

# Indigenous Students In The Tertiary Education Sector

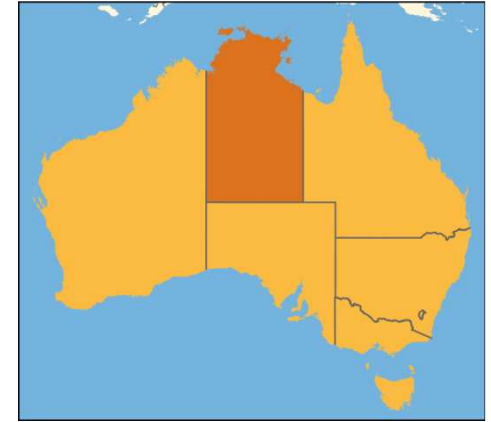
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# Background

- NCVET research grant to investigate – *Indigenous Students and the Pathways from Post compulsory Education to Work*
- Two sectors of the tertiary education system
  - Higher Education
  - Vocational Education (Cert 1 – Advanced Diploma)
- Pathway from VET to HE

# Context of the NT



- 1,364,000 km<sup>2</sup> ( Aust. 7,682,300km<sup>2</sup>)
- Pop. 212000 people (0.17 person per km<sup>2</sup>)
- 54% of Pop. Reside in capital city
- 23 % <15 yrs of age
- 30 % of Pop. Indigenous
- Majority of Indigenous Pop reside in remote or very remote locations
- 1 University (Dual sector – VET and HE)
- 1 Indigenous HE/VET provider (BIITE)
- 1759 Private VET providers

# Policy Context

- ...from 2010 the supply of people with undergraduate qualifications will not keep up with [the labour-force] demand. To increase the numbers participating we must also look to members of groups currently under-represented within the system, that is, those disadvantaged by the circumstances of their birth: Indigenous people, people with low socio-economic status, and those from regional and remote areas (Bradley et. al,2008.xi).
- One potentially significant means of improving access for people from under-represented groups in the tertiary education system is to streamline the pathways from VET to HE (Bradley et. al,2008 .21).

