

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES IN NSW CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



JULY 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia. We honour their stories, traditions, spirituality and living cultures, acknowledging their unique contribution to the life of this country.

CSNSW acknowledges Aboriginal families and communities as the first and continuing educators of their children and young people.

In referring to Aboriginal people, this document refers inclusively to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“The Church of Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until [the Aboriginal people of Australia] have made [their] contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.”

POPE JOHN PAUL II

INTRODUCTION

Catholic schools in NSW currently educate approximately 9,500 Aboriginal students, more than at any other time in the sector’s 202-year history. The sector also employs more than 350 Aboriginal teachers, teaching assistants, community engagement officers and other non-teaching staff.

At the same time, NSW’s schools face challenges in closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student outcomes across a range of metrics including: attendance, retention, NAPLAN, HSC, Vocational and Educational Training (VET) and post-school destinations.

This report explores some of the trends behind the successes and challenges experienced in Catholic schools in NSW and is part of Catholic Education’s broader commitment to creating educational opportunities and high quality learning environments in inclusive, culturally safe settings for all Aboriginal students and staff.

In Catholic Schools NSW’s (‘CSNSW’) most recent Aboriginal Education Strategy document, a commitment was made to develop an annual reporting framework to monitor Aboriginal student outcomes against state and national KPIs, as well as collecting and sharing best practice case studies from across the System. This is in response to our constitutional requirements and the NSW Premier’s Priorities¹.

To guide the development of this first CSNSW Aboriginal Education Report, key policy documents and reports have been referenced, including the:

- i. Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration
- ii. Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia
- iii. Australian Education Act and National Schools Reform Agreement
- iv. National Report on Schooling

Based on the objectives of these policy documents, the following metrics have been included in this report:

- Enrolments
- Attendance
- Retention
- NAPLAN
- HSC
- VET and Post-school destinations

In certain circumstances, there may currently be limited data available. It is the objective of CSNSW to continue collecting additional information and refining the reporting included within this document.

In referring to NSW Catholic schools in this report, this may be in reference to systemic Catholic schools only, or to both systemic Catholic schools and Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person (‘RI/MPJP’) schools. This differentiation is made clear in each section.

¹ <<https://www.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/increasing-number-of-aboriginal-young-people-reaching-their-learning-potential>>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ The proportion of students identifying as Aboriginal in NSW Catholic schools has more than doubled from 1.7% in 2008 to 3.6% in 2021.
- ▶ Catholic schools have enrolled an increasing share of Aboriginal students in NSW, up from 9.5% in 2008 to 11.4% in 2021.
- ▶ Attendance and retention rates for Aboriginal students attending NSW Catholic schools is higher than for Government and Independent schools. Additionally, the 'gap' in attendance & retention rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Catholic school students is smaller in Catholic schools.
- ▶ Almost all Aboriginal students in NSW Catholic schools are achieving the national minimum standards in NAPLAN, with rates only slightly behind non-Aboriginal students.
- ▶ However, within systemic NSW Catholic schools, the gaps in NAPLAN performance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students becomes much larger when reviewing Top 2 and Bottom 2 band results, with little or no improvement noted over the past 7 years.
- ▶ HSC Attainment Rates for Aboriginal students remains approximately 20-30% lower than non-Aboriginal students in NSW systemic Catholic schools. In 2021, 49% of the original year 9 cohort of Aboriginal students were awarded their HSC. This compares to approximately 45% for Government schools.
- ▶ Aboriginal students in NSW Catholic schools participate in VET courses at a slightly higher rate (34%) than non-Aboriginal students (31%).
- ▶ While both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in NSW Catholic schools select similar VET courses, the completion rates for non-Aboriginal students is slightly higher – 63% compared to 50% where the full certificate is available.
- ▶ Since 2014, in NSW, there have been declines in the proportion of Aboriginal students enrolled in Education or Training after leaving school, both for Year 12 Completers and Early School Leavers. However, this has been partly offset by the increase in the proportion of Aboriginal students in full-time or part-time work.

ACCESS TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

KEY POINTS

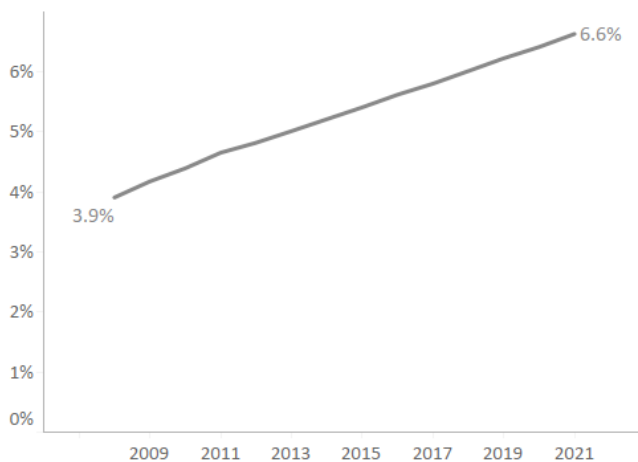
- ▶ The proportion of students identifying as Aboriginal in all NSW schools has increased from 3.9% in 2008 to 6.6% in 2021.
- ▶ Over the same period, the proportion of Aboriginal students in NSW Catholic schools has increased from 1.7% to 3.6%, higher than Independent schools, but significantly lower than Government schools.

In 2021, NSW Catholic schools educated 9,405 Aboriginal students (2008: 4,086 students). These students make up 3.6% of the sector’s cohort (3.9% for systemic and 2.0% for RI/MPJP – see *Figure 2* below), up from 1.7% in 2008 (1.8% for systemic and 1.1% for RI/MPJP).

As shown in *Figure 1* below, this upward trend in Aboriginal enrolments is reflective of the state as a whole, where the Aboriginal proportion of students increased from 3.9% in 2008 to 6.6% in 2021.

FIGURE 1

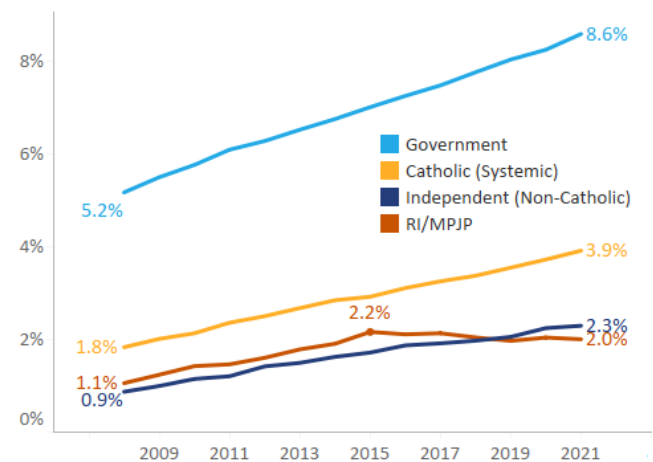
ABORIGINAL STUDENTS AS % OF COHORT - ALL NSW SCHOOLS, 2008-21



Source: ACARA MySchool datasets

FIGURE 2

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS AS % OF COHORT - NSW SCHOOLS BY SECTOR, 2008-21



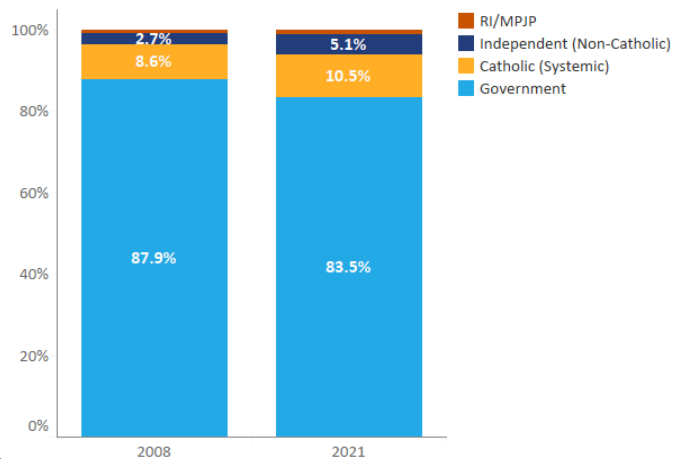
Catholic schools have enrolled an increasing share of Aboriginal students in NSW, up from 9.5% in 2008 (8.6% for systemic and 0.9% for RI/MPJP) to 11.4% in 2021 (10.5% for systemic and 0.9% for RI/MPJP).

