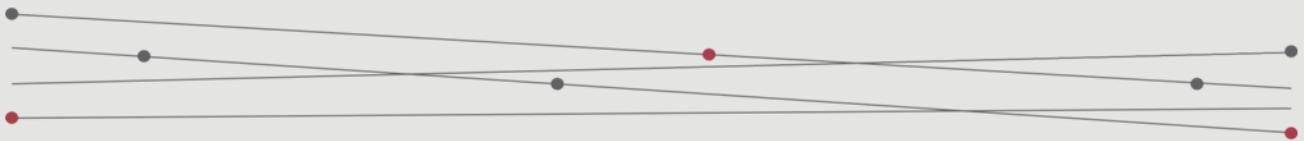


EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON YOUTH ATTAINMENT AND TRANSITIONS

A REPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

16 JANUARY 2014



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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 National Partnership)¹ in July 2009. The National Partnership seeks to improve educational outcomes and transitions for young Australians from school to further education, training or employment. Specifically, the National Partnership focuses on 15–24-year-olds, young people at risk, and the educational attainment and engagement of young Indigenous Australians. The National Partnership comprises:

- Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST; \$106 million) – State/Territory-based initiatives supporting multiple learning pathways, career development and mentoring
- School Business Community Partnership Brokers (\$183 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) – Strengthened youth education and training participation requirements and changes to income-support entitlements.
- Reward funding to States and Territories (up to \$100 million) for achievement against agreed National Partnership Year 12 or equivalent participation and attainment targets.

The third of the three scheduled evaluations of the National Partnership was conducted this year:

- The first-year review focused on understanding what was happening in jurisdictions and across sectors to inform improvements in the National Partnership and its elements
- The second-year review focused on what had changed since Year 1. It presented findings and suggested areas of focus to inform a decision about what should occur beyond the National Partnership
- The third-year review focuses on summing up the impact of the National Partnership and discussing the future of national youth attainment and participation policy beyond the National Partnership.

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 National Partnership as a whole, not to provide a detailed assessment of the individual programs and activities that are operating under the National Partnership.

¹ Council of Australian Governments (2009), *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*.

Approach

Chapter 2 details what impact the National Partnership appears to have had on youth participation, attainment and transitions outcomes over the three years of our evaluation. It is based on an analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics and National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) data sources measuring the participation, attainment and transition outcomes included in the National Partnership, supplemented by a range of more detailed indicators across sectors.

Chapter 3 examines the implementation and impact of the various elements of the National partnership. Material changes apparent in Year 3 are also highlighted. It is based on:

- The Department of Education's Youth Attainment and Transitions Management Information System (YATMIS) data and interviews with Department of Education staff
- State and Territory annual reports on the National Partnership and interviews with jurisdictional representatives
- Surveys of Partnership Broker and Youth Connections providers and stakeholders undertaken by the Department of Education
- Partnership Broker and Youth Connections program stakeholder interviews.

It is important to recognise that a complex range of influences impact on youth participation, attainment and transitions. It has therefore been beyond the scope of this project to prove causality. For this reason we have focused on establishing correlation where it is possible and relied on qualitative research to offer perspectives on the extent to which the National Partnership has had a causal influence. Another difficulty in demonstrating causality is the relatively short period of time that has lapsed between establishment of the National Partnership and the summative evaluation. It is recognised that a longer period of time is required to fully assess the full impact of some initiatives. Despite these factors, it is possible to make some confident judgements about the effectiveness (impact), appropriateness, governance and implementation of the National Partnership and its elements that are the focus of **Chapter 3**.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of future 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
- Consultation with a range of stakeholders.

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. Steady progress has been made in implementing the National Partnership elements.²

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.

While the National Partnership elements address some but not all of the factors that influence youth attainment and transitions outcomes, an analysis of high-level data suggests the following:

- Since the National Partnership commenced, participation and attainment rates have increased, although the number of disengaged young people remains high³
- 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 inactive⁴ young people, although this needs further investigation. 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).

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 National Partnership are less clear, although qualitative information suggests that they are generally making a contribution consistent with National Partnership objectives.

In terms of efficiency objectives:

- Measurements against objectives are being effectively tracked
- A number of National Partnership objectives are being achieved
- The National Partnership has created efficiencies in the youth attainment and transitions 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 – though this may depend on any causal link between the Compact and youth inactivity.

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

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 are a larger group than the NEET group. This report uses the terms NEET and disengaged interchangeably.

Beyond the current National Partnership

Despite the evidence that suggests the National Partnership has been effective – and the fact that the Compact is likely to remain in place beyond the expiry of the National Partnership – Australia’s performance on other critical metrics has either plateaued or declined. For example, the percentage of 15-24 year olds fully engaged in education, training or employment has remained steady since 2002⁵. Australia’s school completion rates, in particular, continue to lag behind leading OECD nations despite some recent improvements. As was identified earlier in this report, the proportion of teenagers who are unemployed or inactive is higher than in the majority of OECD countries, and well above international best practice countries such as Norway, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Given Australia’s wealth, strong labour market and relatively sound performance in school-aged literacy and numeracy, it could be argued that Australia’s attainment and transition outcomes should be far better than they are.

Youth attainment and transition policy is reasonably mature, and much can be learned from what has worked (and has not) in Australia and elsewhere. While policy responses are highly context specific – and what works in one country may not translate directly to another – there are clear themes emerging in terms of best practice. Several major lessons can be observed from the implementation of the National Partnership, initiatives that preceded the National Partnership and policy responses overseas. Major lessons include:

- Economic and education fundamentals create the foundation for good outcomes
- Reducing early school leaving is more efficient and effective than treating disengagement at a later stage
- Rapid responses to disengagement are most effective
- Formal participation requirements can be effective in improving outcomes
- Individualised approaches are often necessary, though more expensive to deliver
- Solutions that are driven locally tend to be more sustainable and effective
- Integrated responses help reduce confusion and are more efficient and effective

There is general agreement that many of the objectives of the NP YAT remain current. In part this reflects that many of the issues that led to the formation of the NP have not been resolved. Even where there has been significant progress, stakeholders acknowledge that continued improvement is not a given. Determinants of student outcomes and effective transition to work outcomes involve a number of influences during a young person’s development.

There are three broad priority areas for facilitating a successful transition from compulsory education to fulltime work:

1. Getting educational fundamentals right

Poor student outcomes can reflect disengagement with the education system, either because schooling has been deficient or because of family and welfare impediments. Interventions aimed at young people who are either disengaged or at risk of becoming so towards the end of schooling can have real value – but prevention is

⁵ ABS, *Survey of Education and Work, Additional data cubes, 6227.0.55.003*

acknowledged as better than cure. This requires action earlier in a young persons educational life – ensuring that what we have called ‘educational fundamentals’ are in place.

The expiry of the National Partnership creates the need for the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to re-define roles and responsibilities. At a general level, this process has already commenced. In the case of provision of the education fundamentals, roles are reasonably clear. School education remains the core responsibility of State and Territory governments, and the independent and Catholic education sectors. State governments also have primary responsibility for provision of services for disadvantaged people, and early childhood development.

2. Promoting engagement and ensuring streamlined services are available for young people who are disengaged from employment, education and training

The first priority should be to keep young people engaged in education and training, Positive school climates play a critical role here. Young people have varied interests, and curriculum choices need to resonate with students’ interests while maintaining a focus on the subjects that are highly valued by the labour market.

Arrangements also need to be put in place for young people that disengage. Based on lessons learned from other jurisdictions – and the views of stakeholders consulted as part of this evaluation – two distinct policy priorities have emerged for the future:

- *Dealing with young people that become disengaged more quickly:* re-engagement is likely to be most successful if support is provided immediately, and when the response by government, schools, supporting service providers, employers and training providers is integrated. A range of challenges need to be overcome to accelerate the speed with which young people are addressed, including ensuring that schools implement appropriate exit procedures (including timely notification of appropriate authorities when young people disengage) and that those authorities respond quickly.
- *Creating integrated responses to promote engagement and facilitate re-engagement:* Individualised responses are proven to be most effective, recognising that the needs of young people vary significantly on the basis of the issues they are experiencing, demographic factors and the services that are available to them. Rather than the responsibility of government alone, it is recognised that the broader community, business and other stakeholders need to work closely with young. This cooperation should be carefully managed within clear accountability frameworks, and builds on momentum that has been established under the National Partnership.

3. Engaging businesses to increase opportunities and enhance the employability of young people

Schools, the community and businesses need to work together in partnerships to create opportunities for successful transitions to meaningful employment. While the period of the National Partnership has seen an observable improvement in youth attainment and participation, the transition of young people from education and training into full-time employment remains problematic.

The state of the labour market is acknowledged as critical to transition outcomes, and flexible and responsive labour markets also have an important role. Schools, the community and businesses need to work together in partnerships to create opportunities for successful transitions to meaningful employment. As an example,

businesses have a potentially significant role to play in providing work experience as well as job pathways to assist young people to make successful transitions from school to work. The international literature as well as recent Australian research shows that the opportunity to combine work and study, whether through apprenticeships, work placements, work experience or part-time jobs, is a significant predictor of successful school-to-work outcomes⁶. Stimulating such opportunities through working with business should be a key objective of government policy. Timely, market-based information must be available to help individuals make decisions about jobs, careers and training, allowing them to respond to changing circumstances and equipping the economy with a responsive workforce.

⁶ OECD (2010) *Off to a Good Start: Jobs for Youth*, Paris; Polidano, C and Tabasso, D. (2013) *Making It Real: The Benefits of Workplace Learning in Upper-Secondary VET Courses* *Melbourne Institute Working Paper* No. 31/13, Melbourne.

1 Context and background

1.1 The importance of youth attainment and transitions

Youth attainment and transitions policies encompass the participation, retention and attainment outcomes of young people as they move through compulsory education to further education/training or work. They involve strategies to re-engage early school leavers and to respond to youth unemployment and inactivity.

This phase has traditionally been considered to begin at the first age at which young people are legally able to gain employment (generally 15 years old), and education ceases to be compulsory. It ends at an age when most are in full-time employment and no longer studying (typically around 25).

Low levels of educational attainment and poor transitions to work carry costs for individuals, society and the economy. For individuals, low rates of attainment and poor transitions lead to an increased risk of unemployment, lower earnings and lower labour force participation rates.⁷ These risks are apparent in the short and the long term. In society, the costs associated with poor attainment and transition outcomes accrue in areas such as health, civic and social engagement, and the criminal justice system.⁸ The economy is also directly impacted, through reduced levels of Gross Domestic Product and lower rates of productivity (driven primarily by the impact on rates of workforce participation).⁹

While labour market outcomes from the transition phase are historically sound 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.¹⁰ Australia's performance is in part a reflection of the ongoing improvement in other OECD countries' performance in this area.

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 on youth attainment and transition outcomes 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

⁷ See for example: ABS, Education and Work, Australia, Cat. No. 6227.0 – Table 19

⁸ See for example: Chapman, Bruce, D. Weatherburn, C.A. Kapuscinski, M. Chilvers & S. Roussel 2002. "Unemployment Duration, Schooling and Property Crime", *Crime and Justice Bulletin*, No. 72, November, p 8 and Cutler D-M. and Lleras-Muney, A. (2010), 'Understanding differences in health behaviours by education', *Journal of Health Economics* 29 (2010)

⁹ Deloitte Access Economics, *Youth Transitions Evidence Base: 2012 Update*, June, 2012

¹⁰ See for example: OECD *Education at a Glance 2013* Table C1.2

susceptible to economic downturns than in many other OECD countries.¹¹ Six OECD nations have markedly lower rates of 15-19 year old unemployment or inactivity than Australia: Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland. Each nation's total participation for this cohort is between two and 13 percentage points higher than Australia's¹².

The nature of youth attainment and transitions 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.¹³

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 determinative. For example, many young people who are disadvantaged or low achievers are able to record 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. The strong focus on engagement is commonly accepted as best practice across the best performing OECD nations¹⁴.

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

The National Partnership 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 greater priority had to be given to improving youth retention, engagement and attainment. As a result, it was agreed to accelerate the development of the National Partnership and to bring forward the 2020 attainment target to 2015, which is a key outcome of the National Partnership.

¹¹ For instance, Australia's youth employment rates were disproportionately affected by the GFC and have not recovered as well as overall employment rates. See for example: ABS *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed* – Electronic Delivery

¹² OECD Education at a Glance 2013 Tables C1.1a, C1.1b, C1.3 and C5.2a

¹³ See for example: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed* – Table 03b

¹⁴ Sweet (2012) – p 8

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 National Partnership. Given the economic climate at the time, and to minimise disruption to services and enable a rapid response, the Australian Government focused effort on building on existing momentum rather than creating additional large-scale programs and interventions.

1.2.2 Objectives, outcomes, performance indicators and outputs

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

TABLE 1.1: OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES, PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND OUTPUTS

<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Work towards achieving improvements in high-level outcomes for schooling</p> <p>Work towards increasing the qualifications and skill level of the Australian population</p> <p>Achieve increases in the numbers of young Australians making successful transitions from schooling to further education, training or employment</p> <p>Work collaboratively to improve the support provided to young Australians to increase educational outcomes and attainment, and improve transitions</p> <p>Develop a skilled and work-ready Indigenous workforce by increasing the educational attainment and engagement of young Indigenous Australians</p>		
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>Increased participation of young people in education and training</p> <p>Improved rates of Indigenous attendance (education and training)</p> <p>Improved Indigenous retention</p>	<p>More young people make a successful transition from school to further education, training or full-time employment</p>	<p>Increased attainment of young people aged 15 to 24, including Indigenous youth</p>
<p>Performance indicators</p>	<p>Enrolment of full-time equivalent students in Years 11 and 12</p> <p>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</p> <p>Attendance rates for Indigenous students in Years 1–10 in government schools</p> <p>Apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 10, by Indigenous status</p> <p>Apparent retention Years 7/8 to Year 12, by Indigenous status</p>	<p>Proportion of young people aged 15 to 24 participating in post-school education, training or employment six months after leaving school</p>	<p>Proportion of young people aged 20 to 24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above</p> <p>Proportion of young Indigenous people aged 20 to 24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above</p>

Outputs	<p>Improved access to, delivery of and quality of education, training and employment programs for young people aged 15 to 24</p> <p>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</p>
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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 National Partnership over five years from 2009/10 to 2013/14 (including up to \$100 million in reward funding which was to be paid against agreed performance indicators). This comprised payments to States and Territories and three Commonwealth Own Purpose Expense (COPE)¹⁵ programs.

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 below.

TABLE 1.2: FUNDING ALLOCATION ACROSS NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP 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	13,300	26,600	26,600	26,600	13,300	106,400
School Business Community Partnership Brokers (COPE)	22,860	45,720	45,720	45,720	22,860	182,880
Youth Connections (COPE)	35,850	71,700	71,700	71,700	35,800	286,750
National Career Development (COPE)	4,650	9,442	5,980	6,558	3,362	29,992
Reward funding	-	-	-	50,000	50,000	100,000
The Compact for Young Australians	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	76,600	153,462	150,000	200,578	125,322	706,022

Source: Australian Government (2012) *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions*. Revised in line with Australian Government Budget 2012/13.

Notes:

- 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.
- This table does not include additional expenditure on National Career Development Strategy initiatives

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 National Partnership (see [Table 1.3](#))

¹⁵ 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.

4.3). 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
\$46.6 million paid	2012-13 Financial Year	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.
Up to \$53.3 million ¹⁶	2013-14 Financial Year	Proportion of young people aged 20 to 24 who have attained Year 12 or equivalent, or AQF Certificate II or above.

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 did not make 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 target¹⁷, 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.

The Council's 2013 performance report found that all States and Territories made substantial progress towards their Year 12 or equivalent targets. The report noted that South Australia and the Northern Territory had exceeded their targets, while Queensland "reached less than half of its target improvement". The COAG Reform Council report concludes by suggesting that if present trends persist, the target of raising the national Year 12 attainment rate to 90% by 2015 appears unlikely to be met.¹⁸

1.2.4 Elements of the National Partnership

Under the National Partnership, the Australian, State and Territory governments 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

¹⁶ In June 2012, state and territory governments received \$46.7 million in reward funding for increases in the number of young people participating in education and training. Unallocated reward funding to states and territories of \$3.3 million has been rolled into the attainment reward funding pool

¹⁷ Council of Australian Governments Reform Council (2011) *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions: Participation Target Assessment Report*, p. 10.

¹⁸ Council of Australian Governments Reform Council (2013) *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions: Participation Target Assessment Report*, pp. 6-7

importance of education and training for young people. ~~Table 1.4~~ ~~Table 1.4~~ provides a brief outline of the five National Partnership elements. Further information is in the Year 1 interim evaluation report.¹⁹

TABLE 1.4: OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ELEMENTS

Element	Focus
Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST)	<p>The MEAST element supports the development and implementation of State- and Territory-based initiatives to improve education and training outcomes for young people.</p> <p>Funding is available for activities in support of the three reform areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple learning pathways • Career development • Mentoring. <p>MEAST initiatives are implemented by the jurisdictions, including through non-government education sectors.</p>
School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers)	<p>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.</p> <p>Contracted service providers deliver this element.</p>
Youth Connections	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualised and flexible support services • Targeted Engagement Services • Regional Coordination Services. <p>Contracted service providers deliver this element.</p>
National Career Development	<p>Under the National Partnership, Career Development has involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and release of the National Career Development Strategy • Funding the Making Career Connections projects. <p>This is in addition to existing initiatives, including Job Guide, Australian Career Development Studies, the Australian Blueprint for Career Development and the <i>myfuture</i> website.</p>
The Compact with Young Australians	<p>The Compact with Young Australians has three elements to promote skills acquisition and ensure young people are learning or earning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

¹⁹ dandolo partners (2012), *Interim Evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions: A Report for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations*

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 National Partnership. 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 National Partnership as a whole, not to provide a detailed assessment of the individual programs and activities that are operating under the National Partnership. Specifically, the evaluation:

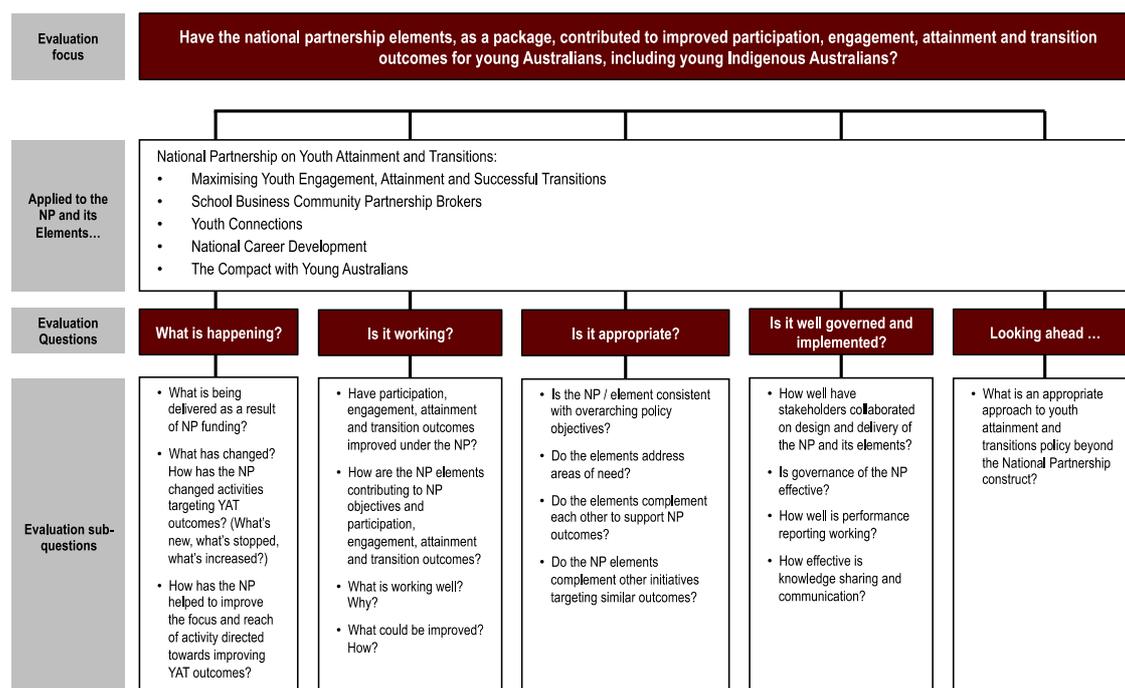
Covers	Does not cover
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measurement of movement in participation, attainment and transition outcomes using reliable national data sources• Acknowledgement of other factors and initiatives that contribute to or impact targeted outcomes (e.g., impact of the GFC; issues faced by 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 National Partnership goals• Examination of whether and how the separate elements of the National Partnership work together• Summary of findings and options for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 Evaluation approach

An evaluation framework was developed at the outset of the project in consultation with the Department of Education and the Multilateral Working Group 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 major questions to be addressed by the evaluation are shown in [Figure 1.1](#). In the second year of the evaluation, the Department of Education requested that an assessment of the efficiency of the National Partnership 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



The evaluation presents findings and areas of suggested focus to inform a decision about the future of the National Partnership and its elements, based on the following questions:

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

1.3.3 Evaluation methodology

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

Part A details what impact the National Partnership appears to have had on youth participation, attainment and transitions outcomes over the three years of our evaluation. It is based on an analysis of:

- ABS and NCVET data sources measuring the participation, attainment and transition outcomes included in the National Partnership, supplemented by a range of more detailed indicators across sectors.

Part A also examines the implementation and impact of the various elements of the National partnership. Material changes apparent in Year 3 are also highlighted. It is based on:

- The Department of Education's Youth Attainment and Transitions Management Information System (YATMIS) data and interviews with Department of Education staff

- State and Territory annual reports on the National Partnership and interviews with jurisdictional representatives
- Surveys of Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections providers and stakeholders undertaken by the Department of Education
- Partnership Brokers and Youth Connection program stakeholder interviews.

It is important to recognise that a complex range of influences impact on youth participation, attainment and transitions. It has therefore been beyond the scope of the project to prove causality. For this reason we have focused on establishing correlation where it is possible and relied on qualitative research to offer perspectives on the extent to which the National Partnership has had a causal influence. Another difficulty in providing causality is the relative short period of time that has lapsed between establishment of the National Partnership and the summative evaluation. It is recognised that a longer period of time is required to fully assess the full impact of some initiatives. Despite these factors, it is possible to make some confident judgements about the effectiveness (impact), appropriateness, governance and implementation of the National Partnership 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
- Consultation with a range of stakeholders.

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.

1.3.4 Project governance

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

2 Changes in National Partnership outcomes

The National Partnership aims to positively 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 data that measures participation, attainment and transitions (including those in the National Partnership), supplemented by a range of more detailed indicators across sectors (schools, VET in Schools and non-school VET) and disadvantaged cohorts (Indigenous, low socioeconomic status, disability and rural/remote locations, where available). Additional data sets 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:

- 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 does not represent a causal relationship. Factors other than the National Partnership influence outcomes. The labour market is a significant determinant of participation and transition outcomes in Australia, as are other factors such as other Australian State and Territory Government programs aimed at improving educational participation.
- The data presented in this report should form 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 for Indigenous cohorts.
- VET data sourced from NCVET's National Provider collection currently only covers publically funded VET delivery, (therefore excluding private VET providers). Data relating to activity in the private VET market (fee for service sector) are not available at the present time. However, this private VET activity represents a large part of total overall VET activity.
- Information reported by SEIFA (Socio-economic Indexes for Areas) and ARIA (Accessibility/ Remoteness Index of Australia) needs to be treated with caution. Geographical areas were updated as the result of the 2011 census meaning that some of these areas and their population bases have changed since the last

census. Where possible, the data has been treated to provide some time series continuity but nevertheless should be interpreted with caution.

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

2.2 Summary of findings

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
- 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.

Participation in education has grown – particularly for school education

The analysis found that participation in full-time education and training continues to increase for 15–19 year-olds and 20–24 year-olds. For 15–19 year-olds, there was a sharp rise of 6.4 percentage points from 2009–13. The largest apparent contributor to this rise was an increase in school participation amongst 16 year-olds and 17 year-olds, coupled with increases in retention rates. Rates of participation in higher education have also increased over time. The increases in educational participation in this group are contrasted with continuing drops in full-time employment for 15–19 year-olds not in full-time education.

The situation for participation in VET is less clear. Participation for 20–24 year-olds without Year 12 has increased slightly since 2008 following decreases between 2003 and 2008. However, participation rates for 15–19 year-olds not at school and without Year 12 have fluctuated with a slight dip being reported from 2011 to 2012. Examining this by qualification level, participation in Certificate I and other category certificates have been declining for both 15–19 and 20–24 year-olds. Participation in Certificate II qualifications has levelled out for both age groups in recent years and participation in Certificate III and above qualifications has been increasing for both age groups (although there was a slight decline in participation for 15–19 year-olds in 2012). Participation in trade apprenticeships for 15–19 year-olds has also declined in recent years, and more recently in non-trade apprenticeships.

Looking at disadvantaged groups, participation in school, including VET in Schools, has increased for Indigenous youth, as have school retention rates. Participation in the VET sector by Indigenous youth has, however, fluctuated over time. Insight into educational participation by young people in regional/remote areas and having SES disadvantage can be gained by an examination of 2006 and 2011 census data. This data indicates clear increases in secondary school participation, and more modest increases in participation in technical and further education for young people in the bottom two socio-economic disadvantage quintiles. While there was some increase in university participation for these groups, it was considerably less than that for the top three quintiles. There have also been increases in secondary school participation for young people from remote/very remote areas, more so than for other regions although from a much lower base. There have been modest increases in

participation in technical and further education and university for young people in remote areas, but for young people in very remote areas participation rates in these two sectors remains very low.

Retention and attainment rates have increased

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 apparent Year 12 retention rates have increased by 5.3 percentage points since 2008, and that VET attainment has increased for 15–19 and 20–24 year-olds since 2008.

Year 12 or Certificate II/III achievement has been trending upwards for young people (Certificate III more so than Certificate II) although for 15–19 year-olds the rate has fluctuated from year to year. The reasons for this are not entirely 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.

Attainment for Indigenous youth has increased in terms of secondary school retention rates and VET achievement. VET attainment for young people reporting a disability also continues to increase. Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above attainment has also increased between 2006 and 2011 for 20–24 year-olds from an Indigenous background, low socio-economic background and from very remote/remote areas.

Transitions to work remain a challenge for young people

In terms of transitions into the labour market, since 2008 there has been a considerable drop in full-time employment for young people not in full-time education, more so than for the 15–64 year age group. In addition, the proportion of 15–24 year-olds fully engaged in employment, education or training is still not at the same level as pre the Global Financial Crisis, particularly for the 20–24 year age group where it has continued to drop. It is worth noting, though, that transitions for young people are in general getting longer. Other research shows that not only have levels of full-time employment decreased for the 20–24-year age group, but also that other life transitions such as independence (leaving home), home ownership, marriage and parenthood are occurring later.

2.3 Young people's participation in education and training

Changes in participation

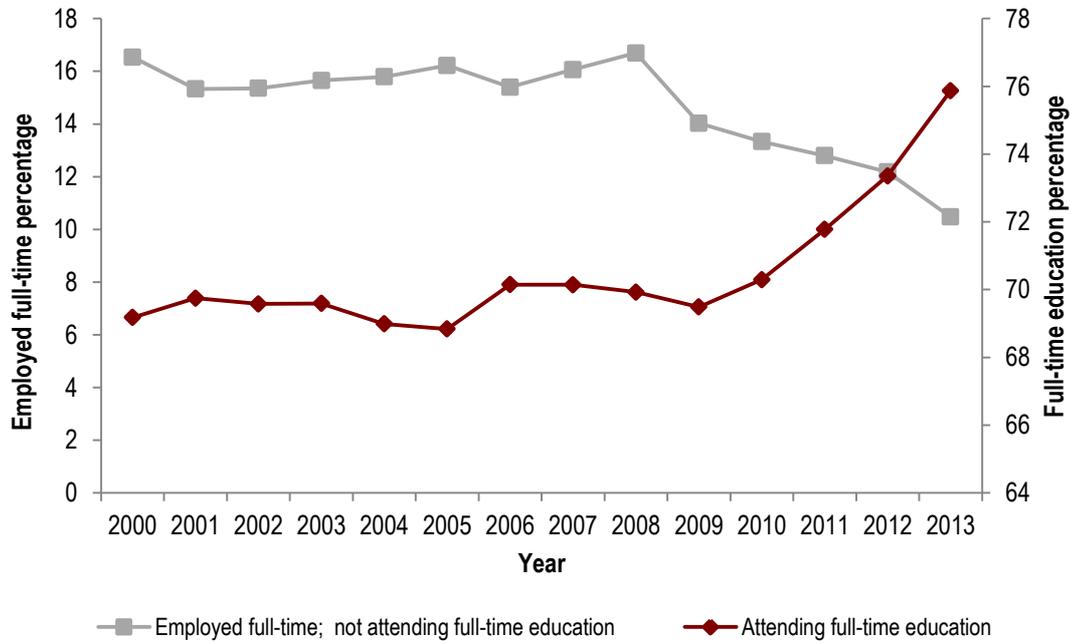
Figure 2.1 provides a summary view of engagement in full-time education and full-time employment (for those not in full-time education) for 15–24 year-olds. It can be seen that rates of full-time education have increased since 2009 for 15–19 year-olds (from 69.5% in 2009 to 75.9% in 2013).

For 20–24 year-olds engagement in full-time education has been gradually increasing over the time period measured (although there was a slight dip of 1% from 2012–2013). While it is difficult to attribute exact causes for the increase in participation in full-time education post-2008 for the 15–19 year-old cohort, it is likely that government policies aimed at increasing participation across the education sectors have had an impact. The increase coincides with the introduction of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, and the new educational participation requirements associated with the Compact with Young Australians. In contrast, full-

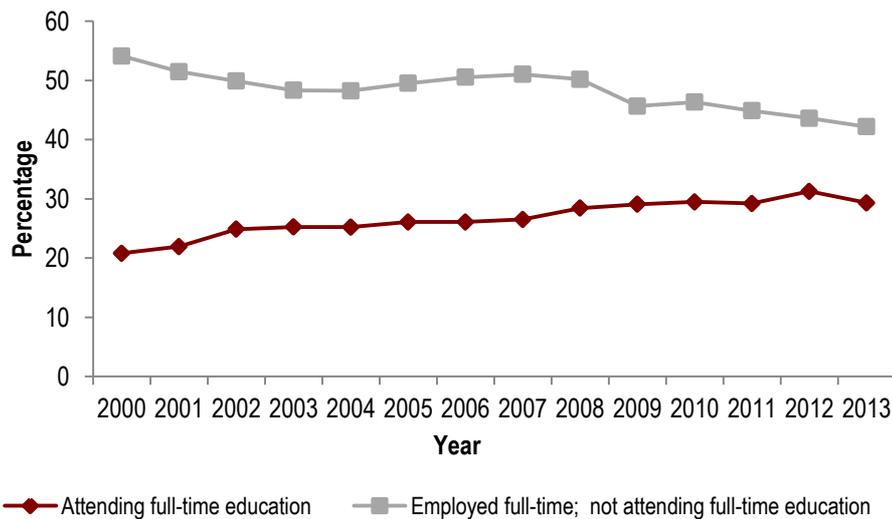
time employment rates for those not in full-time education have been decreasing. The following sections analyse the changes that have occurred in more detail.

FIGURE 2.1: EDUCATION AND FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION OF 15-19 YEAR-OLDS AND 20-24 YEAR-OLDS 2000-2013

15-19 YEAR OLDS



20-24 YEAR OLDS

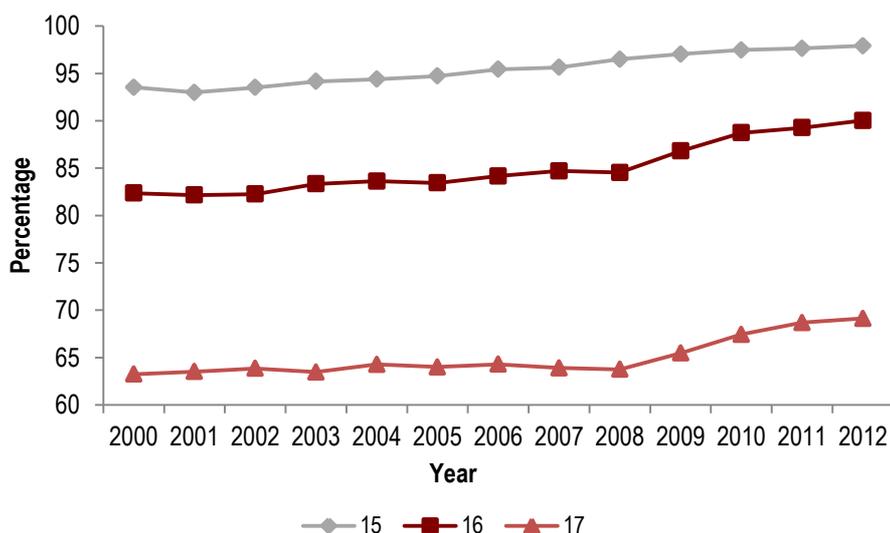


Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed—Electronic Delivery*, Table 03a, 6291.0.55.001.
 Note: The baseline number for calculating proportions for labour force status is the civilian population for the relevant age group.

School participation

School participation for 15–17 year-olds has clearly increased since 2008 after remaining relatively flat between 2000 and 2008. The increase was greatest for 16 year-olds (5.5% between 2008 and 2012) and 17 year-olds (5.3% between 2008 and 2012). The increase for 15 year-olds was not as large because they were starting from a high base and therefore had less scope to increase participation.

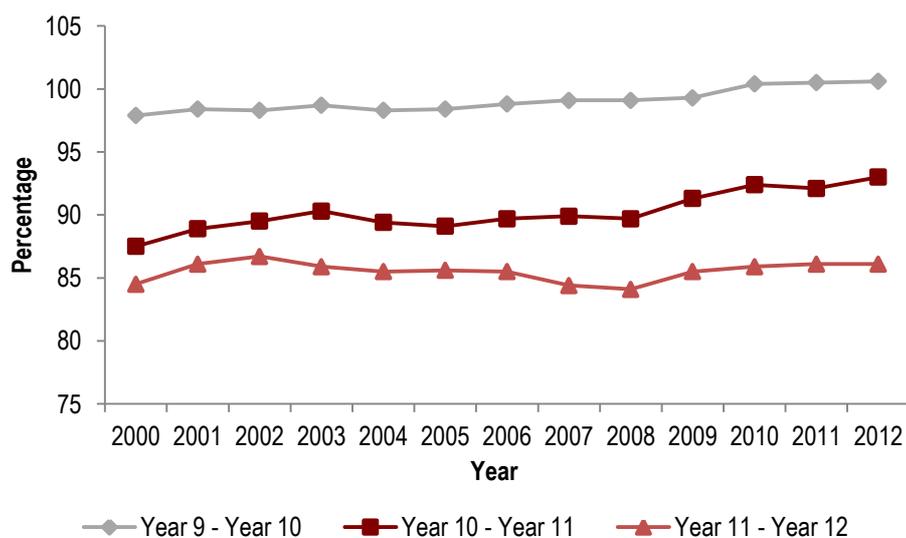
FIGURE 2.2: PERCENTAGE OF 15-17 YEAR-OLDS PARTICIPATING IN FULL-TIME SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2000–12



Source: ABS, *National Schools Statistics Collection*; ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics* cat. no. 3101.0.

Apparent retention rates²⁰ for Year 9 to Year 10 are at about 100 per cent, while for Year 10 to Year 11 retention rates have continued to increase since 2008 (from 89.7% in 2008 to 93% in 2012). Apparent retention rates from Year 11 to Year 12 have seen more modest growth since 2008 (from 84.1% in 2009 to 86.1% in 2012).

FIGURE 2.3: APPARENT RETENTION RATE BY SINGLE YEAR (GRADE), YEARS 9–12, 2000–12



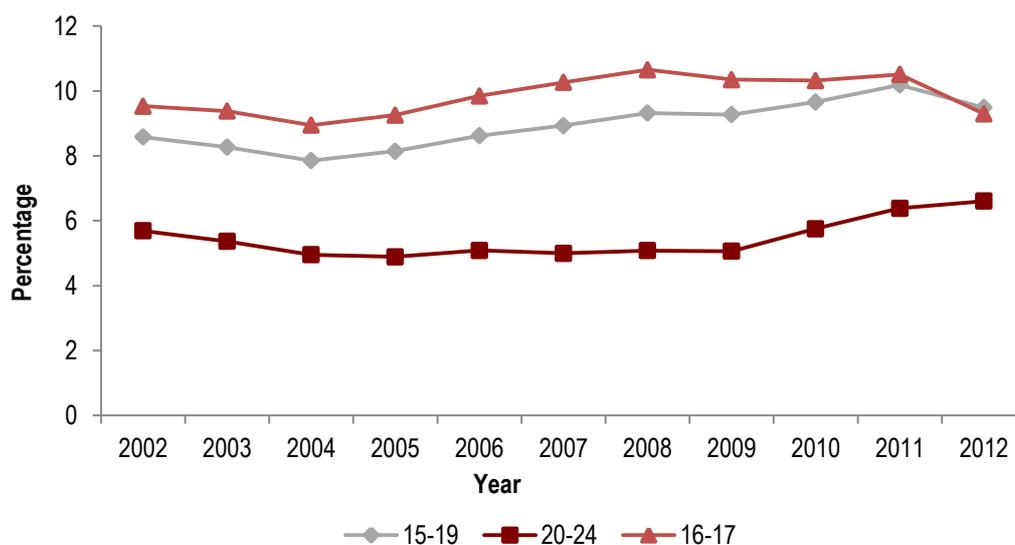
Source: ABS, *National Schools Statistics Collection*, 4221.0, table 63a.

²⁰ The ABS defines apparent retention rates as the number of school students in a designated year of education as a percentage of the respective cohort of students in a base year (ABS, 2013, Glossary, cat. no. 4125.0)

VET participation

The most notable feature of Figure 2.4 is the decline in VET enrolments in 2012 for 15–19 year-olds and 16–17 year-olds not at school and who had not completed Year 12 (dropped from 10.2% in 2011 to 9.5% in 2012 for 15–19 year-olds and from 10.5% to 9.3% for 16–17 year-olds). The reason for this is not entirely clear, though it may be a result of the younger age group staying in school longer. For the 20–24 year-old age group there has been a slight increase from 2010 onwards in the proportion of VET enrolments for those who have not completed Year 12.

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, 2002–12



Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Australian Demographic Statistics cat. no. 3101.0

Note: The calculation in the above table excludes those for whom school attendance status is not known and for whom highest level of schooling is not known

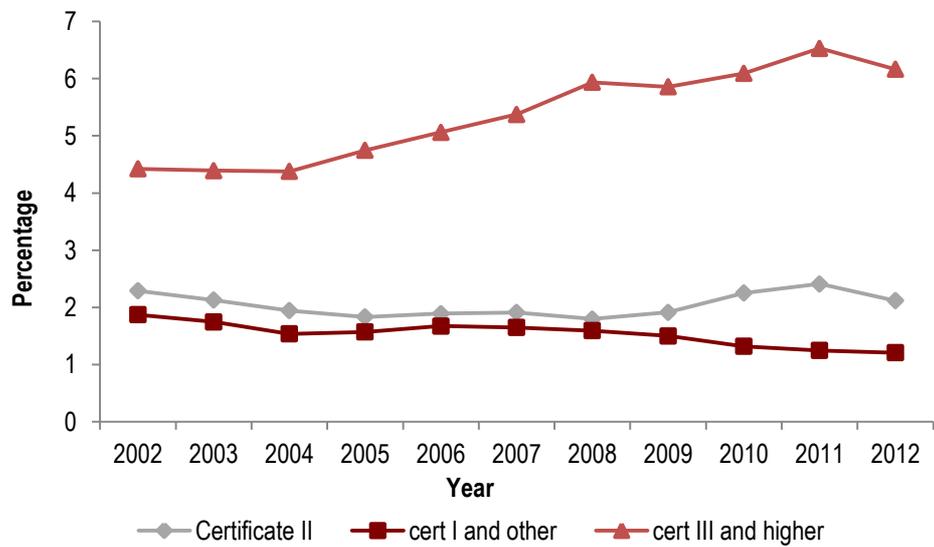
The decline in participation from 2011 to 2012 among 15–19 year-olds not at school and without Year 12 is reflected in the composition of qualifications they are undertaking (Figure 2.5a). While Certificate I and non-AQF qualifications²¹ have been in decline over the past 10 years, the drop in Certificate II and Certificate III and higher qualifications has occurred in 2012 after a period of increased participation in these qualifications.

