



# **Review of the National School Reform Agreement**

## **Interim report**

### Overview

This is an interim report prepared for further public consultation and input. The Commission will finalise its report after these processes have taken place.

**The Productivity Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past and present.**

## **The Productivity Commission**

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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.

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## Opportunity for comment

The Commission thanks all participants for their contribution to the review and now seeks additional input for the final report.

You are invited to examine this interim report and comment on it by written submission to the Productivity Commission, preferably in electronic format, by 21 October.

Further information on how to provide a submission is included on the study website:  
[www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/school-agreement](http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/school-agreement)

The Commission will hold further discussions with participants and prepare a final report after further submissions have been received. The Commission will forward the final report to Government in December 2022.

### Commissioners

For the purposes of this review the Commissioners are:

Michael Brennan	Presiding Commissioner
Malcolm Roberts	Commissioner
Natalie Siegel-Brown	Commissioner



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The full report is available from [www.pc.gov.au](http://www.pc.gov.au)

## Foreword

The Australian, State and Territory Governments share responsibility for school education and have a long history of working together to build the national institutions, systems and tools that support better student outcomes.

This review considers the most recent focus for collaborative reform efforts, the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA). The Commission has been asked to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the National Policy Initiatives included in the agreement, and the appropriateness of the National Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia in measuring progress towards outcomes. Importantly, the Commission has also been asked to make recommendations to inform the design of the next intergovernmental school reform agreement.

This interim report presents the Commission's initial analysis of progress on national reform efforts, and assessment of performance reporting and accountability arrangements. It also identifies potential reform options for a successor agreement. In doing so, the Commission has focussed on factors that influence student outcomes that are amenable to intergovernmental collaboration. This report's primary purpose is to elicit additional stakeholder feedback, noting the clear expectations about broad and extensive stakeholder engagement set out in the terms of reference, and the strong interest in this important area of government service delivery.

The Commission will be calling for responses by 21 October and will be preparing a final report for consideration by Ministers by 31 December 2022.

The Commission has benefited from engagement with students, teachers, school leaders, unions, representatives from the Catholic and Independent school sectors, academics and officials from the Australian, State and Territory Governments, as well as 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. The Commission would particularly like to thank those young people who took time out of their busy learning schedules to share their experiences of school, including over the past few challenging years.

# Overview

## Key points

- ✱ **This review examines Governments' initiatives to lift student outcomes under the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA).**
  - The Commission has been asked to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the national reform initiatives in the NSRA and to make recommendations for the design of the next agreement.
  - Public interest in schools reform has increased over the life of the NSRA, spurred in part by concerns that, despite the large increase in public funding since 2018, student outcomes have stagnated.
- ✱ **Although some initiatives have been delivered, others appear stalled.**
  - Governments appear to have lost their collective commitment to delivering a national unique student identifier (USI) and the formative assessment tool.
  - Despite mounting concerns about teacher shortages, little progress seems to have been made in developing the data and evidence needed for an effective national workforce strategy.
- ✱ **Realising the ambitions of the NSRA will require Governments to resolve some thorny issues:**
  - agreeing on the design and privacy protections of the USI. If parties cannot deliver a national USI, they should, at a minimum, explain why the project has failed
  - developing the national online formative assessment tool in a way that allows jurisdictions to adapt it to their specific needs and preferences (including integrating content and features from existing state-based tools)
  - developing a national model of the teacher workforce to identify future risks and guide workforce planning.
- ✱ **The next intergovernmental agreement should focus on a small number of reforms that will directly lift student outcomes. Governments should select reforms that are best delivered through a co-ordinated national approach to help sustain long-term commitment by all parties. Contenders include:**
  - enabling quality teaching: Governments need to create the time, support and resources for effective teaching. Priorities could include reducing high workloads and out-of-field teaching, professional development at critical points (such as induction and support for early career teachers) and fostering best practice teaching through networks, collaboration and technology
  - making minimum standards the minimum: all jurisdictions need to find effective ways to assist the 5 to 9 per cent of students struggling to meet minimum standards
  - tailored strategies for students from each priority equity cohort. Many students in the NSRA's priority equity cohorts and students in other cohorts (such as students in out-of-home care or with English as an additional language or dialect) face significant challenges. New approaches, developed and implemented in consultation with students, parents and communities, are needed
  - supporting wellbeing to support learning. Many children and young people suffer from poor wellbeing because of experiences in and outside their schools. Schools and teachers need more support to help students overcome these circumstances and achieve their potential.
- ✱ **Addressing these challenges will require a mix of co-ordinated national effort and flexible state-based programs tailored to individual and local needs. Jurisdictions' need for flexibility should be recognised but tied to more transparency and accountability for results. The next agreement should be tight in its commitments and its reporting of performance, but not bind Governments to one-size-fits-all solutions.**
  - The community could reasonably expect to see an improvement in student outcomes over the course of the next five years — funding will remain at all-time highs, current initiatives will have had time to mature, and a new generation of reforms will be underway.

## What's this review about?

Almost four years ago, on the back of a \$319 billion funding deal<sup>1</sup>, the Commonwealth, States and Territories struck an agreement on national reforms to lift education outcomes — the National School Reform Agreement (NSRA).

The NSRA's overarching objective is for Australian schools to provide a high quality and equitable education for all students. To lift outcomes in student achievement, attainment and engagement, the NSRA outlines three reform directions, supported by eight National Policy Initiatives (NPIs) and bilateral agreements between the Commonwealth and each State and Territory Government (figure 1). Implementing the reform initiatives is a condition of Commonwealth funding.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission has been asked to:

- assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the current NPIs under the NSRA<sup>3</sup>
- assess the appropriateness of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in measuring progress towards achieving the outcomes of the NSRA and
- make recommendations to inform the design of the next intergovernmental school reform agreement and to improve the National Measurement Framework.<sup>4</sup>

Funding is outside the scope of the Commission's Review.

In undertaking this review, the Commission is consulting widely, and taking account of important context.

- The NSRA will run until December 2023, and some NPIs are not yet complete.
- The current reforms under the NSRA do not represent all of the collaborative intergovernmental activity on education in Australia. Conversely, the concepts behind a number of the reforms are also being progressed through individual jurisdictions using their own approaches.
- The education landscape has changed — COVID-19 and recent natural disasters have disrupted education systems but also revealed their resilience and opportunities for innovation.
- While much can be done within education systems to lift student outcomes and make them more equitable, some barriers to education, such as secure housing tenure, are beyond the capacity of schools to address. The Commission has focused on factors that can operate 'within the school gates'.
- There can be a substantial gap between high-level policy discourse and classroom practice. Several stakeholders have identified a lack of clear visibility about what occurs in the classroom. Equally, stakeholders have pointed out the remoteness of policy discussions from the lived experience of teachers and school leaders.






<sup>1</sup> As part of its Quality Schools arrangements, the Australian Government moved to a consistent, needs-based school funding model for all Australian students and committed to increasing funding for schools from \$18.7 billion in 2018 to an estimated \$33 billion in 2029, bringing total funding to an estimated \$318.9 billion over 2018 to 2029.

<sup>2</sup> The *Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth.) section 22. The Australian Education Act was amended on 23 June 2017 to give effect to the Quality Schools package.

<sup>3</sup> Under Section 29 of the NSRA, parties agreed that an independent review would be commissioned on behalf of the Education Council to assess 'the effectiveness of the national policy initiatives' and 'the appropriateness of the National Measurement Framework for Schooling in measuring progress towards achieving the outcomes of this Agreement'. This review fulfils that commitment.

<sup>4</sup> The Measurement Framework for Schooling underpins the National Report on Schooling in Australia and informs other reports including the Report on Government Services released by the Productivity Commission.

**Figure 1 – Snapshot of the National School Reform Agreement (2019-2023)<sup>a</sup>**

Aims for Australian schooling to provide a high-quality and equitable education for all students		
Sets out 3 outcomes...	... to be assessed against 7 performance indicators ...	... and 3 existing COAG targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Achievement</li><li>Attainment</li><li>Engagement</li></ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>5 Achievement</li><li>1 Attainment</li><li>1 Engagement</li></ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lift educational attainment by 2031 (two targets, one applies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students)</li><li>Lift international standing by 2025</li></ul> 
Specifies three reform directions ...		
Supporting students, student learning and student achievement	Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement	Enhancing the national evidence base
... to be progressed through national and state-specific initiatives ...		
Parties agreed to 8 National Policy Initiatives	And state-specific bilateral agreements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Progressed by all jurisdictions</li><li>Concentrated on ‘key enablers’</li><li>Building on existing national and state-based reforms</li></ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Outlining local initiatives</li><li>Including reforms to lift outcomes for priority equity cohorts</li></ul> 	
... with reporting and public transparency to give the community confidence		
Parties agreed to report on implementation ...	... and progress towards meeting targets ...	... and an independent review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Annual public reports on national initiatives</li><li>Annual reports on state-specific initiatives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reported under COAG arrangements (National Measurement Framework)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To assess effectiveness of National Policy Initiatives and appropriateness of National Measurement Framework</li></ul>

a. On 11 December 2020, Education Ministers agreed to amend the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) targets to reflect the adoption of the updated national target for school education endorsed by State and Territory First Ministers through the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. On 29 May 2020, National Cabinet agreed to the formation of the National Federation Reform Council and the abolition of COAG. The targets are still in effect.

To identify reforms that could be included in the next agreement, the Commission has followed a two-step approach. The Commission has reviewed the latest research and consulted with a wide range of

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stakeholders to identify the factors that matter most to creating high-quality and high-equity education in Australia. The Commission then assessed which of those factors lend themselves to collaborative solutions through an intergovernmental agreement.

## How have national reforms fared?

### Many National Policy Initiatives focus on enablers rather than achieving outcomes

The NPIs concentrate reform effort on ‘key enablers that drive improvement in educational outcomes’.<sup>5</sup> In simple terms, this means providing teachers, school leaders, and policy makers with resources to make well informed interventions.

The outputs associated with different NPIs include (figure 2):

- **national tools** to gauge and share information on student progress (the online formative assessment initiative (OFAI) and the unique student identifier (USI))
- **national reviews** to identify and realise opportunities for national collaboration on teacher workforce needs and senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training
- **national accreditation standards** to promote consistent quality in graduate teaching (strengthening initial teacher education (ITE) accreditation)
- **a new national institution** to generate and communicate evidence-based advice on best practice to teachers, schools and policy makers
- **national data projects** to improve national data quality, consistency and collection.

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<sup>5</sup> NSRA, s. 43(c).

**Figure 2 – Progress implementing National Policy Initiatives****Expected outputs and implementation status as reported by Education Council**

National Initiative	Expected outputs	Complete?
 Online Formative Assessment Initiative	<p>Progressively make available existing and <b>new learning progressions and formative assessment capability</b> for agreed Australian Curriculum learning areas and general capabilities, from 2022.</p> <p>Progressively develop and <b>release nationally available online on-demand formative assessment resources</b> (aligned to learning progressions) from 2022.</p>	
 Senior secondary pathways review	Education Council to have <b>implemented, or be progressing, agreed recommendations (for any <u>national</u> initiatives to strengthen student pathways)</b> by end of the Agreement.	
 Teacher workforce review	Education Council to have <b>implemented a national teacher workforce strategy</b> to respond to teacher workforce needs of the future and support decision making of teacher employers and ITE providers.	
 Initial Teacher Education accreditation	<p><b>Commence national quality assurance activities</b> in cooperation with all jurisdictional authorities from January 2019.</p> <p>States and Territories <b>ensure that accredited initial teacher education programs require... final-year teaching performance assessment</b> prior to graduation.</p>	
 Unique Student Identifier	Schools and systems to progressively work to create <b>a national Unique Student Identifier for each student</b> from 2021.	
 Evidence institute	The <b>national evidence institute commences</b> operations from 2020, and develops and implements a national research and evidence plan.	
 Improving national data quality	<b>Education Council considers strategic opportunities to enhance the national evidence base</b> including options for measures of child development status at school entry, student learning gain, general capabilities, post-school destination information, attainment, retention, wellbeing, and post-school outcomes, over life of the Agreement.	

