

Figure 1 plots the attendance rate in 2006 (light grey points) and 2012 (dark grey points) by region. The gap between the points shows how the regions' attendance rates have changed since 2006.

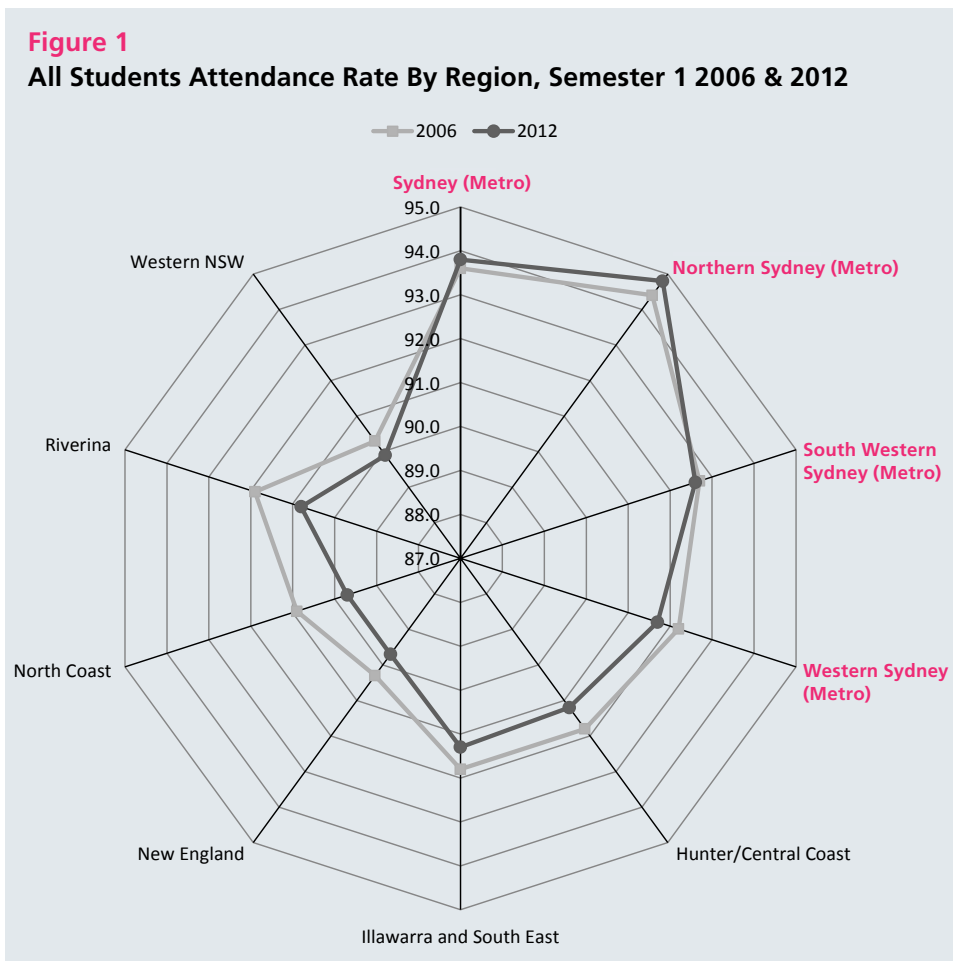
For example, in the Riverina region the 2012 point is closer to the centre of the chart than the 2006 point, showing a fall in the attendance rate between 2006 and 2012, from around 92 per cent to 91 per cent.

From 2006 to 2012, the attendance rates of students in both Sydney and Northern Sydney regions increased between 2006 and 2012, but attendance rates in other regions declined. The fall in attendance rates occurred mainly outside the regions in Sydney metropolitan area.

Attendance rates by school type

Attendance rates of primary school students are significantly higher than they are for secondary students. Between 2006 and 2012 primary attendance rates have been around 94 per cent, with the highest rate being 94.3 per cent in 2010. The primary attendance rate declined to 94.1 per cent in 2012. However, primary attendance rates remain on average 5.0 more percentage points higher than secondary attendance rates.