For 20–24 year-olds without Year 12, participation in Certificate III and above has continued to increase (from 3.3% in 2008 to 4.7% in 2012). In contrast, participation in Certificate II and Certificate I and non-AQF qualifications has been fairly level in recent years (Figure 2.5b).

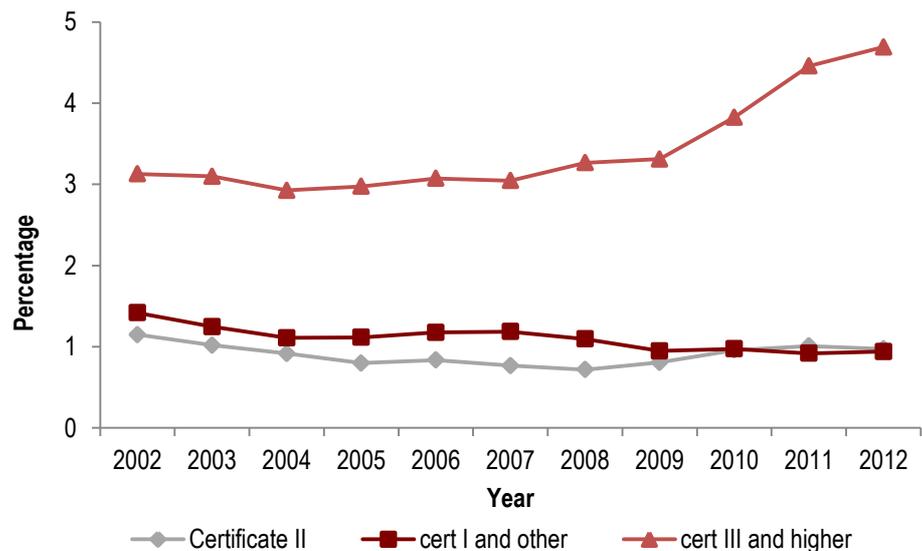
²¹ Training qualifications outside those recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework

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, 2002–12

(a) 15–19 year-olds



(b) 20–24 year-olds

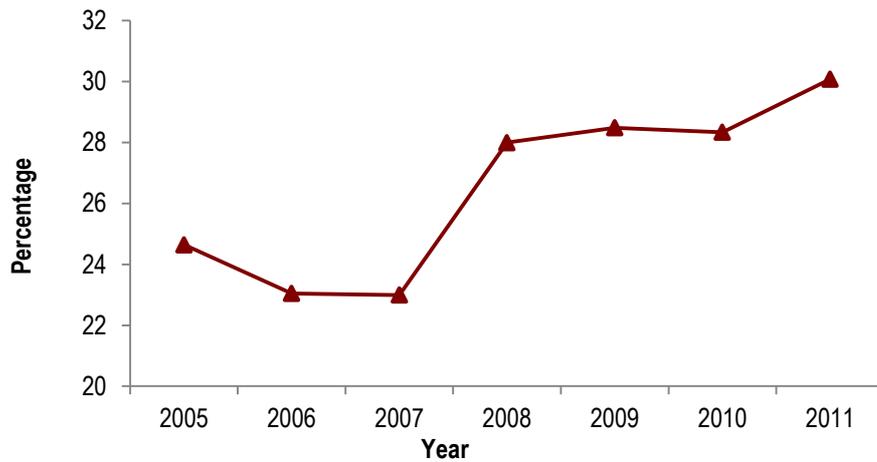


Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Australian Demographic Statistics cat. no. 3101.0

Note: The calculation in the above table excludes those for whom school attendance status is not known and for whom highest level of schooling is not known

In contrast, VET in Schools participation rates for 15–19 year-old full-time school students continue to increase (see Figure 2.6). Since 2007 the rate has increased from 23 per cent to 30.1 per cent in 2011 (the most recent year for which data is available).

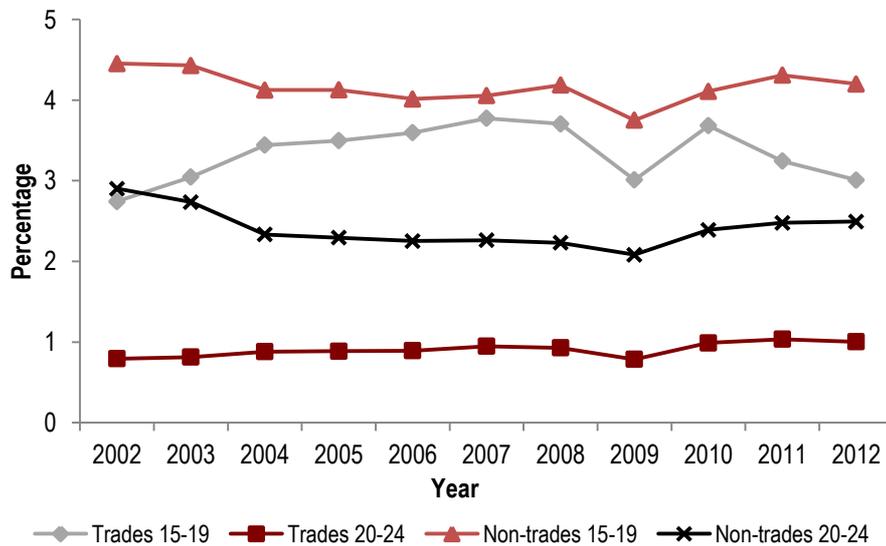
FIGURE 2.6: VET IN SCHOOLS PARTICIPATION AS A PROPORTION OF 15–19 FULL-TIME SCHOOL STUDENTS, 2005–11



Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS National Schools Statistics Collection, 4221.0.

The rate of apprenticeship commencements over time is more complex because of its connection to the labour market and to government incentive payments. Figure 2.7 shows apprenticeship commencement rates for 15–19 and 20–24 year-olds both in trades and non-trades areas. The most notable feature of the table is a decline in the rate of commencements in trades apprenticeships for 15–19 year-olds since 2010, perhaps due to unfavourable labour market conditions for this age group, but also perhaps due to increasing school participation among the younger age group.

FIGURE 2.7: APPRENTICESHIP COMMENCEMENTS TO POPULATION, 15-19 AND 20-24 YEAR OLDS, AUSTRALIA, 2002-2012

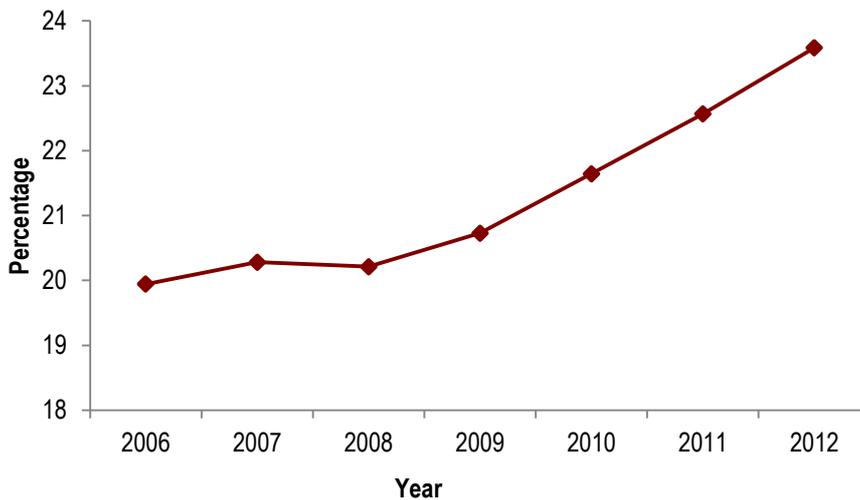


Source: NCVET National apprentice collection, December quarter 2012.

Higher education participation

Higher education participation for all 18–24 year-old domestic students increased steadily from 19.9 per cent in 2006 to 23.6 per cent in 2012 (see Figure 2.8). This is due to a variety of factors that may include labour market conditions and government policy aimed at increasing rates of participation in higher education.

FIGURE 2.8: PERCENTAGE OF ALL 18–24 YEAR-OLD DOMESTIC STUDENTS ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 2006–12

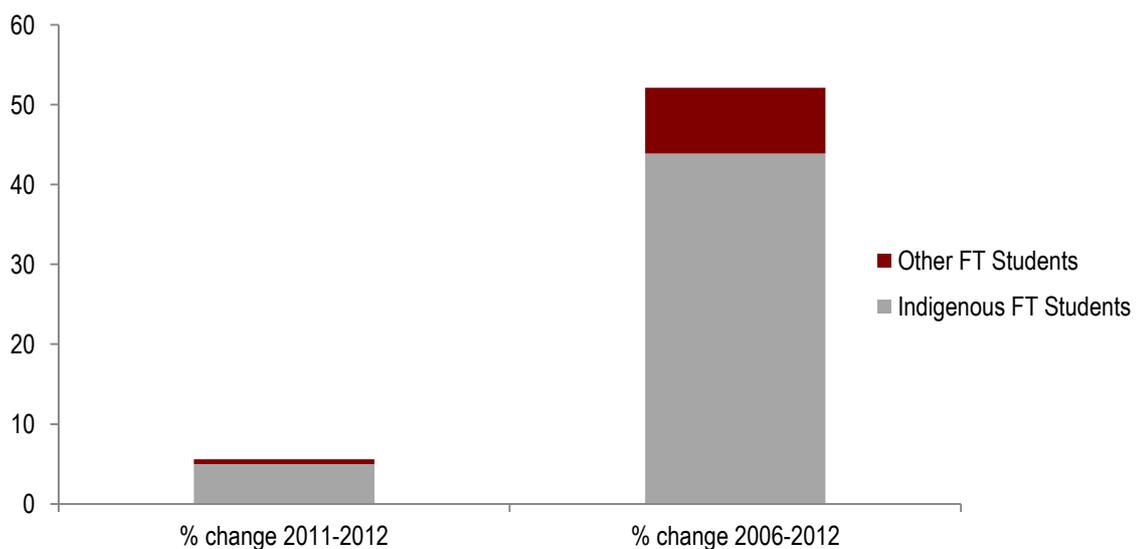


Sources: DEEWR, *Higher Education Statistics Collection*; ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, 3101.0.

Participation of disadvantaged cohorts

Data from the ABS Schools Australia collection shows that the secondary school participation rate for 15–19 year-old Indigenous youth has increased at a far greater rate since 2006 than for non-Indigenous students (increased by 43.9% for Indigenous students since 2006 as compared to 8.3% for other students).

FIGURE 2.9: PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN FULL-TIME SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTICIPATION BY INDIGENOUS STATUS 15-19 YEAR OLDS, 2006-2012

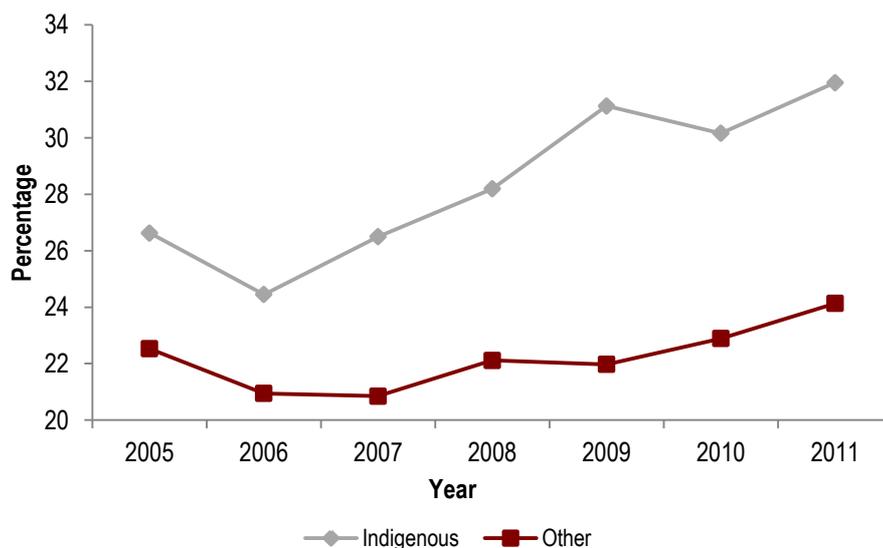


Source: ABS Schools Australia 4221.0, 2012

Note: The percentage change figures for 2001-2012 are derived by subtracting the number of students in 2011 from 2012 and dividing by the number of students in 2011 (split by Indigenous full-time students and other full-time students) and then converting this to a percentage. The same approach was used for the change from 2006 to 2012.

In addition to the increased participation in secondary schools, Figure 2.10 indicates that there has also been an increased rate of Indigenous youth participation in VET in Schools (to 2011). Indeed the rate of increase has been higher for Indigenous youth than non-Indigenous youth. There does not appear to have been much change in participation in VET in Schools over time by SES disadvantage or by remoteness (see table A2.10 and A2.11 in Appendix 2).

FIGURE 2.10: VET IN SCHOOLS PARTICIPATION BY INDIGENOUS STATUS AS A PROPORTION OF 15–19 YEAR-OLD FULL-TIME SCHOOL STUDENTS, 2005–11

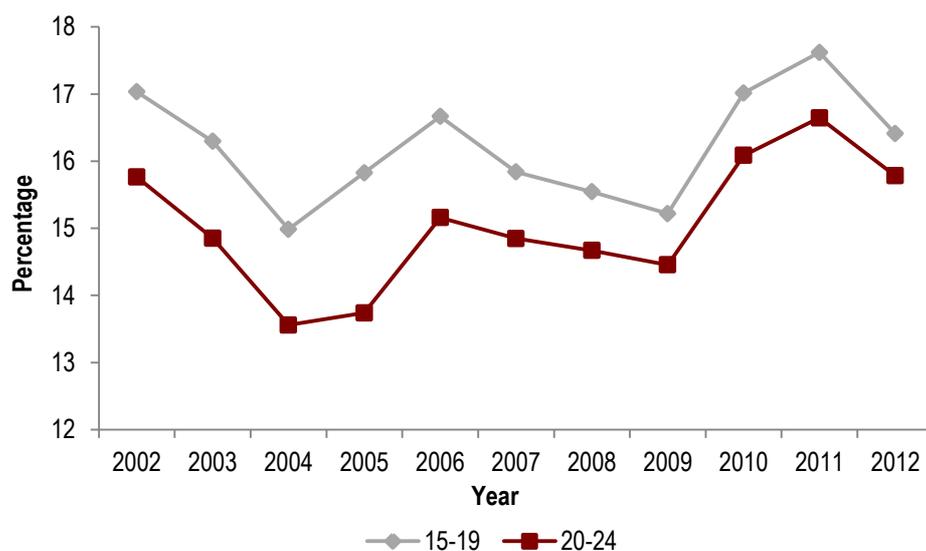


Source: NCVET VET in Schools collection (excludes Queensland data because of the very large increase in the number of unknowns in 2010 making that data unreliable when split by Indigenous status), ABS National Schools Statistics Collection, 4221.0.

Participation in VET by non-school Indigenous 15–19 and 20–24 year-olds without Year 12 has been variable since 2002 (refer to Figure 2.11). It increased for both groups for the period 2009–2011 (there was an increase of 2.4 percentage points for 15–19 year-olds and 2.1 percentage points for 20–24 year-olds), before participation dipped again in 2012, as it did for all VET students not at school and without Year 12. As mentioned earlier, the reason for this is not entirely clear.

There seems to have been some increase in VET participation by disability status (proportion enrolled in VET with a reported disability as compared to those without a reported disability). Of 15–19 year-olds, 8.4 per cent of enrolments in 2012 were by students reporting a disability status as compared with 6.1 per cent in 2002, while for 20–24 year-olds, 8.2 per cent of enrolments in 2012 were by students reporting a disability as compared with 6.4 per cent in 2002 (see Table A2.13 in Appendix 2).

FIGURE 2.11: VET PARTICIPATION BY INDIGENOUS YOUTH WHO HAVE LEFT SCHOOL WITHOUT COMPLETING YEAR 12, AS A PERCENTAGE OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH AT THAT AGE GROUP, 2002–12



Sources: National VET Provider Collection; ABS, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, 3238.0 (Series B projections).

Note: The calculation in the above table excludes those for who school attendance status is not known and for whom highest level of schooling is not known

Participation in education by the level of SES disadvantage and remoteness can be further examined by using the 2006 and 2011 ABS census data. Table 2.1 on participation by SES disadvantage shows that school participation rates have clearly increased for the bottom two quintiles to a greater extent than that of the top three quintiles (although they are starting from a higher base). The table also shows that there has been some increase in technical and further education for 20–24 year-olds in the bottom two quintiles but not the other quintiles.

For 15–19 year-olds participation in technical or further education has decreased for all quintiles, presumably because they are staying at school longer and also because higher education participation rates have increased. Higher education participation rates have increased across all five quintiles although the rate of increase has been larger for the top three quintiles.

TABLE 2.1: EDUCATIONAL ATTENDANCE IN SEIFA QUINTILES 15-24 YEAR OLDS 2006 AND 2011 (%)

		Age 15-17		Age 18-19		Age 20-24	
		2006	2011	2006	2011	2006	2011
Secondary school	Quintile 1	65.8	73.1	9.5	11	0.9	0.7
	Quintile 2	70.8	75.4	8.9	11.9	0.4	0.4
	Quintile 3	71.7	75	9.4	1.8	0.4	0.3
	Quintile 4	72.3	75.9	8.5	1.7	0.4	0.3
	Quintile 5	78.1	81.8	9.7	1.9	0.3	0.3
	Total	73.8	77.3	9.3	10.5	0.4	0.4
Technical and Further Education	Quintile 1	4.3	4.2	14.5	13.9	7.5	8.2
	Quintile 2	4.8	4.7	15.6	15.3	7.7	8.3
	Quintile 3	4.3	4.1	15.4	14.1	7.9	7.7
	Quintile 4	4.1	4	14.6	13.3	7.2	7.4
	Quintile 5	3.3	3.2	13.9	12.2	7.2	7
	Total	3.9	3.9	14.6	13.2	7.4	7.4
University or tertiary education	Quintile 1	0.3	0.4	14.7	19.5	12.2	15.7
	Quintile 2	0.3	0.3	14.4	17.1	12.6	15.2
	Quintile 3	0.5	0.7	18	24.9	16.3	18.7
	Quintile 4	0.9	1.2	20.4	29.5	17.5	23.1
	Quintile 5	1.8	2	34.8	47.8	30.4	35.9
	Total	1.1	1.2	24.9	28.7	22.1	25.8

Source: ABS census data, 2006 and 2011, derived from table builder basic, Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia, 2006 and 2011, 2033.0.55.001

Considering remoteness, Table 2.2 shows that there has been an increase in secondary school participation for 15–17 year-olds in remote and particularly very remote areas; more so than for the other regions. However, the school participation rate for 15–17 year-olds in remote and very remote areas is still well below that of the general population.

In 2011, participation in technical and further education by young people in remote and very remote areas was below the overall population, while for higher education it was well below the population. There has been a slight increase in higher education participation for young people in remote areas between 2006 and 2011, and in very remote areas a slight increase in participation in technical and further education.

TABLE 2.2: EDUCATIONAL ATTENDANCE IN REMOTE AND VERY REMOTE REGIONS 15-24 YEAR OLDS 2006 AND 2011 (%)

		Age 15-17		Age 18-19		Age 20-24	
		2006	2011	2006	2011	2006	2011
Secondary school	Major cities	75.5	79.2	9.2	10.4	0.4	0.4
	Inner regional	72.7	75.4	10.6	1.6	0.4	0.3
	Outer regional	69.6	72.4	8	1.5	0.3	0.3
	Remote	60.4	64.4	4.2	6.5	0.2	0.1
	Very remote	35.7	49.1	4.1	4.3	0.7	0.4
	Total	73.8	77.3	9.3	10.5	0.4	0.4
Technical and Further Education	Major cities	3.5	3.4	15	13.1	7.6	7.5
	Inner regional	5.1	5	14.6	14.7	7.7	8.1
	Outer regional	4.5	4.8	12.3	12.4	5.8	6.2
	Remote	3.9	3.5	9.6	9.4	4.2	4.7
	Very remote	1.8	2.3	3.9	4.3	2.5	2.7
	Total	3.9	3.9	14.6	13.2	7.4	7.4
University or tertiary education	Major cities	1.3	1.4	29.7	34.8	25.6	30.1
	Inner regional	0.5	0.5	14.9	19.5	14.4	15.6
	Outer regional	0.6	0.7	10.1	13.1	7.9	9.7
	Remote	0.4	0.3	3.3	4.2	3.5	4
	Very remote	0.2	0.2	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Total	1.1	1.2	24.9	28.7	22.1	25.8

Source: ABS census data, 2006 and 2011, derived from table builder basic

Trends in VET participation since the National Partnership was introduced are likely both to have slightly detracted from these estimates (as 15-17 year-old participation has declined among those without Year 12) but slightly added to them (as participation by those aged 18 and over without Year 12 has increased), so on balance perhaps the two cancel one another out.

2.4 Attainment by young people aged 15–24 years

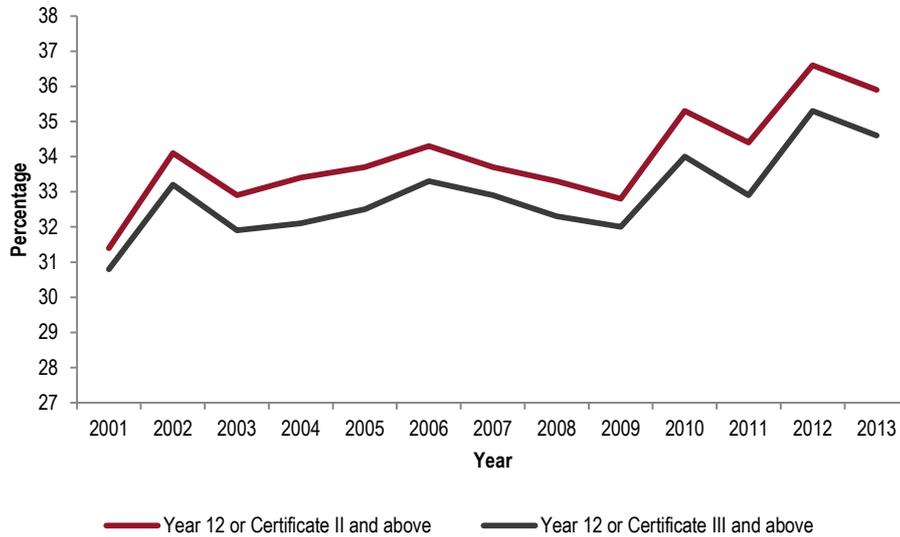
Changes in attainment

Following an unexplained fall in 2011, proportions of young people attaining Year 12, a Certificate II or higher qualification, or a Certificate III or higher qualification increased in 2012 but then decreased again slightly in 2013 for the 15-19 year age group (Figure 2.12). For both age groups the rate of attainment has increased overall over the past few years. For example, year 12 or certificate III and above attainment has increased by 2.6 percentage points since 2009 for 15-19 year olds and by 2.2 percentage points for 20-24 year olds. There is not a large difference when using Certificate II or Certificate III as a benchmark. Year 12 or Certificate II and above attainment

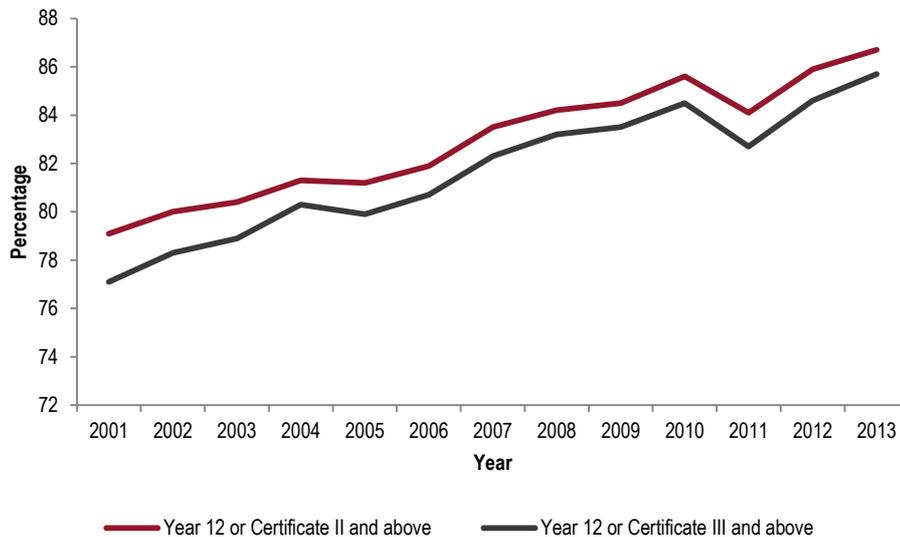
was higher than Year 12 or Certificate III and above attainment by 1.3 percentage points for 15-19 year olds and 1.0 percentage points for 20-24 year olds in 2013.

FIGURE 2.12: PERCENTAGE OF 15-24 YEAR-OLDS WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 OR ACHIEVED A CERTIFICATE II OR HIGHER OR CERTIFICATE III OR HIGHER QUALIFICATION, 2001-13

15-19 YEAR-OLDS



20-24 YEAR-OLDS

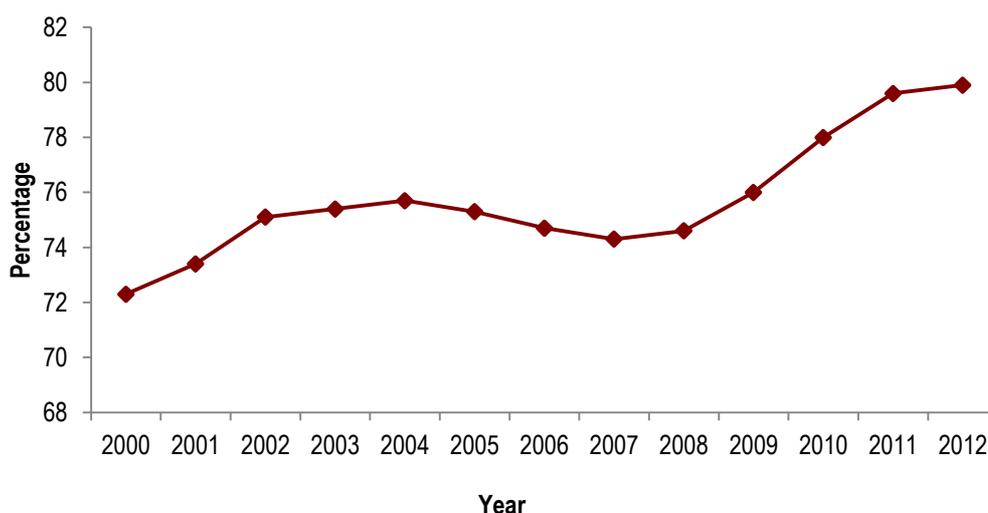


Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*

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 79.9 per cent in 2012 (see Figure 2.13). This increase indicates that there is likely to have been an improvement in the National Partnership target of increasing Year 12 or equivalent attainment.

FIGURE 2.13: APPARENT YEAR 7/8 TO YEAR 12 RETENTION RATES, 2000–12



Source: ABS, *National schools Statistics Collection*.

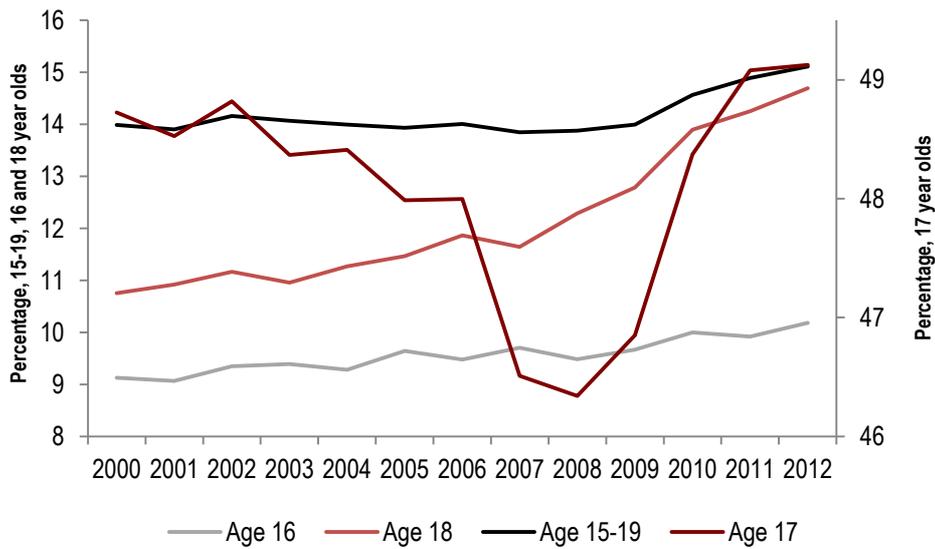
The COAG Reform Council report (2013) argues that if the 2002-2012 trend continues, the 2015 target of 90% of 20-24 year-olds having Year 12 or Certificate II will not be reached.²² However the National Partnership has seen a significant departure from past trends, and this should alter judgements about the likelihood of the target being reached.

The 20-24 year-olds in the 2012 Education and Work survey were aged 15-19 in 2007, and only some would have been influenced by the new participation requirements. However the proportion of 20-24 year-olds who were subject to, and influenced by, the new requirements will grow with future surveys. The proportion of all 17 year-olds (the predominant age of Year 12) who were in Year 12 jumped by around 2% between 2008 and 2010, but the proportion of 15-19 year-olds in Year 12 increased by only 0.7%. This suggests that next year's Education and Work survey may see a departure from the previous trend as a result of the Compact. Such a departure from the previous trend can be expected to increase in future years, as the proportion of all 15-19 year-olds who are in Year 12 jumped markedly after the introduction of the Compact: from 14.0% in 2009 to 15.1% in 2012.

Figure 2.14 shows that the new requirements appear to have had a particular impact on participation in Year 12 by 17-year-olds. Among 16 and 18 year-olds Year 12 participation had been rising well before the Compact, but the Compact does seem to have given a boost to the rate of increase among 18 year-olds. Even putting aside any increases in Year 12 participation (and completion) in the future, the increases that we have seen since the Compact was introduced can be expected to see an impact on the Year 12 or equivalent indicator that will begin in 2015, and increase thereafter. Compared to the 2009 15-19 year-old Year 12 participation rate, the rate in 2010 was 0.6% higher, and in 2011 and 2012 0.9% and 1.1% higher respectively. This suggests that the 2016 and 2017 surveys will see an increase of around 1% in the 20-24 year-old attainment rate as a result of the Compact.

²² COAG Reform Council 2013, *Education in Australia 2012: Five years of performance*, available at: <http://www.coagreformcouncil.gov.au/reports/education/education-australia-2012-five-years-performance>

FIGURE 2.14: PARTICIPATION IN YEAR 12 BY AGE 2000-2012 (%)



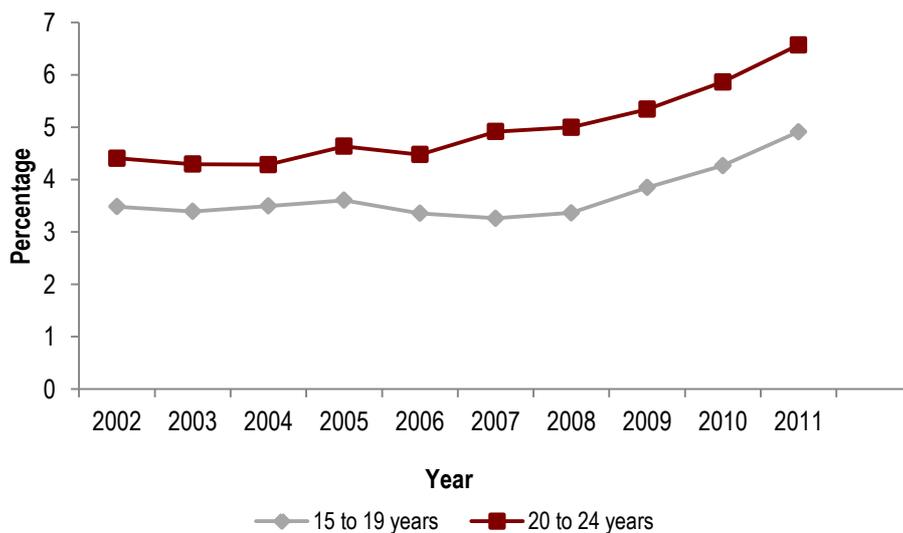
Source: ABS 2013 National Schools Statistics Collection, cat. no. 4221.0, table 40a

VET attainment

The proportion of 15–24 year-olds completing a publicly funded VET qualification at Certificate II level or higher each year has shown a noticeable increase between 2008 and 2011²³ (an increase of 1.5 percentage points for 15–19 year olds and 1.6 percentage points for 20–24 year olds; see Figure 2.14).

VET in Schools attainment increased substantially for the period 2005–09, but then decreased slightly (for 16 and 17 year-olds) or remained level (for 15 year-olds) in 2010 (Table A2.18 in Appendix 2).²⁴

FIGURE 2.15: VET CERTIFICATE II AND ABOVE ATTAINMENT FOR 15–24 YEAR-OLDS, AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AT THAT AGE GROUP, 2002–11



Sources: National VET Provider Collection; ABS Australian Demographic Statistics cat. no. 3101.

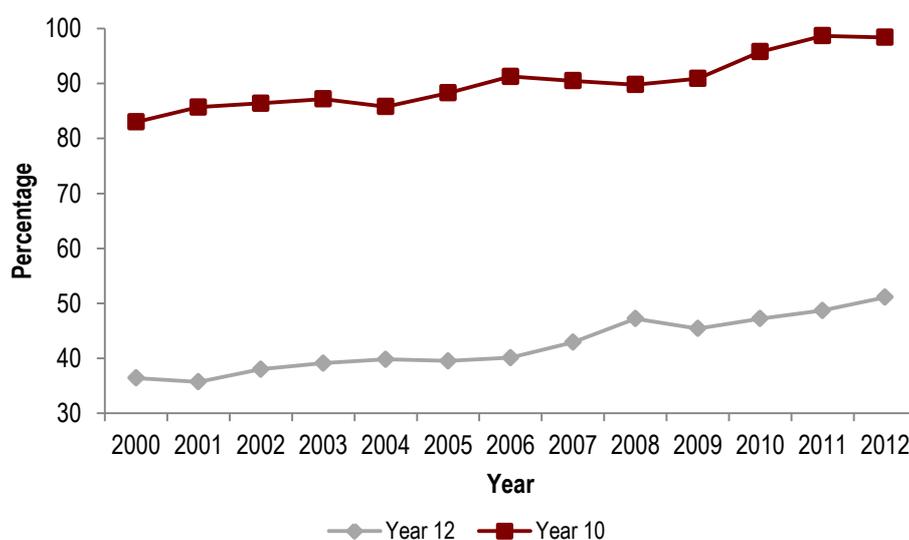
²³ Note that this excludes VET qualifications attained through private providers, unless via publicly funded places.

²⁴ For VET in Schools attainment data there is a considerable time lag to publication of the data. Data for 2011 VET in Schools attainment should be available in December 2013.

Retention and attainment of disadvantaged cohorts

Figure 2.15 shows that apparent Year 12 retention rates for Indigenous students rose substantially from 2000 to 2008²⁵ (36.4% to 47.2%), dipped slightly in 2009 but then has increased again steadily until 2012 (where it reached 51.1%). Year 10 retention rates for Indigenous young people also increased substantially (by 7.5 percentage points) from 2009 to 2012 (see Table 2.20 in Appendix 2). In comparison, the non-Indigenous retention rate has remained relatively stable; although it is much higher in absolute terms (see Table A2.21 in Appendix 2).

FIGURE 2.16: INDIGENOUS YEAR 10 AND YEAR 12 RETENTION RATES, 2000–12



Source: ABS, *National Schools Statistics Collection*.

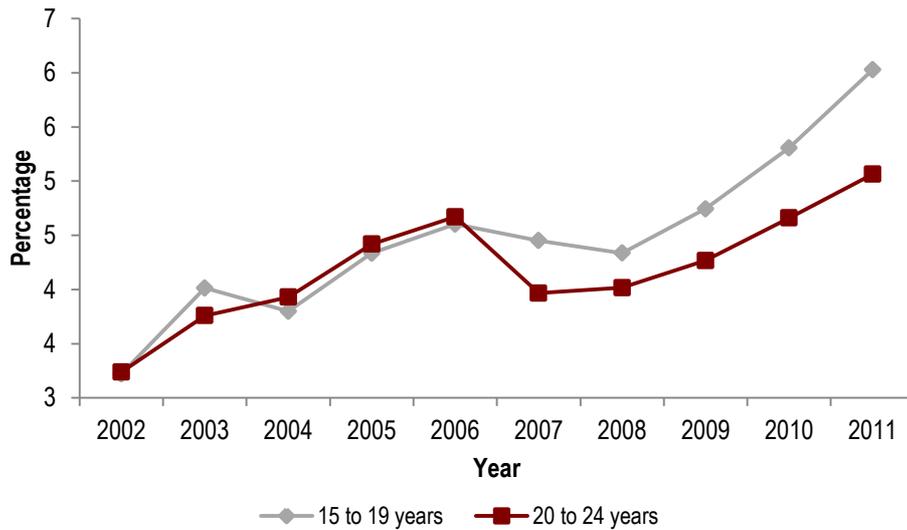
There was little change in the proportion of 15–19 year old Indigenous youth completing VET in Schools qualifications between 2005 and 2008, but this was followed by an increase of 3 percentage points in 2009 and then a drop of just over 2 percentage points for 2010 and 2011 (to 3.8% as compared to 6.4% for others).

There has been a substantial rise in non-school VET completions from 2007–2011 at Certificate II level and above by Indigenous youth aged 15–19 years old (a rise of 2.5 percentage points) and 20–24 years old (a rise of 2.8 percentage points). This rise is greater than for other 15–19 and 20–24 year-olds (a rise of 1.6 percentage points, see ATable 2.23 in Appendix 2).

Between 2006 and 2011, 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 2.16 would seem to indicate that attainment of vocational education and training qualifications increased for those reporting a disability for the period 2002–11, particularly since 2008.

²⁵ However the identification of Indigenous youth in schools by ABS has improved over the period.

FIGURE 2.17: COURSE COMPLETIONS AT CERTIFICATE II LEVEL OR ABOVE FOR 15-24 YEAR-OLDS REPORTING A DISABILITY AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COMPLETIONS, 2002-11

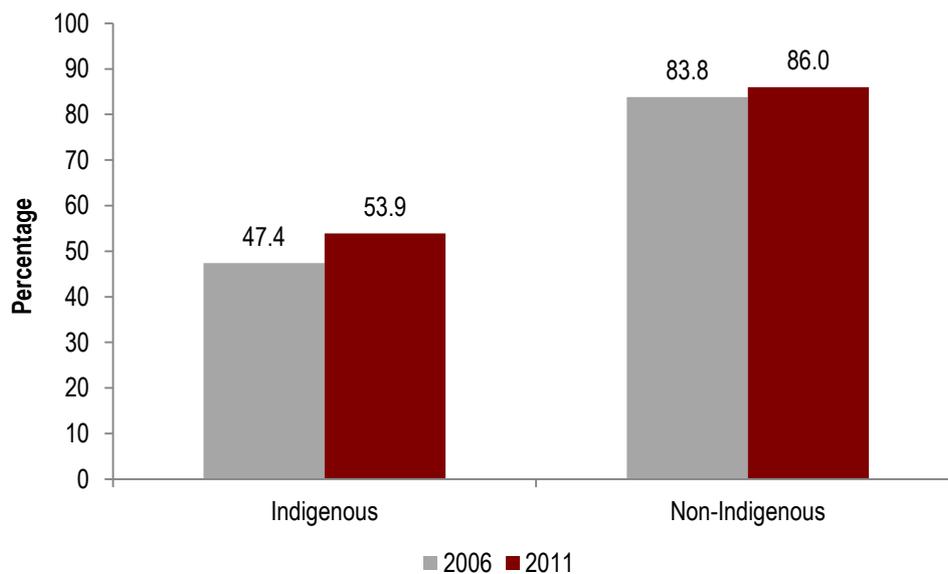


Source: National VET Provider Collection.
This excludes those attending school and those whose disability status is not known.