 = Partly

## Progress on some of the initiatives that would make the most difference has been disappointing

So far, the NPIs have likely had little impact on Australian students' academic achievement, educational attainment and skill acquisition.<sup>6</sup>

Many outputs from the NPIs are yet to be delivered, including two of the more significant NPI outputs (the OFAI and the USI) (figure 2). Of the NPIs that have been delivered, the institute charged with providing evidence-based advice — the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) — is just beginning its work; Governments are still to clarify many details regarding if and how they will act upon the national reviews of senior secondary pathways and teacher workforce needs; and new standards governing ITE providers have been in place for a little more than two years.

If the NSRA is to have any chance of fulfilling its ambitious targets and outcomes, the Commonwealth, States and Territories will need to resolve some key issues.

### The USI and OFAI are stalled

The USI and OFAI would provide much needed tools to better understand student progress.

- The USI would provide insights on a student's progress, the factors that influence the paths they take, and the outcomes they achieve. As the Department of Education New South Wales (sub. 12, p. 13) observed: '... the USI has the potential to provide a new, unique and rich data source to inform policy in a way which was never possible before.'
- The OFAI would enable teachers to assess a student's knowledge, skills and understanding, identify next steps in learning, and track progress over time. Given the significant variation in student achievement in any given year level — spanning, on average, as much as 4 years of learning in numeracy within individual schools and about 6 years across all schools — the OFAI would help teachers tailor their teaching to a student's level of knowledge and understanding.<sup>7</sup> Importantly, the OFAI would provide time-poor teachers with recommended teaching strategies and quality-checked digital resources aligned with the national curriculum.

But both NPIs have stalled. Already more than 13 years in the making, disagreements about data use have hindered progress of the USI.<sup>8</sup> And the value proposition of a national OFAI has diminished as some jurisdictions have pressed ahead with local (albeit typically less comprehensive) solutions, while others await a national solution.

Fulfilling their commitments to deliver these two key initiatives will require Governments to:

- confirm that a USI remains a priority, which can and should be developed through intergovernmental co-operation. Governments will also need to resolve their differences over data and privacy. If parties cannot deliver a national USI, they should, at a minimum, explain to the public why the project has failed (especially as USIs are already in use in higher education and vocational education and training)

<sup>6</sup> Attachment A reports performance of the Australian school systems against the sub outcomes specified in the NSRA since the NSRA commenced in 2018.

<sup>7</sup> For example, for NAPLAN numeracy, a year 7 student performing at the bottom 10th percentile in a school will on average perform lower than the mean year 5 student. And a year 7 student performing at the top 10th percentile in a school will on average perform greater than the mean year 9 student. A larger spread was found in reading scores within individual schools across all year levels (for example, up to 6 years on average for year 5 students). The variation in NAPLAN results across the whole school system was greater than the average variation found within a school. Results are based on 2021 data.

<sup>8</sup> Governments committed to introducing a national USI as far back as 2009 (MCEETYA 2009, p. 19).

- develop a flexible version of the national online formative assessment tool that allows jurisdictions to adapt the tool to their needs and preferences (including integrating content and features from existing state-based tools). Parties should consider assigning responsibility for completing the OFAI to a single entity capable of delivering the tool quickly at least cost.

### **A systematic approach to predicting and identifying workforce imbalances is still lacking**

According to the Education Council, the narrative on *National Initiatives to Support Teaching and School Leadership* and the workforce strategy *Teaching Futures: A National Teacher Workforce Strategy for Australia* together fulfil Governments' commitments to review teacher workforce needs. The former identifies principles 'to guide Education Ministers in commissioning work', while the latter 'highlights opportunities for potential future efforts'.<sup>9</sup> Neither provide the resources required by school systems and ITE providers to identify and plan for future workforce needs.

Current and emerging national workforce pressures require more systematic treatment to predict future teacher workforce imbalances. As part of their *National Action Plan on Teacher Shortage*, Education Ministers recently agreed to develop and publish teacher workforce projections, disaggregated at a regional level and by subject specialisation, along with nationally consistent data on teacher demand. This improved labour supply and demand data should support the development of a national teacher labour market model, which could be used to predict teacher demand and supply.

### **Significant investments in the national evidence base have been made, but gaps remain**

A strong national education evidence base would help policy makers, school leaders and teachers make informed decisions about the policies, programs and classroom practices that would lift student outcomes. AERO was created under the auspices of the NSRA to help build such an evidence base to inform practices and policies.

One area where AERO and others could help advance the education evidence frontier is providing insights into the teaching strategies deployed in Australian classrooms and their effectiveness. Research has shown that classroom interactions are a key factor for effective learning. But both policy makers and researchers say too little is known about what happens in classrooms and how inputs (teachers, pedagogy, learning materials) affect student outcomes.

The Commission is seeking feedback on options for gleaning a better understanding of what occurs in the classroom, including the extent to which evidence-based practices are adopted. The Commission is also seeking views regarding whether the current education and research evidence base sufficiently incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and community perspectives and Aboriginal knowledge.

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<sup>9</sup> AITSL 2021, p. 38; Education Council 2020, p. 1

## What should be the focus of the next agreement?

Many of the policy initiatives, including the USI and OFAI, form part of a longer-term investment in the national institutions, systems and tools to help improve student outcomes.<sup>10</sup> Once these initiatives are complete (or their fate resolved), the key pieces of the national education architecture will largely be in place.

The next reform agreement is an opportunity to change tack to focus directly on lifting student outcomes, improving equity, and enhancing student wellbeing.

### The next agreement should concentrate on pervasive challenges

The Commission has identified four overarching and interrelated policy challenges facing Australia's school systems.

- Constraints on the effectiveness of teachers and leaders arising from such factors as:
  - teacher shortages in some places and in key subjects
  - high workloads for teachers and principals
  - limited opportunities to develop and share best practice
  - lack of career pathways for mid-ranking teachers and principals.
- A lack of equity in student outcomes. This has several dimensions:
  - a core of students who do not meet minimum standards
  - significant and persistent gaps in outcomes for many students in the NSRA's priority equity cohorts
  - gaps in outcomes for students in other cohorts facing disadvantage
  - a lack of recognition of the unique educational ambitions for particular cohorts and their families.
- Poor student wellbeing.
- The capacity of the education sector to adapt to changing contexts and needs.

These challenges are plausible future priorities for intergovernmental collaboration.

- All jurisdictions face these challenges.
- Each has a proven, material impact on student outcomes.
- With the exception of the final challenge, Governments have already recognised the value of national collaboration to address the issues.<sup>11</sup>

### Improving teaching

Teacher effectiveness is the single most influential 'in-school' factor for student outcomes.<sup>12</sup> Teacher effectiveness is determined by both teacher quality (the attributes of an individual teacher) and quality teaching (effective teaching practices). A key issue for policy makers, schools and the public generally has been how to improve teacher effectiveness, and given its links to this goal, address teacher shortages (box 1).

Some stakeholders have stressed the importance of attracting 'the best and brightest' to teaching, especially school-leavers with high tertiary admissions rankings (ATARs). This is a natural response to concerns that

<sup>10</sup> These include the national curriculum, national testing regime (NAPLAN), national data collections, reporting frameworks, teaching standards and institutions such as ACARA and AITSL.

<sup>11</sup> COAG (2018); DSS (2021a); DESE (2020b); Education Council (2015); DET (2018); Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations and All Australian Governments (2020); Education Council (2020c); NCCD (2020).

<sup>12</sup> Commission analysis suggests a one standard deviation increase in the effectiveness of an average teacher would raise average lifetime earnings of the classroom by several hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

some teaching graduates may lack necessary academic skills. However, fewer than one in five students enter ITE on the basis of their ATAR, and there is mixed research on whether high school performance is a good predictor of subsequent teaching performance. Requiring minimum ATARs for prospective teachers can also give rise to unintended consequences, resulting in some potentially good teachers being excluded from ITE courses, with flow on effects for workforce diversity and shortages.

For these reasons, some stakeholders have suggested that lifting the quality of ITE courses would be more effective than expensive scholarships to raise the 'quality' of ITE candidates. Improving the quality of ITE courses should be a permanent priority. But improving the standard of ITE will take time to improve the quality of teaching across all Australian schools. Other initiatives could be implemented to support teachers during the critical first three to five years of their careers when they face the most challenging adjustments (especially if employed at so-called 'hard-to-staff' schools) and are at higher risk of early exit from the profession. Australia has relatively high use of mentoring for teachers by OECD standards. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that more than one-third of early career teachers surveyed, say that they do not receive induction training and mentoring. The Commission is seeking feedback on whether measures to address this could form the basis for a new NPI in the next intergovernmental agreement.

In addition to supporting new entrants to the profession, focusing on factors such as teacher workload, and developing and sharing best practice, would target the around 300 000 teachers already in the classroom. This would also help to address teacher shortages — some of these same factors weigh heavily in teacher attraction and retention decisions.

### **Box 1 – Evidence of teacher and school leader shortages**

Gauging the extent of teacher shortages is difficult.

Over the past decade, in the aggregate, the teacher workforce has grown more quickly than the student population, particularly in primary schools, where student-teacher ratios are lower than a decade ago. In secondary schools, student-teacher ratios are relatively unchanged.

However, several stakeholders raised concerns about teacher shortages, including that existing shortages had been exacerbated by COVID-19.

A lack of timely data makes it difficult to assess, but shortages appear concentrated in particular subject areas and locations, or can manifest as a lack of workforce diversity.

Rates of out-of-field teaching point to significant shortages in secondary subjects such as maths, science, technology and English. In 2018, almost one-quarter of surveyed teachers teaching mathematics had limited or no training in the subject; a trend echoed in science (18 per cent), design and technology (30 per cent), languages other than English (29 per cent) and English (18 per cent).

There continue to be longstanding shortages in regional, rural and remote areas. School principals report greater difficulty finding staff and higher rates of out-of-field teaching.

There is also a shortage of teachers qualified to teach particular student cohorts. For example, close to one-third of teachers who teach special education have no specialised training. Shortages can also result in a lack of workforce diversity; for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are underrepresented in schools, making up only 3 per cent of the Australian teaching workforce.

### Box 1 – Evidence of teacher and school leader shortages

Some stakeholders suggested that many of the factors that have contributed to localised shortages will likely continue over time. These include growing school enrolments, a drop in the number of people enrolling in teaching degrees, and an ageing workforce. But gauging the extent of future shortages is also difficult. Estimates of future shortages are contingent on assumptions, including about how teachers are deployed across tasks and schools, rates of teacher attrition, and the ratio of students to teachers. Estimates of shortages are particularly sensitive to the latter.

