



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment



Incoming Government Brief

2022



Australian Government
Department of Education, Skills and Employment

Secretary
Dr Michele Bruniges AM

The Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education

Dear Minister

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister for Education. I look forward to working with you to implement your *plan for a better future for all Australians*.

The contribution of education is significant, providing a lifetime of opportunity for all Australians, from early childhood to school and tertiary education, university research and international education.

My department stands ready to implement your agenda by providing national leadership on education policy. We will partner with portfolio agencies, states, territories and stakeholders to deliver high quality education across the life course.

I look forward to meeting with you and discussing your agenda further.

Yours sincerely

Dr Michele Bruniges AM



1 June 2022

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1. Introduction

Provides an overview of the department and its role, introduces the leadership group, presents an overview of education through the life course, and provides a high-level education and training outlook.

2. Your agenda

Provides advice on your reform agenda, including a high-level roadmap of key milestones and  .

Commitments

Early childhood

School education

Youth

Higher education, international education and research

3. Early priorities

Identifies the briefings you will receive in the first week and first month to make time-critical or significant decisions, stakeholders you might like to contact, and early event opportunities you may wish to consider.

4. Overviews

Describes how the education sectors operate, with reference to key data and reforms. Also includes overviews on significant issues, such as Commonwealth-state relations and Closing the Gap.

SUPPLEMENTARY PRODUCTS

Portfolio guide

Provides information about the architecture and main activities of the education, skills and employment portfolio, including overviews of all administered programs.



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2. Your agenda

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Early childhood

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- Productivity Commission review of the child care sector
- Price regulation mechanism (ACCC)
- Early years strategy
- Early childhood transparency measures

School education

- Fully funding government schools
- Plan to fix teacher shortages and stop the slide in school results
- Helping students bounce back – student wellbeing boost
- Schools upgrade fund
- Plan to teach students respect: helping protect kids and prevent violence
- Teach First Nations languages in schools
- Urgent/rapid review of the impact of COVID-19 on students with disability

Youth

- New Youth Engagement Model

Higher education, international education and research

- Future Made in Australia Skills Plan: an Australian universities accord
- Future Made in Australia Skills Plan: 20,000 university places
- Startup Year
- New CQUniversity Cairns campus
- End the 10% HECS HELP upfront discount

Commitments with significant linkages to your portfolio

Department approach to implementation

Introduction to the department

The Department of Education, Skills and Employment's (the department) purpose is to *contribute to Australia's economic prosperity and social wellbeing by creating opportunities and driving better outcomes for people, through education, skills and employment pathways.*

An educated society and workforce, with the ability to learn new skills, innovate and create new knowledge, improves the economic capacity of the nation and increases productivity and potential future growth. Providing quality education is perhaps the most powerful policy lever available to improve lifetime incomes and reduce entrenched disadvantage.

The work we do

The department implements Government policies and programs that impact Australians from their early years and throughout their lives, as well as being a driving force behind the economic and social wellbeing of the nation.

The policies and programs help enable all Australians to overcome disadvantage, positively participate in their community and contribute to social and economic life.

We achieve this through our four Outcomes, as outlined in the Portfolio Budget Statement:

- 1** Improve early learning, schooling, student educational outcomes and transitions to and from school through access to quality child care, support, parent engagement, quality teaching and learning environments.
- 2** Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education and international quality research.
- 3** Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality skills and training.
- 4** Foster a productive and competitive labour market through policies and programs that assist job seekers into work and meet employer needs.

In 2022-23, the portfolio will manage around \$59.1 billion of Australian Government funding (including Portfolio Agencies and Treasury Appropriations). Of this, \$58.1 billion is for administered expenses and \$848.3 million for departmental expenses.

How we do it

The department provides advice to its Ministers and effectively implements Government policies and programs. In doing this, the department draws on the best available research, evidence and data.

The department works closely with other government agencies, state and territory governments, international organisations, regulators, businesses, education institutions, peak bodies, providers, industry and the community. This engagement combined with strong working relationships ensure policy development, program delivery, services and evaluation reflect the needs of the sectors, stakeholders and the Australian public.

We aim to maximise the benefit of our state, regional and international presence to support local relationships, contribute local knowledge and deliver services nationally and internationally.

As at 31 December 2021, the portfolio¹ employed approximately 4,369 staff under the *Public Service Act 1999*. The department has a presence across Australia, including 3,871 staff (88.6 per cent) in Canberra, central Melbourne and central Sydney, 427 staff (9.8 per cent) in other capital cities, and 60 staff (1.4 per cent) in regional areas (Alice Springs, Bendigo, Cairns, Newcastle, Orange, Mackay, Rockhampton and Townsville). Our international Counsellor network includes Brazil, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico and Vietnam.

Portfolio agencies

- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority
 - Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Board
- Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership
 - Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited Board
- Australian Research Council
 - Australian Research Council Advisory Committee
- Australian Skills Quality Authority
 - National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
 - Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Accountable Authority

Bodies forming part of the portfolio's administrative arrangements orders

- Australian National University

Statutory Bodies

- Australian National University (ANU) Council
- Higher Education Standards Panel
- Initial Teacher Education Quality Assessment Expert Panel
- National School Resourcing Board
- Tuition Protection Service (TPS) Advisory Board

Statutory office holders

- National Skills Commissioner
- Tuition Protection Service (TPS) Director
- Unique Student Identifier (USI)

Non-Statutory Appointments

- Regional Education Commissioner

¹ Data reflects the department, Australian Research Council, Australian Skills Quality Authority, and Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. Data for the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) are not included as these agencies do not employ staff under the *Public Service ACT 1999*.

Non-Statutory Boards

- Australian Industry and Skills Committee
- Council for International Education
- Equity in Higher Education Panel
- National Careers Institute Advisory Board
- Performance-Based Funding Review – Expert Group
- Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching Working Group
- Skills Expert Panel

Ministerial Forums Relevant to the Portfolio





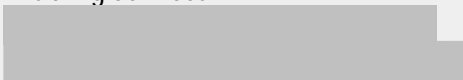










- Education Ministers’ Meeting
- Skills National Cabinet Reform Committee
- Skills Ministers’ Meeting

Other Structures within the Portfolio

- Australian Education Research Organisation Limited (AERO)
- National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd
- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
- Australia India Education Council
- Australia Indonesia Centre
- Australian-American Educational Foundation (Fulbright Commission) Board
- Education Services Australia (ESA)

Further information can be found in the *Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio Guide*.

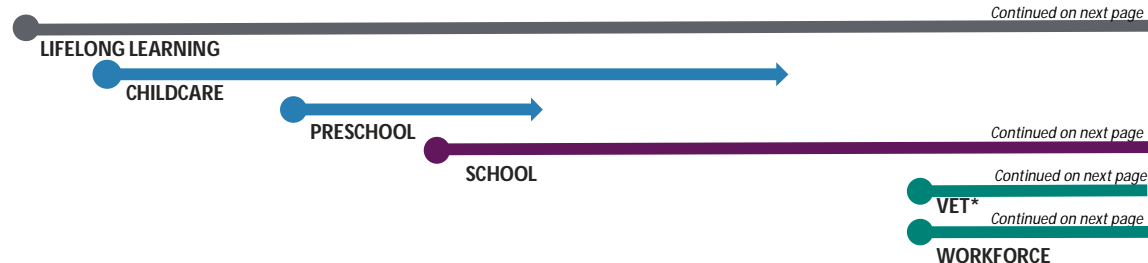
Departmental leadership

Name	Role and contact details	Executive Officer contact details
	Dr Michele Bruniges AM Secretary, Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment 	
	Mr Marcus Markovic Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Enabling Services 	
	Mr Brenton Philp Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and Child Care 	
	Dr Ros Baxter PSM Deputy Secretary, Schools and Youth 	
	Ms Nadine Williams Deputy Secretary, Skills and Training 	
	Mr Tony Cook PSM Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International 	
	Mr Nathan Smyth Deputy Secretary, Employment and Workforce 	

Learning life course

How Australians engage with learning across their life course

Education is a lifelong experience and Australians engage with the education system in a myriad of ways. The Commonwealth provides national leadership, funding and programs to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to learn and grow across their lifetimes.



STAGE/PHASE OF LEARNING	CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING 0 to 3-4 years	PRESCHOOL 3-4 to 5-6 years	PRIMARY SCHOOL FOUNDATION-YEAR 6 5-6 to 11-12 years	SECONDARY SCHOOL YEARS 7-10 12-13 years to 15-16 years	SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL YEARS 11-12 16 to 18 years
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Children learn to speak, begin to understand spatial concepts and test theories about the world around them	Children explore relationships through play and develop skills in early literacy, numeracy, creative thinking, problem solving, hypothesising and self investigating	Students learn to read and write, apply mathematical concepts, develop basic problem solving skills and work in teams	Students learn to analyse information using evidence, apply practical solutions, recognise problems and develop solutions, and connect complex ideas	Students learn to interpret texts, apply maths in problem solving and develop deeper knowledge across a variety of disciplines including the arts, humanities and sciences
LEARNING FRAMEWORK	Early Years Learning Framework		Australian Curriculum		Senior secondary curriculum varies by state and territory
COMMONWEALTH FUNDING	Child care support and subsidies for parents	Additional funding to states to support universal access	Needs based funding support to approved education authorities		
PROVIDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre-based day care Family day care In-home care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschool Centre-based day care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government schools Non-government schools Outside school hours care 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government schools Non-government schools VET in schools

Outcome in 2021

82.6% of Australian children were developmentally on track on the language and cognitive skills (school based) domain
Australian Early Development Census, 2021

- a. 59% of Indigenous children
- b. 77% of children from regional locations (regional)
- c. 66% of children from remote locations (remote)
- d. 71% of children in the lowest socio-economic quintile (Low SES)
- e. 80% of male children
- f. 85% of female children

Outcome in 2018

59% of 15 year olds were proficient in reading while
54% were proficient in maths
Program for International Student Assessment, 2018

READING

- a. 32% of Indigenous 15 year olds
- b. 54% of regional 15 year olds
- c. 40% of remote 15 year olds
- d. 43% of 15 year olds from the lowest ESCS* quartile
- e. 54% of male 15 year olds
- f. 65% of female 15 year olds

*ESCS is Economic, Social and Cultural Status

MATHS

- a. 27% of Indigenous 15 year olds
- b. 48% of regional 15 year olds
- c. 34% of remote 15 year olds
- d. 36% of 15 year olds from the lowest ESCS quartile
- e. 55% of male 15 year olds
- f. 54% of female 15 year olds

Outcome in 2021

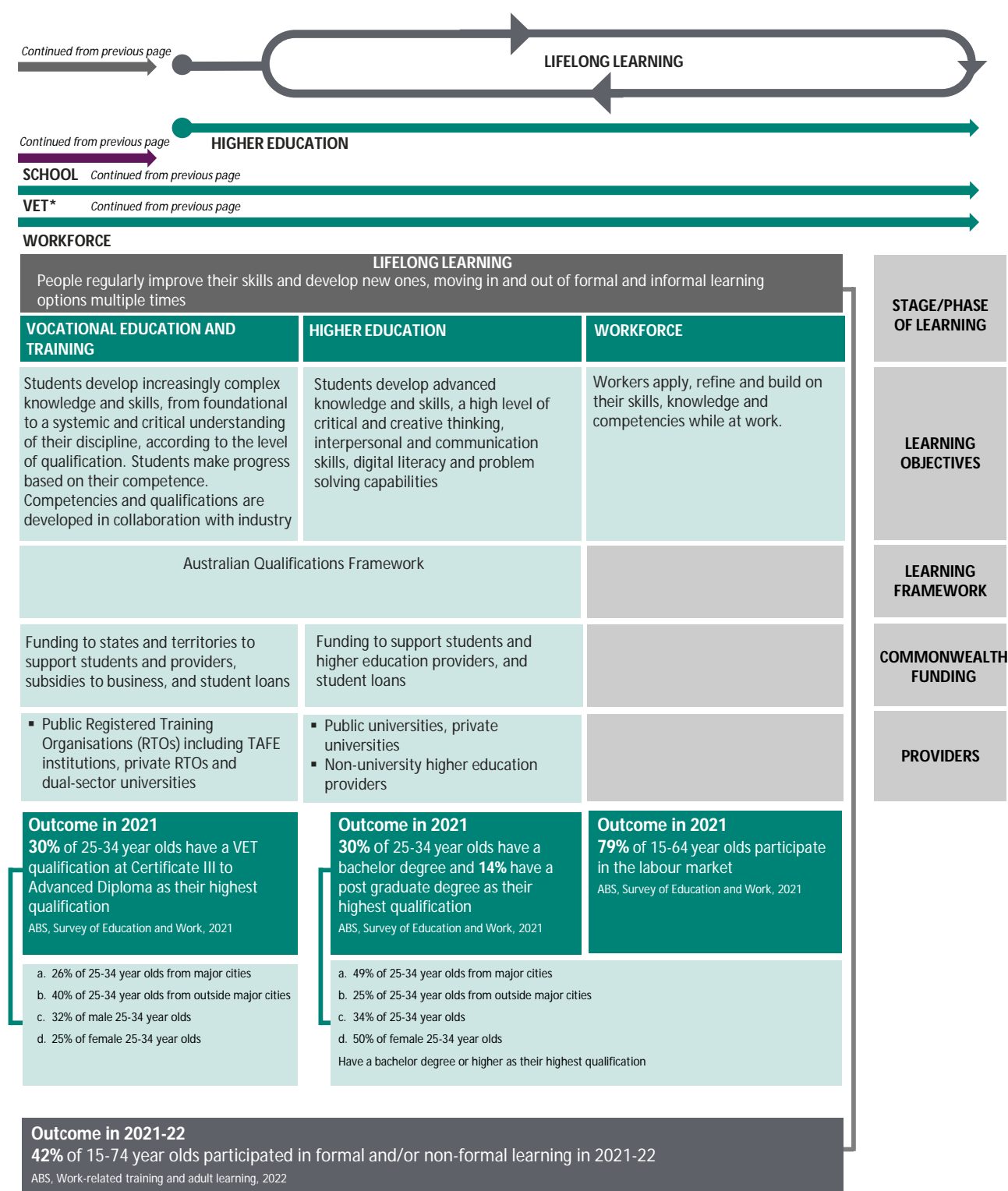
82.5% of 20-24 year olds held a Year 12 or equivalent qualification
ABS, Survey of Education and Work, 2021

- a. 91% of 20-24 year olds from major cities
- b. 84% of 20-24 year olds from outside major cities
- c. 87% of male 20-24 year olds
- d. 92% of female 20-24 year olds

VET* = Vocational Education and Training

Learning life course (continued)

How Australians engage with learning across their life course

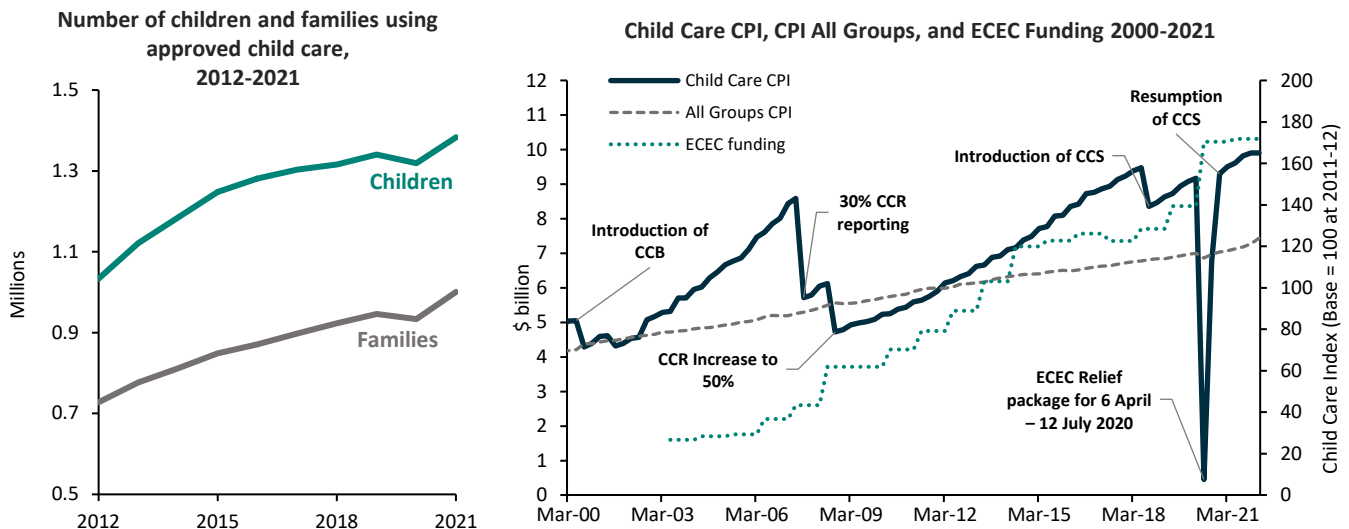


Education outlook

This outlook provides insights into the Australian education system throughout the learning life course. The Australian education system aims to help every Australian achieve their full potential and drive economic and social wellbeing.

Australia has a comprehensive early childhood education and care system, but the greatest need is for disadvantaged children and families.

- 1. Use of approved child care fell due to the pandemic but has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Affordability of child care is an ongoing policy focus.**

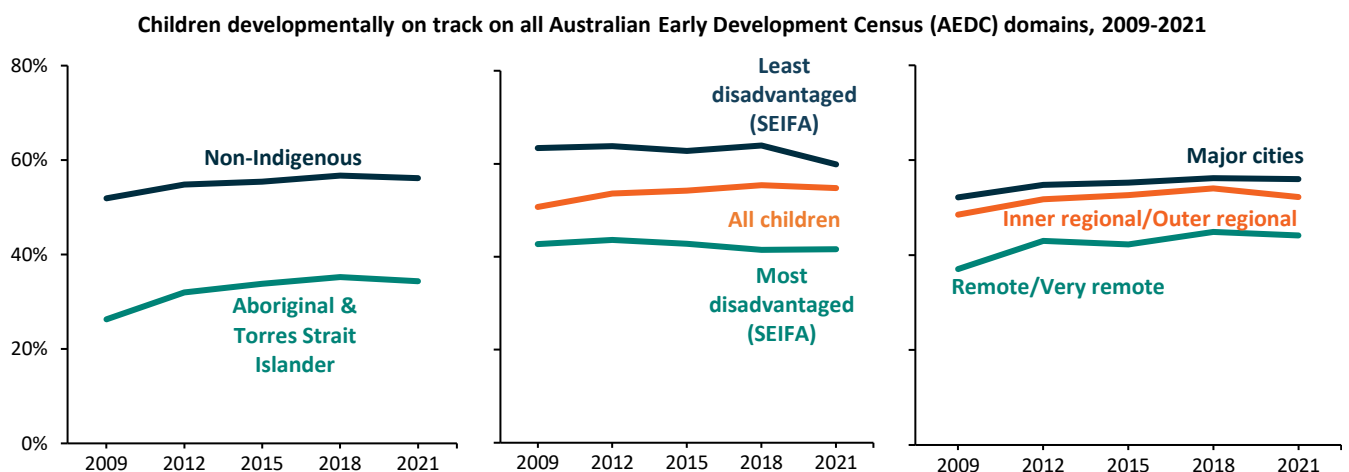


Source: DESE, Key Early Childhood Data, March 2021

Source: ABS, Consumer Price Index, Australia, March 2022; DESE administrative data

The number of children and families accessing approved child care has increased steadily over the past decade. Despite falling in 2020, it rebounded quickly in 2021 to exceed pre-COVID levels. The child care component of CPI measures the out of pocket costs of child care borne by households. Over the year to the March quarter 2022, child care CPI increased by 4.2 per cent. Child care CPI is 4.6 per cent higher compared to June quarter 2018 (before the introduction of the child care subsidy on 2 July 2018). This reflects an increase in fees, but also an increase in the amount of care that families use. Since the June quarter 2018, there has been an 8 per cent increase in the average charged hours per child per week in Centre Based Day Care.

- 2. Teachers assess most kids as on track in their development when they commence school, but significant gaps remain for disadvantaged cohorts.**

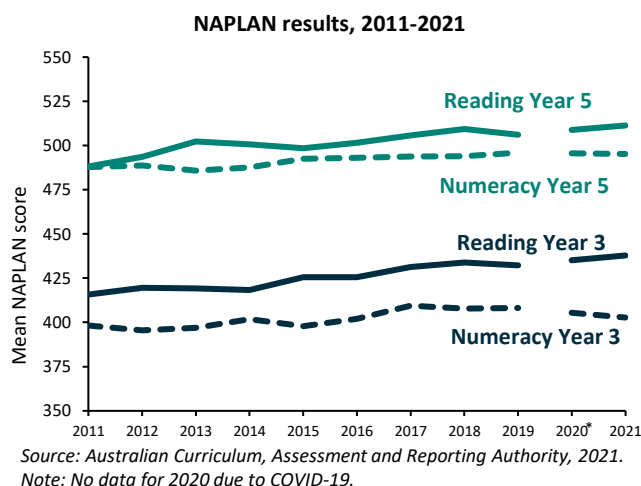


Source: Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) National Report, 2009-2021

The majority of children have been identified as 'developmentally on track' for each of the five AEDC domains in each of the five collections to date. However, in 2021 the percentage of children who were on track across all five domains decreased for the first time since 2009. A persistent gap remains for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children of low socioeconomic status and children located in remote areas of Australia. After meaningful developmental progress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from 2008-2018, in 2021 there was a 0.9 percentage point decline to 34.3 per cent. Increased effort may be required to meet the Closing the Gap school readiness target of 55 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be on track across five domains by 2031.

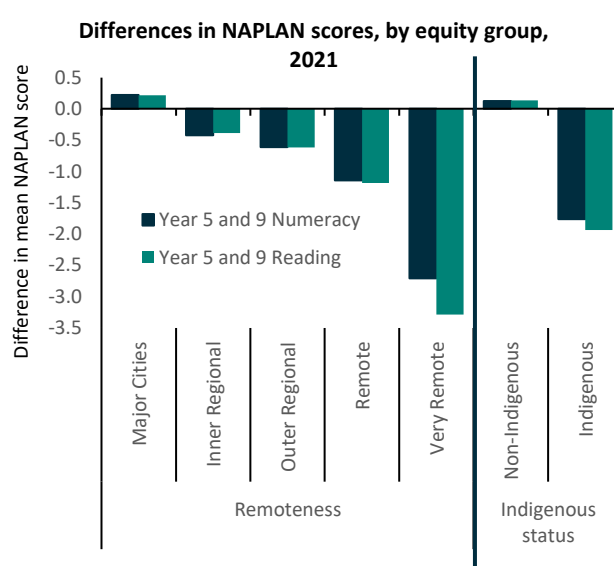
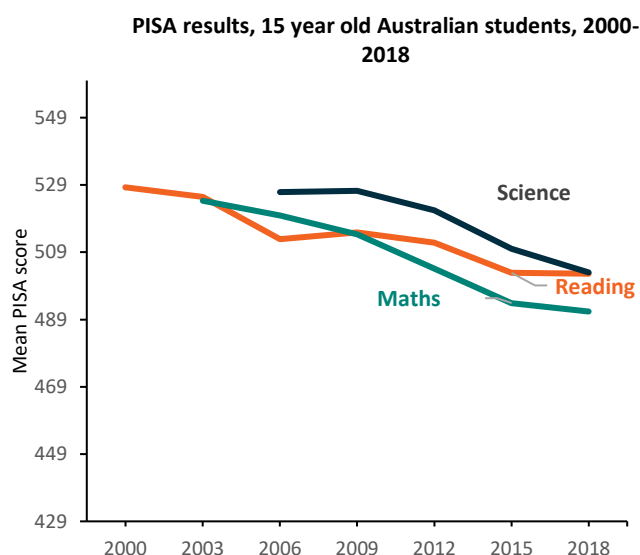
Early learning and school reforms have driven improvements year on year in primary school NAPLAN results. However more needs to be done to support children who are not meeting the minimum standards.

3. While there have been sustained improvements in primary students reading performance, NAPLAN results have generally remained stable over the last decade.



Commonwealth funding for schools has increased from \$13.0b in 2013 to \$25.3b in 2022 which is an increase of 94.4 per cent; [REDACTED] The largest gains in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) have been in reading scores for Year 3 and 5 students. Numeracy scores for these years have not increased as significantly. Year 7 and 9 scores across reading and numeracy remain steady, however students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and remote locations tend to receive lower scores.

4. Proficiency across PISA learning domains has declined markedly. Differences in NAPLAN scores show disadvantages are stark.



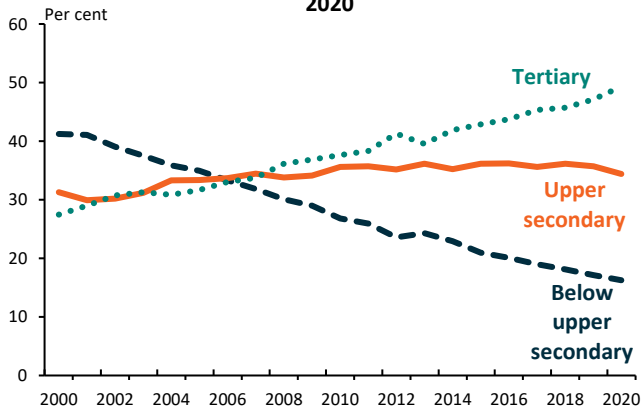
Source: OECD Program of International Student Assessment and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2021

The Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) assesses 15 year old students worldwide in their ability to apply skills and knowledge to real life situations. Australia's PISA scores are declining across Science, Reading and Maths, meaning our Year 9 students are at risk of falling behind their overseas peers. While NAPLAN scores are stable and show some improvement (even during the pandemic), differences grow as a student's geographic remoteness increases, particularly for students in remote and very remote locations. The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is large.

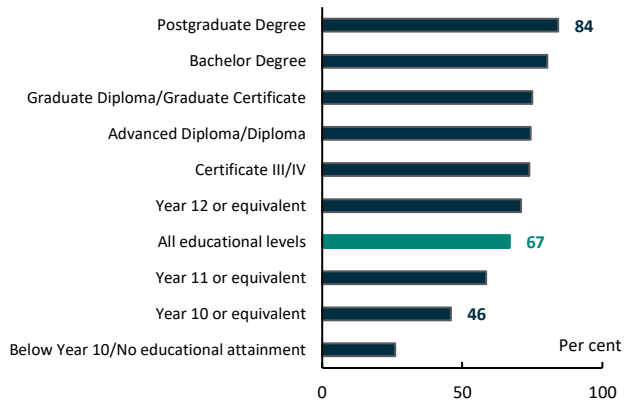
Education foundations are supporting people to enter tertiary education or enter the workforce, but pathways can vary and some people are not effectively transitioning.

5. More Australians than ever are receiving tertiary qualifications. Labour market participation outcomes remain positive for people who achieve at least a Year 12 certificate.

Highest level of educational attainment, 25-64 year olds, 2000-2020



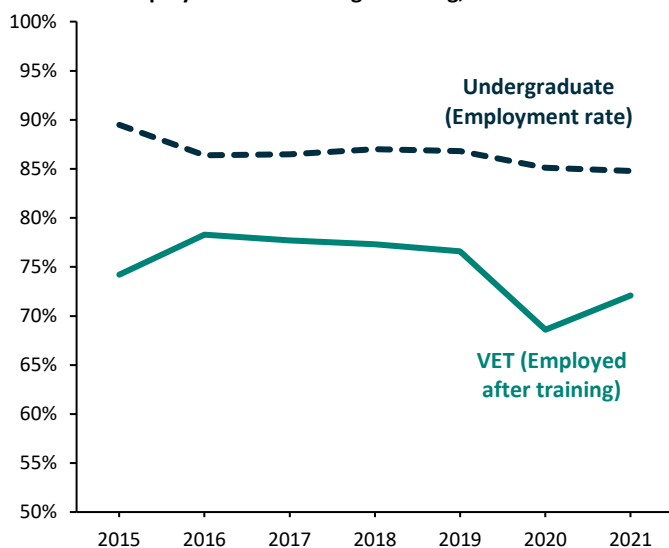
Participation rate by educational attainment, February 2022



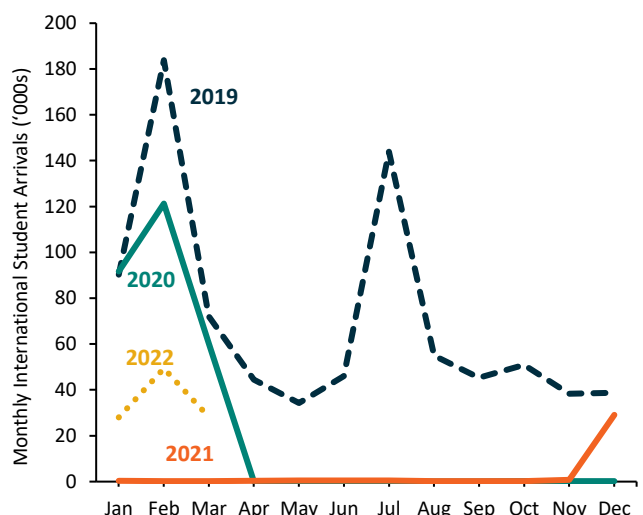
Since 2000, the number of Australian adults with a university degree or VET certificate has increased by 20 percentage points. During the same period the number of Australians with their highest level of educational attainment at Year 10 or lower more than halved. Education remains a significant determinant of workforce participation. Australians who achieve a Year 12 certificate or higher have a greater chance of participating in the workforce than the national average. Only 46 per cent of Australians aged 15 years or older with a Year 10 or equivalent education participate in the labour market.

