



Education Ministers Meeting

27 June 2025

Communiqué

Education Ministers met in person and online at The Heights Technical College in Adelaide on 27 June 2025.

Ministers continued to progress significant reforms across early education, school education and higher education.

Strengthening child safety and quality in ECEC

Ministers agreed that the safety and protection of children attending Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is the highest priority for all governments.

Ministers noted the important progress made in implementing key recommendations from the [Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework](#), which includes reducing the timeframe for reporting abuse from 7 days to 24 hours, and restricting the use of personal devices in childcare services.

Ministers also noted that the Australian Government will this year introduce legislation to further strengthen safety and quality in ECEC, including restricting Child Care Subsidy funding going to operators that fail to meet minimum standards and strengthening powers to prohibit unscrupulous individuals from working in the sector.

Ministers were briefed by the CEO of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), Ms Gabrielle Sinclair and by the author of the review into the New South Wales Childhood Education and Care Regulatory Authority, Mr Chris Wheeler.

Today Ministers agreed to immediate further actions, including:

- significantly increasing penalties where providers are non-compliant with National Law and improving and enhancing information provided to parents.
- strengthen regulatory responses to poor quality ECEC service delivery through increased information sharing, oversight and regulatory action, especially for providers who operate across jurisdictions; this includes through expanding joint compliance monitoring under the National Law and Family Assistance Law.
- increase availability, transparency and national consistency of compliance and safety data, through publishing more information about the full suite of state and territory regulatory compliance activities. This includes more accurate

information for families and the community about the most recent service visits, enforcement actions and clarifying where serious incidents are the result of a compliance breach and where they are not.

- strengthen market entry gateways to the ECEC sector to deter providers who do not have children's best interests at heart, including assessment of a provider's track record for service application approvals.
- enhance fitness and propriety testing, and regulatory practice to increase scrutiny on persons with management or control, which includes the use of targeted online testing.

The Australian Minister for Early Childhood Education, Senator Dr Jess Walsh will convene a meeting of Ministers responsible for ECEC ahead of the next EMM to progress this work.

Ministers agreed that strengthening child safety, quality and regulatory responses may require consideration of funding and resource implications by all governments.

Better and Fairer Schools Agreement

Ministers noted the significance of reaching agreements across the country to fully fund government schools and tie that funding to reforms to improve outcomes.

Ministers discussed the next steps in implementing the agreements.

Ministers agreed, with the exception of Western Australia public schools, to bring forward the piloting or implementation of Year 1 numeracy checks to 2026, facilitated by the sharing of state and territory-based numeracy checks.

Ministers welcomed confirmation from the National Catholic Education Commission to also pilot the implementation of the numeracy checks in 2026. Officials will also work with the independent school sector to promote similar arrangements.

Western Australia noted that it operates a mandatory on-entry assessment in pre-primary that includes a numeracy component.

Ministers also agreed that Officials will work across sectors and provide advice to EMM on approaches underway to lift student engagement and attendance.

New South Wales and South Australia provided an update on the early years of schooling numeracy check; Victoria on evidence-based teaching practices; and South Australia on its work on concentrations of disadvantage.

Ministers agreed to publish the finalised bilateral agreements under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement - Full and Fair Funding 2025-2034. Publication timing will be settled between the Commonwealth and respective jurisdictions.

Teacher Workforce

Ministers noted the progress on implementing the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan (NTWAP).

Ministers welcomed preliminary higher education enrolment data indicating a year-to-date 11 per cent increase in the number of domestic initial teacher education (ITE) commencements between 2024 and 2025, including a 10 per cent increase for undergraduates and a 15 per cent increase for postgraduates.

Ministers noted an emerging trend showing a decrease in teacher vacancies and increase in casual teachers moving to permanent employment.

Ministers noted the progress of higher education providers to embed new core content in teaching degrees by 1 January 2026. All 46 ITE providers have been working to embed core content into their courses and have them endorsed by their respective Teacher Regulatory Authority.

Ministers agreed to invite the Chair of the ITE Quality Assurance and Oversight Board to present an update to EMM in October on the implementation of the new core content. Ministers also agreed to have Officials bring advice to the October EMM on the interaction between consistent delivery of ITE courses, ITE accreditation standards, teacher registration and mutual recognition arrangements.

Ministers welcomed the introduction of the new Commonwealth Prac payment for teaching students which will commence next week.

Ministers agreed to publish an update on the NTWAP implementation, continue to strengthen teacher and school leader wellbeing, and improve safety in schools.

