Career Moves

Longitudinal Survey of Destinations, Pathways and Satisfaction of 2005 Government School HSC Students in New South Wales
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Executive Summary

This study was undertaken to determine the value to students of vocational education and training (VET) in schools programs in New South Wales, given that the number of students undertaking VET subjects as part of their Higher School Certificate (HSC) has increased dramatically in recent years. In 2005, 52,484 NSW students in Years 11 and 12 enrolled in one or more HSC VET subjects, representing over 34 per cent of the total number of students. Of these, more than 38,000 students were from government schools, which means that slightly more than four in every ten senior government school students enrolled in at least one HSC VET subject in 2005.

The study seeks to add to our understanding of how NSW VET in schools programs have benefited students over the longer term, by tracking their pathways over the two years following completion of their HSC. It does so by means of a re-contact of VET and non-VET HSC completers from the 2005 HSC cohort, who were first surveyed in 2006 and then re-contacted in October/November 2007.

This longitudinal study is based on two samples of 2,401 students each (VET and non-VET graduates) from the 2005 HSC government school cohort, matched by gender, prior academic achievement, school attended in 2005 and geographical location of the school, in order to allow statistically valid comparisons between the two groups.

This study provides detailed destinations data of the 2005 HSC cohort (comprising labour market outcomes and study destinations), which allows for an analysis of the pathways taken by VET and non-VET graduates to education, training and work, two years after completing school. It also provides information on school completers’ views of their HSC program, and their experience of work placement programs, with a particular focus on the views of VET in schools graduates.

Key Findings

2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates: A snapshot 2 years on

- This study provides significant evidence on a range of indicators of strong outcomes for HSC graduates who studied VET in schools programs in Year 12. In particular, the findings confirm strong outcomes for VET in schools graduates in their second year after completing school.

- HSC VET students have successfully accessed a broad range of study and labour market destinations two years after school completion: 83.5 per cent of respondents in this sample were fully engaged either in study, training or the full-time labour market (see Figure i below).
The destinations of matched HSC VET and non-VET graduates show that while non-VET students were more likely to go to university in 2007, VET students were much more likely than their non-VET counterparts to be in employment-based training, with 14.5 per cent having taken up apprenticeships and 6.4 per cent undertaking traineeships (compared to 10.3 per cent non-VET apprentice and 4.5 per cent non-VET trainees).

HSC VET graduates were more strongly oriented towards the labour market, and those who entered the labour market were more likely to find full-time employment than their matched non-VET peers (28.2 per cent compared with 20.7 per cent respectively).

For males, enrolling in a VET in schools program sharply increases the likelihood of obtaining an apprenticeship (28.6 per cent of VET compared to 19.4 per cent non-VET two years on from graduation).

For females, VET in schools enhances the likelihood of obtaining a traineeship or apprenticeship and strongly increases the likelihood of getting a full-time job as opposed to part-time or casual work. One in three female VET graduates are in full-time work in 2007 compared to around one in five female non-VET graduates. These data also provide evidence that HSC VET is effective in steering female students into Certificate IV and above level training in their second year after completing school.

HSC VET students access a broader range of education and training destinations, highlighting once again the contribution made by VET programs to broadening

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1Respondents were allocated to a “main” destination category, either in a study location, in an apprenticeship/traineeship or in the labour market. Destinations data are treated in a hierarchical manner (for details refer to Chapter 2).
the effectiveness and range of pathways offered by the HSC. VET in schools graduates also have a higher rate of transition to the full-time labour market.

- VET in schools graduates are somewhat more likely than non-VET in schools graduates to draw together the worlds of work and study. The proportion of students in employment is higher for the VET in schools graduates than non-VET (79.4 per cent compared with 70.1 per cent). For students seeking to survive a tertiary study environment characterised by rising costs, this is an important advantage.

- The proportion of graduates looking for work two years after completing school was three per cent or below, having dropped from 5.5 of the VET and 6.2 per cent of non-VET cohorts respectively in 2006.

- A small proportion of young people are not in education and training nor in employment, but are looking for work in 2007, two years after completing school (3 per cent of VET graduates and 2.7 per cent of non-VET graduates). On average, unemployed VET graduates had been looking for work for a short period of time than the non-VET graduates. Over sixty per cent of non-VET graduates report a lack of appropriate skills and training as a barrier to finding employment, compared to 48.6 of their VET counterparts.

**Post-school pathways: 2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates**

- While the vast majority of young people who were at university in their first post-school year continued their course in 2007, the rates for VET in schools graduates are higher than for non-VET graduates (84.4 per cent compared to 81.3 per cent respectively). High rates of continuation are to be expected given that the minimum duration of an undergraduate degree is three years of full-time study. There was however more ‘milling and churning’ amongst non-VET graduates: 11.7 per cent of non-VET graduates had left their original university course without completing but entered a new degree-level course in 2007, compared to 8.7 per cent of VET graduates. The proportion of students who had left without completing their degree and did not take up another university course is similar for both VET and non-VET graduates.

- Higher-level VET courses can be a stepping stone to university, with approximately one in ten of both VET and non-VET graduates having made the transition from their VET course to university in 2007.

- Although 2006 entrants to entry-level VET courses find themselves in a wide variety of destinations in 2007, VET graduates not studying at the same level were most likely to have entered full-time work (27.2 per cent VET compared to 18 percent non-VET). Transition to apprenticeships for this group was particularly strong amongst VET males (23.9 per cent VET compared to 17.2 per cent non-VET).

- The vast majority of VET and non-VET graduates who entered an apprenticeship in 2006 were also undertaking an apprenticeship in 2007, although males were
more likely to be in this position than females. Females no longer undertaking apprenticeships had for the most part entered the full-time labour market.

- A majority of VET graduates who had completed the traineeship they entered in 2006 had made the transition to full-time employment in 2007 (57.4 per cent compared to 42.7 per cent of their non-VET counterparts, see Figure ii below).

**Figure ii. 2007 destinations of matched HSC VET and non-VET post-school traineeship completers**

- The results show that about half of the group who were in full-time work and not in study in 2006 were also in full-time work in 2007 (52.7 per cent of VET graduates and 54.5 per cent of non-VET graduates). Young men who entered full-time employment following school were more likely than young women to make a transition to an apprenticeship, and amongst this group VET graduates were more likely to be indentured than non-VET graduates (16.9 per cent of VET males had entered apprenticeships in 2007 compared to 14.6 per cent of non-VET males).

### The value of VET

- As the amount of VET taken in the HSC increases (as measured by the number of VET subjects), destination patterns change considerably. Transfer to university two-years out declines substantially with increasing amounts of VET study while transfer to apprenticeships increases markedly, as does the likelihood of being in the full-time labour market and not in education or training.

- Male graduates undertaking two VET subjects were 14.8 per cent more likely than their non-VET counterparts to be doing an apprenticeship two years after completing school, and those who studied three or more VET subjects were 15.6 per cent more likely than their male non-VET counterparts to have transferred to an apprenticeship.
Differences between female VET and non-VET graduates tend to increase with greater amounts of VET study. In particular, increasing amounts of VET study are associated with increasing differences in the likelihood of undertaking a traineeship two years out from school. The transition for female VET graduates to full-time work (compared to their non-VET counterparts) also increases in likelihood with increased VET activity. Conversely, the likelihood of studying at university two years on decreases with increased VET activity.

School-based trainee students are also less likely to undertake university studies than their non-VET counterparts, but are more likely to be studying a campus-based Certificate IV or above course two years after school completion. There are much higher rates of transition to apprenticeships and traineeships among school-based trainee graduates, and a higher rate of transition into full-time work.

It is particularly important for graduates from the lowest quartile of prior academic achievement\(^2\) to access further education or training either prior to, or as part of, an employment destination. Analysis suggests VET in schools programs help them to do this. Although less likely to enter university and middle level VET by 2007, VET in schools graduates in this prior achievement band compensate for this with higher rates of transition to both apprenticeships and traineeships, as well as full-time employment (see Figure iii below).

\(\)\(^2\) Levels of prior academic achievement were based on the respondents’ School Certificate results in English, Mathematics and Science in Year 10.

Figure iii. 2007 destinations of matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates by prior achievement
Analysis by gender reveals some further nuances. Nearly one in three low achieving males were undertaking an apprenticeship two years on from graduation (compared to one in five non-VET graduates) while one in three females were in full-time work (compared to one in five non-VET graduates).

VET in schools has provided the high achieving group with a breadth of outcomes while at the same time not deterring transition to university, with 57 per cent of VET high achievers studying degree-level courses in 2007.

The value of the HSC

Overall, this survey depicts a graduate view of the HSC which is overwhelmingly positive. Respondents were asked to reflect upon the value of the HSC, two years on from graduation. Approximately 85 per cent of both VET and non-VET graduates agree or strongly agree that “Overall, doing the HSC was worthwhile”, with more than one in three from each group providing the strongest endorsement (strongly agree).

The data show little difference between the views of the HSC VET and non-VET graduates, they present evidence of a strongly positive response to the HSC from both groups.

The effectiveness of the HSC in facilitating the transition to work for the VET in schools group specifically is an important question to consider. Respondents who were enrolled in HSC VET programs were better prepared for this transition than respondents enrolled in non-VET programs.

HSC VET graduates in employment in 2007 (including training contracts) are more likely than their non-VET counterparts to assert that their HSC subjects had helped them in various aspects of their transition to work.

Figure iv. “HSC subjects helped me since leaving school to get my current job” (matched VET and non-VET graduates compared)
VET graduates undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship in 2007 or in full-time or part-time employment gave a stronger endorsement than non-VET graduates of the role of their HSC subjects in helping them to make the transition to their current employment. Regardless of their position within the labour market, VET graduates are more likely to report that their HSC subjects helped them get their current job, gain skills and knowledge for their current job, and understand the world of work. In general, apprentices and trainees are the most emphatic (see for example, Figure iv above).

Indeed, the strength of views offered on the HSC increases with the amount of VET subjects undertaken. In particular, 63.4 per cent of HSC graduates who had undertaken three or more VET subjects felt that their HSC subjects had helped them to work out the sort of career they would like, compared to 49.6 per cent of their non-VET counterparts.

School-based trainees were almost twice as likely as their counterparts who were not school-based trainees (but had similar levels of prior academic achievement) to report that their subjects helped them a lot in gaining their current job. School-based trainee graduates were even more emphatic about their HSC subjects helping them to gain skills and knowledge needed to perform that job.

Statewide estimates of transitions

This study provides statewide estimates of post-schooling transitions which reflect the total NSW government school Year 12 population, by weighting the survey sample to reflect the broader population. Given that the primary purpose of the study was to compare VET and non-VET graduates, such a weighting exercise produces estimates which must be treated with some caution.

The proportion of government school HSC graduates enrolled at university had increased from 29.8 per cent to 36.7 per cent by the second post-school year. A further 16.5 per cent had entered a VET study destination. One in ten had taken up an apprenticeship by 2007, and 4.4 per cent entered traineeships. Just under one-third of the cohort entered the labour market with no further education or training (19.3 per cent in full-time work and 9.5 per cent in part-time work). The unemployment rate is a low 2.4 per cent, and a further 1.1 per cent are not in the labour force (inactive).

Female government school HSC graduates were more likely than their male counterparts to be studying at university in their second-post school year. Males were much more likely to enter apprenticeships, while females were more likely to be in full-time or part-time employment.

Statewide estimates of the differences between VET and non-VET graduates largely reflect the differences between VET and non-VET students noted previously (see Figure v below).
The statewide estimates of the study and work destinations of HSC VET graduates from government schools in the 2005 HSC cohort two years after school completion indicate:

- close to three in every ten HSC VET graduates had entered university;
- 16 per cent were studying a post-school VET course;
- 13 per cent were apprentices and 5 per cent were trainees; and
- 25 per cent were in full-time work and not studying while 9 per cent were in part-time work and not studying.

Non-VET HSC graduates are more likely than HSC VET graduates to be enrolled in a university course two years after school completion. However, HSC VET graduates had a slightly higher rate of growth between the first and second post-school years in terms of the proportion studying at university (recording an increase of 22.4 per cent between 2006 and 2007, compared to 21 per cent for non-VET graduates).

Two years after school completion the relatively higher rates of transitions for VET in schools graduates into apprenticeships and traineeships has been sustained. Among those entering the labour market, the HSC VET graduates are more likely to be working full-time than their non-VET peers.
• In relation to gender, the statewide estimates show that two years after HSC completion, approximately one in five male VET graduates entered university, and that nearly one in three female VET graduates did so. This strengthens the case for VET as a strong and broad platform for entry into various post-schooling destinations. Added to this are the higher levels of transition to apprenticeships, traineeships and full-time employment for both male and female VET in schools graduates, further highlighting the breadth and strength of the HSC VET program.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study has found that HSC VET programs confer a strong range of benefits on HSC graduates in New South Wales, as measured by their contribution to a positive experience of the HSC, and their impact on post-school transitions for a range of students two years after school completion (including those who had been at risk of early leaving). Also of great policy significance in a climate of labour skills shortages is the higher proportion of VET in schools graduates entering apprenticeships and traineeships, in the first two years following HSC graduation.

This study shows that HSC VET students access a broader range of education and training destinations, highlighting once again the contribution made by VET in schools programs to broadening the effectiveness and range of pathways offered by the HSC.
Chapter 1
Introduction

Background

In Australia, vocational subjects have come to occupy an increasingly larger share of the curriculum space available to secondary school students. Since the early 1990s, school-based vocational courses, commonly referred to as VET in schools (VETIS), have been introduced in the final two or three years of school, and these have attracted steadily growing proportions of the senior secondary cohort, with up to half the cohort across Australia now experiencing vocational subjects at some point in the final three years (MCEETYA 2007). The value of these subjects in meeting the economic, social and educational needs of young people, however, has not been extensively researched.

For this reason, the current New South Wales study plays an important role in adding to the knowledge base regarding an initiative which constitutes a significant change in the curricular make-up of secondary schools in this country. This report seeks to measure the longer-term impact of this major curriculum innovation at upper secondary level in New South Wales schools, as there has been relatively little research conducted into the effectiveness of VETIS programs over the longer term. It builds on previous destination studies of VETIS in New South Wales (Polesel et al. 2005 and Helme et al 2007). This introduction seeks to summarise some of the main findings from Australia and internationally, in order to place the findings of this study into a research and policy context.

