

5 Effective schools and quality schooling

5.1 Involvement of young people in schooling

While this section of the report seeks particularly to provide a perspective on matters relating to the outcomes of schooling, especially for senior secondary students, it also examines some of the initiatives aimed towards helping improve those outcomes. It includes a statistical and textual overview of aspects of senior secondary schooling and discusses factors relating to post-secondary education.

Participation in schooling by young people is a key goal of Australian education providers and age participation rates provide an effective means of measuring the overall state of community involvement in schooling. Comparisons of

participation rates over time also tend to reflect the changes occurring in society, as changing community expectations, changes to the job market in respect of young people, or the availability of places in higher education courses all impact directly on participation rates.

A comparison between States is also possible using data on participation rates from the various jurisdictions. Such comparisons, of course, are more likely to be valid if they take into account the range of State-specific factors, referred to in the table's footnotes, which contribute to the different participation rates in the States.

Table 5A presents an overview of the participation in schooling of those age groups who are, for the most part, above the age of compulsory attendance. From this table it is immediately clear that the participation rate for older students is less than for younger students, particularly after age 17. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data suggests 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 5A. Age participation rates (a), full-time students aged 15–19, by gender, all schools, by State, 1997 (per cent of relevant population)

	<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>
Males									
15	91.8	93.8	87.7	91.3	90.6	96.5	80.3	105.8	91.5
16	75.6	83.8	75.5	79.4	71.0	71.9	63.4	97.7	77.5
17	60.6	67.7	46.7	50.1	37.9	52.5	36.8	88.3	56.7
18	14.6	16.5	7.1	7.6	5.9	12.4	10.7	29.2	12.4
19	2.0	2.4	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.3	3.1	3.7	2.0
15–19	49.4	52.3	44.3	46.3	41.7	48.8	38.8	61.8	48.2
Females									
15	93.3	95.8	91.6	93.4	92.2	98.2	80.1	105.1	93.7
16	80.1	88.9	82.0	83.5	77.4	76.6	73.3	99.3	82.8
17	69.6	79.6	48.7	55.3	42.0	59.0	42.2	88.8	64.0
18	13.5	14.8	6.2	6.3	5.9	10.9	11.2	24.9	11.3
19	1.6	1.9	1.3	1.6	1.7	2.0	2.7	2.8	1.7
15–19	51.9	56.0	46.3	48.5	44.0	51.2	42.9	61.0	50.8
Persons									
15	92.5	94.8	89.6	92.3	91.4	97.3	80.2	105.5	92.6
16	77.8	86.3	78.6	81.4	74.1	74.3	68.1	98.5	80.1
17	65.0	73.5	47.7	52.6	39.9	55.7	39.4	88.5	60.2
18	14.1	15.7	6.7	7.0	5.9	11.7	10.9	27.0	11.9
19	1.8	2.2	1.4	1.7	1.7	2.2	2.9	3.2	1.8
15–19	50.6	54.1	45.3	47.4	42.8	50.0	40.7	61.4	49.5

(a) 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*, 1997.

Table 5B. Age participation rates (a), full-time students aged 15–19, by gender, all schools, Australia, 1994–1997 (per cent of relevant population)

Age	1994			1995			1996			1997		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
15	91.0	93.5	92.2	91.9	93.7	92.8	91.0	93.3	92.1	91.5	93.7	92.6
16	77.4	82.6	80.0	75.7	82.1	78.8	77.0	83.0	79.9	77.5	82.8	80.1
17	56.5	63.0	59.7	55.2	62.0	58.5	55.3	63.1	59.1	56.7	64.0	60.2
18	13.8	11.9	12.9	13.0	11.6	12.3	12.4	10.9	11.7	12.4	11.3	11.9
19	2.7	2.1	2.4	2.3	1.9	2.1	2.2	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.7	1.8
15–19	47.5	49.7	48.6	47.1	49.7	48.4	47.5	50.2	48.8	48.2	50.8	49.5

(a) 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.

Sources: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1997 and earlier years.

Table 5C. Progression rates, years 8–12, full-time students, by sector, Australia, 1993–94 to 1996–97 (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
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
1996–97	99.7	99.8	99.7	96.1	100.8	97.7	85.1	91.5	87.3	82.9	92.0	86.1

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.

Sources: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1997 and earlier publications

The Table also makes clear the gender differences evident in the participation rates for these students of middle/upper secondary age. In States other than the Australian Capital Territory, the participation rates for male students aged 15, 16 or 17 are lower than the comparable rates for female students. This gender difference is generally greater 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 are greater than for females.

To provide a view over time of young people's involvement in schooling, Table 5B 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 strong trend over the four years. The participation rates across the whole 15–19 age group were slightly higher in 1997 for both males and females than they had been in 1996. For those aged 19, the participation rates for both genders were lower than in 1996.

Another view of the capacity of schools to continue to meet community expectations and demands, in the context of the current social and economic climate, may be gained from the degree to which students remain at school from year to year through the years of secondary schooling, known as the progression rate.

The information in Table 5C provides a basic perspective, indicating that, at a national level 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;
- progression rates at each year level were higher for non-government schools than for government schools; and
- there was no clear trend in changes to participation rates across the years from 1993–94 to 1996–97.

Table 5D. Apparent retention rates (a) of secondary school students to year 12, by gender, category of school (and non-government affiliation), by State, selected years (per cent)

