

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

1 The context of Australian schooling

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this *National Report* is to inform the people of Australia about the schooling that was provided during 1996 to some 3.14 million primary and secondary students enrolled in more than 9,600 schools in Australia's eight States and Territories.

The nature of the schooling provided for young people in those schools has evolved from Australia's diverse history as well as its unique geography. For example, particular types of schools and educational approaches have been established to serve the specific needs of Australia's sparsely populated interior. More than 60 per cent of the nation's population live in capital cities and a further ten per cent in urban centres with more than 100,000 people, so most children attend school in urban environments.

In Australia, primary and secondary schooling is delivered through both government and non-government providers. In excess of 70 per cent of all students enrol at government schools, with the remainder choosing non-government schooling. This choice may be made for educational, religious, cultural or other reasons. This year's *National Report* contains information provided by each State's government, Catholic and independent schooling sectors.

In reporting on Australian schooling in 1996, this *National Report* follows the format introduced in the previous year. The first part comprises an extensive *National Overview*, which describes and seeks to broadly quantify the structure and scope of schooling in Australia and summarises national achievements in areas identified by education authorities for concentrated development in 1996. In the second part of the *National Report*, the States and the Commonwealth report in detail on their own

specific priority objectives for 1996 and chart highlights of their progress towards achieving the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia which are provided on page ix. (Note: the term 'State' is used throughout the *National Overview* to refer to both 'State' and 'Territory'.)

The *National Overview* also seeks to broadly quantify aspects of Australian education and, following the format established in the *National Report* for 1995, incorporates detailed statistical information within the text of each chapter, enabling it to be read in the appropriate context. In early sections of the *National Overview*, key statistics serve to provide an understanding of the extent of schooling in Australia in terms of schools and students, as well as the resourcing of teaching and learning and physical facilities. In later sections, statistics are used to quantify and report on progress in focus areas linked closely to the ten Common and Agreed National Goals.

The agreed focus area for Goals 1, 2, 4 and 5 in 1996 is students' attitudes as they apply to the social objectives of schooling and this will be largely addressed through a report on the social objectives sample study managed by the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). Goal 3, with its equity focus, has geographically isolated students as its 1996 reporting emphasis. Goals 6–10, which relate to skills and knowledge, have one focus on student outcomes in numeracy and another on science.

1.2 Responsibility for schooling in Australia

State governments have the constitutional and major financial responsibility for school education in Australia. Variations evident in the schooling provided for the young people of Australia in 1996 stem from the diversity in those States in such areas as population size and

composition, history, physical size and features, past development and economic outlook.

Each State government is required to ensure the provision of schooling to all students of school age, administering and providing substantial funding for primary and secondary schooling. Within each State, Ministers, departments, statutory authorities and individual schools determine policies and practices on such matters as curriculum, course accreditation, student assessment, resource allocation and utilisation, as well as teacher employment and professional development. States have also developed equity policies and programs which aim to provide quality schooling for all students irrespective of their social background or geographic location.

The Commonwealth has several schooling-related roles. Its policies and programs for schools and students are administered through DEETYA. Roles shared with State and non-government school authorities include identifying national priorities for schooling, promoting national consistency and coherence in the provision of schooling across Australia, and identifying strategies for achieving these aims. DEETYA provides significant supplementary financial input to State and non-government school authorities to support the agreed priorities and strategies. A shared national priority in relation to disadvantaged students sees continuing cooperation on agreed goals and strategies between State and non-government school authorities and the Commonwealth in schools' equity policies and programs. This includes policy and programs relating to Indigenous people and immigrants, for whom the Commonwealth has particular responsibilities.

The Commonwealth also has specific responsibilities for the provision of financial assistance to students and for Australia's international relations in education, as well as shared responsibilities for schooling in Australia's external territories of Christmas Island, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Norfolk Island.

1.3 Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

MCEETYA comprises the State, Commonwealth and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of education, employment, training and youth affairs. Papua New Guinea and Norfolk Island have observer status. It is the Ministerial forum for national collaboration in policy

development and implementation relating to schooling in Australia, in the wider context of education and training, employment and youth culture.

Ministers whose portfolios include school education are responsible for both government and non-government schools. The Council, as a matter of principle, has established a range of consultative mechanisms at both national and State levels to obtain the views of the non-government school sector and, wherever possible, extends membership of its working parties and committees to the national bodies representing the non-government education authorities—the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and the National Council of Independent Schools' Associations (NCISA).

Regular consultation also takes place with peak national bodies representing:

- parents – the Australian Council of State Schools Organisations (ACSSO) and the Australian Parents Council (APC), representing government and non-government school parents respectively;
- teachers – the Australian Education Union (AEU) and the Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU), representing government and non-government school teachers respectively; and
- the business sector – the National Industry Education Forum (NIEF), representing a range of peak industry bodies, including the Business Council of Australia (BCA) and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI).

Two national research and development companies, partly or wholly funded by Commonwealth and State Ministers of education, facilitate cooperative initiatives in schooling:

- Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), founded in 1930, which undertakes, promotes, disseminates and markets research and development projects, including educational and psychological tests; and
- Curriculum Corporation, which commenced full operation in 1990 in the development and publication of curriculum materials resulting from national collaboration. It is managed by a board comprising representatives from the government and non-government sectors and parent and teacher organisations.

MCEETYA held two meetings in 1996, supplemented by teleconferences. Its ongoing work is undertaken through a

number of taskforces which have clearly defined terms of reference and are subject to annual review. The Council is supported by a small, independent secretariat, which is funded by all governments and is located in Melbourne.

During 1996, national collaboration under MCEETYA resulted in a number of key initiatives to enhance schooling outcomes across the nation.

National literacy goal

The development of strong literacy skills, particularly in the early years of schooling, was seen as an urgent priority by Ministers, who committed themselves to realising a new national goal:

that every child leaving primary school should be able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level.

To assist in achieving this goal, Ministers agreed to the development of common literacy benchmarks at year 3 and year 5, which would set out the levels of performance to be met in reading, writing and other essential aspects of literacy. The Benchmarking Taskforce was established, with representation from all States, the Commonwealth and peak non-government school authorities, to oversee the development process. A report on progress with this work has to be made to the first MCEETYA meeting in 1997.

National School English Literacy Survey

All States and the non-government school sector participated in the Commonwealth-sponsored National School English Literacy Survey (NSELS), which was conducted in August–September 1996. The survey, conducted by ACER on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, sought to collect reliable national baseline data on the literacy performance of Australian school students in years 3 and 5. Results of the survey will be available in 1997.

At the July 1996 MCEETYA meeting, the Commonwealth supplied, for information, a progress report on planning for the survey. Noting that this survey would not be able to be used for valid and reliable comparisons between States, and mindful of the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) requirement for nationally-comparable performance indicators, Ministers agreed that any future NSELS be amended to incorporate sufficient data enabling a national comparison among States and that results of this will be reported to a MCEETYA meeting prior to their release.

National strategy in schooling to prevent paedophilia and other forms of child abuse

Ministers made a commitment to the development of a coordinated national strategy in schooling to prevent paedophilia and other forms of child abuse. New South Wales agreed to prepare a paper, in consultation with other States, to be presented to MCEETYA in 1997, concerning current action in each State and a national strategy for the coordination of State actions.

