Chapter 3: School education (SE)

The school education chapter

Throughout the school education chapter, descriptive information and performance indicators are generally available for: government primary and secondary schools; non-government primary and secondary schools; and school education as a whole (government and non-government primary and secondary schools).

Schooling aims to provide education for all young people. The main purposes of school education are to assist students in:

- attaining knowledge, skills and understanding in key learning areas;
- developing their talents, capacities, self-confidence, self-esteem and respect for others; and
- developing their capacity to contribute to Australia's social, cultural and economic development.

Indigenous data in the school education chapter

The school education chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2003* (ROGS) contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- Indigenous full time students as a proportion of all students, 2001;
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 3 reading benchmark, 2000;
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 5 reading benchmark, 2000;
- Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey results for 15 year olds in reading, 2000;
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 3 numeracy benchmark, 2000;
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 5 numeracy benchmark, 2000;
- PISA survey assessment results for 15 year olds in mathematical literacy, 2000;

- PISA survey assessment results for 15 year olds in scientific literacy, 2000;
- Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students to year 10, all schools, 2001; and
- Apparent retention rates of Indigenous full time secondary students from year 10 to year 12, 2001.

Throughout the chapter, the following definition is used for an Indigenous student:

"A student of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as being from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background."

It needs to be noted that administrative processes for determining Indigenous status varies across jurisdictions.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for data within the school education chapter of the compendium are contained in the attachment to the compendium. Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by the abbreviated chapter name (for example, table SE.A5 is table 5 in the school education attachment to the compendium).

As the data are directly sourced from the *Report on Government Services 2003*, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the Report can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to 'ROGS 2003, p. 6.15' this is page 15 of chapter 6 of the Report and 'ROGS 2003, 6A.2' is attachment table 2 of attachment 6 of the Report.

Indigenous full-time students, 2001

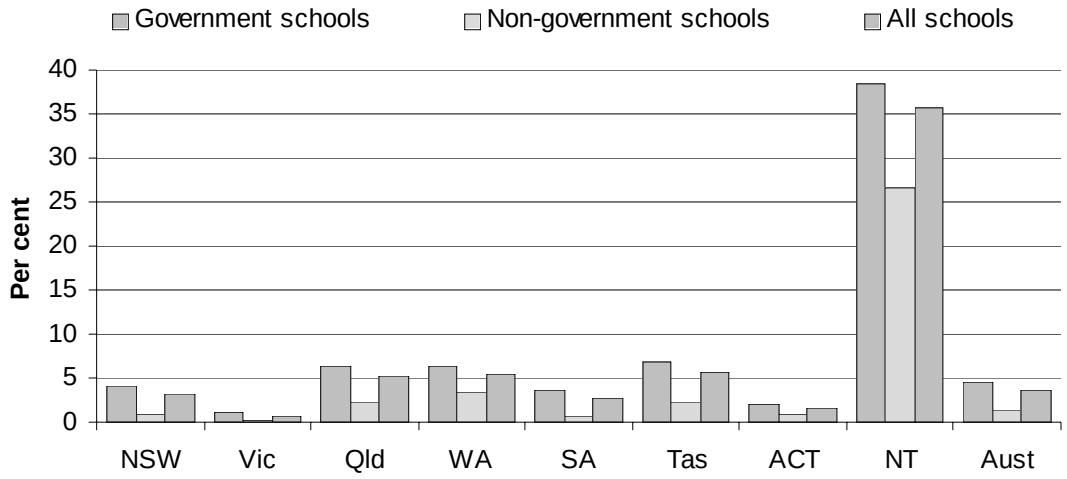
Certain groups of students have been identified as having special needs in school education. These special needs groups include Indigenous students. Government schools provide education for a high proportion of students from special needs groups. Around 88 per cent of Indigenous students, for example, attended government schools in 2001 (table SE.A1).

