

# ABOUT CLASS SIZE DATA

The size of each primary classes and secondary English classes is collected from government schools as part of the February School Census conducted on the last school day of February each year.

Note: Special and language schools are not required to submit class size data.

## PRIMARY CLASS SIZE

### Definition of Class Size

In the past, some primary schools have varied class structures during the school week, generally involving smaller classes for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. In such situations, the following definition should be used to identify the class size to be reported in the February School Census:

Count the class size as that which exists for the majority of the time and which includes the time spent teaching literacy and numeracy and which the school community relates to as a class grouping.

### Additional Teaching Support

The size of a class is defined as 'the number of students that exist in a class grouping' and has been defined this way for many years. A class of 24 students with 1.2 teachers is a class of 24 students and not a class of 24/1.2 or 20 students. Some schools indicated that their classes were supported by additional teaching support. This extra teaching support is NOT included when calculating the average class size. Average class size is NOT the same as the student/teacher ratio.

Decisions on the class size profile for a school are made by the Principal and School Council and take into account a number of factors such as the desired use of specialist teachers, practice re composite classes, the enrolment profile and class room availability. Schools with the largest class sizes were contacted to ascertain any special circumstances. Common reasons related to the use of additional support classroom teachers within these classes or to facilities issues.

Although a number of schools indicated that their large classes were supported by additional teaching support, this extra teaching support is NOT included when calculating the average class size. Average class size is NOT the same as the student/teacher ratio. Class sizes therefore need to be considered in the context of the whole school operation and can at times be misleading if looked at in isolation.

### Reasons for large class sizes

Decisions on the class size profile for a school take into account a number of factors such as the practice concerning composite classes, the enrolment profile and class room availability.

The number and size of classes are based on the expected enrolments prior to the commencement of the school year. Class structures are modified if necessary again at the start of the school year if there has been a substantial change in the number of enrolments. However, once term has started, late enrolments are usually absorbed into these classes unless there is a very large increase in enrolments.

The schools with the largest average class sizes and the largest individual class sizes, both for all classes and for Prep–2 classes have been contacted to confirm the data and to ascertain any special circumstances or reasons prevailing in these schools. The use of additional support within these classes to support the teacher was the most common reason given, as their enrolment profile did not readily allow the creation of another class.

### **Derived statistics on Primary class sizes**

- Number of classes: A class is a group of students timetabled together. Students are counted in the class group in which they spend most of the school week.
- Average primary class size: The total number of students divided by the number of primary classes.
- Number of Prep–2 classes: The number of classes in the school/state with at least one student in Prep, Year 1 or Year 2.
- Average Prep–2 class size: The total number of students in Prep–2 classes divided by the number of Prep–2 classes.
- Number of classes by year level: The number of classes with at least one student in the respective year level.
- Average class size for each year level: The total number of students in classes assigned to the respective year level divided by the number of classes with respective year level students.

In the case of composite classes, all the students that are in a composite class (regardless of which year level) are included in the calculation of the average class size for the respective year levels. For example, if there was a composite 2/3 class with 25 students, then the 25 students would be included in the calculation of the average Prep-2, Year 2 and Year 3 class size respectively.

## **SECONDARY (ENGLISH) CLASS SIZE**

### **Definition of Class Size**

English class size is an indication of the size of classes in secondary schools, as almost all students study English. Where an ESL class was taken instead of a regular English class these ESL classes have been included in the analysis. VCAL and intensive English language classes are not included in this analysis.

All compulsory English classes for secondary students held during the week of the census are included. Secondary students not studying English are NOT counted in the class size return. All elective English classes (e.g. Remedial English or ESL) are also included.

Excluded are classes such as English Literature, Remedial English or ESL that a student attends as well as “compulsory” English.

Please note that extra teaching support is NOT included when calculating the average class size.

### **Derived statistics on Secondary (English) class sizes**

- Number of classes: A class is a group of secondary students who are timetabled together undertaking English.
- Average secondary (English) class size: The total number of students divided by the number of secondary (English) classes.

- Number of classes by year level: The number of classes with at least one student in the respective year level.
- Average (English) class size for each year level: The total number of students in classes assigned to the respective year level divided by the number of classes with respective year level students.