

# Promoting opportunities for all

Education

Thematic Strategy November 2011

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## AusAID's Thematic Strategies

The fundamental purpose of Australian aid is to help people overcome poverty. Australia's aid program is guided by five strategic goals, as set out in An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference – delivering real results.

The strategic goals of the aid program are:

- saving lives
- promoting opportunities for all
- sustainable economic development
- effective governance, and
- humanitarian and disaster response.

Australia works with governments of partner countries, mostly in the Asia-Pacific region, civil society organisations and multilateral agencies to achieve these goals. Funding decisions are guided by individual countries' development priorities, an assessment of poverty, Australia's capacity to make a real and measurable difference and our national interest.

The thematic strategies provide further detail to inform program decisions in particular sectors.

# Summary

Promoting opportunities for all is one of the five strategic goals of Australia's aid program. In education this means enabling more children, particularly girls, to attend school for a longer and better education so they have the skills to build their own futures and, in time, escape poverty. Education is an enabler of development and crucial to helping people overcome poverty. Education makes a significant difference to improving equity, health, empowering women, governance and sustainable development.

Australia has three pillars for our investment in education:

1. Improving access to basic education opportunities for all so that children and youth complete a basic education
2. Improving learning outcomes so that children and youth achieve the basic skills necessary for productive lives
3. Driving development through better governance and service delivery so that partner governments support quality education for all.

Australia will base its investments in education on what works, is effective aid and achieves results. Australia will provide a mix of support, enhancing partnerships with partner governments, multilateral organisations, NGOs, civil society organisations and the private sector. Our geographic focus will continue to be on Asia and the Pacific.

# Purpose

The fundamental purpose of Australia's aid program is to help people overcome poverty.<sup>1</sup> Promoting opportunities for all through education is helping to achieve this purpose. This thematic strategy outlines Australia's approach to helping people overcome poverty through education by:

- Improving access to basic education opportunities for all
- Improving learning outcomes for children and youth
- Driving development through better governance and service delivery.

The thematic strategy reflects existing commitments through to 2015, as well as new policy initiatives. Country strategies will continue to be developed in consultation with partner governments. The thematic strategy will be a reference point for the development of future program designs, and will be a key tool for quality assurance processes relating to implementation. An education results framework will be used to assess the impact of our investments in education and to evaluate the success of policies and programs. Appendix A presents indicative education indicators.

# The rationale for investing in education

Education is a great enabler. It helps people escape poverty through improving incomes, employment and enterprise opportunities. For girls, extra years of basic education are empowering. Education makes a significant difference to girls' employment opportunities, marriage age, fertility levels and capacity to make decisions about their lives. It gives women the means to become leaders. For children with disabilities, education opens doors to social inclusion and independence. Education enables communities to make choices about their futures, and contributes to good governance and sustainable development.

## The challenges

Significant progress has been made in primary education globally since 2000, but the Millennium Development Goal of achieving a full course of primary education for all is unlikely to be met by 2015. Globally, at least 67 million children, including 35 million girls, remain out of school. Of these around 27 million children are in Asia and 560 000 in the Pacific, with the majority in Papua New Guinea (PNG).<sup>2</sup> Conflict robs many children of the opportunity of schooling: 42 per cent of all out-of-school children are in conflict-affected countries. Nine countries in the Asia-Pacific region have experienced extended conflict in the past 10 years.<sup>3</sup> The impact of the financial crisis is threatening to reverse progress gained. On current trends there could be as many as 72 million children out of school in 2015.<sup>4</sup>

Formal education during the adolescent years is the most effective base for learning and skills development. But patterns of exclusion during childhood impact upon basic education completion, and the transition to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), higher education and skilled work. Education inequalities reinforce labour market inequalities in and between countries. In fragile and conflict-affected countries, skills development is critical to help youth escape the economic despair that often contributes to violence.<sup>5</sup>

Education quality is a pressing concern. Around 200 million children in primary school are learning so little that they struggle to read basic words.<sup>6</sup> Many of Australia's partner countries have large and growing youth populations, and in an age where higher levels of skill are increasingly important for employment, job security and a better income, improving education quality is an imperative. Without basic literacy and numeracy, the returns on years of schooling to a child are very small.

