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Indigenous people in vocational education and training

A statistical review of progress

John Saunders

Michael Jones

Kaye Bowman

Phil Loveder

Louise Brooks

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Level 11, 33 King William Street, Adelaide SA 5000
PO Box 8288 Station Arcade, Adelaide SA 5000, Australia

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Executive summary

This report provides a statistical overview of Indigenous peoples' participation and outcomes in vocational education and training (VET) over the period 1997–2001. The data analysis provides base benchmarks against which trends over the coming years can be assessed as impacted by actions taken against the blueprint for implementation of the *Partners in a learning culture* national Indigenous strategy that commenced in 2001 and continues up to 2005.[1] The data are all sourced from the national VET statistical collections managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

The blueprint calls for the monitoring of participation, completions and outcomes for Indigenous students in VET and provides guidance on how the analysis should be conducted; that is, for all Indigenous students and those in higher versus lower level courses etc. Moreover, a disaggregated analysis by geographic region has been included because of advice received that this would be most useful given that the context, needs and aspirations differ among Indigenous people who live in the city/metropolitan areas compared to those who live in rural and remote areas.

The blueprint for implementation requires a focus on participation and outcomes for Indigenous students in VET, particularly at the school-age level and on access and attainment in higher-level VET and more industry-relevant courses for Indigenous students.

Key findings from the data analysis undertaken on participation and completions in VET programs between 1997–2001 are as follows:

- ✧ Participation of Indigenous people in vocational education and training is very strong and the rate is twice that of other students.
- ✧ Young Indigenous people are especially participating in strong numbers, and at rates above those for non-Indigenous young people.
- ✧ The very strong participation rates in vocational education and training provides encouraging opportunities for the future for Indigenous people, especially given their relatively low participation rates in the other education sectors of schools and higher education. However, against all indicators apart from participation, Indigenous people are faring less well than non-Indigenous people.
- ✧ The proportions of Indigenous students achieving modules through recognition of prior learning and through credit transfer are about half those of non-Indigenous students.
- ✧ There is a trend towards more Indigenous students studying Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)-related courses that therefore have industry and lifelong learning relevance.
- ✧ Although Indigenous VET students tend to study for lower level qualifications than do other students, there is a trend also towards Indigenous people participating in higher-level AQF courses evidenced by:
  - ◆ reduction in the number of Indigenous people participating in enabling courses (i.e. non AQF)

[1] ANTA 2000, *Partners in a learning culture: Blueprint for implementation from 2000 until 2005,* ANTA, Brisbane.

- increases in the numbers of Indigenous people participating in certificates I and II
- increases in the numbers of Indigenous people participating in certificate III and above

✧ Pass rates however have decreased, and withdrawal rates also continue to be higher than for non-Indigenous students. The lower levels of previous schooling among Indigenous VET students is an important factor here, but all reasons for these lower achievement levels require investigation.

✧ There is a significant trend toward Indigenous people participating in information technology-related courses, especially at Australian Qualifications Framework level II; however, pass rates have decreased.

✧ Growth in Indigenous peoples' participation in New Apprenticeships is positive, especially at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level

✧ The proportion of Indigenous apprentices and trainees undertaking group training was around twice that of non-Indigenous apprentices and trainees (21% compared to 10%). However, overall, group training is employing less of total New Apprenticeships in 2001 compared with previous years.

✧ National VET employment outcomes data are not particularly useful in relation to Indigenous people as community development employment program employment is not distinguished from other forms of employment. This notwithstanding, employment outcomes for Indigenous vocational education and training students have improved overall but remain considerably poorer than for non-Indigenous students.

✧ Geographic regional comparisons show very clearly that conditions differ significantly between the three main regions and hence so do the aspirations of Indigenous people as to what they expect to achieve from VET (see *Regional differences* towards the end of this report).

✧ An outstanding challenge is to develop performance indicators that will demonstrate the social and community economic and welfare benefits of participating in VET that can be used in addition to the existing employment-related indicators.

Table 1: Key comparisons between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in VET 2001

	Indigenous (%)	Other[1] (%)
Participation rate[2] 15–64 years	20	11
Participation rate[2] 15–24 years	30	26
Regional distribution		
% metropolitan students	33	65
% rural students	39	32
% remote students	28	3
Proportion of students with year 12	17	43
VET qualification levels AQF III & above	34	44
AQF I & II	45	24
Enabling courses	21	11
Pass rate: assessed modules	77	86
Employment outcome: employed after course	63	74

Notes: [1] Includes persons for whom Indigenous status not known
[2] Participation rate = numbers in VET as a proportion of total numbers of the stated social group

Table 2: Comparison of VET populations – Indigenous versus other, 1997 and 2001

Indicator	Indigenous			Other[1]		
	1997	2001	Change (1997–2001)	1997	2001	Change (1997–2001)
Number of VET students	38 528	58 046	+ 50.7%	1 420 072	1 698 723	19.6%
Australian population aged 15 years and above	241 301	285 296	+ 18.2%	14 363 309	15 140 746	+ 5.4%
VET students as percentage of respective population aged 15 years and above	16.0%	20.4%	+ 4.4 % points	9.9%	11.2%	+ 1.3 % points

Note: [1] Includes persons for whom Indigenous status not known

Table 3: VET participation – comparisons of Indigenous and non-Indigenous VET students, 1997 and 2001

Indicator	Indigenous			Other[1]		
	1997	2001	Change (1997–2001)	1997	2001	Change (1997–2001)
Percentage of VET students at AQF Certificate III and above	27.0%	33.6%	+ 6.6 % points	38.4%	44.0%	+ 5.6 % points
Percentage of VET students at AQF certificate I & II and senior secondary	29.1%[2]	44.7%[2]	+ 15.6 % points	12.9%[2]	24.0%[2]	+ 11.1 % points
Percentage of VET students in AQF recognised courses	75.2%	79.9%	+ 4.7 % points	60.1%	69.5%	+ 9.4 % points
Percentage of qualifications completed at AQF level III and higher	N/A	27.1%	_	N/A	37.1%	_
Number of VET students in IT courses	1690	2 930	+ 73.4 %	168 090	205 170	+ 22.1%
Percentage of TAFE graduates employed after completion of VET course	51.7%	62.7%	+ 11.0 % points	71.2%	73.8%	+ 2.6 % points

Notes: [1] Includes persons for whom Indigenous status not known
[2] Senior Secondary accounted for less than 1%

Table 4: Apprenticeship participation – comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous VET students, 1997 and 2001

Indicator	Indigenous			Other[1]		
	1997	2001	Change (1997–2001)	1997	2001	Change (1997–2001)
Number of New Apprenticeship commencements	4 980	5 900	+ 18.5%	109 280	222 110	+ 103%
Number of New Apprenticeship completions	1 350	2 100	+ 55.6%	49 950	93 160	+ 87%
Percentage of New Apprentices in-training with group training employers	25.3%	20.7%	- 4.6% % points	13.2%	10.2%	- 3.0 % points

Note: [1] Includes persons for whom Indigenous status not known

Introduction

The implementation phase of the *Partners in a learning culture* strategy began in 2000, and will carry the strategy through until 2005 of its planned lifespan. Given that, at the time of writing this report, data are only available up to and including 2001, it is unlikely that any impact from the implementation of the blueprint will be reflected in the data to date. It is perhaps more useful to consider the data analysis presented in this review as a snapshot of the current state of Indigenous vocational education and training, and as a result of the trends that were emerging over the five years to the end of 2001. Viewing the data in this way allows for the establishment of baseline benchmarks from which future analysis of the Indigenous experience in vocational education and training can be compared and presumably as impacted by actions taken against the implementation of the blueprint.

The key data presented here are at the national level, but there are many interesting variations at the state level that might usefully be explored in the future. Beyond national level data, the focus in this analysis is at the geographic region level, comparing city/metropolitan with rural and remote areas.

There is one point of interest at state level worthy of comment. The greatest numbers of Indigenous students were in New South Wales followed by Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia (17 279, 13 397, 9121 and 7995 students respectively). The proportion of Indigenous students living in identified regions (city/metropolitan, rural and remote) varied greatly between states and territories. Northern Territory and Western Australia stood out in this regard, with very high proportions of their student populations in remote areas (76% and 52% respectively, compared with 21% in Queensland, 17% in South Australia and single digit percentages in the remainder).

Data sources

Data relating to the participation and attainment of Indigenous vocational education and training students are taken from the national vocational education and training provider collection that covers all government funded training and fee-for-service activity in TAFE institutes, and includes all available VET in schools activity. It will not be until 2003 that all state/territory VET-in-schools data will be available. Those Indigenous students participating in New Apprenticeships are all identified within the New Apprenticeship collection. Data relating to destination outcomes come from the *Student outcomes survey* that covers only TAFE graduates and module completers. Australian Bureau of Statistics resident population data have also been used in calculations of participation rates.

Within these data collections, a person is reported as Indigenous if they identify themselves as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person at the time of their enrolment in vocational education and training. The quality of the data is dependent upon accurate self-identification, and no checks or audits are conducted to verify that a student meets accepted criteria for being Indigenous.

The analysis has been conducted for two groups, those who have identified themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin and all other students. This group includes those students

who have identified themselves as not being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin and students whose Indigenous status was not known.

For all variables, a full analysis is provided for 2001 data. Where practical, analysis is also provided for data relating to 1997 onwards, allowing presentation of time series and trend analysis. As prescribed under the performance measures outlined in the *Blueprint for implementation*, Indigenous data are compared with non-Indigenous data wherever possible.

Another important point to note is that all data presented relate to the public vocational education and training system only unless otherwise stated.

Participation

National figures

In 2001, 58 000 of the 1 756 800 students who participated in the public vocational education and training system identified themselves as Indigenous.

Indigenous student numbers increased steadily between 1997 and 2001. The Indigenous student *proportion* of the total vocational education and training population also increased but particularly between 1997 and 1998 and 2000 and 2001.

Table 5: Vocational education and training students by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Indigenous	38 528	44 447	50 795	51 662	58 046
Non-Indigenous	1 099 375	1 166 700	1 308 758	1 331 881	1 394 002
Unknown	320 697	324 089	287 626	365 821	304 721
Total	**1 458 600**	**1 535 236**	**1 647 179**	**1 749 364**	**1 756 769**
Indigenous proportion of all students*	**2.6**	**2.9**	**3.1**	**3.0**	**3.3**

Note: * Where all of unknown status are assumed non-Indigenous students

In comparison with its non-Indigenous counterpart, the gender balance of the Indigenous VET student population tended to be slightly more biased towards males (see table 6 for 2001). The proportion of males ranged from 51.3% (1999) to 53.3% (1998) over the five-year period 1997 to 2001.

Table 6: Vocational education and training students by Indigenous status and gender, Australia, 2001

	Male %	Female %	Unknown %	Total %	Number
Indigenous	52.9	46.9	0.2	100.0	58 046
Non-Indigenous	49.9	49.8	0.3	100.0	1 394 002
Unknown	54.9	44.2	0.9	100.0	304 721
All	50.9	48.7	0.4	100.0	1 756 769

In terms of school status, the largest single group of Indigenous students is those who left school more than two years before their year of enrolment in VET. This group increased by just under 50% between 1997 and 2001. However, the number of students doing VET while still at school more than doubled over this five-year period. While missing data and ongoing refinements to the national data collection make it difficult to know the exact figures, the lower-bound figures for this group are 2300 in 1997 and 5900 in 2001. In 2001, approximately 10% of all Indigenous VET students were still at school.

In 2001, the 55 000 (whose age was known and over 15 years) Indigenous students represented 20% of all Indigenous people aged over 15 years. This was approximately twice the participation rate for all other people aged over 15 years, of whom 11% participated in vocational education and training in 2001 (table 7).

