

Schools: InBrief mid-year census 2018

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

InBrief summarises the results of the census of students in NSW government schools undertaken on Friday 3 August 2018, and the census of NSW non-government schools undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Education.

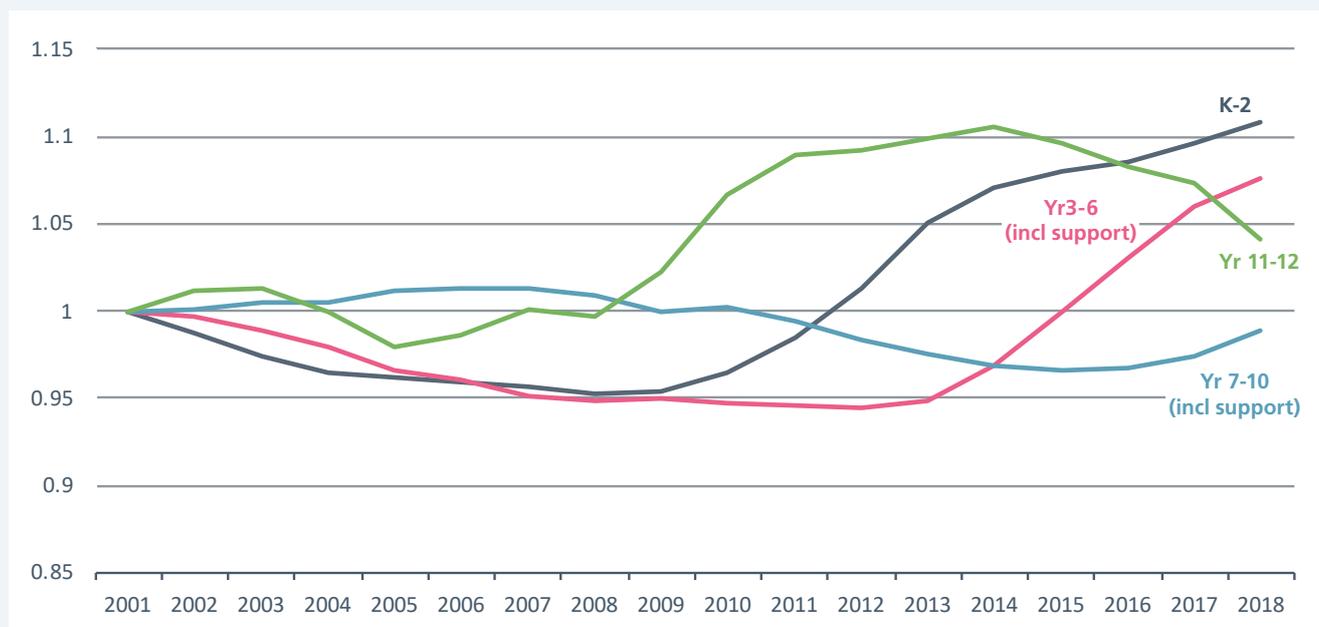
Mid-year census

The mid-year census includes data on NSW government schools (preschool, primary, secondary, central/community and special) and students (age at 1 July, grades, full-time, part-time, gender and Aboriginality).

2018 enrolments

Figure 1

NSW government school enrolments as a proportion of total 2001 enrolments by grade groups, 2001-2018



Note: Throughout this report student enrolments are reported in full-time equivalent (FTE) units.

2018 InBrief summary

NSW government

Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments

Primary enrolments	491,043.0
Secondary enrolments	301,315.2
SSP enrolments	5,664.0
Total enrolments	798,022.2

Aboriginal students

Total Aboriginal enrolments	61,932.5
Percent Aboriginal enrolments	7.8%

Part-time students

Number of part-time students	2,008.0
FTE enrolments	1,253.2

Preschool students

Number of preschool students	4,522.0
FTE enrolments	2,389.7

NSW government schools

Primary and infants schools	1,604
Central/community schools	66
Secondary schools	401
Schools for specific purposes (SSPs)	113
Environmental education centres (EECs)	23

Total government schools

Preschools attached to primary/infants schools	99
Separate preschools	1

Total preschools

100

NSW non-government

Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments

Primary enrolments	208,517.2
Secondary enrolments	212,152.5
Total enrolments	420,669.7

NSW non-government schools

Primary schools	502
Secondary schools	144
Primary/secondary schools	245
Special schools	61

Total non-government schools

952

Figure 1 shows government school enrolments as a proportion of 2001 total enrolments. Enrolments in Years 11 and 12 rose from 2008 to 2014, largely as a result of the raising of the school leaving age in 2010. However Year 11 and 12 enrolments declined between 2014 and 2018 and now represent 104% of 2001 enrolments.

Kindergarten to Year 2 enrolments have increased markedly since 2009 and now represent 111% of 2001 enrolments. These additional enrolments are mostly the result of demographic changes, with larger numbers of children born in NSW since 2005.

Year 3 to 6 enrolments declined from 2001 to 2008 and remained at around 95% of 2001 enrolments until 2013. However, since then enrolments have grown rapidly and are expected to keep rising, although at a slower rate. This is caused by the increased birth rate from 2005, with Kindergarten children from 2012 to 2015 now in Years 3 to 6. In 2018, they represented 108% of 2001 enrolments.

Year 7 to 10 enrolments rose a little from 2001 to 2006 and then fell steadily for the next eight years, with a slight increase in 2010 when the school leaving age was raised. Between 2014 and 2016 enrolments remained steady at under 97% of 2001 enrolments. However in 2017, Year 7 to 10 enrolments began to rise as the 2010 Kindergarten children started high school. In 2018, Year 7 to 10 enrolments rose by 3,147 students compared with 2017, and reached almost 99% of 2001 enrolments.