The proportion of Indigenous students in NT schools was 35.7 per cent in 2001 — far higher than the proportion in any other jurisdiction. The jurisdictions with the next highest proportions of Indigenous students were Tasmania and WA (5.6 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively) (figure SE.1). In absolute terms, NSW (33 910) and Queensland (32 147) had the largest numbers of Indigenous students,

together accounting for 57.2 per cent of all Indigenous students enrolled in Australian schools (table SE.A1). Care needs to be taken in interpreting this information because some definitions for groups of 'special needs' students differ across States and Territories. To assist the interpretation of figure SE.1, the underlying data are presented below the figure. Table SE.A1 provides additional information on Indigenous enrolments.

In all jurisdictions, the proportion of Indigenous students was higher in government schools than in non-government schools. Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students was 4.5 per cent for government schools and 1.4 per cent for non-government schools (figure SE.1).

Figure SE.1 **Indigenous students as a proportion of all students, 2001[a]**



	NSW	*Vic*	*Qld*	*WA*	*SA*	*Tas*	*ACT*	*NT*	*Aust*
Government schools	4.1	1.1	6.5	6.4	3.6	6.7	2.1	38.3	4.5
Non-government schools	0.9	0.2	2.3	3.3	0.7	2.4	0.9	26.7	1.4
All schools	3.1	0.8	5.3	5.5	2.7	5.6	1.6	35.7	3.5

a Full time students.

Source: ABS (2002); ROGS 2003, p. 3.9; table SE.A1.

Access and equity

Access and equity objectives of school education can be assessed by comparing outcomes for special needs groups, such as Indigenous and language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE) students, to those for all students through indicators such as literacy, numeracy, completion rates, apparent retention rates and age participation rates. Outcomes are compared for special needs groups for available indicators where possible. Learning outcomes for special needs groups are also

reported for NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and the NT in tables SE.A13, SE.A14-17, SE.A18, SE.A19-A20 and SE.A21.

State and Territory specific learning outcomes

The reporting of test result data by jurisdiction may help an understanding of trends within jurisdictions over time, but the general noncomparability of data across States and Territories limits the usefulness of this information. Where jurisdictions provided updated information on jurisdiction-specific learning outcomes, that information is reported in attachment SE.A.

Nationally comparable learning outcomes

The schools chapter includes nationally comparable learning outcomes data for literacy, numeracy and science. Data for years 3 and 5 relate to agreed national benchmarks developed to assess student performance at these year levels. Data for 15 year olds have been sourced from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). All of the nationally comparable learning outcomes data are for the year 2000, no data for 2001 were available for inclusion in the chapter.

In July 1996, the Commonwealth, State and Territory Education Ministers agreed to develop national benchmarks for use in reporting years 3, 5 and 7 students' performance. Benchmarks have been developed for reading, writing, spelling and numeracy. These benchmarks describe the nationally agreed minimum acceptable standard in the aforementioned areas of study, at a particular year level — that is, the standard without which a student will have difficulty making sufficient progress at school. Given that the benchmarks represent *minimum* acceptable standards, Education Ministers have determined that the national goal is that all students achieve at least the benchmark level of performance.

PISA is an initiative of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA focuses on students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life problems and situations, rather than on how much curriculum-based knowledge they possess. In 2000, PISA conducted a survey of the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of 15 year olds across 32 countries. Reading literacy was the major domain, accounting for almost 70 per cent of total assessment time. Almost 6200 students from 231 Australian schools participated in the survey (Lokan et al. 2001). The main sample of Australian students represented approximately 2.3 per cent of 15 year old secondary school students in Australia. PISA operates on a three-year assessment cycle, with the next survey planned for 2003. Mathematical literacy will be the major domain in 2003.