It was agreed that the strategy should cover the following areas:

- student welfare and child protection programs;
- personnel practices and procedures;
- training and development;
- community awareness; and
- coordination with other agencies.

Implementation of the Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship System in schools

Ministers examined the issue of the provision of accredited vocational education and training (VET) courses in schools and how this contributes to Commonwealth and State priorities with respect to the Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship System (MAATS).

In particular, they considered how the new system could be implemented in partnership with industry to meet the needs of enterprises and provide for a broader approach to training through the schools sector; a proposal for the allocation of resources to support rapid expansion in the current provision of accredited VET courses in schools; and the strategic and targeted introduction of initiatives across Australia, which would link these courses in schools with traineeships and apprenticeships, and in some cases, deliver programs of this type.

Council agreed on priorities for funding including:

- meeting the additional annual recurrent costs involved in the delivery of 'higher cost' courses which meet the requirements of industry and which schools cannot provide for through their normal allocations;
- program development and delivery costs associated with linking school courses with traineeships and apprenticeships;

- integrating VET courses with senior secondary certificates to meet industry standards and providing course advice and support materials; and
- associated infrastructure costs such as provision for workplace coordination and elements of professional development and training for teachers and for workplace supervisors and assessors, which cannot be funded through the National Professional Development Programme (NPDP).

Council requested the MCEETYA Taskforce on the Implementation of the MAATS in Schools to undertake further national work on the implementation of the MAATS through 1996 and to provide advice on milestones for implementation in 1997 and beyond, in the light of available resources.

The Taskforce was asked to develop a strategic plan and advice on:

- an implementation strategy involving transition arrangements to be mounted in 1997, leading to broader implementation in 1998;
- coordination arrangements which need to be implemented;
- guidelines to assist schools to deliver traineeships and apprenticeships;
- further work being undertaken on the development of a recurrent funding formula and advice on the issue of how schools can access funds for the delivery of MAATS courses in the long term; and
- strategies for achieving high levels of industry ownership of programs which involve enterprises and schools at the national, State, regional and local levels.

1.4 Objectives for schooling in Australia: national goals and 1996 priorities

Although schooling is provided to students in Australia through eight separate and distinct State government systems, and through large numbers of non-government providers in each State, there exists a national agreement about its underlying objectives. The ten Common and Agreed National Goals provide a framework for cooperation among schools, the States and the Commonwealth and help

the development of specific objectives and strategies, particularly in the areas of curriculum and assessment.

The Common and Agreed National Goals are acknowledged as an appropriate basis for the collaborative efforts required to enhance Australian schooling. Planned, periodic review will ensure they continue to reflect the changing needs of Australian society.

Individual States' and authorities' priority objectives for 1996 were all closely related to the national goals. In those objectives, State government systems and non-government providers sought to reflect and respond to the needs of their communities. A recurring fundamental objective was that all students should develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their individual potential and to contribute positively to the society in which they live.

Nationally, States and authorities determined a broad range of objectives in 1996, all aimed at improving the quality of learning and teaching in Australian schools. Commonly described foci in 1996 included:

- the learning environment – to ensure the provision of safe, secure and positive learning environments, including the management of student behaviour;
- aiming for excellence – to strive for good teaching, effective learning and the highest levels of achievement; to develop each student's ability to learn, to think critically and creatively and to communicate effectively; and to improve the outcomes of learning in specific subject areas or for particular student groups;
- equity issues – to ensure that schools provide programs and structures which cater for all children, including those with special needs;
- school responsiveness – to focus on values, ethics and active citizenship; to foster the convergence of general and vocational education in the postcompulsory years; to continue to reform early childhood and post-compulsory education; to facilitate transition between educational levels and from education to work; and to streamline communication and develop closer links between schools, parents and communities;
- quality assurance issues – to develop and refine methods used to assess and report student performance and give feedback to students, parents, schools and the community; to improve management information systems; and to further develop methodologies for monitoring and reporting on school performance;

- information technology – to ensure both teachers and students become skilful users of personal computers and associated technology; to further develop the role of information technology and multimedia for curriculum support and delivery, thus enhancing student learning; and to improve the effectiveness of management through the application of information technology; and
- professional staff – to further develop the competence, efficiency and confidence of teachers, through providing opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills; to increase skills in information technology; and to enhance the role of teachers through changed career structures and greater participation in decision making and leadership.

In addition to these broadly-supported objectives, non-government schools which had a religious focus often expressed social goals in terms of the relationships between God, the individual and other human beings; some placed particular emphasis on community participation and community service as part of the social development of their students. Schools with strong ethnic or indigenous links sought to develop an awareness of particular cultures and their importance in multicultural Australia, viewing those links as important to the social development of their students, assisting with the development of self-image and the ability to relate to others. Non-government schools generally noted the importance of close links with their communities in contributing to the social and general education of their students.

Central to the involvement of the Commonwealth in schooling in Australia is its aim of enhancing the educational outcomes of all school students by providing support for schools and educational systems through various funding programs and through policy development, research and analysis of nationally significant educational issues.

In 1996, the Commonwealth Government affirmed a strong commitment to the Common and Agreed National Goals, placing particular priorities on literacy and numeracy and vocational education. Its major educational goal was to ensure that all young Australians attained appropriate literacy and numeracy skills. To help achieve that goal, the Commonwealth was instrumental in the adoption by Ministers in September 1996 of a national literacy target for all children leaving primary school.

Other Commonwealth priorities during 1996 included:

- assisting the transition of young people from school to work, through a national focus on vocational education;
- assisting educationally disadvantaged students to access and participate fully in education in order to maximise their educational outcomes; and
- supporting the rights of parents to choose the educational environment which best suits their children.

The Commonwealth also played a strategic role in the promotion of national consistency in the provision of schooling across Australia, including the reporting of nationally comparable data on students' learning outcomes.

1.5 The structure of schooling in Australia

There are two broad categories of schools in Australia: government schools (which enrol the large majority of students) and non-government schools, the latter including both schools with religious affiliations and others independent of such links. Government schools operate under the direct responsibility of the State education Ministers. Non-government schools, while not subject to direct Ministerial control, operate under conditions set by State government registration authorities and are required to provide certain minimum educational standards and satisfactory premises.

Most non-government schools have a religious affiliation, most commonly with the Catholic church (66.7 per cent of all non-government schools in Australia in 1996 were Catholic and 66.8 per cent of full-time non-government students were enrolled in those schools). Non-Catholic, non-government schools, totalling 848 schools nationally, are hereafter referred to in this report as 'independent' schools.

Schooling is compulsory from age 6–15 in all States except Tasmania, where compulsion extends to 16. In most States, however, children start primary school at the age of five, when they enrol in a preparatory or kindergarten year, after which primary education continues for either six or seven years, depending on the State. In 1996, there were almost 1.85 million full-time primary students in Australia, of whom 74 per cent were enrolled in government schools. All government primary schools and most non-government primary schools are coeducational.

