19 July 2023

Ms Sarah Redden
Australian Government Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment References Committee
eec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms Redden

**Re:  Inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and related matters**

Thank you for your letter of 27 June 2023 requesting a response to questions on notice with regards to the inquiry into the national trend of school refusal and related matters.

I note previous correspondence in December 2022 from the Hon Eva Lawler MLA where the Department of Education (the department) notified Senator Matt O'Sullivan that it does not collect data relating to school refusal data or its impact on financial security of parents and careers and therefore declined the invitation to make a submission to the Education and Employment References Committee.

In cases of school refusal, the department does not issue an exemption from attendance, rather approval for the student to engage in alternative education pathways.

Attached is the department's formulated responses to the questions on notice with regards to related matters in line with available data and engagement policy approaches.

Thank you for the opportunity to revisit this important topic. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Ms Aderyn Chatterton, Executive Director, Inclusion and Engagement Services:

Yours sincerely

**Karen Weston**
Chief Executive

# Questions on notice – National trend of school refusal and related matters

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | • Please provide attendance data by year level<br>— Do you collect data on reasons for absenteeism?<br>— If so, please provide the categories you collect data against/<br>— Please provide the absenteeism data by year level and by category you collect this data under. | Yes, data on reasons for absenteeism is collected for Northern Territory Government schools.<br><br>Reasons for absenteeism category is provided in Annexure 3.<br><br>Absenteeism data by year level and by category is provided in Annexure 3. |
| 2 | • What is your attendance target level for students? Is this consistent across all year groups? If this varies by year level, please provide the target for each year level. | The ambition set by the Department of Education is that every child engages in learning every day.<br><br>Targets are published that set out a minimum target to be achieved in the budget papers. The current budget paper includes targets which represent the 2023 whole year average attendance rate for Northern Territory Government schools: |

| Preschool attendance rate | | 2022-23 Target |
|---|---|---|
| | non-Aboriginal | ≥ 88% |
| | Aboriginal | ≥ 55% |
| Primary, middle and senior attendance rate | | |
| | non-Aboriginal | ≥ 88% |
| | Aboriginal | ≥ 60% |

Source: NT Budget Paper No. 3 Agency Budget Statements

NORTHERN
TERRITORY
GOVERNMENT

|   | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|----------|---------------------|
| 3 | • Have you done any analysis work on the linkage between student attendance and student academic performance? | Recent work has not been completed specifically analysing the relationship between student attendance and academic performance. |
| 4 | • How much of a gap are we seeing between the academic outcomes of children engaged in school refusal, and other students? | Recent work has not been completed specifically analysing the relationship between student attendance and academic performance.<br><br>School refusal is not captured through a specific code. |
| 5 | • How many children are enrolled in a form of education, other than mainstream school, including:<br><br>— Home School<br><br>— Virtual School<br><br>— Distance Education<br><br>— Other (please define categories). Please provide student data against each category. | In 2023, the number of students enrolled in a form of education, other than mainstream schooling, is set out below:<br><br>• Home education – 165 students[1]<br><br>• Distance Education – whole of year average enrolment<br><br><table><tr><td></td><td>2019</td><td>2020</td><td>2021</td><td>2022</td></tr><tr><td>Distance Education total</td><td>760</td><td>816</td><td>1,045</td><td>1,189</td></tr></table><br>Please see Annexure 4<br><br>• Eligible options – 65 students[2]<br><br>These options are described further in the response to Question 6.<br><br>The *Education Act 2015* (NT) provides for distance education and does not refer to 'virtual education'. For the Northern Territory, distance education and virtual education are interchangeable terms for non-face-to-face delivery of teaching and learning. |

The Distance Education table, rendered properly:

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Distance Education total | 760 | 816 | 1,045 | 1,189 |

---

[1] Note: Total number of students registered for home education as at 6 July 2023.
[2] Note: Total number of students approved to undertake an eligible option as at 7 July 2023.

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | • Is data collected on the reason a student is not attending mainstream school and why an exemption has been provided? Please provide data by category of exemption for how many students are enrolled in alternative methods of schooling. | In the Northern Territory, there are various forms of legally recognised alternatives to enrolling a child of compulsory school age (at least 6 years on 30 June and less than 18 years) in school. These alternatives require approval, but parents are not required to apply for their child to be exempt from enrolling in a school. Alternatives include: <br><br> • **Home education** – where a parent or legal guardian takes on the responsibility for educating their child (s 46 *Education Act 2015* (NT). Annexed and marked "1" is data collected from parents showing reasons for enrolling a child in home education.[3] <br><br> • **Distance education** – involves a parent enrolling a child in a school that delivers its programs by mail, email, telephone and/or other electronic means (s 42 *Education Act 2015* (NT)). Annexed and marked "4" is data collected from parents showing the reasons for enrolling a child in distance education. <br><br> • **Eligible options** - enables compulsory school-aged children who have completed Year 10 and don't wish to participate in school-based education programs to engage in: <br><br> 1) approved education or training; or <br><br> 2) approved paid employment if older than 15-years; or <br><br> 3) a combination of approved employment and education/training (s 38(2)(a)(ii) of the *Education Act 2015* (NT)). <br><br> Annexed and marked "2" is data collected from parents as to their reasons for choosing eligible options.[4] |

---

[3] Note: The information provided for the reasons a student is seeking enrolment in home education is disclosed by parents/guardians in the Home Education 2023 online application form. The Department of Education's Education Regulation business unit manually collects and records this information at the point of parents/guardians completing the online application form. The form does not mandate parents to provide a reason.

