

Chapter 3

National Overview of Progress Under the Plan

Data Limitations

Where possible, existing data sets and reporting agreements have been used to report against the performance indicators within the Annual Report for the Plan. Data within the Annual Report should be interpreted with care. Caveats and footnotes must be taken into consideration when reviewing the data and drawing conclusions about the relative progress of jurisdictions and groups of students.

There are a range of overarching issues which affect the comparability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sets across jurisdictions including:

- a net undercount for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians within the 2006 Census, estimated at 11.5 per cent
- under-identification of individuals as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander within jurisdiction databases
- errors in estimating performance due to the small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cohort size in some jurisdictions
- lagged or missing data due to privacy issues or small cell size
- student migration across State and Territory borders and transience within State and Territory borders
- increasingly large measurement errors when particular disaggregations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes, such as outcomes by geolocation, are required to be reported.

A number of the performance indicators in the Plan can be reported utilising data with national sources. While these data are relatively robust, attention must be paid to the issues outlined above. Some national data sets derive from surveys and are subject to large relative standard error in smaller jurisdictions and in jurisdictions with small Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

For a number of performance indicators in the Plan, no nationally comparable data are available, and in some cases there is limited capacity to report against the indicators using administrative

data. Administrative data may be collected by jurisdictions and sectors using different methodologies and definitions, may not be reliable at the expected level of disaggregation, or may be a partial data set. Nevertheless, administrative data can be helpful in reviewing progress at the jurisdictional level where collection methodologies and processes are unchanged across time.

In some instances, no existing data sets are available to service the indicators and these cannot, at this stage, be usefully reported. Planning and resourcing will be required to collect additional or new data where measures reflect high priority outcomes, and to improve data quality across the board to ensure that progress against the Plan's indicators can be identified and reported.

National Outcomes by Domain

This section of the Annual Report presents data and information about performance indicators, contained within the Plan, where national data is available. Outcomes, where available, are reported by domain.

The information and data contained in this section is representative of national outcomes only. States and Territories may choose to examine these data within their own context in the State and Territory chapters of this Annual Report.

The Melbourne Declaration, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) four-year plan 2009–2012, and data collections use the term 'Indigenous' to refer to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Where possible, this report uses 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' in preference to the term 'Indigenous'. In some instances, particularly in labels for graphs and tables, the term 'Indigenous' has been included by the provider of the information, and therefore it is unable to be changed.

The term 'Other' is used in this section of the report to signify the group who are not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Generally 'Other' will include persons where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status is unknown or not stated.

Readiness for School

Performance Indicator 1

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in, and attending, (where possible to measure) a preschool program

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed a new data collection for indicators relating to early childhood education and care. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are enrolled in, and attending, a preschool program will be reported in the next Annual Report with data sourced from the National Early Childhood Education and Care data collection which will be available in 2011.

Engagement and Connections

There are no national level data for performance indicators under this domain. Information for this domain will be reported in individual State and Territory chapters from the 2011 Annual Report onwards.

Attendance

Performance Indicator 5

Attendance Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Other students in schools

Data Source: ACARA 2010 Attendance Data (unpublished).

Attendance

The student attendance data collection is in a transitional phase until all jurisdictions and sectors have the capacity to report their data using an agreed standard. All States and Territories and the non-government sectors are collaborating to standardise the collections. However, because the definitions and methodologies used by jurisdictions and sectors to collect the 2010 (and previous years) data are not uniform, accurate comparisons between jurisdictions and sectors cannot currently be made.

For 2010, the largest difference between the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students for Years 1 to 6 in government schools was 21 percentage points in Year 2, in the Northern Territory.

The largest difference in the attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students for Years 7 to 10 in government schools was 30 percentage points, in Year 9, in the Northern Territory.

Tasmanian government schools have the smallest gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students. In Years 1 to 4 the difference did not exceed one percentage point for any year level.

In 2010 across Years 1 to 7, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania recorded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance rates above 84 per cent; South Australia and Western Australia recorded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attendance above 79 per cent.

In the Northern Territory the attendance rates across Years 1 to 7 were above 69 per cent. Attendance rates in the Australian Capital Territory were above 84 per cent for Years 1 to 6.

Figures 5–6 show a representative selection of year level attendance in government schools, by State and Territory, with a view to tracking change over the period of the Plan.

