Chapter 3: School education

This chapter focuses on performance information — equity, effectiveness and efficiency — for government funded school education in Australia. Descriptive information and performance indicators are generally available for:

- government primary and secondary schools
- non-government primary and secondary schools
- 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
- 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 2004* contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- The number of Indigenous full time students (and as a proportion of all students) in government, non-government and all schools, 2002.
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 3 reading benchmark, 2001.
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 5 reading benchmark, 2001.
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 3 writing benchmark, 2001.
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 5 writing benchmark, 2001.
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 3 numeracy benchmark, 2001.
- Proportion of Indigenous students achieving the year 5 numeracy benchmark, 2001.
- Apparent retention rates of full time secondary students from year 7 or 8 to year 10, by Indigenous status, all schools, 2002.

- Apparent retention rates of Indigenous full time secondary students from year 10 to year 12, by Indigenous status, 2002.

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

"A student of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin who identifies as being 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. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 3A.3 is table 3 in the school education attachment to the compendium). As the data are directly sourced from the Report on Government Services 2004, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the Report on Government Services 2004 can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to 'ROGS 2004, p. 3.15' this is page 15 of chapter 3 and 'ROGS 2004, 3A.2' is attachment table 2 of attachment 3 of the Report on Government Services 2004.

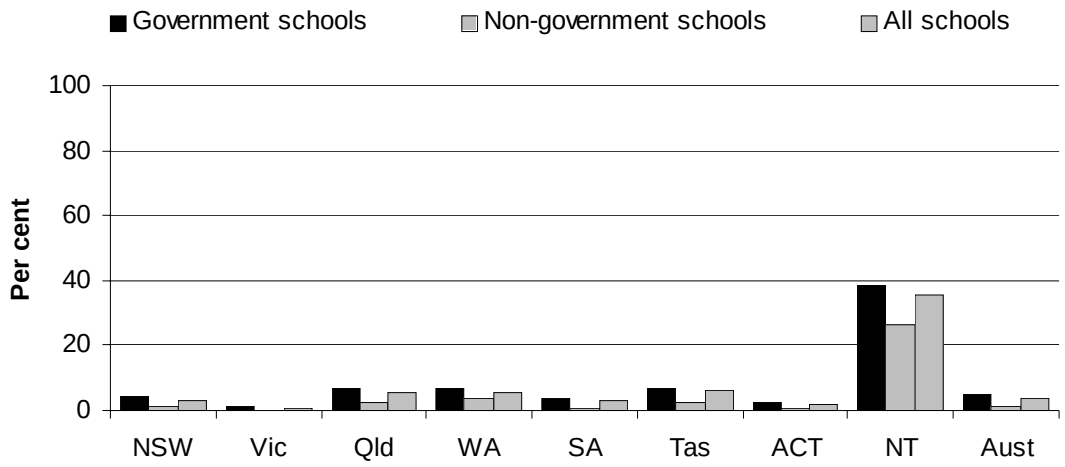
Indigenous full-time students, 2001

Certain groups of students, including Indigenous students, have been identified as having special needs in school education. Government schools provide education for a high proportion of students from special needs groups. In 2002, 87.5 per cent of Indigenous students, for example, attended government schools (table 3A.1).

The proportion of full time Indigenous students in NT schools was 35.8 per cent in 2002, far higher than the proportion in any other jurisdiction. The jurisdictions with the next highest proportions of full time Indigenous students were Tasmania and WA (5.9 per cent and 5.8 per cent respectively) (figure 3.1). In absolute terms, NSW (36 161) and Queensland (33 501) had the largest numbers of full time Indigenous students, together accounting for 57.3 per cent of all Indigenous students enrolled in Australian schools (table 3A.1). Table 3A.1 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 4.7 per cent for government schools and 1.5 per cent for non-government schools (figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 **Indigenous students as a proportion of all students, 2002[a]**



	NSW	*Vic*	*Qld*	*WA*	*SA*	*Tas*	*ACT*	*NT*	*Aust*
Government schools	4.4	1.1	6.6	6.9	3.8	7.0	2.3	38.5	4.7
Non-government schools	0.9	0.2	2.4	3.4	0.8	2.5	0.8	26.6	1.5
All schools	3.3	0.8	5.4	5.8	2.8	5.9	1.7	35.8	3.7

a Full time students.

