

2001

# National Report on Schooling in Australia

Preliminary Paper

National Benchmark Results  
Reading, Writing and Numeracy  
Years 3 and 5



# 2001 year 3 and year 5 national benchmark results

## Reading, Writing and Numeracy

### Introduction

In March 1997, all State, Territory and Commonwealth education ministers agreed on a national goal which stated:

“that every child leaving primary school should be numerate and be able to read, write and spell at an appropriate level.”

To provide focus to this goal, ministers also agreed to a sub-goal that:

“every child commencing school from 1998 will achieve a minimum acceptable literacy and numeracy standard within four years.”

To help support the achievement of these goals ministers agreed to the implementation of a National Literacy and Numeracy Plan, the essential features of which are:

- Early assessment and intervention for students at risk of not achieving minimum required standards.
- Development of national benchmarks for each of years 3, 5 and 7.
- Assessment of student progress against these benchmarks.
- National reporting of benchmark data.
- Professional development for teachers.

Since its formulation, education authorities in all States and Territories, assisted by the Commonwealth, have been engaged in implementing these elements of the National Plan. This paper concerns the national reporting of benchmark data for 2001 and follows on from earlier editions that published data for 1999 and 2000 respectively.

The publications reflect the continuing development of the benchmark reporting process. For 1999, data was available only for reading in each of years 3 and 5. For 2000, as well as results for years 3 and 5 reading, data was also published on numeracy in each of years 3 and 5. This edition presents 2001 data in all of these areas and also includes benchmark results for writing in each of years 3 and 5. As data for writing has not previously been published, results for 1999 and 2000 are also presented.

As part of their commitment to producing nationally comparable data against the literacy and numeracy benchmarks, ministers have requested further developmental work in the following areas:

- a common equating method to be used by all jurisdictions
- nationally consistent criteria for defining exempt students and an agreed method for collecting information on exemptions and absent students
- a common standardised process for calculating and reporting the accuracy of the student achievement data against the national benchmarks.

While work is underway on the ministers' requests, it was not completed for the publication of the 2001 benchmark results.

### Benchmarks

The benchmarks that underpin the reporting of student achievement describe nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for aspects of literacy and numeracy at particular year levels. That is, they represent the minimum acceptable standard without which a student will have difficulty making sufficient progress at school.

The benchmarks have been developed with reference to current levels of achievement as demonstrated in national surveys and State assessment programs. There has been extensive consultation with stakeholders and with experts in the areas of literacy, numeracy and educational measurement. As well, the benchmarks have been trialed in classrooms in all States and Territories.

Because the benchmarks represent minimum acceptable standards, education ministers meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), have determined that the national goal should be that all students will achieve at least the benchmark level of performance. Regular publication of benchmark results enables them and others to monitor progress towards the attainment of that goal.

The standards described by the benchmarks for years 3, 5 and 7 represent increasingly demanding levels of proficiency against which the progress of students through school can be measured and followed. The benchmarks form three important markers along a continuum of increasing competence. The year 3 benchmark with the least demanding level is located in the early part of the achievement continuum, while the years 5 and 7 benchmarks, requiring more demanding understandings and skills, are at progressively higher levels. Students' locations on the achievement continuum can be estimated through the assessment procedures undertaken by the States and Territories.

Full details of all of the benchmarks are available online at <http://online.curriculum.edu.au/litbench/default.htm> and in print form from Curriculum Corporation, P.O. Box 177, Carlton South, Victoria, 3053, Australia. Telephone: +61 3 9207 6000 Facsimile: +61 3 9639 1616 Email: [sales@curriculum.edu.au](mailto:sales@curriculum.edu.au) Website: <http://www.curriculum.edu.au>.

### The assessment process

All jurisdictions have in place State-based literacy and numeracy monitoring programs. These programs are well established, understood and valued within the State educational communities and all States are keen to retain them. As well, they allow States and Territories to report (both publicly and to parents) on the range of performance demonstrated, including benchmark performance. As a result, ministers agreed that assessment against the national benchmarks should occur using the existing State-based programs.

A nationally agreed procedure was designed to equate State and Territory tests and to provide comparable reporting of student achievement data

against the benchmarks. The committee that developed the procedure included several of Australia's leading educational measurement experts.

At each of years 3 and 5, equating the State and Territory tests is a three-stage process. The first stage involves the construction of common achievement scales for each of reading, writing, and numeracy. During the second stage the location of the benchmark on the common achievement scale is determined and, in the final stage, the equivalent benchmark locations on State and Territory achievement scales are calculated.

The common achievement scales are constructed from results of testing students from a representative sample of schools in each State and Territory using the assessments of other States and Territories.

To establish the location of the benchmark at each year level, expert judges are required to envisage a student who is just able to demonstrate the skills described in the benchmark and to estimate the probability of this minimally competent student succeeding on each test item. The judges used in the benchmarking were from all States and Territories and included a range of literacy specialists and classroom teachers who were qualified to make decisions about the likelihood of students succeeding on the test items.

In the final phase of equating, an equivalent benchmark location is calculated for each jurisdiction's test. Individual jurisdictions are responsible for equating benchmark locations to any new tests used by that jurisdiction. Any imprecision in this process is not reflected in the confidence interval of the published estimates. All of these aspects of the process contribute to enhancing the comparability of the separate State tests and to ensuring that any differences in State results are likely to be due to factors other than the tests.

## Making comparisons

Tables such as 1 and 2 highlight apparent differences between States and Territories in relation to the proportion of students achieving the benchmark. However caution needs to be applied when considering these differences. While the assessment and equating processes are designed to make the various results comparable between jurisdictions, there have been large variations in the results for some jurisdictions over the three years in which the benchmarks have been reported. The variations in the results will be examined to inform further improvements to the benchmarking process.

Some of the relevant issues include major differences between jurisdictions in school starting arrangements that result in variations in the time students would have spent in schooling prior to the testing. (See Tables 3, 11, 18, 19 and 29.)

As well, there are differences between States and Territories in relation to a number of factors that are known to influence measured literacy and numeracy achievement. For example, it is known that such achievement in literacy and numeracy is strongly correlated with

the socioeconomic circumstances of students being assessed. As well, students who do not usually speak English, or who have just begun to speak English, would be expected to be at some disadvantage during assessment of aspects of English literacy. Not only are there variations in the proportion of such students between States and Territories, there are also variations in the policies regarding inclusion in the testing programs.

Variations also exist in the proportion of government school students and non-government school students included in the results. (See Tables 4, 12, 20, 21 and 30.)

It should also be noted that neither absent nor withdrawn students are included in the benchmark calculations. While the variation between jurisdictions in the proportion of students absent or withdrawn from testing was reduced between 2000 and 2001, there is still a large variation across jurisdictions and this may affect the comparability of the results. (See Tables 5, 13, 22, 23 and 31.) Further work is to be undertaken by States and Territories to maximise the participation of students in the tests.

The publication of confidence intervals with the benchmark results provides a way of making inferences about the achievement of students that reflects the uncertainty associated with the measurement of student achievement. The benchmark achievement percentages reported in the tables include 95 per cent confidence intervals. These confidence intervals are based on three components: the error associated with the location of the benchmark cut-score, sampling error and measurement error. The error associated with the location of the benchmark cut-score is, by far, the largest component. In addition, as mentioned previously, each State and Territory is responsible for equating the appropriate benchmark location onto any new tests used by that State or Territory. This exercise results in a relatively small component of error, known as 'equating error', which is not currently reflected in the confidence intervals published here. It is anticipated that statistical tests of significance that further assist readers make comparisons about students' achievements, will be incorporated into future reports. Until these technical improvements are implemented, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.

## The results

The data in the following tables represent students who have achieved the benchmark as a percentage of the students participating in the State or Territory testing. The results reported here are for assessed students. The term 'assessed students' includes both students who sat the test and students who were formally exempted. Exempted students are reported as below the benchmark and thus are included in the benchmark calculation. Students not included in the benchmark calculation are those who were absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and students attending a school not participating in the testing.

# Reading

**Table 1** Percentage of year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark, by State and Territory, 2001

State/Territory 1. Average age <sup>(a)</sup> 2. Yrs of Schooling <sup>(b)</sup>	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales</b>	91.3	89.7	92.9	79.2	91.4
1. 8yrs 9mths	± 1.8	± 2.4	± 1.6	± 4.5	± 1.9
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(d)</sup></b>	89.0	86.5	91.4	64.3	86.0
1. 9yrs 0mths	± 2.2	± 2.7	± 2.1	± 5.3	± 2.7
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland</b>	89.0	87.1	91.5	71.6	87.4
1. 8yrs 3mths	± 2.5	± 3.0	± 2.2	± 5.1	± 2.9
2. 2yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	87.7	85.0	90.4	61.7	84.5
1. 8yrs 6mths	± 2.5	± 3.0	± 2.3	± 5.9	± 2.6
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Western Australia</b>	95.0	93.9	96.1	83.5	94.5
1. 8yrs 2mths	± 1.5	± 1.9	± 1.4	± 5.1	± 1.8
2. 2yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	95.1	93.8	96.4	92.6	96.0
1. 9yrs 2mths	± 1.3	± 1.7	± 1.2	± 3.4	± 2.5
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	68.0	64.1	72.3	29.2	34.7
1. 8yrs 8mths	± 2.2	± 2.9	± 2.7	± 3.3	± 3.6
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	95.1	93.2	97.1	89.8	92.4
1. 8yrs 10mths	± 0.8	± 1.3	± 0.7	± 4.9	± 2.0
2. 3yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia</b>	90.3	88.4	92.3	72.0	88.6
	± 2.0	± 2.6	± 1.9	± 4.8	± 2.3

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 5. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) Results adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years' results.

**Table 2 Percentage of year 5 students achieving the reading benchmark, by State and Territory, 2001**

State/Territory	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales</b>	92.0	90.5	93.5	76.6	90.6
1. 10yrs 9mths	± 1.2	± 1.5	± 1.1	± 3.2	± 1.5
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(d)</sup></b>	90.9	88.7	93.1	71.7	87.8
1. 10yrs 11mths	± 1.2	± 1.7	± 1.1	± 4.0	± 2.0
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland</b>	83.0	80.1	86.3	57.3	76.0
1. 10yrs 4mths	± 1.6	± 2.0	± 1.5	± 3.4	± 2.4
2. 4yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	89.0	86.5	91.6	62.9	87.0
1. 10yrs 6mths	± 1.3	± 1.7	± 1.3	± 4.5	± 1.8
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Western Australia</b>	94.5	93.2	95.9	77.9	92.2
1. 10yrs 2mths	± 1.0	± 1.3	± 0.9	± 4.3	± 1.7
2. 4yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	94.4	92.2	96.6	91.5	93.5
1. 11yrs 2mths	± 0.9	± 1.4	± 0.8	± 2.9	± 3.0
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	71.5	71.0	72.2	34.5	34.4
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 2.2	± 2.7	± 2.7	± 3.6	± 3.6
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	94.6	92.9	96.4	82.3	91.9
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 0.8	± 0.8	± 0.7	± 7.9	± 2.4
2. 5yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia</b>	89.8	87.8	92.0	66.9	87.7
	± 1.3	± 1.6	± 1.2	± 3.6	± 1.8

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 5. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) Results adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years' results.

