

Audit report of the 2023–24  
annual performance statements

Department of Education



## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT on the 2023-24 Annual Performance Statements of the Department of Education**

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

#### ***Conclusion***

In my opinion, the 2023-24 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 2024; 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***

In order 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; and
- 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.

I plan and perform my procedures 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



George Sotiropoulos  
Group Executive Director  
Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra  
13 September 2024

# 02

## Performance

Statement by the accountable authority	32
Changes to our performance measures	33
Our purpose	36
Our performance	38



## Statement by the accountable authority

---

I, as the Accountable Authority of the Department of Education, present the Annual Performance Statements 2023–24 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

3 September 2024

# Changes to our performance measures

The Department of Education made some amendments to the performance measures published in the 2023–24 Corporate Plan. The amendments are non-significant variations and are summarised below.

## Changes to Outcome 1:

<b>Performance Measure PM073</b>	The Australian Government will work to deliver a 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.
----------------------------------	--

The performance measure wording has been revised to reflect the updated name of the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (previously the 'new National School Reform Agreement').

<b>Published performance measure</b>	The Australian Government will work to deliver a new National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) 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 new NSRA will be operational from January 2025.
--------------------------------------	---

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

<b>Published target</b>	A new NSRA developed throughout the 2024 calendar year in consultation with states and territories, so that the new agreement is operational by January 2025
	Intermediate target for 2023–24:  The Expert Panel delivers the Final Report on the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System to education ministers. The review will advise on which reforms should be attached to funding in the new NSRA.

**Performance Measure PM073**

The Australian Government will work to deliver a 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.

---

**Amended target**

A **Better and Fairer Schools Agreement** developed throughout the 2024 calendar year in consultation with states and territories, so that **the Agreement** is operational by January 2025.

Intermediate target for 2023–24:

The Expert Panel delivers the Final Report on the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System to Education Ministers. The Review will advise on which reforms should be attached to funding in **the Agreement**.

---

**Published methodology**

Reporting against this measure will be based on the creation of a new NSRA that is operational by January 2025. To make payments to states and territories for Commonwealth 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 new NSRA 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 an expert panel undertaking a review of the current NSRA.

---

**Amended methodology**

Reporting against this measure will be based on the creation of **the Agreement** so that it is operational by January 2025. To make payments to states and territories for Commonwealth 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 **other inputs, including the Expert Panel's report to Education Ministers and the Productivity Commission Review of the National School Reform Agreement**.

---

## Changes to Outcome 2

### **Performance Measure PM011**      **Proportion of domestic undergraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing a degree**

The performance measure wording has been clarified to reflect that this measure relates to domestic undergraduates.

Published performance measure	Proportion of undergraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing a degree
-------------------------------	---

Amended performance measure	Proportion of <b>domestic</b> undergraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing a degree
-----------------------------	---

### **Performance Measure PM016**      **Proportion of domestic undergraduate students who rate the teaching quality at their institution positively**

The performance measure wording has been clarified to reflect that this measure relates to domestic undergraduates.

Published performance measure	Proportion of undergraduate students who rate the teaching quality at their institution positively
-------------------------------	--

Amended performance measure	Proportion of <b>domestic</b> undergraduate students who rate the teaching quality at their institution positively
-----------------------------	--

### **Performance Measure PM020**      **Proportion of domestic research postgraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree**

The performance measure 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
-----------------------------	---



# Our purpose

Our purpose is to create a better future for all Australians through education. To do this, our focus in 2023–24 was on:



**Early childhood** to support and prepare children for school through quality early education and care, and through access to subsidised child care, support parents and carers to work, study or volunteer.



**Youth** to improve the Australian Government's engagement with young people on issues, programs and policies that impact them.



**Schooling** to prepare children and young people for further study or work, through access to quality schooling that provides the knowledge, skills and values for every child to achieve their potential.



**Higher education** that maximises employment opportunities and supports participation in the workforce, community, and society.

## Our outcomes

### Outcome 1

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

The following programs support the delivery of this outcome:

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

### Outcome 2

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

The following programs support the delivery of this outcome:

- **Program 2.1** Commonwealth Grant Scheme
- **Program 2.2** Higher Education Superannuation Program
- **Program 2.3** Higher Education Support
- **Program 2.4** Higher Education Loan Program
- **Program 2.5** Investment in Higher Education Research
- **Program 2.6** Research Capacity
- **Program 2.7** International Education Support
- **Program 2.8** Nuclear Powered Submarine Program.

# Our performance

## Introduction

In 2023–24 the department focused on refining its performance reporting processes and improving the analysis of factors that have contributed to the department’s performance in achieving its purpose. We reviewed our performance measures as part of the performance cycle, to ensure they remained appropriate for measuring and assessing our performance in achieving our purpose: to create a better future for all Australians through education.

In 2023–24 the department’s annual performance statements were audited for the third year by the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), supported by dedicated internal resources. We considered feedback from the ANAO’s audit of our annual performance statements in reviewing and refining our performance measures, processes, and analysis in this reporting period and for future performance cycles.

The number and composition of the department’s performance measures may change each year as a result of changes to government priorities and programs, as well as part of the continual improvement in performance reporting outlined above.

## Assessing our performance

When assessing our performance we considered the current operating environment, the methodology and data sources, and assessed the results against the result rating criteria shown 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 for the 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.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 2.1: Applying a result rating for 2023–24**

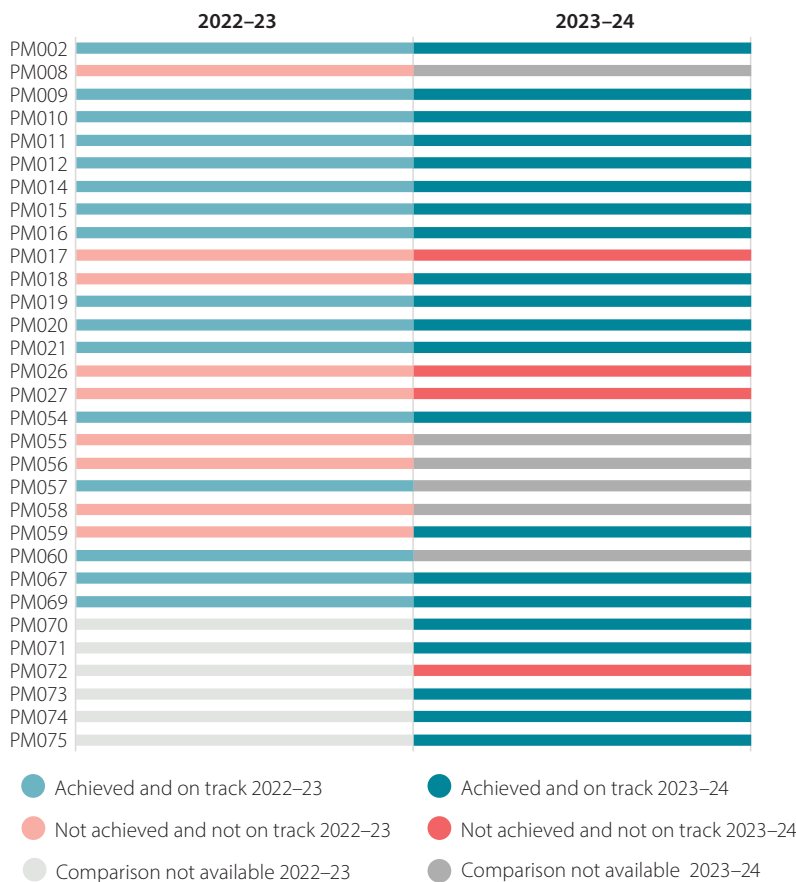
<b>Achieved</b>	The target was met or exceeded
<b>On track</b>	The target is on track to be achieved against future year targets
<b>Not achieved</b>	The target was not met during 2023–24
<b>Not on track</b>	Based on current information the performance measure is not on track to meet future year targets
<b>n/a</b>	Result not available or not measured in 2023–24

