

VET for secondary school students: insights and outcomes

Josie Misko, Melinda Lees and Emerick Chew
National Centre for Vocational Education Research



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About the research

VET for secondary school students: insights and outcomes

Josie Misko, Melinda Lees and Emerick Chew, NCVET

This research examines the merits of vocational education and training (VET) for secondary school students (VfSSS) in preparing students for work or further training from the perspectives of students, parents, industry stakeholders and employers. It also explores the models of provision used in government and non-government school sectors. Case studies of a sample of government and non-government schools that have been successful in state, territory and or national training award competitions, or nominated as having successful programs, provide useful learnings for the VET sector. The study also extends previously published analysis (Misko, Chew & Korbel 2020) to examine the differences in employment and training outcomes between students undertaking VfSSS compared with other student cohorts, including students who attained an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and those who did not, using data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY).

Key messages

- Students undertake VfSSS for a variety of, and sometimes multiple, reasons, indicating the broad appeal of VET courses for those who decide to take them. Reasons include getting a qualification, getting a full-time job when leaving school, starting an apprenticeship or traineeship, following a personal interest, and achieving an ATAR. Parents cited a similar range of academic and personal benefits for their child undertaking VfSSS.
- There are varied and differing perceptions among industry and employer participants on the benefits and challenges for students undertaking VfSSS studies, with a general acceptance that having school students in workplaces helps students gain experience and knowledge. The areas for attention and improvement identified by some included issues of:
 - industry currency
 - course relevance
 - training quality.
- Various models of VfSSS provision are favoured across jurisdictions and school sectors, including, for example, schools becoming registered training organisations (RTOs) in their own right. In many cases, schools use a combination of arrangements and partnerships with other schools to enable access to a broader range of offerings.
- Schools with successful VfSSS display a strong commitment to VET, a broad range of offerings, good relationships with employers and access to purpose-built facilities for training. Key challenges for the case study schools involve recruiting teachers with industry expertise and ensuring that teachers maintain their industry currency.
- An analysis of LSAY data shows that at the age of 22, VfSSS who had not attained an ATAR were more likely to be in full-time and permanent employment than other cohorts. The picture changes at the age of 25, with all other student cohorts not only more likely to be employed but also more likely to have completed a post-school qualification at bachelor or higher degree level than their VfSSS counterparts without an ATAR. This change is primarily due to ATAR students who went on to university finishing their studies and entering the labour market by the age of 25.

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Contents



Tables and figures	6
Executive summary	8
Trends in VfSSS	8
Why students and parents choose VfSSS	8
Models of VfSSS provision	9
Industry and employer perspectives on VfSSS	9
Factors which lead to effective practice	9
Employment and training outcomes	10
Introduction	11
Scope of the study	12
The findings	13
What we mean by VfSSS	13
VfSSS trends	13
Models of provision	13
A closer look at VfSSS arrangements in non-government schools	14
Why students and parents choose VfSSS	15
ATAR achievement is often desired by students and parents	16
Feedback from industry and employers	16
Factors that lead to successful outcomes at school	18
Employment and training outcomes	21
Final remarks	22
References	23
Appendix	24
A: Detailed scope and method	24
B: Trends in uptake	27
C: Non-government sector - a sample of jurisdictional models	29
D: Student and parent surveys	32
E: Industry and employer views	40
F: Case Studies	45
G: LSAY analysis of employment and training outcomes	72

Tables and figures

Tables

1	School RTOs by state/territory of RTO head office and school sector, 2021	14
B1	VET for secondary school students enrolments by training package, 2020 (%)	28
B2	Students undertaking VET for secondary school students that are school-based apprentices and trainees by state/territory, 2010 & 2020 (%)	28
D1	VET for secondary school students surveyed by training package of course in which enrolled, 2021 (%)	34
D2	Students' reason(s) for doing a VET course while still at school, 2021 (%)	35
D3	Students' aspirations for after final year of schooling, 2021 (%)	35
D4	Parents surveyed by the training package of the VET for secondary school students program in which their child was enrolled, 2021 (%)	37
D5	Parents' perceived benefits for their child doing a VET course while still at school, 2021 (%)	38
D6	Parental aspirations for their child beyond the child's final year of schooling, 2021 (%)	39
F1	Students enrolled in VET for secondary school programs at Grace Lutheran College by year level and campus, 2021(%)	47
F2	Delivery locations and funding source for VET for secondary school students programs delivered by Harvester College, 2021	50
F3	VET qualification enrolments at Bendigo Senior Secondary College, 3 February 2021	56
F4	VET Programs at Guilford Young College, 2021	67
G1	Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and labour force status at age 25, 2019 (%)	72
G2	Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and full-time/part-time employment status at ages 22 and 25, 2016 & 2019 (%)	72
G3	Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and full-time/part-time employment status at age 25, 2019 (%)	73
G4	Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and permanent/casual employment status at ages 22 and 25, 2016 & 2019 (%)	73
G5	Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and permanent/casual employment status at age 25, 2019 (%)	74
G6	Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and highest level of qualification completed by ages 22 and 25, 2016 & 2019 (%)	74
G7	Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and highest level of qualification completed by age 25, 2019 (%)	75
G8	Labour force status at age 25 for students who undertook VET subjects at school by location of the school, 2019 (%)	75
G9	Labour force status at age 25 for students who undertook VET subjects at school by state/territory of student residence, 2019 (%)	75

Figures

B1	VET for secondary school students, Australia 2010–20	27
B2	VET for secondary school students enrolments by qualification level, 2010–20	27



Executive summary

Trends in VfSSS

The number of students in vocational education and training (VET) for secondary school students (VfSSS) has ranged from about 230 000 to 260 000 over the past 10 years.

During this period, certificate II qualifications have been the most popular VET qualification undertaken by secondary school students (131 220 students enrolled in 2020), followed by certificate III (88 720 in 2020) and certificate I (12 520 in 2020). However, certificate III programs have increased in popularity over the last few years.

School-based apprentices and trainees represent a small proportion (7.4% in 2020) of VfSSS, with the most common in business services, retail services and tourism, travel and hospitality.

Why students and parents choose VfSSS

Feedback sought from students and parents sheds light on how decisions for students to undertake a VfSSS course were informed.

- Many (41.1%) of the students surveyed planned to achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) on completion of Year 12. Of these, more than two-thirds (68.4%) intended to count their VET studies towards their ATAR. Students identified a range of academic and non-academic reasons for doing so, including: to get a certificate; for enjoyment and interest; being likely to do well; recommended by friends; and broadening their post-school education, training and employment opportunities.
- For nearly two-thirds (64.5%) of the students surveyed, one of the reasons for doing VfSSS was ‘to get a qualification’, while for about half (49.8%), it was ‘to help them get a full-time job when leaving school’. For 45%, it was ‘to be able to use the facilities, equipment and materials that are available in the course’. Over two-thirds (70.6%) of the students had decided to enrol in the VET course themselves.
- Over three-quarters (77.5%) of the students surveyed indicated that they had ‘always wanted to learn the skills and knowledge’ in the course they had chosen, followed by ‘I want to get a job in this industry’ (52.8%).
- Over half (59.7%) of the students surveyed described their aspiration for their final year of schooling as being ‘to complete Year 12 and obtain their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE)’, while for 27.7% it was ‘to achieve an ATAR’.
- For 60.6% of the students, what best described their post-school aspirations was to undertake further education or training, followed by gaining full-time/part-time or casual employment (28.6%).
- The majority of parents surveyed (79%) had encouraged their child to enrol in a VET course while at school, with most reporting they had received sufficient information to inform their decision.
- Three-quarters (75.1%) of the parents surveyed reported that a benefit for their child undertaking VfSSS was ‘to get a qualification’. Just under half (47.6%) wanted their child ‘to complete Year 12 and achieve their SSCE’ in the final year of schooling, almost a third (30.6%) wanted their child ‘to achieve an ATAR’ and 70.7% wanted their child to go on to further education or training.

Models of VfSSS provision

The various jurisdictions and sectors support diverse models of VfSSS provision. VfSSS can be undertaken as part of a senior secondary school certificate; however, there are differences in how VET contributes to the achievement of a senior secondary school certificate across jurisdictions. Studies that lead to nationally recognised¹ VET qualifications must be delivered by a registered training organisation (RTO), or in conjunction with one. Although some schools are RTOs in their own right, the majority of schools generally work in partnership with an RTO. Schools may also employ external RTOs to deliver and assess the training.

Industry and employer perspectives on VfSSS

Across industries there is general acceptance that having school students in workplaces to gain experience and knowledge benefits students, industry and employers, although with some caveats. These relate to the students' limited exposure to occupational knowledge, skills and opportunities for practice, while a number of industries express concerns about the extent of student maturity for some higher qualifications and skill areas, the competence and industry currency of teachers, and student access to safe facilities, tools and equipment.

Industry groups raised specific issues relating to trade-related pathways, including school-based apprentices and the impacts on competency wage progression, centred on a perception that students may not have achieved the skills to the industry standard required for the workplace, due to the limited amount of time spent in the workplace. Pre-apprenticeship or prevocational programs were favoured by some industry sectors but not others.

Employers providing student work placements experience challenges in finding enough activities and an appropriate workplace trainer to work with the students. Tradespersons can be helped to complete jobs in good time when paired with interested students, but their progress is hindered when paired with struggling students.

Factors which lead to effective practice

Case studies were conducted with eight schools with successful VET programs. These schools demonstrate a strong commitment to VET, with dedicated, qualified VfSSS managers and staff. Purpose-built facilities, including trade training centres, recreation centres, hair salons and commercial kitchens are used to deliver the practical components of various programs. Where purpose-built facilities do not exist within the school (for example, for trade training, childcare and aged care), partnerships are established with other schools with trade training centres, or arrangements are made for students to use nearby facilities.

Key challenges for the case study schools involve recruiting teachers with industry expertise, ensuring that teachers maintain their industry currency and getting parental support for a VET pathway for students.

1 'Training that is nationally recognised or accredited is training that leads to vocational qualifications and credentials that are recognised across Australia. Only registered training organisations (RTOs) that meet government quality standards [including] TAFEs, private providers, enterprise registered training organisations, vocational divisions of universities, community RTOs and schools that are RTOs can provide nationally recognised training. Nationally recognised training is listed on the National Training Register (training.gov.au) and includes accredited courses, endorsed training package qualifications, training package skill sets and associated subjects' (Naidu, Stanwick & Frazer 2020).

Employment and training outcomes

An analysis of LSAY² data was also undertaken to investigate the employment and training outcomes of students who had undertaken VET studies at secondary school. This analysis found that, at the age of 22 years, there were no statistically significant differences between the labour force status of VfSSS and non-VfSSS; however, VfSSS without an ATAR were more likely to be in full-time and permanent employment compared with other student groups.

At 25 years of age, differences between the VfSSS students with and without an ATAR begin to emerge:

- VfSSS without an ATAR were less likely than their VfSSS ATAR counterparts and non-VfSSS cohorts to be employed by the age of 25.
- VfSSS without an ATAR had improved training outcomes at certificate III and above VET qualification levels than VfSSS with an ATAR.
- All other student cohorts were more likely than VfSSS without an ATAR to have completed a post-school qualification at bachelor or higher degree level by the age of 25 years.

The differences are primarily due to ATAR students who went on to university finishing their studies and entering the labour market by the age of 25.

2 The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) data collection is managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). LSAY tracks the journey of young people through education, work and life from the ages of 15 to 25 years.

Introduction

Over the past 10 years, many policy initiatives have been implemented to increase Year 12 attainment rates and to promote VET for secondary school students as a viable pathway to encourage this. The main aim of these initiatives has been to help students to transition to employment or further education and training.

Despite the focus on improving attainment rates and increasing the delivery of VfSSS, there is little understanding of the effectiveness of these programs in improving employment and promoting further training outcomes. According to the Joyce Review (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2019), there are also many other concerns, in particular:

- The VfSSS pathway is not often highly valued, and in many instances, regarded as an option for disengaged students.
- There is no consistent, system-wide approach to the delivery and funding of VfSSS, creating inequity between schools.
- The quality of content and delivery of VfSSS is perceived to be problematic.

Recent initiatives and reviews designed to improve the ability of the education system to prepare young Australians for work or further training have included: *Melbourne Declaration on educational goals for young Australians* (Ministerial Council for Education, Employment and Youth Affairs 2008); *Compact with young Australians* (COAG 2009); *Preparing secondary students for work* (Education Council 2014), *Strengthening skills: expert review of Australia's vocational education and training system – Joyce review* (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 2019), *Looking to the future: report of the review of senior secondary pathways into work, further education and training – Shergold review* (Department of Education, Skills and Employment 2020); *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) education declaration* (Education Council 2019) and the establishment of the National Careers Institute (2019).

A recent overview of how senior secondary school students can better understand pathways that support transition into work and further education or training (NCVER 2020) found:

- Students and parents still place a greater focus on the merits of higher education pathways despite evidence that VET occupational pathways are in increasing demand in the Australian workforce.
- For some students it may be better to move into alternative pathways (for example, an apprenticeship or full-time work) rather than staying on at school.
- A range of 'practical factors', such as cost of education (including living expenses) and proximity of study to home, are important in influencing the choices of post-secondary pathways for young people.
- Barriers that prevent students having equal access to employment and study pathways continue to exist, particularly for young people from lower socioeconomic circumstances, Indigenous Australians and those living in geographically remote areas.
- Schools play a significant role in preparing students for further education and training by providing them with career advice that can assist in changing their perceptions of the VET sector.

While the findings of these various studies contribute to an understanding of the employment and further education and training outcomes for students undertaking VET in secondary school, little is known about a student's motivation for their choice of employment and study pathways, including why students who attain an ATAR choose to do VfSSS studies. In the light of the improved employment outcomes for students who undertake a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship, we also do not understand some of the hesitancy of both students and employers to engage with these pathways.

Scope of the study

This study analyses data and information from the National VET in Schools Collection, online surveys of students and parents, and consultations with non-government school sector bodies, employers, industry and relevant schools to investigate the factors or attributes of VfSSS that provide the best results for secondary students transitioning from school to work and further education and training, with the aim of informing strategies for improving the take-up, quality and relevance of VfSSS.

Previous research by Misko, Chew and Korbelt (2020) used LSAY data to look at the five-year employment and training outcomes for students who had undertaken VET at school, including those who had attained an ATAR. This research expands on this analysis, our objective being to better understand differences between student cohorts at the ages of 22 and 25 in terms of their employment and further study outcomes.

Information about the methodology used for this research may be found at appendix A.

The findings

What we mean by VfSSS

VfSSS refers to VET studies undertaken in secondary schools as part of a senior secondary certificate of education, with completion leading to, or providing credit towards, a VET qualification and a senior secondary school certificate. VfSSS can be taken in all jurisdictions and school sectors and is delivered by RTOs (or in partnership with one) and must be compliant with required government quality assurance standards and conditions (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities (ACACA, 2020)). Training can be delivered in schools by school RTOs (that is, the school is also an RTO), and public or private RTOs through third-party arrangements with schools (auspicing), or through external providers.

We begin by providing some background data on uptake and participation.

VfSSS trends

- The number of students in VfSSS has ranged from about 230 000 to 260 000 over the past 10 years (appendix B, figure B1).
- Certificate II qualifications have historically been the most popular qualifications for VfSSS, with over 130 000 students enrolled in these qualifications in 2020 (appendix B, figure B2). The number of students enrolled in certificate I level qualifications has been declining since 2010, while students enrolled in certificate III level qualifications has been steadily increasing. Other qualifications, such as certificate IVs and diplomas, have remained a small part of VfSSS.
- The most popular training package for VfSSS is Tourism, Travel and Hospitality, followed by Business Services, and Sport and Recreation (appendix B, table B1).
- Students can also undertake a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship (SBAT) as part of VfSSS. Just over 7% of VfSSS in Australia in 2020 were SBATs.
 - In 2020, Queensland had the highest (10.3%) percentage of SBATs.
 - SBATs are most common in the Business Services, Retail Services and Tourism, Travel and Hospitality training packages, with nearly half (45.1%) of SBAT students enrolled in one of these training packages in 2020.

Models of provision

Diverse models of VfSSS provision are utilised across jurisdictions and sectors. VfSSS can be undertaken as part of a senior secondary school certificate, although its contribution may differ across jurisdictions. While some schools are RTOs in their own right, schools generally work in partnership with other RTOs or have training delivered and assessed by external RTOs. Some schools will have a combination of arrangements.

To identify the number of school RTOs across jurisdictions and public and private sectors, we analysed data from training.gov.au, the National Register on Vocational Education and Training, which contains information on nationally recognised training and RTOs. As of January 2021, there were 403 school RTOs on the national register, of which almost three-quarters (73.2%) were in Queensland (table 1) and of these, 63% were government sector school RTOs. In New South Wales, Catholic sector school RTOs accounted for over half (56.3%) of all school RTOs, and in Victoria, independent sector school RTOs accounted for 44% of all school RTOs, followed by government sector schools (42%).

Table 1 School RTOs by state/territory of RTO head office and school sector, 2021

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	ACT	NT	Tas.	Total
School – Catholic	9	7	59	-	1	6	1	1	84
School – government	4	21	198	4	19	5	2	1	254
School – independent	3	22	38	-	1	-	1	-	65
Total	16	50	295	4	21	11	4	2	403

Note: training.gov.au includes all current status (current, current (suspended), current (re-registration pending), current (in administration/liquidation).

Source: training.gov.au (as at 4 January 2021).

A comprehensive documentation of VfSSS provision (including for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships) across jurisdictions is available in Polesel et al. (2019). This work was done to provide information for the New South Wales Department of Education, but its evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the NSW approach can provide useful information for other jurisdictions interested in improving their programs. This work also provides a mapping of jurisdictional approaches to the contribution VfSSS makes to SSCEs and ATAR, and arrangements for structured workplace learning (in some jurisdictions known as work placements), curriculum and delivery.

A closer look at VfSSS arrangements in non-government schools

While the Polesel et al. (2019) study provides a great deal of information on VfSSS in government schools, in this study we also focus on arrangements in the non-government sector. Consultations with associations for independent schools and dioceses for Catholic schools found:

- Most schools in the non-government sector are not RTOs.
- While it is common for Queensland Catholic sector schools to be RTOs, this situation is rare for schools in Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory and New South Wales.
- Where Queensland schools are RTOs, they may be registered with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), which has delegation under the national VET regulator (ASQA), or registered with ASQA individually in their own right.
- Central bodies such as the Associations of Independent Schools or Catholic sector dioceses in different states and territories may also act as the RTO for the schools in their association or dioceses. Such bodies often have full-time advisors to offer schools advice on secondary school curriculum, including VET. At the school level, all schools will have a designated person (including VET coordinator or equivalent) responsible for VET.
- A combination of auspicing and clustering arrangements enables many schools to broaden their offerings for their own students and for students from schools with which they have partnerships. Both public and private providers are used to deliver or auspice training.
- The type of program provided in schools often depends on the creativity and energy of the VET coordinator, their ability to develop networks with industry and employers, and their access to time, resources and facilities to run an effective program.
- SBATs are on offer but the extent to which they are taken up depends on the school profile and its geographic location.

