
5 Vocational education and training

This chapter reports performance information about the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government funded vocational education and training (VET) in Australia in 2006. The VET system delivers employment related skills across a wide range of vocations. It provides Australians with the skills to enter or re-enter the labour force, retrain for a new job or upgrade skills for an existing job. The VET system includes government and privately funded VET delivered through a number of methods by a wide range of training institutions and enterprises.

The focus of this chapter is on VET services delivered by providers receiving government funding, which relate directly to training activity funded under the *Commonwealth–State Agreement for Skilling Australia’s Workforce*. These services include the provision of VET programs in government owned technical and further education (TAFE) institutes and universities with TAFE divisions, other government and community institutions, and government funded activity by private registered training organisations (RTOs). The scope of this chapter does not extend to VET services provided in schools (which are within the scope of school education in chapter 4) or university education (some information on university education is included in preface B).

Indigenous data in the vocational education and training chapter

The vocational education and training chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2008* (2008 Report) contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- VET participation rate, 2006
- proportion of students who reported as Indigenous, 2006
- load pass rate, 2002–2006
- number of VET qualifications completed, 2002–2005
- number of units of competency and modules achieved/passed, 2002–2006
- proportion of graduates who were satisfied with the quality of their completed course, 2002–2006

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- proportion of graduates in employment and/or continued on to further study after completing a course, 2002–2006.

Attachment tables

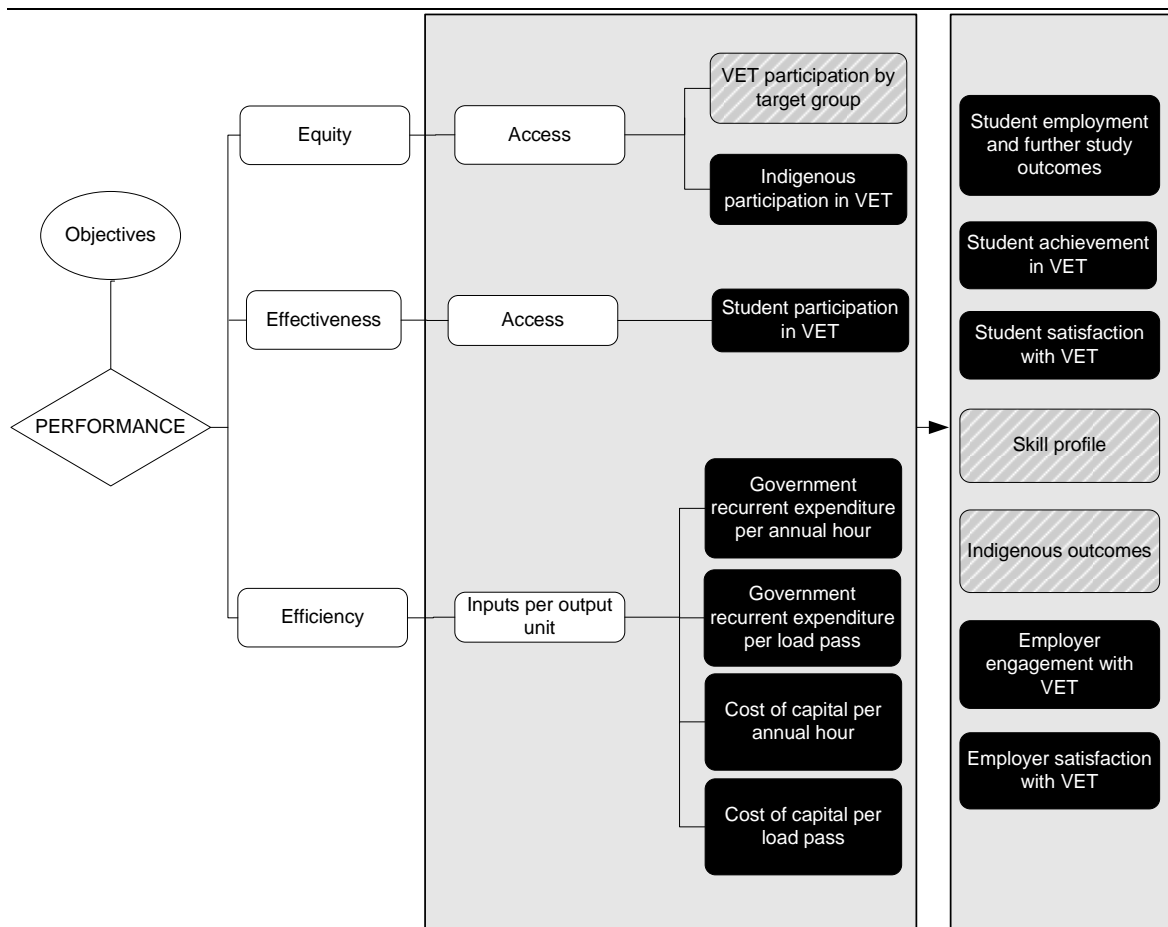
Attachment tables for data within the VET chapter of this compendium are contained in attachment 5A of the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘A’ suffix (for example, table 5A.3 is table 3 in the VET attachment). As the data are directly sourced from the 2008 Report, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the 2008 Report can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to ‘2008 Report, p. 5.15’ this is page 15 of chapter 5 of the 2008 Report, and ‘2008 Report, table 5A.2’ is attachment table 2 of attachment 5A of the 2008 Report.