Care should be taken in interpreting the learning outcomes data presented in this chapter, because differences in student achievement may sometimes be the result of sampling or measurement error. To assist with interpretation, 95 per cent confidence intervals are presented, indicating the likely size of these errors. A result of 80 with a confidence interval of ± 2, for example, means there is a 95 per cent chance that, if all students were tested, the result would be between 78 and 82. The result for a State, therefore, can be thought of in terms of a range. If one State's range is 78 to 82 and another's is 77 to 81, then it is not possible to say that one clearly out scored the other (because there is no statistically significant difference). Where ranges do not overlap, there is a high likelihood that there is a statistically significant difference.

In the commentary accompanying the learning outcomes data in this chapter, comparisons are made between the results for particular jurisdictions and the overall national result, and attention is drawn to cases where there is no overlap between confidence intervals (that is, where there is a high likelihood that there is a statistically significant difference). To say that there is a statistically significant difference means there is a high probability that there is an actual difference; it does not imply that the difference is necessarily large or important.

Literacy

An indicator of performance is the proportion of students who reach a benchmark standard. Table SE.1 shows the percentage of assessed year 3 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2000, reported by gender, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table SE.1, see tables SE.A2, SE.A3 and SE.A4.)

The proportion of students who achieved the year 3 reading benchmark in WA (95.8 per cent) was demonstrably higher than the national proportion (92.5 per cent), in 2000. The results for the NT (65.3 per cent) and SA (86.8 per cent) were demonstrably lower than the national proportion (table SE.1). Taking confidence intervals into account, the results for the other five jurisdictions were not demonstrably different from the national proportion. The proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the year 3 reading benchmark was lower than the proportion for all students in all States and Territories. Results for LBOTE students were generally similar to those for all students. The main exception was in the NT, where a substantial proportion of LBOTE students are Indigenous.

The proportions of students who achieved the year 5 reading benchmark in the ACT (94.0 per cent), WA (93.6 per cent) and Victoria (92.1 per cent) were demonstrably higher than the national proportion (87.4 per cent) in 2000. The results for the NT

(71.2 per cent), Queensland (78.5 per cent) and Tasmania (81.4 per cent) were demonstrably lower than the national proportion (table 3.6). In 2000, the gap between the reading benchmark results of Indigenous students and those of all students was generally greater at year 5 than at year 3 (tables SE.1 and SE.2). A higher proportion of female students than of males achieved the benchmark standard in all jurisdictions at both year levels.

Table SE.1 **Proportion of year 3 students who achieved the reading benchmark, 2000 (per cent)[a]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[b] *2. Years of schooling*[c]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[d]	*LBOTE students*[d]
NSW	93.1	91.5	94.8	83.1	92.8
1. 8yrs, 9mths	± 1.9	± 2.3	± 1.5	± 4.9	± 2.1
2. 3yrs, 7mths					
Victoria	93.0	91.1	95.1	78.4	90.9
1. 8yrs, 11mths	± 1.9	± 2.3	± 1.5	± 6.1	± 2.5
2. 3yrs, 7mths					
Queensland[e]	92.6	90.8	94.4	81.0	92.2
1. 8yrs, 4mths	± 3.5	± 4.4	± 3.2	± 10.1	± 6.0
2. 2yrs, 8mths					
WA	95.8	95.2	96.5	86.6	95.1
1. 8yrs, 2mths	± 1.1	± 1.3	± 0.9	± 3.3	± 1.3
2. 2yrs, 7mths					
SA	86.8	84.4	89.3	59.2	82.4
1. 8yrs, 6mths	± 2.6	± 3.0	± 1.7	± 4.2	± 3.1
2. 3yrs, 3mths					
Tasmania	91.2	88.7	93.6	82.5	89.8
1. 9yrs, 1mths	± 2.3	± 2.9	± 2.0	± 5.5	± 5.1
2. 3yrs, 8mths					
ACT	95.1	94.0	96.2	87.5	82.5
1. 8yrs, 8mths	± 1.2	± 2.0	± 1.5	± 9.6	± 10.6
2. 3yrs, 6mths					
NT	65.3	62.2	68.6	25.6	39.7
1. 8yrs, 8mths	± 3.2	± 3.8	± 3.7	± 4.0	± 3.9
2. 3yrs, 3mths					
Australia	92.5	90.9	94.3	76.9	90.8
	± 2.2	± 2.7	± 1.8	± 6.5	± 2.6