<sup>1</sup> The department has a role in regulating components of the early childhood education and care, school and higher education sectors. The department will commence reporting on regulatory performance in the 2024–25 Annual Report. The 2024–25 Corporate Plan provides information on the department’s approach to fulfilling regulatory responsibilities

## Analysis of our performance

The department’s 2023–24 Annual Performance Statements comprise 27 performance measures, of which 2 performance measures (PM055 and PM056) do not have 2023–24 results as the measures are establishing a new baseline for future reporting cycles. Overall, our performance improved in 2023–24, with 21 out of 25 (84%) comparable performance measures achieved or on track as reported in the 2022–23 Annual Report, 16 out of 25 (64%) measures were achieved or on track in 2022–23. Of the comparable 18 performance measures (unchanged between years), 83% of *actual result values* improved in 2023–24 compared with 2022–23 results. Figure 2.1 summarises the result ratings for each performance measure for 2022–23 and 2023–24, showing how result ratings have changed in this reporting period compared with last year.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 2.1: 2022–23 result ratings compared to 2023–24 result ratings**



<sup>2</sup> Performance measures PM055, PM056, PM059 and PM070 to PM075 could not be compared with 2022–23 results as data is not available or they are new measures/targets. Measures PM008 and PM060 in 2022–23 have been combined into PM072 in 2023–24. As noted in the 2023–24 Corporate Plan (page 46), the department removed PM057 and PM058 after 2022–23.

## Early childhood

In 2023–24, more than 95% of all children including First Nations children and children from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities were enrolled in quality preschool programs the year before attending school [PM069]. The results reflect the department's focus on delivering on the government's early childhood initiatives including providing access to and supporting participation in early childhood education and care.

The department's continued focus on integrity ensured ongoing of over 90% payment accuracy for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) in 2023–24 [PM002]. In December 2023, the department launched Gecko (Get early childhood compliance knowledge online), an online learning platform for the early childhood education and care sector to support providers to understand and comply with their legal obligations in administering the CCS.

## Youth

The department contains the Office for Youth, a dedicated unit to listen to young people, and improve and harmonise policy across government.

In 2023–24 we facilitated consultations with young people from diverse backgrounds and across government to inform the new youth engagement strategy *Engage!*, launched on 20 March 2024, to connect young people directly with government [PM075].

## Schools

Our performance measures reflect our work to improve student educational outcomes and transitions from school to work to support positive social and economic outcomes for young people. The department supports schools and teachers through a range of literacy and numeracy programs and ensures resourcing of schools primarily through timely recurrent funding [PM070, PM071] valued at over \$28 billion in 2023. New NAPLAN proficiency levels were implemented in 2023 [PM055, PM056] to provide greater accuracy and deliver better information for parents, carers and teachers about students with additional support needs.

School attendance rates are increasing, indicating a higher level of student participation in schooling, but have not yet returned to pre-COVID levels [PM059]. We continue to work with the states and territories on initiatives that will help identify ways to improve student attendance and performance.

The proportion of 20- to 24-year-olds who have attained at least Year 12 or an equivalent vocational education and training (VET) qualification has remained stable. More work is needed, in consultation with key stakeholders, to reach the Closing the Gap attainment outcomes [PM072].

In 2023–24 the department supported delivery of the Teacher Education Expert Panel report on the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System to government. Consultation with states and territories on a new agreement, the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA), is underway [PM073]. The BFSA ties new funding to reforms to help lift student outcomes, sets targets and improves school funding transparency.

## Higher education, research and international

In the universities sector, the rates of employment for domestic graduates with bachelor degrees and postgraduate research qualifications have remained stable and the level of employer satisfaction with the skills available is also similar to previous years [PM011, PM017, PM020]. As the proportion of jobs requiring tertiary qualification grows, the department continues to deliver strategies that support student access to and participation in higher education, and support students transition to employment [PM011, PM020].

Our investment in research continued to underpin world-class research, with the proportion of Australian research publications that are in the world's most highly cited journals above the average for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries [PM019].

In response to the Australian Universities Accord, the department announced a number of reforms aimed at improving the student experience [PM015, PM016]. These include reforms to ease cost-of-living pressures, improve equity outcomes and increase access to tertiary education opportunities for more Australians, particularly those from First Nations and disadvantaged backgrounds. These reforms are expected to have a further positive influence on students in future reporting periods as they take effect.

## Summary

The department's results highlight our achievements towards creating a better future for all Australians through education from the early learning years through to higher education and beyond. The results show that we are contributing to successful education outcomes through our programs and working collaboratively with key stakeholders to understand local issues and better provide strategic direction and national leadership of Australia's education system.

Our performance measures are a mix of measures on how we do our work (direct) and how our work impacts the health of the education system (indirect). These system-health measures reflect the department's stewardship role, which involves working with state and territory governments, public institutions and the private and not-for-profit sectors, to deliver accessible, quality education across Australia.

The analysis above is a consolidation of the results reported for each individual performance measure. Further detail on the individual performance measures is provided for Outcome 1 on pages 47 to 68 and for Outcome 2 on pages 69 to 92.

## Summary of 2023–24 performance measure results

Outcome 1					
Performance measure	PM#	Program	2022–23 result	2023–24 result	Page reference
Proportion of accurate child care payments to all services	PM002	1.2	Achieved	Achieved	47
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	Achieved	49
Lower the proportion of students in the Needs additional support level in NAPLAN for reading for Year 3 students	PM055	1.3, 1.4, 1.5	Not on track	n/a – a new baseline was established in 2023	51
Lower the proportion of students in Needs additional support level in NAPLAN for numeracy for Year 3 students	PM056	1.3, 1.4, 1.5	Not on track	n/a – a new baseline was established in 2023	53
Increase the proportion of students attending school 90% or more of the time	PM059	1.3, 1.4, 1.5	Not on track	Achieved	55
Average early childhood education and care hours attended by children that are supported by Additional Child Care Subsidy	PM067	1.2	Achieved	Achieved	57

### Outcome 1

Performance measure	PM#	Program	2022–23 result	2023–24 result	Page reference
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	58
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	n/a – this is a new measure for 2023–24	Achieved	60
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	n/a – this is a new measure for 2023–24	Achieved	61
Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12, or equivalent, or gaining a qualification at Certificate III or above	PM072	1.5	n/a – this is a new measure for 2023–24	Not on track	62



## Outcome 1

Performance measure	PM#	Program	2022–23 result	2023–24 result	Page reference
The Australian Government will work to deliver a Better and Fairer Schools 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	n/a – this is a new measure for 2023–24	On track	65
Release a new youth engagement strategy by 30 June 2024	PM075	1.5	n/a – this is a new measure for 2023–24	Achieved	67



