4

Growth and participation

4.1   Recent years have seen a rapid growth in participation in VET in Schools. This chapter examines the growth and participation in vocational education in schools examining the range of programs, including School-based New Apprenticeships and structured workplace learning, qualification levels, industry areas and gender differences. The effect of location and schooling sector is reviewed along with the effectiveness of vocational education in responding to Indigenous students' needs.

Overview

4.2   Vocational education is one component of a broadening of the senior secondary curriculum. Since 1990 enrolments in vocationally oriented studies have increased, with significant participation in one aspect of vocational education, VET in Schools, and to a lesser extent School-based New Apprenticeships (SBNAs). Developments in other aspects of vocational education, such as enterprise education, and their outcomes, are less apparent.

4.3   The pattern of involvement by types of students, educational sector, state and territory, and region varies significantly and leads to a diversity of outcomes. This chapter will focus mainly on accredited vocational education and training, reflecting the volume of evidence that was presented to the Committee.

4.4   In general, the picture of VET in Schools is one of strong growth since 1993, when the first trial programs were introduced. Since dedicated Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) funding was provided in 1996, VET in Schools has developed from isolated activity to a program widely adopted in the vast majority of senior secondary schools.

4.5   In 2002:

- 185,520 students were enrolled in VET in Schools programs, representing 44 per cent of all students enrolled in the senior secondary certificate;

- 95 per cent of all schools offering senior secondary programs offered VET in Schools programs;

- more than 50 per cent of programs were in three industry areas:

  ⇒ tourism and hospitality;

  ⇒ business and clerical; and

  ⇒ computing;

- over 37 million hours of training were delivered across Australia, with the average varying between 111 and 341 hours per student across the states and territories;

- 112,403 students undertook structured workplace learning; and

- over 7,500 students commenced SBNAs in 2002, with more than half commencing in Queensland.[1]

Participation and retention at school

4.6   In August 2002, age participation rates for full-time school students were 92.5 per cent for 15 year olds, 80.9 per cent for 16 year olds and 62.3 per cent for 17 year olds. The number of part-time school students is increasing, 5.6 per cent higher than in 1997. The apparent retention rate of full-time school students from Year 7/8 to Year 12 was 75.1 per cent, an increase from the previous year. As in previous years since 1976, the female retention rate was higher than that for males.[2]

4.7   The target of 95 per cent retention rate of students to complete Year 12 or its vocational equivalent was recommended in the Finn Review in 1992, and more recently reiterated in 2001.[3] Research into participation in the final year of school has found that the quality of earlier education and the level of school achievement impact significantly on the likelihood of students completing Year 12. In addition, the student's gender and socio-economic and cultural background are also associated with completing Year 12. There are also differences between school sectors and between metropolitan and non-metropolitan locations of schools. Therefore, there are many factors that come into play in the final years of schooling but the

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1   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, pp. 25 and 27.

2   ABS, 4221.0, *Schools Australia*, 2003.

3   Fullarton, S et al., 2003, *Patterns of participation in year 12, LSAY Research Report 33*, ACER p. 1.

growth in the availability of VET courses is one factor that has encouraged less academically focussed students to complete Years 11 and 12.

4.8   Subject selection in senior secondary years has a significant influence on education and career options after leaving school. Students from higher socio-economic and Asian backgrounds are more likely to participate in courses such as mathematics, chemistry and physics, that traditionally are avenues to university. Students from lower socio-economic groups are more likely to participate in courses leading directly into vocational education and training or into the workforce with no additional formal education or training.[4]

4.9   Examination of subject selections in the past decade reveals that there has been a broadening of distribution of selections, with a reduction in:

- the proportion of students taking two subjects from traditional areas of specialisation: two mathematics subjects or the combination of physics and chemistry, or two subjects from humanities and social sciences; and

- the enrolments in the four largest key learning areas (English mathematics, society and environment, and the sciences), dropping from 76 per cent in the early 1990s to 71 per cent in 2001.

This has combined with increasing enrolments in vocationally oriented studies, such as computer studies and technical studies as well as the arts. Within economics and business there has been growth in business studies away from accounting.[5]

Growth in VET

4.10   In the ten years from 1992 to 2002, the number of students in Australia's public VET system, including school students undertaking VET courses, increased from around 1.04 million to 1.69 million. From 1994 to 2000 the average growth rate was around 6 per cent per annum. This stabilised after 2000 with a 0.3 per cent increase in student numbers between 2001 and 2002.[6] In 2000, 8 per cent of VET was undertaken in schools.[7]
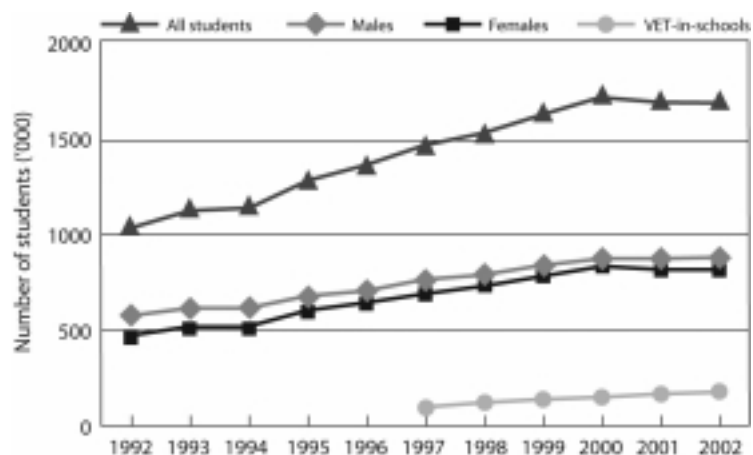
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4   Fullarton, S et al., 2003, *Patterns of participation in year 12, LSAY Research Report 33*, ACER pp. 1, viii.

5   Fullarton, S et al., 2003, *Patterns of participation in year 12, LSAY Research Report 33*, ACER p. viii.

6   NCVER, 2003, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics. Students and Courses 2002: At a glance*, p. 12.

7   NCVER, 2002, *Vocational education and Training: Programs and outcomes. An overview.* Statistics 2000, p. 3.

Figure 4.1   Number of students in VET ('000s), 1992–2002

4.11   A major area of growth has been in VET in Schools:

> There has been a continued increase in VET-in-schools, through
> states, territories and the Commonwealth actively promoting VET-
> in-schools as a pathway from school to post-school activities. This
> has made VET-in-schools an important alternative to more
> traditional pathways.[8]

4.12   In 2002 there were 185,500 students participating in VET in Schools, treble
what it was just six years earlier, with similar proportions of males and
females participating, with over 37 million hours of training.[9] The number
of VET in Schools students increased by 9.3 per cent from 2001, and the
number of schools participating increased by 2,097 schools, with 95 per
cent of all schools offering a senior secondary program. Forty-four per cent
of students undertake VET in their senior secondary certificate, up from 16
per cent in 1996.[10]

4.13   NSW had the largest number of students participating in VET in Schools
with 64,400, followed by Queensland with 50,700 students. However,
Queensland had the largest proportion of hours with over 15.5 million
annual hours. This reflects the different policy emphases of the various
jurisdictions, where the number of students participating is larger for

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8   NCVER, 2003, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics. Students and Courses 2002:
At a glance*, p. 2.

9   NCVER, *Exhibit No. 105*, pp. 119, 122.

10   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools Programs and School-based New
Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, pp. 1 and 5.

various jurisdictions, but the depth at which students engage in these courses, measured in contact hours, is less.[11]

Figure 4.2   Number of students enrolled in VET in Schools programs in Australia 1996-2002
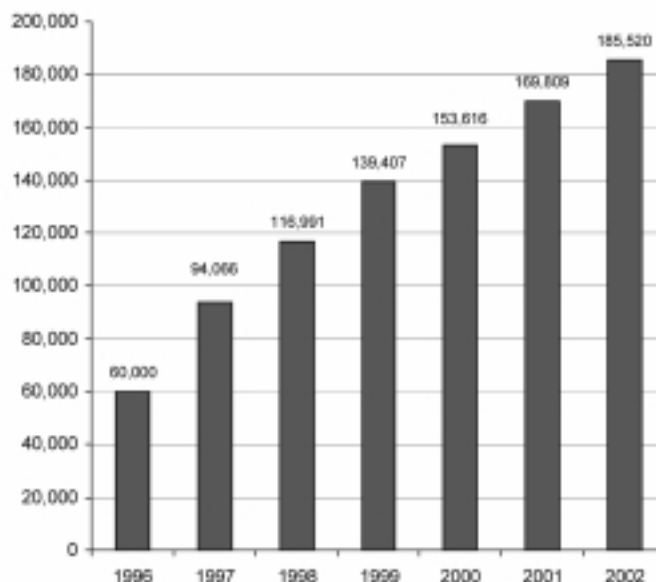
4.14   Inconsistencies across states and territories in the number of hours attributed to units of competency, which can then be aggregated to form certificates, make broad conclusions difficult. As the achievement of competency by students is standards-based rather than time-based, the calculation of average hours has to be estimated. The standard unit of Average Annual Hours Curriculum is the hours specified in curriculum statements or nominal hours attached to modules or units of competence. These hours do not included hours associated with work experience, industry placement or field placement.[12]

4.15   Figure 4.3 provides a broad picture of the variation in enrolment and hours across the states. The average amount ranges from a low in South Australia of 111 hours to a high in Tasmania of 341 hours. This range of participation then has implications for attempts to persuade industry of the effectiveness of VET in Schools where there are substantial jurisdictional differences.[13]

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11   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, pp. 15.

