

# 5 Effective schools and quality schooling

## 5.1 Introduction

In addition to updating continuing efforts in the area of vocational education, which was a focus area of the *National Report on Schooling in Australia 1995*, the reporting which follows also highlights other initiatives relating to the national goals concerned with educational excellence and educational relevance.

This section of the report seeks particularly to provide a perspective on matters relating principally to the outcomes of schooling, especially for senior secondary students, but considers also some of the efforts aimed towards helping improve those outcomes. It provides a statistical and textual overview of aspects of senior secondary schooling and discusses factors relating to post-secondary education.

## 5.2 Towards quality and effectiveness

Teaching and learning in Australian schools are based on a belief that young people in Australia should be offered the highest possible quality of education. Programs of training, funding, assessment and review all exist because of the shared belief in the goal of quality education, which they seek to achieve either through ongoing improvements at the input end of the process, or through modifying the interactions which comprise the process of education.

### Accountability and quality

A range of initiatives were in place in Australian schools in 1996 with a focus on educational quality. These generally related to measuring and monitoring the effectiveness and quality of existing educational programs, or had moved beyond that to bring about a shift in program quality.

In seeking to ensure maximum effectiveness of the educational programs offered, government schools in New South Wales, for example, sought to refocus quality assurance procedures. In doing so, a new approach to school accountability and improvement was developed, incorporating school self-evaluation, the production of annual school reports, in-depth school reviews and systemic monitoring and reporting. Teachers and parents work closely together to help schools to focus their planning and decision making.

Equivalent processes exist in other government school systems across the nation, providing frameworks for consideration of effectiveness and excellence in schooling. Programs tend to have an element of public accountability for educational outcomes and, in common with the New South Wales procedure, provide for school self-assessment, annual reporting and external review.

Non-government schools are accountable to governments, system authorities (where relevant), parents and communities for the learning outcomes of students, ensuring on-going monitoring occurs and necessary strategies for improvement are instituted. Because so many non-government schools are independent of system ties and will often exist to serve the demands of particular philosophies or community groups, their approaches to quality assurance and the ensuring of program effectiveness vary greatly.

### Community participation and responsibility

Schooling in Australia is generally acknowledged as a partnership between parents, professional educators and students. The commitment of parents to the schools attended by their children has long been sought and accepted. Increasing parent participation and involvement is also helping to foster new levels of commitment from schools and educators to those parents.

Parents showed their commitment to the partnership by participating in their schools in numerous ways, none more vital than supporting their children in the learning which occurs in and through the home. Many parents also assisted directly in the implementation of school programs, ranging from listening to reading to coaching school sporting teams. They served as volunteers in school canteens, at working bees and fetes. Some supported career education and work placement programs, took roles in support groups for specialist subjects, or as mentors for gifted and talented students. Many were prepared to help elect and serve on school councils and boards.

The commitment of schools to the partnership with parents was demonstrated in many of their activities, most clearly through the increasing openness of their operations and the extensive communication programs they undertake. The means of reporting on student progress, the provision of prospectus and newsletter information, the existence of parent open days and nights and a general commitment to consultation with parents, all served to reinforce the key role parents were acknowledged to have in Australian schools.

**Table 26. Age participation rates (a), full-time students aged 15–19, by gender, all schools, by State, 1996 (per cent of relevant population)**

<i>Age</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>
<b>Males</b>									
15	92.5	93.1	87.3	89.5	87.5	95.7	75.2	108.1	91.0
16	75.6	83.8	74.0	77.7	70.1	68.8	59.4	105.2	77.0
17	60.6	67.7	44.2	43.6	36.2	45.8	37.3	90.4	55.3
18	14.8	15.4	7.6	7.5	6.0	10.2	13.1	33.5	12.4
19	1.9	2.6	1.7	2.2	1.7	2.2	3.3	5.7	2.2
15–19	49.2	51.9	43.1	44.3	40.3	45.9	38.4	64.3	47.5
<b>Females</b>									
15	93.4	95.3	91.0	92.0	90.9	97.1	80.5	108.1	93.3
16	81.5	89.3	80.8	83.6	77.1	73.6	67.7	105.5	83.0
17	69.5	79.3	47.2	49.1	41.7	55.9	44.5	93.3	63.1
18	13.1	14.0	6.4	6.1	5.9	9.1	9.9	26.0	10.9
19	1.7	2.3	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.7	3.0	2.4	1.8
15–19	51.8	55.6	45.0	46.6	43.3	49.0	41.8	62.5	50.2
<b>Persons</b>									
15	93.0	94.2	89.1	90.7	89.1	96.4	77.7	108.1	92.1
16	78.4	86.5	77.3	80.6	73.5	71.1	63.2	105.4	79.9
17	64.9	73.3	45.7	46.3	38.9	50.7	40.5	91.8	59.1
18	14.0	14.7	7.0	6.8	5.9	9.7	11.6	29.8	11.7
19	1.8	2.5	1.5	1.9	1.7	2.0	3.1	4.0	2.0
15–19	50.5	53.7	44.0	45.4	41.8	47.4	40.0	63.4	48.8