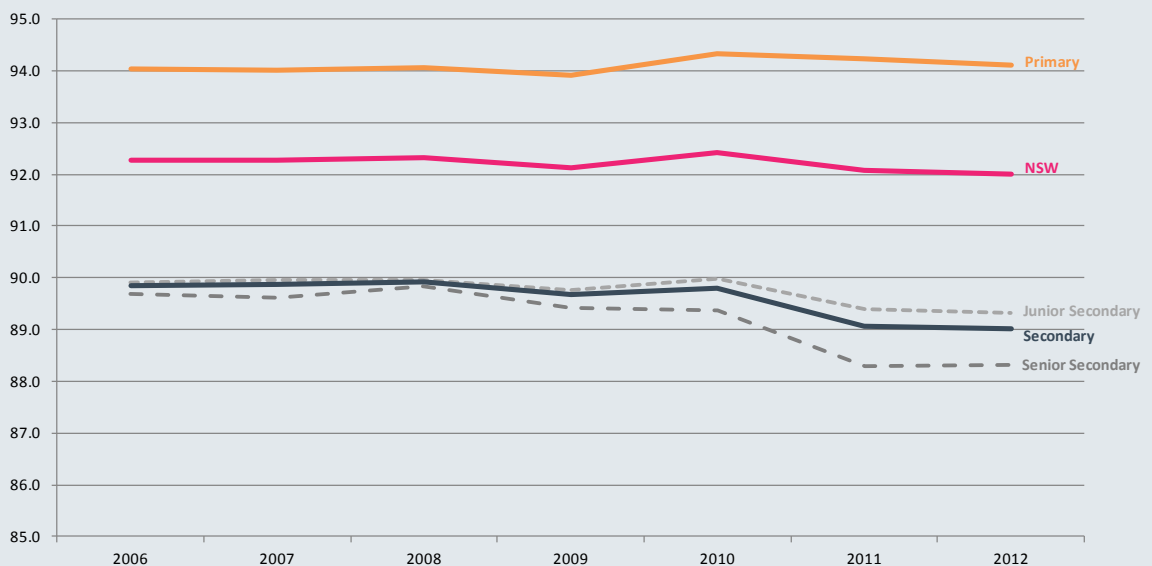
Since 2006, the overall secondary attendance rates have decreased, with senior secondary rates declining twice as much as junior secondary attendance



rates. 2010 to 2011 saw the biggest decline in overall secondary attendance, falling 0.7 percentage points, with junior secondary declining by 0.6 percentage points and senior secondary by 1.4 percentage points. This can largely be attributed to raising the school leaving age which came into effect in January 2010.

Between 2011 and 2012, overall secondary attendance stabilised, declining only slightly by 0.1 percentage points, with senior secondary attendance unchanged.