Figure 1. The structure of primary and secondary schooling in Australia

<i>Level</i>	<i>NSW, Vic., Tas., ACT</i>	<i>SA, NT</i>	<i>Qld, WA</i>
Year 12	SECONDARY	SECONDARY	SECONDARY
Year 11			
Year 10			
Year 9			
Year 8			
Year 7	PRIMARY	PRIMARY	PRIMARY
Year 6			
Year 5			
Year 4			
Year 3			
Year 2			
Year 1			
Pre-year 1	(a)	(b)	

(a) Pre-year 1 is known as Kindergarten in NSW and ACT and Preparatory (Prep or P) in Vic. and Tas.

(b) Pre-year 1 is known as Reception (R) in SA and Transition (T) in NT.

Secondary education is available for either five or six years, depending on the State and the length of primary education provided. Students usually commence their secondary schooling at age 12 or 13, reaching year 12 when 17 or 18 years old. In 1996, 1.29 million full-time secondary students were enrolled in Australian schools, with 66 per cent of those enrolments in government schools. Most government secondary schools are coeducational, but a significant number of non-government schools are single-sex.

1.6 Key statistics on schooling in Australia in 1996

Combining information presented in tables and figures elsewhere in this *National Overview*, Table 1 provides an overview of education in Australia in 1996. It clearly identifies the relative sizes of the government and non-government sectors and, by means of a range of selected indicators, presents a statistical summary of their contribution to Australian schooling in 1996.

From 1995 to 1996, the Australian population grew by 248,230 persons, or approximately 1.37 per cent, an annual rate greater than that shown in any year since 1991. The slow growth in population in the 1990s has occurred in a period with a declining rate of natural population increase and increasing net overseas migration.

Table 1. Key features of Australian schooling, 1996

	<i>Govt</i>	<i>Non-govt</i>	<i>Total</i>
Schools	7,088	2,542	9,630
Students (full-time)			
All students	2,221,557	921,458	3,143,015
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	81,336	11,331	92,667
Full-fee paying overseas students	1,090	6,845	7,935
Staff (in schools) (FTE)	180,195	77,629	257,825
Teachers (in schools) (FTE)	143,949	60,023	203,972
Expenditure (1995-96) – government schools (\$ million)	\$11,213	n.a.	n.a.
Apparent retention rates (to year 12) (per cent)			
Males	59.8	78.9	65.9
Females	72.0	87.7	77.0
Persons	65.8	83.2	71.3
Participation rates (per cent)			
16 year olds	–	–	79.9
17 year olds	–	–	59.1
Full-time student/teaching staff ratios			
Primary	17.8	18.8	18.1
Secondary	12.7	12.8	12.7

Note: Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

n.a. Not available.

Sources: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996 and MCEETYA, *National Schools Statistics Collection*, 1996

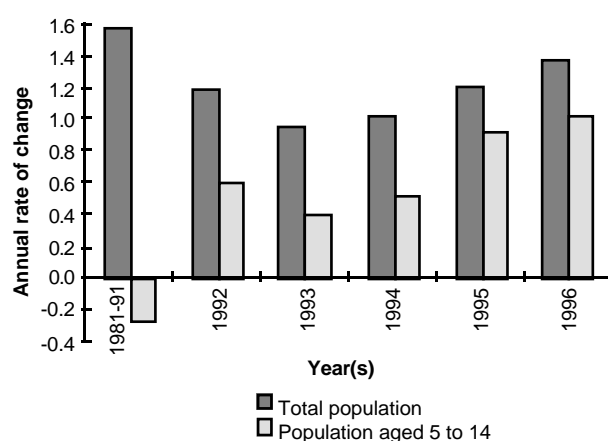
Table 2. Population by age group, selected years, Australia, 1981–1996

Age	1981	1991	1995	1996 (p)
0–4	1,139,618	1,271,703	1,297,020	1,297,534
5–14	2,585,922	2,513,827	2,587,784	2,614,203
15–19	1,297,045	1,364,074	1,268,057	1,279,008
20–24	1,301,866	1,396,764	1,427,888	1,396,728
25–34	2,456,924	2,825,398	2,838,534	2,862,486
35–44	1,822,877	2,622,658	2,755,702	2,811,179
45–64	2,864,009	3,338,897	3,737,359	3,847,168
65+	1,454,999	1,950,715	2,150,912	2,203,180
Total	14,923,260	17,284,036	18,063,256	18,311,486

(p) Preliminary.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, March 1997 and earlier publications

Figure 2. Percentage change in total population and population aged 5–14, Australia, 1981–1996



Source: ABS Cat. No. 3101.0, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, March 1997 and earlier publications

The number of persons within the 5–14 age range, that most closely approximating the years of compulsory schooling, increased by 26,419 persons, or 1.02 per cent, in the year to 30 June 1996. That growth rate was virtually unchanged from the previous year, and was higher in both years than was evident earlier in the 1990s. Table 2 plots the actual growth in this cohort during the past 15 years. Figure 2 makes clear the changing rates of that growth, in particular the contrast between the decline in the period 1981–1991 and the increases now occurring.

Information drawn from Table 2 provides evidence of the ageing of Australia's population. In 1991, the 5–14 age cohort comprised 14.5 per cent of the total Australian population, down from 17.3 per cent in 1981; the annual

decrease still continues, though now at a minimal level. Significant decreases in relative numbers were also evident over the same period in the 0–4 and 15–19 age cohorts, which are of importance to considerations of schooling, as well as in the 20–24 and 25–34 age cohorts, which are more likely to be indicative of the potential for commencement of new families. The 35–44, 45–64 and 65+ age groups have all shown continued relative growth since 1981.

Changes in the demographic profile of the population will affect the provision of schooling in all States, the extent of that impact being at least partly dependent on the extent and nature of those changes in a particular State. However, other political, social and economic changes, particularly shifts in community expectations of schooling, can be of primary importance in bringing about educational change.

A comparison of some of the indicators of the scope of schooling in Australia with the 1995 equivalent figures confirms a continuing pattern of change impacting on schools, students and staff. The ability of the States to react to the demands made on them for the provision of appropriate schooling in a climate of change is the focus of Section 2 of the *National Overview*.

Schools in Australia in 1996:

There were 9,630 schools operating in Australia in August 1996, a fall of 18 (0.2 per cent) since 1995. The number of non-government schools increased by 16 (0.6 per cent), while the number of government schools fell by 34 (0.5 per cent). In all States except the Australian Capital Territory, the number of government schools decreased marginally from 1995–96. The number of non-government schools increased marginally in all States in the same period.

Within the non-government sector, there was a net increase of 16 schools from 1995 to 1996 (0.6 per cent growth). Fifteen of these schools were new independent schools and most were established in Western Australia and Victoria. The total number of Catholic schools in Australia increased by one from 1995 to 1996.

In Australia in 1996, 70.5 per cent of the schools were primary schools, 16.0 per cent were secondary schools, 9.5 per cent were combined primary/secondary schools and 3.9 per cent were special schools. Those relative percentages were only marginally different from 1995.

