



Australian Government
Department of Education

Corporate Plan 2026-27



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The document must be attributed as the Department of Education Corporate Plan 2026–27.




Australian Government
Department of Education

Corporate Plan **2026-27**

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders past and present.



01

Introduction

This plan sets out the significant agenda we are delivering on behalf of the Australian Government, to support Australians to achieve their potential through education.





Secretary's introduction

The Department of Education's Corporate Plan 2026–27 sets out our purpose, operating context and strategic direction for the 2026–27 to 2029–30 period. It guides our work as stewards of Australia's education system and provides a clear line of sight between the government's priorities, our day-to-day activities and the outcomes we seek to achieve for Australians.

We remain committed to delivering the department's Capability Review Action Plan, strengthening how we plan, partner and deliver for Australians. This Action Plan reinforces the importance of building the capability, systems and partnerships needed to deliver system-wide outcomes for education and to effectively support and fulfil government priorities over the longer term. This includes embedding the department's Long Term Direction, which guides our national stewardship of the education system.

Our purpose is to create a better future for all Australians through education. Access to quality education enables people of all ages and backgrounds to realise their potential and pursue their aspirations. Strong foundations in early childhood education and care, inclusive and high-quality schooling, and accessible post-school pathways deliver lifelong benefits for individuals and families, strengthen communities and underpin Australia's social and economic prosperity. A diverse, sustainable international education sector supports student aspirations while building enduring global relationships for Australia. World-leading research in the university sector contributes to economic growth, drives innovation and improves quality of life across the nation.

Collaboration and partnerships are central to the department delivering the Australian Government's education priorities. Over the year ahead, we will work closely with ministers, jurisdictions and the sector to progress key priorities for all sectors. These include workforce support, expanding access through new and expanded services under the Building Early Education Fund, and strengthening child safety and integrity standards.

We will continue to implement the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, which puts all jurisdictions on a pathway to funding government schools to 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard. Additional Australian Government funding is tied to reforms across three major outcomes: equity and excellence, wellbeing for learning and engagement, and a strong and sustainable workforce.

In higher education, we will support the newly created Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC), develop a new funding system to better support under-represented students, improve the sustainability of international education, and drive better alignment between the higher education and vocational education and training sectors. The ATEC, as the independent steward of the higher education sector, will implement new higher education funding arrangements to ensure Australian students have the best opportunity to participate and succeed in higher education regardless of their background.

This year the department will support the Antisemitism Education Taskforce as part of the Australian Government's response to the Special Envoy's Plan to Combat Antisemitism, as well as broader work to strengthen social cohesion through the education and training system. This work will span early childhood, schools and higher education. It will involve engagement with communities, educators, students and other stakeholders to support consistent, practical and education-focused approaches aligned with broader efforts to counter racism and discrimination and foster social cohesion.

The department continues to make progress in embedding the Priority Reforms under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap across our people and business practices. We will continue to integrate these reforms into the fabric of our organisational culture, transforming how we think, work and engage with colleagues, stakeholders and communities to improve First Nations education outcomes.

Within the department, increasing our adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) will be a strong focus in the coming year. We will equip our workforce with the skills and guidance to safely and ethically use AI as another tool in our day-to-day work. By embedding AI literacy, the department will enable staff to harness AI to improve productivity and service delivery.

The department is refining its approach to performance reporting to provide a clearer and more meaningful account of how we deliver on our purpose. This work will be implemented through a phased approach over coming years. In 2026–27, performance measures have been streamlined or repositioned to better reflect the work we do, how we do it and how we contribute to educational outcomes for Australians. High-level metrics on the performance of the education sector will continue to be reported in the department's Annual Report.

I look forward to working with our staff, partners and stakeholders to deliver meaningful improvements across Australia's education system in 2026–27 and beyond.

Statement of preparation

As the accountable authority of the Department of Education, I am pleased to present our Corporate Plan for the reporting period 2026–27, which covers the period 2026–27 to 2029–30, as required under section 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).



Tony Cook PSM

Secretary

Australian Government Department of Education

6 July 2026

Statement of commitment to First Nations peoples

Improving outcomes of First Nations peoples and communities is a priority for our department, and a shared responsibility for all staff, supported by strong leadership accountability and governance.

We are committed to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Our work contributes to the 5 socio-economic outcomes that we lead or share responsibility for in the areas of education and youth engagement. The National Agreement is not just relevant to teams working on Closing the Gap. It is applicable to all of us through embedding the 4 Priority Reforms to transform the way we work as a department and across the Australian Government to deliver intersecting priorities.

In 2025, the department elevated the Indigenous Business Is Everyone's Business Committee to provide dedicated strategic oversight, advice and shared decision-making on First Nations priorities. The committee provides a mechanism to strengthen accountability and increase transparency about our progress. Beyond the committee, there are many ways we are working together – from increasing the representation of First Nations staff and leaders, to strengthening our relationships with key First Nations partners and stakeholders and embracing the Deadly Crew staff network through allyship. These relationships provide important insights to the operations and decision-making within the department.

Our commitment to genuine partnership continues to be supported through formal partnership arrangements with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, as well as the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership. The department also manages the formal Partnership Agreement between NATSIEC and the Education Ministers Meeting (EMM), an enduring mechanism to develop a joined-up approach to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life cycle education outcomes.

In 2026–27, the department will focus on improving outcomes of First Nations learners across the education life cycle by:

Strengthening early foundations in early childhood education and care

- Continuing key programs, including Connected Beginnings and the Community Child Care Fund Restricted Expansion Program
- Monitoring the impact of the 3 Day Guarantee which provides eligible families caring for a First Nations child with access to 100 hours of subsidised early childhood education and care per fortnight
- Delivering the Building Early Education Fund, including a dedicated funding round for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations.

Supporting success through school education

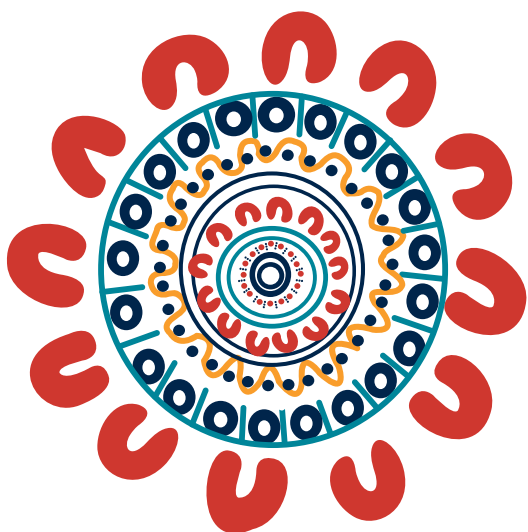
- Considering First Nations education needs in delivery of Better and Fairer Schools Agreements commitments
- Delivering the First Nations Teacher and School Leader Strategy to strengthen culturally safe workspaces and culturally responsive teaching and leadership
- Finalising the First Nations Education Policy, defining the national aspirations and priorities for First Nations education.

Enabling pathways through further education

- Implementing needs-based funding to support First Nations students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students with disability and those studying at regional, rural and remote campuses to access, participate in and succeed at university
- Appointing a statutory First Nations Commissioner within the ATEC to strengthen First Nations leadership and influence
- Improving access to tertiary education for students in regional and remote areas through Regional University Study Hubs. Between July and December 2025, 6,404 students were supported across 56 Hubs, 10% of whom identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The department will also develop its next Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), led by the RAP Working Group in collaboration with People Branch and the Deadly Crew staff network. This will support the vision for a reconciled Australia, where First Nations peoples, cultures and heritages are valued and respected, and our shared history is recognised and accepted as a foundation for unity, equity, and enduring positive change. The department will challenge unconscious biases that result in decisions based on stereotypes and will share and publish engagement approaches, consistent with the transformation elements.

As the department continues to steward the education system, we recognise the need to further embed the Priority Reforms in how policy is designed, delivered and governed, and in how government works with First Nations communities and stakeholders, to accelerate system-wide change.

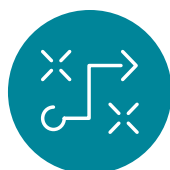


Our purpose



Our purpose

We create a better future for all Australians through education.



Outcomes

Outcome 1

Improved early learning, schooling, student educational outcomes and transitions to and from school through access to quality early childhood education and care, support, parent engagement, quality teaching and learning environments.

Programs

- 1.1 Support for the Child Care System
- 1.2 Child Care Subsidy
- 1.3 Government Schools National Support
- 1.4 Non-Government Schools National Support
- 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support

Outcome 2

Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education, and international quality research.

Programs

- 2.1 Core Commonwealth Funding for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
 - 2.2 Higher Education Superannuation Program
 - 2.3 Higher Education Support
 - 2.4 Higher Education Loan Program
 - 2.5 Investment in Higher Education Research
 - 2.6 Research Capacity
 - 2.7 International Education Support
 - 2.8 Nuclear Powered Submarine Program
-



Key activities

1. Support equitable access to quality early childhood education and care
 2. Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding for schools
 3. Strengthen the education workforce and boost outcomes for children and young people
 4. Strengthen the quality, accessibility and sustainability of higher education
 5. Invest in research and innovation, and support international education and global engagement
-

Who we are here for



Learners

All who engage in some form of learning in Australia from early childhood education and care to schooling and tertiary students, to lifelong learners of all ages.



Families, communities and the nation

Parents, caregivers, young people and other different groups comprising our society. Our work helps foster a society of active and engaged citizens.



Educator workforce

Educators and the workforce that support education providers, services and institutions, including researchers.

Our impact – who benefits

We ensure that Commonwealth funding is administered correctly to support Australians to access education and realise the benefits of lifelong learning. Through national policies and programs, we help:

- **lift education outcomes** for learners from all locations and backgrounds so they can achieve their ambitions and aspirations

- **support child safety** in early childhood education and care settings to complement our regulatory partners

- **prepare children for school** and help families, particularly women, to engage in work or learning during their child's early years

- **promote reform** in the classroom and through funding provided in the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, to improve learning outcomes for school students

- **provide skilled and adaptable workers with higher education qualifications** that boost workforce productivity, sovereign capability and innovation

- **support teachers and educators** to build their skills, knowledge and capability to deliver the quality education required to lift education outcomes

- **give young people a say** on the issues, policies and programs that impact them

- **empower First Nations peoples** to be involved in decisions about their education and the education system

- **give international students an opportunity** to gain a world-class education

- **support researchers** to deliver cutting-edge research that drives innovation and economic growth.

What we do



Provide **strategic direction and national leadership** for Australia's education system



Administer Commonwealth funding for education in accordance with legislation



Support a **safe and positive learning experience** for children and students





Provide **advice to the Australian Government** on education policy





Carry out **regulatory functions** in partnership with relevant Commonwealth and state and territory regulators.


How we deliver


-  **We collaborate** with other government agencies, stakeholders and organisations in the education sector and communities


-  **We work in genuine partnership with First Nations peoples** on education policies and programs that affect them

-  **We ensure our interactions with stakeholders** are inclusive, trustworthy and transparent

-  **We deliver our work with a strong focus on continuous improvement**, including through implementation of the department's Capability Review Action Plan

-  **We act in accordance** with the Administrative Arrangements Order and legislative requirements

-  **We demonstrate our commitment to innovation** through our investment in the capability of our staff and the technological tools they need to deliver work effectively and efficiently to improve productivity

-  **We ensure our advice** is grounded in research, evaluation, evidence and data.

02

Operating context

We will continue to monitor our operating environment and respond to the opportunities and challenges presented – enhancing our ability to achieve our purpose.



Our environment

Our operating environment determines how we deliver on our purpose. Factors that affect our operating environment include government decisions and the broader social and economic landscape.