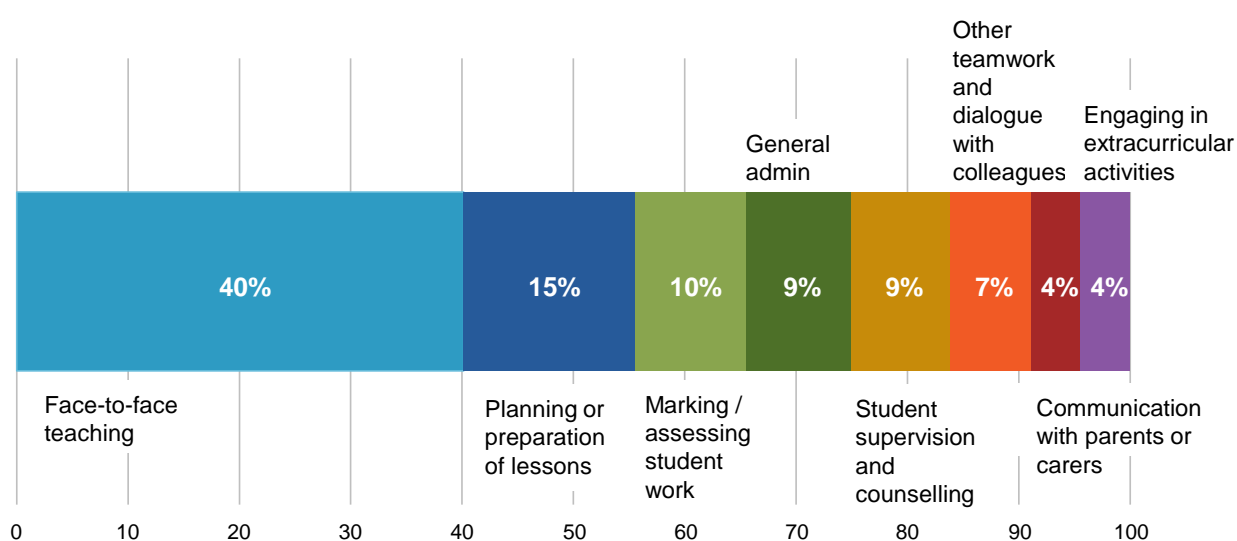
With the pipeline of school leaders largely drawn from the teaching workforce, some worry that '[t]oday's teacher crisis will be tomorrow's leadership crisis' (Grant 2022). In some areas, pressures are already evident, with stakeholders pointing to challenges attracting and retaining school leaders in regional, rural and remote areas.

### Teachers are shouldering more workload

Teachers' workload is high and increasing. Teachers typically spend most of their time on teaching, lesson planning, marking and general administration (figure 3). The most recent domestic surveys suggest that full-time teachers work between 44 to 57 hours a week during term time. Reported working hours are similar for primary and secondary teachers, and early career teachers, and even higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers. International measures suggest secondary teacher hours are rising, up from about 43 hours in 2013 to 45 hours in 2018. Teachers typically spend most of their time on teaching, lesson planning, marking and general administration (figure 3).

**Figure 3 – Teachers typically spend most of their time teaching, lesson planning, marking and on general administration<sup>a</sup>**

**Average proportion of weekly hours spent on teaching tasks by full-time teachers in 2018**



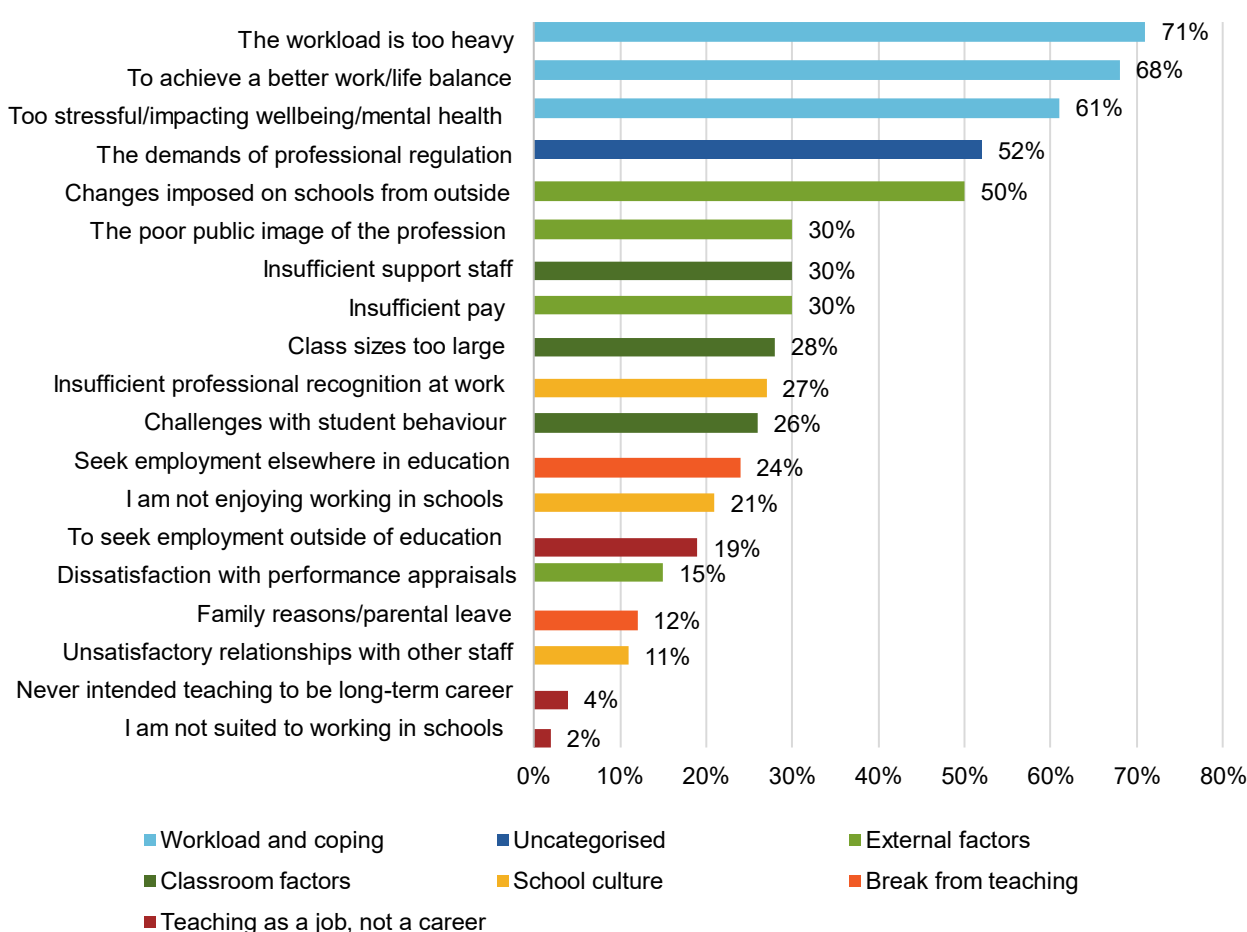
a. Based on a survey of teachers from New South Wales, Northern Territory and South Australia in 2018. The sample of survey respondents varies by task. The sample was not sufficient to consider part-time work under 16 hours a week. Only includes full-time school teachers.

Source: Commission analysis based on AITSL (2021a, pp. 67–70).

Reducing teacher workloads would not only improve teacher effectiveness — by increasing the time teachers have to prepare for lessons and undertake professional development — it would help reduce shortages. High workload is the main factor behind teachers' intention to leave the profession (figure 4).<sup>13</sup> More manageable workloads might also encourage former teachers to return to the profession — survey estimates suggest that 11 per cent of registered teachers are not working in education, although teacher registration data in some jurisdictions point to a much larger number.

About two-thirds of Australian principals also cite heavy workload (along with 'level of responsibility' in their job) as a factor limiting their effectiveness, with recent surveys suggesting that they work just over 61 hours per week.

**Figure 4 – Reasons for considering leaving<sup>a</sup>**



a. 3 216 survey respondents from New South Wales, Northern Territory and South Australia.

Source: AITSL (2021c, p. 108).

### Reducing low-value tasks and effectively deploying teachers' assistants could help ease the burden

While, on average, Australian teachers work more hours than their international counterparts, they spend less time teaching, both in terms of absolute hours and as a proportion of their working week. Instead, they spend more time on general administration, such as communication, paperwork and other clerical duties. At just over

<sup>13</sup> While intentions data do not necessarily correlate with attrition, they can be a good barometer of current perceptions and the mindset in a group.

5 hours a week, this is the fifth highest number of hours in the OECD. Principals spend an even greater share of their time (more than one-third of their worked hours) dealing with administrative matters, along with leadership tasks and meetings, while just 5 per cent is spent on professional learning for school staff.

At the same time that teacher (and principal) workload is increasing, the number of teaching assistants and other support staff has grown to just over 129 000 in 2021. The remit of teaching assistants is broad — working under the direction of teachers to support students (especially those with special needs) and helping with day-to-day running of the classroom, including administrative tasks. When used effectively and supported well, teaching assistants can make a difference to the learning outcomes of students, but it is unclear how they are being deployed.

Most jurisdictions, systems and sectors in Australia have some process underway to reduce the administrative compliance impact in their schools. And Education Ministers recently agreed that jurisdictions and non-government systems would ‘provide information on actions they are taking’ to free teachers up to focus on planning, collaborating and teaching (2022, p. 3).

But more concerted efforts are required. There is a strong case for the Australian, State and Territory Governments, in consultation with teachers and school leaders, to reduce low-value tasks, and find ways to more effectively use teaching assistants. The Commission is seeking feedback on whether this could form the basis for a new NPI in the next intergovernmental agreement.

### Fostering expertise would improve teaching

AERO has observed that ‘we are not effectively utilising our best teachers ... our existing teacher career paths do not systematically build, recognise and deploy teaching expertise ... to create a quality teaching workforce’ (sub. 6, pp. 11-12).

Initiatives, such as Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALTs), are intended to address this gap. In addition to career pathways, they provide an opportunity for highly skilled teachers to share their expertise with others. But progress towards developing and recognising highly accomplished and/or lead teachers has been slow, in part due to intensive application processes. Since the introduction of HALT certifications in 2012, only 0.3 per cent of the workforce (about 1000 teachers) have become certified. And some contend that the communities of practice envisaged have failed to emerge, with many certified teachers saying they have too little time or opportunity to lead the development of others in their school.<sup>14</sup> If so, there is a risk that HALT certifications become more a costly credential than a catalyst for better deployment of skilled teachers.

Processes to build, recognise and deploy teaching expertise can take many forms. Like HALT, Master Teachers and Instructional Leaders are also intended to recognise high-performing teachers and support local communities of practice. Employed by high-performing school systems overseas, such as Singapore and Shanghai, Master Teachers are intended to be the pedagogical leaders in their subjects, working across a network of schools in their region to identify teacher needs, coordinate training, and connect schools with research. Unlike Master Teachers, who have no classroom load, Instructional Leaders split their time between classroom teaching and instructional leadership, working in their own schools to support and guide other teachers in specific subjects.

While they do not offer the same degree of recognition, Quality Teaching Rounds — where teachers work together in small groups to analyse and improve their practice — have been found to have significant positive effects on teaching quality and student academic achievement. Teachers who participate in Quality Teaching Rounds report experiencing enhanced morale, stronger individual and collective efficacy, and

<sup>14</sup> See for example Goss and Sonnemann 2020, pp. 23–24 and AITSL 2019.

improved school culture. Quality Teaching Rounds do not require intensive application or certification processes, and so provide an accessible avenue for time-poor teachers to improve their practice.

These three models are not mutually exclusive — the next agreement is an opportunity for Governments to develop and support localised communities of practice across schools, regions and sectors. These should encompass accessible options for time-constrained teachers.

