



Australian Government
Department of Education and Training

Corporate Plan 2017–18

Opportunity through learning



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The document must be attributed as the *Department of Education and Training Corporate Plan 2017–18*.

Disclaimer: The Department of Education and Training acknowledges diversity and respectfully uses both the terms 'Indigenous' and 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' interchangeably throughout this document.

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The Department of Education and Training acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and elders past, present and future.

Greg (Yidinji) Joseph. *Dance of the Brolga*. 2013.
Acrylic on canvas.

Yidinji AND FRIENDS 2013

Introduction



Education and training is central to individual opportunity, economic growth and social wellbeing, national prosperity and global competitiveness.

The *Department of Education and Training Corporate Plan 2017–18*, our primary planning document, positions us for the year ahead. It will guide us—as individuals and together as an organisation—in our ongoing commitment to providing national leadership on education and training.

Our purpose is maximising opportunity and prosperity through national leadership on education and training. Through our national policy and funding programs, we aspire to maximise opportunities for learning and prosperity for current and future generations. We are motivated to always have a positive impact on the lives of individuals, on our communities, and on our nation.

The department leads the Australian Government's efforts to strengthen social wellbeing and economic growth through better access to child care and quality early learning and schooling through to higher education and research, skills and training, and international education.

We are implementing the Government's significant reform agenda, which includes major initiatives in child care, schooling and higher education, and a renewed focus on skilling Australians through apprenticeships and traineeships. Over the next 12 months, the department will focus on the capabilities we require—including the technology, systems, people capability and leadership required—to implement these major reforms.

I want the department to build on its national and international reputation as a trusted and leading source of policy expertise and advice that is based on evidence and focused on the future. We are building a national education evidence base to better understand the links between early learning, schooling and tertiary education and training. We'll work closely with states and territories on delivering partnership agreements for fair, accessible and quality education.

I am continually impressed by the knowledge, dedication, commitment and passion our people demonstrate. I am committed to strengthening opportunity for our people—to maximising talent and performance within the department and to building a diverse and inclusive workplace that supports our people to maximise their potential.

We are guided by the principle: Indigenous business is everyone's business. We aim to deepen our cultural understanding, to be an employer of choice and to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This corporate plan has been developed collaboratively with our people throughout the department, as well as with a range of stakeholders. I look forward to working with our Ministers and the early childhood, education, training and research sectors to meet the priorities we have set out together.

Statement of preparation

I, as accountable authority of the Department of Education and Training, present our Corporate Plan 2017–18, prepared for the 2017–18 reporting period and covering the four years from 2017–18 to 2020–21, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Dr Michele Bruniges AM

28 August 2017

Purpose

The Department of Education and Training's purpose is maximising opportunity and prosperity through national leadership on education and training.

Education and training maximises life choices for every Australian—of all ages and at every stage of life. By creating and strengthening access to quality education for all Australians and for international students, the department maximises *opportunity through learning*. Through opportunity, individuals, families and communities are encouraged to maximise their potential, participate in the social and economic wellbeing of their communities, and contribute to national and global prosperity.



Outcomes

The department works to achieve its purpose within the context of delivering the Australian Government's outcomes as outlined in the *Education and Training 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements*:¹

Outcome 1 – Quality early learning and schooling

Improved early learning, schooling, student educational outcomes and transitions to and from school through access to quality child care, support, parent engagement, quality teaching and learning environments.

Outcome 2 – World-class tertiary education, training and research

Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education, and international quality research, skills and training.

“By creating and strengthening access to quality education for all Australians and for international students, the department maximises opportunity through learning.”

¹ Outcome statements, which are set by Government, are part of the Government's resource management framework, and used for budgeting and reporting against the use of appropriated funds.

Map of our purpose, programs and outcomes

Purpose

Maximising opportunity and prosperity through national leadership on education and training

Programs

- 1.1 – Support for the Child Care System
- 1.2 – Child Care Benefit
- 1.3 – Child Care Rebate
- 1.4 – Child Care Subsidy
- 1.5 – Government Schools National Support
- 1.6 – Non-Government Schools National Support
- 1.7 – Early Learning and Schools Support

Programs

- 2.1 – Commonwealth Grants Scheme
- 2.2 – Higher Education Superannuation Program
- 2.3 – Higher Education Support
- 2.4 – Higher Education Loan Program
- 2.5 – Investment in Higher Education Research
- 2.6 – Research Capacity
- 2.7 – International Education Support
- 2.8 – Building Skills and Capability

Outcome 1

Quality early learning and schooling

Improved early learning, schooling, student educational outcomes and transitions to and from school through access to quality child care, support, parent engagement, quality teaching and learning environments.