Figure 2
All Students Attendance Rate by School Level, Semester 1 2006-2012



Aboriginal student attendance rates

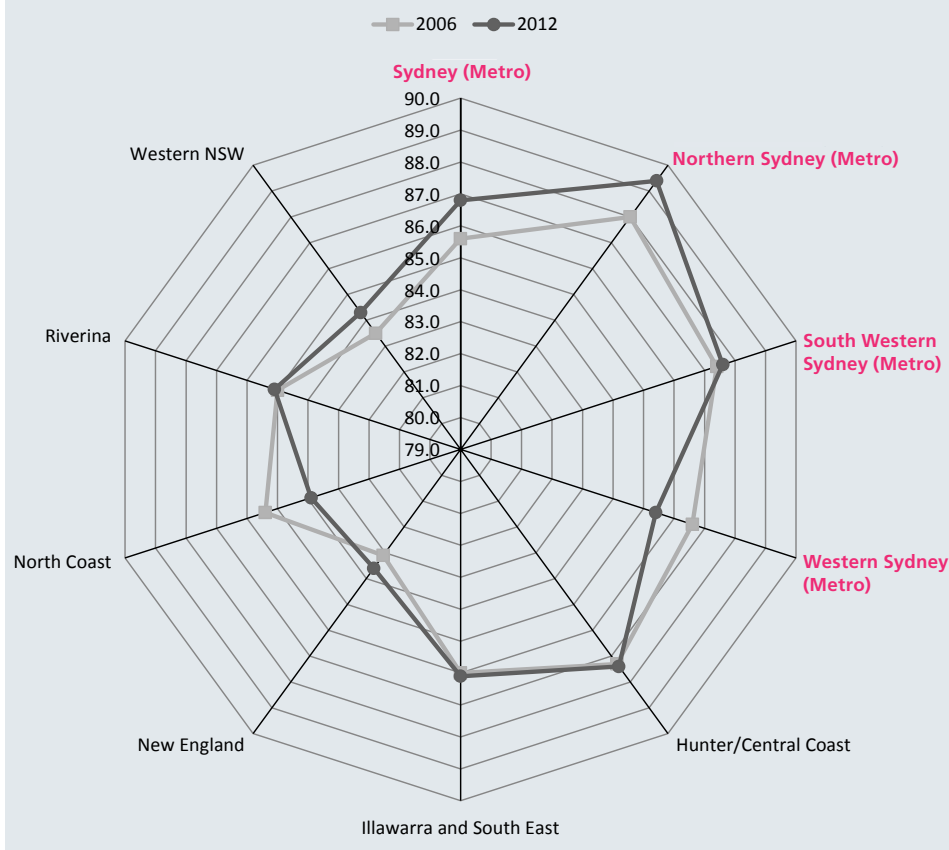
From 2006 to 2012 the Aboriginal student attendance rate improved in eight out of ten regions. The only regions where attendance rates declined were the Western Sydney and North Coast regions.

Aboriginal attendance rates across regions in 2012 varied from 89.4 per cent in the Northern Sydney region to 83.6 per cent in New England region, a difference of 5.8 percentage points. This was a larger gap than in 2006, where the difference was 4.9 percentage points.

While the Northern Sydney region has the highest Aboriginal student attendance rate, the number of Aboriginal students enrolled in this region is low. There are only 350 Aboriginal students in Northern Sydney, which represents only 0.4 per cent of the region's total enrolment. The higher attendance rate may be the result of the low concentration of Aboriginal students, although the attendance rate is still around 5 percentage points lower than the rate for all students in Northern Sydney.

