



Submission No 38

**Review of Australia's Relationship with the
Countries of Africa**

Name: Jeanette Ross
Assistant Director
Migration Policy and Analysis Section

Organisation: Department of Education, Employment and
Workplace Relations



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Inquiry into Australia's relationship with the countries of Africa

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Executive Summary

In bringing together the core elements of the Australian Government's productivity and participation agenda, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has a key role in the provision of education, skill development and employment opportunities for Australians.

Through DEEWR's international arm, Australian Education International (AEI), Australia works with foreign governments, including Africa, to enhance education cooperation.

In relation to migration and international commitments on labour mobility, DEEWR informs the Australian Government on labour market, skill and workplace relations issues associated with the composition and criteria for a range of temporary and permanent migration arrangements. DEEWR's interests also include the short and long term impact of these arrangements on the Australian economy labour market and demography.

DEEWR is also responsible for administering education and employment services to eligible Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents and, subject to eligibility criteria, temporary visa holders.



PART A: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction – DEEWR Role

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is the Australian Government agency providing national leadership in education and workplace training, transition to work and conditions and values in the workplace. DEEWR also plays a role in international relationship building through education cooperation with foreign governments.

DEEWR is accountable to the Australian Government, Parliament and to the public in achieving the following objectives:

- to educate and build socially inclusive communities where all Australians have the opportunity to reach their full potential and to actively participate in a rewarding economic and social life;
- to build and promote individual development through equitable and accessible education from early childhood services to skills training and higher education;
- to increase workforce participation and promote fair and productive work practices;
- to develop national economic potential and capability that builds future economic prosperity and international competitiveness through skills development and employment growth;
- to actively engage with clients and stakeholders to ensure services, advice and resources respond to the needs of these groups; and
- to look for efficiencies and innovative, targeted and effective solutions in developing national economic potential.

In bringing together the core elements of the Government’s productivity and participation agenda, DEEWR has a key role in the provision of education, skills development and employment opportunities for Australians. In relation to migration and international commitments on labour mobility, DEEWR informs the Government on labour market and workplace relations issues associated with the composition and criteria for a range of temporary and permanent migration arrangements.

DEEWR’s interests also include policy advice and policy focussed research on the short and long term impact of these arrangements on the Australian economy, labour market and demography.

This Submission provides an overview of Australia’s education and training engagement with countries in Africa, Australia’s temporary and permanent migration arrangements, and information on the services and programs that DEEWR provide for education and employment support for migrants. As these services and programs do not have common definitions of “migrant” reference must be made to the definitions which apply to each service or program.

PART B: ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNTRIES OF AFRICA

2. DEEWR International Engagement with Africa

2.1 Overview of Australia's education and training relationship

As the international arm of DEEWR, Australian Education International (AEI) works with governments to enhance education cooperation.

The AEI Consul (Education) for the Middle East, located in Dubai, has worked extensively with Libya through the Australian Embassy in Cairo. AEI does not have representation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Australia, African students comprise less than 2.2 per cent of international student numbers. The number of students in Australia on student visas from Sub-Saharan Africa has grown from 3 733 in 2002 to 12 604 (relatively evenly divided between higher education and vocational education and training) at September 2009. Thirty countries have no or single digit student numbers in Australia, while three countries have around twenty students. Numbers for other countries include Malawi (94 students); Ghana (125); Seychelles (126); Tanzania (181); Nigeria (293); Zambia (868); South Africa (872); Kenya (2 044); Zimbabwe (2 205) and Mauritius (4 883).

In North Africa, the AEI Consul is accredited to Libya and Egypt from where there are 331 and 2 080 students respectively. To our knowledge there are no government to government education and training Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with any African country.

2.1.1 South Africa

Early in 2010 a delegation from the South African Department of Education responsible for establishing a National Education Evaluation Unit will visit Australia to overview quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of schooling systems.

At the institutional level, links between South Africa and Australia include Monash University's wholly owned subsidiary (Monash South Africa) established in 2001. Monash University's South Africa Campus was opened as the first foreign university in South Africa. The campus expanded rapidly, from 100 students when it first opened to over 2 200 in 2008. The student mix at the campus is diverse, including local South African students as well as students from other African states, often on government bursaries. There are three faculties at Monash South Africa, Arts, Business and Economics and Information Technology, offering mostly undergraduate programs, although postgraduate courses were introduced in 2008.

