

**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE****Group of National Experts on Evaluation and Assessment****Country Background Report for Australia****OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes**

This report was prepared by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations as an input to the OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes. The document was prepared in response to guidelines the OECD provided to all countries. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the national authority, the OECD or its member countries. This document is only available in PDF format and can also be downloaded from the project's website at www.oecd.org/edu/evaluationpolicy.

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Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes

COUNTRY BACKGROUND REPORT FOR AUSTRALIA

2010

Prepared by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations with the assistance of States and Territories, the National Catholic Education Commission and the Independent Schools Council of Australia

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List of Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
ACACA	Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities	NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
ACARA	Australian, Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority	NEA	National Education Agreement
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research	NSW	New South Wales
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	NT	Northern Territory
AEEYSOC	Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee	OEA	Office of Evaluation and Audit
AITSL	Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association	P21	Primary Schools for the 21st Century
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office	PD	Professional Development
ANR	<i>National Report on Schooling in Australia</i>	PIPS	Performance Indicators in Primary Schools
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework	PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
AST	Advanced Skilled Teachers	PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank	PRT	Provisionally Registered Teachers
BARS	Behaviour Anchor Rating Scales	QCAT	Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks
BER	Building the Education Revolution	QSA	Queensland Studies Authority
BSSS	Board of Senior Secondary Studies (ACT)	RoGS	<i>Report on Government Services</i>
CEO	Catholic Education Office (Sydney)	SA	South Australia
COAG	Council of Australian Governments	SAA	Schools Assistance Act
CRC	COAG Reform Council	SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Australian Government)	SACS	Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools
DET	Department of Education and Training	SCOPE	Science Connections Program
EOL	English Online Interview	SES	Socio-economic status
ERG	Expert Review Group	SIMR	Strategic Information Management and Research
ESSA	Essential Secondary Science Assessment	SMART	School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies	SPIF	School Performance Improvement Frameworks
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement	TARS	Teacher Assessment Review Schedule
IGA	Intergovernmental Agreement	TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
KLA	Key Learning Area	TQNP	Teacher Quality National Partnership
IPP	Industry Pathways Program	VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
LBOTE	Language Background Other than English	VET	Vocational Education and Training
LSAY	Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth	VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority
MCEECDYA	The Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs	WA	Western Australia
NAP	National Assessment Program		

Glossary

Commonwealth	The whole nation; a federation of states and territories with powers and responsibilities divided between a central government and smaller governments.
Director General	A senior civil servant in a government department, reporting only to the democratically-elected minister of that department.
Federal	A union of states (and territories) under a central government, distinct from the individual governments of the separate states.
Jurisdiction	The area of legal authority of each state and territory.
Non-government schools	Schools not run by the government (private schools).
School Board	A local board that oversees individual (usually independent, non-government) schools. Members may include the head of the parents and citizens organisation, the principal of the school, teachers and community members.
School Council	The school council is the group of people who govern the school. It is given the power to set the key directions for the school, and is a legal entity in its own right. A school council directly influences the quality of education that a school provides to its students.
Teacher registration/ accreditation	The process by which teachers are assessed in order to be legally allowed to teach in schools in Australia, whereby they have met prescribed educational qualifications.

Executive Summary

This report outlines the various frameworks for evaluation and assessment of schooling that exist in Australia. It covers topics such as system evaluation, school and student assessment practices and teacher evaluation. This report highlights the processes and connections involved in evaluation and assessment—from the collection of information and data (such as student assessment results, school self evaluation results, parent and teacher surveys and evaluations of school systems) through to the use of information and results to inform and improve school outcomes. Australia's Country Background Report also includes information on many new initiatives being undertaken in Australia, particularly at the national level.

Australia is a federal nation with primary responsibility for school education devolved to the eight state and territory governments. The Australian Government has a national focus on education and contributes funding for schooling while state and territory governments set the framework for the registration and operation of schools within their jurisdiction and manage government schools. Private schools in Australia, usually called non-government schools, are established and operate under the frameworks set by the state or territory they are in and conditions determined by governments. Non-government schools in Australia are either part of a system of schools or are completely independent.

Due to the federal nature of Australia's education system, the structure of school education and evaluation and assessment practices varies across the eight states and territories. Australia's Country Background Report details the commonalities and also the differences that exist across the jurisdictions. The report provides information on evaluation and assessment at a national level, at the system level (state, territory or non-government) and at the school level (including teacher appraisal and student assessment). Generally, the process for evaluation and assessment at each level includes common key elements such as setting standards or goals, planning and identifying policy priorities, interventions and support usually involving funding or changes to policy, student assessment and other data collection and performance analysis and reporting.

The National Framework and New Initiatives

At a national level in Australia, there are various consultative arrangements that exist, such as the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), to ensure that governments across the country can work together on shared priorities and agree to national initiatives. This provides the fabric for a national approach in areas such as education. Some of the most significant recent national developments which are detailed further in this report include:

- » COAG's agreement in late 2008 to a new framework for investment and reform of Australia's schools through an Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations and National Education Agreement, which has resulted in all governments agreeing to a common framework for reform in education. The new framework includes a set of aspirations, outcomes, progress measures and future policy directions to guide education reform across the country, including a strong focus on indigenous and also low socio-economic status students in order to lift outcomes for these groups.
- » MCEECDYA's agreement, also in late 2008, to the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* which outlines new national goals for schooling. This declaration identifies key strategies and initiatives Australian governments will undertake in the following eight inter-related areas in order to support the achievement of the educational goals:
 - developing stronger partnerships
 - supporting quality teaching and school leadership
 - strengthening early childhood education
 - enhancing middle years development
 - supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions
 - promoting world-class curriculum and assessment
 - improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds
 - strengthening accountability and transparency.

- » Significant changes to national education architecture including the establishment of two new agencies, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) which commenced operation in May 2009 and the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) which commenced operation in January 2010.
- » Agreement to develop and implement a national curriculum. (States and territories have previously set the curriculum and achievement standards for their state.) The Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history for kindergarten to Year 10 is to be implemented from 2011.
- » The introduction of National Literacy and Numeracy testing in 2008 for years 3, 5, 7, and 9 which replaced eight state/territory assessments which were previously used and equated to provide national literacy and numeracy assessment information. NAPLAN provides nationally comparable information about student performance and one of its most innovative features is the ability to place all students on a common scale for each area assessed.
- » The launch of the *My School* website in January 2010 which provides a profile for each school in Australia containing a range of information about the school, including performance and contextual information. *My School* provides the most comprehensive information on schools that Australia has ever made publicly available and ensures all governments, researchers and the community have access to the same, nationally comparable information. The primary aims of the site are to improve transparency and accountability and to assist with school improvement.

The above initiatives have played a key role in shaping the current national framework for evaluation and assessment in Australia.

System Evaluation

System-level evaluation in Australia occurs at both the national level and the state and territory or non-government system authority level. National system evaluation seeks to evaluate Australia's overall performance both internationally and also in an Australian context in terms of progress made towards the national goals for schooling. At the state, territory and non-government education system level, evaluation practices and procedures are developed and carried out by relevant authorities within the system, and are designed specifically for the system which they evaluate.

National reports on education play a key role in system evaluation as well as being a tool for accountability. Key national reports include the Council of Australian Governments Reform Council's report on the National Education Agreement; the National Report on Schooling produced to report on progress towards educational goals; and the *Report on Government Services* which covers a range of service areas and provides information on the effectiveness and efficiency of Australian Government and state and territory government services. These reports measure the performance of different systems using student assessment and other data and this information can then be used to inform policies and programs. Public reporting of the progress and performance of Australian schooling is an important part of the evaluation process and enables the broader public to evaluate the system and the performance of governments.

School Assessment

School-level assessment, evaluation and improvement practices are well established within Australia's schools. In general, all schools participate in annual self evaluation practices, utilising standard guides, templates and set frameworks which are usually developed by the relevant state or territory government or system authority. The performance of a school is usually evaluated using student assessment data, along with other sources such as surveys of communities and teachers. The current approach to school assessment achieves improvement and accountability through the continuous cycles of evaluation and intervention for those schools needing assistance. Assessment practices are in place in schools across Australia in order to identify best practice or high performing schools, alongside identifying those schools that require additional assistance in order to make improvements. All government schools across Australia take part in some form of school-level assessment and evaluation process annually as well as a long term strategic review.

School assessment results are usually published in the form of an annual report, which is made available to all stakeholders. School assessment results published in system annual reports and strategic plans are used by systems as important elements in their own evaluation process. Some states and territories also publish performance information at the school level for their schools. This information is made publicly available, although the format varies considerably between jurisdictions.

Teacher Appraisal

Australia recognises that teacher and leadership appraisal processes are an important tool for improving teaching and learning outcomes. At a national level, the Australian Government is committed to developing effective workforce planning and supporting structures to identify the quality of teaching performance and to reward quality teaching at the national level through the Smarter Schools—Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership agreement. This Partnership runs over five years and is designed to provide nationally significant and sustainable reforms to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and school leaders in schools.

Teacher appraisal processes vary across Australia depending on the jurisdiction or school concerned. Commonly, the process of teacher appraisal includes elements of performance planning, personal development planning, recognition of achievement, feedback and review, which enables teachers and their line area managers to identify areas for improvement and development opportunities. As part of the performance management process, a range of information may be used as a basis for discussion about performance, including student assessment data and classroom planning and evaluation information. This information may also be used more broadly to coordinate professional development within the school.

Operational responsibility for conducting performance management processes in schools is generally delegated to principals and school leaders. In systemic schools, while the actual appraisal process usually occurs between the teacher and their line manager or supervisor, the school Principal may be responsible for ensuring that levels of compliance are reported to the relevant government department or system authority.

Student Assessment

In Australia, there is a National Assessment Program (NAP) which consists of international and national sample assessments as well as a full cohort national literacy and numeracy assessment which operates in all schools (government and non-government). The results from the NAP provide the means by which the achievement and progress of Australian students, schools and systems can be measured and reported using nationally comparable data against national standards. The results are not used towards students' grades or entry into programs/courses but they provide valuable information which is used for policy analysis and to set policy directions.

There is additional student assessment in each state and territory designed to test a student's application of knowledge based on the relevant state or territory curriculum, in order to evaluate what the student has learned from the curriculum. Student assessment, based on goals and standards set in state and territory curricula, is often developed at the school level. It includes a wide range of tools, both informal and ongoing summative evaluation, as well as formative assessments, for students to demonstrate their understanding and use of the curriculum. The progress of students is assessed against specific curriculum standards for each state and territory, which define what students should know, understand and be able to do. Students in some states and territories participate in forms of testing at year 10, which in some states and territories, goes towards their School Certificate (or equivalent) to recognise the achievement of the end of compulsory schooling. All states and territories also have senior secondary completion assessments (often administered by an external body to the school), which can be used to inform a tertiary entrance ranking for all students across Australia that are interested in pursuing tertiary study.

Research and Academic Analysis

Australia frequently looks to international research in designing policies and programs, in addition to research and analysis undertaken within Australia. While there is some academic and policy research that has been undertaken by Australian researchers specifically on evaluation and assessment issues, it is important to note that many developments in evaluation and assessment in Australia that provide national cohesion and comparability are very recent. For example, up until recently, there has only been limited national data available (there was no national data at the school level until the *My School* website) for analysis by education research groups, think tanks or universities.

Two Australian research papers provided information used in the consideration and development of national school-level reporting policy. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned by the Australian Government to provide technical advice for governments in a report titled *'Reporting and Comparing School Performances'* (2008). The Commonwealth Treasury also produced a report, titled *'How much of the variation in literacy and numeracy can be explained by school performance?'* (2008). (These papers are discussed in paragraphs 103 and 105 respectively.)

It is expected that as a result of the number of significant policy initiatives and reforms that are being undertaken in areas relating to assessment and evaluation (which have received considerable media attention) and with transparency being a key commitment of governments (which is likely to result in increased reporting of information and data publicly), there will be an increasing interest in this area and more independent research undertaken. In fact, there are already some signs of this occurring with the release of two reports this year by Grattan Institute on measuring school performance, *'Measuring What Matters: Student Progress'* (see paragraph 108) and on teacher evaluation, *'What Teachers Want: Better teacher management'* (see paragraph 273).

Chapter 1: The School System

1. Australia's school system aims to provide quality education for all young people. Education equips young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to take advantage of opportunity and to face the challenges of this era with confidence. Schools play a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation's ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion. Schools share this responsibility with students, parents, carers, families, the community, business and other education and training providers.
2. The Australian Government is committed to building a world class education system to establish Australia as one of the most highly educated and skilled nations. This commitment recognises the central role that education plays in the economic and social strength of our nation. Education not only drives productivity but also empowers individuals to reach their full potential, and helps overcome disadvantage.

1.1 Australia's School System

3. Australia has a federal school system which includes six states and two territories. The Constitution of Australia allocates primary responsibility for school education to state and territory governments, all of which provide and manage government schools and support non-government schools. The Australian Government's involvement in schooling is facilitated through national consultative arrangements, such as the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) and through funding provided to schools (via government and non-government systems or directly to independent schools) which is usually attached to certain obligations or requirements that need to be met.
4. Australia has both public and private schools which are usually referred to as 'government' and 'non-government' schools. Government schools operate under the direct responsibility of the relevant state or territory Minister, while non-government schools are established and operate under conditions determined by government and state or territory registration authorities. Non-government schools can be part of a system of schools (systemic) or completely independent. Many non-government schools have some religious affiliation, most with the Catholic Church and as such, the non-government sector in Australia is often split into 'Catholic' and 'independent' for reporting purposes.
5. Up until recently, states and territories have been responsible for setting the curriculum and achievement standards for their state or territory, through Boards of Studies or relevant authorities. Curriculum content and achievement standards are mandated under state and territory regulations, usually in the form of Education Acts¹ which apply to all schools registered within each state or territory. This ensures both government and non-government schools are required to implement and follow the curriculum and standards. In 2008, all Australian education ministers agreed to the development of a national curriculum, which will be implemented from 2011 for kindergarten to Year 10 in English, mathematics, science and history. The senior secondary curriculum and the Australian curriculum for languages, geography and the arts are also under development for implementation at a later stage.

1 *Education Act 2004* (ACT): <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-17/current/pdf/2004-17.pdf>
Education Reform Act 1990 (NSW): <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+8+1990+cd+0+N>
Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Victoria): [http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubLawToday.nsf/a12f6f60fbd56800ca256de500201e54/6404E6596967CDE3CA25769C0010F354/\\$FILE/06-24a018.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubLawToday.nsf/a12f6f60fbd56800ca256de500201e54/6404E6596967CDE3CA25769C0010F354/$FILE/06-24a018.pdf)
Education Act 1994 (Tasmania): <http://www.srb.tas.gov.au/materials/act.htm>
School Education Act 1999 (WA): http://www.des.wa.gov.au/pages/non_gov_legislation.php
Education Act 2007 (NT): http://www.dcm.nt.gov.au/strong_service_delivery/supporting_government/current_northern_territory_legislation_database
Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Queensland): <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2006/06AC039.pdf>
Education Act 1972 (SA): <http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/EDUCATION%20ACT%201972/CURRENT/1972.154.UN.PDF>

6. School management in government schools varies across the states and territories, from very centralised to decentralised. For example, in New South Wales (NSW) government schools, school principals lead the design and implementation of school curriculum, assessment and teaching and learning programs within agreed curriculum frameworks, while key budget items are managed centrally to reflect the benefits of service-wide contractual arrangements and policies. On the other hand, in government schools in Victoria, school principals lead and manage the planning, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the education of all students in the school community through the deployment of financial and other resources provided by the department, school council and school community. For independent schools, school management responsibilities are entirely that of the School Board and principal.

Structure of Schooling across Australia

7. The structure of school education varies across the eight states and territories. Formal school education in Australia comprises of primary education and secondary education. Depending on the state or territory, primary school education consists of six to eight years followed by five to six years of secondary school education. There are two basic patterns in current formal schooling in Australia. These are:
 - » In NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), primary education comprises a pre-year 1 grade followed by years 1 to 6. In NSW and the ACT, pre-year 1 is called Kindergarten, whereas in Victoria and Tasmania it is called Preparatory and in the NT it is called Transition. Secondary education comprises years 7 to 12 (except in Tasmania, where secondary education comprises years 7 to 10 followed by post-compulsory years 11 and 12).
 - » In Queensland, South Australia (SA), and Western Australia (WA), primary education comprises a pre-year 1 grade followed by years 1 to 7. In Queensland pre-year 1 is called Preparatory, in SA it is called Reception, and in WA it is called Pre-Primary. Secondary education comprises years 8 to 12.
8. Currently there is no national consistency in school starting age with four different minimum school starting ages across Australia ranging from four years and five months to five years of age at the beginning of the (pre-year 1) school year. The minimum school starting age in Queensland, NT and WA is four years and six months; the minimum starting age for NSW is four years and five months while in Victoria and the ACT the starting age is four years and eight months; the minimum school starting age in SA and Tasmania is five years of age.
9. Up until December 2009, states and territories specified the compulsory age up to which students must stay at school and the age differed in different jurisdictions. In April 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to implement the National Youth Participation Requirement, a common requirement that applies to young people up to 17 years of age across all states and territories. Starting January 2010, participation in schooling is compulsory for young people up to year 10 after which they are required to participate in schooling or they must be in training or employment for at least 25 hours per week until 17 years of age.²
10. During 2009, 3.48 million students (including part-time students) attended school in 9,529 institutions across Australia (see Table 1). Of these, 2.29 million students attended 6,802 government schools and 1.19 million students attended 2,727 non-government schools. Of the non-government schools, 1,705 were classified as Catholic schools and 1,022 as independent.³

2 Further information can be found in the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) meeting communiqué of 30 April 2009 available on the web here: http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2009-04-30/docs/20090430_communique.pdf

3 ABS Schools Australia 2009—Preliminary Release: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4220.0>

Table 1: Number of Schools and Students by School Affiliation and State/Territory, 2009⁴

State		Government		Non-government		Total Schools		
				Independent	Catholic			
New South Wales	Schools	2,181		330	586	3,097		
	Students	737,549		136,225	239,442	1,113,216		
Victoria	Schools	1,575		216	488	2,279		
	Students	540,359		119,226	188,093	847,678		
Queensland	Schools	1,245		176	289	1,710		
	Students	490,691		105,413	128,322	724,426		
South Australia	Schools	588		97	102	787		
	Students	169,057		44,075	47,342	260,474		
Western Australia	Schools	771		138	158	1,067		
	Students	234,451		57,322	65,399	357,172		
Tasmania	Schools	207		30	37	274		
	Students	59,478		9,302	14,175	82,955		
Northern Territory	Schools	152		21	15	188		
	Students	28,718		5,361	4,739	38,818		
Australian Capital Territory	Schools	83		14	30	127		
	Students	34,336		8,255	17,327	59,918		
Australia	Schools	6,802	71.4%	1,022	10.7%	1,705	17.9%	9,529
	Students	2,294,639	65.8%	485,179	13.9%	704,839	20.2%	3,484,657

Schooling Qualifications⁵

- The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) outlines the hierarchy of qualifications in Australia. It is owned, supported and funded through the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment and provides a nationally recognised official qualification. After completing secondary schooling, most Australian students are awarded a senior secondary certificate of education, which certifies the completion of secondary education. Different names are used for the qualification in each state and territory, however it is a certification which assists employers, employees, professional associations, unions, curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and the wider public, including students, parents, and education and training bodies, to understand factors determining the level of the qualification.
- Vocational Education and Training⁶ (VET) is also available in some schools across Australia. VET programs undertaken by school students as part of a senior secondary certificate provide credit towards a nationally recognised VET qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework. The training that students receive reflects specific industry competency standards and is delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or by a school in partnership with a Registered Training Organisation. Both publicly and privately funded RTOs must meet national standards set by the Australian Quality Training Framework 2007. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research provides an annual report on VET in schools to MCEECDYA in order to monitor key performance measures.⁷

4 Source: ABS, Schools, Australia 2009 Cat # 4221.0, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4221.02009?OpenDocument>

5 Further information can be found here: http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AQF_Handbook_13-14.pdf

6 Further information on VET in schools can be found at: http://acaca.bos.nsw.edu.au/files/pdf/vet_report_2007.pdf http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/policy_file.pdf

7 The report can be found here: http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/NCVER_2008_VET_in_Schools_Report.pdf.

1.2 School Funding

13. Public funding for schooling in Australia is shared between levels of government. Private contributions, mainly in the form of fees from parents, support the operation of schools, particularly for non-government schools. In general, state and territory governments provide the majority of recurrent funding to government schools, and the Australian Government is the primary source of public funding for the non-government schooling sector.
14. In 2007–08, the Australian, state and territory government contributions to school education amounted to \$36.4 billion of which \$28.8 billion, or 79.0 per cent, was expended on government schools and \$7.6 billion, or 21.0 per cent, expended in non-government schools. For government schools, state and territory governments provided 91.4 per cent of total government recurrent expenditure in 2007–08 and the Australian Government provided 8.6 per cent. For non-government schools the Australian Government contributed 72.1 per cent of public recurrent expenditure and state and territories 27.9 per cent.⁸
15. For government schooling, the Australian Government provides supplementary funding through the National Education Agreement (NEA), which is part of a suite of intergovernmental financial agreements formed between the Commonwealth and states and territories to support a range of shared priorities such as in transport and health, in addition to schooling. Funding for non-government schools is appropriated separately through Commonwealth legislation, the *Schools Assistance Act 2008 (SAA)*, but has the same objectives, reporting and accountability arrangements which apply to government schools through the NEA. As part of inter-government financial arrangements, the Australian Government also provides additional funding through National Partnership arrangements which provide financial support to achieve specifically agreed outcomes, such as computers in schools, or in the form of reward payments for implementation of reforms. Other payments of a smaller scale are paid by the Australian Government to school communities, students and other organisations to support specific initiatives.
16. The new framework for financial relations established by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) contains clear roles and responsibilities for each level of government, sets outcomes, progress measures and targets accompanied by transparent accountability, reducing Australian Government prescriptions on service delivery by states and territories.
17. The Australian Government will conduct an open and transparent review of school funding arrangements which will commence in 2010 and conclude in 2011. The review is expected to be extensive and will inform government decisions for future school funding.⁹

1.3 National Initiatives and Approach

18. Although the states and territories have primary responsibility for delivering schooling, education is a key priority for the Australian Government. Through a range of reforms introduced since November 2007, the Government's focus is on ensuring that all young Australians acquire the knowledge and skills to enable them to reach their full potential. Improving educational outcomes for all young Australians is considered central to the nation's social and economic prosperity.
19. Since the beginning of 2008, the Australian Government has been working through COAG to develop a new framework for both investment and reform in Australian schools. The three major reform priorities set by the Australian Government are raising the quality of teaching in schools, ensuring all students are benefiting from schooling, especially in disadvantaged communities, and improving transparency and accountability of schools and school systems at all levels.

8 More information can be found in the Australian Government Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2010*: <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2010>

9 Further information on the Review of funding for Schooling, including the Terms of Reference, can be found here: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/Pages/FundingReview.aspx>

20. The Australian Government's 'Education Revolution' involves greater collaboration and a sharper focus on improving outcomes as students move through school. Reform involves collaboration across the government and non-government sectors of schooling and a partnership involving parents, children, students, employers and all levels of government.¹⁰

Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

21. COAG is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia. COAG comprises the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). COAG was established in 1992 and is chaired by the Prime Minister.
22. The role of COAG is to initiate, develop and monitor the implementation of policy reforms that are of national significance and which require cooperative action by Australian governments. Through COAG and its national productivity agenda, governments around Australia have committed to building a world-class education and training system in Australia and are working together to improve education and training in Australia. COAG recognises that ensuring all young people have the best possible start in life is vital to the well-being of families, communities and the nation as a whole. Through COAG, Australian governments have agreed to a shared policy framework to work towards COAG's educational targets and outcomes¹¹ and also to implement a number of reforms through the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on Federal Financial Relations and the NEA.

The Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA)

23. MCEECDYA is the principal forum for developing national priorities and strategies for schooling. Membership of the Council comprises state, territory, Australian Government and New Zealand Ministers with responsibility for the portfolios of school education, early childhood development and youth affairs, with Papua New Guinea, Norfolk Island and East Timor having observer status.
24. Functions of the Council include coordination of strategic policy at the national level, negotiation and development of national agreements on shared objectives and interests (including principles for Australian Government/state relations) in the Council's areas of responsibility, negotiations on scope and format of national reporting on areas of responsibility, sharing of information and collaborative use of resources towards agreed objectives and priorities, and coordination of communication with, and collaboration between, related national structures.
25. A group called the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC) which includes Chief Executives for education and early childhood education from each jurisdiction and the Australian Government, supports MCEECDYA and ensures ministerial priorities are implemented.

1.4 National Education Architecture—Ministerial and Statutory Bodies¹²

26. The following organisations and bodies have a direct relationship with MCEECDYA and COAG and are relevant to the review.

Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA)¹³

27. ACACA is the national body for the chief executives of the statutory bodies in the Australian states and territories and in New Zealand responsible for certificates of senior secondary education. ACACA provides a national means for monitoring and enhancing developments in senior secondary curriculum and certification.
28. ACACA's role is to promote curriculum, assessment and certification in schooling functions within the framework of the Commonwealth of Australia and its states and territories. ACACA provides advice on curriculum, assessment and certification matters, including matters of national concern for senior secondary education.

10 *Quality Education: The case for an Education Revolution in our Schools*: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Resources/Documents/Publications/QualityEducationEducationRevolutionWEB.pdf>

11 The Policy Framework for Participation and Productivity can be found here: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_081010_161454.aspx

12 A diagram of these can be found at: http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/MCEECDYA_ORGANISATION_CHART_February_2010.pdf

13 <http://acaca.bos.nsw.edu.au/>

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)¹⁴

29. In October 2008, following a review of the existing national collaborative structures, MCEECDYA decided to establish a new national body to execute its policy decisions in relation to curriculum, assessment and reporting functions. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was established as an independent statutory authority in December 2008.
30. Australian Education Ministers agreed to ACARA's responsibility for managing the creation and implementation of a national curriculum, national student assessment and reporting nationally on school education outcomes (including school and system performance). ACARA is jointly funded by the states and territories and the Australian Government and commenced operation in May 2009.
31. The establishment of ACARA brings together curriculum, assessment and reporting for the first time in Australia at the national level and aims to deliver greater effectiveness and reduce duplication of both resources and costs, and provide a central mechanism through which all Australian Governments can drive national education priorities.

Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)¹⁵

32. AITSL came into being on 1 January 2010 and provides national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership.
33. AITSL's role is to:
 - » develop and maintain rigorous national standards for teaching and school leadership
 - » implement an agreed system of national accreditation of teachers based on these standards
 - » administer annual prestigious national awards for teachers and school leaders
 - » undertake and engage with international research and innovative developments in best practice
 - » foster and drive high quality professional development for teachers and school leaders
 - » work collaboratively across jurisdictions and sectors
 - » engage with key professional bodies and stakeholders
 - » be the assessing authority under the Migration Regulations 1994 for the purposes of skilled migration to Australia as a school teacher
 - » continue the work of Teaching Australia¹⁶

1.5 Recent developments

34. There have been a number of recent changes in Australian education at the national level relevant to this review. Many of these are detailed in the following chapter. A number of states and territories have also experienced major recent changes or new policy developments in school education that are separate from the national level initiatives. Two such examples not discussed further in the report are; Tasmania and WA.

Tasmania

35. Tasmania has recently restructured the delivery of senior secondary schooling.¹⁷ From January 2009, post-year 10 education institutions will be streamed into:
 - » the Tasmanian Academy, which focuses on academic learning, with a curriculum and academic pathway for Year 11 and 12 students seeking university entrance;
 - » the Tasmanian Polytechnic, which focuses on practical learning, with a vocational pathway, supported by academic courses as well, for both Year 11/12 and mature-age students seeking employment outcomes or university articulation; and
 - » the Tasmanian Skills Institute which focuses on skills development for employees in enterprises, in line with their enterprise's skills needs.

14 <http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp>

15 The AITSL website can be accessed here: <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/aitsl/go>

16 Further information on Teaching Australia can be found here: <http://www.teachingaustralia.edu.au/ta/go>

17 <http://tomorrow.education.tas.gov.au/>

Western Australia

36. WA is also undergoing significant reform with the creation of independent public schools.¹⁸ These schools have more ownership of overall school direction, teacher selection, education programs, values/ethos and discipline, and behaviour management. Principals and staff will have more authority and freedom from central policies, procedures and compliances.