6. Tertiary education was significantly impacted by COVID. Employment rates after graduating VET fell noticeably in 2020, while international student arrivals were very low for much of 2020 and 2021.

Employment rate after graduating, 2015-2021



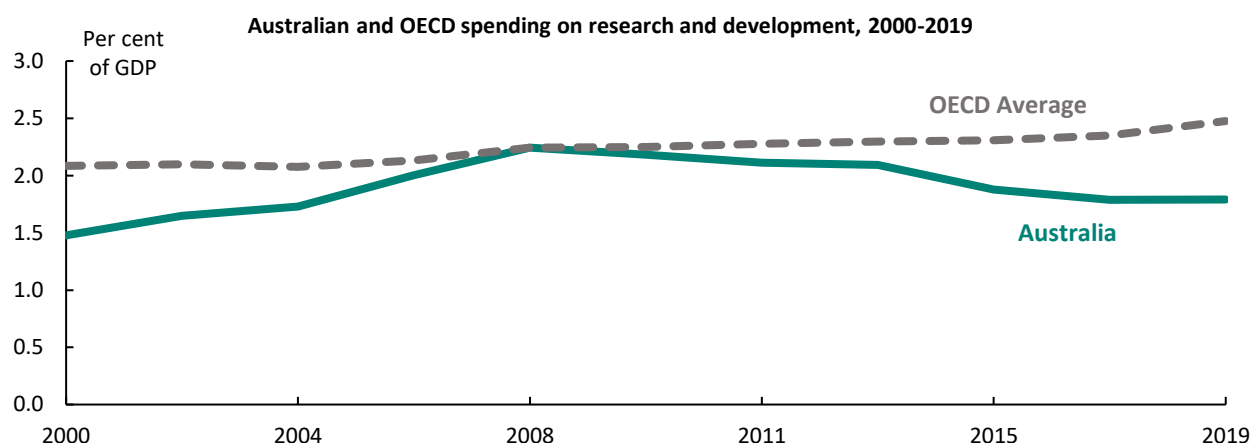
Overseas arrivals, Student Visa Holders, 2019-2022



The overall employment rate for undergraduate level graduates in 2021 (84.8 per cent) is the lowest on record, with the previous lowest figure being 85.1 per cent in 2020. In the VET sector employment rates after graduating significantly declined in 2020. Despite recovering in 2021, they remain below pre-COVID levels. International border closures significantly impacted on overseas arrivals of student visa holders. Between April 2020 and November 2021, the total number of monthly arrivals of student visa holders did not exceed 770. Since Australian borders reopened, student overseas arrivals have improved. 28,000 more international students arrived in March 2022 compared with arrivals in March 2021. However, this remains 61 per cent below the number of arrivals in March 2019.

The education sector plays a key role in helping Australia respond to long-term future challenges, drive innovation and meet future workforce needs.

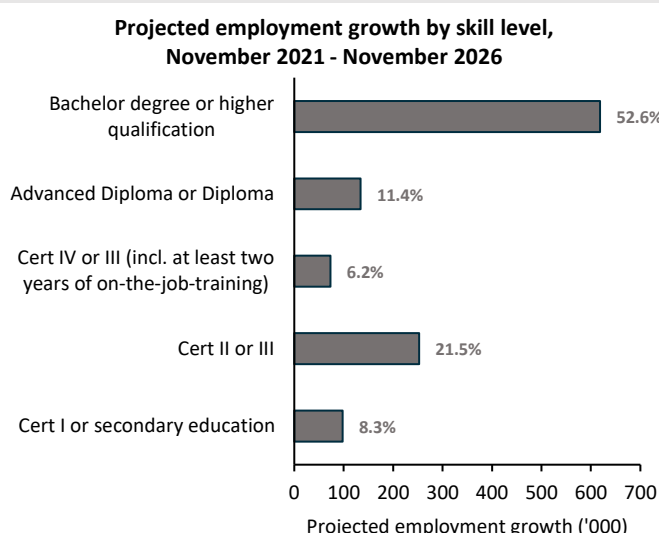
7. Investment in Australian higher education research is steadily increasing, but overall spending on research and development is below the OECD average.



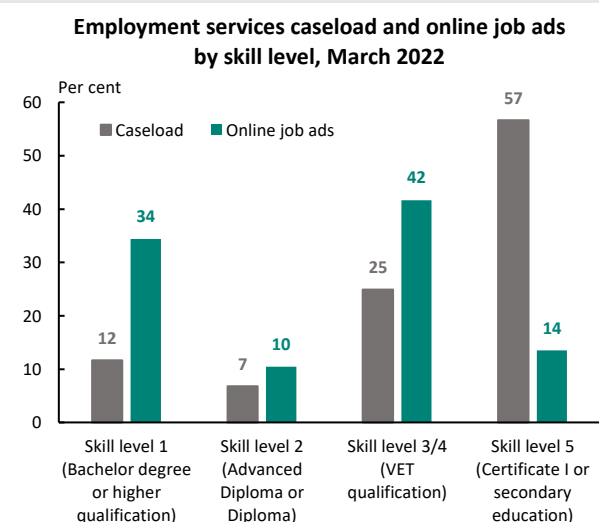
Source: OECD, Gross domestic spending on research and development, 2019

Australia's expenditure on research and development (R&D) as a proportion of GDP has slightly increased from 1.48 per cent in 2000 to 1.80 per cent in 2019 (following a peak at 2.25 per cent in 2008). Since 2000, real Australian higher education R&D spending has increased by 5.3 per cent per annum. The overall R&D increase between 2004 and 2008 is attributable to spending by the mining and manufacturing sectors during the first mining boom. Following the Global Financial Crisis, research in the mining and manufacturing sectors fell, contributing to the overall decrease in research and development spending as a percentage of GDP.

8. Over the next five years, nine in 10 of the jobs created are projected to require a post-school education.



Source: National Skills Commission, Five year employment projections to November 2026



Source: NSC, Internet Vacancy Index, March 2022; DESE, administrative data, 31 March 2022 (Note: data is derived and should be treated as indicative only)

Over the next five years (November 2021 to November 2026), jobs growth is projected to be highest in roles requiring a bachelor degree or higher, with the second highest growth in roles requiring a Certificate II or III. Education and skills are critical in meeting future workforce needs. Ensuring Australians are adequately educated or skilled is also essential in filling job vacancies. Currently, the majority (86 per cent) of online jobs require a VET qualification or higher. This requirement cannot be met by the current employment services caseload.

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2. Your agenda

Commitment roadmap

Commitments

Early childhood

- Changes to Child Care Subsidy
- Productivity Commission review of the child care sector
- Price regulation mechanism (ACCC)
- Early years strategy
- Early childhood transparency measures

School education

- Fully funding government schools
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Youth

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Higher education, international education and research

- Future Made in Australia Skills Plan: an Australian universities accord
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- Startup Year
- New CQUniversity Cairns campus
- End the 10% HECS HELP upfront discount

Commitments with significant linkages to your portfolio

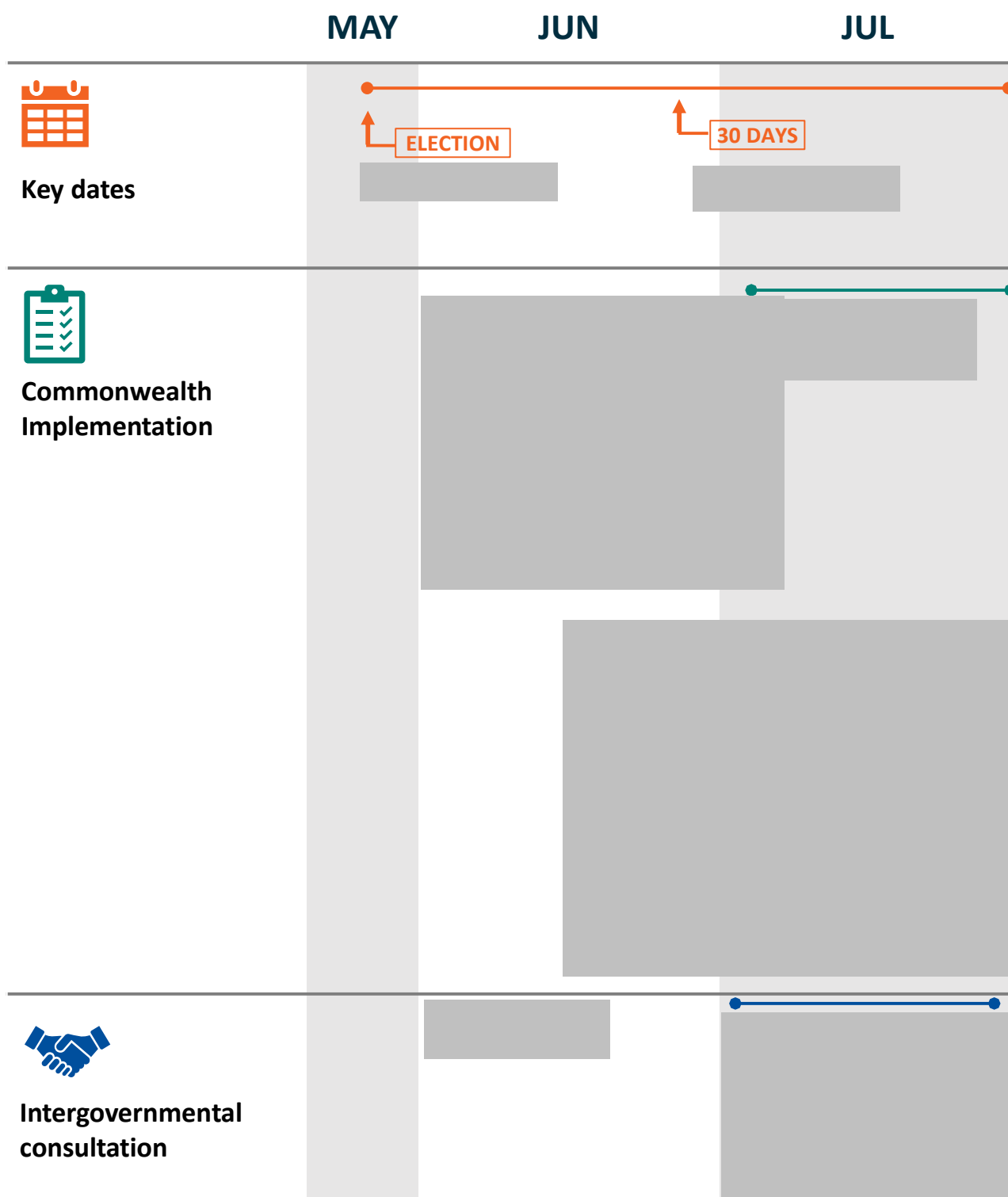
Department approach to implementation

Commitment roadmap – education

This roadmap highlights the major milestones in the delivery of your commitments

These milestones are not exhaustive.

See commitment briefs for more detailed implementation information



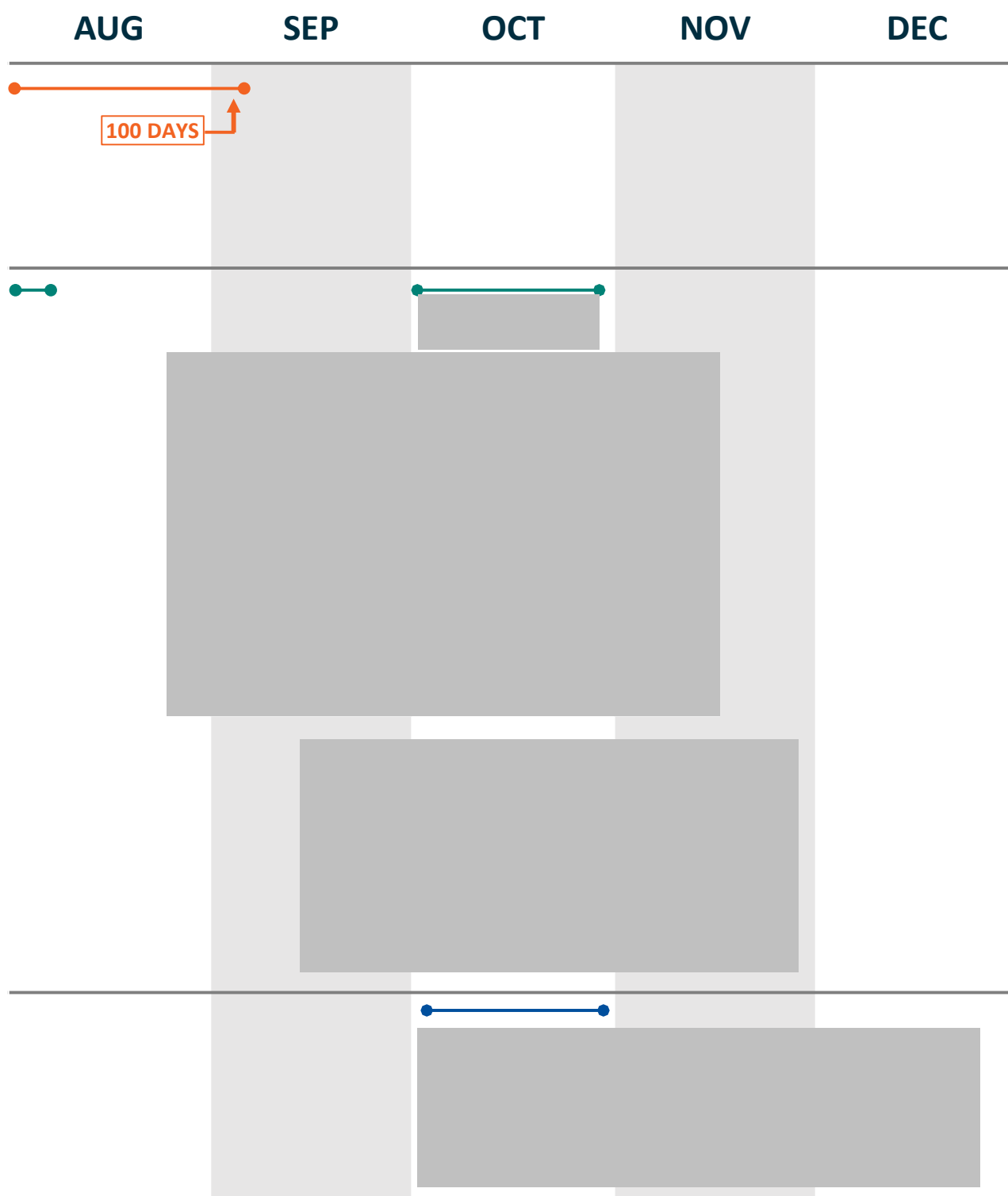
NOTE: Timing of milestones and events are approximate

Commitment roadmap – education

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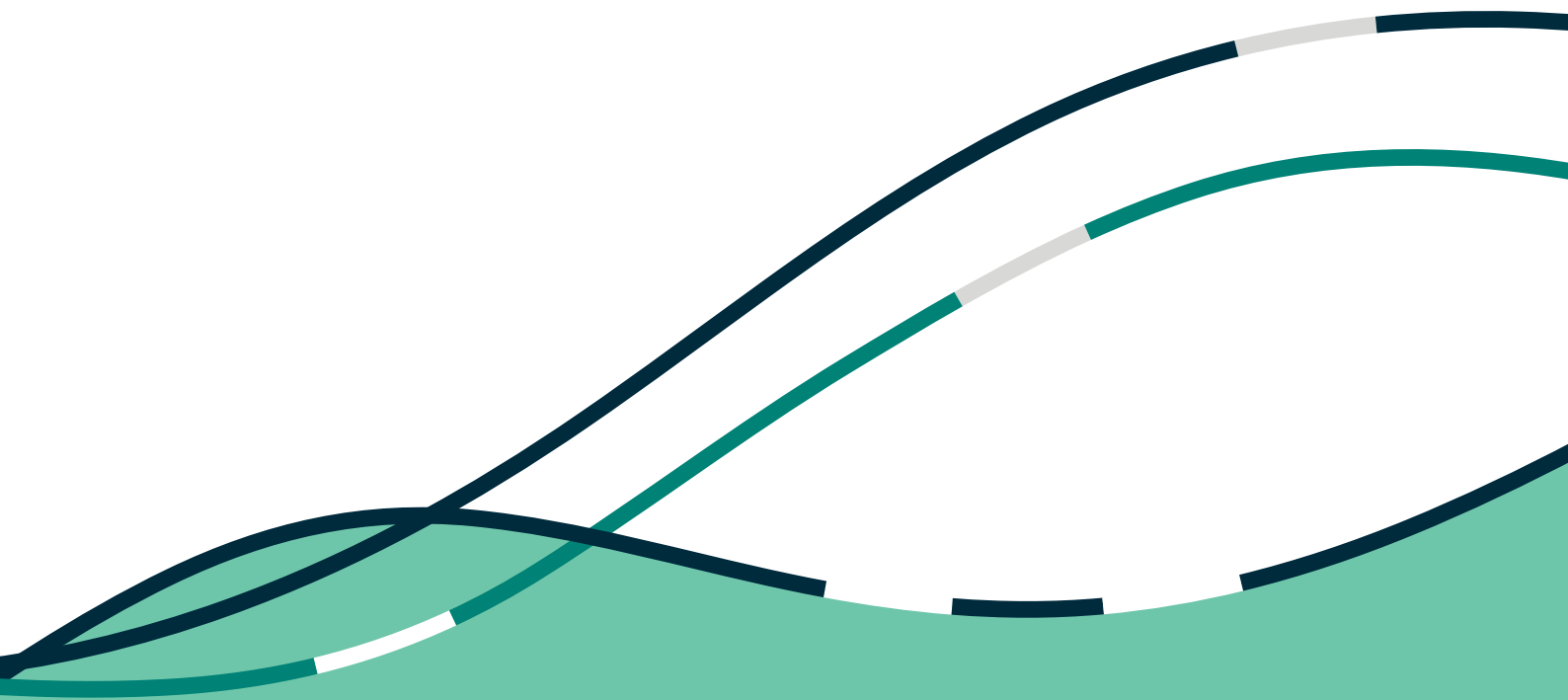
See commitment briefs for more detailed implementation information



NOTE: Timing of milestones and events are approximate



Commitments



Early Childhood

Changes to Child Care Subsidy

Announcement	Funding	Priority
31 March 2022 The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP alp.org.au/policies/cheaper-child-care	\$5.1 billion over 2022-23 to 2025-26	

Description

This commitment will ‘reduce the cost of child care and make it easier for mums, children and working families to get ahead’ by:

- *‘lifting the maximum Child Care Subsidy (CCS) rate to 90 per cent for families for the first child in care*
- *increasing CCS rates for every family with one child in care earning less than \$530,000 in household income*
- *keeping higher CCS rates for the second and additional children in care, and*
- *extending the increased subsidy to outside school hours care.’*

This is an investment of ‘approximately \$5.4 billion to make child care cheaper, starting from July 2023’. ‘96 per cent of Australian families will be better off under these child care reforms – 1.26 million families.’

The Productivity Commission will also ‘conduct a comprehensive review of the sector with the aim of implementing a universal 90 per cent subsidy for all families’ (refer to brief *Productivity Commission review of the child care sector*).

Implementation approach






Implementation risks



Legislation

Legislative amendments are required to *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* and *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*. 

.

Early actions



Cost

Financial impact on underlying cash balance (\$ millions): -5,073.2

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	-6.0	-1,523.8	-1,710.8	-1,832.6

Source: Labor's Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

- There is widespread support among families for increased financial support for child care, including broadening the existing policy parameters of the Higher CCS measure for families with multiple children.
- A number of key stakeholders have provided proposals for more generous child care subsidies. This includes KPMG, the Grattan Institute, the Business Council of Australia and Thrive by Five (Minderoo Foundation). All of these stakeholders emphasise the economic, workforce participation and educational benefits of providing increased investment in early learning, particularly child care.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting
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Department contacts:

Mr Brenton Philp
Deputy Secretary
Early Childhood and Child Care

Mr Tristan Reed
First Assistant Secretary
Provider Analytics and Integrity Division

Productivity Commission review of the child care sector

Announcement	Funding	Priority
8 October 2020	Costs not	
The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP	available	
www.alp.org.au/policies/cheaper-child-care		

Description

This commitment is a *‘comprehensive review by the Productivity Commission into the child care sector with the aim of implementing a universal 90 per cent subsidy for all families as part of the Cheaper Childcare Plan’*. This builds on your commitment *‘to lift the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to 90 per cent for families earning under \$80,000, for their first child in care’*.

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

N/A.

Early actions



Cost

Costs not available.

Media and stakeholders

- There is widespread support among key stakeholders for your plan to move towards universal child care, with an emphasis on economic, workforce participation and educational benefits.
- Stakeholders (the Grattan Institute) have also noted the transitional nature of your plan is essential to allow the sector and workforce to respond to increased demand for child care.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:	
Mr Brenton Philp Deputy Secretary Early Childhood and Child Care [Redacted] [Redacted]	Mr Tristan Reed First Assistant Secretary Provider Analytics and Integrity Division [Redacted] [Redacted]

Price regulation mechanism (ACCC)

Announcement	Funding	Priority
8 October 2020 The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP	Costs not available	
alp.org.au/policies/cheaper-child-care		

Description

This commitment is to *'get the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to design a price regulation mechanism to drive out of pocket costs down for good. The ACCC will examine the relationship between funding, fees, profits and educators' salaries.'*

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation



Early actions



Cost

Costs not available. See the *Changes to Child Care Subsidy Commitment Brief* for Cheaper Child Care funding information.

Media and stakeholders

N/A.

Summary of 2022 action

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Department contacts:

Mr Brenton Philp

Deputy Secretary

Early Childhood and Child Care

Mr Tristan Reed

First Assistant Secretary

Provider Analytics and Integrity

Early years strategy

Announcement	Funding	Priority
8 November 2021		
The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP	Costs not available	
The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP		
alp.org.au/policies/early-years-strategy		

Description

- This commitment will develop and implement an *‘Early Years Strategy (the Strategy)’ to create a new integrated, holistic, whole-of-government approach to the early years. It will examine the range of programs and funding delivered across the Commonwealth Government that directly impact on early childhood development, and identify ways to:*
 - *reduce program and funding silos across departments*
 - *better integrate and coordinate functions and activities across government, and*
 - *target outcomes to deliver better outcomes for young Australians and their families.’*
- *‘The Strategy will develop a programme of action which will set out the policies, initiatives and plans to help achieve the vision and outcomes.’*

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

N/A.

Early actions



Cost

Costs not available. See the *Changes to Child Care Subsidy Commitment Brief* for Cheaper Child Care funding information.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received positive coverage from stakeholders. It will require early stakeholder engagement.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:

Mr Brenton Philp
Deputy Secretary
Early Childhood and Child Care

Ms Anne Twyman
First Assistant Secretary
Programs, Payments and Early Learning

Early childhood transparency measures

Announcement	Funding	Priority
24 June 2021 The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP	Costs not available	
rishworth.com.au/news/labor-to-improve-transparency-in-early-learning-sector/		

Description

This commitment will *'improve transparency in the child care sector for Australian families and taxpayers, building on the Cheaper Child Care for Working Families policy by:*

- *requiring large child care providers (more than 25 services as defined by Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)) and landlords owning more than 10 child care centres to publicly report their child care revenue and profit results to www.childcarefinder.gov.au*
- *mandating that www.childcarefinder.gov.au includes every Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved provider, real-time child care fee data and quality ratings, and average year-on-year fee increases so parents and carers can make an informed choice, and*
- *banning providers from offering non-educational enrolment inducements.'*

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

Amendments to the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999* and associated Ministers Rules are required to implement these measures.

Early actions



Cost

Costs not available. See the *Changes to Child Care Subsidy Commitment Brief* for Cheaper Child Care funding information.

Media and stakeholders

N/A.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:	
Mr Brenton Philp Deputy Secretary Early Childhood and Child Care <div></div> <div></div>	Mr Tristan Reed First Assistant Secretary Provider Analytics and Integrity <div></div> <div></div>

Commitment brief summary

Early Childhood

Summary

This section includes **five** briefs which provide advice on the implementation of your commitments in the Early Childhood sector.

Commitment	Announcement date	Funding	Action required	Implementation risk rating
Changes to Child Care Subsidy	31 Mar 2022	\$5.1 billion over 2022-23 to 2025-26		
Productivity Commission review of the child care sector	8 Oct 2020	Costs not available		
Price regulation mechanism (ACCC)	8 Oct 2020	Costs not available		
Early years strategy	8 Nov 2021	Costs not available		
Early childhood transparency measures	24 Jun 2021	Costs not available		



School Education

Fully funding government schools

Announcement	Funding	Priority
11 December 2021 The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP	Costs not available	
alp.org.au/policies/your-education (11 Dec 2021); and ABC Insiders (8 May 2022)		

Description

- This commitment will *'put every school on a path to its full and fair level of funding'* by moving public funding for the government school sector to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).
- As part of the *'next funding agreement* [National School Reform Agreement (NSRA)], *we would work with the states and territories to get every school up to 100% of its fair funding level.'* This would *'need states and territories to increase efforts, as we increase our effort.'*
- There will be *'no funding changes to Catholic and Independent Schools'* who *'will continue to receive the full 100% of the SRS.'*
- *The Australian Education Act 2013 (the Act)* requires states and territories (states) to fund a minimum of 75 per cent of the SRS, unless otherwise agreed with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth share is legislated at 20 per cent.

Implementation approach



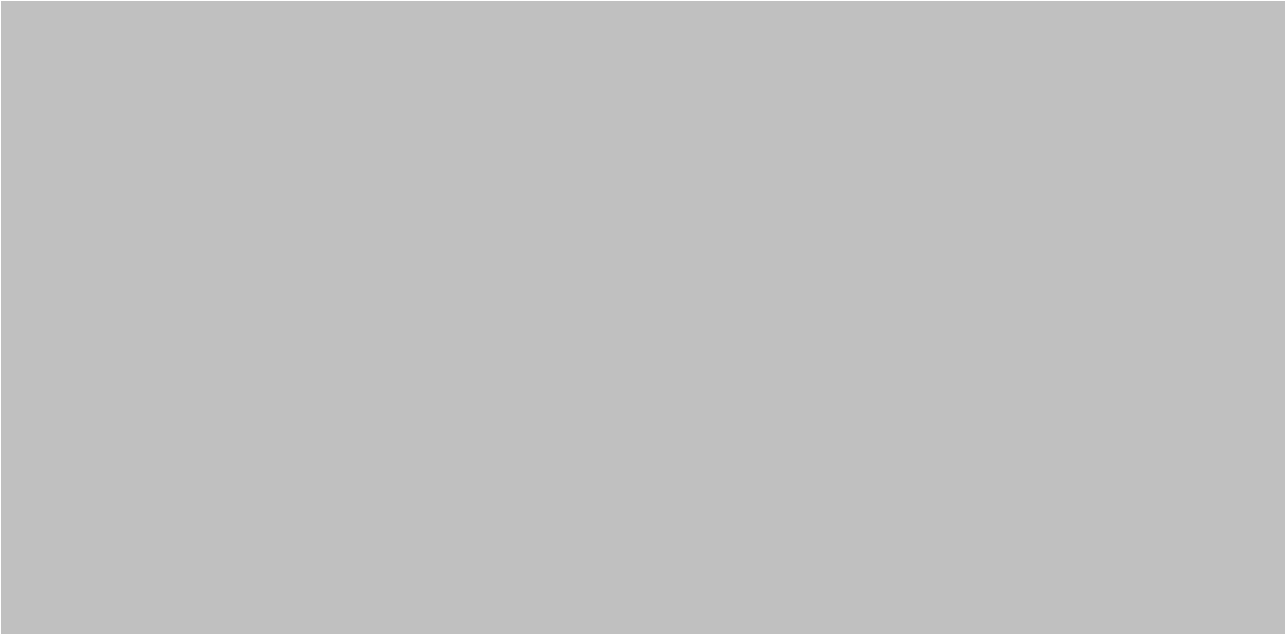
Implementation risks



Legislation

N/A.