In 2019, the Australian and state and territory governments issued the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, setting out a vision for ‘a world class education system that encourages and supports every student to be the very best they can be, no matter where they live or what kind of learning challenges they may face’. This declaration underpins the department’s operating environment now and in the future.

The following **economic and social factors** will continue to impact our operating environment in 2026–27 and the years ahead:

- the changing nature of work and education, particularly with the rapid evolution of technology and AI
- workforce shortages and the increasing need for skilled workers to drive productivity
- demographic changes and the need to address the different educational outcomes of these groups
- a complex geopolitical environment requiring greater focus on skills and innovation that underpin our economic activity and sovereign capability
- the changing fiscal environment alongside high expectations for the standards of government service delivery
- capital works challenges due to external factors such as supply chain disruptions
- the need to strengthen and support social cohesion in the aftermath of terrorist attacks and increasingly frequent hate crimes, with education being a tool to shape values
- the impact of climate change and how to deliver education in a time of increasing risk of natural disasters.

Significant **whole-of-government policies** that shape the way we work include:

- Closing the Gap commitments including embedding Priority Reforms to change the way the Australian Government works with First Nations people, organisations and representatives through genuine partnerships, shared decision-making and structural reform to improve life outcomes
- adopt and embed the Australian Public Service (APS) reform agenda to lift capability and create a culture that values integrity and builds community trust
- the AI Plan for the Australian Public Service 2025, setting out how the APS will harness AI to improve service delivery, policy outcomes, and productivity, while ensuring public trust is maintained
- the department’s Capability Review Action Plan, which is identifying opportunities to strengthen our capability to deliver as an effective, future-ready organisation.

The department remains focused on implementing the **Australian Government's education reform initiatives** across early childhood education and care (ECEC), schools, and higher education. The reforms work together to reshape the Australian education system and lift workforce participation through educational attainment. They also support vulnerable and under-represented cohorts to have equal opportunity to access education.

The department continues to support access, participation and outcomes of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students with disability and students from regional, rural and remote Australia, to help these cohorts overcome the unique barriers they can face to educational opportunities.

In 2026–27, the department will focus on:

- continuing on the pathway to achieve high-quality, safe, affordable and accessible universal ECEC by:
 - improving the affordability and accessibility of ECEC, including through the 3-Day Guarantee, Building Early Education Fund and Preschool Reform Agreement and extension of the Worker Retention Payment
 - implementation of actions to strengthen ECEC quality and safety through joint actions with states and territories, including a National Early Childhood Worker Register, mandatory safety training for the ECEC sector and compliance actions
 - working with states and territories, and with key stakeholders, on a potential national Early Education and Care Commission to improve system stewardship.
- delivering on a range of initiatives to improve educational outcomes for students, including the national priorities within the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, through:
 - equity and excellence: supporting the Foundation to Year 2 Maths curriculum review; developing the First Nations Education Policy; and implementing the recommendations of the 2025 Review of the Disability Standards for Education
 - engagement in learning: continuing to ensure schools are safe, accessible, inclusive and respectful learning environments for all students and implementing the recommendations of the Anti-Bullying Rapid Review
 - supporting high-quality teaching: embedding core content with universities for initial teacher education (ITE) programs; providing the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships, as one element of supporting the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan; developing the First Nations Teacher and School Leader Strategy; and providing supports for principals
 - accountability and transparency: supporting a public dashboard to report on progress against the Agreements; providing an annual Statement by the Minister for Education in progress made under the Agreements, and calculating, administering and assuring the integrity of Commonwealth funding including funding for students with disability for all Australian schools eligible under the *Australian Education Act 2013*.

- improving the quality, accessibility and sustainability of the higher education system by:
 - continuing to improve university governance to strengthen accountability, transparency and public trust in Australian universities
 - setting up the Better Regulation Working Group to streamline processes and improve efficiency in the higher education sector and to monitor quality and confidence in the sector
 - upholding the integrity and sustainability of the international education sector
 - fostering innovation and an entrepreneurial culture in Australia's university research system, which is critical to economic growth and productivity
 - holding higher education providers accountable for compliance with the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence, while supporting higher education providers to strengthen their prevention and response arrangements
 - combating antisemitism in education through the 12-month Antisemitism Education Taskforce, to help the education system prevent, tackle and properly respond to antisemitism
 - supporting efforts to strengthen social cohesion, with a focus on improving student safety and inclusion.

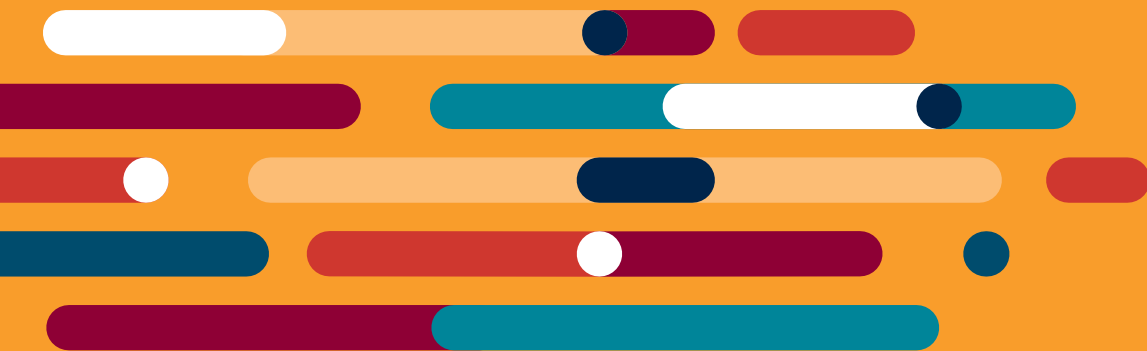
In 2026–27, the ATEC, supported by the department, will:

- act as the independent steward of the higher education sector to create a better and fairer tertiary education system that delivers for students and on national economic and social objectives
- negotiate new Mission-Based Compacts with providers to help achieve national tertiary education objectives while balancing institutional and local priorities
- continue initiatives to deliver a more joined-up tertiary system including developing a Tertiary Roadmap and national credit recognition framework
- assume responsibility for the Higher Education Standards Framework from the previous Higher Education Standards Panel
- publish a State of the Tertiary Education System Report.

03

Partnerships and cooperation

We prioritise and value our relationships with our diverse range of stakeholders. Our cooperation with others ensures our policies and programs reflect evidence-based advice and meet the needs of our stakeholders and the Australian community.



How we engage

To achieve the portfolio outcomes and objectives, the department works with a range of stakeholders. We support our ministers and work closely with statutory bodies and statutory office holders, state and territory governments, other government agencies, education bodies, providers, research institutions, First Nations peoples and other groups.

The department's collaborative culture supports our people to work together and build genuine partnerships with our stakeholders. We strive to ensure our engagement with stakeholders is meaningful and reflects our commitment to two-way communication, open dialogue, and structured feedback mechanisms that inform and strengthen our work. We use both traditional and contemporary ways of consulting with our stakeholders and the community, including the use of digital platforms to boost inclusion.

Collaboration is an important part of our role as a steward of the education system. Together, we provide strategic direction for and oversight of Australia's education system. We work with our stakeholders to develop informed and impactful advice, and effective policies and programs. These partnerships support us to achieve our purpose and are crucial to the delivery of outcomes in a shared policy environment.

Our portfolio

The portfolio consists of the department, statutory bodies and statutory office holders (Figure 1). The department works with these portfolio agencies and office holders to achieve shared objectives as stewards of the education system.

Figure 1. Our portfolio



Ministers

We support our ministers and assistant minister by providing advice which is impartial, complies with legal requirements, considers the integrity of government processes, outlines implementation and delivery risks and considers the impact of policy on the broader Australian community.

We provide the best objective, non-partisan advice based on the best evidence available, while understanding the needs of the government. Our advice is relevant and comprehensive and considers the context in which policy needs to be implemented, the broader policy directions set by government and, where appropriate, implications for the longer term.

Portfolio bodies

We work closely with others in the Education portfolio to achieve mutual goals, including with the:

- **Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority** on improving the learning of all young Australians through world-class curriculum, assessment and reporting
- **Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership** on a high-quality and nationally consistent approach to teaching and leadership in schools and education settings
- **Australian Research Council** on advising the government on research matters, funding the highest quality research, and assessing the quality, engagement and impact of research
- **Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency** as the independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for the higher education system
- **Australian National University** to set the legal framework for its governance and accountability obligations under the *Australian National University Act 1991* and the PGPA Act.

Statutory office holders within the Department of Education

The **ATEC** operates with support from the department. It formally commenced on 29 April 2026. The ATEC is led by Commissioners appointed as independent statutory office holders. It will provide independent expert advice and drive meaningful long-term reform to build a tertiary education system that is equitable and sustainable, lifting Australia's educational attainment. The ATEC's responsibilities will include negotiating new mission-based compacts, allocating student load across universities, advising on improvements to system-wide policy, and advancing a more joined-up tertiary education system.

The **Tuition Protection Service¹ Director** operates with support from the department. The Tuition Protection Service supports eligible students whose education providers are unable to fully deliver their course of study to either complete their studies at another education provider, receive a refund of tuition fees paid upfront or receive a loan re-credit. The Tuition Protection Service Director's Annual Report, including regulatory performance reporting, can be found within the Department of Education Annual Report.

¹ The Tuition Protection Service (TPS) has prepared a Statement of Intent in response to a joint Ministerial Statement of Expectations. The statement outlines the TPS's regulatory role in safeguarding Australia's reputation as an education destination by supporting registered education and training providers to understand and meet their obligations to students and supporting eligible students whose education provider defaults. The regulatory functions of the TPS fall within the accountable authority of both the Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. They are published at: www.education.gov.au/resources/tps.

Our partners

Our partners – both domestic and international – are critical to the department’s provision of evidence-based advice to our ministers and the Australian Government, and in supporting the delivery of positive outcomes for individuals and the community.

Domestically, we work closely with state and territory education authorities, national education bodies, providers, research institutions and other organisations to improve Australia’s education and research sectors. Our partnerships allow us to make informed recommendations to government and enhance Australia’s position as a leader in education and research globally.

We also work closely with:

- the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), an independent statutory body owned by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments that oversees the National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care in Australia
- Education Services Australia, a ministerial not-for-profit company that works with all education systems and sectors to improve student outcomes, enhance teacher impact and strengthen school communities
- the Australian Education Research Organisation, which provides independent evidence to promote better educational outcomes for Australian children and young people
- the Council for International Education, which oversees Australia’s role in international education and training.

We work in partnership with:

- SNAICC – National Voice for our Children (SNAICC), the national peak body organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
- the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC), the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education across the lifelong learning cycle
- Investment Dialogue for Australia’s Children (IDAC) to build and expand integrated early learning hubs.

We engage and partner with peak bodies, including:

- peak bodies representing early childhood education and care providers
- the National Catholic Education Commission, a peak body for Catholic education in Australia, responsible for the national coordination and representation of Catholic schools and school authorities
- Independent Schools Australia, a peak body representing the interests of the independent school sector nationally
- peak bodies representing principals
- peak bodies representing parents and communities
- unions representing the sector workforces
- Independent Higher Education Australia, a peak body representing registered and accredited higher education providers
- Universities Australia, a peak body representing member universities and providing expert policy advice, analysis, statistical evidence and media commentary on higher education
- the International Education Stakeholders Forum, which brings together peak bodies across all education sectors with responsibilities in international education.

We work across the Australian Government and with state and territory governments, including with:

- Services Australia on the shared delivery of the Child Care Subsidy for families
- the National Indigenous Australians Agency to support the department's contribution to the Commonwealth's shared commitment to implement the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- the National Office for Child Safety and the e-Safety Commissioner to improve child safety
- the National Student Ombudsman, within the Commonwealth Ombudsman, to enforce the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender Based Violence
- the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing supporting children and families through Thriving Kids.

The department works in partnership with state and territory governments to achieve educational and regulatory outcomes.