Enrolment

Performance Indicator 6

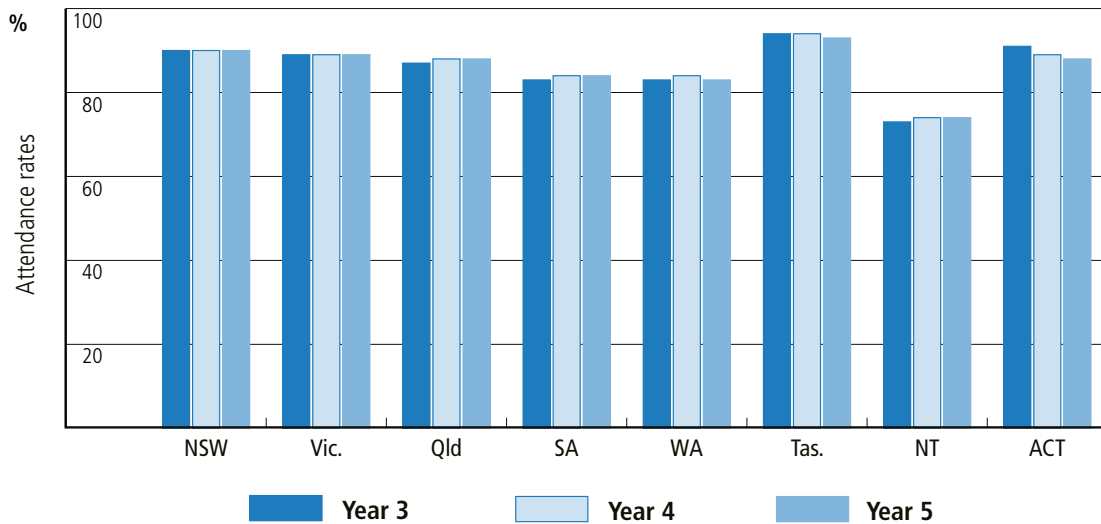
Enrolment to population ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to Other Australians

Data Source: ABS, Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991–2021 (Cat.No.3238.0); and ABS, Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories June 2010, (Cat.No.3201.0); and ABS, Schools Australia, 2010 (Cat. No.4221.0), National Schools Statistics Collection.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021*, the projected resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of 6 to 15 year olds in 2010 was 129,308.

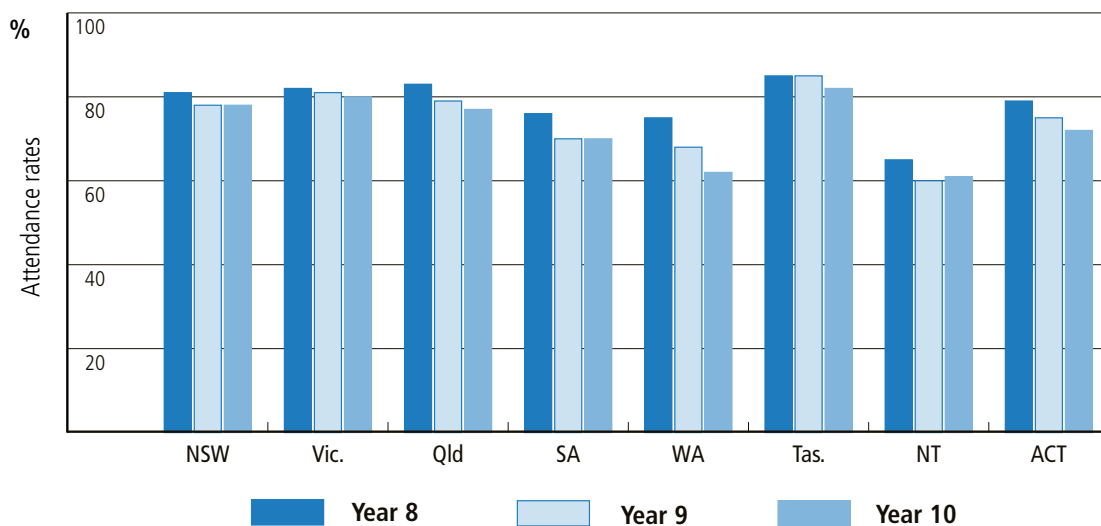
According to the National Schools Statistics Collection 2010, there were 133,990 full time and part time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (aged 6 to 15 years) enrolled in school in 2010.

Figure 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates in government schools, by State and Territory – Years 3, 4 and 5, 2010



Source: ACARA, 2010 Attendance Data (unpublished)

Figure 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student attendance rates, government schools, by State and Territory – Years 8, 9 and 10, 2010



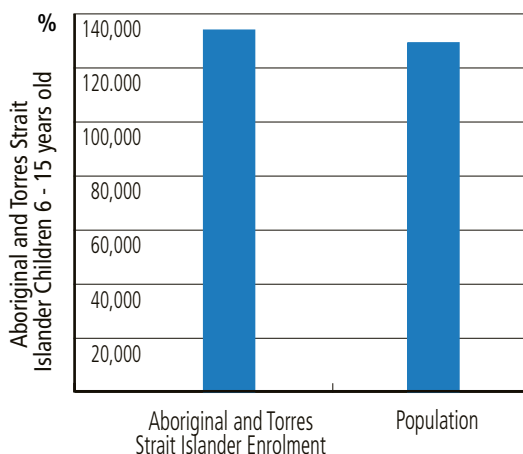
Source: ACARA, 2010 Attendance Data (unpublished)

Based on these figures, 103.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children between the ages of 6 and 15 were enrolled in school in 2010 (see notes to Figure 7).

Collection in 2010 reported 2,755,893 full-time and part-time Other Australian students, indicating that 1.3 per cent of Other Australian children aged 6 to 15 were not enrolled in school.