In appendix C we give a brief account of the diverse approaches used in schools that are members of the Australian Independent Schools Associations in New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania, and schools that come under the umbrella of the Brisbane, Rockhampton and Southern Tasmania Catholic dioceses in Australia.

Why students and parents choose VfSSS

Online surveys designed to assist us to understand why students and parents choose VfSSS were completed by 231 students and 229 parents. In appendix D, we give the questions asked of students and parents and provide more details on the survey findings.

Students

Students undertake a VfSSS course for a variety of reasons and sometimes for multiple reasons, indicating the broad appeal that VET courses can have for those who decide to take them. By far the most popular reason, given by two-thirds of students, was to gain a qualification. Around half of the respondents wanted the course to help them get a full-time job after leaving school and just under half wanted to be able to use the facilities, equipment and materials that are available in the course. Another reason considered by just over 40% of the students was to follow a personal interest. A third of the students wanted the course to contribute to achieving an ATAR. Students also chose VfSSS for enjoyment and fun, and to gain experience in their intended post-school education and training or employment.

Students gave a variety of reasons for why they had chosen their specific course; over three-quarters of them indicated they had always wanted to learn the skills and knowledge taught; just over half wanted to get a job in the industry; and just over a quarter wanted to undertake an apprenticeship/traineeship in the industry.

The main aspiration for almost 60% of students for their final year of schooling, was to complete Year 12 and obtain their senior secondary certificate of education. For 27.7% it was to achieve an ATAR. Post school, 60.6% hoped to move into further education and training, with just over a quarter wanting to move into employment.

Parents

Parents identified a range of academic and other personal benefits for their child undertaking VfSSS. The most popular benefit was to help their child get a qualification (75.1%), followed by getting a full-time job after leaving school (54.6%), starting an apprenticeship or traineeship (44.1%), using the facilities equipment and materials available in the course (38.9%) and to achieve an ATAR (32.8%). Other benefits mentioned by the parents included: personal development, increased engagement and enjoyment, broadening options available, and gaining experience/credits in intended post-school education and training or employment.

Almost half (47.6%) of the parents wanted their child to complete Year 12 and obtain their senior secondary certificate of education; another third (30.6%) wanted their child to achieve an ATAR. Some parents had a range of other aspirations, including for their child to: enjoy school or be engaged in school; have a better understanding of future pathway options; and gain experience to help with further education or employment opportunities.

Beyond the final year of schooling, over two-thirds of the parents wanted their child to undertake further education or training (in VET or university). Just over a tenth wanted them to gain a full-time, part-time or casual job. Other parental aspirations included giving their child opportunities to follow their future education and employment dreams and passions.

ATAR achievement is often desired by students and parents

Of those students who planned to achieve an ATAR, more than two-thirds (68.4%) planned to use their VET studies to count towards their ATAR, while 26.3% were not sure and 4.2% did not plan on using their VET studies to count towards their ATAR.

Reasons given by the students for undertaking VET studies as part of an ATAR included:

- for enjoyment/interest
- to enable a break from studies
- to complete a certificate
- its affinity with other selected subjects
- compatibility with the timetable
- highly skilled or good at the subject and therefore likely to do well
- less work required
- broadened post-school education and training and employment opportunities and enhanced experience in chosen area of study or industry
- recommendation from friends.

A third of parents wanted their child to achieve an ATAR.

The frequency with which students and their parents want VfSSS studies to improve student ATAR may be problematic for education and training systems, which believe that this practice ‘devalues and undermines the purpose of VET’ (South Australian Department of Education 2019, p.21).

Feedback from industry and employers

Since the introduction of VfSSS into the formal VET system, there has been a strong interest in the ability of the education and training system to service the needs of industry, not only by upskilling students and workers through post-school VET, but also through the secondary school system. This continues to hold true, although during our consultations industry and employers raised some caveats relating to the benefits and challenges.³

These tend to divide along industry lines and the level and type of vocational qualification. It is generally accepted that introducing students to vocational studies during high school is worthwhile. It eases students into the workforce and enables employers to fulfil their sense of obligation to the community and to their industry. However, representatives from some industries indicated that, at times, they experienced slight inconveniences as workplace trainers needed to find time to work with the students and they also needed to ensure that students are paired with an appropriate trainer. One view was that it was beneficial to get committed students into the industry early.

Group training organisations (GTOs) for their part inform us about the hesitancy or willingness of host employers to have SBATs: they report that host employers generally want full-time apprentices. In industries that are especially affected by inclement weather (like building and construction), employers

3 In our sample we include organisations representing workers and employers across a range of different industries (see appendix A). We had small take-up of our request for information, so our findings need to be considered in this light. However, the information we have received comes from industry associations (both employer and employee associations) with strong views about the content of VfSSS.

may not need students on the days on which they are rostered and furthermore might require them for a number of consecutive days (so that jobs can be completed on time).

During consultations, the great majority of employer respondents did not provide a definitive view about whether or not they preferred students to have received training via VfSSS, or a post-school VET or a TAFE program. Rather, they were interested in selecting students according to their life and workplace experiences to date, and their motivations for working in the industry. Employers in the construction industry preferred potential employees (including full-time apprentices and SBATs) to have gained the necessary industry certificates and essential training (for example, white card, safety awareness and asbestos training). They also wanted them to be familiar with the tools and activities of the trade. In terms of providing placements for VfSSS, some were pleased that the student's insurance was covered by VfSSS.

Other issues were highlighted, relating to the inability of VfSSS to:

- provide students with sufficient exposure to workplace practice, knowledge and skill to warrant their being assessed as competent to industry standard for certain competencies in the trades
- develop skills requiring higher levels of maturity (for example, leadership and management skills, and customer service skills).

Student maturity is not the only issue in question, but also:

- the suitability of VfSSS for some areas,⁴ the competence of teachers to deliver skills training to industry standards and the accessibility of facilities, tools, and equipment and their adequacy (an issue for specific trades in building and construction, electrical, modern manufacturing and motor trades)
- the limited amount of time that students in VfSSS spend on site, especially in construction, where the *work* would have progressed substantially between student on-site placements
- safety and adequate preparation in certain knowledge-based subjects. Issues of safety are of concern to all trades, including electrical trades, who also want students to be undertaking higher-level maths in Years 11 and 12.

Industry stakeholders expressed a range of views and concerns with respect to the 'equivalence' of the outcomes of VfSSS programs to the industry standard knowledge and skills required in the workplace. This was especially the case for trade-related programs that provided credit towards a trade apprenticeship, with implications for competency-based wage progression. Under competency-based wage progression, if the commencing apprentice has already completed the specified proportion of competencies through a pre-apprenticeship (for example, through a Certificate II in Construction), which is equivalent to the competencies of a first-year apprentice in the trade certificate, then many awards require employers to start the commencing apprentice at second-year wages. A number of stakeholders felt that the lack of industry-based work experience in the pre-apprenticeship program meant that these graduates had not reached the level of industry standard competence in the workplace that would have been achieved by a first-year apprentice, who had commenced directly into the trade certificate.

4 The Western Australian Retail and Personal Services Skills Advisory Council (2018) conducted consultations with employers and reported that employers 'over a broad range of retail industry sectors have stated strongly that they would not employ people with the VET in Schools qualifications of Certificate II in Retail Services and Certificate III in Retail as they have no confidence in the ability of the person to carry out the required tasks on the job. Employers stated that these young people had no understanding of the industry or what a job is and could not contribute to the business'.

In some cases, stakeholders were more comfortable if the training program was undertaken as a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship, but even then, some felt that the difference in the overall time spent in the workplace in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship compared with that of a full-time apprenticeship was significant enough to warrant concern.

A number of industry stakeholders proposed alternative programs as a means of addressing this issue, including developing prevocational or preparatory, curriculum-based courses that either did not provide credit towards nationally recognised competencies or at least limited the amount of credit that could be attained.

Employers who have provided work placements for students in VfSSS of two of our case study schools, and GTOs that also take on SBATs, generally accept the notion that providing work placements for VfSSS has benefits for students because these enable them to move gradually into the workforce, also providing them with practical workplace skills and credit points towards their SSCE. The benefits for employers include developing student skills in preferred ways (that is, workplace-specific), having a steady stream of workers into the trade or occupation (especially where there are skill shortages), and trialling students before making a longer-term commitment to them.

Challenges reported by employers were:

- providing enough suitable activities for students in the workplace, matching students up with the appropriate workplace trainer, ensuring students can travel to and from the workplace (especially when working late or starting early, and in relation to students who do not yet have a driver's licence)
- reducing the use of mobile phones in the workplace, particularly since some families want their children to have their phones on them while some employers prefer them not to do so
- keeping students safe on site.

Keeping students interested when they are on site is a more difficult challenge for both schools and employers. It is felt that an interested and capable student can help the tradesperson or workplace supervisor to complete their tasks in good time, but a student who is not interested or capable may well slow them down. Having the students on site for only one or two non-consecutive days a week is often difficult for employers because students may not remember what they had learnt the last time they were in the workplace. The Head Start program (currently being trialled in some schools in Victoria) attempts to deal with this by requiring SBATs to spend at least two or three days a week in the workplace (representing at least 13 hours of paid work).

The suggestions for improvement provided by respondents are generally concerned with addressing the issues identified above and are reported in more detail in appendix E, which also includes the questions put to industry stakeholders and employers as part of this study.

Factors that lead to successful outcomes at school

Here we draw lessons from interviews with government and non-government school sector RTO managers and VET coordinators or their equivalents, specifically those whose schools have been identified by experts or central administrators as having strong VfSSS programs, or who were winners of various state,

territory, or national training awards.⁵ Their insights can help us to understand what distinguishes their delivery models such that they receive nominations or awards, as well as assist other schools to develop and deliver successful VfSSS. We draw lessons from four government colleges (three from Victoria and one from the Northern Territory) and four non-government colleges (two from Tasmania and one each from Queensland and South Australia). The detailed findings are provided in appendix F.

A strong commitment to VET

What stands out as a key attribute among these successful schools and colleges is the strong commitment to VET at principal, RTO manager, VET coordinator and VET staff levels. Such commitment is seen in the dedication of the staff to developing good relationships with other schools and colleges to broaden offerings for students, as well as establishing networks with industry and employers, with the aim of sourcing structured workplace learning (SWL) and work experience opportunities, along with work placements and jobs for SBATs. This is especially important in schools and school systems lacking a centralised coordination of these placements. Having VET subjects time-tabled within subject lines is another feature of these schools. This approach to time-tabling provides greater flexibility for schools and students and means that students do not have to forgo too much schoolwork while they are in workplaces. Commitment to VET is also displayed by the teachers and trainers, who are reported as being passionate about their industry and the areas they teach, keeping students engaged in suitable placements and promoting the benefits of VET to parents.

Dedicated VfSSS management and training teams

The case study schools in our sample are divided between those that are RTOs in their own right with an RTO manager, and those that are run by a dedicated team under the leadership of a VET coordinator (or equivalent). Schools that are RTOs are advantaged because they are in a position to determine the qualifications for which they will seek scope of registration, those they will source through partnerships with other external RTOs, and those they can offer to other schools seeking training. Being an RTO also means that the RTO manager can get on with the job of focusing on compliance issues, along with other tasks of running the RTO. Where the school has chosen not to be an RTO in its own right, the role of managing the VfSSS is allocated to a dedicated VET coordinator (or equivalent), who leads the team of teachers and trainers involved in VfSSS. Irrespective of whether the school is an RTO, the main aim is to recruit teachers and trainers with the requisite industry backgrounds and experience, which can sometimes be a challenge.

One of the case study schools (in Victoria) is trialling a relatively new program (the Head Start Program) for SBATs, whereby 17 schools form a cluster under the management of a director. A dedicated team of cluster coordinators applies a case-management approach to monitor the progress of the SBATs and helps to resolve any timetabling issues that arise. The cluster approach also enables the college to reach into multiple other schools to source SBATs.

5 These schools are from government and non-government sectors and include: Circular Head Christian School (Tasmania), Grace Lutheran College (Queensland), Cardjin College (South Australia), Harvester College (Victoria), Bendigo Senior Secondary College (Victoria), Mildura Senior College (Victoria), Guilford Young College (Tasmania), and Taminmin College (Northern Territory).

The Head Start Program prescribes the number of days that an SBAT must be in work; namely, two or three days per week (and at least 13 hours in total), which is considered to help with the flexibility of the program. Such an approach can be used to address some employer concerns over SBATs having limited exposure to, or sufficient, work tasks and experience in the trade or other occupations.

A centralised approach to sourcing work placements and structured workplace learning placements by dedicated liaison officers or trainers helps in the smooth running of the placements: at the school level staff do not have to either rely on students to locate their work placements or spend time themselves identifying them. Including VET studies on a VET subject line helps to ensure that students do not miss out on other work when they are in workplaces.

A variety of marketing approaches

Open days, information nights, school tours, discovery days, and course taster programs are among the various ways by which schools market VfSSS to their own and potential students, as well as to parents. Some only rely on word of mouth. Interviews with career counsellors and teachers are also used to assist students to determine what a course might entail while enabling the school to confirm whether the student is making the right choice. In addition to these events, schools market programs to students and parents via school handbooks, school newsletters, emails, lists of subject offerings, and prepared videos. Using former students and employers to visit schools and make presentations to students and parents is another marketing strategy. A 'GET SET 4 VET' event used in one school, which involves students rotating through different course learning experiences, is another approach that has been found to be successful.

Purpose-built facilities

Having access to purpose-built facilities, belonging to the school or located close by, is another theme that emerges from the case studies. These facilities include trade training centres (for the trades); recreation centres (for sport and recreation and fitness); and salons for training in hairdressing and beauty. Commercial kitchens have been used for training in kitchen operations and hospitality. Partnerships with nearby aged care facilities for training in individual support programs and childcare centres for early childhood education and care training have also been used. These enable students to learn in specialised environments and to use state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for this learning.

Adequate time and resources

A successful VfSSS program requires access to adequate time and resources, including time and resources to enable staff to maintain industry currency, as well as time for staff to meet with teachers from other schools for professional development. Time is required for teachers to develop the efficiencies required to run a successful program. In some programs staff maintain their skills training at times when students are not at school and are in workplaces for their workplace learning.

Positive feedback from parents and caregivers and other teachers

One of the sources of satisfaction and an indicator of success for some RTO managers and VET coordinators is receiving positive feedback from parents/caregivers and teachers when a change in student behaviour either at school or at home is noticed. For others, it is seeing students graduate and enter the field in which they trained.

Challenges

Some schools encounter challenges attracting teachers from industry, keeping up with training package requirements and ensuring that staff maintain their industry currency. Across the schools, attracting parental support for a VfSSS pathway is often identified as a challenge.

Funding

Across government and non-government sectors, schools are generally only expected to cover the cost of maintaining equipment. However, schools can charge for consumables and materials. Non-government schools generally do not charge extra for tuition.

Employment and training outcomes

To this point we have considered the experiences of industry and employers, as well as the characteristics of successful schools, in a bid to understand how these might explain the factors that lead to a better transitioning of students undertaking VfSSS into the workforce or into further training. Jurisdictional models of provision have also provided us with some background information on the VfSSS systems and arrangements in government and non-government school systems.

In this section we take the analysis in a different direction and look at student outcomes. We use ATAR attainment as a distinguishing feature to, firstly, to focus on the employment and training outcomes for students who have traditionally been focused on VET studies. Following this, given that some students take up VfSSS studies to help them to improve their study outcomes, we also examine the employment and training outcomes for this group. Other cohorts in the school population are not interested in VfSSS and not interested in getting an ATAR, while others are interested in getting an ATAR but not interested in pursuing VfSSS studies. The analysis helps us to identify a meaningful evaluation of the employment and training outcomes of VfSSS. Analysing data in terms of ATAR attainment also enables us to recognise more clearly that students who undertake VfSSS includes those who also see their futures as moving into higher education.

Having an ATAR also says something about a student's ability to study at higher levels, which is generally believed to lead to improved labour market outcomes over the longer term. In our previous study (Misko, Chew & Korbel 2020), we looked at the employment and training outcomes for students at the age of 22, a cut-off point that did not give a good coverage for some students still in education and training. On this occasion we use the LSAY data (controlling for ATAR attainment) to understand the employment outcomes of students at the age of 25 years, for those who undertook VfSSS or not, and compare their outcomes with younger age groups. As a bonus this analysis enables us to understand outcomes for ATAR-attaining students.

While for students at the age of 22 years we found no statistically significant differences between the labour force status of VfSSS participants who had or had not attained an ATAR and non-VfSSS participants who had or had not attained an ATAR, by the age of 25 years some differences start to emerge.

- At the age of 22, VfSSS without an ATAR were more likely than other groups to be in full-time employment; they were also more likely to be in permanent employment and less likely to be in casual employment. This could in part be due to the significant proportion of this cohort that were undertaking or had completed an apprenticeship after leaving school.
- At the age of 25, VfSSS with an ATAR are more likely than VfSSS without an ATAR to have a job, indicating that having an ATAR may be used to distinguish between different groups of students.

- At the age of 25, VfSSS without an ATAR were also less likely than students with an ATAR (who had or had not done VfSSS) to be in full-time or part-time jobs or permanent jobs.

In summary, the job outcomes of VfSSS without an ATAR remain steady with time in the workforce, whereas the job outcomes for those with an ATAR increase substantially. This largely reflects the fact that, by the age of 25, many ATAR students may have finished their university studies and entered the labour market. What is noteworthy is that the job outcomes of those who have not undertaken VfSSS and do not have an ATAR have also improved with time.

By comparison with other groups, VfSSS without an ATAR are also more likely to find themselves not working at the age of 25. If the aim of VfSSS is to ease students into the workforce, then it may also have a greater role to play in helping this group to stay in or get work following their schooling. The Queensland Government's Link and Launch program may have some useful lessons for how to help students navigate their options to prevent their falling into this group.

When comparing highest level of qualifications completed for 22- and 25-year-olds, we find that VfSSS without an ATAR are more likely to show improved training outcomes at certificate IV and above VET qualification levels than non-VfSSS. VfSSS with an ATAR and non-VfSSS (with or without an ATAR) have improved training outcomes at bachelor degree or higher qualifications than VfSSS without an ATAR. This suggests that these groups may still have been studying at the age of 22, when VfSSS without an ATAR were found to have better employment outcomes.

