

Chapter 14

COMMONWEALTH

Role of the Commonwealth in schooling

The Commonwealth's role in school education arises from its interest in pursuing the Government's broad national social and economic agenda and in improving the well-being of all Australians. The Commonwealth seeks to enhance the educational outcomes of all school students by providing support for education systems and schools through its funding programs, through policy development and through research and analysis of nationally significant educational issues.

In fulfilling its responsibilities in Australia's international relations in education, the Commonwealth seeks to establish educational links which take account of Australia's location in the Asia-Pacific region and which contribute to its international competitiveness through increased Australian participation in international studies and research projects.

The Commonwealth government's highest priority in 1998 was to improve the literacy and numeracy standards of all young Australians.

Other major Commonwealth priorities in 1998 were:

- the expansion of curriculum options in post-compulsory schooling to accommodate the interests and abilities of the full range of senior secondary students
- improvement in the educational outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students and Indigenous Australian students
- improved choice and diversity in schooling
- civics and citizenship education
- enterprise education
- drug education.

In 1998, the Commonwealth provided around \$4.13 billion in specific-purpose payments for schools. A further

\$23.2 million, under the Assistance for Isolated Children, and \$55.7 million, under ABSTUDY, was provided directly to individual school students and their families in income support. (AUSTUDY figures are not comparable for 1998 due to the cessation of AUSTUDY and the transferral of students to the Youth Allowance.)

The Commonwealth administers its policies and programs for schools and students through the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA). Student income support programs are administered by Centrelink, the Commonwealth authority which provides social security, income assistance and employment assistance services.

Initiatives and developments

In 1998, there were some important developments in Commonwealth policy and programs for schools, notably in the areas of the review of the national goals for schooling, the development of literacy benchmarks, the transition from school to work and the implementation of school drug education initiatives. There was also a major review of the funding mechanism for non-government schools.

Review of the National Goals for Schooling

The review of the 1989 Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling, which commenced in 1997, continued in 1998. As part of a national consultation process, the Commonwealth consulted with peak national education bodies, national interest groups, and other organisations and groups which have important links with the schools sector, including relevant Commonwealth departments and agencies.

As the review progressed, it became apparent that there would be advantages in developing draft targets related to

new national goals for schooling to provide a focus for increased effort towards their achievement. To this end, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) directed the National Goals Taskforce to examine any existing targets for schooling, identify areas for new targets and develop draft targets, with a view to producing, in due course, a consolidated statement of goals and targets for consideration by Commonwealth, State and Territory Schools Ministers. Through DETYA, the Commonwealth was actively involved in this process. Work on the development of targets will continue in 1999.

Literacy

Literacy for All: The Challenge for Australian Schools was released by the Commonwealth during 1998. As a comprehensive statement of Commonwealth literacy policies for schools it is a document of national significance.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Plan, as agreed by all education Ministers, is set out in *Literacy for All*. The elements of the plan are:

- assessment of all students by their teachers in the first years of schooling
- early intervention strategies for those students identified as having difficulty
- development of agreed benchmarks or standards for years 3, 5, 7 and 9/10 against which all children's achievement in these years can be measured
- progress towards national reporting on student achievement against the benchmarks commencing in 1999
- professional development for teachers to support the plan.

The Commonwealth was active in its support for the National Literacy and Numeracy goal, sub-goal and plan. Further details are provided elsewhere in this chapter under the headings 'Student Outcomes in Literacy' and 'Targeted Assistance'.

The Commonwealth was also active in the development of literacy and numeracy benchmarks during 1998.

Review of the Education Resources Index

During 1998, the Education Resources Index, the Commonwealth mechanism which assigns non-government schools and systems to one of twelve needs-based funding categories, was under review. Following the release of the

Schools Funding: Consultation Report (October 1997), several alternative funding models were investigated further.

In response to a strong degree of interest in an approach to schools funding based on the socioeconomic status (SES) of the school community, DETYA conducted a study in 1998 to examine the feasibility of this approach to provide a more equitable way of distributing recurrent funding for non-government schools. Over 90 per cent of the non-government school sector agreed to participate in the SES Simulation Project. This project is expected to report to the government in 1999.

Full Service Schools Programme

In January 1998, the government announced the Full Service Schools (FSS) Programme, which addresses the Commonwealth government's priority of reducing youth unemployment by encouraging young people under 18 (primarily 16 to 17 years) who are at risk of not completing year 12 or making a successful transition from school to further education, training or employment, to remain at or return to school to complete year 12.

The objectives of the FSS Programme are to:

- provide additional support to schools to develop innovative programs and services that address the specific needs of the target groups
- undertake national strategic projects which contribute to the pool of data, information and resources available on a national basis.

Commonwealth FSS funds will be used to complement State/Territory funds and programs for the target group. Throughout 1998, the Commonwealth, States and Territories Steering Committees, along with schools in the government, Catholic and independent sectors, have participated in the planning of programs/services in their regions.

A diverse range of State and Territory FSS projects will provide for gaps in existing educational provision and support services, and emphasise collaboration and partnerships between government, business and community services in particular regions.

Youth Allowance

In July 1998, the government introduced the Youth Allowance (YA), an income support payment for young Australians,

irrespective of whether they are in education, training, unemployed or sick. The government's aim is to:

- help young people make key decisions about education, training and employment by making income support arrangements simpler and more flexible
- encourage young people under 18 years of age to remain in study until they have the necessary skills and training to be competitive in the labour market.

The Department of Family and Community Services administers YA policy. Centrelink will deliver the YA and undertake eligibility screening and monitoring of continuing participation in education or job search activities.

In order to receive the new YA, from 1 January 1999, eligible people under 18 years of age who have not completed year 12 or equivalent are required to be in full-time education or training unless they are specifically exempted. The YA has removed disincentives to study caused by differences in income support arrangements for young people under 21 years of age, and for younger students creates a real incentive to complete year 12 or equivalent qualification before they look for work.