Early actions



Cost

Costs not available.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received a positive response from stakeholders, particularly the Australian Education Union.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:	
Dr Ros Baxter Deputy Secretary Schools & Youth Group	Mr Fabian Harding First Assistant Secretary Funding and Data Collection Division

Plan to fix teacher shortages and stop the slide in school results

Announcement	Funding	Priority
3 May 2022 The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP	\$152.2 million over 2022-23 to 2025-26	
anthonyalbanese.com.au/media-centre/fixing-teacher-shortages-and-lifting-standards-plibersek alp.org.au/policies/labors-plan-to-fix-teacher-shortages-and-stop-the-slide-in-school-results thewest.com.au/news/wa/federal-election-2022-tanya-plibersek-vows-to-boost-qualification-and-entry-requirements-for-teachers--c-6664995		

Description

A package of changes will be made which together will ‘*stop the slide in student results and make sure Australian schools have the world’s best teachers with a national drive to fix teacher shortages and attract our best and brightest to teaching*’. The changes include:

- Measure a): ‘*Bursaries for talented students: up to 5,000 new students will receive a \$10,000 a year bursary throughout their teaching degree. Bursaries will be available to high school leavers who achieve an ATAR of 80 or above, First Nations students, and students from regional areas, with a top up payment of \$2,000 a year for students who do their placements in regional areas.*’
- Measure b): ‘*Boost the High Achieving Teachers Program to support 1,500 qualified professionals in other fields – including mathematicians and scientists – to retrain as teachers through an employment-based pathway that will pay a part-time wage while they complete an intensive master’s degree in education. The 1,500 extra places will include 700 new Teach for Australia teachers and 60 new teachers through LaTrobe University’s Nexus Program.*’
- Measure c): ‘*Work with States and Territories, through the next National School Reform Agreement, to make sure teachers have a better career path.*’
- Measure d): Respond to the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review, ‘*including by expanding Quality Teaching Rounds and developing new micro-credentials of classroom management and phonics.*’
- Measure e): Require students to pass the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (LANTITE) as a pre-entry requirement, as ‘*it should be a prerequisite for starting a teaching degree that you can pass the LANTITE so that we’re not wasting the time and money of the students going into these courses.*’

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

- Measure a): A new item in Schedule 1AB to the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997* will be required for the proposed bursaries.
- Measure d): A new item inserted into Schedule 1AB to the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulations 1997*, will be required to support the funding of QTR and micro-credentials.

Early actions



Cost

Financial impact on underlying cash balance (\$ millions): -\$152.2				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	-17.2	-34.5	-47.3	-53.2

Source: Labor’s Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received positive coverage from stakeholders.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:	
Dr Ros Baxter Deputy Secretary Schools & Youth Group	Ms Julie Birmingham First Assistant Secretary National System and Performance

Helping students bounce back – student wellbeing boost

Announcement	Funding	Priority
25 January 2022 The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP	\$201.5 million in 2022-23	
alp.org.au/policies/help-schoolkids-bounce-back		

Description

- This commitment will *'deliver a \$200 million Student Wellbeing Boost to get students' mental health and wellbeing back on track. Every Australian school will benefit from the one-off Student Wellbeing Boost in 2022. Schools will get a big say in how they use the extra money to best help their kids, with funding able to be used for:*
 - *extra school mental health professionals like psychologists and school counsellors*
 - *camps, excursions, as well as sporting and social activities that improve kids' wellbeing, and*
 - *proven student wellbeing and mental health initiatives.'*
- Investment will be made into a *'new Voluntary Mental Health Check tool that schools will be able to use, with parents' permission, to identify kids who are struggling and make sure they can get the help they need.'*

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

- | | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |



Early actions

Cost

Financial impact over on underlying cash balance (\$ millions): **-\$201.5**

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	-201.5	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Labor's Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received positive coverage from media/stakeholders.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting
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Department contacts:

Dr Ros Baxter
Deputy Secretary
Schools and Youth

Mr Pablo Carpay
First Assistant Secretary
Improving Student Outcomes

Schools Upgrade Fund

Announcement	Funding	Priority
25 January 2022	\$238.0 million over 2022-23 to 2023-24	
Hon Anthony Albanese MP		
Hon Tanya Plibersek MP		
alp.org.au/policies/help-schoolkids-bounce-back		

Description

- First, this commitment will provide \$40 million for 'Australian schools (government and non-government) with access to grants in 2022 to improve air quality with measures such as better ventilation, building more outdoor classrooms, replacing boarded-up windows and doors and buying air purifiers. Funding will be available for other much needed school upgrades as well. This is part of a new plan to help Australian kids bounce back after COVID'.
- Second, in 2023, \$200 million in funding 'will be provided to states and territories to enable larger investments in government schools, for example, for new buildings and facilities, major refurbishments and upgrades. In 2023, government schools will receive the same amount of capital funding from the Commonwealth as non-government schools'.
- Additionally, a number of commitments have been announced for targeted capital school upgrades.

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

- The Regulation will require amendment to give effect to program guidelines which will contain the conditions for funding and requirements on the expenditure of the funding.

Early actions

Cost

Financial impact on underlying cash balance (\$ millions): -\$238.0				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	-144.0	-94.0	0.0	0.0

Source: Labor’s Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received positive coverage from media/stakeholders.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:

Dr Ros Baxter

Deputy Secretary

Schools and Youth Group

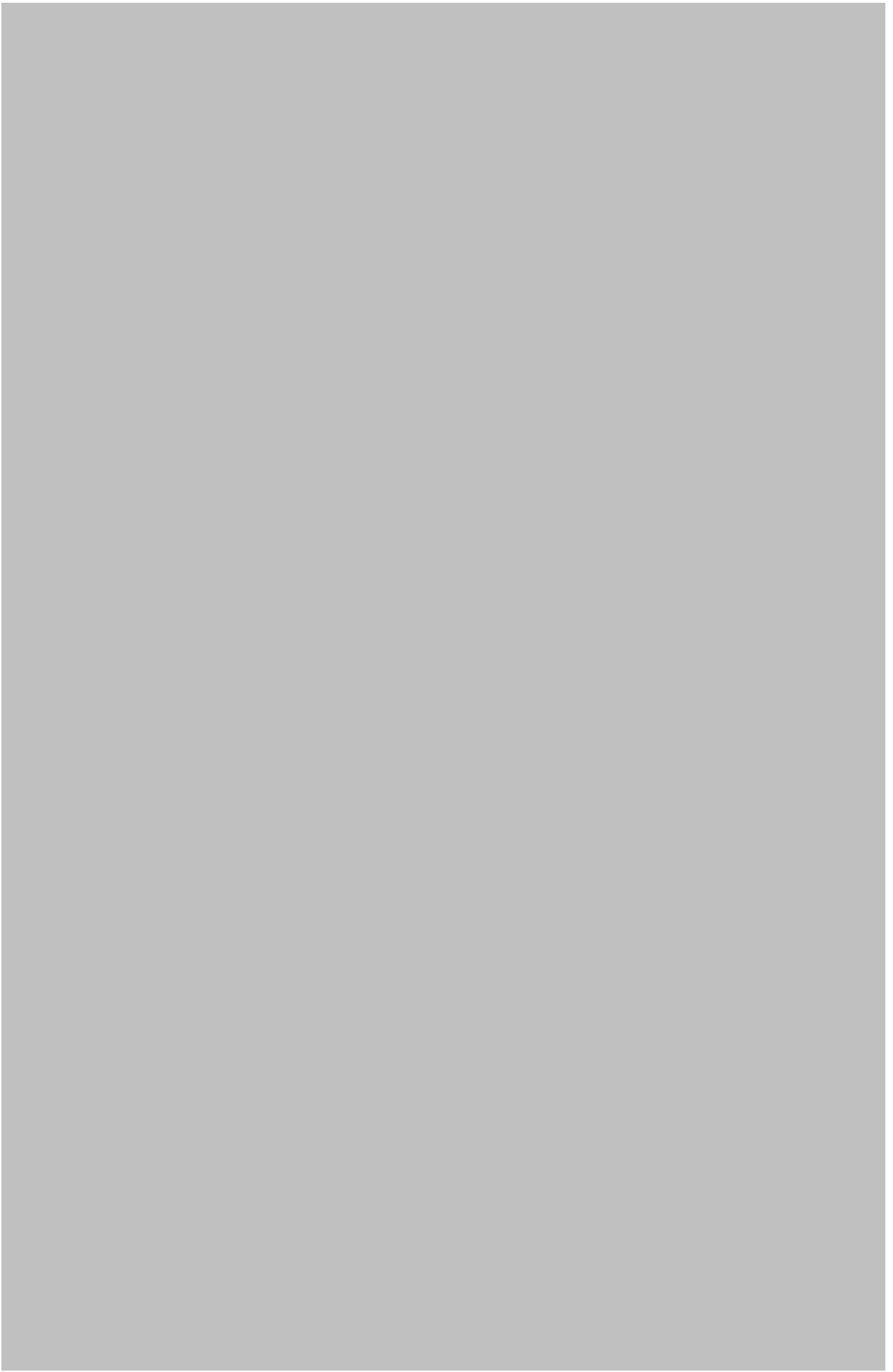
Mr Fabian Harding

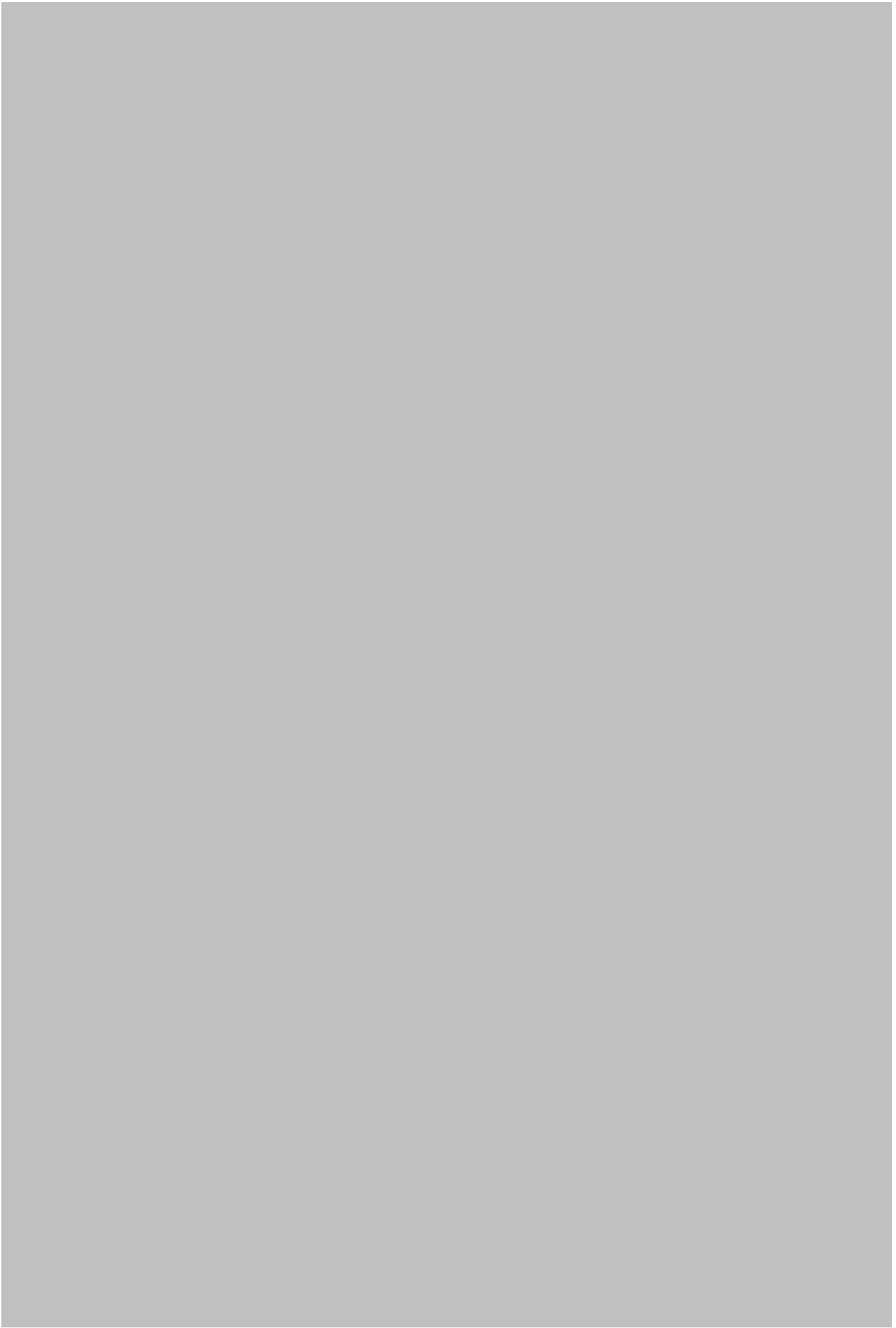
First Assistant Secretary

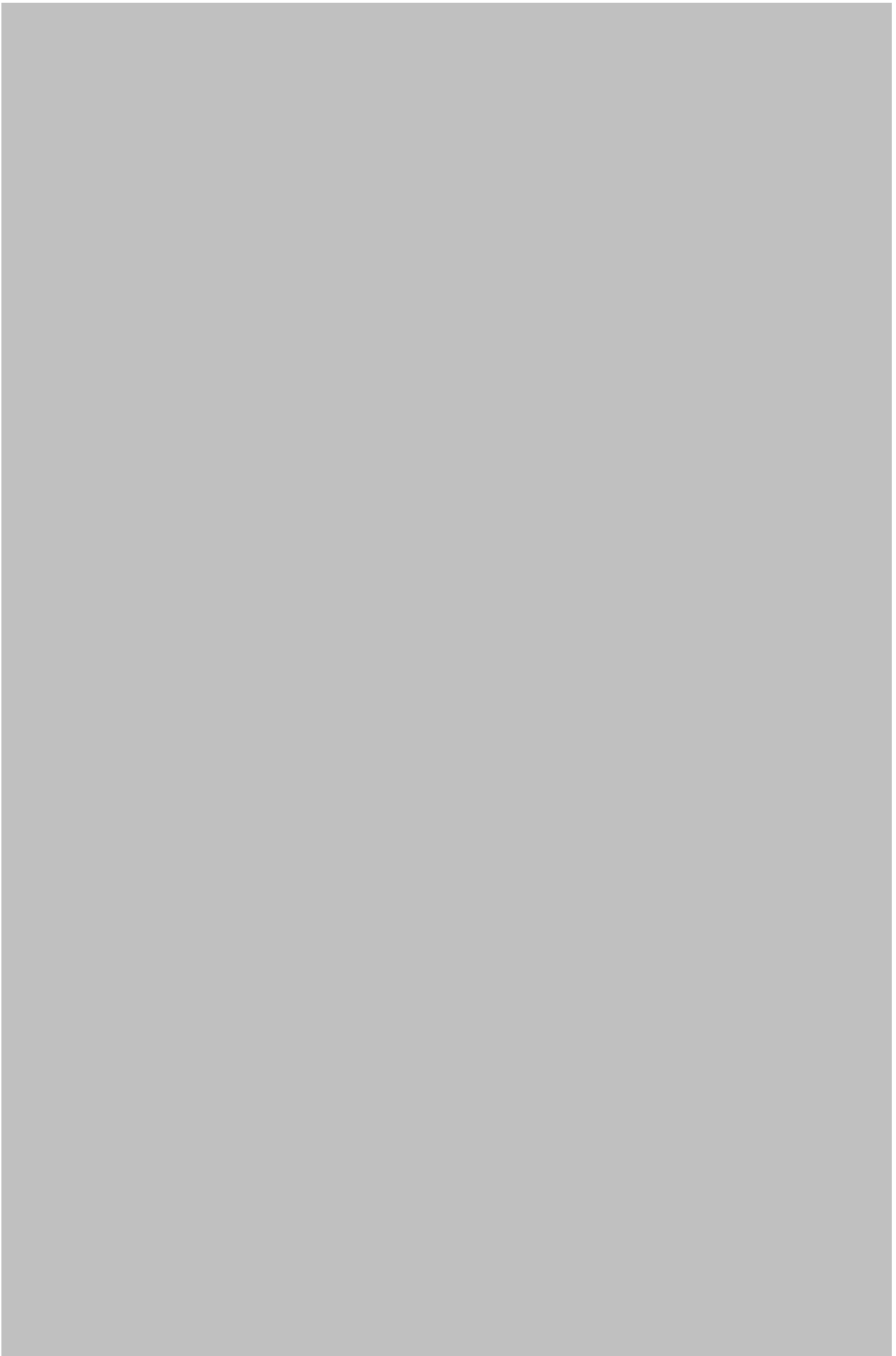
Funding and Data Collection Division



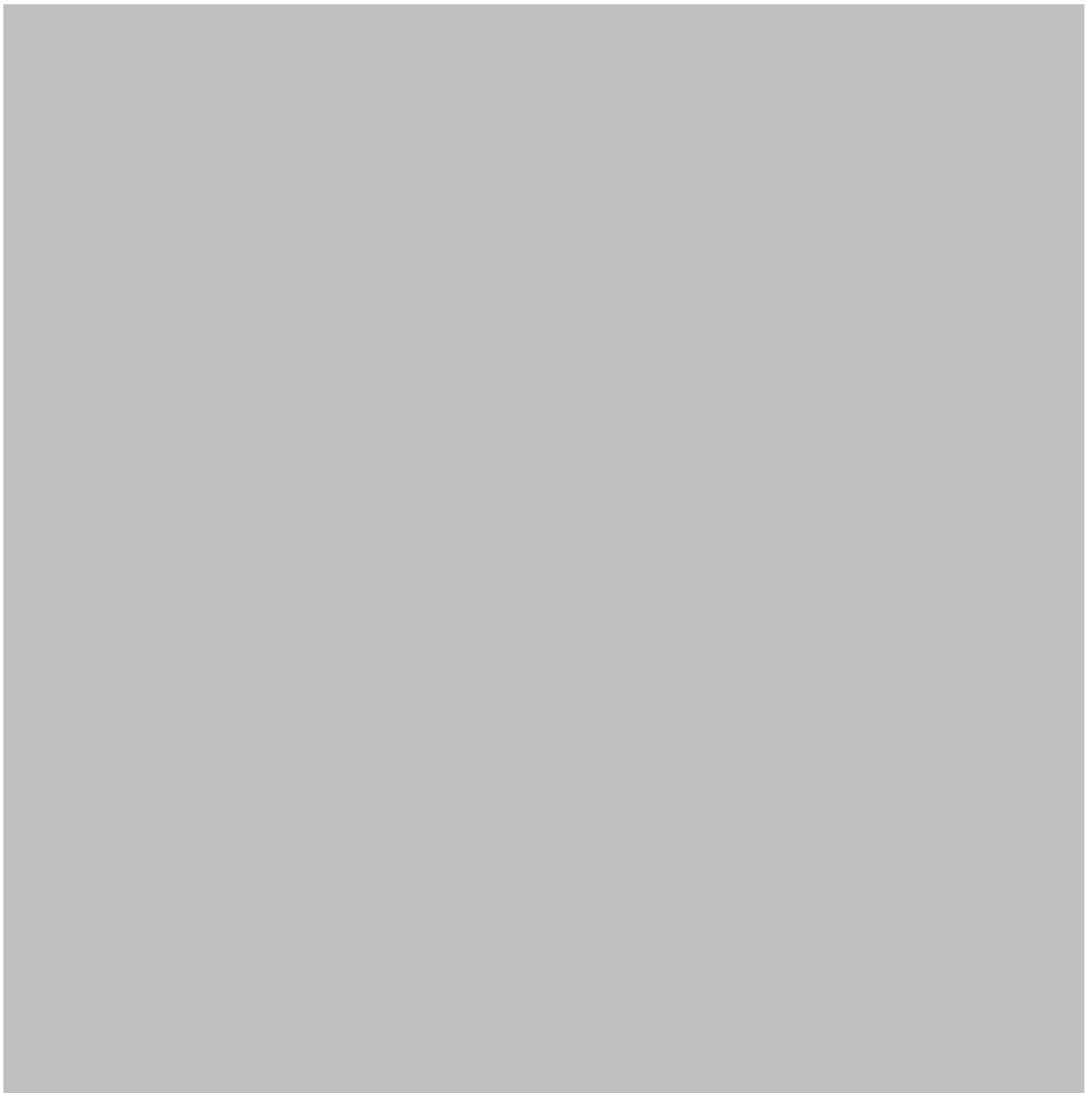












Plan to teach students respect: helping protect kids and prevent violence

Announcement	Funding	Priority
8 March 2022 The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP	\$61.1 million over 2022-23 to 2025-26	
alp.org.au/policies/consent-and-respectful-relationships		

Description

- This commitment will deliver *‘high quality, age-appropriate consent-based respectful relationships and protective behaviours programs to Australian primary and high schools’*.
- The initiative will be delivered *‘in partnership with states, territories and non-government school systems and will support schools to invest in teacher training and release time, roll out “whole-school” approaches to violence prevention, and partner with quality external providers’*.
- The commitment will be informed by a *‘rapid review of consent education programs’* currently being taught in schools, and advice from a *‘National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Group’*.

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation



Early actions



Cost

Financial impact on underlying cash balance (\$ millions): -\$61.1				
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	-3.5	-14.7	-22.4	-20.5

Source: Labor’s Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received positive coverage from stakeholders, including the Australian Education Union, Independent Schools Australia and National Catholic Education Commission.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:	
Dr Ros Baxter Deputy Secretary Schools and Youth Group	Mr Pablo Carpay First Assistant Secretary Improving Student Outcomes Division

Teach First Nations languages in schools

Announcement	Funding	Priority
29 March 2022 The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP The Hon. Linda Burney MP The Hon. Graham Perrett MP Senator Patrick Dodson Senator Malarndirri McCarthy	\$14.0 million over 2022-23 to 2024-25	
alp.org.au/policies/labors-plan-to-teach-first-nations-languages-in-schools		

Description

- This commitment will *‘invest \$14 million to partner with sixty primary schools around the country to teach local Indigenous languages and cultural knowledge in schools.’*
- *‘First Nations communities will be placed at the centre of the program, deciding whether they want to share their language and culture with local schools. Where communities decide to participate in the program, they’ll be able to work with schools and regional coordinators to appoint First Nations Educators who will receive training in Education Support to complement existing skills and cultural knowledge, and then be placed in a local primary school.’*
- *‘First Nations Educators will teach language in schools and work with teachers on ways to teach knowledge of local cultures across the curriculum, through classes like art, science and story-telling.’*

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

Implementation may require amendment to the *Financial Framework (Supplementary Powers) Regulation 1997* (FF(SP) Regulation) to provide legislative authority for expenditure on the program.

Early actions



Cost

Financial impact on underlying cash balance (\$ millions): -\$14.0

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	-2.0	-6.0	-6.0	0.0

Source: Labor's Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received significant positive coverage from media/stakeholders.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting
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Department contacts:

Dr Ros Baxter
Deputy Secretary
Schools and Youth Group

Mr Pablo Carpay
First Assistant Secretary
Improving Student Outcomes Division

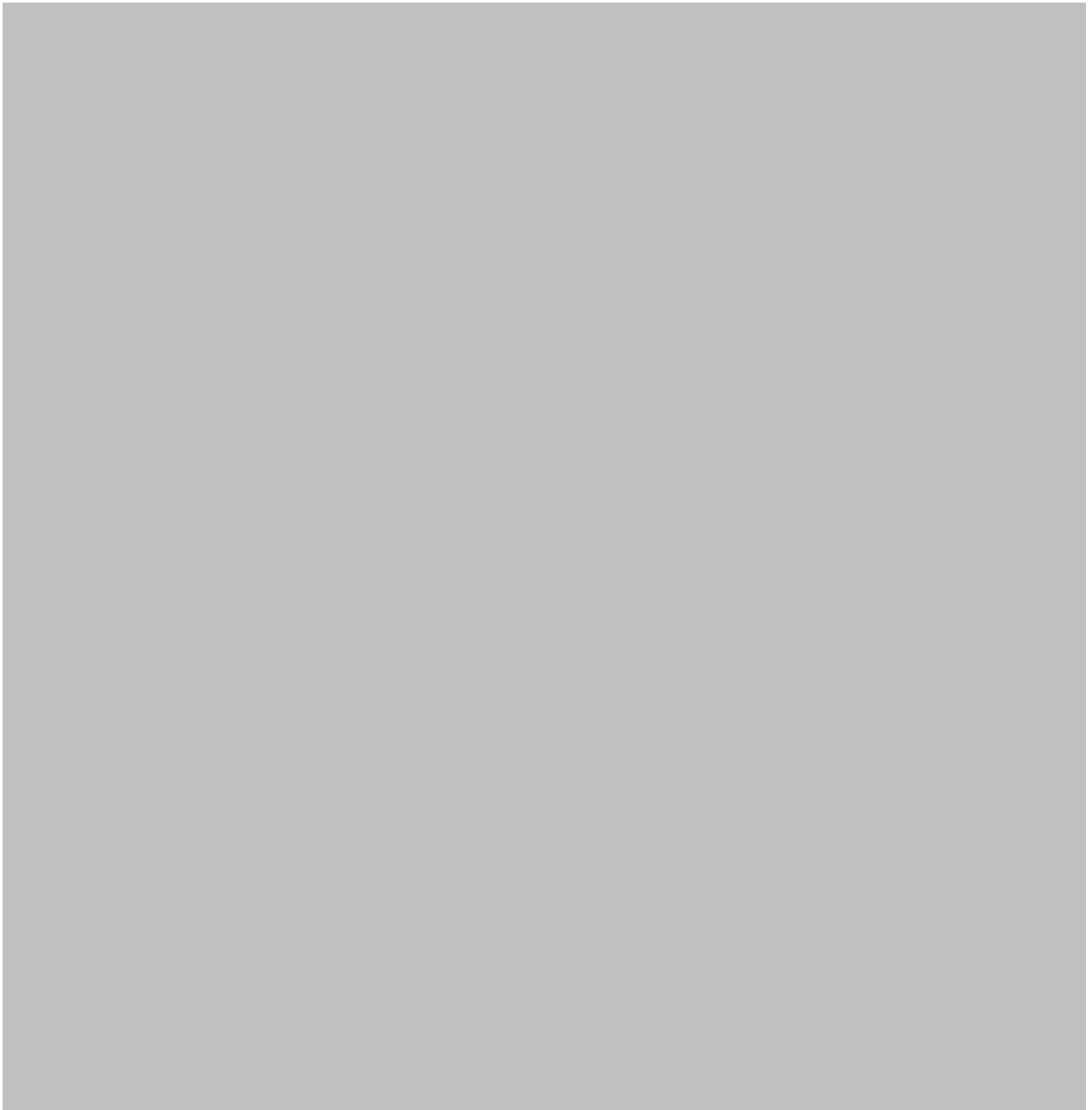
Urgent/rapid review of the impact of COVID-19 on students with disability

Announcement	Funding	Priority
25 January 2022		
The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP	Costs not available	
The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP		
anthonyalbanese.com.au/media-centre/australias-best-days-are-ahead		

Description

- This commitment is to *'conduct an urgent review of the impact of COVID on students with disability, so they get the support they need'*.

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

N/A

Early actions

Cost

Costs not available.

Media and stakeholders

We are not aware of any media or stakeholder responses to this announcement. The department sought input from [REDACTED] to inform advice on the implementation of this commitment.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting
[REDACTED]			

Department contacts:

Dr Ros Baxter
Deputy Secretary
Schools and Youth Group

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ms Julie Birmingham
First Assistant Secretary
National System and Performance Division

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

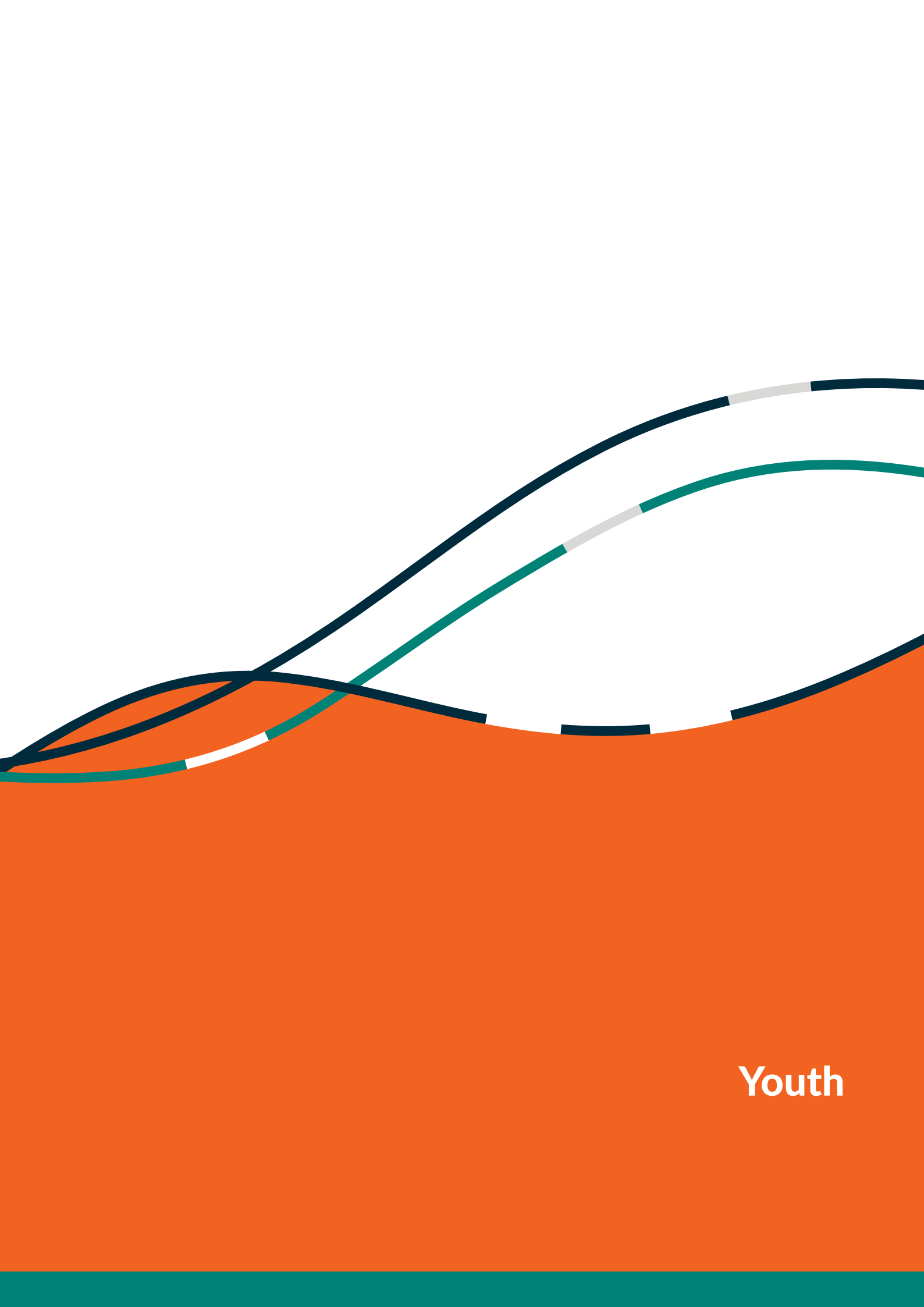
Commitment brief summary

School education

Summary

This section includes **seven** briefs which provide advice on the implementation of your commitments in the School Education sector.