To succeed in these challenges we need deeper understanding of the obstacles to achieving quality education for all. First, we need to know who are the children most likely to be out of school; and who are the youth missing out on skills and qualifications. Second, we need to understand what affects the quality of learning at all levels of education and training.

## Out-of-school children

Out-of-school children are those who either never have the opportunity to go to school or who get some schooling but drop out early without completing the full course of basic education.<sup>7</sup> The children most vulnerable to drop out are those whose chance for schooling comes late. Late starters face added pressures, such as the need to earn an income, or the expectation to marry.<sup>8</sup>

The two strongest factors associated with children out of school are household poverty and mothers' education.<sup>9</sup> Extreme poverty exists in many of Australia's partner countries in the Asia-Pacific region. This produces the intergenerational illiteracy that entrenches poverty. Children who live in the poorest 20 per cent of households are three times more likely to be out of school than children living in the richest 20 per cent.<sup>10</sup> In Pakistan, for example, almost half the children aged seven to 16 years from the poorest households were out of school in 2007.<sup>11</sup> Very poor families are vulnerable to crises such as price shocks, drought and unemployment. If a child's mother is uneducated, that child is twice as likely to be out of school.<sup>12</sup> Though many countries have improved enrolment by abolishing primary school fees, education-related costs can still amount to a significant percentage of a poor family's income.<sup>13</sup>

Interactions between poverty, gender, location and ethnicity reinforce disadvantage. In Pakistan poor girls in rural areas are 16 times less likely to be in school than boys from the wealthiest households in urban areas.<sup>14</sup> In Laos, ethnic minority girls from rural communities complete, on average, less than two years of school, compared with ethnic majority Lao-Tai girls in urban communities who complete eight years.<sup>15</sup> The interaction between rural location and poverty is strong.<sup>16</sup> In some countries, urban poverty impacts upon education participation. In Bangladesh the primary attendance rate is nearly 16 per cent lower in poor urban areas than the national average.<sup>17</sup> Great internal income disparities can exist in middle-income countries. In Indonesia, in the eastern provinces of Nusa Tenggara Timur and Papua, only 60 to 68 per cent of children are enrolled in junior secondary education as compared with 91 per cent in Jakarta.<sup>18</sup> Issues of remoteness can also be seen in the Pacific, particularly in PNG: communities that live in the outer islands and mountainous areas have lower participation rates. Gender is a factor which varies in strength and effect across countries: in Afghanistan 66 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys.<sup>19</sup> In some countries, boys are falling behind. In Indonesia, the Philippines and Laos, boys are less likely than girls to complete primary school.<sup>20</sup>

Fragility and conflict pose significant challenges to continuity of education. During conflict, education opportunities are limited. International evidence suggests that children and young people whose education is interrupted tend not to return to school.<sup>21</sup> In the conflict-affected Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in the Philippines, for example, the proportion of young people with less than two years of education is more than four times the national average.<sup>22</sup>

Children with disabilities are chronically under-represented. The gap in primary school attendance rates between children with disabilities and children without disabilities is 60 per cent in Indonesia.<sup>23</sup> Girls with disabilities are especially under-represented in primary education.<sup>24</sup> Children with disabilities are less likely to start school and they have lower rates of retention and completion. With the exception of



parts of the Pacific, they are largely invisible in education data. Rigid curricula, inadequate training and support for teachers, physical barriers and negative attitudes need to be overcome to ensure children with disabilities can be included in education.<sup>25</sup>

## Transitioning to productive livelihoods

Equity is a major issue in access to post-basic education. Secondary schools often charge fees and tend to cluster in urban or peri-urban locations, not easily accessible to rural youth. In East Timor, of those who enrolled in Grade 1 only 16 per cent enter secondary school.<sup>26</sup> Barriers for girls increase at adolescence, due to risks to safety in travelling to school, early marriage, and the low value placed on girls' education in some communities. Some governments make no provision for children and youth excluded from school; many countries have no mechanism to re-capture lost youth back into formal learning pathways.