The FSS Programme aims to assist Youth Allowees who return to school to address the educational, social, behavioural and family issues which caused them to leave school before completing year 12. They are encouraged to re-engage and participate in education programs to complete year 12 and make a successful transition from school to further education, training or employment. The YA initiative also provides more assistance to young people who need to live away from home to study or look for work, especially those from rural/remote areas.

National School Drug Education Strategy

The education component of the National Illicit Drug Strategy includes approximately \$7.5 million over three years from 1998–99 for DETYA to develop and implement school drug education initiatives under the National School Drug Education Strategy.

The strategy will provide a broad statement of principles and strategic intent for Commonwealth initiatives and funding under the National Illicit Drug Strategy in the area of school drug education. States and Territories already have strategies in place for the delivery of school drug education in their jurisdictions and these will be complemented and enhanced by the National

School Drug Education Strategy. This strategy recognises that they have primary responsibility for school drug education.

A priority for the strategy is the recognition of and integration with existing school initiatives in the States and Territories. There will be ongoing consultation with State and Territory governments and non-government education authorities, as well as school principals, teachers, academics, health professionals, parents, relevant non-government organisations and the broader community. Collaboration across Commonwealth portfolios, particularly between health, education and law enforcement, will also be maintained.

Discovering Democracy kit

In November 1998, all government and non-government schools received a Discovering Democracy kit, containing detailed civics and citizenship education curriculum materials. Eighteen units of work have been developed from the program's four organising themes: 'Who rules?', 'Laws and rights', 'The Australian nation', and 'Citizens and public life'. They are designed for students from middle primary to year 10. Each kit consists of two books containing the units of work; a professional development manual; a CD-ROM; posters and cards; a video; and *Discovering Democracy – A Guide to Government and Law in Australia*, a teacher reference text.

The Simpson Prize

Eight secondary school students – one from each State and Territory – were named the inaugural winners of the Simpson Prize Essay Competition by the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp, in time for Remembrance Day, 11 November 1998.

The Simpson Prize, for year 9 students, is in honour of John Simpson Kirkpatrick, the man with the donkey, whose bravery and compassion epitomise the ANZAC spirit. The Commonwealth has created the Simpson Prize to encourage students to consider what ANZAC Day means to them and to their country.

The winning students and two teacher chaperones will travel to Turkey on 19–27 April 1999 to attend the dawn service on ANZAC Day and participate in other activities. The runners-up from each State and Territory will join the winners for a two-day forum in Canberra in February 1999 based at significant national institutions such as the Australian War Memorial and Parliament House.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – Indigenous Language Speaking Students (ESL–ILSS)

The ESL–ILSS initiative was introduced by the Commonwealth in 1998 in recognition of the importance of fluency in English to the participation of Indigenous students in the classroom and their subsequent acquisition of English literacy skills. The program is funded under the *Indigenous Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989*.

The program aims to assist Indigenous students commencing school to function and participate in a meaningful way in classroom activities. ESL–ILSS is targeted tightly to those students who have very limited exposure to, or use of, English in their communities and will be required to use the English language in a sustained manner when they commence school. A once-only Commonwealth grant of \$3,079 per eligible student is allocated to education authorities responsible for arranging the intensive English tuition.

In 1998, approximately 2,398 students were assisted under the program at a total cost of \$7.4 million.

Information technology in schools

The Commonwealth has continued to support initiatives aimed at improving quality and equity in the use of Information and Communications Technology in Australian schools through the Framework for Open Learning Programme (FOLP).

In the 1997–98 financial year, the Commonwealth government provided \$3.025 million under FOLP to support increased awareness and use of the Internet and the EdNA website by members of the education community. This included support for a range of teacher professional associations to build and strengthen their own electronic networks, and provide resources to enhance teacher professional development and student learning. Other important projects now underway include a project to provide surplus Commonwealth government computers and information technology equipment to schools, and an educational community access pilot project in rural areas and areas of socioeconomic disadvantage to ensure that all members of the educational community have access to, and understanding of, the uses of technology in education.

1998 focus areas

This section outlines Commonwealth activities in three of the five focus areas for this report.

Student outcomes in literacy

The Commonwealth's major priority of improving literacy was supported by a range of activities undertaken in 1998. These included the development of literacy plans, funding to improve the literacy and numeracy of students in the middle years of schooling, planning for a National Literacy Week, forums and conferences and a range of innovative research projects.

For the first time in 1998, States and Territories and non-government education authorities were required to provide a sector-wide strategic plan outlining how Commonwealth literacy funding for schools would be used to support the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan, particularly in schools with a high proportion of students educationally disadvantaged in terms of their literacy and numeracy outcomes. The plans generally demonstrated a strong commitment to the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan and provided valuable detail about the way education authorities use Commonwealth funding.

In addition to funding provided under the Commonwealth's Literacy and Numeracy Programme, funding of \$5 million over three years from the Quality Outcomes Programme was

approved for pilot projects aimed at improving the literacy and numeracy skills of those students in the middle years of school who have not developed the basic literacy and numeracy skills which they need to cope with the demands of the secondary school curriculum. Funding was approved for projects such as mapping of current intervention programs, promoting effective intervention teaching strategies, development of curriculum and intervention materials, teacher professional development and computer-assisted learning.

Planning commenced during 1998 for a National Literacy Week to be held in September 1999. This Commonwealth-initiated event has received full support from the States and Territories. It will be a collaborative national event that will complement and showcase the work being undertaken in Australian schools in the area of children's literacy and numeracy.

A forum for literacy professional associations was held during 1998 to assist them to identify and foster their role in supporting the National Literacy and Numeracy Plan. A

children's literacy researchers' conference was also held to examine directions for future research and professional development based on the outcomes of research funded under the Children's Literacy Programme (incorporated into the Commonwealth's Literacy and Numeracy Strategies Programme). The report of this conference will be available in 1999.