12   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, p. 13.

13   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, p. 15.

Figure 4.3   Average Annual Hours Curriculum and VET in Schools enrolments in 2002
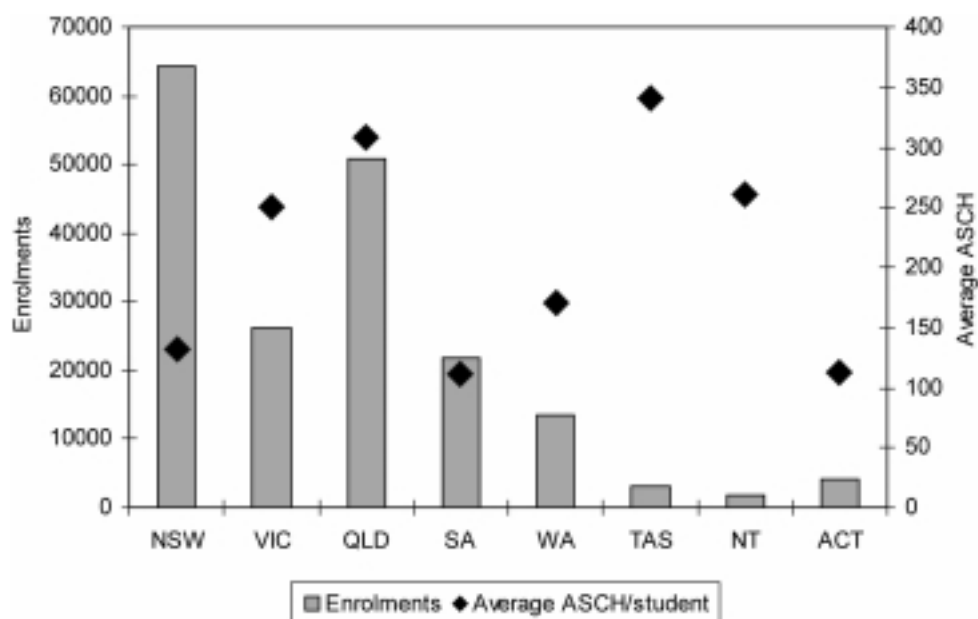
Participation in structured workplace learning

4.16   Not all states and territories require structured workplace learning (SWL) as not all VET in Schools programs require students to undertake work placement. However, Tasmania and NSW have mandated a workplace component for all VET courses.[14] Almost 61 per cent of VET students were involved in SWL during 2002 compared to 44 per cent in 2000. Although the demand for SWL is increasing, the average number of hours is showing a downward trend, perhaps reflecting the finite number of placements that schools can access while maintaining a positive relationship with employers.[15]

4.17   On average these students participate in 70 hours a year of structured workplace learning, although actual levels vary widely from state to state. However, there is a concern that the 40 per cent not undertaking SWL may not be able to demonstrate relevant skills in the workplace. This issue holds for any purely institutional pathway and has obvious implications for industry confidence in VET qualifications and for the effectiveness of transition to the workplace. The ANTA submission to the inquiry states that growth in structured workplace learning opportunities in VET in Schools programs is a key objective.[16]

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14   ANTA, *Submission No. 90,* p. 21.

15   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year,* p. 16.

16   ANTA, *Submission No. 90,* p. 21.

Figure 4.4   Percentage of VET in Schools students undertaking structured workplace learning (SWL) and the average hours spent in SWL, 1997-2002
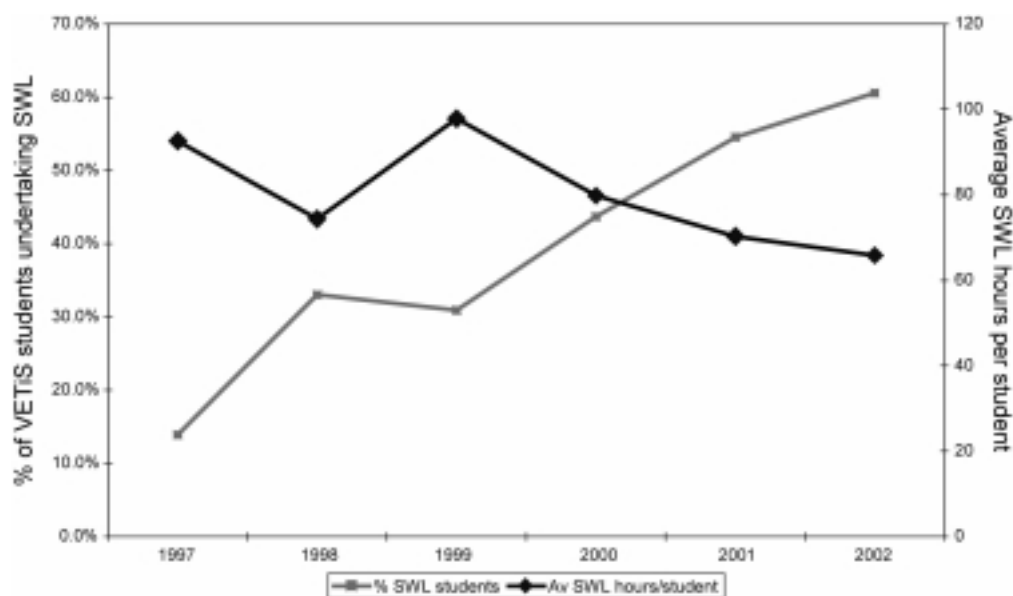
4.18   More detailed research on structured workplace learning was undertaken for the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEF) in 2000, with statistics supplied by school VET coordinators.[17] ECEF forecast that over 100,000 students were to participate in SWL in 2001, consistent with the findings above. Equal proportions of males and females participated but there were marked patterns of gender differentiation which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. There is also evidence of significant participation by Indigenous students, those from non-English speaking backgrounds and students with a disability. Over 40,000 employers participated in 2000, an increase of over 30 per cent on 1999.

4.19   The Committee notes the value of structured workplace learning as an important component in developing workplace skills, and ensuring credibility with industry of the effectiveness of vocational education in schools. The coordination and location of placements has been identified as a significant challenge for schools.[18] Consideration of the issues associated with work placements continues in Chapters 5 and 6.

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17   McIntyre, J and Pithers, R, 2001, *Structured Workplace Learning 2000: A review of structured workplace learning of students studying vocational education and training in schools, supported by programs funded by ECEF*, UTS Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training, p. 5.

18   For example: Mr Lee Wright, Principal, Junee High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 July 2003, Junee, NSW, p. 765; and Mr Roderic Grosvenor, School to Work Project Officer, AIST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 October 2003, Hobart, p. 1399.

Qualification levels

4.20   The pattern of qualifications in vocational education and training differs
        significantly between states and territories. The publication produced by
        NCVER, *Australian Vocational Education and Training, Students and Courses
        2002: In detail*, provides a comprehensive summary of VET in Schools
        activity in the public education system in Australia in 2002. This includes
        private providers who are in receipt of public funding. Part of this
        collection is drawn from information provided to the MCEETYA
        Transition from School Taskforce, which has already been drawn upon
        substantially in this chapter. 2002 was the first time that NCVER reported
        on VET in Schools activity separate from other VET activity.[19]

4.21   The proportions of general VET students and VET in Schools students
        studying for different qualifications in 2002 are listed below. Clearly, the
        majority of qualifications in VET in Schools are at the Certificate II level,
        with only 8 per cent at the higher levels compared to 46 per cent at other
        VET providers, mainly at institutes of TAFE.