a The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals (for example, 80.0 per cent ± 2.7 per cent). Table SE.A3 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table SE.A2 contains more information. **c** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table SE.A2 contains more information. **d** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Table SE.A4 contains more information. **e** Data from Queensland are based on a representative sample of approximately 10 per cent of students from government and non-government schools.

Source: MCEETYA (2002a); ROGS 2003, p.3.21.

Table SE.2 **Proportion of year 5 students who achieved the reading benchmark, 2000 (per cent)[a]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[b] *2. Years of schooling*[c]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[d]	*LBOTE students*[d]
NSW	89.1	87.1	91.2	70.9	86.7
1. 10yrs, 9mths	± 1.7	± 1.9	± 1.5	± 3.9	± 2.2
2. 5yrs, 7mths					
Victoria	92.1	90.6	93.7	75.1	89.0
1. 10yrs, 11mths	± 1.9	± 2.2	± 1.7	± 7.5	± 2.8
2. 5yrs, 7mths					
Queensland	78.5	75.1	81.7	54.4	74.4
1. 10yrs, 4mths	± 3.6	± 3.9	± 3.5	± 6.1	± 4.9
2. 4yrs, 8mths					
WA	93.6	92.4	94.9	70.9	89.6
1. 10yrs, 2mths	± 1.0	± 1.2	± 0.8	± 3.4	± 1.4
2. 4yrs, 7mths					
SA	84.4	82.2	86.7	55.9	81.9
1. 10yrs, 6mths	± 1.4	± 1.5	± 1.4	± 3.1	± 1.5
2. 5yrs, 3mths					
Tasmania	81.4	78.7	84.3	66.1	78.6
1. 11yrs, 0mths	± 2.9	± 3.3	± 2.8	± 7.8	± 9.2
2. 5yrs, 8mths					
ACT	94.0	93.0	98.7	83.7	81.4
1. 10yrs, 8mths	± 1.3	± 2.3	± 2.5	± 12.1	± 15.2
2. 5yrs, 6mths					
NT	71.2	69.3	73.1	34.2	46.0
1. 10yrs, 8mths	± 2.8	± 3.4	± 3.3	± 4.1	± 4.1
2. 5yrs, 3mths					
Australia	87.4	85.2	89.6	62.0	84.9
	± 2.1	± 2.3	± 1.9	± 4.8	± 2.6

a The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals (for example, 80.0 per cent ± 2.7 per cent). Table SE.A3 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table SE.A2 contains more information. **c** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table SE.A2 contains more information. **d** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Table SE.A4 contains more information.

Source: MCEETYA (2002a); ROGS 2003, p.3.22.

In this chapter, PISA survey assessment results are reported in terms of the proportion of Australian students who achieved at or above the mean score for the 27 OECD countries for which data are available. These proportions were generally well above 50 per cent, indicating that Australian students performed at a high level

relative to most other OECD countries. The national proportions for Indigenous students (30.7 per cent), geographically remote students (44.3 per cent) and students from low socioeconomic status families (45.5 per cent) were all below the proportion for all students (61.8 per cent) (although the difference was not statistically significant for geographically remote students) (table SE.A8).

Numeracy

Table SE.3 shows the percentage of assessed year 3 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2000 reported by gender, Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table SE.3, see tables SE.A5, SE.A6 and SE.A7.)

The proportion of students who achieved the year 3 numeracy benchmark in Victoria (96.5 per cent) was demonstrably higher than the national proportion (92.7 per cent) in 2000. The results for the NT (81.4 per cent) and SA (85.3 per cent) were demonstrably lower than the national proportion (table SE.3). The proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the year 3 numeracy benchmark was lower than the proportion for all students in all States and Territories.