In comparison, there were 2,786,535 Other Australian children aged 6 to 15 years. The ABS National Schools Statistics

Figure 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment to population, 6–15 year olds, 2006



Notes:

- School data includes children enrolled full-time or part-time in 2010. Data also includes students who cross State and Territory boundaries to attend school. In the case of the ACT this causes the proportion of 6-15 year olds enrolled in school to exceed 100 per cent. Includes children enrolled full-time or part-time. Jervis Bay enrolments are included with ACT; Norfolk Island enrolments are included with NSW. 'Other territory' enrolments are excluded.
- Data for the Indigenous population are projections based on final experimental estimates of the Indigenous population at 30 June 2006 derived from the 2006 Census. Quality issues associated with the identification of Indigenous status in both the National Schools Statistics Collection and population statistics can result in rates that exceed 100 per cent. See 'Collection of Indigenous Status of students' in ABS, *Schools, Australia 2009* (Cat.No.4221.0). For information on adjustments for Census undercount and the methods used to calculate projections of the Indigenous population, see explanatory notes in the publication, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991–2021* (Cat.No.3238.0).
- Estimates for the total population are sourced from the most recently available ABS, *Population by Age and Sex, June 2010* (Cat.No. 3201.0). The Australia total includes 'Other territories' including Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island. However, Jervis Bay and Norfolk Island are excluded from ACT and NSW totals. Therefore, State and Territory Estimated Resident Population numbers will not add to Australia totals.
- 'Non-Indigenous' and 'All children' includes those for whom Indigenous status is not known.
- In the absence of population estimates by Indigenous status for inter-censal years, non-Indigenous population figures are calculated by subtracting projections of the Indigenous population from estimates of the total population.

Source: ABS, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991–2021* (Cat.No.3238.0); and ABS, *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories June 2010*, (Cat.No.3201.0); and ABS, *Schools Australia, 2010* (Cat.No.4221.0), National Schools Statistics Collection.

Retention Rates

Performance Indicator 7

Retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

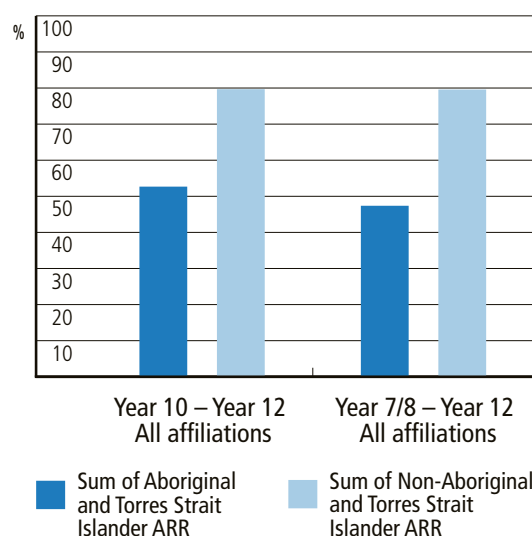
Data Source: ABS, National Schools Statistics Collection 2010, Apparent Retention Rates.

'The apparent retention rate measures the number of school students in a designated year of education expressed as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year.'

Source: ABS, *Schools Australia 2010*, (Cat.No.4221.0) Glossary definition 'Apparent Retention Rate (ARR)', available online at: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@nsf/Products/4221.0~2010~Glossary~Glossary?OpenDocument>

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12 for all schools has increased from 46.8 per cent in 2006 to 52.5 per cent in 2010. The gap has closed from 29.4 percentage points in 2006 to 26.0 percentage points in 2010. The Year 7/8 (first year of secondary schooling) to Year 12 apparent retention rate has increased from 40.1 per cent in 2006 to 47.2 per cent in 2010.

Figure 8: Apparent retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, 2010



Source: ABS, National Schools Statistics Collection 2010, Apparent Retention Rates (ARR)

Progression

Performance Indicator 8

Progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Data Source: ABS, School Australia, 2010, (Cat.No.4221.0) Additional Statistics.

Apparent grade progression ratios measure the number of students at a given year level compared to the number enrolled in the previous year, at the time of the annual August census.

Progression ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the Year 8 to 9 and Year 9 to 10 ranges are showing strong results in 2010, at around 100 per cent (100.8 per cent and 97.1 per cent respectively). The progression ratios for the 10 to 11 grade range drop dramatically to 79.3 per cent and further to 67.9 per cent for the 11 to 12 grade range.

Year 8 to Year 9

The 2010 progression ratio for Years 8 to 9 was 100.8 per cent. It was an improvement on the 2009 result of 98.9 per cent.

Year 9 to Year 10

For Years 9 to 10 the 2010 progression ratio was 97.1 per cent. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other students was 3.5 percentage points.

