

Australian Catholic Education Statistics 2021

About this report

Catholic schools across Australia are thriving. From humble beginnings 200 years ago, Australia's **1,755 Catholic schools** now educate more than **785,000** or one in five Australian students.

Catholic schools are a significant partner alongside government in educating Australia's children. Our schools give families the choice of a holistic, balanced and affordable education. Sharing our Catholic faith, lifting educational standards, and supporting the diverse needs and wellbeing of students is at the heart of our mission.

Catholic schools are inclusive welcoming students from all backgrounds and with growing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disability. Almost 40 per cent of Catholic schools are outside major metropolitan areas.

In 2021, Catholic schools employed more than **102,000 teaching and non-teaching staff** including part-time staff.

This report provides a comprehensive look at Catholic schools across the country – where they are, who they teach and what they provide. The data comes from the Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment's National Schools Census. This report is published as part of the National Catholic Education Commission's commitment to transparency and accountability.

Catholic schools have been serving families for over 200 years. Millions of Australian students have been educated in our schools since 1820.

SNAPSHOT OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC EDUCATION



38% of Australia's **1,755** Catholic Schools are in regional and remote areas

Over **785,000** students attend Catholic schools



785,585 headcount / 785,396 FTE



Over **102,000** staff work in Catholic education

Staff - 102,788 headcount / 83,194 FTE
Teachers - 66,080 headcount / 57,586 FTE



1 in 5 Australian students attend a Catholic school

Primary - 17.7%*
Secondary - 21.3%*

*2020 data



Students with disability make up **20%** of student population in Catholic schools

156,818 FTE



Since 2000 the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Catholic schools has increased by **180.2%**

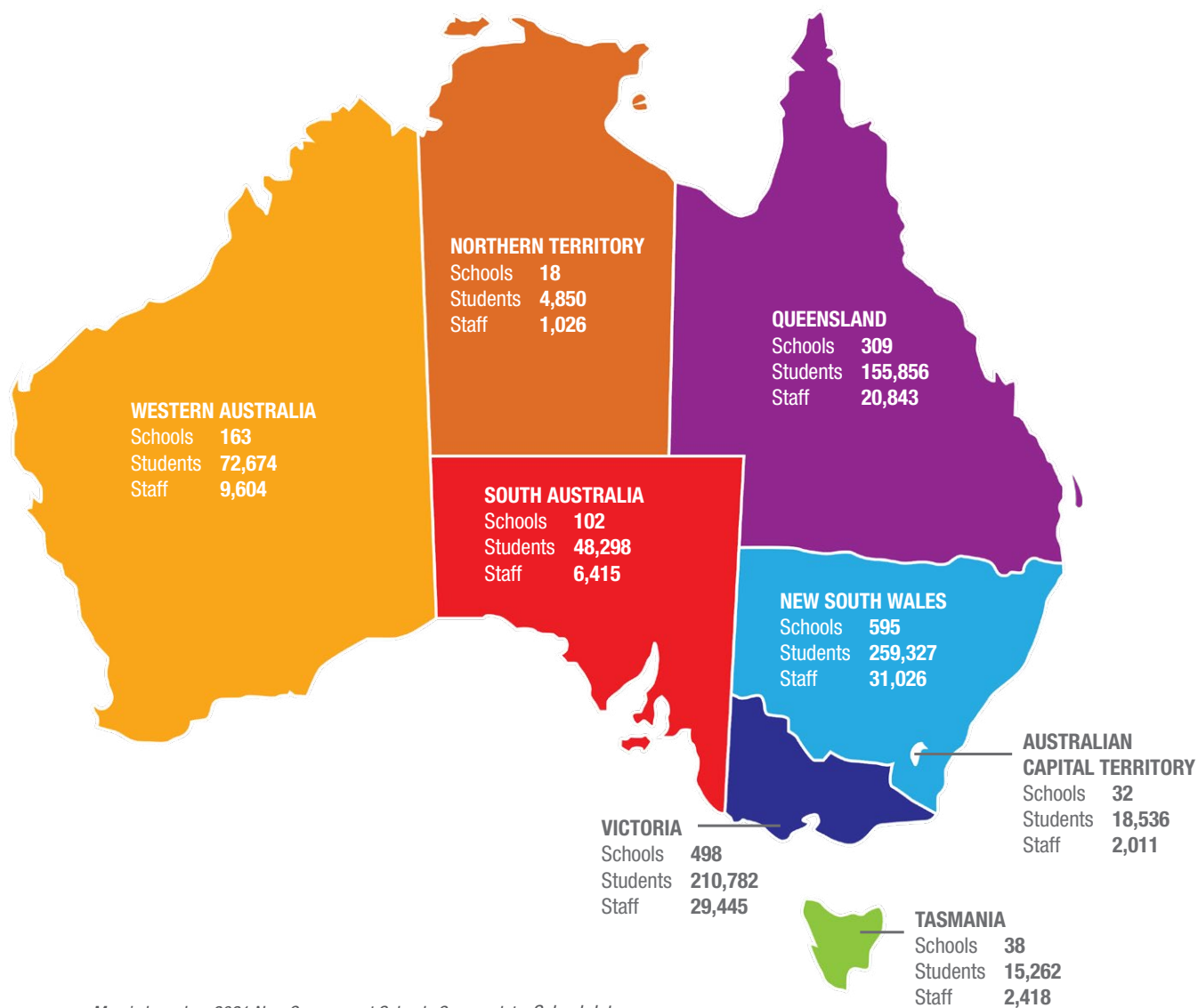
41%* of Catholic school students are funded for socio-educational disadvantage