Table 7: Vocational education and training student numbers* and participation rates, by age group and Indigenous status, Australia, 2001

	Indigenous			Other		
	VET students	Resident population**	Rate (%)	VET students	Resident population**	Rate (%)
15–24	25 293	84 340	30.0	657 350	2 582 406	25.5
25–39	19 362	103 429	18.7	495 865	4 279 207	11.6
40–64	10 439	80 156	13.0	441 870	5 912 424	7.5
Age 65 or over	315	13 087	2.4	28 762	2 427 549	1.2
Age unknown	1 499			66 910		
Total (aged 15 or over)*	**55 409**	**281 012**	**19.7**	**1 623 847**	**15 201 586**	**10.7**

Notes: *Where student age was known
**ABS resident population data, 30 June 2001

By age

Analysis of the 2001 vocational education and training student numbers against the preliminary 2001 census counts suggests that Indigenous peoples' participation rates in vocational education and training are strong, especially among the younger age groups. The data show that 30% of all Indigenous people aged 15–24 participated in vocational education and training in 2001, compared with 26% of all other 15–24-year-olds. Although the participation rates of Indigenous students progressively fell with increasing age, they did not drop off as markedly as those of their non-Indigenous counterparts. In fact, the participation rates of Indigenous students 25 years and over, were almost double those of non-Indigenous students.

Indigenous vocational education and training students have tended to be younger than other vocational education and training students. In 2001, almost half (46%) of all Indigenous vocational education and training students were aged under 25 years, compared with 41% of all other students. In contrast, only 19% of Indigenous vocational education and training students were aged over 40 years, compared with 29% of all other students. These proportions could be expected, given the younger age profile of the Indigenous population.

The proportion of all Indigenous students aged under 25 years has increased since 1997 when the percent was 43%. The proportion of all other students aged under 25 years has also increased from 38% in 1997.

Table 8: Percentage of vocational education and training students in selected age groups, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
15–24	43.3	37.8	43.4	38.4	44.1	38.2	45.6	38.0	45.6	40.5
25–39	38.3	35.5	38.0	34.4	36.5	33.4	35.1	31.6	34.9	30.5
40–64	17.8	25.4	18.0	25.9	18.7	26.8	18.6	28.4	18.8	27.2
Age 65 or over	0.6	1.3	0.6	1.4	0.7	1.6	0.6	2.0	0.6	1.8
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Where student age was known (and over 15 years)

While gender balances of Indigenous and other students were almost identical for the 15–24 year age group (at about 55% male, 45% female, refer table 9), there were variations at higher ages with the most marked difference being for the relatively small number of students who were 65 and over.

Overall, both Indigenous and other populations exhibited higher proportions of male students in ages 15–39 and higher proportions of female students in ages 40 and over.

Table 9: Comparison of Indigenous and other VET students by gender and age, Australia, 2001 (values for 'Other' category in parentheses)

Age	Male %		Female %		Not known %		Total %		Number	
15–24	55.2	(55.1)	44.7	(44.7)	0.1	(0.2)	100	(100)	25 293	(637 350)
25–39	54.3	(50.9)	45.6	(48.9)	0.1	(0.2)	100	(100)	19 362	(495 865)
40–64	44.3	(46.0)	53.6	(53.8)	0.1	(0.2)	100	(100)	10 439	(441 870)
Age 65 or over	30.5	(46.8)	69.5	(52.8)	0.0	(0.4)	100	(100)	315	(28 762)
Age unknown	59.7	(41.0)	37.8	(52.9)	2.5	(6.1)	100	(100)	1 499	(66 910)
All (aged 15 or over)*	**52.7**	**(51.2)**	**47.2**	**(48.6)**	**0.1**	**(0.2)**	**100**	**(100)**	**55 409**	**(1 623 847)**

Note: *Where student age was known

Table 10 shows trends in VET enrolments for Indigenous students by gender and age. Whereas the proportions of male students in all age categories have remained relatively stable over the period 1997–2001, those for females have not, particularly among the 15–24 and 25–39 year age groups.

Table 10: Percentage of Indigenous VET students by gender and age, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
Age	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
15–24	47.3	38.8	46.5	40.0	47.4	40.6	48.2	42.8	47.8	43.2
25–39	37.8	39.0	38.3	37.7	36.5	36.6	35.6	34.6	36.0	33.8
40–64	14.6	21.3	14.9	21.4	15.7	21.8	15.8	21.7	15.8	22.2
65 or over	0.3	0.9	0.3	0.9	0.5	1.0	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.8
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

By region

In 2001, one third of the 58 000 (all ages) Indigenous vocational education and training students lived in metropolitan areas, compared with nearly two-thirds of all other students. A further 39% of Indigenous students lived in rural areas, and 28% lived in remote areas of Australia. Only 3% of all other vocational education and training students were living in remote areas. These proportions did not change markedly between 1997 and 2001.

Table 11: Percentage* of vocational education and training students in each geographic region, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind	Other	Ind	Other	Ind	Other	Ind	Other	Ind	Other
Metropolitan	33.8	67.4	35.9	66.9	33.5	66.3	33.6	66.5	33.1	65.1
Rural	40.2	29.7	39.5	30.1	38.6	30.6	38.9	30.5	39.0	31.7
Remote	26.0	2.9	24.6	2.9	27.9	3.0	27.5	3.0	28.0	3.2
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Students ('000)**	38.5	1420.1	44.4	1490.8	50.8	1596.4	51.7	1697.7	58.0	1698.7

Notes: *Where student region was known

**Includes students living outside Australia and students whose region was not known

Indigenous people from rural areas show the highest participation rate (21%) while Indigenous people residing in metropolitan areas have the lowest participation rate (17%). About 20% of Indigenous people from remote locations participated in vocational education and training in 2001.

Table 12: Participation rates and distributions of populations by geographic region and Indigenous status, 2001*

	Indigenous	Indigenous population		Other	Other population	
	% of regional population	('000)	(%)**	% of regional population	('000)	(%)**
Metropolitan	17.1	106.1	37.7	9.3	11 113.3	73.1
Rural	21.4	100.3	35.7	13.5	3 763.3	24.8
Remote	19.9	74.7	26.6	15.3	325.0	2.1
Total*	**19.7**	**281.0**	**100.0**	**10.7**	**15 201.6**	**100.0**

Notes: *Includes students living outside Australia and students whose region was not known
**Proportion of population where region was known

By disability

The proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students reporting a disability (or disabilities) was higher than for all other students in 2001, and was highest in metropolitan areas, and lowest in remote areas. This was in contrast to the situation for all other students, where the proportion reporting a disability was similar across all regions.

Table 13: Percentage of vocational education and training students reporting a disability, by Indigenous status, by geographic region, Australia, 2001

	Metropolitan	Rural	Remote
Indigenous	9.0	7.4	3.5
Other	3.9	4.1	2.5

By mode of delivery

VET training can be delivered by a range of methods, including campus-based, employment-based, and via remote access. While data are available to indicate mode of delivery, there may be regional discrepancies or variations in the interpretation of the categories, as evidenced by the large proportion of data in the 'Other' and 'Not applicable' categories in table 14. Data on mode of delivery should therefore be interpreted as indicative only.

In 2001, Indigenous VET students appeared to be slightly less likely than non-Indigenous VET students to undertake campus-based or employment-based training. The data appear to indicate that Indigenous students were more likely to access VET via remote access methods.

Table 14: Percentage of training hours delivered by identified means of delivery, by Indigenous status, Australia, 2001

	Indigenous	Other
Campus based	74.8	77.7
Remote access	5.7	4.0
Employment based	4.2	6.2
Other	12.0	6.3
Not applicable	3.3	5.8
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

By qualification level (of main course of study)

Indigenous vocational education and training students tend to study for lower level qualifications than other vocational education and training students. However, the proportion of Indigenous students studying at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level and above increased from 27% in 1997 to 34% in 2001. In comparison, the proportion of all other students studying at these higher Australian Qualifications Framework levels was 44% in 2001 up from 38% in 1997.

In 2001, 45% of Indigenous vocational education and training students were studying at the Australian Qualifications Framework I or II level (up from 29% in 1997), compared with 24% of all other vocational education and training students (up from 13% in 1997). Indigenous students were more likely to be studying Australian Qualifications Framework related and other recognised courses than were all other students. Recognised courses are courses that have national and industry relevance.

Table 15: Percentage of vocational education and training students at each qualification level, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
AQF diploma or higher	6.8	13.1	6.2	13.1	5.9	12.4	5.9	11.6	5.9	11.7
AQF certificate IV or equivalent	6.7	9.7	7.5	9.9	7.9	10.2	7.4	10.0	7.4	10.9
AQF certificate III or equivalent	13.5	15.6	15.5	17.5	18.9	19.6	19.1	19.9	20.4	21.4
Sub-total – AQF III and above	**27.0**	**38.4**	**29.2**	**40.4**	**32.7**	**42.3**	**32.4**	**41.5**	**33.6**	**44.0**
AQF level unknown	19.1	8.9	11.5	5.8	4.2	3.5	2.5	1.8	1.5	1.5
AQF certificate II	17.2	9.1	20.8	12.6	23.9	15.6	29.3	17.0	30.1	19.0
AQF certificate I	11.8	3.4	13.8	4.7	15.3	5.2	14.6	4.5	14.5	4.8
AQF senior secondary	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
Sub-total – all AQF*	**75.2**	**60.1**	**75.4**	**63.9**	**76.1**	**66.8**	**78.8**	**65.0**	**79.9**	**69.5**
Other recognised courses	17.4	19.1	18.9	19.2	7.2	8.3	7.1	6.9	8.6	9.4
Non-award courses	6.7	19.2	5.0	15.4	13.9	19.2	9.7	23.1	5.8	15.0
Module only – no qualification	0.7	1.5	0.7	1.6	2.8	5.8	4.4	5.0	5.7	6.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Includes apprentices and trainees in training

In all geographic areas the proportion of Indigenous students studying VET at Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level and above was lower than for non-Indigenous students. The lower overall proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students studying at this level may be related to the higher proportion of Indigenous students in remote areas (28% of Indigenous compared with 3% non-Indigenous in 2001, table 11). This is because Indigenous students in remote areas are less likely to speak English in the home and less likely to have achieved higher levels of schooling, both of which are factors conducive to entry into higher AQF level study.

Table 16: Percentage of vocational education and training students at each qualification level, by Indigenous status, by region, Australia, 2001

	Metropolitan		Rural		Remote		Total*	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
AQF diploma or higher	7.9	13.7	5.3	6.8	4.1	7.1	5.9	11.7
AQF certificate IV or equivalent	9.0	11.3	8.0	10.2	5.0	11.1	7.4	10.9
AQF certificate III or equivalent	22.2	21.8	21.8	20.5	16.5	26.1	20.4	21.4
Sub-total – AQF III and above	**39.1**	**46.8**	**35.2**	**37.5**	**25.6**	**44.3**	**33.6**	**44.0**
AQF level unknown	1.6	1.5	0.8	1.6	2.3	0.5	1.5	1.5
AQF certificate II	27.9	17.7	31.1	21.6	32.0	23.0	30.1	19.0
AQF certificate I	13.7	5.0	11.3	4.8	20.3	4.9	14.5	4.8
AQF senior secondary	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2
AQF sub-total**	**82.5**	**71.2**	**78.4**	**65.6**	**80.1**	**72.8**	**79.9**	**69.5**
Other recognised courses	8.2	8.4	12.5	12.2	4.1	7.5	8.6	9.4
Non-award courses	5.7	14.9	6.4	14.7	5.2	17.0	5.8	15.0
Module only – no qualification	3.7	5.5	2.7	7.5	10.6	2.8	5.7	6.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes: *Includes students living outside Australia and students whose region was not known
**Includes apprentices and trainees in training

Another factor associated with the lower proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students in remote areas studying at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level and above (34% of Indigenous compared with 44% of all other students) in 2001, was the higher proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students in remote areas who speak a language other than English at home (38% compared with 2% of all other students). The proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students studying at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level or above who spoke a language other than English at home was approximately half that of those who spoke English at home (19% compared with 36%).

