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Student digital proficiency and equity fall short – supporting teachers is key to the solution

The latest national technology [literacy results](#) from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) show the lowest levels of student digital proficiency since testing began in 2005, alongside persistent digital inequity.

At a time when digital proficiency and equitable access are indispensable for modern education and employment, [digital education](#) must be effective, inclusive and accessible for all students. Governments and employers must ensure that schools, particularly in remote and regional communities and those serving First Nations and disadvantaged students, have the resources and time to deliver high-quality information and communication technology (ICT) skills to all students.

[ACARA's testing of 10,000 students](#) in 2025-2026 found two thirds of year 10 students and half of year 6 students do not meet digital proficiency standards. Entrenched structural inequities of race, region, and socio-economic disadvantage continue to impact ICT education with markedly lower test scores for students from First Nations, remote and/or poorer socio-economic backgrounds.

A [NSW case study](#) also found high levels of digital exclusion, with only 28% of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and only 19% of asylum seeker and refugee students having a level of digital inclusion adequate for their education.

Education Minister Clare's commitment to [support teachers](#) to reverse the decline in digital learning, while promoting the ethical and safe use of technology, is essential – particularly in safeguarding [the safety](#) of female teachers and students. Achieving these outcomes depends on governments and employers meeting their shared duty of care by working closely with teachers - both in schools and through education unions - to inform decision-making.

Teachers deal with competing pressures related to delivering mandatory curriculum and supporting the diverse needs of students. They need access to appropriate and timely professional training during paid hours and structured and regular release time to support student learning in a rapidly changing digital landscape. All initiatives, including those related to digital literacy, must be subject to a Teacher Workload Impact Assessment consistent with the [National teacher workforce action plan](#) and aim to address the structural issues that perpetuate inequities across the education sector.