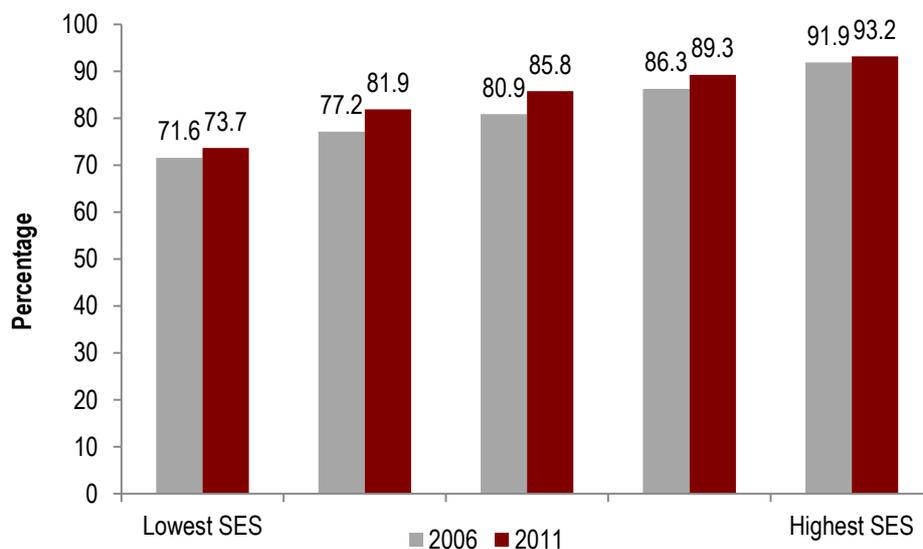
Other data based on the census and reported by the COAG Reform Council (2013) indicates that Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above attainment has increased between 2006 and 2011 for 20-24 year-olds from an Indigenous background, low socio-economic background and from very remote/remote areas. Figures 5.6, 6.4 and 7.3 from the COAG Reform Council's report are replicated below.

FIGURE 2.18 YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT OR CERTIFICATE II OR ABOVE ATTAINMENT FOR VARIOUS 20-24 YEAR OLD DISADVANTAGED GROUPS, 2006 AND 2011

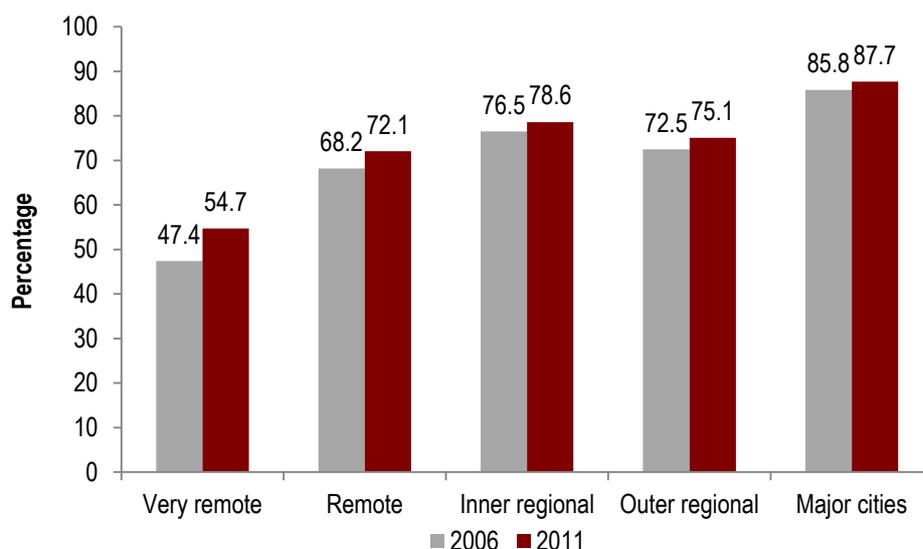
(a) Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above, Indigenous status, 2006 and 2011



(b) Year 12 or equivalent or Certificate II or above, by socio-economic areas, 2006 and 2011



(c) Year 12 or equivalent or certificate II or above, remoteness, 2006 and 2011



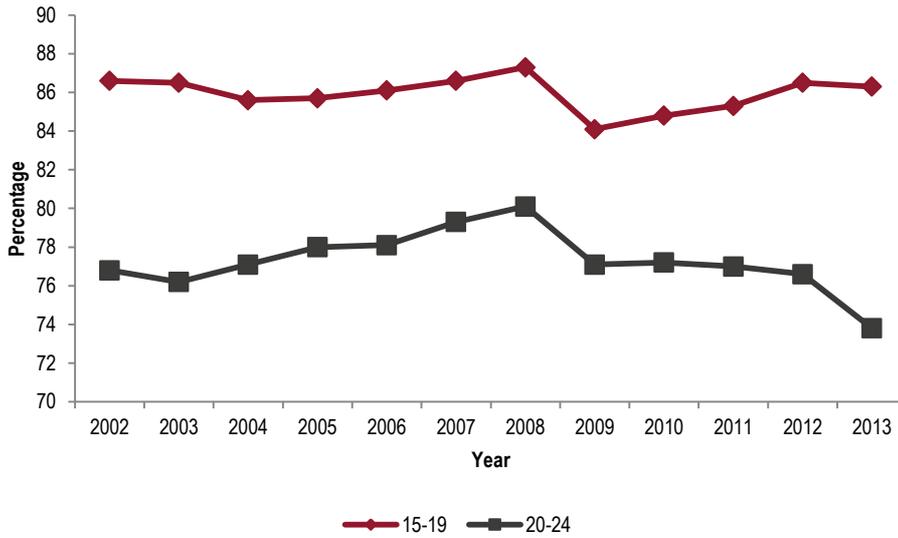
Source: COAG Reform Council (2013) Education in Australia 2012: Five years of performance, figures 5.6, 6.4 and 7.3 respectively. Charts derived from 2006 and 2011 ABS census data

2.5 Transitions to further education, training and employment

Proportions of young people fully engaged

Between 2008 and 2009, the proportion of 15–24 year-olds fully engaged in employment, education or training dropped by around 3 percentage points following the Global Financial Crisis. For 15–19 year-olds the proportions fully engaged have increased slightly since 2009 (by 2.2 percentage points) but for 20–24 year-olds they have decreased even further (see Figure 2.19), meaning that there are still considerable proportions not fully engaged.

FIGURE 2.19: PERCENTAGE OF 15–24 YEAR-OLDS FULLY ENGAGED IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR EMPLOYMENT, 2002–13



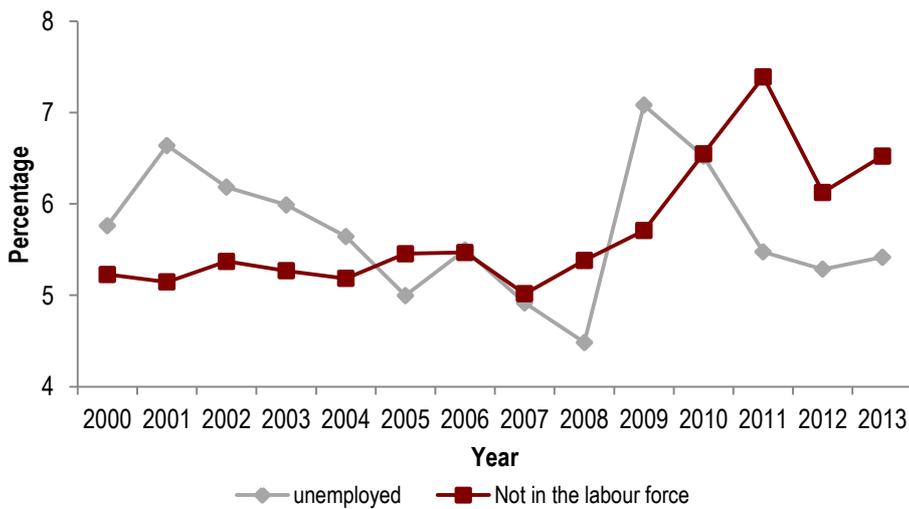
Source: ABS, *Survey of Education and Work*

The NEET cohort

For 17–19 year-olds²⁶, Figure 2.20 disaggregates those not engaged in employment or full-time education into those who are unemployed and those not in the labour force. The data shows that the proportion unemployed and not in full-time education has dropped 1.7 percentage points between 2009 and 2013, but remains above the pre-GFC levels. In 2011 the proportion not in the labour force or in education dropped 0.9 percentage points from its 2009 high, but is still higher than in 2008, which was just pre-GFC.

The decline in the numbers unemployed and not in full-time 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 2008.²⁷

FIGURE 2.20: PERCENTAGE OF 17–19 YEAR-OLDS NOT EMPLOYED AND NOT IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION, 2000–13



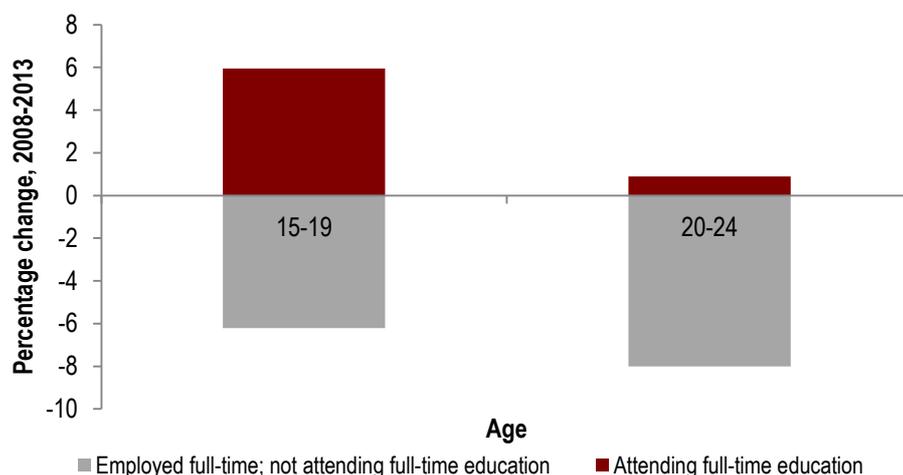
Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed* –Electronic Delivery, Table 03b: Labour force status for 15–19-year-olds by educational attendance, age and sex, 6291.0.55.001.

²⁶ The 15-17-year-age group rather than the 15-19-year age-group is used here as most 15 and 16 year olds are still at school
²⁷ From 249,600 in August 2008 to 159,400 in August 2013; 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.

Figure 2.21 shows a continuing drop in full-time employment between 2008 and 2013 for 15–19 year-olds (a 6.2 per cent drop) and 20–24 year-olds (an 8.0 per cent drop). While for 15–19 year-olds much of this drop has been supplanted by an increase in full-time education (of 5.9 per cent), for 20–24 year-olds this is not the case (full-time education has only seen an increase of 0.9 per cent).

It is worth noting that following the GFC there was a drop in full-time employment across the entire 15–64 year-old civilian population, with the largest effect for 15-24 year-olds. Table A2.40 in Appendix 2 shows that from 2008-09 there was a drop in full-time employment by 1.3 percentage points and by 2013 this has fallen by a further 0.3 of a percentage point. This has been accompanied by an increase among the 15-64 year age in unemployment and a slight increase in part-time work. However, the drop in full-time employment after the GFC in 2008 is greater for the 15–24 year age group than for the overall population²⁸. Table A2.32 in appendix 2 shows that for 15-19 year olds not in full-time education full-time employment dropped 6.2 percentage points and for 20-24 year olds the drop in full-time employment was 8.0 percentage points.

FIGURE 2.21: CHANGE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF 15–24 YEAR-OLDS EMPLOYED FULL-TIME OR ATTENDING FULL-TIME EDUCATION, 2008–13 (MAY FIGURES)

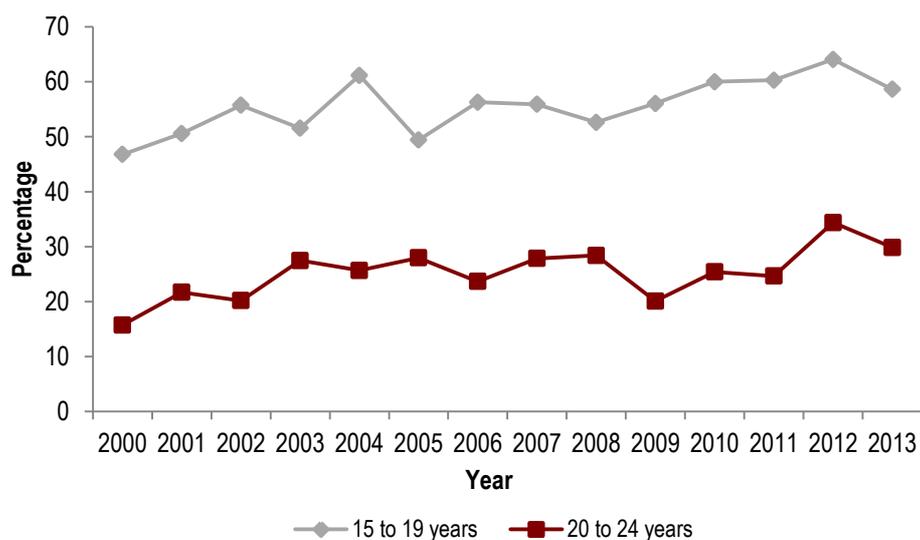


Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*—Electronic Delivery, Table 03a, 6291.0.55.001.

Following on from this, transitions appear to be becoming more difficult for young people. Figure 2.22 shows that the proportion of young people who are unemployed and looking for their first full-time job has been on the increase in recent years despite a decrease from 2012 to 2013.

²⁸ 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 2.22: UNEMPLOYED (NOT ATTENDING FULL-TIME EDUCATION) AND LOOKING FOR FIRST JOB AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL UNEMPLOYED (NOT ATTENDING FULL-TIME EDUCATION), 2000–13



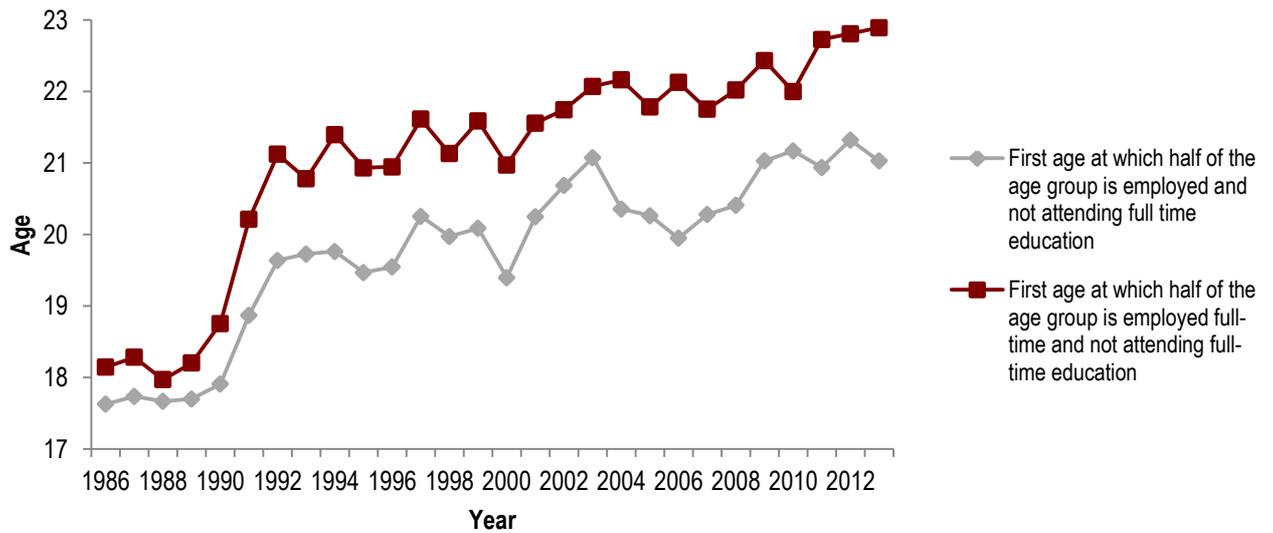
Source: ABS, *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed—Electronic Delivery*, Tables 03b and 03c, May figures, 6291.0.55.001.

The age of transitioning to work has been increasing over time. Figure 2.23 shows two things:

- The age at which half of the group of young people is employed and not attending full-time education, and
- The age at which half of young people are in full-time employment and not attending full-time education.

It shows quite clearly that the age of transition to work has increased by several years since 1986. Much of this is as a result of young people staying in full-time education longer. Table A2.36 in Appendix 2 shows that in 1986 the first age at which half of all people were not attending full-time education was 16.8. This compares to 2013 where the age had risen by 2.2 years to 19 years. This means that young people are more likely now to stay on in full-time study to obtain post school qualifications. In addition, moving into full-time work would seem to be taking longer. Table A2.36 in Appendix 2 shows that in 1986 there was a difference of 1.3 years between finishing full-time study and being employed full-time (based on measures of where half the age group were at) whereas by 2013 this difference had increased to 3.9 years.

FIGURE 2.23: AGE OF TRANSITION INTO EMPLOYMENT AND FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

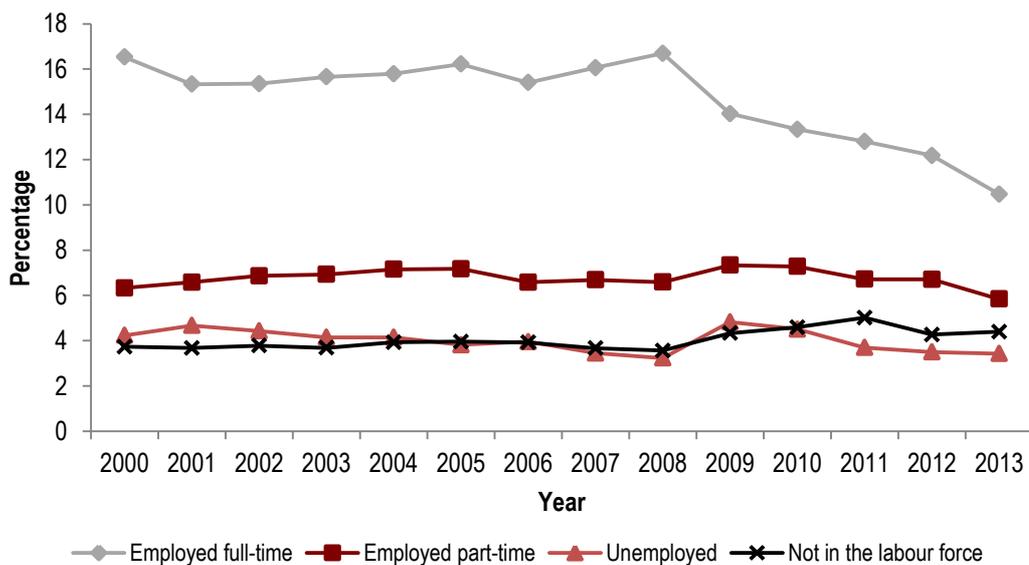


Source: ABS 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, single year tables, May figures

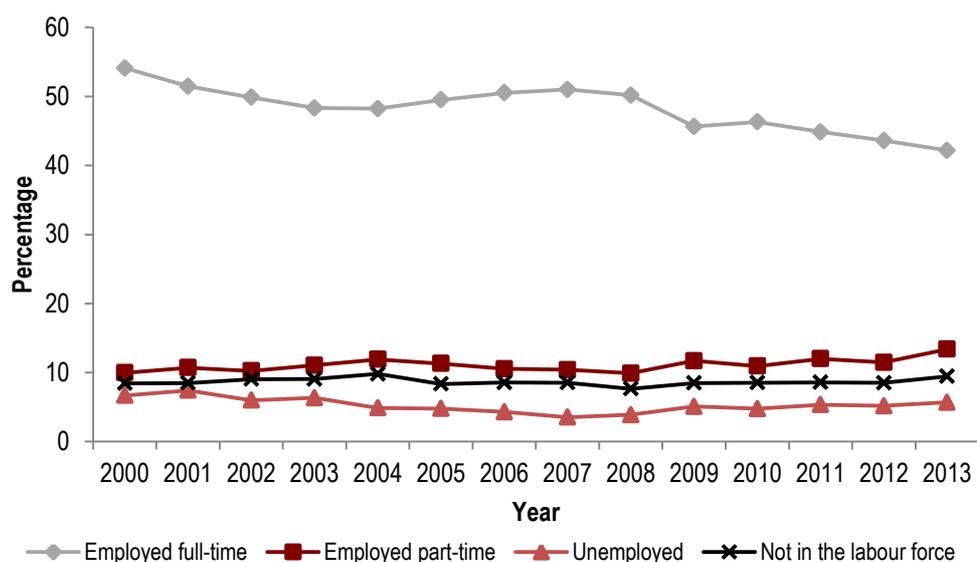
Figure 2.24 summarises overall trends for 15–24 year-olds in terms of labour force status for those not in full-time education. The figure shows that for 15–19 and 20–24 year-olds, there has been movement out of full-time employment since 2008. This has been accompanied by some increases in the not employed categories and in part-time employment, although this trend seems to have been arrested since 2011 for 15–19 year-olds. For that age group, there has been a substantial increase in the proportion in full-time education (an increase of 4.1 percentage points since 2011, see also Table A2.34 in Appendix 2).

FIGURE 2.24: LABOUR FORCE STATUS FOR 15–24 YEAR-OLDS NOT IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION, AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION AT THAT AGE GROUP, 2000–13

(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.

It is worth noting that the age of life transitions in areas other than education and employment have also been increasing for young people. For example, proportions of young people who identify as independent (from the family home) and whom own their own home has been decreasing over the last few years. In addition, women are on average giving birth at older ages as compared to 10 years ago, and marriage rates for both male and female 15-24 year olds have been decreasing.²⁹

Further study for VET graduates

When examining transitions, it is important to keep in mind that many VET graduates then advance to further study (either via VET or university).

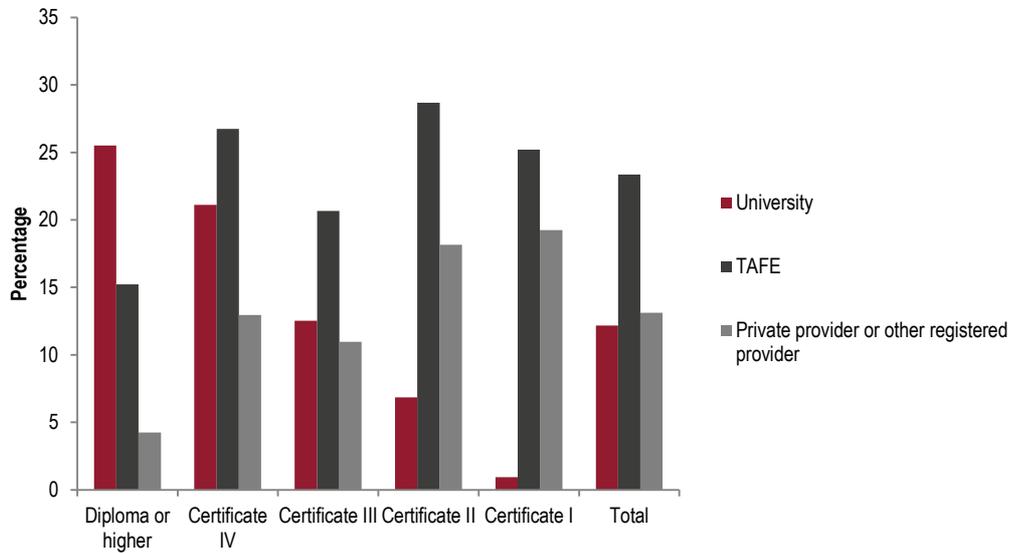
Figure 2.25 shows the proportions of VET graduates who go on to further study by the qualification level attained and type of institution. The data shows that in addition to employment outcomes, further study is a significant pathway for VET graduates, particularly higher-level VET graduates, and more so for 15–19 than for 20–24 year-olds overall. In total nearly half (48.6%) of 15-19 year old VET graduates stated that they went on to some further study in 2013 whereas for 20-24 year olds the figure was 38.8%.

University is a significant pathway for diploma graduates for both the 15–19 and 20–24 year-old age groups, and in addition, substantial proportions of Certificate IV graduates go on to university (21% of 15–19 year old graduates and 18% of 20–24 year old graduates). The data also shows that further VET study is a significant pathway for Certificate IV and below graduates aged 15–24 years old.

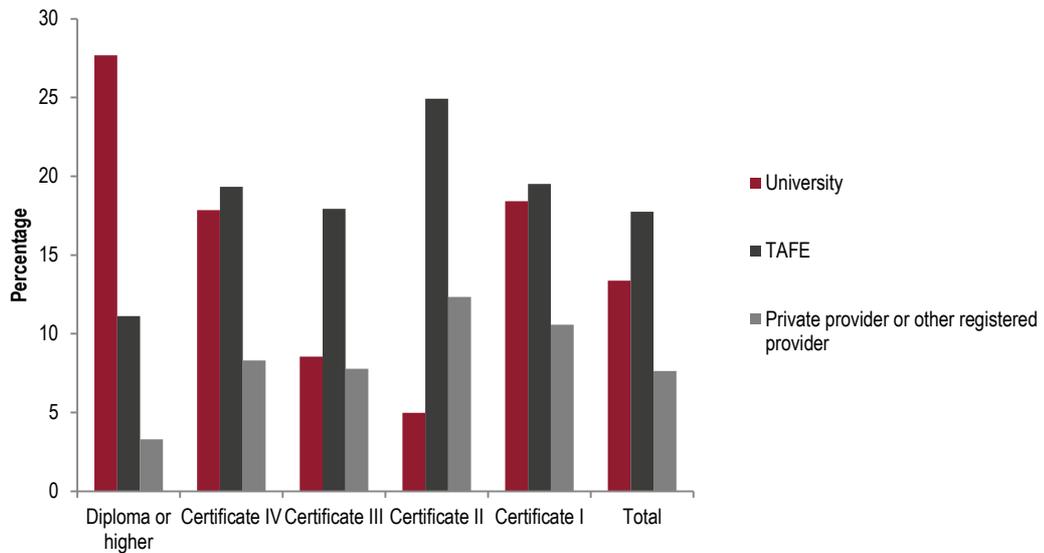
²⁹ Foundation for Young Australians, *How young people are faring 2013*, available at: http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/FYA_HYPAF-2013_Digital1.pdf

FIGURE 2.25: PERCENTAGE OF VET GRADUATES GOING ON TO FURTHER STUDY AGED 15–24 YEARS-OLD BY QUALIFICATION LEVEL ATTAINED AND TYPE OF INSTITUTION, 2013

(a) 15–19 year-olds



20–24 year-olds



Note: The percentages are based on total number of graduates at each qualification level, which includes a small proportion of students (about 3 percent) for which further study status is not stated.
 Source: NCVET, *Student Outcomes Survey 2011*.

Transitions and engagement for disadvantaged cohorts

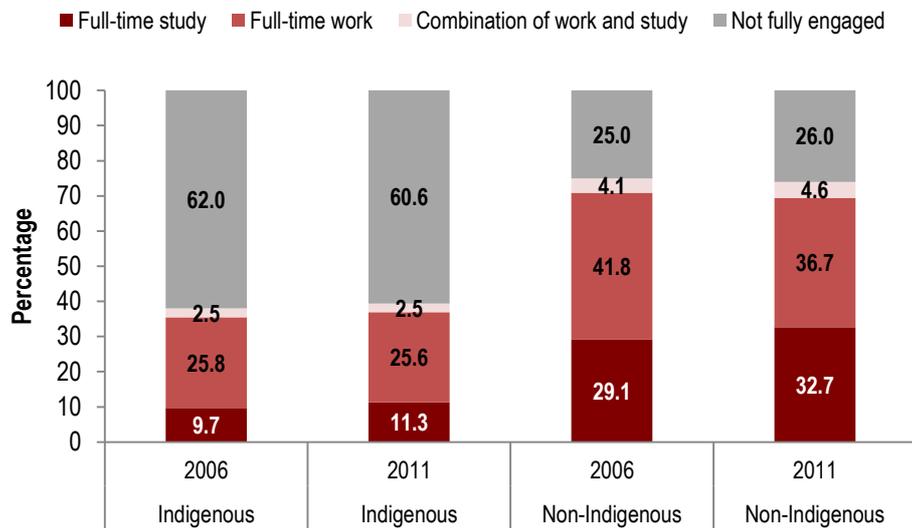
The COAG Reform Council (2013) has compiled data on youth engagement in work for disadvantaged groups, Indigenous, low SES and remote/very remote area 17-24 year-olds. Charts 5.8, 6.5 and 7.4 from the Reform Councils report are replicated in Figure 2.26 below. The figure shows that the proportion of those not fully engaged dropped slightly between 2006 and 2011 for 17-24 year-olds from Indigenous backgrounds however is still at more than double the rate for non-Indigenous 17-24 year-olds.

For those from the lowest SES quintile the proportions not fully engaged increased slightly between 2006 and 2011 (40.1% to 41.7%). The proportion employed in full-time work for this group dropped 5.5% over the period, which is more than any other quintile. In addition people in this group are less likely to be in full-time study than any of the other quintiles.

The story is a little different for those from very remote and remote areas with the proportion not fully engaged dropping slightly between 2006 and 2011 (2.1 and 0.5 % respectively). For those from very remote areas the drop is accompanied by a 3.0 percentage point increase in full-time employment while for those in remote areas there was an increase of 0.7 percentage points in full-time study. Nevertheless, young people from very remote areas are much more likely and young people from remote areas are somewhat more likely to be not fully engaged compared to their major city counterparts.

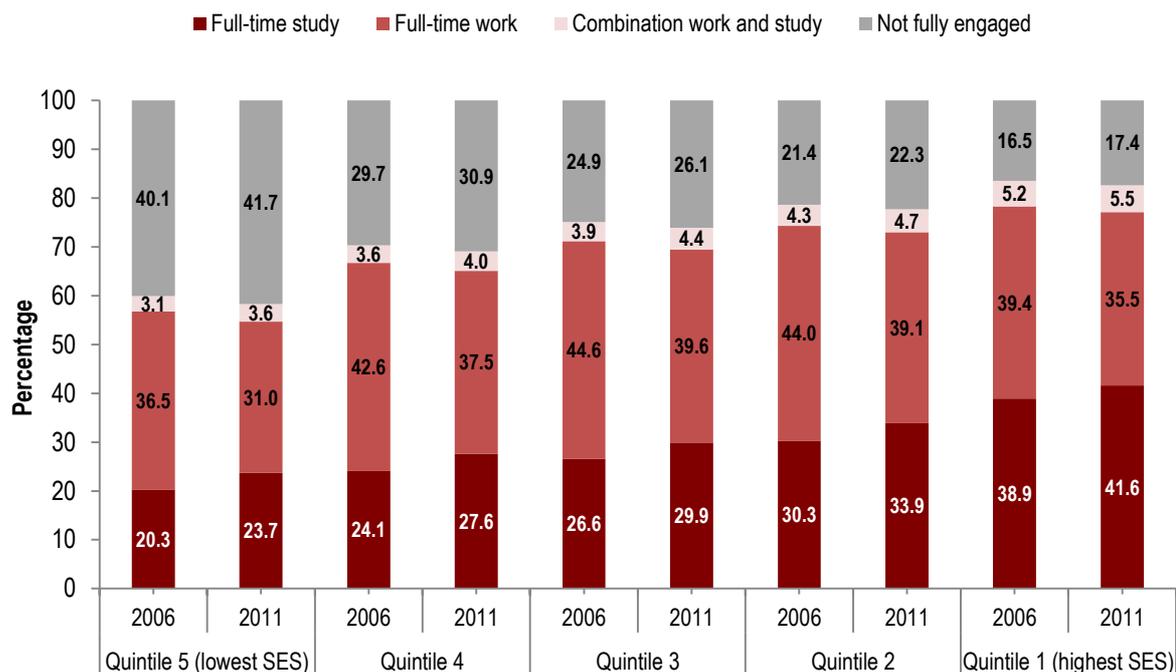
FIGURE 2.26: ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR 17-24 YEAR OLD DISADVANTAGED GROUPS
PERCENTAGE OF FULLY ENGAGED³⁰ 18-24 YEAR-OLDS BY SES QUINTILE, 2008-11

(a) 17-24 year olds fully engaged in work or study, Indigenous status, 2006 and 2011

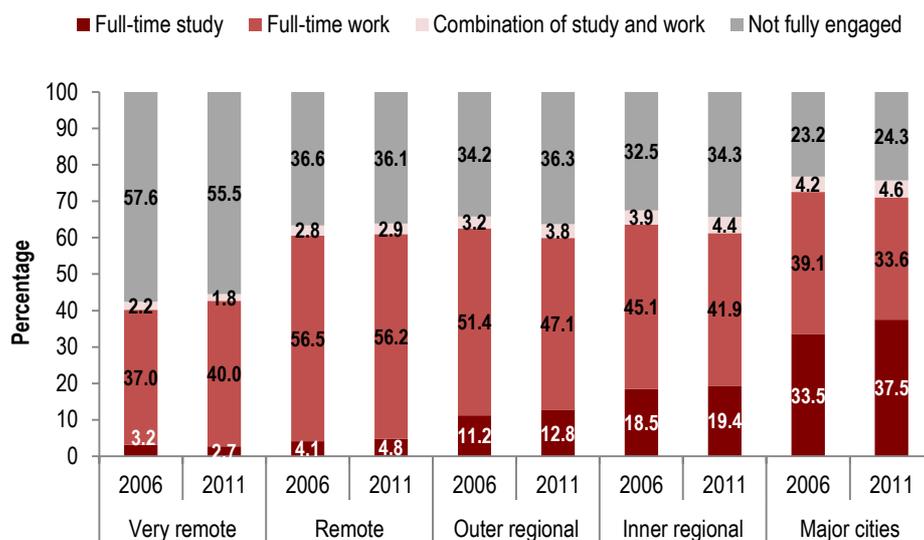


³⁰ 'Engaged' is defined as: in employment or in education and training at or above Certificate III level.

(b) 17-24 year olds fully engaged in work or study, by socio-economic areas, 2006 and 2011



(c) 17-24 year olds fully engaged in work or study, by remoteness, 2006 and 2011



Source: COAG Reform Council (2013) *Education in Australia 2012: Five years of performance*, figures 5.6, 6.4 and 7.3 respectively. Charts derived from 2006 and 2011 ABS census data

3 Assessment of the National Partnership

3.1 Overview of the assessment of the National Partnership

Table 3.1 shows the summary of progress over the three years life of the National Partnership against the evaluation framework.

TABLE 3.1: SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP ACROSS THREE YEARS OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

Evaluation question	Overall assessment
What has happened?	
Has the National Partnership led to changes in activities directed toward participation, attainment and transition outcomes?	<p>There is an elevated profile for, and sharpened focus on, youth attainment and transitions issues and outcomes across jurisdictions</p> <p>The National Partnership has been a catalyst to improve collaboration across education and training sectors to better understand issues and strategies to improve participation, attainment and transitions</p> <p>The National Partnership has increased attention and support for young Australians who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education and training</p> <p>While funding is seen as limited by jurisdictions, it has enabled them to bolster existing (and implement some new) initiatives</p>
Has it worked?	
Has young people's participation in education and training increased?	<p>Young people's participation in full-time education and training has increased</p> <p>There has been an increase in participation levels since the National Partnership was introduced, mainly among younger cohorts (16–17 year-olds)</p> <p>The increase in participation among 15–19 year-olds between 2009 and 2013 was at a rate above the pre-GFC trend (2000–08)</p> <p>We can infer that The Compact with Young Australians has had an impact on teenagers, but not on 20–24 year-olds</p>
Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased?	<p>Year 12 retention rates have increased since the National Partnership was introduced in 2009, although there was a decrease from 2010–11</p> <p>VET Certificate II and above attainment has increased from 2008–12</p>

Are more young people making successful transitions from school?	<p>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</p> <p>The proportion of young people not in education or fully employed has decreased since 2009 but is still not at pre-GFC levels</p> <p>The number of disengaged young people is still significant – and the state of the labour market has the most significant influence on transition outcomes</p>
Was it appropriate?	
Has the National Partnership been consistent with overarching policy objectives?	<p>The National Partnership 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</p> <p>Stakeholders see the National Partnership as an evolution of prior initiatives, rather than a comprehensive new policy/response</p>
Did the National Partnership address areas of need?	<p>The policy imperative that initiated the National Partnership appears to remain – there is an increasing number of disengaged young people</p> <p>National Partnership funding is directed towards areas of need – but stakeholders identified challenges and capacity constraints to meet those needs</p>
How has the National Partnership and its elements complemented other National Partnerships and programs targeting similar outcomes?	<p>Increased collaboration between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions has resulted in better alignment of objectives and programs</p>
Have the National Partnership outcomes and outputs been maximised for the investment?	<p>Measurement against objectives is tracked</p> <p>A number of targets are being achieved</p> <p>The National Partnership has created efficiencies in the youth attainment and transitions area through better coordination of initiatives and information sharing</p> <p>The Compact appears to have increased participation and reduced benefit recipients at minimal cost</p>
How well was it governed and implemented?	
How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the National Partnership?	<p>The Australian Government and States and Territories continue to work in partnership to deliver the National Partnership</p> <p>National Partnership program service providers collaborate through national and State/Territory networks to make program improvements and get programs to work together better</p>
Has governance of the National Partnership worked effectively?	<p>Appropriate governance arrangements are in place at national, jurisdictional and program levels – although it is difficult for some stakeholders to participate in these</p> <p>Positive relationships can generally be seen between stakeholders and the Commonwealth</p>

How well has performance reporting worked?	<p>Program administration and quality of reporting was challenging at first but is improving</p> <p>Annual State and Territory performance reporting has begun to show the outcomes of activities</p> <p>Some program reporting gives limited insight into the impact of programs on youth attainment and transition outcomes</p>
How effective has communication been?	<p>Stakeholders generally understand the National Partnership objectives and value – and this has improved over the life of the National Partnership, particularly for Partnership Brokers</p>

3.2 What has happened under the National Partnership

Evaluation question	Overall assessment
What has happened?	
Has the National Partnership led to changes in activities directed toward participation, attainment and transition outcomes?	<p>There is an elevated profile for, and sharpened focus on, youth attainment and transitions issues and outcomes across jurisdictions</p> <p>The National Partnership has been a catalyst to improve collaboration across education and training sectors to better understand issues and strategies to improve participation, attainment and transitions</p> <p>The National Partnership has increased attention and support for young Australians who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education and training</p> <p>While funding is seen as limited by jurisdictions, it has enabled them to bolster existing (and implement some new) initiatives</p>

The National Partnership has continued to be implemented according to the National Partnership Agreement and continued to focus effort on improving youth attainment and transitions outcomes. Relative to previous investment in the youth attainment and transitions area, the overall level of investment has not increased significantly through the National Partnership. The National Partnership elements have had varying degrees 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 National Partnership since the Year 2 evaluation. The most significant changes include the following:

- Some States and Territories have adjusted the timing, scope and funding of MEAST-funded initiatives
- The National Career Development Strategy was announced
- Some aspects of the Youth Connections Program were updated to improve performance
- 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	Overall assessment
Has it worked?	
<p>Has young people's participation in education and training increased?</p>	<p>Young people's participation in full-time education and training has increased</p> <p>There has been an increase in participation levels since the National Partnership was introduced, mainly among younger cohorts (16–17 year-olds)</p> <p>The increase in participation among 15–19-year-olds between 2009 and 2013 was at a rate above the pre-GFC trend (2000–08)</p> <p>We can infer that The Compact with Young Australians has had an impact on teenagers, but not on 20–24-year-olds</p>
<p>Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased?</p>	<p>Year 12 retention rates have increased since the National Partnership was introduced in 2009</p> <p>VET Certificate II and above attainment has increased from 2008–12</p>
<p>Are more young people making successful transitions from school?</p>	<p>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</p> <p>The proportion of young people not in education or fully employed has decreased since 2009 but is still not at pre-GFC levels</p> <p>The number of disengaged young people is still significant – and the state of the labour market has the most significant influence on transition outcomes</p>

3.3.1 Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

The Australian Government provided project funding to States and Territories under the Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions (MEAST) element of the National Partnership to support initiatives designed to improve educational and transitional outcomes for young people. Funded initiatives fall under one of the following three identified areas for reform: career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring. Table 3.2 below identifies the indicative actions and examples of initiatives falling under each MEAST reform area.

TABLE 3.2: MEAST 'REFORM AREAS', INDICATIVE ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

Reform Area	Indicative Actions	Examples of MEAST-funded initiatives
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering universal high quality individualised career development and pathways planning Involving business and industry and parents/families, in young people's career development Improving the industry relevance of career advice and tailoring it appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Development Frameworks and resources (Vic, ACT, WA) Professional development in career education (QLD, SA, Vic) Additional places in Industry Pathways Program (SA)
Multiple learning pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving access to a broader range of more flexible, relevant and engaging learning options Creating opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom Providing comprehensive program and subject choice, flexible timetabling and instruction methods Increasing engagement by Indigenous young people and young people with disabilities Improving student progression and credit transfer to higher skill and qualification levels Improving access to structured workplace learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for structured workplace learning (Vic, SA, QLD, NSW, ACT) Improved VETiS and VET delivery (QLD, NSW, WA, NT) Industry engagement and participation (NT) Alternative education programs (ACT) New, expanded and extended destination surveys (QLD, Tasmania, SA)
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the provision of a variety of meaningful quality mentoring opportunities Improving mentor training programs and increasing the numbers of trained mentors Increasing the use of mentoring to support young people to development resilience and provide direct assistance at important transition points in their lives Adopting national benchmarks relating to the design and implementation of mentoring programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship Support Officers (Vic) Attendance and Retention Counsellors (Tasmania) Career Mentoring Network Initiative (Vic) Koori Transitions Coordinators (Vic) Mentoring pilot programs (Vic) Youth Mentoring Strategic Framework (WA)

Source: National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions, p. 11.

