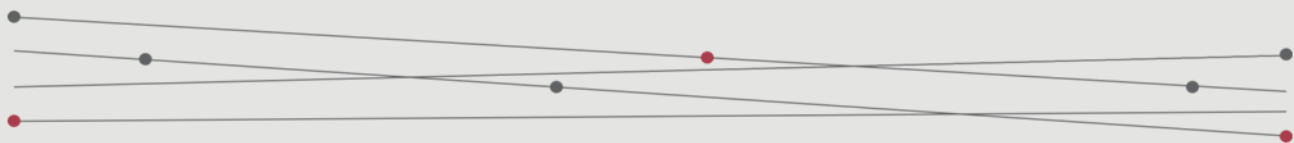# SECOND INTERIM EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON YOUTH ATTAINMENT AND TRANSITIONS

A REPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

21 DECEMBER 2012

Contents

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Executive summary

Focus of the study

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (the NP)[1] in July 2009. The NP seeks to improve educational outcomes and transitions for young Australians from school to further education, training or employment. Specifically, the NP focuses on 15–24-year-olds, young people at risk, and the educational attainment and engagement of young Indigenous Australians. The NP comprises five elements:

- Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST; $150 million) – State/Territory-based initiatives supporting multiple learning pathways, career development and mentoring
- School Business Community Partnership Brokers ($139 million) – Australian Government program focused on building partnerships involving schools, businesses, community groups and families
- Youth Connections ($288 million) – Australian Government program that provides support to young people who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging from education or training
- National Career Development ($30 million) – Funding for a range of national projects and resources, including the development of a National Career Development Strategy
- The Compact with Young Australians ($0 million) – Strengthened youth education and training participation requirements and changes to income-support entitlements.

The second of the three scheduled evaluations of the NP was conducted this year:

- The first-year review focused on understanding what was happening in jurisdictions and across sectors to inform improvements in the NP and its elements
- The (current) second-year review focuses on what has changed since Year 1 (Part A). It presents findings and suggested areas of focus to inform a decision about what should occur beyond the NP (Part B)
- The third-year review will focus on summing up the impact of the NP and presenting options for what should occur beyond the NP.

The overarching question for this evaluation is: 'Have the National Partnership elements, as a package, contributed to improved participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians, including young Indigenous Australians?' The purpose of this project is to evaluate the NP as a whole, not to provide a detailed assessment of the individual programs and activities that are operating under the NP.

Approach

Part A details what has changed since Year 1. It is based on an analysis of:

- ABS and NCVER data sources measuring the participation, attainment and transition outcomes included in the NP, supplemented by a range of more detailed indicators across sectors
- DEEWR's Youth Attainment and Transitions Management Information System (YATMIS) data and interviews with DEEWR staff

- State and Territory annual reports on the NP and interviews with jurisdictional representatives
- Surveys of PB and YC providers and stakeholders undertaken by DEEWR
- Tailored surveys of PB and YC providers undertaken on our behalf by DEEWR
- PB and YC program stakeholder interviews.

As for the first-year review, it is important to recognise that a complex range of influences impact on youth participation, attainment and transitions. It is therefore difficult to prove causality. Also, it will take time for some initiatives to have their full impact. Nevertheless, it is possible to make some confident judgements about the effectiveness (impact), appropriateness, governance and implementation of the NP and its elements.

Part B provides an overview of challenges and key policy focus areas for improving youth attainment and transition outcomes. It involved:

- Research on national and international policies and performance in the area of youth participation, attainment and transition
- The preparation of a discussion paper
- Stakeholder workshops and interviews.

Impact of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

The Australian Government, States and Territories are collectively committed to the goal of improved youth attainment and transition (YAT) outcomes. No diminution of effort was evident in this year's assessment. Steady progress has been made in implementing the majority of the NP elements.[2]

While the NP elements address some but not all of the factors that influence YAT outcomes, an analysis of high-level data suggests the following:

- Since the NP commenced, participation and attainment rates have increased, although the number of disengaged young people remains high[3]
- The Compact with Young Australians seems to have had an impact on the target cohort

  - Educational participation is increasing among 16–17-year-olds
  - The major impact has been on extending participation by those in education, rather than encouraging re-entry into education by the unemployed
  - An unforeseen consequence may have been a rise in the number of inactive[4] young people, although this will need further investigation. Countering this, the Compact also appears to be associated with a fall in the number of young job seekers receiving income support and also the number of families of young people eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A
  - Now that the legislation is in place, the focus needs to be on assessing how the supporting processes work (e.g., responsibility for following up young people that are disengaged).

[2] National Career Development progress has been slower than originally anticipated, but a Green Paper on options for a national strategy was released for public consultation in June 2012.
[3] Between 2008 and 2009, the proportion of 15–24-year-olds not fully engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) rose by around 3 percentage points following the global financial crisis (GFC) and has still not returned to pre-GFC levels, even though for 15–19-year-olds, the size of the group has been decreasing.
[4] In this report "inactive young people" refers to those not in full-time education and not in the labour market . The term "not in employment, education or training "(NEET) refers to young people neither in employment nor in education. Inactive young people is a larger group than the NEET group. This report uses NEET and disengaged interchangeably.

The data on Youth Connections client numbers and outcomes suggest it is also making a measurable contribution to improving participation. The quantitative impacts on participation, attainment and transition of the other elements of the NP are less clear, although qualitative information suggests that they are generally making a contribution consistent with NP objectives.

In terms of efficiency objectives:

- Measurements against objectives are being effectively tracked
- A number of NP targets are being achieved
- The NP has created efficiencies in the YAT area through better coordination of initiatives and information sharing
- The Compact seems to have increased participation and reduced the number of job seekers receiving benefits, at minimal cost.

The effectiveness of governance and implementation is generally sound, with progress noted in some areas where scope for improvement was identified in the Year 1 evaluation.

Some refinements to the implementation of individual NP elements warrant consideration. However, these are generally 'continuous improvement' in nature rather than activities requiring significant intervention.

Beyond the current National Partnership

YAT outcomes are important in terms of life outcomes for individuals as well as national economic outcomes and reducing income support dependency. Australia's performance in terms of YAT outcomes has been weak relative to other OECD countries for much of the last decade. Given the most recent OECD data was published in 2010, any positive outcomes associated with the NP are not yet reflected in reports but should be evident when future OECD reports are published.

It is now evident what is needed to improve outcomes and the challenges that need to be overcome. It seems clear that better outcomes require comprehensive and coordinated actions and initiatives across jurisdictions. There is therefore a continued need for a coherent, long-term, national YAT policy that:

- Builds on the gains being made in participation and attainment through improved engagement
- Decreases the number of disengaged young people.

While the current NP addresses many areas where action is required, a renewed and more comprehensive focus is warranted when it ends.

Achieving YAT goals requires a national policy focus concentrated in five areas:

- The educational fundamentals need to be put in place. This area is much broader than YAT. This is the focus of much national policy consideration and is not expanded on further in this report.
- The specific capability of upper secondary schooling needs to be strengthened around YAT through improved leadership, relevant professional skills, research and curriculum
- Community-strengthening initiatives need to be deepened to further engage young people, parents, schools and training providers, and business and community groups
- More systematic career development and pathway planning initiatives and resources need to be implemented
- Ensuring that tailored support services are available to meet the demands of all young people that are at risk of disengaging or are disengaged.

It is acknowledged that a broad range of policy initiatives related to productivity and participation impact on these areas, and a replacement for the YAT NP will only be a part of an overall policy agenda. The future national policy needs to primarily focus on a set of arrangements that offer support directly to young people, support relevant reform occurring within schools, build community capacity, and provide disincentives to nonparticipation However, it is also important that the alignment between the full set of initiatives is improved and that any 'gaps' with respect to the five areas outlined above are filled.

These elements need to be underpinned by a coordinated partnership between the Australian Government, States and Territories, who have a shared interest in improving youth attainment and transition outcomes.

1 Context and background

1.1   The importance of youth attainment and transitions

The distinctive institutional arrangements and policy settings in education, the labour market and the income support system for the transition phase reflect the importance of successful school-to-work transitions not only for the individual, but also for society and the economy as a whole. Failure to complete high school (or a vocational training equivalent) carries costs for individuals: an increased risk of unemployment, lower earnings and lower labour force participation rates. These risks are apparent in the short and the long term. For the economy as a whole, they translate into reduced levels of GDP and lower national productivity. Wider social costs can be found in health, civic and social engagement and crime. While labour market outcomes from the transition phase are quite good in Australia compared with many other OECD countries, upper secondary completion rates are only a little above average and have been static until very recently, in the face of ongoing improvement across the OECD countries.

Transition outcomes are the result of a complex mix of the economic and social contexts, institutional arrangements in education, the labour market, the income support system and personal qualities, such as resilience and self-confidence. Among the more important influences are the state of the labour market, the structure of socioeconomic advantage and disadvantage within society, and in particular socioeconomic status, early educational achievement and the ways in which school climate and quality influence engagement with and interest in learning. Labour market conditions appear to have a greater impact on some transition outcomes in Australia than elsewhere, with youth unemployment rates being more susceptible to economic downturns than in many other OECD countries.

The transition process in Australia has changed in recent years, increasing the policy challenge associated with achieving improved outcomes. Full-time employment opportunities have been declining, the transition to stable employment after leaving education has become harder, and transitions are more uncertain and more unstable. Since the early 1990s, there has been a notable increase in the proportion of young people who are neither in education, employment nor training.

The key to improving Australia's transition outcomes overall is to raise outcomes among the lowest achievers and the most disadvantaged. While many of the factors listed above have a strong impact, they are not all determining. For example, many young people who are disadvantaged or low achievers are characterised by good transition outcomes.

Strategies that can improve outcomes for low achievers and the disadvantaged are evident from the research literature; for example, a positive school climate that increases learning engagement; motivation and having a career goal; self-confidence; and personal support in the form of mentoring, tutoring and addressing welfare needs. Whole-of-school approaches are important, not only interventions that target the individual student. For those young people who do drop out of school, international and Australian experience shows that early intervention designed to reinsert them into education is important, as are mutual obligation approaches to income support. International and Australian experience also suggests that good overall transition outcomes can result from a range of policy settings – there is no silver bullet.

1.2 The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

1.2.1 Background

COAG agreed to the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions in July 2009. The NP seeks to improve educational outcomes and transitions for young Australians to further education, training or employment. Specifically, the NP focuses on 15 to 24 year olds, young people at risk, and the educational attainment and engagement of young Indigenous Australians.

The NP builds on the previous COAG commitments to lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment to 90 per cent by 2020, and to at least halve the gap in attainment for Indigenous young people. Following the global financial crisis (GFC), young people with low education and skill levels were thought to be particularly vulnerable. It was recognised that even greater priority needed to be given to maximising youth retention, engagement and attainment. As a result, it was agreed to accelerate the development of the NP and to bring forward the 2020 attainment target to 2015, which is a key outcome of the NP.

To support the COAG resolution, the Australian Government agreed to consolidate and streamline the existing suite of federal youth career and transitions programs and funding (which primarily appeared under the banner of Career Advice Australia) into four of the elements of the NP. Given the economic climate at the time, and to minimise disruption to services and enable a rapid response, the Australian Government decided to build on existing national investments in the short term.

1.2.2 Objectives, outcomes, performance indicators and outputs

The NP sets out a number of objectives, outcomes, performance indicators and outputs (see Table 1.1).

Objectives	Work towards achieving improvements in high-level outcomes for schooling Work towards increasing the qualifications and skill level of the Australian population Achieve increases in the numbers of young Australians making successful transitions from schooling to further education, training or employment Work collaboratively to improve the support provided to young Australians to increase educational outcomes and attainment, and improve transitions Develop a skilled and work-ready Indigenous workforce by increasing the educational attainment and engagement of young Indigenous Australians		
Outcomes	Increased participation of young people in education and training Improved Indigenous attendance Improved Indigenous retention	More young people make a successful transition from school to further education, training or full-time employment	Increased attainment of young people aged 15 to 24, including Indigenous youth
Performance indicators	Enrolment of full-time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12 Number of 15–19-year-olds without Year 12 and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a VET course at Certificate II level or above Attendance rates for Indigenous students in Years 1–10 in government schools Apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 10, by Indigenous status Apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 12, by Indigenous status	Proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 participating in post-school education, training or employment six months after leaving school	Proportion of young people aged 20 to 24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above Proportion of young Indigenous people aged 20 to 24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above
Outputs	Improved access to, delivery of and quality of education, training and employment programs for young people aged 15 to 24 Implementation of a package of measures focused on strengthening participation requirements, raising qualification levels, supporting successful transitions from school, and communicating the importance of education and training for young people		

Sources: Council of Australian Governments (2009) *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*, p. 5; and Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2011) *National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions Annual Report*.

1.2.3   Funding

Initially, up to $723 million was allocated to the NP over five years from 2009/10 to 2013/14 (including $100 million in potential reward funding). This comprised $149 million in payments to the States and Territories and $474 million in Commonwealth Own Purpose Expense (COPE).[5]

In the 2012/13 Australian Government Budget, funding for the National Career Development element was reduced by $17 million over three years to $30 million overall. The funding arrangements per financial year are outlined in Table 1.2.

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[5] This is federal expense for the use of goods and services and associated transfer payments by the Australian Government in the conduct of its own general government activities.

TABLE 1.2: FUNDING ALLOCATION ACROSS NP ELEMENTS, 2009/10 TO 2013/14

Element	2009/10 $000	2010/11 $000	2011/12 $000	2012/13 $000	2013/14 $000	Total $000
Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions	18,751	37,501	37,501	37,501	18,751	150,007
School Business Community Partnership Brokers (COPE)	17,409	34,818	34,818	34,818	17,409	139,271
Youth Connections (COPE)	35,850	71,700	72,254	72,254	36,325	288,383
National Career Development (COPE)	4650	9442	5980	6558	3362	30,022
The Compact for Young Australians	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total	**76,600**	**153,461**	**150,553**	**151,161**	**75,847**	**607,683**

Source: Australian Government (2012) *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*. Revised in line with Australian Government Budget 2012/13.
Note: Payments to States and Territories are provided under the MEAST initiatives, and for Victoria only, $43 million under the School Business Community Partnership Brokers initiative. COPE: Commonwealth Own Purpose Expense.

Reward funding was available to States and Territories based on the achievement of participation and attainment targets set out in the NP (see Table 1.3). These targets are designed to indicate progress towards the 2015 COAG target of 90 per cent Year 12 or equivalent attainment for 20–24-year-olds by 2015.

TABLE 1.3: REWARD FUNDING

Reward funding	Year funding available	Targets	Baseline
Up to $50 million	2011	Total enrolment of full-time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12 and 15–19-year-olds without Year 12 and not enrolled in school who are enrolled in a VET course (full-time or part-time) at Certificate II level or higher in 2010.	National Schools Statistics Collection August 2008 data (as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)) and VET enrolments from NCVER
Up to $53.3 million	2013	Proportion of young people aged 20 to 24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above.	To be determined.[6]

Note: The assessment of State and Territory eligibility for reward payments is outside the scope of this evaluation.

The COAG Reform Council is responsible for assessing performance against set targets. The Council's 2011 performance report concluded that 'the majority of the States and Territories have only partially achieved their participation targets. Tasmania is the sole jurisdiction to fully achieve (and exceed) their target, while the Northern Territory made no progress toward their target, recording a result below the 2008 baseline. The Council's initial assessment of the ACT indicated that little progress was made toward their target[7], however, subsequent to this assessment additional VET participation data was identified which indicated the ACT exceeded their target.. Based on this assessment, $46.7 million in reward funding was distributed to States and Territories. The remaining $3.3 million in reward funding will be rolled over into the allocated funds for the respective States and Territories for achievement against their attainment target.

1.2.4   Elements of the National Partnership

Under the NP, the Australian, State and Territory governments have committed to implementing a range of initiatives that are focused on strengthening participation requirements; lifting qualification levels; supporting a successful transition from school, especially for young people at risk; and communicating the importance of education and training for young people. Table 1.4 provides a brief outline of the five NP elements. Further information is in the Year 1 interim evaluation report.[8]

TABLE 1.4: OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ELEMENTS

Element	Focus
Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST)	The MEAST element supports the development and implementation of State- and Territory-based initiatives to improve education and training outcomes for young people. Funding is available for activities in support of the three reform areas: • multiple learning pathways • career development • mentoring. MEAST initiatives are implemented by the jurisdictions, including through non-government education sectors.
School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers)	The Partnership Brokers element focuses on building partnerships with education and training providers, business and industry, parents and families, and community groups to support young people in attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, and to reach their full educational and social potential. Contracted service providers deliver this element.
Youth Connections	The Youth Connections element offers a continuum of services to support young people at risk of disengaging from education or training, not attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, and not making a successful transition to further study, training or work, through: • individualised and flexible support services • outreach and re-engagement activities • strengthening services in the regions. Contracted service providers deliver this element.
National Career Development	A National Career Development Strategy is being formulated to provide a strategic approach to career development information, advice, guidance and support.
The Compact with Young Australians	The Compact with Young Australians has three elements to promote skills acquisition and ensure young people are learning or earning: • a National Youth Participation Requirement for all young people to participate in schooling and/or education, training or employment until the age of 17 years • entitlement to an education or training place for 15–24-year-olds • strengthened participation requirements for some types of income support.

1.3   This evaluation

1.3.1   Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness (impact), appropriateness, governance and implementation of the NP. In order to make that assessment, this evaluation has sought to answer the overarching question:

*'**Have the National Partnership elements, as a package, contributed to improved participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians, including young Indigenous Australians?'***

The purpose of this project is to evaluate the NP as a whole, not to provide a detailed assessment of the individual programs and activities that are operating under the NP. Specifically, the evaluation:

Covers	Does not cover
• measurement of movement in participation, attainment and transition outcomes using reliable national data sources • acknowledgement of other factors and initiatives that contribute to or impact targeted outcomes (e.g., impact of the GFC; issues faced by those in regional and remote areas) • investigation of the value of a national, collaborative approach to initiatives aimed at improving those outcomes (predominantly through qualitative research and supported by literature review) • high-level evaluation of elements in terms of their contribution to the NP goals • examination of whether and how the separate elements of the NP work together • summary of findings and options for the future.	• a detailed evaluation of individual programs and activities that would require acquisition and analysis of new primary data; where possible, findings from evaluations being conducted of elements/programs at the federal, jurisdiction or sector level will be incorporated • a comparative assessment of performance and contributions made by school sectors, States and Territories, or service providers • a quantification of the elements' contribution towards targeted outcomes, as attribution is not possible • reward funding decisions – this evaluation will not contribute to these.

1.3.2   Challenges for the evaluation

A number of challenges for this evaluation were identified and helped inform the evaluation approach that was adopted. Some of the more significant anticipated challenges are outlined in Table 1.5, together with the strategies adopted to address them.

TABLE 1.5: PROJECT CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Project challenge	Strategies for addressing challenge
Project causality – or accounting for the influence of external factors on youth attainment and transition outcomes. A wide range of factors (in addition to this NP) contribute to targeted outcomes. This evaluation needs to consider movements in targeted outcomes in the context of influential 'external' factors.	• Conduct research to identify and explore external factors that influence participation, attainment and transition outcomes. • Where possible, use proxies that identify progress being made towards achievement of outcomes – i.e., develop an understanding of what is being done at the federal and jurisdictional levels to work towards improved outcomes. • Observe movements in targeted outcomes – before and since the introduction of the NP.
Assessing comparable and reliable data – consistent data are not collected across the States and Territories and available datasets have their limitations.	• Focus on available and reliable data and work with DEEWR to facilitate access to identified datasets. • Utilise available program datasets and analyses. • Address data gaps effectively and efficiently through qualitative research. • Undertake early development of the evaluation framework (including identified datasets and qualitative research methods) in collaboration with DEEWR and the NP Multilateral Working Group (MWG).
Understanding perspectives and managing sensitivities of a wide range	• Arrange early engagement with the MWG, DEEWR and key decision makers to confirm the evaluation purpose, questions and methodology, including

of stakeholders – the NP operates within a complex system of stakeholders and there are a number of sensitivities relevant to the evaluation and potential outcomes. These include contextual factors, stakeholders needing to be convinced of the credibility of the evidence base, findings and recommendations.	stakeholders and engagement approach. ● Adopt a systematic approach to stakeholder engagement to ensure a representative, structured and consistent method within the time and budget available.
Representing the experience of young people at risk, particularly Indigenous youth – evaluation outcomes are heavily influenced by gains made with the most disadvantaged, and the engagement of young people is a complex and sensitive issue.	● Engage with young people, youth service providers, youth representative organisations, parents, and family and community groups. ● Where possible, understand movements in targeted outcomes in and outside of schools (particularly the VET sector) and for important cohorts (particularly Indigenous, low SES and remote).

1.3.3   Evaluation approach

The evaluation framework was developed at the outset of the project in consultation with DEEWR and the MWG of State and Territory government and non-government education sector representatives. It was refined at the start of the second year in consultation with this group.

The key questions to be addressed by the evaluation are shown in Figure 1.1. In the second year of the evaluation, DEEWR requested that an assessment of the efficiency of the NP be added to the evaluation framework, in line with The Treasury's 'A Short Guide to Reviewing National Partnerships' issued in 2012. The full revised evaluation framework is included at Appendix 1.

FIGURE 1.1: KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS
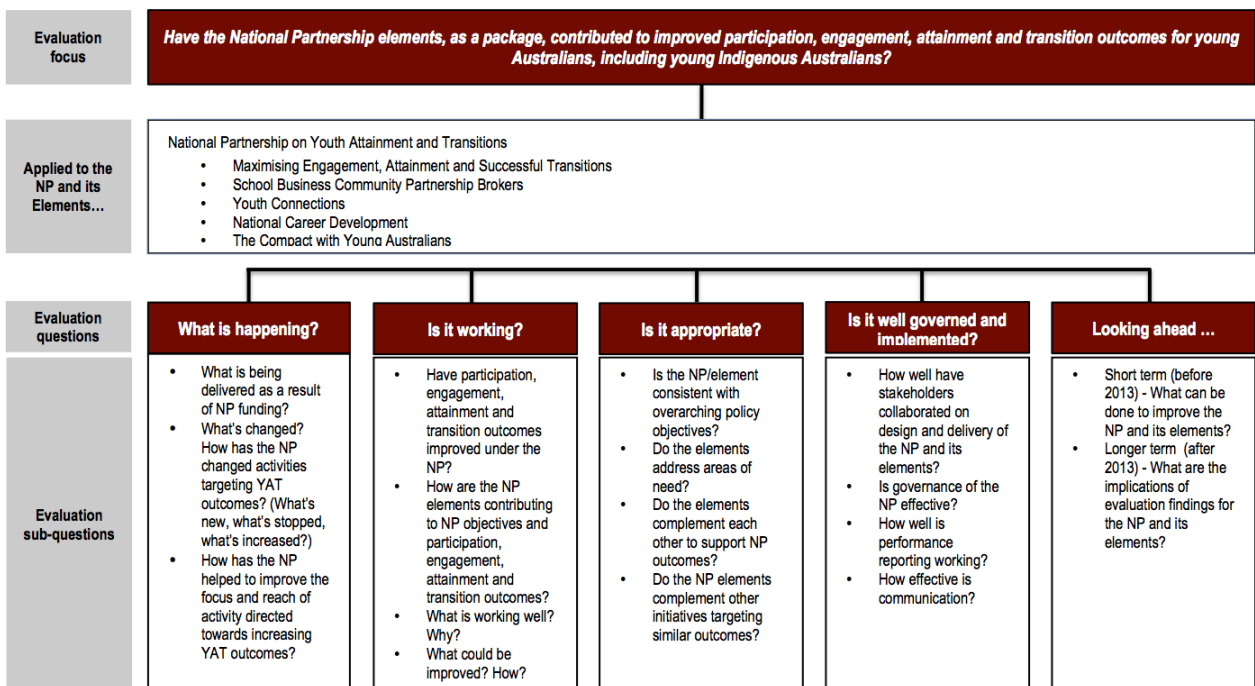
This is the second of the three annual evaluations:

- The first-year review focused on understanding what was happening in jurisdictions and across sectors to inform improvements in the NP and its elements

- The (current) second-year review focuses on what has changed since Year 1 (Part A). It presents findings and suggested areas of focus to inform a decision about what should occur beyond the NP (Part B)
- The third-year review will focus on summing up the impact of the NP and present options for what should occur beyond the NP.

This Year 2 evaluation presents findings and areas of suggested focus to inform a decision about the future of the NP and its elements, based on the following questions:

- Have there been measurable changes in youth attainment and transition outcomes since the NP was introduced?
- Has the NP and its elements been implemented according to plan and achieved planned outcomes?
- What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?
- Are there factors that have a significant influence on youth attainment and transition outcomes that are not addressed by the NP?
- What options are available to lift educational outcomes and improve transitions following the conclusion of the NP?

In addition, there are element specific issues that were identified in Year 1 that warrant further review. These have been included in this evaluation for the respective element.

1.3.4   Evaluation methodology

The evaluation findings are based on extensive literature review, data analysis and stakeholder consultation.

Part A of the evaluation focuses on what's changed since the Year 1 evaluation and was informed by:

- Analysis of national education and labour force datasets (see Appendix 2)
- A written information request and follow-up interviews with all members of the NP MWG of State and Territory government and non-government education sector representatives
- Interviews with DEEWR program teams, and Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections stakeholders (see Appendix 3)
- Online surveys of Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections service providers, and follow-up focus groups involving national network representatives
- A written information request to a random sample of Job Services Australia providers that focused on their relationship with Youth Connections providers and the implementation of The Compact with Young Australians
- A synthesis of State and Territory NP annual reports and DEEWR program reports.

Part B of the evaluation focuses on what should occur beyond the current term of the NP and involved:

- The development of a discussion paper to serve as a basis for interaction with stakeholders
- A series of workshops and interviews with DEEWR, MWG members, Expert Panel members (see below) and representatives from:

  - the education and training sector (e.g., Australian Secondary Principals Association)
  - the business and industry sector (e.g., Australian Industry Group)
  - the community and youth sector (e.g., Australian Youth Affairs Council)

- An analysis of research literature and data trends related to youth attainment and transitions.

Further details about the datasets analysed are available in the Year 1 evaluation report. A full list of the stakeholders consulted is attached at Appendix 3.

1.3.5   Project governance

Representatives from DEEWR and the NP MWG have guided and provided input into each step of the evaluation to date. As part of their role this year, DEEWR and the MWG reviewed the revised evaluation project plan, participated in stakeholder consultations, provided reports, and responded to the presentation of interim and draft findings. The dandolopartners evaluation team provides regular progress reports to the DEEWR project manager and executive team.

An Expert Panel of academic and public policy experts have guided the evaluation team throughout the project, providing input into framing the evaluation questions, which stakeholders to consult, and interpreting and contextualising findings. The Expert Panel members are:

- Jan Owen AM, Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Young Australians
- Professor Larissa Behrendt, Director, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology Sydney
- Professor Margaret Vickers, Centre for Educational Research, University of Western Sydney
- Professor Peter Dawkins, Vice-chancellor, Victoria University.

The contributions of the Expert Panel members to this evaluation are greatly appreciated by dandolopartners.

Part A – Impact of the National Partnership

This section of the report provides an overview of Australia's performance against the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (NP) outcomes and the impact of the NP to date, in terms of its appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, governance and implementation. It concludes with some suggestions that can be made to improve the NP elements prior to its conclusion at the end of 2013.

2 Changes in the YAT NP outcomes

The NP aims to impact on young people's participation in education and training, attainment of Year 12 and equivalent qualifications, and transitions to further education, training and employment. This section reports on overall movements in measures of participation, attainment and transition (including those in the NP), supplemented by a range of more detailed indicators across sectors (schools, VET in Schools and non-school VET) and disadvantaged cohorts (Indigenous, low SES, disability and rural/remote locations, where available). The full sets of measures are presented in Appendix 2.

2.1   Data context and limitations

There are a number of points that need to be kept in mind when reviewing the data presented, in particular the following:

- It is still relatively early in the NP's life cycle, with most NP elements only approved in 2010. The Compact is the exception here, with changes to participation requirements and allowance entitlements being implemented across jurisdictions by the end of 2009.
- There is a time lag in the collection and availability of data to assess movements in participation, attainment and transitions. Movements in participation are typically identified before movements in attainment and transitions, which can take longer to observe.
- Change is not causation. Factors other than the NP influence outcomes. The labour market is a significant determinant of participation and transition outcomes in Australia, as are other factors such as other State and Territory government programs aimed at improving educational participation.
- The data presented here help set a benchmark for future evaluations. Any recent changes need to be monitored to determine if they are sustained. Similarly, a lack of movement in outcomes to date doesn't necessarily mean there won't be change in the future.
- The recording of Indigenous status has improved over time, impacting on reported data movements.
- VET data only covers publically funded VET delivery, which can be delivered by public or private VET providers. Data relating to activity in the private VET (fee for service sector) are not available at the present time. However, private VET activity represents a large part of overall VET activity.

More detailed information about data limitations is included in Appendix 2.

2.2   Young people's participation in education and training

Changes in participation

Figure 2.0 provides a summary view of the education and employment status of 15 to 19-year-olds from 2000 to 2012. The section that follows unpacks the changes that have occurred during this period.

FIGURE 2.0:   EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION OF 15-19-YEAR-OLDS 2000-2012 (AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL 15-19-YEAR-OLDS)
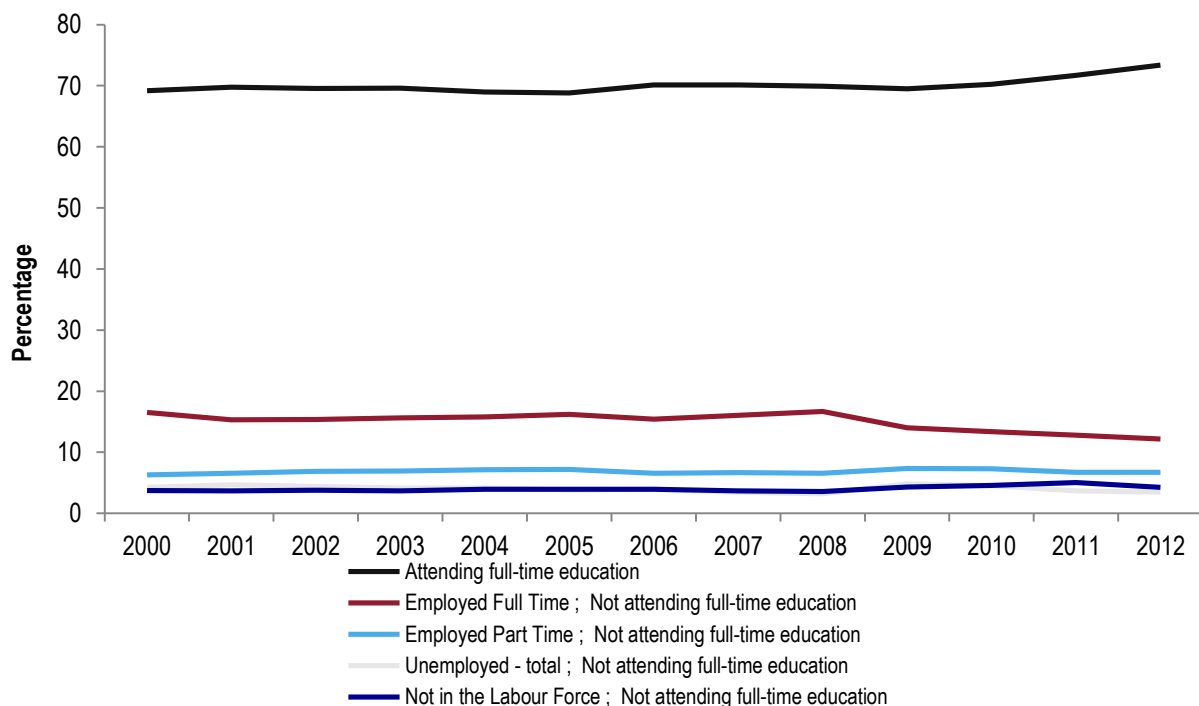
Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed —Electronic Delivery*, Table 03a, 6291.0.55.001.
Note: The baseline number for calculating proportions for labour force status is the civilian population for the relevant age group.

From 2000 to 2010, the proportion of 15–19-year-olds participating in full-time education remained fairly constant at around 69 to 70 per cent, then increased by over 3 percentage points in the period 2010–12 (70.2 to 73.4 per cent; see Figure 2.1). The proportion of 20–24-year-olds in full-time education increased from about 21 to 29 per cent between 2000 and 2009, then stayed steady during 2010 and 2011 before increasing to 31.3 per cent in 2012.

While it is difficult to attribute exact causes for the increase in participation post-2009 for the 15–19-year-old cohort, it is likely that government policies aimed at increasing participation across the education sectors has had an impact.

FIGURE 2.1:   PERCENTAGE OF 15-24-YEAR-OLDS IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION, 2000–12

(a) 15–19 year-olds
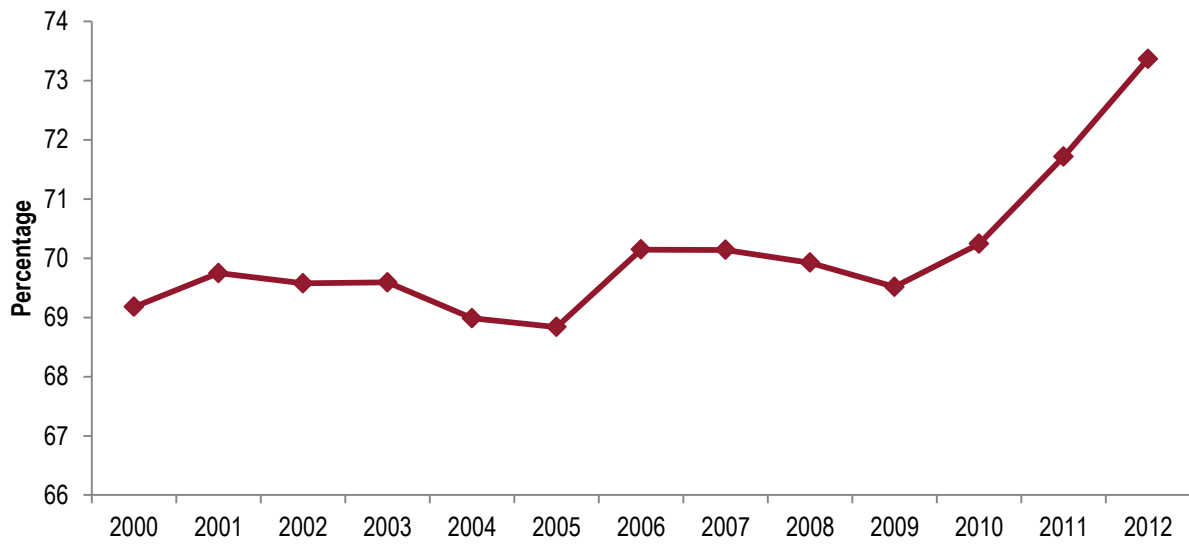
(b) 20–24 year-olds
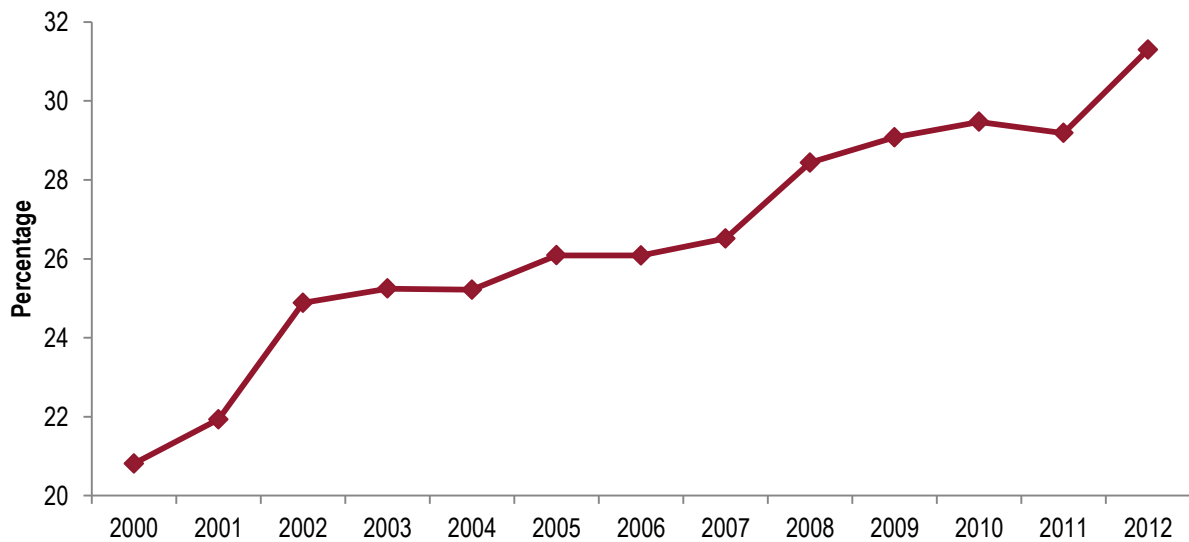
Source: ABS, *Labour Force Survey*.

School participation

There was little increase in school participation among 15–17-year-olds between 2000 and 2008 (see Figure 2.2). However, between 2008 and 2011, school participation rose 4.7 percentage points among 16-year-olds and 4.1 percentage points among 17-year-olds.

FIGURE 2.2:   PERCENTAGE OF 15-17-YEAR-OLDS PARTICIPATING IN FULL-TIME SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2000–11
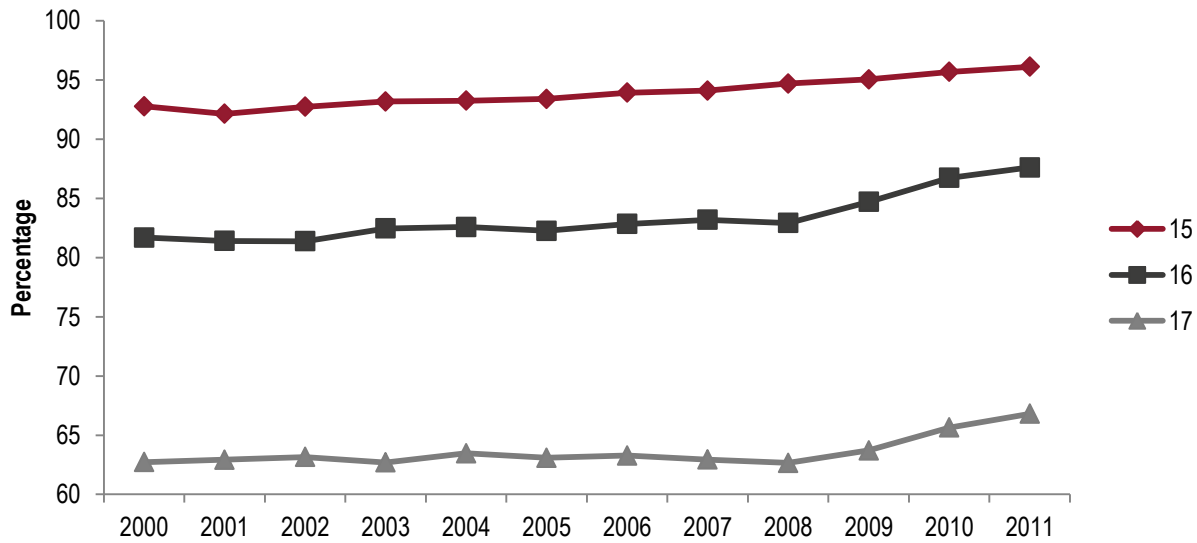
Source: ABS, *National Schools Statistics Collection*; ABS, *Population by Age and Sex*, cat. no. 3201.0.

Progression rates from Year 9 to Year 10 have continued to increase since 2009 (from 96.9 per cent in 2009 to 98.7 per cent in 2011). While there has been some fluctuation in progression rates between 2000 and 2008 from Years 10 to11 and Years 11 to 12, from 2008–11 they increased by 3.4 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively.

FIGURE 2.3:   APPARENT PROGRESSION RATES (PERCENT PROGRESSING), YEARS 9–12, 2000–11
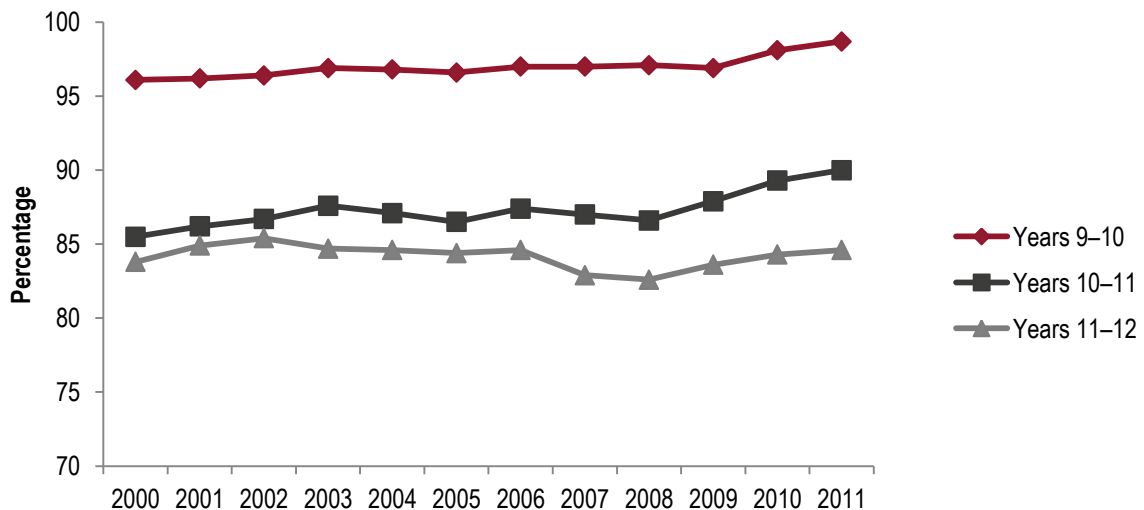
Source: ABS, *National Schools Statistics Collection*.