Framework of performance indicators

The VET performance indicator framework (figure 5.1) is developed around the VET objectives established under the national strategy for 2004–2010 (ANTA 2004). A specific objective relating to Indigenous people is that ‘Indigenous Australians will have skills for viable jobs and their learning culture will be shared’.

Data for Indigenous people are reported for a subset of the performance indicators for VET services in the 2008 Report. It is important to interpret these data in the context of the broader performance indicator framework outlined in figure 5.1. The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2008 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary.

Figure 5.1 Performance indicators for VET services



Key to indicators

- Text** Data for these indicators comparable, subject to caveats to each chart or table
- Text** Data for these indicators not complete or not directly comparable
- Text** These indicators yet to be developed or data not collected for this Report

Outputs

Outcomes

Source: 2008 Report, figure 5.4, p. 5.12.

Indigenous participation in VET

A key national goal of the VET system is to increase opportunities and outcomes for disadvantaged groups including Indigenous people. ‘Indigenous participation in VET’ is an indicator of equitable access to VET services (box 5.1).

Box 5.1 Indigenous participation in VET

'Indigenous participation in VET' is an indicator of Indigenous people's access to the VET system.

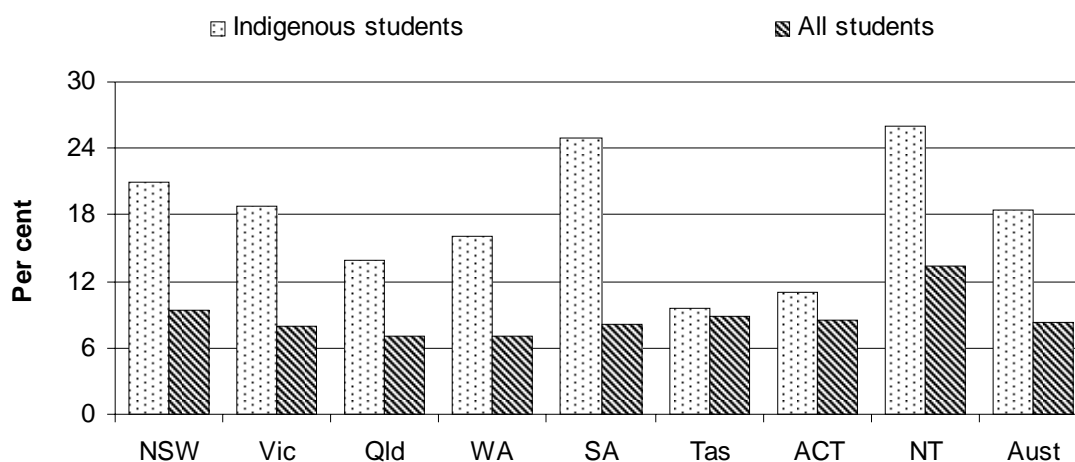
'Indigenous participation in VET' is defined as the number of all government funded participants in the VET system who self-identified as Indigenous, as a proportion of the total number of Indigenous people aged 15–64 years, compared with that of the general population.

A lower participation rate means Indigenous people are under-represented in VET; a higher participation rate means Indigenous people are over-represented in VET.

Care needs to be taken in interpreting the participation rates presented for Indigenous people because (1) the data depend on self-identification at the time of enrolment, and (2) the number of non-responses (that is, students who did not indicate whether or not they were Indigenous) varies across jurisdictions. Data are for government funded VET students.

Nationally, the VET participation rate for all Indigenous students (the number of all Indigenous students as a percentage of Indigenous people aged 15–64) was 18.5 per cent. The participation rate for 15–64 year old students (the number of 15–64 year old students as a percentage of the 15–64 year old population) was 8.2 per cent (figure 5.2). These student participation data are not age standardised, so the younger age profile of the Indigenous population relative to all Australians is likely to affect the results.