Source: ABS (2003); ROGS 2004, p. 3.10; Table 3A.1.

Access and equity

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

Nationally comparable learning outcomes

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed in April 1999 a set of national goals for school education (see box 3.1, p. 3.14, SCRGSP 2004).

Benchmarks were 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.

The school education chapter in the Report on Government Services 2004 includes nationally comparable learning outcomes data for years 3 and 5 for 2001 for reading and writing literacy and numeracy. These data relate to agreed national benchmarks developed to assess student performance at these year levels. Data for 2002 are not available.

Learning outcomes data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000 assessment of the scientific literacy of 15 year old students was reported in the Report on Government Services 2003.[1] As PISA operates on a three year assessment cycle, the most recent survey was undertaken during 2003. The mathematical literacy was the major focus for this 2003 survey and results are expected to be available in late 2004.

Limitations of comparing learning outcomes results across jurisdictions are discussed in box 3.3 in the Report on Government Services 2004 (p. 3.36, SCRGSP 2004).

To assist with making comparisons between jurisdictions, 95 per cent confidence intervals are presented. Confidence intervals are a standard way of expressing the degree of sampling and measurement error associated with the survey estimates. An estimate of 80 with a confidence interval of ± 2, for example, means that if the total population had been surveyed rather than a sample, or had another sample been drawn, there is a 95 per cent chance that the result would lie between 78 and 82. The participation rate for a jurisdiction, therefore, can be thought of in terms of a range. If one jurisdiction's rate ranges from 78–82 and another's from 77–81, then it is not possible to say with confidence that one differs from the other (because there is unlikely to be a statistically significant difference). Where ranges do not overlap, 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.

The commentary accompanying the learning outcomes data in the school education chapter compares the results for particular jurisdictions and the overall national result, and draws attention to cases where there is no overlap between confidence intervals. To say there is a statistically significant difference means there is a high probability of an actual difference; it does not imply that the difference is necessarily large or important.

[1] Although PISA data were not reported in the school education chapter of the Report on Government Services 2004, they were included in the Report's attachments tables. These tables, therefore, have been included in this compendium (see tables 3A.5–3A.7).

Literacy — Reading

An indicator of performance is the proportion of students who reach a benchmark standard. Table 3.1 shows the percentage of assessed year 3 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2001, reported by Indigenous status and language background other than English (LBOTE) status. (For further information and caveats to table 3.1, see table 3A.2.)

The proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the year 3 reading benchmark in 2001 was lower than the proportion of all students in all States and Territories, except in Tasmania and the ACT, where there was no difference.

Table 3.2 shows the percentage of assessed year 5 students who achieved the reading benchmark in 2001, reported by Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table 3.2, see table 3A.2.)

In 2001, the extent to which reading benchmark results for Indigenous students were lower than those for all assessed students was similar for year 3 (ranging between 2.5 percentage points and 38.8 percentage points) and year 5 (ranging between 3.0 percentage points and 37.0 percentage points). Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the reading benchmark was below the proportion of all students by 18.3 percentage points at year 3 and by 22.9 percentage points at year 5 (tables 3.1 and 3.2).

