

# Schools: InBrief mid-year census 2019

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

InBrief summarises the results of the census of students in NSW government schools undertaken on Friday 2 August 2019, and the census of NSW non-government schools undertaken by the Australian Government Department of Education.

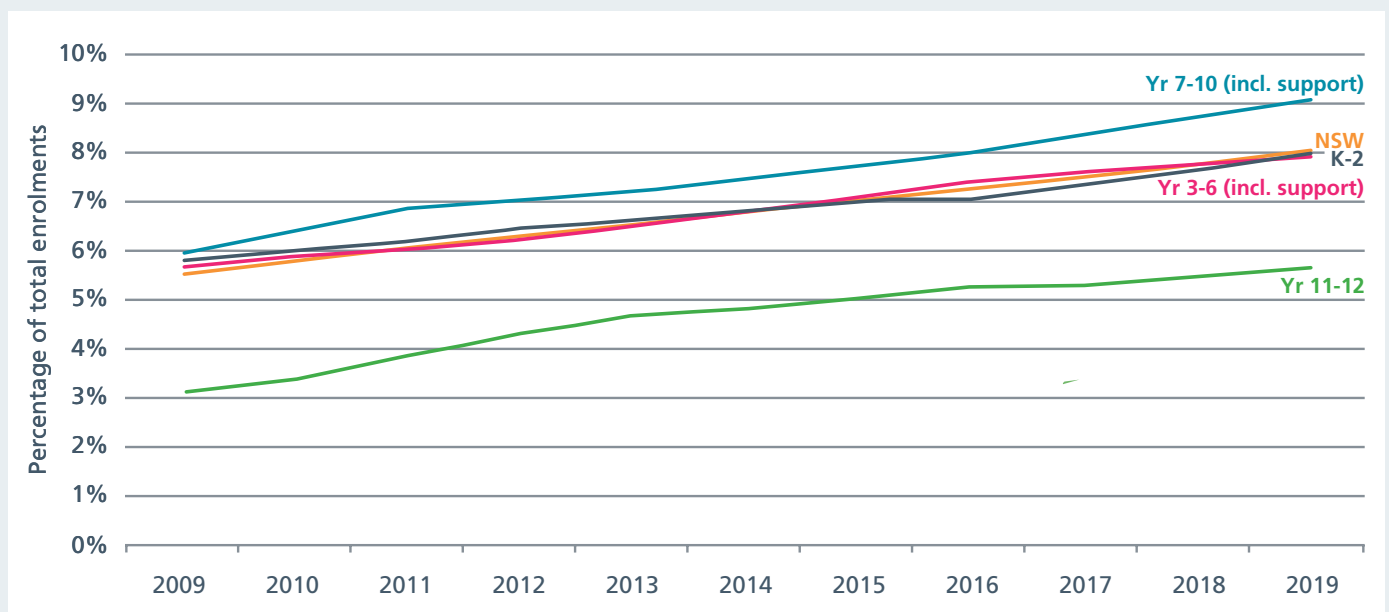
## Mid-year census

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).

## Aboriginal enrolments as a percentage of total enrolments

Figure 1

Aboriginal students enrolments (FTE) percentage of total enrolments, by grade group in NSW government schools, 2009-2019



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

## 2019 InBrief summary

### NSW government

#### Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments

Primary enrolments	493,608.0
Secondary enrolments	306,327.8
SSP enrolments	5,737.0

**Total enrolments** **805,672.8**

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Total Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander enrolments	64,692.5
Percent Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander enrolments	8.0%

#### Part-time students

Number of part-time students	1,698
FTE enrolments	1,109.8

#### Preschool students

Number of preschool students	4,316
FTE enrolments	2,294.5

#### NSW government schools

Primary and infants schools	1,605
Central/community schools	68
Secondary schools	399
Schools for specific purposes (SSPs)	115
Environmental education centres (EECs)	23

**Total government schools** **2,210**

Preschools attached to primary/infants schools	99
Separate preschools	1

**Total preschools** **100**

### NSW non-government

#### Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolments

Primary enrolments	210,409.3
Secondary enrolments	215,581.7

**Total enrolments** **425,991.0**

#### NSW non-government schools

Primary schools	499
Secondary schools	144
Primary/secondary schools	249
Special schools	59

**Total non-government schools** **951**

Figure 1 shows Aboriginal student enrolments as a percentage of total enrolments. The proportion of students identifying as Aboriginal has increased noticeably over the last 10 years, rising from 5.5% in 2009 to 8% in 2019.

The largest proportion of Aboriginal students in 2019 was in Years 7 to 10 at 9.1%, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2018. This is likely to be due to a higher proportion of non-Aboriginal students moving to non-government schools for secondary education.

The proportion of Aboriginal students in Kindergarten to Year 2 and Years 3 to 6 were similar at 8.0% and 7.9% respectively. Years 11 to 12 had the lowest overall proportion of Aboriginal students in 2019, at 5.6% of total student enrolments. This reflects the increased tendency for Aboriginal students to leave school at the end of Year 10 for TAFE, work or an apprenticeship, rather than remaining in school until Year 12.

### 2019 enrolments

Table 1 shows that the total number of full-time equivalent students in NSW Government schools increased by 7,650.6 or 1.0%, from 798,022.2 in 2018 to 805,672.8 in 2019. This is the eleventh 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 record increases for the first time since 2011. In 2019, secondary enrolments grew significantly, by 5,012.6 students (1.7%) from 2018. Primary enrolments increased at a slower rate, by 2,565 students (0.5%). Enrolments at schools for specific purposes (SSPs) also increased by 73 students (1.3%).