Table 17: Percentage of vocational education and training students at each qualification level, by Indigenous status, by language spoken at home, remote areas, Australia, 2001

	English		Non-English		Total	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
AQF diploma or higher	6.4	11.3	2.5	16.5	5.9	11.7
AQF certificate IV or equivalent	8.2	11.2	3.2	10.0	7.4	10.9
AQF certificate III or equivalent	21.6	23.5	13.5	17.5	20.4	21.4
Sub-total – AQF III and above	**36.3**	**46.0**	**19.2**	**44.0**	**33.6**	**44.0**
AQF level unknown	0.9	1.5	3.9	1.6	1.5	1.5
AQF certificate II	30.4	20.4	30.7	20.0	30.1	19.0
AQF certificate I	12.6	4.2	23.5	11.1	14.5	4.8
AQF senior secondary	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2
Sub-total – all AQF**	**80.2**	**72.2**	**77.3**	**76.9**	**79.9**	**69.5**
Other recognised courses	9.8	8.2	4.4	8.3	8.6	9.4
Non-award courses	6.3	13.5	2.0	10.3	5.8	15.0
Module only – no qualification	3.7	6.1	16.3	4.5	5.7	6.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Proportion of remote area students* (%)	61.6	97.8	38.4	2.2	100.0	100.0

Notes: *Where language spoken at home was known
**Includes apprentices and trainees in training

The level of schooling a student has achieved is also an important factor. Given the lower education levels of Indigenous vocational education and training students (in 2001, 17% of Indigenous vocational education and training students had completed Year 12, compared with 43% of all other students), it is likely that this factor has also played a part in the lower proportion of Indigenous students studying at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level and above.

In 2001, over half of the Indigenous vocational education and training students who had completed Year 12 were studying higher Australian Qualifications Framework levels, compared with less than a quarter of those who had only completed Year 9 or lower. However, in each school-level category the proportion of Indigenous students studying at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level or above was still lower than the proportion for all other students.

Table 18: Percentage of vocational education and training students at each qualification level, by Indigenous status, by highest level of schooling, Australia, 2001

	Year 12		Year 11		Year 10		Year 9 or lower		Total*	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
AQF diploma or higher	12.6	22.2	6.2	9.1	6.1	7.1	3.4	3.5	5.9	11.7
AQF certificate IV or equivalent	12.1	15.4	7.4	10.2	8.4	10.1	5.1	6.2	7.4	10.9
AQF certificate III or equivalent	28.9	24.5	22.4	24.7	23.1	26.6	14.6	17.5	20.4	21.4
Sub-total – AQF III and above	**53.6**	**62.1**	**36.0**	**44.0**	**37.6**	**43.8**	**23.1**	**27.2**	**33.6**	**44.0**
AQF level unknown	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.8	1.1	1.5	1.5
AQF certificate II	24.2	14.4	36.1	30.9	31.2	24.0	30.4	24.0	30.1	19.0
AQF certificate I	5.9	3.1	11.8	6.1	12.0	4.8	21.8	11.5	14.5	4.8
AQF senior secondary	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2
Sub-total – all AQF* **	**84.4**	**80.6**	**85.0**	**82.9**	**82.4**	**74.2**	**77.1**	**63.9**	**79.9**	**69.5**
Other recognised courses	7.7	7.9	6.1	5.1	8.7	10.5	11.9	13.5	8.6	9.4
Non-award courses	4.8	8.3	4.1	7.6	4.9	7.9	5.2	17.0	5.8	15.0
Module only – no qualification	3.2	3.3	4.8	4.4	4.0	7.4	5.7	5.6	5.7	6.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Proportion of student group** (%)	16.9	43.4	15.0	17.1	35.0	29.0	33.1	10.5	100.0	100.0

Notes: *Includes unknown highest school level
** Where highest level of schooling was known
***Includes apprentices and trainees in training

From 1997 to 2001, the distribution of the level of schooling of Indigenous students has not changed greatly. A slight shift from Year 10 to Year 11 has occurred and absolute numbers at each level have grown.

Table 19: Percentage of vocational education and training students by highest level of schooling achieved, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Year 12	17.1	47.3	17.6	46.5	16.7	45.5	16.5	44.3	16.9	43.4
Year 11	12.6	15.3	13.6	15.8	13.1	15.8	13.5	16.4	15.0	17.1
Year 10	37.1	27.7	36.9	27.8	35.9	27.4	35.9	28.6	35.0	29.0
Year 9 or lower	33.2	9.7	31.8	10.0	34.3	11.3	34.2	10.7	33.1	10.5
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total* ('000)	30.7	920.0	35.6	985.5	41.4	1080.7	44.1	1135.2	48.7	1219.5
Unknown level of schooling ('000)	7.8	500.0	8.8	505.3	9.4	515.7	7.5	562.5	9.4	479.2
All students ('000)	**38.5**	**1420.1**	**44.4**	**1490.8**	**50.8**	**1596.4**	**51.7**	**1697.7**	**58.0**	**1698.7**

Note: *Where highest school level known

The effect of lower levels of schooling on the Indigenous experience of vocational education and training is associated with the higher proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students living in rural and remote areas. The table below shows that in 2001, students (both Indigenous and all others) living in rural and remote areas were less likely to have achieved Year 12 than students living in metropolitan areas. For Indigenous vocational education and training students, the effect of living in a remote area was particularly significant, with nearly 40% of these students only having achieved Year 9 or lower in 2001. Considering that approximately two-thirds of all Indigenous students lived in rural or remote areas in 2001, the combined effects of isolation and poor levels of schooling have a negative impact upon the levels of VET courses which Indigenous students undertake.

Table 20: Percentage* of vocational education and training students by highest level of schooling achieved, by Indigenous status, by geographic region, Australia, 2001

	Metropolitan		Rural		Remote		Total**	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Year 12	21.4	48.1	16.2	33.7	12.2	36.3	16.9	43.4
Year 11	16.1	16.0	14.4	19.2	14.7	19.1	15.0	17.1
Year 10	34.1	26.3	36.6	34.7	34.1	34.1	35.0	29.0
Year 9 or lower	28.4	9.6	32.8	12.4	38.9	10.5	33.1	10.5
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes: *Where highest level of schooling known
**Includes students living outside Australia and students whose region was not known

By major field of study (industry areas)

A large proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students are not actually enrolled in any of the major vocational fields of study, but were instead studying vocational education and training multi-field education, which focuses on enabling skills, such as literacy, numeracy, study and employment skills. In 2001 the proportion of Indigenous students undertaking these courses was almost twice that for all other students (21% compared with 11%). However, the proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students studying multi-field education did decrease markedly between 1997 and 2001 (by 10 percentage points), indicating a greater percentage of Indigenous students undertaking study in the major vocational fields of study.

Between 1997 and 2001, the three most popular major fields of study for Indigenous students were: Arts, humanities and social sciences; Business, administration, economics; and Health, community services.

Over the same period, all other students favoured: Business, administration, economics; Services, hospitality, transportation; and Engineering, surveying.

Table 21: Percentage of vocational education and training students in each major field of study, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	7.4	6.0	7.6	6.1	8.1	5.0	8.4	5.1	8.8	5.6
Architecture, building	4.5	5.4	4.5	5.1	4.2	5.1	4.2	4.8	4.5	5.1
Arts, humanities and social sciences	12.0	7.5	11.8	6.9	12.2	6.9	12.0	6.5	12.0	6.6
Business, administration, economics	13.3	20.5	13.3	20.5	13.2	21.2	12.5	21.1	11.9	19.7
Education	3.3	2.3	3.2	2.3	3.0	2.2	4.4	2.5	5.5	3.0
Engineering, surveying	7.7	15.0	8.7	14.2	7.5	13.6	7.8	11.7	7.2	11.7
Health, community services	9.5	8.4	10.8	8.5	11.0	8.6	10.7	7.8	11.2	8.9
Law, legal studies	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.6
Science	2.3	7.3	2.1	7.0	2.4	5.9	2.6	7.0	3.5	8.3
Veterinary science, animal care	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3
Services, hospitality, transportation	7.6	10.8	7.8	11.8	8.4	13.3	9.5	16.8	8.4	13.3
VET multi-field education	31.3	14.7	29.1	15.5	26.6	11.4	22.6	10.9	20.6	10.8
Module only – no FOS	0.7	1.5	0.7	1.6	2.8	5.8	4.4	5.0	5.7	6.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

There were marked differences between males and females, as well as between Indigenous and all other students, in their choice of major field of study. In 2001, male Indigenous vocational education and training students favoured Land and marine resources, animal husbandry (13%); Engineering, surveying (12%); and Arts, humanities, social sciences (12%), while female Indigenous vocational education and training students favoured Business, administration, economics (18%); Health, community services (15%); and Arts, humanities, social sciences (13%). The three most popular fields of study for all other male students were Engineering, surveying (20%); Services, hospitality, transportation (13%); and Business, administration, economics (13%), while all other females favoured Business, administration, economics (27%); Services, hospitality, transportation (13%); and Health, community services (12%).

In 2001, field of study choices did not appear to be overly influenced by a student's geographic region, except where local industries or employment opportunities were reflected.

For example, the proportions of students (both Indigenous and all others) studying Land and marine resources, animal husbandry were noticeably larger in rural and remote areas, while the proportions studying Business, administration, economics were slightly lower in rural and remote areas.

Table 22: Percentage of vocational education and training students in each major field of study, by sex and Indigenous status, 2001

	Male		Female		Total*	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	13.5	8.3	3.5	2.7	8.8	5.6
Architecture, building	7.8	9.1	0.8	1.0	4.5	5.1
Arts, humanities and social sciences	11.6	4.8	12.6	8.5	12.0	6.6
Business, administration, economics	6.3	13.1	18.3	26.7	11.9	19.7
Education	4.0	2.5	7.3	3.6	5.5	3.0
Engineering, surveying	12.3	20.2	1.4	3.0	7.2	11.7
Health, community services	7.5	5.7	15.3	12.2	11.2	8.9
Law, legal studies	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6
Science	3.7	8.7	3.4	7.8	3.5	8.3
Veterinary science, animal care	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.3
Services, hospitality, transportation	7.3	13.5	9.7	13.2	8.4	13.3
VET multi-field education	20.5	9.6	20.8	12.1	20.6	10.8
Module only – no FOS	5.1	3.7	6.2	8.1	5.7	6.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Includes unknowns

Table 23: Percentage of vocational education and training students in each major field of study, by Indigenous status, by region, Australia, 2001

	Metropolitan		Rural		Remote		Total*	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	4.3	2.5	10.4	10.9	12.1	16.1	8.8	5.6
Architecture, building	5.0	5.7	4.4	4.4	4.0	2.2	4.5	5.1
Arts, humanities and social sciences	12.7	7.7	11.2	4.2	12.4	4.3	12.0	6.6
Business, administration, economics	13.9	21.3	11.7	16.4	10.2	17.6	11.9	19.7
Education	5.3	2.9	5.6	3.2	5.8	4.9	5.5	3.0
Engineering, surveying	7.2	11.8	6.9	11.5	7.8	15.4	7.2	11.7
Health, community services	10.6	8.5	11.3	10.0	11.8	8.3	11.2	8.9
Law, legal studies	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.6
Science	4.6	8.3	3.5	8.3	2.4	6.4	3.5	8.3
Veterinary science, animal care	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.3
Services, hospitality, transportation	10.9	13.1	9.2	14.3	4.6	8.8	8.4	13.3
VET multi-field education	21.1	11.8	22.3	8.7	17.8	12.1	20.6	10.8
Module only – no FOS	3.7	5.5	2.7	7.5	10.6	2.8	5.7	6.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Includes students living outside Australia and students whose region was not known

Some correlations can be identified by taking a student's highest level of schooling into consideration when analysing field of study. For example, for those students who had achieved Year 12 there was almost the same proportion of Indigenous and all other students studying vocational education and training multi-field education (8%), while for those with Year 9 or lower, a much higher proportion were engaged in these courses (32% of Indigenous and 28% of all other students). It is possible that the overall higher proportion of Indigenous students studying multi-field education may, to some extent, be due to the higher proportion of Indigenous students with

lower levels of schooling (in 2001, 33% of Indigenous students had Year 9 or lower, compared with only 11% of all other students).

