

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### ***PISA shows Indigenous students continue to struggle***

The latest results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show a continuing wide gap in academic achievement between Australia's Indigenous and non Indigenous students with very little improvement since PISA was first conducted in 2000.

The results from PISA 2006 were released today by the OECD in Paris with an Australian national report released simultaneously by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

Altogether, 1080 Indigenous students were assessed in PISA 2006 as part of an Australian sample of just over 14,000 students. They undertook assessments in scientific, mathematical and reading literacy in mid 2006.

While some Indigenous students performed very well in the assessments, Indigenous students, on average, scored 86 points lower than non-Indigenous students – corresponding to about two and a half years of formal schooling.

Indigenous students were under-represented among the highest scoring students and over-represented among low scoring students. In scientific literacy, 40% of Indigenous students performed below the OECD 'baseline' and were judged to be at serious risk of not being able to participate adequately in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce or to contribute as productive future citizens. In mathematical literacy and reading literacy, the corresponding percentages were 39% and 38%.

These findings mirror the large gaps previously found in both PISA 2000 and 2003 and suggest there has been little improvement over time.

Commenting on the performances of Indigenous students, ACER's chief executive Professor Geoff Masters observed that Australia faced an enormous task in closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous achievement levels:

"The challenge is to ensure that all Indigenous children, particularly those in rural and remote Australia, are participating and engaged in schooling. And we require incentives to encourage our best teachers to take up our most difficult challenge."

Australia's results from PISA 2006 are reported in *Exploring Scientific Literacy: How Australia measures up* by Sue Thomson and Lisa De Bortoli of the Australian Council for Educational Research. The report is available from the ACER website at [www.acer.edu.au](http://www.acer.edu.au)

A subsequent report to be prepared by ACER will further investigate the performance of Indigenous students.

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