Figure 5.2 VET participation rate, by Indigenous status, 2006^{a, b, c, d, e, f}

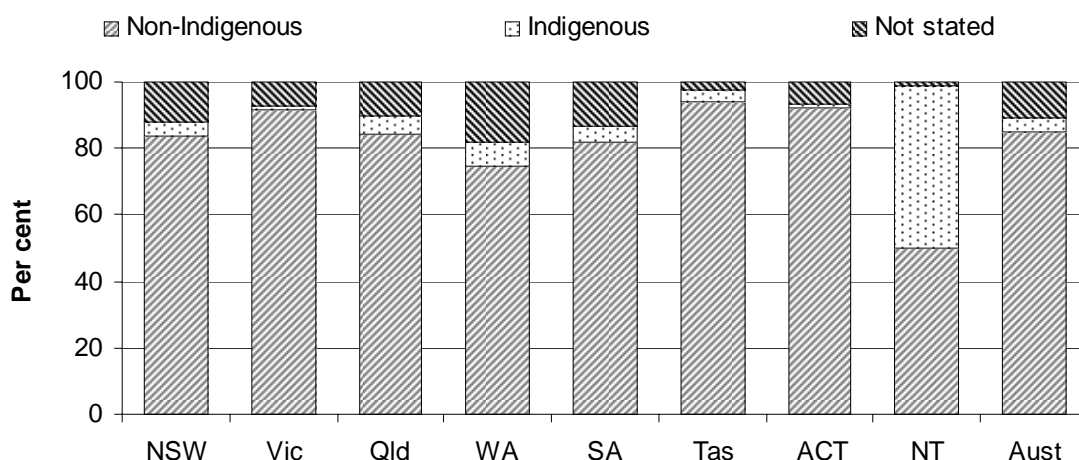


^a Data are for government recurrent funded VET students. ^b The scope of Indigenous students covers all age groups who reported being Indigenous and the scope of all students covers those aged 15–64 years. ^c The Indigenous participation rate is the number of Indigenous students as a percentage of the experimental estimates of Indigenous people aged 15–64 years for 30 June 2006 (ABS 2004; low series, tables 25–34, pp. 53–62). The all students participation rate is the number of students as a percentage of the estimated resident population aged 15–64 as at 30 June 2006. ^d Care needs to be taken in interpreting these data because the Indigenous population’s age profile is younger than that of the non-Indigenous population. Participation rates for all ages are likely to differ from participation rates for working age populations. ^e NSW reported data on two additional programs for the first time in 2006. ^f SA data now include VET in schools which has been assessed by TAFE.

Source: ABS (2004); ABS (unpublished) Australian Demographic Statistics, December Quarter 2006; NCVET National VET provider collection (unpublished); table 5A.1; 2008 Report, figure 5.9; p. 5.18.

In 2006, 4.7 per cent of government funded VET students in Australia identified themselves as Indigenous, while 10.6 per cent of students did not report their Indigenous status (figure 5.3). The proportion of government funded VET students who identified themselves as Indigenous (4.7 per cent) was higher than the proportion of Indigenous people in the total population nationally (2.4 per cent) (table 5A.1).

Figure 5.3 VET students, all ages, by Indigenous status, 2006^{a, b, c}



^a Data are for government recurrent funded VET students. ^b NSW reported data on two additional programs for the first time in 2006. ^c SA data now include VET in schools which has been assessed by TAFE.

Source: NCVET National VET provider collection (unpublished); table 5A.1; 2008 Report, figure 5.10; p. 5.19.

Indigenous outcomes

'Indigenous outcomes' is an indicator of outcomes of VET services for Indigenous people (box 5.2).

Box 5.2 Indigenous outcomes

'Indigenous outcomes' is an indicator of the extent to which Indigenous people engage with and achieve positive outcomes from VET. Three measures are reported:

- 'Indigenous students' achievement in VET' measures Indigenous students' success in VET. It reports on load pass rates achieved by Indigenous students and the number of Indigenous students who commenced and completed expressed as a proportion of all course commencing enrolments by Indigenous students in that year.
- 'Skill outputs of Indigenous students' measures the level of skill outputs achieved in a given year by Indigenous students from the VET system. It reports on the number of qualifications completed by Indigenous students, the number of units of competency and the number of modules (outside training packages) achieved/passed by Indigenous students.

(Continued on next page)

Box 5.2 (Continued)

- ‘Qualifications completed by Indigenous students’ is defined as the number of qualifications completed by both government and non-government funded Indigenous students each year in VET, where a qualification is a certification awarded to a person on successful completion of a course in recognition of having achieved particular knowledge, skills or competencies.
- ‘Units of competency achieved by Indigenous students’ is defined as the number of units of competency achieved/passed by Indigenous government recurrent funded VET students, where a unit of competency is defined as a component of a competency standard and/or a statement of a key function or role in a particular job or occupation.
- ‘Modules completed by Indigenous students’ is defined as the number of modules (outside training packages) achieved/passed each year by Indigenous government recurrent funded VET students, where a module (also called a subject) is a unit of education or training which can be completed on its own or as part of a course. Modules may also result in the attainment of one or more units of competency.
- ‘VET outcomes for Indigenous students’ measures the VET system’s ability to meet Indigenous students’ objectives. It reports on the proportion of Indigenous students who were satisfied with the quality of their completed course, and the proportion of Indigenous students who improved their employment or further study outcomes after completing a course, compared to those of the general student population.