- The department facilitates the Education Ministers Meetings between the Commonwealth and all state and territory education ministers and ministers with responsibility for early education and care and higher education. Chaired by the Commonwealth Minister for Education, these meetings enable ongoing national cooperation and consistency on strategic issues, including national policy initiatives through the Preschool Reform Agreement and the Better and Fairer Schools Agreements, and on university governance.
- In 2026, the department will work particularly closely with state and territory regulatory bodies for the early childhood education and care sector to implement legislative changes made in 2025 to improve health, safety, wellbeing and educational outcomes. We will continue to work to enhance the National Quality Framework with ACECQA following the legislative changes.

For international education, our offshore network posted in Australian missions across key regions is critical to building positive government-to-government education relationships. The overseas network aims to advance Australia's strategic priorities, diversify our international student markets and identify opportunities for Australian education providers to grow their provision of transnational education.

International bodies we work with include:

- the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through participation in various forums, to support improvements in education and research policy domestically and globally
- the G20, a forum where Australia's education and research contributions can strengthen key partnerships, influence the policy agenda and increase market access opportunities for Australian education providers.

04

Risk oversight and governance

We empower our staff to proactively manage risk and make decisions in line with our Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Framework.



Risk oversight and governance

Enterprise risk management arrangements

A better future for all Australians through education cannot be delivered without engaging with risk.

The department's Accountable Authority Instructions and Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Framework provide staff with resources to engage with and manage risk. Staff are empowered to proactively identify and manage risks and make decisions in line with our risk appetite and tolerance limits and our governance and accountability arrangements.

The Executive Board has overarching responsibility for overseeing the department's enterprise risk management arrangements, including setting our risk appetite and tolerance limits. Risk management is embedded in our planning, governance and performance arrangements. We use the following committees to support risk management arrangements:

- The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent advice to the Executive Board on the appropriateness of risk oversight and management.
- The People, Culture and Integrity Committee oversees a positive risk and pro-integrity culture.
- The Project and Investment Committee provides oversight and assurance over the department's project portfolio, including projects of high strategic importance.

The Chief Risk Officer (CRO) plays an important role in championing enterprise risk management arrangements. The CRO promotes risk awareness and communicates and engages with staff to build risk capability and maintain a positive risk culture.

Our positive risk culture is underpinned by trust, transparency and a no-blame approach to dealing with issues and emerging risks. Our risk appetite and tolerance statement defines our willingness to accept risks to deliver our purpose.

All staff have a role in identifying, managing and mitigating risks as part of their day-to-day activities. Through our enterprise risk management arrangements, we support staff to incorporate risk management practices into daily business activities at the operational and strategic levels, providing guidance on acceptable risk taking, and building capability through a range of training and awareness activities, including mandatory risk management training for all staff every 12 months and tailored risk management workshops.

Figure 2. Overview of our enterprise risk management arrangements



Strategic risk environment


The department has robust mechanisms in place for managing current and emerging risks in its internal and external environment.

The department regularly considers security, cyber security, service delivery, regulatory changes, psychosocial factors, natural disasters and emergencies as part of the ongoing management of our enterprise risk arrangements, including risks shared with our service providers.

Our enterprise-wide risks (EWRs) consider the department's current strategic and operating environment, challenges and opportunities. The EWRs and mitigation strategies align with our risk appetite and tolerance statement.

Enterprise-wide risks and mitigation strategies

Table 1. Enterprise-wide risks and mitigation strategies

Risk category	Enterprise-wide risk
 <p data-bbox="288 1137 368 1167">Policy</p>	<p data-bbox="469 1016 1347 1081">The department gives poor-quality policy advice impacting its ability to achieve government agendas and strategic outcomes</p>

Mitigation strategies

- The department invests in its internal research and analysis capabilities to build strategic policy expertise across the department. These capabilities are deployed in areas of need, prioritising the delivery of high-quality and evidence-based policy advice.
- The department has strong collaborative partnerships with experts, institutions and other departments; enhances communication channels; and provides continuous professional development opportunities for its staff.
- The department will use data and evidence to inform policy development, to ensure alignment to the government's Policy Impact Analysis framework.
- The department has a People Strategy and Enterprise Workforce Plan that sets the overarching direction and priorities for how the department and its leadership will support and develop its people and build capability. This will enable it to deliver on its strategic objectives and provide high-quality evidence-based advice to government.

Risk category**Enterprise-wide risk****Delivery**

The department fails to deliver on its strategic objectives to the speed or expectations of its stakeholders

Mitigation strategies

- The department has established robust processes for regular review and evaluation of policies, programs and initiatives to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- The department has adopted a proactive approach to staying informed about emerging trends, research and best practices in education and related fields, both domestically and internationally.
- The department fosters partnerships and collaborations with other government agencies, educational institutions and industry stakeholders to leverage collective knowledge and expertise.
- The department continues to build on its internal environmental scanning and research capabilities to continue to identify, understand and invest in innovation and technology advancements. A key element of this is to also continue managing and investing in relationships with our stakeholders.
- The department has established agreements for services with other agencies and monitors their effectiveness and delivery as they impact the department (e.g., Inter agency agreements with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)).
- The department's Child Safe Policy sets out our approach to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person that has contact with the department's staff, contractors, consultants, and service providers.
- The department's Strategic Prioritisation Framework is maturing across the department to support flexible and coordinated resource deployment.

Risk category**Enterprise-wide risk****Regulatory and Compliance**

Failure to discharge our regulatory responsibilities and/or failure to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements

Mitigation strategies

- The department adopts a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving performance, capability and culture to build trust and confidence in Australia's regulatory settings.
- The department proactively engages with education sector entities, other key regulators, industry bodies, and the public to understand its concerns and implement regulations in a transparent and collaborative way.

- The department ensures adequate resources (funding, staffing, and technology) are allocated to meet regulatory responsibilities.
- The department takes a risk-based approach to maintain essential safeguards while minimising regulatory burden, and leverage data and digital technology to support those it regulates to comply.
- The department's Regulator Statement of Intent, Resource Management Guide 128, and the PGPA Act Fraud and Corruption Rule provide greater clarity about how the department should carry out its regulatory roles.
- The department requires all major programs to conduct a Fraud and Corruption Risk Assessment as required under the PGPA Act Fraud and Corruption Rule.
- The department's Conflict of Interest Policy and provisions in contracts help guide and set clear expectations for its staff and providers.
- The department's legislative compliance is overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee and the Executive Board.
- The department has a program of internal audits with periodic audits and reviews of compliance against regulatory requirements, policies and processes, to detect instances of non-compliance.
- The department has clear and accessible policies, procedures and training materials outlining key compliance requirements and obligations, which are updated regularly.
- The department continues to embed a pro-integrity culture through its Integrity Framework and processes applicable to all our people, contractors and service providers.
- The department has access to appropriate legal advice from qualified and experienced advisers via the Legal Division and the Australian Government Solicitor.

Risk category**Enterprise-wide risk****Stakeholders**

Failure to effectively foster professional, inclusive, and collaborative relationships with stakeholders, third parties and partners

Mitigation strategies

- The department identifies and prioritises key stakeholders based on their influence and engagement. We have undertaken thorough stakeholder analysis to understand their interests and concerns.
- The department develops and embeds a consistent approach/principle to establishing formal partnership and shared decision-making mechanisms with First Nations stakeholders across the portfolio.
- The department invests in developing staff capability to engage with stakeholders in genuine partnership and ensures sufficient resourcing and timeframes.
- The department maintains comprehensive communication plans prioritising digital communications and ensuring transparency, regular updates, and tailored information for each stakeholder group. The department dedicates time to manage existing relationships and build new relationships.
- The department continues to co-design future projects and policies with key stakeholders.

- The department will continue to invest in further developing forums for consultation with internal and external subject matter experts.
- The department uses standard Commonwealth contract suites, contracts, agreements, or inter-agency agreements that are reviewed and approved by all relevant stakeholders, including the Australian Government Solicitor and the department's Legal Division.
- Contract managers are provided guidance to support them to address protective security threats, including those relating to supply third-party risk management, foreign interference and security of emerging technology.
- The department has established due diligence, onboarding and ongoing monitoring and exit processes to enable, assess and ensure all external workers meet obligations and agreements.

Risk category Enterprise-wide risk



People

Failure to attract, develop and retain a skilled and effective workforce while protecting the health, safety and welfare of its workers

Mitigation strategies

- The department has a People Strategy that sets the overarching direction and priorities for how the department and its leaders will support and develop its people. It focuses on fostering health, safety and wellbeing; mobilising and building capability; and living our culture.
- Supporting health, safety and wellbeing, the department has a centralised overarching Work Health and Safety Risk Plan that forms a part of its Work Health and Safety Management System. This plan includes the management of psychosocial risks as outlined in the Work Health and Safety (Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work) Code of Practice.
- The department's Enterprise Workforce Plan 2024–26 outlines the critical roles, capabilities, key focus areas and priority actions to support our people to deliver on our purpose now and into the future.
- The department has committed to supporting our diverse workforce to take advantage of flexible arrangements, including time, place and practice, while remaining affiliated and connected to their team and the department.
- The department continues its objective of being a workplace that attracts top talent. This includes developing a strategic plan to manage workforce and investing in its current and future workforce through approaches such as structured career pathways, identifying talent, deliberate succession planning, mobility, and provision of career opportunities.
- The department continues to focus on the attraction and retention of First Nations peoples through the use of affirmative measures recruitment and through participation in pathway programs including the Indigenous Apprenticeships Program.

Risk category **Enterprise-wide risk**


Digital Services are ineffective and/or data is not accessible, managed or leveraged effectively to support delivery of policy, programs, projects and services

Data and Digital
Mitigation strategies

- The department has established a strong partnership with DEWR and will continue maturing this relationship.
- The department has actively sought to enhance its internal capabilities and expertise, investing in staff training and development to minimise reliance on external systems where possible.
- The department will work with the providers of key services to support the co-delivery of programs, projects and services.
- The department has clear governance structures to ensure oversight of major ICT investments and delivery.
- The department has clear governance structures to ensure oversight of its data assets, data-sharing agreements and data releases.
- The department articulates a clear strategic plan for technology and data, in accordance with its ICT Strategy and Data Strategy.
- The department continues to invest in modernising legacy systems, improving data infrastructure, leveraging new capabilities and adopting new technologies.
- The department adopts an agreed strategic approach to data sharing.
- The department adopts quality assurance checks on data releases.
- The department is progressing arrangements to support increased use of AI across the department in line with government expectations, including training, licensing etc.
- The department is progressing governance arrangements as required by the Digital Transformation Agency including AI leadership roles.