VET participation

Between 2002 and 2008/09, there was a slight decline in VET participation among 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds who were not attending school and who had not completed Year 12 (see Figure 2.4). Among non-school 20–24-year-olds who had not completed Year 12, VET participation fell somewhat faster than among 15–19-year-olds. This decline appears to have levelled out since 2009; indeed, during 2010–11 there was a slight increase (11.6–12.2 per cent for 15–19-year-olds and 7.8–8.1 per cent for

20–24-year-olds). The rate for 16–17-year-olds also increased for 2010–11 (12.0–12.5 per cent) after declining from a rate of 12.8 per cent to 12 per cent from 2008–10.

FIGURE 2.4:   VET PARTICIPATION, PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS NOT AT SCHOOL AND WITHOUT YEAR 12 BY AGE GROUP, AS A PERCENTAGE
                OF THE POPULATION AT THAT AGE GROUP, 2002–11
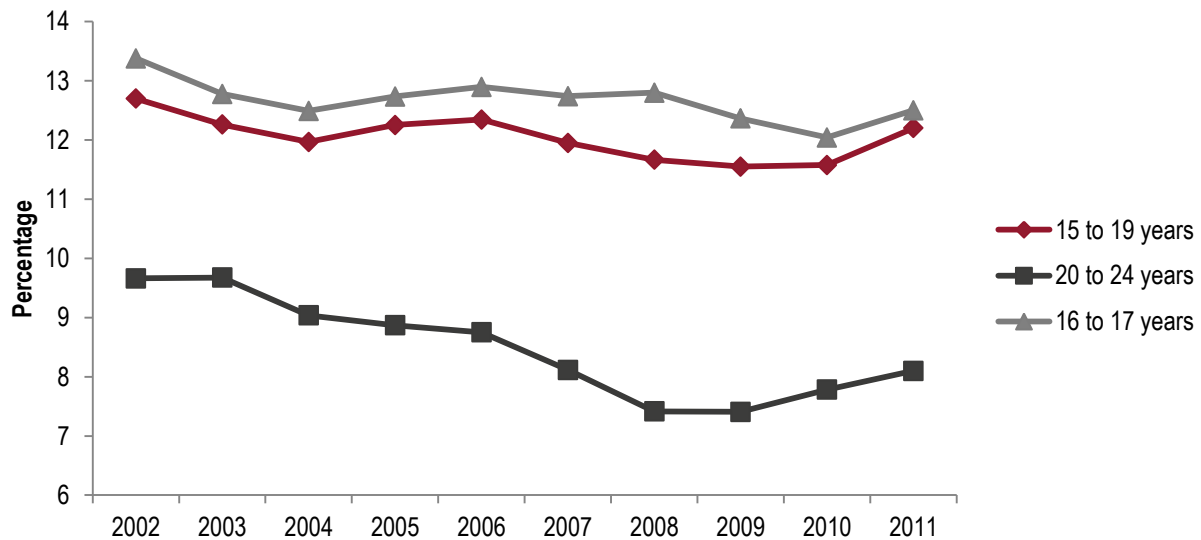
Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Since 2002, there has been a change in the composition of VET enrolments among young people who have left school without completing Year 12. Among 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds, enrolments in courses below Certificate II have been trending downwards since 2002. However, among both groups, participation in Certificate II courses rose slightly between 2008 and 2010 (refer to Figure 2.5). Participation in Certificate III level and above courses also increased between 2010 and 2011 for 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds.

FIGURE 2.5:   VET PARTICIPATION, PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS NOT AT SCHOOL AND WITHOUT YEAR 12 BY QUALIFICATION LEVEL, AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AT THAT AGE GROUP, 2002–11

(a) 15–19-year-olds
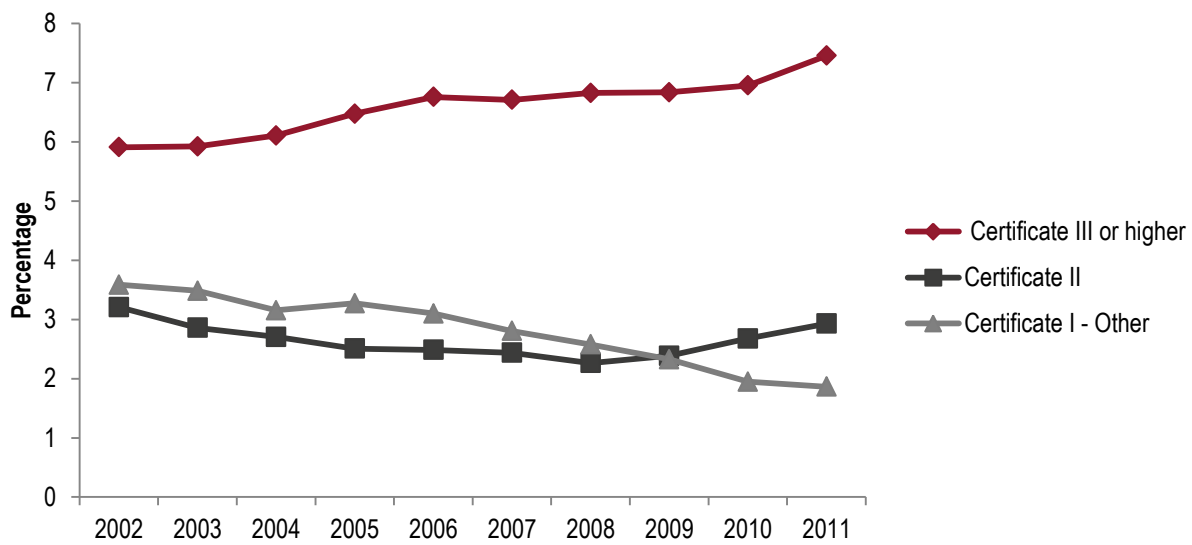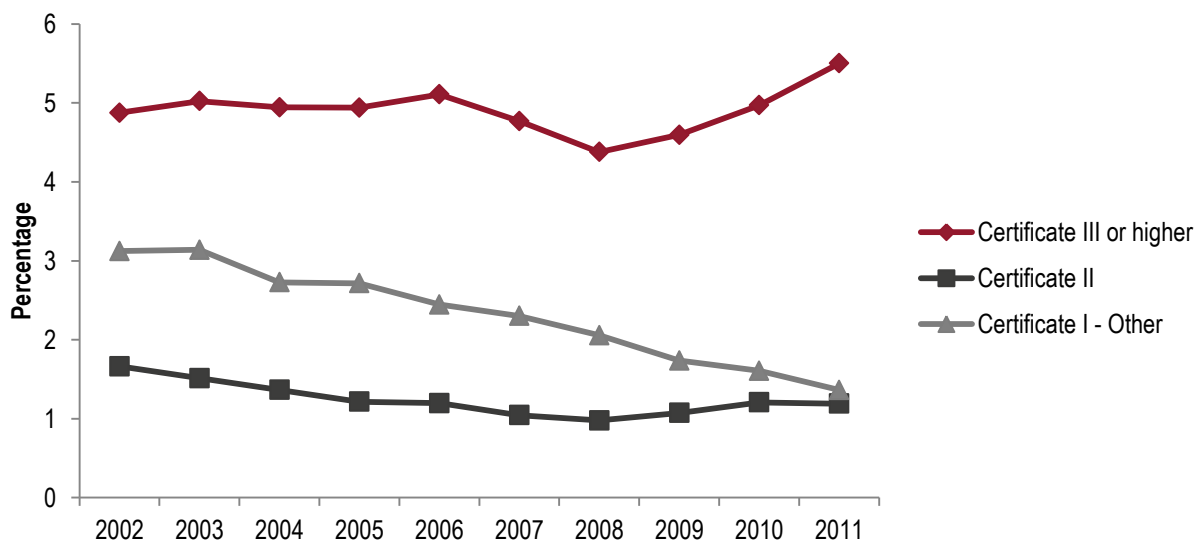
(b) 20–24-year-olds

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Higher education participation

Higher education participation for 18–24-year-olds increased steadily from 27.5 per cent in 2006 to 33 per cent in 2011 (see Figure 2.6). This is due to a variety of factors, including labour market conditions. Government policy aimed at increasing rates of participation in higher education may also have affected the participation rate.

FIGURE 2.6:   PERCENTAGE OF 18–24-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 2006–11
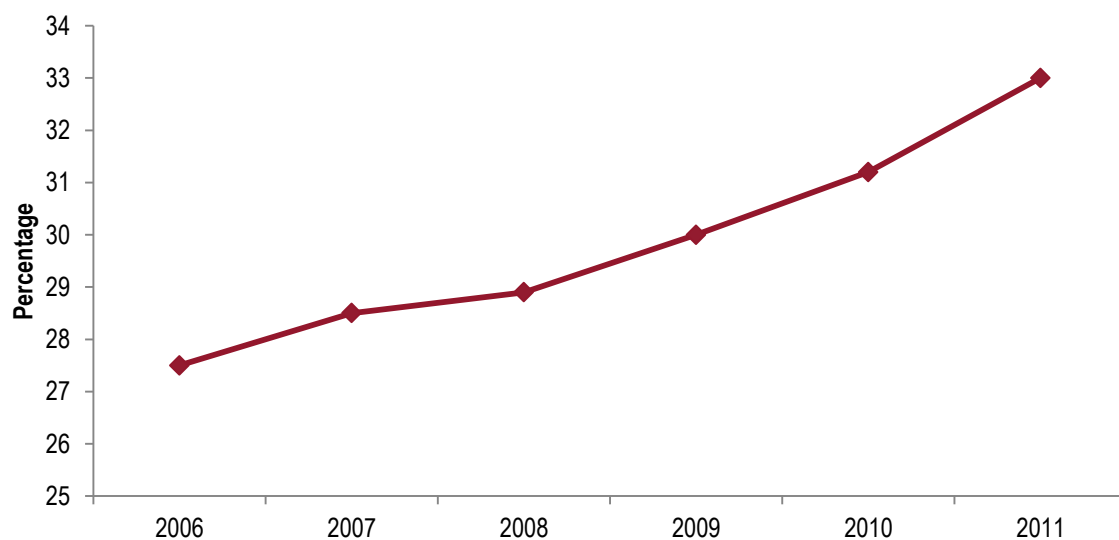
Sources: DEEWR, *Higher Education Statistics Collection*; ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, 3101.0.

Participation of disadvantaged cohorts

Data from the ABS 2006 and 2011 census collection shows that the participation rate of 15-19 year old Indigenous youth in education increased between 2006 and 2011 (4.8 percentage point change), with secondary school participation making the biggest contribution to the overall increase (5.1 percentage point increase). The rate of increase for Indigenous youth has been greater than the rate of increase among non-Indigenous youth, although in absolute terms, it's still 17.8 percentage points below that of non-Indigenous students (see Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1:   PARTICIPATION RATES 15–19-YEAR-OLDS BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2006 AND 2011

Institution type	Participation rate 2006		Participation rate 2011		Percentage point change (2006-2011)	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Secondary school	35.9	51.2	41.1	53.0	5.1	1.8
VET	6.4	8.5	7.0	7.9	0.6	-0.6
University	2.1	11.1	2.9	13.1	0.8	1.9
Other	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.1	0.1
Not stated	11.3	5.0	9.4	4.3	-1.9	-0.7
TOTAL PARTICIPATION	**56.8**	**76.9**	**61.6**	**79.4**	**4.8**	**2.5**

Source: ABS Census data, 2006 and 2011 (table-builder basic).

In addition to the increased participation in secondary schools, Figure 2.7 indicates that there has also been an increased rate of participation in VET in Schools (to 2010) by Indigenous youth. Indeed the rate of increase has been higher for Indigenous youth than non-Indigenous youth.

FIGURE 2.7:   VET IN SCHOOLS PARTICIPATION RATES BY INDIGENOUS 15–19-YEAR-OLDS, 2005–10
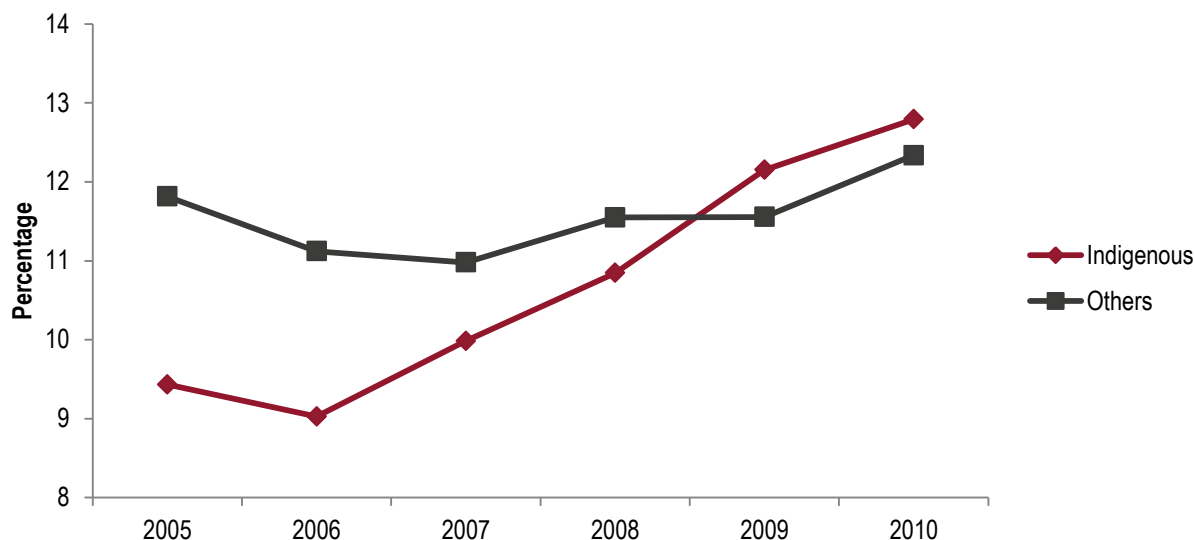
Source: ABS, *ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait* Islanders, cat. no. 3238.0 (Series B Projections); ABS, *Population by Age and Sex*, cat. no. 3201.0; NCVER (excludes Queensland data).

While participation in VET by non-school Indigenous 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds without Year 12 has been variable since 2000 (refer to Figure 2.8), it has been on the increase for both groups since 2009 (there was an increase of 2.4 percentage points for 15–19-year-olds and 2.2 percentage points for 20–24-year-olds between 2009 and 2011, with participation returning to just below 2002 levels).

Although Indigenous participation in VET has increased since 2009, there has been little change in VET participation by SES disadvantage and remoteness. There seems to have been some increase by disability status. In regard to 15–19-year-olds, 8 per cent of enrolments in 2011 were by students reporting a disability status as compared with 5.9 per cent in 2002, while for 20–24-year-olds, 7.7 per cent of enrolments in 2011 were by students reporting a disability as compared with 6 per cent in 2002. One needs to keep in mind, though, that the reporting of disability status is not entirely robust.
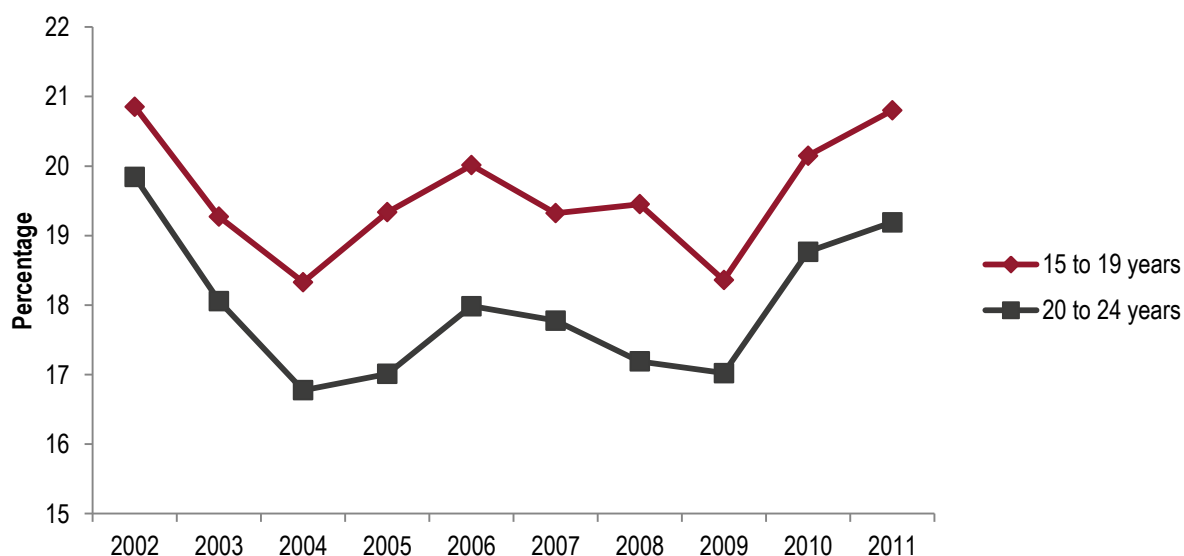
Sources: National VET Provider Collection; ABS, *Population by Age and Sex*, 3201.0; ABS, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, 3238.0 (Series B projections).

2.3   Attainment by young people aged 15–24 years

Changes in attainment

The proportion of 15–19-year-olds who have completed Year 12 or a Certificate II qualification rose and fell over the period 2001–11, peaking at 35.3 per cent in 2010 before dropping back to 34.4 per cent in 2011. The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who have completed Year 12 or a Certificate II qualification increased steadily between 2001 and 2010, when it reached a peak of 85.6 per cent, before declining to 84.1 per cent in 2011.

It is not clear why the slight decline in attainment occurred. One possibility is that it may be due to sampling or measurement factors. There was a small (around one per cent) decline in the apparent Year 12 retention rate between 2005 and 2008, but this would not be sufficient to account for all of the decline. Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth (LSAY) data indicates that very few young people complete a Year 12 school qualification after reaching the age of 18, and so any explanation for the decline is most likely to be found in trends in the attainment of vocational qualifications. Information on trends in the attainment of publicly funded vocational qualifications over the period is limited, and information on the attainment of privately funded vocational qualifications is not systematically collected. It can be speculated that, given the large role that private vocational colleges have played in providing qualifications to visa seekers, tighter monitoring of these colleges and changes to visa requirements under the Skilled Migration Program may offer a partial or substantial explanation for the decline.

Regarding the issue of whether Certificate II qualifications are a reasonable equivalent to Year 12 attainment, this evaluation sought to understand whether a significantly different picture emerged for attainment levels of Year 12 or Certificate III qualifications (presented in Figure 2.9). In summary, there would appear to be only marginal differences (around 1.5 percentage points for 15–19-year-olds and 1.4 percentage points for 20–24-year-olds) between using Certificate II or III to measure Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

(a) 15–19-year-olds

(b) 20–24-year-olds

Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*.

School retention

Apparent Year 12 retention rates increased from 72.3 per cent in 2000 to 75.1 per cent in 2002, remained fairly steady until 2008, and then increased to 79.3 per cent in 2011 (see Figure 2.10). This increase indicates that there is likely to have been an improvement in the NP target of improving Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

FIGURE: 2.10:   APPARENT YEAR 12 RETENTION RATES, 2000–11
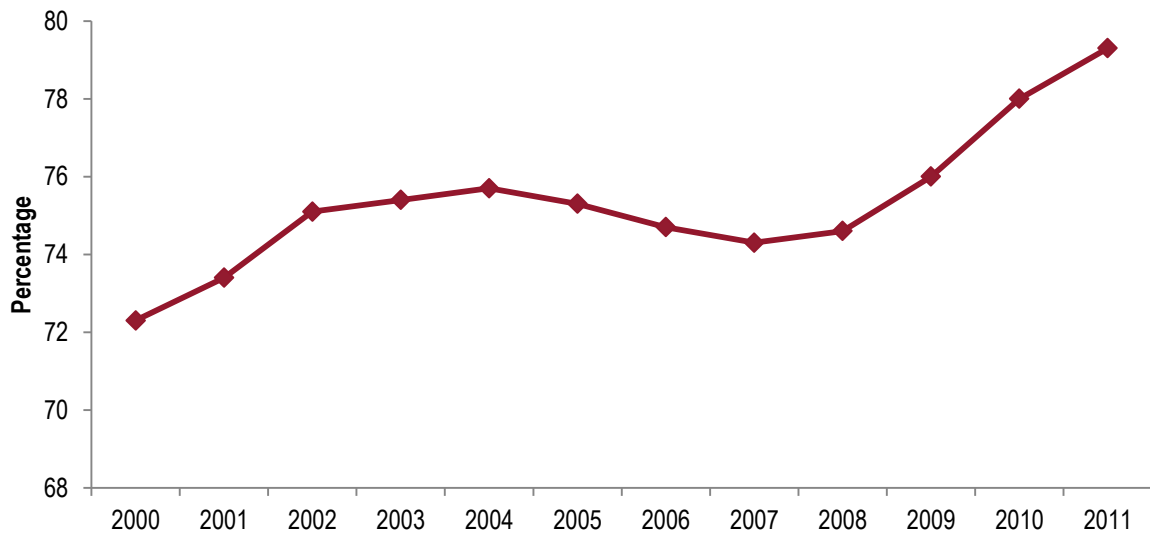
Source: ABS, *National schools Statistics Collection*.

VET attainment

The proportion of 15–24-year-olds completing a publicly funded VET qualification at Certificate II level or higher each year is relatively small but showed a noticeable increase between 2008 and 2010[9] (an increase of 0.9 percentage points for 15–19-year-olds and 0.8 percentage points for 20–24-year-olds; see Figure 2.11).

VET in Schools attainment increased substantially for the period 2005–09. This was particularly so for 15-year-olds (0.8 per cent in 2005 to 4.5 per cent in 2009) and 16-year-olds (6.5 per cent in 2005 to 10.9 per cent in 2009; see Table A2.18 in Attachment 2).[10]

FIGURE 2.11:   VET CERTIFICATE II AND ABOVE ATTAINMENT FOR 15–24-YEAR-OLDS, AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AT THAT AGE GROUP, 2002–10
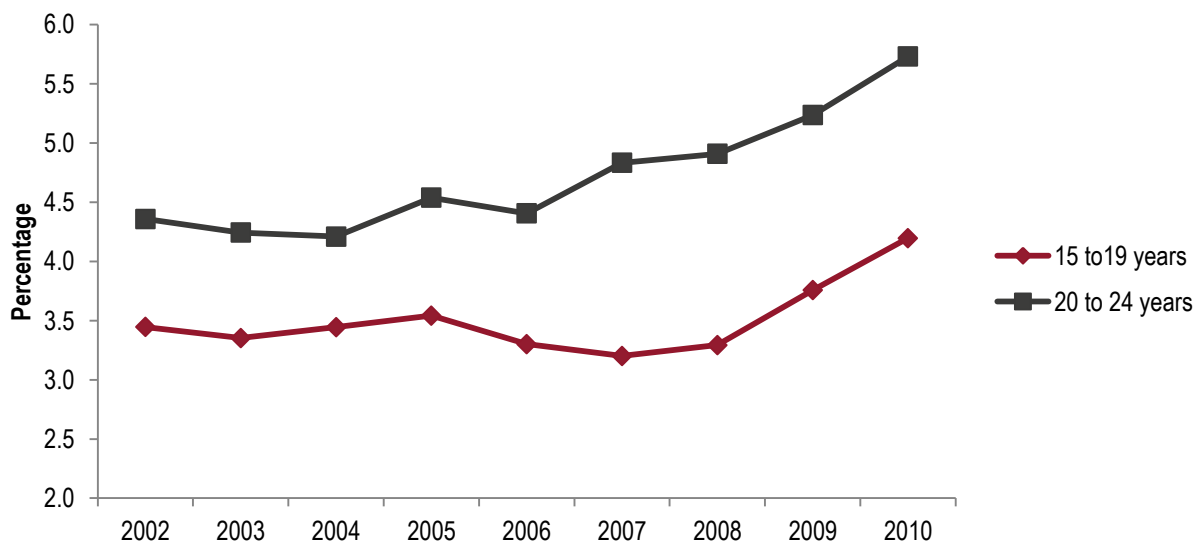
Sources: National VET Provider Collection; ABS, *Population by Age and Sex*, 3201.0.

[9] Note that this excludes VET qualifications attained through private providers, unless via publicly funded places.
[10] For VET in Schools attainment data there is a considerable time lag to publication of the data. Data for 2010 VET in Schools attainment should be available in December 2012.

Retention and attainment of disadvantaged cohorts

Figure 2.12 shows that Year 12 apparent retention rates for Indigenous students rose substantially from 2000 to 2008[11] (36.4 per cent to 47.2 per cent). They have levelled out since then – although there was an increase in retention of 1.5 percentage points between 2010 and 2011. Year 10 retention rates for Indigenous young people also increased between 2009 and 2011 (7.8 percentage points). In comparison, non-Indigenous attainment has remained relatively stable, although it is much higher in absolute terms (see Tables A2.20 and A2.21 in Appendix 2).

FIGURE 2.12:   INDIGENOUS YEAR 10 AND YEAR 12 RETENTION RATES, 2000–11
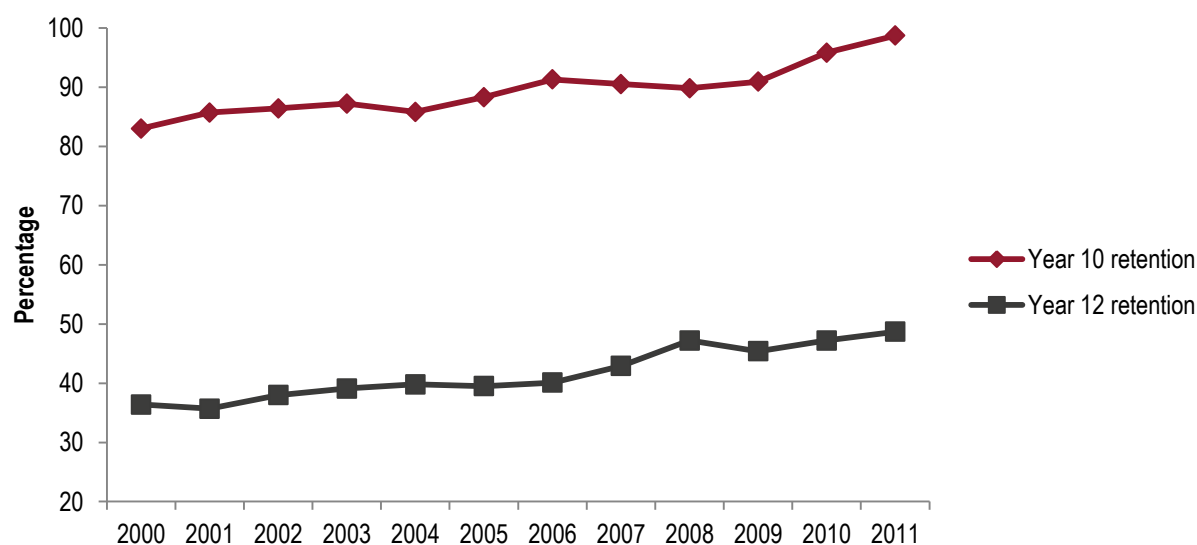
Source: ABS, *National Schools Statistics Collection*.

There was little change in the proportion of 15–19-year-old Indigenous youth completing VET in Schools qualifications between 2005 and 2008, but this was followed by an increase of 3 percentage points in 2009. There was also a rise of 1.3 percentage points for non-school VET completions at Certificate II level and above by Indigenous youth aged 15–19-years-old and 20–24-years-old between 2008 and 2010 (see Table A2.23).

Between 2006 and 2009/10, there were no appreciable changes in VET in Schools and VET completions by youth from low SES backgrounds or youth from remote regions. On the other hand, Figure 2.13 would seem to indicate that attainment of vocational education and training qualifications increased for those reporting a disability for the period 2002–10.

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[11] However the identification of Indigenous youth in schools by ABS has improved over the period.
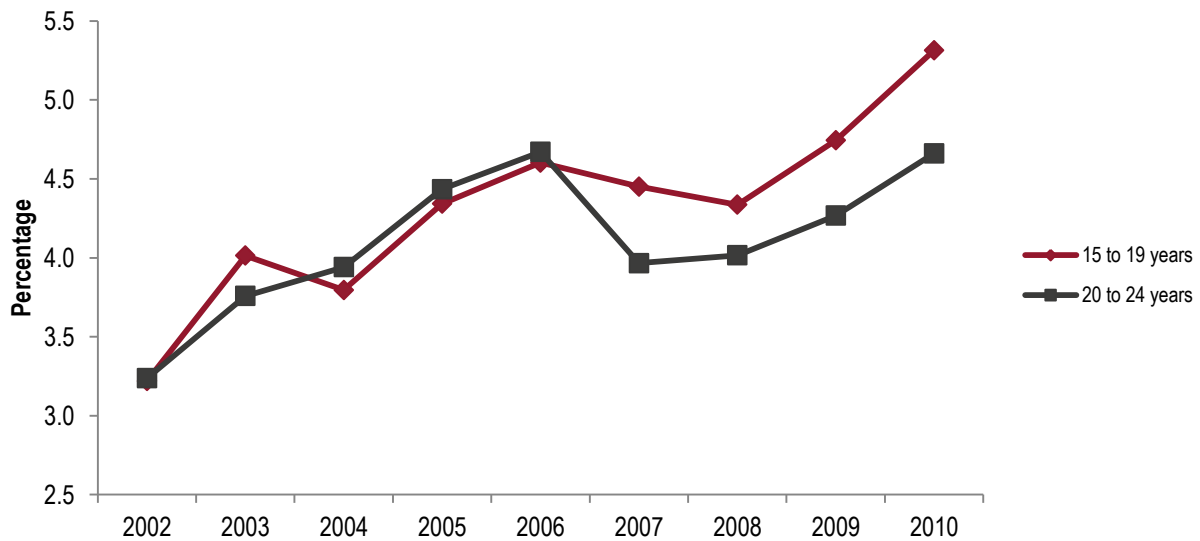
Source: National VET Provider Collection. This excludes those attending school and those whose disability status is not known.

2.4   Transitions to further education, training and employment

The high number of disengaged young people[12]

Between 2008 and 2009, the proportion of 15–24-year-olds not fully engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) rose by around 3 percentage points following the GFC and has still not returned to pre-GFC levels, even though for 15–19-year-olds, the size of the group has been decreasing (see Figure 2.14).

FIGURE 2.14:   PERCENTAGE OF 15–24-YEAR-OLDS NOT FULLY ENGAGED IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR EMPLOYMENT, 2000–11
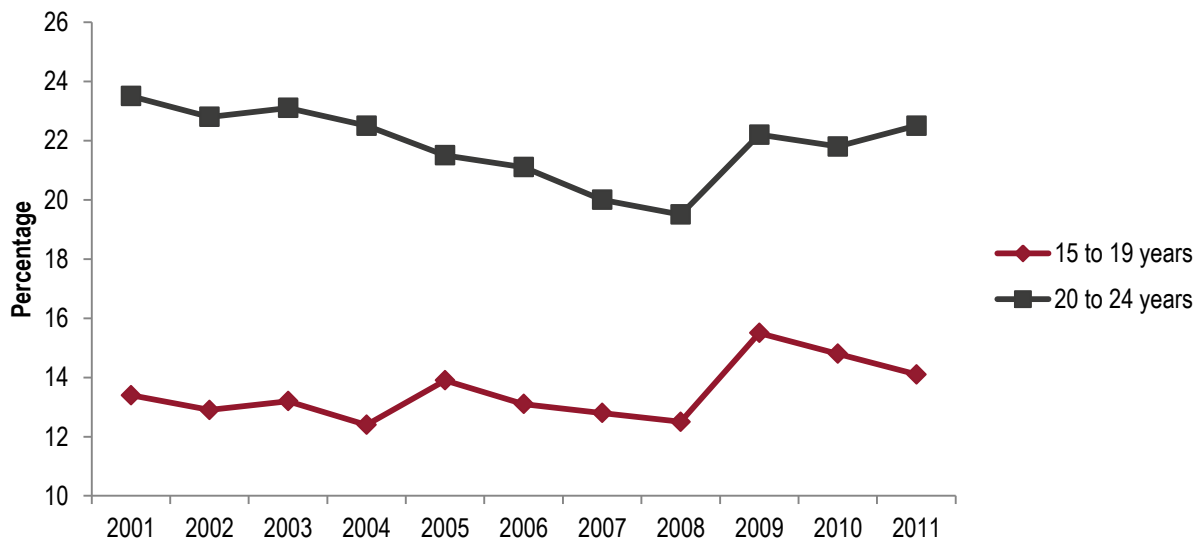
Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work* (refer to Table A2.29 in Attachment 2).

[12] In this report "inactive young people" refers to those not in full-time education and not in the labour market . The term "not in employment, education or training "(NEET) refers to young people neither in employment nor in education. Inactive young people is a larger group than the NEET group. This report uses NEET and disengaged interchangeably.

Figure 2.15 further compares school leavers not fully engaged who have and have not completed Year 12. The figure shows that for those without Year 12, the level of disengagement is more than twice that of those who have completed Year 12.

FIGURE 2.15:   PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS NOT FULLY ENGAGED – COMPARING THOSE WITH AND WITHOUT YEAR 12 ATTAINMENT, 2001–11
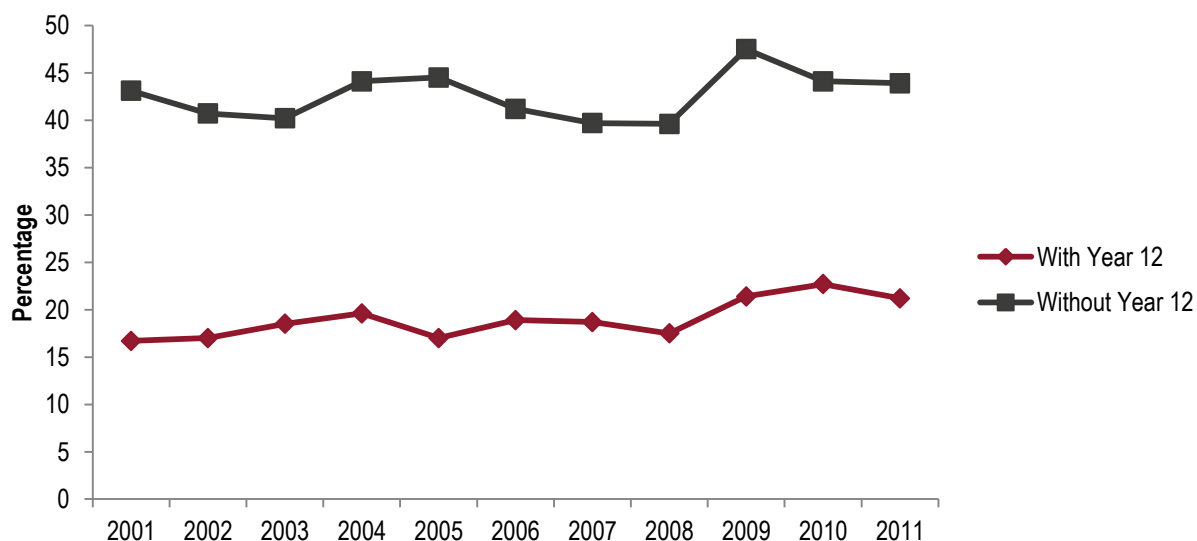
Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*.

For 17–19-year-olds, Figure 2.16 disaggregates trends in the group that is disengaged (the NEET group) into those who are unemployed and not in education and those not in the labour force[13] or education. The figure shows that the proportion unemployed and not in education has dropped 1.8 per cent between 2009 and 2012, but is still above the pre-GFC levels. The proportion not in the labour force or in education dropped 1.3 per cent from 2011 to 2012, but is still higher than in 2008, which was just pre-GFC. The decline in the size of the numbers unemployed and not in education is unlikely to be due to improvements in employment levels in the labour market as a whole since the GFC, as levels of full-time employment among 15–19-year-olds have continued to decline since 2008.[14]

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[13] In other words, neither employed nor unemployed.
[14] From 249,600 in August 2008 to 187,900 in August 2011; source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed —Electronic Delivery*, Table 03b: Labour force status for 15–19-year-olds by educational attendance, age and sex, 6291.0.55.001.
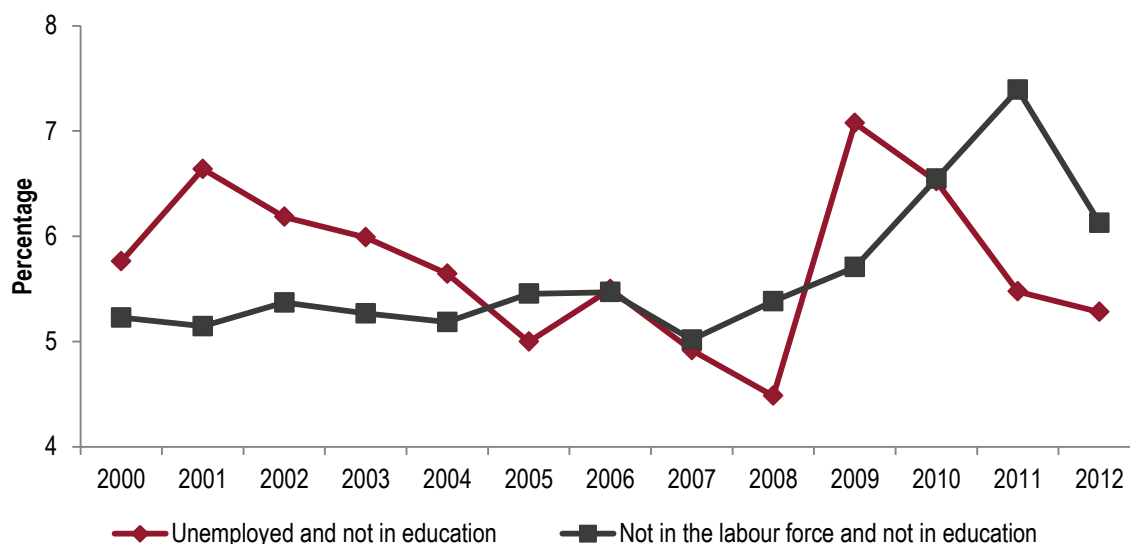
Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed –-Electronic Delivery*, Table 03b: Labour force status for 15–19-year-olds by educational attendance, age and sex, 6291.0.55.001.

Indeed, Figure 2.17 shows a continuing drop in full-time employment between 2008 and 2012 for 15–19-year-olds (a 4.5 per cent drop) and 20–24-year-olds (a 6.6 per cent drop). While for 15–19-year-olds much of this drop has been supplanted by an increase in full-time education (of 3.4 per cent), for 20–24-year-olds this is not the case (an increase of only 2.9 per cent).

It is worth mentioning that following the GFC there was a drop in full-time employment across the 15-64 year old civilian population not just 15-24-year-olds. Table 2.40 in Attachment 2 shows that from 2008-2009 there was a drop in full-time employment of 1.3 percentage points and by 2012 this has only recovered by 0.2 of a percentage point. This has been accompanied by an increase in unemployment and a slight increase in part-time work. However, the drop in full-time employment after the GFC in 2008 seems greater for the 15-24 year age group[15].

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[15] Although the comparison base is slightly different, i.e. for 15-24-year-olds we are looking at those not in full-time education whereas for 15-64-year-olds we are looking at the entire civilian population for this age group (as full-time education could not be netted out here).

FIGURE 2.17: CHANGE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF 15–24-YEAR-OLDS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME OR ATTENDING FULL-TIME EDUCATION, 2008–12 (MAY)
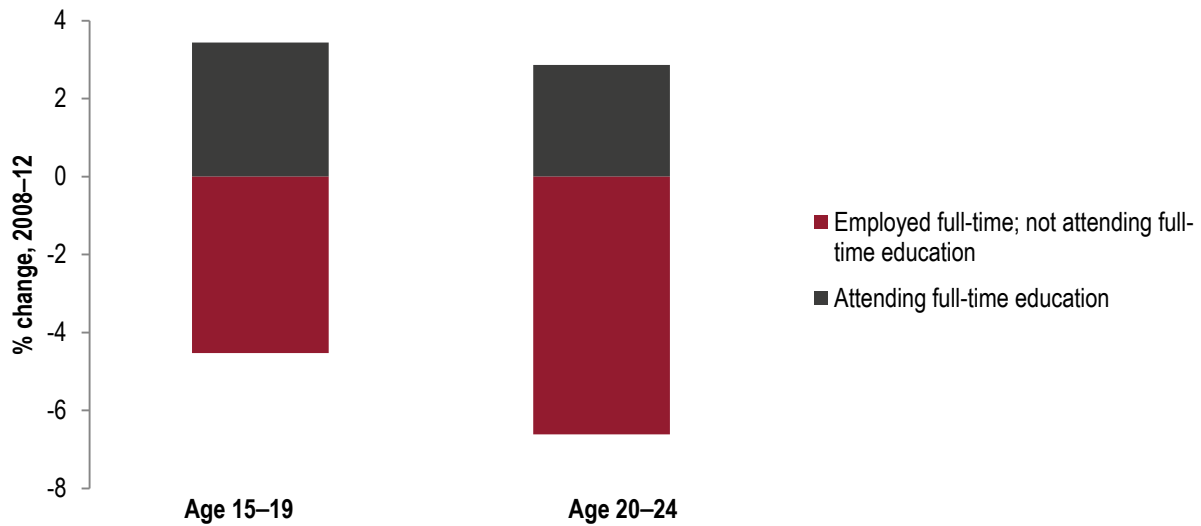
Following on from this, transitions seem to be getting more difficult for young people. Figure 2.18 shows that the proportion of young people who are unemployed and looking for their first full-time job (as compared with all unemployed young people) has been on the increase in recent years.

