

2.05 Years 10 and 12 retention and attainment

Years 10 and 12 retention rates and Year 12 attainment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Data sources

Data for this measure come from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The NSSC is a collaborative arrangement between all Australian government education authorities and the ABS. The NSSC is an annual collection of data on schools, students, staff and finance. The ABS undertakes this data collection in the government sector and the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations collects data in the non-government sector. Student data are collected through a school census in August of each year and the ABS publishes selected results annually in *Schools Australia*. Only full-time students were included in the analysis; part-time students were not included.

Care should be taken when comparing attainment outcomes for Indigenous students because of the small number of Indigenous students represented.

National Schools Statistics Collections (NSSC) 2009

Data for this measure come from the ABS National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC). The NSSC is a collaborative arrangement between state, territory and government education departments and the ABS. The data for this census were collected from State Education authorities (government schools) and the Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) (non-government schools), according to agreed standard definitions, instructions and tabulations that the ABS developed. The full-time plus part-time School Participation Rates (SPR) were added to this publication for the first time in 2009.

Care should be taken when comparing attainment outcomes for Indigenous students because of the small number of Indigenous students represented.

Apparent retention rates

Apparent retention rates are the percentage of full-time students of a given cohort group who continue from the start of secondary schooling to a specified year level. The term 'apparent' is used because the retention rate does not account for students repeating a year of school or migrating in or out of the Australian school student population or between states/territories. All full-time students enrolled at a school, including 'VET (vocational education and training) in Schools' students, but excluding people completing Year 12 through a vocational education facility, are included in retention calculations.

Year 10 apparent retention rates: Year 10 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7/8).

Year 12 apparent retention rates: Year 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7/8) or as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from Year 10.

Year 12 attainment rate: The proportion of Year 11 students who went on to achieve a Year 12 certificate.

Data analyses

Apparent retention rates

Table 2.05.1 presents the apparent retention rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12; the apparent retention rate from Year 10 to Year 12; and the apparent retention rate from Year 11 to 12.

- In 2009, there were approximately 10,799 Indigenous students in Year 10 (approximately 3.9% of all Year 10 students), 8,173 Indigenous students in Year 11 (approximately 3.3% of all students in Year 11) and 5,060 Indigenous students in Year 12 (approximately 2.5% of all students in Year 12).
- In 2009, the apparent retention rate of full-time Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10 was 90.9% compared with 100.1% for non-Indigenous students.
- In the same year the apparent retention rate of full-time Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 11 was 69.5% compared with 91.8% for non-Indigenous students.
- The apparent retention rate of full-time Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 was much lower – 45.4% compared with 77.3% for non-Indigenous students.
- Similarly, the apparent retention rate of full-time Indigenous students from Year 10 to Year 12 was much lower – 50.1% compared with 77.7% for non-Indigenous students.
- This trend was also seen in the apparent retention rate of full-time Indigenous students from Year 11 to Year 12 – 67.0% compared with 86.1% for non-Indigenous students.

Apparent retention rates by sex

- The apparent retention rates for Indigenous females were slightly higher than those for Indigenous males from Year 7/8 to Year 10 (92.3% compared with 89.6%); and slightly higher than for Indigenous males from Year 7/8 to Year 11 (71.6% compared with 67.5%), Year 7/8 to Year 12 (49.5% compared with 41.5%), Year 10 to Year 12 (54.3% compared with 46.1%), and Year 11 to Year 12 (69.6% compared with 64.2%).

Apparent retention rates by state/territory

- South Australia had the highest retention rates of Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10 (98.0%), whereas the Northern Territory rates were lower (75.0%).
- Retention rates of Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 11 were highest in Western Australia (85.3%) and lowest in the Northern Territory (52.6%).
- The South Australia had the highest retention rates of Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 (56.0%), and the Northern Territory had the lowest (34.5%).
- The South Australia had the highest retention rates of Indigenous students from Year 10 to Year 12 (63.9%), whereas Western Australia had the lowest (41.3%).
- The Queensland had the highest retention rates of Indigenous students from Year 11 to Year 12 (75.4%), whereas Western Australia had the lowest (49.3%).
- Rates for Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory should be interpreted with caution, because the small size of these jurisdictions means that relatively small changes in student numbers can create large movements in retention rates. Some rates exceeded 100%, largely reflecting the movement of students from non-government to government schools in Years 11 and 12; and in the Australian Capital Territory, some New South Wales residents from surrounding areas enrolled in Australian Capital Territory schools during secondary school.