Table 1 shows that the total number of full-time equivalent students in NSW Government schools increased by 6,982.4 or 0.9%, from 791,039.8 in 2017 to 798,022.2 in 2018. This is the tenth year in a row that total government school enrolments have increased, after a sustained downward trend between 1998 and 2008.

From 2012 to 2016 the increase in total number of full-time equivalent students in NSW Government schools was driven by increasing primary enrolments, which was greater than the decrease in secondary enrolments. However from 2017, secondary enrolments began to also record increases for the

first time since 2011. In 2018, secondary enrolments grew by 482.4 students (0.2%). Primary enrolments also increased by 6,398 students and enrolments at schools for specific purposes (SSPs) increased by 102 students.

Table 1

Enrolments in NSW government schools by grade level and schools for specific purposes, 1996-2018

Year	Primary (K-6)	Secondary (7-12)	SSP	Total
1996	450,465	306,823.3	3,749	761,037.3
1997	451,560	308,922.7	3,690	764,172.7
1998	452,568	309,133.7	3,673	765,374.7
1999	453,454	308,116.1	3,762	765,332.1
2000	454,363	303,681.0	3,792	761,836.0
2001	451,093	301,774.4	3,873	756,740.4
2002	447,897	302,988.0	3,915	754,800.0
2003	443,213	304,034.0	3,938	751,185.0
2004	438,677	302,849.6	3,981	745,507.6
2005	434,876	302,578.3	4,124	741,578.3
2006	432,660	303,622.0	4,133	740,415.0
2007	429,900	304,457.7	4,278	738,635.7
2008	428,331	303,055.7	4,392	735,778.7
2009	429,000	303,180.7	4,466	736,646.7
2010	430,177	307,291.2	4,673	742,141.2
2011	433,873	306,893.2	4,774	745,540.2
2012	438,681	304,632.1	4,921	748,234.1
2013	446,848	303,433.6	5,064	755,345.6
2014	456,151	302,339.7	5,207	763,697.7
2015	465,767	300,871.1	5,340	771,978.1
2016	475,073	300,069.9	5,457	780,599.9
2017	484,645	300,832.8	5,562	791,039.8
2018	491,043	301,315.2	5,664	798,022.2

Notes: Since 1993 some students have enrolled part-time. All enrolments are reported in full-time equivalent units (FTEs) and include full-time and part-time students.

Enrolments in NSW Government schools are affected by a number of factors, including the school age population, the participation rate and the enrolment share between government and non-government schools. For students of compulsory school age (5 to 17 inclusive), the participation rate is close to 100 per cent; however, after this age it declines noticeably (from 2010, all NSW students must complete Year 10. After Year 10 and until the age of 17 students must be in school and/or in approved education or training and/or in full-time paid employment).

Kindergarten enrolments increased by 1,318 students (1.9%) in 2018, continuing the trend of increasing Kindergarten enrolments observed in most years since 2008. Kindergarten enrolments generally reflect the NSW birth rate five years previously.

The largest increases in enrolments in 2018 were in Year 6 and Year 7. Year 6 enrolments rose by 4.5% from 63,138 in 2017 to 65,980 in 2018, while Year 7 enrolments also rose by 4.5% from 51,083 in 2017 to 53,405 in 2018 (individual grade level data not presented in tables). This is due to the progression of large numbers of Kindergarten students enrolled in 2011 and 2012.

Enrolments (full-time equivalent) by ABS Statistical Area Level 4 groups

Table 2 presents the NSW Government schools' enrolment data using a geographical structure based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), illustrated in Map 1. The ASGS is maintained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and allows comparison of education statistics with other statistical data. ASGS Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4) boundaries in NSW have been combined into 11 groups for reporting and publication of department data.



Table 2

Enrolments by ABS Statistical Area Level 4 groupings and grade group in NSW government schools, mid-year 2018

Statistical Area Level 4 group	K-2	Y3-6	Primary Total	Y7-10	Y11-12	Secondary Total	SSP	Statistical Area Total	% of NSW
Sydney-North	26,381	32,261	58,642	20,496	9,393.5	29,889.5	455	88,986.5	11.2%
Sydney-Inner	16,756	19,331	36,087	14,275	6,319.1	20,594.1	336	57,017.1	7.1%
Sydney-South	20,300	26,250	46,550	21,032	8,887.6	29,919.6	769	77,238.6	9.7%
Sydney-South West	22,131	30,363	52,494	25,624	9,894.6	35,518.6	718	88,730.6	11.1%
Sydney-West	26,322	31,749	58,071	20,450	7,907.6	28,357.6	963	87,391.6	11.0%
Sydney-North West	16,935	22,441	39,376	17,493	7,208.8	24,701.8	401	64,478.8	8.1%
Sydney Total	128,825	162,395	291,220	119,370	49,611.2	168,981.2	3,642	463,843.2	58.1%
North East NSW	15,417	21,864	37,281	18,768	6,732.0	25,500.0	143	62,924.0	7.9%
North West NSW	17,026	23,304	40,330	19,766	6,227.3	25,993.3	223	66,546.3	8.3%
South West NSW	13,570	18,459	32,029	15,797	4,994.8	20,791.8	568	53,388.8	6.7%
South East NSW	18,250	25,488	43,738	20,563	7,114.0	27,677.0	439	71,854.0	9.0%
Central Coast, Newcastle	19,642	26,646	46,288	23,835	8,408.1	32,243.1	649	79,180.1	9.9%
Regional Total	83,962	115,861	199,823	98,821	33,513.0	132,334.0	2,022	334,179.0	41.9%
NSW	212,787	278,256	491,043	218,191	83,124.2	301,315.2	5,664	798,022.2	100.0%

Notes: Students in Distance Education are included with their appropriate grade levels.