Year 10 to Year 11

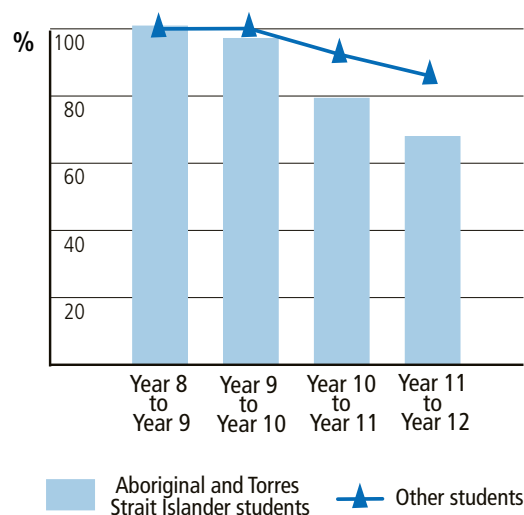
The 2010 progression ratio for Years 10 to 11 was 79.3 per cent. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other students was 13.6 percentage points.

Between 2009 and 2010 there was an increase of two percentage points in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 10 to 11 rate, with an increase of one percentage point for other students.

Year 11 to Year 12

The 2010 progression ratio for Years 11 to 12 was 67.9 per cent. The gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other students was 18.6 percentage points.

Figure 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students apparent grade progression ratios, Australia, 2010



Note: Care should be exercised in the interpretation of grade progression ratios since a range of factors affecting the calculation are not taken into account. These include students repeating a year of education, migration and other net changes to the school population.

Source: ABS, Schools, Australia, 2010, (Cat.No.4221.0).

Literacy and Numeracy

Performance Indicator 9

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing

Data Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

The 2010 NAPLAN results show that the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard ranged from 59 per cent in Year 9 Writing to 79 per cent in Year 3 Writing. Outcomes for other students ranged from 89 per cent in Year 9 Writing to 97 per cent in Year 3 Writing.

Since 2009, there have been some small decreases in the gaps between the percentages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students at or above the national minimum standard. The largest decrease across the 12 gaps

was 2.5 percentage points, which occurred in both Year 3 Numeracy and Year 7 Reading.

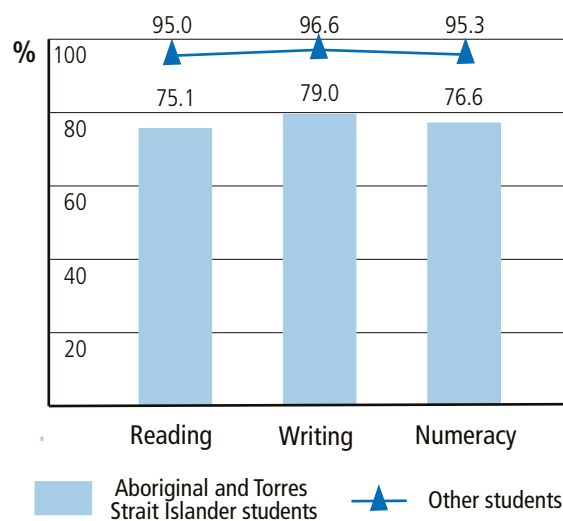
Since 2009, there have also been increases in the gaps between the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and other students at or above the national minimum standard. In Year 9 Numeracy, the gap increased by 2.9 percentage points.

Nationally, participation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in 2010 were below those of 2009.

The overall results across Australia show that most students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 achieve the national literacy and numeracy minimum standards. Boys have lower achievement than girls, while students living in remote regions, especially in very remote regions, achieve at lower rates than metropolitan and provincial students in all year levels and domains.

In general, the achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, at or above the national minimum standard in 2010, was significantly below that of Other students at every year level and in all three key domains.

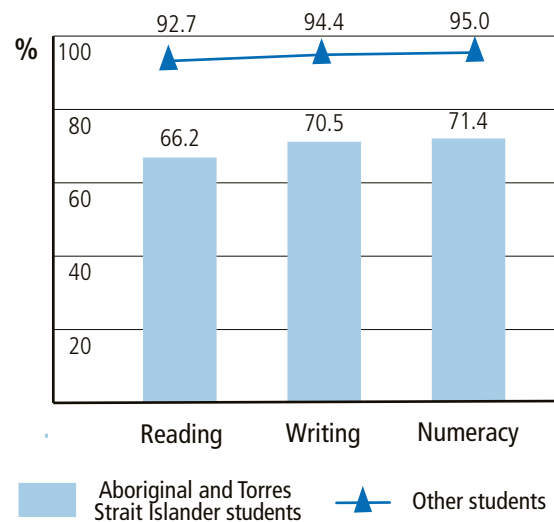
Figure 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students, Year 3 NAPLAN 2010 test results, by year level and key domains, Australia, 2010



Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

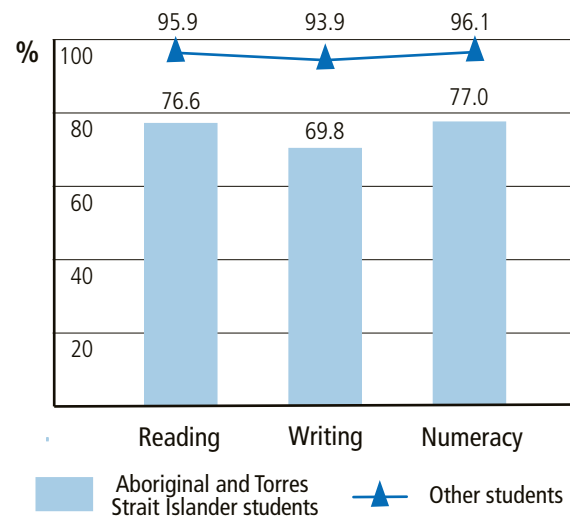
The gaps between the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and Other students attaining the national minimum standard for all year levels and domains ranged from 17.6 percentage points to 29.7 percentage points.