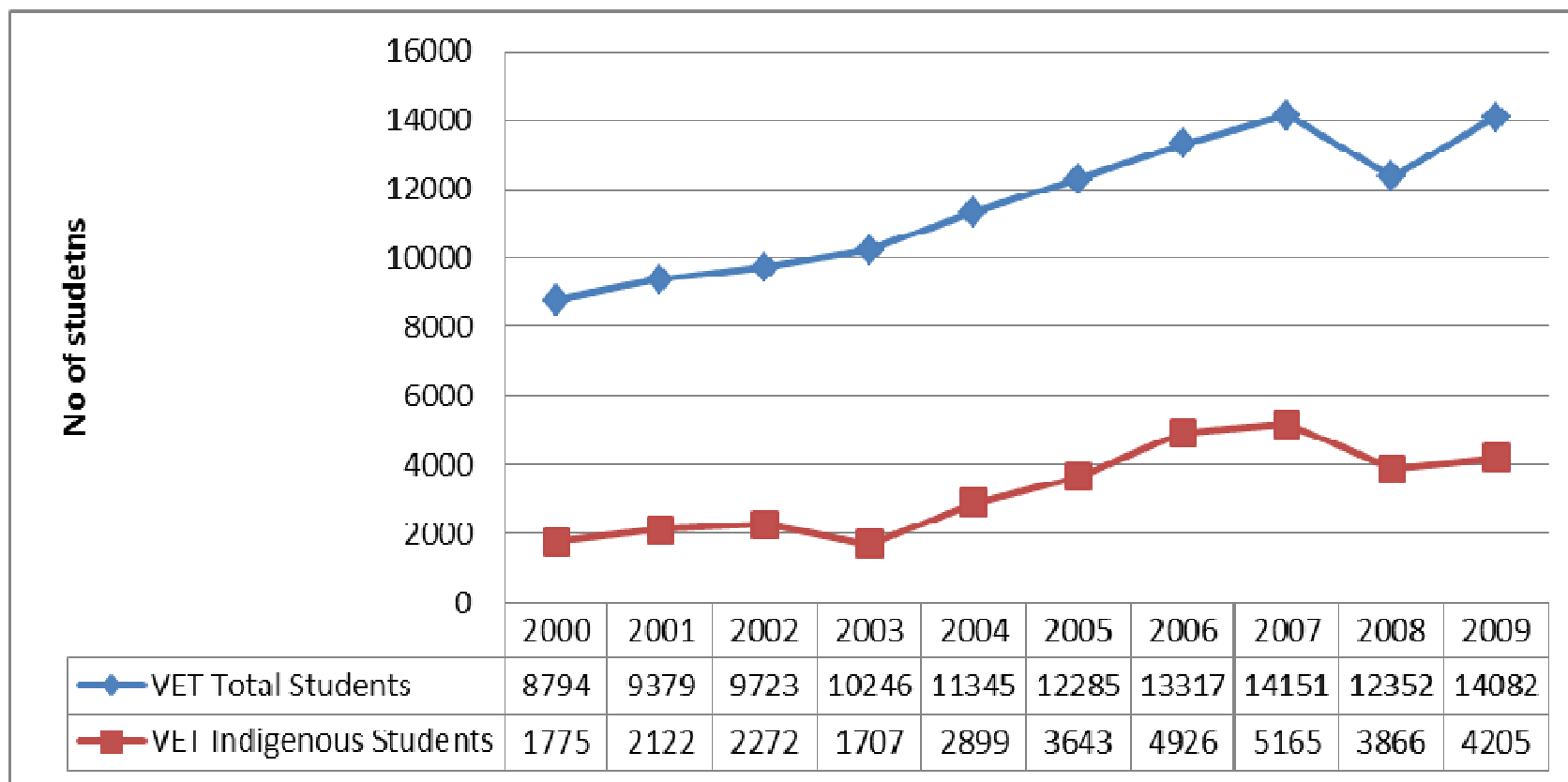
# Research Focus Questions

- What is the retention, progression and attrition rate among Northern Territory Indigenous students in the VET sector?
- What is the experience of Northern Territory Indigenous students that transition from the VET sector to the HE sector?
- Can collaboration between the VET and HE sectors increase the educational and employment opportunities of Indigenous students in the Northern Territory?

# Methodology

- Mixed methods – quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis:
  - CDU enrolment data 2000 – 2009.
  - Interviews.
  - Focus groups.
- Multiple sites:
  - CDU
  - BIITE – Residential students from remote locations
  - Two private VET providers.

# CDU – Indigenous Participation in VET



- Indigenous students represented on average, 27.3 per cent of the total VET enrolments.