In New South Wales, VET in schools began earlier. HSC VET courses delivered to school students by TAFE NSW were introduced in 1985 and were well established by the early nineties when school courses were introduced. This was a significant factor in the development of the NSW model of VET in schools because the courses developed for school delivery were modelled on those delivered by TAFE. As such, VET in schools courses were stand alone VET courses accredited by the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board as well as the Board of Studies NSW. The “embedded” curriculum model used in some states, where vocational modules are taught as part of general education courses, was not adopted.

In addition, the availability of TAFE courses, along with school courses, has given NSW students access to a much broader VET curriculum (and range of industry training areas) than could be provided by schools. In 2005, when the students in this study were in Year 12, TAFE delivery accounted for 28 per cent of government school enrolments in VET in schools. Over three quarters of these (more than 10,000) were in VET courses that were not available in schools.

The increasing value of vocational subjects in catering for the growing numbers of young people completing school has been widely acknowledged (Keating 1994, Polesel 2000, Teese and Polesel 2003). Upper secondary schooling in Australia (in contrast to many European systems, for example) generally follows a model of
comprehensive provision, offering a general, non-differentiated track with a single exit point at the end of Year 12, when most of the cohort have reached the age of 18. However, the trend towards comprehensive provision which began in the early 1980s has been associated with decreasing programme choices and limited vocational options in schools (for a full discussion see Polesel 2007). VETIS programmes, introduced in most jurisdictions within the context of the school leaving certificates in the early 1990s, increased curriculum breadth. By locating vocational subjects within the mainstream secondary school completion certificate, they conferred upon school completers both the school leaving certificate associated with the state system in which they reside (in most cases qualifying them for entry to university) and a basic nationally-accredited VET qualification.

School-based VET has also been called upon to play a role in meeting the challenge of skills shortages in modern western nations and, as such, has been central to many recent policy initiatives in upper secondary schooling internationally (Jephcoate and Abbott 2005). It has also been argued that applied learning pedagogies can improve the learning experiences of all students, especially by helping to integrate the general and vocational aspects of the curriculum (Billett 1994).

However, dissent with these views may also be found in the literature, with Bernstein, for example, arguing that it is too much to expect education to compensate for social divisions (Bernstein 1971) and Young arguing that there need to be serious improvements in the knowledge base of vocational programmes (Young 2007). Moreover, major problems, such as lack of parity of esteem between general and vocational tracks in school (Green 1995) and continuing problems of social selection in education more generally (Baudelot and Etablet 1971, Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) have generated considerable policy debate. Young (2007), using the concepts of Durkheim (1961), argues that the debate on parity of esteem needs to acknowledge the importance of different types of knowledge in the curriculum, and that the divisions between academic and vocational knowledge are not merely ideological but based on important differences between experiential learning and theoretical forms of learning.

The role of school-based vocational education and training in democratising the curriculum or further segregating young people along class lines is an integral feature of this debate (Polesel 2007). It might also be argued that mass participation in the upper secondary curriculum had already been established in Australia by the early 1990s, before the introduction of vocational programmes in most jurisdictions and any possible effect they might have had on levels of participation (Polesel forthcoming). Further, the tensions between the need to deliver effective training which serves the national interest, the need to cater educationally for a range of young people and the need to avoid social segregation are often downplayed in debates which focus instead on efficiency, diversity and choice (Edwards 2002). There is also a view that the academic curriculum continues to dominate the operations of secondary schools, and that practical or vocational studies, despite their growing role in the secondary school curriculum, continue to be regarded as lower status curriculum options, while “the underlying fabric of curriculum has remained surprisingly constant” (Goodson 1993: 22).
In the light of the massive expansion of VET in schools programs and with some evidence of the value of these subjects in democratizing the curriculum (Teese & Polesel 2003), are arguments such as those mounted by Goodson still valid? Or is it the case that VET programs have now come to occupy a place of central importance in the modern upper secondary school curriculum (Labaree 1997 and Blunden 1996)?

In Australia, a system of high and technical schools – the former with a university-preparatory role and the latter providing terminal-track (Baudelot and Establet 1971) vocational studies – had been dismantled in most states by the early 1980s. Vocational and university-preparatory curricula now co-habit the same schools, often competing for scarce resources. In this context, it is important to understand whether the rapid and very large increase in VET enrolments has been accompanied by a real expansion in educational "opportunity", as represented by higher rates of school completion, workplace learning and successful post-school transitions to further education and training and to the labour market.

Past research has noted that models and contexts of VETIS delivery vary across the state jurisdictions, and even between schools in the same state (Lamb and Vickers 2006). The variations include: the nature of the program – full VET certificate or units of competence; the level of the program – modules to Certificate IV; the funding of programs; relationships with TAFE institutes and other Registered Training Organisations (RTOs); different models of provider registration; the role of VET in gaining university entrance and the grading of VET subjects; the role of work placement; and the relationship to Australian Apprenticeships. The establishment of VET programs has also been shown in previous research to be influenced by school policies and culture, which may continue to valorise the academic curriculum at the expense of VET (Polesel et al. 2004).

Research also indicates that parents are sometimes reluctant to have their children enrol in VET subjects, reinforcing the doubts entertained by schools and teachers about the suitability of VET. An Australian Research Council project found that in 1998-99 over half of all upper secondary school teachers in Australia either doubted the value of VET or were opposed to its place in school programs (Teese and Polesel 2003), a finding confirmed by Dixon and Pelliccone (2003). This would suggest that research elucidating the longer-term benefits of VET programs, as provided by the current study, is required before these cultural biases can be challenged.

Past research suggests that one negative manifestation of this cultural impact is the sometimes nearly exclusive focus of careers education and guidance on university, with little or no attention paid to TAFE/VET, apprenticeship or employment. A recent survey of schools in rural and low socio-economic status (SES) communities found high proportions of students reporting that they received poor quality information about VET or received none at all (Polesel 2001a), although evidence from a recent New South Wales study (Helme, Lamb, Polesel and Mason 2007) suggests that 73 per cent of VET students (and 70 per cent of non-VET students) agreed or strongly agreed that they had received useful careers counselling. This may reflect the NSW practice of employing trained, usually full-time careers advisers in government high schools and the central role that these careers advisers have played in the establishment and growth of VET in schools in this state.
There are also differences, not only in the level of provision of VET programs in schools and student access to them, but also in the quality of programs that are offered (teaching resources, facilities, work placements, TAFE links and labour market relevance). A recent Australian report (PhillipsKPA 2006), for example, criticised Australian school-based vocational programmes for not delivering competencies, for being out of touch with industry, for being too heavily focussed on graded assessments rather than attainment of vocational competence and for being compromised by their delivery within the context of a school or “academic” environment, although the extent to which these criticisms apply in different state systems varies. For example, the issue regarding units of competency does not apply in New South Wales.

The report also expressed concern that VETIS delivery was supply-driven rather than responsive to industry demand. It is not too difficult to detect the narrowly instrumentalist basis of this report and its lack of consideration of the needs, aspirations and broader learning needs of young people themselves. Its antithesis may be found in arguments that school-based education should not deal with vocational learning at all, but rather with the development of the rounded individual, an argument which, similarly, might be seen to ignore the economic needs of young people negotiating the transition from school (Teese 2000).

As VETIS continues to evolve, however, economic dependence on secondary school has increased (Teese and Polesel 2003), but low achievement, disengagement and early leaving remain problematic for some students. How well VET works for different equity groups and in different state contexts must be determined. A national study undertaken by the University of Melbourne on behalf of the Enterprise & Career Education Foundation (ECEF) noted that there are significant state-level differences in the modes of delivery of VET programs and the year-levels at which VET is available (Polesel et al. 2003). Lamb et al. (1998) have found that access to school-based VET continues to vary considerably by state, school sector, and region. There is also evidence that VET participation varies according to achievement, socio-economic status, type of school attended, gender, ethnicity and geographical region. Other school factors, such as size, also have a bearing on the quality and range of VET offerings, as well as staff resources and facilities. What we know of the impact of VETIS on different socio-economic status groups is limited, although a number of studies have investigated the participation of low SES students in VET programs.

For example, it is known that schools serving mainly low SES populations are more likely to offer vocational programs (Ainley and Fleming 1997) and students from low SES backgrounds are more likely to enrol in them (Teese and Polesel 2003). Similarly, Lamb and Ball (1999) found that Year 12 students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds enrolled in vocational education and technology subjects at about twice the rate of high SES students. Polesel (2007) found that VETIS enrolments are proportionally twice as high in the poorest outer suburban regions of Melbourne (Mornington, North West and Outer West regions) as in the wealthy inner and eastern suburbs of that city (Inner East and Inner Melbourne regions), confirming that vocational programs in schools are most strongly colonised by the poorest families, and that VET delivery is concentrated in those schools serving those families. He also noted the influence of the non-government schools on patterns of participation, with state schools, which cater for the greatest diversity,
displaying the highest rate of VET enrolments and the lowest socio-economic profile, while non-government schools display lower rates of participation in VET and much higher means for socio-economic status.

With respect to other equity groups, Fullarton (2001) reported that young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds were less likely to undertake VETIS, a finding consistent with a view that non-English speaking families place a stronger emphasis on university studies than Australian born families (Lamb et al. 1998). Indigenous students, however, are more likely to enrol in VETIS programs (see, for example, Helme et al. 2003). Lamb et al. (1998) also found that VETIS students were more likely to have attended government schools and come from home backgrounds where parents worked in skilled or unskilled manual occupations. Similar results were obtained by Fullarton (2001). However, further research is needed to identify the types of VET programs that students from different SES backgrounds select and what benefits they reap over the longer term.

As discussed above, VET programs have played an important role in broadening the range of curriculum offerings and providing young people with an alternative pathway to work and further education. But to what extent do VETIS programs improve student outcomes? The evidence to date is mostly limited to state-specific studies, though there is little analysis of the impact of differences in models of delivery. A recent study (Walstab et al. 2002) suggests that participation in VETIS has a positive impact on students’ choices to continue with VET, with VETIS graduates entering apprenticeships or traineeships at about twice the rate of non-VET graduates. Data from a series of destination surveys conducted in Victoria (for example, Polesel 2001b) also provide positive findings about post-school pathways of VET students, with over half of the leaving cohort consistently going on to further study either at university or TAFE, with the majority of these students choosing to continue their schooling at a TAFE. According to Polesel, this demonstrated some progress towards the achievement of one of the aims of the VETIS program, which is to stimulate interest in non-university training among secondary school students. Labour market transitions were also effective, with high rates of transition to full-time employment, apprenticeships and traineeships. Recently Keating and Polesel (2004) found that student work placements are a more common means for employers to recruit workers than the Jobs Network. On the other hand Noonan et al. (2003) found that employers harbour concerns about VETIS programs because of their lack of workplace focus.

Comparison of outcomes for VET and non-VET students of similar academic achievement revealed impressive results for academically weaker students. Polesel et al. (2005) and Helme et al (2007) showed that among the academically weakest students completing the HSC in New South Wales, progression to further education and training was stronger for the VET group than for the non-VET group, a finding replicated in Victorian studies. These results paint a promising picture of the role of VET in facilitating effective transitions, but relatively little research has been conducted to measure the longevity of these benefits over the longer term, as proposed in this longitudinal study.

In an era that has faced the phenomenon of high youth unemployment, the genesis and growth of VETIS have been in parallel with government policies and actions to
increase secondary retention rates and strengthen youth transition from school to tertiary studies, training and employment. Amongst the many reports and initiatives from all Australian Governments in this area, VETIS stands out as the most observable and substantial change in post-compulsory schooling in the past decade. All Governments support policies of increased Year 12 retention rates. Five states have mooted an increase in the compulsory leaving age and three (New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria) have established targets.\textsuperscript{3} On current projections, these targets will be difficult to achieve. If they and the broad transition objectives are to be achieved, it would seem that the major mechanisms will need to be those associated with vocational programs and students’ links with industry and the workplace.

VETIS can be regarded as such a mechanism. The capacity for VETIS to expand subject range was one reason for its accreditation within the senior secondary certificates. State and non-government sector school authorities have supported VETIS because of its capacity to accommodate students with poor scholastic records or to generate a broader range of learning and teaching styles (Keating 1999). More recently, school systems have become interested in its capacity to offer solutions to the major problem of student failure and disaffection in the middle secondary years.

This study seeks to add to our understanding of how VETIS programs have benefited Australian students. In the context of a New South Wales-based study, it seeks to show how VETIS programs have benefited students over the longer term, by tracking their pathways over the two years following completion of their HSC. It does so by means of a re-contact of VET and non-VET HSC completers from the 2005 cohort, who were first surveyed in 2006 and then re-contacted in October/November 2007. In the context of near mass dependence on secondary schooling combined with continuing high rates of non-completion (Sweet 2005), this study seeks to add to our understanding of the major curriculum initiative which VETIS constitutes in the Australian educational scene.

**Purpose of the study**

In 2006, the NSW Department of Education and Training conducted a large scale destination and satisfaction survey of over 6,000 Government school students who had completed the HSC in 2005. This major survey provided further data on the effectiveness of NSW VET in schools programs in achieving effective transitions from school for a range of student groups (Helme et al 2007).

In 2007, the 2005 HSC cohort surveyed in 2006 was recontacted to provide additional longitudinal data on destinations, pathways and satisfaction of these Year 12 graduates. The findings of this longitudinal survey are reported here, providing further evidence about the value to students of HSC VET courses, in an examination of the outcomes and views of young people at a point approximately two years after their HSC, and one year after they were first surveyed in 2006. It is important to monitor these outcomes to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the NSW VET in schools policy initiatives and to recognise, where appropriate, the achievements in this curriculum area.

\textsuperscript{3} The NSW target is to increase the proportion of students completing Year 12 or recognised vocational training from 82.7 per cent in 2005 to 90 per cent by 2016 (see *The State Plan – a new direction for NSW*, 2007).
This longitudinal survey has two related purposes:

- Pathways and Destinations: to discover the relationship between participation in VET HSC courses and longer term outcomes for work and study.
- Perceived Value: to discover any differences in the views of HSC VET students and non VET HSC students about the usefulness of their HSC studies for their current activities, and to see if these views have changed since they were surveyed in 2006.

**Methodology**

This report is based on a longitudinal surveyed designed to track 2005 HSC students from NSW government schools to determine which pathways they follow, and in particular to examine their employment and further education and training destinations (including higher education) two years after completing school. The survey was also designed to gauge views on the relevance and effectiveness of their HSC courses and the contribution they make to post-school outcomes.

