Table of Contents

Volume 3

Appendix 2(A) 2
The Perceptions of Youth of the Education System
- Motive Market Research

Appendix 2(B) 47
Participation by Disadvantaged Young People in Post-Compulsory Education and Training
- Australian Council for Educational Research

Appendix 2(C) 161
Dislocated Transitions: Access and Participation for Disadvantaged Young People
- John Freeland, University of Sydney

Appendix 2(D) 225
Post-Compulsory Education and Training: Participation of Young People with Disabilities
An Issues Paper
- Dr R J Andrews
Appendix 2(A)

The Perceptions of Youth of the Education System

Qualitative Research Report
July 1991

Prepared for: AEC Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training
Prepared by: Motive Market Research
8 Waterloo Crescent
St Kilda Vic. 3182
Tel: (03) 534 1420
Fax: (03) 525 3789
# Contents

Introduction  
Objectives  
Method  
Executive Summary  
Detailed Findings  
1. Profile of Youth  
   1.1 Achievers  
   1.2 The Workers  
   1.3 The Rebels  
   1.4 The "Second Chancers"  
   1.5 The Trainees  
   1.6 The Strugglers  
2. The Purposes of School  
3. Attitudes and Behaviour Affecting School Attendance  
4. The School Experience  
   4.1 The Relationship  
   4.2 Stimulation  
   4.3 Rules  
5. The Structure of Schools  
   5.1 The Influence of Teachers  
   5.2 Teacher Typologies  
   5.2.1 Pure Gold  
   5.2.2 Power Players  
   5.2.3 Wrong Job  
   5.3 Relationships in Senior School  
   5.4 The Curriculum  
   5.4.1 The Need for Context  
   5.4.2 Competency  
   5.5 Counselling  
   5.6 Careers Advice and Information  
   5.7 Senior College
6. The Examination System
   6.1 Overview 37
   6.2 VCE 39

7. Additional Sources of Post Compulsory Education and Training
   7.1 Preparing for Life Courses 41
   7.2 Alternative School-based Programmes 41
   7.3 Apprenticeships/Trade Schools/Services 42
   7.4 TAFE 43
   7.5 University 45

8. Financial Support 45
Introduction

The Committee for Post Compulsory Education and Training was appointed in late 1990 for the specific task of reporting to the Australian Education Council and to Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training on the future development of post compulsory education and training in Australia, with particular reference to those young people who have left school and are not participating in a formal education or training program. Having considered submissions and the points of view of a large number of organisations and individuals, the Committee commissioned Motive Market Research Pty Ltd to conduct a research study gathering input from young people themselves.

The research was commissioned amongst people aged 15–19 years to gain an understanding of their attitudes toward, and perceptions of, the education system. The specific focus of the study was to:

- Assess the value young people place on PCE&T... where it fits in their priorities and perceptions.
- Determine what they understand about PCE&T
  - What it embodies?
  - What it means?
  - What the benefits might be?
- Evaluate the factors which currently inhibit them from taking more advantage of PCE&T (including their own attitudes, beliefs and perceptions; institutional barriers and constraints; social and economic inhibitors).
- Isolate and explore those factors which have, to date, helped individuals take advantage of PCE&T, eg. information, networks of contacts, persuasive arguments, parents/friends.

Objectives

The objectives which guided the conduct of the research were:

- To generally explore young people's attitudes to school.
  Is it merely tolerated or is it a stimulating experience?
  Is it too restrictive or are the boundaries appropriate?
  Does the idea of a senior college appeal, where young people in Year 10, 11 and 12 or in Year 11 and 12 are given more freedom to be themselves?
• To assess the attitudes of young people toward post compulsory education and training.

What is seen as being gained by staying on at school after school leaving age?
What is seen as being gained by staying on until Year 12?
Is there value in going on to University?
What is the value gained?
Is there value in entering other sorts of training schemes?
Is there a relationship between staying on in the education system and gaining a desired outcome (job)?

• To gain an understanding of how students in years 10, 11 and 12 within the education system and those who have recently left the system view the education they are receiving/have received.

Is the curriculum perceived as relevant?
Is it perceived as equipping young people to get a job?
Should the curriculum include more content on “life skills”, eg what is involved in renting a flat, how you find your way around government agencies?
Is sufficient careers advice available?
Are they familiar with options for further training and education?

• To identify the reasons why young people decide to leave the education system.

Do they leave because the school situation is negative?
Do they leave because they feel they have as much opportunity to get a job as they would if they had stayed on in the education system for a longer period of time?
Do they perceive that they have adequate training for the sort of employment they are seeking?
Are they informed about the options available to them?
What role do their parents play?
Are they being encouraged to leave school by their parents?
Do they suffer economic constraints?
Is the desire to be financially independent a prime motivator to leave the education system early?
What do they know about Austudy and the benefits available under Austudy?
If they qualified for Austudy would this encourage them to stay at school longer?

What do they see as their future, what will their lives be like in five or ten years time?
• To evaluate the reasons which help young people to continue in the education system after school leaving age.

What do they perceive they are gaining by staying on at school?

Do young people who continue on in the education system have an outcome towards which they are aiming?

Do they have a vocation in mind?

Had they ever thought about leaving school early?

What influenced them to stay on?

What are their parents' attitudes toward them continuing in the education system or undertaking training?

Have they been encouraged to stay?

Who else has influenced them in their decision to stay at school/undertake training?

What are their closest friends currently doing?

Are they still at school?

• To gather the opinions of young people in respect of the options available to them in further education and training on leaving school.

What are apprenticeships or industry training perceived to offer?

What is a University course perceived to offer?

What is the TAFE system perceived to offer?

Is a course within the TAFE system a viable option to going to University/college?

If not, why not?

Would a student consider a course within the TAFE system an option if they did not gain entrance to University?

• To explore how young people decide what they are going to do on leaving school.

Do they have a definite path in mind or are they open-minded when they leave school?

Who do they talk to about their future options?

Who is most influential in setting them on a course?

How extensive is their evaluation of the options available to them?

If they go on to further education is it with a specific vocation in mind?

Do they have enough information to make informed decisions about what jobs they will finally find satisfactory and what type of further education and training they will need to undertake to satisfy the job pre-requisites?
Method

The target market for the research was young people between the ages of 15 and 19 years and comprising two major segments:
- those still at school
- those who had left school having completed less than Year 12.

The objectives set for the study were broad ranging and required an in-depth understanding of the attitudes of young people toward the education system. They also required that an understanding be reached of how young people are, and can be, influenced to continue their education past compulsory school leaving age.

Given the exploratory nature of the objectives, a qualitative research approach was adopted, utilising group discussions and a small number of depth interviews.

The four depth interviews were included in order to provide a "case study" background to the attitudes of young people to their education. They allowed us to explore in more detail the home and upbringing of the young person and its potential influence on attitudes to education than was possible in the group discussion.

The group discussion provided a creative forum in which young people's attitudes to school, toward getting jobs and to further education and training was explored.

Twelve group discussions were conducted, recruited to conform to the following criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At school</th>
<th>Melbourne</th>
<th>Sydney</th>
<th>Adelaide</th>
<th>Ballarat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approaching minimum school leaving age and intending to leave school at earliest opportunity; from predominantly lower socio-economic households.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in Year 11 and 12 who have no intention of going on to further training or education and no firm employment plans.</td>
<td>M (mid)</td>
<td>F (lower socio-econ)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in Year 11 and 12 who intend to go on to Higher Education</td>
<td>M &amp; F</td>
<td>M &amp; F</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left School</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who recently left school at the minimum age and have not taken up any further education and training:</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— employed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who recently left school at the minimum age and have not taken up any further education and training:</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>— unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who recently left school at the minimum age and have taken up further training or education (e.g. apprenticeships, TAFE, private college)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who stayed on at school at least a year after minimum school leaving age but did not complete Year 12 and who have not taken up further education and training</td>
<td>M &amp; F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who stayed on at school at least a year after minimum school leaving age but did not complete Year 12 and who have taken up further education and training</td>
<td>M &amp; F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Group</td>
<td>M &amp; F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people of Aboriginal descent, still at school and without clear plans for their future</td>
<td>M &amp; F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the group discussions four "case-study" depth interviews were conducted with young people fulfilling the following descriptions:

- Male, still at school and intending to leave at the end of 1991 with no plans at present to seek further training: Sydney.
- Female, still at school and to complete Year 12 at the end of 1991, with plans to continue on to Higher Education next year: Melbourne.
- Male, who left school at the minimum age and has taken up further education or training in an apprenticeship, TAFE college etc: Melbourne.
- Female, who left school at the minimum age and has not taken up any further education and training and is currently unemployed: Sydney.

The discussion sessions lasted approximately one and a half hours and the depth interviews lasted approximately three-quarters of an hour. All sessions were tape recorded.

The findings of the study as set out in this report are based on the observations and interpretations of the researchers together with an analysis of transcripts. The findings are essentially qualitative and must be interpreted as such.

Executive Summary

- Decisions as to educational choices, whether or not to continue within the educational system, are made at one of the most difficult and vulnerable times of life. Those in their later teenage years have lots of unchannelled energy but are unsure of themselves, of what they want and of their capabilities; they are emotionally immature but seeking relationships with members of the opposite sex; and they are struggling with the desire for freedom and the need to be adult while still financially dependent. Within the context of all that is happening to them personally, young people have to make decisions which will not only determine how they spend the remainder of their youth (in the education system or the workforce) but which will influence the type of work they seek for years to come. It is little wonder that some make this important decision by default.

- While there were considerable individual differences in the young people we spoke to, the vast majority were aware of the importance of school and education. Educational qualifications are acknowledged as the **pre-requisite for finding an effective and secure place in the workforce.** Indeed, young people clearly see the role of the education system as providing them with skills which will aid their
There is little interest in knowledge for knowledge's sake. The subjects in the secondary school curriculum which are valued are:
- those which students felt had direct vocational relevance
- those providing general knowledge or life skills which would be useful on leaving school
- those which were pre-requisites for chosen tertiary or post-secondary courses.

However, while young people in general acknowledge the link between educational achievements and employment, secondary school appears to be a satisfactory experience only for the more motivated achievers. Many of the remainder lose their way and fail to either complete secondary school or to obtain entry into alternative education and training options. They fail to realise their potential, for a combination of reasons:
- They respond poorly to the pressure to perform, to concentrate and to do homework. This pressure may come from either parents or teachers. In many cases, students described how they couldn't or didn't know how to study. Lack of effective study habits results in students experiencing difficulty in coping with assignments and homework. Assignments are not handed in, the student gets into trouble and hence negative attitudes start to build.
- They respond poorly to discipline, feeling the need to rebel. Rebellion becomes destructive to learning. Some of these young people complain that they want to be treated as adults, not as children. For others, rebellion is their answer to failure to cope with schoolwork.
- They feel that what they are studying is irrelevant since they can find no context for it in their lives. Contexting of curricula is extremely important and should be a continuous process. If students have a real understanding of where a subject fits into their life, they will be more receptive to it, whatever it is.
- They possess poor basic skills (reading, writing, spelling, basic maths) and poor learning skills which exacerbate feelings of inadequacy.
- Peer group members tend to distract low achievers and each encourages the other; they affirm their mutual resolve to escape school as soon as is possible.
- Unstable family situations may leave students in emotional chaos which makes concentration on schoolwork impossible. Hence the student falls back; if they were struggling in the first place they may find that they are unable to make up the lost ground.
Inability to cope with schoolwork for any combination of the above reasons or because of low aptitude in respect of key subjects leads to a lowering of self-esteem and a desire to escape the system.

- Often, when students begin to feel a sense of failure within the school system, they combat the discomfort of these feelings with behaviour which sets them ever more firmly on the path they have chosen—to drop out from school as soon as they can. Avoidance of homework, truancy, disruptive behaviour such as swearing, answering back and fighting, all seemed to be responses to help young people cope with the sense of failure they were experiencing. Many had started with ambitions to stay at school to gain qualifications, but once they experienced problems coping with the work, they became caught up in a series of events which left them, in their eyes, little option but to leave school.

- Teachers can play a key role in re-kindling interest in students who are on the brink of joining the low achievers and those planning to drop out of school, if they can help the student overcome his/her difficulties. The teachers who young people respond to most positively are those who involve themselves with their students, who explain what students want to know and who can cater to the academic and emotional needs of each of their students. These teachers are approachable and the student suffering problems and difficulties, be they personal or academic, will feel able to approach them for help. This can put an enormous load on teachers in senior years.

- Those students who battle their way through to the level which is their goal, despite difficulties along the way, tend to have a clear sense of both themselves and of the sort of vocations they feel themselves suited to in terms of their abilities. Amongst the young people we spoke to who had entered apprenticeships or specific TAFE courses, this clarity of self and purpose was most apparent. Many saw themselves as 'practical' people and had chosen practical subjects to prepare them for a practical vocation. Those in apprenticeships were enjoying both the work and study components of their training. Whereas they may have found study at school difficult and tedious, the study component of their trade course had an appropriate context.

- The young people we spoke to who had continued on at school until at least the end of Year 11 held one or both of the following characteristics:
  - they were high achievers
they had a vision of what they wanted to do on leaving school; they had in mind either entering a course or entering a specific vocation.

The converse appeared to be the case for those who had left school early or who had intentions of doing so, they were low achievers and/or they had no vision of what they wanted to do.

- Some of the characteristics of the education systems in the States in which this research took place (NSW, Victoria, South Australia), including initiatives recently introduced, go some way to overcoming the various factors which inhibit young people from staying on at school:
  - The introduction of senior colleges brings more equality into the relationship between senior students and teachers hence helping to overcome negative feelings on the part of senior students in respect of being “treated like kids.”
  - VCE in Victoria has potential to allow students more options to match their interests and aptitudes to the subjects they take. This can occur within an assessment system which does not discriminate in favour of students who are good at exams. However despite its potential, VCE is being rejected by many students because the new system has not been effectively sold to them.
  - Work experience can both help students in careers choices and, if used by teachers, help in the contexting of curriculum.
  - The South Australian system of streaming students into PES and SAS potentially matches aptitudes to course types and should result in fewer cases of young people becoming disenchanted with the education system through failure.

- However, major problems remain. One of the principal reasons underlying the decision by a student to drop out of school appears to be an inability to cope at some level, be it with the subject matter of courses, the homework, the routine of school or the discipline and environment of the school. No easy solutions present themselves. Solutions appear to lie in:
  - psychological counselling to assist young people to work through factors which are giving rise to negative attitudes to school
  - educational counselling to provide the student in difficulty with learning and study techniques
  - remedial teaching to bring basic skills up to acceptable levels of competency
  - careers counselling to assist young people to find jobs and careers to aspire to and which reflect their aptitudes and abilities.
• There is need to **improve access to careers information** for young people. There are vast quantities of such already available but, on the whole, it is not in a format which is user friendly for young people, nor does it help students understand how their individual skills can be best matched to an occupation. Job opportunities listed in huge print volumes, however carefully the graphic content is orchestrated, appear daunting to many students. Audio-visual presentations, perhaps made with the help of industry, would allow young people to gain a more realistic impression of what is entailed in various jobs.

• With high youth unemployment, school retention rates are reaching an upper limit. Many young people are unwilling attendees rather than participants in the school system. There is a need to create programs to cater for their needs and abilities, recognising this as an opportunity to help these students redress earlier deficiencies in their education and to build confidence in learning.

• All the available options in respect of **post compulsory education and training** are viewed positively by young people. Comparative to school, all are perceived as having more contextual relevance and to give the young person more personal freedom than does secondary school. The relative appeal of each of the options depends on both the ability and the aspirations of the individual.

• Only a **small number** of the young people we spoke to aspired to go to University; for most University was simply not an option they felt was open to them. University was, they perceived, for the very bright students with high academic abilities. Going to University was often correlated with completing Year 12; many felt it was a waste of time to try and complete Year 12 unless the student had in mind to go to University. Relatively few declared that Year 12 was worth gaining in its own right though this might have been rationalisation to justify the decision not to attempt Year 12; better not to try than to try and fail. Some felt that time would be better spent doing another course after Year 11.

• **TAFE Colleges** represent different things to different people, depending on the perspective from which students view the TAFE system. For those aiming for University, TAFE colleges are seen as some sort of middle ground between apprenticeships and University. In the eyes of the aspiring University student they are an option of last resort, only to be considered when all else fails (and not always then). General Studies courses at TAFE are perceived as catering for those whose HSC/VCE marks were so low that they were unable to gain University entrance.
Comparatively, for those interested in courses with a more practical orientation, such as graphics or fabric design, the TAFE system provides courses which are aspirational and which suit the individual's needs. They associate TAFE with practical "hands-on" courses, rather than with General Studies courses.

TAFE courses do not have a consistent positioning in the minds of young people. There is need to clearly differentiate the General Studies courses from courses at University so that the secondary school student has a clear impression of the potential advantages that accrue from undertaking general courses at a TAFE college.

- **Apprenticeship** training is one of the best understood types of post school education. Apprenticeships have several clear advantages:
  - they lead directly to a recognised qualification which is felt to virtually guarantee employment
  - training takes place while young people work and earn while there is still classroom content, trainees on apprenticeships are treated as adults
  - during the apprenticeship the trainee has the opportunity to develop a relationship with his/her employer and hence increase the likelihood of being offered a job on completion of training.

- **In conclusion**, we note that this research study merely scratched the surface of the topic under review. In considering the findings of the study, we believe there would be much to be gained from undertaking further research, exploring with unwilling participants in the school system, ways of creating options and courses for them that would stimulate their interest in learning and provide them with a worthwhile return for the additional time they are spending in the system.

**Detailed Findings**

1. **Profile of Youth**

The young people interviewed represented a wide range of personality types, family and socio-economic backgrounds, levels of maturity, literacy levels and emotional states (in terms of fears and aspirations). All of these factors impacted on their attitude to, and receptivity to education. Their responses vividly demonstrate the enormity of the task of developing an education system that aims to meet all their needs.

Few had a strong sense of what their futures would hold in terms of their occupations or personal lives.
The majority of young people interviewed were very self-orientated, their attitudes towards school as a whole being directly associated with their own very individual needs.

**Six broad but not mutually exclusive segments were identified.** These classifications should not be seen as an absolute description of the market as they represent the findings of this small qualitative study.

*The six segments were:*

1.1 **Achievers**

These students perform well academically and recognise their own potential to achieve school and university qualifications that will lead to greater occupational opportunities. These students respect school and understand the relevance of the curricula to meet their needs. The disciplines and controls of school rarely concern them. While they are at times intimidated by the amount of work they had to complete, their clear focus on their goal ahead, be it getting to university or an eventual career, make them tolerant of the school experience and occasional frustrations.

Students in this segment tend to come from families where higher education is the norm and/or from the private school system. Their home life is very positively orientated towards the concept of study and tertiary qualifications. These students were in the minority in the young people we spoke to in this study, reflecting the group structure and the objectives of the research.

1.2 **The Workers**

These students are committed to their studies but are finding the pace and level of work in some subjects hard and daunting. Many report a sense of disappointment in their inability to perform successfully at school. They also report difficulty in terms of exam performance, studying generally, information retention and speed. Many of these students intend to leave school on completion of Year 10 or Year 11 and indicated that they may have left earlier if the employment market had been more attractive or if their parents had not insisted that they stay.

It is interesting to note that young people in this segment in Adelaide appeared to be experiencing a greater sense of achievement and self-esteem than their Victorian and NSW counterparts. These South Australian students were given the choice of PES or SAS subjects (discussed in greater depth in Section 6.3). This alternative curricula appears to provide a situation whereby the student can acquire a sense of achievement and concomitant sense of self esteem whatever their scholastic ability.
1.3 The Rebels

These students are often but not exclusively, males who lack key skills, particularly literacy skills; this inhibits their ability to cope with the work of Years 9 and 10. These students have difficulty concentrating for any length of time.

This segment tended to include students who for a variety of reasons are not living with their parents. Many of these young men and women demonstrated the need for psychological as well as educational counselling.

These students “rebelled”, acting against the discipline and authority they perceive in the traditional school system. Their behaviour can induce school expulsions and changes in schools as a result of their behaviour (few of these changes in educational institutions appeared to have resulted in a permanent behavioral change).

Many students in this category were strongly orientated towards the trades and related apprenticeships, but were failing in some cases to find their way because of difficulties in coping with the experience of secondary school.

1.4 The “Second Chancers”

The “Second Chance” students were an interesting group of young people who, for a variety of behavioral and/or family reasons, had left the school system as early as age 14, but who decided a year or two later to return to school. Their return to the system was usually via alternative routes such as TAFE, and/or correspondence. These students returned to the system for the sole purpose of achieving qualifications which would stand them in better stead in the workforce. Many intended to acquire HSC or VCE, some aimed for University.