**Table 3 Years of schooling and level of participation: Reading, by State and Territory, 2001**

State or Territory	Average age at time of testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Years at school <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of students assessed <sup>(c)</sup>	
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	8yrs,9mths	10yrs,9mths	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	94.3	94.3
Victoria	9yrs,0mths	10yrs,11mth	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	90.1	90.2
Queensland	8yrs,3mths	10yrs,4mths	2yrs,8mths	4yrs,8mths	96.0	96.5
South Australia	8yrs,6mths	10yrs,6mths	3yrs,3mths	5yrs,3mths	94.3	91.7
Western Australia	8yrs,2mths	10yrs,2mths	2yrs,7mths	4yrs,7mths	88.8	91.8
Tasmania	9yrs, 2mths	11yrs,2mths	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	94.3	94.2
Northern Territory	8yrs,8mths	10yrs,8mths	3yrs,3mths	5yrs,3mths	83.8	89.5
Australian Capital Territory	8yrs,10mths	10yrs,8mths	3yrs,6mths	5yrs,6mths	94.3	95.5
Australia					92.9	93.3

(a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.

(b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of the testing, expressed in years and months.

(c) The percentage of students from all schools who were assessed includes exempted students but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools which did not participate in the testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government and non-government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

**Table 4 Participation by school sector: Reading, 2001**

State or Territory	Percentage of assessed government school students <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of assessed non-government school students <sup>(b)</sup>		Proportion of assessed students (per cent)			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Government school students <sup>(c)</sup>		Non-government school students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	94.0	94.0	94.9	95.2	71.8	71.3	28.2	28.7
Victoria	90.2	90.2	89.9	90.0	69.8	68.6	30.2	31.4
Queensland	96.1	96.5	95.6	96.3	76.4	75.9	23.6	24.1
South Australia	93.8	90.3	95.7	95.2	71.4	70.3	28.6	29.7
Western Australia	88.3	91.0	90.3	94.1	74.8	73.3	25.2	26.7
Tasmania	95.0	94.7	92.0	92.7	78.7	76.4	21.3	23.6
Northern Territory	82.4	90.2	89.4	86.8	77.9	79.7	22.1	20.3
Australian Capital Territory	93.5	94.5	96.1	97.3	65.9	63.1	34.1	36.9
Australia	92.8	93.1	93.3	93.8	72.6	71.8	27.4	28.2

(a) The percentage of assessed students from government schools includes exempted students, but not students withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools that did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

(b) The percentage of assessed students from non-government schools includes exempted students, but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers and not students attending schools which did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time non-government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

(c) The percentage of assessed government school students compared with all assessed students.

(d) The percentage of assessed non-government school students compared with all assessed students.

**Table 5 Exemptions, absences and participation of equity groups: Reading, by State and Territory, 2001**

State or Territory	Percentage of students exempted from testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of students absent or withdrawn <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of assessed students			
					Indigenous students <sup>(c)</sup>		LBOTE students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	1.4	0.7	5.7	5.7	3.9	3.6	25.5	24.0
Victoria	1.9	1.7	9.4	9.1	0.8	0.8	16.8	17.3
Queensland	1.3	1.3	3.2	2.8	5.7	5.8	6.7	6.3
South Australia	2.5	2.1	5.7	8.3	3.3	3.0	16.5	15.0
Western Australia	0.8	0.8	11.2	8.2	4.3	4.8	12.1	13.3
Tasmania	0.7	0.7	5.7	5.8	4.4	5.9	4.4	3.7
Northern Territory	1.2	1.1	10.1	8.9	24.8	27.5	23.8	25.8
Australian Capital Territory	1.8	1.5	5.7	4.5	1.6	1.5	9.7	8.2
Australia	1.5	1.2	6.7	6.4	3.7	3.7	16.9	16.4

- (a) The percentage of students who were exempted from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. Exempted students are reported as not achieving the benchmark. The percentage of exempted students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with the non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.
- (b) The percentage of students who were absent or were withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. These students are not included in the benchmark calculations. The percentage of absent/withdrawn students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.
- (c) The percentage of assessed Indigenous students. The percentage of Indigenous students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on figures for the *National Schools Statistics Collection* and non-government students who participated in the relevant testing programs. The specific ways in which Indigenous student information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.
- (d) The percentage of assessed students with a language background other than English (LBOTE). The percentage of LBOTE students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on figures for the *National Schools Statistics Collection* and non-government students who participated in the relevant State or Territory testing programs. The specific ways in which LBOTE information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.

## Discussion

As demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2, the large majority of students from each of years 3 and 5 achieved the reading benchmark in 2001. As the benchmark represents the minimum level of competence deemed necessary to allow meaningful participation in the school learning program, this result is not surprising. However, approximately 10 per cent of students from each of years 3 and 5 were unable to achieve the benchmark.

### Changes over time

Table 6 shows the changes that have occurred during the three years in which performance against the reading benchmarks have been measured. When the designated confidence levels are taken into account, it is apparent there is no clear trend immediately obvious for year 3. For year 5, while there were no measurable differences between years, there was some evidence of potential for a generally upward trend.

### Gender differences

Table 7 provides data for male and female students for each year the benchmark achievement has been measured and Figures 1 and 2 show the gender distribution for 2001. The evidence of potential differences between male and female students in the achievement of the reading benchmarks that was apparent in 1999 and 2000, was continued in 2001.

### Indigenous students

The relative performance of Indigenous students is summarised in Table 8 and in Figures 1 and 2. The large gap in benchmark achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students remains clearly observable. As non-achievement of the benchmark represents an indication that the student will experience extreme difficulty with schooling, it is clear that Indigenous students remain an educationally disadvantaged group within the Australian community.

**Table 6** Percentage of students achieving the reading benchmark, years 3 and 5, Australia, 1999–2001

Year	Year 3	Year 5
1999	89.7 ± 2.5	85.6 ± 2.0
2000	92.5 ± 2.2	87.4 ± 2.1
2001	90.3 ± 2.0	89.8 ± 1.3

**Table 7** Percentage of students achieving the reading benchmark, by gender, years 3 and 5, Australia, 1999–2001

Year	Year 3		Year 5	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1999	87.9 ± 3.0	92.0 ± 2.2	83.4 ± 2.3	88.4 ± 1.8
2000	90.9 ± 2.7	94.3 ± 1.8	85.2 ± 2.3	89.6 ± 1.9
2001	88.4 ± 2.6	92.3 ± 1.9	87.8 ± 1.6	92.0 ± 1.2

**Table 8** Percentage of Indigenous students achieving the reading benchmark, years 3 and 5, Australia, 1999–2001

Year	Year 3		Year 5	
	Indigenous students	All students	Indigenous students	All students
1999	73.4 ± 6.2	89.7 ± 2.5	58.7 ± 4.2	85.6 ± 2.0
2000	76.9 ± 6.5	92.5 ± 2.2	62.0 ± 4.8	87.4 ± 2.1
2001	72.0 ± 4.8	90.3 ± 2.0	66.9 ± 3.6	89.8 ± 1.3

Figure 1 Percentage of year 3 students achieving the reading benchmark, by sub-group, Australia, 2001

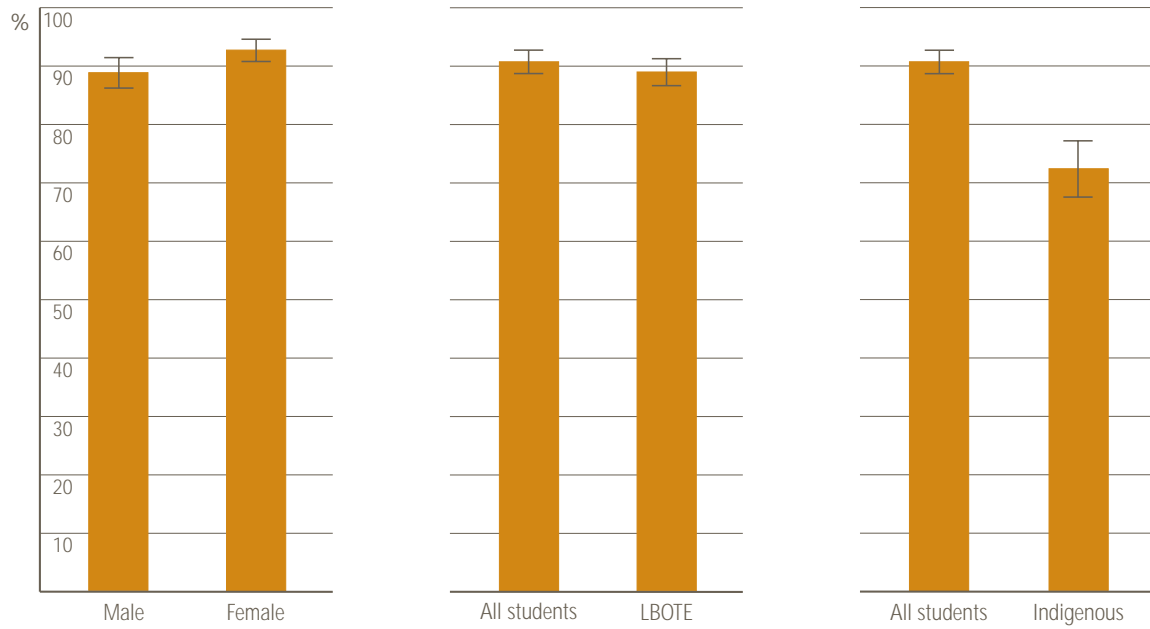
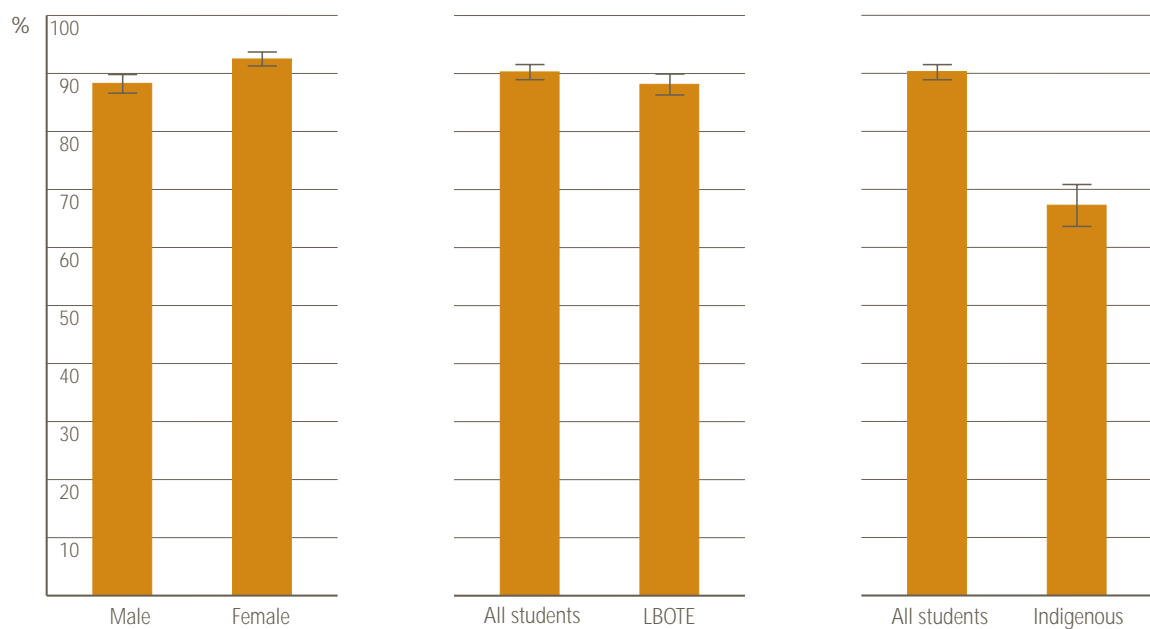


