What is the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability?
The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (the national data collection) is an annual collection that counts the number of school students with disability and the level of reasonable educational adjustment they are provided with. It has been progressively implemented from 2013. From 2015 all schools will participate in the annual national data collection.

The national data collection will count students who have been identified by a school team as receiving an adjustment to address a disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (the DDA). The DDA can be viewed or downloaded from the ComLaw website at www.comlaw.gov.au.

Why has the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability been introduced?
Until now there has been a lack of nationally comparable data about school students with disability. The national data collection will mean that, for the first time, this information is transparent, consistent and reliable at a national level.

More information about school students with disability will help parents, carers, teachers, principals and education authorities to support students with disability to take part in school on the same basis as other students. The national data collection will better enable all levels of government to effectively target resources for students with disability wherever they live and whatever school they attend.

The national data collection is also an opportunity for schools to review their learning and support systems and processes and continually improve education outcomes for students with disability.

Over time, the processes underpinning the national data collection will help to reinforce the actions required of schools under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (the DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards). Both the DDA and the Standards are available to view or download via the ComLaw website at www.comlaw.gov.au.

How will the data from the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability be used?
The information provided through the national data collection will help education authorities and schools better target programmes and resources and contribute to enhanced learning outcomes for students with disability.

The national data collection is also an opportunity for schools to review their learning and support systems and processes and continually improve education outcomes for students with disability. In addition, the national data collection will provide governments with greater insight into the number of students with disability in Australian schools, where they are located and what reasonable adjustments are provided for them.

Who is overseeing implementation of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability?
Implementation of the national data collection is overseen by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training in partnership with all state and territory governments and
non-government education authorities.

The Education Council Joint Working Group to Provide Advice on Reform for Students with Disability (the Joint Working Group) has provided advice and oversight on this work since 2011. The Joint Working Group is chaired by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and includes representation from all state and territory government education authorities, the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA), the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Isn't data on students with disability collected now? Why do we need to be involved in another data collection process at the national level?
The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability is focused on building an evidence base that will provide teachers, schools and sectors with more information and a better understanding at the national level about how many school students with disability there are in our schools; where they are; and the level of adjustment being provided for them to participate in schooling on the same basis as other students.

When does a school need to start collecting evidence for this data collection?
To include a student in the data collection, there should be evidence that the student has been or is being provided with an ongoing, long-term educational adjustment for a minimum of one school term (or at least 10 weeks).

The data entry date for the 2015 national data collection on students with disability is 7 August 2015. The process of identifying evidence can occur at any time in the 12 months preceding this date. Schools are encouraged not to leave this process to the weeks immediately preceding 7 August 2015.

When and how often will the national data be collected?
The national data collection on students with disability first took place in October 2013. From 2014, the data collection has been aligned with the National Schools Statistical Collection in August each year. Education ministers have agreed that the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability will occur annually in all schools across Australia from 2015.

How does a school decide if a student is being provided with the lowest level of adjustment (support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice)?
Students whose disability requires that the school actively monitor the need for reasonable adjustments or who are provided with adjustments that are reasonably expected as part of quality teaching or school practice would be included in this category.

For example, a student who is short-sighted and has this condition corrected through glasses or contact lenses would not be included in the count because the condition does not have a functional impact on their schooling and does not require monitoring by the school. However a student with a vision impairment that does have a functional impact on their schooling and who thus needs educational adjustments in one or more areas such as planning, teaching, assessment, reporting, the environment and/or resources, would be included in the national data collection on students with disability.

A decision to include the student in the lowest level of adjustment would reflect that the teacher/school is undertaking ongoing monitoring and making minor adjustments in relation to the student’s disability related needs.
Some students with disability may not need educational adjustments beyond those that are reasonably expected as part of quality teaching or school practice to address disability related needs (e.g. allowing a student with dyslexia additional reading time during a test, using graphic organisers to support writing). These students should be recorded under the “Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice” level of adjustment for the purposes of this collection.

This category enables the collection of data on students who require active monitoring or provision of low-level support/s. While the student’s needs as a result of the disability are being met through quality differentiated teaching practice during the period they are being considered for the data collection, those needs necessitate ongoing monitoring and review.

What if an adjustment was provided for a past student and is now being used for a current student (i.e. a wheelchair ramp)?