These students described the student-learning institution relationship in a very positive way; they felt free from many of the disciplinary pressures of traditional schools.

1.5 The Trainees

The “Trainees” comprised young people who had left school or completed Year 9 or 10, most of whom were actively involved in the workforce (in clerical work/apprenticeships) and were involved in some vocational training at TAFE or Trade School.

Those young people appeared to have gained a sense of purpose and achievement that was new and exciting to them. They were responding positively to the demand of their work and training.
1.6 The Strugglers

These young people are unemployed, either because of limitations in the employment market and/or because of other issues affecting their prospects of work such as poor literacy, pregnancy, homelessness, and poor academic levels and references.

Many of the Strugglers we interviewed were under 16 years of age and therefore receiving only limited financial support. They lived at home or in special housing and have little to occupy their time.

Some of these people are involved in youth programmes conducted by local youth workers working at revealing job opportunities, improving skills, providing social interaction. These programmes helped them achieve a focus and sense of self esteem.

2. The Purpose of School

Young people are very aware that school has an important role to provide them with an “education”. Further they clearly acknowledge the role education plays in providing them with improved potential in the workforce.

“To gain an education.”

“It is important to attend school to get a good education. In order to continue on to further tertiary education or a stable job.”

“If you want to succeed and get the job that you really want, then it’s probably a good thing to stay at school.”

“It allows you to make your own choices in the workforce.”

“You have to go to achieve a better future.”

Many young people view what they do at school purely in terms of what they perceive to be its value in assisting them to get into a chosen course or line of work or in terms of its relevance to the skills they see they need on leaving school.

Respondents’ perceptions of the ideal level to achieve within the education system and indeed their own achievable level of education varied considerably.

The majority considered “completion of Year 10 or 11” to be the minimum as this would qualify them to take on further training in nursing, the army, enter the police force etc.

“I think you just have to finish Year 11 and then you just go into the Academy.”

Others believed VCE, HSC or “completion of Year 12” to be the ideal (albeit many felt unable to achieve this objective) to provide them with the opportunity of choosing University and more varied work opportunities.
"There are not many jobs offered to girls without finishing Year 12 or University."

"I regret not having completed Year 12. Employers tend to downgrade you if you haven't completed your HSC."

"I'm not going to get there anyway, so why bother."

Many of the lower achievers, even those who rebelled, acknowledged the importance of school in teaching them basic skills such as reading, writing and everyday mathematics, skills which they had often failed to acquire in their earlier years.

"I'd like to be able to read."

"It's just messy (my writing), I am hopeless."

"You need your basic additions (maths), besides that school's useless."

For a minority, school was thought "meaningless"; these young people had no strong sense of direction and could not cope with the discipline and pressures they associated with the school education system. For others, school appeared to be somewhere to spend time out of their homes and out of their parents way. These young people often reported that they purposely tended to misbehave in school. Their reasons for staying at school were negative, not positive.

"So I wouldn't have to be in the house as much."

"To give the teachers hell."

The social aspects of school were appreciated by achievers and non-achievers alike, the opportunity to make and spend time with friends. A minority of schools encouraged extra curricula social activities, such as school dances; these initiatives are very much appreciated by young people.

The school itself and parents are strong influences on the young people's attitudes to school. Considerable pressure is being applied from both directions to encourage the young to believe in the need for education and school qualifications. However, only in exceptional circumstances did young people report specific interventions by the school or parents that helped them cope with their schooling when they encounter major difficulty. An additional pressure to stay at school was the overriding awareness of limited job opportunities if they chose to leave.

Considerable dissonance has emerged regarding what the young people believe they should do and what they actually did. Many were caught in a "catch 22" situation, not coping, disliking and rebelling against school but forced by their own preconceptions, their parents and the job market to stay within the system.

During the group discussions we encouraged our respondents to complete "cartoons" and stories. These allowed us to elicit at a more individual level the mixture of attitudes and feelings young people associated with school. Examples of the completed
cartoons and stories in Appendix A (not reproduced in this volume) clearly illustrate the importance young people place on education and the acquisition of qualifications. They show the perceived role of education in their futures as well as the contradictions and the regret often expressed by those who had, or were about to leave school without completing Years 10–12.

3. **Attitudes and Behaviour Affecting School Attendance**

Section 2 discussed the role of school and revealed that the more motivated and achieving the student, the more positive their attitude to going to school. Indeed some of these young people reported that taking a legitimate sick day penalised their performance quite significantly. However, the less motivated and capable often avoid the school experience.

Many reported taking the occasional unjustified sick day at home or taking days off, or as they described it “wagging”. The more difficult the school experience, the more likely is the student to miss days or particular classes. Excesses of this behaviour are often supported by peers making the return to involvement in the system all the more difficult. Each member of a low achiever peer group can reinforce the intentions of others to inevitably drop out.

“Many cannot cope with the work, it’s too hard so they don’t do the work, they get into trouble . . . ”

The students stayed at school because:

- they (and society) believed they should or had to
  
  “The higher I go the better off I’ll be in the long run.”
  
  “Some kids think they have to go to school so they go along, but don’t try to learn.”

- their parents wanted them to because they wanted their child to have more or equal opportunities to themselves or because they would rather they were in school than on the dole or in trouble

  “My parents would like me to stay and go to Uni and get a really good job.”
  
  “My parents say leave as long as you’re not on the dole and if I go on the dole they’ll make me go back to school.”
  
  “Mum wants me to go so I’ll keep out of trouble”

- the social welfare or justice system insisted they did

- the perceived lack of job opportunities makes school the preferable option to a poorly paid job or no job at all.

  “There are not as many jobs offered to girls without year 12 or going to university.”

- they lacked the motivation or sense of direction to do anything else.
There comes a point where the student feels that they should leave. Often the student has explored some work activity and/or course outside school which they believe will eventuate and will be more satisfying. At other times, they are so alienated by their school experience that they simply drop out into a void.

"I've learnt more and become more responsible since leaving school early and joining the workforce."

For some the decision to leave was forced upon them by the school (through expulsion) or by personal circumstances, homelessness, pregnancy etc. In the present economic environment these young people find it very difficult, if not impossible, to get work. Many had, or intended to restart their education after six months in this position.

Most of those leaving school prior to Year 11 believed that they were not able to cope adequately with the work in the year they were studying for and this precluded their involvement in the years ahead. There was, they felt, no point in them going on. Often this failure to keep up had been realised by the respondents some years earlier indicating the need for evaluation and special help many years earlier. A basic lack of reading skills was often perceived as a major reason for failure. In some cases this was linked to reading skills not being continually tested.

"They stopped us reading out loud in Year 8."

"I have never read out loud in my life."

Those who had left or intended to leave school gave a variety of reasons:

- they could not take the routine any longer, "done it for 10 years"

"I become fed up, I left school early and started landscaping . . . The frustration was waking up dreading the same old routine of going to school, feeling huge pressure is the right thing to do."

- they were not willing to put in the effort, do homework etc.

"It is bullshit, a drag, boring—I hate homework."

- they wanted to be adults and felt that at school they are treated like children

"They don't treat you like an adult, they treat you like a kid."

- they were not interested, therefore didn't listen or didn't attend and therefore could not keep up

"I could keep up with the work but I didn't want to."

- they could not cope with the quantity of work

"I struggled, all the work—the homework."

- they could not cope with some of the subjects
"It's all right 'till year 11, then it's too hard."
- they could not concentrate
- they could not cope with the pressure imposed by the curricula, the teachers and family

"I would tell the teachers to stop pressuring me. They want you to get good marks but they know you can't."

"Especially for the students that can't do much, that are lower than everyone else. It's pretty hard on them."

"And they know you can't do the work but they will give it to you."
- they saw themselves as "practical" rather than as "writing people"
- they could not see the relevance of much of the curricula they were being taught.

"How is x + y going to help me when I go to buy a car".
- they only see value in subjects which directly assist them in getting a job. For example, these students felt that it would be a complete waste of time to stay onto Year 12 and end up going into an apprenticeship, where only Year 10 is required.

Behind many of the reasons young people gave for leaving school, we felt lay a lack of learning skills which led the student to develop a negative attitude to school.

Moreover, most of the students leaving prior to Year 12 had not had a vision of their schooling extending to Year 12. They believed Year 12 to be for brighter and more motivated youth, set on achieving higher qualifications.

The completed cartoons and stories contained in Appendix B illustrate the conflicts students experience in relation to school and schoolwork. They show the aspirations and doubts of the higher achievers, the importance placed on school in respect of gaining employment, the external pressures and distractions and the problems associated with not being able to cope with the schoolwork.

4. The School Experience
4.1 The Relationship
The young people had a complex relationship with school, a relationship combining aspects of:
- hero worship
- dependency
- respect
- disrespect
- acceptance
- ambivalence
- resentment
- fear
- powerlessness
- rebellion

All of these emotions can be experienced by an individual student.

Responses to authority and routine, the influence of peers, relationships with teachers, general interest in subjects, response to the pressures to perform and conform, response to different forms of assessment, academic abilities and the individual's home environment all impact on the relationship. Many do complain that they are not being treated as adults.

"I don't really like it because they tell you what to do and you can't do what you want when you want."

"They treat you like babies."

"The teacher puts shit on you all the time."

"They hassle you and ruin your weekends."

"If you come to school late instead of yelling at you, they should ask you where you have been."

"If you don't like the teacher then you can't really like the subject."

"It's a drag going to school."

"If you're not good at the subject you don't enjoy it."

"When I get up in the morning I think—Oh no not school again!"

"I had a lot of personal problems last year—they pressure you as though nothing is wrong."

"All the work, the homework, is hard when you don't live at home."

Even the more capable students in every state (particularly in Victoria) reported feeling considerable pressure regarding the need to submit assignments etc.

"If you don't hand it in they might think you're slack—they mightn't like you."

A minority of students indicated a certain pride for their school and a concomitant sense of belonging that seemed to enhance the school-pupil relationship. The school became more human and less institutional in character. This was particularly evident amongst public and private school students in Adelaide and the private school students we spoke to in Sydney.
4.2 Stimulation

The majority of students and young people who had recently left school found school to be lacking in stimulation. An occasional subject and/or teacher was able to capture the interest and involvement of students. The subjects of interest were often those described as having relevance to their future life and work.

For the better performing students this included subjects such as physics which they believed important to their achievement of university entrance and acceptance for engineering courses and the like. For the students not targeting university, the subjects that stimulated them included subjects such as Commerce and those in the trades area—subjects dealing with issues and skills they believed directly relevant to everyday life. Other subjects were often deemed "a waste of time". The importance of teachers and context is discussed further in sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4.1 respectively.

"Physics—I need for Uni—it's not relevant to everyday, but the work that follows."

"Commerce—the most interesting subject—because you learn from it about opening bank accounts, tax file numbers, things you need."

"Many subjects learnt at school are not really relevant to the world outside unless you go on to university."

"I'm trying to get through Year 11, but I couldn't take Year 12. It's a waste of time doing Year 12 and ending up in an apprenticeship."

For many, the lack of perceived relevance, a lack of actual ability to cope with the subject, the inability to cope with homework and assignments, rejection of authority, and/or for some an overriding fear of/ or the portent of failure appeared to inhibit their involvement in school work.

"Most of the stuff is pretty irrelevant really."

"I just didn't get along with the teachers, I just didn't agree with them."

"Geometry, I don't understand it at all—I feel like getting up and just walking out."

"She didn't explain things as much, the class played up a bit—she didn't control the class as well."

"Many cannot do the work, it's too hard—so they don't do the work and they get into trouble."

"It's the work really, I don't usually hand it in because I know it's all wrong . . . ."

"A positive sleeping experience."

24
Many students completing or who had left school in Years 9, 10 and 11 described the school experience as “pressured”, “boring” and “repetitive”. This may, of course, simply be a cover-up for the fact that they were not coping. Boredom, for many students can be the fact that they have lost interest in subject matter that they are failing to grasp.

“I thought it was boring.”

“The system—it's just boring that's all.”

For some students only the social aspects of school were thought stimulating.

“It's good to be around with your friends.”

“We've got a great social life in Year 12.”

Despite disparate levels of ability and different behavioral dispositions, most demonstrated a genuine interest to learn. However, the type of teaching and curricula that would achieve this objective varied considerably.

4.3 Rules

Rules defined the institutional nature and lack of adult freedom of the school system. Young peoples' attitudes towards the discipline inherent in the school system contained many contradictions. The kind of contradictions are often present in relationships with authority figures, on one hand there being a desire to rebel against the power the authority imparts, and on the other a need for the protection inherent in the rules. Some found the thought of the lack of rules in some secondary colleges particularly frightening. They felt there can be too much freedom—you might just “mess around” and not do any schoolwork.

The higher achievers had few problems with the rules, they knew what they were and broke them discreetly, with the occasional “sick day” or non-attendance.

Others felt the rules were not clear enough, they or their friends had been punished for behaviour they had not recognised as being against the rules.

A significant minority were unable to abide by the rules and aggressively rejected the premises on which they were based. These students were particularly sensitive to the inequalities they perceived in the rules for students versus the rules for teachers, such as being allowed to smoke.

“It's not fair, as the teachers are allowed to smoke at school but not the kids. Why can't the kids smoke. I was hardly at school anyway even if I had a class you just wouldn't go to it.”

“A lot of young kids are allowed to smoke at home but not at school.”
"I just thought—bugger them."
"They boss you around all the time and they go up and you could hit back at them."
"They push you too far. They just keep pushing you until you can't take any more and then you start wagging."
The most common breaking of rules that resulted in punishment or expulsion were not passing in homework and assignments, physical fighting, answering back, the use of swear words and smoking. These students were also likely to have played truant, but this was rarely cited as a cause of reprimand by the school.
One or two had been involved in illegal activity such as involvement with drugs, and this had resulted in eventual suspension. It should be noted that for some male students physically violent behaviour appeared an involuntary response to certain situations, something which they had not learnt to control rather than intentional malice.
"They would give you assignments to hand in on a certain day and if you were slack they would . . ."  
"He (a teacher) told me to get off the court in the gym—so I got off and he came along and gave me a whack. He said I told you to get off and I said I did—he said look where you are standing and he came up to me and pushed me and said don't get smart, so I hit him."
"I got suspended for fighting."
"Lots of fighting, swearing, back-answering, just the general sort of stuff."
"I got sprung last week—they said if I get caught again they'll expel me."
Expulsion from one school often resulted in being placed in another and then another school. This rarely resulted in a positive behavioral change amongst the students we talked to. Behavioral changes were only identified in those who had spent time out of the education system and came back to it because they personally had decided that they wanted to.
"When I was in year 8, they caught me for back-answering and they wouldn't let me back into school, they sent me forms, I only went there for two weeks and Mum said I don't have to go to school anymore. I went to school and the teacher told me to go and then I got into trouble with the police. They said, I either go to school or to a boys home, so they got me back to a different school, they said I am not allowed to muck around with those friends anymore, they choose the subjects for me—that's why I go to school."
5. The Structure of Schools

5.1 The Influence of Teachers

A positive teacher–student relationship would appear to be a primary prerequisite to learning. The teachers are the protagonists of the system.

"If you don't like the teacher, then you don't like the subject, but if you have a good teacher you enjoy going to class."

The students' primary request was for individual help and support; this was often not sufficiently forthcoming.

"Some teachers, you say can you give me a hand with this, and they say, yes hang on a minute, and before you know it the class is over and you sit there all week and not know what you are talking about."

Many of the low achiever students we spoke to complained of falling behind and finding help from teachers lacking.

At times the teacher–student relationship suffered from the effects of:

- A lack of responsiveness to requests for help.

  "Make them help you more."

- An aggressive/superior approach to communication.

  "Some were good, but others couldn't be bothered and were very condescending."

- Inadequate communication ability. Some teachers were identified as knowledgeable in their subject, but unable to communicate this effectively with their students because of general communication or specific language difficulties.

  "All the foreign teachers—if they come in they should make them do English. We have got this teacher and we have him for science and that's the main subject and you can't understand what he says."

- Not being able to address learning difficulties not remedied in earlier years of schooling.

- The student feeling out of his/her depth with some subjects

  "A lot of teachers start giving you really hard topics and that—they know you can't understand."

- Lack of continuity. Some students reported difficulty in understanding subjects when faced with repeated changes in teachers and teacher styles.

  "We had a lot of change of teachers. In year 10 we went through about 10 different teachers—so that was a bit of a problem."

- Apparent lack of interest. A small minority of teachers were thought to be totally disinterested in their work.
- Misinterpretation of the rules and expectations regarding assessable assignments.

5.2 Teacher Typologies
From the students' perspective there were three main types of teachers.

5.2.1 Pure Gold
From the students' perspective those teachers were in the minority. These teachers were those who loved teaching and cared and respected their students. Their classes were interactive and used humour to good effect; the lessons were involving and more easily understood. They had control of the class but not through the use of aggression. These teachers never hesitated to, nor forgot, to help individual students. They showed no favouritism and the students felt they could talk to these teachers with a feeling of ease and equality, adult to adult. Such teachers were used by the students as informal counsel when they confronted school or personal problems.

"Some would want to know you as a person."
"It depends on their attitude, you get teachers that care about you and how you are going and you get teachers who say—who cares about him, he's a smart arse—don't worry about him."
"Patience and understanding—they would repeat any explanation until everyone understood."
"Some were good, but others couldn't be bothered and were very condescending."
"A good sense of humour and still respected by the class."
"Dedicated, always willing to help you."
"He was the best I had because he took the time to teach you. You know you could talk to him like you were talking to your dad and not like a teacher and we could call him by his first name."
"Treated as an equal—no distance between teacher and student."
"You can usually understand more with a teacher you can relate to."
"Younger teachers—you can talk to them like a friend—talk about what you do at the weekend."

The private school system was reported to have more teachers that fitted this description.

"Private school is a lot different—the teachers sound a lot better from what I am hearing. They at least try to get you to learn, they actually care about how you do."
5.2.2 Power Players

These teachers kept a distance between themselves and their students either through the way they communicated their subject, (ie without sufficient explanation) or by the use of an aggressive approach to discipline. They tended to have preferred pupils, ie “favourites”, usually the higher achievers. These teachers made students, particularly lower achievers, feel incompetent and powerless.

"Teachers know all the subject matter and forget that the students don't know it all and are there to learn as much as they can."

"It's probably a really good intelligent guy who understands everything, but he can't bring himself down to the level of his students."

"They give you hard topics, things you can't understand."

"They look down."

"They tend to disregard kids that are not so bright."

"I don't like teachers who keep favourites—either that or they hate you for some reason."

"They just dictate."

5.2.3 Wrong Job

These teachers either failed to communicate genuine interest in their subject and students, or were totally unable to control their classes.

"You get teachers that are in a far off distant land."

"Others just hand out work and go out for a smoke."

"Some didn’t show any initiative—they'd stray away from school work and talk about the weekend."

5.3 Relationships in Senior School

Quite different student-teacher relationships were reported in some senior classes. A more interactive, less disciplinarian approach was evidenced. In the senior college school system the pressures of homework, internal assessment and exams sometimes replaced the pressures students had felt in the earlier years in their relationship with teachers.

"In Year 11 their attitude changed—they became more friendly and showed more encouragement."

TAFE colleges, Trade Schools and alternative institutions such as the School of Mines in Ballarat, were identified as having a teaching style that the students were more receptive to. These teachers treated their students in a very adult manner, allowing far more personal control. Students who had rebelled, at school, often functioned much better in this less authoritative environment.
These institutions are discussed further in later section 7 of this report.

5.4 The Curriculum
The curriculum was one of the most discussed elements of the school structure and one of the most misunderstood.

5.4.1 The Need for Context
Students frequently expressed feelings that many of the subjects they were studying were irrelevant to their present or to their future. They continually stated a need to rationalise their reason for studying a particular subject, to find a context for the subject in their lives. When this was understood they were more receptive to learning the subject, whatever it was.

"Most of the stuff's pretty irrelevant, really you think how am I going to use it later on."

"Australian studies the whole subject. It's a total waste of time."

"In history at the moment we're doing music through the 50's until the 80's (that's good)."

"In history class we're doing politics in it—that's pretty irrelevant."

"Modern history leads you somewhere because you can get to know things that happened, like when you were alive."

"If you're interested in the subject you can learn."

Most often the "context" was related to acquiring qualifications or to improving ability to function in life and in the workplace, whether as a professional, tradesperson or labourer. Very few mentioned interest in a subject for the subjects sake, ie based on an inherent desire to learn.

"Personal development—that's a new class we've got this year, it teaches us about ourselves."

"Yes also stuff on sex education and at the end of this term we're going to start on sexually transmitted diseases. And at the moment we're doing stuff on alcohol and the body and drink driving and things like that—so that's pretty relevant—because we're getting to the stage where we'll be driving soon."