State	School category	1991			1996			1997		
		M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
New South Wales	Government	51.1	61.8	56.3	56.9	67.8	62.3	56.0	67.1	61.4
	Catholic	63.3	69.0	66.1	69.7	78.3	73.9	69.2	80.3	74.5
	Independent	91.9	101.3	96.6	91.6	96.0	93.8	89.5	98.9	94.1
	Total non-govt	70.7	77.3	74.0	76.1	83.5	79.7	75.1	85.8	80.2
	All schools	56.6	66.4	61.4	62.9	72.7	67.7	62.0	72.8	67.2
Victoria	Government	63.6	79.5	71.1	61.2	78.3	69.4	61.3	78.9	69.8
	Catholic	65.0	78.4	71.9	71.4	81.1	76.4	72.8	82.9	77.9
	Independent	99.2	113.4	106.4	97.2	106.2	101.5	102.8	108.2	105.5
	Total non-govt	77.9	90.8	84.4	81.6	90.2	85.9	84.3	92.2	88.2
	All schools	66.3	83.5	75.7	68.3	82.7	75.3	69.3	83.8	76.3
Queensland	Government	70.6	80.4	75.4	64.2	75.4	69.7	65.2	76.7	70.8
	Catholic	78.6	86.4	82.3	80.6	87.2	83.7	81.8	89.3	85.3
	Independent	97.7	108.3	102.8	95.4	109.5	102.3	99.7	108.3	103.9
	Total non-govt	85.8	94.6	90.0	86.9	97.1	91.8	89.3	97.6	93.3
	All schools	75.1	84.4	79.6	71.3	82.0	76.5	72.9	83.2	77.9
South Australia	Government	72.3	81.9	76.8	54.1	66.3	59.9	52.3	63.1	57.5
	Catholic	89.6	100.4	95.1	74.6	84.4	79.4	70.3	87.1	78.8
	Independent	107.9	118.0	112.9	94.5	105.2	99.8	96.6	104.2	100.3
	Total non-govt	97.8	107.9	102.8	83.1	93.6	88.3	82.2	94.5	88.3
	All schools	78.7	88.9	83.5	62.6	74.6	68.4	61.3	72.9	66.9
Western Australia	Government	63.2	71.2	67.1	60.6	72.5	66.4	59.8	72.6	66.0
	Catholic	67.1	77.2	72.2	64.8	78.7	71.8	67.7	83.0	75.3
	Independent	91.6	101.7	96.4	87.7	99.6	93.7	94.3	103.0	98.5
	Total non-govt	76.3	85.8	81.0	73.9	87.1	80.5	78.4	90.8	84.5
	All schools	66.9	75.5	71.1	64.6	77.0	70.7	65.3	78.1	71.6
Tasmania	Government	47.8	57.0	52.1	47.1	53.4	50.2	52.7	60.2	56.2
	Catholic	49.0	47.1	47.9	51.6	65.3	58.7	57.1	65.6	61.5
	Independent	61.7	64.5	63.0	61.2	68.1	64.5	59.0	79.3	69.0
	Total non-govt	54.9	53.7	54.3	55.9	66.4	61.1	58.0	71.4	64.7
	All schools	49.3	56.1	52.6	49.4	56.9	53.1	54.1	63.4	58.6
Northern Territory	Government	60.6	61.3	60.9	40.8	42.0	41.3	37.4	50.3	43.4
	Catholic	30.4	38.3	34.5	40.6	45.3	42.9	26.2	36.0	31.8
	Independent	73.5	57.1	66.1	37.6	36.2	36.9	41.1	45.3	43.3
	Total non-govt	37.9	41.0	39.5	39.1	41.0	40.0	34.1	40.5	37.6
	All schools	57.1	57.9	57.5	40.4	41.7	41.0	36.7	47.8	42.0
Australian Capital Territory	Government	114.5	114.8	114.6	110.5	106.1	108.2	111.2	102.1	106.6
	Catholic	67.2	64.4	65.9	62.5	62.8	62.6	64.1	71.1	67.5
	Independent	77.0	72.9	75.0	80.6	82.9	81.7	77.2	79.4	78.3
	Total non-govt	70.0	66.8	68.4	67.5	68.3	67.9	67.8	73.6	70.6
	All schools	95.8	95.4	95.6	91.7	90.8	91.3	92.5	90.7	91.6
Australia	Government	61.5	72.7	66.9	59.8	72.0	65.8	59.6	72.1	65.7
	Catholic	67.6	76.0	71.9	71.1	79.9	75.4	71.6	82.2	76.8
	Independent	95.5	106.3	100.8	92.3	101.3	96.7	94.9	102.9	98.8
	Total non-govt	77.2	86.0	81.6	78.9	87.7	83.2	80.1	89.7	84.8
	All schools	66.1	76.7	71.3	65.9	77.0	71.3	66.2	77.8	71.8

(a) Apparent retention rates show the percentage of 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, migration 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.

Sources: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1997 and earlier years

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, in particular 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 suggests that schools have generally maintained a capacity to retain senior students. For example, during the period 1993–1997, while the number of full-time year 12 students fell nationally by more than 14,000 or 7.6 per cent, the rate of retention of year 11 students into year 12 showed relative stability. Across all schools, the year 11 to year 12 progression rates were higher for 1996–97 than

for 1995–96, which itself had increased compared with 1994–95.

A common measure of the degree to which schools maintain student involvement is provided by apparent retention rates of secondary students to year 12 (see Table 5D). 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 particularly useful as indicators of trends over time or within sectors, but their use decrees that allowance be made for the external factors which impact on them and the compounding nature of the calculation which magnifies their volatility. These factors include students repeating a year of education, migration, transfer between government and non-government schools and other net changes to the school population.

Table 5E. Number of full-time year 12 students by gender and category of school, by State, selected years

<i>State/Category</i>	<i>1991</i>			<i>1996</i>			<i>1997</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>
New South Wales									
Government	16,305	18,515	34,820	15,913	18,222	34,135	15,791	18,017	33,808
Non-government	8,869	9,620	18,489	9,500	10,107	19,607	9,554	10,170	19,724
All schools	25,174	28,135	53,309	25,413	28,329	53,742	25,345	28,187	53,532
Victoria									
Government	14,741	16,675	31,416	12,262	14,561	26,823	12,231	14,534	26,765
Non-government	8,756	10,460	19,216	8,769	9,595	18,364	8,939	9,782	18,721
All schools	23,497	27,135	50,632	21,031	24,156	45,187	21,170	24,316	45,486
Queensland									
Government	11,606	12,658	24,264	10,115	11,244	21,359	10,184	11,377	21,561
Non-government	5,848	5,850	11,698	6,155	6,363	12,518	6,541	6,574	13,115
All schools	17,454	18,508	35,962	16,270	17,607	33,877	16,725	17,951	34,676
South Australia									
Government	5,718	5,758	11,476	3,348	3,768	7,116	3,322	3,738	7,060
Non-government	2,554	2,726	5,280	2,140	2,338	4,478	2,236	2,517	4,753
All schools	8,272	8,484	16,756	5,488	6,106	11,594	5,558	6,255	11,813
Western Australia									
Government	5,420	5,791	11,211	5,261	5,992	11,253	5,327	6,136	11,463
Non-government	2,589	2,869	5,458	2,770	3,270	6,040	2,967	3,349	6,316
All schools	8,009	8,660	16,669	8,031	9,262	17,293	8,294	9,485	17,779
Tasmania									
Government	1,475	1,536	3,011	1,236	1,357	2,593	1,389	1,432	2,821
Non-government	451	476	927	515	608	1,123	549	680	1,229
All schools	1,926	2,012	3,938	1,751	1,965	3,716	1,938	2,112	4,050
Northern Territory									
Government	636	604	1,240	421	402	823	414	482	896
Total non-govt	74	80	154	111	109	220	94	136	230
All schools	710	684	1,394	532	511	1,043	508	618	1,126
Australian Capital Territory									
Government	1,634	1,606	3,240	1,469	1,471	2,940	1,496	1,438	2,934
Non-government	722	635	1,357	697	640	1,337	689	687	1,376
All schools	2,356	2,241	4,597	2,166	2,111	4,227	2,185	2,125	4,310
Australia									
Government	57,535	63,143	120,678	50,025	57,017	107,042	50,154	57,154	107,308
Non-government	29,863	32,716	62,579	30,657	33,030	63,687	31,569	33,895	65,464
All schools	87,398	95,859	183,257	80,682	90,047	170,729	81,723	91,049	172,772

Sources: ABS Cat. No. 4221.0, *Schools, Australia*, 1997 and earlier years

Table 5E provides “snapshot” views of the numbers of full-time year 12 students in Australia in years which correspond to each of the last two Australian Population Census collections and 1997, as the year being reported. In contrast to the five years from 1986 to 1991, when the total number of full-time year 12 students grew by over 43 per cent in five years, in the period from 1991 to 1996 year 12 student numbers fell by 6.8 per cent, or almost 1.4 per cent per annum. That decline was reversed from 1996 to 1997, when the number of full-time year 12 students grew by 2,043 students, or 1.2 per cent.

5.2 Improving the quality and effectiveness of schooling

Review of government service provision

In late 1993, the Prime Minister, State Premiers and Territory Chief Ministers, who make up the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), established a review of the effectiveness and efficiency of government-funded—and largely government-provided—services in the areas of school education, vocational education and training, health, law and community services. The review published its first report in December 1995.