Risk category**Enterprise-wide risk****Security and Integrity**

Breaches of the security of information or assets due to cyber-attacks, insider threats, or fraudulent or unethical behaviour

Mitigation strategies

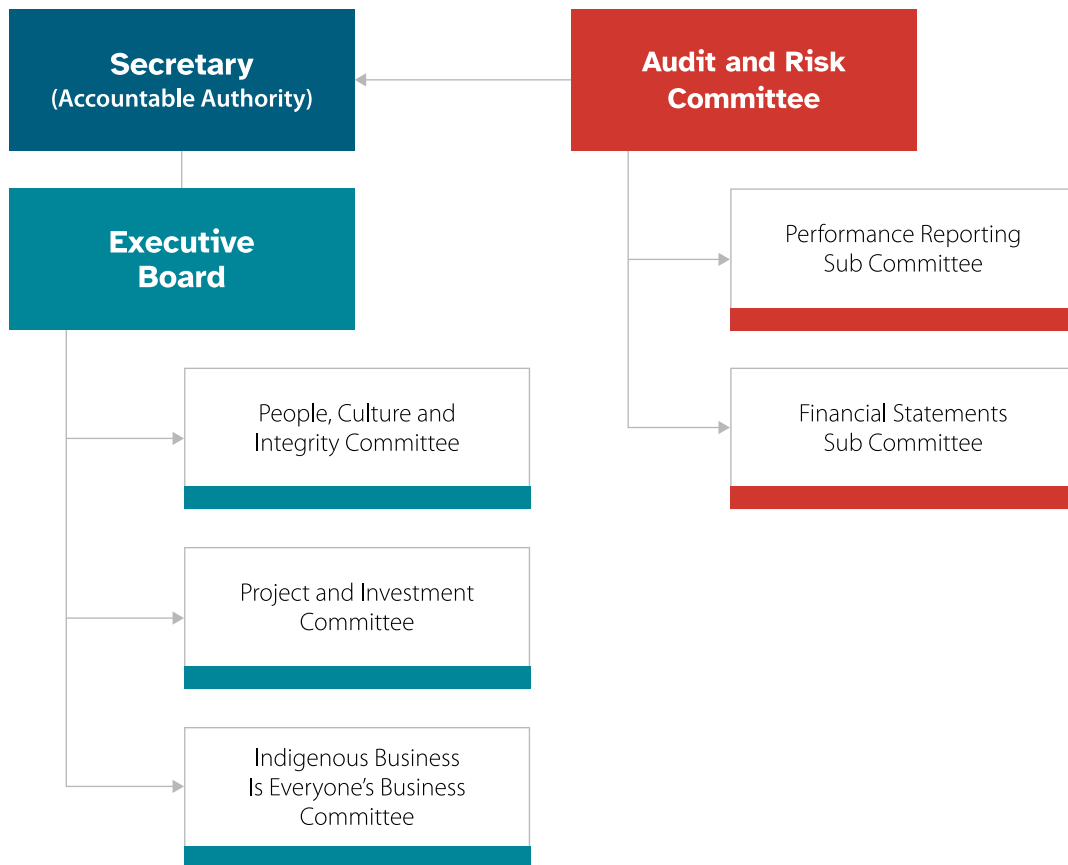
- The department's Agency Security Plan and the Commonwealth Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) govern and outlines the department's responsibilities, policies and procedures to protect our people, information and physical assets.
- The department has embedded information management into our business activities. The department has sound arrangements in place to protect information in our Agency Security Plan, Information Security Framework and Data Strategy.
- The department will effectively manage risks that could compromise the security of classified and sensitive data and information, including insider threats.
- The department will continue monitoring the internal and external environments in collaboration with DEWR for any cyber threats and will action PSPF Policy Directions as appropriate.
- The department must consider the security risks before engaging third-party providers and ensure they comply with PSPF requirements.
- The department has a Fraud and Corruption Control Framework and takes all reasonable steps to prevent, detect and respond to fraud and corruption.
- The department's Cyber Security Strategy 2023–26 supports its continued investments in strengthening the security of our ICT network, systems and data holdings.
- The department requires staff and contractors to complete security awareness training at engagement and annually thereafter to ensure they understand, mitigate and escalate security risks.
- The department continues to embed a pro-integrity culture through its Integrity Framework and processes applicable to all our people, contractors and service providers. The department's values and the APSC Code of Conduct promote a culture of compliance and ethical behaviour.
- The department's Conflict of Interest Policy and provisions in contracts help guide and set clear expectations for its staff and providers.
- The department considers joint investment in cyber security with DEWR annually, as part of internal budget-setting processes.

Governance

The department’s governance committees (Figure 3) support the delivery of its strategic goals and deliverables. These governance committees play a key role by overseeing and managing risk, monitoring performance, providing a forum for consultation and overseeing reporting. Each group has internal governance arrangements in place.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent advice on the appropriateness of financial and performance reporting, risk management and internal control mechanisms.

Figure 3. Overview of our governance structure



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Enabling capabilities

Corporate and enabling services support our staff to deliver on the department's purpose by ensuring we have the right people in the right place and with the right tools to do their job. Over the period of this plan we will continue to refresh our strategies and build capability to deliver our key activities and achieve our purpose.



Capability Review

In 2024–25, the department participated in the APS-wide Capability Review pilot program.

As outlined in the 2025–26 Corporate Plan, the review provided an independent assessment of the department’s capability to meet its current objectives and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The Capability Review report was delivered in June 2025.

The department published its Capability Review Action Plan in September 2025. The action plan sets out how the department is responding to the review’s findings and provides a high-level roadmap for strengthening capability over the 4-year excellence horizon (2025–26 to 2029–30). It is structured around 4 priority areas and aligns with the department’s goals and reform agenda.

The Capability Review Action Plan focuses on:

- strengthening a holistic, department-wide strategic direction to support the department’s stewardship role
- enhancing collaboration with external stakeholders through stronger partnerships and trusted relationships
- improving the transparent sharing and use of data with federated partners, supported by integrated analytics and information systems
- building workforce capability in regulation, service and program delivery, while continuing to strengthen policy and public administration craft skills.

Implementation of the action plan is underway. Our ongoing progress against capability uplift priorities will be monitored internally and reported through the department’s Annual Report.

Artificial intelligence

In line with the AI Plan for the Australian Public Service, the department's Strategic Position on AI sets the direction for how the department will engage with AI safely, responsibly and consistent with whole-of-government expectations.

The department will use this position to guide progressive uplift in AI governance, risk management, use case oversight and staff capability across the department.

The department is embracing innovation including through the adoption of new technologies and capabilities offered through AI. The department's internal Generative AI Guidelines provide guidance for staff on the responsible, safe and ethical use of approved AI tools. The guidelines align with the Digital Transformation Agency's Policy for the Responsible Use of AI in Government and with the AI Plan for the Australian Public Service.

In response to the AI Plan for the Australian Public Service, the department has expanded its use of Microsoft Copilot and made Microsoft Copilot Chat available to all staff. Staff are required to complete mandatory AI in Government Fundamentals training and have access to a range of AI learning and development opportunities. An AI Accountable Officer and a Chief AI Officer have been appointed. The department is strengthening governance around AI and working across government to share AI information and use cases. The department's AI Transparency Statement is published on its website.

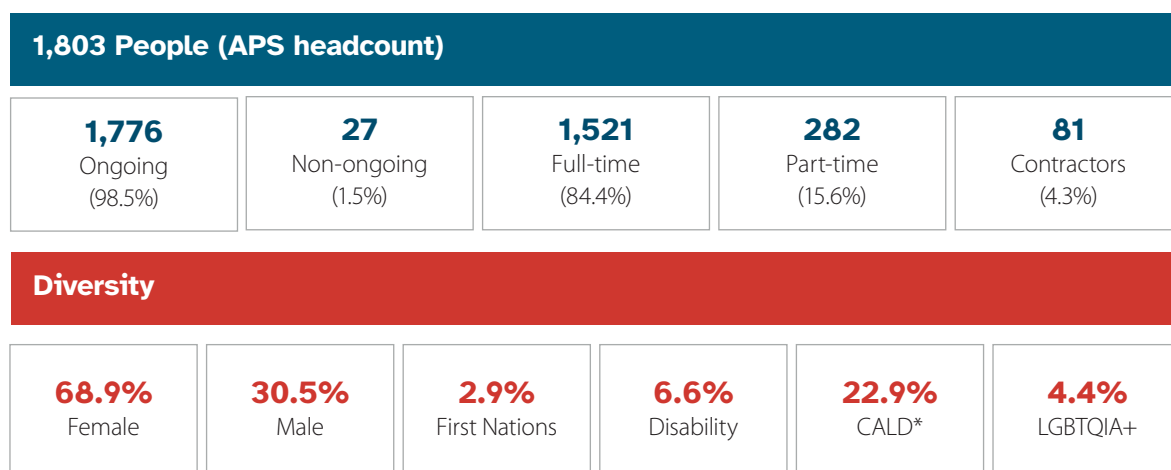
People

This year the department will deliver the People Strategy 2026–2030 and the Enterprise Workforce Plan 2026–2030.

The People Strategy will continue our focus on building capability, culture, leadership and wellbeing, and set clear priorities for supporting and developing our people.

Together, the People Strategy and the Enterprise Workforce Plan will outline how the department will support its workforce to deliver our key activities and achieve our purpose, while fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture.

Figure 4. Our workforce composition as at 4 June 2026



* CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) refers to the measure 'First language not exclusively English', used for the purposes of benchmarking and tracking progress towards a target in accordance with the APS CALD Employment Strategy.

The percentage of employees who identify as a gender other than male or female is not included in the figure above.

Integrity

Integrity guides our actions and decisions at every level, and we are committed to fostering and embedding a strong integrity culture across the department.

In 2026–27, the department will continue to support whole-of-government integrity measures through implementation of the Commonwealth Integrity Strategy. The strategy provides a framework that builds on existing integrity measures to reinforce trust in government and confidence in public administration.

The department's approach will be guided by the strategy's 3 strategic priorities:

- **Culture:** building integrity awareness, understanding and capability across the workforce
- **Systems:** embedding integrity into how we plan, engage and deliver our work
- **Accountability:** strengthening integrity oversight, accountability and transparency.

To give effect to these priorities, the department will continue to uplift and maintain its existing integrity measures. These include the ongoing delivery of actions in the department's Integrity Action Plan and championing our Integrity Framework, which sets the foundation for integrity-based decision-making. Our integrity policies and processes apply to all personnel, including contractors and service providers. These obligations are reinforced through contract and conflict-of-interest provisions that clearly articulate expectations. The department also continues to support the work of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, through established mechanisms for managing mandatory referrals and completion of the Commonwealth Integrity Survey. Together, these measures reinforce a strong integrity culture across the department and demonstrate that integrity risks are actively managed through defined controls and transparent oversight.

Workforce planning

The 2024–26 Enterprise Workforce Plan identifies core and critical roles and capabilities required to support our people to deliver on our purpose.

The plan will be updated in 2026 to identify priority and emerging capabilities needed to support our workforce. This will enable a stronger focus on the strategic prioritisation of work to achieve sustainable delivery for the community, as well as ensuring staff can engage effectively with emerging technologies and continue to refine our ways of working.

Our key workforce planning activities will align with the department's APS Employee Census Action Plan and the Capability Review Action Plan. Activities will include maintaining our commitment to employee wellbeing, promoting positive workplace relationships, developing cultural capability, and strengthening our culture of informed risk-taking and integrity.

The department will continue to monitor alignment with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework. In 2025–26, the department did not establish targets, as outsourcing of core work was minimal and confined to limited circumstances. For 2026–27, the department has identified core work primarily within the Policy, Compliance and Regulation, Business and Organisation Management, Intelligence and Information Management, and Legal and Parliamentary job families. The department will further embed the Strategic Commissioning Framework by strengthening internal capability to support ongoing delivery of core work in-house. Responsible sourcing will continue where necessary to meet business demands, short-term surge activity or access specialist skills, supported by strong monitoring practices.

People capability

By investing in the development of our staff, we strengthen the skills, knowledge and expertise needed to deliver our work effectively.

We assess training needs by considering core and job-specific capabilities and the broader work environment. This helps us target learning solutions that support our priorities.

Our learning and development priorities support both current and future capability requirements and align with the APS Learning and Development Strategy. Through learning programs, mobility opportunities, and on the job experience, we support both individual and team development and build capability where it is most needed.

In response to the AI Plan for the Australian Public Service 2025, the department will continue to provide foundational training and guidance to support the capability of staff to use AI tools safely and responsibly.

Together, our People Strategy, Enterprise Workforce Plan and Capability Review Action Plan will guide our activities to ensure we attract, develop and maintain the capabilities required to deliver high-quality services, respond effectively to emerging challenges and achieve our department's strategic objectives.

Diversity and inclusion

The department values a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve.