FIGURE 2.18:   UNEMPLOYED (NOT ATTENDING FULL-TIME EDUCATION) AND LOOKING FOR FIRST JOB AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL UNEMPLOYED (NOT ATTENDING FULL-TIME EDUCATION), 2000–12
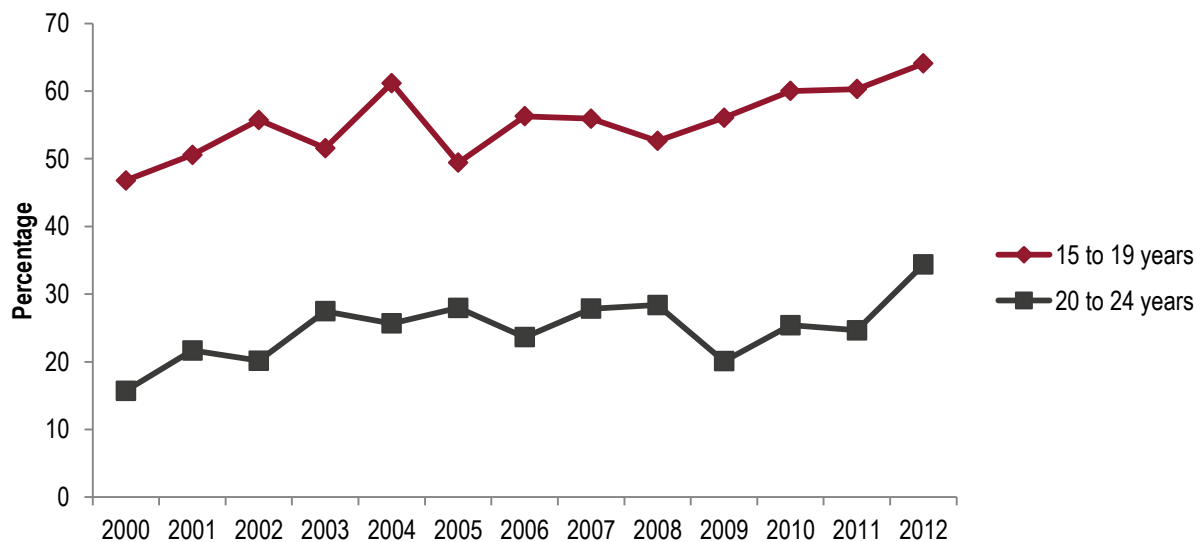
Figure 2.19 summarises overall trends for 15–24-year-olds in terms of labour force status for those not in full-time education. The figure shows that for 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds, there has been movement out of full-time employment since 2008. This has been accompanied by increases in the not employed categories and some increase in part-time employment, although this

trend seems to have been arrested for the period 2011–12 for 15–19-year-olds. These patterns have also coincided with increases in full-time education for both age groups (see Figures 2.1 and 2.17).

FIGURE 2.19:   LABOUR FORCE STATUS FOR 15–24-YEAR-OLDS NOT IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION, AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AT
                  THAT AGE GROUP, 2000–12

(a)   15–19-year-olds
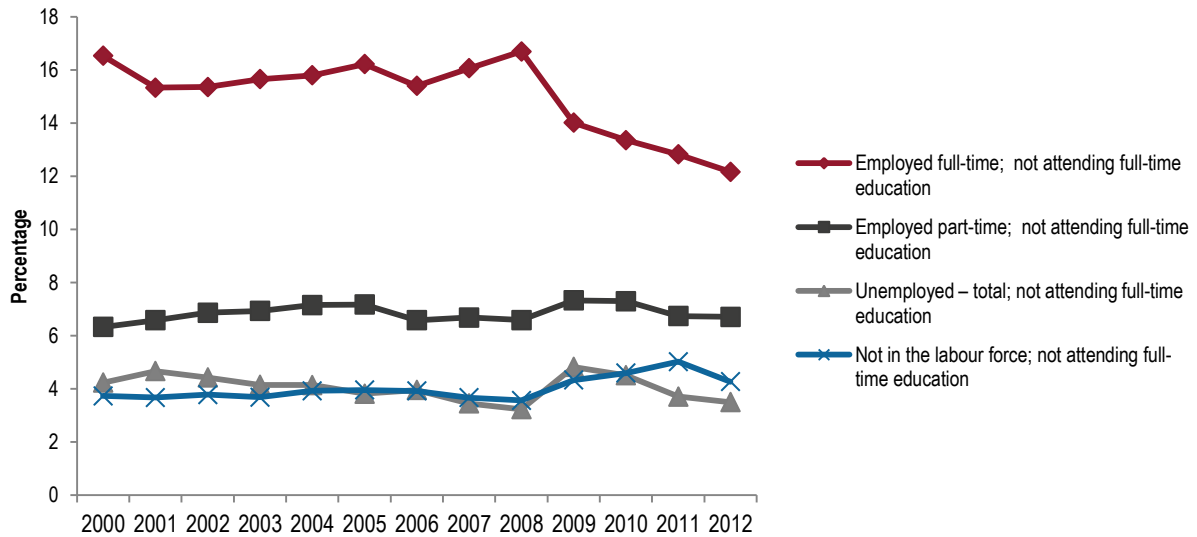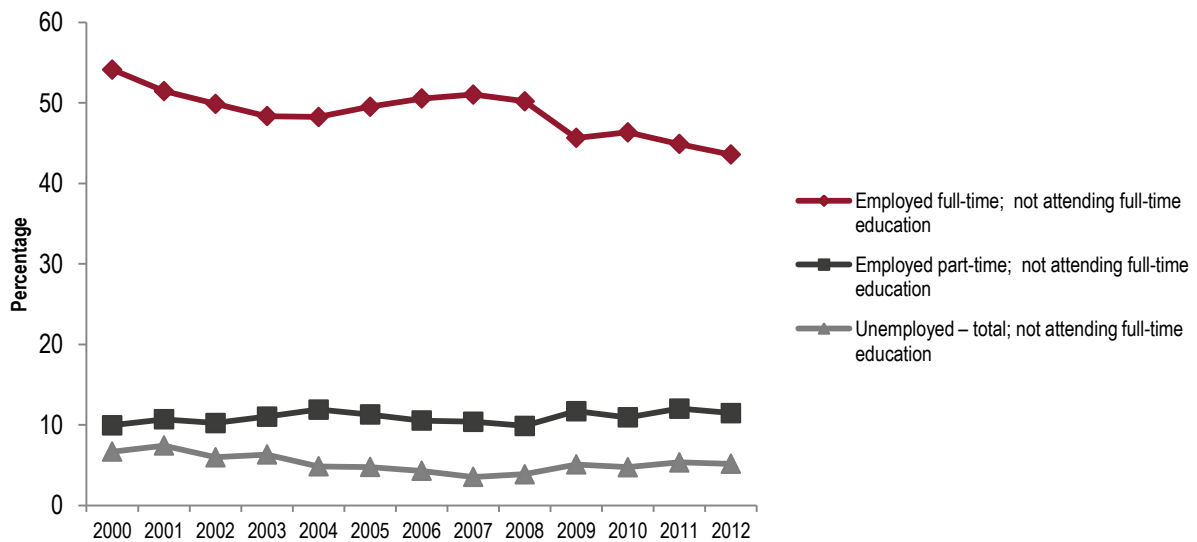
(b)   20–24-year-olds

Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed —Electronic Delivery*, Table 03a, 6291.0.55.001.
Note: The baseline number for calculating proportions for labour force status is the civilian population for the relevant age group.

Further study for VET graduates

Figure 2.20 shows the proportions of VET graduates who go on to further study by type of institution. The figure shows that in addition to employment outcomes, further study is a significant pathway for VET graduates, particularly higher-level VET graduates, and more so for 15–19-year-olds than for 20–24-year-olds overall. University is a significant pathway for diploma graduates for the 15–24-year-old age group (about a quarter of these graduates enrol in university), and in addition, substantial

proportions of Certificate IV graduates go on to university (17 per cent of 15–19-year-old graduates and 12 per cent of 20–24-year-old graduates). Furthermore, VET study is a significant pathway for Certificate III and below graduates aged 15–24-years-old. It is important to keep in mind when examining transitions that a lot of VET graduates do embark on further study – either further VET study or university study.

FIGURE 2.20:   PERCENTAGE OF VET GRADUATES GOING ON TO FURTHER STUDY AGED 15–24-YEARS-OLD BY QUALIFICATION LEVEL GRADUATED IN, 2011

(a)   15–19-year-olds
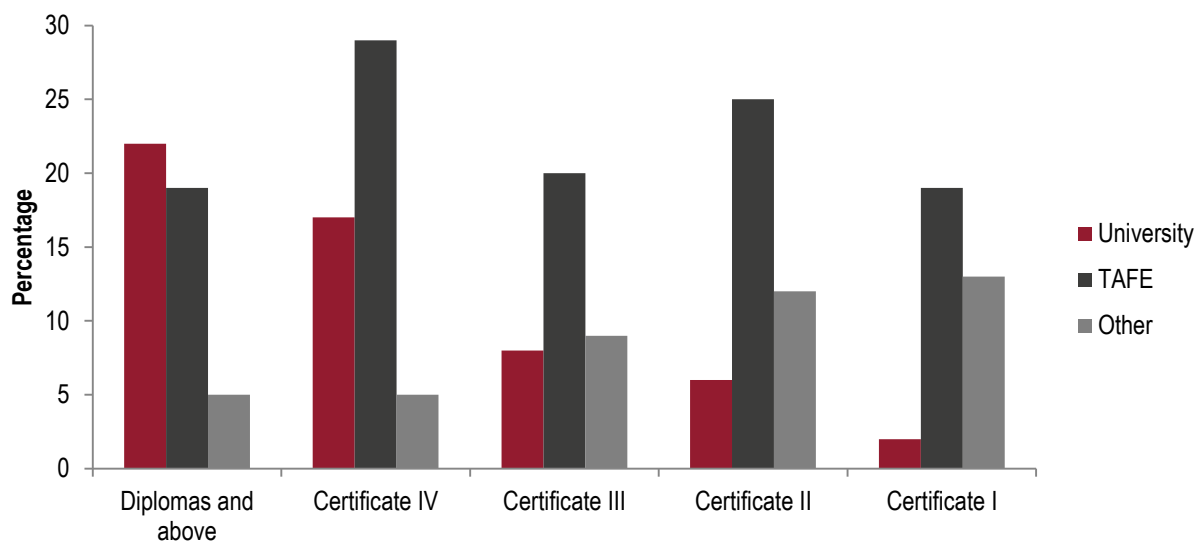
(b)   20–24-year-olds
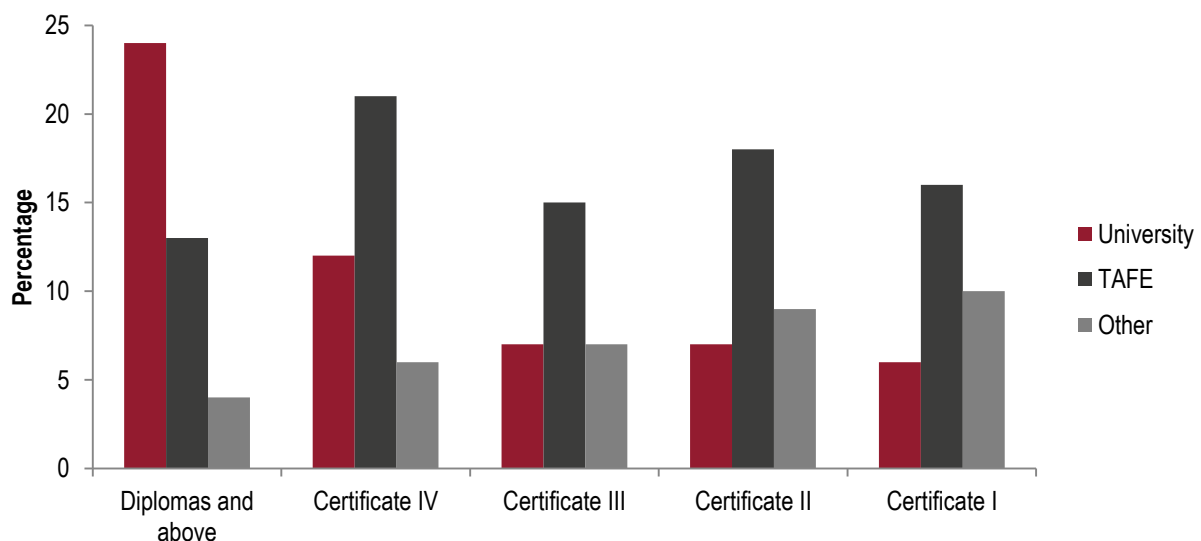
Source: NCVER, *Student Outcomes Survey 2011*.

Transitions for disadvantaged cohorts

Young people from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic status (SES) quintiles are less likely to be fully engaged in post-school education or employment than young people from the least disadvantaged quintiles (refer to Figure 2.21). In 2008, there was a difference of 16.7 percentage points between the highest and lowest quintiles in the proportion of 18–24-year-olds fully engaged; by 2010, this gap in outcomes had widened a little to 19.8 percentage points.[16]

FIGURE 2.21:   PERCENTAGE OF FULLY ENGAGED[17] 18-24-YEAR-OLDS BY SES QUINTILE, 2008–10
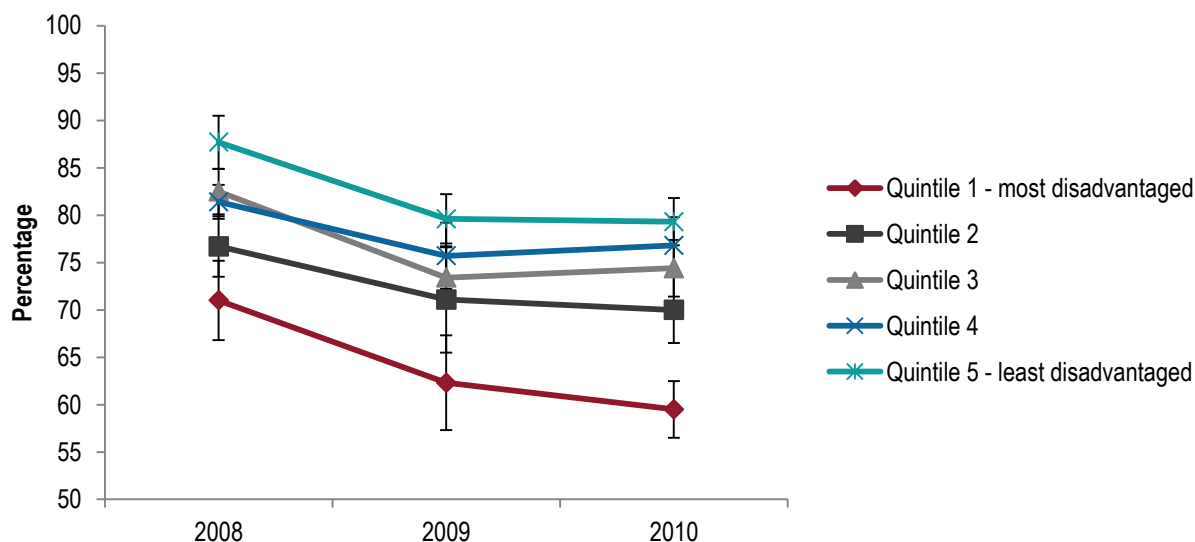
Source: COAG Reform Council; based upon data from ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*.

2.5   Summary and conclusion

To assess the educational and transition outcomes for young people aged 15–24 years, this section examined national data from three perspectives:

- participation in education;
- educational retention and attainment; and
- transitions to employment or further education.

Within these perspectives, outcomes were examined relating to the different education sectors (particularly school and VET) and also for disadvantaged groups, particularly Indigenous youth.

The analysis found that participation in full-time education and training increased for 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds for the period 2000–12. For 15–19-year-olds, there was a sharp rise of over 3 percentage points from 2008–12. When this was disaggregated by sector, it was found that school participation had increased for 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds between 2009 and 2011, coupled with increases in apparent retention rates. Rates of participation in higher education have also increased over time.

The situation for participation in VET is less clear. Participation for 15–24-year-olds not at school and without Year 12 decreased over the period 2002–08/09, but there was an increase during the period 2010–11. Examining this by qualification level,

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[16] This data is subject to revision in November 2012.
[17]   In employment or in education and training at or above Certificate III level.

participation in Certificate I and other category certificates has been declining, but since 2008, participation in Certificate II and Certificate III and above qualifications has been on the increase.

Looking at disadvantaged groups, participation in school has increased for Indigenous youth, particularly since 2009, and in the VET sector, participation has also increased since 2009. There has been little change in participation in VET for other disadvantaged groups, apart from an increase in participation for those students reporting a disability.

Attainment was analysed in terms of 15–24-year-olds who have completed a Year 12 or Certificate II/III, apparent Year 12 retention rates for the school sector, and qualification completion rates for the VET sector. The data showed that Year 12 retention rates have increased since 2008, and that VET attainment has increased for 15–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds since 2008.

However, the situation for Year 12 or Certificate II/III achievement is not straightforward. There was a sharp increase in achievement for 15–19-year-olds in 2009–10, but then a decrease in 2010–11. For 20–24-year-olds, the rate steadily increased from 2001–10 but then also dropped from 2010–11. The reasons for this are not clear, but we need to be aware of the vagaries of comparing different types of datasets – the Year 12 or Certificate II/III achievement is derived from the ABS household sample survey, whereas the schools and VET achievement data is derived from administrative collections.

In terms of disadvantaged groups, attainment for Indigenous youth and those reporting a disability has increased, but there were no observable changes by SES or remoteness categories.

Finally, transition to further education and employment were analysed. Following an increase after the GFC, the size of the NEET group has declined slightly for 15–19-year-olds since 2009 but has held steady for 20–24-year-olds. Similarly, there was a jump in the proportion of school leavers not fully engaged following the GFC, but this proportion has declined since then.

This data is further supported by the proportions of 17–19-year-olds not in education and not employed. After the GFC spike, the proportion unemployed has declined; however, the proportion not in the labour force has only shown some decline since 2011. Of concern also is the continuing drop in full-time employment among 15–24-year-olds. Part of this is no doubt accounted for by increases in full-time educational participation, but not all of it. Some of this group also would have entered part-time employment or the not employed categories.

In terms of youth transitions, then, we cannot say that these have been improving. While there have been increases in full-time educational participation, full-time employment has been dropping, and there is still a substantial NEET group. Another year's worth of data needs to be analysed to see whether the NEET group continues to get smaller.

3 Assessment of the NP to date

3.1 Overview of the assessment of the NP to date

The first year of the evaluation involved an assessment of the NP's progress to date against the evaluation framework. Table 3.1 shows the summary assessment and any changes that have been observed in Year 2 of the evaluation.

TABLE 3.1: SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF THE NP IN YEAR 1 AND 2 EVALUATION FINDINGS

Evaluation question	Assessment in Year 1	Changes in Year 2
What is happening?		
Has the NP led to changes in activities directed toward participation, attainment and transition outcomes?	There is an elevated profile for, and sharpened focus on, YAT issues and outcomes across jurisdictions The NP has been a catalyst to improve collaboration across education and training sectors to better understand issues and strategies to improve participation, attainment and transitions The NP has increased attention and support for young Australians who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education and training While funding is seen as limited by jurisdictions, it has enabled them to bolster existing (and implement some new) initiatives	• Minimal change in the NP activities. • There has been some contraction of Australian Government investment in the NP ($17 million for national career development initiatives) and State and Territory activity outside of the NP directed at improving YAT outcomes.
Is it working?		
Has young people's participation in education and training increased?	There has been an increase in participation levels since the NP was introduced, mainly among younger cohorts (16–17-year-olds). The Compact appears to be having an impact in this regard; however, the influence of other factors such as the GFC needs to be recognised.	• Young people's participation in full-time education and training has increased. • The increase in participation among 15–19-year-olds between 2009 and 2012 was at a rate above the pre-GFC trend (2000–08). • We can infer that The Compact with Young Australians has had an impact on teenagers, but not on 20–24-year-olds.
Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased?	It is too soon to say whether attainment levels have changed during the term of the NP.	• Year 12 retention rates have increased since the NP was introduced in 2009, although there was a decrease from 2010–11. • VET Certificate II and above attainment has increased from 2008–10.
Are more young people making successful transitions from school?	The NP may have had some positive impact upon the number of young people not in education and unemployed. However, the	• Since 2009, it has become more difficult for young people to secure full-time employment, particularly for 15–19-year-olds but also for

	number of disengaged young people is still significant – and the state of the labour market has the most significant influence on transition outcomes.	20–24-year-olds. • The proportion of young people not in education or fully employed has decreased since 2009 but is still not at pre-GFC levels.

Is it appropriate?		
Is the NP consistent with overarching policy objectives?	The NP is consistent with the National Education Agreement and jurisdictional policy direction – focused on increasing compulsory participation age, (re)engaging at risk young people and increasing attainment through education and training places Stakeholders see the NP as an evolution of prior initiatives, rather than a comprehensive new policy/response	• No change
Does the NP address areas of need?	The policy imperative that initiated the NP appears to remain – there is an increasing number of disengaged young people NP funding is directed towards areas of need – but stakeholders identified challenges and capacity constraints to meet those needs	• No change
How does the NP and its elements complement other NPs and programs targeting similar outcomes?	Increased collaboration between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions has resulted in better alignment of objectives and programs – but there is scope to review potential areas of overlap	• There are additional examples of collaboration and initiatives to reduce overlap.

Is it efficient?		
Have the NP outcomes and outputs been maximised for the investment?	Not assessed in Year one	• Measurement against objectives are tracked. • A number of targets are being achieved. • The NP has created efficiencies in the YAT area through better coordination of initiatives and information sharing. • The Compact appears to have increased participation and reduced benefit recipients at minimal cost.

Is it well governed and implemented?		
How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the NP?	Collaboration has generally been strong during the NP	• No change – the Australian Government and States and Territories continue to work in partnership to deliver the NP. • NP program service providers collaborate through national and State/Territory networks to make program improvements and get programs to work together better.
Is governance of the NP working effectively?	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place at national, jurisdictional and program levels – although it is difficult for some stakeholders to participate in these Positive relationships can generally be seen between stakeholders and the Commonwealth	• No change – good cooperation exists between the Australian Government and States and Territories.
How well is performance reporting working?	Key NP measures and data sources (that underpin reward payments) are flawed	• Targets have focussed attention on the need for quality data.

	State and Territory performance reporting is in place, but could be improved to address needs of the non-government sector and present impacts/lessons learned from jurisdictional activities	• Agreement has not yet been reached on the measures underpinning attainment reward payments.
	Program administration and quality of reporting was challenging at first but is improving	• Annual State and Territory performance reporting has begun to show the outcomes of activities.
		• Some program reporting gives limited insight into the impact of programs on youth attainment and transition outcomes.
How effective is communication?	Stakeholders generally understand the NP objectives and value – Partnership Brokers and National Career Development are exceptions.	• Not formally assessed in Year two – stakeholder views were consistent with Year one

3.2 Changes to what is happening under the NP since the Year 1 evaluation

Evaluation question	Assessment in Year 1	Changes in Year 2
What is happening?		
Has the NP led to changes in activities directed toward participation, attainment and transition outcomes?	There is an elevated profile for, and sharpened focus on, YAT issues and outcomes across jurisdictions	• Minimal change in the NP activities
	The NP has been a catalyst to improve collaboration across education and training sectors to better understand issues and strategies to improve participation, attainment and transitions	• There has been some contraction of Australian Government investment in the NP ($17 million for national career development initiatives) and State and Territory activity outside of the NP directed at improving YAT outcomes
	The NP has increased attention and support for young Australians who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education and training	
	While funding is seen as limited by jurisdictions, it has enabled them to bolster existing (and implement some new) initiatives	

The NP has continued to be implemented according to the NP Agreement and continued to focus effort on improving YAT outcomes. Relative to previous investment in the YAT area, the overall level of investment has not increased significantly through the NP. The NP elements have had varying levels of success in achieving their targeted outcomes. However, progress is apparent in all areas.

Overall, there have been minimal changes to the activity under the NP since Year 1 of the evaluation. The most significant changes include the following:

• Some States and Territories have adjusted the timing, scope and funding of MEAST-funded initiatives

• The Green Paper on National Career Development was released and the NCDS was announced

• The education and training place entitlement part of The Compact with Young Australians has ended – the States and Territories have reported that this has been embedded into ongoing arrangements.

3.3   Effectiveness

Evaluation question	Assessment in Year 1	Changes in Year 2
Is it working?		
Has young people's participation in education and training increased?	There has been an increase in participation levels since the NP was introduced, mainly among younger cohorts (16–17-year-olds). The Compact appears to be having an impact in this regard; however, the influence of other factors such as the GFC needs to be recognised.	• Young people's participation in full-time education and training has increased. • The increase in participation among 15–19-year-olds between 2009 and 2012 was at a rate above the pre-GFC trend (2000–08). • We can infer that The Compact has had an impact on teenagers, but not on 20–24-year-olds.
Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased?	It is too soon to say whether attainment levels have changed during the term of the NP.	• Year 12 retention rates have increased since the NP was introduced in 2009, although there was a decrease from 2010–11. • VET Certificate II and above attainment has increased from 2008–10.
Are more young people making successful transitions from school?	The NP may have had some positive impact upon the number of young people not in education and unemployed. However, the number of disengaged young people is still significant – and the state of the labour market has the most significant influence on transition outcomes.	• Since 2009, it has become more difficult for young people to secure full-time employment, particularly for 15–19-year-olds but also for 20–24-year-olds. • The proportion of young people not in education or fully employed has decreased since 2009 but is still not at pre-GFC levels.

The table above reports on performance in relation to the NP outcomes (documented in detail in Chapter 2).[18] The focus of this year's assessment of the effectiveness of the NP (that follows) is changes in each of the NP elements since Year 1 of the evaluation.

3.3.1   Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

As was reported in the Year 1 evaluation, there are signs that MEAST funding has been invested in activities that have improved the quality of, and access to, career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring. Some jurisdictions have reported increased structured work placement participant numbers and school-based apprenticeships. For example, the Northern Territory reports a 120 per cent increase in student work placements, from 423 placements in 2010 to 930 placements in 2011.[19] In Victoria, MEAST funding has been leveraged to improve the retention rates of apprentices through the Apprenticeship Support Officers program. These are very positive results; however, due to the local/regional scope of many of the MEAST initiatives, the impact of these increases is not evident at the national level.[20]

MEAST funding has helped to improve the quality of the YAT services offered, often acting as a focus for the coordination of existing programs and services. For example, in Victoria, study grants to 292 career development practitioners between mid-2010 and the beginning of 2012 has increased the number of qualified practitioners able to assist young people with career development and pathway planning. Meanwhile in Western Australia, community groups have gained a better understanding of mentoring program benchmarks (on Communication, Capacity building, Program operations, Research and Governance) through an

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[18] Council of Australian Governments (2009), *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*.
[19] Note that the figures quoted in this section of the report are from the State and Territory Youth Attainment and Transitions Annual Reports (May 2012).
[20] Ideally an assessment of the effectiveness of the MEAST element of the NP would highlight the key differences between States and Territories in program design and rollout and how these have affected outcomes. This approach would allow for an assessment of the relative effectiveness of the different interventions. It would require a common dataset on program outcomes across the jurisdictions which currently does not exist, and a comparison of differences between jurisdictions which is beyond the scope of this evaluation (see Section 1.3.1). Consequently, this assessment focuses on common areas of achievement and outstanding challenges.

extensive consultation and training process. These initiatives will lead to improvements in career development and mentoring services provided to young people.

MEAST funding has also contributed to improved data collection, enabling youth education and training service providers to develop stronger evidence bases for understanding early school leavers and designing better services to engage them. In Tasmania and Queensland, for example, early school leavers and/or post-Year 12 destination surveys have provided an information base for the development of policies and programs to support young people to engage, and remain engaged in, education and training. The logical next step in this area is the collection of common data across jurisdictions that can be used to build a national data set to build a better understanding of young people's pathways.

But despite these achievements, some challenges remain. Some jurisdictions, such as the Australian Capital Territory, will continue the MEAST activities in some form at the end of the NP, though these programs do not all have sourced funding. Other jurisdictions will not continue MEAST activities after the expiration of the NP.[21] Some jurisdictions have experienced capacity constraints regarding sufficiently skilled members of the VET sector to deliver training and career development services to young people. This has caused some delays in commencing MEAST-funded programs in some jurisdictions as efforts are made to ensure an adequate supply of skilled labour.

3.3.2   School Business Community Partnership Brokers

As pointed out in the Year 1 review, the Partnership Brokers (PB) program represents a significant shift in the Australian Government's approach to supporting the formation and operation of partnerships between schools, businesses, parents and community groups. This shift was driven by the view that strategic, regionally based and managed partnerships would have a greater impact and provide more sustainable change than the approach taken by preceding programs, which provided services for and on behalf of schools and were seen to displace effort and create dependence on external service providers.

The remit of PB providers is ambitious and the role is challenging, requiring a range of capabilities. It is therefore realistic to expect that the program will take time to fully develop.

Some issues arising in the early stages of program implementation were highlighted in the Year 1 review:

- The role and value of PB is not well understood or appreciated
- Jurisdictional support for the PB model is critical to success, but is lacking
- Establishing sustainable partnerships takes time, and success may not be realised within the term of provider contracts – or the term of this NP
- There is some overlap between PB activity and other initiatives being implemented in some jurisdictions
- Some providers may not have the capacity to succeed
- Service delivery is costly and difficult to support in larger service regions and remote locations.

An assessment of what has changed since Year 1 in terms of the effectiveness of the PB program has been made based on:
- Data entered by PB providers into DEEWR's YATMIS
- A DEEWR survey sent randomly to over 4000 partner organisations and which had 1131 responses – a response rate of about 25 per cent
- The annual PB Provider Survey undertaken by DEEWR

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[21] Some States and Territories planned for initiatives to be bound by the NP timeframe and expected that they would not continue after this time, for example, the research projects into factors which impact upon student participation, attainment and transitions undertaken in SA. The findings of this and other similar projects will be used to inform current and future policy and program changes.

- A tailored survey of PB service providers undertaken by DEEWR on dandolo partners' behalf (233 PBs responded to the survey, a response rate of approximately 46 per cent)
- Focus groups with 13 PB national network members
- Interviews with five PB stakeholder organisations (e.g., regional education offices)
- Interviews with DEEWR staff.

Overall, the PB program has continued to make steady progress towards targeted program outcomes, with positive metrics on a number of key outcome measures[22]:

- The number of partnerships that have shifted from active to self-sustaining status
- The number (and proportion) of 'high-quality' partnerships, or where considerable progress has been made
- The number (and proportion) of partnerships that have been evaluated and have had their progress rated as considerable or achieved
- The number (and proportion) of partnerships involving education and training providers partnering with stakeholders in their community
- The number (and proportion) of partnerships where business and industry are actively engaged
- The number of partnerships that involve parents and families as partners
- The number (and proportion) of partnerships that are contributing to parent and family outcomes
- The involvement of community groups in partnerships.

Since the Year 1 evaluation, there has been clearer evidence that the partnerships are of high quality (measured against DEEWR's key performance measures) and that they address the needs of young people in the service region. For the first time, there is quantitative evidence indicating a high level of support for the program from partner organisations (such as schools, businesses and community groups; see Figure 3.1):

- Partner organisations are strong believers in the benefits of a partnership approach and highly value the support provided by PBs – about 80 per cent of the schools surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their PB had helped them become more engaged with their community
- The vast majority of responding partner organisations feel that their partnership possesses the key characteristics for effective partnering and is achieving outcomes that support their community and its young people.
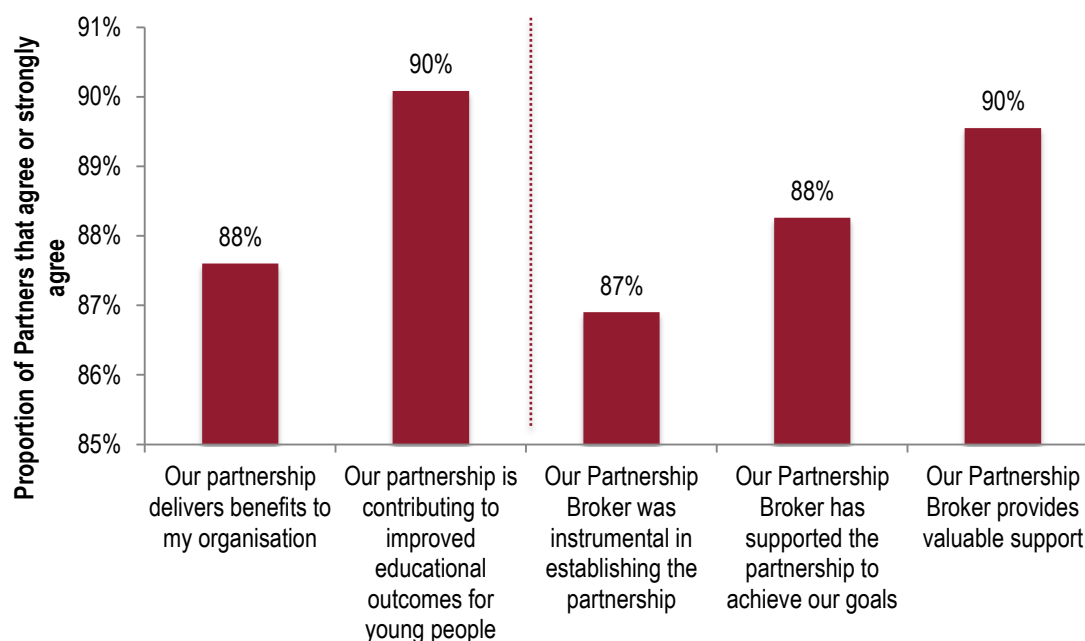
Source: DEEWR (2012) *School Business Community Partnership Brokers Partner Survey Report (PB Partner Survey)*.

Importantly, there is evidence from the YATMIS results, the partner survey and the dandolopartners PB survey that PBs are having increased success engaging with schools. Stakeholder consultations in several jurisdictions also produced examples of how PBs had effectively engaged with regional education authorities at a strategic level, which resulted in successful school-level partnerships being established.

The dandolopartners survey of PB providers showed there is relatively strong agreement from PBs on:

- What is needed to create successful partnerships
- The most important things they require to establish successful partnerships
- How the program is addressing needs.

The role of a PB is relatively complicated, with many factors impacting outcomes. The survey responses highlighted that PBs require a diverse range of skills, knowledge and tools. As a consequence, there is some variation in capability and performance across PBs, as you would expect in such a program. This has been recognised by DEEWR, which has a clear focus on building the capability of organisations and their personnel. Provider networks at the State/Territory and national levels have a key role to play in this regard.

One common area of concern regarding many PBs is whether they have enough capacity to meet the demand for services (experienced by around 70 per cent of PBs). As shown in Figure 3.2, other major challenges faced by PBs which were identified in the dandolo partners survey were:

- Time constraints / competing demands of schools and businesses
- The time taken to develop partnerships that produce outcomes for young people
- Partnership sustainability, once partnerships are established
- A lack of awareness and understanding of the program among stakeholders

- A perceived reluctance by some State/Territory education authorities to encourage schools to actively participate in the program, at least initially (except in Victoria)[23]
- The administrative support needs of prospective partners.
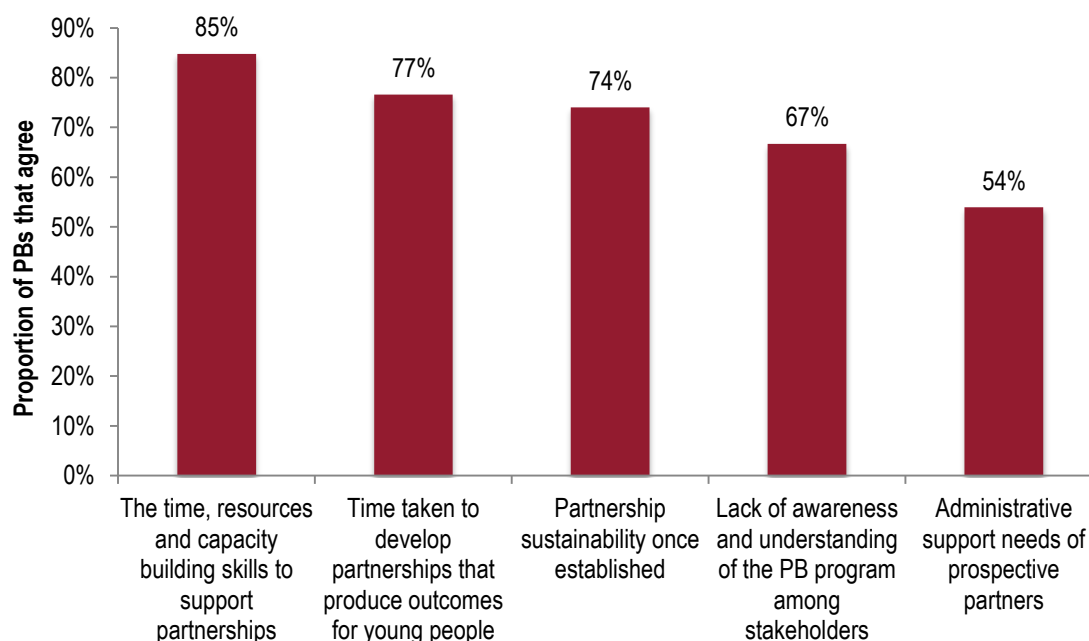
Source: dandolopartners survey of PB service providers (2012).

Some of these challenges cannot be realistically addressed within the time frame of the NP. However, they provide guidance for future program design.

Areas that warrant a continued effort to overcome program challenges include:

- the broad promotion of the PB program:

    - to regional education authorities and schools
    - to local government
    - to business

- the sharing of good practice and partnership exemplars
- a focus on building the capability of PBs and their personnel.

The issue of State/Territory support still represents a challenge for many PBs. As mentioned above, there is reliable evidence that engagement with education authorities and schools is increasing. There are examples in several jurisdictions where this seems to be occurring effectively through regional education offices, and the promotion of case studies where this is occurring would be valuable. There also seems to be further scope for States and Territories to provide information, encouragement and support for schools to consider the benefits that participation in the program could provide.

The dandolo partners survey also identified differing views on some issues, although most PBs did not regard them as being major challenges. A minority of surveyed PBs saw issues with the clarity of program requirements, the level of required program flexibility, the adequacy of communication, and whether it was beneficial to have brokerage funds to assist partners develop partnerships.

[23] In Victoria, the PB program is delivered through the Local Learning and Employment Network which are managed by the Victorian Government.

This is not unexpected, but it suggests there is still room for interaction between DEEWR and at least some PBs to better align understandings and expectations.

Another issue that a number of PBs raised in survey responses was the concern that uncertainty about the program's future after the end of the NP will increasingly impact on their capacity and capability to deliver outcomes. The provision of early communication to service providers about arrangements beyond the NP is therefore highly desirable.

3.3.3   Youth Connections

Consistent with the findings of the Year 1 evaluation, the Youth Connections (YC) program has continued to deliver positive outcomes for young people and is strongly supported by education and training, and community and youth sector stakeholders.

The program has three components:

- Individual support services (case management) to assist young people to overcome barriers to participating in education or training
- Outreach and re-engagement activities aimed at finding young people who are disengaged from education/training or their community, and helping them re-engage with learning and the community
- Strengthening services in the region activities aimed at improving the capacity of education providers and stakeholders to prevent and address disengagement from learning.

An assessment of what has changed since Year 1 in terms of the effectiveness of the YC program has been made based on:

- Client and activity data entered by YC providers into YATMIS
- A tailored survey of YC service providers undertaken by DEEWR on our behalf (215 YC workers responded to the survey, a response rate of approximately 26 per cent)
- Focus groups involving 17 YC national network members
- Interviews with five YC stakeholder organisations (e.g., schools, TAFEs, community organisations)
- A survey of a sample of 17 Job Services Australia providers
- Interviews with DEEWR staff.

In the survey of YC service providers, over 90 per cent agreed that the program has helped young people develop valuable personal skills and attributes (97 per cent); helped young people connect to education, family and community (98 per cent); and helped develop strong collaborative relationships between organisations that support young people (93 per cent).

Individual support services

Since the program commenced at the start of 2010, over 54,000 young people have received individual support services through it.[24] From January to mid-September 2012, 51 per cent of young people had addressed or minimised a barrier to learning. The most common barriers addressed were low self-esteem (3018 young people), low literacy and/or numeracy (2021) and behavioural problems (1958) – see Figure 3.3. Significantly, the program resulted in 4115 young people commencing or re-engaging in education in the first half of 2012 – see Figure 3.4. Other common final outcomes of the program during this period included consistent improvement in behaviour at school (1958 young people) and school attendance (1002).

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[24] Individual support services provided between 1 January 2010 and 31 August 2012. More young people have participated in the program through outreach and re-engagement activities.

FIGURE 3.3: MOST COMMON BARRIERS ADDRESSED AND MINIMISED BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES
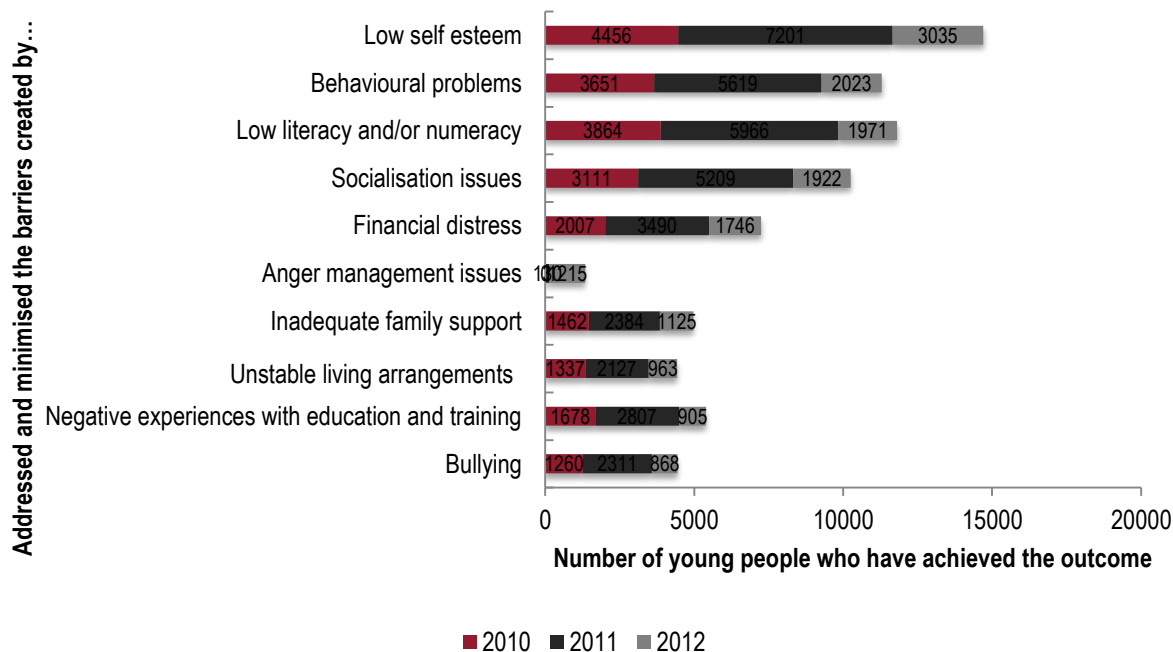
Source: DEEWR (2012) *YATMIS Program Reporting*.
Note: Individual young people may address or minimise more than one barrier. These are the most common 10 of 28 barriers that YC service providers report young people have addressed.