A number of projects funded under Grants for National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and Projects were completed during 1998. Appendix 2 provides relevant details of reports. A range of other innovative research projects commenced or continued during 1998. These projects are expected to be completed during 1999.

Citizenship education

A Commonwealth priority for schooling is to support civics and citizenship education, with the aim of ensuring that all students leaving school are prepared for informed and responsible participation in civic life. In May 1997, the Commonwealth announced details of Discovering Democracy, a national program of civics and citizenship activities. Over four years the Government has allocated \$18 million to raise the levels of civic knowledge of students, including \$10.6 million to be spent on curriculum materials.

The National Implementing Discovering Democracy Forum, held in September 1998, involved approximately 160 people from schools, teacher professional organisations, education authorities and other relevant organisations, as well as parents. It planned the implementation of the program in all States and Territories.

The 1998 Discovering Democracy awards were distributed at the National History Challenge presentation ceremony held at Parliament House on 5 November 1998. Thirteen students of Australian history from each of the eight States and Territories were presented with the first Discovering Democracy awards by the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Dr David Kemp. Students in years 5–12 who entered the competition were required to submit a research project on the theme 'Discovering democracy in our history'.

As noted earlier in this chapter, on 18 November 1998 Dr Kemp launched the major Discovering Democracy school materials kits. All primary and secondary schools received a kit of detailed curriculum materials.

Vocational education in schools

Vocational education and training (VET) in schools continued to develop and expand in 1998, with many of the programs developed over the past 12 months initiated and established. Highlights in 1998 included the following:

- 1,591 students undertook a part-time school-based New Apprenticeship
- Australian National Training Authority funding of \$20 million contributed to 117,406 students completing nationally accredited VET in Schools programs
- the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) Board approved funding of over \$16 million for at least 275 programs. The number of students in ASTF-supported projects grew from around 2,800 in 1995 to over 52,600 in 1998
- during 1998–1999, 93 projects were contracted under the Jobs Pathway Programme to some 25,000

eligible school leavers during 1998–99 to assist them in making the transition from school to work. Brokers have been contracted to provide coverage to over 1,500 secondary schools across Australia, and are working in partnership with schools, industry groups, employers and community organisations to assist school leavers. Of the 93 projects contracted by the Commonwealth in 1998–99, nine are provided by schools and/or school consortia across Australia.

The Commonwealth government's commitment to reforms to apprenticeships and traineeships, together with reforms in workplace legislation will ensure that school leavers are better prepared for further education, training or the workforce.

School-based pathways are an essential component of many New Apprenticeship arrangements. Under the government's apprenticeship reforms, school students are able to obtain skills and qualifications recognised by industry as part of their senior secondary schooling. Students are able to commence New Apprenticeships or undertake VET modules while undertaking other senior secondary studies. Part-time work and part-time study will become increasingly available to young people.

Enterprise education

Major activities in 1998 included:

- presentation of the inaugural Enterprising Communities awards, recognising the work of schools and their communities working together to contribute to the development of an enterprise culture in students. Twenty-seven schools across Australia were presented with awards for their exceptional projects
- continuation of the National Enterprise Days Initiative, with 107 schools participating in 1998 and 1999. The project promotes enterprising attributes in young people through partnerships between schools, small businesses and community organisations
- the launch of a video and CD-ROM package, *Making It Happen*, in March 1998. The package was distributed to all schools across Australia. It is designed to stimulate a learning approach through enterprise at all levels of schooling.

Provision for socioeconomically disadvantaged students

As described in the National Overview chapter, the Commonwealth provides for socioeconomically disadvantaged students under the Grants to Schools strand of the Literacy and Numeracy Programme. Furthermore, the National Literacy and Numeracy goal, sub-goal and the National Plan relate to *all* students, including socioeconomically disadvantaged students and students from other sub-groups.

Research and evaluation activity

During 1998, a number of program evaluations were undertaken or reported.

Preliminary results from the Asia Education Foundation activities evaluation indicated a 10 per cent increase in the number of schools involved in the Access Asia program, significant increases in the inclusion of Asian Studies into State and Territory curricula over the past decade, production of a range of learning and teaching materials during 1998 and

provision of professional development activities. Full results of the evaluation will be available during 1999.

There were also a number of research studies initiated or supported by the Commonwealth during 1998. The major piece of research work undertaken in-house over 1998 was the review of the Education Resources Index. Further details on this can be found earlier in this chapter.

Another study initiated in 1998 will examine the total research activity of education faculties in Australian universities to:

- describe and evaluate the impact of the outcomes of educational research on educational policy and administration and the practice of teaching and learning in schools
- evaluate the impact and performance of educational research in terms of the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia and competencies such as literacy and numeracy, and the effectiveness of the

discipline in supporting teaching and learning improvements.

Over the course of 1998, work progressed on both data collection and research in relation to the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) program. LSAY is a joint project of DETYA and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), and exists to provide the basis for continuing research into young people's participation in schooling, post-compulsory education and training, and the labour market. In 1998, almost 9000 young people (the Y95 cohort), most of whom were in their final year of school, were interviewed by telephone. They will be surveyed annually for some years to come, as they locate and pass along a range of pathways through the early post-school years.

In late 1998, another LSAY cohort, Y98, was selected, via a nationally representative sample of government and non-government schools. The 13,500 year 9 students who were selected, and who undertook tests of basic reading comprehension and numeracy, are representative of all year 9 students in Australia in 1998. They will complete a mail-out questionnaire in 1999, and be surveyed by phone for the first time in the second half of the year 2000. From 2000 onwards, data will be collected from two cohorts which are effectively three years apart, thus allowing for a measure of change between the groups, as well as tracking to see how outcomes vary within each group. This structure provides the basis for

long-term research into youth employment, education and training.