A diverse and inclusive workforce strengthens our capability and supports effective delivery of our work. It also underpins our approach to policy and service design, ensuring decisions are informed by the needs and experiences of those we serve.

Diversity and inclusion are integral to the People Strategy 2026–2030, providing continuity of our existing commitments, while extending our focus across the full employee life cycle. Diversity and inclusion strategies, policies and practices continue to guide our day-to-day operations, and are embedded in how we work. This includes drawing on lived experience and stakeholder engagement to inform policy development and program design, and applying inclusive approaches across our services.

The department continues to invest in initiatives that support a diverse and inclusive workplace, including strengthening employee voice and fostering safe spaces for connection, support and collaboration. The Employee Support Officer Network remains an active presence across the department, with representatives from a diverse range of backgrounds contributing to a positive and inclusive workplace culture.

The department also continues to support 6 employee-led diversity networks, each promoted by Senior Executive Service co-champions:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network (Deadly Crew)
- Ability and Carers Network
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Network
- Gender Equity Network
- Neurodiversity Network
- Pride Network.

These networks perform an important role in shaping policy, guiding cultural change and supporting staff across the department. They will continue to contribute to the development of the People Strategy 2026–2030 to ensure it reflects lived experience and contemporary practice.

Reconciliation

The department continues to progress reconciliation through our 2023–25 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The department will also deliver a new RAP in 2026, led by the RAP Working Group in collaboration with People Branch and the Deadly Crew staff network.

The department remains committed to its responsibilities under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This includes building cultural capability, cultural competence and safety, embedding First Nations perspectives across our programs, policies and operations, and strengthening accountability to deliver Closing the Gap Priority Reforms that improve educational outcomes for First Nations peoples. We support cultural awareness through a range of programs and initiatives, including the Jawun APS Secondment Program, the department's annual First Nations Staff Conference, and cultural appreciation training.

Safe, inclusive and respectful workplace

The department is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace that supports physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing.

We provide wellbeing programs and support services, including training, coaching, peer support and employee network initiatives to foster a positive and inclusive culture. These programs and services also deliver on our commitment to psychosocial health, safety and wellbeing. Our programs emphasise prevention and early intervention.

We continue to apply a person-centred, trauma-informed approach to the Respect@Work reforms, supporting people to feel safe to speak up and receive appropriate support when concerns arise. Targeted training and leadership development continue to reinforce shared accountability for health, safety and wellbeing across the department.

Flexible, remote and hybrid work remain important enablers of wellbeing, team connection, engagement and workforce attraction.

Fraud and corruption control

The department recognises that fraud and corruption present ongoing risks to public trust, the proper use of public resources, and effective operations.

The department maintains a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and corruption and takes reasonable and proportionate action to prevent, detect and respond to fraudulent and corrupt conduct.

The department's Fraud and Corruption Control Framework is aligned with the Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework and the PGPA Act. The framework provides an integrated approach to prevention, detection and response, supported by clear accountabilities and ongoing assurance activities. The department is further strengthening the framework through alignment with the new Commonwealth Integrity Strategy, published in December 2025, and by ensuring processes remain robust and fit for purpose to effectively manage fraud and corruption.

Evidence-based policy

The department harnesses strategic insights and data to inform policy development and program delivery across the Education portfolio.

This includes analysing the impact of technological, societal and geopolitical shifts on the education system, identifying dependencies between emerging reforms, and providing strategic, whole-of-portfolio advice.

In 2025 the department developed a long-term direction statement, articulating our strategic priorities as stewards of the education system. In 2026 we will further embed and consolidate strategic policy and stewardship in the department's work for the benefit of learners and all Australians.

The Data Strategy 2026–2028 guides how we strengthen our ability to develop and deliver effective policies and programs, underpinned by high-quality, accessible and secure data. It aims to promote and embed data stewardship, build capability, facilitate data sharing and foster a culture where data is recognised and valued as a strategic asset for improving education outcomes. By governing and managing our data effectively, we are growing the education evidence base to shape better policies and programs.

The Data Strategy supports the use of data for better decision-making, while reflecting the need to maintain public trust in how we protect the privacy of individuals. It outlines the initiatives we will undertake to progress its key objectives, which are:

- fostering a data-driven evidence culture
- maintaining a data-capable workforce
- governing and managing our data safely and effectively to maximise its value
- sharing data to grow the education evidence base
- using fit-for-purpose technology to drive efficiency and meet our data needs
- adding value to our data through analytics to gain insights to inform decision-making.

The department recognises that data plays a significant role in formulating policy and programs to improve educational outcomes for First Nations children and youth. To support the data-related aspirations of our First Nations stakeholders, we will work closely with our First Nations partners to implement First Nations data-related initiatives under Priority Reform 4 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which includes the Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data and the Data Policy Partnership to support progress towards Indigenous Data Sovereignty.

The department is committed to continual capability uplift in areas such as high-quality policy development, data proficiency, economic analysis and evaluation. Through the recently launched Capability Review Action Plan, the department is targeting capability uplift in 4 focus areas:

- engage staff in strategic foresight and whole-of-system conversations
- embed the way we work in partnership across the department
- promote an evidence-based culture
- equip staff with the tools and capabilities to lead change and deliver with impact.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of the policy and program life cycle.

It enables the department and stakeholders to measure the impact of policies and programs and to understand what is working well, how it is working and for whom it is working.

The department is strengthening its policy and program capability by evaluating the appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and social benefits of its work. Strong and credible evaluation provides clear insight into the impact of our policy and programs, measured against key objectives. This evidence helps shape future policy decisions by highlighting the most successful ways to achieve desired results and the improvements that may be possible.

The department's evaluation unit partners with policy and program teams across the policy life cycle to co-design evaluations, providing expert advice, support and guidance materials. This ensures that we ask the right questions, measure the right things in the right way, and undertake effective and credible evaluations of education policy and programs.

The department's Evaluation Strategy 2025–2027 details our approach to evaluation, including a vision and commitment to:

- embed evaluative approaches in our policy and program design and delivery from the new policy proposal stage
- publish evaluations and management responses by default to support transparency and accountability
- improve the robustness of our evidence base
- encourage a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Information and communications technology

The department receives the majority of its ICT services from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations through a shared services arrangement, including ICT infrastructure, application development and hosting, and cyber security.

The department has governance arrangements in place to ensure oversight of ICT project investments and project delivery. Underpinning the department's approach to the use of technology are our ICT Strategy and Cyber Security Strategy.

The ICT Strategy sets 4 key priorities:

- delivering reliable, secure, and user-centred digital services
- providing clear governance and direction to maximise business value
- strengthening collaboration across the business and with service providers
- accelerating digital innovation through the adoption of new capabilities and technologies.

Ensuring the security and protection of data entrusted to us is a critical priority. The department continues to implement the Australian Cyber Security Centre's Essential Eight mitigation strategies, comply with new Cyber Security Directions under the Protective Security Policy Framework, and invest in ongoing strengthening of our ICT systems, networks, and data holdings.

Financial management

Our Finance Strategy 2025–28 outlines our key priorities and approach to meeting the department’s requirements under Commonwealth finance law.

It outlines robust governance arrangements to support the department in achieving its priorities while ensuring resources are managed in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner.

In 2026–27, integrity and sustainability continue to be at the forefront of our financial management practices. Effective financial management is central to supporting integrity through the department’s performance, stewardship and accountability, as well as ensuring the department’s sustainability now and into the future.

As the financial management landscape continues to change, capability building and innovation will continue to be an essential part of the department’s approach to supporting efficient financial management practices.

Information regarding the department’s budget estimates, average staffing levels and budgeted financial statements is set out in our 2026–27 Portfolio Budget Statements.

Project management

The department’s project delivery approach is underpinned by established project and risk management frameworks.

The Project and Investment Committee provides oversight and assurance of the department’s portfolio of projects, particularly regarding projects of high strategic importance.

The department’s Project Office supports project teams through the life cycle of a project. It provides guidance and support to build consistent project management practices and strengthen capability across the portfolio. It supports our project teams by:

- improving confidence in project delivery through reporting and assurance support
- building project management capability among departmental staff
- keeping the senior executive and project management community informed
- serving as the department’s authority on project management practices.

Communication

The department's communication and engagement activities are guided by the 2024–26 Communication Strategy, which will be updated in 2026.

This strategy shapes how we connect people and communities with the department's work and purpose. It aims to deliver the right information to the right audiences at the right time – keeping people informed, connected, and engaged with the department's priorities.

Within the department, we communicate with staff to ensure they are well informed, engaged and empowered to contribute effectively. Our internal communication centres on raising awareness of the department's work, its people and its achievements – supporting staff to fulfil their responsibilities as public servants and fostering a positive, respectful workplace that promotes wellbeing, productivity and inclusion.

Our external communication and media work is purposeful and audience focused, raising awareness of the department's programs and initiatives. We prioritise digital channels to engage audiences and stakeholders on the delivery of education policies and programs.

We work collaboratively across government and engage early and constructively with stakeholders, including states and territories and peak bodies, to inform the development of communication strategies and campaigns. We value effective stakeholder engagement as a core part of how we work, recognising the importance of building strong, trusted relationships. Meaningful, two-way communication that actively seeks and values stakeholder input ensures our approaches are responsive, informed and fit for purpose. To do this we place importance on openness, clarity and ongoing dialogue, and strive to create genuine opportunities for reciprocal communication, where insights and feedback shape our decisions and strengthen shared outcomes.

Our messaging is informed by evidence to ensure it is timely, accurate and relevant, and delivered through effective channels. We aim to produce clear, engaging and accessible communication products written in plain English, to help Australians find and connect with the programs and initiatives that support their education goals.

Through clear and purposeful communication, we support the Australian Government's reform agenda to improve access to quality, affordable education, from early childhood education and care through to schools and higher education.

06

Performance

Our performance information supports transparency and accountability to the Australian Parliament and the Australian community by clearly demonstrating how we are delivering on our purpose.



Our approach to performance

The 2026–27 Corporate Plan is the department’s primary planning document, setting out how performance will be measured, assessed and reported for the year ahead. The department’s approach to performance emphasises clear planning, rigorous monitoring and transparent reporting to demonstrate the delivery of outcomes for the government and the public.

The department’s Performance Reporting Framework, aligned with the Commonwealth Performance Framework, supports the development and assurance of performance information. The framework ensures the department’s planning and reporting documents provide clear and meaningful information for the public and the Australian Parliament. It is reviewed annually to ensure its consistency with the PGPA Act, the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 and Department of Finance guidance, and that it continues to be appropriate.

Following the establishment of ATEC on 29 April 2026, the department’s performance reporting information will include performance measures relating to the ATEC’s functions in line with the requirements of the PGPA Act.

The department is committed to producing meaningful, transparent and accurate performance reporting. This commitment is supported through regular review of performance reporting information, independent assurance and verification of performance information, continuous improvement of performance reporting tools and guidance, and clear visibility of changes across the Portfolio Budget Statements, Corporate Plan and Annual Report.

From 2026–27, the department is undertaking a phased review of its performance measures across the 2026–27 and 2027–28 reporting cycles. As part of this review, operational information such as delivery strategies has been removed from the Corporate Plan to strengthen its strategic focus. Key activities have been consolidated, and performance measures are being refined to more clearly reflect the department’s priorities and how it will achieve its purpose. A summary of changes is provided on pages 70–77.

Measuring our performance in 2026–27

In 2026–27, the department's performance information is presented across 2 outcomes, 13 programs, 5 key activities and 18 performance measures.

The department will assess performance outcomes for the 2026–27 period using the results rating system outlined at Table 2. Assessment and analysis of results will be undertaken as part of the annual performance statements, to be published in the 2026–27 Annual Report.