Table 4.1   Distribution of qualifications in general VET and VET in Schools, 2002

Qualification level	General VET	VET in Schools
		Proportion of students (%)
Certificate IV or higher	23.3	0.5
Certificate III	22.7	7.5
Certificate II	17.1	64.5
Certificate I	5.2	14.2
Other	31.6	13.4
Total	100.0	100.0

*Source   Australian Vocational Education and Training Students and Courses 2002 VET in Schools Table 2, p.119;
            and Australian Vocational Education and Training At a glance 2002 Table 7, p.10, NCVER, 2003.* Note*: Other
            refers to non-AQF courses or subjects only.*

4.22   The predominance of specific levels of qualification for VET in Schools
        students varies between states and territories. For example, in Victoria
        21 per cent are at Certificate III level, 70 percent of qualifications are at the
        Certificate II level and 3 per cent at Certificate I level. This compares very
        differently to Queensland, with 2 per cent at Certificate III level, 78 per
        cent at Certificate II and almost 20 per cent at Certificate I level.

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19   NCVER, 2003, *Australian Vocational Education and Training, Students and Courses 2002: In detail*,
     p. 7.

Table 4.2   Students in schools by major qualifications by state/territory, 2002

Qualification	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
	Proportion of students (%)								
Certificate IV or higher	0.8	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.2	0.5	3.4	0.0	0.5
Certificate III	6.4	21.4	2.1	0.9	4.0	3.6	0.0	0.0	7.5
Certificate II	74.8	70.0	78.0	5.4	60.6	51.4	38.9	0.0	64.5
Certificate I	14.1	3.2	19.8	6.7	29.8	44.5	41.9	0.0	14.2
Other	3.8	5.2	0.0	86.9	4.4	0.0	15.8	0.0	13.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source   *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: Students and Courses 2002, VET in Schools Table 2, p.119, Exhibit No. 105, NCVER, 2003. (ACT figures not available)*

Programs

4.23   The growth in enrolments has been matched by growth in program breadth. For example, in the Victorian system 39 certificates were on offer in 1999, while a year later in 2000 this had risen to 67.[20]

4.24   All jurisdictions offer VET in Schools Programs in at least thirteen of the eighteen industry areas. VET in Schools programs are offered in all or most states and territories in the areas of:

- Arts, Entertainment, Sport and Recreation;
- Automotive (except Queensland, where training is provided mainly via School-based New Apprenticeships);
- Building and Construction;
- Business and Clerical;
- Communications (except the ACT and Queensland);
- Community Services, Health and Education;
- Computing;
- Engineering and Mining;
- Food processing (except Queensland, where training is provided via School-based New Apprenticeships);
- Primary Industry (except the ACT);
- Process Manufacturing (except Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory;
- Sales and Personal Services;
- Science, Technical and Other (except New South Wales and the Northern Territory);

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20   Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 10.

- Textiles, Clothing, Footwear and Furnishings (all states except Tasmania);

- Tourism and Hospitality; and

- Utilities (except Queensland, Tasmania and the ACT).[21]

4.25   Finance, Banking and Insurance, and Transport and Storage are offered as VET in Schools in a minority of states and territories.[22] Further analysis of programs follows, and demonstrates the uneven pattern of participation.

Major field of education or industry area

4.26   The distribution of students by industry grouping or major field of study demonstrates that the delivery of programs is in five main groupings. Across Australia almost 25 per cent of students undertook management or commerce studies, followed by 18 per cent in information technology, about a further 18 per cent in food, hospitality and personal services, 10 per cent in engineering and 9 per cent in mixed field programs.[23] Less than 5 per cent of students were undertaking building and architecture studies or agriculture.

4.27   Patterns of enrolment by industry area vary across the country. South Australia reports 41 per cent of students in mixed field programs, and Victoria reports no students in this category. This difference relates to reporting differences and the way that VET in Schools is delivered, with some states mainly offering industry-specific programs, in contrast to other states' approach of more generic programs embedded within curriculum.[24] Information technology enrolments range from just over 10 per cent of Tasmanian VET students to 23 per cent, more than double that amount, in Queensland.

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21   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, p. 8.

22   ANTA, *Submission No. 90*, pp. 13-14.

23   Mixed field programs include for example general education programs, social skills programs, and employment skills programs, NCVER, *Australian Vocational Education and Training, Students and Courses* 2002, Appendices, p. 160.

24   ACACA, *Submission No. 99*, p. 5.

Table 4.3   VET in Schools students by major field of education by state/territory, 2002

Field of education	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
	Proportion of students (%)								
Natural and physical sciences	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Information technology	19.7	22.0	23.3	2.6	11.9	10.5	8.2	0.0	17.8
Engineering & related technologies	9.2	16.1	5.1	5.4	12.8	8.9	9.9	0.0	9.5
Architecture & building	7.0	2.0	3.5	1.8	2.7	3.1	0.9	0.0	4.4
Agriculture, environmental studies	3.8	5.4	2.7	3.8	5.0	5.6	3.0	0.0	3.9
Health	0.1	0.0	0.0	4.9	0.5	0.3	2.6	0.0	0.6
Education	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3
Management & commerce	22.2	13.0	38.0	36.0	35.3	15.3	18.5	0.0	24.6
Society & culture	4.5	9.7	4.3	0.3	8.2	19.5	3.5	0.0	5.5
Creative arts	2.8	12.1	0.4	0.6	1.5	3.3	17.6	0.0	3.9
Food, hospitality & personal services	29.2	19.5	1.5	3.2	11.9	10.4	11.2	0.0	17.8
Mixed field programs	1.5	0.0	21.1	41.3	6.0	23.1	12.9	0.0	8.9
Not known	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.8	100.0	2.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source   Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: Students and Courses 2002, VET in Schools Table 4, p.121, Exhibit No. 105, NCVER, 2003. (ACT figures not available)

4.28   However, the number of annual hours tells a slightly different story. The 18 per cent of students studying IT are responsible for only 3 per cent of the hours spent, whereas in food and hospitality services the 18 per cent of students are responsible for closer to 10 per cent of hours. The largest proportion of hours is in the management and commerce field, with 36 per cent of all annual hours being undertaken in this field. State differences are also apparent here, with Western Australia having over four times the annual hours and subject enrolments in agriculture and environmental studies of any other jurisdictions.[25]

4.29   The distribution of enrolments, which counts one student studying two VET courses as two enrolments, rather than of total students, presents a

25   NCVER, *Exhibit No. 105,* Table 5 and Table 6, pp. 122-123.

slightly different picture. A comparison with general VET enrolments (i.e. VET delivered by TAFE and private providers) is also provided in Table 4.4 to determine if there is a skewed distribution for VET in Schools enrolments.

4.30   The top four areas of enrolments in general VET are: management and commerce, engineering and related technologies, mixed field programs, and society and culture. For VET in Schools, the top four areas of enrolments are management and commerce, mixed field programs, engineering and related technologies, and food, hospitality and related services. This pattern is similar, with the main differences being the lower proportion of students in schools undertaking information technology, architecture and building, and education. The level of enrolments in education is a feature of the qualification required, Certificate III and above.

Table 4.4   General VET and VET in Schools subject enrolments by subject field of education and sex, 2002

Field of education	General VET			VET in Schools		
	Proportion of subject enrolments (%)					
	Male *a*	Female *b*	Total *c*	Male *a*	Female *b*	Total *c*
Natural and physical sciences	2.7	2.2	2.4	4.4	2.2	3.4
Information technology	7.1	3.7	5.5	3.3	1.8	2.7
Engineering & related technologies	23.7	3.8	14.2	19.1	5.3	12.8
Architecture & building	7.2	0.9	4.2	3.5	0.1	2.0
Agriculture, environmental studies	4.4	1.8	3.2	4.3	2.0	3.2
Health	7.0	7.9	7.4	8.6	10.2	9.4
Education	2.2	2.9	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Management & commerce	19.8	33.2	26.1	25.6	34.5	29.6
Society & culture	6.1	15.6	10.6	3.1	4.5	3.7
Creative arts	3.5	4.8	4.2	5.8	5.3	5.6
Food, hospitality & personal services	4.9	7.9	6.4	5.6	16.0	10.4
Mixed field programs	11.4	15.3	13.3	16.6	18.0	17.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No. of enrolments ('000) % of all enrolments	6,544.8 (52.4%)	5,953.4 (47.6%)	12,514.1	1,001.3 (54.5%)	834.9 (45.5%)	1,836.2

Source   Australian Vocational Education and Training Students and Courses 2002: In detail. Table 20 Australia, p. 31. plus VET in Schools Table 6, p.123, Exhibit No. 105, NCVER, 2003. Note*: a) Proportion of female subject enrolments, b) proportion of male subject enrolments, c) proportion of all subject enrolments.*

4.31   VET in Schools has higher enrolments in health, management and commerce, food, hospitality and personal services, and mixed field studies. Of particular note are the gender differences which are more extreme in the food, hospitality and personal services category, and natural and physical sciences. Other gender differences are also apparent with similar proportions both in VET in Schools and in general VET. This will be discussed more fully in the next section. There was little information provided to the Committee on the reasons for the nature of choices.