Table 2.05.1: Apparent retention rates, by Indigenous status, sex and state/territory, 2009^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

		Year 7/8 to Year 10 ^(h)		Year 7/8 to Year 11 ^(h)		Year 7/8 to Year 12 ^(h)		Year 10 to Year 12 ⁽ⁱ⁾		Year 11 to Year 12 ⁽ⁱ⁾	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Males											
NSW	Indigenous	1,419	85.2	825	50.5	548	33.3	548	39.7	548	71.2
	Non-Indigenous	41,630	96.8	34,760	80.2	29,083	67.6	29,083	69.8	29,083	86.1
Vic	Indigenous	310	81.2	205	59.2	102	35.8	102	42.5	102	61.4
	Non-Indigenous	33,294	98.6	30,056	90.0	24,723	74.3	24,723	76.3	24,723	83.4
Qld	Indigenous	1,780	96.3	1,476	80.3	930	53.6	930	56.3	930	73.4
	Non-Indigenous	28,378	100.7	25,659	93.0	20,953	77.5	20,953	76.8	20,953	86.7
WA ^(e)	Indigenous	881	89.0	809	84.4	370	39.3	370	41.8	370	48.1
	Non-Indigenous	14,373	103.0	13,722	98.5	9,785	71.0	9,785	69.8	9,785	76.8
SA	Indigenous	306	101.0	249	73.9	185	53.3	185	60.1	185	69.0
	Non-Indigenous	9,939	102.8	9,791	101.1	7,068	72.5	7,068	71.9	7,068	76.7
Tas	Indigenous	236	105.4	142	59.7	61	27.4	61	28.5	61	73.5
	Non-Indigenous	3,283	99.1	2,395	72.9	1,893	59.9	1,893	60.1	1,893	83.3
ACT ^(f)	Indigenous	40	100.0	35	77.8	29	69.0	29	55.8	29	90.6
	Non-Indigenous	2,312	99.2	2,465	100.4	2,138	84.8	2,138	87.7	2,138	88.6
NT ^(g)	Indigenous	469	75.9	340	52.3	157	30.1	157	36.7	157	44.5
	Non-Indigenous	863	97.4	682	83.9	591	62.5	591	68.7	591	78.0
Australia	Indigenous	5,441	89.6	4,081	67.5	2,382	41.5	2,382	46.1	2,382	64.2
	Non-Indigenous	134,072	99.2	119,530	88.9	96,234	72.1	96,234	73.1	96,234	83.7

(continued)

Table 2.05.1(continued): Apparent retention rates, by Indigenous status, sex and state/territory, 2009^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

		Year 7/8 to Year 10 ^(h)		Year 7/8 to Year 11 ^(h)		Year 7/8 to Year 12 ^(h)		Year 10 to Year 12 ⁽ⁱ⁾		Year 11 to Year 12 ⁽ⁱ⁾	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Females											
NSW	Indigenous	1,532	90.0	1,009	58.2	615	40.4	615	48.1	615	72.0
	Non-Indigenous	40,722	98.5	35,999	86.8	31,914	77.8	31,914	79.4	31,914	90.2
Vic	Indigenous	266	79.6	227	67.2	146	50.9	146	55.1	146	65.8
	Non-Indigenous	32,592	101.9	31,608	97.4	27,122	87.0	27,122	86.7	27,122	89.1
Qld	Indigenous	1,775	99.4	1,379	83.5	1,056	62.5	1,056	64.9	1,056	77.2
	Non-Indigenous	27,222	102.8	25,686	98.4	22,446	84.5	22,446	83.0	22,446	88.3
WA ^(e)	Indigenous	799	93.8	736	86.4	338	40.2	338	40.8	338	50.8
	Non-Indigenous	13,719	103.7	13,325	102.1	10,847	84.1	10,847	81.5	10,847	85.0
SA	Indigenous	280	94.9	263	86.5	194	58.8	194	68.1	194	78.5
	Non-Indigenous	9,506	103.2	9,673	104.5	7,955	86.4	7,955	84.2	7,955	85.5
Tas	Indigenous	249	109.2	155	69.5	106	53.5	106	51.5	106	89.1
	Non-Indigenous	2,968	99.3	2,585	81.6	2,230	71.0	2,230	71.3	2,230	88.2
ACT ^(f)	Indigenous	34	94.4	28	53.8	28	70.0	28	87.5	28	121.7
	Non-Indigenous	2,383	99.5	2,404	103.8	2,106	89.8	2,106	90.7	2,106	89.1
NT ^(g)	Indigenous	423	74.0	295	52.9	195	39.2	195	48.0	195	56.0
	Non-Indigenous	798	96.7	780	86.2	612	70.2	612	76.4	612	81.5
Australia	Indigenous	5,358	92.3	4,092	71.6	2,678	49.5	2,678	54.3	2,678	69.6
	Non-Indigenous	129,910	101.1	122,060	94.8	105,232	82.7	105,232	82.5	105,232	88.5

(continued)

Table 2.05.1(continued): Apparent retention rates, by Indigenous status, sex and state/territory, 2009^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