Figure 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students, Year 5 NAPLAN test results, by year level and key domains, Australia, 2010



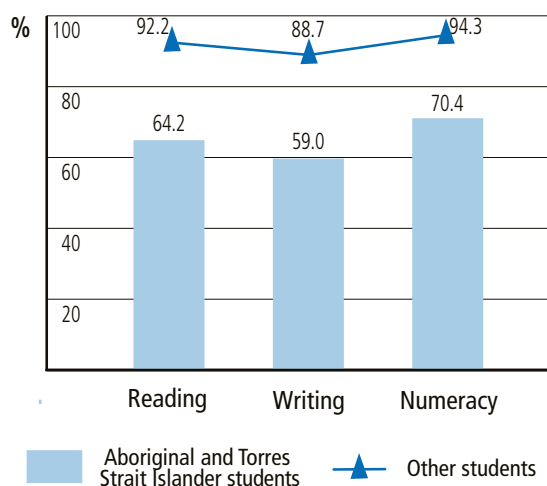
Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

Figure 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 'Other' students, Year 7 NAPLAN 2010 test results, by year level and key domain, Australia, 2010



Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

Figure 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 'Other' students, Year 9 NAPLAN 2010 test results, by year level and key domain, Australia, 2010



Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

Reading

In 2010, Reading outcomes were greatest for Year 3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with 75.1 per cent achieving the national minimum standard, compared to only 64.2 per cent of Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The gaps between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes and other student outcomes in Reading ranged from 19.3 percentage points for the Year 7 cohort to 28.0 percentage points for the Year 9 cohort.

The Reading outcomes for Years 3, 5 and 7 exceeded the trajectory (also known as progress points) targets for 2010, with the outcomes for Year 9 the only one below the trajectory target in the Reading domain.

Writing

The Year 3 Writing outcome (79.0 per cent) for the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving at or above the national minimum standard was the highest for all year levels in each of the key domains in 2010.

The gap between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Other cohort for Year 3 Writing, at 17.6 percentage points, was the

smallest of all gaps for each year level in each of the key domains. In 2010, 59.0 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved the national minimum standard in Writing.

The outcome for the Year 9 cohort was the lowest for all year levels in each of the key domains in 2010, and the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Other students outcomes was also larger in Year 9 Writing than it was in any other year level in each of the key domains.

The gaps in Writing outcomes ranged from 17.6 percentage points for the Year 3 cohort to 29.7 percentage points for the Year 9 cohort. The Writing outcomes for all year levels were below the trajectory (also known as progress points) targets for 2010. However, if confidence intervals are applied, Year 3, 5 and 7 Writing outcomes met the trajectory.

Numeracy

In 2010, Numeracy outcomes were greatest for Year 7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, with 77.0 per cent achieving the national minimum standard. Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had the lowest outcome, with 70.4 per cent achieving at or above the national minimum standard.

The gaps between the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Other students' outcomes in Numeracy ranged from 18.7 percentage points for the Year 3 cohort to 23.9 percentage points for the Year 9 cohort.

The Numeracy outcomes for Years 3, 7 and 9 were all below the trajectory (also known as progress points) targets in 2010, while the Year 5 Numeracy outcome exceeded the trajectory target.

Trends in NAPLAN Outcomes for 2008 to 2010 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

The greatest improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student performance since 2008 occurred in Year 3 Reading. In 2008, 68.3 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were 'at or above' the national minimum standard; this increased by 6.8 percentage points to 75.1 per cent in 2010.

The greatest decline in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student performance since 2008 occurred in Year 9 Reading. In 2008, 70.7 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

students were 'at or above' the national minimum standard; this decreased by 6.5 percentage points to 64.2 per cent in 2010.

Year 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student performance showed increases from 2008 to 2010 in each of the three key domains. The percentage increases of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving 'at or above' the national minimum were 2.8 percentage points for Reading, 0.8 percentage points for Writing and 2.2 percentage points for Numeracy.

Year 9 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student performance decreased from 2008 to 2010 in each of the three key domains. The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieving 'at or above' the national minimum standard decreased by 6.5 percentage points in Reading, 0.7 percentage points in Writing and 2.1 percentage points in Numeracy.

Note: The 'trends' do not reflect the progression of the same cohort of students from 2008 to 2010.

Performance Indicator 10

Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at or above the national minimum standard in reading, writing and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in NAPLAN testing.