In September 2009 Monash announced an alliance with World Vision in research, advocacy and education, involving volunteering and internship opportunities for students in World Vision activities, graduate placement and curriculum development. The two institutions will work together in five key areas: sustainability and climate change, global poverty, child labour and human trafficking, development and public health.

An MoU exists between the University of Sydney and the University of Johannesburg to establish a Transport and Logistics research centre in Africa. The University of Adelaide works with the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business to deliver training courses aimed at strengthening business capability in South Africa's wine-making industry, under an MoU between the two institutions.

In September 2008, senior representatives from education trade unions and the South African Ministry of Education visited the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to study Australia's public education system. The overriding aim of the project was to enhance the formulation of evidence-based policies within the Education Labour Relations Council with specific reference to improving the conditions of employment for public educators, resulting in teaching that makes a difference to the delivery of quality education in South Africa.

2.1.2 Botswana

There are no formal links between the Governments of Australia and Botswana in education, and there are currently no plans to enter into any such agreements.

In September 2009 the Manager of International Group, DEEWR met with members of a delegation from Botswana, led by Ms Bridget John, Co-ordinator of the Botswana Education Hub. The Botswana Education Hub was established to develop Botswana into an education hub in the region, particularly for international students, and to promote education quality and access. The delegation was interested in seeking Australian support to internationalise Botswana's education system. Australia has been benchmarked as a model for this process.

2.1.3 Ethiopia

In September 2008, a six member delegation from the Ethiopian Ministry of Education visited education Departments in Canberra, NSW and Victoria, as well as the NSW Institute of Teachers. The Ministry is currently undertaking Business Process Reengineering and has chosen to visit Australia as a benchmark for best practice. The delegation was interested in quality assurance process, curriculum design, implementation and evaluation, and enhancing the leadership capacity of education institutions.

2.1.4 Mauritius

In December 2008, AEI Consul (Education) Middle East visited Mauritius following negative media reports in Australia and Mauritius regarding the activities of education agents recruiting students for Australian education institutions. Subsequently AEI has taken a number of steps to assist students in Mauritius who wish to find out more about studying in Australia. These include providing links to the Study in Australia website and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) website for the Ministry website.

In addition, AEI Middle East has provided training and has introduced the online Education Agent training course to the Business Development Manager at the Australian High Commission in Mauritius. Subsequently, advice from the Mauritian High Commissioner indicates that the situation regarding education agents had improved significantly.

2.1.5 Zimbabwe

In mid 2008, Universities Australia reported to DEEWR that six Australian Universities had enrolled a significant number of students affected by unrest in Zimbabwe. Deakin and Griffith Universities each had approximately 200 student enrolments while Universities of Newcastle, Curtin and Murdoch each had approximately 30 affected students. At that time, of the 7 810 international students enrolled at Griffith University, Zimbabweans represented the ninth largest national group with 260 students studying at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Another University reported having two students who submitted UNESCO coupons for their tuition fees payment. These coupons need to be sent to France UNESCO to be converted from USD to AUD. It was estimated that the potential bad debt from unpaid fees from this group could total close to \$2.4 million.

There was strong evidence from all five universities' International Student Advisors, administrators and academics that the financial, academic and emotional difficulties faced by the vast majority of Zimbabwean students were escalating rapidly. Zimbabwean students remain extremely concerned about their future prospects given the situation in their home country.

One university reported case managing every student individually in this situation from Zimbabwe, and being committed to trying to support these students while also minimising any increase in debt.

Facing significant debt, many Zimbabwean students have to work maximum allowable hours under their student visas to repay university fees and earn sufficient funds for basic living expenses.

2.1.6 Egypt

The AEI Counsellor Middle East assessed Egypt as a large and young population with the potential for large growth. AEI's role in Egypt has focused primarily on government links, and building relationships that may have an outcome of scholarships or in-country reform consultancies.

2.1.7 Libya

Throughout 2009, AEI has worked with Libyan Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Libyan Cultural Attaché in Canberra to streamline Australian higher education enrolment and visa processes. Consequently we anticipate that enrolments of three hundred higher education students a year from Libya for the next three years. There may also be opportunities for consultancies in the Vocational Training system in Libya.

