Performance report: In early childhood
Our performance targets

Ensure all children have access to quality early childhood education in the year before school by 2013

In 2013, 96.2 per cent of children were enrolled in a preschool program in the year before school, up from 91.5 per cent in 2012. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds now represent over a quarter of all children enrolled in preschool programs in NSW. There was also a 15 per cent increase in the number of Aboriginal children in the year before school enrolled in a quality preschool program, from 3,606 in 2011 to 4,164 in 2013 (see Figure 1).

Increase the proportion of children with the literacy and numeracy skills they need for the best start at school

The Best Start Kindergarten Assessment is an assessment of each student’s literacy and numeracy skills when they start Kindergarten. In 2014, 77 per cent of school starters participating in the assessment achieved level 1 or higher in an aspect of literacy and were assessed as ‘beginning Kindergarten already knowing some Kindergarten content’ in literacy. Around 90 per cent achieved the equivalent level in numeracy (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Proportion of children enrolled in a preschool program in the year before full-time school, 2010 to 2013

Source: NSW annual reports on implementing the Bilateral Agreement under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. Notes: Under the bilateral agreement, performance was measured by the proportion of children accessing an early childhood education program in the year before school. The universal access target is associated with a 95 per cent benchmark, which was chosen because attendance at a preschool program is not compulsory.
Figure 2: Proportion of students achieving level 1 or higher on at least one aspect of the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment in numeracy and literacy, 2010 to 2014.

Source: Department of Education and Communities, Public Schools NSW.
Our priorities:
In early childhood
Our priorities: In early childhood

High expectations, closing the gaps

Increasing access to preschool

In 2014, according to the department’s annual preschool census, the number of children in the year before school and three-year-old children from disadvantaged or Aboriginal backgrounds enrolled in government or community preschools increased by 1.7 per cent.

The increase has been facilitated by the new preschool funding model, which came into effect in January 2014. This initiative increased the base funding rates for children in the year before school, bringing the minimum and maximum base rates up by 45 per cent and 75 per cent respectively.

The new funding model also provides additional equity funding for children from low-income families and Aboriginal children aged three and over. The number of Aboriginal children enrolled in government and community preschools increased by 6.2 per cent in 2014 with Aboriginal children representing 8.0 per cent of total enrolments, up from 7.4 per cent in 2013.

In August 2014, the Minister for Education announced the new Preschool Disability Support Program to improve access to preschool and support equitable education outcomes for children with disability in community preschools. From 2015, the program will provide a new universal disability loading in the form of targeted funding based on enrolments to support the inclusion of children with disability or additional needs. The program also provides higher rates of funding for children with higher needs and supports professional development with a new scholarship program for special education teachers. Preschools received their first disability loading payment in December 2014 and will receive their first child-based payment in Term 1, 2015.

In 2014, we distributed $984,635 in capital funding to community-based preschools in rural and remote NSW. These preschools were chosen because of the high level of need for more preschool places in their local communities. The capital works grants are used to extend existing buildings or construct new, purpose-built facilities. In total the program will deliver 362 new preschool places across rural and remote areas of the state.

Giving young children the best start at school

In 2014, the Best Start Kindergarten Assessment, which identifies the literacy and numeracy skills that each child brings to Kindergarten, was conducted in all NSW public schools. This involved 70,297 children and over 3,700 teachers. The department’s Planning Literacy and Numeracy (PLAN) software enables teachers of students in Kindergarten to Year 8 to enter initial assessment data, as well as track the progress of students against our literacy and numeracy continuums as they move through each year of school.

The Transition to School Statement was launched in September 2014. This is a child-focused, practical and user-friendly tool designed in consultation with educators and teachers from the early childhood and schools sectors. It summarises a child’s strengths, identifies interests and approaches to learning and suggests ways these can be supported.

The statement is completed by the child’s early childhood educator, in cooperation with the child’s family. This information is then communicated to the child’s intended school, where it provides the school and teachers with information they can use in planning and preparing for the child’s arrival and transition into the new learning environment.

A successful trial was completed in early 2014 with feedback collected from early childhood education and care services and educators, parents and carers, Kindergarten teachers and principals. The department’s Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation has begun an evaluation of the statement, which will continue into 2015.
Our priorities: In early childhood

Quality teaching and leadership

Implementing the National Quality Framework

The department continued to implement the National Quality Framework (NQF), which came into effect in 2012. The framework aims to improve the quality and consistency of early childhood education and care across Australia through an integrated approach to the approval, quality assessment and compliance of services with the national legislation. It applies to around 5,000 services in NSW, including long day care centres, preschools, family day care services and outside school hours care services.

As of December 2014, the department had rated and published almost 3,000 reports for services. This included 47 of the department’s preschools.

In 2014, we worked with the early childhood sector and other jurisdictions to refine and streamline the process for assessment and rating. The department also partnered with other jurisdictions, the Commonwealth and the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority to review the NQF itself. Consultation on a regulatory impact statement began in November 2014 and will inform potential legislative changes.

The department also monitors compliance with legislative requirements, investigates complaints and responds to incidents. In 2014, these activities involved around 2,800 visits to service providers. We responded to over 33,200 telephone enquiries, 12,650 email enquiries and handled over 9,640 regulatory notifications from service providers.

Building the knowledge and skills of early childhood educators

The department continues to support early childhood educators to improve their skills and qualifications, assisting services to achieve the best outcomes for children and meet the requirements of the NQF.

In early 2014, the department finalised a second round of early childhood teaching scholarships, each worth up to $10,000, to early childhood educators to upgrade their qualification to a bachelor degree. We awarded 70 scholarships to early childhood educators working in rural and remote NSW. This brought the total scholarships awarded across both rounds of the program to 102. Of these, 63 per cent went to educators in rural and remote areas, including three Aboriginal educators.

The Preschool Disability Support Program includes a scholarship program to help staff develop new skills. The department provides funding to support preschool educators complete postgraduate study to assist children with additional needs. Up to 20 scholarships will be available each year and will cover the full cost of a graduate certificate or masters degree.
New and better ways of doing business

Reforming the funding of early childhood education and care

In January 2014, the new preschool funding model came into effect, making $150 million available to the community preschool sector, a 20 per cent increase on previous funding levels. Under the model, 95 per cent of community preschools will see an increase in their base funding rate, with the highest increases directed to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The additional investment was supported by the National Partnership for Universal Access to Early Childhood Education.

The changes to the funding system are based on a review by Professor Deborah Brennan, who found that government funding for early childhood education was complex, inefficient and poorly targeted, meaning that not enough children in the year before school and from disadvantaged backgrounds were accessing preschool. Professor Brennan estimated that up to 30,000 children were missing out on early childhood education in the year before school.

In line with Professor Brennan’s recommendations, funding for community preschools is being targeted towards children four and five years old in the year before school and children three years old from disadvantaged and Aboriginal backgrounds. The changes aim to drive increased participation and reduced fees so that cost is not a barrier to access for these children.

To help preschools adjust to the new funding arrangements, the NSW Government established a Community Preschool Operational Support program. This assists eligible community preschools develop the business skills necessary to operate an efficient and effective service and to ensure their sustainability over the longer term. The first stage of this program commenced in September 2014 with local Small Biz Connect advisors providing general business advice and health checks to participating preschools.

For a small number of community preschools additional support may be required to ensure that children have continued access to a local early childhood education service. The department is developing a program to support the viability of eligible services. The eligibility criteria are underpinned by six guiding principles for additional funding developed in consultation with the community preschool sector. We are now working to develop appropriate settings for the eligibility criteria to inform a policy that is equitable and supports universal access. Further consultation will continue into 2015.
Performance report:
At school
Our performance targets

Ensure participation of students in national (NAPLAN) tests exceeds the national average

NSW participation in National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests has been consistently higher than the national average across all year levels (Years 3, 5, 7 and 9) since testing began in 2008 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Participation rate of NSW students in NAPLAN tests compared to the national average in 2014

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2014.
Increase the proportion of NSW students achieving at or above the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy

In 2014, the proportion of NSW students achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading and numeracy was consistently higher than the national average (see Figure 4).

Over the period 2008 to 2014, the proportion of students across all year levels meeting or exceeding the national minimum standard in reading has shown no statistically significant change. The same is true for numeracy, with the exception of Year 3, where there was a statistically significant decrease.

Figure 4: Proportion of NSW students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 at or above the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy in 2014

Increase the proportion of NSW students achieving in the top two performance bands for reading and numeracy

In 2014, the proportion of NSW students achieving in the top two performance bands for reading and numeracy was consistently higher than the national average (see Figure 5).

Since 2008, the proportion of NSW students achieving in the top two bands has increased for Years 3, 5 and 7 in reading and Year 5 in numeracy.

**Figure 5:** Proportion of NSW students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in the top two performance bands for reading and numeracy in 2014

Halve the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in reading and numeracy by 2018

Over the period 2008 to 2014, the proportion of Aboriginal students across all year levels meeting or exceeding the national minimum standard in reading has shown no statistically significant change. The same is true for numeracy, with the exception of Year 3 students where there was a statistically significant decrease. The decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal Year 3 students meeting or exceeding the national minimum standard for numeracy is also evident for non-Aboriginal students (see figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6: Proportion of Aboriginal students in NSW achieving at or above the national minimum standard in reading (2008 to 2014)

Source: ACARA, NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2014. Notes: In line with the Council of Australian Government (COAG) National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap), the 2018 target is to halve the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal results in reading and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 as it existed in 2008 (baseline).

Figure 7: Proportion of Aboriginal students in NSW achieving at or above the national minimum standard in numeracy (2008 to 2014)

Source: ACARA, NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2014. Notes: In line with the Council of Australian Government (COAG) National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap), the 2018 target is to halve the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal results in reading and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 as it existed in 2008 (baseline).
Ensure that 90 per cent of young people have attained a Year 12 or AQF qualification at certificate II or above by 2015

In 2014, the proportion of young people who had completed Year 12 or an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification at certificate II or above was 87.1 per cent (see Figure 8).

Ensure that 90 per cent of young people have attained a Year 12 or AQF qualification at certificate III or above by 2020, including those in regional NSW

While there are fluctuations in survey data from year to year, the overall proportion of young people who had completed Year 12 or an AQF qualification at certificate III or above remained stable at 85.1 per cent in 2014 (see Figure 9).

Improve Year 12 completion rates for students in disadvantaged areas

Since 2008, the proportion of NSW students living in low socio-economic areas who have completed Year 12 has increased from 64 per cent to 68 per cent. Over the same period, the national average has increased from 67 per cent to 68 per cent (see Figure 10).

Figure 8: Proportion of 20 to 24 year olds who have attained a Year 12 or AQF qualification at certificate II or above (2007 to 2014)

The proportion of young people living in rural and regional NSW who had attained Year 12 or an equivalent qualification at certificate III or above has remained relatively stable since 2007.
Figure 9: Proportion of 20 to 24 year olds who have attained a Year 12 or AQF qualification at certificate III or above (2007 to 2014)

Source: ABS Australia, Survey of Education and Work (cat. 6227), additional data cubes. Notes: Rural and regional attainment data are calculated from a sample survey for which there is a known standard error. The ABS has advised that year to year fluctuations are to be expected due to sampling variability. Care needs to be taken with the interpretation of survey data as high standard errors can mean differences from year to year are not statistically significant.

Figure 10: Year 12 completion rates for students living in low socio-economic areas (2008 to 2013)

Halve the gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment for Aboriginal students by 2020

In 2011, 55.9 per cent of young Aboriginal people had attained Year 12 or equivalent qualification. While this is an increase of over six percentage points between the 2006 and 2011 census collections, significant and sustained effort is required if we are to achieve the 2020 target of 66.8 per cent (see Figure 11).

Since the school leaving age was raised to 17 in 2010, school retention rates have increased for all NSW students across Years 7 to 12. The retention rate for Aboriginal students has increased from 32.2 per cent in 2008 to 48.4 per cent in 2014, nearing the 2020 target of 49.2 per cent. If current trends continue, NSW will have exceeded its halving the gap target for Aboriginal student retention rates by 2020 (see Figure 12).

Increase the number of teachers with higher-level professional accreditation

Accreditation at the higher career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher requires teachers to demonstrate they have achieved the relevant teaching standards through a combination of documentary evidence, referee reports and independent observation.

In 2014, 7 teachers achieved accreditation at the Highly Accomplished level and 13 at Lead Teacher level. Since 2008, 96 teachers have achieved accreditation at the higher levels. An increase in the number of teachers seeking higher accreditation is expected with the introduction of standards-based remuneration in January 2016.