FIGURE 3.4: FINAL OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES
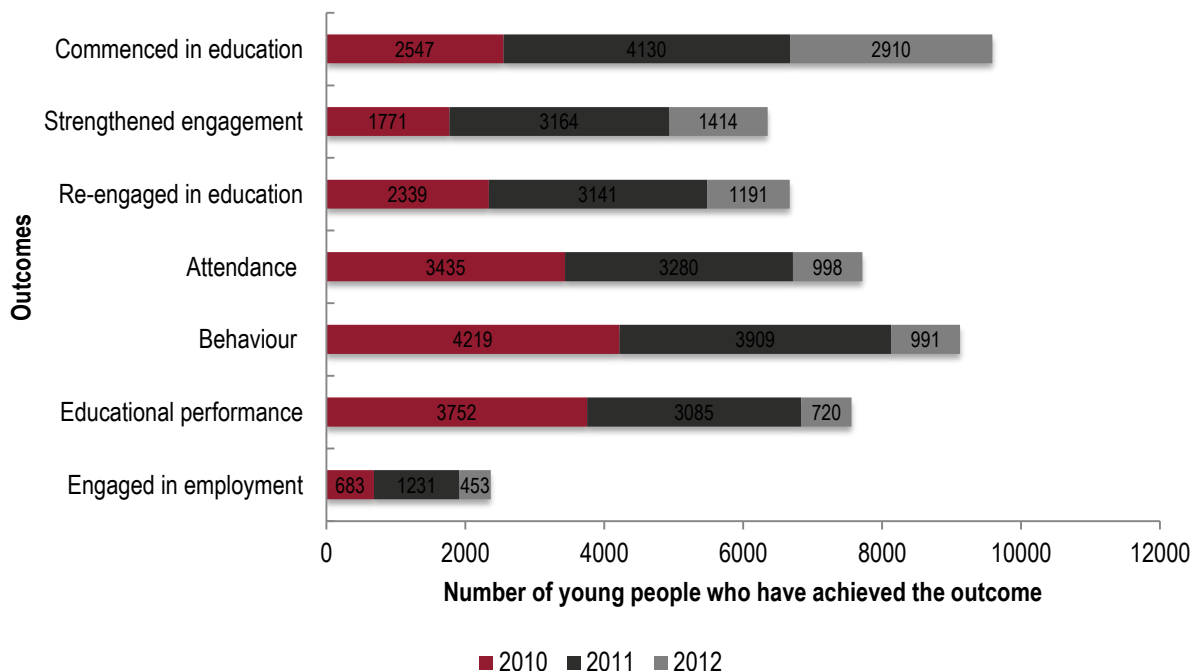
Source: DEEWR (2012) *YATMIS Program Reporting*.
Note: Individual young people may achieve more than one final outcome.
* This category was introduced in 2012.

Information is not available on a national basis to indicate whether young people remain in education once they exit the program. A recent study by the Brotherhood of St Laurence of YC services in Victoria provides an indication of the sustainability of the

outcomes achieved through the program in one region.[25] Almost three-quarters (72.5 per cent) of young people in this region were still engaged with education at least three months after exiting the program.[26] The dandolo survey of service providers indicates that, where circumstances are known, the majority of young people are engaged in education, training and/or employment six months after completing the program (78 per cent) (see Figure 3.5).[27] This suggests that YC is effective in establishing a lasting connection for young people to education, training or employment.

FIGURE 3.5: MAJOR ACTIVITY OF MOST YOUNG PEOPLE SIX MONTHS AFTER LEAVING THE YOUTH CONNECTIONS PROGRAM
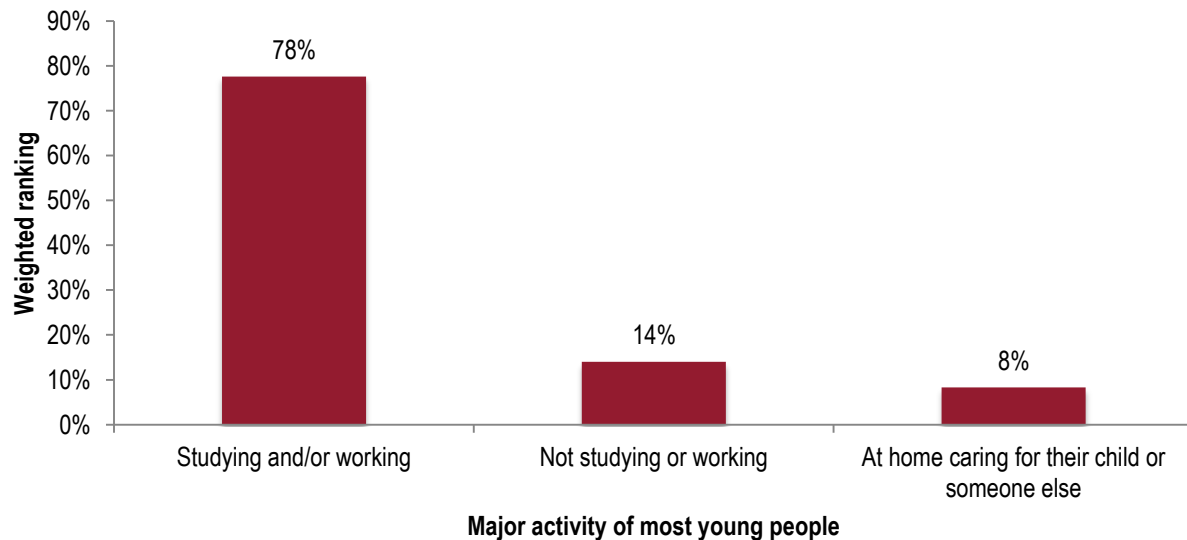
Source: dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012). Sixty-three per cent of survey respondents indicted that they know the locations of their clients six months after achieving a final outcome and therefore answered this question.

However, not all young people that participate in the program achieve outcomes. As of mid-September 2012, 45 per cent of participants who had enrolled this year had not yet achieved a progressive or final outcome through the program. Service providers report that the most common reason for young people not achieving outcomes is that they fail to become engaged when initially contacted (54 per cent of survey respondents; see Figure 3.6). Far fewer become engaged and then withdraw during the program (30 per cent of respondents). Common reasons given for young people not achieving outcomes include lack of personal motivation to engage or make changes; transience/unstable accommodation, which makes it difficult to maintain contact; and either a lack of family support, negative parental influence or family dysfunction. These reasons indicate the complexity of the service delivery challenge for service providers.

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[25] Barrett, Anna (2012) *Building Relationships for Better Outcomes*, 'Peninsula Youth Connections evaluation, Stage 2 report', Brotherhood of St Laurence, <http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Barrett_Building_relationships_for_better_outcomes_PYC_Stage_2_evaluation_report_2012.pdf>. Peninsula Youth Connections provides services to young people in the Frankston Mornington Peninsula region of Victoria.
[26] To exit the program participants are required to be engaged in education, training and/or employment for a continuous 13 week period. This indicates that the combined minimum period of engagement achieved is closer to six months.
[27] These responses reflect the views of 63 per cent of a sample of service providers that report they know the locations of their clients six months after achieving a final outcome (completing the program).

Reasons young people do not achieve positive outcomes
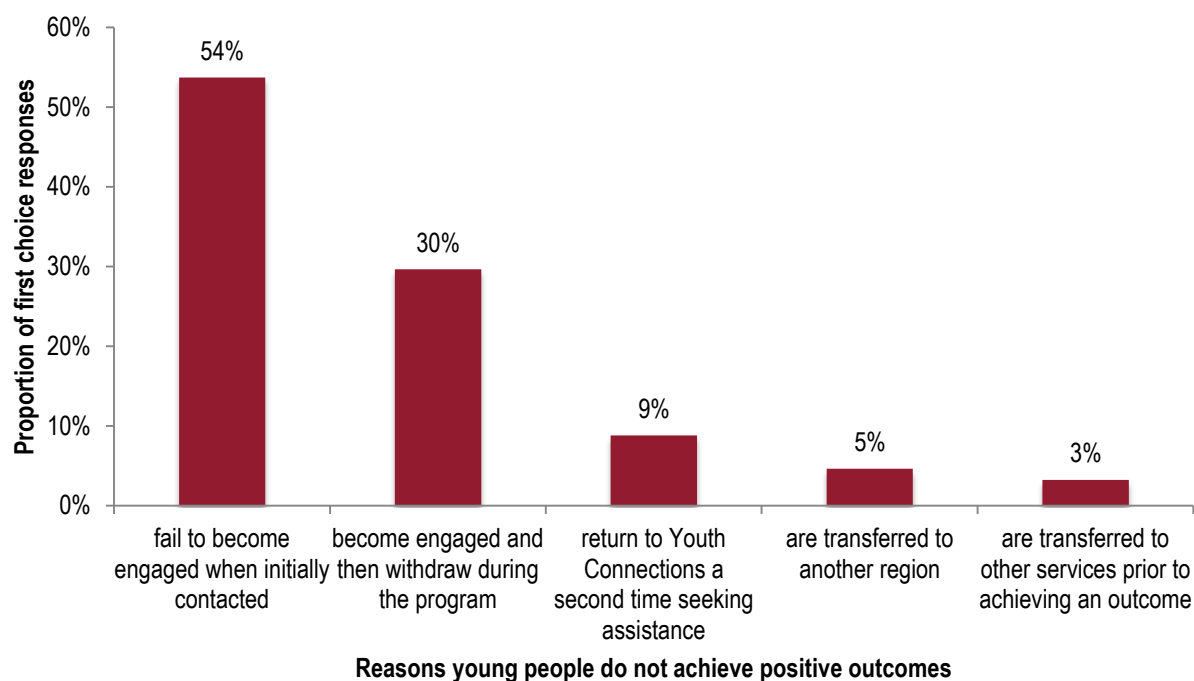
Source: dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012).

As well as learning outcomes, the YC program is associated with improvements in young people's personal wellbeing. The YC program uses a Personal Wellbeing Index to measure young people's subjective wellbeing ('a normally positive state of mind that involves the whole life experience'[28]). Between their first meeting with their case manager and their exit from the YC program, a significant proportion (of a sample of 1535 young people who completed the index on two occasions) experienced improved psychological outcomes.[29] This indicates that more young people had experienced normal levels of wellbeing and fewer young people were depressed or at high risk of depression at the end of the program. The change in young people's views of their future security was particularly marked.

Service providers consistently identified the strengths of individual support services to be:

- The flexibility to work with a young person over an extended period of time and meet their individual needs (e.g., holistic support, individual learning plans)
- Links to other service providers (particularly alternative education providers)
- Developing trust and a connection with young people through mentoring
- Empowering young people to make decisions about their lives now and in the future.[30]

These features should be incorporated into the development of future programs aimed at supporting young people at risk of disengaging from learning and community.

Outreach and re-engagement

Through outreach and re-engagement, providers actively go out to locations where young people spend time and engage them in activities (such as tutoring programs and life skills workshops) aimed at helping them to re-engage with family, community and

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[28] Tomyn, A. & Norrish, J. (2012) *Youth Connections Subjective Wellbeing Report*, RMIT University, commissioned by DEEWR, p.57.
[29] The respondents represent a high percentage of young people who were identified as having a lower risk of depression, and therefore the results should be treated as indicative only.
[30] dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012).

learning. YC providers have delivered a large number of outreach and re-engagement activities involving large numbers of young people. In the six months to mid-2012, 4434 activities were conducted that involved almost 75,000 young people.

The outcome of the outreach and re-engagement activities is less clear than for individual support services. Some service providers reported that re-engagement programs are labour-intensive, costly to deliver, and produced variable results when compared with individual support services. In the context of unmet demand from young people for individual support services generated through existing referral channels (see section 3.4.3) and a common lack of personal motivation in young people that are contacted to participate, some service providers have questioned the value of seeking out additional young people through outreach activities. An important benefit of this component of the program is accessing young people outside of the normal referral channels. These young people are less likely to be receiving support from other service providers and are therefore in greater need of YC services to assist them to reconnect with learning and community. However, there may be an opportunity to vary the effort different service providers allocate to the different service types based on the needs in their region.

Service providers reported that there are some outstanding challenges to be overcome to improve the effectiveness of outreach and re-engagement activities. Frequently suggested improvements include matching the anticipated level of service delivery to the allocation of funding available, and running outreach activities as a separate program (or with dedicated staff members who have the necessary skills).

Strengthening services in the region

Since the Year 1 evaluation, service providers have increasingly focused on strengthening services in their regions. The activities that service providers see as being most effective include sharing their experiences working with young people within schools, and establishing links with other services in the region for young people at risk of disengaging.[31]

YC providers are expected to form effective working relationships with the PBs in their region to support young people at risk.[32] Around three-quarters of service providers report that they work with PBs, though they are slightly less positive about activities involving PBs (69% per cent agree or strongly agree the activities are helpful for young people) than about other types of activities (the average of the other activities is 84 per cent) (see Figure 3.7).
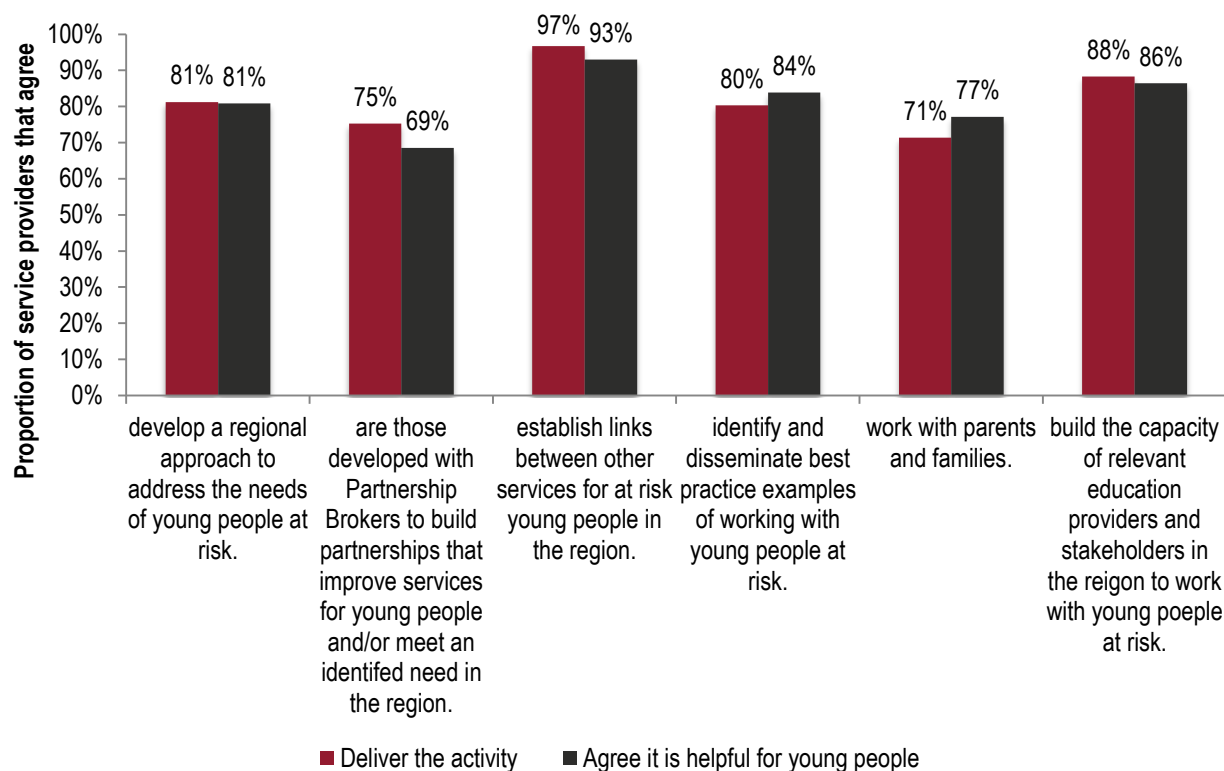
Source: dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012).

Summary

YC service providers and stakeholders have highlighted many strengths of the program. In particular, YC:

- Provides a unique, specialised service focused on education and training

- Service delivery is flexible and highly individualised to the needs of young people

- Gives young people the skills they need to seek out alternative options in the future if needed

- Is sufficiently flexible that it can add components to target local needs (e.g., working with Centacare to run young mums and dads programs in Burnie, Tasmania as part of the Building Australia's Future Workforce trial managed by the Australian Government Department of Human Services)

- Provides the opportunity to get to know young people through outreach and re-engagement, and develops effective links with other service providers through strengthening services

- Strategic approach encourages links between related programs and minimises duplication (e.g., adjustment to YC service delivery to accommodate changes to the Innovative Community Action Network (ICAN) program in South Australia) (see section 3.4.3).

These strengths should be considered during the development of a future national youth attainment and transitions policy (see Chapter 5).

3.3.4   National Career Development

The National Career Development element continues to benefit young people in all States and Territories through projects and resources aimed at improving engagement with quality career development. Feedback from consultations with jurisdictions and non-government sector representatives indicates that schools value the existing resources provided by the Australian Government

in conjunction with the States and Territories. These resources support a range of active career development initiatives reported by each State and Territory in their annual reports. A common suggestion is that there needs to be an improvement in the regular distribution of regional labour market information to schools and young people, to increase the understanding of relevant career options and pathways.

The finalisation of the National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) was delayed. A Green Paper was released for comment in June 2012. The closing date for submissions was 1 August 2012 and the Australian Government's response was not available at the time this report was finalised. However, early indications suggest that the strategy should lead to a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians as well as Australians in other age cohorts.

3.3.5   The Compact with Young Australians

An assessment of the effectiveness of The Compact with Young Australians (The Compact) has been made based on:

- Changes in national education and training participation data
- Changes in income support recipient data
- Consultations with (and an information request of) State and Territory governments through the Youth Attainment and Transitions Multilateral Working Group
- A survey of a sample of 17 Job Services Australia providers.

The Compact has two main dimensions. The first is a regulatory aspect that introduced consistent new national requirements for educational participation, largely targeted at those under the age of 18. The second is a financial aspect that changed the conditions attached to the provision of income support, such that those under the age of 21 who have not completed Year 12 now need to take part in education and training in order to receive income support previously available to the unemployed, and in order for their families to receive Family Tax Benefit Part A. The first component was primarily expected to increase the number of young people participating in education and training, particularly amongst 16 and 17-year-olds. The second component was expected to shift young people to student payments.

The first aspect of The Compact can be judged a success. ABS data shows that full-time educational participation among the target age groups has risen at a rate that is appreciably above the pre-NP trend, as has participation in full-time schooling (see Figure 3.8). And while VET participation by those who have not completed Year 12 has responded more slowly, it has shown some increase above the pre-NP trend. In each case, the increase observed after the introduction of the NP and The Compact has been appreciably higher than the quite minimal changes in participation that were observed during the 2008-09 GFC. Taken together, it can be estimated that an additional 57,000 15–19-year-olds without a Year 12 qualification were participating in education and training in schools and VET in 2011 compared with the trend rate prior to the introduction of the NP and The Compact. It can also be estimated that the overall rate of participation in school and in VET by those without Year 12 was around 4 percentage points higher than it would have been had the pre-2010 trend continued.[33]

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[33] While it seems clear that the changes in educational participation observable since 2010 are not primarily a function of the impact of the GFC, it should be pointed out that they have also coincided with the introduction of the NP on low SES schools. This has some aims that are similar to those of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, and it has in part targeted groups at risk of leaving school early. However, its scope is wider than the age group of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, and at this stage it is not possible to separately judge any impact that it might have had upon participation by 15–19-year-olds.

FIGURE 3.8: PROPORTION OF 15-19-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOL, 2000-2011

15 year olds: upward kick to a pre-existing trend

16yos: very substantial boost to previous trend for slow increase

17 year olds: dramatic reversal of a trend for flat/declining participation

18yos: very substantial boost to previous trend for slow increase

Age 15 — 2000-2009 predicted

Age 16 — 2000-2009 predicted

Age 17 — 2000-2009 predicted

Age 18 — 2000-2009 predicted
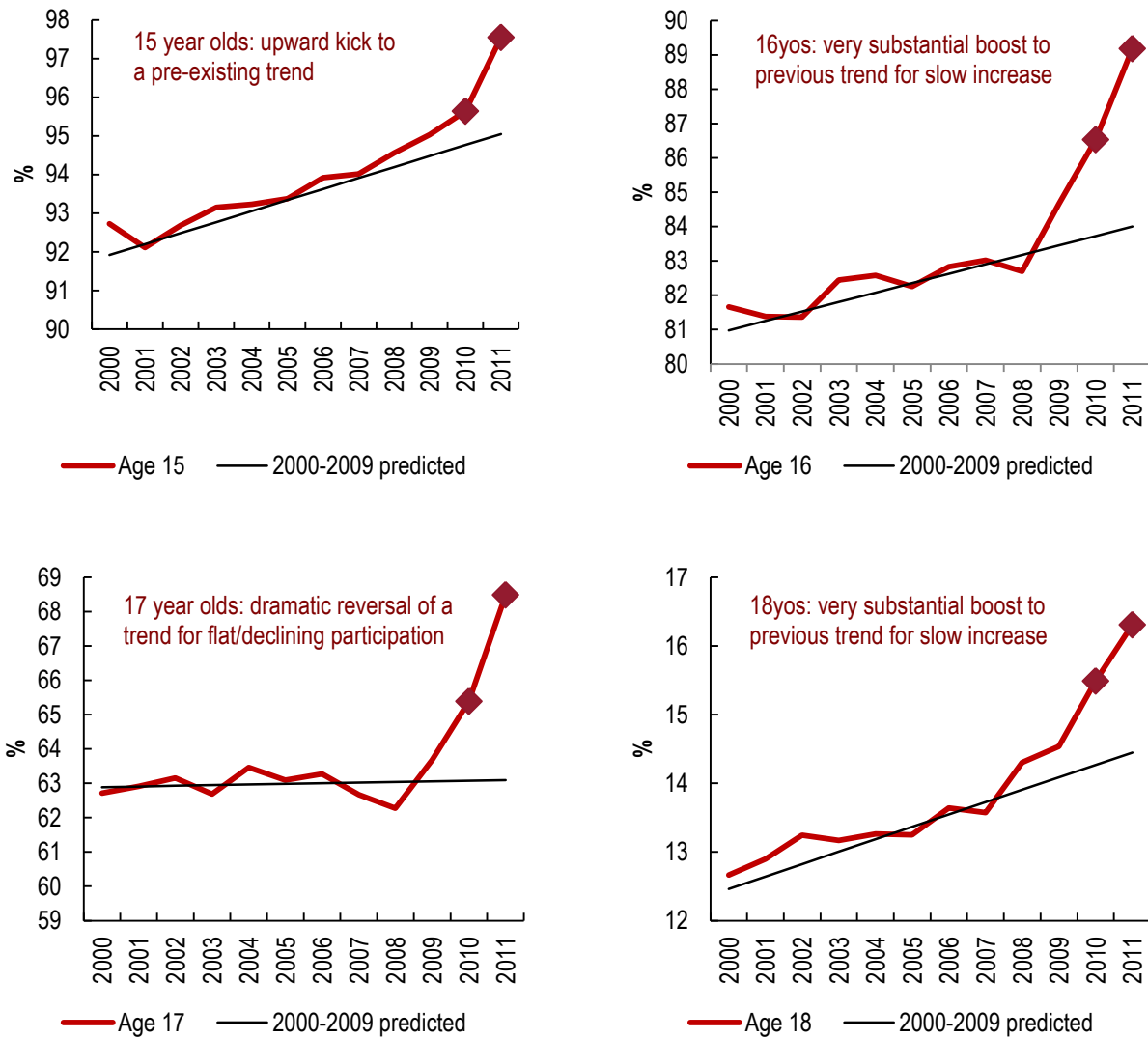
Source: ABS (2012), *National Schools Statistics Collection*; ABS (2012), *Australian Demographic Statistics*.

In contrast to the regulatory dimension of The Compact, the financial aspect appears to have been less successful, either in encouraging a return to study by unemployed youth or in reducing the size of the age group who are either unemployed or inactive (not engaged in employment, education or training, or NEET). There is little or no firm evidence that unemployed youth have shifted into education and training; the number of Youth Allowance (Other)[34] recipients as a proportion of unemployed youth has fallen (see Figure 3.9); and while the number of unemployed 15–19-year-olds has fallen, the number who are inactive (neither in education and training nor looking for work) has jumped sharply since The Compact was introduced (see Figure 2.17). As a result, there has been no appreciable reduction in the size of the NEET group. This is consistent with UK research on the impact of the Education Maintenance Allowance, which concluded that financial incentives are much less successful in encouraging young people to return to study than in encouraging continued participation by those already participating.[35]

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[34] Customers, in receipt of Youth Allowance, who are 21 years of age and under who are not full-time students or Australian Apprentices.
[35] Middleton, S. et al. (2005) *Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots: Young People Aged 16 to 19 Years. Final Report of the Quantitative Evaluation*, Department for Education and Skills, Research Report RR678.
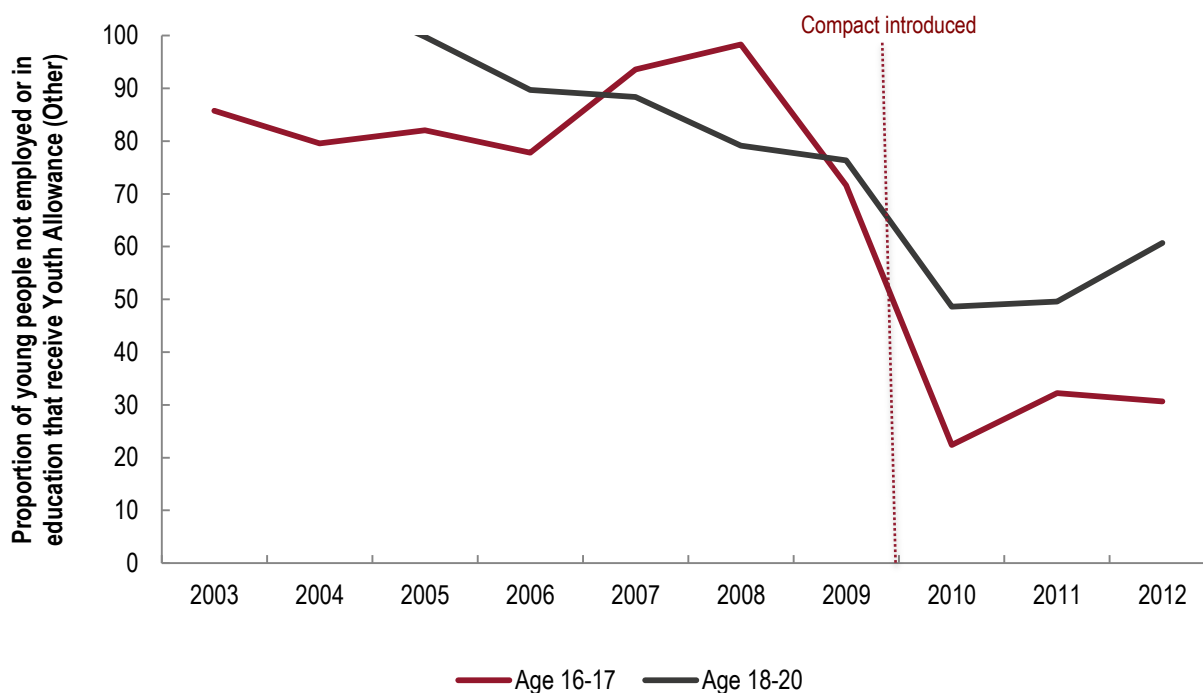
Sources: DEEWR, *Labour Market and Related Payments: A Monthly Profile*, and *ABS Labour Force Survey*.

The Compact has been associated with an increase in the number of young people who are inactive (neither unemployed nor studying), with a marked fall in the number of families of young people who are eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A, and with a sharp fall in the proportion of young job seekers who receive income support. While it cannot be proven that the Compact has caused the first of these trends, the evidence (timing, age groups affected) leads to a strong presumption that it is a part of the explanation, although this presumption will need to be tested. The link between the Compact and the second trend is not at all clear, although it seems significant that the biggest decline has occurred among the age group (16-17) most clearly targeted by the Compact. Both trends need more detailed investigation. The Compact seems almost certain to have been the cause of the third trend.

3.3.6 Comparison of the impact of NP elements on COAG targets

There is no way of estimating the proportion of gains in increased participation of 15-19-year-olds as a direct result of the raising of the school leaving age and restrictions placed on accessing income support compared to program activity, such as MEAST. However the balance of the evidence favours the Compact having had a strong impact: the age group most clearly targeted by it shows the largest increases in participation, and the timing of these increases coincides with the introduction of the Compact. Also, it is a major policy innovation representing a real change to previous arrangements; it is nationally consistent and applies to all young people; and the participation and progression increases associated with it can be observed in all states and territories.

On the other hand evidence in favour of the other elements of the National Partnership having had an impact upon young people's participation behaviour is either not readily available or at best suggestive (MEAST, PB, NCDS). None of the arguments used to support a conclusion about the impact of the Compact can be applied to the other elements of the National Partnership. The strongest grounds for suspecting an impact applies to YC given the quality of its monitoring and evaluation data, but, compared to the Compact, its reach is quite small, and it represents an incremental change on previous arrangements (better targeting and

more flexible delivery, for example) but no change in the level of expenditure compared to previous arrangements. Monitoring and evaluation data from previous arrangements suggested similar levels of positive outcomes.

In the case of MEAST, any major impact seems unlikely. It represents no increase in expenditure, it is not clearly targeted to groups at risk of leaving early, it has resulted in very little activity that is different from previous arrangements, and some of its funds have been taken away from direct program expenditure and used to support improved administration or a better information base. Whilst these may in the longer term have an impact, in the short- to medium-term they are unlikely to have influenced young people's participation behaviour.

3.4   Appropriateness

Evaluation question	Assessment in Year 1	Changes in Year 2
Is it appropriate?		
Is the NP consistent with overarching policy objectives?	The NP is consistent with the National Education Agreement and jurisdictional policy direction – focused on increasing compulsory participation age, (re)engaging at risk young people and increasing attainment through education and training places Stakeholders see the NP as an evolution of prior initiatives, rather than a comprehensive new policy/response	• No change
Does the NP address areas of need?	The policy imperative that initiated the NP appears to remain – there is an increasing number of disengaged young people NP funding is directed towards areas of need – but stakeholders identified challenges and capacity constraints to meet those needs	• No change
How does the NP and its elements complement other NPs and programs targeting similar outcomes?	Increased collaboration between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions has resulted in better alignment of objectives and programs – but there is scope to review potential areas of overlap	• There are additional examples of collaboration and initiatives to reduce overlap.

There have been no significant changes since the Year 1 evaluation in terms of overarching federal and State/Territory policy objectives. The NP remains consistent with these objectives and priorities.

As outlined in Chapter 4, youth attainment and transition outcomes are influenced by many factors. The NP addresses some of the factors that influence youth YAT outcomes (see Figure 5.5). It is one of many initiatives at the regional, State/Territory and national levels that aim to improve young people's school-to-work transition outcomes. In addition to recurrent school funding, significant related Australian Government investments aimed at improving participation and attainment include the Low Socio-economic School Communities National Partnership and Trade Training Centres. These (and other) initiatives address some additional factors that influence transition outcomes.

Where policy responsibilities are shared, there is a risk that federal, State and Territory programs will overlap. At the commencement of the NP, efforts were made to avoid duplication of the services provided to support young people. Changes have been made to relevant programs at the national and State/Territory levels (e.g., the shift in focus of the YC program in South Australia as a result of the expansion of the Innovation Community Action Networks (ICAN)). However, some States and Territories

have acknowledged that it is an ongoing challenge to avoid the duplication of service offerings as a result of fast-moving federal policies. Clear, open communication at a time that allows changes to be made would assist this challenge to be overcome.

During the NP period, several jurisdictions have enacted budgets with reduced government spending on education and training, particularly the VET sector. There are indications that in some States and Territories, this will lead to reduced access and availability of courses. Given the central role that education and training play in achieving positive YAT outcomes, these changes may influence the nation's ability to continue to improve these outcomes.

Participation and attainment outcomes have improved since the NP was introduced (see Chapter 2); however, there is room for further improvement. In addition, the school-to-work transition has become more difficult for young people, and the proportion of disengaged young people has still not returned to pre-GFC levels. These outcomes indicate that there is an ongoing imperative for a national youth attainment and transitions policy. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 discuss the challenges and options for a future policy.

3.4.1 Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

As was reported in the Year 1 evaluation, States and Territories have directed funding towards activities that are consistent with the NP objectives. The focus of these activities is improving access to, and the quality of, career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring. These are factors that underpin successful transition outcomes. Many of the States and Territories have chosen to direct MEAST funding to initiatives that complement and add value to the suite of existing education and training reform policies and programs already in place in their respective jurisdictions.

In all jurisdictions, a portion of MEAST funding was directed towards young people at greater risk of disengagement – particularly disadvantaged youth and those from Indigenous backgrounds – and therefore with a higher need of support. Some initiatives are beginning to deliver outcomes for young people at risk. In Western Australia, for example, hospitality traineeships for young people in custody have been introduced to create a pathway to sustainable post-prison employment for offenders. Also in Western Australia, career and employment services have been implemented in prisons. This resulted in 1160 prisoners receiving employment and career support in 2011 – 261 received employment assistance post-release, while 36 were assisted into employment, 14 into work experience and 17 into further education and training prior to their release from correctional facilities.

The MEAST element of the NP shows that there is an appetite for local-level projects targeted at regional needs. It has provided States and Territories with the opportunity to trial innovative ways of increasing young people's engagement in education and training, particularly through local-level grant-funded projects (such as New South Wales' locally designed and managed targeted support program for youth at risk of disengagement). Given the breadth of local projects occurring, there would be merit in assessing the impact of the different types of initiatives. Such an assessment could be used to inform the development of future programs, including initiatives that would be suitable to roll out across regions, States/Territories and/or nationally.

3.4.2 School Business Community Partnership Brokers

The PB program remains consistent with NP objectives. Evidence from outcome measures and survey data consistently reveal the establishment of partnerships that meet local needs which are broader than youth attainment and transition (e.g., student welfare) – for example, 92 per cent of partners surveyed agree that their partnerships address real needs in the community. Service providers do indicate, however, that meeting the demand for services is a challenge – only 30 per cent agree that there is sufficient capacity to meet demand (see Figure 3.10).
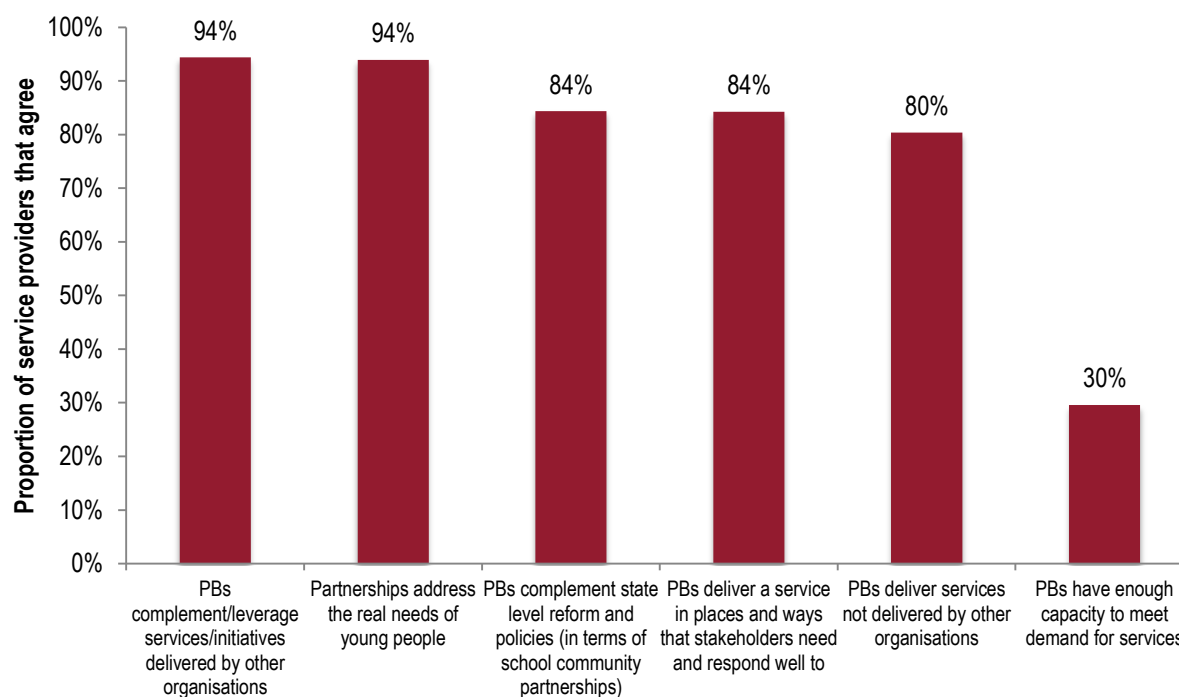
Source: dandolopartners survey of PB service providers (2012).

The program complements other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes. While there is some overlap with other programs, it appears that many opportunities are being taken to increase collaboration. In particular, active collaboration with YC appears to be happening in a number of service regions.

3.4.3   Youth Connections

The YC program remains consistent with NP objectives, with a clear focus on improving youth attainment and transition outcomes.

As in the Year 1 evaluation, the YC program has been successful in addressing the needs of young people identified as most at risk of disengaging or being disengaged from education and training – namely, young people from low-SES, Indigenous and humanitarian refugee backgrounds. Figure 3.11 shows the distribution of young people enrolled in YC individual support services from most disadvantaged to least disadvantaged, based on the area in which they reside. It indicates that YC is well targeted at the young people who are most at risk. More clients reside in the most disadvantaged areas (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas or SEIFA quintiles one and two) than the least disadvantaged areas (SEIFA quintiles four and five). A slightly higher proportion of clients were located in the more disadvantaged areas in 2012 compared with 2011.
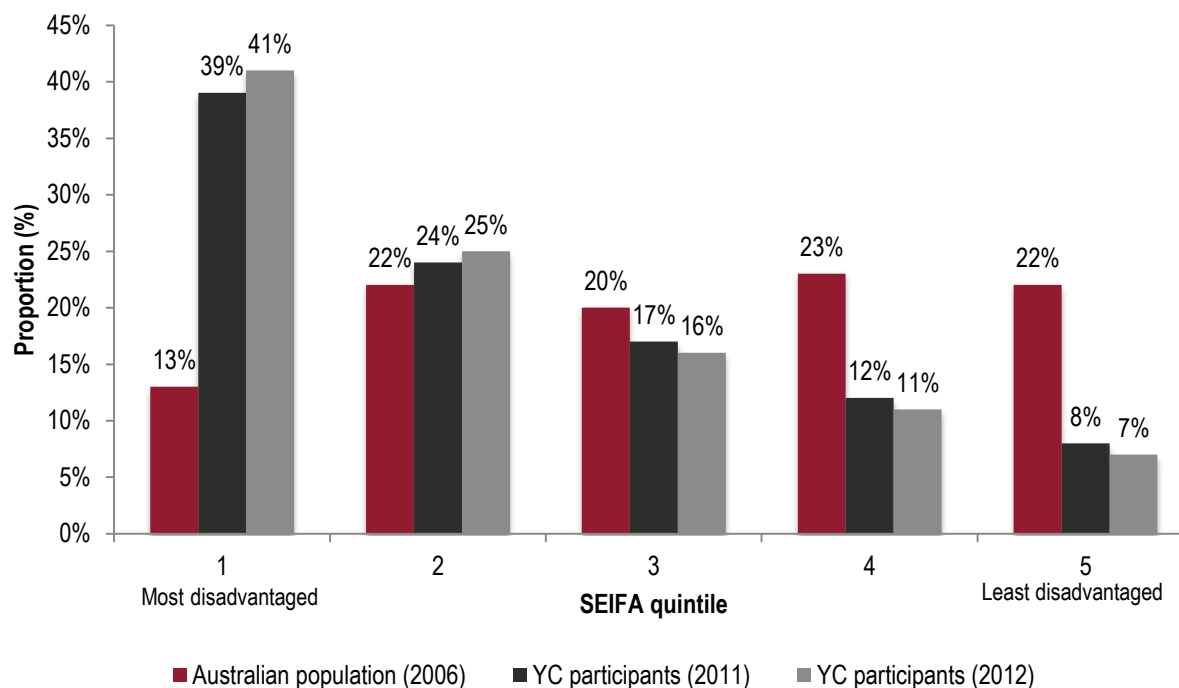
Source: Analysis of DEEWR, YATMIS Program Reporting, 2012; Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas*, 2008 (based on 2006 Census of Population and Housing data).
Note: This data does not take into account young people who are supported through outreach and re-engagement activities.

YC providers are expected to be responsive to the needs of their communities. In regions with proportionally high numbers of Indigenous and/or humanitarian refugee young people ('flagged' regions), service providers are required to pay particular attention to these cohorts of young people. Seventy-five of the 111 YC regions have an Indigenous 'flag'. In the first six months of 2012, 30 per cent of participants in these regions were Indigenous young people (3903 of 14,523 participants).[37] All 111 regions had Indigenous participants and 43 per cent of these young people had achieved an outcome, a slightly lower rate than all participants (50 per cent of all participants have achieved an outcome). Meanwhile, 37 regions have a humanitarian refugee 'flag'. In the first six months of 2012, 4 per cent of YC participants in 45 regions were humanitarian refugees. These young people achieved outcomes at a higher rate than participants overall (62 per cent versus 50 per cent).

The number and make-up of participants in flagged regions indicates this is a useful program feature for engaging with particular target cohorts. The majority of service providers agree that flags and associated targets help to ensure YC services are targeted to Indigenous and/or humanitarian refugee young people (70 per cent), help improve YC services for Indigenous and/or humanitarian refugee young people (60 per cent), and help set appropriate priorities (58 per cent). There is a sizeable minority that disagree that flags and associated targets help improve YC services for Indigenous and/or humanitarian refugee young people (17 per cent). This is an area that needs further investigation by the YC team.

Service providers and stakeholders report that YC:

- Targets young people who can most benefit from the program (95 per cent strongly agree or agree)
- Delivers services in places and ways that young people need and respond well to (90 per cent)
- Delivers a service not delivered by other programs or organisations (88 per cent)

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[36] Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) allows the ranking of regions/areas by the level of social and economic wellbeing.
[37] DEEWR (2012) *YATMIS Program Reporting*.

