

# Audit report of the 2024–25 annual performance statements

Department of Education



## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT on the 2024-25 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Education**

### **To the Minister for Finance**

#### ***Conclusion***

In my opinion, the 2024-25 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Education (the Department):

- present fairly the Department's performance in achieving its purpose for the year ended 30 June 2025; and
- are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act).

#### ***Audit criteria***

To assess whether the Department's annual performance statements complied with Division 3 of Part 2-3 of the PGPA Act, I applied the following criteria:

- whether the entity's key activities, performance measures and specified targets are appropriate to measure and assess the entity's performance in achieving its purposes.
- whether the performance statements are prepared based upon appropriate records that properly record and explain the entity's performance.
- whether the annual performance statements present fairly the entity's performance in achieving the entity's purposes in the reporting period.

#### ***Accountable Authority's responsibilities***

As the Accountable Authority of the Department, the Secretary is responsible under the PGPA Act for:

- the preparation of annual performance statements that accurately present the Department's performance in the reporting period and comply with the requirements of the PGPA Act and any requirements prescribed by the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (the Rule).
- keeping records about the Department's performance as required by the PGPA Act, and
- establishing internal controls that the Accountable Authority determines are appropriate to enable the preparation of annual performance statements.

### ***Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the performance statements***

My responsibility is to conduct a reasonable assurance engagement to express an independent opinion on the Department's annual performance statements.

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which include the relevant Standard on Assurance Engagements (ASAE) 3000 *Assurance Engagements Other than Audits or Reviews of Historical Financial Information* issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board.

Procedures were planned and performed to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the annual performance statements of the entity present fairly the entity's performance in achieving its purposes and comply, in all material respects, with the PGPA Act and Rule.

The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures depend on my judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, in the annual performance statements. In making these risk assessments, I obtain an understanding of internal controls relevant to the preparation of the annual performance statements in order to design procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my conclusion.

### ***Independence and quality control***

I have complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements relating to assurance engagements, and applied Auditing Standard ASQM 1 *Quality Management for Firms that Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Reports and Other Financial Information, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements* in undertaking this assurance engagement.

### ***Inherent limitations***

Because of the inherent limitations of an assurance engagement, it is possible that fraud, error or non-compliance may occur and not be detected. An assurance engagement is not designed to detect all instances of non-compliance of the annual performance statements with the PGPA Act and the Rule as it is not performed continuously throughout the period and the assurance procedures performed are undertaken on a test basis. The reasonable assurance conclusion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Australian National Audit Office



Rahul Tejani  
Executive Director  
Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra  
4 September 2025

# 02

## Performance

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# Statement by the accountable authority

I, as the Accountable Authority of the Department of Education, present the Annual Performance Statements 2024–25 as required under section 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

In my opinion, the Annual Performance Statements are based on properly maintained records, accurately reflect the performance of the entity, and comply with section 39(2) of the PGPA Act.



Mr Tony Cook PSM

2 September 2025

# Our performance

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Our performance information provides transparency and accountability to the Australian Parliament and the public on how we are delivering on our purpose and performing in line with our agreed objectives.

The department will continue to mature the quality of our performance reporting over time.

## Purpose

We create a better future for all Australians through education.

## Outcomes and programs

### 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.

## Key activities

1. Provide targeted support to families, children and early childhood education and care centres 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.

Performance measures outlining the department's performance against Outcome 1 are on pages 50 to 88.

## 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** Commonwealth Grant Scheme
- **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

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 university research sector through research training, research funding 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.

Performance measures outlining the department's performance against Outcome 2 are on pages 89 to 128.

## Introduction

The department is committed to reporting transparent, accurate, and meaningful performance information. In 2024–25 we focused on enhancing both our performance reporting processes and the analysis of factors that contributed to the department's performance. As part of our assurance processes, we reviewed our performance measures to ensure they remain appropriate for measuring and assessing our performance from early learning years through to higher education and beyond.

In 2024–25 the department's annual performance statements were audited for the fourth year by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO). The audit was supported by dedicated internal resources. Participation in the audit has supported the department to continue to refine our performance measures, processes, and analysis in this year's annual performance statements and inform preparation for future performance cycles.

The number and composition of the department's performance measures has changed this year and may change in future years because of changes to government priorities and programs, as well as part of the continual improvement in performance reporting outlined above.

## Our regulatory performance




The regulatory environment across Australia's education sectors is complex and involves a broad range of organisations and levels of government. The department does not have a significant regulatory role, with most regulatory functions in the early childhood education and care, school, and higher education systems undertaken by states and territories or independent statutory agencies. The small number of regulatory functions for which the department is responsible for focus on safety, quality and financial integrity. As part of this regulatory work, the department works closely with state and territory governments, portfolio entities such as the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, and other education bodies such as the Tuition Protection Service and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

The Minister for Education's Statement of Expectations signed on 5 July 2024 and the department's Regulator Statement of Intent signed on 6 August 2024 are published on our website. Our approach to fulfilling our regulatory responsibility is underpinned by the Australian Government's 3 best practice principles of regulation. Figure 2.1 outlines each of these principles represented by an icon and these icons are used in this chapter to indicate performance measures to which they apply.

The department continues to examine its regulatory performance to ensure its approach is fit for purpose and reflects our regulatory nature as it changes.



Figure 2.1: Regulator best practice principles

| Principles of regulator best practice  |   | Measures  |
|--|---|---|
|   | 1. <b>Continuous improvement and building trust:</b> regulators adopt a whole-of-system perspective, continuously improving their performance, capability and culture to build trust and confidence in Australia’s regulatory settings.           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PM002</li><li>• PM012</li><li>• PM014</li><li>• PM015</li><li>• PM070</li><li>• PM071</li></ul> |
|   | 2. <b>Risk based and data driven:</b> regulators manage risks proportionately and maintain essential safeguards while minimising regulatory burden, and leveraging data and digital technology to support those they regulate to comply and grow. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PM002</li><li>• PM012</li><li>• PM014</li><li>• PM015</li></ul>                                 |
|  | 3. <b>Collaboration and engagement:</b> regulators are transparent and responsive communicators, implementing regulations in a modern and collaborative way.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PM002</li><li>• PM012</li><li>• PM070</li><li>• PM071</li></ul>                                 |

## Analysis of our performance

Table 2.1 outlines the classification system used to assess performance outcomes for the 2024–25 period.

When assessing performance, the department considered the current operating environment, the methodology and data sources, and classified the results according to the result ratings in Table 2.1. This assessment occurred as part of our processes to develop information for the Portfolio Budget Statements, for the corporate plan and/or annual performance statements included in this annual report. This has allowed a result rating to be applied to each performance measure and supported analysis of our achievement.

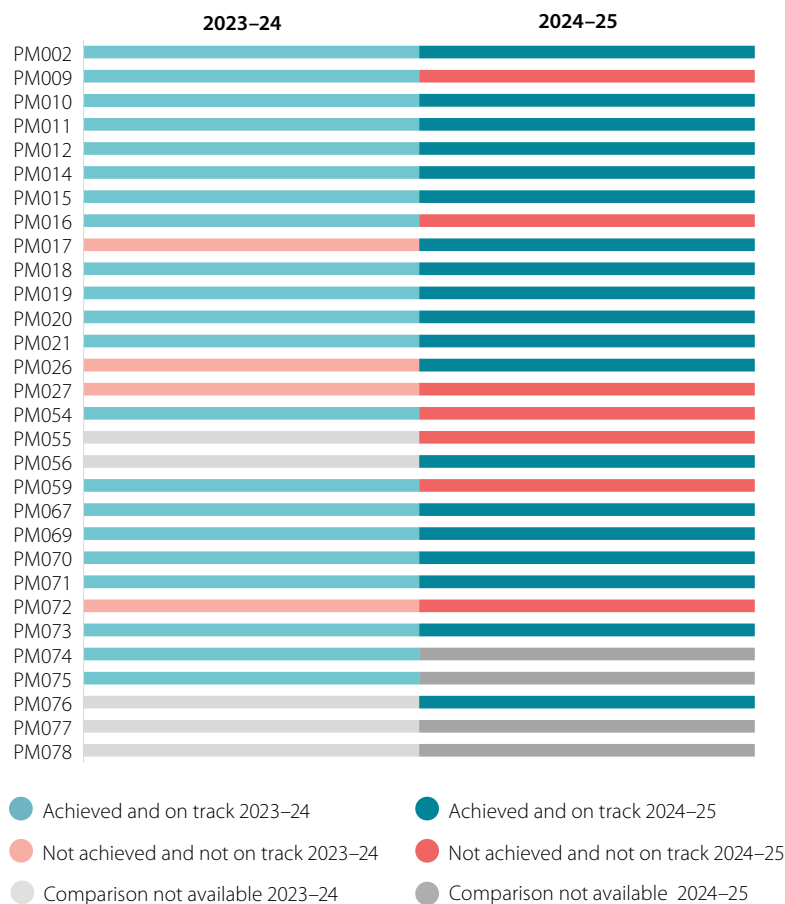
**Table 2.1: Result rating for 2024–25**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Achieved</b>     | The target was met or exceeded   |
| <b>On track</b>     | The target is on track to be achieved against future year targets                                |
| <b>Not achieved</b> | The target was not met during 2024–25  |
| <b>Not on track</b> | Based on current information the performance measure is not on track to meet future year targets |
| <b>n/a</b>          | Result not available or not measured in 2024–25  |

The department's 2024–25 Annual Performance Statements comprise 28 performance measures, of which 2 performance measures (PM077 and PM078) do not have 2024–25 results as they are new measures establishing baseline data for reporting in 2025–26. Performance measures show an overall decline in results for 2024–25, with 19 out of 26 (73%) reportable performance measures rated as 'achieved' or 'on track', compared to results published in the 2023–24 Annual Report where 21 out of 25 (84%) reportable performance measures were rated as 'achieved' or 'on track' (with 2 measures having no result).

There are 23 performance measures unchanged between the 2023–24 and 2024–25 Annual Reports. Based on the actual result values for these performance measures, 8 showed improved results, 9 results declined, and 6 results were unchanged from 2023–24. Figure 2.2 summarises how result ratings have changed in 2024–25 compared with 2023–24.

Figure 2.2: 2023–24 result ratings compared to 2024–25 result ratings<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Performance measures PM076, PM077 and PM078 could not be compared with 2023–24 results as they are new measures. PM055 and PM056 were revised in 2023–24 to account for the implementation of new NAPLAN proficiency levels at the national level.

# Overarching analysis

## Early childhood and youth

The department has direct responsibility for implementing the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), which is Australia's primary funding mechanism for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), reducing costs for families by paying subsidies directly to service providers (PM002 refers). It operates in conjunction with the Child Care Safety Net, which includes the Additional Child Care Subsidy to provide extra help with the costs of care to families in difficulty (PM067 refers), Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) to support disadvantaged communities and the Inclusion Support Program to help services accommodate children with additional needs (PM054 refers).

The department also works collaboratively with states and territories to co-fund preschool programs (PM069 refers) and facilitates the ACECQA in maintaining national standards.

In 2024–25, \$15.2 billion in expenditure was made via the CCS System to support 1.2 million families with the cost of early childhood education and care. To ensure this funding is getting to families as intended, the department conducts compliance checks, investigates reports of non-compliance in coordination with state and territory regulators and offers guidance and resources to help providers and services understand their obligations (PM002 refers). The department's approach to maintaining the financial integrity of the CCS is publicly available on its website ([www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-subsidy-financial-integrity-strategy](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/child-care-subsidy-financial-integrity-strategy)).

The department continues to support access to quality ECEC through the CCCF, which aims to support families that face structural barriers and disadvantage. Among other projects, the department provides funding to ACECQA to deliver a project to support quality and safety in CCCF restricted services.

The department implemented a range of ECEC workforce initiatives in 2024–25, addressing nation-wide shortages, to support access to quality ECEC across Australia.

Administering the worker retention payment was a significant undertaking in 2024–25. The worker retention payment is a grant currently running for 2 years (2 December 2024 to 2 November 2026) to fund an uplift in wages for ECEC workers in services who agree to pass on wage increases to eligible ECEC workers. From October 2024 to 30 June 2025, 3,478 applications were received, and the department executed 1,605 grant agreements for the worker retention payment which provides a grant equivalent to a 15% wage increase for ECEC workers over 2 years from December 2024 to 30 November 2026. Data from December 2024 to June 2025 indicates 58% of eligible providers, representing 71.6% of eligible services have applied for grants and agreed to sign a workplace instrument that guarantees the funding will pass to workers in the form of higher wages.

The department delivers ECEC workforce measures intended to support families and their children access quality ECEC. In 2024–25 \$17.2 million in grants was provided to support professional development opportunities for 60,144 early childhood staff by enabling services to backfill staff undertaking training activities. Additionally, \$12.5 million supported 2,117 existing educators to complete current studies or undertake practicum placements.

The department collaborates with state and territory governments, ACECQA, and the ECEC sector to progress the 21 actions under the National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy 2022–2031 (publicly available at [www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/workforce/support/national-workforce-strategy](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/workforce/support/national-workforce-strategy)); 6 were completed in 2024–25.

## Schools

The delivery of schooling in Australia is a shared responsibility. The Australian Government has a key role in the provision of national leadership and funding, while state and territory government and non-government education authorities are responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of schools and the teaching workforce. The department collaborates with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority before (ACARA) on key areas such as data collection and reporting to monitor student progress and report on school performance.

The department's leadership on collaborative reforms and its significant investment (\$11.7 billion in 2024–25 for government schools, \$19.4 billion for non-government schools) to put the Commonwealth, states and territories on a pathway of full and fair funding for schools, builds upon existing efforts to ensure the national investment in schools facilitates a healthy schooling system. The schools performance measures work together to track overall progress toward this goal.

In December 2023, all education ministers affirmed their commitment to three key outcomes – equity and excellence, wellbeing for learning and engagement, and a strong and sustainable workforce. These reflect the core outcomes that the education system must strive for so that all young Australians can access an education that facilitates them to reach their potential. In 2024–25 this joint vision for the national education system was operationalised through *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034* (BFSA) and the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025–2034* (Full and Fair Funding Agreement). The agreements will see public schools on a pathway to 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard and progress reforms to improve student outcomes, which will be reported on annually.

The department's strategic and supportive role in national education includes funding for nationally coordinated reforms which include improving student outcomes through initiatives including Year 1 phonics checks, early years of schooling numeracy checks, evidence-based teaching, early interventions, and targeted interventions, such as small-group or catch-up tutoring. The department's national leadership is supported by our portfolio entities including ACARA and Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL).

Although not statistically significant, school attendance rates in 2024 are down compared to 2023 (PM059 refers) and remain below pre-COVID levels. The department will continue to lead work with the states and territories and the non-government sector on initiatives to improve student attendance and performance, and support schools to provide engaging and safe places of learning for students. It is too early to see the impact of these initiatives in 2024–25, however the department expects the impact to be captured across the department's performance measure results in future years.

Academic achievement enhances outcomes for all students and evidence indicates that investing early in a student's education has the most significant long-term impact. The NAPLAN assessment in Year 3 is the first major assessment to compare the progress of students at a nationally comparable level in key foundational literacy and numeracy skills (PM055 and PM056 refer). The results in Year 3 are critical to identify the students most needing support and will be complemented by initiatives under the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement to ensure students can catch up, keep up and finish school.

There is a clear link between finishing school and improved social and economic outcomes for young people, such as better labour market outcomes and access to further educational opportunities. In 2024, the proportion of 20- to 24-year-olds who have attained at least Year 12, or an equivalent vocational education and training qualification has held steady (PM072 refers).

## Higher education, research and international

The department facilitates Australia's higher education institutions' delivery of world class education and research. Together with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, the Australian Research Council, and the Tuition Protection Service, the department is responsible for developing and implementing policy, as well as regulation in higher education and research. Access to and participation in quality higher education enables Australians to achieve their full personal, social, and economic potential, while also supporting Australia's future skills and workforce needs.

The higher education sector has undergone significant change over the past 5 years, with many external factors influencing student study choices. Domestic and international student demand has fluctuated in response to the Australian Government's emergency response to the pandemic (PM026 and PM027 refer). In addition, the strong domestic labour market and growing cost-of-living pressures have influenced prospective and current student decision-making about higher education (PM011 and PM20 refer). Increasingly, students are studying part-time, and universities are supporting the delivery of off-campus or online study (PM016 and PM017 refer).

In 2024–25, the department implemented various broad and targeted programs to alleviate financial barriers to higher education and improve student outcomes. This included around \$7.7 billion to subsidise Commonwealth-supported students' tuition costs for over 800,000 domestic students through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) and providing \$7.9 billion via the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) to remove up-front cost barriers for over 950,000 domestic students through the income contingent loan scheme. Legislation was passed in November 2024 to cap indexation applied to HELP debt to the lower of the Consumer Price Index or Wage Price Index, effective from 1 June 2023. The lower indexation rates in 2023 and 2024 reduced the total HELP debt by around \$3 billion (PM018 refers).