Table 2. Result rating for 2026–27

Achieved	The target was met or exceeded
Partially achieved	Some sub-targets were met or exceeded
Not achieved	The target was not met during 2026–27
On track	The target is on track to be achieved against future year targets
Not on track	Based on current information the performance measure is not on track to meet future year targets
N/A	Result not available or not measured in 2026–27

Regulator performance




The department provides strategic direction and national leadership of Australia’s education system, stewarding the Australian Government’s vision for reform. Most regulatory functions in the early childhood education and care, schools and higher education systems are undertaken by states and territories or independent statutory agencies. The department’s regulatory functions play a key role in ensuring the Australian education system is characterised by safety, quality and financial integrity. As part of its regulatory role, the department works closely with Australian Government and state and territory regulators.

The Higher Education Gender-based Violence Regulator (GBV Regulator) was established within the department in 2025 and commenced operating as a regulator on 1 January 2026. The GBV Regulator is dedicated to fostering long-term sustainable cultural change within the higher education sector and ensuring higher education providers create safe and supportive environments for working, living and learning.

The Minister for Education’s Statement of Expectations signed on 23 March 2026 and the department’s Regulatory Statement of Intent signed on 30 April 2026 are published on our website.

The department is committed to continually reviewing and strengthening its regulatory performance to ensure its approach remains effective, proportionate and fit for purpose. We support this through regular evaluation of our practices; the use of informed data; fostering a culture of learning, accountability and continuous improvement; and building workforce capability. The department’s approach is underpinned by the Australian Government’s 3 best-practice principles for regulation, as set out in Resource Management Guide – Regulator Performance (RMG 128).

Figure 5. Regulator best practice principles

Best practice principles	Performance measurement identifier		
	PM002	PM079	PM080
 Continuous improvement and building trust	✓	✓	✓
 Risk based and data driven	✓	✓	✓
 Collaboration and engagement	✓	✓	✓

Outcome 1 Performance measures

Purpose: We create a better future for all Australians through education.

Improved early learning, schooling, student educational outcomes and transitions to and from school through access to quality early childhood education and care, support, parent engagement, quality teaching and learning environments.

In 2026–27 we will assess our early learning and schooling (Outcome 1) performance against **3 key activities** across the **5 reportable Programs** through **9 performance measures**. These quantitative measures are a mix of output, effectiveness and efficiency measures.



Outcome 1

Performance measures

Key activity 1 – Support equitable access to quality

early childhood education and care

Program 1.1 – Support for the Child Care System

PM054

Measure

The proportion of services supported by the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) and Inclusion Support Program (ISP) that are in socio-economically vulnerable and disadvantaged communities

Target

Increase on previous year

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

Measuring the proportion of services supported through CCCF and ISP funding that are in disadvantaged communities allows the department to track the increase (or decrease) over time. Under CCCF, this aligns with the specific objectives of the program. For ISP, this provides awareness of inclusion and access for vulnerable families and children in these communities.

Methodology

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) and Statistical Area level 2 (SA2) data is applied to each service funded through CCCF and ISP during the financial year. Services located in areas with no assigned SEIFA decile are removed. The proportion of services in the lowest 2 SEIFA deciles (i.e. 20% most disadvantaged areas of Australia based on SA2 and SEIFA) is calculated.

Data source

- ABS, SEIFA, Table 2 SA2 Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage, 2021
- Department of Education, CCCF administrative data report
- Department of Education, ISP administrative data report
- Department of Education, Child Care Subsidy Approved Services Report

Changes from previous year

The performance measure title has been amended to improve readability and clarity.

Program 1.2 – Child Care Subsidy

PM002

Measure

Proportion of accurate Child Care Subsidy payments to all services

Target

95% or higher

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

This target has been set to clearly align with the policy objectives to ensure funding is properly administered by providers and is directed to assist eligible families to meet the real costs of genuine child care sessions.

Methodology

The Random Sample Parent Check (RSPC) process involves asking a stratified random sample of parents about the hours of early childhood education and care their child attended over the preceding week to ascertain the extent to which the early childhood education and care sessions reported by providers/services (and hence the CCS payments and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) payments) are correct/incorrect.

Data source

- RSPC Checking Tool

Regulator best practice principles



Continuous improvement and building trust



Risk based and data driven



Collaboration and engagement

Changes from previous year

The performance measure's 95% accuracy target is an increase from the previous 90% accuracy target. The target has been revised to reflect program maturity and encourage continuous improvement, and is consistent with most major government payment programs.

Program 1.2 – Child Care Subsidy

PM067

Measure

Average early childhood education and care hours attended by children that are supported by Additional Child Care Subsidy

Target

Equal to or higher than the average early childhood education and care hours attended by children that are supported by Child Care Subsidy

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

The target has been set by considering the policy objective of Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) payments, which is to provide additional access to early childhood education and care for children from specific vulnerable cohorts as defined in ACCS eligibility criteria. If this policy is operating effectively, the early childhood education and care attendance hours of this cohort would mirror those of broader Australia.

Methodology

Data is obtained for each of the Additional Child Care Subsidy and Child Care Subsidy groups and broken down by service type (Centre Based Day Care, Family Day Care and Out of School Hours Care). The average weekly attended hours is calculated for each group by pooling all attended hours in the most recent 12-month period (of available data) and dividing this by the number of pooled weeks of care provided to children.

Data source

- Services Australia, Child Care Subsidy System

Changes from previous year

Nil

Key activity 2 – Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding for schools

Program 1.3 – Government Schools National Support

PM079

Measure

Timely lodgement of acquittal certificates by states and territories for government schools by 30 June, as set out within the *Australian Education Act 2013*

Target

100%

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

The timely lodgement of acquittal certificates by state and territory governments provides assurance to the public and the Australian Parliament that states and territories have spent, or committed to spend, recurrent funding for the purpose of providing school education in government schools.

The 100% target takes into account prior year performance and encourages the achievement of the highest rate of reporting compliance.

Methodology

The number of acquittal certificates lodged by states and territories for government schools on or before 30 June divided by the total number of acquittal certificates issued to states and territories for completion, expressed as a percentage.

Data source

- Department of Education, Financial Submissions Tracker

Regulator best practice principles



Continuous improvement and building trust



Risk based and data driven



Collaboration and engagement

Changes from previous year

Nil

Program 1.4 – Non-Government Schools National Support

PM080

Measure

Timely lodgement of acquittal certificates and audited financial statements by approved authorities for non-government schools by 30 June, as set out within the *Australian Education Act 2013*

Target

85% or higher

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

The timely lodgement of acquittal certificates and audited financial statements by approved authorities provides assurance to the public and the Australian Parliament that approved authorities have spent, or committed to spend, recurrent funding for the purpose of providing school education in non-government schools and allows the department to assess their financial viability.

The 85% or higher target takes into account prior year performance, encourages the achievement of high rates of reporting compliance and recognises challenges faced by a minority of approved authorities in meeting the due date.

Methodology

The number of acquittal certificates and audited financial statements lodged by approved authorities of non-government schools on or before 30 June divided by the total number of individual acquittal certificates and audited financial statements to be lodged by approved authorities, expressed as a percentage.

Data source

- Department of Education, Financial Submissions Tracker

Regulator best practice principles



Continuous improvement and building trust



Risk based and data driven



Collaboration and engagement

Changes from previous year

Nil

Key activity 2 – Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding for schools

Key activity 3 – Strengthen the education workforce and boost outcomes for children and young people

Program 1.3 – Government Schools National Support

Program 1.4 – Non-Government Schools National Support

Program 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support

PM059

Measure

Increase the proportion of students attending school 90% or more of the time

Target

- Nationally – Increase on previous year
- In government schools – Increase on previous year
- In non-government schools – Increase on previous year

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

Increased attendance indicates higher levels of student participation and engagement in school, which are crucial for learning and development and correlated with positive schooling outcomes.

Methodology

The proportion of full-time students in Years 1–10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90%.

The attendance rate is the number of actual full-time-equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1–10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1.

Data source

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, National Report on Schooling in Australia

Changes from previous year

Nil

Key activity 3 – Strengthen the education workforce and boost outcomes for children and young people

Program 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support

PM055

Measure

Reduce the proportion of students in the Needs additional support proficiency level in NAPLAN for reading for Year 3 students (nationally)

Target

Decrease on previous year

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

Educational outcomes for all students can be improved by identifying the students needing additional support at the earliest identified opportunity as evidence suggests that investing early in a student's education has the most significant long-term impact.

Methodology

Full cohort assessment of Year 3 reading (national level results) through the annual NAPLAN test.

Data source

- NAPLAN National Report

Changes from previous year

From 2026–27, the performance measure will only be reported against Program 1.5 (Early Learning and Schools Support). NAPLAN data are not disaggregated by school sector as required by Programs 1.3 (Government Schools National Support) and 1.4 (Non-Government Schools National Support).

Program 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support

PM056

Measure

Reduce the proportion of students in the Needs additional support proficiency level in NAPLAN for numeracy for Year 3 students (nationally)

Target

Decrease on previous year

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

Educational outcomes for all students can be improved by identifying the students needing additional support at the earliest identified opportunity as evidence suggests that investing early in a student's education has the most significant long-term impact.

Methodology

Full cohort assessment of Year 3 numeracy (national level results) through the annual NAPLAN test.

Data source

- NAPLAN National Report

Changes from previous year

From 2026–27, the performance measure will only be reported against Program 1.5 (Early Learning and Schools Support). NAPLAN data are not disaggregated by school sector as required by Programs 1.3 (Government Schools National Support) and 1.4 (Non-Government Schools National Support).

Program 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support

PM069

Measure

Proportion of children enrolled in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school who are enrolled for 600 hours per year

Target

- Overall – 95% or higher
- First Nations children – 95% or higher
- Disadvantaged children – 95% or higher

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28

Target rationale

The targets are set under the Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA) with the states and territories.

The targets reflect the PRA objective to facilitate children’s early learning and development and transition to school by maintaining universal access to a quality preschool program for all children.

The PRA target of 95% reflects the maturity of the PRA (and previously the National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education and Care (UANP)). The policy of universal access to early childhood education and care programs has been jointly funded by the Australian Government since 2010 and data has been collected since 2012, when national enrolment rates were 57%. The joint effort between the Australian Government and the jurisdictions via the UANP and PRA has lifted the enrolment rate substantially over the last 15 years, so 95% or higher is achievable and expected. The end date of the PRA has now been extended from the end of 2025 to the end of 2027, with existing policy maintained for this 2-year period.

Methodology

The number of 4 and 5 year-old children who are identified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as enrolled in an early childhood education program in the year before they start full-time school for 600 hours per year. This is divided by the number of 4 and 5 year-old children who are identified by the ABS as enrolled in an early childhood education program, from the Preschool Education, Australia publication, for all children, First Nations children, and disadvantaged children (ABS SEIFA Quintile 1).

Note: The states and territories can provide supplementary data, which is assessed by the department and, if considered acceptable, is included in the performance results.