## Outcome 2

Performance measure	PM#	Program	2022–23 result	2023–24 result	Page reference
The proportion of the 25- to 34-year-olds population with a tertiary qualification	PM009	2.1	Achieved	Achieved	69
The rate of attrition for domestic bachelor students	PM010	2.1	Achieved	Achieved	70
Proportion of domestic undergraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing a degree	PM011	2.1	Achieved	Achieved	72
Proportion of eligible universities able to meet specified superannuation expenses	PM012	2.2	Achieved	Achieved	73
Proportion of domestic undergraduates who are from a low socio-economic background (based on Statistical Area level 1)	PM014	2.3	Achieved	Achieved	74
Proportion of higher education students who are Indigenous	PM015	2.3	Achieved	Achieved	76
Proportion of domestic undergraduate students who rate the teaching quality at their institution positively	PM016	2.3	Achieved	Achieved	78
Proportion of employers who are satisfied with the skills of graduates (overall across all skills)	PM017	2.3	Not achieved	Not achieved	80

## Outcome 2

Performance measure	PM#	Program	2022–23 result	2023–24 result	Page reference
The proportion of HELP debt not expected to be repaid on new debt	PM018	2.4	Not achieved	Achieved	81
The proportion of research publications in the world's top 10% most highly cited journals that are Australian research publications	PM019	2.5, 2.6	Achieved	Achieved	82
Proportion of domestic research postgraduates who are employed within 4 to 6 months of completing their degree	PM020	2.5	Achieved	Achieved	85
Indigenous Higher Degree by Research (HDR) completions	PM021	2.5	Achieved	Achieved	86
Proportion of international students employed or enrolled in further study after graduation	PM026	2.7	Not achieved	Not achieved	88
Number of students enrolled in offshore and transnational education and training delivered by Australian providers	PM027	2.7	Not achieved	Not achieved	90
Allocate additional Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP), focused on STEM disciplines	PM074	2.8	n/a – this is a new measure for 2023–24	Achieved	91

## Our 2023–24 individual performance measure results

### Outcome 1

#### Performance measure PM002

#### Proportion of accurate child care payments to all services

**Target:** 90% or higher

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 96.4%

---

#### Analysis:

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payment accuracy increased from 96.2% in 2022–23 to 96.4% in 2023–24.

The department has continued its strong focus on payment integrity outcomes in the CCS program, including supporting improved capability in the early childhood education and care sector.

In 2023 the department launched an online learning platform called Geccko (Get early childhood compliance knowledge online). Geccko was designed in collaboration with the sector to support providers to understand and comply with their legal obligations in administering the CCS.

In September 2023, for the first time since Random Sample Parent Check (RSPC) data has been collected, no surveyed parents reported the non-payment of gap fees. Further, in the December 2023 RSPC data, no surveyed parents reported having paid their gap fee by cash. These results were observed following the department's implementation of the new policy announced in the October 2022–23 Budget that from 1 July 2023 required gap fees to be paid by electronic funds transfer. The results indicate a notable change in sector behaviour and compliance, showing the department's focus on child care payment integrity had a significant influence during 2023–24.

The result value in the 2022–23 Annual Report was reported as 96.9%. The correct result value is 96.2%. The 2022–23 result rating of 'Achieved' is not affected by the error. The department's 2022–23 Annual Report webpage was updated to correct the error ([www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/departement-education-202223-annual-report](http://www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/departement-education-202223-annual-report)).<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Appendix H: Corrigendum.

### Methodology:

The 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.

Note: In 2023–24 this measure was based on data collected from RSPC's conducted in 10 out of 12 months of the year.

---

**Source:** RSPC Checking Tool

---

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

---

### Key activity:

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



### 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:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 21.6%

---

#### Analysis:

The proportion of services supported by the CCCF and ISP in socio-economically vulnerable and disadvantaged communities has increased from 20.8% in 2022–23 to 21.6% in 2023–24.

The increase in 2023–24 was mainly driven by ISP-funded services. The department's ISP helps early childhood education and care (ECEC) services address barriers to inclusion and helps children with additional needs to participate in ECEC through tailored support and funding to services. As ISP funding is needs-based rather than specifically targeted, 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.

The department's CCCF is part of the government's Child Care Safety net and aims to increase participation in ECEC, particularly in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities. In 2023–24 the only new CCCF grants issued were to support the establishment of new child care services/premises. For consistency with the methodology of the measure over previous periods, which has focused on support provided to operational services, these grants have been excluded from the measure's calculation for 2023–24.

In 2023–24, 44.7% of the services supported under the CCCF were in the most disadvantaged areas. In the same period, 19.1% of the services supported through the ISP were in the most disadvantaged areas.

---

### **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.

The measurement only includes services that received financial support within the given financial year (12-month period).

---

### **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

---

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

---

### **Key activities:**

- 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 level in NAPLAN for reading for Year 3 students

**Target:** No target

---

**Result rating:** n/a – a new baseline was established in 2023 when NAPLAN implemented new proficiency levels.

---

**Result value:** n/a – a new baseline was established in 2023. Initial comparison can be completed when results from NAPLAN 2024 are released in August 2024.

---

#### Analysis:

The new NAPLAN proficiency levels support higher expectations for student achievement and provide greater precision of results using NAPLAN's adaptive testing to deliver better information for parents, carers and teachers about students needing additional support.

The 2023 NAPLAN results using the new proficiency levels show that about 9.1% of Year 3 students, nationally, are at the Needs Additional Support proficiency level for reading. This result is from the NAPLAN test event of March 2023 and was published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority in August 2023 (i.e. the 2023–24 reporting year).

No analysis has been carried out for 2023–24 against preceding years. This is because the 2023 NAPLAN results were the first using the new NAPLAN proficiency levels, which reset the data scale, making comparison against previous NAPLAN results impossible.

The 2023 NAPLAN results for 2023–24 established a new baseline for future reporting on and analysis of NAPLAN achievement. In 2024–25 a comparative analysis will be possible using the August 2024 publication of results from the NAPLAN test event of March 2024.

This result reports national data for performance across all Australian schools, combining both government schools and non-government schools. NAPLAN results are not reported by school sector under the nationally agreed [Principles and protocols for reporting on schooling in Australia, 2009](#).

---

#### Methodology:

The percentage of students identified as 'Needs Additional Support' in NAPLAN reading at the Year 3 level, nationally, in the NAPLAN Final 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.



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

---

**Source:** Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, publicly available NAPLAN National Reports.

---

**Contributing programs:**

1.3 – Government Schools National Support

1.4 – Non-Government Schools National Support

1.5 – Early Learning and Schools Support

---

**Key activities:**

- 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 level in NAPLAN for numeracy for Year 3 students

**Target:** No target

---

**Result rating:** n/a – a new baseline was established in 2023 when NAPLAN implemented new proficiency levels.

---

**Result value:** n/a – a new baseline was established in 2023. Initial comparison can be completed when results from NAPLAN 2024 are released in August 2024.

---

#### Analysis:

The new NAPLAN proficiency levels support higher expectations for student achievement and provide greater precision of results using NAPLAN's adaptive testing to deliver better information for parents, carers and teachers about students needing additional support.