Table 3.2 **Year 3 students who achieved the reading benchmark, 2001 (per cent)[a, b, c]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[d] *2. Years of schooling*[e]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[f]	*LBOTE students*[f]
NSW	91.3	89.7	92.9	79.2	91.4
1. 8 years, 9 months	± 1.8	± 2.4	± 1.6	± 4.5	± 1.9
2. 3 years, 7 months					
Victoria[g]	89.0	86.5	91.4	64.3	86.0
1. 9 years, 0 months	± 2.2	± 2.7	± 2.1	± 5.3	± 2.7
2. 3 years, 7 months					
Queensland	89.0	87.1	91.5	71.6	87.4
1. 8 years, 3 months	± 2.5	± 3.0	± 2.2	± 5.1	± 2.9
2. 2 years, 8 months					
WA	95.0	93.9	96.1	83.5	94.5
1. 8 years, 2 months	± 1.5	± 1.9	± 1.4	± 5.1	± 1.8
2. 2 years, 7 months					
SA	87.7	85.0	90.4	61.7	84.5
1. 8 years, 6 months	± 2.5	± 3.0	± 2.3	± 5.9	± 2.6
2. 3 years, 3 months					
Tasmania	95.1	93.8	96.4	92.6	96.0
1. 9 years, 2 months	± 1.3	± 1.7	± 1.2	± 3.4	± 2.5
2. 3 years, 7 months					
ACT	95.1	93.2	97.1	89.8	92.4
1. 8 years, 8 months	± 0.8	± 1.3	± 0.7	± 4.9	± 2.0
2. 3 years, 6 months					
NT	68.0	64.1	72.3	29.2	34.7
1. 8 years, 10 months	± 2.2	± 2.9	± 2.7	± 3.3	± 3.6
2. 3 years, 6 months					
Australia	90.3	88.4	92.3	72.0	88.6
	± 2.0	± 2.6	± 1.9	± 4.8	± 2.3

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 3A.35 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies across jurisdictions, as shown in tables 3A.2, 3A.3 and 3A.4. Readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results. **c** Some movements in the results over time might have occurred as a result of State equating processes and may not reflect improvements in student performance. **d** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.34 contains more information. **e** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.34 contains more information. **f** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Definitions can be found in section 3.7 of the Report on Government Services 2004 (SCRGSP 2004). Table 3A.2 contains more information. **g** Victoria's results have been adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years results.

Source: MCEETYA (2003a).

Table 3.3 **Year 5 students who achieved the reading benchmark, 2001 (per cent)[a, b, c]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[d] *2. Years of schooling*[e]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[f]	*LBOTE students*[f]
NSW	92.0	90.5	93.5	76.6	90.6
1. 10 years, 9 months	± 1.2	± 1.5	± 1.1	± 3.2	± 1.5
2. 5 years, 7 months					
Victoria[g]	90.9	88.7	93.1	71.7	87.8
1. 10 years, 11 months	± 1.2	± 1.7	± 1.1	± 4.0	± 2.0
2. 5 years, 7 months					
Queensland	83.0	80.1	86.3	57.3	76.0
1. 10 years, 4 months	± 1.6	± 2.0	± 1.5	± 3.4	± 2.4
2. 4 years, 8 months					
WA	94.5	93.2	95.9	77.9	92.2
1. 10 years, 2 months	± 1.0	± 1.3	± 0.9	± 4.3	± 1.7
2. 4 years, 7 months					
SA	89.0	86.5	91.6	62.9	87.0
1. 10 years, 6 months	± 1.3	± 1.7	± 1.3	± 4.5	± 1.8
2. 5 years, 3 months					
Tasmania	94.4	92.2	96.6	91.5	93.5
1. 11 years, 2 months	± 0.9	± 1.4	± 0.8	± 2.9	± 3.0
2. 5 years, 7 months					
ACT	94.6	92.9	96.4	82.3	91.9
1. 10 years, 8 months	± 0.8	± 0.8	± 0.7	± 7.9	± 2.4
2. 5 years, 6 months					
NT	71.5	71.0	72.2	34.5	34.4
1. 10 years, 8 months	± 2.2	± 2.7	± 2.7	± 3.6	± 3.6
2. 5 years, 3 months					
Australia	89.8	87.8	92.0	66.9	87.7
	± 1.3	± 1.6	± 1.2	± 3.6	± 1.8

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 3A.35 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies across jurisdictions as shown in tables 3A.2, 3A.3 and 3A.4. Readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results. **c** Some movements in the results over time might have occurred as a result of State equating processes and may not reflect improvements in student performance. **d** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.34 contains more information. **e** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.34 contains more information. **f** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Definitions can be found in section 3.7 of the Report on Government Services 2004 (SCRGSP 2004). Table 3A.2 contains more information. **g** Victoria's results have been adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years results.