### **Ensuring a pipeline of future school leaders**

School leaders are second only to teachers in terms of their importance for student outcomes. But school leadership roles are becoming more complex and demanding. Effectively preparing teachers aspiring to become future school leaders requires early identification and investment, but also risks removing effective teachers from the classroom. And some aspiring school leaders are shying away from leadership roles due to workload concerns, particularly at the principal level.

Effective leadership planning, including clearer, more systematic career pathways would help ensure a pipeline of future school leaders. The Commission is seeking feedback on potential career pathways for aspiring school leaders.

### **Flexible approaches are required to overcome teacher labour market challenges**

As workforce pressures persist, and as workers become more ‘career mobile’, more flexible approaches will be needed to avoid future shortages.

Mid-career professionals could be an important pipeline for future teacher supply — particularly in certain subject areas and locations where rates of out-of-field teaching are higher (box 1). Recent surveys reveal up to four in 10 mid-career professionals would consider a career in teaching, with one in 10 planning a career change to become a teacher, and three in 10 open to the idea.

Mid-career professionals looking to make the switch are motivated by a range of factors, including the desire to make a social contribution. But they face significant switching costs, such as the time taken to undertake an ITE course (raised from a 12 month diploma to a 2 year Master’s degree in recent years) and loss of income while studying and building a new career. Greater reliance on accelerated postgraduate degrees to reduce the time required to study, and employment-based pathways, would make teaching a more attractive option for many professionals.

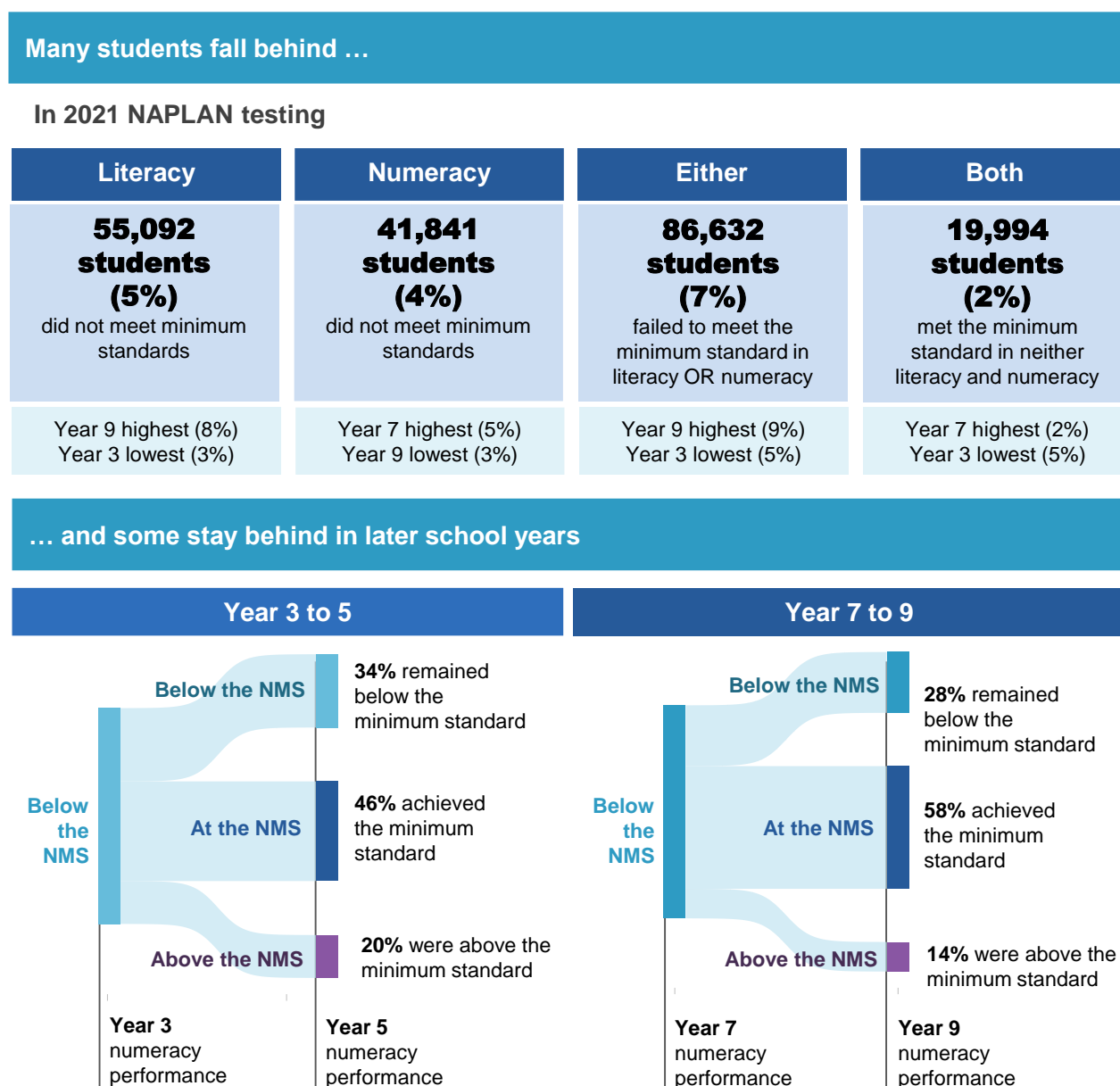
A recent review into quality Initial Teacher Education (2021, p. iv), concluded that, ‘for highly qualified candidates with strong subject knowledge, the Graduate Diploma might be sufficient preparation for teaching in secondary schools.’ The Commission invites feedback on options for streamlining pathways for mid-career entrants, especially people with skills in critical areas.

### **Tackling a lack of equity in student outcomes**

Australia has long aspired to provide a high quality and equitable education for all students. But we persistently fall short of this ideal.

### **Many students do not meet minimum standards — often year after year**

Each year, between 5 and 9 per cent of Australian students do not meet year-level expectations in either literacy or numeracy. About one-third of the students who do not meet minimum literacy standards in year 3 also do not meet minimum standards in year 5. Similar patterns are evident in numeracy and across years 7 and 9 (figure 5).

**Figure 5 – Proportions of students meeting minimum standards in NAPLAN<sup>a</sup>**

a. NMS denotes National Minimum Standard. The bottom figure shows students who were below the national minimum standard in year 3 and whether they remained below, were at or above the national minimum standard in year 5. The same analysis was done for students between year 7 and year 9.

Source: Commission estimates based on NAPLAN de-identified student level data (2022).

The impact on these students can be demoralising, as the Australian Council for Educational Research observed:

[These students] tend to start each school year behind most of their age group and they are poorly equipped for the material they are about to be taught. Most struggle, and this is reflected in their poor performance on the year-level curriculum. Many students receive low grades year after year, reinforcing the message that they are not succeeding at school – or worse, that they are inherently poor learners. (Masters 2016, p. 1)

### **Tailored supports are needed for students who have fallen behind**

One proven way to address gaps in learning outcomes is to have processes and structures within schools that identify when a student is starting to fall behind and intervene to support that student's performance.

Research suggests that targeted interventions are effective, particularly small group or one-to-one tuition. Intensive, targeted support allows the teacher to focus on the needs of a small number of learners, providing teaching that is closely matched to pupil understanding, and opportunities for greater levels of interaction and feedback. International evidence from two high performing nations shows that small group tuition can improve learning outcomes by about 4 months over one or two school terms.

Closer to home, targeted interventions have been shown to substantially improve educational attainment for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Focusing on students who have fallen behind, and are at most risk of staying behind (particularly those in lower year levels), would be a good place to start. Commission analysis reveals students with parents with low levels of educational attainment and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are at higher risk of not catching up. The Commission seeks feedback on how such an approach, or other proven approaches, might be applied cost effectively in an Australian context.

### **Most students who do not meet national minimum standards are not from priority equity cohorts**

Promoting equity is more than assisting students with low academic performance. A second, but related equity consideration is the significant and persistent gap in learning outcomes for some cohorts of students — often described as priority equity cohorts (Attachment A). The priority equity cohorts listed in the NSRA are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students living in regional, rural and remote locations, students with a disability and students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

While students from priority equity cohorts are disproportionately represented among students who have fallen behind national minimum standards, most underperforming students do not belong to these cohorts (at least, not the equity cohorts identified in the NAPLAN data).<sup>15</sup> And some 85 per cent of students who identify as belonging to a priority equity cohort, achieve at or above national minimum standards. Rather, gaps in outcomes exist at all levels of achievement — high and low (figure 6).

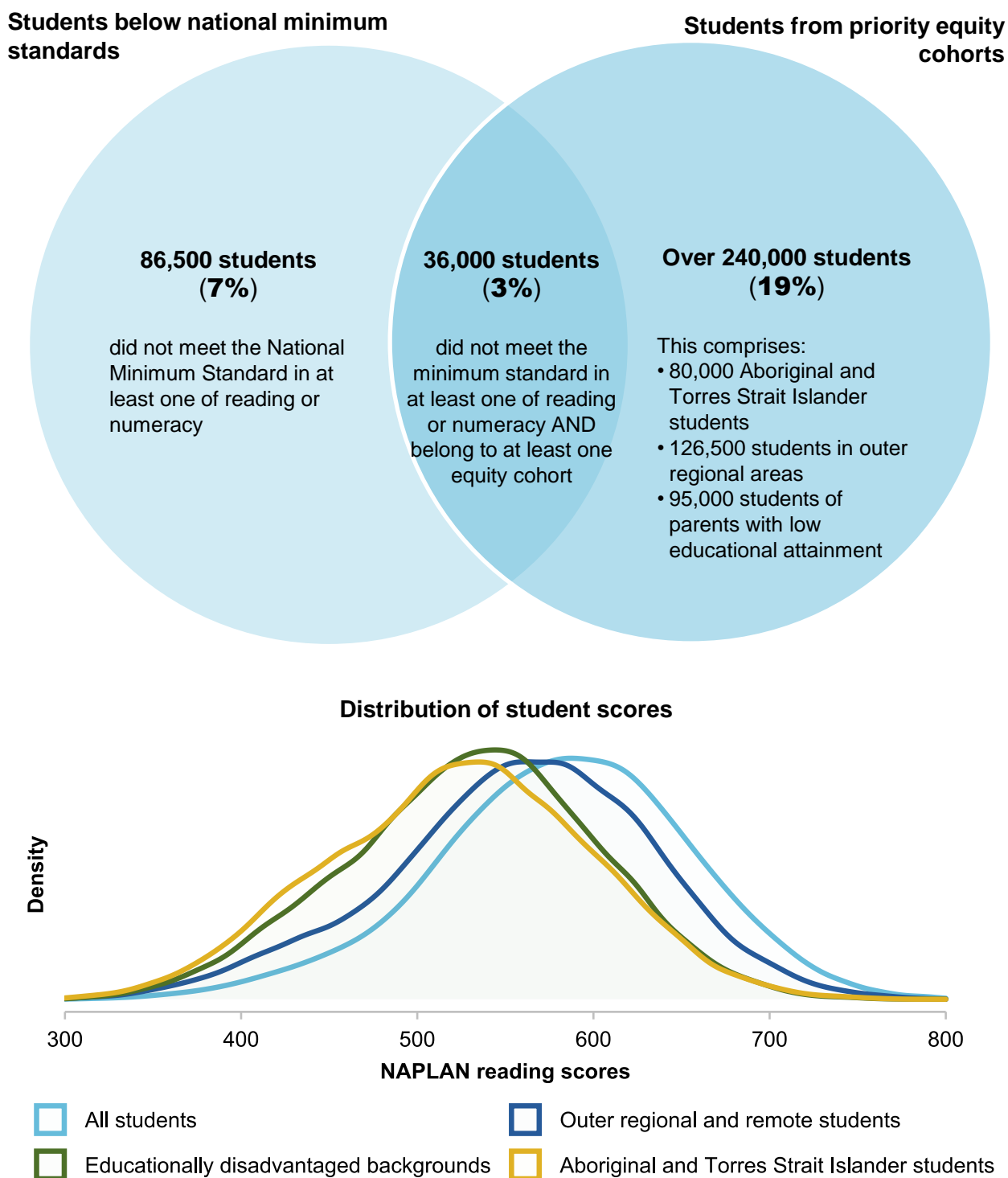
While the NSRA does not define equity, the Melbourne Declaration (and its successor, the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration) define equity at length. Definitions broadly reflect the values that school systems should strive to eliminate discrimination of all kinds and to ensure differences in educational outcomes associated with students' culture, disability, remoteness, or socioeconomic status are reduced or eliminated.