Partner countries are lagging behind in tertiary enrolments. Enrolment rates in tertiary education (both TVET and university) are on the rise in the Asia-Pacific region but there is still a significant lag in some countries and some groups remain excluded.<sup>27</sup> Ethnic minorities have the lowest rate of inclusion of any group across the East Asia region.<sup>28</sup> Low and distorted access to tertiary opportunities denies individuals the chance to move out of poverty. Skilled labour opportunities in regional and national markets go unfilled. Most significantly, low levels of 'active innovators' inhibit a country's capacity to lift its economy to the high end of productivity, and jeopardise the enterprise that future employment will be based on.

## Quality of learning

Poor quality affects school drop-out. Children may drop out because of silent exclusion – children attend without understanding then fail, repeat, and leave school early.<sup>29</sup> Efforts to rapidly increase enrolment can also have an unintended impact on quality, with teacher numbers and availability of learning materials falling behind new enrolment rates. Ensuring that teaching and learning resources keep pace with enrolments is a factor to watch in supporting partner government initiatives to abolish fees for attending primary school. Enrolment expansion needs to be matched with commensurate resource allocations for classrooms, teachers and learning materials.

The issue of education quality has seized global attention. Even in a middle-income country, nearly half of 15 year olds tested performed below the lowest level in maths.<sup>30</sup> The results of early-grade reading assessments in a Pacific country showed that only 30 per cent of children at the end of Grade 3 could read to an international standard. Reading tests in a neighbouring partner country have revealed a large group of children who cannot read a single word – 20 per cent of the Grade 3 sample scored zero in reading tests.<sup>31</sup>

Multiple factors affect children's learning. Malnutrition threatens cognitive development in regions where Australia works, such as West and South Asia. Children from the most marginalised groups are often the least represented in pre-primary education, but have the most to gain.<sup>32</sup> Research indicates widespread problems in early literacy practices. While mother-tongue education programs can

have a large impact on keeping children from ethnic minority groups in school, finding qualified teachers for these communities is difficult.<sup>33</sup>

Systems contribute to poor quality in schools. Country partners identify poor teacher quality as the main school-based cause of low student achievement. Processes relating to the recruitment, preparation and distribution of teachers and principals are systemic obstacles to improving the quality of teaching. Many of Australia's partner countries allocate less than 10 per cent of their education budget to resources at schools, meaning there are often shortages in basic learning materials, textbooks and equipment. Decentralised responsibilities for schools can make it difficult to scale up effective models of school management.

Even more than access, the quality of tertiary education is fundamentally important for development. Poor quality frustrates the role that TVET and higher education should play in driving development and economic growth in our partner countries. Technology has transformed local industries in the Pacific but few TVET institutions can match training to the skills or the quality needed to attract investors. Despite dramatic improvements in some areas, the universities of some middle-income partner countries rate very low on international rankings for research, development and innovation.<sup>34</sup> Graduates have poor levels of critical and creative skills, and many do not train in courses useful to economic or technological development. Contributing to these problems are the low quality and relevance of teaching and curricula; poor governance systems; and the disconnect between the sector and key users, particularly schools, companies and administrators.<sup>35</sup>

# Australia's approach to access and a quality education for all

## Australia's priorities

In all countries where we work in education, Australia has three priorities. These are: (1) basic education for the 'hard case' out-of-school children and youth; (2) improved quality of learning; and (3) strengthened education policy and systems for better service delivery. Australia is investing AUD 1.7 billion in scholarships, as a mechanism for building leadership to drive good governance and development.

In our immediate region, appropriate to context, we will support the whole sector, from early childhood to vocational training and, in some cases, higher education.

In other parts of the aid program Australia will respond to local conditions in investing beyond basic education.<sup>36</sup> Targeted investments may be undertaken in other subsectors, such as early childhood, non-formal education, and post-basic education, where it bears relevance to increasing children's basic skills.<sup>37</sup>

## The pillars of Australia's investment in education

Australia's investment in education will improve opportunities for all by:

**Improving access to basic education opportunities for all** so that children and youth complete a basic education.

**Improving learning outcomes** so that children and youth achieve the basic skills necessary for productive lives.

**Driving development through better governance and service delivery** so that partner governments support quality education for all.