**Table 1****Enrolments in NSW government schools by grade level and schools for specific purposes, 1996-2019**

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
<b>2019</b>	<b>493,608</b>	<b>306,327.8</b>	<b>5,737</b>	<b>805,672.8</b>

**Notes:** Since 1993 some students have enrolled part-time. All enrolments are reported in full-time equivalent units (FTE) 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 (6 to 17 inclusive), the participation rate is close to 100 per cent; however, after this age it declines noticeably (since 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 in 2019 declined for the first time since 2014, decreasing by 1,647 students (2.3%) from 2018. This followed a trend of increasing Kindergarten enrolments observed in most years since 2008. Kindergarten enrolments generally reflect the NSW birth rate five years previously. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) population estimates, NSW has experienced a decline in the number of 5 year olds (Kindergarten aged children) between 2018 and 2019. This is the first drop in eleven years, which may explain the decrease in Kindergarten enrolments.

The largest increases in enrolments in 2019 were in Year 7 and Year 8. Year 7 enrolments rose by 4.6% from 53,405 in 2018 to 55,866 in 2019, while Year 8 enrolments rose by 4.2% from 51,359 in 2018 to 53,505 in 2019 (individual grade level data is 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.

### Map 1

#### Enrolments (FTE) by ABS Statistical Area Level 4 groupings in NSW government schools, mid-year 2019

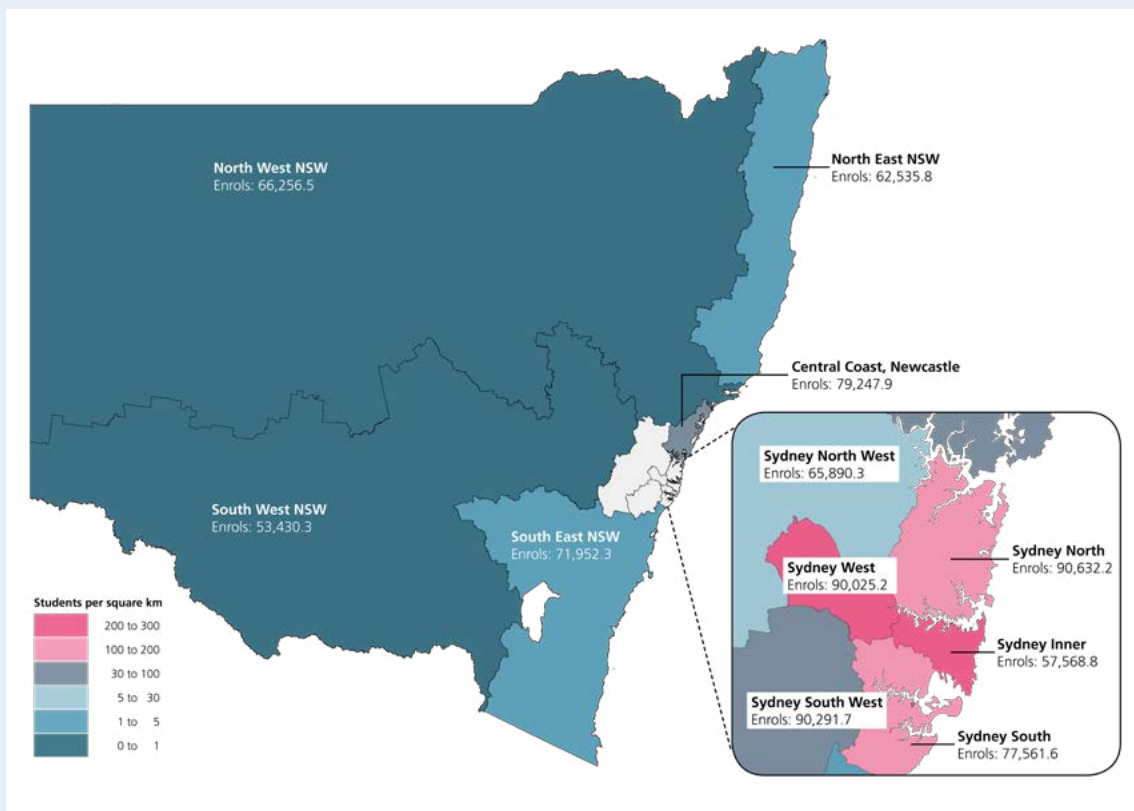


Table 2

## Enrolments by ABS Statistical Area Level 4 groupings and grade group in NSW government schools, mid-year 2019

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	26,344	33,047	59,391	21,445	9,336.2	30,781.2	460	90,632.2	11.2%
Sydney-Inner	16,542	19,576	36,118	14,842	6,258.8	21,100.8	350	57,568.8	7.1%
Sydney-South	20,161	26,204	46,365	21,532	8,904.6	30,436.6	760	77,561.6	9.6%
Sydney-South West	22,691	30,628	53,319	26,216	9,975.7	36,191.7	781	90,291.7	11.2%
Sydney-West	26,800	32,995	59,795	21,346	7,929.2	29,275.2	955	90,025.2	11.2%
Sydney-North West	17,225	23,014	40,239	18,054	7,152.3	25,206.3	445	65,890.3	8.2%
<b>Sydney total</b>	<b>129,763</b>	<b>165,464</b>	<b>295,227</b>	<b>123,435</b>	<b>49,556.8</b>	<b>172,991.8</b>	<b>3,751</b>	<b>471,969.8</b>	<b>58.6%</b>
North East NSW	15,135	21,831	36,966	19,014	6,408.8	25,422.8	147	62,535.8	7.8%
North West NSW	16,840	23,022	39,862	20,187	5,964.5	26,151.5	243	66,256.5	8.2%
South West NSW	13,510	18,278	31,788	16,134	4,947.3	21,081.3	561	53,430.3	6.6%
South East NSW	18,097	25,381	43,478	21,283	6,759.3	28,042.3	432	71,952.3	8.9%
Central Coast, Newcastle	19,538	26,589	46,127	24,385	8,132.9	32,517.9	603	79,247.9	9.8%
<b>Regional total</b>	<b>83,181</b>	<b>115,200</b>	<b>198,381</b>	<b>101,095</b>	<b>32,241.0</b>	<b>133,336.0</b>	<b>1,986</b>	<b>333,703.0</b>	<b>41.4%</b>
<b>NSW total</b>	<b>212,944</b>	<b>280,664</b>	<b>493,608</b>	<b>224,530</b>	<b>81,797.8</b>	<b>306,327.8</b>	<b>5,737</b>	<b>805,672.8</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**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 280.2) is included in Regional Total and NSW, but does not have an ABS Statistical Area Level 4 code.

In 2019, 58.6% of government students were enrolled in schools within the Sydney area. The proportion of primary students enrolled in Sydney schools was 59.8%.

All statistical area groupings within the Sydney area experienced an increase in primary enrolments in 2019 from 2018, except Sydney-South which saw a small decrease of 0.4%. Sydney-West recorded the largest growth in primary enrolments for the fifth year in a row, with an increase of 1,724 enrolments in 2019. By contrast, enrolments fell in all statistical area groupings outside Sydney, with North West NSW experiencing the largest decrease of 468 enrolments (1.2%).

For secondary enrolments, all statistical area groupings increased in 2019, except North East NSW which saw a small decrease of 0.3%. Sydney-West had the largest growth from 2018, with a significant increase of 917.6 enrolments (3.2%). This was closely followed by Sydney-North, which recorded

an increase of 891.7 enrolments, rising by 3.0%. This was the first year since 2010 that secondary enrolments rose in almost all statistical area groupings. This change is especially notable for the Regional areas, where enrolments declined across most statistical area groupings from 2010 to 2018.

In 2019 the number of senior secondary enrolments decreased by 1,326.4 students (1.6%). The fall occurred across all statistical area groupings except for Sydney-South, Sydney-South West and Sydney-West, where Year 11 and Year 12 enrolments increased by 0.2%, 0.8% and 0.3% respectively. 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 90,632.2, 90,291.7 and 90,025.2 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 25.0% of students identified as Aboriginal, compared with 5.6% or less in each statistical area group in Sydney.

Map 2

Percentage of enrolments (FTE) identified as Aboriginal by ABS Statistical Area Level 4 groupings in NSW government schools, mid-year 2019