Note: Age participation rates represent the number of full-time school students of a particular age and gender expressed as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age and gender. They do not include people in these age groups who may be attending forms of education other than those delivered in schools (e.g. TAFE). Due to interstate movement (i.e. students resident in one State and attending school in a different State) participation rates may be either slightly underestimated or overestimated, thereby making possible participation rates greater than 100 per cent. Differences in State policies on entry age into schooling and alternative provisions for school-age students (i.e. TAFE) can also affect participation rates.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996

## 5.3 Involvement of young people in schooling

Age participation rates provide a simple but effective tool to measure the overall state of community involvement in schooling. Comparisons over time, which are also readily undertaken, tend to show the changes which reflect the variables and trends in society. Factors such as changing community expectations, unemployment levels for young people, or the availability of places in post-secondary courses of study, can impact directly on participation rates.

A comparison among States can also be made using data on participation rates from the different jurisdictions. In doing so, of course, there needs to be an awareness of State-specific factors, referred to in the footnotes to Table 26, which contribute to the different participation rates in the States.

This table presents an overview of the participation in schooling of those age groups who are, for the most part, above the age of compulsory attendance. It is immediately clear that the participation rate for older students is less than for younger students, with the main watershed being

after age 17. ABS data suggest that 17 is the age at which students most commonly undertake year 12, so the major differences in the participation rates for students older than 17 can be readily understood.

Table 26 also makes clear the gender differences evident in the participation rates for these students of middle/upper secondary age. Nationally, the participation rates for male students aged 15, 16 or 17 were lower than the comparable rates for female students. The gender difference increased from age 15 to age 16 and again from age 16 to age 17. For students aged 18 or 19, beyond the general age of students at year 12, the participation rates for males were greater than for females.

To provide a view over time of young people's involvement in schooling, Table 27 summarises national participation rates over a four-year period. Rates for individual age groups from 15 to 17, and for the total 15–19 age group, varied marginally from year to year, but suggested no clear trend. However, a gentle downward trend does appear to be developing in the rate of participation in full-time schooling of both male and female students aged 18 or 19.

**Table 27. Age participation rates (a), full-time students aged 15–19, by gender, all schools, Australia, 1993–1996 (per cent of relevant population)**

Age	1993			1994			1995			1996		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
15	92.5	93.9	93.1	91.0	93.5	92.2	91.9	93.7	92.8	91.0	93.3	92.1
16	78.8	83.8	81.3	77.4	82.6	80.0	75.7	82.1	78.8	77.0	83.0	79.9
17	58.2	63.1	60.6	56.5	63.0	59.7	55.2	62.0	58.5	55.3	63.1	59.1
18	15.0	12.9	14.0	13.8	11.9	12.9	13.0	11.6	12.3	12.4	10.9	11.7
19	2.9	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.1	2.4	2.3	1.9	2.1	2.2	1.8	2.0
15–19	48.3	49.9	49.1	47.5	49.7	48.6	47.1	49.7	48.4	47.5	50.2	48.8

Note: Age participation rates represent the number of full-time school students of a particular age and gender expressed as a proportion of the estimated resident population of the same age and gender. They do not include people in these age groups who may be attending forms of education other than those delivered in schools (e.g. TAFE). Due to interstate movement (i.e. students resident in one State and attending school in a different State) participation rates may be either slightly underestimated or overestimated, thereby making possible participation rates greater than 100 per cent. Differences in State policies on entry age into schooling and alternative provisions for school-age students (i.e. TAFE) can also affect participation rates.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996

**Table 28. Progression rates, years 8–12, full-time students, by sector, Australia, 1992/93 to 1995/96 (per cent)**

	Year 8 to year 9			Year 9 to year 10			Year 10 to year 11			Year 11 to year 12		
	Govt	NG	All	Govt	NG	All	Govt	NG	All	Govt	NG	All
1992–93	99.7	99.6	99.7	97.0	99.6	97.8	86.7	91.5	88.2	84.4	93.1	87.2
1993–94	98.9	100.2	99.3	95.7	100.3	97.2	84.6	91.5	86.8	82.2	91.9	85.4
1994–95	99.0	100.2	99.4	95.5	100.7	97.2	83.4	91.0	85.9	80.9	91.8	84.6
1995–96	99.5	99.8	99.6	96.0	100.3	97.4	84.0	91.6	86.5	82.3	92.1	85.7

Note: The progression rates in this table represent the number of full-time students at a particular year level expressed as a proportion of the number of full-time students at the year level below one year earlier.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996 and earlier publications

An additional view of the capacity of Australia's schools to continue to meet community expectations may be gained from the degree to which students remain at school from year to year through the years of secondary schooling.

