



Australian Government



THE BETTER AND FAIRER SCHOOLS AGREEMENTS PROGRESS REPORT



Updated July 2026

The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which Australians live, work and study, and pays respects to their Elders, past and present. Australia's First Nations peoples are the custodians of the world's oldest continuous cultures of learning and the passing down of knowledge. The Department of Education also acknowledges the determination of First Nations leaders over generations to ensure that higher education is accessible to First Nations people, reflects knowledges and law, and supports research led by First Nations people about their community, land and culture.



With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the Department's logo, any material protected by a trade mark and where otherwise noted all material presented in this document is provided under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) licence.

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website (accessible using the links provided) as is the full legal code for the [CC BY 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>)

The document must be attributed as the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreements Progress Report*.

Image on page 2: The Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education and students from Cabramatta Public School in New South Wales. Source: Supplied.

Images throughout have been supplied by state and territory education departments.

Contents

Minister's foreword	2
The Challenge	4
The funding gap	4
A shared approach to schooling and funding	5
Delivering record investment to schools	6
The last decade	8
Early signs of progress	8
Reform	11
Targets to deliver a better and fairer education system	13
A ten-year plan to lift outcomes for all students	14
Equity and excellence	16
Phonics and numeracy checks — identifying needs early	18
Evidence-based teaching — adopting proven approaches for building literacy	20
Small-group tutoring — support for students who fall behind	22
Wellbeing for student learning and engagement	24
Expanding access to wellbeing supports	26
Bolstering student engagement and attendance	28
Better understanding school and student need	29
Tackling antisemitism, promoting inclusion and shared Australian values	29
A strong and sustainable workforce for teachers	30
Greater access to high-quality, evidence-based teaching resources	32
Attraction and retention of qualified teachers	36
Fostering innovation	39
Collaborating on national reforms	40
Equity-focused support for students	40
Partnering to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to succeed	41
Students with disability	41
Enhancing transparency and accountability	42
Attachment A: Commonwealth investment supporting better and fairer schools	44
Attachment B: NAPLAN Progress	48



Minister's foreword

A good education changes lives. A great education system changes countries.

For the first time, the Australian Government has reached agreement with every state and territory to put all government schools on a path to full and fair funding. This is being delivered through the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034 and the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025–2034.

Under these Agreements, the Australian Government is investing an estimated additional \$20.2 billion in government schools over ten financial years (2026–27 to 2035–36) — the largest new injection of Commonwealth funding in public education ever delivered. This is followed by around a further \$50 billion in additional funding in the decade beyond, supporting sustained investment in our public schools. To safeguard this investment, we have also passed legislation to make sure Australian Government funding for public schools is locked in and can't be reduced without changing the law.

States and territories are contributing alongside the Commonwealth, working together to make sure every child is supported to succeed.

But funding alone is not enough. What also matters is how that funding is used. That's why this investment is tied to evidence-based reforms.

This includes evidence-based teaching, a Year 1 phonics check and an early years numeracy check to identify students who need extra support, catch-up tutoring to help students who fall behind, and stronger wellbeing supports in schools.

To support teachers and school leaders, this investment is tied to reducing unnecessary workload, improving professional learning through coaching and mentoring, and providing quality-assured curriculum materials.

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements also set clear, measurable targets to improve literacy and numeracy, strengthen student attendance, lift Year 12 attainment, and ensure a strong and sustainable teaching workforce.

Legislative changes have strengthened transparency and accountability, with the Government required to publicly report on progress — including through this Statement — so parents, teachers and communities can see how funding is being used and the difference it is making.

We have started the work of building a better and fairer education system for every child in Australia. This report sets out the progress we have made and the next steps to build a better and fairer education system.

The Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education

Delivering record investment in schools



- \$20.2 billion in additional Australian Government funding to fully fund all public schools over the next 10 financial years
- Additional investment to be fairly and transparently distributed and allocated according to need to provide every child with a quality education, regardless of where they live and what school they attend.
- States and the ACT committing to provide at least 75% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) for public schools.
- Funding focused on supporting student outcomes, with states agreeing to no longer count up to 4% of their SRS share for indirect school costs like capital depreciation.
- Australian Government funding safeguarded by protections enshrined in legislation that make sure funding shares cannot go backwards without changing the law.

Funding linked to reforms that make the biggest difference to students and teachers



- Year 1 phonics check and early years of schooling numeracy check to identify students who need additional help.
- Evidence-based teaching and targeted and intensive supports, such as small-group or catch-up tutoring, to help students who fall behind.
- Greater wellbeing support for learning and engagement, including through full-service schools, counsellors, wellbeing coordinators and mental health workers.
- Recognising and rewarding experience in the classroom.
- Providing access to high-quality and evidence-based professional learning for teachers and school leaders along with quality-assured curriculum resources developed in partnership with the teaching profession.

Setting measurable targets so reforms translate into real change for students



- Lifting student attendance nationally to 2019 levels.
- Increasing the share of students in the NAPLAN Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels for reading and numeracy by 10% and reducing the share of students in the Needs Additional Support proficiency level by 10%.
- Increasing Year 12 certification rates so that by 2030 the proportion of students receiving a Year 12 Certificate will be the highest it has ever been.
- Boosting engagement in teacher education by 10 percentage points, including among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Realising targets will deliver national benefits — increasing the proportion of students who receive a Year 12 certificate by 7.5 percentage points by 2030 could add an estimated \$65 billion (in today's dollars) to the economy over the period to 2050.¹

¹ Department of Education, [Building a Better and Fairer Education System](#), Australian Government, 2025, accessed March 2026.



The Challenge

We have a good education system, but it can be better and fairer.

The funding gap

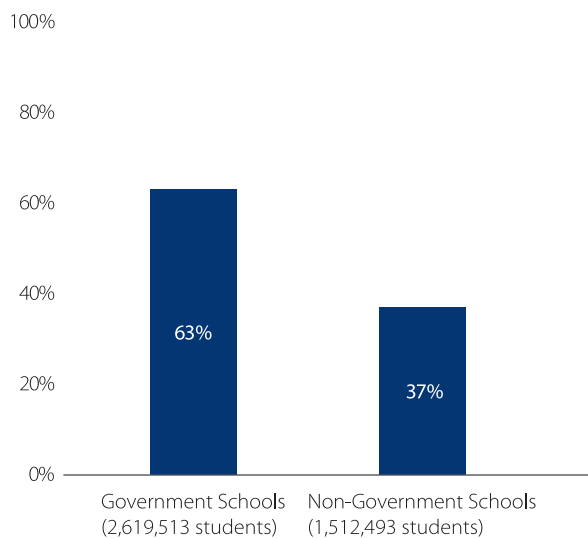
In 2010, the Australian Government, led by Prime Minister Julia Gillard AC, commissioned an independent review of school funding, chaired by David Gonski AC, to examine how funding could better reduce educational disadvantage and lift national performance. The review found that disadvantage has a direct and lasting impact on student outcomes, that overall performance needed to improve, and that public funding should be aligned with the characteristics of schools and the students they serve.

Gonski's core recommendation — the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) — estimates the level of public funding a school needs to meet its students' needs, including additional loadings for disadvantaged schools and priority equity cohorts. This has become the foundation of Australia's needs-based funding model.

In 2013, the Australian Government used these recommendations as the basis for the *Australian Education Act 2013* and the National Education Reform Agreement, establishing the SRS as the national framework for fair school funding.

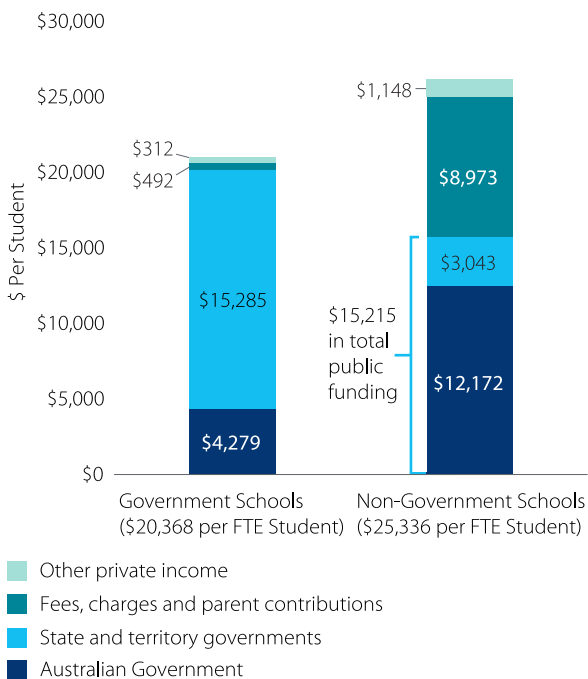
The later 'Review to achieve educational excellence in Australian Schools' – known as Gonski 2.0 – shifted the focus from funding levels alone to structural changes. From 2018, funding arrangements were reshaped through government policy decisions that capped the Australian Government's SRS share for public schools at 20% and allowed states and the Northern Territory to count up to 4% of their SRS share for indirect costs, such as capital depreciation.

Share of students by school sector, Australia, 2024 (%)



Source: Adapted from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). [Schools](#). ABS, 2024, accessed March 2026.

Estimated recurrent funding per student by funding source and school sector, Australia, 2024 (\$)



* ACARA National Report on Schooling (2026), School income data for 2024 funding year.

These funding arrangements also meant for non-government schools, the Commonwealth provided at least 80% of the SRS by 2023 and most State and Territory Governments provided the other 20%. For public schools it was the reverse — the Commonwealth increased its funding share to 20% by 2023, and most states and territories provided up to 75%. This left a minimum 5% gap, based on the agreed shares.