4.32   Research outside the inquiry suggests that the pattern of subject participation reflects a number of influences including:

   ■ student aptitude – earlier achievement and interests;

   ■ student background – gender and socio-economic status;

   ■ school influences – curriculum structures and system-wide opportunities; and

   ■ community influences – labour market opportunities and views on future career possibilities.[26]

4.33   Other descriptions of participation in VET report on the ANTA Industry Groupings rather than field of education. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) Taskforce on Transition from School collates enrolments in VET in Schools programs and identifies clear patterns of industry provision, with Tourism and Hospitality, Business and Clerical, Computing and General Education and Training accounting for over half of all enrolments. This is similar to the education field groupings. The MCEETYA report comments on this skewed pattern and the implication for skill shortages and industry needs. This provision reflects what has traditionally been provided and what can easily be adopted by schools, but there is substantial broadening of VET offerings, with new programs being delivered requiring new processes and relationships to be established.[27]

4.34   The Committee is encouraged by recent actions of governments and education authorities to pursue a greater diversity in vocational education offerings, but considers that a next step may be to examine the influences outlined above on subject participation, to ensure that students are supported in considering a broader range of opportunities.

4.35   The submission from the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland indicated that the number and type of VET programs offered by schools depends on student demand, school location, availability of

26   Fullarton, S et al., 2003, *Patterns of participation in year 12, LSAY Research Report 33*, ACER p. 58.

27   MCEETYA 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, p. 11.

human and physical resources either at the school or available to the school, access to suitable programs and providers external to the school, and employers willing to offer opportunities for structured workplace learning and/or traineeships and apprenticeships.[28]

4.36   The Committee appreciates that this is a complex range of factors to consider and address, and is concerned that for a number of schools where resources are limited this complexity will dissuade schools from advancing vocational education quality and participation. The importance of school systems in providing support, and industry being engaged and being aware of the positive outcomes, is crucial to successful implementation. In setting priorities it is important to still ensure that as a minimum, students are provided with generic workplace and employability skills.

4.37   The Committee notes that the pattern of participation varies across the states in every facet of VET study, the only common theme being that participation in management and commerce is high. This may relate to schools' greater ability to offer such programs, with lower demands for infrastructure, availability of expertise and access to placements. The pattern of participation for this field is similar to general VET and may reflect the generic nature of the applicability of competencies developed. For other fields, especially in areas of identified skill shortages, it would be beneficial to examine states' practices where particular fields of education are a strength, to identify background factors and good practices.

School-based New Apprenticeships

4.38   School-based New Apprenticeships[29] are intended to increase vocational education for students while encouraging them to remain at school. They are more tightly linked to specific industry pathways than other, more general, vocational experiences.

4.39   In 2001 ANTA commissioned a national evaluation of SBNAs, investigating how to improve and expand the SBNA pathways. In November 2002 the review, the *National Evaluation of School-based New Apprenticeships,* reported that SBNAs are gradually becoming established, being about 2 per cent of the total VET in Schools enrolments and 3 per cent of total New Apprenticeships. The evaluation provides a more extensive discussion of SBNAs than is possible here.[30]

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28   Association of Independent Schools of Queensland, *Submission No. 81*, p. 5.
29   In some jurisdictions School-based New Apprenticeships are referred to as SNAPs.
30   ANTA, *Exhibit 56*, p. 1.

4.40   For the year 2002, 7,639 Training Agreements were commenced, growing
        from approximately 1,500 in 1998. Seventy per cent of these were in
        government schools.[31] The growth in the last year has been strong;
        however, the uneven pattern of uptake has been a cause of concern.
        Queensland has been very successful, with 62 per cent of commencements
        in 2001, Victoria had 15.3 per cent while NSW had only 5.5 per cent. (VET
        in Schools participation is at significant levels in these jurisdictions.)

Figure 4.5   Secondary school students commencing School–based New Apprenticeships, 1998-2002
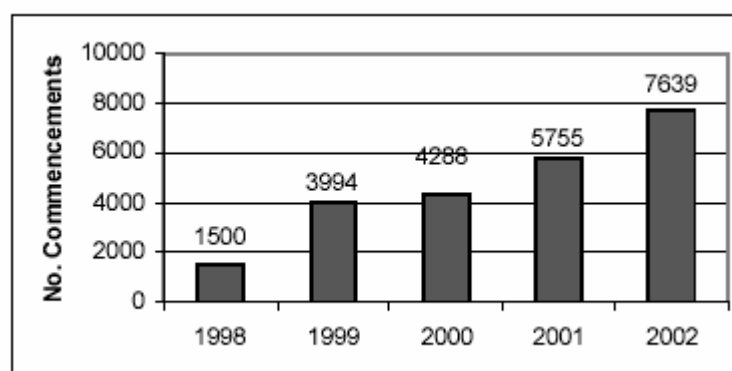
Source   *MCEETYA, 2003,* National Data on Participation in VET in Schools Programs & School-based New
            Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year, *MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from Schools, p. 21*

4.41   The pattern of industry participation is also uneven. In 2001 about 40 per
        cent of commencements were in the retail sector, with Sales and Personal
        Services showing significant growth since 1999, and 15 per cent of
        commencements in Tourism and Hospitality. The other major industry
        groups where there are higher numbers of commencements include the
        Business and Clerical and Primary Industry categories. With the exception
        of Primary Industry, these sectors are traditional employers of young
        people, with high proportions of part-time work.[32]

4.42   Explanations of the different rates at which states and territories take up
        apprenticeships across industry sectors suggest that they do not appear to
        be correlated to the relative size of the industry, nor to skill shortages.
        There has been a decline in Automotive, and Engineering and Mining
        industry category commencements from 1999 to 2001.[33] The Committee
        believes that the uneven participation across industries and states and
        territories needs to be addressed.

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31   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New
     Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, pp. 21-24.

32   ANTA, *Exhibit 56*, p. 22.

33   ANTA, *Exhibit 56*, p. 24.

4.43 The Committee had the opportunity to speak to students involved in SBNAs during the course of the inquiry, and was impressed by the dedication shown and the commitment to employers and also to completing Year 12 studies. There appeared to be considerable value in this option of ensuring general education and literacy and numeracy skills were developed while still at school, while simultaneously developing interest and expertise in a specific industry. However, this pathway may not be suitable for many students who are not yet committed to a particular vocation. The commitment to structured workplace training required from the employer in taking on an SBNA is considerable, and the goodwill of employers may be tested if students are only 'tasting' the industry or occupation.[34] Other vocational education programs may be more suitable for students in the exploratory phase.

4.44 The Committee supports the findings of the *National Evaluation of School-based New Apprenticeships*, which include: the need to identify success factors for industry participation to widen the spread of industry involvement, clarifying school and stakeholder partnerships, and resourcing and normalising SBNAs particularly in areas of skill shortage. The evaluation recommended that there is a need to:

- explicitly outline and confirm the multiple objectives and program implementation models;

- specify the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders;

- set projections for participation in the states and territories so that stakeholders have a sense of the magnitude and any special emphasis that is to be placed on industry sectors;

- develop a series of practical models, including advice on infrastructure, funding, employer responsibilities etc. where the objectives are explicit, to enable informed choice of an approach:
  ⇒ enterprise-driven model;
  ⇒ school-driven model; and
  ⇒ coordinated model (for example, led by a Group Training Organisation);

- explain the following critical success factors at the local level:
  ⇒ the importance of infrastructure in effectively coordinating implementation;
  ⇒ options for achieving critical mass in participation;

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34 Miss Maree Brookes, Senior Human Resources Officer, Austal Ships Pty Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 4 August 2003, Henderson, WA, p. 900.

       ⇒ giving School-based New Apprenticeships greater visibility and legitimacy in the suite of offerings at the post-compulsory level;

       ⇒ ensuring that schools remain closely involved in the process, and building in coordination between parties to achieve continuous improvement and responsiveness to changing circumstances; and

       ⇒ providing clear pathways to subsequent employment within enterprises; and

- address resourcing issues.[35]

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that Commonwealth, state and territory education authorities and industry bodies address the findings and implement the proposals of the ANTA National Evaluation of School-based New Apprenticeships in order to increase the participation of students and industry in SBNAs, particularly in areas of skill shortage such as the traditional trades.