The 10.5% of NSW’s Aboriginal students attending systemic Catholic schools in 2021 (refer to *Figure 3*) is the highest in the sector’s history. However, the proportion of NSW’s Aboriginal students attending RI/MPJP schools peaked at 1.3% in 2015.

The proportion of Aboriginal students attending Independent schools has increased consistently from 2.7% in 2008 to 5.1% in 2021. The increases within Catholic and Independent schools have been offset by a decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal students attending Government schools. Refer to *Appendix 2* for details by diocese.

FIGURE 3

PROPORTION OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS BY SECTOR - NSW SCHOOLS, 2008 vs 2021



Source: ACARA MySchool Datasets

There are challenges to identifying the reasons behind movements in Aboriginal enrolments. Firstly, it is important to note that Aboriginal students are not a homogenous group. The characteristics of these students such as socio-economic background, location and community can vary significantly. As such, identifying broad reasons for overall enrolment movements can oversimplify the complexities of reality.

It is noted that some Aboriginal families are more transient than non-Aboriginal families and are more likely to move children between schools and sectors, which adds to the difficulty of tracking the reasons for sectoral enrolment growth over time. The strong growth in Aboriginal enrolments across all sectors (5.1% p.a. from 2008 to 2021) may in fact be attributed to an increase in the number of students self-identifying as Aboriginal, rather than real growth in enrolments. For context, total enrolments across all NSW schools increased by only 0.9% p.a. from 2008 to 2021. (Note, further details by Catholic School Agency are provided in *Appendix 1*).

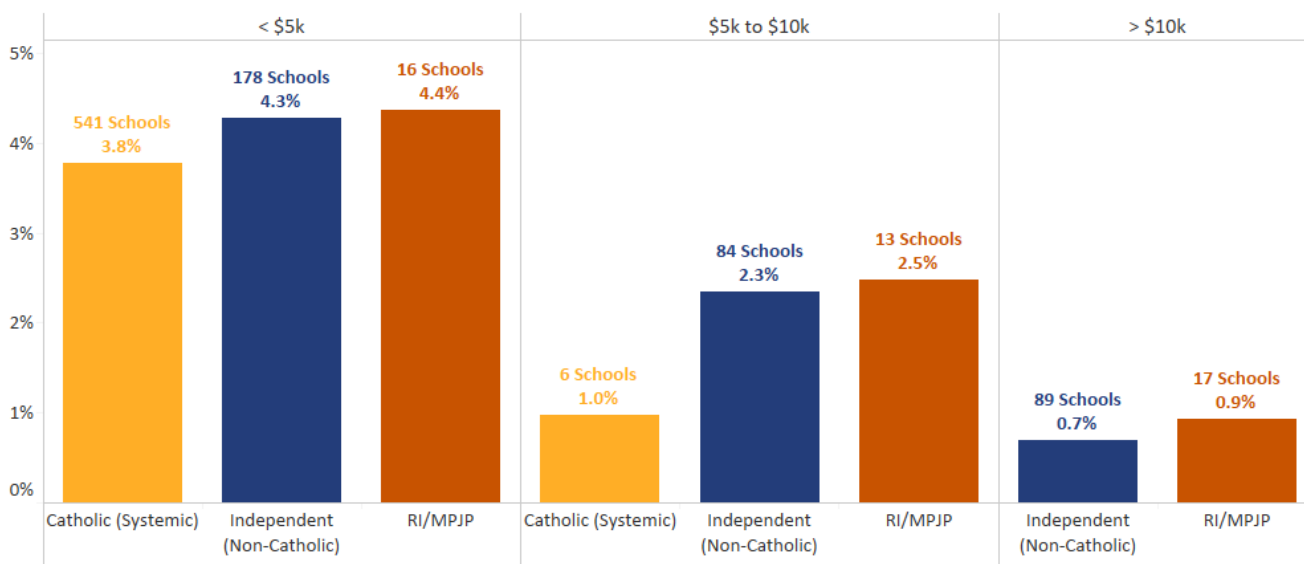
ENROLMENTS BY FEE RANGE

As shown in *Figure 4* below, there is little variation between non-government sectors in the proportion of Aboriginal students attending lower fee schools (less than \$5k). Given that all but six systemic Catholic schools fall into this fee range, this suggests the overall higher percentage of Aboriginal students in systemic all Catholic schools (3.9% per *Figure 2*), compared to Independent and RI/MPJP schools (2.3% and 2.0% respectively per *Figure 2*), may be more to do with the level of school fees than other differentiating factors.

In 2021, Aboriginal students made up 2.0% of the RI/MPJP schools' cohort, which was lower than other Independent schools (at 2.3%) and systemic Catholic schools (at 3.9%) (see *Figure 3*). Despite this, the chart below shows that a higher proportion of Aboriginal students attend RI/MPJP schools at each of the fee ranges.

FIGURE 4

ABORIGINAL STUDENTS AS % OF COHORT BY FEE RANGE, 2020



Source: ACARA MySchool datasets.

BOARDING STUDENTS

In 2021, there were a total of 19 Aboriginal boarding students attending the two systemic Boarding schools, St Francis de Sales Regional College in Leeton and Kildare Catholic College in Wagga Wagga. This represents 7% of all systemic Catholic school boarding students in NSW.

In 2021, there were a total of 181 Aboriginal boarding students across eleven RI/MPJP boarding schools. This represents 12% of all RI/MPJP school boarding students in NSW. 24% of Aboriginal students attending RI/MPJP schools are boarders.

ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Attendance and retention rates for Aboriginal students attending Catholic schools is higher than for Government and Independent schools. The gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Catholic school students is also smaller than that noted in Government and Independent schools. However, there has been little improvement in these metrics in recent years.

Overall, the gaps in attendance and retention rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students is much smaller for Catholic schools compared to Government and Independent schools. The smaller gaps noted for Catholic schools may be partly attributed to the structure of intentional support for Aboriginal students throughout the system. Each diocese employs Aboriginal Education Officers who have knowledge of the challenges of Aboriginal students within their local schools and community.

In a number of dioceses, there has been a transition away from more traditional support for Aboriginal students (i.e. sitting in classrooms and supporting teachers) to focusing on broader community engagement. It is important to note that, despite the smaller gaps for Catholic schools, there has been no notable reduction in the gap within Catholic schools over the past few years. There has also been a downward trend in Attendance Rates for Aboriginal students in Catholic schools.

ATTENDANCE

- While there has been a decline in the Aboriginal attendance rate at Catholic schools over the past 5 years, the level of attendance is still higher than at Independent and Government schools.
- The gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal attendance rates remains significantly smaller for Catholic schools.

FIGURE 5
ATTENDANCE RATE (%): YEARS 1-10, ABORIGINAL STUDENTS, NSW

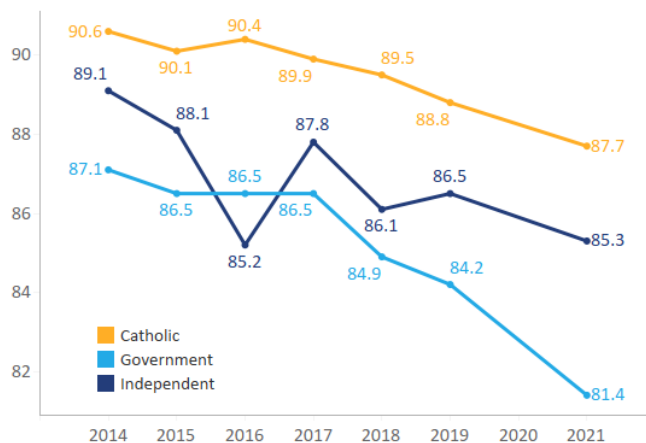
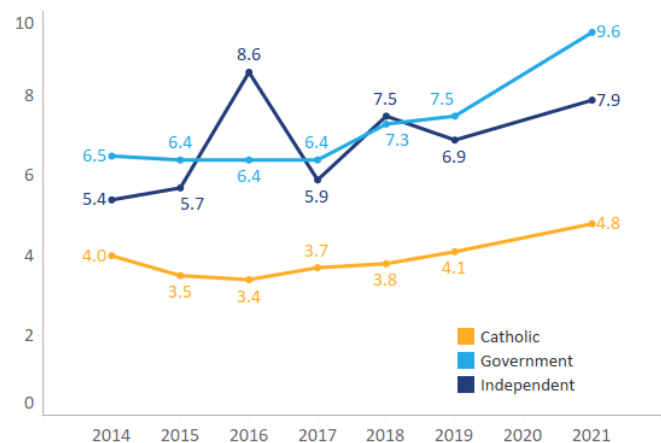


FIGURE 6
ATTENDANCE RATE GAP (%): YEARS 1-10, NSW



Source: ACARA National Report on Schooling in Australia.
 'Attendance Rate' is defined as the number of actual full-time equivalent student-days attended by full-time students in Years 1-10 as a percentage of the total number of possible student-days attended over the period.
 'Attendance Rate Gap' is defined as the difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal attendance.
 Catholic non-systemic schools are counted as Catholic rather than as independent.
 School attendance data for 2020 has not been published due to inconsistencies in the data as a result of the varying health advice and schooling arrangements across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There may have been some impact on Attendance Rates recorded for 2021.

