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Education Council releases new data report on school students with disability

The Education Council has today released data from the 2015 Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability (NCCD).

For the first time, schools and governments across Australia are reporting in a nationally consistent way on students with disability and the adjustments these students receive to enable them to participate in schooling on the same basis as other students. Since 2013, the NCCD has been progressively implemented in Australian schools, with 99.9 per cent of schools participating in the 2015 collection.

The Chair of the Education Council, the Hon. Eva Lawler MLA, said “This national data collection represents the culmination of years of collaborative effort by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, non-government education authorities, and teachers and schools.”

Through the new report *‘Improving educational outcomes: Emergent data on students with disability in Australian schools’* the Education Council has released high-level data from the 2015 NCCD. This shows that in 2015, there were 674,323 school students (or 18 per cent of the total school student cohort) with disability receiving an adjustment to support their participation in education.

Unlike existing state and territory students with disability data collections which are often based on medical diagnosis, the NCCD uses a broad definition of disability that is based on the Disability Discrimination Act. As a result, the numbers of students reported as having a disability in the NCCD is greater than those reported in other collections. This approach aims to ensure that the collection reflects the diversity of students with disability in Australian schools and the variety of ways that schools and systems support their additional needs including through making adjustments within quality teaching practice.

The NCCD relies on the professional knowledge, practice and judgements of teachers and school staff about the educational needs of their students. Through the collection, teachers make evidence-based decisions about the level of adjustment being provided for each student with disability and the broad category of disability under which a student best fits.

Over time, higher quality data will enable schools, education authorities and governments to gain a more complete understanding of students with disability in Australian schools and, in turn, inform policy development on how to best support this important cohort of young Australians.

“Like any new collection, it will take time for the NCCD to mature and become an established part of school practice. We can expect the data will improve in quality as schools and teachers build on their experience” Minister Lawler said.

The Education Council is committed to working together to drive continual improvements in the quality of NCCD data. This includes providing training and support to schools, developing national NCCD professional learning resources and commissioning independent reviews to inform data quality improvements. To complement publication of the 2015 data report, Council has agreed to release the executive summary of the 2015 Continuous Quality Improvement Project.

The *Improving educational outcomes: Emergent data on students with disability in Australian schools* report can be found at: <http://www.educationcouncil.edu.au/EC-Reports-and-Publications.aspx>

Further information about the NCCD can be found at the following websites:
www.schooldisabilitydatapl.edu.au

www.education.gov.au/students-disability

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