BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

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Learning for Life scholarship program

- **Long-term** educational support (1st yr of school to potentially end of tertiary)
- Aims to improve the **educational and post-school** outcomes of **financially disadvantaged young Australians**
- **3 components**:
  - Financial support
  - Relationship with LfL Coordinator
  - Access to range of short programs
- Underpinned by strong **parent engagement**
- Strong **partnerships**
- **Outcomes** focus

Learning for Life families

- Around **43,000** students nationally in **90+** communities across all states/territories

- All **low income** families – Health Care Card or pension

- 1 in 5 **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander** background nationally

- 40% of students and 50% of parents have a **health** or **disability** issue

- 70% of parents **not in the labour force** or unemployed

- 56% of parents have not completed Year 12 or equivalent

- Over half are **single parent;** 6% in grandparent, kin or foster families

- 20% of students have been at **4 or more schools** and 1 in 20 at 6 or more schools

- 30% do not have a home computer and/or internet connection at home

- **More disadvantaged** than their peers in disadvantaged schools

- Over half of our secondary and tertiary students have been on *LfL* for **6 or more years**

OUR RESEARCH AND EVALUATION APPROACH

Our evaluation approach

1. A '**theory of change**'

2. An **Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)** framework:

   – How much did we do?

   – How well did we do it?

   – Is anyone better off?

3. Small number of **long-term outcomes and Key Performance Indicators** and the means of collecting and analysing this data for *Learning for Life* scholarship students.

Nationally unique dataset for *Learning for Life*

- **Longitudinal**
- **All financially disadvantaged students**
- **Admin, demographic** and **outcomes** data for **each** student.

Unique IDs
- Student
- Family
- School
- Community
- Program Coordinator

Administrative records
- Referrals / support
- Participation in key programs
- Years on scholarship

Demographics - family
- Family type
- Family size
- Digital access
- Non-scholarship 'sibling' age and gender

Demographics - students
- Age, gender, Indigenous background
- Year level
- School
- 'Partner school' status
- Community
- Program Coordinator
- *Health and disability*

Demographics - primary carer
- Age, gender, Indigenous background
- Main language spoken
- Highest education level
- Labour market status
- Studying status
- Role relative to scholarship child

Student outcomes
- School attendance
- English & maths achievement
- Yr 12 completion
- Post-school engagement
- Highest year level completed
- *Tertiary qualification completed*

Peer (school level) and national comparisons
- Demographics
- Average attendance rates
- Yr 12 completion
- Post-school engagement

Measures of effectiveness

LONGER-TERM OUTCOMES
- Young people are in education, training, and/or work
- Young people complete Yr 12 or equivalent
- Young people stay engaged with learning

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES
- Improved literacy and numeracy
- Improved confidence (self-efficacy)
- Improved motivation and aspiration
- Enhanced networks and relationships
- Improved knowledge/understanding
- Improved or sustained school attendance

PROGRAMS
Build skills and knowledge and influence attitudes and behaviours
- Let's Count • Let's Read • Learning for Life
- Student2Student • iTrack mentoring
- Learning Clubs • Creative enrichment
- Careers/post-school options workshops
- Cadetship to Career • Aboriginal girls' program
- Work Inspiration • Tertiary Mentoring
- Tech Packs • Financial literacy

ENGAGEMENT ADVANCEMENT ATTENDANCE

New research report

- Uses *LfL* educational outcomes data collected over 7 years from 30,000 students ⇨new knowledge in an Australian-first study

- Range of practice and policy implications
  ⇨ improve program and as basis for public policy advocacy

- Relevant for parents, schools, Depts of Ed, NGOs, philanthropic organisations etc

Learning for Life longitudinal data shows relationships between key educational outcomes

1. SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT & SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

There is a relationship between English achievement and future school attendance

Attendance rates 2015 to 2016 by English achievement in 2014
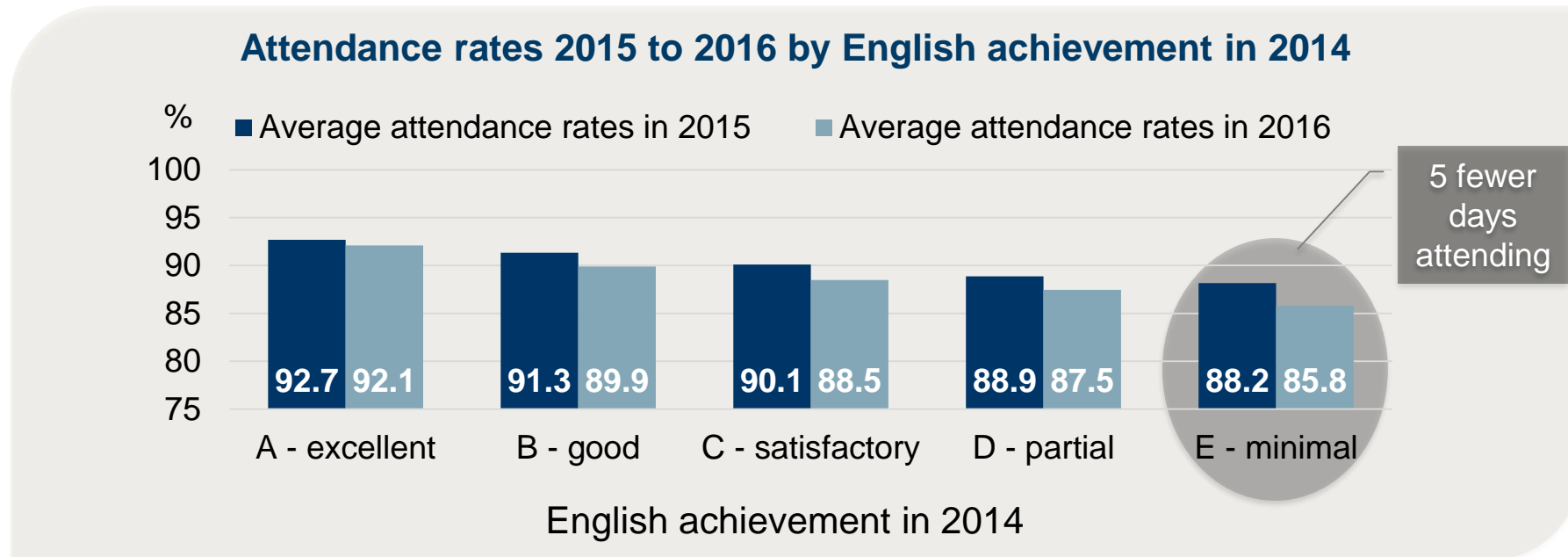
- Lower English achievement grades in 2014 are a **predictor** of lower attendance in subsequent years

- ↓ in attendance greatest for students with '*E*' grade

- Converse applies - attendance **predicts** future achievement

- Same relationships apply for maths

English achievement over time is satisfactory for majority but change is common

Changes in English achievement 2014 – 2016 (%)

- Satisfactory or better in both years — 57%
- Improved from below satisfactory to satisfactory or better — 14%
- Declined from satisfactory or better to below satisfactory — 12%
- Below satisfactory in both years — 17%
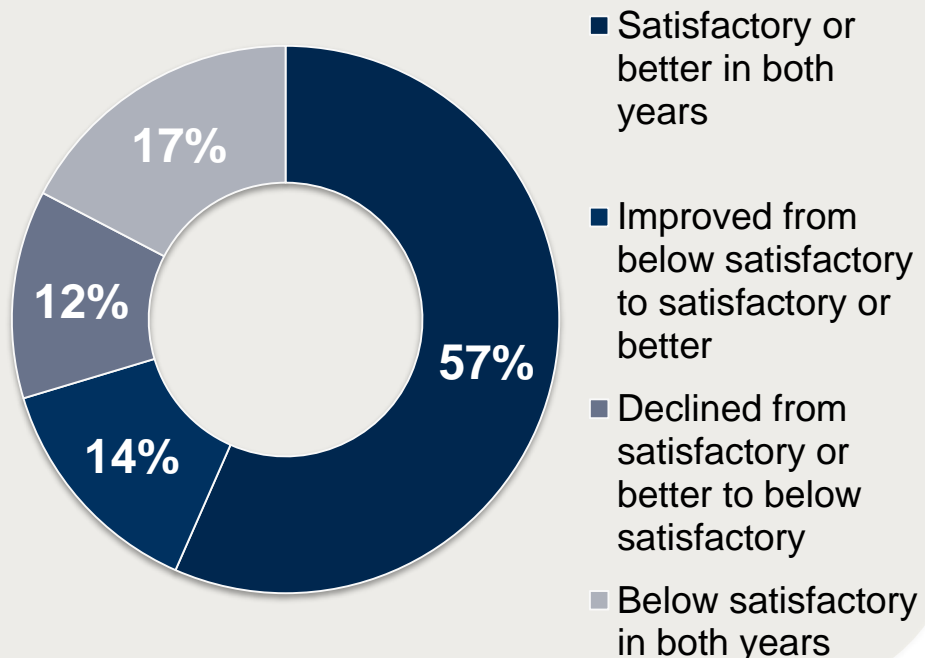
- Majority had satisfactory or better achievement in 2014 and 2016