[4] Note: The eligible options application form prompts parents to provide a reason for choosing eligible options.

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | • Is data collected on student academic performance for students enrolled in alternative forms of schooling (as above). | Students enrolled in distance education, inclusive of Alice Springs and Katherine Schools of the Air and the Northern Territory School of Distance Education, are assessed and reported for academic performance in line with mainstream education services. |
| | | Home Education applications are submitted by guardians and reviewed by the Department of Education to ensure curriculum and assessment plans align with the Australian Curriculum and that student wellbeing is catered for, however the outcomes of assessment are not provided to the Department of Education for recording. |
| | | The Department of Education understands that some students may have accessibility issues of a varied nature to mainstream education services and accepts flexible alternative enrolment options, however the Department of Education does not track reasoning against student profiles and cannot report on this cohort. |
| 8 | • How much of a gap are we seeing between the academic outcomes of children engaged in school refusal, and other students? | The Department of Education does not collect data relating to school refusal (as defined by the inquiry's terms of reference). |
| 9 | • Do schools with higher rates of school refusal also have poorer academic performance among the rest of the student body? | The Department of Education does not collect data relating to school refusal (as defined by the inquiry's terms of reference). |
| 10 | • What is the academic performance like of schools that are specifically geared towards reaching students who engage in school refusal? (e.g. Virtual Schools Victoria is one such school the committee is aware of) | The Department of Education does not collect data relating to school refusal (as defined by the inquiry's terms of reference). |
| 11 | • What data is there on the effect of school refusal on students' employment opportunities later in life? | The Department of Education does not collect data relating to school refusal (as defined by the inquiry's terms of reference). |

|    | Question | Response/questions. |
|----|----------|---------------------|
| 12 | • What academic outcomes do we see among students who have previously engaged in school refusal, but have since returned to school? | The Department of Education does not collect data relating to school refusal (as defined by the inquiry's terms of reference). |
| 13 | • What work has been done to understand the complex factors that influence student absenteeism? | In 2021, the Department of Education undertook extensive consultation with young people, families, and communities across the Northern Territory to understand the complex factors that influence non-attendance, and to seek input into how the Department of Education should engage all young people in learning. The insights from consultation were used along with research provided by academics from across Australia with known expertise in school and early childhood education, including Aboriginal education and culture, to guide the development of the NT Education Engagement Strategy 2022-2031.<br><br>Launched in October 2021, the Engagement Strategy (the strategy) has provided a systemwide understanding of engagement and a focus for improvement. The strategy outlines foundations for engagement – relationships, culture and identity, wellbeing and inclusion, beliefs and motivation – which are present in environments where young people are engaged in learning. To ensure the foundations for engagement can be found in all early childhood centres and schools across the Northern Territory, the strategy is focused on achieving 4 goals including to strengthen partnerships, employ the right people, create meaningful learning opportunities, and prioritise wellbeing and inclusion.<br><br>In July 2022, the Department of Education underwent a restructure, bringing the previously separate division of Inclusion and Engagement into Inclusion and Engagement Services. This was an acknowledgement of how intertwined a student's engagement in learning is with their personal wellbeing and being able to access inclusive and responsive learning.<br><br>At the policy level, in August 2022, Student Engagement Programs and Services under the Division of Inclusion and Engagement Services undertook a major review of the Lesson Attendance Codes and Descriptions in consultation with key stakeholders. Amendments were made to both the codes and descriptions to facilitate Northern Territory Government schools to accurately record reasons for absenteeism. |

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| | | At the practical level, Student Engagement Programs and Services are the agency lead for working with students with chronic absenteeism. The Student Engagement team consists of operational staff and leaders in each of the six regions across the Northern Territory. Engaging and re-engaging students with 0-20% attendance rate in education through intensive case management is the core work of the Student Engagement team. Student Engagement has transitioned away from a punitive, truancy operational model to focus on working in partnerships to identify and overcome barriers to enrolment and attendance. At the centre of this approach is building relationships with students, families, schools, other agencies and service providers, and wider communities to understand student needs and who is providing what service in response to those needs. Aiming at maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery from the education perspective, Student Engagement Programs and Services is currently developing a case management framework that outlines roles and responsibilities, protocols, and processes in providing intensive case management for chronically disengaged children and young people. |
| | | A similar approach is implemented through the School-Based Engagement Officer program in selected Northern Territory Government schools to address disengagement issues. The program provides funding for schools to employ a full-time engagement officer to work collaboratively with disengaged children and young people and those who are at risk of disengagement in education, their families, and other agencies and organisations to provide intensive case management. |
| | | Recognising the effects of student mobility —one of the many factors influencing attendance and school performance —the Department of Education engaged Menzies School of Health Research in 2022-2023 to examine the patterns of mobility of Northern Territory children in primary school year and the characteristics of clusters of children with different patterns of mobility. The findings will be used to inform education policy, practice enhancement and resource allocation. |
| | • What policies do you have that support students and their families re-engage in school when experiencing school refusal? | The Department of Education has a range of policies and resources in place to promote engagement and re-engagement in education. The NT Education Engagement Strategy 2022 to 2031 provides strategic direction aiming at growing connections with young people, |