Data Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

Participation in the 2010 NAPLAN Tests

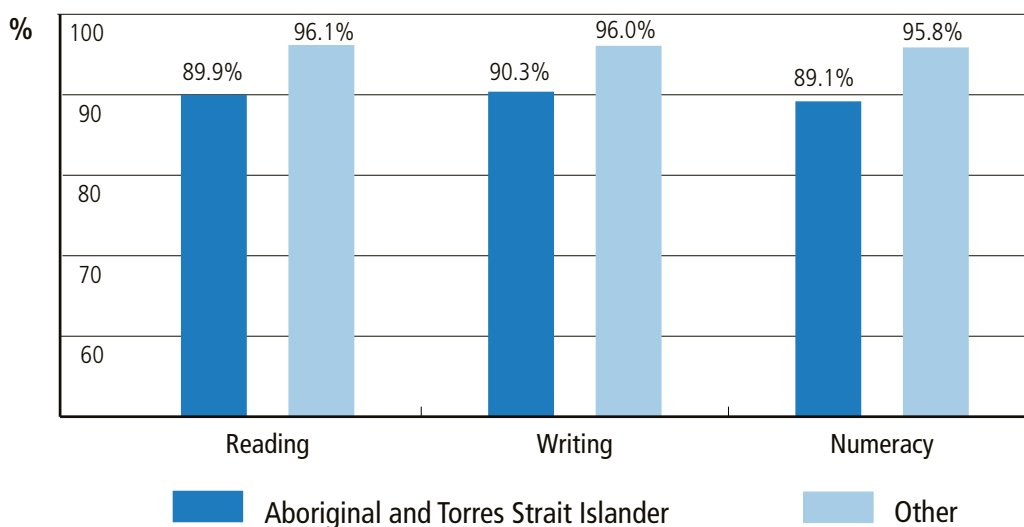
The 2010 national absent rates were higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students than Other students, with the rates for Other students in Years 3, 5 and 7 ranging from 2.3 per cent (in Reading and Writing in Years 3 and 5) to 3.1 per cent (in Numeracy in Year 7) and the rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for the same cohorts ranging from 7.4 per cent (in Reading in Year 5) to 10.4 per cent (in Numeracy in Year 7).

In most instances, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'absent' rates were at least three times higher than those for Other students. Withdrawal rates for both cohorts were all below 2.0 per cent for each year level and in each of the key domains.

The Year 9 Reading, Writing and Numeracy 'absent' rates increased dramatically to between 18.7 per cent and 20.0 per cent of the national cohort for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The Year 9 absent rates for Other students were higher than the cohorts for other year levels, ranging from 5.1 per cent to 5.8 per cent.

In 2010, over 11,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in the Year 3 tests in each of the domains, with participation rates ranging from 89.1 per cent to 90.3 per cent.

Figure 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 3 students NAPLAN participation rates, Australia, 2010



Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

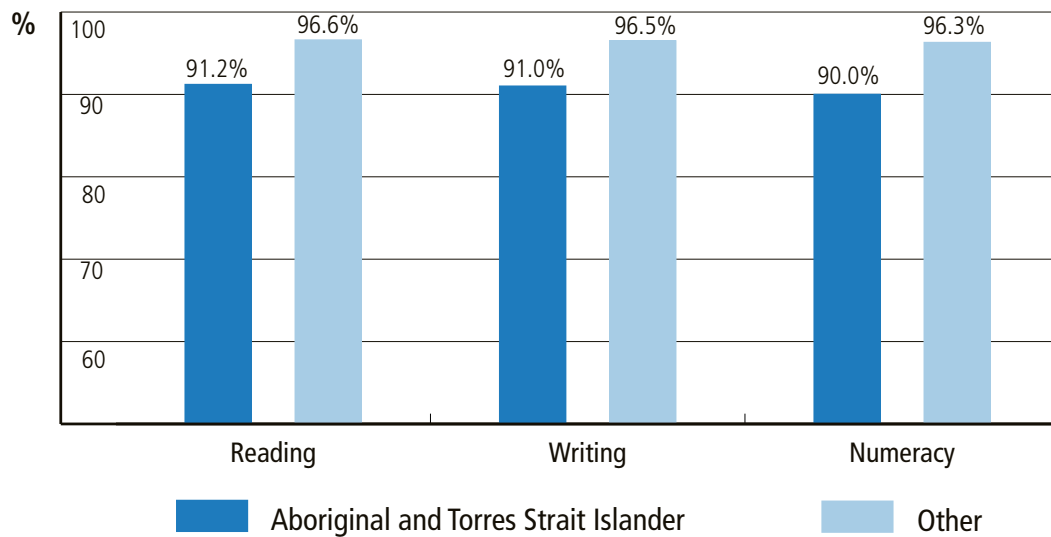
The Year 5 participation rates were the highest when compared to the other year levels, ranging from 90.0 per cent in Numeracy to 91.2 per cent in Reading, representing more than 12,500 students sitting each of the tests.

The Year 7 participation rates varied between 88.6 per cent and 89.5 per cent, representing around 12,000 students sitting the tests.

For Year 9 students, more than 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participated in the tests, representing between 78.8 per cent and 80.2 per cent of Year 9 students.