That report gathered together information from all States on student learning outcomes, equity objectives, the social and other objectives of schooling and the relative efficiency of school systems and published performance indicators which included:

- the numbers of schools, students and staff in each school system, expenditure levels and the value of capital stock;
- age participation rates, apparent retention rates, year 11 and 12 subject enrolments and the composition of the student population;
- the destinations of school leavers;
- student learning outcomes, with reports on testing in literacy, numeracy and other learning areas, including available data for equity target groups; and
- average expenditure per student and student-staff ratios, disaggregated where available by school size, socioeconomic status and location.

The 1995 report concluded that there was no nationally comparable data on student achievement, though it noted

that available data showed that outcomes for Indigenous students were below those for the total student population. There was a perceived need to assemble comparable data on achievement based on existing State testing programs and providing information on outcomes by target groups. The report supported the idea of using existing basic skills tests to obtain data on student achievement.

The second report, published in 1996, covered similar ground, adding outcomes information from such sources as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study. It drew on ACER’s Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth in reporting that literacy levels among government and non-government school students had remained static since 1975. During 1996 and 1997, the steering committee oversaw work to develop equivalences between State basic skills testing programs to obtain comparable student outcome data. A third report is due in early 1998.

Targeting quality

Underpinning Australian schooling is the belief that young people should have access to 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. They each help those who participate in schooling to strive for excellence, approached either through improvements in the quality of the inputs to the process of schooling, or through improving the quality of the interactions which comprise the process of education.

Activities and programs to monitor and report on the quality of schooling outcomes were in place in all States and schooling sectors in 1997. Reporting from Western Australia’s independent sector exemplified the focus on quality assurance in non-government schools. Principals and school councils understood that ongoing improvement is necessary if their students are to receive the best possible education and their schools are to remain competitive. Many administrators attended quality assurance workshops and were trained in best practice processes. Review systems were becoming established to assist leaders in schools to manage and improve their performance through self-appraisal and self-development programs.

The detailed reporting of quality assurance activities in 1997 was undertaken primarily in respect of the country’s government schools. In New South Wales, for example, government schools took part in a new process of evaluation and reporting to the community. Each school carried out a self-evaluation that focussed on improvement, emphasised the importance of student learning and achievement

and involved the whole school community. These self evaluations utilised data from the Board of Studies as well as raw data and a series of performance indicators provided by the Department of Education and Training. The data and indicators were derived from the results of external examinations and included value added information.

Following this self-evaluation, a school report was written, giving parents and the community an open, comprehensive report on the activities and performance of their school, including access at a public meeting to further enquire about aspects of the report. Targets identified in the report were then included in the school's plans for the year ahead, with progress towards their achievement to be monitored.

Victoria's Continuous School Improvement project continued to promote a performance culture of high reliability, quality assurance and improvement at the school level. Key elements of the strategy for 1997 were:

- identifying the performance levels of schools by establishing appropriate indicators of performance and developing an information system of selected indicators;
- targeting the delivery of support services to schools to promote high performance in schools and ultimately improve student learning outcomes; and
- implementing a pilot Quality Management in Schools project using the Australian Quality Council's quality principles and practices to improve management and learning outcomes in schools.

Significant evidence of progress in the State's government schools towards the goal of quality, by way of the Quality Management in Schools project included:

- a joint Department–Australian Quality Council Steering Committee established to oversee the project;
- proposals developed for processes to support under-performing schools;
- 28 schools selected to participate in the project;
- introductory workshops held for principals and assistant principals of participating schools; and
- Internet discussion sites between schools participating in the project established.

A new School Planning and Accountability Framework was introduced in Queensland government schools, starting with pilot "Leading Schools" and "Volunteer Schools". The framework includes three-year strategic plans and annual reports to school communities. Student achievement data

and staff and parent opinion survey data are to be incorporated into these reports. Work also commenced on "Like Schools" and "Value Adding" projects, which will assist schools to benchmark their performance.

For the second year, schools and preschools in South Australia used the Quality Assurance Framework in their annual planning, analysis and accountability cycle. Schools reported to their communities and then to the Department of Education, Training and Employment on a number of key areas, including parent opinion. The Parent Opinion Survey conducted by government schools indicated that parents placed a uniformly high value on six designated aspects of the local State schools: quality of teaching, general environment, learning outcomes, customer responsiveness, reporting and general satisfaction.

In Western Australia, the quality of student outcomes was monitored at the system level by way of the Monitoring Standards in Education (MSE) cyclic testing in years 3, 7 and 10 and by the analysis of other outcomes data at years 10 and 12. MSE provided the senior executive with most of its outcomes-based performance information; was used to evaluate the effectiveness of central initiatives; and supported schools through the production of materials which allowed schools to monitor the performance of their students and to make Statewide comparisons.

The core of ensuring quality education in schools was self-evaluation and performance improvement, based on each school using performance information for its planning purposes. External assessment also considered how comprehensively the school had engaged in self-monitoring, how thoroughly performance information has been analysed, how systematically alternative strategies have been canvassed and how successfully plans for improvement have been implemented.

The Management Review Framework (MRF) provided a consistent approach to the monitoring and review of system-level services. Information gathered through the MRF enabled senior management to determine the most appropriate means, including outsourcing, of delivering services to schools. During 1996–1997, sections evaluated using the MRF included Swimming and Water Safety, Curriculum Materials and Information Services and the School of Instrumental Music.

Quality assurance was a focus of the Assisted School Self Review (ASSR) process in Tasmanian government schools. Aimed at improving student learning outcomes, the process was begun in some schools at the start of 1997, with a

further 100 schools to commence in 1998 and all schools to participate by the start of 1999. ASSR involved all people associated with a school working together to assess what was being done well, what needed to improve and future aims for the school. These aims were then defined clearly and included in a Partnership Agreement between the Government, the school, its parents, and members of the local community, which set down the things that the school community thinks are important and established targets for the improved outcomes that the school wanted to achieve.

The Northern Territory Department of Education is evaluating all of its major programs through a three-year program evaluation cycle which commenced in 1997. All schools were required to have an action plan for school improvement. In 1998, they will be required to provide an annual report to the Department, incorporating information on progress towards achieving these action plan objectives, as well as information on major curriculum initiatives, special projects and highlights of student achievement. School councils will also use this process to report to the school community.

Assessment of student achievement outcomes in the Northern Territory is through its system-wide assessment programs in years 5, 7 and 10. Quality is assured in year 12 through use of the South Australian senior secondary certification. Outcomes profiles have been developed for all major learning areas in the compulsory years and increasingly will be used to assess the quality of teaching programs.

The Australian Capital Territory's School Development process promotes ongoing school improvement and future planning. This quality assurance process involves the whole school community in setting strategic directions for the school; occurs on a five-year cyclic basis; and involves assessment of school effectiveness by the whole school community, including students, parents and teachers. In 1997, nineteen schools took part in school development.

School leadership and governance

The calibre of school leaders has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and the quality of student learning outcomes. Several States reported efforts in areas such as professional development which targeted this particular sector of the educational community.

In New South Wales, the Department of Education and Training developed its School Leadership Strategy in consultation with the teaching profession, to provide relevant, targeted and comprehensive professional

development for aspiring and current school leaders and current school executives at all phases of their careers. Major priorities for NSW Catholic schools in 1997 also included leadership, with programs designed to develop and assist principals, religious education coordinators and system administrative staff.