- Delivers services that address the root causes of young people disconnecting from education and training (86 per cent) (see Figure 3.12).[38]

FIGURE 3.12: SERVICE PROVIDERS' VIEWS ON WHETHER THE YC PROGRAM ADDRESSES AREAS OF NEED
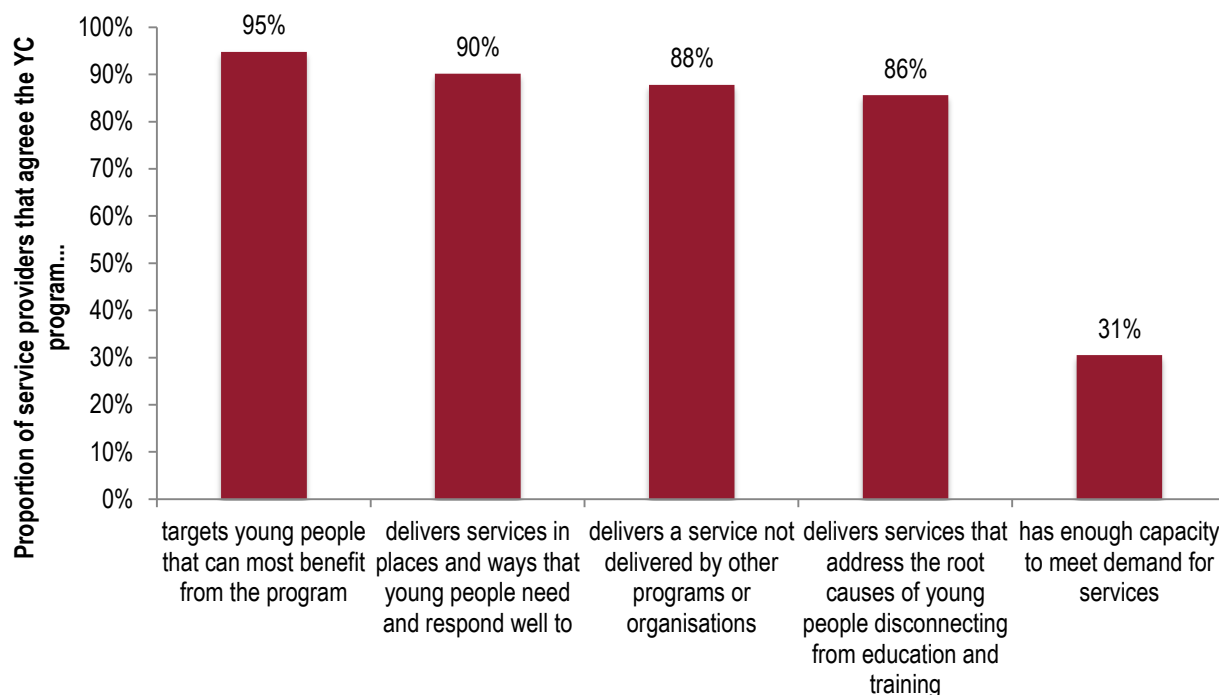
Source: dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012).

Demand for YC services is high and continues to increase. Only 31 per cent of service providers believe that the program has enough capacity to meet demand for services (see Figure 3.7). This view is consistent with those of the education and training organisations and community and youth sector organisations consulted. Service providers operating in major cities and inner and outer regional areas mentioned similar levels of capacity constraint. By contrast, YC service providers in remote and very remote areas recorded a noticeably higher level of concern about the capacity to meet service demand. In 2012, 70 per cent of participants are located in rural and regional areas.

The most common strategies that service providers use to manage capacity constraints include referring young people to other youth or specialist service providers (which is difficult in many rural and regional areas that are lacking in these services) or to other activities/services run by their organisation. Very few service providers move participants through to completion more quickly in order to take on new participants, or explain to the young person that there are no place available.

The capacity to meet demand for individual support services is the most pressing challenge for the program currently and will need to be considered in the development of a future program (see Chapter 5). YC is currently funded to provide individual support services to approximately 30,000 young people who are at risk of disengaging (i.e., still at school, in training or in a job) or disengaged. Around 150,000 15–19-year-olds are disengaged[39] while the number of young people at risk is unknown. This indicates that there are far fewer places in the YC program than the number of young people who could potentially benefit from the service.

In the Year 1 evaluation, some stakeholders identified that the relationship between YC and Job Services Australia (JSA) providers was underdeveloped in some areas. YC and JSA share a common client group – early school leavers. The views of a sample of

[38] dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012) and interviews with YC stakeholders.
[39] Unemployed or not in the labour market and not engaged in education. Source: ABS (May 2012) *Labour Force Survey*.

JSA providers on the relationship were sought by dandolopartners. The results indicated that most JSA service providers believe that JSA works well with YC. The vast majority also agreed that the two organisations need a stronger relationship in order to reduce duplication and provide comprehensive services for clients.

Robust relationships between providers of the two programs appear to exist in instances of co-location, or operation in small geographical areas, such as rural areas. Most of the JSA service providers consulted agreed that regular meetings or communications would enhance this relationship; however, some survey respondents went further, arguing for formally linked systems.

In addition to providing sufficient capacity to meet demand for service, other areas that should be considered during the development of a future program include:

- The interaction of YC with other youth support programs
- The allocation of responsibility for disengaged and at-risk young people (e.g., allocating greater responsibility to schools for tracking young people until they are transitioned to further education, training or employment. (This would have resource implications for schools.)
- Providing services both to young people that are referred to the program (for example, by their school, family or Centrelink) and also seeking out young people that would benefit from YC services that are not referred by education, training or service providers – this will ensure that the needs of young people in different circumstances (e.g. attending school, not attending school) are met, particularly those young people that are the most disengaged and not receiving support through other channels
- Building systemic responses to issues faced by young people (e.g., through Strengthening Services in the Region) – there could be a strategy in place to shift service provider effort to this component of the program over time as individual young people's issues are resolved.

3.4.4   National Career Development

The NCDS is aimed at improving attainment and transitions and remains consistent with NP objectives. The NCD Green Paper identifies the fact that a focus on career development should not be constrained to the youth cohort:

Career development helps people throughout their lives to plan and to make decisions about education, training, and career choices, and provides the right skills to do this. Support for career development (through education providers, governments, employers, career industry) includes the collection, organisation and provision of information needed to make these decisions; advice and guidance about education, training and work at key points in people's lives.[40]

During consultations, some State and Territory governments expressed reservations about the Australian Government's commitment to career development and their capacity to consistently deliver high-quality career development services and resources given the reduction in funding in the 2012–13 Budget. The NCDS should provide greater clarity around the respective roles of the Australian Government and State and Territory governments in career development. This should be accompanied by the publication of a clear statement to the States and Territories about the career development resources and initiatives the Australian Government will deliver, and what it expects the States and Territories to provide. This will assist the States and Territories in planning their delivery of career development support with greater certainty. It will be particularly important if national career development resources are not funded at the end of the NP, as States and Territories report that they are not in a position to

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produce the resources the Australian Government delivers (and this would not be a desirable outcome given the efficiencies that result from the delivery of national resources).

Ensuring career development is a mainstream part of Australian education and training, as opposed to an add-on service, was seen as an important step by a number of stakeholders consulted. An option identified to increase the profile and importance of career development in schools was to include career development in the national curriculum.

3.4.5   The Compact with Young Australians

The Compact remains consistent with the NP objectives. The success of The Compact in assisting the retention and re-engagement of young people in education and training is contingent upon young people having access to education and training, and sufficient financial resources to participate.

JSA providers support early school leavers in finding and securing employment, and are therefore able to provide a perspective on the impact of The Compact on young people. The JSA providers surveyed tended to view The Compact positively. However, some noted that the benefits of The Compact were limited by capacity constraints on education service providers. This is not a view shared by the States and Territories, who report that sufficient training places are available to satisfy demand. Some JSA providers also raised concerns about lower-quality education and training providers, which were established as a result of increased demand for services driven by The Compact. This is an area that warrants further investigation.

A common theme among JSA providers was that early school leavers poorly understood The Compact prior to receiving their support. Some JSA providers were concerned that The Compact prompted young people to select training choices that were inappropriate for their needs, and led them to seek services from multiple providers simultaneously to fulfil The Compact requirements.

The responsibility for ensuring that young people participate in education, training and/or employment is shared between the States and Territories (through education legislation) and the Australian Government (through income support regulations). There are differences in how States and Territories have approached the monitoring and compliance of The Compact education participation requirements. Some jurisdictions have assigned departmental staff to track disengaged students or initiate legal action against non-compliant students. Many jurisdictions note the ongoing challenge of reaching already disengaged youth, particularly those located in regional and rural areas.

Some of the education and training providers consulted raised the issue of young people not complying with The Compact participation requirements. Based on anecdotal experience, stakeholders have indicated that some young people enrol in education and training courses to access income support payments; they stop attending these courses, yet continue to receive payments when they are in breach of the participation requirements. There is a need for greater clarity around the allocation of responsibility for disengaged young people, as well as for a concerted effort to re-engage them in education and training.

3.5   Efficiency

Evaluation question	Assessment in Year 1	Changes in Year 2
Is it efficient?		
Have the NP outcomes and outputs been maximised for the investment?	Not assessed in Year one	• Measurement against objectives are tracked. • A number of targets are being achieved. • The NP has created efficiencies in the YAT area through better coordination of initiatives and information sharing. • The Compact appears to have increased participation and reduced benefit recipients at minimal cost.

At DEEWR's request efficiency was added to the evaluation framework at the start of 2012. The Treasury provides some guidance on the requirements and arrangements for conducting reviews of NPs under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (Intergovernmental Agreement).[41] Two questions are specified relating to efficiency: Have outputs been produced commensurate with inputs? Has 'value for money' been achieved?

In relation to efficiency, the guidelines state that:

Measurements of efficiency are best facilitated when performance measures, such as performance benchmarks and/or milestones are specifically provided for in the agreement, allowing for 'value for money' assessments. For example, how many services were delivered or what increase in services was achieved in return for the financial and non-financial contributions outlined in the agreement?   In addressing whether outcomes and/or outputs have been maximised for the investment, a review may consider:

• the extent to which the parties to the agreement fulfilled their agreed roles and responsibilities;

• evaluation of tracked progress against performance benchmarks;

• the adequacy of the performance indicators and benchmarks for assessing whether objectives have been met;

• the extent to which the actual benefits of the agreement are commensurate with the funding provided; and

• how outcomes, such as defined beneficial impacts of implementation, have been distinguished from how efficient the delivery of outputs have been, recognising that in some cases, changes in outcomes may not be measurable within the life of the agreement.

In terms of these matters, it is possible to assess the following for the YAT NP:

- Measurements against objectives are tracked
- A number of targets are being achieved
- The NP has created efficiencies in the YAT area through better coordination of initiatives and information sharing
- The Compact seems to have increased participation and reduced benefit recipients at minimal cost.

There are also indications that the NP has created efficiencies in the youth attainment and transition area:

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[41] The Treasury (2012), *A Short Guide to Reviewing National Partnerships*, <http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/guidelines/Short-Guide_review.pdf>..

- Investment in improving youth attainment and transitions prevents later costs (e.g., income support)
- Collaboration through the NP mechanism has reduced duplication of Australian Government and State/Territory-delivered services (e.g., YC and ICANs in South Australia).

However, the issue of whether value for money has been achieved is more problematic.

The NP was established without a rigorous policy development process or an analytical basis for allocating funds to get the most efficient outcome. It is therefore unlikely that the allocation of funds is optimal, although measuring the divergence from optimality is not possible.

The diverse nature of the program does not readily facilitate a 'value for money' analysis. While it is possible to comment on roles and responsibilities, the NP did not include benchmarks and milestones or collect the information necessary for a 'value for money' assessment. In addition, there is no baseline data to determine if more services are being delivered in return for investment under the NP compared with earlier programs.

Also, the features of the NP elements are such that the links between activity and measurable participation, attainment and transition outcomes are generally indirect, often with time lags:

- MEAST funding has been used by government and non-government education sectors to maintain structured work placement programs, bolster career development resources, and provide mentoring support to young people, all of which impacts indirectly on measurable outcomes
- YC is a step away from YAT outcomes as success is measured by engagement outcomes, but the translation of this to attainment and transition outcomes is not guaranteed
- PB activity is likely to have a longer-term pay-off that is not readily measurable in short-term YAT outcomes
- The Compact is probably the most efficient element, as its cost was minimal and it has had specific evident participation outcomes. But, as with YC, the impact on attainment and transition outcomes is not guaranteed.

Finally, it should be noted that stakeholder feedback indicates that diverging views exist regarding the question of whether the allocation of funding to specific programs is optimal:

- States and Territories argue that the MEAST initiatives do not have enough funding
- The near-universal view is that YC is having an impact, but as it is only dealing with about 25 per cent of the target group[42], it could be claimed that it is underfunded
- Some State/Territory stakeholders question the relative level of funding for the PB program.

3.6   Governance and implementation

Evaluation question	Assessment in year one	Changes in year two
Is it well governed and implemented?		
How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the NP?	Collaboration has generally been strong during the NP	• No change – the Australian Government and States and Territories continue to work in partnership to deliver the NP. • NP program service providers collaborate through national and State/Territory networks

[42] This estimation is based on the approximate number of young people who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging and who receive individual support services annually (30,000), and the number of 15–19-year-olds who are disengaged (unemployed or not in the labour market and not engaged in education – 115,000 at May 2012). This is a conservative estimate, as it excludes young people who are at risk of disengaging (i.e., those who are at school and are contemplating leaving). Source: ABS (2012) *Labour Force Survey*.

		to make program improvements and get programs to work together better.
Is governance of the NP working effectively?	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place at national, jurisdictional and program levels – although it is difficult for some stakeholders to participate in these Positive relationships can generally be seen between stakeholders and the Commonwealth	• No change – good cooperation exists between the Australian Government and States and Territories.
How well is performance reporting working?	Key NP measures and data sources (that underpin reward payments) are flawed State and Territory performance reporting is in place, but could be improved to address needs of the non-government sector and present impacts/lessons learned from jurisdictional activities Program administration and quality of reporting was challenging at first but is improving	• Targets have focussed attention on the need for quality data. • Agreement has been reached on the measures underpinning reward payments. • Annual State and Territory performance reporting has begun to show the outcomes of activities. • Some program reporting gives limited insight into the impact of programs on youth attainment and transition outcomes.
How effective is communication?	Stakeholders generally understand the NP objectives and value – Partnership Brokers and National Career Development are exceptions.	• Not formally assessed in Year two – stakeholder views were consistent with Year one

3.6.1   Collaboration

The NP established a precedent for collaboration by the Australian and State and Territory governments to design and deliver youth attainment and transition-related programs. The NP provided a national focus for existing and new initiatives to improve outcomes. A key feature was the establishment of outcome targets and the measurement of performance against these targets.

Jurisdictional stakeholders acknowledge the benefits of having a set of agreed priorities, and the overall interaction between the Australian Government and State/Territories appears to be satisfactory.

Since the Year 1 evaluation, all parties have continued to collaborate through the MWG and bilateral channels to support program delivery and implementation. No diminution of partnership effort is evident.

At a program level, collaboration across provider networks continues to be effective. While opportunities to collaborate more will always be available, examples are evident of where NP program service providers are actively collaborating to get program elements working together better (e.g., YC providers, PB providers and the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network partnering to better meet the needs of humanitarian refugee youths).

The NP set out the expectation that funding for the PB and YC programs would be transferred from the Australian Government to the States and Territories following the demonstrated achievement of the outcomes negotiated as part of implementation plans. This reflected the 'reform areas' targeted by each State and Territory. The Year 1 report concluded that it was unlikely that the States and Territories would support a transfer of responsibilities for those programs within the term of the NP. Nothing has changed in this regard.

3.6.2   Governance

There are no apparent changes to the effectiveness of governance arrangements. Appropriate governance arrangements are in place at the national, jurisdictional and program levels. The only issue that continues to be raised by some stakeholders (e.g.,

smaller jurisdictions and some non-government schools sector representatives) is that the effort involved in participating in governance arrangements is out of proportion to the level of funding provided through the NP.

Positive relationships can generally be seen between stakeholders and the Australian Government.

Knowledge sharing between program providers seems to have increased since the Year 1 evaluation. The national and State/Territory networks have proved an effective mechanism for sharing knowledge and experience, and also for addressing issues common to service providers. The provider networks have moved from the establishment phase to undertaking projects. The majority of PBs (55 per cent) and YC service providers (67 per cent) agree or strongly agree that the national and State/Territory networks are effective in addressing issues common to service providers. The higher number of neutral and negative responses from PBs indicates that the PB network has more work to do to improve providers' views of the networks.

3.6.3   Performance reporting

Since the Year 1 evaluation, changes have been made to improve the clarity and usefulness of the information included in the NP annual reports prepared by the States and Territories about the MEAST and the Compact elements of the NP. These reports are now beginning to document the outcomes of activities in more detail rather than just describing activities.

Stakeholder consultations confirm that the NP targets continue to focus attention on the importance of YAT outcomes and on activities to promote improved outcomes. The targets also highlight the need to improve the quality of data, which is an ongoing challenge in any complex set of programs. NP performance reporting is more difficult in a very small jurisdiction, as small movements of numbers can result in significant statistical movements.

The Australian Government and States and Territories are yet to reach agreement on the data and methodology to be used to measure performance in relation to the attainment target underpinning the next (and final) reward payments. During the negotiation of the NP, it was agreed that the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) *Survey of Education and Work* (*SEW*) would be used for this purpose. Subsequently, advice that the ABS gave to the COAG Reform Council indicated that the *SEW* was unsuitable. In July 2012, the MWG agreed to seek additional advice on an alternative method of calculating performance in relation to the attainment target (using State and Territory administrative data). The first phase of this work is expected to commence prior to the end of 2012. States and Territories have expressed frustration at the time taken to resolve issues with the data that underpins target performance reporting. For targets to be meaningful, in future NP arrangements, they will need to be set and measured based on data that is readily available and appropriate to measure.

Since the Year 1 evaluation, improvements have been made to systems that capture service provider reporting. This has improved the breadth of information available to monitor the impact of the programs. The initiative of undertaking an extensive Partner Survey in the PB program proved very valuable, as discussed in section 3.3.

One area that some provider stakeholders suggest needs more attention is the development of program reporting to provide greater insights into the impact of programs on youth attainment and transition outcomes. It may be that instead of pursuing this through changed program reporting, it would be more efficient at this stage in the life of the NP to handle it through more extensive reporting and communication of appropriate case studies.

3.6.4   Communications

This issue wasn't specifically assessed in this year's assessment. However, stakeholder consultations indicated views that were generally consistent with Year 1 in regard to overall objectives and value. Overall communication seems to be adequate.

In response to the findings of the Year 1 evaluation, DEEWR has increased the intensity of communication activities in relation to PB and National Career Development. In the case of PBs, efforts were made to communicate the role and value of PBs to critical stakeholders (government and non-government), whereas National Career Development communication involved a public consultation process concerning the NCDS. Provider surveys confirm that most providers see communication with DEEWR as being satisfactory.

3.7   Refinements to the National Partnership

Given that almost three-quarters of the NP lifetime has elapsed, there are limits on refinements that can be made to the NP elements. Overall, there are a number of areas that warrant further analysis, and there is also a need for a continued focus on the two main components of the NP – PBs and YC.

The achievement of the following would be worthwhile:

- A better understanding of who are the disengaged and inactive young people, why their numbers have risen since the introduction of the NP (particularly if this is a result of income support changes introduced as part of the Compact), what barriers they face and services that need to be provided to assist young people to overcome these barriers[43]
- An analysis of YC outcomes achieved in different States and Territories, to help determine the impact of different program structures (e.g., age groups, 'in school' versus 'out of school' focus)
- A comparison of the reduction in the total quantum of income support payments with the investment through NP YAT to assess its cost effectiveness
- A better understanding of how Centrelink and JSA interact with potential and current Youth Allowance (and other) recipients, YC, and education and training providers
- An analysis of whether the introduction of the Compact has generated lower-quality education and training providers, and if so, the impact of this change on young people.

The analysis of these areas would be assisted by better links between the parts of DEEWR that impact youth transitions (e.g. the team responsible for the Low SES School Communities NP, of which school–community partnerships are a component, and the employment area that sets income support policy).

The PB program would be further strengthened by a continued focus on:

- The broad promotion of the PB program:

    – to regional education authorities and schools
    – to local government
    – to business

- The sharing of good practice and partnership exemplars

- Building the capacity of lower-performing PBs.

The YC program would benefit from an ongoing focus on:

- Managing demand for individual support services
- Retaining more young people in the program until they achieve outcomes

[43] In designing future services for disengaged young people NSW Government's Independent Employment Adviser Program warrants consideration. This program provides industry grounded career advice, case management, work experience/placement and employment brokerage for young people at risk of disengaging. To date the program has delivered a positive outcome for 92 per cent of young people that have participated, through re-engagement with school, TAFE or employment. Source: NSW Government (2012), *Youth Attainment and Transitions Annual Report.*

- Working with schools to improve their capacity and willingness to work with re-engaged young people (for many schools this has resource implications)
- Adjusting the services delivered in response to changes in the local service delivery landscape (e.g. changes to similar programs delivered by State and Territory governments)
- Identifying young people who are disengaged from education and training (particularly those who stay at home during the day).

The provision of early communication to YC and PB service providers about arrangements beyond the NP is also desirable.

3.8   Conclusion

The NP has heightened collaboration between the Australian Government, States and Territories, and across school and other sectors, and this should continue to be leveraged. The NP activities are clearly targeted at improving YAT outcomes. The NP – as a portfolio of interventions – provides an indication of the relative effectiveness of different approaches to improving YAT outcomes. With just over 12 months left until the end of the NP, it is time to assess the outstanding challenges and identify how to address them.

Part B – Beyond the current National Partnership

The purpose of this part of the report is to provide an overview of the outstanding challenges in the youth attainment and transitions space, and to indicate where future effort is needed to address these challenges. Another objective of this part of the report is to outline considerations for the development of future youth attainment and transitions policy, including principles, focus areas, potential funding models and roles for the different levels of government.

This part of the report primarily draws on an extensive review of Australian and international literature on youth attainment and transitions.[44] It is also informed by the views of representatives from the:

- Australian Government
- State and Territory governments
- Community and youth sector
- Education and training sector
- Business and industry sector.

[44] Some content in this part of the report was originally published in: Professor Richard Sweet (2012) *A Curate's Egg: Good Practice in School-to-Work Transitions*, commissioned by the COAG Reform Council, Good Practice in Youth Transitions National Conference, 16–17 August 2012.

4 Youth attainment and transition challenges

4.1 The importance of a youth attainment and transition policy

4.1.1 Costs to individuals of poor transitions

Failing to make a successful transition from school to work or post-school education and training carries costs for individual young people. These costs to individuals can be observed both in the short and longer terms. They take the form of higher incidences of unemployment, temporary and casual work, and inactivity; longer periods needed to settle into steady employment; and reduced lifetime opportunities and lower earnings and wealth (see Table 4.6). The chances of all of these occurring appear to be magnified when the transition is protracted and difficult, with the success or otherwise of the period immediately after leaving full-time education being critical to the chances of succeeding in the longer term. The probability of these outcomes is, as indicated above, magnified for those who fail to complete Year 12 (or an equivalent vocational qualification).

Recent OECD data for 25–64-year-olds estimates the benefits of completing upper secondary education (including equivalent vocational education qualifications) when compared with not completing it.[45] For Australia:

- Unemployment rates are 1.6 times higher among those without upper secondary education than among those with upper secondary education.

- The proportion of full-time earners among those with upper secondary education is 12 per cent higher than among those without this level of education, and the proportion of part-time earners or non-earners is 26 per cent lower. This indicates that the earning capacity of people with upper secondary education is greater than people without this level of education.

- Among those without upper secondary education, earnings are only 81 per cent of those with upper secondary education.

- The private rate of return for completing upper secondary education compared with not completing it is 11.4 per cent.[46]

- The public rate of return for completing upper secondary education compared with not completing it is 8.6 per cent.[47]

4.1.2 Economic and social costs of poor transitions

The consequences for individuals of not making a successful transition, and in particular the consequences of not completing Year 12, translate into wider macroeconomic and social costs. By the same token, redressing them would translate into wider economic and social benefits. These occur through the ways in which higher rates of educational attainment translate into higher labour force participation rates, higher employment rates and higher earnings, and in turn through the impact of these upon indicators such as expenditure on unemployment benefits and welfare programs, and taxation receipts from higher earnings (see Table 4.6).

[45] OECD (2011) *Education at a Glance*, Table A7.4a, Chart A7.4, Table A8.1, Table A9.1 and Chart A9.5.
[46] The private rate of return is calculated based on a comparison of the direct cost of education and foregone earnings (total cost) with the gross earnings benefits, income tax effect, social contribution effect, transfers effect and unemployment effect (total benefits).
[47] The public rate of return is calculated based on a comparison of the direct cost of education and foregone taxes on earnings (total cost) with the income tax eddect, social contribution effect, transfers effect and unemployment effect (total benefits).

Estimates vary of the size of the economic benefits that would result from better transition outcomes and in particular from raising national Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates. But all estimates point to a gain in GDP and productivity. Access Economics has estimated that if Year 12 or equivalent retention rates were to increase to 90 per cent (from the estimated real retention rate in 2004 of 80 per cent[48]), GDP would be increased by 1.1 per cent by 2040. Federal government revenue would increase by 0.27 per cent of GDP, and this would be achieved at a cost of only 0.05 per cent of GDP in increased educational spending.[49] Using earnings data from the *Household Income and Labour Dynamics Survey*, Leigh (2007)[50] estimates the annual earnings increase from completing Year 12, compared with not completing it, at 30 per cent. In his estimate of the economic return to various levels of education Leigh finds that raising Year 12 attainment appears to yield the highest annual benefits, with significant additional gains from vocational training at the Certificate II/IV level and university qualifications. These benefits flow from increased productivity and higher levels of economic participation.

In addition to direct economic benefits, raising Australia's Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates would result in wider social benefits, which would have an economic flow-on. A major OECD review identifies social benefits flowing from higher levels of educational attainment that include:

- Improved health and lower illness rates
- Higher educational participation by the children of educated parents
- Reduced infant mortality
- Higher participation in lifelong learning
- Later retirement ages
- Greater civic engagement
- Higher rates of volunteering and community service
- Greater political stability
- Lower property crime rates.[51]

TABLE 4.6: COSTS OF UNSUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Costs to individuals	Economic and social costs

• Higher incidences of:
  – unemployment
  – temporary and casual work
  – inactivity
• Taking longer to settle into steady employment
• Reduced lifetime opportunities and lower earnings and wealth
	• Lower labour force participation and employment rates
	• Lower earnings
	• Higher expenditure on unemployment benefits
	• Lower taxation receipts from lower earnings

4.2   Influences on youth attainment and transitions

Transitions from school to work, whether successful or otherwise, are the outcome of a complex set of influences, some of which are more important than others, and some of which are harder to influence than others. The research literature indicates that three

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[48] In other words, taking into account those who complete Year 12 or the equivalent in the years after leaving school.
[49] Access Economics (2005) *The Economic Benefit of Increased Participation in Education and Training*, Dusseldorf Skills Forum, Sydney.
[50] Leigh, A. (2007) 'Returns to education in Australia', Discussion Paper No. 561, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Australian National University.
[51] Schuller, T. & Desjardins, R. (2007) *Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning*, OECD/CERI.

sets of influences are important: the economic and social context; the institutional arrangements within the labour market, education and the income support system; and young people's personal qualities.

Some of the most significant influences are the overall state of the labour market (which in turn reflects the overall health of the economy) and the structure of advantage and disadvantage within society. The overall state of the labour market has a strong impact upon labour market transition outcomes such as employment and unemployment rates, but a lesser impact upon educational outcomes such as participation and attainment rates. The socioeconomic status (SES) of young people's families is the most influential measure of advantage and disadvantage, and it has a strong impact upon both educational and labour market outcomes. Other contextual factors that have an impact include geographical location (e.g., remoteness), Indigenous status, type of school attended and immigrant status. However, the impact of factors such as these is far less than the impact of SES, and can disappear once the impact of SES is taken into account.

A number of institutional factors are important:

- Transition outcomes are influenced by arrangements within the labour market. These include the level of youth wages, opportunities to undertake part-time work as a student, the existence of training wages, the availability of apprenticeships, and employment protection levels (the ease with which people can be hired and fired)
- Educational arrangements that influence transition outcomes include the quality of teaching and learning, the quality and attractiveness of the school climate, the types of institutions available (e.g., senior high schools or Years 7–12 schools), the breadth of the curriculum, and the diversity and quality of the pathways that connect school to work or further education and training
- Studies of why young people leave school early consistently show that, alongside factors associated with family disadvantage, disengagement from learning (not liking school, not liking the way that they are treated, and not finding what is available to learn interesting) has a strong impact
- Institutional arrangements that connect the school to the world outside it also have an impact upon transition outcomes. These include opportunities to combine school with workplace experience, career guidance, links between schools and their local communities, links between schools and families, and community-based safety nets that quickly pick up early leavers and help to re-engage them with education and training
- Within the income support system, the level of, and conditions attached to, educational income support and welfare benefits have an impact upon outcomes.

Of these, the one that is most consistently shown to have an impact upon successful transitions and labour market outcomes is educational achievement. In addition, factors such as resilience, self-confidence, career self-management skills, and having high aspirations and clear career goals also have an impact.

4.3   How Australia is faring

Chapter 2 outlines changes in national educational participation and attainment, employment and unemployment, and inactivity. On some measures, school-to-work transition outcomes in Australia compare quite well with those seen in many other OECD countries:

- Employment rates are relatively robust for young people who have left education
- Youth unemployment rates are far lower than in countries such as Ireland, Spain and Italy
- For those young people who do become unemployed, spells of unemployment tend to be shorter than in countries whose labour markets are less flexible and more tightly regulated than ours.

These positive indicators owe much to the strength of our economy and our labour market in recent years. However, there are a number of grounds for believing that we have school-to-work transition problems that need to be addressed, and that these are not trivial.

4.3.1 Young people and educational participation

Closely linked to these labour market indicators are a number of education indicators that point to challenges that will need to be addressed in order to improve overall transition outcomes. Since the introduction of the NP, there has been an increase in school participation by 16-year-olds and 17-year-olds (around 4 percentage points between 2008 and 2011), and an increase in rates of progression between Years 9 and 10, Years 10 and 11, and Years 11 and 12.[52] There has also been a (smaller) increase in participation in VET by 18–19-year-olds who have not completed Year 12.[53]

However, there is still a major challenge ahead of Australia in reaching OECD best practice. Overall educational participation among 15–19-year-olds in Australia remained flat for a decade in the face of ongoing improvement within the OECD as a whole. In 2000, 82 per cent of 15–19-year-old Australians were participating in education, compared with an OECD average of 77 per cent; in 2010, our participation rate was 81 per cent, whereas the OECD average had risen to 83 per cent (see Figure 4.2).

FIGURE 4.2: TEENAGERS' EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION HAS BEEN FLAT IN AUSTRALIA, BUT HAS BEEN RISING STEADILY IN THE OECD AS A WHOLE: 15–19-YEAR-OLD STUDENTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AGED 15–19, 2000–10
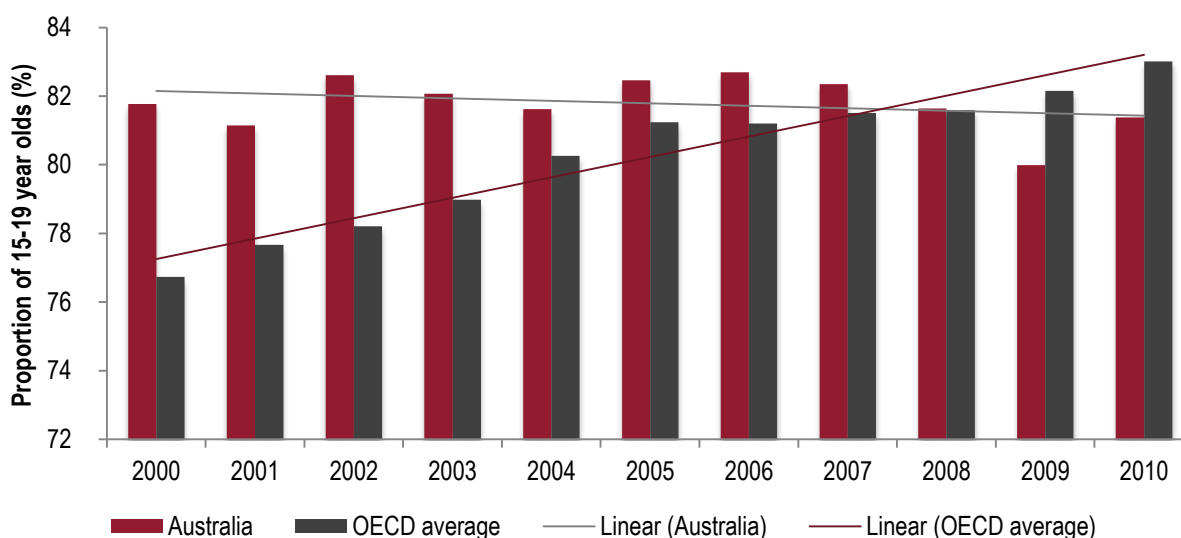
Source: OECD (2011, 2012) *Education at a Glance*, Table C1.2.

Australia has set itself an ambitious target of raising 20–24-year-olds' Year 12 (or equivalent Certificate III) attainment rates to 90 per cent by 2020, with an interim target for 2015 for Year 12 or Certificate II qualifications. Schools are at the heart of achieving this target:

- Most 16–17-year-olds who are in education are in school (see Figure 4.3), not publicly funded VET or higher education; most people who attain a Year 12 or equivalent qualification do so by the age of 18

- The majority of young people who attain a Year 12 or equivalent qualification do so at school[54]

[52] ABS (2011) *National Schools Statistics Collection.*
[53] NCVER (2012) *Students and Courses,.*
[54] Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) data shows that of those who had completed Year 12 or a Certificate III by the age of 24 in 2009, 92 per cent had done so by the age of 18; by the age of 24, 82 per cent had completed Year 12 and 90 per cent had completed Year 12 or Certificate III or higher; see http://www.lsay.edu.au/cohort/1998/2.html

- VET participation by 16–17-year-olds without Year 12 has been falling in recent years, whereas school participation has risen slightly since the NP was introduced.

FIGURE 4.3: 16–17-YEAR-OLDS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING, BY SECTOR, 2010
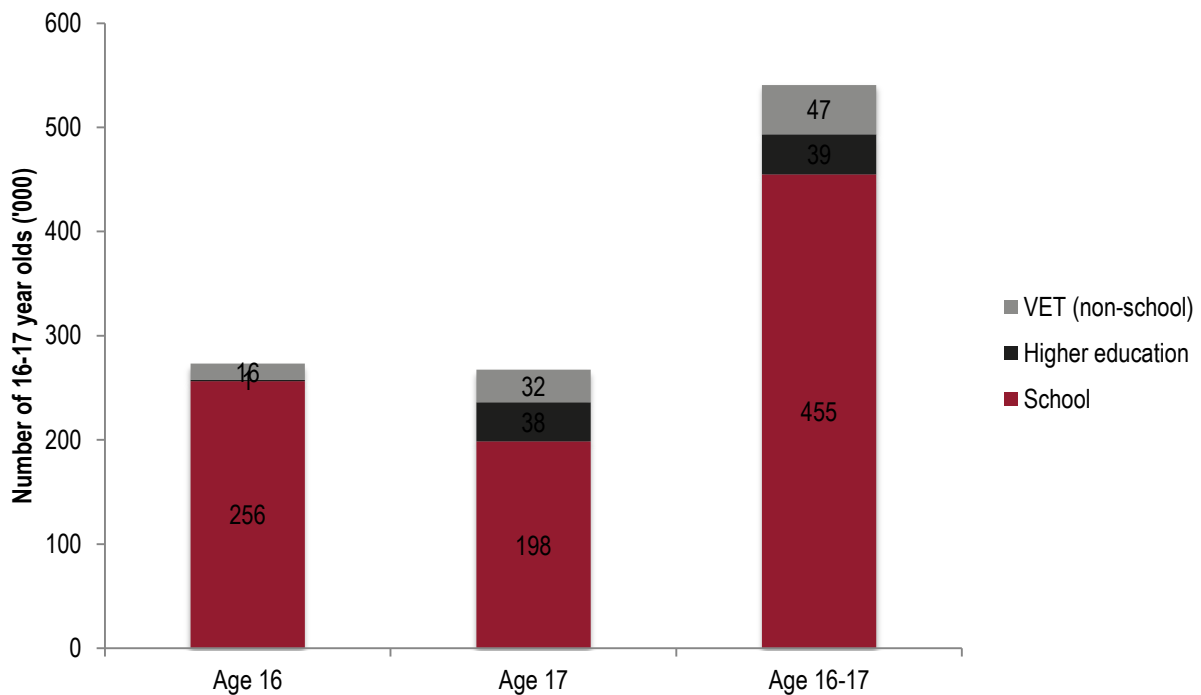
Source: NCVER (2011) *Young People in Education and Training*, Adelaide.

Increased participation seems unlikely if young people are not interested in what is available, and if they do not engage with how it is taught, where it is taught, and who teaches it. And this increased engagement with learning needs to occur in particular among those who are the least likely to participate in education and training at the moment.

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey points to a real challenge for Australia in raising engagement with learning among lowest achievers. Both the 2006 and 2009 surveys showed that overall interest in learning by 15-year-olds in Australia was at about the OECD average (see Figure 4.4, left). However, both surveys showed that the gap in achievement between those most and least interested in learning was at the very top of the OECD range. And the gap in interest in learning between the best and the worst readers was also among the highest in the OECD (see Figure 4.4, right). Whether lack of interest in learning leads to low achievement, or low achievement leads to low interest in learning, the fact remains that we face a substantial challenge in raising achievement levels among those disinterested in learning, and in raising interest in learning among low achievers. Both have implications for transition outcomes given the demonstrated links between disengagement from learning, low achievement and early school leaving.

FIGURE 4.4: LEARNING ENGAGEMENT LEVELS (LEFT) AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS (GAP IN READING ACHIEVEMENT BETWEEN MOST AND LEAST ENGAGED LEARNERS) (RIGHT)
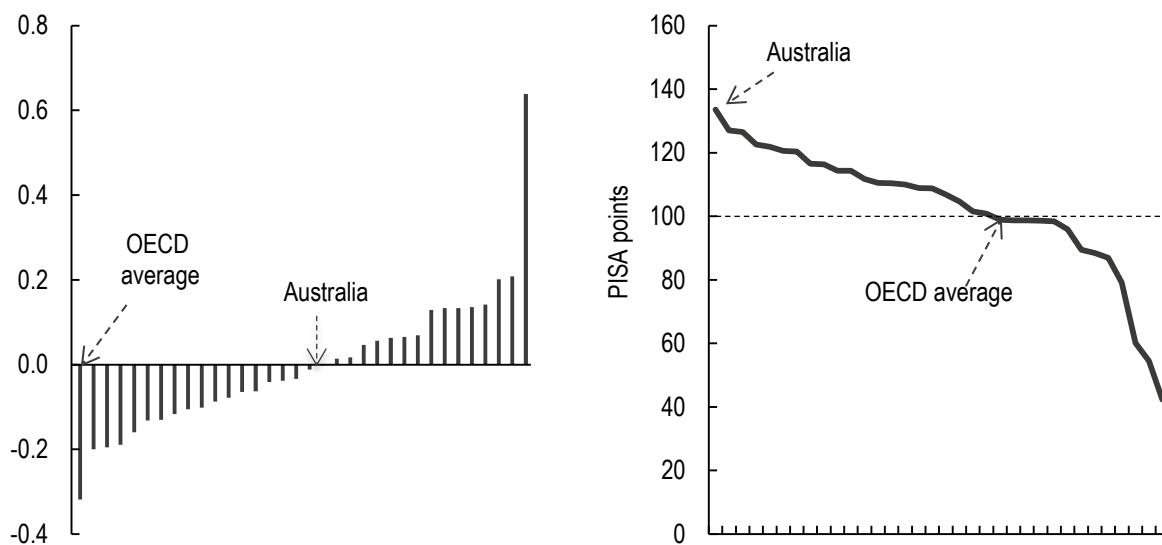
Source: OECD (2011) *PISA 2009 Results: Learning to Learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices,* Vol. III, Table III.1.1.

Among the common reasons given by education, training, community and youth sector representatives to explain why young people for leaving school early is the fact that they cannot not find anything to study that interested them, and the fact that they do not like the school and how they were treated there. This suggests that solutions to the challenges that we face in raising engagement with learning need to be sought in what is taught (the breadth of the curriculum), how it is taught (appropriate pedagogy), where learning occurs (school, classroom, workplace), and who young people learn from (teachers, mentors, peers, employers).

4.3.2   Young people and the labour market

There is a strong inverse relationship between levels of educational participation and the number of young people who are not in education and either unemployed or inactive (NEET). Figure 4.5 shows this relationship using international data:

- Countries such as Denmark that have the highest rates of educational participation by 15–19-year-olds have the smallest number in the NEET group
- Those with low rates of educational participation such as Turkey have large numbers who are not in education and are either unemployed or inactive
- Australia falls between these two extremes.