Figure 2 Percentage of year 5 students achieving the reading benchmark, by sub-group, Australia, 2001



# Writing

This is the first time the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* has published the results of assessments against the benchmarks for writing. Although these benchmarks had been developed and States and Territories had been assessing students, the equating process used to obtain a national picture had not been developed. These technical difficulties have now been overcome and this edition contains the results for years 3 and 5 in 2001 as well as those for years 3 and 5 in 1999 and 2000.

**Table 9 Percentage of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark, by State and Territory, 2001**

State/Territory 1 Average age <sup>(a)</sup> 2 Yrs of Schooling <sup>(b)</sup>	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales</b>	89.9	87.0	92.7	73.1	89.3
1. 8yrs 9mths	± 2.9	± 3.8	± 2.4	± 6.2	± 3.0
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(d)</sup></b>	94.7	93.1	96.2	78.2	92.9
1. 9yrs 0mths	± 1.7	± 2.4	± 1.4	± 4.0	± 2.1
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland</b>	85.4	81.1	90.5	68.4	83.8
1. 8yrs 3mths	± 1.9	± 2.6	± 1.6	± 3.4	± 2.1
2. 2yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	88.4	84.9	91.9	60.5	84.8
1. 8yrs 6mths	± 2.5	± 3.3	± 2.2	± 6.2	± 2.9
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Western Australia</b>	84.3	80.0	88.8	54.7	83.7
1. 8yrs 2mths	± 2.5	± 3.2	± 2.3	± 4.9	± 2.8
2. 2yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	91.8	88.7	94.9	89.4	90.2
1. 9yrs 2mths	± 1.6	± 2.2	± 1.4	± 3.9	± 3.9
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	79.1	75.8	82.5	48.4	51.1
1. 8yrs 8mths	± 2.7	± 3.4	± 2.7	± 4.9	± 4.4
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory<sup>(e)</sup></b>	93.3	90.7	96.1	87.4	90.4
1. 8yrs 10mths	± 1.3	± 1.9	± 1.0	± 6.2	± 2.5
2. 3yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia</b>	89.5	86.4	92.7	67.8	88.5
	± 2.3	± 3.0	± 1.9	± 4.9	± 2.7

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 13. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) Results adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years' results.
- (e) ACT writing data should be interpreted with some caution as a criterion-referenced assessment process was not used. This will be changed from 2003.

**Table 10 Percentage of year 5 students achieving the writing benchmark, by State and Territory, 2001**

State/Territory	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales</b>	95.9	94.6	97.2	87.4	94.6
1. 10yrs 9mths	± 0.9	± 1.4	± 0.7	± 3.1	± 1.1
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(d)</sup></b>	92.4	89.6	95.3	75.4	91.4
1. 10yrs 11mths	± 0.8	± 1.1	± 0.6	± 3.3	± 1.0
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland</b>	95.8	94.5	97.7	87.5	94.3
1. 10yrs 4mths	± 0.7	± 1.1	± 0.4	± 2.1	± 0.9
2. 4yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	95.0	93.3	96.8	80.0	93.7
1. 10yrs 6mths	± 0.8	± 1.2	± 0.7	± 3.9	± 1.1
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Western Australia</b>	89.4	85.6	93.2	63.8	86.7
1. 10yrs 2mths	± 1.9	± 2.6	± 1.4	± 4.9	± 2.3
2. 4yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	91.9	88.4	95.5	88.0	88.7
1. 11yrs 2mths	± 1.3	± 1.9	± 1.1	± 3.6	± 4.2
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	77.6	74.3	80.9	41.6	45.8
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 2.2	± 2.9	± 2.4	± 4.2	± 4.2
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory<sup>(e)</sup></b>	90.6	87.0	94.4	66.9	88.0
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 1.8	± 2.5	± 1.5	± 10.6	± 3.4
2. 5yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia</b>	94.0	91.9	96.2	79.9	92.2
	± 1.0	± 1.4	± 0.7	± 3.3	± 1.2

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 13. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) Results adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years' results.
- (e) ACT writing data should be interpreted with some caution as a criterion-referenced assessment process was not used. This will be changed from 2003.

**Table 11 Years of schooling and level of participation: Writing, by State and Territory, 2001**

State or Territory	Average age at time of testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Years at school <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of students assessed <sup>(c)</sup>	
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	8yrs,9mths	10yrs,9mths	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	91.2	91.2
Victoria	9yrs,0mths	10yrs,11mth	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	89.9	89.5
Queensland	8yrs,3mths	10yrs,4mths	2yrs,8mths	4yrs,8mths	95.7	96.3
South Australia	8yrs,6mths	10yrs,6mths	3yrs,3mths	5yrs,3mths	92.6	91.9
Western Australia	8yrs,2mths	10yrs,2mths	2yrs,7mths	4yrs,7mths	89.1	90.9
Tasmania	9yrs, 2mths	11yrs,2mths	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	92.4	92.7
Northern Territory	8yrs,8mths	10yrs,8mths	3yrs,3mths	5yrs,3mths	76.5	82.3
Australian Capital Territory	8yrs,10mths	10yrs,8mths	3yrs,6mths	5yrs,6mths	96.6	97.2
Australia					91.6	91.7

(a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.

(b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of the testing, expressed in years and months.

(c) The percentage of students from all schools who were assessed includes exempted students but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools which did not participate in the testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government and non-government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

**Table 12 Participation by school sector: Writing, 2001**

State or Territory	Percentage of assessed government school students <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of assessed non-government school students <sup>(b)</sup>		Proportion of assessed students (per cent)			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Government school students <sup>(c)</sup>		Non-government school students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	92.3	92.0	88.5	87.2	72.8	72.6	27.2	27.4
Victoria	89.9	89.6	89.7	89.3	69.8	68.7	30.2	31.3
Queensland	95.8	96.4	95.4	96.2	76.4	75.9	23.6	24.1
South Australia	91.7	91.1	94.8	94.0	71.2	70.7	28.8	29.3
Western Australia	88.7	90.0	90.2	93.4	74.9	73.2	25.1	26.8
Tasmania	93.0	92.3	90.2	94.1	78.7	75.6	21.3	24.4
Northern Territory	75.2	81.7	81.5	84.6	77.9	78.5	22.1	21.5
Australian Capital Territory	96.4	96.7	97.0	98.1	66.4	63.5	33.6	36.5
Australia	91.9	92.0	90.8	90.8	73.0	72.2	27.0	27.8

(a) The percentage of assessed students from government schools includes exempted students, but not students withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools that did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

(b) The percentage of assessed students from non-government schools includes exempted students, but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers and not students attending schools which did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time non-government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

(c) The percentage of assessed government school students compared with all assessed students.

(d) The percentage of assessed non-government school students compared with all assessed students.

**Table 13 Exemptions, absences and participation of equity groups: Writing, by State and Territory, 2001**

State or Territory	Percentage of students exempted from testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of students absent or withdrawn <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of assessed students			
					Indigenous students <sup>(c)</sup>		LBOTE students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	1.3	1.2	8.8	9.4	3.7	3.5	24.5	23.4
Victoria	1.9	1.7	9.6	9.7	0.8	0.8	16.9	17.2
Queensland	1.3	1.3	3.4	3.0	5.7	5.8	6.7	6.3
South Australia	2.2	2.0	7.4	8.1	3.2	2.9	15.7	14.8
Western Australia	0.8	0.8	10.9	9.1	4.6	4.7	12.2	13.2
Tasmania	0.7	0.7	7.6	7.3	4.3	5.7	4.3	3.7
Northern Territory	1.5	1.2	11.7	11.9	18.7	22.0	18.0	20.4
Australian Capital Territory	1.6	1.5	3.4	2.8	1.7	1.6	10.0	8.9
Australia	1.5	1.3	8.0	7.9	3.6	3.6	16.4	16.1

- (a) The percentage of students who were exempted from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. Exempted students are reported as not achieving the benchmark. The percentage of exempted students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with the non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.
- (b) The percentage of students who were absent or were withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. These students are not included in the benchmark calculations. The percentage of absent/withdrawn students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.
- (c) The percentage of assessed Indigenous students. The percentage of Indigenous students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on figures for the *National Schools Statistics Collection* and non-government students who participated in the relevant testing programs. The specific ways in which Indigenous student information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.
- (d) The percentage of assessed students with a language background other than English (LBOTE). The percentage of LBOTE students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on figures for the *National Schools Statistics Collection* and non-government students who participated in the relevant State or Territory testing programs. The specific ways in which LBOTE information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.