High ‘load pass rates’ and ‘number of students who commenced and completed’ indicate that student achievement is high, which is desirable. Holding other factors constant, high or increasing numbers of qualifications completed, and units of competency or modules achieved/passed results in a greater increase in VET skills. High proportions of Indigenous student satisfaction indicates a higher level of satisfaction. The proportion of graduates who achieve their training objectives varies according to their objectives — employment related, further study and/or developmental — so it is useful to distinguish amongst types of student objective. High or increasing proportions of employment or further study outcomes after training are positive.

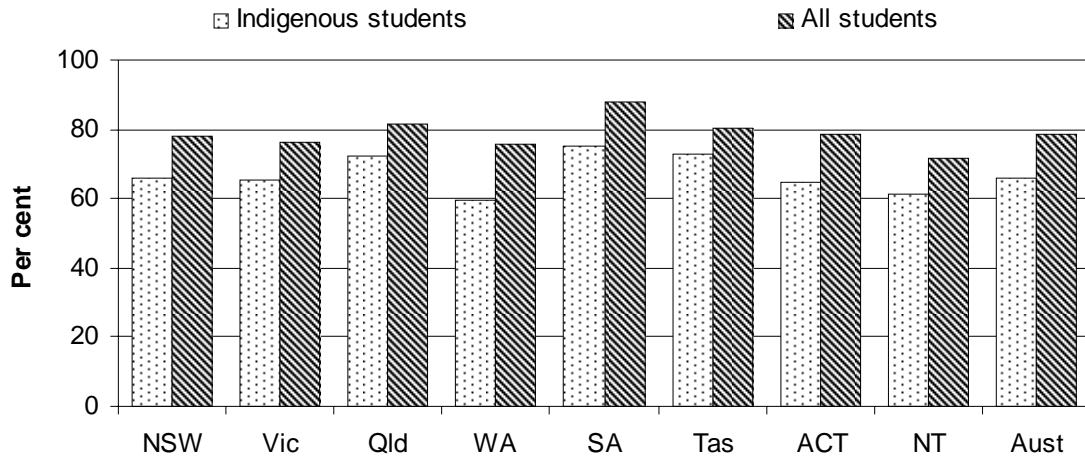
Reporting on students who commenced and completed is dependent on the capacity to track individual students over more than one calendar year and the data are not yet available. Qualifications completed in 2005 are counted in 2007 and are included in the 2008 Report.

Indigenous students’ achievement in VET

In 2006, the national ‘load pass rate’ for Indigenous government funded students (66.2 per cent) was lower than the national load pass rate for all government funded

students (78.5 per cent) (figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Indigenous students' load pass rate, 2006^a

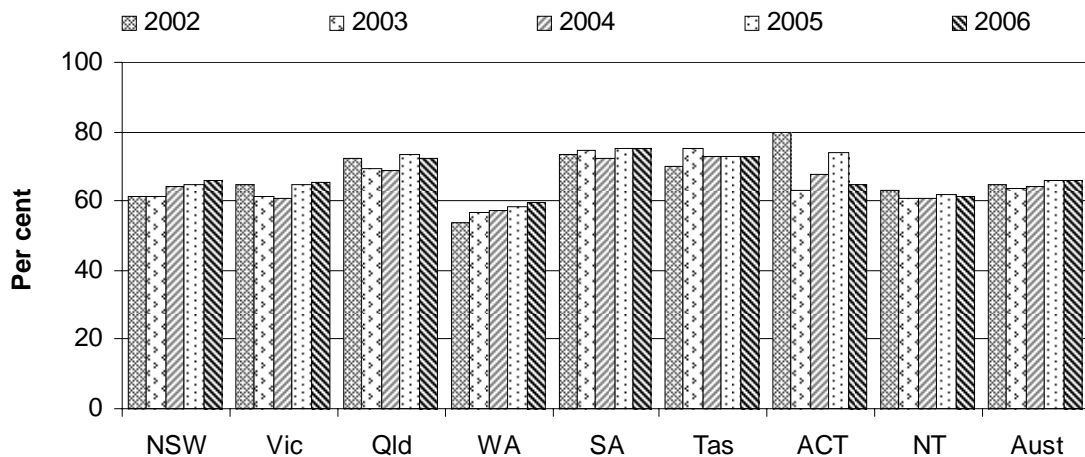


^a Data are for government recurrent funded hours.