FIGURE 4.5: EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION AND NEET RATE
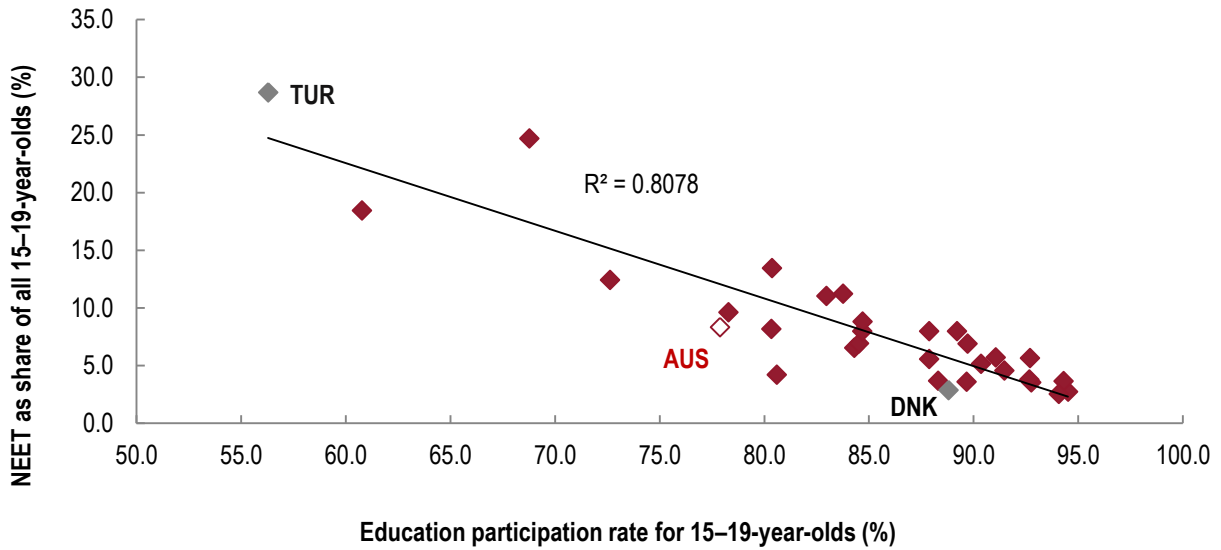
Source: OECD (2011) *Education at a Glance*.

Figure 4.6 shows that the same relationship exists over time in Australia. As full-time educational participation rates rose between 1990 and 2012, the proportion of teenagers in the NEET group fell: from around 12 per cent of the age group in the early 1990s (when full-time educational participation was around 65 per cent) to around 8 per cent of the age group in 2012 (with participation standing at around 73 per cent of the age group).

FIGURE 4.5: FULL-TIME EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION AND NEET, 1990–2010
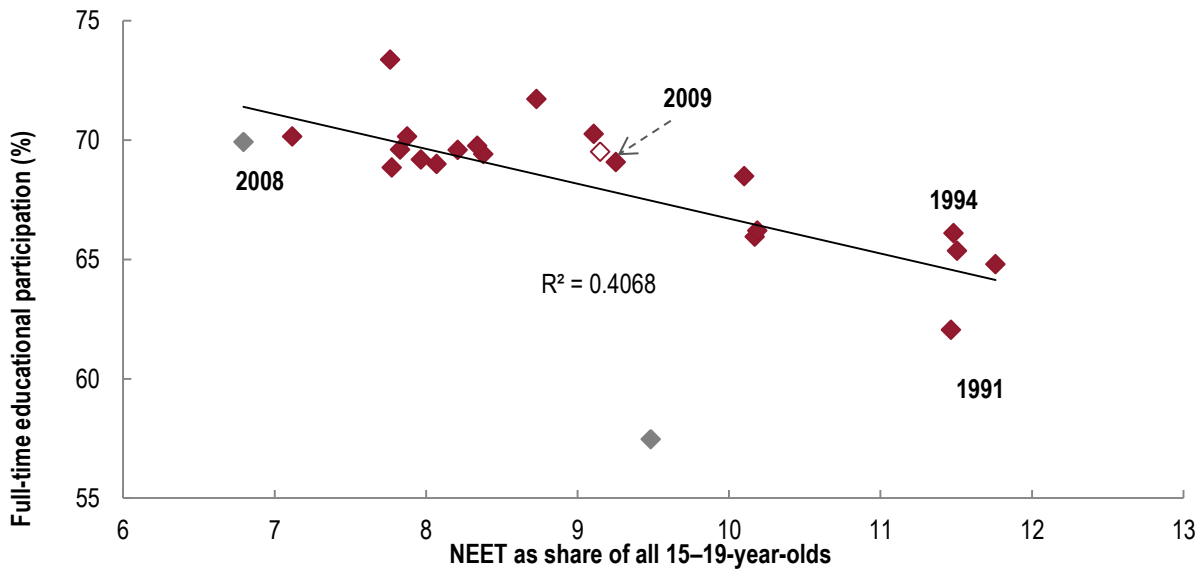
Source: OECD (2011) *Education at a Glance*.

This strong relationship shows that raising educational participation and reducing the size of the NEET group are two aspects of the same policy challenge, and need to be tackled jointly.

Looking at the labour market, it is clear that while youth unemployment is relatively low when the labour market is buoyant, teenage unemployment is far more strongly influenced by the state of the labour market here than in other OECD countries. This means that Australian teenagers are much more vulnerable when the labour market turns down than are teenagers in other countries. This was evident during the 2008–09 GFC, when the number of Australian teenagers neither employed nor in education and training

increased at a much faster rate than in nearly all other OECD countries, even though the overall impact of the GFC here was far less (see Figure 4.6).

FIGURE 4.6: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF 15–19-YEAR-OLDS NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING, AND 15–64-YEAR OLDS UNEMPLOYED, 2008–09
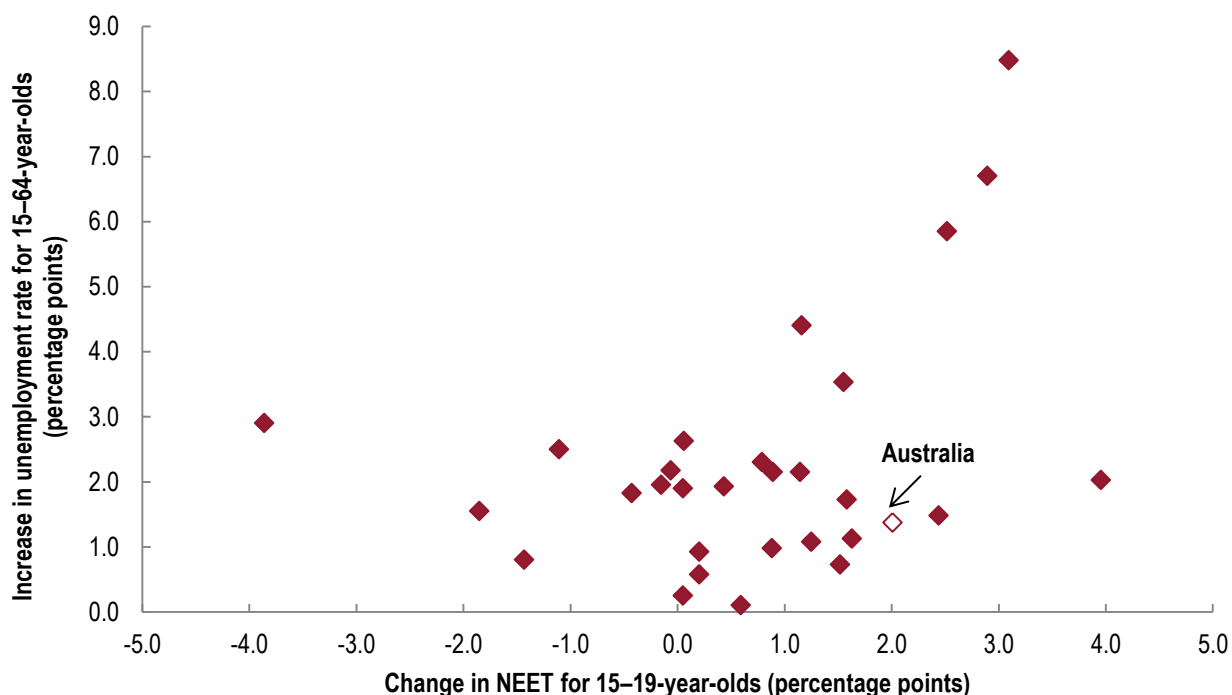
Sources: OECD (2010) *Education at a Glance*, Table C4.2a.

Over and above teenagers' vulnerability to short-tem labour market fluctuations, their transition outcomes have been influenced by some longer-term structural changes to the youth labour market. These longer-term changes present policy challenges that were far less apparent in previous periods. For those teenagers who have left full-time education, the labour market is becoming increasingly difficult.

Since 1990, there has been a steady decline in full-time job opportunities for teenagers, accentuated both by the 1991–92 recession and by the 2008–09 GFC. Experience tells us that full-time teenage employment levels do not recover when labour market conditions improve. In 1990, two-thirds of teenagers who had left full-time education held a full-time job. Now, less than half do. Declining full-time work has been accompanied by a steady increase in the proportion of those teenagers not in full-time education who hold only a part-time job: from one in 10 in 1990 to nearly one in four now (see Figure 4.7).

Teenage unemployment levels over this period have generally risen or fallen in line with overall labour market conditions. The proportion of 15–19-year-olds not in full-time education who were unemployed fell steadily between 2000 and 2008, but jumped sharply during the GFC. At 13 per cent, the number of those not in full-time education remained well above the pre-GFC level (see Figure 4.7). Between 2000 and 2008, the number of 15–19-year-olds who were neither in full-time education nor in the labour force jumped sharply, alongside unemployment, with the GFC. Since then, unlike unemployment, this figure has continued to rise, although there was a slight downward movement in 2012. This growth in the number of inactive youth is both worrying and insufficiently understood.
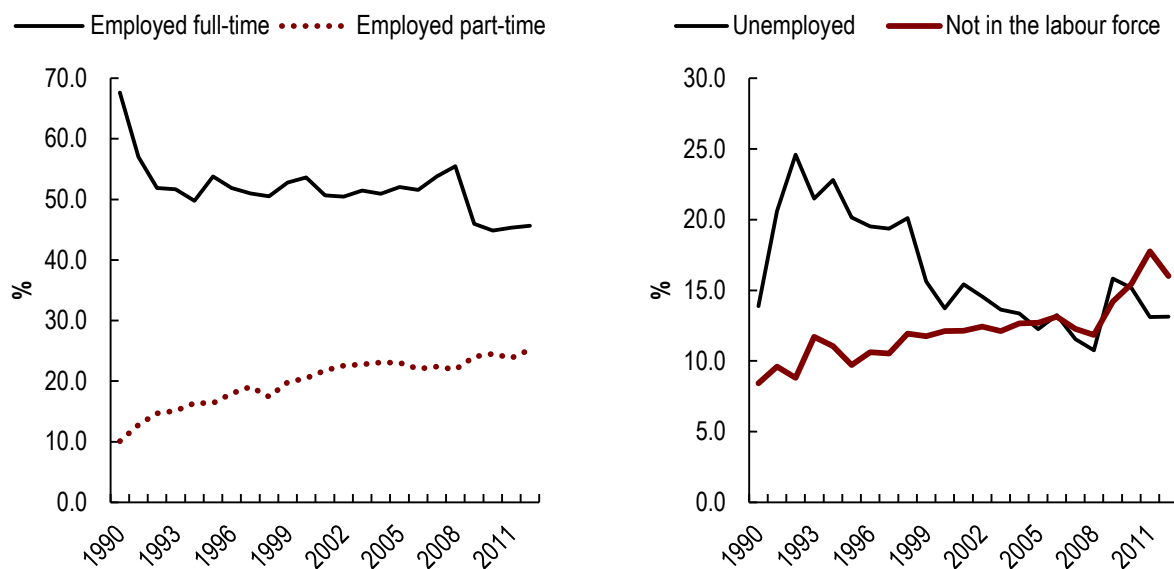
Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed —Electronic Delivery*, Table 03a, 6291.0.55.001.

The rise in the number of inactive youth has more than offset the recent fall in unemployment. As a consequence, the total NEET group has not declined markedly since the introduction of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions: it now represents close to 30 per cent of all teenagers not in full-time education.

It is estimated that around half of all inactive 15–19-year-olds are receiving passive Australian Government income support payments: in other words, those forms of income support not linked to participation in education or the labour force (see Figure 4.84.8).[55] This finding suggests that a future national policy on youth attainment and transition needs to increase movement from passive types of income support into active engagement with education, training and the labour market. Given that the other half of the inactive group remains an unknown quantity, there are strong reasons for the continued provision of the types of community-based services and assistance to disengaged young people that are provided by the YC program. Also, given that the other half of the inactive group receive no other Australian Government subsidy, and do not have formal contact with government, they are perhaps even less likely to receive information or support to re-enter the education and training market. There are therefore strong reasons for continued provision of the types of community-based services and assistance to disengaged young people that are provided by the Youth Connections program.

[55] The disability support pension is the largest category, accounting for nearly a third of all inactive 15–19-year-olds. Another large group receives single parent payments, and small numbers receive other forms of income support.

Legend:
- Carer payment
- Parenting payment (Partnered)
- Parenting Payment (Single)
- Disability pension
- Other
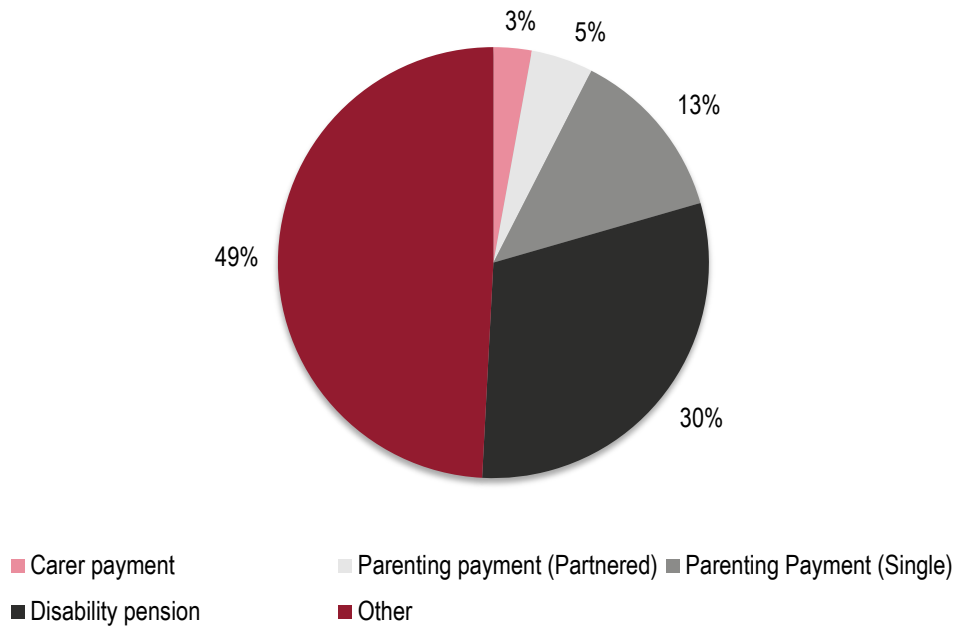
Sources: Estimated from FaHCSIA Statistical Paper: Income Support Customers: A Statistical Overview, various issues; and ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed –-Electronic Delivery*, Table 03b: Labour force status for 15–19-year-olds by educational attendance, age and sex, 6291.0.55.001. The 'Other' category is estimated by subtracting the total number of benefit recipients aged less than 20 from the total number of inactive 15–19-year-olds as estimated in the *Labour Force* survey. See Table A5.

4.3.3   Young people and transition outcomes

The transition from full-time education to full-time work has become increasingly long and unstable for young Australians. The amount of time that it takes to find any work after leaving full-time study has been rising, and the amount of time that it takes to find full-time work has risen even faster. In the mid-1980s, young people took, on average, less than a year to find work after they had left education, and only a little over a year to find a full-time job. By 2011, it was taking them an estimated average of three years to find any work after leaving education, and nearly five years to settle into a full-time job (see Figure 4.9). Increasingly, young Australians are spending longer periods after leaving school in insecure part-time work, unemployment or inactivity, even if at times interspersed with periods of education and training or full-time work.
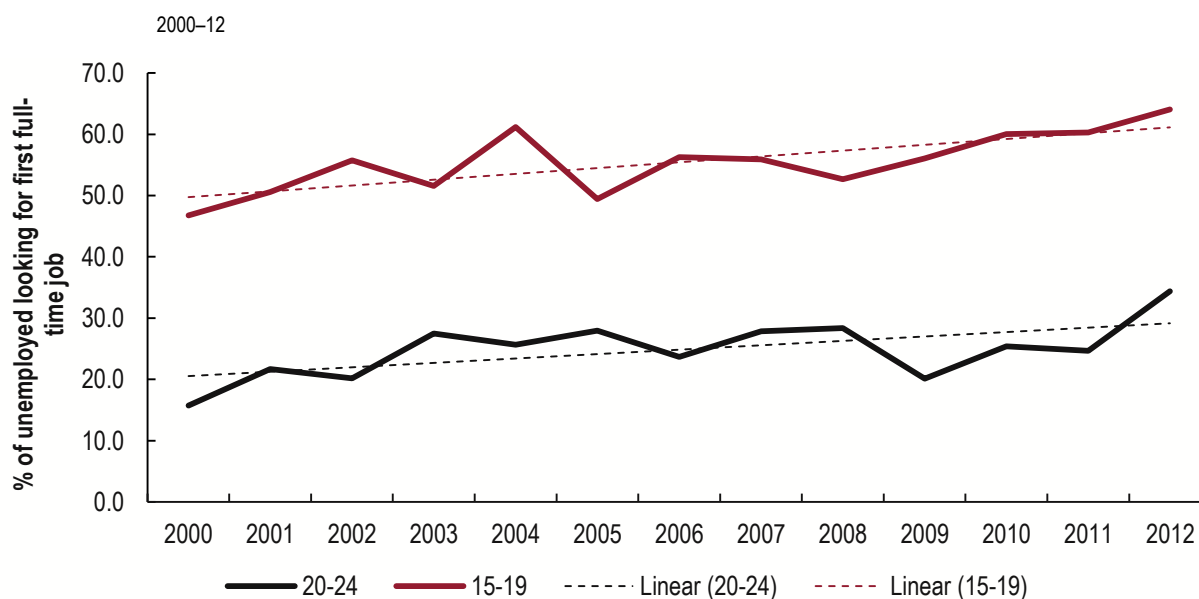
Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed –-Electronic Delivery*, Table 03b: Labour force status for 15–19-year-olds by educational attendance, age and sex, 6291.0.55.001.

Those young people who have not completed Year 12 are particularly vulnerable to adverse fluctuations of the labour market. ABS data[56] shows that after leaving school, they are more than twice as likely to make an unsuccessful transition, when judged by the proportion neither in full-time work nor full-time study, than are those who have completed Year 12. In 2011, nearly half of 15–19-year-olds who had not completed Year 12 were not fully engaged but on the margins of the labour market or post-school education and training: this compared with one in five of those who had completed Year 12 (44 per cent compared with 21 per cent).

Comparing Australia to other countries' outcomes provides a basis for deciding whether our transition outcomes are as good as may be expected, better, or worse. There are six predictor variables known to have a strong correlation with transition outcomes, and for which comparable international data is readily available:[57]

- The unemployment rate among persons aged 15–64, an indicator of overall labour market conditions
- The employment-to-population ratio among 15–64-year-olds, another indicator of overall labour market conditions
- GDP per capita (in US$ at purchasing power parity)
- PISA reading scores, a measure of educational achievement
- The PISA index of economic, social and cultural status, a commonly used international indicator of socioeconomic status
- The proportion of 15–19-year-old students participating in the labour market.

These outcomes are reflected in the NP objectives and the objectives of many other governments' education and labour market policies:

- The number of 15–19-year-olds either unemployed or not participating in either education and training or the labour market (NEET) as a proportion of all 15–19-year-olds
- The number of 20–24-year-old non-students employed as a proportion of all 20–24-year-old non-students
- The number of 15–19-year-olds students as a proportion of all 15–19-year-olds

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[56] ABS (2011) *Education and Work Australia*, Table 17.
[57] For evidence of the link between these variables and transition outcomes, see: OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris; Raffe, D. (2008) 'The concept of transition system', *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 4 (1), pp. 277–96; and Sweet, R. (2009) *Factors Influencing Youth Transitions: a Review of the Evidence*, Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. It should be noted that other factors known to be related to transition outcomes, such as young people's personal qualities and institutional arrangements within education, are difficult to measure, and even if measurable, do not have comparable international data available.

- The proportion of 25–34-year-olds who have attained an upper secondary or equivalent qualification[58]
- The proportion of 25–34-year-olds who have obtained a tertiary qualification.[59]

A comparison of international performance in these outcomes and objectives shows that Australia's average transition outcomes are the lowest of the five most similar countries (Canada, Demark, Norway, the Netherlands and Switzerland[60]). It also reveals that the gap between what might be expected on the basis of the predictor variables and outcomes is larger for Australia than the other five countries, including the countries most comparable to Australia (Canada and Denmark; see Figure 4.10).[61]

FIGURE 4.10: AVERAGE TRANSITION PREDICTOR SCORES AND AVERAGE TRANSITION OUTCOME SCORES FOR SIX OECD COUNTRIES, 2009
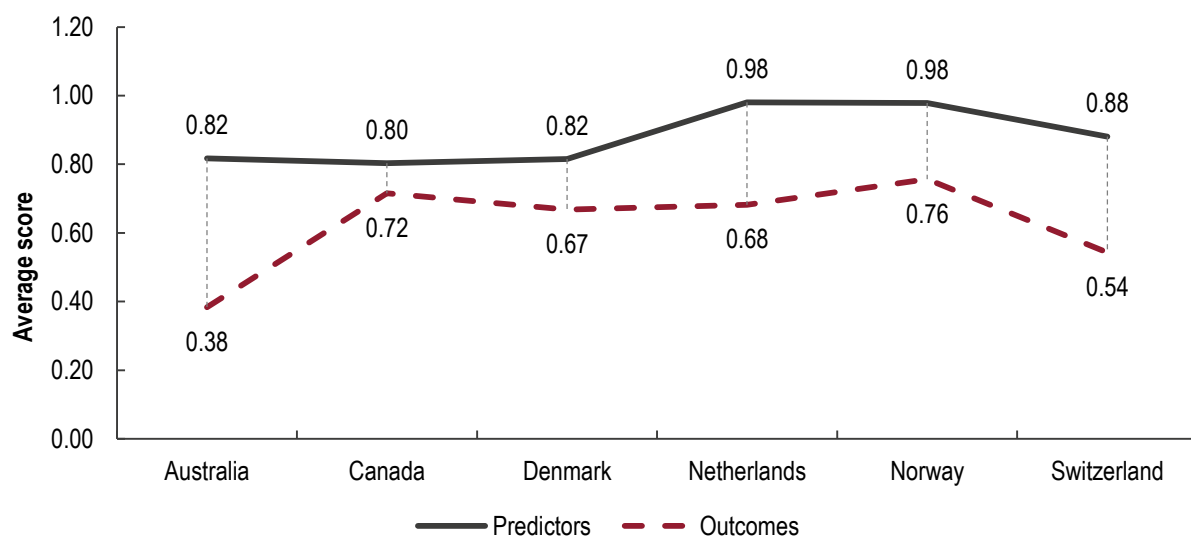
Sources: OECD (2011) *Employment Outlook*, Table B; OECD (2011) *Factbook*; PISA (2009) Tables I.2.3, II1.1; OECD (2011) *Education at a Glance*, Tables C4.2a, C1.1, A1.2a, A1.3a.

Four of these five countries are the best-performing OECD countries in terms of transition outcomes (all except Switzerland), whereas Australia ranks 12th. In summary, the analysis shows that Australia's transition outcomes are below what would be expected on the basis of our natural advantages, that is we fall well below world's best practice, and that we achieve worse transition outcomes than similar OECD countries.

Given the similarity of contextual factors that have a strong influence on transition outcomes in Australia and the other countries, it is difficult to argue that other countries do better than Australia because they are wealthier, have better performing labour markets, have young people who have more contact with the labour market while they are students, and have families of young people with higher economic, social and cultural resources, or because their school systems have produced higher achievement levels by the age of 15. Transition outcomes are a function not only of these types of factors but of the quality of the institutional arrangements in education, the labour market, the community and the income support system that facilitate and support transitions. On this basis, the conclusion can be drawn that the institutional arrangements that support transition outcomes are not as effective here as in similar, best-performing OECD countries, and that these need to be improved if our transition outcomes are to improve.

[58] Australian data, like the data for other countries, follow the standard international convention in treating Certificate III qualifications as the equivalent of Year 12, but not Certificate II qualifications, which are classified as lower secondary qualifications.
[59] The OECD does not normally publish either this indicator or the previous upper secondary attainment indicator for 20–24-year-olds or 25–29-year-olds, due to the relatively later average ages at which these qualifications are typically completed in some OECD countries.
[60] Based on the transition predictor variables listed.
[61] A full description of the methodology and supporting data underpinning this analysis is included in Professor Richard Sweet, 2012, *A Curate's Egg: Good Practice in School-to-Work Transitions,* commissioned by the COAG Reform Council, Good Practice in Youth Transitions National Conference, 16–17 August 2012.

In summary, the challenges in the youth attainment and transitions environment that need to be addressed to improve outcomes are:

- Further increasing 15–19-year-olds' participation in education
- Raising engagement with learning among low achievers
- Establishing good links between schools and workplaces
- Ensuring young people have a strong focus on their post-school goals
- Getting a better understanding of inactive young people
- Reducing the size of the inactive group.

5 Focus areas for improving youth attainment and transition outcomes

The aim of this chapter is to provide the broad framework for a future youth attainment and transition policy. This includes the goals that such a policy should be trying to achieve and the issues that it should address. It also includes implications for different funding models (broad-purpose block grants with hooks; specific-purpose grants to school systems; specific-purpose grants to non-government organisations) based on the goals and focus issues, and some (illustrative) specific options that could be used to achieve the framework's goals. It does not, however, represent a fully developed policy position. Although it is informed by consultations with the Australian and State and Territory governments, it has not received their formal endorsements and is intended only as a basis for further discussions. Chapter 6 outlines the steps that need to be taken to reach this point.

5.1 Principles and examples of intervention features, and challenges for a future policy

Describing all the factors that impact on youth attainment and transition outcomes is a non-trivial task because of the range of influences on outcomes achieved and the myriad of interactions between factors.

The factors vary widely in the strength of their association with YAT outcomes. Not all of their impacts are easily measured, particularly many of the important institutional arrangements in education and those that connect education to the world outside it. And even when they are measurable, consistent performance indicators across jurisdictions are often not available.

To further complicate matters, the factors that produce YAT outcomes can interact with one another such that, for example, the impact of family background can vary depending upon factors such as school climate, social capital, self-confidence, level of aspirations, opportunities to learn in workplace settings, and career guidance. YAT outcomes are the result of the ways in which the *system* operates, rather than the existence of individual initiatives. Good outcomes, from a system perspective, can be achieved in a number of ways, and for a number of different reasons.

Nevertheless, it is important to attempt to map the key factors.

Figure 5.1 represents the complex interplay of factors that influence youth attainment and transition outcomes. It shows that what occurs during the transition phase is impacted by the preceding years in a young person's life, particularly through access to interventions to address disadvantage in the early years and the development of solid education fundamentals. The breadth of factors indicates that multiple institutions and players are involved in transitions, and that different interventions are needed for different young people – particularly to address the needs of young people who are at risk of disengaging or have disengaged from education or training.

Age

5 yrs

10 yrs

15 yrs

24 yrs

Early life interventions to address disadvantage
- Health
- Housing
- Family support and engagement

Education fundamentals
- Strong family engagement
- Focus on literacy and numeracy skills, and flexible learning delivery
- Focus on Principal and teacher quality, focus and accountability
- Funding that addressing school & student disadvantage
- Positive school 'climate'
- Emphasis on valuing education and work/career awareness including career development
- Curriculum choice & engaging activities, but with focus on high value subjects for senior secondary years

Outside school interventions for 15-24 yos at risk of disengaging
- Participation-contingent income support with strong monitoring and compliance
- Clear responsibilities and accountabilities for support agencies
- Mentoring
- Case management – point in time (e.g. YC)
- Ongoing wrap-around services
- Targeted programs for specific disadvantaged groups (including NGO delivery)

The state of the labour market
- Job vacancies

School based transition interventions
- Pathway options
- Specific career development programs and pathway planning (no dead-ends)
- Work placements
- Awareness of what it takes to get and hold a job
- Mentoring
- Engagement methods that are effective with the target cohort
- Support for positive peer group interactions

Transition interventions outside and/or beyond schools
- Training in generic skills as well as professional skills
- Part – time work and study options
- Range of institutional delivery options (including enterprise RTOs)
- Building community capital (school, business, community, family, networks)
- Fostering employer awareness of characteristics of this generation of young people
- Affordable pricing and availability of training places
- Re-connecting early school leavers to education
- Promoting awareness of self-employment, small business ownership options

Note: The influences of young people's personal characteristics are not represented in this figure.

As stressed in Chapter 3, the state of the labour market has a significant impact on transition outcomes. Policy interventions that influence the labour market are therefore of central relevance to transition outcomes. However, the prime focus of such interventions is usually on broad economic and social goals. Consequently, they are not considered further in this chapter, the focus of which is on key factors that are more specifically related to education and training, and support for young people.

Although overall labour market conditions, SES and educational achievement have been consistently shown to have a strong impact upon transition outcomes, it is important to stress that they are not all determining. Strong institutional arrangements, including effective relationships between key actors such as education sectors, employers and levels of government, can help to redress disadvantage and raise achievement, and help young people compete effectively for jobs.

The starting point of this chapter is the assertion that there is no 'silver bullet' solution to improving youth attainment and transition outcomes. Three areas of focus require attention in a comprehensive approach:

- Educational fundamentals need to be in place, not just for the youth cohort but throughout schooling
- Comprehensive YAT policies and interventions are needed that promote better engagement, attainment and transitions for all young people
- Young people at greater risk of disengaging need to be specifically targeted.

5.1.1 Educational fundamentals

It almost goes without saying that outcomes will be suboptimal without fundamental education system effectiveness across all age cohorts, from the very young to young adults, irrespective of other specific interventions.

Features that are generally accepted as being important in getting the educational fundamentals right include the following:

- Families need to be engaged. The role of families is critical in education, from the earliest age. It is also the main mechanism for providing support for young people through the transition phases of their life

- There needs to be a strong, comprehensive and consistent focus on:

  - the development of literacy and numeracy skills
  - the delivery of flexible learning options[62]
  - the quality of school leadership
  - teacher quality and accountability
  - addressing school disadvantage and student disadvantage

- The climate in schools needs to be positive. Young people are more likely to value education, aspire and achieve good educational outcomes when there is a positive climate that makes the school experience stimulating and rewarding

- The curriculum needs to be broad and engaging, but with a focus on high-value subjects. Young people have varied interests, and there needs to be a fit between curriculum offerings and their interests to engage them. However, care needs to be taken in doing this to remain focused on the subjects that are highly valued in the labour market

- A range of relevant post-school education and training delivery options needs to be available. Pathway choice is essential to ensure that the different needs and aspirations of young people are met.

At a system-wide level, putting in place initiatives to improve educational fundamentals requires dealing with significant challenges:

- The system is complex, with many stakeholders who often have different views about the best approach to take on specific issues.
- With many initiatives being pursued at the national, State/Territory and local levels, there is the potential for overlap, duplication and conflict. Optimal outcomes require coordination and partnerships, which can be difficult to establish and maintain.
- Funding issues limit the capacity to deal with identified issues such as student and school disadvantage.

However, significant steps have been taken by governments in recent years to bring about system reform on a national basis. This has included Australian Government infrastructure funding (e.g., the Digital Education Revolution, the Trade Training Centres Program and the Building the Education Revolution) and three Smarter Schools National Partnerships aimed at addressing disadvantage, supporting teachers and school leaders, and improving literacy and numeracy. As well, important initiatives have been implemented to ensure transparency in school performance data, reporting and assessment, to increase local school empowerment and to develop a world-class national curriculum. The response to the Review of Funding for Schooling (the 'Gonski Review') is also very relevant here.[63]

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[62] Flexible learning focuses on providing learners with increased choice and personalisation in terms of when, where and how they learn.
[63] DEEWR (2011) *Review of Funding for Schooling: Final Report*, http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/ReviewofFunding/Documents/Review-of-Funding-for-Schooling-Final-Report-Dec-2011.pdf

5.1.2 Comprehensive YAT policies and interventions

Even if the educational fundamentals are sound, the evidence outlined in Chapter 4 suggests that specific interventions are necessary to ensure optimal youth attainment and transition outcomes.

It is our contention that a framework of national, State/Territory and local policies and services is required to address the general needs and aspirations of young people so that they engage with learning and can achieve better attainment and transition outcomes. These interventions must foster engagement, provide learning options and reduce friction at transition points.

Based on a review of the literature and the wide consultations undertaken as part of this evaluation, the following desired features of specific policies and interventions have been identified:

- Integrated national, State/Territory and local policies and services:

    - based on sound evidence
    - focused where maximum leverage can be achieved in young people's development (e.g., matched to young people's neurological development)
    - supporting the diverse needs and aspirations of young people
    - linking different interventions that provide graded assistance (e.g. youth transition support and assistance for at-risk youth)[64]
    - with shared targets and agreed performance measures

    An integrated approach is necessary to focus effort on the most effective ways of promoting engagement, attainment and successful transitions. The NP YAT has demonstrated the benefit that comes from such an agreed national policy and program framework in terms of focus, coordination and performance measurement.

- Community strengthening initiatives that engage young people, parents, schools and training providers, business and community groups

    A strong community can help keep young people engaged with education and assist with the transition to further education, training and work. For example, partnerships between parents, schools, businesses and community groups can provide opportunities for work placements as well as programs such as community-based safety nets to support young people who are at risk of becoming disengaged.

- Services to young people that support engagement, attainment and transition, being:

    - flexible and matching the specific needs of young people at the local level
    - targeted and tailored to the local service-delivery landscape to avoid duplication and overlap

    At the local level, there will often be specific challenges that require targeted services for young people. These may involve providing an improved range of education and training opportunities. They may also involve ameliorating the barriers faced by young people (e.g., a lack of mentors or work placement opportunities; transport difficulties getting to work placements). Devolved autonomy to apply funding is needed to address these local needs.

    Studies show that disadvantaged and low-achieving students who beat the odds and succeed at school spend more time learning than disadvantaged low achievers who do not succeed; that they are engaged and confident learners; are more motivated; experience a positive school climate; have career plans; and have high aspirations. Effective strategies

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targeted at low-achieving and disadvantaged students can include mentoring and career guidance, the addressing of welfare needs and family outreach, tutoring, and individual case management.

- Interventions focusing on engagement as a precursor to attainment and transition:

  - using methods that are effective with the target age cohort
  - promoting positive peer-group interactions

Engagement is a precondition for attainment and successful transitions; the cost of disengagement is high for individual young people, and ultimately for the community. Effective intervention methods are therefore needed for young people at risk of disengagement. There is an emerging evidence base regarding what tends to work and what doesn't. With further research confirmation, this knowledge should be used to design interventions.

The importance of peer influence (both negative and positive) on participation, attainment and transitions needs careful attention. The development of positive peer-support networks is an option to be considered to increase positive outcomes, rather than relying on adults directing young people.

- Young people building an awareness and understanding of post-school options

An awareness of work and careers is something that should be built up throughout schooling. Quality career information, including information that reflects local labour market demand, needs to be readily available to meet the needs of young people through their education. Specialist career advice, supported by up-to-date, regionally specific career information, becomes critical in the later stages of schooling and for those who are unemployed or working with training providers.

- Choice of pathway options, where:

  - an implicit pathway bias is minimised
  - flexible pathways are supported, but dead-ends are minimised

Young people have diverse aspirations in terms of their ideal careers, and these require varied post-school education, training and work experience. Successful transition outcomes are more likely to occur if young people have flexible pathway options and are not inadvertently 'steered' down a pathway that is inappropriate for them. On the other hand, care needs to be taken to ensure that 'dead-end' pathways are minimised (e.g., education options in a local area that do not reflect the needs of the local labour market).

- Availability of work placement opportunities

It is important that young people gain an appreciation of what work involves and what is required to be successful in the workplace. This is best done through practical workplace experience.

There will be a number of challenges in implementing a new national YAT policy framework when the current NP ceases:

- It requires an elaboration on the YAT components of existing national education policies, such as the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* and the *National Education Agreement*[65]
- When the NP YAT expires, a new agreement with shared aspirations and targets needs to be in place

[65] Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (2008) *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/national_declaration_on_the_educational_goals_for_young_australians.pdf; Council of Australian Governments (2008) *National Education Agreement*, http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_agreements/education/NE_Agreement_20120821.pdf

- NP YAT funding will cease in less than 18 months, and fiscal pressure on all jurisdictions will constrain funding for the replacement /extension of initiatives
- An evidence base either exists or is emerging on many pertinent matters, but a comprehensive description of what is required and what works best is yet to be developed
- Community strengthening is complex and requires the cooperation and involvement of community groups, jurisdictions, businesses and community service providers
- The engagement of young people in the 15–19-year-old cohort is highly dependent on teacher quality, school leadership, school culture and climate, curriculum choice and accountabilities
- The responsibility/accountability for assisting young people with challenges outside/beyond school can be unclear
- The availability and quality of pathway planning and career information and advice is variable
- Work placement opportunities are often difficult to obtain
- Pathway options and curriculum choice can be limited because:

  - of a bias towards a particular academic pathway in some schools
  - the availability of flexible pathways can be limited
  - some pathways lead to dead-ends.

5.1.3 Specific targeting of those at risk

The need for priority to be given to specific policy interventions that focus on those at risk of becoming disengaged is also evident from the analysis outlined in Chapter 4. This involves multiple solutions tailored to meet the specific needs of young people who are disengaged, or at risk of disengagement.

Successful models in other countries have some common features: a legal requirement for local authorities to contact all early school leavers within weeks rather than months after they drop out of school, to identify those who may be at risk (e.g., those not in employment or other training); personal advisers or mentors who develop highly flexible individual action plans for all participants; a goal of ensuring that young people return to education and training in order to obtain an upper secondary qualification; the restriction of income support to those who agree to participate in the safety net programs; and extensive cooperation among governments, parents, schools, the business community and welfare and juvenile justice authorities to assist dropouts.[66]

Based on a review of the international literature and the wide consultations undertaken as part of this evaluation, the following features of interventions that are needed have been identified:

- Early intervention occurs to avoid crisis intervention later.

  The earlier intervention occurs after (or even before) disengagement occurs, the more likely it will be that the issues a disengaged young person faces can be resolved successfully. In time, the issues faced by a disengaged young person are likely to become more complex and difficult to resolve.

- Families are engaged, when possible.

  Family involvement is paramount, whenever it is practical. Family engagement provides critical linkages and support for intervention initiatives.

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[66] OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris, pp. 107–15; OECD (2008) *Jobs for Youth: Netherlands*, Paris, pp. 81–5, 119–42.

- Support is comprehensive and coordinated:

  - 'wraparound' services – case management
  - support agencies have clear responsibilities and accountabilities
  - participation-contingent income support with strong monitoring and compliance

  While case management is relatively expensive and can be difficult to organise across agencies, there is evidence that it is the best way of coordinating the range of support services that may apply to a disengaged young person (e.g., education, welfare, health and justice). This approach seeks to 'wrap' appropriate services around the individual, rather than have the person deal with each service provider in an uncoordinated manner. In any case, it is important that the responsibilities and accountabilities of different support agencies are clear in this complex environment. Experience with The Compact with Young Australians highlights the fact that participation-contingent income support can be effective provided there is strong monitoring and compliance.

- Learning environments are inclusive of all young people and have the resources to support the needs of those who re-engage; e.g., through experiential learning, flexible timetables and access to the appropriate support staff.
- Support is well targeted.

Given the strength of the evidence concerning the relationship between early school leaving and socioeconomic disadvantage, low achievement and disengagement from learning, interventions should be targeted at schools and regions in which disadvantaged students, low-achieving students and disengaged learners are concentrated.

The main challenges involved in implementing such initiatives include the following:

- Effective early intervention requires coordinated responses across a number of organisational 'silos' – such as education, welfare and justice
- Family support can be limited for some young people
- The provision of services on a 'wraparound' basis can be difficult and initially costly to establish because it involves coordination between different agencies
- The case management of disengaged young people is relatively expensive and is only likely to be successful if there is an effective 'handover of responsibility' for a re-engaged young person back to a school or other education/training provider that has the capability to maintain engagement
- It could be expensive to adequately support schools to deal with re-engaged young people
- Many disengaged young people are hard to identify and contact
- Inclusive educational environments can be seen to be 'lowering the bar'.

5.1.4   Summary of policy principles and intervention features

The following diagrams seek to provide a summary of the content of this section.

