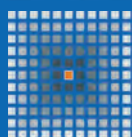


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Education Action Plan 2010–2014

# 2012 Annual Report



**SCSEEC**

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Front cover painting:

'This painting represents pathways to greater learning. The spiral is what life contributes, sometimes low, sometimes high. The result of persistence is the bloom, growth through learning. As a drop of water hits the surface the ripple effect is created, this is what is needed.'

Artist Bronwyn Bancroft: <http://www.bronwynbancroft.com>

'I have always supported the education system at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, and firmly believe that education for Indigenous people is imperative to our development and confidence. It allows us to participate with equity in an often inequitable society.'



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2012

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Education Action Plan 2010–14

## 2012 Annual Report





# Executive summary

Closing the Gap for Indigenous Australians is one of two strategic themes that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has tasked the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) to progress.

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* (the Action Plan) sets out how governments are coming together to realise this strategic theme in relation to early childhood and school education.

The Annual Reports provide information to ministers on SCSEEC on the progress against commitments, targets and performance indicators agreed through the Plan.

In the 2010 academic year, much of the foundation work associated with reporting arrangements and Focus schools was progressed, along with the commencement of many actions. In 2011, work commenced in schools to put in place key actions where they were not already part of schools' strategies to lift education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

During 2012, there has been a consolidation of this work, with key reports received, an increase in the number of schools partnering with communities, and more students supported by personalised learning strategies. It is important to acknowledge the significant extra effort of school staff and families in progressing these activities, and generously offering advice and ideas to the reports received to date. This Annual Report also demonstrates the considerable efforts of government and non-government education providers across Australia who are committed to implementing approaches that can accelerate the pace of improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

## Readiness for school

*Participation in culturally inclusive, high quality early education programs and care can assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to get the best start in life.*

In 2012, there were 11,237 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4 and 5 year-old children enrolled in preschool programs across Australia. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

children enrolled in preschool programs was 82.0 per cent, only slightly below the proportion of 'All' children at 88.5 per cent (see Table 1 in Chapter 3: National overview of progress under the Plan).

The National Quality Framework for Education and Care commenced on 1 January 2012 for long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschools/kindergartens. Under the Framework, all early childhood education and care services are required to demonstrate their use of the Early Years Learning Framework in design of learning programs for children. These frameworks outline practices to support and promote children's learning. The frameworks promote equity, respect for diversity and cultural competence.

In September 2012, the Australian Government response to the Review of Funding for Schooling was announced by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP. The National Plan for School Improvement includes a signature reform to provide school readiness assessments for students on entry to school to assist teachers to understand and meet the needs of individual students in their first few years at school. Education providers will consider their position on signing up to the National Plan during 2013.

Examples of systemic/local level action in 2012 include:

- The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) completed construction of the Pukatja/Ernabella Children and Family Centre; commenced construction of the Christies Beach, Whyalla and Ceduna Aboriginal Children and Family Centres; and officially named the Christies Beach Centre as Taikurrendi. Services will include: child and maternal health; high quality early learning programs for young children; parenting and family support and community development activities, and are fully integrated with the DECD preschool, which offers leadership and an educationally-based care curriculum supporting children's early development as the foundation for life-long learning and achievement. This integrated service approach is subsequently being proposed in development of the Port Augusta Child Development Centre.
- The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) involvement in Best Start programs

has been instrumental in developing working relationships across a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years initiatives, with 451 out of 486 schools (representing 92.8 per cent) responding to the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) Indigenous Survey. The data identified 92 Preparatory year (Prep) students, of whom, 63 per cent were considered ready in relation to numeracy skills.

- In Western Australia, 94 of the 96 Focus schools provided universal access in 2012, with the final two government Focus schools providing universal access from the beginning of the 2013 school year.
- Ten of the 15 Western Australia Catholic Education Office (CEOWA) Focus schools offered 3 year-old kindergarten and/or playgroup programs, with community-based programs operating in two further Focus school communities. Eleven of CEOWA's 15 Focus schools use assessment information from a range of health and welfare sources to assist in identifying needs.

## Engagement and connections

*Schools and early childhood education providers that work in partnership with families and communities can better support the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of educational decision-making builds connections, contributing to a positive impact on educational outcomes.*

In 2012, Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs) provided advice on issues such as National Curriculum and support for the Teacher Standards, as well as assisting in development and implementation of school/community partnerships. Many IECBs contributed to the implementation of Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) projects within their respective States and Territories. The IECB chairpersons also made a submission to the Review of Funding for Schooling (Gonski Review).

The First Peoples Education Action Advisory Group (FPEAG) continued to provide policy advice to the Australian Government on Closing the Gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in early childhood and school settings.

A major focus for the FPEAG in 2012 was the Review of Funding for Schooling (Gonski Review). At its May 2012 meeting, the FPEAG developed a set of principles and submitted its recommendations on the Review to the Minister for School Education, the Hon. Peter Garrett MP. In addition, the FPEAG concentrated on engaging and connecting with Australian Government program and policy managers on the action areas of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*. Other key priorities of the FPEAG were: effective delivery of professional development in schools; policy advice on improving school attendance and a submission to the Budget Based (childcare) Funding Review.

Some examples of systemic/local level action in 2012 included:

- The Australian Capital Territory Education and Training Directorate employed six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers in Focus secondary schools, and four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers in Focus primary schools, to provide transition support, promote early childhood programs and encourage high expectations for all students. Additionally, Australian Capital Territory Family Support Officer and Student Engagement Officer positions were established in Central Office to work collaboratively with schools, the Directorate's Network Student Engagement Teams and other agencies to support students (and their families) to remain engaged, or re-engage with education. During 2012, 30 children and their families received support from these officers.
- The Families as First Teachers (FaFT) program in the Northern Territory engaged 2,115 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and 2,323 parents and carers in early learning activities including dual generational playgroups, parent workshops, books in homes, parent coaching and transition to preschool programs.
- In Queensland, an innovative program – launched in 2011 and continued in 2012 – gives teenage mothers the chance to complete further study while raising their newborn babies. The Studying, Training and Effective Parenting Program (STEPP), a partnership of the Bremer Institute of TAFE and Mission Australia's Communities for Children Plus, was created to give teenage mothers an opportunity to

re-engage in education, further develop their life skills and improve their prospects for employment or further study. STEPP provides education, training and life skills for young mothers aged 16 to 18 who are pregnant or parenting, while also providing high quality childcare in a supportive learning environment next door to the classroom.

- Independent Schools Queensland engaged two Indigenous Education Consultants to support and assist Independent Focus schools to develop Personalised Learning Plans and strategies for their implementation.
- Four Aboriginal Turn Around Teams operated within the Northern Adelaide, Western Adelaide, Far North, Eyre and Western regions of South Australia. The teams provided intensive case management and coordination of community non-government and government agency groups to provide support in the areas of health, education and family services. Support was provided for 35 families, 91 students, 40 educational sites and 45 agencies. Outcomes included an improvement in school attendance, literacy, retention rates, and positive engagement of children and young people in education.
- All Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) Focus schools developed school and community partnership agreements prior to 2012. In 2012, a review and update of the agreements commenced, with all partnerships expected to be updated by the end of 2013. Additionally, community-based Focus schools held family meetings at the end of the year to facilitate student reporting and update the community on the school's direction for the following year. Facilitated by AISWA advisors, all Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (AICS) that reviewed their school and community partnership agreements in 2012 held community meetings to discuss the renewal and updating of the agreement.

## Attendance

*Attending school and engaging with learning is fundamentally important in helping young Australians to acquire the skills they need for life.*

In 2012, the largest difference between the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander students in government schools was 30 percentage points in Year 10, in the Northern Territory. In the independent and Catholic sectors, the largest differences were in Western Australia for Year 10 students, at 28 percentage points in independent schools, and in the Northern Territory for Year 1 and Year 4 students, at 29 percentage points in Catholic schools.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) was engaged in December 2011 to progress the project on effective evidence-based attendance strategies. The research outcomes were presented to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group for consideration in November 2012. The findings of the AIHW provide insight of a practical nature about effective attendance strategies. The AIHW have also determined that effective strategies could be shared via an internet-based portal, to better support school leaders, teachers, administrators, students and communities.

During 2012, the Tri-Border Attendance Strategy continued to effectively track student mobility. A business case was developed to secure continued funding and build on previous outcomes. In November 2012, this investment culminated in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group putting forward a successful submission for continued funding under the SCSEEC National Project Fund.

Some examples of systemic/local level action in 2012 included:

- In the Northern Territory, implementation of strengthened provisions relating to attendance under the *Education Act* continued in 2012, and was reviewed using internal stakeholder surveys, enrolment and attendance data and Attendance and Truancy Officer activity data to refine processes. The Attendance and Truancy Officer team was expanded in 2012, to ensure officers could work more closely with their allocated schools to identify students who had the opportunity to re-engage sustainably.
- Each Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) Focus school developed an evidence-based attendance strategy for their particular context, which forms an integral component of their Whole School Action Plan. Each school managed their attendance strategy using a variety of electronic data management systems to record, collate, monitor and follow-up Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance. The information gathered informed regular and on-going evaluation of attendance processes and strategies,

in order to celebrate successes and make adjustments for improvement, where necessary. Independent Focus schools link their whole-school attendance strategies with the health and wellbeing and Standard Australian English (SAE) literacy and numeracy development programs and strategies of each school. All ISQ Focus schools publish the progress of school attendance in their local school newsletters to encourage parents, carers and the local community in their partnership with the school to support student attendance. They report annually to school boards and to family and community on attendance progress.

- All Victorian government schools are required to implement evidence-based attendance strategies as part of their Student Wellbeing Policy. The Koorie Education Workforce, in place across the State, provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance through Koorie Education Support Officers, who work with families and teachers to identify non-attending students and implement strategies to support stronger engagement. Data gathering and analysis relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school attendance significantly improved during 2011 and 2012, and the more detailed information available will form the basis for the evidence-based and area-specific responses, developed as part of the Victorian Koorie learning and development strategy from 2013–2014.

## Literacy and numeracy

*Mastering the basics of English literacy and numeracy is essential to participation in contemporary Australian society. Ensuring young Australians achieve and go beyond these basics is one of the most effective ways of enabling their participation and broadening their life choices and options.*

The 2012 NAPLAN results show that the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard ranged from 48.8 per cent in Year 9 writing, to 78.3 per cent in Year 3 writing. Outcomes for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ranged from 83.4 per cent in Year 9 writing, to 96.4 per cent in Year 3 writing.

Since 2010, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are achieving at or above the national

minimum standard increased in two of the eight comparable test areas. The increases from 2010 to 2012 were 3.0 percentage points for Year 9 reading, and 3.8 percentage points for Year 9 numeracy. In 2012, one of the eight national trajectory targets (progress points) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was met, for Year 7 reading.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) employs a range of strategies to ensure NAPLAN tests are not culturally biased against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. A number of committees with relevant expertise are in place to review the subject matter of the tests and the test items (questions). The subject matter is carefully selected to be inclusive of all students.

Test items are examined to ensure that they are free of bias and are culturally appropriate. Once test items are developed, a panelling process takes place to examine them. Education practitioners in States and Territories, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, provide specific feedback on the suitability of the test items and the appropriateness of the stimulus materials for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Test trials are then carried out using a sample of students, and analysis of the results is undertaken to ensure that all items are culturally appropriate and free of bias.

The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), in conjunction with State and Territory education authorities, developed the Teach, Learn, Share – The National Literacy and Numeracy Evidence Base website, which published 31 strategies at its launch on 30 June 2012, at: <http://www.teachlearnshare.gov.au/>. Twenty-three of these published approaches can be applied to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The two-year, home-based parenting and early childhood Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) has been delivered in 50 mainstream locations. Of the 50 locations, Katherine, Pioneer (Mt Isa), Inala, La Pouse and Alice Springs all reported a high number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in 2012, with many of the remaining locations also having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled. The Australian Government committed \$55.7 million in the 2012–13 Budget to expand HIPPY to an additional 50 locations, with an emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander communities. The first 25 new locations will commence program delivery in 2014, with the remaining 25 commencing in 2015.

Some examples of systemic/local level action in 2012 included:

- The New South Wales Department of Education and Communities continued to provide staff in Focus schools with the opportunity to participate in English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) professional development workshops. These workshops were designed to support the application of EAL/D pedagogies and the implementation of a bi-dialectal approach to teaching Standard Australian English (SAE) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2012, a further 190 teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers from the original 88 government sector Focus schools participated in this training. In collaboration with its counterparts in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities also continued to contribute to the development of an EAL/D online resource, through the Senior Officers National Network of Indigenous Education (SONNIE). The New South Wales Department of Education and Communities also continued to be involved in the development of an online induction program for the National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools (NARIS), and to be represented on both the NARIS National Working Party and Steering Committee.
- In response to the 2011 NAPLAN results, the Tasmanian Department of Education developed and implemented a strategy for each school to carefully analyse their school data to identify specific aspects of literacy and numeracy requiring further focus. Schools were also provided with additional data to assist with their analysis, as well as direct access to web-based teaching resources, strategies and support. In addition, the Curriculum and Educational Performance Services Teams provided further school level support, including help desk assistance to aid their analysis and planning. Principals and teachers are translating their findings into revised Literacy and Numeracy Plans at the school level, and implementing teaching and learning strategies to address the identified areas of future focus.
- Western Australian schools are becoming more critical of their whole-school approaches to teaching and learning,

and are subsequently reviewing current practices.

Ninety-two per cent of government Focus schools had either a whole-school approach to teaching literacy and/or numeracy in 2012. Sixty-four per cent of these schools indicated that the program or strategy being used is showing promising results.

- With the support of Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) consultants, Focus schools have continued development of their whole-of-school literacy and numeracy plans. AISWA consultants encouraged implementation of a phonemic awareness program in the Focus schools with junior primary students. All schools have taken up the program and received teacher training. The AICS numeracy portal provides detailed scope and sequence lessons designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as well as diagnostic tests to help teachers isolate areas of curriculum need. A language in mathematics project commenced in 2012, and aims to assist teachers to explicitly teach mathematics concepts that English as a Second Language (ESL) students find difficult.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

*It's important that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are taught by high quality teachers in school led by effective and supportive principals who are assisted by a world-class curriculum that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.*

The Teach Remote projects, which are progressing steadily, support teachers and leaders working in remote and very remote schools across Western Australia, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. In 2012, one of the features of the 14 projects was the Common Orientation program, which provided initial support to teachers and leaders moving into remote school locations. Teachers were provided with the opportunity to share their experiences working within remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and fostered development of support networks with other NARIS teachers.



Additionally, the Teacher Conference and Leader Conference provided school staff with an opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with colleagues and hear from experts in the field of teaching and leadership in remote locations on strategies to assist with improving learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

During 2012, States and Territories continued to familiarise themselves with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards), in preparation for national implementation from 2013.

The Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures will come into effect progressively from 2013, as courses become due for re-accreditation. The Accreditation Standards will ensure that by the end of their courses, all graduates will meet the requirements of the Graduate career stage of the Standards, which includes 'strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' and 'understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians'.

Some examples of systemic/local level action in 2012 included:

- The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn provided teachers with a range of professional learning experiences that ensured high levels of cultural understanding and competencies, and in 2012 included:
  - a three-day Cultural Immersion program based around the local Ngunnawal Aboriginal Community
  - school-based Aboriginal Contact teachers designated in all Australian Capital Territory Catholic schools
  - a session on understanding, writing and implementing Personal Learning Plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
  - a workshop on embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the curriculum and using appropriate resources
  - the Aboriginal Education Officer provided advice and support to principals, deputy principals and the school executive to develop a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and pedagogy.

- The New South Wales government, Catholic and independent school sectors continued to provide a range of professional learning opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding of, and competencies in, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives. Across all sectors, these professional learning opportunities included involvement in: Connecting to Country; the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program; Dare to Lead activities; Aboriginal 'Eight Ways of Learning' pedagogies; bi-dialectal approaches to teaching; regional Aboriginal education workshops and conferences; and facilitation of an Aboriginal Education Worker mentoring program.
- Supporting culturally inclusive practices and approaches, and the development of cultural competency in all staff, 523 corporate, regional school or preschool staff of the South Australian DECD attended workshops based around culture and how to provide better quality and more appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Leadership teams in Catholic Education South Australia Focus schools accessed 32 hours of cultural competency training with expert providers from Dare to Lead and Fire and Water consultancies. Principals, leadership teams, along with Indigenous Education Focus Teachers, key National Partnerships personnel and coaches worked together in a rigorous program designed to provide for professional learning in leadership for cultural proficiency and sustainability.
- In Tasmania, 53 teachers, principals and Tasmanian Department of Education corporate staff participated in Cultural Understandings training, provided by Aboriginal Education Services through various modes of delivery, which ranged from two to five days on Country.
- Both the Victorian government and Catholic sectors strengthened the cultural competency of their systems through targeted scholarship programs. Twenty-nine students benefitted from the Victorian government's Koorie Teaching Scholarship Program, receiving a cash grant of \$8,000 per person, per year of full-time study. Since 2011, six scholarship holders have graduated from a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) accredited course. This program targets pre-service teachers, Year 12 leavers and mature age students. Scholarship holders also take part in a mentoring program through the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), which supports recipients in their studies.



- All principals new to Kimberley Catholic schools (comprising 12 of the Western Australian Catholic Education Office's 15 Focus schools) participated in a specialised induction program over four days. The CEOWA has a comprehensive leadership program for new principals in their first to third years of appointment, which includes an emphasis on ensuring improvement of learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. An on-site, regionally based, Principal Schools Advisor supports principals in all regions. Kimberley principals have CEOWA coordinated professional learning four times a year (over six days), specifically targeted at improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes.

## Pathways to real post-school options

*Successful education can lead to employment and economic independence and form the basis for intergenerational change by providing individuals with the skills to participate fully in society and work and determine their own futures.*

While numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have increased over the past two decades, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be under-represented in the higher education sector, across many indicators, such as student access, participation and completion rates, and employment in universities.

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in higher education has increased from 8,871 in 2002, to 12,632 in 2012. However, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander proportion of total students has remained fairly stable, at around 1.4 per cent, due to increasing rates of participation by non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students over the same period.

In August 2012, the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) endorsed the proposed approach to progress development of an Action Plan for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (TESE Action Plan) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The TESE Action Plan will map the commitments of the Australian Government, highlight common themes across Vocational

Education and Training (VET), employment and higher education, and provide recommendations for future action on how pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can be strengthened across the three sectors.

A Project Reference Group, chaired by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) Secretariat was established to oversee development of the Plan, and Outpost Consulting was selected to undertake the coordination and drafting. The project commenced in November 2012, and is due to the NVEAC and Access and Participation Principal Committee for consideration in March 2013.

Some examples of systemic/local level action in 2012 included:

- In Australian Capital Territory government schools, 128 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Years 5 to 12, participated in the Aspirations Program, an elective program in that it promotes the successful completion of Year 12 and the transition into tertiary education for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The program offers a range of activities and experiences designed to broaden students' knowledge of the tertiary education pathways available to them.
- Strengthening of partnerships between New South Wales' schools, VET providers and universities continued throughout 2012, and providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to participate in VET in Schools courses was pivotal in this process. There were 5,160 enrolments by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from both government and non-government schools, in Stage 6 VET in Schools courses in New South Wales. This equates to 3,454 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking one or more Stage 6 VET in Schools courses. Funds from the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions were also utilised to provide \$7.2 million annually, to 30 Work Placement Service Providers, to facilitate coordination of work placements for VET students from all school sectors. In 2012, these providers arranged 1,966 placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, participation in various regional Indigenous Job Markets and Expos served to strengthen industry links and broaden students' horizons. At the regional level, links and partnerships with universities were established or maintained via programs such as Djinggi, Fast Forward and 2Uni.

- The Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment's Year 12 Destinations initiative supported 1,850 students, an increase from 1,682 for 2011. The initiative provides case management for Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through their final year of schooling and for up to six months post-school, into further learning, training or employment. Indigenous Pathways Coordinators partner and utilise the services of other agencies to provide case management support for individual students, monitor their Senior Education and Training Plan, and ensure each student has an Individual Pathway Plan.
- In the Northern Territory, access to school-based accredited training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

was provided through a number of programs. In the Catholic sector, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic College in Wadeye implemented the Indigenous Ranger Cadetship pilot program, providing accredited training and pathways to employment on Country. In the government sector, in Borroloola, the local school and the Department of Education and Children's Services work closely with the McArthur River Mine, which provides funding to facilitate an on-site trainer at the school to deliver Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificates I and II in Resources and Infrastructure. Students participated in excursions to the mine, leading to structured work placements with the opportunity for them to undertake School Based Apprenticeships with the company.

# 2012 Annual Report for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014

## Preamble

The National Education Agreement (NEA), a new funding framework for schools, came into effect on 1 January 2009. The NEA defines Australian Government, State and Territory roles and responsibilities, objectives, outcomes, performance benchmarks and indicators for reporting. The *Schools Assistance Act* (2008) confirms funding for the non-government, Catholic and independent school sectors and introduces the same transparency and accountability requirements that apply to government schools. Within this framework the government and non-government sectors are committed to support the reporting and evaluation activities within the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*. The nature of the non-government sectors is such that they do not have authority to report nationally on behalf of their constituent members. The non-government sectors do not operate State and Territory or national systems. They will bring their best endeavours to this task in collaboration with the relevant State and Territory governments.

## Purpose

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* (the Plan) identifies fifty-five national, systemic and local level actions in six priority domains that evidence shows will contribute to improved outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

All parties to the Plan have agreed to a clear line of sight in reporting details of progress made against each action for which they have responsibility.

The Plan requires that a report be compiled annually to record this progress. This Annual Report<sup>1</sup> will inform ministers with responsibility for education portfolios in their respective States and Territories of progress toward achieving the desired outcomes, targets and performance indicators as set out in the Plan. Each Annual Report will be published on the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) website, <http://www.scseec.edu.au>.

## Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Where possible, this report uses 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' in preference to the term, 'Indigenous'. In some instances, particularly in labels for graphs and tables, the term 'Indigenous' has been included by the provider of the information and, therefore, it is unable to be changed.



## Chapter 2

# Statistical picture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students in Australia

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reported that for the 2011 Census, 548,370 people identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

This equates to 2.5 per cent of the total Australian population. The median age for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was reported as 21.0 years, compared to 37.0 years for the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

For the 2011 Census, the ABS mapped the distribution of people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by State and Territory. Information was also provided about the distribution of this population by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander region and between capital cities and the rest of the State/Territory.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander regions

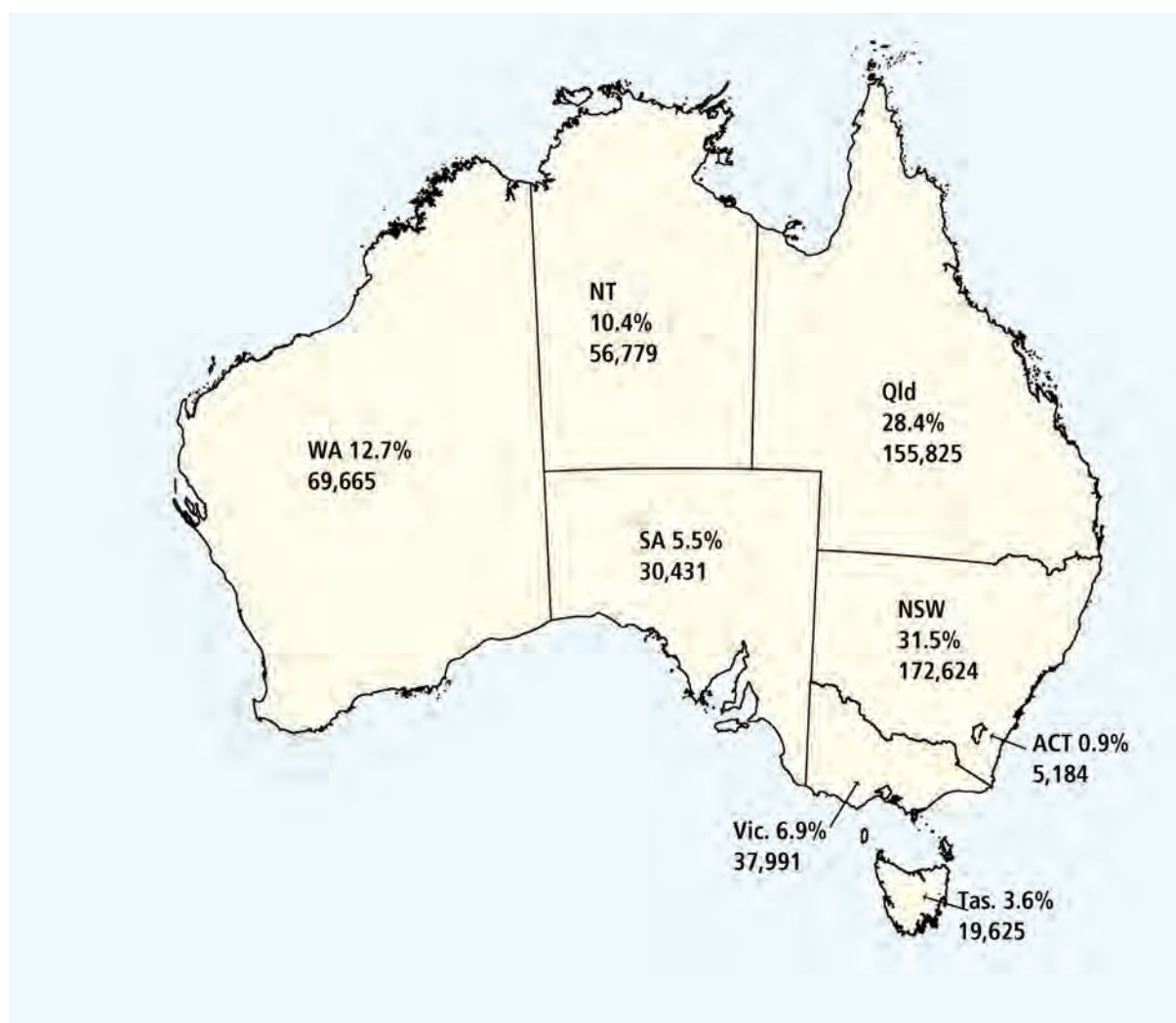
In the 2011 Census, over half (53 per cent) of the people who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin lived in nine of the 57 Indigenous Regions. The three largest regions were located on the eastern seaboard of Australia: Brisbane (53,271), New South Wales Central and North Coast (52,319) and Sydney – Wollongong (52,171). These three regions accounted for 29 per cent (157,761 of 548,370) of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander count for Australia.

**Figure 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander regions, Australian Statistical Geography Standards, 2011**



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Census of Population and Housing – Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2011*, (Cat. No. 2075.0). Available online: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2075.0main+features42011>.

**Figure 2: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and percentage of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, 2011**



Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing – Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2011*, (Cat.No. 2075.0). Available online: [http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2075.0Main Features32011?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=2075.0&issue=2011&num=&view=](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2075.0Main+Features32011?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=2075.0&issue=2011&num=&view=).

## Distribution – capital cities and rest of States and Territories

In the 2011 Census, one-third (33 per cent) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population lived in capital city areas.

States with relatively high proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in capital cities included South Australia (51 per cent) and Victoria (47 per cent).

By contrast, 80 per cent of the population who both identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin and who were counted in the Northern Territory lived outside the capital city area. Likewise, in Queensland, 73 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population lived outside the capital city area.<sup>2</sup>



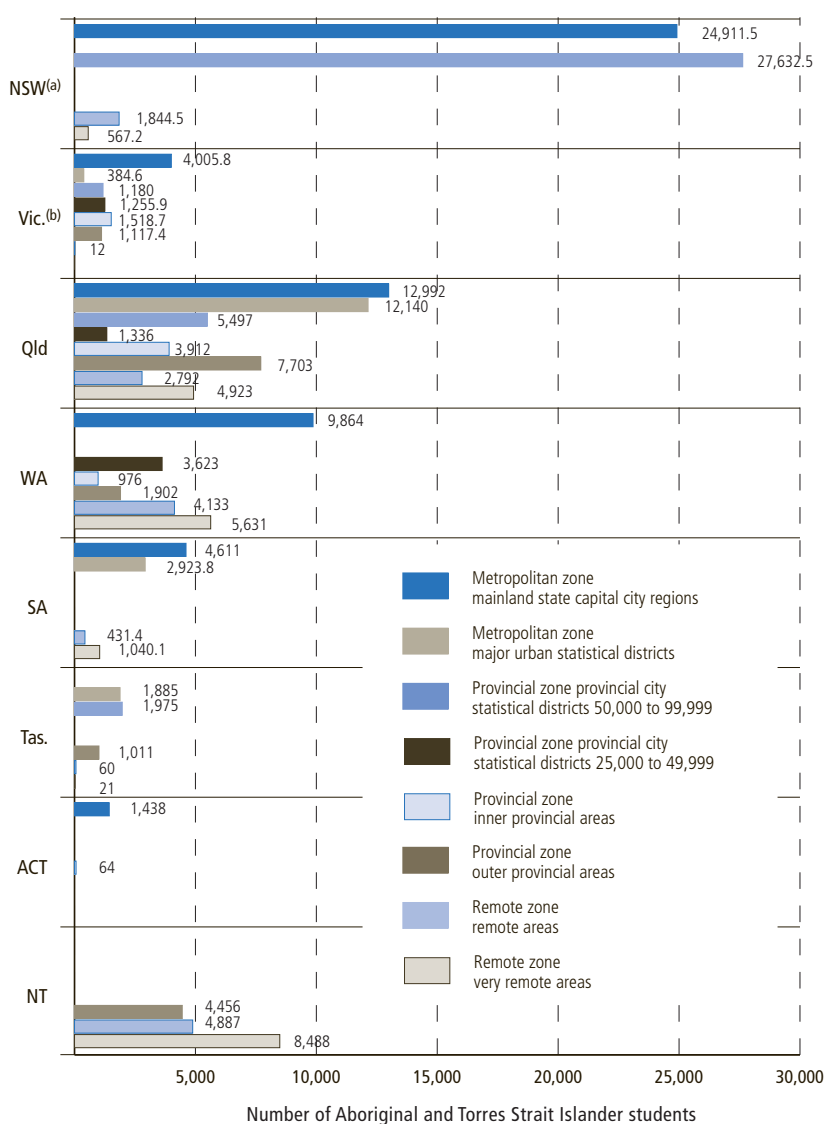
# School information

Tables providing detailed information about the number of full-time and part-time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are available in Table 42b – Full-time and part-time students 2006–2012, from the ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0) on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website,

at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4221.02012?OpenDocument>. Table 42b includes a breakdown of student enrolments, showing numbers attending government, Catholic and independent schools by level and year of schooling, and also by gender.

Figure 3 shows the number of students enrolled in 2012, in each geolocation, by State and Territory.

**Figure 3: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled, by geolocation, by State and Territory, 2012**



Note:

- For the purposes of State reporting, only students in Years 11 and 12 may be part time. Hence there is no difference between 'full-time' and 'full-time equivalent' enrolments for K-10 or ungraded in New South Wales government primary schools. However in non-government schools in New South Wales, students can enrol part-time at any level.
- Victoria has 254 enrolments in 'Unknown' geolocations, owing to a number of postcodes not included in the existing classification, and the incomplete nature of student address information maintained by schools on CASES21, as part of the school census process.

Source: State/Territory departments of education.

## Factors impacting on education

As at 30 June 2011, there were 669,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, comprising 2.5 per cent of the Australian population.<sup>3</sup> Although many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have a good standard of living, too many experience unacceptable levels of disadvantage in living standards, life expectancy, education, health and employment. Current data show a significant gap in these critical areas between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other populations.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates for 2009 show life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to be lower than the 'Other' population, by approximately 11.5 years for males, and 9.7 years for females.<sup>4</sup>

Age-specific death rates for 2007 to 2011 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian males and females, in all age groups, were higher than rates for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females.

Quality early childhood education is critical to ensure that young children have opportunities for early learning, development and preparation for their later schooling.

While the Closing the Gap target to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four-year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education by 2013 is likely to be met, it should be noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, whether they live in metropolitan, rural and/or remote areas of Australia, may speak one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders languages, Kriol, and/or dialect of English called Aboriginal English. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their first contact with Standard Australian English (SAE) will be when they begin school. This will impact on their learning if appropriate learning opportunities are not provided.

In 2012, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results continued to show a pattern where the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above National Minimum Standards is declining the further away students are located from metropolitan areas. Australians who do not complete Year 12 are less likely to have the same opportunities as those who do. In 2011, Year 12 or equivalent completions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Australians aged 20–24 were 53.9 per cent, compared to 86.0 per cent for 'Other' Australians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians also experience much higher levels of unemployment than 'Other' Australians.

At the time of the 2011 Census, around 46.2 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce-aged population was in employment. This compares to 72.2 per cent for other Australians – a gap of 24 percentage points.<sup>5</sup>

For individual State and Territory contexts please refer to the following information.

## State and Territory contextual information

### New South Wales

According to the 2011 Census, New South Wales had the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia. There were 172,624 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in New South Wales in 2011, and approximately 36.3 per cent of them were under 15 years of age.

In 2012, there were 54,955.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in New South Wales' schools. Approximately 86 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (47,087) were enrolled in government schools and 14 per cent (7,869) were enrolled in schools in the non-government sector (Catholic and independent schools). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students comprised 6.3 per cent of students in government schools and 4.8 per cent of the total New South Wales student enrolment.

In 2012, 45.3 per cent of New South Wales Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in schools in metropolitan locations, over half (50.3 per cent) were enrolled in schools in provincial locations, 3.4 per cent were enrolled in schools in remote locations, and only 1.0 per cent were enrolled in schools situated in very remote locations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students continued to be spread over a large number of schools in New South Wales. While representing only 4.4 per cent of total students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in approximately 2,675 schools – which is more than 80 per cent

of all schools in New South Wales. It is also noteworthy that 44.8 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in New South Wales were enrolled in schools in which they comprised less than 10 per cent of total student enrolments.

As was the case in previous years, in 2012, the spread of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students over a large number of schools, in which they comprised a small proportion of total students, continued to have significant implications for program and resource distribution. This includes the strategic targeting of resources to schools where data indicates there was the greatest need.

## Victoria

The Koorie population in Victoria is young and growing. At the 2011 Australian Census, there were 37,990 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria, comprising approximately 0.7 per cent of the total population. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is growing rapidly, at more than two and half times the rate of the general Victorian population. This could be due to a number of factors including high birth rates, migration to Victoria and increased self-identification.

The Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is also much younger than the general population. At the 2011 census, more than one in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were under the age of 15, with a median age of 22 years. By contrast, the median age for the general Victorian population is 37.

More than half of the Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population lives in rural areas, compared to just 27 per cent of the general Victorian population. Forty-three per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in metropolitan areas.

In 2012, the number of students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the Victorian school system grew to 11,285, representing an increase of 33 per cent since 2007. The majority of these students (9,728) were enrolled in government schools, with 1,557 enrolled in the non-government sector.

One feature of the Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population profile is that families are highly dispersed across the State, and Koorie children are highly dispersed across schools. As an indication, 51 per cent of government schools have

enrolments of four Koorie students or fewer, and only eight per cent have more than 20 Koorie students.

Dispersal is a particular feature in high-growth metropolitan areas such as the Casey, Darebin and Wyndham local government areas. The Koorie population is also dispersed across regional areas, but there are several regional areas with large Koorie communities and high concentrations of Koorie students in schools, including Greater Shepparton, Mildura and Greater Geelong. High dispersal rates have significant implications for Koorie policy and program design in Victoria, where the central concern is ensuring the universal system is inclusive of and accessible to Koorie people.

## Queensland

Queensland has a highly regional population with medium to large population centres along the east coast. Approximately half of the population lives in the south-east of the State. However, higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live outside the Brisbane capital city area.

The estimated resident population, as at December 2012, was approximately 4.6 million. According to the 2011 Census, there were 155,824 people in Queensland who were of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Of these, 78.9 per cent (122,896) were of Aboriginal origin and 12.9 per cent (20,094) were of Torres Strait Islander origin, and 8.2 per cent (12,384) were of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. These persons comprised 3.6 per cent of the total Queensland population, and about 28.4 per cent of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. While the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population represents a lower proportion of the overall population who live in the Brisbane area, this represents approximately 34.2 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Queensland.

## Schools

In 2012, there were 1,715 schools in Queensland, of which 72.2 per cent (1,239) were government schools and 27.6 per cent (476) were non-government schools. Of the 1,715 schools in Queensland in 2012, 67.2 per cent (1,153) were primary schools, 14.8 per cent (253) were secondary schools and 14.1 per cent (246) were combined primary/secondary schools and 3.6 per cent (62) were special schools. There are approximately 540 schools in the Brisbane capital city area. In comparison to

other Australian States and Territories, Queensland continues to have a relatively high proportion of small schools, particularly serving rural localities.

## Students

In 2012, Queensland had approximately 747,682 (full-time) students attending schools, representing approximately 21 per cent of the Australian total. Of these, 66.6 per cent (498,013) attended Queensland government schools and 33.4 per cent (249,669) attended non-government schools.

In 2012, more than 51,295 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended Queensland schools, comprising 43,227 students in government schools and 8,068 students in non-government schools.

Of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Queensland government schools:

- 49 per cent attended in metropolitan areas
- 35.9 per cent attended in provincial areas, and
- 15 per cent attended in remote areas.

## Western Australia

Providing educational services over an area of more than 2.5 million square kilometres presents a number of logistical challenges in Western Australia. With a significant proportion of the State's 88,277 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people<sup>6</sup> living or residing in remote or very remote areas, the difficulties associated with providing a quality service over long distances impacts on Western Australia's ability to close the educational performance gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise almost four per cent of Western Australia's total population, with approximately 34 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 14 years or younger.<sup>7</sup> With over a quarter of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population being of school age, the ongoing requirement for appropriate and engaging education programs that address the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, particularly in remote or very remote locations, remains a priority for Western Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Western Australia are often characterised by marked variations in population size and transiency; cultural and linguistic diversity; and remoteness. After the Northern Territory, Western Australia has the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote or very remote locations. People residing in these remote communities have very little access to goods, services and economic and employment opportunities. Service providers also find it difficult to attract and retain staff at these locations.

The Western Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs' Aboriginal Community Profile System currently identifies 221 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Western Australia. Of these, 210 are located in very remote regions, nine are in remote areas and two are in outer regional areas. As approximately 76 per cent of these communities have a population of less than 50 people, challenges associated with effective and efficient service delivery to these communities are exacerbated.

There are over 60 different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups throughout Western Australia, with approximately 14 per cent of the State's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people speaking a language other than Standard Australian English at home.<sup>8</sup> The dispersal of such a large number of transient and linguistically diverse populations over vast areas of remote and very remote Western Australia ensures that the complexities associated with planning and providing adequate and sustainable services to these locations will continue to be key drivers in the ongoing development of responsive and inclusive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educational strategies.

## South Australia

South Australia has a culturally diverse population, with medium to large population centres in the Adelaide metropolitan region, and at regional centres across the State. In 2012, the estimated resident population for South Australia was 1,662,169, with 37,392 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprising 2.3 per cent of the total South Australian population. Nearly three-quarters of the total population live in Adelaide; however, just over half of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population live outside Adelaide, with a quarter living in the north of the State.

## Schools

In August 2012, there were 750 schools in South Australia, of which, 74 per cent were government schools, and 25 per cent were non-government schools. Of the 750 schools in South Australia in 2012:

- 66 per cent (496) were primary schools
- 12 per cent (87) were secondary schools
- 19 per cent (146) were combined primary/secondary schools, and
- 3 per cent (21) were special schools.

There were over 400 schools in the Adelaide capital city area.

## Students

In 2012, South Australia had approximately 259,000 full-time students attending schools, representing 7.8 per cent of the Australian total. Of these, 64 per cent attended government schools, and 36 per cent attended non-government schools in South Australia.

Approximately 89 per cent of the South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander full-time student population were enrolled in government schools, which equates to approximately 5.4 per cent of the overall South Australian government student population.

South Australia has the third highest proportion of part-time students across Australia, at 1.2 per cent, while Australia as a whole has 0.6 per cent. The proportion of part-time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia is also the third highest across Australia, but at a lower rate of 0.7 per cent.

In 2012, 10,123.9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended South Australian schools. Of the 9,006.3 students enrolled in South Australian government schools:

- 4,611.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) students comprised 4.1 per cent of all enrolments in metropolitan areas
- 2,923.8 FTE students comprised 6.5 per cent of all enrolments in provincial areas
- 431.4 FTE students comprised 7.2 per cent of all enrolments in remote areas, and

- 1,040.1 FTE students comprised 50.5 per cent of all enrolments in very remote areas.

The South Australian Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) oversees children's services and government education in South Australia. The department has approximately 28,000 people working in over 1,000 different locations, and its schools and preschools provide services to more than 180,000 children, students and their families.

In 2012 (Term Two data collection), there were 21,197 preschool enrolments in South Australia. There were 1,454 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander preschool enrolments, representing 6.9 per cent of all preschool enrolments. Ninety-two per cent of all preschool enrolments were enrolled in government preschools, compared to 97.0 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in South Australian schools and retained in senior secondary years of schooling has continued to grow over the past 10 years, with combined Year 11 and 12 enrolments increasing from 470.9 (full-time equivalent) in 2002, to 1,230.3 (full-time equivalent) in 2012. Similarly, in government schools, the Year 11 and 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments have increased in 2012, from 417.9 (FTE) in 2002, to 1,081.3 (FTE).

## Tasmania

Lutruwita (now known as Tasmania) has been the country of Tasmanian Aborigines for over 40,000 years. Pre-invasion Lutruwita supported a number of different Nations. While the Tasmanian Aboriginal community of today is quite different to that of the Old Peoples, their culture survives and continues to be dynamic and diverse.

Maintaining strong connections to community, country and culture continues to be an integral part of Aboriginal family and community life in Tasmania. Connection to country is connection to family, community, knowledge and learning. The importance of these connections in the lives and education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is critical to sustain successful learning outcomes. In order to achieve this, it is crucial that families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are fully engaged in schools.

In 2012, there were 5,879 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in full-time and part-time schooling

(Preparatory to Year 12) in Tasmania, representing 7.1 per cent of Tasmania's student population. Of the 5,879 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 4,960 were enrolled in government schools (84 per cent).

In 2012, there were 262 schools operating across Tasmania. Of this total, 197 were government schools, 37 were Catholic schools, and 28 were independent schools. Of the 262 schools, there were 156 primary schools, 43 secondary schools, 57 combined schools and six special schools. The majority of schools were located in metropolitan and provincial areas, with only a small proportion classified as remote and very remote.<sup>9</sup>

## Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory is the smallest jurisdiction in Australia. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the estimated population of the Australian Capital Territory in 2011 was 367,752 and 1.2 per cent of this figure identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

All government schools in the Australian Capital Territory are metropolitan with the exception of one, Jervis Bay School, which is classified as provincial. Jervis Bay School is located in the Jervis Bay Territory and is situated on HMAS Creswell, a naval training college. The composition and number of students at the school have changed quite significantly in recent years. Many Defence families are choosing to live off base in newer Defence Housing dwellings. Consequently, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending Jervis Bay School, and in 2012, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students accounted for 88 per cent of total enrolments.

In 2012, there were 67,536 students enrolled in government and non-government in schools in the Australian Capital Territory, representing an increase of 1,392 students (2.1 per cent) since February 2, 2011. In the Australian Capital Territory, primary school enrolments increased by 3.3 per cent (1,210 students), secondary school enrolments increased by 0.3 per cent (52 students), and college enrolments increased by 0.8 per cent (77 students). Enrolments in special education increased by 15.1 per cent, (53 students).

In 2012, there were 40,074 students enrolled in 84 government schools, representing an increase of 2.7 per cent (1,064 students) since 2011. Primary school enrolments in Australian

Capital Territory government schools increased by 3.8 per cent (885 students); secondary school enrolments increased by 0.5 per cent (45 students); and college enrolments increased by 1.4 per cent (81 students). Enrolments in special education increased by 15.1 per cent (53 students).

In 2012, Australian Capital Territory non-government school enrolments increased overall by 1.2 per cent (328 students), despite a decrease in independent primary school enrolments. Non-government primary school enrolments increased overall by 2.4 per cent (325 students). However, there was a notable increase in Catholic primary schools of 4.2 per cent (343 students), while independent primary school enrolments decreased by 18 students. Non-government secondary school enrolments increased by 0.1 per cent (seven students), but there was a slight decrease in college enrolments of 0.1 per cent (four students).

In 2012, Australian Capital Territory government schools accounted for 59.3 per cent of the total student population, recording over eight in ten (82.7 per cent) preschool level enrolments, and close to eight in ten special education enrolments (77.2 per cent) in government schools.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Australian Capital Territory schools increased on 2011 figures by 5.0 per cent (79 students), to 1,648, with government schools increasing by 4.2 per cent (54 students), and non-government schools increasing by 8.7 per cent (25 students). Australian Capital Territory government schools continued to have the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, at 3.3 per cent of the total government sector enrolments (1,337 students), and 81.1 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments in the Australian Capital Territory. Since 2008, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments has increased by 37.4 per cent (364 students).

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn in the Australian Capital Territory has 29 schools, 24 primary schools, and five secondary colleges. There are five regional Early Learning Centres (ELCs), and these are located within primary schools. In 2012, there were 8,538 primary school students enrolled in Australian Capital Territory Catholic schools, 111 of whom were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Of the 5,179 students enrolled in Australian Capital Territory Catholic secondary schools and colleges, 90 students were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.



## Northern Territory

The Northern Territory has an estimated population of 236,869, which is one per cent of the 2012 total Australian population (22,906,352).<sup>10</sup> It is the third largest State or Territory, with a land area of 1,346,200 square kilometres, yet has the smallest population.

The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of young people (median age 31.4, compared to the national median age of 37.3)<sup>11</sup>, the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (approximately 26.8 per cent)<sup>12</sup>, and the largest proportion of the population living in very remote locations, compared with any other State or Territory.

A high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students fall within the school-aged population when compared to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. At the 2011 Census, the Northern Territory had 6,118 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged birth to four years, and 12,746 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged five to 14 years (10.8 per cent and 22.4 per cent of the total Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, respectively).<sup>13</sup> Comparatively, at the 2011 Census, the Northern Territory had 11,003 non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged birth to four years, and 19,277 non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged five to 14 years (7.1 per cent and 12.4 per cent of the total non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, respectively).<sup>14</sup>

The Northern Territory has the largest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of any State or Territory, with approximately 56,777 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, approximately 26.8 per cent of the total population.<sup>15</sup> The proportion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is even greater in the school-aged population, with 40.2 per cent of students enrolled in Transition to Year 12 identified as being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, compared with the national average of 4.9 per cent.<sup>16</sup>

Student mobility is high and continuity in learning programs is a major issue. Irregular attendance, or chronic under-attendance, also impacts on student outcomes. Where non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance rates have remained stable at about 90 per cent since 2006, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance rates are, on average, 70 per cent. Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander attendance rates are volatile and often follow seasonal trends.

Of all the Northern Territory students enrolled in government schools, 54 per cent are enrolled in provincial areas (including Darwin and Palmerston). A total of 23.6 per cent of the student population is enrolled in remote areas of the Northern Territory, with 22.4 per cent of the student population enrolled in very remote areas. Schools in very remote locations tend to have much smaller student populations but assist in ensuring access to education is available for the entire dispersed Northern Territory population.

Enrolments at distance education schools, such as the Northern Territory Open Education Centre (NTOEC), Alice Springs School of the Air, and Katherine School of the Air, comprise 2.2 per cent of Northern Territory enrolments.

The average attendance rate in provincial and remote schools is over 85 per cent. The average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote schools is 58.3 per cent. A range of strategies is being implemented to address the issue of absenteeism, particularly in very remote schools.

At the 2011 Census, about 56,679 people were living in the Northern Territory who had a language background other than English.<sup>17</sup> Of the total population, 62.8 per cent spoke English only; 10.5 per cent were speakers of languages from other countries; 16.3 per cent were speakers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages (34,446), and a further 10.5 per cent did not identify their language.<sup>18</sup> Of the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language speakers in Australia (61,800), 55.7 per cent were located in the Northern Territory.<sup>19</sup>

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners studying in remote schools, English is rarely used in their communities outside school. This means that, while at school, they are learning English as an additional language.

The Northern Territory has over 52.3 per cent of its government schools in the bottom 10 per cent of the Socioeconomic Indexes for Areas – Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage range (SEIFA–IRSD, see section below for definition). Over 24.2 per cent of Northern Territory students attend the schools in the bottom (most socio-economically disadvantaged) decile.<sup>20</sup>

The cost of delivering educational services in the Northern Territory is significantly greater than in any other Australian State or Territory. The factors contributing to this are varied, but many are a result of the large proportion of Northern Territory schools located in remote, isolated and very remote communities. Remoteness increases costs associated with personnel (school and teaching staff), infrastructure (including staff housing), curriculum delivery and travel.

## SEIFA-IRSD

Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a suite of four measures created from Census information. The measures summarise different aspects of socio-economic conditions in an

area and are appropriate for distinguishing between relatively disadvantaged areas. The Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) measures the proportion of:

- low income households in an area
- people who do not speak English well
- households that pay low rent, and
- people with no post-school qualifications.

Areas within Australia are then ordered from the lowest to the highest scores. The lowest 10 per cent of areas are given a decile number of one and so forth, up to the highest 10 per cent of areas, which are given a decile number of 10. This means that areas are divided into 10 groups, depending on their score.

### Footnotes

- 1 Where possible, this report uses 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' in preference to the term, 'Indigenous'. In some instances, particularly in labels for graphs and tables, the term 'Indigenous' has been included by the provider of the information and therefore it is unable to be changed.
- 2 ABS, *Census of Population and Housing – Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2011*, (Cat.No. 2075.0). Available online: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2075.0MainFeatures32011?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=2075.0&issue=2011&num=&view=>.
- 3 ABS, *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2011*, (Cat.No. 3238.0.55.001). Issue released, 30/08/13. Available online: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3238.0.55.001Main+Features1June+2011?OpenDocument>.
- 4 ABS, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, October 2010*, (Cat.No. 4704.0). Issue released, 17/02/11. Table 1.6 – Life Expectancy at Birth, by Indigenous status, 2005–2007. Available online: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/lookup/4704.0Chapter218Oct+2010>.
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# National overview of progress under the Plan

## Readiness for school

### Performance indicator 1

*The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods*, 2012; ABS (unpublished), *Australian Demographic Statistics* (Cat. No. 3101.0); ABS (unpublished), *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat. No. 3238.0).

Data for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (NECEC) Collection have been sourced from the Australian Government and the State and Territory departments with responsibility for Early Childhood Education and Care and the ACT Catholic Education Office. The NECEC Collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) that facilitates consistency of data provision across the various jurisdictional collections. Alignment with these standards has not been completely achieved by all jurisdictions for 2012, and care should be taken when comparing States and Territories.

Some jurisdictions were not able to provide certain data elements as specified in the ECEC NMDS for the National ECEC Collection. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to identify children attending multiple preschool programs within the collection reference period. It is also a challenge to report accurately the number of children enrolled in and attending a preschool program, without counting an individual child more than once. When a child attends two different preschool programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. This child is only counted once in child counts. All preschool episodes associated with a child are included in preschool episode counts. Australian totals in Table 1 need to be interpreted with care due to the mixed populations that are reported between States and Territories.

Comparison of data year to year is not possible due to collection, output and processing methodology not being consistent across years.

For further information on the ECEC NMDS, collection methodologies and coverage for the National ECEC Collection, please see the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat.No. 4240.0.55.001), available online at: <https://secure.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4240.0.55.0012012?OpenDocument>.

In 2012, there were 11,237 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4 and 5 year-old children enrolled in preschool programs across Australia, compared to 266,036 Australian children overall.

**Table 1: Proportion of children developmentally 'on track' as they enter school, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2012 (per cent)**

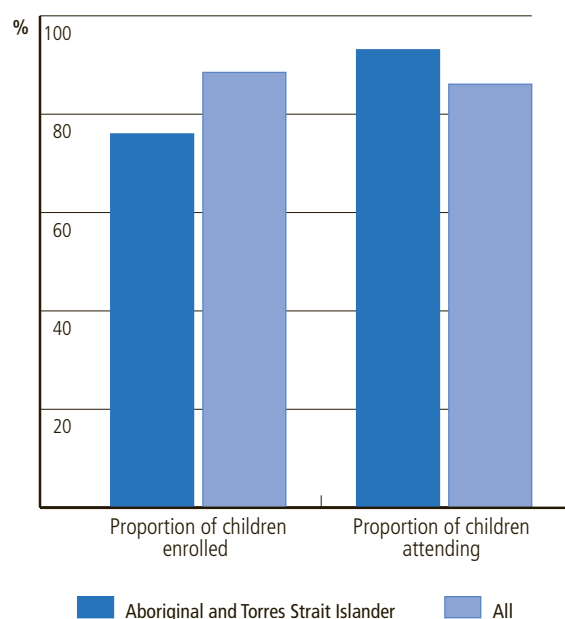
	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	70.3

**Notes:**

- The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored above the 25th percentile of the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge need to also be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) data, 2012 data collection, (unpublished).

**Figure 4: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students enrolled and attending preschool programs, Australia, 2012**



**Notes:**

- Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and should be treated as indicative.
- Enrolment and attendance counts include children 4 and 5 years of age. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.
- Due to data collection limitations, Queensland data represents episode counts rather than child counts. Episode counts include all instances of preschool programs provided to a child without accounting for duplication in preschool experience. For information on methodologies and concepts of the preschool enrolment data please refer to explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Preschool Education Australia, 2012* (Cat.No. 4240.0). Some percentages are reported over 100 per cent, which reflects the double counting that may occur in child counts across years.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (unpublished); ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics* (Cat. No. 3101.0), (unpublished); ABS, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat. No. 3238.0), (unpublished).

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in preschool programs was 82.0 per cent, only slightly below the proportion of 'All' children at 88.5 per cent.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending preschool in relation to the estimated residential population of 4 year-olds was 82.0 per cent, compared to 86.1 per cent for 'All' children.

## Performance indicator 2

*The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as developmentally on track across four or more domains in the AEDI.*

Data Source: Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 data collection (unpublished).

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) results indicate a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are developmentally 'on track' when they start school than their 'Other' peers.

The AEDI was administered in 2009 and 2012 to students in their first year of full-time schooling. The average age of Australian children who completed the AEDI was 5 years 7 months. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as being 'on track' in 2012 was 47.7 per cent, compared with 42.5 per cent in 2009. For non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the proportion assessed as being 'on track' in 2012 was 70.3 per cent, compared to 78.6 per cent in 2009.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicator 3

*Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*

There is no national data set for this performance indicator. Further information is available in the State and Territory chapters of this report.

## Performance indicator 4

*Proportion of Focus schools with a school–community partnership agreement in place.*

There is no national data set for this performance indicator. Further information is available in the State and Territory chapters of this report.

# Attendance

## Performance indicator 5

*Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students in schools.*

*Data Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).*

The student attendance data collection is in a transitional phase until all jurisdictions and sectors have the capacity to report their

data using an agreed standard. All States and Territories and the non-government sectors are collaborating to standardise the collections. However, because the definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect the data (for 2012, and data for previous years) are not uniform, accurate comparisons between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made.

In 2012, the largest difference between the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students in government schools was 30 percentage points in Year 10, in the Northern Territory. In the independent and Catholic sectors, the largest differences were in Western Australia for Year 10 students, at 28 percentage points in independent schools; and in the Northern Territory for Years 1 and 4 students at 29 percentage points in Catholic schools.

Between 2011 and 2012, there was little variation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates across States and Territories. The jurisdictions that had the larger variations were those with smaller proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

**Table 2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, by State and Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>New South Wales</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90	90	90	90	90	90	85	81	78	75	88	73
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	95	94	94	93	91	89	88	92	85
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	90	89	87	91	83
<b>Victoria</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89	90	90	90	87	90	89	87	86	82	86	82
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	92	92	91	88
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	92	92	91	88
<b>Queensland</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	86	86	87	87	86	87	86	83	79	77	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	91	89	88	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	92	93	93	93	93	93	92	91	88	87	n/a	n/a
<b>Western Australia</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	80	81	82	82	82	81	80	72	67	64	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	93	94	94	94	94	93	91	89	88	n/a	95
<b>Total</b>	92	92	93	93	93	93	92	89	87	86	n/a	95
<b>South Australia</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	80	81	82	81	83	81	81	77	72	73	81	78
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	92	93	93	93	93	93	92	91	88	87	91	90
<b>Total</b>	92	92	93	92	92	92	92	90	88	86	91	89
<b>Tasmania</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	92	93	93	91	92	92	89	84	82	78	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	90	88	87	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	89	87	86	n/a	n/a
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87	87	85	88	87	87	83	76	79	77	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	93	94	93	93	93	92	90	88	87	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	93	93	93	93	93	92	92	89	88	87	n/a	n/a
<b>Northern Territory</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	68	70	72	71	72	71	68	64	60	55	60	88
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91	92	92	92	92	92	90	88	88	85	n/a	92
<b>Total</b>	81	81	82	81	82	81	79	77	76	74	60	92

Notes:

- a) Indigenous data refers to those who identify as Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin, or Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.
  - b) Non-Indigenous data refers to those who identify themselves as Non-Indigenous, or where it is unknown/not stated.
  - c) ACARA provides the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Reform Council with the proportion of data where the Indigenous status is unknown/not stated, for those jurisdictions where a breakdown is available.
  - d) Student attendance rates are collected and provided as the whole number (rounded to zero decimal place).
  - e) Different definitions and methodologies are used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance. Therefore, data cannot currently be aggregated or averaged at the national level, nor can the data be compared between jurisdictions.
- n/a Data not available or not reported.

Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).



**Table 3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, by State and Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>New South Wales</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91	91	91	91	91	90	92	90	89	87	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	94	95	94	95	93	93	92	92	n/a
<b>Total</b>	94	94	95	94	95	94	94	93	93	92	92	n/a
<b>Victoria</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85	87	90	89	87	90	88	89	85	85	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	95	95	94	95	94	94	93	92	93	95	94
<b>Total</b>	94	94	95	94	95	94	94	93	92	93	95	94
<b>Queensland</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87	87	90	89	89	88	90	91	89	86	n/a	69
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	93	92	n/a	70
<b>Total</b>	93	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	93	92	n/a	69
<b>Western Australia</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	77	79	81	78	86	81	82	80	82	80	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	95	95	95	95	94	94	93	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	95	95	95	94	93	93	n/a	n/a
<b>South Australia</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90	92	89	90	93	88	86	83	85	84	100	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	94	94	94	94	93	92	91	94	94
<b>Total</b>	94	94	95	94	94	94	93	93	91	91	94	94
<b>Tasmania</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95	92	93	92	93	91	91	90	89	88	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	94	94	95	94	93	92	91	90	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	95	94	93	92	91	90	n/a	n/a
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89	93	92	91	79	85	87	83	83	84	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	94	94	95	94	93	92	89	90	90	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	93	94	94	94	94	93	92	89	90	89	n/a	n/a
<b>Northern Territory</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	63	66	67	64	66	67	65	73	67	71	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	92	91	92	93	92	93	93	92	92	90	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	80	81	81	83	83	84	82	85	82	84	n/a	n/a

Notes:

- a) Indigenous data refers to those who identify as Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin, or Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.
  - b) Non-Indigenous data refers to those who identify themselves as Non-Indigenous, or where it is unknown/not stated.
  - c) ACARA provides the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Reform Council with the proportion of data where the Indigenous status is unknown/not stated, for those jurisdictions where a breakdown is available.
  - d) Student attendance rates are collected and provided as the whole number (rounded to zero decimal place).
  - e) Different definitions and methodologies are used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance. Therefore, data cannot currently be aggregated or average at the national level, nor can the data be compared between jurisdictions.
- n/a Data not available or not reported.

Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).

**Table 4: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, by State and Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>New South Wales</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91	91	93	91	91	93	91	92	83	79	84	100
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95	95	96	95	95	95	95	94	94	93	92	95
<b>Total</b>	94	95	95	95	95	95	95	94	94	93	92	95
<b>Victoria</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89	92	92	92	94	89	91	91	96	89	97	86
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	95	95	95	95	94	95	94	93	93	88	81
<b>Total</b>	94	95	95	95	95	94	95	94	93	93	89	81
<b>Queensland</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	86	88	86	85	87	90	89	88	83	78	n/a	75
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	95	95	95	95	94	94	93	92	70
<b>Total</b>	94	94	95	94	95	94	95	94	94	93	92	70
<b>Western Australia</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	84	85	87	86	87	81	92	85	75	65	n/a	19
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	94	95	95	95	95	94	93	100	31
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	95	94	95	94	94	92	100	27
<b>South Australia</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90	78	91	88	89	92	84	83	92	93	100	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	95	95	95	94	94	94	94	93	93	89	95
<b>Total</b>	94	94	95	95	94	94	94	94	93	93	89	95
<b>Tasmania</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	84	94	90	96	93	95	93	92	93	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	94	94	94	95	94	93	94	92	86	99
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	94	95	94	93	94	92	86	99
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	73	94	88	95	94	77	98	76	76	98	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	93	93	93	93	91	95	88	92	86	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	93	93	93	93	93	91	95	88	92	86	n/a	n/a
<b>Northern Territory</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	77	77	75	85	79	81	76	74	75	71	n/a	48
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91	94	94	94	94	93	93	93	93	91	n/a	48
<b>Total</b>	89	92	92	93	91	92	89	88	88	85	n/a	48

Notes:

- a) Indigenous data refers to those who identify as Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin, or Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin, or both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.
  - b) Non-Indigenous data refers to those who identify themselves as Non-Indigenous, or where it is unknown/not stated.
  - c) ACARA provides the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Reform Council with the proportion of data where the Indigenous status is unknown/not stated, for those jurisdictions where a breakdown is available.
  - d) Student attendance rates are collected and provided as the whole number (rounded to zero decimal place).
  - e) Different definitions and methodologies are used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance, therefore data cannot currently be aggregated or average at the national level, nor can the data be compared between jurisdictions.
- n/a Data not available or not reported.

Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).

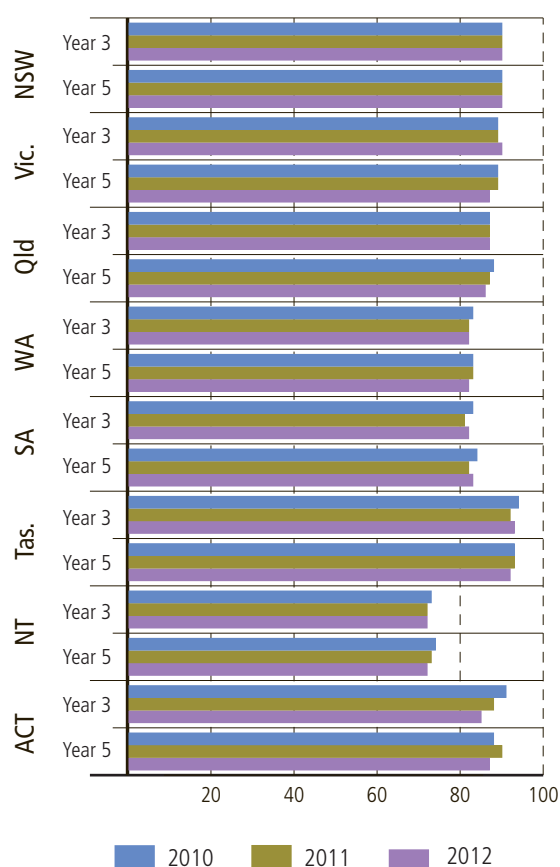
## Government schools

In 2012, the largest difference in the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students for Years 1 to 6 in government schools was 23 percentage points in Year 1, in the Northern Territory. The smallest difference was in Tasmania at one percentage point for Years 2 and 3.

For Years 7 to 10, the largest gap in attendance rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students was in the Northern Territory at 30 percentage points for Year 10, while the smallest gap was three percentage points in Tasmania for Year 7 students.

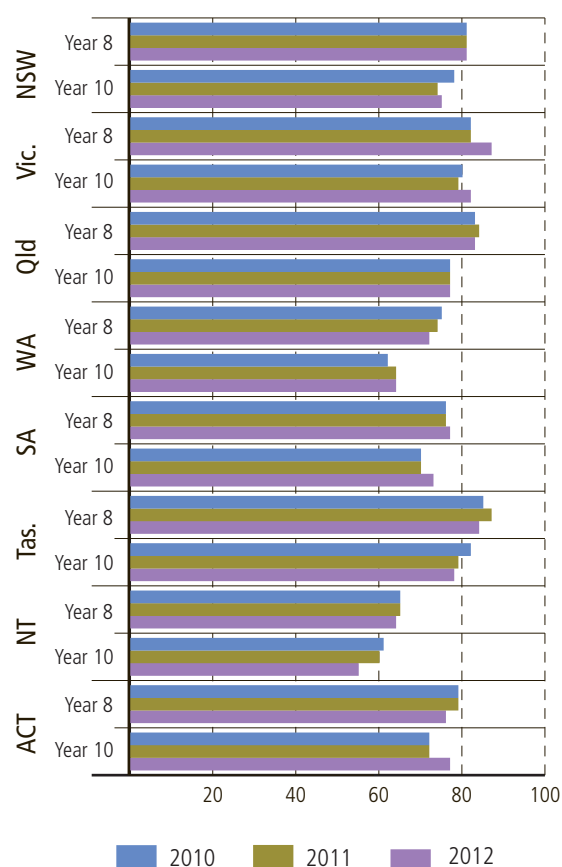
Tasmanian government schools have the smallest gap between the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students. Across Years 1 to 6, the largest difference was three percentage points for Year 4 students. In 2012, across Years 1 to 7, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania recorded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates at or above 85 per cent; South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory recorded rates at or above 80 per cent. In the Northern Territory, the attendance rates across Years 1 to 7 were at or above 68 per cent. Figures 5 and 6 show a representative selection of year level attendance in government schools, by State and Territory.

**Figure 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates in government schools, by State and Territory, Years 3 and 5, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).

**Figure 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates, government schools, by State and Territory, Years 8 and 10, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).

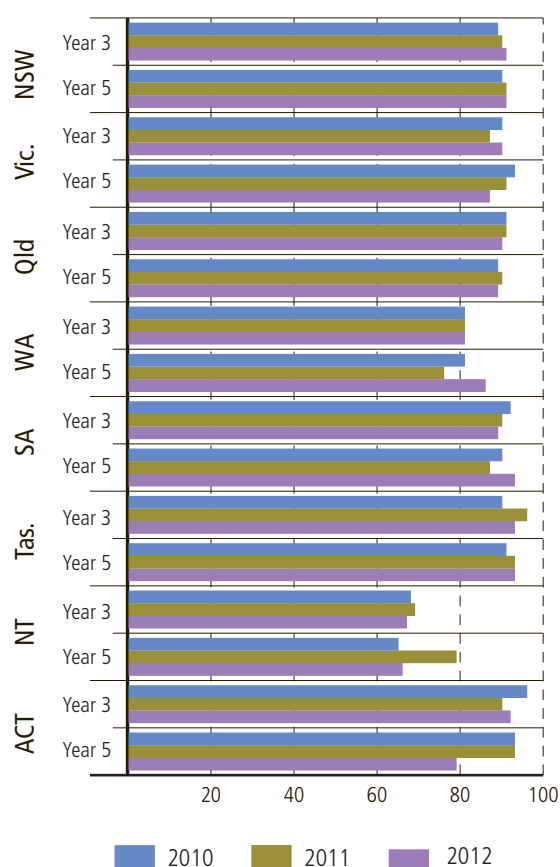
## Catholic schools

In Catholic schools, the largest difference in the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students for Years 1 to 6 was 29 percentage points for Years 1 and 4 students in the Northern Territory. The smallest gap was in Tasmania, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students outperformed 'Other' students by one percentage point in Year 1.

In 2012, for Years 7 to 10, the largest gap in attendance rates was in the Northern Territory for Year 7 students, at 28 percentage points; while the smallest gap was in Tasmania, where there was just two percentage points difference in all Years 7 to 10.

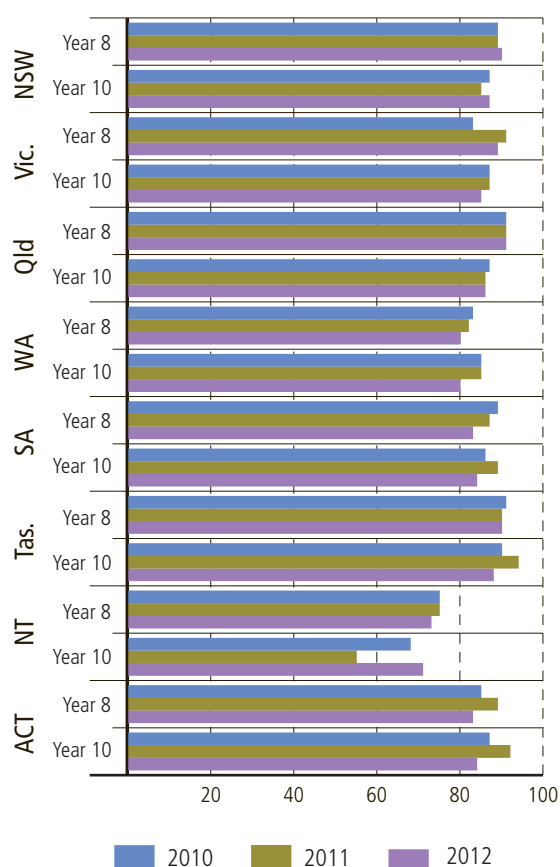
In Catholic schools, Tasmania had the highest attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with all Years 1 to 10 rates at or above 88 per cent. In New South Wales and South Australia, for Years 1 to 10, all attendance rates were at or above 86 per cent. For Years 1 to 10, Victoria and Queensland recorded rates 85 per cent or above; South Australia recorded rates 83 per cent or above; Western Australia recorded rates above 77 per cent; and in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, all rates were at or above 79 and 63 per cent, respectively. Figures 7 and 8 show a representative selection of year level attendance in Catholic schools, by State and Territory.

**Figure 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates in Catholic schools, by State and Territory, Years 3 and 5, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).

**Figure 8: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates, Catholic schools, by State and Territory, Years 8 and 10, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).

## Independent schools

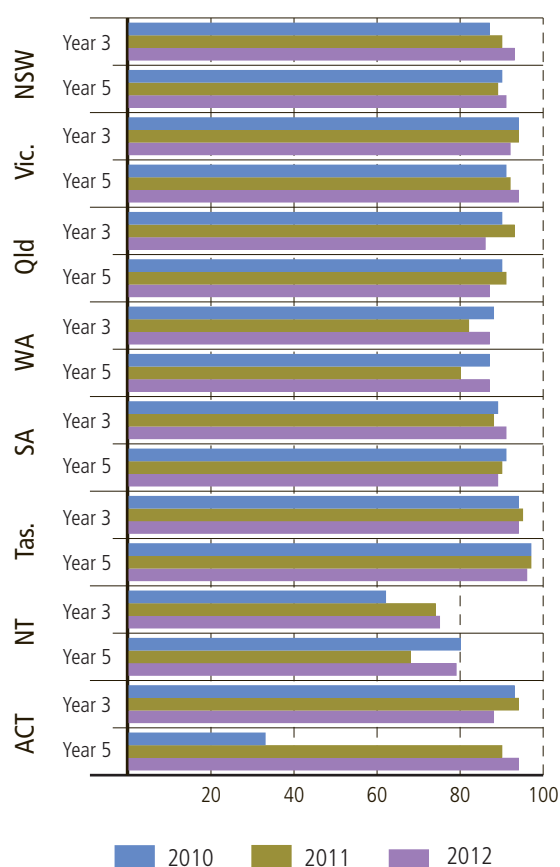
Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in independent schools varied between States and Territories. The largest difference between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students for Years 1 to 6 was 20 percentage points in the Australian Capital Territory for Year 1 students. In the ACT, the attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was above that of their peers in three out of six year levels. This was also true for Year 5 students in Tasmania.

For Years 7 to 10 in independent schools, the largest difference was 28 percentage points in Year 10, in Western Australia; while

in the Australian Capital Territory, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students outperformed their peers by 12 and three percentage points for Year 10 and Year 7 students respectively; and in Tasmania, the attendance rate for Year 7 and Year 10 students was one percentage point higher than the 'Other' students' attendance rate. Victorian Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also outperformed their peers by three percentage points.

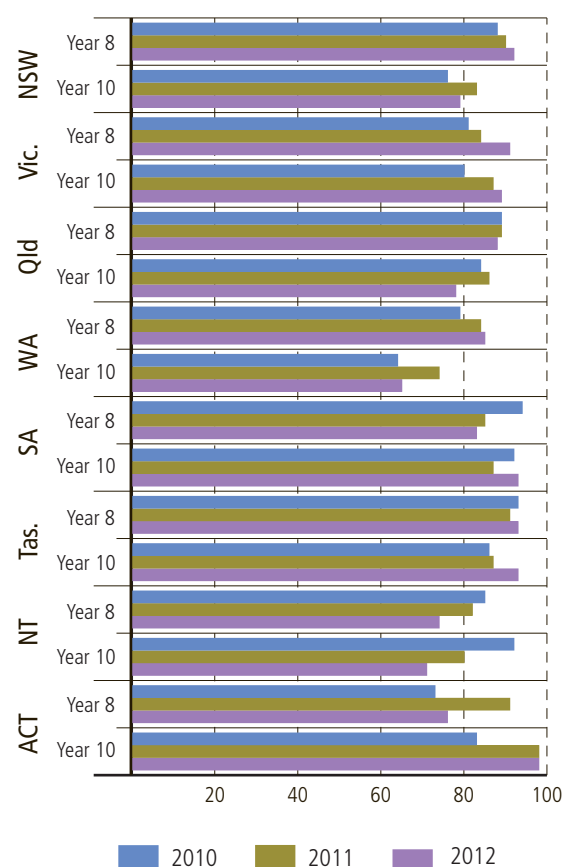
In independent schools, New South Wales recorded the best attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, recording rates for Years 1 to 8 all above 90 per cent. In 2012, across Years 1 to 6, Victoria recorded Aboriginal and Torres

**Figure 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates in independent schools, by State and Territory, Years 3 and 5, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).

**Figure 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates, independent schools, by State and Territory, Years 8 and 10, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, 2012 National Student Attendance Data Collection (unpublished).

Strait Islander student attendance rates at or above 89 per cent; Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia recorded rates above 80 per cent. For 2012, the Australian Capital Territory had both the smallest and one of the greatest differences in attendance rates. In the Northern Territory, the attendance rates across Years 1 to 6 were at or above 75 per cent. Figures 9 and 10 show a representative selection of year level attendance in independent schools, by State and Territory.

## Enrolment to population ratio

### Performance indicator 6

*Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to 'Other' Australians.*

For 2012, school participation rates have not been published by Indigenous status due to concerns with the quality of the indicator. Specifically, the rates for most States and Territories exceeded 100 per cent, primarily as a result of modal differences in the data sources. The denominator is sourced from the Estimated Resident Population series, itself drawn from the Population Census, while the numerator is sourced from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The ABS is working to provide a substitute measure.

## Apparent retention rates

### Performance indicator 7

*Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

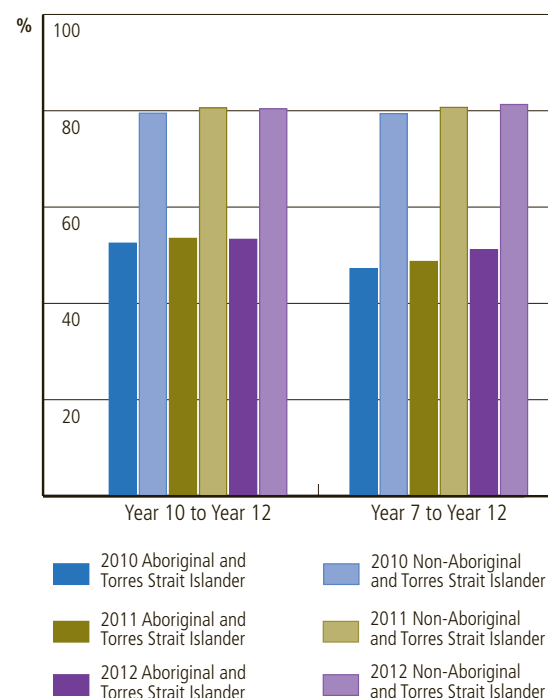
'The apparent retention rate measures the number of school students in a designated year of education expressed as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year.'

Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0), National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), Apparent Retention Rates.

In 2012, the Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 53.3 per cent, a decrease of 0.2 of a percentage point from the 2010 rate of 53.5 per cent. Since 2006, the Year 10 to Year 12 apparent retention rate has increased by 6.5 percentage points from 46.8 per cent. However, over this time, the gap has shown little evidence of closure, decreasing only slightly from 29.4 percentage points in 2006 to 27.1 percentage points in 2012.

The Year 7/8 (first year of secondary schooling) to Year 12 apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased from 48.7 per cent in 2011 to 51.1 per cent in 2012. This outcome has increased by 11 percentage points since 2006, when the equivalent outcome was 40.1 per cent. Over this time, the gap has decreased from 35.8 percentage points to 30.2 percentage points.

**Figure 11: Apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students, Australia, 2010–2012**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).



**Table 5: Comparative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apparent retention rates and the percentage point gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rates, Australia, 2008–2012 (per cent)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Years 7/8 to Year 10</b>					
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89.8	90.9	95.8	98.7	98.4
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	99.9	100.1	101.0	101.3	101.4
Gap (percentage points)	10.1	9.2	5.2	2.6	3.0
<b>Years 7/8 to Year 12</b>					
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	47.2	45.4	47.2	48.7	51.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	75.6	77.3	79.4	80.7	81.3
Gap (percentage points)	28.4	31.9	32.2	32.0	30.2

Notes:

- The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/Year of education as a percentage of their respective cohort group. Ungraded students not included.
- There are several factors influencing the reason why the proportion of students relative to the population can exceed 100 per cent. These factors may include cross-border enrolments and migration (interstate/international). In particular for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, analysis has shown this population has a higher dual-enrolment occurrence across multiple schools, government and non-government sectors and jurisdictions, which would impact on the percentages represented. The occurrences of students repeating grades would also contribute to percentages exceeding 100 per cent. Data includes students enrolled full-time or part-time. Jervis Bay enrolments are included with ACT; Norfolk Island enrolments are included with New South Wales. 'Other territory' enrolments are excluded.
- Apparent retention rates for Indigenous students can be affected by the disposition to identify as Indigenous over time.
- Issues that may affect comparability over time can be found in the Explanatory Notes of the source publication.

Source: ABS, *Schools Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Apparent grade progression ratios

### Performance indicator 8

*Progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

Data Source: ABS, *School Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No.4221.0)  
Additional Statistics.

Apparent grade progression ratios measure the number of students at a given year level compared to the number enrolled in the previous year, at the time of the annual August census.

Progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Year 8 to 9 and Year 9 to 10 ranges showed strong results in 2012, at around 100 per cent (99.6 per cent and 97.1 per cent respectively). The progression ratios for the Year 10 to 11 range dropped to 78.3 per cent and further, to 69.6 per cent for the Year 11 to 12 grade range.

### Year 8 to Year 9

The 2012 progression ratio for Years 8 to 9 was 99.6 per cent, a slight decrease from the 2011 result of 99.7 per cent. The 'Other' student result was 100.7 per cent, resulting in a gap of 1.1 percentage points in 2012.

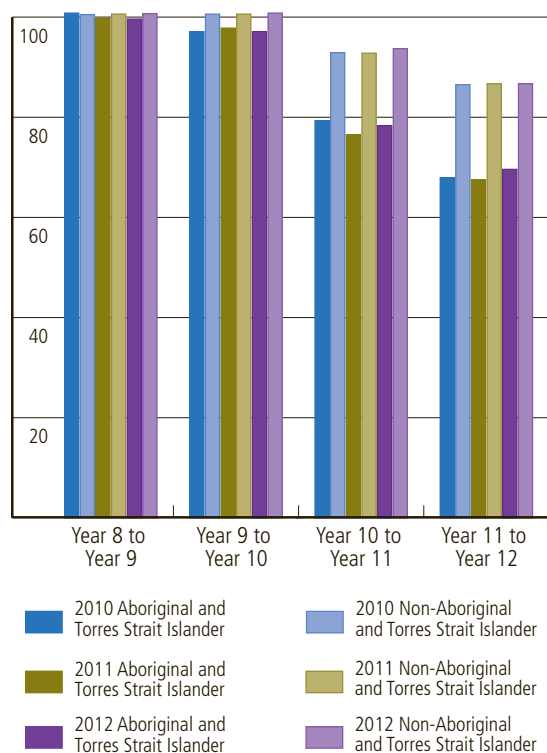
## Year 9 to Year 10

For Years 9 to 10, the progression ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased slightly, from 97.8 per cent in 2011 to 97.1 per cent in 2012. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students was 3.7 percentage points.

## Year 10 to Year 11

The 2012 progression ratio for Years 10 to 11 was 78.3 per cent, an increase of 1.8 percentage points from the 2011 result of 76.5 per cent. The 'Other' student outcome was 93.7 per cent, resulting in a gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students of 15.4 percentage points.

**Figure 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students' apparent grade progression ratios, Australia, 2010–2012**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Year 11 to Year 12

The 2012 progression ratio for Years 11 to 12 was 69.6 per cent, an increase of 2.1 percentage points from the 2011 outcome of 67.5 per cent. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students was 17.1 percentage points, with the 'Other' students' Years 11 to 12 progression ratio at 86.7 per cent.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicator 9

*Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*

*Data Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) National Reports, 2008–2012*

### NAPLAN results 2012

The 2012 NAPLAN results show that the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard ranged from 48.8 per cent in Year 9 writing to 78.3 per cent in Year 3 writing. Outcomes for 'Other' students ranged from 83.4 per cent in Year 9 writing to 96.4 in Year 3 writing.

It should be noted that a new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results from 2011 onwards should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years. The change in the writing genre has also resulted in the 12 'Closing the Gap' trajectories being reduced to eight, as the writing trajectory targets are no longer applicable.

Since 2010, the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard increased in two of the eight comparable test areas. The increases from 2010 to 2012 were three percentage points for Year 9 reading and 3.8 percentage points for Year 9 numeracy. In 2012, one of the eight national trajectory targets (progress points) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was met, for Year 7 reading.

**Table 6: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

	2010			2011			2012		
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Gap	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Gap	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Gap
<b>Year 3</b>									
Reading	75.1	95.0	19.9	76.3	94.9	18.6	74.2	94.7	20.5
Writing	79.0	96.6	17.6	79.9	96.2	16.3	78.3	96.4	18.1
Numeracy	76.6	95.3	18.7	83.6	96.4	12.8	72.7	95.1	22.4
<b>Year 5</b>									
Reading	66.2	92.7	26.5	66.4	92.9	26.5	64.7	93.1	28.4
Writing	70.5	94.4	23.9	68.9	93.9	25.0	66.3	93.6	27.3
Numeracy	71.4	95.0	23.6	75.2	95.5	20.3	69.2	94.6	25.4
<b>Year 7</b>									
Reading	76.6	95.9	19.3	77.1	95.7	18.6	75.4	95.1	19.7
Writing	69.8	93.9	24.1	66.9	92.6	25.7	63.7	91.4	27.7
Numeracy	77.0	96.1	19.1	76.5	95.5	19.0	74.4	94.9	20.5
<b>Year 9</b>									
Reading	64.2	92.2	28.0	71.9	93.5	21.6	67.2	92.7	25.5
Writing	59.0	88.7	29.7	55.0	86.4	31.4	48.8	83.4	34.6
Numeracy	70.4	94.3	23.9	72.0	94.1	19.4	74.2	94.7	20.5

Note:

A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.

Source: ACARA, *NAPLAN National Reports*, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

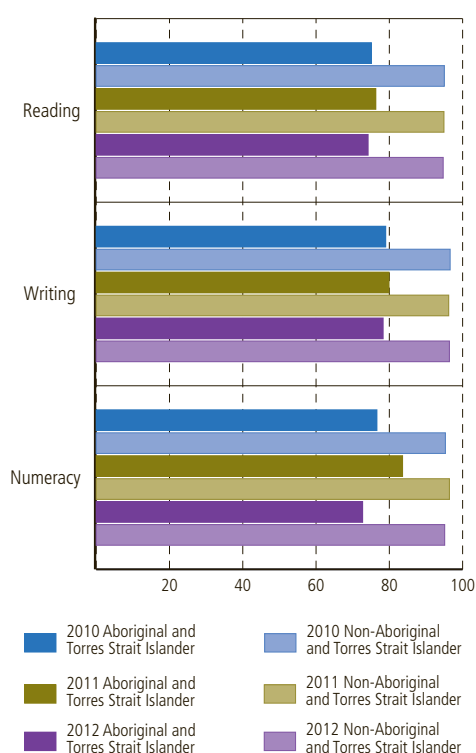
Between 2011 and 2012, there were decreases in all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' outcomes, in return increasing the gap for each outcome. The largest increase in the gap between 2011 and 2012 was 9.6 percentage points for Year 3 numeracy.

In general, the achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, at or above the national minimum standard in 2012, was significantly below that of 'Other' students at every year level and in all three key domains. The gaps between the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students attaining the national minimum standard for

all year levels and domains ranged from 18.1 percentage points to 34.6 percentage points. Please note that the calculations on trajectories in this section do not incorporate confidence intervals.

In 2012, the overall results across Australia show that most students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 achieved the national literacy and numeracy minimum standards. Boys had lower achievement than girls, while students living in remote regions, especially in very remote regions, achieved at lower rates than metropolitan and provincial students, in all year levels and domains.

**Figure 13: Percentage of Year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN, by year level and key domain, Australia, 2010–2012**



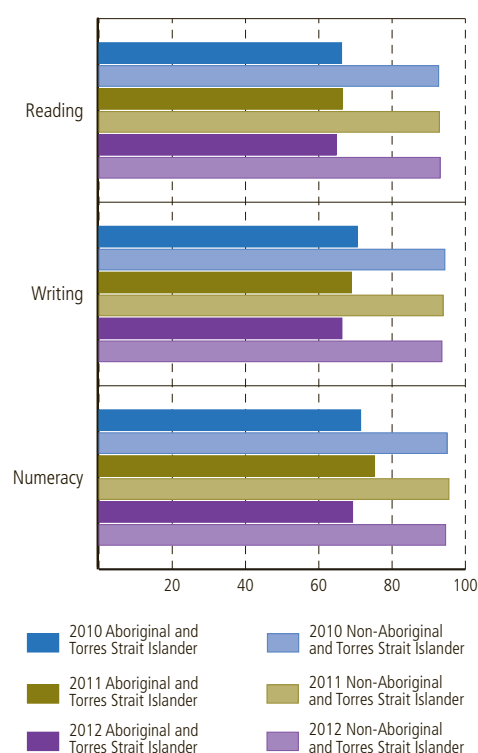
Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Reports, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

## Reading

In 2012, reading outcomes were greatest for Year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with 75.4 per cent achieving the national minimum standard, compared to only 64.7 per cent of Year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes and 'Other' student outcomes in reading ranged from 19.7 percentage points in Year 7 to 28.4 percentage points for the Year 5 cohort.

The greatest increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes since 2010 was in Year 9, with the reading outcome increasing by three percentage points.

**Figure 14: Percentage of Year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN, by year level and key domain, Australia, 2010–2012**



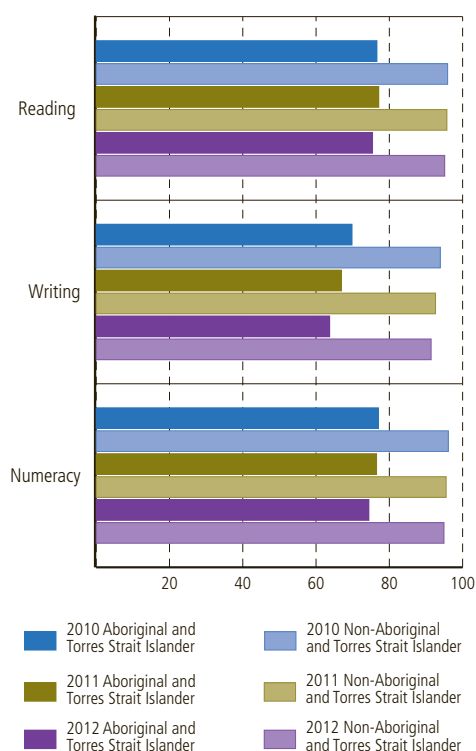
Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Reports, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The reading outcome for Year 7 exceeded the trajectory targets (progress points) for 2012.

## Writing

The writing outcomes in 2012 were greatest for Year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with 78.3 per cent achieving the national minimum standard, which was also the highest outcome for all year levels in each of the key domains in 2012. Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had the lowest outcome, with 48.8 per cent achieving at or above the national minimum standard. The outcome for the Year 9 cohort was the lowest for all year levels in each of the key domains in 2012, and the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal

**Figure 15: Percentage of Year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN, by year level and key domain, Australia, 2010–2012**



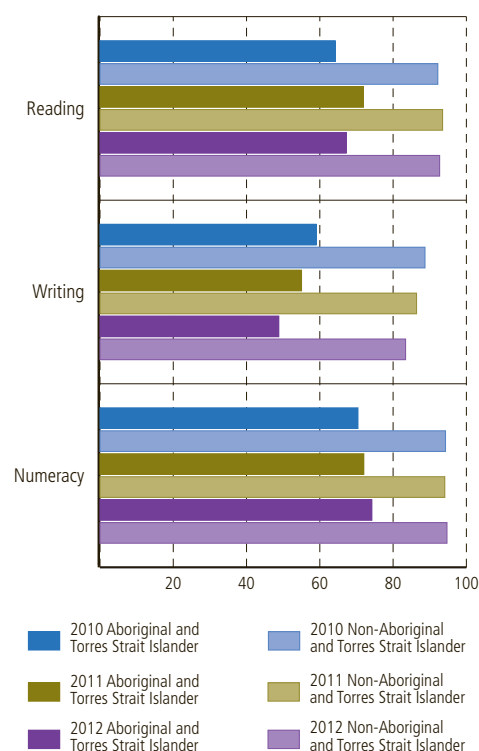
Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Reports, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students' outcomes was also larger in Year 9 writing than it was in any other year level in each of the key domains. The gaps in writing outcomes ranged from 18.1 percentage points for the Year 3 cohort to 34.6 percentage points for the Year 9 cohort. Due to the change in the writing genre, the trajectory targets (progress points) for 2012 are no longer applicable.

## Numeracy

The highest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' numeracy outcome for 2012 was in the Year 7 cohort with 74.4 per cent achieving at or above the national minimum

**Figure 16: Percentage of Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN, by year level and key domain, Australia, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Reports, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

standard. The gap between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' student cohort for Year 7 numeracy was 20.5 percentage points. Year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had the lowest numeracy outcome, with 69.2 per cent achieving at or above the national minimum standard. The gap between the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students was largest for the Year 5 cohort at 25.4 percentage points.

The greatest increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes since 2010 was in Year 9, with the numeracy outcome increasing by 3.8 percentage points.

## Trends in NAPLAN outcomes from 2008 to 2012 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Since 2008, the gap has decreased in Years 3, 5 and 7 reading and Year 9 numeracy. Some decreases of the gap have been noteworthy: 4.7 percentage points for Year 3 reading, and 3.8 percentage points for Year 7 reading. However, the other decreases were smaller: 1.8 percentage points for Year 9 numeracy and 0.8 percentage points for Year 5 reading.

The 2012 cohort is substantially the same as that tested in 2010, and comparing the progress in reading and numeracy over the two assessment periods reveals improvements in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 9 reading and numeracy, of 3.0 and 3.8 percentage points respectively; and decreases in the gap of 2.5 and 3.4 percentage points, respectively.

## NAPLAN participation

### Performance indicator 10

*Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*

## Participation in the 2012 NAPLAN tests

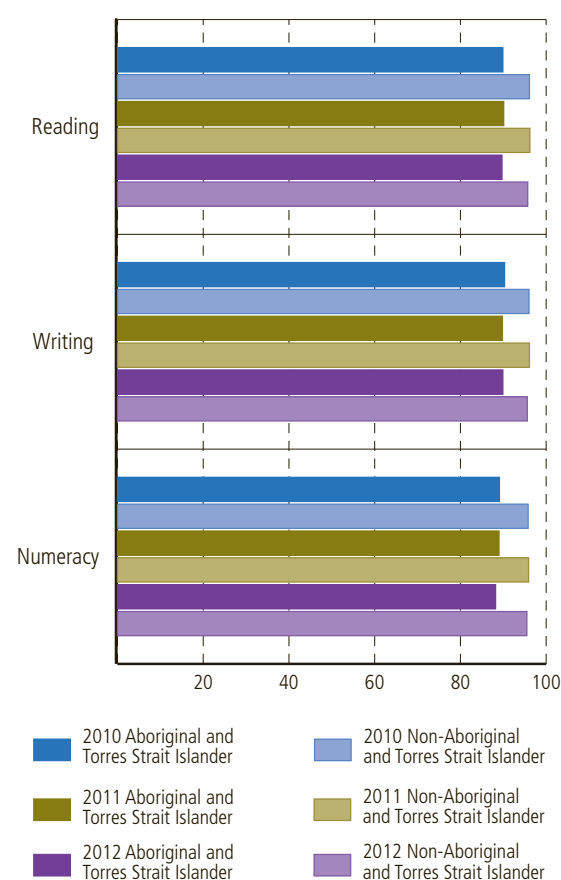
The 2012 participation rates in NAPLAN for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ranged from 89.9 per cent for Year 3 writing to 75.8 per cent for Year 9 numeracy. The national absentee rates were much higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for 'Other' students, and in most instances the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander absentee rates were at least three times higher than those for 'Other' students. The absentee rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ranged from 7.9 per cent for Year 3 writing to 22.4 per cent for Year 9 numeracy, while 'Other' students' absentee rates ranged from 2.3 per cent to 6.3 per cent.

Withdrawal rates for both cohorts were all below three per cent for each year level and in each of the key domains. The exemption rates were all below two per cent for 'Other' students,

and below three per cent for all year levels and domains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2012, an average of more than 12,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in the Year 3 tests in each of the domains, with participation rates ranging from 88.2 per cent to 89.9 per cent, the highest when compared to other year levels. The absentee rates for Year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ranged from 7.9 per cent to 9.6 per cent, while for 'Other' students, participation rates were around 95 per cent and absentee rates below three per cent. Between 2011 and 2012, the participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students remained stable, with the rates fluctuating less than one percentage point.

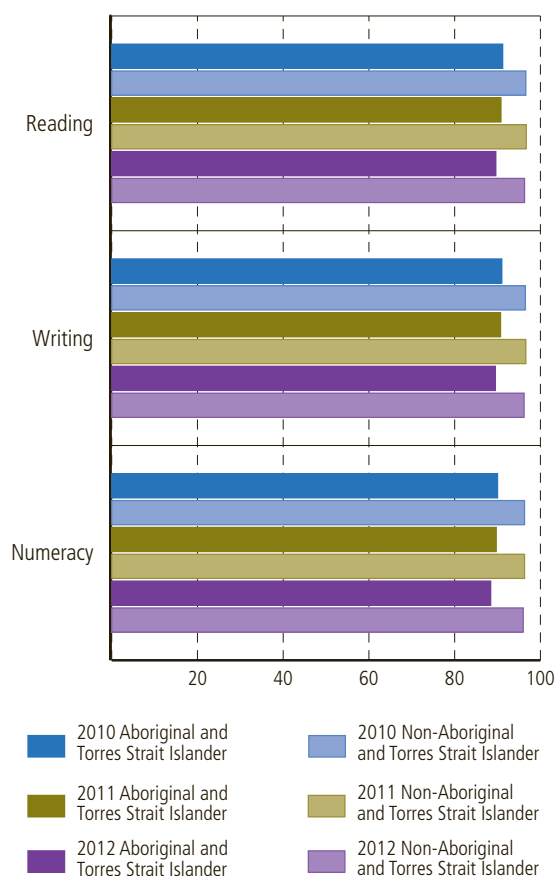
**Figure 17: Year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students' NAPLAN participation rates, by key domain, Australia, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) 2010, 2011 and 2012.



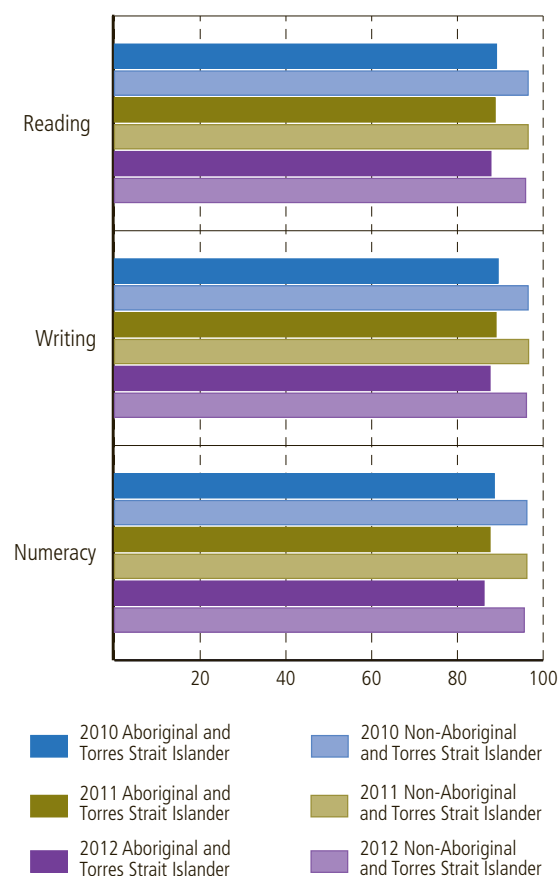
**Figure 18: NAPLAN participation rates, Year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students, by key domain, Australia, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)* 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The Year 5 participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ranged from 88.4 per cent in numeracy to 89.6 per cent in reading, representing an average of more than 11,400 students sitting the tests. Participation rates for 'Other' students were over 96.0 per cent and absentee rates were all below three per cent, while for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Year 5 absentee rates ranged from 8.6 to 9.9 per cent. From 2011 to 2012, the participation rates for Year 5 students decreased by about 1.2 percentage points in all domains.

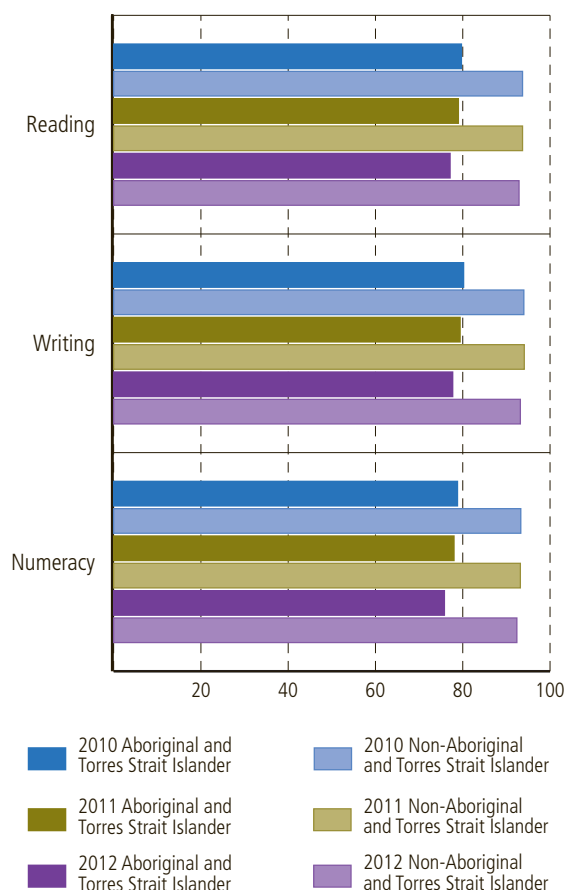
**Figure 19: NAPLAN participation rates, Year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students, by key domain, Australia, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)* 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The Year 7 participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students varied between 86.2 per cent and 87.8 per cent, representing an average of more than 12,200 students sitting the tests. Absentee rates for Year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ranged from 10.5 to 12.1 per cent, while 'Other' students' absentee rates were around three per cent and participation rates were above 95.0 per cent. Between 2011 and 2012, the participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 7 decreased slightly in all domains, with the largest decreases in writing and numeracy at 1.4 percentage points.

**Figure 20: NAPLAN participation rates, Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students, by key domain, Australia, 2010–2012**



Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) 2010, 2011 and 2012.

For Year 9 students, an average of just over 10,200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in the tests, representing between 75.8 per cent and 77.7 per cent of Year 9 students. The participation rates for 'Other' Year 9 students ranged from 92.4 per cent to 93.2 per cent. Absentee rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were quite high, ranging from 20.7 per cent to 22.4 per cent, while 'Other' students' absentee rates were around six per cent. From 2011 to 2012, the participation rates decreased in all domains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with the largest decrease at 2.2 percentage points in Year 9 numeracy.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicator 11

*Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*

There is no national data set for this performance indicator. Further information is available in the State and Territory chapters of this report.

### Performance indicator 12

*Number and Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*

There is no national data set for this performance indicator. Further information is available in the State and Territory chapters of this report.

### Performance indicator 13

*Average Length of Service of Principals and Teachers in Focus schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

Data Source: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), *Staff in Australia's Schools Survey*, 2010.

In 2010, the average length of service of teachers in primary Focus schools was 6.5 years, while in secondary Focus schools it was 7.6 years. The average length of service of teachers in both primary and secondary Focus schools was below that of teachers in 'Other' schools, as can be seen in Table 7.

The average length of service of leaders in Focus schools in 2010 was 5.5 years for primary schools and 5.6 years for secondary schools. As with teachers, the average length of service of leaders in Focus schools was below that of leaders in 'Other' schools by more than two years.

National data for this performance indicator will be collected again in 2013.

**Table 7:** Average number of years teaching at current school, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan Focus school status, 2010

	Focus schools	Other schools
<b>Teachers</b>		
Primary	6.5	7.3
Secondary	7.6	8.5
<b>Leaders</b>		
Primary	5.5	7.5
Secondary	5.6	8.3

Note: The figures reported in this table are estimates of population values obtained from the Staff in Australia's Schools (SiAS) survey sample. Each should be seen as an estimate, not as an exact measure of the population that it represents.

Source: ACER, *Staff in Australia's Schools Survey*, 2010.

## Pathways to real post school options

### Performance indicator 14

*Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.*

Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there are no publicly available national level data for 2012.

Further information is available in the State and Territory chapters of this report.

## Other indicators of patterns and trends

A sample of students from across Australia, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, is chosen to participate

in international assessments when they are administered. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student results in the following international assessments are summarised as follows:

- the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2011,
- the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011, and
- the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009.

It is noted that there are no new results for PISA since the release of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2011 Annual Report*.

## The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2011

TIMSS 2011 was the fifth in a cycle of internationally comparative assessments, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Carried out every four years with Years 4 and 8 students, TIMSS provides data about national and international trends in mathematics and science achievement. TIMSS 2011 saw the participation of Year 4 students from 59 countries and 10 benchmarking participants, and the participation of Year 8 students from 45 countries and 14 benchmarking participants.

In Australia, TIMSS is part of the National Assessment Program. It provides a level of international benchmarking to complement national assessments (NAPLAN at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9) and other sample-based national studies. To inform educational policy in participating countries, TIMSS also routinely collects extensive background information that addresses concerns about the quantity, quality, and content of educational instruction.

In Australia, approximately 13,700 students in around 555 schools participated in the main sample of TIMSS 2011. In

addition, an extra sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in all participating schools was also collected, in order to provide a more detailed examination of the achievements of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the 2011 TIMSS assessment

In 2011, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students performed significantly below other students in mathematics at both Year 4 and Year 8 levels. At Year 4 mathematics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an average score of 458, which was 64 score points below the average score of 'Other' students (522). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also scored below the TIMSS scale average of 500 (by 42 points). However, the gap in Year 4 mathematics achievement scores between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students has narrowed, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students registering a significant improvement from the 2007 cycle of TIMSS, while mathematics achievement scores for 'Other' students remained unchanged.

In the Year 8 mathematics assessment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an average score of 438, which was 71 score points below the average of 'Other' students (509), and significantly below the TIMSS scale average of 500 (by 62 score points). The gap in mathematics achievement between Year 8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students (438 score points to 509 score points) has remained constant since 1995.

In the Year 4 science assessment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an average score of 458, which was 64 score points less than the average score of 'Other' students (522). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also scored below the TIMSS scale average of 500, by 42 points. The gap in performance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students has narrowly decreased in Year 4 science over time, as there have been no significant changes to the performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between TIMSS 2011 and previous cycles, while for 'Other' students, a significant decrease in the same period was recorded.

In Year 8 science, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an average score of 459, which was 65 score points less than the average score of 'Other' students (524), and significantly below the TIMSS scale average of 500. The gap in performance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students for Year 8 science achievement scores has remained constant since 1995.

In addition to reporting mean scores, TIMSS also reports results on the basis of the proportions of students achieving a number of 'international benchmarks' (levels of achievement). The benchmarks are referenced from highest to lowest as: Advanced, High, Intermediate and Low. In TIMSS 2011, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were over-represented at the Low benchmark and under-represented at the High and Advanced benchmarks.

Source: ACER, *Australian Results TIMSS & PIRLS 2011*, December 2012. Available online: <http://www.acer.edu.au/timss/australian-results-timss-pirls-2011>.

## The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011

Australia participated in PIRLS for the first time in 2011. The aim of PIRLS is to study the acquisition of reading literacy among primary-school age children. PIRLS has been conducted every five years since 2001, with 49 countries participating in the 2011 assessment.

In Australia, approximately 6,100 students at Year 4 level in 280 schools participated in PIRLS 2011, of whom approximately seven per cent self-identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

While PIRLS is not an ongoing part of the National Assessment Program, all ministers for education agreed for students to participate in the assessment in 2009 to enable international benchmarking of reading at the primary school level.

## Results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the PIRLS 2011 assessment

For PIRLS, in addition to reporting mean scores, benchmarks are used to represent the range of performance shown by students internationally, complementing the TIMSS International Benchmarks. The benchmarks are referenced from highest to lowest as: Advanced, High, Intermediate and Low. In PIRLS 2011, Year 4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attained an average score of 475, which was 57 score points below the average score of 'Other' Australian students (532). This score for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is at the designated Intermediate benchmark, which is set at 475 score points. The average 57 score point difference between Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander students and 'Other' students in PIRLS for Year 4 reading is not as great as the differences at other year levels, or in various subject areas assessed in other international tests.

Source: ACER, *Australian Results TIMSS & PIRLS 2011*, December 2012. Available online: <http://www.acer.edu.au/timss/australian-results-timss-pirls-2011>.

## Draft Evaluation Report for 2012

ACIL Allen Consulting is conducting a longitudinal evaluation report of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*. The Executive Summary of the draft Evaluation Report is included in this report as Appendix 1.





# Report on activities in support of the Plan at the national level

## Readiness for school

### Intended outcome

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under 5 years of age benefit from inter-agency actions to improve their social, physical and cognitive development
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are developmentally ready to benefit from schooling (e.g. in their physical health, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, communication skills and general knowledge).

### Targets

- Increased proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children participating in quality early childhood education and development and childcare services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students perform at equivalent or better rates to 'Other' students in school on-entry assessment.

Source: Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), 2011, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

## Action 1

*MCEECDYA will support the development of a national Early Years Development Workforce Strategy. This Strategy will address the skills and capacity of the current and future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's workforce, including the early childhood educational and care sector in rural and remote areas. Connections will be made with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educator Workforce Strategy (see Action 33).*

The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has worked with States and Territories to develop the national Early Years Workforce Strategy, which was released in September 2012 by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood

(SCSEEC). Focusing on the skills and attributes of high quality early childhood educators, the Strategy complements, and builds upon, existing Commonwealth and State and Territory government measures aimed at improving the supply and quality of the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) workforce.

The Strategy comprises five key priorities for the ECEC workforce. The priority characteristics are that the workforce is professional, qualified, growing to meet demand for early childhood services, responsive to the needs of all children and collaboratively works with other early childhood development professionals.

The Strategy includes numerous key approaches that focus on attracting and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood educators, as well as ensuring that all educators have the skills to provide high quality education and care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

More information on the Strategy and Implementation Plans are available on the DEEWR website, at: <http://education.gov.au/early-years-workforce-strategy>.

In order to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators in remote services to interpret and use the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to deliver quality education programs to children, the Australian Government is fully funding the Remote Indigenous Professional Development (RIPD) project until 2013, with a total expenditure of \$4.55 million.