RETENTION

- In the graph below, retention rates represent the proportion of a Year 10 cohort who go on to complete Year 12.
- The retention rate for Aboriginal students in Catholic schools remains above the rate in Independent and Government schools, albeit with some decline over the past 2 years.
- Similar to the attendance rate trend, the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal retention rates remains significantly smaller for Catholic schools.

FIGURE 7

RETENTION RATE %: YEARS 10-12, ABORIGINAL STUDENTS, NSW

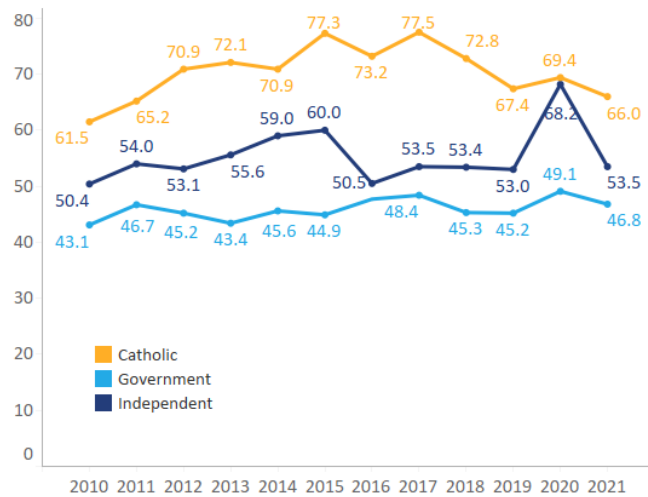
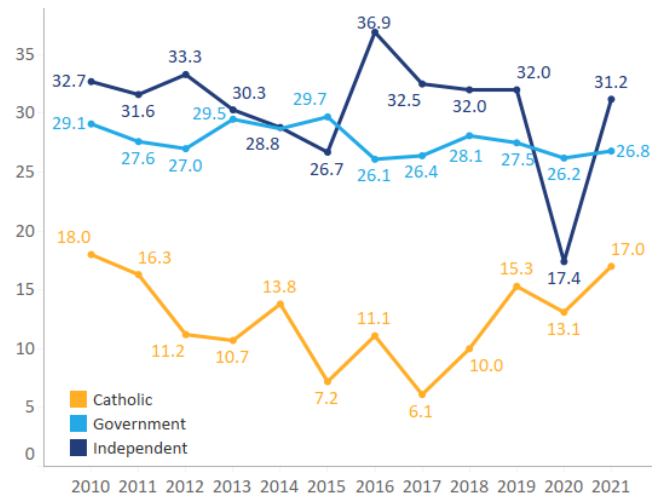


FIGURE 8

RETENTION RATE GAP %: YEARS 10-12, NSW



Source: ACARA National Report on Schooling in Australia.

The 'Apparent Retention Rate' is an indicative measure of the number of full-time school students in a designated year level of schooling as a percentage of their respective cohort group in a base year.

Catholic non-systemic schools are counted as Catholic rather than as Independent.

Overall, it is estimated that the impacts of COVID-19 on the data were minor.

NAPLAN PERFORMANCE

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Almost all Aboriginal students in NSW systemic Catholic schools are achieving the national minimum standards in NAPLAN, with rates only slightly behind non-Aboriginal students.
- ▶ It has been noted that Aboriginal achievement of the national minimum standard in Year 9 Reading did drop below 90% for the first time in 2021, which may be related to the dislocating impacts of COVID-19.
- ▶ Within systemic Catholic schools, the gaps in NAPLAN performance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students becomes much larger when reviewing Top 2 and Bottom 2 band results, with little or no improvement noted over the past 7 years.

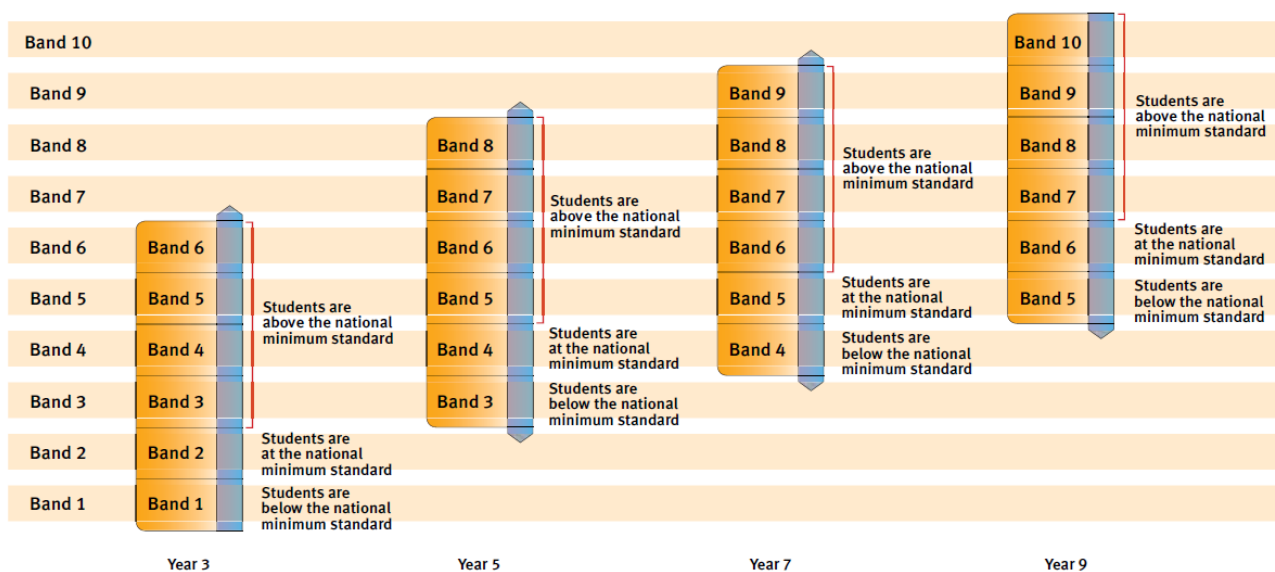
Analysis comparing NAPLAN performance between systemic Catholic school Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students should be treated with caution for two reasons:

- The number of Aboriginal students in each NAPLAN cohort is small. Typically, fewer than 500 Aboriginal students in NSW Catholic schools sit each NAPLAN assessment.
- NAPLAN analysis comparing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students does not take into account other student background characteristics. This limits the conclusions which can be drawn from the analysis.