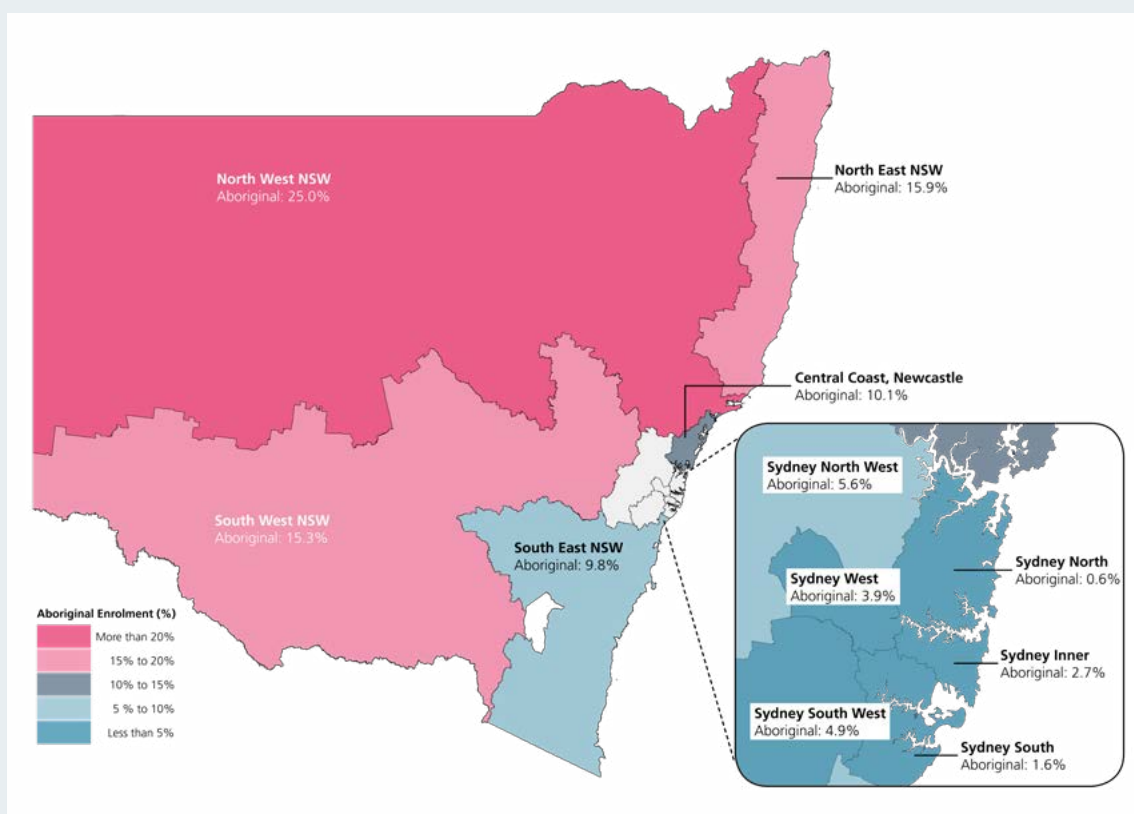


Table 3

Enrolments (FTE) of Aboriginal students by ABS Statistical Area Level 4 groupings and grade group in NSW government schools, mid-year 2019

Statistical Area Level 4 group	K-2	Y3-6	Primary total	Y7-10	Y11-12	Secondary total	Statistical area total	% of NSW
Sydney-North	156	147	303	148	45.2	193.2	511.2	0.8%
Sydney-Inner	425	528	953	442	142.3	584.3	1,581.3	2.4%
Sydney-South	303	406	709	411	123.2	534.2	1,270.2	2.0%
Sydney-South West	1,146	1,578	2,724	1,305	270.4	1,575.4	4,433.4	6.9%
Sydney-West	971	1,227	2,198	969	246.7	1,215.7	3,528.7	5.5%
Sydney-North West	1,002	1,270	2,272	1,078	258.0	1,336.0	3,682.0	5.7%
<b>Sydney total</b>	<b>4,003</b>	<b>5,156</b>	<b>9,159</b>	<b>4,353</b>	<b>1,085.8</b>	<b>5,438.8</b>	<b>15,006.8</b>	<b>23.2%</b>
North East NSW	2,500	3,446	5,946	3,152	766.9	3,918.9	9,924.9	15.3%
North West NSW	4,473	5,657	10,130	5,192	1,133.2	6,325.2	16,563.2	25.6%
South West NSW	2,142	2,787	4,929	2,577	520.0	3,097.0	8,157.0	12.6%
South East NSW	1,831	2,382	4,213	2,286	458.4	2,744.4	7,020.4	10.9%
Central Coast, Newcastle	2,076	2,678	4,754	2,488	648.2	3,136.2	8,019.2	12.4%
<b>Regional total</b>	<b>13,022</b>	<b>16,950</b>	<b>29,972</b>	<b>15,695</b>	<b>3,527.7</b>	<b>19,222.7</b>	<b>49,685.7</b>	<b>76.8%</b>
<b>NSW</b>	<b>17,025</b>	<b>22,106</b>	<b>39,131</b>	<b>20,048</b>	<b>4,613.5</b>	<b>24,661.5</b>	<b>64,692.5</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Aboriginal total as a percentage of total NSW enrolments</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>-</b>

**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 900 Aboriginal students enrolled in SSPs, representing 16% 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 (FTE) of Aboriginal students by ABS Statistical Area Level 4 grouping and grade group in NSW government schools, mid-year 2019**