Under the Budget-Based Funded (BBF) program, funding is provided to support the delivery of a range of early childhood education and care and school-aged care services in a limited number of approved locations. Types of services funded under the BBF program include: flexible/innovative services; mobile childcare services; Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander playgroups; Outside School Hours Care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrichment programs and crèches. The services funded under the BBF program provide flexible services that meet the needs of all families in the community. Some services in remote communities are delivered using a combination of English and local language(s). Services in less remote communities often include some local language in interactions with children and families.

In 2012–13, the Australian Government allocated \$61.85 million to contribute to the operational costs of around 340 early

childhood education and care and school-aged care services funded under the BBF program. These services operate in approved locations in all Australian States and Territories (except the Australian Capital Territory), where services need financial assistance to operate, or where there is a need for culturally appropriate services, particularly in regional and remote communities. This provides children and their families with accessible, affordable and culturally appropriate early childhood education and care and school-aged care services. The program helps children get ready for schooling, engages parents in their children's education and enables parents to participate in the workforce.

## Action 2

*MCEECDYA will support the use of the Early Years Learning Framework in all early childhood settings to ensure the delivery of quality early education programs through partnerships with families. The Framework also supports the cultural competence of early childhood educators in developing and delivering programs for young children. An Educators' Guide and other resources will also support educators in developing their cultural, linguistic and contextual knowledge about the communities in which they teach and support them in engaging with these communities.*

The National Quality Framework for Education and Care commenced on 1 January 2012 for long daycare, family day care, outside school hours care and preschools/kindergartens. Under the National Quality Framework, all early childhood education and care services are required to demonstrate their use of the Early Years Learning Framework in the design of learning programs for children. These frameworks outline practices to support and promote children's learning. The frameworks promote equity, respect for diversity and cultural competence.

The Australian Government funds a range of support and training available to assist the implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework within the early childhood education and care sector, including:

- Professional Support Coordinators providing training and mentoring to eligible childcare services
- Inclusion Support Agencies supporting educators in inclusive practice, and

- funding Early Childhood Australia to provide web-based support, including an interactive online forum and e-newsletter.

Within each State and Territory, there is targeted support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services. This includes Indigenous Professional Support Units, which assist Indigenous Services to deliver quality programs under the Early Years Learning Framework. To support staff in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services to use the Early Years Learning Framework, a Remote Indigenous Professional Development Package has been developed to support locally-engaged staff in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services to interpret and implement the Early Years Learning Framework.

## Action 3

*MCEECDYA will reference, synthesise and report on longitudinal studies into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care in the annual report on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–14. Research will consider integrated approaches for children aged 0–8 years, examining barriers to and enablers of success and curricula and resources that provide skill development in the foundations for learning essential for the first year of formal schooling.*

### Longitudinal studies and data sets

Initial action has included scoping the current datasets. The Australian Government runs and/or funds the following longitudinal studies and datasets:

- Footprints in Time: the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC)
- Growing up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)
- Study of Environment of Aboriginal Resilience and Child Health (SEARCH)
- Effective Early Educational Experiences for Kids (E4Kids) study
- Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)
- National Data Collections

Following on from the initial scoping of relevant longitudinal studies and datasets undertaken in 2011, the collection of information for Action 3 was completed in 2012. All members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group participated in referencing and reporting on longitudinal studies into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care, and research on integrated approaches for children from birth to 8 years of age; barriers to and enablers of success; and curricula and resources that provide skill development in the foundations for learning essential for the first year of formal schooling. During this process, useful clearinghouses and websites were also identified.

The volume and breadth of this valuable information provided by members meant that when synthesised, it was more practical to publish it on the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood website, at: <http://www.scseec.edu.au/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Education-Action-Plan/Information-and-Resources.aspx>, in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan section. This information was organised into seven streams to improve its usefulness:

- longitudinal studies
- research and/or administrative data sets
- clearinghouses
- relevant websites
- integrated approaches for children from birth to 8 years of age
- curricula and resources, and
- barriers and enablers of success.

The information collected under Action 3 is relevant for anyone who has an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and transition to school – members of the community, early childhood practitioners, policy and program staff and researchers/academics. It contains the information collated to date on school readiness and transition to schooling. In some instances, this reflects data and/or learnings specifically focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; in others, it captures data and insights into school readiness and transition for the general population. In all cases, the contributors are of the view that these are relevant to supporting and engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and their children in early childhood and early primary education.

In addition to this work, the second Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) collection took place from May to July 2012, with 16,425 teachers completing checklists on 289,973 children in their first year of formal full-time schooling, representing 96.5 per cent of all children enrolled to start school in 2012, including those from regional, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Results will be published on the AEDI website, at: <http://www.rch.org.au/aedi/>.

## Action 4

*MCEECDYA will commission further development of on-entry assessment frameworks and guidelines for their use in particular settings.*

In September 2012, the response to the Review of Funding for Schooling was announced by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP. The National Plan for School Improvement includes a signature reform to provide school readiness assessments for students on entry to school, to assist teachers to understand and meet the needs of individual students in their first few years at school. Education providers are considering their position on signing up to the National Plan during 2013.

## Engagement and connections

### Intended outcome

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are engaged in and benefiting from schooling. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities are empowered through the promotion of their identity, culture and leadership in community partnerships with providers of early childhood and school education.

### Targets

- Increased number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students involved in personalised learning
- Active school–community partnership agreements in place within Focus schools.

Source: MCEECDYA, 2011, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

## Action 9

*MCEECDYA will seek support from the Australian Health Ministers' Conference and Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference to strengthen connections between schools and health, welfare, family support, and youth and community services at local and systemic levels. Consideration will also be given to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disabilities.*

During 2012, the chairs of relevant officials groups met and agreed to map activity within each Standing Council and each jurisdiction on the three agreed priorities of:

- (i) Otitis media (a chronic middle ear infection which potentially affects the ear drum and causes hearing impairment)
- (ii) supporting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers
- (iii) early childhood education with an emphasis on connection to, and of, services at a local level.

This mapping will assist bilateral priorities against these priority areas of action. The mapping exercise had not been completed at the end of 2012.

## Action 10

*Governments commit to maintaining appropriate advisory arrangements to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, cultures and languages can be considered when developing policy and programs.*

### Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs)

Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs) have been established to provide independent advice to the State, Territory and Australian governments, as well as to facilitate the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in education systems. They work to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives are included in curriculum.

IECBs consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and provide advice to the Australian and State

and Territory governments on the progression of the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

They work to enhance relationships and they develop partnerships with preschool, school, further education providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. IECBs support parental and community engagement with education providers.

The Australian Government has been providing funding for an IECB in each State and Territory since 2000, with the expectation that each State and Territory government will also contribute towards the costs of the IECBs. State and Territory government contributions to funding of the IECBs, or providing 'in-kind' support to the IECBs, vary. Some IECBs are well supported, while others receive little or no support, which has made it difficult for those IECBs to function at the level expected by Australian, State and Territory governments.

DEEWR facilitates up to two meetings a year with the Indigenous Education Consultative Body Chairpersons network. These meetings are conducted for the purpose of facilitating advice to the Australian Government about the implementation of the Indigenous Education Targeted Programs, and providing advice on how the *Objects of the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act (2000)* may be advanced.

In 2012, the IECBs provided advice on issues, such as the National Curriculum and Teacher Standards, and assisted in the development and implementation of school and community partnerships. To varying degrees, IECBs contributed to the implementation of Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) projects within their respective States and Territories. The National Network of IECB Chairpersons also made its submission to the Review of Funding for Schooling (Gonski Review).

### First Peoples Education Advisory Group (FPEAG)

The First Peoples Education Advisory Group (FPEAG) is a cross-sectoral expert advisory group established to provide policy advice to the Australian Government on Closing the Gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

students in early childhood and school settings. The FPEAG is comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives from academia, school education, early childhood education and community organisations.

A major focus for the FPEAG in 2012 was the Review of Funding for Schooling (The Gonski Review). At their May 2012 meeting, the FPEAG developed a set of principles and submitted its recommendations on the Gonski Review to the Australian Government Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Hon. Peter Garrett MP. In addition, the FPEAG has mainly concentrated on engaging and connecting with DEEWR program and policy managers on the action areas of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*. Other key priorities of the FPEAG have included: the effective delivery of professional development in schools; policy advice on improving school attendance; and a submission to the Budget Based (childcare) Funding Review.

## Action 11

*The Australian Government and education providers will work together to promote the cross-cultural value of formal education in contemporary Australia to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and families. This will help to create partnerships with families to build from and strengthen their capacity to be involved in their children's education.*

During 2011, DEEWR commissioned Orima Research to explore strategies for raising the awareness of the importance of attending school every day and increasing positive attitudes of communities towards education, in order to increase school attendance and engagement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and low socio-economic communities.

Orima Research completed the study in 2012. The findings of this research highlight a number of issues. The research outlines the disconnection between the perceived value of education, and the benefits that flow for individuals who engage with school and stay in the education system. The research shows that the reasons behind poor attendance at school are multiple, and the issue needs to be addressed on a number of levels. This includes: at the student level, at the family level and at the community level. Those students who are engaged in their learning most

often report high levels of support from their parents, and high expectations from their communities.

The research will be used to inform future policy development around school attendance and engagement and other National Collaborative Actions.

## Action 12

*As part of the implementation of the Australian Government's National Indigenous Languages Policy, a study will be commissioned into the feasibility of a national panel of experts framing the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, including consideration of out-of-school schemes.*

The Australian Government is supporting the directions of the National Indigenous Languages Policy, through its advice to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on the development of the *Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages* (the Framework).

ACARA established three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expert advisory panels that support the development of the Australian Curriculum and the Framework:

- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel guides development of the Australian Curriculum. They have also been providing advice on how the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures can be best incorporated into the curriculum
- the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Advisory Group provides advice to the writing team at key stages in the curriculum development process; provides advice on groups or individuals to be consulted; and reviews documentation prepared during the curriculum writing process, and
- the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Panel has been established to extend opportunities for receiving advice and input from a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based organisations and individuals with expertise in languages and languages education, from all States and Territories.

## Action 13

*MCEECDYA's National Plan for Languages Education in Australian Schools will acknowledge the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and require all States and Territories to communicate their expectations surrounding the teaching of these languages to schools.*

In 2012, the Australian Government supported the development and implementation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in Australian schools through the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and its development of the *Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages*.

The Framework will provide younger generations of Australians with the opportunity to learn Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages in schools, and is being deliberately designed to cater for the 250 or more Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages of Australia, irrespective of the ecology of each language. The Framework will provide both important guidance and necessary flexibility for the development of language-specific programs for any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language.

Guided by the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper, ACARA continued to develop the Framework throughout 2012. In July 2012, ACARA established the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Advisory Group to provide advice to the writing team at key stages in the curriculum development process. In December, an Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Panel was established to extend opportunities for receiving advice and input from a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based organisations and individuals with expertise in languages and languages education, from all States and Territories.

The draft broad outline of the Framework was presented to the ACARA Languages National Panel, for feedback and review, at its 16 November 2012 meeting, and to the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Panel on 18 December 2012.

In the spirit of building engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, widespread community consultation on the Framework will take place in mid-2013.

## Action 14

*The Australian Government and education providers will work together to develop options to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in regional and remote areas to access high quality secondary schooling while retaining links with their communities.*

The Australian Government and education providers currently have a number of agreements and national programs in place to provide quality secondary schooling options while retaining links with communities. These include:

- the National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions
- Compact with Young Australians
- Youth Connections Program
- School Business Community Partnership Brokers
- the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program
- Sporting Chance Program
- Trade Training Centres in Schools Program
- Reducing Substance Abuse Program
- No School No Play Initiative
- Boarding Facilities in the Northern Territory
- ABSTUDY.

### National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions

Data from the 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing provides the first measure of progress against the target to halve the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20 to 24 year-olds in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020. It indicates that the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20 to 24 year-olds with at least Year 12 or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II qualifications has increased by 6.5 percentage points between Censuses (from 47.4 per cent in 2006 to 53.9 per cent in 2011).



The 2011 attainment rate of 53.9 per cent places Australia ahead of schedule to meet the target, when compared to the agreed indicative national trajectory in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement that anticipated an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate of 52.8 per cent in 2011. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 20 to 24 year-olds in 2011 was 32.1 percentage points, down from 36.4 percentage points in 2006.

### Compact with Young Australians

Although there are no incentives directly linked to the halving the gap target, the Compact with Young Australians includes a requirement that all young people participate in schooling (or an approved equivalent) to Year 10, and then participate full-time (at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until age 17.

### Youth Connections Program

The Youth Connections Program assists young people who are at risk of disengaging from secondary education, or who have left school, to continue with their education and ultimately gain a Year 12, or equivalent, level education. It does so through individualised, case-managed and youth-focused outreach activities.

In 2012, over 6,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people participated in the Youth Connections program. This represented 21 per cent of the Youth Connections caseload. Over 2,600, or 44 per cent, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants during that period achieved a final outcome, which represents re-engagement or a sustained improvement in a young person's engagement with education, training or employment. A further 1,000, or 17 per cent, were assessed as making significant progress in addressing their barriers to full engagement in education.

### School Business Community Partnership Brokers

School Business Community Partnership Brokers foster a whole-of-community approach that support young people's learning and development with the key goal of ensuring that young Australians attain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications. Partnership Brokers build partnerships that empower local communities to take ownership of relevant issues and drive

change, with the aims of improving education and transition outcomes for all young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

As at April 2013, there were approximately 1,600 partnerships associated with Partnership Brokers nationally (excluding Victorian data) involving almost 5,300 partner organisations. These partnerships are undertaking a range of activity to support the learning and development of young people in their community. Approximately 20 per cent of these partnerships have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus. (Note that these figures currently exclude Victorian data, as the Partnership Brokers program is delivered through the Victorian Government's Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) and is managed by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.)

### Indigenous Youth Leadership Program

The Indigenous Youth Leadership Program provides scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, mainly from remote and very remote regions, to attend high performing schools or universities.

The program is delivered through eight Partnership Brokers nationally. Tertiary students may attend any university, while secondary schools must apply to participate and meet criteria including:

- demonstrated excellent academic results for students
- a culturally sensitive and appropriate environment, and
- a proven capacity to engage with community and students' families.

In 2012, 75 high performing schools provided education scholarships to 691 secondary students, and 140 students completed Year 12. In 2012, the program had a retention rate of 95 per cent amongst secondary level scholarship recipients, and 188 tertiary scholarships were also awarded.

Between 2006 and 2012, there were 429 Year 12 completions by Indigenous Youth Leadership Program scholarship recipients, with a retention rate of 86 per cent. Students who completed Year 12 in 2011 were able to continue their pathway to further study with support from the Indigenous Youth Mobility Program (see Action 45).

## Sporting Chance Program

The Sporting Chance Program uses sport and recreation as a vehicle to increase the level of engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their schooling to encourage positive educational outcomes. The program has two elements: school-based sports academies and education engagement strategies.

School-based sports academies target secondary school students at risk of not successfully completing their schooling through the provision of:

- innovative and high-quality sports-focused learning
- opportunities to develop leadership
- enhanced education and career opportunities, and
- activities to improve the health and wellbeing of learners, including self-esteem and confidence, as well as the promotion of positive learning experiences that foster success.

In 2012, under the Sporting Chance Program, there were 65 school-based sports academies and five education engagement strategies targeting some 13,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary and secondary school students across Western Australia, the Northern Territory, South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

Outcomes of the program in 2012 included:

- 74 per cent average attendance rate for academy students, compared to 69 per cent for the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student cohort in participating schools
- average attendance rates of academy students ranging from 32 per cent to 98 per cent
- participating schools reporting that, on average, over 56 per cent of academy students improved in their literacy and numeracy performance
- qualitative reporting from both providers and classroom teachers indicating significant improvement in self-esteem, attitude and behaviour of academy students, and
- a total of 539 participants completed Year 12 and 396 of the participants received their Year 12 certificate.

## Trade Training Centres in Schools Program

The Trade Training Centres in Schools Program is providing \$2.5 billion over 2008 to 2018 to enable all eligible secondary schools across Australia to seek funding for Trade Training Centres (TTCs), and to provide secondary students with access to state-of-the-art trade training facilities.

By the end of 2012, four funding rounds had been held, with over 370 projects announced, benefiting over 1,070 schools across Australia. Of these:

- 224 projects have been approved in regional and remote Australia, representing 60 per cent of all projects approved for program funding
- 129 (58 per cent) will support the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and
- 128 (57 per cent) of the TTCs approved for regional and remote Australia were operational, with 77 (60 per cent) of these providing training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A funding priority for the program is to accelerate TTC rollout to schools servicing Remote Service Delivery (RSD) locations. At the end of 2012, program funding had been approved for 18 of the 29 RSD schools (62 per cent) and six (33 per cent) were operational. Almost all enrolments at these facilities are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Operational TTCs provide annual activity reports to DEEWR. The most recent data available is for 2011, with 102 TTCs nationally (involving more than 260 schools) reporting formal pathway training involving over 9,100 enrolments. About 11 per cent of these enrolments related to students identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

## Reducing Substance Abuse Program

The \$3.5 million Reducing Substance Abuse Program (2009 to 2012) is funded through the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act* (2000) and is a component of the Australian Government's Petrol Sniffing Strategy, which aims to reduce the incidence and impact of petrol sniffing and other forms of substance abuse amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and communities.

In 2011 and 2012, DEEWR delivered three pilot projects in the following petrol sniffing zones: the Central Desert, Northern Territory; Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, South Australia; and East Kimberley, Western Australia. The objective of the projects was to increase pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth aged 10 to 25 years who are at risk of engaging in, or are engaged in, substance misuse to re-engage with formal education, training or employment.

The three pilot projects targeted some 190 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in 2011 and 2012. The projects were delivered through DEEWR's Youth Connections Program to determine if the needs of the target group could be met through the Australian Government's National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (NP-YAT).

An evaluation of the pilot projects was carried out by Urbis Pty Ltd (August 2011 to June 2012) to determine the effectiveness of delivering the Reducing Substance Abuse Program through the mainstream Youth Connections Program. The evaluation report confirmed that this approach was effective.

The Reducing Substance Abuse Program ceased 31 December 2012.

## No School No Play Initiative

The No School No Play Initiative aims to build strong partnerships between sporting organisations and parents and communities of secondary school students to promote the benefits of school attendance. The Australian Government provided a total of \$2 million to implement the initiative from July 2010 to December 2012, to assist sporting organisations to include a focus on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students.

Eight national sporting organisations were contracted to implement No School No Play initiatives throughout Australia. Implementation focused on sport-specific strategies to strengthen the No School No Play message with students and parents, such as player and parent school attendance pledges, sports-based reward and incentive schemes and engaging high profile sports figures as role models.

In 2012, No School No Play Initiative projects were delivered to 4,305 students in 282 schools across all States and Territories. Approximately 3,706 of the 4,305 students (or 86.1 per

cent) involved were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Approximately 56 per cent of schools targeted in 2012 were located within regional and remote areas (158 out of 282 schools).

The No School No Play Initiative ceased on 31 December 2012; providers were notified of the cessation in October 2012.

## Boarding Facilities in the Northern Territory Initiative

The Northern Territory Boarding Facilities initiative aims to provide accommodation options that assist young people from remote areas to access secondary schooling. These facilities provide safe, supervised accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, designed to be close to an existing school, enabling young people from each of the targeted regions to access a quality, full-time secondary education.

In 2007, \$28.9 million was made available for the construction and operation of three new boarding facilities in the Northern Territory for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students. The Indigenous Land Corporation committed an additional capital contribution of \$15 million towards the facilities, bringing the total investment to \$43.9 million over four years.

The Boarding Facilities initiative is a partnership between the Australian Government, Northern Territory education authorities, the Indigenous Land Corporation and a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The sites for these boarding facilities are: Wadeye, East Arnhem and the Warlpiri Triangle. The first facility, in Wadeye, was completed in 2012 and the Australian Government Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Honourable Peter Garrett MP, opened the facility on 6 September 2012. By the end of the year, the operators of the facility, Aboriginal Hostels Limited, had completed the fit-out of the facility and recruited staff to provide care for residential students. The Wadeye facility, Kardu Darrikardu Numida Hostel, will be fully operational from the commencement of the 2013 school year.

The next facility to be built will be in Garrthlala. The site has been selected and a technical feasibility study has been completed. A site in the Warlpiri Triangle has yet to be identified and its location is subject to ongoing consultation.

## ABSTUDY

The ABSTUDY Scheme is an ongoing special measure to assist in addressing the educational disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Financial assistance can facilitate access to secondary schooling for students who may otherwise not be able to access an appropriate level of education.

In addition to the primary benefit, living allowance, the ABSTUDY scheme continues to include a number of supplementary benefits, which recognise the unique circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and are provided to address particular areas of disadvantage.

# Attendance

## Intended outcome

- All compulsory school-aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are enrolled in school and progressing through schooling at the same rate as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Targets

- Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are equivalent to non-Indigenous student attendance rates.
- All compulsory school-aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled in school.
- Increased retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Increased grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Source: MCEECDYA, 2011, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

## Action 22

*MCEECDYA will dedicate National Project Funds in 2011 to further develop a better evidence base of what works*

*in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance. The evidence base will consider a range of contextual information, including the way in which schools respond to the diverse linguistic, cultural and geographical contexts in which they operate.*

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) was engaged in December 2011 to progress the project on effective evidence-based attendance strategies. The research outcomes were presented to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group for consideration in November 2012. The findings of the AIHW provide insight of a practical nature about effective attendance strategies. The AIHW have also determined that effective strategies could be shared via an internet-based portal to better support school leaders, teachers, administrators, students and communities.

The research has demonstrated that there is an audience of education practitioners who would benefit from having access to a 'one-stop-shop' website of practical strategies for improving school attendance among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The research outcomes will be used to inform future policy development around school attendance and engagement and other National Collaborative Actions.

## Action 23

*MCEECDYA will initiate work to establish mechanisms for tracking individual students (enrolment and attendance) from at least the first year of compulsory schooling to post-school destinations.*

Through 2012, a range of activities took place, contributing to the capability of education sectors to link and track information across students' education.

Through the work program of the Learner Identity Management Sub-Committee and the Schools Data Sub-Group, the schools sector discussed and provided feedback on a paper, which outlined the benefits of, and identified options for, achieving a nationally consistent approach to unique identification of school students.

In December 2012, the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) endorsed the development of a National Roadmap on data linkage in the education sector. The

outcome of this work is to facilitate the use of linked data to better understand the developmental pathways of children and their families over time and across complex systems of education and care at the population and sub-population levels.

In April 2012, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the introduction of a Unique Student Identifier (USI) for the vocational education and training (VET) sector from 1 January 2014. Since then, work has progressed in consultation with key VET sector stakeholders on the development of the necessary legislation (which has since been introduced into Federal Parliament) and the national ICT system that will underpin the scheme. The USI will be student controlled and will enable the student to track their VET enrolments and achievements over their lifetime. With the student's permission, this data can be made available to third parties.

## Action 24

*The Australian, Western Australian, South Australian and Northern Territory Governments will continue working with non-government providers to develop strategies to better record enrolment and attendance of highly mobile students from remote communities.*

During 2012, the Tri-Border Attendance Strategy continued to effectively track student mobility. A business case was developed to secure continued funding and build on previous outcomes. In November 2012, this investment culminated in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group putting forward a submission for continued funding under the SCSEEC National Project fund. In March 2013, the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC) approved funding of \$2.068 million, over three years, to continue, refine and enhance the Tri-Border Student mobility project under the SCSEEC National Project Fund. This new funding will enable Western Australia – as the lead jurisdiction – to explore the full potential of the Tri-Border initiative nationally, as a real-time, up-to-date resource to better assist schools to manage short- or long-term student absences, or more permanent planned school changes. It is envisaged that this will evolve into a valuable resource, and is an important opportunity to support schools, teachers, students and families at the right time with the right resources.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Intended outcome

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving.

### Targets

- Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students by 2018.
- Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation rates in NAPLAN.

Source: MCEECDYA, 2011, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

## Action 27

*The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) will regularly review NAPLAN tests to ensure that they are not culturally biased against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) employs a range of strategies to ensure that NAPLAN tests are not culturally biased against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. A number of committees with relevant expertise are in place to review the subject matter of the tests and the test items (questions). The subject matter is carefully selected, so as to be inclusive of all students.

Test items are examined to ensure they are free of bias and are culturally appropriate. Once test items are developed, a panelling process takes place to examine them. Education practitioners in States and Territories, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, provide specific feedback on the suitability of the test items and the appropriateness of the stimulus materials for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Test trials are then carried out using a sample of students, and analysis of the results is undertaken to ensure that all items are culturally appropriate and free of bias.

## Action 28

*The Australian Government will work with education providers to develop and maintain a national database of effective, evidence-based literacy and numeracy strategies to support the sharing of best practice. Bilingual and bidialectal evidence-based strategies will be considered for inclusion in the database.*

The Australian Government DEEWR, in conjunction with State and Territory education authorities, has developed the *Teach Learn Share – The National Literacy and Numeracy Evidence Base* website, which published 31 strategies at its launch on 30 June 2012, available online at: <http://www.teachlearnshare.gov.au>. Twenty-three of these published approaches can be applied to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. One strategy that is published is a numeracy project that is specifically targeted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

DEEWR will continue to work with States and Territories to increase the volume of contributions to the Teach Learn Share, with particular emphasis being placed on encouraging submissions covering strategies that target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' literacy and numeracy learning needs.

## Action 29

*The Australian Government and education providers will work together to support access to family literacy and numeracy programs, including multilingual family programs, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and target participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in intensive support playgroups and other family support services.*

There are a number of activities in early childhood education and care that support this action.

### Early Childhood Education and Care sector

#### National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development (Children and Family Centres)

Based on information provided by jurisdictions, of the 38 locations identified, 37 physical sites had been identified and

agreed on in consultation with communities (this does not include Palmerston, Northern Territory).

The construction of nine centres has been completed and these are now operational:

- West Belconnen, Australian Capital Territory
- Whittlesea, Victoria
- Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia
- Bridgewater, Tasmania
- Pukatja, South Australia, and
- Mornington Island, Doomadgee and Mareeba, Queensland.

Construction has commenced at a further 24 sites. Of these sites:

- three are at practical completion stage
- eight are at structural or fit-out stage
- seven sites are at foundation stage, and
- six sites are under contract or at site control stage.

The five sites in the Northern Territory are in the planning stage.

Interim services are being delivered at 23 sites.

#### Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) empowers parents and carers to be their child's first teacher. The program builds the confidence and skills of parents and carers to create a positive learning environment to prepare their child for school. The program also offers some parents and carers a supported pathway to employment and local community leadership. In 2012, the two-year home-based parenting and early childhood program (HIPPY) was delivered in 50 mainstream locations.

Of the 50 locations, Katherine, Pioneer (Mt Isa), Inala, La Perouse and Alice Springs all reported a high number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in 2012, while many of the remaining locations also identified having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled.



The Australian Government committed \$55.7 million in the 2012–13 budget to continue HIPPY in the existing 50 locations, and to expand the program to an additional 50 locations, with an emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The first 25 new locations will commence program delivery in 2014, with the remaining 25 commencing in 2015.

Data for the period 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012 shows that 2,259 children participated in HIPPY. Furthermore:

- 193 (8.5 per cent) mothers and 182 (eight per cent) fathers of participating children identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- 116 (five per cent) of children who graduated from HIPPY had a least one parent identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- 18 (0.79 per cent) of the participating families listed Aboriginal English as the main language they speak at home, and 48 (two per cent) families speak an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language at home either as the main language, or in addition to another language.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Intended outcome

- High performing principals and teachers are effective in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students benefit from school leaders who have a strong understanding of their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

### Targets

- Increase in professional development hours in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.

- Increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, principals and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).
- Increase retention of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Source: MCEECDYA, 2011, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

## Action 33

*MCEECDYA will develop a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educator Workforce Strategy to assist education providers to make progress towards an equitable ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to students. The Strategy will support aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education leaders, include initiatives to attract more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians into the education workforce and bureaucracies and provide pathways through the workforce. The Strategy will also help to recognise and clarify the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers and support their professional development and career aspirations.*

During 2012, the More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers Initiative worked with a range of stakeholders across Australia to initiate activities aimed at addressing the low number and retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in Australian schools.

A number of initial teacher education providers and State and Territory education authorities commenced action research projects focused on the recruitment, retention, and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. One project, managed by the Australian Council of Deans of Education, has led to the development of institutional action plans that formalise internal institutional strategies that target the retention, success and graduation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher education students.

An inaugural 'Yamaiyamarna Paitya: Teachers are Deadly!' conference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers gave participants the opportunity to provide input toward reforms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and leaders in schools.



Work also commenced on identifying the scope and priorities for national collaborative effort toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school workforce structural reform.

## Action 34

*MCEECDYA has agreed to the development and implementation of an Australian Curriculum by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority that will include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives to ensure that all young Australians have the opportunity to learn about, acknowledge and value the cultures and languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.*

Throughout 2012, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has continued to expand the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority into all learning areas under development, including the Arts, geography, and languages.

In its support for educators incorporating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture cross-curriculum priorities into their teaching, Education Services Australia (ESA) continues to source online teaching and learning resources relating to the cross-curriculum priority. In so doing, ESA has aimed to include at least one online teaching and learning resource for each content descriptor in the Australian Curriculum learning areas of English, maths, science and history. ESA has endeavoured to make linkages to the cross-curriculum priority explicit, where appropriate.

During 2012, ACARA continued to develop a *Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages* as part of the first phase of the languages curriculum as set out in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages* paper. In July 2012, ACARA established the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Advisory Group to guide the development of the Framework. In December 2012, ACARA established the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Panel to extend opportunities for receiving advice and input from a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based organisations and individuals with expertise in languages and languages education, from all States and Territories. ACARA presented the draft broad outline of the Framework to the ACARA Languages Panel meeting on 16 November 2012, and to the Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages Panel meeting on 18 December 2012.

In August 2012, ACARA released its revised *English as an Additional Language Teacher Resource: Overview* and *EAL/D Learning Progression Foundation to Year 10*. The English as an Additional Language resource is designed to help teachers make the Foundation to Year 10 (F–10) Australian Curriculum content accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose first language is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander language, including traditional languages, creoles and related varieties, or Aboriginal English. The revised resource provides a number of new components to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who use English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D), including annotated content descriptions for each subject and an EAL/D Student Work Learning Progression.

## Action 35

*Education providers in Northern and Central Australia will work more closely together to provide professional learning for staff and to share staff and resources where mutually beneficial. Providers will work with the Australian Government to establish a coordinated approach to support sustained improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous contexts.*

The Teach Remote projects that support teachers and leaders working in remote and very remote schools across Western Australia, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales have been progressing steadily throughout 2012.

The National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools (NARIS) website, at: <http://naris.edu.au/>, is providing teachers and leaders in the NARIS schools with newsletters and information about many of the projects, including a numeracy package, community and cultural orientation, and a teacher and leader application process to apply for a placement in a NARIS school.

Featured in the 14 Teach Remote projects in 2012 was the Common Orientation program to provide initial support to teachers and leaders moving into remote school locations. The program provided teachers the opportunity to share their experiences in working within remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and fostered the development of support networks with other NARIS teachers.

Additionally, two other highlights were the Teacher Conference and Leader Conference. These opportunities gave school staff a

chance to meet and exchange experiences with colleagues and hear from experts in the field of teaching and leading in remote locations about strategies to assist with improving learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Teach Remote Stage 2 aims to support NARIS to continue its work in attracting and retaining high calibre teachers in remote areas. It will see the implementation of an Experienced Teacher Bonus in Remote Schools Package, and a range of projects to support teachers in all NARIS schools.

## Action 36

*MCEECDYA will consult with the VET and higher education sectors to develop and introduce core components on good practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, in all pre-service teacher education courses across Australia.*

Jurisdictions continued to familiarise themselves with the Australian Professional Standards (the Standards) for Teachers during 2012, in preparation for national implementation from 2013.

The Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures will come into effect progressively from 2013, as courses become due for re-accreditation.

The Accreditation Standards will ensure that by the end of their courses, all graduates will meet the requirements of the Graduate career stage of the Standards, which include Standards 1.4: Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and 2.4: Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has been developing resource materials, including exemplars of good teaching practice, to assist initial teacher education providers support all new teachers to be adequately prepared to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages. In addition, ministers specified five priority areas, including Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander education, in which all initial teacher education graduates should develop skills and knowledge. In 2012, AITSL worked with key stakeholders to develop statements that elaborate these priority areas, and provide additional guidance to providers of teacher education courses. Ministers for education endorsed these statements in December 2012.

The Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, announced the National Plan for School Improvement on 3 September 2012. It continues the focus on initial teacher education, and a commitment to embed the Standards across the classroom practice of all new and existing teachers.

## Action 37

*Education providers will consult with teacher registration boards to ensure that completion of core components on good practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including those from diverse linguistic and cultural background, in pre-service training before these requirements were introduced, education providers will ensure the provision of appropriate professional learning.*

During 2012, a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration was agreed by ministers for education, to be progressively implemented from 2013. Requirements for registration are based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) which include Standard 1.4: Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and Standard 2.4: Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The new approach builds on current processes in the states and territories and has identified common elements that apply across all jurisdictions. AITSL continues to work with teacher regulatory authorities in each State and Territory to implement the changes required by this national approach.

Throughout 2012, AITSL developed resource materials, including exemplars of good teaching practice, to assist all new and existing teachers to be adequately prepared to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.

## Action 38

*MCEECDYA will ensure that requirements for teachers to have knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including those from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are included in the forthcoming National Professional Standards for Teachers. This requirement will be made at graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teacher levels. The Standards will inform reforms in pre-service education course accreditation and national consistency in teacher registration.*

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) underpin significant national reforms including the national accreditation of initial teacher education programs and a nationally consistent approach to teacher registration. In order to become a registered teacher, applicants will need to demonstrate that they meet the Graduate level of the Standards.

AITSL has continued to work with education stakeholders on implementation of the Standards and has developed a range of supporting documentation and resources to support teachers to meet the Standards. Jurisdictions continue to familiarise themselves with the Standards during 2012 in preparation for national implementation from 2013.

## Action 39

*MCEECDYA will consult with the higher education sector to establish a coalition of universities, based on the New Zealand model, to provide evidence-based culturally and linguistically authenticated research that can directly inform classroom pedagogy.*

No work was progressed on this action during 2012. As reported last year, work is not expected to commence on this action until later in 2013. This work will include further negotiations with the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples regarding aligned activity set out in its Education Policy. This work is also to be informed by activities being undertaken by the following organisations:

- Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

- Education Services Australia (ESA)
- Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (supported through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)
- What Works project (supported through National Curriculum Services)
- Stronger Smarter Institute (supported through the Queensland University of Technology)
- Dare to Lead project (supported through Principals Australia).

It is expected that the higher education sector will be consulted on this issue to assist officials with the development of implementation strategies for this action.

## Action 40

*The Australian Government and education providers will provide access to high quality, highly effective professional learning and research for current and aspiring school leaders for the purposes of improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership will oversee and facilitate the delivery of national flagship programs.*

In 2012, AITSL continued to support principals and school leaders with professional learning underpinned by the Australian Professional Standard for Principals. AITSL, through the provision of the national flagship professional learning program, Local Leadership, gave support to the Empowering Local Schools initiative, which supports participating schools to make more decisions at a local level. In August 2012, a Local Leadership conference featured presentations by Australian and international educationalists, who led small-group workshops.

SCSEEC ministers endorsed the Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders (the Charter) on 3 August 2012. The Charter describes what is needed to build an effective professional learning culture in all Australian schools. The Charter promotes the central role of professional learning in improving teachers' and school leaders' knowledge, practices and engagement to improve student outcomes. It also outlines the characteristics and importance of effective professional learning.

# Pathways to real post-school options

## Intended outcome

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make a successful transition from school to work and further study.

## Targets

- Halve the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

Source: MCEECDYA, 2011, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

## Action 45

*MCEECDYA will seek advice from Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies, the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, Universities Australia and other strategic stakeholders to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who make a successful transition to university in conjunction with new national reforms to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in higher education.*

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in higher education has increased from 8,871 in 2002, to 12,632 in 2012. However, the Indigenous proportion of total students has remained fairly stable at around 1.4 per cent due to increasing rates of participation by non-Indigenous students.

The *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (2012) identified what is needed to increase participation and success in higher education. The review maps comprehensive changes marked by:

- a whole-of-university approach to success for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in higher education
- much stronger engagement of the professions, and communities to ensure better preparation and appropriate course selection in secondary school, and visibility of career pathways from university into professions, and

- increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in a wider range of disciplines, particularly Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

Current activity to address the gap in higher education attainment between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians includes:

- Supplementary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education support programs under the *Higher Education Support Act* (2003) and the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance Act)* (2000). These programs share the overall goal of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher education, and individually focus on either bringing students into university (ie, providing access), or supporting students to continue with, and complete, their qualification (ie, supporting participation and eventual success). These programs are being transitioned to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as part of new portfolio arrangements.
- Institutional targets and supporting strategies for increased attainment by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in higher education with every university, via their individual mission-based Compacts.
- A suite of projects, funded under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), designed to expand opportunities for successful engagement in higher education by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Initiatives include: academic enrichment for high achieving students; mentoring activities; expanding pathways into engineering; and better, more effectively targeted information for students and their families.

Following completion of the term of the third Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council (IATSIHEAC) was established in 2012, to provide independent, expert advice to government on increasing the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of higher education. The Council's work is focused on a number of strategic priority areas, including fostering a whole-of-university approach, broadening the disciplines and professions in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participate, growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic workforce, and measuring progress.

## Action 46

*MCEECDYA will request that the Ministerial Council on Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) develop a companion document to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014 that outlines actions to close the gap in training, university and employment outcomes. This companion document would improve links between the school sector and the training, tertiary education and employment services sectors and support the development of innovative cross-sectoral approaches to programs and pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

In August 2012, the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) endorsed the proposed approach to progress National Collaborative Action 46 – the development of an Action Plan for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (TESE Action Plan) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The TESE Action Plan will map the commitments of all Australian governments, highlight common themes across VET, employment and higher education, and provide recommendations for future action on how pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples can be strengthened across the three sectors.

A Project Reference Group, chaired by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) Secretariat, was installed to oversee the development of the TESE Action Plan and comprised VET representatives from the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE) and the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST), and Higher Education, Employment and Education representatives from DEEWR.

Outpost Consulting was selected to undertake the coordination and drafting of the TESE Action Plan. The project commenced in November 2012 and the TESE Action Plan is due to the NVEAC and Access and Participation Principal Committee for its consideration in March 2013.

## Action 47

*MCEECDYA will institute an investigation into how new technologies can increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander*

*students' access to education and training, collaborate with relevant bodies such as the Learning Federation and Education Services Australia in extending these technologies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for use in education and training programs, and monitor the results of innovative developments in the use of interactive technologies.*

During 2012, the Australian Government continued its commitment to harness the potential of technology to transform teaching and learning in schools through a number of key projects and activities.

The National Secondary School Computer Fund achieved a one-to-one computer-to-student ratio for students in Years 9 to 12 in Australian schools for the start of the 2012 school year. On 16 February 2012, the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Hon. Peter Garrett MP, announced that more than 911,000 computers had been installed in Australian schools, exceeding the national target of 786,000.

Through the Supporting the Australian Curriculum Online (SACOL) program, ESA continued to:

- identify, align and develop digital resources for the Australian Curriculum and make them accessible via online portals to schools across Australia, including those in regional and remote locations
- support professional development of teachers in the use of digital resources in their teaching
- develop an innovative and interactive online Language Learning Space, and
- enhance the digital infrastructure that supports delivery of national services.

Teachers can search for digital resources acquired through SACOL using elements of the Australian Curriculum including the Cross-curriculum priority, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures.

Several projects were initiated and progressed under the Online Diagnostic Tools initiative, including:

- development of a new online assessment system that will assist teachers to identify student needs and support personalised learning

- preparatory work on the transition of the National Assessment Program from paper-based to computer-based delivery, which will enable a range of improvements to the test and resulting data available to school leaders, teachers and parents, and
- creation of an online portal to help parents to support their child's learning at home.

The ICT Innovation Fund projects were successfully completed in 2012. The projects have delivered resources and professional learning to teachers, pre-service teachers and school leaders to assist them to take up technology, and to encourage them to creatively and effectively integrate the use of ICT into the classroom.

## Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies' (IECBs') feedback

The Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs) represent the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community perspectives and viewpoints and make the following comments and recommendations on the six domains of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

### Readiness for school (National Actions 1–4)

#### IECBs' comments

The IECBs are concerned about a lack of consistency and constant changes with funding models and programs.

IECBs would like to eventually see pre-compulsory early childhood education free and easy to access. Some centres have been known to charge for programs that are 100 per cent government funded, and the IECBs would like to have this investigated. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Auditor-General could be appointed to keep track of funds and reporting of programs' expenditure, to ensure this practice does not continue. Seeing money evaporate into the system is disheartening.

Parents have complained that fees are too expensive in the Children and Family Centres that were specifically set up for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to utilise. Additionally, it appears the Children and Family Centres are targeted towards only working Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, not all families.

There is no support or strategies for first teachers (ie, parents or caregivers) to develop engagement or cultural responsiveness skills. There needs to be more focus on intended outcomes, meeting with community with a focus on engaging and involving parents, more specifically, male parents/caregivers as role models as a whole, but also in early childhood functions.

The IECBs believe that the Parents as First Teachers program worked very well in all States and Territories, and it is a shame the program is no longer being funded. The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), as a program is hit-and-miss, as these programs seem to be targeting working Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, and not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Also, the guidelines for the Parent and Community Engagement Framework (PaCE) do not always suit the programs and need to be more flexible.

Educators also need to be better trained about how to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and to make the centres more culturally aware. A possible solution is to have early childhood centres physically attached to schools, and not kept separate. This would encourage parents to engage and become part of the school early, and would help make the children feel part of the school before they begin their formal schooling.

IECBs believe there is a high need to have centres and services accredited. The IECBs would like to know how, and by whom the National Quality Framework is being monitored. The IECBs believe that programs that are rolled out should be assessed, monitored and reported on by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The IECBs would like to receive the bulk of funding under the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act (2000)*, and disperse the funds to schools to run specific programs/strategies to improve school readiness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students where the need has been identified.

Indigenous Professional Support Units are working well and should continue to be supported and funded to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



The Remote Indigenous Professional Development (RIPD) project has had great feedback, and the IECBs believe it should be rolled out nationally in all localities.

The IECBs propose the transition process from kindergarten to school is re-worked to be more in-depth and effective. For example, the relationships between teacher and student could be more focused, with children that have not accessed early childhood education identified early, and, in turn, better supported when they start kindergarten. Schools also need to be prepared and take more responsibility for engaging these children. Social issues are also not always taken into account by the school with this transition process.

There need to be improvements in parental and community engagement to better inform them of services available, including early enrolments (3 year-olds) and whether fees are compulsory or voluntary.

Participation rates are quite high, yet the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student progress is still 20 per cent below that for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A stronger focus is required to work with the children and their families to build relationships and engage them to be aware and prepared on how to enhance the child's literacy and numeracy. The Personal Learning Plans for students, and the staff work plans, need to be more culturally responsive.

There have been issues with centres/educators giving parents surveys to complete and providing feedback that is not culturally appropriate and seen as invasive.

## SCSEEC's comments

On 19 April 2013, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed a new National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education for the 18 months covering the period from 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2014. Consistent with all State and Territory governments' ongoing commitment to universal access to early childhood education, the Australian Government is contributing an additional \$655.6 million to States and Territories to ensure uninterrupted service delivery in 2013 and 2014.

Universal access means every child will have access to a quality early childhood education program for 600 hours in the

12 months before full-time schooling, delivered by a degree qualified early childhood teacher.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) commenced on 1 January 2012 (except in Western Australia, where it commenced on 1 August 2012), and currently applies to most long day care, preschool, family day care and outside school hours care services. Governments have taken an approach for the NQF to incrementally incorporate service types, starting with the largest (in numbers of children) and the most regulated. It is envisaged that the NQF will eventually encompass all service types.

Under the NQF, Authorised Officers are required to undertake cultural competence training to ensure that they:

- understand the meaning of cultural competence and the connections with Belonging, Being and Becoming
- reflect on one's own culture and world view, especially attitudes towards diversity and difference
- gain further knowledge of cultural practices, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- recognise cultural competence in practice, and
- develop further knowledge and skills to assist services to understand and demonstrate cultural competence.

Children and Family Centres provide a range of services including childcare, early learning and parent and family support services to meet the needs of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the wider community, in 38 locations across Australia. The services offered by the Children and Family Centres have been developed with consultation from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Those Children and Family Centres that offer long day care and/or occasional care services do so on a fee for service basis. Fees in these centres are set by the centre operator. To help offset these costs, the Australian Government provides families with two types of financial assistance to help cover the costs of approved childcare: the Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Rebate.

The *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act (2000)* covers the early childhood education, school, vocational education and training and higher education sectors, as well as adult and community education. The Australian Government must balance the priorities of this funding across sectors, consistent with the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres



Strait Islander Education Policy. The Australian Government receives advice from Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies and other experts when developing its priorities.

## Engagement and connections (National Actions 9–14)

### IECBs' comments

IECBs would like to be consulted in the initial stages of program development to ensure that local and national level programs are responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and cultural and language needs.

Funding should be specifically targeted to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, not just added to general funds or allocated to whole-of-school programs that are not specifically benefiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Additionally, in one jurisdiction, apparently less than 20 per cent of the funding available to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012 was spent. There is a high need for targeted funds to have transparency and accountability to ensure the money is actually spent and goes where it is intended.

It appears that all attention is being directed to Focus schools and very remote localities. In one jurisdiction, 90 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live in urban regions. IECBs believe this inequity disadvantages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in urban areas. There has not been much progress in urban and rural localities, as there is not a lot of funding being directed to them. The IECBs are generally unhappy with the arrangement with Focus schools, the concern being that outcomes have not progressed much for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in these Focus schools, so it is assumed that the remaining schools may have even worse outcomes. The IECBs would like to know if there are any plans for Focus schools to mentor other schools on successful strategies.

Governments should consult more with local communities to make the reporting in this annual report more culturally responsive.

Reporting is not being received by IECBs on many of the programs in States and Territories, making it difficult to provide informed comments on some of the programs mentioned in this

report. The IECBs would like to invite government program areas to provide updates on their programs at IECB meetings.

IECBs would like to see more reporting accountability and receive details of the funding for Focus schools in each State and Territory. Current reporting only provides data on Focus schools, which should be expanded to provide data on all schools. Reporting should also be publicly available for parents to access.

Reporting should focus more on successes and strengths than challenges and weaknesses.

A mentoring system could be developed for Focus schools to share best practice and other success stories with other schools.

Some Focus schools were given additional funding that was used to engage an external provider to coordinate and develop the Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). This is definitely not the intention of the PLPs, which are supposed to be a contract or agreement made between the teachers and parents and students, which would, in turn, develop an ongoing connection with the student. Providers should report on PLPs and exactly how the money provided has been utilised. This is a critical issue and the IECBs recommend that SCSEEC conduct a review of how PLPs have been developed across schools and departments in each State and Territory, and develop broad guidelines for departments and schools to follow, while also allowing for localised formats and content.

The IECBs would like there to be a priority that principals and teachers receive cultural immersion programs, held over one to five days, delivered by members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to improve the capacity of school staff to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families.

School–community partnerships are an important aid in closing the gap and many Focus schools do not yet have these agreements in place. Of those that have such agreements in place, many would benefit from building and strengthening their existing relationships.

IECBs would like to receive all Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) program funding from DEEWR, or, at the very least, to be given the opportunity to endorse proposed budgets for the PaCE funding recipients. This is fundamental core business of IECBs. Non-Aboriginal Non-Government

Organisations (NGOs) have been receiving PaCE funds in some areas, which has led to funds being diverted to non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wages and NGO fees.

Some PaCE programs in Tasmania are not community engaged or promoted. However, PaCE in the Kimberley region is working very well and is showing positive impacts.

The IECBs recommend an approach that does not 'water down' the emphasis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in the current climate of multiculturalism in Australia. In some schools, NAIDOC Week is not being celebrated due to concerns about other cultures. IECBs believe that programs for multicultural groups, while important in their own right, should not be run at the expense of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs, funding and outcomes.

The IECBs also propose more structures be introduced around identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Some students of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background do not identify, and miss out on additional support that they are entitled to. Of large concern is that some non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have used the lack of identification requirements to unjustly claim additional support they are not entitled to.

## SCSEEC's comments

The *Australian Education Act* (2013) and the National Education Reform Agreement provide for an Indigenous-specific loading, on top of base funding amounts and other loadings. While the Indigenous loading is provided to address the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, these students will be expected to benefit from base funding amounts and other loadings that are relevant to them, or the school they attend.

Reports such as this annual report, as well as the *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report and the COAG Reform Council's report on progress under the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, *Indigenous Reform 2011-12: Comparing performance across Australia*, all provide good information on outcomes, progress against targets, performance indicators and agreed actions. This includes information across all schools and not just Focus schools identified under the Action Plan. Information is contained in these reports regarding the strategies, programs and approaches that schools and systems undertake with government funding. MySchool provides another good source of information on how

schools are using resources to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

It should be noted that the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014 Annual Reports* provide information on Focus schools where the agreed action targets Focus schools, while other Actions reported on will summarise the activity across all schools. While the evaluation of the Action Plan is designed to draw out key learnings from Focus schools and share these widely, there are currently no plans to establish Focus schools as mentors to other schools. The 2010–2014 period is the first time the Focus school concept has been progressed in a national agreement, and ministers will consider the value of this concept as they develop strategies beyond 2014. Around one-third of all Focus schools are in metropolitan areas, slightly over a third are in regional areas, and just under a third are in remote areas, representing a balanced effort across geolocations.

The Australian Government commissioned, *Guide to developing Personalised Learning Plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: A professional learning resource*, reflects on practice across Australia and internationally, and is complemented with a fact sheet, school case studies and some hypothetical case studies reflecting on the process between teachers, students and family members. Many education systems maintain their own information for teachers on developing personalised learning plans.

Further information on Personalised Learning Strategies is expected to be received through the Action Plan evaluation process, as well as through reporting under the Focus Schools Next Steps Initiative, and the Project Agreement: Investing in Focus Schools.

The 2012 Annual Report demonstrates that there has been an increase in commencements and completions of School and Community Partnership Agreements since 2011.

The 2011 Census of Population and Housing indicates that there has been an increase in the propensity of people to identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Programs targeted at individuals, such as ABSTUDY, include mechanisms to assure government that claimants are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Broader school-based support programs, such as the Indigenous loading, rely on self-identification as these programs often support the employment of Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers, culturally appropriate learning

resources, professional development for educators, and other measures to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

## Attendance (National Actions 22–24)

### IECBs' comments

Attendance is not a key indicator of whether quality teaching and learning is occurring. IECBs would like future versions of the Action Plan to not have attendance as a stand-alone domain. Improvements in the other domains will deliver improved attendance and retention rates.

The IECBs believe outcomes do not reflect the issues of attendance, and this domain seems enrolments focused. Enrolments do not guarantee attendance. Attendance and progress are not mutually exclusive, and many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students receive quality, culturally appropriate learning from outside the government school system, eg, through interests, hobbies, family and sporting activities.

The IECBs would like to see the government and educators strive not only for equivalency, but for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to surpass the rates of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The IECBs question what will happen if and when the outcomes for attendance reach a level of equivalency, and whether attendance programs and strategies will continue in those areas.

There is a greater need for culturally responsive curriculum to increase attendance rates, including events, activities, course offerings, extra-curricular and sporting activities.

The IECBs would like to see more consultation and collaboration from the Government, when future policies around school attendance and engagement are being developed. Facilitation of meetings and workshops between families and school teachers and principals is also recommended to inform policy development. IECBs would like support for broader parent and community engagement to get past the Same Two Parents syndrome.

The IECBs propose that what is needed is for more data collection and reporting to be done on enrolment and attendance of highly mobile students from remote communities.

Data needs to be collated on days lost due to suspensions, including reporting on how many students this affects. No reports have reflected lost attendance due to suspensions and expulsions, which are essentially a school's choice to impose, due to behavioural or cultural factors.

More information is required on what student information is recorded and transferred under the Unique Student Identifier, as there is concern with student privacy.

The IECBs agree with the finding of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare research on evidence-based attendance strategies, that there would be a benefit with a 'one-stop-shop' website.

Funding to Focus schools for attendance has not achieved any change in attendance rates.

### SCSEEC's comments

Ministers recognise the complex factors influencing attendance. Through the Action Plan, a better picture is being built regarding the strategies that are working to improve attendance. Ministers hope to build on this information to develop strategies beyond 2014, and note IECBs' advice regarding the value of a separate attendance domain in the future. As part of SCSEEC's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group, IECBs' advice will be critical to the development of strategies beyond 2014.

Ministers have agreed to continue funding for the award winning Tri-Border attendance project, which is developing the best ever data on highly mobile students. Considerations on the Unique Student Identifier continue, with careful thought being given to privacy and information sharing arrangements.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report on attendance evidence base relates to Action 22 of the Action Plan. Work is expected to continue on this Action during 2013 and 2014.

Actions 26 (locally developed attendance strategies) and 21 (personalised learning strategies) are designed to better involve local families and communities in the development of school attendance strategies. Information on progress against these actions is contained within this annual report. Ministers agree that there are no 'one size fits all' approaches to attendance, and that strategies to support attendance will be different from

place to place, and will need to evolve over time to sustain good attendance as rates improve.

The evaluation of the Action Plan, including the impact of Focus schools, is not yet complete. Reporting on the Focus Schools Next Steps initiative and the Project Agreement – Investing in Focus Schools, is still to be received. Ministers will be looking to the evaluation and upcoming reports before drawing conclusions on the effectiveness of the Focus schools concept in lifting attendance rates.

## Literacy and numeracy (National Actions 27–29)

### IECBs' comments

IECBs do not support the current NAPLAN testing environment, as it is culturally insensitive, as students are forced into an inappropriately stressful testing environment. IECBs propose delivery of NAPLAN testing should be flexible to suit the style of learning a student is accustomed to. Innovative methodologies for measuring literacy and numeracy need to be considered, eg, oral testing, testing conducted with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Education Worker (AIEW), testing outdoors and/or testing in small group or one-on-one situations.

The IECBs believe outcomes are written in a negative context that is deficit based, rather than based on student strengths. It reflects only low expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes. IECBs believe the 'meeting the national minimum standard' terminology, without mention of achieving high levels and extension, only breeds mediocrity. There should be a focus on extending those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are achieving equivalent literacy and numeracy standards.

The selection for students in the gifted/talented/opportunity class programs also needs to be more culturally sensitive, and not rely solely on standardised exams. IECBs believe talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are invariably 'held back' by teachers and schools.

There is a need to develop closing the gap resources for literacy and numeracy that are culturally appropriate and responsive, because nothing currently exists to fulfil this need. Funding could be provided to the IECBs to manage development of these resources, which will instil confidence in the educators to more

confidently incorporate cultural content and perspectives in their teachings.

### SCSEEC's comments

Consistent with Action 27 of the Action Plan, SCSEEC requires the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to regularly review NAPLAN tests to ensure that they are not culturally biased against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Ministers also acknowledge that schools utilise a range of tools, in addition to NAPLAN, to better understand the learning needs of each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student.

Ministers recognise the importance of having high expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Through Action 21 of the Action Plan, personalised learning strategies are developed, not only to assist underperforming students, but also to assist developing strategies that extend those meeting national minimum standards, as well as gifted and talented students. However, a further focus on gifted and talented students can be considered as ministers develop strategies beyond 2014.

Consistent with Action 28 of the Action Plan, there are an increasing number of literacy and numeracy strategies being included in the Teach, Learn, Share website that have proved successful with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, the Scootle website developed by Education Services Australia (online at: <http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/p/home>) is also drawing together a significant body of professional resources to assist teachers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development (National Actions 33–40)

### IECBs' comments

High performing teachers/principals are ones who:

- can engage
- can teach culturally appropriate lessons
- can develop culturally appropriate pedagogy

- can offer culturally appropriate lessons and tests
- can ask students and families for feedback, and
- have students who are happy and want to go to school.

All educators need to be trained on how to deal with children in a culturally appropriate manner, not automatically sending an Aboriginal child to the Aboriginal educator when issues arise. Skilled practitioners in the field need to be culturally competent, and able to engage with community. Cultural awareness training in universities should be mandatory. However, a single twelve-week course is inadequate training to prepare teachers to move to many regional and/or remote areas. Cultural awareness training should be ongoing throughout a teacher's career – not just when undertaking initial training. Elders should be consulted before commencing any type of cultural awareness training in their region.

IECBs are not aware of the governance arrangements for cultural capability, and would like to know what arrangements are in place to confirm cultural awareness competency, proposed training approaches, training content, protocols and quality, skill and qualifications of instructors.

IECBs propose a reporting database be developed to track professional/training hours undertaken by teachers. The role of IECBs could be strengthened to provide consultation on teacher development plans and receive relevant data to enable them to consult at the national level, and share what works and what doesn't work in their State or Territory. IECBs would like to be included in further work to establish a coalition of universities to provide research that can inform classroom pedagogy (Action 39).

Currently, graduate teachers are targeted to work in remote regions and the IECBs do not believe this is effective. There is an identified need for not only qualified teachers, but also educators of quality, developed with experience. Graduates fresh out of education themselves rarely have the 'on-the-ground' experience necessary, and seem to just want to 'do their time' in remote locations, with a goal to return to less remote locations as soon as they can. They also have not generally developed the skills required to help guide parents into engaging. The IECBs believe local people should be targeted for these positions – people who have more chance of remaining in the community for extended periods. The IECBs believe there needs to be a stronger focus on employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators,

and specialist tutors to specifically support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; in addition to tutors provided to assist mainstream students.

IECBs would like to see increased involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the selection of principals and educators in hard to staff schools.

Teachers' pay, based on student performance, needs to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student improvement as a separate category.

## SCSEEC's comments

The National Professional Standards for Teachers establishes a nationally consistent framework for the registration and advancement of teachers, as well as the accreditation of initial teacher education programs. The new nationally consistent teacher registration system, which will take effect from 2013, includes a focus on the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Standard 1.4) and teacher understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages (Standard 2.4). More information is provided on this issue in the progress reported under Actions 36, 37 and 38.

Consistent with Action 35, a National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools (NARIS) has been developing a range of tools and networking opportunities, with the aims of attracting, retaining and developing exceptional teachers and leaders in remote schools. Further information is available from the NARIS website, at: <http://www.naris.edu.au/>.

Education ministers are already taking action to improve the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and educators. Consistent with Action 33, it is expected that a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educator Workforce Strategy will be developed by the end of 2013.

## Pathways to real post-school options (National Actions 45–47)

### IECBs' comments

Pathway opportunities should begin in Year 8 and continue through to Year 12 to give students ample time to prepare for

their future. The current arrangement of pathways beginning only in senior years is often too late.

There are not any real post-school pathway strategies currently available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and many government initiatives that have worked really well in the past have been withdrawn.

The National Broadband Network (NBN) would ensure better internet access to education and training for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Cooperation across universities should involve IECBs as advisors on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education issues to improve higher education access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. IECBs are disappointed that they have not been engaged in the development of strategies to improve transitions into university under Action 45.

Universities must be seen to facilitate consultation and engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to provide advice and recommendations to faculty and management on an ongoing basis to ensure strategies are culturally responsive.

### SCSEEC's comments

Activities to enhance pathways into further education and employment are outlined in this Annual Report through each jurisdiction's progress report on Actions 48 to 55. In addition, a number of new measures have been introduced by universities to reach back into schools to improve the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students considering a tertiary education at university. Some of these measures target students in the middle years of schooling. The IECBs' Terms of Reference permit engagement with the higher education sector.



## Chapter 5

# New South Wales report on activities and outcomes

## Introduction

In 2012, there were 54,955.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in schools in New South Wales. Approximately 86 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (47,087) were enrolled in government schools and 14 per cent (7,869) were enrolled in schools in the non-government sector (Catholic and independent schools). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students comprised 6.3 per cent of students in government schools and 4.8 per cent of the total New South Wales student enrolment.

In 2012, 45.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in New South Wales were enrolled in schools in metropolitan locations, over half (50.3 per cent) were enrolled in schools in provincial locations, and 4.4 per cent were enrolled in schools in remote or very remote locations.

As was the case in 2011, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments were spread over a large number of schools. Although they represented 4.8 per cent of total student enrolments, these enrolments were distributed across 2,675 schools, which was more than 80 per cent of all schools in New South Wales. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in 1,954 of the 2,223 government schools, and 721 of the 913 non-government schools. Moreover, 44.8 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in New South Wales were enrolled in schools in which they comprised less than 10 per cent of total student enrolments.

The New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated (NSW AECG) is the peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisation concerned with education and training in New South Wales. Throughout 2012, as was the case in previous years, the NSW AECG continued to work collaboratively with sectors to implement the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

## Profile of Focus schools

There was an increase in the number of Focus schools in New South Wales in 2012, going from 115 in 2011, to 143 in 2012. The number of Catholic sector Focus schools remained unchanged at 23. The number of independent sector Focus schools increased from four in 2011 to six in 2012. The number of government sector Focus schools increased by 26, from 88 in 2011, to 114 in 2012. The 26 new government sector Focus schools were nominated in late 2012, with the year devoted to planning for action implementation, and actual action implementation scheduled to begin in 2013. As a consequence, the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (the Department) will report on action implementation in the original 88 Focus schools in this report and commence reporting on action implementation in the 26 new Focus schools in the 2013 Annual Report. In addition to providing a fairer representation of activity, this approach will also make it easier to chart progress in action implementation in Focus schools in New South Wales from 2011 to 2012.

Across the three sectors, 35 Focus schools were located in metropolitan areas, with the majority of Focus schools (89 out of 143) being located in provincial areas, 14 in remote locations and five in very remote locations.

In 2012, there were 10,334.9 FTE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Focus schools in New South Wales.

A number of Focus schools were involved in key National Partnerships. Five Focus schools: Walgett Community College Primary School; Walgett Community College Secondary School; Wilcannia Central School; St Therese's Community School, Wilcannia; and St Joseph's School, Walgett, were involved in the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership, and 84 Focus schools were involved in the Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership. Sixteen Focus schools were involved in the Next Steps Initiative and 64 were involved in the Investing in Focus Schools Initiative.

A map (Figure NSW5) and list of New South Wales Focus schools are presented at the end of this chapter.



# New South Wales report on progress by Domains

## Readiness for school

### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

### Overall progress

Table NSW1 shows that 3,214 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged four and five were enrolled in a preschool program in New South Wales in 2012. This represents 77.7 per cent of the experimental Estimated Resident Population (ERP) as calculated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, an increase of 8.5 percentage points relative to 2011.

Of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled, 3,033 (94.4 per cent) were recorded as attending at some time during the two-week data collection period. This compares with 97.9 per cent of 'All' students. When the ERP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4 year-olds is used as the denominator, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending a preschool program is 73.4 per cent, up from 66.2 per cent in 2011.

**Table NSW1: Summary of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program, New South Wales and Australia, 2012**

	New South Wales		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children
Number of children enrolled	3,214	69,913	11,237	266,036
Children enrolled over ERP (per cent)	77.7	75.1	82	88.5
Number of children attending	3,033	68,419	10,460	258,881
Percentage of children attending over ERP <sup>(a)</sup>	73.4	73.5	76	86.1
Percentage of children enrolled that are attending <sup>(b)</sup>	94.4	97.9	93.1	97.3
ERP 4 year-olds – as at June 2012 <sup>(c)</sup>	4,134	93,086	13,763	300,596

Notes:

- a) Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- b) Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled.
- c) ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and should be treated as indicative.
- d) Enrolment and attendance counts include children aged 4 and 5 years. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (unpublished); ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics* (Cat. No. 3101.0), (unpublished); ABS, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat. No. 3238.0), (unpublished).

*Additional note regarding the data source:*

Regarding the 2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection, the ABS notes that although there have been some collection improvements, there remains an unknown undercount of the number of long daycare service providers, which are delivering a preschool program and are not currently captured by the Commonwealth or State and Territory NECEC connections. The effect of this undercount is particularly significant for New South Wales with its large and relatively sophisticated long daycare sector, and is illustrated by higher numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children participating in New South Wales long daycare services as reported in the New South Wales Annual Reports under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. The New South Wales Government considers these annual reports to be the best available source for current information on preschool participation in New South Wales.

Table NSW2 shows Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) data for New South Wales and Australia. The Australian Early Development Index provides information on young children's development, based on a checklist completed by teachers for children in their first year of full-time schooling. The five domains covered by the Australian Early Development Index are: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills (school-based); and communication skills and general knowledge. The data indicates that 52.8 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in New South Wales were 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains in 2012, up from 50.7 per cent in 2009. In 2012, 71.3 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were assessed as being 'developmentally on track', which is largely unchanged from 2009, when the figure was 71.2 per cent. The data also shows that a higher proportion of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in New South Wales were assessed as being 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains in New South Wales, than in Australia overall.

## Systemic level actions (5, 6 and 7)

### Action 5

In 2012, activity relating to the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) was devoted mostly to supporting the collection of 2012 AEDI data. This involved the Department's AEDI consultant working with over 2,400 schools across all three sectors to ensure that over 95 per cent of schools and over 95 per cent of children in New South Wales participated in the data collection. In 2013, more emphasis will be given to AEDI data analysis and promoting an understanding of its implications for schools. Consultants in all three sectors continued to support schools, including Focus schools, to develop links, networks and partnerships with a range of organisations such as: Aboriginal Co-operatives; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Aboriginal Medical Services; Barnardos; the Smith Family; The Benevolent Society; Area Health Services and government departments such as the Ageing, Disability and Home Care agency of the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services.

### Action 6

In 2012, as in 2011, regional staff, including early childhood consultants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education team consultants liaised with preschools to ensure that local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families were offered access

**Table NSW2: Proportion of children in New South Wales assessed as 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 (per cent)**

	New South Wales	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	52.8	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	71.3	69.1

#### Notes:

- The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored above the 25th percentile of the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge should also be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), (unpublished) Australian Early Development Index data, 2012 data collection.

to 15 hours per week of a quality early childhood program for their children.

### Action 7

In 2012, the Department continued to use the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment. This is a linguistically and culturally inclusive on-entry assessment, which helps teachers to identify the literacy and numeracy skills and understandings that each child brings to school as they enter kindergarten. The assessment provides information for kindergarten teachers to enable them to build on each student's current knowledge and experiences in literacy and numeracy and develop quality teaching and learning programs that support students in achieving Early Stage 1 syllabus outcomes. The assessment also enables parents and carers to be given feedback about what their children can do and how they can best support their children's learning.

## Local level actions (8)

### Action 8

Focus schools continued to implement a range of strategies and approaches to address readiness for school. These strategies included: offering transition-to-school programs; facilitating play groups; providing professional development for staff; and providing information sessions/workshops for parents covering topics such as school readiness, nutrition and early literacy and numeracy. The Wambinya Early Years program, which provides additional support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students identified as needing assistance on the basis of Best Start Kindergarten Assessment data, also continued to be implemented in selected Focus schools in 2012.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicators

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school–community partnership agreement in place.*

### Overall progress

In 2012, approximately 68 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years K–10, across all sectors in New South Wales had a Personalised Learning Strategy or Personalised Learning Plan in place. This figure is up from 55 per cent recorded in 2011.

Approximately 40 per cent of Focus schools across all sectors in New South Wales had a school–community partnership agreement in place in 2012, up from 25 per cent in 2011. It should be noted that the 40 per cent calculation excludes the 26 new government sector Focus schools.

## Systemic level actions (15, 16, 17 and 18)

### Action 15

As in 2011, the Department has continued to employ a range of strategies to connect schools, including Focus schools, with early childhood education, health, welfare, family support and

youth and community services. This included being involved in interagency working groups and collaborating with external agencies such as: Barnardos; Local Aboriginal Land Councils; Aboriginal Medical Services; Families New South Wales and the Benevolent Society to plan, coordinate or provide services.

### Action 16

The Department, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools worked with a range of organisations to provide services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were pregnant or parenting. These included: providing counselling support; developing flexible attendance programs in selected schools; brokering distance education opportunities; working with Trade Training Centres; liaising with providers of specific education programs for young mothers (for example, schools/centres with crèche facilities); and liaising with Youth Connections program coordinators, or connecting students with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student support officer in TAFE institutes.

### Action 17

As reported in 2011, the Department recently reviewed and clarified positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools, including Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs). This resulted in the development of a revised role statement for AEOs, along with a change in remuneration and classification, with AEOs now graded as equivalent to Clerk Grade 1/2. The revised role statement focuses the work of AEOs in the classroom assisting teachers to improve student outcomes through personalised learning. It also provides greater career pathways for AEOs within the Department, so as to encourage greater retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. No further work was undertaken (or required) in relation to the role of AEOs in 2012.

### Action 18

The formal Partnership Agreement between the Department and the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated (NSW AECG) remains pivotal in the Department's approach to strengthening accountability and reporting to families and community on Aboriginal student outcomes. Built on the principles of respect, commitment, collaboration and accountability, the Partnership Agreement underpins the two-way flow of information and advice, between Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander families and communities and New South Wales schools, regions and State offices.

## Local level actions (19, 20 and 21)

### Action 19

In 2012, approximately 40 per cent of Focus schools had school–community partnership agreements in place, up from 25 per cent in 2011. It should be noted that the 26 government sector schools that commenced as Focus schools in Term 4 2012 have been excluded from the calculations. Sectors will continue to work with regions, dioceses and schools, the NSW AECG and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations to further increase this proportion in 2013.

### Action 20

For the purposes of reporting, the Department operationally defined a family forum as a School Advisory Committee that included Aboriginal parents or AECG representatives as members. Approximately 48 per cent of the original 88 Focus schools had such a committee in place in 2012. Sectors will continue to work with consultants in regions, dioceses and schools and with the NSW AECG to further increase this proportion in 2013. In the independent and Catholic sectors, family forums are used to enhance the direction and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and encompass key school leaders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents or carers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and Aboriginal education workers and representatives from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

### Action 21

To ensure that processes are effective and inclusive of families, all school sectors are actively promoting the development of Personalised Learning Strategies/Plans (PLSs/PLPs) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In the government sector, regional Aboriginal Education teams gave presentations on effective PLP processes and practices at regional Aboriginal education conferences, selected schools and, where invited, local NSW AECG meetings. In the Catholic sector, a New South Wales Catholic Education Professional Learning Package was developed; and in the independent sector, consultancy support was provided to schools to enhance student engagement, including supporting the development of PLPs.

## Attendance

### Performance indicators

5. *Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.*
6. *Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to 'Other' Australians.*
7. *Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
8. *Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

### Overall progress

In 2012, relative to 2011, notable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in New South Wales included: an increase in attendance rates for students in Catholic schools; an increase in the Year 7 to 12 Apparent Retention Rate, but a decline in the Year 10 to 11 and Year 11 to 12 Apparent Grade Progression Ratios.

### Attendance rates

Table NSW3 shows that the 2012 attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in government schools were lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in each year of schooling. The attendance rates for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were higher in the primary years than the secondary years. In the primary years, the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were constant at 90 per cent, while in the secondary years, they ranged from 75 per cent in Year 10 to 85 per cent in Year 7. The gap between the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was fairly constant in the primary years (between four and five percentage points), but increased in the secondary years. The gap was largest for students in Year 10, where it reached 13 percentage points. This pattern is consistent with that reported for 2011.

**Table NSW3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by sector, 2012 (per cent)**

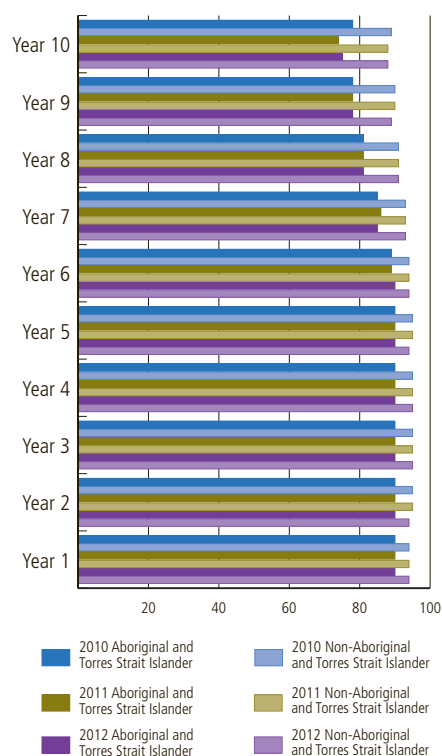
	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>Government</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90	90	90	90	90	90	85	81	78	75	88	73
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	95	94	94	93	91	89	88	92	85
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	90	89	87	91	83
<b>Catholic</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91	91	91	91	91	90	92	90	89	87	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	94	95	94	95	93	93	92	92	n/a
<b>Total</b>	94	94	95	94	95	94	94	93	93	92	92	n/a
<b>Independent</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91	91	93	91	91	93	91	92	83	79	84	100
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95	95	96	95	95	95	95	94	94	93	92	95
<b>Total</b>	94	95	95	95	95	95	95	94	94	93	92	95

Note: Definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance data are not uniform. As such, direct comparisons of attendance rates between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made. Nor can attendance data for 2012 be aggregated or averaged at the national or State/Territory level. Variations in methodology between jurisdictions are described in the explanatory notes for the 2012 attendance data contained in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012*.

n/a Data unavailable or not reported.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure NSW1.1: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, New South Wales, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

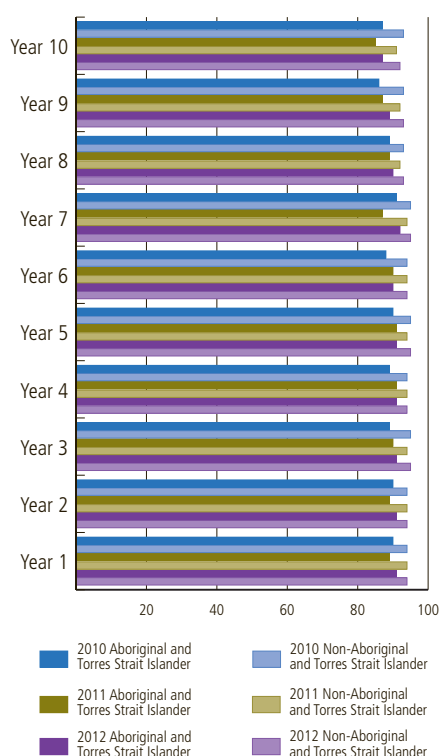


Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

Table NSW3 also shows that the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools were lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in each year of schooling. In the primary years, the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were fairly stable, varying between 90 and 91 per cent, while in the secondary years, they ranged from 92 per cent in Year 7 to 87 per cent in Year 10. The gap between the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was fairly constant, varying between three and four percentage points for all years, except Year 10, where the gap increased to 5 percentage points. Overall, there was an increase in the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools in 2012 relative to 2011.

For New South Wales independent schools, Table NSW3 shows that the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in each year of schooling. The attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ranged between 91 and 93 per cent in the primary years and between 79 and 92 per cent in the secondary years. The gap between the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

**Figure NSW1.2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, New South Wales, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



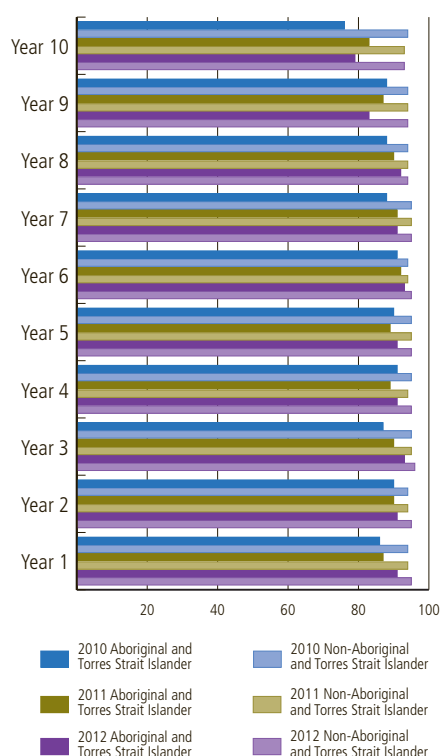
Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was lowest for students in Year 6 (2 percentage points) and largest for students in Year 10 (14 percentage points). This pattern is broadly consistent with that reported for 2011. As was the case previously, in 2012, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in independent schools was small, which means that little significance should be attached to the variation in rates observed across school years.

## Enrolment to population ratio

For 2012, school participation rates have not been published by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status due to concerns with the quality of the indicator. Specifically, the rates for most States and Territories exceeded 100 per cent, primarily as a result of modal differences in the data sources. The denominator is sourced from the Estimated Resident Population series, itself

**Figure NSW1.3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, New South Wales, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

drawn from the Population Census, while the numerator is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The ABS is working to provide a suitable measure.

## Apparent retention rates

Table NSW4 shows the Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12 Apparent Retention Rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012. The Year 7 to Year 10 Apparent Retention Rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 106.6 per cent, while that for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 100.5 per cent. Apparent retention rates can exceed 100 per cent due to a number of factors, including the migration of students between States and Territories.

**Table NSW4: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, New South Wales, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 7 to Year 10	106.6	100.5
Year 7 to Year 12	47.2	76.2

Source: Derived from ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0) and based on full-time student enrolments.

In 2012, the Year 7 to Year 12 Apparent Retention Rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 47.2 per cent, while that for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 76.2 per cent, representing a gap of 29.0 percentage points.

Figure NSW2 charts the apparent retention rates for the period 2010 to 2012. There was an increase in both apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012, compared to 2010. The Year 7 to Year 10 rate increased from 98.0 per cent in 2010 to 106.6 per cent in 2012, while the Year 7 to Year 12 rate increased from 38.6 per cent in 2010 to 47.2 per cent in 2012.

There was also a reduction in the gap between apparent retention rate outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. For the Year 7 to Year 10 rate, the gap has been eliminated, whereas for the Year 7 to Year 12 rate, the gap has steadily decreased, going from 35.3 percentage points in 2010 to 33.0 percentage points in 2011 to 29.0 percentage points in 2012.

As reported in 2011, there was a change in the legislation covering the school leaving age in New South Wales that came into effect in January 2010. Under the new legislation, students are required to complete Year 10 and continue participating in education, training or full-time paid employment until they turn 17 years of age. This is likely to have been a significant factor influencing the increase in apparent retention rates.

**Figure NSW2: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, New South Wales, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Apparent grade progression ratios

Table NSW5 shows that in 2012, the apparent grade progression ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was in excess of 100 per cent for Year 8 to 9, and for Year 9 to 10. However, the rate dropped markedly to 69.2 per cent for the Year 10 to 11 ratio, and was 67.9 per cent for the Year 11 to 12 ratio. The gap between the apparent grade progression ratio for Year 10 to 11 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 19.4 percentage points; while for the Year 11 to 12 ratio, it was 19.0 percentage points. In both cases, the gap increased in 2012 relative to 2011.



**Table NSW5: Apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, New South Wales, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 8 to Year 9	102.1	100.2
Year 9 to Year 10	100.9	100.4
Year 10 to Year 11	69.2	88.6
Year 11 to Year 12	67.9	86.9

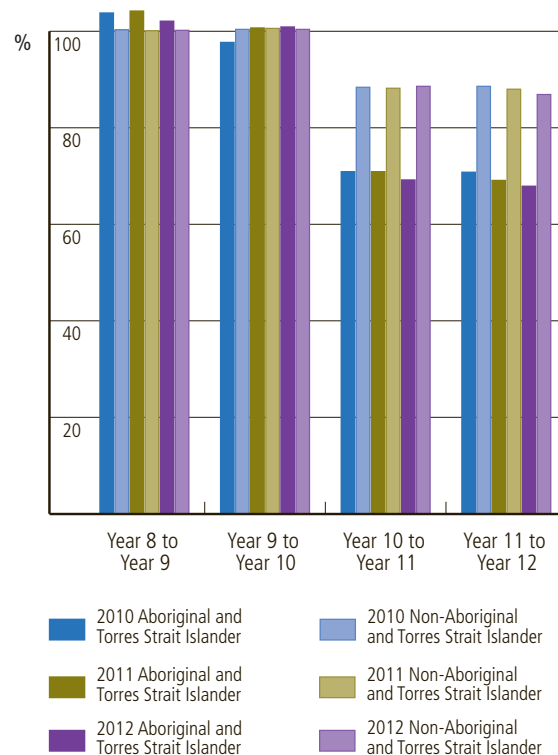
Notes:

- Grade progression rates show the number of students at each year level as a percentage of the number enrolled in the previous year.
- Full-time students only.
- Care should be taken when interpreting these rates since a range of factors affecting the calculation are not taken into account, such as students repeating a year of schooling, movements between schools and systems or States/Territories, and net changes to a school's or system's population. There is also the effect of ungraded students – they are not included in the calculations of rates.
- Components may not add due to rounding. Percentage point gap calculations are based on unrounded data.
- Issues that may affect comparability over time can be found in the explanatory notes of the source publication.

Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

Figure NSW3 charts the apparent grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for the period 2010 to 2012. Throughout, the Year 8 to 9 ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students exceeded 100 per cent. For the Year 9 to 10 ratio, the rate increased from 97.7 per cent in 2010 to more than 100 per cent in 2011 and 2012. With respect to the ratio for Year 10 to 11 and the ratio for Year 11 to 12, there has been a decrease in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and a concomitant increase in both gaps. For the Year 10 to 11 ratio, the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased from 17.5 percentage points in 2010 to 19.4 percentage points in 2012. For the Year 10 to 11 ratio, the gap increased from 17.5 percentage points in 2010 to

**Figure NSW3: Grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, New South Wales, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

19.0 percentage points in 2012. It is worth noting that there has been an increase in the number of 15 to 19 year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enrolled in Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above courses in TAFE NSW during this period. These enrolments increased from 6,426 in 2010 to 7,330 in 2012.

## Systemic level actions (25)

### Action 25

In accordance with the Department's School Attendance Policy and guidelines, in 2012 all school regions had a Regional Attendance Action Plan that outlined strategies, targets, timelines, resources and responsibilities for improving regional attendance rates. School principals in schools with attendance rates below regional primary and secondary averages were

required to develop and implement a School Attendance Action Plan that included targets, strategies, resources and timelines. Aboriginal Student Liaison Officers continued to work with schools and local communities to develop solutions to locally identified attendance issues. The Department's Child Wellbeing Unit also continued to support school attendance by providing advice to schools where poor school attendance was due to risks and needs identified as being outside the control of the education environment, assessing these risks and providing advice about referrals to other services or agencies.

In the Catholic sector, an Attendance Policy and Procedures package was developed and an Attendance Committee established to formulate advice for the 11 dioceses in New South Wales. Schools used the package to develop attendance policies and procedures that also took into account cultural and local contexts, needs and issues.

In the independent sector, Focus schools have developed attendance strategies based on the individual needs of their students and school communities. Strategies implemented in the sector included the employment of a staff member to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families, the operation of breakfast programs, and the development of transport options.

## Local level actions (26)

### Action 26

In 2012, approximately 67 per cent of Focus schools reported having an evidence-based attendance strategy in place. This figure excludes the 26 new government sector Focus schools. Consultants from the Department's regional Aboriginal Education teams provided support and advice to Focus schools in the development of their attendance strategies. Key strategies implemented in Focus schools across all three sectors included:

- ensuring that the expectation of high attendance rates was conveyed to students and parents, eg, via newsletters and during school assemblies
- inclusion of attendance goals in PLPs
- the close monitoring of individual student attendance
- timely follow-up with families when absences were noted, and
- the implementation of attendance rewards programs.

The average attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the original 88 departmental Focus schools increased by 0.4 percentage points in the period 2010 to 2012, going from 85.1 per cent in 2010 to 85.5 per cent in 2012.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*
10. *Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.*

### Overall progress

In 2012, as was the case in 2010 and 2011, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in New South Wales meeting the national minimum standard in NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy tended to decrease with year of schooling. It is important to note that this does not necessarily indicate a decline in performance with respect to cohort expectations, because NAPLAN bands have a statistical basis rather than being based on an empirical study of the levels of growth which students should reasonably be expected to achieve in a two-year period. Nor are the minimum standard cut-points based on a standards-referenced notion of the skills students need to have mastered in order to be able to make progress at the next level of education (as the pre-NAPLAN definition of minimum standard). At each year level and in each test domain, a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students met the national minimum standard than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2012, the gap between outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was smallest for Year 3 writing (9.3 percentage points) and largest for Year 9 writing (31.6 percentage points). The gap increased in 10 of the 12 NAPLAN tests in 2012 relative to 2011, although most of the changes would not be statistically significant when confidence intervals are included.

In 2012, as was the case in 2010 and 2011, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in NAPLAN tests in New South Wales was above the national average.

## NAPLAN outcomes

**Table NSW6: NAPLAN reading, writing<sup>(a)</sup> and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, New South Wales, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

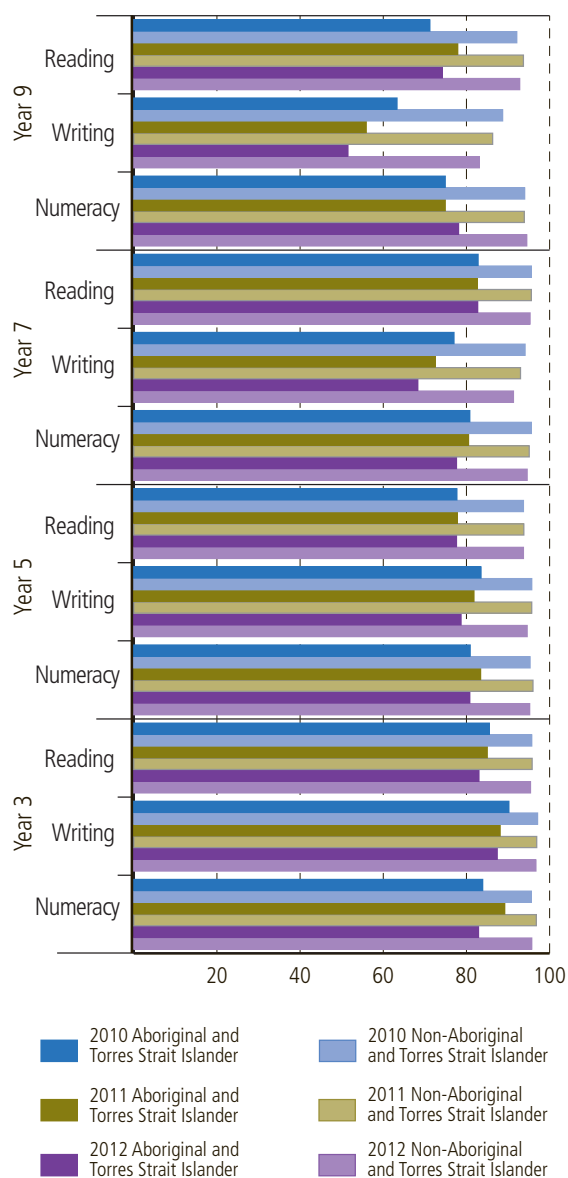
	Year 3			Year 5			Year 7			Year 9		
	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.
<b>2010</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85.5	90.2	83.9	77.7	83.5	80.9	82.8	77	80.8	71.2	63.3	74.9
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.7	97.1	95.6	93.7	95.7	95.3	95.6	94.1	95.6	92.1	88.7	94
Gap	10.2	6.9	11.7	16	12.2	14.4	12.8	17.1	14.8	20.9	25.4	19.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 3.3	± 1.4	± 3.4	± 4.0	± 1.6	± 3.7	± 3.1	± 1.9	± 3.0	± 4.2	± 2.3	± 4.0
<b>2011</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85.0	88.1	89.2	77.8	81.8	83.4	82.6	72.5	80.5	77.9	55.9	74.9
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.8	96.9	96.8	93.8	95.7	96	95.6	93	95.1	93.7	86.3	93.9
Gap	10.8	8.8	7.6	16	13.9	12.6	13	20.5	14.6	15.8	30.4	19
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 1.5	± 1.3	± 1.4	± 1.9	± 1.7	± 1.6	± 1.7	± 2.3	± 1.7	± 1.9	± 2.5	± 2.2
<b>2012</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	83.0	87.4	82.9	77.6	78.7	80.8	82.7	68.3	77.6	74.2	51.5	78.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.4	96.7	95.7	93.7	94.6	95.2	95.3	91.3	94.6	92.8	83.1	94.5
Gap	12.4	9.3	12.6	16.1	15.9	14.4	12.6	23.0	17.0	18.6	31.6	16.4
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 1.5	± 1.8	± 1.9	± 1.8	± 1.9	± 1.7	± 1.7	± 2.2	± 1.8	± 2.2	± 2.5	± 2.1

Notes:

- a) A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.
- b) The confidence intervals for 2010 to 2012 in this table are specifically for New South Wales.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2010–2012.

**Figure NSW4: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, New South Wales, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA (2012 and unpublished), *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2012*.

Table NSW6 and Figure NSW4 provide an overview of the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in New South Wales achieving 'at or above' the national minimum standard outcomes in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy tests for 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students sitting the NAPLAN reading test in 2012, 83.0 per cent of Year 3 students, 77.6 per cent of Year 5 students, 82.7 per cent of Year 7 students and 74.2 per cent of Year 9 students achieved at or above the national minimum standard.

Of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students sitting the NAPLAN writing test in 2012, 87.4 per cent of Year 3 students, 78.7 per cent of Year 5 students, 68.3 per cent of Year 7 students and 51.5 per cent of Year 9 students achieved at or above the national minimum standard.

Of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students sitting the NAPLAN numeracy test in 2012, 82.9 per cent of Year 3 students, 80.8 per cent of Year 5 students, 77.6 per cent of Year 7 students and 78.1 per cent of Year 9 students achieved at or above the national minimum standard.

There was an achievement gap in all NAPLAN tests between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2012, the gap was smallest for Year 3 writing (9.3 percentage points) and largest for Year 9 writing (31.6 percentage points).

Relative to 2011, NAPLAN reading and numeracy outcomes in 2012 showed there was an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above national minimum standard outcomes in Year 7 reading and Year 9 numeracy. There was a decrease in the proportion of students achieving at or above national minimum standard outcomes in: Year 3 reading, writing and numeracy; Year 5 reading, writing and numeracy; Year 7 writing and numeracy; and Year 9 reading and writing, although most of the changes are not statistically significant when confidence intervals are included.

## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

**Table NSW7: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, New South Wales, 2012 (per cent)**

Geolocation	New South Wales		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	86.9	95.7	82.6	95.2
Provincial	81.3	94.2	79.9	93.5
Remote	67.7	93.6	61.2	91.6
Very Remote	65.9	91.3	39.9	90.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	81.8	94.0	76.0	93.6
Provincial	75.4	92.7	72.7	91.9
Remote	64.6	88.6	50.5	89.7
Very Remote	51.6	88.9	20.3	86.5
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	85.4	95.5	84.0	95.4
Provincial	81.3	94.8	80.8	94.5
Remote	72.3	93.1	65.4	93.4
Very Remote	61.3	n.p.	37.6	92.7
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	77.8	92.9	74.6	92.9
Provincial	72.8	92.6	70.9	92.0
Remote	51.0	81.3	50.9	90.5
Very Remote	n.p.	96.3	24.4	87.9
<b>Writing</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	90.4	97.0	87.3	96.6
Provincial	86.1	95.8	85.2	95.6
Remote	72.0	95.2	63.2	95.5
Very Remote	75.9	97.8	40.2	94.3
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	84.4	95.4	77.3	94.3
Provincial	75.4	92.1	73.3	91.6
Remote	65.7	89.4	53.2	90.6
Very Remote	48.9	93.0	24.9	86.7
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	74.4	92.5	74.5	92.4
Provincial	64.5	87.5	68.0	88.6
Remote	50.1	77.4	47.0	88.0
Very Remote	n.p.	n.p.	25.6	89.1
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	56.8	84.8	56.9	85.0
Provincial	48.7	77.6	49.7	79.0
Remote	26.9	59.0	32.6	75.9
Very Remote	n.p.	80.0	17.0	74.6
<b>Numeracy</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	86.9	96.1	81.4	95.5
Provincial	81.0	94.4	78.8	93.9
Remote	64.9	94.3	58.6	93.0
Very Remote	72.3	92.6	37.9	91.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	85.2	95.5	79.5	95.0
Provincial	78.3	94.3	76.3	93.6
Remote	71.4	91.5	55.3	92.5
Very Remote	55.6	94.1	29.2	89.1
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	80.8	94.9	82.3	95.2
Provincial	75.7	93.6	78.6	94.1
Remote	68.0	91.8	64.1	93.6
Very Remote	n.p.	n.p.	42.4	92.4
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	81.3	94.9	79.9	95.0
Provincial	76.5	93.6	76.8	94.0
Remote	65.7	87.6	61.7	93.6
Very Remote	n.p.	97.4	42.9	91.8

Note: 'n.p.' indicates data not published as there were no students tested or the number tested was less than 30.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.

## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

Table NSW7 shows the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard outcomes by geolocation. The data indicates that the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in New South Wales achieving at or above the national minimum standard in 2012 consistently declined from metropolitan locations to provincial, remote and very remote areas. The difference between the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard outcomes in metropolitan locations compared to very remote areas ranged from 14.5 percentage points for Year 3 writing to 35.5 percentage points for Year 5 writing. This trend is even stronger in the national data, reaching a maximum difference of 55.7 percentage points for Year 5 reading.

For non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, both in New South Wales and nationally, the impact of geolocation is much less marked. In some cases (for example, Year 7 reading and Year 5 writing) the proportion of non-Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander students in very remote areas achieving at or above national minimum standard outcomes exceeded the proportion in metropolitan areas in New South Wales.

The 2012 trends in NAPLAN geolocation data for both New South Wales and Australia overall are consistent with those reported in 2010 and 2011.

## 2012 NAPLAN data and 2012 progress points for New South Wales

Table NSW8 shows the 2018 'Closing the Gap' targets for the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy tests. To monitor achievement in relation to the 2018 targets, progress points for each State and Territory were developed. These are also listed in Table NSW8. When the results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012 NAPLAN tests (see Table NSW6) are compared to the progress points listed in Table NSW8, the data indicate that New South Wales met its 2012 progress point for Year 5 numeracy.

**Table NSW8: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy progress points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving at or above the national minimum standard (2008–2012), New South Wales (per cent)**

Year	Reading				Writing				Numeracy			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2008	83.5	77.6	82.4	82.3	90.9	81.7	76.9	67.7	88.6	78.9	84.5	80.3
2009	83.6	77.7	82.5	82.4	90.9	81.8	77.0	67.8	88.6	79.0	84.6	80.4
2010	83.8	77.9	82.7	82.6	91.0	82.0	77.3	68.2	88.8	79.2	84.8	80.6
2011	84.1	78.4	83.0	82.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	89.0	79.7	85.1	81.0
2012	84.5	79.0	83.5	83.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	89.3	80.3	85.5	81.6
2018	89.8	86.3	89.5	89.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	93.1	87.4	90.8	88.2

Note: 'n/a' indicates data was unavailable for writing. There is a break in series from 2011, and the trajectory points were calculated on the first test type (narrative), not the second (persuasive), for 2011 and 2012. As such, from 2011, there are no relevant trajectories to report against.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2008–2012.

## NAPLAN participation

**Table NSW9: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, exemptions, absences/withdrawals and assessed students in New South Wales and Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7		Year 9	
	NSW	Aust.	NSW	Aust.	NSW	Aust.	NSW	Aust.
<b>Reading</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.3	89.7	94.0	89.6	89.9	87.8	79.0	77.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	97.2	95.7	97.6	96.3	96.8	95.9	94.6	92.9
<b>Writing</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.4	89.9	93.8	89.5	90.0	87.6	79.4	77.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	97.1	95.6	97.6	96.2	96.9	96.1	94.9	93.2
<b>Numeracy</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	92.9	88.2	93.1	88.4	88.0	86.2	77.0	75.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	96.9	95.5	97.2	96.0	96.4	95.6	93.8	92.4

Note: The NAPLAN participation data provided reflects students who were exempted, absent/withdrawn and assessed.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.

As was the case in 2010 and 2011, the participation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012 NAPLAN tests was lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, both in New South Wales and nationally.

The participation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in New South Wales was relatively stable in Years 3 and 5, but dropped in Year 7 and then dropped further still in Year 9. For non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, participation rates were relatively stable until Year 9 where it dropped slightly. This pattern is consistent with that reported in 2010 and 2011.

In 2012, in all school years and across each of the three NAPLAN test domains, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in NAPLAN tests in New South Wales was above the national average. This pattern is also consistent with that reported in 2010 and 2011.

## Systemic level actions (30)

### Action 30

As was the case in 2011, all three sectors continued to provide school staff, including staff in Focus schools in remote areas, with the opportunity to participate in English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) or English as a Second Language or Dialect (ESL/D) professional development activities and/or consultancy support. The Department continued to provide EAL/D professional development workshops, which supported the application of EALD pedagogies and the implementation of a bi-dialectal approach to teaching Standard Australian English to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2012, a further 190 staff (teachers and Aboriginal Education Workers) from the original 88 government sector Focus schools participated in this training.

In 2012, in collaboration with its counterparts in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the Department also continued to contribute to the development of an EAL/D



online resource through the Senior Officers National Network of Indigenous Education (SONNIE). The Department also continued to be involved in the development of an online induction program for the National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools (NARIS) and to be represented on both the NARIS National Working Party and Steering Committee.

## Local level actions (31 and 32)

### Action 31

In 2012, 95 Focus schools across all three school sectors had in place a whole-of-school approach to the teaching and learning of Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy, up from the 55 reported in 2011. Some of the strategies employed by Focus schools across the three sectors to support teaching and learning included:

- using Neale Analysis, Torch Tests, PB Benchmarks, Observation Surveys and Running Records to monitor individual student performance
- engaging speech pathologists to conduct language assessments and provide advice to teachers
- the provision of ongoing consultancy support, and
- the employment of additional staff (for example, tutors) to support students in their learning.

### Action 32

In 2012, teachers and education workers in Focus schools with a whole-of-school approach to literacy and numeracy participated in professional learning in the particular approaches implemented in their schools. This included programs such as: Focus On Reading; Accelerated Literacy; Reading to Learn; MultiLit; MiniLit; Taking Off With Numeracy (TOWN); Targeted Early Numeracy (TEN); QuickSmart; Count Me In Too, Counting On; and Go Maths.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. *Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*

12. *Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*

13. *Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

## Overall progress

A range of professional development opportunities related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic training continued to be provided to principals, teachers and Aboriginal Education Officers in all three sectors in New South Wales in 2012. This included:

- Connecting to Country (completed by staff in targeted government schools and five independent schools in 2012)
- the provision of various regional or diocesan level cultural awareness and cultural competency training workshops and seminars
- involvement in the Strong Smarter Leadership Program, and
- the provision of training in culturally inclusive pedagogies.

Overall, there has been an increase in the FTE of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals and teachers employed in schools in New South Wales in 2012, relative to 2011. Across sectors, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals in New South Wales increased by 7.5 FTE, while the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers increased by 121.6 FTE. The unavailability of FTE data for Aboriginal Education Workers in the Catholic sector in 2011 means that no comment can be made about trends for this classification of staff. Table NSW10 shows that in 2012, as was the case in 2011, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools in New South Wales were employed in the government sector. In 2012, relative to 2011, there was an increase in the FTE of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals employed in the government and Catholic sectors (going from 25.2 FTE to 29.7 FTE in the government sector and from 0 to 3.0 in the Catholic sector). There was an increase in the FTE of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching staff employed in all three sectors (going from 693.7 FTE to 750.2 FTE in the government sector, from 40.0 FTE to 105.0 FTE in the Catholic sector and from 22.1 FTE to 22.2 FTE in the independent sector). There was also an increase in the FTE of Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers

**Table NSW10: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents) in New South Wales, by sector, 2012**

	FTE
<b>Government</b>	
Principals	29.7
Teaching staff	750.2
AIEWs and equivalents	381.3
<b>Catholic</b>	
Principals	3
Teaching staff	105
AIEWs and equivalents	100
<b>Independent</b>	
Principals	2
Teaching staff	22.2
AIEWs and equivalents	7.1

Source: New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, Human Resources administrative records, 2012; New South Wales Catholic Education Commission administrative records, 2012; New South Wales Association of Independent Schools administrative records, 2012.

in the government and independent sectors (going from 359.9 FTE to 381.3 FTE in the government sector and from 3.0 FTE to 7.1 FTE in the independent sector).

Table NSW11 shows that principals in government sector Focus schools had been employed at their current school for an average of approximately 45 months. Teachers in government sector Focus schools had been employed at their current school for an average of approximately 87 months. Relative to 2011, in 2012 there was an increase in the average length of service of principals and teachers in both the government and independent sectors, (going from 41 to 45 months for principals and from 85 to 87 months for teachers in the government sector, and from 53 months to 74.3 months of service for teachers in the independent sector). Data for the Catholic sector was not available.

**Table NSW11: Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard to staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (operationally defined as Focus schools), New South Wales, 2012**

Classification	Average length of service (in months)		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
Principals	45	n/a	76.6
Teachers	87	n/a	74.3

Note:

n/a Data for the Catholic sector was unavailable.

Source: New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, Human Resources administrative records, 2012; New South Wales Association of Independent Schools administrative records.

## Systemic level actions (41)

### Action 41

In 2012, as in 2011, the government, Catholic and independent sectors continued to provide a range of professional learning opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding of, and competencies in, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives. Across all sectors, these professional learning opportunities included involvement in the following initiatives: Connecting to Country; the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program; Dare to Lead activities; Aboriginal '8 Ways of Learning' pedagogies; bi-dialectal approaches to teaching; regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workshops and conferences; and the facilitation of an Aboriginal Education Worker mentoring program.

### Action 42

As reported in 2011, the Highly Accomplished Teacher classification was created under the Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership. The position provides the opportunity for high quality teachers to remain in the classroom while working with colleagues to enhance teacher quality. In 2012, six government sector Focus schools had a Highly Accomplished

Teacher. In addition, in 2012, fifty Instructional Leaders in Literacy and Numeracy were appointed in targeted schools throughout New South Wales. Twenty-six of these were in government sector Focus schools. Instructional Leaders work with the school executive to determine the professional learning needs of staff around strengthening the delivery of literacy and numeracy programs in kindergarten to Year 2 classrooms. They also work with teachers to build capacity through collaborative evaluation.

## Local level actions (43 and 44)

### Action 43

The Department, in collaboration with the NSW AECG, continued implementation of the Connecting to Country initiative to targeted schools in New South Wales. Every government sector Focus school was selected for inclusion in the program rollout in either 2011 or 2012. The five-day professional development program, funded by the Australian Government, commenced with a three-day intensive, in-the-field, cultural immersion program. This was followed by a two-day professional practice component, where principals and participating teachers translated their cultural learning into quality school leadership strategies and quality teaching practices. Principals from five of the six independent sector Focus schools also participated in the three-day cultural immersion component of the program in 2012. A number of principals in Focus schools also participated in the Stronger Smarter Leadership program, Dare to Lead, regional principals' conferences and regional collegial leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education network meetings.

### Action 44

Throughout 2012, the Department continued planning and gearing up for the implementation of the Local Schools, Local

Decisions reform package. Under Local Schools, Local Decisions, the proportion of the public education budget going directly to schools will increase from around 10 per cent to around 70 per cent. This will significantly increase the autonomy of principals and enhance their capacity to tailor school operations to meet the needs of their students, including their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Pathways to real post-school options

### Performance indicators

14. Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.

*Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there is no publicly available national level data for 2012.*

### Overall progress

The data in Tables NSW12 and NSW13 indicate that there has been an increase in both the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students awarded a Higher School Certificate and the number awarded a vocational qualification at AQF Certificate II and above, in the period 2010 to 2012.

Table NSW13 shows that there has been a steady increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who were awarded a vocational qualification at AQF Certificate II and above, going from 4,080 in 2010, to 5,055 in 2012.

**Table NSW12: Number of Higher School Certificate (HSC) awards completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, New South Wales, 2010–2012**

	2010	2011	2012
HSC Award – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	1,090	1,168	1,349
HSC Award – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	64,124	65,023	65,313

Source: New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, data derived from New South Wales Board of Studies' data, as at January 2013.

**Table NSW13: The number of vocational qualifications completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, at AQF Certificate II and above, New South Wales, 2010–2012<sup>(a)</sup>**

	2010	2011	2012 <sup>(b)</sup>
AQF Certificate II or above – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	4,080	4,698	5,055
AQF Certificate II or above – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	114,048	120,690	125,387

Notes:

- a) The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status 'not stated' for New South Wales was 7,015 in 2010, 7,843 in 2011 and 2,640 in 2012.
- b) Data for qualifications completed in 2012 are based on preliminary data submissions. The 2012 data will be revised upwards in the 2013 *VET Provider Collection* to accommodate further notification of qualifications completed.

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *VET Provider Collection*, 2013.

## Systemic level actions (48, 49 and 50)

### Action 48

Schools and TAFE NSW work closely with Youth Connections providers across all service regions in New South Wales to support young people who are disengaged, or at risk of disengagement, from education and training. New South Wales has negotiated with the Australian Government DEEWR to implement service targets for Youth Connections providers in regions with significant numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. In 2012, Youth Connections providers in New South Wales supported 2,396 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, slightly less than the 2,421 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people supported in 2011. Sixty-nine per cent of the 2012 cohort of young people at risk served by Youth Connections providers in New South Wales developed personal skills and attributes promoting wellbeing, resilience and supporting positive life choices. Forty-six per cent re-engaged with education, family and community and had successful education and transition outcomes.

### Action 49

The strengthening of partnerships between schools, vocational education and training (VET) providers and universities continued throughout 2012. Providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to participate in VET in Schools courses was pivotal in this process. In 2012, there were 5,160 enrolments by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

from both government and non-government schools in Stage 6 VET in Schools courses in New South Wales. This equates to 3,454 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking one or more Stage 6 VET in Schools courses. Funds from the National Partnership for Youth Attainment and Transitions were also utilised to provide \$7.2 million annually to 30 Work Placement Service Providers to facilitate the coordination of work placements for VET students from all school sectors. In 2012, these providers arranged 1,966 placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, participation in various regional Indigenous Job Markets and Expos also served to strengthen industry links and broaden horizons. At the regional level, links and partnerships with universities were established or maintained via programs such as Djinggi, Fast Forward and 2Uni.

### Action 50

In 2012, a range of innovative ICT tools and resources were in use to support the innovative uses of interactive technologies with all students in New South Wales, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These included: Connected Classrooms, Moodles, interactive whiteboards and bloggED. In addition, the Connected Learning Advisory Service website (which was designed to help teachers reflect on and enhance their use of ICT in their teaching practice) and TaLe4Students (a teaching and learning website that provided students access to a wide array of online learning resources) were also in operation.

## Local level actions (51, 52, 53, 54 and 55)

### Action 51

In 2012, over 3,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 11 and 12 were provided with up to 75 hours of tutorial assistance through the Department's Norta Norta program. Mentoring programs such as SistaSpeak and BroSpeak continued to operate in several departmental regions. A number of schools also engaged Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) to provide mentoring support to students.

### Action 52

The Department continued to support and fund school-based pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2012, 547 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were supported into school-based traineeships and a further 28 into school-based apprenticeships. A new element was added to the Department's Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program, creating pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into public and local government sectors through school-based traineeships. In 2012, 78 new pathways positions were created and funded by the Department.

### Action 53

The Department provided mentoring support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to increase retention and completion rates for apprentices and trainees under the Way Ahead for Aboriginal People Program. Under this program, 23 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees and apprentices, aged between 15-18 years, were provided with mentoring support to assist in their transition from school to employment and to help ensure that they successfully completed their training in 2012. In addition, regionally brokered or implemented programs, such as the Career Links and Beacon program, Project Murra and Work Bites, provided support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking school-based traineeships. At the school level, staff such as: Careers Advisors; Vocational Education and Training (VET) Coordinators; Aboriginal Education Officers and Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers also supported or case managed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking school-based traineeships.

### Action 54

Students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, access a range of career services facilitated by their

school's careers adviser or their school's career and transition team, under the umbrella of the New South Wales School to Work Program. In 2012, 466 government schools, using the Department's online reporting system, indicated that more than 149,400 students participated in one or more aspects of the School to Work Program. In 2012, 6.6 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, an increase from 6.1 per cent recorded in 2011. Examples of programs that were offered regionally in 2012 that specifically target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students included: SistaSpeak, BroSpeak, Aboriginal Career Expos, Digispeak, Djinggi, Deadly Days, Learn, Earn Legend and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Aboriginal project.