A facility such as a building modification, which already exists in the school and caters for a student’s physical disability where no additional action is required to support the student’s learning would be an example of support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice.

What is the difference between “Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice” and the “Supplementary” level of adjustment categories?

The national data collection on students with disability reinforces the existing obligations that schools have towards students under both the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (The Standards).

Students may be counted in the national data collection where they meet the DDA’s broad definition of disability and the functional impact of their disability is addressed by the school actively responding to their specific individual education needs within quality differentiated teaching practice. These students should be counted under the “Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice” level of adjustment.

Examples might include a student with a health condition such as asthma and diabetes, or a mental health condition who has strategies in place to manage the condition in consultation with medical professionals that can be provided within quality differentiated teaching practice. In both examples, the student requires no adjustments beyond support provided within regular practices and resources of the school.

I don't think the student meets the definition of 'disability' under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Only those students who meet the broad definition of 'disability' under the DDA, and whose disability has a functional impact on their schooling, are eligible for inclusion in the national data collection on students with disability. If a student does not meet this broad definition, they should not be included.

I don't think the student fits into the disability categories provided in the list.

If a student has multiple disabilities or does not fit within one category, you should select whichever disability category has the greatest impact, based on your professional judgement, on the student’s education and is the main driver of adjustments to support their access and participation.
Do schools include students with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)?
If this student requires ongoing long-term support, your school should identify the disability that is present as a result of the FASD, and then determine the appropriate disability category.

Do schools include a student with a hearing impairment?
If the student requires ongoing long-term support to participate in education, then record the details relevant to this student. A student who has a hearing impairment that is corrected through a hearing aid and who requires no adjustments by the school, would not be included in the count where the condition does not have a functional impact on their schooling. However, a student with a hearing impairment that does have a functional impact on their schooling (e.g., one of a substantial cohort of students in a class who suffer from otitis media) and subsequently needs educational adjustments in one or more areas that may include planning, teaching, assessment, reporting, the environment and/or resources, would be included in the collection.

Do schools include a student with dyslexia?
If the student requires ongoing long-term support to participate in education, then record the details relevant to this student. Some students with dyslexia may not need educational adjustments beyond those that are reasonably expected as part of quality teaching or school practice to address disability related needs (e.g. allowing such a student additional reading time during a test). These students should be counted under the “Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice” level of adjustment for the purposes of this collection.

Should someone review the information before the completing the data collection process?
Your school principal can advise you of the review processes that apply to your school prior to the submission of data.

When considering the level of adjustment provided to the student, consider all adjustments that the student receives in order to access and participate in schooling on the same basis as other students.

Do schools include a student with a medical condition?
The nature of the medical condition will determine whether or not a student is included in the collection. A student should be included if the student’s needs remain subject to close monitoring and review/require adjustment (and there is evidence to support this). If the school does not need to make any adjustments to accommodate the student then they should not be included in the collection. If staff need to be constantly aware of the student, adjust teaching and learning delivery or adjust activities to accommodate the student’s medical condition, or have regular contact with the parents, in regards to the medical condition, then the student should be included and evidence identified to support the reasons for the inclusion. (Refer to case study 1: Gemma, of the AISACT NCCD Information Pack)

What is the difference between general differentiation and the first adjustment level of ‘support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice’?
‘Support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice’ means that support is being provided for students who have a disability under the DDA. Schools and teachers make adjustments and provide support for a range of students. Not all adjustments and supports are provided to address disability. For example:
• A student who is experiencing difficulty with learning as a result of external factors such as limited school attendance or acquisition of English as a second language whilst learning in English, **would not** be included in the NCCD.

• A student who is experiencing difficulty with learning as a result of a disorder or malfunction that results in them learning differently from other students without the disorder or malfunction **would be** included in the data collection.