Table 24: Percentage of vocational education and training students in each major field of study, by Indigenous status, by highest level of schooling, Australia, 2001

	Year 12		Year 11		Year 10		Year 9 or lower		Total*	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	7.0	4.6	7.5	5.5	9.3	6.3	10.9	6.2	8.8	5.6
Architecture, building	4.7	4.7	5.0	5.9	4.7	6.4	4.2	4.3	4.5	5.1
Arts, humanities and social sciences	9.3	7.9	11.3	5.4	10.8	3.9	12.5	3.6	12.0	6.6
Business, administration, economics	22.0	24.4	15.6	21.4	13.0	18.1	6.3	15.3	11.9	19.7
Education	6.2	3.2	4.7	1.9	5.7	2.6	5.4	2.0	5.5	3.0
Engineering, surveying	8.8	12.6	8.8	14.3	8.8	13.7	5.6	9.1	7.2	11.7
Health, community services	13.2	9.2	11.1	7.8	12.6	9.5	9.0	7.2	11.2	8.9
Law, legal studies	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.6
Science	4.9	8.7	5.8	8.8	3.8	6.9	2.0	4.1	3.5	8.3
Veterinary science, animal care	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.3
Services, hospitality, transportation	11.0	12.4	10.6	15.9	10.2	15.3	6.4	14.4	8.4	13.3
VET multi-field education	8.2	7.5	13.9	7.9	16.4	9.2	31.6	27.7	20.6	10.8
Module only – no FOS	3.2	3.3	4.8	4.4	4.0	7.4	5.7	5.6	5.7	6.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Includes unknown highest school level

By annual hours of training

The number of annual hours of training undertaken by Indigenous VET students increased consistently between 1997 and 2001, although the proportion they comprised of all VET hours decreased slightly over this time. However, this proportional decrease in hours corresponded with a decreasing proportion of Indigenous students studying full-time, thereby making it difficult to accurately assess any trends in aggregate time spent studying.

Table 25: Annual hours of VET training activity, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%	('000)	%
Indigenous	11 644	3.8	12 021	3.8	12 859	3.9	12 830	3.7	14 958	3.8
Non-Indigenous	248 483	82.2	258 589	82.7	276 629	83.6	289 155	83.5	330 840	84.2
Not known	42 073	13.9	42 167	13.5	41 583	12.5	44 155	12.8	46 914	12.0
Total*	**302 200**	**100.0**	**312 777**	**100.0**	**331 071**	**100.0**	**346 140**	**100.0**	**392 712**	**100.0**

Note: *Where all of unknown status are assumed non-Indigenous students

Figure 1 below shows the average number of VET training hours per student undertaken each year. Although Indigenous VET students averaged more annual hours than non-Indigenous students in 1997, the long term trend appears to show a convergence, with both groups approaching a similar amount of average annual hours in 2001. Comparison with figure 2 below, shows an apparent

relationship between the decreasing proportion of full-time Indigenous VET students and the hours of VET training undertaken.

Figure 1: Percentage of VET students studying part time, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

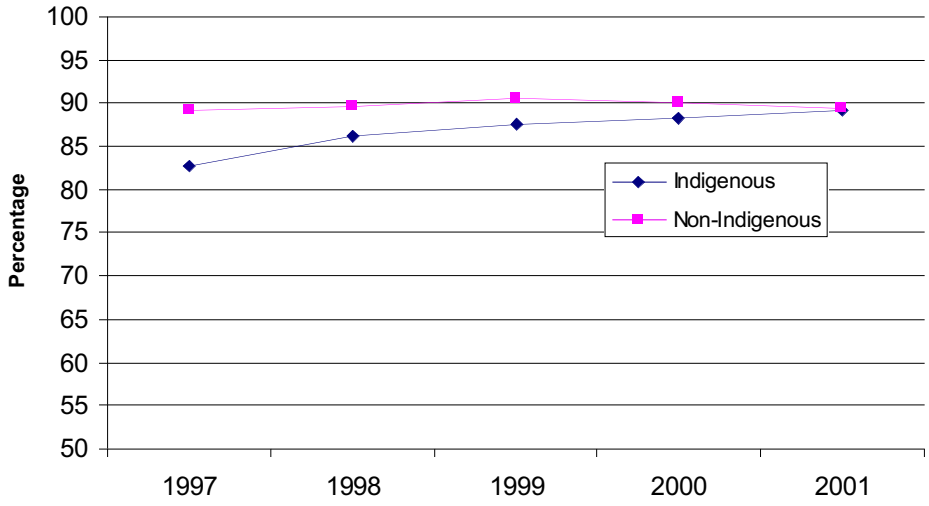
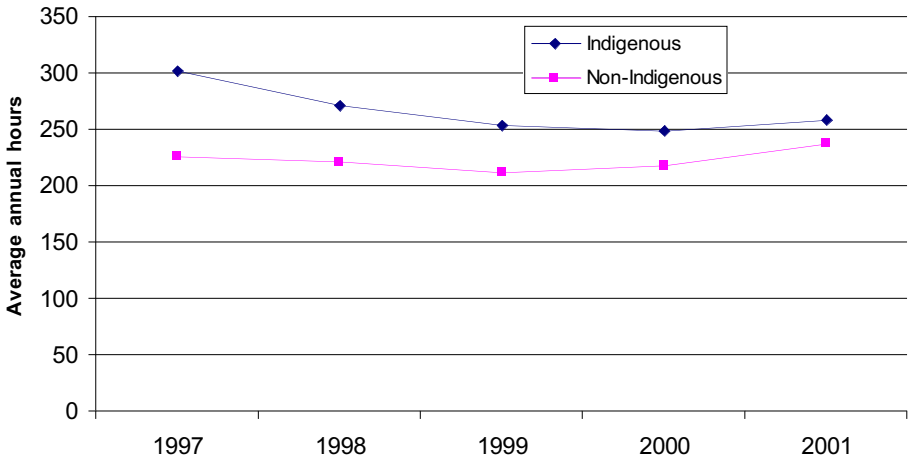


Figure 2: Average annual hours of training per student, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001



Completions

Assessed module (subject) enrolments

The percentage of Indigenous vocational education and training students undertaking assessed modules increased markedly between 1997 and 2001, to be only slightly below the proportion for all other vocational education and training students (73% compared with 75% of all other students in 2001). This increase corresponded with a decrease in the proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students undertaking non-assessed modules, from 15% in 1997 to 4% in 2001 (compared with 5% of all other students in 2001, down from 8% in 1997). Non-assessed modules include those that focus on enabling skills such as literacy, numeracy, study and employee skills from within the TAFE multi-field area, enrolment in which there was a marked decrease among Indigenous students over this time period, as mentioned previously.

While modules achieved through recognition of prior learning made up only a small proportion of all modules undertaken between 1997 and 2001, the proportion achieved in this manner was still noticeably lower for Indigenous students (1.3% of modules in 2001, compared with 2.5% for all other students). A similar situation existed for modules achieved through credit transfer, accounting for 2.1% of all modules taken by Indigenous students in 2001, compared with 3.9% of modules taken by all other students.

The proportion of modules undertaken, then subsequently withdrawn from, is much higher for Indigenous vocational education and training students compared with all other vocational education and training students. Although the proportion of withdrawn modules decreased for Indigenous students between 1997 and 2001, it was still nearly six percentage points higher than the proportion for all other students in 2001 (13.8% compared with 8.3%).

Table 26: Mode of assessment or outcome for all modules, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

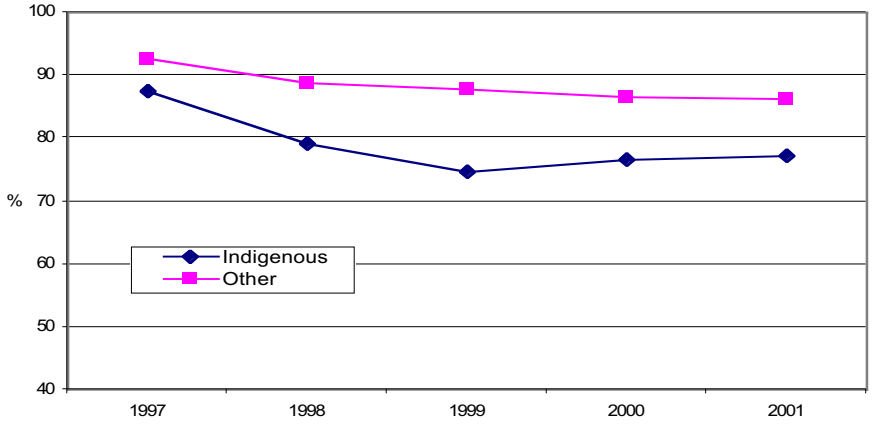
	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Assessed modules	56.2	70.7	65.7	71.2	67.5	71.7	70.8	72.6	72.9	74.6
Non-assessed modules	14.8	8.4	5.1	5.6	4.8	5.9	4.2	6.8	3.6	5.1
Continuing studies	11.5	5.2	12.1	8.5	10.3	7.2	7.8	6.1	6.4	5.5
Recognition of prior learning	1.0	2.6	1.0	2.8	1.0	2.7	1.2	2.5	1.3	2.5
Credit transfer	1.4	3.7	1.7	3.6	1.9	4.1	1.8	3.9	2.1	3.9
Withdrawn	15.1	9.4	14.3	8.4	14.5	8.5	14.2	8.0	13.8	8.3
Total*	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total modules ('000)	**335.7**	**9 545.0**	**375.0**	**10 331.1**	**410.2**	**11 230.6**	**420.2**	**11 872.5**	**480.5**	**13 010.8**

Note: *Where outcome status was known

Assessed module (subject) results

While the proportion of assessed subjects undertaken by Indigenous students increased between 1997 and 2001, the proportion of these subjects achieving a successful, or 'pass', result decreased over this time. In 1997, 88% of assessed subjects undertaken by Indigenous students resulted in a successful result (compared with 93% for all other students). This proportion fell to 75% in 1999 before improving slightly over the next two years to 77% in 2001 (compared with 86% for all other students). While the proportion of successful outcomes for all other students also decreased between 1997 and 2001, the decrease was more pronounced for Indigenous vocational education and training students. Reasons for this require investigation.

Figure 3: Percentage of 'pass' results in modules that were assessed, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001



Analysis of module outcomes in 2001 showed a correlation between a student's highest level of schooling and their likelihood of obtaining a successful outcome. For example, for those Indigenous vocational education and training students who had completed Year 12, 85% of all assessed modules undertaken achieved a 'pass' result; compared with only 77% of the modules undertaken by Indigenous vocational education and training students who had only completed Year 9 or lower. Given the higher proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students with low levels of schooling, it is likely that this variable affected the overall proportions of successful results for Indigenous vocational education and training students.

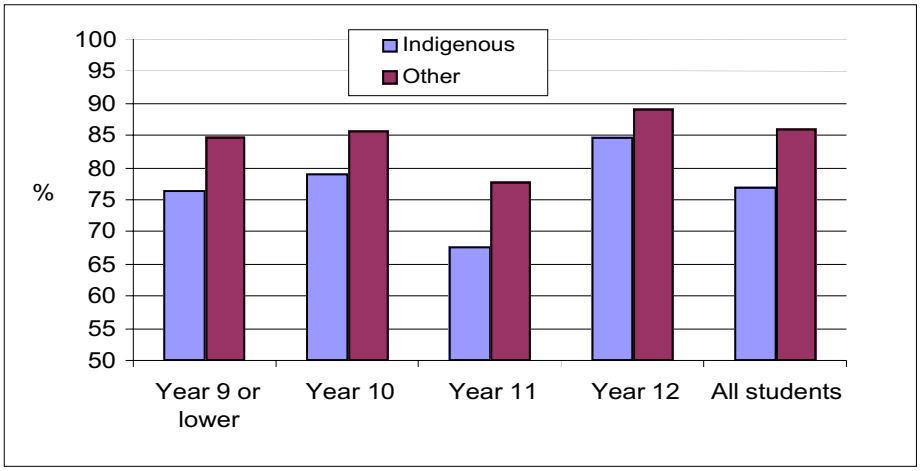
Students with lower levels of schooling were also much more likely to withdraw from modules than students with higher levels of schooling. In 2001, Indigenous vocational education and training students with Year 9 or lower withdrew from 18% of all modules they undertook. In comparison, the withdrawal rate for Indigenous students who had completed Year 12 was only 10%. While this relationship also existed for all other students, the difference was not quite so dramatic (12% for those with Year 9 or lower compared with 9% for those with Year 12).

