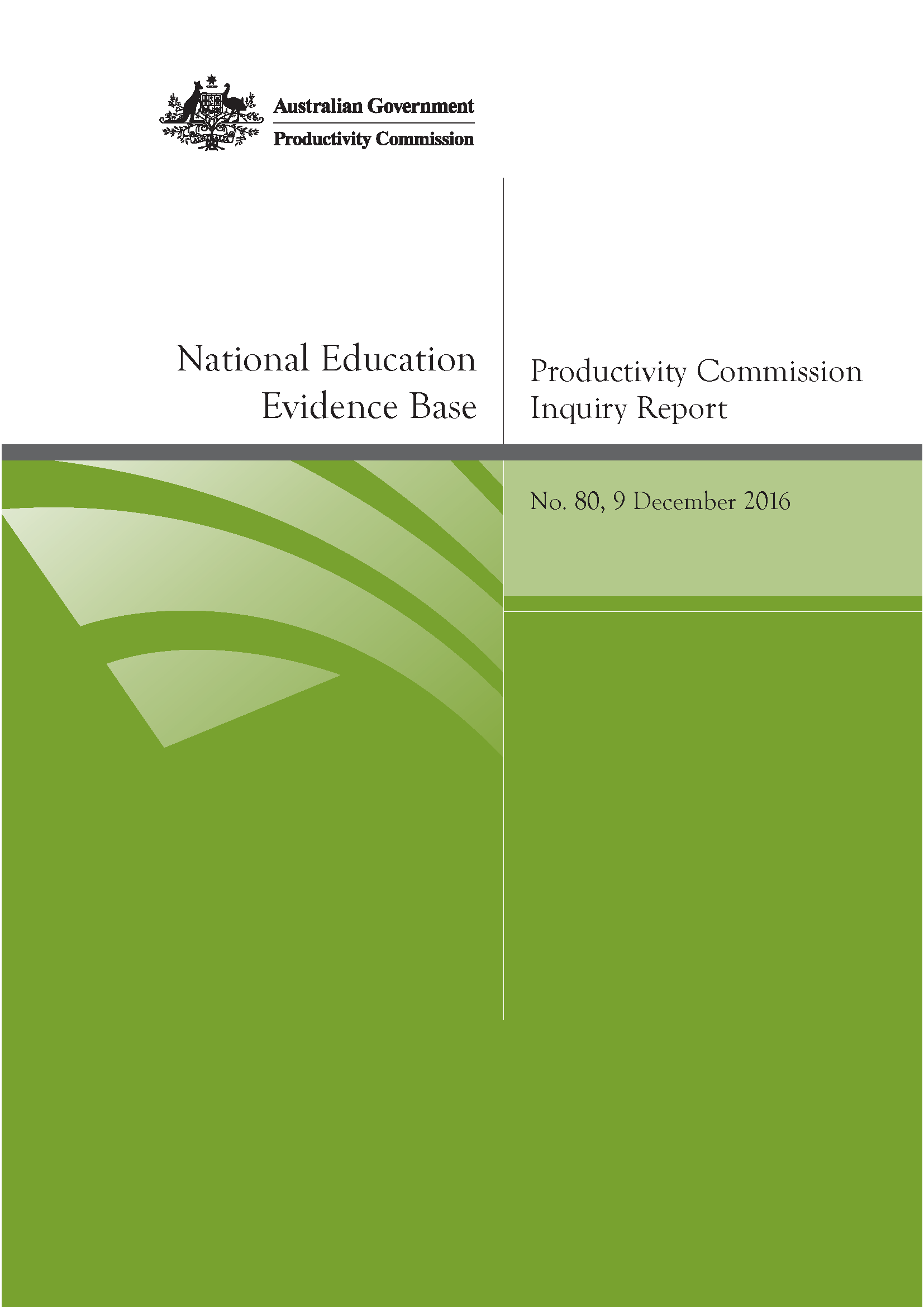
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| The Productivity Commission |
| The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government’s independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. Its role, expressed most simply, is to help governments make better policies, in the long term interest of the Australian community.  The Commission’s independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Its processes and outputs are open to public scrutiny and are driven by concern for the wellbeing of the community as a whole.  Further information on the Productivity Commission can be obtained from the Commission’s website ([www.pc.gov.au](http://www.pc.gov.au/)). |
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The Hon Scott Morrison MP