For more than a decade, Gonski’s vision was not fully realised. While the SRS was adopted, the majority of Australian schools were not on a pathway to full and fair funding. Public schools remained below the SRS on average in every jurisdiction, except the Australian Capital Territory, while in the Northern Territory public schools were receiving only around 80% of their SRS entitlement — less than anywhere else in the country.

Closing the funding gap is essential to giving every school the resources it needs to support student success. The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements address this by putting all public schools on a pathway to full and fair funding.

A shared approach to schooling and funding

Australia’s school system includes public schools, which educate just over 60% of students with Catholic and Independent schools together educating the remaining share.

Funding responsibilities are shared, with states and territories being the majority funder for public schools and the Australian Government the majority funder of non-government schools.



Delivering record investment to schools

The Australian Government is investing an estimated additional \$20.2 billion to public schools over the next decade — the largest new injection of Commonwealth funding in public education ever delivered.

Better and fairer school funding

The Australian Government has reached agreement with every jurisdiction to put public schools on track to full and fair funding.

Under the 10-year Full and Fair Funding Agreement, the Australian Government will provide an additional 5% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) for public schools in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. This will lift the Australian Government's contribution from 20% to 25% of the SRS by 2034.

Under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement, the Commonwealth is doubling its share of the SRS for Northern Territory (NT) public schools from 20% to 40% by 2029.

Funding trajectories tailored to each jurisdiction have been settled with all states and territories, except Victoria, which will be settled in 2026.

The Australian Government's record investment means a child born in 2025 who attends a public school will attract, on average, more than \$20,000 in additional funding over their schooling years – funding that will help students catch up, keep up and complete school.

Greater detail on Commonwealth funding for public schools is included at [Attachment A](#).

A joint funding commitment

Funding of public schools is a shared responsibility and all states and territories contribute. Under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, states and territories have committed to contributing a minimum of 75% of the SRS (60% for the Northern Territory and 81.5% for the Australian Capital Territory).

All states have also committed to no longer claim 4% of state school funding for indirect school costs, such as capital depreciation, and replacing it with funding on eligible expenses.

Additional funding is already rolling out to schools

The Australian Government invested \$31.5 billion in recurrent funding in 2025, including an estimated \$155.4 million in additional funding for public schools in Western Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

New funding under the Agreements will increase to an estimated \$424.2 million in 2026, with additional funding rolling out to support public schools in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. This will bring total recurrent Australian Government funding for schools to an estimated \$33.3 billion in 2026.

Providing funding certainty

The Australian Government passed legislation in 2024 to safeguard the Australian Government's funding contribution to public schools to ensure it cannot go backwards without changes to the *Australian Education Act 2013*.

But funding alone does not guarantee better outcomes — too many students are still being left behind.



The last decade

In the decade leading up to the BFSa, NAPLAN results remained stable, but too many students were at or below the then NAPLAN national minimum standard, and in other areas, student outcomes had declined.²



Student attendance 2014 to 2022

↓ 6.2 percentage points

National attendance rates fell from 92.7% in 2014 to 86.5% in 2022.



NAPLAN performance 2014 to 2022

While there have been positive signs of improvement in primary reading for more than a decade, in 2022 primary numeracy fell to its lowest level since 2017 and Year 3 numeracy has stagnated for almost a decade.³

Students who fall behind early are likely to stay behind. Fewer than one in five who are behind in Year 3 catch up and stay caught up, by Year 9.⁴



Students finishing high school 2017 to 2023

↓ 5.7 percentage points

From 2017 to 2023 students finishing high school declined. Rates fell from 84.8% to 79.1% across all schools, and from 83.1% to 73.6% in government schools.⁵



Initial Teacher Education 2017 to 2023

↓ 22%

The number of domestic students commencing teaching degrees fell 22% from 29,929 in 2017 to 23,426 in 2023.

2 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) [Student attendance](#), ACARA NAPLAN National Results, ACARA [Apparent retention](#), Department of Education [Higher Education Statistics – Student Data](#).
3 NAPLAN data is for the period to 2022. In 2023, the NAPLAN testing window was moved from May to March, and the NAPLAN scale was revised, hence results from 2023 onwards are not comparable to those of earlier years.
4 L Williams, O Groves, W Y Wan, E Lee, and L Lu, [Learning outcomes of students with early low NAPLAN performance](#), Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO), 2023, accessed March 2026.
5 Apparent retention rate for students, Year 7/8 to Year 12.

Early signs of progress

Emerging trends are positive⁶, but there is more work to do.



Attendance is improving

↗ Student attendance rates are improving, rising to 88.8% in 2025 — up 2.3 percentage points from the 2022 low of 86.5%.



NAPLAN results have shown improvements

- ↗ NAPLAN numeracy scores improved across Years 5, 7, and 9 in 2025.⁷
- ↗ The increases represent an additional 20,000 Australian students performing at the highest proficiency level in 2025 compared to 2024.



Retention rates are on the rise

↗ The proportion of students finishing high school in 2025 increased to 81.3%, from 79.1% in 2023.⁸



Commencements of teaching degrees are up and student teacher ratios are declining

- ↗ From 2023 to 2025, the number of domestic students commencing teaching degrees jumped by 20%.
- ↗ In 2026, preliminary data shows university offers are up 6.3% for undergraduates.
- ↗ Since 2023, student teacher ratios in government schools have improved from 13.4 to 13.0.

6 Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) [Student attendance](#), ACARA [NAPLAN National Results](#), ACARA [Apparent retention](#), Department of Education [Higher Education Statistics – Student Data](#), Department of Education Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) [Student attendance](#), ACARA [NAPLAN National Results](#), ACARA [Apparent retention](#), Department of Education [Higher Education Statistics – Student Data](#) (Preliminary), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [Schools](#).
7 In 2023, the NAPLAN testing window was moved from May to March, and the NAPLAN scale was revised, hence results from 2023 onward are not comparable to those of earlier years.
8 Apparent retention rate, as reported by the ABS for students, Year 7/8 to Year 12.

When sustained, these early gains can make a difference, transforming lives and strengthening our economy.

- When a young person finishes Year 12, their lifetime income can rise by 20% — around \$600,000 over the course of their career.⁹
- Lifting Year 12 completion by 7.5 percentage points could add \$65 billion to the economy by 2050.¹⁰
- Improving NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy by 10% could boost annual GDP by up to \$25 billion.¹¹

⁹ Internal Department of Education Analysis 2025 (Economic Analysis Team).

¹⁰ Internal Department of Education Analysis 2025 (Economic Analysis Section).

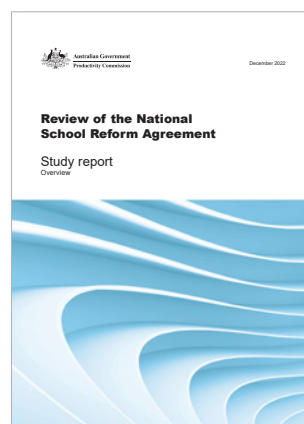
¹¹ Based on Productivity Commission 2025, [Building a skilled and adaptable workforce](#).



Reform

Independent reviews make clear that real reform is needed.

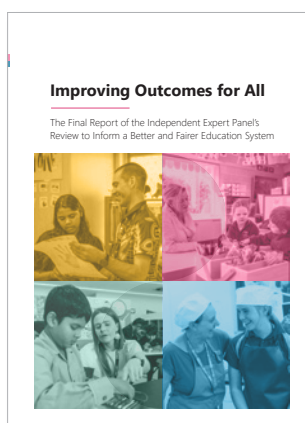
The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements set a new national direction for school reform, grounded in evidence and expert advice.



2023

The Productivity Commission released its review of the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA). The review found “the NSRA has an accountability deficit” and its initiatives had “done little ... to improve student outcomes”. In short, “the NSRA’s targets are incomplete and too vague to drive reforms”.¹²

¹² Productivity Commission, [National School Reform Agreement: Final Report](#), Australian Government, 2023, accessed March 2026.



2023

Education Ministers commissioned an independent expert panel to examine how funding could be more clearly linked to evidence-based reforms, strengthen accountability and improve outcomes, particularly for students most at risk of falling behind. The panel's advice helped shape the design of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, informing the reforms, targets and accountability arrangements that underpin the new national approach.¹³

What the reviewers heard

Across the reviews and submissions to them, a consistent message emerged:

- schools must be properly funded to deliver lasting improvement
- funding must be tied to reform delivery
- reform must focus more sharply on equity and excellence, wellbeing, and the teaching workforce
- progress must be transparent, with clear reporting on results.



How Government responded

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements respond directly to the evidence by:

- putting public schools on a path to full funding
- closing loopholes that dilute investment and clarifying investment parameters
- tying funding to the delivery of evidence-based reforms
- focusing national effort on three priority areas — equity and excellence, wellbeing for learning and engagement, and a strong and sustainable workforce
- setting nationally agreed targets, and
- strengthening transparency and reporting.¹⁴

¹⁴ Department of Education, [The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement \(2025–2034\)](#), Australian Government, 2024, accessed March 2026.

¹³ Department of Education, [Improving Outcomes for All: The Report of the Independent Expert Panel's Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System](#), Australian Government, 2023, accessed March 2026.

Targets to deliver a better and fairer education system

At the centre of the ten-year plan are clear targets for lifting student outcomes and strengthening the education workforce. These targets set the direction for reform and provide a common framework for measuring progress, helping to show whether the combined efforts of governments, school systems and approved authorities are delivering sustained improvement over time. Progress against the targets will be reported annually, including for priority equity cohorts where possible.

