

TERMS OF REFERENCE

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL REFORM AGREEMENT

I, Josh Frydenberg MP, pursuant to Parts 2 and 4 of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998*, hereby request that the Productivity Commission undertake a review of the National School Reform Agreement.

Background

The National School Reform Agreement (NSRA) is a joint agreement between the Commonwealth, states and territories to lift student outcomes across Australian schools. The NSRA outlines a set of strategic reforms in areas where national collaboration will have the greatest impact, builds on current national reform efforts, complements state and territory leadership and supports local implementation. Ongoing implementation of these shared commitments remains a condition of funding under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* (Act).

The objective of the NSRA is that Australian schooling provides a high quality and equitable education for all students. The NSRA sets out long-term national outcomes for school education in Australia and national targets and sub-outcomes to track progress. To achieve these outcomes, the NSRA sets out three reform directions which are supported by eight national policy initiatives as well as bilateral agreements specific to each state and territory.

The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia, including the schedule of key performance measures, provides the basis for Australian education ministers to report to the community on the performance of schooling, in accordance with the Education Goals for Young Australians as expressed in the *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*.

Scope of the review

In undertaking the review, the Commission should assess, as required under section 29 of the National School Reform Agreement:

1. the appropriateness of the National Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia in measuring progress towards achieving the outcomes of the NSRA.
2. the effectiveness and appropriateness of the National Policy Initiatives outlined in Part 3 of the NSRA, recognising that national reform takes time to implement and mature, and for the effects of nationally coordinated reform efforts to materialise.

In the context of the National Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia, consideration should be given to current and planned measures and data projects, and their application, utility and relevance to NSRA outcomes.

Section 30 of the NSRA expressly provides that the review will not include any assessment of compliance with section 22A of the Act.

Process

The Productivity Commission should consult broadly and extensively, including with all parties to the NSRA as well as the Catholic and independent school sectors, and key education entities such as the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, the Australian Education Research Organisation and Education Services Australia.

As managers of the largest school systems, states and territories will have broad and deep insights into the impacts of the National Policy Initiatives and National Measurement Framework on students, schools and systems. In recognition of the role of states and territories, appropriate weight should be given to their feedback.

The Commission should provide a final report no later than 31 December 2022 to allow time for the review's findings to inform the development of the next national agreement. The Commission will present the findings of the review to Education Ministers prior to publication. Within the scope set out above and at Section 29 of the NSRA, the final report should include recommendations to inform the design of the next intergovernmental school reform agreement and improvements to the National Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia.

JOSH FRYDENBERG
Treasurer