

COMMONWEALTH

Role of the Commonwealth in schooling

The Commonwealth's role in school education arises from its interest in the achievement of national social and economic goals, particularly those relating to Australia's young people. The Commonwealth seeks to enhance the educational outcomes of all school students by providing support for education systems and schools through its funding programs, through policy development and through research and analysis of nationally significant educational issues. It pursues its objectives by working closely with the States as well as with the authorities which run non-government schools.

The priorities of the Government include the provision of the basic skills — particularly literacy and numeracy — which enable students to make the most of their education and training opportunities later in life, the provision of better pathways from school to work and improved choice and diversity in schooling, both for parents and students.

In 1997, the Commonwealth provided around \$3.79 billion in specific purpose payments for schools through its General Recurrent Grants and Capital Grants Programmes, and through programs which supported literacy, language learning, special learning needs, the transition from school to work, strategic projects to improve student learning outcomes and initiatives in Indigenous education. A further \$604m of income support was provided directly to individual school students and their families through ABSTUDY, AUSTUDY and the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme.

The Commonwealth also has responsibilities in Australia's international relations in education, aiming to promote educational outcomes and links in ways which take account of Australia's location in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Commonwealth administers its policies and programs for schools and students through the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). During 1997, administration of the student income support programs formerly managed by the Department passed to Centrelink, the new Commonwealth authority providing social security, income assistance and employment assistance services.

Initiatives and developments in 1997

In 1997, there were some important developments in Commonwealth policy and programs for schools, notably in the areas of literacy and numeracy, Indigenous education and transition from school to work. There were also some structural changes in Commonwealth schools programs and a review of the way the Commonwealth funds non-government schools.

The Commonwealth's highest priority in 1997 — the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills of all young Australians — was reflected in its strong support for the decision by Ministers to adopt the new national literacy and numeracy goal and a national plan for assessment, intervention and reporting on literacy and numeracy in primary schools. During the year, the Commonwealth introduced its new Literacy Programme, which aims to foster the acquisition by all students of appropriate literacy and numeracy skills, and specifically, to measurably improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students.

The Commonwealth's principal program for funding Indigenous education was revised to give it a stronger focus on outcomes, and a series of initiatives in the area of vocational education and training in schools got underway.

These initiatives are described in more detail later in the chapter.

Restructure of Commonwealth programs

This was the first full year of operation under the new 'broadbanded' structure for Commonwealth schools programs. Broadbanding was introduced in the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 1996*, which provides funding for schools programs for 1997–2000. With the objective of better reflecting the Commonwealth's current priorities, around forty small programs for schools have been reformed into a simpler, more streamlined structure of five priority areas: Literacy, Languages, Special Learning Needs, School to Work and Quality Outcomes.

This new structure allows funding to be directed more strategically to assist in meeting key objectives and reduces the amount of 'red tape' associated with Commonwealth assistance to schools. In particular, the restructure emphasises the importance the Government places on improved literacy outcomes. It also increases flexibility of funding arrangements, allowing education providers greater scope in determining local priorities. Agreements with States and non-government authorities from 1997 reflect the new program structure.

Funding of new schools

As part of the 1996–97 Budget the Commonwealth Government honoured its undertaking to abolish the

New Schools Policy. Two hundred and forty-five applications were approved under the new funding arrangements during 1997. One hundred and nine were for funding as new schools; of these 48 were from pre-existing schools (known to be in existence prior to 1 January 1997) and 61 were from new schools. A breakdown of applications by State and type of application is given in Table 1, while funding categories of new schools are shown in Table 2.

Review of the Education Resources Index

In line with its 1996 Election commitment, the Commonwealth Government initiated a review of the Education Resources Index (ERI), the mechanism which assigns non-government schools and systems to one of twelve needs-based funding categories. The ERI Review commenced in February and, as well as addressing the operational aspects of the ERI, also considered broad funding policy issues, taking into account the Government's commitment to quality education and parental choice.

The Review has involved consulting widely with the education community and an issues paper, the *Schools Funding: Consultation Report*, was released for comment in October. The report reflects the range of views about schools funding put forward during consultation and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of alternative approaches. Several funding models which attracted interest during the Review are to be examined further in 1998.

Table 1. New schools — numbers of applications approved for Commonwealth funding for 1997, by State, as at 31 December 1997

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Aust</i>
New schools	48	16	17	14	5	4	3	2	109
Extension to new level of education	22	13	12	11	4	3	0	2	67
Progressive extension within level	19	6	16	2	1	2	0	0	46
Relocation/additional campus	2	8	3	2	0	1	0	0	16
Amalgamations/separations	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	7
Total approved	95	44	48	30	10	10	4	4	245

Source: DEETYA

Table 2. New schools — numbers of applications approved for Commonwealth funding for 1997, by funding category

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Total</i>
Non-systemic schools	3	0	5	0	0	5	3	13	4	19	23	19	94
Systemic schools	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	12	1	0	15
Total	3	0	5	0	0	5	3	14	5	31	24	19	109

Source: DEETYA

Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment

The Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA), a 1996–97 Budget initiative, is the mechanism for adjusting government school general recurrent grants as a consequence of the movement in the ratio of non-government students to government students compared with a 1996 benchmark. When a student moves from a government school to a non-government school, State governments make a saving and the Commonwealth pays more. It is estimated that the gradual movement of students to the non-government school sector has saved the States some \$3 billion since 1983.

The EBA is calculated at the end of each year, and uses the annual student census to determine the actual drift in student enrolments in a State, compared with 1996. The calculation uses actual average expenditure by a State on students in government and non-government schools, and actual enrolment proportions for each State rather than a national average. Where the census shows that, in a particular State, the non-government school enrolment share has increased over 1996, this is translated into a notional saving to that State and 50 per cent of that saving is deducted from the Commonwealth general recurrent grant to the State. If the census shows no change in relative enrolment shares, or an increase in the government share, the EBA is not triggered.