		Year 7/8 to Year 10 ^(e)		Year 7/8 to Year 11 ^(e)		Year 7/8 to Year 12 ^(e)		Year 10 to Year 12 ^(f)		Year 11 to Year 12 ^(g)	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Persons											
NSW	Indigenous	2,951	87.6	1,834	54.5	1,163	36.7	1,163	43.7	1,163	71.6
	Non-Indigenous	82,352	97.6	70,759	83.4	60,997	72.6	60,997	74.5	60,997	88.2
Vic	Indigenous	576	80.4	432	63.2	248	43.4	248	49.1	248	63.9
	Non-Indigenous	65,886	100.2	61,664	93.6	51,845	80.5	51,845	81.4	51,845	86.3
Qld	Indigenous	3,555	97.8	2,855	81.8	1,986	58.0	1,986	60.6	1,986	75.4
	Non-Indigenous	55,600	101.7	51,345	95.6	43,399	81.0	43,399	79.8	43,399	87.5
WA ^(h)	Indigenous	1,680	91.2	1,545	85.3	708	39.7	708	41.3	708	49.3
	Non-Indigenous	28,092	103.3	27,047	100.3	20,632	77.3	20,632	75.5	20,632	80.9
SA	Indigenous	586	98.0	512	79.9	379	56.0	379	63.9	379	73.6
	Non-Indigenous	19,445	103.0	19,464	102.8	15,023	79.3	15,023	77.9	15,023	81.1
Tas	Indigenous	485	107.3	297	64.4	167	39.7	167	39.8	167	82.7
	Non-Indigenous	6,251	99.2	4,980	77.2	4,123	65.4	4,123	65.7	4,123	85.9
ACT ⁽ⁱ⁾	Indigenous	74	97.4	63	64.9	57	69.5	57	67.9	57	103.6
	Non-Indigenous	4,695	99.3	4,869	102.0	4,244	87.2	4,244	89.2	4,244	88.8
NT ^(j)	Indigenous	892	75.0	635	52.6	352	34.5	352	42.2	352	50.2
	Non-Indigenous	1,661	97.1	1,462	85.1	1,203	66.2	1,203	72.4	1,203	79.7
Australia	Indigenous	10,799	90.9	8,173	69.5	5,060	45.4	5,060	50.1	5,060	67.0
	Non-Indigenous	263,982	100.1	241,590	91.8	201,466	77.3	201,466	77.7	201,466	86.1

(continued)

Table 2.05.1(continued): Apparent retention rates, by Indigenous status, sex and state/territory, 2009^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

- (a) Although most students are recorded, it is likely that some are not accurately identified as Indigenous. Therefore, these statistics are likely to underestimate the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, the standard Indigenous status question has not yet been implemented in some jurisdictions.
- (b) The following factors have not been taken into account in these statistics: students repeating a year of education, migration and other net changes to the school population, enrolment policies (including year starting high school which contributes to different age/grade structures between states and territories), inter-sector transfer and interstate movements of students.
- (c) In small jurisdictions, relatively small changes in student numbers can create apparently large movements in retention rates.
- (d) The inclusion or exclusion of part-time students can also have a significant effect on apparent retention rates, especially in South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, which have relatively large proportions of part-time students.
- (e) Retention rate = Year 10, 11 or 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7/8).
- (f) Retention rate = Year 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from Year 10.
- (g) Retention rate = Year 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from Year 11.
- (h) Data for Western Australia have been affected by changes in scope and coverage over time.
- (i) Some ACT rates exceed 100%, largely reflecting the movement of students from non-government to government schools in Years 11 and 12, and of NSW residents from surrounding areas enrolling in ACT schools.
- (j) In 2009, changes to the processing of Northern Territory enrolment data will affect comparisons with previous years of all numbers drawing on student data for the Northern Territory.

Source: ABS 2010; ABS and AIHW analysis of National Schools Statistics Collection.

Apparent retention rates over time

- Apparent retention rates for Indigenous full-time students, from Year 7/8 to Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12, as well as from Year 10 to Year 12 and Year 11 to Year 12, have continued to increase over the last 5 years (Table 2.05.2).
- The retention rate for Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10 increased from 85.8% in 2004 to 90.9% in 2009, compared with an increase from 98.5% to 100.1% for non-Indigenous students over the same period. From 2004 to 2009 the retention rate from Year 7/8 to Year 12 for Indigenous students increased from 39.8% to 45.4%, compared with an increase from 76.9% to 77.3% for non-Indigenous students.
- The apparent retention rate for Indigenous students from Year 10 to Year 12 increased from 46.0% in 2004 to 50.1% in 2009. Over the same period there was a slight decrease in the non-Indigenous retention rate from 78.1% to 77.7%.
- The apparent retention rate for Indigenous students from Year 11 to Year 12 increased from 64.7% in 2004 to 67.0% in 2009. Over the same period, the non-Indigenous retention rate remained about the same at 86.0% in 2004 and 86.1% in 2009.