**Table 14 Percentage of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark, by State and Territory, 1999**

State/Territory 1 Average age <sup>(a)</sup> 2 Yrs of Schooling <sup>(b)</sup>	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales<sup>(d)</sup></b>	92.5	91.0	94.0	80.4	91.6
1. 8yrs 9mths	± 2.1	± 2.8	± 1.9	± 5.2	± 2.6
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(e)</sup></b>	97.4	96.5	98.3	91.8	96.9
1. 8yrs 11mths	± 1.1	± 1.6	± 0.9	± 4.0	± 1.6
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland<sup>(f)</sup></b>	90.5	89.2	93.6	82.9	91.7
1. 8yrs 3mths	± 2.5	± 3.2	± 2.4	± 5.4	± 4.5
2. 2yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Western Australia</b>	82.2	78.1	86.3	52.3	79.5
1. 8yrs 2mths	± 2.7	± 3.3	± 2.6	± 4.9	± 3.1
2. 2yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	89.6	86.0	93.4	84.3	74.9
1. 9yrs 0mths	± 1.8	± 2.5	± 1.5	± 4.6	± 9.4
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	63.9	60.6	68.8	27.3	21.0
1. 8yrs 8mths	± 2.9	± 3.5	± 3.0	± 3.4	± 3.4
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory<sup>(g)</sup></b>	86.7	81.3	92.3	68.5	81.1
1. 8yrs 8mths	± 2.1	± 3.1	± 1.7	± 12.0	± 3.6
2. 3yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia<sup>(h)</sup></b>	91.9	90.0	93.9	66.9	89.8
	± 1.8	± 2.4	± 1.6	± 4.8	± 2.4

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 22. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- n.a. not available
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) In 1999 and 2000, New South Wales assessed a sample of students based on schools' voluntary participation. This accounts for the unusually high percentage of absent or withdrawn New South Wales students.
- (e) Victoria 1999: Data on exempt students was not available. As such, results do not include exempt students.
- (f) Data from Queensland are based on a sample of approximately 10 per cent of year 3 students from government and non-government schools. Data from Queensland for the percentage of male, female, Indigenous and LBOTE students do not include students formally exempted from testing.
- (g) ACT writing data should be interpreted with some caution as a criterion-referenced assessment process was not used. This will be changed from 2003.
- (h) Excludes data from South Australia.

**Table 15 Percentage of year 5 students achieving the writing benchmark, by State and Territory, 1999**

State/Territory 1 Average age <sup>(a)</sup> 2 Yrs of Schooling <sup>(b)</sup>	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales<sup>(d)</sup></b>	95.5	94.5	96.5	86.9	94.9
1. 10yrs 9mths	± 1.3	± 1.9	± 1.0	± 4.2	± 1.6
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(e)</sup></b>	95.1	93.3	97.0	85.3	94.3
1. 10yrs 11mths	± 0.6	± 0.9	± 0.5	± 3.9	± 0.8
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland<sup>(f)</sup></b>	94.6	94.6	96.9	85.8	95.6
1. 10yrs 3mths	± 1.1	± 0.8	± 0.9	± 1.4	± 0.8
2. 4yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Western Australia</b>	86.8	82.6	91.1	54.8	83.0
1. 10yrs 2mths	± 1.3	± 1.9	± 1.2	± 3.7	± 1.8
2. 4yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	85.5	80.1	90.8	70.6	75.2
1. 11yrs 0mths	± 2.2	± 3.2	± 1.9	± 5.8	± 9.9
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	67.0	62.7	73.4	28.5	21.9
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 2.4	± 3.2	± 2.6	± 3.4	± 3.5
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory<sup>(g)</sup></b>	84.7	78.7	90.4	60.0	73.8
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 1.7	± 2.7	± 1.7	± 14.8	± 4.0
2. 5yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia<sup>(h)</sup></b>	93.0	91.4	95.4	74.6	91.4
	± 1.1	± 1.5	± 0.9	± 3.6	± 1.5

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 23. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- n.a. not available
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) In 1999 and 2000, New South Wales assessed a sample of students based on schools' voluntary participation. This accounts for the unusually high percentage of absent or withdrawn New South Wales students.
- (e) Victoria 1999: Data on exempt students was not available. As such, results do not include exempt students.
- (f) Data from Queensland for the percentage of male, female, Indigenous and LBOTE students do not include students formally exempted from testing.
- (g) ACT writing data should be interpreted with some caution as a criterion-referenced assessment process was not used. This will be changed from 2003.
- (h) Excludes data from South Australia.

**Table 16 Percentage of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark, by State and Territory, 2000**

State/Territory 1 Average age <sup>(a)</sup> 2 Yrs of Schooling <sup>(b)</sup>	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales<sup>(d)</sup></b>	91.7	89.7	93.6	79.0	91.0
1. 8yrs 9mths	± 2.3	± 3.1	± 2.0	± 5.6	± 2.7
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(e)</sup></b>	94.5	92.9	96.0	87.8	93.7
1. 8yrs 11mths	± 2.6	± 3.6	± 2.2	± 6.2	± 3.7
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland<sup>(f)</sup></b>	88.2	86.2	90.7	76.2	88.0
1. 8yrs 4mths	± 2.3	± 3.1	± 2.2	± 5.3	± 4.1
2. 2yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	87.8	84.6	91.3	64.0	85.0
1. 8yrs 6mths	± 2.5	± 3.3	± 2.3	± 7.9	± 3.5
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Western Australia</b>	79.9	74.8	85.2	47.9	76.9
1. 8yrs 2mths	± 3.4	± 4.2	± 3.1	± 5.2	± 3.7
2. 2yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	86.2	81.1	91.4	75.1	81.6
1. 9yrs 1mth	± 1.6	± 2.2	± 1.5	± 5.1	± 5.0
2. 3yrs 8mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	68.4	64.4	72.6	29.2	41.1
1. 8yrs 8mths	± 2.6	± 3.2	± 2.7	± 3.4	± 3.4
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory<sup>(g)</sup></b>	89.9	86.4	93.6	77.9	80.6
1. 8yrs 8mths	± 1.1	± 1.7	± 1.1	± 8.8	± 3.4
2. 3yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia</b>	90.0	87.4	92.6	65.0	88.0
	± 2.6	± 3.5	± 2.2	± 5.4	± 3.2

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 22. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) In 1999 and 2000, New South Wales assessed a sample of students based on schools' voluntary participation. This accounts for the unusually high percentage of absent or withdrawn New South Wales students.
- (e) Victoria 2000: Data on exempt students was not available. As such, results do not include exempt students.
- (f) Data from Queensland are based on a sample of approximately 10 per cent of year 3 students from government and non-government schools.
- (g) ACT writing data should be interpreted with some caution as a criterion-referenced assessment process was not used. This will be changed from 2003.

**Table 17 Percentage of year 5 students achieving the writing benchmark, by State and Territory, 2000**

State/Territory	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales<sup>(d)</sup></b>	94.3	92.9	95.7	83.3	93.5
1. 10yrs 9mths	± 1.8	± 2.4	± 1.4	± 5.3	± 2.1
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(e)</sup></b>	92.6	90.0	95.2	81.4	91.7
1. 10yrs 11mths	± 0.8	± 1.1	± 0.7	± 4.1	± 1.0
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland</b>	95.5	94.3	97.1	87.2	93.4
1. 10yrs 4mths	± 1.0	± 1.4	± 0.8	± 2.5	± 1.4
2. 4yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	93.6	93.2	94.1	91.5	91.6
1. 10yrs 6mths	± 1.6	± 1.7	± 1.8	± 3.0	± 2.3
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Western Australia</b>	86.3	81.8	91.0	52.6	82.6
1. 10yrs 2mths	± 1.2	± 1.8	± 1.0	± 3.5	± 1.6
2. 4yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	88.2	83.7	93.1	76.8	91.6
1. 11yrs 0mths	± 1.7	± 2.6	± 1.4	± 5.0	± 4.0
2. 5yrs 8mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	72.4	69.7	75.6	32.6	47.6
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 2.1	± 2.8	± 2.4	± 3.4	± 3.2
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory<sup>(f)</sup></b>	83.2	77.0	89.1	71.4	74.4
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 1.6	± 2.5	± 1.6	± 11.1	± 4.7
2. 5yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia</b>	92.5	90.2	94.9	74.3	90.2
	± 1.3	± 1.7	± 1.1	± 3.7	± 1.8

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 23. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) In 1999 and 2000, New South Wales assessed a sample of students based on schools' voluntary participation. This accounts for the unusually high percentage of absent or withdrawn New South Wales students.
- (e) Victoria 2000: Data on exempt students was not available. As such, results do not include exempt students.
- (f) ACT writing data should be interpreted with some caution as a criterion-referenced assessment process was not used. This will be changed from 2003.

**Table 18 Years of schooling and level of participation: Writing, year 3, by State and Territory, 1999, 2000**

State or Territory	Average age at time of testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Years at school <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of students assessed <sup>(c)</sup>	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
New South Wales	8yrs,9mths	8yrs,9mths	3yrs,7mths	3yrs,7mths	47.3	65.4
Victoria	8yrs,11mths	8yrs,11mths	3yrs,7mths	3yrs,7mths	89.8	89.6
Queensland <sup>(d)</sup>	8yrs,3mths	8yrs,4mths	2yrs,8mths	2yrs,8mths	8.8	8.7
South Australia	n.a.	8yrs,6mths	n.a.	3yrs,3mths	n.a.	46.4
Western Australia	8yrs,2mths	8yrs,2mths	2yrs,7mths	2yrs,7mths	88.4	90.0
Tasmania	9yrs, 0mths	9yrs,1mth	3yrs,7mths	3yrs,8mths	93.0	94.7
Northern Territory	8yrs,8mths	8yrs,8mths	3yrs,3mths	3yrs,3mths	77.4	79.6
Australian Capital Territory	8yrs,8mths	8yrs,8mths	3yrs,6mths	3yrs,6mths	63.2	60.0
Australia					67.8	73.7

n.a. not available

(a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.

(b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of the testing, expressed in years and months.

(c) The percentage of students from all schools who were assessed includes exempted students, except for Victoria, but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools which did not participate in the testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government and non-government students based on data from the *National Schools Statistics Collection*.

(d) Queensland assessed a sample of students at the year 3 level. If population testing had been undertaken it is estimated that approximately 95 per cent of the year 3 students from both government and non-government schools would have been assessed.