The EBA reduces the potential for cost-shifting between levels of government. It adjusts the share of government school general recurrent grants to the States by approximately half of the savings that accrue to State governments as a result of enrolment drift from the government to the non-government sector. The States retain the remaining 50 per cent.

The Commonwealth Minister approved a framework for calculating the EBA which addresses many of the concerns raised by States. A buffer mechanism was also introduced to reduce the impact of statistical anomalies, substantially reducing the EBA liability for all affected States and eliminating it for the Territories in respect of 1997. As there was no drift to the non-government sector in Tasmania, the EBA was not triggered for that State for 1997.

The amounts being recovered from States in respect of 1997 are shown in Table 3.

Drug education

The Schools Drug Education Strategy was announced as part of the first instalment of the National Illicit Drug Strategy (NIDS) *Tough on Drugs*, launched in November 1997 by the Prime Minister. Funding of \$7.5m will be provided over three years to 2001 for DEETYA to develop this important component of the overall strategy to reduce the demand for drugs, which adopts the goal of no illicit drugs in our schools. A priority for the Schools Drug Education Strategy is recognition of and integration with existing school initiatives in the States. The Strategy will be developed in close consultation with State governments and non-government education authorities, as well as school principals, teachers, academics, health professionals, parents and the community. There will be close collaboration across Commonwealth portfolios, particularly between health and education.

A National Advisory Committee on Schools Drug Education is being established to provide expert advice and direction to the Commonwealth Minister, and through him to MCEETYA, on the development, implementation and progress of the Strategy.

Civics and citizenship

In May 1997, the Commonwealth announced details of Discovering Democracy, a national program of civics and citizenship education activities. Over four years, commencing 1996–97, the Commonwealth has allocated \$17.5m to raise the level of civic knowledge of students. The Government is committed to ensuring that all students have opportunities to learn about the system of government in Australia. To be able to act as responsible citizens throughout their lives, students need to acquire a body of knowledge and intellectual and citizenship skills.

In November, all schools were sent an outline of eighteen learning units, to be distributed in November 1998, for civics and citizenship education under Discovering Democracy. The units cover from year 4 to year 10 of schooling.

Table 3. Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment – amounts recoverable from States in respect of 1997 (\$ million)

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>
EBA liability 1997	4.33	1.73	2.60	0.96	2.28	0	0	0	11.90

Source: DEETYA

Youth policy and support

Youth support programs

The Youth Bureau supports the Commonwealth Government's priorities through its involvement in a wide range of issues of concern to young people. It also administers youth support programs, the most relevant to school students being Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET), the Youth Affairs Grants and Publicity Programme and sponsorship of the Rock Eisteddfod, including the Battle of the Bands.

The JPET program assists students and unemployed young people under 21 years (with priority given to those aged 15 to 19) who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless — the first stages of homelessness often being encountered when young people are at school. Assistance is also provided to young people who are or have been wards of the State, are refugees or have been in the juvenile justice system.

JPET, which got underway in 1997, differs from other programs in its holistic approach to assisting young people overcome problems which stop them maintaining stable accommodation and entering or staying in full-time education, training or employment. JPET offers support and referral services to help overcome a range of problems including housing, substance abuse, family difficulties, sexual or other abuse, lack of self-esteem, income support, and other barriers to education, training or employment. In 1997, some 90 agencies were funded to provide JPET services.

The Youth Bureau also administers grants which assist students and other young people under the Youth Affairs Grants and Publicity Programme. For example, in 1997, the Smith Family was funded to assist disadvantaged young people to continue their schooling through telephone tutoring by high achieving students.

Higher education review

In January 1997, the Commonwealth announced the details of a broad ranging, independent review of higher education financing and policy, chaired by Mr Roderick West. The Review Committee's task was to develop a policy framework, including financing options, to ensure that Australia's higher education system is responsive to long-term environmental challenges while meeting the Government's broad goals for higher education. The Committee will report to Government by the end of March 1998. The Committee focussed on the role of higher

education in Australia's society and economy over the next ten to 20 years and, significantly for the schools sector, on factors affecting demand for and provision of higher education, as well as on the regulation, administration and financing of higher education.

Focus areas

School-industry links

The Commonwealth Government's reforms to apprenticeships and traineeships, together with reforms in workplace legislation, will help to ensure that school leavers are better prepared for further education, training or the workforce. As part of the reform process, the Commonwealth announced a funding package of initiatives worth \$187m over four years commencing 1996-97 to develop effective and reliable pathways for young people from schooling to employment. The package aimed to help school students obtain skills and qualifications recognised by industry as part of their senior secondary schooling. Students will be able to begin apprenticeships or traineeships at school, while doing other senior secondary studies, or undertake vocational education and training (VET) modules that will integrate into apprenticeships and traineeships after they leave school.

The year was a transitional one for VET in schools, with the establishment of many of the programs that will be delivered in schools in 1998 including the School to Work Programme. In addition, all States and Territories signed agreements under which Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) funds are being provided to government and non-government schools to support the expansion of VET in schools, in particular the development of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships based on the principles for the establishment of New Apprenticeships.

In addition to the VET in schools initiatives, the Commonwealth is providing more than \$550m for at least 220,000 new apprenticeships and traineeships in the next two years. By August 1997, 35,000 new traineeships had been established in a wide range of new and traditional industries.

School to Work Programme

The School to Work Programme provides funding for vocational education in schools. Approximately two-thirds of funds are allocated to State and Territory education authorities to support the increased participation of

industry and VET personnel in the delivery of accredited VET courses in schools. In 1997, these funds were also available to upgrade the skills of existing VET teachers.

Around a third of School to Work funding is for strategic projects supporting the expansion of VET in schools, and in 1997 thirty such projects were approved. Over 170 schools will be involved in these projects, which will benefit some 18,000 students across Australia. Several strategic projects are for the development of vocational preparation programs for year 9 and 10 students, extending to an estimated 12,000 students. Other projects involve the development of part-time school-based apprenticeship and traineeship models for students in years 11 and 12.