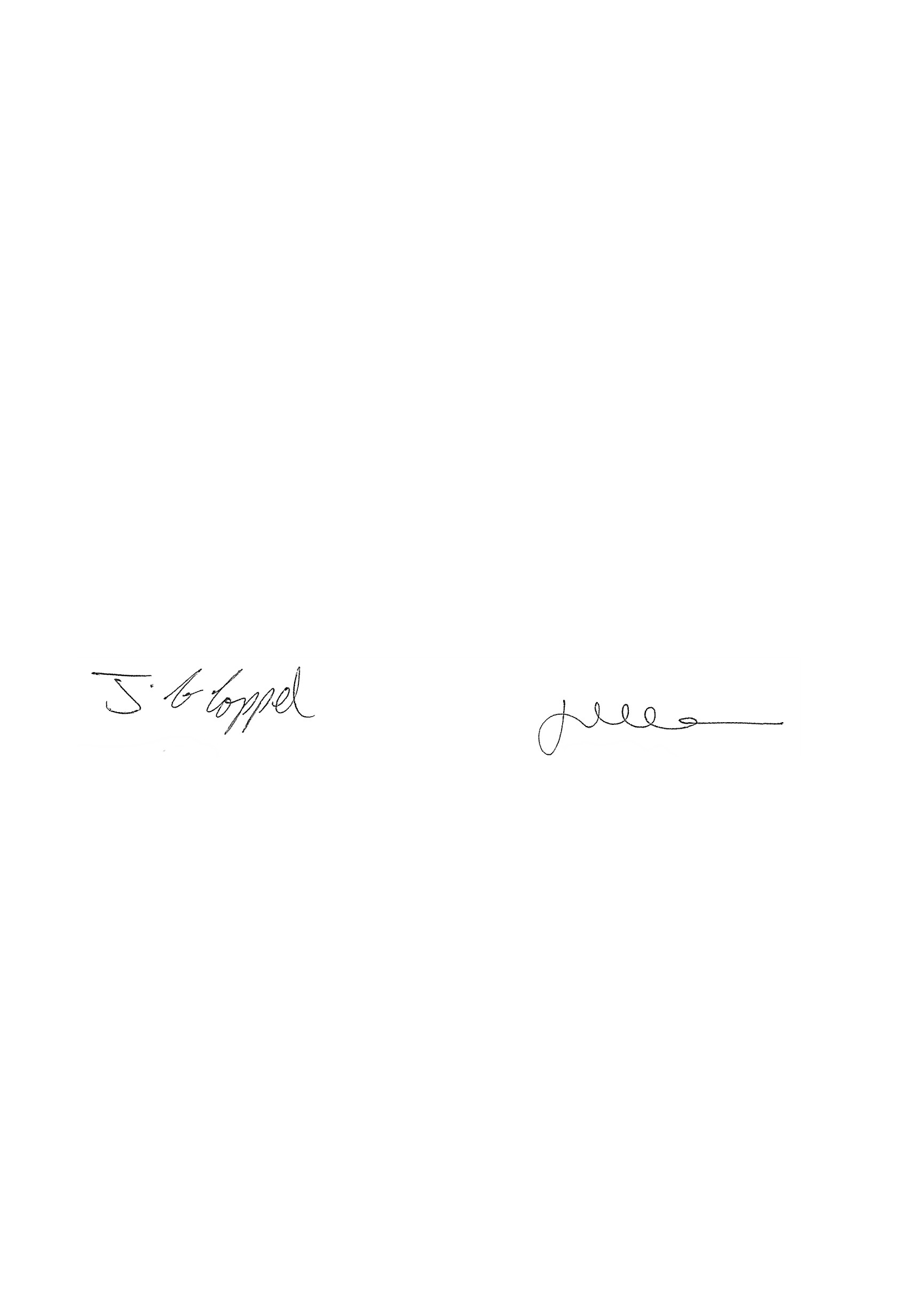
Treasurer

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Treasurer

In accordance with Section 11 of the *Productivity Commission Act 1998*, we have pleasure in submitting to you the Commission’s final report into National Education Evidence Base.

Yours sincerely

|  |
| --- |
| Jonathan Coppel Julie Abramson Presiding Commissioner Commissioner |

# Terms of reference

**Productivity Commission Inquiry into the National Education Evidence Base**

I, SCOTT MORRISON, Treasurer, pursuant to Parts 2 and 3 of the Productivity Commission Act 1998, hereby request that the Productivity Commission undertake an inquiry into the further development of the national evidence base for school and early childhood education.

### Background

The Australian Government is committed to working collaboratively with the states and territories to build a world-class education system that equips children to succeed in an increasingly competitive world. Having comprehensive and consistent data that underpins a national evidence base will inform education policy and help improve educational outcomes for children.

While a significant amount of data is currently collected on students, schools and the workforce, data reported nationally is more limited and often inconsistent. Valuable data is also collected outside schools, including in early childhood education and care. Improved access and greater ability to link and analyse national data could enhance the quality and scope of national education evidence that can be used to monitor educational outcomes and inform policy development and evaluation.

Through consultation with states and territories, education authorities and other key stakeholders, this Inquiry will help to identify current investment in national data collection and education evidence, opportunities to collectively invest further, and how we can improve the effectiveness of our investment through a more streamlined, comprehensive and collaborative national approach.

Improving the collection and management of education data in Australia will assist to create a more robust national education evidence base for effective policy and program development to meet our national education objectives and lift our national productivity.

### Scope of the inquiry

The Commission is to provide advice on the refinement of the national approach to collecting and using data for early childhood education and care and schools, and other information as relevant, to improve Australia’s educational outcomes.