Location of the school was found not to affect employment outcomes, regardless of ATAR attainment. Nevertheless, differences are found at state and territory level, with students residing in Victoria more likely than those in New South Wales and Queensland to be employed at the age of 25.

Final remarks

Linking factors that lead to the successful transitioning of secondary school students into work and further training to models of provision at system or school level is an ambitious task. Nevertheless, we now know more about what can be done to either establish VfSSS or improve it to meet the needs of students, parents, industry and employers more successfully. We also know more about the role of ATAR attainment in employment and training outcomes. It is most important to understand that one size cannot fit all and that schools, as well as education and training systems, must decide on the approaches that will best suit their particular school communities and geographic and industry profiles. Lessons can be provided by our case studies of successful schools. Sizeable proportions of VfSSS students planned to use their VET studies to contribute to their ATAR for a variety of reasons, including personal interest and broadening prospects.



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Appendix

Appendix A: Detailed scope and method

In this study we investigate the factors or attributes of VfSSS that provide the best results for transitioning secondary students from school to work and further education and training, with the aim of informing future strategies for improving the take-up, quality and relevance of VfSSS. We also use LSAY data to compare the employment and training outcomes of students undertaking VET studies in secondary school with other cohorts.

The research is conducted in six phases.

Analysis of data on VfSSS uptake and participation

For context, data from the National VET in Schools Collection from 2009 and 2020 are used to track trends over the last decade in:

- student numbers
- qualifications uptake
- school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

Online surveys of students and parents

We also investigate students' motivations for deciding which pathway to undertake at school and examine in more detail the views of parents helping their children to make these decisions. We had originally intended to run a series of focus groups with students and parents to do this; however, the onset of the pandemic in Australia meant that such face-to-face contact was not easily achievable, and we had to look for alternative ways to collect the information. We settled on separate online surveys of students and parents using the SurveyMonkey tool.

The student survey collected information on:

- how students go about accessing and evaluating advice on courses and programs, and the choices available to them
- why students choose to combine ATAR studies with VfSSS and their perceptions of the merits of doing both.

The parent survey collected information on:

- how parents access and evaluate information for helping their children to make decisions
- their perceptions of the merits of different pathways and the evidence on which they base these judgments.

Consultations about jurisdictional and school sector models

Consultations with administrators and representatives from a sample of government and non-government schooling sectors were undertaken to collect information on the typical models used to deliver VfSSS, including:

- RTO status
- clustering and partnerships with other schools and RTOs

- auspicing arrangements
- delivery by external RTOs
- interrogations of training.gov.au data to investigate the numbers of school RTOs across jurisdictions.

Consultations with industry representatives and individual employers

We consulted with industry bodies (including industry associations) and employers themselves (including GTOs) to better understand their views on the benefits and challenges to being involved in providing placements or jobs for VfSSS. We also investigated their perceptions on the merits of SBATs and what could be done to make this format a more attractive and viable proposition. Employers were asked to explore the merits and barriers to employing a VfSSS graduate by comparison with a graduate or student from other VET programs. Once again, the COVID-19 pandemic meant we could not conduct face-to-face focus groups, so requests for information were sent out by email, and consultations held via telephone conversations. In a few instances, we undertook consultations via Microsoft Teams.

Among the participants (sending completed requests for information or participating in interviews) were representatives from companies, unions and employers from a wide range of industries, including:

Employer and employee stakeholders and associations

- Housing Industry Associations
- Australian Meat Industry Council
- Australian Manufacturing Workers Union
- Electrical Trades Union
- Childcare Alliance
- Sport and Recreation Association
- Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union
- Motor Trades Association
- Master Builders Association
- Australian Workers Union
- National Retail Association

- Plumbing
- Steel and welding
- Racing

Training providers including group training companies from:

- Master Builders Association
- Housing Industry Association of South Australia
- Housing Industry Association of Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory Group Training

Higher-level VET qualifications provider

- Australian Institute of Management

Individual employers providing placements or hiring students in:

- Building and construction
- Civil construction
- Engineering
- Health
- Livestock production

Consultations with government and non-government schools

A small sample of best practice cases from eight schools (including government, independent and Catholic schools), identified for us by experts and administrators on the basis of a school's success in jurisdictional or national training awards, provided us with some lessons on what it takes to run a successful program. Once again, all the information was collected via telephone interview. The schools included: Circular Head Christian School (Tasmania), Grace Lutheran College (Queensland), Cardjin College (South Australia), Harvester College (Victoria), Bendigo Senior Secondary College (Victoria), Mildura Senior College (Victoria), Guilford Young College (Tasmania), and Taminmin College (Northern Territory).

Analysis of LSAY data on employment and training outcomes

This study also builds on findings from a recent NCVET study (Misko, Chew & Korbel 2020), which looked at the five-year employment and training destinations of students who undertook VfSSS in 2006 and 2011. Linked datasets (created for NCVET by the ABS) linked unit record data from the 2006 and 2011 National VET in Schools Collections to data from the 2011 and 2016 Census of Population and Housing, respectively. An earlier linked dataset analysis is published in Misko, Korbel and Blomberg (2017). As well as identifying the five-year destinations of these students, these linkage studies also enabled an analysis of the relevance of their training to their employment and further study outcomes. The most recent publication (Misko, Chew & Korbel 2020) also explored differences in the outcomes of students who undertook VfSSS compared with those who had not and found some interesting differences. In this current study, we have extended this later comparison by controlling for ATAR attainment.

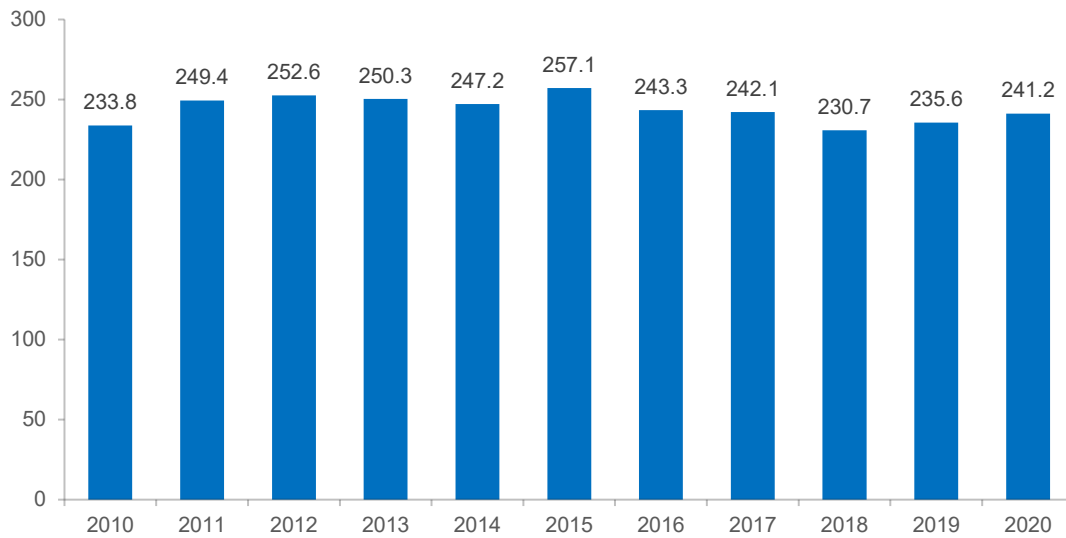
Some limitations

A limitation of the study relates to adequate stakeholder and employer feedback. We experienced difficulty in attracting strong participation from a large range of industry sectors within our allocated timeframe.

Appendix B: Trends in uptake

The number of students in VfSSS has ranged from about 230 000 to 260 000 over the past 10 years.

Figure B1 VET for secondary school students, Australia 2010–20 ('000)

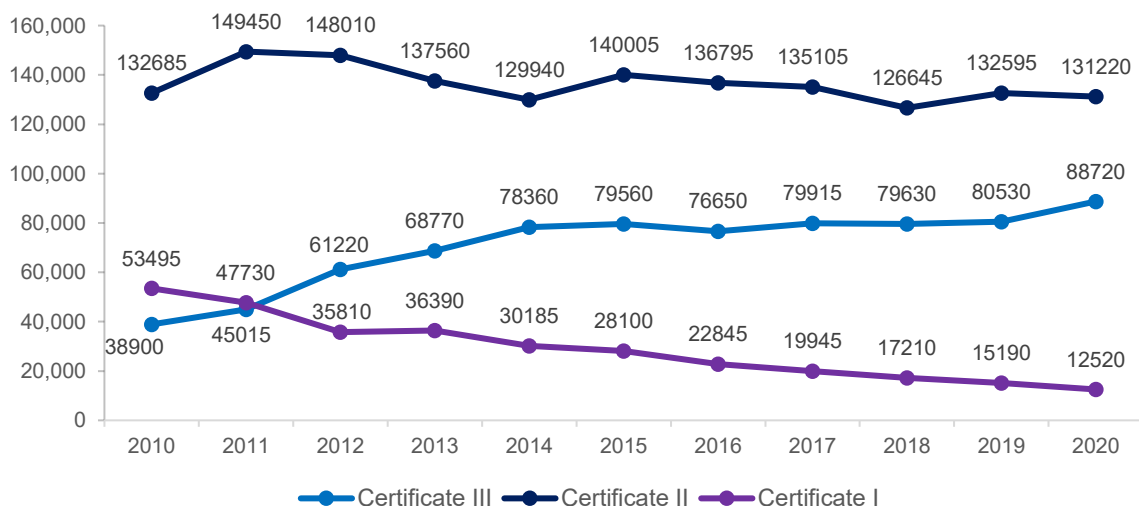


Source: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection.

Students by qualification level

- Certificate II qualifications have historically been the most popular qualifications for VfSSS, with over 130 000 students enrolled in these qualifications in 2020.
- The number of students enrolled in certificate I level qualifications has been declining since 2010, while students enrolled in certificate III level qualifications has been steadily increasing.
- Other qualifications, such as certificate IVs and diplomas, have remained a small part of VfSSS.

Figure B2 VET for secondary school students enrolments by qualification level, 2010–20



Source: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection.

Students by training package

Students are taking courses from a range of training packages, with some from more than one training package (table B1). However, the most populated training packages are in Tourism, Travel and Hospitality, Business Services and Sport and Recreation.

Table B1 VET for secondary school students enrolments by training package, 2020 (%)

Training package	%
Tourism, Travel and Hospitality	33.1
Business Services	29.4
Sport and Recreation	29.0
Creative Arts and Culture	17.9
Foundation Skills	14.1
Construction, Plumbing and Services Integrated Framework	14.0
Community Services	12.8
Agriculture and Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management	9.3
Information and Communications Technology	9.2
Metal and Engineering	8.5
Other Training Packages	45.0

Source: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships by jurisdictions

- Students can also undertake a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship as part of VfSSS. This represents just over 7% of VfSSS in Australia in 2020 (table B2).
- In 2010, Tasmania had the highest percentage of school-based apprentices and trainees (19.3%), followed by Queensland (10.8%) and the Australian Capital Territory (10.1%). In 2020 Queensland had the highest (10.3%) percentage of school-based apprentices and trainees.
- SBATs are most common in the Business Services, Retail Services and Tourism, Travel and Hospitality training packages, with nearly half (45.1%) of all VfSSS enrolled in one of these training packages.

Table B2 Students undertaking VET for secondary school students that are school-based apprentices and trainees by state/territory, 2010 & 2020 (%)

State/territory	2010	2020
New South Wales	4.1	5.0
Victoria	7.4	7.0
Queensland	10.8	10.3
South Australia	6.2	6.9
Western Australia	3.6	4.0
Tasmania	19.3	7.8
Northern Territory	4.3	7.8
Australian Capital Territory	10.1	7.5
Australia	7.4	7.4

Source: NCVET, National VET in Schools Collection.

Appendix C: Non-government sector - a sample of jurisdictional models

Models used in the non-government independent sector for VfSSS are generally arranged on school-specific lines. However, there are some examples of a centralised approach.

- In NSW, the AISNSW (the Association of Independent Schools in NSW) is the main RTO for independent schools, representing 98% of independent schools that want to deliver VET. Of the 500 schools associated with the AISNSW, 110 schools are part of the AISNSW RTO. There are four RTO schools. One reason attributed to the low number of RTO schools is that being an RTO seems to be too difficult to manage at the school level, so most schools will use the services of the AISNSW. AISNSW has 34 courses on its scope of registration. Although AISNSW is an advisory body as an RTO, it has ASQA compliance responsibilities. Schools will also use other public and private providers to access training. Opportunities for students to undertake apprenticeships and traineeships that can be combined with jobs held outside school (where employers agree to take students on as an SBAT) are also available. Beauty services trainees will go to TAFE. Some schools are part of an alliance (for example, there are 10 Christian schools in the Penrith Alliance for VET). Schools in the alliance will deliver different programs at various times, with students from each school accessing programs from the school delivering the course (for example, construction, hospitality and IT). Most schools have a designated contact person for VfSSS, who may be allocated time to undertake this role. They may also be responsible for another role. A selection process for work-placement coordination is conducted to select providers who will be responsible for organising work placements for all three sectors (government, Catholic and independent schools).
 - There is also an eVET portal, which can be accessed by Catholic, government and AISNSW schools. One of the reasons that the e-portal is popular among schools is that schools can trust the decisions about credit towards the HSC appearing on the portal. Schools obtain funding from the NSW Department of Education to supplement the cost and to redistribute this to schools. At the school level the decision is made on who will pay the remainder (that is, the school or the parent). Some of the non-fee-paying schools (for example, Salvation Army, O'Reilly's Street School) may absorb the cost to enable students to participate; however, on occasions the non-fee-paying schools can't afford to participate in the eVET portal system, especially if funds are required for other essential services in the school.
- In Tasmania, independent schools, like most Catholic and government schools, are not RTOs. This is mainly due to their perception that the registration process is complex, that registration brings added administrative burden, and that the ongoing expense of registration is substantial. While government schools and colleges have their own dedicated RTO, the Tasmanian Secondary Colleges RTO, and many Catholic schools use the Guilford Young College Trade Training Centre RTO, independent schools hire in a range of local, national and online commercial RTOs. Historically, there has been a low uptake of VET in Schools in Tasmanian independent schools because of the range of perceived barriers, even though many schools would like to become involved. Without a dedicated Independent schools' RTO, as is the case in other states, quality training services become expensive, and schools are forced to contract RTOs that may not always be sensitive to how schools operate and find it hard to customise their services to meet the needs of schools. There is some limited collaboration between government schools and some independent schools, for example, Circular Head Christian School works with Smithton High School and the local TasTAFE and trade training

centre. Some Launceston independent schools also collaborate through a cluster arrangement with St Patrick's College, which has a trade training centre (although it is not itself an RTO but collectively can employ a number of RTOs to service a larger number of students). While the Tasmanian Secondary Colleges RTO has been approached to extend its services to independent schools, it has been reluctant to do so, citing a lack of capacity and resources to extend its RTO service. Schools that have developed some VET in Schools programs have moved to ensure that a teacher has a role dedicated to coordinating and/or delivering VET. Usually, such teachers will have a Certificate IV in TAE and industry currency, although schools often find it challenging to fund additional teachers to obtain Certificate IV TAE qualifications. Independent Schools Tasmania has now appointed a VET consultant to work with Tasmanian schools wanting to establish VET programs, with the aim of identifying ways to upskill existing teachers to Certificate IV TAE standard, to negotiate with suitable RTOs, and to match school-based VET programs with real industry skills needs.

- In Western Australia, most of the 70 schools in the independent sector are not RTOs. The only RTO schools are: Wongutha CAPS, an Aboriginal School on a farm in Esperance; Port School – Communicare; and Fairbridge School. These are called CARE Schools – Curriculum and Re-Engagement Schools. The majority of school VET programs are conducted through an auspicing arrangement, mostly with private RTOs. Most schools that offer VET have a designated VET coordinator, but the capacity of their roles differs greatly, depending on the size and type of the student cohort. Most have multiple roles within the schools such as career advisors, workplace learning coordinators, heads of department and heads of curriculum, and in some cases even deputies of smaller schools take on this role. The Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA) has a full-time VET consultant, who supports the schools with workplace learning, work-readiness and outreach programs. The AISWA also has consultants in subject areas. Little clustering of schools occurs in metropolitan areas, but clustering does occur in regional areas, where there are some trade training centres, which cater for students from all schools in the region.
- In Queensland, there are currently 41 school RTOs in the independent sector registered with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) and two ASQA-registered school RTOs. QCAA has delegation under ASQA to register and audit Queensland school RTOs. Many independent schools have third-party arrangements in place with external RTOs, including TAFE and private providers. SBATs are highly regarded in independent schools and are offered as part of the educational program. Schools in the independent sector have a person responsible for VET to assist young people to develop their knowledge about vocational pathways to a range of post-school destinations, including work, training and further education. Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) also has a full-time education services advisor for VET, who offers support and advice to schools throughout Queensland. Some schools combine efforts to offer VET qualifications to groups of students or make training delivered under their own RTO scope available to other schools.

Catholic sector schools

The Catholic sector arranges VfSSS delivery according to different dioceses.

- In the Rockhampton Diocese, there are two non-systemic, independent (religious order-owned) schools that are RTOs, four systemic schools that are RTOs and four systemic schools that are non-RTOs. In addition, every college uses a combination of third-party arrangements, with their own staff delivering training or an external trainer coming into the school to deliver the training. All colleges have a VET coordinator. At the diocesan level, a secondary curriculum consultant advises on VET

certificate opportunities, SBATs and the general curriculum. Due to the vast geography of the diocese, Catholic schools have only a once-a-year opportunity for face-to-face clustering; however, once-a-term Zoom sessions and regular ad hoc networking assist in the cross-pollination of ideas and collaboration. In addition, the Catholic schools that cluster with state schools in their local region are assisted by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT). Colleges provide opportunities for students to engage in innovative and emerging industries. For example, the Marist College at Emerald provides opportunities for Year 10 students to achieve a Certificate III in Aviation (flying drones), supported by the local agricultural and mining industries. In Gladstone, Chanel College timetables an intense certificate course focus every Monday, including a certificate on the maintenance of drones. Chanel College also has an agreement with P&O Cruises to enable its tourism students to do practical work. Many Catholic colleges are also involved in the Gateway to Industry Schools (GISP) program, which comprises 10 different industry sectors, with funding and support linked to schools. Through this program, teachers receive professional development and industry currency, and students gain practical real-life engagement. The 10 industry sectors covered by the DESBT Gateway to Industry Schools Program are: advanced manufacturing; aerospace; agribusiness; building and construction; community services (new industry); food, wine and tourism; health (new industry); information and communication technology (new industry); minerals and energy; and screen and media (new industry).