91% of Catholic schools are co-educational
3% are boarding schools

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Map is based on 2021 Non-Government Schools Census data. School data includes main campus only. Student and staff numbers are headcount.

STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT 2021

SCHOOLS

Type	No. of Schools	% of Schools
All Catholic Schools	1,755	100.0%
Primary Schools	1,241	70.7%
Secondary Schools	324	18.5%
Combined Schools	146	8.3%
Special Schools	44	2.5%
Co-Educational Schools	1,598	91.1%
Single Sex Schools	157	8.9%
Boarding Schools	49	2.8%

Type	No. of Schools	% of Schools
Major Cities	1,089	62.1%
Inner Regional	390	22.2%
Outer Regional	208	11.9%
Remote/Very Remote	68	3.9%
Schools in Catholic Systems	1,697	96.7%
Independent Catholic Schools	58	3.3%

STUDENTS

Headcount	No. of Students	% of Students
All Students	785,585	100.0%
Primary	405,948	51.7%
Secondary	379,637	48.3%
Students of Catholic Religion		61.7%
Boarding Students		0.6%
Full Fee-Paying Overseas Students		0.1%

Full-time Equivalent (FTE)	No. of Students	% of Students
All Students (FTE)	785,396.4	100.0%
Primary (FTE)	405,861.4	51.7%
Secondary (FTE)	379,535.0	48.3%
Students with Disability (FTE)	156,817.6	20.0%
Indigenous Students (FTE)	26,804.9	3.4%

STAFF

Headcount	No. of Staff	% of Staff
All Staff	102,788	100.0%
All Teaching Staff	66,080	100.0%
Primary	31,566	47.8%
Secondary/Combined	34,261	51.8%
All Non-Teaching Staff	36,708	100.0%
Primary	17,435	47.5%
Secondary/Combined	18,925	51.6%

Full-time Equivalent (FTE)	No. of Staff	% of Staff
All Staff (FTE)	83,193.8	100.0%
All Teaching Staff (FTE)	57,586.3	100.0%
Primary (FTE)	26,338.0	45.7%
Secondary (FTE)	31,041.1	53.9%
All Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	25,607.5	100.0%
Primary (FTE)	11,384.4	44.5%
Secondary (FTE)	13,965.2	54.5%