1.6 Useful Key Reference Documents

National Report on Schooling in Australia: <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/anr/>

Report on Government Services: <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs>

MCEECDYA: <http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/>

ABS Schools, Australia, 2009: <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4221.02009?OpenDocument>

My School: <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

¹⁸ <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou/detcms/navigation/unlock-your-schools-future/independent-public-schools/?oid=MultiPartArticle-id-4667472>

Chapter 2: The Framework for Evaluation and Assessment

37. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and outline evaluation and assessment in Australia. Evaluation and assessment mechanisms operate at different levels and provide a basis for measuring and reporting against the relative performance of schools, systems and students. Evaluation and assessment allows systems and schools to look at how effectively they deliver education to students in Australia, and more specifically, how well they are meeting broader strategic objectives. The process of evaluating and assessing also highlights strengths and weaknesses of systems and schools, which can help identify areas for improvement and for sharing best practice. Once these areas have been identified, schools and systems are then able to develop strategies for further improvement.

2.1 Current Approaches to Evaluation and Assessment in Australia

38. Evaluation and assessment are an important part of the school system in Australia. Due to the nature of Australia's federal system, the overarching framework for evaluation and assessment has not been explicitly designed as a whole system, however existing frameworks operating at different levels share common features and connections.
39. Components of evaluation and assessment frameworks at both the national and state and territory levels are generally outcomes focused, put students at the centre and are strongly influenced by the goal to ensure all Australian school students receive 'quality education'—that they acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy. The Australian Government has played a key role in setting the national agenda for evaluation and assessment, which is closely intertwined with relevant state and territory, system and school (in the case of non-government schools) frameworks. The framework exists in an environment where there is a growing trend of reporting and accountability for all governments and educational institutions.
40. Evaluation and assessment in Australia operates at three key levels: national; systemic (state, territory or non-government system); and school. A diagram illustrating the three levels can be found at Annex 1. Evaluation and assessment in Australia's schooling sector are used for the strategic management of education. They inform budgetary discussions, resource allocation decisions, curriculum, planning, reporting and performance management.
41. Although evaluation and assessment in Australia is specifically designed for the system or part of the system in which it operates, evaluation and assessment at all three levels generally includes key elements such as:
- » Standards and/or goal setting
 - Setting standards and strategic educational goals provides a basis for policy development and curriculum as well as measurement and reporting. It is these goals that sit at the centre and form the basis of the evaluation and assessment framework; school and system outcomes are evaluated and assessed against these goals to determine relative performance and further plan and identify policy priorities.
 - » Planning/Identifying policy priorities
 - This includes planning and identifying policy priorities as well as curriculum development. These are related to system standards and/or goals and are usually identified via self or external review and include evidence collected from international and national research and performance reporting.
 - » Intervention and support
 - This includes policy and program development usually with funding involved to target specific policy areas and needs.
 - » Student assessment and other data collection
 - Collecting data from a variety of sources enables the measurement of progress towards achievement of goals and standards at the system, school and student levels.

- » Performance analysis and reporting
 - Undertaking analysis and reporting on performance against standards and goals. This element of the framework provides an analytical tool to inform further goal setting and/or the planning and identification of further policy priorities as well as ensuring accountability.
42. External review is part of the framework for evaluation and assessment. External review is undertaken on occasion, at the national, system or school level to provide a more in depth analysis which informs strategic planning and policy development.
43. Each of the above mentioned elements informs the next part of the process, for example performance analysis, which is informed by student assessment and data collection, provides the basis for reporting. The general process for evaluation and assessment is summarised in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Process for Evaluation and Assessment



2.2 Evaluation and Assessment at the National Level

Figure 2: National-Level Assessment and Evaluation

National				
Strategic Goals	COAG National Productivity Agenda		Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals	
Planning/Policy Priorities, Intervention and Support	National Education Agreement (and the <i>Schools Assistance Act 2008</i>)			
	National Partnerships	National Curriculum	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan	
Outcome Measures	Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures			
Student Assessment	National Assessment Program			
Reporting	COAG Reform Council Reports	National Report on Schooling	<i>My School</i> Website	<i>Report on Government Services</i>

44. The specific key elements of the national level of the framework summarised in Figure 2 include the COAG National Productivity Agenda, and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* which provide the aspirations and goals for schooling in Australia; the National Education Agreement which provides funding and further articulates the goals and agreed outcomes for all stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities; and key policy priorities and standards are identified and supported through national initiatives such as the National Partnerships, the National Curriculum and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan.
45. The Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures outlines educational measures and standards agreed for measuring progress and performance against national goals and all of the framework elements at the national level are supported by the National Assessment Program (NAP) which is an ongoing program of sample and full cohort assessments, agreed by MCEECDYA,¹⁹ which collects data that is able to be disaggregated at all levels to provide important information for analysis and evaluation.
46. Progress and performance are reported nationally through the COAG Reform Council Report, the *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, the *Report on Government Services* and individual school reporting on the *My School* website.
47. At the national level, the newly established Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has a central role. ACARA is responsible for developing and implementing the National Curriculum and for implementing national assessments, and analysing and reporting on system and school performance through a national report on schooling (aimed at assessing progress towards achievement of the national goals agreed by Education Ministers) and individual school reporting on the *My School* website.

¹⁹ The use of NAP data for system evaluation is discussed further in Chapter 3, and the specifics of the NAP are discussed further in Chapter 6.

2.3 Strategic Goals

COAG National Productivity Agenda

48. On 26 March 2008,²⁰ COAG set out its national reform agenda with the goals to boost productivity, workforce participation and geographic mobility, and support wider objectives of better services for the community, social inclusion, closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage and environmental sustainability.²¹
49. In terms of education, COAG has set out a number of specific goals in the National Productivity Agenda.²² For the first time, all Australian governments agreed on a common framework for reform of education with COAG's endorsement of a comprehensive set of aspirations, outcomes, progress measures and future policy directions in the key areas of early childhood, schooling and skills and workforce development that will guide education systems across the nation. Those related to schooling are articulated through the National Education Agreement and are outlined in Table 2 below.

20 http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2008-03-26/index.cfm

21 Further details of these and other relevant activities are available in the 29 November 2008 COAG communiqué, which can be accessed at:
http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2008-11-29/docs/communique_20081129.rtf

22 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Documents/COAGForumPaper.pdf>

Table 2: Council of Australian Governments’ National Productivity Agenda—Schools

Participation and Productivity						
That all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy.						Aspirations
All children are engaged in and benefiting from schooling	Young people are meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving	Australian students excel by international standards	Schooling promotes the social inclusion and reduces the educational disadvantage of children, especially Indigenous children	Young people make a successful transition from school to work and further study		Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Proportion of children enrolled in and attending school » Literacy and numeracy achievement of Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in national testing » Proportion of students in top and bottom levels of performance in international testing (e.g. PISA, TIMSS) » Proportion of the 19 year old population having attained at least a Year 12 or equivalent or AQF Certificate II » Proportion of young people participating in post-school education or training six months after school » Proportion of 18–24 year olds engaged in full-time employment, education or training at or above Certificate level III 						Indicative Progress Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2020 » Halve the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade » At least halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020 						Coag Targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » All Year 9–12 students have access to a computer and teachers are trained appropriately » All secondary schools have access to Trades Training Centres delivering high quality industry-recognised training at Certificate III level » National Curriculum supports world-class teaching in all Australian schools from Kindergarten to Year 12, including literacy and numeracy standards » Asian Languages—Increase the number of qualified language teachers and develop national curriculum for advanced students 						Commonwealth Election Commitments
Improving teacher and school leader quality	High standards and expectations	Greater accountability and better directed resources	Modern, world class teaching and learning environments including ICT	Integrated strategies for low SES school communities	Boosting parental engagement	Policy Directions

Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians²³

50. The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, released on 5 December 2008, and agreed to by all Education Ministers through MCEECDYA, articulates future directions and aspirations for Australian schooling. It sets young Australians at the centre of the agenda for educational goals and provides a framework for developing curriculum and assessment. The *Melbourne Declaration* supersedes the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century (the Adelaide Declaration, agreed in 1999), which itself superseded the original National Goals for Schooling in Australia (Hobart Declaration, agreed in 1989).
51. The *Melbourne Declaration* has two overarching goals for schooling in Australia:
 - » Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence; and
 - » That all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens.
52. The national goals for schooling are supported by the MCEECDYA Four Year Plan 2009–2012,²⁴ which was endorsed by all Australian Education Ministers in March 2009. The plan is closely aligned with the COAG agreements. It outlines the key strategies and initiatives Australian governments will undertake in the following eight inter-related areas in order to support the achievement of the educational goals outlined in the *Melbourne Declaration*:
 - » developing stronger partnerships
 - » supporting quality teaching and school leadership
 - » strengthening early childhood education
 - » enhancing middle years development
 - » supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions
 - » promoting world-class curriculum and assessment
 - » improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds
 - » strengthening accountability and transparency.

2.4 Policy Priorities and Support

National Education Agreement and the Schools Assistance Act 2008

53. The National Education Agreement (NEA)²⁵, agreed by COAG in 2008, articulates the roles and responsibilities of the Australian Government and the states and territories. It does not impose input controls on how state and territory governments spend Australian Government funding, as has historically been the case. Instead it focuses on outcomes.
54. Under the NEA, state and territory governments are responsible for developing policy, delivering services, monitoring and reviewing performance of individual schools and regulating schools so as to work towards national objectives and achievement of outcomes compatible with local circumstances and priorities.
55. The NEA provides the vehicle through which the Australian Government provides funding to states and territories for government schools. Through this agreement, all Australian schools have an obligation to meet a common set of national school performance and reporting requirements.
56. The NEA includes a set of reporting requirements for all Australian schools focused on ensuring good reporting to government, parents and the community. There are five basic requirements:
 - » **National Testing**
All schools are required to participate in certain national assessments: NAPLAN (full cohort, annual literacy and numeracy testing); the triennial NAP sample studies in science, civics and citizenship, and information and communication technology; and the international assessments, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (for the first time in 2010/11).

23 More information, including the details of the specific goals, can be found on the web here: http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/melbourne_declaration,25979.html

24 The MCEECDYA Four Year Plan is available here: http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/action_plan,25966.html

25 The NEA can be accessed in full here: www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/index.cfm

» **National Reporting**

All schools and system authorities must participate in preparing national reports on the outcomes of schooling. This enables reporting to the community by Education Ministers on progress towards the National Goals for Schooling and in respect of the agreed COAG outcomes and performance measures.

» **(National) Individual School Information**

All schools are required to provide individual school information on the school's context, capacity (including school income) and outcomes, to enable nationally comparable information about each school to be made publicly available. This information is published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on the *My School*²⁶ website.

» **Reporting to Parents**

Requires that student reports to parents use plain language, give an accurate assessment of progress, and include assessment of achievement against national standards and relative to the student's peer group.

» **Publication of Information Relating to Schools (School Annual Reports)**

Aimed at parents and the community, schools must publish an annual report which includes, contextual information about the school; key outcomes; information on satisfaction; and income by funding source.

57. The *Schools Assistance Act 2008* (SAA) is the vehicle for ensuring the reporting requirements contained in the NEA (listed above) apply to non-government schools. The reporting requirements under the SAA are articulated in individual funding agreements with non-government schools and school systems. Under the NEA and SAA, all Australian schools have an obligation to meet this common set of national school performance and reporting requirements.
58. The performance of all governments in achieving mutually-agreed outcomes and supporting performance benchmarks is monitored, assessed and reported publicly on an annual basis by the independent COAG Reform Council.²⁷

National Partnerships²⁸

59. Through COAG all states and territories and the Australian Government have agreed to work together on key reform areas identified under the NEA. In addition to funding from the NEA, the Australian Government is providing significant additional funding through collaborative new National Partnerships with states and territories.
60. The following National Partnerships were announced in November 2008 or subsequently by COAG or have been deemed to be part of the National Partnerships:
- » Smarter Schools National Partnership for Literacy and Numeracy;
 - » Smarter Schools National Partnership for low SES Schools and Communities;
 - » Smarter Schools National Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality;
 - » National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions;
 - » Digital Education National Partnership;
 - » Trade Training Centres National Partnership; and
 - » Building the Education Revolution (part of the NP on the National Building and Jobs Plan).
61. Each state and territory has the option to decide whether to sign up to NPs. Bilateral agreements between the Australian Government and each jurisdiction have been developed and the detail of Implementation Plans under each of the 'Smarter Schools' NPs and the NP on Youth Attainment and Transitions has been negotiated. The Smarter Schools NPs and the NP on Youth Attainment and Transitions focus on innovative education reform at the school level, whereas the other NPs are more focused on supporting capital or infrastructure initiatives. These other three NPs are sometimes referred to as "service NPs".
62. The non-government school sector has been invited to participate in relevant NPs and states and territories have worked with non-government schools and system authorities to determine funding arrangements through bilateral agreements.

26 www.myschool.edu.au

27 The CRC reports can be found here: <http://www.coag.gov.au/crc/reports.cfm>

28 Further info can be found on the COAG website: http://www.coag.gov.au/intergov_agreements/federal_financial_relations/index.cfm and <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/default.aspx>

Smarter Schools National Partnerships

63. The Australian Government is investing \$2.5 billion through the three Smarter Schools National Partnerships.
 - a. Literacy and Numeracy NP: supports states and territories to implement evidence based practices that will deliver sustained improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, especially those who are most in need of support.
 - b. Improving Teacher Quality NP: is aimed at developing effective workforce planning and supporting structures to identify teaching performance and to reward quality teaching at the national level.
 - c. Low SES School Communities NP: aimed at supporting disadvantaged students, the NP assists low socio-economic status school communities to support education reform activities in up to 1500 low socio-economic status schools across the country. This funding will be matched by state and territory co-investment over the life of the partnership.
64. The National Partnerships represent a new approach to funding and working collaboratively across all school systems to deliver transformational change.
65. States and territories have agreed to share and collaborate on key reforms under the three Smarter Schools National Partnerships. There are six national projects receiving Australian Government funding to support this national collaboration:
 - » School performance improvement frameworks
 - » Innovative strategies for small and remote schools
 - » Parental engagement in schooling in low SES communities
 - » Extended service models in schools
 - » Literacy and numeracy diagnostic tools
 - » School leadership development strategies
66. One of the projects is sharing information on School Performance Improvement Frameworks (SPIF), which aims to foster collaboration between jurisdictions in supporting the implementation of the National Partnerships. In particular, the project aims to facilitate collaboration in the design and implementation of best possible approaches to enhancing performance in schools, within a range of differing circumstances and contexts.
67. The intended outcomes of the project are:
 - » systems and schools have a shared knowledge of best practice frameworks to support them to innovate, reform and drive improved school performance and;
 - » systems and schools have a better understanding of the professional learning and systemic support that will assist in implementing school performance and improvement frameworks.
68. This project is being led by Queensland, with participation by WA, NT, Victoria, SA and the ACT.

Australian Curriculum

69. States and territories agreed to develop and implement the Australian Curriculum as one of a number of priority reforms under the NEA.
70. In October 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to establish the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to oversee the development of a rigorous and world-class Australian Curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 beginning with the learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history. Phase two will involve development of national curriculum in geography, languages and the arts.
71. ACARA built on the significant preliminary work of the interim National Curriculum Board, which was responsible for developing the Australian Curriculum prior to ACARA's establishment. Its work to develop the Australian Curriculum is also being guided by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, agreed by all Australian education ministers in December 2008.
72. The new Australian Curriculum seeks to equip young Australians with the skills, knowledge and capabilities that will enable them to effectively engage with and prosper in society, compete in a globalised world and thrive in the information-rich workplaces of the future. Curriculum is influenced by educational goals and priorities and is the key vehicle through which the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn at different levels is articulated for teachers to provide quality teaching to students and to use to assess their progress.

73. The Australian Curriculum will provide two key elements; firstly, agreement on the curriculum content that all Australian students should be taught; and secondly, explicit advice on the achievement standards that all Australian students should be meeting, regardless of their circumstances, the type of school that they attend or the location of their school. ACARA's 2009 foundational paper, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, states that
- the curriculum should be based on the assumptions that all students can learn and that every student matters. It should set high standards and ensure that they apply to all young Australians while acknowledging the different rates at which students develop.²⁹
74. The curriculum content will specify what teachers are expected to teach and what students need to learn. It will involve an outline of knowledge, skills and understandings for each learning area at each year level. Achievement standards will describe the quality of learning (depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) expected of students at each year level from Kindergarten to Year 10. For each learning area (or strand of learning as necessary), the achievement standards will comprise of:
- » a description of the quality of learning expected; and
 - » a set of work samples that illustrate the described quality of learning.
75. At each year level from Kindergarten to Year 10, teachers will report students' achievements to parents using an A-E framework. A brief description will accompany each level of the reporting framework. These descriptions will be consistent across year levels and learning areas.
76. In 2009 with the release of ACARA's foundational paper, *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, shaping papers were also released for each of the phase one learning areas. These papers were the product of an extensive national consultation process, and incorporated the feedback that was received from key education stakeholders and the wider education community, including parents, teachers, principals, professional associations, academics, and representatives from the business and industry sector. The papers also helped to guide the teams that were established to draft the Australian Curriculum.
77. From 1 March to 23 May 2010, ACARA made available on its website³⁰ the draft Australian Curriculum documents from kindergarten to Year 10 in the first four learning areas for public consultation. ACARA's consultation strategy has involved online surveys, state and territory consultation activities, national consultation meetings, and intensive school-based engagement and trialling activities.
78. Consultation on the draft Australian Curriculum for the senior years in English, mathematics, science and history occurred from April to June 2010.
79. The implementation of the Australian Curriculum is likely to vary by learning areas and by states and territories depending on the extent of difference between the new Australian Curriculum and existing state and territory curricula. ACARA is working with state and territory education authorities to map the extent of change to assist them to develop their implementation plans.
80. The Australian curriculum from kindergarten to Year 10 in English, mathematics, science and history will be implemented by the states and territories from 2011. While there will be flexibility in commencing the implementation of the Australian Curriculum from kindergarten to Year 10 in English, mathematics, science and history depending on the specific issues to be addressed in each jurisdiction, all states and territories have committed to working towards implementation by 2013.
81. Timelines for the implementation of the senior secondary years' curriculum are still to be determined.

29 *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum*, Page 8, http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum.pdf

30 www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan

82. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan outlines how governments will work together to achieve the closing the gap targets (outcomes of Indigenous students compared with other Australian students) outlined in the COAG Productivity Agenda and NEA. Non-government education providers have agreed to join with governments to achieve these targets and progress actions outlined in this Plan. The Plan builds on the commitments by governments through COAG to introduce substantial structural and innovative reforms in early childhood education, schooling and youth as outlined in national partnership agreements between the Commonwealth and the states and territories. These reforms are designed to improve outcomes for all Australian students by increasing access to quality early childhood education, lifting attendance, improving literacy and numeracy achievement, addressing disadvantage in low socio-economic status school communities, improving teacher quality and increasing the number of young people attaining a Year 12 or equivalent qualification.
83. Agreed national reforms will work together with a range of other actions to make progress towards these targets between 2010 and 2014.
84. The Plan identifies national, jurisdictional and local actions in six priority domains including school attendance, that evidence shows will contribute to improved outcomes in Indigenous education. These priorities will guide effort over the next five years. Priority domains are:
 - » Readiness for school
 - » Engagement and connections
 - » Attendance
 - » Literacy and numeracy
 - » Leadership, quality teaching and workforce development
 - » Pathways to real post-school options.
85. The Action Plan has been developed by MCEECDYA. Education Ministers expect to COAG to approve the final draft of the plan in 2010.

The Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures³¹

86. In July 2002, MCEECDYA first agreed to a *Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures*. The framework sets out a basis for reporting progress towards the achievement of the educational goals by Australian school students, drawing on the agreed definitions of key performance measures.
87. Ministers responsible for school education agreed to report on progress towards the achievement of the educational goals in several priority areas, comparable by state and territory, and using a set of agreed key performance measures as the basis for reporting. The core of the framework is a schedule setting out key performance measures and an agreed assessment and reporting cycle.
88. The framework also includes national proficiency standards that have been agreed by Education Ministers and used for reporting. Australia's performance against the *Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures* is reported annually in the *National Report on Schooling in Australia (ANR)*.³²
89. With the aim of driving school improvement and enhanced outcomes for students, Ministers responsible for school education have agreed to report on progress towards the achievement of the Educational Goals in the following priority areas, comparable by state and territory, and using Key Performance Measures as the basis for reporting:
 - » literacy
 - » numeracy
 - » science
 - » civics and citizenship education
 - » information and communication technologies
 - » vocational education and training in schools
 - » participation and attainment.

31 The *Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures* (August 2008) is available online at: http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/PMRT_Measurement_Framework_National_KPMS.pdf.

32 The ANR is available online here: <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/mceetya/anr/>

90. The suite of key performance measures is reviewed annually in the context of MCEECDYA's expectation that measures will be few in number, strategic in orientation and adequately cover the priority areas outlined in the educational goals or required under the relevant legislation. From 2010, this review will be carried out by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

2.5 National Assessment Program (NAP)

91. The NAP is an ongoing program of assessments, agreed by MCEECDYA, to monitor progress towards the Educational Goals for Young Australians and to support ongoing evaluation of the national education system. The NAP encompasses all tests endorsed by MCEECDYA such as national full cohort literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN) which was first introduced in 2008 and three-yearly sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship and information and communication technology (ICT) literacy. Australia's participation in international assessments: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) are also part of the NAP. Australia will participate in Progress in International Reading Literacy Study for the first time in 2010/11 (however, at this stage, this assessment has not been adopted as part of the NAP).

2.6 National Reporting

COAG Reform Council (CRC)—CRC Report

92. The CRC is independent of individual governments and reports directly to COAG. Its current role includes:
- » monitoring, assessing and publicly reporting annually on the performance of the Australian Government and state and territory governments against the objectives, outcomes and targets specified in the six National Agreements, including the National Education Agreement
 - » reporting to COAG on the performance of governments under the National Partnerships, assessing whether predetermined milestones or performance benchmarks have been met before incentive payments to reward nationally significant reforms are made.
93. The CRC reports to COAG on:
- » the performance of the Australian Government and the state and territory governments in achieving the outcomes and performance benchmarks specified in National Agreements
 - » whether predetermined performance benchmarks have been achieved under National Partnerships
 - » the performance of the Commonwealth and the Basin States under five bilateral Water Management Partnerships under the Agreement on Murray-Darling Basin Reform
 - » the aggregate pace of activity in progressing COAG's agreed reform agenda; and
 - » the consistency of capital city strategic planning systems with the new national criteria.
94. The CRC role includes reporting to COAG on the performance of governments under various National Partnerships. There are two distinct tasks in relation to reporting on National Partnerships. For National Partnerships with reward payments, the CRC reports to COAG on an independent assessment of whether predetermined performance benchmarks have been achieved prior to reward payments being made. Secondly, as part of its reporting to COAG on National Agreements, the CRC undertakes 'an analytical overview of performance information for each National Agreement, and National Partnership to the extent that it supports the objectives in a National Agreement.'
95. Copies of recent reports submitted to COAG are publicly available on-line.³³ The CRC provides COAG with an annual report on the progress of the National Reform Agenda.

33 <http://www.coag.gov.au/crc/reports.cfm>

National Report on Schooling

96. The annual *National Report on Schooling in Australia* (ANR) has up until now been published by the MCEECDYA. The aim of the ANR is to report on progress towards Educational Goals agreed by Ministers by detailing the scope of schooling in Australia and describe the activities of the sector, monitor the effects and progress of policy initiatives, and detail the source, volume and direction of education finances.
97. The ANR is a compilation of data provided by state and federal education agencies, both through the finance and non-finance National Schools Statistics Collections, and from specialist work commissioned or delivered by MCEECDYA itself. Other sources include the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) vocational education data, and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) social surveys.
98. Annual ANR publications from 2000 onwards are available online from the *National Report on Schooling in Australia* home page of the MCEECDYA website. Note that MCEECDYA publishes ANR reports on their website progressively. The intention is to publish the complete ANR within twelve months following the reference year. Data are available for Australia, the states and territories, and some sub-state characteristics for selected items, via the MCEECDYA website.
99. From the 2009 school year, ACARA has been given responsibility for the national report on schooling.

National School-level Reporting—My School Website

100. In 2008, MCEECDYA agreed to create a national data collection on individual schools to support school evaluation, accountability and resource allocation. Data are held in a national data repository, housed in ACARA. Data for each school was made publicly available through a national website on 28 January 2010.
101. The national data repository will support Education Ministers and systems in regard to their evaluations of both system and school performance, ensuring schools are accountable to government and assisting in identifying what is working in schools across the country and directing resources to where they are most needed. The creation of this data repository will enable Education Ministers and systems to make informed decisions, based not only on the performance of their own schools/systems but in comparison to other schools/systems across the country. Best practices can also be identified and shared.
102. Significantly, this new data collection and reporting enables the Australian Government, for the first time, to have access to school-level data. It is also the first time that systems and schools have had access to data on other schools not part of their system. Previously, information has only been held at the system or school level and all public reporting has been aggregated to system level. For example, state government, Catholic, independent.
103. Through the *My School* website, profiles of every Australian school are published containing information relating to the following categories:
 - » Contextual—a school's student intake (population), that is, factors that contextualise student outcomes e.g. proportion of low socio-economic students, proportion of Indigenous students;
 - » Capacity—a school's capability e.g. school income, teacher workforce; and
 - » Outcomes—a school's outcomes e.g. literacy and numeracy test results, Year 12 attainment.
104. As part of the development of school-level reporting, independent expert advice was commissioned from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to provide technical expertise on the appropriate indicators. The ACER report, *Reporting and Comparing School Performances* (2008), provided technical advice and expertise on a number of contextual, capacity and outcomes indicators and their usefulness in evaluating school performance.³⁴
105. Salesforce, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' contracted call-centre, undertook a survey of parents of school-aged children in October 2008.³⁵ The survey was developed to enable the Australian Government to gain a broad understanding of parent attitudes to school transparency and reporting issues and collected responses from 1976 parents of school-aged children. 96.9 per cent of surveyed parents agreed that information about individual schools should be available to them as parents of a school-aged child and 83.2 per cent of surveyed parents also agreed that, generally, information about individual schools should be available to the public.

34 A copy of the ACER report is available here: http://research.acer.edu.au/ar_misc/8/.

35 http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/documents/ParentsAttitudestoInfoonSchoolsNOV08_doc.htm

106. An earlier paper, produced by The Commonwealth Treasury, titled '*How much of the variation in literacy and numeracy can be explained by school performance?*'³⁶ was produced while initial discussions on school-level reporting were being undertaken by governments in Australia. The report considered the difference in student performance from schools with similar characteristics, utilising information from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment and school-level reporting data from WA government schools.
107. *My School* provides the most comprehensive school information that Australia has ever had. It includes data on individual school performance and importantly, relevant contextual information about the school. For each school in Australia, it provides a national profile that contains a range of information about the school, including details about the type of school, student and staff numbers, student attendance rate, socio-economic background of the school student body, teaching resources, results from national literacy and numeracy tests, Year 12 attainment, and post-school destinations.
108. The Australian Government believes that the best way of ensuring an honest comprehensive public debate on school performances and Australia's education system in general is to ensure accurate, clear information is publicly available. Since its launch on 28 January 2010, the *My School* website has seen a substantial volume of traffic, indicating a significant interest by the community in the type of information it provides and sparking considerable and robust public debate. The community can now participate in the public debate about the future of education with the benefit of relevant comparable information on schools.
109. The Grattan Institute³⁷, an independent Australian think-tank, started some early analysis related to *My School*. They published a report in January 2010, '*Measuring What Matters: Student Progress*' which considers the issue of measuring school performance through a value-add approach. The Grattan Institute's research provides support for the direction of governments in reporting school performance with further recommendations for improvement when more data becomes available, such as gain/growth measurement strategies. Due to increased media attention and the recent availability of school performance information, more research is anticipated from other education research bodies in the future.
110. It has also been agreed that the *My School* site will include additional indicators about each school on the website (details are at Annex 2). The income available to each school by funding source will be published by the end of 2010 once data comparability issues have been resolved. ACARA is also working with education authorities to find a way that broader aspects of schooling can be reported at the school level. Ministers have already agreed to investigate the development of a nationally-comparable satisfaction survey of parents, teachers and students.
111. A key feature of school-level reporting is the ability of a user to compare a school with other 'statistically similar schools' across Australia, that is, schools with similar student populations based on socio economic statistics. The *My School* website uses a tailor-made index for the purpose of identifying schools serving similar student populations. The index is known as the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA). It places schools on a numerical scale by reference to their relative socio-educational advantage.
112. The index allows the comparison of school results in national literacy and numeracy testing with other schools that have students from similarly advantaged or disadvantaged backgrounds. As research has shown that student background is strongly related to performance it is reasonable to think about school outcomes in this way
113. For the first iteration of the *My School* website, the index was based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census Collection District (CCD) data. For the next iteration of the *My School* website in December 2010, Ministers have agreed to a revised approach to ICSEA that better measures the influence of family background on student results.³⁸ The new approach draws more extensively from data collected directly from parents, which ACARA analysis has shown produces improved predictability of outcomes in NAPLAN testing.