Table 27: Percentage of modules in each outcome category, by Indigenous status, by highest level of schooling, Australia, 2001

	Year 12		Year 11		Year 10		Year 9 or lower		Total*	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Assessed – successful	62.2	67.5	55.6	65.6	56.5	64.1	53.3	59.9	56.2	64.3
Assessed – unsuccessful	11.2	8.1	26.3	18.7	15.1	10.5	16.4	10.8	16.7	10.4
% of assessed modules passed	*84.7*	*89.3*	*67.9*	*77.8*	*79.0*	*85.9*	*76.5*	*84.7*	*77.1*	*86.1*
Continuing studies	9.0	5.4	5.5	4.5	6.9	6.8	4.6	7.0	6.4	5.5
Recognition of prior learning	1.8	2.6	1.2	1.5	1.4	2.0	0.8	1.2	1.3	2.5
Withdrawn	10.3	8.5	8.5	5.3	14.6	9.2	18.2	12.3	13.8	8.3
Total**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes: *Includes students whose highest level of schooling was not known
**Where outcome status was known. Includes non-assessed modules and modules achieved via credit transfer

Figure 4: Percentage of assessed modules that were passed, by Indigenous status, by highest level of schooling, Australia, 2001



Qualifications completed

Qualifications completed data (as opposed to subject-only completions data) have been published for the first time in 2001 for all students in the public vocational education and training system, including VET-in-schools data where available. The qualifications data prior to 2001 were not considered robust enough for public release.

Qualifications reported in the 2001 national VET collection for Indigenous students is provided in the table below.

The total number of qualifications completed by Indigenous students in 2001 was 11 879.

Of this total 37% were Australian Qualifications Framework level I and II qualifications, another 27% were Australian Qualifications Framework level III or higher qualifications and the remaining 36% were other certificates. The other certificates include nationally recognised but not Australian Qualifications Framework related short course completions.

The students who completed these qualifications may well have been in vocational education and training for several years prior to 2001.

Table 28: 2001 VET – numbers of qualifications reported in the national VET collection for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and their % of total qualifications reported

Qualification completed	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Qualifications total	Indigenous % of qualification total
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Bachelor degree or higher	2	< 1.0	428	0.1	430	0.5
Diplomas	404	3.4	27 027	7.9	27 431	1.5
Cert IV and equivalent	766	6.4	37 393	10.9	38 159	2.0
Cert III and equivalent	2 043	17.2	70 932	20.7	72 975	2.8
Cert I and II	4 434	37.3	106 900	31.3	111 334	4.0
Senior secondary	1	< 1.0	8	< 1.0	9	11.1
Other certificates	4 229	35.6	99 276	29.0	103 505	4.1
Total	**11 879**	**100.0**	**341 964**	**100.0**	**353 843**	**3.4**

Information technology VET programs

Indigenous participation in information technology studies

Over the five years from 1997 to 2001, there have been large changes in the participation rates of Indigenous students in information technology (IT) studies. By far the greatest change has been a five-fold (496%) increase in the number of enrolments in Australian Qualifications Framework level II courses (from 260 students in 1997 to 1550 in 2001). There have also been significant increases in 'non-award courses' (a 156% increase from 90 students in 1997 to 230 in 2001), and Australian Qualifications Framework IV (a 114% increase from 70 in 1997 to 150 in 2001). In contrast, there was a significant decrease of 46% in enrolments in 'Other recognised courses' (from 720 students in 1997 to 390 in 2001). The number of enrolments classified as 'Level unknown' also dropped significantly, from 150 in 1997 to only 10 in 2001 (perhaps reflecting better recognition and application of Australian Qualifications Framework levels). Overall, Indigenous participation in information technology increased from 1640 enrolments in 1997 to 2930 in 2001, an increase of 79%.

Along with the increases in Indigenous enrolments in information technology, there was, almost without exception, a decrease in pass rates. Encouragingly, the pass rates for Australian Qualifications Framework levels II to IV and Australian Qualifications Framework diploma or higher dropped only marginally from 1997 to 2001. However, there were notable drops in pass rates for 'Non-award courses' and 'Other recognised courses'. Changes in pass rates for Australian Qualifications Framework level I and Australian Qualifications Framework senior secondary were not evaluated because of low numbers of students in the table cells.

Comparison of pass rates over the period spanning 1997 and 2001 (table 20) shows several noteworthy trends. The performance of Indigenous students at AQF Certificate III or equivalent has risen from a performance well below that of non-Indigenous students in 1997 to match it in 2001. On the other hand, Indigenous pass rates for AQF certificates I and II have not risen to match those of non-Indigenous students. In fact, their pass rates have fallen (as have those of their non-Indigenous counterparts).

Table 29: Comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous VET students by subject pass rate for IT courses[1] and qualification level, for Australia 1997 and 2001 (values for non-Indigenous students shown in parentheses)

	1997		2001		Changes: 1997 to 2001	
	Students[2]	Pass rate[3] (%)	Students[2]	Pass rate[3] (%)	Number	% change
AQF diploma or higher	90	79.7	100	77.8	10	+11
	(12 630)	(81.7)	(18 500)	(76.3)	(5 870)	(+46)
AQF certificate IV or equivalent	70	63.0	150	65.6	80	+114
	(10 980)	(70.5)	(17 450)	(74.5)	(6 470)	(+59)
AQF certificate III or equivalent	250	59.9	230	71.7	-20	-8
	(17 760)	(77.3)	(17 050)	(72.4)	(-710)	(-4)
AQF level unknown	160	73.1	10	50.0	-150	-94
	(7 730)	(81.5)	(3 630)	(83.8)	(-4 100)	(-53)
AQF certificate II	270	53.2	1 550	49.2	1 280	+474
	(13 170)	(76.9)	(61 200)	(69.1)	(48 030)	(+365)
AQF certificate I	a	66.7	270	57.7	–	–
	(260)	(84.4)	(7 410)	(69.5)	(7 150)	(+2 750)
AQF senior secondary	a	60.0	a	40.0	–	–
	(30)	(68.9)	(20)	(45.2)	(-10)	(-33)
Other recognised courses	740	63.1	390	57.9	-350	-47
	(48 440)	(82.2)	(15 690)	(75.8)	(-32 750)	(-68)
Non-award courses	110	94.7	230	57.9	120	+109
	(23 010)	(86.4)	(34 030)	(74.8)	(11 020)	(+48)
Total	**1 690**	64.8	**2 930**	**56.3**	**970[4]**	**+57**
	(134 010)	(77.9)	(174 980)	(72.3)	(40 970)	(+31)

Notes: (1) IT courses are defined as courses where the field of study = 0902, or ASCO = GEN17, or the course name includes 'information technology' or 'comput …'

(2) All figures are rounded to the nearest 10, 'a' represents figures between 1 and 9.

(3) Pass rate (based on enrolments): $\frac{\text{Number successful}}{\text{Number successful + Number not successful + Number withdrawn}} \times 100$

(4) Sum of only the changes listed.

Apprentices and trainees

Commencements

While the number of non-Indigenous apprentice and trainee commencements increased steadily between 1997 and 2001, there were only small increases in the number of Indigenous apprentice and trainee commencements from 1998 onwards. In contrast there was a huge increase in total commencements from 114 000 in 1997 to 228 000 in 2001.

Table 30: Apprentice and trainee commencements, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Indigenous	4 980	4 460	4 869	4 941	5 900
Non-Indigenous	77 134	134 494	178 698	193 689	210 374
Unknown	32 141	15 968	14 878	11 527	11 740
Total	**114 255**	**154 922**	**198 445**	**210 156**	**228 014**

The proportion of Indigenous apprentice and trainee commencements in metropolitan areas increased between 1997 and 2001, from 23% to 39%. This coincided with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of commencements in remote areas, from 39% in 1997 to 22% in 2001. The proportion of Indigenous commencements in rural areas did not change greatly over this time.

Table 31: Percentage of apprentice and trainee commencements by geographic region, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Metropolitan	22.9	65.8	29.0	65.2	34.7	68.1	37.0	68.3	38.8	67.2
Rural	38.1	30.1	33.6	31.0	35.6	28.7	37.8	28.3	38.2	29.5
Remote	38.6	3.0	36.6	2.6	28.4	2.0	24.3	1.9	21.7	2.0
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Includes interstate and overseas, but not unknowns

Numbers in training

The above figures represent total numbers of Indigenous students who commenced an apprenticeship or traineeship at **any** time during the given year.

Here we discuss total numbers that are in training, which includes both commencing students and continuing students.

It is possible for commencement figures for a whole year to be higher than the in-training figure associated with that year because of completions and other departures that occur before the date or point in time when the in-training figures are determined.

There were nearly 6300 Indigenous apprentices and trainees in training in Australia in 2001. This was an increase of about 40% from the 4480 reported in 1997.

Although Indigenous apprentice and trainee numbers increased steadily between 1998 and 2001, the proportion they comprised of the total apprentice and trainee population fell over this period (from 2.4% in 1997 to 1.9% in 2001).

Table 32: Number of apprentices and trainees in-training at 31 December, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Indigenous	4 483	3 967	4 558	5 246	6 274
Non-Indigenous	115 885	170 110	216 961	264 500	299 284
Unknown	65 170	42 784	33 663	25 147	19 577
Total	**185 538**	**216 861**	**255 182**	**294 893**	**325 135**
Indigenous % of all apprentices and trainees*	2.4	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9

Note: *Where all of unknown status are assumed non-Indigenous students

Table 33 attempts to disaggregate apprentices and trainees by means of their AQF level of study. In the main, trainees study for AQF certificates I and II, while apprentices study for AQF certificates III and IV. The table shows that the largest proportion of apprentices (AQF certificates III and IV) reside in the metropolitan areas, followed by rural, then remote areas. In the case of trainees, the major proportion reside in rural areas followed by metropolitan, then remote areas.

Table 33: Indigenous apprentices and trainees in-training, by AQF level and region, Australia, 2001

	Certificates I and II (mainly trainees)	Certificate III and IV (mainly apprentices)
Metropolitan	31.5%	42.9%
Rural	38.8%	36.9%
Remote	29.7%	20.2%
All regions	100.0%	100.0%
Number	2327	3839

Approximately 36% of all Indigenous apprentices and trainees in-training in 2001 were female. This proportion was relatively stable between 1997 and 2001, in contrast to the situation for all other apprentices and trainees where the proportion of females was lower, (but actually increased from 27% to 34% over this period).

Table 34: Proportion of apprentices and trainees in-training at 31 December that were female, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Indigenous	33.6	36.1	34.4	35.1	35.7
Other	27.1	31.6	31.8	32.8	34.3

In training by group training companies

From 1997 to 2001 Indigenous apprentices and trainees were more likely to be employed with group training companies or in the government sector than other apprentices and trainees. Apprentices and trainees not reported as Indigenous, were more likely to be employed in the private

sector. In 2001 apprentices and trainees were twice as likely to be employed by group training companies than all other apprentices and trainees. However the overall percentages both of Indigenous and other apprentices and trainees employed in group training companies has decreased over time.

Table 35: Percentage* of apprentices and trainees in-training at 31 December, by employer type, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Government	21.1	5.7	21.8	5.1	26.5	5.3	23.6	5.3	22.1	6.2
Private sector	53.6	81.1	53.4	81.2	48.8	81.4	53.7	82.7	57.0	83.5
Group training	25.4	13.2	24.8	13.7	24.8	13.3	22.7	12.0	20.9	10.3
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Where employer status was known

Most Indigenous apprentices and trainees employed with group training companies resided in rural areas (37%), with 31% living in metropolitan areas and 32% in remote areas. The proportion of all other apprentices and trainees employed with group training companies in rural areas was similar (36%). However other apprentices and trainees employed with group training companies more likely resided in metropolitan areas (58%) and less likely in remote areas (5%).

Table 36: Percentage of apprentices and trainees in-training at 31 December, in group training, by Indigenous status, by geographic region, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Metropolitan	22.2	58.3	23.8	58.3	26.4	58.5	29.4	58.9	30.9	58.0
Rural	32.8	34.7	36.1	35.4	36.0	35.1	33.7	35.0	37.3	36.1
Remote	44.9	5.6	39.9	5.0	37.3	5.2	36.4	4.8	31.5	4.7
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Includes interstate and overseas, excludes unknowns

In training by AQF level

Indigenous apprentices and trainees have tended to be studying for lower-level qualifications than all other apprentices and trainees. In 2001, 62% of Indigenous apprentices and trainees were studying at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level or above, compared with 82% of all other apprentices and trainees. However, the proportion for Indigenous students studying at this level has increased markedly from the 36% reported in 1997. Most 'traditional' trades apprenticeships are at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level.