Source: NCVET National VET provider collection (unpublished); table 5A.2; 2008 Report, figure 5.35, p. 5.52.

Nationally, the load pass rate for Indigenous government funded students increased from 64.5 per cent in 2002 to 66.2 per cent in 2006 (figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Indigenous students' load pass rate^{a, b}



^a Data are for government recurrent funded hours. ^b In 2006, all states and territories, except Victoria, adopted standard nominal hour values for common units of competency as the basis of calculating total hours of delivery. Victoria continues to report scheduled hours in 2006. To enable comparison over time, standard nominal hour values have been used to revise the time series back to 2002.

Source: NCVET National VET provider collection (unpublished); table 5A.2; 2008 Report, figure 5.36, p. 5.53.

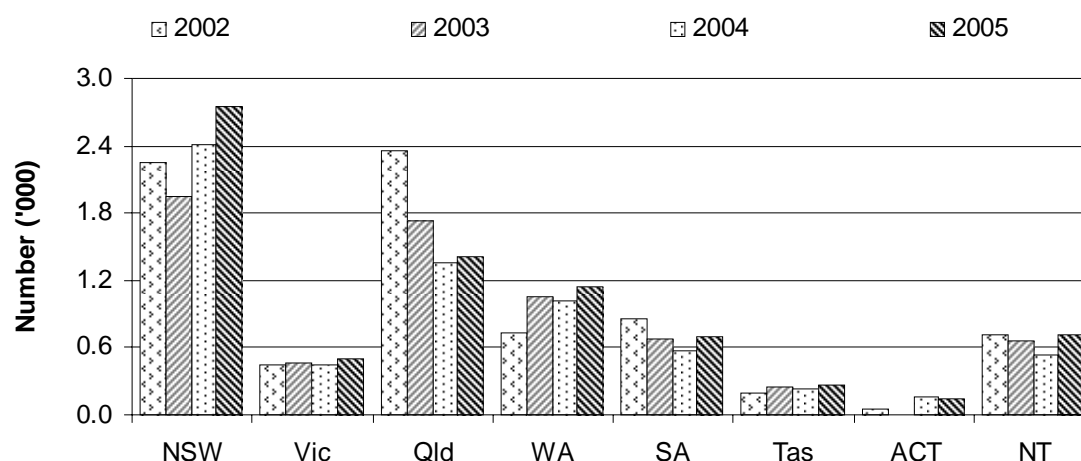
Indigenous students' skill outputs

The measure 'skill outputs of Indigenous students' reports on the number and proportion of qualifications completed, units of competency and modules (outside training packages) achieved/passed in a given year.

Qualifications completed — Indigenous students

Nationally, Indigenous students completed 7600 VET qualifications in 2005, an increase of 13.3 per cent from 6700 in 2004. Indigenous students accounted for 2.5 per cent of all the qualifications completed in 2005 (table 5A.3). The number of qualifications completed by Indigenous students varied across jurisdictions (figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 Qualifications completed, by Indigenous students^{a, b, c, d}



^a Qualifications completed includes courses accredited or approved by a local State/Territory authority, and represents students eligible to be awarded a qualification. ^b The number of qualifications completed includes both government funded and non-government funded VET students. ^c WA reported additional awards completed in 2003. The 2003 ACT data were rounded to zero. ^d SA data now include VET in schools which has been assessed by TAFE. To enable comparability of data, SA data for 2002–2004 have been adjusted to include SA VISA (VET in Schools Assessment) data. Data for 2001 are not reported due to a break in time series.

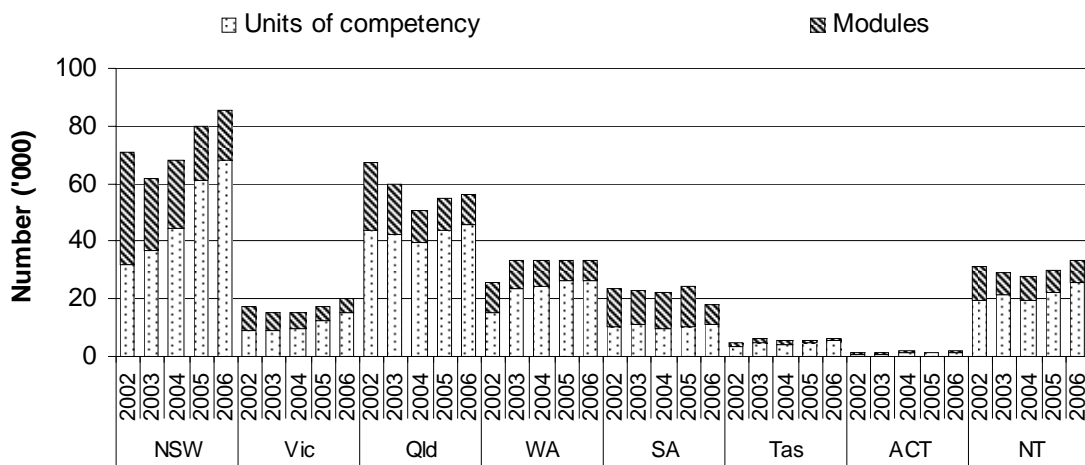
Source: NCVET National VET provider collection (unpublished); table 5A.3; 2008 Report, figure 5.37, p. 5.54.