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| | | families and communities to engage every child in learning. Underpinned by the *Education Act 2015* (NT), the Department of Education has established clear roles and responsibilities and processes to ensure compliance with compulsory enrolment and attendance requirements. Details can be found in the Department of Education's Enrolment and Attendance Policy Suite. |
| | | In response to diverse needs of children and young people, the Northern Territory Minister of Education launched Quality Standards Framework for Flexible Education Programs in 2022. Flexible education is one approach that can support students to overcome barriers to engagement. The framework and its accompanying resources articulate how a quality flexible education program should look like. The Department of Education is currently at an early stage of developing guidelines on the provision of flexible education by Northern Territory Government schools. |
| | | In addition to policies, Student Engagement Programs and Services has developed a range of resources, providing guidance to Student Engagement Advisors and School-Based Engagement Officers on engagement and compliance actions. Examples of these resources are: Authorised person induction and training handbook, Engagement officer operating guidelines, Planning for student engagement, Case management closure, etc. |
| | | **Eligible options** |
| | | The *Education Act 2015* (NT) legislates that students who are still of compulsory school age and have completed Year 10 may participate in an eligible option. Eligible options are alternatives to participating in fulltime school-based education and include: |
| | | • approved education or training |
| | | • if 15 years of age or over, paid employment, for not less than 25 hours per week; or |
| | | • a combination of approved education, training, and paid employment |
| | | Parental consent is required to participate in an external eligible option. A Notification of Arrangements (NOA) form is completed by parents and/or the registered training organisation and/or the employer and submitted to the department for approval. |

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| 14. | • Has any work been done to identify students who may be at risk of school refusal?<br><br>— What intervention strategies are in place to support these students and families? | In the Northern Territory education context, at-risk student is defined as a student who has 'U' (Unexplained absence) or 'X' (Unacceptable reason) codes for 10 or more than 10 days within a 15-school day period. Engaging and re-engaging students with 0-20% attendance rate in education through intensive case management is the core work of the Student Engagement team. Student Engagement also provides universal support and advice to schools on low attendance (20%-40% attendance rate and 40% attendance rate). Universal support and advice include, but is not limited to, materials developed for schools promoting attendance, referrals to external agencies and services such as Operational Orion and Operational Lunar, and implementation of Quality Standards Framework for Flexible Education Programs.<br><br>**Back on Track Program – Youth Justice Unit, Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities**<br><br>Commenced delivery in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Katherine in September 2019. It is a sentencing pathway for the Judiciary, for young people between 10 to 17 years, pursuant S83 (e) of the Youth Justice Act 2005, to Order a young person to a Ministerial Approve Program (MAP). The program accepts referrals for young people at risk of entering the youth justice system, between the ages of 8 to 17 years. Intensive case management and support services based around 4 main program elements:<br>Element 1 – Assessment and Case Management (Therapeutic Services)<br>Element 2 – Restorative Justice, understanding consequences<br>Element 3 – Connection to Family and Connection to Culture<br>Element 4 – Connection to Education, accredited training and employment.<br><br>Referral process includes:<br><br>• Young people can be referred to the program by government or non- government agencies with consent.<br><br>• Referral assessed by a cross agency representatives from the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities, NT Police, Department of Education and Department of Health. |

| Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|
| | • Two referral panels, a northern and southern referral panel meet once a week. |
| | **The Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS)** |
| | The Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) is an Australian Government initiative that was implemented in 2014 to increase school attendance in remote communities by working with families and children to help them overcome barriers for attending school on a regular basis. |
| | RSAS employs local staff as School Attendance Officers to work with schools, families, parents, and community organisations to ensure all children go to school every day. |
| | RSAS is operating in 41 schools across the Northern Territory, 36 are Northern Territory Government Schools with RSAS teams tailoring approaches to local contexts and needs, with input from the local community. |
| | The Department of Education is contracted by the National Indigenous Australians Agency to deliver the RSAS program in the following 10 Northern Territory Government Schools: |
| | • Barunga School |
| | • Borroloola School |
| | • Bulman School |
| | • Gunbalanya School |
| | • Jilkminggan School |
| | • Lajamanu School |
| | • Mutitjulu School |
| | • Ngukurr School |
| | • Numbulwar School |