"Because you are learning about things that are relevant to yourself."

"We're learning about different countries and that's probably good."

There was considerable diversity in the subject matter students found a context for. History, English, Maths, Physics, Health, Commerce all could have a context that could anchor the students' involvement. Much depended on the teacher and how
the individual student related to the content of the course. The challenge seems more in providing the context than to changing the existing curriculum.

"If they could relate algebra to how to buy a car, instead of x's and y's, I might be interested."

Maths and English are two interesting cases as the vast majority of young people recognise a need for competency in these subjects, ie in reading, writing, spelling and everyday maths. However, the more academic elements of these courses have not always been placed in context. Indications are that this could not occur for some students until competence in the basic skills had been enhanced.

"That's important you are always going to have to add-up no matter what you do."

"I want to know how to spell, not writing essays."

"I'd like to be able to read better."

"Some of the Maths they teach you, you wouldn't use—like x over z equals whatever, I mean you just wouldn't use it."

"The subjects learnt are not used after leaving school, except for English language—speaking and writing nothing else."

"English you can see yourself using later on. You're always going to have to write a letter."

"The English course—it's not something you really like doing, but you know you need it."

Some young people who had failed to acquire skills at school had found that when the same skills were placed in context at work, they had learnt the skill with ease. Some students, often low achievers, use the concept of context to dismiss the relevance of education altogether.

Contexting of any subject encouraged a more receptive response from students; the lack of context seemed to provide the student with an excuse to dismiss the subject and give up if any difficulties were encountered.

5.4.2 Competency

The perceived level of competency of students with a particular subject or aspect of schoolwork has a direct and negative effect on their confidence and commitment to continue. A lack of competence evokes pressure from themselves, the school and their parents, that they often do not know how to handle.

Elements which affect competency include:
- organisation of their homework schedule
- balancing of schoolwork and social life
- ability to get work done in the time available
- ability to concentrate

31
- ability to handle exams
- ability to cope with a particular subject matter
- ability to read and spell etc.

"It's difficult when you don't know how to do them."

Further, lack of competence and ability to cope with schoolwork is a major reason for young people leaving school.

"It's the work really—I don't usually hand it in because I know it's all wrong. I'm sick of taking bad reports back home to Mum and Dad saying "why can't I do that, I know you can do better than that." I have trouble in Maths and English, and a lot of those subjects, I hate writing—I'm good at spelling, but no good at stories and everything."

"I'd like to (continue) but I'll probably drop out."

"I find it hard to just sit down and read a book, like study for exams. I just can't do that. I just get so bored."

Many of the young people we spoke to seemed not to have learnt how to learn. Their earlier school years and home life has failed to give them the basic skills they need if they are to cope with secondary school and particularly in years 10, 11 and 12.

"Probably just me, because I am restless all the time. Some kids sit there really quietly, whereas others just have to get up and move around. I just can't hack it."

"Mr ................ talking to us before exams saying if we don't do well he'll ring our parents and get us into trouble—it got me worried I'm trying my hardest, it makes me scared."

"I don't do well in exams, I get a mental block."

"I find it difficult to interpret questions—my (answer) will always be different."

"They expect so much of you."

Particularly motivated young people and the minority with external support, such as parents who provide or buy one on one assistance, appear able to overcome these impediments.

"Mum and Dad have found a lady to teach me how to learn."

"I'm not bright—if it hadn't been for Mum—she gave me a lot of help."

One thing that impressed the moderators involved in the study was the readiness with which the young people were able to discuss their problems and their apparent receptivity to improving their skills and to learning about subjects which they believed have relevance to their lives. However, many were not having these attitudes effectively channelled. Few received the necessary one-on-one help, or counsel, and few were involved in a full compliment of subjects which they could find relevant.
We detected in many early school leavers the desire to stay on at school longer. These desires were however cancelled out by being unable to cope with the standard of work and by peer pressure from those equally disadvantaged. Some recognised the fact that if they could learn some skills they would be better placed in less advanced classes. However, although streaming across years and subjects was appreciated the prospect of learning (even in one subject) with people significantly younger than oneself was untenable whilst in the traditional school system. This was also an impediment to returning to school a year or so after leaving.

"I wouldn't want to be stuck with kids underneath."

The desire to stay with one's peers was very strong and encouraged students to find circuitous means to avoid revealing basic skill deficiencies.

"I have never read aloud in my life. I used A grade kids to read things for me."

5.5 Counselling
Young people spontaneously discussed many issues that affected their attitude to education and level of achievement, such as:
- the incomplete learning of basic skills
- the inability to concentrate
- the inability to organise a study schedule
- the inability to cope with the pressures of school
- specific blocks in understanding affecting some, but not all, subjects and significant home-based personal problems.

At least one of these issues was raised by the majority of students intending to leave school prior to completing year 12. Many of the issues appeared to be able to be resolved if the student received help from an understanding and confidential staff member who had the time and experience to give appropriate counsel. Such counsel was rare.

Some schools were reported to have a counsellor, but these people were often too far removed from the student for the students to easily consult for assistance, a friendly teacher with time was the more likely source, albeit these seemed few and far between.

A major disincentive to approach the school counsellors was the awareness (through bitter experience) that any discussion would not be held in confidence, but discussed with other staff and the students' parents. From the young persons' perspective such actions often exacerbated rather than helped problem situations. Some felt the counsellors lacked empathy and often took on a lecturing rather than listening role, the opposite to what they
felt they needed; often all they felt they needed was someone to talk to.

“In Year 8 it was necessary to go to a counsellor and she helped quite a lot—we’ve had some others since then and people say they are not very good. There are some real bad rumours—is he’d tell teachers and parents—you’d be betrayed.”

“We had a student counsellor at school and I would try and tell her something and she would go and tell all the other teachers.”

“I told the counsellor problems and he went back and told my father and he blasted the shit out of me and I got punished for ages.”

“I went to them and they started giving me all these lectures, so I just said get fucked and walked out. I just went in and they started telling me off.”

Educational and emotional counselling would appear vital if the system is to optimise the potential of each student.

5.6 Careers Advice and Information

Young people took several years to form a view of what they wanted to do when they left school. Generally a rather vague and unstructured thought process occurred as a result of exposure to careers advice at school, work experience, special school programmes and talking with relatives. The majority of young people remained uncertain right up to the time they left school, and for some, lack of vacancies in the job market resulted in this continuing after they had left.

A lot of information and advice was available in schools, but the students did not always appear receptive to it. Rather they were distracted by more immediate concerns of coping with the system; looking ahead was something they had great difficulty doing.

Several spoke of the “employment rate” and the very competitive nature of the market place. This evoked feelings of fear and apprehension that seemed to emotionally deter the student from taking all but the most tentative, pro-active and assertive steps towards establishing what they would do. For them it seemed a foregone conclusion that potential failure in school would be followed by sure failure in the job market. Lack of vacancies in the job market was a reason for many to defer leaving school and all of the decisions that would go with it.

The young people expected the school system to have a careers programme, they expected the school to prepare them for the workplace.
"School should provide some sort of training. You have to have a particular career path which to follow—to help you sort out the realities of it."

Attitudes to the various school initiatives were at times critical. However, this appeared to reflect the dissonance experienced with the subject as a whole, rather than particular deficiencies in the school programme.

School Career Counsellors, work experience and special programmes were discussed in depth; all contributed to some extent to the students' slow development of awareness of options and final focus. Even so, students seemed to suffer from inadequate knowledge of all the fringe jobs and opportunities within each major industry. There was often too much of a tendency to present the more high profile career opportunities, such as the airline pilot.

Family contacts were another very important influence. The more motivated students appear to take more full advantage of the resources available, augmenting this information with their own. Such students would arrange additional work experience placements for themselves and contact organisations for details regarding qualifications required. Work experience was greeted with considerable enthusiasm, albeit Sydney respondents were less satisfied because placements were hard to get.

"A very good idea—at least you get to know what you like and dislike."

"We just finished work experience last week, that was a really good thing to do because like most of the kids you pick something you want to do. It saves a lot of time finding out that you don't like it after going through years of training."

The slow process of career/job decision-making suggests a need for work experience and the like to occur throughout secondary education.

"Work experience is excellent—it's done in Year 10—but should continue to Year 12, because as you get older your ideas change."

The merging of career counselling with personal counselling was met with ambivalence by some students. It seemed that when seeking advice on their future career they did not want this to be associated with other personal problems they were experiencing. There is, nevertheless, a need for counselling which looks at a student's skills, areas of satisfaction and interests and correlates them with appropriate jobs. In these days of sophisticated computer software it should be possible to develop a package which will assist in helping young people direct their attention to work areas which match their abilities.
5.7 Senior College

Senior Colleges, or similar concepts already existed in South Australia and Victoria. Some students wholly or partially shifted campuses for Years 11 and 12. This usually occurred as a result of amalgamations or limitations in the courses available at a particular school.

Students in Year 11 and 12 viewed the separation of senior students from the junior school positively. Those who already attended colleges with separated Year 11 and 12 usually appreciated the change in atmosphere and felt that their experience of school had improved. They felt as though they were treated more as adults, enjoyed the opportunity for more informal communication with teachers and the greater level of personal freedom. This appeared to help counterbalance the additional amount of work expected of them. The recognition of their "adult" status is very important to many young people.

"It's a good idea, because it gives you a chance to break away and get away from the boring nature of school which tends to make a lot of students drop out."

"You know all the teachers, so you just walk into the staff room and have a cup of coffee with them. You just walk in and have a chat to the teachers. Just have a chat about school or how your weekend was and all that. They treat you like a normal person—not like a shit . . ."

"It makes Years 11 and 12 something to really look forward to, more freedom, in a relaxed atmosphere, might make students more willing to learn."

Separation from the more junior years was identified as a key attribute of the new system, freeing them from the restrictions and distractions that the presence of younger students imposed.

"Yes, it's a good idea because many times senior students are not allowed to do certain things for fear of the younger ones observing them and doing the same—the seniors tend to be their role model . . ."

The availability of common rooms and other privileges also had a considerable appeal.

Younger students in Year 9 and 10 had a different view, particularly those who perceived themselves to be struggling to keep up. To them the move is not seen as a positive one; they dislike the fact that Years 11 and 12 are not intermixed with the school and are fearful of the unknowns of the new campus. They feel that when they move they will have to cope with too much change and all at a time when the pressure of schoolwork increases. They fear change in respect of:

- new classmates
- a new work practice
6. The Examination System

6.1 Overview

The examination systems in each State are different. However, students' perceptions of the qualifications in terms of their relevance, the likelihood of acquiring them and the difficulties associated with reaching that level were surprisingly consistent.

Young people who had consistently performed well and/or who had considerable parental support and personal ambition, seemed to understand the examination systems. They recognised the need for school or further education qualifications to get them ahead in the world. They worked conscientiously with the objective of passing.

"You can't get to uni if you don't. You can't get a job."

"I think I'd have to compare like people who left at Year 10 and people who left at Year 12. I think sometimes you think they do have a better grasp of things—school must be something."

The less competent students in this group found the whole process extremely intimidating and disheartening, sometimes their educational aspirations did not appear achievable. They were finding the level and pressure of work in Years 11 & 12 extremely difficult and their results personally disappointing. Many continued to work because they and their parents believed they should, but often at considerable personal cost in terms of self esteem, constantly facing the probability of failure and possibility of dropping out. They continued until they felt beaten rather than actively planned an alternative route.

"I'd like to get to Year 12 and get a job with lots of money, but I really can't see myself as going that far. I'll probably drop out before then."

"If I find it too difficult I guess I'll leave."

Most young people believed that qualifications were a considerable asset in terms of gaining employment, (this was particularly the case in Victoria, where unemployment was a very current issue). However, this recognition only served to lower the self esteem of low achievers because they believed the
acquisition of such qualifications to be out of their reach at this stage of their lives.

"You need to have it now (VCE), you go down to the CES and there is about another 199 people going for the same job."

"You need Year 12 to work in the Supermarket now."

However, many had never considered the possibility of continuing their education to Year 12. These young people often required a total reappraisal of themselves and their ambitions outside the school system for them to consider aiming for more scholastic achievement.

Most reported experiencing considerable pressure in Years 11 and 12. Homework and assignments took up a considerable amount of time.

Difficulties arose when the students and their families were unaccustomed to or had little knowledge of the studying needs or abilities of students, when the student was involved in extra curricula activities, such as sport, music and drama and/or a demanding social life. Many had to more or less totally deny their involvement in out of home activities to meet their study commitments. This lack of balance appeared to have a potentially negative effect on some, making them lack in self-confidence. The actual threat of increased homework in Years 11 and 12 or the actual experience of it acts to dissuade many young people from continuing at school. They are not prepared to give up their leisure time to do homework.

"If you do Years 11 and 12 you do, say 3 hours homework a night."

"Half our school, basically, do maths and so everyone was just in a major panic the week before because 2 maths CATs. They're not supposed to be more than 20 hours, but that was complete junk because everyone was doing 50-60 hours on them because they want the marks . . . Year 12 was zonked . . . we were just dead for the next week."

"I didn't go to sleep at all and I handed in my CATs."

Several young people interviewed who had left school early had returned, or intended to return to the school system to complete Year 11 and 12 and try and acquire a qualification. However, amongst those who had failed very few considered the possibility of resitting these examinations (mark penalties if a subject is repeated would appear to discourage this practice). The HSC, VCE or Matric mark achieved was generally identified as an immovable object which will significantly determine future progress irrespective of the academic, personal or teaching issues that may have affected the score.
VCE

The introduction of VCE in Victoria does not appear to have repositioned final school qualifications. VCE was in the students' minds as aspirational and at least as difficult to acquire as the traditional HSC qualification.

Some students expressed resentment of the fact that the system had changed just as they approached the most crucial time in their schooling. They had been trained in how to work in an exam-based system, not one which focused on assignments and CATs. Many students found this home-based work extremely time consuming. Students presently in Years 11 and 12 appear to be in a state of transition—their difficulties with the VCE system being based on its newness to them and the school rather than a fundamental problem with the concept. They are struggling with change.

"I'd much rather HSC, there's a lot less pressure."

"I think part of the problem is also in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10, we did the old—prepared for basically HSC type exams at the end of the year—but now Year 12 is in dismal disarray at the moment because everyone is really really worried, because these CATs are nothing like what we've done before."

"In Year 11 we did some projects, but they were better actually than the CAT ones—but the Maths CATs are so vague—they had these really vague topics which you had to try and relate to somehow . . . I looked at all the physics and maths stuff, but it didn't relate properly and it wasn't like mathematics, the formal mathematics, that we'd been taught year after year."

"You've got to have a title page—if you don't you fail. If you don't do it their way they want you're gone."

"The CATs I did the teachers didn't know about—unbelievable."

"Our teachers didn't have enough expertise in different areas. I did maths and music and the maths teacher didn't know anything about music."

"Half my time I just spent writing up the CATs. I had the actual content finished ages before but I thought OK—a couple of hours to finish it off—not a problem and about 20 hours later I was getting there."

Some Year 11 students also complained about the use of S & N rather than graded marks. They felt that this discouraged them from trying hard. This issue was relevant both to students intending to go on to Year 12 and those intending to leave after Year 11. Students intending to leave felt that a grading system would have given them the incentive to try and get good marks to impress prospective employers.
"It's not A's, B's & C's and stuff, it's like S's and N's."

"Last year everyone put hours and hours into their comp project in Year 11 and then Year 12 it's only on S or an N—so everybody is doing the easiest project that they can possibly think of just to get it out of the way. It doesn't count. You've just got to do it to pass."

We note with concern that the assignment based system appears to be the cause of considerable pressure and anxiety. Even Year 10 students who were being introduced to this form of work reported that it was a struggle, many were unsure of how to approach the assignments and felt they were provided with insufficient guidance and help from their teachers.

The focus on continual assessment in VCE adds additional pressure on the students. They report that if ill, distracted by personal problems or having difficulty completing work, they could easily fall behind or fail.

"You sign a contract saying that you'll bring the work the next day, if you forget the next day you'll probably fail."

Much of the negativity in respect of VCE appeared to be the result of students finding themselves in an uncomfortable state of transition. The system has changed and is changing and no-one has effectively sold the benefits of the change to the participants.

6.3 HSC and Matriculation

The New South Wales HSC and South Australian Matriculation were better understood than Victoria's VCE. However, they posed the ultimate school pass/fail hurdle as discussed in Section 6.1.

"You've got one chance, it determines the rest of your life."

The examination systems appeared more a worrying threat to the individual student's future, or at best a test of character, discipline and staying power and not the culmination of a carefully planned programme of education.

The South Australian system was the most appreciated and understood. It introduces streaming to education at Year 11. Students study either PES or SAS subjects, or a combination of both. Only PES (Public Examination System) subjects lead to Matriculation and possible entry to university. This differentiation did concern some students, particularly those who saw themselves on the borderline of competency and who were encouraged to take SAS rather than PES subjects. However, it is interesting to note that the students concerned appeared to have taken the issue in hand and were using it as a helpful focus for their future plans; they were looking to the TAFE system for future qualifications. The streaming seemed to have helped channel their energies into directions appropriate to their abilities, without the student experiencing a sense of failure.
7. Additional Sources of Post Compulsory Education and Training

The opportunities for education and training outside the school system are many and varied. Many of the young people interviewed had taken, or intended to take advantage of these opportunities.

What is of particular interest is the very different attitude and response the young people involved in post-secondary options had to their learning activities compared to their attitudes to and behaviour at school. They talked enthusiastically about the things they learnt and the approach to teaching. The two consistent themes were:

- all of the activities had a context, they could be seen as having direct relevance to their lives or occupations.
- they felt that they were treated with respect by the teachers or trainers—that they were treated like adults and not children. A wide range of formal and informal programmes were discussed. Each was seen to have a very different structure and potential outcome, but met the objectives of many of those they attracted.

7.1 Preparing for Life Courses

These were short courses and programmes organised by State and private youth workers aimed at increasing the basic skills of unemployed early leavers. These courses introduced young people to methods of applying for work, different types of occupations, further training opportunities, and home based skills such as cooking.

Young school leavers enjoyed these programmes; they appeared to increase the young person’s sense of direction and self-esteem.

"We did coffee tables and all sorts of things."
"It was a whole range of different things."
"They ask you what you wanted to do and not what they wanted you to do."
"They show you all these videos and they get people to talk to you."
"They tell you things—if you are going for a job."

7.2 Alternative School-based Programmes

Correspondence courses and the courses offered at the Ballarat School of Mines were the two programmes discussed at length. These had been chosen as methods of returning to the education system by early leavers, young people who, for various reasons, had not functioned effectively in the school system. These young
people had been expelled after repeatedly playing truant, and/or were homeless and pregnant—characteristics not necessarily compatible with the normal school system.

These students had very negative associations with school, but found these alternative programmes a lot more appealing, because they could work at their own pace, the discipline was their own rather than that of the system, and when teachers were present, they acted more like supervisors working on a one-to-one basis.

These students were making an individual assertive action to improve their prospects. Their determination suggested that, given the time and understanding inherent in these programmes, they will be successful.

Two examples are described in the verbatim quotes following. The first example is that of a young girl who had left school early and returned to study by correspondence. She was motivated to return to study by boredom and a desire to get a good job.

"I'm sort of at school now, I am doing correspondence—it's from Melbourne."

"I was getting bored all the time and I wanted to go back to school and get a good job."

"It's pretty hard doing it by correspondence, but you haven't got anyone hassling you. You've got no teachers, there's no time to hand it in, you can hand it in when you want. It's good—I am doing Year 9 again."

The second example is that of a young male who left school because he found a job. However, the job failed to live up to expectations and he has now returned to school.

"Last year I left school and I went into a job for six months and I quit a couple of weeks ago and said I'd go back to school."

"(I went back to school) to get some qualifications for a better job."

"Instead of normal teaching you sort of do your own thing and if you need help the teachers come and help you—it's better in every aspect."

7.3 Apprenticeships/Trade Schools/Services

The apprenticeship type of training is one of the best understood forms of post-secondary education.

Apprenticeships are seen to lead directly to a recognised qualification that ensures employment. Many see this qualification as leading them to fulfil ambitions of working for themselves and making "lots of money".
"They've got formal papers to say that they've completed an apprenticeship—he's got a better chance of getting a job with Alcoa than someone who hasn't done an apprenticeship with Alcoa. Therefore it gives them a bit of an in with the company. They've got stable employment, They've probably got a reasonable financial situation."

"Hopefully owning my own business in carpentry."

"You do an apprenticeship—you work hard at it and everything and you've finished your apprenticeship and 2-3 years you keep going with the same job and then you can go into your own business and make more money."