Table 2.05.2: Apparent retention rates, by Indigenous status, 2004 and 2009^{(a)(b)(c)}

	2004			2009			Change		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Number									
Year 7/8 to Year 10^(d)									
Indigenous	3,994	3,982	7,976	5,441	5,358	10,799	1,447	1,376	2,823
Non-Indigenous	126,779	123,323	250,102	134,072	129,910	263,982	7,293	6,587	13,880
Year 7/8 to Year 11^(d)									
Indigenous	2,500	2,797	5,297	4,081	4,092	8,173	1,581	1,295	2,876
Non-Indigenous	108,619	112,977	221,596	119,530	122,060	241,590	10,911	9,083	19,994
Year 7/8 to Year 12^(d)									
Indigenous	1,466	1,754	3,220	2,382	2,678	5,060	916	924	1,840
Non-Indigenous	90,689	99,573	190,262	96,234	105,232	201,466	5,545	5,659	11,204
Year 10 to Year 12^(e)									
Indigenous	1,466	1,754	3,220	2,382	2,678	5,060	916	924	1,840
Non-Indigenous	90,689	99,573	190,262	96,234	105,232	201,466	5,545	5,659	11,204
Year 11 to Year 12^(f)									
Indigenous	1,466	1,754	3,220	2,382	2,678	5,060	916	924	1,840
Non-Indigenous	90,689	99,573	190,262	96,234	105,232	201,466	5,545	5,659	11,204
Per cent									
Year 7/8 to Year 10^(d)									
Indigenous	84.3	87.4	85.8	89.6	92.3	90.9	5.3	4.9	5.1
Non-Indigenous	97.7	99.5	98.5	99.2	101.1	100.1	1.5	1.6	1.6
Year 7/8 to Year 11^(d)									
Indigenous	57.5	64.7	61.1	67.5	71.6	69.5	10.0	6.9	8.4

(continued)

Table 2.05.2 (continued): Apparent retention rates, by Indigenous status, 2004 and 2009^{(b)(c)(d)(e)}

	2004			2009			Change		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Non-Indigenous	85.4	92.6	89.0	88.9	94.8	91.8	3.5	2.2	2.8
Year 7/8 to Year 12^(d)									
Indigenous	35.4	44.3	39.8	41.5	49.5	45.4	6.1	5.2	5.6
Non-Indigenous	71.5	82.6	76.9	72.1	82.7	77.3	0.6	0.1	0.4
Year 10 to Year 12^(e)									
Indigenous	42.4	49.5	46.0	46.1	54.3	50.1	3.7	4.8	4.1
Non-Indigenous	73.2	83.2	78.1	73.1	82.5	77.7	-0.1	-0.7	-0.4
Year 11 to Year 12^(f)									
Indigenous	60.8	68.5	64.7	64.2	69.6	67.0	3.4	1.1	2.3
Non-Indigenous	83.1	88.8	86.0	83.7	88.5	86.1	0.6	-0.3	0.1

- (a) Although most students are recorded, it is likely that some are not accurately identified as Indigenous. Therefore, these statistics are likely to underestimate the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, the standard Indigenous status question has not yet been implemented in some jurisdictions.
- (b) The following factors have not been taken into account in these statistics: students repeating a year of education, migration and other net changes to the school population, enrolment policies (including year starting high school which contributes to different age/grade structures between states and territories), inter-sector transfer and interstate movements of students.
- (c) In small jurisdictions, relatively small changes in student numbers can create apparently large movements in retention rates.
- (d) Retention rate = Year 10, 11 or 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7/8).
- (e) Retention rate = Year 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from Year 10.
- (f) Retention rate = Year 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from Year 11.

Source: ABS 2010; ABS and AIHW analysis of National Schools Statistics Collection.

Table 2.05.3 and figures 2.05.1a, 2.05.1b and 2.05.1c present apparent retention rates over the period 1998–2009.

- Between 1998 and 2009 there was a significant increase in apparent retention rates for Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 (Figure 2.05.1a). The fitted trend implies an average yearly increase in the rate of around 0.8% for Year 10 (equivalent to a 11% increase over the period), 1.7% for Year 11 (equivalent to a 35% increase over the period) and 1.2% for Year 12 (equivalent to a 40% increase over the period).
- Over the same period there was a significant increase in apparent retention rates for Indigenous students from Year 10 to Year 12 (Figure 2.05.1b). The fitted trend implies an average yearly increase in the rate of around 0.7%, which is equivalent to a 19% increase over the period. The change in apparent retention rates for Indigenous students from Year 11 to Year 12 was, however, not significant. The fitted trend implied an average yearly change of 0%, which is equivalent to an 0.1% increase over the period.
- Between 1998 and 2009 there was also a significant increase in apparent retention rates for non-Indigenous students from Year 7/8 to Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 (Figure 2.05.1a). The fitted trend implies an average yearly increase in the rate of around 0.2% for Year 10 (equivalent to a 2% increase over the period), 0.4% for Year 11 (equivalent to a 6% increase over the period) and 0.3% for Year 12 (equivalent to a 5% increase over the period).
- Over the same period there was a significant increase in apparent retention rates for non-Indigenous students from Year 10 to Year 12 (Figure 2.05.1b). The fitted trend implies an average yearly increase in the rate of around 0.2%, which is equivalent to a 3% increase over the period. The change in apparent retention rates for non-Indigenous students from Year 11 to Year 12 was, however, not significant. The fitted trend implied an average yearly change of 0%, which is equivalent to an 0.2% decline over the period.