Commitment	Announcement date	Funding	Action required	Implementation risk rating
Fully funding government schools	11 Dec 2021	Costs not available		
Plan to fix teacher shortages and stop the slide in school results	3 May 2022	\$152.2 million over 2022-23 to 2025-26		
Helping students bounce back – student wellbeing boost	25 Jan 2022	\$201.5 million in 2022-23		
Schools upgrade fund	25 Jan 2022	\$238.0 million over 2022-23 to 2023-24		
Plan to teach students respect: helping protect kids and prevent violence	8 Mar 2022	\$61.1 million over 2022-23 to 2025-26		
Teach First Nations languages in schools	29 Mar 2022	\$14.0 million over 2022-23 to 2024-25		
Urgent/rapid review of the impact of COVID-19 on students with disability	25 Jan 2022	Costs not available		



Youth

Commitment brief summary

Youth

Summary

This section includes **one** brief which provides advice on the implementation of your commitments in the Youth sector.

Commitment	Announcement date	Funding	Action required	Implementation risk rating
New Youth Engagement Model	2 June 2021	Costs not available		

New Youth Engagement Model

Announcement	Funding	Priority
2 June 2021		
The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP	Costs not available	
The Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP		
alp.org.au/policies/youth_engagement		

Description

- This commitment delivers a *‘new youth engagement model, to provide a voice and structure for younger Australians to directly engage with government and contribute to policy development’*. The announcement states a new youth engagement model will:
 - *‘Establish a framework to directly and formally engage with young Australians on an ongoing basis.*
 - *Establish an Office for Youth so that, rather than youth engagement being an afterthought or duplicating functions across departments, there is a dedicated unit within government to feed in the contribution from young people and advocates, improve and harmonise policy across government, and ensure government is communicating effectively with young people.*
 - *Commit to a Minister for Youth to improve and facilitate a holistic response across portfolios on issues affecting young Australians.’*
- A New Youth Engagement Model will provide approximately 3.2 million young Australians (15-24 years old) *‘with strong and formalised engagement in government’* and policy making. It will establish an Office for Youth to support the Minister for Youth.
- Under the direction of the Minister for Youth and Office for Youth, to facilitate a holistic response across portfolios on issues affecting young Australians, the framework will be *‘driven by a Steering Committee of up to 15 young people’*.

Implementation approach

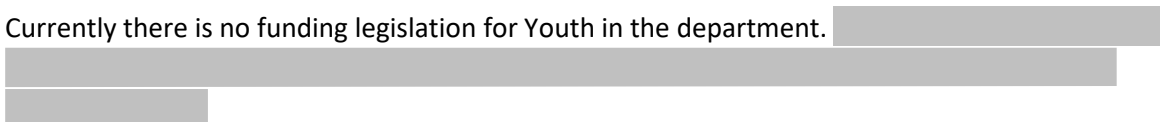


Implementation risks



Legislation

Currently there is no funding legislation for Youth in the department.



Early actions







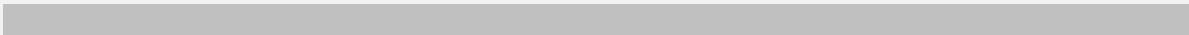
Cost





Costs not available.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received positive coverage from stakeholders. 


Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting
			

Department contacts:	
Dr Ros Baxter Deputy Secretary Schools and Youth Group  	Mr Pablo Carpay First Assistant Secretary Improving Student Outcomes Division  



**Higher Education,
International Education and Research**

Future Made in Australia Skills Plan: An Australian universities accord

Announcement	Funding	Priority
16 August 2021 The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP	Costs not available	
tanyaplibersek.com/media/speeches/tanya-plibersek-speech-to-the-afr-higher-education-conference-sydney-monday-16-august-2021/		

Description

This commitment will establish a new Australian Universities Accord to *‘deliver accessibility, affordability, quality, certainty, sustainability and prosperity to the higher education sector’*.

The Accord is an opportunity to reset the Government’s expectations and relationship with the university sector and focus universities to deliver on Australia’s economic and social goals. It will be the beginning of a major review of the entire sector, aimed at *‘end[ing] the political bickering over higher education policy’*, with a view to delivering sustainability and certainty for the university sector.

Development of the Accord will *‘be a partnership between universities and staff, unions and business, students and parents, and, ideally, Labor and Liberal – that lays out what we expect from our universities’*. The Accord process will be led by you *‘with advice from a small group of eminent Australians from across the political spectrum.’*

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

- No legislation required to establish the expert panel.
- Legislation would likely be required to implement any major recommendations stemming from the accord process.

Early actions



Cost

Costs not available.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received neutral coverage from media.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:	
Mr Tony Cook PSM Deputy Secretary Higher Education, Research and International <div></div> <div></div>	Ms Kelly Pearce First Assistant Secretary Higher Education Division <div></div> <div></div>

Future Made in Australia Skills Plan: 20,000 university places

Announcement	Funding	Priority
5 December 2021	\$523.8 million	
The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP	2022-23 to 2025-26	
alp.org.au/policies/a-future-made-in-australia		

Description

This commitment provides a one-off boost of 20,000 Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) in areas of national workforce need. This will support up to an additional 20,000 full-time equivalent students to access higher education, to *‘train the next generation of nurses, engineers, health and aged care workers, teachers, disability care workers, and those working in resources, digital and cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing’*.

CSPs will be allocated to universities and other eligible non-university higher education providers (NUHEPs) for the commencing cohorts of 2023 and 2024 only. Allocation assessment criteria would give preference to universities and NUHEPs with:

- proven student demand (several universities are substantially over-enrolled)
- a proven track record of performance in teaching in national priority areas such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, health and education, or where there are skills shortages, and
- demonstrated effort in enrolling students from under-represented backgrounds, such as first in family, Indigenous, and being from regional, remote and outer-suburban areas.

These 20,000 CSPs will build on planned increases in Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) funding from 2023 and 2024 as part of existing arrangements for growth funding and allocation of additional ‘Innovative Places’ that were announced by the previous Government as part of the Job-ready Graduates package. The ‘Innovative Places’ are for priority fields and are allocated through a competitive process, with 900 commencing places due to be allocated in 2024.

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

N/A.

Early actions



Cost

Financial impact over the forward estimates (\$ millions): \$-523.8

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	0	-96.1	-156.7	-153.8	-117.2

Source: Labor's Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received neutral coverage from media.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:

Mr Tony Cook
Deputy Secretary
Higher Education, Research, and International

Ms Kelly Pearce
First Assistant Secretary
Higher Education Division

Startup Year

Announcement	Funding	Priority
13 May 2021	\$14.6m	
The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP and The Hon. Ed Husic MP	2022-23 to 2025-26	
alp.org.au/policies/startup_year		

Description

This commitment is to *'potentially create 2000 new firms and provide a platform for future job growth and economic opportunity'* by offering *"income contingent loans to 2000 final year students and recent graduates to support their participation in accelerator programs"*. These concessional loans will provide students with the option of taking an additional business-focussed year working with an accelerator to develop their innovative start-up ideas. To be eligible, Startup year entrepreneurs must be participating in an accredited program, such as a university accelerator. These loans *"will be delivered through the existing HELP system"* and the Government *"will work with universities, incubators and accelerators to establish an appropriate selection criterion."*

Resourcing will be provided through Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) loans to Startup Year Entrepreneurs (SYEs) participating in accredited accelerator programs up to the maximum of \$11,800 in 2023 (the maximum student contribution limit for Band 3 under the student contribution arrangements for Commonwealth supported places, which provides for four bands up to a maximum value of \$15,142 per annum in 2023).

Accredited accelerators may include current or new university accelerator programs, or non-university incubators or accelerators. The accredited accelerators will bring together SYEs, entrepreneurs, researchers, investors and other experts to help SYEs create diverse new enterprises.

Implementation approach



Implementation risks



Legislation

Amendments are required to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) to allow the Startup Year to be eligible under the HELP.



Early actions

Cost

Financial impact over the forward estimates (\$ millions): \$-14.6

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	0	-1.7	-3.6	-4.3	-5

Source: Labor's Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

N/A.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting
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Department contacts:

Mr Tony Cook
Deputy Secretary
Higher Education, Research and International

Mr Dom English
First Assistant Secretary
Research

New CQUniversity Cairns campus

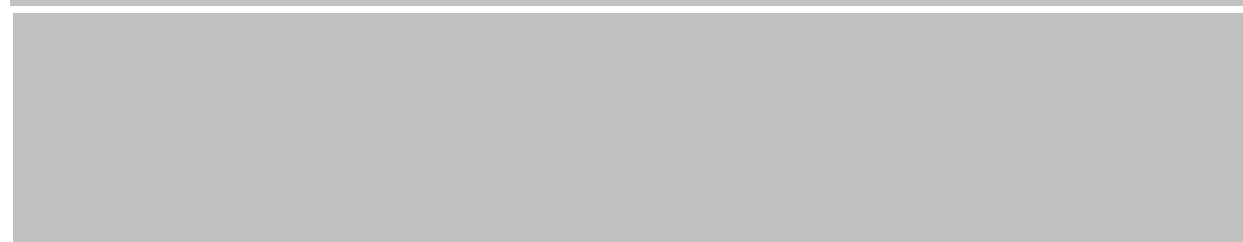
Announcement	Funding	Priority
10 November 2021 The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP The Hon. Catherine King MP tanyaplibersek.com/media/media-releases/media-release-catherine-king-tanya-plibersek-nita-green-new-cq-university-campus-in-the-heart-of-cairns-wednesday-10-november-2021/	\$50 million	

Description

This commitment is to invest \$50 million to build a new CQUniversity campus in the Cairns CBD on the corner of Grafton and Hartley streets, *‘estimated to create 330 construction jobs and bringing up to 4,000 students to this prime city location’*.

Implementation approach

Implementation risks



Early actions



Cost

\$50 million announced.

Source: Media release, Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP and Hon. Catherine King MP, 10 November 2021.

Media and stakeholders

This commitment has received positive coverage from stakeholders, including CQUniversity and Advance Cairns.

Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:	
Mr Tony Cook PSM Deputy Secretary Higher Education, Research and International <div></div> <div></div>	Ms Kelly Pearce First Assistant Secretary Higher Education Division <div></div> <div></div>

End the 10 per cent HECS-HELP upfront discount

Announcement	Funding	Priority
19 May 2022 The Hon. Anthony Albanese MP The Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP The Hon. Ed Husic MP	Underlying cash impact of \$144.7 million save, 2022-23 to 2025-26	
alp-assets.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/documents/ALP_Election_Costing_2022.pdf		

Description

This commitment is to '*end the 10 per cent upfront fee discount*'. This will be done by amending legislation to remove the HECS-HELP upfront discount that was reintroduced as part of the Job-ready Graduates package, and which commenced 1 January 2021. The current arrangement provides a 10 per cent discount for students who choose to defer student contribution amounts through a HECS-HELP loan and make an upfront payment of \$500 or more.

Implementation approach

Legislation

Legislative amendments are required to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA).

Early actions



Cost

Financial impact over the forward estimates (\$ millions): \$+144.7m (save)					
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total Impact on Underlying Cash Balance (\$ millions)	0	+19.6	+40.0	+41.7	+43.4

Source: Labor’s Plan for a Better Future. Better Budget, Better Economy.

Media and stakeholders

N/A.

Implementation risks



Summary of 2022 action

To be included in next economic update (Budget or MYEFO)	Requires new or amended legislation, regulation, or guideline	Requires inclusion in Education Ministers meeting	Requires inclusion in Skills Ministers meeting

Department contacts:

Mr Tony Cook
Deputy Secretary
Higher Education, Research and International

Ms Kelly Pearce
First Assistant Secretary
Higher Education

Commitment brief summary

Higher education, international education and research

Summary

This section includes **five** briefs which provide advice on the implementation of your commitments in the Higher Education, International Education and Research sectors.

Commitment	Announcement date	Funding	Action required	Implementation risk rating
Future Made in Australia Skills Plan: an Australian universities accord	16 Aug 2021	Costs not available		
Future Made in Australia Skills Plan: 20,000 university places	5 Dec 2021	\$528.3 million 2022-23 to 2025-26		
Startup Year	13 May 2021	\$14.6 million 2022-23 to 2025-26		
New CQUniversity Cairns campus	10 Nov 2021	\$50 million		
End the 10% HECS-HELP upfront discount	19 May 2022	\$144.7 million (save) 2022-23 to 2025-26		

Commitments with significant linkages to your portfolio

The Government has made several commitments which will be led by other Ministers, but are significant to your portfolio responsibility for education. The department will work collaboratively across the APS to support implementation of these commitments and your engagement with your counterparts.

Full Employment White Paper, informed by an Australian Jobs Summit

The Jobs Summit is expected to inform development of the White Paper, which will set out a plan *‘to reduce unemployment and underemployment’*. It will review current policy settings and how they can be improved, and consider the role of education and training, childcare, employment services and concentrated disadvantage, as well as how to best supply labour to fast growing sectors, such as the care economy.

Jobs and Skills Australia

This commitment will establish Jobs and Skills Australia, *‘a new independent agency responsible for researching workforce trends and providing advice about what skills are needed now and in the future’*. This intersects with your responsibility for higher education.

Close the gender pay gap and Fair pay and conditions for women in low paid, female dominated industries

These commitments offer opportunities for the early childhood education and care workforce, which is female dominated and relatively low paid. They also align with the objectives of the National Children’s Education and Care Workforce Strategy, which aims to support the recruitment, retention, sustainability, and quality of the sector’s workforce. Improved pay and conditions may attract more people to the profession and, in turn, offer more dependable and higher quality early education to children, which may have flow on effects to workforce participation.

Women’s economic security taskforce

The taskforce will provide advice on the best investments to *‘advance economic equality for women’* and *‘help close the gender pay gap’*.

Better support for people living with disability

This commitment is to ensure *‘real progress is made in education and employment outcomes for people with disability’* by better measuring implementation of the National Disability Strategy. This, plus a *National Autism Strategy* intersects with all elements of your portfolio.

Capital and equipment investments for playgroups and other early childhood services

The commitment will *‘help families learn and grow’* by setting up new playgroups in regional and remote areas, and upgrading facilities and materials for playgroups and toy libraries across the country. This intersects with grants for early childhood education and care services and the Early Years Strategy, under which a holistic approach to investment will be developed.

National Reconstruction Fund

They play an important role in supporting new and emerging industries.

Trade Diversification Plan

This commitment includes development of an export market and product diversification strategy. International education is one of Australia's largest exports, and building on this market will be a crucial part of the plan.

A new Advanced Strategic Research Agency

This agency will drive cutting edge research and development from public sources such as universities and industry and coordinate with defence and other government agencies to deliver *'breakthrough next generation technologies for national security'*.

A minister responsible for cyber security

This commitment will *'lift cyber resilience across the whole nation'*, including enhancing and protecting university research and responding to foreign interference.

Australian Public Service (APS) operations

The department will work with lead agencies to *'rebuild an effective public sector'*, by reducing spending on consultants, contractors and labour hire companies, conducting an audit of employment, and abolishing the average staffing level cap. Other commitments include *'increasing First Nations employment in the APS to 5 per cent by 2030'*, and *'reducing APS emissions to net zero by 2030'*.

Department approach to implementation

The department operates in an environment of change and reform, delivering many commitments and initiatives every year to deliver government priorities. The implementation of deliverables often involves complexities that are inherent to delivering government initiatives, legislative reform and sector transformation, within set timeframes and budgets.

The department's approach to implementation is based on proven methodologies that are practical, scalable and ensures appropriate governance is in place to support delivery.

Accountability

Senior Responsible Officer

A senior executive is assigned responsibility for the delivery of each of the department's significant commitments and initiatives i.e programs and projects, and is known as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). The SRO has overall responsibility for ensuring that a program/project achieves the outcomes and benefits set out in the approved Business Case, within budget and on schedule. SROs have sufficient seniority, accountability and experience to undertake the role, commensurate with the type of project and its significance.

To support SROs in their delivery the department has well established program, project and risk frameworks that underpin our delivery approach. These frameworks are used to deliver projects within the department as well as initiatives of significant strategic value, such as election commitments. Our frameworks are based on proven methodologies and include scalable and flexible tools and processes to support effective delivery. The frameworks require all programs and projects to develop a suite of core documents, tailored to the risk profile of the project, detailing scope, timeline, budget and outcomes.

Assurance and Oversight

Investment and Implementation Committee (IIC)

The IIC provides advice and assurance to the department's Executive Board on the implementation of significant departmental change initiatives (programs and projects). The IIC has key roles in:

- managing the department's portfolio of programs and projects
- supporting SROs to uphold their obligations and accountabilities by ensuring programs and projects remain in line with the department's strategic objectives, government policy and financial approvals
- providing guidance and direction on programs and projects experiencing implementation issues.

The IIC is a decision-making body with responsibility for the allocation of the department's capital budget and the management of cross-portfolio issues. This includes the allocation of project

resources and the prioritisation of internally funded projects to ensure alignment to the department's strategic priorities and objectives.

The Portfolio Project Office

The Portfolio Project Office (PPO) provides guidance and support to project teams to strengthen capability and enhance the department's ability to deliver on strategic outcomes. The PPO carries out its objective by:

- improving confidence in program and project delivery through development and embedding of frameworks and supporting tools and resources
- building program and project management capability among departmental staff
- keeping the Senior Executive and program and project management community informed of portfolio wide trends, risks and issues.

Assurance activities

Project assurance is an independent process that assesses the health and viability of a program/project, to provide confidence to stakeholders that delivery is appropriate, effective, and efficient. Assurance reviews and health checks are carried out across the department's program and project portfolio.

For the department's most significant deliverables, project teams are supplemented with expert external assurance providers that provide independent assurance assessments.

Project Performance Reporting

The PPO is responsible for providing the department's senior executive with visibility over the department's portfolio of projects. The PPO provides monthly project portfolio reporting to the Executive Board and the IIC. This reporting highlights:

- any blockages that may be affecting programs or projects and that may require members of either the Executive Board or IIC to intervene
- reporting against project assurance activity
- analysis of portfolio trends, risks, and issues.

Additionally, the PPO provides analysis against the departments program and project portfolio to the department's Audit and Assurance Committee and Risk, Security and Governance Committee to ensure appropriateness of performance reporting and risk management strategies.

The PPO can provide reporting on the department's projects to Portfolio Ministers and their staff on request.

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Early briefs

First contacts

Early events

Early Briefs

First week briefs

Brief	
WHOLE OF PORTFOLIO	Contact: Marcus Markovic Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Enabling Services
EARLY CHILDHOOD	Contact: Brenton Philp Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and Child Care
SCHOOL EDUCATION	Contact: Ros Baxter Deputy Secretary, Schools and Youth

Brief	
HIGHER EDUCATION	Contact: Tony Cook Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION	Contact: Tony Cook Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International

First month briefs

Brief	
WHOLE OF PORTFOLIO	Contact: Marcus Markovic Deputy Secretary, Corporate and Enabling Services
EARLY CHILDHOOD	Contact: Brenton Philp Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and Child Care

Brief

SCHOOL EDUCATION

Contact: **Ros Baxter**
Deputy Secretary, Schools and Youth

YOUTH

Contact: **Ros Baxter**
Deputy Secretary, Schools and Youth

Brief

HIGHER EDUCATION

Contact: **Tony Cook**

Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International

Brief

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Contact: **Tony Cook**

Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International

RESEARCH

Contact: **Tony Cook**

Deputy Secretary, Higher Education, Research and International

First Contacts

Contact	
The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC NSW Minister for Education and Early Learning	
The Hon James Merlino MP VIC Minister for Education	
The Hon Ingrid Stitt MLC VIC Minister for Early Childhood	
The Hon Gayle Tierney, MP VIC Minister for Higher Education, VIC Minister for Training and Skills	
The Hon Grace Grace MP QLD Minister for Education, QLD Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing	
The Hon Brittany Lauga MP QLD Assistant Minister for Education	
The Hon Sue Ellery MLC WA Minister for Education and Training (including early childhood)	
The Hon Simone McGurk MLA WA Minister for Child Protection (and secondary minister for child care)	

Contact	
The Hon Simone McGurk MLA WA Minister for Child Protection (and secondary minister for child care)	
The Hon Blair Boyer, MP SA Minister for Education, Training and Skills	
The Hon Roger Jaensch MP TAS Minister for Education, Children and Youth	
The Hon Yvette Berry MLA ACT Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development	
The Hon Lauren Moss MLA NT Minister for Youth	
The Hon Eva Lawler MLA NT Minister for Education	
The Hon Ngaree Ah Kit MLA NT Minister for International Education	

Contact

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND CHILD CARE REFERENCE GROUP

Early Childhood Education and Care Reference Group (ECECRG)

Community Child Care Association

Ms Julie Price,
Executive Director

CCCA is the peak body for non-profit community-owned early learning and care services.

Member of ECECRG

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) (and CEO, KU Children's Services)

Ms Christine Legg,
President

ECA is an influential advocacy body for young children in Australia.

Member of ECECRG

Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA)

Ms Elizabeth Death,
CEO

ELACCA members provide nearly 30 per cent of Australia's early learning and care places—across for profit and not-for-profit providers.

Member of ECECRG

Family Day Care Australia

Mr Andrew Paterson, CEO

FDCA is the peak body representing the Family Day Care (FDC) sector in Australia.

Member of ECECRG

Goodstart Early Learning

Ms Julia Davison,
CEO

Goodstart is the largest not-for-profit ECEC provider in Australia.

Member of ECECRG

OSHC of Australia

Mr Craig Napier,
Founding Member

CEO Junior
Adventure Group

OSHCA is a relatively new peak body representing the Outside School Hours Care sector in Australia.

Member of ECECRG

Contact		
<u>Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)</u> Ms Catherine Liddle, CEO		SNAICC is the national voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. <i>Member of ECECRG</i>
<u>Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA)</u> Mr Paul Mondo, President		ACA is a national peak body representing long day care providers and operators. <i>Member of ECECRG</i>
EARLY CHILDHOOD		
<u>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)</u> Ms Gabrielle Sinclair, CEO		
<u>Centre for Community Child Health at Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne</u> Prof Sharon Goldfeld, Director		
<u>Council on Early Childhood Development</u> Ms Leslie Loble, Co-chair Centre for Policy Excellence, fellow		
<u>Dandalo Partners</u> Dr Stacey Fox, Manager		
<u>Early Childhood Australia (ECA)</u> Ms Sam Page, CEO		

Contact

YOUTH

**Foundation for
Young Australians
(FYA)**

**Mr Nick Moraitis,
CEO**

**Australian Youth
Affairs Coalition
(AYAC)**

**Mr Luke Rycken,
Executive Officer**

**National Australia
Day Council (NADC)**

**Ms Karlie Brand,
CEO**

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Aurora Foundation

Ms Leila Smith, CEO

**National Aboriginal
Community
Controlled Health
Organisation
(NACCHO)**

**Ms Pat Turner AM,
CEO Coalition of
Peaks, Lead
Convener**

Contact	
<p>Professor Peter Buckskin</p>	
SCHOOLS	
<p><u>Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)</u></p> <p>Mr Derek Scott, Chair</p>	
<p><u>Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)</u></p> <p>Dr Lisa O'Brien, Chair</p>	
<p><u>Australian institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)</u></p> <p>Laureate Professor John Hattie, Chair</p>	
<p><u>Education Services Australia (ESA)</u></p> <p>Ms Diane Joseph, Chair</p>	

Contact	
<p><u>Independent Schools Australia</u></p> <p>Ms Margery Evans, CEO</p>	
<p><u>National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC)</u></p> <p>The Hon Jacinta Collins, Executive Director</p>	
<p><u>Initial Teacher Education Quality Assessment Expert Panel</u></p> <p>Professor Mark Scott AO, Chair</p> <p>Vice-Chancellor, University of Sydney</p>	
<p><u>Quality Initial Teacher Education Review Expert Panel</u></p> <p>Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM, Chair</p>	
<p><u>The Smith Family</u></p> <p>Mr Doug Taylor, CEO</p>	

Contact

HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

**Regional Education
Commissioner**

The Hon Fiona Nash

**Australian Research
Council (ARC)**

Ms Judi Zielke, CEO

**Australian
Technology Network**

**Professor Iain
Martin, Chair**

**Mr Luke Sheehy,
Executive Director**

**Independent Higher
Education Australia**

Mr Alan Finch, Chair

Dr Peter Hendy, CEO

**Independent
Tertiary Education
Council Australia**

**Adjunct Professor
Wilhelm Harnisch,
Independent Chair**

**Mr Troy Williams,
CEO**

Contact

Innovative Research Universities

Professor Carolyn
Evans, Chair

Mr Paul Harris,
Executive Director

Group of Eight (Go8)

Professor Margaret
Gardner AC, Interim
Chair

Ms Vicki Thomson,
Chief Executive

Regional Universities Network

Professor Nick
Klomp, Chair

Mr Alec Webb,
Executive Director

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Emeritus Professor
Peter Coaldrake AO,
Chief Commissioner

Mr Alistair Maclean,
CEO

Contact	
<p><u>Universities</u> <u>Australia</u></p> <p>Professor John Dewar AO, Chair</p> <p>Ms Catriona Jackson, Chief Executive</p>	
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION	
<p><u>International Education Association</u> <u>Australia</u></p> <p>The Hon Phil Honeywood, CEO</p> <p>Convener of the Expert Members of the Council for International Education</p>	
<p><u>University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT)</u></p> <p>Professor Deborah Terry AO, Deputy Chair</p> <p>Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Queensland</p>	

Early Events

Event Title	Location/ Date	Role of the Minister	Rationale
Education Ministers Meeting	Virtual (TBC) August 2022 (TBC)	Chair.	





4

Overviews

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4. Overviews

Early childhood education and care

School education

Higher education

International education

University research

Commonwealth-state relations

Women's labour market participation

National Agreement on Closing the Gap

People with disability

Youth

Regional education and employment

Early childhood education and care sector

Overview

The early years

A child's early years are critical for social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. The right settings and support in a child's early years have been shown to reduce their developmental vulnerability and improve their readiness for school. Ensuring a smooth transition through early childhood will set them up for success in school, training, higher education, and employment.¹

Supporting children in the early years leads to broader economic and social benefits for families and governments. For example, research indicates investment in early childhood education and care (ECEC) generates around \$2 of benefit for every \$1 spent², and late intervention could cost all governments a total of \$15.2 billion a year.³

For children, high-quality ECEC has been linked to improved cognitive and language development, independence, concentration, and sociability in school.⁴ Children who attend preschool are 10 per cent less likely to be developmentally vulnerable when they start school than their peers who do not.⁵ At the same time, children who start school developmentally vulnerable are more likely to have difficulties in education than those who start on track—for example, Grade 3 NAPLAN results indicate a one year learning gap between those who start school developmentally vulnerable and those who don't, and this gap increases to over two years by Grade 7.⁶ The expected long-term economic benefits of quality early childhood education and reduced developmental vulnerability include reduced need for special education services, improved education outcomes and higher lifetime earnings.⁷

ECEC can also close academic and other gaps between disadvantaged children and their peers, translating into longer-term benefits. For example, children experiencing, or at risk of, disadvantage are more likely to be developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) on school entry. These children are also most likely to show the greatest gains from attending high-quality preschool and child care.

The early childhood education and care sector

The ECEC sector is a large and complex system delivering two broad (and overlapping) service types: child care services (early learning and care services provided to children aged 0 to 12 years) and

¹ ABS (2019) *Final Report: Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children Data Analysis Project*

² The Front Project, & PWC (2019)

³ Teager, W, Fox, S, & Stafford, N (2019) *How Australia can invest early and return more: A new look at the \$15b cost and opportunity*

⁴ AIHW (2015) *Literature review of the impact of early childhood education and care on learning and development*

⁵ Nous Group (2020) *UANP Review: Final Review Report Prepared for COAG Education Council*

⁶ Centre for Adolescent Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute (2018) *The Effects on Schooling Outcomes of Early Developmental Vulnerabilities in Children*—page 2 and page 19

⁷ The Front Project, & PWC, (2019) *A Smart Investment for a Smarter Australia: Economic analysis of universal early childhood education in the year before school in Australia*

preschool services (services that administer structured, play-based learning programs, delivered by qualified teachers, to children in the year or two before full-time schooling).