Jobs Pathway Programme

The Jobs Pathway Programme assists school leavers to make a successful transition from school to the world of work, funding brokers to provide employment and mentoring support services to school leavers. The program's primary objective for 1996–97 was provision of a link between school-based vocational programs and employment, and it therefore targeted year 12 school leavers who had completed such programs. However, in recognition of the numbers of students leaving school without any industry-recognised skills or labour market experience, the program was broadened to allow brokers to work with other year 12 school leavers and year 10 and 11 students at risk of leaving school early and entering long periods of unemployment.

The 1997–98 Jobs Pathway Programme objectives are to:

- encourage greater participation in vocational education and training in schools and provide a link to employment for students completing these programs;
- encourage students who would otherwise leave school before finishing year 12 to remain in school, preferably to acquire vocational skills and qualifications;
- assist students when they leave school to make the transition to work;
- further promote school–industry partnerships and school to work transition arrangements at the local and regional level; and
- provide schools and industry with advice about opportunities for further development of employment, vocational education and training options, and career pathways for students to achieve smooth school to work transitions.

During the year Jobs Pathway funding was offered to a total of 73 secondary schools across Australia to find permanent jobs for school leavers in their district. More than 20,000 students in every State and Territory at about 1,100 secondary schools will be assisted by brokers under the program.

Other VET initiatives

The Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) is an independent body funded by the Commonwealth through ANTA to develop and support joint school–industry programs which promote opportunities for young Australians to acquire work placement knowledge and experience before they graduate from school. Funding of \$40m over four years from 1997–98 is being provided to the ASTF to support the expansion of vocational education in schools. An additional \$30m over three years from 1997–98 will support work placement coordinators. Work placement coordinators establish, maintain and monitor the relationship between students, local enterprises and schools, and foster greater employer involvement in school-based vocational programs. In 1997, 38,000 secondary students were enrolled in ASTF school–industry programs.

The new ASTF Board was announced in 1997, along with the appointment of Mr Ian Spicer as new chairman. Mr Spicer's appointment placed a new emphasis on industry leadership training programs in schools.

In 1997, the Commonwealth was involved in the development of the McDonalds Certificate in Food Retailing for Victorian Certificate of Education students. The course will allow students working in the McDonalds fast food chain to receive credits for accredited McDonalds training modules they undertake in conjunction with their part-time work.

Enterprise education

The year was a developmental one for the Enterprise Education in Schools Programme. Major activities included work on an Introduction to Enterprise education package (to be launched in early 1998) and establishment of a world-first searchable database of enterprise education resources on the Internet, accessible via Curriculum Corporation's website (<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/enterprise>). The program also provided funding to assist 39 schools across Australia to run 'Enterprise Days' as a strategy to link education and employment in metropolitan and regional Australia.

Indigenous school students

Implementation of IESIP

One of the Commonwealth's major program initiatives in 1997 was the introduction of revised funding and administrative arrangements for Indigenous education in the form of the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP). The successor to AESIP, the new program was introduced in response to recommendations of the 1995 *National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.

Under IESIP, the Commonwealth provides supplementary funding assistance to eligible education providers in the school, preschool and vocational education and training sectors to enable them to better cater for the educational needs of their Indigenous students.

The major changes to the program were the implementation of a per capita funding model to provide a more equitable and transparent distribution of funds, and a revised accountability mechanism which focusses on the measurement and reporting of Indigenous education outcomes in the priority areas determined by MCEETYA in 1995. The IESIP Indigenous Education Agreements for the 1997–1999 triennium require funding recipients to select from a number of performance indicators through which they will report to the Commonwealth on their performance in areas such as literacy, numeracy, educational outcomes (including attendance, retention rates and year 12 results), the employment of Indigenous people and the involvement of Indigenous people in educational decision-making. Against these performance indicators they provide baseline data as a measure of their current level of performance, and agree on targets with the Commonwealth for improved performance in each year of the triennium.

Recipients are required to report annually to the Commonwealth on their actual performance against their performance indicators and targets. To assist recipients in meeting their new obligations the Commonwealth implemented a rigorous monitoring process during 1997.

The revised IESIP arrangements also provide for the payment of Transitional Project Assistance (TPA) to existing recipients of IESIP funding who would have received a reduced level of assistance under the new per capita funding. Providers receiving this top-up were required to commit themselves to strategies to increase their Indigenous enrolments and/or retention rates to reduce their future reliance on TPA funding.

Strategic Results Project

A separate element of the IESIP called the Strategic Results Project (SRP), provides grants to eligible bodies to undertake specific time-limited projects aimed at improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students, again in the broad areas determined by MCEETYA in 1995. Such projects can be capital or non-capital in nature.

During 1997, applications were called for 1998 SRP funding for projects, the first round of successful applicants for projects in the non-government sector being announced by the Commonwealth Minister in December 1997. Capital projects totalling over \$20m will be undertaken during 1998, covering initiatives such as teacher housing in remote communities, classrooms to shield students from the harsh elements in the isolated and remote areas of Australia and the purchase of a permanent site for an Aboriginal-controlled urban school.

ESL for speakers of Indigenous languages

As part of the long-term solution to meeting the particular literacy needs of Indigenous students, the Commonwealth had developed a new funding program, English as a Second Language for Indigenous Language Speaking Students (ESL-ILSS), which aims to help Indigenous students commencing school to function and participate in a meaningful way in classroom activities.

The program, which will commence in 1998, will target students who have had very limited exposure to English in their communities and who must use English in a sustained way when they begin school. It will fund education authorities to provide Indigenous students with intensive English language tuition prior to commencing mainstream schooling. A once-only grant of \$3,079 per student will be made for each eligible student, with student progress monitored for 12 months.

Languages other than English

The Commonwealth funds three major elements in its school languages program: National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS), Priority languages and Community languages. It also provides core grant funding for the Asia Education Foundation and Language Australia.