Equity and excellence



Learning equity

- By 2030, increase by 10% the share of students achieving 'strong' or 'exceeding' results in reading and numeracy, as measured by NAPLAN, with clear improvement for priority equity cohorts.
- By 2030, reduce by 10% the share of students who need additional support in reading and numeracy, as measured by NAPLAN.



Year 12 certification

- By 2030, lift the national rate of students receiving a Year 12 certificate by 7.5 percentage points, with clear improvement for priority equity cohorts.



Pathways for success

- By 2031, increase the proportion of 20- to 24-year-olds — including First Nations young peoples — with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%, in line with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Wellbeing for learning and engagement



Student attendance

- By 2030, lift the national student attendance rate back to 91.4% (the 2019 level), and return to 2019 levels for all students, with a focus on priority equity cohorts: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from regional and remote locations, and students from low socio-educational advantage schools.
- By 2035, close the attendance gap so priority equity cohorts attend at the same rate as the overall student population.

A strong and sustainable workforce



Building the workforce

- By 2035, increase the engagement rate of initial teacher education students — those who complete or remain enrolled — by 10 percentage points.



Strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce

- By 2035, increase the engagement rate of First Nations initial teacher education students by 10 percentage points.



A ten-year plan to lift outcomes for all students

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements establish a multi-year program of reforms to ensure every student can access a quality education, no matter where they live or their background.

Reforms focus on what makes the biggest difference for students and teachers — equity and excellence in every classroom, wellbeing so every child can learn and thrive, and a strong, sustainable teaching workforce. These priorities represent a shared national vision, agreed by every Education Minister across Australia.

... tailored to local contexts

States and territories and the non-government sector will contribute to the shared national vision through specific investments and activities that address local needs and complement existing jurisdictional investments and education priorities. These initiatives, outlined in their bilateral agreements, coalesce around 10 reform directions, with timeframes tailored by jurisdiction.



Equity and Excellence

- Identifying student learning needs early through a Year 1 phonics check and early years of schooling numeracy check.
- Implementing evidence-based teaching and learning approaches and providing tiered and targeted learning support, for example, small-group tutoring.
- Encouraging students to take up high-quality STEM education opportunities.



Wellbeing for learning and engagement

- Supporting student access to in-school wellbeing coordinators, school counsellors, psychologists, mental health workers and youth health nurses.
- Strengthening links between schools and non-school services, such as health services.
- Supporting student engagement in learning, such as through greater student participation and inclusion, and enhanced school-family engagement.



A strong and sustainable workforce

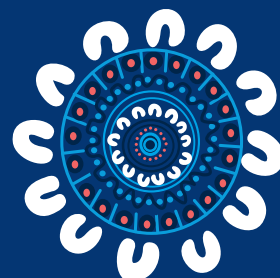
- Attracting more people into a teaching career, retaining more teachers and increasing workforce diversity.
- Improving access to high-quality, evidence-based professional learning and quality-assured curriculum resources.
- Strengthening teacher and school leader wellbeing.
- Developing, recognising, and rewarding highly expert teachers.

Working in partnership

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements were developed in partnership with First Nations peak bodies, including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) and the Coalition of Peaks. NATSIEC and the Coalition of Peaks played a key role in shaping the Agreements, strengthening reforms, improvement measures and outcomes for First Nations students and educators, and ensuring the Priority Reforms under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap are embedded throughout.

This approach reflects Education Ministers' shared commitment to working in partnership with First Nations peoples, consistent with the Closing the Gap framework, and builds on Ministers' formal partnership with NATSIEC, recognised through the partnership agreement signed in 2025.

The non-government school sector, which educates just over one-third of Australian students, also contributed to the development of the Agreements and plays an important role in their delivery, including implementing national reforms, using evidence-based teaching and reporting on progress.



The Department of Education acknowledges diversity and respectfully uses both the terms 'First Nations peoples' and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' interchangeably throughout this document.

Equity and excellence: Reform progress

NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Non-Government
Year 1 phonics check and early years of schooling numeracy checks								
▶ In place – Year 1 phonics checks ▶ 2026 – implementing numeracy checks	▶ In place – Year 1 phonics checks ▶ 2026 – piloting numeracy checks	▶ In place – Year 1 phonics checks ▶ 2026 – piloting numeracy checks	▶ In place – Year 1 phonics checks ▶ 2028 – implementing numeracy checks	▶ In place – Year 1 phonics checks ▶ 2026 – implementing numeracy checks	▶ In place – Year 1 phonics checks ▶ 2026 – piloting numeracy checks	▶ In place – Year 1 phonics checks ▶ 2026 – piloting numeracy checks	▶ In place – Year 1 phonics checks ▶ 2026 – piloting numeracy checks	▶ The non-government sector has committed to implementing a Year 1 phonics check and an early years numeracy check.
Small-group tuition								
▶ 2026 – expanding Small Group Tuition Program	▶ Strategies to help teachers implement evidence-based interventions	▶ 2027 – delivering small-group tuition	▶ 2025 – delivering small-group tuition for students most in need	▶ 2029 – delivering small-group tutoring	▶ 2025 – delivering small-group instruction	▶ 2026 – Design and trial of a Multi-tiered System of Supports model	▶ 2025 (staged rollout) – developing guidelines for targeted support, including small-group tutoring	▶ The non-government sector in QLD and TAS has committed to implement small-group tuition along with the Catholic sector in NSW and SA.
Small-group tuition is being complemented by other targeted supports to build literacy and numeracy skills								
▶ 2025 – implementing a structured literacy and numeracy approach based on multi-tiered systems of supports (NT) ▶ 2025 – introducing a minimum schooling guarantee for reading (TAS) ▶ 2025 – universal screening tools for early years literacy (VIC) ▶ Progressing reforms for the non-government sector that embed whole-of-system and whole-of-school approaches to early identification of student learning needs (non-government; TAS & VIC).								
Three jurisdictions are also implementing initiatives that encourage student uptake of high-quality STEM education opportunities – Western Australia and Victoria (from 2025) and Queensland (from 2027). The non-government sector in Victoria have also committed to encouraging STEM uptake (from 2025).								

*This table is not intended to be exhaustive. It summarises some of the key reforms outlined in bilateral agreements. Not all reforms are captured, and some reforms have been abbreviated. Note: WA public schools already implement a mandatory on-entry assessment in pre-primary that includes a numeracy component.

Literacy and numeracy unlock opportunity — when teaching is high-quality and evidence-based students build the skills to progress and succeed.

Under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, government and non-government education authorities are working together to embed evidence-based teaching and strengthen literacy and numeracy outcomes across all stages of schooling. This includes explicit teaching — where teachers break learning into manageable steps, explain and show new ideas clearly, and guide students as they build understanding and confidence — along with universal screening and targeted supports, such as small-group tutoring for students with additional needs.

These reforms are already underway. As of this year, phonics checks are now standard in public schools, the piloting of early years numeracy checks has been fast tracked by a full year, and schools and systems are adopting evidence-based teaching practices alongside targeted supports for students who are falling behind.

Phonics and numeracy checks — identifying needs early

Early years phonics and numeracy checks are critical elements in building strong literacy and numeracy foundations. These diagnostic tools enable teachers to identify children early who are falling behind and need additional support.

A key reform focus of the Agreements, Year 1 phonics checks are now used in public schools nationwide, helping teachers identify students who need additional support in learning to read. In New South Wales, where phonics checks have been in place since 2021, nearly two-thirds of Year 1 students met the benchmark in 2025, up from just over half in 2022, demonstrating the impact of sustained early literacy reform.

Early years of schooling numeracy checks are being implemented or trialled in all jurisdictions from 2026, except Western Australia, building consistent approaches to identifying students who need support in mathematics. For example, in May 2026 all Year 1 students in New South Wales will undertake the Year 1 Number Screening Check, with schools supported through professional learning, advice and resources to administer the check and analyse results and tailor teaching in response.

Schools and systems are pairing checks with targeted supports, such as trials of small-group tutoring. In jurisdictions such as South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory, phonics and numeracy checks are anchored in broader system-wide initiatives, such as literacy and numeracy guarantees.

Strengthening early numeracy teaching and learning

To further support early numeracy teaching and learning, Education Ministers agreed in February 2026 to commence an iterative review of the Foundation to Year 2 mathematics curriculum. The review will make targeted improvements to ensure the curriculum is clearer, more supportive for teachers, and clearer on the essential concepts to be prioritised for students at each year level. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority will provide recommendations to Ministers in the third quarter of 2026.



CASE STUDY

South Australia – laying the foundations for literacy and numeracy success

South Australia is one of the first jurisdictions to implement both literacy and numeracy checks. Using early identification as the foundation for sustained improvement, these checks are embedded within system-wide Literacy and Numeracy Guarantees, ensuring children develop strong reading and mathematics skills from the earliest years of schooling.

The Literacy Guarantee supports effective literacy teaching from preschool onwards, strengthens professional learning at all career stages, and establishes a Reading Academy to support early-career teachers to teach reading with confidence. It also provides free, accessible online resources for parents, reinforcing literacy development at home. Over time, screening data show sustained improvement, with a growing share of students meeting or exceeding expected benchmarks.

Complementing this work, South Australia has introduced a Numeracy Guarantee, strengthening classroom practice through targeted professional learning, specialist development for primary mathematics leaders, a new academy for early-career teachers, and improved curriculum resources.