The department administers programs to support the participation, attendance and success of domestic higher education students from under-represented groups. In 2024–25 the department's \$291 million Indigenous, Regional and Low SES Attainment Fund allocated funding to universities to support underrepresented students from pre-access (aspiration and outreach) through to completion via programs such as the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program, the National Priorities Pool Program and the Regional Partnerships Project Pool Program. In 2024, demand-driven funding was extended to all First Nations students, allowing students to attend the university of their choice for any non-medical bachelor course of study. Also in 2024–25, the government announced increased support by quadrupling funding for the Disability Support Fund and the establishment of 25 new Regional and Suburban University Study Hubs (RUSH and SUSH). While preliminary 2024 data indicate access and participation rates have improved slightly from 2023 to 2024 for First Nations students (PM015 refers), students with disability and students from low socio-economic status (low-SES) areas (PM014 refers), evidence of the impact of these programs are expected to become available in subsequent years.

In parallel, the department's investment in university research and research commercialisation programs is essential to Australia's ability to create new industries and jobs, improve our productivity and living standards and bolster our capacity to solve key national challenges. In 2024–25, the department provided \$2.3 billion in research block grant funding through the Research Support Program (\$1.1 billion) and Research Training Program (\$1.2 billion). This funding also helps support a broad range of research activities, which over time is expected to contribute to fostering innovation and entrepreneurial culture critical to Australia's economic growth and prosperity (PM019 refers).

## Summary of our performance measure results

| Outcome 1  |       |         |  |                |                |
|--|-------|---------|--|----------------|----------------|
| Performance Measure  | PM#   | Program | 2023–24 result                               | 2024–25 result | Page reference |
| Proportion of accurate Child Care Subsidy payments to all services.  | PM002 | 1.2     | Achieved                                     | Achieved       | 55             |
| 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 | 1.1     | Achieved                                     | Not achieved   | 57             |
| Lower the proportion of students in the Needs Additional Support proficiency level in NAPLAN for reading for Year 3 students (nationally).                                       | PM055 | 1.3     | n/a – a new baseline was established in 2023 | Not achieved   | 61             |
|  |       | 1.4     |  |                |                |
|  |       | 1.5     |  |                |                |
| Lower the proportion of students in the Needs Additional Support proficiency level in NAPLAN for Numeracy for Year 3 students (nationally).                                      | PM056 | 1.3     | n/a – a new baseline was established in 2023 | Achieved       | 64             |
|  |       | 1.4     |  |                |                |
|  |       | 1.5     |  |                |                |
| Increase the proportion of students attending school 90% or more of the time.  | PM059 | 1.3     | Achieved                                     | Not achieved   | 67             |
|  |       | 1.4     |  |                |                |
|  |       | 1.5     |  |                |                |



## Outcome 1

| Performance Measure   | PM#   | Program | 2023–24 result | 2024–25 result | Page reference |
|---|-------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Average early childhood education and care hours attended by children that are supported by Additional Child Care Subsidy.                                | PM067 | 1.2     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 70             |
| Proportion of children enrolled in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school who are enrolled for 600 hours per year.                | PM069 | 1.5     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 72             |
| Recurrent funding payments to approved authorities for government schools under the <i>Australian Education Act 2013</i> are made in a timely manner.     | PM070 | 1.3     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 75             |
| Recurrent funding payments to approved authorities for non-government schools under the <i>Australian Education Act 2013</i> are made in a timely manner. | PM071 | 1.4     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 77             |
| Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12 certification, or equivalent, or gaining a qualification at Certificate III or above.     | PM072 | 1.5     | Not on track   | Not on track   | 79             |

### Outcome 1

| Performance Measure  | PM#   | Program | 2023–24 result                          | 2024–25 result | Page reference |
|--|-------|---------|---|----------------|----------------|
| The Australian Government will work to deliver the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (the Agreement) with states and territories, focusing on driving real improvements in learning and wellbeing outcomes for students, with a focus on students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Agreement will be operational from January 2025. | PM073 | 1.5     | On track                                | Achieved       | 82             |
| Percentage of Office for Youth program participants who felt they influenced a government policy or program.   | PM077 | 1.5     | n/a – this is a new measure for 2024–25 | n/a            | 84             |
| Percentage of Australian Government departments and agencies that worked with the Office for Youth and felt supported to engage with young people.   | PM078 | 1.5     | n/a – this is a new measure for 2024–25 | n/a            | 86             |

## Outcome 2

| Performance Measure   | PM#   | Program | 2023–24 result | 2024–25 result | Page reference |
|---|-------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| The proportion of the 25- to 34-year-old population with a tertiary qualification.                                      | PM009 | 2.1     | Achieved       | Not achieved   | 94             |
| The rate of attrition for domestic bachelor students.   | PM010 | 2.1     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 96             |
| Proportion of domestic undergraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing a degree.                     | PM011 | 2.1     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 98             |
| Proportion of eligible universities able to meet specified superannuation expenses.                                     | PM012 | 2.2     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 100            |
| Proportion of domestic undergraduates who are from a low socio-economic background (based on Statistical Area level 1). | PM014 | 2.3     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 102            |
| Proportion of higher education students who are First Nations.  | PM015 | 2.3     | Achieved       | Achieved       | 105            |
| Proportion of domestic undergraduate students who rate the teaching quality at their institution positively.            | PM016 | 2.3     | Achieved       | Not achieved   | 108            |
| Proportion of employers who are satisfied with the skills of graduates (overall across all skills).                     | PM017 | 2.3     | Not achieved   | Achieved       | 110            |

## Outcome 2

| Performance Measure  | PM#   | Program    | 2023–24 result                          | 2024–25 result | Page reference |
|--|-------|------------|---|----------------|----------------|
| The proportion of HELP debt not expected to be repaid on new debt.   | PM018 | 2.4        | Achieved                                | Achieved       | 112            |
| The proportion of research publications in the world's top 10% most highly cited journals that are Australian research publications.         | PM019 | 2.5<br>2.6 | Achieved                                | Achieved       | 114            |
| Proportion of domestic research postgraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree.                              | PM020 | 2.5        | Achieved                                | Achieved       | 119            |
| First Nations higher degree by research (HDR) completions.   | PM021 | 2.5        | Achieved                                | Achieved       | 121            |
| Proportion of international students employed after graduation.  | PM026 | 2.7        | Not achieved                            | Achieved       | 123            |
| Number of students enrolled in offshore education and training delivered by Australian providers.  | PM027 | 2.7        | Not achieved                            | Not achieved   | 125            |
| Accurate and timely allocation of Commonwealth supported places (CSP) funding, as set out within university Commonwealth funding agreements. | PM076 | 2.8        | n/a – this is a new measure for 2024–25 | Achieved       | 127            |

# Outcome 1 performance measures

## Changes to our Outcome 1 performance measures

Amendments to the department's performance measures published in the 2024–25 Corporate Plan are summarised below (changes in bold).

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Performance measure PM070</b>   | Recurrent funding payments to approved authorities for government schools under the <i>Australian Education Act 2013</i> are made in a timely manner.   |
| The methodology was updated to add the specific place of payment to clarify the exact entity that takes the payments, confirming it is not directly distributed to schools by the Department of Education. |   |
| <b>Published methodology</b>   | The date each payment was planned is compared with the date each payment was actually paid. If the date paid is in the same month as the planned date, the payment is considered to have been paid in a timely manner.  |
| <b>Amended methodology</b>   | The date each payment was planned is compared with the date each payment was actually paid to the <b>Australian Government Treasury</b> . If the date paid to the <b>Australian Government Treasury</b> is in the same month as the planned date, the payment is considered to have been paid in a timely manner. |

**Performance  
measure PM071**

Recurrent funding payments to approved authorities for non-government schools under the *Australian Education Act 2013* are made in a timely manner.

The methodology was updated to add the specific place of payment to clarify the exact entity that takes the payments, confirming it is not directly distributed to schools by the Department of Education.

**Published  
methodology**

The date each payment was planned is compared with the date each payment was actually paid. If the date paid is in the same month as the planned date, the payment is considered to have been paid in a timely manner.

**Amended  
methodology**

The date each payment was planned is compared with the date each payment was actually paid to the **Australian Government Treasury**. If the date paid to the **Australian Government Treasury** is in the same month as the planned date, the payment is considered to have been paid in a timely manner.

**Performance  
measure PM072**

Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12 certification, or equivalent, or gaining a qualification at Certificate III or above.

Title and methodology updated to clarify what certification / qualification are being measured.

**Published  
performance measure**

Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12, or equivalent, or gaining a qualification at Certificate III or above.

**Amended  
performance measure**

Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12 **certification**, or equivalent, or gaining a qualification at Certificate III or above.

**Performance  
measure PM072**

Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12 certification, or equivalent, or gaining a qualification at Certificate III or above.

**Published  
methodology**

- a) Number of people aged 20–24 who have attained a school qualification of Year 12, or equivalent, or attained a non-school qualification at Certificate level III or above, divided by the total number of people aged 20–24 years.
- b) Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained a school qualification of Year 12, or equivalent, or attained a non-school qualification at Certificate level III or above, divided by the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years.

**Amended  
methodology**

- a) Number of people aged 20–24 who have attained a school qualification of Year 12 **certification**, or equivalent, or attained a non-school qualification at Certificate level III or above, divided by the total number of people aged 20–24 years.
- b) Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained a school qualification of Year 12 **certification**, or equivalent, or attained a non-school qualification at Certificate level III or above, divided by the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years.

**Published data source**

- a) ABS, Survey of Education and Work.
- b) Productivity Commission, Closing the Gap Information Repository, Dashboard, with underlying data from ABS Census of Population and Housing.

**Amended data source**

- a) ABS, Survey of Education and Work. **Please note that this is a sample survey.**
- b) Productivity Commission, Closing the Gap Information Repository, Dashboard, with underlying data from ABS Census of Population and Housing.

**Performance measure PM077**      Percentage of Office for Youth program participants who felt they influenced a government policy or program.

The title of this measure has changed to provide more clarity around the role of ‘program participants’ and to more accurately represent the scope of the Office for Youth programs.

The methodology was revised from binary responses to a scaled response to ensure data reliability and remove potential positive bias from responses.

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Published performance measure | Percentage of program participants who felt they directly influenced a government policy or program.  |
| Amended performance measure   | Percentage of <b>Office for Youth</b> program participants who felt they influenced a government policy or program.   |
| Published methodology         | The program participants will be asked if they feel they were able to directly influence a government policy or program in the relevant evaluation survey. This will be recorded as a binary response.  |
| Amended methodology           | <b>Office for Youth</b> program participants will be asked if they feel they were able to influence a government policy or program in the relevant <b>post program</b> evaluation survey. This will be recorded as a <b>proportion of the total Office for Youth program participants responses</b> . |
| Published data source         | Evaluation Survey of Office for Youth Program Participants.   |
| Amended data source           | Office for Youth, Department of Education Survey Data.  |



**Performance  
measure PM078**

Percentage of Australian Government departments and agencies that worked with the Office for Youth and felt supported to engage with young people.

The methodology was revised from binary responses to a scaled response to ensure data reliability and remove potential positive bias from responses.

**Published  
methodology**

The individual Australian Public Service employees who work with the Office for Youth will be asked how supported they felt to engage with young people through an evaluation survey. This will be recorded as a binary response.

**Amended  
methodology**

Australian Public Service employees from the Australian Government departments/agencies that work with the Office for Youth will be asked if they feel they were supported to engage with young people in the relevant post program evaluation survey. This will be recorded as a proportion of the total Australian Government departments/agencies representatives' responses.

**Published data source**

Evaluation Survey of Australian Public Service Employees Engaging with the Office for Youth.

**Amended data source**

Department of Education, Office for Youth Survey Data.

## Outcome 1 performance measure results

### Performance measure PM002

Proportion of accurate Child Care Subsidy payments to all services.

**Target:** 90% or higher

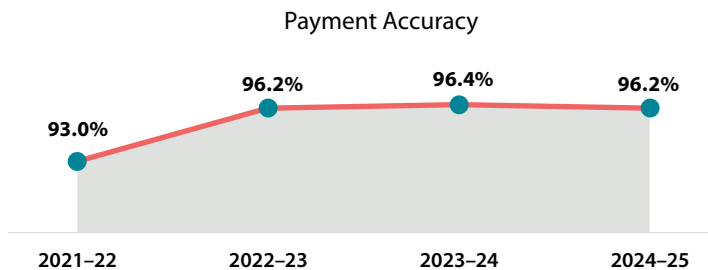
**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 96.2%

#### Analysis:

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payment accuracy result was 96.2% in 2024–25. This represents continued and sustained improvement in payment accuracy since 2021–22 with now three consecutive years of accuracy over 96%.

The below graph shows annual payment accuracy results from 2021–22 to 2024–25.



This result is the outcome of CCS payment integrity measures that were announced in the October 2022–23, the 2023–24 and the 2024–25 Budgets to safeguard the CCS program from fraud and non-compliance.

The CCS is administered by approved child care providers under Family Assistance Law (FAL), who operate services including Centre Based Day Care (CBDC), Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), and Family Day Care (FDC). These providers are responsible for managing CCS payments to families and must comply with requirements to maintain their approval under the FAL.

The Department of Education is responsible for overseeing the integrity of the CCS program, ensuring that payments are accurate and compliant with legislative requirements. This includes administering regulatory functions such as provider approvals, compliance monitoring, audits, sanctions, and fraud prevention in collaboration with other government agencies.

The CCS payment accuracy result is used to assess the department's performance in delivering

these integrity functions. A high accuracy rate reflects the effectiveness of the department's regulatory activities and its commitment to safeguarding public funds.

Payment integrity measures include bolstering education, audit and compliance activities, legislative change to close loopholes, improved detection and intelligence capabilities, monitoring, sanctions, applying approval conditions, criminal investigations and working with other government agencies to reduce and respond to fraud. Each of these activities play a role in driving high levels of payment accuracy and sustaining that level over multiple years.

In 2024–25, the department working with the Australian Taxation Office, implemented a new integrity measure, the Statement of Tax Record (STR) ([www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/howto/who-can-administer/fit-and-proper/statement-tax-record-child-care-subsidy](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/howto/who-can-administer/fit-and-proper/statement-tax-record-child-care-subsidy)) requirement for new CCS provider approval applications. The STR demonstrates the provider's engagement with the Australian Taxation system and is used to support a provider's fit and proper assessment.

During 2024–25, the department is also partnering with AUSTRAC ([www.austrac.gov.au/partners/fintel-alliance](http://www.austrac.gov.au/partners/fintel-alliance)) to identify potential instances of provider fraud and non-compliance and take appropriate action.

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### 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 payments) are correct/incorrect.

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### Source:

The RSPC Checking Tool is a purpose built excel based analysis tool developed by ORIMA Research Pty Ltd to assess the accuracy of CCS payments.

The Tool integrates administrative data from the CCS system, including randomly selected service and family records for the survey period, and RSPC survey responses to generate a robust and comprehensive accuracy assessment. It supports streamlined quality assurance processes and enables the production of reliable, evidence based results for performance reporting.

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**Contributing program:** 1.2 – Child Care Subsidy.

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### Key activity:

- Support to families who rely on subsidised early childhood education and care to work, train, study or volunteer.

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### Regulatory principles:



### Performance measure PM054

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

**Target:** Increase on previous year

**Result rating:** Not achieved

**Result value:** 20.6%

#### Analysis:

For the purposes of this measure, the most 'vulnerable and disadvantaged communities' are defined as the areas of Australia that have been attributed Decile 1 or 2 under the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD). The below provides analysis of the combined outcome for the measure, and for each program separately.

The department administers grants under the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) and Inclusion Support Program (ISP) programs that fund ECEC providers. While separately, both the CCCF and ISP programs saw an increase in the proportion of services funded in the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, when combined for this measure, there was an overall decrease compared with the previous year.

The combined proportion of CCCF and ISP funded services that were located in these areas and received program funding during the 2024–25 financial year is 20.6% of the overall number of services funded by these programs in 2024–25. Compared to the 2023–24 proportion figure (21.6%) the combined CCCF and ISP proportion percentage has decreased by 1.0% in 2024–25.

Although the measure was not achieved, analysis shows this was the result of the reduction in CCCF funded services being more significant proportionately than the increase in ISP funded services, leading to the overall number of services in lowest 2 decile having a slight reduction between years.

Importantly, both programs saw an increase in the proportion of services funded in the most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities when viewed by individual program.