Another major attraction of apprenticeships was the fact that training takes place while in paid employment. This seemed to appeal not only because of the money, but because of the adult status and recognition associated with employment. Many of the apprentices interviewed were reformed rebels, that is, young people that had not functioned effectively within the school system.

"It's just good. I was never any good at book work, but I'm good at using my hands and butchers need to be good at using their hands for getting different cuts and that."

The trades were seen to offer a sense of freedom, as well as emotional, physical and financial well-being.

Some apprentices reported the Trades School training to be a little repetitive, and considerably more orientated to perfection than what is experienced in their jobs. However, this was accepted as something they had to do to achieve the appropriate qualifications. Overall, the attitude to the work and the teaching methods was positive; again teachers were said to treat the young person as an adult.

Several students who reported significant school behavioral problems resulting in expulsion, expressed a genuine interest in acquiring their apprenticeship qualifications with the armed services.

7.4 TAFE

Perceptions of TAFE colleges vary considerably according to the ambitions of students.

Amongst those who aspired to go on to tertiary education the TAFE colleges were seen as providing courses for motivated low achievers where any course was seen as better than no course, particularly if there are few actual jobs available.

"You don't have to be a straight A student to do them."

"They're for deadheads."

"For people who don't get a high enough aggregate and really want to get somewhere or do something."
"It's probably a good thing to do. It gives an advantage."

Students aiming for tertiary education did not see them as an option. They saw TAFE colleges more as a middle ground between apprenticeships and University or for people who were undecided as to what they wanted to do. Several reported that this caused the institutions to experience high drop out rates.

The tertiary orientated students would only consider TAFE when all else fails, but point out that there are so many tertiary institutions, both metropolitan and country, that TAFE colleges failed to get on their list of institutions that they would be interested in attending.

"If I don't get into Uni and I find it gets too hard to get a job, then I'll consider doing a TAFE course."

The attraction of TAFE was in the freedom of subject choice and the acquisition of some qualification.

As a whole, these young people had only a very limited understanding of the TAFE system and what it offers.

"It seems to me that you can go to a TAFE college and so some of the same things that you can do at Uni but I don't know whether it is more practical or what. I think it is... but UNI tends to draw the people who get the higher marks..."

Several respondents across all states reported that employers were perceived to have little regard for TAFE qualifications.

"They're not as recognised nor as highly regarded or respected by the business world."

"I wonder if it has as much credibility—the uni graduate is more likely to be picked."

"They're good, but many people and employers don't approve of them."

Others overlooked TAFE because they believed students had to pay for courses and although money in itself was rarely raised as an issue, for many of our respondents finding money to pay for courses was.

We note, however, that for many students without ambitions to go onto university, but with clear a concept of a career in a more hands-on field such as design or graphics, the TAFE colleges are aspirational because they offer the courses directly linked to the desired job outcome.

The TAFE system appears to have an image problem in respect of its General Studies Courses, though not in respect of courses directed at providing specific practical skills. The system needs to clearly differentiate itself from university and like the school curriculum—be put in context.
7.5 University

University was aspirational to only a minority of students, to the majority, university was beyond the scope of their imagination or desire. The majority felt they wanted to get out of formal education at the earliest opportunity.

University was seen as difficult to get into and accessible only to the very motivated and bright and/or “yuppies”. It is seen as the place for people who wanted “high class” careers and who chose careers which had a “theoretical rather than practical base”.

"People who have not only got brains but the determination to succeed in their chosen career. To work to the best of their ability in all respects."

There is acknowledgment by both those who have aspirations of going on to University and those who do not, that gaining a tertiary qualification potentially leads to a position of greater respect and status in the community.

"You have higher status in the community and respect."

Those with ambitions to go on to University tended to see a tertiary qualification as giving them a much better chance of getting a good well-paid job. However, those without these ambitions were not so sure that a tertiary qualification really assisted in the gaining of employment. Those in, or aiming for apprenticeships see an apprenticeship as more likely to lead them straight to a job as it provides work experience as well as a “ticket” and a relationship with a potential employer.

“If you can be bothered putting in the extra 4 years or however long it takes you—I think you should get a good job—you deserve it.”

“They’re going to use someone with a degree over someone who left at Year 10.”

A minority were attracted to University because of the opportunity to have freedom of subject choice and the opportunity meet new people.

8. Financial Support

“Money” was the least discussed factor that might have an influence on educational choices. The young people appeared assured that their parents or the system would adequately provide for them.

It is interesting to note that many of our respondents had made the decision to leave school and/or home prior to their eligibility for Austudy. Consequently the potential advantages of Austudy had not been considered and could not influence their decision. In one case a student attending an alternative institution to take school examinations was being provided with
Job Start to fill the gap before he was old enough for Austudy. The low income limits and high qualifying age makes Austudy available to only a small number of existing and potential students.
Appendix 2(B)

Participation by Disadvantaged Young People in Post-Compulsory Education and Training

A Paper Prepared for the Review of Post-compulsory Education and Training

John Ainley and Phillip McKenzie

Australian Council for Educational Research

May 1991

The Paper has been prepared with the assistance of Carol Finnigan, Peter Mathews and Rachel Salmond from the Australian Council for Educational Research. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.
Contents

1 Introduction
Disadvantaged Groups 50
Group Differences and Disadvantaged 51
The Paper 52

2 Postcompulsory Schooling
Young Women 54
Young People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds 55
Young People of Non-English Speaking Background 59
Young People from Rural Locations 63
Young Aboriginal People 67
Students of Low Earlier School Achievement 70

3 Technical and Further Education
Characteristics of TAFE 72
Early School Leavers 73
Students with Low School Achievement 75
Young Women 76
Young People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds 78
Young People of Non-English Speaking Background 80
Young People from Rural Locations 84
Young Aboriginal People 86

4 Higher Education
Young Women 90
Young People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds 92
Young People of Non-English Speaking Background 98
Young People from Rural Locations 100
Young Aboriginal People 103

5 Job Training and Other Provisions
Data on Job Training 106
The Extent of Job Training 108
Job Training and Background Characteristics 110
Job Characteristics and Training 112
Commonwealth Training Programs 113
‘Other’ Educational Institutions 116

48
6 Barriers
Participation in Education and Training: A Summary
Barriers to Participation
An Interactive Perspective

7 Previous Strategies and Their Impact
Raising Educational Expectations and Awareness
School Programs
New Combinations of Education, Work and Training
Labour Market Programs
Special Entry Programs to Higher Education
Financial Support for Further Study

8 Possible Future Strategies
Earlier School Achievement
Learning Environments
Expectations and Orientations
Senior School Curricula
Links Between Sectors
Targetted Financial Assistance
A Comprehensive Framework

References
Introduction

Education is an important activity in its own right and because of the personal development that it generates, the individual and social benefits that it can lead to, and the way that it influences life chances and social structures. Principles of social equity, and the need to utilize the talents of the community, both require that people have fair and equitable access to educational opportunities. For a variety of reasons some groups in the community do not have fair and equitable access. These considerations have led to the development of social, economic and educational policies to redress disadvantage.

This paper was commissioned to examine the following issues related to the participation by disadvantaged young people in postcompulsory education and training.

1. The current state of knowledge of the relationship between different forms of disadvantage and participation in postcompulsory education and training.

2. Barriers which restrict participation of different groups of disadvantaged young people in postcompulsory education and training or which reduce the value or effectiveness of participation for those groups.

3. The effectiveness of measures which have been introduced in Australia and overseas to increase the participation of disadvantaged young people in postcompulsory education and training and to improve their educational and labour market outcomes.

4. Options for new or amended strategies to achieve those ends.

In preparing the paper we were asked to focus on the early postcompulsory years. Therefore it concentrates primarily on schools, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), and related training options such as apprenticeships and traineeships. It also includes issues related to higher education and industry-based training, because these constitute important components of the education and training opportunities available to young people. The paper does not include any analysis of participation by people with disabilities since that topic is the subject of a separate paper.

Throughout the paper participation is examined in terms of enrolment rates in four main sectors of education and training: senior secondary schooling; technical and further education; higher education; and job training. Where relevant data are available, enrolments in particular types of courses, fields of study and streams of training are examined. It is the fine detail within broad sectors which can illuminate considerations of disadvantage. Participation in different courses and curricula
within the same sector can have lead to differentiated opportunities in subsequent education, training and employment. A major reason for directing attention to factors influencing participation in postcompulsory education and training is the belief that success in those courses opens opportunities for better occupational futures and productive contributions to the community. However, it is worth noting that limiting attention to participation in postcompulsory education and training falls short of an examination of whether disadvantage operates in relation to the successful completion of those courses and even whether there is equity in subsequent participation in a range of occupations.

Disadvantaged Groups

Much of the literature on educational disadvantage focuses on differences between groups formed on the basis of personal and social characteristics (e.g. males and females on the basis of sex, working and upper class on the basis of socioeconomic status, rural and urban on the basis of location of residence). The implicit assumption is that differences are equivalent to disadvantage or that differences provide evidence of disadvantage.

One of the problems in this approach is the identification of groups to be considered as potentially disadvantaged. The preface to the publication entitled “A Fair Chance for All” by the National Board of Employment Education and Training acknowledges that disadvantaged groups within society cannot be clearly defined or differentiated and that there will be areas of overlap on an individual basis” (NBEET 1990). However, in a number of studies and policies concerned with promoting equity in participation there is some consensus about groups considered to be disadvantaged. Harvey and Klein (1989), writing about equity studies from an international perspective, argue that the “groups most commonly identified and compared” are “those characterised by race, ethnicity, gender, economic status, handicapping condition, primary language and age”. The NBEET document on higher education identifies its major target groups as:

- people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,
- people from non-English speaking backgrounds,
- people from rural and isolated areas, and
- people with disabilities.

The first five of these groups are considered in the present review. Such a selection is conventional because any review is
initially constrained by the factors about which there is an established body of literature and a review such as this is obliged to examine evidence which relates to government policies. However, these constraints do not necessarily prevent using evidence about group differences to conceptualise better the dimensions of disadvantage.

A potential limitation in thinking of disadvantage in terms of social groups is that it tends to focus attention, and therefore policy, on those characteristics which are most readily classifiable. Hence attention focuses on such characteristics as gender and socioeconomic differences rather than disadvantage arising from such things as a poor experience of earlier schooling (as reflected in low achievement or unfavourable attitudes) or lack of interpersonal support. For this reason studies of disadvantage need to examine group differences not only to identify those who suffer disadvantage but to probe for those factors which might cause group differences to become manifest.

There is evidence that in some programs there may be scope at local level to focus on these factors rather than the conventional social groups. Hartley and Owen (1989) concluded that schools in the Participation and Equity Program “tended to address broad participation issues rather than focus on the special needs of particular groups” through attention to learning environments, curriculum relevance and providing wider opportunities for success. This meant that most attention had been paid to underachievers, early school leavers, and non-academically inclined students. Griffin and Batten (in press) note that these categories of disadvantage are based on individuals’ responses to schooling rather than broad social groupings and, in one sense, are closer to the ideal of equal opportunities for individuals than of equal outcomes for groups.

A focus on group differences can lead people to infer homogeneity of groups. Decisions about participation in various forms of postcompulsory education and training are made by individuals within a complex network of constraints and influences. In examining differences between groups it is as important to know about the spread within groups, the overlap between groups, and the relative magnitude of any differences as it is to know which group has the higher participation rate in a given form of education and training.

Group Differences and Disadvantages

Literature reviewed in this paper can be used to identify group differences in participation in various forms of postcompulsory education and training. Usually the existence of differences in participation between the social groups considered is taken to be
evidence of disadvantage. For example, the Commonwealth Schools Commission (1976) argued that, although it was not in favour of equal outcomes among individuals, there was no reason to suppose that there should be differences in outcomes (in this case including achievement) among the social groups it had identified. The NBEET (1990) discussion paper on equity in higher education saw the objective of that program being achieved by “changing the balance of the student population to reflect more closely the composition of society as a whole”.

In considering disadvantage in participation it is important to be explicit about the assumptions involved in linking differences to disadvantage. Williams (1987) argues that information about differences between groups, or subpopulations, “does not provide direct evidence of inequalities” since some may participate at a lower rate “because they do not want to”. Williams argues that difference becomes disadvantage after a judgement is made that there should not be differences, or that the differences should not be so large, between groups.

In terms of preferences it might be argued that differences arise because of family background and culture at an early age and schooling. It might then be argued that disadvantage in participation exists but is the result of early experiences rather than present barriers. Such an argument has been advanced in relation to differences between male and female participation in mathematics and science courses in postcompulsory schooling. Judgements about such matters can be informed by more detailed analyses which seek to identify underlying factors which result in differences between groups. Even then there may remain questions as to whether differences in choices represent disadvantage. For example, Wilson and Wynn (1987) suggest that is inappropriate to see gender equity as simply involving females participating to a greater extent in courses and careers in which males now predominate rather than involving more equal rewards for male and female oriented careers.

In the area of postcompulsory education and training, to a greater extent than school achievement, judgements about disadvantage need to take account of the range of options available and consequences for subsequent life chances. For example, if one group participates at a lower than average rate in higher education humanities courses but at a higher than average rate in apprenticeship, it is not self evident that they are disadvantaged. A judgement about disadvantage would need to take into account information about likely future outcomes from each form of education. Disadvantage in terms of postcompulsory education and training needs to be considered across the range of education and training provisions without
either assuming all have equal benefits or making arbitrary judgements about the esteem of each.

**The Paper**

The present paper reviews the research literature and associated statistics that are concerned with participation by disadvantaged young people. In the course of the review the paper:

- documents the latest available information about the participation in postcompulsory education and training of the relevant groups;
- examines possible reasons advanced to explain differential patterns of participation; and
- documents changes in participation rates over time where the relevant data are available.

The final sections of the paper draw on the review to elaborate the barriers to participation by disadvantaged young people, discuss strategies to overcome disadvantage, and canvass future policy options.

The paper focuses on Australian evidence and research that relates to differences in educational participation between groups. This issue has attracted substantial research attention over a considerable period of time. Indeed, the widespread acceptance of the concept of 'need' as a basis for educational policy can be largely attributed to the knowledge of social and educational processes accumulated from research conducted in Australia and overseas. It is clear, though, that more information is available about some dimensions of disadvantage than others. For example, gender issues in secondary schools have attracted substantial research interest whereas very little is known about the participation of Aboriginal people in on-the-job training. In general, the further an activity is from the formal education sector the more limited the available data base.

The variety of perspectives on, and approaches to, research on educational disadvantage (Keeves 1987) makes it difficult to integrate the findings and theories that have been generated. Nevertheless, the available research does allow some general conclusions to be drawn about the dimensions of educational disadvantage in Australia, the social groups in which disadvantage is most concentrated and, somewhat less satisfactorily, the origins of disadvantage.
Postcompulsory Schooling

Although the minimum school leaving age varies a little between states, and does not correspond precisely to a particular Year level, it has become conventional to regard Years 11 and 12 as the postcompulsory years of schooling. Since 1980 more than 90 per cent of young people have continued secondary school to Year 10 with the consequence that Year 10 and below have become regarded as the compulsory years. A separation of Years 11 and 12 from Years 7, 8, 9, and 10 is evident in curriculum structures, certification and examination structures, and many aspects of school organisation.

In the twenty years from 1970 to 1990 the percentage of each cohort of young people completing secondary education, as measured by the apparent retention rate from the first to final year of secondary school, has more than doubled. In 1970 the apparent retention rate to Year 12 was 29 per cent and in 1990 the rate was 64 per cent (DEET 1991a). Over the same period the proportion remaining to Year 11 also increased dramatically from 44 per cent in 1970 to 81 per cent in 1990. Trends in retention rates to Years 11 and 12 for the period from 1968 (the earliest year for which official data are available on a national basis) to 1990 are shown Figure 1. Those trends show that most of the growth in the retention of young people into the postcompulsory years of school has taken place since 1983. In a short space of time postcompulsory schooling has changed from selective to mass participation.

In 1983 public attention focused on a large increase in retention to Years 11 and 12. In that year retention to Year 12 increased from 36 to 41 per cent and to Year 11 from 57 to 64 per cent. Those increases now seem less of an aberration than they did at that time. Retention rate data on a national basis do not extend back past 1967 but participation rate data for 16-year-olds (the modal age for Year 11) and 17-year olds (the modal age for Year 12) suggest steadily rising levels of participation through the 1960s (Karmel 1981). Retention rates to Year 12 had risen steadily from 1967 until 1972 by about 1.9 percentage points per year. Between 1973 and 1981 the retention rate to Year 12 changed only slowly (averaging 0.3 percentage points per year), and actually declined over the period from 1978 to 1980. There was a slightly larger increase between 1981 and 1982 (1.5 percentage points) and since 1983 there has been sustained growth in the holding power of schools. From 1983 to 1990 the average increase in the apparent retention rate to Year 12 each year has been 3.6 percentage points, and to Year 11 the increase has been averaging 2.8 percentage points per annum.
Retention to Year 12

Retention to Year 11

Figure 1. Trends in Retention to Years 11 and 12
Another view of these patterns of participation in postcompulsory schooling comes from focusing on two cohorts of students, 20 years apart. The group of young people who reached Year 12 in 1990 began secondary school as Year 7 students in 1985 or Year 8 students in 1986. A small percentage (4 per cent) of this cohort left school before Year 10, a further 19 per cent left after Year 10, 13 per cent left after Year 11, and the majority (64 per cent) remained to Year 12. For the class which reached Year 12 in 1970 (i.e. they began secondary school in 1965 or 1966) the corresponding figures were: 24 per cent left before Year 10; a further 34 per cent left after Year 10; 13 per cent left after Year 11; and 29 per cent remained to Year 12. These contrasting patterns have been illustrated in Figure 2.

As shown in Figure 2 the percentage of young people who leave school before Year 10 is now very small and the percentage who complete Year 12 has increased enormously. Staying at school to Year 12 is now the pattern for a majority of young people.

![Figure 2. Leaving School in Australia: Two Cohorts](Image)

Source: DEET 1990
Within the general pattern of increased participation in postcompulsory schooling there remain differences associated with the background characteristics of young people. This section of the review considers research evidence concerning factors often believed to be associated with disadvantage in access to postcompulsory schooling. It examines participation by young people who are female, who come from home backgrounds of low social status, who are of non-English speaking background, who live in rural areas, who are Aboriginal, and who had low earlier school achievement. As a reference for the discussion, participation rates by each of the groups within these categories have been shown in Figure 3. The rates shown refer to the period for the late 1970s and the late 1980s. To be more precise they refer to the completion of Year 12 by the cohorts born in 1961 and 1970. In addition to its examination of participation in postcompulsory schooling in general, the paper considers evidence concerning the types of subjects studied in those years.

Figure 3. Year 12 Completion Rates for Different Groups

Source: Youth in Transition data reported by McKenzie (1991) and AEC (1990)
Young Women

Generally young women participate in the postcompulsory years of school to a greater extent than young men but they participate to a much smaller extent than men in advanced studies in mathematics, the physical sciences, and technical studies. Consequently young women are not disadvantaged in terms of overall participation in postcompulsory schooling but their choice of studies may limit future opportunities in education, training, and employment.

Participation

Figure 1 not only shows the overall trends in retention rates to Years 11 and 12 but the differences between females and males. Up until 1976 retention rates to Years 11 and 12 for females were lower than those for males but since then retention rates for females have been higher. In 1970 the retention rate to Year 12 for females was 26 per cent compared to a figure for males of 33 per cent; a deficit of 7 percentage points. In contrast, in 1990 the retention rate to Year 12 for females was 70 per cent compared to a figure for males of 58 per cent; a margin of 12 percentage points. Expressed differently the gain over 20 years in female retention to Year 12 was 44 percentage points compared to that for males of 26 percentage points. The corresponding gains in retention to Year 11 were similar. The change in the relative position of males and females over the twenty years from 1970 to 1990 is shown in Figure 4.

Observed differences between groups of young people in participation can result from direct influences or from the influences of associated factors. One would not expect there to be differences in social background between males and females in the schools of Australia and therefore one would not expect observed differences between male and female participation in postcompulsory schooling to be confounded by other background characteristics. This has been confirmed in analyses reported by Williams (1987). In nationally representative samples of students reaching Year 12 in 1978 and 1982 Williams showed that statistical adjustment for other background factors had no effect on the difference between male and female participation rates in Year 12. However, adjustment for earlier school achievement and interpersonal support reduced the difference somewhat. This was especially true for the cohort aged 19 in 1989 for whom the residual difference due to gender was only one percentage point (compared to seven without any adjustment) (Williams, Long, Carpenter & Hayden in press). Statistical adjustment addresses the question of what the difference between groups would be if they were alike in all other measured respects. In the case of differences between males and females in participation rates, it
can be inferred from the results of the adjustment process that the higher Year 12 participation rates among females compared to males is largely a consequence of higher levels of interpersonal support for further education (since there is not a large difference in earlier school achievement) (Williams et al in press).