Boxes 1, 2 and 3 set out typical strategies for education assistance for each pillar.

## Pillar 1: Improving access to basic education opportunities for all

Supporting opportunities for all means focusing on the poor, on girls, on children with disabilities and on the vulnerable at the level of basic education. In selected countries we will also improve access to non-formal skills development for youth.

### Box 1: Strategies for improving access to basic education opportunities for all

#### **Reducing barriers to schooling for the poor, girls and the disadvantaged.**

Australia will support school construction in disadvantaged areas in Indonesia, PNG, Nepal, the Philippines and Afghanistan. Activities will include providing separate sanitary facilities for girls and building infrastructure so that children with disabilities have access to schools. In Indonesia, the schools will enable poor students to complete the basic education cycle. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the barriers to access for girls are often cultural, community awareness campaigns will promote the importance of girls' education. We are also assisting governments in Indonesia, PNG and the Pacific to target extremely poor families with cash transfers and fee relief to support getting children into school.

**Helping children stay in school.** To reduce drop-out rates, some of the most important strategies are: helping governments to ready poor children for school with early childhood programs; supporting school entry at the right age; and delivering linguistically accessible early grade education. These approaches have been effective in supporting girls' success in school. We will work more with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Save the Children Alliance and other NGOs to support early childhood programs, and with the World Food Programme to support school feeding, which is crucial for poor children to attend school and improve cognition. A World Food Programme school feeding program in disadvantaged areas of Laos has contributed to increased school enrolment and benefited more than 300 000 students and their families.

**Tracking out-of-school children.** Australia will support country partners to extend their Education Management Information Systems to include data on out-of-school children, school attendance, children with disabilities, and the demographic profile of those who drop out and repeat. This information will be used to improve policy and planning. The commitment to building knowledge on vulnerable and out-of-school children will include a partnership with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics to identify marginalised groups and measure access.

*Results from fee relief and other subsidies and incentives for the poor include an 8% increase in primary enrolments in Vanuatu in 2010, and an additional 183 000 children enrolled in PNG in 2010.*

*Australia will draw on successful experience in programs like the Samoa Inclusive Education Demonstration Program to support government disability-inclusive education programs that benefit all students.*

*In Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan, Australia is supporting Save the Children to enhance basic education and health services, focusing on women and girls. The program is building schools and establishing clinics; training women as teachers and community health workers; establishing literacy groups; and educating women and children about health, nutrition and sanitation.*

**Coordinating strategies for inclusive education.** Access, retention and completion are significant challenges, particularly for children with disabilities. As outlined in *Development For All: Towards a Disability-Inclusive Australian Aid Program 2009–14*, key priorities for inclusive education include incorporating disability-appropriate policies in national education plans, improving research and data on education for children with disabilities, and teacher training for developing enabling school and classroom environments.

**Facilitating education in emergencies.** Australia will support strong coordinated responses through UNICEF, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, and the International Save the Children Alliance, to ensure education is a core element of any emergency response. We will address the importance of disaster preparedness training through adult education, early attention to education in disaster response, and improved access to school for children in displaced populations.

**Supporting non-formal skills development.** Children and youth excluded from formal schooling need opportunities to gain the literacy, numeracy and entrepreneurial skills to improve their livelihoods. Non-formal education can achieve results even in the most challenging environments. We support NGOs in Burma and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) Education Program to provide non-formal education for children. This includes children from the urban poor and remote rural areas, as well as children from ethnic minority groups and those with special needs. Each year approximately 98 per cent of graduates of BRAC's non-formal primary education program move to formal secondary schools.<sup>38</sup> We will support ministries in other countries to better articulate pathways back from non-formal to formal schools. In Vanuatu, Australia has supported access to quality skills development by increasing the number of non-state trainers who meet standards in training provision. This is through the creation of provincial centres – 'one-stop-shops' that support the development of basic skills, business opportunity and training registration at community level.

**Linking education investments in other sectors.** This includes linking our education investments to those in health, water and sanitation, rural development and social protection, to address wider social determinants of exclusion. Health and education provide an effective entry point for broader women's leadership.