The information in Table 28 provides a basic perspective, indicating that, for the years shown:

- progression rates over all schools were higher in junior secondary years than in the final years of schooling;
- contrary to this trend, the progression rates for students in non-government schools moving from year 11 to year 12 were higher than the year 10 to year 11 rates; and
- progression rates at each year level were higher for non-government schools than for government schools.

Progression rates can be seen as an indicator of the degree to which schools are meeting the immediate needs of students in particular years of schooling, especially those beyond the age of compulsory attendance. That in excess of 85 per cent of full-time year 10 students continue into year 11 on a full-time basis, and a similar proportion of those year 11 students then become full-time year 12 students, suggests a high degree of confidence in Australia's schools.

The limited volatility in progression rates over the period indicates that schools have generally maintained a capacity to retain senior students. For example, during the period 1992–1996, while the number of full-time year 12 students fell nationally by almost 22,000, or 11.3 per cent, the rate of retention of year 11 students into year 12 showed relative stability. Across both school sectors, the year 11 to year 12 progression rates were higher for 1995–96 than 1994–95. The relatively unchanging nature of the progression rates suggests a coming return to significantly higher numbers in senior secondary as the increasing numbers moving through years 8 and 9 reach those year levels.

Apparent retention rates are commonly used as a measure of the degree to which schools maintain student involvement (see Table 29). These rates do not reflect the actual retention of particular students from the commencement of their secondary schooling, but stem from compounded calculations of four or five annual progressions, with the impact of external factors at each stage. Apparent retention rates are useful as indicators of trends over time or within sectors, but in using them, allowance must be made for the external factors impacting on them and the compounding nature of the calculation which magnifies their volatility.

**Table 29. Apparent retention rates (a) of full-time secondary school students to year 12, by gender, category of school (and non-government affiliation), by State, selected years (per cent)**

<i>State</i>	<i>School category</i>	<i>1986</i>			<i>1991</i>			<i>1996</i>		
		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
<b>New South Wales</b>	Government	36.7	41.7	39.1	51.1	61.8	56.3	56.9	67.8	62.3
	Catholic	51.6	51.0	51.3	63.3	69.0	66.1	69.7	78.3	73.9
	Independent	88.3	94.4	91.3	91.9	101.3	96.6	91.6	96.0	93.8
	Total non-govt	59.6	60.5	60.0	70.7	77.3	74.0	76.1	83.5	79.7
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>72.7</b>	<b>67.7</b>
<b>Victoria</b>	Government	32.5	42.8	37.5	63.6	79.5	71.1	61.2	78.3	69.4
	Catholic	52.6	62.3	57.7	65.0	78.4	71.9	71.4	81.1	76.4
	Independent	89.7	95.5	92.6	99.2	113.4	106.4	97.2	106.2	101.5
	Total non-govt	65.6	73.3	69.5	77.9	90.8	84.4	81.6	90.2	85.9
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>75.7</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>82.7</b>	<b>75.3</b>
<b>Queensland</b>	Government	47.4	54.9	51.1	70.6	80.4	75.4	64.2	75.4	69.7
	Catholic	66.0	67.2	66.6	78.6	86.4	82.3	80.6	87.2	83.7
	Independent	87.3	99.2	92.8	97.7	108.3	102.8	95.4	109.5	102.3
	Total non-govt	73.2	77.1	75.1	85.8	94.6	90.0	86.9	97.1	91.8
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>71.3</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>76.5</b>
<b>South Australia</b>	Government	44.9	51.0	47.8	72.3	81.9	76.8	54.1	66.3	59.9
	Catholic	69.0	78.8	74.1	89.6	100.4	95.1	74.6	84.4	79.4
	Independent	96.8	103.6	100.1	107.9	118.0	112.9	94.5	105.2	99.8
	Total non-govt	80.1	87.8	84.0	97.8	107.9	102.8	83.1	93.6	88.3
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>58.3</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>88.9</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>62.6</b>	<b>74.6</b>	<b>68.4</b>
<b>Western Australia</b>	Government	43.6	47.4	45.4	63.2	71.2	67.1	60.6	72.5	66.4
	Catholic	55.4	57.0	56.2	67.1	77.2	72.2	64.8	78.7	71.8
	Independent	81.7	90.0	85.8	91.6	101.7	96.4	87.7	99.6	93.7
	Total non-govt	64.2	67.4	65.9	76.3	85.8	81.0	73.9	87.1	80.5
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>66.9</b>	<b>75.5</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>64.6</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>70.7</b>
<b>Tasmania</b>	Government	24.4	30.0	27.1	47.8	57.0	52.1	47.1	53.4	50.2
	Catholic	28.6	35.0	36.7	49.0	47.1	47.9	51.6	65.3	58.7
	Independent	57.6	57.9	57.8	61.7	64.5	63.0	61.2	68.1	64.5
	Total non-govt	45.9	43.3	44.5	54.9	53.7	54.3	55.9	66.4	61.1
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>53.1</b>
<b>Northern Territory</b>	Government	30.9	35.9	33.4	60.6	61.3	60.9	40.8	42.0	41.3
	Catholic	21.8	54.3	37.9	30.4	38.3	34.5	40.6	45.3	42.9
	Independent	33.3	42.1	38.0	73.5	57.1	66.1	37.6	36.2	36.9
	Total non-govt	24.0	51.7	38.0	37.9	41.0	39.5	39.1	41.0	40.0
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>57.9</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>41.0</b>
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	Government	79.2	83.3	81.2	114.5	114.8	114.6	110.5	106.1	108.2
	Catholic	65.6	64.7	65.2	67.2	64.4	65.9	62.5	62.8	62.6
	Independent	89.8	102.3	95.6	77.0	72.9	75.0	80.6	82.9	81.7
	Total non-govt	70.2	71.8	70.9	70.0	66.8	68.4	67.5	68.3	67.9
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>77.7</b>	<b>95.8</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>90.8</b>	<b>91.3</b>
<b>Australia</b>	Government	38.9	45.8	42.3	61.5	72.7	66.9	59.8	72.0	65.8
	Catholic	55.6	59.1	57.4	67.6	76.0	71.9	71.1	79.9	75.4
	Independent	87.7	94.8	91.2	95.5	106.3	100.8	92.3	101.3	96.7
	Total non-govt	65.4	69.4	67.4	77.2	86.0	81.6	78.9	87.7	83.2
	<b>All schools</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>48.7</b>	<b>66.1</b>	<b>76.7</b>	<b>71.3</b>	<b>65.9</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>71.3</b>