FIGURE 5.3: FUTURE YAT POLICY PRINCIPLES AND INTERVENTION FEATURES

Educational fundamentals are in place	Comprehensive YAT policies and interventions are aimed at promoting better engagement, attainment and transition for all young people	Those at risk are specifically targeted
Principles		
Attainment and transition outcomes require fundamental education system effectiveness across different age cohorts from very young to young adult	A framework of national, state and local policies and services are required to address the general needs and aspirations of young people so they engage and can achieve better attainment and transition outcomes Interventions must foster engagement, provide learning options and reduce friction at transition points	Multiple solutions are tailored to meet the specific needs of young people who are disengaged, or at risk of disengagement
Intervention features		

• Strong focus on:
  - The development of literacy, numeracy skills
  - The provision of flexible learning options
  - Principal quality, focus and accountability
  - Teacher quality and accountability
  - Addressing school disadvantage and student disadvantage
• Positive school climate - young people value education
• Families are engaged
• The curriculum is broad and engaging, but there is a focus on high value subjects that are linked to career development
• A range of relevant post school education and training delivery options are available
	• Integrated policies and services:
	  - based on sound evidence
	  - focused where maximum leverage can be achieved in young people's development
	  - supporting diverse needs and aspirations
	  - with shared targets and agreed performance measures
	• Community strengthening initiatives engage young people, parents, schools and training providers, business and community groups
	• Support services:
	  - flexible, matching specific needs of young people at the local level
	  - targeted and tailored to avoid duplication and overlap
	  - devolved autonomy to apply funding to address local needs
	• Interventions focusing on engagement as a pre-cursor to attainment and transition:
	  - using methods that are effective with the target age cohort
	  - promoting positive peer group interactions
	• Young people build awareness and understanding of post-school options – quality national career information is readily available to young people and career development programs are delivered by specialist career advisers and incorporate pathway plan development
	• Choice of pathway options:
	  - implicit pathway bias is minimised
	  - supporting flexible pathways, but minimising dead-ends
	• Work placement opportunities are available
		• Early intervention occurs to avoid crisis intervention later
		• Families are engaged, where possible
		• Support is comprehensive, well targeted and coordinated:
		  - wrap around services – case management
		  - support agencies have clear responsibilities and accountabilities
		  - participation-contingent income support with strong monitoring and compliance
		• Interventions:
		  - foster engagement/re-engagement, with inclusive learning environments
		  - are targeted especially at schools and regions in which disadvantaged students, low achieving students and disengaged learners are concentrated

FIGURE 5.4: CHALLENGES FOR A FUTURE YAT POLICY

Educational fundamentals are in place	Comprehensive YAT policies and interventions are aimed at promoting better engagement, attainment and transition for all young people	Those at risk are specifically targeted
Principle		
Attainment and transition outcomes require fundamental education system effectiveness across different age cohorts from very young to young adult	A framework of national, state and local policies and services is required to address the general needs and aspirations of young people so they engage and can achieve better attainment and transition outcomes. Interventions must foster engagement, provide learning options and reduce friction at transition points	Multiple solutions are tailored to meet the specific needs of young people who are disengaged, or at risk of disengagement
Challenges		

• The task of improving national educational performance is great as the system is complex with many stakeholders and conflicting views on a number of specific issues
• Many initiatives are being pursued at the national, State/Territory and local levels, with potential for overlap, duplication and conflict
• Engaging with families can be difficult in some cases
• Optimal outcomes require co-ordination and partnerships which can be difficult to establish and maintain
• Funding issues limit capability to deal with identified issues such as student and school disadvantage
• Relevant post school education and training options can be limited for many young people
	• To elaborate on the Melbourne Declaration as it impacts specifically on YAT
	• A sound evidence base either exists or is emerging on many pertinent matters, but a comprehensive description of what is required and what works best is yet to be developed
	• When the NP YAT expires a new agreement with shared aspirations and targets needs to be in place
	• Community strengthening is complex and requires facilitation with the co-operation and involvement of community groups, jurisdictions, businesses and NGOs
	• NP YAT funding will cease in less than 18 months and fiscal pressure on all jurisdictions will constrain funding of replacement initiatives
	• Engagement of young people in the 15-19 cohort is very dependent on teacher quality, school leadership, school culture and climate, curriculum choice and accountabilities
	• The availability and quality of pathway planning and career information and advice is variable
	• Pathway options and curriculum choice can be limited
	  - a bias towards an academic pathway occurs in some schools/sectors
	  - the availability of flexible pathways can be limited
	  - some pathways lead to dead-ends
	• Work placement opportunities are often difficult to obtain
	• Responsibility/accountability for assisting young people with challenges outside/beyond school can be unclear
		• Effective early intervention requires coordinated responses across a number of 'silos' – education, welfare, justice etc
		• Family support can be limited
		• Wrap-around services can be difficult and initially costly to establish
		• Case management of disengaged young people is expensive and only effective if there is effective 'handover of responsibility' to schools with the capability to maintain engagement
		• Accountabilities and co-ordination between support agencies can be weak
		• Many disengaged young people are hard to identify and contact
		• Inclusive educational environment can be seen to be 'lowering the bar'
		• Supporting schools and regions in which disadvantaged students, low achieving students and disengaged learners are concentrated is expensive

5.2   Improving YAT outcomes

5.2.1   Overview

Improving youth attainment and transition outcomes requires an agreed national policy on youth attainment and transitions, one with shared aspirations and targets. The long-term national vision of goals that was put in place through the *National Education Agreement* (NEA) and the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*[67] provides an excellent foundation for the efforts of the education system. However:

- They are relatively light on when it comes to specific references to YAT issues
- Their aspirations are expressed at a high level and much of the challenge lies in implementation, which is true for all areas of the Declaration and NEA, including YAT.

Figure 5.5 acknowledges that the NP YAT only covers some of the key issues identified in section 5.1. While it has played a very useful role, a broader, more comprehensive policy response is needed to replace the NP YAT when it concludes. In particular, the policy will need to go beyond "add on programs" of the NP to focus on all of upper secondary education, and extend to focus on all disengaged young people, not just some of them.

FIGURE 5.5: MAP OF FACTORS ADDRESSED BY THE NP (SEE TEXT IN BLACK AND WHITE)
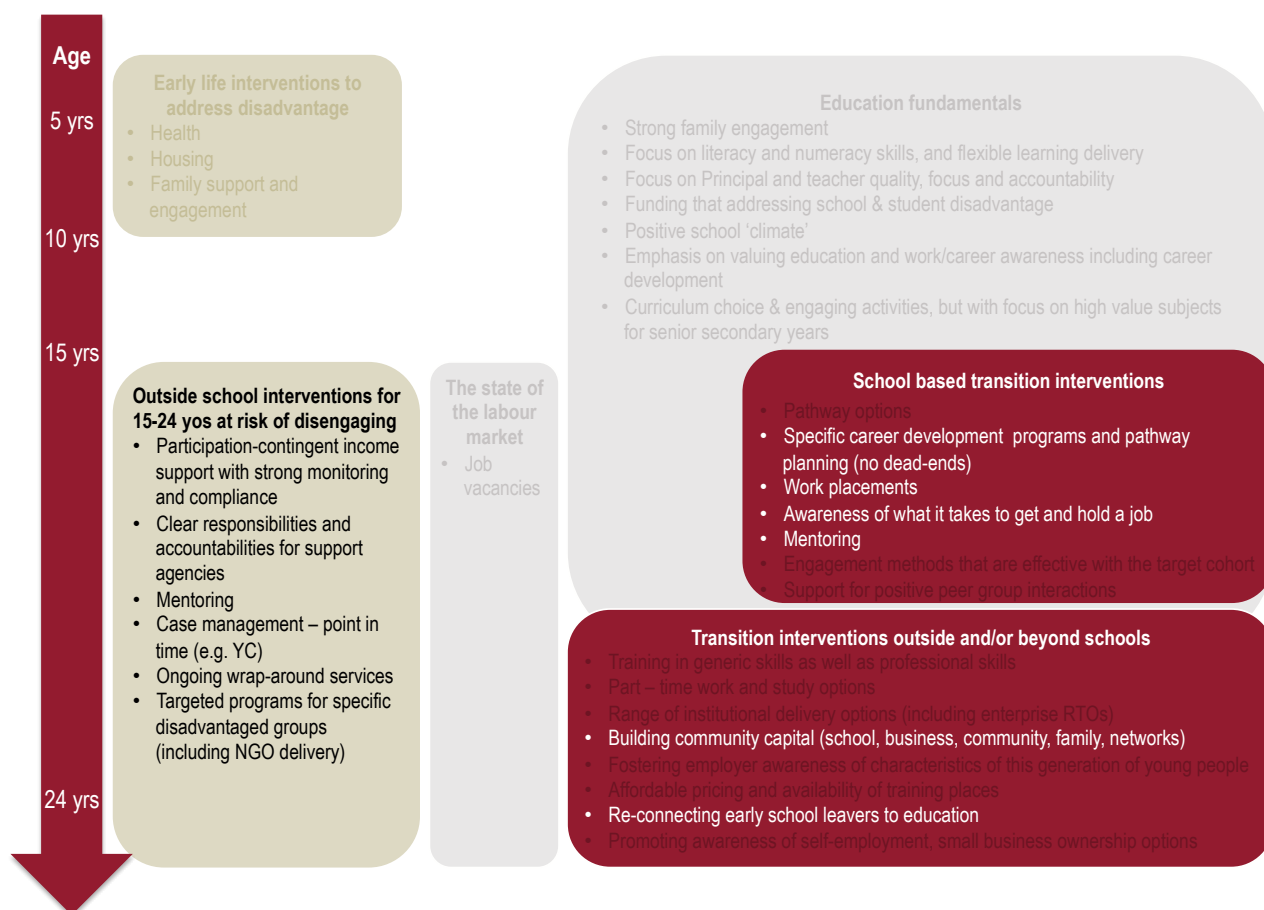
Note: Jurisdictions were able to choose their areas of focus. Therefore, not all jurisdictions have addressed the factors identified. These factors may be addressed through other State/Territory-based programs.

Given the previous analysis, achieving YAT goals requires a policy focus concentrated in five areas:

[67] The action plan underpinning the Declaration is due to expire in 2012.

- The educational fundamentals need to be put in place. This element has a much broader application than that represented by YAT. As outlined previously, it is the focus of much national policy consideration and is not expanded on further in this report.

- The specific capability of upper secondary schooling needs to be strengthened around YAT through improved leadership, relevant professional skills, research and curriculum.

- Community-strengthening initiatives need to be deepened to further engage young people, parents, schools and training providers, and business and community groups.

- More systematic career development and pathway planning initiatives and resources need to be implemented

- Ensuring that tailored support services are available to meet the demands of all young people that are at risk of disengaging or are disengaged.

It is acknowledged that a broad range of policy initiatives related to productivity and participation impact on these areas, and a replacement for the YAT NP will only be a part of an overall policy agenda. It will primarily focus on a set of arrangements that offer support directly to young people, support relevant reform occurring within schools, build community capacity, and provide disincentives to nonparticipation However, it is important that the alignment between the full set of initiatives is improved and that any 'gaps' with respect to the five areas outlined above are filled (as discussed further below).

5.2.2 Focus areas for a future national YAT policy

The following diagram (see Figure 5.6) provides a summary of the content of these focus areas.

FIGURE 5.6: KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR IMPROVING YOUTH ATTAINMENT AND TRANSITION OUTCOMES

Develop an agreed national policy on youth attainment and transition with shared aspirations and targets to replace the NP YAT when it concludes		
Educational fundamentals are in place	**Comprehensive YAT policies and interventions are aimed at promoting better engagement, attainment and transition for all young people**	**Young people at risk are specifically targeted**
A comprehensive national approach to improving educational and developmental fundamentals* Strengthening the capabilities of upper secondary schooling around YAT	Deepening community-strengthening initiatives Implement more systematic career development and pathway planning initiatives	Ensuring that appropriate services are provided for young people at risk

* This has a much broader application than YAT. It is the focus of national policy consideration and is not expanded on in this report.

Strengthening the capabilities of upper secondary schooling around YAT

Post-Year 10 is a distinct phase of education in its own right, with unique challenges that need to be reflected in appropriate policy frameworks, administrative and institutional arrangements, and funding.

Also, increasing participation requirements mean that some schools have become responsible for a larger number of young people that historically would have left, or are seeing young people re-engage in education and training (to a lesser degree). The initial report of this evaluation documented the following stakeholder views:

- Many of these students have characteristics and needs that differ from those of other students. For example, many of those who have been out of school for extended periods have lower literacy and numeracy levels, or require different education or training options to stay engaged

- Some schools do not have the resources or appropriate staff to support this cohort of young people.[68]

A framework for strengthening the capability of upper secondary schooling would need to consider how best to:

- Broaden the curriculum choices available to individual students; for example, by promoting and extending institutional arrangements such as senior colleges

- Emphasise the role of school leadership in improving engagement and attainment

- Strengthen the connections between schools, workplaces and communities

- Extend the use of teaching methods best suited to the needs of older students

- Improve the support services provided to those students most at risk of leaving school early.

It would need to take into account:

- How responsibility for students of upper secondary age is divided among the various stakeholders

- The short-term capital costs associated with altering the stock of educational facilities to reflect new educational needs

- The implications for teachers' skills of teaching methods appropriate to older students, and any implications for teacher working conditions

- The challenges for school leaders in creating school climates that make a distinctive and more appropriate provision for the post-Year 10 group as a whole, as well as better provision for students who are not bound for tertiary education or at risk of leaving early.

A national policy framework with the goal of achieving these objectives, and which reflected the challenges involved, would obviously have funding implications. It would need to take into account:

- The appropriate division of funding responsibility between the Australian Government and the States/Territories

- The role of the Australian Government in national leadership, promoting good practice, and conducting research and other policy-focused analyses

- The appropriate funding methods, whether through conditions attached to overall school funding agreements or specific-purpose programs designed to support the broad objectives of the framework.

Developing such a framework would involve a number of steps, including:

- Conducting a national review of institutional models of post-Year 10 education that facilitate a broadening of curriculum choices (including VET options available to students), and of their relative costs, advantages and disadvantages – this could include consideration of the introduction of senior colleges or similar institutional arrangements by modifying existing school buildings and campuses and developing the capability of school personnel to operate in a senior college environment

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[68] dandolopartners (2012) *Evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transition – Interim Findings*, 2 April, pp. 182–3, <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/YouthAttainmentandTransitions/Documents/InterimEvaluationReport_Accessible.pdf>.

- Conducting ongoing research on the economic and social benefits of upper secondary completion
- Strengthening the capacity of upper secondary school leaders to support transition outcomes[69]
- Improving teaching and learning practices for upper secondary students (including teacher-development programs focused on teaching and learning methods appropriate to upper secondary-aged students)
- Investigating and disseminating good practice in preventing early school leaving.

Deepening community-strengthening initiatives

Engagement, attainment and transition outcomes cannot be achieved by actions at the school level alone. It is also necessary to continue to build stronger connections between young people and their families, schools, communities and businesses.

This requires community-strengthening initiatives involving young people, families, schools and training providers, and business and community groups in activities and initiatives that:

- Expose young people to alternative learning options, where available and of high-quality, to alternative learning institutions
- Provide opportunities to experience work environments and training
- Build positive networks between young people
- Provide practical, community-based programs to help young people at risk of disengagement, and their families (e.g., community-based safety nets).

The benefits of partnerships are evident from the responses from partner organisations in the PB program that were obtained in the evaluation of the NP, as is the fact that schools and businesses need assistance to develop effective partnerships.

Implementing more systematic career development and pathway planning initiatives

An awareness of work and careers is built throughout schooling involving teachers, trainers, career advisors, employers, family members and peers. For career and pathway planning to be effective, it needs to be facilitated by the availability of quality information and appropriate advice that matches the needs of a particular age group. Providing opportunities for young people to learn about what work involves is also important.

In upper secondary schooling, the focus needs to be on the provision of specialist career-development assistance, followed by the development of individual pathway plans. While career-development assistance is provided in most schools, the quality varies and specialist career advisers do not always provide it.

There also needs to be a focus on providing career-development assistance to young people who have dropped out of education without completing Year 12 or the equivalent, so that they are encouraged to re-engage with education and training.

The National Career Development Strategy is progressing and should provide a sound basis for an agreed national approach in this important area.

Ensuring that appropriate services are provided for young people at risk

The challenge of reducing the number of unemployed and inactive teenagers requires national solutions that span several portfolios – those of the Australian Government and the States and Territories.

The first element of a national approach must be more effective action to reduce the number of early school leavers. Strengthening the capability of upper secondary schooling, as discussed above, is the key here.

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[69] Leadership examples include improving connections between schools or colleges and their communities (including employers), and ensuring that resources and inclusive environments are in place to meet the needs of re-engaged young people.

The second element is a strategy to better deal with those disengaged young people who have dropped out of school early. It is critical to provide national safety net services to support young people who leave school early and cannot find a job, to help them re-engage with education and training, and in particular to assist those who are not involved in education, training or the labour market.

The evidence points to the diverse composition, in terms of income support status, of the group of young people who are neither in employment, education nor training, and to the diversity of their needs and characteristics. Any future Commonwealth support for re-engaging early school leavers should therefore span the employment, income support and education and training portfolios, and combine comprehensiveness, segmentation and the targeting of young people in different circumstances that access different institutions.

A national strategy focused on disengaged young people should:

- Obtain a better understanding of who disengaged and inactive young people are, and why their numbers have risen since the introduction of the NP YAT

- Seek national agreement to more clearly differentiate responsibility for at-risk young people who are enrolled in school, and those who are not – this is required to reduce overlap between the States and Territories on the one hand and the Australian Government on the other, and to allow more efficient use of resources

- Continue with the raised participation age and retain participation-contingent income support requirements introduced as part of the Compact with Young Australians initiative, underpinned by stronger monitoring and compliance arrangements aimed at directing young people to the support they need to establish and maintain participation in education, training and/or employment

- Take a national approach to inactive youth that spans the Australian Government's income support, disability, health, employment, and education and training portfolios – this is in recognition of the fact that around half of inactive youth are federal, non-participation-contingent, income-support clients, of whom the largest group receive Disability Support Pensions

- Provide adequate funding for an Australian Government program (along the lines of YC) targeted at those disengaged young people who are not enrolled in education and training. Such a program is needed given the Australian Government's responsibilities for labour market policy, and because of the implications of disengagement in the long term for welfare services and income support. This evaluation has shown that YC effectively targets the regions and groups who are most in need, that it is flexible in its approach, and that it provides a holistic approach to young people's needs. It also has been shown to improve participants' sense of wellbeing, it is valued and appreciated by participants, and it results in positive outcomes in an appreciable proportion of cases. However, the demand for services exceeds the existing capacity, which is effectively capped, based on the level of funding available rather than the level of demand. This impedes the capacity of service providers to quickly respond to disengaged young people.

- Improve coordination at the local level between those who provide re-engagement services, such as YC and Centrelink, JSA and education and training providers.

5.3   Implications for different funding models

Pursuit of the focus areas outlined in the previous section will require careful consideration of both the quantum of funding and the way in which funding is provided. Ensuring that the allocation of resources across the alternative (i.e., competing) components of an overall strategy is optimal will be a significant challenge.

To generalise, the nature of the initiatives/interventions required to improve youth attainment and transitions necessitates clear financial incentives or established funding contingent requirements.

There are various funding options available for pursuing the initiatives and reforms outlined above. Essentially, they fit into the following categories:

- Australian Government:

    - broad-purpose block grants without conditions
    - broad-purpose block grants with conditions
    - specific-purpose grants to school sectors
    - specific-purpose grants to non-government organisations
    - participation-contingent income support to individuals

- State/Territory:

    - broad-purpose block funding to schools without conditions
    - broad-purpose block funding to schools with conditions
    - specific-purpose funding to schools
    - specific-purpose grants to non-government organisations.

There are pros and cons for most of these alternative approaches, and these need to be carefully considered when developing a new policy. The provision of participation-contingent income support to individuals in the YAT target cohort seems to be an effective and efficient approach by the Australian Government[70], which should be continued.

The proposals in the Review of Funding for Schooling (the 'Gonski Review') to reform school funding could do much to address some of the issues that result in less-than-ideal transition outcomes – in particular, funding to help overcome some of the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage upon outcomes. However, the reforms alone will not address all the requirements for improved attainment and transition outcomes. There are two main reasons for this:

- The proposals do not specifically focus on upper secondary schooling or post-school education and training, and there is no guarantee that any additional funding that may eventuate will be directed towards key transition issues.
- Good transition outcomes require a cross-portfolio approach involving specific initiatives that encompasses not only schooling but also employment and the labour market more broadly, vocational education and training, and income support. This will not be achieved just through changes to general school funding arrangements.

Whatever approach is taken to funding initiatives to improve YAT outcomes and minimise disengagement, several obvious considerations are relevant:

- The quantum of funding for a program must be adequate (and provided over a relevant time frame) to achieve target objectives.
- Funding provided without conditions is less likely to achieve the target objectives.
- Incentive-based funding and funding contingent on specified requirements being achieved have attractions, although implementation can be challenging.
- Effective outcomes will require agreement between the Australian Government and States/Territories on funding contributions.

[70] This refers to changes introduced as part of The Compact with Young Australians.

The current fiscal challenges facing the Australian Government and States/Territories, and the Australian Government's proposal to pursue the recommendations of the 'Gonski Review', make dealing with these funding issues for YAT initiatives even more difficult. However, it is worth stressing again that the economic and social costs of failing to promote engagement, attainment and transition outcomes is large and long-lasting (see section 4.1).

6 Looking ahead

6.1 Roles for government

6.1.1 The role of the Australian Government

In determining the appropriate allocation of roles under a future national youth attainment and transitions policy, it is helpful to think of the respective responsibilities and interests of the Australian Government and the States and Territories.

The Australian Government is responsible for national economic policy, national labour market policies, and the provision of income support.

Its responsibility for economic policy gives the Australian Government an interest in raising rates of educational participation and attainment, because of the link between higher rates of educational attainment and higher productivity and GDP, as well as the link to indicators such as positive health outcomes and reduced crime that have expenditure and productivity implications. The economic interest that it has in increasing educational attainment applies to Year 12 (or equivalent) attainment independently of tertiary attainment, as each can be shown to have independent economic benefits.[71]

The Australian Government's responsibility for labour market policy gives it an interest in increased Year 12 completion rates because of the link between these and increased rates of employment and labour force participation, and reduced rates of unemployment. Its responsibility for labour market policy gives it an interest in promoting labour market flexibility and responsiveness, and labour mobility, supported by improved career self-management skills, and in nationally available, high-quality educational, occupational and labour market information.

The Australian Government's responsibility for income support gives it a direct interest in reducing the number of young people who are either unemployed or neither in education nor the labour market, both because of the immediate budgetary costs and because of the longer-term implications for welfare dependency.

Stakeholders from the education and training, business and industry, and community and youth sectors see the Australian Government playing multiple roles in the youth attainment and transitions space:

- Strategy:

  - establishing a long-term view of Australia's future and a pathway for getting there
  - setting national objectives and policies, and facilitating cooperation by jurisdictions

- Policy:

  - linking different policy initiatives that impact on education and training
  - promoting lifelong learning and improved career self-management skills

[71] Leigh, A. (2007) 'Returns to education in Australia', Discussion Paper No. 561, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Australian National University.

- implementing a new national career-development strategy

- Governance and delivery:

    - sharing best practice – finding and promoting things that work
    - coordinating responsibilities with the State/Territory and local levels through a mixture of nationwide, State/Territory-wide and targeted local projects
    - providing high-quality educational, occupational and labour market information
    - coordinating the activities of relevant federal portfolios (e.g., schooling, family and community services).

Specific to the focus areas discussed in Chapter 5 of this report, the provision of services to re-engage early school leavers that are sufficient in scope and quality to meet the needs of all youth not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) is primarily an Australian Government responsibility.

6.1.2   The role of the State and Territory governments

States and Territories have primary responsibility for education delivery. As a result, governments at this level have a direct interest in delivering educational and developmental outcomes. States and Territories are also responsible for their health and justice systems. These responsibilities give States and Territories an interest in containing unnecessary demand for these services. Higher levels of educational attainment are associated with outcomes such as improved health, lower illness rates and lower property crime rates (see Section 4.1).[72]

The following focus areas, which were discussed in Chapter 5 of this report, are primarily State/Territory responsibilities:

- Working in partnership with the Australian Government to develop an agreed national policy on youth attainment and transitions with shared aspirations and targets, to replace the NP YAT when it concludes

- Ensuring that all young people acquire the educational fundamentals

- Strengthening the specific capability of upper secondary schooling around YAT through improved leadership, relevant professional skills, research and curriculum

- Deepening community-strengthening initiatives to engage young people, parents, schools and training providers, and business and community groups[73]

- Implementing systemic career development and pathway planning initiatives and resources so that young people can develop individual plans (where this is not occurring)

- Providing support services for those students most at risk of dropping out of education or training.

6.2   Roles for non-government stakeholders

In addition to the Australian and State and Territory Governments, there are other stakeholders that have a role to play in improving youth attainment and transition outcomes. Table 6.1 details the key stakeholders involved and the roles they could potentially play in a future YAT policy.

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[72] Schuller, T. & Desjardins, R. (2007) *Understanding the Social Outcomes of Learning*, OECD/CERI.
[73] The Australian Government currently invests in this area through the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program.

Stakeholders	Potential roles
Catholic and independent school sectors	• See State/Territory responsibilities above
Further and higher education providers (TAFE, VET, universities and adult education)	• Involvement in pathway planning • Support for improving upper secondary capability (e.g. through broader curriculum choice) • Participation in community strengthening initiatives
Youth and community groups and service providers	• Participation in partnerships with schools and training providers, businesses and parents to improve transition outcomes and provide community-based safety nets for disengaged young people • Delivering targeted programs to young people needing assistance, including services to support disadvantaged students and students most at risk of dropping out of school and to re-engage early school leavers • Involvement in the delivery of mentoring programs
Business and industry groups	• Fostering employer awareness of the characteristics of this generation of young people • Promoting awareness of self-employment and small business ownership as pathway options • Promoting awareness of the value of supporting pathways planning, work placements and other workplace experience activities • Providing input into career-development initiatives and resources • Supporting the development and distribution of occupational and labour market information
Businesses	• Participation in partnerships with community groups, schools and training providers and parents to improve transition outcomes and provide community-based safety nets for disengaged young people • Providing work placement and workplace experience activities • Involvement in the delivery of mentoring programs
Parents and families	• Supporting the development of education fundamentals through active participation in the education of young people • Participation in partnerships with community groups, schools and training providers and business to improve transition outcomes and provide community-based safety nets for disengaged young people • Participation in programs provided by community groups and service providers for particular young people needing assistance, where relevant • Involvement in pathway planning

For a future national youth attainment and transitions policy to be successful, it will need the backing and ongoing support of all of these stakeholders.

6.3   Moving from principles to application

A number of steps need to be taken in order to enact a set of interventions and initiatives that will ensure Australia is a leader among its economic and social peers in terms of achieving YAT outcomes. It will take time to develop a comprehensive and robust new national policy. It would be best to plan how this might occur well in advance of the end of the current NP.

It is acknowledged that this will be challenging given competing policy demands, various election cycles at the national and State/Territory levels, and the current fiscal environment. However, a robust process is likely to provide a more effective program response to the YAT challenge Australia faces than an ad hoc approach.

The following high-level plan specifies four main steps in developing a new national policy:

Step 1:   Confirm agreement on the objective

- Before developing a new policy, governments should confirm a commitment, in principle, to a continuing focus on YAT outcomes, and appropriate intervention through partnership arrangements to facilitate this
- A set of overall program design principles should then be considered and agreed upon. The material contained in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report is designed to promote such consideration.

Step 2:   Confirm a common understanding of what is required

- Complete the evaluation of the NP YAT to obtain a better understanding of the effectiveness of existing YAT interventions and how they interact and overlap (including the respective roles of the Australian Government and the States and Territories).
- Maintain an awareness of new contributions to the knowledge of factors that influence YAT outcomes, both in Australia and internationally
- Analyse how other proposed initiatives (e.g., implementation of the 'Gonski Review' recommendations and the National School Improvement Framework) will impact on YAT outcomes and interact with YAT interventions
- Gain a better understanding of the inactive group (e.g., who they are, why they are disengaged, what is happening with them, and what actions are most likely to reduce disengagement and foster re-engagement)
- Determine where further reform is needed and the relative priorities
- Investigate options to address priority gap areas and barriers, including funding requirements for effective outcomes and the relative costs/benefits of feasible options.

Step 3:   Develop a program proposal

- Identify the preferred program options
- Specify detailed program objectives
- Specify resourcing requirements and funding options
- Specify partnership requirements
- Specify implementation requirements, including:

> respective responsibilities
> performance measures
> governance, dispute resolution and communication arrangements
> performance monitoring and reporting arrangements
> program review arrangements

Step 4: Negotiate a new national YAT agreement between the Australian Government and the States and Territories, which covers:

- Output and outcome targets
- Resourcing/funding commitments and payment arrangements

- Timing, milestones and the program time frame
- Oversight arrangements and communication protocols
- Performance monitoring and reporting arrangements
- Program review arrangements
- Dispute resolution procedures.

Appendix 1: Evaluation Framework

The following diagram represents an overview of the evaluation framework with the high-level questions to be answered across the three years of the evaluation. The following pages show the questions to be answered in year two of the evaluation and the data sources to be used to answer these questions.

Evaluation focus	Have the National Partnership elements, as a package, contributed to improved participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes for young Australians, including young Indigenous Australians?

| Applied to the NP and its Elements… | National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions
• Maximising Youth Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions
• School Business Community Partnership Brokers
• Youth Connections
• National Career Development
• Compact with Young Australians |

Evaluation Questions	**What is happening?**	**Is it working?**	**Is it appropriate?**	**Is it well governed and implemented?**	**Looking ahead …**
Evaluation sub-questions	• What is being delivered as a result of NP funding? • What's changed? How has the NP changed activities targeting YAT outcomes? (what's new, what's stopped, what's increased?) • How has the NP helped to improve the focus and reach of activity directed toward increasing YAT outcomes?	• Have participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes improved under the NP? • How are the NP elements contributing to NP objectives and participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes? • What is working well? Why? • What could be improved? How?	• Is the NP/element consistent with overarching policy objectives? • Do the elements address areas of need? • Do the elements complement each other to support NP outcomes? • Do the NP elements complement other initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	• How well have stakeholders collaborated on design and delivery of the NP and its elements? • Is governance of working effectively? • How well is performance reporting working? • How effective is communication?	• Short-term (before 2013) - What can be done to improve the NP and its elements? • Longer term (after 2013) - What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP and its elements?

Year two evaluation framework

1. National Partnership

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	Aggregation of input from: • DEEWR – national and regional managers and staff • States and territory education and training departments • Catholic and Independent school sectors • Business and industry sector representative bodies • Community and youth sector representative bodies • Expert panel	• Labour Force Survey • National School Statistics Collection • Survey of Education and Work • Regional Population Growth • Australian Demographic Statistics • National VET in Schools Collection • National VET Provider Collection • DEEWR Higher Education Statistics Collection • AG Reform Council • COAG Reform Council	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Research reports regarding YAT outcomes, measurement and influencing factors • Evaluations of NP-funded initiatives • NP implementation plans and annual reports

Question		Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?			

1.1	**Has the NP led to changes in activities directed toward participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes?**	• How have activities changed since the first year of the evaluation:
		   ○ At Commonwealth level?
		   ○ At State/Territory level?
		   ○ In non-government sector?
		   ○ For Indigenous young people?
		   ○ For young people at risk of not attaining a Year 12 qualification?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
			• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives

Is it working?			

1.2	**Has young people's participation in education and training increased?**	• Have there been measurable changes in the proportion of 15-24 year olds participating in secondary school including VET in Schools, VET sector and higher education increased?
		• Explore changes across years by:
		   ○ Indigenous young people
		   ○ Age
		   ○ Gender
		   ○ Qualification level
			Data analysis
			• Labour Force Survey
			• National School Statistics Collection
			• National VET in Schools Collection
			• National VET Provider Collection
			• DEEWR Higher Education Statistics Collection

		• Have there been measurable changes in the proportion of young people aged 15-24 not engaged in employment, education or training?	Data analysis • Labour Force Survey • Survey of Education and Work	
		• What other factors may have influenced participation outcomes?	• Research reports regarding YAT outcomes, measurement and influencing factors • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives	

1.3	**Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased?**	• Have there been measurable changes in the number of young people attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications?
		• Explore across years by:
		   ○ Age
		   ○ Indigenous status
		   ○ Disability
			Data analysis
			• Survey of Education and Work
			• National School Statistics Collection	

		• What other factors may have influenced attainment outcomes?	• Research reports regarding YAT outcomes, measurement and influencing factors • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives	
1.4	**Are more young people making successful transitions from school?**	• Have there been measurable changes in the number of young people aged 15- 24 participating in post-school education, training or employment after leaving school? Areas to explore could include: ○ How does the immediate school leaver group compare with the entire age cohort?	Data analysis • Survey of Education and Work • Labour Force Survey • AG Reform Council, COAG Reform Council	

		• Have patterns of labour force participation changed since the introduction of the NP among 15-24 year olds?
		   ○ Have there been changes to the number and proportion of young people not in employment, education or training?
		   ○ What are the characteristics of disengaged young people?
		   ○ What are young people doing if they are not engaged in employment, education or training?
		   ○ Have patterns of post-school employment changed?
			Data analysis
			• Survey of Education and Work
			• Labour Force Survey	

		• What other factors may have influenced transition outcomes?	• Research reports regarding YAT outcomes, measurement and influencing factors • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives	

1.5	**What's working well? Why?**
	What could work better? How?
		• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		   ○ the most beneficial aspects of the NP?
		   ○ unintended outcomes or other benefits?
		   ○ critical success factors?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
			• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives	

			o major barriers to achieving desired outcomes?	
			o what can be done to address the barriers?	
			• Has the impact of the NP been greater than the sum of its parts?	
			o How well have the elements of the NP worked together?	
			o Has the NP been a catalyst for beneficial changes beyond the elements?	
			• What would be lost if the elements were still undertaken but not within the framework of a NP?	
			• Has the NP and its elements been implemented according to plan and achieved planned outcomes?	

Is it appropriate?

1.6	**Is the NP consistent with overarching policy objectives?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: o Translation of Commonwealth and state/territory policy objectives into NP objectives and priorities? o Inconsistencies or gaps?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
1.7	**Does the NP address areas of need?**	• Are there any unmet needs that should be considered?	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives
1.8	**How do the NP and its elements complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: o Alignment of the YAT NP with other NPs and state/territory/sector reforms and initiatives? o Inconsistencies or gaps?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities

Is it well governed and implemented?

1.9	**How well have stakeholders collaborated on design and delivery of the NP and its elements?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: o Collaboration between governments and between service providers to support program delivery/implementation? o Knowledge sharing across elements and stakeholders?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
1.10	**Is NP governance working effectively?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved?	As above
1.11	**How well is performance reporting working?**	• Have the performance reporting issues identified in year one of the evaluation been addressed? • Have any new issues arisen?	As above

Looking ahead…

1.12	**What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?**	• What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities and service providers
1.13	**What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?**	• Are there factors that influence youth attainment and transition outcomes that are not addressed by the NP? ○ What options are there to improve youth attainment and transition outcomes following the conclusion of the NP?	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities, service providers and sector representatives

2. Maximising Youth Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives	• Not applicable	• Information request from DEEWR and MWG • MEAST-funded initiative evaluation reports

Question		Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?			
2.1	**Has the NP changed the activity and focus of career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring initiatives?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of how MEAST has changed career development, multiple learning pathway and mentoring initiatives?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
Is the element working?			
2.2	**If <u>Career Development</u> was a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to quality career development?**	• How have MEAST initiatives helped more young people aged 15-19 years access career development? • Have MEAST initiatives led to improved equity of access to career development? i.e. greater proportion of services accessed by Indigenous and at risk young people • Is there evidence in the jurisdictions and sectors (including case studies) that Career Development initiatives are improving participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives • Evaluation reports
2.3	**If <u>Multiple Learning Pathways</u> were a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to a broader range of quality multiple learning pathways for young people?**	• How have MEAST initiatives increased the range of options and support available to help young people aged 15-19 years engage in training and education? • Have MEAST initiatives led to improved equity of access to multiple learning pathways, workplace/transition support and expanded subject choice? i.e. greater proportion accessed by indigenous and at risk young people • Is there evidence in the jurisdictions and sectors (including case studies) that Multiple Learning Pathways initiatives are improving participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes?	• As above
2.4	**If <u>Mentoring</u> was a focus of MEAST funding, did it improve access to a variety of quality mentoring opportunities?**	• Have MEAST initiatives increased the range of mentoring options available? • Have MEAST initiatives led to more young people aged 15-19 years accessing mentoring opportunities? • Have MEAST initiatives led to improved equity of access to mentoring opportunities? i.e. greater proportion accessed by indigenous and at risk young people • Is there evidence (including case studies) that Mentoring initiatives improved participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes?	• As above

		• Are there barriers to implementing mentoring initiatives and progress on planned initiatives that is impacting access to mentoring opportunities?	

2.5	**What's working well? Why? What could work better? How?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		   o the most significant benefits?
		   o unintended outcomes or other benefits?
		   o critical success factors?
		   o major barriers to achieving desired outcomes?
		   o what can be done to address the barriers?
			• As above

Is it appropriate?

2.6	**Is MEAST consistent with NP objectives?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		   o Translation of NP objectives into MEAST objectives?
		   o Inconsistencies or gaps?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities

2.7	**Does MEAST address areas of need?**	• Are there any unmet needs that should be considered?	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives

2.8	**Does MEAST complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		   o Alignment of the YAT NP with MEAST initiatives?
		   o Inconsistencies or gaps?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities

Is the element well governed and implemented?

2.9	**How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of this element?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		   o Collaboration to support program delivery/implementation?
		   o Knowledge sharing across elements and stakeholders?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities

2.10	**Is governance of the element working effectively?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved?	• As above
2.11	**How well is performance reporting working?**	• Have the performance reporting issues identified in year one of the evaluation been addressed?	• As above

Looking ahead…

2.12	**What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?**	• What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities, and

			sector representatives
2.13	**What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?**	• Are there factors that influence youth attainment and transition outcomes that are not addressed by the NP? • What options are there to achieve MEAST objectives and outcomes following the conclusion of the NP?	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities, and sector representatives

3. School Business Community Partnership Brokers

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement		Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	- DEEWR – national and regional managers and staff - States and territory education and training departments - Catholic and Independent school sectors - Business and industry sector representatives - Community and youth sector representatives - Partnership Brokers - Expert panel		- YATMIS - PB Survey (conducted by DEEWR with input from dandolo) - Partner Survey (conducted by DEEWR with input from dandolo) - LLEN data (Vic)	Information request from DEEWR (e.g. outcome reports, survey results), MWG and non-government education authorities

Question		Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?			
3.1	**What activity is being generated under the Partnership Broker element?**	- Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: - Number (and type) of partners? - Number of partnerships? - Focus of partnerships? (e.g. literacy support)	Information request from DEEWR – Program report (YATMIS), case studies
Is it working?			
3.2	**Has the Partnership Brokers element facilitated the establishment of high quality School Business Community Partnerships that link key stakeholders?**	- Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: - Progress towards partnership outcomes? (KPM evaluation ratings) - Progress towards partnership characteristics outcomes? (KPM evaluation ratings) - Partnership Brokers' contribution to partnerships? (PB workshop, partner focus groups) - Partnership Brokers' engagement of education and training providers, business and industry, community groups and parents and families in partnerships? (KPM evaluation ratings) - Partners becoming involved in partnerships due to the work of Partnership Brokers? (PB workshop)	- Survey of Partnership Brokers - Workshop with Partnership Brokers - Analysis of YATMIS data
3.3	**Are School Business Community Partnerships tailored to address the needs of young people in the service regions?**	- Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: - Partnerships working towards addressing priorities in their service region?	As above

3.4	What's working well? Why? What could work better? How?	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		  o the most significant benefits?
		  o unintended outcomes or other benefits?
		  o critical success factors?
		  o major barriers to achieving desired outcomes?
		  o what can be done to address the barriers?
			• Information request from DEEWR – Program report (YATMIS), case studies
			• Surveys of Partnership Brokers and partners
			• Workshop with Partnership Brokers

Is it appropriate?			

3.5	Is this element consistent with overarching policy objectives?	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		  o Translation of NP objectives into PB objectives?
		  o PB activities helping to establish long-term reform?
		  o Inconsistencies or gaps?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
			• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives

3.6	Does this element address areas of need?	• Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? • Is the PB program contributing to YAT outcomes?	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives • Survey of Partnership Brokers and partners • Workshop with Partnership Brokers

3.7	Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		  o Alignment of the YAT NP with PB?
		  o Inconsistencies or gaps?
		• Does the PB program complement state level reform and policies in terms of schools community partnerships?
		• To what degree have providers/the program been able to collaborate with and leverage off other programs and initiatives?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
			• Survey of Partnership Brokers
			• Workshop with Partnership Brokers

Is the element well governed and implemented?			

3.8	How well have stakeholders collaborated on the delivery of the element?	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		  o Collaboration to support program delivery/implementation?
		  o Knowledge sharing across service providers and other stakeholders?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
			• Survey of Partnership Brokers and partners
			• Workshop with Partnership Brokers

3.9	Is governance of the element working effectively?	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved?	• As above
3.10	How well is performance reporting working?	• Have the performance reporting issues identified in year one of the evaluation been addressed? • Have any new issues arisen?	• Information request from DEEWR • Interview with DEEWR • Survey of Partnership Brokers and partners • Workshop with Partnership Brokers

3.11	How effective is communication?	• How effective have actions taken to improve communication of the PB program been?	• As above
Looking ahead…			
3.12	**What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?**	• What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities and sector representatives • Survey of Partnership Brokers and partners • Workshop with Partnership Brokers
3.13	**What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?**	• Are there factors that influence PB program outcomes that are not addressed by the PB program? • What options are there to achieve PB objectives and outcomes following the conclusion of the NP?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities and sector representatives

4. Youth Connections

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement		Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	• DEEWR – national and regional managers and staff • States and territory education and training departments • Catholic and Independent school sectors • Community and youth representative bodies • Youth Connections service providers • Centrelink and JSA providers • Youth Connections stakeholders (e.g. principals, community organisations)		• YATMIS • Centrelink (ISIS) • Labour Force Survey • National School Statistics Collection • Survey of Education and Work • Regional Population Growth • Australian Demographic Statistics	• Information request from DEEWR (e.g. outcome reports, survey results), MWG and non-government education authorities • Service provider evaluations (e.g. Brotherhood of St Laurence)

Question			Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?				

4.1	**What is being delivered as a result of NP funding?**		• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
			  o Numbers of participants in YC services
			  o Characteristics of participants - % indigenous, humanitarian refugees
			  o Connection level of participants
			  o Regions/locations
			  o Referrers
				• Information request from DEEWR

Is it working?				

4.2	**Are Individual Support Services working?**		• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
			  o Targeted outcomes being achieved?
			  o Other outcomes being achieved?
			• Is engagement in education and/or training sustained?
			• What is happening to the young people that are not achieving outcomes?
				• Interviews with Youth Connections stakeholders
				• Survey of Youth Connections service providers
				• Workshop with Youth Connections service providers
				• Analysis of YATMIS data (Program Summary Report)
				• DEEWR work on sustainability of outcomes and young people that do not achieve outcomes (CRN tracking)

4.3	**Are Outreach and Re-Engagement services working?**		• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
			  o Targeted outcomes being achieved?
			  o Other outcomes being achieved?
				• Analysis of YATMIS data (Program Summary Report)
				• Interviews with Youth Connections

		• Success of outreach and re-engagement services in moving young people to individual support services? • Where Outreach and re-engagement activities are working – what does it look like and why is it working?	stakeholders • Survey of Youth Connections service providers • Workshop with Youth Connections service providers

4.4	**Have Youth Services in the Regions been strengthened?**	• What is service providers' understanding of the Strengthening Services in the Region objectives?
		• How are YC providers interacting with PBs to deliver this component of the program?
		• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		    o Targeted outcomes being achieved (including movement of young people from outreach into support services)?
		    o Other outcomes being achieved?
		• Where Strengthening Services in the region is working – what does it look like and why is it working?
			• Interviews with Youth Connections stakeholders
			• Survey of Youth Connections service providers
			• Workshop with Youth Connections service providers
			• Analysis of YATMIS data (Program Summary Report)

4.5	**What's working well? Why?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		    o the most significant benefits?
		    o unintended outcomes or other benefits?
		    o critical success factors?
		    o major barriers to achieving desired outcomes?
		    o what can be done to address the barriers?
			• Information request from DEEWR (outcomes reports, evaluation ratings, surveys), MWG and non-government education authorities
			• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives and Youth Connections stakeholders
			• Survey of Youth Connections service providers
			• Workshop with Youth Connections service providers
			• Analysis of YATMIS data

Is it appropriate?			
4.6	**Is the element consistent with overarching policy objectives?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: o Inconsistencies or gaps?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities

4.7	**Does this element address areas of need?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		    o Targeting of at risk young people?
		    o Unmet needs that should be considered?
		• If it is possible to determine – is the capacity of the Youth Connections program sufficient to address the level of demand for youth support services?
		• Are Indigenous and humanitarian refugee flags useful in focusing provider effort on areas of need? Are there other areas that could benefit from being flagged?
			• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives
			• Survey of Youth Connections service providers
			• Workshop with Youth Connections service providers
			• Data analysis

		• What is the impact of using connection level targets on addressing areas of need?	o Labour Force Survey o National School Statistics Collection o Survey of Education and Work o Regional Population Growth o Australian Demographic Statistics
4.8	**Does Youth Connections complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: o Inconsistencies or gaps? • How well does Youth Connections interact with other youth support programs (delivered by the Australian Government, state and territory governments and non-government organisations)?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with service providers, JSA and Centrelink
Is the element well governed and implemented?			