SCHOOL PROFILE

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2011-2021

State / Territory	Schools (2011)	Schools (2021)	Growth (Number)	Growth (%)
Australian Capital Territory	30	32	2	6.7%
New South Wales	584	595	11	1.9%
Northern Territory	15	18	3	20.0%
Queensland	291	309	18	6.2%
South Australia	103	102	-1	-1.0%
Tasmania	37	38	1	2.7%
Victoria	486	498	12	2.5%
Western Australia	158	163	5	3.2%
Australia	1,704	1,755	51	3.0%

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY STATE AND TERRITORY AND BY TYPE, 2021

State / Territory	Primary Schools (2021)	Secondary Schools (2021)	Combined Schools (2021)	Special Schools (2021)
Australian Capital Territory	24	6	2	0
New South Wales	420	129	32	14
Northern Territory	8	4	5	1
Queensland	196	63	36	14
South Australia	66	9	24	3
Tasmania	24	5	8	1
Victoria	394	85	13	6
Western Australia	109	23	26	5
Australia	1,241	324	146	44

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY REMOTENESS AND BY TYPE, 2021

Remoteness	Primary Schools (2021)	Secondary Schools (2021)	Combined Schools (2021)	Special Schools (2021)
Major Cities	762	216	80	31
Inner Regional	280	77	27	6
Outer Regional	155	27	23	3
Remote & Very Remote	44	4	16	4
Australia	1,241	324	146	44

TABLE 4: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS, 2021

	Co-educational Schools (2021)	Single-sex Schools (2021)	Boarding Schools (2021)
Number	1,598	157	49
%	91.1%	8.9%	2.8%

STUDENT PROFILE

TABLE 5: ENROLMENT (FTE) IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2011-2021

State / Territory	Students (FTE) (2011)	Students (FTE) (2021)	Growth (%)
Australian Capital Territory	17,248.3	18,534.5	7.5%
New South Wales	243,797.9	259,300.6	6.4%
Northern Territory	4,560.6	4,843.5	6.2%
Queensland	134,957.6	155,828.4	15.5%
South Australia	48,146.5	48,265.2	0.2%
Tasmania	14,603.8	15,254.1	4.5%
Victoria	193,429.2	210,698.5	8.9%
Western Australia	66,728.2	72,671.6	8.9%
Australia	723,472.1	785,396.4	8.6%

TABLE 6: ENROLMENT BY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2021

State / Territory	Primary Headcount (2021)	Secondary Headcount 2021	All students Headcount 2021
Australian Capital Territory	9,422	9,114	18,536
New South Wales	130,265	129,062	259,327
Northern Territory	2,457	2,393	4,850
Queensland	81,567	74,289	155,856
South Australia	26,020	22,278	48,298
Tasmania	7,818	7,444	15,262
Victoria	111,379	99,403	210,782
Western Australia	37,020	35,654	72,674
Australia	405,948	379,637	785,585

TABLE 7: ENROLMENT IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY REMOTENESS, 2021

Remoteness	Headcount (2021)	Primary (FTE) (2021)	Secondary (FTE) (2021)	All Students (FTE) (2021)
Major Cities	567,821	286,026.3	281,684.7	567,711.0
Inner Regional	150,011	78,979.4	70,972.0	149,951.4
Outer Regional	58,344	34,227.2	24,107.7	58,334.9
Remote & Very Remote	9,409	6,628.5	2,770.6	9,399.1
Australia	785,585	405,861.4	379,535.0	785,396.4

TABLE 8: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF BOARDING AND OVERSEAS STUDENTS, 2021

	Boarding students (FTE) (2021)	Full-Fee-Paying Overseas Students (FTE) (2021)
Number	5,072.6	1,040.0
%	0.6%	0.1%