In December 1997, the States and Commonwealth formally agreed to Australia's participation in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This study will assess the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy skills of 15-year-old students starting in 2000, with further surveys to take place every three years thereafter. During 1998, a consortium headed by ACER won the international contract to implement PISA. ACER was also appointed as national project manager to administer the first PISA survey to a sample of Australian schools. The field trial for PISA will take place in mid-1999.

Besides Australia, the following countries are participating in PISA: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Commonwealth represents Australia on the board that manages PISA internationally.

Research projects which commenced and were supported by the Commonwealth through the Quality Outcomes Programme in 1998 included:

- Research on Innovation and Best Practice in Improving Student Learning Outcomes: this will document new and innovative approaches to the improvement of school performance, with a particular emphasis on the development of flexible structures and the flexible deployment of resources.
- Community Involvement in Schools: this is identifying innovative approaches to interaction/collaboration between

schools and the local community and will test the extent to which this has led to an improvement in student performance.

- Reporting on Performance of Schools and Achievements of Students: this is focussing on the needs and expectations of parents for information about student learning outcomes.

Commonwealth funding

In 1998, the Commonwealth provided around \$4.13 billion in specific-purpose payments for Australian schools. Of this amount, \$3.91 billion was provided via the States Grants legislation (see Table 14.1), the main items being \$3.25 billion in general recurrent grants, \$298 million in capital grants and \$363 million for targeted programs such as grants for literacy. Another \$86 million was provided under the Annual Appropriations for specific-purpose programs (see Table 14.5) – for example, vocational education in schools – run by national and other non-school organisations; \$132 million went to the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme; and \$23.2 million under the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme and \$55.7 million under ABSTUDY was provided as income support for school students.

Of the \$3.91 billion of grants for schools paid under the States Grants Act for 1998, the government sector received \$1.51 billion and the non-government sector \$2.39 billion, with a further \$4.3 million being allocated to joint national programs benefiting both sectors.

Table 14.1 shows how this was distributed to government and non-government authorities, by State, while Figure 14.1 shows the break-up of Commonwealth funding by program.

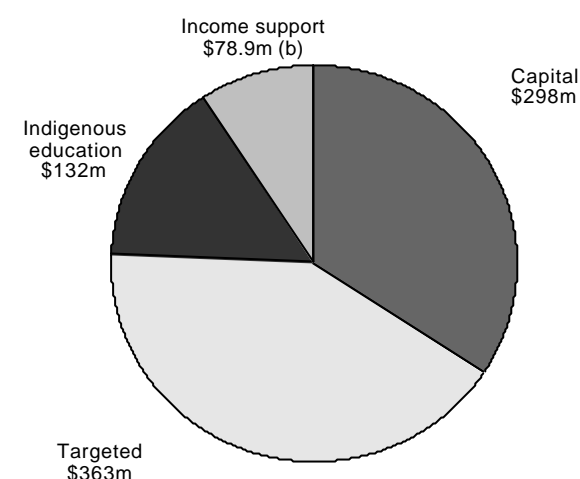
Table 14.1 Commonwealth grants for schools by program and category of school, States and Territories, 1998 (\$000) (a)

| <i>Program</i> | <i>NSW</i> | <i>Vic.</i> | <i>QLD</i> | <i>WA</i> | <i>SA</i> | <i>Tas.</i> | <i>ACT</i> | <i>NT</i> | <i>Australia</i> |
|---|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| <i>Government schools</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| General Recurrent | 357,711 | 245,811 | 201,059 | 111,451 | 80,195 | 30,708 | 18,629 | 13,090 | 1,058,654 |
| Grants to Schools for Literacy | 48,282 | 29,468 | 16,143 | 11,320 | 10,433 | 3,545 | 1,131 | 2,737 | 123,059 |
| Students with Disabilities | 2,675 | 1,389 | 997 | 631 | 1,081 | 283 | 146 | 341 | 7,543 |
| ESL – New Arrivals | 14,043 | 9,205 | 2,774 | 2,501 | 2,310 | 225 | 262 | 410 | 31,731 |
| Special Education General Support | 11,172 | 10,835 | 8,155 | 4,593 | 2,923 | 1,619 | 669 | 648 | 40,613 |
| Country Areas | 4,038 | 2,165 | 4,111 | 2,334 | 1,605 | 462 | 0 | 766 | 15,480 |
| NALSAS | 4,373 | 2,984 | 2,459 | 1,366 | 1,048 | 371 | 232 | 160 | 12,992 |
| Priority Languages Incentive | 923 | 905 | 298 | 139 | 196 | 114 | 98 | 7 | 2,678 |
| Community Languages | 3,294 | 2,230 | 609 | 351 | 466 | 25 | 101 | 38 | 7,114 |
| Capital | 70,005 | 50,129 | 41,335 | 21,786 | 17,209 | 6,086 | 3,875 | 2,692 | 213,117 |
| Total | 516,514 | 355,121 | 277,939 | 156,471 | 117,466 | 43,437 | 25,143 | 20,889 | 1,512,980 |
| <i>Non-government schools</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| General Recurrent (including STEA) | 719,765 | 584,356 | 394,667 | 211,543 | 162,884 | 46,712 | 48,753 | 19,705 | 2,188,385 |
| Grants to Schools for Literacy | 15,556 | 14,202 | 4,312 | 3,558 | 2,806 | 563 | 582 | 601 | 42,179 |
| Students with Disabilities | 2,773 | 2,119 | 818 | 412 | 906 | 181 | 175 | 38 | 7,423 |
| ESL – New Arrivals | 1,267 | 797 | 286 | 612 | 104 | 57 | 3 | 3 | 3,130 |
| <i>Special Education</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| General Support | 11,727 | 8,340 | 2,728 | 3,354 | 1,112 | 597 | 582 | 337 | 28,775 |
| Centre Support | 6,574 | 4,357 | 4,823 | 482 | 2,755 | 83 | 376 | 28 | 19,477 |
| Centre Support – Capital | 524 | 271 | 72 | 29 | 13 | 299 | 0 | 5 | 1,213 |
| Total Special Education | 18,825 | 12,967 | 7,623 | 3,865 | 3,880 | 978 | 957 | 370 | 49,465 |
| Country Areas | 788 | 432 | 523 | 258 | 118 | 47 | 0 | 86 | 2,252 |
| NALSAS | 1,720 | 1,465 | 873 | 477 | 382 | 123 | 121 | 38 | 5,200 |
| Priority Languages Incentive | 648 | 613 | 287 | 202 | 166 | 56 | 42 | 4 | 2,018 |
| Community Languages | 1,004 | 3,701 | 364 | 172 | 146 | 5 | 106 | 0 | 5,497 |
| Capital | 28,039 | 23,981 | 14,070 | 7,705 | 6,170 | 2,080 | 1,999 | 645 | 84,688 |
| Total | 790,386 | 644,632 | 423,822 | 228,803 | 177,563 | 50,802 | 52,739 | 21,490 | 2,390,236 |
| <i>Joint programs</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| National Literacy strategies and projects | 424 | 573 | 953 | 485 | 355 | 50 | 212 | 212 | 3,264 |
| NALSAS | 0 | 445 | 90 | 10 | 90 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 685 |
| Full Service Schools | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 400 |
| Total | 474 | 1,068 | 1,093 | 545 | 495 | 100 | 312 | 262 | 4,349 |
| <i>All programs</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 1,307,375 | 1,000,821 | 702,854 | 385,819 | 295,523 | 94,339 | 78,194 | 42,641 | 3,907,565 |