Table 2.05.3: Apparent Year 10 and Year 12 retention rates, by Indigenous status, 1998–2009

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Annual change ^(a)	Per cent change ^(b)
Year 7/8 to Year 10^(c)														
Indigenous	83.1	82.0	83.0	85.7	86.4	87.2	85.8	88.3	91.3	90.5	89.8	90.9	0.8*	11.1*
Non-Indigenous	97.5	97.9	98.0	98.4	98.5	98.9	98.5	98.6	98.9	99.4	99.9	100.1	0.2*	2.3*
Year 7/8 to Year 11^(c)														
Indigenous	52.3	56.0	53.6	56.1	58.9	61.4	61.1	62.3	67.7	69.7	67.8	69.5	1.7*	35.0*
Non-Indigenous	85.4	86.4	86.2	87.6	88.7	89.5	89.0	88.3	88.9	89.4	89.8	91.8	0.4*	5.8*
Year 7/8 to Year 12^(c)														
Indigenous	32.1	34.7	36.4	35.7	38.0	39.1	39.8	39.5	40.1	42.9	47.2	45.4	1.2*	39.7*
Non-Indigenous	72.7	73.2	73.3	74.5	76.3	76.5	76.9	76.6	76.0	75.6	75.6	77.3	0.3*	5.1*
Year 10 to Year 12^(d)														
Indigenous	42.4	43.1	43.8	43.6	45.8	45.7	46.0	45.3	46.8	48.5	51.7	50.1	0.7*	19.0*
Non-Indigenous	74.8	75.0	75.2	76.2	77.8	77.7	78.1	77.5	77.1	76.6	76.5	77.7	0.2*	3.0*
Year 11 to Year 12^(e)														
Indigenous	64.8	66.4	65.0	66.6	67.8	66.4	64.7	64.7	64.4	63.3	67.7	67.0	0.0	0.1
Non-Indigenous	85.2	85.7	84.8	86.5	87.1	86.3	86.0	86.1	86.0	85.0	84.7	86.1	0.0	-0.2

* Represents results with statistically significant increases or declines at the $p < 0.05$ level over the period 1998–2009.

(a) Average annual change in rates determined using linear regression analysis.

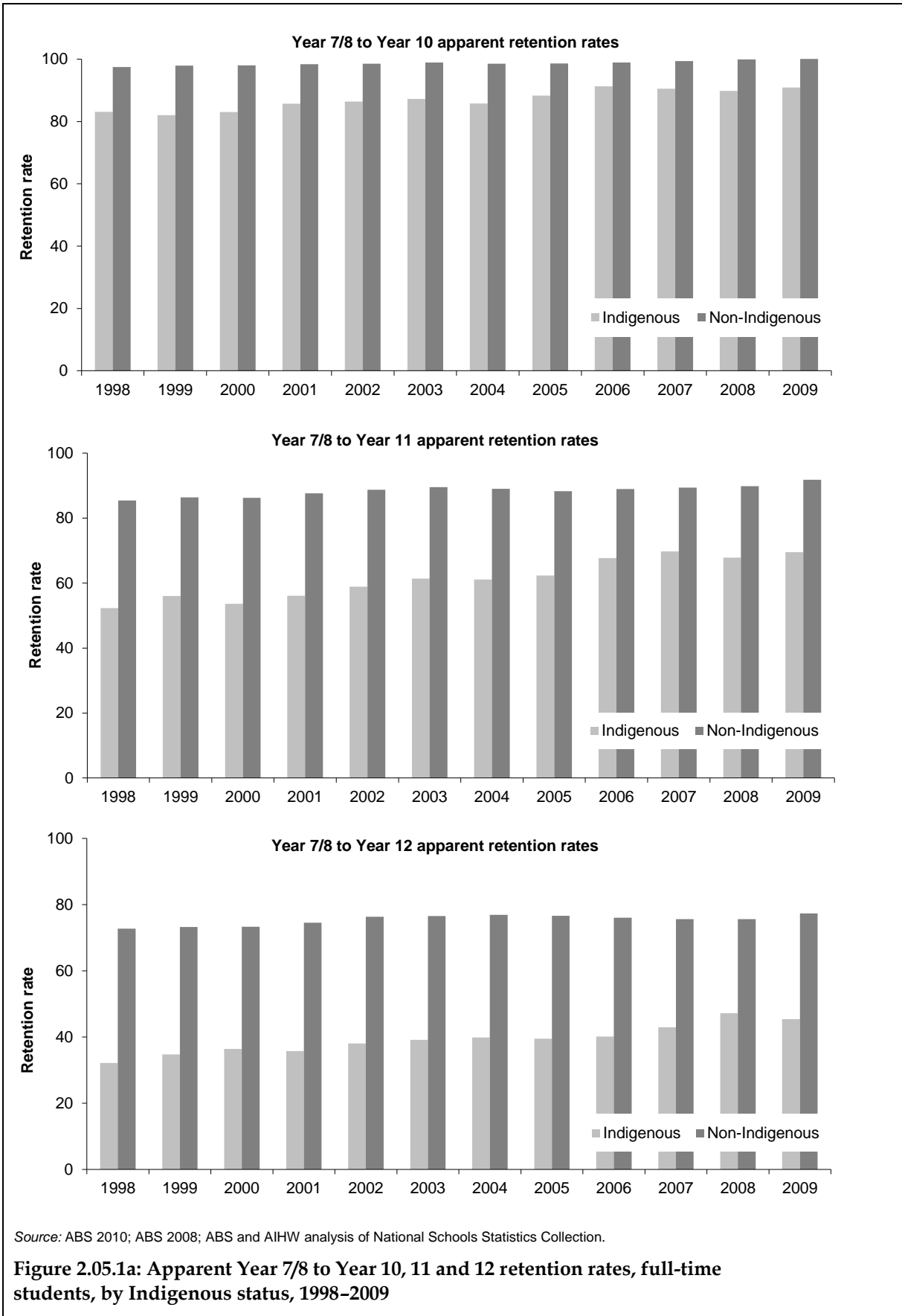
(b) Per cent change between 1998 and 2009 based on the average annual change over the period.