2.2 Australia's ILO involvement with Africa

2.2.1 Overview of Australia ILO involvement

Australia is a member of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) with DEEWR officials providing representation at ILO Governing Body meetings. The ILO is a multilateral United Nations Agency that the Australian Government recognises as the most competent international body focusing on issues of international labour. These issues include setting international labour standards and providing technical assistance to member countries.

2.2.2 Australia's involvement in the ILO's Africa policies and activities

The ILO has played an increasingly significant role in providing technical assistance to help governments improve labour laws, setting up sustainable employment programs and implementing training schemes with particularly large programs throughout Africa.

As a member of the Governing Body, Australia has considerable influence on policy direction setting at the ILO and therefore some influence over the direction the ILO takes in its activities in Africa. Australia has continued to advocate for greater ILO activity, particularly in the face of the global economic and jobs crisis. In this regard, the ILO has shifted most of its regional and country activities to focus on employment in response to the Global Financial Crisis. Countries recently assisted by the ILO in Africa include Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Togo and South Africa.

PART C: Migration

3. Migration Policy and Programs – Overview and Current Criteria

3.1 Australia's Migration Program

The Migration Program is set by the Australian Government on a financial year basis following consultation with key government, industry bodies and community organisations. Australia is one of a small number of countries that manages a planned migration program based on transparent criteria. In general terms, the Migration Program includes a Skill Stream and a Family Stream, and a Humanitarian Program (which recognises Australia's ongoing commitment to a structured intake of humanitarian and refugee entrants).

The Skill Stream is currently the largest component of Australia's Migration Program. It contributes to the supply of skilled labour available to Australian industry through the permanent entry of migrants with skills (recognised qualifications and employment experience) and high levels of English language proficiency that are appropriate to employment in skilled (managerial, professional, associate professional and trade) occupations in the Australian labour market.

The Skill Stream includes migrants in the following categories:

- Employer Sponsored Migration which allows employers to nominate/sponsor personnel from overseas to work in Australia in skilled occupations through a number of visa options on a permanent basis;
- State Sponsored Migration which is designed to contribute to economic growth by contributing to the supply of labour in key occupations identified as in shortage by state and territory governments;
- General Skilled Migration which encompasses a number of permanent points-tested visas;
- Business Skills Entry designed to encourage successful business people to settle in Australia and develop new business opportunities; and
- Distinguished Talent visas are issued to those with special or unique talents of benefit to Australia such as sportspeople, artists, and musicians.

3.2 Australia's Humanitarian Program

The Australian Government also manages a Humanitarian Program which reflects its commitment to refugees and others in need of humanitarian assistance both in Australia and overseas. A total of 13 500 places were allocated in 2008–09. In 2008–09, 13 507 visas were granted comprising 11 010 (81.5 per cent) under the offshore component and 2497 (18.5 per cent) under the onshore component of the Humanitarian Program.

Reflecting the priority regions, the highest number of off-shore visas granted in 2008–09 under the Humanitarian Program was to applicants from the Middle East/South West Asia region (33.5 per cent) followed by the Africa region (33.2 per cent), followed by people from Asia (33.1 per cent) and the remaining visas (0.2 per cent) to people in Europe and Americas.

3.3 Profile of migrants from countries in Africa

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) measures Permanent and Long Term Movement of overseas persons entering and leaving Australia. The following data shows arrivals to Australia from regions in Africa for 2007 to 2008:

- North Africa: 2 849 Arrivals and 425 Departures;
- Central and West Africa: 2 217 Arrivals and 234 Departures; and
- Southern and East Africa: 22 763 Arrivals and 4 170 Departures.

Table 1 below expands on this arrival and departure data providing some occupational information for the three regions. In designing Australia's policies on temporary and permanent migration, Australia is aware of its international commitments, which includes being a signatory to the Commonwealth Code of Practice for International Recruitment of Health Workers.

