



## EXECUTIVE MINUTE

on

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

REPORT No.505

*Inquiry into Policy and Program Design and Implementation*

*Department of Education Response to recommendation 11*

### General comments

This Executive Minute provides the Department of Education's response to recommendation 11 of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit's *Report No. 505 – Inquiry into Policy and Program Design and Implementation*.

Report No. 505 includes consideration of key findings from the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) performance audit report No. 42 (2022-23) - *Access and Participation Programs for Regional and Remote Students*. The audit found the department had largely effective design and implementation of programs and initiatives to improve the access and participation of regional and remote students. However, opportunities exist to improve processes to assess overall package objectives and targets. The audit made two recommendations to the department:

1. The Department of Education establish a methodology to measure the performance of programs and initiatives that contribute to access and participation for regional and remote students, and their progress in achieving Strategy outcomes.
2. The Department of Education establish a reporting framework that:
  - a. identifies data requirements (including the collection of up-to-date baseline data) at both the access and participation, and the program and initiative levels for regional and remote students; and
  - b. outlines evaluation and assurance processes that consider the progress of all access and participation programs and initiatives for regional and remote students in achieving defined package level outcomes.

The Department of Education is committed to evaluating its policy and programs and accepted the audit's recommendations.

**Recommendation No. 11**

**The Committee requests that the Department of Education reports back on the implementation of its Performance and Data Framework Plan and Stakeholder Engagement Plan within 12 months of the date of this report.**

*The Department of Education notes this recommendation.*

The Department of Education is committed to delivering robust policies and programs that support people from underrepresented backgrounds to access and complete higher education.

In 2023, the Department of Education finalised a Performance and Data Framework (the Framework) and Stakeholder Engagement Plan to support the ongoing implementation and oversight of access and participation programs and initiatives for regional and remote students in higher education.

In September 2024, the Department of Education reviewed the performance of relevant programs and initiatives and reported to the responsible SES Band 2 Officer. The review found that these programs and initiatives were implemented in line with their policy objectives and were generally supported by universities and other tertiary education stakeholders.

In February 2025, the Department of Education launched its Evaluation Strategy 2025-27 which supports embedding evaluation through every stage of the policy cycle. The Department of Education is committed to publishing evaluations and sharing outcomes with stakeholders. Through the Strategy, evaluation results will be published on the Department of Education's website. This ensures the results are available to inform future education policy and delivery.

The Department of Education has also established a dedicated Measurement and Evaluation Section to help measure, monitor and effectively evaluate its programs. The Department of Education also has an ongoing program of work to use integrated datasets and understand the variety of factors driving policy and program outcomes.

In addition, the Department of Education reports on its performance in achieving its purpose annually through the Commonwealth Performance Framework. The Department of Education will continue to evaluate and report on relevant programs and initiatives as part of obligations under this framework.

Signed by



Tony Cook  
Secretary

30 October 2025