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Wugularr School. |
| | | The RSAS Manager is also building networks with third party providers to increase visibility of the RSAS program being delivered in non-Department of Education-managed Northern Territory Government schools. |
| | | A Community of Practice has also been designed with the intention of implementing in Term 3, 2023. The community of practice will include all Department of Education-managed RSAS schools and third-party providers will also be invited to participate. The aim is to create a platform to share successes, collectively address challenges, gain insights into Northern Territory-wide program delivery and facilitate sharing resources. |
| | | With respect to the other 31 schools (26 Northern Territory Government schools), the RSAS program is delivered by a third-party provider through a direct funding agreement with the National Indigenous Australians Agency. |
| | | Northern Territory Government schools |
| | | 1. Alekarenge School |
| | | 2. Alyangula Area School |
| | | 3. Alyarrmandumanja Umbakumba School |
| | | 4. Ampilatwatja School |
| | | 5. Angurugu School |
| | | 6. Canteen Creek School |
| | | 7. Elliott School |
| | | 8. Epenarra School |
| | | 9. Gapuwiyak School |
| | | 10. Kalkaringi School |

| Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|
|  | 11. Maningrida College |
|  | 12. Milikapiti School |
|  | 13. Milingimbi School |
|  | 14. Milyakburra School |
|  | 15. Nhulunbuy High School |
|  | 16. Nhulunbuy Primary School |
|  | 17. Ntaria School |
|  | 18. Papunya School |
|  | 19. Pularumpi School |
|  | 20. Ramingining School |
|  | 21. Shepherdson College |
|  | 22. Tennant Creek High School |
|  | 23. Tennant Creek Primary School |
|  | 24. Yarralin School |
|  | 25. Yirrkala School |
|  | 26. Yuendumu School |
|  | Non-government schools: |
|  | 1. Xavier Catholic College - (Wurrumiyanga) (Tiwi) |
|  | 2. Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic Primary School (Tiwi) |
|  | 3. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Thamarrurr Catholic School (Wadeye). |
|  | **North East Arnhem Land (NEAL) Student Mobility Engagement Program** |

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| | | The NEAL Student Mobility Engagement Program was established to better support students with high mobility across the 5 NEAL schools. The program aims to:<br><br>• Minimise the impact of mobility on student learning progress and engagement.<br><br>• Support highly mobile students with an education plan that clearly identifies their learning needs, educational goals and the schools or other agencies that will support them with their plan.<br><br>• Support teachers to understand how best to support highly mobile students.<br><br>• Facilitate strong communication between schools and other agencies to support highly mobile students.<br><br>Fifty active student cases across 5 schools in the Gove Peninsula region; Nhulunbuy Primary School, Nhulunbuy High School, Yirrkala School, Laynhapuy Homelands School and Bäniyala Garraŋali School.<br><br>Students in scope are highly mobile i.e. multiple enrolments at different schools in a 12-month period and may have the following characteristics:<br><br>• Low attendance across schools<br><br>• Additional needs concerns flagged by teachers and/or family<br><br>• Learning progress well below peers<br><br>• Feeling disenfranchised, disconnected, no direction, lack of clarity and hope for the future<br><br>• Engagement in volatile substance abuse or other substance use<br><br>• Recent participation or currently participating in Bush Mob or other external programs (CAAPS)<br><br>• Getting into trouble – youth justice involvement<br><br>• Connection with the Department of Territory Families – family welfare concerns |

| | Question | Response/questions. |
|---|---|---|
| | | • Not currently enrolled in any school e.g. returned from boarding but not re-enrolled; living in a community with no education service<br><br>Work is led by the NEAL Student Mobility and Engagement Program Local Management Group, members include the principals from the 5 participating schools and a local senior representative from Student Engagement. Support to students and families is coordinated through the establishment of a Student Mobility Engagement Team (SMET). This team has representation from agencies with closest connection to the student and family e.g. schools, primary health care, case workers (Department of Territory Families), RSAS, Department of Education Student Engagement. The team is facilitated by the NEAL Authorised Engagement Officer based at Laynhapuy Homelands School. This position facilitates SMET meetings and communication. |

# Annexure 1 to Attachment A – Senate Standing Committee

## Northern Territory Home Education Registrations 2023

| No. | Registration | Year level | Stated reason for choosing Home Education |
|-----|-------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Registered | 8 | |
| 2 | Registered | 12 | |
| 3 | Registered | 4 | |
| 4 | Registered | Transition | |
| 5 | Registered | 8 | Safety |
| 6 | Registered | 7 | Safety |
| 7 | Registered | 9 | |
| 8 | Registered | 11 | |
| 9 | Registered | 3 | |
| 10 | Registered | 1 | |
| 11 | Registered | 5 | |
| 12 | Registered | 3 | |
| 13 | Registered | 2 | |
| 14 | Registered | 2 | |
| 15 | Registered | 6 | |
| 16 | Registered | 5 | |
| 17 | Registered | 1 | |
| 18 | Registered | 2 | |
| 19 | Registered | 1 | |
| 20 | Registered | 8 | |
| 21 | Registered | 9 | |
| 22 | Registered | 3 | |
| 23 | Registered | Transition | |
| 24 | Registered | 4 | |
| 25 | Registered | 2 | |
| 26 | Registered | 11 | |
| 27 | Registered | 8 | |
| 28 | Registered | 8 | |
| 29 | Registered | 2 | |
| 30 | Registered | 9 | |
| 31 | Registered | 8 | |
| 32 | Registered | 6 | |
| 33 | Registered | 10 | |
| 34 | Registered | 3 | |
| 35 | Registered | Transition | |
| 36 | Registered | 2 | |
| 37 | Registered | 8 | |
| 38 | Registered | 7 | |