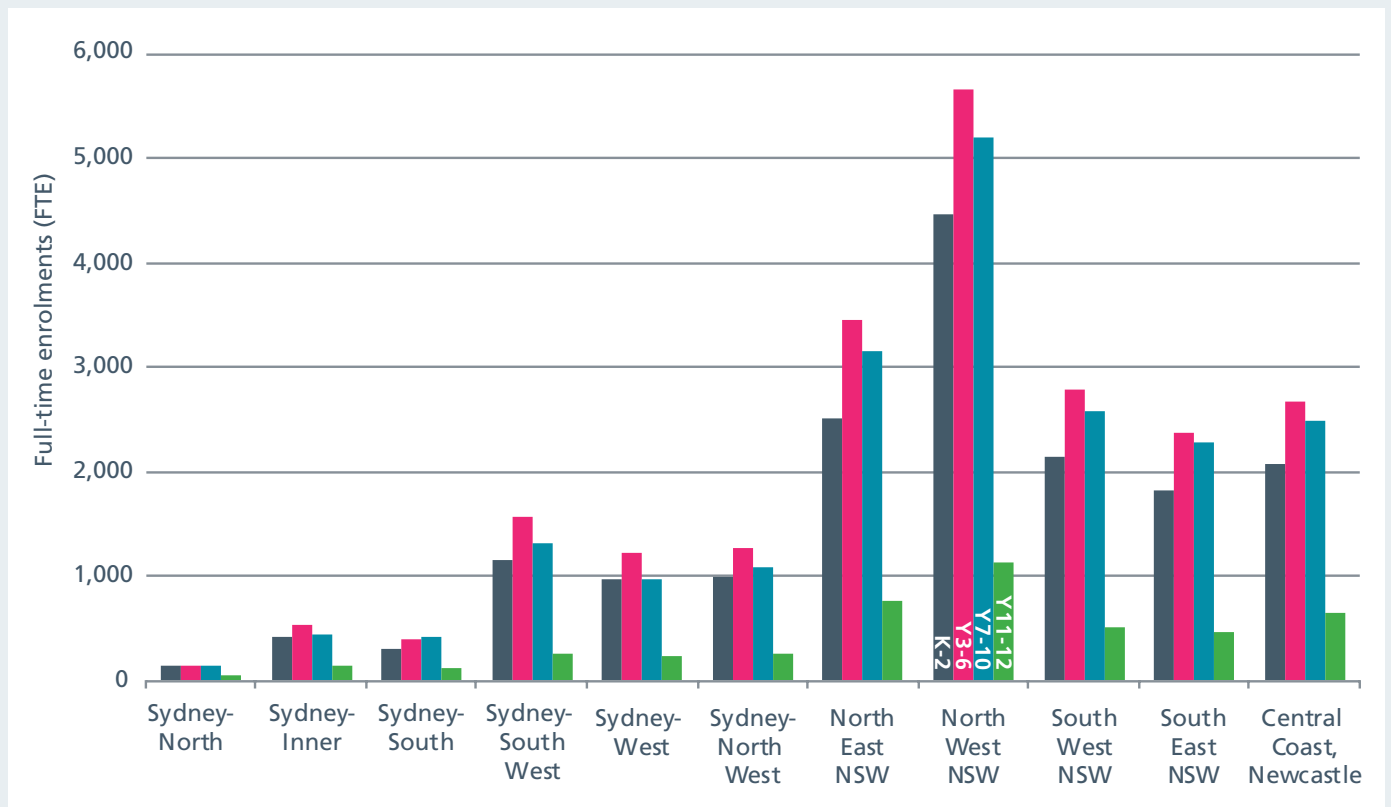


Table 3 shows NSW government student enrolments of Aboriginal students by statistical area groupings and grade groups, and Figure 2 illustrates this comparison.

The majority (76.8%) of NSW government Aboriginal students are enrolled outside of Sydney. Although the six Sydney statistical area groupings account for 58.6% of all enrolments in NSW, only 23.2% of NSW Aboriginal students are enrolled in Sydney.

North West NSW and North East NSW had the highest Aboriginal enrolments at 25.6% and 15.3% 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 6.9%, 5.7% and 5.5% of total Aboriginal enrolments respectively. In contrast, Sydney-North only had 0.8% of the Aboriginal enrolments, compared with 11.2% of all students.

Overall, Aboriginal student enrolments have increased by 2,760 students or 4.5% from 61,932.5 in 2018 to 64,692.5 in 2019. North West NSW recorded the largest increase of 625.8 Aboriginal students, from 15,937.4 in 2018 to 16,563.2 in 2019.

## 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 2009 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 seven years. Since 2006, the total number of students enrolled in education in NSW has increased by 121,347 students, driven by changes to the NSW school leaving age and higher birth rate.

For the last six years, government school enrolment growth has surpassed the enrolment growth of non-government schools. Government enrolments increased by 7,650.6 in 2019, compared with an increase of 5,321.3 for non-government schools. The growth in government enrolments from 2018 to 2019 is mostly driven by a large increase in government secondary aged enrolments of 5,050.6 students. This is the first time since 2010 that secondary enrolments have been the main factor driving government enrolment growth, and this is the largest increase of secondary students in government schools observed for at least 20 years.

Primary enrolment growth slowed slightly in 2019. While the number of students increased by 2,600 students from 2018 to 2019, this was the smallest increase since 2010.

**Table 4**

**Enrolments (FTE) and percentage of enrolment share in NSW government and non-government schools, 1901-2019**

Year	Government		Non-government		Total
	Enrolment	Share	Enrolment	Share	
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
<b>2019</b>	<b>805,673</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>425,991</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>1,231,664</b>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools Australia 2019.