Note: Apparent retention rates show the percentage of full-time students who continued to year 12 from their respective cohort groups at the commencement of their secondary schooling. Rates are based on mid-year enrolments. Care should be taken in interpreting the results, as a range of factors affecting their calculation have not been taken into account. These include students repeating a year of education, interstate movement (i.e. students residing in one State and attending school in a different State), and other net changes to the school population. Comparison between the government and non-government sector should be made with caution due to the effect that transfer between government and non-government schools has on apparent retention rate figures.

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996 and earlier years

**Table 30. Number of full-time year 12 students, by gender and category of school, by State, selected years**

State/sector	1986			1991			1996		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
<b>New South Wales</b>									
Government	11,944	12,960	24,904	16,305	18,515	34,820	15,913	18,222	34,135
Non-government	6,410	6,599	13,009	8,869	9,620	18,489	9,500	10,107	19,607
<b>All schools</b>	<b>18,354</b>	<b>19,559</b>	<b>37,913</b>	<b>25,174</b>	<b>28,135</b>	<b>53,309</b>	<b>25,413</b>	<b>28,329</b>	<b>53,742</b>
<b>Victoria</b>									
Government	8,583	10,366	18,949	14,741	16,675	31,416	12,262	14,561	26,823
Non-government	6,591	7,834	14,425	8,756	10,460	19,216	8,769	9,595	18,364
<b>All schools</b>	<b>15,174</b>	<b>18,200</b>	<b>33,374</b>	<b>23,497</b>	<b>27,135</b>	<b>50,632</b>	<b>21,031</b>	<b>24,156</b>	<b>45,187</b>
<b>Queensland</b>									
Government	7,767	8,690	16,457	11,606	12,658	24,264	10,115	11,244	21,359
Non-government	4,375	4,335	8,710	5,848	5,850	11,698	6,155	6,363	12,518
<b>All schools</b>	<b>12,142</b>	<b>13,025</b>	<b>25,167</b>	<b>17,454</b>	<b>18,508</b>	<b>35,962</b>	<b>16,270</b>	<b>17,607</b>	<b>33,877</b>
<b>South Australia</b>									
Government	4,446	4,718	9,164	5,718	5,758	11,476	3,348	3,768	7,166
Non-government	1,804	2,010	3,814	2,554	2,726	5,280	2,140	2,338	4,478
<b>All schools</b>	<b>6,250</b>	<b>6,728</b>	<b>12,978</b>	<b>8,272</b>	<b>8,484</b>	<b>16,756</b>	<b>5,488</b>	<b>6,106</b>	<b>11,594</b>
<b>Western Australia</b>									
Government	4,158	4,214	8,372	5,420	5,791	11,211	5,261	5,992	11,253
Non-government	1,821	1,987	3,808	2,589	2,869	5,458	2,770	3,270	6,040
<b>All schools</b>	<b>5,979</b>	<b>6,201</b>	<b>12,180</b>	<b>8,009</b>	<b>8,660</b>	<b>16,669</b>	<b>8,031</b>	<b>9,262</b>	<b>17,293</b>
<b>Tasmania</b>									
Government	814	935	1,749	1,475	1,536	3,011	1,236	1,357	2,593
Non-government	316	348	664	451	476	927	515	608	1,123
<b>All schools</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>1,283</b>	<b>2,413</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>2,012</b>	<b>3,938</b>	<b>1,751</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>3,716</b>
<b>Northern Territory</b>									
Government	304	351	655	636	604	1,240	421	402	823
Non-government	42	92	134	74	80	154	111	109	220
<b>All schools</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>1,394</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>1,043</b>
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>									
Government	1,117	1,148	2,265	1,634	1,606	3,240	1,469	1,471	2,940
Non-government	546	487	1,033	722	635	1,357	697	640	1,337
<b>All schools</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>3,298</b>	<b>2,356</b>	<b>2,241</b>	<b>4,597</b>	<b>2,166</b>	<b>2,111</b>	<b>4,277</b>
<b>Australia</b>									
Government	39,133	43,382	82,515	57,535	63,143	120,678	50,025	57,017	107,042
Non-government	21,905	23,692	45,597	29,863	32,716	62,579	30,657	33,030	63,687
<b>All schools</b>	<b>61,038</b>	<b>67,074</b>	<b>128,112</b>	<b>87,398</b>	<b>95,859</b>	<b>183,257</b>	<b>80,682</b>	<b>90,047</b>	<b>170,729</b>