Outcome 2

World-class tertiary education, training and research

Promote growth in economic productivity and social wellbeing through access to quality higher education, international education, and international quality research, skills and training.

Environment

As national education and training policy leaders, we need to understand and appreciate the characteristics of different learning settings and systems, and the associated funding and regulatory regimes, so that we can have the best policy impact. We appreciate the personal and collective benefit accrued from engaging with education and training opportunities across our life course.

The evolving nature of work is changing the skills our economy needs and coupled with new technology and shifting demographics, this requires us to re-think how we do our business. These environmental factors and others will influence our focus over the four year period of this plan and beyond.

The education journey

The learning and education journey is not the same for everybody. People from disadvantaged backgrounds and vulnerable communities can face many barriers to commencing and succeeding in their education journey. Many children commence their education journey in early learning programs in child care or in preschool. While all children are expected to participate in primary and secondary schooling, an individual child might transition more than once between public and private providers, or experience education and training systems in several different states and territories.

Some students go straight from school into tertiary education, while others go first to jobs or other activities, but may re-engage with education later in life. Most people participate in education or training at various stages throughout their lives, including re-engaging in formal education or retraining themselves, or engaging as parents and families in the formal care, early learning or schooling of their children. New migrants and international students may commence their Australian education journey in schooling, skills and training, or in higher education. Learning settings can vary from small to large; child care providers, schools, public and private training providers or universities; and rural, regional or metropolitan locations.

Australia's geographic and demographic challenges require national policies directed at building lifelong learning

opportunities that support workforce participation and prosperity through all stages of life, including in regional and remote Australia. Overall Australia's population is ageing; the proportion of the population aged between 15 and 64 is declining relative to the proportion aged 65 and over.²

At the same time, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a much younger age profile, with more than half aged under 25 years. Around 65 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population live outside capital city areas. People living in regional and remote areas are more likely to encounter difficulties in accessing educational opportunities.

Acknowledging these diverse circumstances, which mirror the diversity of modern Australia, the department is building a national education evidence base to better understand the education journey, and to better support transition pathways and success for all.



² Australian Government (2015), *2015 Intergenerational Report: Australia in 2055*, The Treasury.

A new age of work

A new 'age of work' is emerging. Today's young Australians can expect to have as many as 17 different employers, across five different careers in their lifetimes. The Foundation for Young Australians argues that we must 'shift mindsets' in how we approach jobs, careers and work to ensure young Australians can thrive in the new world of work.³ The focus is no longer so much on preparing for a set career, as with acquiring a 'portfolio of skills' that young people can use to navigate uncertain working lives and switch jobs easily. Students will need to be supported in learning skills such as collaboration, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and innovation. Students themselves will need to be more innovative and creative and be able to work collaboratively with others to be successful in future jobs.

Technological change is also transforming the global labour market.⁴ Some of today's jobs did not exist 10 years ago. Many of today's jobs may not exist in 20 years' time.⁵ Education systems and providers face challenges in responding to these evolving demands of the labour market. Employment prospects will be better for those with higher skills, including digital literacy and readiness to use ICT for problem solving. Globalisation and international mobility increase the need for skills and values to support a society that is prosperous, cohesive and culturally diverse, as well as preparing students for a mobile world of work.

Social and economic prosperity

Education is the foundation of a skilled workforce and a creative community. Education not only prepares people for jobs, it creates confident and creative individuals who are active and informed citizens.

Children start to acquire fundamental skills early, including communication and social interaction skills in early childhood education and care and at home. Early childhood learning interventions prepare children for later academic and social success. Preschool is linked to higher achievement in schooling.⁶ Preschool and school education play a strong role in promoting equality of opportunity at an early age, particularly by targeting otherwise disadvantaged and vulnerable students and communities.

The opportunity to participate in the labour market can have a profound impact on an individual's life experiences and prosperity. People with higher qualifications are more likely to be employed, more likely to earn more, and are better equipped to change jobs.⁷ Both vocational education and training (VET) and higher education offer pathways to individual advancement, qualifications and jobs.

Women's participation in the labour market is also critical to driving economic prosperity. From July 2018, the Government's support for child care will be better targeted to support low and middle income families who depend on child care to work, train or study, providing greater opportunity for women to participate in the workforce. Foundational skills training and English language programs are also important to addressing disadvantage for adult learners, including migrants, and help drive an inclusive and prosperous society.