Source: MCEETYA (2003); ROGS 2004, p. 3.40.

Literacy — Writing

Table 3.3 shows the percentage of assessed year 3 students who achieved the writing benchmark in 2001, reported by Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table 3.3, see table 3A. 3.)

The proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the year 3 writing benchmark in 2001 was lower than the proportion of all students in all States and Territories except Tasmania and the ACT, where there was no difference.

Table 3.4 shows the percentage of assessed year 5 students who achieved the writing benchmark in 2001, reported by Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table 3.4**,** see table 3A.3.)

In 2001, the extent to which writing benchmark results for Indigenous students were lower than those for all assessed students was similar for year 3 (ranging between 2.4 percentage points and 30.7 percentage points) and year 5 (ranging between 3.9 percentage points and 36.0 percentage points). Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the writing benchmark was below the proportion of all students by 21.7 percentage points at year 3 and by 14.1 percentage points at year 5 (tables 3.3 and 3.4).

Numeracy

Table 3.5 shows the percentage of assessed year 3 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2001, reported by Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table 3.5, see table 3A.4.)

The proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the year 3 numeracy benchmark in 2001 was lower than the proportion of all students in all States and Territories.

Table 3.6 shows the percentage of assessed year 5 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark in 2001, reported by Indigenous status and LBOTE status. (For further information and caveats to table 3.6, see table 3A.4.)

In 2001, the extent to which numeracy benchmark results for Indigenous students were lower than those for all assessed students changed between year 3 (ranging between 1.5 percentage points and 23.1 percentage points) and year 5 (ranging between 6.7 percentage points and 36.5 percentage points). Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous students who achieved the numeracy benchmark was below the proportion for all students by 13.7 percentage points at year 3 and by 26.4 percentage points at year 5 (tables 3.5 and 3.6).

Table 3.4 **Year 3 students who achieved the writing benchmark, 2001 (per cent)[a, b, c]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[d] *2. Years of schooling*[e]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[f]	*LBOTE students*[f]
NSW	89.9	87.0	92.7	73.1	89.3
1. 8 years, 9 months	± 2.9	± 3.8	± 2.4	± 6.2	± 3.0
2. 3 years, 7 months					
Victoria[g]	94.7	93.1	96.2	78.2	92.9
1. 9 years, 0 months	± 1.7	± 2.4	± 1.4	± 4.0	± 2.1
2. 3 years, 7 months					
Queensland	85.4	81.1	90.5	68.4	83.8
1. 8 years, 3 months	± 1.9	± 2.6	± 1.6	± 3.4	± 2.1
2. 2 years, 8 months					
WA	84.3	80.0	88.8	54.7	83.7
1. 8 years, 2 months	± 2.5	± 3.2	± 2.3	± 4.9	± 2.8
2. 2 years, 7 months					
SA	88.4	84.9	91.9	60.5	84.8
1. 8 years, 6 months	± 2.5	± 3.3	± 2.2	± 6.2	± 2.9
2. 3 years, 3 months					
Tasmania	91.8	88.7	94.9	89.4	90.2
1. 9 years, 2 months	± 1.6	± 2.2	± 1.4	± 3.9	± 3.9
2. 3 years, 7 months					
ACT[h]	93.3	90.7	96.1	87.4	90.4
1. 8 years, 10 months	± 1.3	± 1.9	± 1.0	± 6.2	± 2.5
2. 3 years, 6 months					
NT	79.1	75.8	82.5	48.4	51.1
1. 8 years, 8 months	± 2.7	± 3.4	± 2.7	± 4.9	± 4.4
2. 3 years, 3 months					
Australia	89.5	86.4	92.7	67.8	88.5
	± 2.3	± 3.0	± 1.9	± 4.9	± 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 3A.37 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies across jurisdictions, as shown in tables 3A.2, 3A.3 and 3A.4. Readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results. **c** Some movements in the results over time might have occurred as a result of State equating processes and may not reflect improvements in student performance. **d** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.36 contains more information. **e** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.36 contains more information. **f** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Definitions can be found in section 3.7 of the Report on Government Services 2004 (SCRGSP 2004). Table 3A.3 contains more information. **g** Victoria's results have been adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years results. **h** ACT writing data should be interpreted with some caution as a criterion-referenced assessment process was not used. This will be changed from 2003.