(a) 1998 program year expenditure for 1998 as at 30 June 1999.

Source: DETYA

Figure 14.1 Commonwealth expenditure on schools and students, by program, 1998 (a)

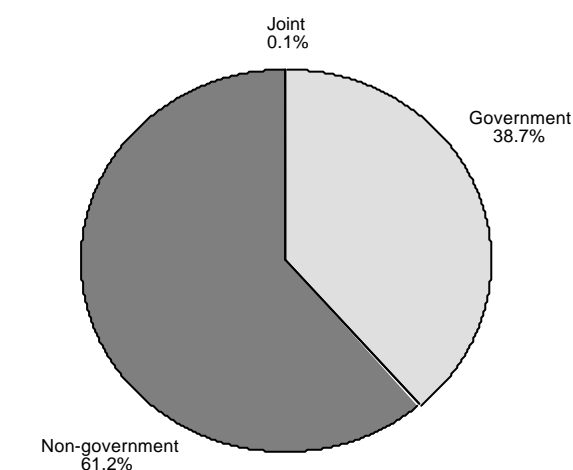


(a) Excludes programs funded under 1998–99 Annual Appropriations.

(b) Excludes Austudy/Youth Allowance.

Source: Commonwealth DETYA

Figure 14.2 Commonwealth grants for schools, by sector, 1998



Source: Commonwealth DETYA

General assistance

General recurrent grants

Commonwealth recurrent funding for government schools in the States and Territories is provided through block grants calculated according to the numbers of students at each level of schooling. The rates for government schools in 1998 were \$397 per primary school student and \$585 per secondary school student. Additional payments of \$82 per primary student and \$119 were available for students with disabilities.

Support for the recurrent costs of non-government schools is also provided on a per capita basis. Non-government schools are classified into one of 12 funding categories according to need. Category 1 schools receive the lowest level of per capita funding and Category 12 schools the highest. Additional recurrent funding is available for eligible students with disabilities in non-government schools, based on the difference between Category 12 and the school's funding category. Table 14.2 sets out grant levels for both government and non-government schools in 1993 and 1998.

As part of the 1996–97 Budget the Commonwealth honoured its undertaking to abolish the New Schools Policy. From 1 January 1997, the additional layer of assessment previously imposed was removed, and all non-government schools that had State or Territory recognition became eligible for Commonwealth general recurrent grants. Basic requirements, such as that the school be non-profit, have a body corporate as its approved authority and enter into a funding agreement with the Commonwealth, remained in place. Thirty-five applications for the funding of schools as new schools in 1998 were approved as at 31 December 1998.

Table 14.2 Commonwealth per capita grants to government and non-government schools by level of education and Commonwealth funding category, Australia, selected years (\$ estimated at final 1998 prices)

| | Primary | | Secondary | |
|----------------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | 1993 | 1998 | 1993 | 1998 |
| Government | 397 | 397 | 585 | 585 |
| Non-government | | | | |
| Category 1 | 525 | 525 | 832 | 832 |
| Category 2 | 700 | 700 | 1,103 | 1,103 |
| Category 3 | 875 | 875 | 1,279 | 1,279 |
| Category 4 | 1,065 | 1,065 | 1,677 | 1,677 |
| Category 5 | 1,231 | 1,275 | 1,793 | 1,858 |
| Category 6 | 1,366 | 1,409 | 1,993 | 2,056 |
| Category 7 | 1,502 | 1,546 | 2,192 | 2,257 |
| Category 8 | 1,647 | 1,702 | 2,410 | 2,492 |
| Category 9 | 1,760 | 1,898 | 2,578 | 2,778 |
| Category 10 | 1,869 | 2,045 | 2,731 | 2,986 |
| Category 11 | 1,984 | 2,208 | 2,896 | 3,220 |
| Category 12 | 2,100 | 2,377 | 3,069 | 3,473 |