Ministers agreed to hold a roundtable of key stakeholders later this year to consider the next steps to address teacher workforce issues and to discuss key priorities post-NTWAP.

Behaviour, Anti-bullying and Wellbeing for Learning

Ministers were briefed by the Co-Chairs of the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, Dr Charlotte Keating and Dr Jo Robinson AM, and noted the issues being raised with the Reviewers through face-to-face consultations with young people, parents and carers, teachers, unions, and school leaders, and through the over 1300 submissions to the review.

Ministers agreed that the Review will respond to the use of devices (including in the creation of sexually-explicit deep fakes) in facilitating bullying in schools.

Ministers agreed to consider the Review's recommendations at the next meeting of EMM in October.

Ministers welcomed the e-Safety Commissioner advice and new resources for schools on deep-fake image abuse and agreed to ask the eSafety Commissioner to brief Ministers at the EMM October meeting on the implementation of the Australian Government's social media ban for under 16 year olds.

Ministers considered issues impacting student behaviour, wellbeing, and engagement for learning, and agreed to support a collaborative approach building on and complementing existing work to improve classroom behaviour as it affects both student and school staff and agreed to consider further advice on these issues at its next meeting in October 2025.

Ministers discussed existing student wellbeing and anti-bullying efforts in states and territories and the positive impact of their collective actions to reduce vaping and mobile phone use in schools, including:

- South Australian data on rates of vaping for young people aged 15-29 dropping by 28 per cent between 2023 and 2024 and suspensions related to vaping dropping by half;
- New South Wales data showing that following the mobile phone ban, 87 per cent of principals reported students are less distracted in the classroom and 81 per cent report student learning has improved.

Ministers also welcomed the New South Wales Government's commissioning of research on screen addiction.

Preschool Reform Agreement

Ministers noted the Australian Government's intention to extend the current arrangements under the Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA) for an additional two years.

Officials will work to progress the PRA to ensure continuity of Commonwealth funding from 1 January 2026.

Reforms in Early Childhood

Ministers received an update on key Australian Government early childhood education and care (ECEC) reforms, including:

- an investment of \$1 billion through the Building Early Education Fund (BEEF) to deliver new and expanded ECEC services in areas of need
- a 15 per cent wage increase for early educators through the ECEC Worker Retention Payment

- the 3 Day Guarantee to provide three days a week of subsidised early education for children who need it from January 2026
- the Early Education Service Delivery Prices Project to determine the cost of delivering quality ECEC.

Reforms in Higher Education

Ministers received an update on higher education reforms including progress to implement the Universities Accord recommendations.

This included:

- That legislation is well developed to reduce by 20 per cent outstanding Higher Education Loan Program, VET Student Loans, Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans and other relevant loans as at 1 June 2025, before indexation is applied. It will be the first legislation introduced in the new term when Parliament returns in July.
- The Commonwealth Prac Payment which is ready to commence on Tuesday 1 July, and will provide \$331.65 per week in support to eligible nursing, midwifery, teaching and social work students while they are undertaking mandatory placements. This measure is expected to benefit 68,000 higher education students each year, and a further 5,000 VET students enrolled in the Diploma in Nursing.
- The establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC), which will be established in an interim capacity on 1 July 2025 (to be fully established 1 January 2026, pending the passage of legislation), and reflected on its role in providing national leadership across the sector and in ensuring student access, equity, and workforce needs are met. State and Territory Education and Skills ministers will be closely engaged as ATEC is further developed. Ministers agreed that the ATEC will work closely with states and territories in its work.

Ministers were also provided a progress update on the work of the Expert Council on University Governance, initiatives to ensure a more joined-up tertiary sector and the National Admissions Framework.

Ministers will consider the recommendations of the Expert Council on University Governance at the October meeting of EMM.

Ministers agreed a forward work plan for higher education and tertiary education reform priorities.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) Partnership Agreement

Education Ministers signed a formal Partnership Agreement with NATSIEC in May 2025. The Agreement aims to transform the way the education systems work with NATSIEC to improve education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout their education journey.

The Agreement recognises the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures and acknowledges the importance of working in partnership to reform and enrich education systems. These partnerships build on commitments to achieve socio-economic outcomes and embed the Priority Reforms from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Ms Geraldine Atkinson AO, Co-chair of NATSIEC, attended EMM and briefed Ministers on the progress of NATSIEC since its incorporation in August 2023.

Ministers noted that as the Tasmanian Government is in caretaker mode, departmental officials attended and adopted observer status for the meeting.

Ministers thanked The Heights Technical College for hosting EMM.

EMM will meet again in October 2025 in Queensland.

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