Units of competency and modules completed by Indigenous students

Nationally, Indigenous government funded students achieved/passed 198 800 units of competency in 2006, an increase of 9.1 per cent from 182 300 units in 2005. Units of competency achieved/passed increased by 48.1 per cent from 134 200 units in 2002 (table 5A.4).

The VET sector is focussed on delivering nationally approved training package qualifications and units of competency as opposed to modules. Nationally, the number of modules achieved/passed by Indigenous government funded students decreased by 12.8 per cent from 64 300 in 2005 to 56 100 in 2006. The number of modules achieved/passed has decreased by 48.2 per cent from 108 300 in 2002 (table 5A.4). The number of units of competency and number of modules achieved/passed varied across jurisdictions (figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7 **Units of competency and modules achieved/passed, by Indigenous students^{a, b, c}**



^a Data are for government recurrent funded VET students. ^b NSW reported data on two additional programs for the first time in 2006. ^c SA data now include VET in schools which has been assessed by TAFE. To enable comparability of data, SA data for 2002–2005 have been adjusted to include SA VISA (VET in Schools Assessment) data.

Source: NCVET National VET provider collection (unpublished); table 5A.4; 2008 Report, figure 5.38, p. 5.55.

VET outcomes for Indigenous students

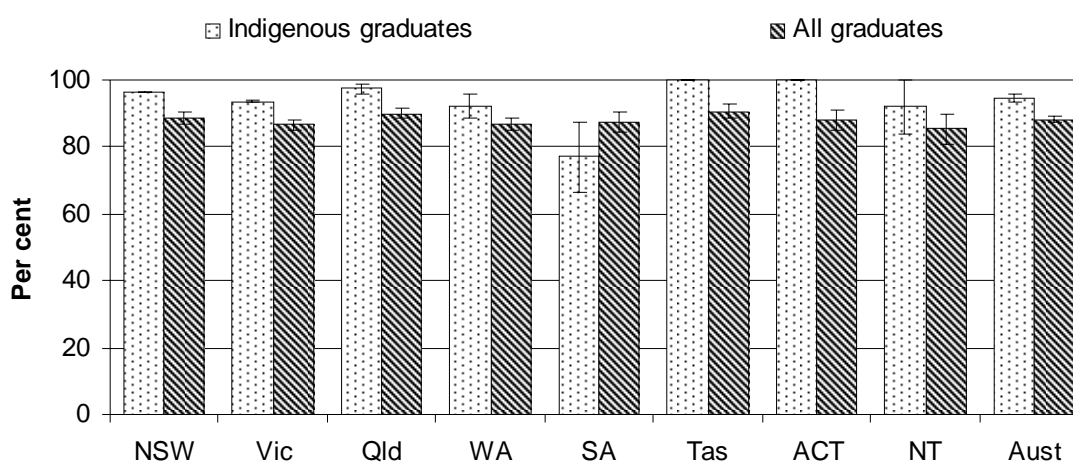
The measure ‘VET outcomes of Indigenous students’ reports on Indigenous students’ satisfaction with VET and Indigenous employment and further study outcomes.

Indigenous students’ satisfaction with VET

The measure ‘Indigenous students’ satisfaction with VET’ reports on the proportion of Indigenous graduates who indicated they were satisfied with the quality of their completed VET course.

Nationally, 94.6 per cent of Indigenous TAFE graduates surveyed in 2006 indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of their completed course, compared with 88.2 per cent for all TAFE graduates (figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8 Proportion of TAFE graduates who were satisfied with the quality of their completed course, by Indigenous status, 2006^{a, b}