Together, the Literacy and Numeracy Guarantees ensure early screening is matched with high-quality teaching, targeted support and strong family engagement — giving every child strong foundations to succeed at school and beyond.



CASE STUDY

Australian Capital Territory – strengthening system-wide literacy and numeracy foundations

In 2024, the ACT Education Directorate launched Strong Foundations to establish consistent, evidence-informed literacy and numeracy practices across public schools.

The initiative provides evidence-informed common teaching approaches, shared assessments — including a Year 1 phonics check — resources for parents, and improved supports for students with additional needs.

In 2025, participation in the phonics check reached 96.6% across ACT primary and specialist schools, delivering the first system-wide dataset on early decoding skills. This information is now being used to inform early intervention, teacher planning and the development of multi-tiered systems of support across ACT schools.

Evidence-based teaching – adopting proven approaches for building literacy

A core objective of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements is to ensure every student benefits from high-quality, evidence-based teaching.

Across the country, this objective is being translated into concrete changes in classroom practice, supported by high-quality resources and professional learning.

These case studies demonstrate how sustained, system-wide implementation of evidence-based teaching will help lift literacy outcomes.



CASE STUDY

Victoria – embedding evidence-based teaching practice

From 2025, Victorian government schools began updating teaching and learning programs to reflect contemporary evidence about how students learn, as part of Victoria's delivery of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements.

Developed in collaboration with the Australian Education Research Organisation, the updated Victorian Teaching and Learning Model (VTLM 2.0) embeds explicit teaching in every classroom, including best-practice phonics instruction in the early years.

Victoria's Reading and Mathematics position statements build on the VTLM 2.0 by identifying area-specific approaches to teaching reading and mathematics, including best-practice phonics instruction in the early years.

From Term 1 2025, all Victorian government students from Prep to Grade 2 were taught using a systematic synthetic phonics approach, with a minimum of 25 minutes of daily explicit phonics and phonemic awareness instruction. This is part of a requirement to use a structured literacy approach to teach reading to be fully implemented from 2027, supported by high-quality lesson plans and professional learning for teachers.

In 2025, Victorian students recorded their strongest NAPLAN results on record, ranking first or second nationally in 18 of 20 measures. Around 70% of students were assessed in the 'strong' or 'exceeding' proficiency levels, with primary students ranking first or second across all 10 domains.

CASE STUDY

National Catholic Education Commission – adopting evidence-based approach to teaching and learning

Launched in 2021 across Canberra and Goulburn, the Catalyst Program adopts an evidence-based approach to teaching and learning. The program supports whole school practice change by providing high-quality professional learning and curriculum resources to 1,735 classroom teachers across 56 school communities.

Implementation support has included face-to-face and online training, structured planning and delivery resources, and tailored mentoring designed to sustain long-term change.

Since the introduction of the new NAPLAN methodology in 2023, reading proficiency has remained high in Canberra-Goulburn, with particularly strong Primary results where the Catalyst program commenced. Year 5 achieved a 6.8% net gain in students moving between proficiency levels from 2023–2025, including substantial net gains of 23.0% in Grammar and Punctuation and 17.4% in Spelling.

Teacher uptake of Catalyst has been strong:

- **76%** use the high impact teaching practices (HITP) daily.
- **82%** say HITP improves their teaching.
- **78%** feel they could not return to pre Catalyst methods.
- **80%** see overall value in the Catalyst approach.

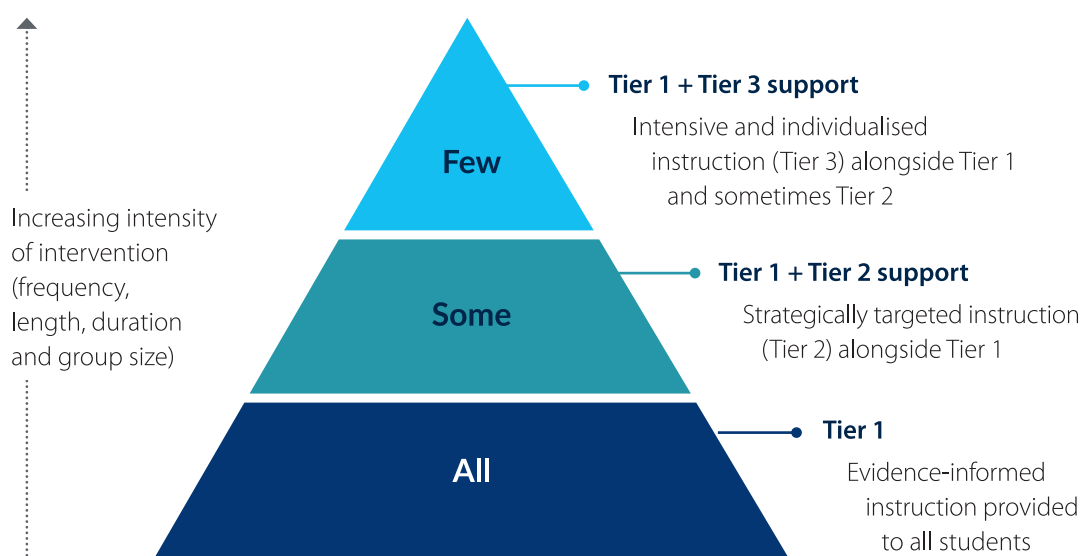


Small-group tutoring — support for students who fall behind

Small-group tutoring is a proven and effective form of targeted support for students who have fallen behind in their learning. For a smaller cohort of students with more complex needs, evidence shows that more intensive and individualised instruction can further accelerate progress and help close learning gaps.

The Agreements include a commitment to a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), recognising that while many students benefit from targeted intervention, a smaller number require intensive and individualised instruction. Implemented well, this approach can enable up to 95% of students to meet academic benchmarks.

Multi-tiered system of supports



Source: Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO), *Introduction to a multi-tiered system of supports*, AERO, 2024, accessed March 2026.

Jurisdictions are implementing small-group or catch-up tutoring to help students who fall behind catch up and keep up, with delivery tailored to local needs.

CASE STUDY

Western Australia – expanding small-group tutoring across public schools

Western Australia is rolling out small-group tuition across 350 public schools to provide targeted literacy and numeracy support for students who need additional help to address learning gaps.

The initiative will support up to 13,000 students, with dedicated small-group tuition teachers delivering structured, evidence-based interventions alongside classroom teaching. These teachers work closely with classroom staff to plan targeted support, monitor student progress and share insights with families, helping ensure tutoring is well-coordinated and responsive to student needs.

The program is designed to strengthen student outcomes while also reducing complexity and workload for classroom teachers, allowing them to focus more time on teaching and learning. Funding of \$21.8 million over two years has been committed to support implementation across participating schools.

CASE STUDY

New South Wales – supporting students through small-group tutoring and expanding opportunities for high-potential students

New South Wales (NSW) is delivering small-group tuition as part of its Better and Fairer Schools Agreement commitments. Small-group tuition is NSW's primary Tier 2 intervention supporting students identified as Needing Additional Support in literacy and numeracy through NAPLAN and is delivered in all NSW public schools.

In 2025, more than 67,000 students participated in small-group tuition, with progress tracked through the Literacy and Numeracy Progressions. Early evidence points to positive impacts on student learning outcomes. Where progress could be monitored over time, nearly three-quarters of students showed growth in the specific literacy and numeracy skills targeted through tutoring.

Strong implementation across schools has supported consistent delivery, with almost all schools demonstrating the use of pre- and post-assessments to guide and monitor student learning. To support quality and consistency, NSW has also introduced structured small-group tuition learning sequences, which are being widely used by educators — particularly in phonics and number and place value — reinforcing evidence-informed practice in classrooms across the system.

In 2026, NSW will deliver a series of targeted small-scale Tier 2 interventions in non-NAPLAN years to strengthen alignment between Tier 1 classroom teaching and targeted support across phonics, writing and numeracy.

New South Wales is also expanding opportunities in high-potential and gifted education (HPGE) so that every public school student can develop their talents across the 4 domains of potential (creative, intellectual, social-emotional and physical) at their local public school. Through the Inspire program, all NSW public schools are implementing the HPGE policy in teaching practice – this includes tailored enrichment, extension and co-curricular offerings.

The Inspire – HPGE rollout is supported by targeted professional learning for teachers. Extension classes are already being trialled in 8 public high schools with more schools joining this project next year. Together, these initiatives ensure high-potential and gifted students can aspire to find their potential and develop their talents close to home.

Wellbeing for student learning and engagement

NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Non-Government
Build stronger connections between schools and non-school services								
2026 – expanding the School Counselling Service	Leveraging strong multidisciplinary teams that deliver inclusion, health and wellbeing services in secondary schools to build more support for students	2029 – extending access to healthcare professionals in primary schools	2026 – trialling place-based approaches to full-service schools model	Continue to support activities and initiatives that enable students to come to school ready to learn	2025 – expanding tiered support by drawing on expertise of multidisciplinary teams	2026 – implementing targeted student wellbeing supports through increased mental health professionals	2025 – expanding multi-disciplinary teams through regionalised delivery models, such as student wellbeing officers	2025 – supporting connections between schools and other non-government services (VIC)
Support wellbeing for learning and engagement								
2025 – released the cross-sectoral NSW Anti-bullying Framework (NSW) 2025 – expanding wellbeing coordinators in public schools (WA) 2025 – implementing additional support for greater access to mental health supports (TAS) 2025 – proactively addressing bullying and responding to students with complex behaviours (ACT) 2025 – implementing enrolment-based funding for disengaged students (NT) 2028 – supporting schools to establish positive patterns of behaviour and attendance (QLD) - Strengthening reforms for the non-government sector that support wellbeing for learning and engagement (non-government; TAS & VIC).								
Strengthen participation and support engagement in learning								
2026 – targeting early intervention for NSW public school students identified at risk of disengaging from school and their learning	2026 – implementing initiatives to support learners and inspire school leavers	2028 – supporting student engagement in learning by providing training for teachers and school leaders on inclusion and engagement	2026 – developing a student management system for minimising disengagement	2029 – supporting Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to improve Aboriginal student engagement	2025 – providing a toolkit of evidence-based resources for school leaders to utilise when planning for improved attendance	2025 – implementing evidence-based approaches to improving attendance and strengthening re-engagement for all students	2025 – implementation of enrolment based funding with a focus on student engagement	2025 – strengthening participation and engagement (VIC)

*This table is not intended to be exhaustive. It summarises some of the key reforms outlined in bilateral agreements. Not all reforms are captured, and some reforms have been abbreviated.