Source: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1996 and earlier years

The potential towards volatility in data is evident from the year 12 figures in Table 30, as much as in the apparent retention rates in Table 29. Table 30 provides 'snapshot' views of the numbers of full-time year 12 students in Australia in years which correspond to each of the last three Census collections. In the five years from 1986 to 1991, the total number of full-time year 12 students virtually exploded, growing by over 43 per cent in only five years. In the following five years, the total fell by 6.8 per cent.

While any number of factors may have contributed to the fall in full-time year 12 numbers from 1991 to 1996, those which have gained a degree of acceptance in some jurisdictions include:

- the increased availability of part-time study options at senior secondary levels;
- the greater availability of non-school-based vocational programs through TAFE and other providers; and

- the increased availability of higher education places, with its direct impact on the number of students returning for a second attempt at year 12.

## 5.4 Vocational education in schools

Vocational education courses continued to provide senior secondary students with articulation into further education and industry training programs, with the focus on structured workplace learning developing further. The availability of dual accreditation for these courses made them attractive student choices, with credit transfer arrangements to TAFE courses increasingly available.

The continuing provision of training opportunities for teachers in all sectors helped ensure greater availability of vocationally-related courses for students. Programs were increasingly available to students attending schools outside the capital cities, with courses in rural and industrial centres

generally seeking to provide skills and experiences relevant to the employment potential in these areas.

The commitment of schools and systems to the provision of vocational education through 1996 saw expansion in the range of vocational education programs, strengthened partnerships with industry and with other VET providers, and a reinforcement of the importance of workplace learning. Central to the successful development of programs has been the active involvement of the non-school stakeholders, such as training advisory boards, Chambers of Commerce and TAFE colleges. The needs of industry are the focal point around which the development of courses proceeds.

At a national level, the July 1996 report of the MCEETYA Taskforce on the Implementation of the MAATS in Schools advised Ministers on the provision of accredited VET courses in schools. The report also advised how this training provision could contribute to the Commonwealth and State priorities with respect to the MAATS (subsequently New Apprenticeships). In particular, the report outlined:

- how the new Commonwealth policy could build on the principles underpinning the Australian Vocational Training System (AVTS), be developed in partnership with industry to meet the needs of enterprises and provide for a broader approach to training; and
- a proposal for the allocation of resources to support rapid expansion in the provision of accredited VET courses in schools and the strategic and targeted introduction of initiatives across Australia which would link these courses in schools with traineeships and apprenticeships.

In September 1996, the Ministerial Council of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) agreed to the allocation of \$20 million of VET funds in each of the next four calendar years for VET in schools. ANTA and the Commonwealth subsequently developed draft principles and guidelines for the allocation of funds, in consultation with the school and VET sectors in each State, ANTA executive officers and the MCEETYA Taskforce on the Implementation of the MAATS in Schools.