STUDENT PROFILE

TABLE 9: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (FTE) IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY STATE AND TERRITORY AND NCCD ADJUSTMENT LEVEL, 2021*

State / Territory	Level 1 (2021)		Level 2 (2021)		Level 3 (2021)		Level 4 (2021)		All Levels* (2021)	
Australian Capital Territory	719.0	3.9%	2,544.0	13.7%	706.0	3.8%	114.9	0.6%	4,083.9	22.0%
New South Wales	11,432.5	4.4%	29,280.8	11.3%	8,454.0	3.3%	1,820.1	0.7%	50,987.4	19.7%
Northern Territory	196.0	4.0%	593.6	12.3%	723.0	14.9%	93.0	1.9%	1,605.6	33.1%
Queensland	5,183.7	3.3%	15,297.5	9.8%	5,380.5	3.5%	430.4	0.3%	26,292.1	16.9%
South Australia	2,990.7	6.2%	5,575.5	11.6%	1,573.4	3.3%	344.2	0.7%	10,483.8	21.7%
Tasmania	786.6	5.2%	1,643.4	10.8%	591.2	3.9%	102.2	0.7%	3,123.4	20.5%
Victoria	12,794.0	6.1%	21,866.4	10.4%	9,953.8	4.7%	2,077.4	1.0%	46,691.6	22.2%
Western Australia	6,058.0	8.3%	6,015.6	8.3%	1,220.0	1.7%	256.2	0.4%	13,549.8	18.6%
Australia	40,160.5	5.1%	82,816.8	10.5%	28,601.9	3.6%	5,238.4	0.7%	156,817.6	20.0%

Level 1 - Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice (QDTP)

Level 2 - Supplementary support

Level 3 - Substantial support

Level 4 - Extensive support

*Percentages represent the proportion of Catholic school students who receive support through an NCCD adjustment

TABLE 10: INDIGENOUS STUDENTS (FTE) IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2011-2021

State / Territory	Indigenous Students (FTE) (2011)		Indigenous Students (FTE) (2021)		Growth (%)
Australian Capital Territory	236.0	1.4%	446.0	2.4%	89.0%
New South Wales	5,410.6	2.2%	9,422.5	3.6%	74.1%
Northern Territory	1,569.0	34.4%	1,609.4	33.2%	2.6%
Queensland	4,435.6	3.3%	7,918.4	5.1%	78.5%
South Australia	592.6	1.2%	969.0	2.0%	63.5%
Tasmania	644.0	4.4%	1,266.4	8.3%	96.6%
Victoria	988.0	0.5%	2,179.6	1.0%	120.6%
Western Australia	2,215.0	3.3%	2,993.6	4.1%	35.2%
Australia	16,090.8	2.2%	26,804.9	3.4%	66.6%

*Percentages represent the proportion of Catholic school students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

STAFF PROFILE

TABLE 11: STAFF IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS (HEADCOUNT), BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, 2011-2021

Employment Status	Part-time (2021)	Full-time (2021)	All Staff (2021)
Teaching staff	19,629	46,451	66,080
Non-Teaching Staff	26,297	10,411	36,708
All staff	45,926	56,862	102,788

TABLE 12: STAFF IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2021

State / Territory	Headcount (2021)	Staff (FTE) (2021)
Australian Capital Territory	2,011	1,680.2
New South Wales	31,026	25,026.2
Northern Territory	1,026	859.0
Queensland	20,843	16,991.6
South Australia	6,415	5,037.3
Tasmania	2,418	1,831.1
Victoria	29,445	23,813.1
Western Australia	9,604	7,955.3
Australia	102,788	83,193.8

TABLE 13: STAFF IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS BY REMOTENESS, 2021

Remoteness	Headcount (2021)	Staff (FTE) (2021)
Major Cities	71,343	58,088.0
Inner Regional	20,625	16,513.8
Outer Regional	8,899	7,029.8
Remote & Very Remote	1,921	1,562.2
Australia	102,788	83,193.8

ABOUT THE DATA

Scope of the report

Australian Catholic Education Statistics 2021 Report* includes the data for the two main categories of Catholic schools – Diocesan and other Catholic school authorities.