- 1 in 4 students experienced movement ↑ or ↓

- Improvements are possible

- Timely support to arrest ↓

- Need ongoing monitoring through school

2. SCHOOL COMPLETION & ATTENDANCE (& ACHIEVEMENT)

Attendance rates in Year 7 are related to whether or not a student completes school

Highest level of school completed 2014-2016 by attendance rates in Year 7

Attendance rates in Year 7	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12/equiv
≥90%	11	14	75
80≤89%	15	22	63
70≤79%	24	17	59
≤69%	28	24	48
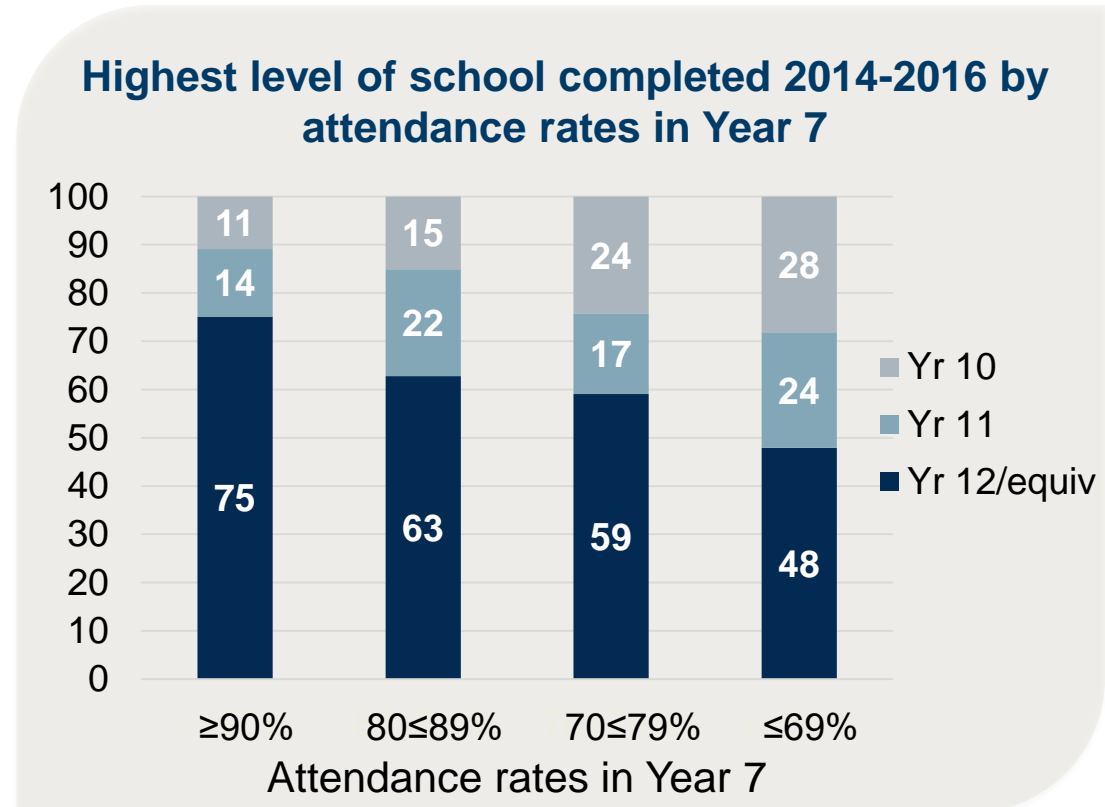
- Students with high attendance in Year 7 were much more likely to complete Year 12, cf students with low attendance (75% cf 48%)

Improving attendance rates as students move through high school increases likelihood they'll complete school