At the November 1996 meeting of the ANTA Ministerial Council, the principles and guidelines were endorsed. Ministers agreed to the development and delivery of programs which contribute to the expansion of vocational education in schools measured against set benchmarks. Priorities include the development of school-based apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements, support for innovative activities and activities that articulate with

apprenticeships and traineeships, and the consolidation of projects which have shown initial success. As agreement to these principles and guidelines was not concluded until late 1996, both 1997 and 1998 will be viewed as transition years for implementing this program.

## 5.5 Beyond senior secondary schooling

The goal of many young Australians, with the clear support of governments, education providers, families and other elements in society, is to satisfactorily complete year 12 studies before taking up post-schooling options. Table 31 presents a view of the range of options pursued by senior secondary students following the completion of their formal schooling. The table details the differences in destinations between students from the different schooling sectors and between genders. It also summarises changes in post-secondary destinations over a five-year period.

Information presented in Table 31 in respect of those who completed year 12 in 1995 and entered post-secondary ranks in 1996 indicates that:

- 66 per cent of this group of students went on to higher education or further training in 1996, a figure unchanged from a year earlier;
- 45 per cent of these students commenced studying at a higher education institution in 1996, an increase from 40 per cent in 1996, balanced by a similar decrease over the years from 26 per cent to 21 per cent entering a TAFE or technical college program;
- 78 per cent of year 12 leavers from non-government schools commenced further education and training in 1996 (81 per cent in 1996), compared with 59 per cent of the corresponding group from government schools (58 per cent in 1996); and
- within both government and non-government school leaver groups, male and female students were equally likely to take up options within higher education and training, although females were more likely than males to enter higher education and males were more likely than females to enter a TAFE/technical college program.

A comparison of the data from the two years presented in Table 31 gives an overview of some of the changes occurring for Australian school leavers from 1991 to 1996:

- the percentage of year 12 leavers commencing courses of higher education had grown from 42 per cent in 1991 to 45 per cent in 1996, while the percentage entering

TAFE/technical college courses grew from 19 per cent to 21 per cent in the same period;

- participation of year 12 leavers from non-government schools commencing higher education increased from 50 per cent to 60 per cent, with participation in TAFE/technical college courses unchanged at 18 per cent;
- 36 per cent of year 12 leavers from government schools commenced higher education courses in 1996, compared with 38 per cent in 1991, with participation in TAFE/technical college courses up from 20 to 23 per cent.

The completion of year 12 and commencement of a course of higher education is widely acknowledged as an indicator of the successful outcome of a program of schooling. Table 32 presents a positive view of the outcomes from schooling in Australia in the mid-1990s from that perspective.

From Table 32 it is evident, for example, that the number of students undertaking final year 12 assessment and then proceeding directly to courses of higher education grew in 1996. The growth to almost three per cent above 1995 levels continued a trend established over a number of years.

Of greater significance as a measure of the outcomes from Australian schooling has been a steady increase since 1993

in the proportion of year 12 students proceeding directly to higher education courses following the completion of their secondary schooling. This group grew from 35.8 per cent of those undertaking year 12 accreditation in 1992 to 43.9 per cent of those undertaking year 12 accreditation in 1995.

Indicative of further trends towards change in the composition of the student group moving directly from year 12 to higher education, and as a likely reflection of programs over a number of years supporting the education of girls, the percentage of female students among the school leaver commencers grew steadily from 1993 to 1996.

As a balance to these positive outcomes from schooling, the period 1993–96 saw a steady decline in the relative size of the group of school leavers within the overall number of undergraduate commencers. This suggests more than an increasing reliance of higher education providers on students other than immediate school leavers. As it occurred during a period when the actual number of students leaving school and entering directly into courses of higher education grew each year, there would appear to have been significant increases in the total number of higher education places available for undergraduate commencers.

**Table 31. Destination in 1991 and 1996 of students completing year 12 in 1990 and 1995, by school sector, by labour force status/type of tertiary institution attended (a), Australia, 1990 and 1995 (per cent)**

<i>Labour force status/tertiary institution in 1991 (b)</i>	<i>Completed year 12 in 1990</i>								
	<i>Government</i>			<i>Non-government</i>			<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Employed	25	24	24	*	20	18	22	23	23
Unemployed	11	11	11	*	*	*	9	10	10
Higher education institution	38	38	38	54	47	50	43	41	42
TAFE/technical college	22	18	20	22	*	18	22	17	19
Other	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Number of students</b>	<b>50,533</b>	<b>60,186</b>	<b>110,719</b>	<b>24,851</b>	<b>27,429</b>	<b>52,280</b>	<b>75,764</b>	<b>88,908</b>	<b>164,672</b>
<i>Labour force status/tertiary institution in 1996 (c)</i>	<i>Completed year 12 in 1995</i>								
	<i>Government</i>			<i>Non-government</i>			<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Employed	24	29	27	*	*	16	22	24	23
Unemployed	14	*	10	*	*	*	9	*	7
Higher education institution	31	40	36	59	61	60	42	47	45
TAFE/technical college	28	19	23	19	17	18	25	18	21
Other	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Number of students</b>	<b>48,500</b>	<b>55,600</b>	<b>104,100</b>	<b>30,600</b>	<b>31,400</b>	<b>62,000</b>	<b>79,100</b>	<b>86,900</b>	<b>166,000</b>

(a) Includes full-time and part-time study.