The NALSAS strategy, in collaboration with the States, funds the learning of the four languages identified as being

of greatest economic significance to Australia: modern standard Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean, as well as Studies of Asia.

The Priority languages element provides funds on the basis of students presenting for year 12 in any of ten identified languages: Aboriginal languages, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese. Funding was paid in respect of 13,739 students in 1997. The Community languages element assists students of language backgrounds other than English to maintain their languages and culture. It is also used to increase awareness among all students of the different community languages and cultures within Australian society.

The Commonwealth funds the Asia Education Foundation to promote awareness and the study of Asia across school curricula. This both enhances the study of the four languages funded under NALSAS and provides opportunities for understanding our broader relationship within our region.

Technology

Information technology in schools

The Commonwealth recognises the importance of information and communication technology in improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout all Australian schools. In addition to its major contribution to Education Network Australia (EdNA), the Commonwealth has also supported a number of initiatives aimed at improving quality and equity in the use of information and communication technology in Australian schools.

Framework for Open Learning

In the 1996–97 financial year, the Commonwealth provided \$2.3m under the Framework for Open Learning Programme (FOLP) to support the development of information technology (IT) skills and expertise throughout the education community. This included support for national subject associations in each of the eight key learning areas to build and strengthen their electronic networks, and to provide resources to enhance teacher professional development and student learning in each subject area. These associations are ideally placed to provide quality professional development to teachers, and they have established sound collaborative networks with universities, school systems and the Commonwealth. Peak national

parent and principal associations were also funded for similar projects, in recognition of the critical role parents, teachers and principals play in achieving quality outcomes for all Australian school students in information technology.

Information Technology Skills of School Students

The Information Technology Skills of School Students sample study began during 1997 and will be completed in 1998. Funded by the Commonwealth, the study is being undertaken by a team led by Dr Neil Russell. Its aim is to assess and provide baseline data on the extent to which students are developing the skills of information processing and computing. A progress report is contained in the National Overview in the context of the Technology focus area.

Industry statement

In December 1997, the Commonwealth released an industry statement, *Investing for Growth*, which contained two initiatives relating to information and communications technology which will benefit schools. The statement undertakes to provide quality surplus Commonwealth Government computers and IT equipment to schools, and to carry out an educational community access pilot project in rural areas and areas of socioeconomic disadvantage to ensure that all members of the educational community have access to, and understanding of, the uses of technology in education.

Technology key learning area

Commonwealth initiatives in this key learning area include two national projects. Funding was approved under the Quality Outcomes Programme in 1997 to enable Curriculum Corporation to develop print and electronic support materials to assist teachers of years P–10 to integrate technology education across the learning areas of the curriculum.

Building on the OECD/CERI Dissemination Conference on Innovations in Science, Mathematics and Technology Education, the Commonwealth funded the Australian Science Teachers Association, the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the Technology Education Federation of Australia, to undertake preliminary work towards a strategy for science, maths and technology education in Australia.

Monitoring, evaluation and research

Program evaluations and reviews

An evaluation of the School Languages Programme commenced in 1997. The successful tenderer — a consortium from the Australian National University — advertised for submissions and conducted interviews in all States during the year, and the results will be synthesised into a report to the Department in 1998.

The review of Commonwealth funding arrangements for special education in schools, announced in 1996 and commencing in 1997, is investigating means of improving the operation and effectiveness of Commonwealth support for students with disabilities. It is being informed by a consultative group which includes nominees from both the government and non-government education sectors. The group met several times during 1997 and will report to the Minister in 1998.

During 1997, MCEETYA considered a number of proposals relating to the current Commonwealth provision of English as a second language (ESL) in schools. The Commonwealth, in consultation with States, will be undertaking a review of the provision of ESL support during 1998.

Country Areas program managers came together in June 1997 to discuss current issues, exchange information and examine strategies to improve the delivery of schooling to geographically isolated students. The conference produced a discussion paper, aimed at practitioners, policy makers, program administrators and members of the rural community, which addresses key issues and best practice in school education in country areas.

The Commonwealth funding formula for Country Areas programs was reviewed during 1997 and, while the existing allocative mechanism was retained, the formula was re-based to target the client group more effectively by using student enrolment numbers, and 1996 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data was applied. The updated mechanism will be implemented in 1998.

Besides the West review of higher education, a number of evaluations and reviews of Commonwealth programs underway in 1997 or announced then, had relevance to

schools and school students, in particular the reviews of the Rural Youth Information Service, JPET, the Green Corps and Electronic Career Information products.

Research and other publications

In addition to the study of the information technology skills of school students (see above), a number of research studies were funded in full or in part by the Commonwealth in 1997.

Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

Two Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) reports were published during 1997:

- *Research Report Number 3: Reading Comprehension and Numeracy among Junior Secondary School Students in Australia*; and
- *School Achievement and Initial Education and Labour Market Outcomes*.

A summary of the findings is contained in the National Overview.

TIMSS follow-up study

In 1997, the Commonwealth commissioned the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to carry out a project that builds on the initial analysis of Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) data. The project will use multi-level and multi-variate analysis of the TIMSS data to identify those school, classroom and personal characteristics that jointly explain Australian students' achievement in TIMSS. It should enable better understanding of Australia's performance against key high achieving countries and differential performance across Australia. The report is due for completion in 1998.

OECD surveys of student achievement

As noted elsewhere, Australia has agreed to participate in the OECD's international surveys of achievement of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics and science, to commence in the year 2000. Australia is represented on the Board of Participating Countries by DEETYA. Further details can be found in the National Overview chapter of this Report.