Primary support students are included in Y3-6. Secondary support students are included in Y7-10.

Norfolk Island Central School (FTE of 285.8) is included in Regional Total and NSW, but does not have an ABS Statistical Area Level 4 code.

In 2018, 58.1% of government students were enrolled in schools within the Sydney area. The proportion of primary students enrolled in Sydney schools was 59.3%.

Most Statistical Area Level 4 groups experienced an increase in primary enrolments in 2018 from 2017, except Sydney-South, North East NSW and South West NSW, which each saw small decreases of 0.2% or less. Sydney-West recorded the largest growth in primary enrolments for the fourth year in a row, with an increase of 2,071 enrolments between 2017 and 2018.

For secondary enrolments, Sydney-North recorded a marked increase in enrolments, rising by 2.4%. Sydney-Inner, Sydney-South West, Sydney West and Sydney-North West recorded modest increases of between 0.4% and 0.8%. All other areas saw slight declines of between 0.1% and 0.9%. The largest decrease was in North East NSW where secondary enrolments fell by 228 students (0.9%).

In 2018 the number of senior secondary enrolments fell by 2,572.6 students (3.0 percentage points) from the year prior.

The fall occurred across all Statistical Area Level 4 groups except for Sydney-North, where Year 11 and Year 12 enrolments increased by around 30 students. The fall in senior secondary enrolments is largely explained by a decrease of more than 2,000 births from 2000 to 2001 in NSW.

As Map 1 shows, the areas of Sydney-North, Sydney-South West and Sydney-West have the highest number of enrolments, with 88,986.5, 88,730.6 and 87,391.6 enrolments respectively.

Aboriginal enrolments (full-time equivalent)

Map 2 shows the percentage of NSW Government students in each (SA4) group who identify as Aboriginal. In North West NSW 23.9% of students identified as Aboriginal, compared with 5.3% or less in each statistical area group in Sydney.

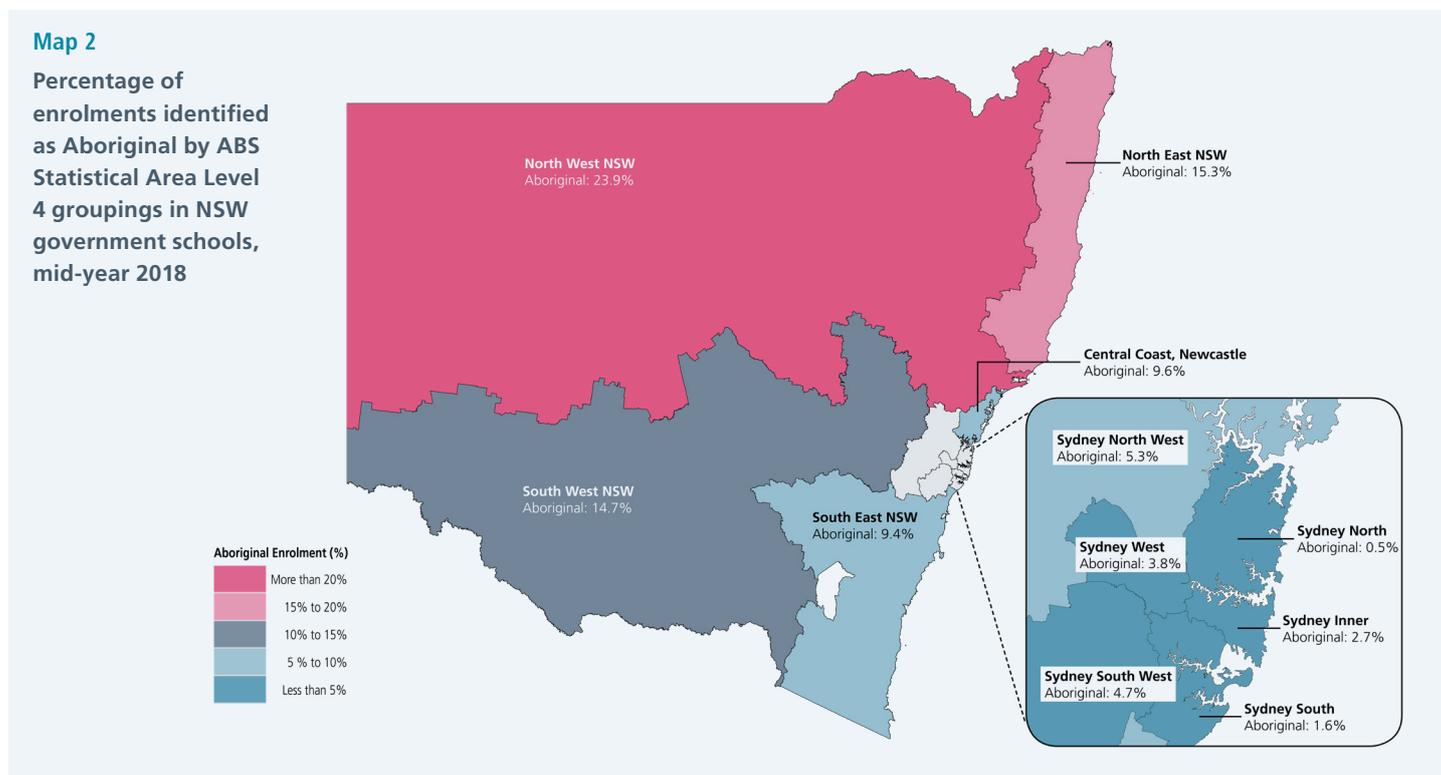


Table 3

Enrolments of Aboriginal students by ABS SA4 groupings and grade group in NSW government schools, mid-year 2018