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



**Figure 3**

**Change in enrolments (FTE) from the previous year, NSW government and non-government schools, 2009-2019**

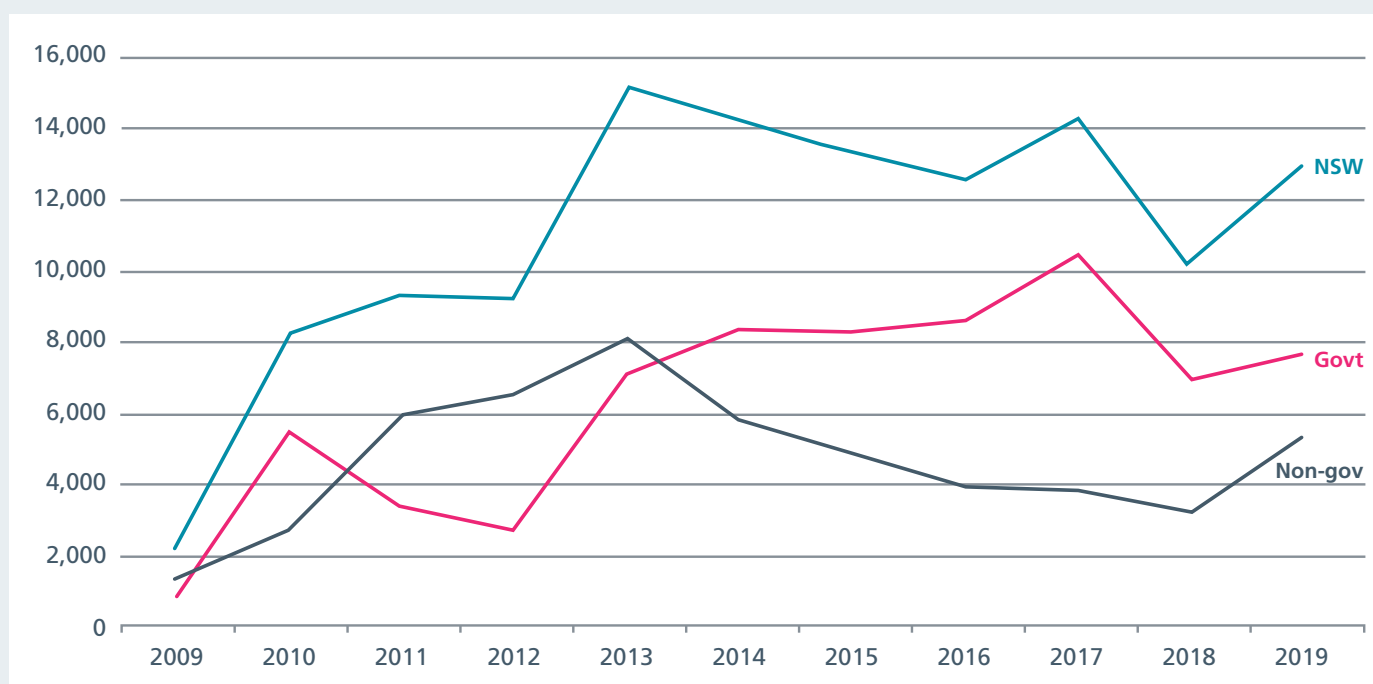


Table 4 shows the enrolment share for students at government and non-government schools in NSW. Total government enrolment share fell gradually, reaching a low of 65.3% in 2015. The enrolment share then increased slightly between 2016 and 2018, but fell by 0.1 percentage points to 65.4% in 2019.

Figures 4 and 5 show NSW government enrolment share by education level, for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Historically government enrolment share for Aboriginal students has been significantly higher than for non-Aboriginal students. In 2019, total government share for Aboriginal students was 84.3%, 20.1 percentage points higher than for non-Aboriginal students (64.2%).

The primary government enrolment share for Aboriginal students in 2019 was 86.2%, 17.1 percentage points higher than non-Aboriginal students at 69.1%. The secondary enrolment share for Aboriginal students in 2019 was 81.5%, 24 percentage points higher than for non-Aboriginal students (57.6%).

The difference in government enrolment share between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students was highest for junior secondary students, at 24.5 percentage points (Aboriginal students 82.8%, non-Aboriginal students 58.3%).

The smallest difference between enrolment share for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students was for Kindergarten to Year 2 students. Aboriginal students' government enrolment share was 85.9% for this cohort, 16.2 percentage points higher than for non-Aboriginal students at 69.7%.

For both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, secondary enrolment share has consistently been lower than primary enrolment share. In 2019, Aboriginal students' secondary enrolment share was 4.7 percentage points lower than the primary enrolment share, compared with an 11.5 percentage point difference for non-Aboriginal students.

Figure 4

Percentage of NSW government enrolments (FTE) share by grade group, Aboriginal students, 2009-2019