Funding arrangements

Under the National Partnership, the Australian Government originally allocated \$106 million over four years to the MEAST element – though this figure was altered by individual jurisdictions, as discussed below. Payments were made annually (in July) to States and Territories. Jurisdictions allocated these funds across a number of functions and purposes, including through the independent and Catholic education systems. Original National Partnership funding allocations by jurisdiction are detailed in Table 3.3 below.

TABLE 3.3: ORIGINAL MEAST FUNDING ALLOCATIONS BY YEAR AND JURISDICTION

	2009-10 \$'000	2010-11 \$'000	2011-12 \$'000	2012-13 \$'000	2013-14 \$'000	Total \$'000
NSW	4,246	8,492	8,492	8,492	4,246	33,970
VIC ³¹	3,182	6,364	6,364	6,364	3,182	25,456
QLD	2,797	5,595	5,595	5,595	2,797	22,380
WA	1,406	2,811	2,811	2,811	1,406	11,245
SA	968	1,937	1,937	1,937	968	7,747
TAS ³²	315	630	630	630	315	2,520
ACT	206	412	412	412	206	1,650
NT	179	358	358	358	179	1,431
TOTAL	13,300	26,600	26,600	26,600	26,600	106,400

Source: National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions.

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding

Under the funding arrangements jurisdictions were given the flexibility to reallocate funding across the various elements of the National Partnership to best deliver youth, careers and transitions reforms. The funding variations included:

- Funding to the ACT Government increased from the original allocation of \$412,000 per year to \$662,500 per year to support the Partnership Brokers program through the ACT Strategic Funding Pool.
- Tasmanian funding decreased from the original allocation of \$630,000 per year to \$606,000 due to \$24,000 in funding being redirected to the Partnership Brokers element to ensure the viability of that program in Tasmania.
- On the basis of the similarities between the two initiatives, the School Business Community Partnership Brokers program in Victoria was delivered through Victorian Government's Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) initiative. In this respect, \$42 million in Partnership Broker program funding was dispersed to Victoria through Treasury payment arrangements.

Jurisdictional stakeholders indicated they valued the flexibility provided by the MEAST funding arrangements. This flexibility allowed them to determine where funding could be effectively allocated to address specific needs and complement existing initiatives. Despite this, stakeholders, particularly in smaller jurisdictions, highlighted that the relatively small amount of funding constrained the scope of initiatives they were able to implement and their ability to introduce system-wide changes.

Impact

According to stakeholders and written jurisdiction reports, MEAST funding appears to have been invested in activities that have collectively improved the quality of, and access to, career development, multiple learning

pathways and mentoring. Stakeholders report that the flexibility of funding arrangements provided jurisdictions with the capacity to invest in and trial new approaches, particularly initiatives that were targeted at specific cohorts (such as 15 and 16 year olds) or to mitigate against the effects of specific circumstances (such as disability).

While positive results were reported by all jurisdictions, the overall impact of MEAST funding is not easy to discern at the national level or identify in national-level data. The reasons for this include the diverse foci of MEAST initiatives and the fact that many initiatives were undertaken in a confined geographic location, which does not necessarily correspond to the way national data is captured.

MEAST funding is regarded as having helped to improve the quality of the youth attainment and transitions services offered, often acting as a focus for the coordination of existing programs and services. As an example,, Western Australia reports that a combination of Australian and State Government responses – including those funded through MEAST – have operated in tandem to support young people to get better transition outcomes. They consider that many of the MEAST initiatives, particularly those focused on career development, mentoring and capacity building would provide a foundation for better outcomes in future years.

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.

Most States and Territories have used funding to introduce, trial or expand destination surveys of early school leavers and/or young people that have completed Year 12. In Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia 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. These surveys are deemed critical if governments are to adopt a truly outcome-based approach to transitions policy.

The surveys provide an information base to support policy development and actions needed to help young people engage and remain engaged in education and training, but some are also linked to support services. The Tasmanian Early Leavers Survey, for example, provides each education sector with a list of early leavers who indicated through the telephone survey that they would like someone to contact them in relation to future education and training options. The sectors are then responsible for following up with the young people to provide guidance and advice on education and training options to improve their transition outcomes.

Despite achievements as a result of MEAST funding, the sustainability of programs delivered under the element remain uncertain given the looming expiration of the National Partnership.

Some jurisdictions, such as the Australian Capital Territory, will continue the MEAST activities in some form at the end of the National Partnership, though these programs do not all have sourced funding. Other jurisdictions will not continue MEAST activities after the expiration of the National Partnership.³³ Those who have not planned for the sustainability of MEAST activities recognise that alternative funding arrangements will need to be put in place if activity is to continue.

³³ Some States and Territories planned for initiatives to be bound by the National Partnership 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 these projects and other similar projects will be used to inform current and future policy and program changes.

In terms of challenges in implementing MEAST initiatives, the capacity of the VET sector was raised as an issue. Some jurisdictions reported difficulties accessing 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.

Career Development

Career development was a major focus of MEAST funding in States and Territories, particularly targeting initiatives aimed at:

- Improving the quality of career development skills and capacity of career advisers and teachers to support young people to make effective transitions through school and between school and post-school destinations.
- Improving access to career development support, particularly amongst disadvantaged cohorts of young people.

Improving the quality of career development support

States and Territories have allocated MEAST funding to lift career development skills and capacity through the development of careers policy frameworks and supporting material and support for careers advisers to undertake career education qualifications. Victoria, for example, has developed and implemented a Careers Curriculum Framework, which provides a foundation for career education programs across the school and training sectors. The ACT has developed a Career and Transition Framework, which is an Internet-based resource that operates as a 'one stop shop' for career advisers and young people to access career and transition services, resources and providers with the aim of generating relationships between stakeholders.

The Western Australian Catholic Education Office reports that schools have accessed MEAST funding to enable teachers to meet regularly to discuss their career development initiatives and progress. The funding gave schools the opportunity to increase awareness of career development within the school and look at a holistic approach for future development. Teachers offering career development were able to access a career-coaching course and/or make use of a train the trainer service.

The WA Catholic Education Office reports that funding support for teachers to gain qualifications to teach vocational education and training within schools had never been available prior to the National Partnership. Principals reported that this initiative had been invaluable in the capacity building for VETiS. A significant number of students have enrolled in the certificate courses on offer and have found these courses beneficial for their chosen pathway. The funding allowed students from low socio-economic areas to access certificate courses that would not normally have been possible.

Some States and Territories have used MEAST funding to provide study grants for career education qualifications (such as Certificate IV in Career Development). In Victoria the grants are open to a broad range of career practitioners, including Youth Connections providers and Local Learning and Employment Networks providers. In addition, Regional Career Development Officers have been introduced to run professional learning with career practitioners across schools in all sectors, including adult and community education providers and TAFE providers. For example, in Victoria, study grants were provided to 292 career development practitioners between mid-2010 and the beginning of 2012. This had increased the number of qualified practitioners able to assist young

people with career development and pathway planning. In South Australia, the grants are open to careers advisers and teachers and are supplemented with the introduction of industry placements and industry focus days.

The ACT used MEAST funding to support pathways planning as part of their Career and Transition Framework. MEAST funding has been used to develop pathways planning documents and deliver professional learning workshops for teachers and youth workers on how to use pathways planning.

Independent sector representatives from Queensland were allocated funds via the Queensland Department of Education, and used the funding to support vocational education for teachers in trade training centres and funding teachers to get a Certificate IV in career education.

Stakeholders reported that these initiatives provided a basis for building the capacity of careers practitioners to provide informed and effective career development to young people beyond the National Partnership. With greater numbers of career advisers - and improved career development skills among teachers, other educators and service providers that interact with young people - it is anticipated that access to career development support and resources will improve. This, in turn, is considered to provide a basis for future improvement in transition outcomes for young people.

Improving access to career development support

MEAST funding has been used by some jurisdictions to provide young people with access to quality career development support, especially those considered at higher risk of disengaging.

In the Northern Territory, MEAST funding was used to employ three officers dedicated to developing links with industry and source structured work placement for students undertaking VET in Schools. This was an essential element in a broader strategic development of industry engagement to improve the quality of VET training in schools and to provide students undertaking that training with realistic, aligned pathways to employment beyond school.

Multiple Learning Pathways

Activities to promote multiple learning pathways by States and Territories have tended to encompass a wide range of initiatives, including VET in schools, supporting structured work placement programs as well as various other efforts to target disengaged cohorts of young people and return them to education and training.

VET in Schools

VET in schools (VETiS) refers to vocational training delivered by schools. It can form the initial stages of a vocational education and training pathway. Some States and Territories have used MEAST funding to introduce initiatives to increase access to VET in Schools. Common activities introduced by States and Territories include initiatives to increase the number of students that can achieve full VET certificates, early leaver and school leaver destination surveys and special projects to better understand and address local barriers to young people making successful transitions from school.

In NSW, for example, VETiS is now offered across the State to students in Years 9 and 10, providing a new pathway for students who might otherwise have left school but are now required to remain until they complete Year 10. Students can now begin studying towards an apprenticeship, traineeship or other qualification in Year 9. In Western Australia, MEAST funding has been used to expand and build on VETiS programs. Due to limits on

state VETiS funding, WA reports that this expanded program only exists because of MEAST funding. As part of a broader reform, the NT Government has expanded access to VETiS courses that are aligned with local labour market priorities and underpinned by structured workplace learning.

States and Territories have reported that MEAST funding has been expended to enable more students to achieve full VET certificates. These changes are aimed at expanding the number of young people that complete education and training courses that are counted towards State and Territory attainment National Partnership targets. The ACT Government, for example, is providing support for existing alternative programs and stakeholders to assist students at risk of disengaging to achieve nationally accredited Certificate II qualifications.

A different approach was taken in WA, where funding has been provided through the Department of Corrective Services to deliver additional Certificate IV Workplace Training and Assessment qualifications for their training delivery staff. This investment will build the capacity of the Corrective Services RTO division to deliver additional VET training to Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels for 19-24 year old detainees in custodial centres.

Structured Workplace Learning

Structured workplace learning is a long-running strategy to support young people's understanding of the workplace and potential career options. It provides an opportunity to further develop young people's knowledge of skills in the field of their vocational studies. Under the National Partnership, responsibility for structured workplace learning was effectively transferred to the States and Territories.

A number of States and Territories (including ACT, NT, SA, Vic and NSW) chose to use MEAST funding to maintain structured workplace learning support that was previously provided through the Australian Government's Local Community Partnership program. MEAST funding was typically used to fund positions to work with schools and employers to source and manage student workplace learning placements.

For example, NSW reported allocating MEAST funding for work placement for HSC VET students. In 2012, this had resulted in 57,000 placements for students across the public, Catholic and independent education systems including nearly 1,966 indigenous students and 1,214 students with a disability. The Northern Territory reported an increase from 423 placements in 2010 to 930 placements in 2011, and a further increase to 1,044 in 2012.³⁴

Some States and Territories had gone beyond maintaining the pre-National Partnership programs to focus on improving the quality and quantity of structured workplace learning placements. In the ACT, for example, industry focused checklists were developed to assist employers to gather evidence of student competence. As a result, the ACT reports that employers now have a better understanding of student needs, and that work placements are better suited to employers' needs. In the NT, MEAST funding was used to engage a number of Industry Engagement and Participation Officers, resulting in support for structured workplace learning placements in more locations. In NSW, structured work placements are mandated for the majority of VET in Schools courses. MEAST funding has been used to assist increasing numbers of students to fulfil the mandatory requirement through a Workplace Co-ordination program.

³⁴ Note that the figures quoted in this section of the report are from the State and Territory Youth Attainment and Transitions Annual Reports (May 2012/2013).

Re-engaging at-risk groups

Jurisdictions reported investing in initiatives directed at young people who had disengaged, or were at risk of disengaging, from 'traditional' learning environments. For example, both the ACT and NSW established funding pools for projects aimed at supporting students to engage and re-engage in education and training. Funded projects in the ACT included research into the best models for re-engaging young people and tutoring support for young people in alternate education programs.

MEAST funding has been used in the ACT to employ staff for alternative pathway programs. These have reportedly been effective in re-engaging young people in education and help them to attain at higher levels. There has been increasing demand for Alternative Programs over the four years as they have enabled a number of young people disengaging from school to gain vocational qualifications and reconnect with education and/or training. This has led to the trialling of new vocational programs each year (such as a construction industry program in 2013).

The ACT had also used its funding to develop structured workplace learning programs to improve young people's employment prospects. The ACT used MEAST funding to develop a Strategic Funding Pool that provides resources for innovative projects aimed at supporting sustainable youth attainment and transitions through strategic partnerships involving schools, businesses and the ACT community.

In Victoria, MEAST funding supported the Koori Transition Program and was reported to have increased the confidence in and capacity of service providers to engage with Koori students around transitions. While facing challenges, including high staff turnover and difficulties collecting and disseminating appropriate student data, the program is considered to have provided many benefits to participants. Members of the Koori Education Workforce in some regions reported enhanced knowledge and skills in relation to career pathways and transitions.

Independent education sector stakeholders reported that MEAST funding had been highly useful. In Queensland, the independent school sector reported using MEAST funding to help support specialist schools, such as for students who had been expelled or who had been in juvenile justice system. This allowed these schools to receive funding for activities that were not necessarily available from other sources, such as the National Partnership for Low Socio-economic Status School Communities. Independent schools with high numbers of disengaged students have accessed MEAST funding to support development of alternative graduation pathways for at-risk students.

Mentoring

It is widely reported by stakeholders, and supported by evidence, that mentoring can help young people to engage more effectively in learning and to make successful transitions to work.³⁵ Research and stakeholder feedback also indicates that mentoring programs are resource-intensive to establish and manage on a sustainable basis.

In States where mentoring was a focus of MEAST funding (WA, SA, Vic and the ACT), activities tended to be aimed at providing targeted cohorts of young people with access to mentoring opportunities, in particular young people not at school and young people considered to be at risk of disengaging. The mentoring activities funded were predominantly new initiatives.

³⁵ For example: Dusseldorp Skills Forum and Australian Industry Group, *It's Crunch Time: Raising youth engagement and attainment*, 2007.

For young people not at school, Victoria extended support for young apprentices through an expanded Apprenticeship Support Officers (ASO) program, which aimed to increase the rate of apprenticeship completions and increase the number of skilled workers in targeted areas by providing early intervention support and dispute resolution services. In 2012, the 27 ASOs conducted almost 32,000 phone calls and over 7,800 visits with over 12,300 eligible apprentices – around 83 per cent of the eligible cohort. Anecdotal evidence and case studies show that confidence in the program has improved over time, as has the proportion completing training and apprenticeships.

South Australia directed MEAST funding towards two mentoring initiatives: Building Effective Mentoring Programs and Teaching in Training Mentoring Program (Getting Started). Both programs were aimed at building capacity for teachers and other staff to develop and effectively manage transition pathway mentoring programs for students. The latter program was aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in training.

Victoria also introduced two new initiatives that provided mentoring support to targeted groups. Koori Transitions Coordinators were employed to provide targeted support to Indigenous young people and their families and communities, coordinating and providing services to further support to this vulnerable group. The Career Mentoring Network initiative aimed to improve the long-term lifelong learning and employment prospects of current students from three targeted groups: Koori students, English as a Second Language and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students, including refugees and students from low SES families experiencing intergenerational poverty and unemployment.

In Western Australia, \$1.15 million in MEAST funding was allocated to a Youth Mentoring Strategic Framework project, project managed by the Department of Local Government and Communities. This involved an extensive consultation and training process to better understand mentoring benchmarks and provide a foundation for continued improvements in mentoring services provided to young people.

3.3.2 School Business Community Partnership Brokers

The School Business Community Partnership Brokers (PB) program represent a significant shift in the Australian Government's approach to supporting the formation and operation of partnerships between schools, businesses, parents and community groups. The new approach is grounded in the view that strategic, regionally based and managed partnerships would have greater impact and provide more sustainable change than the previous approach which focused on the provision of services for and on behalf of schools.

Our assessment of the effectiveness of the PB program over the life on the National Partnership has been informed by a range of sources including PB reports, a survey partner organisations conducted in year 2, an independent evaluation of a number of partnerships and consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. dandolo is confident that we have been able to establish a sound overview of the program.³⁶

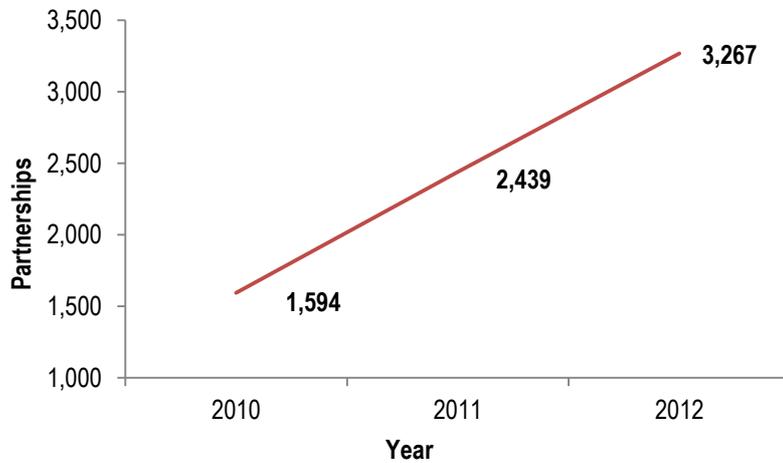
As of April 2013, there were approximately 3,267 partnerships registered in the PB database. Of these, around 1,600 were classified as active and self-sustaining partnerships (excluding Victorian data³⁷). This represents a

³⁶ It should be noted that the assessment of PB as part of the National Partnership evaluation does not constitute a formal program review.

³⁷ In Victoria, the PB program is delivered by the Victorian Government's Local Learning and Employment Network

trajectory of consistent growth since the formation of the program, however it is important to recognise that this considers the growth in Partnership Broker activity not the impacts of these partnerships.

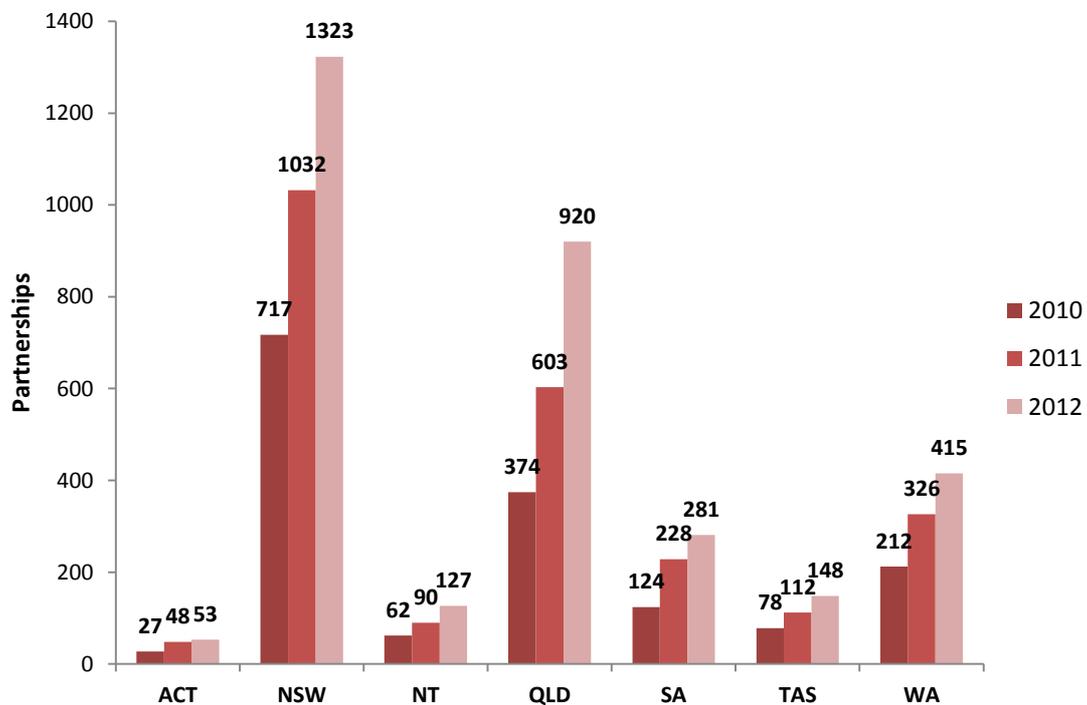
FIGURE 3.1: GROWTH IN TOTAL PARTNERSHIP AMOUNTS



Source: DEEWR (2013) YATMIS Program Reporting

Growth has been experienced across all States and Territories, however New South Wales and Queensland have by far the largest number of registered partnerships.

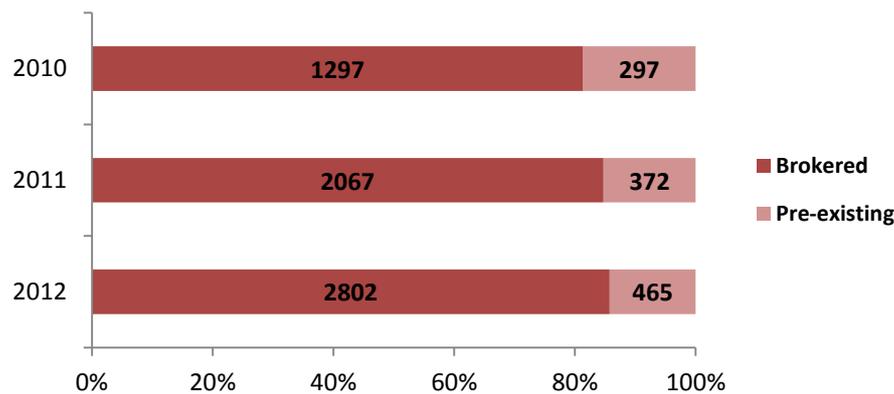
FIGURE 3.2: PARTNERSHIPS BY STATE/TERRITORY OF REGISTRATION



Source: DEEWR (2013) YATMIS Program Reporting

Most partnerships are new, that is, the partners were not working together prior to engagement with a PB. There would also appear to have been an expansion in the types of partnership activities undertaken compared to earlier programs, particularly in areas such as increased support for primary schools and Indigenous young people.

FIGURE 3.3: PRE-EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS COMPARED TO THOSE BROKERED UNDER THE NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP



Source: DEEWR (2013) YATMIS Program Reporting

Overall Impact

The PB program faced some challenges from the outset but has developed steadily over the life of the National Partnership. The program has an ambitious scope and providers are required to possess a range of capabilities. Establishing sustainable partnerships takes time, and success may not be fully realised within the term of provider contracts or indeed within the term of this National Partnership.

Overall, the PB program now has a three-year track record of progress, with positive performance against a number of outcome measures:

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

Early on, the PB program faced some implementation difficulties. Over the course of this evaluation, however, the value of the PB program has become clearer to stakeholders and a number of the issues raised have receded or been overcome, as demonstrated in the table below.

TABLE 3.4: PARTNERSHIP BROKERS PROGRAM RESPONSE TO INITIAL CHALLENGES

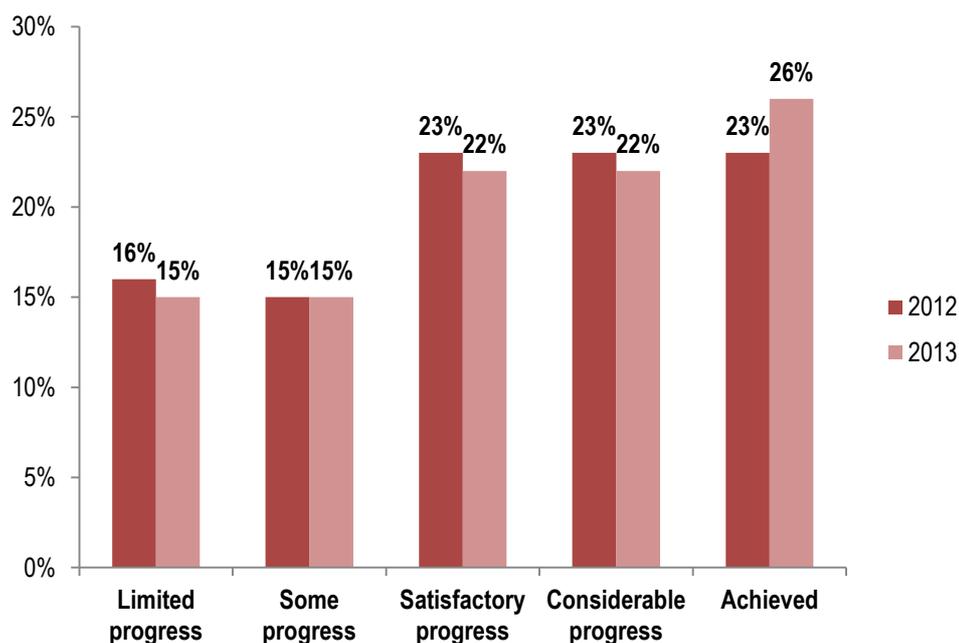
Initial challenges identified	PB response over time
The role and value of PB wasn't well understood or appreciated by some stakeholders	Recognition has grown of the positive outcomes associated with the program (as documented below) Stakeholders now have a more realistic understanding of the PB program's intent, and are more aware of the limitations of the PB program design
Jurisdictional support for the PB model was lacking	While a number of jurisdictions still have some reservations about the value of the program, improved engagement with jurisdictions has occurred over time. For example, there has been a greater incidence of co-operative initiatives between Partnership Brokers and regional education authorities in a number of jurisdictions (as discussed below)
There was some overlap between PB activity and other initiatives being implemented in some jurisdictions	Brokers have developed more clarity about their own role over time. Coordination of overlapping activity has generally improved, although there are still examples where it could be done better (as discussed further below).
Some providers struggled with capacity constraints	Capacity constraints are still an issue for some Partnership Brokers, but to an extent this is a sign of success in developing / attracting opportunities.
Service delivery was found to be difficult in larger / remote service regions	Service delivery challenges continue to exist in large and remote areas, including the attraction and retention of staff. However, this is a feature of all service delivery programs operated under the National Partnership it is not specific to the PB program.

The effectiveness of the Partnership Brokers element is measured through the monitoring evaluation and reporting framework (MERF). Key Performance Measures (KPMs) that reflect program outcomes attributable to partnerships and the contribution of Partnership Brokers are one component of this. While some stakeholders suggest that self-reporting may bias the results, the structure of the reporting (its comprehensive nature and the extensive use of quantitative reporting) and the multi-year comparisons should reduce the impact of any such bias in an overall assessment of the program.

Over the life of this evaluation stakeholders have generally found that the PB program has made notable progress towards targeted program outcomes, although as could be expected there is some variation in outcomes across regions. The Department of Education-administered Partnership Broker survey has found that Partnership Brokers report that the program has steadily been improving the number (and proportion) of 'high-quality' partnerships, or partnerships where considerable progress has been made and the number (and proportion) of partnerships that have been evaluated and have had their progress rated as considerable or achieved.³⁸

³⁸ Detail on comparative data is provided in the *Partnership Brokers Program National Outcomes Report* (April 2013), available at <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/youth/youthattainmentandtransitions/pages/sbcpb.aspx>>. Note: This does not include PBs in Victoria that operate under the Victorian Government's Local Learning and Employment Network reporting framework.

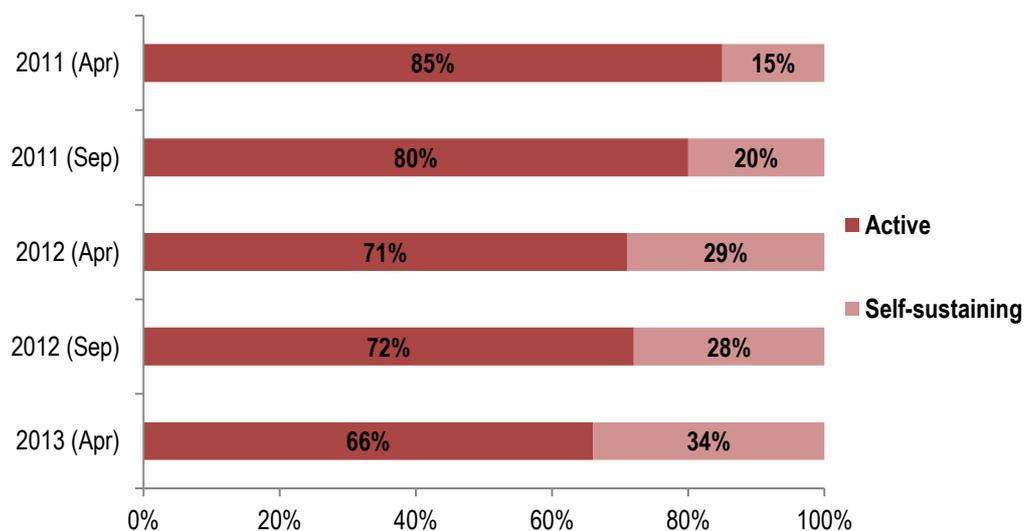
FIGURE 3.4: PROPORTION OF PARTNERSHIPS MAKING PROGRESS LINKING KEY STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER WITH SHARED COMMITMENTS, GOALS AND OUTCOMES TO IMPROVE YOUNG PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND TRANSITIONS OUTCOMES



Source: DEEWR (2013) YATMIS Program Reporting

At the time of writing, nearly half of the partnerships supported by Partnership Brokers were considered active/self-sustaining. Since 2011, the proportion of partnerships that are considered self-sustaining has increased. The breakdown between those two categories of partnerships is demonstrated in Figure 3.5 below.³⁹

FIGURE 3.5: COMPOSITION OF PARTNERSHIPS CATEGORISED AS ACTIVE AND SELF -SUSTAINING



Source: DEEWR (2013) YATMIS Program Reporting

While our assessment of the PB Program over the last three years has not constituted a formal program review, it is clear that PB has performed well despite a challenging start to the program.

³⁹ Of approximately 3,267 partnerships recorded in the YATMIS database, 1,601 or 49% are considered active/self-sustaining

Meeting Regional Needs

Partnership Brokers are expected to adopt a flexible approach to service delivery. Stakeholders report that a feature of the program has been the flexibility it has afforded for partnerships to be tailored to meet the specific needs of local communities and their young people. This enables them to respond to the needs of their region, while being proactive in their approach to engaging stakeholders to facilitate strategic partnerships that meet identified needs or realise identified opportunities within their service region.

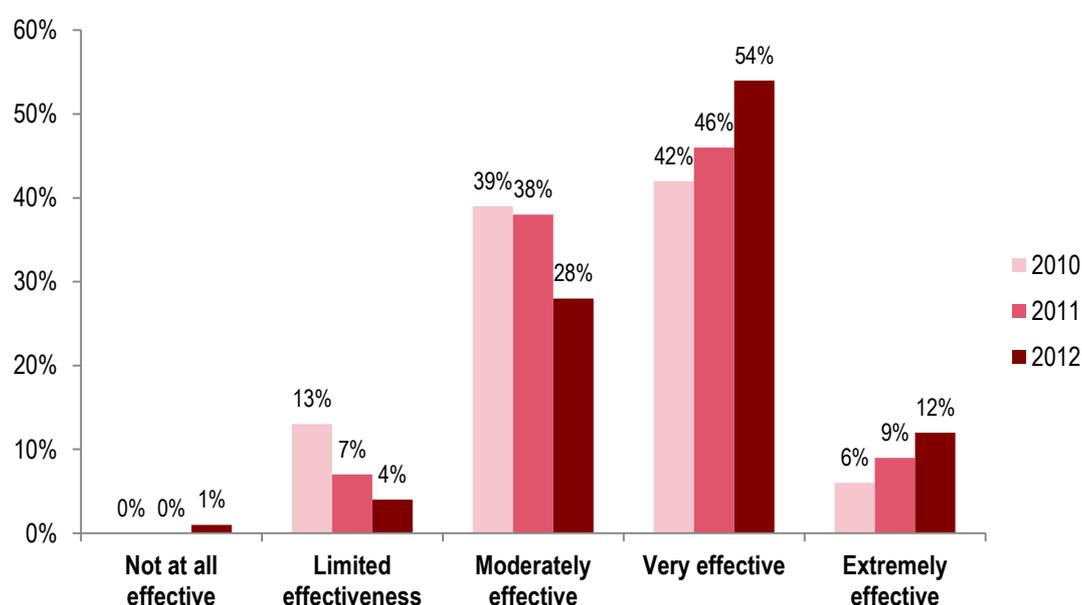
Processes are in place for Partnership Brokers to identify and address regional needs. For example, Partnership Brokers are required to complete:

- An Environmental Scan (reviewed and updated annually) that outlines current and emerging trends, gaps and issues, key stakeholders and existing partnerships within the Service Region education and transition environments; and
- A Strategic Plan (reviewed and updated annually) that, amongst other things, identifies short and long- term goals for the Service Region and the strategies for achieving these goals.

Over three years of surveying there is evidence to suggest that the PB program is making 'considerable progress' or has 'achieved' against aims of providing valuable partnerships between education and training providers, business and industry, the community, parents and families and community groups.

Partnership Brokers also report that, since 2010, the program has increased in effectiveness at addressing regional priorities.

FIGURE 3.6: PROVIDER VIEWS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTNERSHIPS IN ADDRESSING REGIONAL PRIORITIES



Source: DEEWR (2013) YATMIS Program Reporting

Among the most commonly reported regional priorities for partnership development were:

- Addressing the needs of at-risk young people (Mental Health, Low SES and Disability were the primary risk factors targeted);

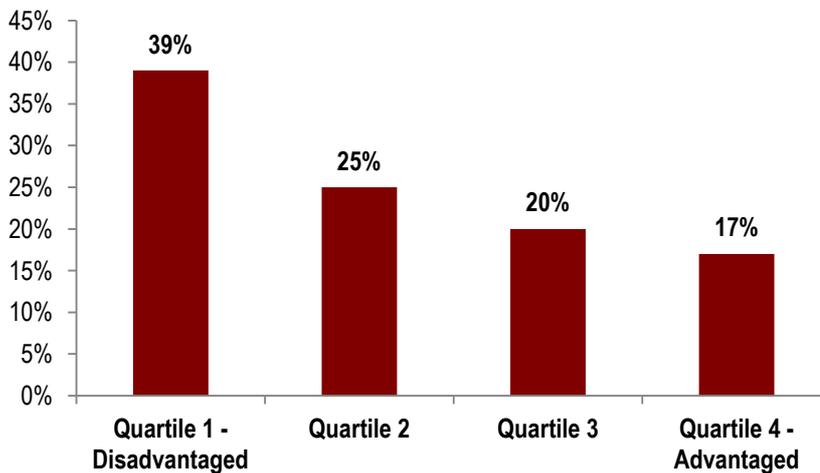
- Supporting the transition of young people from secondary schooling to further education, training or employment; and
- Increasing Indigenous engagement and attainment.

Reports that the PB program had become more effective in addressing those priorities aligns with the view within the Department of Education that the PB program has, over time, focused more on complex issues. This was also supported by evidence that there was a small reported shift in the allocation of PB activities from 2011 to 2012, from partnership creation to partnership development.

Proportion of low SES schools

Analysis of levels of educational advantage or disadvantage of the schools involved in partnerships shows that Partnership Brokers tend to work with those less advantaged. Figure 3.7 below charts the distribution of schools in partnerships by their Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value.⁴⁰

FIGURE 3.7: DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP BY ICSEA VALUE



Source: DEEWR (2013) YATMIS Program Reporting

The Department of Education reports increases in the following as a result of the PB program⁴¹:

- 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.

⁴⁰ The variables that make up an ICSEA value are family background information (including parental occupation, and the school and non-school education levels they achieved) and school characteristics (including whether a school is in a metropolitan, regional or remote area; the proportion of Indigenous students; and the proportion of students with language backgrounds other than English).

⁴¹ Detail on comparative data is provided in the *Partnership Brokers Program National Outcomes Report* (April 2013), available at <<http://www.deewr.gov.au/youth/youthattainmentandtransitions/pages/sbcpb.aspx>>. Note: This does not include PBs in Victoria that operate under the Victorian Government's Local Learning and Employment Network reporting framework.

Partnership Broker Capacity

In 2011, a number of concerns were raised by stakeholders about Partnership Brokers' capacity to succeed. These included:

- Partnership Brokers have often tried to execute against the full remit, but could benefit from a sharper focus on activities and locations where there may be better return on invested time and resources.
- Some service providers initially struggled to adapt to the new approach, particularly in establishing the capabilities, relationships or the capacity needed to succeed.
- A number of Partnership Brokers have had difficulties attracting and retaining staff, which will get worse as the end of the program gets nearer and job security is less certain.
- A number of identified critical success factors relating to leadership, governance, skill characteristics, knowledge and experience, relationship management are lacking in some service providers.
- Partnership Brokers do not always have a good understanding of schools and their priorities – nor do schools always understand the role and scope of PB operations.

While there is, not unexpectedly, perceptions of variability in Partnership Broker capacity and performance, overall stakeholder concern about Partnership Broker's capacity has reduced somewhat over time as the program has developed and successful partnerships have been established. Partnership brokerage requires sophisticated skills and is still evolving as a discipline. The Department of Education is fully aware of this and has had a clear focus on building the capability of Partnership Brokers and their personnel.

Three capacity issues remain particularly relevant:

- **Meeting demand:** a concern expressed by many Partnership Brokers in 2012 was whether they have sufficient capacity to meet the demand for services (experienced by around 70 per cent of Partnership Broker providers responding to the 2012 dandolopartners survey). To the extent this could be seen as a consequence of success in attracting 'clients'.
- **Servicing large and remote regions:** support activities in large service regions and remote locations remain challenging. The cost of servicing these regions is high. This is a perennial issue identified in other programs within and outside this National Partnership, such as MEAST and Youth Connections and one that is difficult to address within existing funding allocations.
- **Attracting and retaining staff:** this remains an ongoing challenge for some Partnership Brokers, especially in remote regions.

State and Territory Support

At the outset of the program, a number of jurisdictional stakeholders expressed scepticism about the value and impact of the Partnership Broker model. The reasons for this varied and included a lack of awareness and understanding about the program, concerns about service provider capacity given the size and scope of their task, resistance of schools to engage in the model and other factors. Some stakeholders were also concerned about the veracity of reported outcomes, indicating that Partnership Brokers may have initially focused on "low hanging fruit", or existing partnerships, to meet contractual obligations.

The lack of initial support from some jurisdictional stakeholders impacted on the program at the outset. However, there is evidence that this constraint has diminished somewhat over the three years that the program has been operating. As an example, engagement with education authorities and schools has increased. 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 is valuable.

Nevertheless, the issue of State/Territory support still represents a challenge for a number of Partnership Brokers. There still seems to be scope for States and Territories to provide information, encouragement and support for schools to consider the benefits that participation in the program could provide.

Other challenges for Partnership Brokers identified by stakeholders during the life of the program have been:

- 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 perceived reluctance by some State/Territory education authorities to encourage schools to actively participate in the program, at least initially (except in Victoria)⁴²
- The administrative support needs of prospective partners.

Managing expectations and educating stakeholders about the intent of the PB program remains an ongoing challenge for Partnership Brokers. They have reported that some school leaders still don't understand the role of the Partnership Broker as a facilitator, rather than a service delivery provider.

Longer-term impacts

A number of stakeholders including Partnership Brokers and partners have recognised that it takes time to support the establishment and operation of new successful and sustainable partnerships. Stakeholders from Victoria's LLENs, who have been operating activities similar to Partnership Brokers for around 10 years, supported this view. They indicated that it could take four to five years for the benefits of this program to become evident. They also indicated that the types of issues Partnership Brokers are currently facing are similar to the challenges they faced at the same stage of the program's implementation.

There is evidence of the value obtained from successful partnerships facilitated by the program. For example, the Partnership Brokers National Network commissioned Social Ventures Australia (SVA) to undertake a Social Return on Investment (SROI)⁴³ evaluation of a five Partnership Broker regions across New South Wales and Queensland. The SROI analyses found that the PB program is creating value for stakeholders participating in partnerships. Across the five Partnership Broker regions analysed, the evaluation showed that for every \$1 invested by the Australian Government, Partnership Brokers have been the catalyst for up to \$5.50 of created

⁴² In Victoria, the PB program is delivered through the Local Learning and Employment Network, which are managed by the Victorian Government.