The 2023 NAPLAN results using the new proficiency levels show that about 10% of Year 3 students, nationally, are at the Needs Additional Support proficiency level for numeracy. This result is from the NAPLAN test event of March 2023 and was published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority in August 2023 (i.e. the 2023–24 reporting year).

No analysis has been carried out for 2023–24 against preceding years. This is because the 2023 NAPLAN results were the first using the new NAPLAN proficiency levels, which reset the data scale, making comparison against previous NAPLAN results impossible.

The 2023 NAPLAN results for 2023–24 established a new baseline for future on reporting and analysis of NAPLAN achievement. In 2024–25 a comparative analysis will be possible using the August 2024 publication of results from the NAPLAN test event of March 2024.

This result reports national data for performance across all Australian schools, combining both government schools and non-government schools. NAPLAN results are not reported by school sector under the nationally agreed [Principles and protocols for reporting on schooling in Australia, 2009](#).

---

#### Methodology:

The percentage of students identified as 'Needs Additional Support' in NAPLAN numeracy at the Year 3 level, nationally, in the NAPLAN Final 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.

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

---

**Source:** Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, publicly available NAPLAN National Reports

---

**Contributing programs:**

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

**Key activities:**

- 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:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 61.6% in 2023

---

### Analysis:

Students attending school 90% or more of the time increased in 2023 to 61.6%, from 49.9% in 2022, achieving the target of an increase on the previous year.

Increased attendance levels indicate a higher level of student participation in schooling. Student attendance levels increased from 2022 levels but have not yet returned to pre-COVID levels (national attendance levels were 73.1% in 2019).

There are a range of external factors that influence student attendance. These include student health and wellbeing, public health directions, natural events and disasters, and family choices.

In February 2023, education ministers agreed to commission the Australian Education Research Organisation to investigate the causes of declining attendance and provide advice to ministers on evidence-based approaches that support attendance.

The target is one of the sub-outcomes of the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA), which is due to expire at the end of 2024. New targets are being considered in the context of the development of the new Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (to be developed throughout 2024). The Australian Government provides national coordination on schools reforms to achieve education outcomes under the NSRA. Reporting schools performance measures at the national level provides an overview of the performance of Australia's education system.

---

### 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 in Semester 1 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended in Semester 1.

---

**Source:** Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority National Student Attendance Data Collection, accessible through the National Report on Schooling

---

**Contributing programs:**

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

**Key activities:**

- 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 with 16.8 hours per week

---

#### Analysis:

In the 2023 calendar year, children supported by the Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) attended early childhood education and care for an average of 20.1 hours per week compared with 16.8 hours for children supported by the CCS.

The result reflects the policy settings in place 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.

---

#### Methodology:

Data is obtained for each of the ACCS and CCS groups and further 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.

---

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

---

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

---

#### 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) Indigenous: 95% or higher
  - c) Disadvantaged: 95% or higher
- 

### Result rating:

- a) Overall: Achieved
  - b) Indigenous: Achieved
  - c) Disadvantaged: Achieved
- 

### Result value:

- a) 97.3%
  - b) 97.2%
  - c) 96.8%
- 

### 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 increased from 96.9% in 2022 to 97.3% in 2023.
- b) The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school who are enrolled for 600 hours per year increased from 96.8% in 2022 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 increased from 96.2% in 2022 to 96.8% in 2023.

Through the Preschool Reform 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.

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.

From 2024, the Australian Government will work with states and territories to establish new state-specific preschool attendance targets for 2025. The Australian Government will also work with states and territories to develop, trial and evaluate a preschool outcomes measure.

---

### Methodology:

The result is calculated using data from the 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, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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. 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.

---

**Source:** ABS Preschool Education, Australia 2023 and additional information provided by Victoria, South Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory.

---

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

---

### Key activities:

- Support children to have access to quality early learning, particularly in the year before reaching school
- 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 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% was achieved for the 2023 calendar year. Approved authorities for government schools received recurrent funding payments in the 2023 school year as planned, supporting government schools to remain financially viable.

---

### 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 (SEMIS Planned Payments Report)

---

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

---

### Key activity:

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

### 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% was achieved for the 2023 calendar year. Approved authorities for non-government schools received recurrent funding payments in the 2023 school year as expected, supporting non-government schools to remain financially viable.

---

**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 (SEMIS Planned Payments Report)

---

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

---

**Key activity:**

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

## Performance measure PM072

Increase the proportion of people (age 20–24) attaining Year 12, 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:** Not on track

---

### Result value:

- a) 89.6% in 2023
  - b) 68.1% in 2021
- 

### Analysis:

This measure has 2 targets. Target (a) covers the full cohort of people aged 20 to 24 and has data available every year while Target (b) covers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 to 24 and has data available every 5 years.

For Target (a), in 2023, 89.6% of young people aged 20 to 24 in Australia had completed a qualification at Year 12 or equivalent or at Certificate III or higher. The Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for young people (aged 20 to 24) has increased over the last decade but remained steady over the last 5 years. As of 2023, it is dipping below the projection to meet the 96% target by 2031.

Attainment is a shared target, agreed with states and territories under the current National School Reform Agreement, and action towards the attainment targets is a joint responsibility. This target is also included in the new Better and Fairer Schools Head Agreement, released on 31 July 2024.

Evidence shows that young people who complete Year 12 or equivalent or a Certificate III or higher have improved social and economic outcomes, such as access to further educational opportunities and higher relative earnings.

Trend data for the period 2004–2023 is available in the National Report on Schooling data portal. This shows long-term upward trend of 0.5 percentage points per annum over this period, in line with long-standing government policy to increase levels of attainment for young people.

The Australian Bureau of Statistic's annual Survey of Education and Work shows no observable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The proportion of 20- to 24-year-olds who have attained at least Year 12 or an equivalent vocational education and training (VET) qualification has remained quite steady over the 5-year period from 2019 to 2023.

The Productivity Commission is charged with monitoring progress against the National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets, which includes producing the result that is used for Target (b) in this performance measure. The result is calculated using the Census, and therefore reported every 5 years. The most recent result for Target (b) is from the 2021 Census, which showed that 68.1% of First Nations people aged 20 to 24 had completed a qualification at Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate III or higher. This was an increase and improvement since the 2016 baseline results (63.2%). The Productivity Commission noted in 2022 that while there have been improved outcomes, these are insufficient to meet the required projected achievement of 96% in 2031.

In the intercensal years, the department continues to deliver First Nations education initiatives to progress towards closing the gap in attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications and other outcomes. The Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Implementation Plan (February 2024) assessed the Commonwealth's delivery of 2023 actions and identified strategic priorities for 2024. The largest investment in First Nations education is through the recurrent needs-based schools funding. This investment will be underpinned by the department partnering with the emerging peak body, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Corporation, which will provide national collective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education engagement, cultural and pedagogical expertise and strategic advice.

In 2023–24 the department implemented targeted initiatives including Support on-Country Learning for central Australian schools, the First Nations Languages Education Program and the City-Country Partnerships Program. In the case of the City-Country Partnership Program, the department has been working with the Yatha Muru Foundation to facilitate students, families and communities to work closely with schools to find a 'good path' for educational success and positive future pathways. The department also commenced support for Aurora Education Foundation's Redefining Success in Education (RISE) program, a 5-year project to gain insights and build an evidence base on best practice for First Nations education programs nationally. Other initiatives focused on improving education outcomes of First Nations students included continued support for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's Indigenous Cultural Responsiveness Initiative, which aims to enhance a suite of resources and tools to better support the cultural capability of the teaching profession, and evidence-based literacy programs to address key drivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student education outcomes through the Scaling up Success in Remote Schools, MultiLit and Good to Great Schools programs.