The government is considering the findings and recommendations from recent inquiries ([www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childhood#report](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childhood#report); [www.accc.gov.au/inquiries-and-consultations/finalised-inquiries/childcare-inquiry-2023](http://www.accc.gov.au/inquiries-and-consultations/finalised-inquiries/childcare-inquiry-2023)), including how these align with the goal of providing universally accessible and affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Table 1 – Services in lowest 2 SEIFA deciles – proportion

| Program  | 2021–22 | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| CCCF     | 45.9%   | 44.8%   | 44.7%   | 46.6%   |
| ISP      | 17.0%   | 18.8%   | 19.1%   | 19.3%   |
| Combined | 19.6%   | 20.8%   | 21.6%   | 20.6%   |

Table 2 – Count of services funded\*

| Program    | 2021–22 | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| CCCF       | 857     | 810     | 749     | 584     |
| ISP        | 5,748   | 6,077   | 6,649   | 7,100   |
| Combined** | 6,347   | 6,638   | 7,161   | 7,498   |

Table 3 – Services in lowest 2 SEIFA deciles\*

| Program    | 2021–22 | 2022–23 | 2023–24 | 2024–25 |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| CCCF       | 393     | 365     | 335     | 272     |
| ISP        | 980     | 1,144   | 1,271   | 1,369   |
| Combined** | 1,243   | 1,384   | 1,546   | 1,546   |

\* Services in scope for measure PM054.

\*\* Some services received both CCCF and ISP funding. Combined service total reflects a count of unique services funded under both programs, rather than the sum of CCCF and ISP funded services.

### Inclusion Support Program (ISP)

The number of ISP funded services in scope for PM054 increased by around 7% in 2024–25 compared to the 2023–24 measure (Table 2 above). The proportion of services in the most vulnerable and disadvantaged areas (lowest 2 SEIFA deciles) increased from 2023–24 to 2024–25 (Table 1). For this measure, services in scope would be in receipt of the Inclusion Development Fund (IDF) subsidy, or Innovative Solutions (IS) funding streams.

The ISP has increased the number of funded services in scope of the measure every financial year since 2021–22 (Table 2). The number of services funded under the ISP in the most vulnerable and disadvantaged areas grew by 98 in the 2024–25 period, compared to 2023–24. Overall, the ISP funded 451 more services in 2024–25 than 2023–24. The increase demonstrates an increased need for support in these areas, as the program is needs-based and demand driven.

The ISP provides tailored support and funding to ECEC services to help address barriers to participation of children with additional needs in ECEC alongside their peers. ECEC services can apply for funding support at any time, with some funding streams offering 12 months of support. ISP funding is needs-based and applications have been increasing annually. From 2022–23 to 2023–24 IDF Subsidy applications grew by 9.2%, then a further 8.4% from 2023–24 to 2024–25. The increase in services funded in disadvantaged areas over the past 3 reporting periods is indicative of increased needs of families and children in these areas.

Since 2021–22, the number of ISP funded services in the lowest 2 SEIFA deciles has increased from 980 (17.0% of funded services) to 1369 (19.3%) (Tables 1 and 3).

In addition, the ISP provides over \$37 million in annual funding to Inclusion Agencies, that are available to support inclusion for all services, regardless of whether they receive IDF Subsidy funding.

### **Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) Program**

The number of CCCF funded services in scope for PM054 decreased by 22% in 2024–25 compared to the 2023–24 measure (Table 2). At the same time, the proportion of services in the most vulnerable and disadvantaged areas (lowest 2 SEIFA deciles) increased from 44.7% in 2023–24 to 46.6% in 2024–25 (Table 1). The number of services funded under the CCCF can fluctuate year by year, depending on the timing of CCCF Open Competitive grant opportunities and the number of applications for funding received/approved under each funding round. For example, grant agreements from 2 previous grant opportunities were finalised, with grant agreements under one grant opportunity commencing.

While there were less services funded in 2024–25 compared to 2023–24, the proportion of funded services located in the lowest 2 SEIFA deciles increased by almost 2%, reaching the highest level since 2021–22 (45.9%).

The CCCF provides targeted grants to support the continuation of ECEC services and improve access to early childhood education for children and families, particularly in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities. Part of the Child Care Safety net, the CCCF grants supplement the Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy for eligible services. There are a number of grant types under the CCCF, most notably:

- the 'Restricted' grant—supporting around 150 ECEC services since 2018, primarily in remote areas, and
- the 'Disadvantaged and vulnerable communities' grant – a competitive grant opportunity held every 2–3 years, with a general aim of supporting services in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, with varying focus and eligibility in each grant round. The number of services supported varies between rounds (400+ to 700+).

In 2024, the fourth round of this competitive grant opportunity was completed. The 435 services that were successful in receiving funding through this round are included in this measure for the first time in 2024–25. For this round, the department identified 350 priority areas experiencing particularly high levels of disadvantage compared to most other communities ([www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/extra-support/community-child-care-fund/disadvantaged-and-vulnerable-communities-grant/priority-areas](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/extra-support/community-child-care-fund/disadvantaged-and-vulnerable-communities-grant/priority-areas)).

In line with previous funding rounds, the priority areas were one of multiple eligibility criteria to apply for funding under Round 4. Priority areas were determined using the Australian Statistical Geography Standard Statistical Area 2 (SA2) level mesh block, with 2021 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) results and ABS 2021 child population data (aged 0–4 years) and SEIFA. The increase in the proportion of services funded under the CCCF program in the most vulnerable and disadvantaged areas in 2024–25 is consistent with the intent of the program and reflects its targeted funding approach.

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### 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.

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### 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.

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**Contributing program:** 1.1 – Support for the Child Care System.

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### Key activity:

- Provide targeted support to families, children and early childhood education and care centres who need it.

## Performance measure PM055

Lower 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

**Result rating:** Not achieved

**Result value:** 11.3%

### Analysis:

Nationally, the proportion of students in the Needs Additional Support (NAS) proficiency level in NAPLAN Reading for Year 3 students increased to 11.3% in 2024 from 9.1% in 2023 (a 2.2 percentage point increase). This small increase in the NAS cohort should be interpreted with caution as this is only the second cycle where proficiency levels have been used to measure student achievement in NAPLAN making the data insufficient to provide any indication of longer-term trends.

The data shows that while there were small increases and decreases across domains and year levels, overall the results were broadly stable.

The average proportion of students who achieved at the NAS proficiency level in Reading in 2024 was 10.3%, decreasing from Year 3 (11.3%) to Year 5 (8.7%), and increasing in Year 7 (10.2%) and Year 9 (11.1%). The average proportion of students who achieved at "Exceeding" and "Strong" levels in 2024 was 67.0%, increasing from Year 3 (66.3%) to Year 5 (71.4%), then dropping in Year 7 (67.3%) and in Year 9 (63.0%).

National data rarely shows any significant change over a single year. As noted by ACARA in 2024, it is too early to interpret any clear trends given we have 2 years of data and, this year, was a new cohort of students ([www.acara.edu.au/docs/default-source/media-releases/media-release-2024-naplan-national-results-release-14-8-24.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/docs/default-source/media-releases/media-release-2024-naplan-national-results-release-14-8-24.pdf)).

The Australian Government continues to work with all state and territory governments to reduce the proportion of students in the NAS proficiency level. In addition to jurisdiction and school specific initiatives to support literacy learning, the Australian Government is supporting literacy learning by funding several early year and school literacy initiatives.

These include the Year 1 Phonics Check and Literacy Hub which aim to ensure that students struggling with learning to read are identified early using evidence-based assessment tools and resources and teachers have the resources they need to act on results. More information about the initiatives is available on the department's website ([www.education.gov.au/australian-curriculum/year-1-phonics-check](http://www.education.gov.au/australian-curriculum/year-1-phonics-check)).



The Australian Government also funded the creation of a microcredential by the University of Adelaide in the teaching of phonics, to provide teachers with training to support them in the implementation of these proven strategies in Australian classrooms. More information can be found on the department's website ([www.education.gov.au/national-teacher-workforce-action-plan/announcements/free-online-short-course-teaching-phonics-now-available-teachers](http://www.education.gov.au/national-teacher-workforce-action-plan/announcements/free-online-short-course-teaching-phonics-now-available-teachers)).

The Needs Additional Support (NAS) proficiency level is set at a level that indicates students at or below this level are not achieving the learning outcomes expected and are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily based on the typical skills and understandings for students at their year level ([www.nap.edu.au/naplan/results-and-reports/proficiency-level-descriptions](http://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/results-and-reports/proficiency-level-descriptions)).

In August 2023, Australian Education Research Organisation's (AERO) research found that Year 3 students who perform below learning expectations are at a high risk of continuing to perform at that level throughout their schooling. This is why the measure reports on Year 3 outcomes to enable early intervention. AERO's research also noted that catching up and staying caught up is not easy to achieve, with only 17% of students who did not meet Year 3 expectations, catch up and stay caught to until Year 9.

More information is available at [www.edresearch.edu.au/research/analytical-insights-papers/learning-outcomes-students-early-low-naplan-performance](http://www.edresearch.edu.au/research/analytical-insights-papers/learning-outcomes-students-early-low-naplan-performance).

The national participation rate in NAPLAN for Year 3 has been above 90% for all assessments since 2008, which is consistent with the general attendance pattern.

Aggregated NAPLAN data at a national level does not separately report on government (program 1.3) and non-government (program 1.4) achievements with sector-specific data. The large-scale, rigorous and robust nature of NAPLAN dataset means that national data provides a thorough understanding of the performance of all schools and systems supported by the needs-based funding model in these key foundational learning areas.

NAPLAN results are not publicly reported by school sector under the nationally agreed *Principles and protocols for reporting in Australia* ([dataandreporting.blob.core.windows.net/anrdataportal/Data-Access-Program/principles-and-protocols-for-reporting-on-schooling-in-australia.pdf](https://dataandreporting.blob.core.windows.net/anrdataportal/Data-Access-Program/principles-and-protocols-for-reporting-on-schooling-in-australia.pdf)). This highlights that NAPLAN data disaggregation by sector does not allow nuanced interpretation and fair comparisons nor take into account the vastly different levels of socio-educational advantage between sectors, so carries a significant risk of misinterpretation and misuse of information without this important context.

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**Methodology:**

The percentage of students identified as 'Needs additional support' in NAPLAN reading at the Year 3 level, nationally, in the NAPLAN National Report. This percentage is based on the number of students participating in the NAPLAN Year 3 reading assessment (excluding exempt students) rather than the entire Year 3 population.

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**Source:**

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) NAPLAN National Results ([www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/naplan-national-results](http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/naplan-national-results)).

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**Contributing program:**

- 1.3 – Government Schools National Support
  - 1.4 – Non-Government Schools National Support
  - 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support.
- 

**Key activity:**

- Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to government schools
- Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to non-government schools
- Provide support for a range of curriculum, assessment, teaching and wellbeing programs
- Provide national leadership and work with states on national policy reform.

## Performance measure PM056

Lower 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

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 9.7%

### Analysis:

Nationally, the proportion of students in the Needs Additional Support (NAS) proficiency level in NAPLAN numeracy for Year 3 students decreased to 9.7% in 2024 from 10% in 2023 which is a small improvement. The small decrease in the NAS cohort should be interpreted with caution as this is only the second cycle where proficiency levels have been used to measure student achievement in NAPLAN making the data insufficient to provide any indication of longer-term trends.

The data shows that while there were small increases and decreases across domains and year levels, overall, the results were broadly stable.

The average proportion of students who achieved at the NAS proficiency level in Numeracy in 2024 was 9.5%, decreasing from Year 3 (9.7%) to Year 5 (8.6%), increasing again in Year 7 (9.4%) and Year 9 (10.4%). The average proportion of students who achieved at “Exceeding” and “Strong” levels in 2024 was 65.5%, increasing from Year 3 (63.5%) to Year 5 (67.8%), remaining relatively stable in Year 7 (67.2%) and then dropping in Year 9 (63.4%).

National data rarely shows any significant change over a single year. As noted by ACARA in 2024, it is too early to interpret any clear trends given we have 2 years of data and, this year, was a new cohort of students ([www.acara.edu.au/docs/default-source/media-releases/media-release-2024-naplan-national-results-release-14-8-24.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/docs/default-source/media-releases/media-release-2024-naplan-national-results-release-14-8-24.pdf)).

Recognising the importance of focusing on building numeracy skills in young people to build the skills they will need to make useful contributions to Australia's future, the Australian Government works closely with state and territory governments to support numeracy learning and funds a range of initiatives for schools, teachers, students, carers and families, from early years to schooling, including:

- The Mathematics Hub, Mathematics Massive Open Online Courses and Year 1 Number Check provide free, Australian Curriculum-aligned resources, professional development and assessment tools for teachers, school leaders, carers and students.
- The Let's Count program is designed for children aged 3 to 5 years and aims to improve the mathematical capabilities of preschool children and support a successful transition to school.

- The reSolve program provides online teaching and professional learning materials, linked to the Australian Curriculum, that support teaching mathematics from Foundation to Year 10. It is designed to develop the fluency, understanding, problem solving, and reasoning needed by students for the 21st century.

More information about the initiatives is available on the department's website ([www.education.gov.au/australian-curriculum/support-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics-stem/school-and-early-learning-stem-initiatives](http://www.education.gov.au/australian-curriculum/support-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics-stem/school-and-early-learning-stem-initiatives)).

The Needs Additional Support (NAS) proficiency level is set at a level that indicates students who are at or below this level are not achieving the learning outcomes expected and are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily based on the typical skills and understandings for students at their year level.

In August 2023, Australian Education Research Organisation's (AERO) research found that Year 3 students who perform below learning expectations are at a high risk of continuing to perform at that level throughout their schooling. This is why the measure reports on Year 3 outcomes to enable early intervention. AERO's research also noted that catching up and staying caught up is not easy to achieve, with only 17% of students who did not meet Year 3 expectations, catch up and stay caught up until Year 9. More information is available at [www.edresearch.edu.au/research/analytical-insights-papers/learning-outcomes-students-early-low-naplan-performance](http://www.edresearch.edu.au/research/analytical-insights-papers/learning-outcomes-students-early-low-naplan-performance).

The national participation rate in NAPLAN for Year 3 has been above 90% for all assessments since 2008, which is consistent with the general attendance pattern.

Aggregated NAPLAN data at a national level does not separately report on Government (program 1.3) and non-Government (program 1.4) achievements with sector-specific data. The large-scale, rigorous and robust nature of the NAPLAN dataset means that national data provides a thorough understanding of the performance of all schools and systems supported by the needs-based funding model in these key foundational learning areas.

NAPLAN results are not publicly reported by school sector under the nationally agreed *Principles and protocols for reporting in Australia* ([dataandreporting.blob.core.windows.net/anrdataportal/Data-Access-Program/principles-and-protocols-for-reporting-on-schooling-in-australia.pdf](https://dataandreporting.blob.core.windows.net/anrdataportal/Data-Access-Program/principles-and-protocols-for-reporting-on-schooling-in-australia.pdf)). This highlights that NAPLAN data disaggregation by sector does not allow nuanced interpretation and fair comparisons nor take into account the vastly different levels of socio-educational advantage between sectors, so carries a significant risk of misinterpretation and misuse of information without this important context.

**Methodology:**

The percentage of students identified as 'Needs Additional Support' in NAPLAN numeracy at the Year 3 level, nationally, in the NAPLAN National Report. This percentage is based on the number of students participating in the NAPLAN Year 3 numeracy assessment (excluding exempt students) rather than the entire Year 3 population.

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**Source:**

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) NAPLAN National Results ([www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/naplan-national-results](http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/naplan-national-results)).

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**Contributing program:**

- 1.3 – Government Schools National Support
  - 1.4 – Non-Government Schools National Support
  - 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support.
- 

**Key activity:**

- Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to government schools
- Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to non-government schools
- Provide support for a range of curriculum, assessment, teaching and wellbeing programs
- Provide national leadership and work with states on national policy reform.

### Performance measure PM059

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

**Target:** Increase on previous year

**Result rating:** Not achieved

**Result value:** 59.8% (2024 all schools, Years 1–10)

#### Analysis:

Students attending school 90% or more of the time decreased in 2024 to 59.8% (down from 61.6% in 2023). This decrease in result should be interpreted with caution as it was not statistically significant from a data perspective.

The attendance level also decreased across all school sectors – government from 58.6% (2023) to 56.3% (2024); and non-government from 67.3% (2023) to 66.1% (2024).

The decline in attendance levels follows a significant increase in 2023, after a substantial drop in 2022. Attendance levels have been trending downwards since 2018 with a marked decrease in 2022 due to the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron variant and high Influenza season outbreaks and floods in certain regions across Australia at that time. While the student attendance level increased in 2023, it did not return to the pre-COVID levels and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) 2024 data suggests a return to the historic steadily declining trend. More information is available on ACARA's website ([www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/student-attendance](http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/student-attendance)).

Regular attendance at school is critical for learning and development which will provide better opportunities for students to engage in further education and training or work after compulsory schooling. The clear benefits between regular school attendance and improved outcomes for students are reflected in the broader outcomes the Australian Government is working towards through national coordination to provide engaging and safe places of learning for students to support young Australians to become successful lifelong learners, and active, informed and productive members of the community.