1. NAPLAN MINIMUM STANDARD

- The NAPLAN assessment scale is divided into ten bands to record student results in the tests. Band 1 is the lowest band and band 10 is the highest band. The national minimum standards encompass one band at each year level (e.g. Band 2 for Year 3, Band 4 for Year 5) and therefore represent a wide range of the typical skills demonstrated by students at this level. Students who are below the national minimum standard have not achieved the learning outcomes expected for their year level. They are at risk of being unable to progress satisfactorily at school without targeted intervention.¹

National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy National Assessment Scale

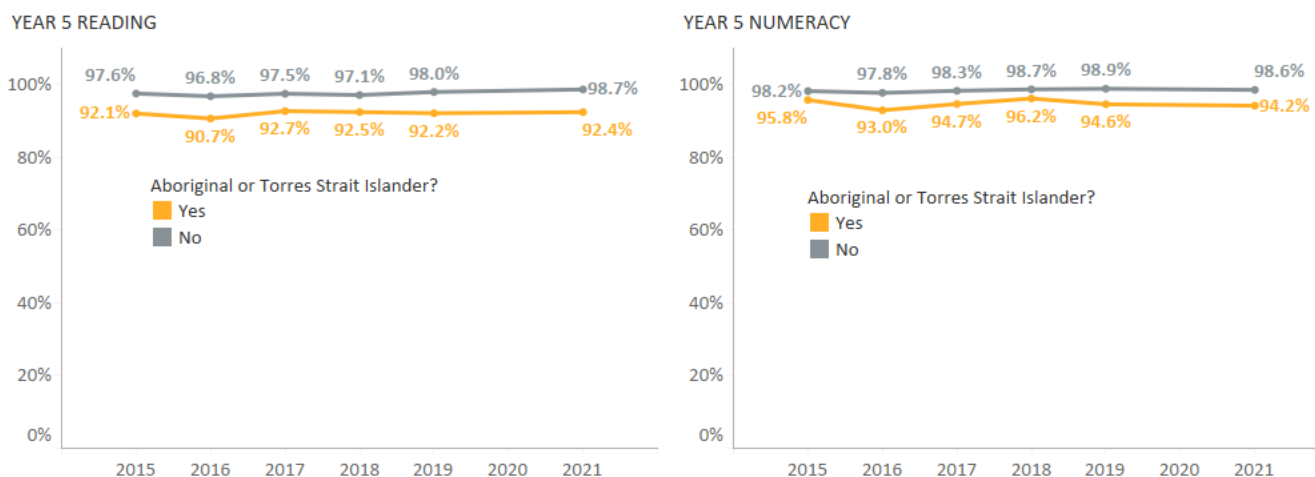


¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2021), <<https://www.nap.edu.au/results-and-reports/how-to-interpret>>

- When it comes to meeting the minimum standard in NAPLAN assessments, there is only a small difference between systemic Catholic school Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. For example, the two charts below show that, in 2021, there was a 6% gap in Year 5 Reading and a 4% gap in Year 5 Numeracy. These are smaller gaps than at the NSW state level where, in 2021, the respective gaps for these domains in Year 5 were 11% and 11% respectively¹.

FIGURE 9

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE NAPLAN MINIMUM STANDARD - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

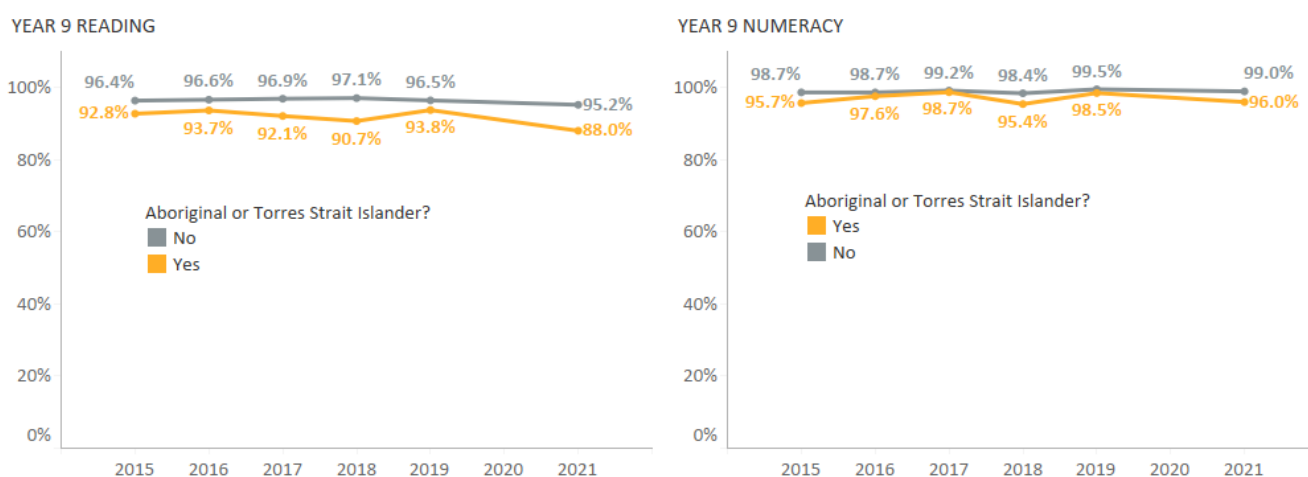


Source: ACARA MySchool Datasets.
 Note: NAPLAN was not held in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

- The trend in Catholic schools for Year 9 is similar. In 2021, the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students was 7% for Reading and 3% for Numeracy. The gaps at the NSW state level are much more significant, at 22% and 13% respectively². However, it can also be seen in Figure 10 below that the gap in NSW systemic Catholic schools in 2021 for both Reading and Numeracy was larger than the previous 2019 NAPLAN year.

FIGURE 10

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE NAPLAN MINIMUM STANDARD - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Source: ACARA MySchool Datasets.
 Note: NAPLAN was not held in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2021), 2021 NAPLAN National Report, <<https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2021-naplan-national-report.pdf>>

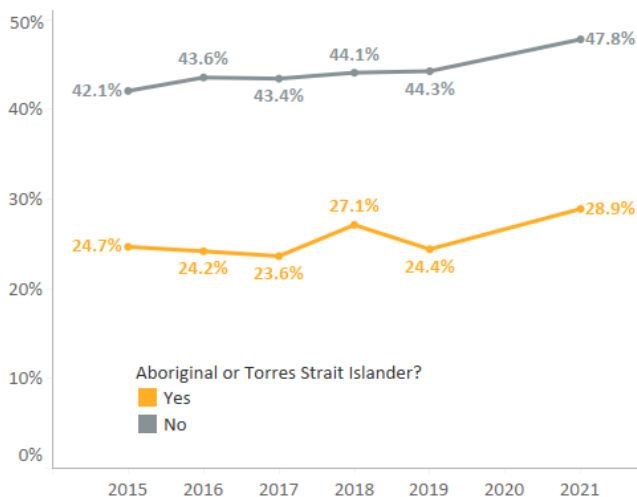
2. NAPLAN TOP TWO BANDS

However, in terms of students achieving top two band NAPLAN scores, the gap in Catholic schools is much larger. For example, in Year 5 Reading 29% of our sector’s Aboriginal students scored in the Top 2 Bands, compared to 48% of non-Aboriginal students. This gap of 19% is still smaller than the state’s gap of 29%, where only 14% of Aboriginal students achieve the top two bands in Year 5 Reading, compared to 46% of non-Aboriginal students¹.

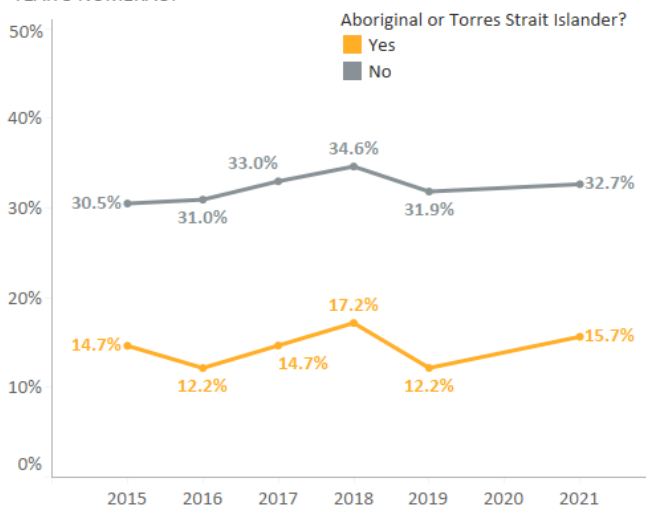
FIGURE 11

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS IN TOP TWO NAPLAN BANDS - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

YEAR 5 READING



YEAR 5 NUMERACY



Source: ACARA MySchool Datasets.

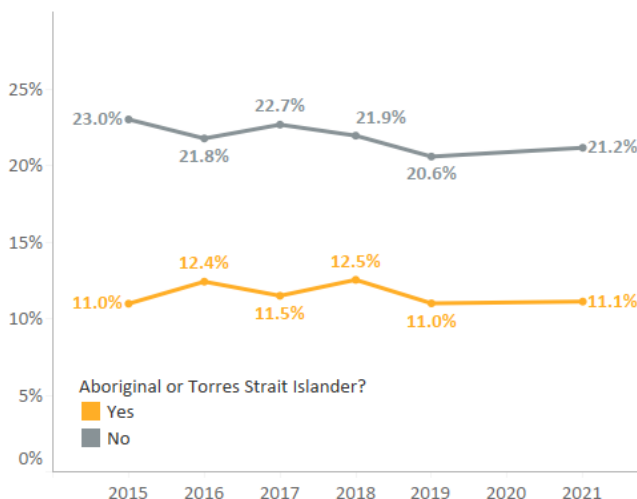
Note: NAPLAN was not held in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

The trends for Year 9 are similar as shown in Figure 12 below.