The next Commonwealth progress report on Closing the Gap, including the department's latest First Nations education initiatives, is scheduled to be published in February 2025.

**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 III level or above, divided by the total number of people aged 20–24 years. Please note that this is a sample survey.
  - 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 III level or above, divided by the total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20–24 years. Please note that this is a sample survey.
- 

**Source:**

- a) ABS Survey of Education and Work, Australia, 2023
  - b) Productivity Commission Closing the Gap Information Repository
- 

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

---

**Key activities:**

- 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 a Better and Fairer Schools 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:

A Better and Fairer Schools Agreement developed throughout the 2024 calendar year in consultation with states and territories, so that the Agreement is operational by January 2025.

Intermediate target for 2023–24:

The Expert Panel delivers the Final Report on the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System to Education Ministers. The Review will advise on which reforms should be attached to funding in the Agreement.

---

#### Result rating:

Target (new Agreement): On track

Intermediate target for 2023–24: Achieved

---

#### Result value:

Target (new Agreement): Negotiations on the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement commenced in 2024.

Intermediate target for 2023–24: The Expert Panel delivered the Report on the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System to education ministers.

---

#### Analysis:

The Expert Panel's report *Improving outcomes for all: the report of the Independent Expert Panel's Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System* was published on 11 December 2023 on the Department of Education's website.

The Expert Panel identified 7 reform directions underpinned by specific, measurable and evidence-based recommendations and targets that could be prioritised through the next Agreement.

The reforms presented in the Expert Panel's report will be considered by education ministers alongside other inputs in the development of the next Agreement, such as the Productivity Commission's review of the current National School Reform Agreement, the National Disability Insurance Scheme review, and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Negotiations for the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement continue with states and territories. The Agreement will inform new performance measures and targets for future reporting cycles.

---

### **Methodology:**

Reporting against this measure will be based on the creation of the Agreement so that it is operational by January 2025. To make payments to states and territories for Commonwealth 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 other inputs, including the Expert Panel's report to Education Ministers and the Productivity Commission's Review of the National School Reform Agreement.

---

**Source:** n/a

---

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

---

### **Key activities:**

- 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 PM075

### Release a new youth engagement strategy by 30 June 2024

#### Target:

A new youth engagement strategy developed, and released by 30 June 2024.

Immediate target: Deliver national youth consultations with young people, the youth sector and across government to inform the contents of the strategy

---

#### Result rating:

Target (Youth Engagement Strategy developed and released): Achieved

Immediate target (national youth consultations): Achieved

---

#### Result value:

Target: Delivered a new youth engagement strategy, *Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make*, released on 20 March 2024.

Immediate target: Delivered national youth consultations with young people, the youth sector and across government.

---

#### Analysis:

The new youth engagement strategy, *Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make*, was released on 20 March 2024.

The Australian Government Office for Youth, within the Department of Education, delivered 58 in-person and online consultations with young people, the youth sector and state government representatives to inform the contents of *Engage!*. Office for Youth consultations included a survey of young people and a discussion paper. In addition, the Office for Youth supported the Commonwealth's whole-of-government participation through a youth interdepartmental committee.

The vision of *Engage!* is that young people are empowered and valued, and contribute to government decision-making. The Office for Youth will publish a monitoring and evaluation report each year to report on the progress of *Engage!*.

In 2024–25 new performance measures will measure progress on the following *Engage!* priorities:

Priority 1 – We will recognise and listen to young people, Action 1.1. Collaborating with young people; and Priority 3 – We will support government to work with young people; Action 3.2. Building government capacity.

---



**Methodology:**

The target will be deemed to have been met if the strategy is published online by 30 June 2024.

---

**Source:** [www.youth.gov.au/engage](http://www.youth.gov.au/engage)

---

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

---

**Key activity:**

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



## Outcome 2

### Performance measure PM009

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

**Target:** Increase from previous year

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 77.0%

---

**Analysis:**

In 2023, 77.0% of 25- to 34-year-olds had a tertiary qualification, up from 76.5% in 2022.

There is a long-term 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. For example, the Commonwealth Grant Scheme makes a direct contribution to the cost of educating Commonwealth-supported higher education students.

Noting that tertiary attainment includes all non-school qualifications, in 2023, 58.7% of 25- to 34-year-olds with a non-school qualification had attained a bachelor degree level or higher qualification. This equates to 45.0% of all 25- to 34-year-olds holding a bachelor degree or higher qualification in 2023.

---

**Methodology:**

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

---

**Source:** ABS, Education and Work Australia, Table 24, 2023

---

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

---

**Key activities:**

- 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:** 14.7% (result based on preliminary 2023 data)

---

#### Analysis:

The attrition rate of students who commenced a bachelor degree in 2022 was 14.7% (based on 2023 preliminary data). There has been no change in the attrition rate of bachelor students from 2021<sup>4</sup> (14.7%).

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. Higher education providers are required to meet certain criteria to be eligible to receive CGS funding. The department's CGS delivery strategies enhance the quality of the higher education system by supporting higher education providers to deliver high-quality teaching and support to students that facilitates positive experiences and graduate outcomes.

Student attrition is influenced by a wide range of factors, including the higher education provider, student characteristics, and the economic environment. A low attrition rate indicates that bachelor degree students are receiving quality higher education that meets student expectations and that students are supported to continue their studies.

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 to this pattern were the pandemic years. Students commencing in 2019 and 2020 had lower attrition rates, likely a result of weak labour market conditions associated with the pandemic. Attrition rates returned to their long-term pattern for 2021 and 2022 commencing students as Australia's labour market strengthened.

The final result for 2023 will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2023–24 Annual Report tabled in Parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

Note: The 2021 result published on the department's website differs from the result reported in the Department of Education Annual Report 2022–23 (14.8%), which used preliminary data.

---

4 The previously published analysis for the 2022–23 Annual Report referenced the year of the annual data collection (2022) supporting the calculation of the attrition rate, not the year in which the attrition occurred (2021). Refer to Appendix H: Corrigendum.

**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).

---

**Source:** Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection

---

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

---

**Key activities:**

- 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:** 88.9%

---

### Analysis:

The proportion of domestic undergraduates who are employed 4 to 6 months after completing their degree increased from 88.3% in 2022 to 88.9% in 2023.

As the proportion of jobs requiring tertiary qualification grows, programs that support student access to and participation in higher education, such as the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS), can support their transition to employment. The CGS makes a direct contribution for domestic undergraduates to undertake studies at higher education providers which enable them to develop skills to enter the workforce.

Graduate employment outcomes are, however, also influenced by general economic and labour market conditions.

There were strong labour market conditions throughout the period covered by the 2023 Graduate Outcomes Survey. This meant that graduating students had more opportunities for employment than earlier years, particularly the pandemic period. There were weaker labour market conditions in 2020 and 2021.

---

### 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 consistent with 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 Outcome 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))

---

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

---

### Key activities:

- 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:

This is a demand-driven program. Funding is provided in line with the reported reconciled amounts from eligible universities; therefore the department is assured that the target is measured accurately.

Eligibility is outlined in the Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022.