⁴³ SROI is a framework that provides a recognised methodology to measure the social, economic and environmental impact of an organisation or program

social value. The value is derived from a combination of Department of Education cash investment and the investments and activities of partner organisations.⁴⁴

TABLE 3.5: ESTIMATED SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT FROM PARTNERSHIP BROKERS PROGRAM

Region	Department investment (2010-2013)	Stakeholder outcomes		
		Total value created from partnerships	Value attributed to Dept. investment	Value attributed to stakeholder investments
Central Tablelands	\$1.8m	\$11.1 - \$16.1m	\$3.9 - \$5.5m	\$7.2 - \$10.6m
South West Sydney	\$4.6m	\$11.0 - \$15.8m	\$4.9 - \$7.3m	\$4.9 - \$7.3m
Northern Sydney	\$3.7m	\$11.9 - \$17.1m	\$4.5 - \$6.5m	\$7.4 - \$10.6m
Gold Coast	\$3.1m	\$12.8 - \$17.2m	\$6.1 - \$8.2m	\$6.7 - \$9.0m
Sunshine Coast	\$2.1m	\$12.3 - \$16.7m	\$5.8 - \$7.9m	\$5.8 - \$7.9m

The SVA report also found that:

- The voluntary nature of partnerships mitigated negative outcomes for stakeholders participating in partnerships. This is because partnerships are based on the principle of mutual benefit. If a potential partner does not see the benefit of participating in a partnership, they will not engage
- Stakeholders participating in partnerships share resources and expertise to build partners' capacity and capabilities.
- Outcomes related to increased capacity to partner and development of quality partnerships were fundamental to increasing stakeholders' ability to work effectively with young people.

While limited to five regions, this assessment suggests longer-term benefits are possible from the program.

3.3.3 Youth Connections

The Youth Connections (YC) program provides a set of services designed to support young people at risk of disengaging from education and training, and to help them engage - or re-engage - and make a successful transition to further education, training or work.

Youth Connections providers are responsible for delivering the following services:

Service delivery component	Description of the component
1. Individual Support Services	Case management support to those young people at risk, including those most at risk of disengaging from school through to those who are severely disengaged from education, family and community. Service delivery is flexible and tailored to the young person's personal situation and circumstances. Activities include mentoring, advocacy and referral.
2. Targeted Engagement Services (formerly, Outreach and Re-engagement)	Youth focused activities that aim to find, connect and engage with severely disengaged young people. These activities may provide an avenue for maintaining participation and engagement for participants in Individual Support Services.

⁴⁴ SVA Consulting, *Partnership Brokers Program: Baseline Social Return on Investment Analysis*, Summary Report, February 2013

3. Regional Coordination Services (formerly, Strengthening Services in the Region)

Focused on building the capacity of education providers and other stakeholders, together with Partnership Brokers, where appropriate, and strengthening services in the region. Aims to develop whole-of-community strategies that identify and respond more effectively to provide appropriate support for young people to prevent disengagement.

Youth Connections is based on a flexible service delivery model that is designed to provide broad regional coverage and a holistic suite of services across the entire spectrum of disengagement. The flexibility of the model and its focus on disadvantaged groups has attracted additional funding to assist some identified target groups in the program:

- \$1.4 million for Youth Connections as part of the Building Australia's Future Workforce measures to better support teenage parents in 10 locations for two years (2012-2013)
- Three Youth Connections providers were contracted to deliver the \$3.5 million Youth Connections/Reducing Substance Abuse Pilot Projects for two years (2011-2012)
- The network of Youth Connections providers in Victoria is being used for Springboard, a Victorian Government program to support young people in residential out-of-home care (\$16.9 million over four years).

Changes to the program

In response to some suggested improvements, including those identified in years one and two of the dandolopartners evaluation, the Youth Connections program issued updated program guidelines in May 2013. As part of this change, Outreach and Re-engagement Services was renamed Targeted Engagement Services.

The emphasis of this element of the program is now clearly on offering proactive, youth-focused services targeted at severely disengaged young people across a region. The guidelines note that, even where Individual Support Services exceed capacity, Targeted Engagement Services should still identify and connect with the most disengaged young people, in some cases to act as a diversionary activity whilst the young person waits for a place in case managed services. However, Targeted Engagement Services do *not* include promotion of the YC program or providing generic information about the services offered under it.

Strengthening Services was renamed Regional Coordination Services. The focus in this service is ensuring that other youth services providers in the region are connected and coordinated. The Department has clarified that awareness raising and promotional activities undertaken as part of standard program delivery cannot be classified as Regional Coordination Services. The guidelines emphasise that these services must actively build or enhance the capacity of other organisations to support young people at risk in the region.

As these changes only occurred relatively recently, it is too early to assess their impact. Nonetheless feedback to date from stakeholders is generally positive, and demonstrates the Department's desire to continually improve the program. Stakeholders involved in program delivery indicated that rather than noticeably changing behaviour; these changes provided further clarity about the criteria for responding to different cohorts. The changes had also assisted in ensuring that data was more accurately recorded.

Composition of the YC cohort⁴⁵

Since the Youth Connections program commenced, just fewer than 74,000 young people have received services through this element of the National Partnership.⁴⁶ The number of participants has grown steadily over the life of the program.

TABLE 3.6: YOUTH CONNECTIONS PARTICIPANTS BY STATUS

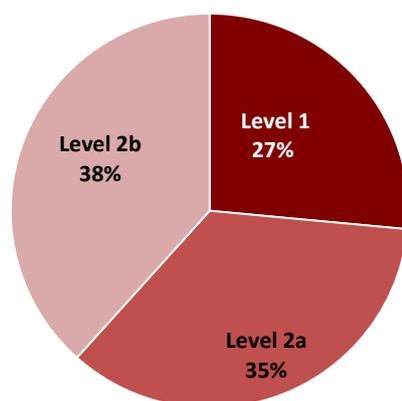
Participant Status - Individual Support Services	
Active (<i>currently engaged in a YC program</i>)	9,420
Completed (<i>achieved an outcome</i>)	60,466
Inactive (<i>registered but not yet enrolled for services</i>)	3,784
Suspended	263
Total	73,933

Youth Connections categorises the complexity of a young person's circumstances at the commencement of their involvement in the program. The major determinant of complexity is described as the level of disengagement that they experienced prior to making the connection to the program:

- Level 1: Young people who are still connected to school but at risk of disengaging.
- Level 2A: Young people who experience high levels of absenteeism and are disengaged from school for a period of up to three months.
- Level 2B: Young people who are severely disengaged from education and have experienced a disconnection for a period of three months or more.

As of September 2013, over 70 per cent of YC participants are classified as Level 2A or 2B.

FIGURE 3.8: PROPORTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY CONNECTION LEVEL



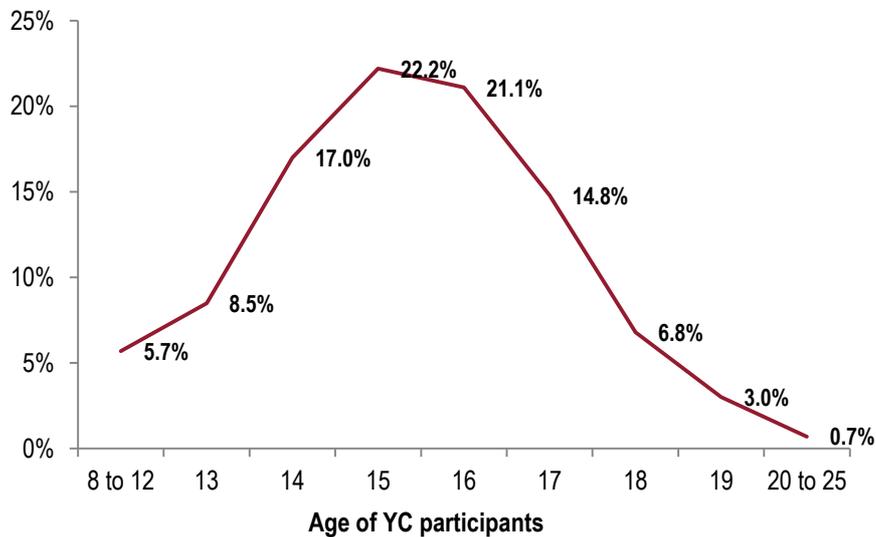
⁴⁵ Note: Youth Connections participant counts can vary as:

- For Connection Levels, participants can be re-assessed multiple times and can therefore appear against different Connection Levels.
- Totals may include young people who have been enrolled in the program but have not yet had an assessment.
- Some participants do not possess or have not identified some characteristics so may not be included in those totals. On the other hand, participants can have multiple characteristics.
- Participants can have multiple barriers so may appear more than once in barrier counts.
- Participants can achieve multiple progressive or final outcomes. Most participants with final outcome(s) have achieved progressive outcome(s) first.

⁴⁶ This only includes young people who received services through Individual Support Services, though 3,784 of those are classified as inactive.

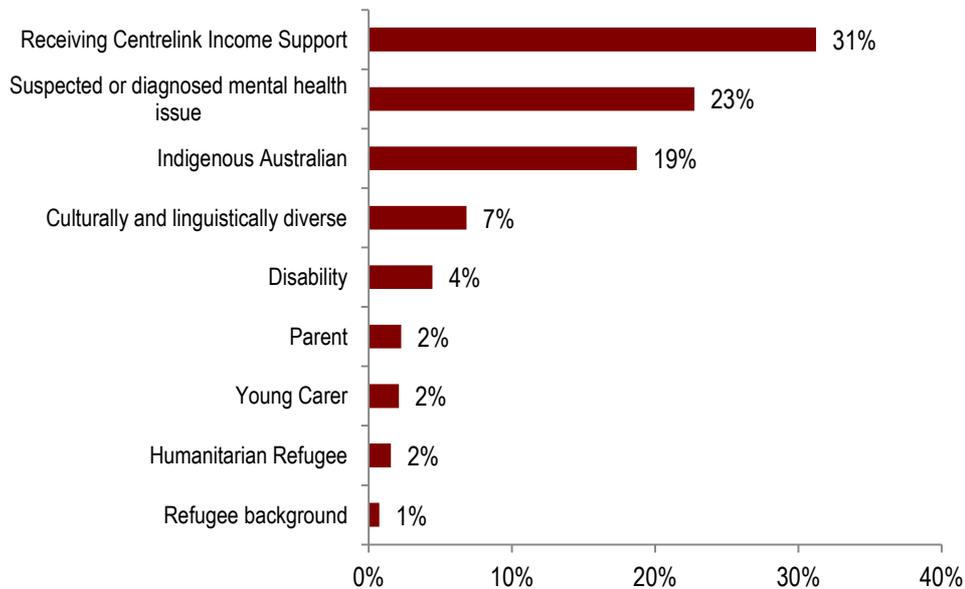
The YC program typically works with participants aged between 13 and 18 years and around 90 per cent of its current cohort falls within this age range. However, it is worth noting that in the Northern Territory and particularly in Tasmania the program tends to work with a younger cohort, which may slightly skew the national average.

FIGURE 3.9: PROPORTION OF YC PARTICIPANTS OF DIFFERENT AGES



The cohort of YC participants is diverse with a wide range of backgrounds and needs. Nearly one third of all YC participants receive Centrelink income support, and nearly one quarter had a suspected or diagnosed mental health issue. Lower, but still notable numbers of participants were reported as having Indigenous backgrounds, having culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds or having disabilities.

FIGURE 3.10: PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING RELEVANT FACTORS IN THEIR BACKGROUNDS



Effectiveness

Overall effectiveness

The Youth Connections program has consistently delivered positive outcomes for young people and is strongly supported by education and training, community and youth sector stakeholders. A strong feature of the program has been robust performance measurement and continuous refinement in response to assessments and feedback over the four years of the National Partnership.

In the 2012 survey of YC service providers⁴⁷, over 90 per cent of respondents agreed that the program has significantly helped young people. The survey found that YC helped to:

- Develop valuable personal skills and attributes in young people (97 per cent)
- Connect young people to education, family and community (98 per cent)
- Develop strong collaborative relationships between organisations that support young people (93 per cent).

Individual support services⁴⁸

Since the program commenced at the start of 2010, almost 75,000 young people have received Individual Support Services.⁴⁹ A report developed by the Youth Connections National Network found that stakeholders valued a number of aspects of the Individual Support Services, including:

- The community-based case management approach of services
- The independence of YC workers from schools and other institutions, which helps to build relationships of trust with young people, in turn contributing to the effectiveness of the case-management approach
- The flexibility of the program and the activities and services that can be provided within its guidelines.⁵⁰

Despite some variation across regions, 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)
- A 'pastoral paradigm' of operating by developing trust and a connection with young people through mentoring
- Empowering young people to make decisions about their lives now and in the future.⁵¹

Over the life of the program, 25,029 young people were recorded as commencing or re-engaging in education for a minimum of 13 weeks.⁵² The majority of these (68.9 per cent) were at Connection Level 2B – or severely disengaged.

⁴⁷ Dandolopartners did not replicate the survey in 2013 as the results were not expected to meaningfully change and we wanted to avoid creating burdens for providers

⁴⁸ It is worth noting that outcomes tend to improve towards the end of the year. Most of the results are current to 30 September, so may underrepresent Youth Connections outcomes for 2013.

⁴⁹ Individual support services provided between 1 January 2010 and 30 September 2013. More young people have participated in the program through outreach and re engagement activities.

⁵⁰ The Space In-between, *Youth Connections National Network* (2012), p 7

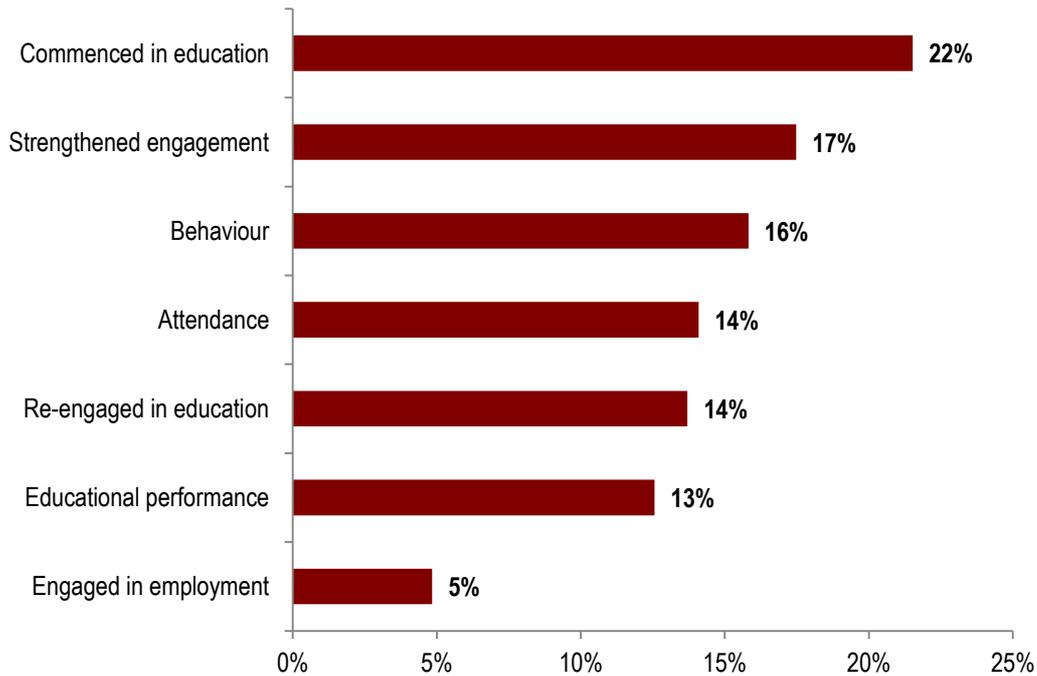
⁵¹ dandolopartners' survey of YC service providers (2012).

⁵² Program participants can record more than one outcome achieved

Other common outcomes of young people (for a minimum of 13 weeks) included:

- Engagement in education was strengthening over a whole school term (12,420 young people)
- Consistent improvement in school attendance over a whole school term (10,012 young people)
- Consistent improvement in educational performance over a whole school term (8,922 young people)
- Consistent improvement in behaviour at school over a whole school term (11,240 young people).⁵³

FIGURE 3.11: FINAL OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES OVER THE LIFE OF THE YOUTH CONNECTIONS PROGRAM



Source: DEEWR (2013) *YATMIS Program Reporting*

Note: Individual young people may achieve more than one final outcome.

However, as is to be expected not all young people that participate in the program achieve positive outcomes. As of 30 September 2013, 40 per cent of participants who had enrolled had not yet achieved a final program outcome (i.e. for a minimum of 13 weeks), and 26 per cent had not yet achieved a progressive outcome.⁵⁴

Based on dandolopartners' 2012 survey of service providers, the most common reason for the non-achievement of outcomes is a failure of young people to engage when initially contacted (54 per cent of survey respondents nominated this as the main reason why young people do not achieve positive outcomes). While some young people become engaged and then withdraw during the program, this was nominated less commonly by service providers as a reason for non-achievement of outcomes (30 per cent of respondents). Securing early engagement is recognised as a priority for this cohort, and has been the subject of other work commissioned by the Department.⁵⁵

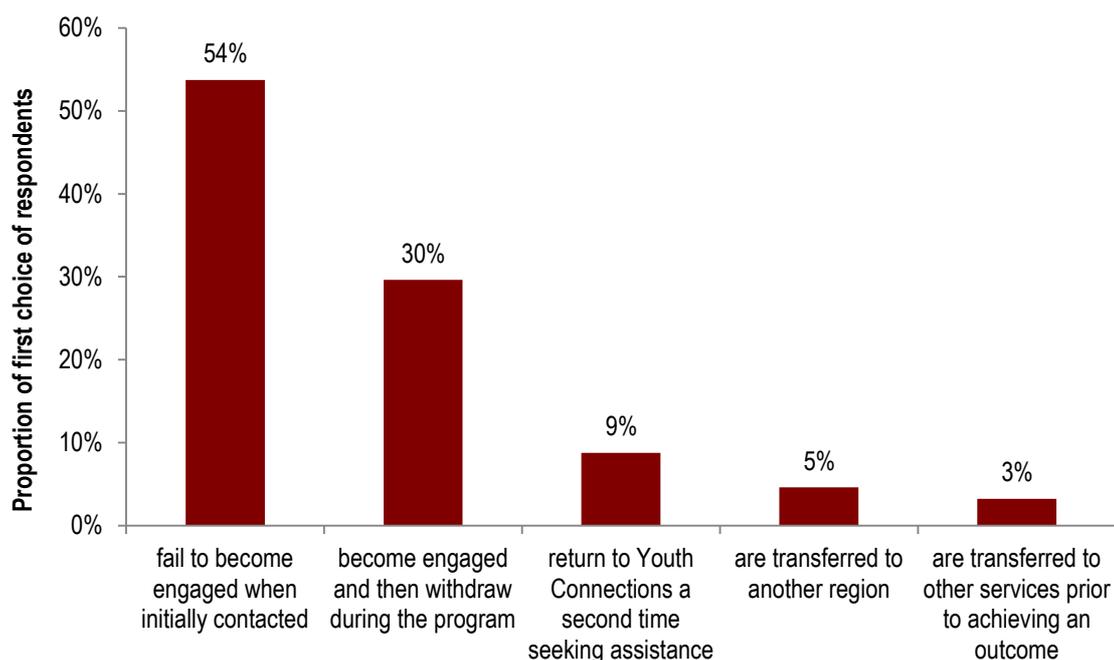
⁵³ DEEWR *YATMIS Program Reporting*

Note: individuals can achieve and be counted against more than one outcome

⁵⁴ DEEWR (2013) *YATMIS Program Reporting*

⁵⁵ See for example: Sweet, R, *Education, training & employment in an international perspective*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, New Transitions: Challenges Facing Australian Youth seminar, 2006

FIGURE 3.12: REASONS WHY YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT ACHIEVE POSITIVE OUTCOMES



Source: dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012).

Some other common reasons given by service providers for young people not achieving outcomes include:

- Lack of personal motivation by a young person to engage or make changes
- Transience/unstable accommodation, which makes it difficult for young people to maintain contact
- Lack of family support, negative parental influence or family dysfunction.

The nature of these reasons – and the presence of more than one of these factors in many cases - indicates the complexity of the delivery challenge for service providers.

From January to mid-September 2013, 51 per cent of young people had addressed or minimised a barrier to learning.

The most common barriers addressed through the YC program were:

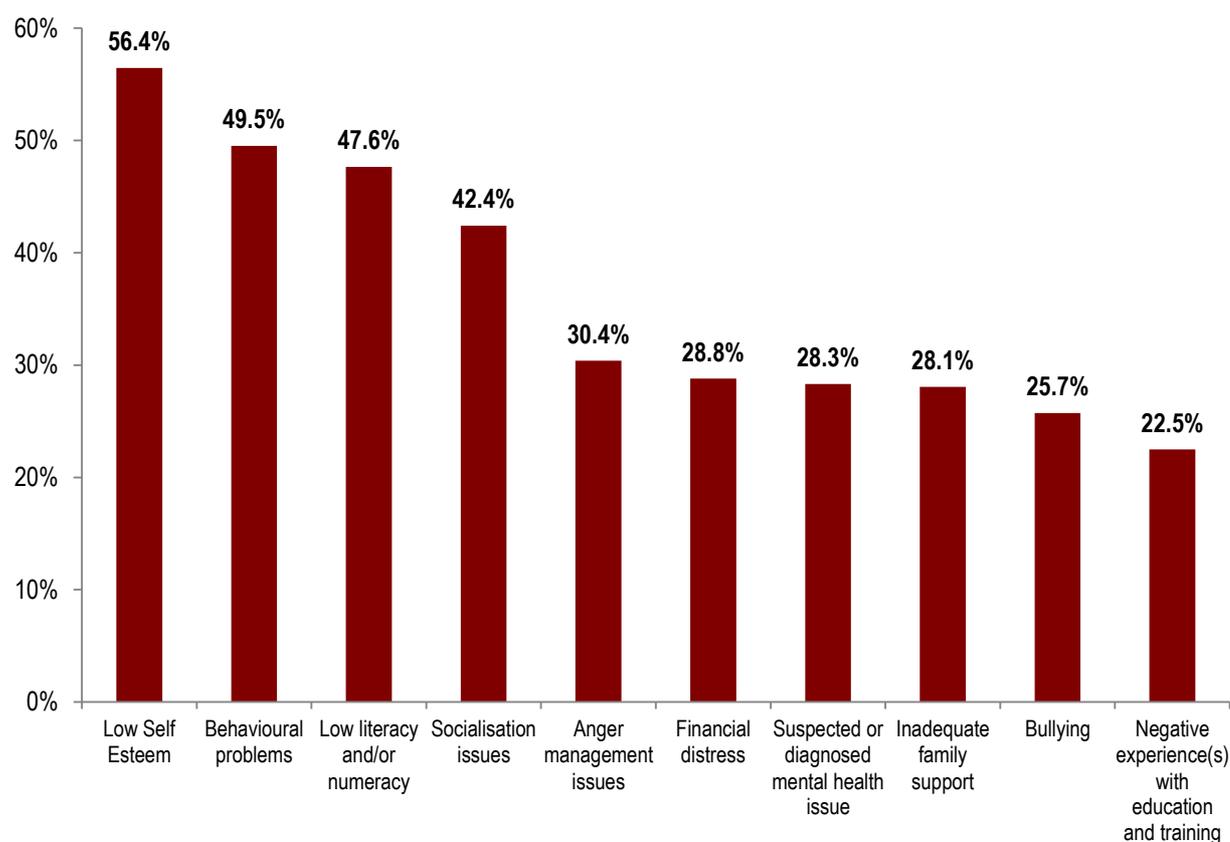
- Low self-esteem (56% or 37,699 young people)
- Behavioural problems (50% or 33,388 young people)
- Low literacy and/or numeracy (48% or 32,280 young people)
- Socialisation issues (42% or 28,317 young people).⁵⁶

While the proportion of program participants experiencing these barriers changed slightly over the life of the evaluation, the relative distribution did not.

⁵⁶ DEEWR YATMIS Program Reporting

Note: individuals can experience and be counted against more than one barrier

FIGURE 3.13: MOST COMMON BARRIERS ADDRESSED AND MINIMISED BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES



Source: DEEWR 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.

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.⁵⁷ Based on a 2012 report commissioned by the Department of Education, a significant proportion of YC program participants sampled experienced 'improved psychological outcomes' between their first meeting with their case manager and their exit from the YC program.⁵⁸ The change in young people's views of their future security was particularly marked. 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.

⁵⁷ Defined as: "a normally positive state of mind that involves the whole life experience" per Tomy, A. & Norrish, J. (2012) *Youth Connections Subjective Wellbeing Report*, RMIT University, commissioned by DEEWR, p.57

⁵⁸ 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.

Longer-term outcomes

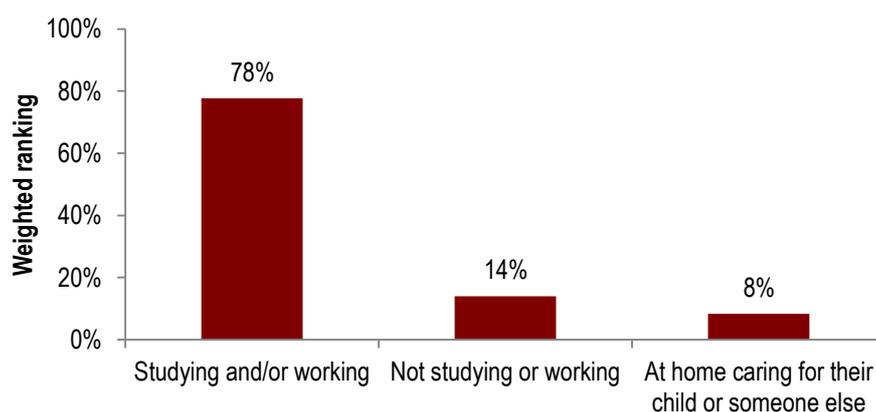
The YC National Network conducted a study of 206 young people who participated in the program in 2011 to determine their final outcomes of their experiences with YC.⁵⁹ Six months after participating in the YC program:

- 58 per cent of surveyed young people reported that they either stayed at school or studied somewhere else
- 28 per cent indicated that they started working full or part time
- 8.2 per cent recorded being in a traineeship or apprenticeship
- Only 5.8 per cent indicated that they were not studying or working in the six months since leaving the YC program and nearly half of these were new parents.

A 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.⁶⁰ Almost three-quarters (72.5 per cent) of young people in this region remained engaged with education at least three months after exiting the program.⁶¹

The 2012 dandolo survey of service providers indicates that, where circumstances are known, the majority of young people were engaged in education, training and/or employment six months after completing the program (78 per cent).⁶²

FIGURE 3.14: MAJOR ACTIVITY OF MOST YOUNG PEOPLE SIX MONTHS AFTER LEAVING THE YOUTH CONNECTIONS PROGRAM



Source: dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012).

Data is not available on a large-scale basis to indicate whether young people remain in education once they exit the program. However, these three studies, when taken together, suggests that YC is effective in establishing a lasting connection for young people to education, training or employment and indicate that it is likely that the YC program has positive long-term outcomes in line with its goals.

⁵⁹ A final outcome is recorded as a minimum of 13 weeks reconnection to education, training or in some instances, connection to employment

⁶⁰ 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.

⁶¹ 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.

⁶² 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).

Unintended positive impacts⁶³

Stakeholders reported some unintended, but beneficial, consequences resulting from the Youth Connections program.⁶⁴

Prior to the implementation of Youth Connections it was reported that many of the services provided to the target cohorts were uncoordinated and cooperation between service providers was inconsistent. Service providers believe that one of the successes of Youth Connections is that it has created a focal point for interactions among providers as a result of its networked and collaborative work practices, and reportedly galvanised the sector in a way that had not been anticipated. They noted that the Youth Connections model encourages providers to work together, increasing capacity and creating avenues for professional development.

Providers reported that this created efficiencies through the pooling of resources and provision of complimentary regional services. This has also helped to reduce duplication in the delivery of services to the target cohorts. This was reported to improve providers' ability to deliver services and develop a presence across a region and to augment the work of other service providers who are not able to operate alone across a region.

Similarly, YC providers have become recognised experts on engagement / disengagement issues. A range of stakeholders now sees YC providers as a major source of intelligence and expertise on the subject of engagement. This includes schools, governments and a range of agencies operating in the sector that regularly petition YC providers to help make decisions related to engagement issues.

Targeted Engagement Services (formerly Outreach and Re-engagement)

Through this element of the YC program, providers actively go out to locations where young people spend time to make contact with those who would not otherwise be identified and referred to the program. These young people are then engaged in activities (such as tutoring programs and life skills workshops) aimed at helping them to re-engage with family, community and learning.

YC providers have delivered many outreach and re-engagement activities involving large numbers of young people. Throughout the lifetime of the YC program, 25,789 activities were held to find and connect with at-risk young people. Of these, 3,613 events were identified as having an indigenous focus and 1,276 were identified as having a focus on humanitarian refugees. Overall, providers have worked with 495,850 young people through these activities.

The outcome of this component of the program has been less clear than for Individual Support Services. In response to the 2012 dandolopartners survey, some service providers reported that re-engagement programs were particularly labour-intensive, costly to deliver, and produced variable results when compared with the more proven Individual Support Services.

Year 2 of this evaluation raised questions about the proportion of effort allocated to Targeted Engagement Services – particularly in the context of unmet demand from young people for Individual Support Services. However, an important benefit of this component of the program is accessing severely disadvantaged young people who are less likely to be picked up by the normal referral channels. These young people are also less likely

⁶³ Many of the findings in this section are drawn from a workshop of Youth Connections Service Providers

⁶⁴ Views in this section are sourced from workshops conducted with Youth Connections providers

to be receiving support from other service providers and are often in greater need of YC services to assist them to reconnect with learning and community.

The changes introduced in May 2013 provide a sharper focus for this element. Effort is prioritised towards making contact with severely disengaged young people who would not otherwise be identified and referred to the program and offering proactive services targeted at their specific needs on a group basis. Even where Individual Support Services exceed capacity, Targeted Engagement Services are still able to identify and connect with the most disengaged young people. In some cases this will act as a diversionary activity whilst the young person waits for a place in case managed services.

It is too early to tell whether the changes made to Targeted Engagement Services will improve the effectiveness of this program element overall. However, they respond to some issues previously raised with the Outreach and Re-engagement element. In particular, they establish a clear priority on severely disengaged young people and recognize the importance of tailoring services to meet specific needs on a group basis.

Regional Coordination Services (formerly Strengthening Services in the Region)

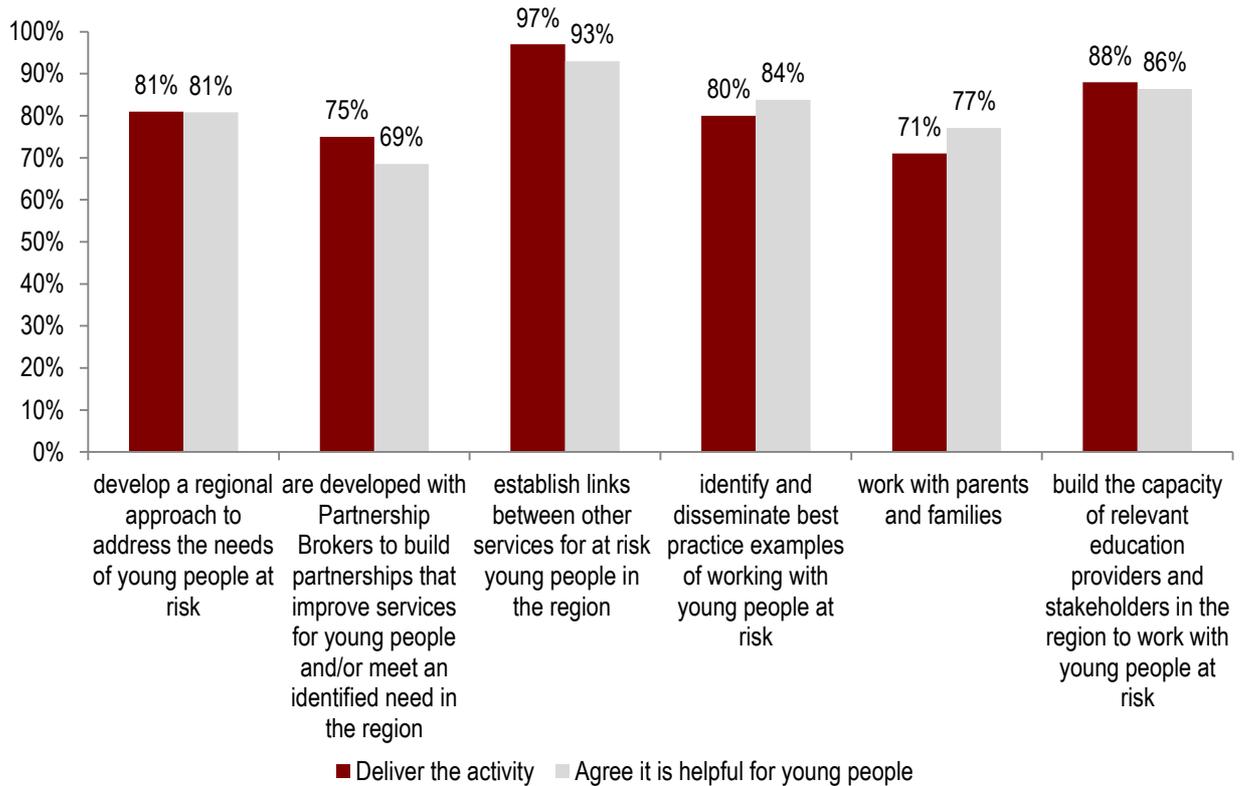
Under Regional Coordination Services activities, Youth Connections providers work to build capacity and strengthen support for organisations that provide services to young people at risk and ensure that providers of other services within the region are connected. Service providers have increasingly focused on strengthening services in their regions, holding 8,476 activities to date. 2,201 were identified as having an Indigenous focus and 717 were identified as focusing on humanitarian refugees.

Based on dandolopartners' 2012 survey, YC service providers found that 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 to be the most effective activities.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ dandolopartners' survey of YC service providers (2012).

FIGURE 3.15: STRENGTHENING SERVICES IN THE REGION – DELIVERY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Proportion of YC service providers who deliver and value activities that...



Source: dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012).

YC providers are expected to form effective working relationships with the Partnership Brokers (PBs) in their region to support young people at risk.⁶⁶ Around three-quarters of service providers report that they work with PBs, though they are slightly less positive about activities involving PBs (69% 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%). The refinements made in May 2013 provide a clear focus for YC providers on:

- Working to coordinate services for young people at risk and ensuring that providers of other youth services in a region are connected. This involves joining-up all the relevant, available services to provide a more effective approach that is responsive to the needs of young people in the region, particularly for those young people at risk.
- Working with key stakeholders in the region, including state and territory programs, schools and education providers in building the capacity of those working with young people at risk.

As with the Targeted Engagement Services element, it was considered too soon to assess the impact of these refinements. However, they appear, prima facie, to be sensible improvements.

⁶⁶ DEEWR (September 2011) *Youth Connections Program Guidelines*, <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/YouthAttainmentandTransitions/Documents/YCGuidelines.pdf>

3.3.4 National Career Development

The rationale for career development activities and context

Effective career development policy is recognised as a critical component of any comprehensive youth policy response. Career development is defined broadly as the ongoing process of a person managing their life, learning and work over their lifespan. It involves developing the skills and knowledge that enable individuals to plan and make informed decisions about education, training and career choices.⁶⁷

A poor decision can have long-lasting economic and social implications for a person. Sound decision making by young people will benefit them, society and the economy.

More than half of Australians stay in their jobs for fewer than five years, and younger people are increasingly identifying with careers rather than jobs to reflect the changing nature of labour markets⁶⁸.

As acknowledged by the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA), the move towards demand-based funding in higher education and the vocational education and training sectors creates additional pressure on students to make informed choices. This requires access to accurate advice about employment options and pathways into different careers, and the capability to make good decisions over their lifetime.

One of the complexities associated with career development policy is that it crosses jurisdictional and departmental boundaries (e.g. agencies with a primary focus on education, industry and employment). The employment focus of career development demands a strong role for industry, as well as government.

The National Career Development program represents the least mature of the elements implemented under the National Partnership. Unlike other elements, the final year report contains an initial assessment of the element rather than a summative evaluation for the new components, specifically:

- The release of the National Career Development Strategy (the Strategy)
- The funding of projects under the Making Career Connections program.

National career development also incorporated a number of pre-existing Australian Government programs and initiatives designed to support people in finding and sustaining employment. These programs include Job Guide, *myfuture* and the Australian Career Development Studies website.

Given that the strategy was only released in May 2013, the year 3 evaluation of this element focuses on stakeholders' perceptions of the strategy, including the extent to which they believe the strategy prioritised the right issues and provided a basis for implementation success. Analysis of the Making Career Connections projects is contained in the Appropriateness section of this report, and focuses on the degree of alignment between the funded projects and the Strategy's guiding principles.

Overall impact

The overall impact of the new career development initiatives is limited, which is understandable given how recently the Strategy and Making Career Connections projects were released.

⁶⁷ Australian Government, *National Career Development Strategy*, May 2013

⁶⁸ Source: Contained in Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency response to dandolo question

According to stakeholders, the single biggest impact of the National Career Development element of the National Partnership so far was the signal it sent to jurisdictions and sectors that career development was an important national issue and a recognised policy priority. This, in turn, provided those working in jurisdictions with greater capacity to leverage attention and funding for work in this area.

Reactions to the National Career Development Strategy

The response to the National Career Development Strategy (the Strategy) from stakeholders was generally positive. The contents of the Strategy – including the major priorities outlined – attracted broad support from a range of stakeholders including those from jurisdictions, sectors and industry. The Strategy is regarded as a robust articulation of the problems facing young people in this area, and is considered to outline a clear vision for where effort needs to be focused.

The majority of stakeholders acknowledged that the formulation of the Strategy was a difficult task due to:

- The complexity of the issues surrounding career development
- The diversity and number of stakeholders that needed to be consulted in the formulation of the Strategy
- The fact that some of the views held by stakeholders were contradictory, or mutually exclusive
- The need for the Strategy to be truly national and representative of diverse jurisdictional interests
- The lack of committed funding from all stakeholders to accompany the release of the Strategy.

At the heart of consultations about the Strategy was the tension between the role of schools and industry. There was some disagreement between stakeholders about which lever was most effective to respond to the careers challenge. The Strategy was seen to have effectively responded to this tension by articulating clear roles for parties in career development, though there was a suggestion from a number of stakeholders that career development remained too heavily associated with schools (not necessarily as a result of the Strategy).

Parts of the Strategy that were seen as particularly effective include:

- Acknowledgment that those providing career advice should be appropriately trained (some suggested that this training should go beyond the Certificate IV in Career Development which is generally associated with career practitioners)
- The aspiration of creating career self-management skills and opportunity awareness. This is based on clear stakeholder views that career development needs to be seen as much more than simply getting someone a job, but instead should be aiming to equip someone to locate, access and interpret information on employment opportunities
- The important role that employment services need to play, including the contribution of Job Services Australia personnel in providing careers advice.

The Strategy was considered less robust in terms of implementation detail. While many stakeholders understood the reasons for adoption of a high-level strategy (most notably the presence of uncertain funding arrangements), others described the lack of implementation 'teeth' as a missed opportunity.

Other areas of the Strategy that attracted stakeholder interest included:

- The emphasis on the role of schools – rather than industry – as a primary driver of career development.
- The lack of a strong evidence base for what causes poor career outcomes. The analogy was drawn with literacy and numeracy, where causal factors are well understood. The need to better understand these issues was not considered to have been identified as a priority in the Strategy.
- Difficulties implementing a ‘whole of government’ approach that effectively integrates services from education, industry, employment and other relevant departments. Despite the Strategy describing a coordination role for the Australian Government, implementing a whole of government approach is expected to be challenging.
- The ‘all ages’ approach outlined in the Strategy was deemed by some stakeholders as too ambitious, particularly given the challenges that exist in providing up to date information to older workers (i.e. recognising that Web-based tools are more suited to a younger cohort).

Feedback on the process for developing the National Career Development Strategy

The process for developing the Strategy was broadly acknowledged as consultative and effective. The process was transparent and appropriately governed, with clear opportunities for stakeholders to provide formal feedback including via responses to the published discussion paper. In all, 80 submissions were received from a cross-section of stakeholders responding to the National Career Development Green Paper, including a number of detailed submissions from industry groups and other critical organisations.