Table 1

Region	Major Group Occupation	Specific Occupations	Arrivals	Departure
North Africa	Professionals		629	79
		Accountants	96	23
		General Medical Practitioners	63	10
		Registered Nurses	3	1
	Associate Professionals		40	43
	Tradespersons and related workers		37	27
	Advanced Clerical, Sales and Service workers		17	5
	Elementary and Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers		75	59
	Labourers and Related workers		16	15
Central and West Africa	Professionals		365	152
		Accountants	13	2
		General Medical Practitioners	46	24
		Registered Nurses	37	18
	Associate Professionals		89	28
	Tradespersons and related workers		5	12
	Elementary and Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers		60	16
	Labourers and related workers		1	1
Southern and East Africa	Professionals		7 333	2 142
		Accountants	617	193
		General Medical Practitioners	443	159
		Registered Nurses	907	351
	Associate Professionals		1 699	418
	Tradespersons and related workers		1 121	54
	Elementary and Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers		729	325
	Labourers and related workers		5	1

Table 2 below shows data from the ABS 2006 Census (of population and housing) on the total number of Australian in comparison with those born overseas and in Africa that are unemployed¹. These can be further compared with data on those born in various African countries.

Table 2

Country of Birth	Age	Number of Unemployed	Unemployment Rate (%)	Workforce Participation Rate (%)	Total number of people
Australia	15-44	277,072	5.9	78.2	6,019,726
Total Overseas	15-44	97,706	7.4	73.7	1,796,613
Total Africa	15-44	6,917	8.1	72.6	117,879
Algeria	15-44	223	15.8	59.3	447
Egypt	15-44	5,046	9.3	71.2	7,812
Libya	15-44	337	8.4	67.2	548
Morocco	15-44	297	11.6	65.2	515
Sudan	15-44	3,024	30.3	39.4	11,025
Tunisia	15-44	60	17.8	76.8	95
Cameroon	15-44	57	6.6	68.5	89
Congo	15-44	102	20.3	45.2	283
Congo, Democratic Republic of	15-44	126	18.7	53.3	291
Gambia	15-44	68	0	80.0	85
Ghana	15-44	1,051	10.4	73.0	1,607
Liberia	15-44	436	21.2	50.2	1,102
Nigeria	15-44	1,204	8.0	79.9	1,638
Senegal	15-44	62	6.1	85.7	77
Sierra Leone	15-44	609	17.7	63.9	1,158
Angola	15-44	170	6.1	77.0	235
Botswana	15-44	263	19.1	52.3	622
Burundi	15-44	73	26.3	20.1	492
Eritrea	15-44	658	17.3	60.6	1,314
Ethiopia	15-44	1,920	14.3	59.6	3,757
Kenya	15-44	3,212	7.6	79.7	4,360
Malawi	15-44	261	4.4	78.4	348
Mauritius	15-44	5,419	7.3	81.2	7,198
Mozambique	15-44	216	5.7	73.2	313
Namibia	15-44	289	4.9	80.6	377
Rwanda	15-44	50	9.1	39.3	140
Seychelles	15-44	524	7.9	71.8	792
Somalia	15-44	861	31.3	42.3	2,961
South Africa	15-44	39,945	4.7	80.0	52,385
Swaziland	15-44	108	6.1	77.2	149
Tanzania	15-44	541	6.2	79.6	725
Uganda	15-44	475	7.2	77.5	661
Zambia	15-44	1,815	4.3	82.4	2,300
Zimbabwe	15-44	8,675	5.5	82.1	11,183
Australia	45-64	75,402	3.2	72.8	3,193,231
Total Africa	45-64	2,303	4.2	76.2	72,366
Total Overseas	45-64	49,396	4.8	68.9	1,497,136
Algeria	45-64	235	6.7	71.6	352
Egypt	45-64	8,754	4.6	64.9	14,127
Libya	45-64	340	1.7	65.5	528
Morocco	45-64	368	6.1	69.1	567

¹ Noting is a self assessment by the persons in the household completing the Census