- In the Brisbane diocese, schools are generally RTOs in their own right. Those that are not RTOs often see their students as being more ATAR-bound than VET-bound. The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority registers and regulates RTOs for ASQA and offers upwards of 13 or more VET courses. Non-RTO schools would also have students doing as many if not more courses for their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). However, not all courses would be on their scope, so they would partner with, or use a range of, favoured providers, especially those that are flexible for schools and where the content of the training is suitable for students. The pricing too must be affordable. The diocese is more likely to use MOUs and Statements of Intent for auspicing arrangements. Schools have their own VET coordinators, even if not an RTO, mostly called VET curriculum leaders. Schools will also combine efforts to enable students to access programs that are not available in their schools but only on a small scale. The schools do not deliver the off-the-job training for SBATs, mainly because they are not accredited with the state government as a Skills Assure Supplier. There has been quite an increase in students undertaking certificate IV and diplomas in recent years: to be precise, 8% of graduating students in 2020 had a diploma in their QCE.
- Guilford Young College (GYC) is the Catholic-sector RTO in Tasmania. All Tasmanian Catholic colleges work as auspiced partners with the GYC RTO to provide their VET programs. GYC has 21 qualifications on its scope. Where programs are offered that are not on Guilford Young College's scope, schools will negotiate with TasTAFE, state government colleges or private training providers to enable students to access alternative programs. Students in the Catholic sector can access programs in alternative Catholic colleges in a range of industry sectors, for which transport between colleges is provided. Currently SBAT employers use their providers of choice. All colleges have a VET coordinator but the amount of time that is allowed for the job will differ significantly and depend on the school and the number of VET programs offered.

Appendix D: Student and parent surveys

While the initial research application sought approval to administer a parent and student survey and undertake focus groups with VET students, our ability to conduct focus groups virtually (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) was impaired as it required direct contact (via email) with students outside the supervised school environment, resulting in privacy concerns. We then decided to survey VET students and parents via the online SurveyMonkey tool.

To set up the surveys, we first selected schools with high VfSSS enrolments, and then made initial contact with over 280 school principals and/or VET coordinators across the four jurisdictions and all school sectors (government, Catholic and independent). We sought consent from principals for their schools to participate in the research study. A total of 44 schools participated in the survey with school RTOs represented in the sample. As response rates varied significantly by jurisdiction and school sector (with very low responses in some areas), it is not possible to present survey results by state/territory or school sector.

In early 2021, we received approval to conduct our parent and student surveys in government schools in New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, and in Catholic schools in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. The 44 consenting schools were contacted via email in March 2021 and provided with details to assist with the administration of both the parent and student online survey using the SurveyMonkey tool.

Student survey

Student survey questions

1. What is the name of the VET course you are currently doing?
2. Are you doing an apprenticeship or traineeship?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Are you planning to obtain an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) on completion of Year 12?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (go to question 6)
 - c. Not sure (go to question 6)
4. If yes, will you use your VET studies to count towards an ATAR
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (go to question 6)
 - c. Not sure (got to question 6)
5. If yes, why did you decide to undertake VET studies as part of an ATAR?
6. Which of the following reasons describe why you decided to do a VET course while still at school? (tick all that apply)
 - a. to get a VET qualification
 - b. to help me get a part-time/casual job while still at school

- c. to help me get a part-time/casual job while continuing with studies after leaving school
 - d. to help me get a full-time job when leaving school
 - e. to be able to use the facilities, equipment and materials that are available in the course
 - f. I have a personal interest in doing a VET course
 - g. to start an apprenticeship or traineeship
 - h. to help me achieve a Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education (SSSCE)
 - i. to help contribute towards achieving an ATAR
 - j. other, please specify.....
7. Which of the following reasons best describes why you chose to do this course?
- a. I have always wanted to learn the skills and knowledge taught in this course
 - b. I want to do an apprenticeship or traineeship in this industry
 - c. I want to get a job in this industry
 - d. other reason, please specify.....
8. Who (what) encouraged you to enrol in a VET course? (tick all that apply)
- a. no one, it was my decision
 - b. my parents thought it was a good idea
 - c. my friends were doing it, so I decided to try it
 - d. my school (e.g. principal, VET coordinator, teacher, career counsellor) suggested I do it
 - e. other, please specify.....
9. Which of the following best describes your aspirations for your final year of schooling?
- a. to complete Year 12 and obtain my Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education (SSCE)
 - b. to achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)
 - c. other, please specify.....
10. Which of the following best describes your aspirations for beyond your final year of schooling?
- a. to get a full-time/casual or part-time job
 - b. to undertake further vocational education and training with a TAFE or private training provider (including apprenticeship or traineeship)
 - c. to undertake higher education at university
 - d. other, please specify.....

Student survey findings

The following analysis is based on 231 student surveys, across all four jurisdictions and all school sectors, except ACT government schools (where there was no participation in the survey).

Of the total students surveyed, 10% were enrolled in an apprenticeship or traineeship while at school. Table D1 shows the proportion of students enrolled in a VfSSS program by training package. The Retail Services Training Package had the highest number of enrolments (15.6%), followed by Tourism, Travel and Hospitality (13.9%) and Creative Arts and Culture (12.6%).

Table D1 VET for secondary school students surveyed by training package of course in which enrolled, 2021 (%)

Training package	%
Aeroskills/Aviation	0.9
Animal Care and Management	0.9
Automotive Manufacturing/ Automotive Retail, Service and Repair	8.2
Business Services	8.7
Community Services	0.9
Construction, Plumbing & Services	4.3
Creative Arts & Culture	12.6
Electrotechnology	7.8
Food, Beverage and Pharmaceutical	1.3
Furnishing	1.7
Health	4.3
Information and Communications Technology	1.3
Metal and Engineering	3.0
Retail Services	15.6
Sport, Fitness and Recreation	9.5
Tourism, Travel and Hospitality	13.9
Not stated	5.2
Total	100.0

Source: NCVET SurveyMonkey student survey, 2021.

Many (41.1%) of the students surveyed were planning to obtain an ATAR on completion of Year 12, while 19.9% were not sure and 39% did not plan to obtain an ATAR on completion. Students enrolled in an apprenticeship or traineeship were less likely than those undertaking a VET course to be planning to obtain an ATAR (13% and 44.2% respectively).

Of those who planned to obtain an ATAR, more than two-thirds (68.4%) planned to use their VET studies to count towards their ATAR, while 26.3% were not sure, and 4.2% did not plan on using their VET studies to count towards their ATAR.

Reasons for undertaking VET studies as part of an ATAR included:

- for enjoyment/interest, provides a break from studies
- to complete a certificate
- corresponds well with other selected subjects, fits in with timetable
- highly skilled or good at the subject and therefore likely to do well, less work
- broadens post-school education and training and employment opportunities, provides experience in chosen area of study or industry
- friends' recommendation.

For nearly two-thirds (64.5%) of students surveyed, 'to get a qualification' was a reason for doing a VET course while still at school. Other reasons cited by many students included: 'to help them get a full-time job when leaving school' (49.8%), 'to be able to use the facilities, equipment and materials that are available in the course' (45%), and 'I have a personal interest in doing a VET course' (42%). Nearly a third of students (32.9%) cited 'to help contribute towards achieving an ATAR' as a reason for doing a VET course while at school (table D2). Other reasons mentioned by students included: for enjoyment/fun, and to gain experience in intended post-school education and training or employment.

Table D2 Students' reason(s) for doing a VET course while still at school, 2021 (%)

Reason	%
To get a VET qualification	64.5
To help them get a part-time/casual job while still at school	29.0
To help them get a part-time/casual job while continuing with studies after leaving school	32.0
To help them get a full-time job when leaving school	49.8
To be able to use the facilities, equipment and materials that are available in the course	45.0
I have a personal interest in doing a VET course	42.0
To start an apprenticeship or traineeship	27.7
To help them achieve their Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education (SSSCE)	16.0
To help contribute towards achieving an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)	32.9
Other	4.8
Not stated	7.4

Note: Responses do not add to 100%, as multiple responses were allowed.

Source: NCVET SurveyMonkey student survey, 2021.

For over three-quarters (77.5%) of the students surveyed, 'I have always wanted to learn the skills and knowledge taught in this course' best described their reason for choosing their VET course, followed by 'I want to get a job in this industry' (52.8%) and 'I want to do an apprenticeship/traineeship in this industry' (26.8%).

Most (70.6%) students made the decision themselves to enrol in a VET course, while 19% were encouraged by their parents to enrol, 18.6% were advised by their school (principal, VET coordinator, teacher, career counsellor) to enrol, and 13.9% were encouraged to enrol because their friends were doing it.

For 59.7% of the students surveyed, 'to complete Year 12 and obtain their Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE)' best described the aspiration they have for their final year of schooling, while for 27.7% 'to achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)' best described their aspiration.

Table D3 shows the aspirations of students beyond their final year of schooling. For 60.6% of students, undertaking further education or training best described their aspiration for beyond their final year of secondary schooling, followed by gaining full-time/part-time or casual employment (28.6%).

Table D3 Students' aspirations for after final year of schooling, 2021 (%)

Aspirations	%
To get a full-time/casual or part-time job	28.6
To undertake further vocational education and training with a TAFE or private training provider (including apprenticeship or traineeship)	30.3
To undertake higher education at university	30.3
Other	2.2
Not stated	8.7
Total	100.0

Source: NCVET SurveyMonkey student survey, 2021.

Parent survey

Parent survey questions

1. What is the name of the VET course your child is currently doing?
2. Are they doing an apprenticeship or traineeship?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Did you encourage your child to enrol in a VET course while still at school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (go to question 8)
4. What information (if any) did you access to help inform your decision?
5. Who provided the information? (tick all that apply)
 - a. my child's school (e.g. principal, VET coordinator, teacher, career counsellor)
 - b. parents of other school students
 - c. my friends/family
 - d. prospective employers
 - e. other, please specify.....
6. Did you feel enough information was available to help inform your decision?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. What other information would have been useful at the time of making the decision?
8. What do you think are the benefits for your child doing a VET course while still at school? (tick all that apply)
 - a. to get a VET qualification
 - b. to help them get a part-time/casual job while still at school
 - c. to help them get a part-time/casual job while continuing with studies after leaving school
 - d. to help them get a full-time job when leaving school
 - e. to be able to use the facilities, equipment and materials that are available in the course
 - f. to start an apprenticeship or traineeship
 - g. to help them achieve their Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education (SSSCE)
 - h. to help contribute towards achieving an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)
 - i. other, please specify
9. Which of the following best describes the aspiration you have for your child for their final year of schooling?
 - a. to complete Year 12 and obtain their Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education (SSCE)
 - b. to achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)
 - c. other, please specify.....

10. Which of the following best describes the aspiration you have for your child beyond their final year of schooling?
- to get a full-time/casual or part-time job
 - to undertake further vocational education and training with a TAFE or private training provider (including apprenticeship or traineeship)
 - to undertake higher education at university
 - other, please specify.....

Parent survey findings

The following analysis is based on 229 parent surveys, across all four jurisdictions and all school sectors, except ACT government schools (where there was no participation in the survey).

Of the total parents surveyed, 10.5% had a child enrolled in an apprenticeship or traineeship while at school. Table D4 shows the proportion of their children enrolled in a VfSSS program by training package. The Construction, Plumbing & Services Training Package had the highest number of enrolments (24%), followed by Creative Arts and Culture (10.9%) and Electrotechnology (10.5%).

Table D4 Parents surveyed by the training package of the VET for secondary school students program in which their child was enrolled, 2021 (%)

Training package	%
Aeroskills/Aviation	1.7
Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management	1.3
Animal Care and Management	5.7
Automotive Manufacturing / Automotive Retail, Service and Repair	7.0
Business Services	1.7
Community Services	3.1
Construction, Plumbing and Services	24.0
Creative Arts and Culture	10.9
Electrotechnology	10.5
Furnishing	1.3
Hairdressing and Beauty Services	2.6
Health	5.2
Information and Communications Technology	1.3
Laboratory Operations	0.4
Metal and Engineering	3.9
Retail Services	0.9
Sport, Fitness and Recreation	7.0
Tourism, Travel and Hospitality	7.4
Not stated	3.9
Total	100.0

Source: NCVET SurveyMonkey parent survey, 2021.

Many parents (79%) encouraged their child to enrol in a VET course while at school, with most of them (80.1%) feeling they had received enough information to help inform their decision. In the majority of cases (84%), the child's school (principal, VET coordinator, teacher etc.) provided information to help inform their decision, followed by friends and family (13.3%), other parents (8.3%), prospective employers (3.3%) and other sources (10.5%).

Sources of information accessed by parents included:

- information provided by the college or school, such as teacher/VET coordinator/careers staff recommendations and advice, curriculum pathway information (including SSCE and ATAR contribution, employment opportunities), information packs/sessions, school tours/open days, school websites, training provider discussions/websites
- external sources of information, such as government websites (training.gov.au) and general VET course information online
- discussions with industry professionals, family or friends with prior knowledge and experience, other students, personal experience of VfSSS pathways
- parental understanding of the child’s interests, aptitude, learning needs or ability to transition into further education and employment.

Around a third of all parents who encouraged their child to enrol in a VET course felt other sources of information would have been useful at the time of making their decision. Additional sources mentioned included: information provided by the school or prospective employers, specific information regarding course structure/employment and further education and training opportunities, and campus-related information (for example, timetables, course content, number of places available). There was some acknowledgement by respondents that COVID-19 resulted in interruptions in the delivery of planned school information sessions.

For three-quarters (75.1%) of the parents surveyed, ‘to get a VET qualification’ was a benefit for their child undertaking a VET course while still at school. Other benefits considered by many parents included: ‘to help them get a full-time job when leaving school’ (54.6%), ‘to start an apprenticeship or traineeship’ (44.1%), ‘to be able to use the facilities, equipment and materials that are available in the course’ (38.9%). Nearly a third of parents (32.8%) considered ‘to help contribute towards achieving an ATAR’ a benefit of undertaking VET while still at school (table D5). Other benefits mentioned by parents included: personal development, increased engagement and enjoyment, broadening options available, gaining experience/credits in intended post-school education and training or employment.

Table D5 Parents’ perceived benefits for their child doing a VET course while still at school, 2021 (%)

Benefits	%
To get a VET qualification	75.1
To help them get a part-time/casual job while still at school	23.6
To help them get a part-time/casual job while continuing with studies after leaving school	24.0
To help them get a full-time job when leaving school	54.6
To be able to use the facilities, equipment and materials that are available in the course	38.9
To start an apprenticeship or traineeship	44.1
To help them achieve their Senior Secondary School Certificate of Education (SSSCE)	24.9
To help contribute towards achieving an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)	32.8
Other	19.2
Not stated	6.1

Note: Responses do not add to 100%, as multiple responses were allowed.

Source: NCVET SurveyMonkey parent survey, 2021.

For 47.6% of parents surveyed, ‘to complete Year 12 and obtain their SSCE’ best described the aspiration they have for their child’s final year of schooling, while for 30.6% ‘to achieve an ATAR’ best described their aspiration for their child. Some (15.3%) parents had other aspirations for their child’s final year of schooling, including: to enjoy school or be engaged in school; to have a better understanding of future pathway options; and to gain experience to help with further education or employment opportunities.

Table D6 shows the aspirations of parents for their child beyond their final year of schooling. For 70.7% of parents, undertaking further education or training best described the aspiration they have for their child, followed by gaining full-time/part-time or casual employment (12.2%). Other post-school aspirations that parents have for their child centred around the child having options that allow them to follow their future education and employment dreams and passions.

Table D6 Parental aspirations for their child beyond the child’s final year of schooling, 2021 (%)

Aspirations	%
To get a full-time/casual or part-time job	12.2
To undertake further vocational education and training with a TAFE or private training provider (including apprenticeship or traineeship)	41.9
To undertake higher education at university	28.8
Other	10.5
Not stated	6.6
Total	100.0

Source: NCVET SurveyMonkey parent survey, 2021

Appendix E: Industry and employer views

Industry stakeholders

Individuals representing employees and or employers (mostly employees) participated in the study.

Questions for semi-structured interviews

1. Is your industry involved in the provision or supporting of industry or vocational programs that are being delivered to secondary school students?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. If Yes,
 - a. what are these programs?
 - b. what are some of the benefits for your industry in providing or supporting these programs?
 - c. what are some of the challenges experienced by your industry in supporting these programs?
3. If No,
 - a. is there any reason why your industry is not participating in providing or supporting these programs?
 - b. what are some of the challenges in having your industry accept the concept of students undertaking VET programs while still at school?
4. Does your industry support the concept of employers taking on secondary school students starting an apprenticeship or traineeship while still at school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. If Yes, to what extent are
 - a. employers in your industry willing to start a student on a school-based apprentice or trainee when they are still in school or to continue to employ them when they have left school?
6. What do you think could be done to improve VET programs (including apprenticeships and traineeships) delivered to secondary schools so that the students develop the skills and knowledge that are useful for your industry?
7. Can you identify for us any employers [companies] that are heavily involved in these programs?

Detailed findings from Industry

There is support for having VfSS that are industry-endorsed, but prevocational rather than vocational in their make-up, mainly because there is a perception that students in VfSS do not have access to the right tools and facilities or teachers to produce skilled workers. The absence of a separate stream for non-qualification-based industry-endorsed programs is another concern.

- There is also support for having students entering prevocational programs based on introductory knowledge. Programs like Doorways to Construction (in South Australia, and similar programs in other states) are supported. There is also a view that students cannot develop the required skills and knowledge in one or two days a week on site, mainly because tasks on construction sites change daily (construction).

- Students not having enough exposure time to develop the practical skills to be of use to an employer is identified as another challenge (building and motor trades).
- Stronger support for VfSSS is provided in industries such as childcare, which is currently experiencing high skill shortages; however, the challenges are seen as: convincing students and parents that the pathway is worthwhile; preparing students for the realities of the workplace; and tailoring offerings to regional contexts and needs. Having the right ratio of students to experienced staff can hinder childcare centres from taking on VET in School students, so it is suggested that longer placement periods be introduced (childcare).
- In industries with no history of taking on VfSSS, there is a willingness to be involved in opening up to VfSSS, but issues relating to the sourcing, recruitment and retention of young workers, and perceived lack of government incentives pose a challenge (meat industry).
- One of the key challenges for the many industries represented by the Australian Workers Union⁶ relates to the perception of a constantly changing training system, which leads to reduced industry participation. There are mixed views about students going into the workplace to start an apprenticeship. If SBATs were to be introduced in the resources sector, for example, employers would need to increase the number of skilled trainers to be with students on site.
- A strong grounding in year 11 and 12 mathematics is felt to be essential for the electrical trade. Also extremely important is the need for SBATs not to be asked to undertake tasks that may have high safety risks and regulatory requirements.