One area of the Strategy development that attracted criticism was the time taken to develop and release the strategy. While it was acknowledged that the strategy’s development coincided with other major cross-government negotiations, the delays to the launch of the strategy were considered to have undermined some of the momentum that had been created leading up to its release. Some considered that the delayed release of the Strategy was regrettable and may have mitigated the effectiveness of the wider National Partnership.

Other Australian Government career development activity

The Australian Government currently manages several other major initiatives which form part of the career development element, but which were not initiated (or evaluated in detail) as part of this element of the National Partnership. The projects are the *myfuture web service*, the Australian Career Development Studies website, the Australian Career Development Blueprint and the Job Guide.

myfuture is regarded by most as an important component of the government’s approach to supporting career development. *myfuture* was launched in 2002 and there continues to be widespread recognition that Australia needs a portal of this type to act as a repository for career information and exploration that is accessible to a wide range of stakeholders. Recently announced and planned functionality, including social media enhancements, were acknowledged as valuable.

Despite this, there were a number of potential areas for enhancement noted by stakeholders, including:

- Customisation to make content accessible to people of all ages (particularly older Australians)
- Opportunities to integrate different channels, particular telephone and web-based information, so that there is a ‘single source of truth’ or one stop shop for information

- Development of a ‘clearing house’ type function on *myfuture*. While this function is not fully available on *myfuture*, recent enhancements provide industry and others with relevant, up-to-date information on careers and networks to industry (in line with a clearing house function). The *myfuture* forum also facilitates contact with industry stakeholders, enabling them to ask questions and have them answered.

The Job Guide is strongly identified with career development in Australia, and remains important to stakeholders. Career development professionals, in particular, acknowledge that the Job Guide is a critical reference material for those working in the sector and remains an important asset. The Job Guide is a career development resource aimed at students in Year 10. It is distributed to schools and contains information on occupations and job search information and advice. It is recognised as a valuable source of information that needs to be maintained. New technologies are providing opportunities to increase the currency of information that continues to be highly relied upon by career development professionals.

Another Australian Government initiative referred to by stakeholders was the Australian Career Development Studies website, which promotes awareness of career development and access to resources and information improving the provision of career development services. The website forms part of the aspiration to improve the capability of career development professionals in schools, including promotion of the Certificate IV in Career Development qualification from the CHC08 Community Services Training Package. The training materials are made available free of charge, and stakeholders reported that the continued professionalisation of the career development workforce through promotion of the Certificate IV remained a priority.

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development is a government-developed framework that has been in place since 2008 and serves as the basis for developing and implementing effective career development interventions for young people. An evaluation of the Blueprint in 2012 found that it is a valuable resource, which forms an important part of supporting quality provision of career development – however the evaluation found that its use is variable and greater awareness is needed for the blueprint to be more effective.⁶⁹

Tension between schools and industry as career development drivers

In previous decades career development has been primarily associated with schools, which have played a critical role in providing advice about career options to young people. Stakeholders consider that there are three ‘models’ for implementation of career development policy:

1. School driven
2. Industry driven
3. A hybrid of the two (which the Strategy was broadly acknowledged to have adopted).

Those that advocate for schools as the dominant driver of career development tend to do so because:

- Schools have an established ‘channel’ for advising young people
- Schools have a pre-existing relationship with young people, and therefore are more likely to understand what pathways might be most appropriate

⁶⁹ Atelier Learning Solutions, *Report of the Review of The Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, November 2012

- Schools are less self-interested than industry, and therefore more inclined to provide feedback that is independent and in the best interest of the young person. This comment needs to be treated in context of research that indicates that young people don't trust the accuracy of school based career advice.

Those that advocate for a greater role for industry and employers do so on the basis that career development should be focused on career/employment *outcomes*, rather than the provision of advice alone. Only industry, it was argued, is capable of providing those outcomes. It was also suggested by some stakeholders that career advisers in some schools lack professional career advisory training and skills, as well as relevant business/industry experience to provide (and be seen to provide) accurate careers information.

The vast majority of stakeholders saw the Strategy's adoption of a hybrid approach between schools and industry was seen as appropriate. There was particularly strong support for the increased role that industry might play in the future in augmenting school-based activity. A hybrid approach would feature more opportunities for joint effort and involvement. For example:

- By including work integrated learning programs across the curriculum in schools that require links with employers
- By building better connections between career development activities and employers, employment coordinators, and employment opportunities through school – community – business partnerships
- Through closer liaison between career services and industry on emerging skills requirements, particularly when industry restructuring is occurring

State and Territory support for continued focus in the area

Almost without exception representatives from jurisdictions and sectors represented on the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions Multilateral Working Group considered career development as a significant future policy priority in the area. The reasons for this commitment to career development included:

- The increased focus by authorities to track student destinations after leaving full-time education (e.g. OnTrack in Victoria)
- The imperative for States and Territories to meet demands for new skills, particularly in industries which were undergoing significant transformation (notably manufacturing, information and communication technology and transport and logistics)
- Recognition that career aspirations plays a significant role in promoting student engagement.

The Strategy represents a significant opportunity to coalesce various stakeholders around an issue that has attracted broad and bi-partisan support.

Longer-term impacts

While the Strategy's impact has been limited to date, there is a high degree of confidence that national action commenced under the National Partnership will be sustained.

3.3.5 The Compact with Young Australians

In April 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to establish a Compact with Young Australians to increase young people's participation in education and training by providing protection from the anticipated tighter labour market and ensuring they would have the qualifications needed to take up the jobs as the economy recovered from the Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

The Compact with Young Australians has three elements:

1. **A National Youth Participation Requirement** for young people to complete Year 10 in school (or an approved equivalent), then participate full-time (at least 25 hours per week) in education, training or employment or a combination of these activities, until age 17
2. **An entitlement** to a government-subsidised education or training place for 15-24 year olds, subject to admission requirements and course availability.⁷⁰ This entitlement ceased on 31 December 2011, as all States and Territories have now embedded the entitlement into their skills development policies and programs
3. **Strengthened conditions for income support payments.** Young people under the age of 21 who do not have a Year 12 or equivalent qualification who seek income support through Youth Allowance (Other/Jobseeker) are now required to participate in education or training full time, or participate in part-time education or training in combination with other approved activities, for at least 25 hours per week, until they attain Year 12 or equivalent or an AQF Certificate II qualification or above. A similar requirement for full-time education or training applies to young people aged 16-20 years whose parents seek the Family Tax Benefit Part A, matching the existing requirement for 21-24 year olds.

These elements underpin an agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories to accelerate the achievement of a 90 per cent national Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate target by 2015. State and Territory governments were responsible for implementation of the National Youth Participation Requirement and the entitlement to education and training places. The new Participation Requirement took effect in all States and Territories on 1 January 2010. The Australian Government was responsible for introducing the strengthened participation requirements for income support recipients.

Overall effectiveness

The Compact was introduced in the midst of the GFC to encourage young people to participate in education and training at a time of labour market contraction. Its introduction also aimed to develop a more consistent national approach to requirements governing how young people participate in compulsory education and training.

The establishment of the Compact appears to be associated with increased educational participation and attainment among targeted cohorts. However, this effect can be difficult to disaggregate from some increases in participation driven by the effects of the GFC, which reduced opportunities to work.

⁷⁰ For 20-24 year olds who already have a Year 12 or equivalent qualification, the entitlement is to a place that would result in them attaining a higher qualification than they currently hold.

Table 3.7 below examines the impact of the Compact and identifies key indicators of improvement on National Partnership outcomes. It also briefly summarises changes in key indicators over the life of the National Partnership and assesses the likely influence of the Compact on that.

The assessment of the Compact's likely influence has been made by:

- Focusing on the cohort targeted by the Compact
- Isolating other relevant possible explanations, such as the effect of the GFC.

Based on this analysis, the Compact appears to have had a measurable influence on school participation amongst 15-19 year olds, some influence on school progression and attainment and some influence on the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

TABLE 3.7: SUMMARY OF THE COMPACT'S INFLUENCE ON YOUTH ATTAINMENT AND TRANSITIONS OUTCOMES

Indicator	Trend	Assessment
Full-time school participation, age 15-19	Some increase, 2008-12	There are strong grounds for believing that the Compact is a material driver of these changes
Year 9-10 progression	Small increase, 2009-12	Some impact likely
Year 10-11 progression	Increase, 2008-12	Some impact likely
Year 11-12 progression	Increase, 2008-11, no change between 2011 and 2012	Some impact likely
Apparent Year 12 retention	Increase 2008-2012	Strong impact likely
Apprenticeship and traineeship participation	Slight decline 2009-13	Possible impact
Not in education and unemployed, age 17-19	Slight increase between 2008 and 2013, though highly erratic year to year	Some impact possible
Not in education and not in the labour market	Increase since 2008	Some impact possible
Income support	Fall in proportion of unemployed young people not receiving income support	Strong impact likely – though unlikely that the Compact influenced the number of young people receiving the other major forms of welfare payments.

Some stakeholders suggest the Compact has driven 'demand' amongst students for alternative education pathways. This has prompted providers in public and private education markets to respond with the provision of flexible learning opportunities, such as the CHANCES program in the ACT – which supports young Indigenous people to secure training opportunities.

In considering the potential impact of the Compact, it is also necessary to assess which other factors may have been responsible, including the labour market conditions during that period. The changes in educational participation observable since 2010 do not appear to primarily be a function of the GFC – instead it seems likely that the GFC caused a short-term, one-off impact. During the GFC, there was a large drop in full-time employment for young people, which has somewhat abated in the years since. At the same time, the participation rate for young people only increased slightly, but this increase has been consistent. Similarly, the overall labour market

improvements since the GFC have not been matched by a youth employment increase, despite the fact that normally youth and adult unemployment correlate. If the GFC alone were operating, participation would normally be expected to plateau, not increase as it has. Further, if these changes were driven by the GFC, one would expect the participation increase to be larger and the employment rate reduction to be smaller.

It should be pointed out that these reported changes have also coincided with the introduction of a separate National Partnership - the National Partnership on Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities. Some of its aims are similar to those of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, including its focus on young people at risk of leaving school early. 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.

Impact on participation

The Compact has two main dimensions. The first is a regulatory component, which introduced consistent new nationwide requirements for educational participation, largely targeted at those under the age of 18. This was primarily expected to increase the number of young people participating in education and training, particularly 16 and 17 year-olds.

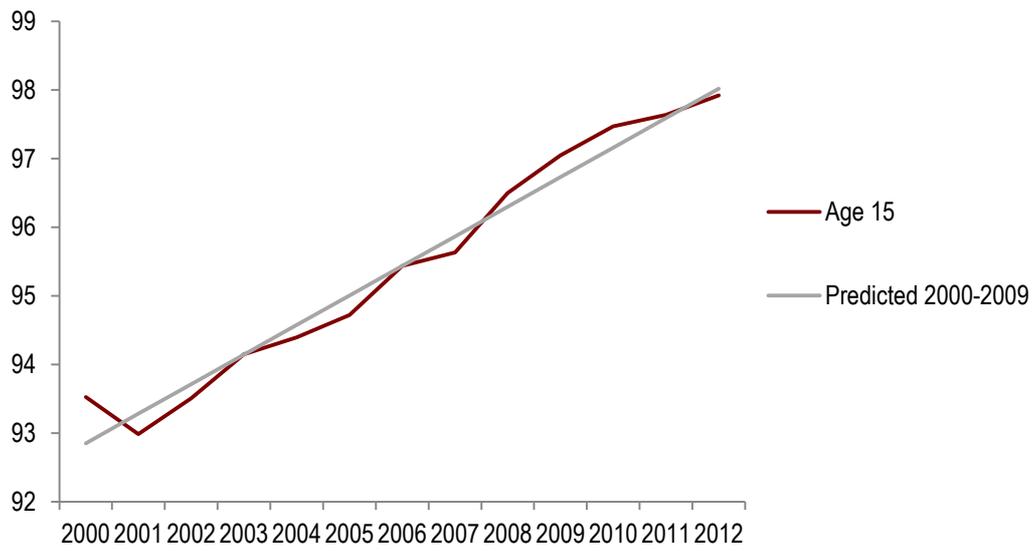
The second is a financial component that changed the conditions around the provision of income support, such that those under the age of 21 who have not completed Year 12 now need to take part in education and training in order to receive Youth Allowance income support, and in order for their families to receive Family Tax Benefit Part A. This component was intended (and expected) to shift young people to student payments from other welfare payments.

The regulatory component of the Compact

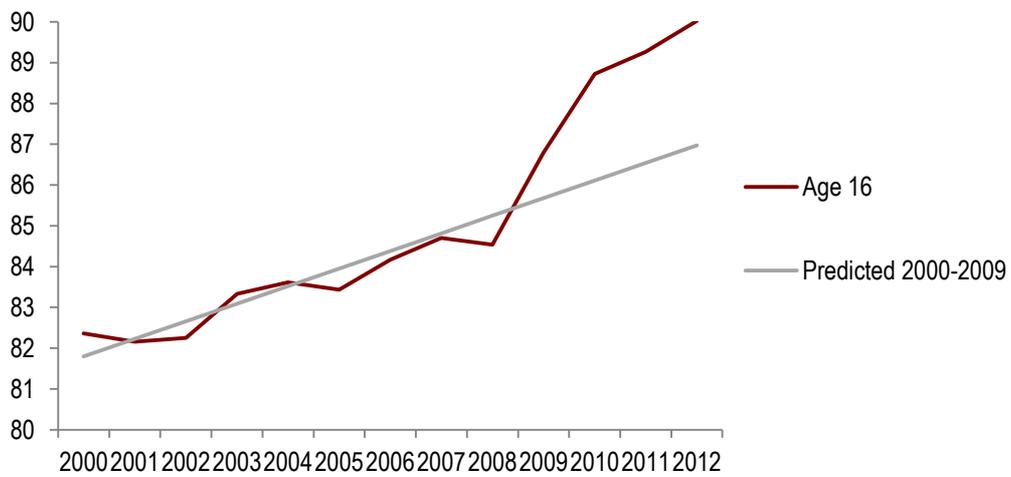
The first aspect of The Compact appears to have been a success in terms of having a positive impact on participation. Full-time school participation among the target age groups has risen at a rate that is appreciably above the pre-National Partnership trend, as has participation in full-time schooling (see Figure 3.16), and the trend shown by school participation data is reflected in data from the Labour Force survey on total full-time educational participation.

FIGURE 3.16: PROPORTION OF 15-19 YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN SECONDARY SCHOOL, 2000-2012

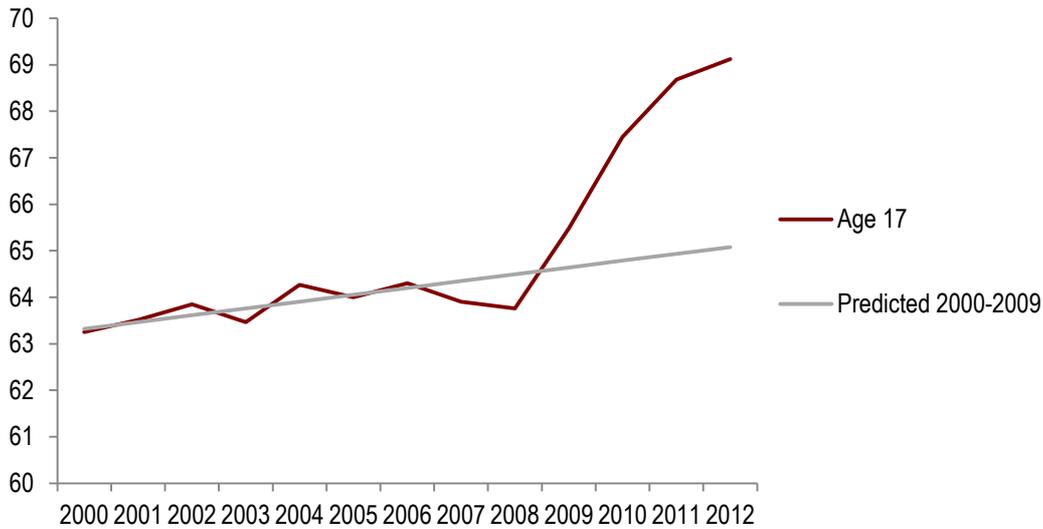
15 year olds: extension of pre-existing trend in context of low possible growth



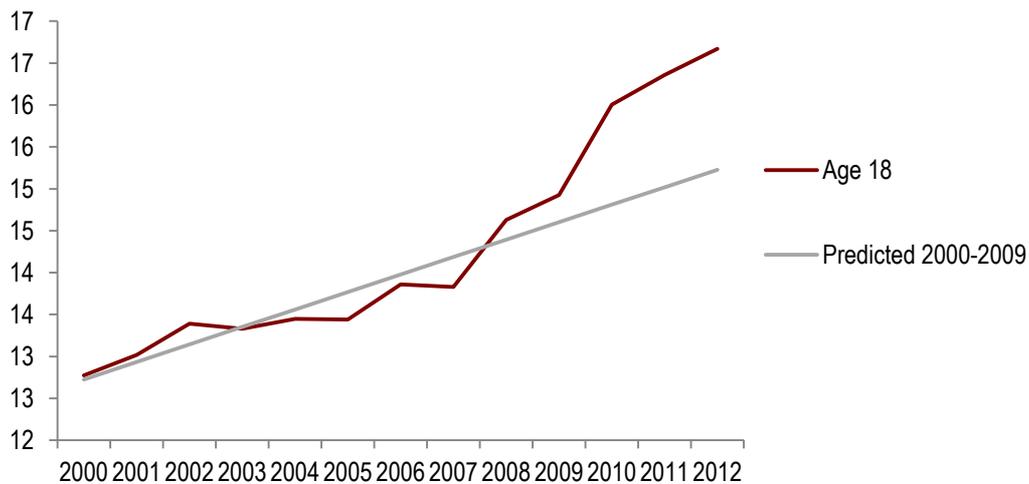
16 year olds: substantial boost to previous trend of slow growth



17 year olds: very substantial growth from a flat trend for participation



18 year olds: large boost to participation from low base



Source: ABS (2013), *National School Statistics Collection*; ABS (2013), *Australian Demographic Statistics*.
 Note: the source of this data has changed between Year 2 and Year 3 of this evaluation. This was to increase the reliability of information and will explain some discrepancies between data reported across different years of this evaluation.

VET participation has responded more slowly – decreasing in the cases of 15 to 19 year olds. Participation in VET in schools has increased, but not at a sufficient rate to offset reductions in VET participation for that cohort. For young people aged 20-24 not in school and who have not completed Year 12, VET participation has steadily grown since 2009 – albeit at a relatively slow pace.

The financial component of the Compact

In contrast to the regulatory dimension of the Compact, the financial aspect appears to have had less impact, either in encouraging a return to study by unemployed youth or in reducing the overall size of the age group who are either unemployed or inactive (not engaged in employment, education or training, or NEET) as a share of

those not in full-time education. Whilst there was an observable decrease in youth unemployment after the Compact's introduction (see Figure 3.17), this reduction in unemployment must be balanced against the increase in youth inactivity – as discussed below – which undermines these gains.

There is mixed evidence that unemployed youth have transitioned into education and training. The number of Youth Allowance (Other)⁷¹ recipients as a proportion of unemployed youth fell sharply after the introduction of the Compact, and while this figure has since increased somewhat, it has not grown as would be expected if a large proportion of unemployed youth became eligible for Youth Allowance by moving into education and training (see Figure 3.18).

VET participation among those not at school and without a Year 12 qualification has increased since the Compact was introduced, although not by a great deal. This could be for a number of reasons, and evidence around potential movements of students from VET into unemployment is not available. However, as shown in Chapter 2 above, the number of 16-21 year olds who are not at school and enrolled in VET who describe themselves as unemployed increased from 2008 to 2013 – suggesting that perhaps some of these have moved into VET education.

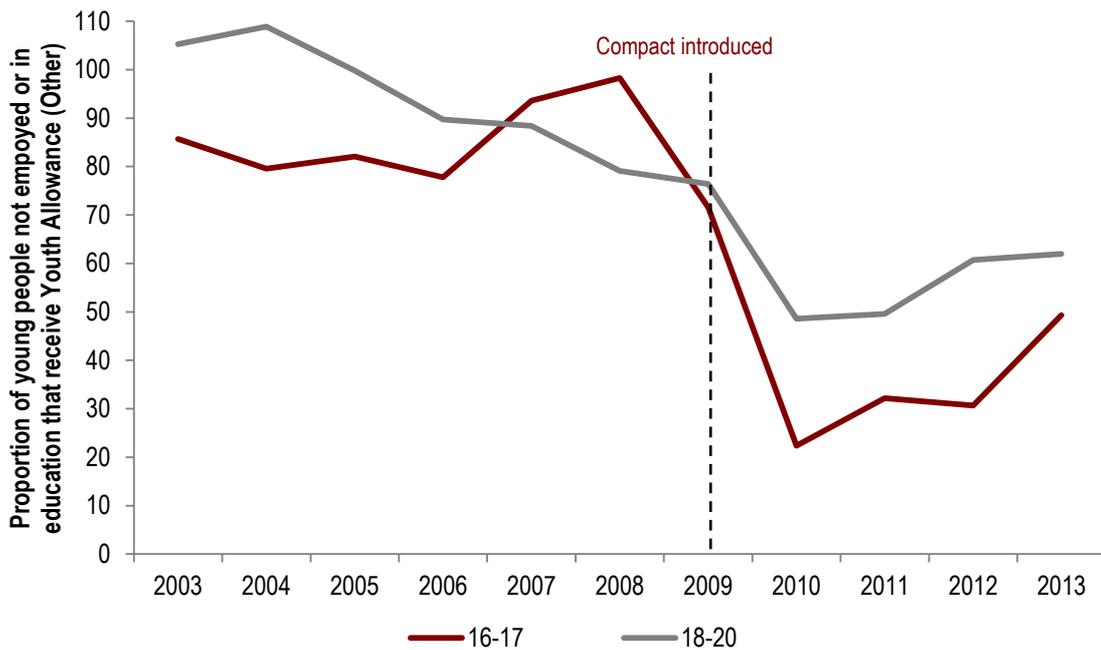
While the number of unemployed 15–19 year-olds has fallen, the number that are inactive (neither in education and training nor looking for work) has jumped sharply since the Compact was introduced from around 12,000 in May 2008 to around 18,000 in May 2013 (see 'Inactive young people', below). As a result, there has been no appreciable reduction in the size of the NEET group – in fact it appears to have increased.

These findings appear 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.⁷²

⁷¹ Customers, in receipt of Youth Allowance, who are 21 years of age and under who are not full-time students or Australian Apprentices.

⁷² 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.

FIGURE 3.17: YOUTH ALLOWANCE (OTHER) RECIPIENTS AS A SHARE OF THOSE UNEMPLOYED AND NOT IN EDUCATION



Sources: DEEWR, Labour Market and Related Payments: A Monthly Profile, and ABS Labour Force Survey.

State and Territory government representatives consulted as part of this evaluation have reported that the Compact was a catalyst for closer collaboration across the education and training systems and sectors and, in some cases, for collaboration between schools, VET and support services for young people.

One reported outcome of this collaboration between different States and Territories has been the development of clearer processes for helping early school leavers transition into further education, training and employment. Despite these positive outcomes, there is some room for improvement in the reporting of the Compact's impact, particularly in accessing data that might help understand the take up of education and training places as a result of changes in income support.

Inactive young people

The Compact has been associated with three notable trends:

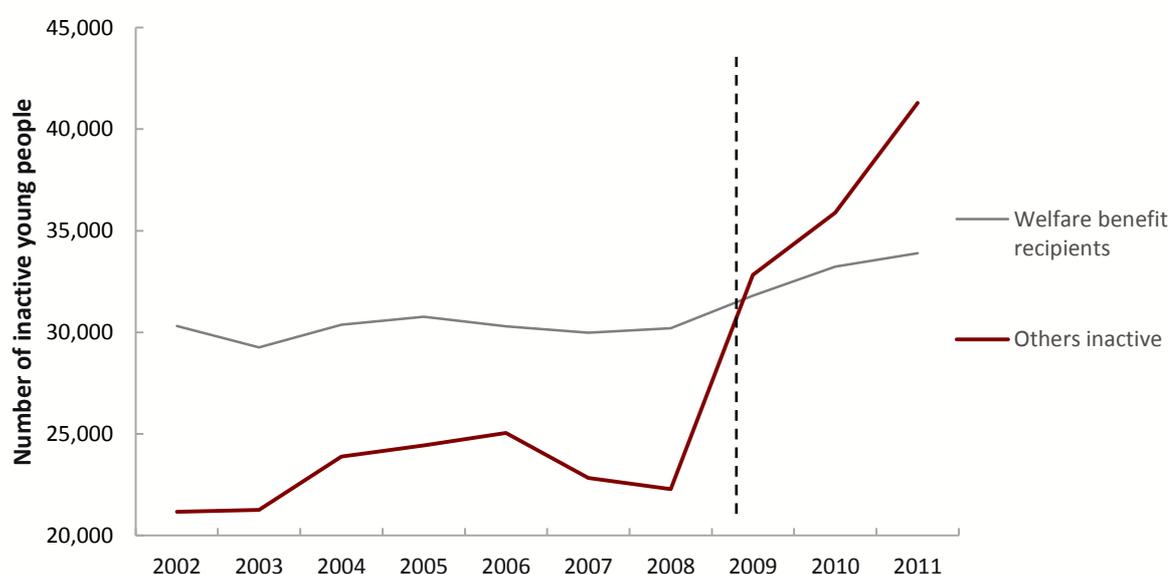
1. An increase in the number of young people who are inactive (not employed, looking for work or studying)
2. A marked fall in the number of families of young people who are eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A
3. A sharp fall in the proportion of young job seekers who receive income support. Young people who are not benefit recipients now make up a clear majority of all inactive young people under the age of 20.

While it cannot be definitively proven that the Compact has caused the first of these trends, the evidence (the timing of its introduction and the age groups affected) leads to a strong presumption that it is part of the explanation, although this presumption needs to be further tested. The link between the Compact and the second trend is less clear, although it seems significant that the biggest decline has occurred among the age group (16-17) most clearly targeted by the Compact. It is worth noting, however, that the Department of Education reports

that a significant proportion of the decline in families eligible for Family Tax Benefit A appears to be a function of administrative procedures that resulted in those who did not respond to a mailed questionnaire being removed. Both trends need more detailed investigation. The Compact seems almost certain to have been a cause of the third trend. This is primarily evidenced by the increase in inactive young people not receiving welfare payments (see Figure 3.18 below).

Between May 2008 and May 2011 there was a noticeable increase in youth inactivity; among 15-19 year-olds it rose from 52,500 to 75,200, and while it fell to 63,500 in May 2012 and has since stabilised, it remains well above the level experienced for all of the period between 1990 and 2008.⁷³ Over the same period there was also a sharp rise in inactivity among 20-21 year-olds.

FIGURE 3.18: INACTIVE PERSONS AGED 15-19 BY WHETHER WELFARE BENEFIT RECIPIENTS OR NOT (2000-2011)⁷⁴



Sources: ABS 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery and FaHCSIA, FaHCSIA Statistical Paper No. 10 Income Support Customers A Statistical Overview 2012.

The growth in youth inactivity appears most pronounced amongst 15-19 year olds who are **not** in receipt of welfare benefits. Amongst this group the number who were inactive appears to have doubled, from around 22,300 to almost 41,300 between 2008 and 2011. Over the same period there has not been a sharp increase in inactivity amongst 21-24 year-olds.

The sharp increase in non-welfare-receiving inactivity amongst 15-21 year olds is of particular concern as the causes are not clear and this group is particularly difficult to contact. This is a highly heterogeneous cohort with members ranging from amongst the least to the most vulnerable members of society. There is very little statistical data available on the profile of inactive young people, and nothing that provides insight into the proportion of inactive young people that fit into the categories of 'most vulnerable' and 'least vulnerable'. Despite the methodological limitations, primary research conducted by dandolopartners suggests that some members of the

⁷³ Difference in age ranges are a result of different sources of data

⁷⁴ The "Others inactive" category is calculated by subtracting the number of benefit recipients from the total number inactive.

inactive cohort appear to face significant personal challenges, such as mental illness, substance abuse, unstable personal and family relationships and poor experiences with schools and service providers.

3.4 Appropriateness

Evaluation question	Overall assessment
Was it appropriate?	
<p>Has the National Partnership been consistent with overarching policy objectives?</p>	<p>The National Partnership 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</p> <p>Stakeholders see the National Partnership as an evolution of prior initiatives, rather than a comprehensive new policy/response</p>
<p>Did the National Partnership address areas of need?</p>	<p>The policy imperative that initiated the National Partnership appears to remain – there is an increasing number of disengaged young people</p> <p>National Partnership funding is directed towards areas of need – but stakeholders identified challenges and capacity constraints to meet those needs</p>
<p>How has the National Partnership and its elements complemented other National Partnerships and programs targeting similar outcomes?</p>	<p>Increased collaboration between the Commonwealth and jurisdictions has resulted in better alignment of objectives and programs</p>
<p>Have the National Partnership outcomes and outputs been maximised for the investment?</p>	<p>Measurement against objectives are tracked</p> <p>A number of targets are being achieved</p> <p>The National Partnership has created efficiencies in the youth attainment and transitions area through better coordination of initiatives and information sharing</p> <p>The Compact appears to have increased participation and reduced benefit recipients at minimal cost</p>

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

The National Partnership addresses some of the factors that influence youth attainment and transition outcomes. 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.

At the commencement of the National Partnership, 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, 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 National Partnership 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 youth attainment and transition outcomes, these changes may influence the nation's ability to continue to improve these outcomes.

Participation and attainment outcomes have improved since the National Partnership 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.

3.4.1 Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

MEAST funding has been used to achieve the National Partnership's objectives of improving youth attainment and transition outcomes through initiatives focused on:

- Encouraging and supporting participation of young people in education and training who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging through providing alternate learning pathways such as the vocational programs in the ACT or mentoring programs such as the Victorian Apprenticeship Support Officers
- Maintaining and providing new access to vocational learning options, particularly structured workplace learning, that aim to improve the relevance of education and training and improve transition outcomes
- Improving attainment through access to, and recognition of, qualifications in a broader range of areas and at higher levels
- Supporting young people to make successful transitions through careers and pathways planning and mentoring support.

The MEAST funding model provided States and Territories with flexibility to invest in a broad range of activities that contribute to youth attainment and transition outcomes. The majority of funding had been targeted towards young people in the 15-18 year old age group, with fewer activities focused on young people between 19-24 years making transitions into the workforce.

States and Territories have directed funding towards activities that are consistent with the National Partnership objectives. The focus of these activities was improving access to, and the quality of, career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring (factors that are known to underpin successful transition outcomes). Many States and Territories directed MEAST funding to initiatives that complemented and added 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. Some initiatives are beginning to demonstrate improved 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 funding has also been used to identify youth attainment and transition barriers and options to address them. Early school leaver and post-year 12 destination surveys are common tools that have been introduced and expanded under MEAST. These surveys have been supplemented in some jurisdictions by research projects aimed at getting a better understanding of the factors influencing youth attainment and transitions.

The MEAST element of the National Partnership 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).

3.4.2 School Business Community Partnership Brokers

Partnership Broker program objectives are consistent with overarching objectives for the National Partnership. This program aims to increase support by engaging key stakeholders to help young people to overcome barriers that stop them from engaging in education and training. In particular, the program supports engagement between schools and employers to improve student learning and outcomes. As outlined earlier, international studies show this to be one of the features of successful transition systems.⁷⁵

There has been a view amongst Partnership Brokers and education and training stakeholders that Partnership Broker activities overlap with other initiatives being implemented in some jurisdictions. For example:

- Partnership Brokers are seen in some cases to be doing the work that schools are already doing, both in terms of industry and parental engagement
- There is an overlap with other programs in some jurisdictions. Examples include:
 - Participation managers and CARE schools (WA)
 - Guaranteeing Futures (TAS)
 - Industry Participation and Engagement (NT).

Some stakeholders suggest that overlap is still occurring between the activity of Partnerships Brokers and other service providers, although the issue seems to be of diminished concern overall. Nonetheless, the Department of Education (at the national level), education authorities (at the state and territory level) and Partnership Brokers (at the local level) should continue to work to improve collaboration, which would ensure that duplication of effort is reduced and that Partnership Brokers are used to complement other related initiatives.

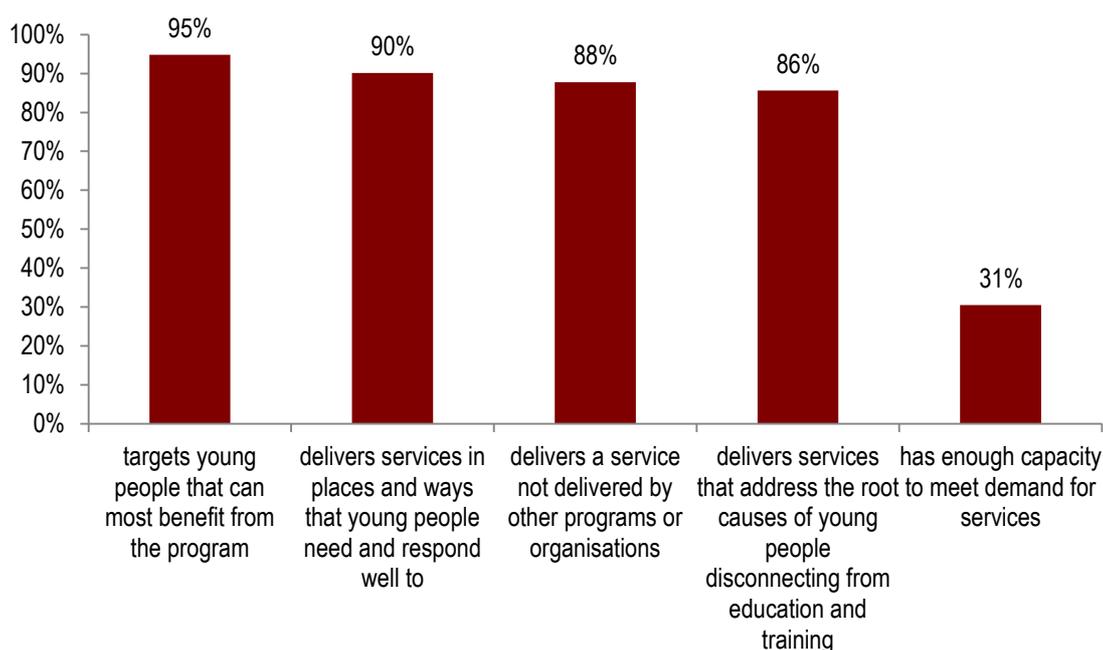
⁷⁵ See OECD (2000) *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris.

3.4.3 Youth Connections

The YC program remains consistent with National Partnership objectives – clearly focusing on improving youth attainment and transition outcomes. The 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-socioeconomic status, Indigenous and humanitarian refugee backgrounds.

Overwhelmingly, Youth Connections service providers believed that the program addresses areas of need – though most did not believe that it has enough capacity to meet demand for services (see Figure 3.19).⁷⁶

FIGURE 3.19: SERVICE PROVIDERS' VIEWS ON WHETHER THE YC PROGRAM ADDRESSES AREAS OF NEED



Source: dandolopartners survey of YC service providers (2012).

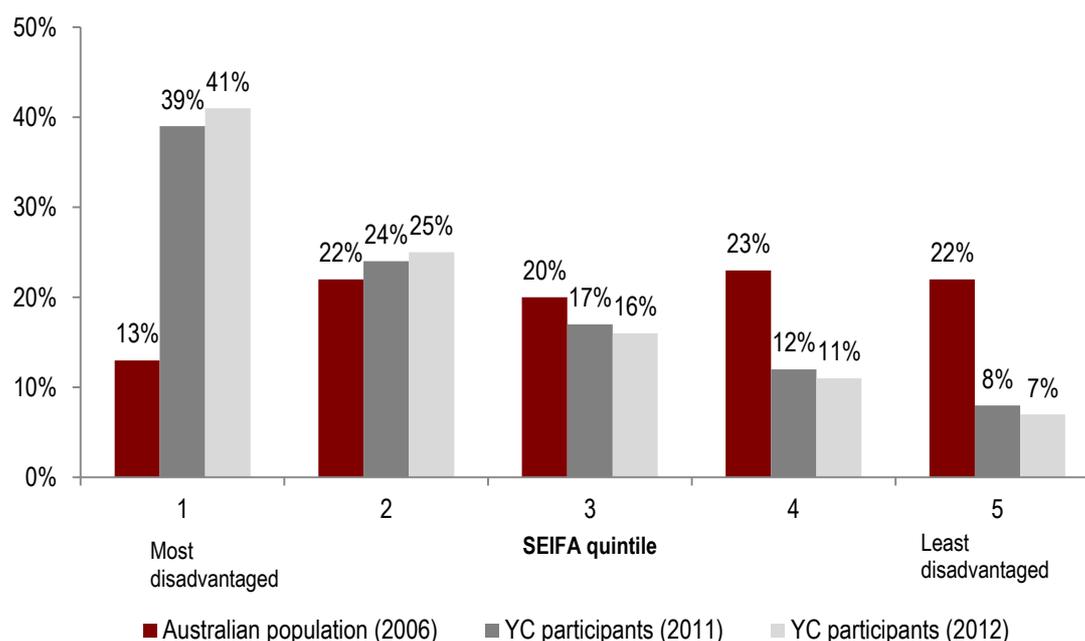
Youth Connections Individual Support Services also predominately support young people from particularly high needs cohorts. Figure 3.20 below shows the distribution of young people enrolled in YC Individual Support Services from most disadvantaged to least disadvantaged, based on the area in which they reside. More YC 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 (data was not available for 2013). Based on this data YC appears well targeted at the young people who are most at risk.⁷⁷

The funding of Youth Connections projects was heavily biased towards consortia-based responses, rather than funding of individual providers. This was considered to be highly appropriate in most circumstances, providing a basis for more integrated approaches and minimising duplication.

⁷⁶ dandolopartners' survey of YC service providers (2012) and interviews with YC stakeholders.

⁷⁷ Note: this data does not take into account young people who are supported through outreach and re-engagement activities.

FIGURE 3.20: YOUNG PEOPLE RECEIVING INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES BY SEIFA QUINTILE⁷⁸



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).

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.

As of September 2013, 19 per cent of the national YC caseload was comprised of Indigenous young people – this proportion varied by jurisdiction (from 6% in Victoria to 77% in the Northern Territory). Nationally, 69 per cent of Indigenous young people in the program recorded 'Progressive' outcomes, while 51 per cent recorded 'Final Outcomes'. This was lower than the overall national average of 74 per cent of young people recording 'Progressive' outcomes, and 60 per cent recording 'Final Outcomes'.

By contrast, only 2 per cent of total YC participants nationwide were recorded as humanitarian refugees (835 people). Of these, 85 per cent recorded 'Progressive' outcomes, and 76 per cent recorded 'Final Outcomes'.

The number and make-up of participants in flagged regions indicates this is a useful program feature for engaging with particular target cohorts. Based on the 2012 dandolo survey, 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%), help improve YC services for Indigenous and/or humanitarian refugee young people (60%), and help set appropriate priorities (58%).

Capacity constraints

Demand for YC services is high and continues to increase. In 2012, only 31 per cent of service providers believed that the program has enough capacity to meet demand for services. Service providers operating in major cities and inner and outer regional areas mentioned similar levels of capacity constraint. YC service providers in remote

⁷⁸ Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) allows the ranking of regions/areas by the level of social and economic wellbeing.

and very remote areas recorded a noticeably higher level of concern about the capacity to meet service demand. Over the life of the program, 69.5 per cent of participants were located in rural and regional areas.⁷⁹

This view is consistent with those held by education and training organisations and community and youth sector organisations consulted as part of the 2013 summative review. Contributing to this challenge is the fact that recruitment and retention of suitable and qualified staff can be an ongoing problem – particularly in rural and regional areas. This not only has the potential to exacerbate issues relating to capacity constraints, but also may lead to variability in quality and capacity of YC staff to deal with severely disengaged young people.

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. YC is currently funded to provide Individual Support Services to approximately 30,000 young people per year who are at risk of disengaging (i.e., still at school, in training or in a job) or disengaged. Around 120,000 15–19 year-olds are disengaged⁸⁰ while the number of young people who are underemployed or studying part-time, and thus also 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.

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. Stakeholder note they believe that few – if any – 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 places available.

The National YC Network has responded to the challenge posed by capacity constraints by committing in its Strategic Priorities Plan for 2013-2014 to strengthen capacity by:

- Providing links to resources that enhance YC provider abilities
- Implementing relevant professional development for providers
- Encouraging and enabling networking and information exchange among providers and other organisations nationally
- Forging and maintaining strategic alliances with other organisations and sectors.

