

Education Ministers Meeting Terms of Reference

<p>Purpose</p>	<p>The Education Ministers Meeting provides a forum for national cooperation on early childhood education and care, school education, higher education and international education.</p> <p>The forum progresses items of national strategic importance within the portfolio collaboratively to achieve agreed objectives and priorities.</p> <p>Vocational education and training matters are progressed through the Skills Ministers Meeting.</p>
<p>Strategic priorities and work program</p>	<p>The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration, the National School Reform Agreement, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and the early childhood education and care agenda, drive the national education reform agenda aimed at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supporting students, student learning and student achievement b. Supporting teaching, school leadership and school improvement c. Enhancing the national evidence base d. Supporting early childhood education and care e. Closing the educational gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people f. Governance and project management g. Supporting cross-sectoral/higher education and international education. <p>Education Ministers meeting agendas focus on three decision-making priorities of national importance every six months. The priorities will have tangible deliverables within the six-month period (see annual work program).</p> <p>Further work, including any administrative matters that require Ministerial consideration and agreement, is conducted out-of-session or delegated to senior officials.</p> <p>Principles for out-of-session matters and delegations to officials are outlined in the Operating Protocols for the Education Ministers Meeting.</p>
<p>Design and operations</p>	<p>The Education Ministers Meeting resolves issues in its portfolio and does not have a reporting line to National Cabinet or the National Federation Reform Council, unless directly tasked by either of these bodies.</p> <p>Ministers collectively set the agenda for the Education Ministers Meeting. The Chair will not deny reasonable requests for items to be included on the agenda.</p> <p>Four Education Ministers Meetings are held each year. The format of meetings will be determined at the discretion of members. The final meeting of the year focuses on the priorities for the next 12-month period. Additional meetings will be held as necessary to progress matters of urgency.</p> <p>For the purpose of determining whether an Education Ministers Meeting can proceed, a quorum will be taken to mean at least five members from different jurisdictions are present.</p> <p>Where appropriate, decisions should be principles-based and allow individual jurisdictions to determine the best way to achieve agreed outcomes. The level of local variation may vary depending on the initiative and should be agreed by Ministers.</p> <p>Except where otherwise specified in legislation, decision making in the Education Ministers Meeting should be on the basis of consensus. Matters that rely on</p>

	<p>consensus for delivery will continue to be agreed in this way. With the agreement of all Ministers, some national initiatives may proceed with a smaller group of jurisdictions, without binding all jurisdictions to participate or contribute to funding.</p> <p>At the discretion of the meeting, key decisions and outcomes may be communicated by a short communiqué drafted in the room and agreed by all jurisdictions. The Chair may also communicate key decisions and outcomes by a press release following the meetings.</p>
Chair	<p>The Australian Government is the Chair of the Education Ministers Meeting. This arrangement will be reviewed by Education Ministers at the end of 2022.</p> <p>The Chair ensures that the Meeting operates effectively and collaboratively to deliver outcomes requiring joint action by the Australian, state and territory governments.</p> <p>The Chair’s responsibilities are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a thorough understanding of the meeting agenda and a focus on achieving outcomes • ensure all agenda items are discussed within the allocated time • encourage full participation of all members • ensure contentious issues are debated in a professional manner and mediate when conflict arises • facilitate decision-making by consensus where possible.
Membership	<p>The Education Ministers Meeting consists of portfolio ministers with responsibility for early childhood education and care, school education, higher education and international education from the Australian Government and each state and territory.</p> <p>New Zealand is a non-decision-making member of the Education Ministers Meeting.</p> <p>The Chair may invite other Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, or representatives from other agencies to participate in specific meetings or discussions, as appropriate.</p> <p>Guests and experts should only attend meetings for relevant agenda items.</p> <p>Members may nominate a proxy parliamentary colleague to attend on their behalf if they are unable to attend a meeting.</p> <p>Ministers are supported at meetings by a maximum of one official, one observer and where appropriate, one adviser.</p>
Sunset clause	<p>To ensure the intergovernmental system remains focussed on key priorities, the First Secretaries Group and National Cabinet will review the composition of regular, ongoing meetings every two years, including its chairing arrangements. This will ensure they remain essential and reflect national priorities.</p> <p>The Chair of the Education Ministers Meeting is required to submit a one-page summary to the First Secretaries Group in late 2022 or early 2023 setting out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the top three priorities for the upcoming year with specific delivery timeframes • the achievements of the meeting for the previous years. <p>The First Secretaries Group will provide recommendations to National Cabinet on the meeting.</p>