ECEC services are delivered by a broad spectrum of providers, from highly sophisticated large providers with hundreds of services, to small providers with one or two services. Businesses are a mixture of for profit, not for profit and sole traders. Alongside stand-alone preschools, child care services can be divided into four sub-markets ('care types'), including: Centre Based Day Care (around 63 per cent of the market), Outside of School Hours Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care.

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is the main way the Australian Government helps families with child care fees. Overall, 1,383,550 children from 1,000,760 families attended a Child Care Subsidy approved child care centre in the June quarter 2021. Of these, 1,328,540 children from 949,920 families had their eligibility for Child Care Subsidy assessed.

The Child Care Safety Net provides additional targeted assistance for disadvantaged communities and vulnerable children and their families to address barriers to participation in child care and employment. Safety Net measures include the Additional Child Care Subsidy, Inclusion Support Program and Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) programs. CCCF programs include Connected Beginnings and the CCCF Restricted Program, which provide additional support for Indigenous children and their families to access ECEC.

In the context of preschool, around 300,000 children attend preschool in the year before school each year across a range of service types including, stand-alone, schools-based, or alongside Centre Based Day Care. The Australian Government ensures universal access to preschool through funding contributions to state and territory governments (the states) who have responsibility for service delivery.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is Australia's system for regulating ECEC services (including preschools), including legislation and National Quality Standards, sector profiles and data, and learning frameworks. The sector continues to expand, and quality continues to improve, with requests for provider approvals growing and child care centres increasingly viewed as safe assets by investors.

Governance and funding

The Commonwealth co-stewards the ECEC system with the states and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

The primary role of the Commonwealth in ECEC is to provide financial assistance to families. This assists families to cover costs, encourages workforce participation (particularly for secondary income earners who are primarily women), and facilitates access to quality early learning opportunities. Payments made by the Commonwealth include the CCS and the Child Care Safety Net which provides families with heavily subsidised access to child care services.⁸ From 2008 to 2021, the Commonwealth also provided funding to the states through the Universal Access National Partnership (UANP) to ensure every child can participate in a quality preschool program (consisting of 15 hours per week, or 600 hours per year) in the year before school. The UANP was replaced by

⁸ Maximum CCS subject to income is 85 per cent of fees charged up to the fee cap. For second and subsequent children, this increases to 90 per cent. During the 2021 June quarter, the average hourly child care fee for all service types – excluding IHC – was \$10.40, reflecting an increase of 1.7 per cent since the 2021 March quarter.

the 2022-25 National Preschool Reform Agreement which links funding to reforms to increase preschool participation rates and improve outcomes.

The states' responsibilities vary across jurisdictions but mainly include funding and/or providing preschool and, in some cases, child care and assisting the most disadvantaged. They also support the implementation of the UANP, play a regulatory role for services under the NQF, and implement strategies to improve the quality of ECEC programs, including curriculum, support and training for providers.⁹

ACECQA, an independent national authority, is responsible for legislation and administration of the NQF. It supports the sector with guidance, resources, and services to improve outcomes for children. The Commonwealth provides operational funding for ACECQA and state and territory regulatory authorities are responsible for administering the NQF and for the quality and safety of services approved under the National Law. Regulators have powers and tools to ensure compliance with NQF requirements.

The department's primary means of engaging with the sector is through the ECEC Reference Group (which represents all the care types) and broad-based sector communications.

COVID and early childhood

The impact of the pandemic on ECEC has been uneven, with some states locking down regions and restricting access while others remained relatively unchanged.

ECEC attendance for children aged 0 to 12 years fluctuated in response to, and throughout COVID-19 waves and public health directions.

Disrupted ECEC services have further impacted on the wellbeing and learning of young children. The impact of this disruption on developmental vulnerability has been less than anticipated but remains a focus.¹⁰ Indigenous Australians, children with additional needs and those living in disadvantaged areas have recorded larger increases in developmental vulnerability.¹¹

Restrictions and service closures have reduced the inflow of skilled employees. Employers have reported increased staff turnover, in part due to impacts on the wellbeing of essential workers during the pandemic because of increased workload. Emerging evidence shows increased vacancies and staffing waivers for qualified staff. Since 2019, the number of child care staff in Australia has fallen by 3.5 per cent.¹²

⁹ Productivity Commission (February 2022), *Report on Government Services 2021*.

¹⁰ Murdoch Children's Research Institute, January 2022, *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children*

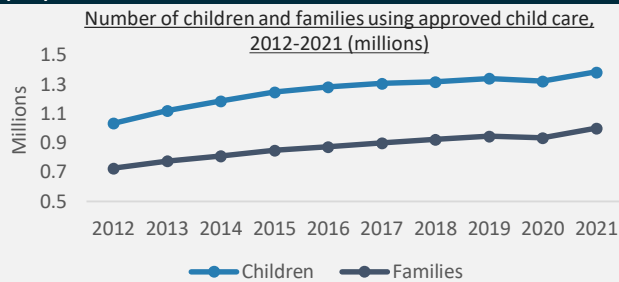
¹¹ Department of Education, Skills and Employment. 2021 Australian Early Development Census National Report, p25.

¹² Labour Market Insights, Child Carers – Overview.

Snapshot of participation and funding in early childhood education and care

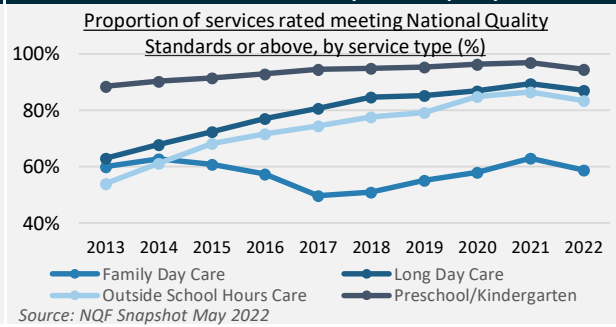
In 2021, 1,383,550 children accessed approved child care. In 2018, Australia spent 0.6% of GDP on early childhood education and care, less than the OECD average of 0.9%.

1. The number of children using approved child care decreased in 2020 due to the global pandemic but numbers have now returned to pre-pandemic levels.



Source: DESE, Key Early Childhood Data, March 2021

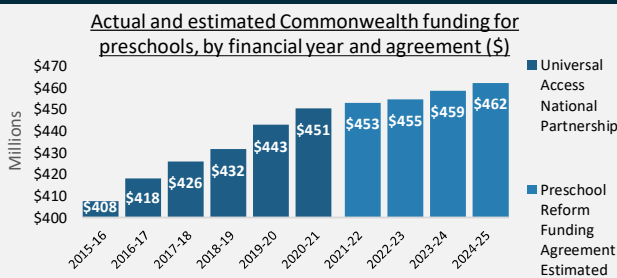
2. The majority of service types demonstrate improved quality over time, noting a marginal decline in 2022; Family Day Care services continue to be the least likely to meet quality standards.



Source: NQF Snapshot May 2022

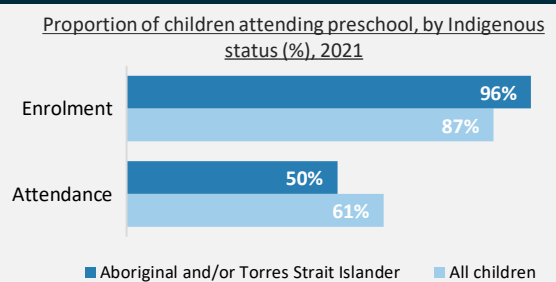
3. The Commonwealth provides steadily growing early childhood funding through fee assistance to benefit children and families.

5. The Commonwealth continues to provide increased funding support for preschools under the new Preschool Reform Funding Agreement (previously Universal Access National Partnership).



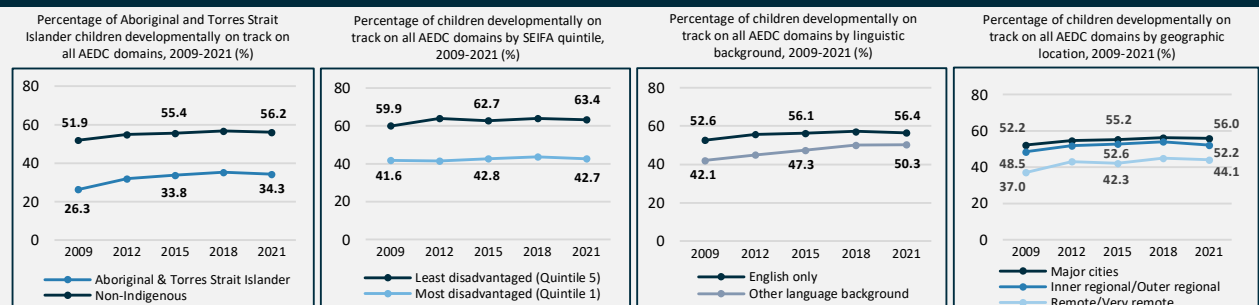
Source: UANP Agreements from 2015 to 2021; Payments to Support Preschool (2022-23 Budget)

6. Preschool enrolments have improved significantly since 2008, but the next step is to ensure children are regularly attending for the 600 hours per year available.



Source: ABS, Preschool Education Australia 2021

7. Most children are 'on track' across all developmental domains in the first year of school, but there is a significant gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children of low socioeconomic status and children located in remote locations of Australia.



Source: AEDC 2009-2021

The reform journey

The Child Care Benefit (CCB) program and Child Care Rebate (CCR)

Introduced to assist families with the cost of raising children. CCB fee relief for up to 50 hours, with tapering support for low and middle income families.

Major frameworks

Services are required to base their educational program on either the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) or the My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care (MTOF). Both are currently being reviewed to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and, where appropriate, align with Australian curriculum requirements.

National Quality Framework (NQF)

As the sector expanded, the Commonwealth introduced the NQF to standardise educator to child ratios and increase skills and qualification requirements for educators, as well as quality rating of services.

Shaping Our Future – National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy (2022-2031)

Engagement from the sector and all governments through the development of the Strategy will support responses to these challenges.

National Preschool Reform Agreement

From 2022, the new National Preschool Reform Agreement replaced the UANP with a focus on improving outcomes and increasing attendance (particularly among disadvantaged and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children) and ensuring all preschool children benefit from Commonwealth funding.

2000

2008

2009

2012

2018

2021

2022

The Preschool Universal Access National Partnership (UANP)

Since 2008, the Australian Government has funded states to provide quality preschool programs. The funding benefits around 350,000 children each year and data collected through the Australian Early Development Census since its introduction has shown significant improvements in school readiness. The UANP is supported by funding committed under the Preschool Reform Funding Agreement.

Australian Early Development Index (AEDI)

Australia became the first country in the world to collect national data on the developmental health of all children starting school. The success of the 2009 AEDI led to the Commonwealth's commitment to the ongoing national measurement (the AEDC).

Child Care Package (the Package)

In July 2018, the Commonwealth introduced the Package to support affordability, improve flexibility and increase the targeting of financial assistance. The Package comprised of the CCS and Child Care Safety Net, including introduction of the CCS activity test.

Annual caps removed

From 10 December 2021, the annual cap for all families receiving CCS was removed.

Further enhancements to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

From 7 March 2022, families with children aged 5 or under in care will receive an increased subsidy of 30 per cent, up to a maximum subsidy rate of 95 per cent, for their second and subsequent children.

School education

Overview

The schools sector

All governments have agreed common goals for schooling in Australia through the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration that all young Australians have the opportunity to become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community. These goals, along with the goals in the previous Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians, drive the reform activities under the National Schools Reform Agreement (NSRA) 2019-2023. Reform activities under the NSRA include supporting students, student learning and student achievement, supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement and enhancing the national evidence base.

In 2021, there were 4,030,717 students and 303,539 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff across 9,581 Australian schools.¹ Around 65 per cent of students were enrolled in government schools and around 35 per cent were enrolled in non-government schools. There has been a shift in enrolments from government to non-government schools. Between 2016-2020, total student enrolments continued to increase by 5.5 per cent. Independent schools had the largest increase with 9.5 per cent, followed by government schools with 5.9 per cent.²

3

Governance, funding and national reform

States and territories (states) have constitutional responsibility for school education, and each has established its own regulatory framework and policies to deliver educational outcomes. Provisions under Section 96 of the Constitution enable the Commonwealth to help shape the schooling sector, largely by means of funding.

Key schools sector delivery bodies include state and territory governments, the National Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Australia. Key stakeholders include students and their families, teacher bodies and unions and national organisations such as the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Agency, the Australian Education Research Organisation, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, and Education Services Australia.

While states provide most funding for government schools, the Commonwealth is the major contributor of public funds for non-government schools. Commonwealth funding is provided under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and the accompanying Australian Education Regulation 2013, which set out the needs-based funding model, and conditions for Commonwealth financial

¹ ABS, Schools 2022

² ABS, Schools 2020

³

assistance, including state and territory minimum funding requirements, and implementation of national reforms.

[REDACTED]

The National School Reform Agreement is a key mechanism under the Act which provides the basis for the Commonwealth to progress national school education reform with states, as a condition of funding and localised initiatives via bilateral agreements. The current agreement sets out eight national policy initiatives against three reform directions to implement across five years to December 2023.

[REDACTED] An independent review of the agreement, including effectiveness of the national policy initiatives, is being undertaken by the Productivity Commission and will be completed by 31 December 2022 for consideration of Education Ministers in the development of a new national reform agreement, due to begin in 2024.

COVID-19 and schools

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic varied across jurisdictions and educational settings. Between February 2020 and November 2021, there were 44 weeks of full or partial school closures in Australia.⁴ During this period, most Australian schools delivered learning online. Early findings on the impact of these disruptions on student outcomes are varied and still being investigated. The volatile learning environment for students, their families and their teachers has led to decreased mental health outcomes.⁵ In 2020, against a background of border closures and fewer employment opportunities, Year 12 completion rates increased slightly. While attendance levels have been declining steadily since the 2018 baseline, ACARA analysis suggests that attendance in 2021 was approximately 0.3 percentage points lower than predicted, likely due to the effects of COVID-19 on student attendance.

Learning loss

Initial evidence suggests learning loss among Australian school students during the pandemic is consistent with, or lower than, the global average.⁶ Early NAPLAN 2021 findings indicate the impact has not been significant on overall literacy and numeracy results.⁷ However, online learning appears to have negatively impacted groups that may experience disadvantage, including students with disability, students who have lower levels of English language proficiency or live in remote and rural regions of Australia and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.⁸

Mental health

School closures and rapid shifts to online learning have put pressure on students' mental health and added complexity for their families and teachers. Increased levels of psychological distress were particularly evident for girls and teenagers, with both groups more likely to access subsidised mental health services in 2021 compared to their peers. Many parents and carers also reported a significant increase in psychological distress.⁹ This has been attributed, in part, to parents and carers being required to oversee their child's or children's online learning while also working remotely themselves or caring for other children or family members.

⁴ UNESCO, February 2022, Education: From disruption to recovery (unesco.org).

⁵ Biddle, N. et al., August 2021, The impact of COVID-19 on child mental health and service barriers: The perspective of parents – August 2021.

⁶ McKinsey, 4 April 2022, How COVID-19 caused a global learning crisis.

⁷ McKinsey, 1 March 2021, Learning loss is global--and significant | McKinsey.

⁸ See for example: Victoria Department of Education, July 2021, Lessons learned from Term 2, 2020 remote and flexible learning (education.vic.gov.au); Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 15 December 2021, NAPLAN National Report 2021.

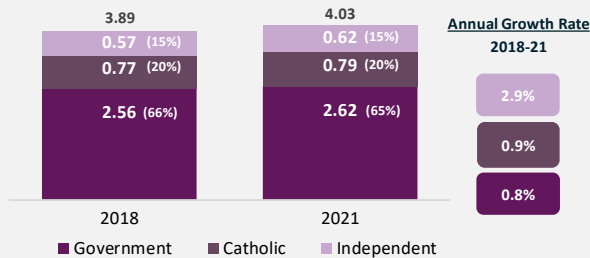
⁹ Australian National University, 28 January 2022, Home-schooling parents experienced psychological distress - ANU.

Snapshot of participation and funding in Australian schools

In 2018, Australia spent 3.8% of GDP on Primary and Secondary Education, more than the OECD average of 3.0%. 68% of adults have completed Year 12 or equivalent.

1. The majority of students attend government schools, but independent schools have seen higher enrolment growth.

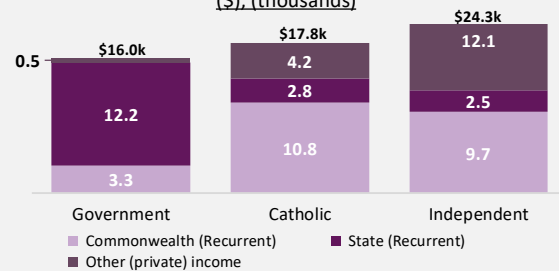
Student enrolments by school affiliation, Australia, 2018 to 2021 (millions)



Source: ABS, Schools Australia 2021

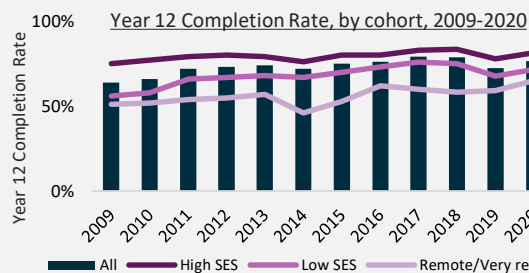
2. The source of funding differs among Government, Catholic and Independent schools.

National average per student funding by source, 2020 (\$), (thousands)



Source: ACARA My School Finance Data (2020)

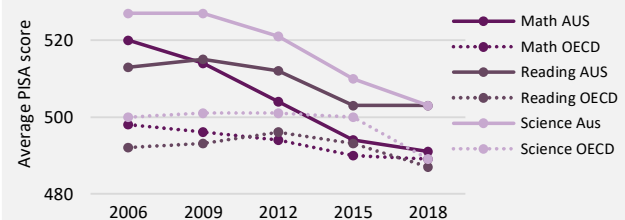
5. Year 12 completion rates increased during the pandemic, with remote students recording their highest completion rates ever.



Source: ACARA National Report on Schooling in Australia

6. The performance of Australian 15-year-olds in reading, maths and science literacy is falling but NAPLAN results are showing positive signs.

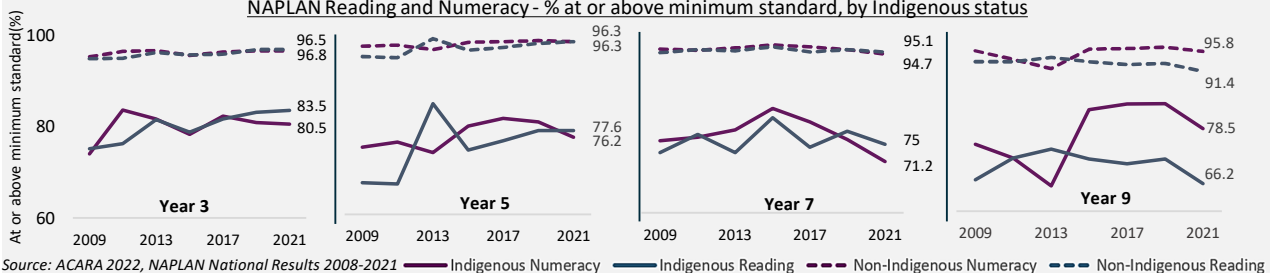
Performance of Australian students vs OECD average, PISA, 2006-2018



Source: PISA National Reports 2000-2018

7. Gaps in achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students narrowed between 2009 and 2021 in reading and numeracy for most year levels, but remain significant. For Year 7 students, the gap in numeracy achievement has widened.

NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy - % at or above minimum standard, by Indigenous status



Source: ACARA 2022, NAPLAN National Results 2008-2021

The reform journey

Melbourne Declaration

Agreed by all Education Ministers, the Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians articulated nationally consistent future directions and aspirations for Australian schooling.

Review of funding for schooling

The Review examined government funding and the role of private funding for schools, making 41 recommendations geared towards creating and implementing a needs-based and sector-blind school funding model.

Australian Education Act 2013

Introduction of the *Australian Education Act 2013* replaced four yearly funding agreements and established the Schooling Resources Standard with base funding plus loading for disadvantage, and set out rights and responsibilities of organisations in order to receive Commonwealth funding and broad expectations for compliance and accountability.

2019-2023 National School Reform Agreement

The agreement, informed by the Review to Achieve Education Excellence in Australian Schools and endorsed by COAG, set strategic reforms between the Commonwealth, states, and territories to lift student outcomes across Australian schools. Reforms included:

- Measures to support well-trained and knowledgeable teachers.
- The review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training.
- Ongoing agreement to the Australian Teacher Workforce Data collection.

Review of the 2019-2023 NSRA

The Productivity Commission is undertaking an independent review of the effectiveness and operation of the current NSRA. This is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022, allowing time for the findings to inform the development of the next NSRA.

2008

National partnerships

Starting in 2008, the Commonwealth introduced a series of individual schools-related national partnerships, which included a focus on low SES cohorts, literacy, numeracy and empowering local schools. This was matched by almost \$25 billion to states in return for improved outcomes, matched funding, specified activities and detailed reporting.

2010

National Education Reform Agreement

Designed to support implementation of the *Australian Education Act* and reflect the needs-based funding model, the agreement provided funding to states and the non-government sector, with reform commitments and reporting requirements. This was a significant departure from the previous Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations.

2013

Amendments to the Australian Education Act

Amendments to the *Australian Education Act* ensured greater consistency of Commonwealth needs-based funding arrangements across states and territories and made Commonwealth funding contingent on the implementation of reforms.

2017

2018

2019

Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration

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

2022

2024-2028 National School Reform Agreement (NSRA)

The Australian Government and state and territory education ministers are due to agree on the next agreement prior to the expiry of the current agreement on 31 December 2023.

2023

Higher education (teaching and scholarship)

Overview

The higher education sector

The higher education sector is comprised of public and private providers offering undergraduate awards (such as bachelor and associate degrees and advanced diplomas) and postgraduate awards (including graduate certificates, diplomas and masters and doctoral degrees). The sector includes:

- 38 public universities — providers listed in Table A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA). Public universities enrol 90 per cent of higher education students including around 93 per cent of domestic students and 85 per cent of overseas students
- around 140 other providers — includes Institutes of Higher Education, University Colleges, private universities, and specialised universities. These providers also offer all levels of higher education and rely mainly on full fee-paying students for income.

In 2020, 1.6 million students were studying in the higher education sector¹, with enrolments at their highest level since 2016. Of these, 880,000 were in Commonwealth supported places, 215,000 were domestic fee-paying students, 40,000 were research students, and 490,000 were overseas students. In 2021:²



Higher education graduates experience better labour market outcomes including higher earnings, better labour force participation and lower unemployment than those who graduate with Year 12 only. Over the last decade, the unemployment rate for tertiary-educated Australians was consistently two to three percentage points lower than the rate experienced by non-graduates.⁴ Higher education qualified workers are more insulated from the effects of economic disruption, such as COVID-19. Employer satisfaction with graduates remains high, with 85.3 per cent of employers reporting overall satisfaction with graduate attributes in 2021, the highest recorded score in the past five years.⁵

¹ Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2021), *Higher Education Statistics collection*.

² ABS (2021), *Education and Work*.

³

⁴ ABS (2021), *Education and Work*.

⁵ QILT (2021) *Employer Satisfaction Survey*

Governance and funding

Most universities are established by state legislation, however in 1973 the Commonwealth assumed full responsibility for funding the sector with the agreement of the states. The legislative framework governing the sector includes:

- The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the national policy for regulated qualifications, such as diploma or bachelor, is delivered in consultation with states and territories.
- The *TEQSA Act*, established the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the provider quality standards framework and categories, and allowing TEQSA to register providers and conduct compliance activity.
- HESA, which covers Government funding, student loans, administration and reporting requirements, and approval of providers to access funding and loan programs.

Higher Education providers are receiving around \$19.7 billion in 2022. This includes:

- the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) (\$7.5 billion) to subsidise student places, directed almost entirely to Table A universities.
- the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) (\$7.6 billion), including \$5.4 billion provided to universities on behalf of Commonwealth supported students. Around \$2 billion is provided on behalf of students in programs not eligible for CGS – most postgraduate coursework at Table A universities and almost all courses at non-Table A institutions, while a further \$200 million is provided to assist students with other costs of study.
- \$3.3 billion in research grants, directed to Table A and B universities, including:
 - Research Block Grants encompassing the research support program (\$900 million) and the Research Training Program (\$1.1 billion)
 - National Competitive Grants Program (\$800 million), administered by the Australian Research Council.⁶
 - Other smaller research grants (\$400 million)
- Other teaching and learning grants to institutions, including for industry engagement, equity participation, National Institutes Grants as well as several smaller programs (\$1.4 billion).

The sector is currently in the middle stages of implementation of major funding reforms that commenced in 2021. These included significant changes to the CGS funding clusters and student contributions, the establishment of a new industry engagement fund, and funding for additional student places with an emphasis on increasing participation in regional areas.

Universities reported better financial outcomes in 2020 than anticipated at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, revenue of \$35 billion compared to \$37 billion in 2019, and a surplus of \$0.7 billion in 2020 compared to \$2.3 billion in 2019. This was supported by increased Commonwealth financial support of \$1.7 billion and reduced expenses of \$1.4 billion compared to 2020 (mostly relating to reductions in staffing expenses).⁷ In 2021, universities were tracking towards revenues of over \$36 billion and a surplus of over \$3 billion.

⁶ Science, Research and Innovation (SRI) Budget Tables 2021-22

⁷ Department of Education, Skills and Employment (October 2021), *Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2021 Staff data*.

COVID-19 and Higher Education

With borders closed, international students were unable to enter Australia to study. Between 2019 and 2021, total international student numbers fell by 24.6 per cent.⁸ Despite borders reopening and international student arrivals at their highest level since April 2020, total international student numbers in March 2022 were 15 per cent lower than in March 2021.⁹ This placed significant strain on the revenue-raising capacity of universities with 7,985 full-time or fractional full-time jobs lost in 2021 (a 6.8 per cent decline from 2020).¹⁰

Before the onset of the pandemic, the Australian higher education sector was facing increased global competition for international student enrolments and shifts in the delivery of international education. As we recover, efforts made by other countries to attract students are likely to affect students' willingness to study in Australia or recognise it as an education destination of choice.

Mental health

Simultaneously, teaching staff faced a student cohort experiencing higher levels of mental ill-health. Between February 2017 and October 2021, psychological distress increased noticeably among 18-35 year olds, but remained largely unchanged or improved for older Australians.¹¹ Among Australians, aged 15-19 in 2020, equity cohorts, such as Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities, experienced higher levels of psychological distress.¹² Many of these students would now be attending tertiary education.

⁸ DESE, February 2022, International student numbers.

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Overseas Arrivals and Departures, February 2022, Total Arrivals by Visa Group & Department of Education, Skills and Employment, PRISMS, March 2022

¹⁰ Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 9 February 2022, DESE 2021 Higher Education staff numbers data.

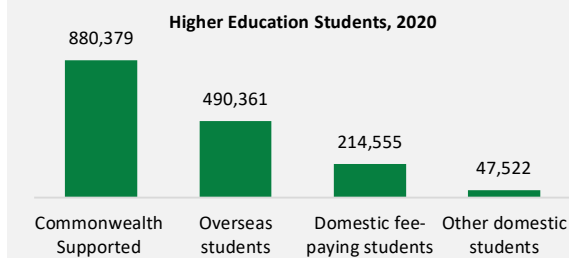
¹¹ Nicolas Biddle and Matthew Gray, 19 November 2021, Microsoft Word - Tracking paper - October 2021 - For web.docx (anu.edu.au)

¹² Brennan N. et al., (2021). Psychological Distress in Young people in Australia: Fifth Biennial Youth Mental Health Report 2012-2020.

Snapshot of Participation and Funding – Higher Education

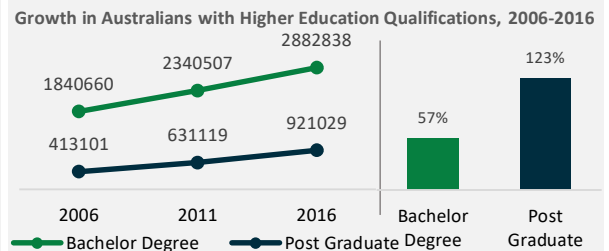
In 2018, Australia spent 1.9% of GDP on Higher Education, more than the OECD average of 1.4%. 30% of Australians have a Bachelor Degree or above.