Two possible explanations that are frequently offered for the increased retention of females to Years 11 and 12 concern differences between males and females in immediate employment opportunities and changing expectations which have expanded career opportunities for females and seen greater encouragement through schools for girls to continue their education. There is some support for each of these explanations.

Concerning differential employment opportunities, female unemployment among 15 to 19 year-olds was a little greater than that for males over the period from 1975 to 1989 (Alford 1990). Over those fifteen years the percentage of females aged 15 to 19 years who were unemployed averaged 10.2 per cent, compared to 9.7 per cent for males. Generally, female unemployment was greater than male unemployment from 1975
to 1981 but male unemployment was greater from 1982 to 1985. In 1986 and 1987 there was no difference in unemployment rates and in 1988 and 1989 female unemployment was marginally greater. Although the difference between males and females in the percentage who were unemployed was relatively small, account needs to be taken of those who were in part-time employment and nothing else (ie. not in conjunction with any study). Alford (1990) shows that, among 15 to 19 year olds over the period from 1975 to 1989, part-time employment (with or without study) has grown more rapidly than full-time employment, and has grown more rapidly for females than males. Results reported by McKenzie (1990a) for South Australia, and by Ainley and Sheret (1991) for Year 10 leavers in New South Wales, suggest that rather more females than males are in part-time employment not combined with study of any type. This underemployment could be taken as additional evidence of differences in job opportunities for males and females. Hence some females stay on at school because, if they drop out, their employment prospects are worse than those for males.

Concerning changed expectations the evidence from Youth in Transition cited above shows that encouragement and support to continue education has a stronger influence on staying at school for females than males (Williams et al in press). This is consistent with evidence that, whereas adolescent males rate jobs most highly as an area of personal concern, adolescent females rate education most highly (Poole & Evans 1988). It is not clear from these data whether young females see education as important in terms of personal development or longer term career plans. It has also been suggested that among students who continued into the postcompulsory years of school males tend to rate lack of immediate job opportunities more highly than females, but females rate satisfaction with school and longer term career factors more highly than males, as reasons for returning to school (Ainley, Batten & Miller 1984ab; Braithwaite 1989). It appears that one reason that more females remain at school than males is that they perceive stronger interpersonal support for that choice and that support is more influential than for males. Such an interpretation would be consistent with a view that a major cause of the changes in the relative retention rates for males and females has been changes in social attitudes towards education and careers for females.

**Subject Choice**

There is an association between gender and the types of subjects studied in Years 11 and 12. A recent national study of subject choice in the senior secondary school reported that Year 12 enrolment levels in the physical sciences (physics and chemistry) for males were more than double those for females.
Males also had higher enrolment levels than females in mathematics (and especially in the more advanced forms of mathematics) and technical studies. Females had higher enrolment levels than males in the creative and performing arts, the humanities and social sciences, and the biological and other sciences, as well as in the home sciences. Similar patterns applied in Year 11. These results are similar to those reported for 1987 in Victoria (Taylor, Alder & Harvey-Beavis 1989).

Even though there is still a noticeable gender difference in subject enrolments, differences between male and female enrolments in Year 12 Chemistry and Physics have become a little smaller in recent years (Dekkers, De Laeter & Malone 1986). In Biology, between 1977 and 1985, there was an increase in female enrolments but a decline in male enrolments so that Year 12 Biology became a subject in which female enrolments predominated.

When combinations of subjects taken by Year 12 students were considered by Ainley et al (1990) the gender differences were also striking. Participation rates for males in a Year 12 course of study which emphasised mathematics and science (typically mathematics in combination with physics and chemistry or double mathematics with chemistry and biology) were between two and three times greater than those for females. In terms of participation in a course which emphasised technical and applied studies, the ratio was even more strongly in favour of males although the overall level of participation was much smaller. Female participation was higher than males in courses which had an emphasis on humanities and social science, or creative and performing arts subjects, or which were structured around a selection of subjects from several areas without any one being dominant. There is some evidence that factors associated with participation in Year 12 courses which emphasise mathematics and science differ in importance for males and females. Earlier school achievement in numeracy and literacy is a stronger influence on participation in this type of course for males than females but interests and social background are stronger influences for females than males (Ainley at al 1990). There is evidence from studies in Queensland (Hobbs 1987) and Western Australia (Parker and Offer 1987) that many high achieving females avoid study in mathematics and science.

Moreover, results from the national study of subject choice indicate an interactive influence of social background and achievement on science participation for females. Among females of high socioeconomic background, high levels of earlier school achievement are associated with high participation in mathematics-science courses (as was the case for males of both
high and low socioeconomic background) but among females from low socioeconomic background no such association was observed. In other words, high achieving females from low socioeconomic backgrounds participate in mathematics-science oriented courses to a much smaller extent than would be expected.

There has been a number of suggestions offered for the underrepresentation of females in mathematics and physical science in senior secondary school (Johnston 1990). Willis (1989) argues that there has been a move away from explanations based on differential abilities to those which focus on reasons for different choices. A focus on choices is evident in considerations of the formation of attitudes to science through school and social expectations (Carpenter & Western 1984, Leder 1980), the image of science perceived by students and the curricula of science subjects (Fraser & Giddings 1987), and career aspirations. The interaction between socioeconomic status, achievement, and participation in mathematics-science courses suggests that a considerable part of the differences can be attributed to social expectations.

Differences between males and females in participation in various subjects in Years 11 and 12 would be a disadvantage if those differences were associated with differences in opportunities for further study and training or employment. There is evidence that a higher percentage of young people who take a Year 12 course of study with an emphasis on mathematics and science than other Year 12 students continue to studies in higher education (Ainley et al 1990, Bannister 1987). It is not clear to what extent that is reflected in future employment, although its impact on the range of careers open to females is likely to be substantial.

Young People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds

Research over a considerable period of time, both in Australia and overseas, suggests that an enriched social background is consistently and positively associated with a decision to remain at school to the postcompulsory years. Social background has often been measured as the socioeconomic status of a young person’s home using the occupations of the parents (most commonly fathers) and related factors as indicators. Year 12 participation rates by socioeconomic background, as reflected in parental occupations, from one study (Williams et al in press) at the end of the 1970s and the end of the 1980s have been shown in Figure 3. Some studies have used indicators of wealth to examine more directly the economic aspects of socioeconomic background and others have used indicators such as parental
encouragement to capture the social aspects of home background.

The issue of the extent to which observed associations between educational outcomes such as participation and socioeconomic status result from the "social" or "economic" aspects of socioeconomic status is teasingly complex. Insights into the distinction can be gained from studies which have assessed both and conducted appropriate forms of analysis. In a situation where these components of socioeconomic status are associated it can be misleading to draw causal inferences on the basis of a single measure of just one of these two dimensions.

**Participation**

Family socioeconomic status has been consistently reported to be associated with participation in education to Year 12 in research reviews extending over some time (Poole 1981; Anderson & Vervoorn, 1983; Blakers 1990). Studies at the individual level by Connell, Stroobant, Sinclair, Connell and Rogers (1975), Rosier (1978), Williams, Clancy, Batten, and Girting-Butcher (1980), Williams (1987) and the AEC (1991), and at the school level by Ainley et al (1984ab) all found that higher socioeconomic status was linked with staying at school, using parental occupation as the measure of socioeconomic status. In a review of issues and evidence concerning high school dropouts in the United States, Rumberger (1987) notes that perhaps the most important family background factor associated with dropping out is low socioeconomic status, regardless of the particular indicators used in its measurement.

There is evidence that, as retention to Year 12 has risen, the association between socioeconomic status and participation has declined a little. McKenzie (1990b) compared the percentage of the low, middle, and high socioeconomic groups who reached Year 12 in three cohorts of young people. The first cohort was born in 1961 and typically reached Year 12 in 1978, the second was born in 1965 and typically reached Year 12 in 1982, and the third was born in 1970 and typically reached Year 12 in 1987. Among the first of these cohorts the percentage from the low socioeconomic group reaching Year 12 was less than half that of the high group (the participation rates being 25 and 53 per cent respectively, a difference of 28 percentage points). In the second cohort, also, Year 12 participation for the low socioeconomic group was also less than half that of the high group with the disparity being a little wider than in the first cohort (31 percentage points). In the third cohort Year 12 participation from the low socioeconomic group was a little more than two thirds that of the high group and the size of the difference had diminished to 20 percentage points (the rates were 47 and 67 per cent respectively).
Socioeconomic status is associated with other influences on staying at school to Year 12, including school achievement and interpersonal support and encouragement for continued education. It becomes important for interpretations which might be drawn, therefore to make adjustments for the associated effects of these influences. Williams (1987) reports analyses which show that, in the early 1980s, the influence of socioeconomic status operated partly through its effect on achievement (i.e., students from poorer backgrounds did less well at school and therefore were less likely to continue at school) (see also Ainley & Sheret 1991), partly because it was associated with other social factors (such as support and encouragement or living in a rural area), and partly as a direct influence. In other words among people otherwise equal there was still a difference associated with socioeconomic status.

Several studies have suggested that the observed association between socioeconomic background and participation in schooling resulted from social aspects of the background to a greater extent than economic factors. For example, Power (1984) looked at the effect of parental education and parental encouragement, and suggested that these factors were more strongly linked to retention rates than were economic factors. Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett (1982) argue that family influences can shape the educational careers of young people in a variety of ways: caring about schooling, relationships through discussions and discipline, and internal structures. Other evidence on this point comes from studies by Miller (1982) and Carpenter and Western (1984).

The Youth in Transition study (Williams 1987: Williams et al. in press) also examined the effects of family wealth (measured in terms of the ownership of goods) on participation in postcompulsory schooling reporting that participation was rather greater for those from the wealthiest quartile than the poorest quartile. For those aged 19 in 1980 the rates were 48 and 28 per cent and for those aged 19 in 1989 they were 67 and 49 per cent. From these data it can be noted that through the 1980s Year 12 participation among the least wealthy increased at a greater rate (it nearly doubled) than among the most wealthy (it increased by one third). Given that there is an association, albeit an imperfect one, between socioeconomic status and wealth it is important for interpretation to know which has the larger effect. After analyses designed to explore the relative influences of wealth and socioeconomic status Williams (1987) concluded that, although each factor influenced participation, the influence of social background was greater than that of wealth as such.

There are other studies which report similar general conclusions to this. Beswick, Hayden and Schofield (1983) concluded from
the results of a survey of young people who left school after Years 10 and 11 that financial considerations influenced the decision to leave school only to a limited extent. Meade (1982) noted that assistance under the Secondary Allowance Scheme went to those who were already committed to continuing their education but that the allowance reduced the degree of financial hardship. A more recent study by Braithwaite (1986) reinforced that view and emphasised that for most of the families receiving assistance under this scheme, keeping children at school did create financial problems. However there are studies which draw attention to the role of income and financial factors in continuation with school for some young people. For example, Chapman and Thomson (1981) suggested that financial considerations were a deterrent to continued participation at school for some students. An issue which arises from basing measures of socioeconomic status on fathers' occupations is that of missing data. In most studies information about fathers' occupations is not provided in a codeable form in 10 per cent or more of the cases. Among the uncodeable responses are "unemployed", "deceased", or "not at home". There is a suggestion in some studies that financial assistance, such as that provided under the Secondary Allowance Scheme or AUSTUDY, may be of greater importance in deciding to continue at school for these particular groups than for those with fathers in regular employment (Meade 1982; Ainley et al 1984a; Braithwaite 1986, 1989). A study by the Brotherhood of St Laurence monitored income and expenditure of 50 families on Unemployment Benefit and concluded that limited income was associated with lower educational participation rates (Sheen 1988).

In summary, even after an allowance is made for associated factors, low socioeconomic status is associated with not continuing school into the postcompulsory years. This appears to be partly a result of economic factors and partly a result of cultural factors. The influence of socioeconomic status operates to some extent through lower school achievement but, even among those equal in earlier school achievement and other associated characteristics, fewer of those from low social status backgrounds complete secondary school. It was noted above that for the cohorts reaching Year 12 in 1978, 1982 and 1987, the differences in Year 12 participation rates between the upper and lower socioeconomic status groups were 28, 31 and 20 percentage points. Data from the Youth in Transition study (Williams 1987; Williams et al in press) suggest that, if young people from those groups were equal in other respects, including achievement, the differences would have been 12, 19, and 4 percentage points respectively.
subject Choice

ear 11 and 12 students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and to have lower enrolment levels in the physical sciences and the traditional humanities and social sciences than those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Ainley et al 1990). This is evident in participation in Year 12 courses which emphasise advanced mathematics and sciences; more students from high, compared to low, socioeconomic backgrounds take those courses. However, this largely results from females of low socioeconomic status not taking these courses and social background does not have much influence on participation in mathematics-science courses among males. Social background also influences participation in Year 12 courses oriented around economics and business subjects or technical and applied studies where students from low status backgrounds participate to a greater extent than those from high status backgrounds.

Young People of Non-English Speaking Background

n Australia, being of a non-English speaking background usually corresponds to being the child of an immigrant. Most research on educational participation by the children of immigrant Australians compares those whose parents came from non-English-speaking countries with those from English-speaking countries and with those born in Australia. This means that non-English speaking background includes both first and second generation immigrants but includes more of the latter than the former (second generation immigrants being those born in Australia of parents born overseas).

Much educational literature has assumed that such students would be disadvantaged in terms of participation because of either language difficulties in learning, because of cultural differences between home and school, or simply because of problems of fitting in with the school youth culture (Fitzgerald, 1976; Blakers 1990). On the other hand, it has been argued that migrants hold high aspirations for their children to succeed in a new country and that this results in a great deal of encouragement to continue with formal study (Taft 1975ab; Blandy & Goldsworthy 1975; Turney, Inglis, Sinclair & Straton 1978; Hayden 1982; Sturman 1985). Overall, the research evidence indicates that young people of non-English speaking background complete Year 12 in greater proportions than their peers and more frequently take courses in the postcompulsory years which emphasise mathematics and science. In those senses there is no evidence of disadvantage by immigrants as a whole with respect to participation in postcompulsory schooling.
Participation

There is consistent evidence from a number of studies including those reviewed by Sturman (1985), Vervoorn and Creagh (1987) and Williams et al (in press) that a higher proportion of students of a non-English-speaking background than students of an Australian born background complete Year 12 at secondary school. There appears to be little difference in the participation in postcompulsory schooling of immigrants from English-speaking countries and those whose parents were born in Australia. Other studies are consistent with these findings (see Taft 1975ab; Williams et al 1980; Ainley et al 1984ab).

Within this general pattern there can be differences between different ethnic groups (DEET 1987A; Vervoorn and Creagh 1987). Clifton and Williams (1986) document that the children of Greek-born parents have much higher secondary school completion rates, and children of Italian-born parents have slightly higher secondary school completion rates, than those of Australian and other-English speaking born parents. It is suggested by other writers that, despite a generally favourable picture, some groups such as the children of Turkish or Lebanese parents may tend to leave school early (Young, Petty & Faulkner 1980). Others draw attention to the complexities of influences and aspirations within particular subgroups (Hartley and Maas 1987). These observations provide the fine structure within a general pattern rather than a contradiction of that pattern.

McKenzie (1990b) documents the differences between three cohorts of young people in the relative rates of completing Year 12 for those non-English speaking background, those of English-speaking immigrant background, and those of non-English speaking background. For all three cohorts there was almost no difference between those English-speaking immigrant background and those of Australian-born background, but those of non-English speaking background had higher Year 12 completion rates than either of these groups. During the period of little increase in aggregate Year 12 completion rates from 1978 to 1982 it appears that the only growth in Year 12 completion occurred amongst those from a non-English speaking background. In 1978, 35 per cent of those of Australian born background completed Year 12 compared to 40 per cent of those from non-English speaking background. By 1982 the corresponding figures were 34 per cent and 49 per cent. Between 1982 and 1987 the fastest rates of increase in Year 12 completion occurred for those with fathers born either in Australia or another English-speaking country. By 1987, 54 per cent of Australian background students completed Year 12 compared to 60 per cent of those from non-English speaking
Although young people from a non-English speaking background are still more likely to complete year 12, this gap has narrowed in recent years. In a recent analysis Williams et al (in press) show that successive generations of immigrants tend to move towards the participation patterns for other young people.

Observed Year 12 participation rates understate the effect of non-English speaking background on staying at school, because associated factors tend to depress those rates. For example, non-English speaking background is associated with low socioeconomic status which is itself associated with lower rates of participation in postcompulsory schooling. When allowance is made for this, and other associated background factors (not including achievement), the difference in Year 12 completion between young people of non-English speaking background and others is wider. According to results reported by Williams (1987) and Williams et al (in press) the observed difference, for the group reaching Year 12 in 1978, of five percentage points between those of non-English-speaking and Australian-born backgrounds would have been 11 percentage points if other things had been equal. For the group reaching Year 12 in 1982 the observed difference of 13 percentage points would have been 18 percentage points, and for the group reaching Year 12 in 1987 the observed difference was five percentage points but the adjusted difference would have been 12 percentage points.

Subject Choice

Year 11 and 12 students of a non-English-speaking background have higher enrolment levels than other students in the physical sciences, mathematics, and languages other than English but lower enrolment levels in the humanities and social sciences (Ainley et al 1990). When the combinations of subjects taken at Year 12 are considered, non-English-speaking background is strongly associated with participation in courses which emphasise science and mathematics and courses which emphasise language studies. The participation rate in a mathematics-science course type among those of non-English-speaking background is almost twice that for those an English-speaking background. Participation rates by Year 12 students of non-English-speaking in courses which emphasised the humanities and social sciences, courses which emphasised the creative and performing arts, and courses which emphasised technical and applied studies were lower than for other Year 12 students. Students from a non-English-speaking background were also less likely than other students to take Year 12 courses which lacked a special emphasis.
Young People from Rural Locations

In many policy reviews concerned with schooling in rural Australia advantages and disadvantages of rural schools are itemised (eg. Commonwealth Schools Commission 1987; Australia 1989). Advantages are seen to reside in security provided in smaller more supportive environment, the greater possibility for providing pastoral care, the organisational flexibility which is possible, and the potential for greater community involvement. Disadvantages typically concern restrictions on curriculum range in the secondary years, high levels of teacher turnover and a high proportion of inexperienced teachers, lack of access to cultural facilities, and a limited range of occupational models in the community. In response to these disadvantages there has been established a range of programs aimed at compensating for these factors (Commonwealth Schools Commission 1987). A major basis for programs concerned with participation in secondary school resides in the observation that Year 12 participation rates from rural areas are lower than those from city areas (Australia 1989).

Participation

The participation rates in the postcompulsory years for young people who live in rural areas are a little lower than for those from urban areas. In 1989 Year 12 completion rates were 60 per cent for urban locations (population centres of 100,000 or more), 56 per cent for rural locations, and 47 per cent for remote locations (AEC 1991). The differences among locations were similar for males and females and, over the period from 1984 to 1989, the differences between urban, rural and remote locations have remained about the same even though Year 12 completion has increased overall. Similar findings of rural disadvantage were reported in the Review of Labour Market Programs (Kirby 1985), by Boylan and Bragget (1988) and, for Tasmania, by Abbott- Chapman, Hughes & Wyld (1986ab) and Jarvis (1990). However, as noted by DEET (1987b) there are much more dramatic differences in Year 12 completion rates between areas within Australia’s capital cities than between urban and rural areas.

Williams et al (in press) note the same general pattern even though a slightly different measure of "rurality" was used. Rurality, in that report, was measured by population density. Year 12 participation rates of young people from the most rural quartile of families were, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, some 13 percentage points lower than those of people living in urban areas. In the late 1980s the difference was only a little smaller with some 51 per cent of those from the most rural
quartile compared to 61 per cent of those from the most urban quartile completing Year 12.

Rurality is associated with other background characteristics, such as non-English-speaking background and socioeconomic status, as well as factors such as earlier school achievement (Williams et al 1980). Williams et al (in press) show that adjustment for the influence of other background factors reduces the observed gap between rural and urban locations a little (to around 10 percentage points for the early 1980s and five percentage points for the late 1980s). In other words, a small part of the observed difference between urban and rural areas is associated with background factors associated with rurality rather than rurality as such. A similar inference was drawn by Boylan and Bragget (1988) from a quite different set of data. If allowance is also made for mediating factors such as interpersonal support and achievement scores the difference between urban and rural Year 12 completion rates almost disappears. It can be inferred from this that much of the observed difference between urban and rural locations in participation in postcompulsory schooling is associated with the lower levels of interpersonal support and achievement of students from rural locations.