Source: MCEETYA (2003); ROGS 2004, p. 3.42.

Table 3.5 **Year 5 students who achieved the writing benchmark, 2001 (per cent)[a, b, c]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[d] *2. Years of schooling*[e]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[f]	*LBOTE students*[f]
NSW	95.9	94.6	97.2	87.4	94.6
1. 10 years, 9 months	± 0.9	± 1.4	± 0.7	± 3.1	± 1.1
2. 5 years, 7 months					
Victoria[g]	92.4	89.6	95.3	75.4	91.4
1. 10 years, 11 months	± 0.8	± 1.1	± 0.6	± 3.3	± 1.0
2. 5 years, 7 months					
Queensland	95.8	94.5	97.7	87.5	94.3
1. 10 years, 4 months	± 0.7	± 1.1	± 0.4	± 2.1	± 0.9
2. 4 years, 8 months					
WA	89.4	85.6	93.2	63.8	86.7
1. 10 years, 2 months	± 1.9	± 2.6	± 1.4	± 4.9	± 2.3
2. 4 years, 7 months					
SA	95.0	93.3	96.8	80.0	93.7
1. 10 years, 6 months	± 0.8	± 1.2	± 0.7	± 3.9	± 1.1
2. 5 years, 3 months					
Tasmania	91.9	88.4	95.5	88.0	88.7
1. 11 years, 2 months	± 1.3	± 1.9	± 1.1	± 3.6	± 4.2
2. 5 years, 7 months					
ACT[h]	90.6	87.0	94.4	66.9	88.0
1. 10 years, 8 months	± 1.8	± 2.5	± 1.5	± 10.6	± 3.4
2. 5 years, 6 months					
NT	77.6	74.3	80.9	41.6	45.8
1. 10 years, 8 months	± 2.2	± 2.9	± 2.4	± 4.2	± 4.2
2. 5 years, 3 months					
Australia	94.0	91.9	96.2	79.9	92.2
	± 1.0	± 1.4	± 0.7	± 3.3	± 1.2

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 3A.37 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies across jurisdictions, as shown in tables 3A.2, 3A.3 and 3A.4. Readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results. **c** Some movements in the results over time might have occurred as a result of State equating processes and may not reflect improvements in student performance. **d** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.36 contains more information. **e** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.36 contains more information. **f** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Definitions can be found in section 3.7 of the Report on Government Services 2004 (SCRGSP 2004). Table 3A.3 contains more information. **g** Victoria's results have been adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years results. **h** ACT writing data should be interpreted with some caution as a criterion-referenced assessment process was not used. This will be changed from 2003.

Source: MCEETYA (2003); ROGS 2004, p. 3.43.