1. Australia has approximately 1.6 million Higher Education students.



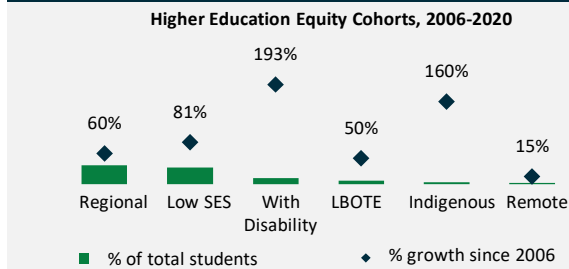
Source: DESE, Higher Education Statistics Collection, Table 5.5, 2020 (based on data finalised in December 2021)

2. The number of Australians with Higher Education qualifications has grown substantially since 2006.



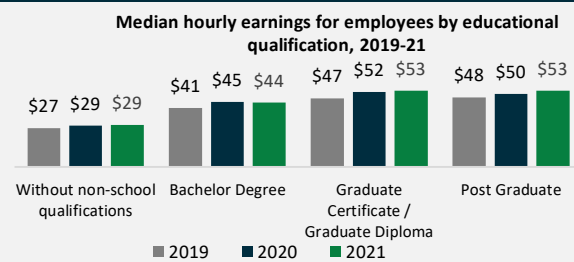
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing (2006, 2011, and 2016), Non-school qualification: level of education by age by sex.

3. Participation in Higher Education by all equity groups has grown since 2006.



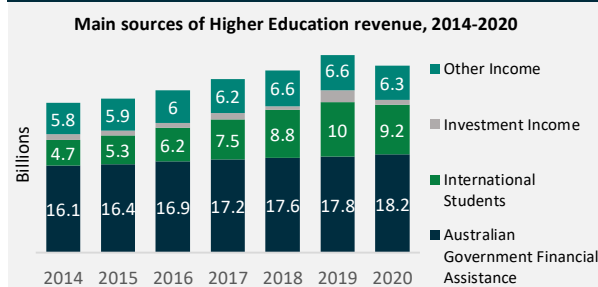
Source: DESE, Higher Education Statistics Collection, Table 11.1, 2020 (based on data finalised in December 2021)

4. Higher Education graduates have higher earnings than those without a non-school qualification.

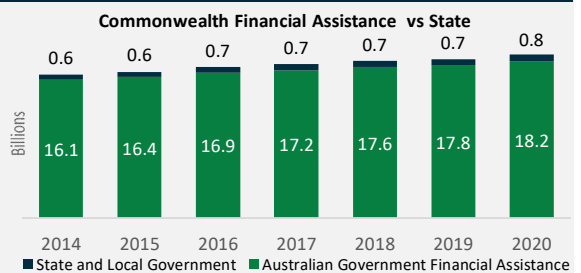


Source: ABS, Characteristics of Employment, Australia, Table 6.2, Aug 2021

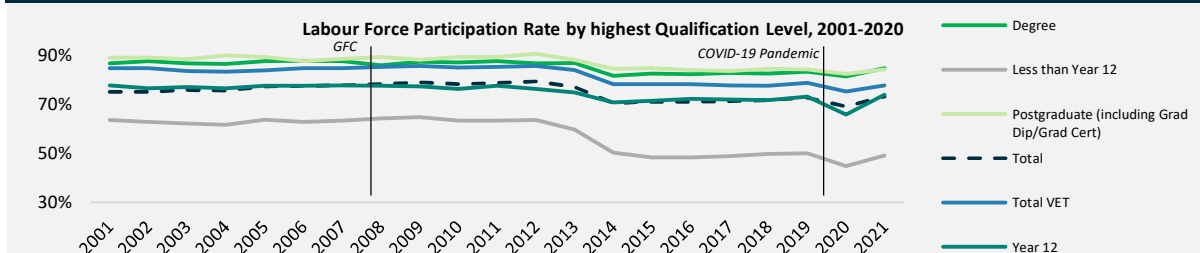
5. The majority of financial assistance comes from the Commonwealth government. Revenue from international education more than doubled between 2014 and 2020, but has fallen since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Source: University financial statements



6. Higher Education graduates continue to show higher labour force participation, and lower unemployment, than those who graduate from VET or year 12 only. This remained true during recent economic crises.



Source: Source: ABS, Survey of Education and Work 2001-2020, Highest educational attainment level by labour force status

The Reform Journey

Higher Education Contributions Scheme

In 1988 the Wran Committee recommended the introduction of student contributions through the tax system and the Government introduced HECS from 1 January 1989.

1989

Unified National System

The 1988 Dawkins White Paper argued that fewer, larger institutions were needed to enhance the system's adaptability, effectiveness and capacity to deliver increased numbers of graduates. Adoption of these reforms in 1989 created the "Unified National System", transforming the sector from 73 to 38 institutions in 1991.

Commonwealth Grant Scheme and the Higher Education Loan Program

In the 2003-04 Budget, the Government responded to the 2002 review, *Higher Education at the Crossroads*. This included the introduction of the CGS (block grants and targets aligned to 12 funding) and the HELP, which subsumed previous loan schemes (including HECS) and extended income contingent loans to domestic students paying full fees (FEE-HELP) and those undertaking part of their degree overseas (OS-HELP).

2005

Review of Higher Education System (Bradley review)

The review recommended major reforms to the financing and regulatory frameworks for higher education, including to introduce participation and equity targets, accountability through compact arrangements to guide funding, conduct a review into base funding, establish a national regulator, establish a new grant indexation system and implement the provision of demand driven funding for bachelor courses at public institutions.

2008

Transforming Australia's Higher Education System

The Government response to the Bradley Review accepted most recommendations in part or in their entirety.

2009

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority

To support introduction of a demand driven system, TEQSA was established by the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (TEQSA Act).

2012

Demand driven funding

Following the Bradley Review, the Government fully implemented the student demand driven CGS funding system from 2012, allowing for a rapid expansion in domestic bachelor enrolments.

2017

Australian Qualification Framework review

The AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications. The Government announced a review of the AQF in the 2017-18 Budget to ensure that it continued to meet the needs of students, employers, education providers and the wider community. On 9 December 2019 the Government accepted all the recommendations of the review in relation to higher education.

2019

Funding caps

Funding caps for domestic bachelor funding were introduced in the 2017-18 MYEFO.

2021

Job-ready Graduates

The package introduced major changes to CGS clusters and student contributions, while providing incentives for students to pursue priority fields including STEM, education and health. It also provides significant funding for additional student places.

International education

Overview

International education is Australia's largest services export, an influencer of Australia's soft power within the Asia-Pacific region and a potential talent pipeline for our workforce. Further, research collaboration with international partners provides access to global knowledge and infrastructure for Australia-based researchers, but this can come with security risks that need to be managed.

Pre-pandemic, international education contributed \$40.3 billion to the economy and supported approximately 250,000 jobs. To 2020, international student numbers showed consistently strong growth, driven by China, with annual commencements increasing more than threefold between 2002 and 2019 (from 228,194 students in 2002 to 756,610 students in 2019). This growth made international education an integral part of the Australian economy – the fifth largest export overall in 2021 after iron ore, coal, natural gas, and gold.

Australia's international education and training sector faced serious challenges due to international border closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sector has almost halved in value in the past two years, constraining its broader contribution to Australia's economy and skill base. In January 2022, international student enrolments were down 30 per cent compared to pre-pandemic levels of January 2020.

This has come as the nature of education changes with the growth of online delivery and short courses, and micro-credentials becoming increasingly prominent.

Innovations in education delivery, such as the rapid rise of digital and online education, micro-credentials and short courses, and enhanced transnational education provision, are providing new market opportunities as students seek to tailor their education experience to their preferred locations and styles of learning. Diversifying offerings to capitalise on digital and offshore opportunities is increasingly important in supporting long-term growth and resilience in the sector.

Pre-pandemic, Australian providers focused on onshore delivery. Online study creates an opportunity for international students to transition to further online or onshore study. Transnational education and offshore education delivery also allow Australian institutions to tap into the growing international middle-class demographic, driven by international students who are unable to afford a premium in-country experience and are looking for more affordable and flexible options.

[REDACTED]

Better aligning international students with Australia's skills needs also presents further opportunities and flow on benefits to derive national gain from international education. International students already help meet short term and service and care industries' labour needs in areas like hospitality, retail and aged care. [REDACTED]

While the benefits of international education are significant, the sector is also facing new security challenges in the increasingly complex and evolving world [REDACTED]. The establishment of the University Foreign Interference Taskforce and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security's (PJCIS) *Inquiry into national security risks affecting the Australian Higher Education and Research Sector* demonstrate the need to safeguard the reputation of Australian universities, protect university students and staff, and ensure our institutions continue to benefit from international collaboration.

Governance

The Council for International Education (Council), established in 2016, provides direction for Australia's role in international education and training. The Council consists of seven ministers with portfolio responsibility for aspects of international education, as well as 11 expert members from across the sector.

Australian education providers, both private and public, through their peak representative bodies, work with the Government on the sector's health and growth, including through the department's quarterly International Education Stakeholders Forum.

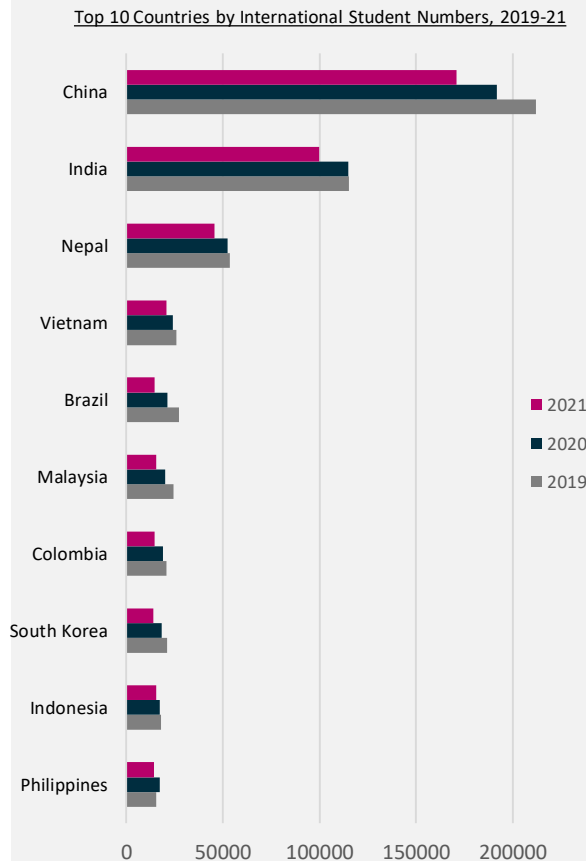
Government oversight of the sector requires collaboration with states and territories. The department holds biannual meetings with international education areas from each jurisdiction through the Commonwealth, State and Territory International Education and Training Forum (CSTIETF).

The department also maintains close working relationships with other federal agencies, including the Department of Home Affairs, Austrade, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. Relationships with Austrade and Home Affairs are particularly important in ensuring alignment of international education policy, regulation, marketing and promotion, and in upholding visa integrity.

Snapshot of participation and funding in International Education

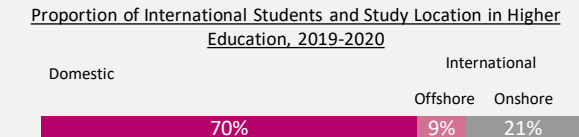
International Education is Australia's 5th largest export and largest services export. In 2019, prior to COVID, it contributed \$40.3 billion to the Australian economy.

1. In 2021, over 570,000 international students studied with Australia. This was a 24 per cent decline on 2019 (prior to COVID-19). Students from China and India make up almost half of Australia's international student cohort.



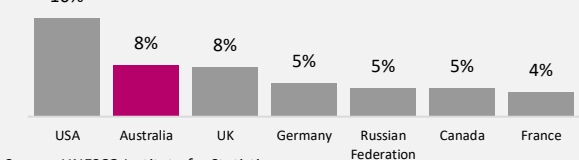
Source: DESE, PRISMS, International Student counts, Annual, December 2021
Note: In 2019 Thailand was ranked 10th

2. International students made up almost a third of Higher Education students in 2019-2020, demonstrating Australia's strong market share of international students globally. Offshore education is an increasing market opportunity.



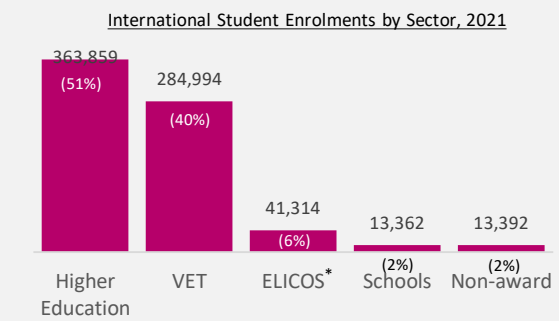
Source: DESE, Higher Education Statistics Collection, Tables 2.10 and 7.5, 2020 (based on data finalised in December 2021). Notes: Higher Education sector only. Domestic students include New Zealand citizens.

Australia's Market Share of International Students Compared to Competitor Countries, 2019



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

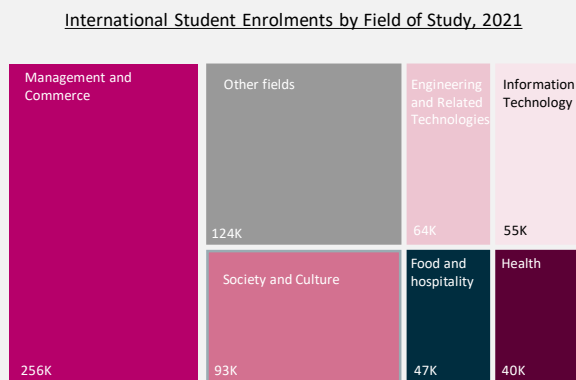
3. International students feature most heavily in Australia's Higher Education and VET sectors.



Source: DESE, PRISMS, International Student enrolments, by Sector, Annual, December 2021

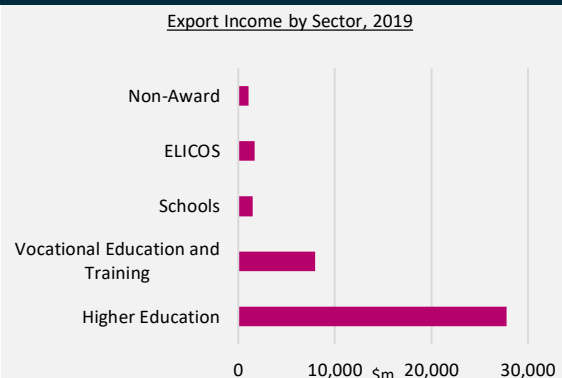
*ELICOS stands for English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students

4. International students are currently concentrated in management and commerce,



Source: DESE, PRISMS, International Student enrolments, by Broad Field of Education, Annual, December 2021

5. Export value varies across each sector, reflecting the number of international student enrolments and price differences in product offerings.



Source: ABS, International Trade: Supplementary Information, Calendar Year, 2019

The reform journey

Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)

Sets out the legal framework governing delivery of education to international students in Australia on a student visa, governing: registration and obligations of registered international education providers; the Tuition Protection Service; and enforcement and compliance arrangements.

2000

International Student Strategy for Australia (ISSA)

The CoAG-led ISSA support a high-quality experience for international students by improving student wellbeing, assuring the quality of education, strengthening consumer protection for international students and providing better information to current and future students.

2010

National Strategy for International Education 2025

Released Australia's first National Strategy to ensure Australia extended its position as a global leader in education.

2015

ESOS Act amendments

Changes removed red tape and aligned the Act with domestic quality assurance frameworks administered by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency and the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

2016

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code)

Provides nationally consistent standards for the delivery of courses to international students. Sets nationally consistent standards for the delivery of courses to international students. Institutions must comply with the National Code to maintain their registration to provide education services to international students.

2018

Council for International Education

Established to oversee Australia's role in international education and training. The Council consists of 7 Ministers with portfolio responsibility for international education; and 11 Expert Members who advise on actions and initiatives to achieve the objectives of the Strategy.

2019

Australian Strategy for International Education 2021-2030

Following a review of the *National Strategy for International Education 2025*, a new Australian Strategy was released and sets a new direction with a focus on diversifying student cohorts, source markets and education offerings, aligning skills to future industry needs, growing Australia's offshore and online presence and ensuring a strong connection between international students and Australian communities.

2021

Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference (CFI)

Designed to enhance the sector's resilience to foreign interference whilst balancing academic freedom to pursue international research collaboration.

Refreshed CFI Guidelines

Revised in 2021 to be more specific and measurable and build awareness of foreign interference particularly those involved in areas of study or research in the national interest.

2022

Review of the ESOS Act

A review of the ESOS Act is proposed to be undertaken in 2022, to ensure the framework supports the sector to grow sustainably and remain competitive.

Report on Implementation of CFI Guidelines

Universities are expected to report on their implementation progress by the end of 2022.

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (PJCIS) report

Whole of government response to the report on the *Inquiry into national security risks affecting the Australian higher education and research sector* by the end of 2022.

Independent Review of CFI Guidelines Implementation

An independent progress review will be completed by the end of 2022.

University research

Overview

University research

A strong university research sector is key to Australia's prosperity. Australian research has contributed to many world changing discoveries. These include the equine vaccine for the Hendra virus, the quantum bit, the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, and needle-less vaccine delivery. Discoveries such as these drive economic growth and national productivity, improve the health and wellbeing of Australians, and help solve complex problems faced by Australia and the world. Australia's universities have been a key factor in these achievements, providing around one-third of all research and undertaking almost all basic research.

Australian universities are internationally recognised for their high-quality research and scientific capabilities. International citations data shows that in 2021, Australia produced 3.4 per cent of the world's scholarly output, 5.5 per cent of the top 10 per cent most cited publications and 7.3 per cent of the top one per cent of most cited publications. Currently, 36 per cent of Australian university research is assessed by the Australian Research Council (ARC) at 'well above world standard'.

While universities support all types of research activities, they are the main drivers of basic research, spending around \$2.7 billion on basic research activities in 2018-19, or around 90 per cent of Australia's total basic research expenditure. Industry, on the other hand, supports the majority of experimental research in the system, expending \$10.4 billion, or 83 per cent of Australia's experimental research expenditure in 2018-19.¹

Reforms in recent years have sought to enhance the innovation and translation focus of the university research sector to increase diversification of the Australian economy and to drive a stronger manufacturing capability.

Australian Government support

The Australian Government's total investment in research and development for 2021-22 was around \$11.8 billion, with \$3.3 billion distributed through the education portfolio for university research.² The Australian university research system is also supported by state and territory governments through a range of grant schemes, with the latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018-19) showing that state and territory government organisations contributed 37 per cent of the total government expenditure on research and development (R&D).³

Australian Government funding for university research is focused on two grant schemes:

- **Research block grants (RBGs)**, worth approximately \$2 billion per annum, incorporate the Research Support Program (RSP) for the systemic costs of research, and Research Training

¹ ABS, Research and Experimental Development, Government and Private Non-Profit Organisations, Australia 2017-19

² Science, Research and Innovation (SRI) Budget Tables 2021-22

³ ABS, Research and Experimental Development, Government and Private Non-Profit Organisations, Australia 2017-19

Program (RTP) for the training of higher degree by research students. Capped funding to universities is allocated through performance-based formulae that consider income received for R&D purposes, and higher degree by research student completions.

- **National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP)** provides around \$800 million for competitive grants for non-medical research through the ARC. Funding is allocated through a competitive and merit based, expert assessment process.

In addition to the grants schemes, the department is rolling out initiatives aimed at supporting university innovation and industry collaboration. Key initiatives include the \$1.6 billion Australia's Economic Accelerator Program, the introduction of a National Industry PhD Program, the expansion of CSIRO's Main Sequence Ventures, and the establishment of the Trailblazer Universities Program. This package reflects extensive policy analysis and stakeholder consultation and is designed for universities, industry, and government to partner together on effective research.

Through prioritising investment across sectors and supporting collaboration between universities and industry, the package will drive innovation in both the research and industry sectors. The strong industry connection will kickstart Australia's focus on manufacturing, national sovereignty and fostering high-skilled job creation.

National research infrastructure

Australia's university research system is underpinned by critical National Research Infrastructure (NRI), including the equipment, resources and expertise required to operate the infrastructure. The NRI network provides merit-based access to researchers from all domains, not just universities. Accordingly, NRI supports outcomes across a range of government priorities and policy areas including climate, health, manufacturing, and agriculture. Examples range from advanced microscopy to improve battery technologies or minerals exploration, to controlled growth environments to improve understanding of the best conditions for agricultural crops.

Data gathered by NRI frequently has multiple benefits – data on ocean observations can be used to improve weather forecasting, reduce the impacts of extreme weather events, improve fisheries management and support Defence initiatives.

The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) underpins Australia's investment in research infrastructure and is distinct in its emphasis on collaboration instead of competition. In 2020-21, NCRIS funding of \$272 million supported researchers to access a range of nationally significant assets, facilities, and services to support leading-edge research and innovation. Over the 2018-19 financial year, 51,482 domestic researchers and 9,552 international researchers used NCRIS projects. Around 76 per cent of current NCRIS projects provide critical or operational services to enable Australian Government policies and program delivery.⁴

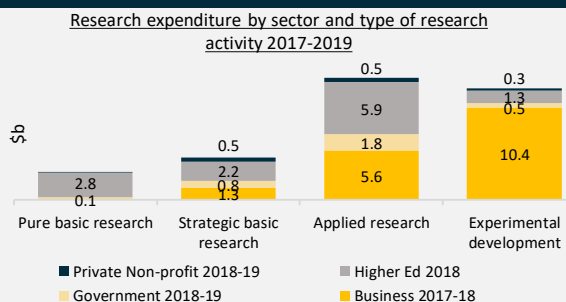
Since 2005, NCRIS has committed a total of \$6.6 billion for the high-quality national research infrastructure that Australian researchers need to address key challenges. Reflecting the findings of the 2021 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap, new investments are being developed in areas with the potential to deliver real change in research capability, support national sovereignty and position Australia as a global leader in the future.

⁴ NCRIS 2020 Census Report (based on data from the 2018-19 financial year), unpublished.

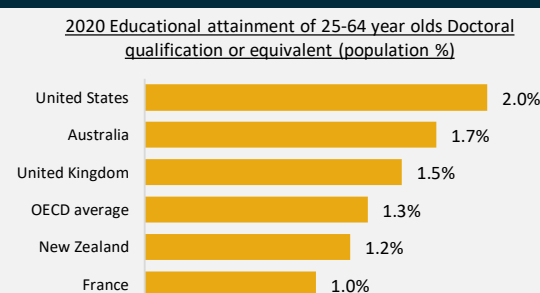
Snapshot of participation and funding – University research

In 2018, 90 per cent of research conducted by Australian Universities was rated at or above world standard. 1.7% of Australians aged 25-64 have a doctoral qualification

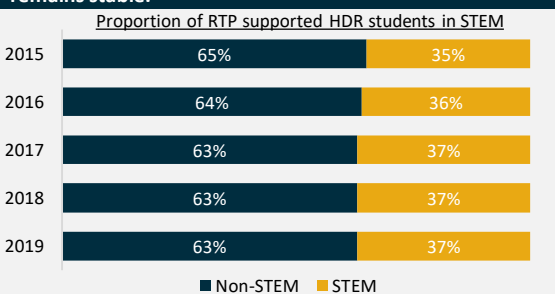
1. Universities support research across all sectors and they undertake the vast majority of basic research.



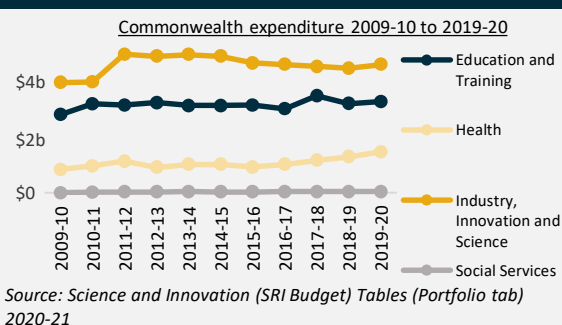
2. A higher proportion of Australians have obtained a Doctorate (1.7%) compared to the OECD average (1.3%).



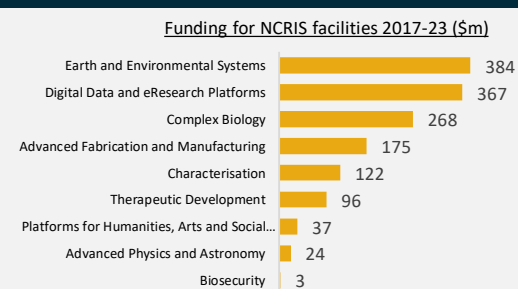
3. The proportion of STEM higher degree by research (HDR) students supported by the Research Training Program remains stable.



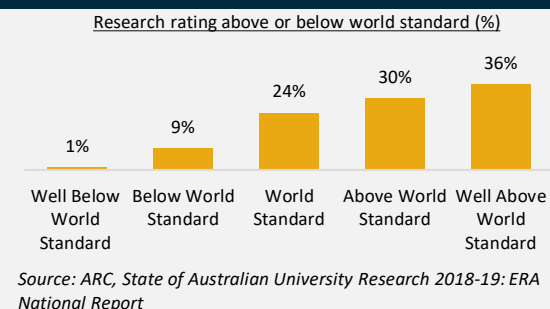
4. The Commonwealth invests approximately \$11.8 billion in Research and Development each year.



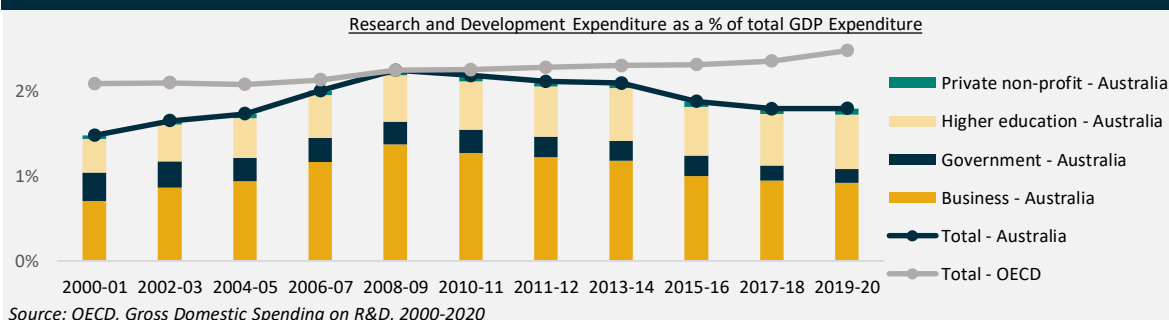
5. National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) funding supports a broad range of disciplines.



6. In 2018, 30 per cent of Australian research was assessed at 'above world standard' and 36 per cent 'well above'.



7. Australia spends less than the OECD average on Research and Development.



The reform journey

Establishment of the Australian Research Council (ARC)

The ARC advises the Government on research matters and administers the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP), a significant component of Australia's investment in research.

Review of Research Policy and Funding Arrangements (Watt Review)

Led to reforms to both the Research Block Grants and ARC Linkage Project. The Watt Review also served as the catalyst for the development of ARC's Engagement and Impact assessment.

National Interest Test

The National Interest Test (NIT) is a standalone statement applied to all forms of funding within the NCGP to demonstrate the societal benefits of the proposed research beyond the academic community.

Governance in the Australian Research Council

The Minister articulated the expectations for Government funded research to better support Australia's economy and society. Also outlined reforms to align ARC's research programs to the NIT and National Manufacturing Priorities, fast-tracking the implementation of recommendations to the Excellence in Research for Australia and EI assessments and enhanced organisational governance.

University Research Commercialisation Action Plan

To increase research translation and commercialisation in the sector by incentivising researchers to collaborate with industry and commercialise research.

2001

2009

2015

2016

2018

2021

2022

Commencement of the National Research Grants Program

Supports the highest-quality fundamental and applied research and research training through national competition. Provides incentives for Australia's most talented researchers to work in partnership with leading researchers, and to form alliances with Australian industry.

Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) Review

Aimed to ensure Australia's research system continued to produce a highly skilled research workforce. Recommendations led to the establishment of the Research Training Implementation Plan working group.

National Research Infrastructure Roadmap

Developed every 5 years to set the policy direction for Government investment, which is delivered through a Research Infrastructure Investment Plan every 2 years.

Research Training Program

Supports reforms enhancing the link between industry and universities. Incentivises universities to provide industry internships earlier.

Commonwealth-state relations

Overview

Effective Commonwealth-state relations will be critical to delivering the Government's agenda. Responsibility for early childhood education and care (ECEC), schooling, and vocational education and training (VET) is shared with states and territories (states). While the Commonwealth provides an increasingly significant leadership and funding role to meet national priorities, states have primary responsibility for policy and service delivery within their respective jurisdictions.

Productive relationships between state, territory and Commonwealth Governments are critical to promote policy reforms that are of national significance.

Commonwealth-state relations architecture

In March 2020, National Cabinet and the National Federation Reform Council were established to govern relations between the Commonwealth and states, replacing the Council of Australian Governments. This new architecture was designed to streamline intergovernmental decision-making.

The Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR), comprising the Commonwealth Treasurer as Chair and all state and territory treasurers, is responsible for overseeing the financial relationship between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. CFFR reports to the National Cabinet under the Australian Federal Relations Architecture.