Statistical Area Level 4 group	K-2	Y3-6	Primary Total	Y7-10	Y11-12	Secondary Total	Statistical Area Total	% of NSW
Sydney-North	147	139	286	138	50.0	188.0	487.0	0.8%
Sydney-Inner	422	499	921	433	147.9	580.9	1,542.9	2.5%
Sydney-South	287	431	718	366	111.8	477.8	1,225.8	2.0%
Sydney-South West	1,086	1,509	2,595	1,149	280.4	1,429.4	4,143.4	6.7%
Sydney-West	896	1,199	2,095	900	224.6	1,124.6	3,326.6	5.4%
Sydney-North West	888	1,206	2,094	1,030	225.0	1,255.0	3,397.0	5.5%
Sydney Total	3,726	4,983	8,709	4,016	1,039.7	5,055.7	14,122.7	22.8%
North East NSW	2,462	3,365	5,827	2,976	761.0	3,737.0	9,621.0	15.5%
North West NSW	4,288	5,513	9,801	4,918	1,124.4	6,042.4	15,937.4	25.7%
South West NSW	2,098	2,735	4,833	2,372	527.0	2,899.0	7,867.0	12.7%
South East NSW	1,724	2,371	4,095	2,118	494.0	2,612.0	6,774.0	10.9%
Central Coast, Newcastle	1,940	2,564	4,504	2,350	610.4	2,960.4	7,608.4	12.3%
Regional Total	12,513	16,548	29,061	14,734	3,517.8	18,251.8	47,809.8	77.2%
NSW	16,239	21,531	37,770	18,750	4,557.5	23,307.5	61,932.5	100.0
Aboriginal total as a percentage of total NSW enrolments	7.6%	7.7%	7.7%	8.6%	5.5%	7.7%	7.8%	-

Notes: Students in Distance Education are included with their appropriate grade levels. Primary support students are included in Y3-6. Secondary support students are included in Y7-10. There were 855 Aboriginal students enrolled in SSPs, representing 15% of total SSP enrolments. Aboriginal students in SSPs are not included in the grade group data but are included in the Statistical Area total column. Norfolk Island Central School is included in Regional Total and NSW, but does not have an ABS Statistical Area Level 4 code.

Figure 2

Enrolments of Aboriginal students by ABS SA4 grouping and grade group in NSW government schools, mid-year 2018

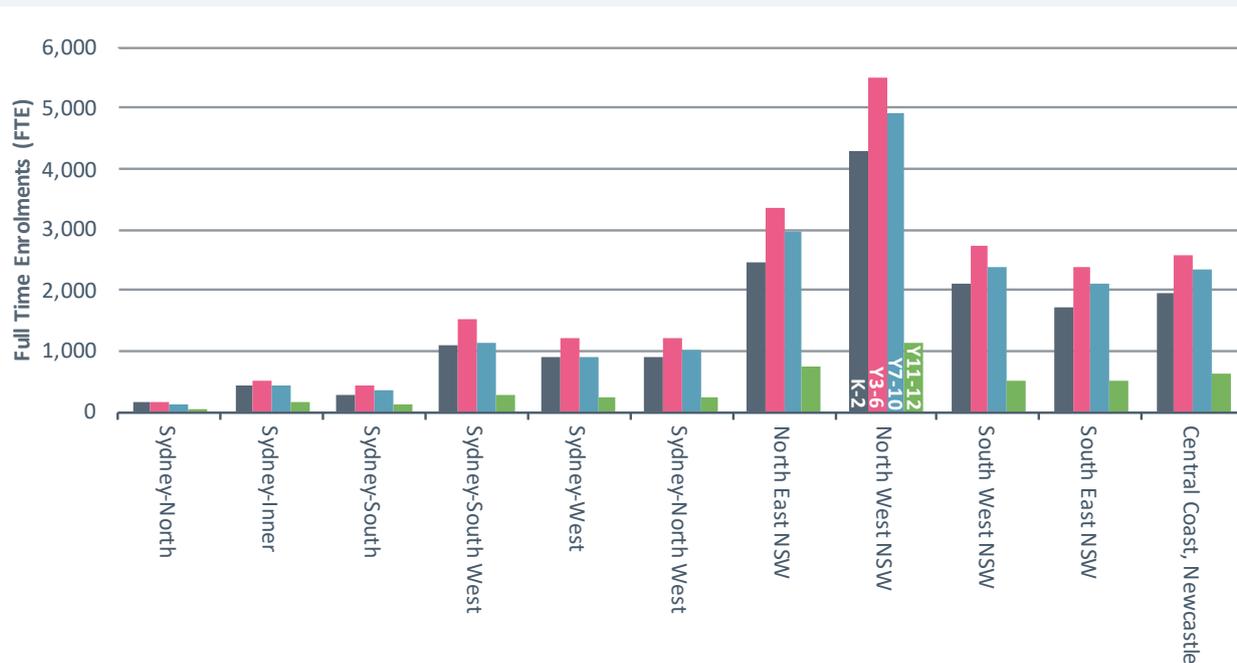


Table 3 shows NSW government student enrolments of Aboriginal students by statistical area groupings and grade groups, and Figure 2 illustrates this comparison.

The majority (77.2%) of NSW government Aboriginal students are enrolled outside of Sydney. Although the six Sydney statistical area groupings account for 58.1% of all enrolments in NSW, only 22.8% of NSW Aboriginal students are enrolled in Sydney.