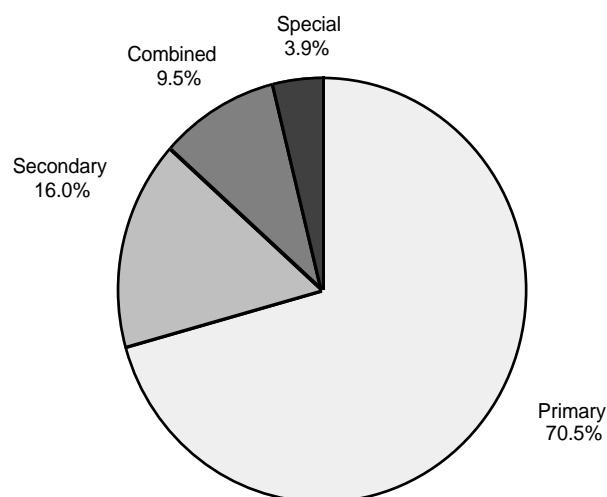
Information extracted from the *National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC)*, 1996 provides an ongoing perspective on the relative sizes of Australian primary and secondary

Table 3. Percentage change in number of schools, by State and sector, Australia, 1995–96

State	Govt	Non-govt	Total
New South Wales	-0.2	0.2	-0.1
Victoria	-0.6	0.6	-0.3
Queensland	-0.2	0.5	-0.1
South Australia	-1.4	0.5	-0.9
Western Australia	-0.5	2.0	0.1
Tasmania	-0.4	-	-0.3
Northern Territory	-2.0	3.8	-1.1
Australian Capital Territory	1.0	2.6	1.6
Australia	-0.5	0.6	-0.2

Sources: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 1995 and 1996

Figure 3. Percentage of schools, by category, Australia, 1996

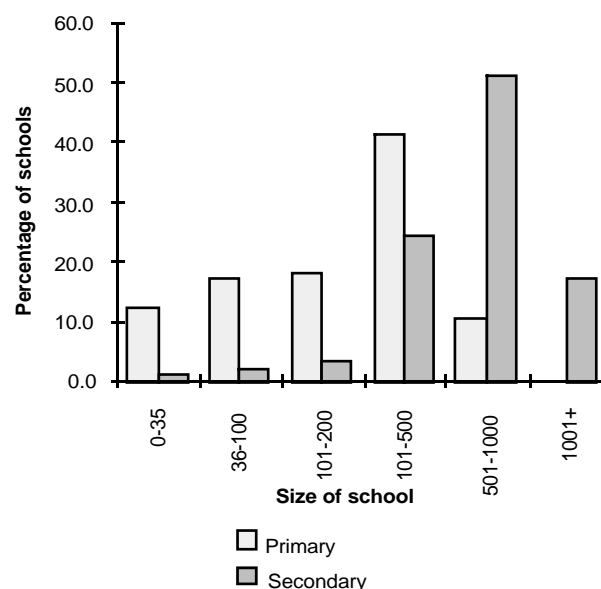


Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 1996

schools. Of those schools offering only primary education, 47.7 per cent had less than 200 enrolments and only 10.7 per cent had more than 500 enrolments. The different constraints on schools catering only for secondary students were reflected in the 6.6 per cent of such schools with less than 200 students and 69.1 per cent with more than 500 enrolments. The 922 Australian schools which offered both primary and secondary schooling ranged in size and focus from small government schools in rural locations with enrolments of less than 40, to large, metropolitan non-government schools providing more than 2,000 student places.

There are major differences in the relative sizes of the schooling sectors in the eight States. For example, 33.9

Figure 4. Schools, by size and level, Australia, 1996



Source: MCEETYA, *National Schools Statistics Collection*, 1996

per cent of the nation's students and 31.7 per cent of its schools are located in New South Wales, with a further 24.7 per cent of both students and schools being in Victoria. At the other end of the scale, the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory together have only 2.5 per cent of Australia's students and 3.8 per cent of its schools.

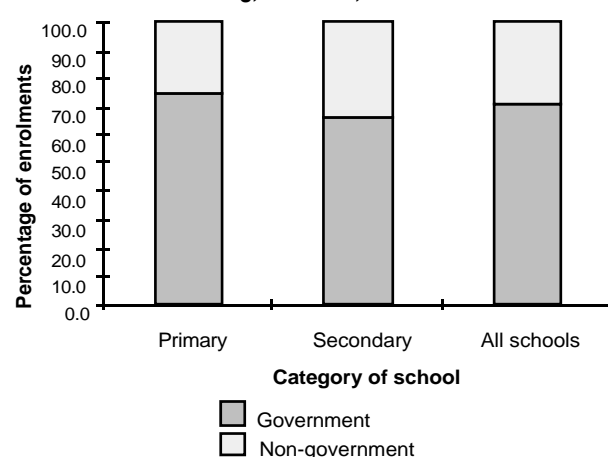
Early settlement patterns within the States, based on the initial availability of water, land and natural resources, still help to determine the relative numbers of schools of different types and levels. For example, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory all have high proportions of sparsely populated rural areas and relatively fewer secondary schools. Those same States, along with Tasmania, have a greater proportion of smaller towns and centres and a significantly higher proportion of combined primary/secondary schools than the more populous States.

Students in Australia in 1996:

There were 3,143,015 full-time students attending schools in Australia, representing an increase of 33,678 (almost 1.1 per cent) over the 1995 total. Enrolments of full-time students in government schools increased by 13,704 (0.6 per cent) from the 1995 total, while the number of full-time students attending non-government schools increased by 19,974 (2.2 per cent) from the 1995 enrolment total.

In 1996, 70.7 per cent of all full-time students in Australia attended government schools, a marginal shift from the 71.0 per cent in 1995. Government primary schools

Figure 5. Percentage of enrolments, by sector and level of schooling, Australia, 1996



Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia*, 1996

enrolled 74.0 per cent of full-time students, while government secondary schools enrolled 66.0 per cent of all students, each a marginal decrease from the comparable 1995 figures.

In 1996, national data were published for only the second time on enrolments of part-time secondary students. All States had students enrolled part-time in government schools and all but the Northern Territory had part-time students attending non-government schools. There was no national consistency of enrolment policy or course availability for part-time students. Data about the ages of part-time secondary students were not collected by all States.

In 1996, 23,034 secondary students attended part-time, a decrease of 974 students (4.1 per cent) from the 1995 total. This total was equivalent to 9,036 full-time equivalent (FTE) students, a 0.7 per cent increase over the comparable 1995 figure. In this national context, part-time students were, on average, enrolled for a marginally greater fraction of time. Virtually unchanged from 1995, 67.3 per cent of part-time students in 1996 were undertaking year 11 or year 12 and 97.2 per cent attended government schools.

South Australia again had more part-time students in both government schools (5,698 persons or 2,616 FTE students) and non-government schools (258 persons or 156.4 FTE students) than any other State. However, both the number of part-time students and the full-time equivalent students it represented were noticeably less than the respective totals in 1995.

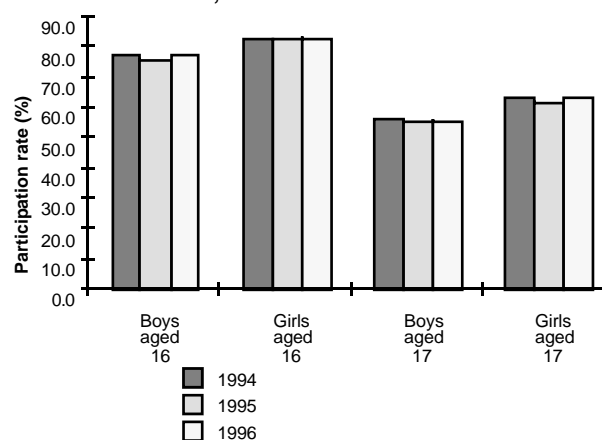
Queensland and Western Australia again had significant numbers of part-time students in 1996, although the total

number of students and the full-time equivalent students they represented decreased in both States in comparison to 1995. Most other States also reported fewer part-time students in 1996. However, Victoria reported a 1.4 per cent increase in the number of part-time students, and New South Wales showed a major increase, reporting a 47.1 per cent increase in part-time numbers across all school sectors.