Table 37: Percentage of apprentices and trainees at each qualification level, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Certificate I	2.1	0.5	1.5	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.0
Certificate II	62.1	26.3	51.1	24.9	39.8	21.1	38.8	19.1	37.7	17.8
Certificate III	35.6	72.1	46.4	71.3	58.2	75.5	58.5	75.8	58.2	75.1
Certificate IV	0.3	1.0	1.1	3.1	1.3	3.2	2.4	5.0	3.7	6.9
Diploma and above	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Where qualification level was known

In training by occupation

The proportion of Indigenous apprentices and trainees in trades occupations increased from 23% in 1997 to 31% in 2001 (compared with 40% of all other apprentices and trainees in 2001). However, the bulk of Indigenous apprentices and trainees were in non-trades occupations in 2001, with 37% in Clerical, sales and service occupations and 16% in Labourers and related workers occupations (compared with 33% and 9% respectively for all other apprentices and trainees).

Table 38: Percentage of apprentices and trainees in each (ASCO) occupation group, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Tradespersons and related workers	*23.0*	*67.2*	*29.7*	*57.7*	*31.4*	*51.1*	*32.5*	*45.4*	*31.1*	*39.9*
Non-trades	*77.0*	*32.8*	*70.3*	*42.3*	*68.6*	*48.9*	*67.5*	*54.6*	*68.9*	*60.1*
Managers and administrators	1.5	1.4	0.7	1.0	1.1	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5
Professionals	6.0	0.6	4.6	0.6	4.0	0.7	3.3	0.8	1.8	1.0
Associate professionals	2.7	3.2	3.5	3.0	4.6	2.6	4.3	3.7	4.5	4.3
Advanced clerical and service workers	0.5	0.1	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.6	3.6	1.6
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	34.0	14.7	31.4	18.5	28.9	20.2	28.5	19.7	28.8	20.6
Intermediate production and transport workers	2.3	1.7	2.4	2.1	5.2	6.1	6.3	10.2	8.4	12.3
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	7.3	4.6	7.3	9.2	7.4	10.2	6.7	10.2	4.8	11.1
Labourers and related workers	22.6	6.5	19.1	7.8	17.5	8.1	17.4	8.8	16.3	8.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

In 2001, an apprentice or trainee's highest level of schooling did not appear to have much of an impact on their likelihood of being in a trades apprenticeship or traineeship, unless they had only Year 9 or lower. Those with higher levels of schooling were more likely to be in Clerical, sales and service occupations, while those with lower levels of schooling were more likely to be in Labourers and related workers occupations. This was true for both Indigenous and all other apprentices and trainees.

Table 39: Percentage of apprentices and trainees in each (ASCO) occupation group, by Indigenous status, by highest level of schooling, Australia, 2001

	Year 12		Year 11		Year 10		Year 9 or lower		Total*	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Tradespersons and related workers	*34.6*	*39.7*	*31.6*	*44.9*	*31.0*	*42.5*	*25.7*	*27.9*	*31.1*	*39.9*
Non-trades	*65.4*	*60.3*	*68.4*	*55.1*	*69.0*	*57.5*	*74.3*	*72.1*	*68.9*	*60.1*
Managers and administrators	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.5
Professionals	2.4	1.2	1.5	1.0	1.6	0.7	1.8	0.6	1.8	1.0
Associate professionals	6.5	6.0	4.6	4.9	3.5	2.8	3.4	1.9	4.5	4.3
Advanced clerical and service workers	4.2	2.5	5.4	1.2	3.2	1.3	2.1	0.4	3.6	1.6
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	33.3	24.3	30.3	16.6	26.9	18.5	21.5	15.8	28.8	20.6
Intermediate production and transport workers	4.5	7.3	7.2	12.5	9.8	15.1	13.6	26.4	8.4	12.3
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	4.9	12.6	4.8	10.3	4.7	8.2	4.7	9.4	4.8	11.1
Labourers and related workers	9.2	6.0	14.0	8.0	18.6	10.3	26.2	16.9	16.3	8.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Apprentices and trainees ('000)	1.8	126.2	1.0	56.4	2.4	100.7	1.0	27.4	6.3	318.9

Note: *Includes unknown highest school level and did not go to school

Within the trades occupation group, there were differences between the proportion of Indigenous and all other apprentices and trainees in specific occupations. In 2001, over a quarter of Indigenous trades apprentices and trainees were in structural construction occupations, compared with only 15% of all other trades apprentices and trainees. Indigenous apprentices and trainees were less likely to be employed in automotive, electrical and electronics, and hairdresser occupations than all other apprentices and trainees.

Table 40: Percentage of apprentices and trainees in-training in selected occupations within the trades occupation group, by Indigenous status, Australia, 2001

	Indigenous	Other
Mechanical engineering tradespersons	4.8	6.4
Fabrication engineering tradespersons	4.1	5.8
Automotive tradespersons	13.3	17.7
Electrical and electronics tradespersons	6.9	12.9
Structural constructiont tradespersons	25.6	14.6
Final finishes construction tradespersons	4.9	2.5
Plumbers	5.7	5.3
Food tradespersons	13.8	14.9
Skilled agricultural workers	2.1	0.6
Horticultural tradespersons	5.9	3.4
Printing tradespersons	0.7	1.6
Wood tradespersons	3.2	3.5
Hairdressers	5.5	8.0
Textile, clothing and related tradespersons	1.4	0.6
Miscellaneous tradespersons and related workers	1.6	1.9
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

By region

The proportion of Indigenous apprentices and trainees in-training in rural and remote areas was higher than for all other apprentices and trainees. The proportion of Indigenous apprentices and trainees in-training in metropolitan areas increased between 1997 and 2001, while the proportion in remote areas decreased.

Table 41: Percentage of apprentices and trainees in each geographic region, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind	Other
Capital cities	19.1	59.3	22.7	59.5	28.1	61.1	29.7	61.2	31.3	60.7
Other metro	4.6	8.5	5.4	7.7	4.9	7.7	6.8	7.7	7.4	7.8
Rural	40.0	29.1	36.7	29.9	37.4	28.8	38.5	29.0	37.6	29.4
Remote	36.4	3.1	35.2	2.9	29.6	2.4	25.0	2.2	23.7	2.1
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Where geographic region was known, not including outside Australia or interstate

The proportion of Indigenous apprentices and trainees in trades occupations was slightly higher in rural and remote areas in 2001, as was the proportion in labourers and related workers occupations.

Table 42: Percentage of apprentices and trainees in each (ASCO) occupation group, by Indigenous status, by region, Australia, 2001

	Metropolitan		Rural		Remote		Total*	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Tradespersons and related workers	*29.2*	*39.5*	*32.2*	*40.0*	*33.1*	*53.5*	*31.3*	*39.9*
Non-trades	*70.8*	*60.5*	*67.8*	*60.0*	*66.9*	*46.5*	*68.7*	*60.1*
Managers and administrators	0.2	0.2	1.1	1.1	0.5	1.7	0.6	0.5
Professionals	1.3	1.0	2.5	0.9	1.8	0.6	1.8	1.0
Associate professionals	5.2	4.9	3.3	3.3	5.5	3.0	4.5	4.4
Advanced clerical and service workers	5.4	1.8	2.4	1.4	1.3	1.6	3.3	1.6
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	31.1	20.8	27.6	20.6	27.6	18.1	28.9	20.7
Intermediate production and transport workers	9.4	12.3	8.8	11.7	6.1	8.4	8.4	12.1
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	6.3	12.2	4.7	9.5	2.6	3.1	4.8	11.2
Labourers and related workers	12.0	7.5	17.5	11.4	21.6	9.9	16.3	8.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Apprentices and trainees ('000)	2.4	215.0	2.3	92.5	1.5	6.6	6.2	314.1

Note: *Does not include 'Outside Australia', 'Interstate' and 'Unknown' regions

Completions

The number of Indigenous apprentice and trainee completions did not increase greatly between 1997 and 2000. Overall the growth from 1346 in 1997 to 2098 in 2001 represents an increase of 56% which averages 14% per year. The largest contribution to the overall increase occurred in 2000–2001 when Indigenous completions grew by 32%. By comparison, growth of non-Indigenous completions over the 1997–2001 period was nearly five times that for Indigenous students at 265%. This gives an average of 66% per year. By far the greatest increases for non-Indigenous students occurred in 1997–1998 and 1998–1999 (both 61%).

Table 43: Apprentice and trainee completions, by Indigenous status, Australia, 1997–2001

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Indigenous	1 346	1 580	1 456	1 588	2 098
Non-Indigenous	22 703	36 545	58 799	70 239	82 846
Unknown	27 243	22 255	14 100	12 598	10 316
Total	**51 292**	**60 380**	**74 354**	**84 425**	**95 260**

In 2001, 42% of Indigenous apprentice and trainee completions were in rural areas, a higher proportion than the percentage of Indigenous apprentices and trainees in-training in rural areas (38%). The proportions of Indigenous completions in metropolitan and remote areas were slightly below the proportions of Indigenous apprentices and trainees in-training in these areas.

Table 44: Percentage of apprentice and trainee completions in each geographic region, by Indigenous status, Australia, 2001

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other	Ind.	Other
Metropolitan	27.4	63.3	26.7	63.5	32.2	62.5	35.0	65.1	35.2	64.9
Rural	45.7	32.4	41.0	32.3	37.6	33.2	37.7	31.3	42.1	31.4
Remote	25.9	3.0	31.9	2.8	30.1	3.0	26.6	2.4	21.8	2.5
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: *Includes interstate and overseas, but excludes unknowns

Employment outcomes

Introduction

Employment outcomes data are currently only available for graduates and module completers of VET programs undertaken in TAFE institutes. This includes for all VET programs, including New Apprenticeships where they have been undertaken within a TAFE organisation.

It should also be noted that the national *Student outcomes survey* does not presently distinguish between employment outcomes associated with community development employment programs from other employment outcomes. Recognising this, and because there are other non-employment outcomes of relevance to Indigenous people, NCVER, through the National Training Statistics Committee, is planning a customised *Indigenous students outcome survey* to be implemented in 2004.

TAFE graduate employment

Amongst Indigenous people who graduated from a TAFE course in 2000, that is, completed a full qualification, 63% were employed at 25 May 2001, compared with 53% who were employed before starting their course.

Table 45: Labour force status of 2000 TAFE graduates, by Indigenous status, pre- and post-course, Australia

	Indigenous		Other	
	Pre-course	Post-course**	Pre-course	Post-course**
Employed	53.4	62.7	66.8	73.6
Unemployed	21.6	15.7	13.4	11.8
Not in labour force	15.1	20.2	14.1	14.1
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes: *Includes 'Not employed (no further information)'
**post course – at 25 May 2001

The proportion of Indigenous TAFE graduates in 2000 who were employed, both pre- and post-course, was higher in remote areas but this is probably influenced by CDEP activity. The biggest improvement in the proportion employed occurred in metropolitan areas, where 70% of Indigenous graduates were employed at 25 May 2001, compared with 54% employed before their course.

Table 46: Labour force status of 2000 Indigenous TAFE graduates, by geographic region, pre- and post-course, Australia

	Metropolitan		Rural		Remote		Total	
	Pre-course	Post-course**	Pre-course	Post-course**	Pre-course	Post-course**	Pre-course	Post-course**
Employed	54.0	69.9	47.6	52.6	70.6	73.6	53.4	62.7
Unemployed	20.3	11.8	24.3	20.0	14.6	13.0	21.6	15.7
Not in labour force	17.4	16.7	15.4	25.8	8.8	13.4	15.1	20.2
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes: *Includes 'Not employed (no further information)'
**post course – at 25 May 2001

TAFE module (subject) completers

For students who completed modules (subjects) in 2000, there was little change in the proportion employed at 25 May 2001 compared with the proportion employed before training. There was a higher proportion of Indigenous module completers who were 'not in the labour force' at 25 May 2001 compared with before training.