**Table 19 Years of schooling and level of participation: Writing, year 5, by State and Territory, 1999, 2000**

State or Territory	Average age at time of testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Years at school <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of students assessed <sup>(c)</sup>	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
New South Wales	10yrs,9mths	10yrs,9mths	5yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	46.3	65.1
Victoria	10yrs,11mth	10yrs,11mth	5yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	89.0	89.6
Queensland	10yrs,3mths	10yrs,4mths	4yrs,8mths	4yrs,8mths	97.6	97.0
South Australia	n.a.	10yrs,6mths	n.a.	5yrs,3mths	n.a.	60.1
Western Australia	10yrs,2mths	10yrs,2mths	4yrs,7mths	4yrs,7mths	88.2	90.6
Tasmania	11yrs,0mths	11yrs,0mths	5yrs,7mths	5yrs,8mths	92.3	94.5
Northern Territory	10yrs,8mths	10yrs,8mths	5yrs,3mths	5yrs,3mths	87.7	85.8
Australian Capital Territory	10yrs,8mths	10yrs,8mths	5yrs,6mths	5yrs,6mths	61.1	59.6
Australia					74.9	80.2

n.a. not available

(a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.

(b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of the testing, expressed in years and months.

(c) The percentage of students from all schools who were assessed includes exempted students, except for Victoria, but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools which did not participate in the testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government and non-government students based on data from the *National Schools Statistics Collection*.

**Table 20 Participation by school sector: Writing, year 3, 1999, 2000**

State or Territory	Percentage of assessed government school students <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of assessed non-government school students <sup>(b)</sup>		Proportion of assessed students (per cent)			
					Government school students <sup>(c)</sup>		Non-government school students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
New South Wales	59.7	66.8	13.9	61.6	92.0	74.6	8.0	25.4
Victoria	88.1	88.2	94.1	93.0	70.2	70.1	29.8	29.9
Queensland <sup>(e)</sup>	8.9	8.7	8.2	8.7	77.9	76.6	21.1	23.4
South Australia	n.a.	50.2	n.a.	36.7	n.a.	78.1	n.a.	21.9
Western Australia	90.9	89.9	80.5	90.3	78.2	75.7	21.8	24.3
Tasmania	96.5	95.0	81.3	93.4	80.0	79.0	20.0	21.0
Northern Territory	75.8	78.1	84.0	85.9	78.0	79.4	22.0	20.6
Australian Capital Territory	94.4	89.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Australia	59.4	62.2	44.0	60.7	79.3	74.1	20.7	26.0

n.a. not available

- (a) The percentage of assessed students from government schools includes exempted students, except for Victoria, but not students withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools that did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on data from the *National Schools Statistics Collection*.
- (b) The percentage of assessed students from non-government schools includes exempted students, except for Victoria, but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers and not students attending schools which did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time non-government students based on data from the *National Schools Statistics Collection*.
- (c) The percentage of assessed government school students compared with all assessed students.
- (d) The percentage of assessed non-government school students compared with all assessed students.
- (e) In 1999 and 2000, Queensland assessed a sample of students at the year 3 level. If population testing had been undertaken, it is estimated that approximately 95 per cent of the year 3 students from both government and non-government schools would have been assessed. In 1999, data from Queensland for the relative proportion of assessed students from government and non-government schools do not include students formally exempted from testing.

**Table 21 Participation by school sector: Writing, year 5, 1999, 2000**

State or Territory	Percentage of assessed government school students <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of assessed non-government school students <sup>(b)</sup>		Proportion of assessed students (per cent)			
					Government school students <sup>(c)</sup>		Non-government school students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
New South Wales	59.5	66.8	12.3	60.7	92.6	73.5	7.4	26.5
Victoria	87.2	88.1	93.4	93.2	69.7	69.0	30.3	31.0
Queensland <sup>(e)</sup>	96.9	96.9	95.0	97.2	75.6	75.8	23.2	24.2
South Australia	n.a.	48.0	n.a.	92.3	n.a.	58.1	n.a.	41.9
Western Australia	91.0	90.3	79.6	91.4	77.9	74.6	22.1	25.4
Tasmania	96.1	94.5	79.8	94.2	79.9	76.5	20.1	23.5
Northern Territory	86.4	84.8	93.3	89.7	79.2	78.5	20.8	21.5
Australian Capital Territory	94.3	91.9	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Australia	80.3	80.2	59.2	80.2	78.5	72.7	21.2	27.3

n.a. not available

- (a) The percentage of assessed students from government schools includes exempted students, except for Victoria, but not students withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools that did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on data from the *National Schools Statistics Collection*.
- (b) The percentage of assessed students from non-government schools includes exempted students, except for Victoria, but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers and not students attending schools which did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time non-government students based on data from the *National Schools Statistics Collection*.
- (c) The percentage of assessed government school students compared with all assessed students.
- (d) The percentage of assessed non-government school students compared with all assessed students.
- (e) In 1999, data from Queensland for the percentage of students from government and non-government schools do not include students formally exempted from testing.

**Table 22 Exemptions, absences and participation of equity groups: Writing, by State and Territory, year 3, 1999, 2000**

State or Territory	Percentage of students exempted from testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of students absent or withdrawn <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of assessed students			
					Indigenous students <sup>(c)</sup>		LBOTE students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
New South Wales <sup>(e)</sup>	0.7	0.8	52.7	34.6	1.9	2.4	10.6	15.6
Victoria	n.a.	n.a.	10.8	10.7	0.6	0.7	13.7	13.5
Queensland <sup>(f)</sup>	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6
South Australia	n.a.	1.1	n.a.	3.6	n.a.	1.4	n.a.	6.2
Western Australia	0.5	1.0	11.6	10.0	5.0	4.7	13.8	13.3
Tasmania	0.5	0.9	7.0	5.3	5.1	5.3	1.3	3.0
Northern Territory	10.2	7.1	8.8	5.5	18.8	22.7	16.0	27.5
Australian Capital Territory	0.9	2.2	2.8	5.1	1.3	1.2	5.0	5.4
Australia	2.1	0.8	29.9	19.6	2.3	2.1	11.6	13.0

n.a. not available

- (a) The percentage of students who were exempted from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. Exempted students are reported as not achieving the benchmark. The percentage of exempted students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with the non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.
- (b) The percentage of students who were absent or were withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. These students are not included in the benchmark calculations. The percentage of absent/withdrawn students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.
- (c) The percentage of assessed Indigenous students. The percentage of Indigenous students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on figures from the *National Schools Statistics Collection* and non-government students who participated in the relevant testing programs. The specific ways in which Indigenous student information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.
- (d) The percentage of assessed students with a language background other than English (LBOTE). The percentage of LBOTE students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data and non-government students who participated in the relevant State or Territory testing programs. The specific ways in which LBOTE information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.
- (e) In 1999 and 2000, the Writing tests in New South Wales were voluntary. This accounts for the unusually high percentage of absent or withdrawn New South Wales students.
- (f) In 1999 and 2000, Queensland assessed a sample of students at the year 3 level. In 1999, data from Queensland for the percentage of Indigenous and LBOTE students assessed do not include students formally exempted from testing.

**Table 23 Exemptions, absences and participation of equity groups: Writing, by State and Territory, year 5, 1999, 2000**

State or Territory	Percentage of students exempted from testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of students absent or withdrawn <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of assessed students			
					Indigenous students <sup>(c)</sup>		LBOTE students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
New South Wales <sup>(e)</sup>	0.6	0.7	53.7	34.9	2.0	2.3	10.6	15.1
Victoria	n.a.	n.a.	11.6	10.6	0.6	0.7	14.9	13.4
Queensland <sup>(f)</sup>	1.1	1.3	2.1	2.5	6.0	5.8	8.0	7.7
South Australia	n.a.	1.1	n.a.	3.6	n.a.	1.5	n.a.	10.0
Western Australia	0.2	0.9	11.8	9.4	4.8	4.9	14.1	13.4
Tasmania	0.5	0.5	7.7	5.5	5.2	5.2	1.0	2.7
Northern Territory	9.0	5.0	9.6	5.8	22.7	24.4	18.1	29.7
Australian Capital Territory	1.0	2.3	2.7	2.9	0.9	0.9	8.9	4.9
Australia	0.6	0.8	24.4	16.4	3.1	3.2	11.3	12.4

n.a. not available

(a) The percentage of students who were exempted from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. Exempted students are reported as not achieving the benchmark. The percentage of exempted students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with the non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.

(b) The percentage of students who were absent or were withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. These students are not included in the benchmark calculations. The percentage of absent/withdrawn students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.

(c) The percentage of assessed Indigenous students. The percentage of Indigenous students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on figures from the *National Schools Statistics Collection* and non-government students who participated in the relevant testing programs. The specific ways in which Indigenous student information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.

(d) The percentage of assessed students with a language background other than English (LBOTE). The percentage of LBOTE students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data and non-government students who participated in the relevant State or Territory testing programs. The specific ways in which LBOTE information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.

(e) In 1999 and 2000, the Writing tests in New South Wales were voluntary. This accounts for the unusually high percentage of absent or withdrawn New South Wales students.

(f) In 1999, data from Queensland for the percentage of Indigenous and LBOTE students assessed do not include students formally exempted from testing.

## Discussion

As demonstrated in Tables 9 and 10, the large majority of students from each of years 3 and 5 achieved the writing benchmark in 2001. As with reading, the benchmark represents the minimum level of competence deemed necessary to allow meaningful participation in the school learning program, so this result is not surprising.

### Changes over time

Table 24 shows the changes that have occurred during the three years in which performance against the writing benchmarks has been measured. When the designated confidence levels are taken into account there were no measurable differences between years.

### Gender differences

Table 25 provides data for male and female students for each year the benchmark achievement has been measured and Figures 3 and 4 show the gender distribution for 2001. For each year group it is clear that more females than males achieve the writing benchmark.

### Indigenous students

The relative performance of Indigenous students is summarised in Table 26 and in Figures 3 and 4. The large gap in benchmark achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students that was evident in the reading results is again apparent in writing. However, in year 5, while the changes over time are not measurable, there appears to be some potential for slight gains to be achieved if the existing trend continues.