As in previous years, data for 1996 indicated that girls were more likely to remain at school until year 12 than boys, in both government and non-government schools. The apparent retention rate for girls was 77.0 per cent (77.9 per cent in 1995), while that for boys was 65.9 per cent (66.7 per cent in 1995). The decrease in apparent retention rates for government schools, from 67.2 per cent in 1995 to 65.8 per cent in 1996, reflects a drop in the apparent retention rate of both boys and girls. An increase in the apparent retention rate for students attending non-government schools was entirely the result of an increase in the apparent retention rate for girls, to 87.7 per cent in 1996.

Nationally, the rate of participation in schooling for persons aged 15–19 grew from 48.4 per cent in 1995 to 48.8 per cent in 1996. Particularly notable were increases in the participation rates for 16 year olds and 17 year olds. The former grew from 78.8 per cent in 1995 to 79.9 per cent in 1996, while the latter grew from 58.5 per cent in 1995 to 59.1 per cent in 1996. Figure 6 clearly indicates the higher participation rate for girls in both of these age cohorts, as well as the relatively minor changes in those participation rates over the past three years.

Figure 6. Participation of 16/17 year olds, by gender, Australia, 1994–1996



Sources: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1994, 1995 and 1996

Table 4. Number of schools, by category (and non-government affiliation) and level of education, by State, 1996

	<i>Government</i>	<i>Non-government</i>			<i>All schools</i>	
		<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
New South Wales						
Primary	1,648	421	104	525	2,173	22.6
Secondary	388	130	23	153	541	5.6
Combined prim/sec	65	33	125	158	223	2.3
Special	85	6	25	31	116	1.2
Total	2,186	590	277	867	3,053	31.7
Victoria						
Primary	1,297	384	60	444	1,741	18.1
Secondary	281	93	17	110	391	4.1
Combined prim/sec	39	10	101	111	150	1.6
Special	83	6	8	14	97	1.0
Total	1,700	493	186	679	2,379	24.7
Queensland						
Primary	997	191	47	238	1,235	12.8
Secondary	189	64	17	81	270	2.8
Combined prim/sec	76	15	74	89	165	1.7
Special	52	0	2	2	54	0.6
Total	1,314	270	140	410	1,724	17.9
South Australia						
Primary	482	76	47	123	605	6.3
Secondary	82	14	11	25	107	1.1
Combined prim/sec	66	17	25	42	108	1.1
Special	21	2	2	4	25	0.3
Total	651	109	85	194	845	8.8
Western Australia						
Primary	510	107	42	149	659	6.8
Secondary	97	26	11	37	134	1.4
Combined prim/sec	95	15	52	67	162	1.7
Special	62	1	1	2	64	0.7
Total	764	149	106	255	1,019	10.6
Tasmania						
Primary	150	26	10	36	186	1.9
Secondary	41	6	2	8	49	0.5
Combined prim/sec	27	6	19	25	52	0.5
Special	11	0	1	1	12	0.1
Total	229	38	32	70	299	3.1
Northern Territory						
Primary	88	7	8	15	103	1.1
Secondary	11	2	2	4	15	0.2
Combined prim/sec	39	6	2	8	47	0.5
Special	7	0	0	0	7	0.1
Total	145	15	12	27	172	1.8
Australian Capital Territory						
Primary	67	22	1	23	90	0.9
Secondary	26	5	1	6	32	0.3
Combined prim/sec	1	3	8	11	12	0.1
Special	5	0	0	0	5	0.1
Total	99	30	10	40	139	1.4
Australia						
Primary	5,239	1,234	319	1,553	6,792	70.5
Secondary	1,115	340	84	424	1,539	16.0
Combined prim/sec	408	105	406	511	919	9.5
Special	326	15	39	54	380	3.9
Total all schools 1996	7,088	1,694	848	2,542	9,630	100.0
1995	7,122	1,693	833	2,526	9,648	100.0
1994	7,159	1,699	821	2,520	9,679	100.0

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996

Table 5. Proportion of full-time students (a) enrolled in government and non-government schools, by level of education, by State, selected years (per cent)

Level of education	1986			1991			1996		
	Govt	Cath.	Indep.	Govt	Cath.	Indep.	Govt	Cath.	Indep.
New South Wales									
Primary	75.2	20.7	4.1	74.1	20.5	5.4	73.9	19.7	6.4
Junior secondary (b)	72.7	20.2	7.1	69.8	21.2	8.9	69.0	21.2	9.8
Senior secondary	66.6	22.4	11.0	66.9	21.9	11.1	64.7	23.2	12.1
Total secondary	71.5	20.6	7.9	69.0	21.4	9.5	67.9	21.7	10.4
Total	73.6	20.7	5.7	72.0	20.9	7.2	71.3	20.5	8.1
Victoria									
Primary	70.6	23.5	5.9	69.9	23.6	6.5	69.7	23.2	7.1
Junior secondary (b)	67.6	20.1	12.3	65.3	21.2	13.5	63.4	22.0	14.6
Senior secondary	61.5	22.1	16.4	63.3	20.6	16.1	60.6	21.9	17.5
Total secondary	66.1	20.6	13.3	64.7	21.0	14.3	62.6	22.0	15.4
Total	68.6	22.1	9.3	67.6	22.4	10.0	66.6	22.7	10.7
Queensland									
Primary	80.0	16.8	3.2	78.7	16.1	5.2	77.2	15.7	7.1
Junior secondary (b)	72.1	17.8	10.1	70.1	17.2	12.8	66.5	18.0	15.5
Senior secondary	66.7	20.1	13.3	67.8	18.3	13.9	63.4	19.1	17.5
Total secondary	70.6	18.5	11.0	69.2	17.6	13.2	65.5	18.4	16.1
Total	76.2	17.4	6.3	75.0	16.7	8.3	72.6	16.8	10.7
South Australia									
Primary	80.2	13.0	6.9	78.3	13.6	8.1	74.8	15.0	10.2
Junior secondary (b)	77.2	13.6	9.2	72.1	15.2	12.6	68.6	17.0	14.4
Senior secondary	73.7	14.8	11.5	69.9	15.9	14.2	63.3	18.8	17.9
Total secondary	76.1	14.0	10.0	71.3	15.5	13.3	66.9	17.6	15.5
Total	78.5	13.4	8.1	75.7	14.3	10.0	72.1	15.9	12.0
Western Australia									
Primary	80.4	15.4	4.2	79.1	15.6	5.4	77.1	16.1	6.7
Junior secondary (b)	74.1	16.6	9.3	70.6	18.0	11.4	67.7	18.5	13.8
Senior secondary	70.2	17.5	12.3	68.1	18.3	13.6	65.5	18.8	15.7
Total secondary	73.0	16.9	10.1	69.8	18.1	12.1	67.0	18.6	14.4
Total	77.5	15.9	6.6	75.5	16.5	7.9	73.2	17.1	9.7
Tasmania									
Primary	80.4	14.0	5.5	77.7	15.2	7.0	76.5	15.9	7.6
Junior secondary (b)	78.3	12.7	9.0	74.5	14.4	11.1	72.6	15.5	11.9
Senior secondary	72.6	14.8	12.6	77.8	12.2	10.0	70.6	16.3	13.1
Total secondary	77.4	13.0	9.6	75.3	13.9	10.8	72.2	15.7	12.2
Total	79.1	13.6	7.3	76.7	14.6	8.7	74.6	15.8	9.6
Northern Territory									
Primary	84.0	12.8	3.2	82.4	13.5	4.1	80.5	14.0	5.5
Junior secondary (b)	84.6	13.0	2.4	75.6	14.7	9.7	71.1	13.3	15.7
Senior secondary	83.8	12.9	3.3	85.7	8.2	6.1	77.9	9.9	12.2
Total secondary	84.4	13.0	2.6	78.6	12.8	8.6	72.7	12.5	14.8
Total	84.1	12.8	3.0	81.2	13.3	5.5	78.2	13.5	8.3
Australian Capital Territory									
Primary	68.0	27.0	5.0	68.3	26.1	5.6	68.1	26.0	5.9
Junior secondary (b)	62.4	27.4	10.2	60.0	28.5	11.5	58.0	29.6	12.4
Senior secondary	69.8	22.5	7.7	71.4	19.8	8.8	69.4	20.7	9.9
Total secondary	64.4	26.1	9.5	63.8	25.6	10.6	61.7	26.7	11.6
Total	66.4	26.6	7.0	66.2	25.8	7.9	65.1	26.3	8.5
Australia									
Primary	75.9	19.4	4.7	74.9	19.2	5.9	74.0	18.9	7.1
Junior secondary (b)	71.6	19.0	9.4	68.7	19.9	11.3	66.9	20.3	12.8
Senior secondary	66.6	20.4	13.1	66.9	19.6	13.4	63.7	21.0	15.3
Total secondary	70.4	19.3	10.3	68.3	19.8	12.0	66.0	20.5	13.5
Total	73.6	19.4	7.1	72.1	19.5	8.4	70.7	19.6	9.7