Wellbeing is a foundation for learning — when students feel safe and supported, they show up ready to learn.

Supporting student wellbeing helps young people stay connected to learning and achieve strong outcomes at school and beyond. When students feel safe, supported and included, they are more likely to attend regularly, participate in learning and build the skills they need to thrive.

Health and education are closely connected. Students experiencing poor mental health are more likely to disengage from learning, with impacts on attendance and achievement. Equally, falling behind at school can place additional pressure on students' wellbeing. By Year 9, students experiencing poor mental health are, on average, between 1.5 and 2.8 years behind their peers in literacy and numeracy — highlighting the importance of supporting wellbeing to improve educational outcomes.¹⁵

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements include a focused set of reforms to support wellbeing for learning and engagement, embedding wellbeing into everyday school practice across jurisdictions. These reforms help schools put the right support in place at the right time, through better access to specialist staff, stronger connections to services, and approaches tailored to local community needs.

In addition to reforms in the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, governments are working together on nationally coordinated initiatives to promote safe and respectful school environments.

National Anti-Bullying Implementation Plan — a shared national commitment to safe schools

In 2025, Education Ministers agreed to the findings of the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review, commissioned by the Australian Government to examine what is working to prevent and respond to bullying in Australian schools and where further action is needed. Building on this work, all Australian governments are progressing the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review Implementation Plan (the Plan).

Rolling out nationally from this year, the Plan sets shared expectations for preventing and responding to bullying, supported by jurisdictional and school level action. A key element is timely intervention, with schools expected to make reasonable effort to initiate a response to reported bullying or harmful behaviours within two school days.

Expanding access to wellbeing supports

Access to counsellors, wellbeing coordinators and integrated health, social and education services play a practical role in helping students stay engaged with their learning.

Under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, students — including those with more complex needs — will benefit from earlier and more coordinated access to these supports. Jurisdictions are delivering this reform in ways that reflect local contexts, while maintaining a shared focus on timely, joined up support that responds to student need.

¹⁵ Goodsell B, Lawrence D, Ainley J, Sawyer M, Zubrick SR, Maratos J (2017) Child and Adolescent Mental health and educational outcomes. An analysis of educational outcomes from Young Minds Matter: the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. Perth: Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia.

CASE STUDY

Western Australia – strengthening wellbeing and engagement through integrated supports

Western Australia is delivering a suite of wellbeing reforms under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements to strengthen engagement and learning by improving access to coordinated supports.

A \$21 million initiative is examining how schools can better connect students and families with community, health and social services through integrated, school-based approaches. The Connected Community School trial will commence in 2026 across four public schools, with participating schools working alongside communities to identify local priorities and reduce barriers to access.

Complementing this work, a \$16.5 million investment is expanding the Complex Behaviour Support Coordinators program to 64 full-time equivalent positions, supporting 192 public schools.

Coordinators will be instrumental in creating safer and more supportive learning environments, working with school leaders and communities to identify student learning needs early, and put in place connected and targeted interventions and supports. In addition to making sure students with complex needs receive the supports and interventions they need, the initiative will help reduce administrative burden on classroom teachers, so they can focus on their core business of teaching and learning.

CASE STUDY

NSW – high expectations for student behaviour

As part of its commitment to maintaining NSW public schools as safe and respectful places, NSW is reinforcing its high expectations for student behaviour.

NSW has launched a stronger and clearer student code of conduct to equip schools with the tools to assist in promoting positive student behaviour.

Staff can familiarise themselves with the revised student code of conduct, new research on *What Works Best – Key practices for positive student behaviour* and a suite of professional learning.

Additional resources to support schools in implementing the code will be released in phases throughout 2026 to help staff familiarise themselves with the content.

Implementation will begin from Day 1 Term 1 2027. NSW public schools will ask students and their families to formally acknowledge the code of conduct at the start of every school year.

CASE STUDY

Victoria – responding to students' social, emotional and behavioural needs

Victoria is strengthening student wellbeing through School-wide positive behaviour support (SWPBS).

SWPBS uses a tiered intervention framework and data-based decision making to support students' social, emotional and behavioural needs. Schools participating in the initiative report improved student connectedness, better classroom behaviour, reduced bullying and suspensions, and associated academic gains.

Bolstering student engagement and attendance

Missing school or learning opportunities means students lose vital learning time, making it harder for them to keep progressing and stay engaged. Under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, jurisdictions are implementing targeted measures to lift participation and inclusion, and strengthening connections between schools, students and families.



CASE STUDY

Northern Territory – bolstering attendance

Under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement, the Northern Territory implemented school funding reform changes, based on the recommendations from the Review of Effective Enrolment.

From 2025, Northern Territory Government school funding has been allocated based on enrolment, rather than attendance. Schools are now more directly funded to deliver programs and services to re-engage students, keep and attract teachers, and boost attendance at a school level.

Better understanding school and student need

Better understanding school and student need increasingly depends on using data to guide early, targeted intervention. One example is Queensland's approach to behavioural support.

CASE STUDY

Queensland – using data to support behavioural interventions

Bringing together data from multiple sources for use by school leaders and positive behaviour advisors, the Queensland Behaviour Insights Dashboard will help schools with planning, implementing and monitoring whole of school actions and additional supports and interventions.

The Dashboard will support better decision making when it comes to behavioural intervention by providing a complete picture of the school and student needs.



Tackling antisemitism, promoting inclusion and shared Australian values

The Australian Government has established a 12-month Antisemitism Education Taskforce to consider action across all levels of Australia's education system. Led by David Gonski AC, the Taskforce will help the Australian education system prevent, tackle and properly respond to antisemitism. It will drive the implementation of education measures announced as part of the Australian Government's response to the Special Envoy's Plan to Combat Antisemitism including:

- A targeted review led by the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) of the Australian Curriculum, identifying opportunities to strengthen students' capacity to understand and reject antisemitism and to support a mature expression of Australian values.
- Supporting the expansion of the Special Envoy's UNESCO teacher training program into schools nationwide.
- Extending and expanding funding for Together for Humanity over four years to continue building intercultural understanding and social cohesion in schools.
- Education Services Australia (ESA) developing an online Social Cohesion Hub, giving educators, teachers and school leaders access to high-quality resources to address antisemitism and hatred, with the first tranche delivered by 31 May 2026.

This work is being complemented by action to strengthen the role of the Australian Curriculum in promoting social cohesion and shared values.

A strong and sustainable workforce for teachers

NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Non-Government
Recognising, rewarding and deploying highly expert teachers								
2027 – implementing new classroom-based career progression pathway for teachers	2025 – delivering professional learning partnerships to support teacher engagement	2028 – support teacher uptake of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) status	2025 – strengthening recognition of highly expert teachers by investigating alignment of the state’s level 3 classroom teacher model with HALT certification	2026 – improving attraction and retention of principals, leaders, teachers and support staff	2025 – attracting high-quality teaching staff into remote and regional areas	2025 – providing a new system-wide approach to teaching, supported with resources and professional learning	2026 – delivering evidence-based coaching and professional development to support multi-tiered systems to support implementation	Strengthening recognition and development of highly expert teachers (VIC ongoing, NSW from 2026)
Improving access to high-quality and evidence-based professional learning								
2025 – co-designing professional workshops with First Nations associations (VIC) 2025 – expanding teacher training in literacy and numeracy and/or highly effective teaching practices, supported by access to high-quality curriculum resources (ACT, WA and SA) 2026 – delivering specialist professional learning to strengthen evidence-based teaching practice (NSW) 2026 – providing coaching for teachers and school leaders to support implementation of tiered support systems (NT) 2028 – providing tailored resources and professional development to support mentors of early career teachers (QLD) 2025 – strengthening access to reform-focused professional learning across the non-government sector (non-government; NSW, WA, TAS & VIC)								
Supporting teacher and school leader wellbeing, reducing workload and enhancing cultural safety								
2026 – continuing school administrative reduction initiatives in NSW public schools	2025 – completing and extending Reconciliation Action Plan commitments	2027 – implementing workload reduction initiatives 2027 – supporting small schools to refocus curriculum on Mathematics and English	2025 – establishing Workload Intensification Taskforce	2026 – implementing workload reduction initiatives 2029 – providing targeted teacher support through training and mentorship opportunities	2025 – introducing a new School Staff Wellbeing Response Team to provide targeted wellbeing support for selected schools	2025 – advancing principal health and wellbeing programs 2025 – implementing workload reduction initiatives	2025 – developing management systems focusing on workload reduction	2025 – supporting workload reduction, teacher wellbeing, and improvements towards First Nations cultural safety in the non-government sector in VIC and TAS
From 2025, five jurisdictions are also implementing initiatives to attract and keep more teachers in our schools, and to build a more diverse workforce – including more First Nations educators – Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania and the non-government sector in Victoria.								