36 *Economic Roundup Issue 3, 2008* Andrew Leigh and Hector Thomposn <http://www.treasury.gov.au/documents/1421/HTML/docshell.asp?URL=05%20How%20much%20of%20the%20variation%20in%20Literacy%20and%20Numeracy%20can%20be%20explained%20by%20School%20Performance.htm>

37 Information and publications from The Grattan Institute can be found at <http://www.grattan.edu.au/programs/education.php>.

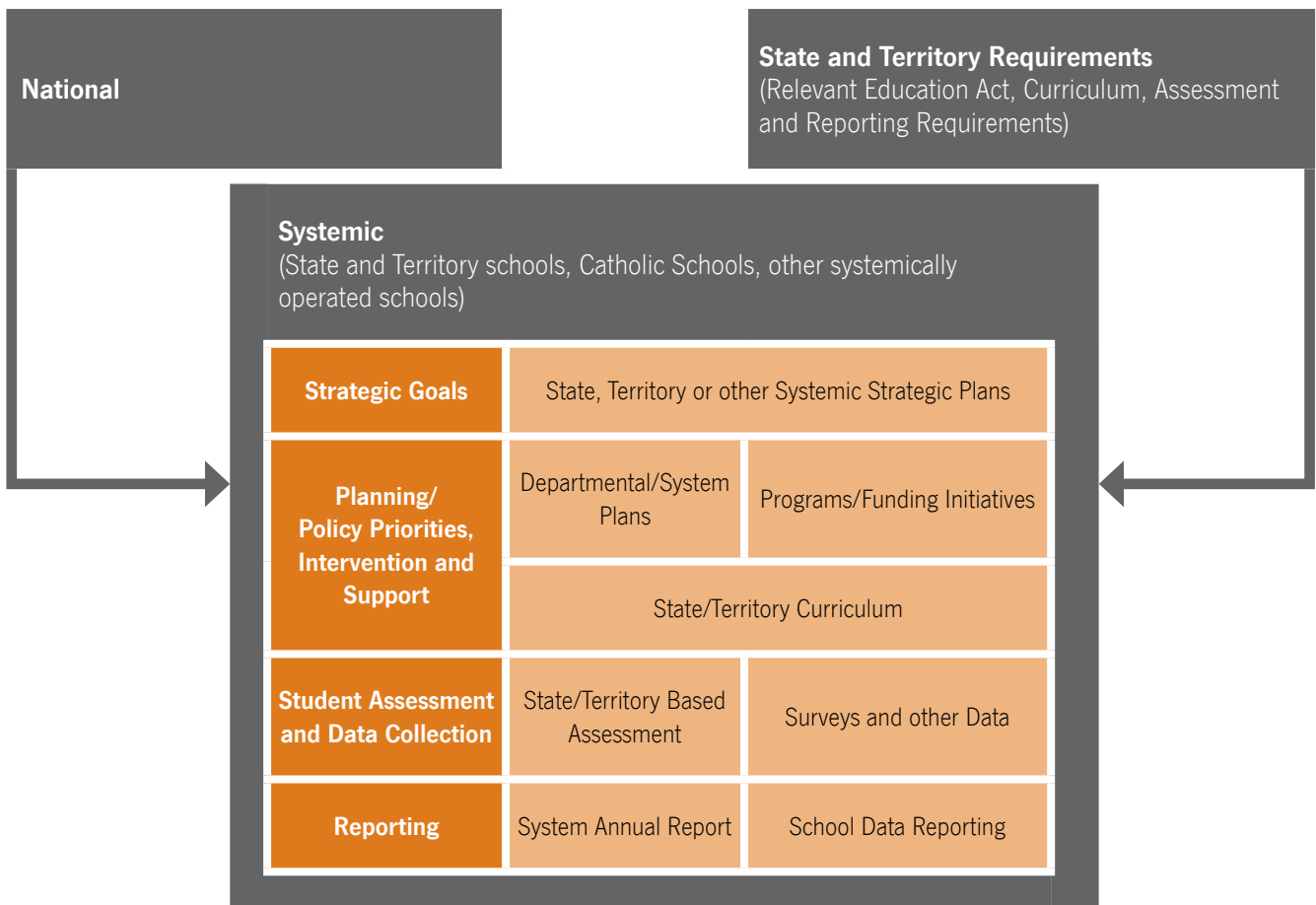
38 http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/C04_Communique_-_10_June_2010.pdf

Report on Government Services

114. The annual *Report on Government Services (RoGS)* is produced by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision through the Productivity Commission. The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government’s independent research and advisory body on a range of economic, social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of Australians. It details an agreed set of performance indicators and data for these indicators, for each jurisdiction (where possible). These indicators assist governments to assess the performance of the services provided in their jurisdiction.
115. The RoGS draws statistical data together to provide information, through key indicators, on the performance of specified government agencies and programs in delivering services to the Australian people. The report is used for strategic budget and policy planning and evaluation.
116. The six broad service areas covered by the RoGS are:
- » Early childhood, education and training
 - » Justice;
 - » Emergency Management;
 - » Health;
 - » Community Services; and
 - » Housing.
117. The Education section of RoGS contains a substantial Preface, plus a chapter each for children’s services, school education, and for vocational education and training. Besides the chapter content and supporting tables, further education data are provided in the Statistical Appendix to RoGS.

2.7 Evaluation and Assessment at the Systemic Level

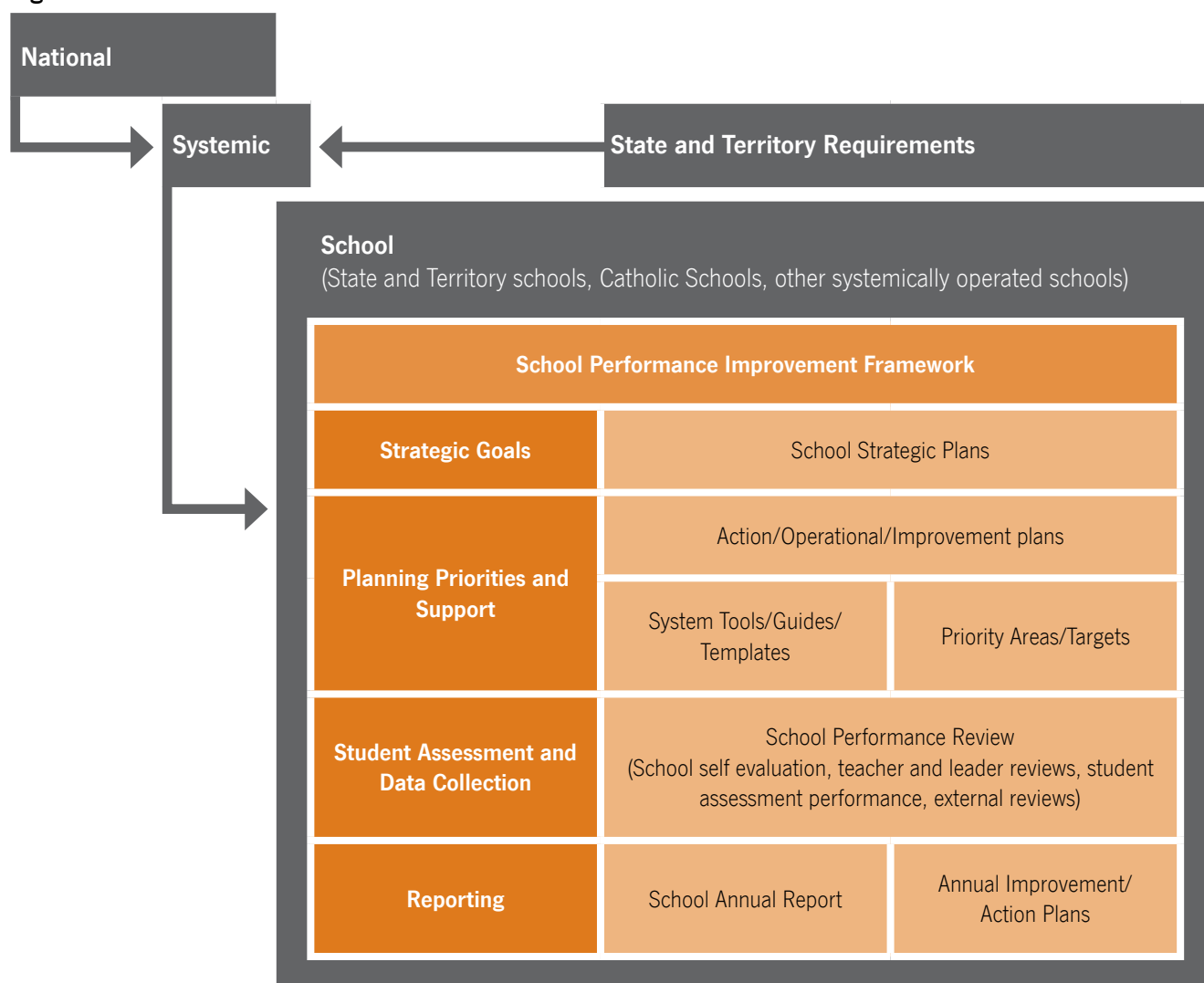
Figure 3: Systemic-level Evaluation and Assessment



118. Frameworks for evaluation and assessment at the systemic level (shown at Figure 3) are developed by state and territory governments or system authorities (in the case of non-government systems) as a means to assess and evaluate the school system and report on outcomes at both a system and local level. Systemic-level evaluation and assessment is carried out by the relevant education departments and agencies or system authority against strategic goals with the results often published in the form of an Annual Report. Systemic-level evaluation practices include legislated reporting requirements, reporting of system wide testing and other evaluation processes. In addition to the local components, systems must also comply with the national requirements related to evaluation and assessment as required under the NEA and SAA.
119. The focus of evaluation and assessment at the systemic level is usually set at the highest level of governance, for example, state and territory governments develop strategic directions for their state or territory as a whole. These directions, usually published in the form of state or department strategic plans, outline the forward direction for the state and usually cover a range of key areas such as healthcare, infrastructure, education and more. These strategic directions frequently inform the state and territories' priorities and planning for education expenditure and policy focus. In some states, the main focus or high level aspirations for education are primarily based on the *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians*.
120. Specific policy directions and areas for support are usually detailed by the relevant education department or system authority in their departmental or system plans. These provide the relevant policy areas for focus and they also usually provide more specific targets for the education system, against which performance can be measured, analysed and evaluated.
121. As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, states and territories have been responsible for setting the curriculum for their state or territory either by the government education system or independent curriculum authorities. The curricula apply to all schools registered within the relevant state or territory as education providers, including non-government schools. The curriculum in each state has been influenced by educational goals and standard setting at the highest levels (such as the National Goals for Schooling agreed by Education Ministers) and provides the framework for schools and teachers to know what they must teach and what students should learn. This in turn provides a firm foundation for assessing teaching and learning and the performance of the system as a whole.
122. The performance of a school system is usually evaluated using student assessment data, as well as other data sources such as surveys to communities and teachers. The results from these are analysed and presented in the form of Annual Reports, which are made publicly available through the system's website. Annual reports sometimes identify areas for improvement, which then inform further goals and aspirations or areas for further policy development. Some states and territories also publish performance information at the school level for their schools. The information made publicly available and its format varies considerably between states.

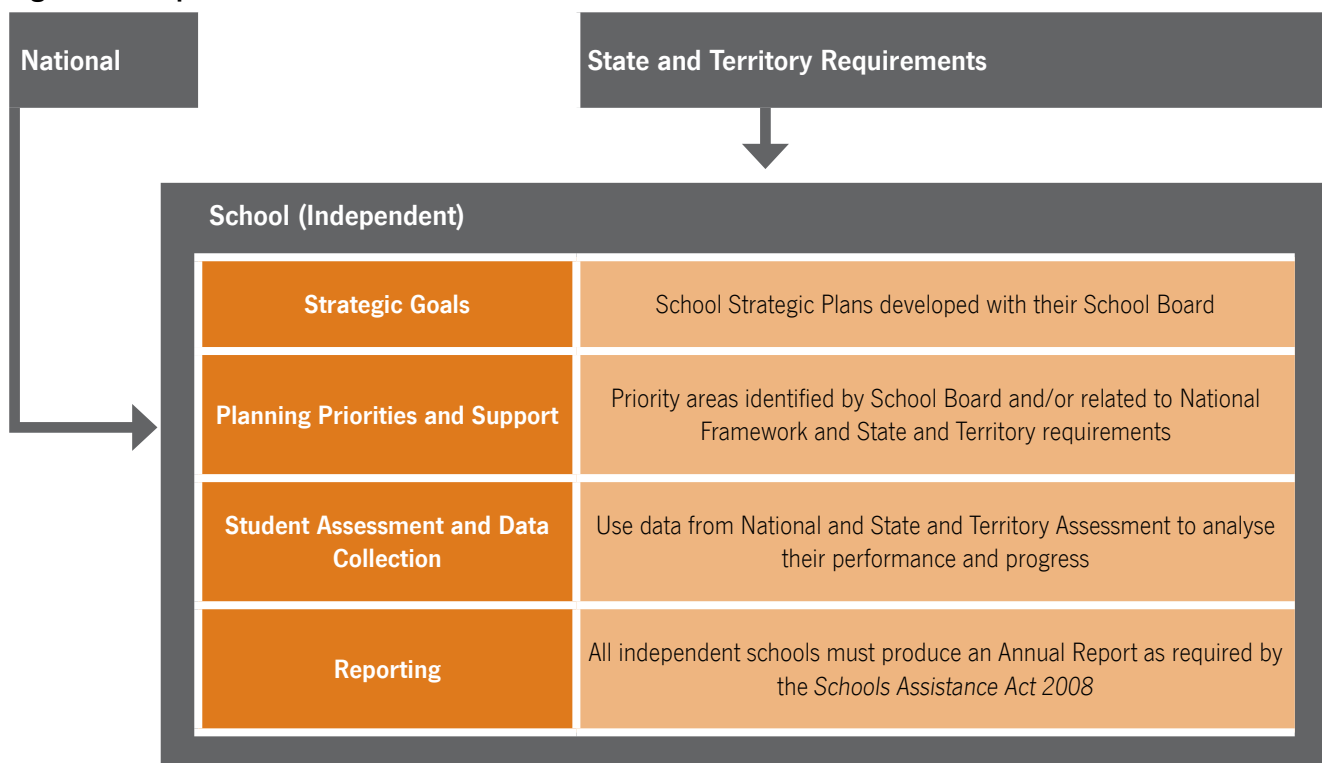
2.8 Evaluation and Assessment at the School Level

Figure 4: School-level Evaluation and Assessment



123. In the case of government schools, the components of evaluation and assessment (outlined in Figure 4) at the school level are developed by the state or territory government and apply to all government schools. All states and territories in Australia have developed means to evaluate and assess schools and report at the school level; most states have some form of improvement and accountability framework. School-level evaluation practices include school and student assessment, school self-evaluation, school planning, external school reviews, school strategic planning and school reporting. In addition to requirements set by the relevant state and territory authority, government schools must also meet the national requirements outlined in the NEA which are usually incorporated as part of the state or territory requirements.
124. In the case of non-government systemic schools, the components of the framework for evaluation and assessment at the school level are developed by the system however, they must meet any relevant national or state/territory requirements. For example, the School Improvement Framework for the NSW Catholic system seeks to address the dual purpose of satisfying legitimate expectations of government and sector authorities about accountability for the outcomes of schooling; and to assist schools and teachers to improve student learning outcomes. The framework recognises the distinctive nature of Catholic schooling, combining a structured approach to internal improvement planning with a component of external assessment and accountability.

Figure 5: Independent School-level Evaluation and Assessment



125. Independent schools, that is, non-systemic non-government schools, are bound by relevant Commonwealth requirements which are set out in the *SAA*, and the relevant state and territory requirements relating to their establishment and operation, such as delivery of the relevant state curriculum. Non-government—including independent—schools are required to renew their registration at regular intervals which provides a process for state and territory regulatory authorities to ensure they are meeting their requirements. Given that practices across independent schools vary greatly, it is not possible to outline a typical situation or practice in the case of independent schools, although many are likely to follow similar practices in terms of evaluation and assessment elements (see Figure 5), i.e. goal setting, planning, using data for analysis and reporting.
126. For independent schools, there is no common process for school-level evaluation and assessment. Independent schools operate as separate entities and thus do not belong to a system. Independent schools are therefore separately accountable to their parent and school communities and evaluation and assessment is determined and carried out at the school level. It is the responsibility of the individual school to determine the details and content of their own evaluation.

2.9 Changes to the Overarching Framework

127. As has been outlined in this report so far, in recent years there have been a number of significant changes at the national level aimed at providing a more robust framework for evaluation and assessment in support of school improvement, including:
- » COAG Productivity Agenda
 - » National Education Agreement
 - » National Partnerships
 - » School-level reporting (*My School*)
 - » National Curriculum
 - » Establishment of ACARA
 - » National full cohort literacy and numeracy assessment

128. These changes have been possible due to strong cooperative arrangements between the Australian Government and state and territory governments. A feature of all of these changes is the partnerships formed between the Australian and state and territory governments and also the non-government sector. Where issues have arisen, (such as privacy concerns over sharing and reporting school-level data), solutions have been found (see the *Principles and Protocols for Reporting on Schooling in Australia*³⁹ agreed by all Education Ministers).
129. In a speech during 2010, the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, highlighted the Government's commitment to school improvement and possible next steps as part of this process:
- We will examine, for example, how every school can get the right support and scrutiny to make sure it is performing well and improving in the areas where it needs to improve. This may involve external assessment and inspection of schools and it will certainly involve strengthening school-based performance management of individual teachers, as some jurisdictions are already trialling through our National Partnerships.⁴⁰
130. The Minister signalled interest in a broad public debate about the possible options and next steps which should be pursued for school improvement to ensure all Australian students receive a world class, high quality education.

39 http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/Principles_and_Protocols_2009.pdf

40 The full transcript can be found here: http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_100224_143429.aspx

Chapter 3: System Evaluation

131. System-level evaluation is an important part of the overall framework for evaluation and assessment of schooling in Australia. System-level evaluation plays an important role in linking school evaluation and assessment practices and outcomes with system-level policies and goals. Evaluation in Australian school systems comprises of strategic goals and planning, intervention and support, data collection/measurement practices and reporting.

3.1 Current Practices—System-Level Evaluation and Assessment

132. System evaluation in Australia occurs at both the national level and the state and territory or non-government system authority level. Much of the context for system-level evaluation is set by a number of national initiatives for evaluation and assessment, detailed in the previous chapter. These provide a means for governments, as well as education stakeholders and the broader community, to evaluate the performance of the education system as a whole.

133. The evaluation framework in place in Australia has a strong focus on the accountability of schools and the school system to deliver quality schooling to students across Australia. The evaluation framework at the highest level has a firm basis with the aspirations and goals agreed by COAG and Education Ministers. By identifying national goals and strategies for schooling across Australia, as well as developing national requirements for measurement and reporting, systems share a common outcomes focused framework, which provides a strong starting point and focus for evaluation and assessment components to be developed at the system level.

134. At the national level, system evaluation is undertaken by the Australian Government in cooperation with states and territories and the non-government sector. The national framework seeks to evaluate Australia's overall performance towards the national goals for schooling. At the state, territory and non-government education system level, evaluation practices and procedures are developed and carried out by relevant authorities within the system, and are designed specifically for the system which they evaluate.

135. Each state and territory government in Australia has a separate framework for evaluating the schooling system. Non-government systems also have frameworks for system evaluation. Evaluation frameworks for both government and non-government school systems utilise various types of assessment practices, and collect data from students, schools and the system itself.

Importance of Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks

136. System-level evaluation provides a basis for the measurement and reporting of the relative performance of education systems. It allows systems to evaluate how effectively they deliver education to students in Australia, and how well they are meeting broader strategic objectives for education. The process of evaluation aims to provide systems with a realistic picture of the state of schooling within their system. Evaluation also highlights strengths and weaknesses, as well as best practice, which in turn can assist systems to identify priority areas for development and further improvement. Once these areas have been identified, schools and systems are then able to develop strategies for further improvement and development. System-level evaluation collects various data which provide an evidence base for informing system wide policies and programs.

3.2 National System Evaluation

137. Evaluation of the school system at a national level is a priority for the Australian Government. A number of national frameworks, such as the COAG productivity agenda framework contained in the NEA and the Measurement Framework for National Key Performance Measures, provide the measures and national standards against which Australia's school system performance can be measured and evaluated both nationally and internationally. Data are collected through the National Assessment Program (NAP) as well as through other collections, such as attendance and enrolment data. Progress and performance are then analysed and reported through reports such as the COAG Reform Council Report, the *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, the *Report on Government Services* and individual school reporting on the *My School* website. Public reporting of the progress and performance of Australian schooling is an important part of the evaluation process and enables the broader public to evaluate the system and also the government's performance.
138. The three main publicly available reports which allow for review or evaluation of the state of education in Australia are outlined as follows:
- » **COAG Reform Council (CRC) Reports** provide annual reporting and evaluation of the Australian Government and state and territory governments against the objectives, outcomes and targets specified in the National Education Agreement.
 - » **Report on Government Services (RoGS)**, produced through the Productivity Commission, the Australian Government's independent research and advisory body details data against an agreed set of performance indicators for each jurisdiction.
 - » **National Report on Schooling in Australia (ANR)** details the scope of schooling in Australia and describes the activities of the sector, monitors the effects and progress of policy initiatives, and details the source, volume and direction of education finances.
139. These reports provide the ability for a number of different stakeholders to assess system performance:
- a. The Australian Government uses the reports to evaluate how the overall system of education in Australia is performing. Using the data in the reports, the Australian Government can analyse performance and identify priority areas for planning, intervention and policy.
 - b. As these reports all provide data and performance information disaggregated to the jurisdictional level, state and territory-level governments can also assess the performance of the services provided in their jurisdiction and how this compares with the rest of Australia.
 - c. These reports are also made available to the public. This enables the broader public to evaluate both national and jurisdictional system performance and understand how well schooling is being delivered in Australia.
140. Data collected from the NAP, including from international assessments, is used for evaluating Australia's system performance. Participation in international assessments, such as the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) supports assessment of how Australia's schooling system compares internationally. Australia's performance data from international assessments is used often as part of the process of national system evaluation; analysis of these data informs new policy directions or program development. Results from PISA were used, for example, as part of the Australian Government's policy document, *Quality Education: The case for an Education Revolution in our Schools*:⁴¹

The OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) results for 2006 show that the average performance of 15 year olds continues to be significantly better than the OECD average.

However, challenges remain. The performance of the Australian schooling system has been allowed to drop relative to that of other countries in the OECD:

- » In the period between 2003 and 2006, Australia declined in both its absolute and relative performance in reading literacy.
- » Australia has too long a 'tail' of underperformance linked to disadvantage. The PISA results indicate that over the last six years the percentage of students who are less than proficient at reading or maths has not reduced.
- » International testing also shows that the reading performance of Australian students at the high end of the achievement scale has declined between 2003 and 2006.

41 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Resources/Documents/Publications/QualityEducationEducationRevolutionWEB.pdf>

The 'tail' of underperformance in Australian schools is concentrated amongst students from low socio-economic status (SES) families and Indigenous students. For example, the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in PISA mathematics and reading literacy is equivalent to more than two years of formal schooling.

The difference between students from the lowest SES quartile and those in the highest is also more than two years of schooling in both reading literacy and mathematics.⁴²

141. PISA results are also used as a performance indicator for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' annual report on the outcomes for schooling.⁴³

System-level use of National Reports in Evaluation

142. National reports play a key role in system evaluation as well as being a tool for accountability. They report and measure the performance of different systems and this information can then be used to inform policies and programs.
143. In the first instance, national reports are used by states and territories to assess their relative performance against other states and territories. National reporting allows for national benchmarking between states and territories and encourages a degree of healthy competition. The disaggregation of data highlights areas of achievement and improvement for state and territory governments, as well as systems. National reporting also allows states and territories to learn from other states and territories. The CRC reports, for example:
- highlight examples of good practice and performance so that, over time, innovative reforms or methods of service delivery may be adopted by other jurisdictions.⁴⁴
144. From 2010, the CRC Reports will also report and analyse trend data from 2008–2009, which will allow states and territories to measure and evaluate changes in performance over time.

3.3 State and Territory System Evaluation

145. Although they differ from state to state in Australia, evaluation frameworks are primarily outcomes focused. The clear articulation of educational objectives allows systems to develop their frameworks for evaluation. By outlining the goals for the system, as well as performance measures, systems are able to tailor their evaluation and assessment to suit their needs.
146. State and territory governments and non-government systems develop tools to assess and evaluate schools and the school system and report on outcomes at both a system and school level. Systems also use products of national-level evaluation for their own evaluation, such as the three reports (*ANR*, *RoGS*, *CRC*) outlined previously. System-level evaluation and assessment is primarily carried out by the relevant education departments, however some specific facets of the overall evaluation and assessment framework, such as teacher appraisal and student assessment, can be undertaken by other agencies. Some jurisdictions also commission evaluations of their school systems to be undertaken by external contractors. System-level evaluation practices typically include legislated reporting requirements, reporting of system wide testing and other evaluation processes.
147. For non-government systemic schools, evaluation and assessment frameworks are developed by the system authorities. Practices used are similar to those of government schools. For example, in Sydney, NSW, for Catholic Schools, the development of evaluation and assessment frameworks is the responsibility of the Catholic Education Office, which runs 147 systemic schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

42 Page 16

43 <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Department/Publications/Documents/Outcome2.pdf>

44 http://www.coag.gov.au/crc/docs/nat_edu_agree_perf_2008.pdf

3.4 Process of System Evaluation

148. Across all state and territory governments, as well as non-government systems, the system evaluation process incorporates key elements such as planning, measurement/data collection and reporting. Planning includes setting the focus, goals and deliverables of the system, measurement and data collection involves the development of indicators and collation of data to measure achievement of these goals, and reporting involves the analysis and evaluation of the data collected.

3.5 Planning

149. The planning stage of system evaluation allows for jurisdictions to broadly set out what it is they aim to achieve in their schooling system. It also gives jurisdictions the opportunity to set goals and aspirations for the system, which they can work to achieve. The planning stage begins with setting a focus and goals.

Focus for System Evaluation and Assessment

150. As referred to in the previous chapter, the foci for system evaluation and assessment of education systems are developed at the government level, or in the case of non-government schools, at the highest level of governance. In the case of systemic schools, strategic plans are usually developed at the system level. These are articulated in the form of strategic directions and are often published in the form of state, department or systemic strategic plans. For example, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) in Sydney, publish their mission to celebrate being catholic in Australia, to ensure quality teaching and learning and to make a difference in our world. This is published on their website.⁴⁵

151. Strategic directions can be in the form of aspirations, desired outcomes or goals. Some states and territories also outline specific targets which they aim to achieve, as well as strategies to deliver these targets and indicators which can measure achievement towards them.

152. Table 3 below outlines the types, names and links to the various strategic plans set at the state and territory level.