**Table 24** Percentage of students achieving the writing benchmark, years 3 and 5, Australia, 1999–2001

Year	Year 3	Year 5
1999	91.9 ± 1.8	93.0 ± 1.1
2000	90.0 ± 2.6	92.5 ± 1.3
2001	89.5 ± 2.3	94.0 ± 1.0

**Table 25** Percentage of students achieving the writing benchmark, by gender, years 3 and 5, Australia, 1999–2001

Year	Year 3		Year 5	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1999	90.0 ± 2.4	93.9 ± 1.6	91.4 ± 1.5	95.4 ± 0.9
2000	87.4 ± 3.5	92.6 ± 2.2	90.2 ± 1.7	94.9 ± 1.1
2001	86.4 ± 3.0	92.7 ± 1.9	91.9 ± 1.4	96.2 ± 0.7

**Table 26** Percentage of Indigenous students achieving the writing benchmark, years 3 and 5, Australia, 1999–2001

Year	Year 3		Year 5	
	Indigenous students	All students	Indigenous students	All students
1999	66.9 ± 4.8	91.9 ± 1.8	74.6 ± 3.6	93.0 ± 1.1
2000	65.0 ± 5.4	90.0 ± 2.6	74.3 ± 3.7	92.5 ± 1.3
2001	67.8 ± 4.9	89.5 ± 2.3	79.9 ± 3.3	94.0 ± 1.0

Figure 3 Percentage of year 3 students achieving the writing benchmark, by sub-group, Australia, 2001

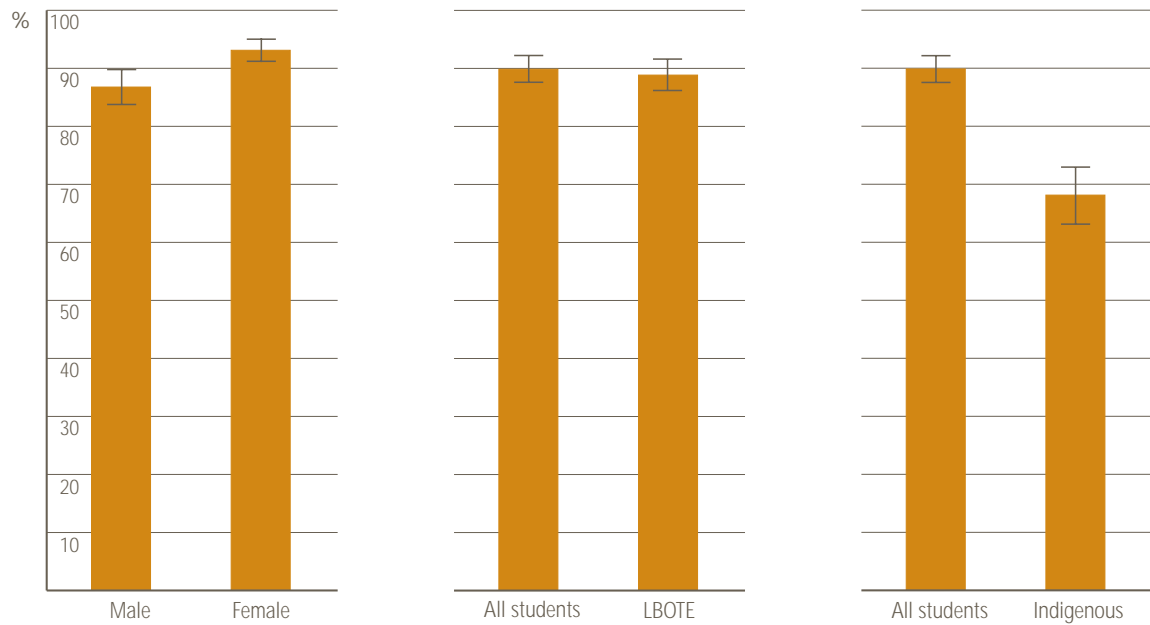
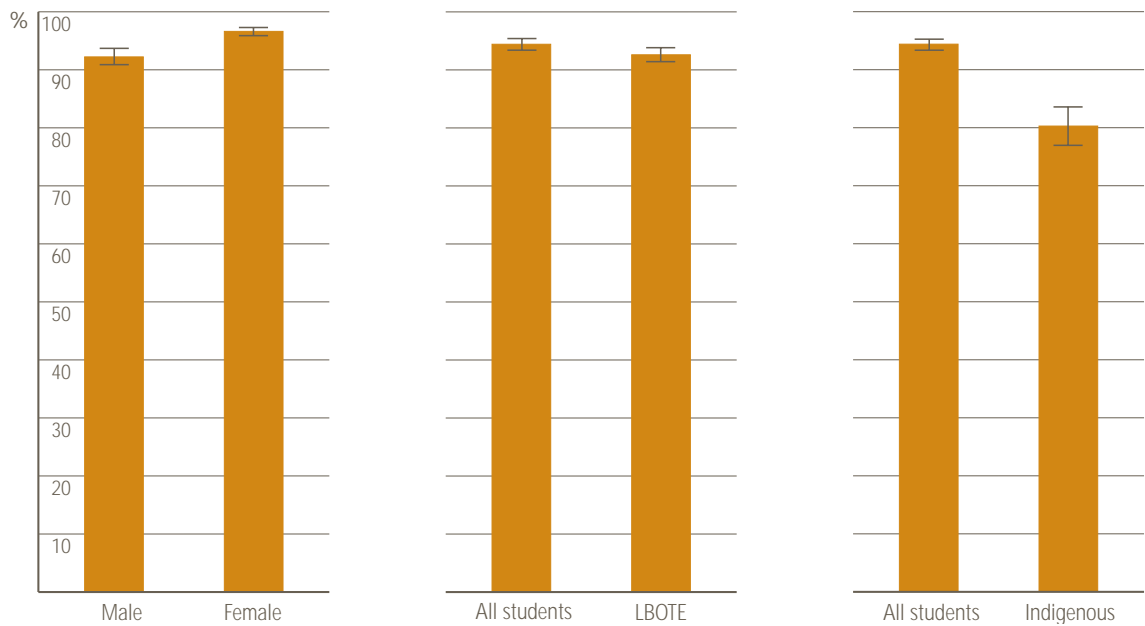


Figure 4 Percentage of year 5 students achieving the writing benchmark, by sub-group, Australia, 2001



# Numeracy

2001 was the second year that student performance against benchmarks for numeracy was measured. As in the previous year, data are available for years 3 and 5.

**Table 27 Percentage of year 3 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by State and Territory, 2001**

State/Territory 1 Average age <sup>(a)</sup> 2 Yrs of Schooling <sup>(b)</sup>	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales</b>	95.0	94.9	95.0	86.9	94.7
1. 8yrs 9mths	± 0.9	± 1.0	± 0.9	± 2.8	± 1.0
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(d)</sup></b>	94.1	93.7	94.5	75.1	91.8
1. 9yrs 0mths	± 1.2	± 1.2	± 1.4	± 4.3	± 1.5
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland</b>	93.4	93.4	94.0	79.0	91.5
1. 8yrs 3mths	± 1.4	± 1.5	± 1.6	± 4.0	± 1.8
2. 2yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	91.1	90.3	91.8	68.0	86.2
1. 8yrs 6mths	± 1.4	± 1.5	± 1.3	± 4.5	± 1.9
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Western Australia</b>	92.9	92.4	93.4	79.2	92.0
1. 8yrs 2mths	± 2.0	± 2.2	± 2.2	± 5.3	± 2.3
2. 2yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	95.6	95.2	95.9	94.1	94.3
1. 9yrs 2mths	± 1.3	± 1.4	± 1.4	± 3.0	± 3.2
2. 3yrs 7mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	86.6	84.9	88.4	65.0	64.8
1. 8yrs 8mths	± 2.0	± 2.4	± 2.1	± 4.8	± 4.5
2. 3yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	97.0	96.5	97.4	91.4	94.2
1. 8yrs 10mths	± 0.6	± 0.7	± 0.7	± 4.3	± 1.6
2. 3yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia</b>	93.9	93.7	94.3	80.2	92.5
	± 1.2	± 1.3	± 1.3	± 3.9	± 1.5

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 31. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) Results adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years' results.

**Table 28 Percentage of year 5 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by State and Territory, 2001**

State/Territory	Percentage of students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of male students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of female students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of Indigenous <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark	Percentage of LBOTE <sup>(c)</sup> students achieving the benchmark
<b>New South Wales</b>	91.7	91.5	91.8	74.6	90.3
1. 10yrs 9mths	± 1.0	± 1.1	± 1.1	± 2.9	± 1.2
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Victoria<sup>(d)</sup></b>	94.7	94.4	94.9	80.4	92.4
1. 10yrs 11mths	± 1.0	± 1.0	± 1.1	± 3.3	± 1.3
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Queensland</b>	81.8	82.2	81.9	54.4	75.0
1. 10yrs 4mths	± 1.9	± 2.0	± 2.2	± 3.5	± 2.4
2. 4yrs 8mths					
<b>South Australia</b>	85.9	85.6	86.2	54.9	82.8
1. 10yrs 6mths	± 1.3	± 1.5	± 1.6	± 4.4	± 1.8
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Western Australia</b>	90.0	89.7	90.3	65.6	87.3
1. 10yrs 2mths	± 1.9	± 2.0	± 2.2	± 5.4	± 2.6
2. 4yrs 7mths					
<b>Tasmania</b>	91.7	91.2	92.2	85.0	89.1
1. 11yrs 2mths	± 1.3	± 1.6	± 1.6	± 4.1	± 4.2
2. 5yrs 7mths					
<b>Northern Territory</b>	68.8	69.2	68.3	32.3	34.0
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 2.8	± 3.0	± 3.4	± 4.1	± 3.8
2. 5yrs 3mths					
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	93.1	92.2	94.0	71.9	87.4
1. 10yrs 8mths	± 1.1	± 1.4	± 1.3	± 10.1	± 3.2
2. 5yrs 6mths					
<b>Australia</b>	89.6	89.5	89.8	63.2	87.9
	± 1.3	± 1.4	± 1.5	± 3.7	± 1.6

Notes:

- The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95% confidence intervals, for example, 80% ± 2.7%.
  - Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies considerably across jurisdictions as shown in Table 31. Hence, readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results.
  - Some of the movements in the results over time may have occurred because of State equating processes, and may not reflect actual improvements in student performance.
- (a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.
- (c) The methods used to identify Indigenous students and students with a language background other than English (LBOTE) varied between jurisdictions as outlined in the explanatory notes.
- (d) Results adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years' results.