Country of Birth	Age	Number of Unemployed	Unemployment Rate (%)	Workforce Participation Rate (%)	Total number of people
Sudan	45-64	776	21.3	52.4	1,881
Tunisia	45-64	117	4.1	66.7	183
Congo	45-64	56	13.8	74.7	87
Congo, Democratic Republic of	45-64	126	3.1	78.8	165
Ghana	45-64	622	4.5	87.4	745
Liberia	45-64	44	24.1	45.3	128
Mali	45-64	11	0	64.7	17
Nigeria	45-64	463	3.1	85.7	558
Senegal	45-64	63	6.0	69.1	97
Sierra Leone	45-64	131	10.3	71.2	205
Angola	45-64	104	5.5	80.3	137
Burundi	45-64	18	18.2	31.0	71
Eritrea	45-64	218	17.4	57.6	458
Ethiopia	45-64	415	10.9	64.7	720
Kenya	45-64	2,439	3.2	83.9	3,004
Madagascar	45-64	51	5.6	69.2	78
Malawi	45-64	185	1.6	86.2	218
Mauritius	45-64	5,108	4.2	72.4	7,369
Mozambique	45-64	152	5.6	75.2	214
Namibia	45-64	143	3.4	81.3	182
Seychelles	45-64	637	3.5	63.8	1,035
Somalia	45-64	161	28.1	44.0	509
South Africa	45-64	23,347	3.1	82.4	29,232
Tanzania	45-64	703	3.6	81.6	893
Uganda	45-64	498	2.7	86.6	591
Zambia	45-64	1,199	3.3	84.6	1,465
Zimbabwe	45-64	4,761	3.0	85.3	5,750

PART D: Workforce

4. Workforce participation and unemployment rates in Australia

4.1 Workforce participation and unemployment rate of people from cultural and linguistic diversity backgrounds

The unemployment rates for people who migrate to Australia vary appreciably. Data consistently show recently-arrived migrants have a higher unemployment rate than those who have lived in Australia for some years. Several factors influence the unemployment rates of migrant and jobseekers with cultural and linguistic diverse backgrounds (CALD), including the period since arrival in Australia, skill level, age, English language proficiency, and recent and relevant work experience.

The Australian Labour Market Update² (published quarterly) provides unemployment rates (original data) for people now resident in Australia who were born in selected overseas countries. In August 2009, people born in Greece and Italy had low unemployment rates (3.3 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively), whereas unemployment rates for people born in North Africa and the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa (13.6 per cent and 7.2 per cent respectively).

4.1.1 Eligibility for income support for migrants³

The Australian income support system differs from those of most other developed countries, in that it is funded from general revenue, rather than from direct contributions by individuals and employers. Instead of reflecting the level and duration of contributions into a social insurance fund, Australian income support is based on residence and need.

In general, a person must be an "Australian resident", as defined in the Social Security Act 1991, to qualify for Australian social security payments. An Australian resident is a person who resides in Australia and has permission to remain permanently—either because they are: an Australian citizen; the holder of a permanent visa; or a protected Special Category visa holder. In deciding whether a person is residing in Australia, factors such as the person's domestic, financial and family ties to Australia are taken into account, as well as the frequency and duration of any absences from Australia and the reasons for such absences.

In addition to the requirement to be an Australian resident at the time of claiming, some social security payments (generally, the "pension" type payments which are intended as long-term support) require that a person has been an Australian resident for a certain period of time. For example, to qualify for Age Pension generally a person must have ten years residence in Australia. This residence requirement is called a "qualifying residence requirement" for social security purposes. These ten years can be made up of periods of residence at any time in a person's life, as long as at least one period is more than five continuous years. Other payments with prior residence requirements include Disability Support Pension (ten years), Parenting Payment (two years) and Widow Allowance (two years). The purpose of the long residence requirements for Age and Disability Support Pensions is to ensure that these payments for the long-term contingencies of life are only granted to people who have a genuine, long-term connection with Australia. This is necessary to protect Australian Government funds, which come from general revenue.

Some payments (generally, the "allowance" type payments which are intended as shorter-term income support) do not have prior residence requirements, but instead have a "newly arrived resident's waiting period". Technically, this means that a person may meet all the qualification criteria for the payment, but it may not be "payable" to them because of the waiting period. In practice, from the claimant's point of view, the effect of the prior two year residence requirements and of the newly arrived resident's waiting period requirement is effectively the same.

4.1.2 Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period (NARWP)

A NARWP applies to people who have not been Australian residents and in Australia for a period of, or periods totalling, 104 weeks (ie two years). Periods spent in Australia, as an Australian permanent resident, at any time in a person's life can be counted towards the waiting period.

Payments with a newly arrived resident's waiting period include Newstart Allowance, Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance, Youth Allowance and Austudy Payment, Sickness Allowance, Carer Payment and Special Benefit. The waiting period also applies to the Health Care Card, the Commonwealth Seniors Health Care Card and Mobility Allowance⁴.