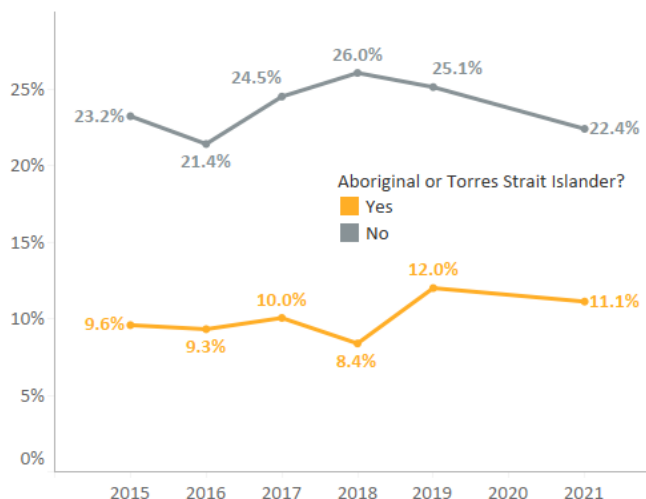
FIGURE 12

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS IN TOP TWO NAPLAN BANDS - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

YEAR 9 READING



YEAR 9 NUMERACY



Source: ACARA MySchool Datasets.

Note: NAPLAN was not held in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

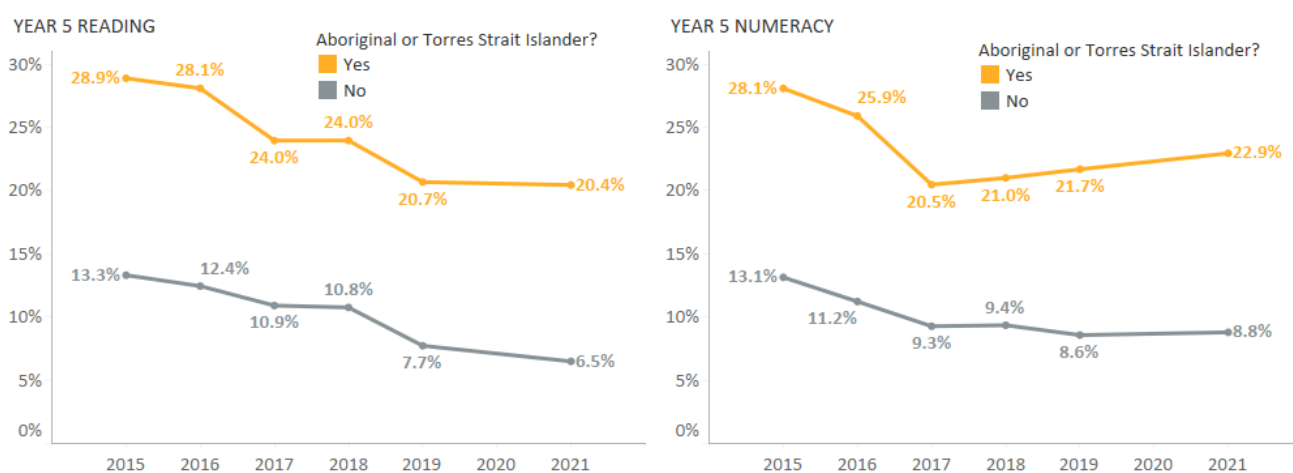
¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2021), *2021 NAPLAN National Report*, <<https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2021-naplan-national-report.pdf>>

3. NAPLAN BOTTOM TWO BANDS

The trend is relatively similar in relation to those students falling in the bottom two bands. For example, in Year 5 Reading 20% of our sector’s Aboriginal students scored in the Bottom 2 Bands in 2021, compared to 6% of non-Aboriginal students. This gap of 14% is smaller than the state’s gap of 22%, where 31% of Aboriginal students scored in the bottom two bands in Year 5 Reading, compared to 9% of non-Aboriginal students in 2021¹.

Although the gap in NSW systemic Catholic schools has remained relatively similar over time, there has been an encouraging trend in Year 5 Reading (refer to the left graph of *Figure 13*) where the representation of Aboriginal students in the bottom two bands has decreased by 9% from 29% in 2015 to 20% in 2021.

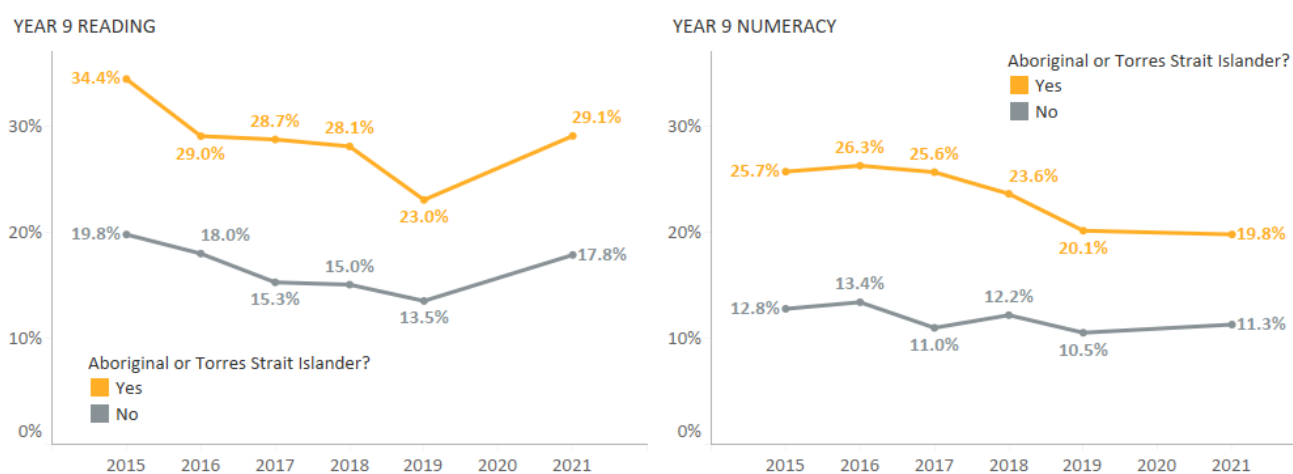
FIGURE 13
PROPORTION OF STUDENTS IN BOTTOM TWO NAPLAN BANDS - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Source: ACARA MySchool Datasets.
Note: NAPLAN was not held in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

Refer to *Figure 14* below for Year 9 trends. There has been a closing of the gap in Year 9 Numeracy Bottom Two Band proportions, decreasing from 13% in 2015 to 8% in 2021.

FIGURE 14
PROPORTION OF STUDENTS IN BOTTOM TWO NAPLAN BANDS - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Source: ACARA MySchool Datasets.
Note: NAPLAN was not held in 2020 due to COVID restrictions.

¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2021), *2021 NAPLAN National Report*, <<https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2021-naplan-national-report.pdf>>

HSC PERFORMANCE

KEY POINTS

- ▶ HSC Attainment Rates for Aboriginal students remains approximately 20-30% lower than non-Aboriginal students in NSW systemic Catholic schools.
- ▶ The combined Bands 5 and 6 rates average approximately 20-25% for Aboriginal students compared to approximately 39% for non-Aboriginal students in systemic Catholic schools.

HSC ATTAINMENT

One of the NSW Premier's Priorities is 'Increasing the proportion of Aboriginal students attaining a HSC by 50% by 2023 while maintaining cultural identity'¹. HSC attainment rates are estimated by calculating the number of students awarded their HSC, expressed as a percentage of the potential Year 12 population, with the Year 12 population calculated based on that cohort's Year 9 enrolment census.

Table 1 summarises the performance of NSW systemic Catholic schools on this metric for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Overall, there has been a decline in the proportion of Aboriginal students being awarded their HSC, currently 49% in 2021 compared to 61% in 2017. For context, Aboriginal students in Government schools achieved an Attainment Rate of 45% in 2020, lower than NSW Systemic schools.

The Attainment Rate for non-Aboriginal students has remained relatively consistent at approximately 78%.