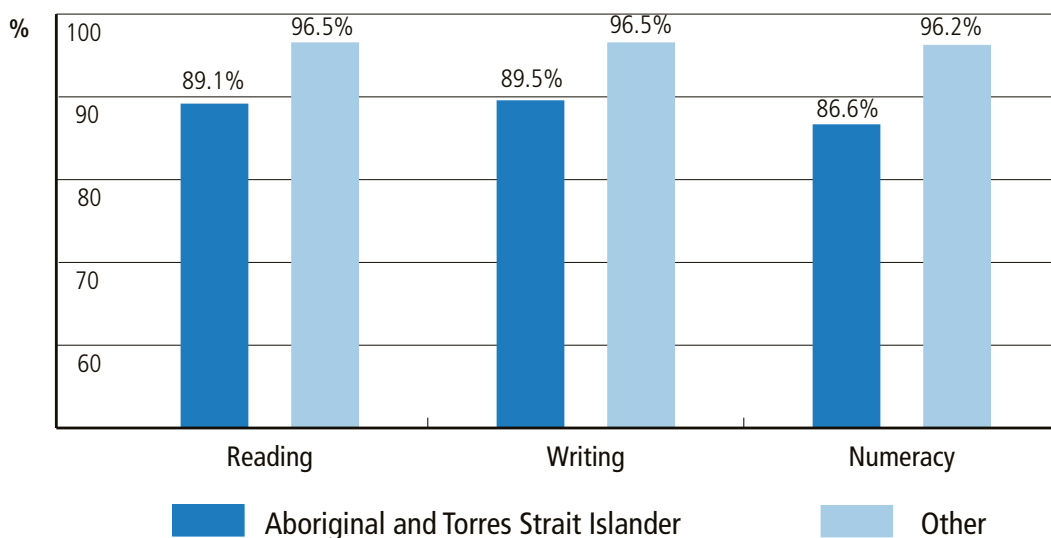
The participation rates for other students for all year levels and in each of the key domains ranged from 93.3 per cent for Year 9 Numeracy to 96.6 per cent for Year 5 Reading.

Figure 15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 5 students NAPLAN participation rates, Australia, 2010



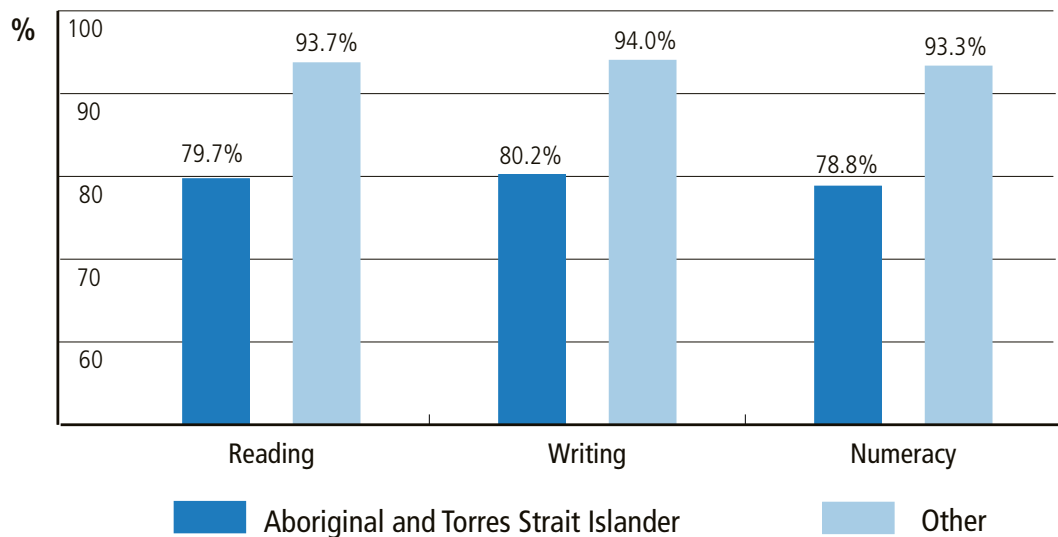
Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

Figure 16: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 7 students NAPLAN participation rates, Australia, 2010



Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

Figure 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 9 students NAPLAN participation rates, Australia, 2010



Source: ACARA, NAPLAN National Report 2010

Leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce Development

There are no national level data for performance indicators under this domain. Information for this domain will be reported in individual State and Territory chapters from the 2011 Annual Report onwards.

Pathways to Real Post-School Options

There is no publically available national level data for performance under this domain at this time. Information for this domain will be reported in State and Territory chapters from the 2011 report onwards.

Overall Patterns, Trends and Best Practice

As 2010 is the base line year for the Plan, patterns, trends and best practice will become evident in subsequent years of reporting.

Other Indicators of Patterns and Trends

A sample of students from across Australia is chosen to participate in international assessments when they are administered. This sample includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The following provides a summary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student results for the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2007 and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009.

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2007

TIMSS 2007 was the fourth in a cycle of internationally comparative assessments, conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Carried out every four years with Year 4 and Year 8 students, TIMSS provides data about national and international trends in mathematics and science achievement. TIMSS 2007 saw the participation of Year 8 students from 49 countries, and the participation of Year 4 students from 36 countries.