To assist the government schooling sector in Queensland, the Centre for Leadership Excellence expanded its provision of training for school leaders and published a Standards Framework for self-assessment of leadership skills and training needs. A Centre of Teaching Excellence was established to develop, among other things, a standards framework for teachers.

Victoria reported on the increasing effectiveness of school councils as central to the improved quality of school governance. Achievements in 1997 in this regard included:

- establishment of a Statewide School Council Reference Group;
- the use of \$54,000 to support nine regional networks;
- a training program for school councillors;
- a review of the information needs of schools councillors;
- the identification of best practice in community participation in schools; and
- a code of practice for school councils.

Other States, including Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, also reported on the efforts being made to develop and improve local school management, with greater school autonomy and self-management the goals.

In Queensland, a model of school-based management commenced in 1997. A total of 104 pilot schools were given greater flexibility for local decision making, new accountability mechanisms, professional development on team building and participatory management, and substantial advice on how to improve student learning outcomes. A further 300 schools were added to the program in late 1997.

In the wake of growing support among school councils and principals in South Australian government schools for the broad concept of site-based management, a trial program involving six schools on the Fleurieu Peninsula was instituted. These trials encompassed most aspects of the schools' financial and resource management other than the appointment of staff.

A number of schools in South Australia also participated in utilities trials, some engaging in energy-only management trials, with others engaging in a trial of local management of all utilities. The schools which managed their energy

resources reported an overall saving of ten per cent, with some individual sites reporting 38 per cent savings as a result of behavioural change. The system role was to administer the budgets across the relevant agencies and to support schools with training and development.

All Western Australian government schools were responsible for significant aspects of educational planning and administration, financial management, performance reporting and curriculum delivery. They were required to establish annual priorities through planning processes that reflected government and systemic policies, local community needs and the identification of student outcomes that required particular attention. Schools were accountable for their performance in improving student outcomes and managing resources through district offices to the Director-General, Minister and government.

The Department of Education in the Northern Territory recognised that local initiative, consultation and participation were essential if schools were to meet the specific and special needs of the local community and achieve excellence. The *School Management Handbook*, produced in 1997 for distribution in 1998, was designed as a general reference on departmental policies and procedures for the whole school community and as a key source of information and guidance to school councils and administrators responsible for local school management. The *Policies and Procedures Manual* codifies policies and practices for schools in the Catholic sector.

In 1997, extended school-based management (SBM) was implemented in Australian Capital Territory government schools, leading to greater local control and flexibility. Extended SBM aims to improve educational outcomes for students by increasing the range of decision making and resource management at the school level. In implementing SBM, schools managed around \$23m in operating costs for functions such as cleaning, grounds maintenance, minor maintenance, minor new works, utilities, furniture and equipment. The SBM training program was a major focus of professional development in government schools in 1997.

Community responsiveness and parental involvement

The participation of parents and other community members in decision making, as well as the responsiveness of schools to the communities they serve were reported nationally as being increasingly encouraged and as key elements of the planning, management and monitoring activities which had their focus in Australian schools.

Notable examples of these close ties between schools and communities were reported from all States.

Parental participation in decision making in New South Wales government schools was encouraged, with a number of structures, including the Teaching and Learning Reference Group and the Resources Reference Group, enhancing parent participation in policy advice.

Also in New South Wales, meetings were held with the Federation of School Communities Organisation (FOSCO) and State Parents and Citizens executive committees and some \$214,000 was spent on training and development for parents and community members.

In the Queensland government sector, a Parent and Student Opinion Survey was trialled and a discussion paper on school councils was issued, followed by legislation to enable school councils to be established to set and monitor the strategic direction of schools.

In South Australian government schools, the Education Act 1972, as amended, empowers the Minister to establish school councils which must comprise a majority of parents of students attending the school, or parents of students enrolled but not yet attending the school.

In addition, the Department of Education, Training and Employment ensures that parents are represented, where appropriate, on reviews of policies and programs conducted by the Department and has provided for parent representation, through the school council, on the selection panel for principals.

The Education Department in Western Australia sought to further improve its customer focus through examining the services being delivered and further analysing the 1996 client survey data to determine customers' needs and expectations. Schools were encouraged to work individually on improving communication, seeking information about community perceptions of their services and the preparation of customer service charters.

The independent sector in Western Australia reported the continuation of strong parental involvement, with many parents assisting by participating in school-community committees and school councils and providing support in libraries and primary classrooms, with VET and LOTE offering particular opportunities for participation.

Schools with Indigenous links were reported to be encouraging a closer relationship with parents and the Indigenous community to assist with the general and social education of their students, resulting, in some cases, in improved student access and participation.

The Northern Territory encouraged parent/family involvement through the provision of grants to support appropriate school-based initiatives and by providing support for a Parents as Teachers program which trained and encouraged parents of children aged 0–3 to plan for their role in assisting their children to become successful learners.

There is also strong community involvement in all Catholic schools in the Northern Territory as parents and families take an active part in decision making through school boards and other consultative arrangements.

The strong community involvement reported from the government sector of the Australian Capital Territory included consultation and participation at a number of levels and included the participation of principals in a number of consultative forums; the regular meeting of the education unions with the department and their representation in other consultative areas; the provision of advice to the Minister by the broadly representational Ministerial Advisory Council on Government Schooling (MACGS); and the School Board Forum which enabled chairs of school boards to meet the Chief Executive.

The non-government sector in the Australian Capital Territory was involved on the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Non-government Schooling, which provided advice to the Minister on a number of educational issues, with the main priorities for 1997 being sources of funding and school registration.

Improving the environment in which children learn

A wide range of initiatives and programs operated in Australian schools in 1997 aimed at improving the learning of young Australians through improving the environments in which they learn, or increasing their capacity to achieve their full potential through their interaction with those environments. Initiatives in areas such as student welfare, drug education, behaviour management, new strategies for increasing school attendance, pastoral care and anti-racism education all had a focus on improving the quality of the links between students and their learning environments.

In New South Wales child protection policy and procedures were a major focus of Department activity during 1997. The Department revised the procedures for the reporting of suspected sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect of students and improper conduct of a sexual nature by staff against students. During 1997, the Government of New South Wales also placed a great deal of importance on the provision of effective drug education.

Another New South Wales initiative was the Computers in Schools initiative. Under this strategy a total of 25,000 computers were made available to schools in 1997 under the first phase of the strategy which addressed equity issues.

Another initiative was Victoria's cross-sectoral Counter-Racism Project, established early in 1997 to assist schools and communities in addressing issues of race and racism. A draft policy statement was distributed for consultation during 1997, counter-racism curriculum material and teaching strategies were prepared as a companion to the Curriculum and Standards Framework and Course Advice, and the Project Team developed a range of outputs to assist teachers and schools.

As part of a move towards expanding the horizons of students and improving their access to broader sources of learning, Queensland government schools began to be connected to the Internet and to a departmental intranet, as part of the Connect-Ed project, with all schools to be connected by the end of 1998.

Reporting from South Australia referred to developments in the theoretical underpinning of government schooling, as well as to initiatives which tackled current areas of concern in respect of students.