The department provided funding based on information reported from eligible universities with superannuation expenses from eligible funds. This has allowed 100% of eligible universities to meet their specified superannuation expenses.

Payments for this measure are made under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*, which allocates funding on a calendar year basis. Therefore, payments towards the specified superannuation expenses are derived from the 2023 and 2024 calendar year reconciled amounts.

---

#### 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.

Note: There are no employees in Queensland in eligible schemes; therefore, none receive Higher Education Superannuation Program funding and they are not reported in this measure.

---

**Source:** Department of Education, program administrative data

---

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

---

#### Key activity:

- Support eligible current and former university employees for certain superannuation expenses

## 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

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 16%

---

### Analysis:

The proportion of domestic undergraduates who are from a low socio-economic background (based on Statistical Area level 1) has remained at 16.0% when comparing 2023 preliminary data with 2022 revised<sup>5</sup> data.

Equity of participation in higher education for all Australians is supported by a range of systemic policy levers including the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) and the Commonwealth Grant Scheme.

There are also targeted higher education equity programs that contribute significantly to improved outcomes for students from a low socio-economic status (low SES) background including the Indigenous, Regional, and Low SES Attainment Fund (IRLSAF), which funds Table A universities to support First Nations students and students from low-SES, regional and remote backgrounds.

In particular, the IRLSAF does this through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program and enabling loading. These components support universities to implement strategies that improve access, retention, success and completion rates of those student cohorts. Similarly, the Regional University Study Hubs provide access to tertiary education to students in regional and remote areas, which assists students from low SES backgrounds due to the overlap between these cohorts.

These programs aid Australian students to access and succeed at higher education, by providing low-SES cohorts opportunities that lead to increased employment rates and income.

5 2022 data revision: Following the publication of 2022 data an error was discovered in the processing of geocodes based on student address information. This resulted in a small overestimation (by 0.2 percentage points) of the overall proportion of low SES students in the initial publication of 2022 higher education student data. Revised data have since been published. More information on the 2022 geocoding error can be found at [www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2022-student-data](http://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2022-student-data).

The decision to undertake university study is influenced by general economic and labour market conditions. High cost of living and low unemployment rates may be contributing factors driving those from a low-SES background to seek employment over study.

Through the 2024–25 Budget the government announced several reforms in response to the Australian Universities Accord final report. A number of these reforms aim to improve the student experience, including easing cost-of-living pressure, improving equity outcomes and increasing access to tertiary education opportunities for more Australians, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The final result for 2023 will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2023–24 Annual Report tabled in Parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

Note: The 2022 result stated here is based on revised\* results published on the Department of Education website and differs from the Department of Education Annual Report 2022–23 (16.8%), which used preliminary data.

---

#### **Methodology:**

Number of domestic undergraduates from a low socio-economic background over the total of domestic undergraduate students registered at the Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) geographical area, as defined by the ABS.

---

**Source:** Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistical Collection

---

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

---

#### **Key activities:**

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



## Performance measure PM015

### Proportion of higher education students who are Indigenous

**Target:** 2% or higher

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 2.2% (result based on preliminary 2023 data)

---

#### Analysis:

Preliminary data for 2023 indicate that the proportion of domestic undergraduate students who are First Nations increased to 2.2%, from 2.1% in 2022.

Although there are vast individual disparities, outcomes for First Nations students have improved across access, participation, retention, success and completion rates for higher education.

Targeted higher education programs contribute to improving outcomes for First Nations students. These include the Indigenous, Regional, and Low SES Attainment Fund (IRLSAF), which funds Table A universities to support First Nations students and students from low-SES, regional and remote backgrounds.

The IRLSAF Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) component supports universities to implement strategies that improve access, retention, success and completion rates for those student cohorts.

Regional University Study Hubs provide access to tertiary education to students in regional and remote areas, including First Nations people. Across Australia (except the ACT), 35 Regional University Study Hubs are currently operational. As of May 2024 (latest program data), Regional University Study Hubs were supporting almost 4,400 students (based on students registered with the hubs to access facilities and support at that time), of whom 11% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Two Regional University Study Hubs, the Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation and the Wuyagiba Study Hub, focus on supporting First Nations students on-Country in Arnhem Land. A third hub with a First Nations student focus, Garrthlala Bush University Study Hub, is due to open to students later in 2024. Regional hubs also provide employment opportunities for First Nations staff.

Other departmental programs such as Program 2.1 (CGS) contribute directly to achieving this performance measure. For example, from 2024, all First Nations undergraduate students (in bachelor and honours-level courses, excluding courses of study in medicine) are funded on a demand-driven basis at Table A universities. Between 2021 and 2023, demand-driven funding arrangements only extended to regional and remote First Nations undergraduate students. This is a key measure that will create more opportunities for access to higher education for First Nations people.

First Nations high school students are often not presented with the same opportunities and inclusion discourses and activities as non-First Nations students to imagine university as an option, and thereby to consider and plan to undertake higher education.

Relationships between universities and regional and remote communities are important, particularly for First Nations peoples, given that many regard university as beyond reach or a complex transition away from family and friends. Incorporating First Nations pedagogies, knowledges and approaches is described as particularly important for First Nations students.

Through the 2024–25 Budget the government announced several reforms in response to the Australian Universities Accord final report. This performance measure is under consideration as part of that process.

Final data for 2023 will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2023–24 Annual Report tabled in Parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

Note: The 2022 result stated here is based on the final results published on the department's website and is the same as the result reported in the Department of Education Annual Report 2022–23 (16.8%), which used preliminary data.

---

**Methodology:**

Number of domestic undergraduate students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in enrolment data over the total of domestic undergraduate students.

---

**Source:** Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection

---

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

---

**Key activities:**

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

## Performance measure PM016

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

**Target:** 80% or higher

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 80.4% (result based on preliminary 2023 data)

---

#### Analysis:

In 2023, 80.4% of domestic undergraduate students rated the teaching quality at their institution positively (based on preliminary data), a slight increase from 80.1% in 2022. This does not represent a statistically significant year-on-year change.

The department regularly measures student satisfaction through a range of indicators found in the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Student Experience Survey. This enables the department to identify areas where student experience could improve, which may form the basis for subsequent policy changes.

The department has influenced the result through its ongoing management of the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS), which subsidises eligible domestic students with the cost of their higher education study. Higher education providers are required to meet certain criteria to be eligible to receive CGS funding. The department's CGS delivery strategies enhance the quality of the higher education system by supporting higher education providers to deliver high-quality teaching and support to students that facilitates positive experiences and graduate outcomes.

In 2023 and 2024, the Australian Government is supporting a one-off boost of 20,000 commencing Commonwealth-supported places. This will provide more opportunities for Australians to enrol to study in areas of national priority, with a focus on increasing participation for students from under-represented backgrounds.

A relatively stable positive rating of around 80% reflects the minimal change in higher education policy settings between 2022 and 2023. The sector is expecting significant policy change through the Australian Universities Accord reforms.

Through the 2024–25 Budget, the government announced a range of reforms in response to the Australian Universities Accord process, a 12-month review of Australia's higher education system designed to drive lasting and transformative reform. A number of these reforms are aimed at improving the student experience, including reforms to ease cost-of-living pressure, improve equity outcomes and increase access to tertiary education opportunities for more Australians (particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds). Following commencement, these reforms are expected to have further positive influence on student satisfaction levels.