Promoting equity can be thought of as recognising that some students may have different educational needs and desired outcomes — including in relation to culture and language — and creating an education system that is able to adapt to these needs. However, outcome measures and feedback from stakeholders highlight that equity remains a key challenge for the Australian education system.

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<sup>15</sup> Students with disability are identified as a priority equity cohort in the NSRA, but NAPLAN performance data are not published for students with disability. As a consequence, the Commission was unable to include these students in its analysis.

**Figure 6 – The overlap between students below the national minimum standards and students from priority equity cohorts, years 3, 5, 7 and 9, 2021 (top), and the distribution of year 9 NAPLAN reading scores in 2021 (bottom)<sup>a</sup>**

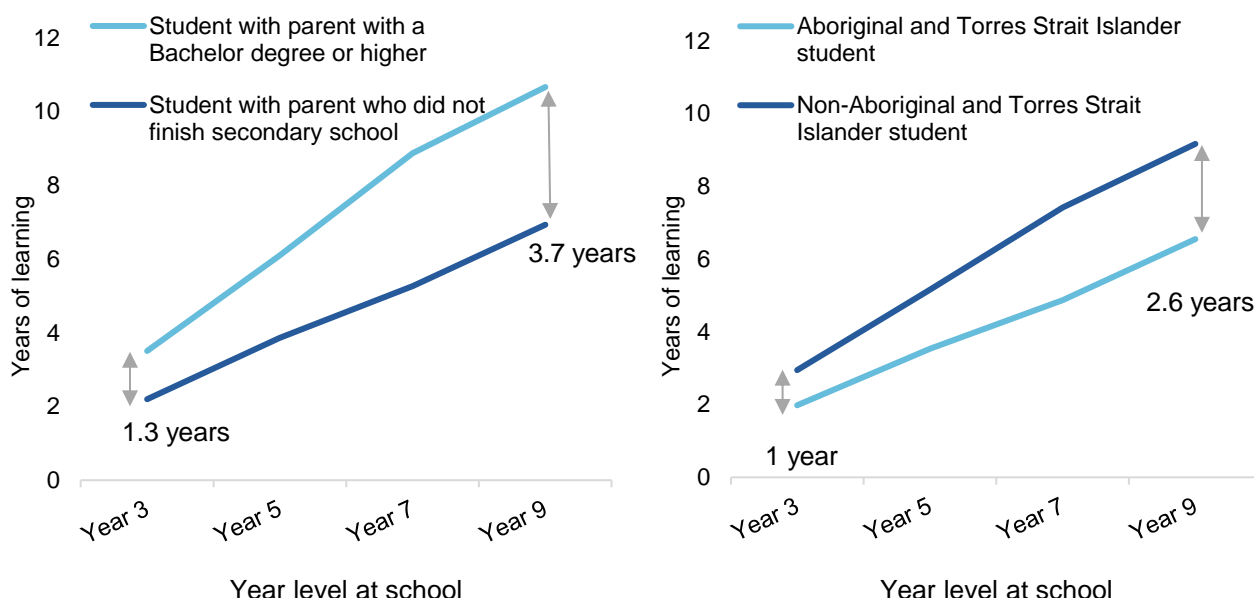


a. Students with disability are identified as a priority equity cohort in the NSRA but NAPLAN performance data are not published for students with disability. Similar distribution results were found for NAPLAN numeracy scores in year 9.

Source: Commission estimates based on NAPLAN de-identified student level data (2022).

Gaps in learning outcomes for students from priority equity cohorts have changed little over the past decade. Indeed, rather than narrowing, the gap in learning (expressed as the time it would take for students from priority equity cohorts to catch-up) widens as students progress through their schooling (figure 7).

**Figure 7 – Gaps in years of progress widen as students progress through schooling**  
**Difference in numeracy NAPLAN scores between students from equity cohorts and other students, expressed as equivalised years of learning**



Source: Commission estimates based on NAPLAN de-identified student level data (2022).

### A new, inclusive approach is needed for students from priority equity cohorts

The label 'priority equity cohorts' masks significant diversity in students' learning needs and educational aspirations. This diversity reflects differences in their life experiences, the education outcomes they value, their learning and wellbeing outcomes, and the nature of adjustments and supports they may require.

Addressing the needs of these students relies on adopting a person-centred approach, which recognises that being in a priority equity cohort does not equate to disadvantage. Rather, it is the experiences of these students, both within and outside the education system that affects their educational achievement. The Indigenous Education Consultative Meeting observed:

[The] labelling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families as disadvantaged continues to play into a culture of deficit discourse and low expectations that stymie Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' ability to thrive in their education ... While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities face a range of complex and compounding circumstances that impact their educational engagement and outcomes, they are not inherently disadvantaged by being Indigenous. (sub. 52, p. 3)

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities

The importance of inclusive, person-centred approaches in responding to the distinct educational needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students was a recurring theme in consultations. The Commission has heard that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities associate the education system with suppression of identity and language. Many stakeholders emphasised the importance of

culturally responsive pedagogies (which value and embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and ways of learning) and a culturally responsive curriculum (which integrates Aboriginal knowledge, culture and history) in creating a sense of belonging and inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. During consultations, an Aboriginal young person highlighted the importance of ‘two-way’ learning:

A good education means getting everyone in the school to learn about Aboriginal culture, for non-Aboriginal people to learn about Aboriginal culture because we all live on Aboriginal land.

Designing policy in collaboration with the people it is intended to support allows for a deeper understanding of the issues certain students face and the policy responses that are most appropriate. Under the NSRA, State and Territory Governments are responsible for engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on the implementation of reforms. Since the NSRA’s inception, all Australian Governments, and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations, agreed the 2020 Closing the Gap Agreement. This agreement focuses on shared decision making with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, representing a new way of working for Governments across all policy areas, including education.

### ***Students with disability***

Students with disability can face various barriers in accessing a high quality education that recognises their learning needs. A common concern raised by stakeholders is that some schools in Australia continue to use a ‘manage-and-discipline’ model, which can result in some students with disability being sanctioned instead of being given the behavioural supports they need, contributing to their disengagement from education. A 2019 survey of students with disability and their parents, conducted by Children and Young People with a Disability Australia, found that 14 per cent of participants had been suspended from school, almost one in five did not attend school full time, and one in ten had been refused enrolment.

Students with disability also related feeling discriminated against at school in the form of lowered expectations and lack of understanding and support for their learning aspirations. Students noted that these experiences often reduced their confidence in their ability to complete, and succeed in, their education.

### ***A person-centred approach is key for addressing complex needs***

There can be multiple factors that increase the challenges of providing high quality education for some students. Where these factors intersect, the effects can be compounding, further reinforcing the need for person-centred approaches. While the NSRA identifies distinct equity cohorts, about 20 per cent of students in priority equity cohorts belong to more than one cohort. As an example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more than twice as likely as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to have a disability.<sup>16</sup> Some stakeholders observed that disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is not always picked up, and instead is treated as ‘misbehaviour’ and that these students are over-represented in school exclusions.

Families in regional, rural and remote areas can have limited choice in where and how they educate their children. Difficulties accessing education that meets student learning needs in remote areas can be particularly acute for students with disability and disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Commission seeks feedback on whether ITE adequately equips teachers to identify and respond to the needs of students from priority equity cohorts. The Commission also invites feedback on whether more can be done to further embed the views of priority equity cohorts in national education policies and the merits of establishing a national Indigenous consultative body on education.

<sup>16</sup> For children aged 0–14 years, based on the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia.

### ***Priority equity cohorts do not capture all students experiencing educational disadvantage***

There are some groups of students that could reasonably be included as a priority equity cohort in a new agreement.

- Students with English as an additional language or dialect often require specific support at school. This can include support to build English language skills to access the general curriculum<sup>17</sup>, as well as social, emotional and cultural support (as their social and cultural expectations can vary greatly).
- Children and young people living in out-of-home care are at greater risk of poorer educational outcomes than peers in the broader community. Young people in out-of-home care tend to move between care settings, and therefore schools. They are considerably less likely than their peers to attend school and engage with education. They typically require more intensive support from teachers and schools.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Bilateral initiatives should give greater prominence to supporting outcomes for students from priority equity cohorts***

Bilateral agreements were the intended vehicle for addressing equity issues.<sup>19</sup> In practice, this has not always occurred. The NSRA does not appear to have spurred many new reforms to lift outcomes for students from priority equity cohorts. Many bilateral agreements fail to address each and all of the priority equity cohorts mentioned in the agreement. Where reforms are listed, there is often little information to show how proposed actions will contribute to desired outcomes. The result is minimal visibility on how jurisdictions are fulfilling their commitments.

There is a strong case for State and Territory Governments to continue to take the lead on implementing reforms to reduce barriers faced by students from priority equity cohorts — they are best placed to design initiatives that reflect local conditions and are tailored to meet their students' needs. However, a more systematic and transparent approach is required.

One approach for giving greater prominence to priority equity cohorts in the next agreement would be for parties to develop implementation plans that set out new and established reforms intended to improve outcomes for students from each priority equity cohort. In consultation with stakeholders, the parties could release plans that identify the desired outcomes and the data to be collected to track progress. This would provide a clearer picture of jurisdictions' efforts to achieve a high equity system.

## **Addressing poor student wellbeing**

### **Many students experience poor wellbeing but there are no focused reforms to address this in the NSRA**

Student wellbeing is both a desired outcome of schooling in its own right, as well as a vehicle to achieve improved learning outcomes — research shows wellbeing influences students' ability to engage and learn at school.

Students struggling with challenges to their wellbeing often have difficulty engaging at school. One study found that year 9 students who experienced feelings of depression scored 7 per cent worse than similar students in NAPLAN for literacy and numeracy. Another study found that students with persistent emotional or behavioural problems between years 3 and 7 fell a year behind in numeracy compared with their peers. This accords with research that suggests that poor wellbeing, and childhood trauma in particular, impacts a

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<sup>17</sup> It has been estimated over 600,000 EAL/D learners need English language support in schools throughout Australia.

<sup>18</sup> As at 30 June 2021, there were about 46,200 children in out-of-home care across Australia.

<sup>19</sup> Parties agreed that they would set out existing and/or new reforms to lift outcomes for students from priority equity cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students living in regional, rural and remote locations, students with a disability and students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds (NSRA, s. 49 (c)).

child's memory and learning, compromising their ability to concentrate and negatively affecting social and teacher interactions at school.