Skills National Cabinet Reform Committee (Skills Committee) and Skills Ministers Meeting

The Skills National Cabinet Reform Committee was established in 2020 to support the ongoing reforms to VET outlined in the Heads of Agreement on Skills Reform (including the development of a new national skills agreement). The Skills Ministers Meeting has the same membership and facilitates intergovernmental collaboration on a broader range of VET matters. Both forums are chaired by the Commonwealth minister with responsibility for skills.

The major intergovernmental agreements which agree shared national goals and activities and provide states with extra funding to assist in the costs of delivery, supported by the Skills Ministers Meeting are:

- National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development (NASWD) (ongoing)
- JobTrainer Fund (2020–2022).

Education Ministers Meeting (previously Education Council)

The Education Ministers Meeting is chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, which was a shift from the historic practice of a revolving chair. The meeting provides a forum for national cooperation on early childhood education and care, school education, higher education, and international education. It replaced the Education Council with the expectation that the forum be more agile and responsive, with consensus decision-making ensuring direct responsibility for decision-making resting with Ministers.

The major intergovernmental agreements which agree shared national goals and activities and provide states with extra funding to assist in the costs of delivery, supported by the Education Ministers Meeting are:

- Preschool Reform Agreement (2022–25)
- National Schools Reform Agreement (NSRA) (2018–2023).

Commonwealth and state roles and responsibilities

Early childhood education and care

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is a joint responsibility of the Commonwealth and the states, working closing with the ECEC sector. Jurisdictions are collectively responsible for policy and rules that govern the operation of the sector through national law, national regulations and the National Quality Framework (NQF). The Commonwealth funds the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) to provide guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes and ensure nationally consistent regulation. States – through their regulatory authorities – are responsible for administering the NQF and for the quality and safety of approved services.

In terms of funding, the Commonwealth's primary role is to assist families with the cost of child care through provision of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and safety net measures. In 2020-21, the Government spent \$10.2 billion on child care funding. This is forecast to grow to \$10.3 billion in 2021-22, of which \$9.9 billion is on the CCS. The Commonwealth also supports universal access to preschool through transfers to states for service delivery (from 2022, via the Preschool Reform Agreement). In 2020-21, the Commonwealth invested \$442.3 million in transfers to states for preschool through the Universal Access National Partnership. That year, states collectively contributed \$1.6 billion of their own funding to the preschool sector.

Schooling

States and territories have constitutional responsibility for schools. The Commonwealth has limited levers to influence delivery – mostly through conditions of funding provided under the Commonwealth Australian Education Act. States provide majority of government funding to government schools and the Commonwealth provides the majority of government funding to non-government schools. The Commonwealth and the states commit to continue to work together through Education Ministers Meetings, recognising their complementary roles in the federation.

A new NSRA is due to come into effect no later than 1 January 2024. Under section 22 of the *Australian Education Act 2013*, states and territories must be: 'party to a national agreement relating to school education reform' and 'party to an agreement with the Commonwealth relating to implementation by the State or Territory' to be eligible for Commonwealth financial assistance for schools. A review of the current NSRA is currently being undertaken by the Productivity Commission. The review is planned to be completed by 31 December 2022. The findings will inform negotiations with the state governments on directions for the next NSRA.

Skills/Vocational education and training (VET)

Jurisdictions are collectively responsible for policy and rules that govern the operation of the sector. States largely manage service delivery within their respective jurisdictions – including deciding which training is subsidised – and are wholly responsible for Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes. The Commonwealth transfers funding to states, and directly funds a range of skills programs, including significant investment in apprenticeships incentives and support. The Commonwealth also funds key regulatory authorities, such as the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and funds the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, the national professional body responsible for collecting, managing, analysing and communicating research and statistics on the VET sector.

As at the 2022–23 Budget, Commonwealth investment in VET in 2021–22 included \$2.2 billion in transfers to states, comprising \$1.6 billion under the NASWD and a further \$600 million via National Partnership Agreements (NPAs), including JobTrainer and the Skilling Australians Fund. States collectively contributed \$3.9 billion of their own funding to VET in 2020, with funding levels varying across jurisdictions. When considering Commonwealth transfers to states, the Commonwealth's funding contribution is approximately 35 per cent of all state VET expenditure.

In 2020, as part of the Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform, the Commonwealth and state governments agreed to an approach and priorities for developing a new national skills agreement to replace the NASWD. Negotiations are due for completion by 30 June 2022.

Snapshot of Commonwealth and state funding for sectors

In 2022–23, the Commonwealth will provide the states with \$166.4 billion in total payments.

1. In 2022–23 the Commonwealth will provide \$27.0 billion to support state education services. A further \$1.8 billion will be provided to support state skills and workforce development.

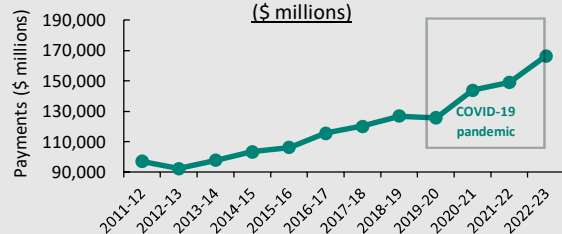
Commonwealth expenditure for sectors, by payment type (\$)



Source: 2022–23 Budget, Paper 3
*includes preschool funding

2. Since 2011–12, Commonwealth payments to the states have increased by over 71.5 per cent.

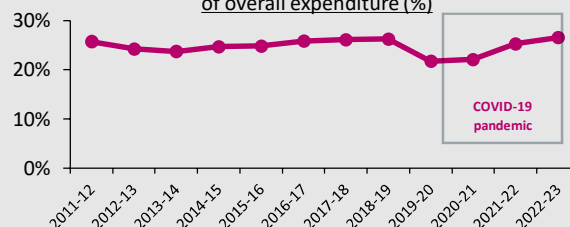
Total Commonwealth payments to states and territories (\$ millions)



Source: 2022–23 Budget

3. While payments have increased significantly since 2011–12, it has been roughly in line with overall Commonwealth expenditure.

Commonwealth payments to the states as a proportion of overall expenditure (%)



Source: 2022–23 Budget

4. The Commonwealth and the states fund education and skills in varying proportions, reflecting the degree of responsibility for a sector. The Commonwealth provides the greatest proportion of funding to Early Childhood (child care) and Higher Education.

Schools

Real Australian, State and Territory government recurrent expenditure, 2010-11 to 2020-21



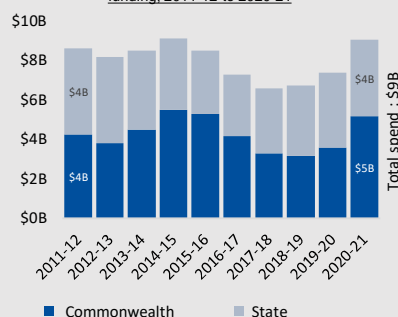
Notes:

- Information as at 11 May 2022
- Education sectors also have significant private expenditure, notably in early childhood, VET and higher education.
- Commonwealth transfer payments to states shown as Commonwealth expenditure.
-
- Higher Education: Excludes loans to students e.g. HELP.
- VET: Commonwealth figures include transfers to states, Commonwealth own programs and income contingent loan outlays. State financial year figures are estimated by averaging the two overlapping calendar years

Source: Department (Higher Education); NCVER and Final Budgets Outcomes (VET); RoGS 2022 (other sectors)

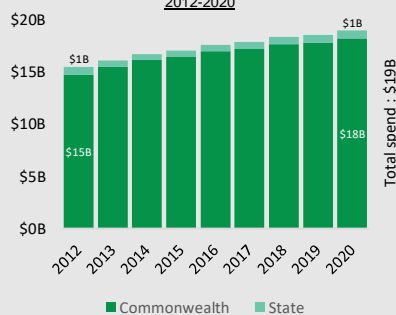
VET

Nominal Australian, State and Territory government funding, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Higher Education

University Revenue from Government Sources 2012-2020



The reform journey

Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA FFR)

Key change in intergovernmental relations
Established a new framework for the Commonwealth's financial relations with the states. It represented the single most significant shift in Commonwealth-state relations for decades.

National Agreement on Skills and Workforce Development (NASWD)*

The NASWD identified the long-term objectives of commonwealth, state and territory governments. The objective of the NASWD is to support a VET system that delivers a productive and highly skilled workforce which enables all working age Australians to develop the skills and qualifications needed to participate effectively in the labour market
In 2020, all governments signed a Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform setting out priorities for a new national skills agreement to replace the NASWD.

Australian Education Act 2013

Introduction of the *Australian Education Act 2013* replaced four yearly funding agreements and established the Schooling Resources Standard. It created a national approach to school funding and adopted a needs-based funding model.

National School Reform Agreement*

A set of strategic reforms between the Commonwealth, states, and territories to lift student outcomes across Australian schools.
*Expires December 2023.

New Federation Funding Agreements Framework (FFA)

New governance arrangements for Commonwealth-state funding agreements. It recognises that the states have primary responsibility for many areas of service delivery, but that coordinated action is necessary to address Australia's economic and social challenges.

Preschool Reform Agreement, 2022-2025*

2008

Universal Access National Partnership

A commitment from both Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to provide the opportunity for all kids to attend preschool and set targets for enrolment and attendance. UNAP funding benefits around 350,000 children each year and data collected through the Australian Early Development Census has shown significant improvements in school readiness.

2012

National plan for school improvement

Introduced a national school funding model which ties funding to concrete improvements. The plan aims to ensure that by 2025 Australia is ranked as a top 5 country in the world for the performance in Reading, Science, Mathematics, and to provide a high-quality and high-equity education system.

2009

2013

Formation of National Cabinet

Key change in intergovernmental relations
Established 13 March 2020, and comprising the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers, to lead a unified and coordinated response to COVID-19 across the Federation.

2019

National Federation Reform Council (NFRC)

The NFRC replaced the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) model. It reset Ministerial Councils and created the:

- Skills National Cabinet Reform Committee and Skills Ministers Meeting
- Education Ministers Meeting
- Data and Digital Ministers Meeting

2020

Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing

Commits all jurisdictions to share public data as a default position, where it can be done securely, safely, lawfully and ethically.

2021-22

*Intergovernmental agreements underpinned by legislative funding arrangements

Women's labour market participation

Overview

Increasing women's labour market participation is an economic and social priority

Increasing women's workforce participation is essential to building a better future for Australia. By removing obstacles to gender equity, increasing women's workforce participation has the potential to boost women's economic participation, boost productivity and provide greater economic security for women.

Women's workforce participation has increased substantially since the 1970s and is currently at a near-record high of 62.1 per cent.¹ Progress has been driven by greater levels of education, changing social attitudes, declining fertility rates, policy changes (particularly greater subsidies for child care), and increasing availability of part-time and flexible working arrangements.² There remains capacity to improve, with Australia's participation rates behind other OECD countries.³ Women are also more likely to work part-time than men, and more likely to take extended time out of the workforce due to unpaid caring and domestic responsibilities, which impacts their lifetime earnings and contributes to the superannuation gender gap.

Decisions to enter or re-enter the workforce are often complex and multifactorial. Commonly cited barriers include workplace culture, gender stereotypes, availability of flexible work arrangements, affordability and accessibility of child care, gender differences in domestic work, and societal expectations regarding gender roles.⁴ In an ABS survey of women who would like to join or increase their participation in the labour force, incentives relating to child care access and cost were cited as the most important incentives, followed by the ability to work part-time hours.⁵ The interaction of the personal tax, family payments and child-care subsidy arrangements can also provide strong disincentives for women returning to work after having children.⁶ Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women, migrant women, mature women, First Nations women, and women with disability may also experience particular or additional barriers that prevent greater workforce participation.

Women's educational attainment has increased over time, with increased numbers of women entering skilled professions and accessing better paid jobs. Despite this, Australian women continue to spend less time in paid employment, earn less than men (the gender pay gap is currently 13.8 per cent), and contribute disproportionately to domestic work.⁷ Coordinated efforts by government and business to implement critical reforms can address gender pay gap contributors, including: discrimination and bias in hiring and pay, female-dominated industries and jobs attracting lower wages, women's disproportionate share of unpaid caring and domestic work, a lack of workplace

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (April 2022) *Labour Force, Australia*.

² Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre and WGEA (2016) *Gender Equity Insights - Inside Australia's Pay Gap; 2021 Intergenerational Report*

³ As at 2020, while Australia was outperforming the OECD average, Australia was ranked 8th and lagged behind countries such as New Zealand, Norway, and Iceland and slightly outperformed Canada and the UK. Source: OECD, *Labour force participation rate, by sex and age group*.

⁴ For example, see Committee for Economic Development of Australia, *Barriers to Equality of Opportunity*.

⁵ ABS (2018-19) *Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia*.

⁶ KPMG (2018) *Ending workforce discrimination against women*.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics (November 2021) *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia*.

flexibility, and greater time out of the workforce impacting career progression.⁸ To improve gender equality in the workplace, it is important to improve the ability of women to engage in paid work and to share unpaid work more equitably with men, to have the skills and opportunity to perform higher-productivity jobs, and occupy positions of leadership.

Delivery of whole-of-government policy and services that account for compounding and overlapping disadvantage (from being both a woman and also from a CALD and/or migrant background, First Nations, mature age and/or with disability) is necessary. Boosting women's labour market participation requires broad, wrap-around action across the Commonwealth, including through consideration of tax-transfer (including the interaction between income tax and benefits), social security, superannuation, child care, health care and parental leave policies.

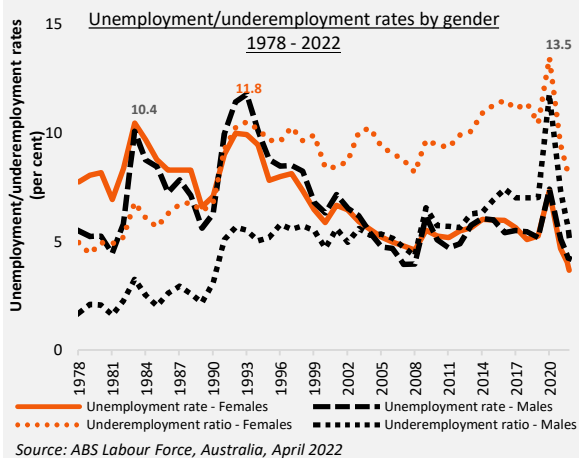
Across the life journey, alongside child care, education and skills policy, this department also delivers activities to encourage women's participation in non-traditional trades and STEM careers and supports employers to reduce barriers to attracting and retaining women. Measures can assist by encouraging and enabling women to increase and maintain their involvement in the labour market, which can improve participation over their lifetime. Government policies must also consider women's personal preferences, including their own and others' attitudes to work and family, because these are critical factors in the decisions women make about working.

⁸ Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics (February 2022)*. The gender pay gap is the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time equivalent earnings, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. It is a measure of women's overall position in the paid workforce and does not compare like roles.

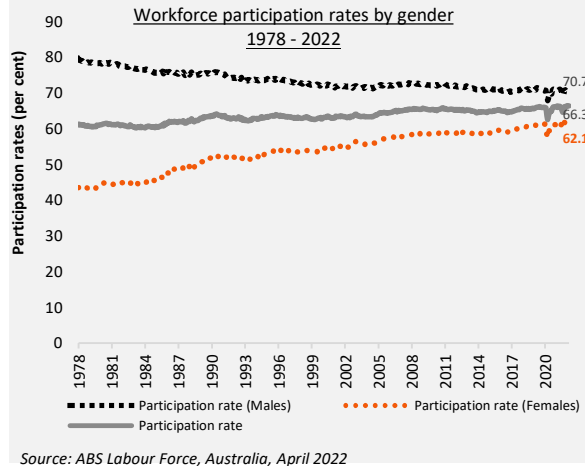
Snapshot of women's labour market participation

Women's participation rates and the gender pay gap have improved over the past decade, however more work can be done to further reduce the gap

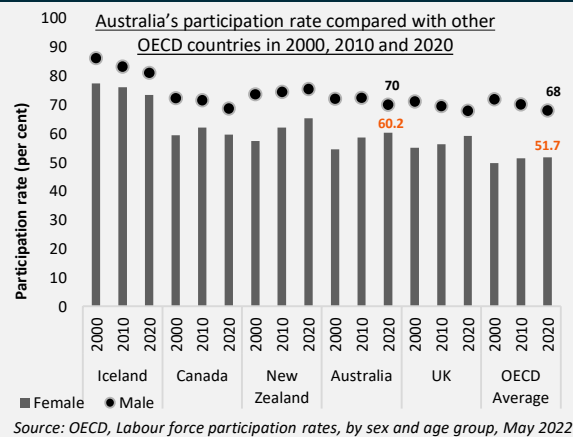
1. Women are consistently more likely to be underemployed



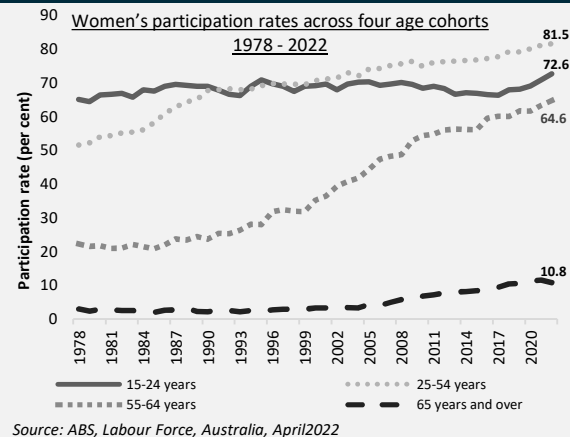
2. The gap in workforce participation has narrowed, but persists



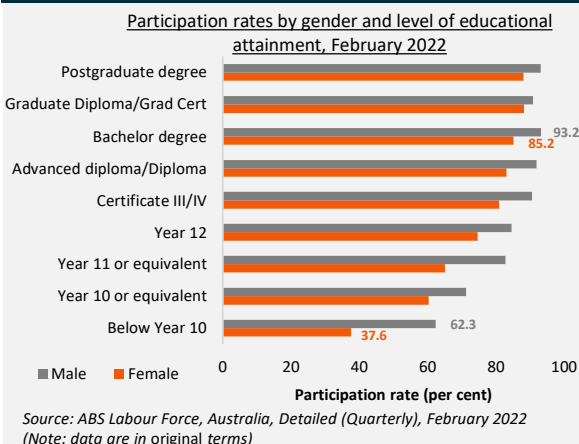
3. Australia's women's participation rate is above the OECD average



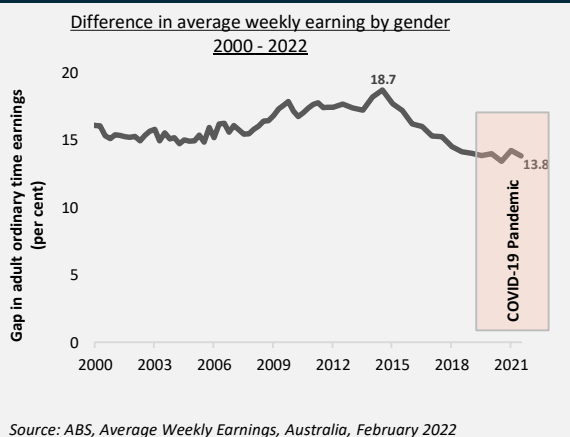
4. Women's participation rates have increased across all age cohorts



5. The difference in participation rates widens for women (20-64 years old) with lower educational attainment



6. Australia's gender pay gap has decreased over the last two decades but remains significant



The reform journey

Fair Work Act 2009

Commencing in 2009, the *Fair Work Act 2009* protects people from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sex.

Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)

Established in 2012, WGEA is charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate replaced with the CCS, an income-tested and activity-tested subsidy. The Additional Child Subsidy for vulnerable children was also introduced at this time.

Child Care Subsidy rate lifted for second and subsequent children

From 7 March 2022, CCS rates for families using care for two or more children aged five and under increased by 30 percentage points for their second and younger children, up to a maximum of 95 per cent.

2009

2010

2012

2013

2018

2021

2022

National Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme introduced

Provided up to 18 weeks pay at the national minimum wage for eligible working parents. Additional changes to this policy have been implemented by successive governments to expand the reach and improve the flexibility of the policy.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

As well as supporting people with disability, the NDIS has also allowed many women caring for family members with disability to return to the workforce.

Child Care Subsidy annual cap removed

From 10 December 2021, the CCS annual cap (of \$10,655 per child for families earning over \$190,015 in 2021-22 terms) was removed for the entire 2021-22 financial year onwards.

Labor's 2022 Women's Budget Statement

Sets out a range of policy reforms, including establishing a Women's Economic Security Taskforce, introducing a National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality, and gender responsive budgeting.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Overview

Australia's First Nations population comprises more than 800,000 people (around 3.3 per cent of the total Australian population).¹ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience poorer outcomes across most life measures compared to other Australians. They remain underrepresented in the workforce, as well as in many occupations and community roles, experience lesser levels of education attainment, and are overrepresented in the criminal justice and child protection systems.

The 2020 National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the Agreement) was developed in partnership with all Australian governments and the Coalition of the Peaks (the Peaks), which consists of more than 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.

The Agreement is built around four new Priority Reforms which underpin essential acceleration towards the socio-economic targets and will fundamentally change the relationship between the Australian Government and First Nations communities. The Priority Reforms are:

1. Formal partnerships and shared decision-making: critical to accelerating policy and progress
2. Building the community-controlled sector: to deliver better informed services
3. Transforming government organisations: to be culturally safe, responsive and eliminate racism
4. Shared access to data and information at a regional level: to inform shared decision making.

Closing the Gap targets

The Agreement commits parties to achieve 17 socioeconomic targets by 2031, opening up life changing opportunities for current and future generations. Targets 3-8 sit within this portfolio:²

1. By 2025, increase enrolment in Year Before Full-time Schooling early childhood education to 95 per cent (on track)
2. By 2031, increase children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census to 55 per cent (not on track)
3. By 2031, increase year 12 or equivalent qualification attainment (age 20-24) to 96 per cent (not on track)
4. By 2031, increase tertiary completion (Certificate III and above) (age 25-34) to 70 per cent (not on track)
5. By 2031, increase employment, education or training (age 15-24) to 67 per cent (on track)
6. By 2031, increase employment (age 25-64) to 62 per cent (not on track).

Despite current efforts, projections show that only two of the six targets will be met (see Chart 5). Extra work will be needed to ensure all six targets are achieved, particularly considering that recently released Target 4 data shows – for the first time – a decline in outcomes. Recent feedback on the Commonwealth's 2021 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan from the Peaks, emphasised more effort is required to embed all the Priority Reforms within departments to ensure that all the socio-economic targets can be met.

¹ ABS Census, 2016

² Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, Canberra, www.niaa.gov.au

There are some projects showing promising signs of positive impact and contributing to a growing evidence base. Notable examples include: the Aurora Foundation's Redefining Indigenous Success in Education which supports students through individualised Academic and Wellbeing Support Plans; and the Early Years Education Program, which will deliver an early learning teaching model to strengthen literacy and numeracy learning through explicit instruction, in combination with play-based learning approaches.

Snapshot of First Nations peoples, outcomes and Closing the Gap progress in education and employment

1. Australia's First Nations population has a relatively younger age structure. This is reflective of higher fertility rates as well as higher mortality rates than the non-Indigenous population.

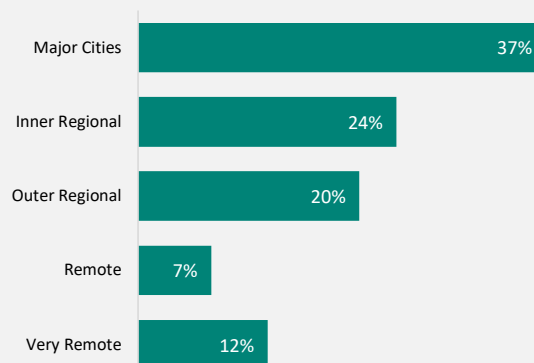
Percentage of non-Indigenous and Indigenous by age group, 2016



Source: ABS 2016, Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

2. The majority of First Nations peoples live in major cities or inner regional areas. While those who live in remote and rural areas of Australia are relatively fewer, they often experience greater challenges, requiring innovative and tailored policy responses.

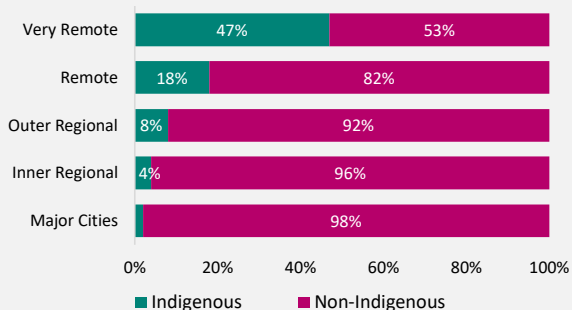
Distribution of Australia's Indigenous population by remoteness, 2016



Source: ABS 2016, Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

3. First Nations peoples represent a higher proportion of the remote and very remote population than they do in other populations. This suggests that a geographic focus may inform policy responses.

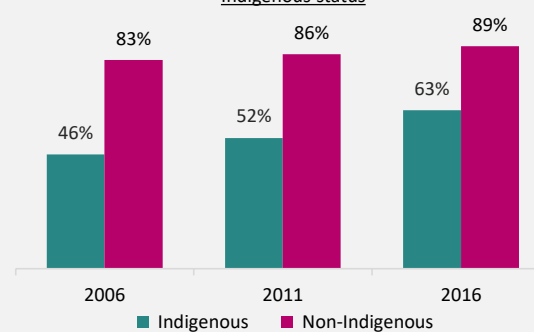
Distribution of Australia's Population by Remoteness and Indigenous Status, 2016 (%)



Source: ABS 2016, Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

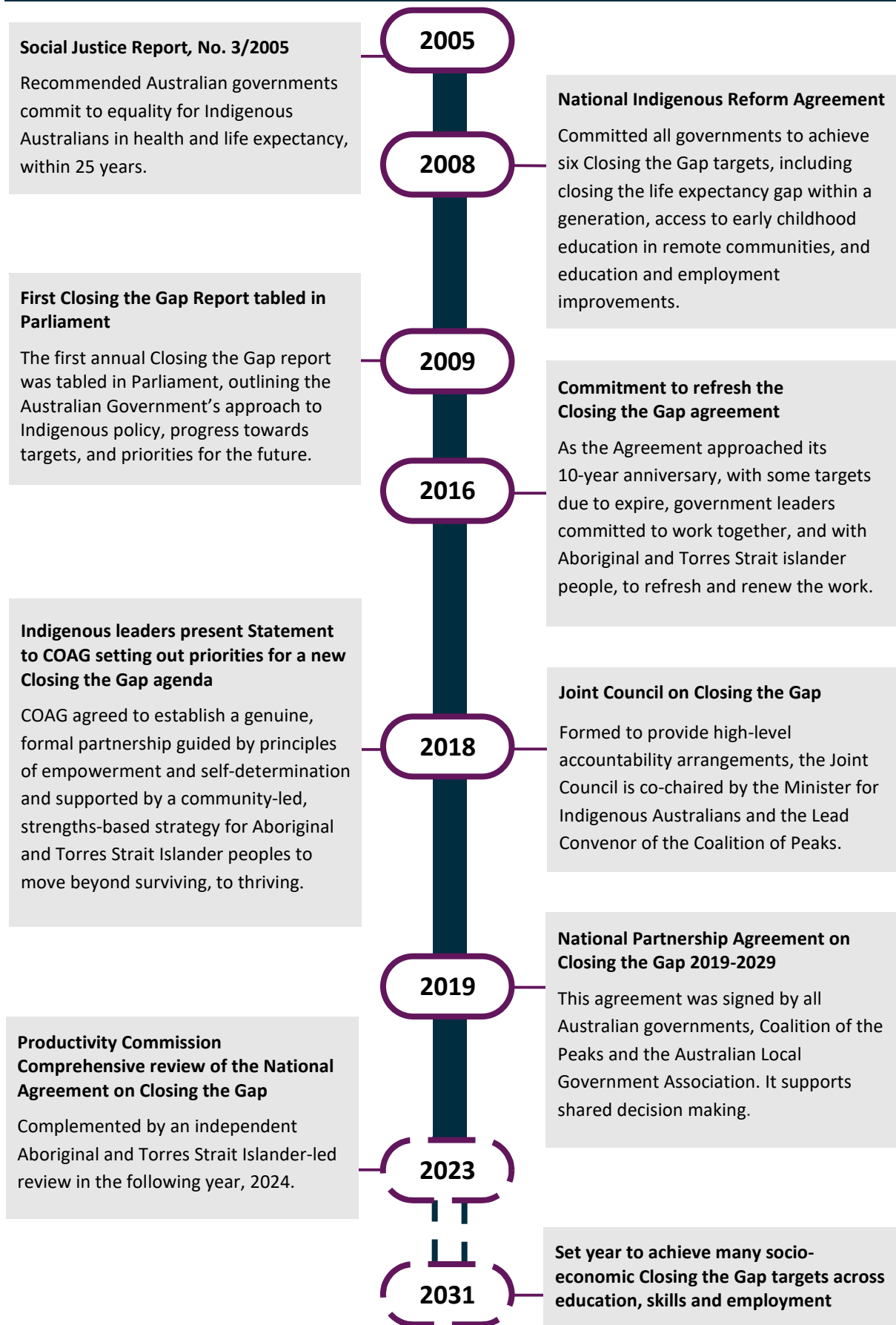
4. The proportion of First Nations students completing Year 12 or equivalent has increased significantly since 2006, but a large gap remains when compared to non-Indigenous students.