Industry stakeholders' suggestions for improvement

The following suggestions have been made to improve the VfSSS approach for various industries:

- Childcare: employers need to get a good sense of the skills and aptitudes of the student; having the student in weekly placements over longer time periods would allow more time for this and for the student to learn.
- Professional development in leadership and management: the training system needs to understand what is best for the student and not keep pushing for higher qualifications.
- Meat industry: schools are urged to work with the meat industry to do school-based projects to increase awareness of what the industry does and the career pathways available.
- Automotive: it might be preferable for students to enter the trade as a full-time apprentice rather than as an SBAT.
- Building and construction: not strongly in favour of SBATs; prefer VfSSS as introductory programs.
- Master Builders: more acceptance of SBAT than VfSSS program approach, but prefer to adopt a skill-set approach, where students do a minimal number of competencies.
- Electrical: higher-grade Year 11 or 12 maths proficiency is required before students can begin the off-the-job component, otherwise training is counterproductive.

⁶ The Australian Workers Union represents a range of industry sectors including agriculture, aquaculture, aluminium, aviation, civil infrastructure and construction, chemicals, funerals, gas and oil (extraction and refining), hair, horticulture, mining, manufacturing (glass, aluminium, steel), pharmaceuticals, recycling, wool and waste, and is included on 15 industry reference committees.

- Sport and recreation: this is favoured because it provides a community benefit, especially for cohorts that don't generally stay at school.
- Manufacturing: one industry representative proposed three alternative options for VET delivered in schools including:
 - industry-endorsed non-qualification-based pre-apprenticeship programs geared to preparation for apprenticeship, comprised of a mix of curriculum, a limited number of core competencies and supported by work 'placement', with credit only for the competencies actually achieved
 - industry-endorsed non-qualification-based prevocational programs, geared to preparation for employment, comprised of a mix of generalist vocational education curriculum, a limited number of core competencies and supported by work 'experience', with credit only for the competencies actually achieved
 - VETiS programs, work studies geared to general education about the world of work, curriculum-based, with no competencies and no credit.

Employers

Questions for semi-structured interviews

1. Has your organisation been involved in providing work placements for secondary school students.
 - a. If Yes, what do you think are the benefits for employers and students in participating in these programs?
 - b. What do you think are the challenges?
2. Have you ever taken on any school-based apprenticeships or traineeships?
 - a. If Yes, what do you think are the benefits for employers and students in participating in these programs?
 - b. What are the challenges for both employers and students in participating in these programs?
3. What do you think could be done to improve VET programs (including apprenticeships and traineeships) delivered to secondary schools so that they develop the skills and knowledge that are useful for your company and other companies?
4. Do you have a preference for where secondary school students that you might employ have received their VET training? Yes, No
5. If YES, what is your preference?
 - a. I prefer to employ students who have received their VET training from their school
 - b. I prefer to employ students who have received their VET training from TAFE or from a private VET provider
 - c. Give reasons for your answer

Employer interview detailed findings

Employer respondents generally accept the notion that providing work placements for VfSSS benefits students because they provide the job exposure and practical workplace skills that ease students into the workforce. Students are also able to obtain some credit points towards their senior secondary certificate of education and in some cases be paid for doing so.

Benefits for employers include enabling them to develop student skills in ways that suit the business, being assured of a steady stream of recruitment into the occupation, and trialling the student before

making a longer-term commitment. Where employers are experiencing skills shortages in specific industries, there is agreement that such programs can be used to start students on their journey to this occupation.

There is also agreement about the challenges for both employers and students participating in such programs, such as providing sufficient suitable activities for students in the workplace; matching them up with the right workplace trainer; students' travel to and from the workplace (especially when working late or starting early); and students who do not yet have a driver's licence. Another common challenge relates to the use of mobile phones in the workplace, particularly since some families want their children to have their phones on them, and employers prefer them not to do so.

In some industries, employers deal with challenges such as the prior experience and confidence of the student and keeping them safe and interested when they are on site. For example, an interested student can help the tradesperson to complete their tasks in good time, but a student who is neither interested nor capable may well hinder their progress. Only having the students for one or two non-consecutive days a week is often difficult for employers because students may not remember what they had learnt last time they were in the workplace.

In the horse-racing industry, the challenges for employers relate to student confidence around horses and past experience with them. Confident students generally enjoy being around horses and are quicker to pick up the skills. Some students who are not confident find the programs quite challenging. Another issue relates to access to training for students. For example, there is access to certificate I and II qualifications in racing in the Northern Territory but there is no RTO with a physical presence delivering training at certificate III and IV levels.

Employer respondents were willing to provide work placements for VfSSS, mainly out of a sense of community obligation to give back to their industry. However, some reported slight inconveniences at times, as workplace trainers need to make the time to work with the students, and the right trainer needs to be paired up with students. One view was that it was beneficial to get committed students into the industry early.

GTOs expressed the view that their industries supported few SBATs, since host employers generally preferred to have full-time apprentices. In some industries (especially building and construction) the employer may not need the students on the days on which they are rostered, and some employers might want them for a number of consecutive days, an arrangement that does not always suit the school's schedule.

Moreover, a significant issue with hiring SBATs would emerge if the arrangement did not work out and the student had to be let go, especially since some employers did not perceive any great benefit to hiring an SBAT or preferred hiring full-time apprentices. There was a view that, when apprentices are full-time, the quality of the work produced is higher and the maintenance of safety assured.

For employers like the GTOs, the challenges often revolved around finding a host employer willing to take on an SBAT. Sometimes restrictions regarding ages for high-risk licensing apply; for example, a student must be of a certain age to work behind a bar.

Employers reported that challenges for the students are concerned with balancing work, trade school studies and school studies and catching up on what has been missed.

Despite some of these challenges, the great majority of employer respondents did not make a definitive choice about whether or not they preferred students to have received training via a VfSSS program, post-school VET or TAFE program. What was important was that the students they employed had the right skills and knowledge. Employers in the construction industry wanted potential employees (including full-time apprentices) to have done their white card, as well as asbestos and safety awareness training. They also wanted them to be familiar with the tools and activities of the trade. In terms of hiring those from VfSSS, some liked the fact that insurance for the student was covered by the VfSSS program.

Employers' suggestions for improvement

Suggestions by employers covered a range of issues including:

- providing additional training opportunities for teachers in schools to increase their awareness of the latest developments in industry, enabling them to pass such learning onto their students
- broadening the awareness of students, teachers and parents of overall career opportunities within different industries
- providing access to training, especially where there are no RTOs with a physical presence delivering certain qualifications of interest to students and employers in the jurisdiction
- restructuring the delivery model to increase its flexibility by giving students more opportunities to spend additional time in the workplace for hands-on learning and to find the right balance between school and work.

For employers in the building and construction industry, the success of an SBAT arrangement would revolve around how much flexibility the school was able to provide, especially in trades that are susceptible to changing weather conditions. Suggestions were made for SBATs to undertake some of their school learning out of hours to enable them to catch up with the schoolwork they may have missed when in the workplace, or to stay at school on days when inclement weather interrupted work. Good communication between the VET coordinator in the school and the employer was suggested as a good way to ensure that the right support is provided to the apprentice to ensure the program is completed, as well as the major project required for the course.

Suggestions were also made for limiting the opportunities for school students to undertake advanced VET qualifications for those occupations that needed students to have higher levels of maturity. Increasing the promotion of a broader range of occupations in the traditional trades was also suggested by some. For example, in the construction trades there seem to be high levels of promotion of the carpenter and joiner, plumbing and electrical trades, and little of the painting, plasterer, tiler, and bricklaying trades, resulting in reduced awareness of these options. Increasing promotion of trade-related study and career options rather than academic pathways was also suggested to broaden student choice.

A suggestion was also made for paying the employer a small sum for the time and effort spent in training the student on the job.

Appendix F: Case Studies

Semi-structured interview protocols

1. About your programs (They can give you approximate numbers and follow up with numbers at a later date. Ask for links to handbooks and online materials that describe their VET in School programs.)
 - a. School Background: No. of students in school.....
 - b. No. of students by year level enrolled in VETiS programs.....
 - c. No. and type of teachers involved in providing training for VET in schools students?.....
 - d. Number and type of VETiS programs
 - e. No. of students by type of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships
 - f. What is the most common arrangement? Is it an apprenticeship or a traineeship?
2. What do you do to promote VETiS programs to students and parents at your school? Has this approach been a successful approach? If YES, give some reasons for your answer? If No, what have been some of the issues?
3. What proportion of the VET in Schools students in your school applied for and obtained an ATAR last year?
4. Does your school have any relationships or partnerships with industry or employer associations (name the industry or employer associations) for the purpose of developing the direction of the VETiS program and providing placements? Please describe briefly. Has this worked?
5. Does your school have any relationships with other secondary schools for the purpose of providing more access to a variety of programs? If Yes, please describe briefly. Has this worked?
6. Does your school have any relationships or partnerships with RTOs (including other school RTOs, TAFEs, and private sector RTOs, including group training companies) for purposes of increasing options for students? What are the programs involved under these arrangements?
7. What would you say are the key factors in helping your school deliver an effective VET training program for your students? Are there any programs that stand out and why are they successful?
8. What are or have been some of the challenges?
9. What have been some of the enjoyments?
10. Staffing (the VET coordinator or equivalent and other staff)
 - a. What are the VET staffing arrangements i.e. VET coordinator, teachers with VET quals?
 - b. What is your background or the background of the other teachers delivering VETiS programs? Do they have an industry background?
 - c. Has this helped you in your role in arranging the program and them in their roles in delivering VET programs to students?
 - d. What are some of the reasons for this?
11. Other arrangements
 - a. What workplace learning arrangements are there in place? Are work-placements mandatory? Who sources and arranges the placements?
 - b. Is funding built into school fees or does the school absorb the cost?
 - c. What are some of the companies you have used for student work placements?

These following case studies report on the VfSSS provision in: Circular Head Christian School (Tasmania), Grace Lutheran College (Queensland), Cardjin College (South Australia), Harvester College (Victoria), Bendigo Senior Secondary College (Victoria), Mildura Senior College (Victoria), Guilford Young College (Tasmania), and Taminmin College (Northern Territory).

Circular Head Christian School

Circular Head Christian School stands out as one of the best examples of the smaller regional schools delivering VET in Tasmania. VET is core business for the school and central to all senior student programs, with 93% of students participating in some form of VET. All senior students are expected to complete a VET course. This puts it amongst the elite VET schools in the country.

The school demonstrates leading or best practice in many aspects of its VET delivery. It delivers programs across 10 qualifications, ranging from Aquaculture Certificates I and II, to Hospitality Certificate II, Animal Studies Certificate I and Retail Cosmetics Certificate II. It has a strong focus on work placement and an impressive business and industry network to support this. It has been recognised for over 20 years as a key agent in the learning community it has nurtured.

This is a small school of 230 students, so what it achieves through its VET program is extraordinary. The strategic planning and thinking are inspirational: from purchasing an oyster lease, to running a commercial operation with aquaculture training at its heart and managing an EDUTECH IT enterprise, which both trains technicians and services local business. It makes good use of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships to support, for example, the school's IT needs and its oyster production.

The school has managed to recruit and retain outstanding VET advocates, particularly those coordinating programs. It invests in staff to ensure they are appropriately qualified and experienced to deliver VET. Its commitment to nurturing students to progress to a broad range of education and training pathways, ranging from university to apprenticeships, is no less impressive. Individual student programs are collaboratively developed and culminate in high levels of student ownership and successful completion.

The school is strongly networked into local business and industry and is at the heart of Tasmania's strong 'paddock to plate' movement, in addition to being strongly aligned with local skills demands from hospitality, aquaculture, food processing and retail services.

Circular Head Christian School has enjoyed strong leadership over many years, with all the organisational benefits that flow from this. The principal is a strong advocate for the VfSSS program and has been recognised by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) as part of their national 'Leading with Impact' case studies.

This case study was provided by Mike Frost, of Mike Frost and Associates.

Grace Lutheran College (GLC)

Grace Lutheran College is a Queensland college located on two campuses: the Rothwell Campus and the Caboolture Campus. The Rothwell campus has 1000 students, and the Caboolture campus has 400 students. There are just under 100 students in both Years 12 and 11 and almost 70 students in Year 10 undertaking VfSSS studies in 2021 across the two campuses.

VfSSS students and staff

Table F1 Students enrolled in VET for secondary school programs at Grace Lutheran College by year level and campus, 2021(%)

	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
At Grace Lutheran College campus	63 at Rothwell 2 at Caboolture	72 at Rothwell 6 at Caboolture	78 at Rothwell 8 at Caboolture
At external (off campus) providers	0 at Rothwell 2 at Caboolture	11 at Rothwell 4 at Caboolture	8 at Rothwell 3 at Caboolture
GRAND TOTAL (Rothwell & Caboolture)	67	93	97

The college has 18 teachers providing training for VfSSS students. This includes seven in business, one in music, two in the trades skills centre, two in visual arts, one in fitness, four in active volunteering and one in early childhood. There is a:

- head of VET
- VET office coordinator
- work placement officer.

Among the VfSSS staff are former accountants (2), artists (2), engineer (1), carpenter/cabinet maker (1), retail business owner (florist), gym instructors (for sports programs), and musicians. The head of VET had worked for 10 years with the long-term unemployed before gaining this role working with secondary students.

Program offerings

The college has 11 programs on its scope of registration:

- Certificate II in Business (teaching out) and Certificate III in Business
- Certificate III in Music Industry (in partnership with College of Sound and Music Production [COSAMP])
- Trade Skills Centre (TSC) – Certificate I in Construction (in partnership with TAFE Queensland Skills Tech)
- TSC – Certificate II in Furniture Making Pathways (in partnership with TAFE Queensland Skills Tech)
- TSC – Certificate II in Engineering Pathways (in partnership with TAFE Queensland Skills Tech)
- Certificate II and Certificate III in Visual Arts
- Certificate II in Sport and Recreation and Certificate III in Fitness (in partnership with the College of Health and Fitness)
- Certificate III in Active Volunteering
- Certificate III in Early Childhood, Education & Care (in partnership with the Australian Child Care Career Options [ACCCO])
- Certificate II and Certificate III in Hospitality (in partnership with Training Direct Australia)
- Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways.

There are 48 students undertaking school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in a variety of occupations at the Rothwell campus.

- Childcare – 6
- Cabinet Making – 3
- Carpentry – 7
- Metal Fabrication – 2
- Automotive Mechanic – 3
- Agriculture – 1
- Health – 5
- Commercial Cookery – 1
- Retail – 4
- Business – 6
- Electrical – 2
- Education Support – 1
- Hairdressing – 3
- Civil Construction – 2
- Plumbing – 2

There are also students at the Caboolture campus doing a variety of trade and other courses, including:

- Electrical – 2
- Carpentry – 1
- Screen and Media – 1
- Health – 1
- Heavy Commercial Vehicle Automotive Technology – 1
- Business – 5
- Business Administration – 1
- Business – 3
- Electrical – 2
- Education Support – 1
- Hairdressing – 3
- Civil Construction – 1
- Plumbing – 1

The most common arrangement is an apprenticeship (carpentry) for males and a traineeship (childcare) for females.

Promoting and marketing the VfSSS program

The college uses a range of promotional materials and activities to recruit students to VfSSS including:

- a curriculum guide
- a video on parent lounge within school website
- an open day
- subject selection nights
- daily notices
- notice boards
- TAFE – career expos.

Relationships and partnerships

The college also has relationships with the following entities to advise on the direction of its VfSSS:

- Gateway School for Construction (CSQ)
- Metro North Health and Community Hospitals Program – school-based traineeships

- Mater Education Program – including Indigenous school-based traineeships
- Industry liaison.

It partners with a range of external RTOs to increase offerings for its students including:

- TAFE Queensland Skills Tech: Certificate I in Construction, Certificate II in Furniture Making Pathways, Certificate II in Engineering Pathways
- Training Direct Australia Pty Ltd: Certificate II in Hospitality, Certificate III in Hospitality
- The College of Health and Fitness: Certificate II in Sport and Recreation, Certificate III in Fitness
- ACCCO: Certificate III in Early Childhood, Education and Care
- COSAMP: Certificate III in Music Industry.

Success factors

The factors for success are identified as:

- having a great team of people
- a priority on providing the best outcomes for students
- treating students as individuals
- ongoing monitoring of their pathways
- ability to manipulate student timetables to suit their needs
- flexibility
- having access to the Grace Lutheran College's trades skills centre to make trade taster programs possible
- on-campus programs delivered by Mater Education, which is a hospital-based RTO delivering:
 - Certificate II in Health Support Services
 - Certificate III in Health Services Assistance.

Seeing students transition from work experience to SBAT has also been identified as a key source of satisfaction.

Challenges

The challenges include the need for:

- constant upskilling of staff, especially with regard to the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE)
- keeping up with changes to training packages
- maintaining industry currency.

The frustrations include a lack of recognition for VET – of the academic rigour and the hours spent in structured work placement. Also the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) scaled a Certificate III for the ATAR calculation at 40.76, meaning that, even though students can use a certificate III in their ATAR calculation, it would be a great disadvantage to do so.

Cardijn College

Established in 1983, Cardijn College is a Catholic co-educational school located across three campuses in the southern suburbs of Adelaide, South Australia. These comprise: Cardijn College at Noarlunga Downs, which caters for Years 7 to 12 students and has 1245 students; Marcellin Campus at Christies Downs and caters for 167 Years 10 to 12 students; and Galilee Campus at Aldinga, which caters for reception to Year 9 students and caters for 323 students. MTC Training, located at Marcellin campus, is Cardijn's RTO.

VfSSS students and trainers

There are currently 141 VfSSS students at the Cardijn campus, including two Year 9 students, 81 Year 10 students, 40 Year 11 students, and 18 Year 12 students. At the Marcellin campus there are 68 Year 11 students and 49 Year 12 students.

Of the teachers involved in providing training for VfSSS students:

- Two Cardijn College teachers provide training under an auspice agreement (teachers have Certificate IV TAE and industry experience in the fields they are delivering in).
- A number of external trainers from various RTOs provide training.
- A number of trainers who train for MTC Training (Cardijn's RTO) deliver training. The trainers have both industry experience and Certificate IV TAE.

Staff comprise a VET and pathways coordinator, the careers education coordinator and a Cardijn teacher with a background in sound production. A sport and recreation teacher provides training under an auspice agreement.

Programs, delivery locations, and funding sources

The college has 20 programs on its scope of registration.