The final result for 2023 will be published on the QILT website ([qilt.edu.au](http://qilt.edu.au)).

This 2023–24 Annual Report as tabled in Parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](http://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

---

**Methodology:**

Number of domestic students rating the teaching received as positive over the total number of domestic students with valid survey responses.

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

---

**Source:** QILT, Student Experience Survey

[www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-\(ses\)](http://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/student-experience-survey-(ses))

---

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

---

**Key activities:**

- 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

---

**Result rating:** Not achieved

---

**Result value:** 83.7%

---

### 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). The result for this performance measure remains below the target of 85% and has slightly decreased from 84.1% in 2022 to 83.7% in 2023. However, this does not represent a statistically significant year-on-year change.

Given the stable nature of the results, the employer views of recent graduates provide assurance of the quality of the Australian higher education system. The results demonstrate the aims of maintaining or improving the quality of the higher education system through the Higher Education Support program managed by the department. Although employer satisfaction across different graduate skills attributes decreased slightly between 2022 and 2023, overall employer satisfaction remained stable in 2023, within the limitations of the ESS.

---

### 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).

---

**Source:** QILT, ESS

[www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/employer-satisfaction-survey-\(ess\)](http://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/employer-satisfaction-survey-(ess))

---

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

---

### Key activities:

- 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 previous year

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 13.0%

---

#### Analysis:

The proportion of Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) debt not expected to be repaid on new debt was 13.0% for 2023–24, lower than the 2022–23 result of 15.4%.

The department is a major contributor to the management of the HELP program and sets HELP policy.

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

The decrease in DNER projected by the AGA for 2023–24 reflects a combination of higher projected incomes for higher education graduates (resulting in higher compulsory HELP debt repayments) and an increase in voluntary HELP repayments which has reduced the amount of debt outstanding.

AGA has adjusted its HELP modelling to account for higher voluntary repayments in the short term, which is aligned to the experience observed through higher voluntary repayments collected by the Australian Taxation Office in 2022–23.

---

#### Methodology:

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

---

**Source:** Australian Government Actuary 2024 HELP Receivable Advice

---

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

---

#### Key activities:

- 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 OECD average

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 4.68%

---

### 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 research sector, research training 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 2023 the average share of the world's top 10% most highly cited research publications among OECD countries was 2.36%. Australia's share was above this average at 4.68%, which ranks Australia fourth behind the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. Australia's ranking has remained relatively stable over the past 5 years.

While the 2023 result for the proportion of research publications in Australia that are among the world's top 10% most highly cited journals is lower than the 2022 result, this is consistent with 2023 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 the 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.

In 2023–24 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 degrees by students who subsequently enter and participate in the research workforce.

Key achievements for 2023–24 under Program 2.6 were achieved through a number of sub-programs including support for critical research infrastructure through the **National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy** (NCRIS). This included infrastructure such as high-voltage electrostatic accelerator beam-time; biological, biogeochemical and atmospheric measurements of Australia’s marine estate; weather, climate and earth system modelling; and technicians and expertise for genome engineered products.

**NCRIS (Program 2.6 sub-program) case study:  
Integrated Marine Observation System (IMOS)**

By using IMOS as a definitive source of comprehensive time-series marine and ocean climate data to analyse the effect of marine heatwaves, research found that sub-surface data needs to be considered in monitoring marine heatwaves and their impact on marine life in coastal areas where maximum biological damage is reported. The findings were published in the Top 10% journal *Nature*.

Also under Program 2.6, the department awarded funding to 20 universities in 2023–24 through the **Australia’s Economic Accelerator** (AEA) AEA Seed pilot program for translation and commercialisation activities to demonstrate proof-of-concept research translation across 7 government identified priority areas. Over 3 pilot rounds more than 90 applications have been awarded more than \$26 million to generate key achievements such as patents, trademarks, joint researcher/industry publications, spin-out and start-up companies and workforce mobility between universities and industry.

**AEA (Program 2.6 sub-program) case study:  
Accelerating alternative green energy research**

AEA Seed funding accelerated research to support Sparc Hydrogen’s successful testing of its second-generation prototype photocatalytic water splitting (PWS) reactor which demonstrated concentrated PWS in real-world conditions, reinforcing the significant potential of PWS as an alternative to electrolysis for the production of low-cost green hydrogen directly from concentrated sunlight.

Through another Program 2.6 sub-program, the **Trailblazer Universities Program**, the government is providing \$370.3 million to establish 6 Trailblazer universities over 4 years from 2022–23 to 2025–26 ([www.education.gov.au/trailblazer-universities-program](http://www.education.gov.au/trailblazer-universities-program)). All Trailblazer universities have established joint commercialisation projects producing world-class results and are contributing to better research quality and outcomes by creating an environment where innovation and industry collaboration can thrive, leading to better research translation and commercialisation outcomes. This is attracting increased industry investment and helping to further build capacity to undertake high-quality, relevant research, with 152 Trailblazer university industry partners co-contributing approximately \$500 million.



## Trailblazer (Program 2.6 sub-program) case study

iLAUNCH Trailblazer brings together over 20 industry organisations to foster collaboration between academia, university and research institutions in building Australia's sovereign space capability by accelerating development of a space technology sector.

The University of Southern Queensland led iLAUNCH Trailblazer is working with industry and university partners to drive cultural change and advance the space manufacturing sector by commercialising new technologies developed in Australian universities. At the end of June 2024, the program had enabled iLAUNCH to attract more than \$99 million in additional industry investments which will contribute to increased research outputs and quality to meet the needs of the space industry.

As part of this work, iLAUNCH Trailblazer partner the University of South Australia has established an advanced manufacturing facility, attracting industry co-investment for projects focused on technologies such as additive manufacturing of space components and surveillance systems for hypersonic missile defence.

---

### Methodology:

Australia's share (proportion) is derived by calculating the number of Australian research publications in the top 10% of journal percentiles by CiteScore percentile (numerator) divided by the total number of publications in the top 10% of journal percentiles by CiteScore percentile from the total world count (denominator).

The 'World' count of publications is a unique count, with each unique document only counted once. In the case of joint publications with authors from different countries, the research publication is counted for each represented country.

CiteScore is based on the number of citations to research publications by a journal over 4 years, divided by the number of the same research publication types indexed in Scopus and published in the same 4 years. A 4-year window is used to capture the citation peak for research publications. CiteScore percentile indicates the relative standing of a journal in its subject field. For instance, a CiteScore percentile of 90 means the journal is in the top 10% of its field. The OECD average share is derived by applying the same calculation method for Australia's share to each other OECD member country and then calculating the average of shares for all OECD countries including Australia.

---

**Source:** SciVal/Scopus (bibliometric database)

---

### Contributing programs:

2.5 – Investment in Higher Education Research

2.6 – Research Capacity

---

### Key activities:

- Support the research sector, research training 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:** 91.4%

---

### Analysis:

In 2023, 91.4% of domestic research postgraduates were employed 4 to 6 months after course completion.

The overall domestic research postgraduate employment rate within 4 to 6 months of degree completion remained stable in 2023, exceeding the performance measure target of 90%. This high result is a sustained increase from 2021, when labour market uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a fall to 88.1% of research postgraduates employed.