Highest level of school completed 2014-2016 by attendance in Year 9 for students with ≤69% attendance in Year 7
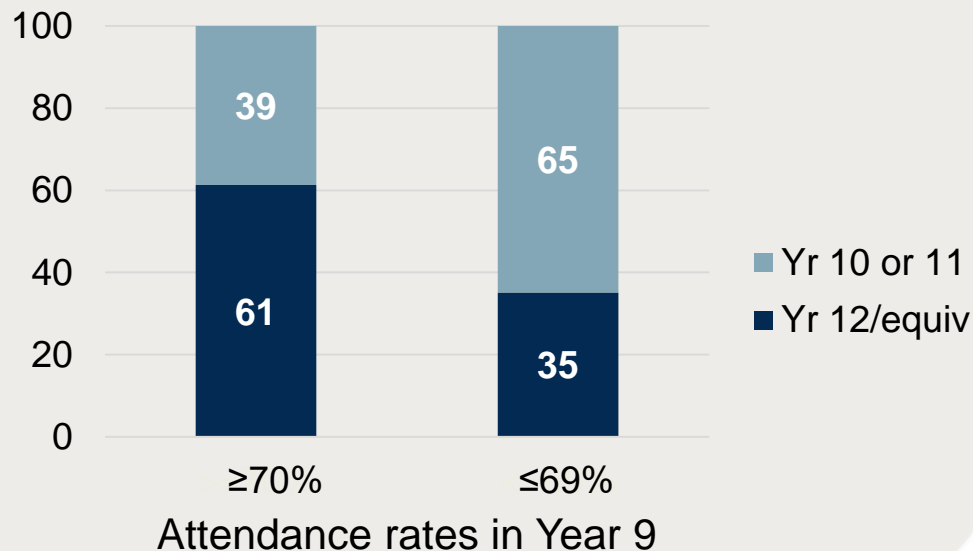
- 6 in 10 students who had very low attendance in Year 7 but improved their attendance Year 9, completed Year 12 cf 35% of students who had very low attendance in both Years 7 and 9
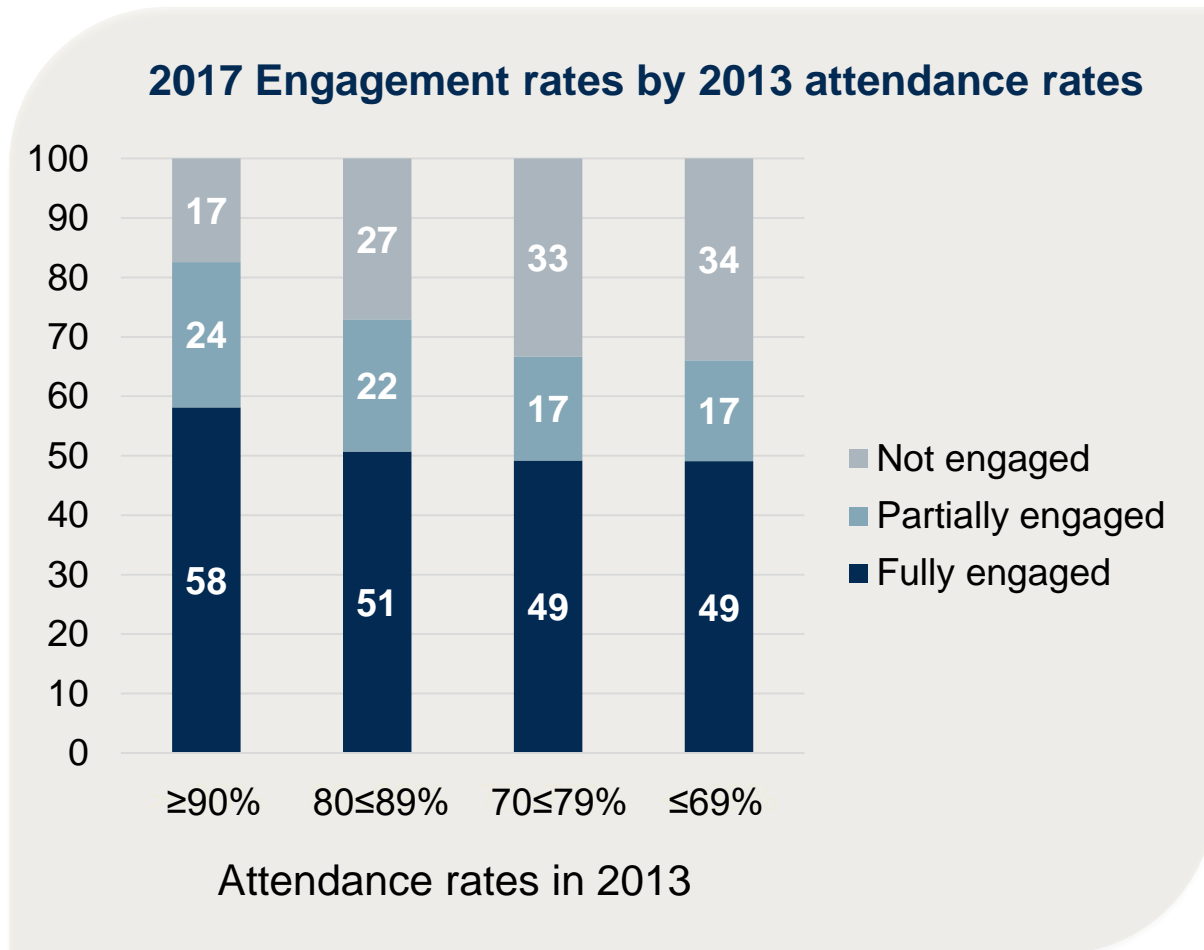
3. POST-SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT IN WORK AND/OR STUDY