The order of magnitude is similar to that from studies of school retention rates in the early 1980s which also noted a reduction in the difference between retention rates for metropolitan and non-metropolitan high school when allowance is made for the concomitant effects of average socioeconomic status and the percentage of students of non-English-speaking background (Ainley et al 1984ab). Notwithstanding the conclusion concerning the mediating role of achievement and interpersonal support it could be that access to opportunities for postcompulsory schooling could influence rural participation more strongly in some contexts. In Tasmania, where postcompulsory schooling has been structured around senior secondary colleges located in towns and cities, Abbott-Chapman et al (1986a) report that proximity and availability of senior secondary education influence participation.

**Subject Choice**

Among students in Years 11 and 12, enrolment levels in different subject areas are not substantially different between rural and city locations. Ainley et al (1990) compared subject area enrolment levels for students from capital cities, other cities (more than 25,000 people), and rural areas. Enrolment levels from rural areas were a little lower than those from cities in mathematics, physical sciences, economics and business, and languages other than English. Interestingly mathematics and
physical science enrolments were greatest in "other cities" possibly reflecting the fact that this category includes the main industrial cities. In contrast there was a tendency for biology and subject areas with a more practical orientation such as technical studies, agriculture, and home economics to have higher enrolments in rural areas than elsewhere. These differences are reflected in the types of Year 12 courses undertaken by rural students. A smaller percentage of students took courses with an emphasis on mathematics and science (15 per cent compared to 17 per cent for students from other cities and 16 per cent from capital cities), economics and business (11, 8, and 14 per cent respectively). A higher percentage of students from rural areas studied courses with an emphasis on technical and applied studies (5 per cent compared to 3 per cent from the two types of city location) or courses with no special emphasis.

**Young Aboriginal People**

As noted by a recent parliamentary inquiry into Year 12 retention rates (Australia 1989), the review of Aboriginal employment and training programs (Miller 1985), and the Aboriginal education task force (Hughes 1988), participation by Aboriginal students in postcompulsory secondary schooling is substantially lower than that for other Australians. Based on numbers of people in receipt of ABSTUDY allowances the retention rate to Year 12 for Aboriginal people in 1980 was 8 per cent, compared to 35 per cent for other Australians (AEC 1991). By 1989 retention to Year 12 for Aboriginal people had risen to 30 per cent, compared to 60 per cent for other Australians (AEC 1991). In other words retention to postcompulsory schooling for Aboriginal people has risen more rapidly than for other people but is still only half the size of that for the population as a whole. In 1985 the Quality of Education Review Report (Karmel 1985) noted that despite improvements in participation in education at all levels the outcomes for Aboriginal people remain seriously inadequate.

It is evident from official data that a significant number of Aboriginal students leave school before Year 10 (AEC 1991). In 1989 overall retention to Year 10 was 96 per cent whereas Year 10 retention for Aboriginal people was 78 per cent. Over the ten years from 1980 Year 10 retention rates overall grew from 91 per cent to 96 per cent and those for Aboriginal people grew from 66 per cent to 78 per cent. On this basis it is possible to estimate that the progression rate from Year 10 to Year 12 in 1989 overall was 63 per cent and that for Aboriginal people was 37 per cent.

Some of the influences which have been seen to be barriers to Aboriginal participation in education are low socioeconomic
status (Broom & Jones 1973), poverty (Watts 1976), geographical isolation (more than 40 per cent of the Aboriginal people live in rural areas compared to 14 per cent of the population as a whole) (Miller 1985), inappropriate teaching methods, curricula, and school environments (Huggonson 1984; Sykes 1986), and the absence of aboriginal staff in schools (Miller 1985). Watts (1976) also noted that significant numbers of Aboriginal students were placed in classes for less academically oriented students. Watts (1976) notes the heterogeneity of Aboriginal people in secondary schools and Coppell (1986) through a series of interviews draws attention to the diversity of views expressed by Aboriginal students about secondary education, subjects and teaching methods.

Generally there are few studies in the research literature which probe the ways in which these and other factors interact to influence the low Year 12 completion rates for Aboriginal people. Given the magnitude of the difference between school retention rates for Aboriginal people and that for Australians as a whole, this is surprising.

**Students of Low Earlier School Achievement**

In several of the preceding sections attention has been drawn to the role of achievement in shaping whether students participate in the postcompulsory years of schooling. It has been noted that students with low levels of earlier school achievement are less likely to participate in postcompulsory schooling.

Analyses from the Youth in Transition data (Williams 1987; Williams et al in press) indicate that the level of earlier school achievement is among the most powerful of influences on Year 12 completion. For the cohort of young people who were aged 19 in 1980, some 67 per cent of those from the highest achievement quartile but only 10 per cent of the lowest achievement quartile had completed Year 12. Year 12 completion rates for the middle two quartiles were 38 per cent for the second highest and 22 per cent for the third highest achievement level. In other words the relationship between participation and achievement was non-linear. Among the cohort aged 19 in 1984, the Year 12 completion rates for the achievement quartiles were 63, 38, 20 and 14 per cent respectively. Most importantly, these values were largely unaffected by adjustment for concomitant differences in social and personal background. In a study of New South Wales high schools, Ainley and Sheret (1991) also report that earlier school achievement was the strongest influence on continuing beyond Year 10 to Year 11. In the United States Rumberger (1987) reports that poor academic achievement has been found to be associated with dropping out from school.
McKenzie (1990b) shows that over the 1980s, as school retention has increased, the most rapid growth in Year 12 retention has occurred among those from the lower half of earlier school achievement. For the cohort aged 19 in 1989 Year 12 completion rates for the four achievement quartiles were 81, 54, 51, and 22 per cent. It should be noted, however, that the rapid growth in retention among the lowest achievement quartile has occurred from a very low base. As a consequence the proportion of Year 12 students drawn from the lowest quartile of school achievement is still quite small. The Year 12 completion rate for the highest quartile of early school achievers exceeded 80 per cent. In contrast, just over half of those from the middle two quartiles of early school achievement completed Year 12 in 1987. This indicates where the greatest growth in school holding power has taken place and where there is a potential for further growth from this quarter. Overall, however, the data suggest that further rises in school retention rates will increasingly come from young people from in the middle and lower parts of the achievement range.

Williams et al (1981) refer also to the influence of students' self-evaluations of their capacities on continuing to the postcompulsory years of secondary school. Even when allowance is made for measured school achievement, those who consider themselves successful at school are more likely to participate in postcompulsory schooling than those who have negative views of their abilities. This argument is supported by Madden (1980) and, in the United States, by Finn (1989). In other words a sense of success is an important part of continuing school into the postcompulsory years.

There are other attitudinal dimensions which are also important in shaping students' decisions about continuing with school. A more positive view of school life is associated with participation in the postcompulsory years. Some writers argue that low school achievement provokes negative attitudes to school which result in dropping out (Connell et al 1982). However, there is a body of evidence which suggests that attitudes to school are largely independent of achievement levels and independently influence participation in the postcompulsory years (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Ecob & Lewis 1988; Ainley, Foreman & Sheret 1991).

Rumberger (1987) refers to United States research which shows that behavioural problems in school are associated with dropping out. It can be inferred from this that it is possible to reduce disadvantage by raising levels of achievement, by promoting confidence among students, and by improving school environments. Rumberger (1987) cites research which suggests that, in the United States, dropout rates vary widely between schools even after controlling for population differences. Ainley et al (1984a) and Batten (1989) have shown that innovative...
curricula in Victoria were associated with higher holding power.
In Tasmania, research by Abbott-Chapman et al. (1986ab) indicates that school factors and the influence of teachers can shape students' attitudes to school and to continuing at school. They find some schools where retention rates are rather higher than would be expected on the basis of demographic and geographic characteristics.

Finn (1989) conceptualises these factors in two models both of which see dropping out as a developmental process beginning in earlier years of school. One is the "frustration-self-esteem" model which sees dropping out resulting from failure and a sense of failure. The other is a "participation-identification model" which focuses on involvement in schooling. According to the second of these, the chances of a young person completing their secondary education are greatest when they participate in a range of school and class activities and identify with school.

Technical and Further Education

Historical studies of the development of technical education in Australia highlight an ambivalence in the way it is viewed. Murray-Smith (1971) points out that the development of a wide range of technical skills was seen as necessary for the development of a new nation and that technical education grew out of the mechanics institutes in promoting educational opportunity more widely in the community. On the other hand technical education was seen as peripheral to the main purpose of education in terms of financial support and organisational structure. Vestiges of these attitudes remain evident in the complex and contradictory roles seen for the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) systems in Australia. Powles (in press) refers to a "social service" view of TAFE based on generic vocational curricula evident in the report "TAFE in Australia" (Kangan 1974) and an "economic utility" view oriented to training in specific skills defined in terms of immediate industrial requirements. Despite the importance placed on TAFE the OECD (1989) report on Australia commented that there was inadequate provision for, and lack of coordination of, skill development.

TAFE encompasses a wide range of programs offered in various institutions and agencies. It is clearly a most important component of the system of vocational education and training in Australia, although Sweet (1990a) notes that official enrolment figures overstate its size because a large number of enrolments are part-time and in short duration programs. In addition many programs have high dropout rates. TAFE is a major destination for those who leave school. In 1988 some 23 per cent of all
school leavers commenced a course in technical and further education; almost the same as the percentage who commenced in higher education and much greater than the percentage who commenced courses in other institutions (five per cent) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1990c). Sturman and Long (1990) estimate that nearly one in three (32 per cent) young people have participated in at least one TAFE course by age 19. That figure has increased only slightly (and is probably better described as fairly constant) over the period from 1979 (29 per cent), through 1984 (31 per cent), to 1989 (32 per cent). The Department of Employment, Education and Training (1988) argues that increased participation in school and higher education partly explains the lack of growth in the TAFE sector in the 1980s but Powles (1990a) notes that TAFE in the 1980s operated in a climate of financial constraint which restricted the number of places. For example, in Queensland in 1986 it has been estimated that there was a shortage of about 50,000 places in TAFE (Blakers 1990). Hawke and Sweet (1983) observe that the emergence of these pressures has caused a rethinking of TAFE admissions policies from an emphasis on “openness” (a key feature of policy statements of the 1970s) to “fairness”.

Characteristics of TAFE

The TAFE systems were formed out of varied state provisions for technical education following the report of the Committee on Technical and Further Education in 1974 (Kangan 1974). This has resulted in a greater coherence in the provision for technical education and a broadening of purpose to give greater emphasis than before to preparatory courses and to adult and community education. The activities which are seen as the responsibility of TAFE institutions are vocational training for a trade or other skilled occupation, preparatory or bridging course prior to vocational training, retraining and advanced skills training, and programs of personal development not specifically related to training for work. However, vocational education remains a central concern; especially in terms of the participation of young people. A majority (60 per cent) of the vocational preparation places in TAFE involve apprenticeships (Sweet 1990a).

Types of Course

According to data recorded by DEET (1990a) enrolments of students aged 15 to 19 years for 1988 were distributed as follows:

- fewer than five per cent of TAFE students aged 15 to 19 years were in recreation and leisure courses (classified as stream 1000),
22 per cent were in basic employment and educational preparation courses (streams 2100 and 2200),
33 per cent were in initial vocational courses (streams 3100 to 3600), and
four per cent had commenced post initial training.
It should be noted the percentages add to more than 100 because of the existence of multiple enrolments. Enrolments in initial vocational courses were distributed such that:
- 19 per cent were in training courses for operatives,
- 45 per cent were in trades training,
- 15 per cent were training for other skilled occupations,
- 9 per cent were undertaking trade technician training, and
- 6 per cent were in paraprofessional technician training.

**Mode of Participation**

The mode of participation in TAFE differs from higher education in that a large percentage of participants study on a part-time basis. In 1988, just over half of all TAFE preparatory and vocational students aged from 15 to 19 years were apprentices who typically attended college for one day per week. In total, some 80 per cent of vocational and preparatory students aged 15 to 19 years were part-time (DEET 1989a). This is lower than the figure for all TAFE enrolments where 90 per cent are part-time (Powles 1990b). Powles (1990b) points out that, although it is commonly assumed that part-time TAFE students are in employment, that is not universally so.

Despite difficulties of compatibility of official statistics with those for previous years there does appear to have been a small increase in the percentage of vocational and preparatory students in the 15 to 19 year-old age range who were full time. There was an increase from 15 per cent in 1975, through 16 per cent in 1982 and 18 per cent in 1985, to about 20 per cent in 1988. This is consistent with data presented by Sturman and Long (1990). Their data for age cohorts suggest that there was growth in participation in full-time TAFE courses up to age 19, from four per cent of an age cohort in 1980, through eight per cent in 1984, to 11 per cent in 1989. Powles (1990b) reports that a smaller than expected percentage of full-time TAFE students have part-time jobs, citing DEET (1984) statistics which show that only about 40 per cent of these students were working part-time. This is a somewhat lower percentage than for students in higher education.
Apprenticeships

The apprenticeship system is the major source of skilled trades workers in Australia and a major form of educational provision for young males in particular. Its most interesting feature is that it embodies the principle of training “on-the-job” concurrently with vocational education in a structured format. Normally the duration of an apprenticeship is four years during which an apprentice works for an employer and attends a TAFE college. Even though there are variations between trades and states a normal apprenticeship involves about 800 hours attendance at college; typically one day per week for 36 weeks in each of the first three years. Alternatives such as “block release” vary the way attendance at college is organised but not the relative times.

According to Sturman and Long (1990) participation in apprenticeship by age 19 appeared relatively constant between 1980 and 1984 but declined a little from 18 to 16 per cent over the period from from 1984 to 1989. Sweet (1990a) notes that the percentage of first year apprentices who had been full-time students in the previous year declined in the late 1980s. From 1983 through 1987 more than 80 per cent of apprentices came direct from full-time study but in 1989 only 71 per cent came from that source. In other words in the late 1980s more new apprentices were commencing after a period in the labour force rather than direct from school.

Traineeships

The Australian Traineeship System represents a relatively new training option involving TAFE and incorporating some characteristics similar to those of apprenticeships. Traineeships were introduced following recommendations from the Committee of Inquiry Into Labour Market Programs (Kirby 1985).

Traineeships involve “broad-based training”, conducted both “on the-job” and “off-the-job”, in non-trades employment and are aimed at facilitating entry to the labour market and career development for young people. They generally comprise a 12 month training period with a minimum 13 weeks “off-the-job” training in a TAFE college or other approved centre. Wages are reduced to reflect the period of off-the-job learning. In contrast apprentices are paid at a rate less than full adult rates but wages are not reduced for time spent at college.

It was only in 1986-87 that there were significant numbers of young people commencing traineeships. According to Sweet (1990a) traineeships make up only a small proportion (about 0.5 per cent) of vocational course enrolments in TAFE. An evaluation of the Australian Traineeship System reported that the financial year 1986-87 there were 6325 commencements.
(DEET 1989b). Data in the Australian Year Book show that in 1988-89 there were approximately 14,000 approvals for new traineeships. Ainley and Sheret (1991) report that some six per cent of Year 10 leavers from New South Wales high schools in 1989 entered traineeships and that most involved office work or retail sales. A survey of former trainees who commenced in February 1987 showed that the overwhelming majority were in office and clerical work (81 per cent) with a further five per cent in retail and seven per cent in telecommunication occupations (DEET 1989b). Just over half (56 per cent) of the trainees were in private sector employment.

**Fields of Study**

TAFE also covers a wide range of fields of study. It is possible to consider the distribution of enrolments from vocational and preparatory courses across fields of study but it is not possible to separate those for students aged 19 or younger from the rest. According to official statistics five of the 11 fields of study contain 87 per cent of students (DEET 1990a):

- business studies which involves some 29 per cent of students,
- engineering involves 18 per cent,
- personal services (which includes such areas as food presentation, hospitality, hairdressing, and child care) involves 16 per cent,
- industrial services (includes aircraft operations, clothing textile and footwear, printing, and food preparation) involves 12 per cent, and
- general studies enrolls 12 per cent.

There are only minor differences between fields of study in the distribution of full-time and part-time students. Over the ten years from 1979 to 1988 there was a decline in the percentage of enrolments in engineering (from 26 to 18 per cent) and general studies (from 17 to 12 per cent) and a rise in the percentage of enrolments in industrial services (from 5 to 12 per cent) and personal services (from 9 to 16 per cent) (Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission 1980; DEET 1990a).

Figure 5 contains an indication of TAFE participation rates for various social groups for the period at the end of the 1970s and the end of the 1980s. These data are derived from the reports of the Youth in Transition study (Sturman & Long 1990; Williams 1987; Williams et al in press) and refer to having participated in TAFE by the age of 19, for those aged 19 in 1980 and 1989 respectively.
Early School Leavers

TAFE students have traditionally differed from those in higher education in their educational background. Whereas almost all students entering higher education have completed Year 12 in secondary school that has not been the case for TAFE. The majority of those who enter TAFE do so with a schooling background that does not extend beyond completion of Year 11. This is particularly so in the case of those who commence apprenticeships. However, Year 12 now represents a rapidly growing source of TAFE students because of the growth in participation to Year 12. It is worth examining this development in a little detail since it could have implications for the access of disadvantaged groups.
TAFE In General

In a survey conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Education in 1975 the percentages of TAFE vocational and preparatory students who had completed Years 9, 10, 11, and 12 were 19, 44, 18 and 19 per cent respectively (Commonwealth Department of Education 1978). According to Sturman and Long (1990), among the cohort aged 19 in 1980, TAFE participation rates were 21, 40, 37, and 19 per cent for Year 9, Year 10, Year 11, and Year 12 leavers respectively. Taking into account the overall distribution of school attainment in their sample this means that the TAFE school-attainment profile for students up to age 19 at that time can be estimated as 9 per cent Year 9, 44 per cent Year 10, 22 per cent Year 11, and 25 per cent Year 12. Between that cohort and the cohort aged 19 in 1984, the main changes in TAFE school-attainment profile were a decline in the percentage of TAFE participants with Year 9 (to three per cent) and a rise for those with Year 10 (to 53 per cent). The percentage with Year 11 and and Year 12 changed only slightly (the former rising to 23 per cent and the latter dropping to 21 per cent). Table 1 records the school-attainment profile for TAFE students (aged up to 19 years) at four points over the past 15 years.

Table 1  Estimated School Attainment Profiles for Vocational and Preparatory Students to Age 19 in TAFE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attainment</th>
<th>Early&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; 1970s</th>
<th>Late&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 1970s</th>
<th>Early&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 1980s</th>
<th>Late&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; 1980s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than Year 10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Based on Commonwealth Department of Education Survey from 1975.

<sup>b</sup> Based on Youth in Transition Data for those aged 19 in 1980, 1984, and 1989 respectively.

The dramatic increase in school retention rates since 1983 has not altered the percentage of Year 12 leavers who enter TAFE but, because that group is now much larger, it has altered the
profile of TAFE participants. For the cohort aged 19 in 1989, 21 per cent of Year 12 leavers participated in TAFE and, therefore, Year 12 leavers comprised 36 per cent of the TAFE participants from that cohort. Mageean (1989), noting that some 60 per cent of traineeship students in South Australia have studied to Year 12 level, has suggested that in the near future a majority of TAFE students will have completed secondary Year 12.

These changes have taken place even though there is little evidence that the formal entry requirements to TAFE courses have been lifted. Powles (1990a) reported that minimum academic requirements had not changed over the preceding five years in any of the TAFE courses she had analysed in either Victoria or New South Wales: Associate Diplomas still usually required a HSC (Year 12) pass or its equivalent, and Certificates generally required Year 10 with passes in specified subjects. Nevertheless, although entry requirements to particular courses did not appear to have risen, several Certificate courses in NSW and Queensland had been reclassified as Associate Diplomas with a corresponding rise in minimum entry level. Of course, the minimum entry level specified for a given TAFE course is not necessarily the same as the level required to actually gain a place.

Sturman and Long (1990) note that the relationship between entry into TAFE and years of schooling completed is different for males and females. Males entering TAFE tended to have left school at an earlier stage than females. This pattern is associated with differences in the types of TAFE programs being entered by males and females. Males tended to be entering apprenticeships in much greater numbers than females and apprenticeships tend to take entrants who leave school at an earlier stage than full-time TAFE courses.