From a statistical study of outcomes from enabling courses (in TAFE multi-field) conducted in 2000, we learn that one-third of the Indigenous students in these courses move up to a higher-level course in the subsequent year, and that of the two-thirds[2] approximately that do not do this, many enrol in another enabling course or among those students with Year 9 or below as their highest year of previous schooling in the same enabling course. The latter especially occurs.

Table 47: Labour force status of 2000 TAFE module completers, by Indigenous status, pre- and post-course, Australia

	Indigenous		Other	
	Pre-training	Post-training**	Pre-training	Post-training**
Employed	47.6	47.3	67.5	67.7
Unemployed	24.2	25.0	12.4	13.0
Not in labour force	13.8	26.2	14.9	18.4
Total*	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes: *includes 'Not employed (not further information)'
**post training – at 25 May 2001

[2] Phan, O & Ball, K 2001, *Outcomes from enabling courses*, NCVER, Adelaide.

Regional differences

VET participation enhances employability. It also can yield several other valid outcomes. Involvement of Indigenous people in VET related learning in itself gives participants satisfaction, a sense of greater control over their lives and can encourage them to seek out new opportunities, enable better informed choices to be made, and to pass on these and other benefits through their interactions with their families and communities.

The attached tabular form discussion of geographic regional comparisons shows very clearly that conditions differ significantly between the three main regions of Australia and hence so might the relative emphasis to be given to employment versus other outcome objectives of VET in each of these areas.

Hence while developing closer links between VET outcomes for Indigenous people and industry and employment should remain a key objective of *Partners in a learning culture*, VET and its links with individual and community wellbeing as another key objective should not be overlooked.

The challenge is to demonstrate the social and community welfare benefits of participating in education and training through the development of appropriate performance indicators that can be used in addition to the existing employment related indicators.

For decades, VET (particularly TAFE) has been perceived by some observers as performing an additional role to that of providing vocational training—a role in which it offers a supportive environment which is less intimidating than some other education sectors and one in which students are encouraged and assisted to embark on learning which they might otherwise have missed out on through reluctance to 'go out on a limb' and test themselves. VET can offer a second chance to people to make good on these previously missed opportunities. The benefits which accrue from this secondary role are very important ones, both to the individual and the community. Not only do the individuals achieve goals they may have previously thought unattainable, they may also gain self esteem and a better sense of control over their lives, and an enhanced ability to interact socially and to involve themselves in the broader community. In the case of Indigenous students, successful participation in VET can contribute much more than newly learned vocational skills. The individual may act as an ambassador of learning, encouraging, even guiding others towards pursuit of careers and more rewarding lives.

Commentators have identified these non-vocational benefits as 'social capital' and suggest that measures of these outcomes should be developed. Such outcomes, and hence the measures, are particularly relevant and important to the Indigenous population. The range of performance indicators needs to be expanded to include more with a social focus—examples include student satisfaction, self-esteem, self-confidence, perception of personal enrichment, pathways to further study, participation in community life, generation of new groups, and partnerships and local networks, including those for new Indigenous enterprises.

Settings, opportunities, aspirations and outcomes

Primarily derived from a report by Gelade, S et al. (forthcoming), *Exploring locality: The impact of context on Indigenous vocational education and training aspirations and outcomes.*

	Capital cities/metropolitan centres ('Urban')	Rural ('Regional')	Remote
Settings	General wider community acceptance and recognition of Indigenous issues such as reconciliation, health and welfare in a more cosmopolitan setting. More support and opportunities for employment from local government, businesses, sporting clubs, etc. Successful employment programs for Indigenous participants are generally in urban locations.	Sometimes negative community attitude to the employment of Indigenous workers. The highest level of schooling achieved tends to be lower for students in rural (and remote) areas than in capital cities/metropolitan areas. Lower schooling levels tend to reduce employment opportunities. Necessity to relocate to other areas for continuing or mainstream study.	English as a second language can restrict learning opportunities or extend time spent in study for some students. The highest level of schooling achieved tends to be lower for students in remote (and rural) areas than in capital cities/metropolitan areas. Lower schooling levels tend to reduce employment opportunities. Necessity to relocate to other areas for continuing or mainstream study.
Opportunities	More choices available for access to further training. Learners have more opportunities to interact with the mainstream community and are more comfortable about taking on training positions that locate them in the mainstream More examples of successful role models in the Indigenous urban community. Options such as university study, apprenticeships and high level mainstream courses are acknowledged as potential pathways, although the tendency to remain within the Aboriginal Studies Program is quite strong. There is some continuity within modules and units of training available across differing TAFE and other RTOs where trainers have a level of similarity in qualifications.	Regional TAFE centres serve as places for Indigenous people to group together in a safe and supported environment – socialising and learning can be combined with access to resources and facilities. Vocational education and training environment allows learners a space to plan action to help themselves, their families and communities. With the lack of available employment, further training on ABSTUDY is a soundly viable alternative. Apart from its actual content, participation in a course provides wider access to knowledge and services that might not be so freely available through registration for unemployment benefits or involvement with a community development employment program. Although regional (and remote) learners who are registered with community development employment programs could access programs offered in the urban context, they need to re-locate in order to participate. Strong local agricultural and horticultural industry environment provides more opportunities for seasonal work and involvement with local industry than is the case for remote or urban localities. However, this type of work and involvement can have a negative influence on the learner's attitudes toward gaining long-term employment or taking longer-term career-oriented training options. Learners may also find it difficult to fit work commitments around study requirements. Tensions between pay for work, unemployment benefits and ABSTUDY payments also play a part in learner's decisions.	The vocational education and training environment offers learners a space to plan action to help themselves, their families and communities. Learners are more closely linked to the influence of particular teachers and trainers who offer a particular course to a community and who develop close rapport with the learners. However, these teachers and trainers come and go according to the vagaries of contract employment, or for personal reasons. Lack of consistency in personnel is a major reason why training programs or courses (that may have proved highly successful) have not always been continued in remote locations. Although remote (and regional) learners who are registered with community development employment programs could access programs offered in the urban context, they need to re-locate in order to participate. Lack of local employment opportunities means learners have difficulty linking learning with observed employment outcomes. As a consequence they find it problematic to relate vocational education and training learning to 'going to work' or finding work elsewhere. In contrast with their urban and rural counterparts remote learners often acquire English as their second language – learned after they begin their schooling.

	Capital cities/metropolitan centres ('Urban')	Rural ('Regional')	Remote
	Urban (and regional) adult learners tend to be enrolled in accredited vocational education and training programs such as *Certificate in Aboriginal Community Management* and *Certificate III in Community Services*, courses that are relevant to students who want to get into community and youth work in their region and offer qualifications that have transferability and portability.	Regional (and urban) adult learners tend to be enrolled in accredited vocational education and training programs such as *Certificate in Aboriginal Community Management* and *Certificate III in Community Services*, courses that are relevant to students who want to get into community and youth work in their region and offer qualifications that have transferability and portability.	Remote learners are said to have fewer opportunities to study in programs which offer qualifications with transferability and portability. (Figures showing the proportion of remote students undertaking *non-award courses* or *modules without qualification* to be almost double that of rural and capital city/metropolitan centre students lends support to this.)
Aspirations	Adult learners have positive aspirations to continue and widen their learning. Adult learners have expectations of gaining employment in the field in which they have been studying.	Other traditional learning may take precedence because it is seen as being more important in the societal setting. The prevailing culture is less insistent on the importance of continuing formal or accredited learning. Relocating for both study or employment purposes is a significant issue for Indigenous learners from regional (and remote) contexts due to their strong attachment to their land and community (whereas it is not an issue for urban learners). This may contribute to an explanation of why *National student outcomes survey* data finds rural Indigenous graduates less likely to be employed after exiting a vocational education and training course.	Other traditional learning may take precedence because it is seen as being more important in the societal setting. The prevailing culture is less insistent on the importance of continuing formal or accredited learning. In remote community culture, there is a socially less compelling necessity for learners to pursue continuing or formal accredited learning and to train to find paid employment (which may not even be an established expectation). Other traditional learning may take precedence because it is seen as more important in the social setting. Relocating for both study or employment purposes is a significant issue for Indigenous learners from remote (and regional) contexts due to their strong attachment to their land and community. (By comparison, this is not such an issue for urban learners.)
Outcomes	Learners in urban regions have access to a wider range of courses, both in Aboriginal and mainstream learning sectors, and the number and diversity of teaching staff is greater. As a consequence, even though not all learners achieve positive outcomes in terms of course completions or actual employment, the learning outcomes they achieve can open more avenues of training and increase the range of employment options.	The variety of outcomes available to learners in regional locations is limited by the smaller number of organisations able to offer structured workplace training, and the smaller range of courses available. Most learners move into Aboriginal health and community management areas of training, however competition is so high, that successful course or module outcomes do not necessarily translate into successful employment outcomes. Even where learners do achieve successful course outcomes, their access to further training may be limited by a reluctance to move into mainstream courses Post-course outcomes may be limited by local labour market options, a reluctance to move to another location, and an often negative attitude of the mainstream community to employment of Aboriginal workers.	Although Indigenous vocational education and training student outcomes in remote areas are poor in comparison with outcomes achieved by their counterparts in urban and regional areas (as judged by generally accepted standards), what they achieve is important in terms of their locality and societal context. For example, knowledge and skills gained in communications technology (such as telephone, fax and information technology) and local radio operation are valuable in the context of their location. Filling in applications and other forms and using power tools and machinery are important to work they may undertake with community development employment programs. For females, whose social status may mitigate against them participating in the community development employment program economy, computing skills and development of skills in art can open up opportunities.

Discussion of regional differences

Statistical comparisons

	Capital city/metropolitan centre		Rural		Remote		Totals	
Regional comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous vocational education and training students Participation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by region, expressed as percentage of their respective populations (2001).	Indigenous	33%	Indigenous	39%	Indigenous	28%	Indigenous	100%
	Non-Indigenous	65%	Non-Indigenous	32%	Non-Indigenous	3%	Non-Indigenous	100%

The proportion of the Indigenous vocational education and training student population living (and therefore studying) in capital cities or metropolitan centres was close to half that of non-Indigenous students. In contrast, the proportion of the Indigenous vocational education and training student population living and studying in remote areas was over nine times greater than that of the non-Indigenous vocational education and training students.

	Capital city/metropolitan centre			Rural			Remote			Totals	
Indigenous participation by state/territory and region Numbers and proportions of Indigenous vocational education and training students by state/territory expressed as proportions of their respective state/territory Indigenous vocational education and training student populations. (2001).		Number	Proportion		Number	Proportion		Number	Proportion		State/territory totals
	NSW:	6 280	36%	NSW:	9 855	57%	NSW:	1 045	6%	NSW:	17 279
	Vic:	1 931	44%	Vic:	2 152	49%	Vic:	190	4%	Vic:	4 403
	Qld:	4 217	32%	Qld:	6 198	46%	Qld:	2 806	21%	Qld:	13 397
	SA:	2 008	47%	SA:	1 494	35%	SA:	732	17%	SA:	4 269
	WA:	2 297	29%	WA:	1 498	19%	WA:	4 151	52%	WA:	7 995
	Tas:	481	38%	Tas:	740	58%	Tas:	55	4%	Tas:	1 284
	NT:	1 346	15%	NT:	239	3%	NT:	6 946	76%	NT:	9 121
	ACT:	279	94%	ACT:	10	3%	ACT:	0	0%	ACT:	298

The proportion of Indigenous students living in identified regions varied greatly between states and territories. Northern Territory and Western Australia featured by far the highest numbers of students living in remote areas. These large numbers of remote students also comprised major proportions of the respective Northern Territory and Western Australia Indigenous populations.