Post-school engagement in work and/or study is related to school attendance

2017 Engagement rates by 2013 attendance rates

Chart legend:
- Not engaged
- Partially engaged
- Fully engaged

| Attendance rates in 2013	≥90%	80≤89%	70≤79%	≤69%
Not engaged	17	27	33	34
Partially engaged	24	22	17	17
Fully engaged	58	51	49	49

- 82% of students who had high attendance rates during high school were in work and/or study post-school cf 66% of those with very low attendance rates

- High attenders were also more likely to be fully engaged

Policy and practice implications

- Achievement and attendance are **indicators of risk** and can be used to **identify students** needing additional support as they move through school

- **Targeted** and **timely** support to improve students' **low** school **attendance** and below satisfactory **achievement** in English and Maths as they move through school is essential

- **Improvements** in attendance and achievement **are possible** and increase the **likelihood** of students **completing school** and being in **work and/or study** post-school

- Support for high attenders and achievers should focus **on widening learning experiences**, sense of possibilities and expanding networks

- **Support students at risk** of early school leaving eg through new Early School Leavers pilot initiative. Includes career coaching, setting goals, skills development including with employers

- **Unique Student Identifier** needed for all Australian students

Conclusion

- There is significant opportunity to improve Australia's educational performance, especially for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

- Highly disadvantaged students can achieve educationally and be involved in work or study post-school
- This research contributes to the evidence base to ensure more students succeed

  - Provides more sophisticated and nuanced understanding

  - Contributes to evolution of *LfL* but goes well beyond this by strengthening the educational evidence base

- Wherever possible work in the outcomes space should benefit program participants <u>and</u> help inform the work of others.
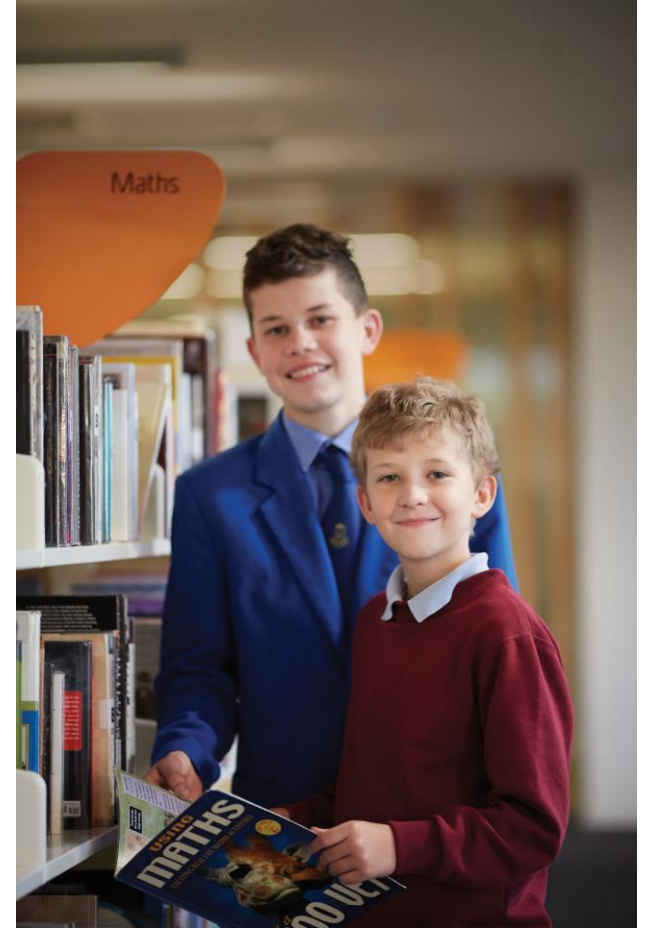
The Smith Family

everyone's family

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