ATAR TRENDS

The percentage of non-Aboriginal HSC students eligible for an ATAR in systemic Catholic schools has dropped slightly from 84% in 2016 to 82% in 2021, with very little variation.

The percentage of Aboriginal students eligible for an ATAR has ranged between 62% and 67% over the past five years, approximately 15-20% lower than for non-Aboriginal students. Refer to Table 2 for further details.

TABLE 1

NSW SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Aboriginal Students					
Awarded HSC	280	257	230	285	255
Potential Year 12 Cohort*	460	453	469	514	522
% HSC Attainment	61%	57%	49%	55%	49%
Non-Aboriginal Students					
Awarded HSC	12,685	12,575	12,435	12,290	12,213
Potential Year 12 Cohort*	16,081	16,124	15,880	15,757	15,612
% HSC Attainment	79%	78%	78%	78%	78%

Sources – NESA HSC Extract and ACARA MySchool Datasets

* Potential Year 12 cohort based on the Year 9 enrolment census 3 years prior.

Note: Potential data issues where a student doesn't identify as Aboriginal in Year 9, but does so in Year 12 or vice versa. Also, students may leave or arrive in the System during this period, so the data may not be like-for-like. Individual student identifiers not yet available.

TABLE 2

NSW SYSTEMIC SCHOOLS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Aboriginal Students					
Eligible for ATAR	188	160	152	180	167
Awarded HSC	280	257	230	285	255
% Eligible for ATAR	67%	62%	66%	63%	66%
Non-Aboriginal Students					
Eligible for ATAR	10,617	10,367	10,314	10,039	9,993
Awarded HSC	12,685	12,575	12,435	12,290	12,213
% Eligible for ATAR	84%	82%	83%	82%	82%

Sources – NESA HSC Extract.

¹ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/increasing-number-of-aboriginal-young-people-reaching-their-learning-potential>

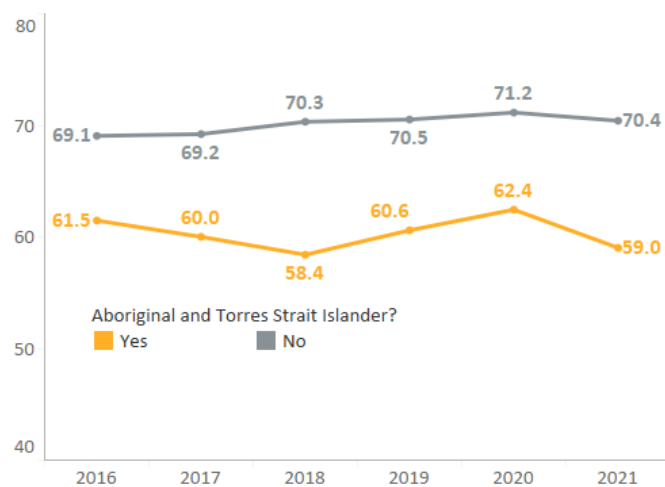
The median ATAR for non-Aboriginal students in systemic Catholic schools has stayed above 70 since 2018, and is generally close to the overall state median (70.4 in 2021).

The median ATAR for Aboriginal students has been averaging approximately 10 points lower over the past five years, ranging from 58.4 to 62.4. In 2021, the gap in median ATAR was 11.4.

(The Median ATARs noted here are an estimate based on CSNSW modelling that utilises HSC marks and Tables A3 and A9 of the “Preliminary Report on the Scaling of the 2021 NSW HSC – UAC”.)

FIGURE 15

MEDIAN ATAR TRENDS - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



HSC BAND TRENDS

Figure 16 below groups HSC Bands 1 & 2, 3 & 4 and 5 & 6 for HSC subjects studied by Aboriginal students between 2016 and 2021. After improving trends in the combined Bands 5 and 6 in 2019 and 2020, this metric decreased back to 20% in 2021. The combined Bands 1 and 2 rates has been increasing slightly over the past two years.

Figure 17 compares the Bands 5 & 6 rate for HSC subjects completed by Aboriginal students mentioned above, with the Bands 5 & 6 rate for non-Aboriginal students. The overall rate for non-Aboriginal students in NSW systemic Catholic schools has remained relatively consistent at around 39%, with a 2021 gap of 19% to non-Aboriginal students.

FIGURE 16

ABORIGINAL STUDENT HSC BAND GROUPS - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

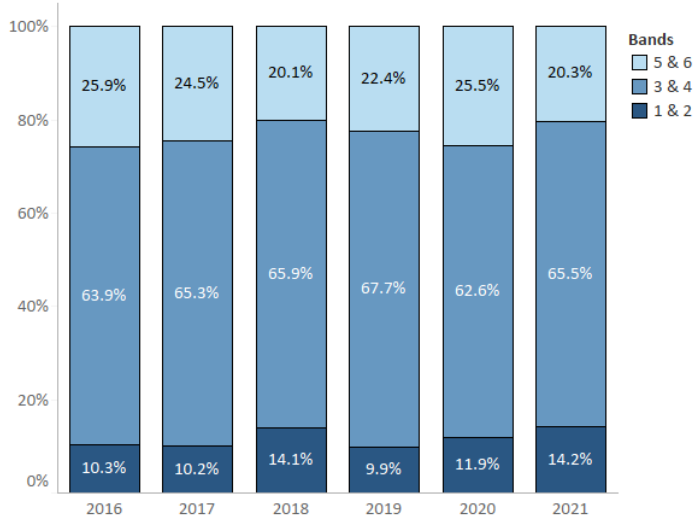
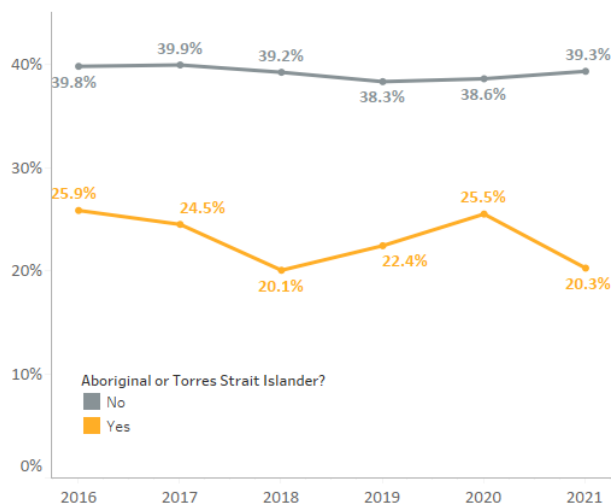


FIGURE 17

BANDS 5 & 6 RATES - NSW SYSTEMIC CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



Source: NESA HSC Extract

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) AND POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Aboriginal students in NSW Catholic schools participate in VET courses at a slightly higher rate (34%) than non-Aboriginal students (31%).
- ▶ While both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in NSW Catholic schools select similar VET courses, the completion rates for non-Aboriginal students is slightly higher – 63% compared to 50% where the full certificate is available.

Students in NSW have the option of studying VET courses at school or through TAFE NSW or other training providers.¹

For NSW school students, VET is 'dual-accredited'. Students receive recognition towards their school qualification (e.g. HSC), as well as a nationally recognised VET qualification (e.g. Certificate II).

Year 11/12 students typically take a 'Stage 6' VET Course, with the most common qualification being a Certificate II.²

VET PARTICIPATION

In 2020 over 11,000 Year 11 and 12 students in NSW Catholic schools participated in VET courses in school.³

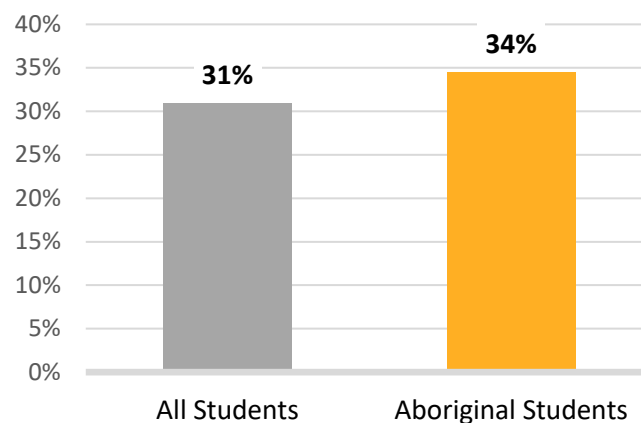
This is estimated to make up around 31% of the cohort of Year 11 and 12 students. This is similar to the equivalent 31% figure for Government schools, and much higher than the 13% for Independent schools.⁴

Within NSW Catholic schools, the estimated VET participation rate of 34% for Aboriginal students is slightly higher than the total of 31% for all students.