### Action 55

In 2012, a number of School Business Community Partnerships were operational across all government school regions. Examples of business partners providing opportunities and placements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012 included: the ABC; the National Australia Bank; Australia Post; Mission Australia; New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service; and a number of local government or shire councils.

## Good practice snapshots

### The Connecting to Country program

Connecting to Country is an intensive, five-day professional development program in Aboriginal education, which has been progressively rolled out in 143 targeted New South Wales government schools since mid-2011. Between two and five members of staff from these schools participated in the program, with the number of eligible participants being determined by the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in each school. The Department's Aboriginal Education and Community Engagement Unit and the NSW AECG jointly administer the program. The Australian Government DEEWR provided funding for the program's 2011 to 2012 implementation.

Connecting to Country addresses both the Engagement and Connections and the Leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce

Development domains of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*. It does so by focusing on enhancing teacher quality and educational leadership by engaging teachers and principals in a learning journey which demonstrates a deep knowledge and understanding of the cultural, historical and socio-political contexts relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, locally and generally.

The program focuses on developing teachers' and principals' willingness and ability to establish relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students based on learning about their students' cultural, linguistic and family backgrounds, then transferring that knowledge to inform classroom practice and pedagogy. The initiative focuses on teachers developing a true and deep understanding of 'who' their students are, and what their students' individual stories involve. At its heart, the initiative aims to increase the capacity of teachers and principals to establish and maintain genuine, respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities and to plan, develop and implement culturally inclusive programs.

By teachers and principals deepening their cultural knowledge and skills base through this initiative, it is anticipated that their educational leadership will be strengthened and their confidence in teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be increased, resulting in both improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and an educational transformation which is purposeful and sustainable.

In 2012, the five-day professional development program commenced with a three day, intensive, in-the-field cultural immersion component (Being Culturally Aware, Becoming Culturally Inclusive: A Pathway to Cultural Competence) that was developed by the NSW AECG and is facilitated by regional and/or local Aboriginal Education Consultative groups at the local level. The cultural immersion component was followed by a two-day professional practice workshop where participants translated their cultural knowledge, understanding and experiences into quality school leadership and quality teaching practices.

The design of the cultural immersion component, Being Culturally Aware, Becoming Culturally Inclusive: A Pathway to Cultural Competence, is noteworthy in that it provides a generic framework into which local experiences, cultures, histories and perspectives can be placed. This means that, in

addition to sharing national histories and perspectives, in each cultural immersion participants are introduced to aspects of local culture, local country, local history and personal stories shared by members of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The power of first-hand experience and personal connection are therefore harnessed in this professional development program.

An independent, external evaluation of Connecting to Country, undertaken by ARTD Consultants, concluded that it is a 'highly successful professional learning program for teachers and principals'.

The evaluation report's summary of key findings section states:

'Connecting to Country is a very well-conceived program, successfully delivered and largely achieving its objectives of increasing most teachers' willingness and capacity to engage with Aboriginal students, families and communities to integrate and apply what they had learnt from the program in the school and classroom.' (page xi)

Regarding the three-day cultural immersion component of Connecting to Country, the report indicates that:

'For many teachers and principals the cultural immersion workshop component in particular was simply the best professional learning experience they had ever had in regards to Aboriginal culture and history. Many recommended that every teacher and school leader in New South Wales should have an opportunity to attend the training.' (page xi)

Another key outcome of the program highlighted in the evaluation report relates to the impact of the program on local AECGs. The evaluation found that:

'Facilitation of the cultural immersion workshops has resulted in a growth in confidence and has empowered many local AECGs and other community members to work with schools and share planning for improving the schools' efforts. AECGs are now more often successfully supporting Aboriginal education in schools, mainly because schools have a greater appreciation of the value they can provide.' (page xiv)

(Source: ARTD Consultants, *Independent Evaluation of Connecting to Country*, April 2013.)



In view of the success of the program, the New South Wales Department has committed to fund the implementation of Connecting to Country in a further set of selected schools in 2013, in collaboration with the NSW AECG. Local and regional Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, empowered by the original rollout of the program, have also conducted additional cultural immersions for schools in their local areas, including schools in the independent sector.

## New South Wales Indigenous Education Consultative Body's (IECB's) feedback

The NSW AECG continued to share a strong, collaborative and purposeful working relationship with the New South Wales Department throughout 2012. The Partnership Agreement, *Maintaining a collaborative partnership into the future – Together We Are, Together We Can, Together We Will*, continued to provide the framework which underpinned this close collaboration.

The NSW AECG continued to sit on a number of high-level statewide advisory groups in 2012. These included: the Ministerial Advisory Group in Literacy and Numeracy, the Ministerial Working Party on Aboriginal School Attendance and the Director General's Aboriginal Education and Training Reference Group. The NSW AECG also continued to be engaged and involved at the local and regional levels, with 19 Regional AECGs and approximately 130 local AECGs operative and active throughout the State.

The NSW AECG also continued to work with TAFE NSW and a number of universities to enhance opportunities and strengthen pathways to further education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

While progress in bridging the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has been made, there is still work to be done.

The strength of the Department's commitment to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is critical to improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. For its part, the NSW AECG will continue to:

- advocate strongly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities
- work collaboratively with the Department
- give advice, contribute to initiatives, and
- support the implementation of systemic and local level actions across the six domains of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan.

## New South Wales Department of Education and Communities' response to New South Wales IECB's feedback

The New South Wales Government remains committed to closing the gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and all students in New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government understands that this can only be achieved by working in genuine partnership and close collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and continues to recognise the NSW AECG as the peak body in New South Wales representing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the sphere of education and training.

The Department values greatly its Partnership Agreement with the NSW AECG and, for its part, remains strongly committed to working closely, collaboratively, inclusively and respectfully with the NSW AECG into the future.

The Department thanks the NSW AECG for its frank, fearless and astute advice, its tenacity and perseverance in steadfastly advocating on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities and for partnering with the Department. Together we will build an education and training system that values and celebrates the identity and cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, is responsive to their needs and aspirations, and enables them to succeed and achieve their education and training goals.



# Distribution of Focus schools in New South Wales

**Figure NSW5: Map of New South Wales Focus schools**

(Focus schools are listed in a table following this map.)



Notes:

- Dots indicate location of Focus schools.
- Sydney metropolitan Focus schools are not individually identified.

## Focus school information

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Albion Park Rail Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	366	55.0			
Alma Public School	Gov.	Provincial	210	48.0	x	x	
Armidale High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	712.1	103.0			
Ashmont Public School	Gov.	Provincial	239	109.0		x	
Ballina High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	507.2	92.0			
Ballina Public School	Gov.	Provincial	283	72.0		x	
Baradine Central School	Gov.	Remote	119.6	53.0		x	
Batemans Bay High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	656.4	87.0		x	
Batemans Bay Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	483	91.0	x		
Bathurst West Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	388	59.0	x		
Bermagui Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	149	19.0			
Blackett Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	259	63.0		x	
Boggabilla Central School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	118.4	107.4		x	
Bourke High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	155.4	94.4		x	
Bourke Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	197	147.0	x	x	
Bowen Public School	Gov.	Provincial	158	69.0	x	x	
Braddock Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	186	29.0		x	
Brewarrina Central School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	170	162.0		x	
Broken Hill North Public School	Gov.	Provincial	277	74.0		x	
Budgewoi Public School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	547	56.0			
Buninyong Public School	Gov.	Provincial	270	177.0		x	
Casino Public School	Gov.	Provincial	525	122.0		x	
Casino West Public School	Gov.	Provincial	277	92.0		x	
Cobar Public School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	327	89.0			
Coffs Harbour High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	889.6	53.0			
Coffs Harbour Public School	Gov.	Provincial	321	66.0		x	
Collarenebri Central School	Gov.	Remote	99	76.0		x	
Condobolin Public School	Gov.	Provincial	273	143.0	x	x	
Coomealla High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	341.5	81.0			
Coonamble High School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	220.6	134.0		x	
Coonamble Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	201	178.0		x	
Coraki Public School	Gov.	Provincial	109	32.0	x	x	
Cowra Public School	Gov.	Provincial	328	64.0		x	
Cranebrook High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	824	107.0			
Crawford Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	512	72.0			
Curran Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	264	38.0		x	
Dareton Public School	Gov.	Provincial	64	50.0		x	
Doonside High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	703.4	89.0			
Doonside Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	173	54.0		x	
Drummond Memorial Public School	Gov.	Provincial	138	49.0		x	
Dubbo West Public School	Gov.	Provincial	293	177.0		x	
Duval High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	605.6	62.6			
Francis Greenway High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	769.4	86.6			
Gillwinga Public School	Gov.	Provincial	138	55.0		x	

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Glenroi Heights Public School	Gov.	Provincial	230	108.0		x	
Grafton High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	897.7	113.0		x	
Grafton Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	678	116.0			
Gunnedah Public School	Gov.	Provincial	132	82.0		x	
Hillvue Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	252	182.0	x	x	
Hunter Sports High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	842	118.0			
Inverell Public School	Gov.	Provincial	406	74.0	x	x	
Kanahooka High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	605	74.5			
Kanwal Public School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	737	90.0			
Kelso Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	255	68.0	x		
Kempsey West Public School	Gov.	Provincial	342	175.0		x	
Koonawarra Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	300	69.0		x	
Koorinal High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	840.8	66.0			
Leeton High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	436.4	58.0			
Lethbridge Park Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	351	68.0		x	
Lightning Ridge Central School	Gov.	Remote	377.8	158.6		x	
Lismore Heights Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	246	41.0	x		
Macksville Public School	Gov.	Provincial	399	64.0		x	
Manning Gardens Public School	Gov.	Provincial	162	77.0		x	
Marayong Public School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	459	33.0	x		
Menindee Central School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	106	72.0		x	
Middleton Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	265	30.0			
Mogo Public School	Gov.	Provincial	57	32.0		x	
Moree East Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	115	101.0		x	
Moree Secondary College Albert St (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	224.2	106.0		x	
Moree Secondary College Carol Ave (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	291	137.0		x	
Mount Austin Public School	Gov.	Provincial	250	72.0	x	x	
Mount Druitt Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	499	19.0		x	
Mount Warrigal Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	208	40.0	x	x	
Mudgee Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	515	46.0			
Narrabri West Public School	Gov.	Provincial	241	38.0		x	
Narromine Public School	Gov.	Provincial	407	170.0	x	x	
Newling Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	88	49.0	x		
Nowra East Public School	Gov.	Provincial	290	130.0		x	
Nyngan Public School	Gov.	Remote	142	69.0		x	
Oak Flats High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	792	57.0			
Parkview Public School	Gov.	Provincial	235	67.0		x	
Port Macquarie High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	792.1	48.0			
Port Macquarie Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	415	52.0	x		
Ross Hill Public School	Gov.	Provincial	679	94.0		x	
Shalvey Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	374	84.0		x	
South Grafton Public School	Gov.	Provincial	577	112.0	x	x	
Sturt Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	329	21.0			
Tahmoor Public School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	327	37.0			
Taree High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	969.6	98.0		x	
Taree Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	74	37.0		x	

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
The Sir Henry Parkes Memorial Public School	Gov.	Provincial	256	54.0		x	
Tingha Public School	Gov.	Provincial	96	60.0		x	
Tolland Public School	Gov.	Provincial	182	70.0		x	
Toomelah Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	41	41.0		x	
Toormina High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	772.4	103.0			
Toormina Public School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	298	55.0			
Tregear Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	356	87.0		x	
Tweed Heads South Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	206	67.0	x	x	
Tweed River High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	926.6	111.0			
Wagga Wagga High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	1,033.4	55.0			
Walgett Community College – High School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	104	99.0		x	x
Walgett Community College - Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	125	121.0		x	x
Warren Central School	Gov.	Provincial	213	92.0		x	
Wee Waa Public School	Gov.	Provincial	156	74.0		x	
Wellington Public School	Gov.	Provincial	486	239.0		x	
Westlawn Public School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	478	33.0			
Westport High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	579.2	65.6			
Westport Public School	Gov.	Provincial	301	69.0		x	
Whalan Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	318	71.0		x	
Wilcannia Central School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	92.8	89.8		x	x
William Bayldon Public School	Gov.	Provincial	206	59.0	x	x	
Windale Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	234	67.0		x	
Woodberry Public School	Gov.	Metropolitan	180	44.0		x	
Woodenbong Central School	Gov.	Provincial	216	80.4		x	
Currawah Adventist Aboriginal College (NS)	Ind.	Very Remote	17	17			
Macleay Vocational College (IFS)	Ind.	Provincial	87.2	67.6	x		
Minimbah Aboriginal Primary School	Ind.	Provincial	42	38		x	
Nowra Anglican College	Ind.	Provincial	664	57			
St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School	Ind.	Metropolitan	21.4	21.4	x		
Taree Christian College (IFS)	Ind.	Provincial	489	61	x		
St Mary's Primary School, Armidale (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	298	22			
St Joseph's Primary School, Taree	Cath.	Provincial	397	64		x	
St Augustine's Primary School, Coffs Harbour (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	642	25			
St Agnes' Primary School, Port Macquarie (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	603	28			
St Carthage's Primary, Lismore (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	652	25			
St Joseph's Primary School, South Grafton (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	161	11			
St Josephs, Tweed Heads (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	331	11			
St Joseph's, Port Macquarie (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	397	22			
St John the Evangelist, Campbelltown (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	562	39		x	

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Good Shepherd Primary, Plumpton (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	751	19			
St Michael's Primary, Nowra (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	431	34		x	
St Joseph's School, Walgett (IFS)	Cath.	Remote	178	85	x		x
St Francis Xavier Primary, Lake Cargelligo (IFS)	Cath.	Remote	47	34			
St Mary's Primary, Bowraville (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	47	40			
Our Lady of Mt Carmel Primary, Waterloo (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	130	88			
St Ignatius' School, Bourke (IFS)	Cath.	Very Remote	123	54		x	
St Therese's Community School, Wilcannia	Cath.	Very Remote	28	28			x
St Joseph's School, Peak Hill	Cath.	Provincial	29	6		x	
St Patrick's School, Brewarrina (IFS)	Cath.	Remote	50	24		x	
St Joseph's Primary, West Kempsey (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	442	54		x	
St Mary's Central School, Wellington (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	207	31			
St Therese's Primary School, Sadleir (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	330	37			
St Pius X Primary School, Windale (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	38	10		x	

Note: shading denotes schools that became Focus schools in 2012.

IFS – school received funding in 2012 under the *Investing in Focus Schools* initiative.

NS – school received funding in 2012 under the *Focus Schools Next Steps* initiative.

# Report on the Remote Service Delivery (RSD) Service Delivery Standards

## Schooling Domain

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) has agreed to use the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* reporting processes to report on schooling service delivery standards for schools located in Remote Service Delivery communities. The following is the report for schools in Remote Service Delivery communities in New South Wales.

### RSD standard (a)

All school-aged children will have access to an appropriate school and/or a distance-learning alternative.

#### Action Plan link

There is no directly equivalent measure in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* for this standard. The following information provides details of the schooling services and other programs available in the Remote Service Delivery communities.

### New South Wales report on outcomes

Number of RSD communities in New South Wales that have:

- pre-primary programs in schools/other centres: **2 out of 2**
- primary schools: **2 out of 2**
- secondary schools: **2 out of 2**
- secondary schools with TAFE programs: **2 out of 2**

In each of the Remote Service Delivery communities in New South Wales (Walgett and Wilcannia), students were provided with the opportunity to access VET in Schools programs. Across both sites, students were enrolled in Hospitality, Business

Services, Fashion Design and Technology and Metals and Engineering courses.

The school providing secondary education in one location was involved in a departmental Access Program. In effect, this allowed the school to offer a broader and more responsive curriculum by linking up via videoconferencing and other collaborative technologies with other schools in the Access Program cluster to provide a shared curriculum for Year 11 and 12 students. This school also provided students with the opportunity to be involved in School Based Traineeships.

### RSD standard (b)

A personalised learning plan for all students negotiated between school staff and families. For Years 10, 11 and 12 students, schools will augment personalised learning plans with activity to support the transition to further education and/or employment.

#### Action Plan link

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate local level actions that pertain to this standard. Action 21 includes the development of personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from the first year of formal schooling to Year 10 to support improved educational outcomes. It should be recognised that personalised learning strategies are not the same as personalised learning plans. In some cases, but not all, quantitative information about both personalised learning strategies and plans may be available.

A second local level action, Action 51, states that secondary schools will provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and targeted case management strategies to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12. Qualitative information for this action is available.

### New South Wales report on outcomes

There were a total of 440 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in schools in the two New South Wales RSD communities in 2012. Of these, 192 had a Personalised Learning Plan. This equates to 43.6 per cent of the cohort.

The government schools in the two RSD communities became Connected Communities schools in 2013. As a result, the Executive Principals will work to develop Personalised Learning Plans for all students during 2013.

The Executive Principals in these schools will also develop more tailored learning opportunities and targeted case management strategies for students in Years 10 to 12 during 2013.

## RSD standard (c)

All schools have literacy and numeracy strategies that respond to the needs of students, particularly recognising the needs of students who speak English as another language.

### Action Plan link

There is some alignment between the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* action (Action 31) and this standard. Action 31 states in part: 'Focus schools will, during 2011, have in place a whole-of-school approach to the teaching and learning of Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy which builds from students' home language(s) where Standard Australian English is a second or further language.' The quantitative data that can be reported is about whole-of-school approaches rather than strategies.

## New South Wales report on outcomes

There are four schools\* located in the two RSD communities, two Catholic primary schools and two government schools providing preschool to Year 12 education. Three of the four schools had a whole-of-school approach to teaching literacy or numeracy in place in 2012.

The one school that did not have a whole-of-school approach to teaching literacy and numeracy in place in 2012 became a Connected Communities school in 2013. As a result, the Executive Principal will work to develop a whole-of-school approach to teaching literacy and numeracy during 2013. This will include provision for the needs of students who speak English as an Additional Language or Dialect.

Selected staff at the two government schools that participated in training in English as an Additional Language or Dialect. This training supported the implementation of English as

an Additional Language or Dialect pedagogies and the implementation of a Bi-dialectal approach to teaching Standard Australian English to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who speak Aboriginal English as their home dialect.

\* Note: for the purposes of this reporting, Walgett Community College is treated as one school. However, in the list of New South Wales Focus schools, Walgett Community College Primary School is listed separately from Walgett Community College Secondary School.

## RSD standard (d)

All schools establish a school and community partnership with local families, which includes an attendance strategy, establishes goals for improvement and is reported on annually.

### Action Plan link

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to this standard and it should be noted that they are addressed separately, i.e. one is not part of the other. Local level Action 19 states: 'Focus schools will commence negotiating a formal school–community partnership agreement between the school, families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in 2011 that sets out the respective responsibilities of each party and the ways in which they will work together to create a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes.' Some quantitative data for schools in Remote Service Delivery communities is available for this action.

The second, separate action (Action 26) ensures that Focus schools will:

- commence developing an evidence-based attendance strategy in 2011 in consultation with parents and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which includes targets for improved attendance and reflects how the school responds to and seeks to enhance the linguistic, cultural and contextual resources that students bring to their schooling
- publish their attendance strategy in 2012



- evaluate and monitor the success of their attendance strategy, and
- report annually on progress towards meeting their targets.

Reporting for this standard will be via the two separate actions noted above.

## New South Wales report on outcomes

Three of the four schools\* located in the two RSD communities had a school–community partnership agreement in place in 2012. The fourth school was in the process of negotiating one.

Each of the four schools reported having an attendance strategy in place in 2012. Two of the schools reported using both a bus to take students to and from school and the implementation of an attendance rewards and incentives program as key components of their school attendance strategies.

\* Note: for the purposes of this reporting, Walgett Community College is treated as one school. However, in the list of New South Wales Focus schools, Walgett Community College Primary School is listed separately from Walgett Community College Secondary School.

## Chapter 6

# Victoria report on activities and outcomes

## Introduction

The Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is young and growing. As at the 2011 census, more than one in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians were under 15 years of age, with a median age of 22 years (compared with 37 years for the Victorian population overall).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is also growing more than two and half times faster (nearly five per cent per year) than the rest of the Victorian population, and faster than in other jurisdictions (with the exception of the ACT). The growth may be driven by a combination of high birth rates, net migration to Victoria (eg, for education or employment opportunities) and increased self-identification by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

As at the 2011 Census, there were 37,991 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria, comprising 0.7 per cent of the total population. Of these, 46 per cent lived in metropolitan Melbourne and 53 per cent in regional Victoria. Victoria has no areas classified as 'remote'. Victoria's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population includes those with connections to lands in Victoria, and those whose lands are elsewhere in Australia.

In 2012, the number of students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in Victorian schools grew to 11,285, an increase of 33 per cent between 2007 and 2012. The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (9,728) were enrolled in the government system, with 1,557 enrolled in the non-government sector. In line with the overall national trend, the proportion of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in the government schools sector is declining relative to the non-government sector – the government sector enrolment is down from 89.2 per cent in 2007, to 86.2 per cent in 2012.

Policies and initiatives to improve the education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in Victoria are implemented through the Wannik Strategy for school education (since 2008), the Wurreeker Strategy for vocational education and training (since 2002), and through a range of targeted early childhood programs provided in partnership with a range of external organisations including a number of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Priorities over recent years have been:

- expanding and developing the statewide Koorie education workforce

- encouraging and supporting services to respect, recognise and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity
- improving engagement of government, schools and service providers with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community, and
- improving data collection to better inform policy design and resource allocation.

These strategies and approaches are currently being evaluated. The findings will contribute to the development of a combined life-course strategy covering Koorie early childhood development, school education and post-school pathways.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria also has a strong commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. In 2012, there were 1,040 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled across 240 Catholic schools, and an extensive range of initiatives in place to support their learning, attendance and engagement at school.

The commitment of independent schools across Victoria to providing education opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is demonstrated through a significant rise in enrolments over recent years. In 2012, 517 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in independent schools; an increase of more than 90 per cent since 2008. Enrolments are spread across 128 schools, including 61 at Worawa College in Healesville, a boarding school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls from low socio-economic backgrounds. Individual academic tuition and boarding scholarships are offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by a number of independent schools. These scholarships are funded by schools, philanthropic organisations and community members.

## Profile of Focus schools

There are 124 Focus schools in Victoria: 115 in the government sector and nine in the Catholic sector. No schools in the Victorian independent sector have been identified as Focus schools.

Victorian Focus schools comprise 113 primary schools, eight Preparatory to Year 12 (P-12) colleges, one P-9 college and two secondary colleges. In 2012, 2,814 Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander students were enrolled in Focus schools, comprising 2,682 government school enrolments and 132 Catholic enrolments.

Fifty-five Victorian Focus schools participate in Smarter Schools National Partnerships programs – 21 of these in the National Partnership for Literacy and Numeracy, and 34 in the National Partnership for Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities. Victoria does not have any Focus schools classified as remote.

In 2012, 39 Victorian Focus schools received funding through the Investing in Focus Schools program, and four were identified for participation in the Focus Schools Next Steps Initiative.

In 2012, Victorian Focus schools continued to undertake Collegial School Snapshots or situational analyses through the Dare to Lead program, with 107 snapshots or mini-snapshots completed by the end of the year. These involved interviews by the Dare to Lead State Coordinator with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents, community and school employees, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, teachers and executive staff. Schools have been able to use this information to effectively plan for improved outcomes for students.

A map (Figure VIC5) and list detailing the location of Focus schools in Victoria are provided at the end of this chapter.

## Victorian report on progress by Domains

### Readiness for school

#### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

## Overall progress

Data for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection have been sourced from the Australian Government and the State and Territory departments with responsibility for early childhood education and care and the ACT Catholic Education Office. The National Collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) that facilitates consistency of data provision across the various jurisdictional collections. Alignment with these standards has not been completely achieved by all jurisdictions for 2012, and care should be taken when comparing States and Territories.

Some jurisdictions were not able to provide certain data elements as specified in the ECEC NMDS for the National ECEC Collection. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to identify children attending multiple Pre-school programs within the collection reference period. It is also a challenge to report accurately the number of children enrolled in and attending a Pre-school program, without counting an individual child more than once. When a child attends two different Pre-school programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. This child is only counted once in child counts. All Pre-school episodes associated with a child are included in Pre-school episode counts. Australian totals in Table VIC1 need to be interpreted with care due to the mixed populations that are reported between States and Territories.

Comparison of data year to year is not possible due to collection, output and processing methodology not being consistent across years.

For further information on the ECEC NMDS, collection methodologies and coverage for the National ECEC Collection, please see the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National ECEC Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat. No. 4240.0.55.001).

Table VIC1 data show the proportion of 4 year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in and attending kindergarten in Victoria to be 97.5 per cent, significantly higher than the national percentage of 82 per cent. However, the accuracy of this comparison is limited due to the use of

**Table VIC1: Summary of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program, Victoria and Australia, 2012**

	Victoria		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children
Number of children enrolled	944	77,007	11,237	266,036
Children enrolled over ERP (per cent)	108.0	105.2	82	88.5
Number of children attending	852	73,565	11,295	258,881
Percentage of children attending over ERP <sup>(a)</sup>	97.5	100.5	82	86.1
Percentage of children enrolled that are attending <sup>(b)</sup>	90.3	95.5	100.52	97.3
ERP 4 year olds – as at June 2012 <sup>(c)</sup>	874	73,196	13,763	300,596

Notes:

- a) Calculated as the percentage of children identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attending, over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- b) Calculated as the percentage of children identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolled.
- c) ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and may not reflect actual participation.
- d) Enrolment and attendance counts include children aged 4 and 5 years. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (unpublished); ABS, (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics* (Cat.No. 3101.0); ABS, (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).

artificially low 4 year-old population estimates based on 2006 Census figures. The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (the Department) is of the view that using Prep enrolments in the following year as a proxy measure for the population estimate of 4 year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enables a more accurate calculation of kindergarten participation. Using Prep enrolments from the following year as the denominator shows Victorian 4 year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kindergarten participation in 2012 to be approximately 70 per cent (25 per cent lower than the participation rate for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children).

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Victoria who are assessed as developmentally on track in four or more domains (52.1 per cent) is higher than the national percentage (47.7 per cent) but is significantly lower than the proportion of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (72.5 per cent). There has been an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children in Victoria being assessed as developmentally on track – from 47.3 per cent in 2009, to 52.1 per cent in 2012.

**Table VIC2: Proportion of children in Victoria assessed as 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 (per cent)**

	Victoria	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	52.1	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	72.5	70.3

Notes:

- a) The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- b) Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored above the 25th percentile of the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- c) Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge need to also be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Index* data, 2012 data collection.

## Systemic level actions

### Action 5

All sectors of the Victorian education system are being targeted to increase the use of the AEDI, to help service providers better connect with their local community by understanding the needs of their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. These discussions with the local community place them in a better position to develop outreach strategies to connect families, and provide more appropriate services including early childhood education and care, health, family support, welfare and community services. The Department works closely with schools to support the use of AEDI data to identify the needs of children and put in place appropriate remedial strategies.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) has used the AEDI as a platform to better understand the early literacy data, allowing it to extensively identify the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the first year of schooling. The AEDI provides an evidence base allowing schools to respond with more suitably matched interventions for the local community, as well as assisting schools to connect families with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

Victorian independent schools have access to advice about AEDI through Independent Schools Victoria (ISV).

### Action 6

Victoria has a comprehensive range of programs to support universal access to early childhood education across all communities. Four year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have access to a fee subsidy that makes participation in a kindergarten program effectively free. Three year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are also able to access up to 15 hours a week of a funded early childhood program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, therefore, have the opportunity to access two years of a funded kindergarten program prior to starting school.

Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) and Koorie Preschool Assistants (KPSAs) are employed by the Department to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to access the broad range of services they need to make sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have the best start in life. They also offer advice and practical support to providers of funded kindergarten programs and help them to deliver programs that are respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural

beliefs and practices. Other targeted initiatives support families to strengthen the education and development of their children, including: In-Home Support and Home-Based Learning programs, the Aboriginal Best Start program and supported playgroups. Child and Family Centres foster strong connections between early childhood education and care, health, family support, welfare and community services, with Bubup Wilam in Whittlesea centre commencing operation in February 2012, and Dala Yooro, the second centre, due to open in Bairnsdale in August 2013.

The CECV's involvement in Best Start programs has been instrumental in developing working relationships across a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years initiatives in the Catholic sector. In 2012, 451 out of 486 schools (92.8 per cent) responded to the CECV Indigenous Survey. The survey data identified 92 Prep students, of whom 63 per cent were considered ready for school in relation to literacy skills, and 68 per cent were considered ready in relation to numeracy skills.

### Action 7

In 2012, linguistically and culturally appropriate on-entry assessment programs were offered to all Victorian schools, including the School Entrance Health Questionnaire (SEHQ), which records a family's concerns and observations about their child's health and wellbeing on entry to school. As a tool for clinical practice, used by nurses to assess children's health and wellbeing and to identify issues that may impact on their child's learning, the SEHQ provides a point of engagement with families and educators. The SEHQ involves a universal health screen for over 800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and has 90 per cent coverage of Victorian schools. Victorian government schools also use Transition Learning and Development Statements to provide information to families about their children's learning and development in early childhood, and to assist teachers to plan for every child's learning and development when they start school.

Catholic schools complete literacy and numeracy assessments for all incoming Prep students, and this data is used to determine students who are 'at risk'.

## Local level actions (8)

### Action 8

All Victorian schools, including Focus schools, are encouraged to implement the AEDI. Schools across the government, Catholic and independent sectors are supported to maximise participation in the data collection and subsequent use of the data to identify and address any readiness for school issues.

The CECV Literacy and Numeracy Framework uses data to identify student needs, develop responses, and monitor student outcomes from the earliest stages on an ongoing basis.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicators

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school–community partnership agreement in place.*

### Overall progress

In 2012, 88 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Victorian government schools had a Personalised Learning Plan.

Sixteen Focus schools (13 per cent) have school–community partnerships in place, with a further 23 Focus schools (19 per cent) indicating they have begun the process of establishing a partnership. This is a significant improvement from 2011, when there were only three school–community partnerships in Victorian Focus schools. School–community partnerships between the school and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community set out responsibilities for each party and the ways they will work together to create a culture of high expectations to support improvements in engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### Systemic level actions (15, 16, 17 and 18)

#### Action 15

The Victorian government school sector has a statewide specialist Koorie Education Workforce, which supports culturally appropriate engagement between schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities; the development and implementation of outreach strategies and the brokerage of connections between families and specialist services; and student transitions between different parts of the learning and development system. The workforce comprises 10 (9 Full-Time Equivalent, or FTE) Koorie Education Co-ordinators (KECs), and 122 (109 FTE) KESOs.

There are 16 (8.5 FTE) Koorie Education Workers working in Victorian Catholic primary and secondary schools. A number of Koorie Education Workers are employed to work across a cluster of schools, including schools with low numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Their role includes supporting students and families to connect with relevant service providers. The CECV employs staff to assist schools and Koorie Education Workers to identify and access the most appropriate services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from early years through key transition points to senior years and pathways planning.

#### Action 16

Outreach supports, as described above, include those for 'at-risk' young people such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are pregnant or who are parents. Further work will be undertaken over the coming year to develop specific responses.

#### Action 17

The Victorian Government has invested heavily in the professional development of all members of the Koorie Education Workforce, with a view to ensuring that KESOs progress to a higher position classification by December 2013. The professional development includes recognition of prior learning and gap training to complete the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate IV in Education Support. In 2012, 49 workforce members completed the requirements for this qualification, with more expected to complete in 2013. A workforce-wide Tailored Professional Learning Package commenced in 2012, and regional workforce development activities have taken place regularly across the State.

In 2012, five of the Koorie Education Workers in the Catholic education system were supported to undertake undergraduate study in teaching, with a completion rate of 100 per cent.

#### Action 18

The Wannik Strategy strengthens the accountability mechanisms around government schools' engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners, families and communities. Targets to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes are included in school business plans and principal performance plans. The reporting process has been expanded to include the requirement for schools to report on additional measures, eg, whether the school flies the Aboriginal and/or the Torres Strait Islander flag or acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land.



In Catholic schools, accountability is supported by families' participation in Program Support Group (PSG) meetings. Schools are able to apply to CECV for funding to support the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and the establishment of PSGs is a condition of that funding being provided. Through PSGs, families receive detailed reports of their child or young person's progress and are involved in educational planning. The family is consulted in the development of a Personalised Learning Plan and included in its review.

Assistance is provided to develop individual learning plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in National Partnership independent schools.

## Local level actions (19, 20 and 21)

### Action 19

Following a pilot Koorie Parent and Community Engagement (KPaCE) program in 2011 to develop three school–community partnership agreements across the government schools sector, and a set of guidelines for statewide implementation, the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) developed a resource to support the development of school–community partnerships, which is being shared with Focus schools. In 2012, there was a significant increase across both sectors, in the number of Focus schools with school–community partnership agreements in place (16 schools). A further 23 agreements are partially completed.

Three of the CECV schools have completed and launched their school–community partnership agreements.

### Action 20

Eighteen Victorian government schools reported that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family forums are held on a regular basis with some occurring as frequently as once per month.

The CECV commenced preliminary work to establish family forums with their nine Focus schools in 2010, and this work continued in 2012. Involvement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in parent forums has allowed them to be directly involved in a range of initiatives, and to develop their formal school–family partnerships. In total, 20 family forums were conducted in Focus schools in 2012.

### Action 21

The Victorian Government has developed an online Koorie Education Learning Plan (KELP) that enables parents, teachers

and students to work together to improve outcomes for students, available at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/aboriginal/pages/wanniklearningplan.aspx>. The KELP is linked with the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) performance levels, teaching and learning strategies, attendance data and interactive data for schools, families and students, and was rolled out across all government schools during 2012. KESOs play a key role in engaging families in developing and monitoring individualised learning plans.

In the Catholic sector, 421 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) in place in 2012. The CECV puts an emphasis on identifying students with higher needs, and on schools using the plans to set goals, strategies and monitor progress on an ongoing basis. PLPs are working documents used to inform the teaching and learning process.

In independent schools, where there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in need, teachers are supported to develop appropriate learning strategies, including Individual Learning Plans.

## Attendance

### Performance indicators

5. *Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.*
6. *Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to 'Other' Australians.*
7. *Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
8. *Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

### Attendance rates

As presented in Figures VIC1.1 to VIC1.3, student attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Victorian government schools remain above 80 per cent across all year levels. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is around five per cent for the early primary school years, and increases progressively through to secondary school. The gap remained largely consistent across the 2010–2012 attendance data, with small reductions in the gap at most year levels. The



**Table VIC3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by sector, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>Government</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89	90	90	90	89	88	89	85	84	83	85	82
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	91	92	91	88
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	92	92	91	88
<b>Catholic</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85	87	90	89	87	90	88	89	85	85	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	95	95	95	95	94	94	93	92	93	78.0	78.0
<b>Total</b>	90	91	93	92	91	92	91	91	89	89	78	78
<b>Independent</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89	92	92	92	94	89	91	91	96	89	97	86
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	95	95	95	95	94	95	94	93	93	88	81
<b>Total</b>	94	95	95	95	95	94	95	94	93	93	89	81

Notes:

- Definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance data are not uniform. Therefore, direct comparisons of attendance rates between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made, nor can attendance data for 2011 be aggregated or averaged at the national or State level. Variations in methodology between jurisdictions are described in the explanatory notes for the 2012 attendance data contained in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012*.
  - The figures for Years 1–10 include students in primary, secondary and primary/secondary schools. Ungraded figures include students in special schools only.
- n/a not available.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

lowest attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were for Year 10 (83 per cent), and ungraded secondary (82 per cent). The largest gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance also occurred at Year 10 (nine percentage points).

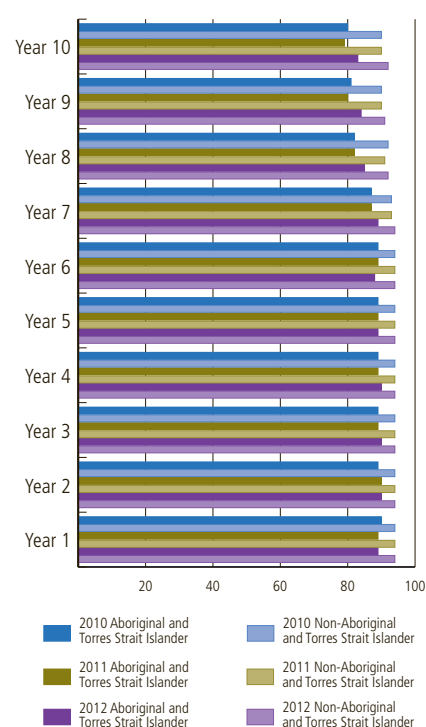
In Catholic schools, attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students remained at about 80 per cent. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students ranged from three to nine percentage points across year levels.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at independent schools had attendance rates at 89 per cent and above across all the year levels. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had higher attendance rates than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 9 and Ungraded Primary.

## Enrolment to population ratio

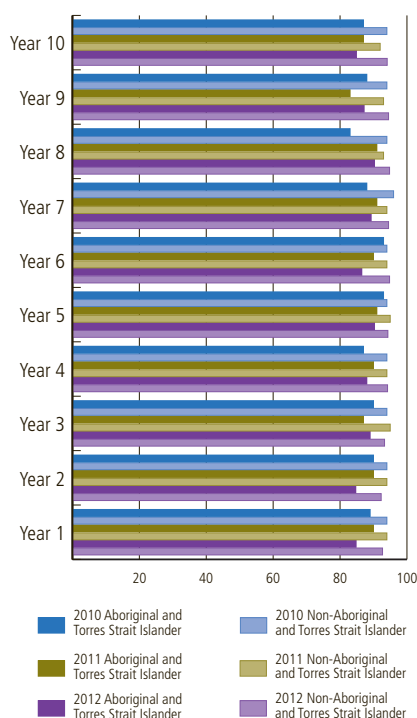
School participation rates by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status for 2012 have not been published due to concerns with the quality of the indicator. Specifically, the rates for most

**Figure VIC1.1: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, Victoria, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



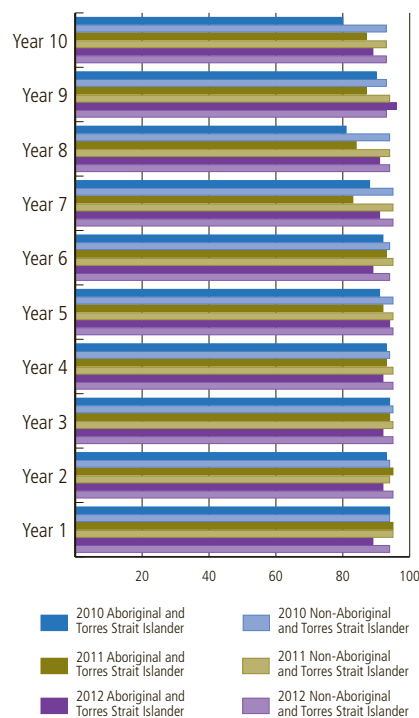
Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure VIC1.2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, Victoria, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure VIC1.3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, Victoria, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

States and Territories exceed 100 per cent, primarily as a result of modal differences in the data sources. The denominator is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Estimated Resident Population* series, itself drawn from the Population Census, while the numerator is sourced from the ABS National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The Australian Bureau of Statistics is working to provide a substitute measure.

## Apparent retention rates

The apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7 to 10 are similar to those for the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. The rates for Years 7 to 10 are over 100 per cent due to migration to Victoria. There is a large gap in apparent retention rates (notionally 31.4 per cent) between Years 7 to 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; however, the rates for the Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander cohort are likely to be affected by high levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student mobility.

It should also be noted that within Victoria a significant number of 15 to 19 year-olds continue schooling to Year 12 or equivalent through the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and the statistics for these students will not be reflected in the apparent retention rates above.

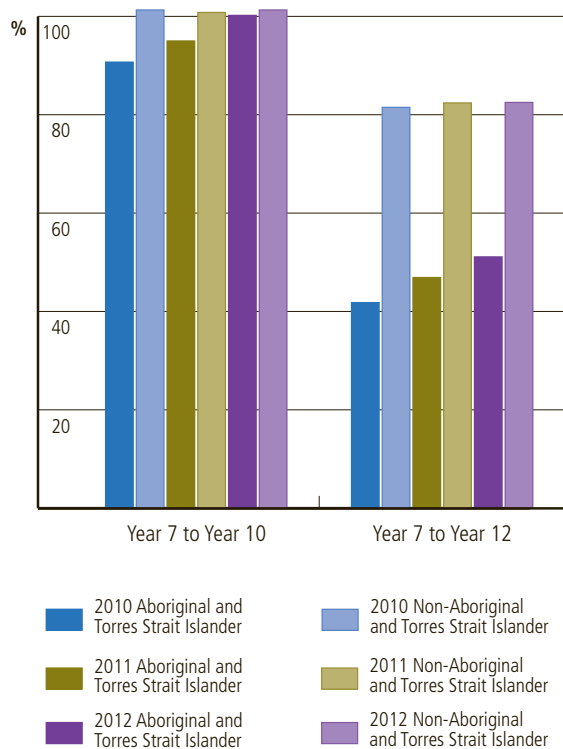
Over the past two years, Victoria has made substantial improvement in apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7 to 10, with the gap decreasing from 10.6 percentage points in 2010, to 1.1 percentage points in 2012. There remains a large gap in Year 7 to 12 retention between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared with non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; however, it has decreased from 39.7 per cent in 2011, to 31.4 per cent in 2012.

**Table VIC4: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Victoria, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 7 to Year 10	100.2	101.3
Year 7 to Year 12	51.1	82.5

Source: Derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0), and based on full-time student enrolments.

**Figure VIC2: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Victoria, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools, Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Apparent grade progression ratios

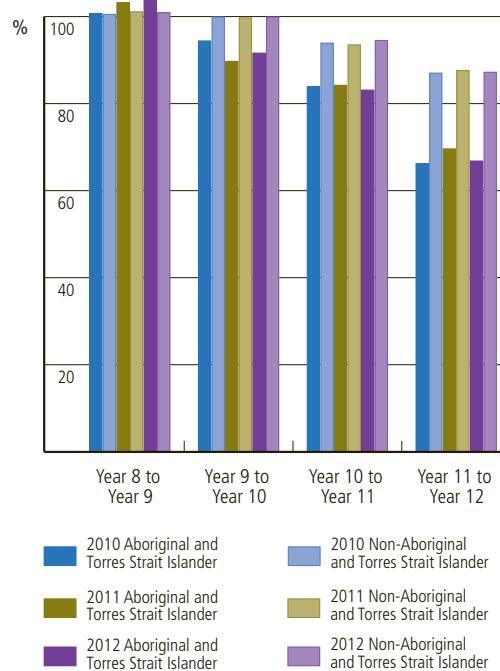
**Table VIC5: Apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Victoria, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 8 to Year 9	104.8	100.9
Year 9 to Year 10	91.6	99.9
Year 10 to Year 11	83.1	94.5
Year 11 to Year 12	66.8	87.2

Note: Grade progression ratios are based on full-time students only.

Source: ABS, *Schools, Australia, 2012* (Cat.No. 4221.0), *National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC)*, Table 63a.

**Figure VIC3: Grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Victoria, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools, Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

Consistent with the apparent retention data, the 2012 grade progression ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased as years of schooling increased. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased from approximately 9 percentage points at Years 9 to 10 and Years 10 to 11, to more than 20 percentage points at Years 11 and 12. There have been no substantive improvements in the grade progression gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander students since 2010.

As noted elsewhere, the significant uptake of Vocational Education and Training options within the VET system by 15 to 19 year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students needs to be taken into account when considering grade progression. Students undertaking study within the VET sector are participating in a robust educational pathway outside the school sector.

## Systemic level actions

### Action 25

All Victorian government schools are required to implement evidence-based attendance strategies as part of their Student Wellbeing Policy. The Koorie Education Workforce, in place across the State, provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance through KESOs, who work with families and teachers to identify non-attending students and implement strategies to support stronger engagement. Data-gathering and analysis relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school attendance significantly improved during 2011 and 2012, and the more detailed information now available will form the basis for the evidence-based and area-specific responses developed as part of the Victorian Koorie Learning and Development Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from 2013/14. New data findings include that around 30 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Victoria, across all year levels (except Year 12), are absent from school more than 26 days over the school year. The data also show this absence generally occurs as many short episodes, rather than single extended periods of absence.

A number of initiatives in Catholic schools aim to support attendance and engagement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including:

- involvement in the Worlds of Work program to promote retention to the senior years and aspirational goal setting

- the annual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Secondary Student Day, which provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students to connect with each other and celebrate their identity and culture
- Koorie Education Workers in schools who contribute to the cultural safety of the school environment and support attendance by identifying concerns in the early stages, and working with teaching and administrative staff to put strategies in place to address non-attendance, and
- tutoring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the secondary level, contributing to improved attendance by building students' academic confidence.

All Catholic schools monitor the attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. When a student is identified as having attendance issues there is a range of responses available to address the non-attendance and related issues, including:

- Program Support Group meetings, which bring together all those involved with a student experiencing attendance issues to determine agreed outcomes and actions
- mentoring by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, and
- modified study programs, including opportunities to attend community settings to learn directly from Elders and other community members alongside the regular school program.

## Local level actions (26)

### Action 26

Victorian government Focus schools use a Koorie-specific version of the *It's Not OK to Be Away* attendance strategy. This initiative is designed to change community and student attitudes to school attendance, and requires the support of parents and the community if student attendance is to be successfully addressed. It promotes two key messages:

- student attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the community, and
- effective schools monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance, as this is a prerequisite for improving educational outcomes.

In 2012, 33 Focus schools (26 per cent) had an attendance strategy (including targets) developed in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community, and

14 (12 per cent) had commenced work towards one. In 2012, 34 schools (28 per cent) monitored, evaluated and reported on the success of their strategy.

In the Catholic schools' system, preliminary work on this action commenced in 2011 and continued to be a priority area for Focus schools in 2012, where there was an identified need.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.

10. Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.

### Overall progress

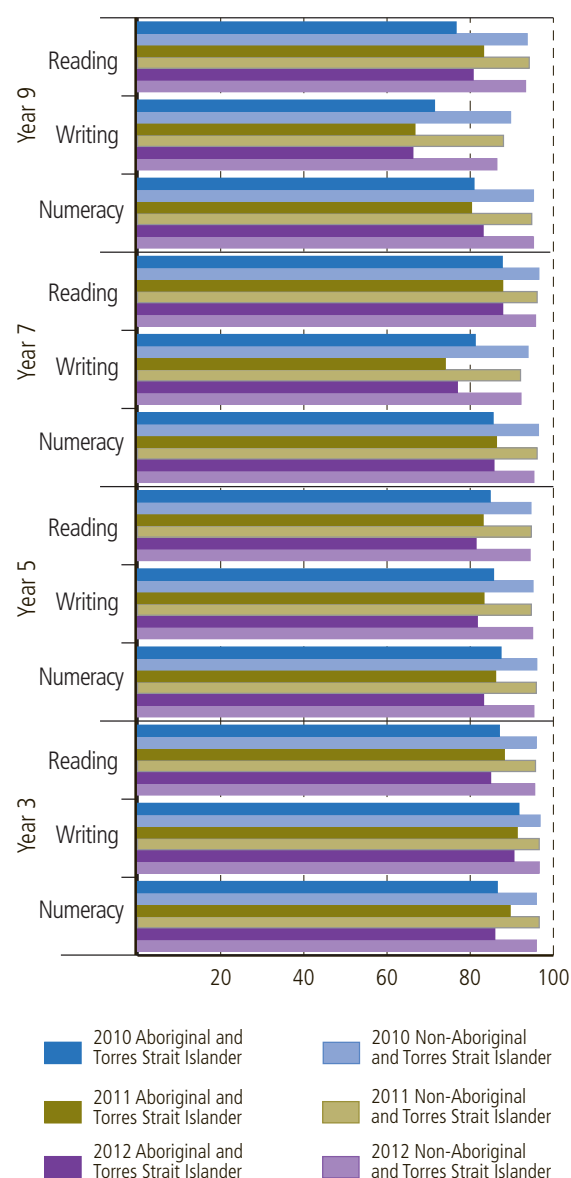
The proportion of students in Victoria meeting the national minimum standard in NAPLAN reading, writing, and numeracy assessment varies across the year levels and across the assessed domains.

Numeracy achievement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students remains between 83 and 86 per cent for all year levels. Writing performance shows the largest range, varying as much as 24.3 percentage points from Year 3 (90.5 per cent) to Year 9 (66.2 per cent). The smallest gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement is at Year 3 writing, where 90.5 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students met the national minimum standard, compared with 96.6 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The largest gap is in Year 9 writing, where 66.2 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students met the national minimum standard, compared with 86.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2012, the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes was smallest for Year 3 writing, at 6.1 percentage points (with a 2.2 per cent confidence interval), and largest for Year 9 writing, at 20.2 percentage points (with a 5.1 per cent confidence interval). This is similar to the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student achievement from 2010 and 2011.

## NAPLAN outcomes

**Figure VIC4: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Victoria, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Note: These data are subject to confidence intervals, which are generally between 2.5 and 3.5 percentage points.

Source: ACARA (2012 and unpublished), *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2012*.

**Table VIC6: NAPLAN reading, writing<sup>(a)</sup> and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Victoria, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3			Year 5			Year 7			Year 9		
	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.
<b>2010</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87	91.7	86.5	84.8	85.6	87.4	87.7	81.2	85.5	76.6	71.4	80.9
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.9	96.8	95.9	94.6	95.1	96	96.5	93.9	96.4	93.7	89.7	95.2
Gap	8.9	5.1	9.4	9.8	9.5	8.6	8.8	12.7	10.9	17.1	18.3	14.3
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 2.5	± 2.3	± 2.4	± 3.1	± 2.6	± 2.8	± 2.9	± 2.8	± 3.0	± 3.8	± 3.8	± 3.5
<b>2011</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	88.2	91.3	89.6	83.1	83.3	86.1	87.8	74	86.3	83.2	66.7	80.3
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.7	96.6	96.6	94.7	94.7	95.9	96.1	92.1	96.1	94.2	88	94.8
Gap	7.5	5.3	7	11.6	11.4	9.8	8.3	18.1	9.8	11	21.3	14.5
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 2.8	± 2.3	± 2.3	± 3.0	± 3.1	± 2.9	± 3.2	± 3.7	± 3.3	± 2.9	± 4.6	± 3.8
<b>2012</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	84.9	90.5	85.9	81.4	81.7	83.2	87.8	76.9	85.7	80.7	66.2	83.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.5	96.6	95.9	94.4	95	95.3	95.7	92.2	95.3	93.3	86.4	95.2
Gap	10.6	6.1	10	13	13.3	12.1	7.9	15.3	9.6	12.6	20.2	12.1
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±2.8	±2.2	±3.1	±2.8	±3.1	±2.8	±2.7	±3.4	±2.9	±3.9	±5.1	±3.1

Notes:

- a) A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.
- b) The confidence intervals for 2010, 2011 and 2012 in this table relate specifically to Victoria.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2010–2012.

## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

**Table VIC7: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Victoria, 2012 (per cent)**

Geolocation	Victoria		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	86.2	95.7	82.6	95.2
Provincial	83.7	94.8	79.9	93.5
Remote	n.p.	95.2	61.2	91.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	39.9	90.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	83.1	94.7	76.0	93.6
Provincial	79.7	93.5	72.7	91.9
Remote	n/a	97.4	50.5	89.7
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	20.3	86.5
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	89.4	95.9	84.0	95.4
Provincial	86.3	95.4	80.8	94.5
Remote	n.p.	97.3	65.4	93.4
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	37.6	92.7
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	81.5	93.4	74.6	92.9
Provincial	79.9	92.8	70.9	92.0
Remote	n.p.	98.4	50.9	90.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	24.4	87.9
<b>Writing</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	92.6	96.7	87.3	96.6
Provincial	88.8	96.2	85.2	95.6
Remote	n.p.	99.3	63.2	95.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	40.2	94.3
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	82.5	95.4	77.3	94.3
Provincial	81.0	95.8	73.3	91.6
Remote	n/a	96.2	53.2	90.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	24.9	86.7
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	79.1	93.1	74.5	92.4
Provincial	74.8	89.2	68.0	88.6
Remote	n.p.	95.8	47.0	88.0
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	25.6	89.1
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	70.5	88.0	56.9	85.0
Provincial	61.8	81.4	49.7	79.0
Remote	n.p.	93.0	32.6	75.9
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	17.0	74.6
<b>Numeracy</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	88.1	96.0	81.4	95.5
Provincial	84.0	95.4	78.8	93.9
Remote	n.p.	97.0	58.6	93.0
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	37.9	91.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	84.3	95.6	79.5	95.0
Provincial	82.0	94.6	76.3	93.6
Remote	n/a	100.0	55.3	92.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	29.2	89.1
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	87.9	95.6	82.3	95.2
Provincial	83.8	94.5	78.6	94.1
Remote	n.p.	96.9	64.1	93.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	42.4	92.4
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	83.3	95.4	79.9	95.0
Provincial	82.9	94.5	76.8	94.0
Remote	n.p.	99.5	61.7	93.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	42.9	91.8

a) 'n.p.' indicates data not published as there were no students tested or the number tested was less than 30.

b) Measurement imprecision is much greater at these levels of disaggregation, ie, confidence intervals are much larger. Care should be taken when reviewing apparent differences in student performance.

n/a not applicable.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.



In 2012, in both metropolitan and provincial geolocation areas, the percentage of Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who performed at or above the national minimum standard remained higher than the national percentage. The smallest difference in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between the Victorian and the national percentages was in provincial Year 3 writing (3.6 percentage points), whilst the largest was in metropolitan Year 9 writing (13.6 percentage points).

The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NAPLAN outcomes increased from Year 3 to Year 9 and was generally larger in provincial locations compared with metropolitan locations. The smallest gap was in Year 3 writing in metropolitan areas (4.1 percentage points), and the largest was in Year 9 writing for provincial locations (19.6 percentage points).

Confidence intervals at these levels of disaggregation may mean that some of the apparent differences are not statistically significant.

## 2012 NAPLAN data and 2012 progress points for Victoria

Victoria met the progress points for reading and numeracy in Year 5, Year 7 and Year 9 in 2012. With regard to writing, there is a break in series from 2011, and the progress points were calculated on narrative writing as opposed to the current persuasive writing (2011 and 2012). Progress points have not yet been developed for persuasive writing and, as such, can't be reported from 2011 onwards. Victoria was on track to meet its progress points until 2010, when the test changed.

## NAPLAN participation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Victoria for NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy fluctuate across the year levels. The highest participation rates are for Year 5 reading, at 89.4 per cent; the lowest rate is for Year 9 numeracy, at 75.2 per cent.

There remains a gap in participation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and Non-Aboriginal and Torres

**Table VIC8: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy progress points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving at or above the national minimum standard (2008–2012), Victoria (per cent)**

Year	Reading				Writing				Numeracy			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2008	88.1	83.0	85.5	79.9	92.1	82.7	77.6	68.9	93.0	83.3	87.9	78.4
2009	88.1	83.1	85.6	80.0	92.1	82.8	77.7	69.0	93.0	83.4	87.9	78.5
2010	88.3	83.2	85.7	80.2	92.2	82.9	77.9	69.4	93.1	83.5	88.1	78.8
2011	88.5	83.5	86.0	80.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	93.2	83.8	88.3	79.2
2012	88.7	83.9	86.4	81.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	93.3	84.3	88.6	79.8
2018	92.0	88.7	91.0	87.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	95.0	89.4	92.5	87.3

Notes:

- 'n/a' indicates data was unavailable for writing. There is a break in series from 2011, and the progress points were calculated on the first test type (narrative) not the second (persuasive), for 2011 and 2012. As such, there are no relevant trajectories to report against from 2011.
- Confidence intervals must be accounted for when reviewing actual results against these progress points.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2008–2012.

**Table VIC9: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Victoria and Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7		Year 9	
	Vic.	Aust.	Vic.	Aust.	Vic.	Aust.	Vic.	Aust.
<b>Reading</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	88.8	89.7	89.4	89.6	85.8	87.8	77.2	77.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.1	95.7	95.3	96.3	95.2	95.9	91.6	92.9
<b>Writing</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	88.8	89.9	88.0	89.5	86.3	87.6	78.0	77.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.8	95.6	95.3	96.2	95.4	96.1	92.0	93.2
<b>Numeracy</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87.8	88.2	87.5	88.4	85.3	86.2	75.2	75.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.9	95.5	95.3	96.0	95.0	95.6	91.4	92.4

Notes:

- Participation rates are calculated as all students who sat the test plus exempted students as a percentage of the total number of enrolled students in the year level in scope, as reported by schools.
- Non-participating students are those who were absent and withdrawn. Exempt students are deemed not to have met the standard and are included in the calculation of participation rates, as they have been allocated a proxy result. For further information, check the NAPLAN Glossary for absent and withdrawn students, at: <http://www.nap.edu.au/glossary.html>.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.

Strait Islander students in Victoria across all year levels and all domains. The smallest gap is for students in Year 3 writing (six percentage points) and the largest gap is for students in Year 9 numeracy (16.2 percentage points). Victorian rates are similar to the national participation rates in most year levels and domains.

## Systemic level actions (30)

### Action 30

Victoria does not have remote schools with multilingual Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.

## Local level actions (31 and 32)

### Action 31

The Victorian Government's *Literacy and Numeracy 6–18 Month Strategy: P–10 Improvement Schedule for School Leaders* provides school leaders in government primary and secondary schools with a foundation for a whole-school approach to

literacy and numeracy improvement. It assists schools to reflect on their current practices to determine which activities and programs they will implement to support improved student learning outcomes. The strategy includes access to resources such as: assessment tools, support for data analysis, school accountability documentation and material to support professional learning. Explicit reference is made to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with schools encouraged to work collaboratively with students, their families and the Koorie Education Workforce.

The Victorian Government has made a significant investment in literacy and numeracy support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in government schools through the Wannik Tutorial Program. In 2012, 730 schools were supported, with \$1,600 being provided for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student in Years 11 and 12, and \$1,300 for every student in Years 2 to 10 identified as below the expected standard in English and/or mathematics.

The Expanded Central Gippsland Koorie Literacy Project, led by Associate Professor John Munro commenced in 2012, and established an evidence-based literacy acceleration program specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 2 to 7. The project linked pedagogy with students' existing cultural and literacy knowledge and resulted in improved literacy outcomes for all who participated. Opportunities to provide professional development to teachers and school leaders across the State on the practices employed in the project will be explored during 2012 and 2013.

The CECV uses NAPLAN data to identify individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have not reached literacy and numeracy benchmarks (minimum standards) and assists schools to determine appropriate responses to individual learning needs. A suite of programs, such as: Extending Maths Understanding; the STAR literacy program; Reading Recovery; First Steps; ERIK; Learning to Read, Reading to Learn, along with additional tutoring and homework classes are used to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students 'at risk' in the areas of literacy and numeracy to assist their learning.

In addition, pre- and post-literacy and numeracy testing is conducted annually at each year level in Catholic schools. Extensive professional learning has been delivered to schools to build teacher capacity to develop Personalised Learning Plans to address set individual learning goals, address student needs, and monitor and evaluate progress.

In 2012, further work was completed on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Literacy and Numeracy framework, available to Catholic schools for monitoring student progress.

### Action 32

Under the Victorian government school sector's *Literacy and Numeracy 6–18 month Strategy: P–10 Improvement Schedule for School Leaders*, the school leadership team is responsible for ensuring professional learning is focused on student needs, and for meeting the goals of the Annual Implementation Plan, which is required to be developed by each school. It includes activities such as: providing regular opportunities for leaders and teachers to share their learning and to build teacher capacity in literacy and numeracy planning instruction; as well as addressing the specific demands of literacy and numeracy education for students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds.

In the Catholic sector, teachers have been provided with extensive professional development on the use of data to improve student performance. There has been a clear focus on pre- and post-assessment to determine whether the teaching approach has had an effect, and to what extent. The system-wide emphasis on assessment for learning requires that all learning and teaching programs are based on evidence.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. *Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*
12. *Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*
13. *Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

### Overall progress

The Victorian Department and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria do not collect systemic data on the total number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.

In addition to professional development hours delivered through providers, such as Dare to Lead and Stronger Smarter Institute, many teachers, education support staff and regional officers attended Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training, which was delivered directly by schools and Regional Offices.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the education workforce in the Victorian government schools sector continues to grow steadily, with a total of 153.3 (FTE) in 2012, representing an increase from 2011 of 25.5 (FTE).

While the greatest proportion of the workforce is employed as education support staff, the highest growth since 2011 has been in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching staff, which has increased by 13.3 (FTE).

Since 2010, there has been significant growth in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers within the Victorian government school sector, with an 84.9 (FTE) increase over two years. This highlights the success of the Wannik Strategy in growing the Koorie education workforce.

In 2012, there were 17 (FTE) teaching staff and 8.5 (FTE) education workers working in Victorian Catholic primary and secondary schools.

Data for average length of service of principals and teachers in schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students cannot be reported for 2012. The Department is currently working on a methodology to develop a meaningful report on the length of service of principals and teachers in schools with high enrolments, as data are not available through the *Staff in Australian Schools Survey*.

## Systemic level actions (41 and 42)

### Action 41

Teachers in government schools where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled continued to be provided the opportunity to undertake professional development to promote cultural and linguistic understanding through the Dare to Lead, What Works, and Stronger Smarter programs. Several Regional Offices also provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural professional development to teachers and school leaders through the Koorie Education Workforce. Government schools were provided with a range of teacher resources to support the development of culturally inclusive curriculum, including curriculum modules as part of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) and a Kindergarten Koorie Inclusion Kit.

In the Catholic sector, a significant number of hours of professional development were delivered in 2012 in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competency and knowledge, including: external professional development; at staff meetings; and in support of curriculum planning to professional learning teams. Programs provided an insight into the ongoing impact of colonisation on the traditional lifestyle, culture and

**Table VIC10: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents) in Victoria, by sector, 2012**

	FTE
<b>Government</b>	
Principals	4
Teaching staff	44.7
AIEWs and equivalents	104.6
<b>Catholic</b>	
Principals	0
Teaching staff	17
AIEWs and equivalents	8.5
<b>Independent</b>	
Principals	n/a
Teaching staff	n/a
AIEWs and equivalents	n/a

Note:

- a) Independent Schools Victoria does not hold data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce in independent schools.  
n/a not available.

Source: Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Human Resources administrative records*, 2012.

**Table VIC11: Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard to staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (operationally defined as Focus schools), Victoria, 2012**

Classification	Average length of service (in months)		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
Principals	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teachers	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note:

- a) There are no Focus schools in the Victorian independent school sector.  
n/a not available.

Source: Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *Human Resources administrative records*, 2012.

languages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and events of historical importance, such as Mabo, Stolen Generations and Native Title.

All Victorian independent schools supported through the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership have received advisory support and professional learning for teachers on the provision of tailored learning opportunities and innovative strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

#### **Action 42**

Both the government and Catholic school sectors strengthened the cultural competency of their systems through targeted scholarship programs. In 2012, 29 students benefited from the Victorian Government's Koorie Teaching Scholarship Program, which provides a cash grant of \$8,000 per person per year of full-time study. Since 2011, six scholarship holders have graduated from a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) accredited course. This program targets pre-service teachers, Year 12 leavers and mature age students. Scholarship holders also take part in a mentoring program through the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), which supports recipients in their studies.

Executive Principals are employed in three Victorian government sector Focus schools with particularly high concentrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as part of an initiative whereby outstanding school leaders are recruited and remunerated to work with targeted schools in complex and challenging environments. A specially designed remuneration structure for Executive Principals provides incentives linked to school improvement and aims to attract high performing leaders to schools serving disadvantaged or rural communities.

The CECV prioritises high performing teachers and leaders. The Catholic Education Office staff in each diocese support each principal and the leaders in each Focus school to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' outcomes are maximised.

### **Local level actions (43 and 44)**

#### **Action 43**

The Victorian Government's Wannik Strategy requires school principals with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to undertake professional development to promote a culturally inclusive school, including through the Dare to Lead, What Works

and Stronger Smarter programs. In 2012, preliminary discussions took place to provide for principals and key leaders in Catholic schools to attend the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program.

In 2012, 18 principals and leading teachers participated in the Stronger Smarter program. The 12-month program has three major components: forums, challenges and dissemination. The forum component provides participants with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to bring about transformational change in their workplaces to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. There were a total of three forums, totalling nine days throughout the year, which participants were required to attend. During 2012, more than 100 staff were involved in Leadership Development Programs to varying degrees, with 120 in the Dare to Lead Snapshot processes. The Leadership Development Programs saw school leaders working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in their schools, connecting with parents and community, and developing their understanding of students' backgrounds.

#### **Action 44**

In Victoria, school principals across all sectors have the capacity to act with autonomy to tailor operations to respond to the needs of students and families. An evaluation of the Wannik Strategy for school education identified many examples in the government sector, including principals engaging the support of Koorie Engagement Support Officers to make out-of-hours visits to personally connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families; whole-of-school Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education programs developed at the school level; and incorporating local community language and cultural elements in school managed mentoring programs.

## **Pathways to real post-school options**

### **Performance indicators**

14. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.*

Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there is no publicly available national level data for 2012.

**Table VIC12: Number of Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), or Vocational Education and Training (VET) awards completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Victoria, 2010–2012**

	2010	2011	2012
VCE Award – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	257	272	354
VCE Award – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	63,619	63,424	63,589

Notes:

- a) The significant increase between 2011 and 2012 may in part be due to improved identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 11 and 12.
- b) VCE awards include all students who completed the VCE, VCAL certificate at Intermediate or Senior level or VET certificate, 2012.

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), 9 January 2013.

**Table VIC13: Number of vocational qualifications completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, at AQF Certificate II and above, Victoria, 2010–2012(a)**

	2010	2011(b)	2012
AQF Certificate II or above – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	841	1,247	1,366
AQF Certificate II or above – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	109,312	147,719	174,026

Notes:

- a) Data for qualifications completed in 2012 are based on preliminary data submissions for students identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The 2012 data will be revised upwards in the 2012 *VET Provider Collection* to accommodate further notification of qualifications completed.
- b) The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status 'not stated' for Victoria was 3,589.

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *VET Provider Collection*, 2012.

## Overall progress

The number of Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students obtaining the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) or a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificate has improved significantly in the past two years with an increase of 37.7 per cent, while the number of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing the VCE has slightly decreased since 2010.

In 2012, more Victorian students completed a vocational qualification at AQF Certificate II level, or above, than ever before. In comparison to 2011, there was a 10 per cent increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student completions, against an increase of 18 per cent for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Systemic level actions (48, 49 and 50)

### Action 48

In 2012, the Victorian Government's Youth Partnerships initiative aimed to reduce the escalation of problems for all young people 'at risk' through better coordinated responses across key services. Disengaged or 'at risk' young people were supported to participate in re-engagement programs through a government initiative in which school funding follows the student. In addition, over 200 'at risk' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were involved in the Youth Connections program.

CECV works closely with Koorie Transition Officers and Regional Career Development Officers to deliver career development programs, including 'Guiding Circles', and develops partnerships with key stakeholders that will support improved pathways and transition support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young

people, and build the Koorie Education Workers' role in secondary schools. CECV and all schools offer a range of pathways that are tailored to individual student needs, including a range of gap year options and support back into future pathways.

#### **Action 49**

The Victorian Government's *On Track* Destinations of School Leavers survey tracks students from Years 10, 11 and 12 for six months after they leave school. Students are contacted and assisted with further advice and support if they are not studying or in full-time employment. The *On Track* survey indicates that an increasing proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in government schools who complete Year 12 are enrolling in university.

A similar system is in place in the Catholic sector, which monitors the pathways of all students who have completed Year 12. The CECV and Catholic schools actively develop links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community agencies and sections of the local corporate community, so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can access information, support and opportunities. Students are linked with relevant agencies to enable them to source ongoing support as needed.

The Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) provides an entitlement to a subsidised training place in the vocational training system. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are eligible for a government-subsidised place through the VTG pay only the concession tuition fee for training at any level, including Diploma level and above.

#### **Action 50**

A Technology Enriched Curriculum Project was implemented by the CECV across government, independent and Catholic schools, in which students in Years 5 to 8 have the use of iPads to develop writing, singing and photographic skills to tell their stories. A total of 15 schools were selected from the Healesville, Ballarat and Echuca areas. The project aimed to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' motivation and engagement through the use of ICT learning activities, provide opportunities for developing personal learning goals and encourage pride in their culture, identity, interests and experiences. The project also strengthened and enhanced teachers' ICT skills and how to confidently use them to achieve improved student outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their classroom. 'Spark' sessions, where students come together in clusters, have provided an empowering platform for students to showcase their culture.

## **Local level actions (51, 52, 53, 54 and 55)**

#### **Action 51**

Through the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (NP-YAT), Victoria has implemented a range of initiatives to increase the educational attainment and engagement of young people between the ages of 15 to 24 in education, training and employment, across all education sectors. Delivery of a suite of programs under the NP-YAT occurs during the four years, 2010 to 2013, to support retention and career development pathways across all sectors. Years 7 and 8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are mentored to develop their career aspirations and awareness through the Careers Mentoring Network Initiative pilot.

Specific CECV initiatives to support career development and retention in the Catholic school system include the Worlds of Work, and a Secondary Day, which is held to inspire students to remain at school and complete their senior years.

#### **Action 52**

In 2012, there was an increase in the number of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships across all school sectors. Under the NP-YAT, Apprenticeship Support Officers were engaged to support apprentices and their support includes working with appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking an apprenticeship across all sectors.

A range of programs are offered through the Catholic Colleges and these are tailored to individual needs. There has been an increase in the number of school-based apprenticeships offered and completed, with great success.

Independent Schools Victoria provides professional development and advice to its member schools so staff will be informed and supported to guide their students in the areas of school based accredited training, including traineeships and apprenticeships.

#### **Action 53**

Under the NP-YAT, Victoria employed Koorie Transition Officers to increase education and training retention and attainment, improve aspirations to succeed at school, and support strong post-school pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

All Catholic schools provide case management and ensure links are made for schools to liaise with Koorie Transition Officers and



relevant agencies to link with case management support and careers information opportunities to support pathways options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Workplace Learning Coordinators and Regional Career Development Officers (RCDOs) provided independent schools with advice and work experience opportunities, including links to employment services to assist students to obtain school-based traineeships.

#### Action 54

In 2012, under the NP-YAT, RCDOs located in the Department's regions worked to enhance the capacity of career practitioners to implement effective career development programs and activities for young people. This occurred in schools in all sectors, Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Learn Local organisations. The work of the RCDOs includes: support for the implementation of the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework; providing professional learning to support careers practitioners to work with targeted cohorts (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people) and their parents/families; and supporting schools and organisations to benchmark their career development programs. Study Grants were made available to careers practitioners and other relevant staff, including departmental Koorie Education Workforce staff, for the completion of a Graduate Certificate in Career Development. These initiatives have assisted Career Counsellors in providing access to career services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to make informed careers and study choices.

Pathways and careers advisers in all Catholic schools also provide career advice and guidance.

Independent schools participate in Career Study Grants, Career Benchmarking, the Curriculum Framework and the Careers Mentoring Networking Initiative. This has assisted Career Counsellors in providing access to career services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to make informed career and study choices.

#### Action 55

School, business and community partnerships are brokered and extended by the work of the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), that deliver the national School Business Community Partnerships Brokers program in Victoria, which responds to meet local needs across the government, Catholic and independent schools sectors. Workplace Learning

Coordinators, funded under the NP-YAT, facilitate workplace learning opportunities for Koorie young people in government, Catholic and independent schools to support informed career choices.

## Good practice snapshots

### Thornbury Primary School – Aboriginal Language Revival Program

Thornbury Primary has the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in a Melbourne primary school (12 per cent), and is a pilot school for the Woiwurrung Language Program: a program developed and delivered in partnership with the VAEAI and the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL). It is also a hub school for the Stronger Smarter programs.

The school began a pilot Aboriginal Language Revival Program in 2012 with seed funding grants from the Department and the Victorian Government's Collaborative Internet Innovation Fund (CIIF) program through the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). The language being reclaimed is Woiwurrung, the Language of the Wurundjeri people, traditional owners of the land upon which the school is situated.

The project is overseen by an Aboriginal Language Planning Committee and a Language Team and is modelled on the protocols outlined in the VELs (Victorian Essential Learning Standards), Aboriginal Languages, cultures and reclamation in Victorian schools: standards P–10 and protocols (available online at: [http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vels\\_aboriginal\\_languages.pdf](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vels_aboriginal_languages.pdf)). The Wurundjeri Council representative supplies language knowledge. The project was carefully planned, with the observance of all protocols. It has the support and endorsement of the local community and the Wurundjeri Council, and there are regular meetings with Wurundjeri Elders, who are supportive and enthusiastic.

All students from Prep to Grade 3 participate in weekly Woiwurrung classes. The school envisages extending the

program to all levels in coming years. Older students are currently offered exposure to Woiwurrung as part of the weekly Indigenous Studies program, a cultural program provided by the school's Koorie Educator, who is also involved in the language program. The program builds on strong community links and partnerships and receives strong support from the Principal, the staff, the School Council and parents.

The project has the commitment and active support of the school leadership team and staff, with teachers across year levels seeking out related teaching materials, incorporating sample units into team teaching and referring to language posters on a daily basis. Classroom work related to Woiwurrung is displayed and Woiwurrung is used in the school newsletter and at assemblies. The program is contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families increasingly being attracted to the school.

Strengths and critical factors supporting the success of the initiative include the strong support of the VAEI and VACL, including active linguistic and lesson planning support; and the composition and involvement of the Language Team. The school-based Italian language teacher is allocated additional hours to coach the Woiwurrung language Education Support person, who is also a pre-service teacher (Master of Teaching), and also works with the school-based linguist team to provide additional curriculum support for program planning, delivery and evaluation. A dedicated Woiwurrung teacher has underpinned delivery with the active involvement of classroom teachers.

In addition to contributing towards reclamation of the Woiwurrung language, the program is contributing to increased student engagement, increased student pride, improved literacy, improved attendance, increased ICT and technology skills, growing other teachers' capacity and inspiring future Woiwurrung teachers and leaders. Students are enthusiastic and positive about the program, with many sharing their learnings with their families.

Positive feedback has been provided by the School Council, the local community and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, with many parents and carers expressing interest in becoming involved in classroom activities. Some have also have requested their own language lessons. Options to develop adult and/or family language classes are being considered.

## The Koorie Academy of Excellence (KAE)

The Koorie Academy of Excellence (KAE) was established in 2012, with the aim of inspiring Koorie secondary students to take control of their education and futures. The KAE is a joint initiative between the VAEI and the Department in the North-Western Region.

In 2012, 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were selected for entry in the KAE program, half from Year 7 and half from Year 10. As part of the recruitment process, KAE staff held information sessions for students and their families. While academic potential is considered in selecting students for the KAE, it is not the sole criterion, ie, leadership potential is also taken into account, and in their applications, students were asked to describe leadership roles they had undertaken in their school, family, socially or in their community.

The KAE is not designed as a short-term program. Once a student is accepted to participate, the aim is to provide support throughout their secondary education and their transition to post-school pathways. As activities take place on weekends, after school, and during school holidays, students are not taken away from their academic program to participate in the KAE.

Students at the KAE are immersed in cultural leadership and career pathway activities. In 2012, the KAE students were visited by guest speakers who are leaders in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, including Dr Alf Bamblett, who spoke about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, and Richard Frankland, who spoke about his life as a writer, filmmaker and activist.

The School for Student Leadership, a residential school in Victoria that hosts nine-week stays for Year 9 students, made its facilities available to the KAE, so its students could undertake leadership activities there.

KAE career pathway activities include the acquisition of accredited job ready skills, such as resume writing. KAE students are also connected with tutors to support their academic progress. The KAE program involves exploration of students' individual interests and exposure to relevant career and study options. KAE students are partnered with university buddies

(both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) to discuss options for tertiary study.

To date, all students in the KAE have stayed in school and remain connected with the program. One student in the KAE is completing a school-based hospitality apprenticeship at Charcoal Lane with the support of Mission Australia. When he began the program he was not very confident, but after working at Charcoal Lane and deciding on a career working with food, his self-esteem improved to the extent that he was able to give a speech about his experience in front of more than 100 people at the KAE 2012 end-of-year Christmas party.

Two Koorie Academy Liaison Officers (KALOs) have been appointed to support students through the program and ensure that families are involved. Families are invited to attend KAE events, such as guest speaker nights, and are in regular communication with the KALO about the progress of their student. Parents regularly call the KALOs to say that their children are a lot more confident, engaged with school and committed to study since beginning with the KAE.

## CECV Worlds of Work Program (WOW)

The Worlds of Work Program (WOW) program, commenced by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria in 2010, has a focus on improving school retention, and pathways planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The program was developed in conjunction with the Foundation for Young Australians, and received funding from the Australian Government DEEWR through the Indigenous Employment Program.

The 2012 WOW program brought 25 Years 9 and 10 students from metropolitan and regional Victoria to a residential program in Melbourne. The aim was for students to experience a new environment and increase their awareness of career opportunities. It aims to develop their interest and ability to access such opportunities. The program provides new experiences and connections to expand students' conceptions of success in life and work; and to increase students' capacity to identify and utilise their skills and strengths to create their own pathways and achieve their aspirations. WOW provided students with an environment in which they were challenged by new

contexts, ideas, and role models as they set out to find answers to an essential question: 'What does it take to succeed in the global world of life and work?' The program included:

- an induction session held at the Melbourne Museum
- 'cold' interviews in the Melbourne CBD to develop students' confidence and communication skills
- interviews with employees at IBM and the ABC, Clayton Utz (a large legal firm) and Thoughtworks (a corporate problem-solving company about their diverse career paths)
- a workplace breakfast at Origin Energy to practice networking skills and broaden their aspirations
- an Imagine Me/Dream workshop to clarify students' hopes for the future
- a Happiness Signature exercise to explore career paths based on individual strengths and values
- a Brand Me workshop to identify the qualities of success students already possess, and to reinforce their individuality, identity and pride
- a talk by an inspirational Torres Strait Islander who shared his story of triumph over adversity with the group
- visits to the Koorie Heritage Trust and 3KND radio station, and
- viewing the movie, *The Sapphires*.

During the week, students' activities, reflections and experiences were captured and became part of a final presentation for parents, carers, staff and visitors. The four main working groups from the week presented a short film. Each student spoke to the audience and articulated their new understandings of success and the importance of remaining true to themselves. The general atmosphere was one of pride and accomplishment, and the feedback from parents was overwhelming. Students have expressed increased confidence, a desire to make a difference in the world, a greater interest in their culture, and all are developing incremental long-term goals.

Implementation of this program is likely to be a factor in the increase in retention of Year 11 students, from 40 in 2010, to 57 in 2012; and of Year 12 students, from 37 in 2010, to 45 in 2012.

# Victorian Indigenous Education Consultative Body's (IECB's) feedback

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) is a community-based and controlled organisation, established in 1976. The VAEAI is the Victorian Indigenous Education Consultative Body, which advocates on behalf of the Koorie Community and is the peak advisory body to the Victorian State Government – including the Department – on all issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training. The VAEAI also provides advice to the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), concerning education and training issues for Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The following feedback against progress on systemic and local actions in support of the Plan, across each of the six priority domains, is informed by Koorie community perspectives.

## Readiness for school

The VAEAI is pleased to see that Koorie pre-school attendance has significantly improved in the last few years; however, we do note that it is difficult to obtain an accurate figure for participation due to issues around undercounting in the 2006 Census. The VAEAI's community advisory mechanisms have indicated that the introduction of free kindergarten has had a positive effect on participation by addressing affordability issues. The free kindergarten initiative has been supported by several other early childhood education and support services, such as the In-Home Support and Home Based Learning programs, as well as the Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services.

The VAEAI is concerned that there is still a large gap in the proportion of children being deemed 'school-ready' under the domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI). A gap of 20 percentage points between Koorie and non-Koorie children persists. Given that the AEDI is used as a measure of school readiness that is applied once Koorie children are already in Prep, the VAEAI believes that it essential to place a greater focus on school readiness before Koorie children enter the school system.

Koorie families need to be supported in helping their children to become school ready. This should occur through early years'

services communicating expectations, and providing the appropriate resources for learning and development in the home. To achieve this, the VAEAI advocates expanding programs such as In-Home Support and Home-Based Learning. These programs provide Koorie families with resources to use in the home. Currently, Home-Based Learning, in particular, is only targeted at three sites: Bairnsdale, Mildura and Swan Hill. These services need to be expanded and replicated in other parts of Victoria.

The VAEAI's Committee of Management can provide guidance on where support services for Koorie families with pre-school aged children should be targeted. Also, the AEDI school readiness data needs to be further analysed to provide a complementary evidence base for expanding In-Home Support and Home-Based Learning.

## Engagement and connections

### Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs)

In 2012, the VAEAI surveyed Koorie parents/caregivers in community forums across Victoria. The VAEAI found that knowledge of Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) amongst Koorie families varied widely, with some families very familiar with this learning and development tool, and others not aware or minimally aware. The Wannik evaluation, carried out by Synergistic in 2013, reported the same finding. For Koorie PLPs to have an impact on lifting the outcomes for Koorie students as a cohort, there needs to be greater consistency in how PLPs are applied across schools. The Department must clearly communicate to schools and principals that Koorie PLPs are not remedial tools to be used for students who are struggling; rather, they are for setting goals and charting the progress of all Koorie students. All Koorie students and their families can benefit from PLPs.

### Koorie Education Workforce (KEW)

The VAEAI commends the Department for its work in expanding the Koorie Education Workforce (KEW) and providing further professional development opportunities for KEW officers. VAEAI is concerned however that there are a high number of vacancies across regions for KEW officers. The issue of vacancies in the KEW needs to be addressed and the role needs to be promoted in Koorie communities. If Koorie people are not applying for

these positions because they believe that they do not have the requisite skills, arrangements should be made so that individuals who have the desire and potential to succeed in the KEW can be trained in the role over time.

## School–community partnerships

The VAEAI has worked in partnership with the Department on the expansion of school–community partnerships in 2012, and commends the Department for recognising the value and importance of school–community partnerships. School–community partnerships allow Koorie families to feel that they have a meeting place in the school where they are welcome to raise issues and discuss concerns. The school–community partnerships clarify shared goals for Koorie students, their families, and their schools. To work effectively they need to be regarded as a regular part of school business.

Many Koorie students are in schools where there are low numbers of Koorie students. These students and their families should not miss out on the benefits of SCPs. Schools with low numbers of Koorie students should organise a cluster arrangement where schools work together on SCPs in a given locality.

The Synergistic Review of the Wannik strategy found that Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) frequently felt ‘spread too thin’ in their roles (ie, there were too few KESOs for Koorie students). The school–community partnerships provide a model for KEW officers to work with groups of Koorie families to achieve shared goals. School–community partnerships should be used more widely as a strategic tool to assist the KEW in reaching greater numbers of Koorie families.

The Position Descriptions for KESOs and Koorie Engagement Coordinators (KECs) need to be worked on and clarified. The Synergistic Review highlighted that there is confusion across schools and with school principals about what the role of the Koorie workforce is. The VAEAI’s understanding is that the primary role of the KESO is to connect Koorie students and their families with education services and opportunities in, and also outside of, school. The KEC’s function is to coordinate the education services and programs available to Koorie families in the region. The Position Description needs to keep Koorie students at the centre of KEW work. There should be consensus across regions about the function of the KEW.

## Attendance

Koorie school attendance declines significantly in the secondary years as students move through to higher levels of schooling.

It is clear that Koorie students require intensive support at the beginning of their secondary years to arrest this pattern of disengagement. The Koorie Academy of Excellence, located in the Department’s Northern Region, which began in 2012, is showing promise in improving attendance (see Good practice snapshots). The Academy also links Koorie students to literacy and numeracy supports where this support is needed. The VAEAI recommends expansion of the Academy following an evaluation of its work to date.

For some years, the VAEAI has requested that the attendance data be disaggregated to get a clearer sense of attendance issues (ie, is there a subset of the Koorie student population who are chronic non-attendees of school, and is this overly skewing the data set?). It would be valuable to have richer quantitative data and be able to use it to target attendance programs.

## Pathways to real post-school options

The VAEAI does not consider it acceptable that the retention rate of Koorie students moving from Year 11 to Year 12 within the school system is 20.4 percentage points lower than the rate for non-Koorie students.

The VAEAI notes that movement of Koorie students to the VET system should be considered in looking at grade progression. It is true that the VET model has proven successful in engaging Koorie students. However, schools should not transfer their responsibility for Koorie students to the VET sector. It is important that Koorie students are able to access the same range of post-school pathways as non-Koorie students.

## Literacy and numeracy

The VAEAI anticipates that evaluation data from the Next Steps program schools will provide more in detailed insights into the gap in literacy and numeracy outcomes than what is currently available through NAPLAN testing. The persistent gap in literacy and numeracy outcomes reported through NAPLAN testing highlights the need for increased tutorial assistance. In 2012,

the VAEAI's parent and community forums found that tutorial assistance was the education support service Koorie parents most frequently wanted for their children.

The VAEAI notes that in 2012, 730 schools were supported through the Wannik Tutorial Program. It would be valuable to know how many schools accessed the funding available. If there is a shortfall in schools accessing tutorial support for Koorie students who need it, this issue must be addressed.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

The VAEAI notes that the Wannik strategy requires school principals with Koorie students to undertake professional development to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum. All school staff, including principals, in-service teachers and school support staff should undertake training in understanding Koorie knowledge and how to work with the Koorie community to create a culturally inclusive school. This is important for a number of reasons, including that the growing Koorie population and high dispersal of Koorie students across the State makes it highly likely that teachers and principals will have Koorie students in their classrooms either currently or in the future.

As the Australian Curriculum and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers reflect, all schools are responsible for ensuring that every student receives an education that provides them with understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and knowledge.

## Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's response to Victorian IECB's feedback

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development supports the priorities identified by the VAEAI for the next strategic phase in improving Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander learning and development outcomes in Victoria. The Department acknowledges the centrality of early childhood experiences, and development to school readiness and long-term education outcomes. As such, this will be an area of focus for the Department's new Koorie strategy, which is currently in development.

The current work of the VAEAI in the preschool space is greatly valued, particularly its continued coordination of the In-Home Support and Home-Based Learning programs. Both programs will be formally evaluated over the coming year, with the outcomes of these evaluations to inform future action in this area. Future action will incorporate targeted initiatives, alongside strengthening of universal platforms, such as maternal and child health services and early learning settings.

Along with early childhood support, another shared priority area is the ongoing capacity building of the KEW, which is central to Victoria's forward strategic directions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning and development. Addressing vacancies in the workforce will be a priority over the coming year, supported by the new Department structure, which includes dedicated central officers to support the regional KEW.

The Department strongly supports the VAEAI's work in convening community forums as a vehicle to give voice to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and ideas. The Department notes the feedback from the VAEAI's recent community forums, particularly regarding support for tutorial assistance, and more consistent and rigorous practices around individual learning plans. This feedback will be considered alongside the findings of current program evaluations, including the 2012 evaluation of the Wannik Tutorial Program, and evidence of good practice emerging from programs such as the Focus Schools Next Steps Initiative, in developing the new strategy.

Improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literacy and numeracy outcomes remains a high level focus for the Department. While needs-based targeted assistance will continue to be one element of the Department's approach, strengthening universal programs and practices to better cater to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs will be a central focus. Findings from recent action research through the Expanded Central Gippsland Koorie Literacy Project provide practical directions for literacy teaching practice effective in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.



During 2012, the Department supported the rollout of the Koorie Education Learning Plan (KELP) across Victoria. Community concerns about inconsistent implementation of the Plan raised by the VAEAI accord with evaluation findings and other feedback received by the Department. Options for improving processes surrounding the KELP and optimising its impact are being explored.

The 2012 Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Education of Gifted and Talented Students identified the then proposed Koorie Academy of Excellence as a program warranting Government support. The Department has been pleased to partner with the VAEAI to establish the Academy, and will monitor its activities and outcomes with a view to considering expanding the model to other locations.

The Department supports the VAEAI's view around the importance of disaggregated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school attendance data, and has recently made significant improvements to its data collection. A detailed analysis of this data is now being used to inform conversations, including with the VAEAI, around development of the Department's new Koorie strategy.

While data sharing arrangements between the Department and the VAEAI are well established, options to expand this to greater sharing of new regional data with local communities, service providers and Koorie Education Workforce members to empower development of local responses will be a priority.

This data sharing will be part of the capacity building agenda to be embedded in Victoria's strategic directions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and development. This will

include building on achievements under the Wannik strategy, including the increased proportion of school business plans and principal performance plans with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific targets, to further support teachers, school leaders and service providers to connect with Koorie families and communities, and support Koorie children and young people.

Service provider and workforce capacity building will continue, through programs such as: Dare to Lead; What Works and the Stronger Smarter Institute; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training; and scholarships to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to undertake teaching qualifications. The Department will monitor Victorian implementation of the new cultural component of the National Professional Standards for Teachers currently being developed to educate pre-service and in-service teachers in strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and understanding and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation. The Department also looks forward to working with the VAEAI to further develop support for schools and service providers to develop partnerships with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Department acknowledges the issues raised by the VAEAI regarding Year 12 completion trends, with a higher proportion of Koorie than non-Koorie students currently choosing to complete Year 12 in the VET sector. More needs to be done to understand the circumstances that contribute to this effect. Ensuring the same opportunities are open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is a priority in this area.



# Distribution of Focus schools in Victoria

**Figure VIC5: Map of Victorian Focus schools**  
(Focus schools are listed in a table following this map.)



Note: Dots indicate location of Focus schools.

## Focus school information

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Araluen Primary School	Gov.	Regional	175	28	yes	no	x
Bacchus Marsh Primary School	Gov.	Regional	687	12	yes	no	x
Baden Powell P–9 College	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,830	17	no	no	x
Bairnsdale Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	260	27	no	no	x
Bairnsdale West Primary School	Gov.	Regional	215	64	no	yes	x
Ballam Park Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	336	8	no	no	x
Banyan Fields Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	559	17	no	no	x
Benalla College P–12	Gov.	Regional	302	9	no	no	x
Bourchier Street Primary School Shepparton (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	594	37	no	no	x
Bundarra Primary School	Gov.	Regional	253	19	no	no	x
Canadian Lead Primary School	Gov.	Regional	153	8	no	yes	x
Chaffey Secondary College (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	682.2	76	no	yes	x
Charles La Trobe P–12 College	Gov.	Metropolitan	624.6	58	no	no	x
Colac West Primary School	Gov.	Regional	124.4	3	no	yes	x
Commercial Road Primary School - Morwell	Gov.	Regional	228.6	21.6	no	yes	x
Courtenay Gardens Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	680	4	no	no	x
Craigieburn Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	663.1	16	no	no	x
Dallas Brooks Community Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	509	4	no	yes	x
Doveton College	Gov.	Metropolitan	519.4	43	no	yes	x
Drouin Primary School	Gov.	Regional	209	17	no	no	x
Eaglehawk North Primary School	Gov.	Regional	293	13	no	no	x
Eastbourne Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	453	19	no	no	x
Echuca East Primary School	Gov.	Regional	328	36	yes	no	x
Echuca Primary School	Gov.	Regional	508.2	26	yes	no	x
Echuca South Primary School	Gov.	Regional	245	28	no	no	x
Findon Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	417.4	6	no	no	x
Forest Street Primary School	Gov.	Regional	337	30	yes	no	x
Gowrie Street Primary School Shepparton	Gov.	Regional	244	55	no	yes	x
Grovedale Primary School	Gov.	Regional	244	13	no	no	x
Guthridge Primary School	Gov.	Regional	278.4	21	yes	no	x
Guthrie Street Primary School Shepparton (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	492.2	33	no	no	x
Hastings Westpark Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	95	8	no	yes	x
Healesville Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	366.2	19	no	no	x
Heywood Consolidated School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	158	21	no	no	x
Horsham Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	476.2	27	no	no	x
Horsham West Haven Primary School	Gov.	Regional	641	10	no	no	x
Huntly Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	193	25	no	no	x
Iramoo Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	611	37	yes	no	x
Irymple Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	314	18	no	no	x
Kennington Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	583	7	no	no	x

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Kerang Primary School	Gov.	Regional	68.8	8	no	no	x
Kilmore Primary School	Gov.	Regional	479.4	7	yes	no	x
Kyabram P–12 College (interim name) (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	1,129.2	41	no	no	x
Lakes Entrance Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	208	45	yes	no	x
Lakes Entrance Secondary School (NS)	Gov.	Regional	229.4	25	yes	no	x
Lalor East Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	372	17	no	yes	x
Leopold Primary School	Gov.	Regional	745.8	9	no	no	x
Lightning Reef Primary School (merged school, formerly Comet Hill Primary School) (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	175	17	no	yes	x
Lucknow Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	515	25	no	no	x
Lyndale Greens Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	491.4	8	no	no	x
Mahogany Rise Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	142.2	12	no	yes	x
Maryborough Education Centre	Gov.	Regional	1,101.8	29	no	yes	x
Meadowglen Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	535.6	14	yes	no	x
Melrose Primary School	Gov.	Regional	338	22	no	yes	x
Melton West Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	475	14	no	yes	x
Merbein P–12 College (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	622.2	64	no	no	x
Mildura Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Regional	353	107	no	yes	x
Mildura South Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	655	42	no	no	x
Mildura West Primary School	Gov.	Regional	392	29	yes	no	x
Mill Park Heights Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	997	16	no	no	x
Moe Primary School	Gov.	Regional	124.8	8	no	yes	x
Mooroopna North Primary School	Gov.	Regional	78	15	no	no	x
Mooroopna Park Primary School	Gov.	Regional	91	27	no	yes	x
Mooroopna Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	292	55	yes	no	x
Morwell Park Primary School	Gov.	Regional	348	37	no	yes	x
Morwell Primary School	Gov.	Regional	155	32	no	yes	x
Nathalia Primary School	Gov.	Regional	134	10	no	no	x
Norris Bank Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	179.8	8	yes	no	x
Northern Bay College (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	2,142.2	139	no	no	x
Nowa Nowa Primary School	Gov.	Regional	35	22	no	yes	x
Orbost Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	185.2	19	no	no	x
Orrvale Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	383.4	15	no	no	x
Pakenham Hills Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	427	16	no	no	x
Penders Grove Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	188.4	18.8	no	yes	x
Preston North East Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	351.6	23	no	yes	x
Preston South Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	115	12	no	no	x
Ranfurlly Primary School	Gov.	Regional	440	82	yes	no	x
Rangebank Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	396	6	no	no	x
Reservoir East Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	115	8	no	yes	x
Reservoir Views Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	223	12	no	no	x
Robinvale P–12 College	Gov.	Regional	415.7	95.3	no	yes	x
Roxburgh Park Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	495	13	no	yes	x
Seymour P–12 College (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	895.8	48	no	no	x
St Albans Meadows Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	368	10	no	yes	x

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
St Alipius School Ballarat (IFS)	Cath.	Regional	261	14	no	no	x
St Brendan's School Lakes Entrance (IFS)	Cath.	Regional	227	20	yes	no	x
St Brigid's School Healesville	Cath.	Metropolitan	245	9	no	no	x
St Catherine's School Melton (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	444	10	no	no	x
St Georges Road Primary School Shepparton (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	348	58	no	no	x
St Joseph's School Collingwood	Cath.	Metropolitan	154	3	no	yes	x
St Mary's School Bairnsdale (IFS)	Cath.	Regional	352	8	no	no	x
St Mary's School Swan Hill (IFS)	Cath.	Regional	423	9	no	no	x
St Paul's School Mildura (IFS)	Cath.	Regional	287	22	yes	no	x
St Peter's School Bendigo (IFS)	Cath.	Regional	165	37	no	yes	x
Swan Hill North Primary School	Gov.	Regional	202.4	15	yes	no	x
Swan Hill Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Regional	543	64	yes	no	x
Sydenham – Hillside Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,328	9	no	no	x
Tatura Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	241	16	no	no	x
The Grange P–12 College (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,778.8	47	no	no	x
Thornbury Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	345	45	no	no	x
Toorloo Arm Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	175	12	no	no	x
Torquay P-6 College	Gov.	Regional	835	8	no	no	x
Traralgon (Liddiard Road) Primary School	Gov.	Regional	334.4	18	yes	no	x
Tullamarine Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	317	7	no	no	x
Wallan Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	590	23	no	no	x
Warragul Primary School	Gov.	Regional	174	10	yes	no	x
Warrnambool East Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	440.4	32	no	no	x
Warrnambool Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	589.9	17	no	no	x
Warrnambool West Primary School	Gov.	Regional	149	19	no	no	x
Westgrove Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	635	28	no	no	x
Whittington Primary School	Gov.	Regional	100	7	no	yes	x
Wilmot Road Primary School Shepparton	Gov.	Regional	26	33	no	yes	x
Winters Flat Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	204.2	12	no	no	x
Wodonga Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	700.4	50.4	no	no	x
Wodonga South Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Regional	550	24	no	no	x
Wodonga West Primary School	Gov.	Regional	307	16	no	yes	x
Wooranna Park Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	343	9	no	yes	x
Yarrawonga College	Gov.	Regional	822.1	19	no	no	x
Yarrunga Primary School	Gov.	Regional	218	8	no	yes	x
Yuille Park P–8 Community College	Gov.	Regional	241	32	no	yes	x

Notes:

NS – school has received funding in 2012 under the *Focus Schools Next Steps* Initiative.

IFS – school has received funding in 2012 under the *Investing in Focus Schools* Program/Initiative.



# Queensland report on activities and outcomes

## Introduction

In 2012, there were 1,715 schools in Queensland, of which 1,239 (72.2 per cent) were government schools and 476 (27.6 per cent) were non-government schools. Of the 1,715 schools in Queensland in 2012, 1,153 (67.2 per cent) were primary schools, 253 (14.8 per cent) were secondary schools, 246 (14.1 per cent) were combined primary/secondary schools and 63 (3.6 per cent) were special schools.

In 2012, 747,682 students were enrolled full-time in Queensland schools, 21 per cent of the Australian total. Of these, 498,013 (66.6 per cent) attended Queensland government schools and 249,669 (33.4 per cent) attended non-government schools.

There were 51,295 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled full-time in Queensland schools, comprising 43,227 in government schools and 8,068 in non-government schools. Of these students:

- 49 per cent were in metropolitan areas
- 36 per cent were in provincial cities
- 5 per cent were in remote areas, and
- 10 per cent were in very remote areas.

The Closing the Gap Education Strategy is the overarching strategy for the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in Queensland government schools. It was developed in response to the COAG Closing the Gap agenda and sets three statewide intermediate targets for closing the gap in education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These targets are focused on improving the three key foundation areas of achievement, attendance and retention.

The three headline targets are to:

- halve the gap in Year 3 reading, writing and numeracy by 2012
- close the gap in student attendance by 2013, and to
- close the gap in Year 12 retention by 2013.

Under the Smarter Schools National Partnerships, addressing the education outcomes is a key priority of Queensland

implementation plans. Queensland enjoys a productive, effective and respectful working arrangement between all three education sectors: Education Queensland, representing the government schooling system; the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, representing the five Catholic Diocesan schooling systems; and Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ), representing independent schools and other non-government schooling systems. The sectors engage in collaborative consultation, decision-making and feedback processes, and share information on the development and implementation and outcomes of their initiatives. All three sectors participated in Working Group meetings for the individual agreements, as well as Smarter Schools Working Group meetings.

## Profile of Focus schools

In Queensland, there are 269 Focus schools – comprising 206 government, 58 Catholic and five independent schools. The 206 government schools cater for 19,550 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which represent just over 45 per cent of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in Queensland government schools. Over half of the government Focus schools are also National Partnership (NP) schools under the Low Socio-Economic Status (SES) National Partnership (71 Focus schools) and the Literacy and Numeracy NP (80 Focus schools). Five government schools are also NP schools under the Remote Service Delivery NP. Nine of the Catholic schools are Low SES NP schools and 11 are Literacy and Numeracy NP schools. Two independent schools are both Low SES and Literacy and Numeracy NP schools.

In 2012, 76 Queensland schools received funding under the Investing in Focus Schools initiative and 41 Queensland schools continued participation in the Focus Schools Next Steps initiative. This funding is provided to these specially selected Focus schools to accelerate the implementation of strategies to bring about improved school attendance, classroom engagement and academic achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A map (Figure QLD5) and list detailing the location of Focus schools in Queensland are provided at the end of this chapter.

# Queensland report on progress by Domains

## Readiness for school

### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

### Overall progress

Data for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (NECEC) Collection have been sourced from the Australian Government and the State and Territory departments with responsibility for Early Childhood Education and Care and the ACT Catholic Education Office. The NECEC Collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) that facilitates consistency of data provision across the various jurisdictional collections. Alignment with these standards has not been completely achieved by all jurisdictions for 2012, and care should be taken when comparing States and Territories.

Some jurisdictions were not able to provide certain data elements as specified in the ECEC NMDS for the National

**Table QLD1: Summary of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program, Queensland and Australia, 2012**

	Queensland		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children
Number of children enrolled	2,236	52,803	11,237	266,036
Children enrolled over ERP (per cent)	54.0	81	82.0	88.5
Number of children attending	2,034	51,394	10,460	258,881
Percentage of children attending over ERP <sup>(a)</sup>	49.0	78.7	76	86.1
Percentage of children enrolled that are attending <sup>(b)</sup>	91.0	97.3	93.1	97.3
ERP 4 year olds – as at June 2012 <sup>(c)</sup>	4,136	65,278	13,763	300,596

Notes:

- a) Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- b) Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled.
- c) ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and should be treated as indicative.
- d) Enrolment and attendance counts include children aged 4 and 5 years. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.

Additional Note:

Due to data collection limitations, Queensland data represent episode counts rather than child counts. Episode counts include all instances of preschool programs provided to a child without accounting for duplication in preschool experience. For information on methodologies and concepts of the preschool enrolment data please refer to explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Preschool Education Australia, 2012* (Cat.No. 4240.0). Some percentages are reported over 100 per cent, which reflects the double counting that may occur in child counts across years.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (unpublished); ABS, (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics* (Cat.No. 3101.0); ABS, (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).



ECEC Collection. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to identify children attending multiple preschool programs within the collection reference period. It is also a challenge to report accurately the number of children enrolled in and attending a preschool program, without counting an individual child more than once. When a child attends two different preschool programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. This child is only counted once in child counts. All preschool episodes associated with a child are included in preschool episode counts. Australian totals in Table QLD1 need to be interpreted with care due to the mixed populations that are reported between States and Territories.

Comparison of data year to year is not possible due to collection, output and processing methodology not being consistent across years.

For further information on the ECEC NMDS, collection methodologies and coverage for the National ECEC Collection,

please see the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National ECEC Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat.No. 4240.0.55.001).

In 2012, Queensland achieved a kindergarten participation rate of 77 per cent, representing a strong and positive improvement from 68 per cent in 2011, and the baseline of 29 per cent in 2008. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in a kindergarten program increased from 56 per cent in 2011 to 66 per cent in 2012, from a 2008 baseline of 29 per cent. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in Queensland remote communities have access to a kindergarten program.

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) prides itself on 'developing policies and procedures that reflect its commitment to actively encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to access Catholic schools' (Source: Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy 2013). Fourteen new kindergarten services will open on Catholic school sites in Queensland from the beginning of the 2013 school year. Kindergarten programs offered on Catholic school sites are based on the accredited Kindergarten Learning Guideline, developed by the Queensland Studies Authority, which aligns with the National Early Years Learning Framework.

The previous AEDI data collection was carried out in 2009. The number of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally 'on track' in four or more domains of the AEDI in 2009 was 40.8 per cent. For non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, this was 61.4 per cent. The 2012 data indicates that there has been an increase, compared to 2009, of seven percentage points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track, from 40.8 per cent to 47.8 per cent, and a narrowing of the gap by 4.2 percentage points, from 20.6 percentage points to 16.4 percentage points.

**Table QLD2: Proportion of children in Queensland assessed as 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 (per cent)**

	Queensland	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	47.8	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	64.2	69.1

Notes:

- The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored above the 25th percentile of the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge need to also be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Index* (AEDI) data, 2012 data collection.

## Systemic level actions (5, 6 and 7)

### Action 5

Schools in Queensland have been provided with information and support to access, analyse and use AEDI data. The support included the appointment of four AEDI Local Champions based in regions across Queensland; the development of a range of

school case studies; and presentations at forums and events. Additionally, Queensland schools were provided with information about the value of the AEDI to support their participation in the 2012 data collection, with Queensland achieving a 97.6 per cent participation rate in the collection.

Queensland is supporting outreach strategies to connect with early childhood education and care, health, family support, welfare and community services by using Foundations for Success: Resource for extending and enriching learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Kindergarten Year. This is a resource providing advice to educators to support planning, implementing, reflecting and continually improving on culturally and linguistically sensitive programs, with a strong emphasis on relationships and partnerships with families and communities.

The Transition to Kindergarten program (2012 to 2013) provides kindergarten transition support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with pre-kindergarten aged children attending playgroups or other family support programs.

The ISQ collaborated with a number of community services, networks and agencies to provide information to families, teachers and support staff on identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at educational risk. The ISQ is actively working with various agencies, led by the Child and Youth Mental Health Service Management Unit, Mater Health Services and the University of Queensland, to support the development of a resource to help teachers and families understand the difference between language difference and language disability, and how best to support students with home-languages that differ from the language of school. The independent sector provided support to school staff in assisted enrolments and on-going programming advice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with language difference and language disability.

#### **Action 6**

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, the Queensland Government is committed to providing access to kindergarten programs for Queensland children in the year prior to the Preparatory year (Prep).

The Queensland Government continues to establish extra kindergarten services in areas of need. In 2012, 36 (42 per cent)

of the 85 kindergarten services opened were in areas where the population share of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4 year-old children exceeded the statewide average of six per cent. Additionally, children who are unable to attend a centre-based kindergarten service are able to access a kindergarten program through the distance education program, E-Kindy.

Under the Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership Agreement, the Australian Government is providing \$75 million to the Queensland Government over six years (2008–09 to 2013–14) for the establishment of 10 Children and Family Centres (CFCs). These CFCs are providing integrated early childhood education and care, family and parenting support, and child and maternal health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with children from birth to 8 years of age.

Governance structures have been established and service delivery models have been finalised in consultation with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities. Community ownership is growing across all 10 CFC locations.

Permanent facilities in Doomadgee, Logan, Mareeba, Mornington Island and Palm Island are complete. Services are being delivered from temporary premises in other locations while construction of permanent facilities continues.

In 2012, the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme base subsidy was increased by an additional \$100 for each child enrolled, to reduce cost as a barrier to kindergarten participation. Subsidies were also significantly increased for services in low-income areas, and for Health Care Card holders.

Pre-Preparatory Year (pre-Prep) programs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are delivered for 15 hours per week to children three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half years of age living in 35 discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland. The program is delivered in a range of settings, including kindergarten services, childcare services, 28 government schools and one non-government school.

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) formulated partnerships with the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care and other Central Governing Bodies by agreeing to become a Central Governing Body for kindergartens. This agreement allows the progress of negotiations on legislation, recurrent and capital funding levels. The QCEC and

Catholic Schooling Authorities have appropriate measures in place to fulfil approval requirements for fourteen kindergartens on Catholic school sites.

In 2012, the Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) provided advice and support to its member kindergarten services, including the promotion of particular programs and services that can assist in the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. These included: information on access to education materials about cultural and linguistic difference; provision of professional development information, such as the Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Early Childhood program, Yarn Up and the Remote Indigenous Professional Development project.

The ISQ facilitated the establishment of eight new kindergartens co-located on independent school sites.

#### Action 7

In 2012, Queensland developed and is trialing in 2013, an on-entry assessment program to assess students' essential literacy and numeracy skills. The materials have been developed in conjunction with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The early years monitoring and diagnostic literacy and numeracy assessment initiative, Early Start, is inclusive of all students including: students with disability, English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and /or those requiring support or extension. This initiative will assist in identifying students at educational risk and determining and implementing early intervention strategies. The On-entry to Prep and End of Prep materials will be available to all Queensland government schools in 2014, with Year 1 and Year 2 to follow in 2015.

### Local level action (8)

#### Action 8

Focus schools have identified strategies to address readiness for school. The Foundations for Success program is being implemented in conjunction with the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline in 35 remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

A transition statement based on the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline assists teachers to develop descriptions of learning as a summary of each child's learning and development

during the kindergarten year. Teachers develop the transition statement, towards the end of the kindergarten year, in collaboration with the children, their parents/carers, and support personnel. This statement may provide an evidence-based focus for conversation between education settings and parents about school readiness.

A number of literacy and numeracy initiatives have been implemented across Catholic school authorities, including the Mini Murris and School Readiness programs in Toowoomba, two such ventures that assist families and children to be school ready.