North West NSW and North East NSW had the highest Aboriginal enrolments at 25.7% and 15.5% of all Aboriginal students in these areas respectively. In Sydney, the statistical area groupings of Sydney-South West, Sydney-North West and Sydney-West had relatively higher Aboriginal student enrolments, at 6.7%, 5.5% and 5.4% of total Aboriginal enrolments respectively. In contrast, Sydney-North only had 0.8% of Aboriginal enrolments, compared with 11.2% of all students.

Overall, Aboriginal student enrolments have increased by 2,718.3 students or 4.6% from 59,214.2 in 2017 to 61,932.5 in 2018. North West NSW recorded the largest increase of 762.3 Aboriginal students, from 15,175.1 in 2017 to 15,937.4 in 2018.

Government enrolment share (full-time equivalent)

School enrolment growth can be affected by parent and carer choice in selecting non-government education, the base school population, the changing legal and policy framework in NSW and the ability of schools to respond to demographic changes. Figure 3 shows the change in enrolments of government and non-government schools in each year since 2008 and Table 4 provides data in selected years from 1901.

Overall enrolments in NSW have increased by more than 8,000 each year since 2010, and by more than 10,000 in each of the last six years. Since 2006, the total number of students enrolled in education in NSW has increased by 108,375 students, driven by changes to the NSW school leaving age and higher birth rate.

For the last five years, government school enrolment growth has surpassed the enrolment growth of non-government schools. Government enrolments increased by 6,982.4 in 2018, compared with an increase of 3,239.4 for non-government schools. The growth in government enrolments from 2017 to 2018 is mostly driven by a large increase in government primary aged enrolments of 6,408 students. Secondary students increased by 574.4 students from 2017 to 2018, the second increase in a row, following a pattern of decreases from 2011 to 2016.

Table 4

Enrolments and percentage of enrolment share in NSW government and non-government schools, 1901-2018

Year	Government Enrolment	Share	Non-government Enrolment	Share	Total
1901	210,588	77.6%	60,837	22.4%	271,425
1911	221,810	78.3%	61,550	21.7%	283,360
1921	315,228	80.1%	78,460	19.9%	393,688
1931	387,881	80.8%	92,285	19.2%	480,166
1941	337,073	76.2%	105,319	23.8%	442,392
1951	405,906	75.3%	133,019	24.7%	538,925
1961	610,883	75.2%	201,147	24.8%	812,030
1971	771,713	77.6%	222,195	22.4%	993,908
1981	790,575	76.9%	237,853	23.1%	1,028,428
1986	755,257	73.6%	270,745	26.4%	1,026,011
1991	746,417	72.0%	290,896	28.0%	1,037,313
1996	761,034	71.4%	305,373	28.6%	1,066,407
2001	756,738	68.7%	344,228	31.3%	1,100,966
2006	740,415	66.7%	369,902	33.3%	1,110,317
2011	745,540	66.0%	384,209	34.0%	1,129,749
2012	748,234	65.7%	390,756	34.3%	1,138,990
2013	755,346	65.4%	398,813	34.6%	1,154,159
2014	763,698	65.4%	404,623	34.6%	1,168,321
2015	771,978	65.3%	409,627	34.7%	1,181,605
2016	780,600	65.4%	413,588	34.6%	1,194,188
2017	791,040	65.5%	417,430	34.5%	1,208,470
2018	798,022	65.5%	420,670	34.5%	1,218,692

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools Australia 2018

Notes: From 1993 the table includes full-time and part-time students, reported in full-time equivalent units. Government and non-government school data for 1901-1961 include students in ACT schools.

Figure 3

Change in enrolments from the previous year, NSW government and non-government schools, 2008-2018