Australia's world-class tertiary education, training and research are vital to ongoing prosperity. The international education sector is our largest services export and third-largest export industry overall. In 2016, the value of the industry was a record \$22.4 billion and enrolments increased by 11 per cent. International education has been identified as one of five sectors that can drive the next wave of Australia's economic growth and prosperity.

A key challenge will be continuing to drive the quality and outcomes from our tertiary and vocational education and research sectors to sustain Australia's international competitiveness and attractiveness to international students. The Government's *National Strategy for International Education 2025* acknowledges the importance of this industry in driving Australia's future economic growth, global engagement and social advancement. Under the leadership of Ministers and experts on the Council for International Education, the strategy will encourage Australia's international education sector to grow sustainably, and be future focused, innovative and more globally engaged. The strategy is complemented by the *Australian International Education 2025 Roadmap*—a market development plan to support the international education sector's sustained long-term growth.

Research training produces a highly qualified research workforce, drives research and innovation, and contributes substantially to growing knowledge.⁸ Our world-class research and infrastructure are the reason Australia has historically been at the forefront of global discoveries. The Government provides long-term operational funding certainty for cutting-edge, national research infrastructure to ensure research jobs stay in Australia and so Australia retains its world-class science and research capability.

³ Foundation for Young Australians (2016), *The New Work Mindset*, Melbourne.

⁴ OECD (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

⁵ CEDA (2015), *Australia's future workforce?*, CEDA, Melbourne.

⁶ OECD (2016), "What are the benefits from early childhood education?", *Education Indicators in Focus*, No. 42.

⁷ OECD (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*.

⁸ Australian Council of Learned Academies (2015), *Review of Australia's Research Training System*.

Closing the Gap

We recognise that more needs to be done to achieve the education-related Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Closing the Gap targets. While responsibility for Indigenous-specific policy and funding programs is centralised in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the department continues to help lead the national effort to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The department is responsible for significant policy levers and funding for child care, education and training, which can impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities. We seek to improve educational outcomes for young children through innovative programs like *Connected Beginnings*, which supports the integration of early childhood, maternal and child health and family support services with schools in a number of Indigenous communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will be consulted in developing and implementing school education reforms tied to new school funding arrangements. The department's national education policy leadership seeks to ensure that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have the desire and capability to participate in tertiary education and training are able to do so and are supported to succeed.

The department operates on the principle that *Indigenous business is everyone's business*, which means that all employees consider our Reconciliation Action Plan in their work. It also means we strive to develop and deliver national policies and funding by working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and respecting their cultures and building our cultural capability.

The way we work

The department works with a range of stakeholders across all Australian government jurisdictions and with service providers to promote and implement national policies, including driving quality and accountability through national regulations and significant investment in education and training. We aim to maximise the benefits of our state and regional presence, including by using our State Network to support local relationships, contribute local knowledge and intelligence to national policy development, and deliver services nationally.

Australia's education architecture is multifaceted and child care, education, training and research are delivered through a complex mix of government, not-for-profit, religious, private and corporate entities. Our policies, regulatory frameworks, funding programs and stakeholder engagement strategies reflect this environment.



Enterprise risks

There are a number of enterprise risks relevant to our purpose that, if realised, would likely impact our performance. We actively manage these risks through systems, processes and strategies that are designed to respond to our environment, shape our activities and improve our capability.

The risks identified below relate to the department's operating environment in 2017–18 and over the four year outlook. Our enterprise risks are reviewed and updated each year as part of the annual corporate planning cycle.

Strategic	
Lack of capability aligned to priorities	Staff capability and resource allocation are not aligned to priority activities that meet the department's purpose and objectives.
Failing to generate good policy and advice in a changing external environment	Policy and advice is not informed by or does not address changing external environment, including changing regulatory and funding architecture, multiple reform agendas, technological change, global advancements and community expectations.
Lack of fit-for-purpose systems, processes and infrastructure	Systems, processes, infrastructure and culture do not support the department to achieve its purpose and objectives.
Lack of fit-for-purpose accountabilities, controls and governance	Accountabilities, controls and governance arrangements fail to ensure the department can meet its purpose and objectives.
Operational	
Security	Failing to protect the physical safety of staff and visitors, information holdings and documents, personal information and IT infrastructure.
Communications and information quality	Ineffective communication channels result in poor stakeholder management or in lost opportunity to perform better. Information produced is erroneous or irrelevant, or not produced or made available in a timely manner, resulting in poor decisions or reputational damage.
Fraud, non-compliance, and poor financial management	Fraudulent activities perpetrated by staff, or external parties against the department for personal gain. Non-compliance with policies and regulations (including staff failure to bring these to the attention of senior management) resulting in poor performance, poor financial management and/or legal action.