In 2012, readiness for school strategies that have had repeated success in independent schools included: the School Readiness Program, delivered by the University of Queensland at the Murri School; the Preparation for Learning Program at Djarragun College; and Prep Screening at Gulf Christian College, to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Prep students who may be educationally 'at risk'. Collaborative outreach strategies implemented by Hymba Yumba and Shalom Christian College included: visits to local childcare centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-schools and home visits to meet new and prospective children and carers prior to, and during, the Prep year by school staff; and involvement in the Head Start Program, which assists schools in identifying the needs of students prior to school entry.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicators

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school-community partnership agreement in place.*

### Overall progress

Within Queensland government schools, functionality within OneSchool (the Queensland school administration system which supports schools in student management; curriculum and learning management; resource management; and performance, reporting and analysis) allows for students' personalised learning needs. This means that all students are accommodated with

personalised learning strategies. An Individualised Learning Plan is developed for students who perform substantially above or below year level expectations. In addition, all students in Years 10, 11 and 12 have a Queensland Senior Education and Training Plan, which outlines student aspirations and support needs to assist in them complete Year 12 and/or transition to further education, training and/or employment options. There are currently 45,766 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students recorded in OneSchool. Of these students, 9,219 had at least one specific support provision recorded in OneSchool in 2012.

Almost 20 per cent of Catholic schools have personalised learning strategies in place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and a significant number of schools are in the process of developing personalised learning strategies.

In 2012, Independent Schools Queensland supported independent Focus schools to progress development of Personalised Learning Plans and school–community engagement processes. Within the independent sector, the number of enrolled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with active Personalised Learning Plans has risen to 80 per cent.

The Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS) strategy is a core initiative of the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment's (the Department's) Closing the Gap Education Strategy, and a major responsibility under the Queensland Government Reconciliation Action Plan. EATSIPS is being implemented in Queensland government schools across the four main areas of school practice: Personal and Professional Accountability; Organisational Environment; Community Partnerships; and Curriculum and Pedagogy. In 2012, 11 Principal Project Officers led the implementation of EATSIPS across Queensland as a regional process. All (100 per cent) of Queensland's government schools have either accessed EATSIPS professional development in the required stages (from audit to implementation), or are receiving targeted support to implement EATSIPS.

In addition, 80 per cent of the 60 Queensland Government Investing in Focus Schools initiative have a Community Partnership agreement in place, the remaining 20 per cent are working with communities to develop an agreement, and 100 per cent of schools participating in the Focus Schools Next Steps initiative are committed to finalising a school–community partnership agreement.

Four (80 per cent) independent Focus schools had community partnership agreements in place at the end of the 2012 school year.

## Systemic level actions (15, 16, 17 and 18)

### Action 15

The Department's Parent and Community Engagement Framework (PACE) was developed in 2012, and is planned to be made available in 2013. PACE will help schools, parents and the community to work together to maximise student learning, and will directly support Focus schools to develop implementation of outreach strategies. Practical strategies are included, that schools, parents and the community can adopt and/or adapt to suit their local needs.

The Moving Together project, funded by the Australian Government, is a joint initiative run in partnership with Dare to Lead, and involves collaboration with the Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee for government and Catholic Focus schools, and their neighbouring secondary schools. The project began in Semester 2, 2011, and continued in South-East Queensland throughout 2012. The aim of the project was to build the capacity of school leaders to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, parents and the community. The project has engaged with 52 schools in South-East Queensland. Outcomes observed include improved NAPLAN results, attendance and retention for primary students in the first phase of the project.

### Action 16

Advice and strategies for the retention and support of pregnant and parenting young people in education has been developed as part of the Department's Strategic Plan 2012–2016. Within the Department's Strategic Plan, schools have key strategies that are highly applicable to supporting pregnant and parenting students to maximise their potential and contribute productively to the economy. These strategies will directly support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young mothers to remain in education.

An innovative program, launched in 2011 and continued in 2012, gives teenaged mothers the chance to complete further study while raising their newborn babies. The Studying, Training and Effective Parenting Program (STEPP) – a partnership of the Bremer Institute of TAFE and Mission Australia's Communities for Children Plus – was created to give teenaged mothers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers, an opportunity

to reengage in education, further develop their life skills and improve their prospects for employment or further study. STEPP provides education, training and life skills courses for young mothers aged 16-18 who are pregnant or parenting, while also providing high quality childcare in a supportive learning environment next door to the classroom.

#### **Action 17**

The role of Indigenous Education Workers (IEWs) is periodically reviewed within the Queensland Department to ensure that they are best positioned to most effectively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Catholic schooling authorities provides mentoring programs and facilitates career pathways for IEWs to undertake sponsored study programs and tertiary studies in partnership with the Australian Catholic University.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) encourages independent schools to conduct reviews of IEWs as part of their whole-of-school Action Plan review. ISQ also supports schools to develop strategies to maximise the ability of IEWs to perform their roles in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents/carers and teachers to improve educational outcomes. ISQ supports this process by conducting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education network days and workshops where good practice is shared and discussed.

#### **Action 18**

In 2012, government Focus schools developed and endorsed whole-school plans. The plans strengthen school accountability and reporting to families and the community by detailing direct strategies to support the outcomes of the Action Plan under the six domains. For example, Cunnamulla State School Community Reference Group developed strategies for sustainable partnerships specifically to improve attendance by forming strong community links with its school. The Community Reference Group is co-chaired by the principal and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community member. Subgroups have a range of responsibilities and report back regularly on progress on targeted activities. The Community Reference Group is the driver of change and allows Elders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, community members and organisations a voice and common understanding about the importance of education.

Independent schools are encouraged to report to families when principals, support staff, and teachers attend specifically focused

ISQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education network days, and national curriculum, literacy and numeracy workshops where good practice and 'What Works' program strategies are shared and discussed.

### **Local level actions (19, 20 and 21)**

#### **Action 19**

Developing strong community partnerships between the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community and school staff is key to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the school and within curriculum and pedagogical processes. Statewide implementation of the EATSIPS strategy is a core initiative for Education Queensland (for further information, see: [http://deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous/pdfs/eatsips\\_2011.pdf](http://deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous/pdfs/eatsips_2011.pdf)). EATSIPS is focused on the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the four action areas: Personal and Professional Accountabilities; Community Engagement; Organisational Environment; and Curriculum and Pedagogy. Queensland government schools, regions and the Department's central office are working together to implement EATSIPS.

In 2012, 62.5 per cent of Catholic Focus schools have completed or are working on their School Community Partnership Agreements (SCPAs). In the Brisbane Catholic Education Diocese, there are two Diocesan schools that have developed and completed their Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). There are 14 Diocesan schools currently developing their individual RAP or SCPA, and are scheduled to be completed and implemented during 2013. Within the Brisbane Archdiocese there are two religious order schools that have developed and completed their RAPs. RAPs help sustain school-community partnerships and are used in conjunction with them.

Independent Focus schools receive support in developing SCPAs and in the development of Personalised Learning Plans and, as such, are encouraged to include family and community in the development and continual feedback processes whilst implementing these strategies.

#### **Action 20**

During 2012, EATSIPS officers engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities and supported connections with Queensland government schools. Schools mapped their progress on an implementation matrix, including the element of community connections and engagement. Where

schools have undertaken a commitment to work with the Attendance Turnaround Team to improve student attendance, strong community engagement has resulted. Other ongoing strengthening of partnerships has included: maintaining or re-forming parent groups, and establishing or re-establishing community reference groups or school-based advisory groups.

Families as First Teachers (FAFT) is a program initiated in North Queensland that is individually tailored to the local community it supports communities working together to create a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes. In 2012, a statewide FAFT coordinator was employed. FAFT assists with literacy and numeracy development in extended family groups, as the groups work alongside school personnel in learning environments designed to assist small children. FAFT promotes transference of these skills to the early education of children from birth to 4 years of age, and it promotes sharing of cultural information between all members of the group. FAFT aims to encourage family/parent interactions with school personnel. It enables adult members of the community to develop relationships with school personnel – teachers, teacher aides and volunteers – so that the barriers between these groups are eased, and to assist in the smooth transition of the children into the formal school setting. FAFT also assists both parents and school personnel to establish the needs of individual children and, where possible, to meet these needs before the child transitions into the formal school setting.

#### **Action 21**

Government schools have involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, teachers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers in the development of personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to support improved educational outcomes, and support engagement at school and community connectedness. For example, Cairns West State School has developed a service agreement. This is a written student agreement, which is voluntarily entered into by the principal, the student and parents. It states that if a student attends school 95 per cent of the time and does not meet academic benchmarks for their year level, they are guaranteed to receive intensive support from the school until they are meeting those benchmarks. Other Focus schools have adopted the agreement.

During 2012, all Catholic schools worked towards the development of personalised learning strategies/plans. In

some instances, schools had to provide new teaching staff and leadership teams in schools with quality professional development of the Action Plan. Support of school staff and good communication and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families has led to the longevity of successful and sustainable personalised learning strategies. Where there has been little improvement of student outcomes, the decision to go to personalised learning plans will be introduced.

In 2012, Independent Schools Queensland engaged two Indigenous Education Consultants to support and assist independent Focus schools to develop Personalised Learning Plans and strategies for implementation.

## Attendance

### Performance indicators

5. *Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.*
6. *Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to 'Other' Australians.*
7. *Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
8. *Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

## Overall progress

There is little overall movement in attendance rates or apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2010 and 2012.

### Attendance rates

As presented in Figures QLD1.1 to QLD1.3, school attendance rates are lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, in all year levels, in all school sectors. Attendance rates tend to be lower in the upper years for all students. In general, there is little overall movement in attendance rates from 2010 to 2012, for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with some very slight upward trend recorded in Year 6.



**Table QLD3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by sector, 2012 (per cent)**

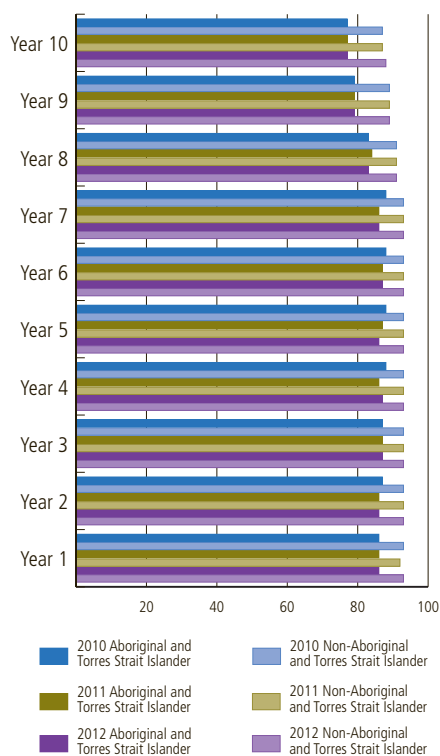
	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>Government</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	86.0	86.0	87.0	87.0	86.0	87.0	86.0	83.0	79.0	77.0	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	91.0	89.0	88.0	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	92.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	93.0	92.0	91.0	88.0	87.0	n/a	n/a
<b>Catholic</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87.0	87.0	90.0	89.0	89.0	88.0	90.0	91.0	89.0	86.0	n/a	69.0
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	93.0	92.0	n/a	70.0
<b>Total</b>	93.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	94.0	93.0	92.0	n/a	69.0
<b>Independent</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	86.0	88.0	86.0	85.0	87.0	90.0	89.0	88.0	83.0	78.0	n/a	75.0
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.0	94.0	95.0	95.0	95.0	95.0	95.0	94.0	94.0	93.0	92.0	70.0
<b>Total</b>	94.0	94.0	95.0	94.0	95.0	94.0	95.0	94.0	94.0	93.0	92.0	70.0

Notes: Definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance data are not uniform. As such, direct comparisons of attendance rates between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made. Nor can attendance data for 2012 be aggregated or averaged at the national or State level. Variations in methodology between jurisdictions are described in the explanatory notes for the 2012 attendance data contained in the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012*.

n/a not available.

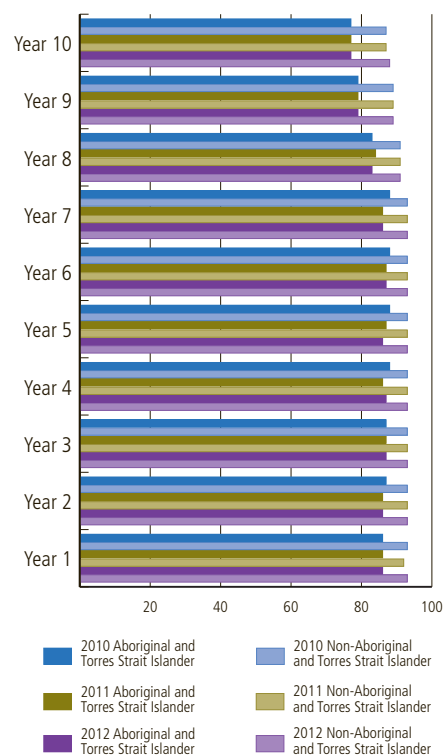
Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure QLD1.1: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, Queensland, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

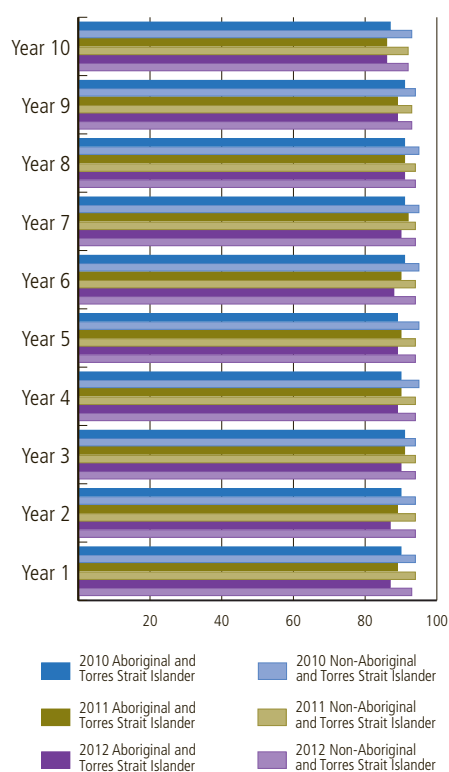
**Figure QLD1.2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, Queensland, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).



**Figure QLD1.3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, Queensland, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

## Enrolment to population ratio

For 2012, school participation rates have not been published by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status due to concerns with the quality of the indicator. Specifically, the rates for most States and Territories exceed 100 per cent, primarily as a result of modal differences in the data sources. The denominator is sourced from the Estimated Resident Population series, itself drawn from the Population Census, while the numerator is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The ABS is working to provide a substitute measure.

## Apparent retention rates

Apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for both Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12.

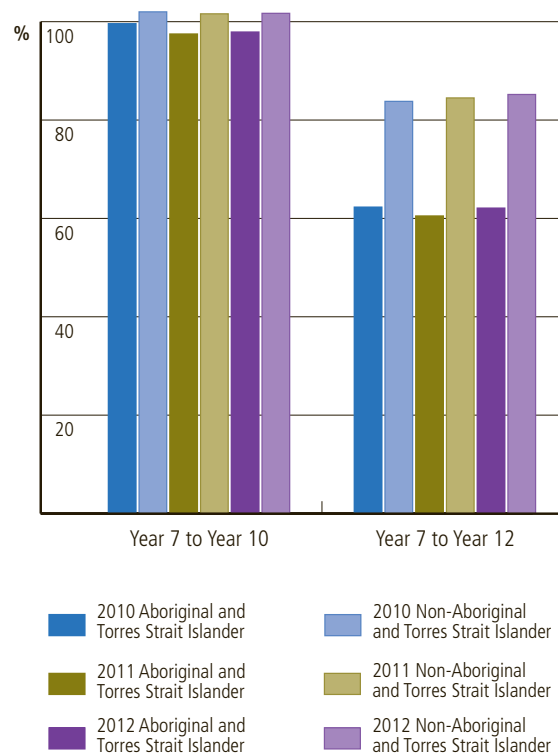
As presented in Figure QLD2, there is little overall movement in retention rates from 2010 to 2012, with a very slight decline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student apparent retention rates from Year 7 to Year 10 from 2010 to 2011.

**Table QLD4: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Queensland, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 7 to Year 10	97.9	101.7
Year 7 to Year 12	62.1	85.2

Source: Derived from ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat. No. 4221.0) and based on full-time student enrolments.

**Figure QLD2: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Queensland, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

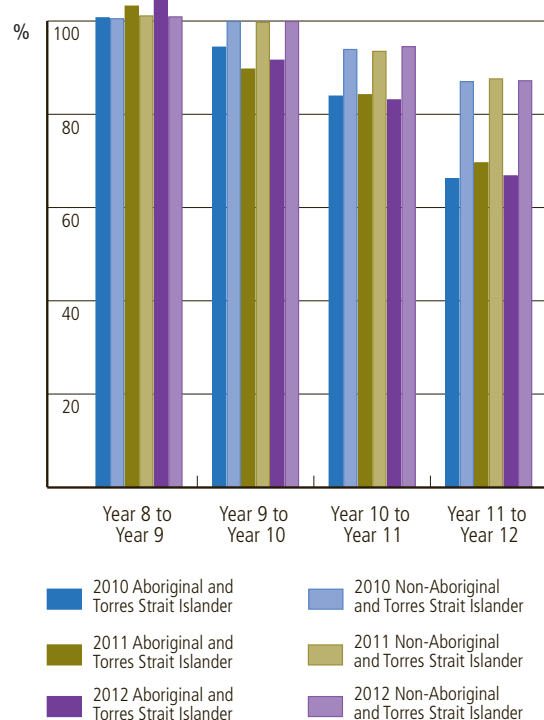
## Apparent grade progression ratios

**Table QLD5: Apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Queensland, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 8 to Year 9	101.6	100.8
Year 9 to Year 10	98.7	101.2
Year 10 to Year 11	84.6	94.5
Year 11 to Year 12	79.2	89.3

Source: ABS, *Schools, Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

**Figure QLD3: Grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Queensland, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools, Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

It should be noted that where progression appears to be above 100 per cent, this may reflect student movement across schooling sectors or jurisdictions.

Grade progression rates decrease as the students move into upper secondary for all students, particularly amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are evident and most pronounced between Years 10 and 11 and Years 11 and 12. However, there has been a slight increase in the grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Years 10 to 11 and Years 11 to 12 from 2010 to 2012, and a narrowing of the gap for Years 11 to 12.

## Systemic level action (25)

### Action 25

Attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has been an ongoing focus for the Queensland Department. Proactive strategies, such as Let's Stay Put and Every Day Counts in government schools, have enabled schools to convey the message to all families that attendance is critical to their success at school. The Connectedness Gauge, developed by the Department, was introduced to schools, and invited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, as a self-check instrument to allow schools to see how well they were connected. The Connectedness Gauge is a tool that schools can analyse for developing ways to improve student attendance. A road show was conducted in Term 3, 2012, introducing the Connectedness Gauge and challenging schools to raise their expectations for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2012, Education Queensland made a number of changes to the Managing Student Absences procedure and Roll-marking procedure. This was in response to recommendations made in an internal report into strategies and initiatives that had been effective in increasing student attendance rates and directly related to the Closing the Gap Education Strategy. Also in 2012, the Every Day Counts website (at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/>) was updated. The Department has also progressed a number of the internal report's recommendations, and worked with OneSchool to establish an 'Attendance Dashboard', which allows users to interrogate and analyse absence and attendance information.

Other strategies included the development of an awareness/advertising campaign to raise parent/community/school awareness of the importance of school attendance. Additional case studies and vignettes, which will be developed, will be available on the Every Day Counts website. Model school attendance strategies will be showcased in these vignettes.

Catholic schools have whole-of-school approaches to monitor and manage the attendance of individual students. Existing practises support students and families, if attendance issues are identified.

## Local level action (26)

### Action 26

In 2012, Queensland government schools utilised their collected attendance data, including data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, to develop a range of strategies at the school level. These include:

- employing a part-time community participation officer who tracks student attendance and makes follow-up phone calls to the parents about absences
- use of the school newsletter to stress the importance of attendance; development of literacy and numeracy goals agreed on with the parents, with attendance as part of this discussion (ie, the child has to be at school to learn these things and meet the goals)
- incentive programs for attendance, targeting the peak drop-off times for absences (around end of term) through parent communication channel, and
- use of popular extra-curricular activities as incentives to support school attendance, using existing school-based activities, such as an active swimming club, to increase the visibility of the school within the community.

Site-specific strategies have been developed for identified school communities. Improving attendance through a 'Turn around Approach', facilitated by a team of highly experienced educators, has been very successful in a number of communities, such as Palm Island. A scan and desktop audit and community consultation of what was happening, what had been done and what the perceived needs were to improve attendance, has led to the formation of a whole, community-owned action plan. By establishing a number of subgroups – comprised of

community, school and council members – a truly community managed process was established to build on the positive work that was already in place. The data shows a very positive trend in improved attendance, reduced disciplinary absences, increased staff morale, parent satisfaction and improved learning outcomes.

Mornington Island State School, one of the top 12 Queensland schools with improved attendance, has published their attendance program. It outlines a strategic process for attendance and community awareness. It includes roles and responsibilities of teachers, students, the school and parents, a detailed process for addressing persistent absenteeism and an attendance improvement plan.

In 2012, each independent Focus school developed an evidence-based attendance strategy for their particular context. This strategy is an integral component of their whole-school Action Plan. Each school manages their attendance strategy using a variety of electronic data management systems to record, collate, monitor and follow-up Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance. The information gathered informs regular and ongoing evaluation of attendance processes and strategies, in order to celebrate successes and make adjustments for improvement where necessary. Independent Focus schools link their whole-school attendance strategies with the health and wellbeing and Standard Australian English (SAE) literacy and numeracy development programs and strategies of each school.

All independent Focus schools publish the progress of school attendance in their local school newsletters to encourage parents/carers and the local community in their partnership with the school to support student attendance. They report annually to school boards and to family and community on attendance progress.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*
10. *Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.*

## Overall progress

The performance of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assessment remains well below that of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. While there are mixed results, relating to the gap between the performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2010 and 2012, the gap has widened in more areas than it has narrowed (refer to data in Table QLD6 for further detail).

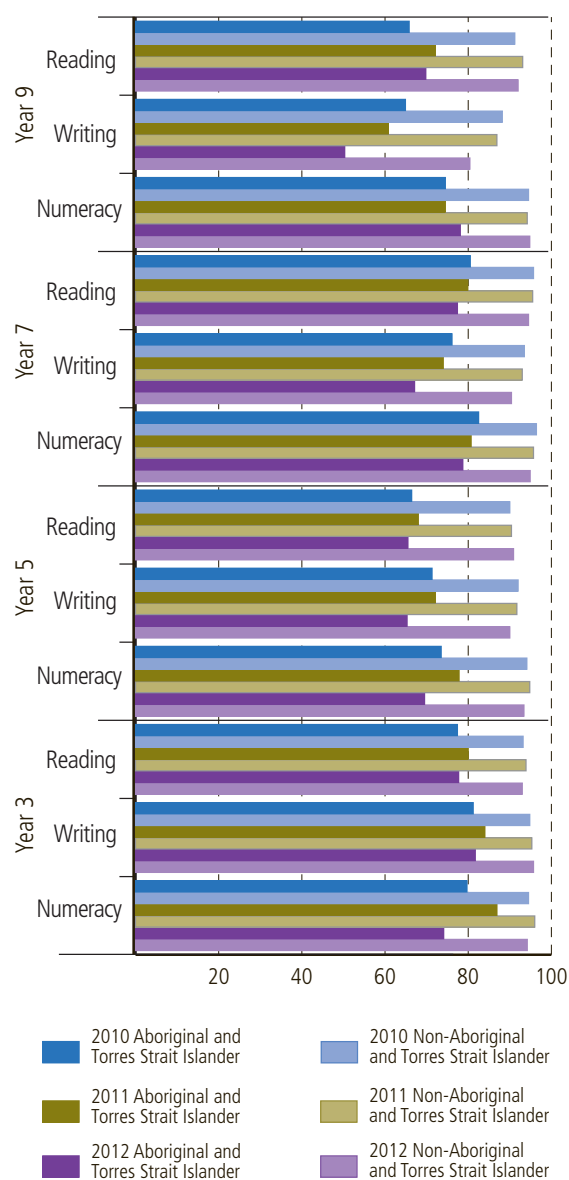
## NAPLAN outcomes

The performance of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN remains below that of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. There are mixed results relating to the gap between the performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving the national minimum standard tends to be markedly lower in Year 9 compared to the other year levels. A significant characteristic of the gap appears to be its volatility from year to year. The gap often widens and then narrows (or narrows and then widens) in consecutive years (eg, Year 3 numeracy). This volatility makes it difficult to discern where sustainable gains might be occurring. Year 9 numeracy is the only test area with a narrowing of the gap in both testing intervals of 2010 to 2011 and 2011 to 2012. From 2010 to 2012, there are some areas where the gap remains: in 2012, within one per cent of the 2010 level. The gap has narrowed in Year 3 reading, and Year 9 reading and numeracy, but there are a number of areas where the gap has widened considerably (eg, Year 3 numeracy).

The percentage of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard is generally highest in metropolitan areas and generally lowest in very remote areas. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also tends to be the highest in very remote areas. In general, the proportion of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

**Figure QLD4: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Queensland, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA (2012 and unpublished), NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2012.

**Table QLD6: NAPLAN reading, writing<sup>(a)</sup> and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Queensland, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3			Year 5			Year 7			Year 9		
	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.
<b>2010</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	77.4	81.2	79.7	66.4	71.3	73.5	80.5	76.1	82.5	65.8	64.9	74.5
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.2	94.8	94.5	90.0	92.0	94.1	95.7	93.5	96.4	91.2	88.2	94.5
Gap	15.8	13.6	14.8	23.6	20.7	20.6	15.2	17.4	13.9	25.4	23.3	20.0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±2.2	±2.3	±2.3	±3.0	±3.2	±3.1	±2.3	±2.8	±2.2	±3.0	±3.0	±2.9
<b>2011</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	80.0	84.0	86.9	68.0	72.1	77.8	79.9	74.0	80.7	72.1	60.8	74.5
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.9	95.3	96.0	90.4	91.7	94.8	95.5	93.0	95.7	93.1	86.9	94.2
Gap	13.9	11.3	9.1	22.4	19.6	17.0	15.6	19.0	15.0	21.0	26.1	19.7
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±2.0	±1.8	±1.3	±2.4	±2.3	±2.1	±2.3	±2.5	±2.2	±3.0	±3.1	±2.7
<b>2012</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	77.7	81.7	74.1	65.5	65.3	69.5	77.4	67.1	78.7	69.8	50.3	78.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.0	95.7	94.2	90.9	90.0	93.4	94.5	90.4	94.9	92.0	80.4	94.8
Gap	15.3	14.0	20.1	25.4	24.7	23.9	17.1	23.3	16.2	22.2	30.1	16.7
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±2.1	±2.5	±2.6	±3.1	±3.3	±3.1	±2.5	±3.1	±2.4	±3.3	±2.7	±2.6

Notes:

- a) A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.
- b) The confidence intervals for 2010 to 2012 in this table are specifically for Queensland.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2010–2012.

## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

**Table QLD7: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Queensland, 2012 (per cent)**

Geolocation	Queensland		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	81.7	94.4	82.6	95.2
Provincial	80.5	92.6	79.9	93.5
Remote	66.6	90.3	61.2	91.6
Very Remote	58.5	89.0	39.9	90.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	70.9	91.7	76.0	93.6
Provincial	72.0	89.3	72.7	91.9
Remote	44.7	86.2	50.5	89.7
Very Remote	36.0	85.2	20.3	86.5
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	83.0	94.8	84.0	95.4
Provincial	80.4	93.7	80.8	94.5
Remote	65.1	92.7	65.4	93.4
Very Remote	52.8	92.0	37.6	92.7
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	73.5	92.4	74.6	92.9
Provincial	71.0	91.3	70.9	92.0
Remote	56.3	88.4	50.9	90.5
Very Remote	38.9	83.7	24.4	87.9
<b>Writing</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	85.9	96.1	87.3	96.6
Provincial	85.9	94.9	85.2	95.6
Remote	63.0	94.7	63.2	95.5
Very Remote	60.8	94.4	40.2	94.3
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	70.2	90.9	77.3	94.3
Provincial	68.5	88.0	73.3	91.6
Remote	47.9	88.3	53.2	90.6
Very Remote	46.0	85.2	24.9	86.7
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	74.3	91.3	74.5	92.4
Provincial	69.9	88.6	68.0	88.6
Remote	42.9	87.7	47.0	88.0
Very Remote	43.2	88.0	25.6	89.1
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	55.1	81.8	56.9	85.0
Provincial	48.4	77.2	49.7	79.0
Remote	36.3	69.0	32.6	75.9
Very Remote	31.2	71.6	17.0	74.6
<b>Numeracy</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	78.9	94.7	81.4	95.5
Provincial	78.5	92.9	78.8	93.9
Remote	61.3	91.5	58.6	93.0
Very Remote	47.1	88.9	37.9	91.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	74.7	93.9	79.5	95.0
Provincial	75.8	92.2	76.3	93.6
Remote	47.9	92.1	55.3	92.5
Very Remote	41.9	88.0	29.2	89.1
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	83.4	95.2	82.3	95.2
Provincial	81.8	94.3	78.6	94.1
Remote	63.8	92.4	64.1	93.6
Very Remote	58.7	91.6	42.4	92.4
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	80.5	95.0	79.9	95.0
Provincial	79.7	94.4	76.8	94.0
Remote	64.3	92.7	61.7	93.6
Very Remote	57.3	91.2	42.9	91.8

Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), 2012.

students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in metropolitan, provincial and remote areas is similar to the Australian percentage. In very remote areas, the Queensland percentage is generally higher than the Australian percentage.

## 2012 NAPLAN data and 2012 progress points for Queensland

One of the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG's) 'Closing the Gap' targets is to halve the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy by 2018. To monitor achievement of this COAG target by 2018, progress points for each State and Territory were developed. The progress points for Queensland are provided in Table QLD8.

When comparing the progress points with the actual NAPLAN results detailed in Table QLD6, it can be seen that there is a mixture of Queensland performance with respect to the trajectories. Queensland Year 5 numeracy performance for 2012 is at its anticipated progress point and Year 9 numeracy and reading in Years 3, 5 and 7 are all ahead of target.

## NAPLAN participation

The overall participation rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the 2012 NAPLAN was below that of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This applies in all domains and year levels, in both Queensland and Australia. However, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation rate was consistently higher than the Australia-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation rate. This also applies for all domains and year levels. Participation tended to be lower in Year 9 for both Queensland and Australian students. These patterns are consistent with those in 2010 and 2011.

## Systemic level action (30)

### Action 30

Queensland is leading national projects that aim to build the capacity of teachers and school leaders to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are learning Standard Australian English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). Through the projects, an online induction course is being developed for teachers starting work in remote Aboriginal or

**Table QLD8: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy progress points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving at or above the national minimum standard (2008–2012), Queensland (per cent)**

Year	Reading				Writing				Numeracy			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2008	66.2	62.9	74.8	70.0	77.2	72.0	72.3	61.8	75.5	69.5	81.8	73.2
2009	66.2	62.9	74.8	70.0	77.2	72.0	72.3	61.8	75.5	69.5	81.8	73.2
2010	66.2	62.9	74.8	70.0	77.2	72.0	72.3	61.8	75.5	69.5	81.8	73.2
2011	71.8	62.9	74.8	70.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	61.8	80.0	69.5	81.8	73.2
2012	77.5	62.9	74.8	70.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	61.8	84.4	69.5	81.8	73.2
2018	88.7	88.8	89.4	81.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	73.6	93.3	92.0	92.4	83.5

Note: 'n/a' indicates data was unavailable for writing. There is a break in series from 2011, and the trajectory points were calculated on the first test type (narrative), not the second (persuasive), for 2011 and 2012. As such, from 2011, there are no relevant trajectories to report against.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2008–2012.



**Table QLD9: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, exemptions, absences/withdrawals and assessed students in Queensland and Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7		Year 9	
	Qld	Aust.	Qld	Aust.	Qld	Aust.	Qld	Aust.
<b>Reading</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91.6	89.7	90.3	89.6	91.5	87.8	81.3	77.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.0	95.7	95.2	96.3	95.7	95.9	92.1	92.9
<b>Writing</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91.0	89.9	90.8	89.5	91.1	87.6	82.0	77.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.0	95.6	95.0	96.2	95.7	96.1	92.5	93.2
<b>Numeracy</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90.3	88.2	89.4	88.4	90.3	86.2	80.7	75.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.7	95.5	94.9	96.0	95.3	95.6	91.7	92.4

Note: Exempt students are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard, and are included in the calculation of participation rates.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.

Torres Strait Islander communities, and a comprehensive online, action-learning course is being developed that will be available to all teachers.

The national work has included the development of the Capability Framework – Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D Learners. The framework, which is currently in the process of being endorsed by States and Territories, makes explicit the knowledge and practice teachers require to be able to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners effectively. The framework closely aligns with, and will support implementation of, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. In Queensland, the framework will be used in induction processes and to inform implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The framework is also being used as the basis for developing video vignettes to support schools with embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. The vignettes will illustrate how teachers work within the framework to support and progress EAL/D learners appropriately.

In 2012, Catholic schooling authorities undertook varying initiatives within each Diocese to focus on improving literacy and numeracy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Initiatives include: the Indigenous Literacy Day and Book Swap; Accelerated Literacy Teaching program; RoleM (Maths); Kagan Cooperative Learning and the ESL EsSentialS workshop.

ISQ provides specialist staff to assist remote schools with multilingual and multidialectal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, who require English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Second Dialect (ESD), to teach Standard Australian English. ISQ provides off-site ESL/ ESD workshops, as well as in situ, face-to-face literacy and ESL/ESD specialist support, teleconferences and online workshops. All independent Focus schools, including remote schools, are able to access training workshops and specialist support in the use of the ESL Bandscales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Learners and other strategies, as required. ISQ provides targeted opportunities for remote schools to be involved in specific professional networking sessions to support the implementation of good

practice. Additionally, in 2012, all Queensland independent schools were provided the opportunity to apply for funds to support students with a language background other than English under the Australian Government's Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs program.

## Local level actions (31 and 32)

### Action 31

Over 2011 and 2012, the Queensland Department implemented a project to help ensure multilingual students were appropriately prepared with EAL/D strategies, including the means by which to assess student progress in the acquisition of skills in Standard Australian English. The Bridging the Language Gap project was accessed by 86 government and Catholic schools. It supported schools to identify, support and monitor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners. Schools nominated a staff member to be trained as a Language Leader. The Language Leader undertook a comprehensive professional development program. Other school staff accessed basic EAL/D professional development, and were assisted by the Language Leader to apply their professional learning. Early results of a single, whole-class case study show significant growth in students' language, literacy and learning area knowledge resulted from teachers using the strategies that were taught through the Bridging the Language Gap project.

The Bridging the Language Gap project was delivered alongside other community-based language work. This included work on languages in Normanton, Mareeba, Cherbourg, South-Western Queensland, St George, Cunnamulla and Lockhart River.

All independent Focus schools participated in the ISQ's Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy professional learning workshops in 2012. The ISQ Academy workshops were specific in assisting schools to implement their whole-of-school approach to the teaching of Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy, using data-driven and evidence-based strategies. Mentors were assigned to visit Focus schools and provide additional workshops and face-to-face support. Additional professional learning undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education workers included 'in context of the classroom' professional learning sessions.

### Action 32

The Department, Central Southern Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology's YuMi Deadly Maths

Centre partnered to provide specific professional development for Queensland schools through resources that teach mathematics through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of learning. Teaching Indigenous Mathematics Education (TIME) was rolled out in three stages, with the junior secondary program finalised this year. In total, 148 schools have undertaken training. Four Centres for Excellence in the YuMi Deadly Maths program were established to promote and support other schools to introduce this pedagogical approach to teaching mathematics.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. *Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*
12. *Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*
13. *Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

## Overall progress

The Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission do not collect systemic data on the number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.

In 2012, Independent Schools Queensland delivered a total of 36 hours of professional development on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence.

At the end of 2012, the average length of service in Queensland government Focus schools was 4.1 years for principals and 5.6 years for teachers. This is similar to 2011 (noting that only teachers were reported for 2011). The Queensland Catholic Education Commission, or Independent Schools Queensland, does not collect data on this indicator.

**Table QLD10: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents) in Queensland, by sector, 2012<sup>(a)</sup>**

	FTE
<b>Government<sup>(b)</sup></b>	
Principals	25
Teaching staff	532
AIEWs and equivalents	635
<b>Catholic<sup>(c)</sup></b>	
Principals	2
Teaching staff	52
AIEWs and equivalents	135
<b>Independent<sup>(c)</sup></b>	
Principals	1
Teaching staff	42
AIEWs and equivalents	63

Notes:

- a) Data for 2012 is presented differently to the data for 2011 and therefore, cannot be directly compared.
- b) AIEWs and equivalents in government schools are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are classified as either: Community Education Counsellor, Community Teacher or Teacher Aide, and may not necessarily be engaged to work specifically with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- c) AIEWs and equivalents in Catholic and independent schools include administrative staff.

Sources: Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment; Queensland Catholic Education Commission, Independent Schools Queensland, 2012.

**Table QLD11: Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard to staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (operationally defined as Focus schools), Queensland, 2012**

Classification	Average length of service (in months)		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
Principals	49.2	n/a	n/a
Teachers	67.2	n/a	n/a

Note:

n/a not available.

Source: Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment.

## Systemic level actions (41 and 42)

### Action 41

Significant investment continues to be made by the Department of Education, Training and Employment in capacity building to support teachers and schools leaders in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools initiative (EATSIPS) strategy has provided opportunity for Queensland government teachers and principals to undertake professional development on issues specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The professional development is offered to clusters and it is also available online.

Crossing Cultures professional development is increasing awareness among principals and school staff of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories as an important part of improving learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Providing cultural awareness training through this and other workshops is a key part of Queensland government schools' Closing the Gap Education Strategy.

Catholic schooling authorities have embraced the professional development program for all teachers and staff in their local Dioceses. It has become apparent that School Leadership forums, whole-of-school professional development and Diocesan team meetings have been advantageous in the Catholic schooling environment.

Catholic schools have provided targeted professional learning to build cultural safe environments, improve cultural and linguistic understanding and inclusive practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In the Rockhampton Diocese, in early February, 2012, all members of the Indigenous Education Support Team were in-serviced into the use of the Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) Professional Development package developed to support schools in the implementation of PLPs. Throughout 2012, all teaching and some support staff throughout the Rockhampton Diocese (numbering approximately 1,550) participated in professional development training in the use and implementation of PLPs for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in their school/class.

In 2012, the independent sector provided quality research based professional learning on an ongoing basis to teachers and specialist support staff to ensure continuous improvement in teacher understanding of the cultural and linguistic needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Professional learning events included:

- all independent sector Focus schools involvement in the ISQ Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy, which involves regular face-to-face professional learning days
- online interactive tutorials with ISQ specialist staff and school-based mentoring and support
- delivery of the Cultural Awareness Training Course under the Indigenous Enhancement Support Structures program
- mathematics workshops to ISQ Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy schools, and
- mentors and coaches involved in the YuMi Deadly Maths Program to improve teacher understanding of the linguistic and conceptual development needs of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander students and to improve teaching practice in the area of Mathematics.

#### **Action 42**

The Queensland Government's Great Teachers = Great Results direct action plan for schools outlines actions that will directly give priority to Focus schools when attracting or placing high performing leaders and teachers, in the form of performance bonuses and performance based fixed-term contracts. In this way, principals with demonstrated experience will be leading schools to improve outcomes for all students and, in the case of Focus schools, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### **Local level actions (43 and 44)**

#### **Action 43**

Principals in schools across Queensland have participated in a range of leadership programs over a number of years, including mentoring through the Dare to Lead coalition and via the Stronger Smarter Institute leadership program. In 2012, under the Focus Schools Next Steps initiative, professional development took place to build principals' capacities to lead an improvement agenda to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

students. Planning to build leadership capacity also commenced under the Investing in Focus Schools initiative.

The Moving Together project, funded by the Australian Government, is a joint initiative run in partnership with Dare to Lead, and involves collaboration with Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee for government and Catholic Focus schools, and their neighbouring secondary schools. The aim of the project is to build the capacity of school leaders to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, parents and the community. The project has engaged with 52 schools in South-East Queensland. Improved NAPLAN results, attendance and retention for primary students have been observed in the first phase of the project.

Independent Schools Queensland offers an annual leadership program that is open to principals of all independent schools, including those with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The program is designed to assist principals to: drive improvement for their schools and students; lead a learning community that encourages teacher accountability and autonomy; evaluate their effectiveness and focus on the high-level challenges that are unique to the independent school principal position.

#### **Action 44**

Flexibility to tailor operations is provided under the Workplace Reform process for Queensland government schools. This involves consultation via the school's Local Consultative Committee, and could include reforms such as changing the staffing mix or hours of operation.

Independent sector school principals flex and tailor operations to meet the needs of their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in a number of ways including: involving parent participation in paid employment activities, eg, delivering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancing classes to students as an after-school program to school boarders; engaging local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community sporting groups to practice on local college sporting fields; provision of on-site basic food handling certification and training for volunteer school canteen workers; providing a pre-Prep playgroup for low-income families; involving community health agencies, and providing accommodation for parents and carers when families from remote communities needed to attend school orientation sessions with their children.

## Pathways to real post-school options

### Performance indicators

14. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.*

*Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there is no publicly available national level data for 2012.*

### Overall progress

It has been agreed to use State and Territory administrative data to report progress against Performance Indicator 14. It should be

noted that State and Territory administrative data for Year 12 completions is not nationally consistent, and that work is currently under way to develop a nationally consistent measure.

The proportion of (school identified) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students receiving a Queensland Certificate of Education and those eligible for an Overall Position (OP), (presenting a student's position in a statewide rank order, based on their overall achievement in Queensland Studies Authority approved subjects, indicating how well a student has done in comparison to other OP-eligible students in Queensland, and used for tertiary entrance purposes only), and their ranking for tertiary entrance purposes, is lower for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. For those achieving an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate Level II or above, the proportion is higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

**Table QLD12: Year 12 completions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Queensland, 2010–2012**

	2010		2011		2012	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Total student number – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	1,826		1,836		1,980	
Total student number – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	43,172		44,300		45,023	
Queensland Certificate of Education – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	956	52.4	1,150	62.6	1,357	68.5
Queensland Certificate of Education – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	35,477	82.2	37,616	84.9	39,223	87.1
Overall Position eligible – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	378	20.7	427	23.3	438	22.1
Overall Position eligible – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	25,325	58.7	25,520	57.6	25,795	57.3
AQF Certificate II and above – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	799	43.7	950	51.7	1,095	55.3
AQF Certificate II and above – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	18,095	41.9	20,276	45.8	21,651	48.1

Notes:

- a) Visa students excluded.
- b) Data are for students completing Year 12 only.
- c) A student's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identification is sourced from the student's school. The Queensland Studies Authority does not cross-validate or confirm student status.

Source: Queensland Studies Authority, Year 12 Outcomes data collection, 2010–2012.

There has been an increase in the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students receiving a Queensland Certificate of Education, those eligible for an Overall Position, and those achieving a Certificate Level II or above from 2010 to 2012. The gap between those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students receiving a Queensland Certificate of Education and those who are Overall Position eligible has decreased from 2010 to 2012.

## Systemic level actions (48 and 49)

Queensland government secondary schools provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and targeted case management strategies to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12.

To help all young Queenslanders complete Year 12 and attain a qualification, the Queensland Government has joined a National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. The partnership seeks to increase young people's participation in education and training, lift qualification levels to meet a national target of 90 per cent of young people aged 20–24 attaining a Year 12 or equivalent qualification by 2015, and improve successful transitions from school.

### Action 48

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) has engaged directly with Youth Connection and Youth Partnership Broker providers across Queensland to increase direct engagement with individual schools. In addition, ISQ used funds from the Australian Government's National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions program to support schools, some of which have significant numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, to re-engage youth who are disengaged or who are at risk of disengaging from school in 2012. Strategies included one-on-one mentoring, provision of emergency short-term accommodation and engagement of career pathways officers and teacher aides to help students complete assignments.

### Action 49

There are a number of partnership programs that work to broaden the horizons of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, including:

- the Indigenous Leaders of Tomorrow program which works with Far-North Queensland schools to identify potential leaders in the senior years in government secondary schools.

The program works with school based personnel to guide students to define and implement localised projects that seek to engage and develop young Indigenous leaders in a supportive network.

- the Indigenous Leaders of the Future program is a precursor and feed-in program for upper primary and junior secondary students to the Indigenous Leaders of Tomorrow (ILOT) program.
- the Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP) is a community-based teacher education pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people offered in partnership between the department, Tropical North Queensland TAFE and James Cook University. It enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to remain within their local community while completing the requirements of a Bachelor of Education at a RATEP site or Thursday Island campus.

Three Catholic Dioceses have officers employed in order to assist with Career Planning and Post-school Destination studies. All five Diocese offices have increased opportunities and initiated strategies to assist Year 12 school leavers through: Career Camps; Senior Education and Training (SET) Planning days; Former Origin Greats (FOGs) Expo; university programs, such as participation in ASSETS (for Engineering and Science) and improved industry partnerships.

## Local level actions (51, 52, 53, 54 and 55)

### Actions 51 to 55

The Year 12 Destinations initiative provides case management for Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through their final year of schooling, and for up to six months post-school, into further learning, training or employment. Indigenous Pathways Coordinators partner and utilise the services of other agencies to provide case management support for individual students, monitor their Senior Education and Training plan and ensure each student has an Individual Pathway Plan. In 2011, 1,682 students were case managed. This figure grew to 1,850 in 2012.

The P-Plate program is a mentoring and coaching program that prepares and positions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school leavers for the transition into the workforce. P Plate operates in conjunction with the Australian Employment Covenant and One Generation. The P-Plate program complements

other vocational programs that operate within school systems. For P-Plate program schools, the program commences when an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enters secondary school, allowing for five years of continuous, comprehensive support. The program provides employers with a rich supply of job-ready Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leavers or recruitment into traineeships, apprenticeships or workforce entry roles within their workplace. P-Plate program officers were engaged to support schools to link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to employers who had committed jobs through the Australian Employment Covenant. The P-Plate program officer in Far-North and North Queensland assisted schools in preparing students for a career pathway much earlier in their schooling than Year 11 or 12. Plans are in place to expand the program.

Djarragun College partnered with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation on two-year scholarships for students entering Year 11. Hymba Yumba Community Hub and Shalom Christian College engaged vocational education and training (VET) and school-based career officers and coordinators to mentor and case manage career pathways for students. Both Djarragun College and Hymba Yumba Community Hub implemented a school-based management program, including the use of Senior Education and Training Plans.

#### **Action 52**

Independent Schools Queensland facilitated access to school-based apprenticeships and traineeships for Queensland independent school students in 2012.

#### **Action 55**

Career expos were held in various locations including Inala and Townsville to motivate and engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Good practice snapshots

### Cunnamulla State School – the Cunnamulla Campaign

At Cunnamulla State School, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students comprise 86 per cent of the student population. Attendance at the school had been declining over previous

years and was at a low of 75 per cent for the 2010 school year. Suspension rates were high.

In August 2011, a team of three officers with experience in improving attendance worked in partnership with the school and community to undertake an extensive consultation and SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) process across the Cunnamulla community, with Elders, parents, school staff, students and representatives of local organisations. The consultation process involved over 400 people in large gatherings, small groups and individual interviews.

A groundswell of support rose for the Cunnamulla community and the school to work in partnership to turn attendance around. Young and old suggested new and practical ways to encourage students and the community to be involved in school, to build pride, identity, respect and above all, connectedness. Out of the consultation process a framework for improving attendance emerged: the Cunnamulla Campaign. Some of the features of the Cunnamulla Campaign are outlined below.

### Connectedness with Community

Elders in the classroom, Parent education programs, community induction by members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and mentors for teachers from the community.

### Community Reference Group

A Community Reference Group drives an Attendance Improvement Strategy and is co-chaired by the principal and a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community member. Representatives include the key influential people whose support is needed to make strategies work: the principal, school staff, Parents and Citizens Association, parents and student members, Elders, police and representatives from local organisations.

### Strengthening School-wide Positive Behaviour Support program

This is a central overarching framework for improving attendance.

### Transition

A cradle-to-employment approach was adopted that supports students as they transition into school in the early years, and



from school to work or further learning. This includes: programs for parents and children to support school readiness and early literacy and numeracy skills for children from birth to 5 years of age; a case manager to be a vital link between school, home and the workplace and to support each Year 10, 11 and 12 student to gain a work placement; and increased support from local employers for work experience placements, which has resulted in higher numbers of students participating.

Possibly as a result of these changes that were adopted at Cunnamulla State School in 2011, for Term 4 2011, school attendance improved to 80 per cent and suspensions dropped substantially. In 2012, attendance improved from to 84 per cent.

In 2012, Cunnamulla P–12 State School continued to work to build a positive image within the community and across the district, with a focus on developing a learning culture. The school has taken up the challenge to build a positive and supportive learning environment where students, staff, families and the wider community take a shared responsibility in educating future generations. Through the Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students, and with the Community Reference Group's support, which continues to meet monthly to drive the school improvement agenda, the school has implemented a focus on rewarding students who are doing the 'right thing'. All school and community members use positive language, ensuring that the school has a caring and supportive environment where all members of the school community feel safe and welcome.

The school mantra illustrates this approach: 'As a member of the Cunnamulla State School Community I am: Respectful, Responsible, Learning and Safe'.

Activities that promote positive student participation include:

- relevant curriculum and personalised learning plans that value individual differences, including cultural and educational strengths and specific needs
- organised lunchtime activities with support from Eagle Edge Solutions
- Smart Cards/bands/certificates with the school mantra (Respectful, Responsible, Learning and Safe)
- Rewards Camps/Trips – Sea World
- Weekly Class Attendance Awards
- Positive Rewards Programs in each individual classroom

- Drumbeat
- Chaplaincy Program
- Adopt-a-Cop Program, and
- Elders and community member lunch program.

The School Opinion Survey results showed an improvement in all areas, with students and parents expressing their satisfaction with the school.

## Year 12 Destinations Initiative

The Indigenous Year 12 Destinations initiative is currently operating in all Education Queensland regions. This initiative aims to increase the retention and successful completion rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students, and assist them to transition to further education, training, and/or meaningful employment. Students are case managed throughout Year 12, and for a minimum of 26 weeks post-schooling.

The initiative is a component of Queensland's Education Strategy, which responds to the COAG 'Closing the Gap' agenda. It responds principally to two targets, these being to:

- halve the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment by 2020; and
- halve the gap in employment outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians within a decade.

Under the initiative, Indigenous Pathways Coordinators (IPCs) were in place for the seven Education Queensland regions. The role of the IPCs is to ensure case management processes were implemented and maintained for all Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The initiative originally began in August 2010 as the Learn, Earn, Legend! Year 12 Destinations initiative and was funded by the Queensland Government, in partnership with the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee was also a project partner.

In 2012, some 1,850 students were assisted. In 2011, 1,682 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students were assisted, with 159 of these being in non-government schools, compared with 1,234 students in 2010, with 62 in non-government schools.

In 2012, Australian Government funding concluded. However, Education Queensland has continued the initiative from within its existing funding.

The IPCs are integral to the success of the initiative. The IPCs utilise the services of other agencies to: 'package' case management support for individual students; monitor the SET Plan for each Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student; and ensure each student has an Individual Pathway Plan.

The role includes establishing formal and informal partnerships with: business industry, education and training providers; Centrelink; Job Services Australia; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, groups and other key stakeholders to support achievement of student outcomes; and to coordinate post-secondary education and training opportunities that are nationally accredited and include pre-vocational training, Australian Apprenticeships, Vocational Education and Training and university courses.

Education Queensland regions are committing funds to continue the IPC arrangements and also to provide other support for the initiative, such as professional development and the establishment of a student pathways database aimed at streamlining data collection and student tracking to obtain consistent quality data across the regions.

In 2013, it is expected that nearly 2,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will have access to additional support throughout Year 12, followed by 26 weeks of post-school assistance to support their successful transition from school to further education, training and/or work.

## Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee's (QIECC's) feedback

The Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee (QIECC) notes the importance of reporting against achievement; however, would like to see the Annual Report influencing the forward plan for the next 12 months. In areas where there has

been no improvement (for example, NAPLAN results) the QIECC would like to see the schooling sector focus on how progress will be made in the next 12 months to ensure that improvements are made (ie, by not continuing the same approach if things are not improving).

The QIECC would like to see the breakdown of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in non-government schools further, by number and percentage in Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) and Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) schools (see Introduction section). This further level of detail would provide the QIECC and other readers with an indication of the size of the cohort that individual initiatives are targeting.

## Readiness for school

The QIECC is concerned that there is still no uniformity across data collections in relation to early childhood education and care. The QIECC, and other readers, cannot draw a conclusion on progress, or comment on future policy direction, without data or comparable data. As a matter of urgency, agencies should work towards nationally consistent data standards and measures (eg, similar to other performance indicators, such as NAPLAN, which are consistent).

## Engagement and connections

The QIECC is concerned that it appears only 20 per cent of government school students have a personalised learning plan reported in OneSchool, and only 20 per cent of Catholic schools have personalised learning strategies in place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It is unclear if the low percentage for government school students is due to a lack of reporting through OneSchool, or if 80 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students do not have a plan in place. If it is the latter, the QIECC is deeply concerned and would like to be informed how this issue is being addressed for the coming years.

Further detail on the Independent Schools Queensland achievement rate of 80 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with an active personalised learning plan would be beneficial, for learnings to be shared.

The QIECC seeks clarification on whether the personalised learning plans are mandated, or encouraged.

The QIECC also recommends that plans are developed throughout the schooling stages, and not just in the final years of schooling, Years 10 to 12.

Regarding Action 17, the QIECC would like to be involved in, or be informed of, the outcomes of any reviews of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEWs), that the Department of Education, Training and Employment has undertaken. AIEWs are a key priority for QIECC, and it is a consistent message at QIECC forums that AIEWs require better conditions and recognition within the schooling environment/sector.

## Attendance

The QIECC is concerned with the lack of progress towards increasing school attendance and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, particularly given the funding has been directed towards raising attendance with little improvement in outcomes.

## Literacy and numeracy

The QIECC is concerned that the 2012 NAPLAN results demonstrate that in Queensland metropolitan regions, where the largest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reside, there is a substantial gap between the achievement rates (at or above the national minimum standard) at the Year 5 level, between Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students nationally (around a 5 to 7 percentage point difference). For progress to be made towards 'closing the gap', a focus is required on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in metropolitan regions.

The 2012 NAPLAN results show that a concerted effort towards improving writing is required.

The QIECC would like to see a focus on NAPLAN results identifying students who require additional support, and that the support be shown through an individual learning plan/strategy.

The QIECC recognises and commends the Queensland chapter for reporting on NAPLAN participation rates. The QIECC recognises that in 2012, across all year levels, Queensland achieved higher participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander students than the national average of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In relation to Action 30, the QIECC recommends that the comprehensive, online action-learning course that will be available to all teachers prior to their working in remote Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities include local level, site-specific content. Engaging local Elders on community content is vital.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

The lack of systemic data collection by the Department and the QCEC on professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training should have been addressed by 2012 (two years after the Plan was developed).

Without the provision of data, the QIECC is unable to determine how Queensland is progressing towards achieving quality teaching. The QIECC sees improvements in cultural capability as being a key driver towards improvement in other domain areas, such as attendance.

The QIECC highlights that it is important that the school sectors report the number of full-time equivalent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals and teaching staff as a proportion of all principals and teaching staff. In addition, it is important to report what each school sector does to support the learning and development of those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals and teaching staff.

The QIECC would like additional information on the Great Teachers = Great Results direct action plan for schools initiative listed in Action 42. Specifically, an outline is needed of the criteria for the performance based bonuses/fixed-term contracts, and how they are measured.

## Pathways to real post-school options

The QIECC recommends that the reporting on AQF Certificates II and above should be revised to AQF Certificate III and above, as noted in the 2013 National Centre for Vocational

Education Research (NCVER) report, *Cultural dimensions of Indigenous participation in vocational education and training: new perspectives*. Certificate III or above is the minimum for employment, and the competency level of Certificate II is unlikely to improve employment outcomes. At QIECC forums, participants have often raised that students undertake Certificate II courses (sometimes multiple Certificates), which do not relate directly to the students' post-school aspirations. Undertaking multiple certificates – which may not result in improved educational or employment outcomes – may actually detract from their school studies.

The QIECC also notes the importance of having high expectations of students and encouraging students to aspire to higher qualifications.

The QIECC notes that the next Action Plan should have a minimum of Certificate III or above.

The QIECC notes that the Year 12 Destination initiative (Actions 51 to 55) does not provide case management for the full calendar year of Year 12, only the final six months from 1 July (ie, 12 month case management is the final six months of school, and first six months after graduation).

## Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment's response to Queensland IECB's feedback

### Overall comments

In 2012, the Queensland Government launched *Solid partners, Solid futures*, which adopts a partnership approach to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood, education, training and employment outcomes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders from the State, through to the school level, will be involved in all aspects of the plan's implementation. The partnership approach represents a new way of doing business, involving all stakeholders, from

development through to implementation and evaluation.

This process will facilitate new approaches in response to the issues raised.

The Queensland Department is in the process of reviewing its Closing the Gap strategy in government schools to align with *Solid partners, Solid futures*, and in particular, the stated outcome: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students are enrolled, engaged and achieving in school; and progressing at the same rate as non-Indigenous students'.

The Department will raise the issue of distinguishing statistical information for the non-government sector in future reports through the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group.

### Readiness for school

The Department has raised the issue of uniform data measures and collection methods in reports through the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group. The issue of data consistency has also been raised as part of the Action Plan's evaluation. It is expected that these issues will be addressed in future action plans.

### Engagement and connections

In May 2013, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) committed to personalised learning strategies for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 1 to 10. The Department is working with the education sectors to progress this commitment.

The implementation of the Department's OneSchool initiative within Queensland government schools complements the development of a personalised approach to learning in government schools by enabling teachers to meet the individual learning needs of students. As mentioned in the report, through the Department's OneSchool initiative, 100 per cent of students are accommodated with personalised learning strategies. Because 20 per cent (9,219 of 45,766) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government school students had at least one specific support provision recorded in OneSchool in 2012, this should not be read to imply that these are the only students with personalised learning strategies.

Information on Independent Schools Queensland's (ISQ's) approach to personalised learning plans has been requested and will be shared with the QIECC.

The Department will seek to engage with the QIECC regarding any future consideration of the role and conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEWs).

## Attendance

Improving school attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students continues to be a major priority for the Department. Under *Solid partners*, *Solid futures*, the Department has committed to pilot an academic success guarantee. This means that, in exchange for regular attendance, the school commits to doing 'whatever it takes' to make students successful. This will be delivered under local school–community partnerships.

## Literacy and numeracy

The Department is implementing the actions identified in *Solid partners*, *Solid futures*, which include:

- a pilot guarantee of academic success (refer to the above for details)
- resources to support children's attainment, attendance and engagement in schools
- implementation of learning partnerships between the Department's Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (OEECs) and local Traditional Owner groups
- introduction of a targeted program to ensure that all students achieving a high level of literacy and numeracy in Year 3 are supported to reach their full potential.

The Department notes the QIECC comments in relation to reporting on NAPLAN participation, and also supports its reporting.

The QIECC's comments on Action 30 are noted; however, as a national course, it is not expected to include local level, site-specific content. It will however, include advice to teachers on how best to engage with families and communities at the local level to support teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who speak English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D).

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

The Department notes the comments on systemic data on professional development hours. Data collection systems on professional development will be considered in the context of the development of the next national Action Plan. The Department is committed to increasing the workforce's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, perspectives and strategies through the Crossing Cultures: It's Everybody's Business cross-cultural awareness program, and the Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools resource.

The Department acknowledges that cultural capability is a key driver for success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The development of cultural capability of the entire workforce is a key commitment under *Solid partners*, *Solid futures*.

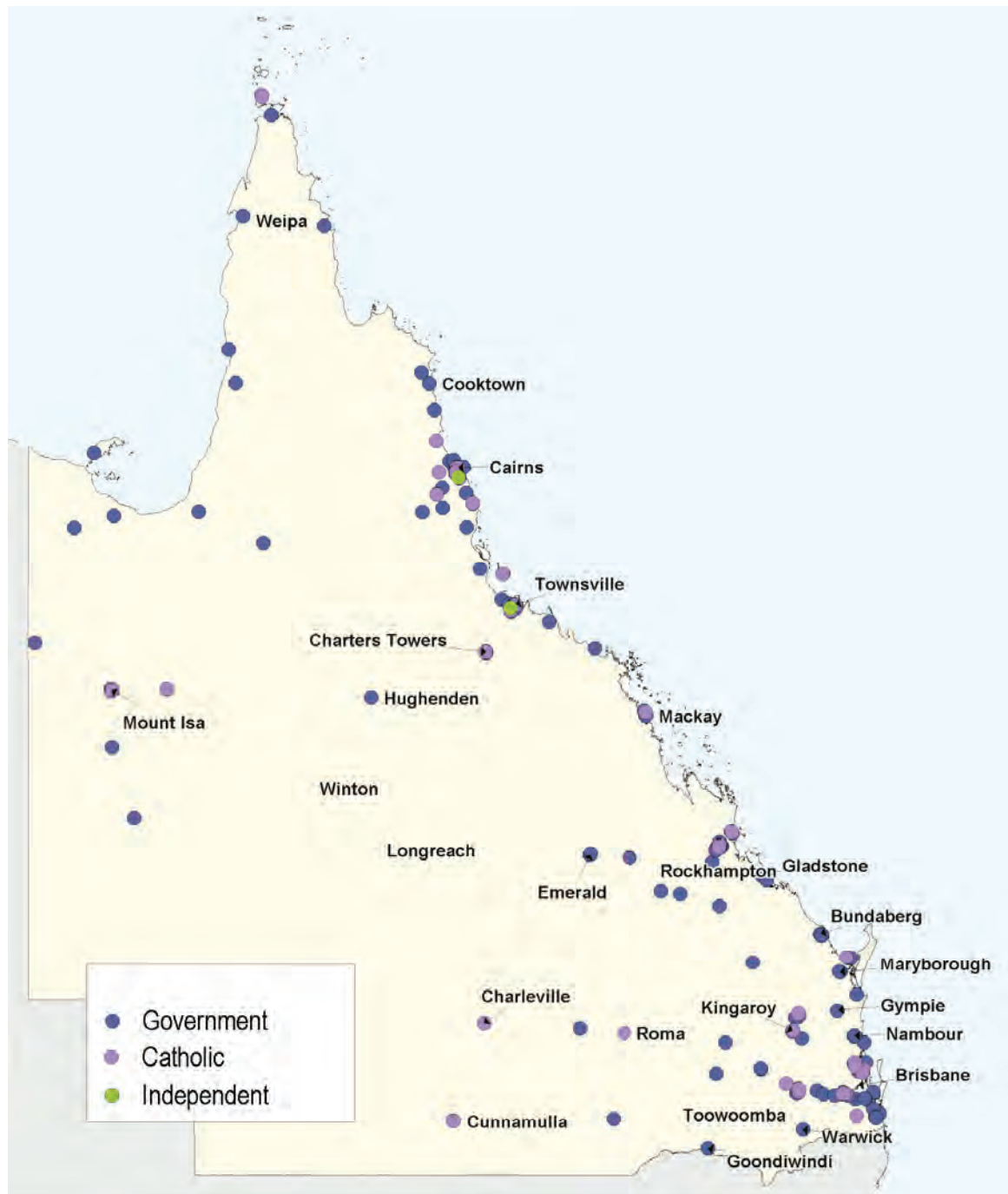
## Pathways to real post-school options

The QIECC's comments regarding the reporting on Certificate III and above are noted. As an existing measure in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA), this cannot be changed, but this issue will be considered during the development of the next Action Plan.

# Distribution of Focus schools in Queensland

**Figure QLD5: Map of Queensland Focus schools**

(Focus schools are listed in a table following this map.)



Notes:

- a) Dots indicate location of Focus schools.
- b) Brisbane metropolitan Focus schools are not individually identified.



## Focus school information

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Low SES NP	Lit/Num NP	RSD
Aboriginal and Islander Independent Community School (IFS)	Ind.	Metropolitan	211	192			
Acacia Ridge State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	274	42	X		
Aitkenvale State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	381	62		X	
Allentown State School	Gov.	Provincial City	399	59	X	X	
Annandale State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	873	42			
Atherton State School	Gov.	Rural	668	144		X	
Ayr East State School	Gov.	Rural	610	79		X	
Babinda State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	227	74			
Balaclava State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	303	181	X		
Baralaba State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	98	48			
Barkly Highway State School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	554	120			
Beachmere State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	373	22		X	
Beaconsfield State School	Gov.	Provincial City	419	51		X	
Bentley Park College (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,568	431			
Berrinba East State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	494	49	X		
Berserker Street State School	Gov.	Provincial City	489	146	X		
Biggera Waters State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	822	21			
Biloela State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	380	51			
Blackwater North State School	Gov.	Rural	492	30		X	
Blackwater State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	187	45			
Blair State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	407	49			
Bloomfield River State School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	37	37			
Bluewater State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	272	29			
Bohlevale State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	733	101			
Boondall State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	695	33			
Boronia Heights State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	620	36		X	
Boulia State School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	27	20			
Bowen State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	437	56	X		
Brassall State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	747	105		X	
Bray Park State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	539	57			
Bribie Island State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	641	61		X	
Browns Plains State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	558	31		X	
Bundaberg West State School	Gov.	Provincial City	303	54	X		
Bundamba State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	629	98	X	X	
Burketown State School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	32	28			
Burnside State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	455	49		X	
Bwgcolman Community School	Gov.	Remote	296	294	X		
Cairns West State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	668	451	X		
Camooweal State School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	42	40			
Caravonica State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	450	65		X	
Carole Park State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	222	49	X		
Charleville State School	Gov.	Remote	247	84		X	
Charters Towers Central State School	Gov.	Rural	148	59	X		



School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Low SES NP	Lit/Num NP	RSD
Cherbourg State School	Gov.	Rural	140	139	X	X	
Chinchilla State School (NS)	Gov.	Rural	501	44		X	
Christ the King Catholic Primary School	Cath.	Metropolitan	187	15	X		
Cloncurry State School	Gov.	Remote	314	161		X	
Columba Catholic College (Mount Carmel Campus)	Cath.	Rural	314	54		X	
Columba Catholic College (St Mary's Campus)	Cath.	Rural	257	14	X		
Cooktown State School	Gov.	Remote	375	159	X		
Cranbrook State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	614	83			
Crescent Lagoon State School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial City	403	90			
Crestmead State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,033	60	X		
Croydon State School	Gov.	Remote	35	23			
Cunnamulla P-12 State School	Gov.	Remote	126	111	X		
Currajong State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	604	113			
Dajarra State School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	43	39			
Dalby South State School	Gov.	Rural	718	80		X	
Dalby State School	Gov.	Rural	483	87		X	
Darling Heights State School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial City	589	55			
Deception Bay North State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	586	88	X		
Denison State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	489	27			
Djarragun College (IFS)	Ind.	Metropolitan	426	416	X	x	
Doomadgee State School	Gov.	Remote	318	308	X		X
Drayton State School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial City	300	30			
Eagleby South State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	344	58	X		
Eagleby State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	408	39	X		
East Brisbane State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	203	35		X	
Eidsvold State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	76	55			
Eimeo Road State School	Gov.	Provincial City	927	82		X	
Emerald North State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	286	29			
Emmaus College (Yaamba Road Campus) (NS)	Cath.	Provincial City	733	45			
Garbutt State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	120	88	X	X	
Gatton State School	Gov.	Rural	596	37		X	
Gladstone South State School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial City	289	47			
Glenmore State School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial City	523	118		X	
Good Counsel Primary School (Innisfail)	Cath.	Rural	331	31			
Good Shepherd Catholic College (NS)	Cath.	Remote	388	50			
Good Shepherd Catholic Community School (Rasmussen)	Cath.	Metropolitan	449	51		X	
Goondiwindi State School (NS)	Gov.	Rural	597	130		X	
Gordonvale State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	606	189		X	
Gracemere State School	Gov.	Provincial City	265	46		X	
Greenbank State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,100	31			
Gulf Christian College (IFS)	Ind.	Very Remote	53	34	X	X	

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Low SES NP	Lit/Num NP	RSD
Gympie South State School (NS)	Gov.	Rural	483	51			
Happy Valley State School	Gov.	Remote	407	68		X	
Harlaxton State School	Gov.	Provincial City	126	59	X		
Harris Fields State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	526	65	X	X	
Harristown State School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial City	354	95			
Healy State School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	195	84			
Heatley State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	687	202		X	
Herberton State School	Gov.	Rural	192	46	X		
Hercules Road State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	884	47		X	
Hermit Park State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	552	39			
Holy Spirit School (Cranbrook)	Cath.	Metropolitan	855	33			
Hope Vale campus of Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA)	Gov.	Remote	122	120	X		X
Hughenden State School	Gov.	Remote	196	46	X	X	
Humpybong State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	737	40		X	
Hymba Yumba Community Hub (Springfield) (NS)	Ind.	Metropolitan	71	71			
Inala State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	537	70	X		
Ingham State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	408	67			
Innisfail East State School	Gov.	Rural	184	82	X	X	
Innisfail State School	Gov.	Rural	160	92	X	X	
Ipswich Central State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	649	48			
Ipswich East State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	477	49		X	
Ipswich North State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	126	32	X		
Ipswich West State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	168	11	X		
Isabella State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	563	155		X	
Kallangur State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	763	61		X	
Kawana Waters State College (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,360	48		X	
Kawungan State School	Gov.	Provincial City	1,003	68		X	
Kelso State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	406	81			
Kingston State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	658	112	X	X	
Kippa-Ring State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	461	38		X	
Kirwan State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	802	105			
Kowanyama State School	Gov.	Remote	165	160	X	X	
Kruger State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	985	66			
Kuranda District State College (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	396	145			
Kurwongbah State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	883	28			
Laidley District State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	525	54			
Lakes Creek State School	Gov.	Provincial City	165	36		X	
Lawnton State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	232	27		X	
Leichhardt State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	262	69	X		
Lockhart State School	Gov.	Remote	118	114	X	X	
Mabel Park State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	699	99	X		
Mackay Central State School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial City	201	46			
Mackay North State School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial City	343	52			

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Low SES NP	Lit/Num NP	RSD
MacKillop Catholic Primary School (Andergrove)	Cath.	Provincial City	327	15			
Mareeba State School	Gov.	Rural	741	235	X		
Marian Catholic School (Currajong)	Cath.	Metropolitan	410	30		X	
Marsden State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	989	109	X		
Maryborough Central State School	Gov.	Rural	338	53	X		
Millchester State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	304	40			
Mitchell State School	Gov.	Remote	133	47	X	X	
Mitchelton State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	365	29			
Morayfield East State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	974	36		X	
Morayfield State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	758	96	X	X	
Moreton Downs State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	676	40			
Mornington Island State School	Gov.	Remote	274	269	X		X
Mossman State School	Gov.	Rural	223	133			X
Mount Archer State School	Gov.	Provincial City	653	129		X	
Mount Garnet State School	Gov.	Remote	63	35		X	
Mount Isa Central State School	Gov.	Remote	214	62		X	
Mount Isa Flexible Learning Centre	Cath.	Remote	69	61			
Mount Morgan Central State School	Gov.	Rural	249	77	X	X	
Mount St Bernard College (Herberton)	Cath.	Rural	163	101	X		
Mount Warren Park State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	738	53			
Mundingburra State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	689	93			
Murgon State School	Gov.	Rural	226	92	X		
Nambour State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	408	42		X	
Nanango State School	Gov.	Rural	526	51	X	X	
Nerang State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	398	41			
Newtown State School	Gov.	Provincial City	343	68		X	
Normanton State School	Gov.	Remote	168	152	X		
North Lakes State College (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	2,901	69			
Northern Peninsula Area State College	Gov.	Remote	505	488	X		
Oakey State School	Gov.	Rural	370	80	X		
Oonoomba State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	511	31			
Our Lady Help of Christians School (Earlville)	Cath.	Metropolitan	561	50		X	
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School (Hammond Island)	Cath.	Remote	16	16			
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School (Thursday Island)	Cath.	Remote	94	60	X		
Park Avenue State School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial City	129	35			
Parkhurst State School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial City	275	21			
Parramatta State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	435	286	X		
Pialba State School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial City	578	116			
Pormpuraaw State School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	84	83			
Railway Estate State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	229	46			
Rasmussen State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	479	229		X	

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Low SES NP	Lit/Num NP	RSD
Ravenshoe State School	Gov.	Rural	419	135	X	X	
Redbank Plains State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	792	58		X	
Redbank State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	186	20	X		
Redlynch State College (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,757	119			
Richlands East State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	419	62	X		
Richmond Hill State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	378	83			
Riverview State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	250	53	X		
Rockville State School	Gov.	Provincial City	121	50	X		
Roma State College (NS)	Gov.	Rural	801	134		X	
Rosewood State School (NS)	Gov.	Rural	249	40		X	
Ryan Catholic College (Townsville) (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	1,916	76			
Sacred Heart Primary School (Cunnamulla)	Cath.	Remote	87	46	X		
Sacred Heart School (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	611	34			
Saint Mary's Catholic College	Cath.	Rural	346	25			
Sandgate State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	338	18		X	
Shalom Christian College (IFS)	Ind.	Metropolitan	323	310	X	X	
Southern Cross Catholic College (Kippa Ring Prim)	Cath.	Metropolitan	321	6			
Southern Cross Catholic College (Scarborough Sec) (NS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	1097	25			
Southern Cross Catholic College (Woody Point Prim)	Cath.	Metropolitan	173	5			
Southport State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	538	33		X	
St Anthony's Catholic Primary School (North Rockhampton)	Cath.	Provincial City	583	38			
St Augustine's School (Mossman) (IFS)	Cath.	Rural	195	25			
St Brendan's College (Yeppoon) (IFS)	Cath.	Rural	623	96			
St Columban's College (Caboolture)	Cath.	Metropolitan	937	27			
St Eugene College	Cath.	Metropolitan	1,151	42			
St Francis' College (Marsden)	Cath.	Metropolitan	853	54		X	
St Francis Xavier's School (Goodna)	Cath.	Metropolitan	489	27		X	
St Francis Xavier's School (Manunda) (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	558	39			
St George State School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	210	113		X	
St John's School (Roma) (IFS)	Cath.	Rural	752	37			
St Joseph's School (Cairns)	Cath.	Metropolitan	387	41			
St Joseph's School (Cloncurry)	Cath.	Remote	155	26		X	
St Joseph's School (Mount Isa)	Cath.	Remote	430	27		X	
St Joseph's School (Murgon)	Cath.	Rural	152	67	X		
St Joseph's School (Rockhampton, Park Avenue)	Cath.	Provincial City	372	41		X	
St Kieran's School (Mount Isa)	Cath.	Remote	199	37			
St Mary of the Cross School (Windsor)	Cath.	Metropolitan	54	27		X	
St Mary's Catholic College (Woree) (NS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	811	57			

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Low SES NP	Lit/Num NP	RSD
St Mary's Catholic Primary School (Rockhampton North)	Cath.	Provincial City	304	29			
St Mary's Primary School (Ipswich) (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	625	26			
St Mary's School (Beaudesert)	Cath.	Rural	348	13			
St Mary's School (Charleville)	Cath.	Remote	183	19			
St Michael's School (Gordonvale) (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	264	23			
St Michael's School (Palm Island)	Cath.	Remote	141	140	X	X	
St Monica's School (Oakey)	Cath.	Rural	204	28	X		
St Paul's School (Woodridge)	Cath.	Metropolitan	248	26	X		
St Peter Claver College (Riverview)	Cath.	Metropolitan	941	54			
St Saviour's College (Toowoomba) (NS)	Cath.	Provincial City	305	38			
St Saviour's Primary School (Toowoomba)	Cath.	Provincial City	431	6			
St Therese's School (Bentley Park) (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	675	39			
St Thomas' School (Mareeba)	Cath.	Rural	458	26			
St Ursula's College (Yeppoon) (IFS)	Cath.	Rural	376	24			
St William's Primary School (Grovely)	Cath.	Metropolitan	532	15			
Stafford State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	255	33			
Sunbury State School	Gov.	Rural	285	50	X		
Sunset State School	Gov.	Remote	298	230	X	X	
Taabinga State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	575	36			
Tagai State College	Gov.	Remote	1,534	1,469	X		
Tannum Sands State School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial City	735	42			
Tara Shire State College	Gov.	Rural	351	76	X		
Taranganba State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	795	69			
Thabeban State School	Gov.	Provincial City	195	42	X		
The Cathedral College (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial City	900	64			
The Hall State School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial City	363	39			
Tin Can Bay State School	Gov.	Rural	404	34	X	X	
Townsville Flexible Learning Centre	Cath.	Metropolitan	113	59			
Townview State School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	367	220		X	
Trinity Beach State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	832	91			
Tully State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	264	64			
Upper Coomera State College (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	2,369	77			
Urangan Point State School	Gov.	Provincial City	335	42	X		
Victoria Park State School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial City	664	68			
Victoria Point State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	631	37		X	
Vincent State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	187	116	X	X	
Walkervale State School	Gov.	Provincial City	536	65	X	X	
Waraburra State School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial City	458	99			
Warwick Central State School	Gov.	Rural	245	57	X	X	
Waterford State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	624	45		X	
Waterford West State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	633	73	X		
Watson Road State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	201	36	X		

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Low SES NP	Lit/Num NP	RSD
Weir State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	873	218			
Western Cape College (NS)	Gov.	Remote	912	500		X	X
White Rock State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	477	240		X	
Whitfield State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	927	247			
William Duncan State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	590	29			
Wilsonton State School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial City	415	94		X	
Wondai State School	Gov.	Rural	184	41	X	X	
Wondall Heights State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	662	42		X	
Woodridge North State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	476	59	X		
Woodridge State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	728	55	X		
Woorabinda State School	Gov.	Rural	151	151	X		
Woree State School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	889	324		X	
Worongary State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	803	29			
Wulguru State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	435	109			
Wynnum West State School	Gov.	Metropolitan	522	30		X	
Xavier Catholic College (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial City	1,241	43			
Yarrabah State School	Gov.	Rural	463	457	X		
Yeppoon State School (IFS)	Gov.	Rural	342	17			
Youth and Community Learning Centre	Cath.	Provincial City	17	9			
Yugumbir State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,120	43			
Zillmere State School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	99	30			

Note:

IFS – school received funding in 2012 under the *Investing in Focus Schools* initiative.

NS – school received funding in 2012 under the *Focus Schools Next Steps* initiative.

# Report on the Remote Service Delivery (RSD) Service Delivery Standards

## Schooling Domain

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) has agreed to use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan reporting processes to report on schooling service delivery standards for schools located in Remote Service Delivery Communities (RSDs). The following is the report for schools in Remote Service Delivery Communities in Queensland.

Queensland has six RSD communities, they include:

- Mornington Island
- Doomadgee
- Coen
- Aurukun
- Hopevale, and
- Mossman Gorge.

## RSD standard (a)

All school-aged children will have access to an appropriate school and/or a distance learning alternatives.

## Action Plan link

There is no directly equivalent measure in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014 for this standard. The following information provides details of the schooling services and other programs available in the Remote Service Delivery Communities.

Number of RSD Communities in Queensland that have:

- pre-primary programs in schools/other centres: 6
- primary schools: 5

- secondary schools (Years 8 to 10): 2
- secondary schools with TAFE programs: 0

There are no schools in Mossman Gorge and students attend either Mossman State School or Mossman State High School (distance and regional remoteness are key factors here).

Hope Vale State School provides P–7 education. Secondary students access education at Cooktown State School (day attendance) or attend boarding school.

Students in Coen and Aurukun must leave their Community after Year 7 to complete their education (distance and regional remoteness are key factors here).

Both Doomadgee and Mornington Island are P–10 schools, with students either leaving in Year 8 or Year 10 to attend boarding school to complete their education (distance and regional remoteness are key factors here).

Enrolment options for students from these Communities include:

- non-government boarding schools throughout Queensland
- government and non-government secondary high schools or colleges in Cairns, while residing at AFL Cape York House
- enrolment at Western Cape College Weipa campus while residing at the residential boarding facility in Weipa, and/or
- Higher Education Program (HEP) Scholarships (Cape York Partnerships only).

In Aurukun, Western Cape College run the Alternative Secondary Pathways program (ASP), which includes multi-agency case management processes. Under the ASP, students are directed into a choice of part-time pathway programs with the intent of developing re-engagement and transition skills.

Students from Aurukun, Coen, Hopevale and Mossman Gorge attending boarding school outside their Community are supported by the Transition Support Service, which was established to assist students and families from remote Communities in Far North Queensland (where there is no secondary school provision after Year 7 or Year 10) to transition to boarding schools throughout Queensland.

The Transition Support Service has developed and implemented a regional strategy to case manage students who become



de-enrolled from boarding schools. The Transition Support Service facilitates an integrated case management approach across diverse agencies on Cape York.

Mornington Island and Doomadgee run their own successful transition to boarding school programs.

## RSD standard (b)

Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) for all students were negotiated between school staff and families. For Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 students, schools will augment personalised learning plans with activity to support the transition to further education and/or employment.

### Action Plan link

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to this standard. Local level action 21 includes the development of personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from the first year of formal schooling to Year 10 to support improved educational outcomes. It should be recognised that personalised learning strategies are not the same as Personalised Learning Plans. In some, but not all, cases quantitative information about both personalised learning strategies and plans may be available.

A second local level action, Action 51, states that secondary schools will provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and targeted case management strategies to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12. Qualitative information for this action is available.

Count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland RSD schools, and count of those students in those schools with a Personalised Learning Strategy or Plan.

- Mornington Island: 270 students (the number of students attending boarding school is not available)
- Doomadgee: 348 students (40 students attend boarding school in Years 8 to 10)

- Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) Coen: 47 students (13 students attend secondary boarding school supported by the Transition Support Service)
- CYAAA Aurukun: 197 students. At secondary level, through the Western Cape College Alternative Secondary Pathways program: 40 students. (46 students attend boarding school)
- CYAAA Hope Vale: 120 students. At secondary level, at Cooktown State High School: 42 students. (29 students attend secondary boarding school supported by the Transition Support Service)
- Mossman State School: 18 students. At secondary level, through Mossman State High School: 4 students.

All students have a personalised learning strategy.

Within Queensland government schools, functionality within OneSchool (the school administration system which supports schools in student management; curriculum and learning management; finance and asset management; resource management; performance, reporting and analysis) allows for the personalised learning needs of the majority of students. An Individualised Learning Plan (ILP) is developed for students who perform substantially above or below year level expectations. Also, all students in Years 10, 11 and 12 have a Queensland Senior Education and Training Plan, which outlines student aspirations and support needs, to assist them complete Year 12 and/or transition to further education, training and/or employment options.

There are currently 45,766 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students recorded in OneSchool. Of these students, 9,219 had at least one specific support provision recorded in OneSchool in 2012.

Through Indigenous Year 12 Destinations Initiatives, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students in Queensland government schools are provided with assistance to successfully transition from school to further education, training and/or work. In 2012, 1,850 students were supported. A recent evaluation has indicated that the initiative is producing success in areas that include attainment of post-school pathways and

improved school completion. The post-schooling support for 26 weeks is considered a major success factor. Other programs, such as P Plate and post-Year 12 tracking have significantly lifted the data-based evidence of these successes.

## RSD standard (c)

All schools have literacy and numeracy strategies that respond to the needs of students, particularly recognising the needs of students who speak English as another language.

### Action Plan link

There is some alignment between the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* action (Action 31) and this standard. Action 31 states in part: 'Focus schools will during 2011 have in place a whole-of-school approach to the teaching and learning of Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy which builds from students' home language(s) where Standard Australian English is a second or further language.' There have been other projects, such as MOJO (mobile journalism), which has been very successful in the re-engagement of children through IT. Also, programs such as I DREAM and Indigenous Student Ambassador Network (ISAN) have been successful in student re-engagement in learning. The quantitative data that can be reported is about whole-of-school approaches rather than strategies.

All six RSD schools in Queensland have whole-of-school approaches to literacy and numeracy.

All Remote Service Delivery schools in Queensland have adopted a whole-school approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. These strategies include: professional development of teaching and support staff; increased capability by the implementation of a whole-school pedagogical framework, with a focus on using pedagogies that are appropriate and effective in supporting the achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; using strategies that involve family and Community in children's learning and engagement in schooling; and the use of data to monitor and support student learning.

Specific programs being implemented in RSD schools include:

- the statewide implementation of the Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools (EATSIPS)

strategy has provided opportunities for teachers and principals to undertake professional development for issues specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The professional development is offered face-to-face and is also available online. Other areas of professional development include EATSIPeC (Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Early Childhood), local area studies and frameworks, and other training, such as Crossing Cultures.

- 'Break it down, Build it up' model, a planning and teaching framework for working with EAL/D learners in whole-class contexts. This framework is particularly relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Special Language units have been implemented and Language has also been taught with the aid of the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) P–10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Syllabus in schools.
- YuMi Deadly Maths is a pedagogical approach to teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of learning maths. Three Centres for Excellence in YuMi Deadly maths have been established to support schools in implementing the program with professional development packages developed for Pre-Prep to Year 10. The YuMi centre is developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources to support implementation of the Australian Curriculum mathematics under Education Queensland's Curriculum to the Classroom. The Centres for Excellence three-year project seeks to evaluate the implementation of the YuMi Deadly Maths (YDM) program in Centres for Excellence schools involving up to 112 classes using evidence-based:
  - plans of action that demonstrate how YuMi Deadly Maths is implemented across the schools
  - strategies that involve the school community in YuMi Deadly Maths
  - budgets of how funding was spent, and
  - application of professional support from the YuMi Deadly Centre.

It is expected that the five schools will show how they have benefitted, and how the school maths program, teachers, students and the community have been supported.

- The Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) utilises a Direct Instruction Program and methodology to support literacy and numeracy learning in the primary school campuses in the communities of Aurukun, Coen and Hopevale. Other explicit instruction models for literacy and numeracy are implemented in Mornington Island and Doomadgee government schools.

## RSD standard (d)

All schools establish a school and community partnership with local families, which includes an attendance strategy, establishes goals for improvement and is reported on annually.

### Action Plan link

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to this standard and it should be noted that they are addressed separately, ie, one is not part of the other. Local level action 19 states that: 'Focus schools will commence negotiating a formal school–community partnership agreement between the school, families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in 2011 that sets out the respective responsibilities of each party and the ways in which they will work together to create a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes.' Some quantitative data for schools in Remote Service Delivery communities is available for this action.

The second, separate action (Action 26) ensures that Focus schools will:

- commence developing an evidence-based attendance strategy in 2011 in consultation with parents and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which includes targets for improved attendance and reflects how the school responds to and seeks to enhance the linguistic, cultural and contextual resources that students bring to their schooling
- publish their attendance strategy in 2012
- evaluate and monitor the success of their attendance strategy, and
- report annually on progress towards meeting their targets.

Reporting for this standard will be via the two separate actions noted above.

All six RSD schools in Queensland have a School and Community Partnership Agreement, which includes attendance strategies, establishes goals for improvement and is reported on annually.

Within Education Queensland, the EATSIPS and the Parent and Community Engagement Framework (PACE) strategies have been available to help schools, parents and the community to work together to maximise student learning and support RSD schools to develop and implement outreach strategies. Practical strategies are included, which schools, parents and the Community can adopt and/or adapt to suit their local needs.

Cape York Partnerships, through the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA), have implemented a pilot to improve the education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Aurukun, Coen and Hopevale incorporating three learning domains – Class (direct instruction in English literacy and numeracy); Club (delivery of extra curriculum activities in music, arts and sport); and Culture (the delivery of traditional cultural knowledge and language). The initiative is part of the Cape York Welfare Reform education stream. CYAAA has a range of reporting mechanisms to community and to government agencies on the progress of the pilot. An evaluation of the pilot was recently completed by the Australian Centre for Educational Research (ACER) and will be released in August 2013.

The CYAAA model recognises the importance of having a number of Community initiatives in place to support the delivery of the Class, Club and Culture programs. These initiatives include the Student Case Management approach to attendance, school readiness and parent engagement and working with the Family Responsibilities Commission.

The Student Case Management Framework addresses student attendance and school readiness to ensure not only that children are at school, but also that conditions that determine their capacity to engage in education – their health, nutrition, wellbeing and material needs – are systematically addressed. Students with three or more unauthorised absences in a term are reported to the Families Responsibility Commission. The Family Responsibilities Commission provides support and counselling to students and their families to get the children back to school.

Mornington Island State School, which is working hard to improve attendance, has a multi-faceted attendance program, which outlines a strategic process for attendance and community awareness. It includes roles and responsibilities of teachers, students, the school and parents, a detailed process for addressing persistent absenteeism and an attendance improvement plan. The approach has a number of key elements: school-based attendance monitoring and incentives program; Parents Supporting Learners program; partnership with community groups and organisations to offer incentives for attendance; the Banbaji partnership with the Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) and police liaison officers to support student attendance and build a safe and supportive school environment.

Mossman State School has a whole-of-school attendance strategy, but also provides additional support to Mossman Gorge

students through a Cape Work Welfare Reform attendance case manager. Students with more than three unauthorised absences in a term are sent a breach letter and the case manager will follow up with the student's family. Cape York Institute runs a variety of extra-curricular programs for Mossman Gorge students to be involved with.

Doomadgee State School has implemented a comprehensive approach to improving student attendance and community engagement in the school. This includes the implementation of a cultural and language program to value student backgrounds and heritage, and incorporate this into the school curriculum and appointment of an additional full-time equivalent (FTE) Guidance Officer to monitor student attendance and engagement and to work with students and families to ensure that students experience some success every day.



## Chapter 8

# Western Australia report on activities and outcomes

## Introduction

In Western Australia in Semester Two, 2012, there were 409,343 students enrolled in 1,106 schools. This compares to 397,156 students enrolled in 1,113 schools in 2011. There were 26,129 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Western Australian schools in Semester Two, 2012.

In 2012, there were 22,012 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in government schools, accounting for approximately 84 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Western Australian schools. The Western Australian Department of Education (the Department) maintains a presence in many remote and very remote locations.

The Catholic education sector has a strong commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. In 2012, there were a total of 72,464 students enrolled in 160 Western Australian Catholic schools. Of this number, 2,338 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This represents approximately three per cent of the total number of students in Western Australian Catholic schools. In 2012, the sector had: 109 schools in the Archdiocese of Perth; 27 in the Bunbury Diocese; 11 in the Geraldton Diocese and 13 in the Broome Diocese. Of the 13 schools in the Kimberley, 11 have a predominantly or 100 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort, with some being sole provider schools. Clontarf Aboriginal College is the only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school in Perth.

The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the independent school sector are enrolled in Aboriginal Independent Community (AIC) schools and Curriculum and Re-Engagement (CARE) schools. There are 13 AIC schools in Western Australia. Six of the AIC schools are located in the Kimberley, three are in the Pilbara, one is in the Midwest, two are in the Goldfields and one is in the Southwest education region. Three provide boarding facilities. Ten of the schools are sole providers in their community. All schools have a 100 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population. A number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled in the eight CARE schools, and a further 240 Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled in Perth boarding schools as part of the Future Footprints program.

## Profile of Focus schools

There are 96 Focus schools in Western Australia, comprising 69 government schools (situated over 79 sites), 15 Catholic schools and 12 independent schools. Most of these schools have either received or are receiving support through the Low Socio-economic Status School Community or Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership agreements.

Focus schools had 9,723 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Semester 2, 2012, which equates to 48 per cent of the total enrolment in these schools. These students represent 37 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Western Australian schools.

Seventy-seven per cent of Western Australia's Focus schools are in remote and very remote locations. Schools in such remote locations are presented with many unique and complex challenges, and these can have a significant impact on student outcomes. Most of the Catholic Focus schools are in the Kimberley region. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments are very high in these schools and, in many cases, constitute 100 per cent of the cohort. Ten of the independent Focus schools are in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions. These independent Focus Schools are all AIC schools; eight are sole providers and two are boarding schools. All are classified as remote or very remote.

Focus schools in Western Australia are encouraged to use flexible and innovative approaches to address the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The best results are often achieved when school leaders work with communities to build shared ownership in addressing local issues, and ensure that teachers are supported to adopt the most effective strategies for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

A map (Figure WA5) and list detailing the location of Focus schools in Western Australia are provided at the end of this chapter.

# Western Australian report on progress by Domains

## Readiness for school

### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

### Overall progress

Data for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection have been sourced from the Australian Government and the State and Territory departments with responsibility for early childhood education and care and the ACT Catholic Education Office. The National Collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) that facilitates consistency of data provision across the various jurisdictional collections. Alignment with these standards has not been completely achieved by all jurisdictions for 2012, and care should be taken when comparing States and Territories.

Some jurisdictions were not able to provide certain data elements as specified in the ECEC NMDS for the National ECEC Collection. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to

**Table WA1: Summary of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program, Western Australia and Australia, 2012**

	Western Australia		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children
Number of children enrolled	2,078	32,186	11,237	266,036
Children enrolled over ERP (per cent)	118.8	97.1	82	88.5
Number of children attending	2,078	32,176	10,460	258,881
Percentage of children attending over ERP <sup>(a)</sup>	118.8	97.0	76	86.1
Percentage of children enrolled that are attending <sup>(b)</sup>	100.0	100.0	93.1	97.3
ERP 4 year olds – as at June 2012 <sup>(c)</sup>	1,749	33,160	13,763	300,596

Notes:

- Calculated as the percentage of children attending over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- Calculated as the percentage of children enrolled.
- ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and should be treated as indicative.
- Enrolment and attendance counts include children aged 4 and 5 years. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.

Additional Note:

There was a severe undercount of the Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the 2006 Census, the effects of which flow through to the 2012 population estimates used to calculate the percentages of Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4 year-olds who are enrolled and attending school.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (unpublished); ABS, (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics* (Cat.No. 3101.0); ABS, (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).



identify children attending multiple Pre-school programs within the collection reference period. It is also a challenge to report accurately the number of children enrolled in and attending a Pre-school program, without counting an individual child more than once. When a child attends two different Pre-school programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. This child is only counted once in child counts. All Pre-school episodes associated with a child are included in Pre-school episode counts. Australian totals in Table WA1 need to be interpreted with care due to the mixed populations that are reported between States and Territories.

Comparison of data year to year is not possible due to collection, output and processing methodology not being consistent across years.

For further information on the ECEC NMDS, collection methodologies and coverage for the National ECEC Collection, please see the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National ECEC Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat. No. 4240.0.55.001).

In Western Australia, 2,078 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled and attending kindergarten at the time of the 2012 student census. This represents almost 119 per cent of the ABS's Estimated Residential Population (ERP) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four year-olds in Western Australia in 2012. Western Australia is not confident that the ABS's 2012 population estimates are sufficiently reliable to be used to calculate the enrolment and attendance rates for kindergarten-aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Table WA1.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) results from 2009 and 2012 indicate there is a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are developmentally vulnerable when they start full-time schooling than their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers. While the 2012 AEDI results show an improvement in the level of vulnerability from 2009, Western Australia has a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children vulnerable when compared to national statistics. The greatest improvement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children occurred in the language and cognitive domain.

The average age of Western Australian children who completed the AEDI was 5 years 5 months, which was younger than the average nationally (5 years 7 months) and for all States and

**Table WA2: Proportion of children in Western Australia assessed as 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 (per cent)**

	Western Australia	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	44.0	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	69.8	70.3

Notes:

- This indicator is based on the results of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), which was administered in 2012 to Western Australian children during their first six months of pre-primary (full-time schooling).
- The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored above the 25th percentile of the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- The average age of Western Australian children who completed the AEDI was 5 years 5 months, which was younger than the average nationally (5 years 7 months), and for all States and Territories, except Queensland and the Northern Territory (also 5 years and 5 months).
- Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge also need to be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Index* data, 2012 data collection.

Territories, except Queensland and the Northern Territory (also 5 years and 5 months).

The percentage of children who lived in remote or very remote areas of Western Australia was almost three times that of the national average and the second highest amongst the States and Territories.

In 2012, the Department's On-entry assessment program continued to specifically focus on the early literacy and numeracy capabilities of students. Findings reported that between 2011 and 2012, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in some areas of the State showed slight improvement in skills assessed. Overall results remained relatively unchanged.

Catholic schools use the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) as the On-entry assessment for all children entering their first year of full-time schooling. In 2012, 35.4 per cent of Pre-primary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were assessed as at or above the average band of achievement on entry into Pre-primary: an improvement on 33.8 per cent in 2011 (as per the PIPS assessment).

The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) does not collect or survey schools to obtain school readiness data. The AIC schools that enrol primary students all have pre-compulsory programs. These programs are designed to prepare students for full-time schooling. Students are assessed and monitored from the commencement of their enrolment.

## Systemic level actions (5, 6 and 7)

### Action 5

The Western Australian Local Champions Program continued in 2012, which included planning for expansion. The program aims to facilitate an understanding of the AEDI and its potential to improve outcomes for children.

Children and Family Centres provide early childhood services in communities with high levels of vulnerability. The centres aim to improve the health, wellbeing, education and care of young children by supporting parents and improving accessibility to services within the local community. The Halls Creek, Fitzroy Valley and Kununurra Centres are now open.

In 2012, nine Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) Focus schools received training in use of the English as a Second Language or Dialect Maps for the early years. A data consultant and a dedicated Early Childhood Education and Care team are available to support schools in working with the AEDI and other data sets.

A comprehensive analysis of the latest AEDI data for each school has not been possible, as data has just been released. Initial indications are that the priorities for AIC schools will continue to be the domains of: Language and Cognitive Skills, Communication Skills and General Knowledge.

The AISWA English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) consultant and early childhood consultant supported all Focus schools at professional learning sessions and through individual support to help schools develop appropriate strategies for assessment and teaching.

All AISWA Focus schools are involved in, or support, a number of health and welfare programs. These include: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services; dental clinics; hearing testing; speech pathology; physiotherapy; Royal Flying Doctor clinics; psychologist support from non-government psychology services and in the Kimberley; the government school psychologist services and Centrelink services. In 2012, the number of visits and the particular services provided to each school varied.

### Action 6

In 2012, 94 of the 96 Focus schools in Western Australia provided universal access. The remaining two government Focus schools will provide universal access from the beginning of the 2013 school year.

### Action 7

The On-entry assessment literacy and numeracy program is now established as the mandated Term 1 assessment for all Pre-primary children enrolled in government schools throughout the State. Advice on conducting the assessment with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children was included in supporting handbooks. On-entry program staff were also available throughout the assessment period to assist with any additional enquiries. Reports available on completion of an assessment provided teachers with valid, current data to assist them in targeting program content to meet the learning needs of each child in their class.

All CEOWA schools continue to use PIPS as the On-entry assessment for Pre-primary. This tool is used to assist in the identification of students at educational risk and enables teachers to implement early intervention strategies. The assessment is implemented at the beginning and end of the Pre-primary year to monitor student progress.

Teachers in the Kimberley have participated in the Remote Indigenous Professional Learning (RIPL) program. This program is a mentoring program, training teachers in the implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework. The teachers then act as mentors for teacher assistants and child care workers in the local community. The CEOWA also trained three consultants from the Broome office and one Perth-based consultant so that additional support could be provided.

All AISWA Focus schools assess their students on entry using a variety of assessment tools including: Marie Clay; Concepts of Print; Motor Skills Assessments; Letter ID; Accelerated Literacy bands, and numeracy skills using the AIC schools Numeracy Tracking Tool.

## Local level actions (8)

### Action 8

In government schools, two parallel suites of professional learning modules were developed for school leaders and early childhood teachers based on the Early Years Learning Framework, the National Quality Standard and the Australian Curriculum. The suites included a focus on cultural competence and the need to build solid relationships. Professional learning was conducted to assist schools in interpreting On-entry program data and developing programs incorporating students' strengths while addresses any weaknesses. Forty-nine of 66 Focus schools (74 per cent) indicated they had strategies in place to address school readiness.

In 2011, eight CEOWA Focus schools offered kindergarten and/or playgroup programs for 3 year-old children. In 2012, 10 of the 15 CEOWA Focus schools offered these services. Community-based programs operate in two further Focus school communities. On-entry data is used in Pre-primary to tailor learning opportunities with specific emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Eleven of CEOWA's 15 Focus schools use assessment information from a range of health and welfare sources to assist in identifying needs.

All AISWA Focus schools with primary aged students provided pre-compulsory programs. All schools provide kindergarten classes; five schools provide a program for 4 year-old children, and four schools support programs for birth to 3 year-olds.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicators

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school–community partnership agreement in place.*

### Overall progress

All government schools develop personalised learning strategies to ensure programs build upon students' strengths and address skill development at the point of need. Results from the Department's survey indicate that in 2012, 13,099 (59 per cent) of 22,068 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). All students participating in the Follow

the Dream: Partnerships for Success and the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS) programs are expected to have PLPs.

In 2011, it was estimated that approximately 10 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in CEOWA schools had personalised learning strategies in place. The data collection system has been determined to be unreliable, and therefore data cannot be reported for 2012.

Forty per cent of students in AIC schools have a PLP. In the CARE schools that, along with AIC schools, enrol the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in independent schools, 100 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have a PLP. Of the 240 Future Footprints program Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who attend Perth independent schools, none had PLPs.

There were 69 government Focus schools in Western Australia in 2012. By the end of 2012:

- 38 (55 per cent) had a School and Community Partnership Agreement (SCPA) in place
- 24 (35 per cent) were negotiating SCPAs, and
- seven (10 per cent) had not commenced the process.

There were 15 Catholic Focus schools in Western Australia in 2012. By the end of 2012:

- eight (53 per cent) had a completed SCPA
- six (40 per cent) were negotiating SCPAs, and
- one school had not commenced the process. Note: this school has over 80 per cent of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (or 18 of 22 students) attending via a Department of Child Protection (DCP) hostel. The school works with the hostel and DCP case workers under confidentiality agreements and cannot legally engage with families of the students. Attendance is not an issue for these students and each student has a personalised learning plan.

All AISWA Focus schools continue to have a functioning SCPA. In 2012, all SCPAs were being reviewed and updated.

## Systemic level actions (15, 16, 17 and 18)

### Action 15

The three Children and Family Centres operating in Western Australia connect with government and non-government

service providers at the local level, as well as outreach early learning and clinical and allied health services from Broome and Kununurra. In 2012, services included: WA Country Health; the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical services; early learning programs from the local district high schools; parenting; nutrition; family support; community services and licensed child care. Forty-nine of 66 government Focus schools (or 74 per cent) indicated that they had strategies in place to address school readiness.

The CEOWA implements a range of evidence-based programs including Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies and Blue Earth. In 2012, a joint agreement between CEOWA and the Department saw a significant increase in school psychology support in 12 of CEOWA's 15 Focus schools.

In the independent sector, early childhood and literacy consultants worked with all Focus schools to improve teaching practice. All AISWA Focus schools have regular visits from health and other support providers. These include providers for the following services: the Royal Flying Doctor Service; dental; medical; hearing; occupational therapy; speech therapy; Kimberley Trachoma Screen and Treatment Program; Centrelink and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services. Two boarding schools have full-time nurses on-site, and one remote school has a part-time community nurse.

#### Action 16

The Guidelines for Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Young People to Continue their Education were completed in 2012 (and available online at: <http://det.wa.edu.au/childprotection/detcms/inclusiveeducation/child-protection/public/resources/Guidelines.en?oid=MultiPartArticle-id-13332213>). Many stakeholders were consulted in the development of the guidelines including: schools; the School Curriculum and Standards Authority; the School of Isolated and Distance Education, and representatives from the vocational education system and not-for-profit organisations. The online guide is being promoted as part of a professional learning presentation for principals.

The Catholic Education sector does not have any specific programs in place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are pregnant or parenting; however, schools have supporting structures that assist the students through their schooling life.

All AISWA Focus schools and CARE schools provide support for all young mothers and pregnant girls so they can complete their schooling.

#### Action 17

In 2012, the Department:

- continued to implement the professional learning program that provides Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs) with access to Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificates III and IV, diploma level training, or transition to a teaching qualification, and
- developed and implemented a new *AIEO Handbook*, which outlines the ways that an AIEO assists in shaping strategies to support students, work with principals and teachers, and connect with community.

Processes to assist Aboriginal Teaching Assistants (ATAs) and schools to improve the ATA program have been made. This includes professional development for both school staff and ATAs. In 2011, the CEOWA initiated an ATA Up-skilling program in the Kimberley region with 12 ATAs participating. Of the 36 ATAs engaged in study in 2012, 11 completed AQF Certificate III in Education Support. A dedicated special projects consultant is employed to coordinate the ATA Up-skilling program and provide regular support visits.

The AISWA consultants provided training for AIC school teachers on 'How to Support Your Aboriginal Education Worker' (AEW) and for AEWs on 'Supporting Literacy and Numeracy in Your Classroom'. Literacy and numeracy consultants worked with AEWs in their schools to improve their support of students and teachers. AEWs in all Focus schools had the opportunity to participate in AISWA sponsored Teacher Assistant courses. Twenty AEWs completed the course and obtained certificates, and two have continued onto teacher training.

#### Action 18

In 2012, government schools developed local strategies to strengthen family and community relationships. The development of SCPAs, strategies implemented to target school readiness, and participation in family forums has improved the exchange of information between schools, families and communities.

The CEOWA SCPAs, the development of personalised learning plans, and a strong emphasis on the school–community engagement component of the ATA role assist in strengthening the two-way communication between schools and their communities.

The AISWA consultants provided advice to schools on the regulatory requirements of reporting. All schools reported

student progress to families. Focus schools use culturally appropriate report formats for student reporting.

## Local level actions (19, 20 and 21)

### Action 19

In 2012, Focus schools in Western Australia received priority support and continued their establishment of formal SCPAs. The Department's Aboriginal Education Teams assisted with the development of these agreements. Schools have been provided with professional learning and a resource kit. The amalgamation of schools has resulted in some agreements being delayed in order to commence the development of a partnership that represents all stakeholders. Leadership changes in the school and community have resulted in the need for some agreements to be renegotiated.

All CEOWA Focus schools worked to enhance their partnerships with families and communities in 2012. Of the eight schools with a SCPA in place, four undertook a review of their agreement in 2012.

All AISWA Focus schools developed SCPAs prior to 2012. In 2012, the agreements began to be reviewed and updated. By the end of 2013, it is expected that all partnerships will be updated.

### Action 20

Fifty-four government Focus schools conducted family forums in 2012. However, the number of forums conducted was not recorded. Of the schools that held forums, 71 per cent were on attendance, 65 per cent on parent/community capacity building and 50 per cent on school readiness.

Eleven of the 15 CEOWA Focus schools hosted regular school–community meetings in 2012. Four of these schools have at least one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member on their school board. Ten of these schools host parent meetings, and all Focus schools have informal and social opportunities to engage families.

Community-based Focus schools hold family meetings at the end of the year to facilitate student reporting and updating the community on the school's direction for the following year. Facilitated by AISWA advisors, all AIC schools that reviewed their SCPAs in 2012 held community meetings to discuss the renewal and updating of the agreement.

### Action 21

The Department encourages schools to implement personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in consultation with all stakeholders. Data collection for the development of PLPs began in 2011, and has continued to be adjusted. Data for 2012 indicates that approximately 41 per cent of Focus schools collaboratively developed PLPs in half or more of the cases. Some ambiguity in the survey question will result in further adjustments to the survey for the 2013 reporting process.

In 2012, the CEOWA undertook a research tour and trial for personalised learning strategies. Eleven CEOWA schools (including five Focus schools) participated in the tour and/or the trial. The CEOWA is currently using information from this trial to develop a system-wide strategy for implementation of personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This strategy will ensure the individual needs of the whole child are catered for, including their health and wellbeing, within their personalised strategies.

In independent Focus schools, PLPs were developed with the support of parents. The plans include the health support required by the student.