Sector

4.45   As noted previously, the number of students enrolled in VET in Schools programs in Australia has grown from 16 per cent of students undertaking VET in their senior secondary certificate in 1996 to 44 per cent in 2002. The growth in enrolments from 1997 to 2002 across the school sectors has ranged from 124 per cent in the government sector and 158 percent in the Catholic sector to 252 per cent in the Independent sector.[36] Strong growth has occurred in all three school sectors, although the levels of participation as a proportion of Year 11 and 12 students vary, with the government sector having the highest level of participation.

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35   ANTA, *Exhibit 56*, p. 5.

36   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, p. 5.

Table 4.5   Number of students enrolled in VET in Schools programs in Australia 1996 – 2002

Sector	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2001 as % of FT Yr 11 & 12
Govt	NA	53,258	66,366	83,367	97,982	109,900	119,442	42.9%
Catholic	NA	12,165	17,825	22,202	25,778	28,925	31,335	33.0%
Independent	NA	5,043	8,300	11,035	14,252	15,721	17,752	23.2%
TAFE	NA	23,600	24,500	22,803	15,604	15,263	16,991	NA
Total	60,000	94,066	116,991	139,407	153,616	169,809	185,520	41.3%

Source   MCEETYA, 2003, National Data on participation on VET in Schools: Programs and school based New Apprenticeships for 2002 school year, p. 5; and ANTA, Submission No. 90, p. 17, Figure 7.

4.46   Further analysis from the MCEETYA data is difficult as figures are supplied for government and Catholic schools as the total number of enrolments. Aggregate data for both government and Catholic schools is then included, with the percentage of industry group enrolments calculated as percentages for all enrolments.[37]

4.47   One of the larger deliverers of vocational education in schools is the non-government sector in Queensland. Queensland Catholic schools had over 17,600 enrolments in VET in Schools programs in 2002. In the 78 Catholic Senior Secondary Schools in Queensland in 2001, 55 per cent of all Year 11 and 12 students were enrolled in vocational curriculum. Since 1997 the number of students enrolled in VET has risen by 110.4 per cent.[38] The Association of Independent Schools of Queensland enrolled almost 6000 students in 2001 in VET in Schools, with almost 1000 School-based New Apprentices since 1998.[39] An example of delivery in a Queensland Catholic school that the Committee visited is Marymount College.[40]

37   MCEETYA, 2003, *National Data on Participation in VET in Schools: Programs and School-based New Apprenticeships for the 2002 School Year*, pp. 8-12.
38   Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Submission No. 66*, p. 1.
39   Association of Independent Schools of Queensland, *Submission No. 81*, pp. 4-5.
40   Marymount College, *Transcript of Evidence*, Burleigh Waters, 8 April 2003 and *Exhibit 55*.

Marymount College

The Committee visited Marymount College in Burleigh Waters, Queensland in April 2003 and was impressed by its dedication to vocational education, with the provision of a vocational education and careers coordinator and administrative assistant reflecting this commitment. In 1972, the college became the first Catholic co-educational college in Queensland, with an enrolment of 120 students. Marymount College now has an enrolment of around 905 students.

The College has an extensive vocational educational program with a range of Category 'A' and 'B' subjects which provide accreditation for a number of VET courses and certificates. These subjects include English communication, tourism, business communication and technologies, business procedures, hospitality practices, industrial skills, trade and business maths, computer studies, early childhood practices, information technology systems and hospitality studies. Within these subjects, 'on-the-job training' is promoted through school functions, enterprises, industry activities, multimedia projects and community link projects.

The College has also been involved in a wide-ranging workplace learning program in conjunction with the South Coast Industry Schools Coordinating Organisation (SCISCO), a cluster organisation which brings students, teachers and industry together. This has been highly successful. All Year 11 and 12 students (approximately 360) participate in the program. Year 10 students are also encouraged to undertake work experience. In 2002, over fifty students gained school based apprenticeships and traineeships from the program. This is the highest number of any Catholic secondary school in Australia. In 2003, 52 students were completing School-based New Apprenticeships and traineeships.

The College has been able to expand its services in vocational education through the receipt of funding for teacher placement in industry and through funding for the high level of VET in the program. An assistant to the vocational education coordinator is employed to ensure that the heavy demands of record-keeping are fulfilled, to assist in industry liaison and promoting employment opportunities for students. The Marymount College Careers Expo, which has been an annual event for eight years, brings together over 150 practitioners and advisers for students.

The New Apprenticeship scheme has been highly successful with both OP eligible and non-OP eligible* students obtaining positions as trainees. Over the last two years, 60 Year 12 students were successful in obtaining either direct entry to Gold Coast Institute of TAFE to Diploma/Bachelor courses or direct entry to Griffith University courses, assisted by their vocational commitment.

* OP = Overall Position, a 1-25 ranking assigned by Queensland's Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority, equivalent to the Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) in other states.

Gender differences

4.48   VET has traditionally been associated with trade-related courses for predominantly male-dominated trades. VET in Schools, however, appears to be an equally appealing option for male and female students, although with slightly higher representation of males (refer to Table 4.4 above). The higher participation of males may reflect a preference for more interactive

and experiential learning. There are clear gender differences in the choice of school VET courses.[41]

4.49   Females were more likely to choose business and clerical, work skills and food, hospitality and personal services courses. Males were more likely to choose technology and trades and primary industry courses.[42] These choices reflect a continuation of work role stereotypes. Teachers and industry representatives speaking to the Committee reflected on their experiences in trying to encourage girls into construction and automotive programs with minimal success. In Tasmania a new school cluster program in electro-technology has no female students in a group of twelve to fifteen.[43] In South Australia, the program Doorways 2 Construction has also been marketed on a cluster basis and in 2003 had only one per cent female participation. At Salisbury High School in Adelaide, where there has been good participation in a range of programs, teachers commented that only one girl had participated in the horticulture program.[44]

4.50   The Committee had insufficient opportunity to adequately pursue the gender division in participation, but believes that opportunities to market the full range of employment options and careers to both sexes should be supported. The Photonics Institute provided an example of a female student altering her career aspirations after participating in an e-summer school. The student commented that she had expected to have a job in childcare at the end of school but that after completing the summer school she wanted a job in telecommunications.[45]

4.51   The impact of subject selection and participation in programs during school, such as VET in Schools, has life long implications and should be considered as an important component of vocational education, including careers counselling. Research in Victoria has found that patterns from past years continue in outcomes from VET in School students exiting Year 12. More girls go into tertiary education (both VET and university), more boys go into apprenticeships and more girls go into traineeships.[46] Further discussion of pathways is included in Chapter 9.

4.52   In evidence to the Committee, it was reported that labour market outcomes are linked with choices made by male and female students in

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41   AEU, *Submission No. 72,* p. 56.

42   NCVER, *Submission No. 82*, Attachment 3, p. 24, and *Exhibit No. 105*, Table 6, p. 123.

43   Hydro Tasmania site visit, Ms Elaine Brown, VET in Schools Development Officer, 1 October 2003, Hobart.

44   Construction Industry Training Board, *Submission No. 37*, Ms Alice George, Assistant Principal Senior School, Salisbury High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2003, Adelaide, p. 1108.

45   Photonics Institute, *Submission No. 100*, p. 3.

46   Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 13.

high school. These choices (in relation to both VET and non-VET subjects) are associated with far greater incidence of full-time employment by age 24 for males than for females. Gender differences in full-time labour market participation significantly widen for 'at risk' students.[47] The Committee believes that greater emphasis on career guidance and industry promotion needs to occur to maximise the potential opportunities for all students.

Rural, regional and remote regions

4.53   VET students in rural and remote locations formed one of the equity groups designated in the National Strategy for VET 1998-2003.[48] It has been found that overall, students in general VET programs from non-metropolitan areas have equal levels of participation and achieve equal or better outcomes than students in metropolitan areas.[49] Therefore, there is no apparent widespread disadvantage for these students.

4.54   However, national comparison of VET in Schools participation between metropolitan and non-metropolitan students is more difficult to identify. Research based in Victoria indicates that VET in Schools enrolments were highest in non-metropolitan areas. Country regions with higher VET in Schools enrolments had a higher transfer rate to study than to work. However, participation in the workforce overall is higher for non-metropolitan VET in Schools graduates than for city graduates.[50] Additionally, VET in Schools enrolments tend to be highest in regions which have the lowest socio-economic profile.