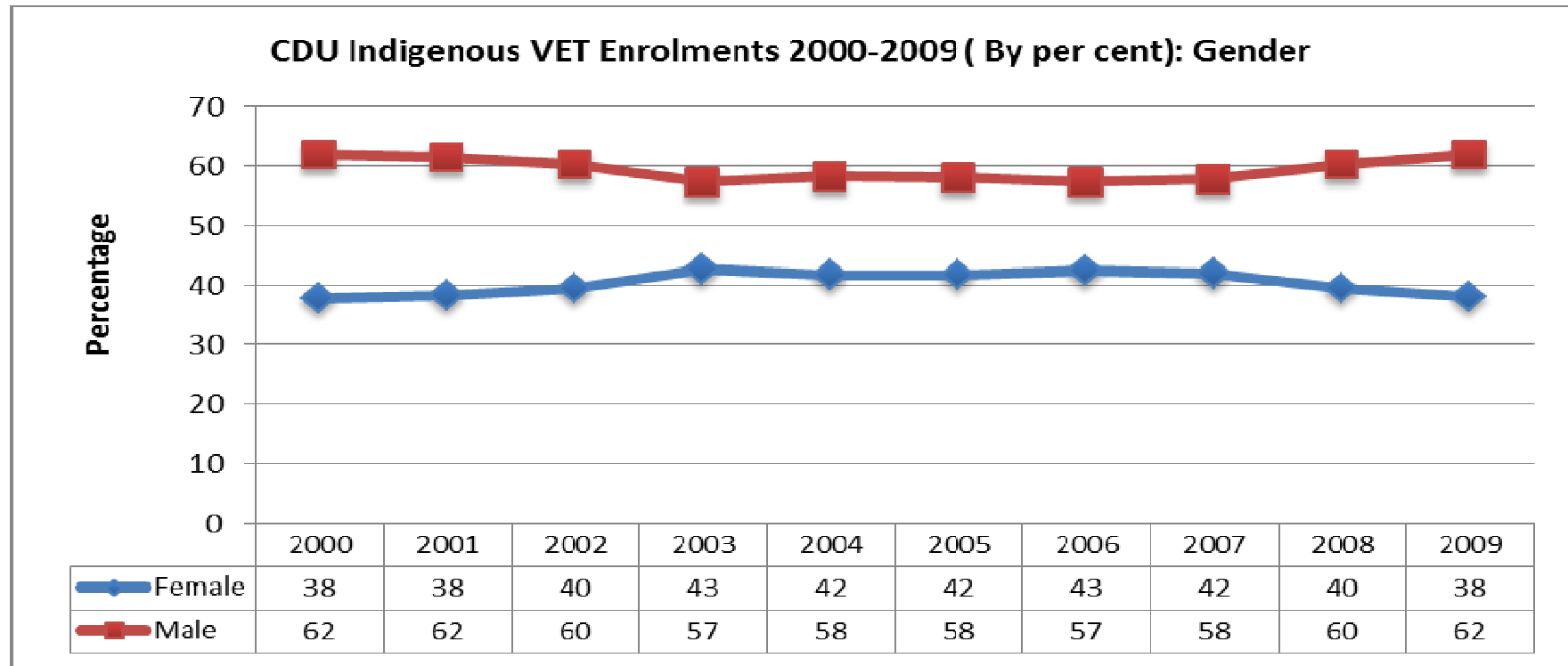
# Enrolment by Age

Age range	Aver. % (2000- 2009)
<20 yrs	41.1%
20 - 29 yrs	28.2%
30 - 39 yrs	25.5%
40 -49 yrs	20.9%
>49 yrs	14%

- Highest proportion < 29 years of age.
- Students < 20 years of age represented approximately 41 per cent of all Indigenous VET students.



# Enrolment by Gender



- Indigenous male enrolments - 59.4 per cent of all Indigenous enrolments.
- Female enrolments - 40.6 per cent.

# Enrolment by Course

Course	Aver. Enrolment (2000- 2009)
Certificate I	61.5%
Certificate II	30.9%
Certificate III	14.7%
Certificate IV	9.5%
Diploma	7.1%
Advanced Diploma	0.6%

- 92 per cent of enrolments at Certificate I and II.
- 7 per cent enrolment at the Diploma level.
- < 1 per cent at the Advanced diploma level.

# Completion Rates

	Average (2000- 2009)
Certificate I	52.1%
Certificate II	24.7%
Certificate III	12.1%
Certificate IV	8.3%
Diploma	4%
Advanced Diploma	0%

- Highest completion rate at Cert I level.
- Total completion rate averaged 16.2 per cent.
- Non-Indigenous students experience twice the success rate.

# Multiple Course Enrolments

- Multiple course enrolment consistent feature of the enrolment pattern.
- Between 2005 – 2009 approx. 25.5 per cent of Indigenous students enrolled in more than one course in a give year.
- For the same period, 18.6 per cent of Non-Indigenous students were enrolled in multiple VET courses.

# 2005 – 2009 Field of Study Enrolment, Completion and Success Rates

- Highest number of enrolments in Agricultural Environmental & Related Studies.
- Highest success rate in Natural & Physical Sciences<sup>#</sup>; and Food Hospitality & Personal Services.
- Highest attrition rate in Mixed Field programs.
- Total of 5892 students enrolled – success rate of 10 per cent.
- (#1 student enrolled)