Information on the department's approach to risk management is outlined in [Risk oversight and management](#).

Activities and performance

The department recognises the importance of communicating what we do and how it impacts opportunity and prosperity—especially for children, families, communities, students, the workforce and the nation. The department aims to better measure, monitor and report our performance.

We recognise that responsibility for our outcomes is shared and we work with states and territories, educators and experts, and with a range of public, private and not-for-profit child care, education and training providers to develop measures of performance. We are driving efforts to build the national education evidence base to strengthen national policy development and service delivery.

This plan outlines priority activities and performance criteria for 2017–18 and over the four year outlook. The department's role in contributing to achievement in each area varies; sometimes we are involved directly in implementing national policy; at other times we use our funding and regulatory role to focus on improving outcomes through measures that are implemented by others.

The performance information listed in our corporate plan sits within a broader framework of measuring and monitoring our performance, in internal business planning and reporting, as well as externally. Further information on program resourcing and performance is available in our *2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements*. The achievement against the performance criteria in this plan and in our budget statements will be reported in the department's annual performance statements, at the end of the reporting period.

Outcome 1 – Quality early learning and schooling

The department is responsible for national policy leadership on early childhood education, child care and schooling, which aims to maximise opportunity and prosperity for all by driving national reforms and quality improvements, including addressing vulnerability and disadvantage in childhood and communities.

Access to quality child care provides families with the opportunity to participate in work, study or volunteering in their communities, while their children access quality early learning to maximise their life potential. Access to quality preschool and school education provide children and young people with opportunity through learning, including pathways to further learning or to jobs.

Quality school education sets up our children for a successful and fulfilling life. The department leads the Australian Government's efforts for a nationally consistent approach to school funding that assists every child to reach their full potential so they can fully participate in the workplace, economy and society.



One million families using approved **child care** for **1.6 million children**



More than **3.8 million students** enrolled in **Australian schools**

Activities	Delivery strategies
<p>Ensuring access to quality, affordable child care, enabling parents to work, train or study.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting families to access targeted support for child care, while children benefit from quality early learning opportunities. Ensuring families and child care services are supported to transition to new arrangements under the Government's child care reforms, which will apply from 2 July 2018. Protecting taxpayer funding by focusing on the integrity of child care payments, including continuing compliance activities.
<p>Strengthening access to quality early learning and schooling, including for disadvantaged groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting vulnerable or disadvantaged children and communities, so that more children can access quality child care and early learning services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - building the capacity and capability of child care services to better integrate children with additional needs through the Inclusion Support Programme - assisting child care services to reduce barriers in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities, including supporting eligible families and services to transition to new arrangements on 2 July 2018. Supporting the delivery of at least 600 hours of quality early learning preschool programs for children in the year before full-time school in 2017 and 2018, and consulting with states and territories on longer term arrangements for preschools from 2019. Supporting national initiatives, such as expanding the Learning for Life program and implementing the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability, that help to support disadvantaged school students.
<p>Needs-based funding provided to support quality outcomes for every eligible school student in Australia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the Government's <i>Quality Schools</i> package, including implementing new Commonwealth school funding arrangements from 2018, which will be needs-based, transparent and tied to reforms that boost outcomes across the schooling sector.
<p>Strengthening the national evidence base and lifting outcomes in Australian schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributing to national policy on the most effective teaching and learning strategies, including supporting the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools, led by David Gonski AC, which will report to Government by March 2018. Helping regional, rural and remote students to succeed in school and in their transition to further study, training and employment, by supporting the Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education, led by Emeritus Professor John Halsey, which will report to Government by December 2017. Leading efforts to improve our national education evidence base and data for schools and preschools, which is critical for informed policy and decision making in education. Improving school leadership and quality teaching nation-wide through a range of targeted initiatives, and supporting the delivery of the Australian Curriculum, which outlines the knowledge, skills and capabilities that all students need to succeed. Supporting parents to be positively and actively involved in their child's education, including through the <i>Learning Potential</i> app, an innovative and award-winning approach.
<p>Creating and connecting transition pathways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing students for life beyond school, by supporting our ministers and working with education, industry, career and parent stakeholders to develop the <i>National Career Education Strategy</i>.