4.55   An example of this is demonstrated in Figure 4.5, with north-west Melbourne and outer-west Melbourne showing the highest participation in VET in Schools in metropolitan Victoria. Rural areas such as the Goulburn Valley have continuing higher VET in Schools participation in Year 12.

4.56   The Committee notes that the Victorian data in relation to socio-economic profile and vocational education activity suggests that VET in Schools is providing curriculum breadth and alternative options to address the
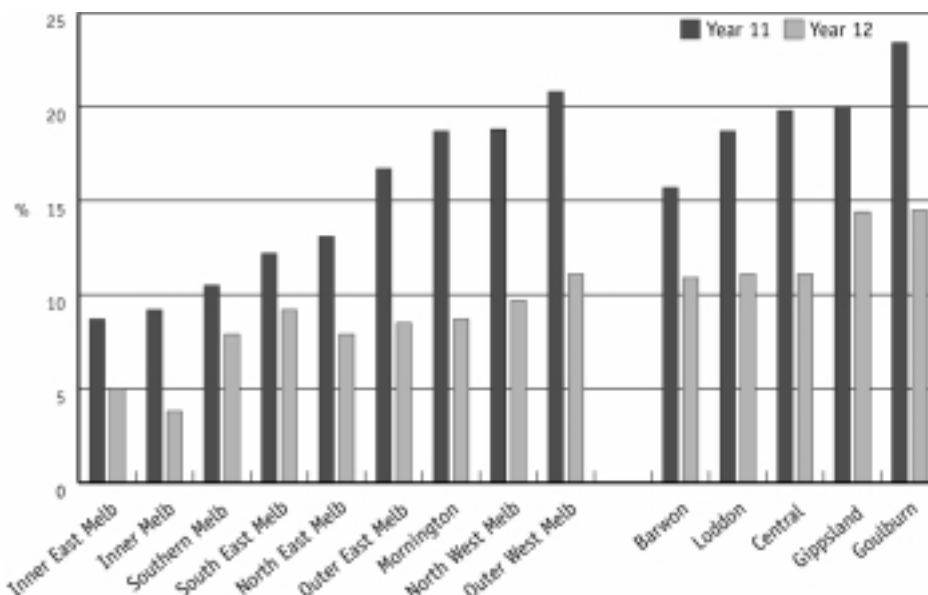
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47   AEU, *Submission No. 72*, p. 56.

48   ANTA, 2003, *Annual National Report of the Australian Vocational Education and Training System 2002, Volume 3, Report on the Key Performance Measures for the Australian vocational Education and Training System*, p. 65.

49   ANTA, 2003, *Annual National Report of the Australian Vocational Education and Training System 2002, Volume 3, Report on the Key Performance Measures for the Australian vocational Education and Training System*, p. 78; *see also* Golding, B. and Pattison, S, 2004, Location and equity in VET, *Equity in vocational education and training: Research readings*, NCVER.

50   Victorian Government *Submission No. 86*, p. 11; *see also* Victorian Department of Education and Training, *Transitions from the VET in Schools Program the 2000 Year 12 cohort*, July 2002, prepared Educational Outcomes Research Unit, University of Melbourne, p. 7.

narrower curriculum of the past, which may have been marginalising students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Figure 4.6   VET in Schools participation rates (Victoria) by Labour Force Region and Year level, 2000

4.57   In New South Wales, a case study of Warialda High School indicates the strength of VET in rural communities. Warialda is in the north-west of the state, 648 kilometres from Sydney and isolated from regional centres. Of a total enrolment of 289 students, there are 70 senior school students, some of whom spend up to three hours a day travelling to and from the school.

4.58   Warialda has tailored its Higher School Certificate VET program to offer a broad range of subjects that meet student interests and local industry needs. School-based traineeships are offered in Retail, Business Services and Administration, Hospitality and Primary Industries. Other programs are delivered by qualified teachers or by TAFE NSW in such course areas as Nursing, Aged Care, Business Services, Electro-technology and Childcare. In 2002, 92 per cent of students were studying at least one VET subject, 36 per cent two VET subjects and 27 per cent three or more VET subjects. The number of students undertaking part-time traineeships has grown from two in 1999 in one industry to 36 in 2002 across four industry areas.[51]

4.59   However, in more geographically dispersed states and territories, regional, rural and remote students face obvious disadvantages, particularly in terms of achieving a critical mass for VET in Schools delivery, and in

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51   NSW Department of Education and Training, *Submission No. 94*, p. 9.

accessing work placements. ECEF commented that efforts to increase the participation of such students in VET in Schools programs have been made in a number of jurisdictions through the establishment of skills centres and the promotion of new flexible delivery models.[52]

4.60   Project work was undertaken in the late 1990s to identify the most appropriate forms of vocational education and training delivery in rural and more remote schools in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. Examples of models are documented in a *Handbook of Case Studies* that supplements the report of this School to Work project.[53] Given the locations of the project, many of the findings are applicable to supporting vocational education for Indigenous students. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

4.61   The report identified different models in operation:

> In the **Northern Territory** there are three models: combined vocational learning, accredited vocational education and Structured Workplace Learning; vocational learning and; accredited vocational education and training using local trainers and/or coordinators. In **Queensland** there are three models: P-10 schools combine year levels to form a critical mass and vertical timetable; State high schools link vocational education outcomes to study area specifications and; access to vocational education at a comprehensive range of levels, including vocational learning, vocational education and training and part-time New Apprenticeships in schools. A fourth model is being developed in Queensland and elements will be trialed in 2000: vocational learning and work experience in Year 9 in preparation for post-compulsory vocational education and training. In **Western Australia** there is one model: vocational education and training incorporating vocational learning and enterprise-based education.[54]

4.62   These models all emphasise the importance of vocational learning in conjunction with vocational education and training. A range of factors were identified as critical to the effective delivery of vocational education and training in remote and rural communities. These include:

■   use of culturally appropriate, and where possible, local, trainers;

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52   ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, p. 48.

53   DETYA, 2000, *A handbook of case studies: Models of delivery of vocational education and training in schools in rural and remote areas.*

54   DETYA, 2000, *A handbook of case studies: Models of delivery of vocational education and training in schools in rural and remote areas,* pp. 1-2.

- incorporation of vocational learning with accredited vocational education;

- use of appropriate distance and online learning;

- awareness in schools and their communities of their roles in successful vocational education initiatives;

- flexibility of programs and their ability to respond to local needs;

- professional development of teachers and their need to access information.[55]

4.63   In order to ensure the effectiveness of VET in Schools for students in rural and remote areas, the accessibility of services and facilities targeted to local socio-economic circumstances and needs is essential.[56] The professional development of staff who are appropriately trained and prepared for the requirements of remote and rural communities is also necessary to support disadvantaged geographical regions of Australia.

Indigenous students

4.64   There has been considerable focus on education and training for Indigenous students since the late 1990s, as part of the National Strategy for VET 1998–2003, which includes Indigenous people as a focus. Additionally, Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Strategy for VET for 2000–2005, *Partners in a Learning Culture,* has been developed with key stakeholders to identify VET issues and set measurable outcomes to improve VET for Indigenous Australians. A blueprint has also been developed to support the national strategy. It identifies where effort is needed to achieve equitable outcomes for Indigenous Australians.[57]

4.65   Research completed in 2003 for NCVER reviewed the last five years of progress in addressing vocational education and training for Indigenous people across the whole VET sector. Indigenous students were found to have a relatively high level of participation in enrolments, especially for males, although Indigenous students tend to undertake training at the lower qualification level. Certificates I and II comprised the greater share of enrolments among the 15-24 year old age group. However, despite

55   DETYA, 2000, *A handbook of case studies: Models of delivery of vocational education and training in schools in rural and remote areas,* p. 2.

56   Golding, B and Pattison, S, 2004, Location and equity in VET*, Equity in vocational education and training: Research readings*, NCVER.