* This table is not intended to be exhaustive. It summarises some of the key reforms outlined in bilateral agreements. Not all reforms are captured, and some reforms have been abbreviated.

Teaching quality drives outcomes — when teachers are supported and well-resourced, they can deliver their best in every classroom.

Teachers and school leaders are central to delivering a better and fairer education system. Under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, governments are working together to strengthen the teaching profession by supporting high-quality practice, creating clearer pathways into and through the profession, and reducing unnecessary workload.

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

Alongside the Agreements, the Australian Government is working in partnership with states, territories, non-government education authorities and other stakeholders to deliver the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, providing a clear, coordinated approach to addressing teacher workforce shortages.

Backed by a \$477 million investment, the Action Plan is beginning to show early, encouraging signs of progress across the workforce since its introduction in 2022. In 2026, early data suggest more people are choosing to study teaching, with domestic applications for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) degrees up 6.5%. Teacher numbers are increasing, student-teacher ratios have improved, most ITE graduates are employed within six months, and more graduates are staying in the profession for at least three years.¹⁶

Greater access to high-quality, evidence-based teaching resources

High-quality, evidence-based teaching materials support teachers to exercise their professional expertise, enabling them to focus on responsive, effective teaching that meets the needs of their students.

Under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, teachers will have better access to quality assured curriculum resources developed with the profession and aligned to evidence about how students learn. Supported by targeted professional learning, these resources will provide clarity, promote shared approaches and support effective classroom practice.

Access to evidence-based resources and professional learning is being further strengthened through national initiatives, such as microcredentials for teacher professional development and the Teacher Resource Hubs, supporting consistent, high-quality practice in classrooms nationwide.

CASE STUDY

Tasmania – delivering ready to use teaching resources

High-quality instructional materials in English and Mathematics are being developed for Foundation to Year 10, rolling out across 2025 and 2026 to 184 Tasmanian schools. The materials are designed to reduce preparation time, ease workload and support consistent, evidence-based instruction.

Teachers and school leaders will also have access to tailored professional learning, ensuring they have the skills and confidence to effectively use the materials in the classroom. This BFSA-backed initiative enables teachers to focus more on student learning and less on administrative preparation.

¹⁶ Department of Education [Undergraduate Applications and Offers](#) (Preliminary), Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [Schools](#), Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Graduate Outcomes Survey, QILT [Graduate Outcomes Survey – Longitudinal](#).



CASE STUDY

Northern Territory – explicit teaching resources

The Boosting Literacy and Numeracy Plan was launched in June 2025 ensuring every NT government school uses a consistent, evidence-based approach to learning through explicit teaching.

Under the plan, teachers and students have access to:

- planning resources for schools, outlining what to teach each term and each year
- clear guidance on curriculum delivery and effective teaching strategies for how students learn best
- sequenced lessons and teacher resources for explicit teaching of reading and mathematics
- ongoing training and support for school leaders and educators to build knowledge and confidence in teaching reading and mathematics, and
- access to a Northern Territory developed professional learning suite focused on evidence-based teaching practices.

The plan focuses on how students learn best, and the resources that support teachers to implement small, more manageable steps, enabling students to build understanding and independence in their learning.

The high-quality resources, professional learning and advice provided to NT government schools will help reduce teacher workloads.

CASE STUDY

Microcredentials for teacher professional development

The Microcredentials for Teacher Professional Development program, delivered under the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, supports teachers to build skills in a fast, practical and flexible way.

Through a \$5 million investment over four years (2022–23 to 2025–26), the Australian Government is delivering evidence-based online microcredentials in three areas of identified need — classroom management, explicit teaching, and teaching phonics. The courses are available at no cost to Australian educators until December 2026.

The three microcredentials offer an engaging mix of digital content and applied activities, with a total of 48 hours of learning across four modules. They align with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and are designed to be recognised by Teacher Registration Boards as counting towards professional learning requirements.

Uptake has been strong. By January 2026, more than 5,800 educators had enrolled in one or more microcredentials, with over 4,000 modules completed and more than 745 educators completing a full course.

Feedback from participants indicates high levels of confidence and impact. Among those who completed post-module surveys:

- 83% reported feeling well prepared to teach the subject matter
- 89% reported learning new ideas and strategies they intended to implement
- 93% said they will recommend the courses to a colleague.

The microcredentials program has been supported by a broad range of stakeholders, including state and territory education departments, Catholic and Independent school peak bodies, and teacher and principal associations.

CASE STUDY

Teacher Resource Hubs

High-quality, curriculum-aligned resources help teachers focus on what matters most — effective teaching and student learning. Reducing unnecessary workload is also critical to supporting teacher wellbeing and retention.

To support this, the Australian Government is investing \$34.6 million over four years to deliver a national suite of **Teacher Resource Hubs**, providing free, evidence-based curriculum and student wellbeing resources for teachers and school leaders across Australia.

The Hubs offer easy access to high-quality, curriculum-aligned materials that reduce lesson preparation time and support consistent teaching practice. They are particularly valuable for teachers in regional and smaller schools, where access to specialist resources can be more limited.

The Teacher Resource Hubs include:

- Literacy Hub, including the Year 1 Phonics Check
- Mathematics Hub, including Massive Open Online Courses and the Year 1 Number Check
- Digital Technologies Hub
- Civics and Citizenship Hub
- Student Wellbeing Hub
- Early Learning Languages Australia initiative.

In February 2026, Education Ministers also agreed to establish a new Social Cohesion Education Hub, providing free resources to teachers, school leaders, and families to support social cohesion and address antisemitism. This work is being delivered in collaboration with the Antisemitism Education Taskforce with Australian Government funding.

Building on this, in 2026, work will commence on developing an anti-bullying resource hub to provide schools with quality assured, evidence based guidance focused on prevention and early intervention.

High-quality initial teacher education and pathways for future teachers

High-quality initial teacher education (ITE) is critical to preparing graduates for the classroom.

Australian Government reforms have strengthened the quality and consistency of ITE, ensuring new teachers who enter the profession are more confident, capable and classroom-ready.

Evidence-based core content has now been embedded in every ITE program in Australia, setting clear expectations for what all new teachers should learn from day one — including how students learn and how to manage classrooms effectively. Implementation is being supported by a more than \$7 million investment over four years (2023–24 to 2026–27).

High-quality preparation is shaped both by what ITE students learn and by opportunities to apply that learning in real classroom settings during their training.

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements promote clearer, supported pathways into the teaching profession, complemented by Australian Government initiatives that provide financial support to teaching students so they can undertake their prac to be able to keep going with their teaching qualifications; and that expand employment-based pathways into teaching. Together, these efforts enable aspiring teachers to gain practical classroom experience earlier while building skills, confidence and capability over time.

Paid Prac is also rolling out. For the first time ever, the Australian Government is providing financial support to help teaching students with their practical training.

CASE STUDY

High Achieving Teachers program — providing a national pathway

The Australian Government is expanding the High Achieving Teachers (HAT) program through a \$78.8 million investment over five years (2022–23 to 2026–27) to strengthen employment-based pathways into teaching and support more people to enter the classroom sooner. Through the program, participants earn while they learn, combining paid classroom experience with study towards an accredited teaching qualification.

Ten providers are delivering more than 1,600 places across all states and territories, with pilots designed to attract people from diverse backgrounds, including STEM specialists, First Nations peoples, people with disability, teacher aides and those living in regional and remote communities.

Participants receive wraparound support, including mentoring, coaching and targeted professional learning, helping them build confidence and capability while studying. By enabling participants to live, work and study locally, the HAT program is strengthening a diverse, well-prepared pipeline of future teachers and supporting graduates to stay and contribute to their communities.

CASE STUDY

Independent Schools NSW – providing hands-on classroom experience

In line with the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement commitment to a strong and sustainable teaching workforce, Independent Schools NSW is developing highly skilled, classroom-ready teachers through NSW Teaching School Hubs.

The transformative model of ITE offers year-long, school-embedded placements where trainees are employed one day a week. This immersive experience strengthens practical skills, deepens confidence and attracts high-quality candidates from metropolitan and regional areas addressing key workforce challenges.

Delivered in collaboration with 26 Independent schools and 8 affiliated universities, trainees receive structured mentoring, targeted professional learning and opportunities to apply theory directly in real classrooms. Mentors benefit from tailored professional learning and pathways towards the higher levels of accreditation. By aligning preparation with real world school experience, the Teaching School Hubs Project helps build a sustainable, confident and classroom ready teacher workforce for the Independent sector.

Attraction and retention of qualified teachers

Teachers do one of the most important jobs in the country. Supporting them to stay in the profession is essential to delivering strong outcomes for students.

Workforce reforms under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements focus on easing workload pressures, improving career opportunities and creating supportive school environments.

The Australian Government is working with jurisdictions to deliver initiatives that directly target teacher workload. Central to this effort is the Workload Reduction Fund, which is supporting practical, on the ground pilots to reduce administrative and compliance burdens on teachers and school leaders freeing up the time they can spend teaching and supporting students.



CASE STUDY

Workload Reduction Fund – early results

The Workload Reduction Fund (WRF), an action under the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan, provides \$30 million in Australian Government funding, matched by states and territories, to support practical pilots to reduce unnecessary workload for teachers and school leaders. Phase 1 pilots are now complete, with evaluations showing evidence of reductions in workload and improved efficiency, particularly in schools facing systemic challenges.