After an initial period of community consultation, South Australia's declaration for education and care to 2010, *Foundations for the Future* was launched in September. The document will underpin the directions to be taken by schooling in the government sector in the next decade.

The government sector's comprehensive Policy on School Discipline provided a basis upon which school communities established effective behaviour codes, to provide the framework for a safe, orderly, productive and success-oriented learning environment at school.

A Child Abuse Prevention Task Group was established to review child protection measures and plan additional strategies to ensure that children have safe learning environments in all education sites.

There was also a focus on inter-agency collaboration in developing supportive school environments.

Schools were involved in using the *No Fear Kit* to address violence in schools.

In addressing the needs of specific target groups, the Aboriginal Education Plan 1997–2001 was released for consultation and materials were produced to support transition practices for students with disabilities.

Major improvements in the learning environment of Western Australian students were reported in areas allied to

the introduction or upgrading of technology and its application. Examples reported included:

- the extension of the Education Department's electronic wide-area network EdNet to more than 200 schools, to help streamline administrative tasks but also, in the longer term, to enable the electronic delivery of a wide range of curriculum and management services;
- a review of the present EdNet strategy to determine how best to continue to meet school needs and project goals within the new district structure;
- the continuation of support for the national Education Network Australia (EdNA) initiative and participation in the development of standards in publication and data classification schemas for the World Wide Web;
- the announcement of a three-year Computers in Classrooms program, involving expenditure of \$20.6m over the three years beginning 1996–1997 on a range of initiatives, including the establishment of technology focus schools, the development of innovative classroom strategies, the promotion of use of the Internet and further progress towards the provision of satellite communications technology in schools;
- a draft strategic plan for using information technology to improve teaching, learning and management was made available for consultation in the latter part of 1997; and
- in the State's Catholic sector, a permanent reference group for technology was established to monitor major technology issues and their possible impact on Catholic schools, as well as to assist with the implementation of other recommendations approved by the Catholic Education Commission and to address associated resourcing and equity issues.

Reporting from Catholic schools noted, amongst other initiatives, the emphasis placed by schools on pastoral care, with the development of various strategies to actively involve students, including such organisational structures as 'Buddy' systems. Schools have developed policies in the areas of equity and bullying and they involve students in social outreach activities.

5.3 Key Competencies

At a national level, the Key Competencies Programme concluded its national trialling in June 1997. A summary report of findings, *Key Competencies: for Work, Education and Life*, describing what has been learnt from piloting the Mayer Key Competencies, was endorsed by MCEETYA.

An interactive multi-media professional development package for teachers and trainers to nationally support implementation of key competencies was developed with Commonwealth funding, and launched by the Commonwealth Minister. Around 10,000 copies were distributed among schools, tertiary, vocational education and training sectors and business and industry.

Reporting from individual States indicated that progress towards the alignment of teaching and assessment practices with key competencies was occurring in all jurisdictions. In working towards that national goal, however, States and sectors within them were following a range of approaches with varying rates of progress evident.

New South Wales

In 1997, the Government accepted advice that there should be no central reporting on students' performance on key competencies. It was considered best to focus on the key competencies within the context of the curriculum and not develop a separate system-wide approach to assessing and reporting on key competencies.

Key competencies were acknowledged as providing a useful language for describing attributes that are valued by teachers, trainers, students and employers. These attributes have been variously described and used in school reports, references, job advertisements and recruitment practices. Reporting that provides additional information on student achievement in those areas was supported.

Although central reporting on key competency achievement was not supported in 1997, it was accepted that schools should have the option of providing reports. Reporting at school level was acknowledged as providing better opportunities for including contextually rich evidence of students' achievements of key competencies.

To assist schools, the Board of Studies, the Department of School Education and TAFE undertook to provide support to schools and colleges issuing their students with reports on achievements of those aspects of the Higher School Certificate that are consistent with key competencies.

Victoria

Investigations relating to the introduction of key competencies have been under way for some years in Victoria. A project, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) and conducted by the Victorian Board of Studies, to identify opportunities to develop key competencies in the Victorian Certificate of Education

(VCE) and the Curriculum Standards Framework (CSF), was concluded in June 1996. There were two phases of the project—an audit of curriculum documents and an investigation of classroom practices with respect to teaching and assessing the key competencies.

The audit process for the VCE, conducted in 1994, found that between 85 per cent and 95 per cent of VCE students would be engaged in learning activities related to all the key competencies.

For students working at levels 6 and 7 of the CSF, competencies are implicit in the curriculum framework.

Information was gathered from schools about how the key competencies are taught. It was evident that development of the key competencies was largely dependent on how the VCE and CSF are taught. To help further inform the process of incorporating key competencies, information was also sought from a variety of employers about their perceptions of the value of key competencies. Meanwhile, as an example of the positive steps being undertaken in Victoria, curriculum support materials were produced to develop the key competencies in the VCE and levels 6 and 7 of the CSF.

Table 5F. Representations of key competencies, VCE, Victoria, 1994

<i>Competency</i>	<i>Representation of Competencies (%)</i>
Collecting, analysing and organising information	100
Communicating information and ideas	100
Planning and organising activities	100
Working with others	71
Mathematical ideas and techniques	54
Solving problems	87
Using technology	33

Source: Department of Education, Victoria

Table 5G. Representations of key competencies, CSF levels 6 and 7, Victoria, 1994

<i>Competency</i>	<i>Representation of Competencies (%)</i>
Collecting, analysing and organising information	97
Communicating information and ideas	94
Planning and organising activities	94
Working with others	44
Mathematical ideas and techniques	47
Solving problems	91
Using technology	35

Source: Department of Education, Victoria

Queensland

Working at a cross-sector level, the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies completed the sixth and final stage of a DEETYA-funded research project into the feasibility of integrating the assessment and reporting of students' performance in the key competencies into the present system of assessment and reporting of students' achievements in senior secondary education.

Stage six of the Key Competencies Integration Project involved a series of three conferences, at which State panellists and district panel chairs explored the issue of independent learning in the teaching of Board subjects. Previous stages of the project had shown that, while examples of independent learning (performance level 3 of the key competencies) could be found in student work, such examples were not commonplace. Participants at the conferences discussed the place of independent learning in their subjects and devised activities that would provide students with the opportunity to develop independent learning skills.

A major outcome of this stage of the project has been a resource package of materials, now publicly available, that encourage independent learning. The project has also shown that it is possible, with relatively modest resources, to derive, with defensible and testable levels of reliability, performance levels in at least five of the key competencies from existing assessments in Board subjects.

South Australia

The key competencies are one component of the Ready, Set, Go school-to-work program operating in South Australia. The State Government is providing \$1.3m over the 1997–1999 period for a phased implementation plan for the key competencies in all government schools, for students in years R–12. The implementation plan has three stages including an information strategy, professional development for teachers and whole school and local community application of the key competencies. The *Key Competencies* CD-ROM won a national award as the Best Training Multimedia Production and was a finalist in the International Design Network Awards held in Hong Kong.

Catholic schools have all received information and professional development materials following the key competencies school trials. The assessment of those trials

and its application to Catholic schools in South Australia found that:

- at the R-7 level, implementation is school-based. Key competencies as a means of reporting is being explored and piloted by one school;
- implementation is also school-based at the year 8 to year 10 level. In those year levels schools are incorporating the key competencies into curriculum delivery and using the resource material developed from the school trials, although at this point there has been no system formalisation apart from encouragement to schools to incorporate into their curriculum opportunities for students to engage with the key competencies; and
- at years 11–12, all frameworks and syllabuses being developed, or redeveloped, now incorporate specific opportunities for students to demonstrate appropriate key competencies as an integral component of their learning within that curriculum area.