(b) As at May 1991.

(c) As at May 1996.

\* Estimate too small for most practical purposes (cut-off 5,312).

Source: ABS *Labour Force Survey* (unpublished data), 1996

**Table 32. Year 12 school leavers continuing on to higher education, key statistics, Australia, selected years, 1981–96**

Year	Males	Females	Persons	Annual growth rate	Females (a)	School leavers as a proportion of total undergraduate commencers (b)	School leavers as a proportion of year 12 enrolments in the preceding year (c)
						(per cent)	
1981	19,200	19,400	38,600	-2.3	50.3	36.3	43.4
1986	23,200	25,900	49,100	7.2	52.7	41.1	42.2
1991	32,300	40,100	72,400	1.0	55.4	43.1	42.7
1993	30,400	38,500	68,900	5.1	55.9	45.3	35.8
1994	31,255	39,853	71,108	3.2	56.0	42.7	38.0
1995	31,876	40,888	72,764	2.3	56.1	40.2	40.4
1996	32,582	42,344	74,926	3.0	56.5	38.7	43.9

(a) Proportion of school leaver undergraduate commencers who were female.

(b) Proportion of total undergraduate commencers who undertook year 12 accreditation the previous year.

(c) School leaver undergraduate commencers as a proportion of those who undertook year 12 accreditation the previous year.

Note: The year 12 school leaver information included in this table is based on data provided by accreditation authorities in each State and refers to those year 12 students who undertake programs of examination and/or assessment at the conclusion of year 12. Student numbers do not correlate directly with year 12 student numbers published by the ABS in *Schools, Australia*, or by MCEETYA in previous editions of this report.

Source: Commonwealth DEETYA

**Table 33. Year 12 school leavers continuing on to higher education, by gender and field of study, Australia, 1996**

Broad field of study	Males		Females		Persons	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Arts	5,401	16.6	13,864	32.7	19,265	25.7
Business	7,771	23.9	8,104	19.1	15,875	21.2
Education	1,186	3.6	4,279	10.1	5,465	7.3
Engineering	6,164	18.9	1,160	2.7	7,324	9.8
Health	1,736	5.3	5,538	13.1	7,274	9.7
Science	7,631	23.4	6,846	16.2	14,477	19.3
Other (a)	2,693	8.3	2,553	6.0	5,246	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,582</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42,344</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>74,926</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) 'Other' includes agriculture, animal husbandry, architecture, building, law, legal studies, veterinary science and non-award courses.

Note: The year 12 school leaver information included in this table is based on data provided by accreditation authorities in each State and refers to those year 12 students who undertake programs of examination and/or assessment at the conclusion of year 12. Student numbers do not correlate directly with year 12 student numbers published by the ABS in *Schools, Australia*, or by MCEETYA in previous editions of this report.

Source: Commonwealth DEETYA

Of the almost 75,000 school leavers commencing courses of higher education in 1996, the levels of enrolment in particular fields of study, summarised in Table 33, provide some indication of the relative importance placed on those areas of study by students and the tertiary institutions at which they enrol. Collectively, the three most popular fields of study (arts, business and science) enrolled a total of 66.2 per cent of school leavers commencing higher education in 1996.

Table 32 and Table 33 also make it clear that far more females than males commenced courses of higher education in 1996, with female students comprising 56.5 per cent of

the total group. Female students represented a somewhat smaller 52.6 per cent of full-time year 12 students in Australian schools in 1995.

More importantly than the actual number of female students commencing higher education courses, gender appears to have a key role in helping determine the area of study undertaken, with the direct relationship that will often have with future career paths. From Table 33, for example, it is evident that the most popular area of study for commencing female students was arts, with almost one-third of total female students enrolled. At the same time, arts was only the fourth most popular area for male students, with 16.6



**Table 34. Destination in 1996 of school leavers aged 15–19 years who attended school full-time in 1995, by labour force status/type of tertiary institution attended, by State (per cent)**

<i>Labour force status/tertiary institution in 1996</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>ACT</i>	<i>Australia</i>
Employed	27	26	28	*	28	*	*	*	26
Unemployed	11	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10
Higher education	31	39	31	26	29	*	*	*	32
TAFE	27	22	23	*	31	*	*	*	25
Other	*	*	*	*	3	*	*	*	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Number of students	76,439	61,469	44,454	14,780	25,990	6,184	836	3,915	234,067

\* Estimate too small for most practical purposes.