Table 3: State and Territory Strategic Directions

State/Territory	Type	Name	Link
New South Wales	State Plan	NSW State Plan	http://www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan
	Departmental Corporate Plan	Corporate Plan 2008–2010, NSW Education and Training system	https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/strat_direction/corporate/detcorpplan08.pdf
	Departmental Strategic Plan	The Office of Schools Plan	https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/strat_direction/schools/officeschoolsplan0911.pdf
Victoria	Departmental Strategic Plan	Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Corporate Plan 2009–2011	http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stratman/planning/corpplan/deecdcorporateplan.pdf
Queensland	Departmental Strategic Plan	Department of Education and Training (including the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care) Strategic Plan 2009–2013	http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/planning/pdfs/strategic-plan-09-13.pdf
South Australia	State Plan	South Australia's Strategic Plan 2007	http://www.stateplan.sa.gov.au/
	Departmental Statement of Directions	Department of Education and Children's Services Statement of Directions 2005–2010	http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/StatementofDirections20-1.pdf
Western Australia	Departmental Strategic Plan	Plan for Public Schools 2008–2011	http://www.det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/cms-service/download/asset/?asset_id=6322092

⁴⁵ <http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au/cms/Jahia/pid/38>

State/Territory	Type	Name	Link
Tasmania	State Plan	Tasmania Together	http://www.tasmaniatogether.tas.gov.au/reports_and_papers
Northern Territory	Departmental Strategic Plan	Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2009–2012	http://www.det.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/4126/DET_strategic_plan2009-2012.pdf
Australian Capital Territory	Territory Plan	The Canberra Plan	http://www.canberraplan.act.gov.au/theplan.html
	Departmental Strategic Plan	ACT Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2010–2013 Everyone matters	http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/109955/DET_Strategic_Plan_2010-2013.pdf

153. Despite differences in the format and articulation of system-level strategic plans for education across Australia, all states and territories set priorities and targets for schooling and have performance measures used for evaluating their success.
154. Strategic directions in the form of departmental plans or strategic plans form the basis for system evaluation frameworks. Some systems use their strategic directions to develop specific policies which link school-level improvement frameworks to systemic evaluation procedures.⁴⁶ In these cases, School Improvement Frameworks function alongside strategic delivery plans. All systems do have detailed school-level evaluation and assessment frameworks, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. While a number of these school improvement frameworks acknowledge the role of the central system administration in the improvement of schools, they focus primarily on improvement at the school level.
155. All schooling systems within Australia strive to provide quality education and opportunities for all students. To do this, systems identify specific goals and indicators, against which data can be collected and performance can be measured. By setting goals and measuring performance, systems are able to identify areas in which school systems are improving, and areas which require further improvement.
156. The strategic goals or priorities for education set by state and territory government and non-government system strategic plans are mostly tailored to the unique demography or situation of each. Victoria for example, a high performing state in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy, sets the mission to ensure a high-quality and coherent birth-to-adulthood learning and development system to build the capability of every young Victorian. They provide specific targets which are relevant to their current performance, such as that at age 15, Victorian students will excel by national and international standards. The NT for example, aim to promote positive learning environments, improve attendance at school and increase the number of territorians who complete high school and achieve a senior secondary certificate of education.⁴⁷
157. In order to achieve the goals set for the education system, it is necessary to address a number of different aspects which influence the delivery of quality schooling. This involves the inclusion of goals for and measures against not only student performance, but conditions relating to teachers, school environments, student future pathways and school leadership. In order to develop well rounded and comprehensive system evaluation procedures, it is important to look at these aspects. For example, the ACT has four priority areas in its strategic plan: Learning and Teaching; School Environment; Student Pathways and Transitions; and Leadership and Corporate Development. All states and territories, as well as some non-government systems, recognise the importance of every facet of the schooling system in their evaluations. Most states and territories identify the role that governments, regions, schools, communities, teachers and students play.

46 For example, SA <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DecsImprovementandAccou-1.pdf> and Victoria <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schoolimprovement/accountability/default.htm>

47 http://www.det.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/4126/DET_strategic_plan2009-2012.pdf

Performance Measures and Data Collection

158. An important step in the process of system evaluation is the collation of data to measure system performance. Data are collected to measure systems' performance on indicators which have been determined to measure relative success against strategic goals. All school systems across Australia use data to inform evaluation practices. The method and types of data collected are similar for all system evaluation frameworks.
159. A variety of data are collected across the states and territories which are used as performance measures towards state and territory strategic goals. Some of the common forms of data collected are:
- » Student performance data⁴⁸ collected through:
 - Full cohort assessments, such as the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and state and territory based assessment, for example, senior secondary assessments
 - Sample assessments including those as part of the National Assessment Program including national and international studies
 - » School Improvement Framework data,⁴⁹ which are collected through:
 - State and territory school improvement procedures, including annual plans, implementation plans, school self-reviews and school audits
 - » School attendance data, which are collected through:
 - School-level reporting
 - School retention rates, which are collected through state and territory based surveys
 - » Teacher quality data, collected through:
 - Research conducted by teaching institutes (for example, NSW)
 - » School leaver destination and early school leaver data, which collect information about student destinations after school milestones such as years 10 and 12 (for example Queensland's Next Step⁵⁰)
 - » Community satisfaction information, which are collected in all states and territories through:
 - Surveys to communities and parents which gauge satisfaction levels with the school (for example Queensland's school opinion survey⁵¹)
 - » Financial Information, collected through legislation requirements.

3.6 Products of System Evaluation

Annual Reporting

160. The primary product of the process of planning and measuring performance is reporting. All states and territories, as well as some non-government systems, publish different types of reports about the system which provide an overview and evaluation of the system's achievements. System reports take on different forms, with some systems publishing a number of different reports focused on different aspects of system performance. System performance reporting often includes a variety of information, which is often required by legislation, policy and/or programs.

48 These are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

49 These are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

50 <http://education.qld.gov.au/nextstep/>

51 <http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/accountability/surveyfaq.html>

Table 4: Links to Annual Reports

State/Territory	Report Type	Link
New South Wales	Departmental Annual Report	https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reports_stats/annual_reports/index.htm
CEO Sydney, NSW	Annual report	http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au/cms/Jahia/pid/41
Victoria	Departmental Annual Reports	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/publications/annualreport/default.htm
	State Budget Reports	http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/publications/budget/default.htm
CEO Melbourne, Victoria	Annual Report	http://www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/
Queensland	Departmental Annual Report	http://deta.qld.gov.au/reports/annual/index.html
	State Budget reports	http://deta.qld.gov.au/budgethigh.html
CEO Brisbane, Queensland	Annual Report	http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/asp/index.asp?pgid=11977
South Australia	Departmental Annual Reports	http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/portal/aboutdept.asp?group=reports&id=reports
Western Australia	Departmental Annual Report	http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/AnnualReport/docs/DET_Annual_Report_2008-09.pdf
Tasmania	Department of Education Annual Report	http://www.education.tas.gov.au/annualreport
Northern Territory	Departmental Annual Report	http://www.det.nt.gov.au/about-us/publications/annual-report-200809
Australian Capital Territory	Departmental Annual Report	http://www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z/annual_report

161. Departmental annual reports provide an analysis of the system data collected using performance measures. This includes identifying relative good performance, as well as identifying potential areas for improvement. It is the results from such reporting which provide state and territory governments and well as systemic schools, with the focus for future development and further reform or attention. These are likely to inform future strategic planning.

3.7 External Reviews

162. Another process which forms part of both national and system evaluation is external reviews and research. The reviews, often commissioned to experts external to the systems, collect data and information about systems, and have the potential to present systems with a number of observations and analysis about their system's performance, and present practical recommendations for reform.
163. The Australia Government and a number of states, territories and also the Catholic system have commissioned external reviews, which are aimed at identifying strengths and weaknesses of the system. Often the external reviews have different loci, as explored below, however they are all conducted in the form of system evaluation and assessment with a view to using the recommendations to improve system performance.
164. The Australian Government is currently participating in this OECD Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks with the aim of obtaining independent, expert advice for school improvement. Detailed below, the NT Department of Education and Training (DET) review was focused on improving the department's practices to best ensure the delivery of a quality education system to NT students, DET staff and DET teachers. A recent Queensland Education Performance Review, on the other hand, was focused on lifting educational outcomes and was initiated in response to poor student performance in the 2008 NAPLAN and TIMSS assessments. The Sydney Catholic Education Office commissioned a review in 2004 and details of this are included below.

Table 5: Northern Territory Structural Review**Structural Review of the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training 2009⁵²**

In 2008, the review was commissioned with the objective to “refocus the NT Department of Education and Training (DET) to more efficiently deliver the government’s commitments to improved school attendance and levels of literacy and numeracy and meet future challenges in education”. Specifically, the review was intended to:

- » Assess the effectiveness of the Group School and Cluster organisational models for NT schools.
- » Evaluate the effectiveness of the structure, reporting arrangements and support mechanisms provided to schools by DET in providing efficient and effective service delivery at schools.
- » Consider the adequacy of teaching and learning programs being delivered in urban and regional, remote and very remote schools and learning centres.
- » Comment on the appropriateness of performance targets and measurement tools and the adequacy of data capture systems and information management capability.
- » Examine the effect of a range of Australian Government funded programs delivered in urban, regional and remote NT schools and the likely future needs to support the Australian Government’s education revolution.
- » Make recommendations about the most appropriate supporting mechanisms, management systems and delivery models to ensure effective services outcomes, and
- » Identify priority areas requiring specific support and strengthen a regional approach to supporting schools.

The review was based on evidence collected through interviews, documents and data sets provided to the review. With this information, the review was able to develop recommendations directly responsive to the review’s objectives.

The review made a number of recommendations regarding the structure and organisation of the department, as well as its performance and procedures. The recommendations were based on five themes: building a more coherent system; building a performance based system; strengthening organisation capacity through improved recruitment and retention of staff; and strengthening school governance with improved community participation.

Since the commissioning of the review, the department has undergone many changes, including the appointment of a new Chief Executive and the beginning of a departmental restructure.⁵³ The recommendations were also addressed in the new departmental strategic plan, with new priorities including:⁵⁴

- » bedding down the department’s restructure and new strategic plan—to ensure that all staff can clearly see the link between the work they do and goals, strategies and vision;
- » ensuring systems, strategies, programs and supports are of high quality, are performance focused and aligned to priorities;
- » attracting, retaining, supporting and developing quality school teachers and leaders. This includes improving data capture, tracking improvements in teacher retention and undertaking research to better understand factors that contribute to teacher turnover—especially in remote contexts;
- » increasing participation of Indigenous personnel at all levels of the department; and
- » agreeing on a set of quality measures and associated data that will establish a baseline on key areas of performance as a basis for setting targets and ensuring that this data is used internally as well as being made available to the public.

52 The full report can be downloaded here: http://www.det.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/6674/NTeducationAndTrainingReviewReport.pdf

53 The then Minister for Education and Training released the following press release regarding the Review: <http://newsroom.nt.gov.au/adminmedia/mailouts/5792/attachments/090708%20education%20restructure.pdf>

54 These are articulated in the Chief Executive’s foreword of the Northern Territory’s Department of Education and Training Annual Report 2008–09: http://www.det.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/8255/Overview.pdf

Table 6: Queensland Review

Queensland Education Performance Review 2009⁵⁵

The Queensland Education Performance Review was commissioned after the release of Queensland's 2008 NAPLAN and 2007 TIMSS results. The results showed that the literacy, numeracy and science achievement level of students in the middle primary years in Queensland tend to be below those of other students in all states and territories except the NT. The purpose of the review was to evaluate the Queensland primary school system, and identify areas which would potentially lift the educational outcomes for students in Queensland.

The review aimed to "to identify existing effective practices, to propose ways in which these could be scaled up, and to make recommendations for new strategies or initiatives for improving levels of literacy, numeracy and science achievement in Queensland primary schools". The methodology included analysis of available performance data of Queensland students, consultations with stakeholders, visits to schools and a review of relevant research literature. There were two products from this review, a preliminary report⁵⁶ and the final report, *A Shared Challenge: Improving Literacy, Numeracy and Science Learning in Queensland Primary Schools*.⁵⁷

Five recommendations were presented by the review team:

Recommendation 1: That all aspiring primary teachers be required to demonstrate through test performances, as a condition of registration, that they meet threshold levels of knowledge about the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science and have sound levels of content knowledge in these areas.

Recommendation 2: That the Queensland Government introduces a new structure and program of advanced professional learning in literacy, numeracy and science for primary school teachers.

Recommendation 3: That additional funding be made available for the advanced training and employment of a number of 'specialist' literacy, numeracy and science teachers to work in schools (and/or district offices) most in need of support.

Recommendation 4: That standard science tests be introduced at Years 4, 6, 8 and 10 for school use in identifying students who are not meeting year level expectations and for monitoring student progress over time.

Recommendation 5: That the Queensland Government initiates an expert review of international best practice in school leadership development with a view to introducing a new structure and program of advanced professional learning for primary school leaders focused on effective strategies for driving improved school performances in literacy, numeracy and science.

The Queensland Government responded to the review⁵⁸ by supporting four out of the five recommendations and providing in-principle support for the other (recommendation 4). Nine key actions were presented in response to the review which are designed to enhance teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy and science, including:

- » Building confidence in teaching standards—introducing pre-registration tests in literacy, numeracy and science for all teachers
- » Endorsement of rigorous professional development—developing a professional development framework for programs improving literacy, numeracy, science and assessment capability for teachers and school leaders
- » Deploying specialist teachers—employing additional specialists beginning with literacy and numeracy coaches in 175 government schools, and 100 additional teachers to support the teaching of science in Queensland government schools
- » Building Capacity in Science Teaching—enhancing the Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCAT) and developing additional science assessment items that will be available for all schools and teachers on the QSA's Assessment Bank
- » Analysis of student performance data—analysing Queensland students' performance in national and international tests to identify priority areas for professional development programs
- » Queensland Education Leadership Institute—establishing the Queensland Education Leadership Institute to provide high quality professional learning opportunities to meet the needs of leaders in all school sectors.

55 <http://education.qld.gov.au/mastersreview/>

56 <http://education.qld.gov.au/mastersreview/preliminary.html>

57 <http://education.qld.gov.au/mastersreview/pdfs/final-report-masters.pdf>

58 <http://education.qld.gov.au/mastersreview/pdfs/gov-response-masters-review.pdf>

Table 7: Sydney Catholic Education Office Review

Sydney Catholic Education Office External Review 2004⁵⁹

In 2004, the Catholic Education Office (CEO), Sydney, commissioned an external review to assess the “appropriateness and quality of the services provided to the system of schools by the CEO, and their effectiveness in improving standards of education and care”. The review examined the operations of the CEO, Sydney and the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (SACS) Board.

The report resulted in a detailed document which made extensive recommendations in the areas of:

- » Strategic Leadership and Management of Schools
- » Catholic Identity and Religious Education
- » Students and their learning
- » Human Resources
- » Financial Services
- » Partnership, Consultation and Communication.

The recommendations made by the external review formed the foundations of the next Strategic Management Plan, *Towards 2010*.

3.8 Roles of Organisations in System Evaluation

165. Aside from external review teams periodically employed by systems to undertake external evaluation, the majority of system evaluation is undertaken by governments and in the case of non-government systemic schools, the central system office or organisation.
166. Within government departments, there are usually divisions which have primary responsibility for different aspects of system evaluation. It is customary, for example, for departments to have dedicated staff and expertise in areas such as:
- » student assessment
 - » financial audit and compliance
 - » strategic directions
 - » system evaluation
167. The NSW DET has recently established the Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau to provide state-wide strategic policy and program advice on new state and Australian Government school priorities involving directorates across the schools portfolio, other DET portfolios and external agencies. The Bureau has special responsibilities for student engagement and the involvement of the schools portfolio in program evaluations.
168. Some states and territories also collect information from external authorities, such as teacher organisations, curriculum corporations, boards of study and community organisations. It is common for state and territory education departments to also work closely with other government departments, such as treasury and finance departments.
169. Government education departments also regularly participate in internal and external audits of programs. These are standard practice in government departments and agencies and can be used as part of the system evaluation process. In Australia, nationally as well as in each state and territory, an Auditor General provides an independent assessment on whether services, including educational institutions, have been managed economically, efficiently and effectively. One of the main functions of state and territory auditors is to conduct performance audits. This forms part of the accountability mechanism within the system evaluation process.

⁵⁹ <http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au/cms/Jahia/pid/39>

Chapter 4: School Assessment

170. This chapter describes the key elements involved in Australian school evaluation and assessment practices. Australia has a range of different practices, all with commonalities towards reaching COAG aspirations and MCEECDYA goals for education. The chapter covers current practices as well as new initiatives that are beginning to reshape the focus of school assessment towards a more holistic and connected approach, with a high regard for accountability, transparency and continuous improvement.

4.1 Current Practices

Overall Framework for School Assessment

171. The practice of school assessment, evaluation and improvement is well established within Australia's schools. Due to the federalist nature of education in Australia, each state and territory has its own set of school assessment and evaluation procedures, although there are common fundamental characteristics.

172. In general, all schools participate in annual self evaluation practices, utilising standard guides, templates and set frameworks. These are mostly developed by the relevant state government or authority, for example the department of education, which allows for consistency of measurement between schools within jurisdictions. Strategic planning cycles are conducted for the most part on a three or four yearly cycle, and often include external reviews, which in some cases may be at the discretion of the school, or may be a requirement. This is dependent on the jurisdiction and the current performance of the school. The nature of school assessment within Australia is that it is transparent, with the results published in annual school reports made available to school communities.

173. While the Australian Government does not have a direct role or involvement in school assessment and evaluation, many Australian Government policies are aimed at school improvement, for example, the recent launch of the *My School* website. These policy areas tend to form part of school planning and measurement of progress. The following is an extract from an Australian Government policy document which illustrates this point:

A strong focus on core skills, especially numeracy and literacy in the early years, is necessary to ensure that future learning is successful. To achieve this, school leaders need the autonomy and incentive to implement local approaches, such as specialised teachers and the use of individualised data to ensure that students are not losing their footing in education. We will be working with states, territories and school systems to invest in approaches which lift performance for all students in literacy and numeracy. These approaches will embed high-quality teaching and the use of student data in evidence-based, whole of school approaches to improvement.⁶⁰

174. The current approach to school assessment achieves improvement and accountability through the continuous cycles of evaluation and intervention for those schools needing assistance. Assessment practices are in place in schools across Australia in order to identify best practice or high performing schools, alongside identifying those schools that require additional assistance in order to make improvements.

175. The rationale of the current approach to school assessment is towards continual performance improvement of students, first and foremost. This requires the continuous improvement of teachers, school leaders and the educational environment. Australian governments recognise the need to improve and be accountable for, educational outcomes within the challenging context of an increasingly complex 21st century educational environment. In addition to enhancing outcomes, there is recognition that school performance and improvement frameworks have a critical role in accountability, reporting and transparency.

60 Quality Education: The Case for an Education Revolution in our Schools, August 2008: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Resources/Documents/Publications/QualityEducationEducationRevolutionWEB.pdf>

176. School assessment in Australia involves a holistic approach (both qualitative and quantitative) in relation to school performance and improvement. There is an increased emphasis on qualitative aspects such as quality leadership and teaching, establishing and maintaining high expectations, in addition to the already established national assessments which provide quantitative information.
177. As noted in Chapter 3, school assessment is nationally recognised as an integral part of system evaluation and as such, is a large part of each state and territory's system evaluation practices. School assessment is a high priority as part of broader evaluation and assessment, particularly towards improved transparency of reporting, prioritising schools with additional assistance needs and highlighting schools with best practice and performance.
178. The recent launch of *My School* in Australia has made school assessment and evaluation more public. One of its aims is to engage parents and the community in constructive dialog with schools and principals towards continuous improvement in education within their local schools. It is also hoped that schools will use *My School*, along with other information and tools, to consider policies and practices of other schools with similar students who are performing well. For the first time, all Australian schools can consider information on the performance of other schools across sectors and state boundaries.
179. The National Education Agreement (NEA), as discussed in Chapter 2, includes a set of requirements for all Australian schools some of which form a part of states' critical evaluation processes and school assessment. These five requirements are;
- » National testing (NAPLAN and sample assessments);
 - » National reporting (ANR, COAG reports);
 - » Individual school information (*My School*);
 - » Student reports to parents; and
 - » Publication of information relating to the school (Annual school reports).
180. States and territories generally have their own requirements including those specific to their context which are used as part of school assessment. Some state and territory requirements apply to non-government schools as well as government schools through legislation linked to registration and accreditation authorities. For example, in Victoria, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority⁶¹ (VRQA) is responsible for the regulation of all education and training providers and qualifications in Victoria. VRQA ensures education and training providers meet minimum standards and develop an integrated, quality assurance regime.
181. Continuous improvement does not occur by chance, it must be planned for. Schools and state and territory departments/system authorities share a common understanding about the planning process and its ability to reflect and accommodate local needs and its capacity to maintain the momentum of quality improvement. School planning processes are evidence-based and rely on the careful analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.
182. In a self assessment context, all Australian schools are responsible and accountable for learning achievement and wellbeing outcomes. More specifically, they are responsible for monitoring and improving teacher performance, developing strategic relationships with the local community in order to have cooperative assistance in the assessment/evaluation process, and directing targeted funds to program initiatives. They are also responsible for taking necessary action to improve performance, through strategic plans, action plans and self evaluation processes.
183. While the responsibilities for school evaluation and assessment largely fall at the localised school level, support is provided by state or territory education department or system authorities. Each of the eight jurisdictions' education departments assist schools through the provision of school guides and templates towards self evaluations, external review personnel and development and monitoring of policies and programs such as self examination procedures as part of their policy framework and strategic review timeframes.

61 <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/>

184. School principals and leadership teams have a key role in conducting school self-evaluation and developing their school strategic plan and annual reports. Principals and leadership teams are also active participants in the external school review process. However, the quality of leadership is not always directly assessed through the school assessment frameworks, as the focus is on student outcomes. State and territories often have a separate process for measuring principal and leadership performance, such as in Victoria, where a Principal Class Performance and Development Process⁶² is in place and in NSW, where the Principal Assessment and Review Schedule can be used.⁶³ However, if the quality of a school leadership team is affecting improved student outcomes, then this can be identified as a general contributing factor in the school self evaluation or school review.
185. In Queensland, principals of state schools are held accountable for leading the school self-assessment, planning and reporting processes. Principals are provided with a number of resources to assist them to utilise assessment data effectively, including a handbook on ways of using the school performance profile data, One School (Queensland DET's own data warehouse) data, *My School* data and schoollevel data and to inform teaching and learning.
186. States and territories are integrally involved with school assessment processes through their Education and Training departments. They are responsible for monitoring the performance of their schools. Often in larger states, localised areas are identified and there are regional or district officers who work with specific schools within an area and provide the link between the department and schools. For example, NSW is broken into 10 regions and 78 School Education Directors, each having responsibility for approximately 30 schools. Each School Education Director conducts a minimum of four visits to each school each year, with improvement and accountability being at the cornerstone of their responsibilities.
187. The Queensland DET have a Planning Reporting And Reviewing Framework,⁶⁴ enabling school communities, lead by the Principal, to engage in reviewing their school performance against systemic and locally developed performance indicators. Reviews are seen as an important part of transparency in decision making and public administration, and allow for evaluation of school quality management processes. All the processes within the framework are developed and implemented in full consultation with stakeholders such as the Principal's association, parents' association and the teacher unions.
188. Education departments in all states are involved in the early identification and prioritisation of areas that require intervention or support when it is identified a school requires more assistance. In some cases, this will lead to an external review from the state or territory governing body. The outputs from school assessments, such as annual reports and school plans, are crucial elements used in overall system planning and evaluation for each state and territory.
189. In some states and territories, the school community, such as the parents and citizens association and school councils, participate in the development and endorsement of the school self assessment. They participate in the development of assessment reports through discussions at school council meetings and provide input into strategic plans and goals.

School Assessment Procedures

190. School planning is a continuous process best understood as cyclical, developmental and adaptive. The purpose of school planning in Australia is to improve outcomes for children and young people in all schools. All state and territory schools are committed to self-reflection, strategic planning and transparency of reporting when evaluating and assessing their individual schools performance.
191. As discussed in Chapter 3, states and territories have the authority and autonomy to develop and manage their own system evaluation which allows them the flexibility to concentrate on areas of performance improvement specific to them in light of demographic or performance needs. Catholic systems and independent schools also develop their own performance and evaluations programs in line with the national framework and goals for education, while maintaining their autonomy and strong focus on accountability to their stakeholders.

62 <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/proflearning/schoolleadership/principalpd.htm>

63 Available only to NSW DET intranet users.

64 <http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/accountability/pdf/sprr-framework.pdf>

192. There are a number of steps to the school assessment process. The following list is not exhaustive of all practices or inclusive of every state and territories framework. However, it provides a good indication of what is typical and of the comprehensive nature of school assessment and evaluation throughout Australia.
- » School self reflection
 - » School strategic plan development
 - » Action/implementation/operational plan development towards meeting the goals of the strategic plan
 - » Annual reports
 - » Internal reviews
 - » Expert reviews
 - » External reviews by regional or state authorities
 - » Australian Government/state and territory reporting requirements
193. School self reflection is the first step in the process of school development and improvement, providing the foundation for reporting and accountability. School self assessment practices are performed in all public state and territory schools. This is through a process of monitoring and assessing yearly operation plans (as performed in Queensland for example), strategic plans and measuring against key performance measurement indicators, as established by individual state and territory guidelines.
194. Self review enables an analysis of current performance and the effectiveness of strategies implemented to support performance improvement. It provides the basis for performance reporting and future improvement planning. School self assessment appears to be most effective when assisted by significant levels of support from the state and territory departments, regional directors or school regulatory bodies, especially in the form of external reviews and the provision of templates and standard frameworks.
195. School self reflections or reviews are focused on answering the following types of questions:
- » What student outcomes was the school trying to achieve?
 - » What student outcomes did the school achieve?
 - » Why did the school achieve/not achieve the improved student outcomes?
 - » How effectively did the school manage its resources to support the achievement of its improved student outcomes?
 - » What can the school do in the future to continue to improve?
 - » How will we know if we have been effective in improving student achievement?
 - » What areas should be the focus for improvement?
196. Through these types of questions, schools consider:
- » academic achievement of students from school-based assessment (formative and summative)
 - » academic achievement of students in national testing, such as NAPLAN results
 - » non-academic student achievement
 - » school culture and learning environment
 - » student engagement and wellbeing
 - » stakeholder engagement (through parents and teachers surveys)
 - » teaching quality and leadership
 - » school capacity
197. It is important for each school to collect and report data and information that will contribute to an understanding of performance at both local and system levels. Decisions about priority areas for school improvement strategies need to be based on a range of high quality data and should represent qualitative and quantitative sources. Information collected should:
- » be about performance and achievement, particularly in relation to achieving set goals;
 - » inform formative and summative processes; and
 - » improve accountability and transparency.
198. The self-assessment process is one that informs good school planning. It incorporates the analysis of student performance data, using both high quality external test results and school-based information, to find better ways of meeting the learning needs of students. It provides the opportunity to evaluate specific areas of school practice in areas of management and education. It also allows schools to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of school systems such as planning, communication, curriculum delivery, professional learning and improvement.

199. The results of a school review/reflection process are then used to develop the school plan or to measure performance against the schools strategic plan or action plans if mid way through the cycle and feeds into the annual school report. Many schools use a range of evaluation tools to support their assessment, including best practice documents or standards, and survey tools for parents, students and teachers. For example, annual student and parent surveys are an intrinsic part of Victoria's Accountability and Improvement Framework for Government Schools. The information from these surveys is used to inform school strategic plans and schools are required to report on a range of key measures from these surveys in their Annual Report to the school community. In WA, student, parent and teacher survey instruments are made available to schools by the department in paper and electronic forms. They are not mandatory and the data is not centrally collected however, all schools in WA are required to report annually on the satisfaction of parents and students.
200. Most schools undertake a long term strategic planning process and develop a three or four year strategic plan—except in instances such as the Queensland example earlier, where the school operates with a one year improvement cycle. In this process, the school community (that is, staff, administration, and parents and citizens association/school council) collaboratively plan how it will improve student achievement, monitor school performance and provide direction for the operational planning.
201. School or strategic plans articulate an improvement strategy with longer-term improvement priorities and outcomes and key shorter-term indicators describing progress towards the achievement of targets for the coming year. School plans do not represent all that happens in a school or even everything that is most valued in a school. The intent of school planning processes is to strategically and systematically focus on areas identified as the priorities that require change and improvement.
202. Typically, the school plan or strategic plan sets long term (3–4 year) improvement priorities, based on a thorough evaluation of performance data and contains quantifiable performance targets and realistic timeframes. The broad priority areas in school plans are flexible in order to meet the differing needs and priorities of schools, regions and state or territories while still considering national education goals. Some priority areas in the strategic plans give rise to more specific areas for action which may have shorter timeframes and have their own action plans as separate measurable areas for implementation. These provide the basis for allocation of resources within the plan. In order for outcomes to be optimal and targets met, there needs to be an alignment between resources and priorities.
203. The majority of states (including Queensland, NT, Victoria and ACT) have a four year strategic planning cycle (NSW and SA operate on a three year cycle and WA schools may operate anywhere between a one year and five year cycle). Schools in all jurisdictions must provide an annual report. In most cases these reports are to their school community as well as a higher authority such as the regional or central office which is used as a primary source of information on the school by the school reviewer, if that school is participating in an external review.
204. In the ACT and Queensland, all schools are required to develop an annual operating plan in conjunction with their 4 year strategic plan. In the ACT, the operating plans address the specific strategies that will be implemented in that year to assist in achieving the targets set within the school plan. Annual reporting on the operating plan is used as the source of evidence for an annual review conducted by school network leaders as well as a means to report to the school community. The reports also become the cumulative source of evidence for external validation at the end of the four year cycle of review.
205. In Queensland, all schools undertake short-term operational planning requirements in accordance with their strategic improvement cycle (Queensland schools can opt to operate on a four year strategic review which leads to strategic planning or partnership agreements, or an annual review informing year on year short term operational plans). The operational plan addresses:
- » Key strategies and targets that will drive improved performance in student outcomes;
 - » Strategies for effective workforce planning including professional development to ensure staff capacity and capability to deliver improved student performance; and
 - » The school budget developed using the approved budget tools and procedure.
206. Operational plans as used in Queensland schools are succinct and may include action plans to detail actions and milestones to implement strategies. Operational plans and the school budgets are developed in consultation with and endorsed by the schools Parents and Citizens association/school council and either endorsed by the principal's supervisor or provided to the principal's supervisor by the end of February each year.