Data source

- National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection published by the ABS as Preschool Education, Australia

Changes from previous year

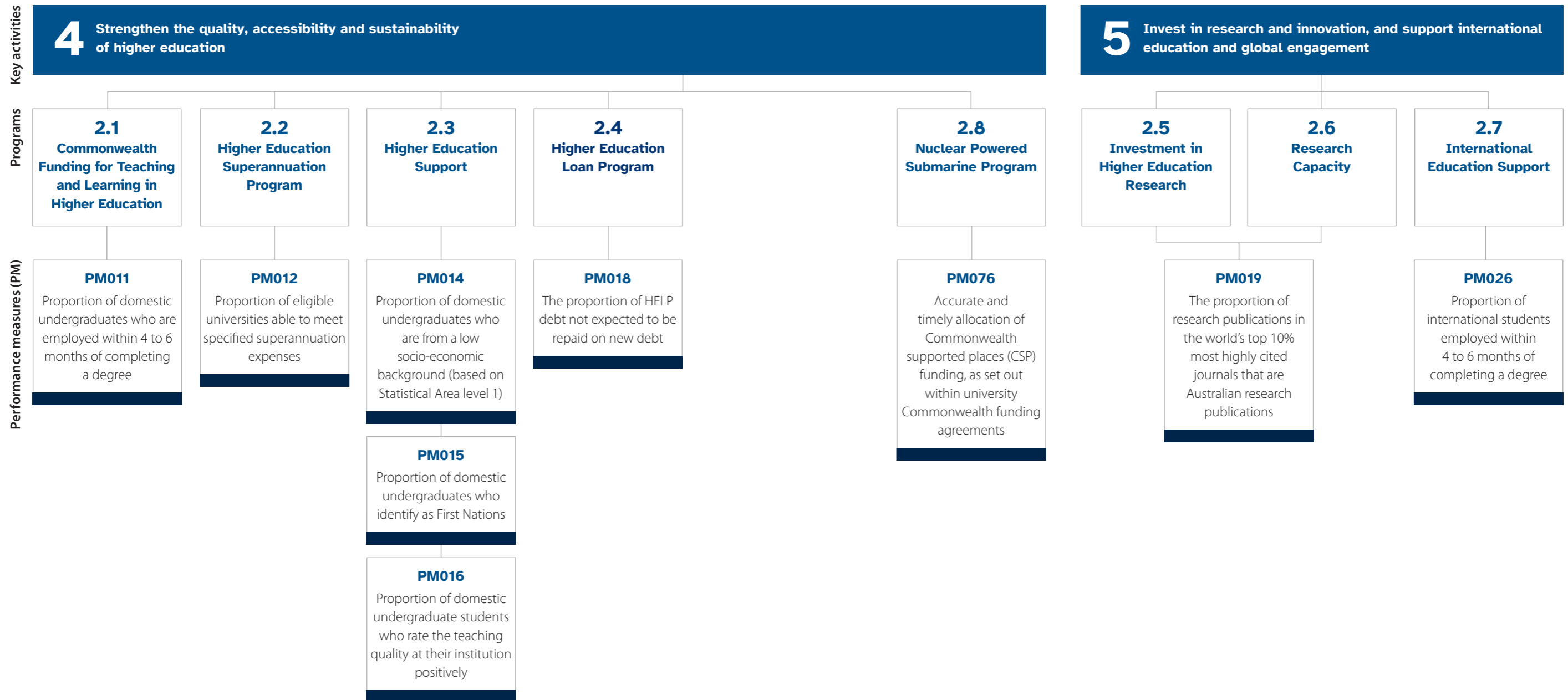
Future performance reporting is to be determined once the new National Preschool Attendance Collection is no longer considered experimental. Reporting preschool attendance will be considered as a replacement for reporting enrolment, as it provides a more accurate measure of actual participation in specific preschool programs.

Outcome 2 Performance measures

Purpose: We create a better future for all Australians through education.

Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education, and international quality research.

In 2026–27 we will assess our higher education, research and global engagement (Outcome 2) performance against **2 key activities** across the **8 reportable Programs** through **9 performance measures**. These quantitative and qualitative measures comprise a mix of outputs and/or effectiveness measures.



Outcome 2

Performance measures

Key activity 4 – Strengthen the quality, accessibility and sustainability of higher education

Program 2.1 – Core Commonwealth Funding for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

PM011

Measure

Proportion of domestic undergraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing a degree

Target

85% or higher

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

The target of 85% or higher supports the Commonwealth Grant Scheme delivery strategies aim to enhance the quality of the higher education system and contribute to a high-skilled workforce and educated community. Achieving 85% or higher indicates that higher education has had a positive impact on employment opportunities for the majority of domestic undergraduates.

Methodology

Number of domestic undergraduates employed 4 to 6 months after completing their degree over the total number of domestic undergraduates available for work 4 to 6 months after completing their degree.

Data source

- Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching, Graduate Outcomes Survey

Changes from previous year

Nil

Program 2.2 – Higher Education Superannuation Program

PM012

Measure

Proportion of eligible universities able to meet specified superannuation expenses

Target

100%

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

All eligible universities require funding to meet expenses specified under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and the Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022. Without adequate funding, universities may be unable to meet these obligations, which could result in pensioners relying on affected superannuation schemes facing financial difficulties.

Methodology

Number of universities that can meet their expenses based on the funding provided by the Commonwealth over the number of universities eligible for funding, as per the Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022.

Data source

- Department of Education program documentation
- Annual program claim forms from universities
- Cashflow funding documents from NSW State Super

Changes from previous year

This performance measure is no longer classified as relating to a regulatory function, following review against the Commonwealth definition of regulatory activities. As PM012 reflects administration of the Higher Education Superannuation Program rather than regulatory oversight, it is now reported as a non-regulatory measure.

Program 2.3 – Higher Education Support

PM014

Measure

Proportion of domestic undergraduates who are from a low socio-economic background (based on Statistical Area level 1)

Target

16% or higher

To be reported in  2026–27

Target rationale

The target has been retained for 2026–27 based on historical assessment of performance, as this will be the final year of the measure. The target was attained in each of the last 3 years.

Methodology

Number of domestic undergraduate enrolments with a permanent home residence in a low socioeconomic area (based on Statistical Area 1 and latest SEIFA) over the total domestic undergraduate student enrolments.

Scope: Domestic undergraduate student enrolments with a current permanent home residence in Australia as collected through the department's Tertiary Collection of Student Information system at the Statistical Area 1 level. This relates to domestic undergraduate students at providers registered under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

Data source

- Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection, Table 11.3

Changes from previous year

The data source table identifier has been updated in accordance with the restructure of the Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection. The data source was previously found in Table 11.2. From 2024, the data source is Table 11.3.

This performance measure is no longer classified as relating to a regulatory function, following review against the Commonwealth definition of regulatory activities. This is a change from information presented in the 2025–26 Corporate Plan.

The 2025–26 Corporate Plan identified that PM014 would be reported in 2027–28 and later years; however, 2026–27 is the last year PM014 will be reported. The department will consider other performance reporting information in advance of the 2027–28 performance reporting cycle as the ATEC is established.

Program 2.3 – Higher Education Support

PM015

Measure

Proportion of domestic undergraduates who identify as First Nations

Target

2.2% or higher

To be reported in  2026–27

Target rationale

The target has been retained for 2026–27 based on historical assessment of performance, as this will be the final year of the measure.

Methodology

Number of domestic undergraduate students who identify as First Nations over the total of domestic undergraduate students.

Data source

- Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection, Table 11.3

Changes from previous year

The data source table identifier has been updated in accordance with the restructure of the Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection. The data source was previously found in Table 11.2. From 2024, the data source is Table 11.3.

This performance measure is no longer classified as relating to a regulatory function, following review against the Commonwealth definition of regulatory activities. This is a change from information presented in the 2025–26 Corporate Plan.

The 2025–26 Corporate Plan identified that PM015 would be reported in 2027–28 and later years; however, 2026–27 is the last year PM015 will be reported. The department will consider other performance reporting information in advance of the 2027–28 performance reporting cycle as the ATEC is established.

Program 2.3 – Higher Education Support

PM016

Measure

Proportion of domestic undergraduate students who rate the teaching quality at their institution positively

Target

80% or higher

To be reported in  2026–27

Target rationale

The 80% target represents a high benchmark for student satisfaction with higher education providers. High-quality teaching is critical to improving student learning, encouraging more domestic students to access higher education, improving graduate outcomes and promoting growth in Australia's economic productivity.

Since the target's introduction in 2020–21, the results have remained generally stable and close to the benchmark. This provides a reliable baseline for measuring future improvements following the formal establishment of the ATEC and implementation of the Australian University Accord reforms. Consideration will be given to introducing a stretch target as part of the implementation process.

Methodology

Number of domestic undergraduate students who rated the teaching they received positively as measured by the 'Teaching Quality Scale' of the Student Experience Survey over the total number of domestic undergraduate students with a valid 'Teaching Quality Scale' score in the Student Experience Survey.

Scope: Domestic undergraduate-level commencing and later-year students at higher education providers as listed under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

Data source

- Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching, Student Experience Survey

Changes from previous year

The methodology wording was revised for clarity and to align with the measure title after the 2025–26 Corporate Plan was published, and this revision was reported in the 2024–25 Annual Report.

The department will review this performance measure and consider other performance reporting information in advance of the 2027–28 performance reporting cycle as the ATEC is established.

Program 2.4 – Higher Education Loan Program

PM018

Measure

The proportion of HELP debt not expected to be repaid on new debt

Target

Equal to or lower than previous year

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

This measure is linked to the quality of higher education and employability of graduates by measuring the rate by which current students are expected to repay their HELP debt based on actuarial assessment of their future earning capacity. A low rate of debt not being repaid demonstrates that students are achieving financial gain from their higher education. The program also reduces the cost to the Commonwealth in providing financial support for higher education, which enables the Commonwealth to continue this support.

Methodology

The proportion of debt not expected to be repaid on new debt is modelled by the Australian Government Actuary (AGA) using historical and projected repayment data in its longitudinal data on HELP debtors. AGA's modelling of debt not expected to be repaid (DNER) incorporates the expected impacts from any HELP policy changes.

Data source

- Australian Government Actuary

Changes from previous year

Nil

Program 2.8 – Nuclear Powered Submarine Program

PM076

Measure

Accurate and timely allocation of Commonwealth supported places (CSP) funding, as set out within university Commonwealth funding agreements

Target

100% of allocations under the Nuclear Powered Submarine Program are accurately reflected in providers' Commonwealth funding agreements, and at least 90% of payments, which are included in the broader Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) Higher Education Course Advance payments through the UniPay system, are made on time

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

On 28 November 2023, the Minister for Education approved the allocation of funding to support 4,001 places across 16 providers following consultation with the Minister for Defence. The target to include 100% of allocations reflected in funding agreements and to make at least 90% of payments on time reflects that the department has funding delivery responsibility for this program at this stage of implementation.

Methodology

Reporting against this measure is based on data regarding the allocation outcomes which is entered into the UniPay system each program year, and payments which are made on a monthly basis in line with a published payment schedule.

Note: Commonwealth funding agreements as published on the department's website are updated regularly to accurately reflect funding amounts and to provide transparency and accessibility to the Australian public.

UniPay payment dates are published for universities each year.

Data source

- 2024–26 Commonwealth Grant Scheme Funding Agreements
- Published funding cluster rates
- UniPay payment schedule
- Higher Education Courses Advance UniPay Determination

Changes from previous year

Nil

Key activity 5 – Invest in research and innovation, and support international education and global engagement

Program 2.5 – Investment in Higher Education Research Program 2.6 – Research Capacity

PM019

Measure

The proportion of research publications in the world's top 10% most highly cited journals that are Australian research publications

Target

Above the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

The OECD average is a widely used benchmark for performance against international peers, particularly for the evaluation of research and research excellence.

Methodology

Number of Australian research publications in the world's top 10% most highly cited journals divided by the total number of publications in the world's top 10% most cited journals, compared to the average for all OECD countries when applying the same calculation method.

Data source

- SciVal

Changes from previous year

Nil

Program 2.7 – International Education Support

PM026

Measure

Proportion of international students employed within 4 to 6 months of completing a degree

Target

70% or higher

To be reported in  2026–27  2027–28  2028–29  2029–30

Target rationale

The target of 70% or higher reflects the aim to support sustainable growth of Australia's high-quality international education. The majority of the international student cohort (70% or more) gaining employment after completing a degree indicates that the cohort has benefited from Australia's higher education system.

Methodology

Number of international graduates employed 4 to 6 months after completing their degree over the total number of international students available to work 4 to 6 months after completing their degree.

Data source

- Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching, Graduate Outcomes Survey

Changes from previous year

Nil

Summary of changes to performance measures

The table below explains changes to our performance information made since the publication of the 2025–26 Corporate Plan.