In January 2025, the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) published the *School Attendance: new insights from AERO* report, which discusses the findings of an investigation AERO conducted into student attendance in Australian schools for education ministers. The report found that reasons for absence from school are complex, interrelated and often specific to the student, family and broader community, and noted the impact of COVID-19 on school attendance. The report is available at [www.edresearch.edu.au/summaries-explainers/explainers/school-attendance-new-insights-aero](http://www.edresearch.edu.au/summaries-explainers/explainers/school-attendance-new-insights-aero).

The Australian Government continues to work with state and territory governments to identify and implement measures to address school attendance at the national, jurisdictional, school and community levels. Through the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034 (BFSA)* and the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025–2034* (Full and Fair Funding Agreement), jurisdictions have committed to undertaking collective work to advise education ministers on student attendance, its impact on schools and student learning and mechanisms to advance an evidence-based approach to addressing non-attendance, including school refusal and also to develop a new measure of student engagement.

The causes of non-attendance are complex and multi-faceted, relating to a student's sense of safety at school, their individual sense of wellbeing, and their family circumstances and background. How absences are recorded and reported will be considered as part of the department's work with ACARA and states and territories on the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia. The measure of non-attendance will need to consider factors making some students more vulnerable to non-attendance, such as poor mental health and wellbeing, neurodiversity and disability, bullying, family background or socio-economic disadvantage.

Work is underway as part of the Australian Government response to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment's report for the *Inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and related matters*. The Australian Government response is publicly available at [www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Education\\_and\\_Employment/SchoolRefusal/Government\\_Response](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/SchoolRefusal/Government_Response).

While reporting schools performance measures at the national level provides an overview of the performance of Australia's education system, aggregated data at a national level does not directly provide insight on achievements of government (program 1.3) and non-government (program 1.4) sectors so results of this performance measure will be reported at a national level and by school sector from 2025–26.

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### 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 calculated as 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.

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### Source:

ACARA National report on Schooling in Australia data portal ([www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/student-attendance](http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/student-attendance)).

### Contributing program:

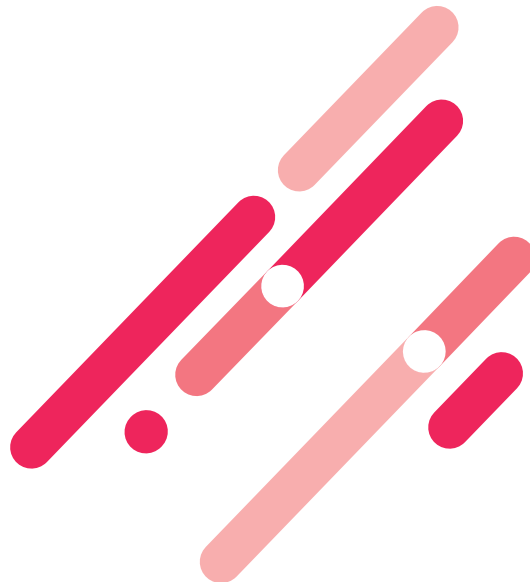
1.3 – Government Schools National Support

1.4 – Non-Government Schools National Support

1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support.

### Key activity:

- Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to government schools
- Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to non-government schools
- Provide support for a range of curriculum, assessment, teaching and wellbeing programs
- Provide national leadership and work with states on national policy reform.





## Performance measure PM067

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

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 20.1 hours per week compared to 17.0 hours per week

### Analysis:

The Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) provides additional fee assistance to families facing barriers to early childhood education and care services for vulnerable or at-risk children. The ACCS is made up of 4 categories:

- ACCS (child wellbeing) – for families who need practical help to support their children's safety and wellbeing
- ACCS (grandparent) – for grandparents on income support who are the primary carers of their grandchild/ren
- ACCS (temporary financial hardship) – for families experiencing temporary financial hardship
- ACCS (transition to work) – for families transitioning from income support to work.

The ACCS has been designed to eliminate or minimise attendance barriers for ACCS eligible children. Compared to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), the ACCS covers a greater proportion of fees and provides access to more subsidised hours.

The Department of Education has policy responsibility and provides policy and operational guidance to Services Australia and early childhood education and care providers, to enable effective administration of the CCS and ACCS programs. Services Australia administers the payments according to legislative entitlements. Further information on ACCS and CCS is available at [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-child-care-subsidy).

In the December 2024 quarter, 29,400 families with 41,490 children were supported by the ACCS, with most of them being under the 'Child Wellbeing' – ACCS category (22,350 families and 31,760 children). This is consistent with other quarters in 2024. Further information is available at [www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about/data-and-reports/quarterly-reports](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about/data-and-reports/quarterly-reports).

The data shows that children supported by ACCS have a higher average weekly attendance than children receiving CCS. In 2024 children supported by the ACCS attended early childhood education and care for an average of 20.1 hours per week compared to 17.0 hours for children supported by the CCS. Compared to 2023, the ACCS attendance was unchanged and the CCS attendance increased slightly from 16.8 to 17.0 hours per week.

The result reflects the ACCS policy settings to ensure that children who receive ACCS have the same opportunity to access and participate in early education and care as children who do not receive ACCS.

Evidence shows that access to, and participation in, early childhood education and care is important to children facing barriers. ACCS families can face complex circumstances that make regular early childhood education and care attendance challenging.

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### 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.

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**Source:** Services Australia – CCS System, program administrative data.

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**Contributing program:** 1.2 – Child Care Subsidy.

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### Key activity:

- Support to families who rely on subsidised early childhood education and care to work, train, study or volunteer.

## Performance measure PM069

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

### Target:

- a) Overall – 95% or higher
- b) First Nations children – 95% or higher
- c) Disadvantaged children – 95% or higher

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### Result rating:

- a) Achieved
- b) Achieved
- c) Achieved

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### Result value:

- a) 97.0%
- b) 97.5%
- c) 97.0%

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### Analysis:

- a) The proportion of all children enrolled in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school who were enrolled for 600 hours per year remained relatively stable in 2024 at 97.0%, compared to 97.3% in 2023.
- b) The proportion of First Nations children enrolled in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school who are enrolled for 600 hours per year remained relatively stable in 2024 at 97.5%, compared to 97.2% in 2023.
- c) The proportion of disadvantaged children enrolled in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school who are enrolled for 600 hours per year remained relatively stable in 2024 at 97.0% in 2024, compared to 96.8% in 2023.

Attending a high quality 600-hour preschool program helps children develop and is especially important for disadvantaged and First Nations children. Children who attend preschool are more likely to start school developmentally on track.

Through the Preschool Reform Agreement (the Agreement), the Australian Government provides a funding contribution to states and territories to ensure all children have access to 600 hours of preschool in the year before full-time school.

The Agreement commits the Australian and state and territory governments to a collaborative reform agenda. The aim of the reform agenda is to improve preschool participation and outcomes.

A key reform under the Agreement is the implementation of new national preschool enrolment and attendance measures, with payment tied to the provision of baseline data in 2024 and bilateral targets from 2025.

The Preschool Outcomes Measure is another key reform under the Agreement. It's a joint initiative of the Australian and state and territory governments and will be designed to support everyday teacher and educator practice and to give insights into children's learning and capability. It is being trialled nationally in 2025.

Australian Government funding provided under the Agreement is subject to states and territories implementing the agreed reform agenda. States and territories are required to provide annual implementation plans and meet performance milestones to receive their funding. Once submitted, implementation plans are assessed by the department for accuracy and then approved by the Minister for Early Childhood Education to enable payments to be made.

Implementation plans are available on the Federal Financial Relations website ([federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/agreements/preschool-reform-agreement](https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/agreements/preschool-reform-agreement)) and further information on the Agreement and its reforms is available on the department's website ([www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about/preschool/preschool-reform-agreement](https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about/preschool/preschool-reform-agreement)).

The Australian Government has also committed funding under the Preschool Data Framework to support implementation of reforms in the Agreement, including to improve preschool data collection and performance measurement.

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### Methodology:

The result is calculated using data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Preschool Education, Australia publication.

Tables 1 to 4 from the Summary Release provide the data on the number of 4- and 5-year-old children, number of 4- and 5-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and number of 4- and 5-year-old disadvantaged children enrolled and enrolled for 600 hours in preschool programs.

The actual calculations are as follows: the number of 4- and 5-year-old children who are identified by the ABS as enrolled in an early childhood education program in the year before they start full-time school for 600 hours, 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) to arrive at each result for (a), (b), (c).

Note: Disadvantage is measured by the ABS's Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) index, which looks at relative advantage and disadvantage according to geographic location, based on the most recent Census data. In this context, children are counted as disadvantaged if they reside in an area for which the SEIFA score is in the bottom quintile (i.e. bottom 20% of scores across Australia). This does not reflect the actual socio-economic status, vulnerability and disadvantage of individual children and their families. Depending on state contexts, other measures of vulnerability may provide a better representation of disadvantage. As such, the states and territories can provide supplementary data, which is assessed by the department and, if considered acceptable, is included in the performance results.

For example, due to its small population size and a mixture of socio-economic status within all suburbs, the ABS's SEIFA measure is not appropriate for measuring vulnerability and disadvantage in the ACT. Accordingly, the ACT provides supplementary data, which is allowed under the Preschool Reform Agreement.

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**Source:**

National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection, published by the ABS as Preschool Education, Australia 2024 ([www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/preschool-education/latest-release](http://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/preschool-education/latest-release)).

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**Contributing program:** 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support.

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**Key activity:**

- Support children to have access to quality early learning, particularly in the year before reaching school
- Provide national leadership and work with states on national policy reform.

### Performance measure PM070

Recurrent funding payments to approved authorities for government schools under the *Australian Education Act 2013* are made in a timely manner.

**Target:** 100%

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 100%

#### Analysis:

The target of 100% of payments made in a timely manner was achieved for the 2024 calendar year.

Approved authorities for government schools received recurrent funding payments in the 2024 school year as planned, supporting government schools to deliver quality teaching and learning environments and supporting their ongoing financial viability.

In 2024, \$11.3 billion was paid to government schools. The department makes payments to the Australian Government Treasury who in turn pass the payments on to the treasury of the relevant state or territory for their government schools.

Approved authorities for schools are regulated under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act). The department seeks to continually improve its regulatory practice and is currently building a new payment IT system. The new IT system will improve the security and stability of the payment process and make it easier for approved authorities to meet their obligations under the Act, such as reporting enrolment data, financial acquittals and address collection. Information on the new IT system is available here: [www.education.gov.au/education-funding-system-project](http://www.education.gov.au/education-funding-system-project).

The department also provides reports (census data, payment advices/funding determinations) and funding estimation tools to approved authorities to be transparent about funding arrangements and help them check their entitlements and payments.

A report to parliament is tabled each year on all payments made to approved authorities. The 2023 report (most recent available) can be found here: [www.education.gov.au/other-commonwealth-funding-schools/reports-financial-assistance-schools](http://www.education.gov.au/other-commonwealth-funding-schools/reports-financial-assistance-schools).

Note: This performance measure has been removed for 2025–26 as it is administrative in nature. A new performance measure is being developed.

**Methodology:**

The date each payment was planned is compared with the date each payment was actually paid to the Australian Government Treasury. If the date paid to the Australian Government Treasury is in the same month as the planned date, the payment is considered to have been paid in a timely manner.

**Source:**

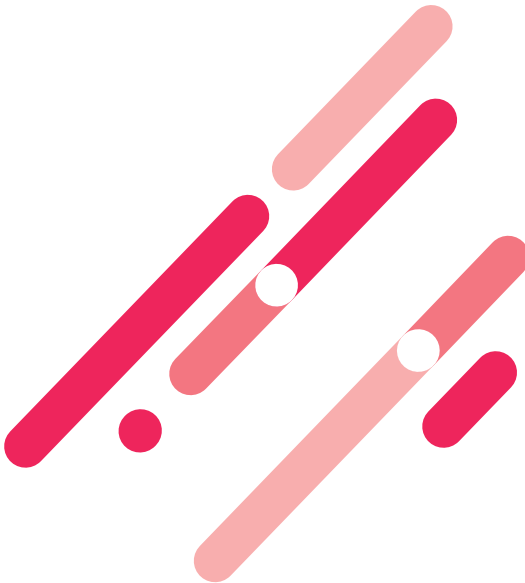
Departmental administrative data, School Education Management Information System (SEMIS) Planned Payments Report.

**Contributing program:** 1.3 – Government Schools National Support.

**Key activity:**

- Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to government schools.

**Regulatory principles:**



### Performance measure PM071

Recurrent funding payments to approved authorities for non-government schools under the *Australian Education Act 2013* are made in a timely manner.

**Target:** 100%

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 100%

#### Analysis:

The target of 100% of payments made in a timely manner was achieved for the 2024 calendar year.

Approved authorities for non-government schools received recurrent funding payments in the 2024 school year as planned, supporting non-government schools to deliver quality teaching and learning environments and supporting their ongoing financial viability.

In 2024, \$18.3 billion was paid to non-government schools. The department makes payments to the Australian Government Treasury who in turn pass the payments on to the treasury in the relevant state or territory and they pass the funds on to the approved authorities for non-government schools.

Approved authorities for schools are regulated under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act). The department seeks to continually improve its regulatory practice and is currently building a new payment IT system. The new IT system will improve the security and stability of the payment process and make it easier for approved authorities to meet their obligations under the Act, such as reporting enrolment data, financial acquittals and address collection. Information on the new IT system is available here: [www.education.gov.au/education-funding-system-project](https://www.education.gov.au/education-funding-system-project).

The department also provides reports (census data, payment advices/funding determinations) and funding estimation tools to approved authorities to be transparent about funding arrangements and help them check their entitlements and payments.

A report to parliament is tabled each year on all payments made to approved authorities. The 2023 report (most recent available) can be found here: [www.education.gov.au/other-commonwealth-funding-schools/reports-financial-assistance-schools](https://www.education.gov.au/other-commonwealth-funding-schools/reports-financial-assistance-schools).

Note: This performance measure has been removed for 2025–26 as it is administrative in nature. A new performance measure is being developed.



### Methodology:

The date each payment was planned is compared with the date each payment was actually paid to the Australian Government Treasury. If the date paid to the Australian Government Treasury is in the same month as the planned date, the payment is considered to have been paid in a timely manner.

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### Source:

Departmental administrative data, School Education Management Information System (SEMIS) Planned Payments Report.

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**Contributing program:** 1.4 – Non-Government Schools National Support.

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### Key activity:

- Provide consistent, transparent and needs-based funding to non-government schools.
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### Regulatory principles:



## Performance measure PM072

Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12 certification, or equivalent, or gaining a qualification at Certificate III or above.

### Target:

- a) 96% of all people in Australia by 2031
- b) 96% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2031

### Result rating:

- a) Not on track
- b) Not on track

### Result value:

- a) 90% in 2024
- b) 68.1% in 2021, updated data available every 5 years

### Analysis:

This performance measure has 2 targets. Target (a) covers the full cohort of people aged 20–24 with data for this target available every year through the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Education and Work. Target (b) covers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 to 24 with data for this target only available every 5 years through the ABS Census of Population and Housing.

For Target (a), in 2024, 90% of young people aged 20–24 in Australia attained a qualification at Year 12 certification or equivalent or at Certificate III or higher. These rates have remained steady over the past 5 years and are not on track to meet the 96% target by 2031. A graphical illustration of the attainment trend of young people is available at [www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/student-attainment](http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/student-attainment).

For Target (b), the most recent result is from the 2021 ABS Census of Population and Housing, which showed that over two-thirds (68.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 20–24 completed a qualification at Year 12 certification or equivalent or Certificate III or higher. This is a substantial improvement since the 2016 baseline result (63.2%); however, it is not on track to meet the target of 96% by 2031. More information on attainment trend of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth is available at [www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap/data/dashboard/se/outcome-area5](http://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap/data/dashboard/se/outcome-area5).

Data for Target (b) is not available in between Census results with the next Census due in 2026. The annually published attainment rate of the general population does not disaggregate the data and report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. The attainment rate for all young people has remained quite steady since 2018, whereas the attainment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth improved by 4.9 percentage points between 2016 and 2021. This upward trend in the attainment rate suggests continued improvement in the academic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

There are clear benefits in completing Year 12 or its equivalent qualification. Improved social and economic outcomes for young people are reflected in the broader outcomes the Australian Government is working towards to improve students' educational outcomes and post-school transitions. More information on the opportunities available for life after school can be found on the website: [www.yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support](http://www.yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support).

Recognising that schools play an essential role in supporting students to complete both in-school senior secondary qualification and non-school VET qualifications, education ministers have committed to work together to achieve the attainment targets for all young people aged 20–24 and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth through the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025–2034 (BFSA)* and the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025–2034* (Full and Fair Funding Agreement). These Agreements align with the objectives of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* and were developed in partnership with First Nations representatives and peak bodies, including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation (NATSIEC) and the Coalition of Peaks.