Table 3.6 **Year 3 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark, 2001 (per cent)[a, b, c]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[d] *2. Years of schooling*[e]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[f]	*LBOTE students*[f]
NSW	95.0	94.9	95.0	86.9	94.7
1. 8 years, 9 months	± 0.9	± 1.0	± 0.9	± 2.8	± 1.0
2. 3 years, 7 months					
Victoria[g]	94.1	93.7	94.5	75.1	91.8
1. 9 years, 0 months	± 1.2	± 1.2	± 1.4	± 4.3	± 1.5
2. 3 years, 7 months					
Queensland	93.4	93.4	94.0	79.0	91.5
1. 8 years, 3 months	± 1.4	± 1.5	± 1.6	± 4.0	± 1.8
2. 2 years, 8 months					
WA	92.9	92.4	93.4	79.2	92.0
1. 8 years, 2 months	± 2.0	± 2.2	± 2.2	± 5.3	± 2.3
2. 2 years, 7 months					
SA	91.1	90.3	91.8	68.0	86.2
1. 8 years, 6 months	± 1.4	± 1.5	± 1.3	± 4.5	± 1.9
2. 3 years, 3 months					
Tasmania	95.6	95.2	95.9	94.1	94.3
1. 9 years, 2 months	± 1.3	± 1.4	± 1.4	± 3.0	± 3.2
2. 3 years, 7 months					
ACT	97.0	96.5	97.4	91.4	94.2
1. 8 years, 8 months	± 0.6	± 0.7	± 0.7	± 4.3	± 1.6
2. 3 years, 6 months					
NT	86.6	84.9	88.4	65.0	64.8
1. 8 years, 8 months	± 2.0	± 2.4	± 2.1	± 4.8	± 4.5
2. 3 years, 3 months					
Australia	93.9	93.7	94.3	80.2	92.5
	± 1.2	± 1.3	± 1.3	± 3.9	± 1.5

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 3A.39 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies across jurisdictions, as shown in tables 3A.2, 3A.3 and 3A.4. Readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results. **c** Some movements in the results over time might have occurred as a result of State equating processes and may not reflect improvements in student performance. **d** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.38 contains more information. **e** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.38 contains more information. **f** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Definitions can be found in section 3.7 of the Report on Government Services 2004 (SCRGSP 2004). Table 3A.4 contains more information. **g** Victoria's results have been adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years results.

Source: MCEETYA (2003); ROGS 2004, p. 3.45.

Table 3.7 **Year 5 students who achieved the numeracy benchmark, 2001 (per cent)[a, b, c]**

State/Territory *1. Average age*[d] *2. Years of schooling*[e]	*All students*	*Male students*	*Female students*	*Indigenous students*[f]	*LBOTE students*[f]
NSW	91.7	91.5	91.8	74.6	90.3
1. 10 years, 9 months	± 1.0	± 1.1	± 1.1	± 2.9	± 1.2
2. 5 years, 7 months					
Victoria[g]	94.7	94.4	94.9	80.4	92.4
1. 10 years, 11 months	± 1.0	± 1.0	± 1.1	± 3.3	± 1.3
2. 5 years, 7 months					
Queensland	81.8	82.2	81.9	54.4	75.0
1. 10 years, 4 months	± 1.9	± 2.0	± 2.2	± 3.5	± 2.4
2. 4 years, 8 months					
WA	90.0	89.7	90.3	65.6	87.3
1. 10 years, 2 months	± 1.9	± 2.0	± 2.2	± 5.4	± 2.6
2. 4 years, 7 months					
SA	85.9	85.6	86.2	54.9	82.8
1. 10 years, 6 months	± 1.3	± 1.5	± 1.6	± 4.4	± 1.8
2. 5 years, 3 months					
Tasmania	91.7	91.2	92.2	85.0	89.1
1. 11 years, 2 months	± 1.3	± 1.6	± 1.6	± 4.1	± 4.2
2. 5 years, 7 months					
ACT	93.1	92.2	94.0	71.9	87.4
1. 10 years, 8 months	± 1.1	± 1.4	± 1.3	± 10.1	± 3.2
2. 5 years, 6 months					
NT	68.8	69.2	68.3	32.3	34.0
1. 10 years, 8 months	± 2.8	± 3.0	± 3.4	± 4.1	± 3.8
2. 5 years, 3 months					
Australia	89.6	89.5	89.8	63.2	87.9
	± 1.3	± 1.4	± 1.5	± 3.7	± 1.6