Respondents in the survey were originally interviewed by telephone in July to October in 2006, and a further recontact, also by telephone was undertaken during October and November in 2007. This major survey tracked over 4,000 HSC government school students from the Year 12 cohort in the two years following school completion.

The longitudinal study is based on two samples of 2,401 students each (VET and non-VET) from the 2005 HSC government school cohort, matched by gender, prior academic achievement (based on Year 10 results in English, Mathematics and Science), school attended in 2005 and geographical location of the school (based on administrative regions), in order to allow statistically valid comparisons between the two groups. Thus each VET graduate was matched with a non-VET counterpart, so that 2,401 matched pairs were created for the purpose of making comparisons between VET and non-VET graduates.

This large controlled study of VET in schools outcomes allows a detailed examination of students’ satisfaction with the HSC and the impact of VET in schools programs on destinations two years on from school. While the 2006 survey of 2005 HSC graduates was able to measure initial destinations and the extent to which young people enter tertiary education and work in their first post-school year, this longitudinal component provides a longer-term view of how successful school leavers are in securing stable employment and completing further study. The opportunities that young people have in the early years after leaving school, and the decisions they take, can have major implications for their long-term economic and social well being. Measurement and analysis of what happens to young people in this critical period

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4 The 2006 destinations survey contacted 5,238 HSC graduates resulting in reporting for 3,161 matched pairs. The 2007 recontact yielded a 77 per cent response rate, surveying 4,024 graduates and resulting in 2,401 matched VET and non-VET pairs. These patterns of sample attrition are consistent with those achieved in other longitudinal surveys of young people (for example, see Marks and Long (2000), for an account of sample attrition in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth).
provides valuable and important information that can inform policy on school, work, education and training strategies to help make the transition process smoother for larger numbers of young people and particularly for those most at risk.

This longitudinal study provides detailed destinations data of the 2005 cohort (comprising labour market outcomes and study destinations), which allows for an analysis of the pathways taken by VET and non-VET graduates to education, training and work, two years after completing school. It also provides information on school completers’ views of their HSC program, and their experience of work placement programs, with a particular focus on the views of VET in schools graduates.

The sample

It is important to emphasise that this sample is not representative of the broader cohort of HSC graduates, because of its primary focus on HSC VET in schools graduates. A major goal of VET in schools programs is to provide curriculum options designed to address the needs and interests of the increasingly diverse range of students that now stay on to complete the HSC.

In 2005, HSC VET students made up 37 per cent of the Year 12 cohort in NSW government schools. As VET in schools is taken up in greater numbers by students with lower rather than higher levels of prior academic achievement, the sample is somewhat biased towards the lower end of prior academic achievement and this must be kept in mind when generalising the findings to a larger group.

Profile of VET students

Tables 1-4 below provide a profile of the total cohort of VET and non-VET students from NSW government schools in 2005. The tables show only minor differences between males and females in patterns of enrolment in VET and non-VET subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2005 HSC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, they indicate considerable differences in levels of prior academic achievement (as determined by results in the Year 10 School Certificate) between VET and non-VET students, with VET students much more likely to be drawn from the lower deciles of prior academic performance.

Also, prior academic achievement was strongly related to the amount of VET undertaken, with the number of VET subjects tending to increase for students with lower levels of prior achievement (see Table 2). Nevertheless, over 5 per cent of VET students in the 2005 HSC cohort from government schools were in the two highest deciles (achievement deciles 9 and 10), 13 per cent were in the next two highest deciles (deciles 7 and 8) and more than 22 per cent were in the next two highest deciles (deciles 5 and 6).
Table 2. 2005 HSC VET and non-VET government students by achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr 10 Achievement deciles</th>
<th>2005 HSC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-VET</td>
<td>VET</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest achievers</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest achievers</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, students in non-metropolitan New South Wales were more likely to be enrolled in VET subjects than students in Sydney.

Table 3. 2005 HSC VET and non-VET school students by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2005 HSC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-VET</td>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Sydney</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Western Sydney</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sydney</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter/Central Coast</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra and South Coast</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western NSW</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 2005 HSC VET and non-VET government school students by amount of VET and achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr 10 Achievement deciles</th>
<th>Amount of VET studied in HSC (2005)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No VET</td>
<td>1 VET subject</td>
<td>2 VET subjects</td>
<td>3+ VET subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest achievers</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest achievers</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of the report

Following this introduction in Chapter 1, Chapters 2 to 5 examine the activities of 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates in the second year out from school. These chapters map the experiences of the different groups of school leavers in the period between leaving secondary school and the interviews in 2007. Comparisons are made between the various categories of school leavers to identify the different pathways young people take through education, training and work, as well as periods of time spent not in the labour force or in study.

Chapter 2 presents some of the key findings on outcomes comparing VET and non-VET graduates. It provides a broad outline of the main activities undertaken by the 2005 HSC graduates in 2006 and 2007.

Chapter 3 examines the pathways and destinations of VET and non-VET graduates in more detail, and in particular differences that arise due to gender.

Chapter 4 examines the impact of VET in schools participation on 2007 destinations.

Chapter 5 explores views of the HSC as expressed by VET and non-VET graduates, two years after school completion.

Chapter 2

2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates: a snapshot two years on

This chapter explores the main destinations of 2005 HSC graduates in education, training and work two years after they completed school, comparing the experiences of those who had undertaken a VET in schools subject during the HSC with the experiences of those who had not.

It begins with a broad outline of the main activities of 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates in 2006 and 2007. In determining main activity or destination, participation in education and training has been given precedence over employment. Therefore, young people who were both in study or training and working were categorised as students, and the looking for work category excludes those who were looking for work but who were in study or training. Thus destinations data presented in this report are treated in a hierarchical manner, with “main” destinations defined in the manner described in Table 5 below.

It is of course possible for young people to be both studying and working, or indeed to be both studying and looking for work. As Table 9 later in this chapter demonstrates, many young people who enter study in VET or university are working part-time and some even full-time. Apprentices and trainees, of course, always combine work and study. There are also young people who are studying and neither working nor looking for work, and young people who are not in study or training but in the labour market (i.e. working or unemployed). The ‘unemployed’ category, as it is used in this report, refers only to those who are actively seeking work. The small proportion of respondents who are not working nor looking for work are classed as ‘inactive’. The main activities of this group are detailed below.

It is also important to remember that the sample of VET and non-VET students recruited for this study has been specially selected to allow for valid comparisons between VET and non-VET students – comparisons which control for gender, prior achievement (Year 10 results) and location. This means that the reported data allow us to legitimately and fairly compare differences in the destinations of the two groups and in their views of the HSC. Despite these controls, however, we should not expect the destination profiles of the two groups necessarily to be identical. Students enrolled in VET programs at school clearly have a different orientation to study and to the labour market. We will see in the following analyses, for example, that VET and non-VET students had about an equal chance of entering a study or training destination on leaving school, but the types of study destination they entered were quite different. VET in schools students were much more likely to be oriented towards vocational courses in post-schooling VET.
Table 5. Hierarchical scheme for coding post-schooling destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In education and training</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Respondents studying at degree level. (N.B. Some are also in the labour market)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET Cert IV+</td>
<td>Respondents studying Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma. (N.B. Some are also in the labour market)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Entry Level</td>
<td>Respondents studying Certificate I, II or III (excluding apprentices and trainees). This category also includes students in an “unspecified” VET course, or in other basic courses (e.g. Year 12, bridging course, etc) and with an unknown course level. (N.B. Some are also in the labour market)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices</td>
<td>Working and in an employment based apprenticeship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainees</td>
<td>Working and in an employment based traineeship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working full-time*</td>
<td>Working full-time (35 hours or more per week) and not in a study or training destination. This includes people with part-time or casual jobs that total 35 hours or more.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working part-time*</td>
<td>Working part-time or casual (fewer than 35 hours per week) and not in a study or training destination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Not in a study or training destination and looking for work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>Not in study or training, not working and not looking for work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on ABS classification

Figures 1 and 2 below summarise the 2006 and 2007 destinations for the matched VET and non-VET graduates. These charts show the main differences between the two groups in relation to their study and training destinations in their first post-school year (2006) and second post-school year (2007).

Figure 2 reveals strong outcomes for VET in schools graduates in their second year after completing school. Although VET graduates were less likely overall than their non-VET counterparts to be in a study or training destination two years after completing school (55.3 per cent compared with 64.5 per cent), those who entered the labour market were much more likely to find full-time employment (28.2 per cent compared with 20.7 per cent). VET graduates are also more likely to be in employment-based training in 2007 than their non-VET counterparts, with 14.5 per cent having taken up apprenticeships and 6.4 per cent undertaking traineeships (compared to 10.3 per cent non-VET apprentice and 4.5 per cent non-VET trainees). Non-VET graduates are almost twice as likely to be studying at university in 2007 (30.5 per cent of non-VET compared to 15.9 per cent of VET graduates). The strong
orientation to post-schooling VET and employment is not surprising for this group, given their HSC subject choices.

The proportion of graduates looking for work two years after completing school was three per cent or below, having dropped from 5.5 per cent of the VET and 6.2 per cent of non-VET cohorts respectively in 2006. A very small number of young people are not in education, training or employment, nor are they looking for work (1.4 per cent of the VET graduates, and 1.1 per cent of non-VET graduates).

Figure 1. 2006 destinations of matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates

Figure 2. 2007 destinations of matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates
The gender differences in Figures 3 and 4 are indicative of broader gender-based trends, for example, higher proportions of females entering university and higher proportions of males entering apprenticeships.

Figure 3. 2007 destinations of matched HSC VET and non-VET graduates (Males)

However, they also show where the benefits of doing VET accrue most strongly. For males, enrolling in a VET in schools program sharply increases the likelihood of obtaining an apprenticeship (28.6 per cent of VET compared to 19.4 per cent non-VET two years on from graduation). For females, it enhances the likelihood of obtaining a traineeship or apprenticeship and strongly increases the likelihood of...
getting a full-time job as opposed to part-time and casual work, a destination that is so real for female school leavers (see for example, ABS, Teese 2000, and Teese and Polesel 2003). One in three female VET graduates are in full-time work in 2007 compared to around one in five female non-VET graduates. These data also provide evidence that HSC VET is effective in steering female students into middle-level training in their second year after completing school.

Also of great policy significance in a climate of labour skills shortages was the higher proportion of VET in schools graduates entering apprenticeships and traineeships, in the two years following HSC graduation. It could be argued from this analysis that VET students access a broader range of education and training destinations, highlighting once again the contribution made by VET programs to broadening the effectiveness and range of pathways offered by the HSC. VET in schools graduates also have a higher rate of transition to the full-time labour market.

**Campus-based VET study: AQF levels of HSC graduates**

While one in three non-VET graduates and half as many VET graduates were studying at university in the second year following school completion, a further 18.5 per cent of VET graduates and 19.2 per cent of non-VET graduates were studying campus-based VET courses. The level at which school leavers access VET is an important policy question. Although it is difficult to determine what level of an AQF qualification relates exactly to the HSC, it might be argued that a transition to an AQF level III program or higher is certainly a better outcome than a transition to Certificate I or II programs. In other words, the higher the AQF level accessed the more successful the transition is.

**Figure 5. Level of post-school campus-based VET course of 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates, 2007**

![Bar chart showing the level of post-school campus-based VET course of 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates, 2007.](image)

*The “Other” category includes students who did not specify the AQF level of their studies, or in other basic courses (e.g. Year 12, bridging course etc).*
Figure 5 above compares the rates of entry to different levels of VET of VET graduates and their non-VET counterparts studying a campus-based course (excluding apprenticeships and traineeships), two years after completing the HSC. Of those who entered a campus-based VET course, more than one in ten VET graduates (11.1 per cent) entered an Advanced Diploma course, which was higher than the 7.8 per cent of non-VET graduates. Conversely non-VET graduates were more likely to be enrolled in Diploma level courses (41.2 per cent of non-VET compared to 35.7 per cent of VET graduates) and at Certificate IV level (23.6 per cent non-VET compared to 20.6 per cent VET).

Among graduates entering entry-level VET programs, categorised here as Certificates I, II and III level courses, VET graduates are much more likely to enter at AQF III level than are their non-VET counterparts. This points to the value of VET in schools studies in creating articulation and pathways and building a platform from which to access higher-level VET programs, even two years out from HSC completion.

Credit towards post-school VET studies

A further measure of the benefit of the VET in schools curriculum is its utility in obtaining credit towards post-schooling studies or towards the time taken to obtain an apprenticeship or traineeship qualification. The survey approached this question by asking whether VET in schools graduates who were in a VET study destination in 2007 had asked for credit towards that VET course.5

Table 6 below shows the responses of the HSC VET graduates who were studying campus-based VET programs. Of these graduates, 27.5 per cent reported that they asked for credit. This figure may indicate the need for these graduates to be better informed of the potential of their VET course for obtaining credit for future courses even two years after completing their VET in schools program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows the results of these requests for credits. As respondents reported credits in various ways – subjects, modules, weeks, semesters – this table is an attempt to summarise levels of credit in a comparable manner (using the base modules) and is therefore dependent on the accuracy and expression of respondents’ perceptions. In addition a number of respondents were not clear as to how much credit had been awarded. The data in Table 7 show that the vast majority of those requesting credit were granted credit (95.6 per cent). Almost half (49.6 per cent) were granted credit of one to five modules, while a further 25.2 per cent were granted credit of 6 modules or more. About one in five (21 per cent) were unable to specify what

5 Many HSC VET graduates enrol in a post-school VET course in a different field of study to their HSC VET course. Helme et al (2007) found that amongst HSC VET graduates who entered a post-school VET course in the year following school completion, the HSC VET categories with the highest rates of transitions into related fields were “Health and Personal Services”, “Engineering and Related”, “Automotive” and “Business”. 

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level of credit they were granted. Only 4.2 per cent stated that they were given no credit.

Table 7. Amount of credit granted as a percentage of all students asking for it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of credit</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 modules</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+ modules</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified credit</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No credit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VET in schools graduates who had entered an apprenticeship or traineeship were also asked if their training had been shortened as a result of their VET in schools course (see Table 8). Approximately one in five apprentices reported that this was so (20.3 per cent), and 16.2 per cent trainees.