There is no waiting period for family payments. These payments are available to all Australian residents (and holders of special category visas and prescribed temporary visas, as described above), with children in their care who meet relevant income tests.

² see www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Individual/Migrant/AustralianLabourMarketUpdate.htm

³ From consultation with the Australian Government Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

⁴ Centrelink provides a quarterly publication for people from CALD and Non-English speaking backgrounds.

PART E: Employment

5. DEEWR employment services

5.1 Job Services Australia

Job Services Australia was introduced on 1 July 2009 and provides support for all job seekers through streamlined services that provide increased flexibility and access to support and services that are relevant to their individual circumstances. Job Services Australia focuses on the needs of the most disadvantaged job seekers and aims to achieve greater social inclusion.

Job seekers who enter Australia as part of the skilled migration or family reunion programs are usually subject to the two year NARWP before being fully eligible for Job Services Australia. They are eligible for Stream 1 (Limited) services.

Humanitarian entrants are eligible for the full range of Job Services Australia assistance from the date of their arrival in Australia. They have an initial 13 week exemption from activity test requirements. During this period they are not required to engage in employment services, but they can volunteer.

Eligible job seekers are referred to one of four streams of Job Services Australia. The job seekers who are the most ready for employment are referred to Stream 1, those with moderate or significant barriers are referred to Streams 2 and 3 and those with the most severe barriers are referred to Stream 4.

A job seeker's eligibility for Stream services is first assessed through the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) by Centrelink. Where the JSCI shows that a job seeker has multiple and significant barriers they are referred for a comprehensive Job Capacity Assessment (JCA). All job seekers who state that they have arrived in Australia as a refugee within the last five years are referred for a JCA. This independent assessment examines the job seeker's circumstances in detail and, where appropriate to their needs, results in referral to Job Services Australia Stream 4.

There are more than 2 100 JSA sites across Australia. While all JSA providers are able to assist all job seekers, there are many JSA sites that specialise in delivering services for defined groups of job seekers, such as those from a CALD background. There are seven CALD specialist providers delivering services from 28 sites.

PART F: Education

6. Education Programs and Services

Schools in Australia are operated by state and territory governments or non-government education authorities.

The Government provides funding to government and non-government schools as part of a funding partnership involving state and territory governments and parent communities. Under current funding arrangements, government schools are primarily resourced by state and territory governments with the Government providing supplementary funding. The Government is the primary source of public funding to non-government schools.

6.1 Australian Government funding for government schools

Australian Government funding for government schools is now being provided through a new Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) on Federal Financial Relations agreed in the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) forum. The IGA was accompanied by a rationalisation of the number of payments to the States for Specific Purpose Payments and the creation of associated national agreements. The National Education Agreement (NEA), which came into effect on 1 January 2009, contains agreed objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance indicators, and clarifies the roles and responsibilities that will guide the Commonwealth and the States in the delivery of school education services. The NEA provides the States with increased flexibility in determining how education services should best be delivered and provides an improved focus on the accountability and transparency of all schools for students' outcomes.

All states and territories and the Commonwealth, as parties to the NEA, have agreed to the following reform directions as priority areas for effort in the near term:

- attract, train, place, develop and retain quality teachers and support schools working with their community;
- implement a national curriculum;
- transparent and strengthened accountability to improve student and school performance, including through national reporting on individual schools and the improved collection of, and access to, nationally consistent data and information required to support the agreed outcomes;
- raise parental and community expectations of educational outcomes;
- support teaching and learning in schools through appropriate infrastructure;
- review funding and regulation across government and non-government school sectors;
- providing support to students with additional need; and
- 'closing the gap' in educational outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Effective from 2009, Australian Government funding for targeted programs in government schools, including the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Program (LNSLN) Program and the English as a Second Language – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Program, was consolidated within the NEA. The new funding arrangements not only allow state and territory governments to allocate Commonwealth funding to areas which they believe will produce the best outcomes for students but also reduces Government input controls on service delivery (such as eligibility criteria for ESL-NA funding) by the states and territories.