# Indigenous Engagement in Higher Education at CDU

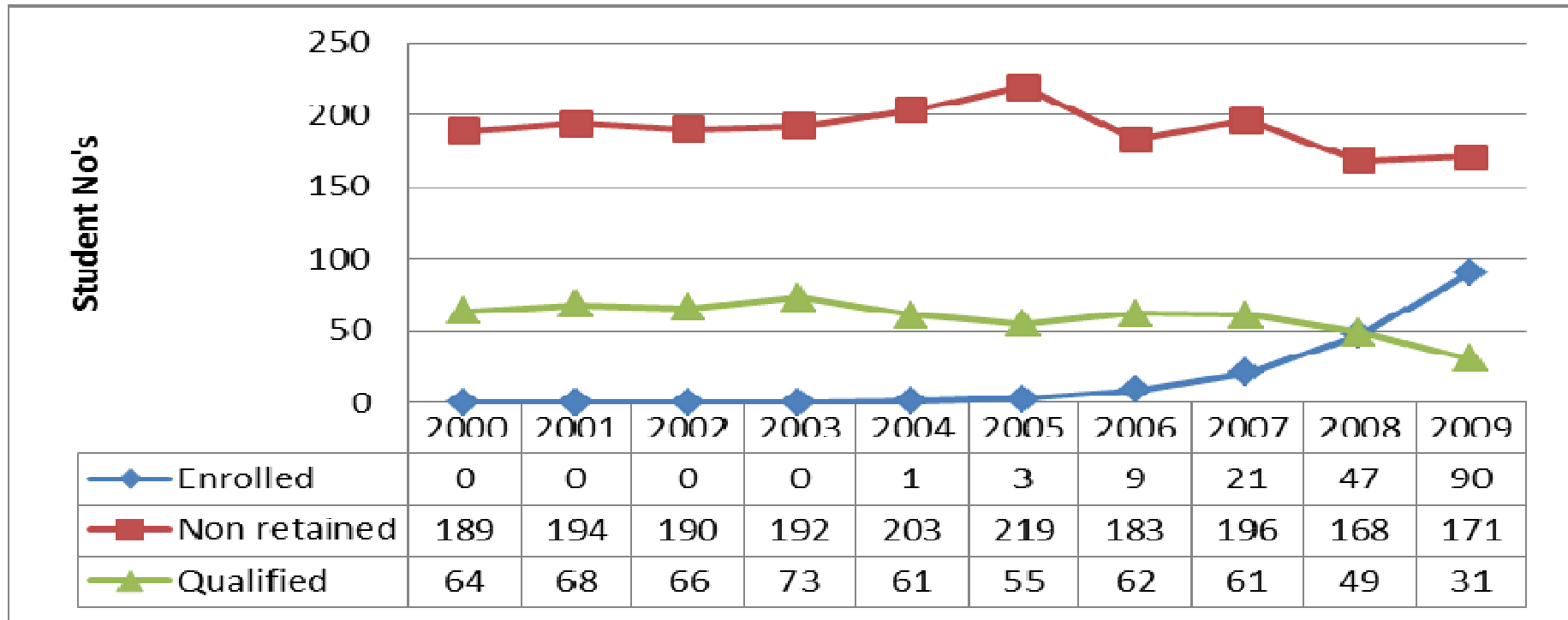
	Aver. Student numbers (2000- 2009)
Indigenous enrolments	280
Non-Indigenous enrolments	5825.3
Indigenous enrolment as a % of total enrolment	4.82%

- Approx. 86.6 per cent in Under - graduate program.
- Approx:13.4 per cent Post - graduate study.
- 4.8 per cent of total HE student body.

# HE Basis of Admission

<b>BOA</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>TEP</b>	4	1	1	2	5	2.6
<b>VET</b>	30	8	15	6	21	16
<b>Mature age</b>	18	12	6	13	13	12.4
<b>Secondary Education</b>	29	23	21	15	18	21.2
<b>Previous HE course</b>	21	27	32	38	30	29.6
<b>Other</b>	17	23	18	9	30	10.4

# Under-Graduate Outcomes



- 25 per cent completion rate.
- Majority of withdrawals occurred during first year of study.



# Indigenous Participation and Outcomes in Post-Graduate Programs

- Indigenous intake includes:
  - Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Masters and Doctoral programs.
- Very modest numbers of Indigenous students undertake Post-Graduate studies.
  - Annual average of 37 enrolments.
  - 46.4 per cent graduated.
  - 44.6 per cent dropped out.
  - 6.7 per cent still enrolled .

# Qualitative Data

- 29 interviews.
  - 10 CDU students.
  - 9 BIITE students.
  - 10 students - two providers.
- Two focus groups
  - 10 students from BIITE.
  - 6 students from CDU.

# Demographic Information

- Location:
  - 48 per cent of interviewees resided in an urban location.
  - 21 per cent lived in the rural area.
  - 31 per cent were from a remote or very remote location.
- All remote students relocated to Batchelor to undertake their study.

# English Language Competence

- English language competence:
  - 76 per cent - English was the main language spoken at home.
  - 24 per cent – ATSI was their first language.
  - 80 per cent were fluent in English.
  - 3 per cent spoke “reasonable” English.
  - 17 per cent had “trouble with English”.
  - 66 per cent of BIITE students spoke “reasonable” English or had “trouble” with English.