A sizable proportion of children and young people experience major challenges to their social and emotional wellbeing. In 2014 (the most recent year for which data are available), one in five young people aged 11-17 reported having high levels of psychological distress, and 14 per cent of children aged 4 to 17 years reported experiencing an episode of mental illness during the year. Poor wellbeing can be particularly acute for children and young people experiencing child abuse and neglect, family violence and in out-of-home care.

Addressing poor wellbeing requires more than just generic wellbeing programs geared at students. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, connection to country, spirituality, community and ancestry can be key protective factors in helping to manage wellbeing. Teachers and school leaders also need support and resources to identify and respond to students' wellbeing needs. While a student's wellbeing is often influenced by what is happening outside the school gates, poor wellbeing can be exacerbated, and trauma entrenched, by a lack of awareness on the part of teachers and school leaders.

While there was already growing recognition that school policy needs to focus on student wellbeing, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought concerns about student wellbeing into sharper focus. However, several reviews have highlighted that school wellbeing programs and policies often fail to provide teachers and students with the support and resources they need. Issues include overlapping policies and programs and schools choosing programs that lack a strong evidence base.

### **Student wellbeing should be included in the next agreement**

The NSRA (s. 9) acknowledges that the 'wellbeing of all students is fundamental to successful education outcomes'. Yet, wellbeing is largely missing from the objectives, outcomes and reform actions in the NSRA. Elevating student wellbeing as an area of national priority and co-operation in a successor agreement, along with greater transparency on wellbeing outcomes, would encourage more effective support for students.

To allow jurisdictions to tailor responses to local needs and conditions, actions to support wellbeing are likely best pursued through bilateral initiatives (under the umbrella of a new intergovernmental agreement). But a greater focus on wellbeing might also provide opportunities for greater collaboration across Governments, portfolios and school sectors.

### **Improving the capacity of the education sector to adapt to changing contexts and needs**

COVID-19 caused significant and ongoing disruption to the education system. It required schools, teachers, parents and students to rapidly adjust to new modes of learning — sourcing, implementing and adapting to a remote, online learning environment.

While the impact of the pandemic on student outcomes is not yet fully apparent, some clear policy implications have emerged. Beyond the immediate need of identifying and assisting students that may have fallen behind, COVID-19, along with a series of natural disasters, underscored the importance of school systems being able to adapt to changing contexts and needs. To be successful in this endeavour, schools and school systems will need to maintain a focus on innovation and improvement, supported by data, research and evidence. While the Commission does not propose that this form the basis of a new NPI, this report identifies some practical steps that jurisdictions can take to build these foundations. Encouraging continuous improvement and innovation in the education system is explored in more detail in the Commission's Productivity Inquiry.

## How might intergovernmental co-operation need to adapt?

### Making a real difference

A key challenge in lifting school performance is that policy deliberations — including as part of intergovernmental agreements — can be far removed from the daily realities of classrooms, teachers and students. A theme of this report is the need for the next NSRA to move beyond system architecture and drive real improvements on the ground. To be successful, the NSRA will need to close the distance between national policy making and classroom practice. Each should inform the other — with teachers and school leaders influencing policy, and evidence-based approaches gaining more traction in schools and classrooms.

Ultimately, schools are relied upon to implement NPIs in addition to other jurisdictional policies and reforms.

### Greater implementation flexibility should be balanced by enhanced accountability and transparency

While national projects will continue to have a role in the next intergovernmental agreement, addressing some future reform priorities may require greater flexibility than the ‘one in, all in’ approach to NPIs under the NSRA. In some cases, the benefits of participating in multi-jurisdictional projects to achieve national reform priorities might differ across parties (for example, where some states and territories have already implemented local responses). In these instances, jurisdictions might have the choice of opting out of joint projects (while continuing to contribute to national reform directions through state-based projects) or to contribute to joint projects by sharing existing knowledge, so that other jurisdictions are not starting from scratch.

Where jurisdictional differences demand more tailored responses, bilateral initiatives might need to do more of the heavy lifting. But greater flexibility in implementation would need to be balanced by greater public transparency and accountability mechanisms. Lessons from implementing the NSRA suggest that these mechanisms are relatively weak.

### Existing accountability mechanisms have limited effect and can give rise to perverse outcomes

The Australian Education Act allows the Commonwealth to withhold funding from States or Territories that do not implement agreed NSRA reforms. While intended to encourage the uptake of reforms, this seems to have created perverse incentives, as states seek to reduce funding risks. Apart from the USI, many of the milestones in the NSRA and bilateral agreements are highly caveated or provide little detail on what outputs parties have committed to deliver, let alone what outcomes they will achieve. And bilateral agreements often represent an audit of current measures (categorised under one of the three broad reform directions of the NSRA) rather than additional measures.<sup>20</sup>

Perverse incentives aside, withholding funding would be a significant step for the Commonwealth and many stakeholders do not see the threat as credible, weakening its effectiveness as an accountability tool.

Annual progress updates for the NPIs and bilateral agreements, one of the main accountability mechanisms in the NSRA, also appear lacking. Performance is self-assessed and updates provide scant information on how outputs are contributing to intended outcomes, leaving stakeholders with little sense of their overall impact or success.

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<sup>20</sup> For example, every jurisdiction’s agreement contains a commitment to continue work on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, a project already in train well before the NSRA.

## **The National Measurement Framework for Schooling does not provide a complete view of performance**

The final and perhaps most important accountability mechanism is public performance reporting.<sup>21</sup> The NSRA (s. 51) sets out public reporting arrangements intended to give ‘the community confidence that outcomes are being achieved and reforms to improve the quality and equity of Australia’s schooling systems are being implemented by all Parties’ (figure 1). But this too has shortcomings.

Arguably, some of the indicators in the NSRA lack the breadth to provide a good understanding of progress. Current indicators provide a limited view of student engagement and transitions to further study, training or work.

And the Measurement Framework (the chosen vehicle for measuring progress against the outcomes of the NSRA) does not reflect commitments to report on outcomes for students from priority equity cohorts. Despite some information being available<sup>22</sup>, the Measurement Framework and associated National Report on Schooling do not include many of the agreed measures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students living in regional, rural and remote locations, or students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Accountability for outcomes for students with disability is particularly poor because of a lack of data.

## **Meaningful and transparent measures of progress are needed**

Governments have several options for enhancing accountability and transparency under the next agreement. One model would be to require jurisdictions to include additional information in their bilateral agreements and associated progress reports so that it is clearer what outcomes are being pursued and whether they are being achieved. This could be set out in implementation plans, as described above.

Improving data quality and availability and fulfilling existing reporting commitments, by ensuring the Measurement Framework and National Report on Schooling disaggregate results by student cohort, would also go a long way to improving accountability. Governments have already signalled their willingness to consider opportunities to enhance and augment existing indicators in the Measurement Framework to provide a better understanding of progress.<sup>23</sup> Indicators for wellbeing, learning gain and post-school outcomes would provide a more complete view of performance.

<sup>21</sup> Under the NSRA (s. 53(c)) parties agreed to ‘continuing public accountability on progress towards meeting targets through existing COAG performance reporting arrangements’. The National 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 (ACARA 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Albeit with some diminution in data quality due to disaggregation and small sample sizes.




<sup>23</sup> Under the NSRA (s. 39) parties agreed to consider improvements to outcomes and sub-outcomes over time including enhancements to the existing performance measures and developing further performance measures reflecting priority areas.

## Attachment A – system performance

**Figure 8 – Recent performance against sub-outcomes<sup>a,b</sup>**

**Progress across NSRA sub-outcomes between 2018 and 2021**

Sub-outcomes	All students	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Students in regional and remote areas	Students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds
<b>Lower the proportion of students in bottom two bands in the NAPLAN – reading</b>				
Year 3	↑ +1.0 ppt	↑ +1.7 ppt	↑ +2.5 ppt	↑ +2.7 ppt
Year 5	↓ -1.8 ppt	↓ -6.3 ppt	↓ -1.5 ppt	↓ -4.9 ppt
Year 7	↓ -0.1 ppt	↓ -1.6 ppt	↑ +0.8 ppt	↑ +1.5 ppt
Year 9	↑ +5.0 ppt	↑ +4.8 ppt	↑ +5.9 ppt	↓ -0.1 ppt
<b>Lower the proportion of students in bottom two bands in the NAPLAN – numeracy</b>				
Year 3	↑ +1.3 ppt	↑ +2.7 ppt	↑ +2.6 ppt	↑ +3.2 ppt
Year 5	↑ +0.2 ppt	↑ +1.3 ppt	↑ +0.8 ppt	↓ -0.9 ppt
Year 7	↑ +2.1 ppt	↑ +5.4 ppt	↑ +3.4 ppt	↑ +2.5 ppt
Year 9	↑ +2.4 ppt	↑ +5.2 ppt	↑ +3.5 ppt	↑ +1.2 ppt
<b>Increase the proportion of students in the top two bands in the NAPLAN – reading</b>				
Year 3	↑ +2.1 ppt	↑ +3.3 ppt	↑ +1.2 ppt	↓ -0.3 ppt
Year 5	↑ +1.8 ppt	↑ +1.7 ppt	↑ +0.9 ppt	↑ +0.1 ppt
Year 7	↑ +0.9 ppt	↑ +0.7 ppt	↓ -0.4 ppt	↓ -0.1 ppt
Year 9	No change	↓ -0.1 ppt	↓ -1.0 ppt	↓ -0.6 ppt
<b>Increase the proportion of students in the top two bands in the NAPLAN – numeracy</b>				
Year 3	↓ -3.0 ppt	↓ -0.8 ppt	↓ -4.0 ppt	↓ -3.7 ppt
Year 5	↑ +1.7 ppt	↑ +0.4 ppt	↑ +0.9 ppt	↓ -0.9 ppt
Year 7	↑ +4.1 ppt	↑ +1.6 ppt	↑ +3.1 ppt	↑ +1.0 ppt
Year 9	↓ -4.1 ppt	↓ -1.8 ppt	↓ -3.9 ppt	↓ -2.7 ppt

Sub-outcomes	All students	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	Students in regional and remote areas	Students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds
<b>Lower the proportion of Australian students in the bottom levels for PISA tests</b> (sample of 15-year olds)				
Note that PISA testing has not been undertaken since the introduction of the NSRA. This table shows the results from the most recent PISA test (in 2018), rather than the change in results.				
Reading	19.6%	43.0%	33.7%	31.2%
Maths	22.4%	48.4%	41.5%	36.6%
Science	18.9%	43.9%	34.1%	30.8%
<b>Increase the proportion of students in the top levels of performance for PISA tests</b> (sample of 15-year olds)				
Note that PISA testing has not been undertaken since the introduction of the NSRA. This table shows the results from the most recent PISA test (in 2018), rather than the change in results.				
Reading	13.0%	4.6%	9.1%	5.8%
Maths	10.5%	2.5%	5.1%	4.0%
Science	14.6%	2.6%	5.9%	3.9%
<b>Reduce the gap in achievement between students from various socio-economic backgrounds in Australia's PISA educational performance compared to other countries and the OECD average</b> (sample of 15-year olds)				
Reading	—	—	—	—
Maths	—	—	—	—
Science	—	—	—	—
<b>Increase the proportion of students attending school 90 per cent or more of the time</b>				
Foundation to year 10	-4.0 ppt	-7.4 ppt	-7.2 ppt	—
<b>Increase the proportion of young people who completed year 12 or equivalent or gained a Certificate III or above</b>				
18-24 year-olds	+0.6 ppt	—	+1.2 ppt	—
Legend	<p>  <b>Outcome improved</b>            (could be due to an increase or a decrease, depending on the sub-outcome)         </p> <p>  <b>Outcome worsened</b>            (could be due to an increase or a decrease, depending on the sub-outcome)         </p> <p>  <b>Data not collected</b> </p>			