**Table 29 Years of schooling and level of participation: Numeracy, by State and Territory, 2001**

State or Territory	Average age at time of testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Years at school <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of students assessed <sup>(c)</sup>	
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	8yrs,9mths	10yrs,9mths	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	94.4	94.4
Victoria	9yrs,0mths	10yrs,11mths	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	90.7	91.0
Queensland	8yrs,3mths	10yrs,4mths	2yrs,8mths	4yrs,8mths	96.6	97.3
South Australia	8yrs,6mths	10yrs,6mths	3yrs,3mths	5yrs,3mths	92.1	93.7
Western Australia	8yrs,2mths	10yrs,2mths	2yrs,7mths	4yrs,7mths	90.5	92.7
Tasmania	9yrs, 2mths	11yrs,2mths	3yrs,7mths	5yrs,7mths	93.3	95.1
Northern Territory	8yrs,8mths	10yrs,8mths	3yrs,3mths	5yrs,3mths	85.6	90.2
Australian Capital Territory	8yrs,10mths	10yrs,8mths	3yrs,6mths	5yrs,6mths	96.9	97.5
Australia					93.3	93.9

(a) The typical average age of students at the time of testing, expressed in years and months.

(b) The typical average time students had spent in schooling at the time of the testing, expressed in years and months.

(c) The percentage of students from all schools who were assessed includes exempted students but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools which did not participate in the testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government and non-government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

**Table 30 Participation by school sector: Numeracy, 2001**

State or Territory	Percentage of assessed government school students <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of assessed non-government school students <sup>(b)</sup>		Proportion of assessed students (per cent)			
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Government school students <sup>(c)</sup>		Non-government school students <sup>(d)</sup>	
					Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	94.1	94.0	95.0	95.3	71.8	71.3	28.2	28.7
Victoria	90.9	91.0	90.4	90.9	69.8	68.6	30.2	31.4
Queensland	96.7	97.4	96.3	97.0	76.4	76.0	23.6	24.0
South Australia	90.8	92.9	95.4	95.7	70.8	70.8	29.2	29.2
Western Australia	90.3	92.0	91.4	94.7	75.0	73.4	25.0	26.6
Tasmania	92.9	95.2	94.7	94.6	77.9	76.1	22.1	23.9
Northern Territory	84.4	90.8	90.3	87.7	78.1	79.7	21.9	20.3
Australian Capital Territory	96.6	96.9	97.6	98.5	66.3	63.4	33.7	36.6
Australia	93.1	93.8	93.7	94.4	72.6	71.8	27.4	28.2

(a) The percentage of assessed students from government schools includes exempted students, but not students withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing and not students attending schools that did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

(b) The percentage of assessed students from non-government schools includes exempted students, but not students absent or withdrawn by parents/care-givers and not students attending schools which did not participate in testing at all. The figure is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time non-government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data.

(c) The percentage of assessed government school students compared with all assessed students.

(d) The percentage of assessed non-government school students compared with all assessed students.

**Table 31 Exemptions, absences and participation of equity groups: Numeracy, by State and Territory, 2001**

State or Territory	Percentage of students exempted from testing <sup>(a)</sup>		Percentage of students absent or withdrawn <sup>(b)</sup>		Percentage of assessed students			
					Indigenous students <sup>(c)</sup>		LBOTE students <sup>(d)</sup>	
	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5	Year 3	Year 5
New South Wales	1.4	0.7	5.6	5.6	3.9	3.6	25.5	24.0
Victoria	1.9	1.7	8.8	8.3	0.8	0.8	17.0	17.5
Queensland	1.2	1.2	2.5	2.0	5.9	6.0	6.8	6.3
South Australia	2.5	2.1	7.9	6.3	3.3	3.2	15.4	15.0
Western Australia	0.8	0.8	9.5	7.3	5.0	5.2	12.5	13.6
Tasmania	0.7	0.7	6.7	4.9	4.4	6.0	4.4	3.7
Northern Territory	1.1	1.0	8.9	8.6	26.1	27.9	25.0	26.0
Australian Capital Territory	1.7	1.5	3.1	2.5	1.7	1.7	10.1	9.0
Australia	1.5	1.2	6.4	5.7	3.8	3.8	16.9	16.5

- (a) The percentage of students who were exempted from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. Exempted students are reported as not achieving the benchmark. The percentage of exempted students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with the non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.
- (b) The percentage of students who were absent or were withdrawn by parents/care-givers from the testing program in the relevant State or Territory. These students are not included in the benchmark calculations. The percentage of absent/withdrawn students is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on *National Schools Statistics Collection* data, together with non-government students who participated in the relevant State and Territory testing programs.
- (c) The percentage of assessed Indigenous students. The percentage of Indigenous students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on figures for the *National Schools Statistics Collection* and non-government students who participated in the relevant testing programs. The specific ways in which Indigenous student information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.
- (d) The percentage of assessed students with a language background other than English (LBOTE). The percentage of LBOTE students includes exempted students and is calculated as a percentage of the total number of full-time government students based on figures for the *National Schools Statistics Collection* and non-government students who participated in the relevant State or Territory testing programs. The specific ways in which LBOTE information was collected and/or categorised were characterised by a degree of variation across the jurisdictions.

## Discussion

As demonstrated in Tables 27 and 28, the large majority of students from years 3 and 5 achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2001. As the benchmark represents the minimum level of competence deemed necessary to allow meaningful participation in the school learning program, this result is not surprising.

### Changes over time

Student performance against the numeracy benchmarks has only been measured for the two years 2000 and 2001 and as a result, it is not possible to draw conclusions about change over time. However, as more data become available each year, it will be possible to detect any trends that may emerge. To begin this process, Table 32 shows the changes that have occurred during the two years in which performance against the benchmarks has been measured.

### Gender differences

Table 33 provides data for male and female students for each year the benchmark achievement has been measured and Figures 5 and 6 show the gender distribution for 2001. It is apparent that there are no measurable differences between the performance of male and female students and this is in sharp contrast to the situations for writing and, to a lesser extent, reading that are discussed above.

### Indigenous students

The relative performance of Indigenous students is summarised in Table 34 and in Figures 5 and 6. The large gap in benchmark achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students that was evident in aspects of literacy is similarly apparent in numeracy. On the positive side, there is some indication that the performance of year 3 Indigenous students improved in 2001 when compared with that in 2000.

**Table 32** Percentage of students achieving the numeracy benchmark, years 3 and 5, Australia, 2000, 2001

Year	Year 3	Year 5
2000	92.7 ± 2.0	89.6 ± 1.7
2001	93.9 ± 1.2	89.6 ± 1.3

**Table 33** Percentage of students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by gender, years 3 and 5, Australia, 2000, 2001

Year	Year 3		Year 5	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2000	92.7 ± 2.1	92.8 ± 2.1	89.4 ± 1.7	89.8 ± 1.8
2001	93.7 ± 1.3	94.3 ± 1.3	89.5 ± 1.4	89.8 ± 1.5

**Table 34** Percentage of Indigenous students achieving the numeracy benchmark, years 3 and 5, Australia, 2000–2001

Year	Year 3		Year 5	
	Indigenous students	All students	Indigenous students	All students
2000	73.7 ± 7.1	92.7 ± 2.0	62.8 ± 4.5	89.6 ± 1.7
2001	80.2 ± 3.9	93.9 ± 1.2	63.2 ± 3.7	89.6 ± 1.3

Figure 5 Percentage of year 3 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by sub-group, Australia, 2001

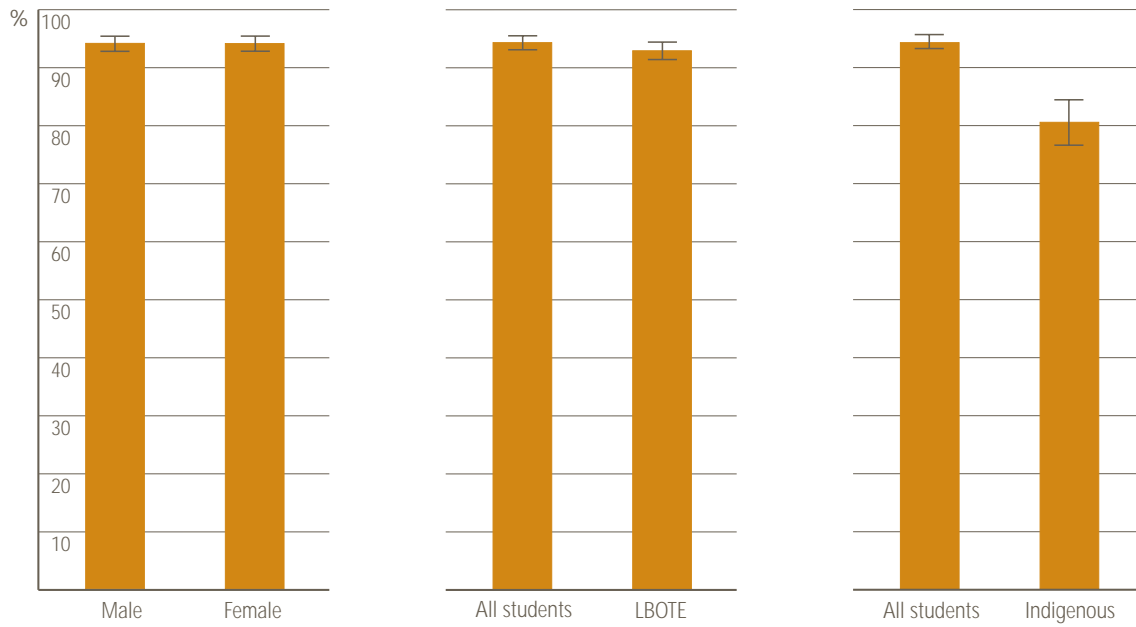
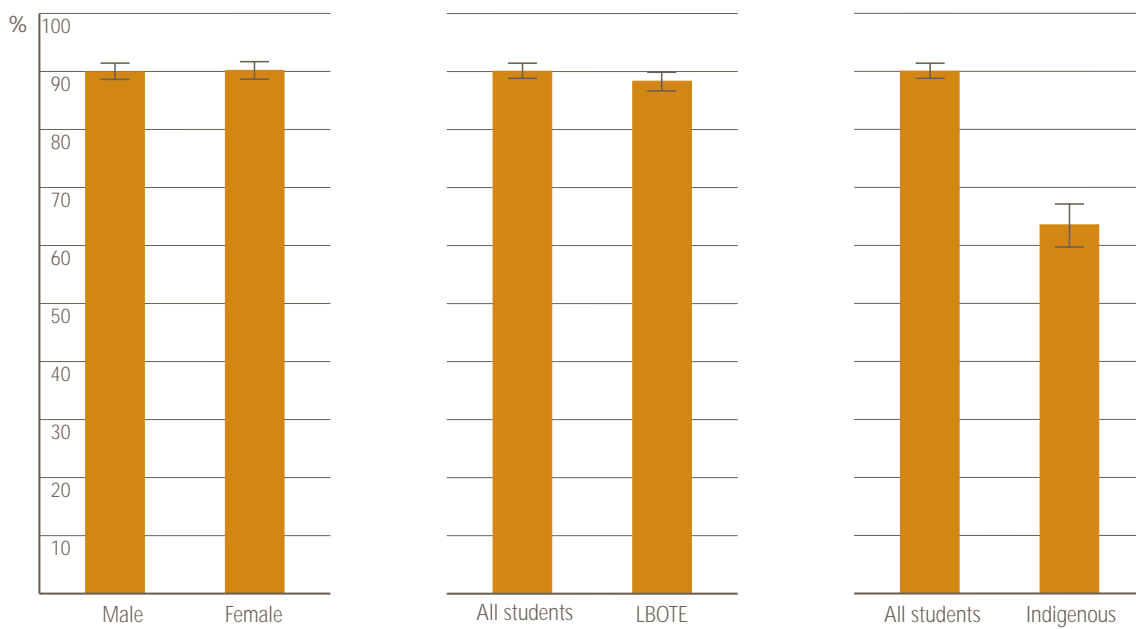