While it is too early to tell whether these efforts will have a meaningful impact, they appear to be well targeted and each have identifiable actions/timelines, suggesting that implementation will be carried through.

3.4.4 National Career Development

Some stakeholders questioned whether career development belonged as part of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions in the first place. It was suggested it was inappropriate to house career development within the National Partnership, in part because the issue was much broader than the period of transition or age cohort that has been targeted by the National Partnership.

⁷⁹ The Youth Attainment and Transitions regions have been classified depending on the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia Index of Australia (ARIA) value for their census Collection District. 69.5% of participants are located in regions with an average ARIA index value between 0.2 and 10.53 being classified from Inner Regional to Very Remote.

⁸⁰ Unemployed or not in the labour market and not engaged in full-time education.
Source: ABS (May 2013) *Labour Force Survey*.

Role of Australian Government in career development

It was widely acknowledged that, at a minimum, the Australian Government needs to play a coordinating role in career development. The career development policy environment was described as highly fragmented, with disparate activity that is not connected or coordinated. The Australian Government was acknowledged as having a critical role to play in bringing cohesion to career development and establishing it as a clear national priority. It was considered that the impact of doing so would be greatest in communities and regions that have poorer outcomes of employment and transitions, or highest need. There were two ways that this could potentially be achieved:

- By re-stating that career development remains a national priority with the new Australian Government
- By ensuring that funding for career development initiatives and projects prioritises areas where there is greatest need (i.e. poorest outcomes).

Specific areas where the Australian Government was considered to have played an important role to date included:

- Creating improved partnerships between industry, government, career development workers, schools and young people (particularly through School Business and Community Partnership Brokers)
- Committing to professionalisation of the career development workforce (though noting that Australia does not have mandatory quality frameworks or mandatory service delivery standards). There was also support for increasing the capability of other people involved in the dissemination of careers advice, including those that sit outside the school environment including JSA providers.

Role and performance of State and Territory Governments

The responsibility of State and Territory governments is also considered critical in career development, particularly given their role in the funding and oversight of government schools, schooling staff including school career advisers and broader legislative responsibilities for other sectors. States and Territories were broadly acknowledged as having increased their focus on career development over the course of the National Partnership's implementation.

Role of industry

Industry was acknowledged as a critical, and increasingly important partner in career development. In particular, industry was acknowledged as playing a vital role in ensuring that labour market information was current and in a form that enabled people to match their skills, interests and abilities with areas of opportunity. Industry was also acknowledged as offering a 'real life' perspective and / or experience that could also help to build student engagement in education and training as well as providing a basis for better outcomes.

It was acknowledged that industry's role would need to be more prominent and focused in coming years than it had been to date. Industry has a powerful symbolic role to play and stakeholders agreed that industry need to be seen to be actively supporting career development. The challenge is to identify how to best engage with and involve industry in career development. A number of ways have been suggested for promoting improved industry engagement including:

- Industry involvement in national leadership

- Stronger connections between career services and industry
 - Increased industry involvement in the provision of career development advice by the provision of up-to-date labour market information (e.g. the gathering and distribution of information through a central system or 'clearinghouse model' coordinated through industry associations)
 - Industry participation in events that showcase employment opportunities (e.g. participation in the National ICT Careers Week)
 - Joint effort to identify the implications of emerging skills requirements, particularly when industry restructuring is occurring
- Opportunities for more effectively gathering and distributing information, coordinated through industry associations where appropriate, as mentioned above
- Focused partnerships between relevant stakeholders and businesses.

Alignment of funded projects to the National Career Development Strategy

The Making Career Connections projects represent the first steps towards implementation of the Strategy. The program provided \$6.1 million in funding for projects that support the Australian Government's four priority areas under the strategy. Using the strategy as a framework it is envisaged that other stakeholders will develop their own priorities areas for action.

The first round of funding was distributed to eight projects, each with a different scope, aim and budget. While it is too early to assess the effectiveness of individual projects this evaluation has involved a high level analysis of the extent to which funded projects aligned with the Strategy.

The projects utilise a range of mechanisms and target a range of stakeholders to support improved career development outcomes. Some projects focus on providing information and skills to young people, while others connect young people to employers and industry and others aim to up-skill adults (including parents and career development professionals).

Table 3.7 below contains an assessment of the extent to which the funded projects align with the guiding principles outlined in the Strategy. The analysis relied heavily on an assessment of project business plans submitted to Department of Education. The assessment revealed that:

- All of the Strategy's guiding principles are addressed by at least one of the funded projects
- All projects were deemed to address at least two of the principles
- A number of projects address the majority of principles, most notably the Parents as Career Transition Support (PACTS) which was deemed to align with all but one of the guiding principles
- Many of the principles are served by multiple projects. An exception is principle 3 (providing career development services at any time that it is required), which was addressed by only one project (CDAA 'Where the Jobs Are'), although it should be noted that pre-existing *myfuture* and the Job Guide provide services to all age cohorts.

TABLE 3.7: ALIGNMENT OF MAKING CAREER CONNECTIONS PROJECTS AND THE NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

✓ = some alignment; ✓✓ = alignment; ✓✓✓ = strong alignment

Guiding Principles	Projects							
	HYPAs Works	Parents As Career Transition Support (PACTS)	Beacon Real Futures Generation	Scientists & Mathematicians in Schools	Work Inspiration	CDAAs 'Where the Jobs Are'	Worlds of Work Program	Aspirations Mentoring
1. The individual is at the centre of career development services	✓✓ ✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓✓		✓✓✓	✓✓✓
2. Career development services will be provided in many different ways and recognise that many people influence an individual's career decisions throughout their life, including parents, teachers, peers, mentors, partners and other family members, employers and colleagues	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓
3. While career development will have a strong focus on preparing young people for the transition to work, individuals across all ages may benefit from career development services at any time when they need it most						✓✓		
4. Education and training organisations, workplaces, employment services, governments and private enterprises will incorporate career development skills within their overall approach to learning, skills development and personal development		✓	✓✓	✓	✓			✓✓
5. Standards and quality assurance processes—for both services and practitioners—support effective career development services and enhance career development outcomes	✓	✓✓✓			✓✓✓	✓	✓	
6. Career development information including labour market information is managed efficiently so that it continues to be relevant and reliable		✓✓				✓✓✓		
7. Communication, collaboration and co-ordination across sectors enhance career development policy, service delivery and outcomes	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓

A summary of all funded projects is contained in Appendix 4.

3.4.5 The Compact with Young Australians

Overall, the Compact remains consistent with the National Partnership objectives by creating clear incentives for young people to engage in education, training or enter the workforce. Stakeholders report that the Compact has also been effective at reaching younger people at higher risk of disengaging from education or training.

The Compact's success 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.

Job Services Australia (JSA) providers support early school leavers to find and secure employment. Because of this perspective, these providers may therefore be able to provide an insight on the impact of the Compact on young people.

dandolopartners conducted a survey of JSA providers in 2012. Overall, they indicated a positive view of the Compact and its effects. Some noted that the benefits of the Compact were limited by capacity constraints on education service providers, an assertion disputed by other State and Territory representatives who believed there were sufficient places in education and training to satisfy demand.

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's requirements.

Some of the education and training providers consulted raised the issue of young people not complying with the Compact's participation requirements. Anecdotally, stakeholders have reported that some young people enrol in education and training courses to access income support payments but continue to receive payments even if they stop attending these courses. This is clearly 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. Despite this, jurisdictions do report ongoing efforts to raise awareness of the participation requirement with students, parents and the community.

Some JSA providers have previously raised concerns about lower-quality education and training providers, which were established as a result of increased demand for services driven by the Compact, though other stakeholders did not raise this issue. This is an area that may warrant further investigation.

3.5 Efficiency

Evaluation question	Overall Assessment
Have the National Partnership outcomes and outputs been maximised for the investment?	<p>Measurement against objectives are tracked</p> <p>A number of targets are being achieved</p> <p>The National Partnership has created efficiencies in the youth attainment and transitions area through better coordination of initiatives and information sharing</p> <p>The Compact appears to have increased participation and reduced benefit recipients at minimal cost</p>

At the Department of Education's request, an efficiency assessment was added to the evaluation framework at the start of 2012. The Department of Treasury provides some guidance on the requirements and arrangements for conducting reviews of National Partnerships under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (Intergovernmental Agreement).⁸¹ dandolo's evaluation, informed by Treasury guidelines, focused on two questions 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 National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions:

- Measurements against objectives are being tracked
- On that basis, a number of targets are being achieved
- The National Partnership has created efficiencies in the youth attainment and transitions 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 National Partnership has created broader efficiencies in the youth attainment and transition area:

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

However, the issue of whether value for money has been achieved is difficult to ascertain within the bounds of this study.

The National Partnership was established without 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.

⁸¹ The Treasury (2012), *A Short Guide to Reviewing National Partnerships*, <http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/guidelines/Short-Guide_review.pdf>

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 National Partnership 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 National Partnership compared with earlier programs.

Also, the features of the National Partnership elements are such that the links between activity and measurable participation, attainment and transition outcomes are often indirect, typically 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
- Youth Connections is a step away from youth attainment and transition outcomes as success is measured by engagement outcomes, but the translation of this to attainment and transition outcomes is not guaranteed
- Partnership Brokers activity is likely to have a longer-term pay-off that is not readily measurable in short-term youth attainment and transition outcomes
- The link between National Career Development activity and measurable youth attainment and transitions outcomes is indirect. In any case, the delay in progressing the National Career Development Strategy has limited the impact of this element on outcomes during the period of the NP
- The Compact is probably the most efficient element, as its cost was minimal and it has had specific evident participation outcomes. But, as with Youth Connections, 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 Youth Connections is having an impact, but as supply of services is exceeded by demand from the target group⁸², it could be claimed that it is underfunded.

3.6 Governance and implementation

Evaluation question	Overall assessment
How well is it governed and implemented?	
How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the National Partnership?	<p>The Australian Government and States and Territories continue to work in partnership to deliver the National Partnership</p> <p>The National Partnership program service providers collaborate through national and State/Territory networks to make program improvements and get programs to work together better</p>

⁸² 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*.

Has governance of the National Partnership worked effectively?	<p>Appropriate governance arrangements are in place at national, jurisdictional and program levels – although it is difficult for some stakeholders to participate in these</p> <p>Positive relationships can generally be seen between stakeholders and the Commonwealth</p>
How well has performance reporting worked?	<p>Program administration and quality of reporting was challenging at first but is improving</p> <p>Annual State and Territory performance reporting has begun to show the outcomes of activities</p> <p>Some program reporting gives limited insight into the impact of programs on youth attainment and transition outcomes</p>
How effective has communication been?	<p>Stakeholders generally understand the National Partnership objectives and value – and this has improved over the life of the National Partnership, particularly for Partnership Brokers.</p>

3.6.1 Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

States and Territories are required to provide annual reports to the Australian Government against the outcomes, performance benchmarks and performance indicators specified in the National Partnership. The information provided about MEAST activities varies widely by jurisdiction and sector.

Initially, only a few of the jurisdiction reports included a breakdown of MEAST funding by area or initiative (in total and as a proportion of other funding for the initiative), making it difficult to determine the relative investment and effectiveness of different types of initiatives. To counter this for the subsequent reports, the annual reporting templates were revised to collect more meaningful information - including where funding was being targeted and the impact of the initiatives. The new reports were more informative – particularly around the allocation of funding to initiatives and by educational sector – though information regarding the potential impact/outcomes of funded programs remained inconsistent across all reports.

States and Territories took different approaches to their allocation of MEAST funding and the design and delivery of MEAST initiatives, including:

- The State or Territory government developing and running programs and developing resources for the benefit of young people in government and non-government education and training
- Dividing MEAST funding between school sectors based on a formula with each sector responsible for designing and delivering initiatives in line with their particular needs and objectives
- The State or Territory government running a process to allocate funding to non-government school sectors and “tendering” organisations.

Non-government school sectors were involved in designing MEAST initiatives in all States and Territories, but to varying degrees. Non-government school peak bodies were commonly engaged in the design of initiatives. In some jurisdictions a broader range of government departments and other stakeholders, such as community service providers, were engaged in the design and delivery of initiatives. For instance, in the ACT, MEAST funded initiatives were developed by schools, business and community sector organisations funded through a Strategic Funding Pool. Amongst other things, this led to Menslink mentoring using MEAST funding to work with professional athletes to reduce the stigma around young men seeking help. Stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of initiatives more commonly reported that they found the initiatives more tailored and relevant to the school sector or young people that they represented.

There is a risk that some initiatives will not be sustained beyond the funded period of the National Partnership. Stakeholders expressed a concern that the momentum established by existing MEAST-funded initiatives may not be sustained beyond the life of the National Partnership. In some cases, it was deemed unlikely that States and Territories would maintain activities that are funded under the MEAST element. Some jurisdictions have already determined the future of these initiatives, while others are yet to do so.

Understanding the impacts of MEAST funding is complicated by the fact that:

1. It supports a diverse range of activities and outcomes
2. It is often highly targeted (making data capture difficult)
3. It contributes to both new and existing programs, creating additional difficulties in disaggregating the effect of MEAST funds.

Most stakeholders supported continued knowledge sharing across jurisdictions in the MEAST areas of mentoring, career development and multiple learning pathways. For example, sharing outcomes from evaluations of MEAST-funded initiatives and research projects; and summaries of specific initiatives and lessons learned. The expiry of the National Partnership has the potential to dull enthusiasm for continued collaboration, particularly if the current National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions Multilateral Working Group structure is discontinued.

3.6.2 Partnership Brokers

Collaboration between Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections

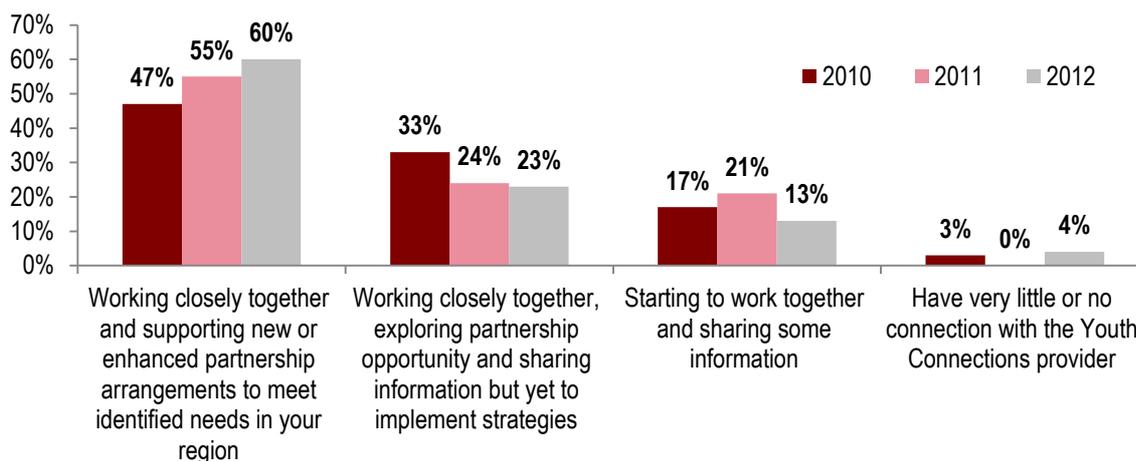
Under the Partnership Brokers program, service providers are required to work with Youth Connections program providers to identify and address the needs of their region. There is scope to:

- Identify common issues faced by case managed clients in the Youth Connections program (Individual Support Services)
- Identify cohorts and barriers to engagement in specific locations based on partner input
- Collaborate on solutions to address those issues.

In general, collaboration appears to be working between Youth Connections service providers and Partnership Brokers.

PB providers report that, since 2010, the program's relationship with Youth Connections has strengthened. Notably, in 2012, 60 per cent of Partnership Brokers indicated they were working closely with Youth Connections providers and supporting new or enhanced partnership arrangements to meet identified needs in their region (up from 55% in 2011).

FIGURE 3.21: PROVIDER VIEWS OF THE LEVEL OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN PARTNERSHIP BROKERS AND YOUTH CONNECTIONS



Relationship with the Department of Education

Department of Education support for Partnership Brokers was positively viewed. Approximately 88 per cent of Partnership Brokers surveyed felt that the Department's support in 2012 was positive (good/very good/excellent), an increase from the previous year's 83 per cent positive rating and a rating of 66 per cent in 2010. The Department has supported service providers to deliver the Partnership Broker program in multiple ways, including:

- Induction programs were developed and conducted for providers
- Network coordination at State and Territory and national levels
- Development and distribution of newsletters
- Organisation and hosting of conferences
- Contract management.

The top four ways providers felt that the Department could offer improved support were:

- Improve linkages between other government programs and Partnership Brokers
- Facilitate access to data / statistics (e.g., on Indigenous populations)
- Further promote the PB program
- Facilitate communications with state/territory government representatives.

Performance reporting

The Partnership Brokers program has a broad-ranging Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework (MERF), which is used to monitor, evaluate and report on individual Partnership Broker service providers and the program as a whole. The MERF has two main elements: provider monitoring and reporting against key performance measures and an evaluation strategy.

Some State and Territory government and non-government education sector representatives raised concerns with the provider monitoring and reporting. Stated concerns included:

- Key performance measures are limited because they are not clearly linked to National Partnership outcomes/targets
- They viewed self-reporting as a limited data source, albeit, self reporting is applied in other programs as well
- There is no baseline for the key performance measures to show if the program is adding value

- They perceive there is a reporting focus on the number, rather than quality, of partnerships – and that this may drive “short term” behaviours in Partnership Brokers, such as “claiming” existing partnerships and/or “business as usual” activities of schools as partnership activities. They argued that this behaviour would be counter-productive to the program’s objective of establishing long term and more strategic partnerships, which may require more effort to establish.

While there is always room to strengthen such arrangements, on balance our assessment is that the monitoring and reporting of the PB program has been relatively robust, comprehensive and very transparent. Stakeholders perceive that there has been willingness from the Department of Education to assess concerns and to respond where appropriate, helping jurisdictions to feel that they are part of a collaborative project where consultation is genuine and acted upon.

3.6.3 Youth Connections

Effective governance has been a feature of the program over the four years of the National Partnership. Most stakeholders have consistently provided positive feedback around YC’s interactions with other education and engagement service providers. Numerous examples were given of YC’s ability to work well with both government and independent school sector stakeholders, as well as not for profit providers in delivering an integrated approach to preventing youth disengagement. For example, YC was reported to work well with pre-existing Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) in Victoria, and with the Australian Capital Territory Education and Training Directorate.

Some stakeholders identified that the relationship between YC and Job Services Australia (JSA) providers was underdeveloped in some areas. YC and JSA regularly address a common client group – early school leavers – and opportunities to work collaboratively are under-exploited. The views of a sample of JSA providers on the relationship were sought by dandolopartners in 2012. The results indicated that most JSA service providers believe that JSA works well with YC. The vast majority 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 more often where the services are co-located, or where they are operating in confined 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.

3.6.4 The Compact with Young Australians

As indicated previously, every State and Territory has introduced legislation requiring young people to complete Year 10 and then remain engaged full-time in education, training and/or employment until 17 years of age. Alongside these requirements some States and Territories have introduced or expanded more formalised processes for managing early school leavers.

In Victoria, the Compact enabled a more formalised school exit process to ensure that young people wishing to leave school prior to the end of Year 10 are not exited until a pathway to another provider or service has been established. Similarly, the ACT is continuing to develop a student transfer register as a mechanism to track young people as they transfer across schools and sectors so that they can be contacted if they do not make a successful transition. In the NT, the introduction of the Compact legislation was followed by the introduction of truancy legislation that introduced greater powers to track young people and compel them to engage in conferences to establish an attendance plan that is monitored by a truancy team.

Many jurisdictions have indicated that accurately tracking the participation of these cohorts is difficult, and all jurisdictions note the ongoing challenge of reaching already disengaged youth, particularly those located in regional and rural areas.

An ongoing challenge facing education systems is finding and engaging 'hard to reach' young people, and specifically those who have already disengaged from school. It was reported that factors external to the education system are often the cause of reduced participation. Jurisdictions have reported the development of a number of initiatives and approaches to reach this cohort and re-engage them in education or training. These responses varied from compelling young people, such as legal action taken against young people not attending school, to providing pathways for disengaged students to re-enter education, such as Tasmania's creation of Youth Transition Officers to work with young people and track their re-engagement. This issue has become a major area of focus for the Targeted Engagement Services delivered under the Youth Connections program.

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.

In some States and Territories, initiatives to monitor and enforce participation requirements are minimal and/or are being scaled back. In the absence of monitoring and enforcement of the participation requirement there is a risk that the potential impact of the Compact is compromised. Notwithstanding differences in local circumstances, there could be benefit in investigating the relative merits of different approaches to monitoring and enforcing participation requirements.

3.6.5 National Career Development

Relationship with the Department of Education

The Department was considered to have effectively governed aspects of the career development element. There was general agreement that the project team responsible for the element – under direction of the Branch Manager – had been consultative in what had become an increasingly complex policy environment. Stakeholders reported that clear expectations of their role / expected contribution had been set by the Department and that interactions were generally efficient and professional.

Some stakeholders criticised the lack of implementation detail in the Strategy, and delays in the release of the strategy, as examples where implementation had not been handled as effectively as expected. The lack of detail in the Strategy, including about future funding arrangements, led some stakeholders to question whether the Strategy vision would be realised. A number of organisations indicated that they did not clearly understand the next steps arising from the release of the Strategy, which was a potential risk.

Some stakeholders indicated that confusion around the proposed 'leadership group' to oversee implementation of the strategy was a governance problem. The group was foreshadowed as part of the Strategy, but little was known about whether the group had been appointed, who would be represented and what its specific functions might be. The notion of a leadership group as articulated in the strategy was broadly supported.

Performance reporting

The importance of standards and performance reporting was acknowledged within the Strategy as one of its guiding principles. The importance of establishing – and reporting against – clear outcomes metrics was acknowledged as particularly critical for projects

funded under the Making Career Connections program. Performance reports will assist all stakeholders to assess what is working (and not working), and provides a basis upon which some of these projects can scale.

The absence of milestone measures and outcome metrics as part of the Strategy was acknowledged as a potential risk. Despite this, reporting provided as part of the Career Development element is limited, but appropriate given where the element is in its overall development.

4 Future Priorities

Rationale for continued focus on YAT

Over the life of the National Partnership significant progress has been made in educational participation and attainment. The introduction of the Compact with Young Australians, in particular, has correlated with a period of sharp improvement in these areas. For example, between 2008 and 2012:

- The proportion of 15-19 year olds in full time education increased by 6.4 percentage points, and for 20-24 year olds by 2.3 percentage points
- Proportions of 15-19 year olds attaining Year 12 or equivalent rose by 3.8 percentage points, and for 20-24 year olds by 1.4 percentage points
- Year 12 retention rates grew by 3.9 percentage points.⁸³

Despite the evidence that suggests the National Partnership has been effective – and the fact that the Compact is likely to remain in place beyond the expiry of the National Partnership – Australia’s performance on other critical metrics has either plateaued or declined. For example, the percentage of 15-24 year olds fully engaged in education, training or employment has remained steady since 2002⁸⁴. Australia’s school completion rates, in particular, continue to lag behind leading OECD nations despite some recent improvements. As was identified earlier in this report, the proportion of teenagers who are unemployed or inactive is higher than in the majority of OECD countries, and well above international best practice countries such as Norway, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Given Australia’s wealth, strong labour market and relatively sound performance in school-aged literacy and numeracy, it could be argued that Australia’s attainment and transition outcomes should be far better than they are. To demonstrate:

- Despite an increase in education participation among 15-19 year olds since 2009, Australia still ranks 21 out of 37 comparable OECD nations⁸⁵.
- Australian overall Year 12 or equivalent completion rates are at best average when compared to many other advanced OECD economies. For instance, among 25-34 year olds, Australia ranks 19 out of 35 developed OECD countries in upper secondary attainment⁸⁶.

⁸³ ABS, *National Schools Statistics Collection, Survey of Education and Work, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed – Table 03a*

⁸⁴ ABS, *Survey of Education and Work, Additional data cubes, 6227.0.55.003*

⁸⁵ OECD Education at a Glance 2013 Table C1.2

⁸⁶ OECD Education at a Glance 2013 Table A1.2a

- Six OECD nations have markedly lower rates of 15-19 year old unemployment or inactivity than Australia: Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland. Each nation's total educational participation for this cohort is between two and 13 percentage points higher than Australia's⁸⁷.

So while the NP YAT has inarguably made a positive contribution, the issues that led to its formation have not been fully addressed. The persistence of lower than ideal attainment and transition performance has potentially serious economic and social implications for Australia. Research undertaken prior to – and during – the implementation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions demonstrate that there are clear economic and social imperatives for continued government focus. In particular, a strong focus on improving outcomes in upper secondary years ('student outcomes') and successful transitions from school to further education, training and work, is proven to result in higher workforce participation over a person's lifetime, a reduced likelihood of skills shortages and higher productivity. Other benefits from improved attainment and transitions outcomes are likely to include reduced welfare and other public costs incurred through the justice, health and human services systems and more fulfilling lives for individuals who are more likely to achieve their full economic and social potential.

Building on our understanding of what works

Youth attainment and transition policy is reasonably mature, and much can be learned from what has and has not worked in Australia and elsewhere. While policy responses are highly context specific – and what works in one country may not translate directly to another – there are clear themes emerging in terms of best practice. Several major lessons can be observed from the implementation of the National Partnership, initiatives that preceded the National Partnership and policy responses overseas. Major lessons include:

1. Economic and education fundamentals create the foundation for good outcomes

Economic fundamentals – including the flexibility and strength of the labour market – have a significant bearing on the participation rates of young people. This was most clearly observed as part of the 2008-10 Global Financial Crisis, where young people's rate of employment was disproportionately impacted by the economic downturn. This demonstrated that young people in particular suffer more acutely from economy-wide challenges. Countries with poor economic fundamentals fared significantly worse than Australia⁸⁸ in terms of overall rates of youth (and overall) unemployment.

While the state of the broader economy is critical, so too is the quality of education provision. Perhaps not surprisingly, the establishment of sound education fundamentals have been proven to significantly influence young people's attainment and transition outcomes⁸⁹. In particular, it has been observed by stakeholders that schools and education authorities have a critical role to play in ensuring that young people have access to environments that enable them to thrive. The education fundamentals, in this instance, range from a robust and engaging curriculum, through to teacher quality and accountability.

2. Reducing early school leaving is more efficient and effective than treating disengagement at a later stage

The primary policy objective in youth attainment and transition is to promote engagement in the first instance. Improving levels of student retention and engagement in education is far easier and more cost-effective than the kinds of intensive services required to

⁸⁷ OECD Education at a Glance 2013 Tables C1.1a, C1.1b, C1.3 and C5.2a

⁸⁸ OECD Education at a Glance 2012 Tables A9.5

⁸⁹ dandolopartners, *Second interim evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions*, November 2012

return young people to education or training once they disengage. The strong focus on engagement is commonly accepted as best practice across the best performing OECD nations⁹⁰. The role of schools is clearly significant in promoting engagement, particularly in creating a positive and motivating environment. The importance of a well-rounded and engaging curriculum is acknowledged as a major contributor to retention (and a pre-cursor to improving attainment).

3. Rapid responses to disengagement are most effective

The earlier intervention occurs after disengagement, the more positive the outcome. In time, issues faced by disengaged young people invariably become more complex and resource-intensive to resolve.⁹¹ Successful interventions in leading countries (including Denmark and Norway) have involved mandating minimum response periods in which service providers are required to contact and begin re-engaging young people who have disengaged from education (typically school dropouts).⁹² The odds of successful re-engagement diminish significantly over time – particularly for young people that have been disengaged for more than three months.⁹³

4. Formal participation requirements can be effective in improving outcomes

Formal requirements to participate have been found by stakeholders to be effective at changing attitudes to study and work, which lead to behavioural changes. The participation requirement under the Compact with Young Australians has been effective in improving rates of education and training participation. This type of requirement has the added benefit of requiring no additional Commonwealth funding, and requiring only additional marginal funding from the states and territories rather than new programme funding. Stakeholders acknowledge that some of the most effective responses to youth disengagement and transitions require active participation by the young people themselves, in the spirit of mutual obligation. As mentioned earlier, a potential risk associated with formal requirements is that some young people may not be able or prepared to meet the hurdles put in place (as has been the case with the Compact which has correlated with – and has perhaps contributed to rather than necessarily causing – a higher number of inactive young people).⁹⁴

5. Individualised approaches are often necessary, though more expensive to deliver

Individualised services and programs have been found to be more effective than 'one-size-fits-all' responses – especially for the most severely disengaged.⁹⁵ Individualised approaches tailored to the characteristics of the young person are considered most effective, particularly when they are customised to the local context.⁹⁶

One of the challenges associated with individualised responses – particularly those based on a case management approach – is the cost of delivery. Unlike standardised and broad-based approaches, individualised approaches are more difficult to provide at scale, and are more costly to provide. The Youth Connections program provides an example of this: while Youth Connections demonstrated a significant positive impact on a national basis, the element was also heavily over-subscribed and unmet demand remains a challenge.

⁹⁰ Sweet, Richard, *Unemployed and inactive youth: What works?* November 2012, page 8

⁹¹ OECD, *Off to a Good Start: Jobs for Youth*, Paris, 2010 – pp 128-129

⁹² OECD, *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work*, Paris, 2000, page 13

⁹³ Polidano, Cain and Tabasso, Domenico and Tseng, Yi-Ping, *A Second Chance at Education for Early School Leavers*, Melbourne Institute Working Paper No. 14. August 2012. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2135284> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2135284>

⁹⁴ See Section 3.3.5 above

⁹⁵ European Union, *Reducing Early School Leaving in the EU*, Directorate General for Internal Policies Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies – Education and Culture, 2011

⁹⁶ dandolopartners, *Second interim evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions*, November 2012 – pp 46-49

6. Solutions that are driven locally tend to be more sustainable and effective

The design and delivery of services for young people needs to be driven by a range of people and organisations, not just government. Contributions by young people themselves, their families, local communities, businesses and service providers – as well as schools, TAFEs and other training providers – is acknowledged as best practice.

The reason for this, according to stakeholders, is simple: people and organisations at the local level are more likely to understand the needs of young people, and have the relationships necessary to respond to them. This includes a greater understanding of specific needs related to an individual's geography or other demographic factors. Family involvement is also considered to be critical, whenever practical, providing valuable linkages and support for intervention initiatives, complementing government and not-for-profit interventions.⁹⁷ Partnership Brokers provide a demonstration of the broad range of parties that need to be mobilised to provide comprehensive support to young people at risk of disengagement.

7. Integrated responses help reduce confusion and are more efficient and effective

The notion of an integrated response to youth attainment and transitions policy is not new. The success of initiatives – including Youth Connections – as part of the National Partnership has demonstrated the value of collaboration between a range of service providers and responsible authorities. The integration challenges tend to be most acute between schools, the not for profit sector, employers and welfare providers. Actions are likely to fall both within and outside the school setting,⁹⁸ and involve allowing young people, schools, communities and the private sector to work together to respond to a need. Services that are integrated tend to include 'case-management' style approaches that offer complementary services – for example job search assistance programs that also consider housing and mobility issues – and are based on the notion that responses need to be constructed from the recipient's perspective. Integrated services also have the benefit of generally leading to clearer roles and responsibilities amongst delivery agencies,⁹⁹ though can be more costly and complex to design and deliver.

Future priorities for the elements of successful transitions

There is general agreement that many of the objectives of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions remain current. In part this reflects that many of the issues that led to the formation of the National Partnership have not been resolved. Even where there has been significant progress, stakeholders acknowledge that continued improvement cannot be assumed. Determinants of student outcomes and effective transition to work outcomes involve a number of influences during a young person's development.

There are three broad priority areas for facilitating a successful transition from compulsory education to full-time work:

- 1. Getting education fundamentals right**
- 2. Keeping young people engaged in education and training and addressing disengagement**
- 3. Supporting successful transitions to sustainable employment**

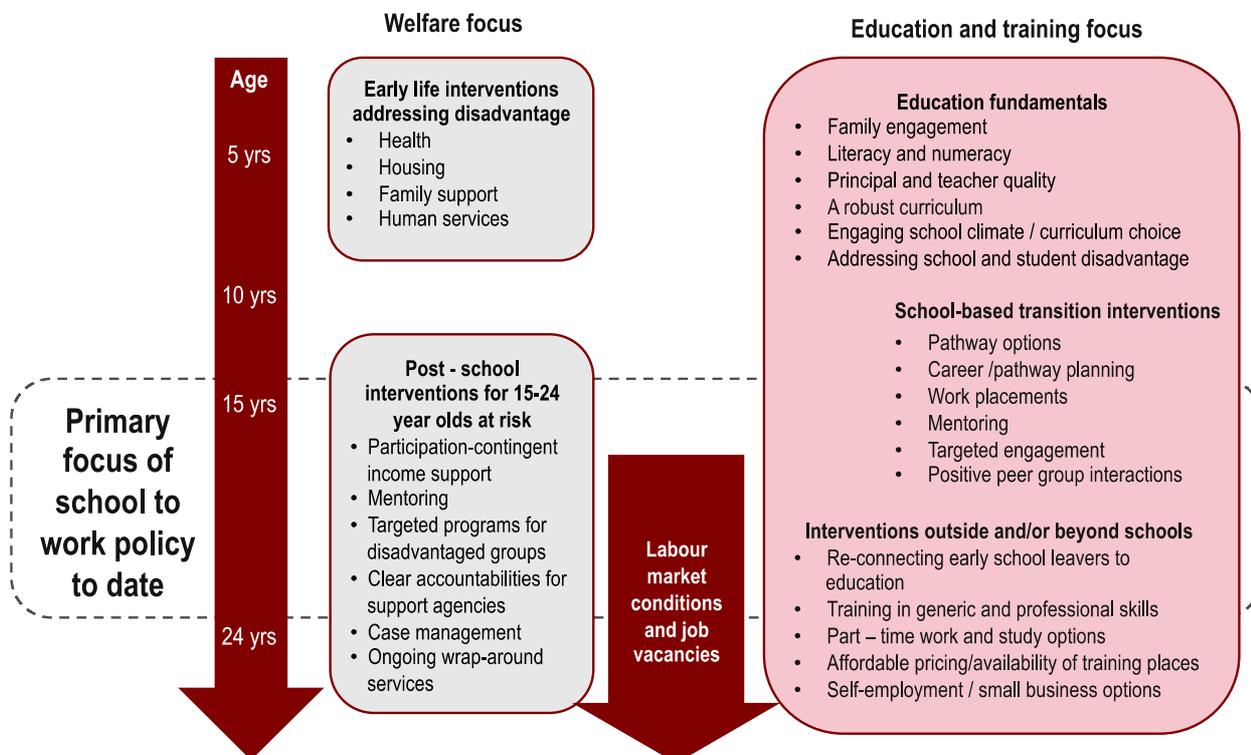
⁹⁷ OECD, *Off to a Good Start: Jobs for Youth*, Paris, 2010

⁹⁸ Sweet, Richard, *Unemployed and inactive youth: What works?* November 2012

⁹⁹ Sweet, Richard, *Unemployed and inactive youth: What works?* November 2012

Student outcomes and transition to work outcomes for young people are influenced by many factors. A diagrammatic representation of a number of these factors is provided below. The hypothesis presented in Figure 3.22 is that outcomes reflect economic, social and educational influences on a person from early schooling age onwards, not just influences in the later years of schooling.

FIGURE 3.22: THE RANGE OF FACTORS IMPACTING ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES



Source: dandolopartners, *Second interim evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions*, November 2012

1. Getting educational fundamentals right

Poor student outcomes can reflect disengagement with the education system, either because schooling has been deficient or as a result of family and welfare impediments. Interventions aimed at young people who are either disengaged or at risk of becoming so towards the end of schooling can have real value; however, prevention is acknowledged as better than cure. This requires action earlier in a young persons educational life, ensuring that what we have called 'educational fundamentals' are in place. These fundamentals include:

- Developing literacy and numeracy skills in early school years
- Strong and effective school leadership
- A robust curriculum
- High standards of teacher quality and effective accountability
- Appropriate recognition of school and student disadvantage in funding arrangements.

These fundamentals are critical to ensuring that student outcomes and transition to work outcomes are strong. They must be a prime focus of attention. School climates should reinforce positive behaviours that are valued in the workforce. A positive school environment that encourages excellence and achievement is more likely to help young people to value education and aspire to and achieve good educational outcomes. Young people have varied interests, and there needs to be a fit between curriculum and the students' interests. This need is particularly acute in the context of young people who are prevented from disengagement or re-engaged as a result of the Compact with Young Australians. Some stakeholders identified that this group of young people posed unique challenges for schools – and that many schools may not be currently equipped to respond to their needs. Teachers need to be properly capable and curriculum must be sufficiently broad to cater to this re-engaged cohort. Despite the clear need to develop curricula that are flexible and appealing to young people, there must be an ongoing focus on provision of subjects that are highly valued by the labour market.

The expiry of the National Partnership creates the need for the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to re-define roles and responsibilities. At a general level, this process has already commenced. Roles are reasonably clear around the provision of strong education fundamentals; school education remains the core responsibility of State and Territory governments, and the independent and Catholic education sectors. State governments also have primary responsibility for provision of services for disadvantaged people, and early childhood development.

The primary role of the Australian Government in promoting engagement with learning/school participation is to ensure that the school funding settings are appropriate. The government has indicated it is likely to adopt a needs-based school-funding model where funds would be distributed on the basis of disadvantage, providing those schools with a higher proportion of low socio-economic status students with additional capacity to meet their obligations. Given that the low socio-economic cohort is at higher risk of disengagement and poor school-to-work outcomes, the model could help maintain schools' focus on providing sound education fundamentals for all students.

2. Promoting engagement and ensuring streamlined services are available for young people who are disengaged from employment, education and training

The first priority should be to keep young people engaged in education and training. Positive school climates play a critical role here. Young people have varied interests, and curriculum choices need to resonate with students' interests, whilst maintaining a focus on the subjects that are highly valued by the labour market.

Arrangements also need to be put in place for young people that disengage from education or work. Based on lessons learned from other jurisdictions – and the views of stakeholders consulted as part of this evaluation – two distinct policy priorities have emerged for the future:

- **Dealing more quickly with young people that become disengaged:** re-engagement is more likely to be successful if support is provided immediately, and when the response by government, schools, supporting service providers, employers and training providers is integrated. A range of challenges need to be overcome to accelerate the speed with which young people are addressed, including ensuring that schools implement appropriate exit procedures (including timely notification of appropriate authorities when young people disengage) and that those authorities respond quickly.
- **Creating integrated responses to promote engagement and facilitate re-engagement:** individualised responses are proven to be most effective, recognising that the needs of young people vary significantly on the basis of the issues they are experiencing, demographic factors and the services that are available to them. Rather than the responsibility of government alone, it is recognised that the broader community, businesses and other stakeholders need to work closely with young

people. This cooperation should be carefully managed within clear accountability frameworks, building on momentum that has been established under the National Partnership.

A number of issues will need to be resolved relating to specific elements of the National Partnership. Funding for the Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers elements was provided for an additional year, but the future of both remains uncertain. A range of decisions will need to be made, including whether the elements should continue at all. If the decision was taken to continue funding, questions include:

- Who should fund the elements and what level of funding certainty should be provided?
- Whether the elements should be re-focused in any way, including eligibility criteria and target clients?
- How to manage the transition from a National Partnership context?

3. Engaging business to increase opportunities and enhance the employability of young people

Schools, the community and businesses need to work together in partnerships to create opportunities for successful transitions to meaningful employment. While the period of the National Partnership has seen an observable improvement in youth attainment and participation, the transition of young people from education and training into full-time employment remains problematic.

The state of the labour market is acknowledged as critical to transition outcomes, and flexible and responsive labour markets also have an important role. In terms of transitions into the labour market, since 2008 there has been a considerable drop in full-time employment for young people not in full-time education. In addition, the proportion of 15–24 year-olds fully engaged in employment, education or training is still not at pre-Global Financial Crisis levels, particularly for the 20–24 year age group. It is worth noting, though, that transitions for young people are in general taking longer. Other research shows that not only have levels of full-time employment decreased for the 20–24-year age group, but also that other life transitions such as independence (leaving home), home ownership, marriage and parenthood are occurring later.

Business have a potentially significant role to play in providing work experience, as well as job pathways to assist young people to make successful transitions from school to work. International literature, as well as recent Australian research, shows that the opportunity to combine work and study, whether through apprenticeships, work placements, work experience or part-time jobs, is a significant predictor of successful school-to-work outcomes.¹⁰⁰ Stimulating such opportunities by working with businesses should be a key objective of government policy.