Literacy and language projects

Five Commonwealth-funded literacy research projects worth \$0.79m were completed in 1997:

- Bilingual Interface Project: the relationship between first language development and second language acquisition as students begin learning English in the context of schooling (Queensland University of Technology);
- Profiling ESL Children: pedagogical implications of using the English Profile, the ESL Scales and the Band Scales to assess ESL learners' development in the early years of schooling (Edith Cowan University);
- Reflecting on Viewing: supporting teachers to make judgements about students in the upper primary and lower secondary years of schooling (University of South Australia);
- Digital Rhetorics: technology and language and literacy learning: current practices and future directions (Queensland University of Technology and Central Queensland University); and
- *Numeracy = Everyone's Business*: the report of the Numeracy Education Strategy Development Conference, May 1997 (Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc. and Education Department of WA).

Most of the Commonwealth's research funds for languages other than English are directed towards the collaborative projects which form part of the NALSAS strategy. These focussed on professional development in the designated NALSAS languages and studies of Asia, proficiency outcomes and descriptors, curriculum materials and ways of enhancing and improving the learning of languages. Projects were developed in conjunction with the NALSAS Taskforce and put out to tender.

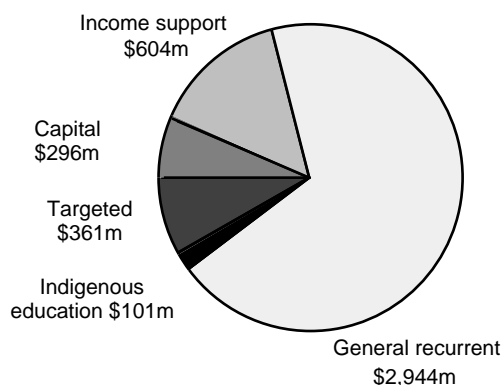
Funding for schools and students

In 1997, the Commonwealth provided around \$3.79 billion in specific purpose payments for Australian schools. Of this amount, \$3.60 billion was provided via the States Grants legislation (see Table 5), the main items being \$2.94 billion in general recurrent grants, \$296m in capital grants and \$361m for targeted programs such as grants for

literacy. Another \$87m was provided under the Annual Appropriations for specific purpose programs — for example vocational education in schools — run by national and other non-school organisations (see Table 6), \$101m went to the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (see Table 7) and \$604m was provided as income support for school students (see Figure 1).

Of the \$3.6 billion of grants for schools paid under the States Grants Act for 1997, the government sector received \$1.47 billion and the non-government sector \$2.12 billion, with a further \$6.8m being allocated to joint national programs benefiting both sectors. Table 5 shows how this was distributed to government and non-government authorities, by State, while Figure 2 summarises distribution according to school sector.

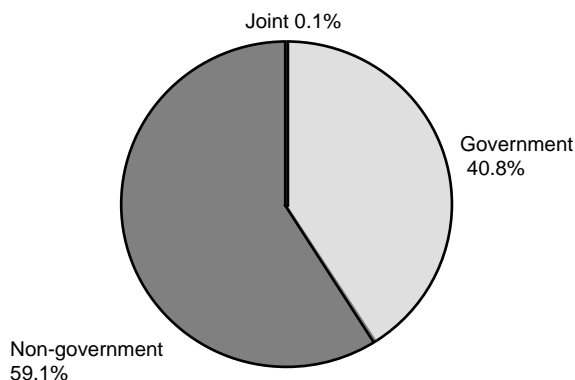
Figure 1. Commonwealth expenditure on schools and students, by program, 1997 (a)



(a) Excludes programs funded under 1997–98 Annual Appropriations.

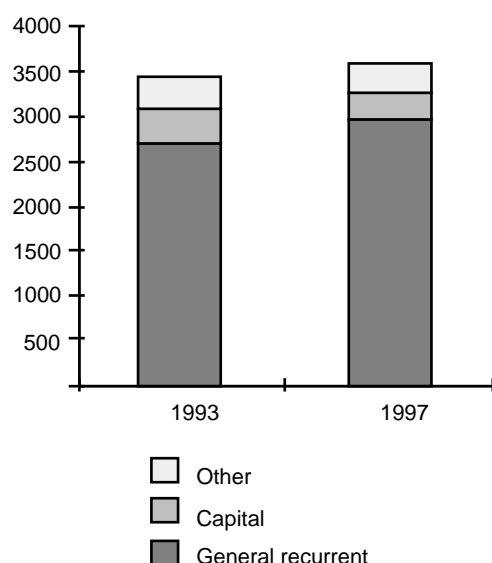
Source: DEETYA

Figure 2. Commonwealth grants for schools, by sector, 1997



Source: DEETYA

Figure 3. Commonwealth grants for schools, by sector, 1993 and 1997 (\$ million, final 1997 prices)



Source: DEETYA

Figure 3 shows total Commonwealth specific purpose payments for schools provided under the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Acts* for 1993 and 1997 in real (final 1997) prices. As the figure demonstrates, there has been a significant real increase in total Commonwealth funding, with reductions in capital funding being more than offset by increases in recurrent grants.

General recurrent grants

In 1997, the Commonwealth provided over \$2.9 billion in recurrent funding to government and non-government schools through the General Recurrent Grants Programme, an increase of 11.1 per cent over 1996. This program underpins the Commonwealth's priorities and objectives for schooling by providing funding to support the recurrent costs of schools. The Commonwealth works in partnership with school authorities to prepare Australia's young people for full participation in the work force and society generally.