Table 8. Apprentices/trainees reporting training shortened due to HSC VET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>Trainees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>83.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combining work and study

The main destinations of the cohort of VET and non-VET graduates reported thus far separate study and work activity. Where a young person is both in education and training and in the labour market, their study status takes precedence over their work status. In fact, many young people combine work and study. Table 9 below takes a more detailed look at the study and labour market destinations of the VET and non-VET matched school completers for students at university and campus-based VET courses. All apprentices and trainees combine work and training, and thus are not included in the table. It presents a cross-tabulation of these two dimensions (study location and labour market destination) and compares the two groups of school completers (VET and non-VET students).

This table illustrates the fact that many young people in study destinations are also working or may in fact be looking for work two years on from school. Approximately two-thirds of respondents at university were working in part-time jobs (from both VET and non-VET backgrounds), and about eight per cent of university students who had undertaken VET in schools were actively seeking work, a substantially smaller proportion than their non-VET counterparts (8.1 per cent VET compared to 14.2 per cent respectively non-VET). At the same time, the highest proportions of respondents not in the labour market (not working and not looking for work) may be found among those studying at university, along with those in Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma courses.
Table 9. 2007 study and labour market destinations of matched VET and non-VET graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full-time work (%)</th>
<th>Part-time work (%)</th>
<th>Unemployed (%)</th>
<th>Inactive (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET University</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Certificate IV+</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Entry-level</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Certificate IV+</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Entry-level</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest proportions of students in full-time work are amongst those studying an entry-level VET course at AQF level Certificate I, II or III. Over one-third of VET graduates in this group are working full-time, compared to 31 per cent of their non-VET counterparts. Unemployment rates are also highest amongst this group, with 13.3 per cent of VET graduates in entry-level VET courses looking for work, which is a smaller proportion than the 15.9 per cent of non-VET graduates in this position.

Of interest is the fact that VET in schools graduates are somewhat more likely than non-VET in schools graduates to draw together the worlds of work and study. The proportion of students in employment is higher for the VET in schools graduates than non-VET (79.4 per cent compared with 70.1 per cent). This is particularly the case for those who moved into middle-level VET programs (79.3 per cent of VET in schools graduates are working, compared with 68.9 per cent of non-VET in schools graduates) and university students (79.6 per cent of VET in schools graduates are working, compared with 69.8 per cent of non-VET in schools graduates). For students seeking to survive a tertiary study environment characterised by rising costs, this is an important advantage.

These analyses provide significant evidence, on a range of indicators, of strong outcomes two years on from school completion, for HSC graduates who studied VET in schools programs as part of Year 12.

**Not in education or training and looking for work in 2007**

A small proportion of young people are not in education and training nor in employment, but are looking for work in 2007, two years after completing school (3 per cent of VET graduates and 2.7 per cent of non-VET graduates). The majority of VET and non-VET graduates who were looking for work in 2007 report that they had been looking for less than three months (58.3 per cent VET and 45.3 per cent non-VET), as illustrated in Figure 6 below. Non-VET graduates had in general been looking for work for a longer period of time than their VET counterparts, with, for example, 18.8 per cent of non-VET graduates reporting looking for between six and twelve months, compared to 11.1 per cent VET graduates. Of those respondents not in education and training or work, one in five non-VET graduates had been looking for employment for more than 12 months, compared to one in six VET graduates.
Figure 6. Number of months looking for work, matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates, unemployed in 2007

Figure 7 reports some reasons given for not being able to find work. Nearly 57 per cent of VET graduates looking for work in 2007 and 51.6 per cent of non-VET graduates in the same position report that labour market conditions, in the form of a shortage of jobs, is a major reason for not securing jobs. While over one-half of VET graduates identify a lack of work experience as critical (52.8 per cent) the figure is slightly higher for non-VET graduates (54.7 per cent). However, skills and training figure strongly, particularly amongst the non-VET graduates. Indeed 60.9 per cent of non-VET graduates report a lack of appropriate skills and training as a barrier to finding employment, compared to 48.6 of their VET counterparts.

Figure 7. Barriers to work, matched 2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates, unemployed 2007
Inactive in 2007

A very small group of both VET and non-VET graduates are not in education, training, work, nor looking for work when surveyed in 2007 (1.4 per cent of VET graduates and 1.1 per cent of non-VET graduates). This group is classified as ‘inactive’, or not in the labour market. Many of the inactive group are undertaking home duties and looking after children (45.5 per cent of the VET group and 50 per cent of the non-VET group). This group also includes those who are ill and unable to work or study. The number of young people not in the labour market and not in study two years after completing school is very small.

The following chapter explores the pathways taken by 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates according to the choices they made in 2006.
Chapter 3
Post-school pathways: 2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates

This chapter explores the pathways taken through education, training and work by 2005 HSC graduates in the two years following their exit from school. It seeks to track the main destinations of each group, as defined by their main 2006 activity. The post-school pathways of 2005 HSC VET graduates are compared to those of their non-VET counterparts. The chapter begins with a broad outline of the main activities of the VET and non-VET graduates in 2006 and 2007. The changes in activities between those years are then presented, looking in more detail at what happens to particular groups of young people in the period between their first and second post-school years.

Tables 10 and 11 provide an overview, for VET and non-VET graduates respectively, of their major destination in 2007 by their main activity in the first year after leaving school (2006).

Table 10. HSC VET graduates: activities in 2007

| Activity in 2006 | University | VET Cert IV+ |  | VET Entry-level |  | Apprentice |  | Trainee |  | Full-time work |  | Part-time work |  | Unemployed |  | Inactive | Total |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|--------|
| University      | 92.7       | 1.7          | 0.7         | 0.3             | 1.0         | 2.4        | 0.3          | 0.7         | 0.7          | 0.0          | 100.0         |             |            |             |          |        |
| VET Cert 4+     | 9.8        | 39.8         | 2.4         | 2.2             | 3.5         | 25.2       | 14.1         | 1.5         | 1.5          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| VET Entry-level | 4.1        | 8.2          | 22.6        | 11.9            | 5.3         | 27.2       | 14.8         | 4.9         | 0.8          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Apprenticeship  | 0.0        | 1.1          | 0.0         | 88.5            | 1.5         | 6.1        | 1.1          | 0.8         | 0.8          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Traineeship     | 4.0        | 9.1          | 2.9         | 2.9             | 20.6        | 43.4       | 10.3         | 4.6         | 2.3          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Working full-time| 6.1        | 6.3          | 7.6         | 8.1             | 6.3         | 52.7       | 10.4         | 1.3         | 1.3          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Working part-time| 6.6        | 9.2          | 5.6         | 6.6             | 10.3        | 34.7       | 23.0         | 2.3         | 1.6          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Unemployed      | 0.0        | 4.5          | 9.8         | 8.3             | 9.1         | 27.3       | 20.5         | 18.9        | 1.5          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Inactive        | 0.0        | 10.5         | 15.8        | 5.3             | 5.3         | 26.3       | 10.5         | 5.3         | 21.1         | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Total           | 15.9       | 12.5         | 6.0         | 14.5            | 6.4         | 28.2       | 12.1         | 3.0         | 1.4          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |

Row percentages (percentage based on 2006 activity)

| Activity in 2006 | University | VET Cert IV+ |  | VET Entry-level |  | Apprentice |  | Trainee |  | Full-time work |  | Part-time work |  | Unemployed |  | Inactive | Total |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------|--------|
| University      | 70.2       | 1.7          | 1.4         | 0.3             | 1.9         | 1.0        | 0.3          | 2.8         | 0.0          | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| VET Cert 4+     | 11.8       | 61.2         | 7.7         | 2.9             | 10.4        | 17.1       | 22.3         | 9.7         | 21.2         | 19.2         |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| VET Entry-level | 2.6        | 6.7          | 38.5        | 8.3             | 8.4         | 9.7        | 12.4         | 16.7        | 6.1          | 10.1         |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Apprentice      | 0.0        | 1.0          | 0.0         | 66.5            | 2.6         | 2.4        | 1.0          | 2.8         | 6.1          | 10.9         |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Trainee         | 1.8        | 5.4          | 3.5         | 1.4             | 23.4        | 11.2       | 6.2          | 11.1        | 12.1         | 7.3          |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Working full-time| 6.3        | 8.4          | 21.0        | 9.2             | 16.2        | 30.7       | 14.1         | 6.9         | 15.2         | 16.5         |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Working part-time| 7.3        | 13.0         | 16.8        | 8.0             | 28.6        | 21.8       | 33.7         | 13.9        | 21.2         | 17.7         |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Unemployed      | 0.0        | 2.0          | 9.1         | 3.2             | 7.8         | 5.3        | 9.3          | 34.7        | 6.1          | 5.5          |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Inactive        | 0.0        | 0.7          | 2.1         | 0.3             | 0.6         | 0.7        | 0.7          | 1.4         | 12.1         | 0.8          |             |             |            |            |          |        |
| Total           | 100.0      | 100.0        | 100.0       | 100.0          | 100.0       | 100.0      | 100.0        | 100.0       | 100.0        | 100.0        |             |             |            |            |          |        |
The first panel presents row percentages, which are the percentages relative to the 2006 main activity. That is, taking the first percentage in Table 10, of the VET graduates who entered university in their first post-school year (2006), 92.7 per cent were still attending university in 2007. A further 2.4 per cent were no longer at university, but in full-time work. Similarly, of those gaining an apprenticeship in 2006, 88.5 per cent were still undertaking apprenticeship training in 2007. This was not the case for those who began in traineeships, however. As a shorter duration form of training than traditional trade training, it would be expected for a large proportion to have completed their study by 2007. The figures suggest that most VET graduates who began in a traineeship after leaving school were in full-time work (43.4 per cent), part-time work (10.3 per cent), study at Certificate IV level or above (9.1 per cent) or even university (4 per cent).

The second panel presents the figures as column percentages, that is, the percentages expressed in terms of the 2007 main activity. Therefore, while 15.9 percent of the cohort was undertaking a university course in 2007, 70.2 per cent of this group had been in university in 2006. A further 11.8 per cent of those in university in 2007 were enrolled in middle and advanced-level VET courses (Certificate IV level and above) in 2006. Almost 14 per cent of the students enrolled in university in 2007 had originally entered employment (6.3 per cent in full-time work and 7.3 per cent in part-time work).

### Table 11. HSC non-VET graduates: activities in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main activity in 2007</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Full-time work</th>
<th>Part-time work</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity in 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Cert 4+</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Entry-level</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traineeship</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working full-time</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working part-time</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Row percentages (percentage based on 2006 activity)** |
|-------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|---------|----------------|---------------|------------|----------|
| University  | 74.8       | 1.2          | 1.6             | 1.6        | 7.5     | 1.6            | 4.5            | 3.1        | 3.8      |
| VET Cert 4+ | 6.7        | 65.1         | 8.7             | 2.8        | 14.0    | 18.1           | 18.5           | 21.9       | 11.5     |
| VET Entry-level | 2.6 | 7.5        | 43.7            | 8.5        | 14.0    | 8.2            | 16.6           | 12.5       | 0.0      |
| Apprentice  | 0.0        | 0.9          | 0.8             | 57.1       | 0.0     | 2.0            | 0.0            | 0.0        | 0.0      |
| Trainee     | 2.0        | 2.4          | 4.0             | 0.8        | 14.0    | 7.8            | 6.0            | 4.7        | 7.7      |
| Working full-time | 3.5 | 6.3        | 7.9             | 11.7       | 19.6    | 31.9           | 9.4            | 1.6        | 0.0      |
| Working part-time | 9.4 | 11.0       | 29.4            | 14.2       | 20.6    | 23.1           | 28.7           | 20.3       | 46.2     |
| Unemployed  | 0.8        | 5.7          | 3.2             | 2.4        | 10.3    | 7.0            | 16.2           | 35.9       | 11.5     |
| Inactive    | 0.1        | 0.0          | 0.8             | 0.8        | 0.0     | 0.2            | 0.0            | 0.0        | 0.0      |
| **Total**   | 100.0      | 100.0        | 100.0           | 100.0      | 100.0   | 100.0          | 100.0          | 100.0      | 100.0    |
One in eight of the VET cohort was in an apprenticeship in 2007. Of this group, two-thirds (66.5 per cent) had entered apprenticeship training immediately on leaving school. A small proportion (3.2 per cent) of apprentices in 2007 were looking for work in 2006, while a further 8.3 per cent had been in entry-level VET, 8 per cent in part-time work and 9.2 per cent in full-time work.

Only 3 per cent of the cohort was unemployed in 2007. About one-third of this group (34.7 per cent) had also been looking for work in 2006. Some of those unemployed in 2007 had entered campus-based VET study in 2006 (9.7 per cent at Certificate IV and above and 16.7 per cent at entry-level), while another 6.9 per cent had been working full-time and 13.9 per cent were in part-time employment.

Similarly, the 2006 and 2007 destinations of 2005 non-VET graduates are given in Table 11.

The second half of this chapter reports the changes in activities for 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates across 2006 and 2007, in more detail for different groups of graduates:

- those who entered university on leaving school
- those who took up advanced campus-based VET courses (Certificate IV and above)
- those who took up entry-level VET study (Certificates I, II and III)
- those who entered either an apprenticeship or traineeship
- those who entered either full-time or part-time work without study, and
- those who initially were unemployed.

### University students in 2006

Approximately 12 per cent of VET in schools graduates and 24.5 per cent of their non-VET counterparts were at university in 2006. Table 12 below presents the main activities in 2007 of this group of young people who left school in 2005 and began study at university in 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity in 2006</th>
<th>Main activity in 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET all</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET all</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By gender</th>
<th>Row percentages (percentage based on 2006 activity)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET males</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET males</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET females</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET females</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that nearly all of the young people who were at university in their first year after leaving school were still at university in 2007 (92.7 per cent of VET graduates and 93 per cent of non-VET graduates). Of those no longer enrolled at university, VET graduates were most likely to be in full-time work (2.4 per cent of this group) and non-VET graduates were most likely to have moved into part-time employment (2 per cent).

Amongst both VET and non-VET graduates females were more likely than their male counterparts to still be enrolled at university in 2007.

The rates of university course completion are given in Figure 8 below. While the vast majority of students are continuing the university course they began in 2006, the rates for VET in schools graduates are higher than for non-VET graduates (84.4 per cent compared to 81.3 per cent respectively). High rates of continuation are to be expected given that the minimum duration of an undergraduate degree is three years of full-time study. There was however more ‘milling and churning’ amongst non-VET graduates: 11.7 per cent of non-VET graduates had left their original university course without completing but entered a new degree-level course in 2007, compared to 8.7 per cent of VET graduates. The proportion of students who had left without completing their degree and did not take up another university course is similar for both VET and non-VET graduates.