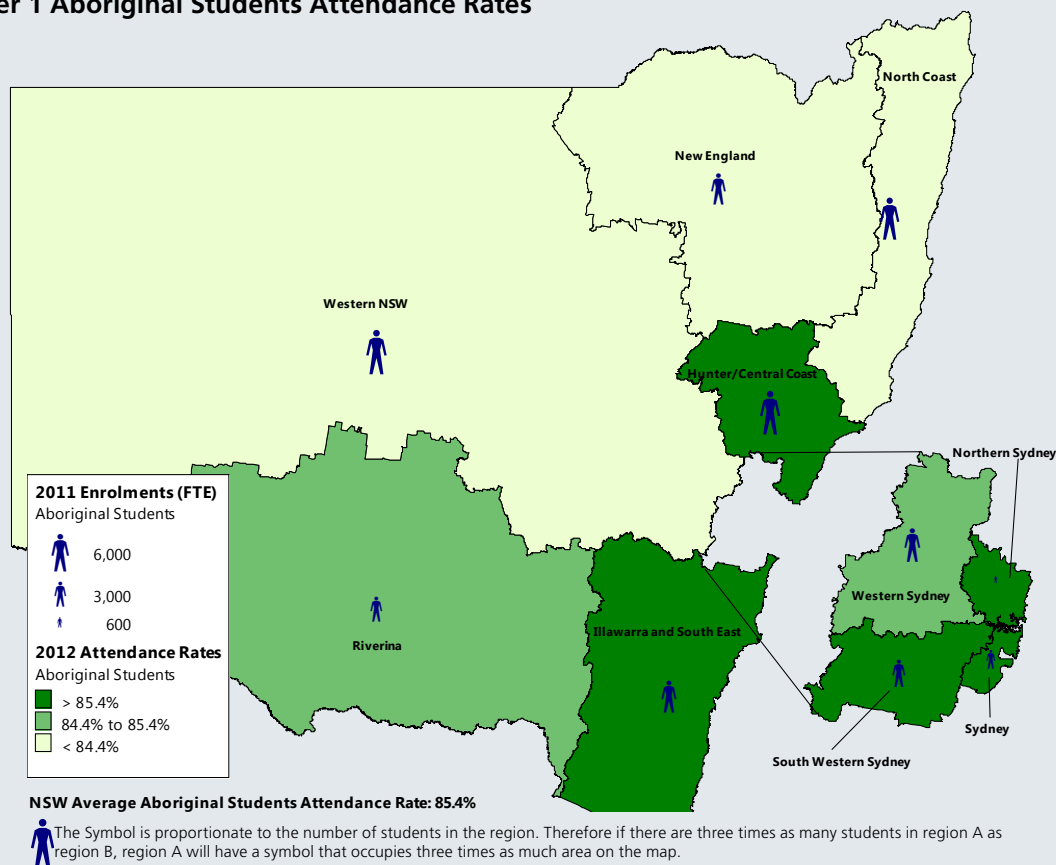
In 2012 the Aboriginal student attendance rates in regional NSW regions were lower than in the Sydney metropolitan regions.

Figure 3
Aboriginal Students Attendance Rate By Region, Semester 1 2006 & 2012



Map 2

2012 Semester 1 Aboriginal Students Attendance Rates



The Aboriginal students' attendance rate has been stable at 85.4 per cent in 2011 and 2012, but it has been significantly lower, around seven percentage points on average, than non-Aboriginal students for the last six years.

Aboriginal primary attendance rates have been increasing steadily for the last six years. This trend continued in 2012, increasing by a further 0.1 percentage point, with an overall increase of 1.3 percentage points since 2006. As a result the gap between all primary students and Aboriginal primary students narrowed from 5.3 percentage points in 2006 to 4.2 percentage points in 2012.

Aboriginal secondary attendance rates have decreased since 2006 but stabilised at 79.1 per cent between 2011 and 2012. Junior secondary attendance rates (Years 7 to 10) have declined slightly since 2006, but rose between 2011 and 2012.

Aboriginal senior secondary attendance (Years 11 and 12) has sharply declined: 4.3 percentage points since 2006, three times the 1.4 percentage points decline of all student senior secondary attendance over the same period. This may be the result of students, who previously might have left school at the end of Year 10, remaining at school until age 17, but not attending regularly.

