

Australian Universities Accord

Student equity and success

More students from underrepresented backgrounds will need to attend university and graduate to meet Australia's skills needs.

Participation targets to achieve population parity by 2050

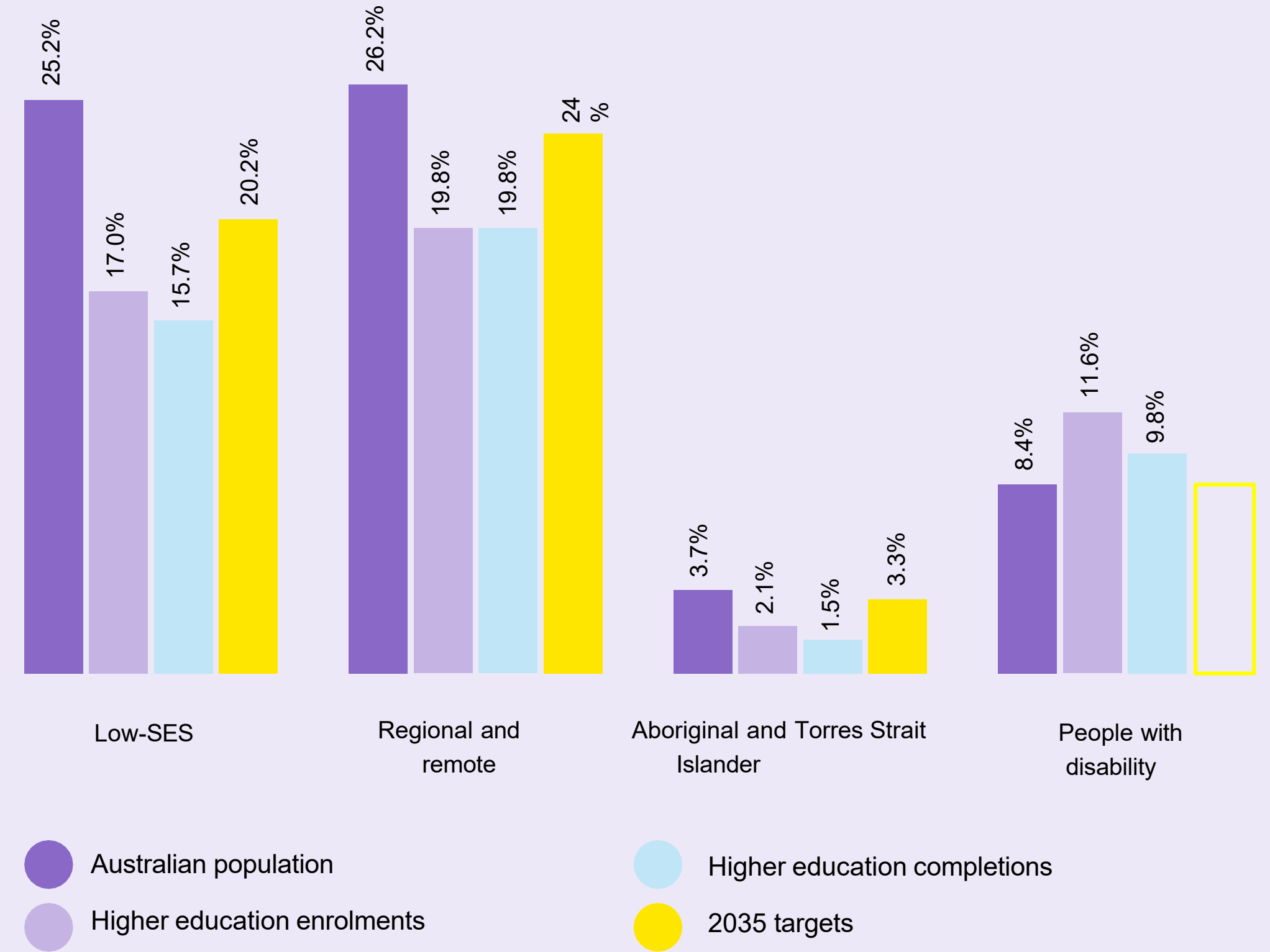
- **Equity targets for 2035:**
 - 20.2% for low SES students (currently 17%)
 - 24% for rural, regional and remote students (currently 19.8%)
 - 3.3% for Indigenous students (currently 2.1%)
 - Maintaining the current participation rate for students with disability
- Each university will have an individual target that matches their context

Empowering under-represented cohorts to participate and succeed

- Government funded outreach programs
- Government funded fee-free preparatory courses
- New needs-based funding model for students from equity cohorts
- Bonus payments for universities meeting completion targets



Representation of equity groups in population versus higher education



Source: Department of Education, Higher Education Statistics – Section 16 Equity Performance Data [data set], (Canberra: 2023), accessed 19 December 2023, HYPERLINK "<http://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2022-section-16-equity-performance-data>"www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2022-section-16-equity-performance-data; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census TableBuilder, Indigenous Status and level of highest qualification, (Canberra, 2023), accessed 19 December 2023; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census TableBuilder, Remoteness Areas and level of highest qualification, (Canberra, 2023), published 18 December 2023. Note: Share of the Australian population for people with disability is an expected enrolment share estimated by the Department of Education, based on the proportion of the 15 to 64-year-old population with disability, adjusted for age profile and profound disability.