## Attendance

### Performance indicators

5. *Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.*
6. *Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to 'Other' Australians.*
7. *Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
8. *Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

## Overall progress

### Attendance rates

As presented in Figures WA1.1 to WA1.3, in 2012, attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were lower than those of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

**Table WA3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by sector, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>Government</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	80	81	82	82	82	81	80	72	67	64	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	93	94	94	94	94	93	91	89	88	n/a	95
<b>Total</b>	92	92	93	93	93	93	92	89	87	86	n/a	95
<b>Catholic</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	77	79	81	78	86	81	82	80	82	80	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	95	95	95	95	94	94	93	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	95	95	95	94	93	93	n/a	n/a
<b>Independent</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	84	85	87	86	87	81	92	85	75	65	n/a	19
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	94	95	95	95	95	94	93	100	31
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	95	94	95	94	94	92	100	27

Notes: Definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance data are not uniform. As such, direct comparisons of attendance rates between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made. Nor can attendance data for 2012 be aggregated or averaged at the national or State/Territory level. Variations in methodology between jurisdictions are described in the explanatory notes for the 2012 attendance data contained in the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012*.

n/a not available.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

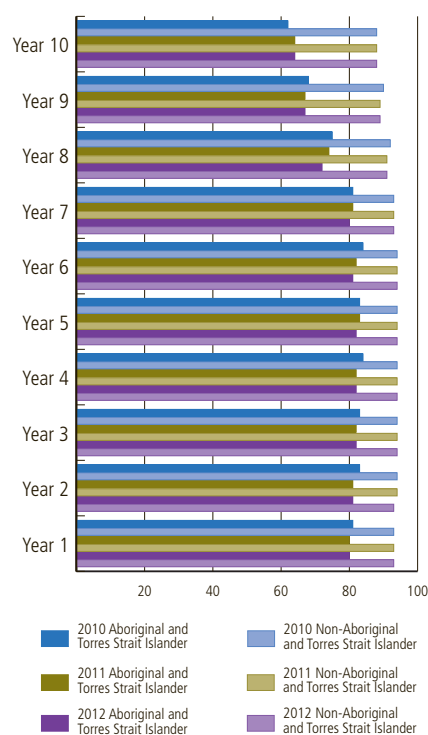
students across all year levels and sectors. Whilst attendance rates remained stable in the government sector, there were improvements in the rates for both the Catholic and independent sectors, except in Year 10.

The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012 ranged from three to 24 percentage points across year levels and sectors.

## Enrolment to population ratio

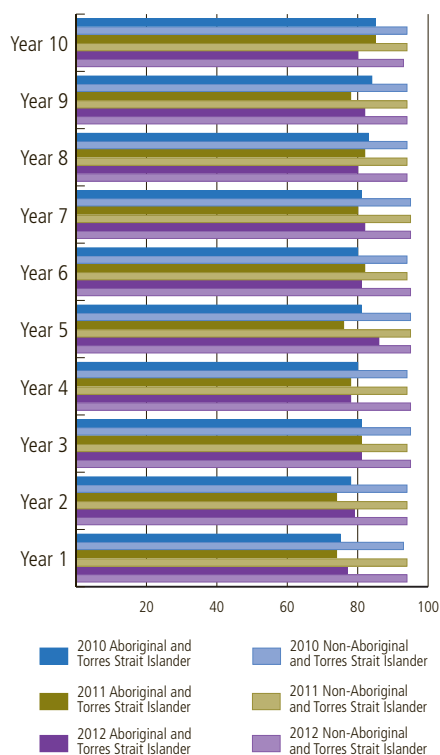
Data for this performance indicator is not available for this annual report. Nationally for 2012, school participation rates have not been published by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status due to concerns with the quality of the indicator. Specifically, the rates for most States and Territories exceeded 100 per cent, primarily as a result of modal differences in the data sources. The denominator is sourced from the Estimated Resident Population series, itself drawn from the Population Census, while the numerator is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The ABS is working to provide a substitute measure.

**Figure WA1.1: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, Western Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



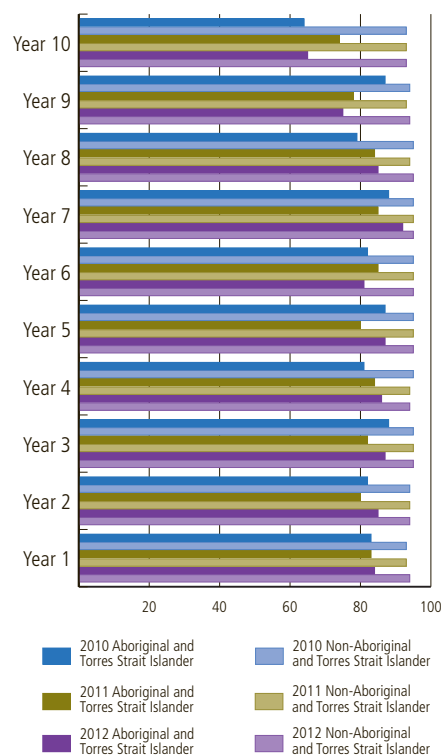
Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure WA1.2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, Western Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure WA1.3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, Western Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

## Apparent retention rates

As presented in Figure WA2, the Year 8 to Year 10 apparent retention rates for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students exceeded 100 per cent in 2010, 2011 and 2012 because strong overseas and interstate migration into Western Australia caused the Year 10 non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student populations in those years to be larger than the corresponding Year 8 populations recorded two years earlier. This, in turn, has artificially further widened the Year 8 to Year 10 apparent retention rate gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers.

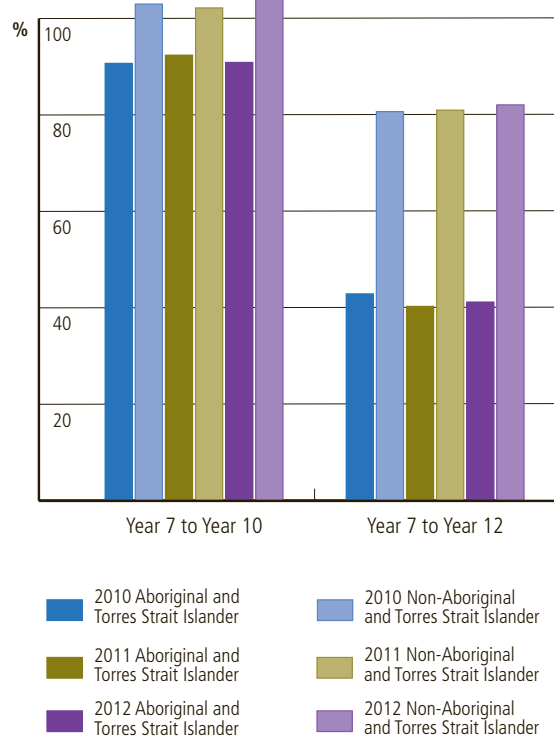
**Table WA4: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 8 to Year 10 and Year 8 to Year 12, Western Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 7 to Year 10	90.9	104.8
Year 7 to Year 12	41.2	82.1

Source: Derived from ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0) and based on full-time student enrolments.



**Figure WA2: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 8 to Year 10 and Year 8 to Year 12, Western Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



**Note:** The apparent retention rates for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are substantially higher than those for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Year 8 to Year 10 apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students dropped slightly in 2012, compared to 2011, but remained above the 2010 rate. The Year 8 to Year 12 apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students improved in 2012, compared to 2011, but is still substantially lower than the Year 8 to Year 12 apparent retention rate for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

*Source:* ABS, *Schools, Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Apparent grade progression ratios

In 2012, the apparent grade progression rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students continued to improve for Year 10 to Year 11 and Year 11 to Year 12, but have dropped for Year 8 to Year 9 and Year 9 to Year 10. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their non-Aboriginal and

**Table WA5: Apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Western Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 8 to Year 9	96.6	102.2
Year 9 to Year 10	93.5	103.2
Year 10 to Year 11	86.4	98.4
Year 11 to Year 12	53.5	82.2

**Notes:**

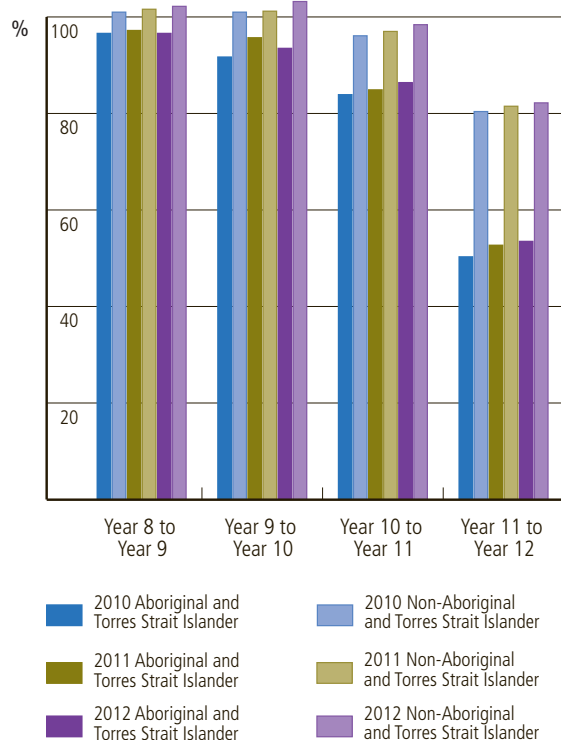
Grade progression rates show the number of students at each year level as a percentage of the number enrolled in the previous year.

- b) Full-time students only.
- c) Care should be taken when interpreting these rates since a range of factors affecting the calculation are not taken into account, such as students repeating a year of schooling, movements between schools and systems or States/Territories, and net changes to a school's or system's population. There is also the effect of ungraded students – they are not included in the calculations of rates.
- d) Components may not add due to rounding. Percentage point gap calculations are based on unrounded data.
- e) Issues that may affect comparability over time can be found in the Explanatory Notes, ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

*Source:* ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

Torres Strait Islander peers has increased in 2012 for Year 8 to Year 9 and Year 9 to Year 10. This is due to the decrease in the apparent grade progression rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as well as unprecedented overseas and interstate migration into Western Australia. The latter has artificially inflated the apparent grade progression rates for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, to above 100 per cent in some cases, and further exacerbated the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their peers is greater for Year 10 to Year 11 and Year 11 to Year 12 but has seen consistent, minor improvement each year since 2010.

**Figure WA3: Grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Western Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Systemic level actions (25)

### Action 25

The Department's evidence-based *Better Attendance: Brighter Futures Strategy* and the *Aboriginal Education Plan for WA Public Schools 2011–2014* continues to guide actions for improving attendance. In 2012, Aboriginal Attendance Grants were provided to schools to assist their responsiveness to local attendance issues and in implementing local solutions.

The Tri-Border Attendance Strategy, which operates between South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia,

enables schools to share student enrolment and attendance details to support better educational follow-up and service delivery. The strategy has established a data system, the Central Schools System (CSS), that enables the sharing of attendance, enrolment and learning information across education sectors and borders in order to identify and address the issue of absenteeism and significant mobility amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The CSS became fully operational at the beginning of April 2011. As of December 2012, the system had enrolment and attendance information for over 120,000 students across 346 Western Australian, South Australian and Northern Territory government, Catholic and independent schools.

Operation Redirect, Daytime Safe Place is a joint initiative between the Department, AISWA, CEOWA, the Department for Child Protection, and the Western Australia Police to reduce truancy. Students located in the community during school hours without a valid reason are approached by police and returned to school. Operation Redirect commenced in the North Metropolitan and South Metropolitan Education Regions in Semester 2, 2012.

In the Catholic sector, the Maze school attendance database in all Kimberley schools enables absentee information to be fed through to the CSS. The CEOWA does not have a system-wide strategy. The Tri-Border Attendance Strategy is continuing to assist in recording student attendance and accessing data from students' previous or subsequent schools.

The AISWA is not a system, so an overall strategy is not possible. All AIC schools reported that in 2012, they had strategies in place to improve attendance. When the Tri-Border Attendance Strategy is refined and internet speed is improved, AIC schools will use the system to help minimise the effect of absenteeism caused by the high mobility of some families.

All AIC schools reported that all primary students who are in the community attend school every day unless unwell. Absences occur as a consequence of the high mobility of families. SCPAs and incentive programs are helping to address the issue of students leaving the community for extended periods of time.

## Local level actions (26)

### Action 26

In 2012, 83 per cent of government Focus schools had developed an attendance strategy and 73 per cent had also published the strategy. Almost 40 per cent (26 schools) of schools identified the strategy was developed in consultation with parents and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, with another 16 per cent (29 schools) indicating some consultation had occurred. Sixty per cent of the outstanding schools (17 per cent of Focus schools) that had not completed developing an attendance strategy rated their progress in the development of the strategy between fair and excellent.

In 2012, 46 per cent (seven of 15) of CEOWA Focus schools had a documented attendance strategy in place, with one further CEOWA Focus school having a draft attendance strategy in place. All CEOWA Focus schools provide an annual report of their attendance as part of their compliance data. The seven CEOWA Focus schools with an attendance strategy report annually to school boards, community councils and parents. Three of these schools publish their strategies online. All CEOWA Focus schools work in consultation with parents and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to develop attendance strategies (including those without a documented strategy in place). All CEOWA Focus schools are engaged in regular, multi-pronged action to address attendance in their local contexts.

In 2012, all AISWA Focus schools had a range of strategies in place to improve attendance, including making attendance part of the SCPA, and the use of incentives. School and Community Partnership Agreements are displayed at the school and referred to when attendance is discussed with the community or parents. All schools had an attendance policy, and attendance is monitored as required by the Department of Education Services for school registration compliance.

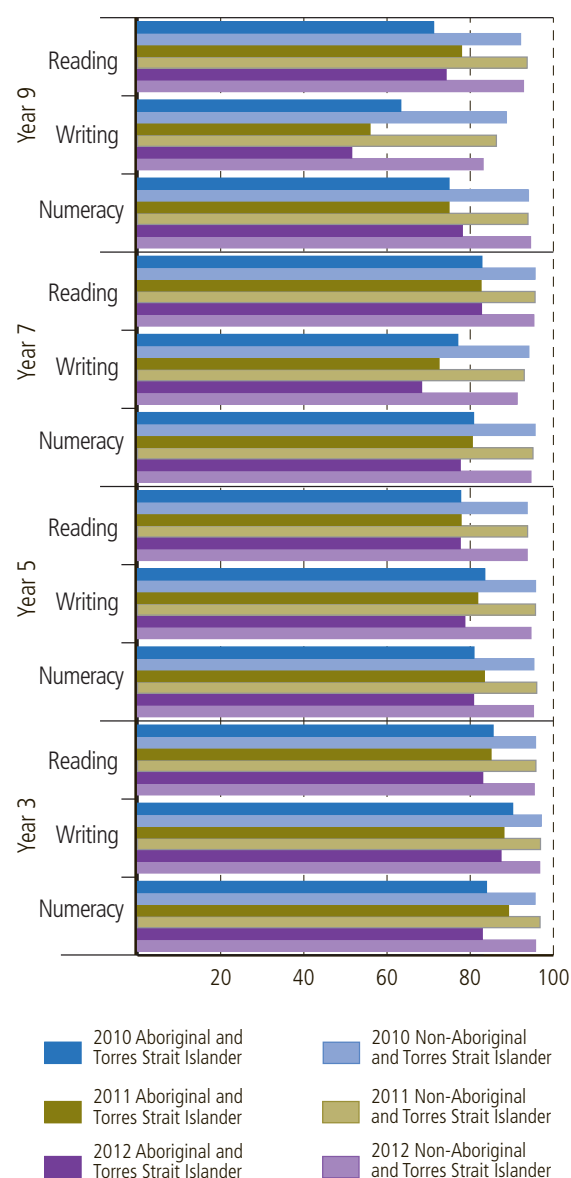
## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*
10. *Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.*

## NAPLAN outcomes

**Figure WA4: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Western Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Note: A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.

Source: ACARA (2012 and unpublished), *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2012*.

NAPLAN results for 2012 show lower results across almost all assessments and year levels for Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students when compared to those for 2011. Increases over the 2011 results are limited to Year 5 writing, and Year 9 numeracy. Furthermore, only Year 9 reading and Year 9 numeracy show improvement over the NAPLAN results of 2010.

Results for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for 2012, however, show little change from those for 2011. This has resulted in the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard continuing to be substantial for all tests.

Consistent with results nationally and for 2011, the NAPLAN results for 2012 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students tended to decrease as remoteness increased. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also tended to increase with greater geographical remoteness, a trend that was also evident nationally.

**Table WA6: NAPLAN reading, writing<sup>(a)</sup> and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Western Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3			Year 5			Year 7			Year 9		
	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.
<b>2010</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	67.4	70.4	73.7	54.1	59.6	61.9	69.9	60.0	72.4	54.7	49.6	63.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.9	96.8	95.3	91.8	94.0	94.6	96.0	94.4	96.5	91.6	88.6	93.9
Gap	26.5	26.4	21.6	37.7	34.4	32.7	26.1	34.4	24.1	36.9	39.0	30.2
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 3.5	± 3.4	± 3.0	± 3.8	± 4.1	± 4.3	± 3.8	± 4.2	± 3.9	± 4.6	± 1.3	± 4.6
<b>2011</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	70.4	74.6	79.8	55.0	56.4	67.0	72.6	60.7	72.2	63.9	47.4	67.3
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.8	96.3	96.5	92.2	93.0	95.4	96.3	93.5	96.3	92.6	85.4	93.6
Gap	23.4	21.7	16.7	37.2	36.6	28.4	23.7	32.8	24.1	28.7	38.0	26.3
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 3.0	± 3.4	± 2.5	± 3.6	± 4.0	± 3.5	± 3.4	± 4.1	± 3.6	± 4.6	± 5.2	± 5.1
<b>2012</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	64.1	71.2	63.9	53.6	58.9	60.4	69.1	59.6	70.9	57.7	44.2	67.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.8	96.3	94.5	92.4	93.5	94.1	95.4	92.7	95.5	92.8	85.2	94.7
Gap	29.7	25.1	30.6	38.8	34.6	33.7	26.3	33.1	24.6	35.1	41.0	27.0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 3.1	± 3.6	± 3.2	± 3.9	± 3.5	± 4.0	± 3.4	± 4.1	± 3.6	± 4.6	± 5.3	± 4.3

Notes:

- A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.
- The confidence intervals for 2010 to 2012 in this table are specifically for Western Australia.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2010–2012.

## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

**Table WA7: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Western Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

Geolocation	Western Australia		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	72.7	94.4	82.6	95.2
Provincial	70.8	92.2	79.9	93.5
Remote	57.9	90.7	61.2	91.6
Very Remote	49.3	89.4	39.9	90.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	66.4	93.0	76.0	93.6
Provincial	61.6	90.9	72.7	91.9
Remote	49.5	90.6	50.5	89.7
Very Remote	28.4	85.4	20.3	86.5
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	79.0	95.6	84.0	95.4
Provincial	73.9	95.0	80.8	94.5
Remote	70.5	95.0	65.4	93.4
Very Remote	48.9	93.4	37.6	92.7
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	64.8	93.1	74.6	92.9
Provincial	64.2	92.2	70.9	92.0
Remote	54.4	90.9	50.9	90.5
Very Remote	35.2	89.6	24.4	87.9
<b>Writing</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	80.4	96.6	87.3	96.6
Provincial	78.5	95.7	85.2	95.6
Remote	65.4	95.5	63.2	95.3
Very Remote	54.8	93.6	40.2	94.3
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	70.6	77.3	94.1	94.3
Provincial	68.2	73.3	92.2	91.6
Remote	52.5	53.2	91.0	90.6
Very Remote	35.9	24.9	86.9	86.7
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	71.6	93.2	74.5	92.4
Provincial	67.8	91.4	68.0	88.6
Remote	59.6	91.4	47.0	88.0
Very Remote	34.0	90.7	25.6	89.1
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	53.4	86.2	56.9	85.0
Provincial	46.6	82.3	49.7	79.0
Remote	36.8	80.4	32.6	75.9
Very Remote	26.8	78.8	17.0	74.6
<b>Numeracy</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	72.1	95.0	81.4	95.5
Provincial	68.6	93.0	78.8	93.9
Remote	58.2	92.9	58.6	93.0
Very Remote	51.3	92.2	37.9	91.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	72.3	94.6	79.5	95.0
Provincial	69.0	93.1	76.3	93.6
Remote	52.1	92.2	55.3	92.5
Very Remote	39.1	88.1	29.2	89.1
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	80.7	95.7	82.3	95.2
Provincial	75.3	95.1	78.6	94.1
Remote	70.4	95.7	64.1	93.6
Very Remote	52.8	92.5	42.4	92.4
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	72.6	95.1	79.9	95.0
Provincial	73.1	94.0	76.8	94.0
Remote	63.3	92.6	61.7	93.6
Very Remote	52.8	91.4	42.9	91.8

Note: 'n.p.' indicates data not published as there were no students tested, or the number of students tested was less than 30.

Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), 2012.

## 2012 NAPLAN data and 2012 progress points for Western Australia

One of the COAG 'Closing the Gap' targets is to halve the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade. To monitor achievement of this COAG target by 2018, progress points for each State and Territory were developed. The progress points for Western Australia are provided in Table WA8.

As outlined in the COAG Reform Council's report, *Indigenous Reform 2011–12: Comparing performance across Australia* (and

available online: <http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/indigenous-reform/indigenous-reform-2011-12-comparing-performance-across-australia>) when allowing for the confidence intervals, Western Australia met its progress points for reading in Years 3, 5 and 7, and for numeracy in Years 5 and 9. The progress points were not met in Year 9 reading and Years 3 and 7 numeracy.

## NAPLAN participation

In 2012, NAPLAN participation rates for Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were below the national average for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for every year level and assessment. The participation rates were above the national averages for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The average gap in NAPLAN participation rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and

**Table WA8: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy progress points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving at or above the national minimum standard, 2008–2012, Western Australia (per cent)**

Year	Reading				Writing				Numeracy			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2008	57.3	51.8	63.4	62.8	72.0	59.2	59.9	49.9	75.5	61.6	74.2	66.2
2009	57.5	52.0	63.6	63.0	72.1	59.4	60.1	50.1	75.6	61.8	74.3	66.3
2010	58.0	52.6	64.1	63.4	72.5	59.9	60.6	50.7	75.9	62.3	74.7	66.8
2011	58.9	53.7	64.9	64.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	76.5	63.1	75.2	67.5
2012	60.2	55.2	66.0	65.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	77.2	64.3	76.1	68.5
2018	75.4	72.8	79.8	79.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	86.2	78.3	85.8	80.8

Note: 'n/a' indicates data was unavailable for writing. A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years. The 2018 target and progress points are not relevant for NAPLAN writing results after 2010 because they were based on the previous narrative writing assessment, not persuasive writing.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN), 2008–2012.

**Table WA9: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, exemptions, absences/withdrawals and assessed students in Western Australia and Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7		Year 9	
	WA	Aust.	WA	Aust.	WA	Aust.	WA	Aust.
<b>Reading</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85.4	89.7	86.3	89.6	84.8	87.8	70.8	77.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.9	95.7	96.5	96.3	96.5	95.9	94.2	92.9
<b>Writing</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	86.1	89.9	86.1	89.5	84.3	87.6	71.4	77.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.8	95.6	96.6	96.2	96.6	96.1	94.6	93.2
<b>Numeracy</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	83.0	88.2	85.4	88.4	83.7	86.2	70.2	75.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.6	95.5	96.2	96.0	96.2	95.6	93.7	92.4

Notes:

- Participation rates are calculated on the basis of all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in the relevant year level reported by schools, which includes those absent and withdrawn.
- The method used to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students varies between jurisdictions.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN), 2012.

non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reduced from 16 percentage points in 2011 to 14 percentage points in 2012. The participation gaps in Year 9 which average 23 percentage points are of particular concern.

## Systemic level actions (30)

### Action 30

The Department, in collaboration with Monash University, launched the report, *Understanding Stories My Way: Aboriginal-English speaking students' (mis)understanding of school literacy materials in Australian English: a project of the ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning* (and available online at: <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/detcms/aboriginal-education/aboriginal-education/docs/understanding-stories.en?oid=com.arsdigita.cms.contenttypes.FileStorageItem-id-12749325>). Findings from the research were incorporated in English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) professional learning and delivered in remote schools with multilingual and bi-dialectal students.

A professional learning course has been developed to build participants' knowledge and skills in two-way teaching, language and dialect understandings, and practical application of classroom strategies. Appropriate assessment and monitoring processes are used, including mapping students' acquisition of Standard Australian English using the Department's English as a Second Language/English as a Second Dialect (ESL/ESD) Progress Maps.

Key milestones achieved in 2012 include:

- development of a professional learning course including alternate course materials for staff teaching Year 4 and above
- building the expertise of 50 facilitators to deliver the course, and
- presentation of the course to 259 participants from 55 schools in metropolitan, rural and remote settings across Western Australia. Forty-four of these schools were in remote locations.

Following course completion, most teachers (93 per cent) felt *very much* or *moderately* more confident about teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students since participating in the course, and *very much* or *moderately* better prepared to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (96 per cent).

The CEOWA employs an EAL/D consultant to work specifically with Focus schools. In 2012, staff from 10 of the 15 Focus schools trained in the use of the ESL/D Progress Maps, and participated in an intensive ESL in the Early Years training program. All teachers new to Kimberley Catholic schools receive

an introduction to the cultural and linguistic implications of working with multilingual students in remote schools.

The EAL/D consultant at AISWA worked with all Focus school teachers, either in class or at professional learning and conferences, to give them the skills and strategies needed for working with ESL students. The AISWA developed a Literacy Portal for all AIC schools, including all Focus schools, that contains information on assessment and diagnosis of literacy levels in Standard Australian English (SAE). The AIC schools' numeracy consultant is developing a literacy in mathematics strategy for Kriol speakers.

## Local level actions (31 and 32)

### Action 31

Schools are now becoming more critical of their whole-school approaches to teaching and learning and are subsequently reviewing current practices. Ninety-two per cent of government Focus schools had a whole-school approach to teaching literacy and/or numeracy in 2012. Sixty-four per cent of these schools have indicated that the program or strategy being used is showing promising results.

All CEOWA Focus schools published a school-based literacy and numeracy plan in 2012. School support consultants provided on-site support to assist in the implementation of these plans. All Focus schools use the Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement and the Maths Assessment interview to monitor individual student achievement and drive whole-school improvement. All CEOWA Focus schools are supported to have a daily literacy and numeracy learning block.

With the support of AISWA consultants, Focus schools have continued their development of whole-school literacy and numeracy plans. AISWA consultants encouraged the implementation of a phonemic awareness program in the Focus schools with junior primary students. All schools have taken up the program and received teacher training. The AIC school's numeracy portal provides detailed scope and sequence lessons designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as well as diagnostic tests to help teachers isolate areas of curriculum need. A language in mathematics project commenced in 2012 and aims to assist teachers to explicitly teach mathematic concepts that are difficult for ESL students.

### Action 32

The modified course of the ESL in the Mainstream for the Early Learner, trialled in 2011, was offered to all government Focus



schools in 2012. This course was undertaken by 259 participants from 55 schools in metropolitan, rural and remote settings across Western Australia. Of these schools, 44 were in remote locations.

Standardised system data was collected and analysed to measure student progress. Students were assessed on the Department's ESL/ESD Progress Map before and after the professional learning. Analysing the ESL/ESD Progress Map data supplied by participating teachers, student levels in listening and speaking increased over 12 to 22 weeks by an average of 0.55 levels in: communication and the use of text; socio-cultural and contextual understanding; English language structures, features and conventions; and language learning processes and strategies. This growth is significant considering the students' ages (3 to 8 years of age), whose cognitive understanding of language and literacy use is still developing.

Professional learning on the Early Years Learning Framework, RIPL in Early Years Learning Framework and On-entry assessment data and usage were also undertaken during 2012.

In 2012, CEOWA Focus schools accessed a range of comprehensive professional learning opportunities including:

- ESL/D Progress Maps and ESL in the Early Years course
- Reading Recovery (training and ongoing)
- Kimberley Induction (four days)
- Halls Creek Regional Literacy professional development (two days)
- Key Teacher Numeracy (four days), and
- school-based professional learning requests (delivered by CEOWA specialist consultants).

The ATAs were provided with the following professional learning:

- RIPL project
- ongoing ATA Up-Skilling program (36 ATAs were engaged in AQF Certificate level study in 2012), and
- an ATA seminar.

The Kimberley Reading Recovery strategy continued in 2012. AISWA consultants delivered intensive professional learning in literacy and numeracy teaching, planning and assessment to Focus school staff in two conferences held over four days. Consultants visited Focus schools each term to support individual teachers in their teaching, planning and assessing. School Improvement Plans were introduced and schools were supported in their development of these plans.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. *Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*
12. *Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*
13. *Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

### Overall progress

The Department does not centrally collect data on professional development; however, it is committed to providing a culturally supportive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students through the continuation of an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program delivered at the local level.

The data collection system that CEOWA has previously used has been determined to be unreliable and therefore data cannot be reported for 2012.

All new teachers to AISWA Focus schools took part in one hour of cultural awareness training before school commenced in 2012. Individual schools continued the training as is appropriate to their situation. All Focus school teachers attended two hours of professional learning on language and mathematics related to the Numeracy Strategy developed by AISWA.

Statistics for the Department and CEOWA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are outlined in Table WA10. The methodology used to calculate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing levels has changed from 2011 to 2012 in both education sectors. Therefore, direct comparisons of staffing levels is not reliable due to variance in dates collected and changes in collection tools. There is a break in government data between 2011 and 2012 due to different data sources and classifications. In 2011, principals were defined as any person in an administrative role including deputy principals and heads of learning areas. There

are no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals in AIC schools or CARE schools where most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the AISWA sector are enrolled; however, there are six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and 51 AEWs in these schools. Other AISWA schools do not collect this information.

Attraction and retention of staff in Focus schools tends to be a challenge in most Focus schools throughout Western Australia. The three CEOWA Focus schools that are not in the Kimberley region have a significantly higher, stable staff cohort that has impacted on the overall average length of service. The methodology used to calculate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing levels has changed since 2011 in both education sectors and, therefore, direct comparisons cannot be made.

**Table WA10: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents) in Western Australia, by sector, 2012**

	FTE	Number
<b>Government</b>		
Principals	9.9	10
Teaching staff	133.3	162
Education Workers (including AIEOs)	338.5	514
<b>Catholic</b>		
Principals	0	0
Teaching staff	24	24
Education Workers (ATA)	97.5	148

Notes:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are those who identify themselves to be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.
- 2012 Human Resources Minimum Obligatory Information Requirements (HRMOIR) data calculated, as of March 2012.
- The definition of Teaching Staff is based on the Education Act Award and includes Deputies, Heads of Department, and School Psychologists.
- Education workers are based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed as Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs), Education Assistants and Special Needs Assistants.
- HRMOIR data does not include other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees such as: school officers, bus drivers and public servants.

Source: Western Australia Department of Education and Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, *Human Resources Minimum Obligatory Information Requirements* (HRMOIR), March 2012.

## Systemic level actions (41 and 42)

### Action 41

The Department encourages all employees to participate in cultural awareness training programs. The Coordinators of Aboriginal Education (CAE) and AIEOs undertake a training program to develop regional-specific cultural awareness packages based on the Western Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Council's cultural awareness program, *Our Story*. On completion of the training, the CAE and AIEOs facilitate the

**Table WA11: Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard to staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (operationally defined as Focus schools), Western Australia, 2012**

Classification	Average length of service (in months)		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
<b>Principals</b>			
	31.2	34.8	51
<b>Teachers</b>			
All Focus schools		68.1	36
Kimberley region only	47.2	36.8	

Notes (government schools):

- Includes current *School Education Act* (1999) defined staff, less school psychologists (9 May 2013), and totals service from the position entry date up to 31 December 2012.
- Current position entry date to calculate service has been used. Where the position entry date is prior to 4 September 1998 (Peoplesoft's historical date), this date becomes the start date for the calculation. This will affect 60 teaching staff who worked prior to 4 September 1998, and as a result, their total service will be understated and therefore, affect the overall average service.
- Where a principal or teacher has worked in different positions within the school, eg, Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Department, Head of learning area, their service has been calculated in their current position only. For example, if a Principal has worked at the school for 20 years, but only been Principal for three years, their service will be counted in the Principal position only, namely, three years. This has the potential to affect the average service within the Focus schools where long-term teachers have recently shifted positions.
- If there have been breaks in service, or acting opportunities in the past but the staff member has subsequently returned to their current position, these breaks have not been excluded.

Source: Western Australia Department of Education and Communities, Human Resources administrative records, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2012; Association of Independent Schools Western Australia, 2013.

delivery of cultural awareness to staff across schools in their regions. In 2012, to maintain a sustainable network of employees trained to facilitate and deliver cultural awareness in schools and regions, 26 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees participated in cultural awareness train-the-trainer programs. While not all professional learning is recorded, Table WA13 outlines the number of participants in selected courses with high levels of cultural and linguistic understanding and competencies.

In 2012, the Dare to Lead program professional learning included:

- remote teacher induction facilitated by Dare to Lead in conjunction with the Institute for Professional Learning

**Table WA12: Average length of service of principals and teachers in Western Australian government Focus schools, by education regions**

Education region	Average length of service (in months)	
	Principals	Teachers
Goldfields	16.5	42.0
Kimberley	33.1	36.0
Mid-West	23.4	52.0
North Metropolitan	34.6	71.4
Pilbara	33.3	36.9
Southwest	33.8	86.1
South Metropolitan	47.0	65.0
Wheatbelt	62.2	68.4

Notes:

- Includes current *School Education Act* (1999) defined staff, less school psychologists (9 May 2013), and totals service from the position entry date up to 31 December 2012.
- Current position entry date to calculate service has been used. Where the position entry date is prior to 4 September 1998 (Peoplesoft's historical date), this date becomes the start date for the calculation. This will affect 60 teaching staff who worked prior to 4 September 1998, and as a result, their total service will be understated and therefore, affect the overall average service.
- Where a principal or teacher has worked in different positions within the school, eg, Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Department, Head of learning area, their service has been calculated in their current position only. For example, if a Principal has worked at the school for 20 years, but only been Principal for three years, their service will be counted in the Principal position only, namely, three years. This has the potential to affect the average service within the Focus schools where long-term teachers have recently shifted positions.
- If there have been breaks in service, or acting opportunities in the past but the staff member has subsequently returned to their current position, these breaks have not been excluded.

Source: Western Australia Department of Education, 2013.

- an aspirant leader program with the Western Australian Primary Principals' Association
- two National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools (NARIS) remote teachers and remote principals conferences, and
- aspirant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders' development workshops.

In 2012, the Department released the Tracks to Two-Way Learning, a resource aimed at improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in education, training and the workplace (available online at: <http://det.wa.edu.au/curriculum/support/eald/detcms/navigation/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect-for-aboriginal-students/teaching-and-learning-resources/tracks-to-two-way-learning/>). The resource is designed for use by education staff working in both schools and training environments to increase effective communication skills between speakers of Aboriginal English and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning outcomes.

A three to five-hour training session on Teaching Aboriginal Students was made available by AISWA to member schools. Teaching, pastoral and boarding staff at Future Footprints program schools were given cultural awareness training and information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning styles, literacy and numeracy needs and family relationships.

**Table WA13: Professional learning with high levels of cultural and linguistic understanding and competencies in Western Australian government schools, 2011–2012**

Professional Learning Course	2011	2012
Tracks to Two-Way Learning		76
ABC of Two-Way Literacy and Learning	108	266
Literacy and ESL in the Early Years project <sup>(a)</sup>		259
ESL/ESD Progress Maps	40	183
EAL/D in the Australian Curriculum		60
Aboriginal Literacy Strategy	32	64
Entry and Orientation Program	75	86

Note:

- This professional learning course was renamed Language, Literacy and Learning Two-Way: Teaching Aboriginal EAL/D students in the Early Years.

Source: Western Australia Department of Education, 2013.

Programs such as the Cultural Immersion Program (CIP), the Connecting the Dots program and the Growing Enriched Cultural Knowledge in Our Schools program are designed to provide CEOWA staff with a sound grounding in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and strategies for learning. In 2012, the CIP was delivered for all teachers new to Kimberley Catholic schools. The CEOWA schools in other regions accessed CIP on demand. The CEOWA has a consultant dedicated to the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the curriculum.

AISWA schools accessed the AISWA languages consultant for support in developing whole-school literacy plans that encompassed home languages, Standard Australian English, traditional languages and revival language programs. Specific teaching strategies were offered to schools alongside professional learning relating to second language acquisition.

#### **Action 42**

The Department continues to provide a number of incentives to attract and retain staff in schools with a significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population, including the Remote Teaching Service.

To attract the best principals to lead schools in the most vulnerable communities, the Department is offering, for the first time, an attraction and retention payment giving principals the potential to earn more than any other principal in Western Australian public education. Through the Attracting Outstanding Principals trial, the Department is offering attraction and retention payments ranging in value from \$5,853 to \$28,703. Principals in regional schools that have greater levels of complexity facing them will be eligible for the higher attraction and retention payments.

Recognising that school improvement results from the efforts of all staff, the trial also includes grants for those schools that have attracted outstanding principals when they demonstrate improvement in key areas. The grant will range in value from \$24,000 to \$57,000 a year, depending on the size of the school. As at December 2012, two principals had already commenced under the trial and a further two were contracted to commence in January for the 2013 school year.

In 2012, key professional learning activities of the Department included:

- delivering the NARIS Leaders' Conference for principals and leaders in NARIS schools across Australia

- coordinating the delivery of the Masters Scholarship to support the professional learning of teachers currently working in NARIS schools
- developing the NARIS webpage
- developing and supporting the communication strategy, and
- delivering an online application system to provide a single point of application for teachers seeking employment in a NARIS school.

The Department also contributed to NARIS initiatives led by other jurisdictions including: the Cultural Orientation Program, the EAL/D Project, Selection Tools Project and the Numeracy Project.

In 2012, the Virtual Teacher Network (VTN) for teachers working in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools was a NARIS initiative. The VTN was launched in 2012 and provides an online, collaborative environment where teachers can share resources, ideas and support with their peers. The VTN also provides teachers with access to free online events where teachers can learn new skills.

'Kimberley Calling' is a CEOWA initiative to assist principals to recruit high quality staff to Kimberley Catholic schools. The CEOWA offer a remote area incentive package to teachers in these schools.

The AISWA is not involved in placing staff or principals in independent schools. AISWA facilitated and supported the introduction of the Rewards for Teachers and Teach Remote programs to Focus schools. The AISWA has become part of the NARIS to allow greater opportunities to support remote school teachers.

## **Local level actions (43 and 44)**

#### **Action 43**

The Dare to Lead program provided professional learning for school leaders in Western Australian government schools. In 2012, every government Focus school principal had the opportunity to access a collegial school snapshot, or a return snapshot to measure growth, as well as the Dare to Lead suite of professional services. By the end of 2012, 40 of the 69 Focus schools had participated in a collegial school snapshot to lead improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Other services included a three-day leadership program and induction workshops for remote leaders held in collaboration with the Institute for Professional Learning.

Almost 61 per cent of principals in government Focus schools had been at their respective schools for two or more years. Approximately 71 per cent of all principals had participated in professional learning to assist in leading improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

All principals new to Kimberley Catholic schools (12 of the 15 Focus schools) participated in a specialised induction program, held over four days. The CEOWA has a comprehensive leadership program for new principals in their first to third years of appointment. This includes an emphasis on ensuring improvement of learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. An on-site, regionally based Principal Schools Advisor supports principals in all regions. Kimberley principals (in 12 of the 15 Focus schools) have CEOWA coordinated professional learning four times a year (over six days), that is specifically targeted at improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes.

All AISWA principals had the opportunity to participate in ongoing leadership training.

#### Action 44

In 2012, six Aboriginal Innovation Schools were given autonomy to work with their communities to develop practice to improve outcomes for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Progress has been mapped through case studies that include evidence-based reports and vodcasts.

More generally, the ATAS provides supplementary tutorial assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and Year 12 attainment or equivalent. In 2012, schools were given greater flexibility in how ATAS funding could be used relevant to their local contexts. This has enabled greater autonomy in approaches to teaching and learning, meeting the needs of their students and the expectations of their communities.

Principals in the Catholic sector have the flexibility to use funding to provide programs to meet the individual needs of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This includes extra-curricular as well as in-school activities. Schools have a variety of programs including breakfast programs, homework centres and sporting programs, depending on the particular needs of the school and community.

Each independent school is able to tailor their operations to suit their students' needs. All Focus schools have set daily school hours and school term opening times to suit the circumstances of their school and to meet registration requirements.

## Pathways to real post-school options

### Performance indicators

14. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.*

*Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there is no publicly available national level data for 2012.*

### Overall progress

The drop in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 students who achieved the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) in 2012 was due to a reduction in the number of Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who attempted to achieve the WACE in 2012.

In 2012, 194 Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved one or more AQF Certificate II or above level

**Table WA14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) award, 2010–2012**

	2010	2011	2012 <sup>(a)</sup>
WACE award – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	423	432	407
WACE award – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	20,373	20,669	20,877

Note:

a) Data based on published figures, as at December 2012.

Source: School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Western Australia, 2010 to 2012.

**Table WA15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II and above, Western Australia, 2010–2012**

	2010	2011	2012 (a)(b)
AQF Certificate II or above – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	134	160	194
AQF Certificate II or above – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	3,754	4,210	5,702

Notes:

- a) Data based on published figures at December 2012.
- b) Full-time Year 12 students who achieved one or more qualifications (in Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12).

Source: School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Western Australia, 2010 to 2012.

qualifications, while in Years 10, 11 or 12, compared with 160 in 2011, and 134 in 2010.

## Systemic level actions (48, 49 and 50)

### Action 48

In 2012, schools engaged directly with Youth Connections services by referring at risk 15 to 17 year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to their case workers for engagement and transitional support, and by accessing specific programs and/or support services. Youth Connections work with Participation Coordinators and other attendance and behaviour staff in all sectors and across all regions.

Participation teams assisted disengaged school aged young people to transition from school to an approved option. To facilitate this, they worked with community service providers and agencies including Youth Connections providers, in assisting school-aged young people to transition into a range of alternative options such as further education, training or employment.

### Action 49

In 2012, the Follow the Dream: Partnerships for Success program expanded to also provide support to students in schools in the vicinity of the host program site. The program accounted for 21 of the 39 (54 per cent) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Western Australian government schools who achieved an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) above 55 in 2011, and 17 of the 28 students (61 per cent) in 2012.

The National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions (NP-YAT) continued in 2012 with a range of projects, including those targeting school students. Cross-agency

collaboration between all existing partners continued. The NP-YAT projects specifically targeting school students across all sectors included Career Development grants and VET in Schools Additional Delivery.

In 2012, Trade Training Centres were being built to re-engage students back into education and training and give them the skills to be work ready. There were also five Aboriginal Workforce Development Centres across all sectors that provided locally responsive solutions to link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with employers for placement in meaningful and sustainable employment.

The Tracks to Two-Way Learning resource was developed jointly by the Department and the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) and is aimed at improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in education, training and the workplace. The resource is designed for use by education staff working in both schools and training environments to increase effective communication skills between speakers of Aboriginal English and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learning outcomes. One of the key aims is to broaden the horizons and post-school options of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Aboriginal School-Based Training (ASBT) initiative is a VET in Schools program, managed by the DTWD, with assistance from all the education sectors. Students have been able to include successfully completed units of competency towards their WACE. There are two pathways available: the institutional pathway for Years 10 to 12 students, for those students still at school who were not yet work ready, and the traineeship and apprenticeship pathway for Years 11 to 12 students. Additional funding was made



available to the Group Training Organisations (GTO) from DTWD for extra mentoring for those ASBT students considered being at high risk of disengaging. All sectors worked with the DTWD on a process for schools to assist in identifying such students.

AISWA continued to coordinate the Future Footprints program, which places Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote communities into Perth boarding schools. The program has a focus on the transition from school to the workplace or higher education. Access to VET is still problematic for remote schools across the State.

#### **Action 50**

The Department continues to employ a variety of initiatives to encourage innovative uses of interactive technologies including: the iPad trial; School Innovation Grants; Online Teaching and Learning system/Connect; and the Microsoft Partners in Learning program. Additional online teaching resources are also being created to assist staff. These include: the National Aboriginal Early Childhood Project; Aboriginal Studies lessons for the new Australian Curriculum; and the Aboriginal Perspectives Across the Curriculum website (at: <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/apac/detcms/portal/>).

Teachers in the Catholic sector were encouraged to promote the use of web-based technologies and mobile devices in schools in their teaching program. Schools have access to Catholic Network Australia.

All members of the CEOWA Aboriginal Education Team are building their digital capacity to ensure authentic integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into their work with teachers in the classroom. The CEOWA ICT team are working with primary schools to improve infrastructure and so increase access to digital learning. Integration of ICT is included in the up-skilling of ATAs.

AISWA has facilitated the introduction of mobile technologies into all Focus schools. Training of school staff in the pedagogical use of mobile technologies has been the focus of AISWA Learning Technology consultants. Collaborations with universities resulted in qualitative research into the introduction and use of interactive technologies. A fully supported iPad lending and training service commenced in 2012. AISWA has brokered an innovative plan between the National Broadband Network and all AIC schools to provide high-speed reliable satellite internet connectivity with significantly improved download limits. Installation will be completed by mid-2013.

## **Local level actions (51, 52, 53, 54 and 55)**

#### **Action 51**

Engagement programs have a focus on increasing the participation and engagement of students who are at risk of disengaging from mainstream schooling. They are designed to provide flexible, clear pathways that respond to student needs within the context of their school and community. In 2012, additional funding was provided to schools for engagement purposes.

In 2012, government schools increased the support given to students across the secondary years. This included building relationships with community-based service providers, registered training organisations, private schools, and across government school networks.

Examples of local engagement programs included the development of a Girls Academy personal development program for over 60 metropolitan Year 8 to Year 11 students, and the AQF Certificate I Building and Construction course in the Kimberley. Students enrolled in the course built a boat and launched it on the local river. This successful program operated in conjunction with the Learning To Live program and a State training provider to develop practical life skills and to provide pathways for graduation and future employment.

In 2012, Catholic Education schools offered tailored school-based programs to engage secondary age students with schooling, ongoing training and employment pathways. The CEOWA operates two CARE schools offering a range of specialised education and training programs for those students who struggle in the mainstream school system. The CEOWA also operates an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander metropolitan secondary school for students who have struggled to access mainstream schooling. Other programs operating in CEOWA schools include the Link Up Program (Years 10 to 12) and the Keys for Life Program. The CEOWA operates four Trade Training Centres, including one in a remote Kimberley location that serves three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A further two Trade Training Centres operate within the State that CEOWA students can access.

The majority of secondary students from AISWA Focus schools attend boarding school. All community schools that do enrol secondary students have programs to encourage the attendance of these students.



The AISWA managed Future Footprints program has placed 240 students into Perth boarding schools. These students are provided support from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AISWA consultant and all students have a culturally appropriate mentor. In 2012, 35 out of 36 Year 12 students graduated from Year 12. The CARE schools provide wraparound services that support the education and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and encourage attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

#### **Action 52**

The ASBT program is a VET in Schools program, managed by the DTWD, with assistance from all the education sectors. Students have been able to include successfully completed units of competency towards their achievement of the WACE.

In 2012, the institutional pathway for Years 10 to 12 students was changed to remove the compulsory work placement component from the program structure. The need for GTOs' involvement was also removed. This program remained a transition program for those students still at school who were not yet 'work ready', and for students based in regional and remote areas whose access to employment-based training arrangements was limited.

The traineeship and apprenticeship component of the ASBT program also continued, with all commencing school-based trainees being employed by the DTWD contracted GTOs. Additional funding was made available to the GTOs by DTWD for extra mentoring for those ASBT students considered being at high risk of disengaging. All sectors worked with DTWD on a process to assist schools in identifying such students. In remote and metropolitan areas, Trade Training Centres have been built to specifically assist with training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

#### **Action 53**

As mentioned for Action 52, the traineeship and apprenticeship component of the ASBT program continued, with all commencing school-based trainees being employed by the GTOs contracted by the DTWD. The DTWD provided additional funding to the GTOs for extra mentoring for those ASBT students considered being at high risk of disengaging. All sectors worked with DTWD on a process for schools to assist in identifying such students.

With AISWA, strong links continued with industry groups including: ERTECH, Action Mining, Nestle, ANZ, CBA AFL

Sportsready, Cannington Police Station, BHP and training providers to assist students to become work ready and to find employment when leaving school. The Aboriginal Independent Community School (AICS) that provides boarding for senior students only provides case managed traineeship opportunities to students.

#### **Action 54**

Government schools address study choices and career services at the local level in order to be responsive to the local community needs and individual student interests. All schools provide guidance to students on courses of study, while the depth of career services can vary significantly depending on individual sites and local expertise available.

Catholic schools have the opportunity to connect with the Aboriginal Workforce Development Centres and students receive relevant career advice from trained staff within schools.

Using participation funding, in 2012, AISWA Focus schools provided opportunities for students to visit places of employment and further education. Future Footprints students participate in at least one employment expo each year and have regular careers and further study presentations.

#### **Action 55**

The Western Australian Guidelines for Career Development Services and Transition were revised by education sectors in 2012 through funding from the NP-YAT and copies were sent to all schools. The guidelines advocated access to career services for all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families, to support informed career and study choices. In addition, in 2012, schools were able to access funding to establish career development projects for students.

Workplace learning opportunities provided students with opportunities to access on-the-job training and career pathways. Schools manage their workplace learning programs and there is no system-wide data collection of the numbers of students accessing workplace learning or the number of employers.

The School Business Community Partnerships are funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). In 2012, the extent of their interaction with schools varied across the State. There was a link with one of CEOWA's CARE schools and the School Business Community Partnership that assisted the students to become work ready and achieve their WACE.

Although AISWA does not collect business partnership information from independent schools, it is known that a number of CARE and AIC schools have formed relationships with local businesses, including mining and agricultural industries.

## Good practice snapshots

### Literacy and English as a Second Language in the Early Years project

The Literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) in the Early Years project was designed to improve the language and literacy outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose first language or dialect is not Standard Australian English (SAE). The project was funded through the Closing the Gap: Expansion of Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Programs initiative.

The project aims to specifically develop teachers' skills, expertise, and understanding in the instruction of English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the early years. Support is provided to a school leadership team to improve whole-school approaches to address the literacy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the early years. The project aims to assist providing a strong foundation for SAE language and literacy development, leading to improved literacy outcomes.

The key deliverable of the project for Western Australian government schools was the development of a professional learning course for early childhood staff in Focus schools. The professional learning in EAL/D language and literacy instruction was expected to have a flow-on impact on the quality of teaching received by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from kindergarten to Year 3.

The course is a modified implementation of the South Australian Department of Education and Child Development's English as a Second Language in the Mainstream for the Early Learner professional learning program. The Western Australian Department of Education altered the South Australian model to

ensure it was relevant and culturally appropriate for the Western Australian audience.

The focus of the course was on supporting staff to implement pedagogical practices that are inclusive of the students' EAL/D learning needs. To enhance learning and practical application, course participants were encouraged to complete between-module readings and classroom-based activities designed to apply the workshop content.

To achieve this, a 24 hour professional learning course (delivered over four days) was developed, which contained additional resources including: facilitator and participant manuals; presentations and presenter notes; ESL/ESD Progress Map Appendix for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D students; and alternate professional learning course materials for staff teaching Year 4 and above.

To assist with the delivery of the course, 20 facilitators were instructed in a train-the-trainer scenario. At the conclusion of the project funding, the course had been presented to 259 participants from 55 schools in metropolitan, rural and remote locations across Western Australia.

In addition to the production of teaching and learning materials, a great deal of time has been dedicated to making this initiative possible.

Central to the delivery of the course is the consultation and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In delivering the course, non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters are required to collaborate with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural expert, preferably local, for both the planning and presenting of all workshops. This ensures the information presented is authentic and more relevant to the local context. At the same time, it models the process of working Two-Way for participants, which they, in turn, can transfer and use in their own contexts and classrooms.

External consultants were engaged to develop the training program and deliver the training to both the teacher-trainers and the course attendees, as well as to assist with the program's evaluation. A project management team, an expert advisory committee and a steering committee oversaw the governance of the project.

Overall, the course achieved the project's goals as it contributed to building staff capacity and better learning outcomes for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D students. It was very well regarded by participants and facilitators. Further, the course was, for many, a revelation, changing the way they understood and related to their students and how they taught them. The depth of the content was such that even some experienced specialist teachers and teachers who had been teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for some time acquired new understandings and skills. The maximum benefit is expected to be in schools where the EAL/D approach is supported by the principal and is incorporated into the whole school-plan.

The overall feedback from participants of this program was overwhelmingly positive: from the content and delivery through to the results participants experienced from classroom implementation.

A strong message from the course evaluation is that this professional learning is effective and needs to continue to be delivered to all teachers, Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs), Education Assistants and administration staff in schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In an assessment of the course, the student improvement matches the perceptions of the interviewees who stated that there was an increase in student skills as a result of applying the course learning in their classrooms. The interviewees also stated that their students now understood and embraced concepts about Aboriginal English and SAE being different but equally valuable dialects. They also felt the students were using and responding to the terminology of Aboriginal English and SAE.

The interviewees felt that, as a consequence of the students being more aware of the two different dialects, they were better able to differentiate between the two and found it easier to use SAE when required.

Participants noted one of the greatest strengths of the program was the use of local facilitators to present the Two-Way approach in a culturally relevant context. This approach led to participants gaining an improved level of understanding for students' and parents' daily life and cultural practices. An additional benefit was the reported improvement of relationships between AIEOs and teachers due, in part, to an increase in value placed upon AIEOs.

An improvement in understanding of cultural contexts has led to more knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds and their

connection to language and literacy development. This has equipped teachers with strategies that can be implemented in classrooms to improve student outcomes.

Delivering the program presented challenges, the most notable of which was logistical issues of delivering the course in the very remote regions – the Kimberley and the Pilbara. Due to the distances that participants needed to travel and the associated time imposition, the program was modified and delivered in two blocks of two days, instead of four spaced days. This resulted in participants being unable to practice some components of the program before their next session. Although not ideal, the program feedback remained positive, with only five per cent of affected respondents commenting on the intensive delivery.

## Aboriginal Independent Schools Numeracy Strategy

The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) has developed the Aboriginal Independent Schools Numeracy Strategy. The resource has a number of components and is accessed online through a portal, located at: <http://numeracy.aicsportal.ais.wa.edu.au/index.php>.

AISWA consultants developed the portal in cooperation with school principals, teachers, community members, university consultants and the Australian Government DEEWR. It was designed to allow new and inexperienced teachers at remote schools the ability to quickly and easily determine the level of a student's numeracy development, and then ascertain what teaching methodologies are required to bring about improved outcomes. During 2012, development of the calculate section commenced, while the number strand component of the portal was completed. The various components of the portal are outlined below.

### Scope and sequence

This section of the resource outlines the critical aspects of mathematics that students need to learn at each of the year levels from kindergarten through to Year 6. The scope and sequence does not include the entire curriculum, only those aspects that need to be the major focus of teaching, and only goes up to Year 6, as this is the upper limit of mathematics knowledge for the majority of the students within the Aboriginal Independent Community (AIC) schools. Students who are above this level can be catered for using other resources.

The assessment tasks, the mathematics and the activities are all accessed through the scope and sequence. This is designed to encourage teachers to continuously consider the critical aspects of mathematics that students need to learn at each of the year levels.

The scope and sequence is aligned with the Australian Curriculum.

## Assessment tasks

Diagnostic assessment tasks have been written for each aspect of the scope and sequence. The tasks get progressively harder in order to help teachers identify what students know and what they need to learn. The assessment tasks include a page of instructions, a recording proforma and a number of examples. These assist teachers in identifying the current level of knowledge of the student and any common misconceptions the student may have.

## Mathematics

This section of the resource outlines the mathematics that students need to learn. It is designed to help teachers to:

- know what mathematics needs to be taught at each of the different year levels
- know how the students learn the mathematics
- identify common misconceptions the students might make
- know what they can do to avoid the common misconceptions, and
- understand the pedagogy and resources that will help students to better learn mathematics.

Recent research in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mathematics has been incorporated into this section of the resource and includes the implications of learning mathematics in a second language environment. The mathematics is summarised in dot points at the bottom of each section. Teachers can choose to add these dot points to a planning document by simply clicking on the ones they require.

## Activities

These provide teachers with high quality, effective activities that are easily applied to the classroom. Research in the area

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mathematics has been incorporated into this section of the resource. The contexts within the activities have been written specifically for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the AIC schools. The activities can be added to planning documents.

## Planning tool

Teachers can use this part of the resource to create a range of planning documents and then file them for later reference. The planning tool includes links to the Australian Curriculum, the AIC schools scope and sequence, the mathematics focus and activities. The documents can be downloaded to allow teachers the opportunity to modify them to suit their specific requirements.

## AICS Numeracy Tracking Tool (ANTT)

The AICS Numeracy Tracking Tool (ANTT) allows teachers to track a student's progress against each of the assessment tasks. Teachers can create a range of reports and graphs by filtering the data to show how individuals or class groups are progressing against each of the components of the scope and sequence.

Teachers only have access to their own school's data and can input or delete students' information as necessary. When adding new student information, should data be available from a previous school, the information can be directly transferred onto the new school's database. This removes the requirement for teachers to re-assess the student.

# Western Australia Indigenous Education Consultative Body's (IECB's) feedback

## Background

The Western Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Council (WAAETC) is a ministerial council comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who provide grassroots community advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and

training to the relevant ministers. The Council was established in 1995 and has an Ex-Officio membership made up of the Heads of key education and training systems/sectors. The WAAETC is the Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) in Western Australia.

The WAAETC provides a valuable and independent voice in the education and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly children and young people. The strength of the WAAETC is its broad community base and comprehensive networks through its statewide regional community membership. The WAAETC facilitates effective consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities on matters concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training. It provides strategic advice to State and Australian Government agencies about the development of policies and programs that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training.

## Introduction

In making comment on Western Australian activities and outcomes, the WAAETC wishes to state upfront that despite the numerous activities and the generous funds allocated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, the overall achievement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is unacceptable. The comments made by the WAAETC have been made with due consideration and are not made to criticise education systems, sectors or schools. Instead, the WAAETC's comments are made as an urgent appeal for action to fix the

situation immediately and truly accelerate the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The information on the overall student numbers; the number of schools and the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in these schools in Semester Two 2012 has been summarised in Table WA 16. The information is necessary background data that the WAAETC requires in order to make relevant comment.

Upon examination of the data provided by Catholic Education and the Department of Education, the WAAETC deduces that there are 1,779 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the independent school sector, which includes Curriculum and Re-Engagement (CARE) schools. It is important that school and student numbers, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student numbers are also provided by the independent sector and CARE schools, as all receive funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and have responsibility for their educational outcomes.

## Focus schools

The WAAETC welcomes the information on Focus schools in Western Australia, as this assists the WAAETC in providing informed comment, particularly in regard to SCPAs and other targets that specifically require Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents' and/or community engagement. For our purposes, we have summarised the information in Table WA16.

**Table WA16: Overall data for Western Australia: schools, student numbers; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Semester Two, 2012**

	Schools	Focus schools	Students	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personal learning plans
Government schools		69		22,012 84%	13,099 59%
Catholic schools	160	15	72,464	2,338 9%	10%
Independent		12		1,779 7%	
All schools	1,106	96	409,343	26,129	

Source: Western Australia Department of Education, Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, Association of Independent Schools Western Australia, 2012.

The WAAETC acknowledges that while a concentration of effort is on Focus Schools in Western Australia, it is disturbed by the low number of schools receiving this attention, and the low percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that supposedly reap the 'benefits' of attending a Focus school. *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* identifies national, systemic and local level action in six priority domains which, evidence shows, will contribute to improved outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait education. The Council fails to see how effort in 96 Focus Schools assists education providers to accelerate improvements in the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people as a collective group, when only 37 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population is in these schools.

## Western Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Council's (WAAETC) comments on progress by domains Readiness for school

### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

## WAAETC comments on overall progress

The WAAETC is concerned by the reliability of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' population estimates. Reliable statistics are necessary in the calculation of enrolment data and assists

schools in identifying the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children likely to begin kindergarten or pre-primary education. Reliable data can also support schools in their preparedness for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

In terms of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), the WAAETC takes issue at the assessment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' development on this measurement instrument because its standards and values are based on an Anglo-Celtic western orientation and it generally paints a negative picture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This measurement instrument tends to assess young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as 'deficit' before they begin school, and this perception is likely to remain with them throughout their years at school. However, the WAAETC notes that according to measurements on the Index, there has been marginal improvement since 2009.

The chapter provides brief comment on the On-entry assessment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, which again highlights the fact that the tasks/measurement tool places an emphasis on English and numeracy with little consideration for the assessment of the whole child in all areas of intelligence, including cultural intelligence. For example, where Standard Australian English (SAE) is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge need to be acknowledged and taken into consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Under this domain, reference is made to a number of programs that are presumably designed to improve and accelerate the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the early years, although the overall results remained relatively unchanged. Reference was made to the Western Australian Local Champions Program, the Children and Family Centres, training in use of the English as a Second Language or Dialect Maps for the early years, data consultants and a dedicated Early Childhood Education and Care team available to support schools in working with the AEDI and other data sets, professional learning programs, and so forth. Yet despite all this activity, the outcomes over the past four years for Aboriginal



and Torres Strait Islander students have not changed, and are considered by the WAAETC to be shamefully disappointing. Furthermore, the concentration of effort on the 96 Focus schools may be beneficial for them but seems to diminish collective commitment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education across all schools, and does not indicate what effort is made in other schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This situation is unacceptable to the Council.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicators

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school–community partnership agreement in place.*

### Overall progress

Engagement and connections is the domain that is specifically concerned with parents, carers, families and communities engaging in schools and schools with their parents, families and communities. The results stipulated by the providers are less than encouraging, when the WAAETC considers the number of Personalised Learning Plans (PLP) and School and Community Partnership Agreements (SCPAs) that have been developed and implemented. However, the results give an honest indication of how well schools are engaging with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the formulation of PLP and SCPAs, namely, that most schools are not doing this very well.

The WAAETC is disappointed by the inadequate number of students that have PLPs, especially when there is such a wide gap between the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers. It is encouraging that 59 per cent of the students in government schools have PLPs but at the same time, it is quite disturbing that 41 per cent of students do not. Schools and providers should be held to account for PLP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and the fact that two major providers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education are vague about the number of students with PLPs in their schools is a response that the WAAETC finds unacceptable. The

development and implementation of PLPs for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is a key strategy in closing the gap in education and, judging by the figures given here, the WAAETC is of the impression that schools are quite dismissive of this requirement.

Furthermore, the WAAETC considers the performance indicator regarding SCPAs as weak because it only concentrates on Focus schools. Although the number of Focus schools with SCPAs is ashamedly low, the WAAETC considers the low numbers are also a pretty accurate account of how poorly most schools engage with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, families and communities.

When results like these are forthcoming, the WAAETC is exasperated and forced to conclude that the implementation of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan* is tokenistic and that ‘closing the gap’ is not taken seriously, and adds to the rhetoric nature of real commitment to improving and achieving educational outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

The work being done by education providers to develop and enhance the skills of AIEOs, AEWs and ATAs demonstrates some commitment to the training, employment and career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the education sector, and will assist these vital workers in schools to become better informed, enhance their knowledge bank, improve their communication skills and equip them with the confidence to share their lived cultural experiences with teachers and educators.

## Attendance

### Performance indicators

5. *Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.*
6. *Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to ‘Other’ Australians.*
7. *Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
8. *Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*



## Overall progress

On examination of the attendance tables in the chapter, it is of concern to the WAAETC that since 2010, Year 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are, on average, missing two days in every 10 so early in their schooling years. Furthermore, the attendance rates in Year 10 are so much worse, with an average attendance of six and a half days out of 10. The overall average attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are very disappointing, despite the many programs that have been implemented to address this issue.

The WAAETC is alarmed by the poor attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as attendance at school affects students' educational achievement, training opportunities and, ultimately, their job prospects. Providers of school education are doing a range of things to improve attendance, but it would seem to the WAAETC that schools are not engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parent, families and communities, as evidenced by the data for the domain on engagement and connections. Increased engagement between the school, community and parents is a key factor in supporting regular attendance.

The WAAETC is interested in the effectiveness of the joint initiative program, Operation Redirect, which involves the Western Australia Police Force. Historically, the police have not had good relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the WAAETC is concerned about the sensitivity of the police officer's approach and his/her cultural competencies in dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, families and communities have complained for many years, and continue to do so, about the fact that the curriculum and pedagogy in most schools do not embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives. They want schools to acknowledge and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aboriginal history, studies and perspectives throughout the year, and not just in NAIDOC Week. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Western Australians want NAIDOC Week celebrated in schools in its own right, and not celebrated as part of multiculturalism.

The WAAETC asserts that increased engagement between the school, community and parents is a key factor in supporting

regular attendance, and a curriculum and pedagogy that embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives are also necessary components for improving attendance, retention and achievement. The WAAETC notes that in the chapter on this domain there is no specific mention of what schools are doing to address the key issues of pedagogy and a curriculum that embeds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives. Perhaps by its absence, it can be assumed that schools are still so western in their approach that little regard is given to tackling the issues of appropriate pedagogy, and a curriculum that embeds Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. Furthermore, the WAAETC contends that a culture of indifference prevails, as there does not appear to be an appetite to address pedagogy or a culturally inclusive curriculum that meet the learning needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*
10. *Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.*

## Overall progress

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people need to be proficient in English literacy and numeracy to participate as equals in the global society. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities want their children to achieve and be successful, and while poor school attendance is an issue in some families, for many others it is not. The fact that the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has increased in 2012 is possibly the best indicator of the need to change the approach to curriculum delivery, and couple this with a pedagogical approach that is relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This change of approach, accompanied by a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for their learning and achievement, should be mandatory in all schools, not just in Focus schools.

Given the huge amounts of funds that are expended on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, the WAAETC is frustrated by the fact that in 2012, the NAPLAN participation rates for Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were below the national average for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, for every year level and assessment. The WAAETC holds the view that far too frequently a culture of indifference prevails in schools, and the NAPLAN results and participation levels give support to this view.

The WAAETC is familiar with the resource, *Understanding Stories My Way: Aboriginal-English speaking students' (mis) understanding of school literacy materials in Australian English*, and notes that only a small number of educators (259) have participated in the accompanying professional learning course. The WAAETC recommends that all primary school and Early Childhood Education teachers complete the course, as it will build participants' knowledge and skills in Two-Way teaching, language and dialect understandings, and their practical application of classroom strategies. The WAAETC also recommends that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education personnel be trained and engaged in the delivery of these professional learning courses.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. *Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*
12. *Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*
13. *Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

### Overall progress

The WAAETC stresses that one hour of cultural awareness training for teachers is grossly inadequate. Since the NAPLAN gap is widening between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, every effort should be made to develop the cultural competencies

of teachers, principals and other school staff, including their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff. The WAAETC questions how education systems/sectors involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders in developing regional, rural and urban strategies to build teacher capacity, and how much of the professional learning is centred on developing the cultural understandings and cultural competencies of the education workforce. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support staff in schools must be empowered to do their job effectively and the WAAETC questions what is being done to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff (including Manager of Aboriginal Education, Coordinators, AIEOs, ATAs and AEWs) so that they can work confidently with teachers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The WAAETC is disturbed that there is no central data collection on professional learning undertaken by teachers and principals, particularly in relation to cultural understandings and cultural competencies. The WAAETC considers it should be a mandatory requirement, given the allocation of funds by the Australian Government to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education outcomes. There appears to be an indifference to the accountability and transparency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander funding, even though the gap is widening and the educational outcomes are poor. The WAAETC notes that it has not been possible to gauge the effectiveness of a culturally responsive learning program (as limited as they are), as data has not been available.

Ideally, school authorities need to collaborate with their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and communities to develop policies regarding use and reporting of data and information, while respecting individual student privacy. The WAAETC, as well as education providers, require accurate annual data to develop specific policies, plans and programs, and to measure their effectiveness. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities require similar information in order to engage in meaningful discussions around community-based education projects and initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and students.

The strategy to attract the best principals to lead the most vulnerable schools is an admirable one. However, the WAAETC questions who determines the suitability of principals for these schools, and what mechanisms are in place to build the capacity of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that they can make that principal accountable for the educational

outcomes in their school. If reward payments are being offered to attract and retain principals in these schools, it then follows that measures must also be put in place to ensure that principals are accountable for the results achieved. Appallingly, there is no mention of how the key stakeholders, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, are involved in this strategy/initiative, which again is reflective of the poor engagement and connection of education providers with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

## Pathways to real post-school options

### Performance indicators

14. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.*

### Overall progress

The WAAETC believes that this performance indicator is not relevant to school education as students in Years 11 and 12 are, at the most, 17 or 18 years of age. In this chapter, school education sectors/systems have reported on programs for Years 10, 11 and 12 students whose ages would range between 14 – 18 years and, in our view, have not provided information against this performance indicator.

## Western Australia education sectors' responses to Western Australia IECB's feedback

The WAAETC notes that the overall achievement by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Western Australia is unacceptable. The education providers in Western Australia agree that the level of achievement is disappointing.

All education sectors in Western Australia welcome programs, strategies and ideas that the WAAETC may have to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes and build relationships with parents and community; however, it has become evident that the State education providers' current working partnership with the WAAETC needs to be reviewed. The Statement of Commitment 2010–2014 between the Department and the WAAETC must also be revisited, in order to better develop the relationship. This will allow the WAAETC to be in a more informed position to provide assistance, advice and expertise in improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The WAAETC is concerned that, while the concentration of effort in Focus schools may be beneficial for those schools, it seems to diminish collective commitment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education across all schools. Focus schools are those schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students requiring the greatest support. The decision to concentrate effort on Focus schools was made at a national level and was agreed to by all State and Territory ministers for education. Most programs are not built around the school being classified as a Focus school, and are targeted at improving the outcomes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Schools also use local-level strategies and programs when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These are not necessarily reported on in the scope of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

The structure of the independent schools sector is such that they cannot mandate schools to carry out specific actions or reporting. This makes some reporting against specific actions difficult.

### Readiness for school

The WAAETC states that the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is based on an Anglo-Celtic western orientation and is concerned that it generally paints a negative picture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Early assessment allows education providers to determine how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are faring when compared to their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers. These assessments measure the readiness of all students for formal schooling, and assist schools in understanding what support structures may need to be put in place for Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander students. This is in line with nationally agreed requirements.

The On-entry assessment targets early essential skills in literacy and numeracy. While it is recognised that physical health, language and cognitive skills, behaviour, creativity and social and emotional health must all be considered in the overall development of children, the purpose of the On-entry assessment is to identify literacy and numeracy skills critical to children's early success at school. Numerous support documents are available for use before, during and after the assessment. These documents incorporate strategies and considerations that need to be acknowledged when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with English Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D). Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers provide support during the assessment period.

## Engagement and connections

There has been some confusion regarding the use of personalised learning strategy and personalised learning plan (PLP). A PLP implies a formalised written plan for individual students, whereas personalising learning strategies can be implemented more informally. It is not currently a requirement that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have a PLP, as some may be progressing well at school and parents may decide that there is no need. Schools can also choose to develop whole-school strategies, or they may opt to only record differentiation in class program documents. These processes are not always reflected in the data collected from schools.

Great effort has been placed in assisting schools to complete a SCPA. This includes contracting facilitators, training regional Aboriginal Education Managers, and providing resources and advice. The Department acknowledges further work is required in this area, and welcomes the support of the WAAETC in building the profile and developing further agreements.

## Attendance

The WAAETC states that the overall average attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are alarming. The Department agrees that attendance continues to remain a critical issue. The WAAETC add that schools are not adequately engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents,

families and communities, and that this is a key to supporting regular attendance. The Department acknowledges that family and community engagement is extremely important and will seek further assistance from the WAAETC to help facilitate the process.

Too many young people are not attending school. It is clear that attendance is a problem that cannot be solved by schools alone. A whole of community approach is required. However, without the support of parents, any new strategy will not work. School is compulsory and parents need to work in partnership with schools to ensure their children's attendance. It is hoped that the expertise and influence of the WAAETC will help spread this message throughout the greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The WAAETC asserts that many schools do not embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives in their curriculum and pedagogy. While much more remains to be done, many schools are trying hard to improve this. Schools are using Aboriginal Perspectives Across the Curriculum resources, teaching Aboriginal languages, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days of significance, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies in their curriculum and upskilling teaching staff.

The introduction of the Australian Curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of students by delivering a relevant, contemporary and engaging curriculum. In the development of this cross-curriculum priority, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has consulted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators, representatives from the Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies, and with community members.

## Literacy and numeracy

The WAAETC emphasises the importance of creating a culture of high expectations. *The Aboriginal Education Plan for WA Public Schools 2011–2014* (available online at: [http://www.det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/detcms/aboriginal-education/aboriginal-education/docs/aboriginal-education-plan-2011-2014\\_en?oid=com.arsdigita.cms.contenttypes.FileStorageItem-id-7148382](http://www.det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/detcms/aboriginal-education/aboriginal-education/docs/aboriginal-education-plan-2011-2014_en?oid=com.arsdigita.cms.contenttypes.FileStorageItem-id-7148382)) supports this ethos and is reflected in many of its aspirational programs, including: Follow the Dream: Partnerships for Success; the High Achievers program; Clontarf Football

Academy program and the Aboriginal School Based Training program.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

The WAAETC stresses that one hour of cultural awareness training for teachers is grossly inadequate. This is not the only cultural awareness training that teachers receive. Cultural awareness is an ongoing process and happens in a variety of ways, not only from a centralised, formal program.

Cultural awareness is offered to all schools. The Department's *Culture Strong, Career Proud: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2011–2014* (available online at: <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/strategic-documents/culture-strong-career-proud-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-employment-action-plan.en?oid=com.arsdigita.cms.contenttypes.FileStorage>) focuses on maintaining a supportive and culturally inclusive work environment. A key initiative of the Plan is to provide opportunities for all Department employees to participate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training.

Coordinators of Aboriginal Education and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers (AIEOs) in schools are responsible for the delivery of cultural awareness to staff across schools in regions. Managers of Aboriginal Education are responsible for facilitating cultural awareness at the local level. The AIEOs support school staff in developing their cultural competencies through the provision of formal and informal professional learning. The AIEOs and Aboriginal Educators lead cultural awareness activities in schools, while the Managers of Aboriginal Education and staff from Central Office provide professional learning support. The Aboriginal Education Teams in regions also assist teachers with cultural activities and lessons on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. During 2012, funding was provided for 25 AIEOs to participate in a train-the-trainer cultural awareness program.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has developed professional learning units to support teachers and principals. The resource is available on the AITSL website, at: <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/professional-learning/professional-learning.html>. The Department promotes this

resource to all principals and teachers. The Department's Institute for Professional Learning incorporates this resource into professional learning modules for graduates and senior teachers.

While there is no central data on professional learning undertaken by teachers, the Department collects data on professional learning undertaken in relation to cultural understandings and cultural competencies through its Student Census.

The Attracting Outstanding Principals trial, as part of the nationally funded Smarter Schools Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership, enables the Department to offer high performing principals a unique opportunity to lead reform in challenging government schools located in vulnerable communities across Western Australia. Invariably, these schools have a large percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and a complex range of social factors affecting student learning. Participating principals are appointed following a merit selection process, which focuses on previous experience and outcomes in a similar school context. Wherever possible, selection panels have included community representatives.

The Department's ongoing commitment to supporting and building the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, Managers of Aboriginal Education, Deputy Principals, teachers and AIEOs is detailed in its strategic planning document, *Culture Strong, Career Proud: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan 2011–2014*.

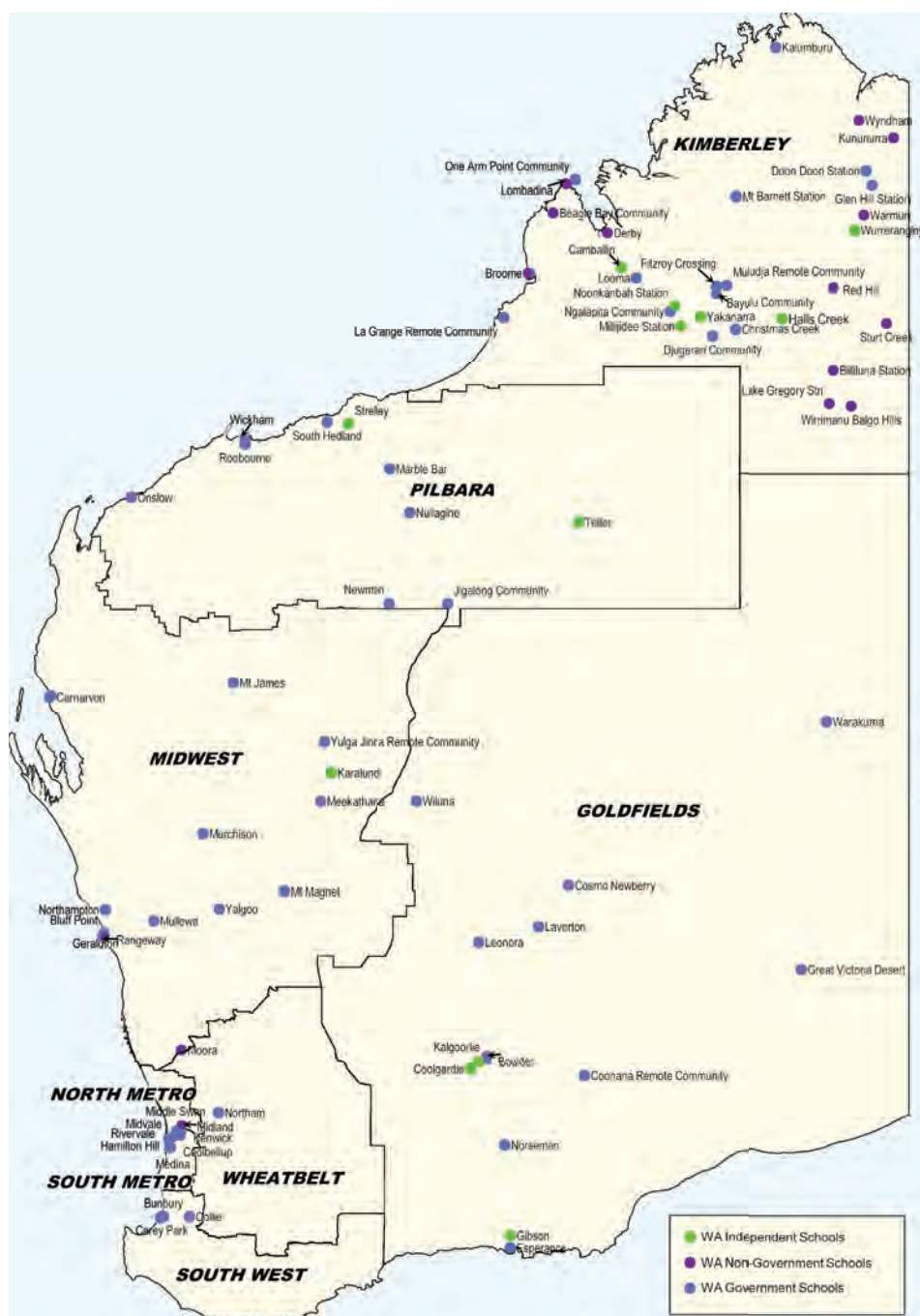
## Pathways to real post-school options

The WAAETC are concerned that this performance indicator is not relevant. The performance indicator for this domain was changed from the 2011 reporting period due to the inability of the proposed data set to disaggregate data at a State level. The proposed and approved interim measure is the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people up to the end of final year of schooling who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate II or above. This was outlined in the sector responses provided to the WAAETC in conjunction with the collated State response.



# Distribution of Focus schools in Western Australia

**Figure WA5: Map of Western Australian Focus schools**  
(Focus schools are listed in a table following this map.)



Notes:

- Dots indicate location of Focus schools.
- Perth metropolitan Focus schools are not individually identified.

Source: Western Australian Department of Education, Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, Association of Independent Schools Western Australia, 2012

## Focus school information

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD*
Ashfield Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	95	28	X		
Baler Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	640	162	X		
Bayulu Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	133	130		X	
Beachlands Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	156	90		X	
Bluff Point Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	413	174		X	
Boulder Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	352	149	X		
Broome Primary School	Gov.	Remote	400	200		X	
Broome Senior High School	Gov.	Remote	532	206		X	
Burringurrah Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	45	43		X	
Cable Beach Primary School	Gov.	Remote	467	269		X	
Carey Park Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	385	64		X	
Carnarvon Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	142	126			
Carnarvon Senior High School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	189	102			
Cassia Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	330	107	X		
Coolbellup Community School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	228	50		X	
Dawul Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	25	23		X	
Derby District High School	Gov.	Very Remote	544	434		X	
Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	122	117			
Djugerari Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	18	18		X	
East Carnarvon Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	352	192			
East Kalgoorlie Primary School <sup>(a)</sup> (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	150	147		X	
East Kenwick Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	437	64	X		
Fitzroy Valley District High School	Gov.	Very Remote	277	254		X	X
Halls Creek District High School	Gov.	Very Remote	374	358		X	X
Jigalong Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	90	87		X	
Jungdranung Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	15	15		X	
Kalumburu Remote Community School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	162	162		X	
Kununurra District High School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	889	454		X	
La Grange Remote Community School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	205	202		X	
Laverton School <sup>(b)</sup> (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	73	49		X	
Leonora District High School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	143	95		X	
Looma Remote Community School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	121	114		X	
Maidens Park Primary School <sup>(c)</sup>	Gov.	Provincial	226	36		X	
Marble Bar Primary School	Gov.	Very Remote	45	35		X	
Medina Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	179	81		X	
Meekatharra District High School (NS)	Gov.	Very Remote	157	145		X	
Midvale Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	370	80		X	
Moorditj Noongar Community College (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	115	115		X	
Mount Magnet District High School (NS)	Gov.	Very Remote	127	80		X	



School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD*
Mullewa District High School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	81	78		X	
Muludja Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	34	34		X	
Newman Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Very Remote	315	104			
Newman Senior High School (NS)	Gov.	Very Remote	229	50			
Ngalapita Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	29	29		X	
Norseman District High School	Gov.	Remote	144	49		X	
Northampton District High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	110	35		X	
Nullagine Primary School	Gov.	Very Remote	49	44		X	
Nulsen Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	338	129	X		
One Arm Point Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	98	90		X	X
Onslow Primary School	Gov.	Very Remote	123	65		X	
Pia Wadjarra Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	26	26		X	
Port Hedland Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	414	60			
Rangeway Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	515	317		X	
Roebourne District High School	Gov.	Remote	174	170		X	
South Hedland Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	251	225	X		
South Newman Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Very Remote	499	90	X		
Southwell Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	108	55		X	
The Ngaanyatjarra Lands School <sup>(d)</sup>	Gov.	Very Remote	293	291		X	
Tjuntjuntjara Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	40	39		X	
Tranby Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	185	94	X		
Wananami Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	33	33		X	
Wangkatjunga Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	62	62		X	
West Northam Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	148	84		X	
Wickham Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	315	117			
Wilson Park Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	104	37		X	
Wiluna Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	83	73		X	
Wyndham District High School	Gov.	Very Remote	153	106		X	
Yalgoo Primary School	Gov.	Very Remote	27	27		X	
Yulga Jinna Remote Community School	Gov.	Very Remote	16	16		X	
Birlirr Ngawiyiwu Catholic School	Cath.	Very Remote	49	48		X	
Christ The King Catholic School <sup>(e)</sup> (IFS)	Cath.	Very Remote	85	83	X	X	X
Holy Rosary School	Cath.	Very Remote	213	104	X	X	
John Pujajangka Piyirn School	Cath.	Very Remote	43	43		X	
Kururrungku Catholic Education Centre	Cath.	Very Remote	66	66		X	
Luurnpa Catholic School	Cath.	Very Remote	128	128		X	
Ngalangangpum School (IFS)	Cath.	Very Remote	111	99		X	
Sacred Heart School	Cath.	Very Remote	119	113	X	X	X
St Brigid's Primary School (NS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	488	24			
St John's School	Cath.	Provincial	223	50		X	
St Joseph's School (Wyndham)	Cath.	Very Remote	73	63		X	
St Joseph's School (Kununurra) (IFS)	Cath.	Very Remote	228	126		X	
St Joseph's School (Moora) (NS)	Cath.	Provincial	162	46	X	X	
St Mary's College	Cath.	Remote	645	283	X	X	

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD*
Warlawurru Catholic School	Cath.	Very Remote	43	39		X	X
Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School: Coolgardie (IFS)	Indep.	Remote	120	98		X	
Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School: Kurrawang Community School (IFS)	Indep.	Remote	20	20		X	
Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School: Wongutha (NS)	Indep.	Provincial	68	68		X	
Karalundi Aboriginal Education Centre (IFS)	Indep.	Very Remote	58	54		X	
Kulkarriya Community School (NS)	Indep.	Very Remote	93	93		X	
Nyikina Mangala Community School (IFS)	Indep.	Very Remote	27	27		X	
Purnululu Independent Community Aboriginal School	Indep.	Very Remote	18	18		X	
Rawa Community School (IFS)	Indep.	Very Remote	56	54		X	
Strelley Community School (IFS)	Indep.	Very Remote	83	82		X	
Wulungarra Community School (IFS)	Indep.	Very Remote	35	32		X	
Yakanarra Community School (IFS)	Indep.	Very Remote	49	48		X	
Yiyili Aboriginal Community School (IFS)	Indep.	Very Remote	60	59		X	

Notes:

- In 2012, Yintarri Remote Community School became a campus of East Kalgoorlie Primary School. Yintarri is classified as very remote.
- Cosmo Newberry Remote Community School was a campus of The Ngaanyatjarra Lands Schools in 2010 but became a campus of Laverton School from 2011.
- Maidens Park Primary School was formerly known as Withers Primary School.
- In 2012, The Ngaanyatjarra Lands Schools comprised the following campuses: Warakurna Remote Community School, Blackstone Remote Community School, Jamieson Remote Community School, Wingellina Remote Community School, Kiwirrkurra Remote Community School, Wanarn Remote Community School, Warburton Ranges, Tjirrkarli Remote Community School and Tjukurla Remote Community School. All schools are classified as very remote.
- Christ The King Catholic School was previously called Djarindijin Lombadina Catholic School.

Additional notes:

NS – This school has received funding in 2012 under the *Focus Schools Next Steps* Initiative.

IFS – This school has received funding in 2012 under the *Investing in Focus Schools* Program/Initiative.

Source: Western Australia Department of Education, *Student Census Collection*, August 2012.

# Report on the Remote Service Delivery (RSD) Service Delivery Standards

## Schooling Domain

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) has agreed to use the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* reporting processes to report on schooling service delivery standards for schools located in Remote Service Delivery communities. The following is the report for schools in Remote Service Delivery (RSD) communities in Western Australia.

There are four RSD communities in Western Australia. They are:

- Bardi Jawi (Ardyloon)
- Beagle Bay
- Fitzroy Crossing, and
- Halls Creek.

Schools are located in all four RSD communities. The schools used in the RSD section of the report are those located in the central location of the RSD community. While other schools may have been consulted, and possibly benefited from, RSD actions, for the purpose of reporting only those schools in central locations are used.

The schools used in the reporting are designated 'hub schools'. There are six RSD hub schools in Western Australia. Of these, three are public schools and three are Catholic schools. All are Focus schools. There is some variation in the school structures:

- three schools cater for kindergarten (Year one minus two) to Year 12 students;
- two schools cater for kindergarten (Year one minus two) to Year 10 students; and
- one school caters for kindergarten (Year one minus two) to Year 7 students.

All of these schools show a pattern of decline in student numbers as the year level increases. This is irrespective of the maximum year level the school may cater for. One of the K–12 schools currently has students only enrolled up to Year 11.

## RSD standard (a)

All school-aged children will have access to an appropriate school and/or a distance learning alternative.

## Action Plan link

There is no directly equivalent measure in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* for this standard. The following information provides details of the schooling services and other programs available in the Remote Service Delivery communities.

Of the six RSD schools in Western Australia:

- all operate pre-primary programs
- all have primary schools
- five schools offer a secondary component, and
- two of the five schools offering a secondary component have TAFE programs.

All school-aged children in Western Australia have access to a school or distance learning through the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE). Boarding schools are available in the Catholic, independent and public sectors.

Four of the six schools made specific mention of a greater emphasis on early childhood, in order to progress strategies to address readiness for school (eg, programs/strategies for children from birth to 4 years of age). These schools are developing links with community-based early learning and care services, community playgroups and, at one location, a recently opened Children and Family Centre. The upskilling of parents in the importance of pre-reading, writing and speaking and listening skills is also being addressed.

A local workplace training program was set up by one school for disengaged students. Students attend a local pastoral station to learn practical horse handling and station maintenance skills for part of the week, and then engage in literacy and numeracy learning activities at school for the remainder of the week.

Due to low student numbers in the three schools located in the Dampier Peninsula, a joint application for funding to implement TAFE hospitality training, and building and construction courses is being sought. The proposed agreement will allow facilities and training to be provided in a model that all three schools can access.

One school has reported that students capable of achieving at mainstream standards have access to enrolment with SIDE. Extra support has been provided for students with severe mental disorders, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and intellectual disabilities. These students are placed in classes of like peers in order to better address their specific needs.

## RSD standard (b)

A personalised learning plan for all students negotiated between school staff and families. For Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 students, schools will augment personalised learning plans with activity to support the transition to further education and/or employment.

### Action Plan link

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to this standard. Local level Action 21 includes the development of personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from the first year of formal schooling to Year 10 to support improved educational outcomes. It should be recognised that personalised learning strategies are not the same as personalised learning plans. In some, but not all, cases quantitative information about both personalised learning strategies and plans may be available.

A second local level action, Action 51, states that secondary schools will provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and targeted case management strategies to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12. Qualitative information for this action is available.

All schools develop personalised learning strategies to ensure programs build upon students' strengths and address skill development at the point of need. Of the 1,015

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled at the time of collection, 311 also had a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP).

The Catholic schools have stated that a number of their students have: individual education plans; specific learning plans with reading recovery literacy intervention; and individual behaviour and engagement plans. The three Catholic schools have not counted these students as having a PLP. Technically, all these students have PLPs, and it is for this reason the total count of students with PLPs is not reliable.

It should be noted that the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students stated for this Action does not match the Semester 2, 2012 enrolment data provided in the Focus school table. This is due to the different collection points used across the two education sectors.

Two government schools indicated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families were involved 'some of the time' in the development of PLPs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. One school had families being involved 'about half the time' in PLP development.

The Aboriginal School Based Training program provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 10 to 12 with opportunities to start training in school to access practical work experience, gain a qualification, and go on to further education, training or employment. Due to small student numbers, access to this program has been restricted in all schools.

In two government schools, a total of seven Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) TAFE Certificate courses had been offered. These are:

- Building and Construction
- Art
- Business
- Sport and Recreation
- Industrial Skills
- Automotive Vehicle Servicing, and
- Resources and Infrastructure Operations.

In one of the two schools offering TAFE courses, the school reported that due to travel time issues for supervisors of Kimberley Training Institute staff and low student attendance rates, no student completed sufficient competencies to be awarded a certificate. In the 2013, staff members in this school will undertake an AQF Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in order for the school to be able to deliver VET courses under a more flexible and student-focused environment. The school has identified that due to high staff turnover this training will need to be completed annually.

The five schools with secondary programs have acknowledged that: limited student numbers in specific secondary year levels; the minimum number of students required for course viability; staff expertise; and other additional factors all impact on the schools' ability to provide depth and breadth to the secondary programs on offer.

Schools indicated that transition programs, either in place or under development, for students to attend a boarding school were one possible solution to the issues revolving around successful completion of secondary courses of study. There are Catholic and government secondary schools located in Broome, as well as a residential college for students from remote communities. The Country High School Hostels Authority is planning to increase the boarding capacity of the college from 72 places to 116.

Providing secondary education in remote and very remote areas of a comparable level to that delivered in metropolitan schools remains problematic.

## RSD standard (c)

All schools have literacy and numeracy strategies that respond to the needs of students, particularly recognising the needs of students who speak English as another language.

### Action Plan link

There is some alignment between the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* Action 31 and this standard. Action 31 states in part: 'Focus schools will during 2011 have in place a whole-of-school approach to the teaching and learning of Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy which builds from students' home language(s) where

Standard Australian English is a second or further language.' The quantitative data that can be reported is about whole-of-school approaches rather than strategies.

All six RSD schools have a whole-of-school approach to teaching literacy and numeracy.

All schools plan for the literacy and numeracy needs of their students with each education sector implementing a consistent structure in their delivery approach.

The Aboriginal Literacy Strategy (ALS) is a systemic literacy initiative to assist all the Remote Teaching Service (RTS) schools in Western Australia. The three government RSD schools are included in this initiative. The ALS is focused on consistent and sustainable pedagogy over time, despite constant changes to school personnel. The process seeks to provide a uniform teaching strategy that meets the needs of a highly mobile and transient student population.

Under the ALS, teachers implement an explicit model of instruction in developing students' English language and literacy skills, incorporating modelling, sharing, guiding and independent practice. The strategy is designed to complement and support other literacy initiatives implemented at a local school level.

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers have significant roles in the school and work alongside teachers in the classroom. They provide essential links to the communities and provide teachers with cultural expertise and knowledge. An understanding, appreciation and respect for traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is paramount to the success of any teaching program within the schools.

The Closing the Gap Literacy and English as a Second Language in the Early Years project (now renamed Language, Literacy and Learning Two-Way), provided professional learning to all three government schools to improve the language and literacy outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students whose first language or dialect is not Standard Australian English (SAE). Part of this professional learning was offered to staff from the independent and Catholic sectors. Fifteen lead teachers from the Broome Catholic sector also received a four-day training session in August 2012.

The Closing the Gap Literacy and English as a Second Language in the Early Years project shared not only expert personnel and the professional learning content with staff

members of the Catholic sector, but also shared evaluation concepts and measures, as well as organisational concepts to further cross-sectoral collaborations. All project materials and methodologies were provided by the Department of Education to the Catholic education sector to support their implementation of the project.

All government schools have a focus on English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) and cultural awareness as integral to student success. Principals of these schools participated in professional learning through the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program and a variety of other courses to assist in leading improvement in the learning outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The three Catholic RSD schools have a daily literacy and numeracy learning block. Whole-school literacy and numeracy assessments are used to identify students' needs. A whole-school Literacy and Numeracy Plan is developed each year, based on analysis of NAPLAN and school-based data to identify an instructional focus. Early literacy intervention is provided via the Reading Recovery program.

Two of the three schools have been, and continue to be, provided professional learning in the area of EAL/D. Specific assessment training has been undertaken with English as a Second language or Dialect progress maps. Recognition of the students' home language underpins the school's approach to improving literacy and numeracy. A specific aspect of this ongoing professional learning program is teachers and Aboriginal Teaching Assistants working together in a two-way partnership to meet the needs of the students. The third school has made plans to implement similar professional learning in 2013.

## RSD standard (d)

All schools establish a school and community partnership with local families which includes an attendance strategy, establishes goals for improvement and is reported on annually.

### Action Plan link

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to

this standard and it should be noted that they are addressed separately, ie, one is not part of the other. Local level Action 19 states: 'Focus schools will commence negotiating a formal school–community partnership agreement between the school, families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in 2011 that sets out the respective responsibilities of each party and the ways in which they will work together to create a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes.' Some quantitative data for schools in Remote Service Delivery communities is available for this action.

The second, separate action (Action 26) ensures that Focus schools will:

- commence developing an evidence-based attendance strategy in 2011 in consultation with parents and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which includes targets for improved attendance and reflects how the school responds to and seeks to enhance the linguistic, cultural and contextual resources that students bring to their schooling
- publish their attendance strategy in 2012
- evaluate and monitor the success of their attendance strategy, and
- report annually on progress towards meeting their targets.

Reporting for this standard will be via the two separate actions noted above.

All Focus schools must have a School and Community Partnership Agreement (SCPA) in place by the end of 2014. Three of the six schools had a school–community partnership in place, while the remaining three were still negotiating an agreement.

In 2012, five of the six schools had an attendance strategy in place. The remaining school indicated their attendance strategy was currently being developed.

There are three RSD schools still negotiating a SCPA. One school indicated that it was in the late stages of negotiations;

another school indicated that it was in the very early stages of renegotiating their agreement; and the remaining school did not indicate progress to date.

Schools suggested that a number of factors impacted on the negotiation process, these included:

- change of school leadership
- no facilitator available to lead partnership negotiations

- community issues
- gathering information and evidence from community about what matters, and
- time constraints.

Of the five RSD schools that have an attendance strategy, all had goals for improvement included within the document and reported on these goals for the 2012 school year. Improving attendance remained a priority for all schools.



## Chapter 9

# South Australia report on activities and outcomes

## Introduction

South Australia is the southern, central state on the mainland of the continent of Australia. It has an area of 983,482 square kilometres and is the driest of the Australian States and Territories. When South Australia was colonised in 1836, it was home to more than 50 different Aboriginal language speaking groups.

The new Department for Education and Child Development (the Department) was created in October 2011 to provide a range of integrated services for the benefit of families, children and young people. The Department aims to support every family so that – right from the start of a child's life – all young South Australians have the opportunity to become happy, healthy and safe members of our community. The Department's core purpose is to provide early childhood development, health and child protection services, as well as public education and care, to South Australians. There is a special focus on ensuring our most vulnerable children and young people at risk of disadvantage are supported to stay engaged as learners.

The need to accelerate improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students is a State priority and is clearly articulated in South Australia's Strategic Plan. The Department's Strategic Plan and the discussion paper, *Every Chance for Every Child*, firmly places all children from ages of birth to 18 at the centre of service development and delivery. In 2012, the Department released a new legislation reform discussion paper to encourage discussion about how best to legislate to support children, young people and their families in all aspects of life with the intention of introducing 'enabling' new child development legislation. The legislation will change the way all sectors in the community integrate policies, planning and support for children's development, and will provide sound principles to underpin child development policies and practices. South Australia has continued to elevate the attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as a major focus, and the importance of community and school partnerships in addressing non-attendance, through shared responsibility and creating high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student learning outcomes.

With intentions to improve the educational outcomes and life chances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, in 2012 Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) implemented across the sector, five key reform priorities for Indigenous Education. Underpinned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014, the CESA Strategic Plan 2010–2014 and the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Indigenous Education Policy, these reform priorities arise out of data generated from consultation processes with school leaders, educational staff, students and community members through Dare to Lead audits conducted in 35 per cent of CESA schools: Cultural Competency, Effective Teaching and Learning, Wellbeing and Resilience, Personalised Learning and Community Engagement/Connection. All Catholic schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments (84 per cent) are supported through sector-based programs and initiatives, to develop action plans aligned to these priorities.

In 2012, the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) endorsed a sector Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workplan that describes organisational commitment to improving educational outcomes for students and young people, within the values and underpinning ethos of each school. It describes collaborative action across funding sources that is responsive to local needs and draws upon the six national priority domains for the delivery of programs and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians under the national Reform Agreement as described in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*.

There are currently 725 schools in South Australia, which include 528 government and 197 non-government schools. As at Term 3, 2012, there were 166,479 student enrolments within government schools, and 94,022 students enrolled within non-government schools. Sixty-four per cent of all South Australian students are enrolled in government schools. There were 9,006.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments within government schools and 1,117.6 within non-government schools. Eighty-nine per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled in government schools. Of the 1,117.6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments within non-government schools, 594 were from Catholic schools and 523 were from independent schools.

According to departmental annual census data, in 2012, over half (51.3 per cent) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in public schools in South Australia were located in metropolitan locations, 32.4 per cent were enrolled in schools in provincial locations, 4.8 per cent were enrolled in schools in remote locations, and 11.5 per cent were enrolled in schools in very remote locations. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children comprise 6.9 per cent (1,454 of 21,197) of all preschool enrolments in South Australia. In government schools, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people comprise 5.2 per cent (9,006.3 of 166,479) of all school enrolments.

## Profile of Focus schools

There are 95 Focus schools within South Australia, 82 in government, 7 in the Catholic sector and 6 independent schools.

Of these schools, 48 are primary, 18 are Aboriginal/Anangu, 10 are combined R–12 (Reception to Year 12), 12 are secondary and seven are area schools. The majority of the Focus schools, 44 per cent, are located in metropolitan Adelaide, with 34 per cent located provincially, 4 per cent remote and 18 per cent in very remote locations.

Government Focus schools had 4,332.6 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled at the time of the 2012 Term 3 Census, comprising 17 per cent of the total enrolment in these schools. These students represent 48 per cent of all government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Of the 82 government Focus schools, 76 schools participated in the Communities Making a Difference (Low SES) National Partnership, and three schools participated in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.

Independent sector Focus schools are situated in urban, rural and very remote areas of South Australia. Five of the six Focus schools were involved in the Communities Making a Difference (Low SES) National Partnership in 2012.

Of the seven Focus Schools in the Catholic sector, two were involved in the Communities Making a Difference (Low SES) National Partnership and two in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.

A map (Figure SA5) and list detailing the location of Focus schools in South Australia are provided at the end of this chapter.

## South Australian report on progress by Domains

### Readiness for school

#### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

#### Overall progress

Data for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (NECEC) Collection have been sourced from the Australian Government and the State and Territory departments with responsibility for Early Childhood Education and Care and the ACT Catholic Education Office. The National Collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) that facilitates consistency of data provision across the various jurisdictional collections. Alignment with these standards has not been completely achieved by all jurisdictions for 2012, and care should be taken when comparing States and Territories.

Some jurisdictions were not able to provide certain data elements as specified in the ECEC NMDS for the National ECEC Collection. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to identify children attending multiple preschool programs within the collection reference period. It is also a challenge to report accurately the number of children enrolled in and attending a preschool program, without counting an individual child more than once. When a child attends two different preschool programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. This child is only counted once in child counts. All preschool episodes associated with a child are included in preschool episode counts. Australian totals in Table SA1 need to be interpreted with care due to the mixed populations that are reported between States and Territories.

**Table SA1: Summary of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program, South Australia and Australia, 2012**

	South Australia		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children
Number of children enrolled	868	18,875	11,237	266,036
Children enrolled over ERP (per cent)	121.9	92.0	82	88.5
Number of children attending	835	18,615	10,460	258,881
Percentage of children attending over ERP <sup>(a)</sup>	117.3	90.7	76	86.1
Percentage of children enrolled that are attending <sup>(b)</sup>	96.2	98.6	93.1	97.3
ERP 4 year olds – as at June 2012 <sup>(c)</sup>	712	20,518	13,763	300,596

Notes:

- a) Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- b) Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled.
- c) ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and should be treated as indicative.
- d) Enrolment and attendance counts include children aged 4 and 5 years. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (unpublished); ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics* (Cat.No. 3101.0), (unpublished); ABS, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0), (unpublished).

Comparison of data year to year is not possible due to collection, output and processing methodology not being consistent across years.

For further information on the NECEC NMDS, collection methodologies and coverage for the National ECEC Collection, please see the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat.No. 4240.0.55.001).

In 2012, 96.2 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in preschool attended, compared to 98.6 per cent of all children, representing a 2.4 percentage point difference.

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, including children aged 3 years, enrolled in South Australian preschools continues to increase, going from 994 in 2003 to 1,454 in 2012, with the percentage of total enrolments of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children increasing from 5.5 per cent in 2003 to 6.9 per cent in 2012.

The AEDI data shows that in South Australia, there is a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are developmentally on track in four or more domains, than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia.

The percentage of South Australian students developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains increased from 22.8 per cent in 2009 to 23.7 per cent in 2012. The 2012 South Australian results indicate that there are around 690 more children across South Australia who are developmentally vulnerable than in 2009. The 2012 collection saw an increased participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children with English as a Second Language, or who are from a Non English Speaking background. It is important to recognise that it is too early to identify trends as current results only represent two

measurement points in time. A further round of data collection is needed to show evidence of trends.

## Systemic level actions (5, 6 and 7)

### Action 5

Within the Department, a statewide AEDI report has been developed to inform planning at the State and regional level. Children's centre staff received training in using the AEDI data, which supports their role in engaging with all aspects of family support within communities. The AEDI team is supporting data analysis, along with professional learning and community engagement.

A number of initiatives have been developed to strengthen a fully integrated service model that incorporates partnerships with Children and Family Health Services and Families South Australia. The Department's Starting Out Right Project is piloting

workshops for parents to close the gap on school readiness in the Southern and Northern Metropolitan Focus schools. Starting Out Right Community Development teams have been established between Children's Centres, Pre-Schools and Schools to support parents to manage and improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

South Australia is establishing four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and family centres under the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development. The centres are being constructed at Ceduna, Whyalla, Christies Beach, and Pukatja. Services will include: child and maternal health; high quality early learning programs for young children; parenting and family support, and community development activities. These services are fully integrated with the government preschool, which offers leadership and an educationally-based care curriculum supporting children's early development as the foundation for lifelong learning and achievement. This integrated service approach is subsequently being proposed in the development of the Port Augusta Child Development Centre and will extend to additional health and community organisations to support the delivery of education and health services tailored for children from birth to 8 years of age. Key achievements for 2012 included:

- the completion of the Pukatja/Ernabella Children and Family Centre
- commencement of construction of the Christies Beach, Whyalla and Ceduna Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Family Centres
- delivery of programs for children and families within interim facilities including universal and targeted playgroups, health and developmental checks for young children and parenting programs, and
- the official naming of the Christies Beach Centre as Taikurrendi.

### Action 6

Universal access is available to all early childhood services within the Department and is being supported in other services that provide a preschool program. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children receive priority placement and are able to attend preschool for 12 hours per week after the age of 3 years, through the Early Entry to Preschool policy. This increases to 15

**Table SA2: Proportion of children in South Australia assessed as 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 (per cent)**

	South Australia	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	39.7	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	67.9	70.3

Notes:

- The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored above the 25th percentile of the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge should also be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Index* data, 2012 data collection.

hours per week when the child turns 4 years of age. The efficacy of the policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 3 year-olds, is demonstrated with increased attendance and participation rates in 2012.

#### **Action 7**

School Entry Assessment (SEA) is a departmental assessment tool for children used upon entry to school, which is undertaken during their first term at school. There are eight domains within this assessment and a sample of 81 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 697 non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reception students was taken in 2012. The SEA found that 26 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were at or above the inquiry level in 6 or more domains, compared to 41 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. (Source: South Australia Department for Education and Child Development, Centralised EDSAS System.)

In Catholic schools, various tools are used to measure for readiness, including ESL Scope and Scales, Reading Recovery and Numeracy Tools. Early entry assessment programs are implemented as part of transition processes to school and within the child's first term in Reception in order to assist the understanding of the educational needs of students at educational risk and in implementing early intervention strategies. Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) data is used to determine readiness, as well as the Early Years Learning Framework, a report prepared by Early Learning Centres.

### **Local level actions (8)**

#### **Action 8**

Increasing the strength of partnerships between families and communities and early childhood services has meant that families are increasingly aware of the importance of their role as the first educators of their children and of the role of preschool in the development of their children.

Within the Department, preschools and schools work together to construct meaningful and appropriate transition and continuity processes. The preschool assessment policy outlines information to be shared, and schools and preschools set attainment targets and actions and monitor and report on the outcomes achieved. Leaders support staff to: look critically at site literacy and numeracy outcomes; identify how improvements can be made; implement actions informed by current research, and monitor learner outcomes effectively. In 2012, the Department

continued to build on the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) through the provision of professional learning support to sites implementing the framework. Preschools also prepared families for the introduction of 'same first day' policy commencing in 2013, when children will commence preschool at the beginning of the year in which they turn 4 years of age, before May 1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children will continue to be supported to enrol at preschool once they turn 3 years of age.

In 2012, the Department commenced development of a Birth to 18 Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. The strategy will support teachers, educators and leaders to: plan for numeracy and literacy improvement for all children and students; monitor achievement in numeracy and literacy using consistent and agreed statewide measures, and identify and implement effective intervention strategies for students not achieving the minimum standards.

The Department has also continued to work on developing a network of individual 'child-friendly' communities and cities linking together to realise a statewide, child-friendly vision. Children's voices and active participation are strong features. In 2013, a strategic framework that suits the needs of South Australian communities and focusing on the needs of children from 3 to 8 years of age will be developed. It will contain policy and practice guidelines and tools required for delivery.

In the independent sector, in 2012, professional learning was undertaken in one independent Focus School with an adjoining Early Learning Centre to introduce the Hanen Program. This is an internationally acclaimed program, which provides early childhood educators with the knowledge and skills needed to support young children's language development. In addition to the professional learning, a speech pathologist with early childhood experience provided additional support at the school, working with the staff to implement the Hanen principles, and to support programming for the development of oral language and play skills.

## **Engagement and connections**

### **Performance indicators**

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school-community partnership agreement in place.*

## Overall progress

In South Australia, a learning plan can include an Individual Learning Plan (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students), an Individual Education Plan (for Guardianship of the Minister students), or a Negotiated Education Plan (for students with disabilities). Data is reliant on schools to flag students with a personalised learning plan within a school's system. It is believed that the actual percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a personalised learning plan is higher, and in 2013, schools will continue to be urged to flag these students. The Department has commenced the One Child, One Plan project – an initiative to reduce the requirement for separate plans for a student and to create a holistic, individualised plan that encompasses the child's full needs in one document. This will be trialled in 2013.