207. The annual school report is the most significant formal means by which schools report their achievements, plans and future directions to their local communities. All government schools produce annual school reports which contain analysis of student performance data and provide a record of the school's self-evaluation and achievements on targets. These are provided to the appropriate state or territory education department and in some states to local government or regions as well. They are public documents and are often provided on school and system websites. (Note: Annual school reports are required to be produced by all schools in Australia and they are now required to be on school websites as part of Australian Government requirements in the NEA and SAA.)
208. Annual school reports provide the community with a range of information about the school, including information about school performance. They give parents and other members of the community a clear sense of how students in the school are progressing and what is being done to maximise student achievement. It is recognised that school reports may also serve as a vehicle for promoting the school. This can influence the design and presentation however the primary purpose is to report on school performance and deliverables, often referring to progress of meeting goals set out in their strategic or action plans.
209. External reviews are conducted at the state and territory and system level although practices do differ between states/territories and systems. External reviews may be at the school's discretion, randomly selected and in some cases, required due to performance issues. For example, in WA, standard reviews are undertaken by Directors Schools and these are complemented by reviews undertaken by an Expert Review Group (ERG) (see Table 8).

Table 8: Western Australia Expert Review Group

The Expert Review Group—A case study of Western Australia's commitment to critical review process	
<p>The Expert Review Group (ERG) is considered to be external and independent (to the school) even though it is a section within the WA Department of Education and Training. The Expert Review Group is responsible to the Director General (of the WA Department for Education and Training) for conducting three types of school review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » identifies schools whose performance raises concern » schools with identified areas of exemplary practice » reviews of schools at the direction of the Director General. <p>For identified schools whose performance raises concern, in addition to a focus on the standards of student achievement, the review team, under the leadership of the Director, Schools Review investigates all aspects of the school operations.</p>	<p>The review team develops a review report which presents the findings and describes the school's performance in relation to components of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework, and provides a set of prescribed improvement strategies. Prior to the report being finalised, the findings of the review are discussed with the school principal and Director Schools. The report is presented to the Director General for approval and a summary of the report is made publicly available.</p> <p>Directors Schools are responsible for working with the principal in developing, supporting and monitoring the school's intervention plans, in line with the Expert Review report.</p> <p>A six month follow up review is conducted by the Director, Schools Review with advice provided to the Director General regarding the school's progress.</p>

210. As mentioned previously, the majority of independent schools operate autonomously. Independent schools do not rely on central agencies, and are separately accountable to their stakeholders. As schools in the sector operate independently, evaluation of the entire independent sector is not undertaken.
211. Evaluation and assessment therefore takes place at the school level for independent schools. It is imperative for independent school to have a process of continuous evaluation and assessment in order to ensure schools continue to meet the needs of students and expectations of parents. The majority of independent schools are members of their state or territory Association of Independent Schools. Many Associations provide support to their member schools through a range of professional services which include supporting schools in self-evaluation and identifying strategies for improvement and innovation.
212. A detailed focus study on Victoria's school assessment and evaluation procedures is provided in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Victoria's School Assessment

A focus study on Victoria's school assessment procedures

Victoria's Accountability and Improvement Framework for government schools was designed to provide a coherent planning and accountability process for schools constructed around the evaluation of progress, planning for improvement, reporting on progress, and managing risk and compliance.

Based on a four-year cycle, schools undertake a process of school self-evaluation, which in conjunction with the school review, contributes to the development of the School Strategic Plan.

School self-evaluation is a process of engaging the school community in reflecting in a systematic, comprehensive and detailed way on the school's achievements in regard to student learning, student engagement and wellbeing, and student pathways and transitions. The school self-evaluation focuses on questions such as "What student outcomes did we achieve?", "Why did we/did we not achieve improvements in student outcomes?", and "How effectively did we manage our resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?" Principals and School Councils have a shared responsibility for overseeing the preparation of the school self-evaluation, including development of the methodology that will be used. The value of the school self-evaluation process is fully realised when the broader school community is significantly engaged and takes ownership of the final document. Schools are encouraged to establish a working party or parties, representative of the school community, to ensure there is broad engagement.

Following upon the school self-evaluation, schools undertake a school review. School review is designed to provide an expert, independent analysis of current school performance and practice, and to advise on appropriate goals, targets and improvement strategies that will help shape the school's new Strategic Plan. The differential model of school review recognises that schools are at different stages in their development and allows schools to undertake a review that reflects their particular context and stage of growth. The four types of review—negotiated, continuous improvement, diagnostic and extended diagnostic—differ in the level of resourcing, with the latter providing for a more intensive review to meet the needs of those schools requiring immediate assessment and intervention. The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development contracts organisations to provide school review services. School reviewers have the following skills and experience:

- » Expertise in school improvement and organisational effectiveness within the educational sector
- » Thorough knowledge of the Victorian education system and the policies and frameworks used to support school improvement

- » Ability to establish effective professional relationships, with a high level of interpersonal skills including negotiation and diplomacy
- » Excellent communication skills, with an ability to convey complex information in a concise, professional and effective manner appropriate to the audience, both via written and oral means
- » Expertise in data analysis and interpretation
- » High ethical standards

Reviewers undergo an initial accreditation program delivered by the department, and are also required to attend a yearly briefing. Contractors are required to ensure reviewers engage in other professional development activities to ensure they maintain their expertise. Reviewers include academics, retired high performing school principals and former senior education officials.

In addition to the reviewer selection and accreditation process, and the requirements for ongoing training, the department uses a range of mechanisms to ensure the quality of school reviews. These include:

- » Members of school review panels complete feedback surveys on the review.
- » Regional Network Leaders or regional staff involved in the review process provide feedback on reviewers and review reports.
- » All Diagnostic and Extended Diagnostic Review reports are reviewed by the department before the draft report is provided to the school.
- » A sample of continuous review reports is assessed by the department.
- » Representatives from the department will from time to time attend school review panel meetings.

The primary audience for the review report is the school and School Council. This is consistent with the principles embedded in the School Accountability and Improvement Framework that continuous school improvement depends upon strengthening the internal accountability and responsibility of a school rather than a sole focus on external accountability.

The school reviewer does more than simply verify the conclusions in the school self-evaluation. The reviewer's expertise in data analysis, their extensive knowledge of the education sector and their understanding of the factors that impact on a school's capacity to improve, means that they can provide a sophisticated analysis of the school's data, its internal capacity and the strategies that will assist the school to make progress.

The focus for review reports is analysis and key recommendations. Where appropriate, reviewers refer to specific findings to support their conclusions. While the school review provides an objective and critical assessment of the school it also recognises the school's achievements.

213. The links below provide more detail of school assessment practices on an individual state or territory basis, including framework documentation where available.

Table 10: State and Territory School-level practices

State/Territory	Document
New South Wales	<p>NSW School Planning Implementation procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » NSW school plan 2009–2011 https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/strat_direction/schools/officeschoolsplan0911.pdf » NSW Framework of School Development Accountability (only available to NSW government schools through NSW DET's Intranet)
	<p>Accountability and Improvement Framework for Victorian Government Schools (2008)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » School self-evaluation guidelines 2010 http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/account/operate/2010_SSEGuidelines.pdf » School review guidelines http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/account/operate/2010_School_Review_Guidelines.pdf » Annual implementation Planning Guidelines http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/account/operate/2010_Annual_Implementation_Plan_Guidelines.pdf
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 2010 Framework policy document http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/qse2010/pdf/strategy.pdf » School Improvement and Accountability Framework—Destination 2010 http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/accountability/docs/dest2010.pdf
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Improvement and Accountability Framework http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/DecsImprovementandAccou-1.pdf
Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » School Improvement and Accountability Framework (2008) http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/accountability/Docs/SIAF%20Final.pdf
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » School Improvement Reports http://schoolimprovement.education.tas.gov.au/2008/
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » DET accountability and performance improvement framework—overview: http://www.det.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/4127/apif_overview.pdf
Australian Capital Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » School Improvement framework 2009 http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/64298/SchoolImprovementFramework.pdf » School self assessment matrix http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/71160/Self_Assessment_Matrix.pdf » School Improvement Direction 2010–2013. http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/117552/SchoolImprovementDirections2010-2013.pdf » Annual reporting guidelines http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/19506/Rep2CommSchoolProgPerformance_edited.pdf

214. Schools receive data packages with information from student assessments which can be used for improvement. Teachers can utilise the data and information provided to schools (such as NAPLAN results and other student assessment information) to improve student outcomes through:

- » integrating information with classroom data and using this to develop intervention programs to support higher levels of student achievement in literacy and numeracy;
- » determining where they need to make adjustments to teaching programs and strategies;
- » connecting with teachers in other, similar schools to share ideas; and
- » engaging with parents in support of their children's learning.

4.2 School Reporting Process

215. The reporting requirements for schools are a collation of legislative, policy and program reporting requirements in each school year. They include mandated reporting requirements arising from Australian Government and state legislation and agreements, departmental policies and procedures and key departmental programs.

Competencies to Assess Schools and to Use School Assessment Results

216. Support is provided to schools through their state or territory government or educational authority. Some states and territories provide detailed guidebooks and templates for the assessment and review processes. Others provide feedback regarding the assessment process and outcomes. For example, the Queensland government has introduced Teaching and Learning Audits⁶⁵ across all Queensland government schools from 2010 which provide a comprehensive curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment audit. Following the audit, each principal is provided with a detailed report in relation to their progress against systematic expectations and accountabilities. These audits assist government schools to monitor their practice to ensure a focus on continuous improvement.

Using School Assessment Results

217. School assessment results, in the form of annual reports and strategic plans, are used by systems as important elements in their own system-level evaluation process. School assessment results are published in the form of an Annual report, which is made available to all stakeholders. By making this type of detailed analysis available to central authorities, schools are provided with an opportunity to display best practice and improvements. It also allows authorities to identify when additional assistance may be needed in order to make improvements. This may lead to extra funding or support and the provision of best practice guides.

218. School assessment results are also used to effectively aid research by external bodies with a view to measuring current practices and achievements and implementing best practice ways towards continuous improvement for all schools. For example, in 2005, the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development undertook an evaluation of schools that had recently developed their school strategic plan and annual implementation plans in order to inform the revision of the current guidelines and supporting materials. They commissioned an external company (Auspoll) to undertake a qualitative and quantitative research project as part of the evaluation, which included: research into sample school's strategic plans and annual implementation plans; discussion groups with regional representatives and principals; on-line survey of principals and school presidents; stakeholder interviews and discussion groups with parents on annual reporting to school communities.

219. The research was designed to focus on the school planning and reporting components of the school accountability and improvement frameworks, such as the school strategic plan, the annual implementation plans and the annual report. The findings were used to inform the revision of current guidelines, templates and support materials for 2006 and beyond and the broader evaluation of the Framework overall. The findings from the research were presented in a final report to the Victorian State Government⁶⁶.

220. Another example of how individual school assessments are used in the wider system approach to improving educational outcomes is the research project the Victorian government undertook recently in 2009, which also demonstrates their continual approach to analysis and use of school assessment to inform future policy and direction. The research program was undertaken to study how Victorian government schools have improved student performance and answer the following questions:

- » Which school practices and behaviours drive student success in Victorian schools, regardless of student characteristics?
- » How are these practices transferable across schools in Victoria?
- » What are the starting points for schools wishing to implement, strengthen and sustain the practices that lead to success?

65 Further information on the Teaching and Learning Audits can be found here: <http://education.qld.gov.au/nationalpartnerships/teach-learn-audits.html>

66 AUSPOLL Report to Victoria Government Department of Education and Training August 2006

221. The research aimed to enhance knowledge of each practice, confirming that it is not only the direction of activity, but the intensity and linkages between practices that set some schools apart in achieving success for all students. Table 11 is an excerpt from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s publication *Signposts: Research points to how Victorian government schools have improved student performance*⁶⁷.

Table 11: Practices and Behaviours of Selected Victorian Schools that have Improved Student Performance

In order of increasing frequency 	Using data
	Coaching, mentoring and sharing expertise
	Raising staff expectations of students
	Establishing and aligning values, vision and goals
	Working in teams
	Aligning professional learning
	Raising Students’ expectations
	Assigning staff to key priority areas
	Focusing on literacy and numeracy
	Establishing partnerships
	Personalising through individual learning plans
	Engaging students
	Articulating clear staff performance expectations
	Targeting resources to student needs
	Releasing staff for group learning, dialogue and planning
	Recognising staff and student achievement

Implementation of school assessment

222. All government schools across Australia must take part in some form of assessment and evaluation process—annually as well as a long term strategic review. This does not differ between states, although the level of assessment and requirements can vary. The main concerns expressed by schools in relation to this is how to ensure all members of the school community have sufficient data literacy to engage in productive conversations regarding school performance.
223. Non-government schools are different to government schools regarding school assessment. While still providing transparency to their school communities through annual reporting, school evaluation practices are performed on an individual basis and are not necessarily mandatory.
224. Catholic schools are committed to providing an outstanding education in faith and knowledge for Catholic families. School reviews are underpinned by the principles of procedural fairness, transparency, excellence, efficiency and effectiveness. The Catholic system has a detailed school improvement framework in place, which all Catholic school adhere to. School improvement arrangements differ between states and territories and the Catholic dioceses but maintain common elements fundamental to meeting the national evaluation and assessment framework including educational goals. For example, the Archdiocese of Melbourne set a framework for all Catholic schools including a mandatory school self-reflection report and an external school review every four years. Schools must have a four year School Improvement Plan in place which relates to each year’s annual report and action plans. The school’s annual report meets the requirements of the Australian and state regulations. Catholic school improvement or review frameworks are designed to allow individual schools the flexibility of determining how they will take forward their responsibility for maintaining quality and continuous improvement.
225. Independent schools are accountable to a range of stakeholders, including students, parents (who are also fee-paying partners), founders and other financial supporters, the Australian Government and state and territory governments, as well as other authorities (for example, ACARA). All stakeholders have a significant interest in how the funds given

⁶⁷ Signposts: Research points to how Victorian government schools have improved student performance Paper No. 16 May 2009 Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/publ/research/nws/Signposts_report.pdf

to them are used. Independent schools maintain a strong focus on accountability and generally ensure they have effective mechanisms in place to report to their stakeholders on their progress, improvements and goals.

226. The autonomous governance arrangements of independent schools means that the school board plays a key role in ensuring schools are accountable, particularly in matters of self-regulation. The principal of an independent school is accountable to the board for the school's educational programs in terms of how they relate to the strategic ethos of the school.

4.3 Policy Initiatives

227. The current national reform agenda is driving an increased focus on school performance and accountability. The reform agenda has some significant implications for schools, particularly relating to strategic planning processes, development and implementation of reform strategies, monitoring and reporting of outcomes, and quality assurance processes. This has led to some states and territories directing attention to enhancing school performance improvement frameworks.
228. Of particular note is the Australian Government's initiative of the *My School* website. Several states and territories already publish websites detailing school information, including performance data, such as Victoria,⁶⁸ which uses a value-add approach to measuring performance improvement,⁶⁹ Tasmania⁷⁰ and WA.⁷¹
229. The *My School* website provides schools with a further element for school assessment purposes. School can use the information on the *My School* website to;
- » Monitor performance and identify priority areas in which to focus improvement efforts;
 - » identify schools with similar students (statistically similar schools) that are performing at a high level, particularly in their priority areas;
 - » explore success factors in statistically similar high-performing schools across the country and incorporate relevant strategies into their improvement plans; and
 - » communicate with the wider school community about their performance and gain support for improvement initiatives.
230. The Smarter Schools National Partnership reform agenda also has important implications for schools—particularly in relation to strategic planning processes, development and implementation of reform strategies identifying best practice in systemic support, monitoring and reporting of outcomes and quality assurance processes. There is much to be gained from national collaboration in determining the best possible approaches to enhancing school performance improvement frameworks and supporting effective implementation.
231. The School Performance Improvement Framework (SPIF) project, as part of the National Partnerships, focuses on collaboration at a national level through sharing experiences and best practice amongst participating jurisdictions with regard to their approaches taken during the development and/or enhancement of school performance and improvement frameworks. The project's main aims are to enable schools and systems to have a shared knowledge of best practice frameworks to support them to innovate, reform and drive improved school performance.
232. Recent reforms in Australia have started a transition towards a more holistic/connected approach to school performance and improvement at all levels. This includes an increased emphasis on qualitative aspects such as quality leadership and teaching, establishing and maintaining high expectations, in addition to the already established national assessments.
233. There is recognition that school performance and improvement frameworks have a critical role in accountability, reporting and transparency as well as in improving school performance itself. School improvement frameworks and school assessment practices are usually developed in consultation with principal, teacher, school council and parent stakeholder groups, which assists with stakeholder support for the process. Schools and systems need the rich information that school performance and improvement frameworks provide to assist with planning, designing interventions and developing responsive programs to ensure quality schooling is delivered to all students.

68 <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice/Home.aspx>

69 <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/aboutschool/schoolreports/default.htm>

70 <http://schoolimprovement.education.tas.gov.au/2008/>

71 <http://www2.eddept.wa.edu.au/schoolprofile/home.do>

Chapter 5: Teacher Appraisal

234. Teachers employed in Australian schools may be subject to appraisal for three reasons:
- To gain registration/accreditation to teach within their state/territory;
 - As part of their employer's performance management and development processes; and
 - To gain promotion positions in schools in recognition of quality teaching performance (Advanced Skills Teaching positions).
235. This chapter will discuss the current practices, procedures, implementation and use of teacher appraisal across these three facets.

5.1 Teacher Registration/Accreditation

236. In order to teach in Australian schools, teachers must be registered/accredited to teach in the relevant state or territory. All states and territories in Australia, with the exception of the ACT, have statutory teacher registration authorities responsible for registering teachers as competent for practice. Teachers who satisfactorily fulfil the registration requirements are assigned different levels of registration, ranging from graduate teachers to school leaders. Each of the teacher registration authorities has its own set of standards and procedures for registration.
237. In the ACT, teachers are not required to complete formal teacher registration with an external authority. Teachers applying for jobs at ACT schools must meet the requirements set out by the Department of Education and Training, which are similar to the requirements set by central authorities in other states and territories. The ACT is currently undergoing a project to review their process for teacher registration.⁷²

Overall Framework for Teacher Registration/Accreditation

238. In order to teach in Australian schools, teachers must be registered/accredited to teach in the relevant state or territory.⁷³ All states and territories in Australia, with the exception of the ACT, have statutory teacher registration authorities responsible for registering teachers as competent for practice. Teachers who satisfactorily fulfil the registration/accreditation requirements are assigned or subsequently achieve different levels of registration/accreditation, ranging from graduate teachers to teacher leaders. Each of the teacher registration/accreditation authorities has its own set of standards and procedures for registration/accreditation.
239. The rationale for the current registration/accreditation arrangements is to assure consistency, and thus credibility for the teaching profession within Australia. Requiring teachers to meet a prescribed standard and apply formally for registration ensures that only qualified and suitable people are employed in schools, strengthening the standard of teaching and protecting the safety of all in the school community. Ultimately, registration ensures the integrity and accountability of the teaching profession.
240. The levels of teaching accreditation vary according to the jurisdiction. The different levels of accreditation across Australian states and territories are outlined in Table 12. In most states, teachers reach the first level of accreditation from the relevant authority upon graduation from an approved course of study and after meeting other requirements, such as a first aid qualification, child protection and a police check.
241. In most jurisdictions, courses are approved centrally by the relevant teaching authority. In NSW, for example, courses are approved by the NSW Institute of Teachers. In order to become registered in NSW, all teachers must therefore graduate from these approved courses, or hold an equivalent foreign qualification.

⁷² http://www.det.act.gov.au/employment/teacher_registration_project

⁷³ Registration requirements for each state and territory are detailed at Table 16. Accreditation requirements vary across jurisdictions.

Table 12: Levels of Teaching Accreditation across Australia

Registration Authority	Levels of Accreditation			
New South Wales Institute of Teachers	Graduate Teacher	Professional Competence	Professional Accomplishment	Professional Leadership
Victorian Institute of Teaching	Graduating Teacher	Full Registration		
Queensland College of Teachers	Provisional Registration	Full Registration		
Teachers Registration Board of South Australia	Graduate	Full Registration		
Western Australian College of Teaching	Provisional Registration	Full Registration		
Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania	Graduate	Competence	Accomplishment	Leadership
Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory	Graduate Teacher	Competent teacher	Accomplished teacher	
Australian Capital Territory				

242. Advancement to full registration is achieved after a period of employed teaching practice and achievement against of a number of criteria. This differs across states and territories and is discussed below.
243. Standards of professional practice are referred to in the incremental salary scale in Victoria. Under the terms of the *Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2008*, there is only one classification of classroom teacher, however there are three salary ranges (graduate, accomplished and expert). The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is the only jurisdiction where levels of accreditation are explicitly linked in this way.
244. In NSW, the Institute of Teachers' process for accreditation at higher levels is being taken up progressively by employing authorities, with higher levels of pay linked to accreditation at the level of Professional Accomplishment. A number of NSW independent schools have salary agreements which include a salary scale linked to Institute accreditation at the Professional Accomplishment level. This process has been facilitated by the NSW Association of Independent Schools. In the NSW Department of Education and Training a number of Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) positions, with higher pay, have been created through the *Smarter Schools Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership*.
245. The teacher registration authority in each state/territory maintains records of accreditation decisions. Teachers' progress through the mandatory levels is monitored for achievement within the required timeframe. Likewise, professional development required to maintain registration is tracked and monitored to ensure achievement within appropriate timeframes.
246. Generally, the key responsibilities regarding accreditation are established under the legislation establishing the teacher registration authority in each jurisdiction. Policy setting regarding accreditation, and monitoring processes and decisions are the responsibility of the authority.

Standards for Registration/Accreditation

247. The criteria and instruments used in teacher appraisal as an element of accreditation/registration vary according to jurisdiction. In general terms, a newly graduated teacher may gain provisional registration by proving that:
- » they have met prescribed educational qualifications (i.e. a pre-service teacher education course approved by the teacher registration board);
 - » they have a good command of the English language; and
 - » they are of good character (i.e. satisfactory results in a criminal history check).

248. The performance criteria for a teacher to gain 'full' registration or a standard of 'Professional Competence' require completion of a defined minimum number of days teaching practice, and, in some instances, appraisal of the applicant teacher against the relevant teaching standards. Different approaches are taken across the states and territories to assess teachers for 'full registration'. The time for which a provisionally registered teacher must teach before progressing through the full registration process varies considerably from state to state, from 80 days in Victoria to 200 days in Queensland, SA and WA. The evaluation methodologies followed can also vary depending on the jurisdiction in which the process takes place. Table 13 below summarises the appraisal process by which provisionally registered teachers can progress to full registration through the teacher registration authorities.
249. Teacher accreditation is differentiated for the type of teacher (primary, secondary, subject or other specialist) through the evidence of practice required of the teacher. Teacher appraisal is also differentiated at different stages of the career in the jurisdictions of NSW, Tasmania and the NT using the distinct set of standards describing each stage (Graduate, Competent, Accomplished, Leadership).

Table 13: Summary of Appraisal Process to Progress from Provisional to Full/Competent Registration

Teacher Registration Authority	Period for which teacher may remain provisionally registered/ accredited	Teaching days required before applying for full registration	Evaluation	By whom
New South Wales Institute of Teachers	3 years	160–180 days (Institute guideline)*	School based evaluation of teacher's practice against the Professional Competence Teaching Standards and completion of accreditation report for Professional Competence' with document examples of teacher's work.	Teacher Accreditation Authority. For moderation purposes, External Assessors reviews reports
Victorian Institute of Teaching	12 months + possibility of further extension of 12 months	80 days	Evidence of professional practice against Standards assessed by a school-based panel. Recommendation Report— statement outlining how applicant meets Standards-used by the Institute to grant full registration where the standards are met. Process supported by induction, including mentoring, where ongoing informal assessment of practice assists teachers to develop practice to meet standards.	School based panel comprising the Principal, a trained mentor and another teacher selected by the provisionally registered teacher.
Queensland College of Teachers	2 years + possibility of further extension of 2 years	200 days (1000 hours)	'Provisional to Full Registration Recommendation Report' involves an ongoing process with applicant providing examples of practice to demonstrate achievement across Standards	Principal
Teachers Registration Board of South Australia	N/A (provisionally registered teachers do not have to apply for full registration)	1 year (200 days)	Ratings on five point scale (unsatisfactory to outstanding) against elements of Teaching Standards and recommendation	Principal

Teacher Registration Authority	Period for which teacher may remain provisionally registered/ accredited	Teaching days required before applying for full registration	Evaluation	By whom
Western Australian College of Teaching	3 years	1 year	Mentor nominated at start of ongoing process. Over period, applicant collects evidence from classes, activities and experiences demonstrating ability to meet Teaching Standards, and meets regularly with mentor. Once Standards met/exceeded, application completed with Referee declaration that applicant has met Standards	Mentor/Collegiate Support Person (CSP)
Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania	Up to 3 years + possibility of further extension 1 year	185 FTE days	Teachers provide evidence of meeting Competence standard from every day classroom teaching	School-based panel nominated by Principal
Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory	Up to 3 years with the possibility of a further 1 year extension	180 FTE days	Teachers provide evidence of meeting standards to the competent level from everyday classroom teaching. At the TRB level a sample audit is conducted on the evidence provided	School-based panel nominated by Principal
* Employers may have additional requirements				

250. The teaching standards against which teachers are assessed by the relevant authorities differ slightly according to the relevant state or territory registration authority, and are outlined in Table 17 at the end of the Chapter.

251. In all states and the NT, after teachers have initially become registered within their jurisdiction, they must maintain or renew their registration. In all states, the period of registration is commonly 5 years, with the exception of SA where it is 3 years. The process varies between states and territories, however commonly includes participation in Professional Development (PD) opportunities. Table 14 summarises the process for maintenance/renewal of registration.

Table 14: Maintenance of Registration

Teacher Registration Authority	Period of registration	Requirements	Process
New South Wales Institute of Teachers	5 years	100 hours of professional development addressing teaching standards—50 hours of Institute-registered and 50 hours of teacher-identified.	Teacher records and evaluates their PD experiences in Institute database. 'Teacher Maintenance of Accreditation Report' completed by teacher and TAA or their delegate.
Victorian Institute of Teaching	5 years	100 hours of standards referenced professional development activities and 50 days teaching, educational leadership or equivalent practice in the previous five years. 50% activities referenced to 'research and knowledge sourced from outside immediate school work environment'	Evidence of PD activities and currency of practice to be maintained and available for audit upon request. Teacher is required to complete a declaration in their renewal application that they have maintained their professional practice.
Queensland College of Teachers (QCT)	5 years	At least 30 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) per year	Evidence of CPD maintained and available for audit upon request. Records may be maintained online at the QCT.
Teachers Registration Board of South Australia	3 years	Completion of Mandatory Notification Training (issues about neglect and abuse of children)	Verified copy of certificate of Mandatory Notification Training to be attached to registration application form.
Western Australian College of Teaching	5 years	List of 16 PD activities based on Standards. Teacher must complete a minimum of three activities to renew membership.	Activities can be recorded online at the WACOT website. Professional learning records required, including reflection notes. Random audits are conducted to ensure professional learning requirements are met. Renewal application completed online.
Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania	Up to 5 years— Expires 31 December		Completion of renewal application, payment of fee
Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory	5 Years	Required to complete a statutory declaration stating they have not, during their last period of registration, either been the subject of disciplinary proceedings or been charged or convicted of a criminal offence. Have completed 180 FTE days over 5 years + 100 hrs professional learning over 5 years and new criminal history check	No documents required except the statutory declaration. Teachers have until 31 January to renew. If not submitted by this time then they are required to submit a new application for teacher registration.