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 3A.39 contains details of test populations in all States and Territories. **b** Students who were absent or withdrawn from testing are not classified as assessed students and are not included in the benchmark calculations. The proportion of absent and withdrawn students varies across jurisdictions, as shown in tables 3A.2, 3A.3 and 3A.4. Readers are urged to be cautious when comparing results. **c** Some movements in the results over time might have occurred as a result of State equating processes and may not reflect improvements in student performance. **d** The typical average age of students at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.38 contains more information. **e** The typical average time that students had spent in schooling at the time of testing (expressed in years and months). Table 3A.38 contains more information. **f** The methods used to identify Indigenous students and LBOTE students varied across jurisdictions. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. Definitions can be found at section 3.7 of the Report on Government Services 2004 (SCRGSP 2004). Table 3A.4 contains more information. **g** Victoria's results have been adjusted based on exempt student data and are not directly comparable to previous years results.

Source: MCEETYA (2003); ROGS 2004, p. 3.46.

Apparent retention from the commencement of secondary school to year 10 and from year 10 to year 12

Apparent retention rates estimate the percentage of full time students who 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 rates of retention 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 commonly 95–100 per cent in 2002, with a national proportion of 98.1 (figure 3.2). High rates are to be expected because normal year level progression means students in year 10 are generally of an age at which schooling is compulsory. Rates for Indigenous students, however, were considerably lower than those for all students in all jurisdictions except Tasmania and the ACT. The national retention rate for Indigenous students was 86.4 per cent, or 11.7 percentage points lower than that for all students.[2]

The apparent rate of retention from year 10 to year 12 has been derived by expressing the number of full time school students enrolled in year 12 in 2002 as a proportion of the number of full time school students enrolled in year 10 in 2000.

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 presented as an indicator of the extent to which students progress to their final year of schooling. It does not reflect factors such as:

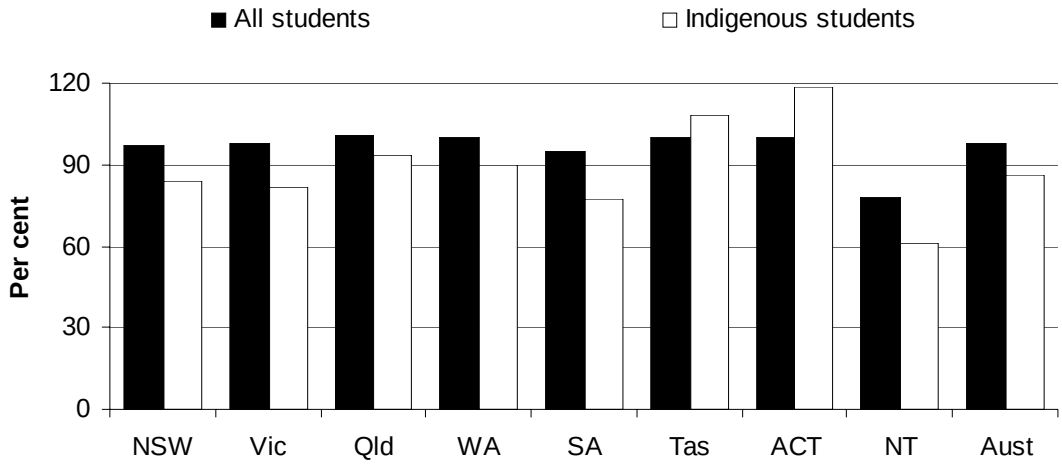
- students repeating a year of education or returning to education after a period of absence and thus being included in the year 10 cohort in 2000 but not in the year 12 cohort in 2002
- differing enrolment policies across jurisdictions (which contribute to different age/grade structures)
- students enrolled in year 12 on a part time basis
- interstate movement of students
- movement between the government school sector and the non-government school sector

[2] Time series data on apparent retention rates across jurisdictions are reported in the school education attachment tables of this compendium.

- impacts of migration and full fee paying overseas students
- 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.

