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The information included on the *My School* website comes from a number of different sources. This fact sheet provides information about data sources and about how to interpret the data.

General

School information and student results should be considered within their State or Territory, sector and school context. Some important factors to consider, for instance, are the year and age range in each State, the different programs offered (such as those for children with an intellectual disability), enrolment policies (eg selective schools) and any different terms or structures (eg different post-school pathways) which may affect the chosen school. Some schools do not, for instance, provide data on senior secondary outcomes in terms of vocational education and training or other pathways achieved following students' completion of high school.

School statement

School statements have been provided by schools and school systems (including State or Territory education departments). They provide an opportunity for the school to give an account of the school's mission, values, special programs, and other information that gives a broader picture of the school.

School facts

Government school information has been provided by the respective State or Territory education departments. For non-government schools, this information has been provided by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) from data collected through the annual non-government school census.

School sector

Australia's education system is comprised of government and non-government schools. The 'School facts' section does not provide additional

information on the type of non-government school. This information is only available in the overview ('School statement') that was provided by the school.

School type

In Australia, there are primary schools, secondary schools, and combined schools (combining the primary and secondary school) which are listed as the school type. There are also a range of special purpose schools. Where these schools have been identified as being for a special purpose by the States and Territories, they have been given the school type 'Special' on the *My School* website. Special purpose schools include different school types, such as juvenile justice schools. In the first release of the *My School* website, academically selective schools are not listed as a school type.

Year range offered by the school

The schooling years on the *My School* website include Year 1 to Year 12 and the various provisions for education prior to Year 1 which are part of the schooling system in each State and Territory. The abbreviations for school years used on the *My School* website are consistent with the abbreviations used by the school education systems. For example, K is kindergarten; P is preparatory. The ages that children start school are not being reported on the *My School* website. This varies across States and Territories.

Total enrolments

Enrolments are counted in two ways: firstly, through a head count of students and secondly, through full-time equivalent enrolments of students. The total enrolment figure uses the head count method and includes both full-time and part-time enrolments.

Full-time equivalent enrolments

A full-time student is one who undertakes a workload equivalent to, or greater than, that prescribed for a full-time student of that year level. This may vary between States and Territories and from year to year. A full-time equivalent enrolment is registered as 1.

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A smaller enrolment is represented as a proportion of the full-time enrolment. For example a half-time enrolment is 0.5.

Percentage of Indigenous Australian students

A student is considered to be an Indigenous Australian if he or she identifies as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. The term 'origin' is considered to relate to people's Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent and for some, but not all, their cultural identity.

Location

There are four categories of geographic location commonly used to describe school locations: metropolitan, provincial, remote or very remote. 'Metropolitan' is an area in each State or Territory within close proximity of its capital city. 'Provincial' is an administration division within a country or State. 'Remote' is an area considered spatially distant from the capital city of that State or Territory. 'Very remote' is an area considered spatially very distant from the capital city. More specific definitions are provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Student attendance rate

The student attendance rate is collected by schools and supplied for an agreed comparative period during the 2009 school year. It refers to the number of actual student days attended during the period as a percentage of the number of possible student days attended during the period. It includes the total (aggregated) attendance across year levels 1 to 10 for the relevant school. It does not include pre-Year 1 attendance, except in government schools in Victoria. In Victoria, this attendance data includes Prep and covers the 2008 year, but does not include the 2009 attendance rates, as of January 2010.

School staff

Numbers of school staff cited are provided by the school sector or system. Some school sector/systems only provide numbers of staff employed by the

sector/system. In these situations, staff employed directly by the school are additional to the figure stated.

Teaching staff

The head count of full-time and part-time teaching staff employed by and assigned to schools.

Full-time equivalent teaching staff

This is the same data provided under teaching staff numbers with full-time staff counted as 1.0, and part-time staff represented as a proportion of the full-time load. For example a staff member who teaches half-time is counted as 0.5.

Non-teaching staff

The head count of full-time and part-time staff employed at the school who are not included in the teaching staff category.

Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff

This is the same data provided under non-teaching staff numbers, with full-time staff counted as 1.0, and part-time staff represented as a proportion of the full-time load. For example a staff member who teaches half-time is counted as 0.5.

Student background

ICSEA value

The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a measure that enables meaningful and fair comparisons to be made across schools. The variables that make up ICSEA include socio-economic characteristics of the small areas where students live (in this case an ABS census collection district), as well as whether a school is in a regional or remote area, and the proportion of Indigenous students enrolled at the school. It has been developed specifically for the *My School* website for the purpose of identifying schools serving similar student populations.

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The average ICSEA value is 1000. Most schools have an ICSEA value between 900 and 1100. ICSEA should be interpreted with the assistance of the *About ICSEA Fact Sheet*, *ICSEA Technical Paper* and relevant FAQs.

ICSEA quarters

ICSEA quarters for each school are displayed in percentages. This gives contextual information about the socio-educational composition of the student population. If students at a school were drawn proportionally from the broad spectrum of the community, then theoretically there would be 25% in each quarter.

NAPLAN results

Data from the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) has been provided by the State and Territory testing authorities.

Participation, absentee and exemption rates for NAPLAN tests

The proportion of students who participated in the NAPLAN tests is displayed at the bottom of the chart which shows NAPLAN results in bands. Also displayed are absentee rates and exemption rates (where students have received an exemption from the test because they have a language background other than English and have arrived from overseas less than a year before the tests, or because they have significant intellectual disabilities). These rates are compared for the selected school and nationally. Participation rates do not include exempt students.

Schools and classes with small populations

In the case of individual schools, the larger the number of students taking the tests, the greater the confidence one can have in the accuracy of the school mean scores as true measures of student performance. For this reason, indicative confidence intervals are reported for schools with varying numbers of students, and no mean scores are reported where there were fewer than five students participating in a test for a particular NAPLAN year level/domain (eg Year 5 Reading).

Senior secondary outcomes

Data provided on senior secondary outcomes has been provided by the Australasian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA). As different jurisdictions use different definitions for these data, data is not comparable between jurisdictions. Definitions for some of the terminology used are provided below:

SBAT: SBAT is the name that is given to two programs: School-based Apprenticeships (SBAs) and School-based Traineeships (SBTs). These programs provide the opportunity for students to combine paid part-time employment, and study towards a nationally credentialled program, while continuing at school and completing their high school certification. Depending on the pattern of study, an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) can be achieved.

VET: Vocational Education and Training is education and training that focuses on providing skills for work. VET provides many skills for people in a vocational environment. VET courses are offered in schools and colleges, community centres, TAFE institutes and other registered training organisations. In these organisations VET may be provided off-the-job and/or in a workplace environment. For example, workplace training is a significant part of all apprenticeships and traineeships.