The proportion of students who achieved the year 5 numeracy benchmark in Victoria (94.3 per cent) was demonstrably higher than the national proportion (89.6 per cent) in 2000. The results for the NT (74.1 per cent) and SA (83.0 per cent) were demonstrably lower than the national proportion (table SE.4). Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the numeracy benchmark was below the proportion for all students by 19.0 percentage points at year 3 and 26.8 percentage points at year 5 (tables SE.3 and SE.4).

Table SE.3 **Proportion of year 3 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark, 2000 (per cent)[a]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[b] *2. Years of schooling*[c]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[d]	*LBOTE students*[d]
NSW	93.2	93.1	93.3	83.4	91.9
1. 8yrs, 9mths	± 1.7	± 1.7	± 1.7	± 4.2	± 2.1
2. 3yrs, 7mths					
Victoria	96.5	96.7	96.1	89.1	94.9
1. 8yrs, 11mths	± 1.3	± 1.3	± 1.5	± 5.7	± 1.7
2. 3yrs, 7mths					
Queensland[e]	91.4	91.5	91.8	71.0	88.0
1. 8yrs, 4mths	± 3.2	± 3.6	± 3.4	± 12.4	± 7.4
2. 2yrs, 8mths					
WA	90.5	90.2	90.8	69.4	88.1
1. 8yrs, 2mths	± 2.2	± 2.2	± 2.3	± 5.3	± 2.6
2. 2yrs, 7mths					
SA	85.3	84.9	85.8	56.8	80.0
1. 8yrs, 6mths	± 2.3	± 2.3	± 2.4	± 5.0	± 3.0
2. 3yrs, 3mths					
Tasmania	92.8	92.3	93.2	85.6	85.8
1. 9yrs, 1mths	± 1.7	± 2.0	± 1.9	± 4.7	± 5.7
2. 3yrs, 8mths					
ACT	95.7	95.2	96.3	88.1	84.5
1. 8yrs, 8mths	± 1.1	± 2.1	± 2.3	± 9.9	± 10.6
2. 3yrs, 6mths					
NT	81.4	80.6	82.4	48.1	56.8
1. 8yrs, 8mths	± 2.0	± 2.5	± 2.6	± 4.5	± 3.9
2. 3yrs, 3mths					
Australia	92.7	92.7	92.8	73.7	90.3
	± 2.0	± 2.1	± 2.1	± 7.1	± 2.7

a The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals (for example, 80.0 per cent ± 2.7 per cent). Table SE.A6 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table SE.A5 contains more information. **c** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table SE.A5 contains more information. **d** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Table SE.A7 contains more information. **e** Data from Queensland are based on a representative sample of approximately 10 per cent of students from government and non-government schools.

Source: MCEETYA (2002a); ROGS 2003, p.3.25.

Table SE.4 **Proportion of year 5 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark, 2000 (per cent)[a]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[b] *2. Years of schooling*[c]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[d]	*LBOTE students*[d]
NSW	91.1	90.8	91.5	73.5	89.7
1. 10yrs, 9mths	± 1.4	± 1.4	± 1.4	± 3.5	± 1.6
2. 5yrs, 7mths					
Victoria	94.3	94.1	94.4	82.2	92.4
1. 10yrs, 11mths	± 1.4	± 1.4	± 1.4	± 6.2	± 1.8
2. 5yrs, 7mths					
Queensland	86.2	86.0	87.0	58.9	82.1
1. 10yrs, 4mths	± 2.2	± 2.4	± 2.4	± 5.2	± 3.5
2. 4yrs, 8mths					
WA	87.5	87.5	87.5	57.2	82.6
1. 10yrs, 2mths	± 2.1	± 1.1	± 2.2	± 4.0	± 2.2
2. 4yrs, 7mths					
SA	83.0	83.1	82.7	50.4	80.2
1. 10yrs, 6mths	± 2.3	± 2.2	± 2.6	± 4.2	± 2.8
2. 5yrs, 3mths					
Tasmania	87.6	87.9	87.2	76.6	84.1
1. 11yrs, 0mths	± 1.8	± 2.1	± 2.1	± 6.9	± 7.5
2. 5yrs, 8mths					
ACT	91.3	91.0	91.6	79.5	74.9
1. 10yrs, 8mths	± 1.7	± 2.5	± 2.5	± 13.7	± 6.8
2. 5yrs, 6mths					
NT	74.1	74.5	73.7	37.0	50.4
1. 10yrs, 8mths	± 2.5	± 3.0	± 3.4	± 4.2	± 3.9
2. 5yrs, 3mths					
Australia	89.6	89.4	89.8	62.8	87.1
	± 1.7	± 1.7	± 1.8	± 4.5	± 2.1