Figure 8. Course completion rates for matched 2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates who entered university in 2006
VET students in 2006

Certificate IV and above

Table 13 below presents the main activities of 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates who initially entered advanced VET courses at the level of AQF Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma. It shows that four in ten VET graduates who entered a Certificate IV or above course were again studying at that level in 2007 compared to 47.8 per cent of their non-VET counterparts (and higher proportions of females than males for both groups). Courses at this level vary in length but can take up to two years to complete.

Table 13. Main activity in 2007 of matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET entrants to Certificate IV or above courses, by gender and location

| Activity in 2006 | Main activity in 2007 | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                | University | VET Cert IV+ | VET Entry-level | Apprentice | Trainee | Full-time work | Part-time work | Unemployed | Inactive | Total  |
| VET all         | 9.8        | 39.8        | 2.4          | 2.2        | 3.5      | 25.2          | 14.1         | 1.5        | 1.5      | 100.0  |
| non-VET all     | 10.7       | 47.8        | 2.4          | 1.5        | 3.3      | 19.7          | 10.7         | 3.1        | 0.7      | 100.0  |

By gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VET males</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>9.8</th>
<th>37.9</th>
<th>2.6</th>
<th>3.9</th>
<th>3.9</th>
<th>24.8</th>
<th>12.4</th>
<th>2.0</th>
<th>2.6</th>
<th>100.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-VET males</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET females</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET females</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is apparent from the figures is that higher-level VET courses can be a stepping stone to university, with approximately one in ten of both VET and non-VET graduates having made the transition from their VET course to university in 2007. VET in schools graduates were more likely than their non-VET counterparts to move into the full-time labour market from their Certificate IV and above course, and for VET females, significantly more likely (25.4 per cent of VET females were in full-time work compared to 17.5 per cent of non-VET females). Unemployment rates were highest amongst non-VET males, with 4.1 per cent of this group looking for work in 2007.

Figure 9. Course completion rates for matched 2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates who entered VET Certificates IV or above in 2006

- VET: Did not complete 15.8%, continuing 34.9%, completed 49.3%
- non-VET: Did not complete 13.0%, continuing 42.2%, completed 44.8%
The course completion rates for VET and non-VET graduates entering a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma course in 2006 are given in Figure 9 above. Nearly half of the VET in schools graduates have completed their advanced level VET course (49.3 per cent compared to 44.8 per cent of their non-VET counterparts). A further 34.9 per cent were continuing their original course and 15.8 per cent had left without completing.

The 2007 destinations of those who had completed their 2006 advanced-level VET course are given in Figure 10. Non-VET course completers were slightly more likely than their VET counterparts to make a transition to university (22.1 per cent non-VET compared to 18.2 per cent VET) and significantly more likely to be undertaking another campus-based VET course at AQF level Certificate IV or above (13.7 per cent non-VET compared to 8.9 per cent VET). However nearly four in ten VET graduates had found full-time employment, compared to three in ten non-VET graduates. The proportion of Certificate IV or above completers looking for work was much higher for non-VET graduates than for VET graduates (6.4 per cent of VET compared to 1.8 per cent of non-VET).

The main reason given by those who had discontinued their Certificate IV or above course by 2007 varied by VET in schools status. As illustrated in Figure 11 below, VET in schools graduates were more likely than their non-VET counterparts to indicate a lack of interest in their course as their main reason for withdrawing (31.9 per cent compared to 23.7 per cent), and more than one in five indicated that the main reason why they left was because they had found employment (22.2 per cent VET compared to 16.9 per cent non-VET). Non-VET graduates were more likely than VET graduates to cite personal circumstances and also difficulties with the study demands of their course (13.6 per cent non-VET compared to 2.8 per cent of VET).
Figure 11. Main reason for discontinuing Certificate IV or above course (matched HSC VET and non-VET graduates)

Entry-level VET

Table 14 below presents the main activities in 2007 of HSC VET and non-VET graduates who initially entered campus-based VET courses at AQF levels I, II or III. It shows that 22.6 per cent of VET in schools graduates and 24.1 per cent of non-VET graduates were still enrolled at this level in 2007. Although entrants find themselves in a wide variety of destinations, VET graduates not studying at the same level were most likely to have entered full-time work (27.2 per cent VET compared to 18 percent non-VET) while their non-VET counterparts not studying in entry-level courses were most likely to have transitioned to part-time work (19.3 per cent non-VET compared to 14.8 per cent VET).

Table 14. Main activity in 2007 of matched HSC VET and non-VET entrants to VET Certificate I, II or III courses, by gender and location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity in 2007</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>VET Cert IV</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Full-time work</th>
<th>Part-time work</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET all</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET all</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By gender

| VET males       | VET Entry-level | 3.3 | 5.4 | 23.9 | 23.9 | 5.4 | 22.8 | 12.0 | 3.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| non-VET males   | VET Entry-level | 8.0 | 13.8| 13.8 | 17.2 | 4.6 | 21.8 | 18.4 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| VET females     | VET Entry-level | 4.6 | 9.9 | 21.9 | 4.6  | 5.3 | 29.8 | 16.6 | 6.0 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| non-VET females | VET Entry-level | 8.5 | 9.2 | 30.5 | 4.3  | 7.8 | 15.6 | 19.9 | 4.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
Destinations for males and females also varied. Transition to apprenticeships was particularly strong amongst VET males (23.9 per cent VET compared to 17.2 per cent non-VET). Non-VET females were twice as likely to take up a university course than VET females, but half as likely to have taken up full-time work.

**Figure 12. Course completion rates for matched 2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates who entered VET Certificates I, II or III in 2006**

Approximately one-quarter of VET in schools graduates who had entered a Certificate I, II or III level course directly from school in 2006 was still enrolled in the same course in 2007 (see Figure 12 above). Similar proportions of VET in schools and non-VET graduates had left their entry-level VET course without completing (16.9 per cent of VET graduates and 16 per cent of non-VET graduates). The destinations of these two groups of non-completers are given in Figure 13 below. VET in schools graduates who did not complete their subsequent entry-level VET course were most likely to have found full-time employment (36.6 per cent compared to 22.2 per cent of non-VET graduates).

**Figure 13. 2007 destinations of matched HSC VET and non-VET Certificate I, II or III non-completers**
Apprentices and trainees in 2006

Apprentices

Table 15 below reports the main activities in 2007 of HSC VET and non-VET graduates who entered apprenticeships in 2006, the year after leaving school. Nearly 11 per cent of VET graduates and 6.5 per cent of non-VET graduates had entered an apprenticeship in 2006. As demonstrated in the table, the vast majority of VET and non-VET graduates were also undertaking an apprenticeship in 2007, although males were more likely to be in this position than females. Females no longer undertaking apprenticeships had for the most part entered the full-time labour market.

Table 15. Main activity in 2007 of matched HSC VET and non-VET apprentices, by gender and location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity in 2006</th>
<th>Main activity in 2007</th>
<th>VET</th>
<th>VET</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>VET Cert IV+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET all</td>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By gender

| VET males       | Apprenticeship       | 0.0 | 1.3 | 0.0        | 90.5    | 0.9       | 5.6       | 0.4        | 0.9      | 0.4   | 100.0 |
| non-VET males   | Apprenticeship       | 0.0 | 1.5 | 0.8        | 92.4    | 0.0       | 5.3       | 0.0        | 0.0      | 0.0   | 100.0 |
| VET females     | Apprenticeship       | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0        | 74.2    | 6.5       | 9.7       | 6.5        | 0.0      | 3.2   | 100.0 |
| non-VET females | Apprenticeship       | 0.0 | 4.3 | 0.0        | 82.6    | 0.0       | 13.0      | 0.0        | 0.0      | 0.0   | 100.0 |

Completion rates for those who entered apprenticeships on completing school are given in Figure 14 below. It would be expected, as is the case, for completion rates to be low at this stage of their indenture. A small proportion of VET graduates had discontinued their original apprenticeship in order to take up another.

Figure 14. Completion rates for matched 2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates who entered an apprenticeship in 2006
Trainees

Traineeships are generally of much shorter duration than apprenticeships. Many involve 12 months of training. For this reason, only 20.6 per cent of VET graduates and 14.3 per cent of non-VET graduates who took up a traineeship in 2006 are still in a traineeship in 2007 (see Table 16 below). More HSC VET graduates than non-VET graduates had taken up a traineeship in 2006 (7.3 per cent of VET graduates compared to 4.4 per cent non-VET graduates), and more males than females were still doing a traineeship in 2007. Many had made the transition to the full-time labour market, especially amongst VET in schools graduates and in particularly the young women in this group, with more than half in full-time employment in 2007. Their non-VET counterparts were more likely to have enrolled at university (18.8 per cent of female non-VET graduates compared to 3.1 per cent of female VET graduates).

Table 16. Main activity in 2007 of matched HSC VET and non-VET trainees, by gender and location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity in 2006</th>
<th>Main activity in 2007</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>Appren -tice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Full- time work</th>
<th>Part-time work</th>
<th>Unem ployed</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET all</td>
<td>Traineeship</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET all</td>
<td>Traineeship</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By gender

| VET males | Traineeship | 6.5 | 13.0 | 6.5 | 8.7 | 34.8 | 21.7 | 4.3 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 100.0 |
| non-VET males | Traineeship | 5.6 | 16.7 | 0.0 | 5.6 | 30.6 | 36.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.6 | 100.0 |
| VET females | Traineeship | 3.1 | 7.8 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 15.5 | 51.2 | 12.4 | 5.4 | 2.3 | 100.0 |
| non-VET females | Traineeship | 18.8 | 2.9 | 7.2 | 0.0 | 5.8 | 37.7 | 23.2 | 4.3 | 0.0 | 100.0 |

Traineeship course completion rates are given in Figure 15 below. A similar proportion of VET in schools and non-VET in schools HSC graduates had left their traineeship without completing (12 per cent of VET and 12.4 per cent non-VET).

Figure 15. Completion rates for matched 2005 VET and non-VET HSC graduates who entered a traineeship in 2006

VET

- did not complete 12.0%
- continuing 18.3%
- completed 69.7%

non-VET

- did not complete 12.4%
- continuing 9.5%
- completed 78.1%
The 2007 destinations of VET and non-VET graduates who had completed their post-school traineeship are given in Figure 16 below. A majority of VET graduates had made the transition to full-time employment (57.4 per cent compared to 42.7 per cent of non-VET graduates). While non-VET completers were more likely to have enrolled at university (13.4 per cent compared to 4.9 per cent of VET graduates), VET graduates were slightly more likely to have moved from a traineeship to an advanced-level VET course (12.3 per cent compared to 9.8 per cent non-VET). Nearly double the proportion of non-VET graduates to VET graduates were in the less secure labour market position of part-time work.

Figure 16. 2007 destinations of matched HSC VET and non-VET traineeship completers

HSC VET and non-VET graduates in work in 2006

Full-time work

Some HSC graduates do not enter study or training on leaving school and rely on entry to the labour market. Some get a full-time job in the first year after leaving school. This was true of 16.5 per cent of the 2005 HSC VET graduates and 12.2 per cent of the non-VET graduates. Their main activities in 2007 are presented in Table 17 below.

The results show that about half of the group who were in full-time work in 2006 were also in full-time work in 2007 (52.7 per cent of VET graduates and 54.5 per cent of non-VET graduates). There are differences based on gender and HSC VET status. Young men who entered full-time employment following school were more likely than young women to make a transition to apprenticeship, and amongst this group VET in schools graduates were more likely to be indentured than non-VET graduates (16.9 per cent of VET males had entered apprenticeships in 2007 compared to 14.6 per cent of non-VET males).
Some young people who leave school and get full-time jobs do re-engage in study. In the second post-school year (2007), 6.1 per cent of VET graduates and 8.9 per cent of non-VET graduates had taken up a university place, while 6.3 per cent of VET graduates and 7.2 per cent of non-VET graduates were enrolled in high-level VET courses (Certificate IV or above). A further 7.6 per cent of VET and 3.4 per cent of non-VET graduates had entered Certificate I, II or III level courses.

Some who began in full-time jobs were in part-time work in 2007 (10.4 per cent VET and 8.6 per cent non-VET). The proportion looking for work was very low.

Table 17. Main activity in 2007 of matched HSC VET and non-VET graduates initially in full-time work, by gender and location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity in 2006</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Full-time work</th>
<th>Part-time work</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET all</td>
<td>Working FT</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET all</td>
<td>Working FT</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By gender

| VET males       | Working FT | 5.1          | 5.6             | 7.3        | 16.9    | 4.5            | 47.2          | 11.2       | 1.7     | 0.6   | 100.0 |
| non-VET males   | Working FT | 12.7         | 8.3             | 1.9        | 14.6    | 3.8            | 51.0          | 7.0        | 0.6     | 0.0   | 100.0 |
| VET females     | Working FT | 6.9          | 6.9             | 7.8        | 0.9     | 7.8            | 57.1          | 9.7        | 0.9     | 1.8   | 100.0 |
| non-VET females | Working FT | 4.4          | 5.9             | 5.2        | 4.4     | 11.1           | 58.5          | 10.4       | 0.0     | 0.0   | 100.0 |

Part-time work

Part-time work also can be an important avenue for young people making the transition from school to work and further education. In 2006, approximately 17 per cent of HSC completers from the year before were not in study or training and in part-time work (similar figure for both VET and non-VET graduates). Table 18 below reports the main activities in 2007 of the sample from this group.

Table 18. Main activity in 2007 of matched HSC VET and non-VET graduates initially in part-time work, by gender and location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity in 2006</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Full-time work</th>
<th>Part-time work</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET all</td>
<td>Working PT</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET all</td>
<td>Working PT</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By gender

| VET males       | Working PT | 6.4          | 8.0             | 3.2        | 11.7    | 7.4            | 41.5          | 17.0       | 3.7     | 1.1   | 100.0 |
| non-VET males   | Working PT | 16.1         | 11.4            | 6.7        | 13.5    | 5.2            | 26.9          | 17.1       | 2.1     | 1.0   | 100.0 |
| VET females     | Working PT | 6.7          | 10.1            | 7.6        | 2.5     | 12.6           | 29.4          | 27.7       | 1.3     | 2.1   | 100.0 |
| non-VET females | Working PT | 17.0         | 6.7             | 10.8       | 4.0     | 5.4            | 28.3          | 19.3       | 4.0     | 4.5   | 100.0 |
The activities in 2007 show that 23 per cent of HSC VET graduates and 18.3 per cent of non-VET graduates remain in part-time work and not in study or training. VET in schools graduates have been most successful in gaining full-time employment (34.7 per cent VET compared to 18.3 per cent non-VET), and particularly young men (41.5 per cent of male VET graduates were in full-time work compared to 26.9 per cent of male non-VET graduates). Non-VET graduates were more likely to have entered university at this stage than VET graduates.