Many independent schools in South Australia reported that they have examined the findings of the Key Competencies Pilot Program. An examination of the explicit nature of key competencies has been undertaken by some schools. Assessment and reporting of key competencies continue to be an area of concern.

Western Australia

In 1995, the State's education sectors cooperated in trialling various aspects of the key competencies developed by the Mayer Committee to determine whether they could be used to improve teaching and learning. In 1997, schools in the government sector examined students' opportunities to gain the competencies, means of assessment and reporting, attitudes of post-secondary institutions and employers, and linkages with the world of work.

While recognising that the key competencies provided a useful curriculum design for some VET programs, are used as the key "organisers" for skills lists for on-the-job training and have been used by some schools as a focus for reporting, the Catholic sector has taken no formal position in relation to them.

Tasmania

In 1997, the Department of Education, Community and Cultural Development assisted the Tasmanian Secondary Assessment Board to continue the review of all Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) syllabuses. These syllabuses

comprise all the subjects studied in Tasmanian schools from year 9 to year 12. Part of this review was the revision of the assessment criteria so that they include, where appropriate, the key competencies. Because the TCE assessment criteria already contain a similar set of competencies, the inclusion of the key competencies is not proving to be a difficult process.

Northern Territory

Key competencies have been integrated into the relevant Northern Territory Board of Studies Stage 1 (year 11) accredited courses offered by schools in each of the schooling sectors. Charts have been prepared to inform students, parents and community of the competencies it is expected students will gain through studies in each course. The Common Curriculum Statement for the compulsory years underwent a revision which included giving emphasis to the key competencies across the curriculum.

Australian Capital Territory

A key competencies pilot project was conducted at an ACT government high school. The project involved teachers exploring how the key competencies could be better integrated into the curriculum. As part of the project, teachers assessed students' skills in using the key competencies.

The second stage of the project, which is planned for 1998, will involve integrating the key competencies into curriculum delivery and tracking student progress. A series of workshops is planned for each of the key learning areas. Staff will also address how the competencies can be incorporated into reports to parents and year 10 references.

This project is being monitored closely by the Department of Education and Training, with the aim of applying the process to other high schools.

5.4 Initiatives in the post-compulsory years

Many of the initiatives which took place in education in Australia in 1997 had impacts across the full range of educational years, while others were targeted at students of particular ages, or at particular stages of their schooling. A key focus, covered in detail elsewhere in this Report, were the major efforts made by the States to improve the links between school and work, necessitating the commitment of funding and the implementation of programs. Additional

teachers were trained, more schools made significant efforts to address the vocational education and training agenda and students gained access to a broader range of options in the post-compulsory years.

A key input to these developments was made through the 1996–97 Budget, in which the Commonwealth announced a substantial package of funding measures for school-to-work activities, worth \$187m over four years. This total was made up of funding from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and funds earmarked for the School to Work Programme, the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation and the Jobs Pathway Programme. Further details are provided elsewhere in this Report.

Some States also reported major efforts related to the review of their year 12 certificate programs which have served as both a goal for students to strive for and as a springboard to post-schooling options.

In New South Wales, the launch of the Government White Paper *Securing Their Future* was the result of the most comprehensive, open and consultative review of that State's Higher School Certificate (HSC) in its 35 year history. The aims of the review were to create a stronger, simpler and fairer HSC, with enhanced intellectual rigour and curriculum quality; to ensure HSC marks reflect standards achieved; to improve community understanding of achievement reporting; and to enhance the chances for more equitable educational outcomes.

In Victoria, the Minister for Education announced a review of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and appointed a Review Committee with terms of reference which included student workload and stress levels; the effectiveness of VCE links with higher education and training; the level of challenge and rigour in VCE studies; assessment appropriateness; the number and range of courses offered; and the perceived status of the VCE. The Committee reported late in 1997, with implementation of its recommendations to be phased in from 2000.

The Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia, in collaboration with the schooling sector and other stakeholders, managed the development of a new Curriculum and Assessment Policy, as well as a policy recognising vocational education and training outcomes within the South Australian Certificate of Education.

Developments also occurred in other aspects of schooling for students of post-compulsory years.

In Queensland, there was a continued broadening of the curriculum choices for students completing their post-

secondary schooling, with an emphasis on curriculum diversity while ensuring that students have the opportunity to acquire a balance of knowledge and skills. The cyclical program of syllabus review continued to subject a number of senior secondary syllabuses to rigorous evaluation and, if necessary, to major revision.

Western Australia removed "satisfactory performance", which was linked to achieving an average grade of C or better in six full-time subjects or equivalent, as a requirement for tertiary entrance, leading to a significant number of students taking one fewer subject at year 12 and lower enrolments in some subjects.

In Tasmania, a review of open learning delivery led to the establishment of the Tasmanian Open Learning Service with the delivery of all distance education and open learning to post-compulsory students made the responsibility of the eight secondary colleges, leading to a large increase in the number of post-compulsory students taking Tasmanian Certificate of Education subjects through open learning.

The Northern Territory reported on the expansion of programs in vocational education in senior secondary schools and colleges as the key post-compulsory initiative in all sectors, with the specific issue of planning and implementing New Apprenticeships in schools being a cooperative cross-sector initiative.

5.5 Beyond senior secondary schooling

During 1997, the Commonwealth announced funding for the investigation and development of alternative methods of entry to university, with the aim to explore methodologies better able to match students and courses and fairer to all talented students than the use of Tertiary Entrance Ranks.

For schools and education authorities alike, one important outcome of schooling is the success of students in gaining entry to further education or to employment. Many, in fact, regard the level of student success in accessing those desirable post-secondary options as perhaps the key indicator of the quality of the education being provided.

Although not universally reported by the States in major detail, a range of views were presented of the post-secondary destinations of their students. New South Wales, for example, summarised the 1997 destinations of HSC candidates in government schools, compared with those of their 1996 counterparts (Table 5H). While 61 per cent of HSC graduates from government schools were reported to have applied for a university place, 33 per cent actually

Table 5H. Post-school destinations of HSC graduates from government schools, New South Wales

	1996	1997
University	31.6%	32.7%
Training	36.2%	36.9%
Employed Full-Time	8.6%	9.9%
Employed Part-Time	12.9%	10.5%
Repeated	1.5%	1.6%
Other*	9.2%	8.4%
	100%	100%

* "Other" includes those who are unemployed, or not in the labour force and not in education or training.

Source: Department of Education and Training, NSW

Table 5I. Destinations in 1997 of school leavers, government schools, 1996, Victoria, (per cent)

Higher Education	TAFE	Employment	Seeking employment	Unknown
42.7	24.8	8.4	3.3	20.8

Source: Victorian Department of Education, *Office of Review*, 1997

enrolled in university in 1997—a slight increase from the previous year. The proportion of students employed full-time and not in education or training also increased in the twelve months. The percentage of HSC graduates who did not enter the workforce or enrol in further training decreased in comparison with the previous year.

Victoria reported 60.5 per cent of all students who completed year 12 in 1996 proceeding to further education and training in 1997. Table 5I indicates that 67.5 per cent of students completing year 12 in a government school in 1996 went on to further study in 1997, in either university or training through TAFE.