Performance criteria and targets

Performance Criteria— <i>what we will measure</i>	Programs	Method	Performance targets— <i>what we aim to achieve</i>			
			2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Child care services and families successfully transition to new arrangements. ^a	1.1; 1.4	Qualitative assessment	IT system is ready for implementation on 2 July 2018.	Eligible services and families transition to new arrangements from 2 July 2018.		
Capacity and capability of child care services to include children with additional needs.	1.1	Assessing against baseline		Establish baseline data through new reporting tool.	Improved inclusion for children with additional needs.	Improved inclusion for children with additional needs.
Universal access to preschool education.	1.7	Reporting	95% of children enrolled in the year before full-time school are enrolled in quality early childhood education for 600 hours per year.			
Indigenous children's access to preschool education.	1.7	Reporting	95% of Indigenous children enrolled in the year before full-time school are enrolled in quality early childhood education for 600 hours per year. ^b			
Quality outcomes from Australian schooling.	1.5; 1.6; 1.7	National and international assessments	Greater proportion of students achieve at or above minimum standards for reading, writing and numeracy under the National Assessment Program. ^c	Greater proportion of 15 year olds in 2018 (compared with 2015) achieve at or above Level 3 on each of the OECD PISA combined scales for reading, mathematics and scientific literacy.	Greater proportion of students achieve at or above minimum standards for reading, writing and numeracy under the National Assessment Program.	Greater proportion of students achieve at or above minimum standards for reading, writing and numeracy under the National Assessment Program.
Closing the Gap Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.	1.5; 1.6; 1.7	Reporting		Halve the gap for Indigenous children in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade (by 2018). Close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance (by 2018).		Halve the gap for Indigenous people aged 20-24 in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates (by 2020).

^a Performance criteria and targets relating to access to quality child care for 2018–19 and beyond are under development.

^b COAG's Closing the Gap target is for 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025.

^c Performance against the National Assessment Program targets are measured annually.



Outcome 2 – World-class tertiary education, training and research

The department's tertiary education policy leadership contributes to a national understanding of labour market needs and standards, and maximises opportunity for students, apprentices and trainees to participate in quality education and training and to make informed choices along their education journey.

Tertiary education and training supports the aspirations of students and the needs of the current and future workforce, improves workforce participation and drives national productivity. Australia's world-class education, training and research contribute to our global reputation as a leading study destination and our success as a global partner in international education and research collaboration.

We aim to build on the current success of Australian international education and help students, communities and industry around the world to maximise their potential and prosperity. Our work to improve collaboration between universities and industry, including supporting national collaborative research infrastructure, contributes to national and global prosperity by delivering social and economic benefits for all.



Over **4 million** students undertaking **vocational education and training**



1.4 million students enrolled in **higher education** in Australian universities



More than **550,000** **international students** studying in Australia



Australia's NCRIS network is used by over **35,000** **researchers**, both domestically and internationally

NCRIS: National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy

Activities	Delivery strategies
Improving the sustainability and effectiveness of Government funding for tertiary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering more choices for students and increasing transparency, accountability and sustainability in higher education by implementing the Government's 2017 higher education reform package. • Providing students with access to tertiary options, while better protecting students and taxpayers, by providing income contingent loans to students in eligible vocational education and training (VET) courses through the VET Student Loans program.
Maintaining a focus on transparency, quality and informed student choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforming the data available to consumers, governments and regulators on VET, and enhancing the MySkills website to bring together information on outcomes with information on VET options. • Supporting students to make informed choices and driving excellence and quality in higher education by managing the Quality Indicators in Learning and Teaching surveys and other digital platforms, and by improving the transparency of university admissions processes. • Lifting training provider standards, implementing stronger consumer protections and implementing the VET Information Strategy to enhance perceptions of and improve information resources about VET.
Strengthening participation of disadvantaged groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting better outcomes for students from low socioeconomic (low SES) status backgrounds, Indigenous students and students with disability. • Improving support for regional students, including establishing regional hubs to study locally by distance from any Australian university and implementing the new four year Rural and Regional Enterprise Scholarships.
Responding to labour market, industry and employer needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting support under the new Skilling Australians Fund for apprentices, trainees, pre-apprenticeships and higher level skilled Australians in occupations of high demand, with future growth potential, or in rural and regional Australia. • Responding to labour market needs by facilitating effective engagement between higher education and VET providers and industry, improving training package development and supporting training that has strong links to industry needs.
Creating and connecting transition pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting changing requirements and expectations in VET and higher education by supporting the Higher Education Standards Panel to undertake a review of higher education provider categories. • Preparing students for success in higher education by linking secondary schooling standards to entry standards for higher education through a review of the Australian Qualifications Framework by 31 December 2018.
Strengthening and growing Australia's international education sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing activities under the <i>National Strategy for International Education 2025</i> to sustainably grow the sector and ensure Australia remains the partner of choice for high quality education, training and research engagement, which is important to Australia's future economic growth and social advancement. • Protecting and strengthening the reputation of Australia's international education sector, including building confidence in Australian providers and their qualifications, and offering world-leading international student protections.
Maintaining the world-class standard of Australian research and increasing its benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing engagement between researchers and industry by advancing the Government's <i>National Innovation and Science Agenda</i>. • Strengthening Australia's national research infrastructure capacity by establishing an investment plan informed by the <i>2016 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap</i>. • Strengthening industry engagement and employment outcomes for PhD students, including increasing internship opportunities for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Performance criteria and targets