Registration/Accreditation Personnel and Data Use

252. The evaluators appraising teachers' achievement for accreditation are experienced professionals. Their decisions are made against a detailed set of standards, supported by a range of explanatory documentation. In a number of jurisdictions, the evaluator is the principal at the school in which the teacher is employed. The registration authorities and employers provide a range of resources and support measures to ensure that principals can undertake effective appraisals and that staff are supported/guided through the processes.
253. Personnel undertaking the evaluation process often undergo specific training. For example, the Victorian Institute of Teaching, offers Principal Briefings in locations across the state. The evidence-based process for teacher accreditation in Victoria has been independently evaluated on an annual basis since 2004. These reports evaluate the effectiveness of the process in developing practice and supporting entry to the profession. They provide feedback for modification and refinement of the process and support materials, and identify pressure points and issues for the Institute to address or raise with school leaders and educational stakeholders. For example, the 2008 report identified the perception by Provisionally Registered Teachers (PRT) who had previously worked in another career prior to teaching that they receive less school support than PRTs where teaching is their first career.⁷⁴
254. In NSW, all accreditation personnel are provided with advice and support for making decisions by the NSW Institute of Teachers. Trained external assessors, who are engaged through a merit selection process, are utilised to monitor accreditation decisions at mandatory levels. They are trained in:
- » The importance of the role including the status of the assessors' decisions and understanding the impact of these decisions;
 - » Professional ethics—incorporating equity, confidentiality and objectivity of judgements;
 - » Unpacking of the standards—particularly for Professional Competence; and
 - » Comparing and contrasting sample reports and evidence.⁷⁵
255. In the NSW government sector, the Regional Director acts as the Teacher Accreditation Authority at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership levels, and is responsible for making final accreditation decisions at these levels.⁷⁶

Using Registration/Accreditation Data

256. The appraisal of teachers against the registration/accreditation authority standards forms part of the teacher regulatory system to ensure teachers are qualified, of suitable character and competent before being fully admitted to the profession. Beyond the levels of full/competent registration, teachers engage in accreditation on a voluntary basis.
257. The results of teacher appraisal are used by some teacher employing authorities to reward teachers who achieve higher levels of accreditation. Rewards may be provided through salary steps when accreditation level is achieved, or by requiring an accreditation level for a designated position with defined duties. Undertaking professional development designed to address particular teaching standards is a requirement for teachers to maintain their mandatory accreditation in some jurisdictions.
258. The identification of teacher and school leader strengths and weaknesses may inform budget, staffing and resource decisions and provide targets for school improvement as expressed in individual school plans.
259. Data are also often used to assess different facets of the teaching registration/accreditation. For example, the Victorian Institute of Teaching has indicated that broad based data collected over time has allowed the Institute to determine the attrition rate for Provisionally Registered Teachers and the length of time taken to attain full registration. This supports the development and revision of policy and assists evaluation of the appraisal process.

74 These evaluation reports are available from the Institute website at http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=26

75 External Assessors Policy, NSW Institute of Teachers, Located at <http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/ignitionSuite/uploads/docs/External%20Assessor%20Policy%20-%20Oct%2007.pdf>

76 Accreditation of Teachers at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership in NSW Government Schools Policy https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/employment/recruit/acc_teachers/PD20080384.shtml?level=

260. Particular states have used the data collected through the appraisal process to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the process on supporting entry into the profession and developing practices. For example, Victoria and SA use the data to analyse trends in retention and attraction of teachers to the profession. NSW have revised their procedures and will implement a new teacher approval process for 2010 as a result of monitoring the appraisal process and resulting feedback.

Implementation of Registration/Accreditation

261. Each jurisdiction undertook extensive consultation with the teaching profession and employee, employer and universities' representatives to determine the teaching standards and key aspects of accreditation processes and policy prior to implementation. Close collaboration with the school sectors and other education stakeholders has been essential to ensure that the processes for registration/accreditation are viewed not just as regulatory requirements but also formative and supportive of teacher practice.

262. Committees and groups are formed in some states and territories with members representative of stakeholder groups. The main stakeholders of the NSW Institute of Teachers, for example, are represented on the Teacher Quality Council, the body responsible for determining accreditation policy. Regular meetings with key stakeholders provide forums for advice, consultation and progress reports. As a result, stakeholders support teacher accreditation processes. In Victoria, stakeholders have been invited to be represented on the Victorian Institute of Teaching committees and working groups.

5.2 Performance Management

263. Teacher appraisal processes vary across Australia depending on the jurisdiction or school concerned. Commonly, features would include:

- » school-based (internal) processes. In the case of school systems (for example, government and Catholic schools), these are often connected to external systemic processes;
- » an understanding and contextualising of the school environment, with processes developed as a result of current research on effective teaching and learning;
- » individual focus, while acknowledging the links to teaching teams;
- » appraisal seen as a routine, ongoing component of teacher's role; and
- » appraisal processes seen as an important tool/strategy to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

264. These processes include elements of performance planning, personal development planning, recognition of achievement and feedback and review, which enable employees and managers to identify areas for improvement, and learning and development opportunities. This information may also be used more broadly to coordinate professional development within the school.

265. Appraisal takes account of the school context as it uses the school's strategic plan and mission statement as part of the evaluative framework. In most jurisdictions, teacher appraisal processes form part of an overarching school improvement framework.⁷⁷ In all instances, however, the primary focus of teacher appraisal is as a supportive and development process to aid teachers in their professional career development.

266. The current approaches aim to promote teacher reflection on their practice, build communities of practice within the school, improve teaching and learning, encourage teachers to take greater responsibility for their performance and promote ongoing learning throughout teachers' careers. There is an increasing recognition that teacher appraisal is one aspect of improving overall school performance as well as providing a formal opportunity to recognise effective teacher practice.

267. In developing an annual performance plan, each cycle is informed by the outcomes of the previous cycle. While this may create a longitudinal dimension within that school setting, records relating to each appraisal are generally not maintained centrally.

⁷⁷ Some examples include: ACT: School Improvement Framework; NT: Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework; Queensland School Improvement and Accountability Framework; SA: Improvement and Accountability Framework; Tasmania: School Improvement Framework. These are further discussed in Chapter 4.

268. In NSW government schools, teachers completing the mandatory maintenance of accreditation at Professional Competence are also tracked for satisfactory completion of their Teacher Assessment Review Schedule (TARS) over each 5 year mandatory maintenance period. Teachers in NSW who fail to achieve the required standards are supported through a designated Performance Improvement Plan.
269. In the ACT, a process called Professional Pathways has been designed to support continuous improvement of performance and career goal setting. The process has a focus on outcomes resulting from a teacher's performance, and features explicit and negotiated performance measures. All permanent teachers participate in the Professional Pathways process. New recruits and temporary teachers undergo professional performance assessment through Contract and Probation processes, and this assessment constitutes their Professional Pathways participation.
270. The NT currently uses observational and multi-rater systems in the form of Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) for teacher appraisal. The observed teaching sessions are compulsory for teachers and inform the development of the teacher's performance plan. While teachers may choose the person who will observe them in the first instance, there is an expectation that the principal or another school leader will also observe the teacher.
271. The multi-rater BARS system is voluntary, with the indicators based on the NT Professional Standards for Teachers. Teachers may rate themselves or invite others within the school to rate their performance. Both systems are internal to the school and linked to the school's annual operational plan under the Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework.
272. In Queensland, a Developing Performance Framework is being implemented in schools. The agreement between the Queensland Teachers union and the Department of Education states that "in establishing and implementing the Framework, each school or work place should adopt an approach that is appropriate to its needs. Unlike traditional models of individual performance appraisal, the framework supports group, team, collegial and mentoring approaches to the process of developing performance".
273. Employers undertake responsibility for the implementation and management of their performance management processes. In government schools, undertaking of annual performance appraisals may be mandated under the terms of the state's public service legislation. (For example, Tasmania—Section 34(1)(g) of the *State Service Act 2000*, Northern Territory *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*, South Australia—*State Service Act*, Western Australian *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.)
274. The Grattan Institute has undertaken research on the impact of teacher appraisal in Australia and published their findings in May 2010. The findings of the report, '*What Teachers Want: Better teacher management*'⁷⁸ shows that quality teachers are the most significant influence on student performance. The report presents the views of Australian teachers about the current state of teacher evaluation and development based on findings from the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) from 2007–08. The report recommends that improving the quality of teachers and teaching should be a central goal of education policy and that evaluating the work of teachers and developing their teaching skills is a key part of improving the quality of teaching.
275. The Victorian Auditor-General's Office have recently examined whether the quality of teaching in government schools has improved as a consequence of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) approach to managing teacher performance using the department's Performance and Development Guide. This audit is discussed further in Table 15 below.

78 Grattan Institute 'What Teachers' Want: Better teacher management' http://www.grattan.edu.au/publications/033_report_what_teachers_want.pdf

Table 15: Audit of Managing Teacher Performance in Victorian Government Schools

Victorian Auditor-General's Office's Audit of Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools⁷⁹

On 26 May 2010 the Victorian Auditor-General's Office tabled the report *Managing Teacher Performance in Government Schools*. The audit examined whether the quality of teaching in government schools has improved as a consequence of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's (DEECD) approach to managing teacher performance using the department's Performance and Development Guide.¹⁰

The audit found that DEECD is addressing the limitations of its approach to managing teacher performance. This includes trialling new ways to understand and measure teacher capabilities, and trialling performance pay. This action is positive but currently there is insufficient evidence to assess and reliably demonstrate whether the quality of teaching has improved.

The Auditor-General's Office made seven recommendations to the DEECD in the report:

Recommendation 1: Mandate a set of core performance indicators and an assessment scale against which schools can assess and grade teacher classroom skills and knowledge against expected requirements; and monitor change over time in teacher performance.

Recommendation 2: Review how it can effectively integrate all its performance management and development tools and processes to optimise its evaluation and management of teacher performance.

Recommendation 3: Obtain regular and reliable assurance that schools are managing the performance and development cycle in line with its requirements particularly for teacher underperformance.

Recommendation 4: Identify and address why some teachers know little or nothing about how they are assessed, and how to use the cycle to improve their teaching from one year to the next.

Recommendation 5: Define underperformance so that schools share an understanding of what it is.

Recommendation 6: Identify what principals and assessors need to address teacher underperformance constructively, provide that support and assess its effectiveness.

Recommendation 7: Remind schools of its requirements for teacher performance assessments and participation in professional development activities.

DEECD responded to the review by supporting all but the first recommendation. The department's comments on each recommendation can be found in Appendix D of the final report.

Responsibility for Performance Management

276. Operational responsibility for conducting performance management processes in schools is generally delegated to principals and school leaders and training in the process is available to them. While the actual appraisal process generally occurs between the teacher and their line manager or supervisor, the Principal may be responsible for ensuring that levels of compliance are reported to the department.
277. For example, in WA, the Department of Education monitors the progress of the performance management process through the following:
- » Information that the process has taken place for staff is reported to the principal's line manager, the Director Schools, as part of the school accountability process;
 - » Reporting is undertaken centrally through the department's school compliance survey which requires schools to indicate the extent of performance management participation; and
 - » The WA Office of Public Sector Standards Commissioner conducts an Annual Agency Survey to monitor compliance related to the Public Sector Standards in Human Resource Management, of which performance management is one of the standards. A report on the results of the survey is communicated back to the agency.
278. As part of the performance management process, a range of information may be used as a basis for discussion about performance. This could include student assessment data and classroom planning and evaluation information. Performance development plans are generally aligned to system objectives, regional and school plans, roles and responsibilities. Feedback by students and other stakeholders may form part of the process.

⁷⁹ The full report, along with an Audit Summary can be found here: http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reports_publications/reports_by_year/2009-10/20102605_teacher_performance.aspx

⁸⁰ <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/perform/pmgmntTS.htm>

279. In the ACT, feedback from staff, student and parents is received in mandatory surveys which are part of the School Improvement Program. This data is reviewed by school management and may feed back indirectly to teachers through the identification of school priorities.
280. In NSW, mandatory teacher accreditation is articulated with NSW Board of Studies' school registration processes for non-government schools. Employers must demonstrate that they meet the teaching and learning requirements of the *NSW Education Act* and accreditation requirements of the *Institute of Teachers Act*. In relation to the *Institute of Teachers Act*, the Boards regular audits of schools ensure employed teachers are all correctly accredited. The Institute is represented on the Board of Studies Registration Committee. Accreditation issues raised through the Board's registration process are referred to the Institute for resolution.

Performance Management Procedures

281. The performance criteria and reference standards used in teacher appraisal vary depending on jurisdiction. In all states and territories except the ACT,⁸¹ professional teaching standards underpin appraisal.
282. Teacher appraisals undertaken as part of a performance management process are generally managed within the school by the principal or their nominee. While the process differs slightly in each jurisdiction, generally each cycle lasts 12 months. At the commencement of a new cycle, the teacher and their supervisor negotiate a performance plan; they meet mid-cycle to discuss progress against the plan, and then review performance against the plan at the end of the cycle. The performance plan aligns the teacher's goals with their professional roles and responsibilities and with school and system priorities. Particularly in the non-government sector, additional criteria may be identified by the school and teachers that specifically relate to their position or school's values and ethos. In all instances, regular informal feedback is regarded as an integral part of the process.
283. A range of tools may inform the development of each teacher's performance plan, including professional teaching standards, guidelines on the performance management process, strategic plans, school plans, etc. In the case of the NT teachers, development of the performance plan is also informed by classroom observation by the supervisor.
284. The ACT Department of Education and Training *Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement 2009–2011* describes the Professional Pathways process:

In the Plan, the teacher and their professional mentor will identify and record realistic and agreed goals and strategies for the school year. The plan will focus on the teacher's:

- » professional work performance;
- » professional and work related goals;
- » professional learning;
- » pathways for development;
- » personal growth and career development;
- » whole of school role and responsibilities; and
- » information technology and other training needs.

In conducting their professional discussion the teacher and their professional mentor will have regard to relevant factors, including:

- » priorities in the departmental strategic plans and other relevant departmental initiatives;
- » the needs of the school and the School Development Plan;
- » priorities set out in the school's business and education plans and policies;
- » the need to enhance student educational outcomes;
- » curriculum assessment and reporting data;
- » the school setting, including whole of school roles and responsibilities, management and team structures, the school community, parents as partners;
- » other factors which may affect the teacher's circumstances, such as part time work or leave arrangements; and
- » the requirement for teachers to participate in professional learning.⁸²

81 The ACT Department of Education's Professional Teaching Framework, located at http://www.det.act.gov.au/employment/teach_in_canberra/professional_teaching_framework

82 ACT DET Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement 2009–2011, Located at http://www.det.act.gov.au/files/employment/Teaching_Staff_EBA_2009-2011_signed.pdf

285. The processes employed in schools vary, but may include: classroom observation, self reflection, peer reflection, support of a mentor, formal coaching, appraisal meeting with assessment panel or supervisor, interview, teacher portfolio, student results or learning outcomes.
286. In the NT, teachers may choose to use a Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) to rate their current performance. The BARS uses key behavioural descriptors of practice based on the NT Professional Standards for Teachers—Competent, tabulated into a BARS.

Competencies to Manage Performance

287. As teacher appraisal processes are generally school-based, the levels of training and support provided to those involved may vary considerably. In most schools, the principal is ultimately responsible for management of the process, and may determine what training is offered to line managers/supervisors who are delegated to undertake the appraisals. Formal training in the performance management process is generally available for principals and other school leaders.
288. Information sessions, workshops and training may be available to teachers and their supervisors at the school level. A range of templates and information sources is available to participants in teacher appraisal processes.
289. In SA, a Quality Performance Development Pilot will be conducted during 2010 to work towards building capacity in the giving and receiving of feedback and the development of a performance improvement culture in sites.

Using Performance Management Data

290. Performance and development arrangements are generally internal to the school. As part of the process, professional development needs and proposed action for the next cycle are identified to support the teacher's ongoing learning and development and their capacity to undertake his or her role effectively. Personal development plans are negotiated in the context of school and departmental strategic plans and identified priorities.
291. At a school level, results of teacher appraisal inform the school strategic plan, which reflects the overarching priorities of the relevant department. Professional development planning, school policy development, planning and resourcing (including staffing and budgeting) may also reflect the results of teacher appraisals.
292. Generally, the completion of a successful performance management cycle enables teachers to progress to the next increment in their pay structure. In the non-government sector, the results of performance management processes may be used to recognise and reward teachers, including the allocation of performance-based pay.
293. Data on the impact of current arrangements for performance management is not consistently maintained centrally. Participation in performance management processes is mandated in public service legislation and teacher enterprise bargaining arrangements for government school teachers.
294. In WA, for example, the Public Sector Commission's Annual Agency Survey collects information from all public sector agencies relating to compliance with the general principles of human resource management, including performance management. The 2008–09 survey results indicated an improvement in performance management implementation in schools against the previous year. This included 85 per cent of schools indicating staff had participated in at least one performance management cycle; and 52 per cent of schools indicating staff had participated in at least two performance management cycles.
295. In the non-government sector, performance management may not be mandated, and the number of schools with formalised programs, the frequency of appraisal and the purpose of the process varies considerably.

Implementation of Performance Management

296. In government schools, performance management processes have been in place for a number of years. At various times, concerns have been expressed about the time involved, the number of personnel required to support the process, and the resourcing of such processes. Teacher unions have raised concerns about the possible linkage of performance management processes to performance pay. The current processes are viewed as providing a positive approach to demonstrating accountability within the context of school workplace and organisational goals. Unions are concerned that using the process to rate teachers against each other would shift the improvement and support culture to a perceived punitive approach. Teacher unions have expressed particular concern about rating teacher performance based on the test scores of their students.

297. The implementation of performance management processes is generally undertaken through a partnership approach with professional associations and unions, particularly in the implementation of a new policy. A range of strategies is undertaken to implement performance management across the system, including:
- » training for line managers in schools;
 - » central delivery of professional development programs;
 - » incorporation of performance management into departmental policies and training; and
 - » provision of support material for schools—for example, templates, website resources.
298. In the non-government sector, individual schools have sought assistance from a variety of external providers to commence the development and implementation of teacher appraisal processes.

5.3 Advanced Skill Teachers

299. Three state and territory education departments (NT, SA and WA) have developed classroom teacher classifications beyond that of “professional competence”. These classifications carry higher pay for those who have demonstrated superior (“accomplished”) teaching performance. Some similar schemes operate in the non-government sector.⁸³ These classifications are not linked directly to advertised positions in specific schools. Rather, teachers usually gain these positions after applying for an assessment of their performance. Teachers do not have to be at the top of the salary scale to apply for these positions.⁸⁴
300. In the case of SA’s Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) assessments, the process is tracked through system databases and data regarding the location, age and profile of teachers who are assessed at this level are currently being used to identify potential aspiring leaders and for placement of pre-service professional experiences.

Procedures for Accreditation as Advanced Skills Teachers

301. Teacher applicants for ‘Advanced Skills Teacher’ positions apply for assessment of their skills. Methods of assessment usually rely on presenting portfolio ‘entries’.
302. In the Advanced Skills Teacher 1 (AST Level 1) process in SA the level of expertise and professionalism is validated by a panel consisting of a Site Leader, Equal Opportunity representative and a Peer Evaluator. The assessment of AST Level 2 also requires panel validation of the level of expertise and professionalism and evidence of teacher leadership in site projects.
303. The AST process has recently been the subject of a Commissioner’s ruling in Enterprise Bargaining, meaning that it will be a more strongly site-based process from October 2010.
304. The NT’s Accomplished Teacher status (which replaced the ‘Teacher of Exemplary Practice’) requires applicants to participate in an ‘inquiry process’ over 12 months, based on the NT Teacher Registration Board Accomplish Standards of Professional Practice for Teaching.⁸⁵ This process is currently being reviewed.
305. Applying for Level 3 Classroom Teacher positions in WA involves a two-stage process. In Stage One, applicants submit a written portfolio which includes an application form, introductory statement, written statements and portfolio of evidence, and referees’ verification of portfolio statements. The portfolio may include evidence such as students’ work, a letter of support from a colleague, extracts from professional learning journal, and items in multimedia format.

83 According to the Independent Education Union of Australia, similar schemes in the non-government sector involve Experienced Teacher (Level 2) classification in Victorian Catholic Schools and Advanced Skills Teacher in Queensland Catholic schools.

84 P.47, Ingvarson, L, Kleinhenz and Wilkinson, J, Research on Performance Pay for Teachers, ACER, March 2007

85 Ten teachers top of class, Northern Territory News, 30 October 2009, Located at http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2009/10/30/96575_ntnews_pf.html

306. In Stage two, applicants are required to prepare and lead a 45 minute reflective practice session and participate in sessions of other applicants. A reflective practice session includes an oral presentation and facilitated discussion. Applicants are assessed against five teaching competencies that align with Phase 3 of the WA Department of Education's *Competency Framework for Teachers*.⁸⁶ An assessment rubric⁸⁷ is used to assess each competency. Each competency is divided into four or five indicators, which must be addressed within each competency.
307. NSW introduced the Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) position in July 2009 with the first 13 HATs taking up their appointments in term 1, 2010. The HAT position is an initiative of the *Smarter Schools National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality*. A HAT is an excellent teacher who models high quality teaching for his/her colleagues across the school and leads other teachers in the development and refinement of their teaching practice to improve student learning outcomes.
308. HAT positions are classroom based positions with a reduced teaching allocation to enable them to mentor and support other teachers, including preservice teacher education students, beginning and more experienced teachers, work with university partners and take a role in the school's leadership team. HATs are remunerated at a level that recognises their high quality and ability to cultivate the teaching skills of their colleagues.
309. HATs are appointed through a merit selection process which requires, as a prerequisite, application to the NSW Institute of Teachers for consideration of accreditation at Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership.

Table 16: Summary of Selection Methods for the Promotion Positions in Government Schools where Teachers apply for Recognition of Quality Teaching Performance

State/ Territory	Promotion position	Who is eligible?	What are the assessment methods?	Who performs the assessment?
South Australia	AST 1/2	All teachers, step barrier removed	Portfolio, lesson observation, presentation and discussion	Three member assessment panel (inc principal)
Western Australia	Level 3 Classroom teacher	All teachers	Portfolio of evidence and reflective practice discussion, assessment against standards	Level 3 Classroom Teacher: Panel, moderation committee. External component
Northern Territory	Accomplished Teacher (replaced 'Teacher of Exemplary Practice')	All teachers	Modelling of teaching, role in curriculum and professional learning	Assessment panels, moderation committee

Adapted from: Ingvarson, L, Kleinhenz, E and Wilkinson, J, *Research on Performance Pay for Teachers*, ACER, March 2007⁸⁸

Competencies to Appraise Teachers and to use Appraisal Results

310. Peer Evaluators are employed in the Advanced Skills Teacher process in SA. A merit selection process is used to select highly competent teachers from the field. Induction into the role includes work shadowing and extended opportunity to moderate the criteria used in the identification of AST.
311. SA teachers self-select and self direct their preparation for assessment as an AST. Site leaders play a role in local support, observation and feedback. A central Teacher Quality unit provides support through information sessions and professional development conferences.
312. Applicants for the Accomplished Teacher positions in the NT reflect on their achievements, strengths and practices against the standards throughout their process. During the process, they are supported and challenged by their principal, teaching colleagues and an external panel who consider their propositions and evidence in relation to the Accomplished Teacher Standards.

86 Competency Framework for Teachers, Western Australian Department of Education and Training http://www.det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/cms-service/download/asset?asset_id=5245770

87 Assessment Rubric, WA Level 3 teacher http://www.det.wa.edu.au/redirect/?oid=com.arsdigita.cms.contenttypes.FileStorageItem-id-2785847&stream_asset=true

88 Available here: http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/profiles/Research_on_performance_pay_for_teachers.htm

313. Applications for Level 3 Teacher positions in WA are assessed by two trained assessors. The assessors may be Level 3 Classroom Teachers, heads of learning areas, principals or deputies. In the event that they cannot reach an agreement, a third assessor will assist with the assessment.⁸⁹
314. Applicants who are successful in gaining AST positions receive a pay rise and may assume leadership or mentoring roles in their schools commensurate with their levels of expertise. These teachers are identified as potential leaders by school principals and are encouraged to participate in aspiring leaders programs and to apply for merit select positions.
315. In SA, Advanced Skills teachers are paid at a higher salary increment and currently need to apply for re-assessment every five years. Accomplished teachers in the NT receive a 4 per cent pay rise. Data on SA's ASTs are currently being analysed to identify trends in attraction and retention, potential to provide quality practicum placements.

Implementation of Advanced Skills Teacher Schemes

316. The range of Advanced Skills Teacher schemes around Australia were developed in negotiation with the relevant union and based on standards developed in collaboration with the profession. Successful implementation of these schemes addressed the following principles:
- » Base salaries set at a professionally appropriate rate and not undermined by the adoption of a scheme for identifying and recognising Accomplished Teachers;
 - » Schemes must be open to all;
 - » Teachers and unions must be included in scheme development;
 - » Appraisal of accomplished teachers must be on the basis of agreed criteria, and conducted fairly and impartially by trained personnel;
 - » Accomplished Teacher Categories must be included in relevant industrial instruments negotiated between the union and the employer; and
 - » All groups, including teachers and their unions, employing authorities, administrators and the community should be included in the planning process.⁹⁰

5.4 Policy Initiatives

317. A range of initiatives has been undertaken across the jurisdictions to improve the effectiveness of teacher appraisal. These include extensive consultation on changes to processes; ongoing communication about expected practice; development of Internet services to facilitate processes, including online registration, databases of professional development courses and personal PD registers; and training for line managers. Departments also undertake reviews of the underlying policies, related programs and documentation.
318. For example, in 2010, the SA Department of Education and Children's Services is planning:
- » a Policy Review of its Performance Management Policy, including Managing Underperformance guidelines; and
 - » a Review of the Advanced Skills Teacher programme.
319. The Australian Government is committed to developing effective workforce planning and supporting structures to identify teaching performance and to reward quality teaching at the national level through the \$550 million Smarter Schools—Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership (TQNP) agreement. This Partnership runs over five years and is designed to provide nationally significant and sustainable reforms to attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and school leaders in schools.
320. The broad areas for reform include:
- » attracting the best graduates to teaching through additional pathways;
 - » improving the quality of teacher training in partnership with universities;
 - » developing national standards and teacher registration to aid teacher mobility and retention;
 - » developing and enhancing the skills and knowledge of teachers and school leaders through their careers;
 - » improving retention by rewarding quality teachers and school leaders; and
 - » improving the quality and availability of teacher workforce data.

⁸⁹ Level 3 Classroom Teacher, Department of Education and Training, Western Australia, Located at <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/detcms/teachingwa/teaching-wa/shared-content/13ct/13ct.en?oid=MultiPartArticle-id-2453419>

⁹⁰ Recognising Accomplished Teaching, Independent Education Union of Australia, Located at: http://www.ieu.org.au/recognising_accomplished_teaching.pdf

321. The Partnership recognises the importance of teachers in making a difference to individual students and ultimately to the long-term productivity of Australia. Fifty million dollars will go to professional development and support to empower principals to be able to better manage their schools and achieve improved student results.

Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL)⁹¹

322. The implementation of National Professional Standards for Teachers by AITSL will provide nationally agreed and consistent requirements and principles to guide reform in the areas of teacher registration, accreditation of pre-service teacher education courses and accreditation of teachers at the graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead teacher levels. The Standards will also inform professional learning and performance appraisal.
323. A consultation and validation process will be conducted in jurisdictions and nationally from March to May 2010. It is expected the Standards will be implemented by the end of 2010.
324. These reforms will promote mobility of the teaching workforce and will increase public confidence in the professionalism of teachers by providing a nationally agreed quality assurance mechanism demonstrating that Australian teachers and school leaders have the required competencies to be effective educators.