Figure 6 Percentage of year 5 students achieving the numeracy benchmark, by sub-group, Australia, 2001



# Explanatory Notes

## New South Wales

Exemption from Testing Policy	Students may be exempted from the test if, in consultation with parents, the school believes that participation in the test will be detrimental to the student. Reasons for exemption include: students from a non-English speaking background who have been enrolled in an English-speaking school for less than 12 months; students with high support needs; students with a medical condition that would affect well-being and test performance; students attending Stewart House on the test day; students attending Schools for Specific Purposes. (Note: as these students are ungraded, the age distribution of year 3 and 5 students doing the tests was used to estimate the notional number of year 3 and 5 students in these schools.)
Average Age Calculation Method	Average age at time of testing was determined from NSW Department of Education birth date data for government school years 3 and 5 students.
Years at School Calculation Method	Most year 3 and 5 students in NSW have completed 3–5 full years of schooling prior to the tests being held at the beginning of August. Years at school were thus taken to be 3 years, 7 months for year 3 students and 5 years, 7 months for year 5 students.
Definition, Identification of Indigenous Students	Indigenous students are those who answered 'Yes' to the question: 'Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?'.
Definition, Identification of LBOTE Students	LBOTE students are those who answered 'Yes' to the question: 'Does anyone speak a language other than English in your home?'.

## Victoria

Exemption from Testing Policy	The principal may grant an exemption to students with disabilities and impairments and to students who have been learning English in Australia for less than two years, and in other exceptional circumstances. The decision is made at the school level. The principal should consult specialist staff and ensure that parents sign a document agreeing to the exemption.
Average Age Calculation Method	Students provide date of birth on test task books. Average age is calculated at August of each testing year by using the month and year of birth and averaging the age of all students who participated in the test.
Years at School Calculation Method	Students commence schooling in the Preparatory year and the year of schooling is calculated as the 3 or 5 years from Prep to the beginning of year 3 or 5, and 7 months to the beginning of August to when testing takes place.
Definition, Identification of Indigenous Students	Schools were asked to answer the following question: 'Is this student Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander?' on the front page of each student's test booklet. Students are identified as Indigenous on enrolment forms at the commencement of school.
Definition, Identification of LBOTE Students	Schools were asked to answer the following question: 'Is this student of non-English speaking background?' on the front page of each student's test booklet. The generally accepted definition of a LBOTE student is one where the student or either parent was born in a non-English speaking country or has a home language other than English.

## Queensland

Exemption from Testing Policy	The following students may be exempted: students for whom English is not their first language and who are assessed by their English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and/or classroom teacher as achieving at or below Level 2 using the Draft Queensland ESL Proficiency Levels or Reading Level 3 and Writing Level 3 of the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia (NLLIA) ESL Band Scales; or those with intellectual impairment who have been identified as having educational needs at levels 5 or 6 through the systemic ascertainment process.
Average Age Calculation Method	The average ages are calculated on age distributions of the populations of years 3 and 5 students attending government and non-government schools based on 1 July census enrolment data, published in ABS, Cat. No. 4221.0, <i>Schools Australia</i> , 2000.
Years at School Calculation Method	Compulsory schooling commences at year 1. Students sat the test in late August. Year 3 students who sat the test would typically have been at school for 2 years and 8 months. Year 5 students typically have been at school for 4 years and 8 months.
Definition, Identification of Indigenous Students	Students self-identify that they are Indigenous by answering 'Yes' to either or both the questions: 'Are you an Aboriginal person?' or 'Are you a Torres Strait Islander person?'. Teachers are required to check the accuracy of the students' responses.
Definition, Identification of LBOTE Students	LBOTE students are those who answer 'Yes' to the question: 'At home, do either of your parents/care-givers speak a language other than English MOST of the time?' and who are not classified as Indigenous. Students self-identify and teachers are required to check the accuracy of the students' responses.

## South Australia

Exemption from Testing Policy	A student may be exempted from the testing program by the school principal in consultation with the parent/care-giver. Reasons for exemptions include: students from a non-English speaking background who have been enrolled in an English-speaking school for less than 12 months; students with high support needs who would not be able to read the test.
Average Age Calculation Method	The average age of students at the time of testing is estimated from student enrolment information which schools collect.
Years at School Calculation Method	A student may begin school once they turn 5 years of age. Most students will spend between 10 and 13 terms in junior primary school classes (ie Reception, and years 1 and 2).
Definition, Identification of Indigenous Students	Indigenous students were identified through their response to a question on the test cover asking if they were an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.
Definition, Identification of LBOTE Students	LBOTE students were identified through their response to a question on the test cover asking if a language other than English is spoken in their home.

## Western Australia

Exemption from Testing Policy	Exemptions may be granted by the principal with the signed agreement of parent/care-givers on the following grounds: temporary or permanent disability or impairment; enrolment in specified intensive language centres; ESL students in mainstream classes who have been in Australia for one year or less.
Average Age Calculation Method	Students provide date of birth on test booklets. Average age was calculated at the week of testing on the basis of this information.
Years at School Calculation Method	The figure given is an estimate based on the assumptions of: (a) continuous attendance of students in all years of schooling; (b) an equal number of students skipping a year of studies and repeating a year of studies; and (c) that for these cohorts of year 3 and 5 students the pre-primary year was neither full-time nor compulsory and is therefore not included in the calculation.
Definition, Identification of Indigenous Students	Indigenous students were identified through their 'Yes' response to the question: 'Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?'. This question was included on the front of the student answer booklet.
Definition, Identification of LBOTE Students	Students from a language background other than English were identified by their responses to the question: 'Does anyone in your home usually speak in a language other than English?'

## Tasmania

Exemption from Testing Policy	Principals of government schools were able to exempt students on the following grounds: Category A students on the Department's intellectual disabilities register; and ESL students who the Principal Education Officer (ESL) identified as being unable to complete the test owing to the students' inability to comprehend English. Students in Catholic and independent schools were exempted at their principal's discretion, under strict guidelines established by each sector.
Average Age Calculation Method	The average age of government and Catholic school students was calculated from date-of-birth records held in the database of each sector. The average age of independent school students was provided by ACER. The average age reported is a weighted average for all three sectors.
Years at School Calculation Method	In Tasmania, most students enrol in Kindergarten. Compulsory schooling begins in Prep, followed by years 1, 2, 3 etc. Thus, the average number of years of compulsory schooling at the time of testing was approximately 3 years, 7 months (year 3) and 5 years, 7 months (year 5). Testing for government and Catholic school students occurred in late August of 2000 and 2001, whereas in 1999 it occurred in early August (hence the one-month difference).
Definition, Identification of Indigenous Students	Indigenous students were identified by each school from information collected at enrolment, or through self-identification. If the Indigenous status was unknown, the student was not considered to be Indigenous.
Definition, Identification of LBOTE Students	Government schools identified LBOTE students from enrolment records and Catholic schools used new-arrival and special education applications to identify LBOTE students. Independent schools used self-identification. If the LBOTE status of a student was unknown, that student was considered not to have had a language background other than English.

## Northern Territory

Exemption from Testing Policy	A student is considered to be exempt from the reading test if they are unable to attempt, with teacher support, all questions at Pre-Level 2 in the reading test. Students are exempted from the mathematics test if they are unable to attempt any questions at Level 1 in the mathematics test.
Average Age Calculation Method	The date of birth of each student is recorded on the test cover. The age of the student relative to the official end of the testing period is then calculated as a decimal. The average age of all students in the cohort (eg year 3) is then calculated.
Years at School Calculation Method	Schooling begins at age 5 in Transition classes. The typical time in school for year 3 students was calculated as follows: 2 years, 8 months (years 1, 2 and 3 to time of testing) plus 7 months (Transition) equals 3 years, 3 months. For year 5 students, the calculation was as follows: 4 years, 8 months (years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 at time of testing) plus 7 months (Transition), equals 5 years and 3 months.
Definition, Identification of Indigenous Students	Indigenous students are identified by schools at the time of enrolment or by self-identification.
Definition, Identification of LBOTE Students	In 1999, data represents students identified by teachers as being eligible for inclusion in the ESL program. From 2000 onwards, if a student answers 'No' to the question, 'Does everyone at home speak to you in English?' or answers 'Never/Sometimes' to the question, 'How often do you speak English at home?', they are considered to be an LBOTE student.

## Australian Capital Territory

Exemption from Testing Policy	Exempt students include mainstream ESL students who have been learning English in Australia for less than 2 years; students enrolled in Introductory English Centres; students enrolled in Learning Support Centres and Units; students with diagnosed communication disorders; mainstream students who have a temporary physical disability at the time of the assessments.
Average Age Calculation Method	From date of birth until August 1 in the year of testing.
Years at School Calculation Method	The years and months beginning February 1 in the Kindergarten year through to August 1, in year 3 or 5.
Definition, Identification of Indigenous Students	Indigenous students are identified at the time of enrolment by the parents/care-givers.
Definition, Identification of LBOTE Students	Data represent funded ESL students rather than the broader LBOTE category.

# 2001

further strengthen  
schools as learning  
communities

literacy, numeracy,  
indigenous education,  
science, the arts

australia's future depends on  
each citizen having the necessary  
knowledge, understanding,  
and values for a productive  
rewarding life in an educated  
just and open society