In 2014, 851 public school teachers expressed interest in seeking voluntary accreditation at the Highly Accomplished level, with 193 commencing the process.
Figure 12: Year 7 to Year 12 apparent retention for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students (2008 to 2014)

Source: ABS Schools Australia (cat. 4221.0). Notes: Apparent retention measures the extent to which students in NSW public schools progress to their final year of schooling. The term “apparent” is used because the measurement is based on the total number of students in each year level compared to the number in an early year, rather than by tracking the retention of individual students.

with the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) NSW. A further 663 teachers completed a preliminary application at Lead Teacher level, with 264 commencing the accreditation process. Teachers have up to three years to complete their submission for accreditation.

**Ensure 60 per cent of school students with disability have a personalised learning and support plan by 2020**

In 2014, over 1,700 NSW public schools participated in the second phase of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on school students with disability. This data collection draws on the ongoing work of teachers to identify, plan for and provide personalised learning and support for students with disability in consultation with their parents and carers.

An electronic data recording system was developed for the data collection in 2014. From 2015 onward, all schools will participate in the annual collection.

To further support planning for students with additional learning needs, including students with disability, in 2014 we continued to develop a new resource to assist teachers in understanding the unique strengths and needs of their individual students. The Personalised Learning and Support Signposting Tool creates a unique student profile that teachers and school teams can use as a basis for planning personalised learning and support for that student, in consultation with their parents or carers. In 2014, feedback from more than 550 trial schools informed further work to refine and finalise the tool for release to all schools in early 2015.
Our priorities: At school
High expectations, closing the gaps

**Supporting students with disability, learning and behavioural difficulties**

Approximately 90,000 students enrolled in NSW public schools require additional support or adjustments to access learning on an equitable basis. In 2014, more than 2,500 specialist support classes were provided, with a further capacity to support more than 20,000 students. We provided additional assistance for around 7,500 students in regular classes through the Integration Funding Support program. A further 63,000 students were supported with specialist resources provided to public schools across NSW.

The Braille and large print service continues to support more than 500 vision-impaired students in NSW public schools. In addition, the department’s specialist itinerant teachers support more than 2,200 students with vision or hearing impairment.

The department is actively supporting the trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the Hunter region. The aim of this work is to ensure that students continue to be fully and effectively supported in the transition to the full NDIS in 2018.

Initiatives under the Every Student, Every School strategy, announced by the NSW Government in March 2012, focus on building the capacity of schools to meet the needs of their students. In 2014, we continued to build the capabilities of teachers in personalised learning and support for students with disability, learning and behaviour difficulties.

Over 44,000 teachers and school staff have completed accredited training on the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education 2005, strengthening their understanding of obligations towards students with disability, their parents and their carers. More than 21,000 staff completed this training in 2014.

In 2014, over 2,500 staff completed more than 86,000 hours of accredited training across a range of six tutor-supported online learning courses that address educational support for students with disability. A new course to support personalised learning for students with disability and additional learning needs is under development in collaboration with other states and territories, for release in 2015.

Scholarships for teachers to undertake further tertiary study in education for students with disability continue to be offered through the Every Student, Every School initiative. Since July 2014, the department has offered a total of 24 scholarships to permanent teachers. Of these, 14 have been granted and 10 are under offer. Since the initiative began in 2013, 62 teachers have completed their masters degree following sponsorship through this scholarship program.

This year we further developed the Personalised Learning and Support Signposting Tool for all NSW public schools to use in 2015. The student profile report generated from the signposting tool will support teachers’ planning to personalise learning and support for students, in collaboration with their parents and carers.
Closing the gap in educational outcomes for Aboriginal students

The department remains committed to close the gap in educational outcomes between Aboriginal and other students. The department continues to work closely with the NSW AECG at the state, regional and local level, as its main community partner in all matters concerning Aboriginal education. The 2014 Aboriginal Students in NSW Public Schools Annual Report and data appendix on key areas such as enrolment, NAPLAN performance, attendance, retention and suspension rates were published on the department’s website.

This year, we changed the way we provide support for Aboriginal students in NSW public schools through implementation of the new Resource Allocation Model (RAM) as part of the Local Schools, Local Decisions initiative. The RAM includes a loading for Aboriginal students and every NSW public school with Aboriginal students now receives funding to support their learning needs. More than $48 million was distributed to schools through the RAM in 2014.

In 2014, the department also allocated approximately $16 million to schools to continue implementation of Norta Norta. This provided approximately 2,400 Aboriginal students, including 200 students in juvenile justice centres, with additional learning assistance via the program’s NAPLAN component. In addition, under the program’s individual sponsorship component, over 3,800 Aboriginal students in Years 11 and 12 were provided with tutorial assistance to keep them engaged in school and improve their academic achievement.

A further 10 Aboriginal students from NSW public schools were selected to join the 40 Aboriginal students already involved in the Galuwa Sponsorship Program, a partnership between Glencore (formerly Xstrata Coal) and the department. The scholarships help students complete secondary schooling and plan for their future careers by providing tutoring and mentoring support, literacy and numeracy support and participation in cultural and career aspiration camps.

The department continued its partnership with the Clontarf Foundation, which provides mentoring and coaching for Aboriginal boys at risk of disengaging from school. In 2014, we agreed to fund nine NSW Clontarf academies until 2016.

In 2014, the department continued to work with the Commonwealth Government and other states and territories to implement the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010-2014.

Connected Communities

Connected Communities is our approach to improving educational and social outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people living in a number of complex and diverse communities in NSW. The strategy has been informed by advice from the AECG and broad consultation with key stakeholders.

The strategy is being implemented in 15 schools and is underpinned by a capital works program. The department has dedicated $25 million for substantial rebuilds and refurbishments at three Connected Communities schools and $10 million for maintenance and minor works in the remaining schools. We have recruited executive principals to lead these schools.
One of the key reforms is the introduction of Aboriginal languages into these schools. Connected Communities schools coordinate Aboriginal language classes, cultural studies or cultural activities in conjunction with the community.

We have focused on building relationships with local Aboriginal communities. An innovative example is the Coonamble Shop Front initiative, where the school has renovated a shop on the main street of Coonamble so that parents can meet with school staff on neutral ground and find out more about what is happening in the school. As a result, 500 interactions with parents have been recorded in two terms, more than the entire previous year.

Connected Communities schools have worked hard to establish partnerships with local health services to facilitate regular health checks for students. For example, at Bourke Public School, the Aboriginal Health Service and Bourke Community Health run a daily morning clinic where a nurse attends to students’ medical needs and contacts parents and carers if follow-up treatment is required.

Signs of improvement in the Connected Communities schools are already apparent and include:

- Primary attendance rates across Connected Communities schools increased by 1.8 percentage points from 2012 to 2014. The gap in primary attendance at Connected Communities schools compared with all NSW schools narrowed slightly from 8.9 percentage points in 2012 to 7.7 percentage points in 2014.
- Eight of the 11 schools with primary students reported improved attendance rates from 2012 to 2014.
- Three schools reported improvements in attendance of more than 7.0 percentage points over the last two years for Years 1 to 6.
- Overall attendance rates for Aboriginal Year 7 to 10 students improved by 2.3 percentage points at Connected Communities schools, compared with an increase of 1.2 percentage points at all NSW non-metropolitan schools, from 2012 to 2014.

The Minister for Education announced $8 million in funding over four years for the development and implementation of the Healing and Wellbeing Framework to provide support for trauma-related issues in Aboriginal communities. The model is culturally responsive and will be implemented across remote geographic locations, including the 15 Connected Communities schools, beginning in 2015.

**Supporting students learning English as an additional language**

Each year, public schools provide English as an additional language (EALD) education to assist students develop their English language proficiency. In 2014, 91,401 students received EALD support. Over 5,000 students received intensive English support through the New Arrivals Program, intensive English centres and the Intensive English High School.

In 2014, 1,406 refugee primary and secondary students in 82 schools were assisted through the provision of targeted support programs and specialist teaching support. Over 1,700 teachers and leaders participated in professional learning programs to help them cater for culturally diverse classrooms. A new professional learning program provided training to 54 experienced EALD teachers in whole-school approaches to support the language and settlement needs of English language learners.
Supporting students from rural, remote and disadvantaged communities

In 2014, the department commenced implementation of Rural and Remote Education: A blueprint for action, released by the Minister for Education in November 2013. We established Aurora College, the state’s first virtual school, to provide the opportunity for students in rural and remote areas to remain in their local school and community whilst studying specialist subjects that their home school cannot consistently offer. From 2015, the school will offer classes for Year 7 to Year 11 students. In 2016, the school will also offer Year 12 classes.

The department has also developed a series of master classes for students from rural and remote communities to enrich their study of mathematics, science and agriculture. These master classes include stand-alone videos and recorded video-conferences.

To support teachers to build leadership capacity in literacy and secondary curriculum, we have initiated a state-wide Secondary Literacy Leaders Network. With a membership of over 200 teachers, local networks of expert teachers are working together through peer mentoring and developing and sharing resources.

In 2014, the department introduced new teach. Rural scholarships, internships and cadetships to attract the best and brightest into teaching in rural and remote schools. We awarded 15 teach. Rural scholarships, three cadetships and seven internships with applicants placed in schools from Term 1, 2014.

From 2014, schools are able to progressively access a state-wide network of specialist assistance through a single local point of contact known as networked specialist centres. The initiative coordinates inter-agency health and wellbeing services through the expertise of specialist departmental staff collaborating with other government and non-government agencies to offer schools specialist assistance for students with complex needs. Four centres were established in Broken Hill, Dubbo, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga. A further 11 will be established in rural and regional NSW in 2015.

In 2014, a specialist preschool centre provided ongoing professional learning and mentor support for distance education preschool teachers. Using video conferencing, the teachers observed quality face-to-face preschool classrooms that demonstrated practice reflecting the National Early Years Learning Framework. In 2015, this project will be extended to include face-to-face preschool teachers from a range of rural and remote locations across the state. New enrolment guidelines were also introduced to provide isolated preschool-aged children access to a distance-education preschool class regardless of their intent to enrol in distance education.

The department is working towards meeting the 26 recommendations from the Review into Agricultural Education and Training in New South Wales. These include actions to review and promote education, teaching and pathways to careers in agriculture for the benefit of rural, remote and disadvantaged students wishing to study agriculture or gain employment in the industry. Substantial progress has been made in meeting many of the recommendations, including a pilot for an agriculture and food week in two learning communities in 2015; and the selection, through an expression of interest process, of the first lighthouse school for teaching agriculture.
Improving basic literacy and numeracy standards

The Early Action for Success strategy is helping to improve the literacy and numeracy performance of students in the early years of school. In 2014, the number of schools taking part in the strategy increased from 92 to 199, supported by 140 instructional leaders. The schools regularly collect data and monitor student progress against the literacy and numeracy continuums that map the learning development of students. For each student achieving substantially below expected standards, teachers and instructional leaders work together to tailor programs of learning to address student needs.

For the 92 schools that have been involved with the initiative for over 12 months, the proportion of Kindergarten students at the lowest level for reading, comprehension and writing reduced from 57.0 per cent to 1.2 per cent by the end of the school year. For early number learning, the percentage of Kindergarten students not able to count to 10, identify numbers or count objects reduced from 25.0 per cent to less than 1.0 per cent over the same period.

Encouraging students to stay in school and transition to further education, training and employment

In 2014, the department allocated $8.7 million to 54 providers to provide Links to Learning (L2L) support programs in over 260 schools. L2L is a practical program for students at risk of leaving school early and for young people who have left school but are not in education or training.

The program was reviewed in 2014 and a new community grants application process was launched for 2015. This new approach involves partner schools determining a service delivery plan to be followed by the funded organisations, which will add value to the work of schools and help develop innovative ways to keep students engaged in the later years of school and move successfully into further education, training and employment. In 2014, we also supported the seven schools within NSW juvenile justice centres to help young people make a transition back into school or other post-school options.

To ensure that students have access to different avenues for education and training, the department allocated more than $2.7 million for students in Years 9 and 10 to undertake vocational education and training (VET) courses. In 2014, there were 410 school-based apprentices and 3,553 school-based trainees in public schools across NSW. Trade schools, industry training centres and trade training centres in over 300 schools provided students with access to industry-standard training facilities. This encouraged more students to complete their schooling and helped to fill local skills shortages.

To further support VET in our schools, we funded approximately 2.2 million hours of work placement. Around $8 million of funding enabled service providers across NSW to broker up to 65,000 work placements for students enrolled in VET courses as part of their Higher School Certificate (HSC).

In 2014, we trained 34 teachers as transition advisers. Since 2005, we have trained a total of 322 secondary teachers. These teachers help at-risk students engage with learning, plan their long-term goals and prepare for their transition from school. The department also allocated $2.9 million to support school-to-work activities and innovative, whole-school initiatives to ensure that students are able to establish the foundations for a future career.
TAFE NSW partners with secondary schools to deliver VET programs and help students transition to further study and employment.