**Apprentices**

Generally, those undertaking apprenticeship training have not completed as many years of secondary school as TAFE students in general. The State Training Board in Victoria (1989) provides data on changes in the educational background of commencing apprentices over the past decade. In 1978, 57 per cent of commencing apprentices in Victoria had left school at Year 10 or earlier, and the numbers entering apprenticeships with a Year 12 background were negligible. By 1988 the proportion of those with Year 10 or earlier had declined to 39 per cent, while those who had completed Year 12 had risen sharply to 16 per cent. Sweet (1990a) reports a similar trend in apprenticeship participation in New South Wales. In 1980-81, 14 per cent of commencing apprentices had completed Year 12, 9 per cent had completed Year 11, and 77 per cent had attained Year 10 or less.
After a small decline in Year 12 completion among new apprentices through the early and middle 1980s, there was a rise in attainment levels after 1986. By 1988-89, 20 per cent of new apprentices had completed Year 12, 12 per cent had completed Year 11, and 68 per cent had completed Year 10 or less. Mealyea (1985) notes, in the context of the changing social composition of apprentices in Victoria, that there is a potential for children of “middle class families, professional parents” with “passes at HSC level at private or high schools” to displace “those from working class families and technical school backgrounds”.

Data reported by Sturman and Long (1990) enabled a national school-attainment profile for apprentices in three cohorts to be constructed. These school-attainment profiles for apprentices are shown in Table 2. For those aged 19 in 1980 the attainment profile for apprentices showed that, compared to other TAFE students, there was about the same percentage who had completed Year 9 only (ten per cent) but more from Years 10 and 11 (53 per cent of apprentices had left school after Year 10 and 24 per cent had left at Year 11) and fewer from Year 12 (13 per cent of apprentices had left school after Year 12). Among apprentices in the cohort aged 19 in 1984, compared to that from 1980, there were more school leavers from Year 10 (68 per cent) about the same from Year 11 (21 per cent), and fewer who had completed Year 12 (six per cent). For the cohort aged 19 in 1989, Year 12 leavers made up 19 per cent Year 11 leavers made up 25 per cent and those who had attained Year 10 or less made up 56 per cent of apprentices.

Traineeships

According to the DEET survey of former trainees, a majority (80 per cent) of commencing traineeships in 1986-87 had not completed Year 12. Among those who commenced traineeships in 1987 just under three quarters (74 per cent) had not reached Year 12 with one quarter (26 per cent) having studied to Year 12 (DEET 1989b).
Table 2 Estimated School Attainment Profiles for Apprentices (Percentages are shown)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attainment</th>
<th>Late a 1970s</th>
<th>Early a 1980s</th>
<th>Late a 1980s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 10 or less</td>
<td>63 b</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Based on Youth in Transition Data for those aged 19 in 1980, 1984, and 1989 respectively.

b Includes 53 per cent with Year 10 and 10 per cent with less than Year 10.

Other TAFE

Full-time TAFE students have generally completed more years of secondary school than apprentices. The difference is quite marked with twice as many Year 12 graduates among full-time TAFE students as among apprentices. Based on unpublished Youth in Transition data for the cohort aged 19 in 1989 it appears that:

- 40 per cent of full-time TAFE students had completed Year 12,
- 22 per cent had completed Year 11, and
- 38 per cent had completed Year 10 or less.

Somewhat surprisingly, the pattern for part-time TAFE students who are not apprentices is even more strongly skewed towards high levels of school attainment. Again based on Youth in Transition data for those aged 19 in 1989, the attainment profile for part-time TAFE participants was:

- 50 per cent had attained Year 12,
- 10 per cent had attained Year 11 and
- 40 per cent had attained Year 10 or less.

For TAFE students other than apprentices the distribution of years of secondary school completed follows a U-shape. The representation of Year 10 and Year 12 leavers are similar but that for Year 11 is rather lower.

Students with Low School Achievement

TAFE students are drawn more evenly from the range of early school achievement than is higher education. Moreover, there is some evidence that those from the lowest quartile of early school achievement have shown an increased level of
participation in TAFE over recent years. Data recorded by Turman and Long (1990) show that:

- in the late 1970s (ie. among those aged 19 in 1980) some 28 per cent of the lowest achievement quartile had participated in TAFE,
- in the early 1980s (ie. the cohort aged 19 in 1984) 39 per cent of the lowest achievement quartile had participated in TAFE, and
- in the late 1980s (ie. those aged 19 in 1989) the corresponding figure had increased to 46 per cent.

For the middle two achievement quartiles there was a very much smaller increase in TAFE participation from 32 to 35 per cent over the same time period, and for the top quartile there was a decline in TAFE participation rates from 24 per cent to 0 per cent.

In the late 1970s apprentices appear to have been drawn from middle of the achievement spectrum to a greater extent than from either the highest or lowest quartile. More specifically, Snell and Clancy (1983) showed that apprentices had higher numeracy than literacy achievement scores. Participation in apprenticeship by young people from the top achievement quartile showed even more marked decline between 1980 and 1989 (from 14 through 11 to five per cent) than did TAFE in general. Concomitantly, there was a very small decrease in apprenticeship participation from the middle two achievement quartiles (from 21 to 19 per cent) and changes in apprenticeship participation from the lowest achievement quartile which resulted in a net increase from that sector (from 18 to 25 and then 24 per cent).

Full-time TAFE participants up to age 19 have a similar achievement profile to apprentices. Participation rates from the top earlier achievement quartile are much lower (about one quarter) than those from the bottom quartile. Over the 1980s full-time TAFE participation hardly changed for the highest and middle quartiles but increased markedly amongst the lowest achievement quartile (from two through 11 to 18 per cent).

Part-time TAFE students other than apprentices are drawn evenly from all achievement levels. Among those aged 19 in 1989, part-time TAFE participants represented around 11 per cent of each achievement quartile. Over the 1980s there was a small increase in participation from the middle two quartiles in part-time TAFE with both the top and bottom quartiles remaining fairly steady (notwithstanding a slight decline for the top quartile in the 1984 figures).

It can be inferred from these data that apprenticeship and full-time TAFE courses enrol young people from the lower sections of the achievement range. Over the period from the late 1970s
to the late 1980s apprenticeship appears to have drawn fewer participants with relatively high achievement levels. A possible interpretation of these trends could invoke the idea of young people of high ability continuing school through to Year 12 and higher education rather than undertaking vocational training through apprenticeship. Participation rates in full-time courses in TAFE showed a marked increase among those of low achievement. This could be, at least in part, attributable to the role of TAFE in providing basic employment skills, preparatory, and prevocational/preapprenticeship programs. On the one hand these trends in the achievement levels of entrants to apprenticeship and full-time TAFE could be seen as opportunities for those disadvantaged by poor earlier school achievement. On the other hand such trends could be seen as a cause for concern about vocational education in Australia and its lack of attractiveness to able young people. Sweet (1990a) expresses concern that, in New South Wales, apprentices are being drawn from "a declining pool of the least academically talented".

**Young Women**

It is a commonly held view that the TAFE system has a preponderance of males in its student population. That view is more valid for some categories of students than others (Pocock 1987; Powles 1987). Overall, there is a greater number of male than female students in TAFE but the imbalance is greater among young TAFE students than among TAFE students as whole. In 1988, males comprised 53 per cent of all TAFE students, but 62 per cent of those TAFE students aged 19 and under who were enrolled in vocational and preparatory courses (DEET 1990a). In 1975 males comprised 68 per cent of students in vocational and preparatory courses (Department of Education 1978). This comparison is consistent with the observation by Pocock (1987) that the participation by women in TAFE has steadily increased since the 1970s, although it is still limited to a small range of fields.

According to official statistics for 1988, the dominance by males was greatest for initial trades training (88 per cent male) and trade technician streams (71 per cent male) (DEET, 1990a). There was a more even balance of males and females in streams concerned with paraprofessional technician and higher technician streams (58 per cent male) and in preparatory streams (53 per cent male). Females were present in greater numbers than males in vocational training other than for trade streams (42 per cent males) and streams concerned with initial training for operatives (41 per cent males). These data are broadly consistent with those reported in Victoria (State Training Board 1988a).
Apprenticeship

Sturman and Long (1990) document differences between male and female participation in TAFE as a whole and three subcategories of TAFE participation up to age 19: apprenticeship, other part-time TAFE, and full-time TAFE. These differences are documented for cohorts who were aged 19 in 1980, 1984, and 1989 and refer to any participation up to that age. The major difference between males and females is in participation in apprenticeship courses. In 1980 34 per cent of males had been in an apprenticeship compared to only four per cent of females. In 1984 the figures had not changed. By 1989 the difference had narrowed as a result of decline in the participation rate for males to 27 per cent. The corresponding female participation rate for 1989 was five per cent. Pocock (1987) notes that entry to apprenticeship is not directly controlled by educational institutions but by employers when recruiting staff. However Pocock also observes that there was not a substantially different gender balance in prevocational and pre-apprenticeship programs.

Traineeships

In contrast to the pattern for apprenticeships, females far outnumber males in traineeships. Sweet (1990a) estimates that some 70 per cent of young people in traineeships are females, in contrast with 12 per cent of those in apprenticeships and 53 per cent of those in full-time TAFE. A national evaluation of the Australian Traineeship System reported that 72 per cent of those who commenced in February 1987 were females (DEET 1989b). Ainley and Sheret (1991) report that 12 per cent of female Year 10 leavers from New South Wales high schools entered traineeships compared to just one per cent of male leavers. The picture of female dominance of traineeships is consistent with the fact that most traineeships involve office and clerical work.

Other TAFE

Differences between males and females in participation in full-time TAFE which were non-existent in 1980 (each was about four per cent), were evident in 1984 (ten per cent for females and six per cent for males), and had disappeared in 1989 (both being about ten per cent). In general it could be inferred that there is little consistent difference between participation by males and females in full-time TAFE. In addition there is little difference between male and female participation in part-time TAFE courses once apprenticeship is excluded (10 per cent for males and 12 per cent for females).
Fields of Study

Official statistics show that the balance between male and female students in TAFE differs among fields of study (DEET 1990a). Males are overwhelmingly dominant in engineering (94 per cent) and building (92 per cent) and are in a substantial majority in rural and horticultural studies (66 per cent). In each of the other eight fields of study there is a majority of female students. Around 40 per cent of students in the business studies, personal services, general studies, industrial services, art and design, applied science, paramedical and music fields of study were male.

Young People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds

It is widely acknowledged that TAFE draws its students from a wider social base than higher education. The differences between social groups are generally smaller in TAFE participation than those which apply in higher education. However there appear to have been some shifts in the participation rates among social groups. Comparing participation among those entering TAFE in the late 1970s, the early 1980s and the middle to late 1980s there is evidence of a small increase in participation in low social status groups, a larger increase in participation among the middle group, and a small decline in participation by the upper social status group. The overall result is a narrowing of the range of social groups represented in TAFE.

Sturman and Long (1990) present evidence of transfer between TAFE and higher education and between different sections of TAFE. Almost one quarter of the early school leavers who had been apprenticed by the age of 19 in 1980 had enrolled in another TAFE course (probably post-trade courses) by the age of 25. Among those who had completed Year 12 and entered apprenticeship nearly half enrolled in another TAFE course. There was also evidence of transfer to higher education. Between 14 (non-apprentice) and 17 (apprentice) per cent of early school leavers in TAFE up to age 19 had also participated in higher education by age 25. Of course some of those in non-apprentice courses would have been in preparatory programs such as the Tertiary Orientation Program in Victoria. For those who had completed Year 12 just under one third of youth TAFE participants (apprentice and other are similar) had been in higher education by the age of 25. Among those who were aged 19 in 1984 there appeared to be rather lower rates of transfer between TAFE and higher education (especially for apprentices) but similar movements from apprenticeship to other TAFE courses. In summary it appears that TAFE may act as bridge to
higher education for some young people and thereby facilitate access for those of low socioeconomic background. It is an issue which needs further investigation before a definitive assessment can be made.

TAFE in General

According to data recorded by Sturman and Long (1990), among the group aged 19 in 1980, participation rates in TAFE were 25 per cent for the lower socioeconomic group (unskilled and semiskilled), 32 per cent for the middle group (skilled-trades and clerical), and 29 per cent for the higher socioeconomic group (professional and managerial). Between this cohort and the cohort which was aged 19 in 1984 there was a shift towards higher participation in TAFE from the low socioeconomic status group but little change in participation rates from the middle and upper socioeconomic groups. Among the cohort aged 19 in 1984 participation rates for the three social groups were 36, 32, and 29 per cent respectively. Between this cohort and the cohort aged 19 in 1989 there was a further change in the social mix of participants in TAFE. There was a small drop in participation from the low socioeconomic group to 32 per cent, a rise in the participation rate among the middle group to 42 per cent and a small drop for the high group to 24 per cent.

In summary, it appears that an increase in the percentage of TAFE participants with a completed Year 12 over the 1980s has not been accompanied by an increase in participation by those from professional-managerial backgrounds, although there may have been a shift in the late 1970s. The largest increase in the late 1980s has been among those of a white collar and killed trades background, with some increase in the early 1980s among those from semiskilled and unskilled backgrounds. Powles (1990b) cites evidence from TAFE in New South Wales, reported by King, which showed that the spread of low to high socioeconomic status groups amongst TAFE students in Sydney corresponded to that of the Sydney population. However, in professional courses there was a higher than expected participation from high socioeconomic backgrounds and a correspondingly lower representation from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. In preparatory courses the pattern was reversed. A few towards low socioeconomic groups in basic skills and preparatory streams is also evident in data from the State Training Board of Victoria cited by by Powles (1990b).

Generally, prevocational courses which are small in number, provide access for young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds.
Apprenticeships

Participation in apprenticeship is also greater among those from middle socioeconomic groups than from either upper or lower groups. According to Youth in Transition data, among the cohort aged 19 in 1980, 22 per cent of those from the middle socioeconomic category had been in an apprenticeship compared to 15 per cent of those from the upper group and 17 per cent of those from the lower socioeconomic group. For the cohort aged 19 in 1984 there had been a rise in participation among the lowest social group to 22 per cent but small declines in participation among the other two groups (to 20 and 13 per cent respectively). For the cohort aged 19 in 1989 there had been a continued decline in apprenticeship participation among those from the upper socioeconomic status group to 11 per cent, an increase for the middle group to 24 per cent, and a decline for those of low social status backgrounds to 15 per cent. The net result of these changes has meant that between the late 1970s and the late 1980s participation in apprenticeships by those whose parents work in skilled trades and white-collar occupations increased but participation by those from upper and lower class backgrounds has declined.

Traineeships

Information on the socioeconomic background of those young people in traineeships was not available on a national basis. A national survey of those commenced traineeships in February 1987 reported most participants (93 per cent) were not classified as "disadvantaged" (DEET 1989b). Two per cent were disabled, three per cent were long term unemployed and three per cent were disadvantaged in other ways. Among Year 10 school leavers in New South Wales, it was found that those who participated in traineeships were drawn in smaller proportions than expected from professional, managerial, and unskilled family backgrounds and in larger than expected proportions from semiskilled family backgrounds (Ainley & Sheret unpublished data). In other words, in that limited population, traineeships did not appear to attract many young people from either the highest or lowest socioeconomic categories, but tended to draw young people from the middle to lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum.

Other TAFE

Participation in full-time TAFE courses increased for all three socioeconomic groups over the period from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, but increased most (from five to 14 per cent) for those from the middle of the socioeconomic spectrum. There was
increase for the lowest social status group (from four to eight per cent) and little change for the upper group (from six per cent).

**Family Wealth**

Data from Youth in Transition show that there have been changes in the relationship between wealth and participation in TAFE. In the late 1970s and early 1980s participation in TAFE was higher for those from the wealthiest quartile than for those in the least wealthy quartile (the figures were 35 and 24 per cent respectively) with the difference being almost unchanged when statistical allowance is made for the influence of other factors including social status (Sturman & Long 1990). However the pattern was reversed in the late 1980s. Among those aged 19 in 1989 some 27 per cent of those from the top wealth quartile compared to 34 per cent of those from the bottom wealth quartile had participated in TAFE.

Participation in apprenticeship followed a different pattern. For the cohort aged 19 in 1980 the highest participation was from the least wealthy quartile (21 per cent) and the lowest participation from the most wealthy (15 per cent). The middle wealth quartile had a participation rate of 18 per cent. However, among the cohort aged 19 in 1984 participation in apprenticeship was marginally greater for the middle wealth groups than for the poorest quartile. There had been a decline in participation by both the wealthiest quartile (to 13 per cent) and the poorest quartile (to 18 per cent). Among the group aged 19 in 1989 there was evidence of a continuing decline in apprenticeship participation among the poorest quartile (to 14 per cent) while apprenticeship participation among the middle and top wealth groups remained the same as for the previous cohort. Powles (1990b) draws attention to the high costs and low wages associated with an apprenticeship. It is possible that factors such as these could be influencing trends in apprenticeship participation.

Whereas participation in full-time TAFE, and to a lesser extent on-apprenticeship part-time TAFE, apparently once drew more from the wealthiest quartile than the poorest quartile, that pattern seems to have changed. In the early 1980s some 11 per cent of the wealthiest quartile compared to seven per cent from the poorest quartile had participated in full-time TAFE (Sturman & Long 1990). More recent Youth in Transition data suggests that, in the late 1980s, participation in full-time TAFE among the wealthiest quartile had dropped to eight per cent and among the poorest quartile had risen to 11 per cent. In the late 1980s part-time TAFE participation also showed this pattern in involving 14 per cent of least wealthy and 10 per cent of the
most wealthy. That pattern is also a reversal of the previous
distribution.

Young People of Non-English Speaking Background

It was noted earlier that young people of non-English speaking
background suffered no apparent disadvantage in terms of
completing a full secondary education or in participating in
mathematics and physical sciences in the senior secondary
years. However, there has been some evidence that those of a
non-English speaking background participated in TAFE, and
especially in apprenticeships, to a smaller extent than would be
expected (Anderson & Vervoorn 1983; Burke & Davis 1985;
Ainley & Clancy, 1983). It has never been clear whether this
was a matter of access or preference. More recent data suggest
that for TAFE as a whole, and even for apprenticeships in
particular, this is no longer the case.

TAFE in General

In the late 1970s (ie. among those who were aged 19 in 1980)
participation in TAFE was somewhat lower for young people of
a non-English speaking background than others (24 per cent
compared to 30 per cent) (Sturman & Long 1990). However,
between then and the early 1980s there was evidence of an
increasing tendency for those from non-English speaking
backgrounds to participate in TAFE. Among those aged 19 in
1984 the TAFE participation rate was 33 per cent for those of a
non-English speaking background compared to 30 per cent for
those of Australian-born backgrounds and 32 per cent for those
from other English speaking backgrounds. From then to the late
1980s the trend continued. Among the cohort aged 19 in 1989
the TAFE participation rate for those of non-English speaking
background was 36 per cent compared to 32 per cent for each of
the other two groups. It seems that over this period TAFE was
starting to experience the greater propensity of non-English
immigrants towards educational participation that had been
evident in the higher education sector for some time. Within
this trend, information reported by the State Training Board of
Victoria (1988b) indicates there are significant regional
differences in this pattern.

Apprenticeships

Since apprenticeships require the prior obtaining of a job before
commencing a course it might be expected that any
disadvantage by those of non-English speaking background would
be greater than for other courses. According to Sturman and
Long (1990) this was the case in the late 1970s. Participation in
apprenticeships was only 12 per cent among those of non-English speaking background compared to 20 per cent among other students. However, for the early 1980s they report no difference in participation rates for apprenticeships between those of Australian-born and non-English speaking background (18 per cent). By the late 1980s (ie. among those aged 19 in 1989) participation in apprenticeship by those of Australian-born backgrounds had fallen below that for non-English speaking background (15 per cent compared to 18 per cent).

Other TAFE

In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was little difference in the participation rates in either full-time or part-time TAFE between those of a non-English speaking background and other young people (Sturman & Long 1990). In the late 1980s it became evident that there was a higher participation rate in full-time TAFE among those of non-English speaking background (12 per cent). For part-time TAFE courses the differences remained inconsequential.

In summary the 1980s have seen a change in the participation patterns in TAFE according to ethnic background. Young people of non-English speaking background have begun to participate in apprenticeship and full-time TAFE in greater numbers. Previous apparent disadvantage in this sector of education and training appears to have dissipated.

Young People from Rural Locations

It was noted in a previous section that young people from rural locations completed a full secondary education to a lesser extent than those from cities. In terms of participation in TAFE differences based on location are small. Sturman and Long (1990) show that, in the late 1970s (ie. for the cohort aged 19 in 1980), those in the least rural areas were only marginally less likely to have participated in a TAFE course than their peers from other locations. In the early 1980s (ie. the cohort aged 19 in 1984) the differences were a little greater with those in most rural areas participating to a greater extent than their peers from the least rural areas (34 per cent compared to 25 per cent). In the late 1980s, the highest participation in TAFE occurred for the second most rural quartile (38 per cent) and the lowest for the second least rural quartile (28 per cent). In Victoria between 1988 and 1990 TAFE participation by those aged between 17 and 24 years is slightly higher in non-metropolitan compared to metropolitan areas (VPSEC 1991). The difference is greater, but still in favour of non-metropolitan areas, for those aged 25 and over because of participation in short duration courses.
In the late 1980s, participation in apprenticeship was also greatest in the second most rural quartile (21 per cent) followed by the most rural quartile (17 per cent). Apprenticeship participation in the two least rural quartiles were 12 and 14 per cent. This pattern is consistent with evidence reported from the early 1980s, when differences in apprenticeship participation favouring the most rural groups (20 per cent) compared to the least rural groups (15 per cent) were reported (Sturman & Long 1990). For those data Williams (1987) shows that these differences remain after making statistical allowance for the influence of concomitant background factors and school achievement.