*Pacific leaders have endorsed the move to regional learning assessment, and early grade reading assessments have already taken place in PNG, Tonga and Vanuatu. Other countries, such as Bangladesh, East Timor, Laos, Nepal and the Philippines have or are planning their own assessment programs.*



## Pillar 2: Improving learning outcomes for children and youth

Australia's investment in improving learning is a major focus of our education strategy. The emphasis is on ensuring children and youth acquire core skills, and on the key levers of quality improvement: development of good diagnostic systems; capacity building; and the policy frameworks to support high standard educators and institutions.

### Box 2: Strategies for improving learning outcomes for children and youth

**Prioritising literacy and numeracy.** We will focus on early literacy and numeracy, starting in the Pacific. This will be supported through training teachers in holistic literacy practices and assessment, and differentiated assessment for children with learning disabilities. The orientation towards literacy and numeracy means increased involvement in early childhood education and development, from existing programs in Burma, Pakistan and the Philippines, to initiatives in the Pacific. Approaches will include the involvement of mothers in literacy acquisition and early childhood learning through supporting community early learning centres. Where the policy has support from government, improved literacy practices will include the use of the mother tongue in early grades.

**Resourcing the learning process.** Australia will help countries with resource constraints to meet the quality gap by providing textbooks, materials and equipment grants to schools. Improving teacher and principal quality through pre-service training and in-service professional development are major parts of our investments in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, PNG and the Philippines. In the Pacific this extends to developing 7 500 teachers, and introducing career structures to support motivated and competent teachers. In Afghanistan it extends to training female teachers as role models to encourage girls into the profession.

**Promoting learning assessment to improve learning outcomes.** Learning assessment will be a priority for Australia, to support our emphasis on results and to provide diagnostic information for targeting interventions. Partner countries will be encouraged to participate in international student assessment programs or develop their own tests to an accepted level of reliability and validity. At present, Indonesia is our only bilateral education partner participating in international testing. We will work with UNICEF and other implementing partners to include quality government tests in the monitoring of school and teacher improvement programs. We will look to collaborate with relevant Australian institutions, agencies and education development NGOs in trialling locally appropriate assessment practices.

**Supporting systems for quality improvement.** Research has shown that student results act as a catalyst for partner governments to adjust and improve education policy. Australia has been supporting policies to improve learning in many partner countries. In Indonesia this means supporting the accreditation of madrasahs (Islamic schools) to meet minimum service standards, and developing accredited training for principals and supervisors. In the Pacific, we will collaborate with the Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment to assess and benchmark policy and systems in the areas of teacher quality, assessment, school

governance and curriculum materials. Our partnerships with the Asian Development Bank and World Bank will give developing countries access to valuable expertise in research and knowledge development. As part of its increasing attention to learning improvement, Australia will support policy reform in: teacher recruitment; teacher qualification systems; teacher development practice; teacher performance; and quality assurance mechanisms.

**Enhancing quality in post-basic education.** Australia will provide targeted support to partner country training providers, TVET and higher education. We will support quality assurance systems and standards frameworks. To ensure that youth in the Pacific meet industry demands for enterprise in a mobile labour market, we will fund strategic demand-driven programs and providers that meet performance-based criteria, including equity. This way we will ensure Australia integrates investment in skills development with regional employment and economic growth strategies.

*To strengthen the employability of young people in the Pacific, AusAID's Pacific Education and Skills Development Agenda supports post-secondary training programs for people to gain skills through qualifications that are recognised regionally and internationally.*



## Pillar 3: Driving development through better governance and service delivery

Australia will support partner governments' efforts to lift people out of poverty by helping to strengthen systems, policies and institutions. Australia will mobilise resources for equitable participation in quality education at all levels. To build sustainable local capacity, Australia will provide scholarships and direct support to tertiary systems and institutions in selected partner countries.

### Box 3: Strategies for driving development through better governance and service delivery

**Strengthening effectiveness of education systems.** Australia works with governments to improve access and learning outcomes through education policy, strategic and operational planning and budgeting, and through personnel capacity building at the school, sub-national and national levels.