Figure 4
Aboriginal and All Students Attendance Rate, Semester 1 2006-2012

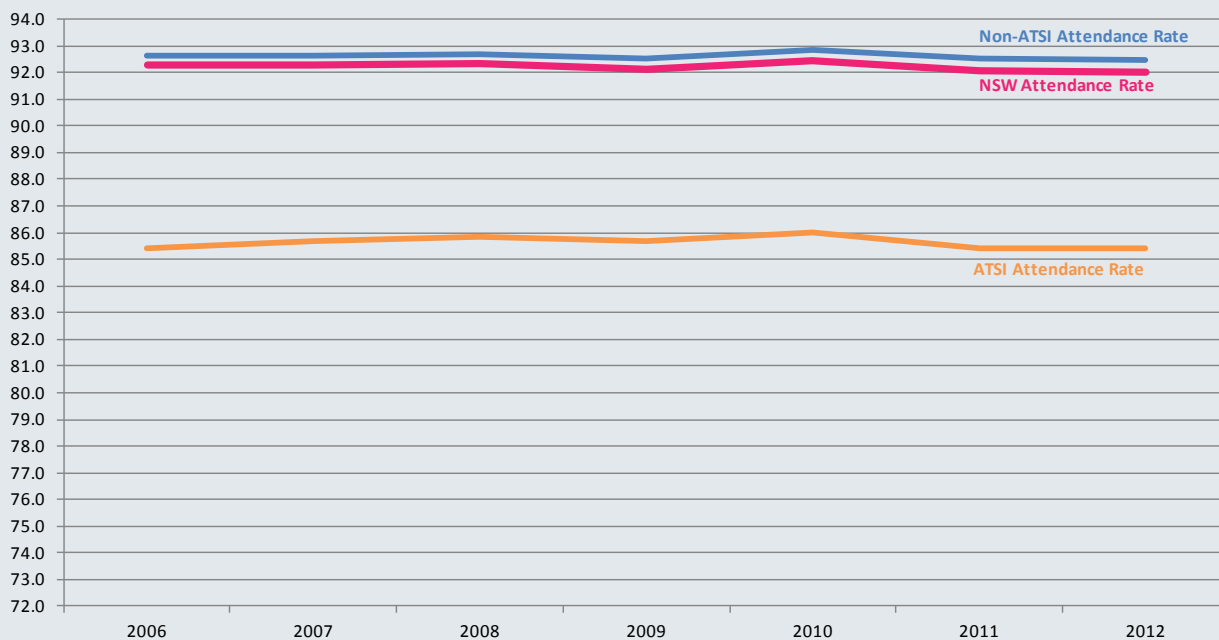
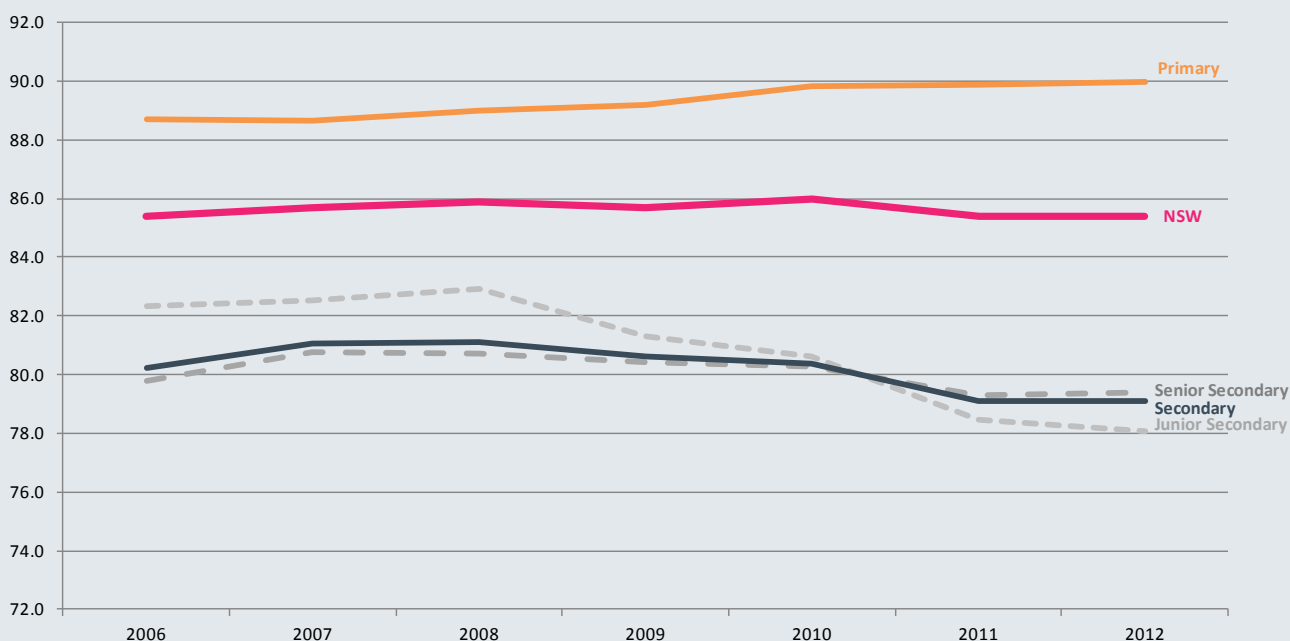