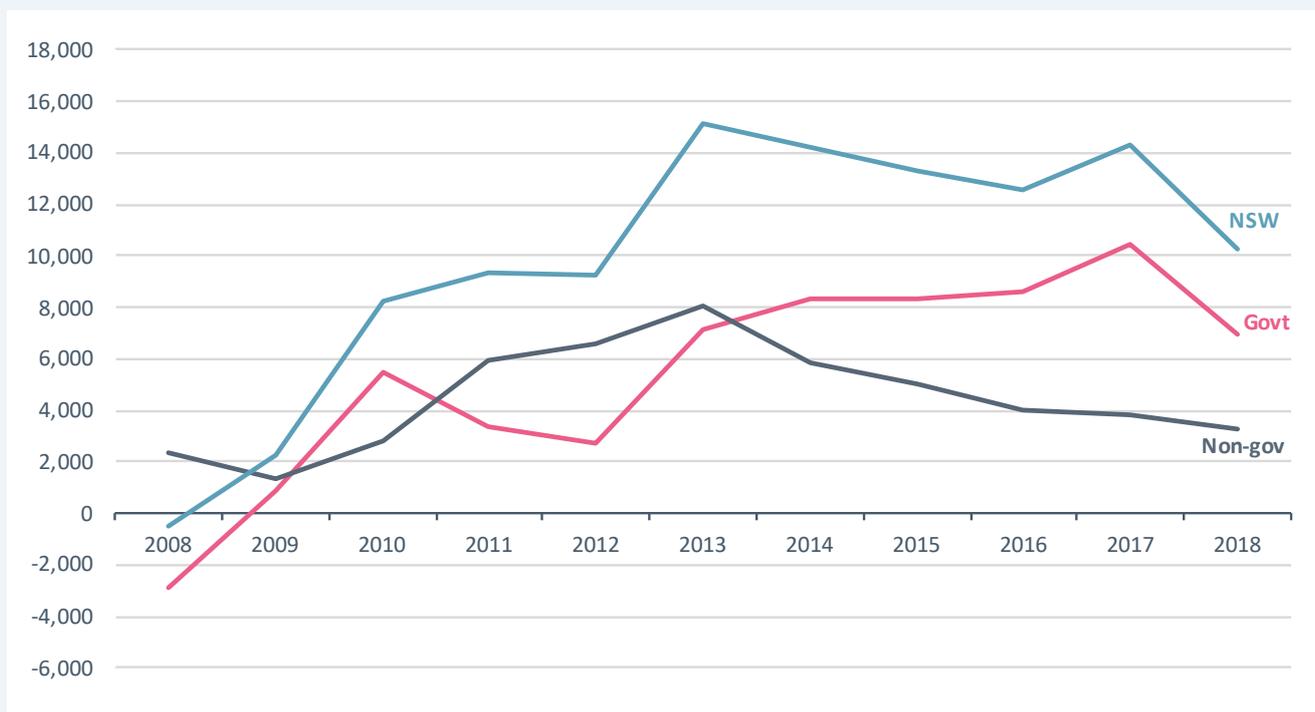


Table 4 shows the enrolment share for students at government and non-government schools in NSW. Total government enrolment share has fallen gradually, reaching a low of 65.3% in 2015. The enrolment share has increased slightly for the past three years and is now at 65.5%.

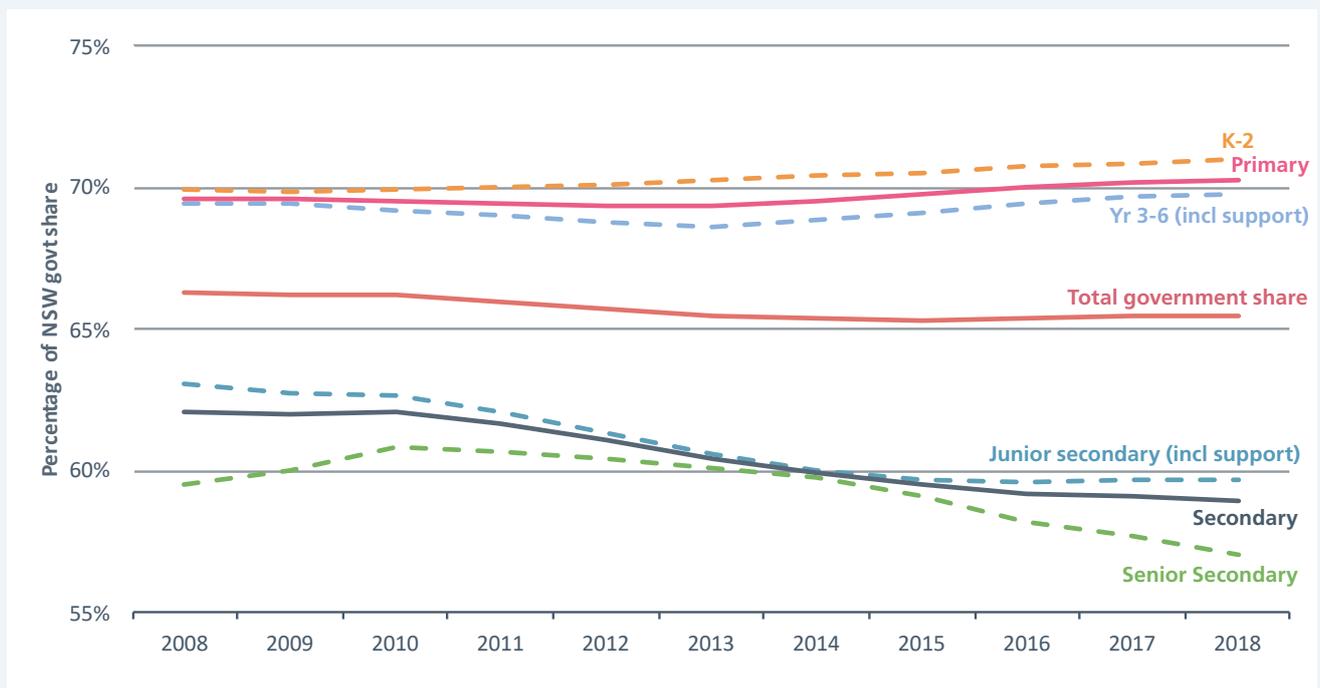
Figure 4 shows NSW government enrolment share by education level. Enrolment share for primary students rose slightly by 0.1 percentage points from 70.2% in 2017 to 70.3% in 2018. This was the fifth increase following over twenty years of falling primary enrolment share.

Despite increasing enrolments, the secondary enrolment share fell slightly from 59.1% in 2017 to 59.0% in 2018. This indicates that non-government secondary enrolments increased by more than government secondary enrolments. Enrolment share for junior secondary students has stabilised at 59.7%, while the senior secondary enrolment share continued its long-term downward trend, falling 0.7 percentage points from 57.7% in 2017 to 57.0% in 2018.

Primary enrolment share was around 7 to 8 percentage points higher than secondary enrolment share until 2013. However, the gap has widened to over 10 percentage points since 2015 and in 2018 was 11.3 percentage points. Within primary education, Kindergarten to Year 2 enrolment share rose from 70.9% in 2017 to 71.0% in 2018, and Year 3 to Year 6 increased from 69.7% in 2017 to 69.8% in 2018.

Figure 4

Percentage of NSW government enrolments share by grade group, 2008-2018



Government preschool

In NSW, most children receiving a preschool education are enrolled at a government-funded community preschool or in a Long Day Care centre. The NSW government operates 100 preschools, providing a preschool education to around 4,500 children.

Table 5 shows that the number of children enrolled in government preschools increased by 80 children from 4,442 in 2017 to 4,522 in 2018. However, full-time equivalent enrolments decreased by 17.7, from 2,407.4 in 2017 to 2,389.7 in 2018, which indicates that some children were enrolled for fewer days in 2018.