Source: DETYA

Table 14.3 Number of Commonwealth-funded non-government schools and students, by funding category and affiliation, selected years

| | <i>Schools</i> | | | <i>Students</i> | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | <i>1994</i> | <i>1996</i> | <i>1998</i> | <i>1994</i> | <i>1996</i> | <i>1998</i> |
| Category 1 | 50 | 61 | 62 | 45,887 | 54,984 | 54,349 |
| Category 2 | 27 | 36 | 36 | 22,341 | 30,356 | 32,106 |
| Category 3 | 91 | 99 | 96 | 52,935 | 57,362 | 57,049 |
| Category 4 | 21 | 16 | 15 | 6,003 | 5,444 | 4,862 |
| Category 5 | 38 | 28 | 25 | 7,577 | 7,721 | 7,223 |
| Category 6 | 99 | 118 | 74 | 23,753 | 29,800 | 24,896 |
| Category 7 | 35 | 48 | 56 | 8,967 | 10,449 | 12,260 |
| Category 8 | 154 | 154 | 174 | 35,497 | 37,631 | 39,976 |
| Category 9 | 95 | 98 | 122 | 42,716 | 40,350 | 49,934 |
| Category 10 (c) | 1,578 | 1,593 | 241 | 531,740 | 560,797 | 104,670 |
| Category 11 (c) | 180 | 174 | 1,606 | 69,227 | 71,256 | 560,505 |
| Category 12 | 38 | 41 | 74 | 8,364 | 9,804 | 12,551 |
| Other (a) | 49 | 0 | 0 | 25,302 | 0 | 0 |
| Total(b) | 2,455 | 2,466 | 2,581 | 880,308 | 915,952 | 960,382 |
| <i>Systemic schools</i> | | | | | | |
| Catholic | 1,536 | 1,557 | 1,558 | 501,169 | 536,252 | 549,416 |
| Independent | 124 | 156 | 166 | 23,903 | 35,510 | 45,782 |
| Sub-total | 1,660 | 1,713 | 1,724 | 531,072 | 571,761 | 595,198 |
| <i>Non-systemic schools</i> | | | | | | |
| Catholic | 156 | 128 | 131 | 97,770 | 82,192 | 84,603 |
| Independent | 639 | 625 | 726 | 251,466 | 261,999 | 280,581 |
| Sub-total | 795 | 753 | 857 | 349,237 | 344,191 | 365,184 |
| Total(b) | 2,455 | 2,466 | 2,581 | 880,308 | 915,952 | 960,382 |

(a) The category 'Other' refers to schools which were re-categorised into a lower funding category but which had their per student grants maintained in money terms each year until their revised funding category rate of grant reached the previous level of grant. For 1996 and 1998 these schools and students are shown against the funding category to which the school is moving.

(b) Where figures have been rounded discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

(c) The substantial shift from Category 10 to Category 11 schools occurred largely as a result of a 1997 review of the funding categories of Catholic systemic schools, excluding those in Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

Source: DETYA

Capital Grants Programme

The objectives of the Commonwealth's Capital Grants Programme are to seek to improve educational outcomes by assisting in the provision of school facilities, particularly in ways that contribute most to raising the overall level of educational achievement of Australian school students. More specifically the program seeks to provide and improve school capital infrastructure, particularly for the most educationally disadvantaged students. Attention is

given to refurbishment/upgrading of the infrastructure for existing students while providing for new students. In

implementing these objectives the aim is to pursue the Commonwealth's other priorities and objectives for schooling.

The Commonwealth allocated \$298 million in capital funding for Australian schools in 1998. This funding was made available through the General Element of the Capital Grants Programme in the form of block grants for

Table 14.4 Summary of Commonwealth capital expenditure, all schools, 1998 (\$m) (a)

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| New South Wales | 98.0 |
| Victoria | 74.1 |
| Queensland | 55.4 |
| Western Australia | 29.5 |
| South Australia | 23.4 |
| Tasmania | 8.2 |
| Northern Territory | 3.3 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 5.9 |
| Total | 297.8 |

(a) Does not include capital funding provided under the Special Education Non-government Capital support.

Source: DETYA

government and non-government schools to help improve educational outcomes for Australian students through the provision of better school facilities. Of the \$298 million provided in 1998, \$213 million funded 465 major and 1,130 minor projects at government schools and, in the non-government sector, \$85 million supported 365 school projects. A summary of Commonwealth capital funding is at Table 14.4.

Capital Grants – Summary of Accountability reports from the States

Government sector

The most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided in both primary and secondary schools were the upgrading and/or provision of new general-purpose classrooms, library facilities, technology facilities and staff administration facilities, and projects for the proper upkeep of capital infrastructure.

Funds were also used for the provision of technical work areas in secondary schools.

All projects in the Northern Territory electorate are subject to Indigenous employment and training opportunities. All such projects will be managed by their respective school councils.

Catholic sector

Of the projects funded by the Commonwealth and completed both physically and financially during 1998 in the Catholic sector, the most common types of work undertaken and the facilities provided were the construction or upgrading of

general learning areas, libraries and student amenities in primary and secondary schools; the construction or upgrading of specialist areas, for example science, music and materials technology in secondary schools; and the construction or upgrading of staff and administration areas in both primary and secondary schools.

Other projects completed in 1998 involved provision for information technology and laboratories, design and technical facilities, resource centres, environmental studies and catering and food technology and home economics.

Independent sector

Of projects completed in 1998 in the independent sector, the most common types of work undertaken and facilities provided were the construction of general classrooms in both primary and secondary schools, student and staff amenities, the construction of specialist learning facilities including art, science and technology for secondary levels and the construction, refurbishment and upgrade of library facilities.

Grants and Awards

The Commonwealth provides funding support to a number of organisations including Curriculum Corporation, the AEF, which promotes Asian Studies in Australian schools, and Language Australia. Language Australia has received core grant funding from the Commonwealth as seed funding to establish itself over a number of years. The contract ceased in 1998. Language Australia continues to be able to compete for project funds on issues of national importance.

Grants-in-Aid are provided under the Grants and Awards Programme to support the operation of key national educational research and representative organisations. In supporting these organisations the Commonwealth hopes to facilitate the flow of information about issues relating to school education into the community and, reciprocally, from the community into government; improve the quality of training and skills development in the community; and facilitate long-term research into issues surrounding education and schooling. In 1998, Grants-in-Aid funding was provided to the ACER, the Australian Council of State School Organisations, the Australian Parents' Council and the Isolated Children's Parents' Association.