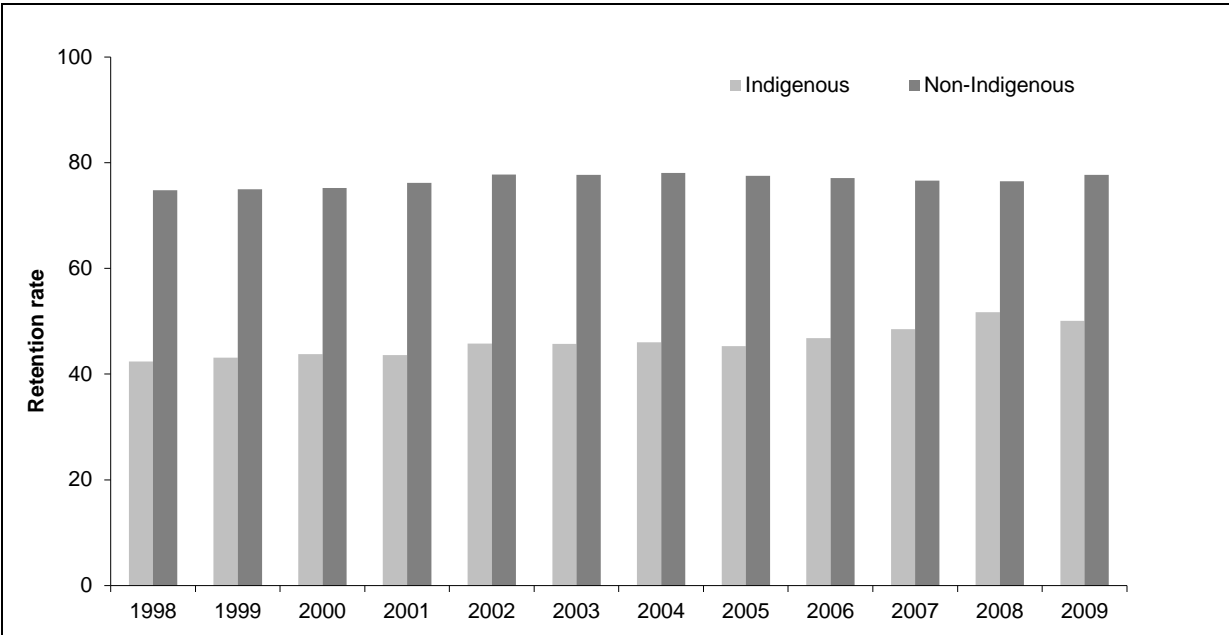
(c) Retention rate = Year 10, 11 or 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from the first year of secondary schooling (Year 7/8).

(d) Retention rate = Year 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from Year 10.

(e) Retention rate = Year 12 students as a proportion of the corresponding cohort from Year 11.