Timely, market-based information must be available to help individuals make decisions about jobs, careers and training, allowing them to respond to changing circumstances and equipping the economy with a responsive workforce. Governments have an important facilitating role to play here, especially in ensuring that career development services place the individual at the centre, and span careers, not just workforce entry advice. They can also co-ordinate the capture and dissemination of relevant data – for example workforce/skills demand statistics – to allow career development professionals, schools, communities and young people to make informed choices.

Maintenance of a collaborative approach going forward

Stakeholders have consistently praised the National Partnership multilateral working group (MWG), and associated national cooperation that has been established under its auspices. Policy focused on youth attainment and transitions outcomes span across jurisdictions as well as levels of government: states are responsible for school age education whereas the Australian

¹⁰⁰ OECD (2010) *Off to a Good Start: Jobs for Youth*, Paris; Polidano, C and Tabasso, D. (2013) *Making It Real: The Benefits of Workplace Learning in Upper-Secondary VET Courses*, Melbourne Institute Working Paper No. 31/13, Melbourne.

Government has taken a leadership role tackling disengaged youth. In recognition of the linked roles and responsibilities of the Commonwealth and States and Territories, a collaborative approach could help to ensure that policy responses are integrated and that cost-shifting and inefficient duplication is avoided.

State and Territory stakeholders highlighted the importance of youth attainment and transition being maintained as a national priority. One of the major achievements of the National Partnership was the fact that it elevated the status of engagement, attainment and transition issues within jurisdictions. Despite this, it was acknowledged that the role of the MWG (or a similar entity) would need to be re-focused in a post-National Partnership environment. Instead of reporting on progress against the goals of the National Partnership, it was suggested that the group should convene to discuss national performance on critical metrics.

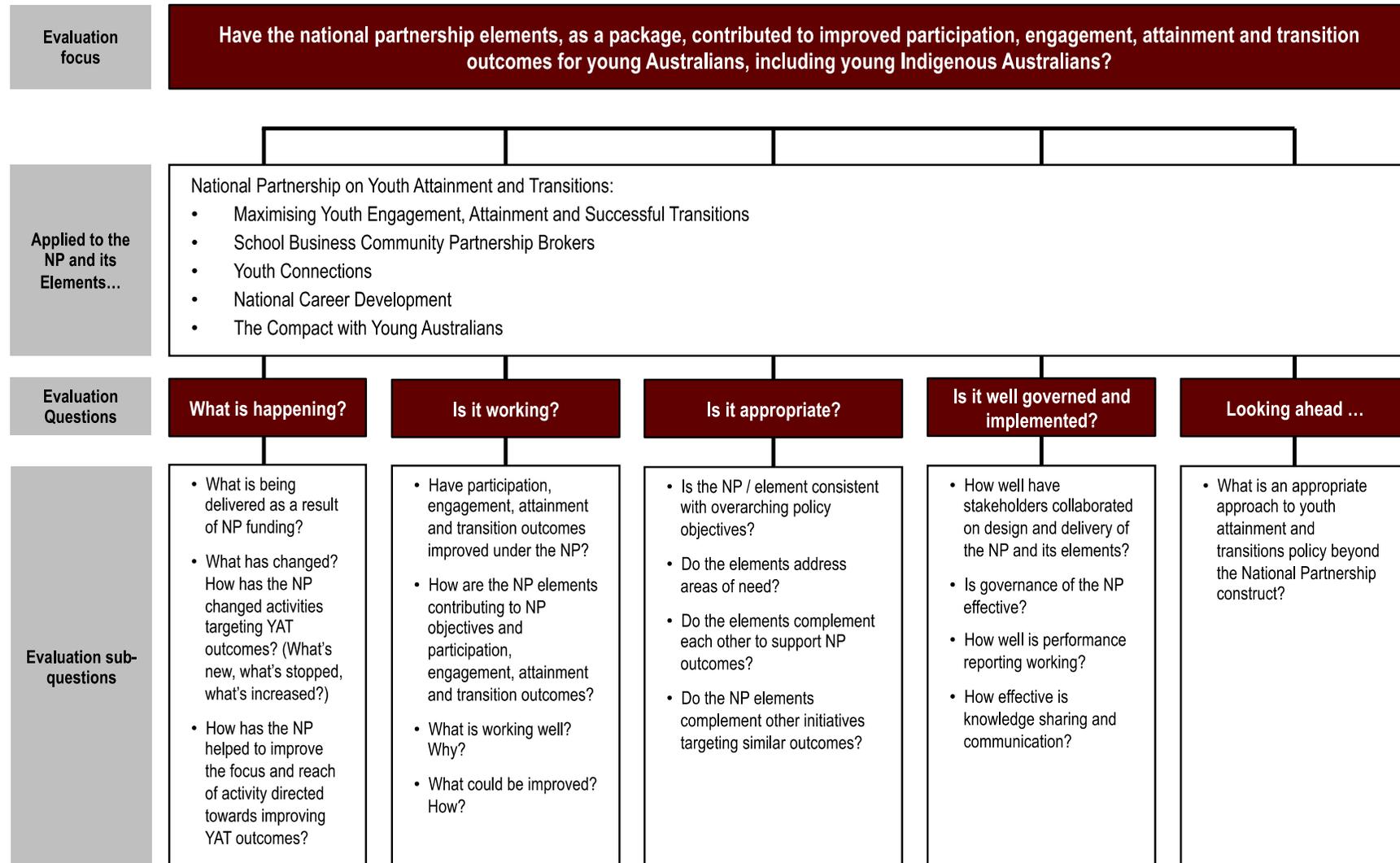
An important aspect of the National Partnership was the collection, analysis and dissemination of data related to attainment, participation (school, training and work) and transition outcomes. There is a strong desire from States and Territories to continue collecting data, including longitudinal analysis where possible. In addition, there was strong interest in representatives from States, Territories and sectors to convene on a national basis and discuss the interpretation of the data and the implications for policy-makers.

Other principles for the continuation of any national governance entity include:

- A clear scope/agenda for its operation
- Funding and secretariat support to enable data collection, analysis and dissemination
- Fewer meetings of higher value, including one face-to-face meeting focused on the annual reporting of data/trends and interpretation from experts in the field
- A continued commitment to openness of discussion and sensitivity to specific jurisdictional contexts
- A forum for responding to emerging policy issues and priorities.

Appendix 1: Evaluation Framework

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



Year three evaluation framework

4.1.1 National Partnership

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	Aggregation of input from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Education – national and regional managers and staff • State and territory education and training departments • Catholic and Independent school sectors • Expert panel • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey • National School Statistics Collection • Survey of Education and Work • Australian Demographic Statistics • National VET in Schools Collection • National VET Provider Collection • Department of Education Higher Education Statistics Collection • COAG Reform Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities • Research reports regarding youth attainment and transitions outcomes, measurement and influencing factors • Evaluations of National Partnership-funded initiatives • National Partnership implementation plans and annual reports • Policy and program information from program providers

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
1.1	Has the National Partnership led to changes in activities directed toward participation, engagement, attainment and transition outcomes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have activities changed over the period of the evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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 or equivalent qualification? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG, non-government representatives

Is it working?

1.2	Has young people's participation in education and training increased?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been measurable changes in the proportion of 15-24 year olds participating in secondary school including VET in Schools, VET sector, Apprenticeships and higher education increased? • Explore changes across years by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indigenous young people ○ Age ○ Gender ○ Qualification level ○ Remoteness 	Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey • National School Statistics Collection • National VET in Schools Collection • National VET Provider Collection • Department of Education Higher Education Statistics Collection • Census of Population and Housing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been measurable changes in the proportion of young people aged 15-24 not engaged in employment, education or training? 	Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Force Survey • Survey of Education and Work
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other factors may have influenced participation outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research reports regarding youth attainment and transitions outcomes, measurement and influencing factors • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives
1.3	Has young people's attainment of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications increased?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been measurable changes in the number of young people attaining Year 12 or equivalent qualifications? • Explore across years by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age ○ Indigenous status ○ Disability ○ Remoteness 	Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of Education and Work • National School Statistics Collection • Census of Population and Housing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other factors may have influenced attainment outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research reports regarding youth attainment and transitions outcomes, measurement and influencing factors • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives
1.4	Are more young people making successful transitions from school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How does the immediate school leaver group compare with the entire age cohort? 	Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of Education and Work • Labour Force Survey • COAG Reform Council

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have patterns of labour force participation changed since the introduction of the National Partnership among 15-24 year olds? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? Have patterns of post-school employment changed? What other factors may have influenced transition outcomes? 	<p>Data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey of Education and Work Labour Force Survey
1.5	<p>What's working well? Why?</p> <p>What could work better? How?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the period of the evaluation, what have been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most beneficial aspects of the National Partnership? Unintended outcomes or other benefits? Critical success factors? Major barriers to achieving desired outcomes? What can be done to address barriers in the future? Has the impact of the National Partnership been greater than the sum of its parts? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well have the elements of the National Partnership worked together? Has the National Partnership 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 National Partnership? Has the National Partnership and its elements been implemented according to plan and achieved planned outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research reports regarding youth attainment and transitions outcomes, measurement and influencing factors Interviews with Department of Education, MWG, non-government representatives and other sector representatives Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives
Is it appropriate?			
1.6	<p>Is the National Partnership consistent with overarching policy objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation of Commonwealth and state/territory policy objectives into National Partnership objectives and priorities? Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
1.7	<p>Does the National Partnership address areas of need?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives

1.8	How do the National Partnership and its elements complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions with other National Partnerships and state/territory/sector reforms and initiatives? ○ Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
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Is it well governed and implemented?

1.9	How well have stakeholders collaborated on design and delivery of the National Partnership and its elements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration to support program delivery/implementation? ○ Knowledge sharing across elements and stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education providers
1.10	Is National Partnership governance working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of the aspects of governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved? 	As above
1.11	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has performance reporting improved over the life of the National Partnership? • Have any new issues arisen since Year 2? 	As above

Looking ahead...

1.12	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the National Partnership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key learnings from the National Partnership that should inform subsequent initiatives to influence youth attainment and transition outcomes? • What options are there to improve youth attainment and transition outcomes following the conclusion of the National Partnership? • How can the collaboration created by the National Partnership continue following the conclusion of the National Partnership? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives
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4.1.2 Maximising Youth Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with Department of Education, MWG, non-government representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MEAST-funded initiative evaluation reports

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
2.1	<p>Has the National Partnership changed the activity and focus of career development, multiple learning pathways and mentoring initiatives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of how MEAST has changed career development, multiple learning pathway and mentoring initiatives?
Is the element working?		
2.2	<p>If <u>Career Development</u> was a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to quality career development?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
2.3	<p>If <u>Multiple Learning Pathways</u> were a focus of MEAST funding, did it help improve access to a broader range of multiple learning pathways for young people?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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?
2.4	<p>If <u>Mentoring</u> was a focus of MEAST funding, did it improve access to a variety of quality mentoring opportunities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have MEAST initiatives increased the range of options and support available to help more 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?
2.4	<p>If <u>Mentoring</u> was a focus of MEAST funding, did it improve access to a variety of quality mentoring opportunities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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? 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the period of the evaluation, what have been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The most significant benefits? ○ Unintended outcomes or other benefits? ○ Critical success factors? ○ Major barriers to achieving desired outcomes? ○ What can be done to address the barriers in the future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Is it appropriate?			
2.6	Is MEAST consistent with National Partnership objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Translation of National Partnership objectives into MEAST objectives? ○ Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
2.7	Does MEAST address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives
2.8	Does MEAST complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions with MEAST initiatives? ○ Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration to support program delivery/implementation? ○ Knowledge sharing across elements and stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
2.10	Is governance of the element working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
2.11	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has performance reporting improved over the life of the National Partnership? • Have any new issues arisen since Year 2? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Looking ahead...			
2.12	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the National Partnership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key learnings from the MEAST component of the National Partnership that should inform subsequent initiatives to influence youth attainment and transition outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives

4.1.3 School Business Community Partnership Brokers

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education – national and regional managers and staff States and territory education and training departments PB providers Catholic and Independent school sectors Expert panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YATMIS PB provider workshop LLEN data (Vic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from the Department of Education (e.g. outcome reports), MWG and non-government education authorities Social Return on Investment evaluation reports

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
3.1	What is being delivered as a result of National Partnership funding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number (and type) of partners? Number of partnerships? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from the Department of Education PB provider workshop
Is it working?		
3.2	Has the Partnership Brokers element facilitated the establishment of high quality School Business Community Partnerships that link key stakeholders? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How partnerships have changed since the introduction of Partnership Brokers? Partnership Brokers' contribution to partnerships? Partnership Brokers' engagement of education and training providers, business and industry, community groups and parents and families in partnerships? Partners becoming involved in partnerships due to the work of Partnership Brokers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from the Department of Education (e.g. outcomes reports), MWG and non-government education authorities Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives PB provider workshop Social Return on Investment evaluation reports
3.3	Are School Business Community Partnerships tailored to address the needs of young people in the service regions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships working towards addressing regional priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above
3.4	What's working well? Why? What could work better? How? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the period of the evaluation, what have been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most significant benefits? Unintended outcomes or other benefits? Critical success factors? Major barriers to achieving desired outcomes? What can be done to address the barriers in the future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews - as above PB provider workshop Social Return on Investment evaluation reports

Is it appropriate?			
3.5	Is this element consistent with overarching policy objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Translation of National Partnership objectives into PB objectives? ○ PB activities helping to establish long-term reform? ○ Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
3.6	Does this element address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any unmet needs that should be considered? • Is the PB program contributing to youth attainment and transitions outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives
3.7	Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions with PB? ○ Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
Is the element well governed and implemented?			
3.8	How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration to support program delivery/implementation? ○ Knowledge sharing across elements and stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
3.9	Is governance of the element working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
3.10	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has performance reporting improved over the life of the National Partnership? • Have any new issues arisen since Year 2? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
3.11	How effective is communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective have actions taken to improve communication of the PB program been? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Looking ahead...			
3.12	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the National Partnership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What options are there to achieve PB objectives and outcomes following the conclusion of the National Partnership? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives

4.1.4 Youth Connections

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEEWR – national and regional managers and staff • States and territory education and training departments • Catholic and Independent school sectors • YC National Network of providers • Expert panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YATMIS • YC National Network workshop • YC National Network Unmet demand survey of providers • YC National Network survey of longer term outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education (e.g. outcome reports), MWG and non-government education authorities • YC National Network policy materials (The Space in Between)
Question	Sub-questions	Data sources	
What is happening?			
4.1	What is being delivered as a result of National Partnership funding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the inception of the National Partnership in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Numbers of participants in YC services ○ Characteristics of participants - % indigenous, humanitarian refugees ○ Connection level of participants ○ Regions/locations ○ Referral mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education • YC provider workshop 	
Is it working?			
4.2	Are Individual Support Services working? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted outcomes being achieved? ○ Other outcomes being achieved? • Is engagement in education and/or training sustained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education (outcomes reports, evaluation ratings, surveys), MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives • YC provider workshop • Analysis of YATMIS data • YC National Network survey of longer term outcomes • BSL evaluation in Mornington Peninsula 	

4.3	Are Targeted Engagement Services working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted outcomes being achieved? ○ Other outcomes being achieved? • Success of Targeted Engagement Services in moving young people to Individual Support Services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education (outcomes reports, evaluation ratings, surveys), MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives • YC provider workshop • Analysis of YATMIS data
4.4	Are Regional Coordination Services working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted outcomes being achieved? ○ Other outcomes being achieved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Department of Education representatives • YC provider workshop • Analysis of YATMIS data
4.5	What's working well? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the period of the evaluation, what have been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The most significant benefits? ○ Unintended outcomes or other benefits? ○ Critical success factors? ○ Major barriers to achieving desired outcomes? ○ What can be done to address the barriers? • How well do YC and PB work together? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education (outcomes reports, evaluation ratings, surveys), MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives • YC provider workshop • Analysis of YATMIS data
Is it appropriate?			
4.6	Is the element consistent with overarching policy objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Translation of National Partnership objectives into YC objectives? ○ Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
4.7	Does this element address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeting of at risk young people? ○ Unmet needs that should be considered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives
4.8	Does the partnership approach complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment of the Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership with YC? ○ Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
Is the element well governed and implemented?			

4.9	How well have stakeholders collaborated on the design and delivery of the element?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration to support program delivery/implementation? ○ Knowledge sharing across elements and stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
4.10	Is governance of the element working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
4.11	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has performance reporting improved over the life of the National Partnership? • Have any new issues arisen since Year 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
4.12	How effective is communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of communication? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Looking ahead...			
4.13	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the National Partnership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What options are there to achieve YC objectives and outcomes following the conclusion of the National Partnership? • What are the opportunities to pursue an integrated youth support service in the context of the Job Services Australia 2015 contracts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives • Richard Sweet research on unemployed and inactive youth

4.1.5 National Career Development

The Report will provide an overview of developments since the National Partnership was established. The evaluation will cover stakeholder reaction to the release of the National Career Development Strategy.

The evaluation will also involve high-level analysis of Making Career Connections projects initiated under the strategy (desktop research). This may include analysis of project plans, anticipated outcomes of projects and the degree to which anticipated outcomes will address priority areas and goals of the national strategy.

When considering options for what should occur beyond the National Partnership in the area of career development, the analysis will include a review of other key career development activity that has relevance to the National Career Development Strategy.

4.1.6 Compact with Young Australians

Research method:	Stakeholder engagement	Data analysis	Literature review
Sources of data:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education – national and regional managers and staff States and territory education and training departments Catholic and Independent school sectors Expert panel 	Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour Force Survey National School Statistics Collection National VET in Schools Collection National VET Provider Collection DEEWR Higher Education Statistics Collection Income support data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from MWG, non-government education authorities Richard Sweet research on unemployed and inactive youth

Question	Sub-questions	Data sources
What is happening?		
6.1	What is being delivered? What has changed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the monitoring and enforcement arrangements in the jurisdictions? What entitlement and training place models in different jurisdictions? How has the introduction of the Youth Compact impacted on the number of income support recipients? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from MWG, non-government education authorities Data request from the Department of Education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there consistency across jurisdictions' arrangements in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemption policies? Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jurisdictions' views of the relative responsibilities of schools/TAFEs in addressing the new participation requirements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from MWG, non-government education authorities
Is it working?		
6.2	Does participation data show that the Compact has had an impact? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jurisdictions' views on the contribution of participation requirements and entitlements on youth participation? Changes in the participation data? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information request from MWG, non-government education authorities Data analysis – see National Partnership level
6.3	What's working well? Why? What could work better? How? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence of the nationally consistent approach on outcomes? Benefits or unintended positive outcomes? Major barriers to achieving desired outcomes? What can be done to address the barriers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives

Is it appropriate?			
6.4	Is this element consistent with National Partnership objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Translation of National Partnership objectives into Compact objectives? ○ Inconsistencies or gaps? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
6.5	Does this element address areas of need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeting of at risk young people? ○ Unmet needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with Department of Education, MWG and non-government education representatives
6.6	Does this element complement other programs and initiatives targeting similar outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment of the Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership with the Compact? Other initiatives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
Is it well governed and implemented?			
6.7	Is governance of the element working effectively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of the aspects of the governance arrangements that are working well or could be improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information request from the Department of Education, MWG and non-government education authorities
6.8	How well is performance reporting working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have there been any changes since the year two evaluation in terms of performance reporting? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Looking ahead...			
6.10	What are the implications of evaluation findings beyond the National Partnership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What options are there to achieve Compact objectives and outcomes following the conclusion of the National Partnership? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	2013
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	75.9
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	29.3

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	2012
15	93.5	93.0	93.5	94.1	94.4	94.7	95.4	95.6	96.5	97.0	97.5	97.6	97.9
16	82.4	82.2	82.3	83.3	83.6	83.4	84.2	84.7	84.5	86.8	88.7	89.3	90.0
17	63.3	63.5	63.8	63.5	64.3	64.0	64.3	63.9	63.8	65.5	67.4	68.7	69.1
18	12.8	13.0	13.4	13.3	13.4	13.4	13.9	13.8	14.6	14.9	16.0	16.4	16.7
19	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.6

Source: Schools Australia 4221.0

Table A2.3: Apparent grade progression rates

APPARENT RETENTION RATES BY SINGLE YEAR (GRADE)

Grade	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
9 - 10	97.9	98.4	98.3	98.7	98.3	98.4	98.8	99.1	99.1	99.3	100.4	100.5	100.6
10 - 11	87.5	88.9	89.5	90.3	89.4	89.1	89.7	89.9	89.7	91.3	92.4	92.1	93
11 - 12	84.5	86.1	86.7	85.9	85.5	85.6	85.5	84.4	84.1	85.5	85.9	86.1	86.1

Source: ABS Schools Australia 4221.0, table 63a

Table A2.4 VET in Schools participation

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED 15 - 19 YEARS PARTICIPATING IN VET IN SCHOOLS BY SEX, 2005-2011

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Males	24.9	23.6	23.4	28.5	29.3	29.5	31.3
Females	24.3	22.5	22.6	27.5	27.6	27.2	28.8
Persons	24.6	23.0	23.0	28.0	28.5	28.3	30.1

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Schools Australia 4221.0

Table A2.5: VET participation

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

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Age 15 to 19	8.6	8.3	7.9	8.1	8.6	8.9	9.3	9.3	9.7	10.2	9.5
Age 20 to 24	5.7	5.4	5.0	4.9	5.1	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.8	6.4	6.6
Age 16 to 17	9.5	9.4	8.9	9.3	9.8	10.3	10.7	10.3	10.3	10.5	9.3

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3101.0

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

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Certificate III and above	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.7	5.1	5.4	5.9	5.9	6.1	6.5	6.2
Certificate II	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.9	2.3	2.4	2.1
Certificate I and Non AQF qualifications	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.2

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3101.0

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

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Certificate III and above	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.8	4.5	4.7
Certificate II	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0
Certificate I and - Non AQF qualification	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3101.0
Note: these tables exclude unknown school status and unknown highest school level

Table A2.6: Higher education participation

PERCENTAGE OF 18 TO 24 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
19.9	20.3	20.2	20.7	21.6	22.6	23.6

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

Participation – Indigenous

Table A2.7: Indigenous participation

INDIGENOUS FULL-TIME SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTICIPATION, 15-19 YEAR OLDS

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Sum of Indigenous FT Students	29943	28525	27167	24965	23743	22279	20809	18937	17659	16768	15818	14848
Sum of Other FT Students	762255	757490	752444	735783	721472	714185	704120	689533	681240	675873	671300	664226
Sum of All FT Students	792198	786015	779611	760748	745215	736464	724929	708470	698899	692641	687118	679074

	% change 2011-2012	% change 2006-2012
Indigenous FT Students	5.0	43.9
Other FT Students	0.6	8.3

Source: ABS Schools Australia 4221.0

Table A2.8: Indigenous VET in Schools participation

VET IN SCHOOLS PARTICIPATION BY INDIGENOUS AND OTHER STATUS AS A PROPORTION OF 15-19-YEAR-OLD FULL-TIME SCHOOL STUDENTS, 2005-2011, EXCLUDING QUEENSLAND

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Indigenous	26.6	24.5	26.5	28.2	31.1	30.2	32.0
Others	22.5	20.9	20.8	22.1	22.0	22.9	24.1

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	2012
15-19yrs	17.0	16.3	15.0	15.8	16.7	15.8	15.5	15.2	17.0	17.6	16.4
20-24yrs	15.8	14.9	13.6	13.7	15.2	14.8	14.7	14.5	16.1	16.6	15.8

Source: National VET provider collection; ABS population by age and sex 3101.0; 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	2011
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	15.0	15.0	14.9	14.6	14.5	14.5
Quintile 2	24.2	23.7	23.6	23.7	23.8	24.4
Quintile 3	24.4	21.9	22.5	22.6	22.6	22.6
Quintile 4	20.3	22.5	22.8	22.9	23.0	22.9
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	16.1	16.8	16.3	16.2	16.0	15.6

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	2011
Major cities	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.7
Inner regional	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3
Outer regional	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.5
Remote	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.2
Very remote	1.2	1.1	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.2	1.2

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, 2002-2012, 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	2012
With a disability	6.1	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.7	6.9	6.6	6.7	7.3	7.8	8.4
Without a disability	93.9	92.6	92.7	92.7	92.3	93.1	93.4	93.3	92.7	92.2	91.6

Source: National VET provider collection

PERSONS AGED 20-24 YEARS ENROLLED IN VET BY DISABILITY STATUS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL, 2002-2012, 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	2012
With a disability	6.4	7.1	7.5	8.1	8.4	8.0	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.7	8.2
Without a disability	93.6	92.9	92.5	91.9	91.6	92.0	92.5	92.4	92.3	92.3	91.8

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, 2002-2012, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 (%)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Major cities	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
Inner regional	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Outer regional	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.0	0.9
Remote	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.8
Very remote	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.7

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

Note: ARIA 2006 used for years 2002-2010 and ARIA 2011 used for years 2011-2012 meaning comparison between 2002-2010 and 2011-2012 is not possible. Total population by remoteness region using ARIA 2011.

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, 2002-2012, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED YEAR 12 (%)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Major cities	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Inner regional	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7
Outer regional	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6
Remote	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8
Very remote	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	0.9	0.8

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
 Note: ARIA 2006 used for years 2002-2010 and ARIA 2011 used for years 2011-2012 meaning comparison between 2002-2010 and 2011-2012 is not possible. Total population by remoteness region using ARIA 2011.
 Source: National VET provider collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Attainment – overall

Table A2.15: Year 12 or Certificate II/III attainment for 15-24 year olds

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	2012	2013
Year 12 or Cert II or above	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	36.6	35.9
	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	85.9	86.7
Year 12 or Cert III or above	15-19 years	30.8	33.2	31.9	32.1	32.5	33.3	32.9	32.3	32.0	34.0	32.9	35.3	34.6
	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	84.6	85.7

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 ABOVE

		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Year 12 or Cert II or above	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	1.3	1.4
	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	1.3	1.5
Year 12 or Cert III or above	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	1.2	1.4
	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	1.3	1.5

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, 2000-12 (%)

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
95.6	not available		95.6	95	94.3	93.7	95.9	95.6	94.5	96	95.4	97.5

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work 6227.0

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

APPARENT RETENTION RATES, 2000-2012

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Year 7/8 - Year 12	72.3	73.4	75.1	75.4	75.7	75.3	74.7	74.3	74.6	76.0	78.0	79.6	79.9

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, 2005-10, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Age 15	0.9	1.0	1.5	3.5	4.8	4.8
Age 16	7.9	7.0	8.8	11.7	12.9	12.2
Age 17	20.2	18.0	20.3	24.2	26.1	24.5
Total	8.4	7.5	9.0	11.8	13.3	12.6

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

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Schools Australia 4221.0

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, 2002-11, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
15 to 19 years	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.9	4.3	4.9
20 to 24 years	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.9	5.0	5.3	5.9	6.6

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3101.0

Attainment – Indigenous

Table A2.20: Indigenous Year 10 retention

APPARENT RETENTION RATES FROM YEAR 7/8-YEAR10 BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2000-2012 (%)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
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	98.4
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	101.4

Table A2.21: Indigenous Year 12 retention

APPARENT RETENTION RATES FROM YEAR 7/8- YEAR 12 BY INDIGENOUS STATUS 2000-2012 (%)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
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	51.1
Non-Indigenous	73.3	74.5	76.3	76.5	76.9	76.6	76	75.6	75.6	77.3	79.4	80.7	81.3

Source: National Schools Statistics Collection

Table A2.22: Indigenous VET in Schools attainment

VET IN SCHOOLS COURSE COMPLETIONS AS A PROPORTION OF FULL-TIME SCHOOL STUDENTS 15-19 YEARS BY INDIGENOUS STATUS, 2006-2010, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND QUEENSLAND

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Indigenous	5.8	6.0	7.0	7.8	8.2
Others	7.2	7.6	8.0	7.6	8.0
Total	7.2	7.6	7.9	7.7	8.0

Note: SA excluded because completions not reported until recently and Qld excluded because of the huge increase in number of unknown Indigenous status in 2010

Source: National VET in Schools Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3101.0, ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders 3238.0 (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	2011
Indigenous	15 to 19 years	2.6	2.3	2.0	2.2	1.9	1.9	2.3	2.7	3.6	4.4
	20 to 24 years	3.5	3.0	2.8	2.9	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.8	4.7	5.9
Others	15 to 19 years	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.9	4.3	4.9
	20 to 24 years	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.4	5.9	6.6

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

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Population by Age and Sex 3101.0, ABS Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders 3238.0 (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, 2005-10, EXCLUDING SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND THOSE WHOSE SEIFA QUINTILE IS NOT KNOWN

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	16.1	13.6	13.8	13.2	13.6
Quintile 2	25.5	21.7	21.5	22.1	21.1
Quintile 3	21.9	20.9	21.8	22.1	23.0
Quintile 4	20.2	24.1	24.4	24.6	25.0
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	16.3	19.7	18.5	17.9	17.2

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	2010
Major cities	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4
Inner regional	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6
Outer regional	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8
Remote	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.9	1.0
Very remote	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.8

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	2011
Quintile 1: Most disadvantaged	15 to 19 years	16.1	13.8	14.0	14.5	13.7	14.5	15.4
	20 to 24 years	13.1	13.4	13.1	13.7	13.8	14.3	14.0
Quintile 2	15 to 19 years	24.1	24.2	24.4	24.2	23.9	24.3	23.0
	20 to 24 years	22.8	23.3	22.7	23.7	23.2	23.2	22.1
Quintile 3	15 to 19 years	20.5	22.0	22.4	22.6	22.8	23.6	29.7

Quintile 4	20 to 24 years	17.1	21.1	21.5	22.0	21.9	22.1	26.7
	15 to 19 years	23.5	22.5	21.9	22.1	22.9	22.2	15.6
Quintile 5: Least disadvantaged	20 to 24 years	25.5	23.4	23.0	22.0	22.5	22.9	17.4
	15 to 19 years	15.8	17.5	17.3	16.6	16.7	15.3	16.2
Total	20 to 24 years	21.5	18.8	19.8	18.6	18.6	17.5	19.8
	15 to 19 years	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	20 to 24 years	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NCVER's National VET Provider Collection, ABS Census data 2006 and 2011, table builder basic

Note: 2011 data has been rescaled to take into account differences in population by SEIFA between 2006 and 2011

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, 2002-11, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL AND WHOSE DISABILITY STATUS IS NOT KNOWN

		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
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	6.0
	20 to 24 years	3.2	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.7	4.0	4.0	4.3	4.7	5.1
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	94.0
	20 to 24 years	96.8	96.2	96.1	95.6	95.3	96.0	96.0	95.7	95.3	94.9

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, 2002-11, EXCLUDING THOSE ATTENDING SCHOOL (%)

		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Major cities	15 to 19 years	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
	20 to 24 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Inner regional	15 to 19 years	0.3	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	0.5
Outer regional	15 to 19 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3
	20 to 24 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Remote	15 to 19 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	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	0.5
Very remote	15 to 19 years	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
	20 to 24 years	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4

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. ARIA 2006 used for years 2002-2010 and ARIA 2011 used for years

2011-2012 meaning comparison between 2002-2010 and 2011-2012 is not possible. Total population by remoteness region using ARIA 2011

Source: National VET Provider Collection, ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia 3218.0

Transition – overall

Table A2.29: Young people fully engaged

PROPORTION OF PERSONS FULLY ENGAGED IN EDUCATION, TRAINING OR WORK BY AGE GROUP, AUSTRALIA, 2002-13 (%)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15 to 19 years	86.6	86.5	85.6	85.7	86.1	86.6	87.3	84.1	84.8	85.3	86.5	86.3
20 to 24 years	76.8	76.2	77.1	78.0	78.1	79.3	80.1	77.1	77.2	77.0	76.6	73.8

95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
15 to 19 years	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.0	1.2
20 to 24 years	1.2	1.1	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.4	2.0	1.6	1.0	1.7	1.1

Source: ABS Survey of Education and Work, 2013, Additional data cubes, 6227.0.55.003

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 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	2013
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	9.8
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	4.6
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	7.1

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

Table A2.32: Proportion of people 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
May-2013		10.5	75.9	42.2		29.3
2008 - 2013 change (%)		-6.2	5.9	-8.0		0.9

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	2013
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	58.7
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	29.9

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Table 03b and 03c May figures.

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	70.3	13.3	7.3	4.5	4.6	100.0
2011	71.8	12.8	6.7	3.7	5.0	100.0
2012	73.4	12.2	6.7	3.5	4.3	100.0
2013	75.9	10.5	5.8	3.4	4.4	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	45.7	11.7	5.1	8.5	100.0
2010	29.5	46.3	10.9	4.8	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
2013	29.3	42.2	13.4	5.7	9.4	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	2011
Quintile 1 - most disadvantaged	65.6	62.3	59.6	59.4
Quintile 2	72.8	71.1	70.0	69.4
Quintile 3	78.7	73.4	74.6	74.9
Quintile 4	77.8	75.7	76.9	76.9
Quintile 5 - least disadvantaged	83.9	79.6	79.4	79.6
95% confidence interval	2008	2009	2010	2011
Quintile 1 - most disadvantaged	4.4	5.0	3.0	3.0
Quintile 2	2.7	5.6	3.6	3.3
Quintile 3	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.0
Quintile 4	1.9	3.5	3.0	3.7
Quintile 5 - least disadvantaged	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.3

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
 Note: Data has been updated for 2008 and 2010 based on latest data cited in education 2011

Table A2.36 Average duration of the transition, 1986-2013

	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)	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	19.4	21.0	1.5	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	18.5	21.3	22.8	2.8	4.3
2013	19.0	21.0	22.9	2.0	3.9

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, single year tables

Table A2.37: Persons aged 15-19 employed full-time, 1990-2012 ('000)

Year	('000)		
1990	387.4	2002	203.8
1991	276.0	2003	208.6
1992	235.2	2004	212.1
1993	218.6	2005	226.4
1994	228.9	2006	224.3
1995	221.5	2007	241.6
1996	219.7	2008	250.0
1997	203.8	2009	200.2
1998	204.7	2010	196.9
1999	214.5	2011	186.5
2000	216.2	2012	182.0
2001	214.4	2013	159.4

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, Y03 LSAY cohort

A2.38A COMPLETED YEAR 12 OR CERTIFICATE III OR HIGHER FOR LOWEST ACHIEVEMENT QUARTILE

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average age of respondent	18.7	19.7	20.7	21.7	22.7	23.7	24.7
Maths	62.2	71.0	73.0	75.3	78.2	80.6	81.9
Reading	60.5	69.0	71.2	73.0	76.3	78.5	79.4
Problem Solving	61.3	70.2	72.2	73.9	77.2	79.3	80.4
Science	62.1	70.3	72.3	74.6	77.5	78.8	80.1

A2.38B NOT WORKING (UNEMPLOYED OR NILF) FOR LOWEST ACHIEVEMENT QUARTILE

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average age of respondent	18.7	19.7	20.7	21.7	22.7	23.7	24.7
Maths	22.4	17.4	15.7	17.9	18.1	19.1	14.4
Reading	21.0	16.2	14.5	16.8	16.2	18.8	13.7

Problem Solving	21.4	16.7	15.0	17.3	17.1	19.7	14.4
Science	21.7	16.4	15.1	17.6	17.2	18.5	14.4

A2.38C PERMANENT/ONGOING EMPLOYMENT FOR LOWEST ACHIEVEMENT QUARTILE

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average age of respondent	18.7	19.7	20.7	21.7	22.7	23.7	24.7
Maths	37.1	47.9	52.0	49.4	51.9	54.5	60.0
Reading	40.2	50.0	53.7	51.5	51.8	51.8	58.9
Problem Solving	38.5	49.2	54.0	50.9	52.1	52.6	59.4
Science	38.9	48.4	52.3	50.5	51.9	53.9	59.7

Source: Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) Y03 cohort, cohort reports, <http://www.lsay.edu.au/cohort/2003/1.html>

Table A2.39: Proportion of VET graduates going on to further study by qualification level and type of further study, 2013

15-19 year olds

Qualification	Type of further study institute				Not enrolled in further study	Not Stated	Total
	University	TAFE	Other				
Diplomas and above	25.5	15.2	4.3		52.0	3.1	100
Certificate IV	21.1	26.7	12.9		34.2	5.0	100
Certificate III	12.5	20.7	11.0		52.6	3.2	100
Certificate II	6.8	28.7	18.1		42.1	4.2	100
Certificate I	0.9	25.2	19.2		46.5	8.1	100
Total	12.2	23.4	13.1		47.5	3.9	100

20-24 year olds

Qualification	Type of further study institute				Not enrolled in further study	Not Stated	Total
	University	TAFE	Other				
Diplomas and above	27.7	11.1	3.3		54.1	3.8	100
Certificate IV	17.8	19.3	8.3		50.4	4.1	100
Certificate III	8.5	17.9	7.8		62.4	3.3	100
Certificate II	5.0	24.9	12.3		52.6	5.1	100
Certificate I	18.4	19.5	10.6		44.4	7.1	100
Total	13.4	17.8	7.6		57.5	3.8	100

Source: NCVET's Student Outcomes Survey 2013

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
2013	50.9	21.3	4.4	23.4	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 National Partnership 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 approximate number of stakeholders consulted in each group for the final year of the evaluation.

Stakeholder group	Number of stakeholders consulted
Australian Government	10
State and Territory governments	16
Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers service providers	40
Business and industry sector	3
Career development sector	5
Education and training sector	8
TOTAL	82

dandolo partners sincerely appreciates the input of all stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation.

Appendix 4: Career Development projects funded under Making Career Connections

The seven project summaries below are based on the project proposals sent to the Department.

1. **HYP A Works**

HYP A Works aims to link young people with small business owners to support them to establish a social media presence. The program intends to create jobs for young people by filling a gap in service provision for small business owners, who have not yet discovered the use of social media for their business.

Participants will receive at least 4 months of intensive training from sessional IT professionals, mentoring and support to either enter work in the IT field or to establish their own business.

2. **Parents as Career Transition Support (PACTS)**

The PACTS program is aimed at supporting parents to be more informed about and play an active role in supporting the career development of their child. The program will provide training to facilitators who will deliver workshops about career decision-making to 28,800 parents and families Australia wide.

3. **Beacon Real Futures Generation Project**

The Real Futures Generation process aims to broaden young peoples' understanding of the range of career options available to them and gives them the core skills for work required to succeed. Through this career exploration process, students hear from industry representatives in a classroom setting, have the opportunity to visit their place of work and many will have the opportunity to participate in the employability skills program which has been specifically developed for this purpose – Prepare for Work. Once in employment, Beacon ensures the students are mentored and assists the employer to establish a mentoring program if one does not already exist.

4. **Scientists and Mathematicians in Schools**

The existing Scientists and Mathematicians in Schools (SMiS) program creates and supports flexible, ongoing partnerships between practicing scientists and mathematicians with primary and secondary school teachers throughout Australia on a voluntary basis. Teachers will be matched with professionals and these partnerships will be used to showcase these potential careers to students. Making Career Connections funding expands this program to include ICT professionals in schools.

5. **Work Inspiration Project**

Work Inspiration (WI) is an Australia wide, employer-led campaign that aims to ensure that young Australians' first experience of the world of work is meaningful and inspiring. Work Inspiration is a combination of hands-on experiences, career conversations

between students and adults in the workforce and student reflections and feedback. These activities are shaped by the Work Inspiration framework, however the precise nature of the activities are designed and delivered by the lead employer.

6. Where the Jobs Are Workshops

These half-day workshops are designed to build the capabilities of attendees in confidently locating, interpreting and applying labour market information in order to support career and employment decision-making and choices.

The workshops will be delivered by qualified career development professionals. Up to 15 will be selected to participate in an intensive “train the trainer” to ensure a consistent message is delivered throughout the implementation of 100 workshops. The workshops will be supported by a Handbook, which will draw on key sources of labour market information.

7. Worlds of Work Extension Program (based on a pre-existing program)

Over one intensive week, this program takes Year 10 students on a journey that aims to broaden their views on what it means to be successful in the changing world of work. The program consists of facilitated workshops around personal development and employability skills and three workplace visits across a range of industries and sectors and will culminate in a student project testing the skills learned throughout the week.

8. Aspirations Mentoring (based on pre-existing program)

The Aspirations Mentoring program is an existing structured mentoring program for students in Year 10 and 11 from disadvantaged schools. The increased funding offered by the Making Career Connections program increases mentoring opportunities for approximately 800 additional students and will allow the program to engage with new schools, and new businesses from industries facing skill shortages.