The current result demonstrates the positive impact postgraduate research study has on employment opportunities. The department's administration of programs that provide research and research training funding to higher education providers supports the successful completion of postgraduate research degrees by their students, who then experience successful labour market outcomes.

The result also reflects strong demand in the labour market for employees with Australian postgraduate research qualifications.

---

### 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.

Note: 'Employed' is consistent with 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 Outcome Survey National Report ([link below](#)).

---

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

---

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

---

### Key activity:

- Support the research sector, research training and national research infrastructure

## Performance measure PM021

### Indigenous Higher Degree by Research (HDR) completions

**Target:** Increase from previous year

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 88 (result based on 2023 preliminary data)

---

#### Analysis:

The number of Indigenous HDR completions reported in 2023 is 88 (based on 2023 preliminary data), compared with 82 Indigenous HDR completions reported in 2022, which represents an increase of 6 completions.

The increase in Indigenous HDR completions for 2023 is consistent with an overall increase in all HDR completions from 10,909 in 2022 to 11,294 in 2023 (based on 2023 preliminary data).

The annual number of Indigenous HDR completions is small, which can lead to some fluctuation from year to year. However, the number of Indigenous HDR completions is trending upwards over the longer term. The 3-year average at 2014 was 35 Indigenous HDR completions compared with the 3-year average of 83 in 2023 (based on 2023 preliminary data).

The Department of Education's Research Training Program (RTP) provides approximately \$1 billion annually to 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 eligible higher education providers to support Indigenous students through to completion of their HDR.

The number of Indigenous 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 Indigenous students study part-time, the number of completions may decrease in a reference period.

Final data for 2023 will be published on the Department of Education website. This 2023–24 Annual Report as tabled in Parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

Note: The 2022 result stated here is based on the final results published on the department's website. It differs from the result reported in the Department of Education Annual Report 2022–23 (81), which used preliminary data.

---

**Methodology:**

Number of Indigenous HDR completions compared to the previous year.

---

**Source:** Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection

---

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

---

**Key activity:**

- Support the research sector, research training and national research infrastructure



## Performance measure PM026

### Proportion of international students employed or enrolled in further study after graduation

**Target:** 85% or higher

---

**Result rating:** Not achieved

---

**Result value:** 76.7%

---

#### Analysis:

The proportion has slightly improved from 76.2% in 2022 to 76.7% in 2023 but remains below the target of 85%.

The target for this measure was adjusted from 60% to 85% in 2021 to align with outcomes for domestic students.

While 2022 and 2023 results have shown promising signs of progress towards the target as labour market conditions improve from the downturn observed between 2019 and 2021, international graduates' full-time employment rates in the short term (4 to 6 months after course completion) historically trail full-time employment rates of domestic graduates across all levels of study. While this trend continued in 2023, the difference between the cohorts across all levels of study decreased.

Lower rates of international graduate labour force participation and employment outcomes may be partly explained by their relatively higher rate of further full-time study.

Further full-time study rates continued to be significantly higher for international graduates than for domestic graduates, across all levels of initial study. For example, the further full-time study rate for international undergraduates was 30.9%, compared with 18.0% for domestic undergraduates. At the postgraduate coursework level and postgraduate research level, 16.7% and 10.6% of international graduates reported being in further full-time study, compared with 7.1% and 6.9% of domestic graduates.

---

**Methodology:**

Number of international graduates employed or undertaking further study 4 to 6 months after completing a degree over the total number of international graduates.

Note: 'Employed' is consistent with 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, Graduate Outcomes Survey  
[www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/graduate-outcomes-survey-\(gos\)](http://www.qilt.edu.au/surveys/graduate-outcomes-survey-(gos))

---

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

**Key activity:**

- Support a high-quality and sustainable international education sector

## Performance measure PM027

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

**Target:** Increase from previous year

---

**Result rating:** Not achieved

---

**Result value:** -1.2% (result based on 2023 preliminary data)

---

#### Analysis:

In 2023 the number of students enrolled in offshore courses delivered by Australian providers was 175,862 (based on preliminary data), lower than in 2022, when it was 178,027 and 2021, when it was 182,536.

Student numbers in 2023 reduced by 1.2% from 2022, which contrasts with large year-to-year growth experienced in 2020 (26.7%) and 2021 (23.5%).

Offshore student numbers from 2020 to 2022 were temporarily inflated due to students studying offshore as a result of border restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The department continues to support the sustainable growth of Australia's offshore education delivery through government-to-government engagement and enhancing opportunities for Australian providers to deliver transnational education.

The final 2023 result for this measure will be published on the Department of Education website. The version of the 2023–24 Annual Report tabled in Parliament and available on [transparency.gov.au](https://transparency.gov.au) will remain unchanged.

Note: The 2022 result stated here is based on final results published on the department's website and differs from the result reported in the Department of Education Annual Report 2022–23 (-2.4%), which used preliminary data.

---

#### Methodology:

Number of students enrolled in higher education offshore and transnational education and training courses delivered by Australian providers compared with the previous year. These students are identified as those who have reported a term of residence outside Australia, as collected through the department's Tertiary Collection of Student Information system. Providers are defined under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

---

**Source:** Department of Education, Higher Education Student Statistics Collection

---

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

---

#### Key activity:

- Support a high-quality and sustainable international education sector

### Performance measure PM074

#### Allocate additional Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP), focused on STEM disciplines

**Target:** An additional 4,000 CSPs are allocated over four years from 2024

---

**Result rating:** Achieved

---

**Result value:** 4,001 CSPs were allocated to universities for commencement over 2024–2027 (detail on extra place is provided in the analysis below)

---

#### Analysis:

Allocations were based on the outcomes of a competitive assessment process assessed jointly across 5 major selection criteria by the Department of Education and the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA).

Following assessment processes which scored each application against a set of criteria which included provider attributes and course selection, outcomes for each course nominated by universities were passed through a mathematical model which produced a recommended allocation outcome based on the weighted score for provider attribute and course selection criteria. These outcomes were then moderated by the ASA and the department to ensure skill requirements were met and Australian Government commitments to states and territories were fulfilled.

Final allocations of CSPs were announced on 29 November 2023 after being approved by the Minister for Education following consultation with the Minister for Defence. In total, 16 universities were allocated 4,001 places commencing across 2024–2027 in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) courses needed to support AUKUS initiatives. Four universities were allocated places for eligible mathematics courses that have relatively lower Commonwealth contribution amounts than the amount originally budgeted for the CSPs. This allowed the allocation of an additional place (4,001 rather than 4,000 places).

These additional places will develop a pipeline of highly-skilled STEM graduates who will strengthen Australia's sovereign capabilities.

This performance measure is complete. The department will report the accurate and timely allocation of CSPs funding, as set out within university Commonwealth funding agreements [PM076] for future reporting periods.

---



**Methodology:**

Calculated based on the outcomes of a competitive assessment process in collaboration with the Department of Defence.

---

**Source:** Nuclear-Powered Submarine Student Pathways webpage ([www.education.gov.au/higher-education-funding/commonwealth-grant-scheme-cgs/nuclearpowered-submarine-student-pathways](http://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-funding/commonwealth-grant-scheme-cgs/nuclearpowered-submarine-student-pathways)) which makes public the allocation of 4,001 Commonwealth-supported places as per the performance measure target

---

**Contributing program:** 2.8 – Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program

---

**Key activity:**

- Support sovereign workforce development through broader access to education pipelines