The Trade Readiness Program aims to reduce apprentice attrition and target young people at risk of disengaging with education. South Western Sydney Institute piloted 10 programs, with the NSW Government subsequently providing $650,000 to support implementation across all TAFE NSW institutes. In the six months to 30 June 2014, TAFE NSW had 849 enrolments in areas including carpentry, plumbing, painting and decorating, wall and floor tiling, electrical, shopfitting, boilermaking and welding, light automotive vehicle mechanics and panel beating.

Through the Participation Phase Initiative, a partnership between TAFE NSW and public and non-government schools, TAFE NSW has delivered training in employability, language, literacy and numeracy and vocational skills to participants aged 15 to 17 years to enhance their access to further education or employment pathways. Between January and June 2014, TAFE NSW enrolled over 1,700 students in this initiative.

Improving student attendance

To help develop the skills needed for work and life, all children are required to attend school (or be registered for home schooling) until they turn 17 years old. To help principals deal with cases of poor school attendance, the department’s attendance conference convenors bring parents, schools and agencies together to solve issues impacting on a child’s attendance. An additional 73 convenors were trained in 2014, bringing the total number trained since 2010 to more than 570.

We work closely with local communities to address the practical issues that impact on children’s ability to attend school. One such concern in the Walgett area is that wet weather often leads to buses getting bogged and, as a result, students are not able to attend either school or the Walgett Community College. To help overcome this issue, the department worked with the community college, the Walgett Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Federal Remote School Attendance Strategy, on a project to construct bus turnarounds and shelters.

At the state level, the attendance rate for students at public schools increased from 92.6 per cent in 2013 to 92.9 per cent in 2014. There was also a reduction in the gap in school attendance rates for Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal students, down 0.2 per cent in 2014 from 2013. While still unacceptably high, overall the gap has reduced by 0.4 per cent since 2011.
Quality teaching and leadership

Attracting and recruiting the highest quality teachers

In 2014, 6,729 new applicants were approved to teach in NSW public schools and we filled 3,171 classroom teacher positions. After incentive transfers and Aboriginal employment applicants were appointed, 57 per cent of classroom teacher positions were filled through a method chosen by schools.

Since the introduction of the Teacher Education Scholarship program in 2002, 1,666 high-quality teachers (including 314 Aboriginal teachers) have been appointed to areas of workforce need. In 2014, 300 new applicants (including 84 Aboriginal students) were awarded a scholarship.

Incentive scholarships were introduced in 2008 to attract high-quality graduates in their final year of study. In 2014, we appointed 11 mathematics, four science (physics), five technological and applied studies and seven special education teachers to NSW public schools.

In 2014, 45 teachers completed their retraining in mathematics, physics, school counselling, special education and teacher librarianship.

We also offered incentives to attract and retain teachers in remote regional schools. These included:

- priority transfers after service commitments had been met
- subsidised housing and rental accommodation
- retention benefits
- additional vacation and leave periods
- additional professional development days.

Under the Rural and Remote Education initiative, the NSW Government will offer further incentives to attract and retain teachers and school leaders in hard-to-staff schools. In 2014, we appointed 57 classroom teachers, 17 executive staff and five principals through incentive transfers.

Great Teaching, Inspired Learning

In 2014, the department continued to implement Great Teaching, Inspired Learning, the NSW Government’s plan to improve the quality of teaching in the state’s schools.

The department, through the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, published the first Workforce Profile of the NSW Teaching Profession report in 2014. The report, to be produced annually, provides a profile of the NSW teaching workforce from entry into initial teacher education to exit from the profession. Data covers both public and non-government school teachers.

We strengthened induction support by publishing Strong Start, Great Teachers, an online resource to support beginning teachers.

2014 saw the introduction of a new and expanded model of support for permanent beginning teachers in the first two years of their teaching career. The initiative provides teachers with the equivalent of two hours per week release in their first year, and the equivalent of one hour per week release in their second year. Schools are also provided with the equivalent of one hour per week to release experienced teachers to provide mentor support during the beginning teacher’s first year of teaching.
In 2014, this initiative supported 2,100 beginning teachers in over 1,000 public schools through first-year resource funding. In addition, eight teacher mentor positions were established across the state to specifically support communities of schools employing significant numbers of temporary teachers in the early stages of their career. These positions were located in four rural and four metropolitan locations and supported beginning temporary teachers in up to 40 schools.

Revised processes for teacher, executive and principal performance management and development are a feature of the 2014 Teachers Award. The Performance and Development Framework for Principals, Executives and Teachers in NSW Public Schools was published at the end of 2014. New procedures for managing performance issues commenced mid-2014, with training and support materials developed by the department in consultation with the NSW Teachers Federation.

An integrated leadership strategy including a new leadership credential was developed in 2014. A series of online coaching modules were prepared and trialled in a number of schools in Terms 3 and 4. To better support school leaders, we created the role of Principal, School Leadership, with 26 full-time and 36 part-time positions appointed in 2014. These positions actively mentor principals to help them develop high-quality school planning processes and conduct a variety of professional learning and mentoring opportunities.

To provide teachers with the opportunity to learn through observing the practice of others, the department has entered a partnership with the University of Newcastle to conduct research on Quality Teaching Rounds in a number of NSW public schools. In 2014, during Terms 3 and 4, 16 schools participated in the research project.

We have also contracted a documentary company to support schools to video their classroom practice to share with others. The department’s ClassMovies website was launched in March 2014 and ClassMovies TV in November 2014. Over 180 NSW public schools registered to participate during the year, with 65 DVDs produced and another 30 in production.

**Accreditation and professional development for our school teachers and principals**

The department is committed to improving the status of the teaching profession and the quality of teaching and learning in all NSW public schools. In 2014, legislation was introduced that will require all teachers in NSW schools to acquire and maintain accreditation with BOSTES against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers by the beginning of 2018.

The implementation of the Performance and Development Framework for Principals, Executives and Teachers in NSW Public Schools from 2015 will support all teachers to develop their understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and to achieve and maintain their teaching accreditation.

In 2014, under Great Teaching, Inspired Learning, beginning teachers received targeted support to develop their professional practice. In addition, the Classroom Teacher Program provided more than 100 hours of registered online standards-based professional learning. The introduction of the 62 Principal, School Leadership positions also supported leadership capacity-building for principals across the state. This professional development particularly focuses on school planning.
Recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching

Professional teaching standards are seen as crucial in promoting quality teaching and the attainment of these standards will be recognised through an increase in teacher salaries from 2016. We are working towards implementing a new award for our teachers, negotiated in December 2013, which includes a new standards-based salary structure. Under the new remuneration structure, to be implemented from 1 January 2016, teachers achieving accreditation at the Highly Accomplished level will be paid an annual salary in excess of $100,000.

To support teachers in rural and remote areas gain the higher levels of accreditation, teachers working in rural and remote areas who achieve accreditation at the higher career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher, are eligible to have their accreditation fees reimbursed.

The 229 schools that participated in the Empowering Local Schools National Partnership now have the flexibility within their budgets to recognise and reward excellence in teaching by creating additional executive positions as required, or engaging Highly Accomplished teachers to support the needs of students in their local schools.

Ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of our students

The department provided a range of services to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all students during 2014.

We continue to build the capacity of schools to respond to child protection issues. In 2013/14, the Child Wellbeing unit responded to over 12,600 contacts, an increase of about five per cent from the previous year. We worked in partnership with health, police, community services and non-government organisations to identify students most at risk and coordinated responses across agencies.

Under the NSW Government’s Supporting Students plan, 50 student support officers worked in areas of greatest need to help young people manage issues such as bullying, cyberbullying and social media. Student support officers provide valuable support to schools by linking with other agencies and working with their local community to support secondary school students. Examples include:

- hosting breakfast clubs on school grounds before school
- running transition-to-high-school programs
- working with students to develop resilience, self-esteem and positive relationships with peers
- assisting in the development of evidence-based student wellbeing and anti-bullying strategies.

During 2014, an independent review of the student support officer initiative was conducted by the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. The review showed the initiative is highly regarded in schools and has overwhelming support from all stakeholder groups. Feedback from principals, school staff, students and external organisations highlighted the value of the officers and their important contribution to the wellbeing of students. This initiative will continue into 2015.

We continue to support student participation and leadership. In 2014, over 250 primary and secondary students took part in state-led initiatives that involved students in planning about their learning, discussion about key contemporary issues impacting on young people, and in developing their leadership skills and experience. Initiatives included the Australia Day Lunch, Secretary for a Day, Y20 Summit, student forums, LEAPS (Law Firms Encouraging and Assisting Promising Students) and PenPal mentoring programs.
Live Life Well @ School is a collaboration between the department and the NSW Ministry of Health and aims to embed nutrition and physical education within the personal development, health and physical education curriculum in NSW primary schools. It supports the NSW Government’s work to reduce the rate of obesity in children and young people.

In 2014, 678 teachers from 428 primary schools attended 31 professional learning workshops on how to promote whole-of-school physical activity and healthy eating.

In addition, four Kindergarten to Year 6 conferences on physical activity and healthy eating were delivered as a joint initiative between the department, Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, the NSW Office of Preventative Health and Live Life Well @ School. The conferences were attended by 471 teachers from 423 schools.

We also completed a review of evidence and best practice about teaching healthy eating to primary school students and continue to implement the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

This year, 714 teachers from 697 schools attended a professional learning program developed in partnership with Transport NSW on how to teach road safety in NSW public schools.

The department’s Anti-Racism Policy outlines a commitment to eliminating all forms of racial discrimination in NSW public schools. Under the policy, every school is required to have a trained anti-racism contact officer to promote anti-racism education and assist with complaints of racism in schools.

In 2014, more than 270 teachers across the state completed anti-racism professional learning programs. New resources to support anti-racism education and the integration of intercultural understanding across the curriculum were published on the department’s Racism. No way! and Cultural Exchange NSW websites. The Strengthening Community Harmony resource was updated to assist schools in building community harmony and in supporting students and their families in the event of community disharmony.

**Implementing the Australian curriculum**

The department extended the range of resources and registered professional learning courses to help schools implement the new NSW syllabuses for the Australian curriculum in English, mathematics, science and history.

We assist teachers and schools to implement each of the new syllabuses through face-to-face professional learning workshops with networks of schools and SyllabusPLUS webinars. These live and recorded modules focus on literacy and the use of the literacy continuum, life skills, pedagogy, changes in the new syllabuses and accommodating the different needs of each student in the classroom. The sessions are being accessed by an increasing number of teachers, both during and after school hours.
New and better ways of doing business

National Education Reform Agreement

The National Education Reform Agreement commenced in NSW in 2014. Additional funding has been distributed to both public and non-government schools via a new needs-based funding approach. Under the agreement, an additional $5 billion will be provided to NSW schools between 2014 and 2019.

The additional investment by the NSW and Commonwealth governments will allow the department to extend and accelerate the innovative reforms already underway throughout the state. These reforms include Great Teaching, Inspired Learning; the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan; Local Schools, Local Decisions; the Rural and Remote Education blueprint; and the Connected Communities initiative.

Increasing local decision-making and reforming the way we finance and staff our schools

The NSW Government’s Local Schools, Local Decisions reform is designed to improve teaching and learning by increasing the level of local decision-making by schools. It recognises that school staff and the school community are best placed to choose how to meet the needs of their particular students.

One of the key reforms is the phased implementation of the new, needs-based RAM for allocating funding to public schools. Based on identified student and school need, the model is both fairer and more transparent. When fully implemented, the RAM will consist of:

- a base school allocation, providing operational funding to support all students
- four equity loadings, providing additional resources to address student need in schools, including support for Aboriginal students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, students with low-level disability and students learning English as an additional language or dialect
- targeted funding for individual students who require moderate to high adjustments for disability and for new arrivals and refugees.

The implementation of the RAM began in 2014, with targeted funding and two equity loadings. In 2015, schools will receive the remaining equity loadings. Geographically remote or isolated schools will also receive a location loading in recognition of the additional support needed. To support staff with this change, the department is providing professional learning in leadership, financial management and consultative decision-making.

Improving our school facilities and infrastructure

We continued to improve our teaching and learning environments through our capital works and asset acquisition programs. In 2013/14 the department completed 14 public school major works projects, 10 major public school projects are ongoing and a further seven have started. We also allocated over $10.3 million for 182 projects in 166 schools from the Public School Upgrade program.
The department completed 28 projects under the Commonwealth’s Trade Training Centres Program, with 39 projects starting. We also completed a $94 million program of capital works in 19 schools for specific purposes, to improve the learning environments of students with special needs. The department’s procurement strategy enabled us to deliver these projects for significantly less than the Commonwealth’s Building the Education Revolution program.