Performance Criteria—what we will measure	Programs	Method	Performance targets—what we aim to achieve			
			2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Increased participation in higher education, particularly for previously under represented groups.	2.1; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5	Time series analysis of university statistics	17.9% of domestic undergraduates are from a low SES background (postcode based). 1.8% of students at funded higher education providers are Indigenous. 0.7% completions of higher degrees by research are Indigenous.	18.0% of domestic undergraduates are from a low SES background (postcode based). 1.9% of students at funded higher education providers are Indigenous. 0.7% completions of higher degrees by research are Indigenous.	18.1% of domestic undergraduates are from a low SES background (postcode based). 2.0% of students at funded higher education providers are Indigenous. 0.8% completions of higher degrees by research are Indigenous.	18.2% of domestic undergraduates are from a low SES background (postcode based). 2.2% of students at funded higher education providers are Indigenous. 0.9% completions of higher degrees by research are Indigenous.
Undergraduates continue to have relatively high employability and earnings.	2.1; 2.3; 2.4	Annual survey and ATO ^a data	87% employed within four months of completing degree.	87% employed within four months of completing degree.	87.7% employed within four months of completing degree.	87.7% employed within four months of completing degree.
VET training choices are better aligned with industry needs.	2.4	Survey on enrolment	80% of VET Student Loans students surveyed report studying for job or business-related reasons.	80% of VET Student Loans students surveyed report studying for job or business-related reasons.	80% of VET Student Loans students surveyed report studying for job or business-related reasons.	80% of VET Student Loans students surveyed report studying for job or business-related reasons.
VET student satisfaction and employability.	2.8	Annual survey	80% of graduates are satisfied with the overall quality of their training. 80% of graduates were employed or enrolled in further study after training.	80% of graduates are satisfied with the overall quality of their training. 80% of graduates were employed or enrolled in further study after training.	80% of graduates are satisfied with the overall quality of their training. 80% of graduates were employed or enrolled in further study after training.	80% of graduates are satisfied with the overall quality of their training. 80% of graduates were employed or enrolled in further study after training.

Performance Criteria— <i>what we will measure</i>	Programs	Method	Performance targets— <i>what we aim to achieve</i>			
			2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Employers' use and views of VET.	2.8	Biennial survey (2017, 2019)	80% of employers satisfied with apprenticeships and traineeships. 80% of employers satisfied with nationally recognised training.		80% of employers satisfied with apprenticeships and traineeships. 80% of employers satisfied with nationally recognised training.	
Research postgraduates continue to have relatively high employability, earnings and course satisfaction.	2.5	Annual surveys and ATO data	90.9% employed within four months of completing degree.	90.9% employed within four months of completing degree.	91.7% employed within four months of completing degree.	91.6% employed within four months of completing degree.
Australian international education continues to be recognised as world leading.	2.7	Biennial survey (2018, 2020)		80% of international student are satisfied or very satisfied with studying and with living in Australia.		80% of international student are satisfied or very satisfied with studying and with living in Australia.
Australian universities continue to rank highly in terms of research excellence and collaboration.	2.5; 2.6	Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA) assessment process	87% of research in Australian universities is rated as world standard or above.	87% of research in Australian universities is rated as world standard or above. ^b	87% of research in Australian universities is rated as world standard or above.	87% of research in Australian universities is rated as world standard or above.

^a ATO: Australian Taxation Office. AGA: Australian Government Actuary.

^b New indicators will be introduced in 2018 relating to industry engagement.

Capability

We aspire to be recognised as a world-class policy agency that delivers on its purpose of maximising opportunity and prosperity through national leadership on education and training.

The department continues to give priority to developing the capability of our people and to building our capacity to develop education policies based on evidence and with a view to Australia's future social and economic needs.