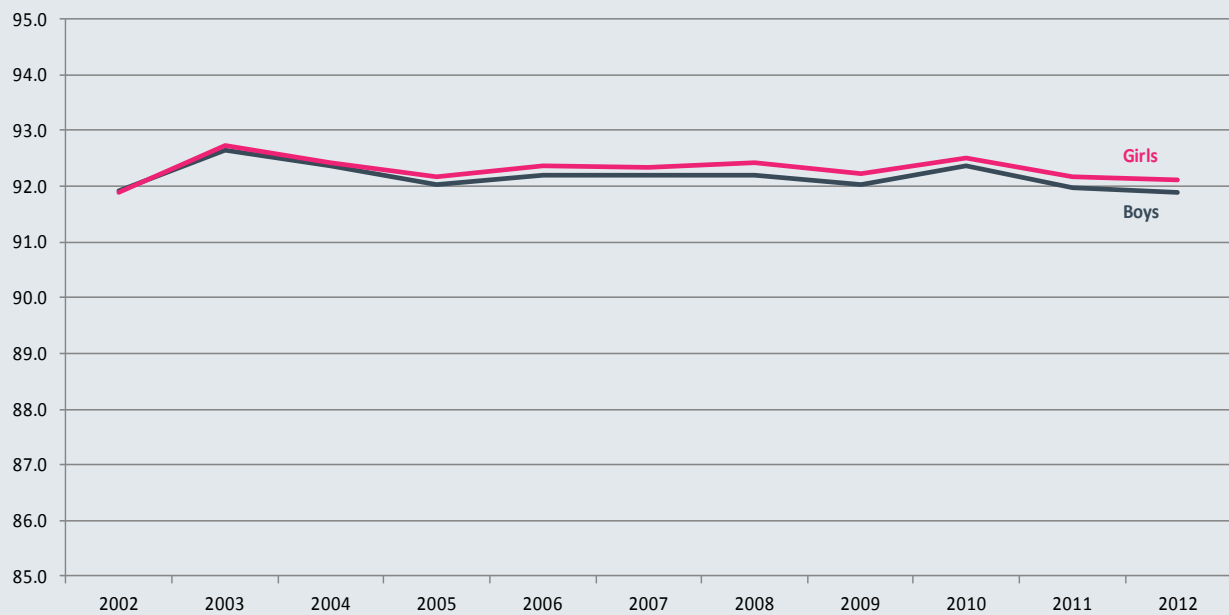
Figure 5
Aboriginal Students Attendance Rate by School Level, Semester 1 2006-2012



Attendance rates by gender

Figure 6 shows the attendance rates for boys and girls between 2002 and 2012. The attendance rate of girls has been consistently higher than the attendance rate of boys over the last ten years, with the gap widening slightly from 0.19 percentage points in 2011 to 0.23 percentage points in 2012.

Figure 6
Attendance Rates by Gender, Semester 1 2002-2012



Attendance Rates by School Size and Location

An analysis of attendance rates by school size indicated that large primary (>300), secondary (>900) and central/community schools (>300) had higher attendance rates than small primary (<300), small secondary (<900) and small central/community schools (<300). Furthermore, schools in non-metropolitan regions had lower attendance rates than schools in metropolitan regions.

As the majority of small schools are located in non-metropolitan regions, the analysis further examined differences among metropolitan regions and non-metropolitan regions. Even within these regional groupings, large schools had higher attendance rates than small schools. These differences in attendance rates may reflect differences in the socio-economic status of small schools compared to large schools, and of metropolitan schools compared to non-metropolitan schools.

