

ATTACHMENT 2: BACKGROUND TO THE COLLECTION OF DATA ON STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS USING NATIONALLY AGREED DEFINITIONS

National Goals for Schooling

In 1999, State, Territory and Australian Government Ministers for Education, meeting as the 10th Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), endorsed the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century*.

Priority areas of schooling

At the same time, Ministers agreed to report on progress towards the achievement of the *National Goals* in the following priority areas of schooling using key performance measures as the basis for nationally comparable reporting:

- literacy
- numeracy
- science
- civics and citizenship education
- information and communication technology
- student participation and attainment
- vocational education and training in schools.

Ministers initially identified enterprise education as an area for the development of key performance measures but subsequently agreed that work would not proceed in this area for the time being.

MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce

The taskforce established by Ministers is responsible for the development and maintenance of the key performance measures, which provide the basis for national reporting, and for the development of nationally consistent definitions of student groups. The taskforce comprises representatives of the Australian Government, all State and Territory education departments, and of the two peak bodies representing the non-government school sector (the National Catholic Education Commission and the Independent Schools Council of Australia).

Key Performance Measures

Ministers agreed that the national key performance measures would be a set of measures 'limited in number and strategic in orientation'. In most instances, including the five set out in the table below, the KPMs are expressed as a percentage of students achieving a set standard or level of proficiency in a given learning area.

The table below sets out the key performance measures for five of the priority areas noted above and provides details of the year level(s) at which assessments are conducted, the proportion of students undertaking the assessment - that is, the full cohort (all students) or a sample of students – and the frequency of the assessments. It also indicates, in bold type, those assessments for which linking of enrolment data and test data is required.

These five areas are particularly important in relation to reporting outcomes by student groups, as there is a need for assessments for year levels up to and including Year 9, to link students' results from the assessments with their background characteristics as reported on enrolment or, where necessary, special data collection forms.

Agreed Key Performance Measures as at January 2008

Measure	Year Level	Full cohort or Sample	Basis/Test-Instrument	Frequency or Cycle
Literacy - % achieving reading/spelling/writing benchmark	Years 3, 5, 7 & 9*	Full cohort	National test	Annual
Numeracy - % achieving numeracy benchmark	Years 3, 5, 7 & 9*	Full cohort	National test	Annual
Science - % achieving at or above the proficient standard in scientific literacy	Year 6	National sample	National test	Three-yearly from 2003
Civics and Citizenship Education – % achieving at or above the proficient standard	Year 6 } Year 10 }	National sample	National test	Three-yearly from 2004
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) - % achieving at or above the proficient standard in ICT	Year 10 }	National sample	National test	Three-yearly from 2005

* Achievement bands and proficiency standards for reading, writing, spelling and numeracy for Year 9 will be established as part of the process for the first national literacy and numeracy assessment in 2008.

Bold text indicates year levels for which linking of student background data and assessment results is required.

Reporting on student groups

In the past, the capacity to obtain a coherent national picture of the educational progress of students with particular background characteristics across Australia has been hampered by the variety of ways in which the student groups have been defined by different States and Territories, school systems and schools.

Ministers' agreement to develop nationally consistent definitions of the identified student background characteristics arose from their recognition that, when reporting on students' educational outcomes, there needs to be reporting in respect of particular groups of students.

The *National Goals* provide the underlying rationale for nationally comparable reporting in respect of particular groups of students. In particular, they state that

Schooling should be socially just, so that:

students' outcomes from schooling should be free of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic location [Goal 3.1]

the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students [should] improve and, over time, match those of other students [Goal 3.2].

The reporting of student outcomes using agreed definitions of student groups is a standard component of reporting in the annual *National Report on Schooling in Australia (ANR)* and therefore applies to all government and non-government schools.