In undertaking this Inquiry, the Commission should use evidence from Australia and overseas to report on and make recommendations about:

1. The information required to provide a comprehensive evidence base to inform policy development in early learning and school education now and in the future. This includes consideration of current data holdings at a national, state and sectoral level, their effectiveness in supporting educational outcomes, and the long term vision for such educational data holdings.
2. What additional information could be considered and how it might add value to the existing evidence base. This may include data concerning non-cognitive skills, and information from other sectors, including but not be limited to: employment, health, social services, early childhood and higher education.
3. Existing or potential barriers to the sharing of education (and other relevant) data and how these can be overcome. Considerations should include, but not be limited to: privacy concerns, costs, technological capacity, sector-based sensitivities, national and jurisdictional data governance structures and workforce capability.
4. Factors that inhibit access to, and consistency of, education-relevant data to support analysis and evidence-based policy development. Considerations should include, but not be limited to: privacy concerns, legislative and technical frameworks, national and jurisdictional data governance structures, workforce research and analytical capabilities, stakeholder engagement, sector-based sensitivities and implementation timeframes.
5. The role technology and mobile devices can play on the scope, quality and timeliness of data collection and reporting.
6. The costs and benefits of options for improvements to the national education evidence base including the administrative and financial impacts on schools and early childhood education and care providers of any suggested change in data collection practices. Consideration should include what opportunities exist to apply efficiencies to existing data collection.
7. How Australian and overseas governments have approached the use of evidence and sharing data to improve outcomes (in education and non-education sectors) and the potential benefits and challenges of adopting these practices in the Australian education context.

### Process

The Commission is to undertake a public consultation process, including holding hearings, inviting key stakeholder and public submissions, and releasing a draft report.

The final report should be provided within nine months of receipt of these terms of reference.

SCOTT MORRISON  
Treasurer

[Received 11 March 2016]

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# Abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ACARA | Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority |
| ACECQA | Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority |
| AEDC | Australian Early Development Census |
| AESOC | Australian Education Senior Officials Committee |
| AHURI | Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute |
| AIFS | Australian Institute of Family Studies |
| AIHW | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare |
| AITSL | Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership |
| ALLD | Australian Longitudinal Learning Database |
| ALRC | Australian Law Reform Commission |
| APP | Australian Privacy Principles |
| APPA | Australian Primary Principals Association |
| ARA | Accredited Release Authority |
| ATO | Australian Tax Office |
| AURIN | Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network |
| CCMS | Child Care Management System |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CESE | Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation |
| CITO | Central Institute for Test Development |
| COAG | Council of Australian Governments |
| CYDA | Children and Young People with Disability Australia |
| DAC | Data Analytics Centre |
| DECD | South Australian Department of Education and Child Development |
| DET | Australian Government Department of Education and Training |
| DSG | Data Strategy Group |
| EC | Education Council |
| ECEC | Early childhood education and care |
| EEF | Education Endowment Foundation |
| ESA | Education Services Australia |
| EYLF | Early Years Learning Framework |
| FOI | Freedom of Information |
| HILDA | Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey |
| HREC | Human Research Ethics Committee |
| ICILS | International Computer and Information Literacy Study |
| ICT | Information and communications technology |
| IDI | Integrated Data Infrastructure |
| IES | Institute of Education Sciences |
| IPP | Information Privacy Principles |
| ISCA | Independent Schools Council of Australia |
| IT | Information technology |
| LSAC | Longitudinal Study of Australian Children |
| LSAY | Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth |
| LSIC | Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children |
| MADIP | Multi‑Agency Data Integration Project |
| MCEETYA | Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs |
| MCRI | Murdoch Childrens Research Institute |
| METeOR | Metadata Online Registry |
| NAP | National Assessment Program |
| NAPLAN | National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy |
| NCCD | Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability |
| NCRIS | National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy |
| NCVER | National Centre for Vocational Education Research |
| NECD RD | National Early Childhood Development Researchable Data Set |
| NECECC | National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection |
| NHMRC | National Health and Medical Research Council |
| NID | National Interest Dataset |
| NMA | National Mutual Acceptance |
| NQA ITS | National Quality Agenda IT System |
| NQF | National Quality Framework |
| NSIP | National Schools Interoperability Program |
| NSSC | National School Statistics Collection |
| OAIC | Office of the Australian Information Commissioner |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PHRN | Population Health Research Network |
| PIA | Private impact assessment |
| PIRLS | Progress in International Reading Literacy Study |
| PISA | Programme for International Student Assessment |
| RCT | Randomised controlled trial |
| SCRGSP | Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision |
| SCSEEC | Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood |
| SiAS | Staff in Australia’s Schools Survey |
| SIF | Systems Interoperability Framework |
| SRC | Social Research Centre |
| STEM | Science, technology, engineering and mathematics |
| SVA | Social Ventures Australia |
| TALIS | Teaching and Learning International Survey |
| TIMSS | Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study |
| USI | Unique student identifier |
| VET | Vocational education and training |
| VSN | Victorian Student Number |