We also entered into our first school partnership agreement working collaboratively with the City of Canada Bay Council to provide the new Victoria Avenue Public School in Concord NSW, which is due to open for the beginning of the 2015 school year. Partnership agreements can provide substantial savings to government and the department is investigating similar agreements for future schools.

As part of the review of the School Facilities Standards the department created the online Educational Facilities Standards and Guidelines. These will provide more flexibility in the way our school facilities can be constructed and used.

The principles of the Thermal Comfort and Energy Efficiency Framework have been applied to energy efficiency projects to provide a cost-effective and sustainable approach to making classrooms and learning spaces more comfortable in summer and winter. The department has also begun detailed energy audits of 15 schools, which will provide recommendations for improving the energy efficiency of schools.

**Supporting technology and innovation in learning**

We recognise that innovative approaches to learning are required for students to meet the challenges of life and work in the 21st century.

Working closely with Education Services Australia, the department has made digital teaching and learning resources available and accessible through NSW DEC Scootle. We continue to work with a range of vendors to make innovative learning tools available to schools in a safe, managed environment.

The department has also produced and published digital resources to support priority projects, including online resources to support NSW syllabuses for the Australian curriculum, the national MoneySmart project and an expanding suite of resources supporting the Centenary of World War I.

In order to position our school libraries as a central point for delivering relevant and advanced information and learning skills, the department has begun to implement a new school library system. Due for completion by the end of 2016, all schools will have an Oliver online library system. This will allow schools to manage their physical and digital resources and access commercial and departmental resources, including e-books.

An online science resource, linking all the department’s digital resources in the Teaching and Learning Exchange to the Science Kindergarten to Year 10 syllabus, will help develop teachers’ skills in science teaching. In addition, the department has collaborated with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) to deliver online master classes and virtual excursions to science students in western NSW. A partnership with the Australian Research Council’s Centre of Excellence for All-sky Astrophysics (CAASTRO) has also produced science webinars for senior high school students.
Improving administrative and information management systems

The Learning Management and Business Reform (LMBR) program is modernising the way the department manages and delivers student enrolment and administration, learning and support, finance, human resources and technology services. The program’s core objectives are to support the NSW Government’s broader reform program, deliver improved educational outcomes and provide better services to staff, students and parents.

The deployment to the initial 229 pilot schools in 2013 presented a number of challenges, as contemporary solutions replaced an operating environment developed 25 years ago. The pilot provided valuable lessons that have helped shape the development and structure of a further rollout to the remaining schools. A considerable amount of work occurred during 2014 to stabilise and enhance the solutions developed for schools. Feedback and engagement from the pilot schools has resulted in the development of an enhanced training and support model for the future phased rollout to all schools.
Performance report:  
In tertiary education and training
Performance report: In tertiary education and training

Our performance targets

**Fifty per cent increase in the proportion of people with qualifications at AQF certificate III and above by 2020**

In 2014, 59.9 per cent of people in NSW aged between 20 and 64 had attained a qualification at AQF certificate III and above. While the rate continues to increase over time, this was an increase of 0.6 percentage points compared to 2013 (see Figure 13).

**One hundred per cent increase in the number of higher-level qualifications at diploma level and above by 2020**

Overall, NSW is progressing towards this target, with 23,504 completions at diploma-level and above in 2012 (see Figure 14).

**Figure 13:** Proportion of NSW people aged between 20 and 64 years old with an AQF qualification at certificate III or above (2006 to 2014)

![Figure 13: Proportion of NSW people aged between 20 and 64 years old with an AQF qualification at certificate III or above (2006 to 2014)](chart)

Source: ABS Australia, Education and Work (cat. 6227), additional data cubes. Notes: Care needs to be taken with the interpretation of survey data as high standard errors can mean that differences from year to year are not statistically significant.

**Figure 14:** Number of completions at diploma qualification and above in NSW (2006 to 2012)

![Figure 14: Number of completions at diploma qualification and above in NSW (2006 to 2012)](chart)

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), National VET Provider Collection. Notes: 2012 qualification numbers are preliminary due to lag in reporting. Data are not yet available for 2013 and 2014.
Twenty per cent increase in the number of women, rural and regional and Aboriginal students completing higher-level qualifications at AQF certificate III and above by 2020

In 2012, progress towards targets for higher-level qualifications among Aboriginal students and women exceeded our expectations. The number of female students completing higher-level qualifications at certificate III and above was 66,617 in 2012, above our target for 2020. Similarly, 3,624 Aboriginal students completed qualifications at certificate III or above, above the department’s target of 2,760 by 2020. Completion numbers in rural and regional NSW continue to increase over time, with 37,674 completions in 2012 (see figures 15.1, 15.2, 15.3).

Figure 15.1: Number of completions at AQF qualification certificate III or above for women (2006 to 2012)

![Figure 15.1: Number of completions at AQF qualification certificate III or above for women (2006 to 2012)](image1)

Source: NCVER National VET Provider Collection. Notes: Data are not yet available for 2013 and 2014.

Figure 15.2: Number of completions at AQF qualification certificate III or above for Aboriginal students (2006 to 2012)

![Figure 15.2: Number of completions at AQF qualification certificate III or above for Aboriginal students (2006 to 2012)](image2)

Source: NCVER National VET Provider Collection. Notes: Data are not yet available for 2013 and 2014.
Increase the proportion of young people with a bachelor degree or above to 44 per cent by 2025

In 2014, 40.4 per cent of young people in NSW held a bachelor’s degree or higher. The NSW Government remains on track to achieve its target of 44 per cent by 2025 (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Proportion of 25 to 34 year olds in NSW holding a bachelor-level qualification or above (2006 to 2013)

Source: ABS Australia, Education and Work, (cat. 6227), additional data cubes. Notes: Care needs to be taken with the interpretation of survey data as high standard errors can mean that differences from year to year are not statistically significant.
Increase the proportion of undergraduate enrolments by students from low socio-economic status backgrounds to 20 per cent by 2020

In 2013, 17.9 per cent of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds were enrolled in an undergraduate degree at NSW higher education institutions. If this trend continues, NSW will meet its target of 20 per cent by 2020 (see Figure 17).

Increase the proportion of school leavers participating in further education, training or employment to 90 per cent by 2020

In 2014, 69.4 per cent of school leavers were fully engaged in further education, training or work (see Figure 18).

Increase the number of apprenticeship and traineeship completions by 10 per cent by 2016

The number of NSW apprenticeship and traineeship completions had been steadily improving since 2006, with 60,969 completions across NSW in 2013. There was a decline in apprentice and trainee completions in 2014 to 51,085, mainly attributed to Commonwealth changes to incentives from 1 July 2012 that affected existing worker traineeship commencements. There were 17,320 completions in rural and regional areas in 2014 (see Figure 19).

Figure 17: Proportion of undergraduate students from low socio-economic status background enrolled at NSW higher education providers (2008 to 2013)

![Figure 17](image-url)

Source: Department of Education and Communities, Selected Higher Education Statistics.
**Figure 18:** Proportion of 15 to 19 year-old school leavers fully participating in education, training and/or employment (2006 to 2014)

Source: ABS Australia, Education and Work, Australia (cat. 6227), additional data cubes. Notes: Care needs to be taken with the interpretation of survey data as high standard errors can mean that differences from year to year are not statistically significant.

**Figure 19:** NSW apprenticeships and traineeships completion estimates (2006 to 2014)

Source: National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER), National Apprenticeship and Traineeship Collection - VOCSTATS (September quarter estimates). Notes: The decline in apprentice and trainee completions in 2014 is mainly attributed to Commonwealth changes to incentives from 1 July 2012 that affected existing worker traineeship commencements. The existing worker trainees are unlikely to receive public funding for their training. The 2010 baseline and the target for rural and regional completions are based on NCVER data that used the ABS 2003 Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). However, from 2014 onwards, NCVER has reported rural and regional data against the 2011 remoteness index. This means the reported data from 2014 onwards are measured against a baseline with a different classification of rural and regional areas. NCVER back-casting of the 2010 baseline applying the 2011 remoteness index, shows the new baseline to be 17,417, instead of the current baseline of 19,552.
Our priorities:
In tertiary education and training
High expectations, closing the gaps

Creating opportunities for people facing barriers

The Smart and Skilled reforms to the NSW VET system will be introduced on 1 January 2015. The reforms will provide eligible students with government-subsidised training in courses on the NSW Skills List, to gain the skills they need to get a job and advance their career.

The Smart and Skilled initiative will provide fee exemptions and concessions for disadvantaged students and those with special needs. These arrangements will assist students with disability, Aboriginal students and Commonwealth welfare recipients. The NSW Government will also allocate loadings to approved providers to offset higher costs supporting Aboriginal students, students with disability, the long-term unemployed and students in regional and remote locations.

TAFE NSW provides educational opportunities for people facing barriers to enhance their prospects for employment and further education. In 2014, TAFE NSW prepared for the implementation of Smart and Skilled by ensuring that institutes adjusted their training profiles and course offerings to courses on the NSW Skills List.

To support skills development, higher-level study and employment opportunities for all students, TAFE NSW continues to provide specialist and accessible training services. As at 30 June 2014, TAFE NSW enrolments in AQF certificate III to graduate diploma qualifications increased for all target groups compared to the same period in 2013.

This included over:
- 134,000 women
- 12,900 Aboriginal students
- 90,900 students from regional and remote locations
- 16,500 students with a disability.

TAFE NSW higher education qualifications are an effective and efficient learning pathway resulting in highly competent, industry-ready graduates. In the six months to 30 June 2014, TAFE NSW offered eight accredited higher education programs at nine locations, with over 770 enrolments. This was an increase of approximately 25 per cent compared with the same time in 2013.

As the preferred NSW training provider under the National Partnership Agreement on Training Places for Single and Teenage Parents, TAFE NSW was allocated $8.52 million in 2013/14, enrolling 10,134 people. In the six months to 30 June 2014, TAFE NSW also enrolled nearly 2,600 students in the state’s correctional and juvenile justice centres, providing training in foundation and employment skills and trade courses.

TAFE NSW institutes implemented a number of local initiatives to support people facing barriers, with the aim of increasing vocational skills and providing pathways to employment or further study. Examples included:

- Illawarra Institute partnered with the Lighthouse Church and Barnardo’s Australia to deliver the Certificate II in Resource Infrastructure Work. This targeted young people, Aboriginal people and long-term unemployed jobseekers. Of the 32 participants, one gained full-time employment before completion and 70 per cent secured employment or undertook further study upon completion.
- Western Sydney Institute partnered with the Men’s Shed Association and community support agencies to deliver an Outreach program for mature-aged men. The program included small motor maintenance, chainsaw operations, welding and employability skills. The institute also delivered eco-friendly community gardening programs in partnership with local councils, community neighbourhood centres and local schools. Training in community learning spaces was based on a case-managed, early intervention model with embedded employability skills.

The NSW Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) delivered the Skillmax program to assist skilled migrants to gain employment in their professions or related fields. The program addresses barriers that may impact upon job-seeking clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. NSW AMES developed extensive professional networks with recruitment agencies and professional associations to enhance employment opportunities for Skillmax clients and training programs incorporated employment experience with volunteer organisations. In 2013/14, 67 per cent of participants gained work in their field.

In May 2014, the Minister for Education announced the $2.4 million Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarships to assist apprentices with disability, Aboriginal apprentices and female apprentices in non-traditional trades who face significant challenges in completing their qualification. The scholarships are named in honour of the NSW Apprenticeships Ambassador, Mr Bert Evans AO, a lifelong advocate for VET. A total of 101 scholarships were awarded (with 99 of the students enrolled at TAFE NSW), plus an additional 10 one-off encouragement scholarships (with nine students enrolled at TAFE NSW). From 2015, the scholarship program will offer 40 annual scholarships worth $15,000 each over three years for beginning apprentices.

In 2014, 10 NSW Country Apprentice Scholarships were awarded to first-year apprentices in regional and rural NSW who were experiencing extraordinary hardship. The scholarship provides $5,000 for each year of the apprenticeship up to a total of $15,000 and will operate in tandem with the Bert Evans Apprenticeship Scholarships.

Adult and community education (ACE) colleges enrolled over 8,000 disadvantaged students in the ACE program. This included pre-vocational training for people facing barriers to employment. Under the Youth Transitions Program, 23 ACE organisations were funded to work with public schools and other organisations and networks to provide training pathways and individualised support for 500 at-risk young people. Under the Mature Aged Workers Program, 25 ACE organisations were funded to deliver training for up to 400 older workers. The program involved partnerships with local employers and community organisations.