What's working

- **NSW:** Additional administrative and support staff reduced administrative workload for teachers and school leaders.
- **Queensland:** Health, Safety and Wellbeing Coordinators cut teacher workload by around half — from about 12 hours per week to 6. The success of this pilot led to the decision to place 140 Health and Safety Officers in schools.
- **South Australia:** Community Connections Officers improved attendance management while reducing demand on central services.
- **Western Australia:** Digitised forms reduced duplication and errors, saving 5 to 20 minutes per form.
- **ACT:** A centralised System Pulse Dashboard reduced administrative workload and supported better planning for principals.
- **Northern Territory:** Shared administrative roles across remote schools eased workloads for teachers and principals.
- **Victoria:** New education support roles, Operational Teaching Assistants, are being piloted in a small number of Victorian schools to reduce teachers' administrative workloads. The pilot was introduced following the feasibility study of Phase 1 of the WRF.

18 phase two pilots are currently underway involving all jurisdictions and will be completed in the second half of 2027.

National pilots are complemented by jurisdiction-led reforms that free up teachers' time.

CASE STUDY

New South Wales – freeing up teachers

New South Wales is taking practical steps to make teaching more sustainable and keep experienced educators in the classroom. The NSW's School Admin Reduction Program (SARP) in 2025 helped ease administrative workload across 723 NSW public schools, contributing to improved operational efficiency.

The program funded new administrative support staff and increased hours for existing School Administrative and Support Staff, enabling more timely and effective management of school operations. SARP added 693,750 administrative hours into NSW public schools in 2025.

In a survey conducted by the program team in Term 4, 2025, 93% of responding principals from SARP schools said that SARP led to real improvements in school operations. They reported the greatest positive changes were in attendance management, process standardisation, reduced teacher administration, community engagement and communications, and third-party systems and digitisation.

The SARP builds on other initiatives, which have helped to cut merged and cancelled classes from close to 10,000 a day in 2023 to 5,669 in 2024 and contributed to a three-year low in teacher vacancies — down 24 per cent at the start of Term 3 2024 compared with the previous year.

CASE STUDY

Queensland – reducing administrative and compliance burdens

Queensland is placing almost 140 Workplace Health and Safety Officers in schools as part of its Better and Fairer Schools Agreement workforce reforms, with plans to expand support to 340 schools through a \$57 million investment.

By shifting administrative and compliance tasks away from teachers and school leaders, the initiative supports greater focus on teaching and learning and strengthens workforce sustainability.

CASE STUDY

Western Australia – Workload Intensification Taskforce

Western Australia has established the Workload Intensification Taskforce, focused on identifying opportunities and evaluating initiatives that reduce the workload of school leaders and teachers in public schools, including the Complex Behaviour Support Coordinator and Small Group Tuition initiatives.

Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships Program

Alongside measures to support teacher retention, the Australian Government is leading national initiatives to strengthen attraction into the profession. Through the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships Program, the Government has committed \$160.1 million over eight years to 2030–31 to support more people to enter teaching and build a strong future workforce. The program provides 1,000 scholarships each year from 2024 to 2028 for students enrolling in accredited primary, secondary and early childhood ITE programs. Scholarships offer financial support of up to \$40,000 for undergraduate students and up to \$20,000 for postgraduate students, helping reduce financial barriers to study.

Scholarship recipients commit to teaching in government-run schools or early learning centres, supporting workforce needs where they are greatest. Following the first round in 2024, second-round offers were made in February 2025, with the third round of scholarships currently underway.

Fostering innovation

Reforms to reduce workload are being complemented by innovative initiatives that free up principals and teachers to focus on delivering high-quality learning.

Some states and territories are piloting artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support teaching and learning in schools, with the Australian Government providing funding for select initiatives. This work is guided by the Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools, which sets nationally consistent expectations for the safe, responsible and ethical use of generative AI in ways that enhance teaching and learning and benefit school communities. Work is also underway to develop product standards for AI tools used in schools, supporting education systems to adopt technology that is safe, effective and fit for purpose.

Complementing these technology-enabled innovations, systems are also trialling new organisational models, such as multi-school organisations — a collaborative model that enables groups of schools to share leadership, curriculum expertise and teaching resources while retaining local identity.



CASE STUDY

Tasmania's multi-school organisations to support teaching and leadership

Tasmania is trialling Multi-School Organisations (MSOs). MSOs are 'families' of schools that are bound together through a united leadership team that is accountable for student results. Schools in an MSO act collectively and have tight alignment across curriculum, teaching and operations, while maintaining their individual identities and community ties. An MSO's size and ability to pool resources allows it to provide targeted and effective assistance to each school in its family. It increases support for teachers and leaders to deliver consistent improvements in student outcomes.

MSOs are inspired by the successful Multi-Academy Trust model in England.

Collaborating on national reforms

In addition to advancing bilateral reforms tailored to the unique contexts of individual jurisdictions, the Australian Government, states and territories and the non-government sector will collaborate on a range of national initiatives.

National initiatives will deliver system-level improvements that support all schools and systems. These include:

- Developing an early years of schooling numeracy check to identify students needing targeted support.
- Implementing a Unique Student Identifier to track students across schooling, VET and higher education.
- Reviewing the Schooling Resource Standard base and loadings calculation methodology.
- Providing advice to Education Ministers on:
 - the impact of socioeconomic diversity on schools and learning
 - attendance, including evidence-based responses to address nonattendance and school refusal.
- Reviewing the Measurement Framework for Schooling to strengthen national performance reporting, including options for a national measures of access, participation and outcomes for students with disability to better understand their education experiences and schooling outcomes.



Equity-focused support for students

First Nations focus

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements recognise the importance of targeted actions that support strong outcomes for priority equity cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This reflects the shared commitment of all Australian governments under the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration* to ensure every young person is supported to unlock their potential.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students bring strong cultures, languages and community connections to their learning. Yet longstanding systemic barriers continue to affect educational outcomes, including school attendance, retention and achievement. While progress has been made, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, on average, experience lower attendance and completion rates and achieve lower results in national assessments than non-Indigenous students — highlighting the need for sustained, culturally responsive action.

Partnering to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to succeed

Working in partnership, governments and education authorities are strengthening pathways and removing barriers so Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are supported to succeed at school and into the future.

First Nations Teacher and School Leader Strategy

The Australian Government is investing \$2.4 million over three years (to 2026–27) to develop the First Nations Teacher and School Leader Strategy in close partnership with First Nations stakeholders. The Strategy aims to attract and retain more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, strengthen cultural responsiveness across education settings, and ensure students see themselves reflected in the workforce that supports them.

The Department is developing the Strategy with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association (NATSIPA), alongside consultation with states and territories and other stakeholders. Education Ministers are expected to consider the Strategy in mid-2026.

First Nations Education Policy

The Australian Government is also leading the development of a new First Nations Education Policy (the Policy) in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education stakeholders and state and territory governments. The Policy will articulate shared national priorities and objectives, supporting a system-wide shift towards education environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are supported to succeed and thrive and reach their full potential in school and beyond.

Students with disability

Students with disability are recognised as a priority equity cohort under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements. Parties to the Agreements — the Australian Government and state and territory governments — affirm their continued commitment to the implementation of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–31* to build inclusive education systems where students with disability can access, participate and succeed in schooling.

Governments are working together to strengthen inclusive practice and ensure students with disability can access education on the same basis as other students. The Schooling Resource Standard includes a students with disability loading, which contributes to the additional assistance schools and systems provide to enable access, participation and learning.

To strengthen understanding of how students with disability are supported across schooling, the review of the *Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia* — a National Enabling Initiative under the Agreements — will consider options for national measures of access, participation and outcomes for students with disability. This work will support a clearer, nationally consistent picture of the education experiences and outcomes of students with disability over time.

This work is complemented by national and jurisdiction-led initiatives that support inclusion within and beyond the school gate. Through *Thriving Kids*, all governments have committed \$4 billion over five years to strengthen early identification and support for children aged 0 to 8 with developmental delay or autism.

The Australian Government is also investing \$28.9 million from 2025–26 to 2029–30 to improve outcomes for students with autism in schools, including through a new, free microcredential for teachers and school staff to support autism-inclusive practice.



Enhancing transparency and accountability

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreements strengthen reporting and public transparency requirements around how extra funding is being used.

The Australian and state and territory governments have committed to new arrangements to enhance transparency, giving the community confidence that funding is being used effectively, reforms are being implemented and outcomes are being achieved.

Strengthened accountability arrangements include:

1. More information for the public on school funding and how it contributes to reform

- Needs-based funding arrangements used in schools across the country will be publicly available and transparent, so the public understands how funding supports schools and students – particularly students with greater educational needs.
- The Commonwealth and states and territories will report annually on their funding for government and non-government schools.
- States and territories and the non-government sector will report annually on how additional Commonwealth funding provided under the Agreements is being invested in key reform areas.

2. Enhanced reporting on student outcomes

- States and territories and the non-government sector will report annually on progress towards agreed targets under the Agreements.

- This will be published in a new public reporting dashboard.
- The Education Minister will provide an annual statement to Parliament on progress under the school education reform agreements.

3. Independent oversight of progress

- Progress under the Agreements will be independently assessed through a mid-term review in 2028 and an end-of agreement review in 2033.

States and territories must also meet funding contribution requirements as a condition of receiving Commonwealth recurrent funding under the section 22A of the Act.

The National School Resourcing Board is charged with assessing state and territory compliance with section 22A funding contribution requirements each year. The Board reports are provided to the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Education Ministers Meeting and tabled in Parliament.