Due to data limitations, it was not possible to compare the Aboriginal student participation rate across sectors.

FIGURE 18

ESTIMATED % OF YEAR 11/12 CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS TAKING VET COURSES - 2020



Source: NCVET DataBuilder 2020, ACARA MySchool 2020

¹ NESA (2021), 'Vocational Education and Training: Stage 6', <<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/vet>>

² Certificates I and III are also present. Note the *Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)* qualification 'hierarchy' is, in ascending order: *Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma*.

³ NCVET (2020), 'DataBuilder', <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/data/databuilder#vis-students>>

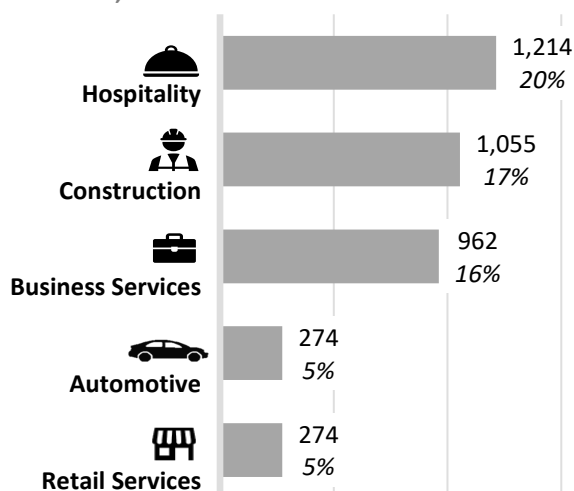
⁴ Figure calculated for each sector by dividing total VET students (from NCVET DataBuilder) by total Year 11/12 students (from ACARA MySchool 2020).

VET COURSES SELECTED

The three most common VET courses in NSW Catholic schools for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are Hospitality, Construction, and Business Services. These courses comprise 53% of VET course selections for non-Aboriginal students and 43% of VET course selections for Aboriginal students.

FIGURE 19

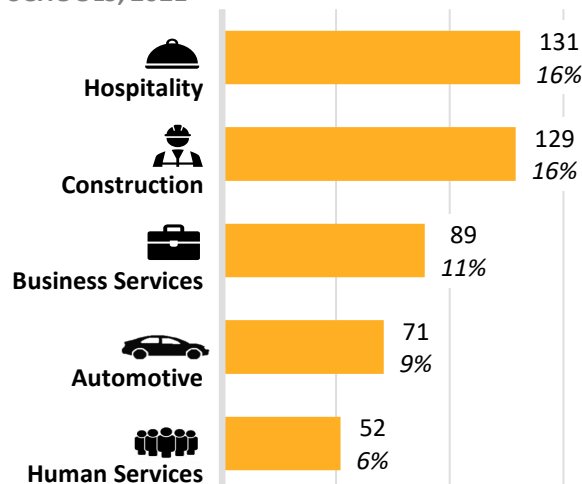
TOP 5 MOST COMMON VET COURSES FOR NON-ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN NSW CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, 2021



Source: NESA VCS Online 2021

FIGURE 20

TOP 5 MOST COMMON VET COURSES FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN NSW CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, 2021



Source: NESA VCS Online 2021

VET COMPLETION

Students vary in how much of their VET competency they complete in Year 12. Most commonly, they complete the 'Full Certificate' – that is, they achieve the official qualification to be able to carry out such work in future. However, many only complete 'some' or 'all' of the training in Year 12, with further training and final assessment to be completed post-school. The reasons for this vary, and can include course structure, required number of hours of work placement, and whether an assessment is included within the unit of competency.

It is worth noting Catholic schools have the most advanced VET completion rates of all providers in NSW.

Where a Full Certificate is available, in Catholic schools around 63% of all students achieve it, compared to 50% for Aboriginal students in Catholic schools. Where a Full Certificate is not available, in Catholic schools around 76% of the students achieve all units, compared to 69% for Aboriginal students in Catholic schools.

FIGURE 21

% OF NSW CATHOLIC SCHOOL VET STUDENTS AWARDED **FULL CERTIFICATE** WHERE AVAILABLE, 2021

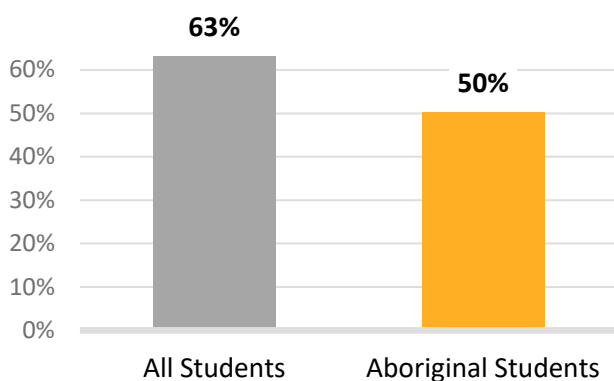
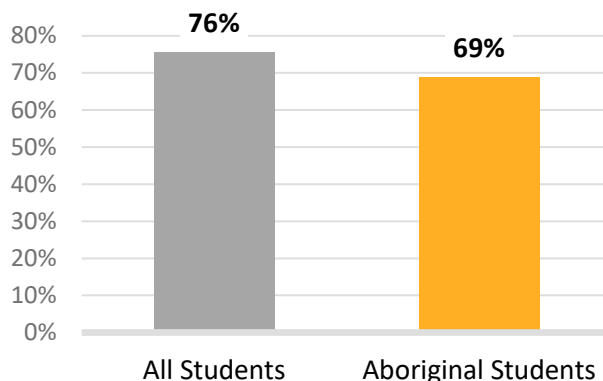


FIGURE 22

% OF NSW CATHOLIC SCHOOL VET STUDENTS AWARDED **ALL UNITS** WHERE FULL CERTIFICATE NOT AVAILABLE, 2021



Source: NSW VET Working Group data, 2021

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

Each year, the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) (a NSW Government department) conducts a survey assessing the post-school destinations and experiences of former NSW school students. The survey has two cohorts: students who completed Year 12 in the year prior to the survey and students who left school before completing Year 12 in the year prior to the survey.¹

Typically this report breaks down certain statistics by sector, i.e. Government, Catholic and Independent. However, when it comes to summarising the results for Aboriginal students, cross-sector data is not provided due to small sample sizes. In 2020, 1,122 Aboriginal Year 12 completers and 694 Aboriginal early school leavers completed the survey.

As such, the following information summarises CESE’s survey results of Aboriginal students at the state level only.

In 2020, 80% of Aboriginal Year 12 completers (Figure 23) and 63% of Aboriginal early school leavers (Figure 24) were in education, training or employment. This compares to 89% and 79% of non-Aboriginal Year 12 completers and early school leavers respectively.

FIGURE 23

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS OF **YEAR 12 COMPLETERS** - NSW, 2020

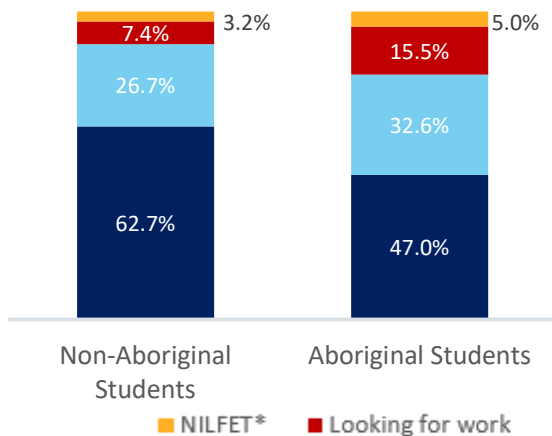
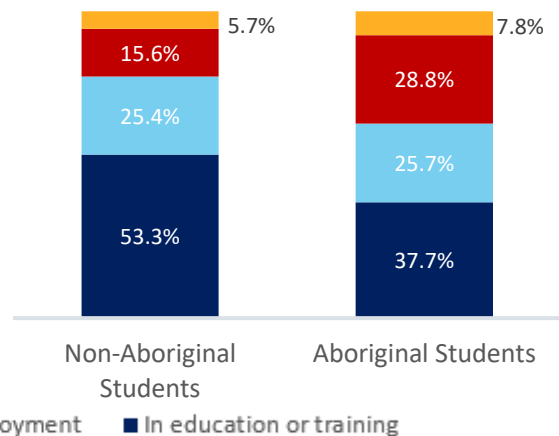


FIGURE 24

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS OF **EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS** - NSW, 2020



Source: NSW DoE 2020 Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey.