Diocesan schools are administered by the Catholic Dioceses under the authority of the Bishop. Under Canon (Church) Law, the Bishop exercises responsibility through a local Diocesan Catholic Schools Authority, which provides direct administrative and educational support to the schools in a Diocese. All Diocesan schools operate within state and territory Catholic systems.

Other Catholic school authorities are conducted and administered by Religious Institutes or Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (PJPs).

**Recognition by Ecclesiastical Authority is required for Catholic schools to be included in the NCEC's report. Seven schools that appear as "Catholic" in the Australian Government's National School Census are not recognised by an ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese (Canon 803) and are not included in the statistics in this report. These schools are St Philomena's School, Parkridge (Queensland); Divine Mercy College, Yangebup (Western Australia); St Thomas Aquinas College, Tynong (Victoria); Saint Mary MacKillop College, Wagga Wagga (New South Wales); Saint Mary MacKillop College, Albury Jindera (New South Wales); Immaculate Heart College, Lower Chittering (Western Australia); and St Dominic Savio School, Rockdale (New South Wales).*

Sources of data

Information on schools, students and staff in this report is sourced from the National Schools Census conducted by the Australian Government since 1985. This census collects information annually from all non-government schools on the first Friday in August. The statistics in the Australian Catholic Education Statistics 2021 Report are validated against Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) public data. It is important to note variation in ABS statistics occurs due to the NCEC's adjustment to exclude the schools not recognised as "Catholic" by the NCEC (see * above).

Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)

From 2013 the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data for Students with Disability (NCCD) was gradually introduced to strengthen schools' obligation in conformity with the Disability Standards for Education (2005). In 2018, the NCCD definition of disability was universally applied across school sectors, eliminating the necessity to continue the previous students with disability (SWD) collection. Unlike previous SWD definitions, the NCCD definition does not depend on objective disability categories as medically defined. Rather, eligibility for a student's inclusion in the collection is based on teachers' professional, evidence-based judgement of a student's functional learning needs and the adjustments required for that student to fully participate in education.

Four levels of adjustment are described:

- 1 - Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice (QDTP)
- 2 - Supplementary support
- 3 - Substantial support
- 4 - Extensive support

As a measure of functional need, the NCCD definition of students with disability has significantly increased the number of students reported in 2018 compared to 2017 (up from 36,930 under the old definition to 137,746 under the new definition).

School Type

- **Primary schools** - deliver primary education
- **Secondary schools** - deliver secondary education
- **Combined schools** - deliver both primary and secondary education
- **Special schools** including Special Assistance Schools - provide alternative educational settings for students with high-level needs and cater for students with medical conditions, physical or cognitive disability, as well as students who are at risk, have social-emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, are on remand or in the social justice system, or whose needs are better met by flexible learning structures.

Enrolment

Headcount - a count of the number of students enrolled or staff employed in a school in each period. Headcount includes students and staff with a full workload and students and staff with a reduced workload.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) - adjusts headcount by student/staff workload.

The number of full-time equivalent students/teachers counts all students with a reduced workload as a fraction of one student. For example, a student with a 60% workload is counted as 0.6 and a teacher who works four full days in a five day week is counted as 0.8. Students/teachers with a full workload are counted as one student.

Remoteness Categories

The location of Catholic schools is determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) geographical measure - the Australian Statistical Geography Standard-Remoteness Area (ASGS-RA). Classification is based on the 2016 ABS Census of Population and Housing and the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+), which defines remoteness by road distance from population centre services. The five remoteness categories are: Major Cities of Australia, Inner Regional Australia, Outer Regional Australia, Remote Australia, Very Remote Australia. More information about remoteness categories is available from the ABS website <https://www.abs.gov.au/remoteness-structure>