Table 4. Number of Commonwealth funded non-government schools and students (FTE), by funding category and affiliation, selected years

	<i>Schools</i>			<i>Students</i>		
	1993	1995	1997	1993	1995	1997
Category 1	50	61	62	46,064	54,623	53,866
Category 2	38	37	37	30,619	30,843	32,990
Category 3	102	101	94	60,430	56,672	55,361
Category 4	24	22	16	7,792	5,699	4,836
Category 5	42	43	27	7,628	8,912	8,331
Category 6	96	102	79	21,817	26,295	25,072
Category 7	39	34	62	10,276	9,273	12,615
Category 8	160	160	177	35,831	38,161	39,941
Category 9	90	104	119	39,212	46,898	46,256
Category 10	1,588	1,574	1,624	531,094	539,516	574,608
Category 11	175	178	206	65,971	71,238	74,812
Category 12	40	38	64	8,416	8,689	10,974
Other (a)	3	—	—	1,708	—	—
Total	2,447	2,454	2,567	866,858	896,817	939,663
<i>Systemic schools</i>						
Catholic	1,523	1,538	1,564	498,587	515,878	542,471
Independent	123	148	164	22,907	31,686	41,292
Sub-total	1,646	1,686	1,728	521,494	547,564	583,763
<i>Non-systemic schools</i>						
Catholic	165	146	132	102,846	94,616	83,722
Independent	636	622	707	242,518	254,637	272,178
Sub-total	801	768	839	345,364	349,253	355,900
Total (b)	2,447	2,454	2,567	866,858	896,817	939,663

(a) The category 'other' refers to schools re-categorised into a lower funding category but which had their per student grants maintained in money terms each year until their revised funding category rate of grant reached the previous level of grant. For 1995 and 1997, these schools and students are shown against the funding category to which the school was moving at the time.

(b) Where figures have been rounded discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

Source: DEETYA

Table 5. Commonwealth grants for schools by program and category of school, States and Territories, 1997 (\$'000) (a)

<i>Program</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>Australia</i>
<i>Government schools</i>									
General Recurrent	345,254	235,344	192,022	106,481	78,688	29,251	18,032	12,308	1,017,380
Students with Disabilities	1,875	1,231	813	571	1,059	273	149	286	6,258
Grants to Schools – Literacy	45,998	30,005	14,551	10,971	9,858	3,431	1,047	2,623	118,484
English as a Second Language – New Arrivals	13,791	8,540	2,574	2,237	2,668	193	315	382	30,700
Special Education – Schools Support	10,679	10,384	7,733	4,385	2,825	1,568	643	613	38,829
Country Areas	3,860	2,070	3,930	2,231	1,534	442	—	732	14,799
NALSAS	6,966	4,754	3,965	2,174	1,671	591	370	255	20,744
Priority Languages	954	839	273	138	227	101	96	9	2,636
Community Languages	3,149	2,132	582	335	446	24	97	36	6,801
Capital	72,659	49,526	39,016	21,462	17,170	6,088	3,860	2,624	212,405
Total	505,186	344,825	265,459	150,983	116,145	41,962	24,608	19,869	1,469,036
<i>Non-government schools</i>									
General Recurrent (including Short Term Emergency Assistance)	628,984	511,818	346,306	191,474	142,206	42,389	45,739	17,242	1,926,159
Students with Disabilities	2,973	2,071	1,033	374	827	175	135	63	7,652
Grants to Schools – Literacy	14,600	13,904	3,747	3,228	2,488	479	547	495	39,488
English as a Second Language – New Arrivals	1,334	926	286	569	119	55	3	6	3,298
Special Education – Schools Support	11,239	8,003	2,579	3,206	1,040	573	562	319	27,521
Special Education Non-Govt Centre Support – Capital	375	155	287	4	35	137	—	36	1,028
Special Education Non-Govt Centre Support – Recurrent	6,272	4,169	4,557	458	2,635	80	362	26	18,559
Country Areas	753	413	500	247	113	45	—	82	2,153
NALSAS	2,737	2,332	1,387	758	607	196	192	61	8,269
Priority Languages	585	588	244	178	176	35	44	3	1,853
Community Languages	960	3,538	348	164	140	4	101	—	5,255
Capital	27,883	23,836	13,591	7,513	6,015	2,062	1,980	623	83,504
Total	698,694	571,751	374,867	208,173	156,402	46,229	49,666	18,956	2,124,738
<i>Joint programs</i>									
National Literacy Strategies and Projects	908	2,694	444	410	474	110	350	175	5,564
NALSAS	—	872	101	80	—	—	163	—	1,215
Total	908	3,566	545	490	474	110	512	175	6,779
<i>All programs</i>									
Total	1,204,788	920,142	640,870	359,646	273,020	88,300	74,786	39,000	3,600,553

(a) 1997 Program Year expenditure as at end June 1998

Source: DEETYA

Capital grants

The objectives of the Commonwealth's Capital Grants Programme are to prepare the nation's young people to undertake post-school education and training, to participate successfully in the labour market, and to contribute to and benefit from Australian society. The program seeks to improve educational outcomes by assisting in the provision of school facilities, particularly in ways that contribute most to raising the overall level of educational achievement of Australian school students. It has a special emphasis on improving educational outcomes in schools catering for students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and other disadvantaged groups.

Of the \$296m provided in 1997, \$212m funded 522 major and 1,512 minor projects at government schools and, in the non-government sector, \$84m supported 335 school projects.

Other programs

The broadbanding arrangements introduced in 1997 saw Commonwealth targeted programs rationalised into five broad priority areas:

- *Literacy*: grants to schools to foster literacy development, and grants for national literacy strategies and projects;
- *Languages*: community languages, priority languages and the NALSAS strategy;
- *Special learning needs*: special education support for schools and non-government centres, ESL for new arrivals, and country areas;
- *School to work*: vocational education, enterprise education and key competencies; and
- *Quality outcomes*: strategic projects supporting the Commonwealth's key objectives.

The Literacy Programme

The Commonwealth Literacy Programme was introduced in 1997 through the broadbanding of the Disadvantaged Schools and the English as a Second Language General Support components and the National Early Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. The broadbanding of these programs provides education authorities and schools with flexible funding arrangements to meet the complex needs of children from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and to enable schools to provide coordinated and effective assistance. The Literacy Programme aims to foster the

acquisition by all students of appropriate literacy and numeracy skills and specifically to measurably improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students.

The Literacy Programme has two funding strands:

- *Grants to Schools to Foster Literacy*, which aims to measurably improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds; and
- *Grants for National Strategies and Projects*, which supports the identification of, research into and implementation of strategic national initiatives in literacy and numeracy.