Table F2 Delivery locations and funding source for VET for secondary school students programs delivered by Harvester College, 2021

No	Course	Course location	RTO name	Payment/ Delivery type
1	Cert. II Construction Pathways	Campus 2	School RTO	FFS & TGSS
2	Cert. II Electrotechnology	Career Start (Campus 2)	School RTO	FFS & TGSS
3	Cert. II Automotive	Campus 2	School RTO	FFS & TGSS
4	Cert. II Construction	Campus 2	School RTO	FFS & TGSS
5	Cert. II Engineering Pathways	Campus 2	School RTO	FFS & TGSS
6	Cert. II Salon Assistant	Campus 2	External RTO	FFS & TGSS
7	Cert. II Retail Cosmetics	Campus 2	External RTO	FFS
8	Cert. III ECE & Care	Campus 2	External RTO	FFS & TGSS
9	Cert. I Kitchen Operations	Campus 1	External RTO	FFS
10	Cert. II Kitchen Operations	Campus 1	External RTO	FFS & TGSS
11	Cert. III Hairdressing	Partial	External RTO	FFS
12	Cert. III Hairdressing	External	External RTO	TGSS
13	Cert. III Barbering	External	External RTO	FFS

14	Cert. III Individual Support (Aged Care)	Currently external**	External RTO	TGSS
15	Cert. III Fitness	Campus 1 & Recreation Centre	External RTO	FFS
16	Cert. III Business	External	External RTO	FFS
17	Cert. III Sport and Rec	Campus 1	AIPT	Auspice
18	Cert. III Music Industry	Campus 1	COSAMP	Auspice
19	Cert. III Dance	Campus 1 & Student's Dance Studios	Empowerdance	FFS
20	Cert. III Screen and Media	External	AIE	FFS

Note: FFS = fee-for-service; TGSS is training guarantee for SACE students; **by Queensford College

In March 2021 there were 26 students in SBAT programs. They were in the following programs:

- plumbing apprenticeships (currently three students)
- electrical apprenticeships (currently seven students)
- carpentry apprenticeships (currently four students)
- cabinet making apprenticeships (currently one student)
- hair and beauty apprenticeships (currently two students)
- automotive apprenticeships (currently three students)
- fabrication apprenticeships (currently four students)
- stonemasonry apprenticeship (one student)
- paint and panel apprenticeship (one student).

In 2020, 82% of the Marcellin Campus Year 12 cohort continued or started an apprenticeship (54 all up).

At Marcellin Campus the vast majority of students undertake Australian school-based apprenticeships. The most common arrangements at Cardijn Campus are the Certificate III Retail Traineeships, which are promoted by the students' casual workplaces. These are not promoted by the school. Nearly all students studying and working in SBATs attend Marcellin Campus to gain access to the dedicated apprenticeship SACE program.

Promoting VfSSS studies

Cardijn has had a targeted approach to promoting VfSSS, beginning from Year 9. The Year 9 cohort students are invited to various 'taster' courses (which, in 2021 may involve one or two units of competency). These courses develop transferable skills and can become part of a future qualification, an addition to a student's learner profile and a highlight to her/his resume. Year 9 students interested in a vocational trade pathway are also invited to undertake careers counselling, which formalises the first step to transferring to Marcellin Campus for the following year (Head Start Program).

Year 10s from Cardijn College (and external schools) can go to Marcellin Campus from the start of the school year in the Head Start Program. Students in this program gain experience in all the trade areas available at Marcellin Campus and study a curriculum encompassing compulsory and core subjects (that is, personal learning plan [PLP], mathematics, English and STEM) and work placement. An additional opportunity in Semester 2 (the 'Mid-Year Program') accommodates those Cardijn Campus Year 10 students (and external Year 10 students) who have realised a vocational pathway from their PLP in Semester 1.

From Semester 2 in 2021 onwards, Year 10 students on Cardijn Campus who wish to study VfSSS certificate IIIs on the funded training list will undertake stackable VET in preparation for Year 11.

VfSSS is promoted in the subject handbook, the morning student notices, via email, open nights, pastoral care time and during one-on-one careers counselling sessions. The approaches are reported as having been successful, based on the proportion of senior school students undertaking VETiS programs; however, it is noted that there is always room for improvement.

In recent years, increases in resources (including time allocation for VET coordinator, increased VET budget and supervised VET study lessons) have resulted in an increase in the number of students undertaking VETiS programs and in the support they receive. The Advancement Team has also been instrumental in the promotion of Marcellin Campus and a trade pathway. The increase in student numbers is also due to efforts to schedule VET in timetabled lessons.

ATAR achievement

In 2020, 102 students achieved an ATAR and of those 18% studied VfSSS in the same year.

Relationships with external RTOs

The college uses a combination of auspicing with external RTOs, delivery by external RTOs and delivery by MTC training, which is its own RTO. At Cardijn all relationships with external RTOs have been developed with the goal of making VfSSS accessible for students. Where possible, VfSSS has been integrated within timetabled lessons, with qualifications delivered on site.

- Two qualifications are auspiced with external RTOs, including the Certificate III in Music, auspiced with COSAMP (College of Sound and Music Production), and the Certificate III Sport and Recreation, auspiced with the Australian Institute of Personal Trainers (AIPT). These courses are both delivered on site at Cardijn College.
- The college has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Clip Joint Education, which trains the Certificate II Salon Assistant and the Certificate II Retail Cosmetics on site at Marcellin Campus in the purpose-built training salon.
- Queensford College supplies Certificate III Fitness Trainers, with training delivered on site at Cardijn Campus and in the nearby recreation centre. Queensford Trainers also delivers the Certificate III Individual Support (Aged Care) and the Certificate III Early Childhood Education and Care at Marcellin Campus in purpose-built training rooms.
- Trainers from the Career Employment Group deliver the Certificate I in Hospitality and the Certificate II in Kitchen Operations on site at Cardijn College in the purpose-built commercial kitchen.
- The school has relationships with the Australian Foundation for Disability (AFFORD).

Training is generally provided in purpose-built facilities.

Cardijn does not have any formal relationships with other secondary schools however, but it does support Cardijn students who wish to study specialist programs at other schools not offered at Cardijn (for example, Diamond Sports Academy at Seaton High School).

The principal trainer of VfSSS students across all campuses is MTC Training. MTC Training provides quality training for students while they are in the SACE program (VfSSS) and also when they are SBATs. After students graduate with their SACE, they continue their certificate III training with MTC Training until they are qualified tradespeople. The ‘circle is complete’ when the now qualified tradespeople come to the college looking for apprentices of their own.

Success factors

The college has found that clear, coordinated and consistent communication with teaching/training staff, parents/caregivers, students, and RTOs is essential. The efforts to bring VET courses on campus and within subject lines has also been a positive factor. Students at Cardijn who are enrolled in VET courses are also on a VET timetable line. This allows the students to catch up on work missed due to VET or work specifically related to their VET course (for example, completing workbook tasks). Supporting and case-managing these students is very labour- and time-intensive, but it results in a successful program.

Having VfSSS studies that clearly articulate to SBATs, employment and identified local industry needs are the most successful outcome (using the metric of employment). ‘The sheer amount of qualified Tradespeople that have studied at Marcellin Campus over the last 11 years creates a self-sufficient population of local Trades that give back to their old school by taking on new apprentices’, noted the VET coordinator.

VET qualifications relevant to university courses that students wish to study have also been very successful (for example, many Certificate III Individual Support students study nursing at university and many Certificate III Early Childhood Education students study primary teaching). Students have also been successful in gaining work related to their VET courses that is flexible in nature and perfect for university students (for example, aged care shift work and vacation care, outside school hours care, and childcare work).

Positive feedback from parents/caregivers and classroom teachers who notice a change in engagement in their other subjects once a student starts a VET course is always appreciated by VfSSS staff. Students whose behaviour and work output improves once they have a careers counselling session is also very pleasing. A highlight last year was the successful partnership between the school and a local aged care facility. This was forged out of necessity, as students were unable to find work placement elsewhere. As a result of this partnership, students are finally obtaining their qualifications and two students have gained employment as a result of their performance on work placement. These two students in particular are exemplary examples of the VET to further study and work pathway, as they are both going to study nursing at university.

Challenges

The year 2020 was particularly challenging as many students could not complete full qualifications. (They could not access work placement due to COVID-19.) This has resulted in many logistical loose ends for resolution this year, on top of the workload related to this year’s students.

Another perpetual challenge is education around student pathways for parents/caregivers and the public in general. In many instances, a student articulates a desire for a trade/vocational pathway and his/her parents/caregivers are initially resistant. Some agree after concerted efforts on the school’s part, but some remain fixed in their views.

Sunshine College: a focus on Harvester College

Sunshine College is a secondary college for Years 7–12 students in Victoria and is comprised of three campuses, each with its own focus: West, North and Harvester College. The West Campus services Year 7 to 12 students (including a small number of school-based apprentices and trainees taught by teachers who have career education as part of their teaching loads). The North Campus services Years 7 to 10 students and Harvester College delivers VfSSS programs for Years 11 and 12 students.

Students and staffing

A total of 145 students participate in VfSSS programs on campus for 14 periods a week, each 50 minutes long, and with VET training taking place every day; they include prevocational programs in building and construction, electrical, engineering, and plumbing. Harvester College also delivers the white card.

At Harvester, students will go out into the field twice, for two weeks at a time, during the year to determine whether the industry suits them. This is a point of difference with schools delivering VET elsewhere, as work placements are not mandated.

An integrated approach to learning has been adopted and students are expected to integrate the learning they undertake in the classroom with the learning they acquire in workplace tasks. For example, a literacy task may require students undertaking a prevocational course in plumbing to go to a local plant and as part of their tasks write up their experiences for the day.

Sunshine is an RTO in its own right, with the principal holding the role of CEO of the RTO. The RTO manager has a non-teaching role and takes charge of administrative issues. VET teachers have the requisite training and assessor training. Teachers running the school-based apprenticeship and traineeship program at Sunshine's West Campus include the assistant principal, leading teacher/careers educators and staff responsible 'transitioning' studies.

Promoting and marketing the VfSSS program

One of the key issues facing the school is the inability to attract a student cohort of VfSSS students, especially as students from other Sunshine schools are not often attracted to Harvester College. Because Sunshine does not have designated feeder schools at the senior secondary level, holding information nights to promote the programs to recruit students is generally not an option, an issue made worse through the pandemic. The school has tried advertising on the back of buses but is of the view that this approach could be seen by other schools as an attempt to poach students. In the main, the school depends on repeat business from past students/families and from word of mouth.

ATAR achievement

The students at Harvester College do not undertake any scored VET and as a result their outcomes do not include an ATAR. However, they can complete a certificate II qualification in one year and a Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) at intermediate level in Year 11 and at senior level in Year 12. They may also choose to complete two certificate II qualifications, for example, in plumbing and carpentry.

The life cycle of an accredited course under Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) registration is five years and Harvester will need to re-register to maintain courses on scope once this time expires. In the past, the RTO would seek feedback about the effectiveness of its program from large organisations, but since students were only going to local organisations both for destinations or on placements, this approach had to be revisited.

Program offerings

The college offers programs in:

- building and construction (Years 11 and 12)
- electro-technology (Years 11 and 12)
- plumbing (Years 11 and 12)
- engineering (Years 11 and 12)
- Tech Ten (Year 10)
- Fast Track (Year 12).

Relationships with external RTOs and schools

Although some clustering occurs in the college as a whole, Harvester College is only engaged in partnerships for the delivery of first-aid programs and for teacher professional development programs. However, partnerships mainly happen when students are not on campus and are involved in structured workplace learning (SWL) placements. At these times the college partners with other RTOs and schools to deliver moderation and validation workshops for its teachers. This enables the college to ensure its VET teachers deal with important assessment issues. When students are in the field, teachers can also use this time to maintain their industry currency, a requirement of registration with VRQA. They also complete a skills matrix (using the VRQA approach).

Success factors

It is clear that the key factors for success relate to understanding that VET is not just another subject and that a successful VET program requires the appropriate amount of support in terms of adequate time and resources. Staff have to keep up with changes in industry and the college prides itself on giving teachers time during the year to undergo professional development for the purpose of upgrading their industry skills and participating in workshops addressing the validation and moderation of assessments. Information about the destinations of students is also made public to promote the success of the program more broadly.

One of the most enjoyable things for the RTO manager is to see 'kids' and families at graduations. Another is to see 'kids' complete and get their jobs in an area where they've always wanted to work, especially as many of the students have come from fields where only success in academic pathways is valued.

Challenges

The key challenges in running a successful program are concerned with getting enough qualified staff to come to the school to teach VET, mainly because some do not want to leave industry and might suffer a decrease in pay. Another challenge relates to the funding model. Although the delivery of training is government-funded under Skills First Funding, the school does not receive funding to maintain the building and machinery. The costs for this must come out of the school budget. The school can charge for consumables and materials.

Bendigo Senior Secondary College (BSSC)

This college has a total of around 1800 students in Years 11 and 12. The college operates as an RTO in its own right and also works in partnership with external RTOs for VET provision. It delivers training for students in around 22 programs on its own site or in collaboration with others at their sites. VfSSS provision happens in two major streams. Students can select VfSSS subjects as part of their set of subjects for achievement of their senior certificate (VCE or VCAL) and, secondly, VET can be accessed through school-based apprenticeships and traineeships. The school-based apprenticeship and traineeships can be streamed through the Head Start Program. The college is the lead school for the Bendigo Schools Trade Training Centre, which has VET programs running from two core sites.

Table F3 VET qualification enrolments at Bendigo Senior Secondary College, 3 February 2021

VET qualification	RTO	Delivery Site	Enrolments
AHC20116 Certificate II Agriculture	Access Skills Training	Coolock TTC (Catherine McAuley College)	18
HLT33015 Certificate III Allied Health Assistance	GOTAFE	BSSC	165
AMC20117 Certificate II Animal Studies	Access Skills Training	Coolock TTC (Catherine McAuley College)	66
10661NAT Certificate II Applied Languages (Chinese)	Ripponlea Institute	BSSC	12
AUR20716 Certificate II Automotive Vocational Preparation	BSSC	Park Road TTC (BSSC)	66
22338VIC Certificate II Building & Construction	BSSC	Park Road TTC (BSSC)	187
BSB20115 Certificate II Business	BSSC	BSSC	37
CHC22015 Certificate II Community Services	BSSC	BSSC	96
CHC32015 Certificate III Community Services	BSSC	BSSC	
22470VIC Certificate II Engineering Studies	BSSC	Park Road TTC (BSSC)	71
SIT20416 Certificate II Kitchen Operations	GOTAFE	BSSC	51
ICT30115 Certificate III Information, Digital Media & Technology	BSSC	BSSC	38
22289VIC Certificate II Integrated Technologies	BSSC	Park Road TTC (BSSC)	26
SHB30215 Certificate III Make-Up	Bendigo Kangan Institute	Bendigo TAFE	42
CUA30915 Certificate III Music Industry	COSAMP	BSSC	38
SIS20213 Certificate II Outdoor Recreation	BSSC	BSSC	24
SHB20216 Certificate II Salon Assistant (Hair)	Bendigo Kangan Institute	Bendigo TAFE	23
CUA31015 Certificate III Screen and Media (Digital Media)	BSSC	BSSC	57
SIS30115 Certificate III Sport & Recreation	BSSC	BSSC	56
CISCO Certified Network Associate Course (mapped to several UOCs from Certificate IV Integrated Technologies)	BSSC	BSSC	7
22484VIC Certificate I in EAL (Access)	BSSC	BSSC	13
22488VIC Certificate II in EAL (Employment)	BSSC	BSSC	19
HLTAID003 Provide First Aid	BSSC	BSSC	First Aid is linked in with other VET qualifications (approx. 300 students per year)
HLTAID001 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)	BSSC	BSSC	

Note: Total VET subjects selected – 1109 (does not include first-aid enrolments)

Source: Bendigo Senior Secondary College.

Relationships with external RTOs and schools

Table F3 shows the relationships that BSSC has with the other RTOs that provide training for students at the college. The range of RTOs used include Access Skills Training, GOTAFE, Ripponlea Institute, Bendigo Kangan Institute and the College of Sound and Music Production (COSAMP). Delivery sites include the college itself and its associated on-site Park Road Trade Training Centre, the associated Coolock Trade Training Centre (hosted by Catherine McAuley College) and Bendigo TAFE. The college has 1109 enrolments in a range of subjects. These do not include first-aid enrolments linked to other VET qualifications and undertaken by around 300 students per year.

The most popular enrolments in a single qualification are in Certificate II in Building and Construction, with almost 200 enrolments. There are about 300 students who undertake first-aid training as part of other qualifications.

BSSC also has relationships with four associated 7–10 colleges, whose students transition to the college for Years 11 and 12. Through the trade training centre consortium commitments, BSSC works with a Bendigo Catholic school (Catherine McAuley College), an independent school (Victory Christian College) and several rural schools (the Charlton Cluster schools, East Loddon P–12 College) for VET provision. As the host of the Coolock Trade Training Centre, Catherine McAuley College takes the lead for the VET agriculture and animal studies programs.

BSSC has integrated SBAT provision with VCAL (Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning) and VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) programs for many years. In 2019 BSSC began participation in a trial of the new Head Start Program for SBATs.

Promoting and marketing the VfSSS program

BSSC promotes the benefits of students undertaking VfSSS, both to students and their parents, in a variety of ways, including information nights, open days, school tours and taster events. In addition, the school has found employers to be very willing as part of their community obligations to provide workplace experience or placements for students. Some employers take on SBATs. These promotional activities have been successful – there has been an increase in the uptake of VET subjects in the last few years.

A number of the VET programs can involve scored assessments and the median score has also increased over time.

The college is especially focused on ensuring that students understand that they need to be competitive to have successful transitions from senior schooling and to get a job. For example, Bendigo has a large regional hospital and there are many opportunities for allied health professionals. The college is keen to inform students that undertaking accredited training in VfSSS can help them to complete VCAL and VCE qualifications, support transitions into further education and training through having industry-specific knowledge and skills, and build up resumés for making job applications to work in the hospital. There has also been a significant increase in enrolments in Certificate III Allied Health Assistance in the last few years – from 10 students in 2013 to 165 in 2021.

A key part of supporting and promoting understanding about the place of VET in career planning is the valuable networking conducted with industry stakeholders, including analysis of environmental scan data for industry sectors. The college has been a key contributor to the development of sector-based regional road maps – for health and engineering and advanced manufacturing. These are valuable for clarifying the place of education and industry training in career pathway development, fostering collaboration for jobs growth and opening up opportunities for students.

Relationships with employers

Employers in the region play an integral role in helping students to gain the experience they need to prepare them for work. The school has a large structured workplace learning (SWL) program and regularly places more than 400 students per year with a large number of employers. The school has relationships with 110 employers and works in conjunction with the Goldfields Local Learning and Employment Network. These businesses include large and medium-sized organisations.

