

# COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS

## FACT SHEET

### **SMARTER SCHOOLS – LITERACY AND NUMERACY NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP**

#### **What is the Nature of Reform?**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed the necessity to deliver sustained improvements in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, especially those who are falling behind.

A new National Partnership (NP) on Literacy and Numeracy will focus on:

- achieving sustainable improvements in literacy and numeracy, as a key indicator of ability to go on and complete Year 12 for all students;
- improving literacy and numeracy for primary school students, especially Indigenous students; and
- developing a national understanding of what is the most effective way to teach literacy and numeracy.

The Commonwealth has previously agreed to provide \$540 million to support this NP. Of this, \$150 million will facilitate ambitious reform initiatives by the States and \$350 million will reward measurable improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for the schools and students targeted through this NP. Some \$40 million will support national research and data collection, including \$13 million for the National Schools Assessment and Data Centre.

The States will match the facilitation funding, including by using existing or redirected funding.

Governments will continue to share best practice in the key areas of teaching, school leadership and the effective use of student performance information to deliver sustained improvements in literacy and numeracy.

#### **What will the impact of the Reform be?**

The NP will fund a range of approaches that will lead to accelerated improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for targeted students and schools.

Over time there should be more students achieving above the national minimum standard in literacy and numeracy, allowing these students to progress successfully through their schooling and actively participate in the workforce and contribute to their community in future years.

Improved results should also reflect the focus on developing early interventions to support students most at risk of falling behind; especially Indigenous students whose literacy and numeracy outcomes are considerably lower than non-Indigenous students.

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### **What will change?**

The NP will result in an improvement in the literacy and numeracy results for students in the schools. The successful outcomes will also be distributed to other schools, through the sharing of “what works” between schools and the wider adoption of the most effective strategies by schools and systems.

The NP will support the sharing of best practice between the States and non-government education authorities in the key areas of teaching, school leadership and the effective use of student performance information to deliver sustained improvements in literacy and numeracy.

### **What are the benefits that will flow from the Reform?**

Literacy and numeracy are essential building blocks in the education of Australian students.

This NP will support our teachers and schools to focus their efforts on those approaches that are the most effective in improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for their students.

This will lead to improved outcomes for students, and will improve the capacity of our teachers and school leaders to make informed decisions about the best strategies for their students or school.

### **When will the changes take effect?**

The reforms will progressively begin from 1 January 2009.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**1. What types of initiatives will be funded under the Literacy and Numeracy NP?**

The suite of initiatives and schools to be targeted will be negotiated with each State and Territory and specified in their bilateral agreements and implementation plans. The initiatives will lead to reforms in three major areas: effective and evidence-based teaching and learning; school leadership and whole school engagement; and monitoring student and school performance.

Examples of the types of initiatives include:

- providing teachers with the skills and strategies to teach the key concepts in literacy and numeracy from the early years and extend these skills in the middle and later years of primary school;
- providing teachers with the skills and tools to identify each student's level of ability in literacy and numeracy and to develop strategies to meet these individual needs;
- supporting school leaders to set high expectations across their school for literacy and numeracy performance; and
- supporting schools to share effective practice of "what works" with other schools and the community.

**2. When will these reforms start?**

The reforms will commence from January 2009.

**3. What will be the funding split between the Commonwealth and the States?**

The Commonwealth has previously agreed to provide \$540 million to support this NP. Of this, \$150 million will facilitate ambitious reform initiatives and \$350 million will reward measurable improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for the schools and students targeted through this NP. Some \$40 million will support research and data collection, including \$13 million for the National Schools Assessment and Data Centre.

The States and non-government education authorities will match the \$150 million of Commonwealth funding for the facilitation component. This contribution may include existing or redirected funding to support the reforms in literacy and numeracy.

**4. How are you going to measure the success of the reforms?**

Success of the reforms will be measured by the improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for the schools and students targeted through this NP. Improvement targets will be negotiated between the Commonwealth and the States, and specified in bilateral agreements and implementation plans.

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The measurement of improvement will consider the different starting points in state literacy and numeracy achievement and the type of approaches being implemented. It will utilise data from the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and other appropriate local data to measure targeted students literacy and numeracy improvement of targeted students.

The COAG Reform Council will provide independent assessment of progress towards agreed performance benchmarks before reward payments are made

### **5. Will non-government schools be involved?**

The non-government school sector will be invited to participate in the NP.

The mechanism for this sector's participation and funding arrangements will be considered in bilateral agreements and reflected in State implementation plans.