**HSC VET and non-VET graduates unemployed in 2006**

Some young people can struggle in making the transition from school to work and remain unemployed and not engaged in work, study or training. Initial periods of unemployment can have lasting effects, as several studies have shown (e.g. Lamb and McKenzie, 2001). For this reason it is important to examine the experiences of those who leave school and experience unemployment in their first post-school year. In 2006, 5.5 per cent of 2006 HSC VET graduates and 6.2 per cent of non-VET graduates were identified as looking for work and not in employment, education or training. The main activities in 2007 for this group are presented in Table 19.

**Table 19. Main activity in 2007 of matched HSC VET and non-VET graduates initially unemployed, by gender and location**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity in 2006</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Trainee</th>
<th>Full-time work</th>
<th>Part-time work</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET all</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-VET all</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By gender

| VET males       | Unemployed | 0.0          | 4.6             | 6.2       | 13.8    | 6.2           | 33.8          | 15.4       | 20.0     | 2.0    | 100.0 |
| non-VET males   | Unemployed | 6.0          | 18.1            | 4.8       | 7.2     | 7.2           | 20.5          | 20.5       | 12.0     | 3.6    | 100.0 |
| VET females     | Unemployed | 0.0          | 4.5             | 13.4      | 3.0     | 11.9          | 20.9          | 25.4       | 17.9     | 3.0    | 100.0 |
| non-VET females | Unemployed | 1.5          | 6.0             | 0.0       | 0.0     | 7.5           | 26.9          | 38.8       | 19.4     | 1.4    | 100.0 |

The figures show that 18.9 per cent of HSC VET graduates and 15.3 per cent of non-VET graduates were still looking for work in 2007. This represents a small group in the overall survey cohort. However, many of those initially looking for work were engaged in some form of study or training in 2007, particularly VET graduates who had obtained employment-based training, apprenticeships and traineeships. Non-VET graduates were more likely to have moved into a Certificate IV or above course than VET graduates.

VET graduates unemployed in their first year out from school were more likely to have made the transition to full-time work in 2007 than their non-VET counterparts. Over 27 per cent of VET graduates had found full-time employment compared to 23.3 per cent of non-VET graduates.
Chapter 4

The value of VET

This chapter examines the relationship between the amount of VET students undertook in Year 12 (in terms of number of VET subjects attempted) and their post-school destinations. It looks more closely at the role of school-based traineeships in shaping students’ post-schooling transitions. This chapter also examines the influence of prior achievement on study and labour market destinations two years after completing school for both the VET and non-VET graduates.

One would expect that students who select VET subjects in the HSC have, ipso facto, a post-school orientation that favours VET study, employment-based study or direct entry to the labour market. An examination of student destination data confirms this, with VET graduates less likely to be studying at university two years after completing school than their non-VET counterparts, but more likely to be undertaking apprenticeships, traineeships and have transferred to the labour market at this stage. The following discussion examines the relationship between the amount of VET undertaken in the HSC and student outcomes, and also explores gender differences.

Figure 17 compares the 2007 destinations of school completers who undertook either one, two or three VET subjects in HSC with their non-VET counterparts. The chart shows that as the amount of VET taken in the HSC increases, destination patterns change considerably. Transfer to university two-years out declines substantially with increasing VET study, from 23.3 per cent for VET graduates undertaking one VET subject, to 1.6 per cent for those who took three or more VET subjects.6 The rate of transfer to apprenticeships two years after HSC graduation also varies by amount of VET undertaken during Year 12, increasing from 12.4 per cent of VET graduates undertaking one VET subject to 19 per cent of those doing three or more.

VET graduates were consistently more likely to have made the transition to full-time work by 2007 compared to their non-VET counterparts. The difference is particularly marked for graduates undertaking two VET subjects, with approximately one in three of this group in full-time work two years after completing school compared to approximately one in four of their non-VET counterparts.

An analysis by gender magnifies some of the differences between HSC VET and non-VET outcomes and amount of VET study. Figure 18 shows the difference between the proportion of male VET and non-VET students in each destination category and Figure 19 illustrates the same for females. For example, Figure 18 shows that male graduates who included one VET subject in their HSC were 3.5 per cent more likely than their non-VET counterparts to undertake an apprenticeship. Moreover, male

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6 This result is not surprising given the rules that apply for university entrance in New South Wales. The Universities Admission Index (UAI) is calculated by the NSW universities, who categorise courses developed by the Board of Studies NSW as either Category A or Category B subjects. To be eligible for a UAI, a student must satisfactorily complete at least 10 units of courses developed by the Board. However, no more than two units of Category B subjects can be included in the UAI. Each HSC VET course is a two unit Category B course.
graduates undertaking two VET subjects were 14.8 per cent more likely than their non-VET counterparts to be doing an apprenticeship two years after completing school, and those who studied three or more VET subjects were 15.6 per cent more likely than their male non-VET counterparts to have transferred to an apprenticeship.

**Figure 17. 2007 destinations of matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates, by amount of**

Note: non-VET graduates have not undertaken any HSC VET subjects but are reported in the same category as their VET pair.
The chart also shows that male VET students are less likely than their non-VET counterparts to undertake middle-level VET studies, regardless of the number of VET subjects studied. On the other hand, VET students are more likely than their male non-VET counterparts to migrate to entry-level VET programs.

Figure 18. Differences in 2007 destinations between matched male 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates, by amount of VET study

Figure 19 shows the deviation between the proportion of female VET and non-VET students in each destination category. The charts show that differences between female VET and non-VET graduates tend to increase with greater amounts of VET study. In particular, increasing amounts of VET study are associated with increasing differences in the likelihood of undertaking a traineeship two years out from school (1.3 per cent more likely for females who did one VET subject compared to their non-VET counterparts, 3.4 per cent more likely for those who did two VET subjects and 5.9 per cent more likely for females who undertook three or more VET subjects).

The transition for female VET graduates to full-time work (compared to their non-VET counterparts) also increases in likelihood with increased VET activity. The proportion of females who undertook one VET subject are 7.7 per cent more likely than their non-VET counterparts to enter full-time work, while for those who did three or more VET subjects are 16.4 per cent more likely than their non-VET counterparts to be in full-time employment. Conversely, the magnitude of difference in the proportion of female VET and non-VET graduates going on to university increases with VET intensity, but in the negative direction, with VET graduates increasingly less likely to study at university.
School-based trainees

Nearly six per cent of the cohort had undertaken a school-based traineeship as part of their HSC program (5.9 per cent or 142 individuals). Figure 20 shows the destinations two years on from completing the HSC of the part-time school-based trainees (SBTs) and compares them with the destinations of their matched non-SBT counterparts. It shows significantly different outcomes for students who took the SBT pathway compared to those who did not.

Figure 20. 2007 Destinations of matched 2005 HSC SBT and non-SBT graduates
Former school-based trainees are much less likely to undertake university studies, but are more likely to be studying a campus-based Certificate IV or above course. The rates of transition to entry-level VET courses are fairly similar for both groups. There are much higher rates of transition to apprenticeships and traineeships among SBT graduates, and a higher rate of transition into full-time work. SBT graduates are less likely to be experiencing the more vulnerable labour market outcome of part-time employment. Unemployment rates for both groups are low at 2.8 per cent.

The influence of prior achievement

VET in schools programs play an important role in enabling a range of students to access tertiary study and training opportunities. It is important that these programs work well for all students, including those with a history of low levels of academic achievement. The four charts in Figure 21 summarise the post-schooling destinations two years after graduation, of VET and non-VET students at different levels of prior academic achievement, based on Year 10 results.

Survey respondents have been allocated to four achievement categories, based on quartiles of prior achievement (lowest to highest). It should be noted that these achievement categories do not necessarily reflect Year 12 achievement, but rather control for prior achievement in order to show how well VET and non-VET programs work for different kinds of students. In this analysis, outcomes for VET graduates were compared with outcomes for their matched non-VET counterparts.

The first chart in Figure 21 illustrates the destinations of students in the lowest quartile of achievement, based on their Year 10 results. From a policy point of view, this is an important group, since it might be argued that while high achieving students are well served by tertiary options and have strong outcomes as measured by transition to university and middle-level TAFE programs, low achievers face more uncertain prospects, with many entering a labour market dominated by part-time work and poor job prospects.

It could be argued that it is particularly important for this group to access further education or training either prior to, or as part of, an employment destination. This chart supports the view that VET in schools programs help them to do this. Although less likely to enter university and middle level VET by 2007, VET in schools graduates compensate for this with higher rates of transition to both apprenticeships (16.2 per cent VET compared to 11.5 per cent non-VET) and traineeships (6.4 per cent VET compared to 5.5 per cent non-VET). VET graduates who enter the labour market without further education or training are more successful than their non-VET counterparts in finding full-time employment.

Analysis by gender reveals some further nuances (see Figures 22 and 23 below). Nearly one in three low achieving males were undertaking an apprenticeship two years on from graduation (compared to one in five non-VET graduates) while one in three females were in full-time work (compared to one in five non-VET graduates).
Figure 21. 2007 destinations of matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates by prior achievement
Respondents in the second lowest prior achievement category have a similar transition profile to the lowest prior achievers (see Figure 21, top right hand chart). Rates of transition two years out to apprenticeships and traineeships are higher for those who studied VET in schools programs than for those who did not (22.8 per cent compared with 13.9 per cent non-VET). As for VET students in the lowest prior achievement category, those in this category who enter the labour market with no further education or training are considerably more likely to gain full-time employment than their non-VET counterparts.
Overall, the benefits of VET may be seen to be strongly in evidence for those 50 per cent of VET in schools graduates who were at the lower rather than the higher end of the academic profile while at school, and particularly when compared with non-VET students of a similar Year 10 achievement profile in comparable schools and locations.

The pattern is similar for respondents in the second highest achievement category: transition to TAFE and to apprenticeships and traineeships is much stronger for VET students than for non-VET students (see Figure 21, bottom left hand corner). While less likely to be studying at university two years following graduation, VET students in this prior achievement band are more likely than their non-VET counterparts to be enrolled in campus-based VET courses.

Finally, the illustration of the 2007 destinations of VET and non-VET students in the highest achievement category reveals some differences in the destination patterns of the two groups. As might be expected, the non-VET group is more likely to enter a degree-level course, but VET graduates have higher levels of transition to middle-level VET and to apprenticeships. VET graduates are also more likely to have entered full-time employment (18.9 per cent compared to 4.6 per cent). VET has provided this high achieving group with a breadth of outcomes while at the same time not deterring transition to university, with 57 per cent of VET high achievers studying degree-level courses in 2007.

In summary, participation in VET programs confers considerable benefits for Year 12 school leavers whose Year 10 academic profile is in the two lower quartiles of achievement. They make strong transitions to apprenticeships, traineeships and full-time employment. For the remaining 50 per cent, those in the second lowest and second highest quartiles, the transition to post-schooling VET, apprenticeships, traineeships and full-time employment is also comparatively strong.
Chapter 5

The value of the HSC

Views of the HSC – two years on

The role of senior certificate programs in creating effective pathways to university is widely accepted. However, given that the majority of school completers do not enter university, it has also been argued that the role of senior certificates (such as the HSC) needs to be considered more broadly and assessed on the basis of their efficacy in providing a range of pathways (Teese 2000, DET 2000).

Overall, this survey depicts a student view of the HSC which is overwhelmingly positive. Respondents were asked to reflect upon the value of the HSC, two years on from graduation. As Figure 24 reveals, approximately 85 per cent of both VET and non-VET graduates agree or strongly agree that “Overall, doing the HSC was worthwhile”, with more than one in three from each group providing the strongest endorsement (strongly agree). Given the diversity of the sample selected in the survey design, this endorsement points to the utility of the certificate in creating diverse and effective pathways for students with a range of needs – a finding supported by the actual destination outcomes. Although the data in these charts show little difference between the views of the HSC VET and non-VET graduates, they present evidence of a strongly positive response to the HSC from both groups.

Figure 24. “Overall, doing the HSC was worthwhile”, views of matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates

Respondents were also asked to rate the value of the HSC when they were surveyed in 2006, approximately six months after completing Year 12. While the overall
proportion endorsing this statement has decreased slightly for both groups over time, the proportion of VET graduates in ‘strong agreement’ that the HSC was worthwhile increased slightly between 2006 and 2007 (see Table 20 below).

Table 20. “Overall, doing the HSC was worthwhile”, 2006 and 2007 views of matched 2005 HSC VET and non-VET graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year views expressed</th>
<th>Strongly agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>VET 34.9</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-VET 36.5</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>VET 33.7</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-VET 37.2</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This view is consistently supported by a majority of male and female HSC VET students in all regions, across metropolitan and non-metropolitan locations. Non-metropolitan HSC graduates were slightly more emphatic in their endorsement than their urban counterparts (for example, 85.8 per cent of non-metropolitan VET graduates were in agreement compared to 83.8 per cent of metropolitan VET graduates). Responses also vary by main destination. VET graduates studying at university in 2007 most strongly endorsed the HSC; 92.1 of the VET and 89.6 per cent of the non-VET university students agreed or strongly agreed that “the HSC was worthwhile”.

**VET in schools programs and the transition to work**

It is important to remember that more than six in ten VET graduates and four in ten non-VET graduates surveyed had entered the workplace two years on from completing school, including those entering apprenticeships and traineeships. The effectiveness of the HSC in facilitating the transition to work for this group specifically is an important question to consider. This section investigates whether respondents who were enrolled in HSC VET programs were better prepared for this transition than respondents enrolled in non-VET programs. The charts that follow suggest this to be the case.

Figures 25 to 27 show the proportion of matched HSC VET and non-VET graduates in employment (including training contracts) who believed that their HSC subjects had helped them in various aspects of their transition to work. On all measures, the VET group were more likely to believe their subjects had helped them make this transition.