5.5 Accreditation/Registration Documentation

- » NSW Institute of Teachers
<http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/Accreditation---Policies---Manual.html>
- » Victorian Institute of Teaching
http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/files/documents/1563_Reg_A_B&W.pdf
- » Queensland College of Teachers
<http://www.qct.edu.au/registration/full.html>
- » Teachers Registration Board of South Australia
<http://www.trb.sa.edu.au/forms.htm>
- » Western Australian College of Teaching
<http://www.wacot.wa.edu.au/index.php?section=3>
- » Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania
<http://www.trb.tas.gov.au/registration.htm>
- » Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory
<http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/registration/index.shtml>

5.6 Education Department Performance Management Policy

- » NSW Department of Education and Training
<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policiesinter/category/search.do?level=Schools&categories=Schools%7CPerformance+appraisal%7CPerformance+%26+assessment+of+teachers>
- » Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/perform/pmgmntTS.htm>
- » Queensland Department of Education
<http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/performance/employee/teachers.html>
- » South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services
http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/ods/pages/Performance_Management/
- » Tasmania Department of Education
<https://staff.education.tas.gov.au/hr/managing/performance-management-framework>

91 The AITSL website can be accessed here: <http://www.aitsl.edu.au/aitsl/go>

Table 17: Professional Teaching Standards from Registration Bodies

Jurisdiction	Authority	Stages	Domains	Elements
New South Wales	NSW Institute of Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Graduate » Professiona Competence » Professional Accomplishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professional Knowledge » Professional Practice » Professional Commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teachers know their subject/content and how to teach that content to their students » Teachers know their students and how their students learn » Teacher plan, assess and report for effective learning » Teachers communicate effectively with their students » Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills » Teachers continually improve their professional knowledge and practice » Teachers are actively engaged members of their profession and the wider community
Source: http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/Main-Professional-Teaching-Standards.html				
Victoria	Victorian Institute of Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Graduating Teachers » Full Registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professional Knowledge » Professional Practice » Professional Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teachers know how students learn and how to teacher them effectively » Teachers know the content they teach » Teachers know their students » Teachers plan and assess for effective learning » Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments » Teachers use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning » Teachers reflect on, evaluate and improve their professional knowledge and practice » Teachers are active members of their profession
Source: http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=23				
Queensland	Queensland College of Teachers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teaching and Learning Relationships » Reflective Practice » Professional Renewal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teachers design and implement engaging and flexible learning experiences for individuals and groups » Teachers design and implement learning experiences that develop, language, literacy and numeracy » Teachers design and implement intellectually challenging learning experiences » Teachers design and implement learning experiences that value diversity » Teachers assess and report constructively on student learning » Teachers support personal development and participation in society » Teachers create and maintain safe and supportive learning environments » Teachers foster positive and productive relationships with families and the community » Teachers contribute effectively to professional teams » Teachers commit to reflective practice and ongoing professional support
Source: http://www.qct.edu.au/Publications/ProfessionalStandards/ProfessionalStandardsForQldTeachers2006.pdf				

Jurisdiction	Authority	Stages	Domains	Elements
South Australia	Teachers Registration Board of South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Graduate entry » Change of status—from provisional to full registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professional Relationships » Professional Knowledge » Professional Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teachers actively engage in personal and collegial learning within the professional community » Teachers foster trusting and respectful relationships with all learners » Teachers work effectively with parents/caregivers and the wider community » Teachers know about learning processes and how to teach and implement » Teachers know the content they teach » Teachers know about learning contexts and diversity » Teachers plan and implement teaching strategies for successful learning experiences » Teachers assess and report learning outcomes » Teachers create a safe, challenging and supportive learning environment
Source: http://trb.sa.edu.au/professional_standards.htm				
Western Australia	Western Australia College of Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Registered Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professional Knowledge » Professional Practice » Professional Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teachers know, respect and are responsive to the diverse needs of their students » Teachers know and teach relevant curriculum content and skills » Teachers know how their students learn and how to teach them effectively » Teachers use a range of teaching practices and resources to engage students in effective learning » Teachers create and maintain a safe, challenging and supportive learning environment » Teachers plan, implement, assess and report for effective learning » Teachers reflect on, critically evaluate and improve their professional knowledge and skills » Teachers act in an ethical and professional manner to uphold the integrity of the profession » Teachers establish and maintain collaborative partnerships within the school and wider community
Source: http://www.wacot.wa.edu.au/index.php?section=41				
Northern Territory	Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Graduate teachers » Competent Teachers » Accomplished Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professional Engagement » Professional Knowledge » Professional Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Teachers are active members of their profession » Teachers reflect on, evaluate and improve their professional knowledge and practice » Teachers know their students » Teachers know how students learn and how to teach them effectively » Teachers know the content they teach » Teachers plan, program, assess and report for effective learning » Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments » Teachers use a range of teaching practices and resources to engage students in effective learning
Source: http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/standards_ethics/standards.shtml				

Jurisdiction	Authority	Stages	Domains	Elements
Tasmania	Teachers Registration Board of Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Graduate » Competence » Accomplishment » Leadership (to be developed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Professional Knowledge » Professional Relationships » Professional Practice » Professional Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » (Competent) Teachers demonstrate knowledge of how students learn » Teachers know the critical content knowledge, key concepts and essential understandings of the subject » Teachers know how to design engaging learning sequences and the processes and skills required to teach them » Teachers engage in systematic professional learning to extend skills and capacities » Teachers reflect on and evaluate their teaching practice to continually improve » Teachers know understand and adhere to legal and ethical obligations and be aware of the nature of professional behaviour » Teachers make deliberate efforts to strengthen professional teacher-student relationships » Teachers explicitly teach the skills for developing social competence to promote positive relationships » Teachers communicate effectively with all stakeholders » Teachers work collaboratively to set and achieve common goals » Teachers use fair, valid and reliable assessment strategies to inform teaching and learning » Teachers plan concept-based teaching for deep understanding and transfer of learning » Teachers use a range of appropriate teaching and learning strategies, materials and resources » Teachers report student progress to key stakeholders » Teachers operate in an equitable manner » Teachers establish a collaborative and cooperative learning culture » Teachers intentionally develop positive relationships with key stakeholders » Teachers establish and maintain a safe, positive and supportive physical environment » Teachers use strategies to support positive behaviour and build resilience in students

Source: http://www.trb.tas.gov.au/teaching_standards.htm

Chapter 6: Student Assessment

325. Australia has an extensive system of national, system and school-level assessment. Student assessment plays an integral part in the overall framework for evaluation and assessment at all levels. Student performance in Australia is measured by a wide range of assessment types, ranging from national standard tests with no punitive measures, to ongoing daily formative assessment in the classroom. At the national level, ACARA is responsible for both full cohort and national sample assessments to all Australian students (the states and territories administer NAPLAN within their jurisdiction), the results from which are used as key performance measures towards national goals.⁹² At the system level, many state and territory governments administer system wide testing such as senior secondary testing, which is used together with the national assessments as part of system evaluation. At the school level, student assessment also plays a role in informing schools and teachers about students' individual achievement. This chapter will discuss the detail of student assessment in Australia at all levels of governance.⁹³
326. In line with the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, assessment of student progress aims to be rigorous and comprehensive. It reflects the curriculum, and draws on a combination of the professional judgement of teachers and testing, including national testing. To ensure that student achievement is measured in meaningful ways, state and territory governments and the Australian Government, through MCEECDYA, work together to ensure all school sectors develop and enhance national and school-level assessment which focuses on three key priorities:⁹⁴
- » assessment for learning, which enables teachers to use information about student progress to inform their teaching and the students' learning pathway;
 - » assessment as learning, which enables students to reflect on and monitor their own progress to inform their future goals; and
 - » assessment of learning, which assists teachers to use evidence of student learning to assess student achievement against goals and standards.
327. As part of the NAP in Australia, there is full cohort national literacy and numeracy testing as well as national sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship and ICT literacy and international assessments. All states and territories also have their own school-based assessment practices, as well as senior school assessments that are used for university entrance.
328. Student assessment in each state and territory is designed to test student's application of knowledge based on their curriculums, in order to evaluate what the students have learned from the curriculum. Student assessment, based on goals and standards set in state/territory curricula, is often developed at the school-level and includes a wide range of tools for students to demonstrate their understanding and use of the curriculum, such as presentations, assignments, experiments and research projects to name a few. Students in some states and territories participate in forms of testing at year 10, which in some states and territories, goes towards their School Certificate (or equivalent) to recognise the achievement of the end of compulsory schooling. All states and territories also have some form of Senior Secondary completion assessment. Individual state and territory student assessment practices will be explained more thoroughly further in the chapter.

92 This is discussed in detail in chapters 2 and 3.

93 Previous chapters have explored the role of student assessment in the overall evaluation framework.

94 http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/PMRT_Measurement_Framework_National_KPMs.pdf

6.1 National Assessment Program

329. National assessments provide detailed information on how well students, schools, sectors, and jurisdictions are performing in essential areas. It is recognised that this is particularly important in Australia where education policies and processes can vary between jurisdictions.
330. The National Assessment Program (NAP) is an ongoing program of assessments used to monitor progress towards the Educational Goals for Young Australians⁹⁵ and for some assessments (such as NAPLAN, PISA and TIMSS) also used to monitor COAG outcomes and targets. The NAP encompasses all tests endorsed by MCEECDYA such as the national literacy and numeracy tests (NAPLAN), Science Literacy, Civics and Citizenship and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Literacy³ and Australia's participation in international assessments PISA and TIMSS. These student assessments have no formal civil effects for students.
331. The national assessment program is an example of the collaborative approach of all governments along with the non-government education authorities working together. The NAP provides the means by which the achievement and progress of Australian students, schools and systems can be measured and reported using nationally comparable data against national standards. It provides information needed for policy analysis and to set policy directions.
332. The subject matter in the sample assessments and NAPLAN tests is carefully selected so as to be inclusive of as many students as possible. Indigenous education experts in states and territories provide specific feedback to assessment authorities in states and territories on the suitability of the test items and the appropriateness of the stimulus materials for Indigenous students. Jurisdictions that have schools in remote and very remote areas provide feedback on the suitability of test materials for those students.
333. All students are encouraged to participate in the NAP assessments and special provisions may be made to support individual students with special needs, including students with mild intellectual disability and communication or behavioural disorders. Special provisions reflect the kind of support and assistance the student usually receives in the classroom. This is based on the principle that all students have the opportunity to participate in educational activities, including assessment activities, on the same basis as other students, and to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competencies. It is also consistent with the Disability Standards for Education, which set out the rights of students with disability and the obligations of school authorities in relation to education under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
334. Student background characteristics are collected through national assessments to allow the breakdown of results by the following sub-groups: sex, Indigenous status, language background other than English status, geographical location, Indigenous status by geolocation and socioeconomic status (parent education and parent occupation). The standardised reporting of NAPLAN tests offers an objective view of student performance and a basis for empirically based decision making about literacy and numeracy policies, practices and resourcing. NAPLAN results also enable longitudinal tracking of student achievement, and can be used to inform and evaluate intervention strategies for underperforming students or groups of students, based on student background characteristics.
335. In general, teacher unions are cautiously supportive of the national assessments. Their major concern is how the data may be used to assess the performance of schools and possibly teachers. Principal and parent organisations also generally support the national assessment program, in particular, the NAPLAN assessment, although some have concerns about reporting practices, such as the publication of school results and the potential misuse of data particularly by media organisations.
336. The publication of results from annual NAPLAN testing is a concern of some stakeholders, with respect to how the information may be used in the public domain- the primary issue being the creation of school league tables which some believe could have negative effects on poor performing schools. The Australian Education Union (AEU) issued a moratorium to prohibit teachers participating in 2010 NAPLAN in May 2010 because of this issue. The tests went ahead after the union reached an agreement with the then Minister for Education to form a working party of educational experts, including representatives of the AEU, to provide advice on the use of student performance data and other indicators of school effectiveness on the *My School* website.
337. Many stakeholders have expressed their support for NAPLAN and see it as an effective tool that can be used by teachers as a valid point-in-time measure of student performance.

95 http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf

338. Following the release of the Australian Curriculum, the National Assessment Program will be reviewed. The review aims to ensure the NAP, including NAPLAN is aligned with the curriculum and provides the objective information necessary to drive continued improvements in student outcomes.

National Sample Testing

339. The rolling three-yearly cycle of sample assessments began in 2003 with Science Literacy⁹⁶ (year 6), followed by Civics and Citizenship⁹⁷ (years 6 and 10) in 2004 and ICT Literacy (years 6 and 10) in 2005. For each assessment a sample of students, around five percent of the student population at each year level, from all states and territories and covering all school sectors and a number of sub-groups of students (such as Socio Economic Status and Indigenous Status) participate in the testing. The participating schools are chosen carefully to ensure that the samples are sufficiently large to provide an accurate picture of the performance of students in each state and territory and are a representative mix of large and small schools, government and non-government, in metropolitan, provincial and more remote locations, and of students from a range of socio-economic, Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) and Indigenous backgrounds.
340. The sample assessments are designed primarily to monitor national and jurisdictional progress; however participating schools receive their own students' results and the school's results. These can provide useful information to classroom teachers and assist with curriculum planning. Following each of the national sample assessments, all schools are able to access a range of the items that were used in the assessment, enabling them to compare their own school performance against the state or territory performance and the national standard. Although individual students and schools cannot be reported on publicly through the sample assessments, a range of information is published on the results at national, state and territory level, including the proportions of students meeting the proficient standards.

Full Cohort Testing - NAPLAN

341. National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests are conducted in May each year for all students across Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. All students in the same year level are assessed on the same test items in the assessment domains of Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy. Each year, over one million students nationally sit the NAPLAN tests, providing students, parents, teachers, schools and school systems with important information about the literacy and numeracy achievements of students.
342. NAPLAN tests are developed collaboratively by the states and territories and the Australian Government and representatives of the Catholic and independent school sectors.⁹⁸ NAPLAN test development has been informed by state and territory curriculum. NAPLAN provides a national picture of how Australian school students are performing in essential literacy and numeracy skills which is fundamental to helping all Australian children reach their full potential.
343. The introduction of national literacy and numeracy testing in 2008 replaced the eight state/territory based assessments that were used previously and which were equated to provide national literacy and numeracy assessment information. 2008 NAPLAN provided for the first time truly national comparisons of student performance across the full range of student achievement. The quality and the richness of the information from NAPLAN is much greater than that previously provided by state and territory based testing.
344. NAPLAN enables greater consistency, comparability and transferability of results across jurisdictions in a way that was not possible under the previous state based testing system. NAPLAN tests provide rich information on student performance across the full range of student achievement in literacy and numeracy. Parents, teachers and schools know how well students are performing compared with other children across Australia.

96 http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/NAP_ScienceLit_2009_Assessment_Domain_Dec_08.pdf

97 http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/mceecdya/nap_civics_and_citizenship_2007_yrs6_and_10_report,26602.html

98 http://www.naplan.edu.au/verve/_resources/2009_NAPLAN_Summary_Report.pdf

345. The results of NAPLAN are not used to gain entry to university or employment. There are currently no punitive measures applied to schools with poor NAPLAN performance. As part of the National Partnership on Literacy and Numeracy, improvement in NAPLAN results is linked to reward payments for schools funded through this measure. In addition, \$11 million in funding was made available for 110 schools not part of the National Partnership process, who as a result of the *My School* website, were identified as being below or substantially below both the national average and those for statistically similar schools in all areas on the NAPLAN national tests. With the introduction of the *My School* website, which makes NAPLAN results publicly available, there is likely to be increased pressure on schools to show improvement. There is also likely to be increased pressure on governments to take action where schools are not performing well, particularly if they show no improvement over time.
346. From December 2010, NAPLAN student growth data will be available on *My School*. This will show the overall improvement of student cohorts that remained in each school between 2008 and 2010. This is the first time this form of school performance information will be available. Growth measures are regarded as an important complement to the current *My School* reports as they show what improvement has occurred over time in a school for a specific group of students. This provides a measure of the influence of the school itself on student progress, the value schools have added to their students' learning over the two years.
347. Governments have agreed to national minimum standards of achievement for NAPLAN for each year level. Students whose results are below the national minimum standards have not achieved the basic elements of literacy and numeracy required for that year level. These students will need focused intervention and additional support to help them achieve the skills required to participate fully in schooling.
348. One of the most innovative features of NAPLAN is the ability to place all students on a common scale for each domain. The NAPLAN results are reported using five scales, one for each of the following domains: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy. Each of the NAPLAN reporting scales describes the development of student achievement in a domain from Year 3 through to Year 9 along a ten-band scale. Students in year 3 are reported against bands 1–6, in year 5 bands 3–8, in year 7 bands 4–9 and in year 9 bands 5–10. At each year level the second achievement band is designated as the national minimum standard for that year level (see Annex 3).
349. The use of a common scale provides significant information about the performance of, and growth in, individual student achievement which can be monitored over time and add a longitudinal dimension to the data. Through the use of these common scales, it is possible to gauge the achievement of the most able group of students and, at the same time, to pay attention to the group of students who have yet to reach the agreed national minimum standard.
350. NAPLAN draws upon the very best curriculum expertise in designing and reviewing the test, the very best research knowledge and technical expertise in developing the achievement scale and world class psychometric methods in analysing and reporting the results in a meaningful way for teachers and parents.
351. The results from the national testing give Australian education ministers information they need to provide greater support to schools and students in specific areas or years. The information is provided through two nationally available reports.
352. The Summary Report, released in September, provides national-level data and a picture of how each state and territory compares against a common assessment scale. The National Report, released in December is a more detailed report which shows results at national and state and territory levels by achievement levels and/or mean scores as well as by sex, Indigenous status, language background other than English status, parental occupation and parental education, and geographical location (metropolitan, provincial, remote and very remote) at each year level and for each domain of the test. For example governments are able to monitor the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to gauge the effectiveness of intervention strategies.
353. As part of NAPLAN, all schools are provided with a detailed report on their (individual) students' results. Detailed results for the school on the full range of NAPLAN achievement are provided, including the number of students in each band at each year level. Principals and teachers can use this information to monitor student progress and identify students in need of additional support. The information can be used for diagnostic purposes and can assist them in their planning to cater for the individual needs of each student.

354. Parents of students taking the tests also receive a report showing their child's results along with common national key information about his or her performance, such as the national average. Over time, parents are able to monitor their child's progress in literacy and numeracy. For example the parents of a Year 3 student will receive a report that shows the national average, the range for the middle 60 per cent of students, the national minimum standard and how their child is performing. Some states and territories will also provide the school average as well as the items the student successfully responded to and those they didn't. With this information parents can see if their child is performing at a satisfactory standard compared to other students in Australia, or if they need specialised intervention. They can then approach the school to discuss how best to meet the individual learning needs of their child. As the child progresses through the years of schooling they can compare their child's position on the scale with previous years and monitor the improvement.
355. Information about school NAPLAN results is available to the community on the *My School* website. Reporting of NAPLAN results on the *My School* website from January 2010 highlights the performance of each school and how they compare with statistically similar schools.

International Student Assessments

356. Australia's participation in international assessment programs⁹⁹ allows education ministers, schools, education ministers and the community to benchmark Australian education performance internationally by monitoring student progress over time against international standards. This also supports improvements in teaching and learning. Australia participates in two highly regarded international assessments as part of the National Assessment Program—the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Australia will participate in Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) for the first time in 2010/11, however this assessment has not at this stage been accepted as a formal part of the NAP to be undertaken on a regular basis.
357. PISA is conducted every three years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Assessment is undertaken of the reading, mathematical and scientific literacy of 15 year-old students in years 9, 10, or 11. Assessments are internationally standardised and jointly developed by participating countries. 356 schools and over 14,000 students participated in the 2006 PISA assessment in Australia. PISA 2006 results demonstrate that, overall, Australian students perform at a high level in all of the areas assessed by PISA and compare well with students in other OECD countries. However, while still significantly above the OECD average, Australia experienced a decline in reading literacy performance in 2006. This has resulted from a significant decline in the performance of students at the high end of the achievement scale, with no compensatory gains for the lowest achieving students.
358. Further information about PISA and detailed reports on assessments are available on the OECD PISA website.¹⁰⁰ Information on Australia's participation in the 2006 PISA assessment is available from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) website.¹⁰¹
359. TIMSS takes place every four years, and is conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). TIMSS assesses the mathematics and science performance of a sample of students in years 4 and 8 from each participating country. There were 229 primary school and 228 secondary schools and over 8,000 students that participated in TIMSS 2007 in Australia. The performance of Australian students was significantly above the average in maths and science at Year 4, and Year 8 science students' performance was above average in comparison with their international peers, but had declined since the previous study undertaken in 2003. Further information about TIMSS and detailed reports on assessments are available on the IEA TIMSS website¹⁰² and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) website.¹⁰³

99 http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/2010_Testing_schedule.pdf

Link to: White paper 5: Policy frame works for new assessments

100 http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

101 <http://www.acer.edu.au/ozpisa/reports.html>

102 <http://timss.bc.edu/>

103 <http://www.acer.edu.au/timss/datarep.html>

360. International testing measures how well Australian students perform in relation to other countries. PISA and TIMSS results are used as key performance measures within the Australian Government's National Assessment Program to provide data on the progress of Australian school students towards achieving the National Goals for Schooling. In addition, the Council of Australian Governments have agreed that PISA results will be used to measure progress towards their aspiration for schooling and specifically the agreed outcome that 'Australian students excel by international standards'.
361. International assessments such as PISA and TIMSS also inform debate about curriculum. They have lessons in terms of what students can do in some countries compared to others which then lead to policy discussions and debate which can lead to reform to curriculum and teaching. In developing the new National Curriculum, ACARA considered the curriculum of other countries, including those that perform highly in international assessments, such as Finland, Canada, Hong Kong and Singapore.
362. In 2011, Australia will participate for the first time in the PIRLS assessment. PIRLS 2011 is the third, after PIRLS 2001 and PIRLS 2006, in a five-year cycle of assessment that measures trends in children's reading literacy achievement and policy and practices related to literacy. Participation in PIRLS 2010–11 will provide Australia with the opportunity to benchmark reading literacy at Year 4 internationally and will provide data complementary to that collected through NAPLAN. It will also complement TIMSS, as PIRLS will provide data on students' achievement in Reading Literacy in Year 4. In 2010, PIRLS and TIMSS will coincide, allowing the same students to participate in the assessment. Australian governments consider that Australia's participation in PIRLS will provide valuable information for future literacy and numeracy policy development.

Longitudinal Studies of Student Progress¹⁰⁴

363. The Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) is linked to PISA and uses data collected from PISA to inform policy on student outcomes. LSAY tracks young people as they move from school into further study, work and other destinations, from age 15 (when they do the PISA assessment) to 24. Individuals are contacted once a year for 10 years. Information collected as part of LSAY covers a wide range of school and post-school topics, including: student achievement, student aspirations, school retention, social background, attitudes to school, work experiences and what students are doing when they leave school. This includes vocational and higher education, employment, job seeking activity, and satisfaction with various aspects of their lives.
364. LSAY provides a rich source of information to help policy makers better understand young people and their transitions from school to post-school destinations, as well as exploring social outcomes, such as wellbeing. This is a national scale project that began in 1995 and since 2003, survey participants have been selected from school students who participate in the Australian component of PISA.

6.2 State and Territory Student Assessment Practices

365. Each state and territory in Australia has control over its own student assessment programs. They use a mix of summative and on-going formative studies to assess students, which enhance the assessment and learning of students. For example, assessment of student performance in the classroom may be done both formally, through tests, short and long constructed response tasks, projects or rich tasks requiring the planning, development and presentation to peers, and informally through observations and discussion.
366. The primary purpose of student assessment is to improve student performance through monitoring and adjusting teaching methods for individual students as necessary. Assessment is based on an understanding of how students learn and is an integral tool to assess curriculum measures. In this way, it forms a component of course design. The progress of students is assessed against specific curriculum standards for each state and territory, which define what students should know, understand and be able to do. Assessment tools chosen by teachers vary to ensure the students are provided with ample opportunity to demonstrate their ability against the curriculum across a range of contexts.

¹⁰⁴ For more information on LSAY, see <http://www.lsay.edu.au/index.html>.

367. All states and territories have forms of system-wide testing in schools. Table 18 contains links to the state and territory agencies and authorities that develop, administer and coordinate many system-wide assessments. They are responsible for delivering services, such as testing and moderation between schools and sectors and reviewing performance of individual schools and regulating schools so as to work towards national objectives and achievement of outcomes compatible with local circumstances and priorities. The standards, goals and key performance indicators outlined in the relevant states and territory curricula inform assessment practices. Student assessments in each state and territory are designed to test a student's application of knowledge in order to evaluate what the students have learned from the curriculum.

Table 18: Links to State and Territory Assessment Practices and Authorities

State/Territory	Links to authority boards of studies/that set curriculum and assessment
New South Wales	<p>Primary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/index.php » http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/beststart/index.htm <p>Senior and senior secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/index.php » http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/essa/index.php » http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/schoolcertificate.php » http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/hsc.php » http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/ellatest.php » http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/snaptest.php <p>NSW board of studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/
Victoria	<p>Primary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/assessment/default.htm <p>Senior and senior secondary</p> <p>Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/exams/index.html
Queensland	<p>Primary School</p> <p>Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs)</p> <p>Senior and senior secondary</p> <p>Queensland Studies Authority, responsible Preparatory Year to Year 12 syllabuses, assessment, reporting, testing, accreditation and certification services for Queensland schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/10-12/2318.html
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » www.decs.sa.gov.au/assessment <p>Primary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.earlyyears literacy.sa.edu.au/default.asp?id=26846&navgrp=1086 <p>Senior and senior secondary</p> <p>SA Board of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.saceboard.sa.edu.au/newsace/index.php
Western Australia	<p>Primary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/internet/Years_K10/Curriculum_Framework <p>Senior and senior secondary</p> <p>WA Curriculum Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au/ » http://www.det.wa.edu.au/educationalmeasurement/ » http://www.det.wa.edu.au/curriculumsupport/

State/Territory Links to authority boards of studies/that set curriculum and assessment

Tasmania

Primary School

Kindergarten Development Check

» <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/curriculum/assessment/kdc>

» <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/curriculum>

Performance Indicators in Primary Schools

» <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/curriculum/assessment/pips>

Senior and senior secondary

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority

» <http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/>

Northern Territory

Senior and senior secondary

Northern Territory Board of Studies

» <http://www.det.nt.gov.au/students/curriculum-ntbos/ntbos>

Australian Capital Territory

Primary school

» http://www.det.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/assessment_and_reporting/early_years_assessment

» http://www.det.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/20572/PIPSBrochure.pdf

Secondary and senior secondary school

Board of Secondary Studies

» http://www.bsbs.act.edu.au/years_11_and_12/act_qualifications

6.3 Formal Student Assessment

368. Student assessment can be divided into three areas of schooling—primary school assessment, secondary school assessment and senior secondary assessment (usually in years 11 and 12). The majority of assessment that occurs in schools is classroom based and conducted by the teachers as part of the learning program. In the senior secondary years, external assessments are high stakes in terms of students gaining access to tertiary institutions, work placement and employment. There are some school designed, year level assessments. These assessments are often referred to as ‘common tests’ and are generally focused on students in the middle years of schooling. They are usually designed and implemented by schools in an effort to identify student achievement groups and plan for the allocation of resources.

Primary School Assessment Practices

369. Upon commencement of primary school, most state and territory and non-government sector schools conduct an assessment for kindergarten/prep students to determine their current educational and skill level. A school entry assessment supports teachers in; gathering information about the knowledge, skills and understanding children first bring to school; recording the developmental stage the child is in; and using the information to plan learning programs to meet the needs of the child. Some examples of state/territory kindergarten assessment include: SA—conducts a School Entry Assessment, Tasmania and ACT—utilise the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools assessment tool (discussed in more detail below), NSW—conducts a Best Start Assessment and Victoria and WA utilise the Online Interviews in English and Mathematics developed by Victoria.

370. The ACT and Tasmania both conduct Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS), which is used to identify what preparatory students know when they first enter school, diagnose individual students work and assess the progress of students in literacy and numeracy in their first year. This helps to identify which students might benefit from early intervention or enrichment programs. The program is a computer based program which the child interacts with and provides their response to particular questions, usually in a multiple choice format. A further PIPS assessment is undertaken later in the school year to determine student progress and ensure current teaching methods are working or to identify which areas require improvement.