The school has also been recognised as being well aligned with the industries in the region. Dedicated staff at the school work to source and secure placements for students and follow up with employers. Employers provide positive evaluations of the students who undertake SWL placements at their firms.

The relationships help the school to understand what employers do and to identify any opportunities for work experience, SWL and employment for SBATs. Liaison between employers and VET teachers supports the VET-validation process for recent and relevant industry experience and assists in maintaining currency for VET training and assessment materials.

School-based apprenticeships and traineeships: the Head Start Program

The Head Start Program, which commenced in 2019, represents a relatively new approach to school-based apprenticeships and traineeships and is currently being trialled in some schools in Victoria and at BSSC. The Head Start program is based on enabling students to spend more time in paid work and on-the-job training in a Head-Start-designated occupation. As an SBAT, at least 13 hours per week must be spent in paid work. As its name implies, the aim is to provide students with a head start in the labour market and in the completion of their industry-based studies. Students may complete a certificate III qualification, at the same time as their Year 10, Year 11 and Year 12 studies.

In the Loddon Campaspe region, BSSC is part of a cluster of 17 schools for the Head Start program. A Head Start cluster director and a team of five dedicated Head Start coordinators are employed to run the program, liaise with employers and case-manage SBATs. Since the inception of Head Start in 2019, there have been 145 SBATs for the cluster of 17 schools (39 BSSC students), with around 75% in the traditional trades. For BSSC students, the placement numbers are consistent with SBATs operating before the Head Start program. This is quite different from the findings of the 'Vocational pathways and applied learning' review, which noted that 80% had been in the non-trade programs. BSSC students have also accessed SBAT placements in early childhood education, commercial cookery, hairdressing, agriculture, horticulture, racing (stable hand) and business administration.

The Head Start team works across the regional and rural area to promote awareness of SBATs to employers, following up with apprentices and trainees to make sure the apprenticeship or traineeship is sustainable and giving employers advice on what to do when apprentices can no longer be kept on (as happened for some during the COVID lockdowns). This is consistent with the supports in place for the SBATs at BSSC not involved in the Head Start program. Because students need to have a placement secured with an employer before they can enter an SBAT, the aim throughout is to get students to think about whether or not the selected workplace is suitable for them and to get a strong match between employer and apprentice or trainee. Of the students who actually get signed up for an SBAT, the Head Start program finds that 60% have actually done work placement with the same employer prior to being signed up, while another 40% have responded to advertisements by employers, or other employer-recruitment approaches made to schools.

Early indications are that the Head Start program is effective in placing students with employers and case-managing students through their employment and training.

ATAR Achievement

In Victoria VET subjects contribute to the ATAR through scored assessment or by an increment, through the VCE certificate. The college has a steady record of high study scores from VET subjects and has had an upward trend for the median study score over recent years. This is predominantly connected to students focused on post-secondary school transitions to university and TAFE. The college supports SBATs for both the VCE and VCAL certificates. It is the college's experience that the majority of SBATs are looking for a transition into a full-time apprenticeship or work; few are seeking an ATAR and want scored assessment.

Success factors

The success of the VfSSS program at BSSC is related to having dedicated staff with the requisite expertise and experience, and dedicated and adequate resources to run a program. Being an RTO in its own right also means that BSSC can choose the VET programs it can manage on scope and undergo the requisite registration processes. The trade training centre consortium operation and facilities help the college to gain access to the latest equipment, facilities and materials and also provide a VET training pathway for Year 10 students. Another advantage is having teachers with industry backgrounds teaching the VET programs. A number of teachers have come to the college as career changers, with these subsequently acquiring their teaching qualifications (mostly a Bachelor of Education). A positive for BSSC operating as an RTO is the expertise within the college for prioritising and supporting industry experience for VET teacher validations and creating and supporting a team-based approach to VET delivery. The RTO expertise is also highly valuable for developing and maintaining the external partnerships that support VfSSS.

Throughout the time of facilitating SBATs, a dedicated resource for overseeing the management of them has helped with the synchronisation of timetabling arrangements, on-the-job commitments, external training provision and course counselling for completion of the VCE or VCAL.

The considerable government resources that have been available to Head Start are identified as the key supports for the program, as is the employment of dedicated staff, especially the role of Head Start cluster director to lead the program for the Loddon Campaspe region and dedicated staff to help case-manage SBATs through their programs.

The college received state training awards in 2012 and 2016 and was shortlisted for the Australian Training Awards in 2011, 2014 and 2015. The BSSC deputy principal managing VET programs and the RTO at the college is of the view that the favourable benchmarking involved and the recognition received encouraged staff to feel and continue to feel celebrated and empowered to keep working hard.

For the Head Start cluster director, the key sources of satisfaction (signalling success) are associated with getting students signed up as SBATs and supporting students to follow the pathways available within the education system.

Challenges

There are challenges associated with keeping up the relationships with other schools and RTOs. These are related to undertaking the contract and compliance tasks to ensure students are well placed for overall progress towards successful completion and for positive transitions to post-secondary school options. For example, this involves monitoring and supporting student attendance, organising and monitoring training plans and crediting, school reporting, auspicing arrangements, staffing and qualifications, and RTO student enrolment requirements. To do the work well needs time to develop staff expertise, other efficiencies, and adequate resources.

Mildura Senior College (MSC)

Mildura Senior College has 852 students with 168 VCAL and 271 VCE students undertaking VfSSS. It is not an RTO in its own right, mainly because it has chosen to use auspiced arrangements or to outsource arrangements when they are required. Clustering is a key part of its VET in Schools program.

The school has a trade training centre – the Deakin Trade Training Centre, on site – which offers state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, and training for the traditional trades, as well as for emerging industries. Students also have access to Riverside Trade Training Centre (Riverside TTC), which is one of the trade training centre hubs that are part of the Mildura Trade Training Centre consortium (MTTC).

In completing VfSSS courses, students can accrue unit credits towards completion of Year 10, 11 and 12 studies and their VCE and VCAL certificates.

There is no government charge for the tuition of VET programs, but the school does charge for materials, kits and uniforms.

Mildura Senior College has an auspice arrangement with a number of RTOs to deliver VfSSS programs and these courses are delivered on site as regular timetabled classes. The staff teaching these programs have generally come from industry, and have been former carpenters, fitness instructors, qualified chefs and business administrators. Teachers must have a qualification at the level or above in the training package they are teaching and the TAE qualification and most will also have a Bachelor of Education or Permission to Teach from the Victorian Institute of Teachers.

The auspiced VET courses include:

- AUR20716 Certificate II in Automotive
- 22338VIC Certificate II in Building and Construction (Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship)
- BSB20115 Certificate II in Business
- CHC32015 Certificate III in Community Services
- UEE22011 Certificate II in Electrotechnology (Career Start)
- 22470VIC Certificate II in Engineering Studies
- SIS30315 Certificate III in Fitness
- MSF20516 Certificate II in Furniture Making
- SIT20316 Certificate II in Hospitality
- SIT20416 Certificate II in Kitchen Operations
- SIT30816 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery (Patisserie – selected units only)
- CUA20615 Certificate II in Music
- CUA30915 Certificate III in Music Industry – Performance
- CUA30915 Certificate III in Music Industry – Sound Production
- SIR20216 Certificate II in Retail
- CUA31015 Certificate III in Screen and Media.

Students can choose to undertake a VET course at either Riverside TTC or SuniTAFE. These programs are delivered one day per week off site. The VET courses offered at these facilities include:

- Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance HLT33015
- Certificate III in Beauty Services SHB30115
- Certificate III in Design Fundamentals CUA30715
- Certificate III in Make-up SHB30215
- Certificate II in Salon Assistant SHB20216
- Certificate II in Plumbing (Pre: Apprenticeship 22304VIC)
- Certificate II in Rural Operations AHC21216.

Occasionally a student will request a program that is not offered locally, such as VET Equine, and the school will work with other RTOs to assist the student to undertake these courses through a combination of online learning and workshops.

Mildura Senior College also offers programs to Year 10 students at the Deakin Trade Training Centre as part of the Mildura Region TTC Consortium, where students come from neighbouring schools in the district to undertake a VfSSS course. These courses are offered one day per week, on a Wednesday, and in programs such as automotive, building and electrical.

Ten other schools and colleges are part of the Mildura Region Trade Training Centre cluster. The aim is to increase the number of completers of Year 12 or equivalent. Students from the 11 cluster schools have access to the MRTTC. Two hubs, the Riverside Hub on the campus of St Joseph's College Mercy Campus, and the Deakin hub, on the campus of Mildura Senior College, are the key facilities.

The only areas in which structured work placements are mandated for VfSSS are in allied health, salon assistant, hospitality, retail and fitness. However, it is highly recommended that all students undertaking a VfSSS programs complete SWL. The workplace learning coordinator at the school manages work placements, work experience and transition-to-work programs. The coordinator will also work with the local learning and employment network (LLEN) and uses the SWL Portal. However, all students undertaking VCAL must go out on a work placement.

SBATs

The college currently has 22 school-based apprentices and trainees, with the majority in apprenticeship rather than traineeship programs. Local employers tend to use local training providers such as SuniTAFE and MMTTC, but are required to look elsewhere if there are no options in Mildura. This means that students are required to travel to either Melbourne or Bendigo to undertake their SBAT training. Some employers in the region are also RTOs in their own right. These include SkillInvest, KFC, and McDonalds.

Promoting the VfSSS program

There are six district schools, which act as feeder schools for MSC, and students from these schools are involved in Year 9 tours and Year 10 discovery days. Open days are held for parents and students, and taster days for Year 9s and 10s at the trade training centre. The VET coordinator participates in information sessions at the different partner schools and provides one-to-one subject counselling for parents and students. Students from the non-partner schools wanting to come to the college will be involved in individual interviews.

Mildura Senior College develops a course guide for students and a handbook for parents each year, promoting the school and all the subjects available at MSC. The school also works with SuniTAFE and Riverside TTC to develop the MRTTC handbook, which promotes the VET programs delivered externally to the school, as well as programs for Year 10s wanting to attend the Deakin TTC. Promotional materials tell students that the Deakin Trade Training Centre Courses are ‘a great way to prepare them for work either through apprenticeships, traineeships, or direct employment’. The school handbook enables students to experience key occupational tasks via interactive simulations by enabling them to click on designated icons.

MSC has developed a range of flyers and promotional PowerPoint presentations, which students, parents and schools can use to help students to have a better understanding of VET and to assist with subject selections and the transition process. These can be accessed on the school’s website page.

Also available on the MSC website is information regarding the SBAT program and how an SBAT program can work alongside a VCE or VCAL program. Students can undertake an SBAT in any industry, as long as they can find an employer who is willing to employ them. The school has had a number of high-profile SBAT students in the past, with three students winning the Victorian Training Awards and two winning the Australian Training Award for the SBAT category.

Program offerings

The MSC Course Guide and the Mildura Region Trade Training Centre and SuniTAFE Handbook provide information about the offerings in the region and advise students on how completion of VET studies can count towards the completion of VCE and VCAL certificates. It lets them know how their VET program will be assessed to show they have achieved competency. The Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network assists with the coordination of the structured workplace learning program in the Sunraysia and Robinvale regions.

The MSC Course Guide provides information on each of the VET courses offered at the school, detailing the units of competency undertaken, length of the course and who the training provider is. It outlines the differences between a VCE and VCAL program, what SBATs are, and how to choose subjects based on the field of interest students have.

The 2021 MRTTC handbook provides some practical advice to students. It tells them to be ‘motivated, and well-organised’. It asks them to ‘accept work placements during holiday times’, and to be ‘flexible in accepting new delivery and assessment approaches’. It tells students they will need to be good communicators and be open to ‘making new friends because students will come from all across the region’ (p3). As well as being open to doing placements during holiday times, the program booklet advises students to maintain a healthy school work–life balance.

The handbook provides students with information on how much credit they will receive towards their VCE or VCAL by undertaking a VET in Schools program. It also provides students and their parents with information that sets out the ‘predicted growth regions and occupations’ in the Mallee, using information from the Mallee Regional Skills Demand Profile.

Relationships with other associations or organisations

Mildura Senior College has relationships with the Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network, local apprenticeship centres, SuniTAFE and La Trobe University, in addition to connections with industry and community groups through its school-based apprenticeship and traineeship and structured workplace learning arrangements. VET teachers also have their own connections. At the end of the year

VET teachers will go into industry to help upgrade their industry currency. All teachers at the college are involved in providing career guidance. The Sunraysia Career Network participates in industry visits, coordinated by the Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network, to provide professional development to local school career and VET coordinators. MSC teachers attend industry visits each year, coordinated by the school's transition-to-work coordinator and the NMLLEN. This approach has been very successful in providing schools with first-hand knowledge of employers' expectations and local skill shortage information.

Relationships with other secondary schools and RTOs

The school has relationships with other secondary schools through the Year 10 Transition program and as part of an alliance – the Mildura Regional Trade Training Centre Consortium. There is a close relationship with six of the schools, with meetings held each term as part of the Year 10 Transition process. The MRTTC also meets each term to discuss and review the program and events. MSC also belongs to the Mildura Secondary School Alliance, where teaching personnel from the local government schools meet to share curriculum to assist with the transition process for students from Year 10 to Year 11.

It is the VfSSS program that enables the creation and sustainability of relationships with other schools and RTOs. Mildura Senior College currently uses the following RTOs to provide VET programs at the school: SuniTAFE (allied health, auto, building, design fundamentals, electrical, engineering, furniture making, hospitality, kitchen operations, patisserie, plumbing, rural operations), IVET (business and community services), COSAMP (music), Foundation Education (fitness), Access Skills Group (retail), Academy of Interactive Entertainment (screen and media) and Riverside TTC (beauty, make-up and salon assistant). These RTOs have their own compliance requirements and provide professional development for the teachers.

Success factors

A range of factors are responsible for the success of the program at Mildura Senior College. These are, having:

- good teachers, who are passionate and enthusiastic about the industry in which they teach and can keep students engaged on suitable projects and encourage them to undertake work placements
- a wide array of offerings (the school has around 50 subjects)
- successful marketing to parents, students, and the community.

According to the VET coordinator, a range of other factors signal the success of the program, and these vary according to the aims of the students in programs they undertake. For example:

- Automotive and hospitality students are often looking for good life skills and not just for a job.
- Fitness students can use the course to get a job while studying at university in health or exercise science courses.
- Engineering students represent a 50:50 split between apprenticeships and university.
- Retail and business students use the skills learned to get casual work while at school.

Having a dedicated VET coordinator to manage the program, look after compliance issues, counsel students, support teachers, and work with the RTOs is part of the success of the program and why Mildura Senior College has had a 300% increase in students participating in VET and SBATs.

Helping young people to develop skills and try out career options provides a source of satisfaction for staff. Their experience is that some students thrive.

Challenges

Recently, it has become more difficult for the college to attract qualified VET teachers. As a consequence, the school has had to employ staff from TAFE and has had to stop offering some VET programs such as IDMT and Avionics. In 2020 the Department of Education provided financial incentives of up to \$50 000, to encourage teachers to relocate and to apply for hard-to-fill teaching positions. The school was still unable to attract anyone to fill a VET electrical teaching position, which they had been advertising for three years. When there is a teacher shortage, then the school has to look for them elsewhere. If unable to replace the teacher, the school has had to use a TAFE teacher, which has been more costly.

The requirements a teacher must comply with to teach a VET subject are many and make the burden so much greater than if the teacher only taught VCE or VCAL. The teacher is required to hold an education degree (or be willing to undertake one), a Certificate IV TAE40116 qualification, a qualification in the industry in which they are teaching, and they must undertake professional development each year to comply with currency requirements. This can take the form of a work placement on top of their normal teaching load. The recent upgrade to the Certificate IV TAE40116 took several months to complete and was very challenging for teachers, who are already working full-time.

Guilford Young College (GYC)

GYC is a Year 11 and 12 secondary Catholic College in Hobart and is the main RTO for the Catholic education sector in Tasmania. While GYC covers the majority of the VET provision in the Catholic sector, it has auspiced partnerships with other RTOs for learning areas that it does not have on scope. TAFE and private providers are both used at times. GYC and other Catholic sector colleges negotiate with other providers to enable their students to attend programs not offered by GYC. All Catholic colleges in Tasmania have a VET coordinator. The amount of time allowed for their job differs significantly, depending on the school and the amount of VET being offered.

GYC has the largest VfSSS Program in Tasmania in the Catholic education sector. The other 12 Catholic colleges in the state are auspiced partners with GYC for them to provide VET. GYC has around 840 students; of these 230 are VET in Schools students.

There are 40 students in school-based apprenticeships at GYC and over 70 in the Catholic sector in Tasmania. SBAT students usually access the vocational training component of their education through external training providers, including TASTAFE or other private RTOs. In Tasmania schools are unable to access User Choice funding and therefore apprenticeship training is traditionally provided by external ETOs. The most common arrangement is a school-based apprenticeship at certificate III level, with approximately half employed with fast food outlets.

In Southern Tasmania the college works closely with its feeder schools. Statewide, it operates as the RTO for the Catholic schools via auspicing. In reality it operates as one large RTO for these schools.

Seventeen teachers are involved in VfSSS delivery at GYC. All staff at the college have industry backgrounds and the required Certificate IV TAE qualifications. Some also have tertiary qualifications.

At the school level, each school has a VET coordinator; at the RTO level (GYC) there is an RTO manager. At GYC, the qualifications and experience of the VET coordinator include: industry background, teaching qualification and diploma of TAE. The RTO manager has a Certificate IV TAE and over 20 years of VET research and development experience.

According to the RTO manager, it is important for RTO managers in VfSSS to have the Certificate IV TAE, and experience and understanding, mainly because they need to know how the training package system works, especially how to utilise it for quality training. When a college is running its own RTO, the manager also needs extensive knowledge relating to the standards for RTOs and the quality assurance system.

Promoting the VfSSS program

Programs are promoted via school newsletters, subject offerings and prepared videos. Former students and employers also go to feeder schools to make presentations to students and parents. Visits are made to Year 7–10 schools to promote the programs. The college does not charge any additional fees for VfSSS.

Relationships with other schools

Clustering is used to broaden offerings for students and there are plenty of examples where students move from one college to another to access courses. In some cases, whole classes move to access a facility and a trainer, and in other cases just a couple of students travel to another college to join an existing VET class.

Relationships with employers

The school has relationships with around 150 employers, as one- to two-week work placements per year are compulsory. Relationships with industry and an understanding of national and state industry skill priorities help the school to select the qualifications to place on its scope. The Catholic schools all have SBATs available, for which GYC is not the RTO; that is, the providers of the ‘training’ component of the training contract. Here it is the employer who can choose the training provider. In Tasmania the User Choice funding is not available to schools and therefore SBATs access their training through outside providers such as TAFE or others.