Figure 25, for example, details the responses for those undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship or in full-time or part-time employment in 2007. The most striking feature of this chart is the stronger endorsement that VET graduates give to the value of their HSC subjects in helping them make the transition to their current employment. Regardless of their position within the labour market, VET graduates are more likely to report that their HSC subjects helped them to obtain their current job, with apprentices and trainees being the most emphatic.

Importantly, VET graduates are also more likely than their non-VET counterparts to report that their HSC subjects had helped them to gain skills required for their current employment-based training or full-time or part-time job (see Figure 26 below).
this item, trainees are most positive (70.6 per cent of VET graduates compared to 65.5 per cent of non-VET graduates), followed by apprentices (64.7 per cent of VET graduates compared to 58.5 per cent of non-VET graduates).

Figure 25. “HSC subjects helped me since leaving school to get my current job” (matched VET and non-VET graduates compared)

Figure 26. “HSC subjects helped me since leaving school to gain the skills and knowledge needed for your current job” (matched VET and non-VET graduates compared)

These findings indicate a stronger relationship between HSC subjects and the transition to work for VET students, suggesting that VET subjects play an important role in facilitating the transition to employment and employment-based training. This is backed by responses to a further item, illustrated in Figure 27. This chart shows the
VET graduates being more emphatic that their HSC subjects had helped them understand the world of work.

Figure 27. “HSC subjects helped me since leaving school to understand the world of work” (matched VET and non-VET graduates compared)

Indeed, the strength of views offered on the HSC increases with the amount of VET subjects undertaken. As Figure 28 below demonstrates, not only were VET graduates more emphatic about the value of HSC subjects in facilitating their transition to the labour market than their non-VET counterparts, but the level of agreement increased with the number of VET subjects undertaken. In particular, 63.4 per cent of HSC graduates who had undertaken three or more VET subjects felt that their HSC subjects had helped them to work out the sort of career they would like, compared to 49.6 per cent of their non-VET counterparts.

Figure 28. “HSC subjects helped me to …” per cent agreeing ‘some what’ or ‘a lot’ (matched VET and non-VET graduates compared), by amount of HSC VET undertaken
Work placement

In New South Wales, Industry Curriculum Frameworks were first implemented for Year 11 students by schools and TAFE colleges in 2000. By 2005, Industry Curriculum Frameworks accounted for roughly 80 per cent of HSC VET enrolments (the remaining 20 per cent of HSC VET enrolments are in other – non-framework – courses which do not have a mandatory work placement requirement). Each framework includes at least one 240-hour course with an optional HSC examination which enables the course to be included in the calculation of a student’s Universities Admission Index (UAI).

Each of the nine Industry Curriculum Frameworks - Business Services, Construction, Information Technology, Metal and Engineering, Primary Industries, Retail, Tourism, Hospitality and Entertainment - provides for students to undertake a mandatory period of work placement. Work placement allows students to develop and practise industry competencies in a real or simulated workplace setting. In some cases, competencies are also assessed in the workplace but this is normally not a requirement.

The mandatory work placement for Industry Curriculum Framework courses in New South Wales is typically for 70 hours for a 240-hour course - the equivalent of one week per year. This is usually undertaken as a one week block but can also be by day release or in school holidays. In some circumstances students' part-time work can contribute to meeting the work placement requirement. Three frameworks, Entertainment, Information Technology and Tourism, allow for up to 50 per cent of the mandatory hours to be completed in a simulated workplace environment, due to the difficulty of obtaining sufficient quality placements in appropriate workplaces in these industries.

The mandatory requirement is a minimum and many students complete considerably more hours than required. Work placement is not normally included in TAFE NSW-delivered courses other than Industry Curriculum Framework courses unless it is a requirement of the corresponding TAFE NSW mainstream course.

Work placement students in this study presented a strongly positive picture of their workplace training when they were interviewed in 2006, with more than nine in ten (91.1 per cent) indicating that they received useful on-the-job training, and 91 per cent reporting that they were assessed on their course competencies while at work. Between 80 and 90 per cent of respondents also believed that their employer was well prepared for them and that their school had prepared them well for their placement, indicating an experience of high quality and value. More than half (52.7 per cent) of respondents indicated that their work placement was still useful to their current activities in 2007, now two years on from completing the HSC.

It is also noteworthy that 43.7 per cent of those respondents had done a work placement in a similar industry to the one they are working or studying in at the time of the recontact, further reinforcing the useful links VET in schools work placements create between school, work and further education and training.
Figure 29 below gives the proportion agreeing that their ‘work placement is useful for my current activities’ by main destination in 2007. Agreement is strongest amongst those in apprenticeships with almost two-thirds concurring with this statement. These strongly positive views of work placement, both in terms of its benefits in acclimatising young people to the world of work and its role in helping them to experience success at school, confirm the value of creating strong links between school and employers. This survey shows the utility of VET in schools programs in creating such links.

**Figure 29. Per cent agreeing, ‘HSC work placement is useful for my current activities’, HSC VET graduates**

![Bar chart showing per cent agreeing 'HSC work placement is useful for my current activities'](#)

**School-based trainees**

Finally, we turn to the perspective offered by the part-time school-based trainees (SBTs) included in the study. As Chapter 4 indicates, these graduates experienced a very positive transition to the labour market in the two years following their HSC graduation.

Figure 30 compares the views of school-based trainees and their matched non-SBT counterparts who moved into employment, apprenticeships or traineeships. School-based trainees were almost twice as likely as their non-SBT counterparts to report that their subjects helped them ‘a lot’ in gaining their current job. School-based trainee graduates were even more emphatic about their HSC subjects helping them to gain skills and knowledge needed to perform that job, with 62.7 per cent reporting their subjects helped them ‘a lot’ or ‘somewhat’, compared to 54.3 per cent of their non-SBT counterparts.
Figure 30. Your HSC subjects helped you to … (SBT and matched Non-SBT graduates compared)
Chapter 6: Statewide estimates of transitions

The purpose of this study was to compare the destinations and views of VET and non-VET students in New South Wales in a statistically valid manner. In order to do this, a sample was drawn which matched respondents on key background characteristics – gender, prior achievement, location and school. The result of such a sample selection process was that certain types of students were over-sampled, for example students with a lower prior achievement profile.

This chapter seeks to provide statewide estimates of post-schooling transitions which reflect the total NSW government school Year 12 population, by weighting the survey sample to reflect the broader population. However, given that the primary purpose of the study was to compare VET and non-VET graduates, such a weighting exercise produces estimates which must be treated with some caution.

With these cautions in mind, Figures 31 and 32 provide estimates of the post-schooling destinations of NSW government school students graduating from the 2005 HSC year, in the first and second years after completing the HSC (i.e. in 2006 and 2007 respectively). The data have been weighted to reflect the actual proportions of VET and non-VET students, of school location (metropolitan, non-metropolitan), and of respondents of different prior achievement levels in the broader government school Year 12 population.

Figure 31. Statewide estimates of 2006 destinations of 2005 government school HSC graduates
The chart of 2007 destinations (Figure 32) shows that 36.3 per cent of government school HSC graduates entered university by the second post-school year, increasing from 29.8 per cent at university one year out (see Figure 31). While 24.3 per cent of the cohort had entered a VET study destination in 2006, 15.6 per cent were doing so in 2007. Over one in ten had taken up an apprenticeship by 2007, an increase from 7.5 per cent in 2006. The proportion undertaking traineeships had decreased slightly over the two years from 5.3 per cent to 4.6 per cent. Two years after HSC graduation, just under one-third of the cohort entered the labour market with no further education or training (20.5 per cent in full-time work and 8.9 per cent in part-time work). The proportion in full-time work has increased from 2006. The unemployment rate in 2007 is a low 2.2 per cent, (reduced from 4.3 per cent in 2006), and a further 1.1 per cent are not in the labour force. Table 21 below breaks out these destinations by gender.

**Table 21. Statewide estimates of 2006 and 2007 destinations of 2005 government school HSC graduates, by gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>Apprentice-ship</th>
<th>Trainee-ship</th>
<th>Full-time work</th>
<th>Part-time work</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Inactive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006 DESTINATIONS (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 DESTINATIONS (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that female government school HSC graduates were more likely than their male counterparts to enter university. Males and females were equally likely to enter middle to upper campus-based VET courses and traineeships two years on from school completion. Males were much more likely to enter apprenticeships, while females were more likely to be in full-time or part-time employment. While unemployment rates two years after HSC graduation were slightly higher for males
than females, the proportion of young men looking for work had halved between 2006 and 2007. There are minimal differences in the proportion inactive (not in study or training and not in the labour market).

Figures 33 and 34 present estimates of transitions for VET and non-VET students separately (one year post-school and two years post-school respectively), each weighted to reflect the gender, prior achievement and location profile of the broader Year 12 government school population.

**Figure 33. Statewide estimates of 2006 destinations of 2005 government school HSC VET and non-VET graduates**

**Figure 34. Statewide estimates of 2007 destinations of 2005 government school HSC VET and non-VET graduates**
Figures 33 and 34 largely reflect the differences between VET and non-VET students already noted in Chapter 2 of this report. Non-VET HSC graduates, for example, are more likely than HSC VET graduates to be enrolled in a university course two years after school completion (44.3 per cent of non-VET HSC graduates are enrolled at university in 2007 compared to 28.5 per cent of VET HSC graduates). However, even when the sample is weighted to reflect the broader achievement profiles of the two groups in the population, HSC VET graduates have experienced a slightly higher rate of growth between the first and second post-school years in the proportion studying at university (22.4 per cent increase between 2006 and 2007, compared to 21 per cent increase for non-VET graduates), despite the latter group’s higher achievement profile. Two years after school completion the relatively higher rates of transitions for VET in schools graduates into apprenticeships and traineeships has been sustained. Among those entering the labour market, the HSC VET graduates are more likely to be working full-time than their non-VET peers.

Table 22 breaks out the data for each group by gender. This table also reflects the differences between the VET and non-VET graduates already noted earlier in the report. It is important to note, however, that these estimates show that two years after HSC completion, approximately one in five male VET graduates entered university, and that nearly one in three female VET graduates did so. This strengthens the case for VET as a strong and broad platform for entry into various post-schooling destinations. Added to this are the higher levels of transition to apprenticeships, traineeships and full-time employment for both male and female VET in schools graduates, further highlighting the breadth and strength of the HSC VET program.

Table 22. Statewide estimates of 2006 and 2007 destinations of 2005 government school HSC VET and non-VET graduates, by gender

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>University</th>
<th>VET Cert IV+</th>
<th>VET Entry-level</th>
<th>Apprentice -ship</th>
<th>Trainee -ship</th>
<th>Full-time work</th>
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<td><strong>2006 DESTINATIONS (%)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-VET</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-VET</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2007 DESTINATIONS (%)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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<td>13.1</td>
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<td>17.3</td>
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<td>17.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>52.4</td>
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<td>15.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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Conclusions

This study adds to our understanding of how NSW VET in schools programs have benefited students over the longer term, by tracking their pathways over the two years following completion of their HSC. It does so by means of a longitudinal survey of matched VET and non-VET HSC completers from the 2005 HSC cohort, who were first surveyed in 2006 and then re-contacted one year later in 2007.

This longitudinal study provides significant evidence on a range of indicators of strong outcomes for HSC graduates who studied VET in schools programs in Year 12, in their second year after completing school. It shows that most young people remain positively engaged in education, training and work in the transition from school. Indeed, HSC VET graduates have successfully accessed a broad range of study and labour market destinations two years after school completion: 83.5 per cent of respondents in this matched sample were fully engaged either in study, training or the full-time labour market.

Two years after school completion the relatively higher rates of transitions for VET in schools graduates into apprenticeships and traineeships has been sustained. Furthermore, HSC VET graduate trainees who completed their indenture in their first-post school year were more likely to make a transition to full-time employment in their second post-school year than their non-VET counterparts.

More generally HSC VET graduates were more strongly oriented towards the labour market, and those who entered the labour market were more likely to find full-time employment two years after graduation than their matched non-VET peers.

While matched non-VET students were approximately twice as likely to be studying at university two years after graduation as VET in schools students, HSC VET graduates entering university in their first post-school year are less likely than their non-VET counterparts to have changed to a different university course in their second year out. This suggests that VET students may have had a better understanding of what to expect from their university course and their chosen field of study.

While VET in schools facilitates post-school pathways, it also assists those undertaking further study to maintain their contact with the workplace. VET in schools graduates were more likely to combine work and study, with former HSC VET students across all forms of campus-based study more likely to be working. For students seeking to survive a tertiary study environment characterised by rising fee and living costs, this is an important advantage.

Differences in the destinations of male and female HSC graduates are indicative of broader gender-based trends, for example, higher proportions of females enter university and higher proportions of males enter apprenticeships. However, they also show where some of the benefits of doing VET in schools accrues most strongly. For males, enrolling in a VET in schools program sharply increases the likelihood of obtaining an apprenticeship. For females, it enhances the likelihood of obtaining a
traineeship or apprenticeship and strongly increases the likelihood of getting a full-time job as opposed to part-time and casual work.

A further measure of the benefit of the VET in schools curriculum is its utility in obtaining credit towards post-schooling studies or towards the time taken to obtain an apprenticeship or traineeship qualification. The survey data show that the vast majority of those requesting credit were granted at least one module (95.6 per cent).

Although they need to be treated with some caution, the statewide estimates of the study and work destinations of HSC VET graduates from government schools in the 2005 HSC cohort two years after school completion indicate:

- close to three in every ten HSC VET graduates had entered university;
- 16 per cent were studying a post-school VET course;
- 13 per cent were apprentices and 5 per cent were trainees; and
- 25 per cent were in full-time work and not studying while 9 per cent were in part-time work and not studying.

Thus VET in schools was found to play a strong role in facilitating the transition to post-school destinations. Among apprentices and trainees, VET graduates were much more likely than non-VET graduates to give a strong endorsement of the value of their HSC subjects in facilitating their transition to the workforce two years out and to the study destination associated with their training. This is an important finding, given the need for HSC options that serve a range of student needs and facilitate the transition to a range of post-schooling destinations.

Indeed, strong links with employment-based training followed in the second year on from school graduation. Young men who entered full-time employment in their first year after completing Year 12 were more likely than young women to make a transition to an apprenticeship in their second post-school year, and amongst this group, HSC VET graduates were more likely to have gained an apprenticeship than non-VET graduates.

The positive contribution that VET in schools makes to the outcomes of low achieving students was an important finding of the study, with VET graduates in the two lowest quartiles of prior academic achievement more likely than their non-VET counterparts to enter a VET destination in the second year following school completion, and for those entering the labour market, a greater likelihood of working full-time rather than part-time.