In the 2024–25 Budget, the Australian Government committed to the development of a new First Nations Education Policy in partnership with key First Nations education stakeholders. Development of the policy is funded to 2026–27. The policy will aim to accelerate progress towards achieving the Closing the Gap Targets and complement the BFSA and Full and Fair Funding Agreement as well as state and territory First Nations education strategies.

The Australian Government invests in First Nations education outcomes in a range of ways which collectively contribute to supporting attainment (including target (b)). This includes recurrent needs-based schools funding, partnering with the NATSIEC, and targeted measures such as the City-Country Partnerships Program, Aurora Education Foundation's Redefining Indigenous Success in Education (RISE) and GO Foundation scholarships.

The *Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan* (available at [www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/commonwealth-closing-gap-2024-annual-report-and-2025-implementation-plan](http://www.niaa.gov.au/resource-centre/commonwealth-closing-gap-2024-annual-report-and-2025-implementation-plan)) assesses the Commonwealth's delivery against actions outlined in the 2024 Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, with the next progress report scheduled to be published in February 2026. The report includes progress of activities undertaken in 2024 including the On-Country Learning measure through which every operating school in Central Australia received additional government funding in 2024 with their place-based activities guided by School Action Plans.

These plans were underpinned by more than 150 consultation sessions held with communities to discuss their vision, aspirations and activities to be funded, and schools have implemented a range of activities, including supporting additional employment, community and student engagement, teacher professional development, flexible learning and wellbeing supports, and improved literacy and numeracy initiatives.

In recognition of the interdependence between student wellbeing and academic achievement, the Australian Government also funds a range of initiatives to support student and school community wellbeing, including the National Student Wellbeing Program (NSWP). More information can be found on the department's website ([www.education.gov.au/national-student-wellbeing-program-nswp](http://www.education.gov.au/national-student-wellbeing-program-nswp)).

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### Methodology:

- a) Number of people aged 20–24 who have attained a school qualification of Year 12 certification, or equivalent, or attained a non-school qualification at Certificate level III or above, divided by the total number of people aged 20–24 years.
- b) Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 who have attained a school qualification of Year 12 certification, or equivalent, or attained a non-school qualification at Certificate level III or above, divided by the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years.

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### Source:

- a) Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Education and Work (SEW). Please note that this is a sample survey.
- b) Productivity Commission, Closing the Gap Information Repository, Dashboard, with underlying data from ABS Census of Population and Housing.

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**Contributing program:** 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support.

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### Key activity:

- Provide support for a range of curriculum, assessment, teaching and wellbeing programs
- Provide national leadership and work with states on national policy reform.

### Performance measure PM073

The Australian Government will work to deliver the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (the Agreement) with states and territories, focusing on driving real improvements in learning and wellbeing outcomes for students, with a focus on students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Agreement will be operational from January 2025.

**Target:** The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement will be developed throughout the 2024 calendar year in consultation with states and territories, so that the Agreement is operational by January 2025

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** n/a

#### Analysis:

The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (2025–2034) (BFSA) became operational on 1 January 2025, as per clause 23 of the Agreement. The Northern Territory Government was the first jurisdiction to sign the Heads of Agreement on 31 July 2024<sup>2</sup>. In 2024, the Western Australian, Tasmanian, and the Australian Capital Territory governments also signed the Heads of Agreement for the BFSA and individual bilateral agreements<sup>3</sup>.

The BFSA, and a subsequent Heads of Agreement<sup>4</sup>, were informed by The Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System ([www.education.gov.au/review-inform-better-and-fairer-education-system](http://www.education.gov.au/review-inform-better-and-fairer-education-system)).

The priority for the Australian Government has been to secure a funding agreement to put all government schools on a pathway to full and fair funding. The BFSA will ensure all government schools in jurisdictions party to the agreement are on a pathway to 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) by 2034<sup>5</sup>. Students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds are one of the priority equity cohorts under the Agreement.

2 Heads of Agreement outline the key terms and conditions that apply at a national level, with jurisdiction specific details outlined in related bilateral agreements. Not all jurisdictions are required to be party to the Heads of Agreement for it to be operational.

3 In January 2025, the Australian Government provided a revised offer, the *Better and Fairer Schools Agreement – Full and Fair Funding 2025–2034* (Full and Fair Funding). The revised offer was presented to all jurisdictions.

4 The Full and Fair Funding Agreement and the BFSA share the same objectives and outcomes and focus on the 3 priority areas agreed by education ministers in December 2023. Both Heads of Agreement were informed by The Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System.

5 The SRS is an estimate of how much total public funding a school needs to meet its students' educational needs. For further detail: [www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/schooling-resource-standard](http://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/schooling-resource-standard).

We shaped agreements through negotiations with multiple stakeholders, including jurisdiction and peak body representatives. This involved First Nations representatives and peak bodies, such as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation and the Coalition of Peaks and the peak bodies of the National Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Australia. Additionally, the department supported the Minister for Education in meetings with education ministers from each state and territory.

Further information:

- [www.ministers.education.gov.au/clare/better-and-fairer-schools-agreement](http://www.ministers.education.gov.au/clare/better-and-fairer-schools-agreement)
- [www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/national-school-reform-agreement/better-and-fairer-schools-agreement-20252034](http://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/national-school-reform-agreement/better-and-fairer-schools-agreement-20252034).

2024–25 is the final reporting period for this performance measure as the BFSA is operational. Payments to states and territories for school funding will be reported in the 2025–26 Budget papers through a National Agreement. Outcomes will be monitored and reported through a set of national Improvement Measures, and implementing the National Reform Directions and the agreed National Enabling Initiatives.

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### Methodology:

Reporting against this measure will be based on the creation of the Agreement that is operational by January 2025. To make payments to states and territories for Australian Government funding for schools, states and territories are required under the *Australian Education Act 2013* to be party to a national agreement relating to school education reform.

The Agreement will be the primary mechanism for enabling the Australian Government's schooling reform agenda. The reform agenda will be informed by negotiations with states and territories and the final report from the Expert Panel Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System.

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### Source:

The Agreement was published on the Federal Financial Relation website ([www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/agreements/better-and-fairer-schools-agreement](http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/agreements/better-and-fairer-schools-agreement)) and the Department of Education website ([www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/resources/heads-agreement](http://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/resources/heads-agreement)).

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**Contributing program:** 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support.

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### Key activity:

- Provide support for a range of curriculum, assessment, teaching and wellbeing programs
- Provide national leadership and work with states on national policy reform.

## Performance measure PM077

Percentage of Office for Youth program participants who felt they influenced a government policy or program.

**Target:** No target

**Result rating:** N/a – data for the 2024 calendar year is not available. Data from 2025 will establish a baseline in 2025–26

**Result value:** N/a – data for the 2024 calendar year is not available. Data from 2025 will establish a baseline in 2025–26

### Analysis:

The department's 2024–25 Corporate Plan stated the department's intention was to use data collected from 2024–25 to form a baseline for future reporting. To better align with the Office for Youth's annual monitoring and evaluation report, as well as the nature of its programs, the data reference period has been changed to reflect the calendar year. As a result, a baseline will instead be established in the 2025–26 reporting period based on data collected in 2025. The department's analysis covers youth engagement activities undertaken in 2024 and early insights from 2025.

In 2024 the Office for Youth, within the Department of Education, published *Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make*. The *Engage!* strategy includes the Australian Government's Youth Engagement Model which aims to coordinate across government and ensure young Australians are involved in developing policies that matter to them. Performance Measure 075 reported on the successful release of a new youth engagement strategy in the 2023–24 Annual Report ([www.youth.gov.au/office-youth/resources/engage-our-new-strategy-include-young-people-decisions-we-make](http://www.youth.gov.au/office-youth/resources/engage-our-new-strategy-include-young-people-decisions-we-make)).

During 2024, the Office for Youth established a National Youth Week which recognised young people's contributions to their communities in Australia and launched the Office for Youth website to support the Australian Government's Youth Engagement Model. The Office for Youth directly supports 3 activities for young people (12–25 years) to engage with government:

- National Youth Forum: where each year approximately 100 young people are hosted by the Office for Youth to meet, build skills and contribute to Australian Government decision-making. Attendees are made up of young people from the Youth Advisory Group program, the Youth Steering Committee and external youth representatives working with non-government organisations.
- Youth Advisory Groups: where usually 5 groups of approximately 40 young people of diverse backgrounds work with the Office for Youth and specific Australian Government departments or agencies to provide policy and program advice.

- Youth Steering Committee: where a group of 14 young people work with the Office for Youth to provide advice about the implementation of *Engage!*, and other Australian Government policies or programs.

This performance measure was introduced in 2024–25 and aligns with *Engage!* Priority 1 – We will recognise and listen to young people, Action 1.1. Collaborating with young people.

Following these activities, the Office for Youth will ask participants, using a survey, to assess if they felt they were able to influence a government program or policy. Responses from these surveys will provide the data to calculate the performance measure's result.

The National Youth Forum and Youth Advisory Groups were hosted by the Office for Youth in February 2025. These activities provide an early look at results from the 2025 calendar year:

- The National Youth Forum survey: 94 young people (12–25 years) participated in the 2025 National Youth Forum in February 2025 and were invited to respond to the post program evaluation survey. Of these, 35 participants responded, 54% of which felt they influenced a government policy or program.
- Youth Advisory Groups survey: of the 6 Youth Advisory Groups and 47 members, there were 28 outgoing members who finished their participation in the program in February 2025. These outgoing members were invited to respond to the post program evaluation survey. Of these, 10 participants responded, 70% of which felt they influenced a government policy or program.

The Office for Youth plans to publish its first annual monitoring and evaluation report for the Youth Engagement Model by late 2025 on the Digital Youth Hub ([www.youth.gov.au](http://www.youth.gov.au)). This report will assess progress of the *Engage!* strategy to empower people to contribute to government decision-making. The report will be a broad assessment of progress, which covers the 2025 calendar year Office for Youth activities and priorities, including those that align with this performance measures. The Office for Youth will report on its 2025 performance result in the 2025–26 performance statements, informed by the first annual monitoring and evaluation report.

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### Methodology:

Office for Youth program participants will be asked if they feel they were able to influence a government policy or program in the relevant post program evaluation survey. This will be recorded as a proportion of the total Office for Youth program participants responses.

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**Source:** Office for Youth, Department of Education Survey Data.

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**Contributing program:** 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support.

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### Key activity:

- Improve Australian Government engagement with young people on issues, programs and policies that impact them.



## Performance measure PM078

Percentage of Australian Government departments and agencies that worked with the Office for Youth and felt supported to engage with young people.

**Target:** No target

**Result rating:** N/a – data for the 2024 calendar year is not available. Data from 2025 will establish a baseline in 2025–26

**Result value:** N/a – data for the 2024 calendar year is not available. Data from 2025 will establish a baseline in 2025–26

### Analysis:

The department's 2024–25 Corporate Plan stated the department's intention was to use data collected from 2024–25 to form a baseline for future reporting. To better align with the Office for Youth's annual monitoring and evaluation report, as well as the nature of its programs, the data reference period has been changed to reflect the calendar year. As a result, a baseline will instead be established in the 2025–26 reporting period based on data collected in 2025. The department's analysis covers youth engagement activities undertaken in 2024 and early insights from 2025.

In 2024 the Office for Youth, within the Department of Education, published *Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make*. The *Engage!* strategy includes the Australian Government's Youth Engagement Model which aims to coordinate across government and ensure young Australians are involved in developing policies that matter to them. Performance Measure 075 reported on the successful release of a new youth engagement strategy in the 2023–24 Annual Report. ([www.youth.gov.au/office-youth/resources/engage-our-new-strategy-include-young-people-decisions-we-make](http://www.youth.gov.au/office-youth/resources/engage-our-new-strategy-include-young-people-decisions-we-make)).

During 2024, the Office for Youth established a National Youth Week which recognised young people's contributions to their communities in Australia and launched the Office for Youth website to support the Australian Government's Youth Engagement Model. The Office for Youth directly supports 3 activities for young people (12–25 years) to engage with government:

- National Youth Forum: where each year approximately 100 young people are hosted by the Office for Youth to meet, build skills and contribute to Australian Government decision-making. Attendees are made up of young people from the Youth Advisory Group program, the Youth Steering Committee and external youth representatives working with non-government organisations.

- Youth Advisory Groups: where usually 5 groups of approximately 40 young people of diverse backgrounds work with the Office for Youth and specific Australian Government departments or agencies to provide policy and program advice.
- Youth Steering Committee: where a group of 14 young people work with the Office for Youth to provide advice about the implementation of *Engage!*, and other Australian Government policies or programs.

This performance measure was introduced in 2024–25 and aligns with *Engage!* Priority 3 – We will support government to work with young people; Action 3.2. Building government capacity.

Following these activities, the Office for Youth will ask individual Australian Public Service employees who worked with the Office for Youth, using a survey, to assess if they felt they were supported to meaningfully engage with young people (12–25 years). Responses from these surveys will provide the data to calculate the performance measure's result.

The National Youth Forum and Youth Advisory Groups were hosted by the Office for Youth in February 2025. These activities provide an early look at results from the 2025 calendar year:

- The National Youth Forum survey: 3 Australian Government departments/agencies participated in the 2025 National Youth Forum. All Australian Public Service departments/agencies involved in the National Youth Forum were invited to respond to the post-program evaluation survey. The Office for Youth received 4 responses across the 3 agencies and all of those who completed the survey (100%) felt supported by the Office for Youth to engage with young people.
- Youth Advisory Groups survey: there were 4 Australian Government departments/agencies who finished their involvement with a Youth Advisory group in February 2025 (across 3 groups – one Youth Advisory Group worked with 2 agencies).
- All Australian Public Service agencies that were involved with Youth Advisory Groups were invited to respond to the post-program evaluation survey.
- The Office for Youth received 5 responses across the 4 agencies and 60% of those who completed the survey felt supported by the Office for Youth to engage with young people.

The Office for Youth plans to publish its first annual monitoring and evaluation report for the Youth Engagement Model by late 2025 on the Digital Youth Hub ([www.youth.gov.au](http://www.youth.gov.au)). This report will assess progress of the *Engage!* strategy to empower people to contribute to government decision-making. The report will be a broad assessment of progress, which covers the 2025 calendar year Office for Youth activities and priorities, including those that align with this performance measures. The Office for Youth will report on its 2025 performance result in the 2025–26 performance statements, informed by the first annual monitoring and evaluation report.

**Methodology:**

Australian Public Service employees from the Australian Government departments/agencies that work with the Office for Youth will be asked if they feel they were supported to engage with young people in the relevant post-program evaluation survey. This will be recorded as a proportion of the total Australian Government departments/agencies representatives' responses.

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**Source:** Department of Education, Office for Youth Survey Data.

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**Contributing program:** 1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support.

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**Key activity:**

- Improve Australian Government engagement with young people on issues, programs and policies that impact them.

# Outcome 2 performance measures

## Changes to our Outcome 2 performance measures

Amendments to the department's performance measures published in the 2024–25 Corporate Plan are summarised below (changes in bold).

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Performance measure PM016</b>  | Proportion of domestic undergraduate students who rate the teaching quality at their institution positively   |
| The measure's methodology is unchanged, its wording has been updated for clarity. |   |
| Published methodology   | <p>Methodology: Number of 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 students with a valid response to the 'Teaching Quality Scale' of the Student Experience Survey.</p> <p>Scope: Domestic undergraduate-level commencing and later-year students at higher education institutions as listed under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i>.</p>  |
| Amended methodology   | <p>Methodology: Number of <b>domestic undergraduate</b> 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 <b>domestic undergraduate</b> students with a valid 'Teaching Quality Scale' <b>score in</b> the Student Experience Survey.</p> <p>Scope: Domestic undergraduate-level commencing and later-year students at higher education institutions as listed under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i>.</p> |

**Performance  
measure PM019**

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

The methodology wording was updated for clarity and to more closely align with the methodology published in the 2023–24 Annual Report and 2025–26 Corporate Plan. No material changes were made to the methodology.

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Published methodology | Number of Australian research publications in the world's top 10% most highly cited journals over the total number of publications in the world's top 10% most cited journals, compared to the average share of OECD countries. |
|-----------------------|---|

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

**Performance  
measure PM020**

Proportion of domestic research postgraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree

The performance measure title and methodology wording has been clarified to reflect that this measure relates to domestic research postgraduates.