Outcome 1

2025–26 Key Activities	2026–27 Key Activities	Rationale
Outcome 1	Outcome 1	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide targeted support to families, children and early childhood education and care providers who need it 2. Support to families who rely on subsidised early childhood education and care to work, train, study or volunteer 3. Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to government schools 4. Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to non-government schools 5. Support children to have access to quality early learning, particularly in the year before reaching school 6. Provide support for a range of curriculum, assessment, teaching and wellbeing programs 7. Provide national leadership and work with states on national policy reform 8. Improve Australian Government engagement with young people on issues, programs and policies that impact them 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support equitable access to quality early childhood education and care 2. Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding for schools 3. Strengthen the education workforce and boost outcomes for children and young people 	<p>The department's key activities have been refined since the 2025–26 Corporate Plan to better reflect and respond to recent changes in the department's work in achieving its purpose.</p>

Outcome 2

2025–26 Key Activities	2026–27 Key Activities	Rationale
Outcome 2		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Enhance the quality of the higher education system 10. Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment 11. Support eligible current and former university employees for certain superannuation expenses 12. Support the research system through investment in research, research training and national research infrastructure 13. Support a high-quality and sustainable international education sector 14. Support sovereign workforce development through broader access to education pipelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Strengthen the quality, accessibility and sustainability of higher education 5. Invest in research and innovation, and support international education and global engagement 	<p>The department's key activities have been refined since the 2025–26 Corporate Plan to better reflect and respond to recent changes in the department's work in achieving its purpose.</p>

Outcome 1

Early learning and schooling

Program	2025–26 published performance measure	Change	Rationale
1.1	The proportion of services supported by the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) and Inclusion Support Program (ISP) in socio-economically vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. [PM054]	Measure title amended The proportion of services supported by the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) and Inclusion Support Program (ISP) that are in socio-economically vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. [PM054]	The performance measure title has been amended to improve readability and clarity.
1.2	Proportion of accurate Child Care Subsidy payments to all services. [PM002] Target 90% or higher	Target amended Target 95% or higher	The performance measure's 95% accuracy target is an increase from the previous 90% accuracy target. The target has been revised to reflect program maturity and encourage continuous improvement, and is consistent with most major government payment programs.
1.5	Reduce the proportion of students in the Needs additional support proficiency level in NAPLAN for reading for Year 3 students (nationally). [PM055]	Reported under Program 1.5 only	From 2026–27, these performance measures will only be reported against Program 1.5 (Early Learning and Schools Support). NAPLAN data are not disaggregated by school sector as required by Programs 1.3 (Government Schools National Support) and 1.4 (Non-Government Schools National Support).
1.5	Reduce the proportion of students in the Needs additional support proficiency level in NAPLAN for numeracy for Year 3 students (nationally). [PM056]		

Program	2025–26 published performance measure	Change	Rationale
1.5	Proportion of children enrolled in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school who are enrolled for 600 hours per year. [PM069]	Future reporting to be determined	Future performance reporting is to be determined once the new National Preschool Attendance Collection is no longer considered experimental. Reporting preschool attendance will be considered as a replacement for reporting enrolment, as it provides a more accurate measure of actual participation in specific preschool programs.
1.5	Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24), attaining Year 12 certification, or equivalent, or gaining a qualification at Certificate III or above. [PM072]	Discontinued	The Survey of Education and Work, which provided the underpinning data used to calculate the result for this performance measure, was discontinued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics at the end of 2025. As a result, the department will no longer report on this performance measure.
1.5	Percentage of Office for Youth program participants who felt they influenced a government policy or program. [PM077]	Retired	These performance measures have been removed from 2026–27 onwards as the measures do not reflect the material objectives of Program 1.5 Early Learning and Schools Support. The 2026–27 Annual Report will continue to report on these metrics outside the annual performance statements. These metrics and others outlined in the youth engagement strategy, <i>Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make</i> , will also be reported on in the Office for Youth's annual monitoring and evaluation report.
1.5	Percentage of Australian Government departments and agencies that worked with the Office for Youth and felt supported to engage with young people. [PM078]		

Outcome 2

Higher education, research and global engagement

Program	2025–26 published performance measure	Change	Rationale
2.1	The proportion of the 25- to 34-year-old population with a tertiary qualification. [PM009]	Discontinued	The Survey of Education and Work, which provided the underpinning data used to calculate the result for this performance measure, was discontinued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics at the end of 2025. As a result, the department will no longer report on this performance measure.
2.1	The rate of attrition for domestic bachelor students. [PM010]	Retired	The performance measure has been removed from 2026–27 onwards as it is primarily driven by variables outside the department's control and therefore is not an accurate indicator of the department's performance in administering the Commonwealth Grant Scheme program. The 2026–27 Annual Report will continue to report on this metric outside the annual performance statements.
2.2	Proportion of eligible universities able to meet specified superannuation expenses. [PM012]	No longer reported under regulator best practice principles	This performance measure is no longer classified as relating to a regulatory function, following review against the Commonwealth definition of regulatory activities. As PM012 reflects administration of the Higher Education Superannuation Program rather than regulatory oversight, it is now reported as a non-regulatory measure.

Program	2025–26 published performance measure	Change	Rationale
2.3	Proportion of domestic undergraduates who are from a low socio-economic background (based on Statistical Area level 1). [PM014]	Data source amended	The data source table identifier has been updated in accordance with the restructure of the Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection. The data source was previously found in Table 11.2. From 2024, the data source is Table 11.3.
2.3	Proportion of domestic undergraduates who identify as First Nations. [PM015]	<p>No longer reported under regulator best practice principles</p> <p>Future reporting to be determined</p>	<p>These performance measures are no longer classified as relating to a regulatory function, following review against the Commonwealth definition of regulatory activities. This is a change from information presented in the 2025–26 Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The 2025–26 Corporate Plan identified that these measures would be reported in 2027–28 and later years; however, 2026–27 is the last year the measures will be reported. The department will consider other performance reporting information in advance of the 2027–28 performance reporting cycle as the ATEC is established.</p>

Program	2025–26 published performance measure	Change	Rationale
2.3	Proportion of domestic undergraduate students who rate the teaching quality at their institution positively. [PM016]	<p>Methodology wording amended</p> <p>Future reporting to be determined</p>	<p>The methodology wording was revised for clarity and to align with the measure title after the 2025–26 Corporate Plan was published, and this revision was reported in the 2024–25 Annual Report.</p> <p>The department will review this performance measure and consider other performance reporting information in advance of the 2027–28 performance reporting cycle as the ATEC is established.</p>
2.3	Proportion of employers who are satisfied with the skills of graduates (overall across all skills). [PM017]	Retired	The performance measure has been removed from 2026–27 onwards as higher education providers are responsible for the skills of graduates and therefore this metric does not directly reflect the department’s performance in supporting under-represented cohorts under Program 2.3. The 2026–27 Annual Report will continue to report on this metric outside the annual performance statements.
2.5	Proportion of domestic research postgraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree. [PM020]	Retired	These performance measures have been removed from 2026–27 onwards as they are primarily driven by variables outside the department’s control and therefore are not an accurate indicator of the department’s performance in driving investment in research under Program 2.5. The 2026–27 Annual Report will continue to report on these metrics outside the annual performance statements.
2.5	First Nations higher degree by research (HDR) completions. [PM021]		

Program	2025–26 published performance measure	Change	Rationale
2.7	Number of students enrolled in offshore education and training delivered by Australian providers. [PM027]	Retired	The performance measure has been removed from 2026–27 onwards as it is primarily driven by variables outside the department’s control and therefore is not an accurate indicator of the department’s performance in supporting the sustainable growth of high-quality higher education and research under Program 2.7. The department will consider other performance measures for this program in a future reporting cycle. The 2026–27 Annual Report will continue to report on this metric outside the annual performance statements.

Appendix

Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCS	Additional Child Care Subsidy
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
AGA	Australian Government Actuary
AI	Artificial intelligence
APS	Australian Public Service
ATEC	Australian Tertiary Education Commission
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CCCF	Community Child Care Fund
CRO	Chief Risk Officer
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
EWRs	Enterprise-wide risks
GBV Regulator	Gender-based Violence Regulator
HELP	Higher Education Loan Program
ICT	Information and communications technology
ISP	Inclusion Support Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NATSIEC	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Abbreviation	Meaning
PGPA Act	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>
PGPA Rule	Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014
PM	Performance measure
PRA	Preschool Reform Agreement
PSPF	Protective Security Policy Framework
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RSPC	Random Sample Parent Check
SA1/SA2	Statistical Area level 1 / Statistical Area level 2
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
TPS	Tuition Protection Service
UANP	National Partnership on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education or Universal Access National Partnership

Compliance

This corporate plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in section 35(2) of the PGPA Act. The table below details the matters included to comply with section 16E(2) of the PGPA Rule.

Source	Matters to be included	Page
Introduction		
PGPA Rule 16E(1)	The corporate plan for a Commonwealth entity must cover a period of at least 4 reporting periods for the entity.	1
PGPA Rule 16E(2)1(a)	The corporate plan must include a statement that the plan is prepared for paragraph 35(1)(b) of the PGPA Act.	2
PGPA Rule 16E(2)1(b)	The corporate plan must specify the reporting period for which the plan is prepared.	2
PGPA Rule 16E(2)1(c)	The corporate plan must specify the reporting periods covered by the plan.	2
Purpose		
PGPA Rule 16E(2)2	The corporate plan must state the purposes of the entity.	5
Key activities		
PGPA Rule 16E(2)3	For the entire period covered by the plan, the corporate plan must outline the key activities that the entity will undertake in order to achieve its purposes.	5
Operating context		
PGPA Rule 16E(2)4(a)	For the entire period covered by the plan, the corporate plan must state the environment in which the entity will operate.	11–13
PGPA Rule 16E(2)4(b)	For the entire period covered by the plan, the corporate plan must include the strategies and plans the entity will implement to have the capability it needs to undertake its key activities and achieve its purposes.	31–41
PGPA Rule 16E(2)4(c)	For the entire period covered by the plan, the corporate plan must include a summary of the risk oversight and management systems of the entity, and the key risks that the entity will manage and how those risks will be managed.	21–29

Source	Matters to be included	Page
Operating context (continued)		
PGPA Rule 16E(2)4(d)	For the entire period covered by the plan, the corporate plan must include details of any organisation or body that will make a significant contribution towards achieving the entity's purposes through cooperation with the entity, including how that cooperation will help achieve those purposes.	15–19
PGPA Rule 16E(2)4(e)	For the entire period covered by the plan, the corporate plan must include how any subsidiary of the entity will contribute to achieving the entity's purposes.	N/A
Performance		
PGPA Rule 16E(2)5(a)	For each reporting period covered by the plan, the corporate plan must include details of how the entity's performance in achieving the purposes will be measured and assessed through specified performance measures of the entity that meet the requirements of section 16EA of the PGPA Rule.	Outcome 1: 46–56 Outcome 2: 58–68
PGPA Rule 16E(2)5(b)	For each reporting period covered by the plan, the corporate plan must include details of how the entity's performance in achieving the purposes will be measured and assessed through specified targets for each of those performance measures for which it is reasonably practicable to set a target.	Outcome 1: 46–56 Outcome 2: 58–68
Publication		
PGPA Rule 16E(3)	The corporate plan must be published on the entity's website by the last day of the second month of the reporting period for which the plan is prepared (i.e. 31 August 2023).	This corporate plan was published as soon as practicable after the plan was prepared.
Distribution		
PGPA Rule 16E(5)	The corporate plan must be given to the responsible Ministers and the Finance Minister as soon a practicable after the plan is prepared, and before the plan is published on the entity's website.	This corporate plan was given to the responsible Ministers, and the Finance Minister prior to publication.