As at December 2012, there were 7,043 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 1 to 10 within government schools. Of these, 4,398 or 62.5 per cent had a personalised learning plan in place. This is an increase of the 2011 figure of 57.3 per cent of the 6,861 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 1 to 10 in government schools with a personalised learning plan in place.

In 2012, 60.5 per cent of Reception to Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools had a personalised learning plan in place – an increase from 51 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2011 with a personalised learning plan in place.

All Focus schools in South Australia are continuing to accelerate activity in support of the development of local school–community partnerships.

## Systemic level actions (15, 16, 17 and 18)

### Action 15

The Innovative Community Action Network (ICAN) school and community model offers support and flexible learning options to students in Year 6 to 19 years of age, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, who are either: at risk of leaving early; not actively participating in their education; leaving school early; and/or who are not pursuing employment or further education; or not engaged in a learning or earning pathway. ICANs also assist address the significant and complex barriers of young people, including mental health, homelessness, justice

issues, teenage parent or carer responsibilities, or a history of transience due to unstable family life.

In 2012, four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'Turn Around' teams operated within the Northern Adelaide, Western Adelaide, Far North, and Eyre and Western regions. The teams provide intensive case management and co-ordinate community, non-government and government agency groups to provide support in the areas of health, education, and family services. In 2012, support was provided for 35 families, 91 students, 40 educational sites and 45 agencies. Outcomes included an improvement in school attendance, literacy, and retention rates, and the positive engagement of children and young people in education.

The Passport program is currently being delivered in northern regional country areas and is supported through ICAN community partnership funding. The program aims to strengthen the relationship between parents and the school, child development and health services, and to better engage local communities in the learning journey and development of their children and young people. The focus is on a reciprocal partnership whereby 'passport points' can be earned by family and community members through involvement in school or wider community projects, through the uptake of services and programs, and by students for regular attendance or other school achievements. The points can then be used to subsidise school fees, or as payment for uniforms, excursions and sporting equipment. Points are recorded in each student or family's 'passport'. Local organisations and businesses contribute to funding the program. Schools reported significant increases in student attendance, cultural change and family engagement since launching the program.

### Action 16

There has been statewide support for young teenage mothers through the development of local programmatic responses from ICAN communities. This has seen programs developed that maintain links with mainstream education while enhancing self-esteem, social and health networks. Following the births of their babies, many young parents continue with their education which can be offered in flexible outreach community spaces and encompass a variety of services to support their parenting and education. These services can include:

- on-site childcare services
- parenting programs



- South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) curriculum tailored to parenting skills
- post-natal health support
- ICAN case management services
- transport assistance, and
- peer support programs.

Collaboration with local and State partners such as: schools; the SACE Board; local government; SA Health; ICAN case management service providers and volunteer groups, have seen this model successfully replicated in many areas of the State, including the ICANs in the metro East, North, West, South, and regional Whyalla, Riverland/Murray and Mount Gambier.

#### **Action 17**

In 2012, the Department continued to review and align Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education roles and resources to target areas of greatest need and in consideration of the organisational priorities of the newly created Department for Education and Child Development. This included the development of the Aboriginal Cultural Instructors initiative, which involves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the design and delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies in schools as Aboriginal Cultural Instructors. The directions statement for the Department clearly places 'children and young people at the centre of everything we do' and this is evidenced through the development of service and operating frameworks that provide a wrap-around service for children and their families, including designated roles for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to work with families.

#### **Action 18**

The Department remains accountable to families and the community on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes through the departmental annual report, the Department's Improvement and Accountability Framework, school governing councils, and community education and engagement activities. In 2012, the Department engaged in widespread consultation activities with parents and the community relating to education priorities and services. In the strategic planning process for the new departmental agency, a system of reporting, monitoring and accountability commenced development. The framework provides a clear indication of progress towards the Department's revised strategic commitments. The framework identifies education, health and

child protection objectives, measures and indicators that are integrated across early childhood settings, schools, regions and the State. The Department publishes performance data and reports on achievements in an annual report. The Department works in close partnership with the South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Body (SAAETCB), to inform policy advice on the implementation of the national Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014. All education sectors in South Australia are represented on the SAAETCB.

### **Local level actions (19, 20 and 21)**

#### **Action 19**

Every government Focus school participated in discussions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and caregivers on commencing school–community partnerships. In 2012, an additional 14 Focus schools commenced negotiations on a School Community Partnership Agreement, bringing the total number of Focus schools, since 2011, that have commenced negotiations to 39. Four Focus schools completed negotiations in 2012, bringing the total number of partnerships since 2011 to 21 Focus schools.

Catholic Education schools are supported by CESA to develop partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and local communities. All seven Catholic Education Focus schools have an action plan for Indigenous Education in place, which outlines five key strategic reform areas. Under these five areas, schools have developed local action strategies, aligned with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014. Parents/caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have been invited to provide input and feedback to these plans. Focus schools are developing relationships with families and key community stakeholders so that the local activity plans are an integral component of the partnership agreements, formalised within enrolment processes.

In the independent sector, three of the six Focus schools have begun liaising with key stakeholders in their school communities to develop formal school–community partnership agreements. It is their aim to continue and complete this process during 2013.

#### **Action 20**

Family forums called Aboriginal Voice Committees are in place across several regions within South Australia including the Far North, Northern Adelaide and Western Adelaide. Across South



Australia there are 41 Aboriginal Voice Committees in schools who meet regularly to provide information to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and caregivers about curriculum, education support, guest speakers from other service providers, and parenting and family support initiatives.

### Action 21

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are mandated in South Australian government schools for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students as active working documents that underpin quality, challenging and interesting learning experiences and enable students, teachers and families to work in partnership to achieve the best possible health, wellbeing and learning outcomes. The ILPs, while monitored and regularly reviewed, are promoted as active documents, where parents in partnership with teachers, students and their families can discuss and review students' learning goals.

At the end of 2011, approximately 10 per cent of students attending independent schools had personalised learning plans in place, with most schools still in the introductory phase and working towards establishing personal learning plans for their students throughout 2012. In independent schools, key professional learning was undertaken with the aim of developing an organisational understanding of the purpose of, and processes for, developing personalised learning plans. Individualised school-based support was also provided throughout the year, with schools having made significant progress in working with students and key stakeholders to develop collaborative and aspirational learning plans for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2012, in the seven Catholic Education Focus schools, 100 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had ILPs in place. The construction of the ILPs occurs through a form of professional coaching, with Indigenous Education consultants modelling the process with educational staff in local settings. Copies of ILPs are retained in a central repository, assisting families and school communities in times of transition. 'Four way' meetings – between consultant, school-based educational staff, parents and students – transform student review meetings. Whole-staff professional learning complements this process. Schools undertook professional learning with the aim of developing an organisational understanding of the purpose of, and processes for, developing personalised learning plans. Individualised school-based support was also provided

throughout the year, with schools having made significant progress in working with students and key stakeholders to develop collaborative and aspirational learning plans for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Attendance

### Performance indicators

5. *Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.*
6. *Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to 'Other' Australians.*
7. *Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
8. *Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

## Overall progress

### Attendance rates

The gap between the attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is at its greatest within government schools in Year 9, at 16 percentage points; in Catholic schools in Year 8, at 10 percentage points; and in Year 2 in independent schools, at 17 percentage points. The smallest gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within government schools occurs in Year 5, at 10 percentage points; in Catholic schools in Year 5, at one percentage point; and in Year 10 in independent schools, where the gap has been closed. Due to the small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments in each of the non-government sectors there is a need for caution in interpreting these results as large variations amongst individual student attendance can affect the reliability of the attendance rates.

### Enrolment to population ratio

For 2012, school participation rates have not been published by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status due to concerns

**Table SA3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by sector, 2012 (per cent)**

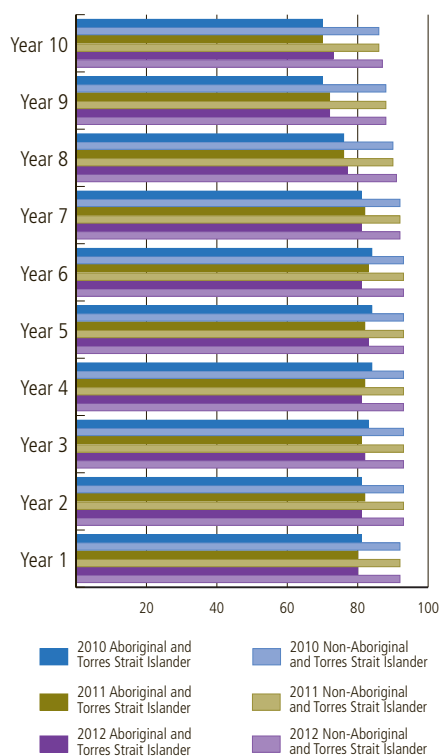
	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>Government</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	80	81	82	81	83	81	81	77	72	73	81	78
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	92	93	93	93	93	93	92	91	88	87	91	90
<b>Total</b>	92	92	93	92	92	92	92	90	88	86	91	89
<b>Catholic</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90	92	89	90	93	88	86	83	85	84	100	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	95	94	94	94	94	93	92	91	94	94
<b>Total</b>	94	94	95	94	94	94	93	93	91	91	94	94
<b>Independent</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90	78	91	88	89	92	84	83	92	93	100	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	95	95	95	94	94	94	94	93	93	89	95
<b>Total</b>	94	94	95	95	94	94	94	94	93	93	89	95

Note: Definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance data are not uniform. As such, direct comparisons of attendance rates between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made. Nor can attendance data for 2012 be aggregated or averaged at the national or State/Territory level. Variations in methodology between jurisdictions are described in the explanatory notes for the 2012 attendance data contained in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012*.

n/a not available.

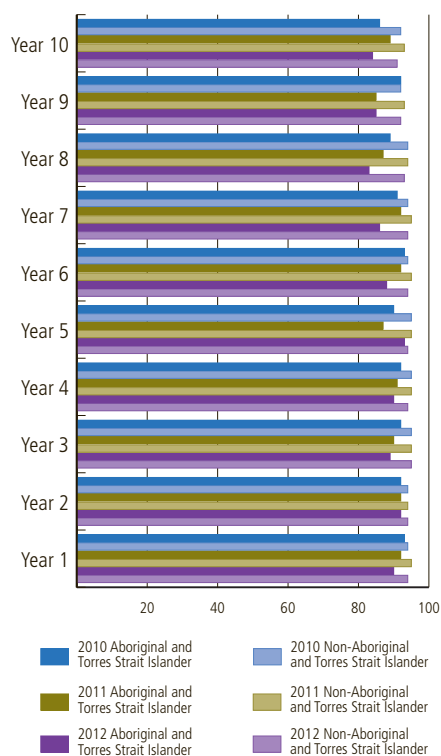
Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure SA1.1: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, South Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



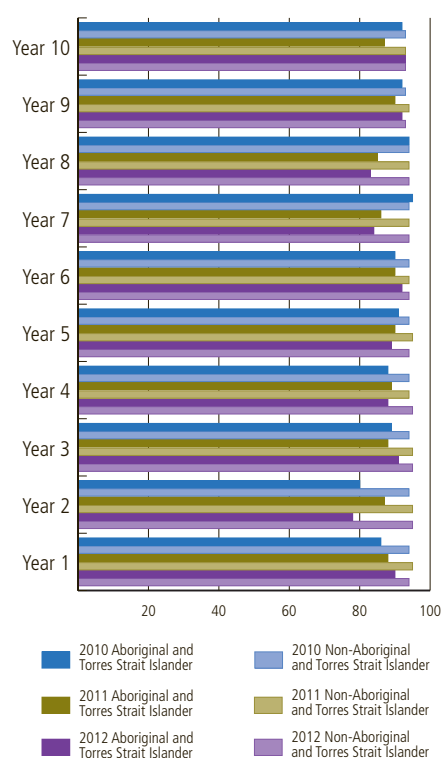
Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure SA1.2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, South Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure SA1.3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, South Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

with the quality of the indicator. Specifically, the rates for most States and Territories exceeded 100 per cent, primarily as a result of modal differences in the data sources. The denominator is sourced from the Estimated Resident Population series, itself drawn from the Population Census, while the numerator is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The ABS is working to provide a substitute measure.

## Apparent retention rates

As presented in Figure SA2, South Australian schools have over a 100 per cent apparent retention rate from Year 8 to Year 10 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This is due to a higher number of students enrolled in Year 10 in 2012, compared to Year 8, two years earlier. As this measure is apparent, it does not track individual students. Therefore, the same individual students may not be included in the

**Table SA4: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 8 to Year 10 and Year 8 to Year 12, South Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 7 to Year 10	101.1	103.6
Year 7 to Year 12	69.4	89.5

Notes:

- This data is for full-time students only.
- The apparent retention rate measures the number of full-time school students in a designated level/year of education as a percentage of their respective cohort group. Ungraded students not included.
- Apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can be inflated by an increased propensity to identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over time.
- Caution should be taken in interpreting the data for apparent retention rates at the State and Territory level, which can be inflated by a net increase in interstate migration. Small numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can also affect results from the State and Territory level and may produce apparent variations from year to year that may not accurately reflect the long-term trend.

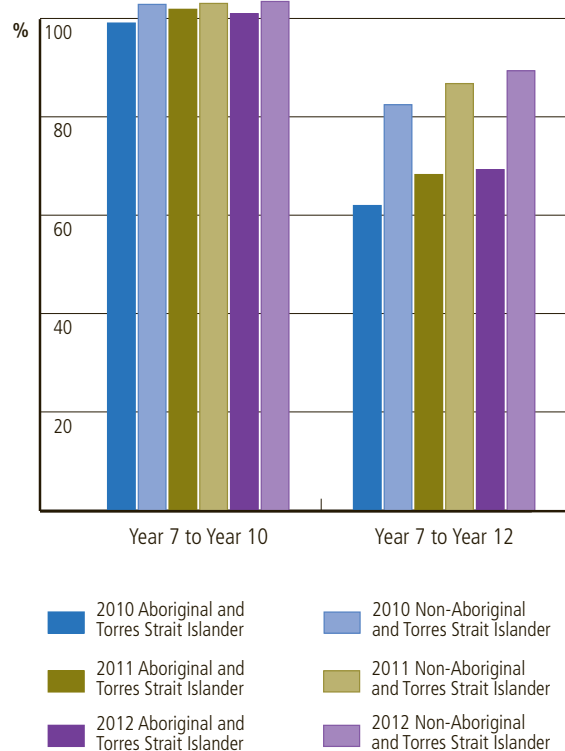
Source: Derived from ABS, *Schools Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0) and based on full-time student enrolments.

measurement from 2010 to 2012. An explanation for this is that more students may have enrolled in 2012 from interstate or overseas than have left since 2010.

The Year 8 to Year 10 apparent retention rate for South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased from 99.2 per cent in 2010, to 101.1 per cent in 2012. The Year 8 to Year 10 apparent retention rate gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has decreased, from 3.8 percentage points in 2010 to 2.5 percentage points in 2012.

In 2012, South Australia had the highest Year 8 to Year 12 apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at 69.4 per cent, an increase from 62.1 per cent in 2010. The Year 8 to Year 12 apparent retention rate gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has decreased, from 20.5 percentage points in 2010 to 20.1 percentage points in 2012.

**Figure SA2: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 8 to Year 10 and Year 8 to Year 12, South Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Apparent grade progression ratios

South Australia has progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Year 9 to 10 of over 100 per cent. The progression ratio then decreases to 98.0 per cent from Year 8 to 9; to 96.8 from Year 10 to 11; and to 78.5 per cent from Year 11 to 12. Some apparent grade progression ratios are over 100 per cent due to a higher number of students enrolled in 2012, compared to the previous year for these year levels. As this measure is apparent, it does not track individual students, therefore, a range of factors affecting the calculation are not taken into account.

There has been an increase in the Years 10 to 11 progression ratio from 89.2 per cent in 2011; to 96.8 per cent in 2012; and in Years 11 to 12 from 71.0 per cent recorded in 2011, to 78.5

**Table SA5: Apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, South Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 8 to Year 9	98.0	100.8
Year 9 to Year 10	100.4	103.0
Year 10 to Year 11	96.8	102.9
Year 11 to Year 12	78.5	85.1

Notes:

- Grade progression rates show the number of students at each year level as a percentage of the number enrolled in the previous year.
- Full-time students only.
- Care should be taken when interpreting these rates since a range of factors affecting the calculation are not taken into account, such as students repeating a year of schooling, movements between schools and systems or States/Territories, and net changes to a school's or system's population. There is also the effect of ungraded students – they are not included in the calculations of rates.

Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

per cent in 2012. There has been a decrease in the Years 8 to 9 progression ratio from 100.7 per cent recorded in 2011, to 98 per cent in 2012, and in Years 9 to 10 from 102.3 per cent in 2011, to 100.4 per cent in 2012.

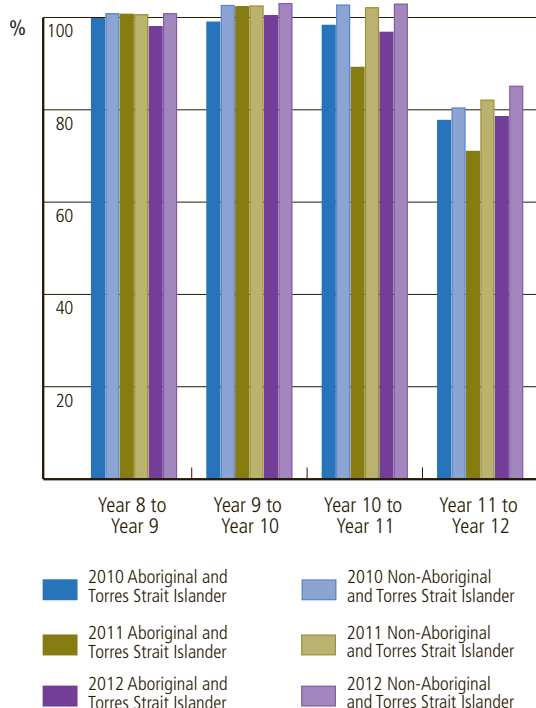
Compared to 2011, the gap between South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012 has decreased for the Years 10 to 11, and Years 11 to 12 apparent grade progression ratios, but has increased for Years 8 to 9 and Years 9 to 10. In 2011, the Years 8 to 9 progression ratio for South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander was over 100 per cent, and higher than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Compared to 2010, the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2012 has only decreased for the Years 9 to 10 apparent grade progression ratios.

## Systemic level actions (25)

### Action 25

In South Australian government schools, attendance has been escalated to a key priority for all regions, and is embedded in regional and site improvement plans. The enrolment, attendance,

**Figure SA3: Grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, South Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

participation and performance outcomes of individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students in the government school sector are monitored through the Indigenous Student Support System – database (ISSS).

The Department's Attendance Improvement Package includes a statewide student attendance policy, as well as procedure documents and guidelines, to support improved management of attendance. In 2012, the implementation of the Safer DECD Schools initiative provided professional learning for principals in the use of data to inform clearly stated targets and strategies to improve student attendance. Also, particular attention was paid to analysis of student cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and the role of school communities in supporting attendance improvement.

The Tri-Border Attendance Strategy, which operates between South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia,

enables schools to share student enrolment and attendance details to support better educational follow-up and service delivery. This is particularly effective in supporting transient students and families that move between different education sectors to re-engage with education effectively and efficiently.

## Local level actions (26)

### Action 26

All government school regions develop a Regional Improvement Plan, which identifies priorities and targets including attendance. Schools incorporate aspects of the Regional Improvement Plan into local improvement plans and publish these on school websites.

New attendance analysis reports were developed in the departmental Student Attendance and Behaviour Management Data Warehouse in order to make data readily accessible and assist regions and individual schools with monitoring their attendance against a target at the school, class/year level and individual student levels. These reports can be customised to focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance.

Departmental Student Attendance Counsellors with an early intervention focus promote the importance of attendance in junior primary with families, schools and communities. One of the priority groups for this service is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families.

The South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy (SAASTA) targets senior secondary students enrolled in government schools who are studying the SACE. While sport and recreation is a major focus, the academic program encourages success in education by supporting every student to focus on areas such as attendance, participation, educational achievement and behaviour.

In the Catholic Education sector, schools employ a range of strategies which include the support and capacity building of school-based Indigenous Education Focus Teachers to case manage and track the learning outcomes and post-school transitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Crucial to this is the employment of Indigenous Education Officers and Indigenous Education consultants. This team currently has a very successful evidence-based Case Management and Attendance strategy in place that supports Catholic Education Focus schools in South Australia through the provision of attendance follow-up and family support. This

attendance strategy complements the various models applied in the seven Focus schools.

In 2012, independent schools implemented a range of strategies to promote attendance, including assistance for students to travel to and from school and community support provided by Aboriginal Liaison Officers. The development of individualised learning plans is also seen as a key element to supporting attendance at school.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.
10. Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.

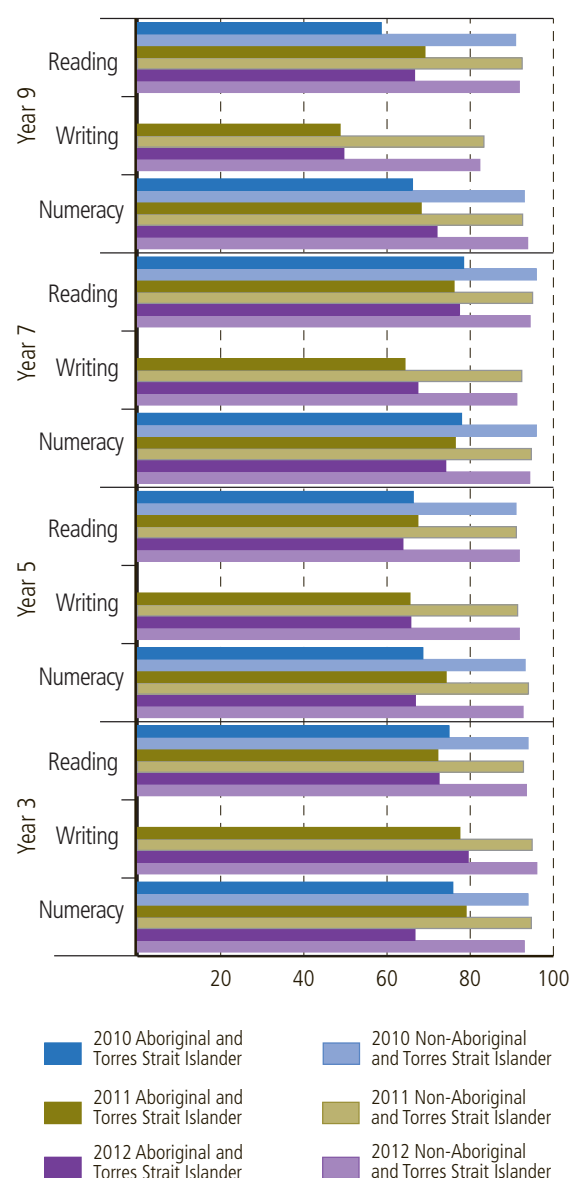
### Overall progress

In 2012, South Australian Year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had the highest percentage achieving at or above the national minimum standard in persuasive writing, at 79.5 per cent. For Year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, numeracy had the highest percentage, at 66.8 per cent, and for Year 9 at 72.0 per cent. Reading had the highest percentage for Year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, at 77.4 per cent.

The smallest gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for 2012 occurred in Year 3 persuasive writing at 16.5 percentage points. The greatest gap occurred in Year 9 persuasive writing, at 32.7 percentage points. The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia that are achieving at or above the national minimum standard has increased in seven out of 12 domains, from 2011 to 2012. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has decreased in six out of 12 domains, from 2011 to 2012. These domains are: Year 3 reading and numeracy, Year 5 reading and numeracy, Year 7 numeracy and Year 9 reading. The gap has remained the same from 2011 to 2012 for Year 5 persuasive writing.

## NAPLAN outcomes

**Figure SA4: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, South Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA (2012 and unpublished), *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2012*.

**Table SA6: NAPLAN reading, writing<sup>(a)</sup> and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, South Australia, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3			Year 5			Year 7			Year 9		
	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.
<b>2010</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	74.9	80.1	75.8	66.3	71.7	68.6	78.4	70.9	77.9	58.6	55.0	66.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.9	96.3	93.9	91.0	93.5	93.2	95.9	94.4	95.9	90.9	88.0	93.0
Gap	19.0	16.2	18.1	24.7	21.8	24.6	17.5	23.5	18.0	32.3	33.0	26.9
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	± 4.6	± 4.6	± 4.8	± 4.8	± 5.2	± 5.0	± 4.9	± 5.6	± 4.5	± 6.0	± 5.9	± 6.2
<b>2011</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	72.2	77.5	79.0	67.4	65.5	74.2	76.1	64.3	76.4	69.1	48.7	68.2
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	92.8	94.9	94.7	91.1	91.4	94.0	95.0	92.4	94.7	92.5	83.3	92.6
Gap	20.6	17.4	15.7	23.7	25.9	19.8	18.9	28.1	18.3	23.4	34.6	24.4
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±5.1	±5.5	±4.8	±5.3	±5.5	±4.6	±4.6	±5.5	±4.8	±5.8	±6.1	±5.6
<b>2012</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	72.5	79.5	66.7	63.8	65.7	66.8	77.4	67.4	74.1	66.6	49.6	72.0
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.5	96.0	93.0	91.8	91.6	92.7	94.4	91.2	94.3	91.8	82.3	93.8
Gap	21.0	16.5	26.3	28.0	25.9	25.9	17.0	23.8	20.2	25.2	32.7	21.8
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±4.9	±4.6	±5.0	±4.8	±5.5	±4.5	±4.4	±5.2	±4.4	±5.9	±5.8	±4.7

Notes:

- a) A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.
- b) The confidence intervals for 2010, 2011 and 2012 in this table are specifically within the year for South Australia.
- c) Exempt students were not assessed and are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard.
- d) The method used to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students varies between jurisdictions.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2010–2012.



## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

**Table SA7: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, South Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

Geolocation	South Australia		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	79.6	93.9	82.6	95.2
Provincial	71.9	92.0	79.9	93.5
Remote	n.p.	93.6	61.2	91.6
Very Remote	43.5	90.7	39.9	90.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	71.9	92.2	76.0	93.6
Provincial	63.8	91.1	72.7	91.9
Remote	n.p.	89.4	50.5	89.7
Very Remote	24.7	82.4	20.3	86.5
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	82.8	94.7	84.0	95.4
Provincial	78.7	93.6	80.8	94.5
Remote	83.7	92	65.4	93.4
Very Remote	44.1	96.5	37.6	92.7
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	70.8	92.2	74.6	92.9
Provincial	66.2	90.5	70.9	92.0
Remote	n.p.	93.4	50.9	90.5
Very Remote	43.2	84.0	24.4	87.9
<b>Writing</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	85.0	96.1	87.3	96.6
Provincial	84.6	95.6	85.2	95.6
Remote	n.p.	96.8	63.2	95.5
Very Remote	49.3	94.5	40.2	94.3
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	70.5	92.3	77.3	94.3
Provincial	68.4	90.1	73.3	91.6
Remote	n.p.	90.3	53.2	90.6
Very Remote	30.4	79.1	24.9	86.7
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	75.3	92.1	74.5	92.4
Provincial	67.2	88.8	68.0	88.6
Remote	n.p.	86.6	47.0	88.0
Very Remote	29.1	91.0	25.6	89.1
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	56.3	83.9	56.9	85.0
Provincial	47.2	77.7	49.7	79.0
Remote	n.p.	77.3	32.6	75.9
Very Remote	26.8	69.2	17.0	74.6
<b>Numeracy</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	73.8	93.5	81.4	95.5
Provincial	66.9	91.5	78.8	93.9
Remote	n.p.	92.5	58.6	93.0
Very Remote	35.6	87.9	37.9	91.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	72.8	93.0	79.5	95.0
Provincial	67.2	92.2	76.3	93.6
Remote	n.p.	92.3	55.3	92.5
Very Remote	36.9	85.3	29.2	89.1
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	79.3	94.6	82.3	95.2
Provincial	74.3	93.6	78.6	94.1
Remote	n.p.	92.7	64.1	93.6
Very Remote	46.1	95.0	42.4	92.4
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	77.0	93.9	79.9	95.0
Provincial	69.5	93.0	76.8	94.0
Remote	n.p.	96.0	61.7	93.6
Very Remote	51.9	89.9	42.9	91.8

Note: 'n.p.' indicates data not published as there were no students tested, or the number of students tested was less than 30.

Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), 2012.

For all year levels and domains, with the exception of Year 7 reading, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students located in metropolitan areas in South Australia held the highest percentage achieving at or above the national minimum standard across geolocations. Metropolitan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia were below the metropolitan percentage for Australia for all domains, with the exception of Year 7 writing. South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students located in very remote areas were above the very remote percentage for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for 11 out of 12 domains, up from eight out of 12 domains in 2011.

The smallest gap in 2012 between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia occurred for remote students in year 7 reading, at 8.3 percentage points; and the largest gap occurred for very remote students in Year 7 persuasive writing, at 61.9 percentage points. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students within the very remote geolocation had the greatest gap for each year level and domain, which varied from 38 to 61.9 percentage points.

The greatest increase from 2011 to 2012 occurred in Year 9 numeracy within the very remote geolocation, which increased from 36.2 per cent in 2011, to 51.9 per cent in 2012, representing a 15.7 percentage point increase. The greatest decrease from 2011 to 2012 occurred in Year 3 numeracy within

the very remote geolocation, which decreased from 58.9 per cent in 2011, to 35.6 per cent in 2012, a 23.3 percentage point decrease.

Disaggregating the data by geolocation, the percentage of South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in very remote areas achieving at or above the national minimum standard is higher than the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander very remote areas percentage, across all year levels and domains. In 2012, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia met four progress points along the trajectories (excluding writing).

## 2012 NAPLAN data and 2012 progress points for South Australia

One of the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) 'Closing the Gap' targets is to halve the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade. To monitor achievement of this COAG target by 2018, progress points for each State and Territory were developed. The progress points for South Australia are provided in Table SA8.

**Table SA8: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy progress points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving at or above the national minimum standard (2008–2012), South Australia (per cent)**

Year	Reading				Writing				Numeracy			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2008	71.5	60.6	69.6	62.5	82.5	69.0	67.5	57.4	79.2	68.5	75.9	68.7
2009	71.6	60.8	69.7	62.7	82.6	69.1	67.6	57.6	79.3	68.6	76.0	68.8
2010	71.9	61.2	70.1	63.1	82.8	69.5	68.0	58.1	79.5	69.0	76.3	69.2
2011	72.5	62.0	70.8	64.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	79.9	69.6	76.8	69.9
2012	73.2	63.2	71.7	65.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	80.5	70.4	77.5	70.8
2018	82.4	76.6	82.5	78.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	87.2	80.6	86.0	81.7

Note: 'n/a' indicates data was unavailable for writing. There is a break in series from 2011, and the trajectory points were calculated on the first test type (narrative), not the second (persuasive), for 2011 and 2012. As such, from 2011, there are no relevant trajectories to report against.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2008–2012.

South Australia met four of its eight 2012 targets, namely for reading in Years 5, 7 and 9, and for numeracy in Year 9. Due to the change in scale for writing for 2011, it is not appropriate to compare writing outcomes against the writing progress points, as these were set against the 2008 narrative outcomes.

## NAPLAN participation

In 2012, participation rates for South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were below the Australian rate, for all year levels and domains, and below the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rate.

Participation rates in Year 9 were well below the other year levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia, ranging from 67.7 per cent for numeracy to 69.5 per cent for reading. Participation rates in Year 5 were the highest for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia, ranging from 87.7 per cent for reading to 86.3 per cent for numeracy.

NAPLAN absentee rates were higher in South Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than for Australia

for seven out of the 12 domains, with absentee rates being lower for Years 3, 5 and 7 numeracy, as well as Years 5 and 7 reading. Absentee rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in South Australia ranged from 8.5 to 9.4 per cent in Year 3; and 8.1 to 9.5 per cent in Year 5, with the rates in Year 7 at 9.2 to 11.9 per cent, and 26.8 to 28.9 per cent in Year 9.

Participation has increased from 2010 to 2012 across all domains with the exception of Year 7 numeracy. From 2010 to 2012, absentee rates for South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have decreased for all years and domains in South Australia, with withdrawals slightly increasing. Except for all Year 7 domains, exemptions have risen from 2010 to 2012.

## Systemic level actions (30)

### Action 30

English as a Second Language (ESL) is now known as English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) within government schools. As at the Term 3 2012 Enrolment Census, the Department supported 21,816 full-time equivalent (FTE) EAL/D enrolments in 360 schools, including 3,179 FTE Aboriginal

**Table SA9: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, exemptions, absences/withdrawals and assessed students in South Australia and Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7		Year 9	
	SA	Aust.	SA	Aust.	SA	Aust.	SA	Aust.
<b>Reading</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	84.3	89.7	87.7	89.6	86.0	87.8	69.5	77.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.2	95.7	95.2	96.3	95.2	95.9	90.7	92.9
<b>Writing</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	83.6	89.9	86.3	89.5	84.2	87.6	67.8	77.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.8	95.6	95.0	96.2	95.3	96.1	90.5	93.2
<b>Numeracy</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	84.8	88.2	86.5	88.4	83.4	86.2	67.7	75.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.7	95.5	94.8	96.0	94.9	95.6	90.3	92.4

Note: The NAPLAN participation data provided reflects students who were exempted, absent/withdrawn and assessed.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.

and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D enrolments, identified through school-based assessment of language need using the ESL Scales. Students required various intervention supports to develop the Standard Australian English required at their respective year level of schooling.

Both Catholic and government schools are replacing ESL Scales with the Language and Literacy Levels, which are aligned to the Australian Curriculum. The Language and Literacy Levels are intended to:

- assess, monitor and report students' language and literacy development (predominantly focusing on the development of formal written language), in particular, high needs students such as EAL/D students
- determine the level of student language learning need
- identify the appropriate support category to inform and direct allocations of EAL/D funding, and
- inform programming and planning through the identification of key teaching points, learning goals and language level targets.

## Local level actions (31 and 32)

### Action 31

The Department has specific initiatives in place to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student literacy and numeracy learning that provides supplementary and direct assistance and leadership to regions and schools. In 2012, initiatives included: tutorial and mentoring support, Home Work Centres, and Keys to Unlocking the Future, which is an Early Years literacy program for Years Reception to 3.

The Keys to Unlocking the Future program focused on improving literacy outcomes for Reception to Year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through building evidence-based pedagogical practices and whole-school literacy approaches. The program developed methods for building sustained improvement and reducing the gap in reading and writing achievement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Regional and school Aboriginal Leadership Teams have facilitated workshops and met with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to increase their knowledge of NAPLAN and how to support students and work in partnership with schools through

the ILP process. In improving reading outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Years Reception to 3, oral language professional development is being implemented across some regions and reading coaches trained specifically for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Catholic schools have adopted a 'whole school change' model to support the teaching of literacy and numeracy based on student performance data to drive improvement. Three of the Focus schools are supported through the Close the Gap: Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Project funding with provision for the employment of specialist literacy and numeracy consultants. School-based inquiry projects utilised case study models with integrated action research processes. Initial evidence from the project indicates that targeted and personalised approaches in Literacy and Numeracy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students – with a focus on building teacher capacity to differentiate – is realising some initial levels of improvements in literacy and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, while at the same time fostering positive changes in professional educational practices. Evidence shows that successful models for improving the outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students feature consultants as experts and as key advocates for targeted and personalised learning and the implementation of key reform priorities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, working in partnership with school communities. For project schools also involved in National Partnerships programs, evidence demonstrates that the process is further enhanced when Close the Gap: Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Project and National Partnerships consultants integrate their services and collaborate effectively. Four of the Focus schools are supported through the Investing in Focus Schools (IFS) Project. Approaches include whole-school literacy professional learning, with a focus on inclusive practices and precision teaching – teaching to students' strengths and needs. Literacy Key Teachers in the four schools have been appointed to work with a CESA Literacy Consultant who is leading whole-school literacy professional development programs.

In 2012, independent schools have focused on effective literacy methodologies such as explicit teaching, valuing and expanding students' cultural and academic knowledge and contextual and inclusive pedagogies. Accredited courses offered included How Language Works and Teaching ESL Students in Mainstream Classrooms. One Focus school has developed and implemented a numeracy action plan that has enabled the drawing upon

of existing professional learning teams in schools to engage teachers in professional discourse about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and numeracy. The effective use of data to identify patterns and trends in the data of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has been a key entry point for this.

### Action 32

The Department has funded a number of literacy and numeracy initiatives within Focus schools. These have included literacy workshops provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and regional and school-based professional development on literacy assessment, oral language and the development of reading coaches. The training for reading coaches is aligned to the Professional Standards for Teachers to ensure a high quality and sustained approach to teaching practice.

A range of resources to support quality literacy teaching were developed during 2012 to further consolidate those developed during 2010 and 2011. A focus for 2012 was support for implementation of the Australian Curriculum, with workshops and resources developed focusing on literacy in English and literacy as a general capability in the learning areas.

A major activity within the ESL program was the writing of the *Language and literacy levels across the Australian Curriculum: EALD students*. This was a collaborative process that involved eight ESL regional consultants. The *Language and literacy levels across the Australian Curriculum: EALD students* reflect the language and literacy that students need to compose texts in the Australian Curriculum across all learning areas at their year level and will be used as an assessment, monitoring and reporting tool.

In government schools, the Teaching ESL Students in Mainstream Classrooms course was undertaken by staff in five schools who engaged in 25 hours of professional learning around supporting EAL/D learners to develop language and literacy skills to access the curriculum.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. *Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*

12. *Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*

13. *Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

## Overall progress

In South Australian schools, professional development around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural linguistic competence is provided to school staff and leaders but data on participation is not collected centrally.

A new professional development system is currently being developed in the Department, which will be progressively rolled out when developed. This system has the capacity to collect relevant data on professional development directly from schools.

Education sectors in South Australia support professional development for principals and teachers in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence through the provision of leadership initiatives, cross-sectoral collaboration, and support for professional practice.

Research shows that the identification of more than one key person provides a more effective and supportive model for the implementation of strategic reforms. In Catholic Focus schools, Focus Teachers or Teams are pivotal change agents for improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Their critical work is underpinned by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) National Professional Standards, the Australian Curriculum and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*. On this basis, principals are invited to appoint at least two teachers to be an Indigenous Education Focus Teachers Team with oversight for the:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education strategic planning and funding allocation/accountability
- ratification of the school's Reconciliation Action Plan
- cultural competency of staff and students
- professional learning in, and implementation of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents/caregivers and community members as key resources

**Table SA10: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents) in South Australia, by sector, 2012**

	FTE
<b>Government</b>	
Principals	5.0
Teaching staff	73.6
AIEWs and equivalents	219.6
<b>Catholic</b>	
Principals	0
Teaching staff	8.5
AIEWs and equivalents	6.4
<b>Independent</b>	
Principals	n/a
Teaching staff	n/a
AIEWs and equivalents	n/a

Notes:

- a) Excludes Temporary Relief Teachers, staff on four or more weeks' leave, and staff on workcover.
- b) Principal and teacher profile is based on staff in schools or support units who spend the majority of their time in contact with students, ie, they support students either by direct class contact, or on an individual basis, and have teaching duties, ie, are engaged to impart the school curriculum. This also includes leadership positions.
- c) Education Worker profile includes staff based in school and non-school locations, with a classification of 'Aboriginal Education Worker'.
- n/a Data unavailable for independent schools.

Source: South Australian Department for Education and Child Development, Valeo Payroll System, 2010–2012.

- case management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to ensure optimum educational outcomes and SACE results
- development and review of Individual Learning Plans (documenting learning and wellbeing goals, post-school aspirations/pathways), and
- active partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents/caregivers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the wider community and the CEO of the Indigenous Education Team.

Focus teachers are also expected to contribute to the Focus teacher network and to actively participate in the professional learning program offered centrally by the Catholic Education Office.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals had decreased from six (FTE) in 2010 to five (FTE) in 2012, while the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching staff has increased from 87 persons (68.1 FTE) in 2010 to 102 persons (73.6 FTE) in 2012, an increase of 17.2 per cent (8.1 per cent increase in FTEs). The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers had increased from 286 persons (195.9 FTE) in 2010 to 307 persons (219.6 FTE) in 2012, representing an increase in persons of 7.3 per cent (12.1 per cent increase in FTEs).

Data collected on Catholic Focus schools is retrieved from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and DUX® education data management systems. Catholic Education South Australia currently does not have the capacity to collect this information centrally. Systems at the local school level rely on self-identification processes, albeit through structures that are partial and inconsistent. Therefore, the data sets are volatile.

Teachers continue to have a longer average length of service than principals in government Focus schools. The average length of service for principals within South Australian government Focus schools has increased from three years and seven months in 2010, to four years and three months in 2012. The average length of service for teachers in government Focus schools has remained steady since 2010, decreasing slightly from five years and 11 months to five years and 10 months in 2012.

## Systemic level actions (41, 42)

### Action 41

In government schools, professional development around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural knowledge and linguistic competence is provided to school staff but is not collected centrally. The Department is continuing to build on data systems to collect relevant data on professional development directly from schools.

**Table SA11: Average length of service of principals and teachers within South Australian Focus schools, 2010–2012**

Year	Principals			Teachers		
	Number	Total service as a principal at site (months)	Average length of service as a principal at site (months)	Number	Total service as a teacher at site (months)	Average length of service as a teacher at site (months)
2010	94	4,047	43	1,959	139,273	71
2011	93	4,097	44	2,007	137,940	69
2012	89	4,505	51	2,082	145,027	70

Note: Profile was taken of government Focus school staff members who were principals or teachers, as at the last day of Term 4 for each year. Only staff members with accumulated service at the site, working as at the last day of Term 4, have been included. Any leave from the site has been ignored, ie, if an employee took twelve months' leave, this has been included in the total service as a principal or teacher.

Source: South Australian Department for Education and Child Development, Valeo Payroll System, 2010–2012.

The Department implements policies and strategies that support culturally inclusive practices and approaches and the development of cultural competency in all staff. In 2012, strategies included:

- implementation of the Cultural Inclusion Framework for South Australia and the Department's Aboriginal Strategy
- Cultural Competency Training
- Aboriginal Cultural Studies being incorporated into the South Australian Curriculum Framework and the Australian Curriculum as general capabilities
- employment programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, children, and families
- cultural induction and cultural awareness programs, and
- provision of professional learning around Aboriginal languages in schools, supporting all nine South Australian Aboriginal languages currently taught in government schools.

Also, 523 corporate, regional school or preschool staff attended workshops based around cultural awareness and how to provide better quality and more appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Department's Aboriginal Cultural Studies curriculum resource is being made available nationally through Scootle, an online training package. A five-year project, Aboriginal Community Language and Culture Partnerships (ACLCP), was implemented in 2011, whereby the Department will support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to take an increasingly leading role in providing language and cultural expertise and training to leadership and staff of local schools and school clusters. From an original six partnerships covering six languages, the ACLCP project in 2012 supported eight partnerships covering seven South Australian Aboriginal languages.

Professional learning opportunities accessed by educational staff in Catholic Education Focus schools in 2012 included:

- **Focus Teacher Program 2012**

A four-day (32 hour) professional learning program, this aims to support the work and build the capacity of Indigenous Education Focus Teachers or Teams and to integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and activities in the Australian Curriculum. Focusing on effective teaching and learning strategies for reconciliation and culturally inclusive practices, program participants were additionally mentored and coached by consultants in between sessions. Access to expert Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and academics featured as a core element.



- **Australian Curriculum Professional Learning days**

A professional learning series over five days (40 hours), focusing on the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within each of the Phase 1 learning areas, were conducted in May to June, 2012. This was a cross-sector initiative (collaborating with the independent schools sector).

- **YARRA Conference**

A two-day (16 hours) cross-sector (collaborating with the independent schools sector) conference with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and wellbeing was facilitated in August, 2012.

- **Inclusive Curriculum**

consultants delivered customised, whole-school based, professional learning with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, cross-curriculum priorities and ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives can be embedded in classroom programs. Inclusive Curriculum exemplars are currently being developed and will be located electronically at CESA Online. The exemplars are in response to locally based inquiry/ research initiatives. Depending on the depth of involvement, the professional learning ranged from 16 to 32 hours.

#### **Action 42**

Departmental Recruitment and Selection and Merit Selection Policy support priority recruitment of high performing teachers to Focus schools through the Local Selection Merit Process, early advertising of vacancies and specific skills set identification. A suite of initiatives, through the Recruitment and Selection Project, has been funded through the Communities Making a Difference (Low SES) National Partnership focused on attracting high quality teachers and leaders to Low Socio-Economic Status (SES) schools and pre-schools.

### **Local level actions (43, 44)**

#### **Action 43**

During 2012, two Stronger Smarter Learning Communities project forums were held to shape the South Australian annex of the Learning Communities. Over 33 Hub and affiliate site principals attended. Professional development was provided, which focused on community engagement and updating Site

Learning Plans to align with the project's fundamental goals.

In 2012, South Australia had six Hub and 18 affiliate sites that represented four regions. Twenty Hub and affiliate site leaders participated in the Stronger Smarter Leadership program. Nine of the sites that participated were Focus schools.

As part of regional leadership days, principals and regional leaders have prioritised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Regional leadership teams have formed strong partnerships with school-based Aboriginal leadership teams, inclusive of Aboriginal Education Teachers and Aboriginal Community Education Officers to improve learning outcomes for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The complementary features of Regional and School Improvement Plans have ensured that every principal and classroom teacher in Focus schools examines the processes and practices that lead improvement for learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The strength of this partnership highlighted areas of most need, and has led to the design and implementation of localised targeted learning goals. In 2012, professional development was provided for 14 Aboriginal Education Coordinators (AEC), within nine South Australian regions, to build pedagogical expertise, capacity to influence, and professional partnerships with principals and Aboriginal Education Teachers to support learning improvement at their school site. Regular professional development meetings were also held as part of an ongoing professional learning program.

A range of quality leadership programs are available to aspiring, newly appointed and existing leaders and include accredited qualifications, induction, mentoring, and business and educational leadership programs.

Aligned with National Professional Standard for Principals, all seven Catholic Education Focus schools participated in a Dare to Lead School Snapshot in 2011 to 2012. The purpose is to present the principal with a snapshot of the school's current practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. On completion of the snapshot, the Dare to Lead Team provides the principal with a comprehensive report that includes a summary of responses from all interviewees, a list of commendations and recommendations, and suggestions for professional development implementation for staff. This data is used to support leadership teams to strategically plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. An external evaluator was contracted to

lead a meta-analysis of the evidence in 2012. The meta-analysis professional learning experience provided an effective model with which to apply data, to determine trends and apply strategic reforms across the sector and also at the school level. The processes were transferable across school communities and to leaders' own specific context and agendas.

Leadership teams in Focus schools within the Catholic sector accessed 32 hours of cultural competency training with expert providers from Dare to Lead and Fire and Water consultancies in 2012. At the workshops, principals, leadership teams along with Indigenous Education Focus teachers, National Partnerships key personnel and coaches worked together in a rigorous program designed to provide for professional learning in leadership for cultural proficiency and sustainability.

#### Action 44

The Department is continuing to consult with the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC) regarding education service provision that supports engagement and achievement and is considerate of cultural obligations. The Department is also in the process of reviewing business and governance operations to support greater local management, accountability, and decision-making.

## Pathways to real post-school options

### Performance indicators

14. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.*

Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there is no publicly available national level data for 2012.

### Overall progress

The proportion of 19 year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within with Year 12 or equivalent (including SACE and DFEEEST data only) increased from 37.0 per cent in 2010 to 37.8 per cent in 2012, with an increase in the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people increasing by two percentage points.

**Table SA12: Nineteen year-old persons with Year 12 or equivalent, South Australia, as reported for the South Australian State Strategic Plan, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

	2010	2011	2012
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons (per cent)	37.0	39.8	37.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons (per cent)	73.7	78.1	77.1
Gap (in percentage points)	37	38	39

#### Notes:

- South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) data was extracted from TAFE sources as at 20 April 2011, and features a count of students that received certificates. Students were counted once on the highest LOE certificate that was issued to them in one given year. Grouping of the data by Aboriginality is available only on TAFE data due to limitation of the collection student details on Client Qualifications Register. International Baccalaureate is not available by Aboriginality, therefore, is not included in this calculation.
- Care is required in interpreting the nineteen year-old persons with Year 12 or equivalent in South Australia data. The estimated residential population that the figures are based on have been updated to reflect new estimates from the ABS after the 2011 Census. As the South Australian 19 year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is relatively small, volatility in the Estimated Residential Population will affect this indicator.

Source: South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board of South Australia; South Australian DFEEEST; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Estimated Resident Population*, and *Census of Population and Housing*, 2012 (Cat.No. 2911.0.55.003).

**Table SA13: South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) completion rates, South Australia, 2010 to 2012 (per cent)**

	2010	2011	2012
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons (per cent)	78	83	85
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons (per cent)	90	92	92
Gap (in percentage points)	12	9	7

Note: Completion rates are calculated from the number who completed SACE, compared to the number of potential completers. Therefore, these figures cannot be used for the purpose of statewide or national comparability as the measures are defined by the SACE Board.

From 2011, a potential SACE completer can be defined as a student who is enrolled in, or has a completed enrolment in, the following:

- the Personal Learning Plan (PLP) or PLP modified at Stage 1
- at least 20 credits of an English subject at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2
- at least 10 credits of a mathematics subject at Stage 1 and/or Stage 2
- the Research Project or Research Project Modified at Stage 2
- at least 60 credits in a Stage 2 subject, and
- at least 200 credits in total, 150 of which may be gained through VET recognition arrangements.

Source: South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board of South Australia, 2010–2012.

South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) completion rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased by seven percentage points from 78 in 2010 to 85 per cent in 2012, while for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their SACE completion rates have remained steady, rising by two percentage points from 90 per cent in 2010 to 92 per cent in 2012. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' SACE completion rates and that of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased from 12 percentage points in 2010, to 7 percentage points in 2012, representing a decrease of five percentage points.

## Systemic level actions (48, 49 and 50)

### Action 48

Through Innovative Community Action Networks (ICANs), significantly disengaged young people, from 10 to 19 years of age, can be supported to re-engage in learning through a DECD Flexible Learning Option (FLO) enrolment. Prior to ICAN involvement, some of these young people were unlikely to have the required skills to participate fully in further education, training, employment, or to be able to take a fully productive role in the community. A FLO enrolment provides each school with a flexible enrolment fund that is used to broker the services of a qualified case manager to provide a customised and flexible accredited learning plan for each student. In 2012, 750 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were supported with a FLO enrolment.

ICAN provides students with access to individual case management services, life skills training, literacy and numeracy support, e-learning opportunities, and flexible learning programs in their school and/or community. The Department is collaborating with the SACE Board of South Australia and the University of South Australia to support Years 10 to 11 students to utilise interactive technologies in learning about possible university and further education paths to careers.

South Australia provides multiple pathways to secondary students to achieve their SACE, including tertiary and vocational pathways into training and employment. Year 11 and 12 education in the South Australian school system is designed to support students and personalise their learning through a variety of educational and other programs. These include vocational education and training (VET), which is offered in many government schools for students to gain work experience and industry skills while still at school.

### Action 49

A SACE Aboriginal Students Pathways Conference is held every year and provides the opportunity for Years 10, 11 and 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to explore their study, training and employment pathways. Teachers and students from all schools are invited to participate in the conference and seek advice on their post-schooling options.

Based on the 2012 VETIS Summary data provided to AISSA by schools, 43 Aboriginal and Torres Islander students (including 29

males and 14 females) engaged in VET activity. This represented 1.8 per cent of all students in independent schools who accessed VET programs during 2012 – representing a small increase from 2011. The 43 students were engaged in 21 qualifications, including nine Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate I, six Certificate II, and six Certificate III programs. Ten Aboriginal and Torres Islander students completed a full qualification during 2012, while six either commenced or continued in their School-based Apprenticeship. Funds were available for all schools to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in programs or activities for students, including those who were identified at risk of not making a successful transition into post-secondary, further education, training and/or employment. Programs included the School To Work Transition and the On The Job Workplace Learning, as well as VET in Schools programs.

#### **Action 50**

The Department's Teaching and Learning Services will publish the new digital Aboriginal Cultural Studies Resource online as a nationally available document in July 2013. The Digital Learning and Communication Team have delivered targeted professional development for teachers through the provision of workshops in clusters with significant enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. This has included Eyre and Western, Murray Mallee, and metropolitan schools. Social media networks have been established and expanded to provide opportunities for professional sharing and collaboration between educators in their work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This new initiative has been an important step in growing networked contributions that build the capacity of teachers to progress Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student use of digital environments, tools and processes.

### **Local level actions (51, 52, 53, 54 and 55)**

#### **Action 51**

The Keeping Them On Track initiative monitors all government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior secondary enrolments at key transitional points of secondary schooling with an aim to improve retention to Year 12 and SACE completion. There is a specific focus on the collection and analysis of individual student data across the student's entire secondary schooling experience to provide clear information to the student, parents, and educators to support the completion of the SACE, and the student's transition to further training, education or an employment pathway. The Department provides support for

students and families through Homework Centres, Work About Centres, personalised learning plans, and through the support of Aboriginal Community Education Officers, and Aboriginal Secondary Education Transition Officers (ASETOS).

Aboriginal Programs Assistance Scheme (APAS) provides funding to schools to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student academic improvement. Support includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student tuition, homework centres, mentoring and coaching programs, counselling, cultural awareness, and support for student wellbeing. The funding aims to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes, attendance, retention, SACE completion, and increased parent and community engagement in education. In 2012, 366 schools received APAS funding with 2,742 students receiving additional support. The APAS program provided resources to 1,297 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Years 11 and 12 students across 131 schools to support retention and SACE completion. In 2012, 1,459 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 5 to 9 were provided with targeted tutorial support.

In ICAN schools, students are able to enrol in Flexible Learning Options (FLO), an initiative that promotes a more flexible approach for supporting successful engagement of young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in Year 6 to 19 years of age, targeted to those most at risk of disengaging with learning. FLO provides a personalised case management and learning program which provides opportunities to engage in meaningful learning that is accredited, and which leads to further training and employment. Professionals such as social workers, and psychologists provide case management for the program. In 2012, there were 750 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students registered as FLO enrolments. Data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in FLO in 2011 indicate a 73.7 per cent re-engagement in learning or earning opportunities in 2012.

The ICAN model also provides community and student mentoring opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2012, 173 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in the secondary mentoring program, and 75 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in the community mentoring program.

#### **Action 52**

The Department's Trade Schools for the Future strategy and Industry Skills Program provide opportunities for school-based

apprenticeships and traineeships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in a range of vocational fields. These two programs have a range of partnerships to ensure young people embark on vocational pathways through AQF Certificate III and school-based apprenticeships. Schools are also supported to develop and implement vocational education and training (VET) industry pathway programs, and upgrade their vocational facilities through the Australian Government funded Trade Training Centres.

The South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy (SAASTA) is a unique sporting and educational program that provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students with the skills, opportunities and confidence to achieve in the areas of sport, education, leadership, employment and healthy living. SAASTA develops and delivers curriculum to students as part of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) and provides professional development to teachers, and coordinators of participating schools. SAASTA students receive Stage 1 and Stage 2 credits towards the attainment of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) and an AQF Certificate III in Sport and Recreation.

The Department works in partnership with the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) and the Aboriginal Employment Industry Clusters to enhance training and employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across six industry areas: Advanced Manufacturing, Community Services, Energy and Water, Hospitality, Professional Services, Sport and Recreation.

#### **Action 53**

All SAASTA students, school-based trainees or otherwise, receive case management from academy staff including teachers, mentors and industry experts throughout their time in the program.

In 2012, 102 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (identified at significant risk) were provided with case management services through ICAN to strengthen support for a successful engagement in primary and secondary schools. This significant student and family support is provided by trained case managers (social workers, youth workers) over the school year and is inclusive of the end of year school holiday period.

#### **Action 54**

In South Australia, the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) allows students to undertake learning to suit their chosen

career pathway. The Personal Learning Plan (PLP) is a compulsory 10-credit subject undertaken at Stage 1, which helps students to plan their personal and learning goals for the future and make informed decisions about their personal development, education, and training.

Three of the six Focus schools from the independent sector enrol senior secondary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Each of these schools has facilitated attendance of senior secondary students at the SACE Aboriginal Student Pathways Conference. At each school, an Indigenous Key Focus Teacher or Worker supports these students to undertake and complete their SACE. Relationships with families are seen as central to this process. Support and advice has also been provided about transition planning and career development that encompasses a range of possible pathways including VET and school-based apprenticeships.

Six of the seven Focus schools in the Catholic sector enrol senior secondary students. Through the Secondary Indigenous Education Consultant and the Choices for Indigenous Secondary Students (CISS) project officer, Catholic Education in South Australia directly supports Focus schools and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander senior students to successfully achieve their SACE and to have access to clearly defined post-school options. All programs were inclusive of parents and carers. Partnerships were further developed with the tertiary sector to specifically support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with enrolment, induction and transition.

In 2012, the Career Pathways program was offered again through AISSA to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 8 to 12. A variety of programs were undertaken to cater for the needs of the students, their parents and their schools. These workshops included opportunities to gain information about career and post-school study options including: university pathways; TAFE options; scholarships available to tertiary students; foundation programs; alternative pathways and assistance to those still completing their SACE. Opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for study, vocational and other educational scholarships and opportunities were promoted through the Vocational Educational Coordinators' professional development network of the AISSA.

#### **Action 55**

The Community Mentoring program matches volunteer community members with students in schools. The aim of the

program is to assist students to reach their full potential by bringing young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement. In 2012, 75 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in the Community Mentoring program.

## Good practice snapshots

### Developing an understanding of numbers

#### Independent schools

Southern Vales Christian College is a Reception to Year 12 college located in the southern suburbs of Adelaide, with an enrolment of around 700 students, over two campuses, including 28 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2013, a specific focus was undertaken to work towards the achievement of local level actions 31 and 32. This has involved use of data to monitor individual student improvement in mathematics, with a focus on explicit teaching, number representations, use and application.

The focus investigated ways of improving the numeracy outcomes for a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students identified as being mathematically vulnerable when benchmarked against the Early Years Numeracy (EYN) interview growth points. The EYN interview is an assessment tool developed as part of the Victorian Early Numeracy Research Project, 1999–2001. A key feature of the EYN growth point framework is the use of language that indicates the progression of mathematical understanding that needs to be learned.

The college worked with a subgroup of students across the two campuses to:

- isolate EYN data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to identify patterns and trends in number
- foster a learning environment that allows students to draw on their full range of mathematical skills and understandings
- allow staff to develop a more in-depth knowledge of mathematics, and an understanding about how children learn mathematics

- build upon existing pedagogical practices to increase the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in number development, and
- develop the use and knowledge of mathematical language.

Professional learning was provided to both teachers and School Support Officers to deepen their mathematical and pedagogical knowledge. Educators worked to enhance their understandings of the growth points that underpin the EYN interview, related learning activities and how to differentiate the activities to allow multiple pathways for learning.

Students were assessed at two points in time and then benchmarked against the growth points. When analysing the data, it was clear that every student had made significant progress in their understanding.

Allowing children to make mathematical connections, reviewing mathematical knowledge and allowing students to reflect on their own learning are important aspects that will continue to be built into the mathematics program. Supporting teachers in delivering strong mathematics programs with effective pedagogy is also a long-term aim that will continue to be developed in 2013. The college will also build on this work through intentionally linking the mathematical goals of the students to their individualised learning plans.

### Development of local school–community partnerships – Mannum Community College

#### Government school sector

Mannum Community College is in the Murray Mallee region of South Australia. In 2012, Mannum Community College identified 35 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments from Reception to Year 12 at the school, constituting 11 per cent of the total school enrolment.

Mannum Community College obtained funding under the Australian Government's School Community Partnership Program to fund a program to develop stronger community partnerships with students, parents, teaching and support staff and school leadership.



In 2012, a working party with representatives from all interested parties was established to commence the process of establishing a School Community Partnership Agreement. Thirteen meetings were scheduled at the school, which resulted in the development of strong relationships – pivotal in the success of the program. Following research and several workshops, the working group identified five target areas for the agreement as being:

- 1 family connections
- 2 culture
- 3 attendance and wellbeing for learning
- 4 respect/ integrity/ vitality/ excellence/ responsibility, and
- 5 positive and successful learning.

The comprehensive involvement of students' and parents' voices was also pivotal to the success of the program, as was the support from the school leadership in the release of staff and students to participate in the working group. Literacy and numeracy emerged as a priority. Staff engaged with the Australian Government numeracy program, What Works, and parents and families worked on home kits and welcome packs to highlight this. Additionally, resources to promote cultural awareness for all students were reviewed. The working group reported back to Governing Council and the Regional Director, parents and families and the What Works program team.

The importance of developing strong working community relationships is a continual focus, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and families comprising a vital part of the school community. The school keeps parents involved through regular reports and school–community meetings. Parent, student and staff involvements lead to the combined design of the artwork featuring on the School–Community Partnership Agreement and promotional materials. A painting was also made for the school, which the Minister for Education and Child Development unveiled at the launch of the Partnership Agreement.

The School Community Partnership Agreement has been a huge success and continues to influence a solution driven and proactive approach to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families at Mannum Community College. Continued achievements include: the introduction of the Ngarrindjeri language as a Language other than English (LOTE)

for Reception to Year 9 students; further literacy and numeracy support for at-risk early learners from Reception to Year 5, and the achievement of higher NAPLAN results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Flexible schooling model – Wiltja Program

### Government school sector

The Wiltja Program was developed as an initiative of the Ernabella women in the late 1970s, and operates to provide flexible secondary learning options to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, in particular those who dwell in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. The Wiltja Program provides transport, accommodation and education solutions to students through a partnership with the Wiltja Residence located at Northfield, Woodville High School (WHS – Middle School) and Windsor Gardens Vocational College (WGVC – Senior School). The concept was to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote locations access to the resources and opportunities offered in a metropolitan location, while maintaining a culturally and educationally supportive environment.

Initial program enrolment includes significant testing to ascertain readiness for secondary school and living away from home. Students first enter the program through the Bridging Class (at Woodville High School) where there is an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and developing the independent working skills required to transition into mainstream classes. While remaining in a discrete Wiltja group, students start to connect with some Woodville High School activities such as: the Community Garden (which provides an environment for horticulture, science and food preparation); sporting opportunities; major assemblies and extra-curricular programs.

Following the Bridging experience, which can last from three weeks to a full year, students progress to the middle school, as Years 8, 9 and 10 students, attending a combination of mainstream classes with Woodville High School students (accompanied by Wiltja teachers in supporting roles) and separate Wiltja classes. Wiltja has a long-standing commitment to Accelerated Literacy as an embedded literacy program for



all levels. Accelerated Literacy gives age-appropriate support to students who lack a cultural background in reading, while giving teachers a structured planning approach to the delivery of literacy across the curriculum. Over the last three years, several Wiltja teachers have had the opportunity to lead literacy within the school.

In 2012, all middle school students were participating in two Pitjantjatjara language lessons per week in order to cultivate a sense of cultural pride and linguistic confidence, while improving both their first language and English skills. Two Wiltja teachers delivering the course attend regular Pitjantjatjara language lectures and work closely with the Wiltja Anangu cultural support teacher.

Stage 1 students progressing to the Wiltja Senior School at Windsor Gardens Vocational College choose from eight Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathways. Students undertake the Personal Learning Plan (PLP) subject as part of the SACE, which assists in appropriate subject and career counselling.

Wiltja has support from the Australian Government through the Smarter Schools National Partnerships Program (SSNP). Funding has enabled:

- the Wiltja Homework Centre to operate three evenings after school and on a timetabled line during the day
- senior students to complete driver education and obtain their drivers licence to increase employment opportunities
- the provision of individual student support/mentoring in the both middle and senior schools in the areas of literacy, numeracy and career pathways
- resourcing of literacy and numeracy materials, and
- continuation of the South Australian Accelerated Literacy Program (SAALP) membership that provides the expertise of an Accelerated Literacy program consultant every fortnight.

At the end of 2012, four SACE graduates left the program with Provisional Drivers' Licences and a work-ready portfolio consisting of: Senior First Aid; Construction Industry White Card; Birth Certificate; Passport; Tax File Number; bank account; police check; Bronze Medallion; Resume; CV; Work Experience reports and current references.

Student wellbeing has been successfully advanced over the last 18 months with the establishment of strong working relationships with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). CAMHS personnel provide ongoing support to teachers in their management of referred students, and work directly with the students. In 2012, Residence and school staff committed to shared training in Restorative Justice practices, and a wellbeing leadership position was created in the middle school.

Since the program's commencement, 54 students have achieved their SACE through the Wiltja Program. Not only have these students achieved a Nationally Accredited Certification in the SACE, they have also made a transition from remote living to metropolitan independent living.

## Literacy and identity case study, and the power of individual learning plans case study

### Catholic sector schools

Common to all Focus schools is the promotion of evidence-based teaching and learning approaches. Case study methods, integrated with an Action Research Process, were applied across the following two examples of good practice. This allowed the collection and analysis of data to inform ongoing planning and review. Goals articulated in Individual Learning Plans determined the appropriateness of specified strategies; however, the utilisation of 'community funds of knowledge' (Source: B. Comber and B. Kamler, *Turn-around Pedagogies: Literacy interventions for at-risk students*, Primary English Teaching Association Australia, 2005, see <http://www.petaa.edu.au/publicationsstore/publicationdetail?ProductCode=PET079>) and a focus on cultural identity in literacy featured as key approaches.

### Literacy and identity

The integration of Literacy Numeracy National Partnership and Closing the Gap projects brought about some good practice in one of the Focus schools. Teachers of the Years 6/7 classes, having worked on the explicit teaching of reading through Partnerships work, aimed to improve their students' critical reading of texts. Students were encouraged to construct a range of texts about their own identities and also to read others'

published texts, which may have included certain representations of the students' identities.

The teachers were concerned that students tended to believe everything that they read, were highly influenced by media and struggled to critically analyse texts to find biases and possible misrepresentations. The students were exposed to a wide variety of texts including: multi-modal texts; they were encouraged to tell their own life experiences in juxtaposition to these texts, and to develop critical thinking and reasoning. Students examined texts for the way they represented Australia, and how these texts represented their identities as Australians (and as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians). Having critiqued others' texts, they designed and re-designed texts of their own (including postcards of Australia). They also critically read each other's texts as well as their own.

A powerful part of the work, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students alike, was the class's critical analysis of the school's library books and resources on Australia, with a particular focus on the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The children were able to discuss and reflect on stereotypes. Their debates were developed into a presentation with their recommendations for action, which they presented to the librarian and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parent at the school. There was very deep engagement and a strong sense of success as they presented their arguments to the panel. This work had a strong impact on the engagement and development of critical reading for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as well as the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

### The power of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

The development of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) at this school has resulted in a leap forward in professional learning and coordination of support for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student cohort at this school. Prior to the commencement of the Closing the Gap Project, key school staff working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students recognised the need to build on practices employed in the school. They particularly focused on the areas of successful and engaging learning pedagogies for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, retention of students to Year 12 and

support with post-school pathways. It was evident that some students succeeded with and without teacher assistance, and some failed despite the school's best efforts.

The implementation of ILPs provided a tool to gather data for future planning, goal setting for individual students and close monitoring of the individual student's learning. Individual Learning Plan meetings highlighted teacher expectation gaps and student/teacher relationship gaps. Collectively, these two factors resulted in lower engagement in learning and lower participation in school activities for a number of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Discussions between students, school staff, Catholic Education South Australia, and Indigenous Education Student Support Consultants realised that student achievement and student opportunity are connected to expectations, relationships, and chances for participation that students perceive they have in the school. These are manifested through expectations, relationships and consequently, participation.

By talking with students it was evident that strong relationships with teachers are crucial to successful learning outcomes. Recommendations from the school's ILP project included:

- teachers need to work at develop authentic relationships with students to foster connectedness and engagement at school
- knowing and accepting who the students are as people and as learners is critical
- through the development of ILPs as a goal setting exercise, students and teachers can work together productively to set high goals with a commitment by both teachers and students to achieve them
- students require a career plan that is (highly) aspirational in nature and documents school and student actions
- a focus on post-school transitions needs to reflect students' abilities and choices in career pathways, and
- ILPs are continually reviewed (twice a term) and can become effective learning tools and data for parents, teachers and students.

# IECB's feedback – South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Body (SAAETCB)

The South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Body (SAAETCB) has reviewed the information presented and notes that South Australia is making progress towards achieving many areas noted in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014. SAAETCB provides the following comments.

The SAAETCB would like to reaffirm the importance of celebrating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity that has been a focus of the Aboriginal Children and Family Centres constructed as a result of the Indigenous Early Child Development National Partnership, and believes that it is a critical element of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement that these centres maintain their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity and focus. To detract from this sends a message to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community that their participation, skills and local knowledge invested in the development of these centres is lost if and when the Centres are, inevitably, mainstreamed. This is counterproductive to ongoing meaningful engagement of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of these Centres. Ceduna Aboriginal Children and Family Centre provides an example of this mainstream approach, where a loss of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity of the Centre may result in a disconnection and alienation of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The South Australian Government's investment in the Aboriginal Children and Family Centres is to be commended and embraced across the education sector as a model for meaningful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement. The centres provide an effective model for the seamless transition that supports both families and children with the move to preschool and school. This is assisted by a cross-agency approach to service provision in response to the needs of the family and child. The

SAAETCB strongly supports the need for greater community education and informing parents of young children about the services available to them. Of paramount importance to this are initiatives, such as the preschool enrolment program for 3 year-old children.

The SAAETCB embraces the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014 local level Action 21 and notes the entitlement of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child to mandatory Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) in South Australian government schools. The SAAETCB has concerns about the genuine engagement of parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and the quality, approach and consistency of ILPs that are being developed. The SAAETCB highlights the importance of engaging with, and establishing ongoing relationships with parents of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across their school life. Parental involvement in the development of ILPs is vital and regular monitoring and reviewing of the ILPs, in conjunction with parents, throughout the school year is imperative. The ILPs must provide the foundation for developing and implementing a teaching and learning plan that supports each individual student's learning and we look forward to the rollout of the new State Government's One Child, One Plan initiative.

Strategies to support attendance and engagement of students can be addressed with parents, the student and the school through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parent engagement strategy, developed and driven at the local school level. The SAAETCB notes the good practice example of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Turn Around Team initiative, and the difference that the initiative has made for the families that the teams have worked with. The SAAETCB suggests that an expansion of the Turn Around Team initiative should be undertaken to:

- support families in crisis
- support children and young people with chronic poor attendance, and
- support re-engagement of disengaged children and young people with appropriate education programs designed to meet the needs of the individual.

School-based initiatives, such as Nunga Kids Groups, should be resourced to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

and young people to have positive successful experiences at the local school level. Resources need to be identified and earmarked from within the schools to enable these peer network opportunities to occur.

The SAAETCB notes that in South Australia, Catholic Education provides the opportunity for key stakeholders to input to the ILP process. The SAAETCB strongly recommends that this approach be adopted across all sectors, and that this may assist in streamlining the rollout of the One Child, One Plan strategy.

The SAAETCB acknowledges the efforts of the independent school sector in embracing the ILP process and supports their continued involvement in the rollout of ILPs in the independent schools sector.

The SAAETCB urges all education sectors explore solutions to overcome the perceived difficulties (real or otherwise) with the development of Local School and Community Partnership Agreements (LSCPs). SAAETCB strongly encourages the investment of time and resources by schools to enable successful LSCPs. There are many ways that LSCPs can be developed and several South Australian schools have LSCPs that others can learn from.

The SAAETCB notes the attendance rates across all South Australian education sectors have remained relatively static over the past year. SAAETCB considers that implementing the strategies identified in this comment may assist in increasing attendance and participation levels, especially if combined with a concentrated effort to establish genuine LSCPs. Addressing these strategies through the development of LSCP Agreements is a key strategy in empowering local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to take charge of the schooling and education of their children and young people.

The SAAETCB notes the decrease in the gap for retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students post Year 10 and encourages the Department to continue its efforts in achieving retention parity to Year 12. Researching quality post-secondary destination data could provide insight into avenues for further development to continue the trend of closing the gap on retention. This research may also reveal gender-based school and post-school options.

The SAAETCB notes the ongoing disparity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander children and young people in the NAPLAN testing results. It is encouraging to note the increase in participation rates for NAPLAN. Further attention and focus should be placed by education providers on the gap in all aspects of literacy and numeracy, and across all geolocations and we support continued efforts to close the gap in this regard.

The SAAETCB strongly recommends the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014, National Collaborative Actions: 37, 38, 39 and Systemic Level Action: 41. In achieving this, the cultural competence and preparation of new, beginning and existing teachers is an area that requires immediate attention. The SAAETCB strongly urges the importance of the immediate introduction of mandatory cultural competence and/or cultural awareness training for all pre- and post-service teachers. The SAAETCB acknowledges and identifies that the lack of cultural competence of many teachers in current service is a barrier to genuine and meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, parents, families and communities. This can and should be addressed as an essential minimum requirement for teacher registration in South Australia. In doing so, it would assist the university sector to institute this as part of their student teacher preparation courses. In particular, university education courses and induction programs should focus on the importance of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, parents and communities in all locations.

Greater community awareness and community education programs are required to inform parents, students and families of the value that education offers, and the ways that parents and families can support their children and young people with school life and learning. Parents need to be empowered by understanding what support is available at the school, district and regional level, and how to access that support successfully. The information flow and support appears to be more effective in primary schooling and drops off in secondary schooling. This may indicate the need for more interactive means of improving this information flow. Key transition points from preschool to school, and then from primary to secondary education settings need closer attention. The SAAETCB notes there is a disconnect between the strategic intent and purpose of programs and initiatives, and their literal implementation in schools at the local level. Schools must genuinely engage more effectively with

parents at all opportunities, and especially when students are accessing additional programs and resources such as mentoring, tutorial support, Flexible Learning Options and employment and training pathways. Additional resources and or alternative learning opportunities must never be used to discount the responsibility teachers and schools have for the academic progress and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care. Any additional support or pathways provided should be clearly identified in the student's ILP, and must be agreed to by the student, the parent and education staff concerned.

## South Australian Department for Education and Child Development (DECD's) response

The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development would like to acknowledge the commitment and contribution of the South Australian Aboriginal Education Training and Consultative Body (SAAETCB) to improving the education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in South Australia.

The Department acknowledges the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, families and communities in early childhood services. The Starting Out Right initiative has been developed as a community education approach with the aim to improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through a series of parent workshops that build the capacity of parents and carers to support their child/children's social, intellectual and emotional development. The initiative also aims to: increase the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children having a successful start to their preschool and early years of schooling; ensure that parents and carers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are recognised as the first educators of their child, and that their home culture is recognised and developed to give children the best possible start. The South Australian Government is establishing 38 Children's Centres for Early Childhood Development and Parenting across the State. The centres are developed in accordance with local community needs and provide easy access for families to family support programs, childcare and education, and health services for children from birth to eight years of age, and support close collaboration

with other agencies and regional office staff. This includes four Aboriginal Children and Family Centres, which have been developed through the Indigenous Early Child Development National Partnership. The centres are located at Ceduna, Whyalla, Christies Beach and Ernabella.

The Department has strongly supports the development of Local School and Community Partnerships (LSCPs) and will continue to progress this work across the State. Site leaders are critical in establishing relationships with their families and school communities. Continued collaboration with Aboriginal Community Education Officers will support the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and families in education and progress the development of LSCP agreements. Resources are also provided at the State and regional level to support community engagement. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment is an identified target in South Australia's Strategic Plan, and as such, the South Australian Government is committed to increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To further support this and the important work in the Early Years, the Department has recently provided a traineeship pathway program for seven Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in preschool and identified Aboriginal Children and Family Centres. Other initiatives to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the Department include: Teaching Pathways' scholarships; the Dr Alitja Rigney leadership scholarships; the recent Aboriginal career intention survey for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and accredited training for Aboriginal Community Education Officers.

Literacy and numeracy development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people is being supported through intensive professional development and support for teachers, including whole-school approaches with a community engagement focus in identified Action Plan Focus Schools. The success in improving outcomes in the Closing The Gap Literacy and Numeracy Achievement – Keys to Unlocking the Future initiative has resulted in additional resourcing through a series of pilots that extend the important and innovative work that had commenced in participating schools and preschools. An expanded school year model is also being investigated in remote and very remote parts of the State, in order to provide intensive support and enrichment programs for students.

The Department's Aboriginal Strategy 2013 – 2016 will provide the structure for continued improvement in the educational outcomes for South Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in seven key priority areas based on the six domains of the national *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010 – 2014*, and will include a seventh domain of Aboriginal Employment to further strengthen and support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Department. The strategy aims to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people will achieve their full potential. The Department's Aboriginal

Strategy embeds cultural competency at the core of all policy, process and practice.

The Brighter Futures Programme was created to help transform the Department to deliver improved benefits for all children, young people and families in South Australia. The Department is committed to improving the education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and looks forward to the continuing partnership with the SAAETCB as the peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education advisory body.



# Distribution of Focus schools in South Australia

**Figure SA5: Map of South Australia Focus schools**  
(Focus schools are listed in a table following this map.)







Source: South Australian Department for Education and Child Development, Catholic Education South Australia, Association of Independent Schools of South Australia, 2012.

## Focus school information

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments (FTE)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments (FTE)	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Aldinga Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	654.8	20	X		
Amata Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	113	110		X	X
Augusta Park Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	280	145		X	
Barmera Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	263	36		X	
Blair Athol North School B-7	Gov.	Metropolitan	367	34		X	
Blakeview Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	492	35	X		
Brahma Lodge Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	202	14		X	
Cardijn College (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	911	14			
Caritas College	Cath.	Provincial	591	40	X		
Carlton School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	58	57		X	
Ceduna Area School (NS)	Gov.	Very Remote	609.1	176		X	
Challa Gardens Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	363	48		X	
Christie Downs Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	257	48		X	
Christies Beach High School and Southern Vocational College (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,203.4	117.6		X	
Christies Beach Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	382	37		X	
Coober Pedy Area School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	291.4	125.8		X	
Crossways Lutheran School	Ind.	Very Remote	62	62		X	
Darlington Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	299	44	X	X	
Elizabeth Downs Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	274	19		X	
Elizabeth East Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	235	20		X	
Elizabeth Grove Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	256	40		X	
Elizabeth Park Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	331	46		X	
Elizabeth South Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	238	21		X	
Enfield Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	204	25		X	
Ernabella Anangu School (NS)	Gov.	Very Remote	136	133		X	
Fisk Street Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	106	35		X	
Flinders View Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	159	121		X	
Forbes Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	289	23		X	
Fraser Park Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	81	30		X	
Fregon Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	56	55		X	
Fremont-Elizabeth City High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	792	78		X	
Hincks Avenue Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	170	44		X	
Holy Family Catholic School (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	828	8		X	
Huntfield Heights Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	96	14		X	
Indulkana Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	87	83		X	
Ingle Farm Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	320	37		X	
John Hartley (B-7) (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	501	81		X	
Kaurna Plains School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	66	64		X	
Kenmore Park Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	10	9		X	
Kirton Point Primary School	Gov.	Remote	267	51		X	
Koonibba Aboriginal School	Gov.	Very Remote	34	34		X	
Leigh Creek Area School	Gov.	Remote	148.5	43.2			
Lincoln Gardens Primary School	Gov.	Remote	71	43		X	

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments (FTE)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments (FTE)	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Long Street Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	345	33		X	
Maitland Area School	Gov.	Provincial	209.1	49		X	
Mark Oliphant (B–12)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,282.2	98		X	
Marree Aboriginal School	Gov.	Very Remote	23.2	19.2		X	
Meningie Area School	Gov.	Provincial	187.9	62		X	
Mimili Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	62	61		X	X
Moonta Area School	Gov.	Provincial	528.4	49		X	
Murputja Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	23.5	23.5		X	
Murray Bridge High School (NS), (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	974	87		X	
Murray Bridge Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	334	19		X	
Murray Bridge South Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	291	50		X	
Murraylands Christian College –Murray Bridge	Ind.	Provincial	93	19	X	X	
Northfield Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	298	38		X	
Oak Valley Aboriginal School	Gov.	Very Remote	22	22		X	
Ocean View P–12 College (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	738	93		X	
Oodnadatta Aboriginal School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	45.6	43.6		X	
O’Sullivan Beach Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	179	13		X	
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College (IFS)	Cath.	Metropolitan	550	8		X	
Parafield Gardens R–7 School	Gov.	Metropolitan	486	22		X	
Paralowie School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	1289	68.8		X	
Pennington Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	252	35		X	
Pipalyatjara Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	54	52		X	
Playford Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	740	14			
Point Pearce Aboriginal School	Gov.	Provincial	11	11		X	
Port Augusta Secondary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	539.9	186.6		X	
Port Augusta West Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	271	40		X	
Port Lincoln High School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	721	103.2			
Quorn Area School	Gov.	Provincial	222.3	39		X	
Raukkan Aboriginal School	Gov.	Provincial	18	18		X	
Renmark Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	256	17		X	
Rostrevor College	Cath.	Metropolitan	915	37			
Salisbury High School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	870.6	80.8		X	
Salisbury North R–7 School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	392	46		X	
Salisbury Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	441	36		X	
Samaritan College	Cath.	Provincial	1,000	34	X		
Solomontown Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	269.4	48.8		X	
Southern Vales Christian College (IFS)	Ind.	Metropolitan	727	28	X		
St Martins Lutheran College (IFS)	Ind.	Provincial	505	16	X		
Stirling North Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	278	50			
Stuart High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	255	36		X	
Sunrise Christian School Whyalla	Ind.	Provincial	152	12	X	X	
Swallowcliffe School CPC–7 (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	374	41		X	
The Pines Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	271	13		X	

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments (FTE)	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments (FTE)	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Unity College Inc (IFS)	Ind.	Provincial	801	31	X	X	
Wandana Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	186	38		X	
Warriappendi School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	45.4	45.4		X	
Watarru Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	13	12		X	
Whyalla Stuart Campus R-7 (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	104	49		X	
Willsden Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	156	97		X	
Woodville High School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	985.6	123.1		X	
Xavier College (IFS)	Cath.	Provincial	972	19			
Yalata Anangu School	Gov.	Very Remote	53	53		X	

Notes:

IFS School received funding in 2012 under the *Investing in Focus Schools* initiative.

NS School received funding in 2012 under the *Focus Schools Next Steps* initiative.

- Willsden Primary School replaced Carlton Primary School in the *Focus Schools Next Steps* initiative.
- Gepps Cross Primary School and Kilburn Primary School closed at the end of 2010. Swallowcliffe Primary School has changed to Swallowcliffe School CPC-7. Blair Athol North School B-7 was opened in 2011 and included as a Focus school. Cardijn College, Xavier College, Holy Family School and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College were included as Focus schools in 2012.
- Total and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments for government schools were taken at the Term 3, 2012 School Enrolment Census.

# Report on the Remote Service Delivery (RSD) Service Delivery Standards

## Schooling Domain

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) has agreed to use the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* reporting processes to report on schooling service delivery standards for schools located in Remote Service Delivery communities. The following is the report for schools in Remote Service Delivery communities in South Australia.

## RSD standard (a)

All school-aged children will have access to an appropriate school and/or a distance learning alternative.

### Action Plan link

There is no directly equivalent measure in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* for this standard. The following information provides details of the schooling services and other programs available in the Remote Service Delivery communities.

Number of RSD communities in South Australia that have:

- pre-primary programs in schools/other centres: 2
- primary schools: 2
- secondary schools: 2
- secondary schools with TAFE programs: 2

The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Trade Training Centre (APYTTC) opened in November 2012, and is available to all senior school students across the APY Lands.

This is a purpose built education and training facility which provides vocational training to AQF Certificate III level in the following industry areas:

- Automotive
- Metal Fabrication
- Construction
- Rural Production (including Conservation and Land Management)
- Horticulture
- Commercial Cookery
- Allied Health (including Aged Care)
- Office Administration
- Information Technology

The APYTTC project addresses skills shortages in the traditional trades of: Agriculture; Carpentry and Joinery; Cookery; Metal Fabrication; Motor Mechanics; Pastry Cookery; Tiling and Landscape Gardening.

The APYTTC include facilities for a visiting trainer to be accommodated for extended periods. Housing South Australia is overseeing the completion of the construction of student accommodation adjacent to the APYTTC.

The Wiltja Program is an annex to Woodville High School, a metropolitan school in Adelaide. Up to 100 Anangu students from remote communities in the APY and Maralinga Lands board at the residence during the school term and return to their communities during school holidays. All students study English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D). While operated by the Department, the Wiltja Program is directly governed by the local school governing council and the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee in the students' home communities.

## RSD standard (b)

Personalised learning plans for all students are negotiated between school staff and families. For Year 10, Year 11 and Year

12 students, schools will augment personalised learning plans with activity to support the transition to further education and/or employment.

## Action Plan link

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to this standard. Local level Action 21 includes the development of personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from the first year of formal schooling to Year 10 to support improved educational outcomes. It should be recognised that personalised learning strategies are not the same as personalised learning plans. In some, but not all, cases quantitative information about both personalised learning strategies and plans may be available.

A second local level action, Action 51, states that secondary schools will provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and targeted case management strategies to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12. Qualitative information for this action is available.

As at 19 December 2012, there were 136 students in the two RSD schools in South Australia in Years 1 to 10. Of these students, 68 (50 per cent) had an Individual Learning Plan recorded in the Integrated Student Support System – Indigenous database (ISSS).

In South Australia, a learning plan can include an Individual Learning Plan (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students), an Individual Education Plan (for Guardianship of the Minister students) or a Negotiated Education Plan (for students with disabilities). Data is reliant on schools to flag students with a personalised learning plan within a schools system. It is believed that the actual percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with a personalised learning plan is higher and in 2013, schools will continue to be urged to flag these students within the data system.

Amata Anangu School have the ongoing Wati's (Initiated Men) Class, with a focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills for this target group. There are ongoing programs conducting VET Work Experience and Community Traineeships with the

Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) at Yulara. There is the ongoing support of a Transition to Work Coordinator for all Years 11 and 12 students.

Mimili Anangu School conduct a 'Transition to Work' SACE and VET program. This is run in conjunction with the University of South Australia, which includes site visits to work places in Whyalla.

## RSD standard (c)

All schools have literacy and numeracy strategies that respond to the needs of students, particularly recognising the needs of students who speak English as another language or dialect.

## Action Plan link

There is some alignment between the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* (Action 31) and this standard. Action 31 states in part: 'Focus schools will during 2011 have in place a whole-of-school approach to the teaching and learning of Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy which builds from students' home language(s) where Standard Australian English is a second or further language.' The quantitative data that can be reported is about whole-of-school approaches rather than strategies.

Both of the RSD schools in South Australia have a whole-of-school approach to Literacy and Numeracy.

English literacy levels in all areas (oral, reading, writing) are below the level of non-Anangu students because most Anangu students do not begin to use English language until they commence schooling. Accelerated Literacy is an effective literacy program that is implemented in all of the schools on the APY Lands. It is designed to accelerate the literacy skills of learners through a systematic teaching sequence and inclusive teacher–student interaction. The Accelerated Literacy Program helps to support students to understand and make explicit the actual function of words and the ways in which they may be grouped to develop meaningful interactions and transactions.

Maths 300 is a project developed by Education Services Australia that aims to collect the very best maths lessons available globally and provides the resources for teachers to implement a 'working mathematically' curriculum in their classrooms.

Anangu students are supported to achieve numeracy skills with a consistent structure to their learning activities. Learning is supported by explicit instructions, concrete materials, trial and error strategies and modelling.

## RSD standard (d)

All schools establish a school and community partnership with local families, which includes an attendance strategy, establishes goals for improvement and is reported on annually.

### Action Plan link

*The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to this standard and it should be noted that they are addressed separately, i.e. one is not part of the other. Local level Action 19 states: 'Focus schools will commence negotiating a formal school–community partnership agreement between the school, families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in 2011, that sets out the respective responsibilities of each party and the ways in which they will work together to create a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes.' Some quantitative data for schools in Remote Service Delivery communities is available for this action.

The second, separate action (Action 26) ensures that Focus schools will:

- commence developing an evidence-based attendance strategy in 2011 in consultation with parents and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which includes targets for improved attendance and reflects how the school responds to and seeks to enhance the linguistic, cultural and contextual resources that students bring to their schooling
- publish their attendance strategy in 2012

- evaluate and monitor the success of their attendance strategy, and
- report annually on progress towards meeting their targets.

Reporting for this standard will be via the two separate actions noted above.

There are two Remote Service Delivery Schools – Amata Anangu School and Mimili Anangu School. Both schools have a negotiated local school-community partnership agreement through the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC). Both schools also have an attendance strategy in place. The Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC) has endorsed attendance as a priority for the community.

The Far North and Aboriginal Lands Region Attendance protocols have been successfully implemented across the region. Detailed case studies have been conducted at three school sites and the findings have indicated that when students are living in the community, their attendance rates are very high. Attendance figures are significantly affected by family relocation and absence from the home community. Approximately 20 per cent of families are travelling at any one time to attend to family and community cultural obligations, such as attending funerals, travelling to access health services and treatment, and food security. The distances travelled, and time that the families are absent, have a marked effect on student attendance rates. Travelling students tend not enrol or attend the nearest local school when they are travelling.

The databases such as ISSS and the Tri-Border State Attendance database provide monitoring data and assist in the implementation of strategies to engage travelling families in schooling as quickly as possible.

In support of the PYEC Strategic Plan 2012–2014, the PYEC and Anangu Coordinators work in close partnership to prioritise and address attendance in the region.



# Tasmania report on activities and outcomes

## Introduction

In 2012, there were 5,879 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in full-time and part-time schooling (Prep to Year 12) in Tasmania, representing 7.1 per cent of Tasmania's student population. Of the 5,879 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 4,908 were enrolled in government schools (84 per cent).

There are 262 schools operating across Tasmania. Of this total, 197 are government schools, 37 are Catholic schools, and 28 are independent schools. Of the 262 schools, there were 156 primary schools, 43 secondary schools, 57 combined schools and six special schools. The majority of schools are located in metropolitan and provincial areas, with only a small proportion classified as remote and very remote. *Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools, Australia, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).*

In 2012, the Department of Education (the Department) was structured into three Learning Services responsible for early childhood education and schooling (from kindergarten to Year 10). There are eight senior secondary colleges catering for students in Years 11 and 12.

Catholic education in Tasmania is delivered by the Systemic Catholic Schools Governing Council, with delegation to the Director of Catholic Education, who is responsible for the overall leadership of the system of Catholic schools and colleges.

There were 28 independent schools in Tasmania in 2012.

## Profile of Focus schools

In Tasmania there are 73 Focus schools (63 government, 9 Catholic and one independent), which together account for 85 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments.

Focus schools in the Catholic and independent systems remain unchanged from those identified in 2010.

The following government Focus schools – Bridgewater High School, East Derwent Primary School, Gagebrook Primary School and Herdsmans Cove Primary School – were amalgamated, becoming the Jordan River Learning Federation. Individual schools became campuses of the federation.

A map (Figure TAS5) and list detailing the location of Focus schools in Tasmania are provided at the end of this chapter.

## Tasmania report on progress by Domains

### Readiness for school

#### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

Data for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection have been sourced from the Australian Government and the State and Territory departments with responsibility for Early Childhood Education and Care and the ACT Catholic Education Office. The National Collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) that facilitates consistency of data provision across the various jurisdictional collections. Alignment with these standards has not been completely achieved by all jurisdictions for 2012, and care should be taken when comparing States and Territories.

Some jurisdictions were not able to provide certain data elements as specified in the ECEC NMDS for the National ECEC Collection. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to identify children attending multiple preschool programs within the collection reference period. It is also a challenge to report accurately the number of children enrolled in and attending a preschool program, without counting an individual child more than once. When a child attends two different preschool programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. This child is only counted once in child counts. All preschool episodes associated with a child are included in preschool episode counts. Australian totals in Table TAS1 need to be interpreted with care due to the mixed populations that are reported between States and Territories.

Comparison of data year to year is not possible due to collection, output and processing methodology not being consistent across years.

For further information on the ECEC NMDS, collection methodologies and coverage for the National ECEC Collection, please see the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National ECEC Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat.No. 4240.0.55.001).

## Overall progress

In 2012, 108.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were enrolled in a preschool program, with 98.1 per cent attending a preschool program. The equivalent figures for the overall kindergarten cohort are 98.3 per cent and 98.5 per cent, respectively. Tasmania has had a kindergarten program with high participation rates for over 20 years.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Tasmania considered to be developmentally on track, across four or more domains, is 54.7 per cent, compared to 47.7 per cent nationally. This figure is slightly lower than that observed in the 2009 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), where 56.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Tasmania

were on track in four or more domains. However, there appears to have been an undercount of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children identified in the 2009 AEDI. As a result, comparisons with the 2009 data must be treated with caution. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children for Tasmania continues to be significantly smaller than for the nation.

Tasmania's good performance in this area is a reflection of the State's investment in the early years including, for example, the Launching into Learning (LiL) program, as well as programs that provide a link between community and school, such as the Aboriginal Early Years Program. Also, as stated above, Tasmania has a long history of well-attended kindergarten.

## Systemic level actions (5, 6 and 7)

### Action 5

All Focus schools participated in the 2012 AEDI data capture and 10 Indigenous Cultural Consultants (ICC) were involved in the AEDI data collection. The ICCs supported a number of schools

**Table TAS1: Summary of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program, Tasmania and Australia, 2012**

	Tasmania		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children
Number of children enrolled	515	6,717	11,237	266,036
Children enrolled over ERP (per cent)	108.6%	98.3	82	88.5
Number of children attending	505	6,613	10,460	258,881
Percentage of children attending over ERP <sup>(a)</sup>	106.5	96.8	76	86.1
Percentage of children enrolled that are attending <sup>(b)</sup>	98.1	98.5	93.1	97.3
ERP 4 year olds – as at June 2012 <sup>(c)</sup>	474	6,831	13,763	300,596

Notes:

- a) Calculated as the percentage of children attending over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- b) Calculated as the percentage of children enrolled.
- c) ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and should be treated as indicative.
- d) Enrolment and attendance counts include children aged 4 and 5 years. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.

Additional Note:

Due to the relatively small population at the cohort level, the reported figures can vary significantly from year to year due to variation in the ABS Experimental Estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (unpublished); ABS, (unpublished) Australian Demographic Statistics (Cat. No. 3101.0); ABS, (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat. No. 3238.0).

**Table TAS2: Proportion of children in Tasmania assessed as 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 (per cent)**

	Tasmania	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	54.7	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	70.4	70.3

Notes:

- The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored above the 25th percentile of the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge need to also be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Index* data, 2012 data collection.

with regard to teacher Checklist completion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in government schools. The involvement of ICCs was supported by an information session by the Tasmanian AEDI Coordinator and provision of the AEDI training materials prior to the commencement of data collection. Overall, ICCs reported that they felt their involvement was an important part of the data capture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Schools and other key stakeholders are encouraged to use their AEDI school profiles.

The AEDI data is also included in the State level information within the Kids Come First Project, managed by the Department of Health and Human Services. The Kids Come First project is a whole-of-government initiative to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for Tasmanian children and young people. The project has developed an outcomes-based framework with a database that allows analysis at a locality/suburb level for children from birth to age 17 for a number of indicators. This includes key indicators of health, wellbeing, safety, development and learning that reflect the influences of child, family, and community and service systems.

Launching into Learning (LiL) is an evidence-based early childhood initiative that recognises the importance of learning and development in the early years of life. LiL aims to provide children with the best possible start in life. The philosophy of LiL is to support caregivers as their child's first, ongoing and often most influential teachers.

The Aboriginal Early Years Program works collaboratively and supports LiL teachers to engage with caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from birth to 4 years of age. In addition, the Aboriginal Early Years Program supports LiL teachers to establish learning environments and experiences that are culturally appropriate. A key focus of the program is home visits. This involves engaging with families and providing a range of resources to support and enhance early literacy and numeracy skills, as well as providing a strong cultural context for learning through cultural practices.

The Aboriginal Early Years Program also plays an important role in connecting families with their local LiL program. To date, the program has been successful in supporting caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to access and engage with LiL programs. LiL also facilitates interagency links through partnerships with child health services, Aboriginal Health, and Child and Family Centres (CFCs).

## Action 6

All schools in Tasmania currently receive State funding to provide at least 10 hours of kindergarten to students per week. As part of the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education with the Australian Government, funding has been provided for achieving Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. This program is enabling the Department to progressively implement a strategy to provide all Tasmanian children with access to at least 15 hours per week of kindergarten by 2013.

## Action 7

All students in kindergarten are assessed using the Kindergarten Development Checklist (KDC). The KDC assists teachers to identify students at risk of not achieving expected child development outcomes. In addition, all Preparatory students are assessed on their school readiness using the Performance Indicators for Schools (PIPS) in the areas of early literacy and numeracy. Information acquired from assists teachers identify students who will benefit from intervention or enrichment programs.

## Local level actions (8)

### Action 8

The Department's Strategic Plan 2012–2015 reflects the commitment to early years through the Bright Beginnings priority. This focuses on the following:

- quality education and care programs and services for young children so they develop as confident and curious learners prior to commencing full-time school
- engagement with children and families in a cohesive way by connecting and integrating services, and
- developing and maintaining strong relationships between schools, families, services and the broader community from the early years.

All Focus schools provide Launching into Learning (LiL). LiL is based on the belief that parents are their child's first, ongoing and often most influential teachers. Schools and families work together to give children the best start in learning, leading to a smooth transition into kindergarten.

All schools use the Early Years Learning Framework to plan strategies and programs to support the growth of the whole child, including social and emotional development and early literacy and numeracy. The Department recognises that children's experiences in the earliest years of their life are critical to their ongoing development. These experiences have a significant impact on their future achievements at school, and the extent to which they are able to take advantage of opportunities later in life. Support and intervention before children begin school is likely to be more effective in achieving success than trying to do things to help children 'catch up' once they are at school.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicators

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school–community partnership agreement in place.*

### Overall progress

For Tasmanian government schools, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with, or working towards

completing, a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) is 42 per cent. The Department's *Closing the Gap in Aboriginal Outcomes 2010–2014: A Tasmanian Strategy for Aboriginal Student Success through School Improvement*, outlines the requirement for all students to have a PLP by 2014.

Additional support is available to schools through a Closing the Gap Coordinator and Aboriginal Education staff, such as Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs), Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers (AEYLOs) and Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs), to support schools in developing PLPs.

During 2012, all Focus schools (100 per cent) in Tasmania worked towards establishing formal school–community partnership agreements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and the community.

The Department recognises that any action towards the establishment of a successful school–community partnership needs to be genuine and authentic. Schools have been encouraged to use flexible and innovative approaches to address the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Principals and school leadership teams have worked with their school community to build shared ownership and responsibility within their local context.

## Systemic level actions (15, 16, 17 and 18)

The Tasmanian Closing the Gap Strategy reflects the priority actions of the national *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan* which aims to build the capacity of schools to meet the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and accelerate performance through whole-of-school approaches to personalised learning, literacy and numeracy improvement and community engagement. A feature of the strategy is the identification of 63 government schools, based on high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments and high educational needs. These schools are prioritised by Aboriginal Education Services, Tasmania (AES) for the provision of support and to facilitate inclusive teaching and community engagement.

Work to increase the degree to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded into, and across, the Australian Curriculum for all schools has continued. This is supported in schools through the implementation of Tasmanian Aboriginal-specific cultural resources developed by AES.

### Action 15

The Department has committed to providing early childhood education, health, welfare, family support, and youth and community services. This involves the department working in collaboration with relevant inter-agency and community groups to promote health and wellbeing learning outcomes.

Through Child and Family Centres (located around the State) all communities in Tasmania have access to improved support and access to a range of services for young children and families. All Focus schools have access to a local child and family centre within their area, as well as linkages with other agencies. Schools are able to identify and determine their local needs and work closely with a range of health care professionals, such as child health nurses, family support workers and childcare professionals, as well as specialist speech, language and occupational therapy services.

### Action 16

The Department has committed to supporting pregnant and parenting students through a Retaining and Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students policy. The policy addresses the inclusion of, and support for, pregnant and parenting students in education.

The policy recognises that pregnant or parenting students are at risk of leaving education, and are among the most vulnerable students in relation to retention. This includes developing links with other government and community agencies to ensure that the health, welfare, financial, social and childcare needs of pregnant and parenting students are met in ways that increase the chances of them completing their education.

### Action 17

In 2012, AES developed a strategic framework in line with the Department's Strategic Plan 2012–2015. This involved scoping current programs, staffing profile and AES priorities and aligning them to the Department's key drivers: successful learners; innovative workforce; inspired leadership; dynamic learning environments and community confidence. *Tasmania's Aboriginal Education Framework (2012–2015)* is a framework for AES staff, teachers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and the wider community.

Aboriginal Education Services staff continued to work in partnership with teachers, students and their parents to improve educational outcomes during 2012. Additional support is provided to schools through the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in a range of positions such as

Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs), Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers (AEYLOs) and Aboriginal Education Officers (AEOs). AEOs and AEWs work across Focus Schools to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the areas of engagement, learning and career pathways.

### Action 18

Focus Schools involved in the low socio-economic status (SES) National Partnerships have closely monitored and reported on the attendance and literacy and numeracy performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, both at a system level and through conveying information to parents through school reporting and PLP processes.

## Local level actions

### Action 19

In 2012, of the 73 Focus schools in Tasmania, 18 per cent of schools (compared to 2.7 per cent in 2011) have completed formal school–community partnership agreements. Forty-two per cent of the Focus schools (compared to 59.7 per cent in 2011) are working towards a formal school–community partnership. The remaining 40 per cent of schools (compared to 37.6 per cent in 2011) are yet to commence a formal school–community partnership, although all schools are ensuring that effective teaching and learning strategies for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are in place.

### Action 20

A number of schools have established Aboriginal Education Advisory Groups (AEAGs). In some instances, AEAGs advise networks of schools. The East Tamar Federation is currently developing AEAGs and has been working on strategies to develop authentic partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Jordan River Learning Federation is undertaking a similar process. This work is supported by a full time Aboriginal Education Officer in each federation.

### Action 21

Schools continue to actively engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools, parents and students to develop personalised learning strategies. As a result of the Investing in Focus Schools funding, a number of schools have employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and the school to develop personalised learning strategies.

# Attendance

## Performance indicators

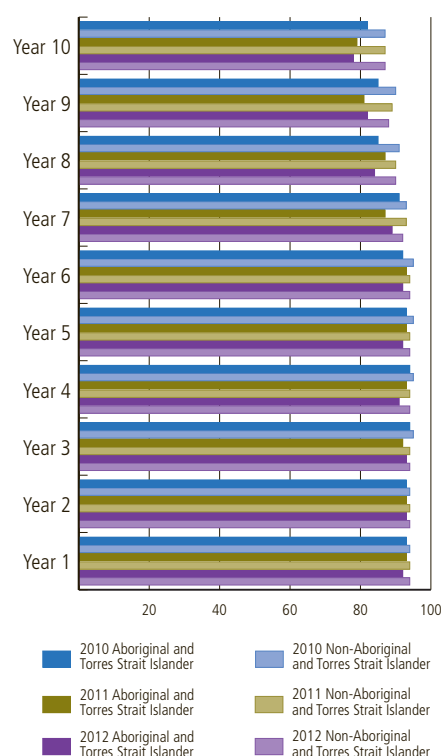
5. Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.
6. Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to 'Other' Australians.
7. Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
8. Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Overall progress

### Attendance rates

Tasmania has the highest attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Australia. In addition, the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is one of the

**Figure TAS1.1: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, Tasmania, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, Student Attendance Data Collection, 2012 (unpublished).

**Table TAS3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by sector, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>Government</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	92	93	93	91	92	92	89	84	82	78	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	90	88	87	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	94	94	92	89	87	86	n/a	n/a
<b>Catholic</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95	92	93	92	93	91	91	90	89	88	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	94	94	95	94	93	92	91	90	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	95	94	93	92	91	90	n/a	n/a
<b>Independent</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	84	94	90	96	93	95	93	92	93	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94	94	94	94	94	95	94	93	94	92	86	99
<b>Total</b>	94	94	94	94	94	95	94	93	94	92	86	99

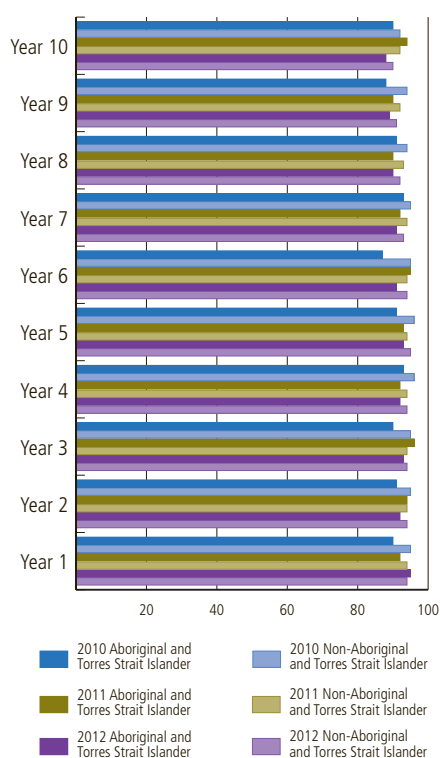
Note: Definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance data are not uniform. As such, direct comparisons of attendance rates between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made. Nor can attendance data for 2012 be aggregated or averaged at the national or State/Territory level. Variations in methodology between jurisdictions are described in the explanatory notes for the 2012 attendance data contained in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012*.

n/a not available.

Source: ACARA, Student Attendance Data Collection, 2012 (unpublished).

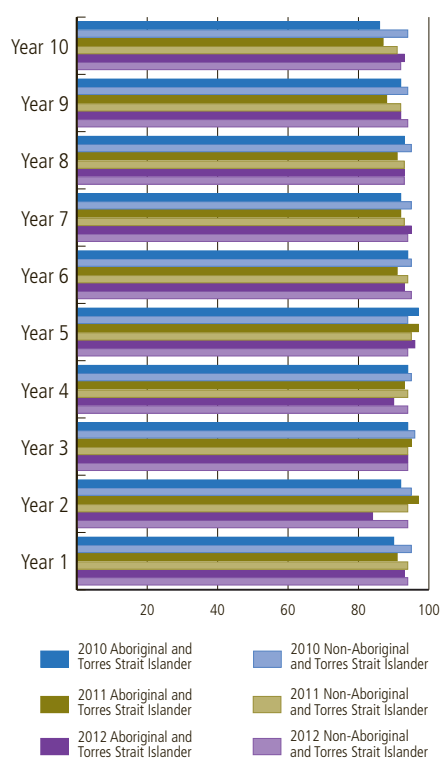


**Figure TAS1.2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, Tasmania, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure TAS1.3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, Tasmania, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

smallest observed for all jurisdictions. In the primary years of schooling in the government sector, the gap is relatively small, averaging around two percentage points, but tends to be larger, averaging around six percentage points, in the later years of schooling.

In terms of a comparative analysis of the data between 2010 and 2012, there is some evidence that the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government school students in Years 8, 9 and 10 has increased slightly. The attendance rates in the primary years have remained relatively stable. However, it should be noted, as discussed above, that Tasmania's attendance rates are still high compared to the national rates. Moreover, cohort effects and the relatively small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will lead to some variation in the data.

Given the small numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in Catholic and independent schools, year-on-year comparisons are difficult to make.

## Enrolment to population ratio

For 2012, school participation rates have not been published by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status due to concerns with the quality of the indicator. Specifically, the rates for most States and Territories exceed 100 per cent, primarily as a result of modal differences in the data sources. The denominator is sourced from the Estimated Resident Population series, itself drawn from the Population Census, while the numerator is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The ABS is working to provide a substitute measure.