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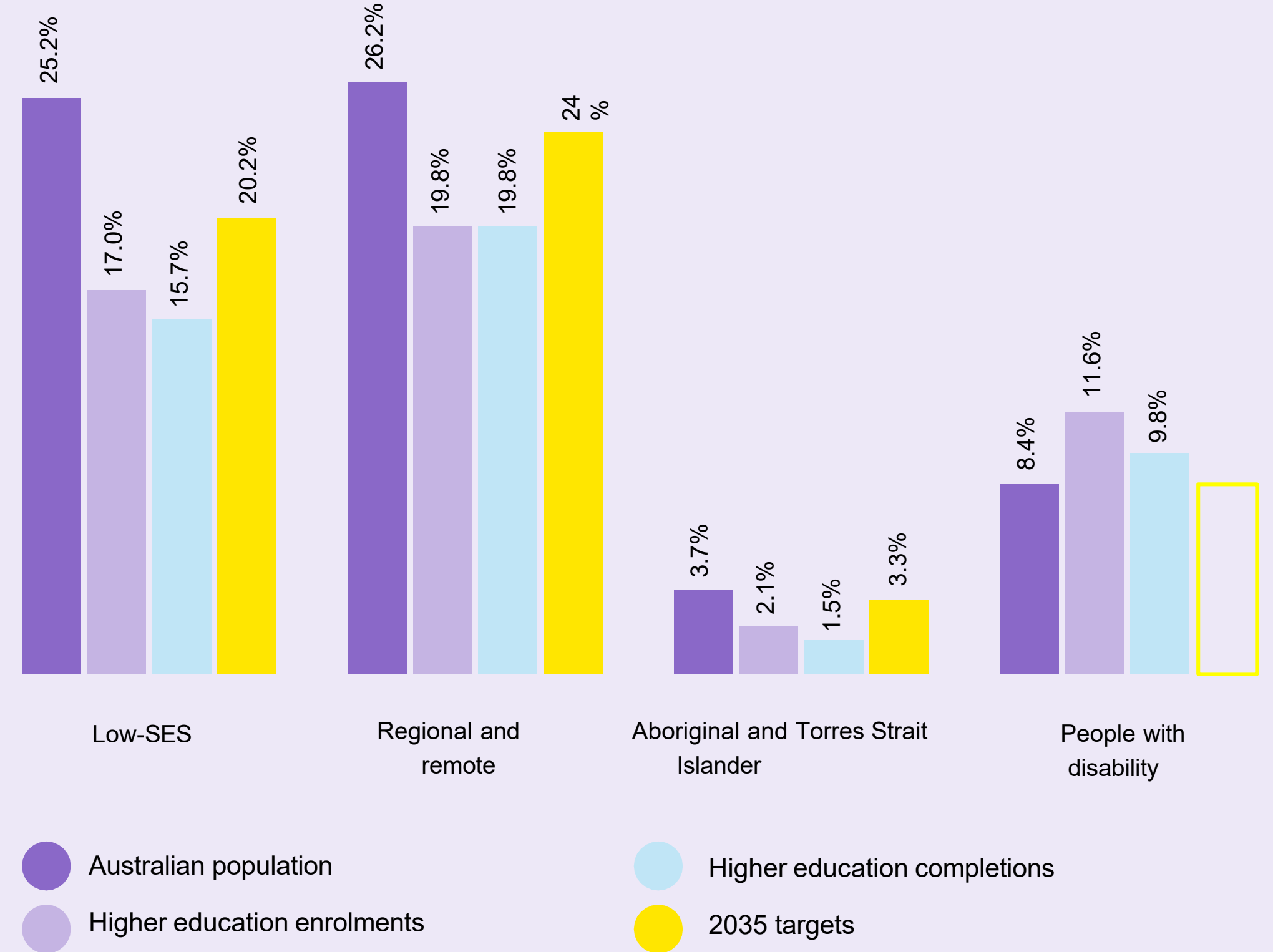
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Support to participate and succeed in learning

Recommendation 13

That to ensure the new focus on increasing the number of higher education students from an under-represented background is matched by a focus on the success of these students, the Australian Government adopt a needs-based funding model including:

- a) a per-student funding amount for under-represented students that recognises the cost of the additional support they need to succeed, specifically First Nations students, students from lower quartile SES backgrounds, and students with disability
- b) a specific element based on the location of delivery in regional and remote Australia recognising the important equity issues involved in delivering courses to students in regional Australia, and the additional costs of that delivery
- c) a completion bonus for higher education providers who meet agreed completion targets negotiated through their mission-based compact with a focus on students who face the largest barriers to success

Early at-school offers

Recommendation 20

That to recognise the critical importance of school to higher education pathways, to ensure that students get the most out of their final year of school, and to maintain the integrity of senior secondary certificates, governments (through the Education Ministers Meeting) agree that early at-school offers for 2025 and 2026 should not be issued before September in the relevant year. Relevant stakeholders (including schools, higher education providers and tertiary admission centres) should also develop a national, cross-jurisdictional approach to at-school offers in time for 2027 offers that includes:

- a) the timing of when at-school offers are made
- b) a consistent and transparent framework for admissions requirements and assessment processes for at-school offers
- c) approaches to improving post-school transitions through at-school offers, particularly for those most at risk of falling out of post-school education
- d) improvements to data and analysis across at-school offers.

Challenges for the sector

Implementation of the Accord will be staged over the long-term

- Government will now consider the recommendations and consult with students, universities, the wider community, and industry
- We will need clear early direction from government, including around funding model and the role of ATEC
- There are other system impacts, such as cap on international student placements
- Many measures will require changes to legislation or funding
- Formation of an Implementation Advisory Committee

What you can do

- Collaborate with equity practitioners and develop key priority recommendations to government on policy design and implementation
- Talk to your network to build support for key measures