In Australia, TIMSS is part of the National Assessment Program (NAP). It provides a level of international benchmarking to complement national assessments (NAPLAN) at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, and other sample-based national studies. To inform educational policy in the participating countries, TIMSS also routinely collects extensive background information that addresses concerns about the quantity, quality, and content of instruction.

In Australia, over 8,000 students in 457 schools participated in the main sample of TIMSS 2007. In addition, an extra sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in all participating schools was collected in order to provide a more detailed examination of the achievements of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in the 2007 TIMSS Assessment

In 2007, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students performed significantly below other students in mathematics at both Year 4 and Year 8 levels. At Year 4, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an average score of 431, which was 91 score points below the average score of other students (522). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also scored significantly below the TIMSS scale average of 500 (by 69 points).

In the Year 8 mathematics assessment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an average score of 431 which was 70 score points below the average of other students (501), and significantly below the TIMSS scale average of 500 (by 69 score points).

In the Year 4 science assessment, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an average score of 441 which was 92 score points less than the average score of other students (533). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also scored significantly below the TIMSS scale average of 500, by 59 points.

In Year 8 science, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved an average score of 447, which was 72 score points less than the average score of other students (519) and significantly below the TIMSS scale average of 500.

In addition to reporting mean scores, TIMSS also reports results on the basis of the proportions of students achieving a

number of 'international benchmarks' (levels of achievement). The benchmarks, from highest to lowest, are referred to as Advanced, High, Intermediate and Low. In TIMSS 2007, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were substantially over-represented at the Low benchmark and substantially under-represented at the High and Advanced benchmarks.

Source: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), *Overview: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study*, available online: <http://www.acer.edu.au/timss/index.html>

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009

PISA is an internationally standardised assessment that was jointly developed by participating economies and administered to 15-year-olds in schools. PISA assesses how well students, nearing the end of compulsory education, have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society. In all cycles, the domains of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy are covered, not merely in terms of mastery of the school curriculum, but in terms of important knowledge and skills needed in adult life.

PISA aims to evaluate the quality, equity and efficiency of school systems in around 70 countries. Four assessments have so far been carried out. In Australia, 353 schools and a total of 14,251 students participated in PISA 2009: 1,143 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 13,108 Other students were assessed.

Overall, PISA results show wide gaps of 76 or more points between the mean scores of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Other students in all three domains. They also provide little or no evidence of any improvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performance when compared to earlier PISA cycles.

PISA 2009 Results for Reading Literacy

The PISA 2009 results for reading literacy indicate that almost 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students did not achieve Level 2 in reading literacy, compared to 13 per cent of Other students, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 19 per cent. (Students achieving below Level 2 are described by the OECD as being 'at

risk of not acquiring essential life skills, partly because they do not have the foundation of literacy skills needed for continued learning and extending their knowledge horizon'.) Two per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved at Level 5 or above compared to 13 per cent of other students and the OECD average of 8 per cent.

PISA 2009 Results for Mathematical Literacy

The PISA 2009 results for mathematical literacy indicate that 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were unable to achieve Level 2, compared to 15 per cent of other students and the OECD average of 22 per cent.

Three per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved at the highest proficiency levels (Level 5 and 6), compared to 17 per cent of other students and the OECD average of 13 per cent.

PISA 2009 Results for Scientific Literacy

The PISA 2009 results for scientific literacy indicate that 35 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students did not achieve Level 2, compared to 12 per cent of Other students, and the OECD average of 18 per cent. Level 2 has been defined as a baseline proficiency level, at which students begin to demonstrate the scientific competencies that will enable them to actively participate in life situations related to science and technology.

Three per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieved at the highest proficiency levels (Level 5 and above) compared to 15 per cent of Other students, and the OECD average of 8 per cent.

Source: Sue Thomson et al., ACER Ltd., Challenges for Australian Education: Results from PISA 2009 – The PISA 2009 assessment of students' reading, mathematical and scientific literacy, 2011, available online: <http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/PISA-2009-Report.pdf>

National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship Years 6 and 10

The National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC) measures not only students' skills, knowledge and

understandings of Australia's system of government and civic life but also their attitudes, values and participation in civic-related activities at school and in the community.

In 2010, approximately 7,246 Year 6 students in 335 schools participated in the NAP–CC assessment. Of these, four per cent identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

In Year 10, the NAP–CC assessment was administered to 6,409 students in 312 schools. Of these, three per cent identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The participating Year 6 and 10 students were from both government and non-government schools.

The NAP–CC results in 2010 show a very large gap in performance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Proficient Standard was reached if a Year 6 student's score was at Level 2 or above or if a Year 10 student's score was at Level 3 or above.

The percentages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Year 6 and Year 10 at each proficiency level, and at or above Proficient Standards are as follows:

- In Year 6, 48 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students had scores below Level 1, compared to 12 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and 16 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reached the Proficient Standard, compared to 54 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- In Year 10 approximately one-fifth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (19 per cent) had scores below Level 1, compared to 4 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and 17 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reached the Proficient Standard, compared to 50 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The 2010 National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship Year 6 and Year 10 Report is available on the National Assessment Program website: <http://www.nap.edu.au/>.