

Attachment 2:

Background to the Collection of Data on Student Characteristics Using Nationally Agreed Definitions

Improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged young Australians

The capacity to obtain a coherent national picture of the educational progress of students with particular background characteristics across Australia has been hampered by the variety of ways in which the student groups have been defined by different States and Territories, school systems and schools.

The *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*, which was endorsed by all Education Ministers in 1999, provided the underlying rationale for nationally comparable reporting in respect of particular groups of students. In particular, the *Adelaide Declaration* stated that

Schooling should be socially just, so that:

students' outcomes from schooling should be free of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic location [Goal 3.1]

the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students [should] improve and, over time, match those of other students [Goal 3.2].

The *Adelaide Declaration* has provided the framework for nationally comparable reporting of students' outcomes over the past decade.

New national goals for schooling

On 5 December 2008, State, Territory and Commonwealth Education Ministers released the *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians*. The Goals were developed by Education Ministers in collaboration with the Catholic and independent school sectors, following public consultation. The 2008 *Melbourne Declaration* supersedes the 1999 *Adelaide Declaration*.

Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agenda

A further recent development is the agreement of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), which comprises the Prime Minister, State Premiers and Territory Chief Ministers, to develop a new schools reform plan for the twenty-first century to ensure that all Australian students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy. COAG has given priority to improving student outcomes from schooling, addressing social inclusion and closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

The schooling elements of the COAG Participation and Productivity Framework are reproduced on the following page.

COAG Productivity Agenda Working Group

Policy Framework – Outcomes, Progress Measures and Policy Directions

<p>That all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy.</p>					ASPIRATIONS
<p>All children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling</p>	<p>Young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving</p>	<p>Schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children</p>	<p>Australian students excel by international standards</p>	<p>Young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study</p>	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of children enrolled in and attending school Literacy and numeracy achievement of Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in national testing Proportion of students in top and bottom levels of performance in international testing (eg PISA, TIMSS) Proportion of the 19 year old population having attained at least a Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II Proportion of young people participating in post-school education or training six months after school Proportion of 18-24 year olds engaged in full-time employment, education or training at or above Certificate III level 					INDICATIVE PROGRESS MEASURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020 Halve the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade At least halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020 					COAG TARGETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Year 9-12 students have access to a computer and teachers are trained appropriately All secondary schools have access to Trades Training Centres delivering high quality industry recognised training at Certificate III level National Curriculum supports world-class teaching in all Australian schools from Kindergarten to Year 12, including literacy and numeracy standards Asian Languages — Increase the number of qualified language teachers and develop national curriculum for advanced students 					COMMONWEALTH ELECTION COMMITMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving teacher and school leader quality High standards and expectations Greater accountability and better directed resources Modern, world class teaching and learning environments, including ICT Integrated strategies for low SES school communities Boosting parental engagement 					POLICY DIRECTIONS

Source: 22nd MCEETYA Meeting Communiqué, 17-18 April 2008, Melbourne

Development of nationally consistent definitions of student background characteristics

When Education Ministers endorsed the *Adelaide Declaration*, they also agreed to develop nationally consistent definitions of the following student background characteristics for the purpose of national reporting on student outcomes:

- **sex**
- **Indigenous status**
- **socioeconomic background**
- **language background.**

Information on students' **geographic location** does not appear in the Manual because it does not involve data collection from parents via enrolment forms. Metropolitan, provincial and remote zones are defined using a geographic location classification developed for the purpose.

The reporting of student outcomes data, disaggregated by student background characteristics, is a standard component of national reporting and applies to all government and non-government schools.

Priority areas of schooling

Over the past decade, Ministers have endorsed a set of key performance measures to provide the basis for monitoring student achievement in the following priority areas of schooling:

- literacy
- numeracy
- science
- civics and citizenship education
- information and communication technology
- student participation and attainment
- vocational education and training in schools.

National Assessment Program

The National Assessment Program comprises the following set of nationally agreed assessment programs used to report on student performance and achievement:

- a. National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy assessments of all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9
- b. National Assessment Program – triennial sample assessments in
 - Science Literacy (Year 6 students)
 - Civics and Citizenship (Year 6 and Year 10 students)
 - Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy (Year 6 and Year 10 students)
- c. International assessments – PISA and TIMSS (as approved by MCEETYA).

The results of the National Assessment Program are released on the MCEETYA website (<http://www.mceetya.edu.au>) as they become available.

National Key Performance Measures

The agreed assessments comprising the National Assessment Program are set out in the *Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures* which can be accessed on the MCEETYA website (<http://www.mceetya.edu.au>). The table below sets out the assessments for which linking of student background data and assessment results is required. It also provides details of the year level(s) at which assessments are conducted, the proportion of students undertaking the assessment - that is, the full cohort (all students) or a sample of students – and the frequency of the assessments.

Measure	Year Level	Full cohort or Sample	Basis/Test-Instrument	Frequency or Cycle
Literacy - % achieving at or above the national minimum standards for reading, writing & language conventions (spelling, grammar & punctuation)	Years 3, 5, 7 & 9*	Full cohort	National test	Annual
Numeracy - % achieving at or above the national minimum standard for numeracy	Years 3, 5, 7 & 9*	Full cohort	National test	Annual
Science - % achieving at or above the proficient standard in science literacy	Year 6	National sample	National test	Three-yearly from 2003
Civics and Citizenship– % achieving at or above the proficient standard in civic knowledge and understanding, and in citizenship participation skills and civic values	Year 6 } Year 10 }	National sample	National test	Three-yearly from 2004
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Literacy - % achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT	Year 6 } Year 10 }	National sample	National test	Three-yearly from 2005

* National assessments in Year 9 (Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy) commenced in 2008.

MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce

The Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce is responsible for the development and maintenance of the key performance measures, for monitoring the collection of student background data using the nationally consistent definitions of student groups, and for developing and implementing the Measurement Framework. The taskforce comprises representatives of the Australian Government, all State and Territory education departments, and the two peak bodies representing the non-government school sector (the National Catholic Education Commission and the Independent Schools Council of Australia).