| No. | Registration | Year level | Stated reason for choosing Home Education |
|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | Registered | 2 | |
| 40 | Registered | 1 | |
| 41 | Registered | 5 | |
| 42 | Registered | 10 | |
| 43 | Registered | 3 | |
| 44 | Registered | 3 | |
| 45 | Registered | 3 | |
| 46 | Registered | 9 | |
| 47 | Registered | 10 | |
| 48 | Registered | 2 | |
| 49 | Registered | 7 | |
| 50 | Registered | 7 | |
| 51 | Registered | 7 | |
| 52 | Registered | 11 | |
| 53 | Registered | 9 | |
| 54 | Registered | 7 | |
| 55 | Registered | 8 | |
| 56 | Registered | 2 | |
| 57 | Registered | 11 | |
| 58 | Registered | 10 | |
| 59 | Registered | Transition | |
| 60 | Registered | 2 | |
| 61 | Registered | 3 | |
| 62 | Registered | 1 | |
| 63 | Registered | 5 | |
| 64 | Registered | Transition | |
| 65 | Registered | 4 | |
| 66 | Registered | 4 | |
| 67 | Registered | 9 | |
| 68 | Registered | 1 | |
| 69 | Registered | 1 | |
| 70 | Registered | 2 | |
| 71 | Registered | 10 | |
| 72 | Registered | 8 | |
| 73 | Registered | 7 | |
| 74 | Registered | 2 | |
| 75 | Registered | 2 | |
| 76 | Registered | 8 | |
| 77 | Registered | 6 | |
| 78 | Registered | 7 | |
| 79 | Registered | 10 | |
| 80 | Registered | 5 | |
| 81 | Registered | 5 | |

| No. | Registration | Year level | Stated reason for choosing Home Education |
|-----|--------------|------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 82 | Registered | 7 | |
| 83 | Registered | 4 | |
| 84 | Registered | 3 | |
| 85 | Registered | 4 | |
| 86 | Registered | 3 | |
| 87 | Registered | 1 | |
| 88 | Registered | 5 | |
| 89 | Registered | 10 | |
| 90 | Registered | 8 | |
| 91 | Registered | 11 | |
| 92 | Registered | 6 | |
| 93 | Registered | 4 | |
| 94 | Registered | 2 | |
| 95 | Registered | 5 | |
| 96 | Registered | 5 | |
| 97 | Registered | 3 | |
| 98 | Registered | 4 | |
| 99 | Registered | 5 | |
| 100 | Registered | 5 | |
| 101 | Registered | 8 | |
| 102 | Registered | 9 | |
| 103 | Registered | 5 | |
| 104 | Registered | 3 | |
| 105 | Registered | 1 | |
| 106 | Registered | 11 | |
| 107 | Registered | 10 | |
| 108 | Registered | 1 | |
| 109 | Registered | 11 | |
| 110 | Registered | 8 | |
| 111 | Registered | 7 | |
| 112 | Registered | 5 | |
| 113 | Registered | 8 | |
| 114 | Registered | 2 | |
| 115 | Registered | 1 | |
| 116 | Registered | 1 | |
| 117 | Registered | 5 | |
| 118 | Registered | 9 | |
| 119 | Registered | 7 | |
| 120 | Registered | 10 | |
| 121 | Registered | 9 | |
| 122 | Registered | 9 | |
| 123 | Registered | 11 | |
| 124 | Registered | 9 | |

| No. | Registration | Year level | Stated reason for choosing Home Education |
|-----|-------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------|
| 125 | Registered | 4 | |
| 126 | Registered | 3 | |
| 127 | Registered | 10 | |
| 128 | Registered | 2 | |
| 129 | Registered | 5 | |
| 130 | Registered | 1 | |
| 131 | Registered | 9 | |
| 132 | Registered | 6 | |
| 133 | Registered | 2 | |
| 134 | Registered | 6 | |
| 135 | Registered | 8 | |
| 136 | Registered | 4 | |
| 137 | Registered | 9 | |
| 138 | Registered | 9 | |
| 139 | Registered | 8 | |
| 140 | Registered | 5 | |
| 141 | Registered | 3 | |
| 142 | Registered | 11 | |
| 143 | Registered | 5 | School isn't working/ refuses to go |
| 144 | Registered | 3 | |
| 145 | Registered | 7 | |
| 146 | Registered | 3 | |
| 147 | Registered | 2 | |
| 148 | Registered | 5 | |
| 149 | Registered | 2 | Additional needs children needing more opportunities to engage |
| 150 | Registered | 5 | Additional needs children needing more opportunities to engage |
| 151 | Registered | 7 | |
| 152 | Registered | 3 | |
| 153 | Registered | 7 | Diverse learning needs, diagnosed Asperger's Syndrome. |
| 154 | Registered | 7 | Diverse learning needs, diagnosed Asperger's Syndrome. |
| 155 | Registered | 7 | Diverse learning needs, diagnosed Asperger's Syndrome. |
| 156 | Registered | 1 | Health and Wellbeing, Tailored Education, |
| 157 | Registered | 8 | |
| 158 | Registered | 3 | She has recently been diagnosed with Autism Levels 2 and 2, as well as Generalised Anxiety Disorder in 2022. I do not want [her] to experience an autistic burnout so young. |
| 159 | Registered | 4 | |
| 160 | Registered | 8 | Fear and anxiety of going to school as child is bullied and assaulted, and the school has done nothing. |
| 161 | Registered | 8 | [He] is getting bullied at school and the effect of this on his mental and physical health is beyond explanation. He feels sick going to school and has been continuously asking us to enrol him in home education. As his parents, we are willing to take on his home education to ensure he continues learning in a safe environment. |