Figure 7.1

All Students Primary Schools Attendance Rate, Semester 1 2012

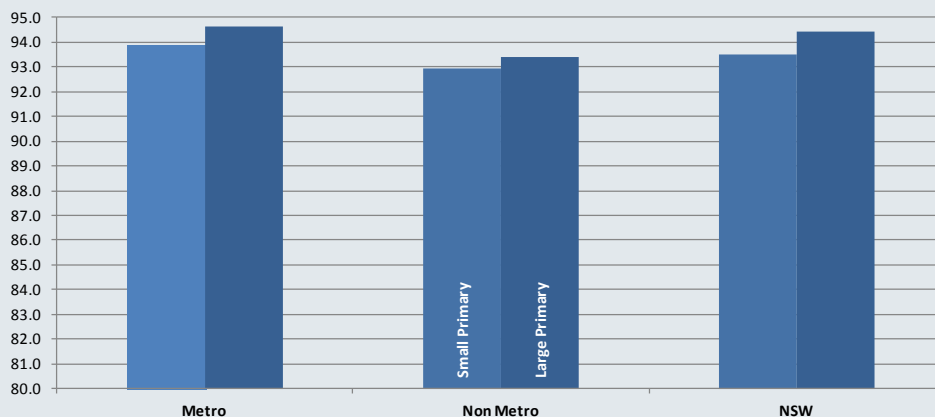


Figure 7.2

All Students Secondary Schools Attendance Rate, Semester 1 2012

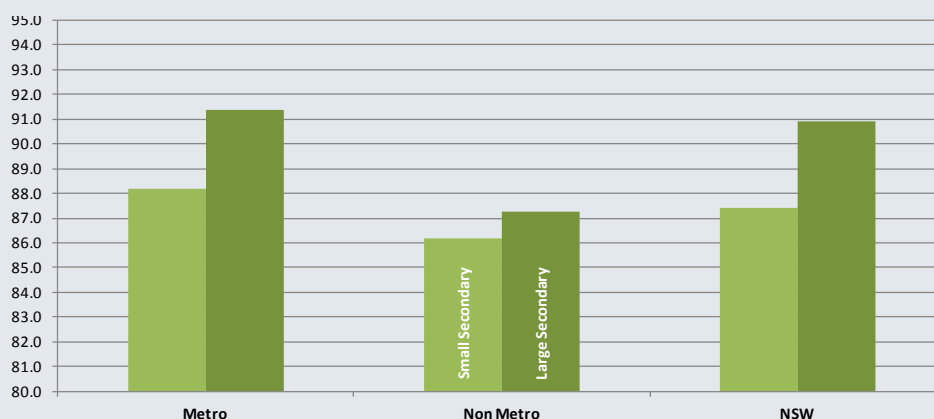
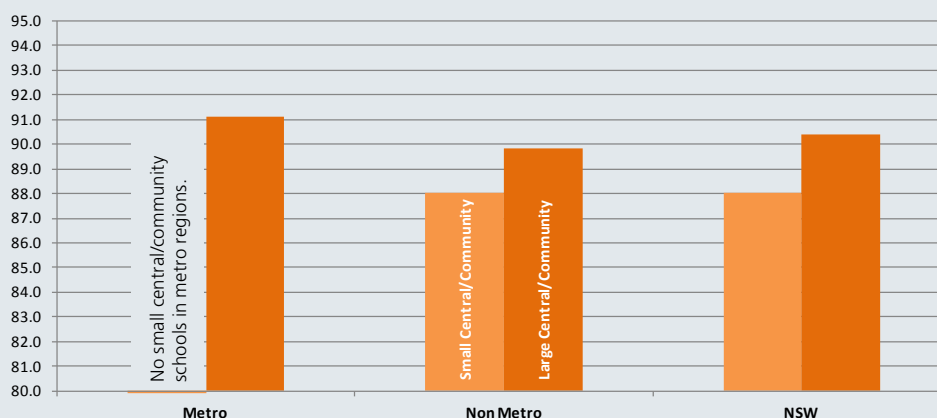