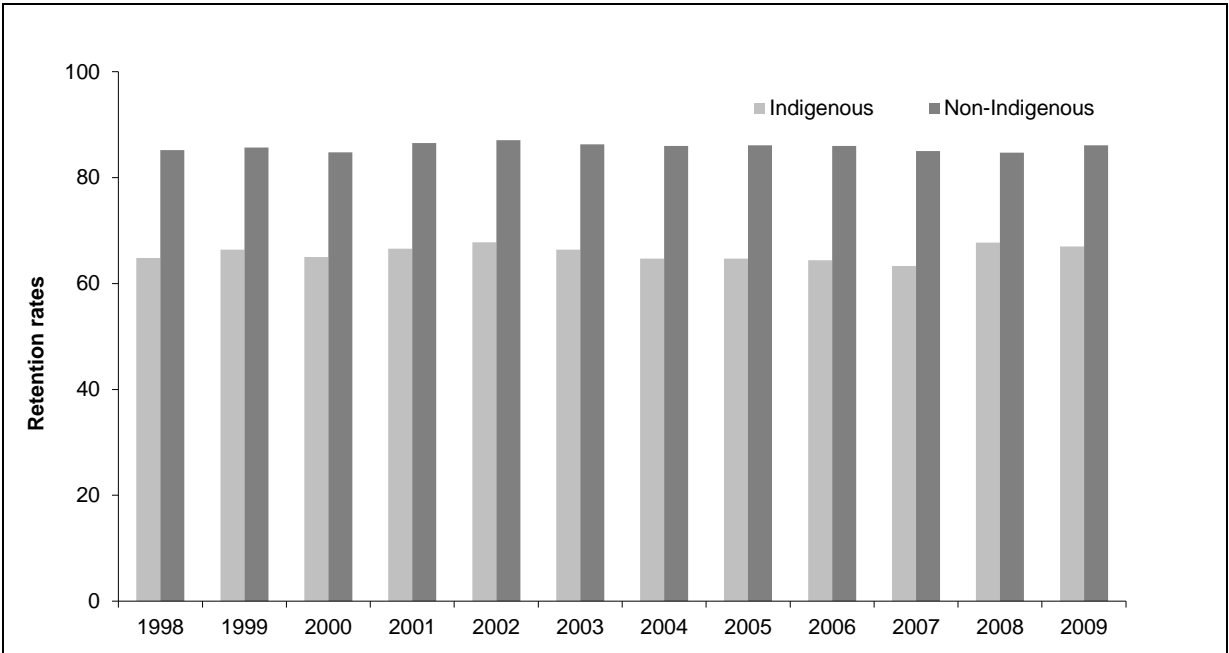
Source: ABS 2010; ABS and AIHW analysis of National Schools Statistics Collection.





Source: ABS 2010; ABS and AIHW analysis of National Schools Statistics Collection.

Figure 2.05.1b: Apparent Year 10 to Year 12 retention rates, full-time students, by Indigenous status, 1998-2009



Source: ABS 2010; ABS and AIHW analysis of National Schools Statistics Collection.

Figure 2.05.1c: Apparent Year 11 to Year 12 retention rates, full-time students, by Indigenous status, 1998-2009

NATSISS

Tables 2.05.4a and 2.05.4b present data on school attendance by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Table 2.05.5 presents data on types of assistance that would help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students. The data are from the 2008 NATSISS.

- In 2008, 98% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 6-14 years usually attended school. The main reason for not attending school was that the child was the cost (62%), followed by the child is not ready for school (Table 2.05.4a).
- Just over a third (34%) of children aged 9-14 years missed school in the week before the survey. The main reasons for missing school were 'school not available/open (12%)' followed by 'child illness or injury' (8%) (Table 2.05.4b).

Table 2.05.4a: School attendance by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 2-14 years, 2008

	Age in years					
	2-4		6-14		Total	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
School attendance						
Child usually attends school	13,964	35.6	124,462	97.9	138,426	83.2
Child does not usually attend school	25,217	64.4	2,697	2.1	27,914	16.8
Total	39,180	100.0	127,159	100.0	166,339	100.0
Main reason child does not usually attend school^(a)						
Problems with getting a place	642	2.5	161	6.0	803	2.9
Cost too high / Can't afford it	1,968	7.8	1,664	61.7	3,631	13.0
Child is not ready for school	19,959	79.1	485	18.0	20,444	73.2
Other reason	2,648	10.5	388	14.4	3,035	10.9
Total	25,217	100.0	2,697	100.0	27,914	100.0

(a) Children who do not usually attend school.

Source: 2008 NATSISS.