| No. | Registration | Year level | Stated reason for choosing Home Education |
|---|---|---|---|
| 162 | Registered | 8 | We have chosen to home-school our daughter to provide her with an enriched educational experience that aligns with the progressive world. Our primary objective is to extend her educational standards, skills, and knowledge across various disciplines. By home-schooling, we can allocate more time for her to explore and develop her interests in art, music, science, mathematics, writing, dance, horse riding, sports, C# coding, IT skills, business/economics, entrepreneurship, and Polish language. Another significant factor motivating our decision is [her] sensitivity to long hours and noise in traditional classroom settings. To address this challenge, we believe home-schooling offers a suitable solution. By creating a supportive and quiet learning environment, we can ensure [she] remains focused and energized throughout her educational journey. Furthermore, our daughter has a _____ that necessitates frequent trips to South Australia and Victoria for medical tests and surgeries in the coming years. Opting for online schooling or home-schooling grants her the flexibility to undergo these essential medical procedures without disrupting her education. This way, she can maintain continuity in her learning while attending to her health needs. Home-schooling also allows us to foster [her] natural rhythms and talents. We aim to provide an environment where she can freely express herself and develop without fear or inhibition. Encouraging a love for lifelong learning is paramount to us, as we want her to grow up with the knowledge that her potential is limitless. By nurturing her individual voice and fostering assertiveness, we aim to empower [her] to become an authentic and self-assured individual. It is essential for [her] to recognize that adults are there to support and love her unconditionally. By home-schooling, we can ensure she receives the attention and care she deserves. We want her to perceive the universe as boundless and understand that limitations exist only in our minds, often imposed by systems, institutions, and individuals who mindlessly adhere to them. Ultimately, our intention is for [her] to grow up as an asset to the world, equipped with the skills, knowledge, and mindset to contribute positively. By empowering her to see herself as part of the solution rather than a problem, we believe she can make a meaningful impact. Through home-schooling, we aim to cultivate an empowered, independent thinker who embraces her authenticity and remains untethered by the limitations of the world. |
| 163 | Registered | 4 | Development of individual skills and interest, increased self-confidence, self-paced learning, and to help [him] develop a deeper sense of curiosity as he is a keen learner. I feel he is not getting this in a traditional school setting. |
| 164 | Registered | 4 | Home Schooling is our preferred method for educating our children |
| 165 | Registered | 2 | Home Schooling is our preferred method for educating our children |

The following report has been prepared by the Department of Education's Education Regulation business unit from data collected manually by staff and recorded from parents/guardians at the point of completing a Home Education 2023 online application form. The form does not mandate parents to provide a reason. Throughout the year, a parent of a compulsory school age student whose usual place of residence is the Northern Territory can submit an application to home educate their child. Registered students met home education requirements the criteria for under section 46 of the *Education Act 2015* (NT) as at 6/07/2023.

# Annexure 2 to Attachment A - Senate Standing Committee

## Approved eligible options students 2023 — reasons for choosing eligible options

| Student | Reason |
|---|---|
| 1 | Employment. Wants to develop hospitality industry skills with a view to establishing own business |
| 2 | Participating in apprenticeship |
| 3 | Participating in employment |
| 4 | Participating in electrician apprenticeship |
| 5 | Participating in a marine technician apprenticeship. |
| 6 | Dis-engaged from school-based education |
| 7 | Participating in apprenticeship |
| 8 | Participating in employment prior to enrolling in an apprenticeship |
| 9 | Dis-engaged from school-based education |
| 10 | Participating in employment prior to enrolling in a carpentry apprenticeship |
| 11 | Participating in plumbing apprenticeship |
| 12 | Participating in employment |
| 13 | Dis-engaged from school, preferring fulltime employment (cleaner) |
| 14 | Dis-engaged from school due to anxiety and some learning difficulties |
| 15 | Participating in employment prior to enrolling in an apprenticeship |
| 16 | Participating in automotive apprenticeship |
| 17 | Participating in employment (agriculture) |
| 18 | Participating in carpentry apprenticeship |
| 19 | Participating in Transition to Work program through an approved provider (Youthworx) |
| 20 | Dis-engaged from school, preferring fulltime employment (kitchen hand). |
| 21 | Participating in carpentry apprenticeship |
| 22 | Participating in carpentry apprenticeship |
| 23 | Participating in in employment (school support worker) |