Note: Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

(a) As from 1990, students in special schools have been allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of age – primary if aged 12 or under and secondary if over 12.

(b) Junior secondary comprises years 7–10 in NSW, Vic., Tas. and ACT and years 8–10 in Qld, SA, WA and NT.

Sources: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996 and earlier related publications

Table 6. Full-time students, by level of education (a), category of school (and non-government affiliation), and gender, by State, 1996

	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Junior secondary (b)</i>	<i>Senior secondary yr 11–12</i>	<i>Total secondary</i>	<i>Total</i>
Government					
New South Wales	452,117	232,965	74,996	307,961	760,078
Victoria	303,769	154,132	59,161	213,293	517,062
Queensland	266,298	99,523	45,865	145,388	411,686
South Australia	120,654	39,803	17,047	56,850	177,504
Western Australia	145,837	53,709	25,168	78,877	224,714
Tasmania	36,097	20,695	5,984	26,679	62,776
Northern Territory	20,203	5,652	1,911	7,563	27,766
Australian Capital Territory	22,431	11,205	6,335	17,540	39,971
Australia	1,367,406	617,684	236,467	854,151	2,221,557
<i>Males</i>	<i>705,070</i>	<i>318,474</i>	<i>113,090</i>	<i>431,564</i>	<i>1,136,634</i>
<i>Females</i>	<i>662,336</i>	<i>299,210</i>	<i>123,377</i>	<i>422,587</i>	<i>1,084,923</i>
Catholic					
New South Wales	120,208	71,552	26,931	98,483	218,691
Victoria	101,190	53,457	21,433	74,890	176,080
Queensland	54,212	27,001	13,815	40,816	95,028
South Australia	24,191	9,864	5,061	14,925	39,116
Western Australia	30,513	14,655	7,217	21,872	52,385
Tasmania	7,497	4,416	1,380	5,796	13,293
Northern Territory	3,510	1,056	243	1,299	4,809
Australian Capital Territory	8,571	5,712	1,887	7,599	16,170
Australia	349,892	187,713	77,967	265,680	615,572
<i>Males</i>	<i>177,844</i>	<i>94,481</i>	<i>37,646</i>	<i>132,127</i>	<i>309,971</i>
<i>Females</i>	<i>172,048</i>	<i>93,232</i>	<i>40,321</i>	<i>133,553</i>	<i>305,601</i>
Independent					
New South Wales	39,338	33,192	14,048	47,240	86,578
Victoria	30,863	35,390	17,060	52,450	83,313
Queensland	24,585	23,188	12,647	35,835	60,420
South Australia	16,436	8,333	4,816	13,149	29,585
Western Australia	12,709	10,979	6,019	16,998	29,707
Tasmania	3,613	3,391	1,109	4,500	8,113
Northern Territory	1,389	1,245	298	1,543	2,932
Australian Capital Territory	1,938	2,398	902	3,300	5,238
Australia	130,871	118,116	56,899	175,015	305,886
<i>Males</i>	<i>66,075</i>	<i>59,968</i>	<i>28,095</i>	<i>88,063</i>	<i>154,138</i>
<i>Females</i>	<i>64,796</i>	<i>58,148</i>	<i>28,804</i>	<i>86,952</i>	<i>151,748</i>
Total non-government					
New South Wales	159,546	104,744	40,979	145,723	305,269
Victoria	132,053	88,847	38,493	127,340	259,393
Queensland	78,797	50,189	26,462	76,651	155,448
South Australia	40,627	18,197	9,877	28,074	68,701
Western Australia	43,222	25,634	13,236	38,870	82,092
Tasmania	11,110	7,807	2,489	10,296	21,406
Northern Territory	4,899	2,301	541	2,842	7,741
Australian Capital Territory	10,509	8,110	2,789	10,899	21,408
Australia	480,763	305,829	134,866	440,695	921,458
<i>Males</i>	<i>243,919</i>	<i>154,449</i>	<i>65,741</i>	<i>220,190</i>	<i>464,109</i>
<i>Females</i>	<i>236,844</i>	<i>151,380</i>	<i>69,125</i>	<i>220,505</i>	<i>457,349</i>
All schools					
New South Wales	611,663	337,709	115,975	453,684	1,065,347
Victoria	435,822	242,979	97,654	340,633	776,455
Queensland	345,095	149,712	72,327	222,039	567,134
South Australia	161,281	58,000	26,924	84,924	246,205
Western Australia	189,059	79,343	38,404	117,747	306,806
Tasmania	47,207	28,502	8,473	36,975	84,182
Northern Territory	25,102	7,953	2,452	10,405	35,507
Australian Capital Territory	32,940	19,315	9,124	28,439	61,379
Australia	1,848,169	923,513	371,333	1,294,846	3,143,015
<i>Males</i>	<i>948,989</i>	<i>472,923</i>	<i>178,831</i>	<i>651,754</i>	<i>1,600,743</i>
<i>Females</i>	<i>899,180</i>	<i>450,590</i>	<i>192,502</i>	<i>643,092</i>	<i>1,542,272</i>

(a) As from 1990, students in special schools have been allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of age – primary if aged 12 or under and secondary if over 12.