Ensuring equal opportunities for people with disability

TAFE NSW aims to meet the needs of students with disability in tertiary education and vocational training and ensure that all students have equal access to the opportunities provided by skills training. In the six months to 30 June 2014, TAFE NSW had over 37,000 enrolments by students with disability, with over 60 enrolled in bachelor and associate degrees and 16,500 in certificate III to graduate diploma qualifications. This represented 10 per cent of total TAFE NSW student enrolments.

Under the Smart and Skilled initiative, TAFE NSW will receive additional community service obligation funding to provide support services for students with disability. This will help fund support services, specialist staff and specialised equipment. In addition, students with disability and their dependents will not pay a fee for the
first subsidised qualification they begin in a calendar year. A concession will apply for any subsequent course the student commences in the same year up to certificate IV. Training providers will also receive a 15 per cent loading on top of the price for the qualification to help meet the learning needs of students with disability.

In 2014, TAFE NSW institutes employed specialist staff to support students with pre-course counselling, course selection and enrolment, classroom support, assessment modifications, access to tutorial support, adaptive technologies, sign language interpreters, note-takers and disability assistants. Other ways in which the institutes supported students with disability included:

- Northern Sydney Institute delivered customised programs including horticulture, carpentry and retail to develop work skills. It also provided entry-level construction training, which included a pathway into the certificate III carpentry course for students with intellectual or learning disabilities.

- Riverina Institute provided career guidance and delivered TAFE vocational education and training (TVET) courses to school students with disabilities. Customised delivery improved student retention and pathway opportunities to certificate II courses.

Through the Strategic Skills Program, State Training Services committed over $6.7 million for more than 2,640 jobseekers with disability to undertake training with the aim of finding employment. Under the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Training program, training was funded for over 1,560 apprentices and trainees with disability.

NSW ACE colleges recognise and value diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment that ensures equal opportunities to all, including those with disability. In 2014, training was undertaken by over 2,000 students with disability across NSW.

### Improving business and career opportunities for Aboriginal people

In 2014, State Training Services committed $9.9 million through the Strategic Skills Program for training to assist 3,481 Aboriginal job seekers with disability into employment. Under the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Training program, $3.6 million was committed to provide training for over 2,610 Aboriginal apprentices and trainees with disability.

State Training Services continued to provide free business advisory support to Aboriginal people wishing to establish their own business through the Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officer program. In 2014, the program assisted 144 clients and successfully created some 40 new Aboriginal businesses.

The Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Program funded state and local government agencies to employ 124 Aboriginal people. The program included the creation of 97 Aboriginal school-based traineeship positions to increase HSC completion rates and to help students successfully transition from school into work. Guidance, mentoring, counselling and support services were provided to over 700 Aboriginal apprentices and trainees under the Our Way Ahead for Aboriginal People program. In 2014, over 120 people successfully completed their training.

Under the Smart and Skilled reforms, commencing in 2015, Aboriginal students will not pay for government-subsidised qualifications. Training providers will also receive a 15 per cent loading on top of the price for the qualification to help meet the learning needs of Aboriginal students.

TAFE NSW is committed to improving the educational and employment outcomes of Aboriginal students. In the six months to 30 June 2014, over 26,200 Aboriginal students were enrolled in TAFE courses, which is more than six per cent of total TAFE NSW enrolments.
The Aboriginal Learning Circle Alliance is a collaboration between Hunter, North Coast, New England, South Western Sydney and Illawarra institutes and represents approximately 16,500 Aboriginal students. The alliance supports networking across institutes to enhance the delivery of training and provide strategic advice and leadership on business strategies for Aboriginal education and training. Its partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce provides business skills and procurement opportunities for Aboriginal businesses.

Institutes continued to support participation in tertiary education and training and establish partnerships with local education providers, businesses and community groups. For example:

- Sydney Institute delivered pre-employment training in customer service skills to Aboriginal students across the state for the First Steps Indigenous Employment Program, in partnership with Coles supermarkets.
- Western Institute delivered national programs for Aboriginal students, including the Aboriginal Governance Skills Set and the Certificate IV in Business Governance (Aboriginal). In the six months to 30 June 2014, 19 Aboriginal students were enrolled in the certificate course. The institute’s Virtual Advisor program for employers and service providers for Aboriginal peoples encompassed ‘Aboriginal Cultural Competence Journey: The Maliyan Experience’. The program included participation in the Bangamalanha Conference, which expanded employer and service provider networks.

The ACE Social Inclusion program provided over 2,000 Aboriginal students with vocational training to improve their employment prospects. Providers offered pathway planning, literacy and numeracy support, counselling and work experience to help students complete their training. In addition, the New Careers for Aboriginal People program provided advisory services for over 1,490 Aboriginal job seekers across NSW, with 785 people gaining employment and over 1,040 people undertaking vocational skills training.

**Removing barriers for women to non-traditional occupations**

State Training Services continues communication and support strategies to encourage women into non-traditional trades. The final report from a (former) Board of Vocational Education and Training research project, Ducks on the Pond, on barriers and enablers to girls entering and completing non-traditional trade apprenticeships was completed in 2014. It includes practical recommendations to increase the number of women completing training in non-traditional trades.

In 2014, 34 scholarships were awarded under the Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarship scheme to first, second and third year female apprentices in non-traditional trades facing significant challenges in completing their qualification.

The NSW Training Award for Women in a Non-Traditional Trade or Vocation recognises the achievements of women working in traditionally male-dominated trades. The 2014 winner of the award will take on an ambassadorial role, helping to raise awareness and promote these trades as rewarding career pathways for young women.
TAFE NSW continues its commitment to remove barriers for women to non-traditional occupations. In the six months to 30 June 2014, there were over 3,600 course enrolments by women in non-traditional occupational areas. The most popular courses were in the building and construction trades, with enrolments across a range of areas including firefighting, boilermaking and welding, maritime engineering, aerospace engineering and heavy vehicle operations, architecture, building, electrical, plumbing and electrotechnology.

Riverina Institute delivered TVET courses in non-traditional trades to HSC students, with successful students receiving a fee reduction for the first year of an apprenticeship. The institute also partnered with Job Services Australia to conduct short courses for older women to help break down barriers to employment in non-traditional trades; and promoted networking opportunities for women in non-traditional occupations such as the Women in Forestry network.

South Western Sydney Institute delivered the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training for women under the Department of Family and Community Services’ Investing in Women program, which focused on painting and decorating. Fifteen students completed the course and six enrolled in further training.

Targeting training to the needs of rural and regional NSW

The Pathway for School Leavers and Partnering for Jobs programs are part of State Training Services’ Regional Training and Employment Strategy. The Pathways for School Leavers program targets disadvantaged school leavers who face difficulties in accessing and transitioning to higher-level vocational or higher education study. In 2014, the program assisted over 40 students to pursue their career goals in the fields of business administration, aged care, nursing, pathology, events management, travel and tourism. To assist employers experiencing skills shortages, the Partnering for Jobs program has provided training for 90 job seekers in aged care, logistics, hospitality and agriculture industries.

In the six months to 30 June 2014, TAFE NSW enrolled over 155,000 students from regional and remote locations, including 90,900 enrolments in certificate III to graduate diploma qualifications. TAFE NSW undertook significant research and consultation with national, state and local stakeholders to identify demand for skills and forecast employment growth and workforce development needs for rural and regional NSW. Initiatives included the following:

- North Coast Institute opened a pop-up campus in the Byron Bay Community Centre to deliver courses in hospitality and tourism. It also partnered with employment service providers to offer training targeted at local skills needs and the needs of communities with limited access to transport.

- Riverina Institute partnered with Deakin University in May 2014 to develop educational opportunities across the region, providing students with seamless pathways from VET to university. It is anticipated that the enhanced educational program offerings and research opportunities will lead to increased employment opportunities and attract new business to the region. The institute also partnered with Riverina and Murray Regional Organisations of Councils to provide training to rural and regional communities without access to a TAFE campus. The training was delivered via video-conferencing, using local town libraries and community centres. Riverina Institute delivered training in foundation skills, language, literacy and numeracy and pathways leading to employment opportunities.
Following the government’s Review into Agricultural Education and Training in New South Wales, the department worked with schools, TAFE NSW, BOSTES and the NSW Department of Primary Industries to review and promote agricultural education, teaching and pathways to careers in the industry. This will help ensure agricultural education and training continues to be responsive to industry needs.

**Retraining retrenched workers in regional and rural areas**

State Training Services continued to administer the Retrenched Workers Assistance Program, part of the Regional Training and Employment Strategy. The strategy helps workers affected by structural readjustment to upskill and retrain for new job opportunities. From 2011 to the end of 2014, we had provided training or assistance to 5,485 affected workers from 194 companies.

State Training Services also collaborates in Rapid Response Teams, which provide a whole-of-government response to job losses and to determine strategies to assist employers and their affected workers, particularly where a large number of workers are involved. In 2014, State Training Services was part of a Rapid Response Team that assisted over 600 affected Electrolux workers and contractors following the announcement in 2013 of the Orange factory closure. The assistance included skills gap analysis, skills assessments and upskilling and retraining options mapped to workers’ career transition plans and aligned with the company’s staged closure from October 2015 to November 2016.

The Continuing Apprentices Placement Service matches employers to retrenched apprentices and trainees wanting to complete their training in their chosen career. By the end of 2014, State Training Services had placed over 1,950 (70 per cent) of apprentices and trainees who applied for placement through this service. The Workforce Mobility Program offers tailored workforce solutions by bringing together employers experiencing skills shortages and job seekers from across NSW. In 2014, the program facilitated training for 220 job seekers in skills shortage areas and assistance for people willing to travel further afield or relocate to another area of NSW to take up work.

TAFE NSW provides skills gap training to help retrenched workers find new jobs. TAFE NSW institutes and the Open Training and Education Network worked with Job Services Australia to deliver language, literacy, numeracy and vocational training to clients through the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program. In the six months to 30 June 2014, TAFE NSW had over 2,800 enrolments in the program, of which over 900 were in employment skills programs, 800 in English language and general education programs and 600 in literacy and numeracy programs.

Hunter Institute partnered with the department’s State Training Services to train 21 retrenched workers from BAE Systems, Bluetongue Breweries and Downer EDI. Training included high-risk work licence assessments, dogging, forklift, work health and safety, management and coastal marine operations. The institute also delivered the SEE program to retrenched mining sector workers. Customised programs were developed for each participant after assessment of their career goals skills and a skills gap analysis. Following this, a number of participants were successful in gaining employment.

Western Institute offered 60 government-subsidised places for workers affected by the closure of Electrolux. The institute worked with State Training Services and the company to build career transition pathways for employees. This included assessments of workers’ skills and capabilities, assisting with career choices and providing specialist support. Skills recognition and customised training was provided in heavy vehicle driving and maintenance, forklift driving and warehousing.
Quality teaching and leadership

Developing the skills and leadership capability of TAFE NSW staff

TAFE NSW provided a range of professional development opportunities for staff, including programs to support national and state policy changes to the VET sector. TAFE NSW has also worked with the Australian Education Union (NSW) to trial new education support and leadership roles as part of the TAFE Teachers and Related Employees Enterprise Agreement, 2013. The University of Sydney’s Workplace Research Centre is undertaking an independent evaluation of the trial, due for conclusion in mid-2015.

The TAFE NSW Higher Education Professional Development Framework was developed in 2014 to provide a planned and systematic approach to encourage and support staff to pursue their professional development. In April 2014, a research colloquium was also conducted to provide an opportunity for teaching staff to engage in academic activities.

The NSW TAFE Commission Board has overseen a draft TAFE NSW Teaching and Learning Standards Framework, which is aligned to the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework and supports compliance with the national standards for registered training organisations. Fifteen staff from the department and TAFE NSW institutes commenced the Building our Future Leadership Program, delivered by the Australian Catholic University.

TAFE NSW institutes implemented a number of training programs throughout the year to manage and develop the skills and leadership capacity of staff, for example:

- New England Institute implemented a talent management system and a personal and professional development management system.

This included training in child protection, customer service, language literacy and numeracy, skills related to training and assessment and current qualifications.

- South Western Sydney Institute held a senior staff leadership forum, Working Together and Supporting Each Other, which was attended by 231 current and aspiring leaders. The forum focused on VET issues and solutions.

Improving the quality of vocational education and training

State Training Services is an approved Australian Apprenticeships Centre. In 2014, support services were provided for over 22,900 apprentices and trainees and their employers.

The NSW Quality Framework was released in December 2013 as part of the Smart and Skilled reform. It sets the benchmark for high-quality training, ensuring that training providers meet stringent criteria. Under the framework, training providers are assessed on their capacity, capability and performance before being approved to deliver Smart and Skilled programs.