Aboriginal preschool enrolments accounted for 15.3% of FTE enrolments in 2018, an increase of 0.3 percentage points since 2017. Aboriginal preschool enrolments rose by 40 students or 6.7%, from 599 in 2017 to 639 in 2018.

In 2008 children were enrolled in government preschools for 17.6 hours on average (based on a 30 hour week), with Aboriginal children enrolled for an average of 19.8 hours. By 2018, average enrolled hours had fallen to 15.9 hours for all children, and 17.2 hours for Aboriginal children. This reflects efforts over the last decade to provide at least 600 hours of early childhood education per year to more children in NSW.

Table 5

Number of students and enrolment full-time equivalents in NSW government preschools, 2008-2018

Year	All Students		Aboriginal Students		% of Full-time Equivalents
	Students	Full-time Equivalents	Students	Full-time Equivalents	
2008	4,285	2,516.9	409	269.5	10.7%
2009	4,291	2,455.5	491	317.7	12.9%
2010	4,325	2,498.6	493	315.1	12.6%
2011	4,416	2,484.9	507	328.7	13.2%
2012	4,424	2,460.7	599	379.9	15.4%
2013	4,433	2,371.1	555	326.8	13.8%
2014	4,365	2,356.8	528	318.4	13.5%
2015	4,278	2,306.6	565	339.6	14.7%
2016	4,446	2,395.7	577	335.5	14.0%
2017	4,442	2,407.4	599	360.6	15.0%
2018	4,522	2,389.7	639	365.9	15.3%

Early intervention preschool children

Children enrolled in an early intervention class at a NSW government school have been included in the government school census since 2012. Early intervention classes provide early childhood education in a preschool setting for children with disability. Enrolments in early intervention classes

increased by 11 students, from 716 in 2017 to 727 in 2018. The percentage of students enrolled in an early intervention program who were Aboriginal increased from 13.0% in 2017 to 14.7% in 2018.

Table 6

Number of students and enrolment full-time equivalents in NSW government early intervention programs, 2012-2018

Year	All Students		Aboriginal Students		
	Students	Full-time Equivalents	Students	Full-time Equivalents	% of Full-time Equivalents
2012	743	151.6	68	13.0	8.6%
2013	684	147.7	76	14.8	10.0%
2014	720	168.1	91	16.7	9.9%
2015	710	162.2	98	19.3	11.9%
2016	707	146.3	105	20.4	13.9%
2017	716	154.1	106	20.1	13.0%
2018	727	166.3	124	24.4	14.7%

Apparent retention rate

Apparent retention measures the proportion of students who remain at school through to Year 10, 11 or 12 and is one measure of students' engagement with education. For example, the Year 7 to Year 10 apparent retention rate in 2018 is the percentage of Year 10 enrolments in 2018 compared to Year 7 enrolments in 2015. Retention is affected by legal and policy changes such as the school leaving age legislation which came into effect in 2010.

Table 7 and Figure 5 show NSW government apparent retention rates from 2008 to 2018. Year 7 to Year 10 retention rates have been over 100% since 2011, largely due to inter-state and international migration for students in Years 8, 9 and 10.

As shown in Figure 5, 2018 saw decreases in apparent retention rates across all cohorts, with Year 10 to 12 and Year 7 to 11 dropping by 1.6 and 1.5 percentage points respectively.

Table 7 shows that the smallest decrease was for Year 10 to Year 11 girls, which fell from 91.5% to 91.2%.

The largest decreases observed in 2018 were in Year 7 to Year 11 boys and Year 10 to Year 11 boys, which recorded drops of 2.1 and 2.0 percentage points respectively.

Table 7

Apparent retention rates by retention period and gender and in NSW government schools, 2008-2018

Year	Years 7-10			Years 7-11			Years 7-12			Years 10-11			Years 10-12		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2008	96.6	96.6	96.6	73.9	84.0	78.8	60.3	72.0	66.0	77.0	86.9	81.9	63.3	75.2	69.1
2009	95.6	97.4	96.5	77.3	85.1	81.1	61.5	73.9	67.6	80.0	88.1	84.0	64.1	76.5	70.2
2010	99.4	100.2	99.8	81.1	89.7	85.3	64.9	74.8	69.7	84.8	92.2	88.4	67.1	77.4	72.2
2011	102.2	102.4	102.3	83.3	91.3	87.2	66.1	77.6	71.7	83.7	91.1	87.3	69.1	79.7	74.3
2012	101.4	102.8	102.1	86.1	93.3	89.6	66.9	77.4	72.0	84.3	91.0	87.6	67.3	77.3	72.2
2013	102.0	102.1	102.0	88.1	94.6	91.3	69.0	79.7	74.3	86.9	92.0	89.4	67.6	77.8	72.6
2014	103.0	103.2	103.1	89.3	94.9	92.1	70.9	81.2	75.9	87.6	92.9	90.2	69.9	79.0	74.4
2015	103.3	103.9	103.6	90.2	95.9	93.0	71.3	80.7	75.9	87.6	93.0	90.2	70.0	79.0	74.4
2016	103.7	105.0	104.3	89.4	96.9	93.1	71.1	81.6	76.2	86.5	93.3	89.9	69.0	79.1	73.9
2017	103.7	104.4	104.0	88.8	96.0	92.4	71.5	83.4	77.4	85.6	91.5	88.5	69.2	80.3	74.7
2018	103.4	103.1	103.2	86.7	95.2	90.9	70.4	82.4	76.3	83.6	91.2	87.3	67.8	78.5	73.1