Tasmania also reported the post-secondary destinations of school leavers from the Catholic sector in some detail, making clear the major differences between the destination of those who leave school early and those who remain until senior secondary years. Thus, year 10 school leavers generally left to employment, while the options for those leaving school later were far broader and included proceeding to university courses, moving on to training in a TAFE environment, taking up a much broader range of employment opportunities, or even taking up overseas studentships.

Queensland reported on the post-secondary intentions of students, rather than the actual post-school destinations of students. A 1997 survey of senior secondary school studies of 1,027 year 11 and year 12 students found that:

- 75 per cent of students studying social science subjects intended to go to university; and
- of the group not studying social science subjects, approximately 40 per cent indicated they intended to go to university, 20 per cent that they intended to start work, and 20 per cent that they intended to go to TAFE.

While the data is of indicative value only, it does suggest important differences in the intentions of students studying different senior subjects.

Reporting from two further States addressed the post-secondary aspirations of students from independent schools. While Western Australia reported that universities remained the most common post-secondary destinations for students from this group, signs of an increase in the level of enrolment in TAFE and vocational education and training courses offered by private providers were also noted. The trend towards a greater diversity of post-schooling options was also reported from South Australia, where the integration of vocational education allowed broadened student options in the post-compulsory school years and assisted students' understanding of the labour market.

A national perspective

Table 5J summarises the range of options pursued by Australian students in 1997 following the completion of their formal schooling the previous year. 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 5J in respect of those who completed year 12 in 1996 and entered post-secondary ranks in 1997 indicates that:

- 61 per cent of this group of students went on to higher education or further training in 1997;
- 41 per cent of these students commenced studying at a higher education institution, while 20 per cent entered a TAFE or technical college program in 1997;
- 74 per cent of year 12 leavers from non-government schools commenced further education and training in 1997, compared with 54 per cent of the corresponding group from government schools;
- within both government and non-government school leaver groups, females were more likely than males to enter higher education and males were more likely than females to enter a TAFE/technical college program; and

• 24 per cent of those completing year 12 in 1996 moved

directly into employment in 1997.

Table 5J. Destination in 1992 and 1997 of students aged 15 to 19 years completing year 12 in 1991 and 1996, by school sector, by labour force status/type of tertiary institution attended (a), Australia, (per cent)

<i>Labour force status/tertiary institution in 1992 (b)</i>	Completed year 12 in 1991								
	<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	26	21	24	*	*	14	23	18	21
Unemployed	15	12	14	*	*	*	12	9	11
Higher education institution	29	36	33	47	60	54	33	44	39
TAFE/technical college	28	21	24	29	*	21	28	18	23
Other	*	10	6	*	*	*	*	9	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students	66,449	61,655	128,104	24,719	30,415	55,134	92,577	92,584	185,161
<i>Labour force status/tertiary institution in 1997 (c)</i>	Completed year 12 in 1996								
	<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	31	24	27	17	*	17	26	22	24
Unemployed	*	*	8	*	*	*	9	*	7
Higher education institution	23	40	32	52	65	59	34	47	41
TAFE/technical college	24	21	22	20	*	15	23	17	20
Other	11	9	5	*	*	*	9	8	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students	48,400	63,028	111,428	27,895	26,643	54,537	76,295	89,671	165,965

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

(b) Numbers as at May 1992.

(c) Numbers as at May 1997.

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

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey (unpublished data), 1997

A comparison of the data from the two years presented in Table 5J gives an overview of some of the changes occurring for Australian school leavers who completed year 12 in 1991 and then moved on to their post-secondary options and for their counterparts five years later:

- the percentage of year 12 leavers commencing courses of higher education had grown from 39 per cent in 1992 to 41 per cent in 1997, while the percentage entering TAFE/technical college courses had fallen from 23 per cent to 20 per cent in the same period;
- 32 per cent of year 12 leavers from government schools commenced higher education courses in 1997, compared with 33 per cent in 1992, while participation in TAFE/technical college courses dropped from 24 to 22 per cent;
- participation of year 12 leavers from non-government schools commencing higher education increased from 54 per cent in 1992 to 59 per cent in 1997, although the rate of participation by this group in TAFE/technical

college courses had dropped from 21 per cent to 15 per cent; and

- the proportion of year 12 school leavers moving directly from school into employment increased from 21 per cent to 24 per cent from 1992 to 1997.

From Table 5K it is evident that the number of students undertaking final year 12 assessment in 1996 and then proceeding directly to courses of higher education in 1997 had fallen by 1,317 persons, or 1.8 per cent in comparison to the figure a year earlier. The decrease is linked to an overall 0.9 per cent decrease in the number of full-time year 12 students from 1995 to 1996. The decrease in the number of year 12 students in government schools, from which a smaller percentage of leavers proceed to higher education, was of the order of 2.0 per cent from 1995 to 1996.

Further changes evident from 1996 to 1997 in the move of year 12 school leavers to higher education included:

- a stalling of the continuing growth in the proportion of school leaver undergraduates who were female, although females still significantly outnumbered males; and

- the proportion of total undergraduate commencers who had undertaken year 12 accreditation the previous year fell in 1997, as it had done for several years.

Table 5K. Year 12 school leavers continuing on to higher education, key statistics, Australia, selected years, 1981–97

<i>Total year 12 school leavers continuing on to higher education</i>				<i>Annual growth rate</i>	<i>Females (a)</i>	<i>School leavers as a proportion of total undergraduate commencers (b)</i>	<i>School leavers as a proportion of year 12 enrolments in the preceding year (c)</i>
<i>Year</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>			<i>(per cent)</i>	
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	43.5
1997	32,083	41,526	73,609	-1.8	56.4	37.5	43.1

(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 5L. Year 12 school leavers continuing on to higher education, by gender and field of study, Australia, 1997

<i>Broad field of study (a)</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>		<i>Persons</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Arts	5,966	18.6	14,971	36.1	20,937	28.4
Business	8,564	26.7	8,925	21.5	17,489	23.8
Education	1,351	4.2	4,828	11.6	6,179	8.4
Engineering	6,520	20.3	1,235	3.0	7,755	10.5
Health	1,681	5.2	5,488	13.2	7,169	9.7
Science	8,682	27.1	7,360	17.7	16,042	21.8
Other (b)	2,959	9.2	3,236	7.8	6,195	8.4
Total	32,083	100.0	41,526	100.0	73,609	100.0

(a) The 1997 data shown have been compiled in a different way from data for previous years. The 1997 data take into account the coding of combined courses into two fields of study. As a consequence, the totals for some broad fields of study show larger increases than would be the case if data for only one field were to be counted. Counting both combined courses means that the data in the total may be less than the sum of the data aggregated.

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

Source: Commonwealth DEETYA

Of the 73,609 higher education course commencements by school leavers in 1997, the level of enrolment in particular fields of study, summarised in Table 5L, presents a clear perspective of the relative importance placed on those areas of study by students and the tertiary institutions at which they enrol.

The three most popular fields of study were:

- Arts, which enrolled 28.4 per cent of all year 12 school leavers who commenced higher education courses in 1997;

- Business, which enrolled 23.8 per cent of school-leaver undergraduate commencers; and

- Science, which enrolled 21.8 per cent of this group.

