ATTACHMENT 2: BACKGROUND TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED DEFINITIONS FOR STUDENT BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

National Goals for Schooling
In 1999, State, Territory and Australian Government Ministers for Education, meeting as the 10th Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), endorsed a new statement of national goals, the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century.

Priority areas of schooling
At the same time, Ministers agreed to report on progress towards the achievement of the National Goals in the following six priority areas of schooling using key performance measures as the basis for nationally comparable reporting:

- literacy
- numeracy
- science
- information and communication technology
- student participation and attainment
- vocational education and training in schools.

Ministers also asked for work to begin on key performance measures for civics and citizenship education and enterprise education.

MCEETYA Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce
The taskforce established by Ministers is responsible for the development and maintenance of the key performance measures, which provide the basis for national reporting and for the development of nationally consistent definitions of student groups. The taskforce comprises representatives of the Australian Government, all State and Territory education departments and of the two peak bodies representing the non-government school sector (the National Catholic Education Commission and the Independent Schools Council of Australia).

Key Performance Measures
Ministers agreed that the national key performance measures would be a set of measures ‘limited in number and strategic in orientation’. In most instances, including the five set out in the table below, the KPMs are expressed as a percentage of students achieving a set standard or level of proficiency in a given learning area.

The table below sets out the key performance measures for five of the priority areas noted above and provides details of the year level(s) at which assessments will be conducted, the proportion of students undertaking the assessment – that is, the full cohort (all students) or a sample of students – and the frequency of the assessments. It also indicates, in bold type, those assessments for which linking of enrolment data and test data is required.

These five areas are particularly important in relation to reporting outcomes by student groups, as there is a need, for assessments for year levels up to and including Year 7, to link students’ outcomes on the assessments with their background characteristics as reported on enrolment or special data collection forms.
Agreed Key Performance Measures as at January 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>Full cohort or Sample</th>
<th>Basis/Test-Instrument</th>
<th>Frequency or Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy – % achieving reading/spelling/writing benchmark</td>
<td>Years 3, 5, 7</td>
<td>Full cohort</td>
<td>State and Territory tests, plus ACER LANNA</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy – % achieving numeracy benchmark</td>
<td>Years 3, 5, 7</td>
<td>Full cohort</td>
<td>as above</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science – % achieving standard</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>National sample</td>
<td>National Test</td>
<td>Three-yearly from 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics and Citizenship Education – % achieving standard</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>National sample</td>
<td>National Test</td>
<td>Three-yearly from 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – % achieving standard</td>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>National sample</td>
<td>National Test</td>
<td>Three-yearly from 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold text indicates year levels for which linking will be required.

Reporting on student groups

The capacity to obtain a coherent national picture of the educational progress of students across Australia has been affected by the variety of definitions of student groups used by different States and Territories, school systems and schools.

Ministers’ agreement to develop nationally consistent definitions of groups of the population arose from their recognition that, when reporting on students’ educational outcomes, there needs to be reporting in respect of particular groups of students.

The National Goals also provide the underlying rationale for nationally comparable reporting in respect of particular groups of students. In particular, they state that

Schooling should be socially just, so that:

students’ outcomes from schooling should be free of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students’ socio-economic background or geographic location [Goal 3.1]

the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students [should] improve and, over time, match those of other students [Goal 3.2].

The reporting of student outcomes using agreed definitions of student groups will become a standard component of reporting in the annual National Report on Schooling in Australia (ANR) and therefore applies to government and non-government schools.