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Published performance measure | Proportion of research postgraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree. |
|-------------------------------|--|

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Amended performance measure | Proportion of <b>domestic</b> research postgraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree. |
|-----------------------------|--|

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Published methodology | Number of research postgraduates employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree over the total number available for work in those 4 to 6 months. |
|-----------------------|--|

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Amended methodology | Number of <b>domestic</b> research postgraduates employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree over the total number of <b>domestic research postgraduates</b> available for work in those 4 to 6 months. |
|---------------------|--|

## Performance measure PM026

### Proportion of international students employed after graduation

The previous measure included international students who were employed after graduation as well as those students who enrolled in further study. This change reflects a focus on building a more nuanced understanding of the pathways international students take after graduation.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Published<br/>performance measure</b> | Proportion of international students employed or enrolled in further study after graduation.   |
| <b>Amended<br/>performance measure</b>   | Proportion of international students employed after graduation.  |
| <b>Published<br/>methodology</b>         | Number of international graduates employed 4 to 6 months after completing a degree over the total number of international graduates available to work, excluding those international graduates who enrol in further study. |
| <b>Amended<br/>methodology</b>           | Number of international higher education graduates employed 4 to 6 months after completing a degree over the total number of international higher education graduates available to work in those 4 to 6 months.            |

**Performance  
measure PM027**

**Number of students enrolled in offshore education and training  
delivered by Australian providers**

The methodology for calculating the PM027 results has been amended. The new methodology measures the number of students enrolled in offshore education and training courses delivered by Australian providers, with these students identified as those who have reported a citizen residence status of 'other overseas student who resides outside of Australia'. This amended methodology utilises data that more accurately reflects Australia's offshore education and training landscape.

**Published  
methodology**

Number of students enrolled in offshore education and training courses delivered by Australian providers compared to the previous year.

Note: These students are identified as those who have reported a term of residence outside Australia, collected through the department's Tertiary Collection of Student Information system. Providers are defined under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

**Amended  
methodology**

Number of students enrolled in offshore education and training courses delivered by Australian providers compared to the previous year.

Note: These students are identified as those who have reported a **citizen residence status of 'other overseas student who resides outside of Australia'**, collected through the department's Tertiary Collection of Student Information system. Providers are defined under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

**Performance  
measure PM076**

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

Minor changes have been made to the target and sources to provide further detail on the process by which the department will assess the accuracy and timeliness of Nuclear Powered Submarine Program allocations.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Published target      | 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 Higher Education Course Advance payments through the UniPay system, are made on time.                |
| Amended target        | <b>100% of</b> 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 Higher Education Course Advance payments through the UniPay system, are made on time. |
| Published data source | Assessment Tracker – NPS Places.   |
| Amended data source   | <b>2024–2025 Commonwealth Grant Scheme Funding Agreements, Published funding cluster rates, UniPay payment schedule, and Higher Education Courses Advance UniPay Determination.</b>  |



## Outcome 2 performance measure results

### Performance measure PM009

The proportion of the 25- to 34-year-old population with a tertiary qualification.

**Target:** Increase from previous year

**Result rating:** Not achieved

**Result value:** 77%

#### Analysis:

The proportion of the 25- to 34-year-old population with a tertiary qualification was 77% in 2024, the same as in 2023.

While the result value for 2024 is unchanged, there has been a trend towards higher educational attainment in Australia in response to the increased skill levels required in the economy.

Tertiary attainment is influenced by a range of factors, such as government programs that encourage participation in vocational and higher education as well as skilled migration programs which favour settlement by migrants with tertiary qualifications.

The department's Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) makes a direct contribution to the cost of educating Commonwealth-supported higher education students, supporting access and participation. This contributes to tertiary attainment.

Noting tertiary attainment includes higher education and other non-school qualifications, in 2024, 61.3% of 25- to 34-year-olds with a non-school qualification had attained a Bachelor Degree level or higher qualification compared with 58.7% in 2023.

This equates to 47.2% of all 25- to 34-year-olds holding a Bachelor degree or higher qualification in 2024, higher than the 45% reported in 2023. ([www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia/may-2024](http://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia/may-2024)).

### Methodology:

The number of Australian residents aged 25- to 34-years old with a tertiary (non-school) qualification over the total number of 25- to 34-year-old residents in Australia is compared to the previous year.

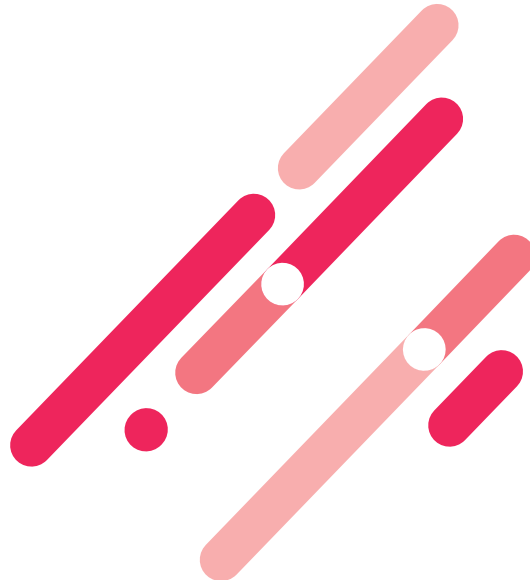
### Source:

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Work Australia, Table 24, 2024 ([www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia](http://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/education-and-work-australia)).

**Contributing program:** 2.1 – Commonwealth Grant Scheme.

### Key activity:

- Enhance the quality of the higher education system
- Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment.



## Performance measure PM010

The rate of attrition for domestic bachelor students.

**Target:** Lower than 15%

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 12.2%

### Analysis:

The attrition rate of domestic students who commenced a bachelor degree in 2023 was 12.2% (based on 2024 preliminary data), lower than the 14.7% attrition rate for domestic students who commenced in 2022 (based on 2023 finalised data).

The department's Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) aids students to undertake and complete higher education degrees by making a direct contribution to the cost of the study. This contribution also supports higher education providers, who are required to meet eligibility criteria to receive CGS funding, to deliver high-quality teaching and support to students that facilitates positive experiences and graduate outcomes.

A low attrition rate is an indicator that bachelor degree students are receiving quality higher education that meets their expectations and that students are supported to continue their studies. Student attrition can also be influenced by other factors, including student characteristics and economic conditions.

Since 2013 attrition rates of domestic commencing bachelor students have been reasonably steady, with only small changes between 14.3% and 15.0% year on year over the period. Notable exceptions were the lower attrition rates for students commencing in 2019 and 2020 due to weak labour market conditions associated with the COVID pandemic.

The 12.2% attrition rate for 2023 domestic commencing bachelor students is the lowest since 2013. This may have been driven by a range of factors, including:

- changes in the profile of the 2023 commencing student cohort towards those less likely to discontinue study
- changes to the student profile may have been influenced by other government programs, such as Fee-Free TAFE, potentially incentivising prospective 2023 students to pursue vocational education and training pathways as an alternative to higher education
- the relative easing of cost-of-living pressures and labour market conditions which may have influenced students' decision to pursue or continue higher education.

Note: Preliminary 2024 data are not expected to differ materially from final 2024 data. However, it should be noted that the preliminary data are impacted by data quality issues due to a cyber incident at one university. The potential impact of data quality issues on this performance measure has been assessed based on historical reporting and are not expected to exceed a variance of 0.04 percentage points.

The final result for 2024 will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2024–25 Annual Report tabled in parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

The 2023 result on the Department of Education website aligns with the 2023–24 Department of Education Annual Report result, which used preliminary data.

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### Methodology:

Number of commencing domestic students in year (x) who neither complete in year (x) or year (x+1) nor return to study in year (x+1), over the total number of commencing domestic students enrolled in year (x).

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### Source:

Department of Education, Higher Education Statistics Collection, Table 15.1.

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**Contributing program:** 2.1 – Commonwealth Grant Scheme.

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### Key activity:

- Enhance the quality of the higher education system
- Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment.

## Performance measure PM011

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

**Target:** 85% or higher

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 86.9% (result based on 2024 pre-release data)

### Analysis:

The proportion of domestic undergraduates who were employed 4 to 6 months after completing their degree decreased from 88.9% in 2023 to 86.9% in 2024 (based on 2024 pre-release data).

Graduate employment outcomes are related to the economic and labour market conditions that existed at the time of the survey. The tight labour market conditions experienced in 2022 and 2023 in Australia continued to ease in 2024 but remained generally elevated.

As the proportion of jobs requiring tertiary qualification grows, programs that support student access and participation in higher education, can support their transition to employment. The department's Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) makes a direct contribution to the cost of educating Commonwealth supported higher education students. The CGS delivery strategies aim to enhance the quality of the higher education system and contribute to a high skilled workforce and educated community.

### Methodology:

Number of domestic undergraduates employed within 4 to 6 months of completing a degree over the total number of domestic undergraduates available for work in those 4 to 6 months.

Note: 'Employed' is informed by the ABS Labour Force Survey concepts and definitions in measuring graduate employment outcomes. Accordingly, this considers graduates 'employed' if they work at least one hour in the survey reference week (in any profession or occupation, which may or may not align to an undergraduate's field of study). Information about the survey methodology, data representativeness and response rate is available in the Graduate Outcomes Survey National Report ([link below](#)).

### Source:

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), Graduate Outcomes Survey, ([www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/graduate-outcomes-survey-\(gos\)](http://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/graduate-outcomes-survey-(gos))).

Note: Pre-released data had passed the department's quality assurance processes and were not available (i.e. published) via the QILT website at the time of result preparation.

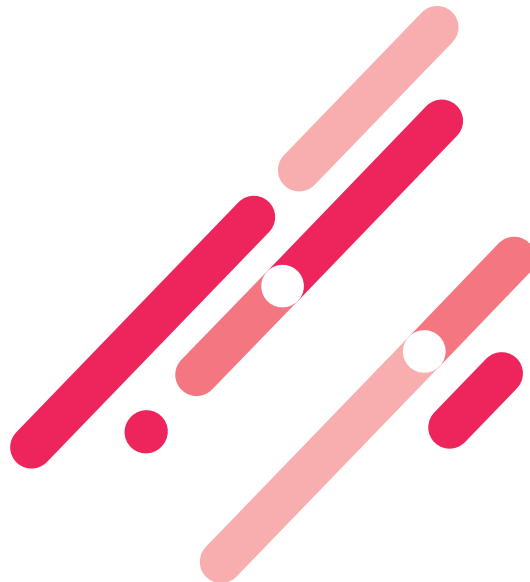
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**Contributing program:** 2.1 – Commonwealth Grant Scheme.

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### Key activity:

- Enhance the quality of the higher education system
- Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment.



## Performance measure PM012

Proportion of eligible universities able to meet specified superannuation expenses.

**Target:** 100%

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 100%

### Analysis:

The department's Higher Education Superannuation Program is demand-driven. The department provides funding to eligible universities in line with reported reconciled amounts, giving the department assurance the target is measured accurately.

Eligibility is outlined in the Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022. Section 55 lists the 27 universities that can be eligible ([www.legislation.gov.au/F2022L00347/latest/text](http://www.legislation.gov.au/F2022L00347/latest/text)).

The department provided funding directly to universities, based on information reported from eligible universities with superannuation expenses from eligible funds. Universities then discharge their superannuation obligations with the relevant superannuation fund. Since 2013–14 when reporting on this measure began, this funding has continued to allow 100% of eligible universities to meet their specified superannuation expenses from 2014 to 2025.

For more information visit the department's website ([www.education.gov.au/higher-education-funding/higher-education-superannuation-program](http://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-funding/higher-education-superannuation-program)).

Payments are made using determinations based on calendar years. Therefore, payments are spread across determinations for 2024 and 2025 calendar years.

### 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.

### Source:

- Department of Education program documentation.
- Annual program claim forms or cashflow funding documents from NSW State Super.

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**Contributing program:** 2.2 – Higher Education Superannuation Program.

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### Key activity:

- Support eligible current and former university employees for certain superannuation expenses.
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### Regulatory principles:





## Performance measure PM014

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

**Target:** 16% or higher

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**Result rating:** Achieved

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**Result value:** 16.6%

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### Analysis:

Preliminary data for 2024 shows that the proportion of domestic undergraduates who were from a low socio-economic background (based on Statistical Area level 1) increased slightly to 16.6% (from 16.0% in 2023).

The decision to undertake university study is influenced by general economic and labour market conditions. Australia's current high cost of living and low unemployment rates may be contributing factors driving those from a low-SES background to seek employment over study. Key funding reforms will support an increased focus on the benefits of higher education, both in terms of increased employment and earning potential and benefits to the national economy by meeting future skills needs. Equity of participation in higher education was highlighted in the Australian Universities Accord (the Accord) and is a key focus of government. Ensuring more people from underrepresented backgrounds access, participate in and complete higher education will be critical to meeting the Australian Government's target of 80% of the working age population (aged 15 to 64) attaining a tertiary qualification by 2050.

To support this focus, the department has a range of programs targeted at reducing barriers to higher education, including the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP), the Commonwealth Grant Scheme and FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses. More information regarding these initiatives is available at [www.education.gov.au/higher-education-funding](http://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-funding). Currently, the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) provides dedicated funding to universities to support people from underrepresented cohorts to access, participate in and complete their studies. The HEPPP funds activities such as outreach and aspiration building, academic and wellbeing support and financial assistance programs.

At the 2024–25 MYEFO, the government announced key reforms to be delivered by the department in 2026 which will see significant investment in equity support to drive greater participation from underrepresented cohorts, replacing the current HEPPP. These reforms include:

- **Managed Growth Funding** – expected to deliver an additional 82,000 fully-funded Commonwealth supported university places compared to current settings in 2035. This will ensure there are sufficient Commonwealth supported places for students from underrepresented backgrounds to go to university.
- **Demand-driven Needs-based Funding** – will provide increased funding to ensure students from low-SES backgrounds, First Nations students, and students studying at regional campuses are supported to participate and succeed in their studies.
- **Dedicated Outreach Funding** – will provide targeted funding to support outreach and aspiration building activities which will help increase the number of underrepresented people accessing tertiary education.

Key reforms will be supported by the establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC), an independent steward for the higher education system with a focus on making sure universities do their part to deliver on the Government’s commitment to lift tertiary attainment and raising equity participation and attainment. These reforms demonstrate the department’s commitment to using data and evidence to support continuous improvement of our programs and policies, and will build public trust in the way our public institutions are funded to support underrepresented students.

These reforms are supported by further investments in broader equity initiatives, including expansion of University Study Hubs, increased eligibility for the Tertiary Access Payment, quadrupling the Disability Support Fund. This suite of measures are expected to continue driving growth in representation of underrepresented cohorts in higher education, including those from low-SES backgrounds.

Note: Preliminary 2024 data are not expected to differ materially from final 2024 data. However, it should be noted that the preliminary data are impacted by data quality issues due to a cyber incident at one university. The potential impact of data quality issues on this performance measure has been assessed based on historical reporting and are not expected to exceed a variance of 0.08 percentage points.

The final result for 2024 will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2024–25 Annual Report tabled in parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

The 2023 result on the Department of Education website aligns with the 2023–24 Department of Education Annual Report result, which used preliminary data.

### Methodology:

Number of domestic undergraduate enrolments with a permanent home residence in a low socio-economic 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*.

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### Source:

Department of Education, Higher Education Statistics Collection, Table 11.2.

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**Contributing program:** 2.3 – Higher Education Support.

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### Key activity:

- Enhance the quality of the higher education system
  - Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment.
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### Regulatory principles:



## Performance measure PM015

Proportion of higher education students who are First Nations.

**Target:** 2% or higher

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 2.3%

### Analysis:

Preliminary data for 2024 indicate that the proportion of domestic undergraduate students who are First Nations increased to 2.3%, an increase of 0.1% from 2.2% in 2023 (based on final data).

This continues the gradual increase in participation of First Nations students in higher education. For example, in 2018, 1.8% of domestic higher education students were First Nations students.

The government has provided extra funding to support First Nations people undertaking higher education through a number of programs including extending demand driven funding to all First Nations undergraduate students (bachelor and honours-level courses – excluding courses of study in medicine) from 1 January 2024 to all Table A universities.

### University study hubs

The department's Regional and Suburban University Study Hubs Program improves access to tertiary education for students in regional, remote areas and outer metropolitan areas with low tertiary education participation, including First Nations people.

There are 56 Regional University Study Hubs across Australia (except ACT), and 47 of these are open and supporting students, while the remaining 9 regional hubs are expected to be operational later in 2025.

In 2024–25, 15 Suburban University Study Hubs were announced for 17 outer suburban locations across Australia's major cities. Of these, 6 are open and supporting students, with the remaining hubs expected to open by the end of 2025. Suburban University Study Hubs aim to reduce barriers for under-represented students, including First Nations students, by bringing more tertiary education opportunities to outer metropolitan areas.

As at November 2024 (latest program data), Regional University Study Hubs were supporting 5,270 students (based on students registered with the hubs to access facilities and support at that time), of whom 12% identified as First Nations. As the Suburban University Study Hubs are a new program in 2024–25, the data collection is yet to commence.

Three of the regional study hubs focus on supporting First Nations students on country in Arnhem Land. These include the Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation, the Wuyagiba Study Hubs and the Garrthalala Bush University Study Hub.