**Do schools include in the collection a student who has high needs and has a lot of adjustments being made for him/her, however, has no diagnosis?**

There are many reasons why a student may not have a diagnosis at the time of the collection, including:

• Parents/guardians choosing not to take their child to obtain a diagnosis
• Waiting for results/still undergoing testing
• Parents not wanting their child to be labelled as having a disability
• Refusal to acknowledge that the student has a disability
• Cultural or religious reasons

Regardless of the reason behind not having a diagnosis, if a teacher/parent feels that the student has a disability (in line with the definition under the DDA), and there is supporting evidence adjustments have been or will be made on an ongoing basis (min. 10 consecutive weeks), then the student could be considered as having an imputed disability. This may come down to professional teacher judgement and having in-school evidence to support the judgement. Evidence can be drawn from four general areas:

• assessed individual needs of the student
• adjustments being provided to the student to address the disability – this includes support provided within quality differentiated practice
• ongoing monitoring and review of the adjustments
• consultation and collaboration with the student and/or parents and carers or associates.

**What evidence is required?**

For a student to be included in the data collection there needs to be evidence that adjustments have been made for a minimum of one school term (10 weeks) in the 12 months prior to the census date. Schools are not required to create new or additional evidence for the purposes of the data collection. School principals are responsible for verifying or confirming that there is evidence at the school to support the inclusion of a student in the data collection.

The evidence could include notes from meetings, standardised test results, evidence of curriculum adjustments, observation notes, school counsellor reports, and other information pertaining to what made the teacher/parent consider that the student might have a disability.

To determine the amount of evidence needed for a student who does not have a diagnosis but is imputed, it is recommended that the school considers, “If we were challenged to explain our decision would we feel we had reasonable ground and documentation to support our judgement?” (Refer to step 1: is the student being provided with a reasonable adjustment to address a disability on the NCCD website)

**Do schools take the diagnosis into account when determining the adjustment level?**

The NCCD model was designed to assist schools to identify and to support students with
disability so they can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers. Schools need not be influenced by the diagnosis; but should be guided by what adjustments are being provided to a student (to address a disability) to ensure he/she can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students in the class. (Refer to the data collection model on the NCCD website) The focus of the data collection is on the adjustments to support functional needs of students rather than on the category of disability.

There is a student who is enrolled in my school who refuses to attend school. Do I include them in the collection?
Schools must determine whether or not the student has a disability or disorder that is preventing them from attending school, or whether or not the student is a consistent school avoider. If it is the former, then you should consider whether adjustments are being made to accommodate for that student, and if yes, whether there is a minimum of 10 weeks evidence to support their inclusion.

If a student has a disability does every teacher in the school (high school, junior school etc) need to be informed or just those in direct contact with the student?
This can vary from school to school due to variances in school policies and the wishes of the parents. There is no right or wrong answer as long as the student and other students are safe at all times and the adjustments that are needed are being implemented and recorded.

There is a student at the school who has Autism. Should they be counted in the cognitive category, or the social and emotional category?
With the changes from the DSM IV to the DSM V, Aspergers is now referred to as Autism therefore the answer is dependent on the student and their diagnosis of Autism as well as the specific adjustments being made. In determining the category schools should consider the category in which the majority of the adjustments fit. If more adjustments are provided to address the cognitive needs of the student, schools count them in the cognitive category. If more adjustments are provided to address the social and emotional needs of the student, schools would count them in the social and emotional category.

It is term 3 and a student has just started at the school. They have a diagnosis of a disability. Are they included in the collection?
Schools can include them in the count if there is evidence that they were receiving adjustments at their previous school over a period of 10 weeks. This evidence should be obtained from the previous school from the student’s parents.

A student who was in the collection has just left to go to another school. Are they included in my school’s collection?
Schools should only include students who are enrolled in that school at the 7th August 2015. If a student has left at any time between 7th August 2014 and 7th August 2015 then they should not be included as the student would be included in the collection of data at their new school.

There is a student at my school who has ADHD. Should I count them in the cognitive category or the social and emotional category?
The adjustments made for the student will determine the category in which they are counted. If more adjustments are provided to address the cognitive needs of the student, a school would count them in the cognitive category. If more adjustments are provided to address the social
and emotional needs of the student, schools would count them in the social and emotional category.

Does all the evidence the school has on a student need to be located in one folder? How long does it need to be kept?

There are no regulations in regards to where the evidence is kept or for how long. This is a school-based decision. Some schools may have one folder containing all the information on the students who are included in the NCCD. Others may prefer to keep different documentation in different locations as the information may need to be accessed by a number of staff. However, in all cases the evidence should, at minimum, be kept for the duration of the student’s time at the school and in accordance to school record keeping policies. Sensitive information should be kept in a secure location.