The NEA's statement of objectives and outcomes includes performance indicators and performance benchmarks. All Australian governments (State, Territory and Commonwealth) have agreed to a performance reporting framework that includes the collection and publication of student and school data to meet public accountability requirements and to provide the evidence base for future national education policy reforms. This reflects the governments' commitment to raising the educational attainment of all Australian students and reducing the effect on their performance of sources of disadvantage, such as socioeconomic background, Indigenous status, language background, refugee or humanitarian status, and geographic location. In order to meet the mutually agreed outcomes within the NEA, supporting performance benchmarks will be monitored, assessed and reported publicly on an annual basis by the independent COAG Reform Council.

The NEA also includes a commitment to report on the number of students who are provided with additional support, including students from non-English speaking backgrounds (including newly arrived migrants and refugees), disaggregated by sector.

6.2 Australian Government funding for non-government schools

The Schools Assistance Act 2008 provides the legislative framework for Commonwealth funding for non-government schools for 2009-2012 and prescribes the general conditions on which financial assistance is paid, including transparency and accountability requirements consistent with those for government schools under the NEA.

Commonwealth funding for non-government schools provides for recurrent and capital funding as well as targeted programs. Targeted programs include the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) which seeks to improve clients' language and/or literacy and numeracy skills enabling more effective training and workforce participation – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Program, which assists newly arrived students of language background other than English – Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Program (LNSLN) which assists the most disadvantaged students and the English as a Second Language.

6.2.1 Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)

LLNP is an Australian Government Program designed to improve language and/or literacy and numeracy skills and to assist clients to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force leading to greater gains for society in the longer term.

There are currently 40 organisations contracted to provide LLNP training and assessment services across Australia in over 300 locations. Eligible job seekers are referred to this program by Centrelink or Job Services Australia providers. Clients need to have a capacity to benefit and satisfy eligibility criteria relating to benefit and visa status.

Each eligible client who is recommended for training has an individual training plan developed which outlines the tailored training a client is to receive to meet their needs and forms the basis for recording the client's progression through training. Client learning outcomes are reported against the Australian Core Skills Framework. Eligible clients can receive up to 800 hours of free training in a 2 year period either through face to face training, or distance education.

Disadvantaged clients who need additional support and are not able to succeed in the standard Program, including Indigenous people, young males, isolated female clients, mature aged and/or humanitarian refugees, are catered for through the options of Complementary Training. Participants who are uncomfortable or struggle in larger classes have the option of smaller training groups to build their confidence in a class of no more than five individuals.

Advanced Vocationally-Oriented Training assists the more advanced clients to participate in vocational training and can include elements of workplace experience and observation. This training is delivered using vocational competencies from endorsed training packages and/or accredited curricula which meet local business and industry needs. The duration of these courses may extend up to 450 hours. On satisfactory completion clients may receive a recognised qualification.

6.2.2 English as a Second Language – New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Program

The ESL-NA Program provides Government funding to non-government education authorities to assist with the cost of delivering intensive English language tuition to eligible newly arrived migrant primary and secondary school students. The Program aims to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes of students who have recently arrived in Australia, whose first language is not English and whose proficiency in the English language is determined, at the local level, to require intensive assistance to enable them to participate fully in mainstream classroom activities⁵.

DIAC sets Australia's immigration policies which determine entry to and conditions of, residence in Australia, including the issuing of visas. Students who do not meet the ESL-NA Program eligibility criteria or do not hold visas from the recommended visa subclass categories do not attract ESL-NA Program funding but may be included in programs/classes organised for eligible students. Eligible students are expected to receive a minimum amount of intensive English language tuition, that is:

- a minimum of 6 months for new arrivals; or
- a minimum of 12 months for humanitarian new arrivals.

Intensive English language tuition may be provided in intensive language centres/units or in schools. Where tuition is provided in schools, it is expected that students be provided with a minimum of ten hours of ESL assistance per week. The amount and duration of assistance to be provided for individual students is a matter for education authorities to determine. The Government provides per capita funding to education authorities in respect of each eligible student, using two rates of funding:

- \$5 786 per eligible new arrival; and
- \$11 572 per eligible humanitarian new arrival.⁶

The funding provided is a once-only payment for each eligible student and is paid to the education authority responsible for the provision of the student's initial course of intensive English instruction. Education authorities lodge claims for funding with DEEWR twice a year. They are also required to provide DEEWR with details of the number of eligible students, including Australian citizens and other residents by visa subclasses (permanent and temporary). In order to meet educational accountability requirements, education authorities also provide DEEWR with information on the assessment tools used to assess English language proficiency including:

- the level of proficiency to access the intensive language training program; and
- the level of proficiency to exit the intensive language training program.