**Supporting better service delivery.** We will continue to assist governments to meet their responsibilities for educating their people. We will support pro-poor public finance management and better education data systems to enable efficient, child-oriented resourcing of schools. We will work at the local level, where there is greater influence on children's chances of going to, staying in, and learning at school. We will help make schools more accountable to their communities.

**Building leadership through scholarships.** Australia will continue to provide targeted in-country, regional and Australia-based scholarships to build leadership, knowledge and technical skills in identified areas that support development. Scholarship numbers will increase to more than 4 000 new scholarships a year from 2014 and will continue to facilitate gender-inclusive and disability-inclusive leadership. Scholarships for long-term study in Australia will increase in those countries where there is a strong pool of suitable candidates and where Australia can work with partners to identify areas for targeted capacity development. This will see an increase in the proportion of scholarships to support post-graduate degrees. Scholarships for short-term study and professional development will increase in those countries where there is a limited number of suitable candidates – particularly where bringing people to Australia for long periods of study could undermine institutional capacity. We will also use scholarships to provide learning and career development opportunities for professionals, and middle and senior managers in key ministries. Australia will strengthen its engagement with scholarship alumni whose expertise and links with relevant ministries can help inform the development and delivery of the aid program. Over the long-term, the capacity built through scholarships could replace the need for expatriate technical advisers. Links developed through scholarships will improve our understanding of the context in which we work, and strengthen our ability to work closely with our developing country partners.

**Supporting tertiary systems.** In higher education in PNG, the Pacific and Indonesia, we are supporting initiatives to help tertiary institutions contribute to national development priorities. In the Pacific and PNG, Australia will support quality improvement in university teaching, particularly as it relates to the production of skilled professionals for strategic industries and services.

New flexible approaches for scholarships include fellowships and options for short-term study that target academics and researchers. These new approaches will strengthen the utility of scholarships as a tool for improving the tertiary education sector, for example by improving the qualifications of university lecturers. In PNG scholarships play an important role in building the capacity of the country's universities and tertiary education institutions, with 15 per cent of scholarships provided to those working in higher education.<sup>39</sup>

We will take advantage of the expertise available in the Australian Government and in tertiary education institutions to build international partnerships and networks with selected institutions in the region. Scholarships will support research collaboration, by increasing the capacity in partner institutions and facilitating links with Australian universities and TAFEs. These approaches will help develop collaborative and innovative approaches to development challenges, quality frameworks and knowledge-to-policy development.

*Evidence shows that increasing the leadership of women in school management committees can improve budget accountability and resource allocation.*

# Where Australia will work

Australia's investment in education will continue to be primarily in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia provides direct education support to 21 developing countries – around 90 per cent of our assistance is bilateral. Our largest education programs will continue to be in Indonesia, PNG, the Pacific and the Philippines. This aligns with need and is consistent with Australia's foreign policy, security and economic interests. Aid to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Laos is set to expand significantly. There will be growth in funding for East Timor, Solomon Islands, Burma, Sri Lanka and Nepal. In Africa, more scholarships and support through multilateral mechanisms will be provided. Scholarships will also be a major feature of Australian bilateral aid to the Caribbean and Latin America.

# How Australia will work

We will emphasise results. Australia's aid program has a commitment to evidence-based policy, strategy, design and implementation. Programs must be able to demonstrate how Australian aid brings about change and improves the areas of education we target. Program results will be used to share learning across countries and programs. Our commitment to evidence will require us to strengthen our sectoral knowledge and expertise through investing in partnerships with local, regional and international institutions.

We will facilitate partner government leadership. The Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination brings countries of the Pacific Islands Forum together to achieve progress on all the Millennium Development Goals. This is a good example of how partner governments can affect the mobilisation and coordination of all resources available for development. In many countries we coordinate our assistance with that of other development partners, including civil society, to maximise effectiveness, transparency and mutual accountability. Where appropriate and practical, we will look to work through partner government systems to build capacity in efficient and effective management, disbursement of resources, and transparent financial reporting.