A further 4 regional study hubs have First Nations Support Officer positions to provide dedicated support for First Nations students, including CUC Cape York (Cooktown), CUC Balonne (St George and Dirranbandi), Geraldton University Centre, and Cassowary Coast University Centre (Innisfail).

### **Other initiatives**

Targeted higher education programs contribute to improving outcomes for First Nations students. This includes the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), which funds Table A universities to support First Nations students to access, participate in and complete their studies, including through the provision of cultural supports and adjustments.

The current HEPPP is set to cease at the end of 2025, with the government announcing a new Demand-Driven Needs-based Funding system from 1 January 2026, which will provide public universities additional core funding to ensure First Nations students, students from low-SES backgrounds and students studying at regional campuses are supported to participate and succeed in their studies.

Settings for Needs-based Funding will recognise the unique barriers faced by First Nations students, and ensure institutions have resources to deliver tailored and culturally appropriate supports.

More information on HEPPP and Needs Based Funding is available on the department's website ([www.education.gov.au/hePPP](http://www.education.gov.au/hePPP)).

### **Regional Partnership Project Pool Program (RPPPP)**

The RPPPP funds university and Regional University Study Hubs-led consortia to deliver collaborative outreach initiatives to enable the higher education aspirations of students in regional and remote areas.

The program is using a 2-phase process to co-design (Phase 1) and deliver (Phase 2) targeted outreach initiatives. This approach is to support initial engagement with communities who may be underserved by existing initiatives, and subsequent delivery of outreach projects.

In 2025, under Phase 2 (deliver), Flinders University will lead a collaborative initiative with a range of partners including Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and Indigenous Allied Health Australia, to increase awareness, aspiration and readiness for a higher education allied health pathway among First Nations youth in regional and remote areas.

In addition, the department is responsible for the Tertiary Access Payment (TAP) program policy. TAP is a one-off payment of up to \$5,000 to help students with the cost of moving from regional or remote areas for tertiary study.

For the MYEFO 2024–25, the Australian Government announced that from 1 January 2025, the TAP eligibility setting which required students to commence tertiary studies within 12 months of completing Year 12, would be removed. This change was made to enable more students to access this payment, following feedback from regional stakeholders and the Australian Universities

Accord Panel. Removing the access limit period will ensure more regional students, including regional First Nations students, can pursue a tertiary education and benefit from this cost-of-living support. All other criteria remain in place, including that students must be up to 22 years of age at the time of commencement of the course.

These reforms demonstrate the department's commitment to using data and evidence to support continues improvement of our programs and policies, and will build trust in the way our public institutions are funded to support First Nations students.

Note: Preliminary 2024 data are not expected to differ materially from final 2024 data. However, it should be noted that the preliminary data are impacted by data quality issues due to a cyber incident at one university. The potential impact of data quality issues on this performance measure has been assessed based on historical reporting and is not expected to exceed a variance of 0.01 percentage points.

The final result for 2024 will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2024–25 Annual Report tabled in parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

The 2023 result on the Department of Education website aligns with the 2023–24 Department of Education Annual Report result, which used preliminary data.

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### Methodology:

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

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### Source:

Department of Education, Higher Education Statistics Collection, Table 11.2.

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**Contributing program:** 2.3 – Higher Education Support.

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### Key activity:

- Enhance the quality of the higher education system
- Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment.

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### Regulatory principles:



**Performance measure PM016**

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

**Target:** 80% or higher

**Result rating:** Not achieved

**Result value:** 79.9% (result based on 2024 pre-release data)

**Analysis:**

The department regularly measures student satisfaction through a range of indicators found in the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Student Experience Survey.

In 2024, 79.9% of domestic undergraduate students rated the quality of teaching at their institution positively (based on 2024 pre-release data), a decrease from 80.4% in 2023.

The decrease has been driven by lower satisfaction ratings from domestic undergraduate students commencing in 2024, and in particular, commencing students in the 4 study areas of Engineering; Business and management; Teacher education; and Humanities, culture and social sciences.

Despite the slight decline in 2024, students' satisfaction with their teaching quality remains high, including for later-year students (completing or middle-year students), which remained stable between 2023 and 2024. Satisfaction rates are higher than 2020 levels, which were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but remain lower than pre-pandemic levels.

| Year               | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|
| Teaching quality % | 80.1 | 80.4 | 79.9 |

More information on student satisfaction is available in the 2024 SES National Report (to be released through the QILT website [www.qilt.edu.au](http://www.qilt.edu.au)).

The department continues to support teaching and learning through its ongoing management of the Commonwealth Grant Scheme, which subsidises eligible domestic students with the cost of their higher education study.

Maximising the proportion of domestic higher education students who are satisfied with the teaching quality at their institution is important to encourage more domestic students to access higher education and thereby promote growth in Australia's economic productivity.

The department works to optimise collaboration and engagement with higher education providers on matters relating to teaching and learning by maintaining open, transparent and consistent engagement. This includes the department's involvement in Mission Based Compacts

negotiations and seeking opportunities for genuine consultation where there are significant changes to policies or processes (for example, the Australian Universities Accord process).

The department also maintains transparency, including around providers' responsibilities, through publication of relevant information through various websites, including the department's and StudyAssist websites ([www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au) and [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au)). This in turn allows providers to better assist students where they need it, which facilitates increased student satisfaction. It can be argued that provision of effective support for students is an important component of high-quality teaching.

The sector is continuing to experience significant change with ongoing implementation of reforms arising from the Australian Universities Accord process. The introduction of Needs-based Funding from 2026 and transition to the Managed Growth Funding System are likely to positively impact student satisfaction with by ensuring more students can access, participate and succeed in higher education.

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### 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*.

Note: Information about the survey methodology, data representativeness and response rate is available in the Student Experience Survey National Report (link below).

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### Source:

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), Student Experience Survey, ([www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-\(ses\)](http://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-(ses))).

Note: Pre-released data had passed the department's quality assurance processes and were not available (i.e. published) via the QILT website at the time of result preparation.

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### Contributing program: 2.3 – Higher Education Support.

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### Key activity:

- Enhance the quality of the higher education system
- Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment.



## Performance measure PM017

Proportion of employers who are satisfied with the skills of graduates (overall across all skills).

**Target:** 85% or higher

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**Result rating:** Achieved

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**Result value:** 85.5% (result based on 2024 pre-release data)

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### Analysis:

Employers have high levels of overall satisfaction with graduates produced by the Australian higher education system, as reported through the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching Employer Satisfaction Survey (ESS).

In 2024, 85.5% of supervisors expressed overall satisfaction with their graduate employees (based on 2024 pre-release data). This was an increase from 83.7% in 2023.

Over the period 2016 to 2024, the proportion of employers satisfied has ranged between 83.6% and 85.5%. This stable nature of employers' views of recent graduates provides assurance of the quality of the Australian higher education system.

This aligns with the department's Higher Education Support Program, which aims to maintain or improve the quality of the higher education system. As the primary framework for funding universities and supporting student access, the program includes funding streams and policy levers that encourage universities to align courses with industry needs and produce graduates with employable skills.

More information on employers' view of recent graduates is available in the 2024 ESS National Report ([www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/employer-satisfaction-survey-\(ess\)](http://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/employer-satisfaction-survey-(ess))).

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### Methodology:

Number of supervisors of employed graduates satisfied with the skills of the graduate over the number of supervisors with valid survey responses.

Note: Information about the survey methodology, data representativeness and response rate is available in the ESS National Report (link below).

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**Source:**

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), Employer Satisfaction Survey, ([www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/employer-satisfaction-survey-\(ess\)](http://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/employer-satisfaction-survey-(ess))).

Note: Pre-released data had passed the department's quality assurance processes and were not available (i.e. published) via the QILT website at the time of result preparation.

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**Contributing program:** 2.3 – Higher Education Support.

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**Key activity:**

- Enhance the quality of the higher education system
- Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment.

## Performance measure PM018

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

**Target:** Equal to or lower than the previous year

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 11.94%

### Analysis:

The proportion of Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debt not expected to be repaid on new debt was 11.94% for 2024–25, lower than the 2023–24 result of 13.0%.

The reduction in debt not expected to be repaid (DNER) in 2024–25 has been partly driven by legislative changes to the indexation method for HELP loans, outlined in detail below. These changes have reduced the total amount of outstanding debt and hence have an impact on the quantum of HELP debt which is not expected to be repaid.

In 2025 the Australian Government Actuary has refined its actuarial HELP models to incorporate field of education into its projection methodology for graduate incomes; this enhancement in methodology has allowed for more precise modelling of long-term incomes at the FOE level.

This methodology change means that overall income projections for graduates will be more reflective of actual outcomes leading to better expected estimates of DNER. This model enhancement also contributed to the reduction in the proportion of DNER on new debts in 2025.

The department has responsibility for the HELP program, including setting policy parameters, legislation, managing relationships and payments to universities, and working with the Australian Taxation Office (who manages repayments of HELP loans).

The HELP program supports access to a greater number of students in higher education, while maintaining the sustainability of higher education funding.

The department supports the ongoing performance of the HELP system by providing policy advice to government, preparing legislation and implementing reforms to support the strategic objectives of government.

The HELP is an income contingent loan program whereby students repay their loans when their income exceeds the minimum repayment threshold for the year, in 2024–25 the minimum repayment threshold was \$54,435.

Income contingency is an important feature of the HELP system which has been in place since the commencement of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 1989 (the precursor to the HELP). Income contingency ensures that repayment of HELP loans does not cause financial detriment to HELP debtors.

The proportion of new debt not expected to repaid is projected each year by the Australian Government Actuary (AGA) use the latest available administrative data from the ATO and the Department of Education.

The income-contingency feature in the HELP means that there will always be an amount of HELP debt not repaid, primarily due to individuals who do not earn sufficient income to fully repay their HELP debt.

Therefore, each year wage growth will affect the amount of debt not repaid and the performance result. In 2024–25, improved wage growth in the Australian economy contributed to a reduction in DNER. However, the impact of recent indexation policy changes and modelling enhancements have had the greater impact.

Following the release of the Australian Universities Accord final report in 2024 ([www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/resources/final-report](http://www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/resources/final-report)), the government has made changes to the HELP system, addressing the Accord's recommendations by implementing legislation to:

- change the way that HELP debts are indexed to the lower of the consumer price index and the wage price index; and
- making the repayment system fairer by raising the minimum repayment threshold from 1 July 2025, lowering repayments and basing compulsory repayment on the income above the new repayment thresholds, rather than compulsory repayments being based on total annual repayment income.
- the government has also passed legislation to reduce all HELP and other student debts incurred on or before 1 June 2025 by 20%.

AGA has adjusted its HELP modelling to account for the lowering of the indexation rates that impacted HELP in 2024–25, following the implementation of the Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024.

The 20% reduction in HELP and the changes to the repayment system in the Universities Accord (cutting Student Debts by 20%) Bill 2025 were passed by the parliament on 31 July 2025 and will be reflected in the 2025–26 annual report. For more information refer to page 211.

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### Methodology:

The proportion of debt not expected to be repaid on new debt is modelled by the Australian Government Actuary using historical and projected repayment data in its longitudinal data on HELP debtors.

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**Source:** Australian Government Actuary 2025 HELP Receivable Advice.

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**Contributing program:** 2.4 – Higher Education Loan Program.

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### Key activity:

- Support students' access to higher education and transition to employment.

## Performance measure PM019

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

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 4.47%

### Analysis:

This measure reflects the influence Australian research has on the world and the quality of research being conducted and supported by **Program 2.5 Investment in Higher Education Research** and **Program 2.6 Research Capacity** which are administered by the department. Both programs enable the department's key activity to support the university research sector through research training, research funding and national research infrastructure and successfully underpin the delivery of world-class research and Australia's research performance. The department uses a single performance measure to assess performance for the activity and its research aligned programs.

In 2024 the average share of the world's top 10% most highly cited research publications among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries was 2.24%. Australia's share was above this average at 4.47%, which ranks Australia fourth behind the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. Australia's ranking has continued to remain relatively stable over the past 5 years.

While Australia's 2024 result for the proportion of research publications in Australia that are among the world's top 10% most highly cited journals has slightly declined from 4.68% in 2023, this is consistent with 2024 results across the top 10 OECD countries. Despite this, Australia's number of research publications in the top 10% most highly cited journals has trended upwards over the past 5 years.

Through **Program 2.5 Investment in Higher Education Research** and **Program 2.6 Research Capacity** the department has continued to provide foundational support for Australia to achieve world-class research outcomes by investing in research, research training, national research infrastructure and capacity of the research workforce. The department coordinates and leverages these investments by promoting university research collaboration with industry and research institutions to generate new knowledge.

### Research block grants

In 2024–25 the department provided funding to universities through the Research Support Program and the Research Training Program (sub-programs of Program 2.5) to support research and research training, with funding drivers incentivising universities to attract research and development income, including through partnerships for the conduct of world-leading research and innovation. Funding also supported the successful completion of postgraduate research degree students who subsequently enter and participate in the research workforce.

### National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS)

The department invests in research infrastructure through NCRIS, which is developed on a collaborative, national, and nonexclusive basis. Research infrastructure investment is in areas of national significance, which meets national priorities such as the National Reconstruction Fund, and Australia's National Science and Research priorities, and solves key challenges that have significant impact for Australia and around the world. NCRIS serves the research and innovation system broadly, not just the host institution, and in 2023–24 across the NCRIS Projects, as reported in their 2023–24 Annual Reports, there were 91,569 users of physical and digital infrastructure situated around the country.

Australian Government expenditure on NCRIS since its inception has allowed past investments to be leveraged to deliver ongoing economic and scientific benefit. In 2023–24 NCRIS Projects reported a total of cash and in-kind co-investments of \$392.4 million. For every dollar invested in NCRIS projects by the government, an additional \$0.98 has been co-invested.

NCRIS research infrastructure is geographically dispersed across Australia. This encompasses research infrastructure located in universities, publicly funded research agencies, in the field such as in rural and environmental observation sites, and in areas such as coastal and marine monitoring facilities. Key achievements for 2023–24 include:

- at a minimum in 2023, 4,743 Australian research publications that have attributed the use of National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy-funded NRI. (These figures are likely to be underestimated, as research infrastructure use is often not credited in research publications.)
- a significant number of jobs and roles funded as a result of NCRIS funding, with NCRIS projects directly employing 2,871 staff across the country, in administrative, technical, managerial and governance roles, with 72% being technical experts.

Examples of 2023–24 key achievements for NCRIS Projects have been published on the following websites:

- Australian National Fabrication Facility Casebook 2024 [anff.org.au/resources/](https://anff.org.au/resources/)
- Integrated Marine Observing System publication [imos.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/IMOS-Highlights-2024\\_WEB.pdf](https://imos.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/IMOS-Highlights-2024_WEB.pdf)
- Microscopy Australia publication [micro.org.au/documents/2024/](https://micro.org.au/documents/2024/).

## **Increase Workforce Mobility & Increase Workforce Mobility (Training Program) 'National Industry PhD Program' (NIPP)**

The NIPP comprises 2 distinctive streams:

- **Industry Linked PhDs:** for outstanding PhD candidates to undertake research projects co-designed by university and industry with opportunities to be embedded in an industry setting.
- **Industry Researcher PhDs:** for highly capable industry professionals, supported by their employers to undertake PhD projects in partnership with a university, while retaining industry employment and salary benefits.

Since NIPP's inception in 2023, the department has provided policy oversight, monitored program outcomes, contributed to evaluation and continuous improvement, and managed a service provider which is assisting with program delivery, to ensure NIPP aligns with national priorities in research, innovation, and workforce skills development. In 2024–25 the government invested \$6.7 million in the program, leveraging additional co-investments of a minimum of \$10,000 from each industry partner for each awarded Industry Linked Stream project.

The fifth funding round was held in the first half of 2025, and successful applications were announced in July 2025. Including this round the NIPP has funded 265 PhD projects and progress includes:

- Industry engagement: 246 industry partners participating in the program.
- University engagement: 35 universities participating in the program.
- Project alignment: 94% of PhD projects associated with NRF in total.

The NIPP has seen 246 university–industry partnerships, with 75 new partnerships created with projects aligning with National Reconstruction Fund Priorities. Successful projects include reducing methane gas emissions in dairy cows, use artificial intelligence in defence decision-making, supporting tools to maintain steady loads in power lines with battery storage, and exploring the durability of cement made with recycled fly ash.

## **Trailblazer Universities Program**

Through the Trailblazer Universities Program, the department increases the commercialisation of research in priority areas through strong engagement with industry investors and end-users as part of the Australian Government's Research Commercialisation Action Plan.