The Commonwealth announced the provision of \$7m over the three years 1997 to 1999 specifically for professional development. This funding will assist State education authorities to implement strategic professional development initiatives to support the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy plan.

Languages and special learning needs

The Commonwealth supports expansion and improvement of the learning of languages other than English and promotes Asian languages and studies through its funding for NALSAS, Priority languages and Community languages. Details can be found earlier in this chapter. Commonwealth special learning needs programs cater for students with disabilities, students arriving in Australia with little or no English and geographically isolated students. Funding for languages and special needs programs is listed in Tables 5 and 6.

School to work

The School to Work Programme provides funding to support the effective transition of young people from schooling to work and further education or training. In the 1996–97 Budget the Commonwealth announced a four-year School to Work package of funding measures totalling \$187m, including \$23m for the School to Work Programme, \$38m for work placement coordinators (through the ASTF), and \$6m for the Jobs Pathway Programme.

Quality outcomes

The new Quality Outcomes Programme provides funding for strategic projects which support the Commonwealth's

objective of improving student learning outcomes in schools and its national leadership role in school education. It has grown out of the broadbanding of five former programs: National Professional Development, Civics and Citizenship Education, Projects of National Significance, Quality Schooling and Curriculum Development Projects.

The Quality Outcomes Programme has funding of \$57.7m over the four financial years 1996–97 to 1999–2000, subject to annual appropriation. Of this, a minimum of \$17m has been allocated to Civics and Citizenship Education projects. The 1996–97 allocation of \$15.8m included funds for completion of existing projects under the National Professional Development Programme and Civics and Citizenship Education projects.

The broadbanding of the Quality Outcomes Programme has maximised flexibility in applying strategic, integrated approaches to key focus areas. In 1996–97, the priority focus areas were outcomes-based assessment and reporting; teacher and principal development and professionalism; school organisation and reform; civics and citizenship education; cross-curricular issues in literacy, numeracy and technology; pastoral care; and parental involvement in school education.

Figure 4. Commonwealth expenditure on targeted assistance, Australia, 1997

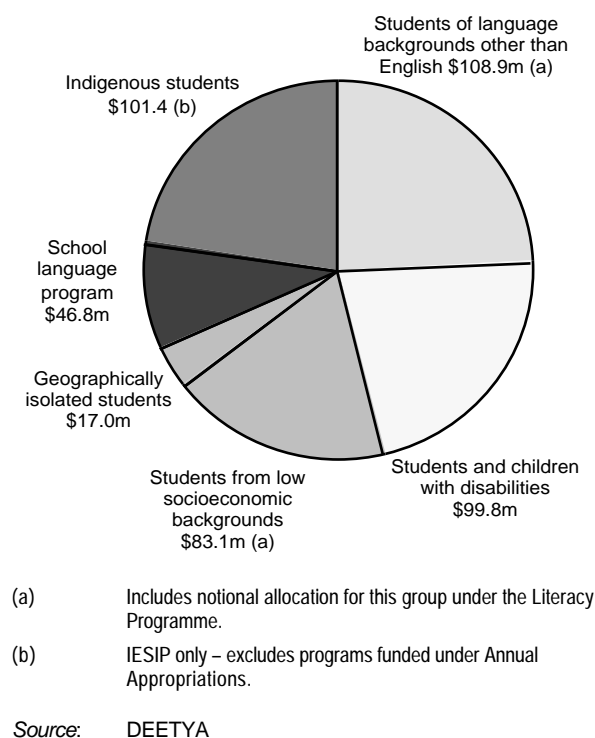


Table 6. Commonwealth grants for schools, Annual Appropriations, 1996–97 (\$'000s actual expenditure)

<i>Grants and Awards</i>	
Grants in Aid	942
Australian Students Prize	998
Curriculum Corporation	115
Language Australia	1,438
Asia Education Foundation	1,114
<i>Literacy</i>	
Children's Literacy National Projects	574
National Literacy Survey	1,056
<i>Languages</i>	
NALSAS	10,057
<i>Quality Outcomes</i>	
Civics and Citizenship Education (a)	2,460
Quality Outcomes	13,353
<i>School to Work</i>	
Enterprise Education in Schools	752
Key Competencies	1,284
Vocational Education in Schools	1,942
<i>Indigenous Education</i>	
Aboriginal Education Direct Assistance (a)	
ATAS	27,748
VEGAS	3,224
ASSPA	17,635
<i>Information Technology</i>	
Framework for Open Learning (a)	2,331
Total	87,022

a) Cross-sectoral programs – not all funding is provided in respect of schools education.

Source: DEETYA

Indigenous education

The Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP)

IESIP is the Commonwealth's principal funding program targeted specifically at addressing the educational disadvantage of Indigenous people. It allocates funds to education providers in a number of sectors, including schools, for the purpose of improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students in accordance with the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP). IESIP funding supplements mainstream Commonwealth, State and Territory education funding and is provided on a triennial basis through the *Indigenous Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989*.

Table 7. IESIP expenditure, payments to States, 1997 (\$'000) (a)

<i>State</i>	
New South Wales	25,217
Victoria	5,179
Queensland	19,779
South Australia	8,530
Western Australia	18,320
Tasmania	2,377
Northern Territory	21,366
Australian Capital Territory	670
Total	101,438

(a) Expenditure of 1997 funding under the *Indigenous Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989* was finalised in January 1998.

Source: DEETYA

This was the first year of the 1997–1999 IESIP triennium, which saw the introduction of new funding agreements between the Commonwealth and recipients under revised program administrative and funding arrangements. IESIP funds for 1997 totalled \$101m, and were distributed to education providers in each State as outlined in Table 7.

Indigenous Education Direct Assistance (IEDA)

The IEDA program comprises the three elements outlined below. Funding for these programs totalled around \$49m in 1996–97.