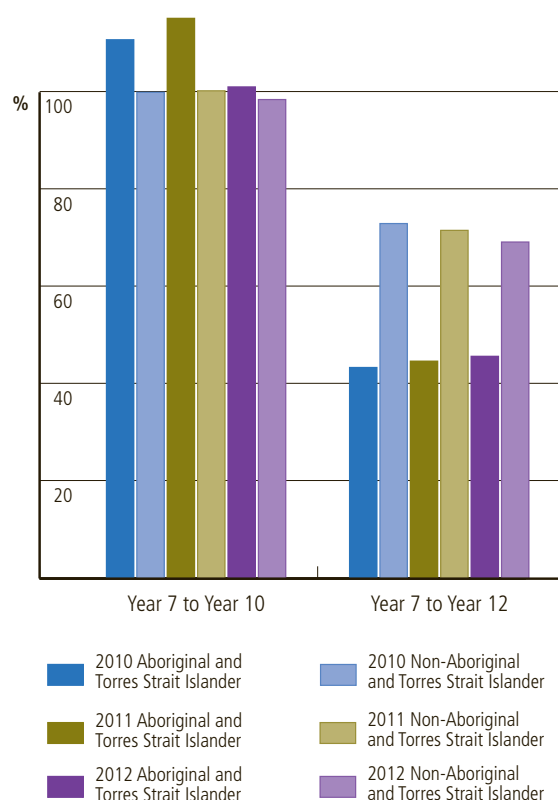
## Apparent retention rates

**Table TAS4: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Tasmania, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 7 to Year 10	101.1	98.5
Year 7 to Year 12	45.7	69.2

Source: Derived from ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0) and based on full-time student enrolments.

**Figure TAS2: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Tasmania, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

Year 7 to Year 10 apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Tasmania were greater than 100 per cent. This is probably due to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification in the secondary years.

There is a gap of 26.9 percentage points between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apparent retention rates for Years 7/8 to Year 12. This is a gap closure of 2.7 percentage points on 2010. Due to the small sample size, the gap closure must be interpreted with caution.

## Apparent grade progression ratios

For the period 2010–2012, apparent grade progression rates for Years 8 to 9, and Years 9 to 10 are consistently close to 100 per cent. There is some evidence of an increase in apparent grade progression rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 10 to 11, but the apparent grade progression rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students Years 11 to 12 shows no clear pattern.

## Systemic level actions (25)

### Action 25

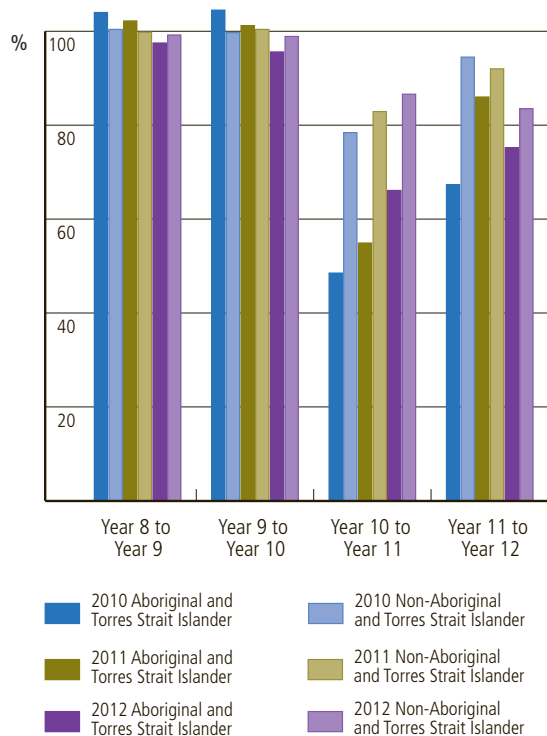
The Department has developed a multi-faceted approach to address declining student attendance. This work is based on national and international best practice for engagement of students. It involves schools making significant and sustainable changes through the development of supportive cultures, implementing school-wide evidence-based strategies and student focused strategies. This work is supported through the

**Table TAS5: Apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tasmania, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 8 to Year 9	97.5	99.2
Year 9 to Year 10	95.6	98.9
Year 10 to Year 11	66.1	86.6
Year 11 to Year 12	75.2	83.5

Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

**Figure TAS3: Grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Tasmania, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools, Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

Smarter School National Partnerships, the Professional Learning Institute and the work of the Principal Network Leaders.

The Department has developed a web-based Student Support System. Through a cyclical process of goal setting, action planning, monitoring and evaluation this system helps schools to support all students in their academic, social, emotional, and behavioural needs. Teachers and support staff access the Student Support System to help them to monitor student welfare, and to plan and implement support strategies in an efficient and timely manner so that the engagement and success of all students is improved.

Tasmania's *Retention and Attainment Strategy Years 10–12* is part of the Department's strategic direction for government schools. The strategy aims to guide the work of the Department in improving the transition of students from Year 10 to further education and training, and on engaging students so they

stay in education and training to gain a meaningful Year 12 or equivalent qualification.

National Partnership schools reported on their attendance data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Attendance data is closely monitored and strategies and processes are put in place where required. The development of Personalised Learning Plans (PLP) is a useful strategy in emphasising the importance of attendance, and in facilitating home and school collaboration in encouraging attendance. Evidence is emerging that where PLPs are in place attendance rates are improving.

## Local level actions (26)

### Action 26

Strategies to improve attendance and retention in schools have targeted at-risk students including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Strategies have included close liaison between schools, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and families in supporting attendance and engaging students through, for example, home visits and regular meetings between families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Focus schools, through their School Improvement Plans, where applicable, identify targets around attendance rates and develop specific strategies to address this. Schools are also required to continually monitor and evaluate their attendance targets and report annually on their progress.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*
10. *Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.*

## Overall progress

In terms of a national comparison, Tasmania has the smallest differences in results between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the majority of tests and year levels.

## NAPLAN outcomes

**Table TAS6: NAPLAN reading, writing<sup>(a)</sup> and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Tasmania, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

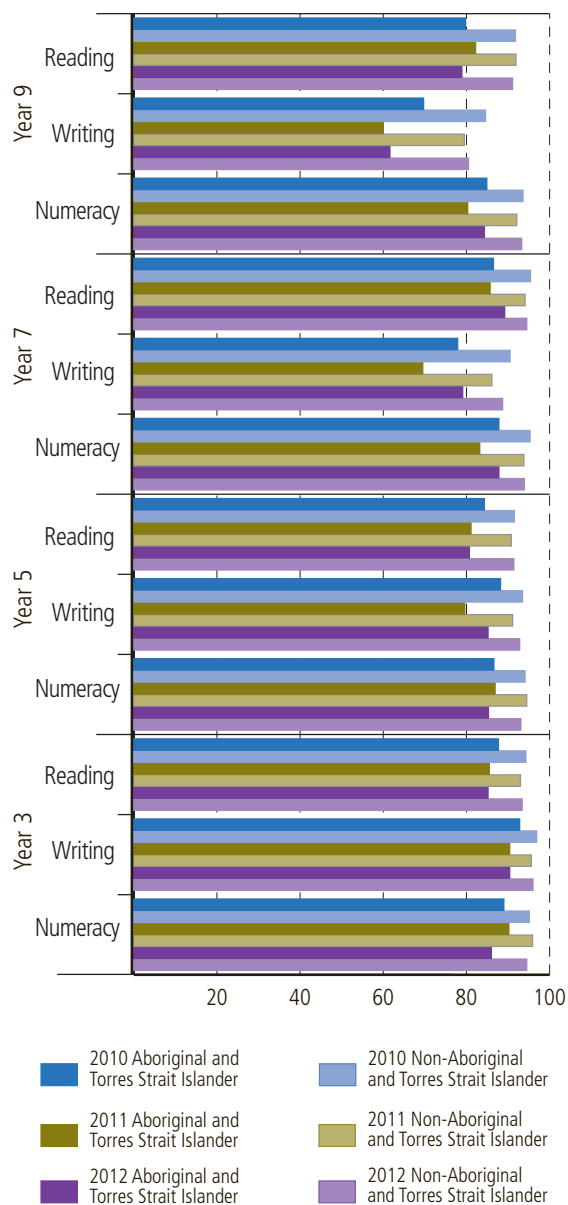
	Year 3			Year 5			Year 7			Year 9		
	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.
<b>2010</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87.7	92.8	89	84.3	88.2	86.6	86.5	77.9	87.8	79.8	69.7	84.9
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.3	96.9	95.1	91.5	93.5	94.1	95.4	90.5	95.3	91.8	84.6	93.6
Gap	-6.6	-4.1	-6.1	-7.2	-5.3	-7.5	-8.9	-12.6	-7.5	-12	-14.9	-8.7
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±5.2	±3.4	±4	±4.8	±3.6	±4.6	±4.1	±4.7	±4.2	±6.5	±5.2	±6.5
<b>2011</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85.5	90.4	90.2	81.1	79.6	86.9	85.7	69.5	83.2	82.2	60	80.3
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	95.6	95.9	90.8	91.1	94.5	94.1	86.1	93.8	91.9	79.5	92.1
Gap	-7.5	-5.2	-5.7	-9.7	-11.5	-7.6	-8.4	-16.6	-10.6	-9.7	-19.5	-11.8
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±4.3	±3.7	±4.5	±4.3	±4.3	±4.4	±4.1	±6.3	±5.1	±5.3	±6.8	±5.4
<b>2012</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85.2	90.4	86.0	80.7	85.2	85.3	89.2	79.1	87.8	78.9	61.6	84.3
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.4	96.0	94.5	91.4	92.8	93.1	94.5	88.7	93.9	91.1	80.5	93.3
Gap	-8.2	-5.6	-8.5	-10.7	-7.6	-7.8	-5.3	-9.6	-6.1	-12.2	-18.9	-9.0
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±4.1	±3.4	±3.6	±4.3	±3.7	±3.8	±3.5	±4.2	±3.6	±5.6	±5.6	±4.6

Notes:

- a) A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.
- b) The confidence intervals for 2010 to 2012 in this table are specifically for Tasmania.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2010–2012.

**Figure TAS4: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Tasmania, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA (2012 and unpublished), *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2012*.

In terms of a comparative analysis of the data between 2010 to 2012 NAPLAN results, the change in gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander government school students is mixed. A few domains have demonstrated gap closure, while a few have demonstrated gap widening. These results should be read in the context of Tasmania having the smallest gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students nationwide.

Significant gap closure has occurred for Year 7 reading (3.6 percentage points between 2010 and 2012), Year 7 writing (3.0 percentage points between 2010 and 2012), and Year 7 numeracy (1.4 percentage points between 2010 and 2012). Over this same period, gap widening has been observed in Year 3 reading, writing and numeracy, Year 5 reading and writing, as well as Year 9 writing.

It is unclear whether these results are trends. In general, the gaps observed for Tasmania can move around from year to year. As a result, interpretation of gap change for Tasmania should be approached with caution.

## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

In general, the gaps for Tasmanian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander metropolitan students are smaller than for Australia as a whole (the average gap was 11.8 percentage points, compared to 15.8 percentage points for Australia), and gaps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander provincial students are significantly smaller (the average gap was 7.5 percentage points, compared to 17.6 percentage points for Australia). For Tasmania, gaps are, on average, smaller in provincial areas than metropolitan areas. This is the opposite of what is generally seen nationwide.

Comparing 2011 to 2012 results, there are gap closures in Year 5 writing, Year 7 across all domains, and Year 9 numeracy for both metropolitan and provincial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. There is gap widening in Year 3 numeracy and Year 9 reading for both metropolitan and provincial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Again, these comments should be read in the context of Tasmania having gaps in reading, writing and numeracy that are the smallest across Australia.

**Table TAS7: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Tasmania, 2012 (per cent)**

Geolocation	Australia			
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	81.8	93.3	82.6	95.2
Provincial	87.5	93.4	79.9	93.5
Remote	n/a	97.8	61.2	91.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	39.9	90.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	80.2	91.3	76.0	93.6
Provincial	81.0	91.5	72.7	91.9
Remote	n/a	92.1	50.5	89.7
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	20.3	86.5
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	88.4	94.8	84.0	95.4
Provincial	89.7	94.3	80.8	94.5
Remote	n/a	n/a	65.4	93.4
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	37.6	92.7
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	76.5	92.0	74.6	92.9
Provincial	80.3	90.4	70.9	92.0
Remote	n/a	n/a	50.9	90.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	24.4	87.9
<b>Writing</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	87.9	96.1	87.3	96.6
Provincial	91.8	95.9	85.2	95.6
Remote	n/a	97.8	63.2	95.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	40.2	94.3
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	83.6	93.2	77.3	94.3
Provincial	85.8	92.4	73.3	91.6
Remote	n/a	94.4	53.2	90.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	24.9	86.7
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	78.3	89.6	74.5	92.4
Provincial	80.4	88.1	68.0	88.6
Remote	n/a	n/a	47.0	88.0
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	25.6	89.1
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	54.2	81.1	56.9	85.0
Provincial	65.8	80.2	49.7	79.0
Remote	n/a	n/a	32.6	75.9
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	17.0	74.6
<b>Numeracy</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	83.4	94.2	81.4	95.5
Provincial	87.8	94.6	78.8	93.9
Remote	n/a	98.4	58.6	93.0
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	37.9	91.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	85.2	93.0	79.5	95.0
Provincial	85.4	93.3	76.3	93.6
Remote	n/a	90.5	55.3	92.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	29.2	89.1
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	85.0	93.4	82.3	95.2
Provincial	89.9	94.3	78.6	94.1
Remote	n/a	n/a	64.1	93.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	42.4	92.4
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	79.9	93.4	79.9	95.0
Provincial	86.7	93.3	76.8	94.0
Remote	n/a	n/a	61.7	93.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	42.9	91.8

n/a not available.

Source: ACARA, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), 2012.

## 2012 NAPLAN data and 2012 progress points for Tasmania

One of the COAG 'Closing the Gap' targets is to halve the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade. To monitor achievement of this COAG target by 2018, progress points for each State and Territory were developed. The progress points for Tasmania are provided in Table TAS8.

In 2012, Tasmania met all its progress points in reading and numeracy with the exception of reading in Year 9, and numeracy

in Year 3 and Year 7. Tasmania notes that the prescribed gap closure target for Tasmania is ambitious. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Tasmania is, in general, the smallest in the nation.

## NAPLAN participation

In Years 3 and 5 there is very little difference between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rates for Tasmanian students. However, the gap in participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students widens in Years 7 and 9. Participation for Tasmanian Aboriginal and Torres

**Table TAS8: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy progress points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving at or above the national minimum standard (2008–2012), Tasmania (per cent)**

Year	Reading				Writing				Numeracy			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2008	88.4	84.5	89	90.7	94.2	83.8	81.9	68.9	94.5	87.8	92.4	88.5
2009	88.4	84.5	89	90.7	94.2	83.9	81.9	69	94.5	87.8	92.4	88.5
2010	88.5	84.6	89.1	90.8	94.3	84	82.1	69.2	94.5	87.9	92.5	88.6
2011	88.6	84.8	89.3	90.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	94.6	88	92.5	88.7
2012	85.2	80.7	89.2	78.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	86.0	85.3	87.8	84.3
2018	90.8	87.7	91.8	92.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	95.7	90.5	94	90.9

Note: 'n/a' indicates data was unavailable for writing. There is a break in series from 2011, and the trajectory points were calculated on the first test type (narrative), not the second (persuasive), for 2011 and 2012. As such, from 2011, there are no relevant trajectories to report against.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN), 2008–2012.

**Table TAS9: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, exemptions, absences/withdrawals and assessed students in Tasmania and Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7		Year 9	
	Tas.	Aust.	Tas.	Aust.	Tas.	Aust.	Tas.	Aust.
<b>Reading</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.6	89.7	96.3	89.6	93.4	87.8	83.4	77.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	96.1	95.7	97.1	96.3	95.4	95.9	91.6	92.9
<b>Writing</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.8	89.9	95.4	89.5	92.4	87.6	86.3	77.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	96.3	95.6	97.2	96.2	96.0	96.1	92.2	93.2
<b>Numeracy</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.1	88.2	96.1	88.4	91.2	86.2	84.0	75.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.8	95.5	96.7	96.0	95.4	95.6	90.9	92.4

Note: The NAPLAN participation data provided reflects students who were exempted, absent/withdrawn and assessed.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN), 2012.

Strait Islander students remains considerably higher than for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students nationwide.

## Systemic level actions

### Action 30

Tasmania does not have remote schools with multilingual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Local level actions (31 and 32)

### Action 31

Focus schools continue to use a range of data sources to inform intensive literacy and numeracy support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the first three years of schooling and, where applicable, are provided with ongoing support throughout schooling. In addition, schools liaise closely with the Department's data service to monitor and guide their literacy and numeracy programs and inform teaching practice.

Raising the Bar Closing the Gap (RTBCTG) is a continuing program with funding targeted for schools most in need to enable further support for children to finish primary school with functional literacy and numeracy skills. An ongoing State Government commitment of \$8 million per annum, targeted for 28 primary and combined schools in 2012, is supported by an evaluation by the University of Tasmania (UTAS) in 2011, which suggested that the RTBCTG initiative is building the capacity of school leaders and teachers to assist students to achieve positive results.

Schools have used their student outcome data and knowledge of students' learning needs to monitor success. Through the school improvement planning process, and specifically in the development of school-based Literacy and Numeracy Plans, principals and teachers regularly revisit, review, refine and refocus priorities and action in classrooms.

In response to the NAPLAN 2011 results, a strategy was developed that involves schools carefully analysing their school data to identify specific aspects of literacy and numeracy that require further focus, including the acquisition of Standard Australian English by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Schools have also been provided with additional data to assist with their analysis, as well as direct access to web-based teaching resources and strategies and support. In addition, the Curriculum and Educational Performance Services

teams are providing further school level support, including help desk assistance to aid their analysis and planning.

### Action 32

In 2012, the Department introduced *Tasmania's Literacy and Numeracy Framework 2012–2015*, which clearly articulates the direction the Department is taking in this area. The Department also introduced the Network Literacy and Numeracy Lead School and Network Lead Teacher Strategy, to provide direct support to schools and teachers within a network of schools. Principals and teachers – in collaboration with Aboriginal Education Workers (where applicable) – are translating their findings into revised Literacy and Numeracy Plans at the school level, and implementing teaching and learning strategies to address the identified areas of future focus.

To support schools in the implementation of *Tasmania's Literacy and Numeracy Framework 2012–2015*, a number of system-wide strategies and initiatives have been implemented including: the Network Literacy and Numeracy Lead School and Network Lead Teacher Strategy; Curriculum Teacher Leaders; statewide professional learning through the Professional Learning Institute; and the development of support resources.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.
12. Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).
13. Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Overall progress

During 2012, 126 teachers and 24 principals from government schools participated in Cultural Understandings training totalling 2,500 hours. Aboriginal Education Services provided Cultural



Understandings training through various modes of delivery. The training ranged from two to five days on Country.

The data provided in the 2011 report was incorrect; therefore, data for 2011 is unable to be compared to data for 2012.

In 2012, the Department implemented a new data review process through Employee Self Service, which has led to improved data quality. All Department staff are able to review and edit their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status online through Employee Self Service. This was implemented in line with Schedule K (Data Quality Improvements) of Tasmania's Overarching Bilateral Indigenous Plan.

The average number of years of teaching experience at Focus schools for principals was 25.8 at primary schools and 14.5 at secondary schools.

According to the Australian Council for Educational Research's (ACER's) *Staff in Australia's Schools 2010: Main Report* (Table A7.4, p.193), the average number of years of teaching experience for teachers at Focus Schools nationwide was 15.3 and 15.8 at primary and secondary schools respectively. The average number of years of teaching experience at Focus schools for principals was 24.3 at primary schools and 22.7 at secondary schools. The figures for Tasmania are very similar to the national statistics.

## Systemic level actions (41, 42, 43 and 44)

### Action 41

The Department is committed to developing the capacity and quality of leadership of our workforce. The Professional Learning Institute provides high quality professional learning to all departmental staff. AES works closely with the Professional Learning Institute to support schools in relation to the National Professional Standards for Teaching, specifically Standards 1.4 and 2.4 and the Australian Curriculum.

In 2012, Dare to Lead conducted 12 school Snapshots (including one return Snapshot). A total of 33 teachers, leaders and Aboriginal Education Workers participated in the Developing Quality Leaders for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. Dare to Lead continues to work closely with Aboriginal Education Services.

AEYLOs, AEWs and AEOs continue to assist schools to build their capacity to provide culturally responsive and inclusive learning

**Table TAS10: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents) in Tasmania, by sector, 2012**

	FTE
<b>Government</b>	
Principals	3
Teaching staff	52
AIEWs and equivalents	22
<b>Catholic</b>	
Principals	n/a
Teaching staff	n/a
AIEWs and equivalents	n/a
<b>Independent</b>	
Principals	n/a
Teaching staff	n/a
AIEWs and equivalents	n/a

Note: This includes 13 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) and 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisors.

n/a not available.

Source: Tasmanian Department of Education, Human Resources administrative records, 2012.

**Table TAS11: Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard to staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (operationally defined as Focus schools), Tasmania, 2012**

Classification	Average length of service (in years)		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
Principals	25.8	6	n/a
Teachers	14.5	n/a	n/a

Note: The figures presented indicate the total length of service in the sector.

n/a not available.

Source: Tasmanian Department of Education, Human Resources administrative records, 2012.

environments and actively promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and family engagement, attainment and successful transitions, from birth to 5 years of age and in Years 8 to 12.

#### Action 42

The Department provides a range of opportunities for teachers and principals to constantly review and improve their practice. This is achieved through the Department's newly developed Professional Learning Institute, which has a focus on leadership development. In addition, the Department has developed procedures for all staff to work in a culture of learning, innovation, leadership and accountability for outcomes through a Performance and Development Policy. The policy supports a culture of ongoing improvement, feedback and development within every school, college and workplace.

Information relating to this domain in Catholic and independent schools was unable to be obtained.

#### Action 43

In 2012, 67 per cent of Focus school principals participated in leadership programs that further enhanced their ability to lead improvement in educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

#### Action 44

A number of schools across Tasmania work in an informal federations or alliances framework. This involves schools sharing resources and working together to meet the needs of the local school community. In addition, a number of schools have access to and maximise services run through the Child and Family Centres, as well as the local LINC, which provides library access, research and information, adult literacy support, community learning, online access, and archive and heritage services.

## Pathways to real post-school options

### Performance indicators

14. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.*

*Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there is no publicly available national level data for 2012.*

## Overall progress

Table TAS12 shows the proportion of the relevant cohort that received the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE). To receive the TCE, students must have achieved at a high level. Students are required to meet 'everyday adult' standards in reading, writing and communication, mathematics, and use of computers and the internet. Students are also required to have submitted a pathway plan, which includes their career goals and the education and training required to reach these goals.

In 2012, 22 per cent of the relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort received a TCE, compared to 49 per cent of the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort – representing a gap of 27 percentage points. The relevant figures from 2011 are 21 per cent and 45 per cent respectively – representing a gap of 24 percentage points.

Table TAS13 shows the proportion of the relevant cohort that has completed the equivalent of two years of full-time post-Year 10 studies.

Overall, during the period of 2010 to 2012, the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students remained relatively constant.

## Systemic level actions (48, 49 and 50)

#### Action 48

Youth Connections services in Tasmania are targeted at young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, 11 to 17 years of age, with service delivery primarily focused on early intervention particularly at transition points of Year 6 to Year 7 and, to a lesser extent, Year 10 to Year 11. In each region, the Department's Learning Service Management Team works with providers to identify specific schools or federation of schools as focus areas for Youth Connections. Close links between the Youth Connections program and Tasmanian education sectors has led to strategic joint planning.

The Alma Lily Stackhouse Scholarship was launched in 2008 to honour Auntie Alma's commitment to the education of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The scholarship offers a two-year bursary of \$3,000 per annum to support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student from a remote or rural area to complete Year 11 and 12 studies. The goal of the scholarship is to facilitate the attainment of the tertiary entry

**Table TAS12: Persons aged 15 to 19, Australian Citizens or permanent residents, completing some education or training in a given year (student counts and percentages of estimated resident 18 year-old population (ERP), who met the standards required for the award of the Tasmanian Certificate of Education, 2010–2012**

	2010		2011		2012	
	Count of students	Per cent of ERP	Count of students	Per cent of ERP	Count of students	Per cent of ERP
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	81	18	96	21	99	22
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	2,742	44	2,766	45	3,076	49

Source: Tasmanian Qualifications Authority, unpublished data.

**Table TAS13: Persons aged 15 to 19, Australian Citizens or permanent residents, completing some education or training in a given year, who have attained at least 120 credit points (equivalent of at least two years full-time study) – student counts and percentage of estimated resident 18 year-old population (ERP), 2010–2012**

	2010		2011		2012	
	Count of students	Per cent of ERP	Count of students	Per cent of ERP	Count of students	Per cent of ERP
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	140	30	168	37	175	38
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	3,791	60	4,013	65	4,315	69

Source: Tasmanian Qualifications Authority, unpublished data.

requirement to enter University or other tertiary-level study. The scholarship is administered by the Department's Aboriginal Education Services.

#### Action 49

Regional Advisory Committees have been established to guide the implementation of the Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers programs in Tasmania. Each Committee is chaired by a local representative from the Department of Education's Learning Services, nominated by Learning Service General Managers. Membership includes Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers program providers and local education stakeholders from the Department, Tasmanian Polytechnic, Tasmanian Academy, Catholic and independent school sectors and Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) representatives. Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people is a key focus for committees.

#### Action 50

The Department's Retention and Attainment Strategy (Years 10 to 12) is part of an overall strategic plan for government schools in Tasmania. The strategy aims to improve the transition of students from Year 10 to further education and training by engaging and supporting students to gain a meaningful Year 12 or equivalent qualification. The strategy also outlines the partnership with the University of Tasmania (UTAS) on the project, *Student Retention Beyond the Compulsory Years in Rural, Regional and Disadvantaged Communities*.

The Department is committed to increasing the use of all technologies across school and colleges. This is achieved through eLearning, which is a suite of coordinated services that supports flexible and eLearning approaches across the Department. Schools and colleges are adopting these approaches in order to provide more flexible, responsive and engaging programs for students.

## Local level actions (51, 52, 53, 54 and 55)

### Action 51

During the course of 2012, government schools worked within the guidelines of Tasmania's 'Closing the Gap' strategy in implementing initiatives towards improving pathways to further education, training and employment for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

An example of progress in this area is the Pilot Junior Ranger Program that was delivered in 2012. The experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students gained provided them with a clear pathway to further education, training and employment.

### Action 52

In 2012, all Year 10 students in government secondary schools were provided with the opportunity to develop a Pathway Plan in consultation with Pathway Planning Officers and teaching staff. All schools were expected to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and community to develop PLPs, as a recognised factor that contributes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success and engagement.

### Action 53

Schools provide individual learning opportunities, mentoring and case management strategies to increase retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12. Case management includes mentoring and linking with post-Year 10 options, school-based traineeships and employment services.

Aboriginal Education Officers have a specific role in actively promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student engagement, attainment and successful transitions, in Years 8 to 12. Aboriginal Education Officers are part of a school-based network of staff that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and community engagement, learning and pathways development. These services are provided through the Department's Aboriginal Education Services (AES).

### Action 54

Pathways and participation refers to a range of programs and initiatives designed to support students to complete Year 12 and make a successful transition to further education, training or employment. AEOs work collaboratively with schools to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their

families to access career services and develop a pathway for ongoing study.

### Action 55

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships are for students in Years 10, 11 or 12 who want to undertake a vocational education and training (VET) qualification as an apprentice or trainee while finishing their senior secondary education. These programs and initiatives provide multiple pathways for students to achieve maximum educational outcomes by offering curriculum opportunities and activities that are targeted to the needs of individual students.

In 2012, 37 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from government schools participated in school-based traineeships.

## Good practice snapshots

In 2012, Aboriginal Education Services (AES) delivered a Pilot Junior Ranger Program, which involved 16 Years 10 to 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from government schools around the State. The program was based at Murrayfield on Bruny Island, over a period of four days. The program was based on the success of the Australian Government's Working on Country Trainee Aboriginal Ranger Program, run by the Parks and Wildlife Service in Tasmania.

The Pilot Junior Ranger Program included on-Country experiences, cultural activities/workshops and lectures from a range of professionals. The professionals involved included: Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Rangers; a Trainee Aboriginal Ranger; representatives from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and Department teaching staff.

The program provided students with the opportunity to:

- explore the wide range of career pathways available under the banner of land management
- hear first-hand from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the Parks and Wildlife Service and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations directly involved in Aboriginal land management

- participate in cultural activities
- engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and peers, and
- enrol in Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II Conservation Land Management on offer at Claremont College.

As a result of the success of the Pilot Junior Ranger Program, in 2012 AES developed a second pilot program to be finalised and delivered from Term 3, 2013.

Both pilot programs align with Pathways to real post-school options Systemic Level Actions 49 and 50 and Local Level Actions 51, 52 and 54 by providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with real opportunities to successfully make the transition to work and further study. The aim is to provide incentive for students to continue study post-Year 10, by linking with an employer (the Parks and Wildlife Service) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members who are working and/or studying. The work placement component is crucial to the success of the uptake of Certificate II studies. It provides students with the opportunity to explore the range of choices for career opportunities within the land management workspace, the chance to participate in actual real-life work opportunities alongside the Parks and Wildlife Service staff, who are Aboriginal Field Officers and Trainee Aboriginal Rangers, and the opportunity to further their education, effectively raising their capacity for better career options – all within their local area.

## Tasmanian Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB's) feedback

### Tasmanian Department of Education's response to IECB's feedback

#### Lutruwita (Tasmania)

While there have been achievements demonstrated against the Action Plan in this reporting period, there is still considerable work that remains to be done across all education sectors in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation for Education (TACE) will continue to work collaboratively with the Department of Education, Aboriginal Education Services (AES), higher education sectors and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Tasmania.

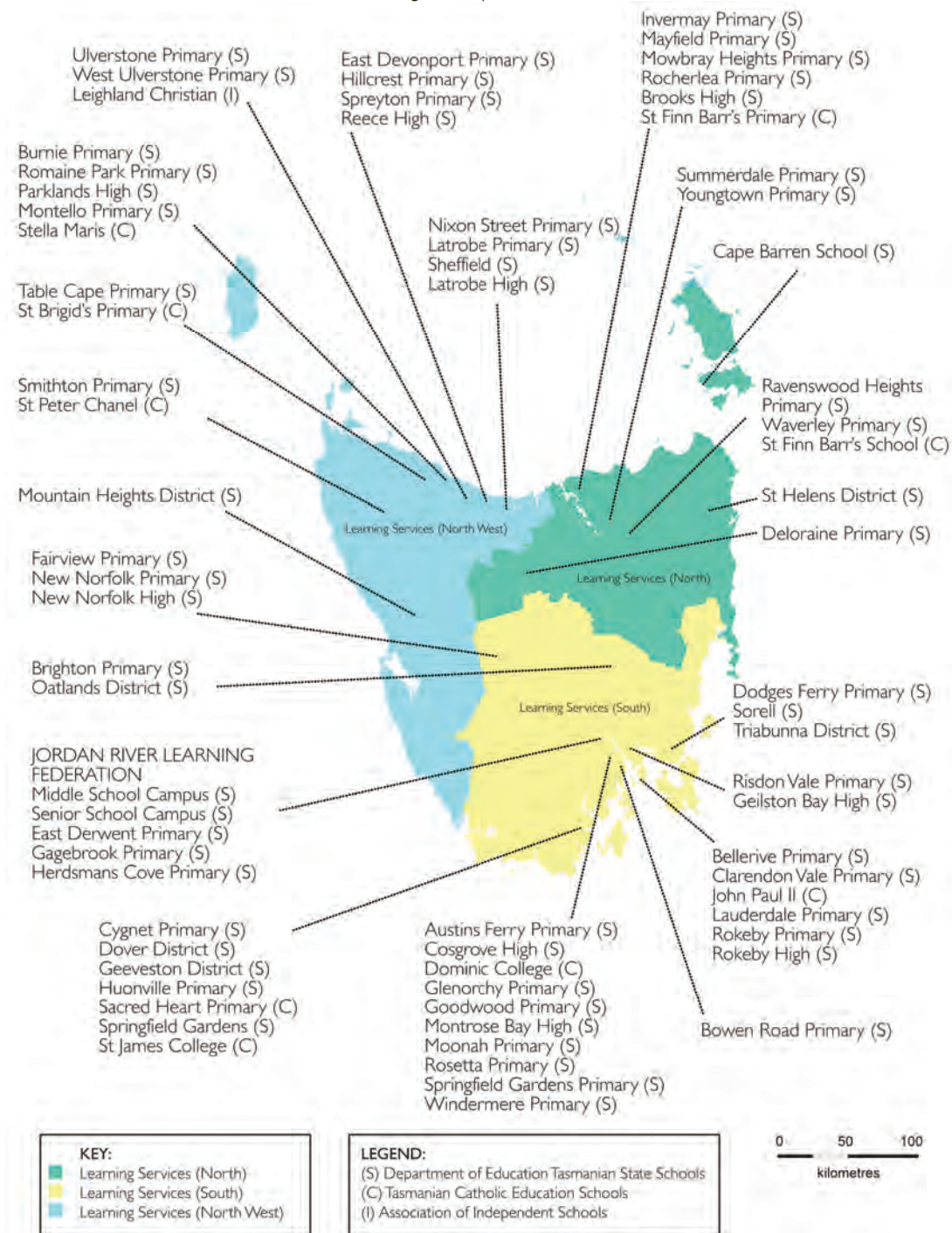
The success of the Aboriginal Early Years Program demonstrates the need for the investment toward the future employment of more Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers (AEYLOs) and Aboriginal Education Workers (AEWs) to provide support toward maintaining strong relationships between schools, families and services within the Early Years' broader community, across all Tasmanian regions.



# Distribution of Focus schools in Tasmania

**Figure TAS5: Map of Tasmania Focus schools**

(Focus schools are listed in a table following this map.)



Notes:

- Dots indicate location of Focus schools.
- Hobart metropolitan Focus schools are not individually identified.

## Focus school information

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total Enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Austins Ferry Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	449	38			
Bellerive Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	345	21			
Bowen Road Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	299	33		X	
Brighton Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	679	47	X		
Brooks High School	Gov.	Provincial	631	76	X	X	
Burnie Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	373	35			
Cape Barren Island School	Gov.	Remote	7	6		X	
Clarendon Vale Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	100	31	X	X	
Cosgrove High School	Gov.	Metropolitan	250	44	X	X	
Cygnnet Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	243	41			
Deloraine Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	332	40			
Dodges Ferry Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	409	38			
Dover District High School	Gov.	Provincial	95	19		X	
East Devonport Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	286	39		X	
Fairview Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	278	29	X	X	
Geeveston District High School	Gov.	Provincial	122	34		X	
Geilston Bay High School	Gov.	Metropolitan	173	35	X	X	
Glenorchy Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	429	55	X	X	
Goodwood Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	99	21	X	X	
Hillcrest Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	253	27		X	
Huonville Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	487	85			
Invermay Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	270	11	X	X	
Jordan River Learning Federation – East Derwent Campus	Gov.	Metropolitan	332	56	X	X	
Jordan River Learning Federation – Gagebrook Campus	Gov.	Metropolitan	175	36	X	X	
Jordan River Learning Federation – Herdsmans Cove Campus	Gov.	Metropolitan	156	28	X	X	
Jordan River Learning Federation – Middle School Campus	Gov.	Metropolitan	421	89			
Jordan River Learning Federation – Senior School Campus	Gov.	Metropolitan	N/A*	N/A*			
Latrobe High School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	466	44			
Latrobe Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	326	33			
Lauderdale Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	554	29	X		
Mayfield Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	207	30	X	X	
Montello Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	292	35	X	X	
Montrose Bay High School	Gov.	Metropolitan	766	99	X	X	
Moonah Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	239	33	X	X	
Mountain Heights School	Gov.	Remote	243	44		X	
Mowbray Heights Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	497	57	X	X	
New Norfolk High School	Gov.	Metropolitan	353	42	X	X	
New Norfolk Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	274	38	X	X	
Nixon Street Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	567	39			



School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total Enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Oatlands District High School	Gov.	Provincial	329	17		X	
Parklands High School	Gov.	Provincial	472	74	X	X	
Ravenswood Heights Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	305	36	X	X	
Reece High School	Gov.	Provincial	621	58		X	
Risdon Vale Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	177	20	X	X	
Rocherlea Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	170	17	X	X	
Rokeby High School	Gov.	Metropolitan	216	37	X	X	
Rokeby Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	239	51	X	X	
Romaine Park Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	499	69			
Rosetta Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	382	35	X		
Sheffield School	Gov.	Provincial	467	37		X	
Smithton Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	251	57		X	
Sorell School (NS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	774	82			
Spreyton Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	449	48			
Springfield Gardens Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	315	44	X	X	
St Helens District High School	Gov.	Provincial	551	52		X	
Summerdale Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	608	41			
Table Cape Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	333	54		X	
Triabunna District High School	Gov.	Provincial	166	30		X	
Ulverstone Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	397	48			
Waverley Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	155	15	X	X	
West Ulverstone Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	241	59		X	
Windermere Primary School	Gov.	Metropolitan	421	45			
Youngtown Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	334	19			19
Leighland Christian School	Ind.	Provincial	615	37			
Dominic College	Cath.	Metropolitan	884	27	X		
John Paul II School	Cath.	Metropolitan	143	26		X	
Sacred Heart School Geeveston	Cath.	Provincial	157	24			
Sacred Heart School Ulverstone	Cath.	Provincial	260	18			
St Brigid's School	Cath.	Provincial	171	14			
St Finn Barr's School	Cath.	Provincial	260	18	X		
St James Catholic College	Cath.	Provincial	244	80			
St Peter Chanel School	Cath.	Provincial	128	15			
Stella Maris Primary School	Cath.	Provincial	419	13			

Note:

IFS – school received funding in 2012 under the *Investing in Focus Schools* initiative.

NS – School received funding in 2012 under the *Focus Schools Next Steps* initiative.

# Australian Capital Territory report on activities and outcomes

## Introduction

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Schools Australia*, 2012, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), Table 42b, identifies that there were 62,208 full-time and part-time students enrolled in government and non-government schools in the Australian Capital Territory in 2012. In government schools, enrolments accounted for 57 per cent of the total student population, with 43 per cent of enrolments at non-government schools.

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students was 1,502, representing 2.4 per cent of the total student population. According to the ABS, in 2008, there were 1,179 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in ACT schools, demonstrating an increase of 323 students. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Schools Australia*, 2012, National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), Table 42b.)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments were 1,177 (78 per cent) in government schools, 270 (18 per cent) in Catholic schools and 55 (four per cent) in independent schools.

All government schools in the Australian Capital Territory are metropolitan schools except Jervis Bay School, which is classified as provincial.

## Profile of Focus schools

In 2012, there were 31 government Focus schools in the Australian Capital Territory, comprising one provincial school and 30 metropolitan schools. There are no Catholic or independent schools identified as Focus schools in the Australian Capital Territory.

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled from preschool to Year 6 in Focus schools, as of the February 2012 census, was 617.

Australian Capital Territory Focus schools included preschool to Year 6 primary schools, an early childhood school, and preschool to Year 10 schools. Four of these schools were Low Socio-Economic Status Communities National Partnership schools and seven schools were involved in the Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.

The Koori Preschool program is the Australian Capital Territory Education and Training Directorate's (the Directorate's) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific preschool program, and it is offered at five of the Focus schools.

A map (Figure ACT5) and list detailing the location of Focus schools in the Australian Capital Territory are provided at the end of this chapter.

## Australian Capital Territory report on progress by Domains

### Readiness for school

#### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

### Overall progress

Data for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (NECEC) Collection have been sourced from the Australian Government and the State and Territory departments with responsibility for Early Childhood Education and Care and the ACT Catholic Education Office. The NECEC Collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) that facilitates consistency of data provision across the various jurisdictional collections. Alignment with these standards has not been completely achieved by all jurisdictions for 2012, and care should be taken when comparing States and Territories.

Some jurisdictions were not able to provide certain data elements as specified in the ECEC NMDS for the National

ECEC Collection. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to identify children attending multiple preschool programs within the collection reference period. It is also a challenge to report accurately the number of children enrolled in and attending a preschool program, without counting an individual child more than once. When a child attends two different preschool programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. This child is only counted once in child counts. All preschool episodes associated with a child are included in preschool episode counts. Australian totals in Table ACT1 need to be interpreted with care due to the mixed populations that are reported between States and Territories.

Comparison of data year to year is not possible due to collection, output and processing methodology not being consistent across years.

For further information on the ECEC NMDS, collection methodologies and coverage for the National ECEC Collection, please see the ABS, *National ECEC Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat.No. 4240.0.55.001).

The Australian Capital Territory has experienced a steady increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in preschool programs over the past five years.

Table ACT1 shows that in 2012 there were 5,166 students aged 4 to 5 who were enrolled in ACT preschool programs. Of these students, 143 (2.8 per cent) were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. There were 5,060 4 to 5 year-old students attending ACT preschool programs. Of these students, 2.7 per cent were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

All kindergarten programs in the Australian Capital Territory participated in the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) survey in 2012. Table ACT2 shows the AEDI data for the Australian Capital Territory and Australia.

The AEDI is a survey completed by teachers of children in their first year of full-time schooling and provides information on young children's development. The five developmental domains covered by the AEDI are: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; and communication skills and general knowledge.

**Table ACT1: Summary of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program, Australian Capital Territory and Australia, 2012**

	Australian Capital Territory		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children
Number of children enrolled	143	5,166	11,237	266,036
Children enrolled over ERP (per cent)	123.3	107.6	81.6	88.5
Number of children attending	139	5,060	10,460	258,881
Percentage of children attending over ERP <sup>(a)</sup>	119.8	105.4	76.0	86.1
Percentage of children enrolled that are attending <sup>(b)</sup>	97.2	97.9	93.1	97.3
ERP 4 year olds – as at June 2012 <sup>(c)</sup>	116	4,799	13,763	300,596

Notes:

- a) Calculated as the percentage of children attending over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- b) Calculated as the percentage of children enrolled.
- c) ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and should be treated as indicative.
- d) Enrolment and attendance counts include children aged 4 and 5 years. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection* (unpublished); ABS, (unpublished) *Australian Demographic Statistics* (Cat.No. 3101.0); ABS, (unpublished) *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).

**Table ACT2: Proportion of children in the Australian Capital Territory assessed as 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 (per cent)**

	Australian Capital Territory	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	55.7	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	68.1	70.3

Notes:

- The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored above the 25th percentile of the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge also needs to be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Index* data, 2012 data collection.

The AEDI indicated that 55.7 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Australian Capital Territory were 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains, compared to 68.1 per cent of all students in the Australian Capital Territory, and 70.3 per cent nationally of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The figure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children represents a 2.2 per cent increase on 2009 AEDI data, which indicated that 53.5 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the Australian Capital Territory were 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains.

## Systemic level actions (5, 6 and 7)

The Directorate identified 31 Focus schools in locations able to offer the greatest support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. In 2012, all Focus schools in

the Australian Capital Territory provided education programs for children from preschool, with five sites offering the additional Koori Preschool program. One Focus school is an early childhood school, providing learning programs for children to Year 2. Six Focus schools are preschool to Year 10 schools. The remaining 24 schools are preschool to Year 6 schools.

### Action 5

The Education and Training Directorate encouraged schools to access the 2009 AEDI data to identify community needs and inform school planning. One Focus school began the implementation of an oral language program across the P–6 site to support effective communication and language skills development. The school, recognising the importance of physical health and wellbeing, also introduced a structured fundamental motor skills program into the weekly timetable.

### Action 6

In 2012, the Directorate offered 15 hours of preschool education in 69 per cent of government preschool units, which was part of the phased implementation of Universal Access to preschool education. Parents and caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were 3 years old (by 30 April each year) could apply for early entry into a government preschool program. Early entry gave these children access to 21 to 24 hours per week in a preschool program (nine hours in Koori Preschool, and 12 to 15 hours in the government preschool program) over an 18 month-period prior to their commencement in kindergarten.

### Action 7

All students in kindergarten in the Australian Capital Territory are assessed on their readiness for schooling using the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) assessment tool. This tool assesses readiness in the areas of reading and mathematics. The 2012 PIPS results identified that progress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students during their kindergarten year was, on average, less than their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers, particularly in reading. This was reflected in the lower mean-scale score and the lower proportion of students making expected or better than expected progress.

Five primary schools in the Catholic education sector have an Early Learning Centre. The five Early Learning Centres are regionally based within the Australian Capital Territory and available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The Early Learning Centres and schools work collaboratively together to develop effective partnerships for their school communities.

## Local level action (8)

### Action 8

The Directorate encouraged schools to access the 2009 AEDI data to identify community needs and inform school planning. One Focus school began the implementation of an oral language program across the P–6 site to support effective communication and language skills development. The school, recognising the importance of physical health and wellbeing, also introduced a structured fundamental motor skills program into the weekly timetable.

The Koori Preschool program remains a key strategy in encouraging the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents in the education of their children. This program provides opportunities for parents to participate in a learning program that focuses on engaging children in rich play-based experiences, supports transitions to formal schooling and develops strong literacy and numeracy skills. Educators delivering the preschool program work collaboratively with therapists from Therapy ACT to provide explicit speech and occupational therapy sessions that are seamlessly embedded within the play based program. The Koori Preschool program promotes collaborative partnerships between families, educators and therapists to guide children's understandings in a culturally safe and inclusive learning environment with a strong focus on culture and identity.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicators

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school–community partnership agreement in place.*

### Overall progress

There has been a strong focus on personalised learning in government schools in recent years. Throughout 2012, the Directorate disseminated information and resources to schools and provided information sessions for each of the four government school networks, and interested members of the community resulting in a significant increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised strategies in place.

In 2012, thirteen Focus schools implemented a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). There are 86 government schools in the ACT and the Directorate encourages them to develop a School–Community Partnership Agreement (SCPA) and/or a RAP. For many schools, the process of creating a RAP is a necessary first step towards developing a SCPA, because the process of creating and implementing a RAP assists in building relationships and demonstrating respect. In 2012, 71 per cent of Focus schools had either, or both, a SCPA or a RAP, in place.

To support the development of RAPs and SCPAs, senior executives delivered a professional development session for all principals about the impact of recognition, human rights and reconciliation in schools.

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn is committed to the implementation of personalised learning plans for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Year 1 to Year 10. The personalised learning plans covered student strengths and areas requiring further support to enhance performance. Classroom teachers consulted with parents/caregivers and students in the process of learning plans. In 2012, a number of Archdiocese secondary colleges developed RAPs and several primary schools began the process of writing their RAPs in 2013.

## Systemic level actions (15, 16, 17 and 18)

### Action 15

The Directorate has worked with the Focus schools as part of a multi-disciplinary team, which has included early childhood, health, police, community services and non-government agencies. This collaborative approach has strengthened relationships between schools and the Child and Family Centres. These early intervention community hubs include a number of wraparound services including: health screening; parenting support; audiology testing; occupational therapy and speech pathology. The centres employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers which support the work of schools and identify strategies in integrating service delivery. The Directorate has also strengthened relationships with the Australian Federal Police and the not-for-profit organisation, Anglicare, to provide selected, targeted and universal strategies to support families. This has included the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Support Worker and Student Engagement Officer meeting regularly with the relevant agencies to provide cohesive case management.

### Action 16

The Canberra College, in partnership with ACT Health and significant government and non-government community agencies, provides an education and support program, CCCares, for pregnant and parenting students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT and surrounding districts. CCCares offers: Year 12 Certification; goal oriented learning packages, on-line learning vocational education and employability skills within a mainstream ACT Government College context.

### Action 17

During 2012, six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers worked in Focus secondary schools, and four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Workers worked in Focus primary schools. These officers promote early childhood programs, provide transition support, and encourage high expectations for all students.

In 2012, the positions of the Family Support Officer and the Student Engagement Officer were established in Central Office. These officers work collaboratively with schools, the Directorate's Network Student Engagement Teams and other agencies to support students and their families to remain engaged, or re-engage with education. During 2012, the officers supported 30 children and their families. The officers assisted families in communicating with schools in order to address concerns and implement strategies to support their children. Students were supported to improve attendance and engagement with learning.

### Action 18

Schools are encouraged to work with the Australian Capital Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group (the Consultative Group) to pass on information to community about achievements and challenges. The Consultative Group receives the Directorate's report on the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2104* for comment. Qualitative and quantitative data about student outcomes and trends is made publicly available through school annual reports and the *Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly Report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education*. The Directorate also provides detailed information to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through the annual estimates-style hearing of the Australian Capital Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.

The Focus School Principals Network is coordinated by the Accepting the Challenge officers and meets each term. The purpose of the Focus School Principals Network is to increase understanding of the role and responsibilities of Focus schools and to provide an informal forum for sharing successes, ideas and challenges, research papers and new resources. The high attendance at these meetings is an indicator of their strength. Through the Focus schools Network, schools have been supported to strengthen accountability and reporting to families and the community on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

Australian Capital Territory Catholic schools have regular 'Gatherings' with parents of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students recognising and celebrating the academic and cultural achievements of these students. Aboriginal Education Workers liaise with parents in relation to student learning, as well as students' cultural, social and financial needs.

Education Officers within the Catholic Education Office are commencing the process of writing a RAP in 2013. This plan will form a reporting structure to inform the community about how the Catholic Education Office is developing relationships, respect and opportunities to enhance student outcomes. The Catholic Education Office employs five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and three Aboriginal Education Workers. Each Aboriginal Education Worker liaises with the Principal, Assistant Principal, School Executive and Aboriginal Contact Teacher to determine the needs of the school in relation to cultural competence.

## Local level actions (19, 20 and 21)

### Action 19

There are currently 28 schools with SCPAs. Partnership Agreements are collaborative agreements between schools and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school community. Partnership Agreements can involve either one school or a cluster of neighbouring schools. The North Canberra cluster of schools, including three Focus schools, released their third agreement in August 2012, and there has been a high level of parent/caregiver participation and decision-making in organising events and forums.

Within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn schools, Community Partnership Agreements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families/communities were not formally



implemented in 2012. Conversations between community, families and schools are ongoing, through meetings related to personal learning plans and cultural programs.

#### Action 20

In 2012, all Focus schools reported an increase in parent/caregiver involvement in commemorations of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events such as the Sorry Day Walk, Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, as well as SCPA celebrations.

In 2012, one Focus school conducted an action inquiry to gain insight into the views of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families about effective strategies to improve student engagement and create genuine parent/carer partnerships. Another Focus school commenced an action inquiry in 2012 involving parent/caregiver input into improving attendance strategies, and one Focus school engaged in a course of intensive parent/caregiver forums to develop effective strategies to improve student welfare and effective community engagement with the school.

An outer suburban Focus school established a Women's Yarning Group in 2012, providing an opportunity for parents and caregivers to advise the principal about improving educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Other Focus schools have adopted the concept of Yarning Circles to increase engagement of families with the school, provide input to school planning and increase support for families.

One Focus school has involved their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the development of attendance strategies incorporating public recognition of improved attendance rates. The school also operates a women's craft group that meets weekly in the school, forming partnerships with staff and students, creating opportunities to support families with healthy eating, and provide assistance with financial and budget planning.

#### Action 21

In 2010, a research project undertaken by the Directorate evaluated the rate of implementation, effectiveness, and community response to the Personalised Learning Plans in Australian Capital Territory government schools. Personalised Learning Plans and guidelines were redeveloped in 2011, and focused on manageable and attainable short and long-term goals, in both literacy and numeracy. During the latter part of 2012, the project officer facilitated five School Network

information sessions for school staff and community members. The Directorate continues to support schools in strengthening partnerships with families to develop high quality and relevant personalised learning strategies.

The implementation of personalised learning strategies or plans is a major component of the work being undertaken in schools participating in the Focus schools and Investing in Focus schools initiatives. Personalised Learning Plans are created early in the school year using a Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-related (SMART) goal process. The plans are generally reviewed at the end of Semester 1, and are linked to parent-teacher interviews. Plans are reviewed during Term Four to support the transition to the new school year.

## Attendance

### Performance indicators

5. *Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.*
6. *Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to 'Other' Australians.*
7. *Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
8. *Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

## Overall progress

### Attendance rates

Table ACT3 shows that attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian Capital Territory government schools were lower than attendance rates for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in each year of schooling. Attendance rates for all students were highest throughout the primary years. During secondary years, attendance rates for all students fell. The fall in attendance was more significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The gap between the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students fluctuated between five percentage points in Year 4 and a gap of 14 percentage points in Year 8.



**Table ACT3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by sector, 2012 (per cent)**

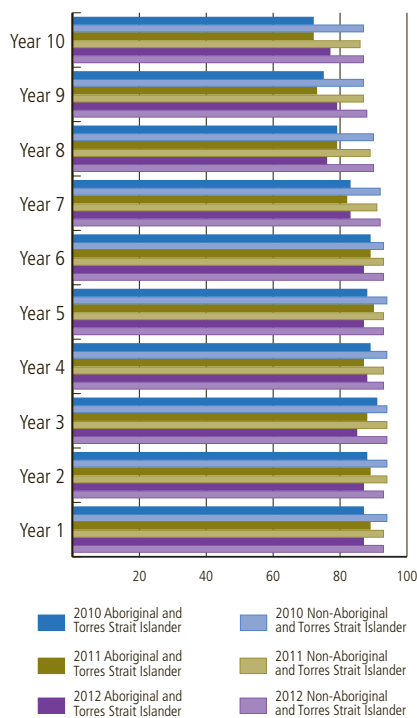
	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>Government</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87	87	85	88	87	87	83	76	79	77	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	93	94	93	93	93	92	90	88	87	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	93	93	93	93	93	92	92	89	88	87	n/a	n/a
<b>Catholic</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89	93	92	91	79	85	87	83	83	84	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	94	94	95	94	93	92	89	90	90	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	93	94	94	94	94	93	92	89	90	89	n/a	n/a
<b>Independent</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	73	94	88	95	94	77	98	76	76	98	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93	93	93	93	93	91	95	88	92	86	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	93	93	93	93	93	91	95	88	92	86	n/a	n/a

Notes:

- Definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance data are not uniform. As such, direct comparisons of attendance rates between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made. Nor can attendance data for 2012 be aggregated or averaged at the national or State/Territory level. Variations in methodology between jurisdictions are described in the explanatory notes for the 2012 attendance data contained in the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012*.
  - Caution is advised in the interpretation of attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait students in the Australian Capital Territory due to the small numbers of students.
- n/a not available.

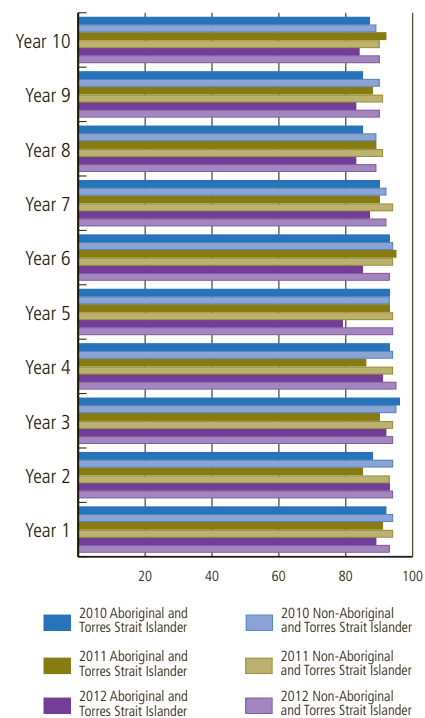
Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure ACT1.1: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, Australian Capital Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



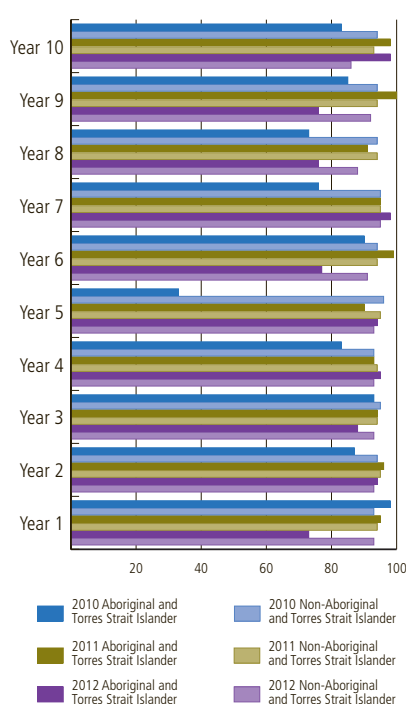
Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure ACT1.2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, Australian Capital Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure ACT1.3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, Australian Capital Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

In Australian Capital Territory Catholic schools, the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were higher in Years 1 to 4 than they were in Years 5 to 10. The gap in attendance rates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students varied significantly in primary school, from one percentage point in Year 2, up to 15 percentage points in Year 5. In secondary school the greatest gap was seven percentage points in Year 9.

In 2012, independent schools' data identified that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance was variable across the years, but there was not a significant decrease in attendance trends as students progressed from primary school through to secondary school. Table ACT3 shows a gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by 20 percentage points in Year 1, yet the attendance rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 10

exceeded the attendance rate of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by 12 percentage points. In Years 2, 4, 5, 7 and 10, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students show an increase in attendance above their non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers.

Between 2011 and 2012 overall, there were a number of changes in the attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in both primary and secondary schools across all the school sectors. In the government schools, there was an increase in attendance noted between 2011 and 2012 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students of five percentage points in Year 10, and six percentage points in Year 9. Across all other years there were only slight variations in percentage points on attendance. In Catholic schools, there were improvements in attendance in Years 2, 3 and 4; however, there were decreases in attendance in all other years. In independent schools, there were fluctuations in attendance from 2011 into 2012 across the year levels; however, the most significant decrease in rates occurred in Years 6 and 9.

## Enrolment to population ratio

In 2011, school participation rates were not published by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status due to concerns with the quality of the indicator. During 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) worked to provide a substitute measure. Investigations have concluded that data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation in 2011 and 2012 do not meet the ABS quality standards due to modal differences between the numerator and denominator and therefore should not be released.

## Apparent retention rates

Table ACT4 shows the Year 7 to 10 and Year 7 to 12 apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across the Australian Capital Territory in 2012. In 2012, the Year 7 to 10 apparent retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 96.3 per cent, while for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students it was 102.6 per cent, a gap of 6.3 percentage points. In 2012, the Year 7 to 12 retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was 63.1 per cent, whereas for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students it was 90.4 per cent, a gap of 27.3 percentage points.

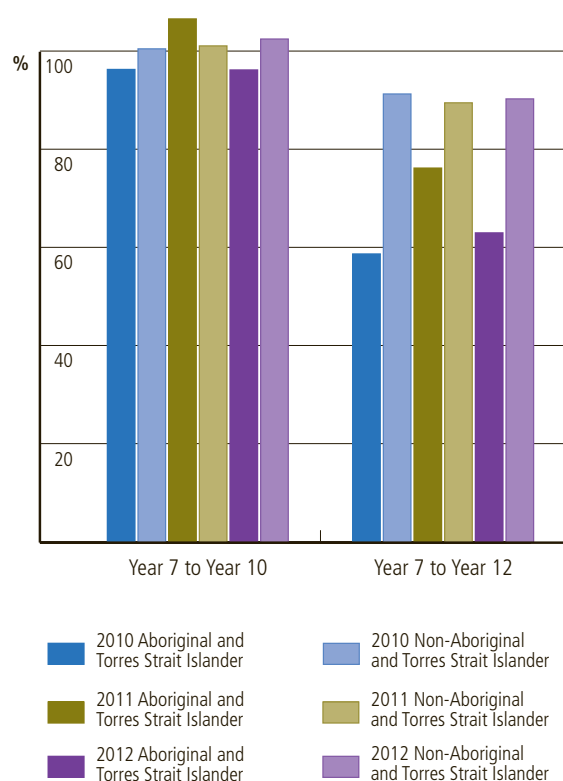
**Table ACT4: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Australian Capital Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 7 to Year 10	96.3	102.6
Year 7 to Year 12	63.1	90.4

Note: Apparent retention rates can exceed 100 per cent due to a number of factors including student migration.

Source: Derived from ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0), and based on full-time student enrolments.

**Figure ACT2: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Australian Capital Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

The 2012 figures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7 to 10 show no progress on 2010 apparent retention rates, but there has been an improvement of 4.3 per cent in retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 7 to 12.

## Apparent grade progression ratios

Table ACT5 shows the apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across the Australian Capital Territory from 2010 to 2012. The 2012 figures indicate significant variations on previous years in Year 10 to Year 11 and Year 11 to Year 12 ratios.

**Table ACT5: Apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Australian Capital Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

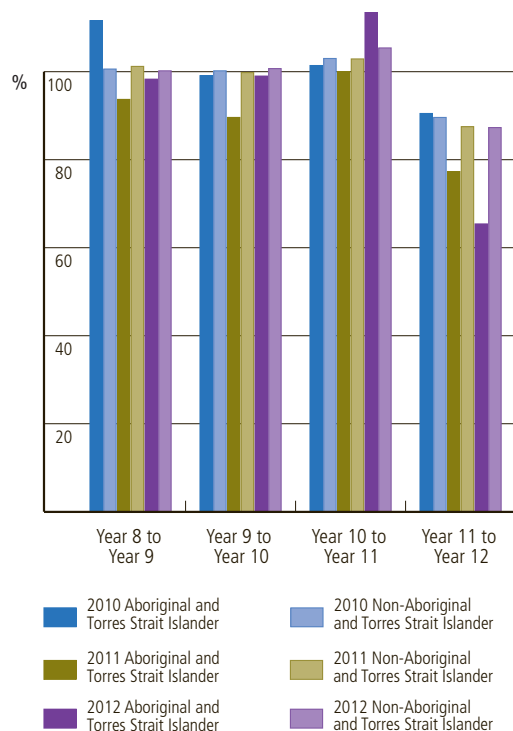
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 8 to Year 9	98.3	100.2
Year 9 to Year 10	99.0	100.7
Year 10 to Year 11	122.1	105.4
Year 11 to Year 12	65.4	87.3

Notes:

- Grade progression rates show the number of students at each year level as a percentage of the number enrolled in the previous year.
- Full-time students only.
- Care should be taken when interpreting these rates since a range of factors affecting the calculation are not taken into account, such as students repeating a year of schooling, movements between schools and systems or States and Territories and net changes to a school's or system's population. There is also the effect of ungraded students – they are not included in the calculations of rates.
- Components may not add due to rounding.
- Issues that may affect comparability over time can be found in Explanatory Notes, ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012 (Cat.No. 4221.0).
- Caution is advised in the interpretation of apparent grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in the Australian Capital Territory due to the small number of students.

Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

**Figure ACT3: Grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Australian Capital Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools, Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No.4221.0).

## Systemic level actions (25)

The Directorate tracks and monitors attendance across government schools and provides support to students and schools who are experiencing difficulties with attendance. The Network Student Engagement Team model was implemented in 2012. The model provides a multi-disciplinary team. The Family Support Officer and Student Engagement Officer work collaboratively with the Network Student Engagement Teams and other agencies to provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to remain engaged, or re-engage with education.

Within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, attendance policies are in place and are reviewed and updated regularly. There is a high priority given to the attendance of all students. Attendance and retention to Year 12 are supported by individual initiatives at school level.

## Local level actions (26)

### Action 26

In 2012, Focus schools committed to supporting students (and their families) experiencing difficulties in maintaining good levels of attendance. Schools were encouraged to work collaboratively with other service providers and draw on the support and expertise of the Directorate's Network Student Engagement Teams, the Family Support Officer, and Student Engagement Officer. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Officers provided valuable support and advice to students, families, and school staff. Schools accessed student attendance real-time data through an electronic system, which ensures an early intervention approach to attendance issues. All Focus schools have unpublished attendance strategies in place and report annually on their progress in implementing their strategies.

Primary schools, secondary schools and colleges in the North/Canberra Gungahlin Network were involved in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Transitions Program. Seven of the schools within this network are Focus schools. Coordinators continued to meet each term to expand and share strategies for successful transition and induction. Schools participating in the transitions program interviewed and surveyed students from kindergarten to Year 12 and their families to receive feedback on the effectiveness of the program, and where improvements could be made.

Schools across the Tuggeranong Network, including 10 Focus schools carried out an intensive attendance project throughout 2012. The aim of the project was to analyse the attendance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, identifying the factors affecting attendance and causing attendance to fall below 90 per cent. Recommendations were developed from the findings and implemented to improve attendance; this research was also shared system-wide.

## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*
10. *Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.*

## NAPLAN outcomes

**Table ACT6: NAPLAN reading, writing<sup>(a)</sup> and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Australian Capital Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3			Year 5			Year 7			Year 9		
	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.
<b>2010</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	83.0	84.6	84.4	78.9	83.2	82.1	88.5	81.8	85.6	84.0	71.3	83.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	96.0	96.9	96.9	94.5	95.1	95.6	97.1	94.9	97.1	93.9	89.4	95.0
Gap	10.6	12.3	12.8	15.6	11.9	13.5	8.6	13.1	11.5	9.9	18.1	11.9
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±9.0	±6.7	±12.5	±9.6	±8.5	±9.3	±6.4	±8.6	±7.5	±10.8	±11.5	±9.1
<b>2011</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	86.8	90.5	88.9	86.0	87.0	86.0	86.1	69.3	79.6	89.0	62.7	83.0
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.8	96.3	96.6	94.7	93.9	95.6	97.1	92.4	96.1	94.6	86.1	94.9
Gap	9.0	5.8	7.7	8.7	6.9	9.6	11.0	23.1	16.5	5.6	23.4	11.9
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±8.7	±5.3	±7.8	±8.3	±7.3	±9.2	±7.1	±11.6	±8.6	±8.5	±13.4	±8.5
<b>2012</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85.7	88.4	84.0	80.4	74.3	81.5	84.1	71.9	81.9	82.4	63.9	86.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	96.3	96.6	96.8	95.3	94.1	96.2	96.0	90.2	95.4	94.9	83.8	95.7
Gap	10.0	8.2	12.5	14.9	19.8	14.7	11.9	18.3	13.5	12.5	19.9	8.9
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±7.8	±6.9	±7.6	±8.1	±9.5	±8.9	±7.9	±10.6	±9.2	±9.9	±10.8	±7

a) A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.

b) The confidence intervals for 2010 to 2012 in this table are specifically for the Australian Capital Territory.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2010–2012.

## Overall progress

Table ACT6 provides a summary of NAPLAN outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Australian Capital Territory achieving at or above the national minimum standards in Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 reading, writing and numeracy for 2010, 2011 and 2012.

In comparison to 2011 NAPLAN, Table ACT6 demonstrates that in 2012:

- there was an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standards in Year 7 and Year 9 writing and numeracy
- there was a decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standards in reading, writing and numeracy for Years 3 and 5, and
- there was a decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standards in reading in Years 7 and 9.

Of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students sitting the NAPLAN reading test in 2012, 85.7 per cent of Year 3 students, 80.4 per cent of Year 5 students, 84.1 per cent of Year 7 students and 82.4 per cent of Year 9 students achieved at or above the national minimum standards.

Of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students sitting the NAPLAN writing test, 88.4 per cent of Year 3 students, 74.3 per cent of Year 5 students, 71.9 per cent of Year 7 students and 63.9 per cent of Year 9 students achieved at or above the national minimum standards.

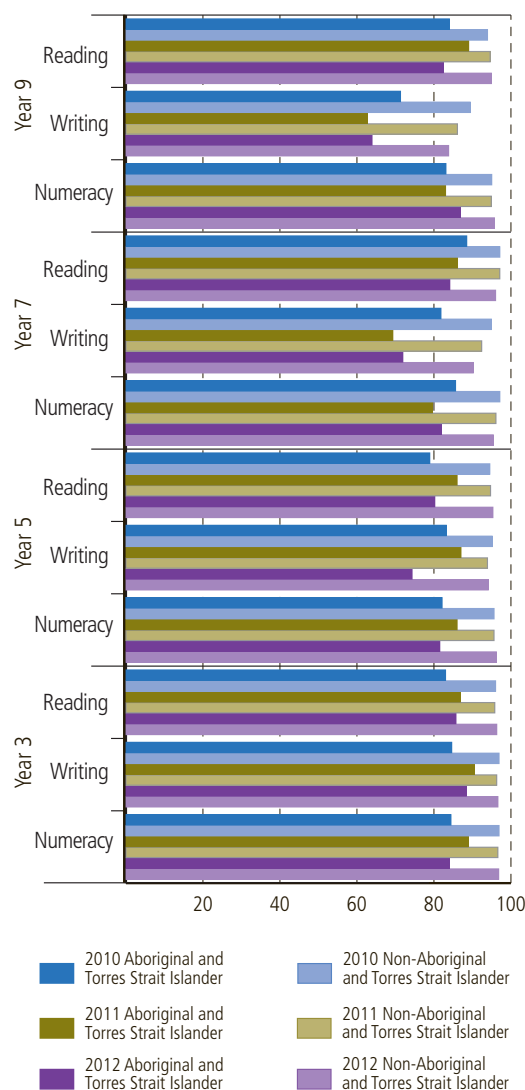
Of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students sitting the NAPLAN numeracy test, 84.0 per cent of Year 3 students, 81.5 per cent of Year 5 students, 81.9 per cent of Year 7 students and 86.8 per cent of Year 9 students achieved at or above the national minimum standards.

There continues to be an achievement gap in all NAPLAN results between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In 2012, there was a small closing of the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 7 and 9 writing and

numeracy and compared with 2011 data. The gap has increased between 2011 and 2012 in all Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN tests and Year 7 and 9 reading. The most prevalent gap in 2012 appears in Year 5 writing, of a 19.8 percentage point difference between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

**Figure ACT4: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Australian Capital Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA (2012 and unpublished), *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2012*.

## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

**Table ACT7: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Australian Capital Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

Geolocation	Australia Capital Territory		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	86.2	96.3	82.6	95.2
Provincial	n.p.	n.p.	79.9	93.5
Remote	n/a	n/a	61.2	91.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	39.9	90.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	80.2	95.3	76.0	93.6
Provincial	n.p.	n.p.	72.7	91.9
Remote	n/a	n/a	50.5	89.7
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	20.3	86.5
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	84.1	96.0	84.0	95.4
Provincial	n/a	n/a	80.8	94.5
Remote	n/a	n/a	65.4	93.4
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	37.6	92.7
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	82.4	94.9	74.6	92.9
Provincial	n/a	n/a	70.9	92.0
Remote	n/a	n/a	50.9	90.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	24.4	87.9
<b>Writing</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	88.0	96.6	87.3	96.6
Provincial	n.p.	n.p.	85.2	95.6
Remote	n/a	n/a	63.2	95.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	40.2	94.3
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	74.0	94.1	77.3	94.3
Provincial	n.p.	n/a	73.3	91.6
Remote	n/a	n/a	53.2	90.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	24.9	86.7
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	71.9	90.2	74.5	92.4
Provincial	n/a	n/a	68.0	88.6
Remote	n/a	n/a	47.0	88.0
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	25.6	89.1
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	63.9	83.8	56.9	85.0
Provincial	n/a	n/a	49.7	79.0
Remote	n/a	n/a	32.6	75.9
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	17.0	74.6
<b>Numeracy</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	84.3	96.8	81.4	95.5
Provincial	n.p.	n.p.	78.8	93.9
Remote	n/a	n/a	58.6	93.0
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	37.9	91.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	81.2	96.2	79.5	95.0
Provincial	n.p.	n/a	76.3	93.6
Remote	n/a	n/a	55.3	92.5
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	29.2	89.1
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	81.9	95.4	82.3	95.2
Provincial	n/a	n/a	78.6	94.1
Remote	n/a	n/a	64.1	93.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	42.4	92.4
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	86.8	95.7	79.9	95.0
Provincial	n/a	n/a	76.8	94.0
Remote	n/a	n/a	61.7	93.6
Very Remote	n/a	n/a	42.9	91.8

Note: 'n.p.' indicates data not published as there were no students tested, or the number of students tested was less than 30.

n/a not applicable.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.



The Australian Capital Territory has no remote or very remote locations and a very small number of people living in provincial areas. Table ACT7 shows the NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standards in the Australian Capital Territory in 2012. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT by geolocation achieved lower than the Australian average in all year levels and subjects.

## 2012 NAPLAN data and 2012 progress points for the Australian Capital Territory

One of the Australian Government's 'Closing the Gap' targets is to halve the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standards in NAPLAN within a decade. To monitor achievement of this target by 2018, progress points for each jurisdiction were developed. The progress points for the Australian Capital Territory are provided in Table ACT8.

In the 2010 and 2011 *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014 Annual Reports*, the progress points were inaccurately recorded. The correct progress points have been inserted in the 2012 report.

In 2012, the Australian Capital Territory met the progress points on the trajectory for Year 3 reading and Year 9 numeracy; however, in all other school years and testing areas did not meet the progress points anticipated for 2012.

## 2012 NAPLAN participation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation in NAPLAN testing is lower than participation rates for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and caution is advised in the interpretation of Australian Capital Territory data. Table ACT9 identifies the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Australian Capital Territory and Australia who participated in NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy tests. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were less represented than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Australian Capital Territory and also nationally, with participation rates decreasing with each year level.

Four year groups and three test areas equates to 12 distinct tests. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Australian Capital Territory had a higher participation rate than the national average for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for five of the 12 tests.

Between 2011 and 2012, participation rates for Year 9 students increased in all testing areas. Participation rates for Year 5

**Table ACT8: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy progress points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, achieving at or above the national minimum standard (2008–2012), Australian Capital Territory (per cent)**

Year	Reading				Writing				Numeracy			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2008	84.9	81.1	94.3	84.2	89.5	82.1	84.1	73.4	88.4	82.3	90.3	83.8
2009	85.0	81.2	94.3	84.3	89.5	82.2	84.1	73.5	88.4	82.4	90.3	83.9
2010	85.1	81.4	94.3	84.5	89.6	82.4	84.3	73.7	88.6	82.6	90.4	84.1
2011	85.4	81.8	94.4	84.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	88.8	82.9	90.6	84.4
2012	85.7	82.3	94.5	85.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	89.1	83.4	90.9	84.9
2018	90.0	88.4	95.4	90.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	92.7	89.1	93.9	90.6

Note: 'n/a' indicates data was unavailable for writing. There is a break in series from 2011, and the trajectory points were calculated on the first test type (narrative), not the second (persuasive), for 2011 and 2012. As such, from 2011, there are no relevant trajectories to report against.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2008–2012.

**Table ACT9: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, exemptions, absences/withdrawals and assessed students in Australian Capital Territory and Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7		Year 9	
	ACT	Aust.	ACT	Aust.	ACT	Aust.	ACT	Aust.
<b>Reading</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	85.8	89.7	88.7	89.6	84.1	87.8	79.8	77.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.7	95.7	95.8	96.3	94.8	95.9	92.6	92.9
<b>Writing</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89.6	89.9	90.6	89.5	88.5	87.6	82.6	77.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.9	95.6	96.0	96.2	94.7	96.1	92.7	93.2
<b>Numeracy</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	87.3	88.2	88.7	88.4	83.2	86.2	78.0	75.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	93.5	95.5	95.9	96.0	94.4	95.6	91.7	92.4

Note: The NAPLAN participation data provided reflects students who were exempted, absent/withdrawn and assessed.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.

students decreased in all testing areas. In Year 3, participation rates increased for writing and numeracy but decreased for reading. Participation rates for Year 7 students decreased for reading and numeracy and increased for writing.

## Systemic level actions (30)

### Action 30

The Australian Capital Territory does not have remote schools with multilingual Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.

## Local level actions (31 and 32)

### Action 31

Improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students remains a key focus for the Directorate. Literacy and Numeracy Field Officers and Coordinators are employed to support programs and interventions to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes for students. Additional resources are allocated to schools to target student literacy and numeracy skills development. As part of this

approach, data is collected, student progress is monitored and appropriate support is provided.

In 2012, five Tuggeranong Network secondary schools completed the Literacy Excellence Project for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The project focused on the development of a culturally responsive environment to improve student engagement and implement literacy strategies through working with leadership teams, students and class teachers.

Students participating in the project made gains in literacy skills, and these gains were greatest in reading and spelling. The key literacy teaching strategies developed during the project continue to be shared with government schools through the school-based literacy coordinator network. The project also developed key information and strategies for the development of a culturally responsive environment. Both of these strategies will be shared through the national database of successful literacy and numeracy strategies.

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn have implemented a three-tiered approach to addressing literacy and numeracy needs of all students in primary schools.

Although there are no Focus schools in the Catholic sector, Catholic schools have made significant progress in 2012 in improving evidence-based teaching, and whole-school engagement in literacy and numeracy and performance monitoring through a range of activities based on whole-school intervention and leadership training, including professional development, mentoring and program support.

### Action 32

The Focus School Network meetings provided opportunities for ongoing sharing of professional development, particularly on literacy and numeracy best practice initiatives in 2012. Further information about the Focus School Network is available under local level actions 41 and 42.

Twelve government schools in the Australian Capital Territory carried out a year-long Action Inquiry Program, which was led by the Accepting the Challenge officers and supported by Emeritus Professor, Tony Shaddock. The learning journey of all of the school participants was documented and all projects addressed the priorities of the national *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*. The Action Enquiry Project was a dynamic way for teachers to engage in evidence based research and practice.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. *Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*
12. *Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*
13. *Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

### Overall progress

Work has continued on the development of the Directorate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plan. The plan aligns with the Australian Capital Territory Public Service

Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The vision for the strategy is to double the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the Directorate by 2015, including teaching staff, administrative staff and schools support staff. Development of the plan has included extensive consultation with the Directorate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Network, whose voices and world-views are reflected throughout the plan.

In 2012, The Directorate provided a range of professional development opportunities focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and cultural competency for principals and teachers. The Directorate does not currently collect data relating to the total number of professional development hours delivered; however, all events were well attended.

**Table ACT10: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents) in the Australian Capital Territory, by sector, 2012**

	FTE
<b>Government</b>	
Principals	1
Teaching staff	24
AIEWs and equivalents <sup>(a)</sup>	3 (F/T) 10 (P/T)
<b>Catholic</b>	
Principals	0
Teaching staff	6
AIEWs and equivalents <sup>(a)</sup>	3
<b>Independent</b>	
Principals	n/r
Teaching staff	n/r
AIEWs and equivalents <sup>(a)</sup>	n/r

#### Notes:

n/r not reported.

F/T full-time.

P/T part-time.

a) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workers and Officers generally work school-based hours and are, therefore, employed at 85 per cent of the full-time equivalent.

Source: Australian Capital Territory, Human Resources administrative records and Australian Capital Territory Catholic Education.

**Table ACT11: Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard to staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (operationally defined as Focus schools), Australian Capital Territory, 2012**

Classification	Average length of service (in months)		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
Principals	n/r	n/a	n/a
Teachers	n/r	n/a	n/a

n/a not applicable.

n/r not reported.

Source: Australian Capital Territory, Human Resources administrative records, 2012.

In 2012, there were 38 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the government education sector and nine in the Catholic Sector. The launch of the Directorate's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy* will increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teachers and other staff. From 2011 to 2012, there has been a decrease in the number of teaching staff and AIEWs by one position each.

The Directorate has not collected data about length of service of principals and teachers in Focus schools.

## Systemic level actions (41 and 42)

### Action 41

In 2012, a total of 12 schools, (colleges, secondary schools, primary and early childhood schools), completed the year-long program to improve the outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through an inquiry cycle approach of planning, data collection, reflection and action.

The Directorate continued the professional learning for principals and deputy principals with two Accepting the Challenge Leadership in Aboriginal Education conferences being held. Mr Mark (Jack) Johnston, CEO of the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, presented the keynote address. This was followed by workshops and a panel discussion involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Section staff and school-based officers. Accepting the Challenge officers presented workshops at

the request of schools and coordinated professional learning for schools and clusters. These professional learning events included presentations in six school staff meetings.

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn provided teachers with a range of professional learning experiences that ensured high levels of cultural understanding and competencies. This informed evidence-based teaching and learning for the purpose of improving educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools. The professional learning in 2012 included:

- a three-day Cultural Immersion program based around the local Ngunnawal Aboriginal Community
- school-based Aboriginal Contact teachers was designated in all Australian Capital Territory Catholic schools. This included a session on implementing, developing, understanding and writing Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- a workshop on embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the curriculum and using appropriate resources, and
- the Aboriginal Education Officer advised and supported principals, deputy principals and the school executive to develop a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and pedagogy.

In 2012, the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn continued with the initiative of appointing an Aboriginal Contact teacher to liaise with school staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

### Action 42

The Directorate maintains a rigorous selection process when appointing school leaders. All teachers in the Australian Capital Territory must meet registration requirements of the Australian Capital Territory Teacher Quality Institute, and the Directorate remains committed to enhancing the capacity of all staff through professional learning opportunities. In addition, the Directorate clearly articulates the expectation that all school leaders and teachers participate in professional learning opportunities to support them in meeting Standards 1.4 and 2.4 of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*.

In August 2012, 62 school leaders (staff in School Leader A, School Leader B and School Leader C roles) attended an intensive

leadership seminar structured around a keynote presentation delivered by Mark (Jack) Johnson, CEO of the Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council.

## Local level actions (43 and 44)

### Action 43

Established in 2012, the Focus School Principals Network is coordinated by the Accepting the Challenge officers and meets each term. The purpose of the Focus School Principals Network is to increase knowledge and understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and to provide an informal forum to share successes, ideas, and challenges faced by Focus schools. Every Focus school principal participated in leadership programs each term within the Focus schools Principals Network. High attendance at these meetings is an indicator of their value.

Four principals and executive staff also participated in activities delivered by the Stronger Smarter Leadership in Indigenous Education Program in 2012. The majority of Focus schools are also members of the Dare to Lead program and regularly access resources available through its website. Sixty Executive teachers attended a leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education workshop in 2012.

In Catholic Education, the Team Leadership for School Improvement Program continued to be implemented in each of the National Partnership schools. The Australian Capital Territory Catholic Education sector reviewed teacher induction and support programs with a focus on strengthening teacher mentoring through Quality Teaching and Learning. The initiatives assist with the implementation of the Personalised Learning Plans. They included:

- a whole-school focus on teaching and learning including the development of agreed practice
- numeracy professional learning focusing on Count Me In Too, and David Sousa's Brain-Based Learning
- literacy professional learning focusing on the Gradual Release of Responsibility, and First Steps Reading and Writing training
- Numeracy Intervention Program and Reading Recovery program
- appointment of Numeracy and Literacy Contact Teachers, and
- principals and school staff receiving training in the key components of the standards and the appraisal process.

The Catholic Education sector continued the delivery of the cultural competence program in 2012. Through this three-day program, teachers developed a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, historical and political issues that affect and concern the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The program also assisted teachers build capacity to respond to the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents/community and engage with the local culture. The program is available for school leaders and teachers in all schools, including those without Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments.

### Action 44

The priorities, performance measures and key actions outlined in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* provide a framework for committed action and innovative responses by every principal to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities. Schools have tailored operations to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by providing access to health services and youth and community programs.

## Pathways to real post-school options

### Performance indicators

14. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above.*

*Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there is no publicly available national level data for 2012.*

### Overall progress

All Australian Capital Territory students participate in the Pathways Planning process, which encourages a cohesive approach to supporting the career development and transitions of young people. The use and management of Individual Learning Plans and Personalised Learning Plans have been linked to the elements of Pathways Planning to encourage and support personalised learning for every student.

**Table ACT12: The number of Year 12 Certificates completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Australian Capital Territory, 2011–2012**

Qualification	2011	2012
Year 12 Certificate	59	66
Year 12 Certificate and VET Certificate	12	16
VET Certificate but no Year 12 Certificate	1	0
Neither Year 12 nor VET Certificate	2	0

Source: Australian Capital Territory Board of Senior Secondary Studies, 2011 to 2012.

In 2012, 66 students across the Australian Capital Territory education sectors achieved a Year 12 Certificate, compared to 59 in 2011. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who received a Year 12 Certificate from non-government schools in 2012 was 16, representing an increase of three on the 2011 figures. In 2012, fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students graduated with a Year 12 Certificate from Australian Capital Territory government colleges, with eight students also achieving a VET Certificate.

Table ACT13 demonstrates an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have completed a vocational qualification at Certificate II and above, between 2010 and 2011. The growth in the number of students who obtained an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II is more significant for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

## Systemic level actions (48, 49 and 50)

### Action 48

All Australian Capital Territory government school students from Years 5 to 12 participated in the Pathways Planning process, which supports the development of personalised learning plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Pathways Planning also incorporates career development and career education, both of which support the development of student pathways to post-school options.

Each year, the Directorate offers ten scholarships of \$5,000 for students in Years 11 and 12 who are interested in pursuing

**Table ACT13: Number of vocational qualifications completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, at AQF Certificate II and above, Australian Capital Territory, 2010–2012<sup>(a)</sup>**

	2010 <sup>(b)</sup>	2011	2012
AQF Certificate II or above – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	206	220	n/a
AQF Certificate II or above – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	5,945	5,945	n/a

Notes:

- a) Data for qualifications completed in 2011 are based on preliminary data submissions. The 2011 data will be revised upwards in the 2012 VET Provider Collection to accommodate further notification of qualifications completed.
- b) The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status 'not stated' for the Australian Capital Territory was 2,645 in 2010.
- n/a not available.

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *VET Provider Collection*, 2012.

a career in teaching, and three university scholarships of \$20,000 for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students who are undertaking teacher training at the University of Canberra.

### Action 49

The Aspirations Program is an elective program in Australian Capital Territory government schools that promotes the successful completion of Year 12 and the transition into tertiary education for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The program offers a range of activities and experiences designed to broaden students' knowledge of the tertiary education pathways available to them. In 2012, 128 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from Years 5 to 12 participated in the Aspirations Program.

In Catholic schools, the Canberra Region Pathways Trade Training Centre (CRPTTC) provided an integrated approach to education that supports the range of academic and vocational pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The CRPTTC derives value from partnerships with industry practitioners,

vocational educational and higher education providers and the community for the benefit of participants.

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools have access to all the training opportunities that are on offer at the secondary colleges. All colleges have provisions in place to support students in their learning and to provide extended opportunities for those who are attracted to an industry area, or who wish to pursue further qualifications. Students in Year 11 and 12 have access to the Australian National University Secondary College Program. Assistance in the academic requirements of each course is available through the Tjabal Centre at the Australian National University.

#### **Action 50**

All students in Australian Capital Territory government schools, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, have access to computers and ICT is incorporated across the curriculum.

Within the Catholic sector, the provision of flexible learning areas in all colleges and the implementation of ICT into the curriculum is mandatory. Students have access to laptops and are encouraged to use these tools to obtain information, participate in chat rooms, communicate with other students and staff and access the Canberra Institute of Technology student portal.

### **Local level actions (51, 52, 53, 54 and 55)**

#### **Action 51**

In 2012, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had access to the broad range of transition support and vocational and career education services available in Australian Capital Territory government schools. The Transitions and Careers Officers offer a range of services to the 6,000 (including 158 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Year 11 and 12 students enrolled in government colleges to support their transition from school to post-school options.

#### **Action 52**

In 2010, the Directorate partnered with the Indigenous Social Inclusion Company (now known as the Aboriginal Corporation for Sporting and Recreational Activities) to provide an Australian School-Based Apprenticeships (ASBA) program specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This program connects young people with their communities, while developing

skills that contribute toward further training and employment. The program has been highly successful, and in 2012–13, there were 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing ASBAs: 12 in AQF Certificate II level qualifications and three in AQF Certificate III level qualifications.

During the same period, there were 38 commencements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in ASBAs in the Australian Capital Territory, with 76 per cent in AQF Certificate III level qualifications.

#### **Action 53**

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking school-based traineeships have a teacher as a supervisor who visits the workplace, checks on attendance and supports the students with any issues experienced.

#### **Action 54**

The Student Aspirations Program provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to explore various professions and tertiary education institutions. Aspiration Officers support students with university applications and scholarship processes. All secondary schools and colleges have a work experience coordinator. All secondary schools have a careers advisor and all colleges have a transitions and careers officer.

In Catholic schools, students of the four secondary colleges participating in the Trade Training Centre programs have the opportunity to complete their senior secondary studies with a Year 12 Certificate and AQF Certificate III level qualifications in hospitality, and an advanced pathway into AQF Certificate III in Carpentry and Joinery.

#### **Action 55**

The annual Canberra CareersXpo provides an opportunity for all students to access current information from education, industry, employment, and community service providers about post school options.

## **Good practice snapshots**

To increase the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, a small team of teachers completed a year-long Action Inquiry program examining personalised



learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: 'Who owns this Achievement Plan anyhow?' The study, conducted under the ACT Education and Training Directorate's Accepting the Challenge Program, included: formal input from Emeritus Professor Tony Shaddock on conducting Action Inquiry; staff presentations, meetings and surveys; data collection and analysis; and professional development and research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. A critical element was feedback received from 32 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students on personalised learning and goals. Teachers created a more student-centred process that increased student, staff and parental ownership of learning in relation to Personalised Learning Plans. They found that both teachers and students using the revised Achievement Plan demonstrated increased awareness of their goals and could reflect on achievements. The Achievement Plan has been received very positively by other teachers. The process of change and implementation will continue in 2013 with the aim of increasing the number of staff actively involved in using the new format, and to increase the number of families connecting with the school through effective student personalised goals and learning.

Dickson College (Year 11 and 12) completed an Action Inquiry in 2012 examining the relationship between attendance and academic performance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The study was conducted under the Australian Capital Territory Education Directorate's Accepting the Challenge Program, with academic input provided by Emeritus Professor Tony Shaddock. The research was undertaken because of the effect that attendance has on academic performance, and thus the achievement of the Year 12 Certificate. It was evident that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students often experienced difficulties adjusting to the college system and its requirements, which impacted on their attendance. Through the research, the college examined: the subjects with the greatest difference in performance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; what the important factors were affecting academic performance and achieving a Year 12 Certificate; and how the college could support improvement in results. Comprehensive analysis of student results and attendance was complemented by literature searches relevant to the inquiry. Students were engaged in the project through literacy tutorials, NAIDOC Week events, social gatherings and a mentoring program. Student surveys included questions around parental participation in parent –

teacher interviews. The project was seen as the first stage in improving participation and performance and concluded more comprehensive support was needed to assist student adjustment to college. Earlier intervention in Semester 1 was identified as a key factor. A whole-school approach to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete both assessment and attendance requirements were implemented, and the college committed to introducing the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME).

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Catholic Education Office established a school-based Aboriginal Contact Teacher initiative in 2010. The initiative supports Catholic schools in the Australian Capital Territory to focus on the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* and its six priority domains. The Contact Teacher in each school works closely with the CEO Aboriginal Education Officer and the Aboriginal Education Workers. Schools receive allocated relief days for the school-based Aboriginal Contact teachers to work with school staff, students, and families to meet individual learning needs. The goal of the initiative is to ensure that families and communities of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students are engaged with their children's learning by involving them in the everyday activities of the school. The presence of an Aboriginal Contact Teacher in each school has assisted in building relationships with parents and community and raising the profile of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander education in schools. The Contact Teacher performs a vital role in connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families to the school through a personalised approach involving classroom teachers.

The implementation of Personalised Learning Plans for students in Year 1 through to Year 10 has also assisted in the development of student learning. The Aboriginal Contact Teacher has been instrumental in implementation of this initiative. The Contact Teacher is able to liaise with the Aboriginal Education Worker, class teachers, students and families to maximise the learning opportunities of each individual student.

Schools, with the support of the Contact Teacher, have been able to embed the Australian Cross-Curriculum priority of Aboriginal Histories and Cultures in teaching and learning programs. The Aboriginal Contact Teacher provides information about authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources, as well as liaising with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, so

that appropriate protocols are followed. The Aboriginal Contact teacher is able to plan and organise whole school activities for Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and National Sorry Day. The Aboriginal Contact Teachers in Catholic secondary colleges have been able to assist the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students explore tertiary institutions within the Australian Capital Territory through 'come and try days' and attending an annual Indigenous Expo that focuses on career, training and education. The Aboriginal Contact Teacher initiative has been very successful. This is evident through the engagement and authentic involvement of all members of the school community in displaying a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their culture. The following quote typifies the comments received from school principals regarding the impact of this initiative for their school communities: *'Our students have a much deeper appreciation of Aboriginal spirituality and culture, respect for themselves and others and how this symbolises yet another step forward in Reconciliation.'*

## Australian Capital Territory Indigenous Education Consultative Body's (IECB's) feedback

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group liaises with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and provides advice and feedback to the Australian Capital Territory and Australian governments about issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. This report is an excellent platform on which to base discussions about future strategies to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Consultative Group consults with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education programs and other education and training programs in the Australian Capital Territory. The consultations include developing partnerships with preschool, school and further education providers across sectors in the Australian Capital Territory to enhance reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student achievement to the Directorate and to communities.

The group continued to meet regularly throughout 2012, and contributed to a number of policy directions including: the Australian National Curriculum, the Gonski Review and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan*. During the reporting period, the group met with their interstate counterparts, the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Australian Government Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Honourable Peter Garrett MP, to advance the national agenda.

In July 2012, there were only four active members of the group. In collaboration with the Directorate, the group reviewed its direction, revised the Terms of Reference and updated their website, in preparation for a new group of ministerially appointed members in November 2012, taking the group to eight active members.

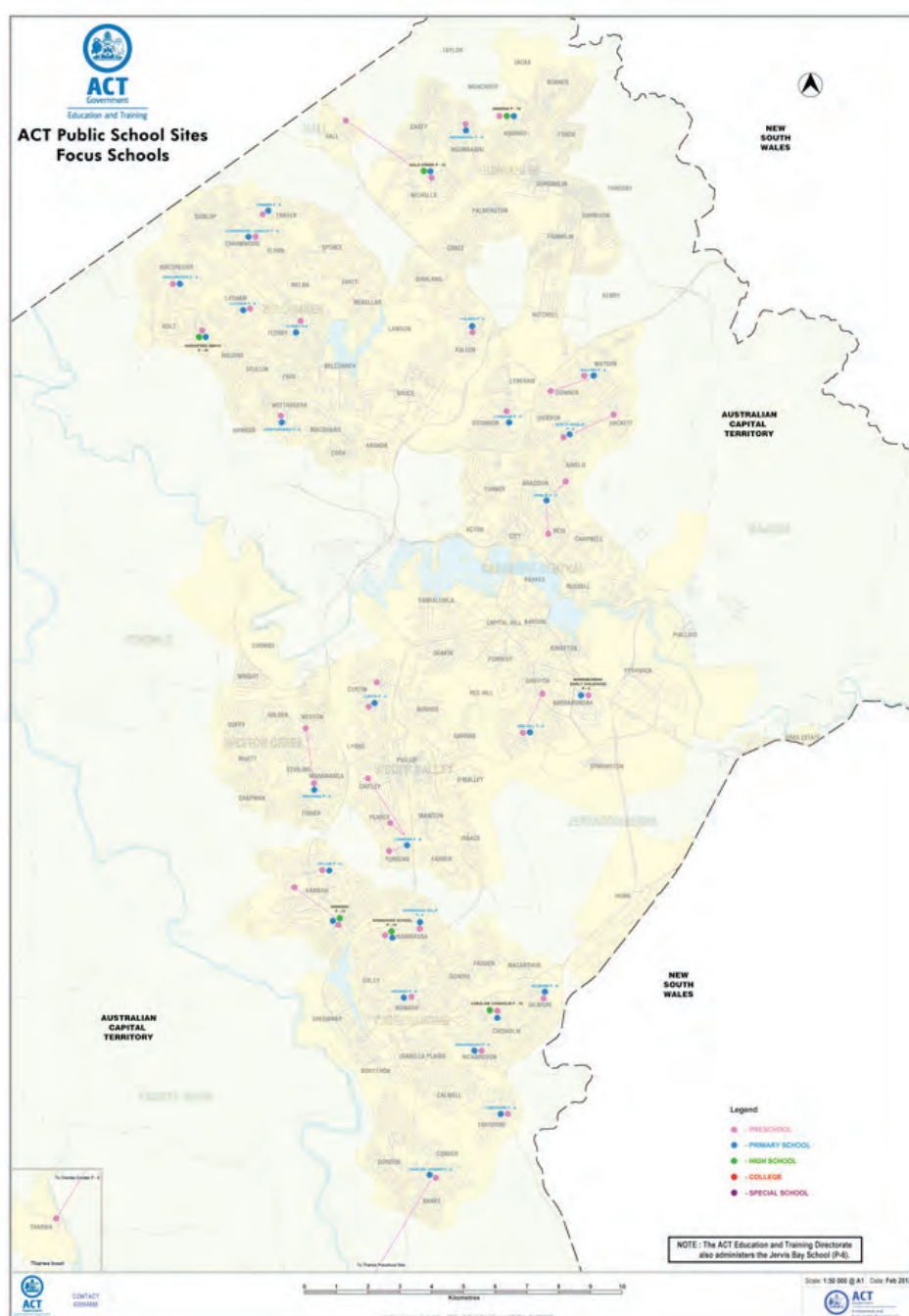
## Australian Capital Territory Education and Training Directorate's response to IECB's feedback

The Australian Capital Territory Education and Training Directorate remains committed to accelerating improvements in educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. These commitments are underpinned by the national *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014* and the *Directorate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Plan: Everyone Matters 2010-2013*.

During the reporting period, July 2012 to June 2013, the Directorate continued to strengthen its relationship with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group through regular meetings. Members of the Consultative Group continue to provide strategic advice to the Directorate to progress the key actions of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan*. The strength and honesty of these key relationships has enabled the Directorate to continue to work with authenticity and integrity. The Directorate would like to thank the members of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group for the constant partnership, valuable insight, and continued drive to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Australian Capital Territory government schools.

# Distribution of Australian Capital Territory Focus schools

**Figure ACT5: Map of Australian Capital Territory Focus schools**  
(Focus schools are listed in a table following this map.)



Notes:

- Dots indicate location of Focus schools.
- Canberra metropolitan Focus schools are not individually identified.

## Focus school information

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Ainslie	Gov.	Metropolitan	439	7			
Amaroo	Gov.	Metropolitan	1,078	9			
Arawang	Gov.	Metropolitan	414	12			
Caroline Chisholm (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	240	11			
Charles Conder	Gov.	Metropolitan	395	24	x		
Charnwood-Dunlop	Gov.	Metropolitan	337	19			
Curtin (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	495	9			
Florey	Gov.	Metropolitan	445	11		x	
Fraser	Gov.	Metropolitan	429	16			
Gilmore (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	209	20			
Gold Creek	Gov.	Metropolitan	587	19			
Jervis Bay (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	82	64	x		
Kaleen	Gov.	Metropolitan	564	15			
Kingsford Smith (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	581	41			
Latham (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	305	11	x		
Lyneham (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	409	4			
Majura (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	594	17			
McGregor (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	441	12	x		
Monash	Gov.	Metropolitan	464	14			
Namadgi	Gov.	Metropolitan	472	46			
Narrabundah (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	121	25			
Ngunnawal	Gov.	Metropolitan	568	47			
North Ainslie (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	379	14			
Red Hill (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	645	12			
Richardson (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	218	49		x	
Taylor	Gov.	Metropolitan	207	12			
Theodore (IFS)	Gov.	Metropolitan	306	31			
Torrens	Gov.	Metropolitan	492	12			
Wanniassa	Gov.	Metropolitan	263	59			
Wanniassa Hills	Gov.	Metropolitan	409	20		x	
Weetangera	Gov.	Metropolitan	428	10			

Note:

Total enrolments include preschool to Year 6.

IFS – school received funding in 2012 under the *Investing in Focus Schools* initiative.

NS – school received funding in 2012 under the *Focus Schools Next Steps* initiative.

## Chapter 12

# Northern Territory report on activities and outcomes

## Introduction

In the 2012 school year, 44,274 students were enrolled in Northern Territory schools. Of these, 17,831 students identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

A high proportion of schools in the Northern Territory span very remote and remote regions, with 54.0 per cent of students enrolled in schools located in provincial areas, 23.6 per cent enrolled in schools in remote areas and 22.4 per cent of students enrolled in schools located in very remote areas (based on agreed Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), 2006, geolocation categories).

In the Northern Territory in 2012, 82.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attended government schools and 17.9 per cent attended non-government schools in the Catholic and independent sectors.

When examining the results of the Northern Territory, it is important to consider that this jurisdiction differs markedly from any other State or Territory. The Northern Territory has the lowest population overall but the highest proportion of the population living in the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas. It has by far the largest proportion of the population living in remote and very remote areas, and the largest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of any jurisdiction, most of whom live in these areas.

The Northern Territory does not have any areas classified as metropolitan (which includes locations such as Sydney and Melbourne). Darwin, Palmerston and rural areas are classified as provincial, Katherine and Alice Springs areas are classified as remote, and all other areas, including Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy, are classified as very remote.

The Northern Territory has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student cohort that is over 40 per cent of the total school population, which is over six times greater than the next largest proportion from any other State or Territory. Furthermore, a vastly higher proportion of these students are speakers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages from very remote communities, compared to any other State or Territory. These contextual factors are reflected in the overall results achieved by Northern Territory students, and have a large impact on the variability in these results.

## Profile of Focus schools

Of the 154 government schools and 38 non-government schools in the Northern Territory in 2012, 61 schools, or 32 per cent, are Focus schools, including 55 government schools, five Catholic schools and one independent school. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in these schools represent almost two-thirds of all Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students in the Northern Territory, and almost a quarter of all enrolments. Ten of the Northern Territory's Focus schools are classified as provincial, 12 are remote and 39 are very remote.

A map (Figure NT5) and list detailing the location of Focus schools in the Northern Territory are provided at the end of this chapter.

## Northern Territory report on progress by Domains

### Readiness for school

#### Performance indicators

1. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in and attending (where possible to measure) a preschool program.*
2. *The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students assessed as ready for the first year of full-time schooling by State and Territories' measures.*

### Overall progress

Data for the National Early Childhood Education and Care (NECEC) Collection have been sourced from the Australian Government and the State and Territory departments with responsibility for Early Childhood Education and Care and the ACT Catholic Education Office. The NECEC Collection is underpinned by standards specified within the Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set (ECEC NMDS) that facilitates consistency of data provision across the various jurisdictional collections. Alignment with these standards has not been completely achieved by all jurisdictions for 2012, and care should be taken when comparing States and Territories.

Some jurisdictions were not able to provide certain data elements as specified in the ECEC NMDS for the National ECEC Collection. Given the complexity of the service delivery models for ECEC across Australia, it is a statistical challenge to identify children attending multiple preschool programs within the collection reference period. It is also a challenge to report accurately the number of children enrolled in and attending a preschool program, without counting an individual child more than once. When a child attends two different preschool programs, this is described as a child attending two episodes of preschool. This child is only counted once in child counts. All preschool episodes associated with a child are included in preschool episode counts. Australian totals in Table NT1 need to be interpreted with care due to the mixed populations that are reported between States and Territories.

Comparison of data year to year is not possible due to collection, output and processing methodology not being consistent across years.

For further information on the ECEC NMDS, collection methodologies and coverage for the National ECEC Collection, see the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *National ECEC Collection: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (Cat. No. 4240.0.55.001).

In 2012, 79.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in the Northern Territory eligible to attend preschool were enrolled in a preschool program. Of these children enrolled, 79.4 per cent attended during the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection reference week (see notes for Table NT1).

The 2012 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) data indicate statistically significant improvement in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in four or more domains from 27.7 per cent in 2009 to 32.8 per cent in 2012. The Northern Territory continues to utilise the Assessment of Student Competency

**Table NT1: Summary of enrolment and attendance in a preschool program, Northern Territory and Australia, 2012**

	Northern Territory		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	All children
Number of children enrolled	1,239	3,369	11,237	266,036
Children enrolled over ERP (per cent)	79.3	90.4	82.0	88.5
Number of children attending	984	3,039	10,460	258,881
Percentage of children attending over ERP <sup>(a)</sup>	63.0	81.5	76.0	86.1
Percentage of children enrolled that are attending <sup>(b)</sup>	79.4	90.2	93.1	97.3
ERP 4 year olds – as at June 2012 <sup>(c)</sup>	1,562	3,728	13,763	300,596

Notes:

- a) Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children attending over the Estimated Resident Population (ERP). For information on adjustments for 2006 Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, see explanatory notes in the ABS publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No. 3238.0).
- b) Calculated as the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled.
- c) ERP figures presented are unpublished numbers based on the 2006 Census and should be treated as indicative.
- d) Enrolment and attendance counts include children aged 4 and 5 years. Child counts may include some 5 year-old children who were enrolled in preschool in the previous year.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *2012 National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection*; ABS (unpublished) Australian Demographic Statistics (Cat. No. 3101.0); ABS (unpublished), *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (Cat. No. 3238.0).



**Table NT2: Proportion of children in Northern Territory assessed as 'developmentally on track' in four or more domains of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), 2012 (per cent)**

	Northern Territory	Australia
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	32.8	47.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	70.5	70.3

Notes:

- The AEDI population comprises children with at least one valid domain score.
- Children are deemed to be developmentally 'on track' if they scored in the 25th percentile or above the national AEDI population in four or more AEDI domains.
- Where Standard Australian English is not the child's first language, there may be an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are assessed as developmentally vulnerable in the 'language and cognitive skills' or the 'communication skills and general knowledge' domains of the AEDI. Cultural differences in the child's mode of communication and general knowledge should also be acknowledged and taken in consideration when reviewing the AEDI data.

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), (unpublished) *Australian Early Development Index* data, 2012 data collection.

(ASC) tool to measure competencies identified as the minimum requirement for a child entering full-time schooling, in order for them to make appropriate progress in their learning. In Term 4 2012, results from the ASC indicate 46 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed demonstrated literacy awareness, and 41 per cent demonstrated numeracy awareness and understanding appropriate for entry into primary school in the following year.

## Systemic level actions (5, 6 and 7)

### Action 5

In 2012, 100 per cent of eligible Northern Territory schools (both government and non-government), including Focus schools, participated in national AEDI data collection. The Families as First Teachers – Indigenous Parenting Support Services Program (FaFT) staff worked closely with the Northern Territory AEDI project manager to analyse the 2012 data and participated in professional learning to assist in interpreting the data to identify learning needs. FaFT Early Learning programs use

the Abecedarian Approach, involving conversational reading and learning games to support children's development in all domains. Using books in conversational reading and simple, fun activities through learning games encourages positive, sustained parent-child interactions, and children develop age appropriate skills and concepts for success at school, thus decreasing the levels of vulnerability. The FaFT programs incorporate a range of outreach services for Focus schools to connect with early childhood education and care, health, family support, welfare and community services; this is further detailed under Action 15.

### Action 6

In 2012, 53 Focus schools were providing 15 hours of preschool to children in the year before full-time schooling (the definition of universal access), an increase from 2011, when 42 Focus schools provided universal access to preschool. In 2012, 48 of the 55 government sector Focus schools and five of the six non-government sector Focus schools were providing universal access. Preschool in the Northern Territory is delivered through stand-alone preschools, multi-year classes, mobile preschooling and distance education and outreach programs. For reporting under universal access, Long Day Care centres are also considered to be delivering preschool programs, where delivery of a program is by a four-year trained Early Childhood qualified teacher.

### Action 7

The ASC tool is utilised to screen students for being developmentally at risk on entry to school. Students who speak English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) can be assessed in their first language through the tool. Through the ASC handbook, teachers are encouraged to collaborate with Special Education Teachers, the student's family, and follow the Department's tiers of intervention should concerns for a child's development require further investigation. The ASC promotes collaboration with parents and families in the teaching and learning cycle and provides a form of reporting for teaching for preschool and transition educators to document their knowledge of each student's dispositions, skills and understandings.

In the Catholic sector, the Stepping Stones assessment tool has been developed, trialed and refined for use in Focus schools. The tool is used to assess and report readiness for school in literacy and numeracy, as well as to support programming.

In the independent sector, the Focus school is implementing a school-based assessment to screen students for being developmentally at risk on entry to school.



## Local level action (8)

### Action 8

To address readiness for school, Focus schools hold regular parent forums and family days to engage and inform parents on educational processes, and utilise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to engage new enrolments. Many schools hold playgroups for children from birth to 5 years of age and their families either on-site or at alternate centres. In Alice Springs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Preschool Engagement Officers are employed in five Focus schools to liaise with parents of preschool aged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, to support them in engaging with the education process. The Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce pilot project is also underway in four remote communities, to develop a more integrated workforce that can collaborate across early childhood development activities and provide better services for children and their families (for further information, refer to the 'Good practice snapshot' section of this chapter).

Readiness for school in the Northern Territory continues to be developed through a range of programs, such as: FaFT, Child and Family Leaders and improved access to preschool services and outreach programs. Programs work to support families and communities to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that underpin school success.

In the independent sector, the Home Intervention Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is in place to help parents assist in teaching children four to five years of age to assist school readiness.

In the Catholic sector, under the Smarter Schools National Partnership, a two-year project is taking place to develop a measure of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child development to inform literacy and numeracy acquisition programs.

## Engagement and connections

### Performance indicators

3. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with personalised learning strategies in place.*
4. *Proportion of Focus schools with a school–community partnership agreement in place.*

## Overall progress

The majority of schools in the Northern Territory have personalised learning strategies in place for all students, for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students. These identify the specific learning needs of individual students and enable differentiated strategies to be implemented in the classroom. Robust data for personalised learning strategies is not available.