57   ANTA, 2000, *Partners in a Learning Culture: Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Strategy for vocational education and training 2000–2005.*

improved pass rates and employment outcomes these are still well below those for non-Indigenous students.[58] Similarly, findings from the report *Indigenous People in VET: a statistical review of progress* between 1997 and 2001 found that participation of young Indigenous people in VET is very strong, at rates above those of other students, but that against other indicators such as completions Indigenous students are not faring as well as non-Indigenous students.[59]

4.66   In 2002 there were 121,647 Indigenous full time school students, a 5.4 per cent increase over the number reported in 2001. Approximately 57 per cent of Indigenous students attended schools in NSW or Queensland. Apparent retention rates for full-time Indigenous school students from Year 7/8 to both Year 10 and Year 12 have continued to rise over the last five years to 86.4 per cent in Year 10, and from 30.9 per cent to 38 per cent in Year 12.[60]

4.67   In the wider VET system, in 2000, 51,700 Indigenous students undertook vocational education and training, an increase of over 60 per cent from 1996. Twenty-nine per cent of these students were aged less than 19 years, which is a greater proportion than compared to all students in this age group (22 per cent). Indigenous VET students tend to have lower levels of school attainment, with only 17 per cent having completed Year 12, and 34 per cent having only completed Year 9 or lower.[61]

4.68   There has been a steady increase in Indigenous Australian participation in New Apprenticeships, up from 890 in March 1996 (0.6 per cent of total numbers in training) to 1,480 in March 2002 (representing 2.2 per cent of total commencements).[62] However, the growth has not been as substantial as for non-Indigenous people.

4.69   The lower retention of students at Year 10 and Year 12, and lower level of qualifications, have implications for vocational education in schools, with the major target of accredited training in senior secondary schools not providing for Indigenous students. A review of the transitions of Indigenous students found that reasons for higher dropout rates include a lack of relevant courses, lack of culturally appropriate curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and low literacy levels, which are first apparent

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58   Dumbrell, T, de Montfort, R and Finnegan, W, 2004, Equity in VET: An overview of the data on designated equity groups, in *Equity in vocational education and training: Research readings*, NCVER.

59   NCVER, 2003, *Indigenous People in VET: a statistical review of progress,* p. 7.

60   ABS, 4221.0, *Schools Australia*, 2003.

61   NCVER, 2002, *Australian vocational education and training statistics 2000: Indigenous students in vocational education and training - At a glance*

62   DEST, *Submission No. 75*, Appendix B, p. 82.

in primary school.[63] It also includes other factors related to the community and home environment and inadequate support networks.

4.70   A holistic approach to education, employment and community services is needed to address Indigenous students' needs. While in Alice Springs the Committee was made aware of the background issues that act as barriers to Indigenous students' attendance at school. These include health issues and hygiene, the need for positive role models and mentoring, past poor experiences with education programs and a lack of infrastructure to ensure that basic health and housing needs are met.[64] In addition, funding problems create significant uncertainty for providers and clients.

4.71   A range of strategies has been introduced to address the lower retention and specific needs of students, most often in rural and remote geographic regions. In 2000 over 65 per cent of Indigenous students lived in rural and remote areas.[65]

Current practices

4.72   Examples of programs for vocational education in schools include the Wadu Strategy: Vocational Learning for Indigenous Australians.[66] Resources have been developed as part of the Wadu National Vocational Learning Strategy for Young Indigenous Australians. Its aim is to promote the development and implementation of high-quality vocational education programs for Indigenous students through the provision of professional development activities and resources. As part of the Wadu Strategy, the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation provided financial support for a number of demonstration projects to test out innovative vocational education programs for Indigenous secondary students.

4.73   Some programs were broad and generic, such as the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP). This funded more than forty schools to provide over 200 Indigenous students with programs that delivered

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63   Long, M, Frigo, T, Batten, M, 1998, *The School to Work Transition of Indigenous Australians. A Review of the Literature and Statistical Analysis*, ACER, p. ix.

64   Members of Tangentyere Council: Ms Amanda Ahmat, Manager, Tangentyere Job Shop, Ms Heather Laughton, Coordinator IHANT Employment and Training Unit, Mr Peter Lowson, Coordinator Youth Activity Services, Ms Leone Sheedy, Coordinator, Yarrenyty-Arltere Learning Centre, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 May 2003, Alice Springs, pp. 644-651; Mrs Kathryn James-Walsham, Field Officer, Group Training Northern Territory, *Transcript of Evidence*, 30 April 2003, Alice Springs, p. 589.

65   NCVER, 2002, *Australian vocational education and training statistics 2000: Indigenous students in vocational education and training - At a glance*, p. 5.

66   *Wadu* is a word from the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains in South Australia, which means 'together in partnership and trust'.

elements of the relevant state or territory's Work Education Framework.[67] Others are more industry-specific, focussing on completing modules within a Retail traineeship, or on providing training for prospective local employment such as primary industries, in tractor operation or sheep handling.

Examples

Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (IESIP)

4.74　In South Australia, participation of Indigenous students involved in vocational education has increased since 2001 as a result of specific targeted programs to address the needs of the communities, and participation in senior secondary schooling. As an example of IESIP funding, VET pathways for Indigenous students in the area of music were developed. Entitled Transition to SACE Studies, this program embedded Certificate II AUSMUSIC modules within South Australian Certificate of Education music subjects, allowing three rural and two metropolitan high schools with significant numbers of Indigenous students the opportunity to study music for the first time. This resulted in increases in the level of attendance of Indigenous students in senior secondary studies. The curriculum was developed in partnership with the community, and included local Indigenous artists. The program developed in Ceduna Area School, for example, was tailored around music production techniques and community radio.[68]

4.75　Other examples provided to the Committee include the involvement of students in the south of Adelaide (Southern Futures) with the Department of Health, local government and community elders in developing a medicinal herb garden. State funding to regions such as the Anangu region in northern SA has enabled local community decision making. In each local community, vocational education committees have been established to ensure that community members and other local key stakeholders are actively involved and set the agenda for the delivery of vocational education.[69]

4.76　Work in 1999 from ten projects on VET in Schools with Indigenous students, funded under the IESIP, suggests that providing Indigenous secondary students with employment-related training and/or industry-specific skills can assist in encouraging student attendance and retention at

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67　ECEF, 2000, WADU Resource: Vocational Learning for Indigenous Australians, <www.ecef.com.au/WADUResource/objects/081.htm>.

68　South Australian Government, *Submission No. 97*, p. 26.

69　South Australian Government, *Submission No. 97*, pp. 26-27, and Attachments 11 and 13.

school, while also providing pathways into further education and training, or employment.[70]

4.77   Common key elements in these IESIP projects were that the:

■   design and delivery of courses were tailored to local needs with a high degree of flexibility, mostly with the cooperation of a number of parties: schools, TAFE institutions, representatives of Indigenous communities, employers either individually or in association, municipal and other community groups;

■   provision of information about careers and ways to achieve students' goals was assisted by mapping pathways through further education or training options or directly to employment on an individual basis;

■   cultural support, through mentoring and access to people who could function as role models and building a sense of common identity and purpose (through means such as camps and excursions), was strong; and

■   provision of workplace experience, ranging from visits to more substantial work placements, was effective. Longer work placements were generally found to be of greater value, because of the prospect of building fruitful relationships with employers.

New Apprenticeships

4.78   Western Australia has focussed on improving the uptake of apprenticeships and traineeships for Indigenous students in schools throughout Western Australia. The Western Australian Department of Education and Training is currently piloting Aboriginal School Based Traineeships (ASBT), an arrangement with the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), to improve on early successes.[71] A central element is the involvement of the Indigenous community through parents, Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) management organisations and community consultation.

4.79   The program has been running throughout Western Australia since 1999. Anecdotal evidence shows that in most regions where the program has been operating, there has been an increase of Indigenous students in Year 10 wanting to stay on at school. For example, in the Swan District region, there are more than fifty students who have expressed an interest in participating, while in the Peel region there is a reported 300 per cent

70   McRae, D et al. 2000, *What has worked (and will again) The IESIP Strategic Results Projects*, Australian Curriculum Studies Association and National Curriculum Services, Canberra, p. 39.

71   Mr Malcolm Goff, Acting Deputy Director General, Training, WA Department of Education and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 906.

increase in expressions of interest. From a total of 260 traineeships offered, there has been a commencement rate of 70.5 per cent with an overall retention rate of 89.3 per cent.[72] The Committee is very encouraged by this targeted approach to assisting young Indigenous people and looks forward to other jurisdictions considering the application of this model to their systems.

4.80   Other examples were provided in the Northern Territory at Nyangatjatjara College, an independent secondary Indigenous college with a main campus at Yulara, near Uluru. The students come from remote Aboriginal communities (Imanpa, Docker River and Mutitjulu) that experience the lowest socio-economic situations in Australia, and English is not their first language. Work experience programs have been implemented as there is the potential for employment in the hospitality and tourist industries at Yulara. A small number of students have begun apprenticeships in the resort, supported by training in social skills and in improving literacy and numeracy skills.[73]

4.81   The Committee witnessed the importance of successful role models here where four students of Nyangatjatjara College were working as apprentices at the Outback Pioneer Hotel at Yulara through the New Apprenticeships program and an arrangement with Centralian College in Alice Springs. This program includes many of the features of the IESIP outlined above.