In 2014, State Training Services facilitated 57 professional development workshops for 691 vocational education trainers, assessors and other staff. A major focus of the workshops was to improve training and assessment practices based on the new framework and to build capacity and capability for NSW training providers.

State Training Services also assisted trainer and assessor networks and facilitated the introduction of the NSW Smart and Skilled Teaching and Leadership Policy through its professional development activities. The Teaching and Leadership program supported ACE providers to transition
Our priorities: In tertiary education and training

to Smart and Skilled in 2014, funding five ACE organisations in metropolitan and regional NSW to support professional development training.

Performance monitoring is one of nine principles outlined in the NSW Quality Framework. It incorporates a risk-based approach, coordinated monitoring and performance reviews. During 2014, we developed a performance monitoring strategy to assist in the implementation of Smart and Skilled contracts. Over 1,700 learners with 149 registered training organisations were monitored, representing 65 per cent of the total organisations funded under the Strategic Skills program.

### 2014 NSW Training Awards

The NSW Training Awards are the peak awards for the VET sector, recognising and celebrating achievement, excellence and innovation in the training sector in NSW. Over 850 applications were received across the 18 award categories in 2014. The 2014 awards were hosted by the Minister for Education, with over 550 guests from the training sector, business, government and community attending, including the Patron and NSW Apprenticeship Ambassador, Mr Bert Evans AO.

Award winners for 2014 were:

**Apprentice of the Year**

Mark Hardy  
Electrotechnology Electrician Certificate III  
Trained by: TAFE NSW – North Coast Institute  
Employed by: Mackie Electric and Refrigeration Pty Ltd

**Trainee of the Year**

Joshua Lodge  
Laboratory Techniques Certificate IV  
Trained by: TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute  
Employed by: Hunter Valley Training Company

**Vocational Student of the Year**

David Bridge  
Meat Processing – Advanced Diploma  
Trained by: Response Learning  
Employed by: Gundagai Meat Processors

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year**

Jameela Smith  
Employment Services Certificate IV  
Trained by: ORS Training Solutions  
Employed by: The ORS Group Pty Ltd

**School-Based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year**

Savannah De Oliveira  
Hairdressing Certificate III  
Trained by: TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute  
Employed by: Whispa Salon Spa  
School: Lucas Heights Community School

**VET Trainer/Teacher of the Year**

Steven Atkins  
Employed by: TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute

**2014 Industry Collaboration Award**

Barangaroo Skills Exchange

**2014 Large Employer of the Year**

Wyong Shire Council

**2014 Small Employer of the Year**

TRAKKA Pty Ltd

**2014 Large Training Provider of the Year**

TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute

**2014 Small Training Provider of the Year**

Evolution
2014 Excellence in Trade Skills

Stephen Coyle
Mechanical Trade Certificate
Trained by: TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute

2014 Phil Darby Memorial Award – Encouragement Award

Daniel Brown
Automotive Vehicle Body (Vehicle Painting) Certificate III
Trained by: TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute

Top Apprentice in the Vehicle Trades

Mitchell Conley
Automotive Mechanical Technology (Heavy Vehicle Mobile Equipment) Certificate III
Trained by: TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute

Special Award for a Woman in a Non-Traditional Trade or Vocation

Amba Groeneveld
Stonemasonry Certificate III
Trained by: TAFE NSW – South Western Sydney Institute

Excellence in Electrotechnology

Jonathon Clack
Mechanical Trade Certificate III
Trained by: TAFE NSW – Illawarra Institute

Excellence in Manufacturing

Kenny Ng
Electro technology Electrician Certificate III
Trained by: TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute

2014 Australian Training Awards

Australian Apprentice (Trainee) of the Year

Joshua Lodge
Laboratory Techniques Certificate IV
Trained by: TAFE NSW – Hunter Institute
Employed by: Hunter Valley Training Company

Australian VET Teacher/Trainer

Steven Atkins
Employed by: TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute

Australian Runner up Apprentice of the Year

Mark Hardy
Electrotechnology Electrician Certificate III
Trained by: TAFE NSW – North Coast Institute
Employed by: Mackie Electric and Refrigeration Pty Ltd
New and better ways of doing business

Smart and Skilled

Smart and Skilled, the NSW reform of the VET system, will give people the opportunity to gain the skills they need to find a job and advance their careers. In April 2014, in preparation for changes to be implemented in 2015, the department consulted with industry and community representatives on the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Report on 2015 prices, fees and subsidies for VET. We also sought advice from the NSW Skills Board. Following this, in May 2014, the department published information on the 2015 prices, fees and subsidies.

A series of 16 information sessions were run throughout the state prior to opening Smart and Skilled provider applications, with over 1,500 people participating, including in regional areas.

The governance of the Smart and Skilled application assessment met the highest standards of rigour and probity. Under the guidance of the independent NSW Skills Board, a high-level steering committee scrutinised every element of the assessment, which was conducted by a separate implementation committee. Both of these groups included external and independent advisors on probity and training quality.

In October 2014, we contracted more than 300 providers to deliver quality training in priority skills areas across NSW from 2015. The robust provider application process ensured that the most competent training providers were selected to deliver quality training in nominated qualification areas and regions across NSW.

Complementing the Smart and Skilled Entitlement and Targeted Priority programs, the Smart and Skilled ACE Community Services Obligation program was also announced. It will provide pathways for disadvantaged learners (including young people) to Smart and Skilled entitlement training.

The department launched the Smart and Skilled website in November 2014, providing a central hub of information on available courses and providers for students and assistance for employers and training providers. We published a range of fact sheets on the website in preparation for the new fee arrangements and, in particular, for continuing students, students in regional areas and those with special needs.

Partnering with industry to meet local skills needs

In 2014, the department updated the NSW Skills List, ensuring that priority qualifications for the NSW economy will be eligible for funding under Smart and Skilled in 2015. The list was developed through targeted consultations with peak provider and industry bodies, state government agencies and community representatives.

State Training Services continued to administer the Regional Training and Employment Strategy, which supports economic growth in rural and regional NSW by helping to close the gap between training and employment outcomes. The strategy includes the Retrenched Workers Assistance, Partnering for Jobs and Pathways for School Leavers programs.

Strong industry partnerships are developed to help build the knowledge and skills needed to support businesses and employment in communities across NSW. Since December 2011, we have assisted 6,343 people to upskill, retrain and increase their employability skills and job opportunities.
Over 1,150 young people commenced the 2013/14 Youth Attainment and Transitions Pre-apprenticeship Training program. Over 120 courses were delivered through partnerships between group training organisations and registered training organisations. These provide tailored, industry-specific trade training with a view to employment. Of those who enrolled, 918 completed the training and 346 went on to secure an apprenticeship.

TAFE NSW collaborates with industry to deliver workforce development solutions to position businesses, local communities and the NSW economy for growth. TAFE NSW institutes network with local, state and federal industry bodies and industry skills councils to ensure continuous improvement initiatives address relevant needs.

With Western Sydney as the lead institute, TAFE NSW partnered with Lend Lease and the Construction and Property Services Industry Skills Council to establish the Barangaroo Skills Exchange (BSX). This provides a designated on-site facility to deliver training for the $6 billion Barangaroo urban regeneration project on the western edge of the Sydney CBD. Under the initiative, TAFE NSW and private providers deliver flexible training designed to work around tight construction schedules. Program delivery includes foundation skills and aims to improve safety, trade skills and green-skilling in the construction industry.

Hunter Institute partnered with Peabody Coal, Wambo Mines and the SkillsDMC Industry Skills Council to deliver surface extraction operations, underground coal operations and frontline management training for mine workers. The program was supported by the National Workforce Development Fund. The institute also partnered with the Newcastle Knights to establish the Education and High Performance Sports Training Hub at its Newcastle campus. The initiative is designed to meet the on-field needs of professional athletes, while providing skills to advance career opportunities off the field.

**Using digital media and technology to deliver flexible, personalised learning options**

TAFE NSW continues to develop and implement strategies such as the TAFE NSW Online initiative. This provides students with access to a range of cutting-edge technologies to support individual learning styles. The most recent national data show that TAFE NSW delivers more than 70 per cent of online and remote-access VET across Australia.

In the six months to 30 June 2014, Illawarra and North Coast institutes partnered to deliver the first online postgraduate course: the Graduate Diploma in Leadership (VET Sector). Delivery incorporates collaboration via video and web conferencing and the Moodle learner management system.

New England Institute established TNE Connects, an initiative enabling students to access more courses from their home or workplace. Program delivery includes video-conferencing, online resources and teacher contact, campus-based workshops and mobile delivery units.

NSW AMES Online continued to lead the market in online English language learning. This initiative is accessible through public and private institutions, colleges, libraries and individuals in Australia and overseas. Content design integrates online and offline study methods and is supported by apps for mobile devices as well as printed resources. NSW AMES developed a professional development program for teachers delivered through online and face-to-face training workshops that combine digital and classroom content and activities.
Streamlining apprenticeships and traineeships

The department’s State Training Services continued to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth, states and territories to harmonise apprenticeship and traineeship policy and regulations. This will ensure uniformity across an array of administrative and regulatory requirements.

We introduced streamlined arrangements supporting competency-based completion of apprenticeships and traineeships, in line with national harmonisation requirements. Registered training organisations now provide an electronic notification to State Training Services when apprentices or trainees complete qualifications. In 2014, over 50,000 apprentices and trainees completed their training contracts with 61 per cent finishing early through competency-based completion. Approximately 88 per cent of new apprentices and trainees agreed to undertake competency-based completion.

State Training Services developed industry engagement strategies to improve completion rates for apprentices and trainees in NSW via a revised NSW Training Plan and, more recently, through the Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines. Professional development strategies to improve consultation in training include industry-specific information sessions for registered training providers and targeted supervisor workshops for the VET community.

In March 2014, TAFE NSW signed a memorandum of understanding with the Group Training Association (GTA) of NSW and ACT. Members of the GTA employ more than 8,000 apprentices and trainees and provide employment across a wide range of industries. The memorandum of understanding aims to boost apprenticeship and trainee completions through a closer working partnership between the two organisations including opportunities for collaboration, options for better reporting on attendance of apprentices and trainees, a review of maximising outcomes for students and employers and improving assessment validation.

TAFE NSW had over 13,000 apprenticeship and traineeship commencements in the six months to 30 June 2014. The institutes implemented a number of streamlining initiatives including fast-tracked gap training programs, competency-based progression, improved reporting processes, flexible delivery modes and recognition of prior learning. For example:

- Hunter Institute provided a fast-track gap training program that increased on-the-job training complemented by shorter and more intensive periods of training delivered at the institute’s Maitland campus. The institute also trialled My Profile, a new reporting tool to efficiently process competency-based progression and completion prior to issuing a trade qualification.

- Sydney Institute offered a fast-track program to 50 apprentices from Toyota, which reduced the time to complete the certificate III qualification by 45 per cent. More than 75 per cent of the participants completed the program.
Improving administrative and management systems

The LMBR program aims to deliver systems to support student enrolment, administration, learning and support, finance and human resources management and technology services for TAFE NSW. The program’s core objectives support the NSW Government’s broader reform program and deliver better services to staff and students. Deployment of LMBR human resources and payroll systems were completed in January 2014.

In October 2014, TAFE NSW institutes and central units participated in role mapping, user testing, data cleansing and migration and go-live processes to support the implementation of LMBR Educational Business Software. The TAFE NSW online financial tool for pricing and costing online courses was developed in collaboration with PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers). A governance framework was also developed, along with key training and development materials for institutes to apply quality and design standards to TAFE NSW online courses.

Institutes also invested in improved administrative and process management systems. North Coast Institute developed the People@NCTAFE system to house staff performance review outcomes, capability development plans, staff qualifications and teaching and industry vocational experience. South Western Sydney Institute introduced a customer relationship management system, reviewed and realigned its customer engagement functional areas and established a call centre at Bankstown to improve customer services for clients and students.

Building an effective and coordinated tertiary education system

The department led the development of the Universities Legislation (Regulatory Reform) Act 2014, which will significantly reduce red tape for NSW universities. The Act was passed by the NSW Parliament in August 2014 and reassigns responsibility for a range of financial and management areas to university governing bodies. These responsibilities include borrowing, investment, appointment of funds managers, commercial activity guidelines and some land dealings. Universities now have the ability to internally determine governing body election procedures rather than through by-laws that must be approved by Parliament.
Performance report:
In our communities
Our performance targets

**Increase the proportion of the NSW population involved in volunteering**

Research shows that people who volunteer are healthier and live longer than people who do not and that volunteering increases people’s wellbeing. Volunteering also supports and extends government-funded services and delivers care and support to people in local communities. The target is to exceed the national average by 2016. In 2010, the estimated proportion of adults involved in formal volunteering in NSW rose to approximately 36.6 per cent, slightly higher than the national average (see Figure 20).