NORTHERN
TERRITORY
GOVERNMENT

| Student | Reason |
|---------|--------|
| 24 | Participating in Transition to Work program through an approved provider (Youthworx) |
| 25 | Disliked school. Participating in employment (insurance administration). |
| 26 | Disengaged from school. Participating in employment (Coles). |
| 27 | Participating in electrician apprenticeship |
| 28 | Participating in employment (irrigation and mowing) |
| 29 | Participating in employment (administration) prior to leaving Australia. |
| 30 | Participating in carpentry apprenticeship |
| 31 | Participating in boilermaker apprenticeship |
| 32 | Participating in employment (plant operator/drill hand) |
| 33 | Disengaged from school. Participating in employment (farm hand) |
| 34 | Participating in boilermaker apprenticeship |
| 35 | Participating in electrician apprenticeship |
| 36 | Participating in boilermaker apprenticeship |
| 37 | Participating in Cert 3 Childcare Worker |
| 38 | Participating in employment (shed construction) |
| 39 | Participating in Foundation Skills course. Referral from Workforce Australia |
| 40 | Participating in plumbing apprenticeship |
| 41 | Participating in mechanic apprenticeship |
| 42 | Mental health and wellbeing. Participating in employment (facilities hand) |
| 43 | Participating in cabinetmaker apprenticeship |
| 44 | Not interested in school. Participating in in employment (welding/metalwork) |
| 45 | Participating in Cert 3 Carpentry |
| 46 | Employed at a childcare centre and participating in Cert 3 Early Childhood Education |
| 47 | Participating in Cert 3 Electrotechnology |
| 48 | Participating in Cert 3 Carpentry |
| 49 | Participating in metal fabrication and welding apprenticeship |
| 50 | Participating in electrician apprenticeship |

| Student | Reason |
|---|---|
| 51 | Employed in family business (concrete pool construction) |
| 52 | Participating in commercial landscaping employment and participating in Cert 3 Landscape Construction |
| 53 | Anxiety and depression. Participating in Transition to Work program through approved provider (Youthworx) |
| 54 | Employed by a locksmith |
| 55 | Employed by a refrigeration business |
| 56 | Participating in an electrical apprenticeship |
| 57 | Participating in carpentry apprenticeship |
| 58 | Participating in Transition to Work program through approved provider (Youthworx). Bullying at school. |
| 59 | Participating in Transition to Work program through approved provider (Youthworx) |
| 60 | Participating in apprenticeship |
| 61 | Employed as a childcare worker |
| 62 | Disengaged from and did not like school. Participating in Transition to Work program through approved provider (Youthworx) |
| 63 | Participating in hairdressing apprenticeship |
| 64 | Lacking interest in school. Employed in garden maintenance. |
| 65 | Bullying. Anxiety, depression. Participating in Transition to Work program through approved provider (Youthworx) |

NOTE:

- This data is for active eligible options students at 07/07/2023.
- The program is more heavily patronised by males —of the 65 active students, only 16 are female

Annexure 3 to Attachment A - Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Absenteeism data by year level and category

**Source: Student Activity Dataset**

Attendance data is collected twice a term. The reporting period for this data covers weeks 1 to 4 and weeks 5 to 8 of each term. Data provided does not include weeks 9, 10 or 11 (where applicable).

The **attendance rate** is the proportion of session students attend compared to he sessions they are expected to attend during the repor ing period.

The **absent rate** is the propor ion of sessions that students are absent from compared to the sessions they are expected to attend during he reporting period.

The **authorised absent rate** is the proportion of sessions that students are authorised to be absent from compared to the sessions they are expected to attend during the reporting period. This includes Sanc ioned absences and absences relating to sickness and funeral.

The **unauthorised absent rate** is the proportion of sessions that students are not au horised to be absent from compared to the sessions they are expected to attend during the reporting period. This includes un-no ified and unacceptable absences.

The **other absent rate** is he rest of the absence type including absences due to transport, community unrest, suspension.

Please note that this provision may not reconcile with publish sources as it is from an unpublished data source. However, the numbers should be close in terms of overall attendance and absent rates. Ungraded year levels have been excluded due to low numbers.

Data is current at he ime of provision.