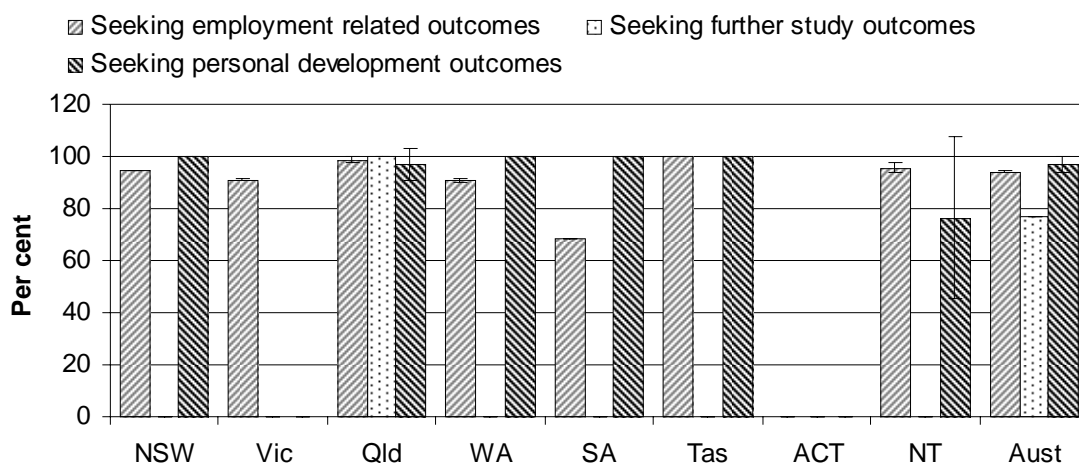
^a Satisfaction with overall quality of training was rated as satisfied or very satisfied (4 or 5 on a 5 point scale).
^b The error bars in the figure represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate.

Source: NCVET Student Outcomes Survey (unpublished); table 5A.5; 2008 Report, table 5A.44; 2008 Report, figure 5.39, p. 5.56.

Of those Indigenous TAFE graduates who completed courses in 2006, the proportion of those who indicated that they were satisfied with their courses was:

- 94.1 per cent of those seeking employment related outcomes
- 76.8 per cent of those seeking further study outcomes
- 96.9 per cent of those seeking personal development (figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 **Proportion of Indigenous TAFE graduates who were satisfied with the quality of their course, by purpose of study, 2006^{a, b, c, d}**



a Satisfaction with overall quality of training was rated as satisfied or very satisfied (4 or 5 on a 5 point scale). **b** The seeking further study outcomes data for NSW and ACT were nil or rounded to zero. Data for Victoria, WA, SA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT are not published due to 5 or fewer responses. **c** The error bars in the figure represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. **d** Due to insufficient sample size it was not possible to calculate an estimate of the variance for some proportions.

Source: NCVET Student Outcomes Survey (unpublished); table 5A.5; 2008 Report, figure 5.40, p. 5.57.

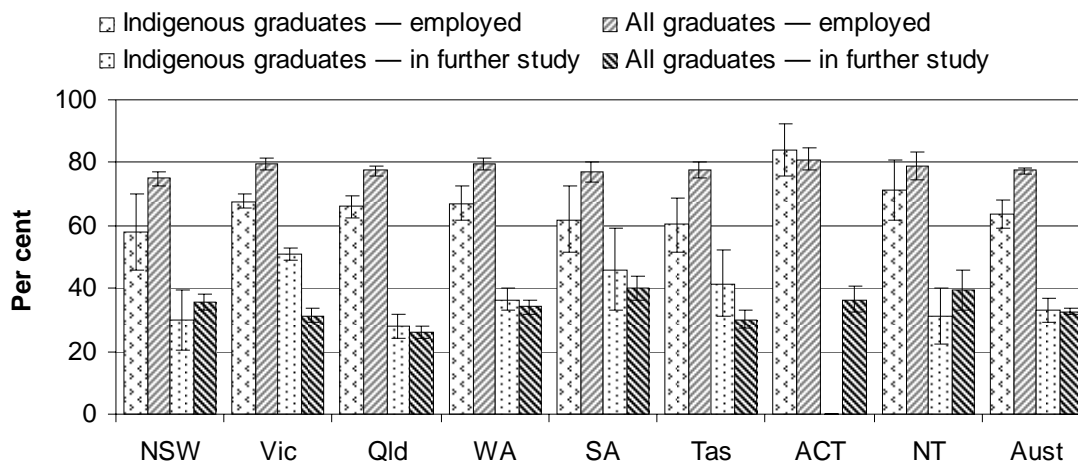
Further information on Indigenous students' views of their VET courses is available in the 2006 Report (SCRGSP (2006), box 4.18) and in the NCVET publication, *Indigenous Australians' training experiences 2004 – First findings* (NCVET 2005).

Indigenous students employment and further study outcomes

'Indigenous students' employment and further study outcomes' measures the proportion of Indigenous graduates who improved their employment circumstances or continued on to further study after completing training.