**Increase the proportion of the NSW population involved in local community organisations**

Community participation develops connections between people outside their close personal relationships, providing a wider pool from which people can draw resources and contribute to society. The target is to exceed the national average by 2016. Between 2006 and 2010, the estimated proportion of adults involved in a community support organisation in NSW remained stable at around 33.2 per cent of the population. Over the same period, there was a small increase in the national average to 34.9 per cent (see Figure 21).

---

**Figure 20:** Percentage of people aged 18 and over who undertook voluntary work for an organisation in the last 12 months (2006 to 2010)

**Figure 21:** Percentage of people aged 18 and over who were involved with a community support organisation in the last 12 months (2006 to 2010)

Sources: ABS General Social Survey, 2006 (cat. 4159155001); General Social Survey: Summary Results, 2006 (cat. 159.0.2006); Voluntary Work, Australia 2010 (cat. 41590D0007_201). Notes: Care needs to be taken with the interpretation of survey data as high standard errors can mean that differences from year to year are not significant. Survey results are available every four years, with 2014 data available in mid-2015.
Increase the proportion of the population who have weekly social contact with family or friends

Close personal networks of families and friends provide a source of practical help as well as material and emotional support. The target is to exceed the national average by 2016. While the proportion of adults with regular contact with family and friends remains high (at around 96.1 per cent of the population), between 2006 and 2010 there was no significant change. This is roughly consistent with the national average (see Figure 22).

**Figure 22:** Percentage of people aged 18 and over who had contact with family and friends living outside the household in the last week (2006 to 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERCENTAGE</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ABS Australian Social Trends: Data Cube, Family and Community, 1998-2011 (cat. 4102.0); General Social Survey, 2010, expanded CURF, RADL. Notes: Care needs to be taken with the interpretation of survey data as high standard errors can mean that differences from year to year are not significant. Survey results are available every four years, with 2014 data available in mid-2015.

Increase the proportion of the population who feel they have someone to turn to in times of crisis

Levels of social attachment can also be measured by the ability of people to get support in an emergency. The target is to exceed the national average by 2016. In 2010, an estimated 92.6 per cent of adults reported that, in a time of crisis, they could get support from outside their household. This proportion has been stable over the period from 2006 to 2010 and is consistent with the national average (see Figure 23).

**Figure 23:** Percentage of people aged 18 and over who were able to get support in a time of crisis (2006 to 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERCENTAGE</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ABS General Social Survey, 2006 (cat. 4159.0.2006); General Social Survey, Australia 2010 (cat. 415900006_2010); General Social Survey 2010 expanded CURF, RADL. Notes: Care needs to be taken with the interpretation of survey data as high standard errors can mean that differences from year to year are not significant. Survey results are available every four years, with 2014 data available in mid-2015.
Close the life expectancy gap within a generation

Estimates of life expectancy at birth for Aboriginal Australians are used as a measure for assessing population health and disadvantage. In NSW for 2010 to 2012, life expectancy at birth for Aboriginal males was estimated to be 70.5 years, 9.3 years less than life expectancy at birth for non-Aboriginal males (79.8 years). Life expectancy at birth for Aboriginal females was estimated to be 74.6 years, 8.5 years less than life expectancy at birth for non-Aboriginal females (83.1 years). The ABS estimates that life expectancy at birth for Aboriginal males in NSW increased by 2.2 years since 2005 to 2007 and by 0.6 years for Aboriginal females. The difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal life expectancy in NSW narrowed by 1.2 years for males and 0.1 years for females over the same period (see Figure 24).

Ten per cent increase in participation in sport and recreational activities by 2016

Sport and physical recreation are important to the Australian sense of identity and are a key way for people to connect with their local communities and institutions. Over 3.8 million people in NSW participated regularly in sport or physical activity in 2011/12. The participation rate for people aged 15 and over increased to 65.1 per cent in 2011/12, compared to 62.7 per cent in 2009/10. This puts NSW on par with the national average and on track to achieve this target (see Figure 25).

Figure 24: Life expectancy at birth (2005 to 2007 and 2010 to 2012)

Source: ABS Life Tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2010-2012 (cat. 3302.0.55.003). Notes: This target is consistent with the national target agreed by COAG in 2008 to close the gap in life expectancy within a generation (by 2031). Life expectancy at birth refers to the average number of years a group of newborn babies could expect to live, if they experienced the 2010 to 2012 death rates throughout their lifetimes. The estimates are calculated for a three-year period and reported every five years. Changes to the ABS methodology required an adjustment to 2005 to 2007 estimates (baselines). These estimates are calculated without an age adjustment and may not be comparable to the headline estimates for Australia published by the ABS.
Figure 25: Percentage of people aged 15 years and over who regularly participate in physical activity

![Percentage of people aged 15 years and over who regularly participate in physical activity](image)

Source: ABS Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation, Australia (cat. 4177.0) Notes: As part of changes to its work plan announced in June 2014, the ABS has discontinued the collection and reporting of culture, sport and recreation statistics. Data for 2013/14 is therefore not available.

### Increase the number of partnerships between Aboriginal communities and the NSW Government

OCHRE: Opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, empowerment is the Aboriginal affairs plan for NSW. It reiterates the NSW Government’s intention to work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people. Aboriginal Affairs continues to play a key role in facilitating and strengthening these partnerships.

Local Decision Making, a key initiative of OCHRE, is empowering Aboriginal leaders and communities to take a greater role in making decisions about the government services. The initiative focuses on building regional alliances in order to deliver services and programs that are tailored to local communities. Aboriginal Affairs is currently working with regional alliances in five sites across NSW.

The first accord between the NSW Government and the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly in Far Western NSW was finalised in December 2014, and will be signed in early 2015. In 2014, the initiative was expanded to the Three Rivers Regional Assembly (Central West NSW) and the Central Coast Aboriginal Community Organisations Network (Central Coast NSW).

### Increase access for people to learn Aboriginal languages

In 2014, 15 Aboriginal languages were taught in NSW public schools. This included both schools connected to Aboriginal language and culture nests, and 26 schools outside of the language and culture nests.

Aboriginal language and culture nests are local community networks connected by a language. They will create pathways for Aboriginal students, teachers and community members to teach and
learn traditional languages. In 2014, we established five language nests for local school students and community members to revitalise their language and culture: the North West Wiradjuri, Gumbaynggirr, Bundjalung, Paakantji and Gamilaraay/Yuwaalaraay/Yuwaalayaay language nests.

In 2014, five Aboriginal teaching positions have been created and filled. They are located at the base school in each language and culture nest and have a key role in supporting schools to implement a local Aboriginal language program. There are also 50 Aboriginal language tutors in schools across the five language and culture nests. All tutors are working towards Certificate III in Aboriginal Languages at TAFE NSW.

TAFE NSW delivers qualifications in Aboriginal languages. Courses are developed and delivered in collaboration with local community groups and Aboriginal language speakers. In the six months to 30 June 2014, there were over 190 enrolments at TAFE NSW in AQF certificate I to III Aboriginal language programs.

**Increase number of opportunities for cultural participation**

The department provides opportunities for cultural participation by sponsoring major events and providing assistance and support to communities to deliver local activities. Events in 2014 included Corroboree Sydney, the Yabun Festival, the Saltwater Freshwater Festival, WUPA@Wanaruah and Message Sticks.
Our priorities:
In our communities
High expectations, closing the gaps

**OCHRE: The NSW Government plan for Aboriginal affairs**

OCHRE: Opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, empowerment is the Government’s plan for Aboriginal affairs in NSW. Released in 2013 by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the plan has education, employment and accountability at its heart. The department, which includes Aboriginal Affairs, and its government and non-government partners, have commenced implementing OCHRE initiatives with communities across the state.

The implementation of OCHRE is underpinned by a robust accountability framework. *The Ombudsman Act 1974* was amended to create the new role of Deputy Ombudsman (Aboriginal Programs) to independently monitor and assess Aboriginal programs in NSW. The first program to be listed for review in the Regulations is OCHRE. The Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia has been engaged by Aboriginal Affairs to consult with key stakeholders and develop a monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement framework as well as individual evaluation plans for OCHRE. Information about the evaluation of OCHRE will be published in 2015.

Aboriginal Affairs has signed an industry-based agreement with the construction sector and continued to implement the agreement with the minerals sector to support Aboriginal businesses and improve employment outcomes. Aboriginal Affairs has completed public consultations and prepared a draft Aboriginal Economic Development Framework to be published in 2015.

OCHRE acknowledges that healing and inter-generational trauma and loss are real, significant and ongoing issues for Aboriginal communities.

The department held a healing forum in 2014 to share Aboriginal perspectives and consider what role government should play to support healing.

**Matching Aboriginal students’ aspirations to real jobs**

The purpose of the department’s opportunity hubs is to coordinate and broker services that support young Aboriginal people to stay at school and progress to further education, training and employment. The first hubs were established in Dubbo and the upper Hunter in late 2013. In 2014, we engaged non-government providers to set up new hubs in Tamworth and Campbelltown. The department dedicated over $1.5 million in funding to support the operation of the hubs this year.

By October 2014, 1,280 Aboriginal students in Years 5 to 12 were engaged with the hubs, which will help students gain an understanding and appreciation of the career pathways and opportunities available to them. They will also provide mentoring and other support to pursue those opportunities and help them link these aspirations to learning plans and real jobs.

**Increasing opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in cultural activities and events**

Aboriginal Affairs supported a number of cultural festivals, events and activities during the year to showcase Aboriginal culture and talent, increase community awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and history and help advance reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.
The Yabun Festival was held in Sydney on Australia Day to celebrate the survival of Aboriginal people and culture and was attended by over 20,000 people. The Saltwater Freshwater Festival was also held in Kempsey, celebrating and sharing Aboriginal culture on the mid-North Coast with the wider community. It commemorated Australia Day as a positive, inclusive, family day for all communities to enjoy and attracted 15,000 people.

Aboriginal Affairs ran a successful National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) grants program during the year. As part of the program, we provided approximately $120,000 in funding to support 60 events across the state including flag-raising ceremonies, street parades, concerts and family days. The 2014 NAIDOC Week had a particular emphasis on honouring the military service of Aboriginal peoples.

In July 2014, Aboriginal Affairs hosted the Healing Our Way Forum – Mapu Yaan Gurri, Mapu Marrunggirr, in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation. Over 200 delegates, representing 68 organisations, participated in the forum alongside Aboriginal leaders to discuss Aboriginal perspectives on culture, inter-generational trauma and healing. The forum highlighted that cultural revitalisation and restoration can be achieved through healing. Respect for culture and healing is at the core of relationships between government and Aboriginal people and communities.

Increasing opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in sporting activities and events

In partnership with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the department’s (former) Sport and Recreation division provided funds to state sporting organisations that had identified Aboriginal outcomes in their national participation plans. Nine sports, including AFL, cricket, football, netball and surfing, were supported. The Indigenous Sport Network, originally established in 2013, continued to link all nine funded sports together to share strategies and identify areas of collaboration.

Sport and Recreation’s partnership with Swimming NSW saw over 200 Aboriginal children participating in swimming programs in 14 locations. The division also worked with Netball NSW to support the Barwon Darling Netball Association, which implemented and maintained six-week junior competitions in Lightning Ridge, Brewarrina and Walgett. Subsidies were provided for registration, uniform and equipment to support the sustainability of the program. Sport and Recreation also supported the training of 13 Aboriginal umpires from the Dubbo Senior College, who gained their umpiring accreditation in partnership with the National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy.

Aboriginal Sport Development Officers helped to deliver a regional netball tour in Tamworth, with over 1,160 primary school girls from 17 schools participating. In southern NSW, Sport and Recreation worked with Albury City Council to organise the Gindaymannha Touch Football Carnival. Leading into
the carnival, over 470 participants were involved in an eight-week training program at seven locations across Albury. In south-western Sydney, Sport and Recreation partnered with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation, the Benevolent Society and Muru Nanga Mai to organise the Airds Sport Program. Two-hour weekly sport programs were run in Airds, Bradbury, Rosemeadow and Ambarvale during school terms, averaging 45 participants each session.

Increasing access to Aboriginal languages

Aboriginal language and culture nests are local community networks connected by a language. The language and culture nests provide communities with opportunities to revitalise, reclaim and maintain their languages in partnership with schools, TAFE NSW, universities and other community language programs. Each language and culture nest also includes a keeping place where language resources and materials are accessible through community consultation.

Five language and culture nests were launched in 2013/14. Table 7 outlines the details.