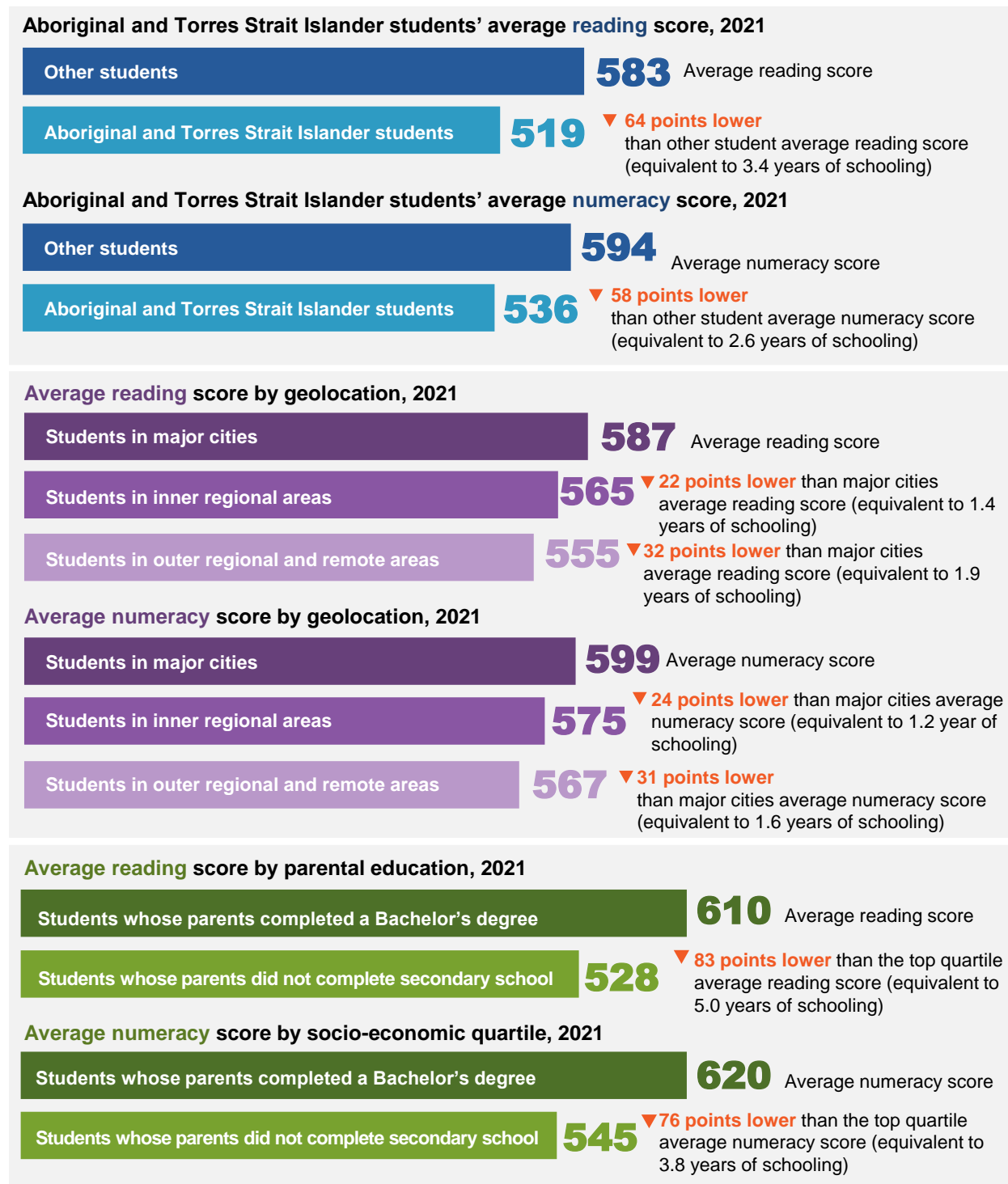
a. The NSRA commenced in 2019; so this figure illustrates the changes in outcomes since the NSRA was implemented.

b. The figure shows outcomes for students from three priority equity cohorts (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from regional and remote locations and students from an educationally disadvantaged background). As the latter is not defined in the NSRA, this is taken to mean students of parents without a year 12 (or equivalent) qualification for NAPLAN data, and students in the lowest socioeconomic quintile for PISA data. A fourth priority equity cohort — students with disability — has no data published so is not included in the table.

Sources: Commission estimates based on NAPLAN de-identified student data (2022); ACARA (2021); PC (2022).

**Figure 9 – 2021 NAPLAN results by selected equity cohorts**

**Gaps in average test scores for students from equity cohorts, expressed in NAPLAN points and equivalised years of learning**



Source: Commission estimates based on NAPLAN de-identified student data (2022).

# Recommendations and findings

## Chapter 1: About this review



### Draft finding 1.1

**Student achievement has stagnated, while attainment has improved and engagement has declined**

Over the past decade, the performance of Australian school students in national and international assessments of literacy and numeracy has stagnated.

Although the proportion of students completing school has increased since 2015, the proportion attending school regularly has declined, with much of this decline predating COVID-19.



### Draft finding 1.2

**Persistent gaps in education outcomes for some student cohorts point to systemic problems**

Australia has long aspired to provide a high quality and equitable education for all students.

Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students in outer regional and remote areas, and students with parents with low educational attainment are consistently below the outcomes of the broader student population.

## Chapter 2: High-level assessment of the National Policy Initiatives



### Information request 2.1

**Realising the full potential of evidence-based research through the Australian Education Research Organisation**

What steps could governments take to realise the full potential of evidence-based research through the Australian Education Research Organisation?



#### **Draft finding 2.1**

**To date, the National Policy Initiatives have had little impact on Australian students' outcomes, with some initiatives stalled or incomplete**

Some National Policy Initiatives have only recently delivered outputs, while others have stalled or fallen short.

- The design of the unique student identifier and the online formative assessment tool still need to be settled.
- The National Review Projects have not yet been followed by substantial national reforms.
  - There is no clear plan on how jurisdictions will implement the National Workforce Strategy to plan for future workforce needs.
  - It is equally unclear how aspects of the Senior Secondary Pathways Review will be progressed.
- National data projects have met with delays.
- The Australian Education Research Organisation is just beginning its work and will need to develop effective relationships and systems to realise its potential.



#### **Draft recommendation 2.1**

**Parties to the National School Reform Agreement should fulfil their commitments to deliver key National Policy Initiatives**

Recommended actions include:

- agreeing the design and privacy protections of a Unique Student Identifier (USI). If parties cannot deliver a national USI, they should, at a minimum, explain why they have been unable to do so
- developing the national online formative assessment tool in a way that enables jurisdictions to adapt the tool to their needs and preferences (including using content and features from their own formative assessment tools)
- developing a national model of the teacher workforce to support workforce planning.



#### **Draft finding 2.2**

**The National School Reform Agreement has weaknesses that undermine its effectiveness in facilitating collective, national efforts to lift student outcomes**

- Relying too much on NPIs that are a single solution to common issues has delayed reform outcomes.
- A lack of transparent, systematic, independent and meaningful reporting means there is little effective accountability.
- Outcomes do not adequately capture non-academic domains such as wellbeing.
- Insufficient prominence has been given to lifting outcomes for students from priority equity cohorts or a core of students who do not meet minimum standards.
- There is a poor connection between policy making and implementation in the classroom.



### Information request 2.2

#### Options for enhancing accountability in the next agreement

The Commission is seeking stakeholder views on:

1. the benefits, costs and risks of proposed enhancements to accountability mechanisms for the next intergovernmental agreement, including:
  - a. jurisdictions specifying the outcomes that they expect to achieve (and related indicators) over the life of the agreement in public 'implementation plans' and reporting on progress annually. This would be in addition to identifying what measures they pursue in each priority reform area (as per current practice for bilateral agreements)
  - b. aligning the design of outcomes and indicators across jurisdictions to allow comparability
2. ways of ensuring groups representing school systems (Independent, Catholic), teachers, principals and students have effective input into policy formation (such as requiring jurisdictions to receive and publish input from affected parties as part of preparing implementation plans).

## Chapter 3: Lifting outcomes for all students



### Draft finding 3.1

#### Many students have additional needs that do not directly relate to culture, disability or remoteness

- A significant number of students do not meet minimum standards — often year after year. Around one third of students who do not meet national minimum literacy and numeracy standards in their early years of schooling do not meet national minimum standards in later school years.
- Most underperforming students do not belong to the priority cohorts named by the National School Reform Agreement. Around 85 per cent of these students do not belong to any of the priority equity cohorts identified in the National School Reform Agreement. Low educational performance needs a different approach.



### Information request 3.1

#### Intensive, targeted support for students who have fallen behind

Would programs that provide intensive, targeted support to students who have fallen behind lend themselves to being a national policy initiative under the next intergovernmental agreement on schools?



### **Draft finding 3.2**

**Governments are yet to achieve outcomes for students who have specific educational needs related to their culture, their disability or remoteness, as set out in the National School Reform Agreement**

- Gaps in learning outcomes for priority equity cohorts identified in the National School Reform Agreement have not closed.
- There can be multiple factors that increase the challenges of providing high quality education for some students. Where these factors intersect, the effects can be compounding.



### **Draft finding 3.3**

**Governments have failed to adequately demonstrate how reforms under the National School Reform Agreement are addressing specific educational needs related to students' culture, disability or remoteness**

- There is significant diversity in students' learning needs and educational aspirations, both across and within cohorts, reflecting differences in their life experiences, the education outcomes they value, their learning and wellbeing outcomes, and the nature of adjustments and supports they may require.
- The National School Reform Agreement does not adequately include reform actions relating to students from the priority equity cohorts it names.
- Under the National School Reform Agreement, equity issues are to be addressed through the bilateral agreements between the Australian Government and each jurisdiction. However, these agreements often do not identify measures to lift outcomes for students from all priority equity cohorts or, if they do, provide little detail on how measures will lift outcomes, or report any progress being achieved.



### **Draft finding 3.4**

**The priority equity cohorts in the National School Reform Agreement do not capture all cohorts of students experiencing educational disadvantage**

- There are some student cohorts not identified as a priority equity cohort in the National School Reform Agreement that face significant educational barriers.
- Children and young people living in out-of-home care face significant disruptions to their schooling and are considerably less likely than their peers to attend school and engage with education. By year 9, children in out-of-home care were four times more likely to be below the national minimum standard in reading, and six times more likely to be below the national minimum standard in numeracy, relative to the general population.
- Students who speak English as an additional language or dialect often require specific support to strengthen English language skills to access the general curriculum.



### Information request 3.2

#### Priority equity cohorts for the next agreement

Are there student cohorts, not identified as a priority equity cohort in the current National School Reform Agreement, such as children in out-of-home care, that should be a priority in the next agreement? If so, which cohorts and why?



### Draft finding 3.5

#### There are a range of educational barriers experienced by students from priority equity cohorts

- Compounding problems arise from equating Indigeneity with educational disadvantage.
- Cultural recognition by schools, and the value placed on Indigenous knowledges by them, are key in responding to the distinct educational needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogies increase inclusion and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and enrich the learning of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students too.
- Indigenous knowledges, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and how to include and empower students may be poorly understood by teachers and school leadership.
- There is now a mandate for consultation and shared decision-making in relation to the design of educational outcomes and sub-outcomes (and how they shape reform) under the Key Priority Reforms of the 2020 Closing the Gap Agreement.
- Children and young people with disability experience unique barriers to engagement and inclusion at school that affect wellbeing, engagement and school success.
- Initial Teacher Education may not sufficiently empower teachers to recognise and respond adequately to disability.
- Families in regional, rural and remote areas can have limited choice in where and how they educate their children.