Our strengthened governance, internal service delivery and decision-making practices support the department to uphold public sector principles and legislative requirements for accountability, leadership, transparency, integrity, efficiency and risk management.

We are contributing to the Australian Public Service (APS) transformation agenda, with a focus on organisational reform and technology transformation to better manage public resources and achieve our purpose and outcomes. Our capability to deliver our purpose is supported by enabling strategies that include:

- recasting our people strategy and developing our policy and program skills
- improving decision-making and national education policy through better use of evidence and data
- transforming our technology and the way we use it
- strengthening our governance and risk management practices
- improving business planning and performance monitoring processes
- reforming delivery of our corporate services and working with our shared service partners
- our Indigenous business is everyone's business framework.

Together, these strategies aim to continuously improve the department's capability over the next four years and beyond. Our strategies are reviewed and updated regularly to meet current and emerging priorities.



People strategy

We are revamping our people and diversity strategies, including a policy and program skills framework, and giving priority to our capability to develop rigorous, world-class education policy advice and effective program implementation.

Our people strategy

The department is updating our *People Strategy*, including consulting with employees and organisational leaders, and taking account of internal and external environmental factors such as:

- APS-wide reforms and broader environmental influences, including changing generational demographics and expectations
- current and future workforce trends, including employee feedback from the APS Employee Census
- the department's changing role and purpose—and aspiration as a world-class policy agency.

The strategy will articulate the department's approach over the next four years, with a focus on: optimising talent and driving performance; strong leadership; collaboration, innovation and inclusion; and improving our performance management capabilities and systems.

Our new *Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2017–2019* reinforces the department's commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workplace that enables people of all abilities and walks of life to build a rewarding career and maximise their potential.

The department's policy and program skills framework will define the standards and skills necessary for our people to enable the department to provide world-class policy advice, and effective policy implementation and program delivery. The framework will underpin the way the department manages its business from workforce planning through to capability measurement and development.

Improving decision-making through better use of evidence and data

We aim to grow our capability and capacity to develop education policy based on evidence with a view to the future, which is vital to our role as national leaders in education policy. In 2017–18 and beyond, we will work on improving the accessibility of data and information, engage with whole-of-government data initiatives and promote data-driven policy development.

Our priorities are:

- developing a National Education Evidence Base to bring together data on all phases of education, from early childhood education and care through to tertiary education
- contributing to cross-agency data linkage initiatives, including the Data Integration Partnership for Australia and Multi-Agency Data Integration Partnership
- establishing a program of data-driven analytical research to drive national leadership in education policy
- implementing a department-wide data management strategy to secure and store our data holdings, ensuring our data is accessible and appropriately protected
- continuing to build staff capability in data literacy and data analytics.

Information and communications technology

We are transforming our information and communications technology (ICT) capability to improve our business processes and national policy outcomes.

The department is updating its *Technology Strategy* to reflect the technology transformation occurring across the APS and within the wider community. The *Technology Strategy* and delivery roadmap outline our key ICT capability focus areas including:

- building enterprise capabilities through enterprise architecture and strong design governance
- engaging in whole-of-government digital transformation
- focusing on user-centred design and benefits driven investment to deliver strategic priorities
- maturing our portfolio, program and project management capabilities
- utilising our ICT investments to maximise business outcomes and rationalising our application portfolio
- leveraging our knowledge and technology to reform business processes.



Indigenous business is everyone's business

We proudly support the Government's priority to improve the wellbeing and opportunities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our business and internal operations.

The department has developed an *Indigenous Business is Everyone's Business* Framework to help employees and stakeholders better understand the department's philosophy of Indigenous business is everyone's business. The framework consists of three elements: the right people, the right capabilities, and the right policies and programs. Each element brings together initiatives and documents to guide employees in embedding this philosophy into everything that they do.

In 2017–18, the department will progress initiatives that build on our cultural capability, including ensuring the principles of the framework are embedded into our business practices and become part of the way we work.

Reconciliation Action Plan

The department's 2014–2017 *Reconciliation Action Plan* (RAP) provides the framework through which the department commits to practical actions that build respectful relationships and create opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The department remains committed to being an employer of choice for

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and through our RAP we aim to increase our representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to 4.5 per cent by December 2017. We proudly support the Government's Indigenous Procurement Policy so we can foster Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business, create jobs and employ more Indigenous Australians.

Reflecting the different stages of an organisation's reconciliation journey, there are four types of RAP an organisation can develop: Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate. The department's 2014–2017 RAP sits at the Stretch level. The department is currently undergoing a consultative process to consider whether the department can achieve an Elevate RAP for implementation from 2018.