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey (unpublished data), 1996

per cent of male students. Males were relatively more highly represented in business, science and particularly engineering, historically a strongly male option.

A comparison of information provided in Table 33 with its 1993 equivalent reveals that:

- the number of female students commencing higher education courses increased by 9.9 per cent from 1993 to 1996, compared with a 7.2 per cent increase in male student numbers;
- female students comprised 56.5 per cent of those school leavers commencing higher education courses in 1996, compared with 55.9 per cent in 1993; and
- for both male and female students, arts, business and 'other' courses attracted a larger percentage of students in 1996 than in 1993, with education, engineering and health each attracting relatively fewer students.

The limited size of many of the student cohorts included in the data reported in Table 34 prevents their meaningful representation. The data which are presented, however, allow some commentary on a national basis, including comparisons with the year 12 leavers reported in Table 31. They also permit limited comparison of school leaver destination by State, including the following conclusions:

- 26 per cent of all school leavers aged 15 to 19 were in employment, although only 23 per cent of the year 12 leavers were employed;
- the overall school leaver unemployment level of ten per cent was significantly higher than the seven per cent rate for year 12 leavers;
- the low percentage of total school leavers moving into courses of higher education reflects the position of year 12 as a prerequisite for most such courses; and

- commencing a course at a TAFE/technical college was a more frequently chosen option among those who had not completed year 12 than among those who had done so.

In comparing school leaver destinations by State, the limited range of information provided in that section of Table 34 indicates that:

- the percentage of total school leaver cohorts entering employment did not differ significantly between the States for which data were recorded;
- participation in TAFE courses was highest in New South Wales and Western Australia, the latter showing a marked increase in this area from 1995; and
- the rate of entry of school leavers into higher education courses was significantly higher in Victoria than for any of the other States reported.

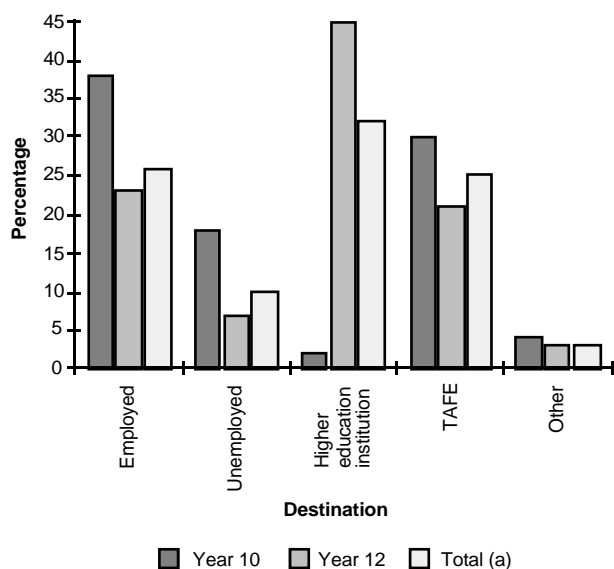
**Table 35. Number of persons who completed school in 1995 and attended TAFE in 1996**

<i>Year 12</i>	Government	24,200
	Non-government	11,300
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35,500</b>
<i>Year 10 or 11</i>	Government	12,300
	Non-government	5,100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17,400</b>
<i>Total (a)</i>	Government	38,400
	Non-government	17,400
	<b>Total</b>	<b>55,800</b>

(a) Includes a small number of persons completing other than years 10, 11 or 12.

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey (unpublished data)

**Figure 13. Destination of 1995 school leavers, by labour force status/type of tertiary institution attended in 1996 and by level of schooling completed 1995, Australia (per cent)**



(a) Figures include persons whose highest year of schooling was other than year 10 or year 12.

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey (unpublished data), 1996

Some 166,000 of the students who left school at the end of 1995 had completed year 12. This group comprised almost 71 per cent of the total school leaver group, compared with something over 64 per cent a year earlier. At the same time, the group of early school leavers who completed only year 10 before leaving school had fallen to 15.7 per cent of school leavers, compared with 17.4 per cent of school leavers the previous year.

Figure 13 indicates that the post-secondary destinations of year 10 leavers and year 12 leavers and their options for employment were markedly different. For example, persons completing only year 10 were 65 per cent more likely to have been direct entrants to the labour force and were far more than twice as likely to be unemployed as persons who had completed year 12. They were also more strongly represented among those undertaking TAFE courses than those who had completed year 12.

Table 35 helps to identify those leaving school at the end of 1995 to enrol at TAFE. It can readily be seen that nearly two-thirds of that group had completed year 12 in 1995. It is also evident that almost 70 per cent of the school leavers enrolling at TAFE in 1996 had attended government schools.