4.9	**How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		  o Collaboration to support program delivery/implementation?
		  o Knowledge sharing across elements and stakeholders?
			• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
			• Survey of Youth Connections service providers
			• Workshop with Youth Connections service providers

4.10	**Is governance of the element working effectively?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved?	• As above
4.11	**How well is performance reporting working?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of performance reporting?	• As above
4.12	**How effective is communication?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of communication?	• As above
Looking ahead…			
4.13	**What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?**	• What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities, Youth Connections service providers, stakeholders and sector representatives • Survey of Youth Connections service providers • Workshop with Youth Connections service providers

4.14	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?	• Are there factors that influence YC program outcomes that are not addressed by the YC program? o What options are there to achieve YC objectives and outcomes following the conclusion of the NP?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities and sector representatives

5. National Career Development

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	• DEEWR – national and regional managers and staff • States and territory education and training departments • Catholic and Independent school sectors • Business and industry representative bodies • Community and youth representative bodies • Career industry representatives • Expert panel	• Not applicable	• National Career Development Strategy and related documents • NCD research reports

Question		Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?			
5.1	**What is being delivered as a result of NP funding?**	• Are resources that it makes sense to produce at a national level being produced nationally? • Is the program on track to deliver the NCDS? • What national career development activities and resources are in place or planned as a result of the implementation of the NCDS? • How is funding allocated? • Has a national approach enabled more to be done with less? (e.g. provided more resources/initiatives or supported more young people within the same or less budget) • Does the NCDS address research project findings and recommendations?	• Information request from DEEWR • Interviews with DEEWR
Is it working?			
5.2	**Has the NP facilitated a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians?**	• How have the career development needs of young people been incorporated in the NCDS development process? ○ Are initiatives supported by evidence about what works well in terms of career education and development support for young people? • Were stakeholder groups that have significant impact on young people's career decisions engaged in developing the initiatives? (schools, parents, carers, etc.) • Are objectives/outcomes clearly defined and measurable?	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government sector representatives, career industry representatives

5.3	**Did the NP lead to a more strategic approach to career development for young Australians?**	• How has implementation of the NCDS helped to:
		    ○ Clarify roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders – e.g. Commonwealth, states/territories, non-gov sector, industry?
		    ○ Reduce duplication of activities/resources?
		    ○ Improve equity of access issues for young people? (e.g. for young Indigenous people, young people living in remote areas, young people out of school and not in education)
			• As above

		o Establish a more integrated career development focus – across NP Elements and beyond?	
5.4	**Has the NP assisted the development of initiatives that have been effective in helping young people identify and consider their career options and develop career plans?**	• Are targeted objectives and outcomes being achieved? • Do career development initiatives and delivery channels address the needs of different cohorts young people (e.g. age groups) and key influencers (e.g. parents, career advisers, teachers)? • Are stakeholders satisfied with the quality of career development initiatives and resources given the available budget?	• As above
5.5	**What's working well? Why? What could work better? How?**	• What have been the most significant benefits of national career development strategy and activity? • Were there any unintended outcomes or other benefits? • What are the critical success factors for national career development support? • What are the major barriers to achieving desired outcomes? • What can be done to address those barriers?	• As above
Is it appropriate?			
5.6	**Is this element consistent with NP objectives?**	• How are NP objectives translated to the NCDS? • How will the NCDS align with other career development strategies at Commonwealth and jurisdictional levels? • Are there any inconsistencies or gaps? • How could alignment be improved?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
5.7	**Does this element address areas of need?**	• Are there any unmet needs that should be considered?	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives, career industry representatives and other sector representatives
5.8	**Does this element complement other elements or initiatives targeting similar outcomes?**	• How is this element integrated with other NP elements? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps? Is there potential for greater integration? • How does this element align with other initiatives at Commonwealth, state and regional levels? Is there overlap, complementarity or gaps?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
Is it well governed and implemented?			
5.9	**Has there been collaboration and buy-in to the NCDS?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of collaboration and buy-in?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with career industry representatives
5.10	**Is governance of the element working well?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved?	• As above

Looking ahead…

5.11	**What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?**	• What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities, career industry representatives and sector representatives
5.12	**What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?**	• Are there factors that influence NCD element outcomes that are not addressed by the NCD element (including tension between youth focus of the NP and a lifelong approach)? • What options are there to achieve Compact objectives and outcomes following the conclusion of the NP?	• As above

6. Compact with Young Australians

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	• DEEWR – national and regional managers and staff • States and territory education and training departments • Catholic and Independent school sectors • Business and industry representative bodies • Community and youth representative bodies • Expert panel • Centrelink/JSA representatives	Data analysis • Labour Force Survey • National School Statistics Collection • National VET in Schools Collection • National VET Provider Collection • DEEWR Higher Education Statistics Collection	• Information request from MWG, non-government education authorities

	Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?			
6.1	**What is being delivered? What has changed?**	• What are the monitoring and enforcement arrangements in the jurisdictions? • What entitlement and training place models in different jurisdictions?	• Information request from MWG, non-government education authorities

		• Is there consistency across jurisdictions' arrangements in terms of:
		  o Exemption policies?
		• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		  o Jurisdictions' views of the relative responsibilities of schools/TAFEs in addressing the new participation requirements?
			• Information request from MWG, non-government education authorities

Is it working?			

6.2	**Does participation data show that the Compact has had an impact?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		  o Jurisdictions' views on the contribution of participation requirements and entitlements on youth participation?
		  o Changes in the participation data?
			• Information request from MWG, non-government education authorities
			• Data analysis – see NP level

6.3	**What's working well? Why? What could work better? How?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of:
		  o Influence of the nationally consistent approach on outcomes?
		  o Benefits or unintended positive outcomes?
		  o Major barriers to achieving desired outcomes?
		  o What can be done to address the barriers?
		• Are stakeholders and young people aware of the requirements of the Compact?
		• What has been the impact of the Compact on young people's behaviour?
			• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives, Centrelink and JSA
			• Workshops with community and youth representative bodies

6.4	**Is this element consistent with NP objectives?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: o Translation of NP objectives into Compact objectives? o Inconsistencies or gaps?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities
6.5	**Does this element address areas of need?**	• Have there been any changes since the year one evaluation in terms of: o Targeting of at risk young people? o Unmet needs?	• Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government representatives, Centrelink, JSA and other sector representatives
Looking ahead…			
6.6	**What are the implications of evaluation findings for the NP?**	• What refinements need to be made in the last year of the NP?	• Information request from DEEWR, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with DEEWR, MWG, non-government education authorities, and sector representatives
6.7	**What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the NP?**	• Are there factors that influence Compact element outcomes that are not addressed by the Compact? • What options are there to achieve Compact objectives and outcomes following the conclusion of the NP?	• As above

Appendix 2: Youth attainment and transitions data

Participation overall

Table A2.1: Total full-time educational participation

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15-24 PARTICIPATING IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION AS AT MAY 2001-2012

Age	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
15-19	69.2	69.7	69.6	69.6	69.0	68.8	70.1	70.1	69.9	69.5	70.2	71.7	73.4
20-24	20.8	21.9	24.9	25.2	25.2	26.1	26.1	26.5	28.4	29.1	29.5	29.2	31.3

Source: Labour force, Australia, Detailed Quarterly, 6291.0.55.001

Participation- by sector

Table A2.2: Total full-time secondary participation

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS ENROLLED FULL-TIME IN SECONDARY SCHOOL, 2000-2011

Age	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15	92.8	92.1	92.7	93.2	93.2	93.4	93.9	94.1	94.7	95.0	95.7	96.1
16	81.7	81.4	81.4	82.5	82.6	82.3	82.8	83.2	82.9	84.7	86.7	87.6
17	62.7	62.9	63.2	62.7	63.5	63.1	63.3	62.9	62.7	63.7	65.6	66.8
18	12.7	12.9	13.2	13.2	13.3	13.3	13.6	13.7	14.5	14.6	15.6	15.8
19	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7

Source: ABS, National Schools Statistics Collection cat. no..

Table A2.3: Apparent grade progression rates

APPARENT PROGRESSION RATES, AUSTRALIA

Grade	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
9 - 10	96.1	96.2	96.4	96.9	96.8	96.6	97.0	97.0	97.1	96.9	98.1	98.7
10 - 11	85.5	86.2	86.7	87.6	87.1	86.5	87.4	87.0	86.6	87.9	89.3	90.0
11 - 12	83.8	84.9	85.4	84.7	84.6	84.4	84.6	82.9	82.6	83.6	84.3	84.6

Source: Nation Schools Statistics Collection

Table A2.4 VET in Schools participation

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15 TO 19 YEARS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS BY SEX, 2005-2010

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Males	12.3%	11.8%	11.6%	14.0%	14.6%	15.1%
Females	12.6%	11.8%	11.8%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Persons	12.5%	11.8%	11.7%	14.1%	14.5%	14.7%

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS BY SEX, EXCLUDING QUEENSLAND, 2005-10

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Males	11.7	11.1	11.0	11.5	11.9	12.7
Females	11.8	11.0	10.9	11.6	11.3	11.9
Persons	11.7	11.0	10.9	11.5	11.6	12.4

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Table A2.5: VET participation

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15-24 ENROLLED IN VET, 2002-11, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Age 15 to 19	12.7	12.3	12.0	12.3	12.3	11.9	11.7	11.5	11.6	12.2
Age 20 to 24	9.7	9.7	9.0	8.9	8.7	8.1	7.4	7.4	7.8	8.1
Age 16 to 17	13.4	12.8	12.5	12.7	12.9	12.7	12.8	12.4	12.0	12.5

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

PERCENTAGE OF 15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN VET BY HIGHEST CURRENT QUALIFICATION LEVEL, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Certificate III and above	5.9	5.9	6.1	6.5	6.8	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.9	7.5
Certificate II	3.2	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.7	2.9
Certificate I and Non AQF qualifications	3.6	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.6	2.3	1.9	1.9

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

PERCENTAGE OF 20 TO 24 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN VET BY HIGHEST CURRENT QUALIFICATION LEVEL, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Certificate III and above	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.9	5.1	4.8	4.4	4.6	5.0	5.5
Certificate II	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2
Certificate I and - Non AQF qualification	3.1	3.1	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.7	1.6	1.4

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Table A2.6: Higher education participation

PERCENTAGE OF 18 TO 24 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2006 Percent	2007 Percent	2008 Percent	2009 Percent	2010 Percent	2011 Percent
27.5	28.5	28.9	30.0	31.2	33.0

Source: DEEWR Higher Education Statistics Collection, ABS Australian Demographic Statistics 3101.0

Participation – Indigenous

Table A2.7: Indigenous participation

PARTICIPATION RATES 15-19 YEAR OLDS BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2006 AND 2011

Institution type	Participation rate 2006		Participation rate 2011		Percentage point change (2006-2011)	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Secondary school	35.9	51.2	41.1	53.0	5.1	1.8
VET	6.4	8.5	7.0	7.9	0.6	-0.6
University	2.1	11.1	2.9	13.1	0.8	1.9
Other	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.1	0.1
Not stated	11.3	5.0	9.4	4.3	-1.9	-0.7
TOTAL PARTICIPATION	**56.8**	**76.9**	**61.6**	**79.4**	**4.8**	**2.5**

Source: ABS Census data, 2006 and 2011 (table-builder basic).

Table A2.8: Indigenous VET in Schools participation

PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS AND OTHER PERSONS AGED 15 TO 19 YEARS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS, 2005-10, EXCLUDING QUEENSLAND

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Indigenous	9.4	9.0	10.0	10.8	12.1	12.8
Others	11.8	11.1	11.0	11.5	11.6	12.3

Note: Others include those whose indigenous status is not known. In 2010 there was a large increase in not known responses, so the drop in participation by indigenous students should be interpreted with caution.

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0, ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Series B

Table A2.9: Indigenous VET Participation

PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS PERSONS AGED 15-24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET, 2002-2011, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO COMPLETED YEAR 12 (%)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15-19yrs	20.9	19.3	18.3	19.3	20.0	19.3	19.5	18.4	20.1	20.8
20-24yrs	19.8	18.1	16.8	17.0	18.0	17.8	17.2	17.0	18.8	19.2

Source: National VET provider collection; ABS population by age and sex 3201.0; ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 3238.0 (Series B projections)

Participation – other target groups

Table A2.10: VET in Schools participation, SES disadvantage

PERCENTAGE OF 15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS BY SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL PARTICIPATION,

EXCLUDING THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN, 2005-10

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	15.0	15.0	14.9	14.6	14.5
Quintile 2	24.2	23.7	23.6	23.7	23.8
Quintile 3	24.4	21.9	22.5	22.6	22.6
Quintile 4	20.3	22.5	22.8	22.9	23.0
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	16.1	16.8	16.3	16.2	16.0

Source: National VET in Schools Collection

Table A2.11: VET in Schools participation, remoteness

PERCENTAGE OF 15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS AS A PROPORTION OF ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION, BY STUDENT REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, EXCLUDING QUEENSLAND, 2005-10

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Major cities	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7
Inner regional	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1
Outer regional	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3
Remote	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.1
Very remote	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.3

Source: National VET in Schools Collection. ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Table A2.12: VET participation, SES disadvantage

PERSONS AGED 15 TO 19 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL, 2006-11, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING

SCHOOL, THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	15.4	15.6	15.8	15.7	15.7	15.9
Quintile 2	27.3	26.7	25.7	26.3	26.6	26.7
Quintile 3	23.1	23.3	23.9	23.8	23.8	23.5
Quintile 4	20.7	20.8	21.3	21.4	21.5	21.9
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	13.5	13.5	13.2	12.8	12.4	12.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: SEIFA was only collected from 2006
Source: National VET Provider Collection

PERSONS AGED 20 TO 24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL, 2006-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING

SCHOOL, THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	16.6	17.3	17.4	17.7	17.5	17.1
Quintile 2	25.7	25.6	25.5	25.5	26.0	26.0
Quintile 3	22.3	22.3	22.6	22.7	22.6	22.9
Quintile 4	21.0	20.5	21.3	21.2	21.1	21.2
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	14.4	14.3	13.2	13.0	12.7	12.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: SEIFA was only collected from 2006
Source: National VET Provider Collection

Table A2.13: VET participation, disability

PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY DISABILITY STATUS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2002-2011, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL, THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 AND THOSE WHOSE

DISABILITY STATUS IS NOT KNOWN

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
With a disability	5.9	6.9	7.1	7.4	7.6	7.0	6.6	6.8	7.5	8.0
Without a disability	94.1	93.1	92.9	92.6	92.4	93.0	93.4	93.2	92.5	92.0

Source: National VET provider collection

PERSONS AGED 20-24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY DISABILITY STATUS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2002-2011, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL, THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12, AND THOSE WHOSE

DISABILITY STATUS IS NOT KNOWN

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
With a disability	6.0	6.4	6.9	7.6	7.7	7.1	6.8	6.9	7.3	7.7
Without a disability	94.0	93.6	93.1	92.4	92.3	92.9	93.2	93.1	92.7	92.3

Source: National VET provider collection

Table A2.14: VET participation, remoteness

PERSONS AGED 15-19 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET AS A PROPORTION OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION BY STUDENT REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, 202-2011, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE

COMPLETED YEAR 12 (%)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Major cities	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Inner regional	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Outer regional	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4
Remote	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
Very remote	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.9

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region
Source: National VET provider collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

PERSONS AGED 20-24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET AS A PROPORTION OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION BY STUDENT REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, 202-2011, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE

COMPLETED YEAR 12 (%)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Major cities	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Inner regional	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
Outer regional	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9
Remote	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0
Very remote	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region
Source: National VET provider collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Attainment – overall

Table A2.15: Year 12 or Certificate II/III attainment

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 (OR EQUIVALENT) OR ATTAINED A FORMAL QUALIFICATION AT CERTIFICATE II/III LEVEL OR ABOVE (%)

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 12 or Cert II	15-19 years	31.4	34.1	32.9	33.4	33.7	34.3	33.7	33.3	32.8	35.3	34.4
	20-24 years	79.1	80.0	80.4	81.3	81.2	81.9	83.5	84.2	84.5	85.6	84.1
Year 12 or Cert III	15-19 years	30.8	33.2	31.9	32.1	32.5	33.3	32.9	32.3	32.0	33.9	32.9
	20-24 years	77.1	78.3	78.9	80.3	79.9	80.7	82.3	83.2	83.5	84.5	82.7

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL FOR PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 15–24 YEARS WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 (OR EQUIVALENT) OR ATTAINED A FORMAL QUALIFICATION AT CERTIFICATE II/III LEVEL OR ABO

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 12 or Cert II	15-19 years	0.7	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.0	1.5
	20-24 years	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.3	1.3
Year 12 or Cert III	15-19 years	0.7	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.3	0.9	1.5
	20-24 years	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.3

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

Attainment – by sector

Table A2.16: Secondary school attainment – Year 10 completion

PROPORTION OF SCHOOL LEAVERS AGED 15 TO 24 WHO HAVE COMPLETED AT LEAST YEAR 10, 2000-11 (%)

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
95.6	not available		95.6	95	94.3	93.7	95.9	95.6	94.5	96	95.4

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

Table A2.17: Secondary school attainment – Year 12 retention

APPARENT RETENTION RATES, 2000-2011

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Year 7/8 - Year 12	72.3	73.4	75.1	75.4	75.7	75.3	74.7	74.3	74.6	76	78	79.3

Source: Nation Schools Statistics Collection

Table A2.18: VET in Schools qualification attainment

PERCENTAGE OF VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL 15 TO 17 YEAR OLDS, 2005-9, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Age 15	0.8	1.0	1.4	3.3	4.5
Age 16	6.5	5.7	7.3	9.6	10.9
Age 17	12.8	11.3	12.7	15.0	16.5

Note: South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed.

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Table A2.19: VET Certificate II and above attainment

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL 15-24 YEAR OLDS, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
15 to 19 years	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.8	4.2
20 to 24 years	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.8	4.9	5.2	5.7

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0

Attainment – Indigenous

Table A2.20: Indigenous Year 10 retention

APPARENT RETENTION RATES FROM YEAR 7/8-YEAR10 BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2000-2011

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Indigenous	83.0	85.7	86.4	87.2	85.8	88.3	91.3	90.5	89.8	90.9	95.8	98.7
Non-Indigenous	98.0	98.4	98.5	98.9	98.5	98.6	98.9	99.4	99.9	100.1	101.0	101.3

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection

Table A2.21: Indigenous Year 12 retention

APPARENT RETENTION RATES FROM YEAR 7/8- YEAR 12 BY INDIGENOUS STATUS 2000-2011(%)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Indigenous	36.4	35.7	38.0	39.1	39.8	39.5	40.1	42.9	47.2	45.4	47.2	48.7
Non-Indigenous	73.3	74.5	76.3	76.5	76.9	76.6	76.0	75.6	75.6	77.3	79.4	80.7

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection

Table A2.22: Indigenous VET in Schools attainment

VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF 15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2005-9, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Indigenous	2.8	2.4	2.8	2.9	5.9
Others	4.4	4.0	4.7	6.0	6.7

Note: 'Others' includes those whose indigenous status is not known. South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed.

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0, ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Series B

Table A2.23: Indigenous VET attainment

PERCENTAGE OF COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE AS A PERCENTAGE OF 15-24 YEAR OLDS BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2002-9, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL

		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Indigenous	15 to 19 years	2.6	2.3	2.0	2.2	1.9	1.9	2.3	2.7	3.6
	20 to 24 years	3.5	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.8	4.7
Others	15 to 19 years	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.8	4.2
	20 to 24 years	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.9	5.0	5.3	5.7

Note: Others includes those students for whom indigenous status is not known

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3201.0, ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Series B

Attainment – other target groups

Table A2.24: VET in Schools attainment, SES disadvantage

PERCENTAGE OF VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS BY 15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2005-9,

EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	16.1	13.6	13.8	13.2
Quintile 2	25.5	21.7	21.5	22.1
Quintile 3	21.9	20.9	21.8	22.1
Quintile 4	20.2	24.1	24.4	24.6
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	16.3	19.7	18.5	17.9

Note: South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed
Source: National VET in Schools Collection

Table A2.25: VET in Schools attainment, remoteness

PERCENTAGE OF VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS BY 15 TO 19 YEAR OLDS AS A PROPORTION OF ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION BY REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, 2005-9, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Major cities	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4
Inner regional	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5
Outer regional	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8
Remote	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.9	1.0
Very remote	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.9

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region. South Australia did not submit a complete dataset for qualifications completed
Source: National VET in Schools Collection. ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Table A2.26: VET attainment, SES disadvantage

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE BY 15-24 YEAR OLDS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SEIFA INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE) AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2006-10,

EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN (%)

		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	15 to 19 years	16.1	13.8	14.0	14.5	13.7	14.5
	20 to 24 years	13.1	13.4	13.1	13.7	13.8	13.9
Quintile 2	15 to 19 years	24.1	24.2	24.4	24.2	23.9	24.2
	20 to 24 years	22.8	23.3	22.7	23.7	23.2	23.1
Quintile 3	15 to 19 years	20.5	22.0	22.4	22.6	22.8	23.4
	20 to 24 years	17.1	21.1	21.5	22.0	21.9	21.7
Quintile 4	15 to 19 years	23.5	22.5	21.9	22.1	22.9	22.5
	20 to 24 years	25.5	23.4	23.0	22.0	22.5	23.3
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	15 to 19 years	15.8	17.5	17.3	16.6	16.7	15.5
	20 to 24 years	21.5	18.8	19.8	18.6	18.6	18.1

Source: National VET Provider Collection

Table A2.27: VET attainment, disability

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE BY 15-24 YEAR OLDS BY DISABILITY STATUS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND WHOSE DISABILITY STATUS IS NOT KNOWN

		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
With a disability	15 to 19 years	3.2	4.0	3.8	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.7	5.3
	20 to 24 years	3.2	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.7	4.0	4.0	4.3	4.7
Without a disability	15 to 19 years	96.8	96.0	96.2	95.7	95.4	95.5	95.7	95.3	94.7
	20 to 24 years	96.8	96.2	96.1	95.6	95.3	96.0	96.0	95.7	95.3

Source: National VET Provider Collection

Table A2.28: VET attainment, remoteness

COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE BY 15 TO 24 YEAR OLDS AS A PROPORTION OF ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION BY REMOTENESS (ARIA+) REGION, 2002-10, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL (%)

		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Major cities	15 to 19 years	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
	20 to 24 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Inner regional	15 to 19 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
	20 to 24 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Outer regional	15 to 19 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
	20 to 24 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
Remote	15 to 19 years	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
	20 to 24 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
Very remote	15 to 19 years	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4
	20 to 24 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6

Note: Population not available by both remoteness region and age, so numbers are expressed as a percentage of the total population for that remoteness region
Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Transition – overall

Table A2.29: Young people not fully engaged

PROPORTION OF PERSONS NOT FULLY ENGAGED IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR WORK BY AGE, AUSTRALIA, 2001-10 (%)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15 to 19 years	13.4	12.9	13.2	12.4	13.9	13.1	12.8	12.5	15.5	14.8	14.1
20 to 24 years	23.5	22.8	23.1	22.5	21.5	21.1	20.0	19.5	22.2	21.8	22.5

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15 to 19 years	0.4	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.3
20 to 24 years	0.6	1.1	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.3	2.0	1.7	1.5

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18-24 YEARS NOT FULLY ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING AT OR ABOVE CERTIFICATE III LEVEL (NEA INDICATOR 10) (%)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	28.6	27.0	27.5	27.2	26.0	26.0	24.5	23.7	27.3	27.3	27.5

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	0.5	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.4

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18-24 YEARS WHO ARE FULLY ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING AT OR ABOVE CERTIFICATE III LEVEL (NEA INDICATOR 10), BY SEX (%)

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Males	Fully engaged through full-time employment [1]	51.4	50.5	50.0	50.8	53.1	54.0	53.2	52.4	47.1	47.2	47.5
	Fully engaged through full-time education/ training at or above Certificate III level [1]	21.7	24.7	23.9	23.9	22.4	22.2	24.4	25.4	25.7	25.8	26.8
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level [2]	1.9	1.9	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.3	2.9	3.0	2.3	2.2	2.4
	Total fully engaged [3]	75.0	77.0	76.3	77.3	78.4	78.5	80.5	80.9	75.1	75.2	76.7
	Not fully engaged	25.0	23.0	23.7	22.7	21.6	21.5	19.5	19.1	24.9	24.8	23.3
Females	Fully engaged through full-time employment [1]	39.5	37.0	36.3	35.6	35.2	37.5	37.4	38.8	34.8	34.4	32.1
	Fully engaged through full-time education/ training at or above Certificate III level [1]	25.7	29.1	29.3	28.9	30.0	28.7	29.6	29.6	32.3	31.7	32.3
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level [2]	2.5	2.6	3.0	3.7	4.3	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.9	3.7
	Total fully engaged [3]	67.7	68.8	68.6	68.1	69.5	69.3	70.2	71.5	70.3	70.0	68.2
	Not fully engaged	32.3	31.2	31.4	31.9	30.5	30.7	29.8	28.5	29.7	30.0	31.8
Persons	Fully engaged through full-time employment [1]	45.6	43.9	43.3	43.3	44.3	45.9	45.5	45.7	41.1	41.1	39.9
	Fully engaged through full-time education/ training at or above Certificate III level [1]	23.7	26.9	26.6	26.4	26.2	25.4	26.9	27.5	28.9	28.7	29.5
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level [2]	2.2	2.3	2.7	3.2	3.5	2.7	3.1	3.1	2.7	3.0	3.1
	Total fully engaged [3]	71.4	73.0	72.5	72.8	74.0	74.0	75.5	76.3	72.7	72.7	72.5
	Not fully engaged	28.6	27.0	27.5	27.2	26.0	26.0	24.5	23.7	27.3	27.3	27.5

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

1 Excludes persons in both full-time employment and full-time education/training.

2 Comprises persons in full-time employment and full-time education/training at Certificate III level or above; and part-time employment and part-time education/training.

3 Fully Engaged comprises persons in full-time employment; full-time education/training at Certificate III level or above; or both part-time employment and part-time education/training at Certificate III level or above.

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL FOR PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18-24 YEARS WHO ARE FULLY ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING AT OR ABOVE CERTIFICATE III LEVEL (NEA INDICATOR 10), BY

SEX (%)

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Males	Fully engaged through full-time employment [1]	0.9	1.7	1.7	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.3	1.7	2.1
	Fully engaged through full-time education/ training at or above Certificate III level [1]	0.9	1.5	1.5	1.8	2.0	1.7	2.0	1.7	2.4	2.0	2.6
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level [2]	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
	Total fully engaged [3]	0.7	1.4	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	2.1
	Not fully engaged	0.9	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	2.1
Females	Fully engaged through full-time employment [1]	1.0	1.7	1.6	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.6	2.2	1.7	1.7
	Fully engaged through full-time education/ training at or above Certificate III level [1]	0.9	1.6	1.6	2.3	2.4	2.1	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.3	1.9
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level [2]	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.8
	Total fully engaged [3]	0.8	1.6	1.5	2.0	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.7	2.1	1.5
	Not fully engaged	1.0	1.6	1.6	2.0	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.7	2.1	1.5
Persons	Fully engaged through full-time employment [1]	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.7	1.3	1.4
	Fully engaged through full-time education/ training at or above Certificate III level [1]	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.8	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Mix of full-time or part-time employment or education/training at or above Certificate III level [2]	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.5
	Total fully engaged [3]	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.4
	Not fully engaged	0.5	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.4

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

1 Excludes persons in both full-time employment and full-time education/training.
2 Comprises persons in full-time employment and full-time education/training at Certificate III level or above; and part-time employment and part-time education/training.

3 Fully Engaged comprises persons in full-time employment; full-time education/training at Certificate III level or above; or both part-time employment and part-time education/training at Certificate III level or above.

Table A2.30: School leavers not fully engaged, by educational attainment [SEW]

PROPORTION OF SCHOOL LEAVERS AGED 15 TO 19 NOT ENGAGED IN POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND/OR EMPLOYMENT, BY LEVEL OF SCHOOLING (NEA INDICATOR 9) (%)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Completed year 12	16.7	17.0	18.5	19.6	17.0	18.9	18.7	17.5	21.4	22.7	21.2
Did not complete year 12	43.1	40.7	40.2	44.1	44.5	41.2	39.7	39.6	47.5	44.1	43.9
Total	27.5	25.9	26.9	28.8	27.8	26.9	26.3	25.7	31.6	30.2	29.3

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Completed year 12	1.3	2.0	2.1	2.4	2.7	2.0	2.5	1.9	2.9	3.2	3.0
Did not complete year 12	2.3	3.5	3.4	3.9	3.5	3.4	3.5	4.0	4.4	4.6	3.6
Total	1.2	1.9	1.9	2.5	2.1	1.7	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.5

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

Table A2.31: Young people not in education and not fully employed

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 15 TO 24 NOT IN EDUCATION AND NOT FULLY EMPLOYED AS AT MAY, 2000-12

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Employed part-time and not in 'FULL TIME' education	8.1	8.6	8.5	9.0	9.5	9.2	8.6	8.6	8.3	9.6	9.2	9.5	9.2
Unemployed -total and not in 'FULL TIME' education	5.4	6.0	5.2	5.2	4.5	4.3	4.1	3.5	3.6	5.0	4.6	4.6	4.4
Not in the labour force and not in 'FULL TIME' education	6.0	6.0	6.4	6.3	6.9	6.2	6.3	6.1	5.6	6.5	6.7	6.9	6.5

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Tables 03b & 03c

Table A2.32: Proportion of persons aged 15-24 employed full-time and not in education and attending full-time education, 2008-2012 (%)

	Age 15 - 19		Age 20 - 24	
	Employed Full Time Not attending full-time education	Attending full-time education	Employed Full Time Not attending full-time education	Attending full-time education
May-2008	16.7	69.9	50.2	28.4
May-2009	14.0	69.5	45.6	29.1
May-2010	13.4	70.2	46.3	29.5
May-2011	12.8	71.7	44.9	29.2
May-2012	12.2	73.4	43.6	31.3
2008 - 2012 change (%)	-4.5	3.4	-6.6	2.9

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 03a

Table A2.33: Unemployed (not attending full-time education) looking for first job as a proportion of all unemployed (not attending full-time education)

Age	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
15-19	46.8	50.6	55.7	51.6	61.2	49.4	56.3	55.9	52.6	56.1	60.0	60.3	64.1
20-24	15.7	21.7	20.2	27.5	25.7	28.0	23.6	27.9	28.4	20.1	25.4	24.7	34.4

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 03a

Table A2.34: Full-time education participation and labour force status for 15-24 year olds not in full-time education

15-19 year olds

Year	Attending full-time education	Employed Full Time ; Not attending full-time education	Employed Part Time ; Not attending full-time education	Unemployed - total ; Not attending full-time education	Not in the Labour Force ; Not attending full-time education	Total
2000	69.2	16.5	6.3	4.2	3.7	100.0
2001	69.7	15.3	6.6	4.7	3.7	100.0
2002	69.6	15.4	6.9	4.4	3.8	100.0
2003	69.6	15.7	6.9	4.1	3.7	100.0
2004	69.0	15.8	7.2	4.1	3.9	100.0
2005	68.8	16.2	7.2	3.8	4.0	100.0
2006	70.1	15.4	6.6	4.0	3.9	100.0
2007	70.1	16.1	6.7	3.5	3.7	100.0
2008	69.9	16.7	6.6	3.2	3.6	100.0
2009	69.5	14.0	7.3	4.8	4.3	100.0
2010	70.2	13.4	7.3	4.5	4.6	100.0
2011	71.7	12.8	6.7	3.7	5.0	100.0
2012	73.4	12.2	6.7	3.5	4.3	100.0

20-24 year olds

Year	Attending full-time education	Employed Full Time ; Not attending full-time education	Employed Part Time ; Not attending full-time education	Unemployed - total ; Not attending full-time education	Not in the Labour Force ; Not attending full-time education	Total
2000	20.8	54.1	10.0	6.7	8.4	100.0
2001	21.9	51.5	10.7	7.4	8.5	100.0
2002	24.9	49.9	10.2	6.0	9.0	100.0
2003	25.2	48.3	11.0	6.3	9.1	100.0
2004	25.2	48.2	11.9	4.9	9.8	100.0
2005	26.1	49.5	11.3	4.8	8.3	100.0
2006	26.1	50.5	10.5	4.3	8.5	100.0
2007	26.5	51.0	10.4	3.5	8.5	100.0

2008	28.4	50.2	9.9	3.9	7.6	100.0
2009	29.1	45.6	11.7	5.1	8.5	100.0
2010	29.5	46.3	10.9	4.7	8.5	100.0
2011	29.2	44.9	12.0	5.3	8.6	100.0
2012	31.3	43.6	11.5	5.2	8.5	100.0

Source: ABS labour force statistics, cat. no. 6291.0.55.01, table 03a

Note: The base number for proportion in full-time education and for labour force status is the civilian population for the relevant age.

Transition – other target groups

Table A2.35: Transition outcomes, SES disadvantage

PROPORTION OF PERSONS AGED 18-24 YEARS WHO ARE FULLY ENGAGED IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING AT OR ABOVE CERTIFICATE III LEVEL (NEA INDICATOR 10), BY SES BASED ON SEIFA INDEX OF

RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE QUINTILES (%)

	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1 - most disadvantaged	71.0	62.3	59.5
Quintile 2	76.7	71.1	70.0
Quintile 3	82.5	73.4	74.4
Quintile 4	81.4	75.7	76.8
Quintile 5 - least disadvantaged	87.7	79.6	79.3

95% confidence interval	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1 - most disadvantaged	4.2	5.0	3.0
Quintile 2	3.2	5.6	3.5
Quintile 3	2.4	3.2	3.0
Quintile 4	1.8	3.5	3.0
Quintile 5 - least disadvantaged	2.8	2.6	2.5

Source:
AG Reform Council (2011) *Education 2010: Comparing performance across Australia – Statistical Supplement, available from*
http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/docs/education/2010compare/education_2010_statistical_supplement.pdf; *COAG Reform Council (2010) National Education Agreement: Performance report for 2009 – Volume 2:*
Performance Data, available from http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/docs/NEA_report_2009_Vol2.pdf

Table A2.36 Average duration of the transition, 1986-2012

	First age at which half of the age group is not attending full-time education (1)	First age at which half of the age group is employed and not attending full time education (2)	First age at which half of the age group is employed full-time and not attending full-time education (3)	Years after leaving education taken to find: Any work (4)	Years after leaving education taken to find: Full-time work (5)
1986	16.8	17.6	18.1	0.8	1.3
1987	17.1	17.7	18.3	0.6	1.2
1988	17.1	17.7	18.0	0.6	0.9
1989	17.2	17.7	18.2	0.5	1.0
1990	17.4	17.9	18.8	0.5	1.4
1991	17.6	18.9	20.2	1.3	2.6
1992	17.7	19.6	21.1	1.9	3.4
1993	17.8	19.7	20.8	1.9	3.0
1994	17.8	19.8	21.4	2.0	3.6
1995	17.7	19.5	20.9	1.7	3.2
1996	17.8	19.5	20.9	1.7	3.1
1997	17.9	20.3	21.6	2.3	3.7
1998	17.9	20.0	21.1	2.0	3.2
1999	17.9	20.1	21.6	2.2	3.7
2000	17.9	19.5	21.0	1.6	3.1
2001	18.0	20.2	21.6	2.3	3.6
2002	17.9	20.7	21.7	2.8	3.8
2003	17.9	21.1	22.1	3.1	4.1
2004	17.9	20.4	22.2	2.5	4.3
2005	17.8	20.3	21.8	2.5	4.0
2006	17.9	19.9	22.1	2.0	4.2
2007	17.9	20.3	21.8	2.4	3.9
2008	18.0	20.4	22.0	2.5	4.1
2009	17.9	21.0	22.4	3.1	4.5
2010	17.9	21.2	22.0	3.3	4.1
2011	17.9	20.9	22.7	3.0	4.8
2012	18.1	21.3	22.8	3.2	4.7

1. The values in the table are calculated from single year of age data on educational and labour force status for 15-25 year-olds in May of each year. Column 4 is obtained by subtracting column 1 from column 2; column 5 is obtained by subtracting column 3 from column 1. The methodology is adapted from a methodology for calculating transition durations that first appeared in OECD (1996) "Transition from school to work", Education Policy Analysis, Paris.
Source: ABS 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Tables 03b and 03c.

Table A2.37: Persons aged 15-19 employed full-time, 1990-2011 ('000)

Date	('000)
Aug-90	387.4
Aug-91	276.0
Aug-92	235.2
Aug-93	218.6
Aug-94	228.9
Aug-95	221.5
Aug-96	219.7
Aug-97	203.8
Aug-98	204.7
Aug-99	214.5
Aug-00	216.2
Aug-01	214.4
Aug-02	203.8
Aug-03	208.6
Aug-04	212.1
Aug-05	226.4
Aug-06	224.3
Aug-07	241.6
Aug-08	249.6
Aug-09	200.1
Aug-10	199.2
Aug-11	187.9

Source: ABS 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Tables03a

Table A2.38: Transition outcomes by age for the lowest achievement quintile, 1998 LSAY cohort

	Age 18	Age 19	Age 20	Age 21	Age 22	Age 23	Age 24	Age 25
Completed Year 12 or Certificate III or higher	67.6	70.8	74.2	75.8	77.8	78.6	80.0	86.8
Not working (unemployed or NILF)	26.3	22.8	16.3	16.1	14.4	13.2	12.2	14.3
Permanent/ongoing employment	34.8	40.7	47.0	49.9	55.8	61.1	64.7	62.1

Source: NCVER Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth 1998 Cohort Reports, http://www.lsay.edu.au/cohort/1998/101.html

Table A2.39: Proportion going on to further study by qualification level and type of further study, 2011

15-19 year olds

Type of further study institute	University	TAFE	Other	Not enrolled in further study	Not Stated	Total
Qualification						
Diplomas and above	22	19	5	51	3	100
Certificate IV	17	29	5	46	3	100
Certificate III	8	20	9	58	5	100
Certificate II	6	25	12	54	4	100
Certificate I	2	19	13	63	3	100
Other	8	15	5	65	7	100
Statement of Attainment	7	15	5	70	3	100
Subject only enrolment	7	19	9	60	4	100
Total	8	22	10	57	4	100

20-24 year olds

Type of further study institute	University	TAFE	Other	Not enrolled in further study	Not Stated	Total
Qualification						
Diplomas and above	24	13	4	57	3	100
Certificate IV	12	21	6	57	4	100
Certificate III	7	15	7	69	4	100
Certificate II	7	18	9	62	4	100
Certificate I	6	16	10	64	4	100
Other	10	10	3	72	5	100
Statement of Attainment	9	9	4	72	7	100
Subject only enrolment	11	16	5	59	9	100
Total	10	15	6	64	4	100

15-24 year olds

Type of further study institute	University	TAFE	Other	Not enrolled in further study	Not Stated	Total
Qualification						
Diplomas and above	24	14	4	56	3	100
Certificate IV	14	24	6	53	4	100
Certificate III	7	17	8	65	4	100
Certificate II	6	23	11	56	4	100
Certificate I	3	18	12	63	3	100
Other	9	12	4	69	6	100

Statement of Attainment	8	13	4	71	5	100
Subject only enrolment	10	17	7	59	7	100
Total	9	18	8	61	4	100

Source: NCVER's Student Outcomes Survey 2011

Table 2.40: Labour force status for the civilian population aged 15-64, 2000-2012 (%)

	Employed Full Time 15-64 years	Employed Part Time 15-64 years	Unemployed 15-64 years	Not in the labour force 15-64 years	Civilian population 15-64
2000	50.8	18.3	4.8	26.1	100.0
2001	50.3	18.8	5.2	25.8	100.0
2002	49.8	19.2	4.8	26.2	100.0
2003	49.8	20.1	4.6	25.5	100.0
2004	50.3	19.9	4.0	25.7	100.0
2005	51.2	20.3	3.9	24.6	100.0
2006	51.4	20.6	3.7	24.3	100.0
2007	52.6	20.3	3.3	23.8	100.0
2008	52.5	20.7	3.4	23.5	100.0
2009	51.2	20.9	4.6	23.3	100.0
2010	51.0	21.0	4.1	23.9	100.0
2011	51.4	21.4	3.9	23.3	100.0
2012	51.4	21.2	4.1	23.3	100.0

Source: ABS labour force statistics, cat. no. 6291.0.55.01, table 03a

Appendix 3: Stakeholder engagement

Throughout the evaluation, dandolo partners gained invaluable insight into the NP through engagement with a large number and broad range of stakeholders across the Australian and State and Territory governments, including education regional offices, schools and public VET providers, non-government education authorities, Youth Connection and Partnership Broker service providers, community and youth organisations, business and industry representatives and young people. The following table shows the number of stakeholders consulted in each group.

Stakeholder group	Number of stakeholders consulted
Australian Government	20
State and Territory governments	19
Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers service providers	43
Community and youth sector	10
Business and industry sector	3
Education and training sector	10
TOTAL	105

dandolo partners appreciates the input of all stakeholders consulted to the evaluation.