Table 14.5 Commonwealth grants for schools, Annual**Appropriations, 1997–98 (\$000 actual expenditure)***Grants and Awards*

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Grants-in-Aid | 990 |
| Australian Students Prize | 1,002 |
| Curriculum Corporation | 137 |
| Language Australia | 968 |
| Asia Education Foundation | 1,134 |

Literacy

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Children's Literacy National Projects | 581 |
| National Literacy Survey | 220 |

Quality Outcomes

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Civics and Citizenship Education * | 4,634 |
| Quality Outcomes | 7,703 |

School to Work

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Enterprise Education in Schools | 1,252 |
| Vocational Education in Schools | 9,286 |

Indigenous Education

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Aboriginal Education Direct Assistance * | |
| – ATAS | 31,003 |
| – VEGAS | 8,352 |
| – ASSPA | 19,001 |
| Framework for Open Learning * | 2,993 |
| Total | 89,255 |

* Cross-sectoral programs – not all funding is provided in respect of school education.

Source: DETYA

Targeted assistance

The Commonwealth administers a number of programs and projects which support national-level priorities in school education, including those which aim at improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged young people. In 1998, these ranged from the Literacy and Numeracy Programme to programs of assistance to Indigenous students.

Literacy and Numeracy Programme

The Commonwealth contributes substantial funding under the Literacy and Numeracy Programme to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

The program has two funding strands:

- Grants to Schools to foster literacy and numeracy development for educationally disadvantaged students
- Grants for National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and Projects to support priority literacy research and national strategies.

Some key program developments are outlined below.

During 1998, Dr Kemp, Commonwealth Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, agreed to a program name change from the Literacy Programme to the Literacy and Numeracy Programme. This is to take effect from 1999 and will better reflect the purpose of the program and the importance of improving numeracy achievement levels in Australian schools.

The Commonwealth uses two mechanisms to allocate funds to government and non-government education authorities under the Grants to Schools strand of the Literacy and Numeracy Programme. These mechanisms include measures of socioeconomic disadvantage, home language and country of birth, and are based on Australian Bureau of Statistics national census data. During 1998, the Commonwealth updated these mechanisms from 1991 to 1996 census data.

The Commonwealth is committed to improving educational outcomes for all students. In 1998, the Commonwealth commissioned ACER to investigate options for outcomes-based funds allocation in relation to the Literacy and Numeracy Programme. A highly consultative approach was taken. The project report is expected to be available in 1999.

Languages

The Commonwealth supports expansion and improvement of the learning of languages other than English through financial assistance for ten Priority languages and of Community languages, and promotes Asian languages and studies through its funding of the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools (NALSAS) strategy.

Special Learning Needs Programme

The Commonwealth seeks to improve the educational participation and outcomes of young people with special learning needs through the provision of assistance targeted at schools. The Commonwealth Special Learning Needs Programme caters for students with disabilities, students arriving in Australia with little or no English and geographically isolated students.

Quality Outcomes Programme

The Quality Outcomes Programme provides funding for strategic projects which support the Commonwealth's objective of improving student learning outcomes in schools and its national leadership role in school education. Funding is provided for strategic and collaborative initiatives which

improve the quality of teaching and learning and promote national collaboration on curriculum and assessment and reporting outcomes.

School to Work Programme

The School to Work Programme, with funding of \$7.6 million in 1998–99, promotes effective and reliable pathways from schooling to employment for young people and supports the implementation of apprenticeship and traineeship reforms in schools.

Over \$3.8 million in 1997–98 and over \$2.6 million in 1998–99 has been allocated to the funding of 35 projects under the Strategic Component of the School to Work Programme to support the expansion of VET in schools. More than 18,000 students across Australia will gain job skills and qualifications from this funding. More than half of the projects involve years 9–12 students living in country regions. Some projects have been specifically designed to encourage students at risk of leaving school before completing year 12 to remain at school. Other projects involve the development of VET programs in schools for students living in rural and remote areas.

The State Component of the School to Work Programme, which provides support to education authorities to enable industry and VET sector personnel to participate in the delivery of VET in schools, has provided over \$5 million in 1998–1999 for this purpose.

Major enterprise activities in 1998 were the inaugural Enterprising Communities Awards, the National Enterprise Days initiative and the launch and distribution to all school of a video and CD-ROM awareness-raising package, *Making It Happen*.

Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme

The Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) is the Commonwealth's principal funding program targeted specifically at addressing the educational disadvantage of Indigenous people. It allocates funds to education providers in a number of sectors, including schools, for the purpose of improving the educational outcomes of Indigenous students in accordance with the goals of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy.

IESIP funding supplements mainstream Commonwealth, State and Territory education funding and is provided on a triennial basis through the *Aboriginal Education (Supplementary Assistance) Act 1989*.

The first year of the 1997–99 IESIP triennium, 1997, saw the introduction of new funding agreements between the Commonwealth and recipients under revised program administrative and funding arrangements.

Funds expended under IESIP for the calendar year 1998 totalled \$132 million. They were distributed to education providers in each State and Territory as outlined in Table 14.6.

Strategic Results Projects

Another element of IESIP is the Strategic Results Projects (SRP). In December 1997, the Commonwealth government launched a series of SRP designed to demonstrate that in specific sites across Australia, targeted groups of Indigenous students can meet or exceed non-Indigenous educational standards within a short period of time. The projects cover the preschool, school and VET sectors.

There are two types of SRP: capital and non-capital. For capital, the focus is on achieving improved access, attendance, retention and completions through improved educational facilities, teacher housing and student transport. For non-capital, the focus is on academic achievement in literacy and numeracy, and increasing access to vocational education in schools.

About \$36 million was provided for 1998: \$21.5 million for about 100 SRP capital projects and \$14.5 million for about 90 SRP non-capital projects.