Each language and culture nest has a vision and commitment statement signed by the communities and other stakeholders. Aboriginal language and culture teachers have been employed in five language and culture nests to work with communities, schools and TAFE NSW to develop resources and support language tutors and teachers.

In addition, ten Aboriginal languages were taught in schools outside of the five language and culture nests through programs negotiated and implemented locally.

In December 2013, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs launched the revised Kindergarten to Year 10 Aboriginal Languages Scope and Sequence that provides the basis for school and community Aboriginal language programs. BOSTES has commenced development of an Aboriginal language course that will be available to HSC students.

Table 7: Aboriginal language and culture nests launched in 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture and language nest</th>
<th>Launch date</th>
<th>Keeping place location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North West Wiradjuri Nest</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>Yarradamarra Centre, TAFE NSW – Western Institute, Dubbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Gumbaynggirr Nest</td>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>Coffis Harbour Education Campus, Coffis Harbour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundjalung Nest</td>
<td>February 2014</td>
<td>Gnibi Centre Southern Cross University, Lismore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paakantji Nest</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>Wilcannia Central School, Wilcannia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamilaraay Nest</td>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Walanbaa Dhuurrali Child and Family Centre, Lightning Ridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TAFE NSW delivers qualifications in Aboriginal languages, with courses developed and delivered in collaboration with local Aboriginal community groups and language speakers. These included Certificate I in Aboriginal Languages, including Gumbaynggirr, YaeGl and Gathang (North Coast Institute), Wiradjuri, Dharawal and Bundjalung (Sydney Institute); and certificates I and II in Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi (Western Institute). In addition, Western Institute hosted the first Aboriginal language and culture nest in NSW at the Yarrandamarr Centre of the institute’s Dubbo campus.

There are also higher-level Aboriginal language courses. Universities, such as Charles Sturt University, offer tertiary-level qualifications in Aboriginal languages or Aboriginal languages education. The department funds scholarships for Aboriginal teachers to undertake further studies, and eight teachers have completed a Masters in Aboriginal Languages.

**Enhancing sporting and recreation opportunities for people with disability**

In the six months to 30 June 2014, the department’s (former) Sport and Recreation division supported people with disability to become more active and established partnerships between the disability sector and the sports industry. More than 118 people with disability and their carers were provided access to NSW sport and recreation centres with the support of the companion card.

The grants program helped community organisations run sporting and recreational events and upgrade their facilities to improve access for people with disability. The program supported 18 state sporting organisations for people with disability, including Boccia NSW, Riding for the Disabled NSW and NSW Goalball.

Sport and Recreation also supported the School Sport Disability Program, providing access to sporting opportunities to over 1,280 students with disability.

Regional offices facilitated local sports programs and training opportunities for 420 participants and sport and recreation centres provided day programs for 1,662 participants. Centres also hosted seven respite camps for 96 teens with an intellectual disability, their families and support workers.

Sport and Recreation partnered with the NSW Department of Family and Community Services to deliver a number of key initiatives under the National Disability Strategy. The Disability Sport Network was established and 13 state sporting organisations were funded to grow the number of people with disability within their sports.
Stronger communities and leadership

Making volunteering easier and more rewarding

The department has made significant progress in implementing the NSW Volunteering Strategy, which aims to make it easier for people to volunteer.

The Statement of Principles for the Recognition of Volunteers aims to ensure that volunteers are treated with respect, dignity and fairness. The statement has been endorsed by over 220 organisations representing more than 721,000 volunteers. One-third of volunteers in NSW now enjoy this additional protection and support. The impact of the statement on volunteer organisations was evaluated in 2014. The evaluation found that organisations that had adopted the statement reported improved practices in relation to volunteer management and recognition.

Timebanking is a free community program that allows the voluntary exchange of services between members. Members can earn time credits for volunteering their time and sharing their skills to help other members. They can then use these credits to secure services from other members including internet coaching, house cleaning, language tuition and babysitting. Timebanking members have exchanged almost 17,000 hours of support since 2012, including 9,000 hours in 2014. So far 4,900 people and 300 organisations have joined Timebanking and one-third of members are new to volunteering. An evaluation of the program found that it was one of the largest in the world, attracting new people to volunteering, creating social networks and a sense of community and improving the quality of life for those involved. In 2014, the department expanded Timebanking from one trial site to 70 communities across NSW.

In 2014, the department provided subsidised police checks for 1,822 volunteers in aged care. We also created career paths for 65 volunteer managers through the new AQF Certificate IV in Volunteer Program Coordination, bringing the total number of new volunteer management careers we have supported since 2012 to 305.

We also contributed $30,000 to support the Volunteer of the Year Awards and a regional awards program in 20 locations across NSW. A record number of 506 nominations were received, a 70 per cent increase on 2013. Awards were given in eight categories including two new categories, Student Volunteer of the Year and Corporate Volunteer Team of the Year.

In 2014, more than 300,000 people visited the department’s website (www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au) with more than 600 people downloading our free risk management resource and more than 200 people accessing the new social media tool kit.
Promoting leadership in sport

Networking and training helps to promote and develop leadership in the sport and recreation industry. In the six months to 30 June 2014, the department’s (former) Sport and Recreation division sponsored a number of events, educational forums, seminars and training sessions.

Sport Talk seminars provided professional development and networking opportunities for staff from state sporting organisations. Five sport talks were conducted covering a range of topics and were attended by 310 sport industry professionals. Topics included:

- Work health and safety
- Working With Children Check
- School Sport Programs and Partnerships – targeting development officers, coaching coordinators and game development staff
- The Numbers Game: Growing participation – designed to develop marketing skills by providing an insight to the sport market, highlighting predictions and trends and exploring tips on how to get ahead in a competitive market place
- Women in Contact Sport: Health, safety and performance.

Four courses, delivered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors, were conducted for 91 directors from state sporting organisations. Tailored to the varying needs of directors across the sport industry, they included:

- Foundations of Directorship, a three-day program for 48 current state-level board directors from large sports
- Not-For-Profit Board Course, a one-day program for 22 current state-level board directors from small to medium sized sports
- Not-For Profit Chairman’s Course, a one-day program for 21 directors.

In 2014, new legislation was passed by the NSW Parliament to regulate betting on sporting events in line with the National Policy on Match Fixing in Sport. The Sport Leaders Breakfast – Meet the Minister attracted 84 industry chief executives and board chairs. Sport leaders heard from the newly appointed Minister, the Hon. Stuart Ayres MP, and discussed features of the new legislation and its benefits to sport.
Our priorities: In our communities

Strengthening youth leadership

Youth Opportunities provides funding to youth organisations and local government for mentoring and other projects to help young people lead and participate in community development activities. In 2014, 28 new projects were funded, supporting youth-led and youth-driven community initiatives that will engage more than 11,000 young people.

A pilot youth mentoring program was launched by the Minister for Citizenship and Communities in 2014. This initiative was jointly funded with the YWCA of NSW and provided mentoring to 512 young people in 29 areas across NSW. The pilot program was independently evaluated and a NSW youth mentoring program will be rolled out across the state in 2015.

We also supported Youth Week 2014 in April, a project that involved more than 3,750 young people in planning and running more than 750 local youth week activities, events and projects. We contributed over $240,000 in grants to local councils to support more than 750 local activities, which were attended by around 90,000 young people across the state.

The department supported the Youth Advisory Council, which met eight times in 2014. In the lead up to Youth Week 2014, the council co-hosted a forum on youth mental health issues with the NSW Mental Health Commission. More than 120 young people from across NSW were involved in discussion on how to support friends and family with mental health issues.

Leading community remembrance and honouring the sacrifices of the past

In 2014, the Office of Veterans’ Affairs continued to work closely with the Centenary of Anzac Council Ambassadors to lead community engagement for the Centenary of the First World War 2014-2018 commemorations.

In February 2014, General Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Ret’d) resigned as Chair of the Centenary of Anzac Advisory Council following the announcement that he would take up the role of Governor-General. In March 2014, the NSW Government approved the appointment of Lieutenant General Kenneth Gillespie AC DSC CSM (Ret’d) to the Chair.

The department’s Centenary of Anzac Program Management Office has lead responsibility for the Centenary Program, which consists of 24 projects. Centenary highlights during 2014 included: a Major Exhibition of First World War Diaries at the State Library from July to September; a Parliamentary Reception to mark the commencement of the First World War held on 5 August; a ceremony to mark the departure of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force at Cockatoo Island on 17 August; the launch of State Records Centenary website on 12 September 2014; a ceremony to mark the embarkation of troops for Gallipoli on 18 October; and refurbishment of the Mothers and Wives Memorial at Woolloomooloo.

The Anzac Memorial Education and Interpretation Centre project was endorsed by the Trustees of the Anzac Memorial. The project will deliver flexible, contemporary and meaningful community spaces to promote, maintain and enhance the memorial as the state’s principal commemorative and interpretative monument to the services and sacrifice of Australians, and enhance the facility’s potential to inform and educate current and future generations. The centre will become a significant local, national and international destination and contribute greatly to Sydney’s cultural, recreation and historical landscape.
In 2014, significant work was undertaken at the memorial to progress works for the Centenary of Anzac, including external lighting, cleaning and the installation of a new Treasures exhibition.

In February 2014, $50,000 was secured from Networks NSW for a commemorative project to create a unique publication of the Anzac Centenary, entitled NSW and the Great War. Predominantly focusing on the social history of the state during the First World War, the book will recount the NSW experience and the story of life on the home front. It will serve as a valuable resource in schools, public libraries and online.

In April 2014, the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs announced that ten Year 11 students had been awarded the Premier’s Anzac Memorial Scholarship to travel to sites of military and cultural significance in South Korea. The students were accompanied by two teachers on their 13-day journey. The students were selected based on their personal connection to the spirit of Anzac and their commitment to studying Australian history.

The Community War Memorials Fund provided grants to 12 Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) clubs, local councils and community organisations to conserve and restore the state’s war memorials.

In July 2014, the Office of Veterans’ Affairs transferred to the DPC cluster.

**Making our communities stronger**

In 2014, the department undertook a number of projects to make communities stronger through place-based strategies, bringing agencies and communities together around particular locations; and population strategies, which focus on a specific population group.

We supported low-cost local community initiatives, such as Illawarra SOUP community dinners that raise funds for small community projects and build positive relationships between community members and local businesses.

The department also supported innovative programs in regional and remote communities, including the successful Tackling Violence anti-domestic violence program. This program engages men and boys through 28 rugby league clubs in 23 rural and regional communities. It includes education programs for players and local high school students, as well as a social marketing campaign. Club players and officials sign a code of conduct and breaches of the code result in players being suspended from competition. An evaluation in 2014 confirmed the program’s effectiveness in preventing domestic violence in some of NSW’s most disadvantaged communities.

We provide community engagement expertise, advice and support for initiatives aimed at increasing communities’ capacity and opportunities to be involved in planning, influencing and implementing local actions. For example:

- the department worked with other government, not-for-profit and community organisations to trial a new model of collaboration in Muswellbrook Shire, with a focus on building trust between participants and the wider community
- we are an active partner in the Collective NSW, an innovative initiative involving government, community and business in a number of districts across NSW
- the department has been working closely with Blacktown Local Court and the University of Western Sydney to re-establish the Blacktown Court Volunteer Project, which provides additional in-language support for members of new and emerging communities when they attend court.
**New and better ways of doing business**

**Improving our sporting facilities**

Sporting infrastructure is an important contributor to the NSW economy. The state’s major stadiums and venues help to attract national and international events to NSW and secure the social and economic benefits that flow from them.

The NSW Government’s Stadia Strategy provides the plan for future investment in major sporting infrastructure in NSW. The department’s (former) Sport and Recreation division has been working with key stakeholders, including sporting codes and government agencies to progress implementation of the strategy.

In the six months to June 2014, the Sport and Recreation Facility Program provided a total of $2.3 million to 129 community sport facilities. The Surf Club Facility Grant Program provided a total of $2 million to 12 surf lifesaving clubs. The Safe Shooting Program provided $600,000 to 61 shooting clubs to improve their facilities.

In the six months to June 2014, the NSW Government invested $87,000 on the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex to complete costing and construction plans. An additional capital works allocation of $7.7 million has also been made, to complete the 50 metre and 500 metre ranges during 2016.

In April 2014, the NSW Government announced the largest grassroots infrastructure program in the history of rugby league. The NSW Footy Facilities Fund will see government and the National Rugby League invest $1 million each into an infrastructure program to assist rugby league clubs.

In June 2014, the Minister for Sport and Recreation announced the Future Needs of Sport study. Planning has commenced on a framework to guide the government’s investment and policy relating to community sport infrastructure. This project will involve establishing a database of sports facilities used for competition, identifying the gaps and prioritising projects to ensure equitable access to sporting facilities.