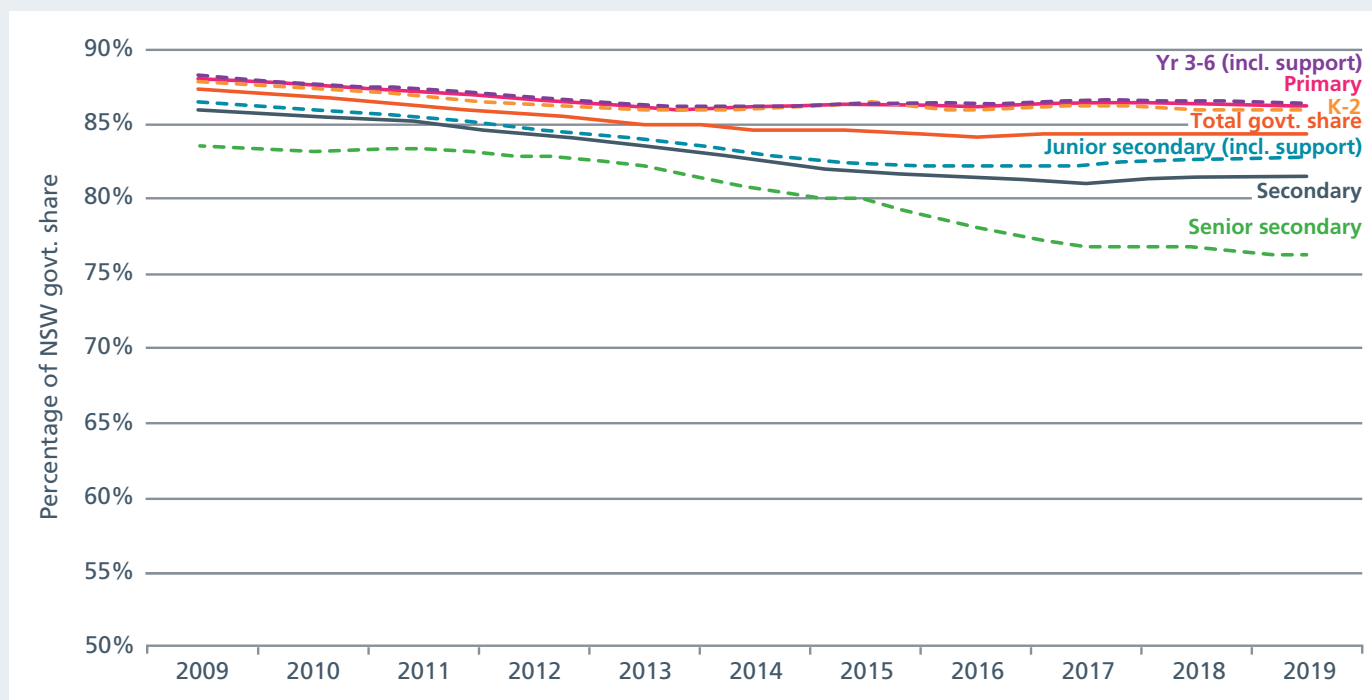
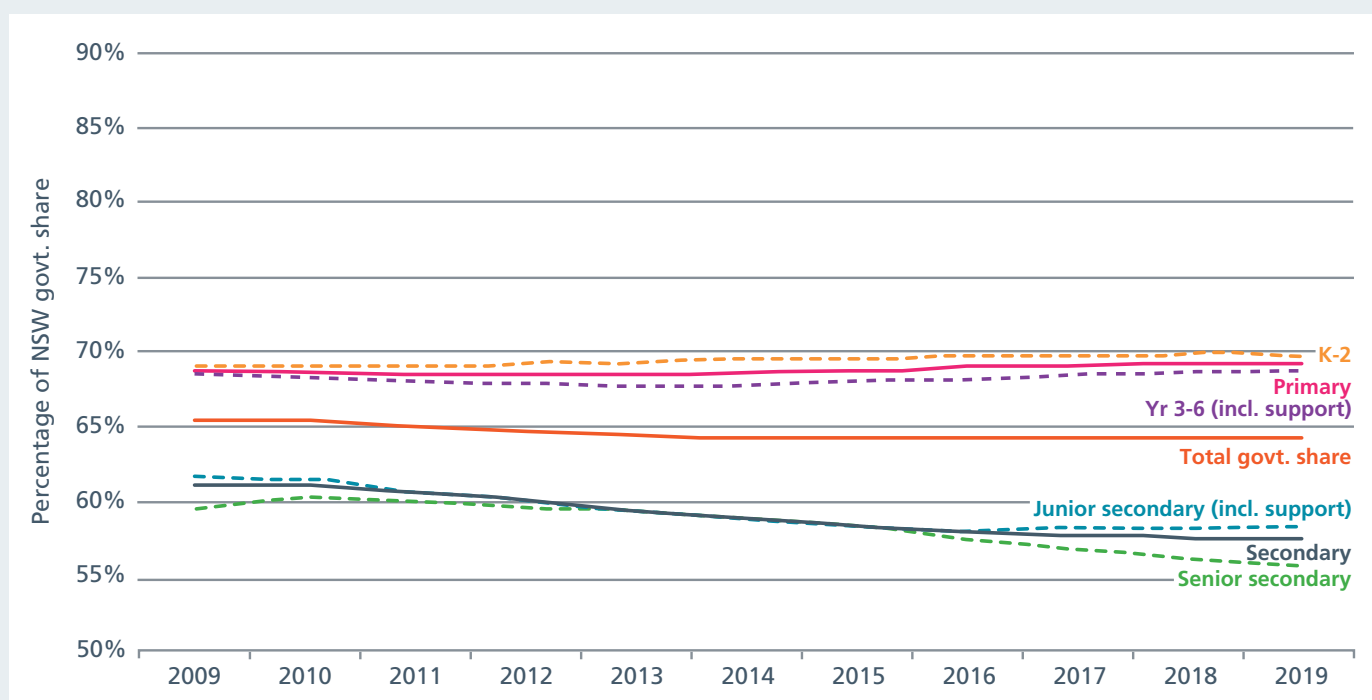


Figure 5

Percentage of NSW government enrolments (FTE) share by grade group, non-Aboriginal students, 2009-2019



## Government preschool

In NSW, most children receiving a preschool education are enrolled at a government-funded community preschool or in a centre-based service. The NSW government operates 100 preschools, providing an early childhood program in the year prior to school, to around 4,300 children.

Table 5 shows that the number of children enrolled in government preschools decreased by 206 children from 4,522 in 2018 to 4,316 in 2019. This is the largest decrease in preschool enrolments experienced in more than 10 years. Full-time equivalent enrolments decreased at a slightly lower rate, by 95.2, from 2,389.7 in 2018 to 2,294.5 in 2019, which indicates that some children were enrolled for more days in 2019.

Aboriginal preschool enrolments accounted for 16.3% of FTE enrolments in 2019, an increase of 0.9 percentage points from 2018. However the number of Aboriginal preschool enrolments remained stable, with an increase of 2 students or 0.3% in 2019.

In 2009 children were enrolled in government preschools for 17.2 hours on average (based on a 30 hour week), with Aboriginal children enrolled for an average of 19.4 hours. By 2019, average enrolled hours had fallen to 15.9 hours for all children, and 17.5 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 (FTE) in NSW government preschools, 2009-2019**

Year	All students		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students		
	Students	FTE	Students	FTE	% of total FTE
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%
<b>2019</b>	<b>4,316</b>	<b>2,294.5</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>373.1</b>	<b>16.3%</b>

## 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 remained stable, decreasing by 2 students (0.3%) in 2019. The percentage of students enrolled in an early intervention program who were Aboriginal decreased from 14.7% in 2018 to 13.7% in 2019.

**Table 6**

**Number of students and enrolment full-time equivalents (FTE) in NSW government early intervention programs, 2012-2019**

Year	All students		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students		
	Students	FTE	Students	FTE	% of total FTE
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%
<b>2019</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>149.2</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>13.7%</b>

## 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 2019 is the percentage of Year 10 enrolments in 2019 compared to Year 7 enrolments in 2016. 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 6 show NSW government apparent retention rates from 2009 to 2019. 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 6, 2019 saw decreases in apparent retention rates across all cohorts, with Year 7 to 12 and Year 7 to 11 dropping by 1.1 and 0.9 percentage points respectively.