The data also showed a strong positive association between the amount of VET taken (as measured by the number of VET awards), perceptions of the quality of the HSC experience and the quality of the transition to the labour market. The amount of VET taken in the HSC also has an impact on destination patterns, even two years on from school graduation. Transfer to university two-years out declines substantially with increasing amounts of VET study while transfer to apprenticeships increases markedly, as does the likelihood of being in the full-time labour market and not in education or training.
In conclusion, this study has found that HSC VET programs confer a strong range of benefits on HSC graduates in New South Wales, as measured by their contribution to a positive experience of the HSC, and their impact on post-school transitions for a range of students two years after school completion (including those who had been at risk of early leaving). Also of great policy significance in a climate of labour skills shortages is the higher proportion of VET in schools graduates entering apprenticeships and traineeships, in the first two years following HSC graduation.

This study shows that HSC VET students access a broader range of education and training destinations, highlighting once again the contribution made by VET in schools programs to broadening the effectiveness and range of pathways offered by the HSC.
References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (various years) Schools Australia, Cat 4221.0, Canberra


Maynes, M. J. (1977) Schooling the Masses: A Comparative Social History of Education in France and Germany, PhD dissertation for the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan


Appendix: Survey Instrument

The University of Melbourne – NSW Longitudinal Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

Hello, my name is ………………., I am ringing on behalf of the NSW Department of Education and Training in relation to a survey of HSC graduates. I would like to speak to ……………. [graduate’s full name]. If ……………. [graduate’s first name] has moved/is not available, would you tell me his/her current phone number so he/she can be contacted for the survey?

We are following up an earlier survey of graduates from the 2005 HSC to find out where you are now in your studies or employment and to see how useful your HSC studies are for your current situation. You might remember that we sent you a letter last year asking if you would consent to participate in the surveys. Is that still OK? We would like to ask you a few questions now about work and study. It should take about four to six minutes.

All the data we collect is confidential within the limitations of the law, your participation is voluntary, and you will not be identified in the survey report. If you have any concerns, you may contact the University of Melbourne Ethics Committee on (03) 8344 2073. Are you happy to continue with the interview?

Post-school Study

[If doing full-time study/part-time study/an apprenticeship/traineeship in 2006 ask Q1, otherwise go to Q6] [SEE STUDAPTR FIELD ON CONTACT FILE]

Q1. At your last interview you said you were doing (specify course, traineeship or apprenticeship). Are you still doing that same (specify course, traineeship or apprenticeship)?

Yes .............................................................. 1 (GO TO Q13)
No ............................................................................. 2 (GO TO Q2)

[If Q1=2 ask Q2, otherwise go to Q13]

Q2. Did you complete it?

Yes .............................................................................. 1 (GO TO Q4)
No ............................................................................... 2 (GO TO Q3)

Q3. What is the main reason you did not complete the (course, traineeship, apprenticeship)? [Do not read out, but can be used for prompting].

Your personal circumstances changed................................................................. 1
Got a job/working now ........................................................................... 2
Deferred ............................................................................................................ 3
Changed to full-time/part-time ......................................................................... 4
Didn’t like it ......................................................................................................... 5
Couldn’t cope with the study demands ............................................................. 6
There was too much travel involved ................................................................. 7
It was too expensive .......................................................................................... 8
Course wouldn’t lead to any job opportunity ...................................................... 9
I wanted to earn more money than was possible with my apprenticeship or traineeship .............................................................. 10
Other (please specify) .....................................................................................11
[Ask if Q2=1, otherwise go to Q6]
Q4. Are you satisfied with the choice of study or course you have undertaken?
   Very satisfied................................................................. 1 (GO TO Q6)
   Fairly satisfied ............................................................ 2 (GO TO Q6)
   Fairly dissatisfied.......................................................... 3 (GO TO Q5)
   Very dissatisfied ........................................................... 4 (GO TO Q5)

Q5. What are the reasons for your dissatisfaction?
   __________________________________________________________ (verbatim response)

[Ask if Q1=2]
Q6. Are you now doing an apprenticeship, traineeship, or any full-time or part-time study?
   Apprenticeship ..................................................................................... 1
   Traineeship........................................................................................... 2
   Full-time study...................................................................................... 3
   Part-time study ..................................................................................... 4
   None ..................................................................................................... 5

[ASK IF Q6=5]
Q7. Do you have any plans to enter an apprenticeship, traineeship, or any full-time or part-time study in the next year?
   Yes ......................................................................................... 1 (GO TO Q.13)
   No............................................................................................... 2 (GO TO Q.13)

[ASK IF Q6=1-4]
Q8. When did you start this study/apprenticeship/traineeship?
   Year________________________________________________________

Q9. And are you currently studying at … READ OUT
   University ............................................................................................. 1
   TAFE .................................................................................................... 2
   A Private Training College ................................................................. 3
   An Adult and Community Education Provider ..................................... 4
   Other (please specify) ........................................................................ 5
   At the workplace ................................................................................ 6
Q11. What is your main area of study? (Multiple response for double degrees)

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Q12. What level are you studying?

[READ OUT IF NECESSARY; NOTE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SHOULD BE STUDYING AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE BUT MUST CONFIRM]

- Undergraduate degree ................................................................. 1
- Advanced Diploma ....................................................................... 2
- Diploma .......................................................................................... 3
- Certificate 4 ..................................................................................... 4
- Certificate 3 ..................................................................................... 5
- Certificate 2 ..................................................................................... 6
- Certificate 1 ..................................................................................... 7
- Certificate Unspecified ................................................................. 9
- Other (specify) ............................................................................... 10

Q13. Have you been in any other study or training since we contacted you last year?

- Yes ...................................................................................................... 1
- No ..................................................................................................... 2

Name of course .................................................................
Level of certificate (USE Q12 FRAME) ..................
Place of study (USE Q9 FRAME) .....................
Main area of study (USE Q11 FRAME) ............
Months of study ..................................................

Q14. Did you complete that study?

- Yes ................................................................................................. 1
- No ................................................................................................. 2

Q15. Are you still doing that study?

- Yes ................................................................................................. 1
- No ................................................................................................. 2

WORK

ASK Q16 if in Work in 2006 [SEE WORKING FIELD IN CONTACT FILE]
OTHERWISE GO TO Q.20

Q16. At your last interview, you told us that you were working. Do you still have that job?

- Yes ................................................................................................. 1
Q17. When did you finish that job?
Year _____________________________

Q18. What was the main reason you left that job?

It was only a holiday job ................................................................. 1
It was a temporary/seasonal job .................................................. 2
Got laid off/sacked/redundant ..................................................... 3
Not satisfied with the job ............................................................. 4
Went to live somewhere else ....................................................... 5
Reasons to do with study ............................................................. 6
To get another job/better job ...................................................... 7
Hours not suitable ....................................................................... 8
Not paid enough ......................................................................... 9
Health reasons ............................................................................ 10
Other ......................................................................................... 11
Specify ______________________________________________________

[If Q18=6 ASK Q19a]
Q19a. What was the main reason the job affected your study?
Wages not enough to support study ........................................... 1
Work left no time for study ....................................................... 2
Other ......................................................................................... 3
Specify ______________________________________________________

[If Q18=7]
Q19b. Was the job you left in an area you wanted to pursue a career in?
Yes ......................................................................................... 1
No .......................................................................................... 2

[IF Q16=1 OR Q6=1 OR Q6=2, SKIP Q20 AND GO TO Q21A]
Q20. Are you currently working?
Yes ......................................................................................... 1
No .......................................................................................... 2

[If (Q2=1 OR Q14=1) and Q20=1]
Q20A. Is the job related at all to the study you completed in 2006?
Yes ......................................................................................... 1
No .......................................................................................... 2

[If Q20=1 or Q16=1 Q6=(1 OR 2) ASK Q21A] OTHERS GO TO Q30
Q21A. Do you have more than one job?

Yes............................................................................................................... 1
No............................................................................................................. 2

(I have some questions about the main job you are working in, that is the job in which you work the most hours)

Q21B. Do you work as … READ OUT

[SINGLE RESPONSE]

Part of an apprenticeship................................................................. 1
Part of a traineeship......................................................................... 2
A full-time employee........................................................................... 3
A part-time employee........................................................................... 4
The owner of a business ................................................................. 5
None of the above ............................................................................. 6
(If Q21B=6, please specify_______________________________)

Q22   How many hours are you working on average per week?

............... (number of hours)

Q23   What is your job? [DON'T READ OUT; SINGLE RESPONSE]

ACCOUNTING, FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT
- Accountants
- Accounts and Payroll Clerks
- Bookkeepers
- Finance, Banking and Insurance
- Human Resources, OH&S and Legal Managers

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION
- Boat Builders and Shipwrights
- Bricklayers and Stonemasons
- Building and Construction Professionals
- Cabinet Makers and Furniture Finishers
- Carpenters and Joiners
- Concreters and Construction Workers
- Glass Trades
- Painters and Decorators
- Plasterers
- Plumbers
- Tilers, Slaters and Floor Finishers

CLEANING
- Caretakers and Handypersons
- Cleaners
- Laundry and Housekeeping

CLERKS, RECEPTIONISTS AND SECRETARIES

GARDENING, FARMING AND FISHING
- Animal Workers
- Farm Workers and Farmers
- Fishing and Forestry Workers
- Gardeners and Nursery Workers

GOVERNMENT AND DEFENCE
- Defence
- Public Service

HEALTH, FITNESS, HAIR AND BEAUTY
- Beauty Therapists
- Hairdressers
- Health Support
- Medical Professionals
- Nurses and Nurses’ Aides
- Sport and Fitness

LABOURERS, FACTORY AND MACHINE WORKERS
- Clothing and Textile Workers
- Construction and Earthmoving Labourers
- Factory Workers and Packers
- General Labourers
- Machine Operators
- Mobile Machine and Mining Workers
- Other Labourers
Q23B. Is the job you have the type of job you would like as a career?

Yes....................................................................................................... 1
No......................................................................................................... 2

Q23C. How satisfied are you with this job?

Very satisfied........................................................................................ 1
Fairly satisfied ...................................................................................... 2
Fairly dissatisfied.................................................................................. 3
Very dissatisfied ................................................................................... 4

Q24. Since we last spoke to you, have you taken part in any formal training in this job (such as seminars, workshops, presentations or other kinds of training organized by work)?
Q25. Has this been at your workplace, somewhere away from it, or both?

At workplace ......................................................................................... 1
Away from workplace ........................................................................... 2
Both ...................................................................................................... 3

Q26. How many days have you attended training courses as part of your job, since we last spoke to you?

____________________ (Number of days)

Q27. Since we last spoke to you, have you taken part in any informal training in this job (such as being shown by others how to do parts of your job, watching others to learn how to do your job)?

Yes ....................................................................................................... 1
No ......................................................................................................... 2

Q28. You said that you were working part-time. Would you rather be working full-time, or part-time?

Full-time ............................................................................................... 1
Part-time ............................................................................................... 2

Q29. Are you looking for an additional or a new job?

Yes, additional job ................................................................................ 1
Yes, new job ........................................................................................ 2
No ......................................................................................................... 3
Both additional and new .................................................................... 4

Q30. (Apart from your current job) How many other jobs have you had since we last spoke to you?

____________________ (Number)

IF Q20=2 AND Q30=0 THEN GO TO Q32

Q31. Since we last spoke to you, how many months have you worked either in paid work or in your own business?

LOOKING FOR WORK

[ASK Q32 IF Q20=2, OTHERS GO TO Q35]

(Q32. Are you ... READ OUT

READ OUT

Looking for work ................................................................................... 1
Not looking for work ......................................................................... 2 (SKIP TO Q36)
[Ask if Q32=1]

Q33. Have you been looking for full-time work, or only part-time work?

- Full-time: ................................................................. 1
- Part-time: ................................................................. 2
- Either/both: .............................................................. 3

Q34. There are problems people can have when looking for work. Have you personally had trouble finding a job because of ...?

- A health problem or disability: ......................... Yes/No
- Problems with transport: ................................... Yes/No
- Not enough or appropriate skills or training: ..... Yes/No
- Not enough or appropriate qualifications: ......... Yes/No
- Not enough job experience: .......................... Yes/No
- Aren’t enough jobs available: .................. Yes/No
- Other reason: .............................................. (PLEASE SPECIFY)

IF Q29=3, GO TO Q36

Q35. Since we last spoke to you, how many months have you been looking for work?

[If Q20=2 and Q32=2 ASK Q36, otherwise go to Q37]

Q36. What would you say is your present main activity?

- Study/training: ......................................................... 1
- Home duties/looking after children: .................... 2
- Travel or holiday: ................................................... 3
- Ill/unable to work: ..................................................... 4
- Other (specify): ...................................................... 5

GENERAL

Q37. Thinking back over the time since you left school, how much did your HSC subjects help you to ...? [APPLY FILTERS AS SHOWN]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get your current job (for those working)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain the skills and knowledge needed for your current job (for those working)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get into your current course of study (for those studying)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain the skills and knowledge you need in your current study (for those studying)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to communicate with a range of people</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work out the sort of career you would like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the world of work</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open up the possibility of going into business</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q38. Thinking back over the time since you left school, how much would you agree or disagree with the following statement?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, doing the HSC was worthwhile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NON-VET STUDENTS END SURVEY HERE … Thank-you, etc….

[ASK VET STUDENTS ONLY]

[ASK Q39 IF Q1=1 OR Q1=2 OR Q9=1 OR Q13=1. OTHERS SKIP TO Q40.]

Q39. (a) Did you ask for credit for your HSC VET subject(s) towards your current TAFE or VET course?  
Yes θ  No θ  Not applicable θ

(b) If yes, how much credit were you given (in hours)? (Record reply)

……………..………..

………………………

[ASK ONLY IF APPRENTICES/TRAINEES]

Q40. Was the length of your apprenticeship/traineeship shortened because you did VET in the HSC?  
Yes θ  No θ

[ASK ONLY IF RESPONDENT DID WORK PLACEMENT – INFORMATION FROM LAST CONTACT]

Q41. Was your HSC work placement useful for your current activities?  
Yes θ  No θ

Q42. Was your work placement in a similar industry to the one you are working in or studying to work in?  
Yes θ  No θ

Q43. Was your work placement with your current employer?  
Yes θ  No θ

CLOSING STATEMENT
That is the end of the interview.
We would like to thank you very much for your time and assistance and for contributing to the study over the last two years.