(b) Junior secondary comprises years 7–10 in NSW, Vic., Tas. and ACT and years 8–10 in Qld, SA, WA and NT.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996

Table 7. Full-time primary Indigenous students, by year and category of school (a), by State, 1996

	<i>Pre Yr 1</i>	<i>Yr 1</i>	<i>Yr 2</i>	<i>Yr 3</i>	<i>Yr 4</i>	<i>Yr 5</i>	<i>Yr 6</i>	<i>Yr 7</i>	<i>Ungraded</i>	<i>Total</i>
New South Wales										
Government	2,437	2,392	2,293	2,149	2,044	1,916	1,980	n.a.	573	15,784
Non-government	227	245	198	179	179	174	161	n.a.	4	1,367
All schools	2,664	2,637	2,491	2,328	2,223	2,090	2,141	n.a.	577	17,151
Victoria										
Government	458	424	468	358	343	361	375	n.a.	16	2,803
Non-government	24	18	23	27	19	15	24	n.a.	6	156
All schools	482	442	491	385	362	376	399	n.a.	22	2,959
Queensland										
Government	n.a.	2,638	2,433	2,186	2,053	2,057	2,079	2,048	159	15,653
Non-government	n.a.	292	249	221	212	215	228	170	18	1,605
All schools	n.a.	2,930	2,682	2,407	2,265	2,272	2,307	2,218	177	17,258
South Australia										
Government	599	516	525	484	496	450	459	463	34	4,026
Non-government	40	49	40	31	39	28	30	24	0	281
All schools	639	565	565	515	535	478	489	487	34	4,307
Western Australia										
Government	n.a.	1,445	1,353	1,379	1,278	1,236	1,228	1,130	2	9,051
Non-government	n.a.	321	294	297	274	256	246	228	147	2,063
All schools	n.a.	1,766	1,647	1,676	1,552	1,492	1,474	1,358	149	11,114
Tasmania										
Government	320	289	305	266	216	270	319	n.a.	7	1,992
Non-government	50	38	34	50	33	46	46	n.a.	5	302
All schools	370	327	339	316	249	316	365	n.a.	12	2,294
Northern Territory										
Government	1,251	1,251	1,089	1,088	1,039	886	761	695	138	8,198
Non-government	114	143	92	124	105	112	116	83	233	1,122
All schools	1,365	1,394	1,181	1,212	1,144	998	877	778	371	9,320
Australian Capital Territory										
Government	58	54	56	47	54	51	57	n.a.	5	382
Non-government	7	11	6	11	11	17	9	n.a.	0	72
All schools	65	65	62	58	65	68	66	n.a.	5	454
Australia										
Government	5,123	9,009	8,522	7,957	7,523	7,227	7,258	4,336	934	57,889
Non-government	462	1,117	936	940	872	863	860	505	413	6,968
All schools	5,585	10,126	9,458	8,897	8,395	8,090	8,118	4,841	1,347	64,857

n.a. not applicable.

(a) As from 1990 students in special schools have been allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of age – primary if 12 years of age or under and secondary if over 12.

Source: MCEETYA, *National Schools Statistics Collection, 1996*

As well as reporting the number of full-time students in 1996 in total and also by sector, by level, and by State, Table 6 provides a perspective on the gender balance of Australia's school students. 50.9 per cent of full-time students in schools in 1996 were male (compared with 49.7 per cent of the total resident population). Gender relativity was not maintained across all levels and providers of schooling. For example:

- male students comprised 51.2 per cent of students attending government schools, but only 50.4 per cent of those attending non-government schools;
- 51.3 per cent of all primary students were males, compared with 50.3 per cent of secondary students; and

- although male students comprised 51.2 per cent of all junior secondary students, the situation was reversed at senior secondary, where only 48.2 per cent of full-time students were male. Male students at senior secondary were out-numbered by females in government, Catholic and independent schools.

The number of Indigenous students undertaking full-time schooling again increased in all States, in both government and non-government sectors and for both boys and girls. The increase was most notable in Victoria, where numbers grew by 21.8 per cent, while the growth was smallest in the Northern Territory, where the already large number of Indigenous students grew by only 2.1 per cent.

Table 8. Full-time secondary Indigenous students, by year and category of school (a), by State, 1996

	<i>Yr 7</i>	<i>Yr 8</i>	<i>Yr 9</i>	<i>Yr 10</i>	<i>Yr 11</i>	<i>Yr 12</i>	<i>Ungr.</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total primary & secondary</i>
New South Wales									
Government	1,854	1,821	1,630	1,238	660	411	513	8,127	23,911
Non-government	152	151	116	98	49	42	15	623	1,990
All schools	2,006	1,972	1,746	1,336	709	453	528	8,750	25,901
Victoria									
Government	349	327	271	202	145	76	27	1,397	4,200
Non-government	21	38	24	26	17	20	0	146	302
All schools	370	365	295	228	162	96	27	1,543	4,502
Queensland									
Government	n.a.	1,747	1,493	1,247	831	635	96	6,049	21,702
Non-government	n.a.	375	366	282	215	160	24	1,422	3,027
All schools	n.a.	2,122	1,859	1,529	1,046	785	120	7,471	24,729
South Australia									
Government	n.a.	408	325	222	117	53	43	1,168	5,194
Non-government	n.a.	25	28	21	13	9	1	97	378
All schools	n.a.	433	353	243	130	62	44	1,265	5,572
Western Australia									
Government	n.a.	1,033	946	810	356	137	17	3,299	12,350
Non-government	n.a.	211	190	149	119	32	60	761	2,824
All schools	n.a.	1,244	1,136	959	475	169	77	4,060	15,174
Tasmania									
Government	263	304	260	280	109	65	9	1,280	3,282
Non-government	44	37	44	27	14	3	0	169	471
All schools	307	341	304	307	123	68	9	1,459	3,753
Northern Territory									
Government	n.a.	266	246	171	97	59	1,086	1,925	10,123
Non-government	n.a.	321	175	122	79	18	373	1,088	2,210
All schools	n.a.	587	421	293	176	77	1,459	3,013	12,333
Australian Capital Territory									
Government	49	39	32	23	28	17	4	192	574
Non-government	10	17	6	14	6	4	0	57	129
All schools	59	56	38	37	34	21	4	249	703
Australia									
Government	2,515	5,945	5,203	4,193	2,343	1,453	1,795	23,447	81,336
Non-government	227	1,175	949	739	512	288	473	4,363	11,331
All schools	2,742	7,120	6,152	4,932	2,855	1,741	2,268	27,810	92,667

n.a. not applicable.

(a) As from 1990 students in special schools have been allocated to either primary or secondary education on the basis of age – primary if 12 years of age or under and secondary if over 12.