In addition to personalised learning strategies, some schools take a more formalised approach by documenting these strategies in learning and engagement plans which involve students working with their teacher, in partnership with the student's parents or carers, to develop a plan that reflects the student's learning goals and current capabilities, including addressing their barriers to learning and specific learning targets.

In 2012, the Northern Territory's 11 Focus schools participating in the Next Steps Initiative received additional funding to work towards implementing personalised learning plans for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Next Steps Focus schools reporting to the Stronger Smarter Institute noted an increase in personalised learning plans in place over the course of the year, increasing from 35 per cent of students at the start of 2012, to 72 per cent at the end of 2012.

Over half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Northern Territory are enrolled in the 91 remote and very remote government schools eligible under the National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory (NP-SFNT). Through the NP-SFNT, schools are developing Learning and Engagement Plans (personalised learning plans) for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Learning and Engagement Plans (LEP) are individual student plans that address a student's learning and engagement needs. LEPs are based on the Australian Government's *Guide to developing Personalised Learning Plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students* and emphasise the need for schools to focus on improving student engagement by removing barriers to attendance and strengthening capacity to learn before learning outcomes can be improved.

At the end of the 2012, 5.1 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending NP-SFNT eligible schools had a LEP in place. The proportion of students with LEPs will increase over 2013, with the Northern Territory Department of Education

and Children's Services (the Department) committed to two out of every ten students having a LEP in place by 2015.

At the end of 2012, 80 per cent of the 55 government sector Focus schools had School Community Partnership Agreements (SCPAs) in place. For the remaining 11 government Focus schools, there are two schools with draft agreements in place yet to be finalised, and nine Focus schools with negotiations for SCPAs currently underway. In the Catholic sector, 60 per cent of the five Focus schools have SCPAs in place. In the independent sector, the one Focus school in the Northern Territory has a SCPA in place.

## Systemic level actions (15, 16, 17 and 18)

### Action 15

The FaFT program provides outreach services for early learning and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families of children under school age. FaFT programs operate in Northern Territory Remote Service Delivery sites and employ a Family Educator and Family Liaison Officer. Staff work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, providing information, support and access to agencies working with families of children from birth to 3 years of age. In smaller communities, mobile family educators work collaboratively with agencies to provide early learning and family support services for children from birth to 5 years of age and their families. For example, FaFT staff work with health professionals and nutritionists to provide nutrition information, cooking workshops and education for all families. FaFT staff also: provide specific workshops for families of children identified as failing to thrive; supervise access visits for families whose children are in care; and link families to programs such as Money Matters for budgeting and financial planning. In 2012, the FaFT program engaged 2,115 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and 2,323 parents and carers in early learning activities including dual generational playgroups, parent workshops, books in homes, parent coaching and transition to preschool programs.

The Mobile Preschool program is designed to provide children and families living in remote communities with a quality early learning program in preparation for school. The mobile preschool model has proven successful in reaching remote communities through a 'hub and spoke' model. In 2012, nine hubs were in operation servicing up to 32 sites, with a total of 170 children enrolled. Two of the sites are located at Focus schools. The

mobile preschool teachers are regionally based and visit each site on a regular basis, providing curriculum activities, associated resources and professional support to locally recruited assistant teachers. The assistant teachers run the mobile preschool daily when the mobile preschool teacher is visiting other communities. All assistant teachers hold, or are working towards the attainment of, an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate III in Children's Services.

The Targeting Health, Improving Engagement program in Alice Springs was established in partnership with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and the Northern Territory Department of Health to improve school attendance through better student health. The program places primary healthcare into Focus schools, quarantines clinic appointments and offers holistic support to parents. The program has led to increased attendance in participating schools and a decline in the number of students coming to school with common and easily treatable health issues.

### Action 16

There are a range of programs available at schools to support pregnant and parenting students, including the Northern Territory Open Education Centre's Student Support Program, which provides extensive one-on-one support. Students may have dual enrolment through their local school, or may enrol directly with the Centre if they have left school. Examples of further support for young mothers include: the Young Mothers Support Unit at Palmerston High School (supported by Young Women's Christian Association), the Young Mothers Group and the Young Mum and Babies program in Alice Springs. The Department has also established contact with Mission Australia concerning school-aged clients who are being case managed. Further policy development is required to establish school processes that maintain a connection with young women during pregnancy and after birth.

### Action 17

The Northern Territory Government has a specific Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker (AIEW) classification covering approximately 50 positions. AIEWs have a role in many urban schools to support student and school community engagement. Additional to the AIEW classification, assistant teachers and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education support roles play a significant role in school and community engagement programs. The Department is working with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education to develop a structured pathway from Certificate level qualifications through

to higher education qualifications, linked to career progression for Indigenous Education Support Workers (including assistant teachers).

The independent sector strongly encourages the employment and up-skilling of AIEWs. Every class at the independent Focus school employs at least one AIEW or Assistant Teacher. Each AIEW is encouraged to undertake studies to further their career.

In the Catholic sector, role descriptions for Indigenous Education workers and for Assistant Teachers have been reviewed. A whole-sector initiative, focused on the professional development and growth of individual staff members, was developed and trialled in 2012 for full implementation in 2013.

#### **Action 18**

To strengthen school accountability and reporting to families and the community, the Schools Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework is implemented across all government schools. As part of the strategic planning process, schools prepare annual operational plans, which are available to the community, and schools report annually on progress. Reporting outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to families and communities is also supported through SCPA activities, for example, through parent and community group forums, which are held on a regular basis.

In the independent sector, Liaison Officers and AIEWs play a role in sharing information in annual improvement and operational plans, as do the school leaders and staff. Hard copy reports and one-to-one meetings with families are also held to develop education plans and report against these plans.

In the Catholic sector, consultation with Focus schools in 2012 included discussions with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and staff on reporting educational outcomes to families. Expectations for reporting student outcomes, consistent with legislative requirements, were reiterated across the sector, including through a sector-developed common reporting template.

### **Local level actions (19, 20 and 21)**

#### **Action 19**

The education aspirations of the community are documented in SCPAs, assisting schools and the broader education community to articulate their roles in the education of their children. SCPAs are in place for 48 of the 61 Focus schools in the Northern Territory. SCPAs have facilitated the implementation

of parent groups and the overall engagement of parents and families in their children's education. Participation in school governance arrangements provides opportunities for community members to work closely with school leaders and participate in decision-making about their children's education. The government sector has worked with the Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations to develop a governance training model and negotiate agreement for the delivery of governance training for all government schools. In 2012, across all sectors, 154 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members participated in governance training, including through governance workshops held in Darwin and Alice Springs, regional governance training and on-site school specific training.

In the Catholic sector, through the Da Ngimalmin SCPA, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr School at Wadeye, has seen a significant increase in the numbers of community members engaged regularly within the school, and substantial increases in enrolment and attendance.

In the independent sector, schools have worked extensively with families and communities to develop partnerships for the benefit of the students. Governance training has been provided to the independent Focus school and the Association of Independent Schools provides support for school boards, school leaders and staff. This work has resulted in the restructuring of a number of the school boards to better reflect the consultative process being undertaken by the schools.

#### **Action 20**

Family forums offered in 2012 ranged from educational information sessions to parent workshops that allow families to engage with staff and each other. In the Alice Springs region, parent engagement activities included how to read to your child and basic information technology training. The independent sector offered a Reading with Parents FAST (Families and Schools Together) program, with a focus on parents, children and schools learning together.

#### **Action 21**

In 2012, schools continued to implement personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition to personalised learning strategies, documented LEPs are also providing significant opportunities for parents to engage in the educational process with their children's teachers, resulting in greater knowledge of student achievement and an understanding of the context of classroom learning.

Educational, social, emotional and health factors are considered at every opportunity, and AIEWs have a strong connection to implementation of personalised learning strategies. Schools are encouraged to report on the proportion of students with a formalised LEP in place through their School Annual Performance Report.

The independent sector Focus school develops individual Education Plans for its students. This is undertaken in a consultative and collaborative manner with students and families. The inclusion of health workers, counsellors and other professional and para-professionals occurs when relevant for particular students.

## Attendance

### Performance indicators

5. *Attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in schools.*

6. *Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians compared to 'Other' Australians.*
7. *Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*
8. *Grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

## Overall progress

### Attendance rates

Whilst there was no overall improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance rates for the Northern Territory in 2012, compared to previous years, improvements in attendance are being seen across a number of individual schools in response to targeted local strategies. To address student attendance at the whole-of-system level, the Department continues to implement the Every Child Every Day strategy. Due to the Northern Territory's small and diverse population

**Table NT3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by sector, 2012 (per cent)**

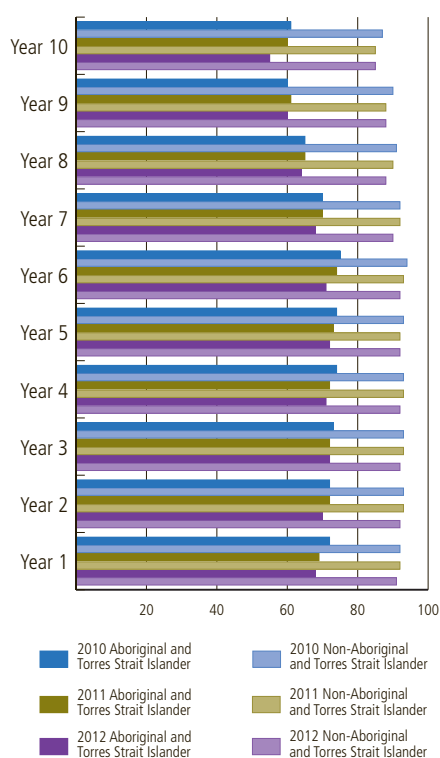
	Year level										Ungraded	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Prim.	Sec.
<b>Government</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	68	70	72	71	72	71	68	64	60	55	60	88
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91	92	92	92	92	92	90	88	88	85	n/a	92
<b>Total</b>	81	81	82	81	82	81	79	77	76	74	60	92
<b>Catholic</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	63	66	67	64	66	67	65	73	67	71	n/a	n/a
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	92	91	92	93	92	93	93	92	92	90	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	80	81	81	83	83	84	82	85	82	84	n/a	n/a
<b>Independent</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	77	77	75	85	79	81	76	74	75	71	n/a	48
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	91	94	94	94	94	93	93	93	93	91	n/a	48
<b>Total</b>	89	92	92	93	91	92	89	88	88	85	n/a	48

Note: Definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect attendance data are not uniform. As such, direct comparisons of attendance rates between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made. Nor can attendance data for 2012 be aggregated or averaged at the national or State/Territory level. Variations in methodology between jurisdictions are described in the explanatory notes for the 2012 attendance data contained in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 2012*.

n/a not available.

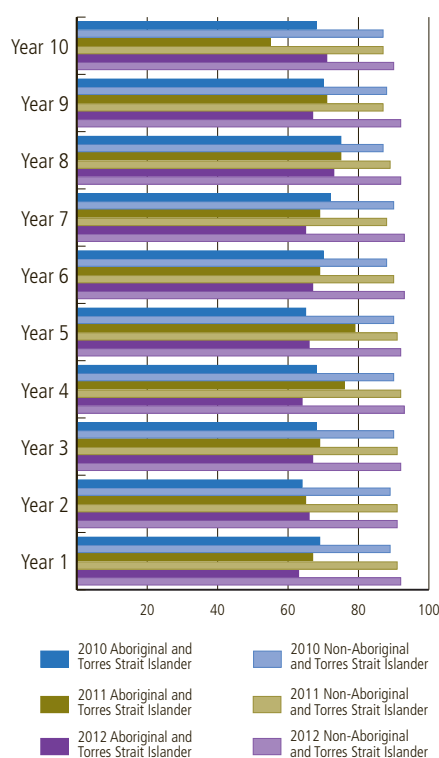
Source: Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure NT1.1: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, government sector, Northern Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Figure NT1.2: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Catholic sector, Northern Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

and subsequent small numbers of students in each cohort, attendance data shows volatility across years for individual year levels, and should be treated with caution.

Compared to 2010, 2012 attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the government sector have declined.

In the Catholic sector, compared to 2010, attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students decreased for the majority of year levels with the exception of Year 5 and Year 10.

In 2012 in the independent sector, compared to 2010, attendance rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased for Years 1 to 4 inclusive and for Year 6.

## Enrolment to population ratio

Data for this performance indicator is not available for this annual report. Nationally for 2012, school participation rates

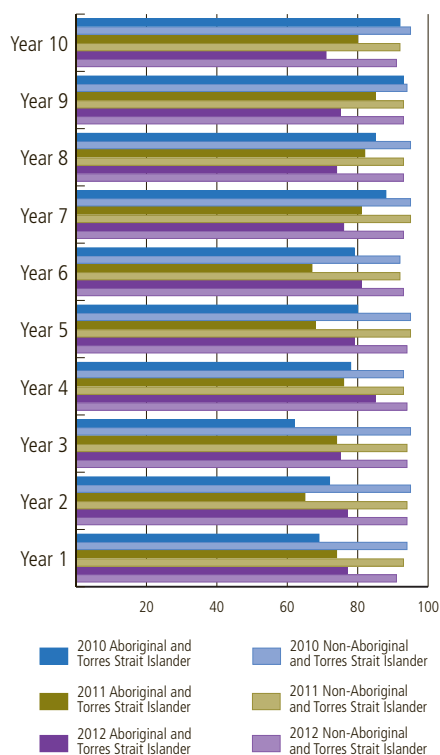
have not been published by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status due to concerns with the quality of the indicator. Specifically, the rates for most States and Territories exceeded 100 per cent, primarily as a result of modal differences in the data sources. The denominator is sourced from the Estimated Resident Population series, itself drawn from the Population Census, while the numerator is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The ABS is working to provide a substitute measure.

## Apparent retention rates

Consistent with previous years, in 2012, retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Compared to 2010, 2012 retention rates for Years 7 to 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students increased, but retention rates for Years 7 to 10 decreased.

**Figure NT1.3: Student attendance rates Years 1–10, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, independent sector, Northern Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



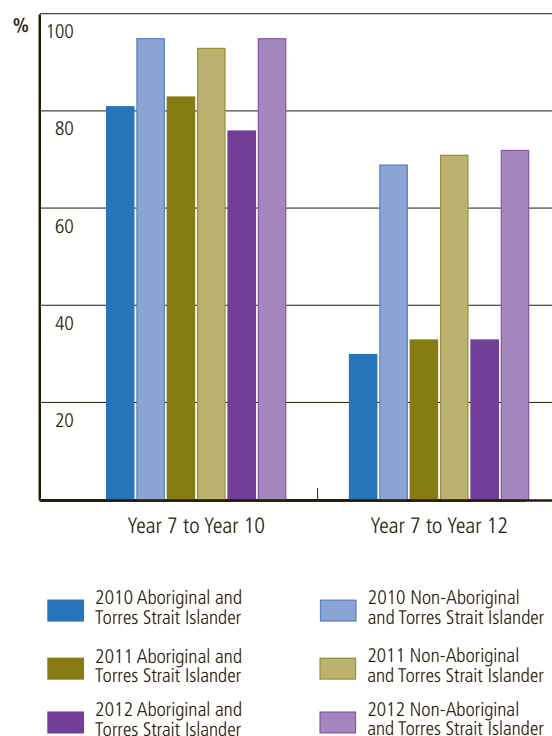
Source: ACARA, *Student Attendance Data Collection*, 2012 (unpublished).

**Table NT4: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Northern Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 7 to Year 10	75.9	94.8
Year 7 to Year 12	32.7	71.5

Source: Derived from ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0) and based on full-time student enrolments.

**Figure NT2: Apparent retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, from Year 7 to Year 10 and Year 7 to Year 12, Northern Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia*, 2012, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Apparent grade progression ratios

Consistent with previous years, grade progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The grade progression ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared with non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is lower in Years 8 to 10 than in Years 11 and 12. However, Year 11 to Year 12 grade progression is showing an increase for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students between 2010 and 2012.

**Table NT5: Apparent grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Northern Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

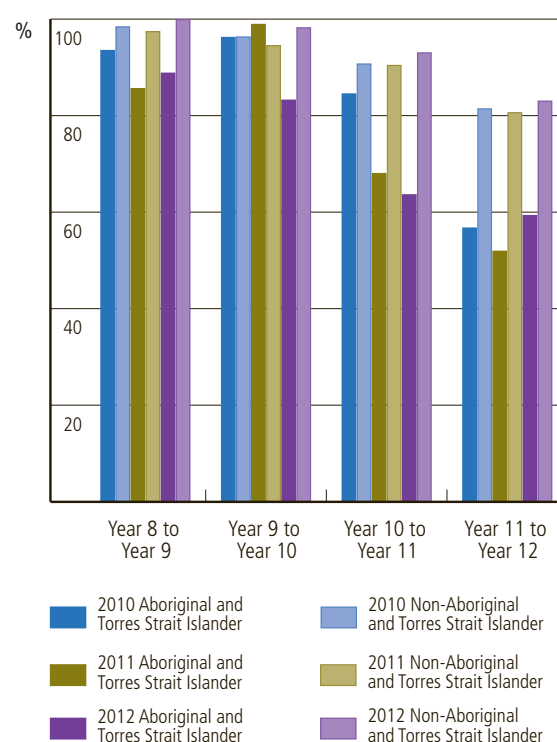
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Year 8 to Year 9	88.8	99.9
Year 9 to Year 10	83.2	98.2
Year 10 to Year 11	63.6	93.0
Year 11 to Year 12	59.3	83.0

Notes:

- Grade progression rates show the number of students at each year level as a percentage of the number enrolled in the previous year.
- Full-time students only.
- Care should be taken when interpreting these rates since a range of factors affecting the calculation are not taken into account, such as students repeating a year of schooling, movements between schools and systems or States/Territories, and net changes to a school's or system's population. There is also the effect of ungraded students – they are not included in the calculations of rates.
- Components may not add due to rounding. Percentage point gap calculations are based on unrounded data.
- Issues that may affect comparability over time can be found in the Explanatory Notes, *ABS Schools Australia, 2012* (Cat. No. 4221.0).

Source: ABS, *Schools Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

**Figure NT3: Grade progression ratios of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Northern Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



Source: ABS, *Schools Australia, 2012*, (Cat.No. 4221.0).

## Systemic level action (25)

### Action 25

Every Child, Every Day is the Northern Territory Government's overarching attendance and participation improvement strategy. The strategy has five evidence-based action areas, and in 2012 there were approximately 30 programs supporting outcomes under these action areas, including programs such as: FaFT, Frequent Attenders Program, Beyond School Guarantee and Flexible School Year. Many of these programs are based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. For example, the flexible school year program trialed at Gunbalanya School in 2012 was a solution developed by the local community to address the seasonal weather patterns identified as having an impact on attendance. The Every Child, Every Day Action Plan also identifies the need to: strengthen the emphasis on

attendance in SCPAs; plan for improvement in School Attendance Strategies; and develop attendance plans in a compulsory conference with an Attendance and Truancy Officer. Evidence such as community, student and family consultation, and enrolment and attendance data are taken into consideration to form all of these plans.

Implementation of strengthened provisions relating to attendance under the *Education Act (Northern Territory of Australia)* continued in 2012 and was reviewed using internal stakeholder surveys, enrolment and attendance data and Attendance and Truancy Officer activity data to refine processes. The Attendance and Truancy Officer team was expanded in 2012 to ensure officers could work more closely with their allocated schools to identify students who had the opportunity to re-engage sustainably.



## Local level action (26)

### Action 26

School attendance strategies are published as part of school annual operational plans and measurement processes are in place to inform future directions. For example in the Barkly region, Alpururulam School's attendance strategy is an example of a successful strategy combining incentives, community involvement, and a whole-of-school education vision with targeted Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs from the middle years upwards. Alpururulam School has close to 100 per cent enrolment of school-aged students living in the community, and an improving attendance rate. Also in the Barkly region, Elliott School's funding of a home liaison officer to target improved relations between the school and community has seen a decrease in un-notified absences.

In the Darwin region, Manunda Terrace Primary School has a homework centre, rewards for regular attendance and other engagement programs delivered in partnership with local community groups, which are all having a positive impact. Over half of targeted students have improved their attendance by an average of 17.5 per cent.

In the Catholic sector, all Focus schools have specific strategies for attendance within their annual planning frameworks and report annually on achievement and effectiveness of the strategies.

Independent schools work with communities and families to develop and implement attendance strategies tailored to specific school and community circumstances. All strategies include parent consultation and education as key components. Door-to-door pick-up and drop-off for students is identified as a key effective strategy, as there is immediate follow-up when a child does not attend.

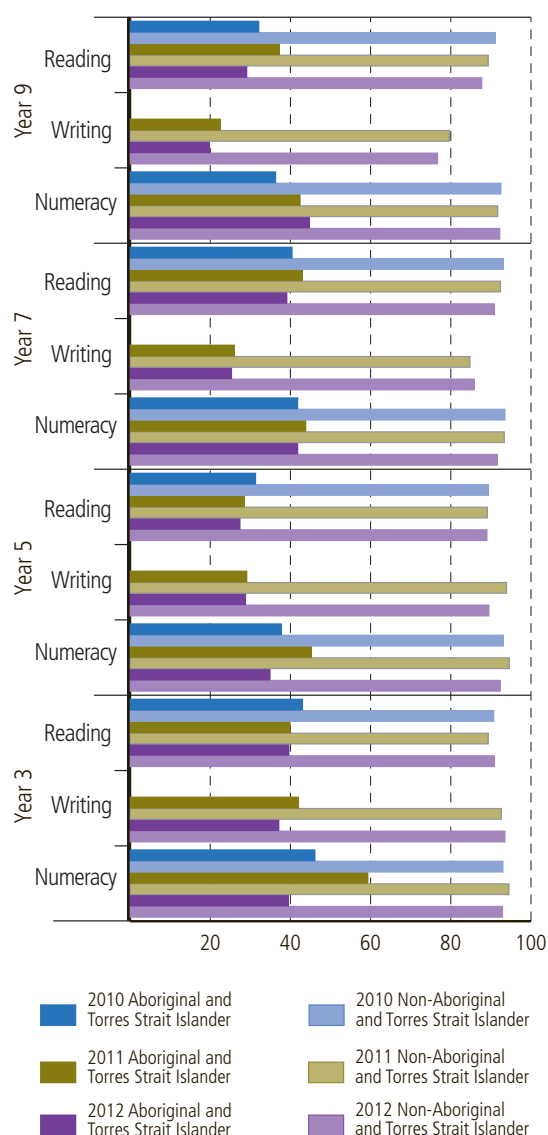
## Literacy and numeracy

### Performance indicators

9. *Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.*
10. *Participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in NAPLAN.*

## NAPLAN outcomes

**Figure NT4: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Northern Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**



**Note:** In 2011, the writing genre test genre changed from narrative to persuasive writing, so comparisons should not be made between 2012 writing performance and historical data prior to 2011.

**Source:** ACARA (2012 and unpublished), *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2012*.

**Table NT6: NAPLAN reading, writing<sup>(a)</sup> and numeracy trend summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Northern Territory, 2010–2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3			Year 5			Year 7			Year 9		
	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.	Reading	Writing	Num.
<b>2010</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	43.0	45.3	46.1	31.3	30.2	37.7	40.4	27.5	41.8	32.1	24.1	36.3
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90.7	94.2	93.0	89.4	89.3	93.1	93.1	86.6	93.5	91.1	82.0	92.5
Gap	47.7	48.9	46.9	58.1	59.1	55.4	52.7	59.1	51.7	59.0	57.9	56.2
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±6.5	±8.0	±6.5	±6.4	±6.9	±6.8	±9.3	±8.5	±8.5	±8.5	±8.1	±8.0
<b>2011</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	39.9	42.0	59.3	28.5	29.1	45.2	42.9	26.0	43.8	37.2	22.5	42.4
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	89.3	92.6	94.5	89.1	93.9	94.6	92.4	84.8	93.3	89.3	79.6	91.7
Gap	49.4	50.6	35.2	60.6	64.8	49.4	49.5	58.8	49.5	52.1	57.1	49.3
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±6.5	±6.5	±5.8	±6.2	±6.2	±6.6	±8.3	±7.5	±8.4	±9.1	±6.7	±8.6
<b>2012</b>												
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	39.6	37.1	39.5	27.4	28.8	34.9	39.1	25.3	41.8	29.1	19.8	44.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	90.8	93.5	92.9	89	89.5	92.3	90.8	85.8	91.6	87.7	76.7	92.2
Gap	51.2	56.4	53.4	61.6	60.7	57.4	51.7	60.5	49.8	58.6	56.9	47.5
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander confidence intervals <sup>(b)</sup>	±6.6	±7.3	±6.8	±6.2	±6.4	±6.5	±9.7	±8.5	±8.5	±8.9	±6.4	±7.8

Notes:

- a) A new scale was introduced for writing in 2011. With the break in the time series, the persuasive writing results for 2011 should not be directly compared to the narrative writing results from previous years.
- b) The confidence intervals for 2010 to 2012 in this table are specifically for Northern Territory.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy* (NAPLAN), 2010–2012.

The Northern Territory's school-aged population is characterised by higher levels of disadvantage than the rest of Australia. This disadvantage, coupled with the Northern Territory's small population, impacts on the volatility of Northern Territory NAPLAN results across years.

In 2012, across all year levels and assessment areas, the proportion of Northern Territory students achieving the national minimum standard for literacy and numeracy performance remained consistently lower than for other States and Territories, and the Australian average. This difference in performance was greater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and overall, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Northern Territory had the lowest performance in Australia as a cohort (*Source: Northern Territory Department of Education and Training, Annual Report 2011–12*, available online: <http://www.education.nt.gov.au/about-us/publications/annual-report-2011-12>).

Year 9 numeracy was the only test domain where NAPLAN results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the minimum national standard showed improvement when comparing 2012 results to those for 2010 and 2011.

Since 2008, while there are few consistent year-on-year trends across test domains, overall, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student results in the Northern Territory have been improving at a greater rate than those for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Analysis of matched student data, which considers changes in performance of the same students across years of testing, shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' four-year gain in the Northern Territory was stronger than the unmatched data in Table NT6 indicates.

## 2012 NAPLAN data by geolocation

Representing the challenges faced by students living in remote and very remote locations, in 2012, for all year levels and test domains, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending schools in provincial areas showed the highest proportion of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard. Results for students in remote areas, and then for students in very remote areas followed this.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student results in remote areas showed greater improvement than their counterparts in provincial areas in 2012, compared to 2011. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in remote schools improved in 11 out of 20 test domains in 2012, compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in provincial schools, who improved in seven out of 20 test domains.

## 2012 NAPLAN data and 2012 progress points for Northern Territory

One of the COAG Closing the Gap targets is to halve the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade. To monitor achievement of this COAG target by 2018, progress points for each State and Territory were developed. The progress points for the Northern Territory are provided in Table NT8.

Year 3 reading is the only year level and domain showing consistent year-on-year improvement of students achieving at or above the national minimum standard since 2008. Year 5 and Year 7 reading has also shown improvement since 2008. However, most other test domains are not on track to meet the COAG 2018 targets.

**Table NT7: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy geolocation summary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, Northern Territory, 2012 (per cent)**

Geolocation	Northern Territory		Australia	
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
<b>Reading</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	82.6	95.2
Provincial	74.4	89.9	79.9	93.5
Remote	54.2	92.6	61.2	91.6
Very Remote	22.1	95.8	39.9	90.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	76.0	93.6
Provincial	63.6	87.8	72.7	91.9
Remote	44.8	92.0	50.5	89.7
Very Remote	8.6	94.1	20.3	86.5
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	84.0	95.4
Provincial	76.1	90.4	80.8	94.5
Remote	52.7	92.1	65.4	93.4
Very Remote	18.1	91.6	37.6	92.7
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	74.6	92.9
Provincial	52.3	86.7	70.9	92.0
Remote	40.5	90.7	50.9	90.5
Very Remote	7.4	94.0	24.4	87.9
<b>Writing</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	87.3	96.6
Provincial	77.4	93.0	85.2	95.6
Remote	53.1	95.2	63.2	95.5
Very Remote	17.2	93.8	40.2	94.3
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	77.3	94.3
Provincial	64.7	88.5	73.3	91.6
Remote	47.0	92.5	53.2	90.6
Very Remote	9.9	92.6	24.9	86.7
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	74.5	92.4
Provincial	62.8	86.0	68.0	88.6
Remote	30.9	84.6	47.0	88.0
Very Remote	7.1	87.9	25.6	89.1
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	56.9	85.0
Provincial	38.4	76.8	49.7	79.0
Remote	27.1	76.7	32.6	75.9
Very Remote	3.3	76.6	17.0	74.6
<b>Numeracy</b>				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	81.4	95.5
Provincial	73.5	92.0	78.8	93.9
Remote	50.9	94.7	58.6	93.0
Very Remote	23.3	97.8	37.9	91.4
<b>Year 5</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	79.5	95.0
Provincial	67.5	91.7	76.3	93.6
Remote	52.5	94.2	55.3	92.5
Very Remote	17.5	94.8	29.2	89.1
<b>Year 7</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	82.3	95.2
Provincial	74.4	91.2	78.6	94.1
Remote	52.5	92.5	64.1	93.6
Very Remote	23.8	93.0	42.4	92.4
<b>Year 9</b>				
Metropolitan	n/a	n/a	79.9	95.0
Provincial	60.6	91.4	76.8	94.0
Remote	54.4	95.3	61.7	93.6
Very Remote	29.0	94.7	42.9	91.8

n/a not available – there are no schools in the Northern Territory classified as metropolitan.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.

**Table NT8: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy progress points for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard, 2008–2012 (per cent)**

Year	Reading				Writing				Numeracy			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9	Year 3	Year 5	Year 7	Year 9
2008	30.4	25.8	32.4	37.9	46.6	32.8	29.9	32.8	52.4	38.3	50.2	46.1
2009	32.8	28.4	34.9	40.2	48.6	35.2	32.5	35.0	54.2	40.5	52.1	48.1
2010	35.2	31.0	37.5	42.4	50.6	37.6	35.2	37.1	56.1	42.7	54.0	50.1
2011	37.6	33.7	40.0	44.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	57.9	45.0	55.9	52.0
2012	41.2	37.6	43.8	48.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	60.7	48.3	58.7	55.0
2018	60.5	58.6	64.2	66.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	75.3	66.0	73.8	70.8

Note: 'n/a' indicates data was unavailable for writing. There is a break in series from 2011, and the trajectory points were calculated on the first test type (narrative), not the second (persuasive), for 2011 and 2012. As such, from 2011, there are no relevant trajectories to report against.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2008–2012.

**Table NT9: NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, exemptions, absences/withdrawals and assessed students in Northern Territory and Australia, 2012 (per cent)**

	Year 3		Year 5		Year 7		Year 9	
	NT	Aust.	NT	Aust.	NT	Aust.	NT	Aust.
<b>Reading</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	78.1	89.7	79.5	89.6	73.8	87.8	66.0	77.1
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.9	95.7	96.3	96.3	96.9	95.9	96.0	92.9
<b>Writing</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	80.7	89.9	80.6	89.5	74.9	87.6	67.1	77.7
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	95.0	95.6	96.3	96.2	97.2	96.1	96.2	93.2
<b>Numeracy</b>								
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	75.2	88.2	76.3	88.4	71.3	86.2	65.1	75.8
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	94.4	95.5	95.7	96.0	96.4	95.6	94.7	92.4

Note: The NAPLAN participation data provided reflects students who were exempted, absent/withdrawn and assessed.

Source: ACARA, *National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)*, 2012.

## NAPLAN participation

In 2012, average participation rates by Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, across all year levels and assessment areas ranged from 65.1 per cent to 80.7 per cent compared to a national range of 75.8 per cent to 89.9 per cent. Year 3 writing students had the highest participation rate for the Northern Territory with 80.7 per cent of Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating, while Year 9 numeracy had the lowest participation rate at 65.1 per cent. Year 5 writing had a participation rate of 80.6 per cent and was the closest to the national average with a difference of 8.9 percentage points. Overall, student participation

in the Northern Territory was highest in Years 3 and 5 and lowest for Year 9. Across the domains, participation was highest in writing, followed by reading and numeracy. This is consistent with national results.

## Systemic level action (30)

### Action 30

Investment through the Smarter Schools National Partnerships (SSNP) across all sectors has assisted to build capacity at the school, region and system level to participate in Northern Territory reforms focused on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for disadvantaged students, including Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander students. Support for localised reform efforts through the Engaging Urban Students (EUS), Engaging Remote Indigenous Students (ERIS) and Remote Whole-School Reform (RWSR) initiatives, coupled with targeted coaching support through Teaching Multi-lingual Learners/ English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) Officers and Literacy and Numeracy Coaches has seen positive results for many schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Schools use a variety of methods to assess students and report to parents and carers about their child's progress. Some assessment and reporting is part of national programs (for example, NAPLAN), some is done at the Northern Territory level (eg, T–9 Net), and some is done at the school level (eg, PM Benchmark Reading Assessment Resources 1 and 2, and QuickSmart®). Schools are supported to identify and develop literacy and numeracy assessment that targets individual learner needs and assists in identifying future literacy and numeracy learning.

## Local level actions (31 and 32)

### Action 31

All Northern Territory government schools are required to develop clear guidelines for whole-of-school directions as part of their annual operational plans, in line with the Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework. Focus schools are supported through regional teams, and systemically through the departmental literacy and numeracy improvement teams, to design and implement whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy that recognise and respond to the different learning needs of students, in particular, the English literacy learning needs of learners whose first or main language is not English.

The Northern Territory's literacy and numeracy improvement priorities are focused on helping students improve their reading, writing, oral language and numeracy skills to better prepare them for their futures. These priorities include:

- development of whole-of-school literacy and numeracy improvement plans that include data informed targets
- student monitoring and assessment of Standard Australian English (SAE) literacy and numeracy achievement of students
- a strong focus on the early years and school readiness
- quality teaching and development of teacher capacity to deliver learning programs that maximise the opportunity for all students to develop SAE literacy and numeracy skills, and

- strong school leadership and improvement, with a focus on instructional whole-school literacy and numeracy improvement practice, engagement of parents and the community, and professional learning opportunities of teachers and leaders on student demographic and achievement data.

An example of a successful whole-of-school approach to literacy in place in the independent sector is the Honey Ant Readers used at Yipirinya School. These readers provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories presented in progression from Aboriginal English through to Standard Australian English.

In the Catholic sector, Education Officers work with Focus schools to support the implementation of a range of whole-of-school approaches to literacy and numeracy, including provision of whole-of-school professional development using Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS) and Accelerated Literacy.

### Action 32

In the government schools sector, EAL/D officers and Literacy and Numeracy Coaches continued to provide regionalised support, training and facilitation of site-specific evidence based literacy and numeracy approaches to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including at Focus schools. The focus of this work has been determined by regional priorities and included:

- supporting the use of appropriate pedagogy to enable EAL/D learners to access the Australian Curriculum, including support for teachers to use the Australian Curriculum EAL/D resource materials, and adapting materials to include cultural and language considerations for EAL/D Learners
- supporting management in designing and implementing school policies to cater for needs of EAL/D learners, including assessment and moderation practices
- working collaboratively, especially with small schools to develop whole-school curriculum plans using Curriculum in the Classroom materials
- supporting schools to undertake assessment and reporting, including use of the T–9 Diagnostic Net, Assessment of Student Competencies (ASC), and moderation and use of the Student Achievement Information System
- developing and facilitating regional professional learning workshops and teacher networks to build positive collegial

relationships and enable the sharing and dissemination of information – an important mechanism for support teachers working in remote and isolated contexts, and

- mentoring and support for schools to integrate literacy and numeracy outcomes into science and VET programs.

The Department provides postgraduate professional learning in E/ALD learning and assessing expert practice. To date, 270 remote teachers have completed training and another 20 are currently enrolled. Online and regionally delivered programs in inter-cultural Team Teaching for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and school leaders have been developed to equip them to implement bi-oracy and bi-lingual programs relevant in their schools, with a particular focus on the needs of assistant teachers. Online pedagogical resources are being developed to assist remote teachers to provide access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners to the full curriculum through first language and Standard Australian English (SAE) and assessment of the development of SAE language proficiency using Australian Curriculum and Northern Territory learning progression materials.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

### Performance indicators

11. *Number of professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers.*
12. *Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents).*
13. *Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard-to-staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.*

### Overall progress

In 2012, the total professional development hours on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and cultural and linguistic competence training undertaken by principals and teachers – as part of the Centre for School Leadership, Learning and

Development (CSLLD) programs – was 18,973 hours. This is an increase of 2,819 hours from 2011. Professional development programs completed by teachers included:

- Preparation for School Leadership
- Arriving in the Territory – Teachers Orientation
- Thriving in the Territory – Teacher Recall
- National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools (NARIS) Orientation Conference, and
- Cultures of Collaboration – one and two-day courses.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals in government schools was six in 2012, an increase of four since 2011. In the Catholic sector, the number of Aboriginal and Torres

**Table NT10: Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principals, teachers and education workers (AIEWs and equivalents) in Northern Territory, by sector, 2012**

	FTE
<b>Government</b>	
Principals <sup>(a)</sup>	6.0
Teaching staff <sup>(b)</sup>	358.1
AIEWs and equivalents <sup>(c)</sup>	257.7
<b>Catholic</b>	
Principals <sup>(a)</sup>	1.5
Teaching staff <sup>(b)</sup>	62.1
AIEWs and equivalents <sup>(c)</sup>	55.7
<b>Independent</b>	
Principals <sup>(a)</sup>	0.0
Teaching staff <sup>(b)</sup>	8.6
AIEWs and equivalents <sup>(c)</sup>	42.7

Notes:

- Principals should include all role descriptions containing the words 'Principal' or 'Acting Principal', but excludes Assistant Principals, who are classified as Teaching Staff.
- Teaching Staff should include all roles classified as teaching roles, ie, Head Teacher, Relief Teacher or ESL Teacher.
- AIEWs and equivalents include Assistant Teachers, Home Liaison Officers and exclude staff with a major function classified as Building Maintenance.

Source: Northern Territory Department of Education and Children's Services, Human Resources administrative records, 2012.



**Table NT11: Average length of service of principals and teachers in hard to staff schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (operationally defined as focus schools), Northern Territory, 2012**

Classification	Average length of service (in months)		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
Principals	36.8	18.3	n/a
Teachers	34.3	14.1	n/a

Notes:

- a) Government sector: This report includes Principals and Teachers who were active at Term 4, Week 8. Staff length of service at the same school is calculated between the earliest start date at the school and Wednesday date at Term 4 Week 8 of each year. Care must be taken when interpreting information in this report, as start dates prior to June 2004 are not included in the dataset used for these calculations.

n/a not available.

Source: Northern Territory Department of Education and Children's Services, *Human Resources administrative records*, 2012; Catholic Education Northern Territory, *Human Resources administrative records*, 2012.

Strait Islander teaching staff grew from 46.3 full time equivalents in 2011, to 62.1 full-time equivalents in 2012. This significant increase may be partially attributed the Growing our Own program, in place to train prospective teachers in communities. In the independent sector, the number of AIEWs and equivalents increased from 27.5 full-time equivalents (FTE) in 2011, to 42.7 FTE in 2012. The figures above for the government sector represent staff employed within the Department. A number of assistant teachers are also casually employed by school councils and may not be recorded in these figures.

Average length of service for staff in government Focus schools increased in 2012, with teachers recording an average length of service of 34.3 months in 2012, compared to 20.4 months in 2011. Data from the independent sector was not available. Average length of service data in the Catholic sector reflects the nature of Focus schools in the sector primarily being located in remote areas, which tend to see a higher turnover of staff.

## Systemic level actions (41 and 42)

### Action 41

The Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development (CSLLD) operates under a partnership between the Department and Charles Darwin University and in 2012, delivered a range of programs that supported Northern Territory teachers and leaders to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The CSLLD also offered the Cultures of Collaboration Program, which is specifically designed to enhance cultural competence, transform workplace cultures and support individuals to better meet the students' needs. The program provided professional learning opportunities to meet schools' needs and was offered in a variety of flexible modes to accommodate all school staff and community members. This program was completed by 142 participants in 2012, with 40 per cent of the participants identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

In 2012, CSLLD was commissioned to lead the National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools (NARIS) Common Orientation Program. The Orientation program was held in Alice Springs by over 60 new teachers in remote schools from across Australia, and aimed to:

- promote clear and consistent expectations of what it takes to teach effectively in a remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school
- assist in establishing a professional network and culture of high expectations and commitment to excellence, and
- focus on key priority areas for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Catholic Education Office provided an induction program for all teachers new to Catholic sector Focus schools at the start of the school year. The three-day program included cultural awareness training and information about their community. Professional learning in literacy and numeracy and special education, particularly for hearing and autism, was targeted to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D students.

In the independent sector, in 2012, schools continued to conduct whole-school professional development in linguistics with a particular emphasis on language acquisition.

#### **Action 42**

In order to attract and retain high quality teachers in remote government schools, the Northern Territory Public Sector Teacher and Educator 2010–2013 Enterprise Agreement has new entitlements and incentives that commenced in 2012. These include a fortnightly remote incentive allowance, and after completing 12 months of continuous service, a remote retention payment, providing a significant financial incentive for teachers to remain in remote schools. Additionally, a refined classification structure for principals recognises the value of Teaching Principal positions in small remote schools, being the on-site school leader and the complexity of the environment in which they operate.

The CSLLD also gives priority to attracting school leaders and teachers from Focus schools to participate in the range of leadership programs and activities delivered by the Centre. In 2012, 47 per cent of the participants on courses delivered by the CSLLD were from remote and very remote schools.

In the Catholic sector in 2012, a recruitment program specific to Focus schools was conducted to ensure that when attracting and placing high quality teachers and leaders, priority was given to Focus schools.

### **Local level actions (43 and 44)**

#### **Action 43**

The majority of Focus school principals have taken part in a range of leadership programs to assist them to lead improvement in the learning outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Leadership programs completed by Northern Territory principals at the CSLLD in 2012 included:

- High Performing Principals Program
- School Leaders' Conference
- Coaching Program
- Early Career Principals Program, and
- Literacy and Numeracy Leadership Program.

In the Catholic sector, in 2012, all school principals, deputy principals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership teams participated in a range of Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) leadership studies specifically tailored to their work.

In the independent sector, there is a particular focus on leadership in early childhood. A study tour to Israel looked at the origins of the HIPPY program, and professional learning for leaders in education was also provided at the annual Australian Independent Schools forum.

#### **Action 44**

The Community Use of School Facilities Policy encourages government schools to make school facilities available to community groups and organisations outside of normal school hours. In remote areas, school facilities are being used for activities such as: sewing, literacy and numeracy, cooking, sport, driver licensing and ranger programs. Other examples of flexible operations in schools include before school breakfast programs, as well as after school homework centres. In 2012, the Northern Territory's extended service delivery model, Strong Start Bright Futures, was in place in seven very remote college sites. Extended school programs, such as 3.00pm to 9.00pm classes (3–9 programs) and after-hours libraries, are engaging community members in adult learning, as well as students who were previously disengaged with traditional schooling. A strong focus on 3–9 programs across colleges has provided employment opportunities for local people through the delivery of classes such as: drivers licensing, first language, art and culture.

## **Pathways to real post-school options**

### **Performance indicators**

*14 Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent or Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II or above. Note: Although the performance indicator for this domain cites a national data source, there is no publicly available national level data for 2012.*

## Overall progress

**Table NT12: Number of Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCET) awards completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, Northern Territory, 2010–2012**

	2010	2011	2012
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	139	148	134
Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	902	996	1,075

Note: Inconsistencies in the collection of the Indigeneity qualifier exist between years and schools. In 2010 and 2011, three schools did not record this Indigeneity qualifier. In 2012, two schools recorded the Indigeneity qualifier using a different value.

Source: South Australian Certificate of Education Board database, 2010 to 2012.

**Table NT13: Number of vocational qualifications completed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II and above, Northern Territory, 2010–2012<sup>(a)</sup>**

	2010	2011	2012
AQF Certificate II or above – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	18	62	74
AQF Certificate II or above – Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	96	393	466

Note:

- a) Data for qualifications completed in 2012 are based on preliminary data submissions for students identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The 2012 data will be revised upwards in the 2012 *VET Provider Collection* to accommodate further notification of qualifications completed.

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *VET Provider Collection*, 2012.

## Overall progress

There are many challenges in increasing Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training completions, which decreased in 2012 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, compared to 2010 and 2011 completions. However, flexible pathways and the Jobs Guarantee for students completing the NTCET in remote areas are in place to encourage the completion of NTCET awards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2013.

As shown in Table NT13, in 2012, completion of AQF Certificate II and above qualifications by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students continued to increase.

Since the Strong Start Bright Futures, extended school 3–9 programs have been rolled out, and there has been a significant increase in the number of students undertaking VET courses across college sites. Increased VET participation rates, certificate completions, structured work placements and school-based

apprenticeships are all positive outcomes, positioning colleges as a means through which young people can enter into job and career pathways.

## Systemic level actions (48, 49 and 50)

### Action 48

All sectors are in regular communication with Youth Connections providers to share information on latest initiatives to reconnect students with education. Departmental Enrolment and Attendance Officers utilise Youth Connections services, when considered appropriate, for the circumstances of the students they are working with.

### Action 49

Partnerships between schools, VET providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are being strengthened through a range of VET in Schools programs, involving agreements with the corporate sector which provide direct training and employment pathways for students. For example, in several remote areas,

partnerships are in place with local mines to fund on-site trainers in schools to provide training relevant to working in mining, with opportunities for students to complete school-based apprenticeships.

#### **Action 50**

Through the VET on Demand and Ready to Run projects, the Department has developed a holistic online interactive curriculum with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in remote communities. The project has seen the completion of Senior Years SACE online curriculum in Stage 1 and 2 Design and Technology and Stage 2 Workplace practices. Online courses are essential for flexible timetables to allow senior secondary students to have a pathway to school-based apprenticeships, work and further training.

Catholic Education Northern Territory rolled out the system-wide Civica Learning Platform in all schools in 2012. Officers in the teaching and learning team incorporated e-learning and interactive technologies in the suite of professional learning offered to staff. The Inclusion Support Team provided advice on interactive technologies and applications appropriate for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

### **Local level actions (51, 52, 53, 54 and 55)**

#### **Action 51**

Secondary schools have a range of strategies in place to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12. Formal engagement programs delivered through the Clontarf Academy (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys), and a range of girls' programs provide mentoring support and a rewards system for students to achieve and complete secondary schooling. Schools offer individualised timetables and pathways to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12. Many schools provide innovative and tailored strategies including:

- involvement in community garden projects
- membership in community bands
- work placements with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art communities
- flexible curriculum options, and
- technology classes.

#### **Action 52**

Access to school-based accredited training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was provided through a number of programs. In the government sector in Borroloola, the local school and the Department worked closely with the McArthur River Mine. The McArthur River Mine provides funding to facilitate an on-site trainer at the school to deliver AQF Certificate I and II level qualifications in Resources and Infrastructure. Students have participated in excursions to the mine, leading to structured work placements, with the opportunity for students to undertake School Based Apprenticeships with the company.

In the Catholic Sector, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic College in Wadeye is piloting the Indigenous Ranger Cadetship program, which provides accredited training and pathways to employment on country.

In the independent sector at Nyangatjatjara College, Indigenous Ranger programs for both young men and young women were provided, each with an emphasis on Land, Country and Culture.

#### **Action 53**

Industry Engagement Coordinator and Pathways Officers provide case management to link students undertaking school-based traineeships to employment services. Additional case management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is provided by AIEWs and Employment Support Officers employed under the Clontarf Academy programs, providing a network that ensures the best possible opportunity for students to achieve their goals.

#### **Action 54**

Other career services provided in 2012 to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to support informed career and study choices included: individual support from careers counsellors; work preparation courses; presentations from universities and scholarship programs; and employment and skills expo presentations. The Personalised Learning Plan subject is a compulsory subject to be completed in Year 10 and incorporates a work experience component.

In the independent sector, in 2012, schools provided opportunities for students to receive career advice and assist students on an individual and whole-group basis in their career and study choices.

### Action 55

In 2012, activities to increase student engagement, deepen the learning experiences, and improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders under School Business Community Partnerships included: career expos, visits by industry representatives to schools and student excursions to industry localities.

In the independent sector, a partnership with Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife provided opportunities for students to participate in courses associated with the Desert Wildlife Park in Alice Springs, assisting to increase engagement for students who are interested in becoming rangers or guides.

## Good practice snapshots

### Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce Pilot

Research has provided evidence to support a link between the qualification levels of staff delivering early childhood development programs and the quality of the programs and outcomes for young children. To support sustainable programs and services for early learners in remote communities, the Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce program is being piloted at four sites across the Northern Territory.

The program aims to achieve a more integrated workforce that can collaborate across early childhood development activities and provide better services for children and their families. On-site training is provided in Community Services and Children's Services qualifications for VET in Schools students, school-based apprentices, as well as new and existing staff in childcare and other community services roles. The program contributes to the achievement of a number of actions under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* relating to pathways to real post-school options, workforce development and readiness for school. The program also helps to contribute to meeting the Closing the Gap targets ensuring all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 4 year-olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education, and halving the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates.

The pilot has employed full-time early childhood educators, based in four remote communities and delivers training to

current employees of services who support children and families, and senior school students under a Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) model. By living in communities, trainers develop relationships with the community and the school and provide ongoing flexible training for students. In 2012, there were 58 enrolments in Community Services certificate courses across the participating communities including: staff employed in child early learning and care; child wellbeing and safety; schools; senior school students and interested community members.

Key successes of the training project have stemmed from the strong relationship developed between the trainers and individual students. Students have been retained in the courses at a rate of 74 per cent, which is significantly higher than comparable courses in these locations. Students are able to progress at their own pace towards completing certificates.

Among the 2012 results, there were 11 completions in AQF Certificate I Community Services/Children's Services, and most of these students will continue with study towards the Certificate III qualifications, and achieve or maintain employment outcomes in 2013.

Menzies School of Health Research completed a review of the project in December 2012. Key findings from the review included successful outcomes of the project to date, such as: the suitability of the training model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in remote locations; the partnership between the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and the Department providing strong, valued support and accountability for training delivery; a student retention rate of 74 per cent; and unit completions at all locations, including school students through VET in Schools.

The continuation of the program through 2013 will contribute to a more integrated, culturally competent early childhood workforce that works collaboratively across early childhood services.

### Vocational Education and Training at Ngukurr School

Ngukurr School is situated in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Ngukurr, 330 kilometres south-east of Katherine. As an extended service delivery site, the school takes an integrated approach to education for students from the early years through to secondary, including VET programs for middle and senior year students. The school caters for approximately

300 students, all of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, EAL/D learners.

In 2011, the school established a horsemanship program aiming to increase student attendance and engagement through the provision of VET. The impetus for the program was a community desire for a local and sustainable training model, identified through consultations with groups such as Yugul Mangi Aboriginal Corporation and Roper Gulf Shire. The program continued in 2012, and the school purchased twenty-five horses and riding equipment, built the infrastructure and, through National Partnership funding, employed two on-site VET trainers (Rural Operations and Engineering). This helps to deliver training and contextualises learning in literacy and numeracy by working together with senior years teachers and VET trainers.

Formal VET training began in Semester One 2012 and offers Certificate I in Rural Operations and Engineering and Certificate II in Rural Operations. In 2012, nine middle year students and 11 senior year students attained Certificate I Rural Operations qualifications. In addition, four students are now enrolled in a traineeship with full employment on offer at completion and two students have now commenced full-time employment.

The Vocational Education and Training program at Ngukurr is contributing to meeting the Closing the Gap targets of halving the gap in employment outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and halving the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 12 attainment and equivalent rates. The program also contributes to achievement of local level actions within the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*, relating to pathways to real post-school options.

The school has also participated in the Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce pilot program, which supports local community members and students who want to engage in employment opportunities in the early childhood field. The pilot enables the local on-site delivery of AQF Certificate courses in both Community and Children's Services. In 2012, two students completed Certificate I in Children Services.

## Improving educational outcomes at Bradshaw Primary School

Bradshaw Primary School is located in a suburb of Alice Springs, at the foot of the MacDonnell Ranges. The school caters for

approximately 430 students in preschool to Year 6, and has a student cohort that includes 45 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, many of whom live in town camps. Targeted efforts are helping to improve: literacy and numeracy learning; home-school partnerships; enrolment; attendance and student wellbeing, as enablers of student readiness to learn.

The school offers a range of intervention programs including: phonological awareness, QuickSmart® literacy and numeracy, and the Gateways Oral Language program. The school's Irrkerlantye Indigenous Support Program also has had a positive impact on attendance and academic success through the wrap-around services it provides. These include: bus services for pick-up and drop-off; showers; provision of uniforms; breakfast, recess and lunches; medical intervention and medical appointments with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and NT Hearing. Support staff and teachers work closely together to provide the best opportunities for the students' education.

Bradshaw Primary NAPLAN results have seen continued improvement since 2008, with increases in the majority of test domains for both Year 3 and Year 5 students. Year 5 reading, in particular, has consistently improved since 2008, with increasing percentages of students at or above the national minimum standard every year.

Recent perception surveys of staff, students and parents were overwhelmingly positive and the school was a regional finalist in the inaugural Smart Schools Awards for excellence in improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Bradshaw Primary School's intervention program is contributing to meeting the Closing the Gap targets of halving the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade, and achievement of a number of local actions under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* across the engagement and connections, attendance and literacy and numeracy domains.

## Northern Territory Indigenous Education Council (NTIEC) feedback

The Northern Territory has 61 Focus schools under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan*, and the Northern Territory Indigenous Education Council (NTIEC) have



had the opportunity to visit nine of the Focus schools since 2011, or since the Focus school's inception. The Council has received all of the School and Community Action Plans.

The NTIEC endeavours to monitor the progress for the Department, the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office and Australian Independent Schools Association Northern Territory sectors against the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan's* six domains (readiness for school; engagement and connections; attendance; literacy and numeracy; leadership, quality teaching and workforce development and pathways to real post-school options) relating to the 61 Focus schools.

## Readiness for school

The NTIEC has obtained a copy of all Focus schools action plans. The NTIEC will monitor each of these plans to ensure that schools are adhering to them.

There is a need for greater involvement and consultation with the NTIEC on the development of the Early Years Workforce Strategy. In addition, appropriate cultural practices need to be taken into consideration and embedded into the Framework in order to effectively build a diverse, highly skilled workforce that provides high quality services for children.

The lack of access to comprehensive data means that the NTIEC are unable to compile an accurate picture of what is happening in all schools and makes input into the development of effective programs and meaningful progress reporting difficult.

The NTIEC see the benefits of the Parental and Community Engagement program (PaCE), and would like to see the funding for this program maintained and guaranteed on a long-term basis. The NTIEC PaCE/ Parent Education Engagement Team (PEET) program has enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and communities to capacity build, and have a better understanding of the importance of attending school, and of educational policies and issues that are affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Northern Territory.

The NTIEC needs to be more closely consulted with and involved in strategies aimed at community engagement and connections, especially in the delivery of cultural awareness programs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and languages and curriculum development.

The NTIEC should be utilised to ensure any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages studies or programs have the support and endorsement of the local language group where the school is located.

## Engagement and connections

The NTIEC identified Engagement and connections as their priority domain to focus on from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan in 2012, and again in 2013. The NTIEC have continued with this key domain as their second focus priority. The NTIEC believes that a coordinated, open and honest two-way engagement and connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents, families, schools and community is what is required to address or achieve any desired outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The NTIEC has engaged, connected and listened to students, parents, families, communities and schools through conducting a series of family meetings and public forums. This has assisted the NTIEC to build and sustain strong relationships and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, parents, families and communities, schools and other key stakeholders associated with the education sector in the Northern Territory.

The NTIEC received draft copies of the 61 Focus schools action plans and provided comments on them to ensure that schools are adhering to their responsibility/commitment before being endorsed by the Director of School Performance. The NTIEC had issues with a few school plans as they were requesting additional funds to employ specialist staff to write Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs), whereas PLPs are supposed to be between the student, teacher and parent. The NTIEC believe that PLPs benefit students not only in their engagement with education, but also in establishing their post-school pathways. PLPs allow students, teachers and parents to build a relationship/partnership, and this enhances the engagement process between parents, teachers and students.

Through the delivery of workshops in remote communities under the NTIEC PaCE/PEET project, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities had an awareness and understanding of educational policies and procedures, and the expected milestones/Key Performance Indicators/outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Through the NTIEC Consultations and attendance at the PaCE/PEET



workshops, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were informed about, and had an understanding of, the education systems, education legislation, as well as school frameworks and processes.

The NTIEC PaCE project workshops were delivered in 15 remote service delivery sites to parents and community members to build their capacity to give them a clearer understanding of educational policies and issues that affect their children's attendance and retention at school. There were 203 participants in the NTIEC PaCE/PEET workshops. It was through these workshops and consultations that the NTIEC ensured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were aware of the programs and opportunities that were available to assist them to be a part of a skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce, and the promotion of programs, while conducting forums, visits and meetings.

The NTIEC believe that there should be a dedicated unit or officer/s within all education sections to monitor the *Indigenous Education Targeted Assistance Act* (2000) funding to ensure that it can be easily identified.

The NTIEC would like to see more support for children who are doing well. Often the focus is on the deficit group of students and acknowledgement should also be given to those who are doing well. Additionally, there is a need for better cross-agency collaboration to clearly identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disabilities, and to strengthen connections to help assist students' families build awareness of what support is available to them, and provide training in how to best support the education of children with special needs.

## Attendance

Attendance is a focus priority of the NTIEC and has continued to be a vital element for educational success since the inception of the NTIEC in 2008.

The NTIEC feel that attendance is a by-product of engagement and connection, without engagement and connection students cannot achieve the desired outcomes in attendance.

There is evidence to suggest that if a child attends 80 per cent of the school year they will obtain a good level of education. In the Northern Territory we have the lowest rates of attendance,

enrolments and retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In the Northern Territory, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people still practice cultural and traditional ceremonies and lore, these ceremonies and traditions impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' attendance, achievement and participation at school. There are a number of other reasons why in the Northern Territory we are experiencing the lowest numbers thus far. These reasons can range from transport to school (some students travel up to 50km to the nearest school with no public transport provided or available); no access (some schools are cut off for six months of the year due to the wet season); and overcrowding in the student's home, to name a few impediments that cause unsatisfactory educational/social outcomes.

All schools need to embed and embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, cultures and traditions within their curricula to ensure a safe learning environment is provided for all students.

The NTIEC obtained copies of all Focus schools evidence-based attendance strategies, to ensure that Focus schools have signed, or are in the process of signing, their School and Community Partnership Agreements, as well ensuring that their School Action Plans have been developed in consultation with parents and community members, and are ready to be implemented. SCPAs have been signed off in 48 of the 61 Focus schools.

The NTIEC feel that education providers need to recognise the obligatory attendance and participation in cultural ceremonies for periods of time as an integral teaching and learning phase for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The NTIEC Chairperson worked collaboratively with the Northern Territory Department of Education and Children Services, Traditional Owners and Elders from Tiwi Islands, Yirrkala, Groote Eylandt, Galiwinku, Gunbalanya, and Barunga to start the initial conversations on Ceremonial leave/Time off School, now known as Cultural Learning Process – Authorised Absence Agreement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

This policy is being put in place so communities can identify the number of compulsory days that students need to be absent from school to attend funerals and ceremonies.

## Literacy and numeracy

The NTIEC engages with Focus schools principals to ensure that staff have participated in appropriate professional learning which will assist to support their whole-school approach to the teaching of Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy, and use of data on student performance to drive individual and whole-school improvement.

The NTIEC believe that all literacy and numeracy assessments need to be administered in a culturally appropriate way; recognising the existence of Aboriginal English and Creole and taking into account the distinctive language backgrounds and cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in provincial, rural/remote and very remote schools.

## Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development

The NTIEC identifies leadership, quality teaching and workforce development as one of the most important domains to come out of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan*.

The NTIEC acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in schools play a major role in their students' learning outcomes. Therefore, the NTIEC believe that up-skilling and having more qualified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in our schools/workforce will assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to achieve national benchmarks and their desired educational outcomes.

The NTIEC will inform parents and community members of Focus school communities of the principal's obligation to participate in a leadership program that will assist the principal to lead improvements in the learning outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The NTIEC have, and will continue to, inform parents, students and community members of Focus school communities that principals have the flexibility to adjust the school operational hours to suit community calendars, as well as to inform parents, disengaged students and other community members that adult education, health, childcare, sport and family support groups programs can be conducted in the school after school hours and with the principal's approval.

Teachers need to expand their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories; therefore, all pre-service teachers should undertake both mandatory and elective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies units as a part of their studies to qualify as teachers. The development of compulsory study units by universities should be in close partnership with the local community and with the support of their local IECBs and government. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies also need to be solidly embedded in the curriculum, in line with the Australian Curriculum's priority to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across all learning areas.

## Pathways to real post school options

The NTIEC has worked with the Department to ensure that secondary schools:

- provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and targeted case management strategies to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12
- provide pathways and improved access to school-based accredited training, including traineeships and apprenticeships, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 10 to 12
- provide case management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students undertaking school-based traineeships and link them to employment services
- provide access to career services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families to support informed career and study choices, and
- maximise the opportunities for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, under School Business Community Partnerships, to extend learning beyond the classroom, increase student engagement, deepen learning experiences and improve educational outcomes.

In some jurisdictions, a 'service guarantee' is in place for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who complete Year 12. This program ensures that students are supported to gain employment, undertake training or engage in further education on completion of Year 12.

## Northern Territory Department of Education and Children's Services response to the NTIEC's feedback

The Department recognises the valuable contribution the NTIEC provides in driving improvements in educational outcomes for the Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, including supporting the implementation of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014*. The Department thanks the NTIEC for its feedback.

The Department recognises the good work of the NTIEC in delivering the NTIEC Parental and Community Engagement Program (PaCE / Parent Education Engagement Team (PEET) project in remote service delivery sites, and the outcomes achieved in contributing to increased awareness of educational policies and procedures, and expected milestones for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The feedback from the NTIEC is acknowledged, and specifically:

- the Department will seek to consult and involve the NTIEC more closely in strategies aimed at community engagement and connections, and will seek input from the NTIEC in the development of cultural awareness programs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and language curriculum development
- the NTIEC is thanked for their interest in the Early Years Workforce Plan. The Building the Remote Early Childhood Workforce Pilot is culminating in December 2013. However, regarding any further activities arising from the Early Childhood Workforce Plan, the Department would be grateful for the NTIEC's future involvement and will make every effort to consult with the Council
- the Department is committed to ensuring the monitoring of the *Indigenous Education Targeted Assistance Act* (2000) funding, and all Australian Government funding, is used

strategically and to strengthen the processes to establish and monitor external funding programs, to ensure they are targeted to meet the needs of all Northern Territory students

- the Department recognises the complexities in the Northern Territory of balancing school attendance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with attendance at cultural ceremonies, and supports the development of the formal policy, Cultural Learning Process – Authorised Absence Agreement, and
- the Department supports the integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies as part of all education qualifications, and will work with tertiary institutions to contribute to this content. The Centre for School Leadership and Development runs orientation programs for teachers and principals new to the Territory, and it is important that these programs include knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories.

The Department is undertaking an update of its Strategic Plan, which drives the strategic direction of existing and new initiatives over the period of 2013 to 2015. A key focus of the Strategic Plan implementation will be examining the way the Department engages with key stakeholders, including the NTIEC. In particular, the NTIEC will be a key stakeholder in the Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory being undertaken by the Department in 2013. Within the context of national and Northern Territory reforms, programs and initiatives in Indigenous Education, the Review will provide the Northern Territory Government with recommendations to optimise education, training and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Department looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with the NTIEC to implement the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan* in Northern Territory schools and educational settings, and to improve educational outcomes for Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# Distribution of Focus schools in Northern Territory

**Figure NT5: Map of Northern Territory Focus schools**  
(Focus schools are listed in a table following this map.)



Notes:

- Dots indicate location of Focus schools.
- Darwin metropolitan Focus schools are not individually identified.

## Focus school information

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Alekarenge School	Gov.	Very Remote	131	131		X	
Alpurrurulam School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	89	89		X	
Alyarrmandumanja Umbakumba School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	95	95		X	X
Ampilatwatja School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	106	106		X	
Angurugu School	Gov.	Very Remote	242	242		X	X
Arlparra School 1, 2	Gov.	Very Remote	147	147		X	
Bakewell Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	565	94			
Batchelor Area School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	134	84	X	X	
Borroloola School	Gov.	Very Remote	259	245		X	
Bradshaw Primary School	Gov.	Remote	302	148	X	X	
Braitling Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	244	169	X		
Clyde Fenton Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	207	123	X		
Driver Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	406	115	X		
Elliott School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	69	68		X	
Gapuwiyak School	Gov.	Very Remote	248	245		X	X
Gillen Primary School	Gov.	Remote	257	182	X	X	
Gray Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	299	140	X	X	
Gunbalanya School	Gov.	Very Remote	249	243		X	X
Humpty Doo Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	352	84	X		
Jabiru Area School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	272	162		X	
Jilkminggan School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	80	79		X	
Kalkaringi School	Gov.	Very Remote	128	125		X	
Karama Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	201	100	X		
Katherine South Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	282	94	X		
Lajamanu School	Gov.	Very Remote	170	168		X	X
Larapinta Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Remote	235	121	X		
Ltyentye Apurte Catholic School	Cath.	Remote	138	136		X	
MacFarlane Primary School	Gov.	Remote	186	166		X	
Malak Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	242	113	X		
Maningrida School	Gov.	Very Remote	554	537		X	X
Manunda Terrace Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	198	94	X	X	
Milikapiti School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	64	63		X	
Milingimbi School	Gov.	Very Remote	310	302		X	X
Millner Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Provincial	203	84		X	
Minyerri School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	142	141		X	
Moulden Primary School	Gov.	Provincial	357	211		X	
Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic Primary School	Cath.	Very Remote	211	211		X	X
Nganmarriyanga School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	103	103		X	
Ngukurr School	Gov.	Very Remote	254	254		X	X
Nhulunbuy Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Very Remote	487	94	X		
Ntaria School	Gov.	Very Remote	166	165		X	X
Numbulwar School	Gov.	Very Remote	158	155		X	X

School name	Sector	Geolocation	Total enrolments	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments	Lit/Num NP	Low SES NP	RSD
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic College (IFS)	Cath.	Very Remote	513	510		X	X
Papunya School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	102	101		X	
Ramingining School	Gov.	Very Remote	223	222		X	
Robinson River School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	58	58		X	
Sadadeen Primary School (IFS)	Gov.	Remote	123	97		X	
Shepherdson College	Gov.	Very Remote	482	478		X	X
St Francis Xavier Catholic School	Cath.	Very Remote	51	50		X	
Tennant Creek Primary School	Gov.	Very Remote	375	276		X	
Ti Tree School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	87	84		X	
Wagaman Primary School (NS)	Gov.	Provincial	300	77	X		
Walungurru School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	56	56		X	
Warruwi School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	125	125		X	
Wugularr School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	118	118		X	
Xavier Catholic College	Cath.	Very Remote	112	106		X	X
Yarralin School (IFS)	Gov.	Very Remote	42	39		X	
Yipirinya School	Indep.	Remote	160	159		X	
Yirrkala Homeland School	Gov.	Very Remote	158	158		X	
Yirrkala School	Gov.	Very Remote	194	194		X	X
Yuendumu School	Gov.	Very Remote	138	135		X	X

Note:

NS – school has received funding in 2012 under the *Focus Schools Next Steps* Initiative.

IFS – school has received funding in 2012 under the *Investing in Focus Schools* Program/Initiative.

Source: Northern Territory Department of Education and Children's Services, Performance and Data Management.



# Report on the Remote Service Delivery (RSD) Service Delivery Standards

## Schooling Domain

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) has agreed to use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan reporting processes to report on schooling service delivery standards for schools located in Remote Service Delivery communities. The following is the report for schools in Remote Service Delivery communities in the Northern Territory.

### RSD standard (a)

All school-aged children will have access to an appropriate school and/or a distance learning alternative.

#### Action Plan link

There is no directly equivalent measure in the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* for this standard. The following information provides details of the schooling services and other programs available in the Remote Service Delivery communities.

### Northern Territory reporting against RSD standard (a)

There are 17 schools in the 15 RSD sites in the Northern Territory, of which:

- all 15 RSD sites offer pre-primary, primary, middle school and senior years programs
- four RSD sites offer approved senior years (secondary) programs that enable students to gain a Year 12 certificate or tertiary entrance score
- eleven RSD sites offer limited secondary (senior years) programs, augmented by assistance from the

Northern Territory Open Education Centre (NTOEC) to enable students to gain a Year 12 certificate or tertiary entrance score

- all 15 RSD sites offer Vocational Educational Training (VET) pathways to school students.

In addition to education facilities available in RSD sites, students have access to distance education schools such as NTOEC, Alice Springs School of the Air and Katherine School of the Air.

Boarding facilities in the Northern Territory able to be attended by students from RSD sites include St John's College and Kormilda College in Darwin, and Yirara College and St Philip's College in Alice Springs.

Through the Northern Territory Boarding Facilities initiative, accommodation is being built at three RSD sites to assist young people from remote areas to access secondary schooling.

### RSD standard (b)

A personalised learning plan for all students negotiated between school staff and families. For Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 students, schools will augment personalised learning plans with activity to support the transition to further education and/or employment.

#### Action Plan link

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to this standard. Local level action 21 includes the development of personalised learning strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from the first year of formal schooling to Year 10 to support improved educational outcomes. It should be recognised that personalised learning strategies are not the same as personalised learning plans. In some, but not all, cases quantitative information about both personalised learning strategies and plans may be available.

A second local level action, Action 51, states that secondary schools will provide innovative and tailored learning opportunities, mentoring and targeted case management strategies to increase the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12. Qualitative information for this action is available.



## Northern Territory reporting against RSD standard (b)

In 2012, 4,155 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were enrolled in schools in Northern Territory RSD sites from the first year of schooling to Year 12.

At the end of 2012, approximately 1,026 students at these schools had a Personalised Learning Plan or learning and engagement plan in place. This figure includes Year 11 and 12 students who have completed the compulsory Northern Territory Certificate of Education Personal Learning Plan subject.

(Note: Personalised Learning Plan figures from the government schools sector are for the end of the 2012 year, figures from the Catholic schools sector are for the 2013 year, but anticipated to be comparable for numbers from 2012.)

Schools in the Northern Territory continue to implement Personalised Learning Strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These identify the specific learning needs of individual students and enable differentiated learning strategies to be implemented in the classroom to address these.

In addition to Personalised Learning Strategies, some schools take a more formalised approach by documenting these strategies in Learning and Engagement Plans. These plans involve students working with their teacher, in partnership with the student's parent or carers, to develop a plan that reflects the student's learning goals and current capabilities, including addressing their barriers to learning and specific learning targets.

All students completing the Northern Territory Certificate of Education are required to complete the subject Personal Learning Plan, which assists in supporting the transition to further education or employment.

## RSD standard (c)

All schools have literacy and numeracy strategies that respond to the needs of students, particularly recognising the needs of students who speak English as an additional language or dialect.

### Action Plan link

There is some alignment between the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* action (Action

31) and this standard. Action 31 states in part: 'Focus schools will during 2011 have in place a whole-of-school approach to the teaching and learning of Standard Australian English literacy and numeracy which builds from students' home language(s) where Standard Australian English is a second or further language.' The quantitative data that can be reported refers to whole-of-school approaches rather than strategies.

## Northern Territory reporting against RSD standard (c)

All 17 schools in the 15 Northern Territory RSD sites have whole-of-school literacy and numeracy approaches in place.

The Northern Territory government sector has an Evidence Based Literacy and Numeracy Practices Framework to guide system endorsement of literacy and numeracy programs, and to support schools and regions to select quality, evidence-based approaches that support their whole-of-school improvement and classroom development.

Northern Territory government schools list specific literacy and numeracy goals and targets in their School Improvement Plans. These goals and targets are identified using local level data for student literacy and/or numeracy performance. Whole-of-school literacy and numeracy approaches are further supported by professional development for staff in the teaching of literacy and numeracy concepts.

## RSD standard (d)

All schools establish a school and community partnership with local families, which includes an attendance strategy, establishes goals for improvement and is reported on annually.

### Action Plan link

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014* contains two separate actions that pertain to this standard and it should be noted that they are addressed separately. Local level action 19 states that: 'Focus schools will commence negotiating a formal school–community partnership agreement between the school, families and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in 2011 that sets out the respective responsibilities of each party and the ways in which they will work together to create a culture of high expectations

for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes.’ Some quantitative data for schools in Remote Service Delivery communities is available for this action.

The second, separate action (Action 26) ensures that Focus schools will:

- commence developing an evidence-based attendance strategy in 2011 in consultation with parents and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, which includes targets for improved attendance and reflects how the school responds to and seeks to enhance the linguistic, cultural and contextual resources that students bring to their schooling
- publish their attendance strategy in 2012
- evaluate and monitor the success of their attendance strategy, and
- report annually on progress towards meeting their targets.

Reporting for this standard will be via the two separate actions noted above.

## Northern Territory reporting against RSD standard (d)

Of the 17 schools in RSD sites in the Northern Territory, 11 schools have a School Community Partnership Agreement in place.

All of the 17 schools in RSD sites in the Northern Territory have an attendance strategy in place.

All School Community Partnership Agreements for Northern Territory government schools require the school and the community to commit to the actions and strategies outlined in School Strategic Improvement Plans and Annual Operational Plans, which incorporate attendance strategies and are reported on annually.

Initial meetings have been held with all schools that do not have a School Community Partnership Agreement in place and negotiations continue to be progressed.

School attendance plans are in place at all sites and involve families, schools and the community working together to improve attendance.



# Draft longitudinal evaluation report for 2012

ACIL Allen Consulting is conducting a longitudinal evaluation report of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2010–2014*. The Executive Summary of the draft report is as follows.





# Evaluation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014

Draft Evaluation Report for 2012

July 2013

Report to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group of the Standing Council for Education and Early Childhood Development

## Executive summary

This draft evaluation report outlines findings from the second phase of a three year longitudinal evaluation of the implementation outcomes of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014 (Action Plan)*. The first phase sought to identify early implementation efforts at the national, systemic and local level and to outline baseline data against which to gauge longitudinal changes.

This phase sought to confirm phase one findings and identify any substantive changes since this time. It also outlines the role of the *Action Plan* in relation to:

- its delivery model and reporting requirements; and
- broader shifts in education policy and funding directions.

It also articulates key questions to help inform future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education planning processes.

In summary, concerted *Action Plan* implementation activity has continued across the national, systemic and school levels. In May 2013, the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) committed focus schools to implementing personalised learning strategies, school-community partnerships, attendance strategies and literacy and numeracy strategies by the end of 2013.

Nationally, the *Action Plan* has helped to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in major national directions that are expected to have a long term impact, including through teacher standards and the Australian curriculum. The Indigenous student loadings in the *National Plan for School Improvement* are a further way in which the focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be maintained for government jurisdictions that have agreed to the funding arrangements, and for Catholic and independent sectors.

Many school sectors (government, Catholic and independent) have drawn on and tailored the *Action Plan's* structure to promote action both in focus schools and more broadly. The adoption of specific actions from the plan at the local level have been more visible where school sectors have explicitly encouraged schools to pursue agreed directions through, for example, inclusion in school plans and performance reporting requirements. Where schools have undertaken greater data monitoring, this has helped schools to gauge student progress and reflect on the schools' effectiveness in implementing the *Action Plan*.

In reviewing longitudinal change in relation to implementation activities and student outcomes, there is limited evidence of significant year-on-year shifts. This demonstrates the incremental nature of achieving change in education outcomes and the need for schools to introduce systems and processes to sustain efforts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.



## Methodology

The phase two report draws on findings of fieldwork, including surveys with 168 school leaders, case studies at 24 schools and interviews with 11 organisations involved in delivering the *Action Plan*, along with available national data. It involved a smaller number of consultations and case studies than phase one, given its position at the mid-point of the evaluation. However, the number of survey response in 2012 (total of 168) was substantially greater than in 2011 (total of 105).

The outcomes data for 2011 forms the baseline for data comparison. Data in this report is limited, given that many of the *Action Plan*'s performance indicators rely on State and Territory data, which is expected to be provided in August 2013. The complete dataset will be presented in the final 2012 evaluation report, to be circulated in October 2013.

## Recap of findings from the evaluation report for 2011

The major findings that emerged through the 2011 report and the extent to which they remained of concern to stakeholders in mid-2013 are outlined in Figure ES 1.1Box ES 1.1Table ES 1.1.

Table ES 1.1

### MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE FINAL EVALUATION REPORT FOR 2011 AND UPDATE IN MID 2013

Phase one findings	Phase two status update
The <i>Action Plan</i> development process was generally considered highly collaborative and effective, resulting in a plan that was appropriate and achievable	The <i>Action Plan</i> is still considered appropriate and achievable. Some jurisdictions are seeking to extend the directions in the <i>Action Plan</i> further, including in the post-school pathways area
The clear, action-based structure of the plan has been a key to its implementation	While the structure of the <i>Action Plan</i> continues to provide a good focus, there was feedback that it has too many actions, and that there is not sufficient flexibility for schools to tailor local actions and plans to achieve outcomes
Some stakeholders were unclear about who was taking overall leadership and accountability for delivery of the <i>Action Plan</i>	There is clarity that leadership and implementation is a shared responsibility for government and non-government sectors, with SCSEEC being the intergovernmental committee that is ultimately accountable
A broad range of programs, policies and funding arrangements were driving schools' approaches to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education	There remain mixed program, policy and funding arrangements at the school level. All focus schools should be receiving additional funding for implementation through national partnerships, the Next Steps program or the Project Agreement - Investing in Focus Schools (PAIFS)
That local implementation is improved where the <i>Action Plan</i> 's domains are embedded in school plans	This finding was further reinforced in phase two
Action at the school level was highly variable	Variation was again observed in phase two, with some focus schools making advanced approaches across most or all domains, while other schools continued work to clarify their obligations as focus schools

Source: ACIL Allen Consulting, 2013

### Key evaluation questions and emerging themes

The evaluation focus during phase one was largely around early implementation activities, following acceptance of the *Action Plan* by COAG in May 2011. The phase one report sought to test whether the *Action Plan* had been embraced nationally, by school sectors (government, Catholic and Independent), and at the school level.

Phase two of the evaluation assesses how implementation activities have progressed since phase one, and the challenges associated with sustaining change. It also identifies key questions to be considered in progressing development of any subsequent national plan. The *Action Plan's* outcomes are again considered, though these will form a more primary focus in phase three (to be provided in the first half of 2014).

These major themes emerging in response to the key evaluation questions for phase two are outlined in Figure ES 1.1. These are discussed in the sections that follow.

Figure ES 1.1

#### KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND MAJOR THEMES

Topic	Key evaluation questions	Major themes
Implementation	<p>To what extent are the 55 actions being implemented? What are the links between the <i>Action Plan</i> and what is being done?</p> <p>What are the enablers and barriers for successful implementation?</p> <p>Are the national and systemic actions flowing through to schools, including focus schools?</p>	<p>National/systemic vs local</p> <p>Mainstreaming</p> <p>Metropolitan/provincial vs remote</p> <p>School and systemic funding</p>
Sustainability	<p>How are systems and schools setting up processes for sustained improvement in outcomes?</p> <p>What are the barriers to sustainability and how can these be overcome?</p>	<p>Embedding action in policy, reporting and school plans</p> <p>Recognition of the school workforce</p>
Value of the plan / next action plan	<p>To what extent has the <i>Action Plan</i> been a change agent at national, systemic and local levels to improve student outcomes?</p> <p>Is the <i>Action Plan</i> itself valuable? Are things happening because of the <i>Action Plan</i> or for other reasons?</p>	<p>Framing the development and planning for further action</p>

Source: ACIL Allen Consulting, 2013, drawn from evaluation questions at Appendix A

## Implementation

### *National/systemic versus local implementation*

As outlined in phase one, the *Action Plan* structure seeks to drive activity at the national, systemic and local levels across six domains, and acknowledges that coordinated efforts are required by national and state and territory government along with the non-government school sectors. Further, the *Action Plan* has been crucial in crystallising areas of activity within each domain and has created a common language to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, building on the best available evidence.

The implementation responsibility for the *Action Plan* is necessarily a shared responsibility, with ultimate accountability resting with the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group (ATSIEWG) of SCSEEC is responsible for monitoring and overseeing implementation activities and outcomes on behalf of SCSEEC. The ATSIEWG has representation from national, school sectors (government, Catholic and independent) and the community sector (through Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies).

At the national level, there are 27 actions to be pursued. While many of these reference policy developments already underway at the time of writing the *Action Plan*, the plan itself has helped to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded. Those actions that are not being addressed elsewhere are being led by purpose-specific sub-committees of the ATSIEWG.

The extent of implementation of the *Action Plan* across school sectors appears more variable, appearing to be affected by:

- the internal capability to coordinate approaches to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, reflected in the resources and tools that are developed to guide schools to implement key directions in the *Action Plan*;
- the degree to which the *Action Plan* is embedded in departmental and sectoral education plans, which ultimately drive action at the school level, and in many cases become embedded in school plans; and
- structural barriers that may limit the level of systemic influence over school implementation activities, particularly in the independent sector, and to a lesser extent in the Catholic sector.

As in phase one, the phase two case studies concluded that while many focus school leaders at the local level were aware of the *Action Plan*, it was not usually the primary driver of school-wide practices. Its value is limited by the extent to which it is embedded by school sectors in their policies, and subsequently flows through to annual school planning processes and strategies to which schools and staff are held accountable.

### *Policy mainstreaming*

As outlined in the first phase of the evaluation, one of the ambitions of the *Action Plan* and its predecessor – *Australian Directions* – has been to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes become ‘everybody’s business’. This is a response to past policies for Indigenous student education that sat outside mainstream directions and required separate or additional action. Increasingly, national directions seek to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander directions in mainstream programs. As outlined in *Australian Directions*, this seeks:

to ensure that Indigenous education and the lessons learnt from strategic intervention programs are ‘built in’ to core business to become everyone’s business: departmental staff, principals, teachers, school staff, Indigenous students, parents/caregivers, families and communities.

Australian Directions, 2005, p. 16.

Consultations suggest that this is beginning to be achieved at the national level. In particular, national collaborative actions in the *Action Plan* have ensured that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are being embedded in mainstream approaches, including the national curriculum, the national teacher standards and school funding approaches. Some States and Territories are also reviewing their approaches in this regard.

### *Metropolitan/provincial versus remote implementation*

One area more clearly highlighted in phase two through interviews, case studies and surveys is that different approaches are required in the way that the *Action Plan* is addressed in remote settings compared to metropolitan and provincial schools. In particular, education administrators at the national and systemic levels noted that additional resources and tailored approaches were required to adequately service remote areas.

The imperative for different approaches is clear from literacy and numeracy performance results. Based on NAPLAN outcomes, there are vast disparities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in remote and very remote areas compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in provincial and metropolitan areas. Broader gaps are evident in remote and very remote areas between Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous counterparts in remote and very remote settings.

There is close correlation in survey responses between metropolitan and provincial schools, but marked differences in remote settings. The evaluation survey received responses from 45 remote focus schools, indicating in general:

- a broader spread of classes are available across year levels, reflecting that remote schools are more often the sole provider along the full education pathway from early childhood through to secondary school for local communities;
- lower numbers of teachers on-average, reflecting the generally smaller school profiles in remote areas;

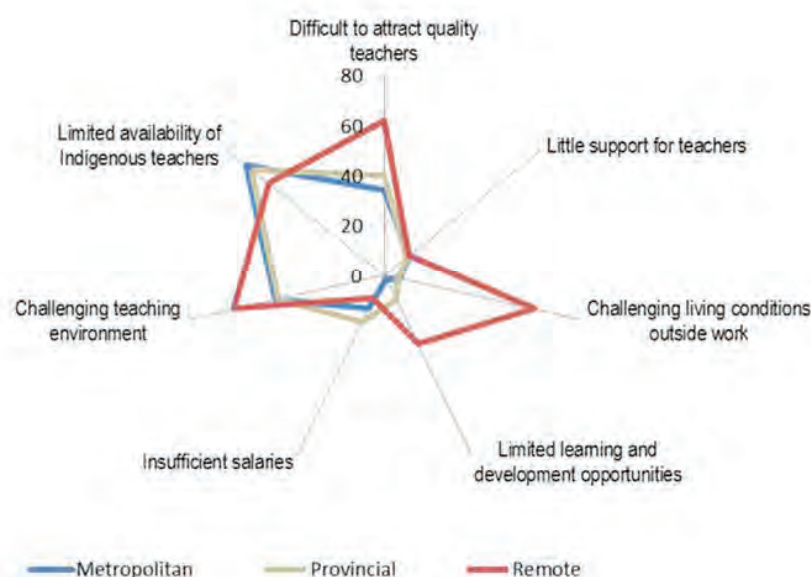
- higher degrees of contact with parents and families, reflecting the centrality of schools to remote areas and the engagement between school staff and community members;
- higher levels of involvement and engagement between the school and other service providers;
- similar levels of access to nationally accredited training at remote schools; and
- similar levels of awareness of the *Action Plan*.

These differing characteristics, in combination with poorer outcomes data, indicate that different approaches to student support are required in remote areas than in metropolitan and provincial areas.

One of the key challenges facing remote schools is to attract and retain staff. As demonstrated in Figure ES 1.2, the challenges faced by metropolitan/provincial schools in this area are largely similar, but remote schools differ in some key ways. In remote settings, while teachers are supported and receive adequate salaries, they must be willing to work in challenging teaching environments, with associated challenges in living environments outside work. While there is a perception that there are limited learning and development opportunities for remote teachers, the survey responses indicated that remote school teachers and principals had higher levels of engagement in cultural awareness training, and principals had higher levels of engagement in leadership training.

Figure ES 1.2

#### CHALLENGES ATTRACTING AND MAINTAINING TEACHER WORKFORCE



Survey question 42: Please indicate which of the following factors represents the greatest challenge in attracting and maintaining a skilled and culturally competent teacher workforce?

Source: ACIL Allen Consulting, 2013



### *Funding*

The evaluation report for 2011 identified a range of funding in addition to annual allocations that are impacting on school priorities. Much of this additional funding remains in place as at mid-2013, in particular through the Smarter Schools National Partnership, which includes additional funding under National Partnership Agreements (NPA) for schools servicing low socio-economic communities or exhibiting low levels of literacy and numeracy achievement.

The phase one research highlighted funding allocations specifically targeted towards implementation of the *Action Plan*, in particular through the \$30 million Next Steps Initiative. This provides support for approximately 100 focus schools. In addition, further funding of \$40 million was formalised in May 2012 through the *Project Agreement – Investing in Focus Schools (PAIFS)*. Both these initiatives seek to provide funding to schools that are not otherwise receiving benefits under the Smarter Schools National Partnership.

While the additional funding appears to give focus schools greater impetus to support the implementation of the *Action Plan*, it may have set an expectation that additional funding is required to implement the local actions. This suggests an evolution in thinking from phase one interviews, which indicated that the local actions were not intended to have cost impacts on school activities, and should be supported through recurrent funding.

One issue likely to emerge at the school level over the next 12 to 24 months is that funding for various NPAs, the Next Steps Initiative and PAIFS is due to expire at various times throughout 2014 and 2015. At this point, there are likely to be schools that are unable to sustain initiatives and staff that have been integral to supporting local approaches to implementation of the *Action Plan*. There is a risk that schools that have failed to embed processes sufficiently will lose momentum, particularly if key staff who have accumulated knowledge are not retained.

Alongside concerns raised regarding school funding, a number of broader policy and funding considerations are impacting on school sector's efforts to implement programs and priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Many education department representatives interviewed were involved in or had been affected by downsizing or restructuring processes.

At the time of writing, jurisdictions were considering the proposed new national school funding model. The new funding model includes allocations for recurrent funding, along with additional loadings for low socio-economic status areas, students with limited English, students with disabilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The new funding model will be introduced progressively over six years. Three state and territory jurisdictions (the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia and New South Wales) have agreed to adopt the new funding model. The new model will also be adopted across the Catholic and Independent school sectors.

It is intended that the funding model will help schools to reduce the short-termism that characterises many programs and interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The extent to which the new funding model will change school practices will become clearer through the implementation of the new model.

### Sustainability

For those schools and systems that have initiated or advanced their levels of activity to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in line with the *Action Plan*, the challenge remains to sustain the achievements to date. Several themes emerged about how this may be accomplished, including to embed action locally and to support workforce knowledge so that school leaders, teachers and staff maintain momentum beyond the initial stimulus.

#### *Embedding actions in policy, reporting and school plans*

There is a desire and awareness among school leaders of the need to achieve and sustain improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. While the *Action Plan's* domains are considered by many schools to be core business, sustained local effort appears to be reliant on:

- continued support, leadership and guidance for approaches at the policy level, including through the provision of resources that can assist in implementation;
- including the focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes and engagement in school annual and strategic plans; and
- monitoring school-level data collection and reporting on the achievement of outcomes.

At the school level, there is increasing focus on monitoring of outcomes, both through locally collected data (often in literacy and numeracy) and against nationally accepted performance measures (eg. NAPLAN). This is instilling a results-oriented culture in many schools.

#### *Recognition of workforce development*

The shared knowledge and commitment of school leaders and teachers is important to drive and sustain change. One of the lessons from the case studies is that where a broad range of school staff are heavily involved in setting and implementing school-wide approaches, changes can be systematised through school policies and processes. While the role of the school principal and leaders in starting the change process is acknowledged, it was increasingly clear that lead teachers or other senior staff were becoming the drivers of school-wide activity. Some schools had processes in place to educate a larger numbers of teachers each year to broaden their knowledge base.

The important role of the school workforce was also highlighted through examples of major disruptions at some schools as a result of changes in leadership or through persistent high levels of teacher turnover. High levels of workforce change impacted negatively on the way the community viewed the school, and the subsequent ability of new school staff to successfully build community relationships. It was suggested that schools seeking to pursue sustainable change, particularly in the 'engagement and connections' domain, should do so only when they feel confident that they have the required internal stability, processes, staff and community standing.



## Value of the Plan/next Action Plan

### *Framing the development and planning for further action*

The primary intention of the longitudinal evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the *Action Plan* in supporting improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In doing so, it seeks to inform future planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education planning and policy direction.

Phase two seeks to set up the key considerations to be addressed in the phase three overall evaluation. One of the key considerations is whether the existing approach should be adjusted in any future plan.

Figure ES 1.2 Table ES 1.2 outlines key components of the existing plan and questions regarding future directions. These will be tested further in phase three, along with questions regarding what would not have been achieved without the *Action Plan*, and the implications if there was no further national plan.

Table ES 1.2

#### KEY QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN FUTURE PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Topic area	Key components of the <i>Action Plan</i>	Questions regarding future directions
Need for national policy	A highly collaborative national approach	What are the benefits and/or problems associated with nationally coordinated action?
Cross-sectoral action	Involvement by the government, Catholic and independent sectors	To what extent did government and non-government sectors benefit from the <i>f</i> ?
Action-based plan	A series of actions at the national, systemic and local levels	Did the action-based structure support clarity of action? Which of the actions have been completed? Are additional actions required?
Domains	Domains of activity for the primary areas of attention	Should the existing domain structure be retained? Should any of the domains be combined? Should new domains be introduced?
Orientation	Orientation towards those coordinating and implementing actions	Is the <i>Action Plan</i> primarily a coordination document for government? To what extent is it intended to be implemented locally? Should it be accompanied by a document for students and/or parents?
Focus schools	Focus schools should be prioritised, mostly at the primary school level	Should the focus school concept be retained? Should focus schools continue to prioritise primary schools, or extend more actively into secondary schools?
Funding	Additional funding supports activity at the school level	Is additional funding required for schools to implement or sustain local actions?  If yes, what funding model would be most appropriate for schools, with reference to differences arising between jurisdictions under the new school funding model?

Source: ACIL Allen Consulting, 2013

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# Glossary and acronyms

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABSTUDY	The ABSTUDY scheme is an ongoing special measure to assist in addressing the educational disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Financial assistance can facilitate access to secondary schooling for students who may otherwise not be able to access an appropriate level of education. In addition to the primary benefit, living allowance, the ABSTUDY scheme includes a number of supplementary benefits, which recognise the unique circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and are provided to address particular areas of disadvantage.
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACLCP	Aboriginal Community Language and Culture Partnerships (a South Australian program to support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to take a leading role in providing language and cultural expertise and training to school leaders and staff.)
Action Plan	the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014
AEAG	Aboriginal Education Advisory Group (Tasmania)
AEC	Aboriginal Education Coordinator (South Australia)
AEDI	Australian Early Development Index
AEYSOC	Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee, directly responsible to the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for the execution of SCSEEC Council decisions.
AEO	Aboriginal Education Officer (New South Wales, Tasmania)
AES	Aboriginal Education Services (Tasmania)
AEW	Aboriginal Education Worker (Western Australia, Tasmania)
AEYLO	Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officer (Tasmania)
AICS	Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (Western Australia)
AIEO	Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (Western Australia)
AIEW	Aboriginal and Islander Education Worker
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIME	Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory school mentoring program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students)
AISSA	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
AISWA	Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ALS	Aboriginal Literacy Strategy (Western Australia)
ANTT	Numeracy Tracking Tool for Aboriginal Independent Community Schools (AICS), (Western Australia).
APAS	Aboriginal Program Assistance Scheme (South Australia)
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (South Australia)
AQF	The Australian Qualifications Framework, which provides a national system of qualifications, eg, Certificates, encompassing all post-compulsory education.
ASBT	Aboriginal School-Based Training program (Western Australia)
ASC	Assessment of Student Competency Tool to assess literacy and numeracy aptitudes of preschool children (Northern Territory)



ASETO	Aboriginal Secondary Education Transition Officer (South Australia)
ASP	Alternative Secondary Pathways program (Queensland)
ATA	Aboriginal Teacher Assistant (Western Australia)
BBF	Budget-Based Funded program (Australian Government) to support the delivery of a range of early childhood education and care and school-aged care services in a limited number of approved locations.
BLUE EARTH	Blue Earth Foundation. This is a national, not-for-profit organisation that works in more than 300 schools nationwide to increase the levels of physical activity amongst Australians, particularly school-aged children.
CAE	Coordinators of Aboriginal Education assist local schools to implement culturally appropriate initiatives to improve outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education (Western Australia)
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (provider of mental health and counselling services for children and adolescents)
CARE	Curriculum and Re-engagement (schools, Western Australia)
CATH.	Catholic sector of schooling
CCCares	Canberra College program, run in partnership with ACT Health and government and non-government community agencies, providing support to access education for pregnant and parenting students in the ACT and surrounding districts.
CECV	Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
CEOWA	Catholic Education Office of Western Australia
CESA	Catholic Education South Australia
CFC	Children and Family Centre (Queensland); Child and Family Centre (Tasmania)
CIIF	Collaborative Internet Innovation Fund (Victorian Government grants program that aims to accelerate the innovative use of ICT by Victorian government, industry and community organisations).
CISS	Choices for Indigenous Secondary Students program (South Australia)
CLONTARF	Clontarf Foundation, through the Clontarf Academy, aims to improve the education, discipline, life skills, self-esteem and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and by doing so, equips them to participate meaningfully in society.
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CRPTTC	Canberra Region Pathways Trade Training Centre (Australian Capital Territory students' vocational pathways provider)
CSLLD	Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development (Northern Territory)
CSS	Central Schools System (Western Australia)
CYAAA	Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy school (Queensland)
Dare to Lead	This is a national, Australian Government funded initiative to support school principals to progress the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, targeting key focus areas in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education: literacy, numeracy, attendance and retention.
DECD	Department for Education and Child Development (South Australia)
DEECD	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (Victoria)
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Australian Government)
DFEEST	Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (South Australia)
DIICCSRTE	Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (Australian Government)
DTWD	Department of Training and Workforce Development (Western Australia)
E4KIDS	Effective Early Educational Experiences for Kids study (Australian Government)
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language or Dialect
EATSIPEC	Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Early Childhood strategy (Queensland)
EATSIPS	Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools strategy (Queensland)

ECEC NMDS	Early Childhood Education and Care National Minimum Data Set
ELC	Early Learning Centre (ACT Catholic education sector preschools)
ERIS	Engaging Remote Indigenous Students initiative (Northern Territory)
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
ESA	Education Services Australia
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESL/D	English as a Second Language or Dialect
EUS	Engaging Urban Students initiative (Northern Territory)
EYLF	Early Years Learning Framework
EYN	Early Years Numeracy interview (a series of assessment tasks where students demonstrate mathematical understanding and preferred strategies for solving increasingly complex tasks.)
F–10	Foundation to Year 10
FaFT – IPSS	Families as First Teachers – Indigenous Parenting Support Services is a parental support program for early literacy and numeracy development (Northern Territory and Queensland).
FASD	Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
FAST	Families and Schools Together program, focusing on early intervention/prevention, designed to strengthen family functioning and thereby develop protective factors in children (Northern Territory).
FLO	Flexible Learning Options program (South Australia)
FOGS	Former Origin Greats (not-for-profit organisation assisting rugby league, communities and charities in Queensland)
Foundations for Success	A guideline for educators to extend and enrich early learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in their kindergarten year (Queensland).
FPEAG	First Peoples Education Advisory Group, a cross-sectoral expert advisory group, established to provide policy advice to the Australian Government on Closing the Gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in early childhood and school settings. The FPEAG is comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives from academia, school education, early childhood education and community organisations.
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FUTURE FOOTPRINTS	This program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from regional and remote areas of Western Australia attending residential schools in Perth. The program aims to support students' engagement in education and to enhance their transition to and from school, to further education, employment or training.
GEMS	Girls' Academy: Girls Engagement Mentoring and Support Program (Northern Territory)
GOV.	Government sector of schooling
GTO	Group Training Organisation (Western Australia)
HEPPP	Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program
HIPPY	Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (Northern Territory)
HSC	Higher School Certificate (New South Wales)
IATSIHEAC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council, established in 2012 to provide independent, expert advice to government on increasing the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels of higher education.
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, which conducts the quadrennial comparative assessment, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) for Years 4 and 8 students, and the comparative assessment of Year 4 students, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), conducted every five years.
ICAN	Innovative Community Action Networks program (South Australia)

ICC	Indigenous Cultural Consultant (Tasmania)
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IECB	Indigenous Education Consultative Body
IEW	Indigenous Education Worker (Queensland)
ILOT	Indigenous Leaders of Tomorrow (leadership program for Year 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Queensland)
ILP	Individual Learning Plans (South Australia)
IND.	Independent sector of schooling
ISQ	Independent Schools Queensland
ISSS	Indigenous Student Support System database (South Australia)
ISV	Independent Schools Victoria
KAE	Koorie Academy of Excellence (Victoria)
KALO	Koorie Academy Liaison Officer (Victoria)
KDC	Kindergarten Development Checklist, which assists teachers to identify students at risk of not achieving the expected child development outcomes (Tasmania)
KEC	Koorie Education Co-ordinator (Victoria)
KELP	Koorie Education Learning Plan (Victoria)
KESO	Koorie Engagement Support Officer (Victoria)
KEW	Koorie Education Workforce (Victoria)
Kindergarten	First year of primary schooling (New South Wales), eg, K–10 refers to schooling from the preparatory, kindergarten year, up to Year 10.
KPaCE	Koorie Parental and Community Engagement Program (Victoria)
KPSA	Koorie Preschool Assistant (Victoria)
LEP	Learning and Engagement Plan (Northern Territory)
LiL	Launching into Learning initiative (Tasmania)
LINC Tasmania	A statewide network which consolidates the services of the State Library of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, Adult Education and online access centres. LINC provides community services, such as adult education courses and literacy skills support, access to information about Tasmania's heritage, and Tasmanian Government records and resources.
LLEN	Local Learning and Employment Network (Victoria)
LSAC	Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (Australian Government)
LSCP	Local School and Community Partnership Agreement (South Australia)
LSIC	Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (Australian Government)
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (from 2009 to 2012. Prior to MCEECDYA, it was the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). In 2012, MCEECDYA became the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC))
MCTEE	Ministerial Council on Tertiary Education and Employment. In 2012, MCTEE became the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTese).
MOODLE	Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (an e-learning software platform)
NAIDOC Week	National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee Week is observed nationwide from the first Sunday in July through to the following Sunday. NAIDOC Week celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NAP	National Assessment Program encompasses tests endorsed by ministers for education meeting as MCEECDYA, including the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, and three-yearly sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship and ICT literacy.
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (managed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA))
NARIS	National Alliance for Remote Indigenous Schools
NBN	National Broadband Network
NCECEC	National Collection on Early Childhood Education and Care
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NEA	National Education Agreement
NECEC	National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection (data sourced from the Australian Government and State and Territory departments with responsibility for Early Childhood Education and Care and the ACT Catholic Education Office.)
NEXT STEPS	A two-year initiative funded by the Australian Government to directly assist 102 selected Focus schools to Close the Gap, and lift the attendance, engagement and educational achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NIRA	the National Indigenous Reform Agreement was a 2008 COAG agreement to: commit all jurisdictions to achieving the Closing the Gap targets; provide an integrated strategy for achieving the targets in urban and regional areas, as well as in remote Australia; define responsibilities and promote accountability among governments; note the significant funding provided through Indigenous-specific National Partnerships to assist in meeting the targets, and link to other National Agreements and National Partnerships for all Australians that include elements addressing the Closing the Gap targets.
NON-GOV.	Non-government (Catholic or independent) sector of schooling
NP	National Partnership agreements (between the Australian Government and States and Territories)
NP-IECD	National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development
NP-SFNT	National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory
NP-YAT	National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions
NQF	National Quality Framework is an agreement between all Australian governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children using education and care services.
NSSC	National Schools Statistics Collection, published through the Australian Bureau of Statistics' publication, <i>Schools Australia</i> (Cat.No. 4221.0)
NSW AECG	New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Incorporated
NTCET	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training
NTIEC	Northern Territory Indigenous Education Council
NTOEC	Northern Territory Open Education Centre
NVEAC	National VET Equity Advisory Council
OEEC	Outdoor and Environmental Education Centres (Queensland)
OneSchool	The school administration system which supports schools in student management; curriculum and learning management; resource management; and performance, reporting and analysis (Queensland).
OP	Overall Position (Queensland), presenting a student's position in a statewide rank order, based on their overall achievement in Queensland Studies Authority approved subjects, indicating how well a student has done in comparison to other OP-eligible students in Queensland, and is used for tertiary entrance purposes only.
PaCE	Parent and Community Engagement Framework (Queensland)

PEET	Parent Education Engagement Team (a capacity building Northern Territory program, run in conjunction with PaCE, to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members' understanding and appreciation of school attendance and issues affecting students)
PIPS	Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (assessment tool for literacy and numeracy aptitude for kindergarten students)
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. This is a comparative assessment of Year 4 students, conducted every five years by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), with the Australian data collection managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). PIRLS measures students' progress in reading achievement, as well as measuring trends in the associated home and school contexts for learning to read.
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLP	Personalised Learning Plan
PLS	Personal Learning Strategy (New South Wales)
Pre-Primary	Preparatory year of primary schooling (Western Australia)
Prep.	Preparatory year of primary schooling (Victoria, Queensland), also, P–12 (Preparatory to Year 12) schooling.
Prim.	Primary (level of schooling)
PSG	Program Support Group (Victoria)
PYEC	Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (South Australia)
QCEC	Queensland Catholic Education Commission
QIECC	Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee
QSA	Queensland Studies Authority
QUICKSMART®	A theory-based educational intervention program for middle-school students, specifically, for those in Years 5 to 8, designed to enhance students' fluency in either literacy or numeracy (Northern Territory).
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RATEP	Remote Area Teacher Education Program (Queensland)
RCDO	Regional Career Development Officer (Victoria)
Reception	First year of primary schooling (South Australia), eg, R–12 is Reception to Year 12
Reconciliation Week	National Reconciliation Week is an annual event celebrated across Australia between 27 May and 3 June, and commemorates two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey: the anniversaries of the successful 27 May, 1967 referendum to alter the Australian Constitution, according Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples official recognition in Commonwealth legislation and the national Census; and the High Court of Australia's landmark Mabo decision of 3 June, 1992, which legally recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special relationship to the land, that existed prior to colonisation and still exists today, a recognition paving the way for land rights called Native Title.
RIPD	Remote Indigenous Professional Development project (Australian Government) to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Educators in remote services to interpret and use the Early Years Learning Framework to deliver quality education programs to children.
RIPL	Remote Indigenous Professional Learning. This is a program to mentor and train teachers in the implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework (Western Australia).
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Victoria)
RSD	Remote Service Delivery
RTBCTG	Raising the Bar, Closing the Gap program (Tasmania)
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
RWSR	Remote Whole-School Reform initiative (Northern Territory)
SAAETCB	South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Body

SAALP	South Australian Accelerated Literacy Program
SAASTA	South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SACOL	Supporting the Australian Curriculum Online program (Education Services Australia)
SAE	Standard Australian English
SASP	South Australia's Strategic Plan
SCOTese	Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (formerly the Ministerial Council on Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE)).
SCPA	School Community Partnership Agreement (Western Australia, Northern Territory)
SCSEEC	Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (formerly the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). In 2012, MCEECDYA became the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC))
SEA	School Entry Assessment (South Australia)
SEARCH	Study of Environment of Aboriginal Resilience and Child Health (Australian Government)
Sec.	Secondary (level of schooling)
SEHQ	School Entrance Health Questionnaire (Victoria)
SEIFA–IRSD	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas – Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage. This is an ABS measure of socio-economic conditions by geographic area.
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SET	Senior Education and Training plan (Queensland)
SFNT	National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory
SiAS	Staff in Australia's Schools. This is a triennial national survey, to obtain a picture of the teacher workforce, conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). It aims to collect information from school teachers and leaders about their background and qualifications, their work, their career intentions and school staffing issues, to help inform important workforce issues such as teacher shortages. The last survey was conducted in 2010, with the next survey to be conducted in 2013.
SIDE	Schools of Isolated and Distance Education (Western Australian distance education provider)
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-related goals at the school level (Australian Capital Territory)
SONNIE	Senior Officers National Network of Indigenous Education (membership consists of directors and managers of Indigenous Education and Training directorates in all Australian States and Territories)
Sorry Day	National Sorry Day, held annually on 26 May, since it was first held in 1998, remembers and commemorates the mistreatment of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population impacted by the government policies of forcible removal that have resulted in the Stolen Generations. The National Sorry Day Committee works to support and encourage schools and community groups nationwide to plan and hold their own annual Sorry Day events, whilst holding events itself, normally in Canberra and Sydney.
SSNP	Smarter Schools National Partnership (Australian Government program aimed at addressing disadvantage, supporting teachers and school leaders and improving students' literacy and numeracy).
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines of learning.
STEPP	Studying, Training and Effective Parenting Program provides teenaged mothers with an opportunity to re-engage in education, further develop their life skills and improve their prospects for employment or further study (Queensland).
T-9 Net	Transition to Year 9 Diagnostic Net (Northern Territory literacy and numeracy assessment tool, providing a diagnostic 'safety net' for teachers so they can not only prioritise the teaching of aspects of the English and mathematics curriculum, but can also use the other learning areas as contexts for students to apply the skills they've learned.)

TACE	Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation for Education
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
TEN	Targeted Early Numeracy (numeracy program used in New South Wales)
TESE Action Plan	Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment Action Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Australian Government).
THRASS	Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (phonics literacy program, used in Northern Territory)
TIME	Teaching Indigenous Mathematics Education (Queensland)
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. This is a quadrennial comparative assessment of Years 4 and 8 students, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), with the Australian data collection managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). TIMSS provides data about national and international trends in mathematics and science achievement.
TOWN	Taking Off With Numeracy (numeracy program used in New South Wales)
Transition	The first year of full-time schooling in the Northern Territory
TTC	Trade Training Centre
Turn Around Team	The Aboriginal Turn Around Team works with schools to provide crisis intervention for individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and their enrolled schools and centres (South Australia).
USI	Unique Student Identifier
UTAS	The University of Tasmania
VACL	Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
VAEAI	Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VELS	Victorian Essential Learning Standards
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching
VTG	Victorian Training Guarantee, entitling eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to government subsidised places for training courses, including at Diploma level and above, and paying only the concession tuition fee.
VTN	Virtual Teacher Network. An initiative of NARIS, the VTN assists teachers working in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools. (Western Australia)
WAAETC	Western Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Council
WACE	Western Australian Certificate of Education
WHAT WORKS	A program funded by the Australian Government, developed to help schools plan and take action to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
WOW	Worlds of Work program, implemented in Victorian Catholic sector schools in 2010, focuses on improving school retention and pathways planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The program was developed in conjunction with the Foundation for Young Australians, and received funding from the Australian Government DEEWR through the Indigenous Employment Program.