Attachment A: Commonwealth investment supporting better and fairer schools

Table 1: Commonwealth and State/Territory SRS shares for Government Schools under BFSA – 2025 to 2034

State		2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
NSW	S/T	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%
	Cth	20.00%	20.16%	20.31%	20.63%	21.25%	22.50%	22.81%	23.13%	23.75%	25.00%
	Total	95.00%	95.16%	95.31%	95.63%	96.25%	97.50%	97.81%	98.13%	98.75%	100.00%
VIC	S/T	70.43%	70.43%	Bilateral agreement to be negotiated.							
	Cth	20.00%	20.00%								
	Total	90.43%	90.43%								
QLD	S/T	70.50%	72.00%	73.50%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%
	Cth	20.00%	20.42%	20.46%	20.49%	20.50%	20.79%	21.30%	22.08%	23.25%	25.00%
	Total	90.50%	92.42%	93.96%	95.49%	95.50%	95.79%	96.30%	97.08%	98.25%	100.00%
SA	S/T	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%
	Cth	20.00%	20.37%	20.37%	20.37%	21.25%	22.50%	22.89%	23.15%	23.75%	25.00%
	Total	95.00%	95.37%	95.37%	95.37%	96.25%	97.50%	97.89%	98.15%	98.75%	100.00%
WA	S/T	76.25%	77.50%	77.50%	77.50%	77.50%	77.34%	77.11%	76.85%	76.25%	75.00%
	Cth	21.25%	22.50%	22.50%	22.50%	22.50%	22.66%	22.89%	23.15%	23.75%	25.00%
	Total	97.50%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
TAS	S/T	75.91%	77.50%	77.50%	77.50%	77.50%	77.34%	77.11%	76.85%	76.25%	75.00%
	Cth	21.25%	22.50%	22.50%	22.50%	22.50%	22.66%	22.89%	23.15%	23.75%	25.00%
	Total	97.16%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
ACT	S/T	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	81.50%	81.50%	81.50%	81.50%	81.50%
	Cth	21.25%	22.50%	22.50%	22.50%	22.50%	22.66%	22.89%	23.15%	23.75%	25.00%
	Total	101.25%	102.50%	102.50%	102.50%	102.50%	104.16%	104.39%	104.65%	105.25%	106.50%
NT	S/T	59.00%	59.15%	59.30%	59.55%	60.00%	Bilateral agreement to be negotiated.				
	Cth	24.92%	28.69%	32.46%	36.23%	40.00%					
	Total	83.92%	87.84%	91.76%	95.78%	100.00%					

Source: State and territory bilateral agreements under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025–2034 and Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034. On 8 December 2025, Victoria signed a bilateral agreement under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025–2034, representing the first two years of a long-term agreement. The Northern Territory has signed a five-year bilateral agreement under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034.

Table 2: Estimated Total Commonwealth School Recurrent Funding per Student for Government Schools by Calendar Year – 2025 to 2034 (\$)

CY	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
NSW	4,527	4,754	4,966	5,231	5,595	6,171	6,460	6,758	7,155	7,761
VIC	4,488	4,700	4,895	5,096	5,309	5,549	5,744	5,937	6,130	6,323
QLD	4,770	5,098	5,319	5,544	5,775	6,115	6,478	6,936	7,536	8,355
SA	4,724	5,003	5,177	5,359	5,792	6,375	6,690	6,981	7,387	8,015
WA	4,620	5,073	5,240	5,421	5,615	5,874	6,126	6,395	6,768	7,343
TAS	5,313	5,899	6,160	6,428	6,708	7,050	7,365	7,697	8,151	8,849
ACT	4,135	4,568	4,747	4,931	5,131	5,385	5,619	5,865	6,206	6,734
NT	9,509	11,435	13,455	15,622	17,947	18,731	19,320	19,913	20,503	21,092

Source: Department of Education’s school funding models as at Budget 2026–27.

Notes: The data reflects Commonwealth recurrent school funding only and excludes funding for capital purposes, special circumstances, Non-Government Representative Bodies, prescribed circumstances, additional support for NT government schools, and the Choice and Affordability Fund. The funding figures for government schools from 2025 to 2034 are estimated based on the Commonwealth shares set out in the *Australian Education (Commonwealth Share for Government Schools) Regulations 2024*.

Table 3: Estimated Total Commonwealth Funding for Government Schools for each loading by Calendar Year, 2025 and 2026 (\$m)

	Total		Base		SED		SWD		Indigenous		LEP		Location		Size	
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
NSW	3,474.3	3,604.4	2,370.6	2,439.2	383.6	394.8	507.9	550.6	108.4	111.5	10.4	10.7	41.1	42.3	52.4	55.1
VIC	2,952.8	3,093.2	2,033.5	2,102.9	293.0	303.3	544.8	602.8	17.0	17.6	11.2	11.6	16.7	17.2	36.5	37.7
QLD	2,671.4	2,828.7	1,737.6	1,815.9	316.7	330.9	412.3	467.3	95.4	99.6	4.1	4.2	76.1	79.6	29.3	31.1
SA	786.8	822.3	519.5	539.6	93.5	97.1	115.4	124.4	17.8	18.5	1.7	1.8	24.1	25.0	14.8	15.7
WA	1,410.0	1,552.9	999.6	1,097.2	158.8	174.3	127.6	145.5	44.7	49.1	2.6	2.9	57.3	62.8	19.3	21.1
TAS	275.8	299.5	171.1	183.1	37.6	40.3	33.9	40.2	8.8	9.4	0.2	0.2	17.0	18.3	7.1	8.0
ACT	187.3	206.3	149.7	163.6	10.4	11.3	23.9	27.7	1.8	1.9	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.5
NT	271.5	323.9	109.1	128.8	26.6	31.5	43.5	54.6	43.0	50.7	1.8	2.1	40.0	47.3	7.5	9.0
AUS	12,029.8	12,731.2	8,090.8	8,470.4	1,320.1	1,383.4	1,809.3	2,013.3	336.8	358.4	32.2	33.8	272.2	292.6	168.3	179.2

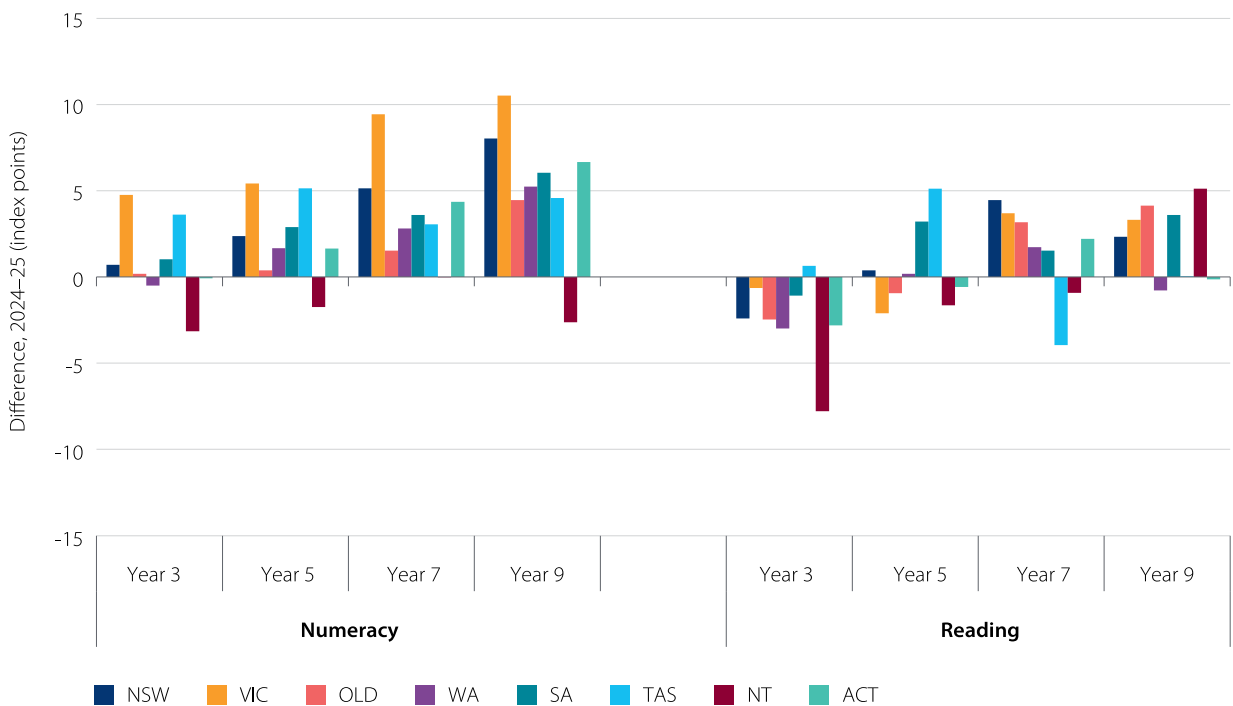
Source: Department of Education’s school funding models as at Budget 2026–27.

Notes: The table includes data that has not previously been published. The above estimated figures may not align with the Section 127 report that details financial assistance provided to Approved Authorities. The above figures show the projected growth of the loadings based on previous years demographics, except for Student with Disability loading

Attachment B: NAPLAN Progress

From 2024 to 2025, there was a general increase in Numeracy scores across the board, with Victoria significantly increasing its mean score across all year levels, along with NSW Year 9 students.

Change in mean NAPLAN scores by state and territory from 2024–2025 for all year levels for Numeracy and Reading



Source: Adapted from Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) [NAPLAN National Results](#).