Source: MCEETYA, *National Schools Statistics Collection, 1996*

Information in Tables 6, 7 and 8 provides an overview of the participation of Indigenous students in schooling. For example:

- Indigenous students comprised 2.9 per cent of total students in 1996;
- the number of Indigenous students increased by 6.2 per cent from 1995 to 1996;
- 87.8 per cent of all students in this population attended government schools in 1996, where they comprised 3.7 per cent of all students;
- the number of Indigenous students attending government schools increased by 4,936 (6.5 per cent) while the number attending non-government schools grew by 490 students (4.5 per cent) over the year;
- Indigenous students comprised 1.2 per cent of students in non-government schools;
- primary numbers grew at a faster rate (6.5 per cent) than secondary numbers (5.6 per cent);
- 70.0 per cent of Indigenous students were undertaking primary schooling (up from 69.8 per cent in 1995 and

Table 9. Number of full-time students, actual and projected (a), by level of education and category of school, Australia, selected years ('000 as at July each year)

Year	Primary (b) (c)			Secondary (c)			Total		
	Govt	Non-govt	Total (d)	Govt	Non-govt	Total (d)	Govt	Non-govt	Total (d)
1981	1,485	386	1,871	814	302	1,116	2,299	688	2,987
1986	1,290	410	1,700	918	384	1,301	2,208	794	3,001
1990	1,323	441	1,763	871	407	1,278	2,193	848	3,042
1991	1,339	448	1,787	879	410	1,289	2,217	858	3,075
1992	1,352	453	1,804	882	412	1,295	2,234	865	3,099
1993	1,359	457	1,816	869	414	1,282	2,228	870	3,098
1994	1,361	465	1,826	854	419	1,274	2,215	884	3,099
1995	1,361	472	1,834	847	429	1,276	2,208	901	3,110
1996	1,367	481	1,848	854	441	1,295	2,222	921	3,143
1997	1,372	488	1,860	862	452	1,315	2,234	940	3,175
1998	1,377	495	1,872	867	462	1,329	2,244	957	3,202
1999	1,382	502	1,883	869	470	1,339	2,251	972	3,222
2000	1,388	507	1,896	868	476	1,344	2,256	984	3,240
2001	1,389	510	1,899	868	482	1,351	2,257	993	3,250
2002	1,395	513	1,908	870	490	1,360	2,265	1,004	3,269
2003	1,398	514	1,912	875	501	1,376	2,273	1,015	3,288
2004	1,403	516	1,918	883	510	1,394	2,286	1,026	3,312
2005	1,408	517	1,925	885	518	1,403	2,293	1,035	3,328
2006	1,414	519	1,933	891	524	1,416	2,305	1,043	3,349

(a) The projections in this table are based on simple grade progression rates for 1995/96. They do not reflect the other factors which influence student numbers and the distribution of students between government and non-government schools: changes in education and youth policy; changes in government policy in areas such as immigration; and changing social and economic conditions.

(b) Prior to 1984 ungraded students were classified as primary students.

(c) From 1984 students in special schools have been allocated to either primary or secondary education.

(d) Components may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Commonwealth DEETYA

directly comparable with the 70.5 per cent applicable to the total student population);

- the number of Indigenous students undertaking studies at year 11 or year 12 fell by 2.3 per cent from 1995 to 1996;
- 50.8 per cent of the Indigenous students attending government schools were boys, while only 49.3 per cent of those attending non-government schools were boys;
- in both government and non-government sectors, boys comprised a larger percentage of the population of Indigenous students at primary level than was the case at secondary level; and
- boys comprised 51.0 per cent of Indigenous students at primary level, 50.3 per cent of those in junior secondary years and 46.8 per cent of those in senior secondary.

Table 9 presents a valuable historical perspective of the changing number of students in Australia, as well as a view

of the future. In particular, it makes clear the differing enrolment trends in the government and non-government school sectors. In terms of primary enrolments, for example, it indicates that:

- a fall in the number of students in government primary schools between 1981 and 1986, averaging 2.6 per cent per annum, occurred alongside a period of growth in non-government primary schools, averaging 1.2 per cent per annum;
- during the period 1986 to 1996, government primary school enrolments increased every year (averaging 0.6 per cent growth per annum), while the continuing growth in non-government primary schools averaged 1.7 per cent per annum; and
- while enrolments are projected to increase in both sectors between 1996 and 2006, the rate of increase in the non-government sector is expected to be significantly greater than that in the government sector.

In terms of secondary enrolments, differences are again evident between the government and non-government sectors, although the pattern is different from that of primary enrolments. For example:

- from 1981 to 1986 government sector secondary enrolments grew by a total of almost 12.8 per cent, or almost 2.6 per cent per annum, coinciding with an even faster growth in secondary enrolments in the non-government sector, which totalled 27.2 per cent over the period, or 5.4 per cent per annum;
- from 1986 to 1996, while government sector secondary enrolments did not show a consistent pattern of change, exhibiting short periods of growth as well as of decline, secondary enrolments in non-government schools grew each year, averaging 1.5 per cent growth per annum; and
- as with primary enrolments, secondary enrolments in both sectors are projected to grow between 1996 and 2006, with the rate of increase in the non-government sector again expected to be significantly greater than that in the government schools sector.

Notable information provided in Table 9 includes the growth of overall student numbers from 1995 to 1996, as well as the projected changes in the ten years until 2000. The table indicates, for example:

- the total number of full-time students in Australia in 1996 grew by almost 1.1 per cent over the 1995 total, well above the 0.8 per cent increase projected in 1995;
- from that increased base, the total number of students in Australian schools is expected to continue to grow by a total of 6.6 per cent by 2006, again achieving annual totals well above those predicted in 1995; and
- in moving towards that 2006 total, the number of students attending government schools is projected to increase by 3.7 per cent over the ten years, while the total number of students attending non-government schools is projected to increase by 13.2 per cent.

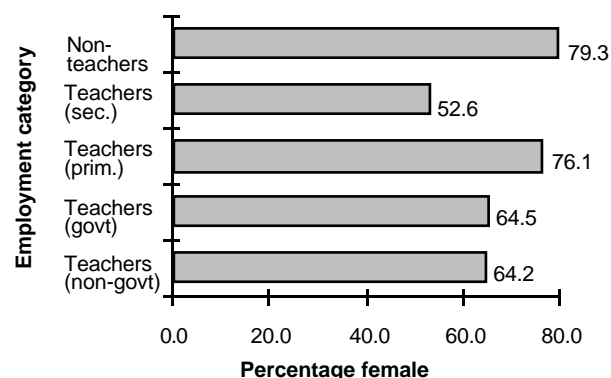
Teaching and non-teaching staff in Australia in 1996:

The number of teaching and non-teaching staff (in full-time equivalents) in both government and non-government schools increased in 1996. The total number of teachers increased by 1,572 (0.8 per cent) to 203,972. Total staff increased by 2,232 (0.9 per cent) to 257,825.

Full-time student/teaching staff ratios fell in government and non-government primary schools from 1995 to 1996. The secondary ratio was unchanged in non-government schools and increased marginally in government schools. Ratios for both primary and secondary were lower in government schools than in non-government schools.

76.1 per cent of all primary teachers were females (75.5 per cent in government schools and 78.2 per cent in non-government schools). In comparison, 52.6 per cent of secondary teachers were females (52.0 per cent in government schools and 53.8 per cent in non-government schools). 79.3 per cent of all non-teaching staff in 1996 were female (82.4 per cent in government schools and 72.8 per cent in non-government schools).

Figure 7. Percentage of female staff, by sector, level and function, Australia, 1996



Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0 *Schools, Australia, 1996*