* NILFET means not in the labour force, education or training.

¹ <<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/cese/publications/research-reports/nsw-post-school-destinations-and-experiences-survey>>

Since 2014, there have been declines in the proportion of Aboriginal students enrolled in Education or Training after leaving school, both for Year 12 completers and early school leavers. However, this has been partly offset by the increase in the proportion of Aboriginal students in full-time or part-time work – refer to *Figures 25 and 26*.

In 2020, 25.7% of Aboriginal early school leavers were engaged in full-time (8.4%) or part-time (17.3%) work, up from just 14.5% in 2014. As a result, in 2020, there were 9.1% fewer Aboriginal early school leavers looking for work or not in the labour force, education or training (NILFET).

FIGURE 25

% OF ABORIGINAL **YEAR 12 COMPLETERS** IN EMPLOYMENT OR EDUCATION/TRAINING - NSW

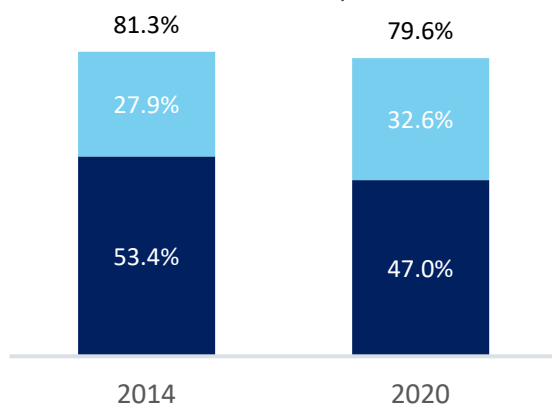
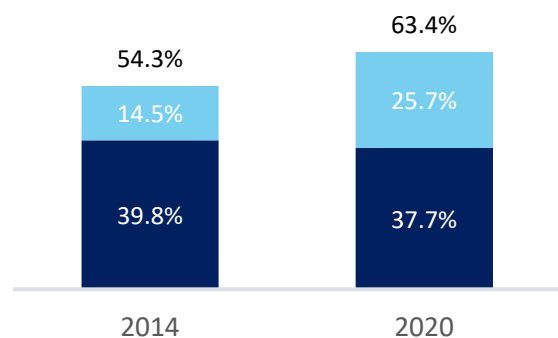


FIGURE 26

% OF ABORIGINAL **EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS** IN EMPLOYMENT OR EDUCATION/TRAINING - NSW



Source: NSW DoE 2020 Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey.

The top 5 areas of education **Aboriginal Year 12 completers** entered post-school in 2020:

1. Teacher education
2. Nursing
3. Human welfare studies and services
4. Business and management
5. Biological sciences

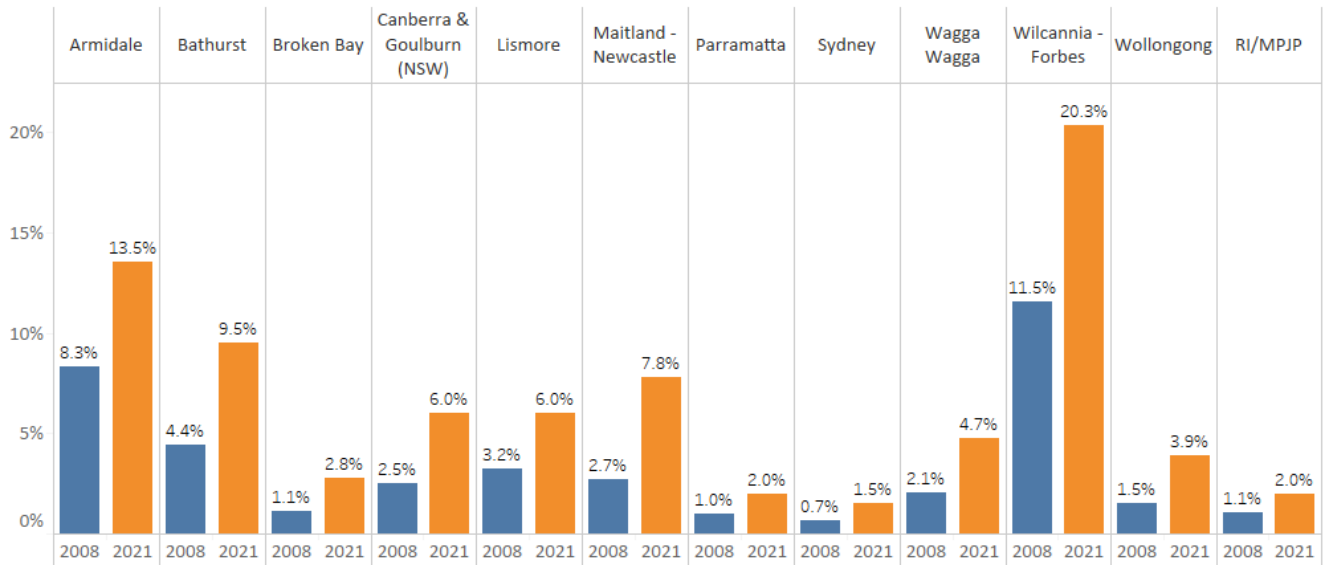
The top 5 areas of education **Aboriginal early school leavers** entered post-school in 2020:

1. Building
2. Human welfare studies and services
3. Food and hospitality
4. Automotive engineering and technology
5. Mechanical and industrial engineering and technology

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

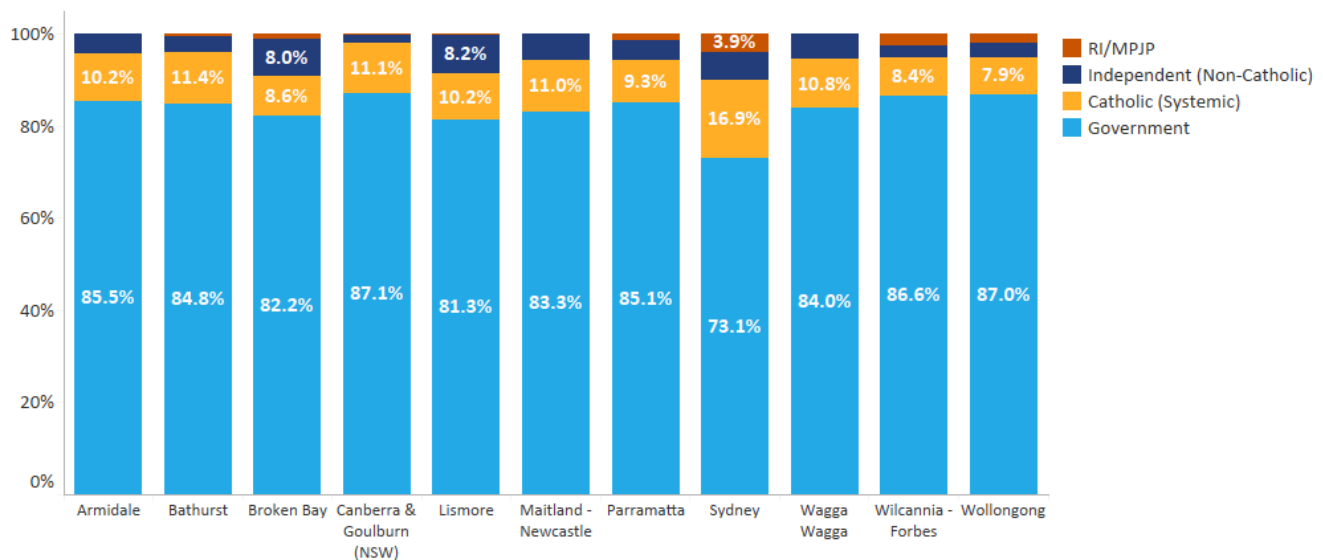
ABORIGINAL STUDENTS AS % OF COHORT BY CATHOLIC SCHOOL AGENCY, 2008 VS 2021



Source: ACARA MySchool Datasets

APPENDIX 2

PROPORTION OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS BY SECTOR BY DIOCESE - NSW SCHOOLS, 2021



Source: ACARA MySchool datasets.