371. In relation to assessment practice in primary classrooms, knowing the students requires making successive judgements about each child, such as what they can do and what they still can't do. This is often assessed through informal internal assessment by the teacher in a process-oriented way (for example, participation in class, talking and socialising and movement skills). In making such judgements over time, teachers can identify the extent of each student's progress: whether learning progress is typical—or whether it has stalled, is slow or rapid. They can then determine what strategies and learning experiences are most appropriate to support each individual's education.
372. Primary schools often use a mix of formative and summative assessment measures. Common assessment methods in primary school settings which are used to provide evidence of achievement using outcomes include observing and recording student achievement as it occurs, mapping progress through the collection of student work samples over a period of time, tasks that incorporate the application of understandings and learning processes in a set project and analysis of non-print-based work samples in areas such as in Visual Arts.
373. Primary teachers throughout Australia use a standards approach to evaluating student progress. The assessment tasks they design are linked to curriculum outcomes and students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of outcomes in a range of tasks.

Secondary School Assessment Practices

374. Secondary school-level assessment practices are varied, ranging from laboratory experiments, essay writing, research papers, presentations, demonstrations, projects, assignments, tests and school based examinations. Schools have the responsibility for determining assessments that best suit the students, including qualitative and quantitative assessment. Formative classroom assessment and standardised testing informs summative teacher judgement regarding student achievement.
375. Student progress is assessed against curriculum and achievement standards/goals set by the state or territory. Areas of learning include English, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and the Environment, Health and Physical Education, Learning Technology, Languages and so on. Collaborative moderation is a key strategy in validating consistency of teacher judgement and marking. Moderation occurs within schools, between schools and across sectors.
376. Formal assessment practices in secondary schooling vary between states and territories but all are specifically intended to measure curriculum outcomes and goals. For example, the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) developed Queensland Comparable Assessment Tasks (QCATs)¹⁰⁵. These are performance-based assessment tasks administered each year to students at both primary and secondary level in Years 4, 6 and 9 to test directly against the curriculum. Their purpose is to provide information about student learning in targeted learning areas of English, Mathematics and Science and to help promote consistency of teacher judgments across the state. Queensland schools have the choice of implementing the QSA developed QCATs or developing their own school-devised QCATs.
377. The Western Australian Monitoring Standards in Education (WAMSE) assessment program provides standardised assessments in Science and Society and Environment. The program has been running since 2008. In 2010 all Year 5, 7 and 9 students from government and Catholic schools and many in independent schools will be assessed in these two learning areas, providing valuable information for WA systems, schools, teachers, parents and students. The assessments aim to assist in improving teaching and learning and student outcomes in these important learning areas and to complement NAPLAN.
378. In NSW, each student's achievement and progress in class is assessed by their teacher(s). Teachers use a variety of ways to assess their students including observing their work in class and looking closely at the work they produce. They make assessments of their students' progress throughout the year.
379. Teachers will also make judgements twice a year of each student's achievement compared with the expectations described in the syllabuses for each key learning area (KLA) subject. Their judgements are made on a 5 point achievement scale, using A-E or the word descriptors; *Outstanding*, *High*, *Sound*, *Limited* and *Basic*. Schools have the option to use either A-E or these words when reporting to a child's parents on the written report provided by each school twice a year.

105 <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/p-9/3163.html>

380. The Essential Secondary Science Assessment (ESSA) is a mandatory test for NSW students¹⁰⁶ who have completed two years of secondary schooling and learning in science. Non-government schools in NSW and independent schools outside the NSW jurisdiction may also register for the ESSA test.
381. The ESSA is a diagnostic test based on the Stage 4 content of the NSW Board of Studies Science 7–10 Syllabus. The ESSA test demonstrates knowledge and understanding in science, skills in planning and conducting investigations and skills in reading, understanding and responding to a range of scientific texts as well as skills in critical thinking and problem solving. The test results provide information about student achievements which are used to support teaching and learning programs. Analysis of these results assists school planning and can be used by schools to monitor development of scientific knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes through time. Schools receive detailed reports containing data about individual student achievement as well as achievement of various groups within the school and the school's performance as a whole. Reports are distributed to schools early in the year following the test and individual reports are provided to parents.
382. NSW Department of Education and Training has developed an on-line tool for teachers and schools towards effectively utilising assessment results to target student performance improvement. The NSW SMART system is an effective analysis, diagnostic and progress measurement tool, including student results from a range of assessments, including NAPLAN and ESSA. A case study on the uses of the SMART system, specifically as a diagnostic tool, is provided at the end of this chapter. (Note: Many states have these sorts of systems.)
383. In some states and territories, Year 10 students sit a formal test developed at the state and territory level around the curriculum goals and standards towards gaining a record of achievement, such as a School Certificate, or Year 10 Certificate. In NSW,¹⁰⁷ The School Certificate is awarded by the NSW Board of Studies to eligible students at the end of Year 10. Each year all students in Year 10 sit for state-wide tests in November in English-literacy; Mathematics; Science; Australian History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship; and Computing Skills. The tests assess individual achievement in the foundation knowledge and skills needed to successfully undertake subjects in Years 11 and 12 and to participate effectively in the wider community. Students receive their own test results for these tests.
384. In the ACT, a Year 10 Certificate is awarded to students who have successfully completed an approved program of study to the end of Year 10. Successful completion includes academic performance, attendance and conduct. Assessment procedures and the grading of student achievements are determined by each individual school. Grades are moderated within the school but not across schools therefore comparison of student achievement between schools is not appropriate.

Senior Secondary Assessment Practices

385. Each state and territory is responsible for conducting assessment and final examination processes for year 12 students. Assessments vary by state and territory in terms of assessment type and structure. They can constitute a combination of school-level assessment and external examinations and often result in the attainment of a senior secondary certificate. External tests are often administered by an external body, such as the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority or the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Examples of some state and territory practices are below and information on other practices can be accessed from the links in Table 18.
386. After completing their senior secondary studies, students who have successfully completed approved courses receive a tertiary entrance ranking which is used, either on its own or in conjunction with other selection criteria, to rank and select school leavers for admission to tertiary courses. Tertiary entrance rankings are reported on a common scale across all states and territories except Queensland. As of 2009, all states and territories reporting rankings on the common scale have adopted a common name for the scale, the Australian Tertiary Entrance Rank (ATAR). The ATAR indicates a student's position in relation to their cohort and is reported as a number between 0.00 and 99.95 in increments of 0.05. The ATAR allows the comparison of students who have completed different combinations of senior secondary courses. The ATAR is calculated solely for use in university admissions.

106 <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/essa/index.php>

107 http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/schoolcertificate/sc_portfolio/sc_portfolio.html

Australian Capital Territory

387. The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) is responsible for assessment and certification for years 11 and 12 in the ACT (including independent and Catholic sector schools), which includes the provision of Tertiary Entrance Ranking. Year 11 and 12 assessment is school based within the parameters set in the BSSS Course Frameworks, available on the BSSS website¹⁰⁸. Each course includes clear advice on formative and summative assessment. Student achievement is moderated across public and non-government sectors on a regular basis to ensure consistency over the two years of schooling.
388. In Years 11 and 12, assessment tasks are focused on outcomes. A range of task types is used to evaluate performance and teachers must ensure students know and understand the outcomes to be assessed. Marking schemes for tasks use words from the outcomes and, where appropriate, words from the performance descriptions. Feedback to students is offered and is based on the marking schemes and indicates achievement of outcomes.
389. The ACT Scaling Test is developed and marked for the BSSS by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and is used to facilitate the comparison of Tertiary Course scores both within schools and across schools and sectors. The ACT Scaling Test for students consists of a multiple choice, a short response and a writing task.

South Australia

390. In SA, the achievements of all Year 11 and 12 students are assessed against the requirements for the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). The SACE Board of SA is responsible for oversight of assessment processes and certification of achievement. Achievement measures of students in Years 11 and 12 are used to determine qualification for the SACE Certificate and to calculate both the University Aggregate and ATAR for university entrance and TAFE Score for TAFE SA selection processes.
391. The SACE allows students to combine vocational education and training (VET) with academic subjects to make their SACE work-related and industry focused. In SA the Industry Pathways Program (IPP) focuses on VET delivery in schools in a number of industry areas, identified as having a priority, based on current skill shortages. Registered Training Organizations (RTO) in SA are responsible for the implementation of competency assessment of VET courses. Most VET courses have workplace assessment components to assess students on their performance in a workplace environment.

6.4 Independent and Catholic Schools Assessment Practices

392. Independent and Catholic schools participate in national and state/territory based student assessments. Many independent schools recognise the potential of student assessment in enhancing teaching and learning. Most state and territory associations of independent schools offer professional learning for teachers on student assessment such as using assessment to inform classroom instruction and ensure student success; enhancing student achievement through the use of embedded assessment; and innovative approaches to student's assessment including the role of new technologies.

6.5 Using Student Assessment Results

393. Student assessment results are used by a number of different stakeholders for different purposes. Firstly, student assessment results are reported to parents and used to monitor student outcomes. Pathway planning officers (or similar, each state has different name for basically career guidance councillors) are employed in secondary schools to work with students around their career choices. Student assessment results are also utilised by students themselves, to reflect on their performance and set goals for future improvement. Classroom teachers use the results to design targeted, differentiated instruction to ensure progress for all students as well as to reflect on and evaluate the success of their instruction, to identify students in need of further support and identify appropriate interventions.

394. School leaders use student assessment results to monitor the progress of students at the school as a whole, to identify students who require additional support, and to evaluate the impact of school policies and programs as well as reflect on the quality of teaching instruction at the school. States and territories have their own custom software systems that provide support to assist school leaders and teachers to assess students, using A-E grades and providing analytical information from standardised assessments and senior secondary data. The use of A-E grading is an Australian Government requirement for all schools under the NEA and SAA.
395. School communities can use assessment results to evaluate and reflect on the impact of school policies and programs and as part of making an informed decision as to where to send their child to school.
396. Student results are used by the school system to identify cohorts of students who require additional support and to evaluate the performance of system policy and initiatives, as well as identify best practice to disseminate across the system. For example, between February and May 2009 a pilot project 'Charting the Course', was implemented in twenty-one WA primary schools to lift the standard of Year Three Reading results. Longitudinal NAPLAN assessment and teacher judgements were used to identify schools requiring intervention. During the project, common assessments for learning processes were used by teachers to inform their teaching and learning programs.
397. In many states, analysis of student assessment data is used to inform curriculum and course review processes. Data on student performance in the end of year exams is made available to schools and authorities in the review of teaching and learning practices to help influence curriculum design.

Support for Effective Use of Assessment Results

398. States and territory education departments offer support for schools for assessing and using assessment results effectively through the development of expertise provided by central office consultants at both primary and secondary level. States and territories provide a wide range of best practice assessment tools and measurement standards, linked to school curricula.
399. Support is provided in the use of software for A to E reporting and NAPLAN data analysis software. Direct school specific support is provided in the use of senior secondary performance data to inform instructional strategies at the classroom level—including the development of effective assessment instruments. There is also direct support provided to all state and territory education districts in the analysis of assessment data. Online and hard copy resources are provided to schools and teachers to support professional learning. Student achievement information is also reported on and addressed in school operation plans.
400. Victoria is implementing a new online system, Ultranet, to support teachers to provide continuous, just-in-time feedback to students and parents in a secure online environment. When used effectively and fully established, the Ultranet will allow teachers to utilise the assessment from previous tasks to inform their development of future learning tasks for students.
401. Teacher and leadership team training is provided in most jurisdictions to improve the competency of teachers to conduct student assessment and interpret results in a meaningful way that will help them adjust teaching strategies to improve student progress. For example, the VCAA conducts in-service courses in schools around Victoria, to develop school leaders' and teachers' skills in interpreting results of NAPLAN testing and VCE examining.
402. Victoria is moving towards utilising diagnostic testing in schools. The English Online Interview (EOL) is the only mandated standardised assessment in Victoria except NAPLAN. EOL is purposed as a diagnostic/instructional tool for teachers, to inform planning and personalised teaching strategies. Results are not reported to students or parents. Schools in Victoria also have access to a range of on-demand diagnostic assessments through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and third parties such as the Australian Council for Educational Research.
403. Table 19 below highlights a new data analysis tool developed in NSW for schools and teachers to use towards improving student outcomes.

Table 19: New South Wales SMART System

Case study: New South Wales SMART system

The NSW Department of Education and Training has developed a sophisticated tool for data analysis in the form of the School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART). This provides diagnostic information on NAPLAN, ESSA (a year 8 NSW based science test) and the NSW School Certificate and Higher School certificate examinations. This information, together with information from school based assessment activities provides a wealth of objective diagnostic information to which teachers can respond. The SMART system is an example of how digital technology can assist in effectively using data and is now also used the ACT and SA.

Analysis of educational outcomes and processes in NSW can be undertaken at many levels, from individual students, to groups of students, cohorts, schools and the system as a whole. The SMART package allows educators to identify areas for improvement as well as strengths in student performance. SMART also provides support through specific teaching strategies designed to improve student outcomes.

The Student Responses feature of SMART provides the ability to view individual student responses for each aspect of the test. You can also view questions answered correctly/incorrectly or, in the case of writing, criterion achieved/not achieved.

SMART is intended to be used by schools to analyse NAPLAN results in-depth. The data and analysis functionality of SMART includes the capacity to:

- » create custom groups of students which could be used to analyse the results of students who have been subject to a specific intervention’.
- » analyse groups of student across the achievement bands which can provide evidence of improved student learning outcomes and effective pedagogy.

- » collate information on the achievement of students on individual items which details patterns of responses.
- » filter information on the performance of the school or for various groups of students by literacy/numeracy, by subject and by sub-strands through Item Analysis. Schools can identify particular skills that students are demonstrating they need additional support in and develop appropriately targeted intervention strategies.
- » access a wide variety of Teaching Strategies which provide practical assistance for informing teaching programs and improving targeted student learning outcomes. Specific teaching strategies are provided as well as teaching sheets and in some cases worksheets for students that teachers can print to use in class. The teaching strategies provide practical assistance for teachers. These teaching strategies are linked to skills assessed in NAPLAN tests and are available for Literacy and Numeracy.

Schools can access information concerning the achievement of students on individual items across the school or by groups of students. It details patterns of student responses and in the case of numeracy, additional information is provided detailing the reason why students chose particular options. This is particularly powerful for providing evidence of improved student learning outcomes and effective pedagogy.

For more information on the SMART schools initiative, go to: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/7-12assessments/smart/index.php>

Chapter 7: Other Types of Evaluation and Assessment

404. There are a number of additional measures for evaluation and assessment which are separate to those aspects already presented in previous chapters. Discussed below are practices of evaluation and assessment focused at the national level.
405. As evaluation and assessment is carried out almost exclusively by government departments and agencies, all work conducted must be audited and assessed by government agencies external to those implementing educational programmes and policies. This is standard government practice, and is legislated in some form both nationally and at the state and territory level.

7.1 National Policy and Program Review

406. The Australian Government considers research and evaluation as essential for successful evidence-based policy making. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has established a Strategic Policy Group to work across organisational structures to develop capability and ensure a whole of department approach to policy issues.
407. Strategic policy capability requires a strong evidence base. To support the coordinated development and provision of innovative and forward looking evidence based policy advice from DEEWR to the Minister for Education and other parliamentary officers, the Strategic Information Management and Research (SIMR) Committee, a senior management committee, works to ensure a strategic approach to DEEWR's research, analysis and evaluation, and information management activities. The Committee's specific responsibilities include prioritising and approving the department's research, analysis and evaluation activities and expenditure; overseeing the development of a responsive strategic and forward looking program of research, analysis and evaluation activities; and developing a strategic approach to the department's information management activities to ensure that information is readily accessible across the department to support informed decision making and the development and provision of evidence based policy advice.
408. Within DEEWR a dedicated unit has been operating for many years, providing evaluation advice and services to education program areas within the department, advocating good governance through ongoing program reviews, with the objective of improving policy development, program implementation and delivery. The unit promotes integrated evaluation activities and data collections where possible and aims to provide advice on the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks prior to funding applications and program development.
409. Education program evaluations typically report on the appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and effective governance of the program, initiative and/or measure. They usually entail (but are not restricted to):
- » assessing the appropriateness and efficiency of the program in achieving its objectives and wider government objectives/priorities
 - » assessing the efficiency of managing and administering program delivery
 - » determining if the program is administered in an equitable, accountable, consistent and transparent fashion (governance)
 - » comparing program delivery mechanisms with better practices, both nationally and globally
 - » making recommendations and scoping future directions
 - » developing evaluation strategies for future and ongoing evaluations of the program.

410. This approach to evaluation is consistent with the Australian National Audit Office¹⁰⁹ (ANAO) better practice guide *Implementation of Program and Policy Initiatives—Making Implementation Matter*¹¹⁰ (2006) which recommends that regular monitoring and review of key implementation deliverables be established as early as possible, preferably during the implementation planning phase. It states that monitoring and review is not a compliance-driven overhead, but a fundamental element of sound governance and quality management.
411. The ANAO is the external auditor for the Commonwealth of Australia, providing Parliament and the Australian people with an independent view of the performance and administration of Federal public sector agencies. In December 2009, the ANAO released the Better Practice Guide *Innovation in the Public Sector: Enabling Better Performance, Driving New Directions*¹¹¹, in which the Auditor-General sought to encourage and facilitate an innovative culture in the public sector. Checking and evaluating the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of initiatives are cited as fundamental for successful innovation.
412. DEEWR commissions evaluations and uses the results for a variety of reasons including:
- » to inform decisions for new policy proposals
 - » to report to government
 - » for the purpose of public accountability and government transparency
 - » to achieve continuous improvement
 - » to inform future funding directions for existing programs
 - » to improve marketing and targeting.

Conduct of Evaluations

413. Evaluations may be undertaken by DEEWR personnel, by consultants or jointly. Time constraints, resourcing issues, requirements for particular expertise and the need for independence are all factors that are used to determine who should conduct the various components of evaluations.
414. Availability and access to quantitative data is often an issue in the evaluation of education programs. Privacy law issues and the lack of agreement to share data can impinge on the ability of jurisdictions to provide data for national evaluation purposes. Qualitative data is often collected on a needs basis to address the key questions for program evaluations. Methods used to collect this information include surveys, on-line questionnaires, focus groups and case studies.
415. In late 2008, DEEWR established a panel of consultants to undertake data collection, data analysis and qualitative research type activities. Program managers are able to approach consultants from this list, expediting the procurement process.

Governance Arrangements

416. Governance arrangements for education program research and evaluations vary, however as education is a shared Commonwealth-state responsibility, governance arrangements usually include both layers of government. Where ever possible DEEWR seeks to work with all stakeholders in the design and conduct of evaluations. In some cases reviews are conducted by external consultants reporting to independent committees or Parliament.
417. State governments, non-government school authorities and private organisations involved in education initiatives also conduct their own evaluations. These do not always include consultations with DEEWR and evaluation results may not be made public.
418. The Australian Commonwealth public service encompasses around 300 agencies and statutory bodies. Along with DEEWR, other federal agencies administer initiatives that impact on school outcomes. For example:
- » A number of public, private and community based water organisations across Australia provide educational programs and resources for schools (Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts)¹¹²

109 <http://www.anao.gov.au/>

110 http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/Implementation_of_Programme_and_Policy_Initiatives.pdf

111 Available online here: http://www.anao.gov.au/download.cfm?item_id=4898370B1560A6E8AA97078CC17C537F&binary_id=4893B5C91560A6E8AA60DF45022BAE97

112 <http://www.environment.gov.au/water/education/programs/index.html>

- » The Education for Sustainability Grants Program aims to support projects that facilitate changes in community attitudes and behaviours in support of sustainable development in Australia. (Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts)¹¹³
- » The Science Connections Program (SCOPE) supports a range of initiatives encouraging interest and engagement in science, engineering, and technology, .encouraging science studies (Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research)¹¹⁴

419. Some recent evaluations undertaken of school education programs/initiatives include:

- » Smarter Schools (in partnership with state governments—an integrated evaluation)
- » Building the Education Revolution (BER) National Co-ordination Implementation Report¹¹⁵
- » Local Schools Working Together
- » QuickSmart
- » National History Prizes
- » School-Business Linkages
- » Community Festivals for Education Engagement Program

420. Randomised control trials are not used to trial education programs within Australia. Pilots are employed to test new ideas, and to trial different approaches before full implementation in some instances. The outputs and outcomes from these pilots, lessons learnt from both failures and successes are then used to inform policy development/program delivery on a wider scale. Some recent pilots that have been evaluated are:

- » Yachad Accelerated Learning Project
- » Literacy and Numeracy Pilots

7.2 External Scrutiny

421. At the Australian Government as well as at the state and territory government levels education programs may undergo scrutiny from other areas within the government, such as from parliamentary committees and independent audit and program evaluation by the Australian National Audit Office or Auditor General.

Senate Committees¹¹⁶

422. Twice each year estimates of proposed annual expenditure of Australia Government departments and authorities are referred by the Australian Senate to eight legislation committees for examination and report. These estimates are contained in the main appropriation bills introduced into parliament as part of the budget (usually in May) and in the additional appropriation bills introduced later in the financial year (usually in February). Senate legislation committees examine the estimates for public service departments and other Australian Government agencies. The Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee has responsibility for education programs.

Parliamentary Standing Committees

423. The Standing Committee on Education and Training conducts inquiries into matters referred to it by the House of Representatives or a Minister of the Australian Government. Managing the demands of study and part-time or casual employment was the topic for a recent inquiry.¹¹⁷ The committee reviewed the impact of combining study and work on the success of youth transitions and Year 12 attainment.

113 <http://www.environment.gov.au/education/programs/index.html>

114 <https://grants.innovation.gov.au/SCOPE/Pages/Home.aspx>

115 http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/BuildingTheEducationRevolution/Pages/National_Coordinators_ImplementationReport.aspx

116 <http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/index.htm>

117 <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoolandwork/tor.htm>

Australian National Audit Office

424. The ANAO is a specialist public sector agency providing a full range of audit services to the Parliament and Commonwealth public sector agencies and statutory bodies. Its purpose is to provide the Parliament with an independent assessment of selected areas of public administration, and assurance about public sector financial reporting, administration, and accountability. This is primarily done by conducting performance and financial statement audits. Forward work programs to advise of performance audit and evaluation activities are published.¹¹⁸ For 2009–10, the ANAO has given priority to audits of the administration of education agreements with the states and territories. These include specific purpose payments for schools and vocational education, including for skills acquisition.
425. In 2008–09 the ANAO undertook an audit to assess the effectiveness of DEEWR's administration of general recurrent grants for non-government schools.¹¹⁹ The audit assessed whether DEEWR:
- » effectively manages the data used for the calculation of general recurrent grants for non-government schools (including assuring the accuracy of non-government schools enrolment numbers)
 - » properly approves, pays and acquits the correct amounts of general recurrent grants
 - » monitors and reports on whether the funding model is achieving its objectives.
426. In early 2010 the ANAO will be reporting to the Australian Parliament on a survey of primary school principals.¹²⁰ The ANAO has commissioned an external research company to assess the experiences with the Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21) element within the Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

Office of Evaluation and Audit (Indigenous programs) (OEA)

427. The OEA provided objective advice to the Australian Government about the management and performance of its programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Office noted good practice and made recommendations through evaluation and performance audit reports about how programs could be improved so that the Australian Government could deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A recent OEA audit of the DEEWR administered school nutrition program was completed and published on the internet.¹²¹ A full list of published reports is available on the internet.¹²² As of December 2009, the OEA has moved to the ANAO.

7.3 State and Territory Reviews

428. State and territories programs also undergo extensive reviews. Some of these are discussed in Chapter 3. These include external system reviews, audits by the Auditor General, internal departmental audits, and other evaluations done by government agencies separate to departments of education. There is also external review at the school level, especially for schools requiring additional assistance to improve performance, as discussed in Chapter 4.

118 <http://www.anao.gov.au/director/publications/Auditworkprogram.cfm>

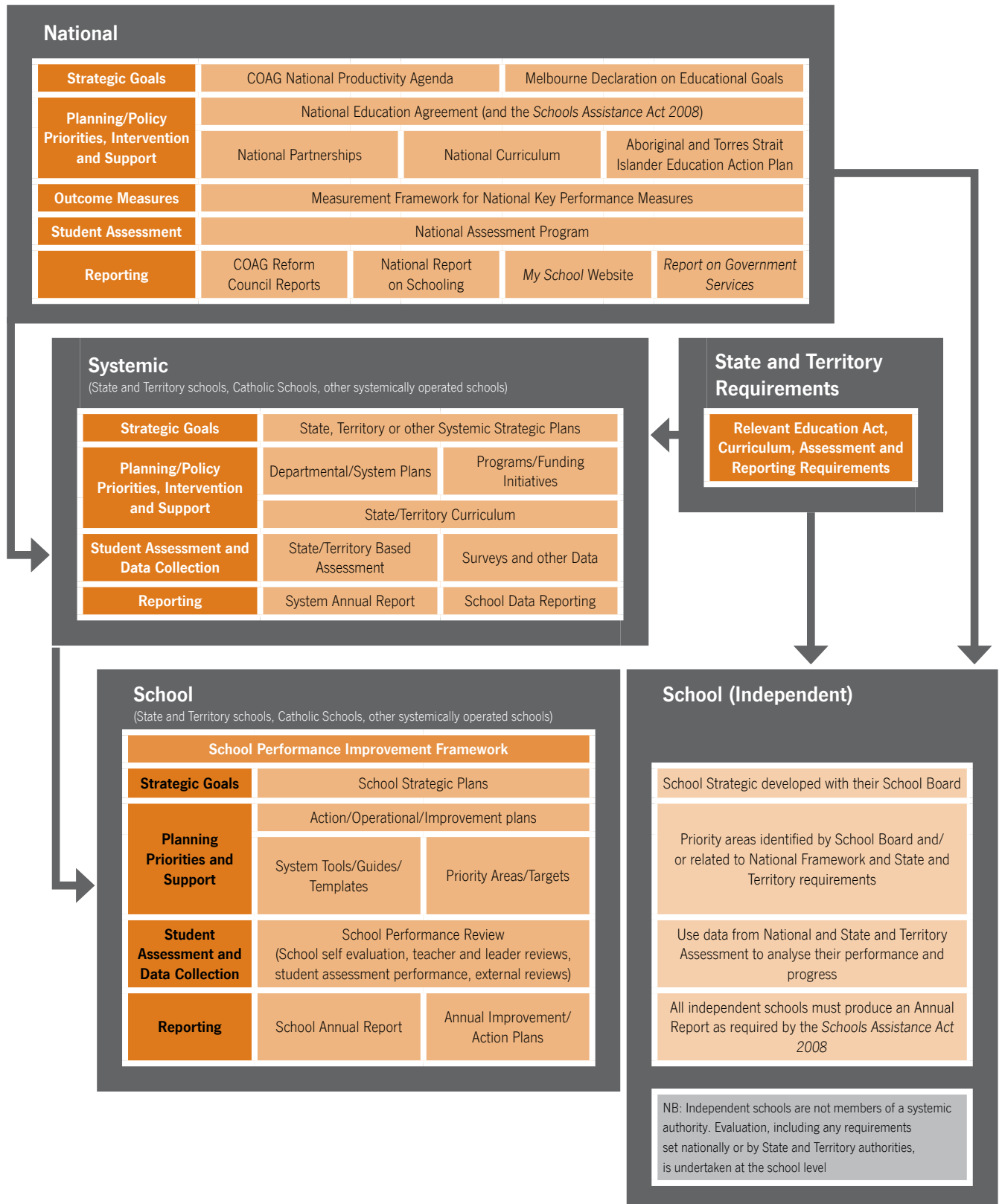
119 The final report is available here: http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/2008-09_Audit_Report_45.pdf

120 http://www.anao.gov.au/director/aboutus/Whats_New.cfm

121 http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/Performance_audit_of_the_School_Nutrition_Program.pdf

122 <http://www.anao.gov.au/director/publications/Indigenousprogramsreports.cfm>

Annex 1: Levels of Evaluation and Assessment in Australia



Annex 2: My School Website Indicators

What is and will be* reported on the My School website

Outcomes	Context	Capacity
Student learning	Student home and personal background	Workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » NAPLAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Status by domain and year level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and like school means • Distribution in bands — Participation — Growth* » VET in school » Senior secondary » Post school destinations » Like school comparisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » SES of family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — ICSEA score — SES distribution » Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Indigenous — Disability — Language background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Numbers/proportions of teachers by level of expertise under new national scheme » In the interim, numbers of teaching and nonteaching staff
School culture	School profile	Funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Student, parent, teacher satisfaction eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Student wellbeing — Parent engagement — Teacher development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Enrolments » Student attendance » School statement » School type <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Primary, secondary — Year range — Government, non-government — Location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » School income/expenditure

* From 2010 onwards, these indicators will be developed for reporting on the My School website.

Source: http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/C04_Communique_-_10_June_2010.pdf

Annex 3: National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) National Assessment Scale