At GYC the work placements are arranged by teachers, who source the placements, visit the employer prior to the student arriving on the placement, and visit the student during the placement. Teachers check on students or conduct the placement assessments. During the COVID lockdowns, many assessments of placements were undertaken in simulated environments.

ATAR achievement

In 2020 there were 380 students in Year 12, with 240 of these gaining an ATAR score; 45% completed school with an ATAR score and some VET achievements.

Success factors

The main success factors for the GYC program are identified by the RTO manager as having a clear understanding of industry needs and putting these first and foremost in planning and development. It helps the college to ensure that it has the right qualifications in teachers, the right facilities for training and the right industry placements to deliver a successful program. Another key to success is that the RTO develops and reviews its own assessment tools, which makes it easier for the VET team to control the quality of the assessment process. Industry also plays a main role in the validation of assessments, while good communication and teamwork among the staff ensure that the staff are ready to develop and apply the tools they require to deliver and assess their training.

Stories of successful students provide the greatest sources of satisfaction for staff, especially of those students who have struggled during their courses but eventually experience success. It is also enjoyable for the RTO and for the VET component of the program to get the recognition it deserves.

Challenges

The key challenge is finding the teachers with the right skills who want to come and work in the secondary sector, or training them to ensure they have the right skill. Another challenge is to get the rest of the school to understand the complexity of the VET sector. This includes teachers and parents, who don't really understand the value of VET to students and how it works.

Table F4 VET Programs at Guilford Young College, 2021

	Guilford Young College	Dominic College	Mount Carmel College	St Virgil's College	St Mary's College	Sacred Heart College	St James Catholic College	Mackillop Catholic College	St Aloysius Catholic College	St Patrick's College	St Brendan Shaw College	Marist Regional College	St Francis Flexible Learning Centre
AHC10216 Certificate I in Agri-food Operations				✓			✓	✓					
AUR10120 Certificate I in Automotive Vocational Preparation	✓			Some students at GYC				Some students at GYC	Some students at GYC			✓	
AUR20720 Certificate II in Automotive Vocational Preparation	✓												
MEM20413 Certificate II in Engineering Pathways	✓	3 units only		Some students At GYC			3 units only						
SIT10216 Certificate I in Hospitality	✓	4 units only	4 units only	4 units only	4 units only	4 units only	4 units only	✓	4 units only	✓		5 units only	
SIT20416 Certificate II in Kitchen Operations	✓											✓	
SIT20316 Certificate II in Hospitality	✓									✓		✓	
SIT30616 Certificate III in Hospitality										✓			
BSB10120 Certificate I in Workplace Skills (Office admin)	✓				✓								
BSB20120 Certificate II in Workplace Skills (Office admin)	✓												
SIS20319 Certificate II in Sport Coaching	✓												
CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support	8 units per year										8 units per year	5 units per year	
SIT20116 Certificate II in Tourism	✓				✓					✓			
CPC20220 Certificate II in Construction Pathways	✓	3 units only		3 units only		3 units only	3 units only	5 units only	3 units at GYC				
CHC22015 Certificate II in Community Services		4 units only			4 units only				4 units only				
CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care	8 units per year										8 units per year		
DEF10117 Certificate I in Defence Skills	✓												
Skill sets in Outdoor skills and land conservation - 8 units										✓			

SIS20419 Certificate II in Outdoor Recreation	✓	
FSK10119 Certificate I in Access to Vocational Pathways	✓	✓
Theatre sound and lighting skill set – 4 units only	4 units only	
CHC24015 Certificate II in Active Volunteering	✓	

Taminmin College – Northern Territory

Taminmin College is a Year 7–12 school in the suburb of Humpty Doo in the Northern Territory. It has 1247 students.

Programs and students

Of these, there are 148 Year 10 students enrolled in a VfSSS program, 106 Year 11 and 25 Year 12 students.

The College has 19 programs on its scope of registration. These include:

- ACM10117 Certificate I in Animal Studies
- AHC10216 Certificate I in Agri-food
- AUR10120 Certificate I in Automotive Vocational Preparation
- BSB10115 Certificate I in Business
- CPC10120 Certificate I in Construction
- MSM10216 Certificate I in Manufacturing Pathways
- RGR10118 Certificate I in Racing
- SIR10116 Certificate I in Retail
- SIT10216 Certificate I in Hospitality
- AHC21216 Certificate II in Rural Operation
- AUR20516 Certificate II in Automotive Servicing Technology
- BSB20115 Certificate II in Business
- CHC22015 Certificate II in Community Services
- CPC20211 Certificate II in Construction Pathways
- MEM20413 Certificate II in Engineering Pathways
- RGR20218 Certificate II in Racing Industry
- SIT20416 Certificate II in Kitchen Operations
- AHC30116 Certificate III in Agriculture
- It has BSB30415 Certificate III in Business Administration

The college has nine students in school-based apprenticeships, undertaking a variety of certificate III trade programs, and another nine students undertaking certificate III traineeships including:

- Certificate III in Metal Fabrication – four students
- Certificate III in Automotive – one student
- Certificate III in Electrotechnology – three students
- Certificate III in Carpentry – one student
- Certificate III in Health – five students
- Certificate III in ECE – two students
- Certificate III in Business – one student
- Certificate II in IT – one student.

On completion of Year 11, SBATs move into full-time apprenticeships. Traineeships are commonly completed at Year 11 or 12 as an SBAT.

The VET team consists of the:

- VET assistant principal – sits on school executive team
- transition-to-work coordinator – ST1
- compliance officer – AO6
- administration officers, AO3 and AO2
- two teacher/trainers
- nine trainers.

Promoting the VfSSS program

To promote subjects to students the school runs a:

- whole-of-school expo night, attended by parents and students
- GET SET 4 VET day, where students rotate through the different courses to see if they would like to do them.

In addition, all interested Taminmin students are interviewed by the trainer/teacher to ensure all parties have an understanding of what the course entails. This approach has been found to be successful, demonstrated by the fact that all courses are oversubscribed and have waiting lists.

To promote VET courses to external schools, Taminmin sends out information and brochures to each of the school's VET coordinators or careers advisors. During some years the Department of Education organises a meet and greet expo night for RTOs to share this information with all schools. This meet and greet night did not occur in 2020 and, as a result, students from external schools did not get the information from their schools in a timely manner and many missed out on Taminmin's VET courses.

ATAR achievement

In 2020 there were 40 students from the school who obtained an ATAR; seven of these students used a certificate III course towards their score.

Partnerships with industry and other schools

The school has formal partnerships with:

- Humpty Doo Golf Club – Certificate I and II Automotive
- Berry Springs Tavern – Hospitality
- Darwin Turf Club and Women in Racing NT – Certificate I and II Racing
- Halikos – Hospitality.

It also liaises with Group Training Northern Territory (GTNT) on school-based apprenticeships and the many small local businesses that regularly take students for work placements as part of Taminmin's VfSSS courses.

The school has partnerships with other secondary schools to offer students from these schools the opportunity to study VfSSS courses. Students from Taminmin generally stay at the college.

Partnerships with different RTOs enable their VfSSS students to access programs that Taminmin does not have on its scope. These include:

- Charles Darwin University – Certificate II and III level courses
- Fox Education – Health services
- Police cadets
- Allied Health Services – Indigenous health courses.

Success factors

The VET coordinator attributes the success of the program to having students undertake project-based work, taking the lead on projects and employing industry experts on their training teams. Work placements are encouraged, and time is allocated for placements within the school timetable.

Having core subject teachers working with the VET trainers ensures that the students' literacy and numeracy requirements for their VET programs are supported by the learning in their core subject. Placing the 'Transition to Work program' on a separate timetable line also helps to ensure success.

The two teachers/trainers have training and assessment qualifications; they have qualifications and experience in the industry area in which they are training and they maintain their industry currency.

Having teachers and trainers with such backgrounds allows them to deliver VfSSS courses in mainstream timetables. This also helps them to cater for students who want to gain ATARs.

Witnessing the growth and success of the Transition to Work program, which shows an 84% completion rate of certificate courses, provides the VET coordinator with a high sense of satisfaction, as does receiving requests from local businesses for students to work in their businesses or to take up apprenticeships.

Challenges

A range of challenges are confronted when attempting to run a successful program. These include the school being at capacity of funding level for VfSSS and of room usage and having adequate access to appropriate facilities. Students are hesitant to take on apprenticeships because their parents believe they need to pass Year 12 and get their Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCET). When students do leave to take on a full-time apprenticeship, the data become skewed, so a 100% completion rating is never achieved.

Work placements

Every VfSSS course has allocated work placement time. The Department of Education supplies industry engagement officers, who work in conjunction with the trainer to source work-placement spots. It seems that having this dedicated team makes sense and helps to ensure the smooth running of placements.

Funding

The RTO sources the cost of delivering the training through government funding, while the school helps with the costs of running facilities. Students are charged a minimal fee to cover uniform requirements.

Appendix G: LSAY analysis of employment and training outcomes

Table G1 shows that VfSSS who had not attained an ATAR were significantly less likely than their ATAR counterparts to be employed at the age of 25. They were also significantly less likely to be employed than non-VfSSS who had or had not attained an ATAR.

Table G1 Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and labour force status at age 25, 2019 (%)

	VfSSS		Non-VfSSS		Sig. at the 5% level depicted in red
	Non-ATAR (1)	ATAR (2)	Non-ATAR (3)	ATAR (4)	
Employed		82.4	92.9	89.0	92.0 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Unemployed		9.3	2.6	3.8	3.7 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Not in the labour force (NILF)		8.3	4.5	7.2	4.3 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test.⁷

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia.

Full-time or part-time employment status

When comparing outcomes for students aged 22 years with students aged 25 years, VfSSS who had not attained an ATAR showed an improved full-time employment outcome at a younger age than other student cohorts, with 61.5% of VfSSS non-ATAR students in full-time employment at age 22 years, remaining steady (60.3%) through to age 25 years (table G2).

Table G2 Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and full-time/part-time employment status at ages 22 and 25, 2016 & 2019 (%)

	VfSSS						Non-VfSSS						
	Non-ATAR		ATAR		Sig. at the 5% level	*	Non-ATAR		ATAR		Sig. at the 5% level	*	
	Age 22	Age 25	Age 22	Age 25			Age 22	Age 25	Age 22	Age 25			
Full-time	61.5	60.3	45.8	68.2		*	44.2	58.3		*	35.5	66.0	*
Part-time	17.9	17.0	40.4	20.8		*	33.7	18.2		*	43.9	22.5	*
Not working (unemployed or NILF)	15.0	17.6	11.8	7.1		*	19.7	11.0		*	15.8	8.0	*
Working, but working time unknown	5.6	5.1	2.0	3.9			2.4	12.6		*	4.8	3.5	*
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test.⁷

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 8 in 2016 (age 22 years) and wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia.

7 Chi-square test (for independence) is a statistical hypothesis test performed to determine any relationship between categorical variables. The null hypothesis of the chi-square test is that there is no difference/association between two categorical variables (i.e. the proportion of variable A would approximately equal to the proportion of variable B). A condition for the chi-square test would be to have a sample size of more than five in each cell of the table. At the 5% significance level, a p-value of less than 0.05 would reject the null hypothesis and suggest with sufficient evidence that there is a statistically significant difference between the two variables.

However, at age 25 years, students who had attained an ATAR (both VfSSS and non-VfSSS) were more likely than students who had not attained an ATAR (both VfSSS and non-VfSSS) to be in full-time employment (table G3).

Table G3 Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and full-time/part-time employment status at age 25, 2019 (%)

	VfSSS		Non-VfSSS		Sig. at the 5% level depicted in red
	Non-ATAR (1)	ATAR (2)	Non-ATAR (3)	ATAR (4)	
Full-time	60.3	68.2	58.3	66.0	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Part-time	17.0	20.8	18.2	22.5	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Not working (unemployed or NILF)	17.6	7.1	11.0	8.0	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Working, but working time unknown	5.1	3.9	12.6	3.5	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Note: All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test (see footnote 7).

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia.

When comparing employment outcomes for students aged 22 years with students aged 25 years, VfSSS who had not attained an ATAR were more likely to be in permanent employment and less likely to be in casual employment than other cohorts, with 57.9% of them in permanent employment at the age of 22; this remained steady at the age of 25, at 59.2%. For all other groups, the permanent employment outcomes of those who had an ATAR (with or without VfSSS) increased substantially, increasing most for those students who had an ATAR but had not undertaken any VfSSS. Casual employment also decreased with age for all groups (table G4). However non-ATAR VfSSS were more likely not to be working at the age of 25 than other ATAR and non-ATAR groups.

Table G4 Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and permanent/casual employment status at ages 22 and 25, 2016 & 2019 (%)

	VfSSS						Non-VfSSS					
	Non-ATAR		ATAR		Sig. at the 5% level	Non-ATAR		ATAR		Sig. at the 5% level	Sig. at the 5% level	
	Age 22	Age 25	Age 22	Age 25		Age 22	Age 25	Age 22	Age 25			
Permanent/ongoing	57.9	59.2	52.9	72.0	*	50.6	71.6	*	45.0	70.0	*	
Casual	21.3	12.7	31.7	16.5	*	28.3	11.3	*	35.4	16.7	*	
Not working (unemployed or NILF)	15.0	17.6	11.8	7.1	*	19.7	11.0	*	15.8	8.0	*	
Working, but employment status unknown	5.8	10.4	3.6	4.4		1.4	6.1	*	3.7	5.3	*	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	100.0	

Note: Asterisk denotes significant differences. All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test (see footnote 7).

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 8 in 2016 (age 22 years) and wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia.

At the age of 25 years, students who had attained an ATAR (both VfSSS and non-VfSSS) and students who had not done VfSSS or an ATAR were more likely than VfSSS without an ATAR to be in permanent employment (table G5). By comparison with these groups, the latter were also more likely to be not working at the age of 25. This is especially concerning if VET in secondary schools is to provide a good transition to work. Providing more support for students when they leave school may be one way to ensure that students do not fail to get work once they leave school.

Table G5 Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and permanent/casual employment status at age 25, 2019 (%)

	VfSSS		Non-VfSSS		Sig. at the 5% level depicted in red
	Non-ATAR (1)	ATAR (2)	Non-ATAR (3)	ATAR (4)	
Permanent/ongoing	59.2	72.0	71.6	70.0	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Casual	12.7	16.5	11.3	16.7	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Not working (unemployed or NILF)	17.6	7.1	11	8	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Working, but employment status unknown	10.4	4.4	6.1	5.3	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Note: All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test (see footnote 7).

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 8 in 2016 (age 22 years) and wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia.

Highest level of qualification completed

When comparing outcomes for students aged 22 years with outcomes for students aged 25 years, VfSSS who had not attained an ATAR had improved training outcomes at certificate III and above VET qualification levels at the age of 25 years (table G6).

Table G6 Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and highest level of qualification completed by ages 22 and 25, 2016 & 2019 (%)

	VfSSS						Non-VfSSS					
	Non-ATAR		Sig. at the 5% level	ATAR		Sig. at the 5% level	Non-ATAR		Sig. at the 5% level	ATAR		Sig. at the 5% level
	Age 22	Age 25		Age 22	Age 25		Age 22	Age 25		Age 22	Age 25	
Certificate I and II (includes unknown certificate level)	13.3	9.3	*	3.6	3.9		10.9	6.3		1.8	2.0	
Certificate III and IV	40.6	48.0	*	16.2	21.8	*	26.1	31.4		8.1	9.5	
Advanced diploma/diploma (incl. associate degree)	11.4	16.4	*	8.2	4.7	*	8.4	7.7		7.9	8.0	
Bachelor degree or higher	1.5	4.9	*	29.8	55.4	*	9.5	27.7	*	40.5	70.0	*
Did not complete a qualification	33.3	21.4	*	42.2	14.3	*	45.2	26.9	*	41.7	10.6	*
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Asterisk denotes significant differences. All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test (see footnote 7).

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 8 in 2016 (age 22 years) and wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia.

The VfSSS who had not attained an ATAR were more likely than non-VfSSS who had not attained an ATAR to have completed a post-school qualification at certificate III to advanced diploma level by the age of 25 years. All other student cohorts were more likely than VfSSS who had not attained an ATAR to have completed a post-school qualification at bachelor degree or higher level by the age of 25 years (table G7).

Table G7 Participation in VET for secondary school students by ATAR attainment and highest level of qualification completed by age 25, 2019 (%)

	VfSSS		Non-VfSSS		Sig. at the 5% level depicted in red
	Non-ATAR (1)	ATAR (2)	Non-ATAR (3)	ATAR (4)	
Certificate I and II (includes unknown certificate level)	9.3	3.9	6.3	2.0	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Certificate III and IV	48.0	21.8	31.4	9.5	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Advanced diploma/diploma (incl. associate degree)	16.4	4.7	7.7	8.0	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Bachelor degree or higher	4.9	55.4	27.7	70.0	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Did not complete a qualification	21.4	14.3	26.9	10.6	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Note: All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test (see footnote 7).

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia.

Table G8 shows there were no significant differences in labour force status outcomes for students who undertook VET subjects at school by location of the school.

Table G8 Labour force status at age 25 for students who undertook VET subjects at school by location of the school, 2019 (%)

	Metropolitan (1)	Provincial (2)	Remote (3)	Sig. at the 5% level None between the groups
Employed	87.6	87.3	98.7	1-2, 1-3, 2-3
Unemployed	5.8	7.3	0.0	1-2, 1-3, 2-3
Not in the labour force	6.6	5.4	1.3	1-2, 1-3, 2-3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Note: All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test (see footnote 7).

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia.

Table G9 shows there were some differences in labour force outcomes for students who undertook VET subjects by state/territory of student residence. Students residing in Victoria who undertook VET subjects were significantly more likely than students residing in New South Wales or Queensland to be employed at age 25 years.

Table G9 Labour force status at age 25 for students who undertook VET subjects at school by state/territory of student residence, 2019 (%)

	NSW (1)	Vic. (2)	Qld (3)	SA (4)	WA (5)	ACT (6)	Tas. (7)	NT (8)	Sig. at the 5% level depicted in red
Employed	85.4	94.9	84.7	91.5	89.3	94.2	84.5	90.5	1-2, 2-3
Unemployed	9.3	2.7	5.2	1.2	8.0	1.3	5.6	2.9	1-2
Not in the labour force	5.4	2.4	10.1	7.3	2.8	4.5	9.9	6.6	1-3, 2-3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Note: All significant testing were performed using the chi-square test (see footnote 7).

Source: LSAY 2009 cohort (Y09), wave 11 in 2019 (age 25 years), Australia

It is important to note that the above analysis is descriptive in nature and only measures the variability between the student cohorts. It does not take into consideration the underlying characteristics of each student cohort, those that may have a positive or negative impact on student employment and further education and training outcomes.



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