Governance

Good governance is essential to the department achieving our purpose and outcomes—it helps us determine the direction of our work, drives organisational stewardship and supports high performance.

Our governance structure

The department’s governance committee structure was reviewed in December 2016. A new committee structure, comprising six senior committees and the Executive Board, was introduced in 2017, with the objective of supporting the department to identify priorities and achieve objectives.

The Executive Board, the department’s decision-making body, focuses on strategic discussion and the delivery of outcomes, while the six senior committees are advisory bodies. The Executive Board and senior committees form a coordinated and unified structure that aims to inform new

policy design, drive evidence-based strategies and act as a forum for sharing ideas and best practice. The structure provides support and assurance to the way the department plans, consults, and makes and communicates decisions.

Forward work strategies enable committees to identify priorities, manage risks and support the Secretary to meet statutory obligations and facilitate planning and consultation. This includes meeting the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Governance committee structure



*Required under legislation or part of whole-of-government agenda

Improving our business planning and performance monitoring

The department has introduced a new internal business planning process, aligned with our corporate planning. In 2017–18 we will also introduce a new quarterly reporting framework to support internal monitoring and reporting on the corporate plan and internal business plans. The new monitoring framework will help the department develop better performance measures over the period of this plan, as well as contribute to a better understanding of what leads to policy and program success.

Business planning is strongly linked to risk management, including using risk management as a tool to make sound business decisions that support achievement of our purpose. More information on the department’s approach to risk management is outlined in [Risk oversight and management](#).

Our planning process also reflects our purpose of maximising opportunity by ensuring our external business and internal services are accessible by all—in line with the Government’s *Multicultural Access and Equity Policy*.

Corporate services

We are leading an ongoing program of organisational reform that will better support the department to deliver outcomes and maintain excellence and productivity in a constrained fiscal environment.

Reforming our corporate delivery

In 2017–18, organisational reform will continue with the implementation of a new ‘hub and spoke’ corporate operating model for human resources, finance and parliamentary services. This will help build a ‘one department’ approach to the delivery of corporate services, enabling policy and program areas to focus on their core business, and reducing duplication in service delivery. A subsequent review will look at extending this approach to a range of other corporate and enabling services.

Sharing corporate services

The department participates in the APS Shared and Common Services Program, which aims to ensure public sector corporate services are sourced in the most efficient and effective way. The department contributes to this initiative through shared corporate service arrangements with the Departments of Finance and Employment. These arrangements focus on strengthened governance, assurance and performance reporting arrangements.

The Department of Finance’s Service Delivery Office supplies the department with core transactional services, including accounts payable and receivable, credit card management, payroll and payroll system administration, and transactional travel management.

The Department of Employment provides some corporate and technology services to the department, including records management, procurement and grants support, financial viability assessments, network access and client computing.

The department provides library and theatre (including audio-visual) services to the Department of Employment and other agencies.



Risk oversight and management

Our people are encouraged to identify and mitigate risk, and to use risk management as a tool to make sound business decisions that support achievement of our purpose. The department's current risk management framework is undergoing revision to ensure a consistent approach to the management and monitoring of risks.

Expanding our approach to risk management

In 2017–18 and beyond, we will focus on ensuring that our Risk Management Framework, enterprise-level risks, risk appetite and supporting documentation are relevant to the department's needs and fit to guide the department's work. These enhanced tools will continue to support staff with their understanding of how the department embraces risk, and to encourage a culture that shares information across the department.

In 2016–17, through discussions with the department's Executive Board, including through the 2017–18 corporate planning process, the department has identified our enterprise-level risks (see [Enterprise risks](#)) and defined the department's risk appetite and tolerance for risk. The department's approach was strengthened by the appointment of a Chief Risk Officer in February 2017, who has led this work.

In 2017–18, we will continue to build on these achievements supported by the department's Risk, Business Continuity and Security Committee, with a focus on:

- building risk management capability at all levels
- incorporating 'real time' risk and issue management to ensure the consideration of risk becomes part of our day-to-day decision making
- developing a positive risk culture.

This enhanced approach to risk management will assist us to make informed decisions about priorities and resource allocation. It will also enable us to be flexible in the way we engage with and respond to risks and opportunities across the life of this plan.

Risk management framework

Risk management is integral to the department's strategic and operational environment and is recognised by our Executive as an essential component of sound management and good corporate governance. The department's risk management framework aligns with broader requirements, including the *Commonwealth Risk Management Policy* and the Australian/New Zealand Standard on Risk Management (AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009), and meets the requirements of section 16 of the PGPA Act.

Contact us

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