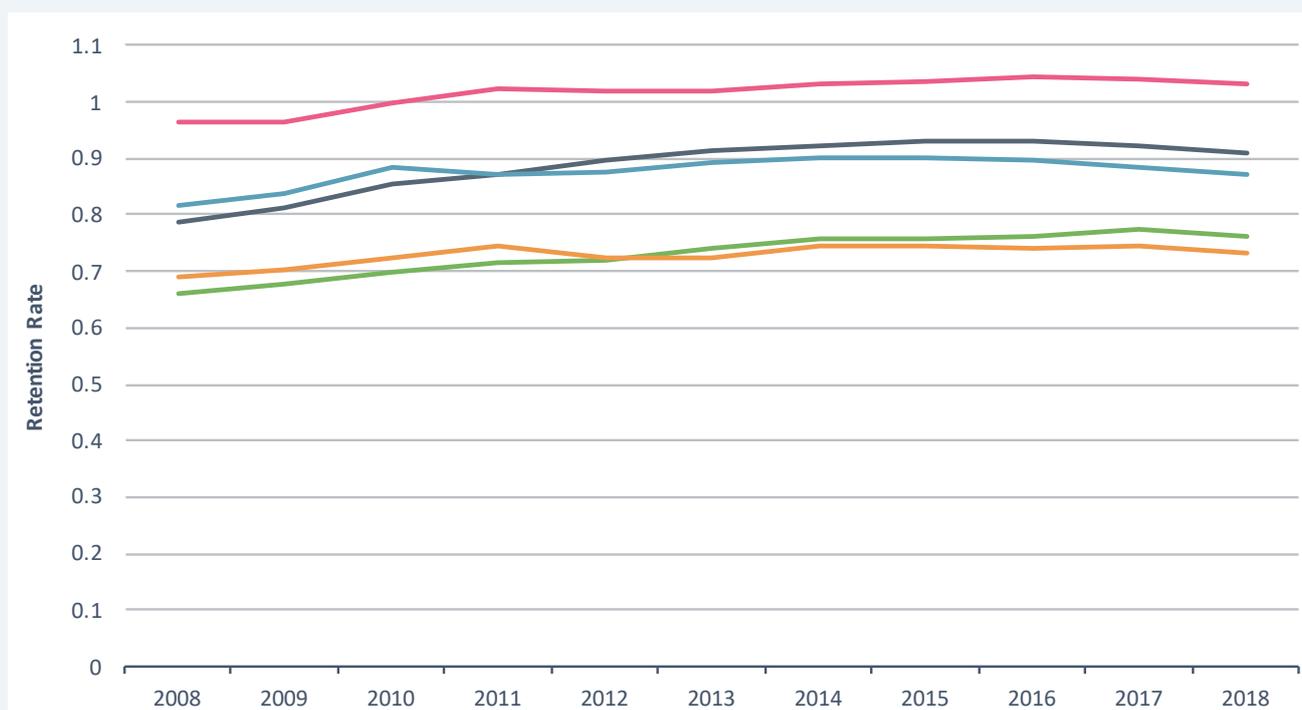
Notes: Includes full-time and part-time students.

In 2018, apparent retention rates across all cohorts are significantly higher than ten years prior in 2008, before the implementation of the new school leaving age legislation in 2010. The rates increased by between 4.0 to 12.0 percentage points over the period, with the biggest increase in retention for Year 7 to Year 11 students (12.0 percentage points).

By gender, the apparent retention rates show a clear difference beyond Year 10. Girls are significantly more likely to remain at school until Year 11 or Year 12 than boys, with the Year 10 to 12 apparent retention rates for girls 10.7 percentage points higher than that of boys in 2018. For Year 7 to Year 12, the gap between girls and boys increased from 11.9 percentage points in 2017 to 12.0 percentage points in 2018.

Figure 5

Apparent retention rates by retention period in NSW government schools, 2008-2018



Explanatory notes

1. Mid-Year Census

The census is used for state and federal planning and accountability, including reporting requirements under the NSW Education Act 1990 and the National School Reform Agreement 2019. Data contribute to the National School Statistics Collection (NSSC) which is collated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) from state and territory student, school and staffing data. Preschool and early intervention data contribute to the ABS National Early Childhood Education and Care (NECEC) collection.

2. Apparent retention rates

Retention rates are 'apparent' as they do not track individual students through their final years of secondary schooling. What they measure is the ratio of the total number of full-time school students in a designated year (for example, Year 12 in 2018) divided by the total number of full-time students in a previous year (for example, Year 7 in 2013). This would be the Year 7 to 12 apparent retention rate in 2018.

Care should be taken in the interpretation of apparent retention rates, which can exceed 100%, because the method of calculation does not take into account a range of factors such as migration, interstate movements of students, transfers to and from non-government schools, part-time schooling, students repeating a year of schooling, or students pursuing other education and training pathways.

3. Norfolk Island Central School

From 2016, the NSW Department of Education has provided school education services under an agreement with the Australian government. Norfolk Island Central School was included in NSW data for the first time in 2016. It has not been designated an SA4 group, so is included in regional and NSW totals, but not included in individual SA4 group data (tables 2 and 3).

3. The use of the term 'Aboriginal' in this report

Throughout this report the term 'Aboriginal' is used to describe the many nations, language groups and clans in NSW, including those from the Torres Strait. The preference for the term 'Aboriginal' over 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' in NSW recognises that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of NSW. This is not consistent with the national approach in which 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' is the accepted term (ABS, 2014).

Further information:

Each year the ABS releases full publications and datacubes of government and non-government school enrolments for all states and territories.

www.abs.gov.au

ABS publication details:

- 4221.0 - Schools Australia, 2018
- 4240.0 - Preschool Education Australia, 2018

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