Annexure 3 to Attachment A - Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Absenteeism data by year level and category

| | | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Preschool** | Authorised Absent Rate | 8.7% | 7.8% | 9.4% | 11.6% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 16.2% | 16.1% | 15.2% | 15.3% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **25.5%** | **24.5%** | **25.2%** | **27.4%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **74.5%** | **75.5%** | **74.8%** | **72.6%** |
| **Transition** | Authorised Absent Rate | 8.6% | 8.2% | 8.1% | 11.8% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 11.1% | 12.8% | 12.2% | 13.1% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **20.5%** | **21.6%** | **20.9%** | **25.4%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **79.5%** | **78.4%** | **79.1%** | **74.6%** |
| **Year 1** | Authorised Absent Rate | 8.1% | 7.4% | 8.1% | 10.9% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 12.0% | 11.8% | 12.8% | 12.7% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.8% | 0.5% | 0.7% | 0.5% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **20.9%** | **19.7%** | **21.6%** | **24.1%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **79.1%** | **80.3%** | **78.4%** | **75.9%** |
| **Year 2** | Authorised Absent Rate | 7.7% | 7.3% | 7.4% | 10.8% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 11.2% | 12.5% | 11.5% | 13.3% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.8% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **19.7%** | **20.5%** | **19.5%** | **24.6%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **80.3%** | **79.5%** | **80.5%** | **75.4%** |
| **Year 3** | Authorised Absent Rate | 7.2% | 6.9% | 7.4% | 10.2% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 11.8% | 12.3% | 12.0% | 11.8% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.9% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.5% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **20.0%** | **19.8%** | **20.1%** | **22.5%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **80.0%** | **80.2%** | **79.9%** | **77.5%** |
| **Year 4** | Authorised Absent Rate | 7.1% | 6.9% | 7.2% | 10.5% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 11.9% | 13.3% | 11.9% | 12.6% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.9% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.5% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **19.9%** | **20.9%** | **19.8%** | **23.6%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **80.1%** | **79.1%** | **80.2%** | **76.4%** |
| **Year 5** | Authorised Absent Rate | 7.2% | 7.2% | 7.6% | 10.4% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 11.7% | 13.5% | 13.2% | 13.0% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 1.0% | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.6% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **19.9%** | **21.4%** | **21.5%** | **24.1%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **80.1%** | **78.6%** | **78.5%** | **75.9%** |
| **Year 6** | Authorised Absent Rate | 7.3% | 7.1% | 7.7% | 10.8% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 12.0% | 13.4% | 13.4% | 13.8% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.7% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **20.3%** | **21.5%** | **21.8%** | **25.3%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **79.7%** | **78.5%** | **78.2%** | **74.7%** |
| **Year 7** | Authorised Absent Rate | 8.0% | 7.9% | 8.2% | 11.2% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 10.2% | 10.7% | 12.0% | 13.7% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 1.3% | 1.0% | 1.2% | 1.1% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **19.5%** | **19.6%** | **21.4%** | **26.0%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **80.5%** | **80.4%** | **78.6%** | **74.0%** |
| **Year 8** | Authorised Absent Rate | 8.5% | 8.5% | 8.8% | 12.6% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 11.8% | 12.5% | 14.0% | 15.2% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 1.1% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **21.6%** | **22.3%** | **24.1%** | **29.0%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **78.4%** | **77.7%** | **75.9%** | **71.0%** |
| **Year 9** | Authorised Absent Rate | 9.0% | 8.4% | 9.3% | 12.6% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 13.2% | 13.2% | 14.8% | 15.9% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 1.5% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 1.2% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **23.7%** | **22.7%** | **25.7%** | **29.7%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **76.3%** | **77.3%** | **74.3%** | **70.3%** |
| **Year 10** | Authorised Absent Rate | 10.2% | 9.5% | 10.0% | 12.1% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 13.0% | 14.8% | 16.0% | 16.5% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.9% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **23.9%** | **24.9%** | **26.8%** | **29.4%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **76.1%** | **75.1%** | **73.2%** | **70.6%** |

| Year 11 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Authorised Absent Rate | 9.7% | 10.1% | 9.3% | 12.8% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 14.8% | 14.3% | 16.9% | 16.3% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **25.1%** | **25.0%** | **26.8%** | **29.7%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **74.9%** | **75.0%** | **73.2%** | **70.3%** |
| | | | | | |
| Year 12 | | | | | |
| | Authorised Absent Rate | 10.0% | 7.8% | 8.6% | 11.5% |
| | Unauthorised Absent Rate | 11.4% | 13.0% | 13.6% | 14.6% |
| | Other Absent Rate | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.3% |
| | **Absent Rate** | **21.8%** | **21.1%** | **22.5%** | **26.4%** |
| | **Attendance Rate** | **78.2%** | **78.9%** | **77.5%** | **73.6%** |

**Distance Education (includes Alice Springs School of The Air, Katherine School of the Air and NT School of Distance Education)**

| Northern Territory Government school | 2019 Average enrolment | 2020 Average enrolment | 2021 Average enrolment | 2022 Average enrolment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Distance Education total | 760 | 816 | 1,045 | 1,189 |

Enrolment data is collected 8 times per year (at the beginning and end of each term). In each term the first reporting period covers Weeks 1 to 4, and the second reporting period covers Weeks 5 to 8. The average enrolment number is the average enrolments of students over the 4-week reporting period.

Source: Enrolment and Attendance Dataset
https://education.nt.gov.au/statistics-research-and-strategies/enrolment-and-attendance

**Distance Education (includes Alice Springs School of The Air, Katherine School of the Air and NT School of Distance Education)**

| Northern Territory Government school | 2019 Average enrolment | 2020 Average enrolment | 2021 Average enrolment | 2022 Average enrolment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Distance Education total | | | | |