Year 12 or equivalent completion rates (%), by Indigenous status



Source: ACARA Year 12 Certification rates, 2016

The reform journey



People with disability

Overview

Australia's population includes approximately 4.4 million people with disability.¹ Full participation and inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of Australian society can deliver broad social and economic benefits, as well individual benefits to persons such as increased independence and greater connection with their community. However, there is still a way to go. People with disability tend to have lower rates of participation across education, skills and employment relative to people without disability, for example:

- Less than half (44 per cent) of people with disability had completed Year 12 or equivalent, compared to people without disability (68 per cent).²
- Only three per cent of apprentices and seven per cent of people who attended university were people with disability.^{3, 4}
- Over half (53 per cent) of people with disability of working age (15-64 years) were in the labour force, compared to the general population (84 per cent).⁵

The shift to online work and study has presented opportunities and challenges for people with a disability. For example, students with a disability have had mixed experiences with remote learning. While some have thrived, others face significant barriers such as access to computers and caring arrangements in the home learning environment.⁶

Inclusive design and delivery of mainstream education, skills and employment policies and systems are critical to improving outcomes for people with disability. Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031, as agreed by all Australian governments, has a focus on strengthening mainstream systems. It includes education and employment among its seven outcome areas.

Trends in enrolments for students with disability in mainstream, special and special assistance schools need to be better understood.

.⁷

The department supports people with disability through mainstream programs, such as school loading for students with disability. The National Quality Framework and major funding streams in each sector are important levers for the Australian Government to drive improved outcomes for people with disability. The department also administers targeted programs, such as the Inclusion Support Program in early childhood education and care and the National Disability Coordination Officer program in tertiary education.

¹ ABS (2018), Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

² Ibid.

³ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), 2020

⁴ Department of Education, Skills and Employment Higher Education Statistics, 2020

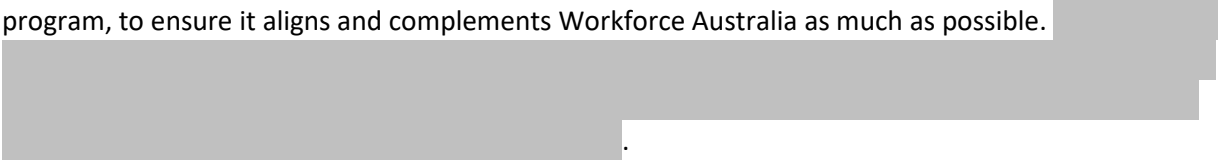
⁵ ABS (2018), Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

⁶ See for example: Victoria Department of Education, July 2021, Lessons learned from Term 2, 2020 remote and flexible learning (education.vic.gov.au)

⁷

Building awareness and capability across the education sector is a key focus of measures being implemented in response to the 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Review). A key priority is improving data transparency, including through the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD), to ensure students with disability are accessing and participating in education on the same basis as their peers without disability.

The department has been working with the Department of Social Services (DSS) on the Disability Employment Support Reform (DESR), including reforms to the Disability Employment Services (DES) program, to ensure it aligns and complements Workforce Australia as much as possible.



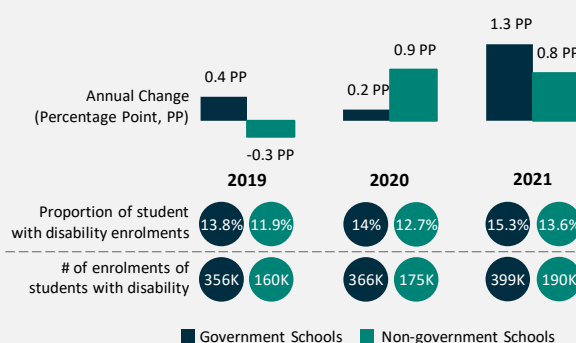
The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) is examining issues related to the work of the department, including in education and employment. The right to inclusive education has been a core focus of the Disability Royal Commission. It has considered the critical importance of education to the inclusion and independence of children and adults with disability over their life course and as a determinant of future outcomes and the full development of an individual's potential.

Snapshot of people with disability in education and employment

Australia's population includes approximately 4.4 million people with disability, or one in six Australians (ABS 2018)

2. 2020 saw an unexpected spike in the proportion of students with disability in the non-government sector. Into 2021, the proportion of such students has continued to grow across school sectors.

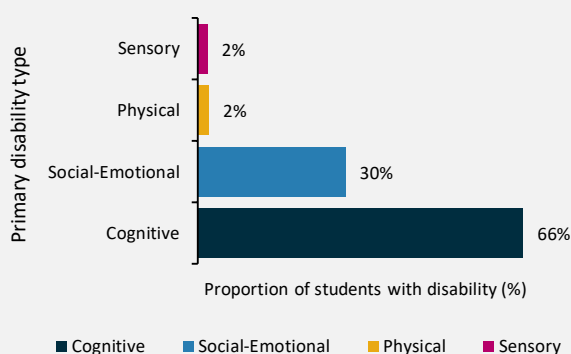
Annual change in proportion of student with disability enrolments (Percentage Point, PP)



Source: DESE school funding models as at 2022-23 Budget

3. Most students who attend special schools have a cognitive or socio-emotional disability.

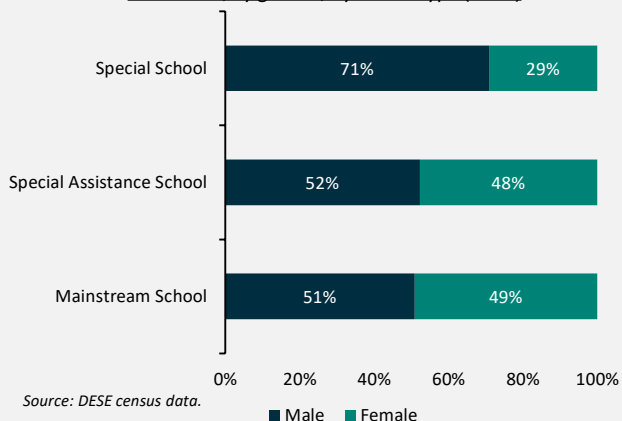
Proportion of special school and special assistance school students, by primary disability type, 2021 (%)



Source: NCCD 2021 data. NB: In the charts above, 'special schools' includes special schools and special assistance schools

4. Students in special schools are more likely to be male.

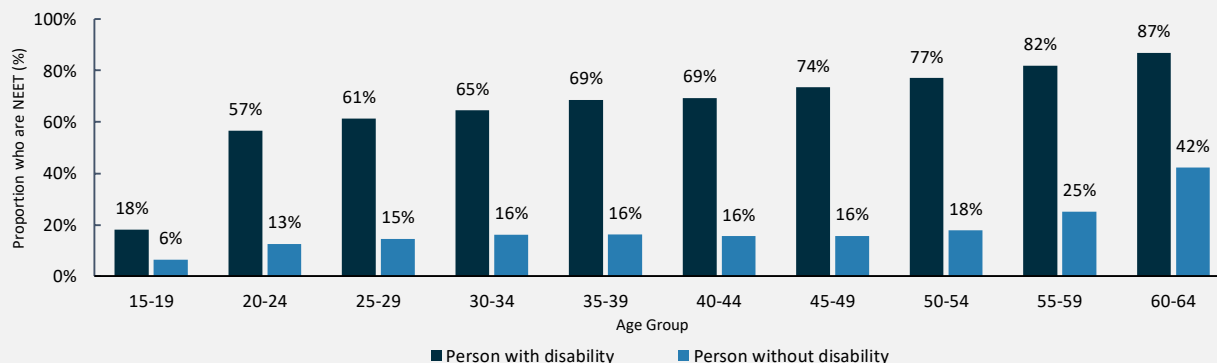
Enrolment, by gender, by school type (2021)



Source: DESE census data.

5. People with disability are disproportionately more likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training) across their lifetime. The NEET measure can be used to measure people who are at risk of becoming socially excluded, and who may not have the skills to improve their economic situation.

Proportion of population who are NEET, by age group and disability status, 2016, (%)



Source: ABS 2016 Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder extract

The reform journey

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Act aims to eliminate discrimination and establishes the concept of reasonable adjustments for people with disability.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Convention reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Australia is a signatory.

School funding disability loading

Introduced as part of needs-based recurrent school funding model.

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability

Implementation of a national approach to counting school students with disability which focuses on educational adjustment based on teacher judgement, rather than medical diagnosis. Implementation included significant investment in teacher capability around adjustments in line with the Disability Standards for Education.

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

Established in response to community concern about widespread reports of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of people with disability. A final report will be delivered to the Australian Government by 29 September 2023. The report is expected to recommend how to improve laws, policies, structures, and practices to ensure a more inclusive and just society that supports people with disability to be independent and live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

1992

2005

2006

2010

2014

2016

2017

2018

2019

2021

Disability Standards for Education 2005

The Standards are subordinate to the *Disability Discrimination Act* and clarify the obligations of education providers and the rights of people with disabilities in relation to education and training. The aim is to ensure participation in education on the same basis as students without disability.

National Disability Strategy 2010–2020

A commitment by all Australian governments to a unified, national approach to inclusion for people with disability. It was the primary mechanism for implementing Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The NDIS funds personalised supports related to people's disability support needs, unless those supports are part of another service system's universal service obligation (for example, meeting the health, education, housing, or safety needs of all Australians) or covered by reasonable adjustment (as required under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and Disability Standards for Education).

Changes to the Australian Education Act

Under the package, the student with disability funding loading is calculated using data from the NCCD.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031

Australia's Disability Strategy calls on all Australians to ensure people with disability can participate as equal members of society. Compared to the previous strategy, there is a greater focus on government accountability for implementation and outcomes, and an emphasis on the role of mainstream systems (such as education) in supporting people with disability.

Youth

Overview

Australia has more than 3.1 million young people (aged 15-24 years), which represent 12 per cent of the population.¹ Successful transitions from youth to adulthood, and from education into employment, are important in providing lifelong opportunities. The department has a key role in stewardship of the Australian Government's youth policy. This reflects the importance of education, skills, and employment in the lives of young people, and provides an opportunity to connect education and skills policy to meaningful employment for young Australians.²

Within the youth cohort, there is significant diversity that shapes social, educational, and economic outcomes. While most young people make a successful transition from education and training into employment, some youth require additional support to realise the financial and social benefits of work, with youth unemployment more than double overall unemployment. Some of the major perceived barriers to youth getting a job have been persistent, such as the availability of jobs and work experience, but more recently there has been a significant rise in lack of confidence and self-esteem.³ These challenges have been compounded by the social and economic disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While varying across jurisdictions, widespread lockdown measures, school closures, and the move to online learning across education settings due to the pandemic have resulted in widespread impacts these include valuable face-to-face learning, job losses and lack of social opportunities. Similarly, experiences throughout the pandemic have exacerbated social isolation, disengagement and mental health concerns. For example, young adults aged 18-24 years reported higher levels of psychological distress in mid to late 2020 than before the pandemic.⁴

The Australian Government has a role in ensuring every young person, particularly youth with the greatest need, are supported to successfully navigate transitions across education and employment. Through the National Strategy to address Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, ongoing efforts have sought to prevent suicide and promote the mental wellbeing of young and Indigenous Australians. The Youth Policy Framework provides an overview of support to young Australians, with an approach for how the Australian Government can better engage with young people, enabling them to become spokespeople for their peers and communities at a local and national level.

¹ ABS (June 2021), *National, state and territory population*.

² "Youth affairs and programmes including youth transitions" was transferred from the Department of Health as per Administrative Arrangements Order of 18 March 2021.

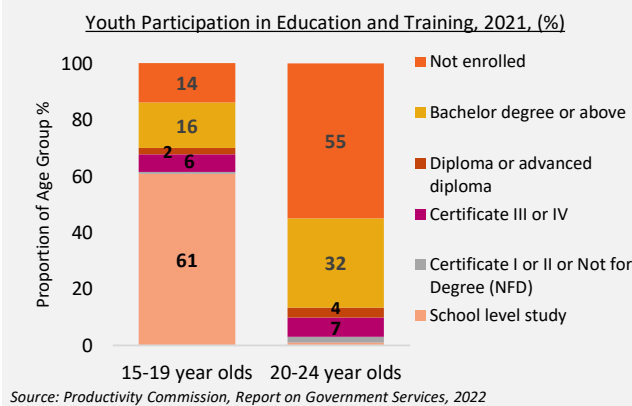
³ Life at 25 now and then visualisation using LSAY, NCVER (2019); Longitudinal survey.

⁴ Biddle N, Edwards B, Gray M & Sollis K (2020). 'Mental health and relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic.' COVID-19 briefing paper. Canberra: ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods; Biddle N and Gray M (2020), 'Tracking outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic (October 2020)', Canberra: ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods.

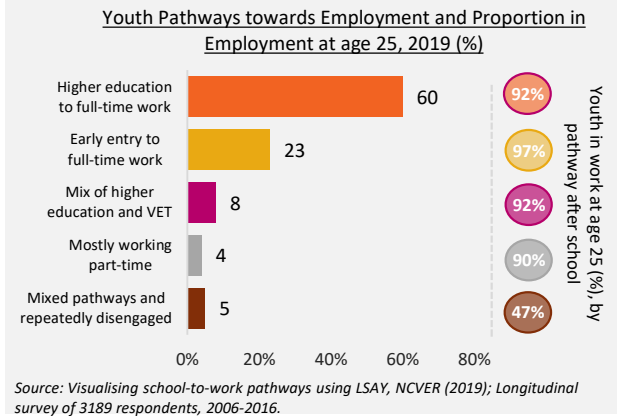
Snapshot of participation and outcomes for the youth cohort

In 2021, there were around 3.1 million young people (aged 15-24 years), which represents around 12 per cent of the population.

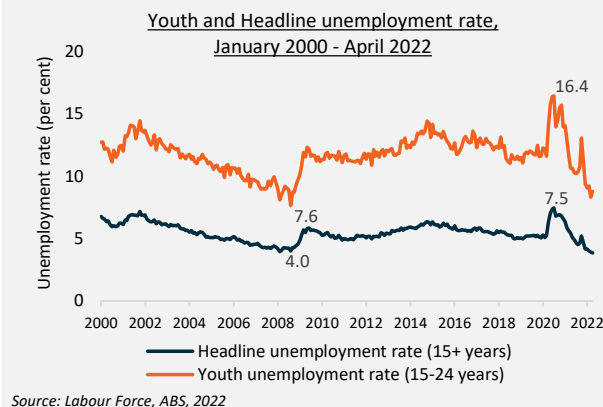
1. Youth aged 15 to 24 years, participate in education and training, including beyond school-level studies. A large proportion of 15-19 year-olds transition out of education, 55% of 20-24-year-olds not being enrolled.



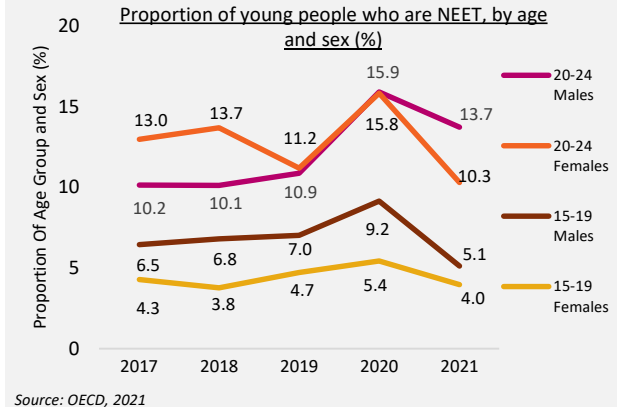
2. Youth experience diverse and individualised school to work pathways. While the majority follow a generally simple higher education to work pathway or enter employment early, some experience complex post-school pathways.



3. Youth unemployment, which is higher than overall 'headline' unemployment, is experiencing its lowest point since 2008 as of February 2022 (9.29%).



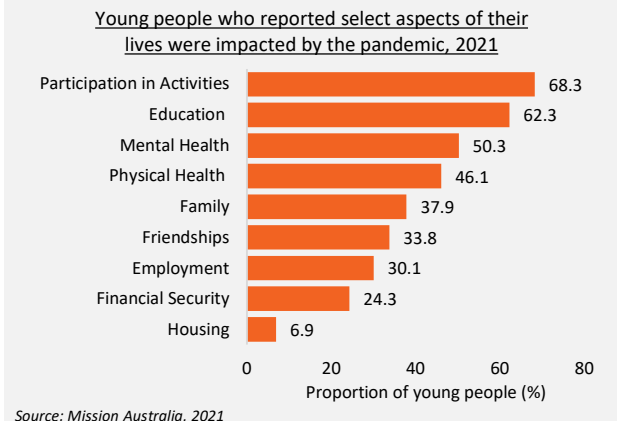
4. Young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) are more likely to experience social exclusion, have income levels below the poverty-line and lack the skills to improve their economic situation.



5. The proportion of young people who meet the criteria of experiencing 'psychological distress' has been increasing.



6. Many young people (aged 15-19 years) have reported that their social participation, education and mental health have been impacted by the pandemic.



The reform journey

Youth Summit

100 young Australians participated in the Youth Summit to lead discussions on their priorities and Australia's future.

2008

Office of Youth established

Compact with Young Australians introduced

Under the Compact, young people aged 15–24 have an entitlement to an education or training place, subject to admission requirements and course availability.

2009

National Youth Participation Requirement introduced

Part of the Compact, the Requirement was introduced to ensure that young people participate in schooling until they complete year 10, and participate in education, training or employment (or a combination of these) until they reach age 17.

The National Strategy for Young Australians launched

The department launched the Strategy to be used as a guide for future Government action to encourage and help young people (aged 12–24) take charge of their lives across eight priority areas.

2010

2013

Office of Youth combined into the department

Youth Jobs PaTH commenced

Government employment program designed to assist young Australians into internships to help them gain real world, practical experience in a business.

2017

Youth mental health and suicide prevention plan

Representing the single largest investment in youth suicide prevention in Australia, the Plan outlines a national strategy to prevent suicide and promote the mental wellbeing of young and Indigenous Australians.

Youth Taskforce established

Established to report to the Minister for Youth on options for whole of government coordination of policies and programs impacting youth.

2019

Review of senior secondary pathways

The Review considered how students can be better supported to understand and be enabled to choose the most appropriate pathway to support their transition into work, further education and/or training.

2020

2021

National Youth Policy Framework released

The framework acknowledges the challenges faced by young people, particularly from the impacts of COVID-19, and outlines the whole-of-Government policies and programs in place to improve the lives of young people living in Australia.

Regional education and employment

Overview

Regional Australia (encompassing regional, rural and remote areas) is a diverse and thriving community. Regional Australia makes up a third of Australia's total population at over 8 million people¹ and makes a significant contribution to Australia's economic prosperity particularly through mining, resources, agriculture and food production.² When compared with major cities, regional Australian communities can face additional challenges, including educational attainment and availability of teachers, and an ageing demographic profile with unpredictable labour demand.

For the first time since 1981, in 2020–21, Australia's regional population grew more than that of capital cities, growing by 70,900. In contrast, capital cities saw a population decline of 26,000 for capital cities.³ The rise of remote and online work provides an opportunity for regional Australia to attract and retain workers to support industries in local communities.

A decade of inquiry and investment has sharpened the focus on regional Australia, with initiatives implemented aimed at building and connecting regional Australia and promoting investment and economic prosperity. The department portfolio has a range of initiatives to improve participation and prosperity in regional Australia. It does so by boosting the accessibility of childcare, education and training, and increasing regional employment to deliver benefits to Australians living in regional communities. The department's role in supporting regional education attainment and success involves investment and coordination within a broader context of government investment in regions. This includes initiatives related to health, infrastructure and industry, social services, tourism, agriculture, water and resources, and Communications.⁴

Regional education

Students in regional Australia account for a significant proportion of the student population although participation, attainment and completion in education tends to decrease the further students are from major cities. This is apparent across education sectors, for example in lower Year 12 attainment, but is particularly pronounced at the university level.⁵

Regional areas face barriers to education, including:

- difficulty recruiting, retaining, and sustaining quality early childhood care workers.
- the increased costs associated with the smaller scale of regional university operations teacher workforce shortages.
- a lack of regional research infrastructure.

¹ Data source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional population, 2020-21 financial year

² Regional Ministerial Budget Statement 2022-23

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional population, 2020-21 financial year

⁴ Regional Ministerial Budget Statement: Supporting Regional Recovery and Growth 2021-22

⁵ National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy (Naphthine Review), Data Source: ABS (2016) Census of Population and Housing

Approximately 25 per cent (3,414) of all approved child care services are located outside major cities in Australia. In the June quarter 2021, 301,360 children used these services, representing around 23 per cent of all children attending child care.⁶

More than one quarter (1,108,020) of Australian full-time equivalent school students are enrolled in schools in regional or remote areas. In remote and very remote areas, 82 per cent of students are enrolled in government schools.⁷

In 2020, an estimated 1,115,675 students were enrolled in nationally recognised VET⁸ in regional and remote areas. The VET Sector allows students from regional and remote areas to access training from providers across a range of locations, not only in their local area. There are 1,150 RTO's with locations in regional and remote areas of Australia.⁹

There are nine universities headquartered in regional Australia, in 2020 enrolling over 230,000 students across all levels (enabling through to postgraduate) and mode of study.¹⁰

Regional employment

Although recent years have brought further challenges like significant drought, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, regional Australia has proven resilient. Employment outside capital cities has increased by 82,700 since March 2020 to reach just over four million in March 2022. The regional unemployment rate is currently 4.1 per cent, a decline of 1.2 percentage points from pre-COVID (over the same period the unemployment rate for capital cities decreased by 1.5 percentage points to reach 4.2 per cent). The regional participation rate has remained relatively stable with a 0.1 per cent increase since March 2020 to reach 62.7 per cent in March 2022.¹¹

The labour market in regions differs from capital cities, with employers typically looking to recruit workers in roles that require lower skills, however, find greater difficulty in recruiting people.

12

⁶ DESE child care data, June quarter 2021. Excludes In Home Care

⁷ ABS Schools Australia 2021

⁸ NCVER 2021, Total VET students and courses 2020, NCVER, Adelaide.

⁹ Training.gov.au register | extracted 2022-01-01

¹⁰ DESE Higher Education Statistics, All students by Higher Education Institution, Full Year 2020

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (Detailed), March 2022

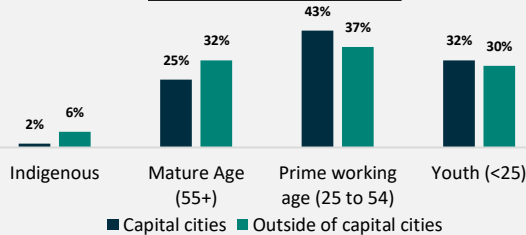
¹²

Snapshot of regional education and employment

Data below references the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), a classification of Australia into five remoteness areas on the basis of relative access to services. The five remoteness categories are: major cities; inner regional; outer regional; remote and very remote.

1. There is a higher proportion of older Australians and Indigenous Australians in regional and remote areas

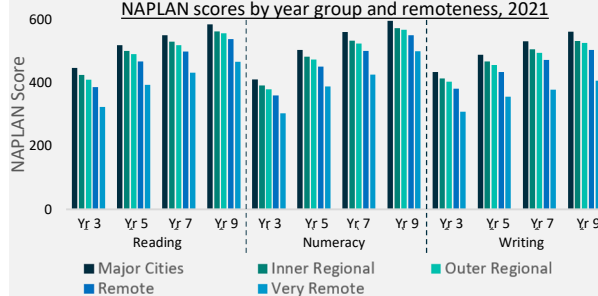
Share of resident population by selected characteristics and remoteness



Source: ABS, Census 2016

3. As remoteness increases, student performance decreases in numeracy and reading

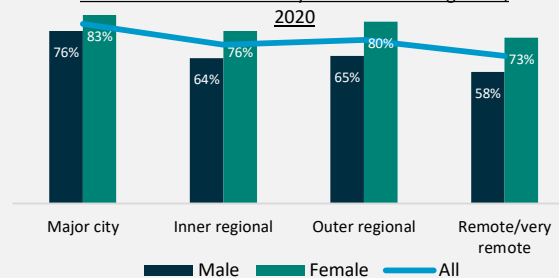
NAPLAN scores by year group and remoteness, 2021



Source: NAPLAN National Report for 2021 (ACARA)

4. Year 12 certification rates decrease as remoteness increases

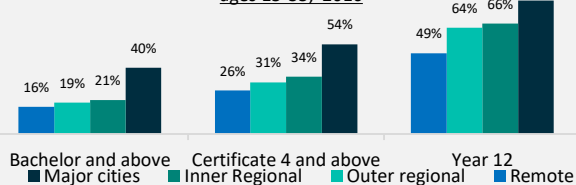
Year 12 certification rate by remoteness and gender, 2020



Source: ACARA, Yr 12 certification rates (2020)

5. Regional and remote individuals are less likely than their city counterparts to have a bachelor's degree or higher by the age of 35, and 40 percent less likely to have a Certificate IV or higher.

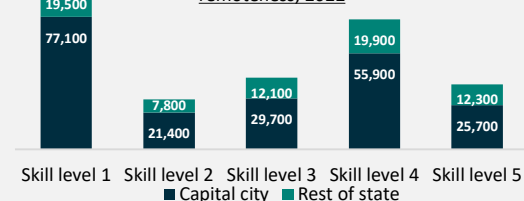
Highest level of educational attainment by remoteness ages 15-35, 2016



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016

6. Both capital cities and regional Australia show higher levels of demand for Skill Level 1 (commensurate to a Bachelor degree) and Skill Level 4 (commensurate to a Certificate II or III).

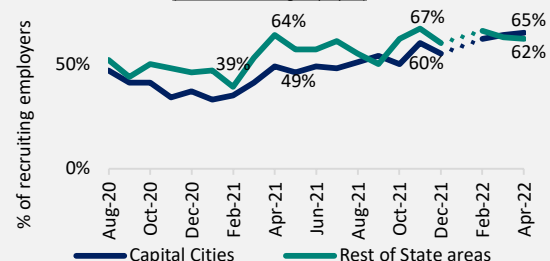
Numbers of job advertisements by skill level and remoteness, 2022



Source: National Skills Commission, Internet Vacancy Index, March 2022, seasonally adjusted data

8. Recruiting employers outside capital cities are consistently reporting difficulty recruiting workers to fill vacancies at a higher rate than their capital city counterparts.

Rate of recruitment difficulty by remoteness, 2020-22 (based on recruiting employers)



Source: National Skills Commission, Recruitment Experiences and Outlook Survey, April 2022. Note: January 2022 data unavailable due to small sample size.

The reform journey

National Inquiry into Rural and Remote Education

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission inquiry investigated the provision of education for children in rural and remote Australia with reference to primary and secondary schooling.

2000

Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review)

In response to the report, the Government implemented several measures including to 'uncap' university places in 2012 and introduce the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP).

2008

Pivot North: Inquiry into the Development of Northern Australia

The final report found opportunities for development that included areas such as research and education.

2014

Productivity Commission Inquiry into Child Care and Early Learning

The inquiry resulted in broad childcare reforms and the establishment of the new Child Care Package, including the Child Care subsidy and Child Care Safety net. Through the Child Care Safety net, the Government supports families and services in need, including regional or remote communities.

2016

Regional Student Access to Education

This 2016 package included funding for 16 Regional study Hubs (Regional University Centres), an additional 1,955 scholarships for regional and remote students over four years, and \$92.5 million to support more students at five regionally focussed universities over four years.

2017

Quality Schools Package

On 23 June 2017 the *Australian Education Act 2013* was amended to give effect to the Quality Schools Package. Increased total Commonwealth funding for students in regional and remote Australia from \$4.4b in 2018 to an estimated \$7.3b in 2029.

2018

Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education (Halsey Review)

Recommended building a high-level national focus on regional education and training.

National School Reform Agreement (NSRA)

A joint agreement between the Commonwealth, states, and territories, which aims to lift student outcomes across Australian schools. The Agreement identifies 'students living in regional, rural and remote locations' as a 'priority equity cohort'.

2019

National Regional, Rural and Remote Tertiary Education Strategy (Naphthine Review)

Focused on improving the participation and outcomes of regional students in post-secondary education. The Government's response included more than \$400 million over 2020–25 to address the recommendations.

2020

Inquiry into Education in Remote and Complex Environments

Recommended the Government improve a range of services in regional communities including health, transport and digital connectivity to support regional education outcomes.

2021

National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy (2022-2031)

The 10-year Strategy provides a roadmap for ongoing collaboration and partnership between all parties to support the recruitment, retention, sustainability, and quality of the ECEC workforce, including in regional areas.

Change to Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPP) eligibility

HEPPP eligibility was expanded to include regional and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

2022

Workforce Australia

In July 2022, jobactive employment services will be replaced by Workforce Australia. The new model includes consideration of supporting job seekers and employers in regional areas.

Pride of place

The Select Committee on Regional Australia delivered a report with 13 recommendations.