Table 14.6 IESIP expenditure, payments to States and Territories, 1998 (\$m)

| State or Territory | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| New South Wales | 29.621 |
| Victoria | 5.850 |
| Queensland | 28.976 |
| South Australia | 11.450 |
| Western Australia | 25.652 |
| Tasmania | 2.947 |
| Northern Territory | 26.360 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 1.302 |
| Total | 132.158 |

Source: Commonwealth DETYA

Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme

The Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS) provides supplementary and other study assistance to Indigenous students in primary/secondary school, TAFE, university and formal training programs. Assistance is provided by making

qualified tutors available to Indigenous students who need additional assistance with their studies and funding Homework Centres where Indigenous students can complete homework and other assignments and receive assistance when needed.

Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Programme

Under the Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness Programme (ASSPA), funds are provided to preschool- and school-based parent committees to enable them to conduct preschool- and school-based activities which are designed to improve access, participation and outcomes for Indigenous preschool and school students and to involve Indigenous parents in educational decision-making. Funding is provided on a per capita basis.

Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme

Under the Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS), grants are provided to sponsoring organisations which conduct projects for Indigenous school students, their parents and Indigenous prisoners which provide them with information about their career and study options and which foster positive attitudes about participation in education.

Funding for Indigenous Education Direct Assistance Programmes, ATAS, ASSPA and VEGAS totalled \$58.5 million for the 1997–98 financial year.

Framework for Open Learning Programme

The Framework for Open Learning Programme aims to inform the education and training communities about developments in open learning approaches and of the options for achieving specific educational outcomes through the use of information and communications technology (ICT). Program funds are directed to a wide range of projects which support cost-effective, high-quality outcomes in all education sectors through ICT.

Income support

In 1998, AUSTUDY assisted needy students to complete their secondary education and continue on to further study. Generally, assistance was available to full-time students aged 16 years or over, although disadvantaged students, particularly

those without parental support because of, for example, homelessness, could receive assistance from the minimum school leaving age, commonly age 15.

ABSTUDY helped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to remain at school and go on to further studies. Students may be eligible for an income-tested living allowance and may also be eligible for supplementary benefits to encourage students to commence and remain in education. Assistance is generally available to full-time students aged 16 years or over, although secondary students who have to go away from home to attend school may be eligible for a living allowance. Secondary students who live at home may also be eligible for some income-tested supplementary benefits.

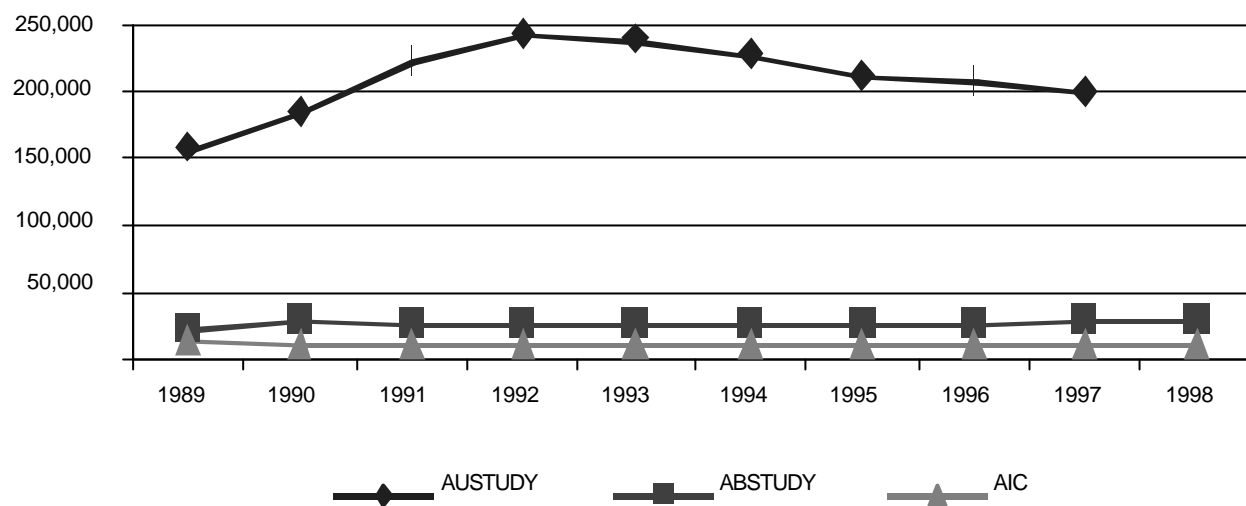
Since 1 July 1997, ABSTUDY has been delivered by Centrelink through a series of Student Service Centres. In line with these service provision changes and the replacement of the AUSTUDY scheme with the Youth Allowance, DETYA has conducted a review of the ABSTUDY scheme to determine the most effective delivery of student assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In December 1998, the government announced that ABSTUDY would be retained as a separate scheme but some changes to the living allowance and some supplementary benefits would take effect from 1 January 2000.

The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme helped the families of students who are unable to attend an appropriate school daily because of geographic isolation. An appropriate school is a government school which offers the student's level of study, or, if the student has special health-related or educational needs, one which provides access to the facilities, programs and/or environment required for those needs.

To qualify for assistance, students must be enrolled in full-time primary, secondary or, in limited cases, tertiary studies in Australia. In most cases, they must have reached the minimum primary school entry age and be under 19 years of age at the beginning of the year of study. Isolated students undertaking tertiary (eg TAFE) studies are eligible for AIC only until they turn 16.

Depending on the student's circumstances, AIC provides boarding, second home or distance education allowances or a pensioner Education Supplement, all of which are free of income and assets tests. An additional boarding allowance is available on an income-tested basis. In 1998, AIC assisted approximately 12,200 students at a cost of \$23.2 million.

Figure 14.3 School students who received Commonwealth income support, by type of assistance, 1989–98



Source: Commonwealth DETYA