	Capital city/metropolitan centre			Rural			Remote			Totals	
Highest level of schooling Comparisons of highest level of schooling achieved by Indigenous and non-Indigenous vocational education and training students (2001).		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
	Yr. 12	21%	48%	Yr. 12	16%	34%	Yr. 12	12%	36%	Yr. 12	17%	43%
	Yr. 11	16%	16%	Yr. 11	14%	19%	Yr. 11	15%	19%	Yr. 11	15%	17%
	Yr. 10	34%	26%	Yr. 10	37%	35%	Yr. 10	34%	34%	Yr. 10	35%	29%
	≤Yr. 9	28%	10%	≤Yr. 9	33%	12%	≤Yr. 9	39%	11%	≤Yr. 9	33%	11%

Indigenous vocational education and training students possessed significantly lower levels of schooling than non-Indigenous students. For example, only 17% of Indigenous students had completed Year 12 compared with 43% of non-Indigenous students, while at the other end of the scale, 33% of Indigenous students had completed Year 9 or lower compared with only 11% of non-Indigenous students. It is likely that this trend was contributed to by the geographic region in which the students lived – students from rural and remote areas as a whole tended to have lower school levels – and it is in these areas that the greater proportion of Indigenous students live. Despite this difference, some encouragement can be drawn from the fact that by 2001 the proportion of Indigenous students entering vocational education and training with Year 11 or 12 qualifications was increasing. This could be due, in part, to increasing Indigenous participation in vocational education and training in schools (which allows students to undertake vocational study in order to gain Year 10, 11 or 12 qualifications).

	Capital city/metropolitan centre		Rural		Remote		All regions combined	
Studying vocational education and training whilst at school	Indigenous	11%	Indigenous	12%	Indigenous	11%	Indigenous	12%
	Non-Indigenous	11%	Non-Indigenous	12%	Non-Indigenous	11%	Non-Indigenous	11%
Proportions of vocational education and training students still at school, expressed as percentage of all vocational education and training students in their respective Indigenous status category (2001).								

The proportions of Indigenous students studying vocational education and training while still at school were of the same order across all four regional classifications. Comparisons between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students across these regions also showed remarkable similarity – evidence that the vocational education and training in schools programs are working as effectively for Indigenous students as non-Indigenous students.

	Capital city/metropolitan centre			Rural			Remote			All regions combined		
Qualification levels		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous		Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Comparisons of qualification levels studied by Indigenous and non-Indigenous vocational education and training students, expressed as % of respective Indigenous/non-Indigenous totals (2001).	≥AQF* III	39%	47%	≥ AQF* III	35%	38%	≥ AQF* III	26%	44%	≥ AQF* III	34%	44%
	AQF* I & II	42%	23%	AQF* I & II	2%	26%	AQF* I & II	52%	28%	AQF* I & II	45%	24%
	Module only	4%	6%	Module only	3%	8%	Module only	11%	3%	Module only	6%	6%

*Australian Qualifications Framework

Overall, the proportion of Indigenous vocational education and training students studying Australian Qualifications Framework certified courses was greater than that of non-Indigenous students (Indigenous 79%, non-Indigenous 68%). However Indigenous students tended to study for lower level qualifications than their non-Indigenous colleagues. In 2001, only 34% of Indigenous students were studying at Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level or above, compared with 44% of non-Indigenous students or, looking at the converse, 45% of Indigenous students were studying at levels of Australian Qualifications Framework I and II compared with 24% of non-Indigenous students (the missing percentages are for study which is non-Australian Qualifications Framework or for which Australian Qualifications Framework level is unknown). There were no marked changes in these relative proportions over the period 1997 to 2001.

More detailed comparison of the proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students studying at Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level or above in remote areas shows a striking difference. In 2001, 26% of Indigenous students were studying Australian Qualifications Framework III and above compared with almost double that proportion, 44% of non-Indigenous students. This lower proportion of Indigenous students in remote areas studying at the Australian Qualifications Framework certificate III level and above may have been influenced by the number of Indigenous students in those areas who spoke a language other than English at home. For Indigenous students in remote areas who spoke English at home, 31% were studying at Australian Qualifications Framework III level, compared with only 16% of those who spoke a language other than English at home, a difference of 14%. For Australian Qualifications Framework I and II levels (combined) the effect of English was much weaker, (50% and 56% giving a difference of only 6%).

Action is needed to encourage and assist Indigenous students in remote areas to take up Australian Qualifications Framework III study. This could include looking at ways to assist students who speak a language other than English at home.

	Capital city/metropolitan centre	Rural	Remote	All regions combined
Field of study Proportion of Indigenous students in a selection of fields of study, expressed as % of Indigenous totals for respective fields. (2001)	*Land & marine, animal husbandry* Indigenous: 4% *Business, administration, economics* Indigenous: 14% *Services, hospitality, transportation* Indigenous: 11% *Module only – no field of study* Indigenous: 4%	*Land & marine, animal husbandry* Indigenous: 10% *Business, administration, economics* Indigenous: 12% *Services, hospitality, transportation* Indigenous: 9% *Module only – no field of study* Indigenous: 3%	*Land & marine, animal husbandry* Indigenous: 12% *Business, administration, economics* Indigenous: 10% *Services, hospitality, transportation* Indigenous: 5% *Module only – no field of study* Indigenous: 11%	*Land & marine, animal husbandry* Indig:9% Non-Indig: 6% *Business, administration, economics* Indig: 12% Non-Indig: 20% *Services, hospitality, transportation* Indig: 8% Non-Indig: 13% *Module only – no field of study* Indig: 6% Non-Indig: 6%

Field of study choices did not appear to be overly influenced by a student's geographic region and where there was some difference, the influence was much the same for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In some cases the differences may have reflected local industries or employment opportunities, for example the proportions of students studying Land and marine resources, animal husbandry were noticeably larger in rural and remote areas, while those for Business, administration, economics were slightly lower in rural and remote areas.

	Capital city/metropolitan centre	Rural	Remote
Educational outcomes Proportions of a selection of educational outcomes achieved by Indigenous students, expressed as % of Indigenous totals for respective regions. (2001)	Passed assessed subject: 65% Granted recognition of prior learning/credit transfer: 4% Failed assessed subject: 18% Withdrawn from subject: 17%	Passed assessed subject: 60% Granted recognition of prior learning/credit transfer: 4% Failed assessed subject: 16% Withdrawn from subject: 15%	Passed assessed subject: 63% Granted recognition of prior learning/credit transfer: 2% Failed assessed subject: 21% Withdrawn from subject: 11%

In the period 1997 to 2001, the number of 'assessed' modules undertaken by Indigenous students increased from 56% to 73%. The corresponding figures for non-Indigenous students of 72% in 1997 and 76% in 2001 highlight the impressive gain Indigenous students have made in that time. Regionally, rural and remote did not enjoy quite the success of their capital city/metro centre counterparts. However, to their credit, they were less likely to withdraw from study, particularly the remote region students. Breaking down the figures for recognition of prior learning and credit transfer, the proportion of remote students granted recognition of prior learning was about half that of the other regions, while the proportion granted credit transfer was about a quarter that of capital city/metropolitan and one sixth that of rural.

	Capital city/metropolitan centre		Rural		Remote	
Employment outcomes	Pre-course	Post-course	Pre-course	Post-course	Pre-course	Post-course
Proportions of employment outcomes achieved by Indigenous students, expressed as % of Indigenous totals for respective regions. (2001) (Missing percentages are for *Not employed – no further information*)	Employed: 54%	70%	Employed: 48%	53%	Employed: 70%	74%
	Unemployed: 20%	12%	Unemployed: 24%	20%	Unemployed: 15%	13%
	Not in labour force: 17%	17%	Not in labour force: 15%	26%	Not in labour force: 9%	13%

The proportion of Indigenous 2000 TAFE graduates who were employed, both pre- and post-course, was highest in remote areas, bearing in mind that the source of these data (the *National student outcomes survey*) currently does not distinguish community development employment programs from other forms of employment. However, the biggest gain in employment occurred in metropolitan areas, where 70% of Indigenous graduates were employed after their course, compared with 54% before their course, an increase of 16%. Corresponding gains for the other regions were: rural 5%, and remote 4%. The post-course increases in students responding *Not in the labour force* in rural and remote regions (11% and 4%, respectively) are of interest. They may be partially due to some students electing to continue with study.

	Capital city/metropolitan centre		Rural		Remote		Totals	
Regional comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous apprentice/ trainee commencements.	Indigenous	39%	Indigenous	38%	Indigenous	22%	Indigenous	100%
	Non-Indigenous	67%	Non-Indigenous	30%	Non-Indigenous	2%	Non-Indigenous	100%
Participation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous apprentices and trainees by region, expressed as percentage of their respective populations (2001).								

Analysis of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous apprentice/trainee populations by region over time has shown the proportion of Indigenous apprentices and trainees in remote areas to be consistently more than ten times that of their non-Indigenous counterparts (39% vs 3% in 1997, 22% vs 2% in 2001). Indigenous proportions in rural areas were also higher, but to a much lesser degree. Conversely, the proportions of non-Indigenous apprentices and trainees in capital cities and metropolitan centres has generally been around double that of Indigenous apprentices and trainees (66% vs 23% in 1997, 67% vs 39% in 2001). The Indigenous proportion in capital cities and metropolitan centres increased from 23% in 1997 to 39% in 2001. This was at the expense of the proportion in remote areas which fell from 39% in 1997 to 22% in 2001. Regional proportions of the non-Indigenous apprentice and trainee population remained relatively constant over the same period.

Regional proportions of completions matched the commencement figures fairly closely, both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous apprentice/trainees.

General

Outcomes achieved by Indigenous students through vocational education and training should not be rigidly judged on the riteria as those for non-Indigenous students. Involvement in vocational education and training learning, in itself, gives the participants satisfaction and a sense of greater control over their lives. They are encouraged to seek out new opportunities, they are better able to make informed choices, and they are able to pass on benefits to others through their interactions with their families and community. Some examples:

- Introductory Vocational Education Certificate (IVEC) learners may be empowered to take an interest in their children's school work and help them with their homework, thus inspiring their children to develop a more positive outlook on school and the value it may bring them.
- As a result of vocational education and training participation learners are able to assist other members of their communities, not only by passing on some of the knowledge and skills gained, but also in assisting them to obtain help from or deal with government agencies, private institutions, and other organisations. Their knowledge and ability to interact with people and organisations outside of their own community can instil confidence and a willingness to venture further in others.
- In Indigenous society, employment does not have to be linked to a wage. Indigenous people see unpaid cultural or voluntary community work, and looking after family, as an occupation. Any vocational education and training outcome that contributes to their ability to perform these roles can be viewed as positive.

Indigenous learners in vocational education and training programs provided under the banner of Aboriginal education speak positively about the support the programs offer and the comfort they derive from working in a secure environment comprising their own people. However this can lead to a reluctance to move out of the comfort zone it represents, into mainstream vocational education and training programs offered in settings away from home. Commentators suggest that future research should consider this aspect – not just from the perspective of removing the barriers to transition into mainstream learning, but also as to whether it is desirable, or even necessary to promote transition. Perhaps there are better options.

Bearing in mind the above, there is concern that some urban and rural TAFE Aboriginal education programs are likely to be incorporated into mainstream program areas. The fear is that this could be detrimental to Aboriginal education because the programs would lose their autonomy, their symbolic importance would be lost, and so too would be their contribution to Indigenous learning in the form of bridging programs.

Relocation for the purpose of study is a big issue for Indigenous students. Not only are they more likely to need to relocate because they so often live in rural or remote locations, but their ties to their land and their community are so strong as to make any move a stressful experience. How to best help Indigenous learners and their families and communities deal with this issue is proposed as another area worthy of research.

The concept of 'Learning Communities' as outlined by Schwab and Sutherland (2001) could provide a useful model for vocational education and training provision in Indigenous communities. Although focussed on schools, many aspects of the program proposed could be applied to adult learning in Indigenous communities. For example, *Empowerment of participants,* where ways are found for participants to steer and shape the program, *Cultural awareness and sensitivity*, which includes acknowledgment of political tensions and cultural differences, *Family involvement*, to ensure other members of the family are aware of and can participate in learning activities, *Programs derived from local needs via consultation*, as a means of avoiding excessive and stifling uniformity, *Dedicated community liaison persons*, to build bridges and alliances within the larger learning community, *Skills transfer and skill development*, which invites the transfer of skills and knowledge among all members of the larger learning community (important where cross-cultural skills are a factor), *Focus on the home as well as the learning institution*, such as by involving other family members in developing literacy, *Dismantling boundaries between the learning institution and community*, such as by inviting the wider community into the institution and making the institutional pool of skills and opportunities accessible to the wider community. (Note: some of the names of the aspects cited have been modified slightly to better match them to the vocational education and training context.)

(Schwab, R G & Sutherland, D 2001, *Building Indigenous learning communities*, discussion paper number 225/2001, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research.)

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