While access is provided, it is noted that those arriving on temporary visas may be required to pay full school fees (even at government schools) and that each individual school has different conditions regarding this.

⁵ Legislation also provides for 510 hours of English language tuition to migrants that are considered under the function level of English.

⁶ See www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/EnglishasaSecondLanguageNewArrivalsProgram/Pages/Arrangements2009.aspx

6.2.3. Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Program

The LNSLN Program assists non-government education authorities to improve the learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students, particularly in literacy and numeracy, by contributing funding for additional teaching and learning assistance. LNSLN funding is, however, only one source of funding available to non-government schools to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students.

The program is targeted at the most educationally disadvantaged school students, including special school students, from Preparatory year (or equivalent) to Year 12 who may face barriers to effective participation at school and who:

- are not achieving or are at risk of not achieving a national minimal standard of literacy and/or numeracy or other appropriate standard of achievement; and/or
- require additional assistance to reach an appropriate standard of achievement.

Educational disadvantage may be associated with a range of factors such as learning difficulty, a language background other than English, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, low socio-economic background or geographical isolation.

6.2.4. Smarter Schools National Partnership

Migrant students with lower socio-economic status will directly benefit from the Smarter Schools National Partnership Agreements on Literacy and Numeracy, Improving Teacher Quality and Low Socio-economic Status (SES) Communities. These National Partnerships target disadvantaged students.

The State and Territory Implementation Plans developed to support the implementation of the National Partnerships include activities which will lead to improved long term student engagement. They provide access to multiple services to assist students and include schools having greater involvement with parents and community organisations in order to improve educational outcomes for all students.

6.3 Participation in national assessments

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results are reported nationally through Summary and National Reports, released in September and December respectively. The first report contains summary results of the tests while the final report contains information derived from more complex analyses, including data on student performance disaggregated by the agreed student background characteristics.

In the final report for the 2008 NAPLAN tests, students identified as Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) made up 20 per cent of participating students. Students with a language background other than English, who arrived from overseas less than a year before the test, may be treated as exempt from testing. In 2008, the proportion of exempt students varied between 1 to 3 per cent of the LBOTE population.

Reporting of student and school performance includes the reporting of the relevant data disaggregated by nationally agreed student background characteristics. NAPLAN and other National Assessment Program (NAP) assessment data are reported by the following characteristics: sex, Indigenous status, socio-economic background, language background and geographic location. Definitions of, and technical specifications for the collection of data on, these characteristics for the purpose of reporting on student achievement and school performance are those agreed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) and published in the MCEECDYA Data Standards Manual – Student Background Characteristics for the relevant school year.

6.4 Establishment of new Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

A new independent statutory authority, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) was established in 2008 to develop and administer a national school curriculum and national assessments, and to collect, analyse and publish student assessment data and other data relating to schools and comparative school performance.

COAG has agreed ACARA will be provided with the information necessary to enable it to publish relevant, nationally comparable information on all schools to support accountability, school evaluation, collaborative policy development and resource allocation. ACARA will provide the public with information on each school in Australia. This will include data on the school's performance, including national testing results, as well as contextual information on the characteristics of its student population (for example, proportions of students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds), school attendance rates and the school's capacity, including the numbers and qualifications of its teaching staff. The publication of this information will allow comparison of 'like schools' (that is, schools with similar student populations) across the nation and comparison of a school with other schools in their local community.

There will be a transition of a number of MCEECDYA's functions to ACARA. These include managing and overseeing the delivery of tests for the NAPLAN tests and the triennial sample assessments in science literacy, civics and citizenship, and ICT literacy – as well as associated tasks, including collection and reporting of student achievement by relevant background characteristics.

6.5 Australian Apprenticeships

The Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program provides financial incentives to eligible employers who employ Australian Apprentices, as well as a number of initiatives that provide financial support to Australian Apprentices to ease the financial difficulties Australian Apprentices experience in the early years of their Australian Apprenticeship, particularly in trades experiencing a skills shortage.

Eligibility for payments under the Australian Apprenticeships Incentives Program is limited to Australian citizens, foreign nationals with permanent residency status or New Zealand passport holders who have been resident in Australia for at least six months.