



15 July 2026

Communiqué

Education Ministers met in Parramatta, Sydney on 15 July 2026.

The meeting began with an acknowledgment of the passing of Professor Peter Buckskin AM PSM FACE, a proud Narungga man and respected leader in First Nations education. As inaugural Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC), he played a key role in strengthening partnership arrangements with Education Ministers.

His lifelong commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners leaves an enduring legacy, and he will be greatly missed.

Ministers discussed the significant reforms across early childhood education and school education, including the Antisemitism Education Taskforce.

Antisemitism Education Taskforce

Ministers were given an update on the progress of the Antisemitism Education Taskforce by the Chair David Gonski AC and Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism Jillian Segal AO.

Ministers recognised the Taskforce has made significant progress on its six priority workstreams, covering professional learning trials, reporting on universities, a curriculum review, higher education regulation, social cohesion education resources, and a review of research grant guidelines. This progress was detailed in the [Midpoint Update](#) which was published on 30 June 2026.

Ministers noted the launch of the Social Cohesion Education Hub at the end of June which brings together antisemitism and social cohesion resources in one place for teachers, principals and schools.

Ministers also noted the Australian Government's work to strengthen standards universities must meet to improve governance, transparency and take action against racism that came into effect on 13 July 2026.

Early Education and Care Commission

Ministers agreed to explore the development of an Early Education and Care Commission to strengthen safety and quality in the system. A Commission could have a role in helping to ensure services are located where families need them, and analysis and insights to support workforce development. If the Commission is established, it was agreed it should involve the reform of the existing Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

A Working Group of the Early Childhood Policy Group, co-chaired by the Australian and South Australian Governments, has been established to provide advice to Ministers on a potential Commission.

Ministers asked the Working Group to provide advice to EMM at their next meeting in October 2026 and agreed to establish a time-limited expert panel to support targeted consultation on a potential Commission.

National Actions to Strengthen Child Safety

Education Ministers were briefed on reforms to strengthen quality and safety in early childhood education and care (ECEC). The reforms are supported by an investment of around half a billion dollars, including \$226 million from the Australian Government and more than \$271 million from states and territories.

Ministers agreed to further work to support the National Early Childhood Worker Register and mandatory National Child Safety Training. Ministers noted that 99 per cent of educators have now completed the first round of mandatory training, with the advanced training becoming available at the end of July.

Ministers also agreed to implement further reforms to strengthen safety and quality for children in ECEC, covering key areas such as across the service ratios, reviewing the use of Working Toward Qualifications, further empowering regulators to hold providers accountable for adequate supervision, and transparency and fencing safety.

Ministers were updated on the extension of the 15 per cent Worker Retention Payment for early education and care workers and the new condition for the payment which requires that services meet health and safety requirements under the National Quality Standard. Ministers were also updated on compliance action which included the first ECEC service having the Child Care Subsidy revoked on safety and quality grounds under laws passed by the Federal Government last year.

Update on the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement

Education Ministers noted the progress made nationally to implement reforms under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements and discussed the outlook for further reforms in 2026 and 2027. Ministers acknowledged the tabling of the Annual Statement to the Australian Parliament.

Delivering on the commitment made by the Australian and state and territory governments under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034, Education Ministers discussed the scope and focus of the upcoming Review of the Schooling Resource Standard base and loadings calculation methodology (SRS Review). Further information on the SRS Review will be presented to Education Ministers when they next meet in October 2026.

Teaching and Learning Commission

Education Ministers discussed the proposed Teaching and Learning Commission and the significant opportunity it presents to meet the needs of Australian schooling and support the substantial investment delivered through the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements.

EMM will receive further advice on the proposed governance, functions, costs, structure, implementation activities and sequencing to establish the potential Commission at the next meeting in October 2026. Ministers noted Queensland's alternative position in support of prioritising improved governance of existing national agencies.

Education Ministers thanked the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Education Services Australia (ESA) and the Australian Education Research Organisation for their continued efforts to support Australian students, teachers and school leaders.

NAPLAN

Ministers were briefed on NAPLAN 2026 by ACARA and ESA. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to NAPLAN, including emphasising NAPLAN's importance to education systems nationwide.

Ministers were briefed by ACARA and ESA on actions to mitigate platform interruptions to future NAPLAN test events.

Ministers requested the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee provide advice on the efficacy of conducting the writing test with pen and paper given the emerging evidence on the impact of screens and devices on cognitive development.

Behaviour and Wellbeing

Ministers noted current efforts across Australia to support evidence-informed, whole-school approaches to student behaviour and wellbeing for learning.

The NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning informed Ministers of the work being undertaken in NSW to introduce a code of conduct for students and families, and the explicit teaching of expected behaviour.

The South Australian Education Minister spoke to the state's \$75 million investment in its 'Kids off Screens' policy, where the government is actively addressing the impact that screens have on children's wellbeing.

Ministers agreed to use the shared information to consider further actions to address student behaviour and wellbeing and support safe, respectful and inclusive learning environments, including through implementation of the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review.

Ministers were presented with the creative materials for the National Anti-Bullying Advertising Campaign in preparation for its upcoming launch. Ministers also had the opportunity to hear from Mr Mathew Howard and Ms Kelly O'Brien regarding their work through the Charlotte's Wish Foundation.

First Nations Education Policy

Ministers discussed work undertaken in partnership with NATSIEC, as well as in collaboration with First Nations peak organisations to develop a First Nations Education Policy.

The draft First Nations Education Policy has been developed with First Nations Peak organisations, including NATSIEC, SNAICC, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Consortium and the National Indigenous Youth Education Coalition. Queensland did not support the draft First Nations Education Policy as a joint commitment between jurisdictions.

Feedback on the draft policy will be sought before it is brought back for further consideration.

Next Meeting

At the next EMM in October, Education Ministers will consider the Iterative Review of the Australian Curriculum: Foundation to 2 Mathematics.

Education Ministers will also receive an update on the roll out of core content in Initial Teacher Programs which commenced this year.

Ministers also agreed to discuss the use and impact of Artificial Intelligence in schools.

Ministers thanked the NSW Department of Education for hosting EMM.

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