Figure 3.2 **Apparent rates of retention from year 7 or 8 to year 10, full time secondary students, all schools, 2002[a, b, c]**



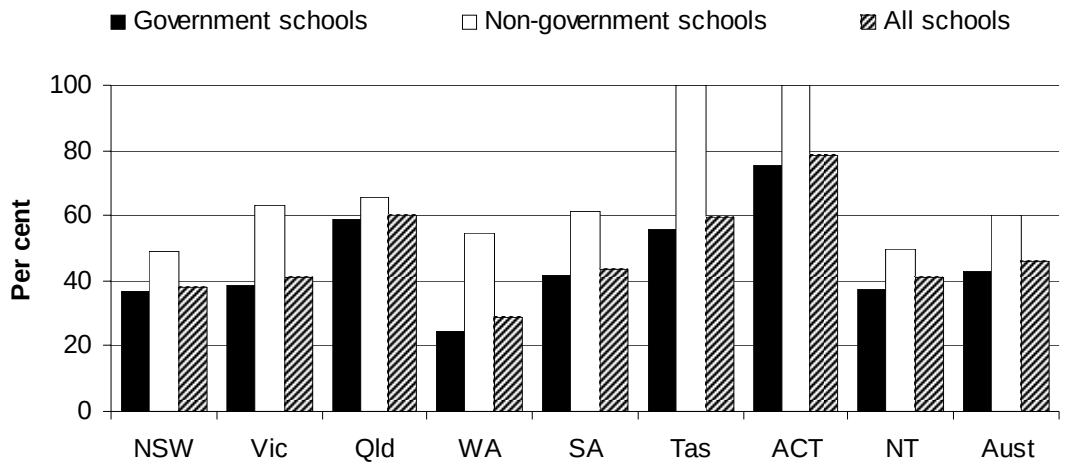
a Apparent retention rates are affected by factors that vary across jurisdictions. For this reason, variations in apparent retention rates over time within jurisdictions may be more useful than comparisons across jurisdictions. Retention rates can exceed 100 per cent for a variety of reasons, including student transfers between jurisdictions after the base year. **b** The exclusion of part time students from standard apparent retention rate calculations has implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there is a high proportion of part time students (table 3.4). **c** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion 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 retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS (2003); ROGS 2004, p. 3.21; Table 3A.8.

Apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12 in all schools in 2002 ranged from 89.8 per cent in the ACT to 66.2 per cent in the NT. The apparent retention rates for government schools ranged from 101.1 per cent in the ACT to 61.9 per cent in SA (table 3A.9). One reason for the ACT rate exceeding 100 per cent is that a number of non-government schools in the ACT do not enrol students beyond year 10 and students thus need to change schools for years 11 and 12. This set-up has the effect of reducing the retention rate for non-government schools and increasing the retention rate for government schools.

For all schools, apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12 for Indigenous students in 2002 ranged from 78.8 per cent in the ACT to 29.0 per cent in WA (figure 3.3). In interpreting this indicator, note that about 10–20 per cent of Indigenous students leave school before year 10 (figure 3.2) so are not included in the base year for retention from year 10 to year 12. Nationally, Indigenous retention from year 10 to year 12 for all schools in 2002 was 45.8 per cent (figure 3.3), or 31.2 percentage points lower than the rate for all students.

Figure 3.3 **Apparent rates of retention from year 10 to year 12, Indigenous full time secondary students, 2002[a, b, c]**



a Apparent 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 implications for the interpretation of results for all jurisdictions, but particularly for SA, Tasmania and the NT where there is a high proportion of part time students (see table 3.4, p. 3.8 in the Report on Government Services 2004). **c** Ungraded students are not included in the calculation of apparent retention rates. This exclusion 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 retention of students in secondary schooling in the NT.

Source: ABS (2003); Department of Education, Science and Training (unpublished); ROGS 2004, p. 3.24; Table 3A.9.

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2003, *Schools Australia, 2002,* Cat. no. 4221.0, Canberra.

MCEETYA (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs) 2003, *National Report on Schooling in Australia, 2001*, Melbourne.

SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2004, *Report on Government Services 2004*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.