# Motivation to Study VET

- In order of frequency and importance:
  - I wanted extra skills for my job/to help me in my job.
  - It was a requirement of my job.
  - To get a job.
  - Knowledge acquisition, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy

# Comments

*I)..had (a) lame job with minimum wage - moved from job to job - did not earn enough. I wanted to get a good paying job. Can't get ahead in life without a degree. VET is the first step in education. It's pointless in life earning the minimum wage*

# Quality of the Course

- High level of satisfaction with:
  - Quality of lecturers and tutors.
  - Cultural appropriateness of the course.
  - Opportunity to interact with other Indigenous students.
  - Flexibility of course.
- Dissatisfaction with:
  - Lack of Indigenous teachers.
  - Level of financial support received.
  - Lack of child care places.
  - Social and linguistic isolation (BIITE).

# Outcomes - Improved career prospects and employment aspirations

- *Employer impressed by the study done. Given more opportunity to attack a variety of job options.*
- *Gained an increase in wage by having a certificate.*
- *The study was helpful in getting me looking for a job.*
- *(VET study) did help me find work.*
- *...helped with reading and writing. (I) was able to fill in log books, accident reports etc. (obtained) computer skills.*
- *Indigenous courses for crane and rigging is (now) the foundation of my full time employment.*



# Outcomes – Family and Community

- *Now closer to my teenage son (I) can help with homework. Communicating better with my mother by talking about issues that could not be discussed previously.*
- *Cert IV enabled me to seek medical assistance for my family.*
- *(I have) gained respect of wife, family and community.*
- *Helped me with community meetings [as an interpreter] when Power and Water come. Gives me confidence.*
- *(Assisted with) with filling out forms, speaking to get things done like family matters.*

# Outcomes - Personal

- *When (I) retire will be able to use computer and stay in touch with the world.*
- *(I have)... better English more confident. Communicate better with other people.*
- *Make me more confident - easier to read newspapers and books.*
- *I try my best. Makes me feel good. Family feels happy for me. Like(s) me coming to Batchelor as I can help them back in community.*
- *... expanded thinking and broadened knowledge  
...promoted self-confidence*
- *Helped with self-confidence. Inspiring me to study more and look at the bigger picture.*

# VET to HE Pathway

- 17 per cent of interviewees utilised the VET to HE pathway.
- Participating in 1<sup>st</sup> year of Under-graduate program.
- Some students felt VET had prepared them for HE.
- Others struggled with the workload, work-life balance , financially and emphasis on online learning

# Comments

- *Money – need more scholarships – particularly in first year. These scholarships are needed in first year not in third [year of a Degree]. I struggle financially. Not having any money I dropped out for 6 month – got a job but came back to study. I need to live, pay rent and buy food. I got a credit card to make ends meet but got into debt with the card. (My )...Parents had to pay off the debt. (We)... need accommodation scholarship in first year.*

# Summary

- VET Indigenous enrolment pattern similar to national trends.
- Proportionally low enrolment numbers characterised by:
  - High male cohort.
  - Concentration in Cert I and II courses.
  - Relatively young student body.
  - Low completion rate.
  - Low graduation rate.
  - High attrition rate.

# Summary (contd)

- Limited access to VET for students in very remote locations.
- Isolation issues associated with relocating
  - Physical
  - Social
  - Linguistic
- Support required in the form of tutors and resources in remote communities.

# Summary (contd)

- Challenges of studying VET and HE at CDU:
  - Financial constraints.
  - Perceived lack of information on financial assistance available.
  - Perceived lack of scholarships in 1<sup>st</sup> year of HE.
  - Cost of child care.
  - Lack of child care places on campus.

# Summary (Contd)

- Pathway from VET to HE is a viable option but limited pool of potential graduands at the Cert IV level.
- High level of attrition in 1<sup>st</sup> year of undergraduate study.
- VET study relevant to HE but:
  - Some students felt unprepared for academic HE environment.
  - Additional computer support required.



# Conclusion

- Low student numbers in HE – student visibility is low.
- Limited research.
- Dual sector institutions well positioned to close the gap.
- Closer collaboration between VET and HE has the potential to:
  - enable Indigenous students to realise their personal and professional aspirations.
  - extend the pathways from post compulsory education to work.
- Concerted effort by all stake holders is required