### **Draft recommendation 3.1**

**Implementation plans, developed in consultation with affected groups, should be used to improve the transparency of reform actions and to hold parties to account for the outcomes they commit to achieve**

In the next intergovernmental agreement, Australian, State and Territory Governments should ensure:

- there are reforms directly addressing the unique barriers and ambitions of students from priority equity cohorts
- bilateral agreements, developed in consultation with stakeholders, identify how jurisdictions will lift outcomes for students in each of the priority equity cohorts identified in the agreement, recognising their specific learning needs
- progress reporting contains sufficient information (and has sufficient oversight) to provide the public with confidence that measures to lift outcomes for students in priority equity cohorts are being implemented and achieving their intended outcomes.



### **Information request 3.3**

#### **Implementation plans**

1. What would be the costs, benefits, and implementation issues associated with the Commission's proposed enhanced accountability mechanisms (draft recommendation 3.1) for bilateral agreements and associated reporting arrangements (in general and as they relate to students in priority equity cohorts)? What would be the costs and benefits of having people with lived experience involved in shared decision making in relation to reporting arrangements?
2. Are there ways parties could reduce the costs (for example, reporting burdens) and increase the benefits of implementation plans by integrating, aligning or linking them with existing government reporting processes (for example, reporting under Closing the Gap and Australia's Disability Strategy)?



### **Information request 3.4**

#### **Transparency of funding for students from priority equity cohorts**

What would be the benefits, costs and risks of greater national reporting of schools funding and expenditure data to support transparency around state and territory efforts to lift outcomes for students from priority equity cohorts? If there is a case for providing such information, how could it be collected cost-effectively?



### Information request 3.5

#### Embedding the perspectives of priority equity cohorts in national education policy and institutions

1. What specifically could be done to embed the views of priority equity cohorts in national education policies and institutions, including outcomes, targets and policy initiatives in the next intergovernmental agreement on school education?
2. What are the merits of establishing a national Indigenous consultative body on education? How might such a body be structured? If pursued, would this best occur through a successor national school reform agreement or some other avenue?
3. Does the current education and research evidence base capture a representative range of cultural and community perspectives, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, teachers and researchers? If not, what actions could be taken to support this?

## Chapter 4: Student wellbeing



### Draft finding 4.1

#### Many students experience poor wellbeing, but some do not receive effective support

A significant proportion of children and young people experience poor social and emotional wellbeing. Poor wellbeing directly affects students' capacity to learn. Poor wellbeing can be particularly acute for students who experience challenges to engagement and inclusion at school, for example, children and young people in out-of-home care, those with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

While wellbeing is often influenced by factors outside the school gate, poor wellbeing can be exacerbated by responses from schools.

Australian, State and Territory Governments have implemented initiatives to support student wellbeing with varying degrees of success.

Successful support of student wellbeing relies on teacher education and the culture of school leadership.



### Draft recommendation 4.1

#### Governments should incorporate wellbeing in the next intergovernmental agreement

In the next intergovernmental school reform agreement, the Australian, State and Territory Governments should:

- add improved student wellbeing as an outcome
- include local actions that would improve student wellbeing and indicators of progress in bilateral agreements or implementation plans
- collect data on student wellbeing from all schools to enable annual reporting on a national measure of student wellbeing.



#### Information request 4.1

##### Should there be National Policy Initiatives to improve student wellbeing?

1. Are there common steps that the Australian, State and Territory Governments could take in the next intergovernmental agreement to improve student wellbeing, or programs that could be implemented nationally?
2. Is knowledge in recognising and responding to poor wellbeing and trauma sufficiently covered in Initial Teacher Education and Teacher Performance Assessments? If not, how might this be improved?

## Chapter 5: Supporting teachers



#### Draft finding 5.1

##### Improving teacher effectiveness is associated with large lifetime economic benefits for students

Improving the effectiveness of teaching would generate sizable lifetime benefits for students. Commission analysis suggests a one standard deviation increase in teacher effectiveness would raise average classroom lifetime earnings by several hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.



#### Information request 5.1

##### Teaching Performance Assessment

1. Does the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) process ensure pre-service teachers are sufficiently classroom ready?
2. Should TPAs meet a national minimum standard? If so, how might this be achieved?
3. Do TPAs ensure that pre-service teachers are well placed to respond to the needs of students from priority equity cohorts? If not, how might this be improved, and what trade-offs might this involve?



#### Information request 5.2

##### Induction and mentoring programs

Would measures for improving early career teachers' access to induction and mentoring programs lend themselves to being a national policy initiative under the next intergovernmental agreement on schools?



### **Information request 5.3** **The prevalence of teacher attrition**

1. Is teacher attrition more or less of a problem than in other professions?
2. Are the drivers of attrition amenable to government policy? How could government policy address high teacher attrition?
3. Do the drivers of attrition vary across the course of a teacher's career?



### **Draft finding 5.2** **There are local shortages of teachers and shortages of trained teachers in key subjects**

There are teacher shortages in regional, rural and remote areas, and in subjects such as mathematics, science, English and design and technology. There is also a lack of teachers from diverse backgrounds.

Factors such as changes in initial teacher education enrolment trends, an ageing workforce and growing student enrolments may contribute to teacher shortages in the future.

Improving labour demand and supply data collection and developing a national model of the teacher workforce, would help Governments better manage local shortages and out-of-field teaching.



### **Draft recommendation 5.1** **Governments should improve teacher workforce demand and supply data**

The Australian, State and Territory Governments should commit to continued development of the Australian Teacher Workforce Data initiative, with a priority placed on achieving full participation by all States and Territories. Governments should also improve workforce demand data. This data could be used to underpin the national model of the teacher workforce (draft recommendation 2.1).



### **Draft finding 5.3** **Teachers work long hours and their workload is increasing**

Australian teacher workload is greater than the OECD average. Australian teachers spend more time on non-teaching tasks, and less time on teaching tasks, than their international counterparts.

Teacher workload has increased over time. Many teachers cite heavy workload as a reason for wanting to leave the profession.

At the same time that teacher workload has been increasing, the number of teaching assistants and other support staff has grown.



### **Draft recommendation 5.2**

#### **Reducing teacher workload should be a focus of the next agreement**

In the next agreement, the Australian, State and Territory Governments — in consultation with teachers and school leaders — should develop a new National Policy Initiative that commits all jurisdictions to undertake an assessment of teacher and principal time use. This could involve a four-step process, whereby Australian, State and Territory Governments:

- commit to an assessment of teacher and principal time use across school sectors, with a focus on identifying how teachers and principals spend their time, and what tasks they rate as low or high value
- specify how they will remove low-value tasks, duplicate tasks and regulatory inefficiencies
- specify how teaching assistants can be best deployed, including to reduce teacher workload
- monitor the compliance and administration burden on teachers and principals over time.



### **Information request 5.4**

#### **Teaching assistants and support staff**

How are teaching assistants and support staff being deployed in schools and classrooms?

- What are the primary functions of teaching assistants and support staff in Australia?
- Could deployment and use of teaching assistants and support staff be improved to help reduce teacher workload? If so, should this be pursued through national collaboration?



### **Draft recommendation 5.3**

#### **Encouraging highly effective teachers and maximising their value**

In the next agreement, the Australian, State and Territory Governments should work together, in consultation with teachers and school leaders, to:

- develop and support localised communities of practice across schools, regions and sectors. These should encompass accessible options for time-constrained teachers as well as subject specific options to support those teaching out-of-field
- ensure that Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers are trained, and deployed as intended, to lift the quality of teaching across schools and sectors
- streamline processes for becoming a Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher, including by recognising prior competencies.



#### **Information request 5.5** **Streamlining pathways into teaching**

How can pathways into teaching for mid-career entrants, especially those with skills in critical areas, be streamlined?

- What are the costs and benefits of re-introducing one year graduate diplomas?
- What employment-based pathways could be explored?



#### **Information request 5.6** **Understanding what happens in the classroom**

What (if any) systems do jurisdictions already have in place to understand what is being taught in classrooms, and how it is being taught? What are the options for obtaining more and better data on classroom practice in a way that minimises costs and administrative impost?

## **Chapter 6: School leadership**



#### **Draft finding 6.1** **Improving school leadership can have large impacts on students' learning**

School leaders are second only to teachers in fostering a positive learning environment. Improving the effectiveness of leaders, especially principals, would generate sizable benefits.



#### **Draft finding 6.2** **More planning is needed to ensure a sustainable supply of school leaders**

Long lead times for teachers to move into leadership roles, and the emergent pressures on the current cohort of school leaders, underscore the importance of effective leadership planning to ensure a sustainable pipeline of future school leaders.



#### **Information request 6.1** **Fostering school leaders**

1. Do principals have the resources, support and professional development opportunities required for their demanding roles?
2. Are policy efforts to identify and prepare potential leaders effective?
3. Are there alternative sources of school leaders, including from outside the teaching profession?
4. What are the relative merits of a nationally coordinated approach to supporting a pipeline of future school leaders?

## **Chapter 7: The National Measurement Framework**



#### **Draft finding 7.1** **The Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia is not appropriate for measuring progress on National School Reform Agreement outcomes**

While reliable, and largely relevant, the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia is not a complete means of reporting progress on National School Reform Agreement outcomes. The visibility of Governments' progress against agreement outcomes is further diminished by the absence of a standalone report and the reliance on the broader *National Report on Schooling in Australia* and ACARA dashboard for performance reporting.



#### **Information request 7.1** **Standalone reporting against the National School Reform Agreement**

Would a standalone report on progress against the National School Reform Agreement outcomes and sub-outcomes (separate to the *National Report on Schooling in Australia*) improve the accountability of Governments to the community?



### Draft recommendation 7.1

#### The performance reporting framework of the next agreement

In the next intergovernmental school reform agreement, Australian, State and Territory Governments should:

- commit to public reporting on each outcome by jurisdiction for students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students in regional, rural and remote areas
- add new sub-outcome measures for learning gain, post-school outcomes and the measure of student wellbeing proposed in draft recommendation 4.1
- update the NAPLAN sub-outcome measure to use proficiency standards rather than learning bands.



### Information request 7.2

#### Proposed sub-outcomes under the future agreement

Do the identified outcomes, and proposed additional and modified sub-outcomes, reflect the aspirations of all Australian students, including those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, students with a disability, and students from other priority equity cohorts (including students from equity cohorts not explicitly identified in the current agreement, such as those in out-of-home care, or who speak English as an Additional Language or Dialect)?



### Draft recommendation 7.2

#### Review of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia

ACARA's next review of the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia should:

- create a performance indicator framework aligned to National School Reform Agreement outcomes and sub-outcomes to which Key Performance Measures are mapped
- consider the inclusion of system performance Key Performance Measures relating to the teaching workforce
- consider the inclusion of additional contextual information relating to influences on learning based on Australian Early Development Census data and information on English language proficiency
- deliver improved reporting on outcomes for students from priority equity cohorts
- be undertaken in consultation with students, teachers and communities
- document remaining gaps.

The *National Report on Schooling in Australia* should be tabled annually in Parliament.

ACARA should work towards filling reporting gaps by exploring the use of State and Territory Government data that are comparable over time, even if it is not nationally complete or comparable across jurisdictions. Well established State and Territory Government surveys of students, parents and carers, and teachers should be given due consideration.