We will enhance our partnerships. Australia will work with effective multilateral, bilateral and non-government and civil society organisations that operate in areas that are consistent with Australian priorities, and that deliver value for money. The Global Partnership for Education is a priority commitment.<sup>40</sup> This global partnership is helping to improve education in the world's poorest countries. Its strategic priorities align closely with our own: supporting policy and planning in fragile states; targeting the participation of girls; and improving learning outcomes.

Australia will become a founding partner of the All Children Reading Grand Challenge for Development — a partnership with USAID and World Vision to improve child literacy through the use of innovation and technology. This initiative represents an increasing commitment to contribute substantively to innovative practice in literacy for development contexts.

Australia will invest in partnerships with non-government and civil society organisations, including Australia's network of organisations that are effective in advocacy and service delivery for the hardest to reach and most marginalised populations.

Australia will support the development of public-private partnerships for development, particularly in tertiary education, where scarce public resources cannot accommodate the expansion of demand, and where the private sector has interests in quality improvement and relevance.

# Conclusion

This thematic strategy guides Australia's future investments in education to provide opportunities for all. It commits Australia to tackling the tough issues in education in access and improvement of learning, and takes Australia into some new territory – such as non-formal and early childhood education. We seek to improve the chances of children and youth in the acquisition of basic skills.

This strategy will require new ways of working – building knowledge, strengthening education information systems and assessing results – so that interventions are effectively targeted. The strategy identifies successful approaches in the sector for consolidating good practice across the program. It extends the role of Australia in shaping global investments through development partnerships.

The commitments made in this thematic strategy are challenging and will impact on collective efforts in support of improved education outcomes. They reflect the confidence that has been put in education as the flagship of the aid program and the main engine of equitable development and opportunities for all.

## Appendix A: Indicative Education Indicators

The following indicators may be used to monitor and evaluate the results of Australia's education assistance. A detailed sector results framework will be developed. Note: data will be disaggregated by sex, socio-economic quintile and relevant disability criteria where possible.

<b>Pillars for Australia's investment in education</b>	<b>Indicators for education outcomes</b>	<b>Indicators for education outputs</b>
<p><b>Pillar 1. Improving access to basic education opportunities for all so that all children and youth complete a basic education</b></p>	<p>Number of additional children and youth enrolled in basic education</p> <p>Number of additional children and youth completing a cycle of basic education</p> <p>Number of out-of-school children</p>	<p>Number of (a) additional classrooms and (b) rehabilitated classrooms</p> <p>Number of children and youth benefiting from initiatives that reduce financial and fee barriers to schooling (stipends, local scholarships, conditional cash transfers)</p> <p>Number of children and youth benefiting from facilities improving access (toilets, facilities for children and youth with disability, school equipment including information and communication technology)</p>
<p><b>Pillar 2. Improving learning outcomes so that children and youth achieve the basic skills necessary for productive lives</b></p>	<p>Scores on literacy and numeracy assessments</p> <p>Youth literacy rate for 15–24 year olds</p> <p>Number of additional youth attaining national, regional or internationally valued qualifications</p>	<p>Number of children benefiting from pre-primary preparation for schooling</p> <p>Number of (a) teachers trained and (b) TVET providers trained</p> <p>Number of textbooks and materials provided</p> <p>Support provided to develop and/or improve quality assurance systems and standards frameworks</p>
<p><b>Pillar 3. Driving development through better governance and service delivery so that partner governments support quality education for all</b></p>	<p>Percentage of government budget allocated to education</p> <p>Percentage of schools meeting national minimum standards</p> <p>Number of individuals gaining tertiary qualifications of international standing who return to work in national ministries, national civil society organisations, strategic industries and tertiary institutions</p>	<p>Support provided for systems and policy strengthening in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; pro-poor targeted funding</li> <li>&gt; education management information systems development</li> <li>&gt; policies for the improvement of education institutions</li> <li>&gt; inclusive education</li> </ul> <p>Number of awards offered for (a) tertiary study, (b) professional development and (c) education-related qualifications</p>

# Endnotes

- 1 Australian Government, *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference – Delivering real results*, Response to the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness, July 2011.
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