a The achievement percentages reported in this table include 95 per cent confidence intervals (for example, 80.0 per cent ± 2.7 per cent). Table SE.A6 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table SE.A5 contains more information. **c** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table SE.A5 contains more information. **d** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Table SE.A7 contains more information.

Source: MCEETYA (2002a); ROGS 2003, p.3.26.

For the PISA 2000 assessment of the mathematical literacy of 15 year old students, the national proportions for Indigenous students (26.2 per cent) and students from low socioeconomic status families (48.4 per cent) were below the proportion for all students (65.4 per cent) (table SE.A9).

Science

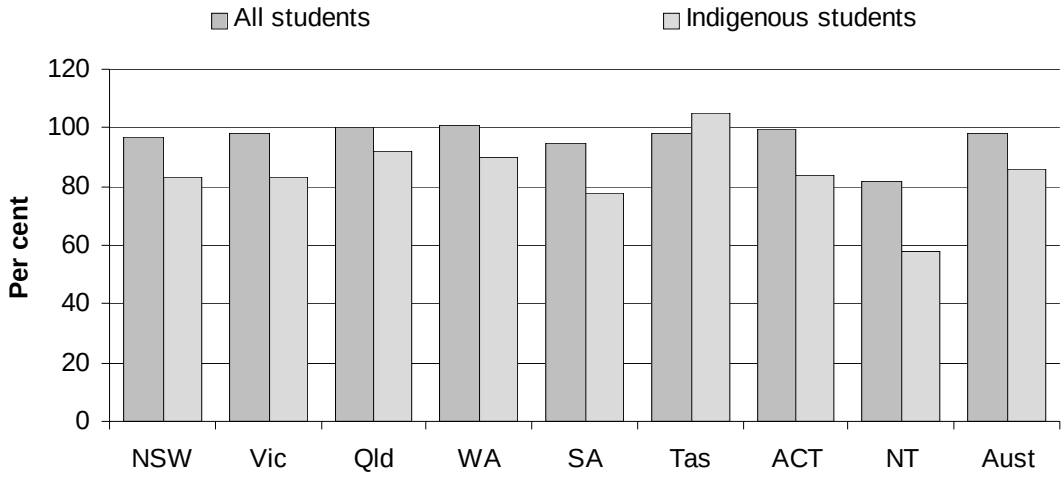
For the PISA 2000 assessment of the scientific literacy of 15 year old students, the national proportions of Indigenous students (29.1 per cent), students from low socioeconomic status families (49.0 per cent) and geographically remote students (51.2) who achieved at or above the OECD mean were below the proportion for all students (61.8 per cent) (although the difference was not statistically significant for geographically remote students) (table SE.A10).

Apparent retention rates – commencement of secondary school to year 10; and from year 10 to year 12

Apparent retention rates estimate the percentage of full time students that continue from a specified year level to a higher year level. The term 'apparent' is used because no adjustments are made for migration, student movements between jurisdictions or students repeating year levels. Apparent retention rates from the commencement of secondary school to year 10 and from year 10 to year 12 are shown in figures SE.2 and SE.3 respectively.