4.82   Members were impressed by the very positive relationship between the resort management and the students, and by the impact of the four students' success on their peers. At Nyangatjatjara College the Committee was told that a lot of students were now asking when they could start their apprenticeship:

> So what is happening here is that these four apprentices are setting the standards and a lot of the younger ones look up to them. They are their role models. One issue we keep very much in mind is the importance of these four students being very successful and completing their apprenticeship. It is not the be-all and end-all, of course, but it is important for them and for the younger ones to have that sort of role model. There is a lot of interest.[74]

4.83   On the other hand, the experience at Nyangatjatjara College illustrates the need for long-term development of relationships and careful planning of such initiatives, and the difficulty encountered trying to match them with

72   WA Department of Training, *Submission No. 70*, pp. 10-11.

73   Nyangatjatjara College, *Submission No. 24*, p. 1

74   Mr Jorge Gonzalez, Nyangatjatjara College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 May, 2003, Yulara, p 670.

existing program structures. The Transition to Work coordinator at the College, Mr Jorge Gonzalez, told the Committee that:

> As you can imagine, being in a remote area, the process of negotiation to try to implement such a program was very lengthy, very intricate, and dealing with the bureaucracy sometimes was frustrating because we did not fit into the framework of some of the bodies out there offering services to other people.[75]

Other programs

4.84   Other programs for Indigenous students from remote communities in the Northern Territory have also had successes. Yirara College is an independent boarding secondary school in Alice Springs that from 1997 has received Commonwealth funding to expand its vocational education programs. The programs were introduced to address poor retention levels among students (in particular, older students), improve their literacy and numeracy levels and also living and work-related skills.

4.85   Seventy-five students (out of 200) are accessing the vocational education programme at Yirara College; fifteen students have participated in work experience in the past twelve months, and twenty-five students have enrolled in accredited courses outside the College. A major concern is that low literacy is impeding the progress of such students.[76]

4.86   Centralian College in Alice Springs provides for two major groups of Indigenous VET in School students: those in major population centres and those in remote communities. The first group participates in a mainstream Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE) program or a traditional training program delivered on campus or in a major population centre. Those 26 per cent of NTCE students who are Indigenous participate in VET in Schools programs in similar numbers with similar outcomes to the entire cohort. They are supported through Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers, the Aboriginal Student Support and Parental Awareness Committee and supportive individual members of staff. All members of the College staff are required to undertake a cross-cultural awareness course.

4.87   The second group of Indigenous VET in Schools students live in remote communities. The issue of accessibility is addressed by the College in a number of ways. This includes having lecturers permanently stationed in remote communities, fly-in and fly-out programs, drive-in and drive-out delivery over a period of days, using established Training Centres, bringing students onto the main campus or the use of Mobile Adult

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75   Mr Jorge Gonzalez, Nyangatjatjara College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 May, 2003, Yulara, p 667.

76   Yirara College, *Submission No. 19*, pp. 2-3.

Learning Units (MALU). One MALU consists of a traditional workshop for metal and wood fabrication. The second unit is equipped with computers and is used for retail, information technology and remote local area government courses.[77]

4.88   The submission from Centralian College notes that the complexity of factors including remoteness, high costs of delivery, low levels of literacy and numeracy, communities under stress or a lack of engagement with the formal education and training system ensures that simplistic solutions to accessibility and vocational education have high chances of failure. A concern cited is the role being given to the CDEP:

> In many communities CDEP is now seen as a desirable work related outcome in the place of 'real' employment. This impacts on the participant's view of the types and amounts of training that might be undertaken. The general outcome is to lower the levels of expectation or even negate the perception of a need for training.[78]

4.89   In urban settings, examples of vocational education for Indigenous students are also showing positive results. The Committee visited Northland Secondary College in Victoria, which has 76 students out of 324 that are Indigenous (Koori), one of the largest proportions of any school in Victoria. A complaint has been the lack of jobs on completion of apprenticeships or traineeships. Students are now not encouraged to go into traineeships unless there is a real job for them. To address this concern, formal agreements have been established for Indigenous trainees with the Victorian Department of Justice.[79] Involving the Koori community in the setup of other programs such as multimedia, music and the arts is a key component to ensure an inclusive curriculum. Additional support has been provided by Koori educators to act as role models and provide a broad range of support.

Additional support

4.90   The importance of support for Indigenous students was emphasised in Gladstone, Queensland in areas with specific skill shortages. Gladstone Indigenous Vocation and Enterprise Network (GIVEN) is a district-wide program aimed at building the partnerships, pathways and programs to enable rural and urban Indigenous students to access vocational and enterprise education opportunities and to achieve employment outcomes

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77   Centralian College, *Submission No. 30*, pp. 10-11.

78   Centralian College, *Submission No. 30*, p. 10, See also Ms Carmelita Dunn, General Manager, Indigenous Education Division, Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 April 2003, Darwin, p. 453.

79   Ms Raffaela Galati-Brown, Principal, Northland Secondary College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 3 September 2003, Melbourne, pp. 1285-1286.

that are at least equal to those of mainstream students. Part of the program is focused on individual support, with all Indigenous students having their own portfolio for the future, incorporating learning pathway plans, individual aspiration plans and progress monitoring tools. This is associated with culturally appropriate enterprise education programs conducted in partnership with TAFE, through a TAFE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access course. Employment opportunities are also being developed with industries such as Comalco and Boyne Smelters. Part of this involves altered application processes and Indigenous mentoring programs.[80]

4.91   The need for greater levels of support for Indigenous students was a common theme of evidence to the Committee.[81] In all discussions the distance and accessibility of support workers to schools, regions and students was an almost overwhelming challenge. Witnesses commented on students disengaging from school and associated vocational education programs. Without the provision of additional resources to assist with literacy and numeracy, and to encourage and monitor students' participation, the development of strategies for higher levels of achievement will not result in effective implementation.[82]

4.92   The DEST submission indicated that further research is needed on the relationship between VET in Schools and retention. In the *Partners in a Learning Culture Blueprint for Implementation*, ANTA included recommendations to assist in establishing qualitative and quantitative information regarding Indigenous VET in Schools participation. All governments recognise the need for further work to facilitate improved learning outcomes and positive post-school pathways for Indigenous students.

4.93   Access to appropriate career information and guidance is also recognised as critical for Indigenous young people. There are five Career and Transition (CAT) Pilot projects which have a specific focus on Indigenous young people, with two of these having a dedicated Indigenous CAT Adviser.[83] Chapter **8**, on career education, considers this issue further.

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80   Mr Robert Buck, Coordinator, Gladstone Indigenous Vocation and Enterprise Network (GIVEN), *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2003, Gladstone, pp. 438-442.

81   Miss Shannon Spark, Manager, Darwin VET in Schools Workplacement Centre, Northern Territory Industry Training Bureau, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 April 2003, Humpty Doo, NT, p. 527; Mr Michael Harrison, Chief Executive Officer, Group Training NT, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 April 2003, Humpty Doo, NT, p. 533; South Australian Government, *Submission No. 97*, p. 26. Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 28.

82   Ms Carmelita Dunn, General Manager, Indigenous Education Division, Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 April 2003, Darwin, p. 453.

83   DEST, *Submission No. 75*, Appendix B, p. 82.

Summary

4.94   This chapter has provided a summary of the growth and participation in vocational education. Specific reference has been made to the growth in student numbers, enrolments, the range of programs, annual curriculum hours, structured workplace learning and to a lesser extent School-based New Apprenticeships.

4.95   The examination of this information, and review of the distribution of qualifications, gender choices, fields of education and industry groupings lead the Committee to the conclusion that the outputs of the system are highly diverse. The implications of this diversity will be discussed more fully in later chapters.

4.96   The effect of location and cultural background highlights the challenges of providing access to vocational education in geographically remote communities. Positive outcomes are being realised, where there is essential support, in participation in vocational education for Indigenous students.

4.97   The complexity of addressing background factors is recognised by the Committee. The Committee supports strategies that acknowledge and incorporate the Indigenous community as encouraging students to stay at school, as a first step. The importance of community factors for all students in shaping students' choices, and supporting work placements is integral to the vocational education process.

4.98   The question remains as to how this participation in vocational education then links to post-school outcomes to determine its effectiveness for all students. Outcomes from participation in vocational education are discussed in the context of pathways in Chapter 9.