Table 2.05.4b: Child school attendance, Year 9 or higher, Indigenous students, 2008

	Number	Per cent
Whether child missed days at school in last week^{(b)(c)}		
Missed days at school/preschool/kindergarten	3,408.4	34.3
Did not miss days at school/preschool/kindergarten	6,519.3	65.7
Total	9,927.7	100.0
<i>Not stated</i>	67.4	0.7
Main reason missed school in last week^(c)		
Child had illness or injury	822.5	8.3
School not available or not open	1,155.1	11.6
Cultural commitments or sorry business	17.2	0.2
Other reason	1,413.6	14.2
<i>Total missed school last week</i>	<i>3,409</i>	<i>34.3</i>
Did not miss school in last week	6,519.3	65.7
Total	9,927.7	100.0
<i>Not stated</i>	67.4	0.7
Number of days child usually attends school^(a)		
Less than five days	0.0	0.0
5 days or more	9,180.1	92.5
Total	9,927.7	100.0
<i>Not stated</i>	67.4	0.7
Whether child missed school without permission in last 12 months		
Yes	1,803.5	18.0
No	8,191.6	82.0
Total	9,995.1	100.0
How well school advised respondent of child's progress^(a)		
Very well	3,546.5	36.6
Well	3,583.0	37.0
Not well	1,911.4	19.7
Not at all	639.7	6.6
Total	9,680.7	100.0
<i>Not known</i>	314.4	3.1

(a) Children who do usually attend school.

(b) Applicable to children aged 2–14 years.

(c) Children who do not usually attend school.

Source: 2008 NATSISS.

Table 2.05.5: Types of assistance that respondents suggest would help child in secondary school complete Year 12, by remoteness, Indigenous children aged 2–14 years, 2008

	Non-remote	Remote	Total
	Per cent		
Support from family, friends and school	11.3	10.6	11.2
Encouragement from elders and council	2.6	4.1	3.0
A relative to support if goes away to boarding school	0.9	3.9	1.6
Greater access to apprenticeships	3.5	2.6	3.3
Provision of coaches or mentors	3.5	2.2	3.2
Career guidance	5.3	3.5	4.9
More individual tutoring	4.9	2.8	4.4
Schools suitable for culture and/or beliefs	2.3	2.6	2.3
Suitable or reliable transport	1.9	2.2	2.0
Accessible secondary schools	1.1	2.3	1.4
Subsidies or grants to help with affordability	3.5	3.2	3.4
Assistance for students with a disability	1.1	0.8	1.1
Support networks	3.6	2.6	3.4
More discipline	2.1	2.1	2.1
Other reason	0.7	0.4	0.6
Not currently attending secondary school	51.6	54.1	52.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	194,254	58,954	253,208

Source: 2008 NATSISS.

Data quality issues

National Schools Statistics Collection

Changes affecting this release

In 2009, changes to the processing of Northern Territory enrolment data will affect comparisons with previous years of all numbers drawing on student data for the Northern Territory. In addition, while Tasmania underwent a significant restructure of post-Year 10 education in 2009, the Tasmanian Department of Education undertook processes to ensure that data provided fully complied with collection definitions.

Indigenous identification

Parents or guardians are asked to identify their child as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, both or neither, when enrolling for the first time. Provision of Indigenous status is not generally mandatory and if this section of the enrolment form is left blank, 'not stated' is recorded on the enrolment database. The incompleteness of Indigenous identification means the number of students recorded as Indigenous is an underestimate of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student population.

Standard Indigenous status question

Although the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs agreed to use the standard Indigenous status question in the schools sector, this has still not been implemented in some jurisdictions.

Retention data

There is no Australia-wide standard method of allocating students and classes to a certain year of school education (grade) and a number of schools do not maintain a formal grade structure. Students at these schools have been allocated to equivalent grades where possible, but otherwise appear against the ungraded category in either the primary or secondary level of school education.

Care should be exercised in the interpretation of apparent retention rates, because the method of calculation does not take into account a range of factors. At the Australia level, these include students repeating a year of education, migration and other net changes to the school population. At lower levels of disaggregation, additional factors affecting the data, such as enrolment policies (which contribute to different age/grade structures between states and territories), inter-sector transfers and interstate movements of students, have not been taken into account. These and other factors affecting the interpretation of apparent retention rates are being looked at, where possible, in the ABS's review of apparent retention rates.

Particularly in small jurisdictions, relatively small changes in student numbers can create apparently large movements in retention rates. In addition, changes in such factors as the proportion of ungraded and/or mature-aged students from year to year may noticeably affect the rates in the smaller jurisdictions. The inclusion or exclusion of part-time students can also have a significant effect on apparent retention rates, especially in South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory which have relatively large proportions of part-time students (ABS 2010).

Attainment data

The following points should be considered when interpreting attainment statistics:

- Full-time and part-time students were included in this analysis
- Because of the small number of Indigenous students represented, care should be taken when comparing attainment outcomes for Indigenous students.

List of symbols used in tables

n.a.	not available
–	rounded to zero (including null cells)
0	zero
..	not applicable
n.e.c.	not elsewhere classified
n.f.d.	not further defined
n.p.	not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2008. Schools Australia 2007. ABS cat. no. 4221.0. Canberra: ABS.

ABS 2010. Schools Australia 2009. ABS cat. no. 4221.0. Canberra: ABS.

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