Apparent retention rates from the commencement of secondary school to year 10 provide one measure of the equity of outcomes for Indigenous students. Apparent retention rates for all students were most commonly between 95 and 100 per cent in 2001, with a national proportion of 98.1 (figure SE.2). High rates are to be expected as, with normal year level progression, students in year 10 are generally of an age where schooling is compulsory. Rates for Indigenous students, however, are considerably lower than for all students in all jurisdictions except Tasmania. The national retention rate for Indigenous students was 85.7 per cent, or 12.4 percentage points lower than for all students.

Figure SE.2 **Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students to year 10, all schools, 2001[a, b, c]**



a Retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions after the base year. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has particular implications for the interpretation of results for SA. **c** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This has particular implications for the NT, where around 50 per cent of Indigenous secondary students are ungraded (compared with an average of around 4 per cent for the rest of Australia). As a result, Indigenous apparent retention rates may misrepresent the actual retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS (2002); DEST (unpublished); ROGS 2003, p.3.30; table SE.A11.

The apparent retention rate from year 10 to year 12 has been derived by expressing the number of full time school students enrolled in year 12 in 2001 as a proportion of the number of full time school students enrolled in year 10 in 1999. Progression to final years of schooling is influenced by a wide range of factors, including student perceptions of the benefits of schooling, the availability of employment and further educational alternatives, socioeconomic status and population movements. Apparent retention to year 12 is a long standing measure which is presented as an indicator of the extent to which students progress to their final year of schooling. It has been consistently reported over time, but it does not reflect factors such as:

- students repeating a year of education or returning to education after a period of absence and hence being included in the year 10 cohort in 1999 but not in the year 12 cohort in 2001;
- differing enrolment policies across jurisdictions (which contribute to different age/grade structures);
- students enrolled in year 12 on a part time basis;

- interstate movement of students;
- movement from the government school sector to non-government school sector;
- impacts of migration and full-fee paying overseas students; and
- varying enrolment patterns in which students choose to complete their secondary schooling in TAFE institutes.

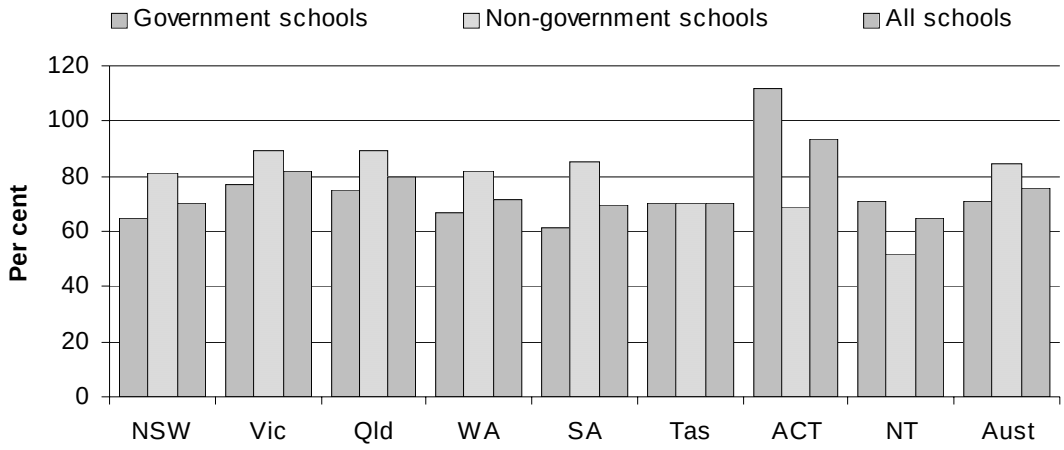
All these factors can combine to result in a year 12 cohort that is significantly different in composition from the corresponding year 10 cohort — for example:

- in SA in 2001, 84.9 per cent of all students, including part time students, had continued their schooling from year 10 to year 12, compared with 69.6 per cent for full time students only (ABS 2000, 2002); and
- in NSW, a significant number of students use the TAFE system to complete their post-compulsory schooling in preference to enrolling in years 11 and 12 in the school system. In 2001, 4646 students aged 15–19 years who undertook Higher School Certificate studies or other tertiary preparation studies in NSW did so through technical and further education (TAFE) institutes.

Apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12 in all schools ranged from 93.3 per cent in the ACT to 64.9 per cent in the NT in 2001. The apparent retention rates for government schools ranged from 112.1 per cent in the ACT to 61.7 per cent in SA (figure SE.3). One reason for the ACT rate for government schools exceeding 100 per cent is that a number of non-government schools do not enrol students beyond year 10 and students need to change schools to continue to years 11 and 12. This has the effect of reducing the retention rate for non-government schools and increasing the retention rate for government schools.

For all schools, apparent retention rates from year 10 to year 12 for Indigenous students in 2001 ranged from 59.1 per cent in Queensland to 26.9 per cent in WA (figure SE.4). In interpreting this indicator, note that about 10–20 per cent of Indigenous students leave school before year 10 (figure SE.2) and, therefore, are not included in the base year for apparent retention from year 10 to year 12. Nationally, Indigenous retention from year 10 to year 12 for all schools in 2001 was 43.6 per cent (figure SE.4), or 31.8 percentage points lower than for all students.

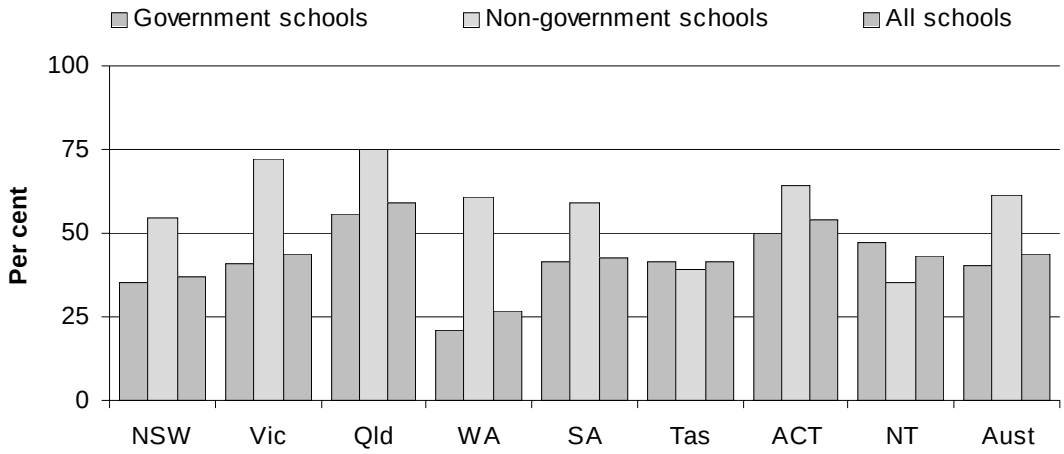
Figure SE.3 **Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students from year 10 to year 12, 2001[a, b]**



a Retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between government and non-government schools after the base year. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has particular implications for the interpretation of results for SA.

Source: ABS (2002); DEST (unpublished); ROGS 2003, p.3.32; table SE.A12.

Figure SE.4 **Apparent retention rates of Indigenous full time secondary students from year 10 to year 12, 2001[a, b, c]**



a Retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has particular implications for the interpretation of results for SA. **c** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This has particular implications for the NT, where around 50 per cent of Indigenous students are ungraded (compared with an average of around 4 per cent for the rest of Australia). As a result, Indigenous apparent retention rates may misrepresent the actual retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS (2002); DEST (unpublished); ROGS 2003, p. 3.33; table SE.A12.