In 2006, 77.1 per cent of Indigenous TAFE graduates surveyed nationally indicated that they were employed and/or in further study after completing a course (table 5A.6). The proportion of students who improved their employment outcomes or were engaged in further study may overlap, since students may realise the two outcomes simultaneously. Of Indigenous TAFE graduates, 63.6 per cent indicated that they were employed after completing a course (compared with 77.4 per cent of all TAFE graduates) and 33.2 per cent continued on to further study (compared with 32.8 per cent of all TAFE graduates) (figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10 Proportion of TAFE graduates who were in employment and/or continued on to further study after completing a course, by Indigenous status, 2006^{a, b, c}

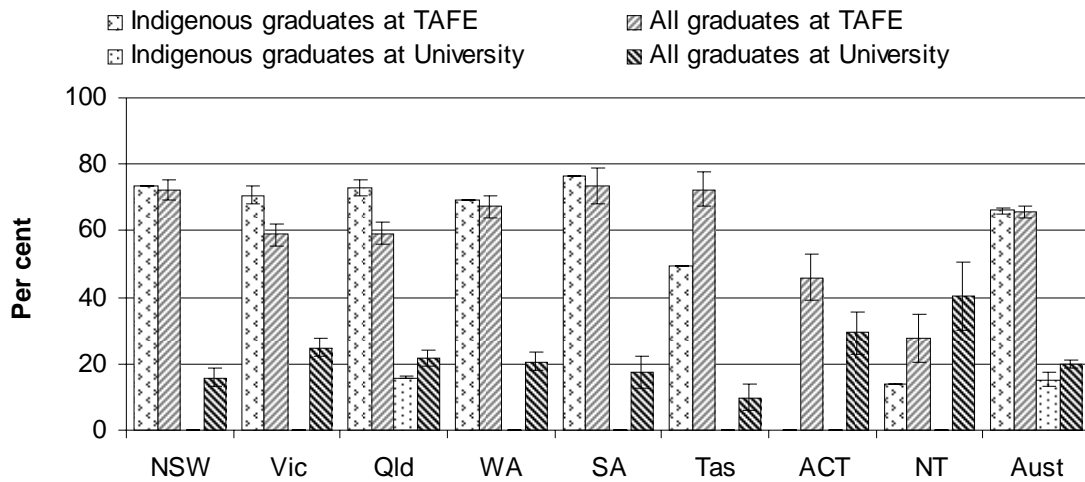


^a Graduates 'employed' and graduates 'in further study' are subsets of graduates who are 'employed or in further study'. Graduates can be both employed and in further study. ^b The ACT 'Indigenous graduates — in further study' data are not published due to 5 or fewer responses. ^c The error bars in the figure represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate.

Source: NCVET Student Outcomes Survey (unpublished); table 5A.6; 2008 Report, table 5A.20; 2008 Report, figure 5.41, p. 5.58.

Of those Indigenous TAFE graduates who went on to further study, 66.1 per cent continued on to further study within the TAFE system (compared with 65.7 per cent for all TAFE graduates) and 15.3 per cent went to university (compared with 19.8 per cent for all TAFE graduates) (figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11 TAFE graduates who continued on to further study after completing a course, by Indigenous status, by type of institution, 2006^{a, b}



^a The 'Indigenous graduates at TAFE' data for the ACT and the 'Indigenous graduates at University' data for NSW, Victoria, WA, SA, Tasmania and the ACT are not published due to 5 or fewer responses. The NT 'Indigenous graduates at University' estimate is not published due to a relative standard error greater than 25 per cent. ^b The error bars in the figure represent the 95 per cent confidence interval associated with each point estimate. Due to insufficient sample size it was not possible to calculate an estimate of the variance for some 'Indigenous graduates at TAFE' proportions.

Source: NCVET Student Outcomes Survey (unpublished); table 5A.6; 2008 Report, table 5A.20; 2008 Report, figure 5.42, p. 5.59.

Attachment tables

Attachment tables for data within this chapter are contained in the attachment to the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an 'A' suffix (for example, table 5A.3 is table 3 in the VET attachment). The tables included in the attachment are listed below.

Table 5A.1	VET participation by Indigenous status, 2006 (per cent)
Table 5A.2	Load pass rates by Indigenous status (per cent)
Table 5A.3	Number of VET qualifications completed, by Indigenous status ('000)
Table 5A.4	Number of units of competency and modules completed, by Indigenous status ('000)
Table 5A.5	Proportion of Indigenous graduates who were satisfied with the quality of their completed course, by purpose of study
Table 5A.6	Proportion of Indigenous graduates in employment and/or continued on to further study after completing a course (per cent)

References

- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2004, *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 1991 to 2009*, Cat. no. 3238.0, Canberra.
- ANTA (Australian National Training Authority) 2004, *Shaping our Future — Australia's National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2004–2010*, Brisbane.
- NCVER (National Centre for Vocational Education Research) 2005, *Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics: Indigenous Australians' Training Experiences 2004 - First Finding*, Adelaide.
- SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2006, *Report on Government Services 2006*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.