Table 7 shows that the smallest decrease was for Year 10 to Year 11 girls, which fell slightly from 91.2% in 2018 to 91.1% in 2019.

The largest decreases observed in 2019 were in Year 7 to Year 11 girls and Year 7 to Year 12 boys, which recorded drops of 1.3 and 1.2 percentage points respectively.

**Table 7**

**Apparent retention rates by retention period and gender and in NSW government schools, 2009-2019**

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
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
<b>2019</b>	<b>103.0</b>	<b>102.7</b>	<b>102.8</b>	<b>86.2</b>	<b>93.9</b>	<b>90.0</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>75.2</b>	<b>83.4</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>87.2</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>72.3</b>

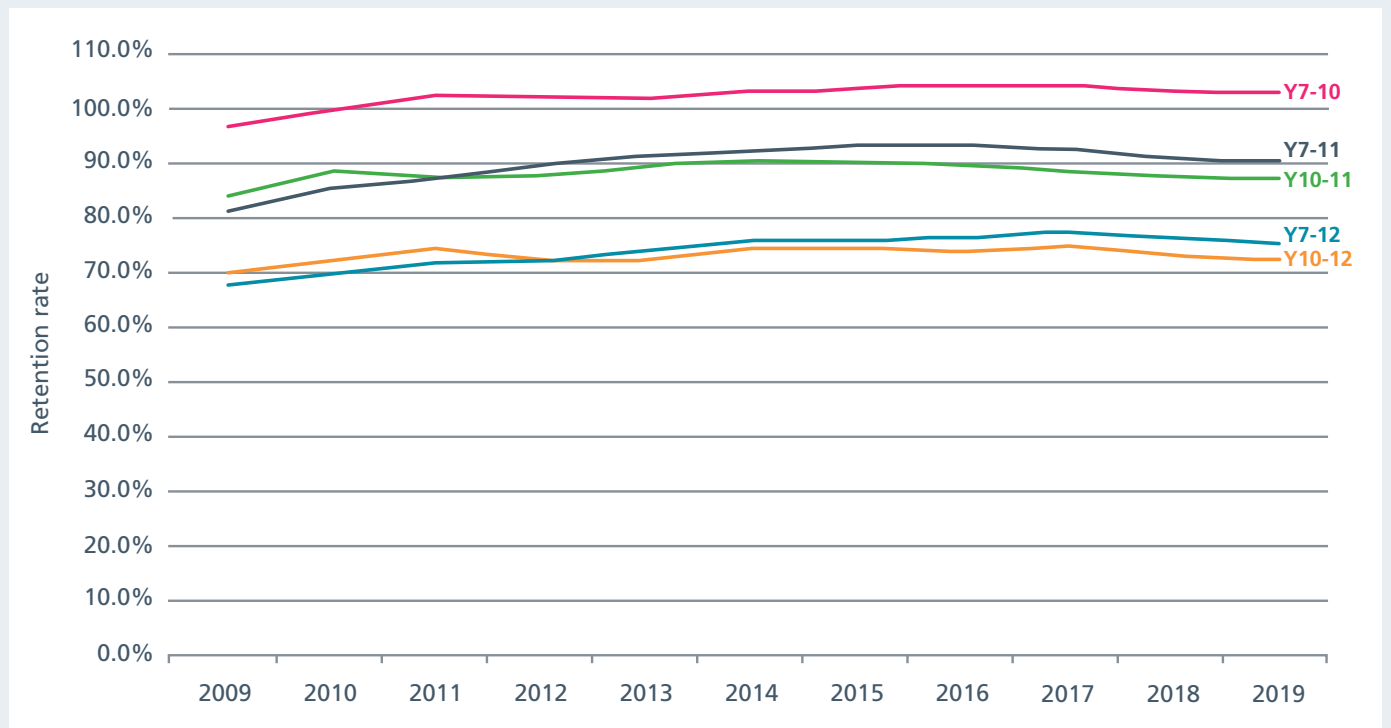
**Notes:** All enrolments are reported in full-time equivalent units (FTEs), and includes full-time and part-time students. Students enrolled in distance education classes are included with their appropriate grade levels. See Explanatory notes 2 - Apparent retention rates.

In 2019, apparent retention rates across all cohorts are significantly higher than ten years prior in 2009, before the implementation of the new school leaving age legislation in 2010. The rates increased by between 2.1 and 8.9 percentage points over the period, with the biggest increase in retention for Year 7 to Year 11 students (8.9 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 11.3 percentage points higher than that of boys in 2019. For Year 7 to Year 12, the gap between girls and boys increased from 12.0 percentage points in 2018 to 12.2 percentage points in 2019.

Figure 6

Apparent retention rates by retention period in NSW government schools, 2009-2019



## 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 2019) divided by the total number of full-time students in a previous year (for example, Year 7 in 2014). This would be the Year 7 to 12 apparent retention rate in 2019.

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 ABS Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4) group, so is included in regional and NSW totals, but not included in individual SA4 group data (tables 2 and 3).

### 4. 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](http://www.abs.gov.au)

#### ABS publication details:

- 4221.0 - Schools Australia, 2019
- 4240.0 - Preschool Education Australia, 2019

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