The program provides \$370.3 million over 4 years (2022–23 to 2025–26) which includes \$45 million allocated to CSIRO to enable access to specialist equipment and facilities for prototyping and testing technologies at scale. Six lead universities were selected in 2022 to receive an indexed grant of \$50 million each following a competitive application process. The universities were required to double the grant with matching contributions from universities and industry. Each lead university has established a Trailblazer business unit which coordinates activities across several universities to support an industry sector. Each Trailblazer has a website which details its activities.

Achievements reported during 2024–25 included:

- The program attracted a total of \$1.02 billion in cash and in-kind co-investments from industry and university partners directed towards research commercialisation and institutional reform projects, based on reporting to 31 December 2024. For every dollar invested by the government, an additional \$2.76 was co-invested, highlighting strong leverage and an effective use of public funding to boost university and industry investment in research commercialisation.
- Over 300 research commercialisation projects with industry partners are underway or about to commence, with examples including:
  - Guardware and the Defence Trailblazer are developing an encryption software suite that can protect sensitive information across the Defence supply chain.
  - Mining and Process Solutions and the Resources Technology for Critical Minerals Trailblazer are developing new technologies to extract and recover metals from ores, mine tailings and other materials.
  - DeCarice and the Trailblazer for Recycling and Clean Energy are developing a one-stop service that retrofits existing diesel engines to hydrogen-diesel hybrid engines for immediate CO<sub>2</sub> reduction.
  - The Trailblazer for Space is partnering with Optus to lead innovation in optical satellite communications technology to give Australians faster and more affordable access to data.

More than 350 academic researchers and students participated in industry placements and training programs to develop their skills and experience in areas of technology transfer, commercialisation and entrepreneurship.

### **Launch Australia's Economic Accelerator (AEA)**

The department administers grants through the AEA program to higher education providers to partner with industry and end-users of research for research translation and commercialisation activities that demonstrate proof-of-concept and proof-of-scale in government priority areas.

In the initial phase, the AEA Seed pilot was delivered in 3 tranches, awarding over \$26.5 million to university-led research commercialisation projects. Achievements include:

- 76 research commercialisation projects currently in progress
- 20 projects from Seed Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 have been successfully completed
- Completed projects have reported progressing their technology to a state of increased maturity increasing the likelihood of future industry or private capital investment (increased Technology Readiness Level (TRL)). For example:
  - The University of South Australia focused on developing a new style of olive using a patented and novel process to remove bitterness from olives quickly and effectively whilst maintaining high quality. During the project, the technology increased from TRL 4 to TRL 6 and attracted further investment from the industry partners for the 2025 harvest. The Australian Olive Association has endorsed the successful completion of the project.



- Monash University aimed to design and build solar-powered direct air capture (DAC) units capable of capturing CO<sub>2</sub>, supporting Australia's climate commitments. Project outputs have attracted interest from venture capital firms and end-users with an interest in integrating the technology with their existing processes. The research team have been awarded an AEA Ignite grant to advance further development.

The full AEA program was launched in 2024–25 and inaugural rounds have awarded \$59.6 million in Ignite (proof-of-concept) and \$93.1 million in Innovate (proof-of-scale) grants, commencing late 2024–25 and 2025–26. It is too early in the development process to report outcomes of these projects.

More information is available at [www.aea.gov.au/resources/aea-ignite-round-1-projects](http://www.aea.gov.au/resources/aea-ignite-round-1-projects), and [www.aea.gov.au/resources/aea-innovate-round-1-projects](http://www.aea.gov.au/resources/aea-innovate-round-1-projects).

### **Higher Education Research Promotion (HERP)**

Through the HERP, the department aims to increase the production, use and awareness of research knowledge and to improve collaboration between government, industry, and the research sector in the production of research knowledge. Funded organisations contribute to the performance measure by creating opportunities and a supportive framework to advance researcher output.

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#### **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.

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**Source:** SciVal.

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#### **Contributing program:**

2.5 – Investment in Higher Education Research

2.6 – Research Capacity.

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#### **Key activity:**

- Support the university research sector through research training, research funding and national research infrastructure.

### Performance measure PM020

Proportion of domestic research postgraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree.

**Target:** 90% or higher

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 90.5% (result based on 2024 pre-release data)

#### Analysis:

The proportion of domestic research postgraduates employed within 4 to 6 months of course completion was 90.5% in 2024 (based on 2024 pre-release data). While the target has been achieved, this is a slight decrease from the 2023 result of 91.4% which is not considered to be a significant fluctuation for research postgraduate employment outcomes.

Graduate employment outcomes are related to the economic and labour market conditions that existed at the time of the survey. The tight labour market conditions experienced in 2022 and 2023 in Australia continued to ease in 2024 but remained generally elevated.

The sustained high result despite labour market pressures indicates the positive impact undertaking a higher degree by research has on employment outcomes. The department supports strong employment outcomes for research postgraduates through providing research and research training funding to higher education providers to support the successful completion of postgraduate research degrees by their students.

The sustained high result indicates the positive influence postgraduate research qualifications have on employment outcomes, which extends to higher domestic postgraduate research median annual full-time salaries.

Further information on Program 2.5 programs, the Research Support Program and the Research Training Program can be found at [www.education.gov.au/research-block-grants](http://www.education.gov.au/research-block-grants).

#### Methodology:

Number of domestic research postgraduates employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree over the total number of domestic research postgraduates available for work in those 4 to 6 months.

Note: 'Employed' is informed by the ABS Labour Force Survey concepts and definitions in measuring graduate employment outcomes. Accordingly, this considers graduates 'employed' if they work at least one hour in the survey reference week (in any profession or occupation, which may or may not align to a graduate's field of study). Information about the survey methodology, data representativeness and response rate is available in the Graduate Outcomes Survey National Report (link below). Employment outcomes for research postgraduates is a useful indicator of the success of Program 2.5 programs.

**Source:**

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) ([qilt.edu.au/surveys/graduate-outcomes-survey-\(gos\)](http://qilt.edu.au/surveys/graduate-outcomes-survey-(gos))).

Note: Pre-released data had passed the department's quality assurance processes and were not available (i.e. published) via the QILT website at the time of result preparation.

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**Contributing program:** 2.5 – Investment in Higher Education Research.

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**Key activity:**

- Support the university research sector through research training, research funding and national research infrastructure.

## Performance measure PM021

### First Nations higher degree by research (HDR) completions.

**Target:** Increase from previous year

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 108

#### Analysis:

The number of First Nations HDR completions reported in 2024 is 108 (based on preliminary data), 20 completions more than the 88 First Nations HDR completions reported in 2023.

The number of annual First Nations HDR completions is small, which can lead to some fluctuation from year to year. However, the number of First Nations HDR completions is trending upwards over the longer term. In 2016, the 3-year average was 47 completions, and this has increased to 93 in 2024 (based on 2024 preliminary data).

The Department of Education's Research Training Program (RTP) provides approximately \$1.2 billion annually to eligible higher education providers to support their students undertaking research doctorate and research masters degrees, known as HDRs.

The RTP calculation includes a weighting that incentivises higher education providers to support First Nations students through to completion of their HDR. Further information on the RTP is available on the department's website ([www.education.gov.au/research-block-grants/research-training-program](http://www.education.gov.au/research-block-grants/research-training-program)).

The number of First Nations HDR completions can be impacted by various factors including students self-identifying as Indigenous, participation in secondary and tertiary studies, yearly HDR commencements and enrolments, the time taken to complete study and other individual circumstances. Furthermore, completions are dependent on many factors and are often correlated with the wider higher education and economic environment. For example, if more First Nations students study part-time, the number of completions may decrease in a reference period.

Note: Preliminary 2024 data are not expected to differ materially from final 2024 data. However, it should be noted that the preliminary data are impacted by data quality issues due to a cyber incident at one university. The potential impact of data quality issues on this performance measure has been assessed based on historical reporting and is not expected to exceed a variance of one completion.

The final result for 2024 will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2024–25 Annual Report tabled in parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](http://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

The 2023 result on the Department of Education website aligns with the 2023–24 Department of Education Annual Report result, which used preliminary data.

**Methodology:**

Number of First Nations HDR completions compared to the previous year.

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**Source:**

Department of Education, Higher Education Statistics Collection, Table 14.14.

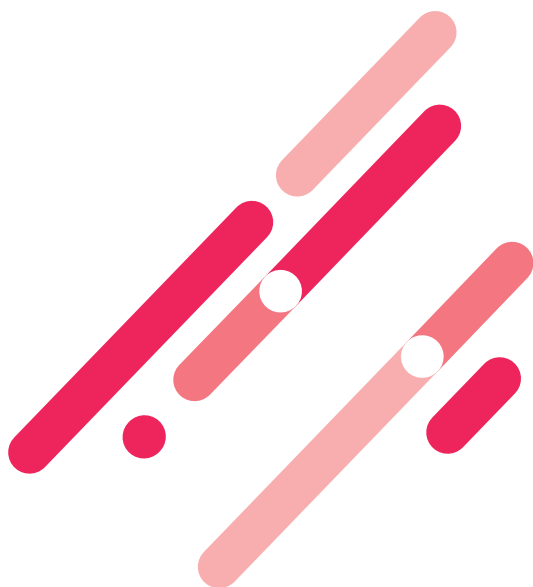
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**Contributing program:** 2.5 – Investment in Higher Education Research.

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**Key activity:**

- Support the university research sector through research training, research funding and national research infrastructure.



## Performance measure PM026

Proportion of international students employed after graduation.

**Target:** 70% or higher

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 70.5% (result based on 2024 pre-release data)

### Analysis:

The proportion of international higher education graduates who were employed 4 to 6 months after completing their degree decreased from 74.2% in 2023 to 70.5% in 2024 (based on 2024 pre-release data). In previous years this measure included international students who were employed after graduation as well as those students who enrolled in further study.

Graduate employment outcomes are related to the economic and labour market conditions that existed at the time of the survey. The tight labour market conditions experienced in 2022 and 2023 in Australia, and many other countries, continued to ease in 2024 but remained generally elevated.

Domestic graduates report higher employment rates shortly after graduation, partly reflecting their higher average age and a lower propensity to take up further full-time study compared to international graduates. Older graduates are more likely to have established themselves in the workforce, and with this prior labour market experience, are typically more competitive than younger graduates.

The Department of Education has major policy responsibility for this measure, and has contributed to the achievement of the target through supporting the sustainable growth, as well as improving the quality and integrity of the international education system. Robust integrity and quality in the sector have positive flow-on effects for the employability of international graduates, with employers able to trust that international graduates have received high quality education and training to an Australian standard.

Graduate outcomes are also influenced by the Department of Home Affairs, through post-graduate study work rights visa settings, Austrade which has some policy responsibility for marketing employment opportunities to international students, and higher education providers themselves.

The target for this measure was reduced from 85% in 2023–24 to 70% for 2024–25, in line with removing those enrolled in further study from the measure.

This target is based on historical assessment of performance including data for the revised measure. It is lower than the target for the previous measure because it removes those who enrol in further study.

More information on international higher education employment outcomes is available in the 2024 GOS International Report (link below).

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**Methodology:**

Number of international higher education graduates employed 4 to 6 months after completing a degree over the total number of international higher education graduates available to work in those 4 to 6 months.

Note: 'Employed' is informed by the ABS Labour Force Survey concepts and definitions in measuring graduate employment outcomes. Accordingly, this considers graduates 'employed' if they work at least one hour in the survey reference week (in any profession or occupation, which may or may not align to a graduate's field of study). Information about the survey methodology, data representativeness and response rate is available in the Graduate Outcomes Survey International Report (link below).

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**Source:**

Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT), Graduate Outcomes Survey, ([www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/graduate-outcomes-survey-\(gos\)](http://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/graduate-outcomes-survey-(gos))).

Note: Pre-released data had passed the department's quality assurance processes and were not available (i.e. published) via the QILT website at the time of result preparation.

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**Contributing program:** 2.7 – International Education Support.

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**Key activity:**

- Support a high-quality and sustainable international education sector.

### Performance measure PM027

Number of students enrolled in offshore education and training delivered by Australian providers.

**Target:** Increase from previous year

**Result rating:** Not achieved

**Result value:** -7%

#### Analysis:

Preliminary data show that in 2024 there were 107,442 students enrolled in offshore education and training courses delivered by Australian providers. This is a 7% decrease on the 115,265 students reported in final, published 2023 Higher Education Student data.

This decrease is based on an updated result for 2023 (not published in the 2023–24 Annual Report), owing to a change in the methodology for determining offshore students that was implemented in 2024 after the 2023–24 performance reporting had been completed. The change in methodology does not affect the overall result ratings of this performance measure in previous years.

Analysis shows the decrease between 2023 and 2024 was driven almost entirely by a large decrease in the total offshore enrolments reported by one higher education provider. This decrease is due to the provider incorrectly reporting residence status for students in their 2023 data. This issue has been corrected in the provider's 2024 data. As a result, the decrease observed for this performance measure is unlikely to reflect substantive changes within that one provider or the sector as a whole.

In further support of this assessment, analysis using corrected (but unpublished) data for 2023 from the affected provider shows a 1% decline between 2023 and 2024 for this performance measure and hence that the target remains unmet. This minor decrease likely reflects ongoing, residual residency status changes of international students following the lifting of pandemic-related border restrictions both in Australia and overseas.



The department continues to support the high-quality and sustainable growth of Australia's offshore education and training delivery through government-to-government engagement and broadening opportunities for Australian providers to deliver high-quality education and training offshore. The department expects to see increased diversification of offshore education and training delivery which is likely to result in increased student enrolments offshore in the future.

Note: Preliminary 2024 data are not expected to differ materially from final 2024 data. However, it should be noted that the preliminary data are impacted by data quality issues due to a cyber incident at another higher education provider. The potential impact of the data quality issues on this performance measure has been assessed based on historical reporting and the percentage change in this performance measure is not expected to exceed a variance of 0.01 percentage points.

The final result for 2024 will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2024–25 Annual Report tabled in parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

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### Methodology:

Number of students enrolled in offshore education and training courses delivered by Australian providers compared to the previous year.

Note: These students are identified as those who have reported a citizen residence status of 'other overseas student who resides outside of Australia'; collected through the department's Tertiary Collection of Student Information system. Providers are defined under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. This definition has changed from the 2024–25 PBS and Corporate Plan owing to a revision to the calculation methodology to improve the accuracy of these data.

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### Source:

Department of Education, Higher Education Statistics Collection, Table 2.10.

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**Contributing program:** 2.7 – International Education Support.

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### Key activity:

- Support a high-quality and sustainable international education sector.

### Performance measure PM076

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 Higher Education Course Advance payments through the UniPay system, are made on time

**Result rating:** Achieved

**Result value:** 100% of allocations were accurately reflected and 100% of payments were made on time

#### Analysis:

100% of allocations under the Nuclear Powered Submarine Program for 2024 are accurately reflected in providers' Commonwealth funding agreements.

The Australian Government is supporting 4,001 commencing Commonwealth support places (CSPs) from 2024 to 2027 to develop a pipeline of highly skilled science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates.

These allocations reflect funding for additional CSPs above the standard funding levels provided under Maximum Basic Grant Amount (MBGA). Funding is provisioned for these extra places to support the nuclear workforce, but is not available to providers until existing MBGA funding has been exhausted.

100% of 2024 payments, administered by the Department of Education, which are included in the broader Commonwealth Grant Scheme Higher Education Course Advance, were made on time.

Funding was paid as a percentage of the total value each month in accordance with approved payment determinations published on the department's Higher Education Information Management System. Government funding contributions are based on cluster rates published on the department's website: [www.education.gov.au/higher-education-loan-program/resources/2024-allocation-units-study-funding-clusters](http://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-loan-program/resources/2024-allocation-units-study-funding-clusters).

While funding provided is paid monthly under this measure, it can be recouped through a retrospective reconciliation process in situations where a provider does not first exhaust its MBGA allocation under the Commonwealth Grant Scheme or is unable to deliver additional places funded under this measure.

This performance measure supersedes PM074 which reported on the accurate and timely final allocation of funding in the Department of Education 2023–24 Annual Report ([www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/departments-education-202324-annual-report](http://www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/departments-education-202324-annual-report)).

### Methodology:

Reporting against this measure will be 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.

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### Source:

- 2024–2025 Commonwealth Grant Scheme Funding Agreements ([www.education.gov.au/collections/higher-education-providers-2024-2025-commonwealth-grant-scheme-funding-agreements](http://www.education.gov.au/collections/higher-education-providers-2024-2025-commonwealth-grant-scheme-funding-agreements)).
  - Published funding cluster rates ([www.education.gov.au/higher-education-loan-program/approved-hep-information/funding-clusters-and-indexed-rates](http://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-loan-program/approved-hep-information/funding-clusters-and-indexed-rates)).
  - Department of Education, UniPay payment schedule, HEIMS online.
  - Department of Education, Higher Education Courses Advance UniPay Determinations.
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**Contributing program:** 2.8 – Nuclear Powered Submarine Program.

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### Key activity:

- Support sovereign workforce development through broader access to education pipelines.