The *Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS)* offers supplementary tuition and other kinds of study assistance to Indigenous students, individually or in small groups, who need help with their studies. Assistance can be provided to students at all levels from primary school to TAFE, university and other formal education and training.

The *Vocational Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS)* funds sponsoring organisations to provide information on education and career options to Indigenous school students and their parents and foster positive attitudes towards participation in education.

The *Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA)* element brings Indigenous people together by funding parent committees to conduct school-based activities which enhance educational opportunities for Indigenous students. ASSPA was extended to cover the preschool sector in 1997.

Grants and awards

Language Australia

Funding was provided during 1997 to Language Australia: The National Language and Literacy Institute to improve the quality and relevance of language and literacy education. The Institute works through a series of centres throughout Australia to a work plan agreed by the governing Council. Funding for Language Australia will move progressively from core grant funding to project based funding which supports, and is relevant to, the needs and priorities of the Commonwealth and States. Funds were reduced by approximately \$0.5m in the 1997–98 Budget to provide the impetus to attract project funds from both the government and non-government sectors.

Language Australia was funded separately to establish a national resource centre for languages other than English, literacy and Asian studies. This is being established in South Australia with access via the Internet.

Asia Education Foundation

The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) works with schools, government and non-government agencies and institutions, philanthropic foundations and the corporate sector to promote and support the study of Asia across all curriculum areas in Australian schools; develop Asia-related materials for Australian school children; promote the study of Asia within teacher education; and educate the broader community about the importance of school students' undertaking studies of Asia. The AEF is funded by the Commonwealth.

During 1997, the AEF's professional development and curriculum programs expanded significantly, and the Foundation continued to collaborate closely with the NALSAS Taskforce in implementing the NALSAS Strategy. The 1997 evaluation of the Commonwealth School Languages Programme indicated that there was 'widespread support' among government and non-government school authorities and others, for the work of the Foundation in encouraging positive attitudes to the Studies of Asia.

One of the AEF's highlights for 1997 was the *Linking Latitudes* symposium and fieldwork program, held in Indonesia in collaboration with the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture. It was attended by about 260 educators from Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

Grants-in-Aid

Grants-in-Aid are provided under the Grants and Awards program to support the operation of key national educational research and representative organisations. In supporting these organisations the Commonwealth hopes to facilitate the two-way flow between community and government of information about school education issues, to improve the quality of training and skills development in the community and to facilitate long-term research into issues surrounding education and schooling.

For 1996–97, Grants-in-Aid funding of \$0.9m was allocated to the Australian Council for Educational Research, the Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents' Council.

Income support for students

The Commonwealth's Student, Youth and Aboriginal Education Support Programme aims to promote equality of educational and employment opportunity by improving access to, participation and retention in, and completion of, education, training and work experience, particularly through the provision of income support.

AUSTUDY assists needy students to complete their secondary education and continue on to further study.

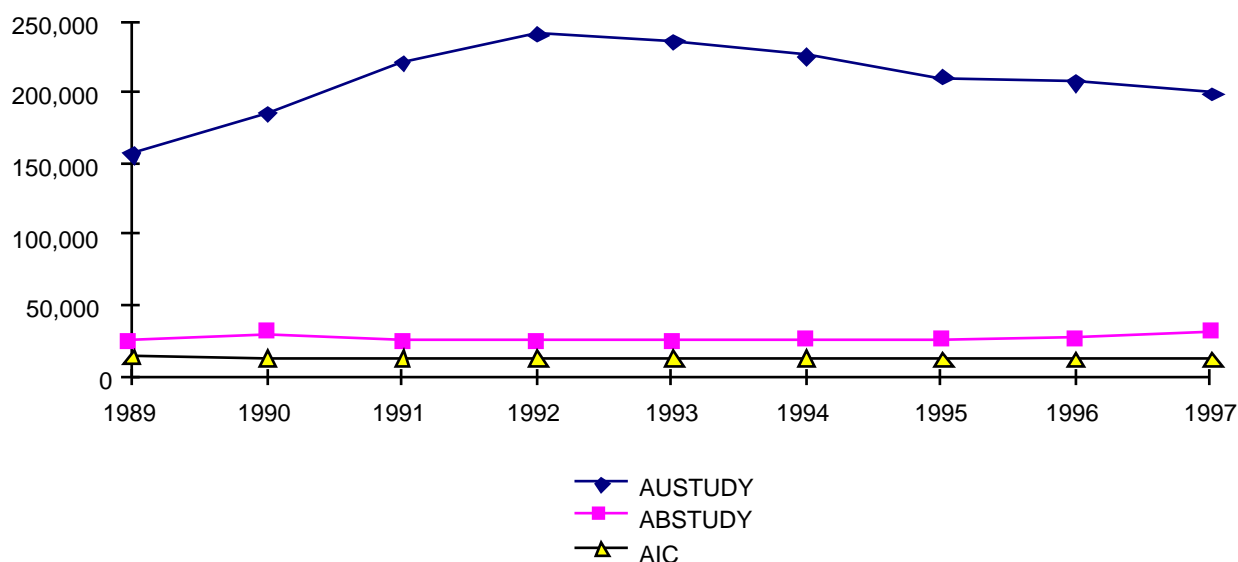
Generally, assistance is available to full-time students aged 16 years or over, although disadvantaged students, particularly those without parental support due, for example, to homelessness, can receive assistance from the minimum school leaving age, commonly age 15.

The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme provides help to families of primary and secondary students and tertiary students under 16 who are unable to attend an appropriate school on a daily basis because of geographical isolation.

ABSTUDY encourages Indigenous students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities at secondary school which are available to other Australian students. It seeks to increase Indigenous education participation to the same levels as the rest of the community by providing financial assistance to eligible students doing an approved course of study.

These programs provided \$604m to assist nearly 244,000 students in 1997. Figure 5 shows trends in the numbers of school student beneficiaries since 1989.

Figure 5. School students who received Commonwealth income support, by type of assistance, 1989–1997



Source: DEETYA