Figure 7.3

All Students Central/Community Schools Attendance Rate, Semester 1 2012



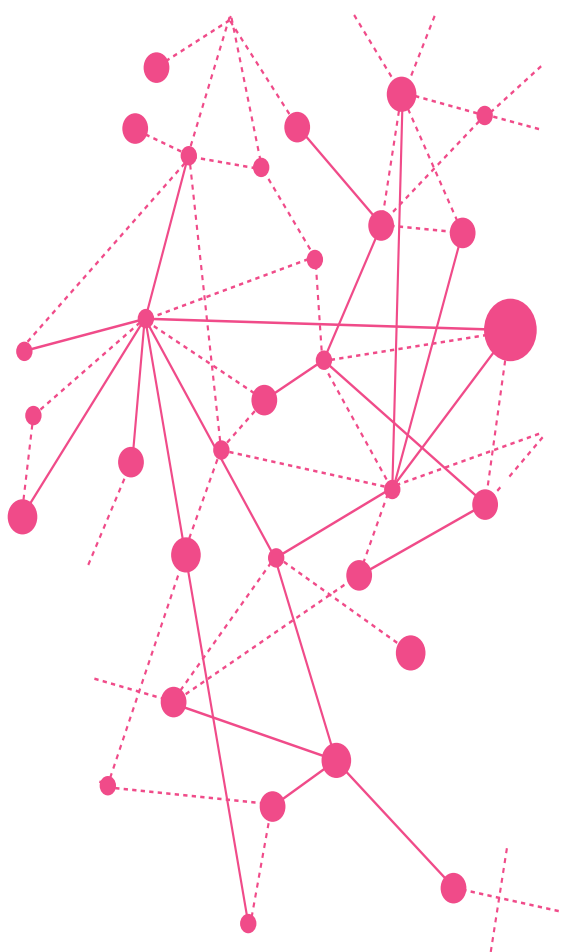
Why collect attendance data?

National and international research substantiates a link between attendance and student achievement, although numerous interrelated factors influence attendance and achievement in complex ways (Report on Government Services 2011, Part 4, 4.18).

'Attendance' is used as a key indicator of governments' objective to develop fully the talent and capacities of young people through equitable access to education and learning.

Enrolment and attendance are specified as performance indicators within the National Education Agreement and as Key Performance Measures in the Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia approved by the Standing Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (SCSEEC).

In 2010, as part of the Keep Them Safe initiatives, changes to child protection legislation made Educational Neglect grounds for reporting risk of significant harm to the child protection hotline. At the same time in NSW, additional Home School Liaison Officer and Aboriginal Student Liaison Officer positions were established to reduce the number of students with chronic attendance issues.



Notes:

Government school systems in Australia measure attendance rates throughout the first semester (terms 1 and 2). This is the time period specified for data collection in National Education Agreements between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. Schools for Special Purposes' attendance data is not collected.

The attendance rate is defined as the number of actual full time equivalent 'student days attended' over the collection period as a percentage of the total number of possible student days attended over the collection period (Measurement Framework for Schooling in Australia KPM 7(b)).

Attendance is calculated as (1, minus absences divided by enrolled days) multiplied by 100, where:

- Absences equals 'all full day absences for the period in question'
- Enrolled days equals 'enrolments multiplied by days open'
- Enrolments equals 'all students enrolled at any time during the period'
- Days open equals 'any day that the school was open for teaching during the period'
- Period equals 'Semester 1 comprised of Term 1 and Term 2'.

$$\text{Attendance Rate} = \left(1 - \frac{\text{absences}}{\text{enrolled days}}\right) \times 100$$

Source: Statistics Unit, Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation. Data extracted in November 2012.

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