Collectively, these three fields of study enrolled 74 per cent of school leavers who commenced tertiary study in 1997. It must be noted that comparisons with data presented in 1996 cannot be made due to the use of a different compilation method in 1997.

Table 5L and Table 5K also make it clear that far more females than males commenced courses of higher education in 1997, with female students comprising 56.4 per cent of

the total group. Female students represented a somewhat smaller 52.7 per cent of full-time year 12 students in Australian schools in 1996.

Table 5M. Destination in 1997 of school leavers aged 15–19 years who attended school full-time in 1996, by labour force status/ type of tertiary institution attended in 1997, by State (per cent)

<i>Labour force status/tertiary institution in 1997</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	28	23	32	36	34	*	*	*	30
Unemployed	9	14	14	*	*	*	*	*	11
Higher education	29	34	24	*	*	*	*	*	27
TAFE	20	23	21	*	32	*	*	*	21
Other	11	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

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

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey (unpublished data), 1997

Gender also appears to have a key role in helping determine the area of study undertaken, with the direct relationship that it will often have on future career paths. For example, it is evident that the most popular area of study for commencing female students was arts, with 36.1 per cent of total enrolments by females, but only 18.6 per cent of total enrolments by males. Females were also proportionally more highly represented in health and education and proportionally less well represented in science, business and engineering.

The limited size of many of the student cohorts included in the data reported in Table 5M prevents their meaningful representation. The data which is presented, however, allows some commentary on a national basis, including comparisons with the year 12 leavers reported in Table 5J. It also permits limited comparison of school leaver destination by State.

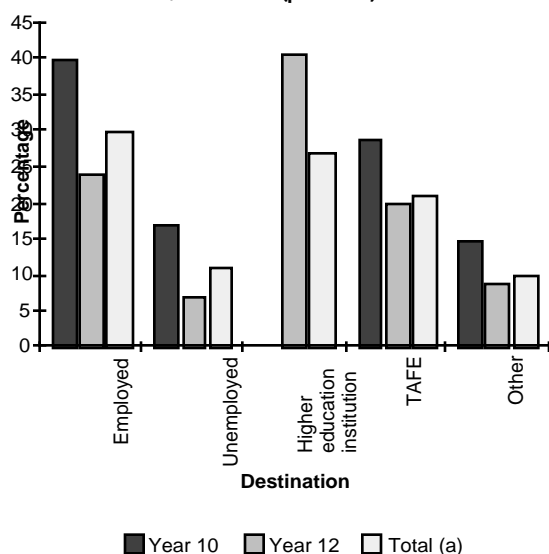
Considering the national data included in Table 5M along with that included in Table 5J in respect of year 12 finishers, allows the following conclusions:

- the overall school leaver unemployment level of 11 per cent (ten per cent in 1996) was higher than the seven per cent rate for year 12 leavers in both 1996 and 1997;
- the low percentage of total school leavers moving into courses of higher education compared with year 12 finishers reflects the position of year 12 as a pre-requisite for most such courses; and
- commencing a course at a TAFE/technical college was an option chosen only marginally less by those who had completed year 12 than among all school leavers.

Almost 166,000 of the students aged 15 to 19 who left school at the end of 1996 had completed year 12. This group comprised 66.0 per cent of the total number who left school at the end of 1996, compared with 70.9 per cent a year earlier. At the same time, the nearly 45,000 early school leavers, who completed only year 10 before leaving school, represented 17.8 per cent of school leavers, compared with 15.7 per cent of school leavers a year earlier.

Figure 5A 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 over 65 per cent more likely to have been direct entrants to the labour force and were 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.

Figure 5A. Destination of 1996 school leavers in 1997, by labour force status/type of tertiary institution attended in 1997, by level of schooling completed in 1996, Australia (per cent)



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

Source: ABS (unpublished data)

Table 5N. Persons who completed school in 1996 and attended TAFE in 1997, by highest year of secondary school completed, by school sector

Year 12	Government	24,646
	Non-government	7,972
	Total	32,618
Year 10 and 11	Government	14,799
	Non-government	3,754
	Total	18,553
Total (a)	Government	39,445
	Non-government	11,726
	Total	51,171

(a) 2,846 students who completed a year other than year 10, 11 or 12 in 1996 and attended TAFE in 1997 have not been included in this table.

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey (unpublished data)

Table 5N indicates that 63.7 per cent of those enrolling at TAFE in 1997 had completed year 12 in 1996, with students from non-government schools more likely to have completed year 12 (68.0 per cent) than students from government schools (62.5 per cent). Overall, 77.1 per cent of school leavers enrolling at TAFE in 1997 had attended government schools, as had 79.7 per cent of those enrolling at TAFE after years 10 or 11.

5.6 Other issues and areas of focus

The new Commonwealth Quality Outcomes Programme arose from the broadbanding of five former programs which separately addressed professional development, civics and citizenship education, quality schooling, curriculum development and projects of national significance. Included among the projects undertaken in 1996–97 were:

- the Impact of Outcomes-Based Education on Teachers' Work project, undertaken by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association, which examined the implications of introducing outcomes-based education on teachers' work and identified ways in which outcomes-based approaches can contribute positively to that work and to classroom learning. Papers were commissioned to address the main issues, identified by teacher survey, and a workshop was held to critique the outcomes;
- South Australia and Tasmania jointly developed and trialled sets of assessment activities each of which formed a *Quality Assessment Task* (QAT). The process of developing and implementing QATs enables teachers to enhance their professional judgements about students' achievements and to benchmark their assessments through a moderation process involving other teachers;
- the Boys and Gender Inclusive Approaches to Literacy project, carried out by James Cook University, detailed the results of research on boys and literacy outlined in the earlier report *Accommodating Boys through a Gender Inclusive Approach to Literacy*. The project culminated in the publication of professional development materials to help teachers work more effectively and inclusively in literacy and of a book of teaching units that translate theory into alternative approaches to literacy practices; and
- the Commonwealth began publishing *School Insight*, a newsletter for government and non-government schools, having a focus on the Commonwealth's priorities for schools, including literacy and numeracy issues, reporting to parents, school-to-work transition and recent research on school education. *School Insight* is intended to be the key mechanism for the Commonwealth to disseminate information to the schools sector, parents and the wider school community about government priorities for schools.

At the State level, New South Wales stressed the benefits of local research as an effective spur for bringing about improvements in educational programs and practices in

government sector schools. Specifically, research into effective training and development practices was seen to underscore the importance of school-based programs that encouraged workplace learning and team approaches, and as a means to improving student learning.

A wide range of successful programs were offered in New South Wales by the Department of Education and Training which reflected these principles. The programs included:

- School-focussed Training and Development: A Coordinator's Guide;
- Induction for Beginning Teachers;
- the Team Leadership Course;
- the Principal and School Development Program; and
- Key Group for parent/school teams.

Other programs in place in New South Wales, such as the Certificate of Teaching and Learning and Certificate of Administrative Leadership, provided credit transfer to further tertiary study.

Local research and program development was also reported from Western Australia. Following the completion in 1996 of a two-year pilot project by the Catholic Education Office primary curriculum and teaching team, an implementation plan was developed which saw a further 19 schools begin to introduce collaborative learning.

Some independent schools in Western Australia took leadership roles in the introduction of on-line technology, middle schooling, values education and pastoral care, exploring a range of innovative approaches towards improved programs for children.