In summary TAFE appears to enjoy higher levels of participation in rural than urban areas. However, there is no evidence to suggest whether this arises because access to other forms of postsecondary education is limited by distance or because the types of programs offered through TAFE are more attractive to young people from rural areas. Davis (1988) suggests that employers in rural areas feel a stronger social obligation to provide apprenticeships for local young people.

**Young Aboriginal People**

In a previous section it was noted that the retention rates to Year 12 of secondary school for Aboriginal people were considerably lower than the rates for Australia as a whole. It does not appear that this low level of participation in school is compensated by participation in TAFE.

The Aboriginal Education Task Force documents TAFE participation in 1986 among 16 and 17 year olds and among those aged 18 to 20 years (Hughes 1988). In the younger of these two age groups 5 per cent of Aboriginal youth were in TAFE compared to nearly 20 per cent of all Australians in that age range. In the older of the two age groups the participation rates were 4 per cent for Aboriginal youth compared to 23 per cent for Australia as a whole. For the age group 20 to 24 years the figures were 3 per cent compared to 12 per cent. In summary TAFE participation rates by Aboriginal people appear to be less than one quarter of those for young Australians as a whole. TAFE participation was reported to be especially low in Queensland and the Northern Territory and, in general was lower among those living in remote areas than those in cities and larger towns (Hughes 1988). Given that TAFE is the main provider of training for trades and other technical occupations the low level of participation by Aboriginal people is a major source of occupational disadvantage.
Higher Education

Participation in higher education has often been seen as a privilege in the sense that completion of a course of higher education facilitates access to a world of learning, to professions and occupations of high social status, and to higher incomes and more comfortable styles of living. In a wider sense, participation in higher education is valued for the development and maintenance of knowledge and skills which benefit the community in terms of social and economic progress. Benefits of higher education can be seen as both social and economic and can be seen as applying to both the community and the individual. Disadvantage in participation in higher education can be seen in terms of social justice (individuals with equal capacity to benefit from higher education should have equal access and through it to its occupational and social benefits) or developing talent (if talented people are excluded from higher education then social and economic progress by the community will be limited). For a variety of reasons, including these, there have been a number of studies in the last two decades which have been concerned with the social composition of higher education.

Since the mid 1950s, following the Murray Report in 1956, there have been increases in the number of students enrolled in higher education although any analysis is complicated by the emergence of colleges of advanced education in the 1960s and 1970s, after the Martin Report of 1964, and the transfer of nursing education to higher education in the 1980s. Although a general picture of growth is evident the rate has not been steady and the growth in numbers has not always corresponded to increases in participation rates (West in press). From 1955 to 1969 university enrolments grew from 30,000 to 108,000. Advanced education, which began as a system during the 1960s, enrolled 32,000 students in 1969 (Anderson & Vervoorn 1983). Between 1970 and 1979 university enrolments grew from 116,000 to 161,000 and college of advanced education enrolments grew from 38,000 to 156,000 (partly as a result of the inclusion of additional institutions in the advanced education system). In total, between 1970 and 1979, the number of students in higher education grew from 153,000 to 316,000; a growth of 107 per cent over ten years. Over more recent years from 1980 to 1989 higher education enrolments grew from 324,000 to 441,000; a ten year growth of 36 per cent (CTEC 1987; DEET 1990b). It has been noted by DEET (1988) that the slower growth in higher education during the early 1980s corresponded to a period of a strong growth in upper secondary retention.

The data above include all students, regardless of age and regardless of whether they are new students or continuing
students. If attention is focused only on commencing students who are school leavers it becomes evident that, over the 1980s, the number of these students (nearly all full time and aged 17 or 18) averaged 42 per cent of the Year 12 enrolment from the previous year (DEET 1990c). The increase in the number of school leavers commencing in higher education from 40,000 in 1980 to 67,000 in 1989 (following a decline to 38,000 in 1982) apparently just kept pace with the growth in upper secondary enrolments. Three fields of study enrol the majority of commencing students accounting for 62 per cent of the total: business (22 per cent), arts (22 per cent), and science (18 per cent). A further 33 per cent of commencing students enrol in education, health, and engineering.

Rising levels of participation provoke the question of what is a desirable size for the higher education sector. On the basis of data on commencing students noted in the preceding paragraph the percentage of each Year level cohort proceeding to higher education can be estimated. In the early 1980s approximately one in seven young people from a beginning school cohort continued to higher education (for those commencing higher education in 1981 the figure was 15 per cent). By the late 1980s the proportion had increased to one in four (the figure for those commencing higher education in 1989 was 24 per cent). In addition there may be some young people from the cohort who enter higher education but not direct from school. Williams et al (in press) suggest that in the late 1970s 20 per cent of a cohort had participated in higher education by age 19 (ie from the cohort aged 19 in 1980), in the early 1980s the participation rate dropped to 18 per cent and in the late 1980s the figure had grown to 29 per cent. These figures include those who entered higher education by the age of 19 but not directly from school. Their data also suggest that some young people entered higher education between age 19 and age 22. In the first cohort (ie. those normally commencing higher education in the late 1970s) this was about six per cent but for the second cohort (in the middle 1980s) it was no more than one per cent.

Projections based on linear extrapolations of trends are fraught with problems but some short-term estimates may be appropriate. Some plausible assumptions for such a projection might be that retention to Year 12 will grow to 75 per cent (by the middle 1990s), the progression rate to higher education will remain at 40 to 45 per cent, and deferred entry to higher education will remain low at one or two per cent. On that basis it could be expected that, in the mid 1990s, about 30 to 32 per cent of a cohort would enter higher education direct from school and a little more than than one in three would have experienced higher education by their early twenties. That seems the most likely probability. If Year 12 retention were to
reach 80 per cent and the progression rate were to reach 50 per cent the overall participation rate for higher education participation would grow to over 40 per cent. These estimates are considerably higher than the levels previously experienced in Australia but they fall far short of suggesting a mass higher education system. However, they do suggest a consideration of the size, shape and purposes of higher and further education might be in order. Such a consideration would need to be based on broader considerations than skill needs and recognise the mix of social demand, community need, and skill considerations which shape provisions.

The discussion above concerns broad trends and developments. Of greater importance to this paper are the differences between social groups in participation and changes in those groups over time. Evidence from the Youth in Transition surveys regarding patterns across social groups, and changes over time, in participation in higher education has been displayed in Figure 6. Those data serve as reference point for much of the following discussion.

**Young Women**

For a long time females participated in higher education to a lesser extent than males and, within higher education, were concentrated in a limited range of fields such as education and arts (Anderson & Vervoorn 1983; Powles 1987). In recent years female participation has grown more rapidly than male participation. For some time females have outnumbered males among commencing students and more recently female students in higher education overall have outnumbered male students. There have been concomitant shifts in the distribution of female students across fields of study but not by a sufficient amount to completely change the gender distribution (Powles 1987). Proportionate increases in female enrolments have been most rapid in male dominant areas.

**Participation**

Female enrolments in higher education have grown strongly over recent times. It is interesting that increases in female participation first observed in the 1970s have continued into the 1980s despite a decline in teacher education numbers. Of course the introduction of basic nursing to higher education in the 1980s boosted female participation rates but this does not fully account for the changing gender composition of higher education.
Between 1975 and 1988 female enrolments grew by 91 per cent compared to 25 per cent for males (DEET 1989e). Since 1979 commencing enrolments by female school leavers have exceeded those by males by an increasing margin each year and, in 1989, females comprised 55 per cent of all school-leaver commencing students in higher education. Since 1987 there have been more female than male students in higher education overall; a change from the mid 1970s when females comprised only 40 per cent of all higher education students (DEET 1989e). As recently as 1981 females were only 45 per cent of all higher education enrolments. In 1989 females made up 52 per cent of all higher education students and, even if basic nursing enrolments were excluded, females would still comprise over 50 per cent of all other enrolments. In other words the growth in the percentage of females in higher education can not be solely attributed to the inclusion of nursing in that sector.
A substantial study of the transition from school to higher education conducted in Victoria in 1980 showed that, other characteristics being equal, females then were more likely than males to turn down an offer of a place in higher education (Elsworth, Day, Hurworth & Andrews 1982). Those authors argue that important components of this effect were the tendency for females to perceive fewer career benefits arising from higher education and to have lower tertiary entrance scores, despite stronger encouragement by significant others to take a place in higher education. Carpenter and Western (1984) also reported the greater importance of perceived encouragement for females than males in deciding to continue their education.

Data from the longitudinal Youth In Transition Study reflect the growth in female enrolments in higher education over the 1980s, although they report only very small shifts in gender balance. Among the cohort aged 19 in 1980, some 20 per cent of males and 19 per cent of females had participated in higher education and for the cohort aged 19 in 1989 participation rates were 28 and 29 per cent respectively (Williams et al in press). Williams et al (in press) conclude that the slightly higher participation by females in higher education is partly explained by the advantages of interpersonal encouragement, achievement, and the greater numbers who have completed Year 12. Among Year 12 graduates, Williams et al (in press) show that there have been steady gains by females across the 1980s but that female participation in higher education among that group was still behind that for males.

**Fields of Study**

It has been often noted in studies of participation that female higher education students have tended be largely in arts and education (Elsworth et al 1982; Anderson & Vervoorn 1983). More recently Powles (1987) reported that, between 1975 and 1982, within a pattern of increased female enrolments in all fields except teacher education, there were disproportionate increases in male dominant fields such as applied science, business, agriculture and engineering in colleges of advanced education and in engineering law and veterinary science in universities. Despite these increases the participation by women in courses such as engineering remains low (Dillon 1987).
Official data (DEET 1990b) show that, among school-leaver commencing students in 1989, the most popular fields of study for females were:

- arts (28 per cent)
- business (19 per cent)
- education (17 per cent)
- health (16 per cent), and
- science (15 per cent).

Among males the most popular fields of study were business (26 per cent), science (23 per cent), engineering (19 per cent), and arts (14 per cent).

There is evidence that the change in the pattern of enrolments across fields of study in higher education noted by Powles (1987) has continued. There have been increases in the percentage of females in business, health (mainly because of nursing), and engineering (from an extremely low base) but a decline in the percentage of female students in education and arts. The percentage of all business students who were female rose from 34 to 39 per cent between 1980 and 1989 (DEET 1989e, 1990b) and among engineering students the percentage of females grew from three to nine per cent in the same period (DEET 1990f).

Further evidence of this trend is seen among the 1989 commencing students, where 42 per cent of business and 10 per cent of engineering entrants were female. Over the 1980s the proportion of science students who were female rose steadily but modestly (DEET 1990e). However those data show that female enrolments are more in the biological sciences than physical sciences.

In other significant fields of study for that year, some 33, 35 and 39 per cent of those entering agriculture, architecture and science respectively were female; 68, 72, and 75 per cent of those commencing in arts, education and health were female; and 45 per cent of those beginning in law were female. Female engineering students were drawn from the top quartile of tertiary entrance scores to a greater extent than males in that field but the reverse was the case for health, possibly reflecting the selectivity of medicine and related courses (DEET 1990h).

**Young People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds**

The influence of socioeconomic background on participation in higher education has been studied extensively over a considerable period of time (La Nauze 1940; Hammond 1962; Schonnell, Roe & Meddleton 1962; Radford & Wilkes 1975; Linke, Oertel & Kesley 1985, 1988; Power & Robertson 1987). There is little dispute about the conclusions of those studies; students in
higher education are of above average socioeconomic status, contain a larger than expected representation of professional and managerial families and a less than expected representation from families where the main breadwinner is an unskilled or semiskilled worker (Anderson & Vervoorn 1983). A national survey of young people has suggested that financial factors may be more important influences on participation in higher education than secondary education (ANOP 1988). It is also evident that the disparity in representation has been greater among university participants than advanced education participants (Williams et al in press). Given this context, the implications for young people of low socioeconomic background of including both former colleges of advanced education and universities in a unified national system, and amalgamating institutions, are unclear. It is possible that some features which provided access and support for those students might be lost.

A study of transition from school to higher education among Victorian Year 12 graduates showed that, after allowing for associated influences, including Year 12 achievement, the likelihood of accepting a place in higher education was rather greater for the highest as opposed to the lowest socioeconomic category (Elsworth et al 1982). It was a less important influence than sex or ethnicity but more important than home location. Young people in that study from lower social status backgrounds perceived both more costs and more benefits to be associated with higher education.

The Youth in Transition study considered three social background influences on participation in higher education: socioeconomic status, family wealth, and parental education. From that study it is evident that those from higher status backgrounds, those of greater family wealth, and those whose parents had higher levels of education enjoyed higher levels of participation in higher education (Williams et al in press). Among all three cohorts, those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds had higher participation rates in higher education by age 19. In the cohort aged 19 in 1980, 31 per cent of those from the upper social status group (professional and managerial) participated in higher education compared to 21 per cent from the middle group (white collar and skilled), and 12 per cent from the lower group (semiskilled and unskilled) (Williams 1987). For the cohort aged 19 in 1984 the participation rates for the three social groups were 33, 17, and 10 per cent, and for the cohort aged 19 in 1989 the participation rates were 42, 28, and 21 per cent respectively (Williams et in press). In should be noted in passing that participation in higher education by those from professional backgrounds (the highest status of six categories) tends to be markedly higher than for the next group.
appeared to have only a minor, if any, effect on the social composition of higher education participants up to age 19. Whereas in 1980, some 48, 33 and 19 per cent of these participants were drawn from the upper, middle, and lower social groups respectively by 1989 those proportions were approximately 46, 31, and 23 per cent. A similar pattern was reported for family wealth. In terms of family wealth, in 1980 29 per cent of those 19 year olds from the wealthiest quartile participated in higher education compared to 16 per cent of those from the poorest quartile. In 1984 the corresponding percentages were 31 and 11 per cent, and in 1989 the figures were 39 per cent and 20 per cent.

Williams et al (in press) also report participation rates adjusted for other background factors such as wealth, location, and type of school and for mediating variables such as early school achievement, interpersonal support, and completion of Year 12. When adjustments were made for other background factors the differences between social status groups were reduced; in the case of the 1989 19-year-olds to ten percentage points between the upper and lower groups compared to an unadjusted difference of 21 percentage points. It can be inferred from this that part of the observed difference in higher education participation among social status groups is due to other associated background factors (eg. wealth, location) rather than social status as such. The introduction of further adjustment for mediating factors reduced the differences between social groups among 1989 19-year-olds to almost nothing. It can be inferred from this that the observed influence of social status on higher education participation operates partly because of factors such as greater interpersonal support for further study, higher early school achievement, and the completion of Year 12. Similarly the effect of applying statistical adjustments for other background factors to the rates for wealth quartiles reduces the differences, and when allowance is made for other mediating factors there is little influence of wealth on participation in higher education. Williams et al (in press) conclude that "it is the opportunities, aspirations, and attitudes correlated with wealth that are behind the observed advantage of family wealth in participation in higher education".

The Youth in Transition reports also include participation rates for those young people who had completed Year 12; normally considered an entry requirement for higher education (Williams et al in press). Observed participation rates show similar patterns to those referred to above but adjustments for other background factors reduce (but do not remove) differences between upper and lower groups somewhat, and additional adjustment for mediating factors reduce those differences further; to negligible amounts for the cohort aged 19 in 1989.
Young People of Non-English Speaking Background

In a comprehensive review of immigrant Australians and education, Sturman (1985) noted that research had generally established that levels of educational aspirations among immigrant groups were higher than for those of an Australian-born background. By way of qualification, Sturman noted evidence which suggested there were varying aspirations between different national groups and that those aspirations might often be higher for males than females. He also noted that a number of research studies had questioned whether those higher aspirations were necessarily translated into participation in higher education. In a previous section of this review, it was noted that young people of non-English speaking background participated in postcompulsory schooling to a greater extent than their peers whose parents were born in Australia or another non-English speaking country. At least in that level of postcompulsory schooling, aspirations did seem to be translated into participation.

Some 20 years ago, a series of studies in Victoria investigated the educational aspirations and post-school destinations of young people of non-English speaking background (Taft, Strong & Fensham 1971; Taft 1975ab). Those studies pointed to variations between national groups in levels of aspiration within a general tendency towards high aspirations in migrant communities. Fensham and Taft (1973) reported that students of a non-English speaking background were equally likely to enter higher education as those of an Australian born or other-English-speaking background, although that participation was more likely to be in a college of advanced education than a university. Elsworth et al (1982) showed that among Victorian Year 12 graduates of 1979, those of a non-English speaking background were more likely (by about 10 percentage points) than other students to take up an offer of a place in higher education. Moreover, they showed that the influence of a non-English speaking background operated through stronger perceptions of career benefits, higher academic expectations (in both interest and expected success).

Recent official statistics suggest that for those aged under 30 years, participation in higher education was greater for people born in a non-English speaking country (note this is a more restricted concept than being of non-English speaking background) than among those people born in Australia (DEET 1991b). However, this pattern was observed among males and not among females.

Burke and Davis (1985) noted that young people of immigrant background had higher than expected rates of participation in higher education, but pointed to possible problems of access to
higher education for immigrant groups in the middle to later 1980s if the availability of places did not keep pace with rising demand. More recent evidence indicates that the higher participation in higher education by non-English speaking background than other students weakened a little during the 1980s. Williams et al (in press) show that in the cohort of young people aged 19 in 1980 some 26 per cent of those of non-English speaking background, compared to 23 per cent of those of English immigrant background and 19 per cent of those of non-immigrant background, had participated in higher education. For the cohort aged 19 in 1984 the participation rates for these three groups were 23, 17, and 18 per cent and for the cohort aged 19 in 1989 the rates were 32, 28, and 28 per cent respectively. Williams et al (in press) note that the size of the difference in participation rates has diminished over the 1980s although the non-English speaking background groups still enjoy an advantage. Changes such as this could arise from differences in the country of origin of successive groups of immigrants or from changes in the social processes which shape educational participation. They report that recent non-English speaking immigrants show a high propensity to complete Year 12 and enter higher education; and especially to enter nursing. They also report a much higher rate of completing Year 12 among young people of Greek background but these high rates of completing Year 12 are not always translated into participation in higher education.

The adjusted participation rates reported by Williams et al (in press) serve to provide some illumination of the nature of the difference between non-English speaking background and other groups. Adjusting for other background factors resulted in a slight widening of the gap for all three cohorts. This is consistent with the proposition that those of non-English speaking background tend to be of lower social status and wealth but aspire to high levels of education (Marjoribanks 1980; Sturman 1985) It is also consistent with the findings by Elsworth et al (1982) that “the effects of SES were partly masked by the ethnic origins of the applicants families” in that for those of non-English speaking background socioeconomic origins had little influence on their decision about accepting a place in higher education. Additional adjustment for mediating factors reduced the gap between non-English speaking background and others a little for the 1980 19-year-olds and substantially for the 1984 and 1989 19-year-olds. This suggests that encouragement and years of schooling completed were important contributors to the higher participation by immigrant groups. Williams et al (in press) attribute patterns of participation by immigrant groups over the 1980s to “the values
and attitudes of an immigrant background.” Such a conclusion is resonant with that of Elsworth et al (1982).

**Fields of Study**

There is little recent information about the fields of study in which students of non-English speaking background enrol. Anderson, Boven, Fensham, and Powell (1978) not only found that young people of immigrant background participated in commerce and engineering to a greater extent and in education, law and medicine to a smaller extent than their peers of Australian born background. Recent data (DEET 1991b) show that higher proportions of people born in a non-English-speaking country compared to people born in Australia studied in engineering (their rate is double that of the Australian born) and science (their rate is a little less than double that of people born in Australia). This suggests that the patterns of different fields of study described for the 1970s have been continued through the 1980s.

**Young People from Rural Locations**

One might expect lower participation rates in higher education among young people from rural areas because of the cumulative effect of lower rates of completion of Year 12, fewer opportunities for contact with adults in occupations related to higher education, and problems associated with distance from home to the location of a suitable higher educational institution. DEET (1990g) has published information concerning participation in higher education for young people from areas classified as remote, rural, and urban (based on the postcode of their permanent home address). That information suggests that, among those aged 19 or younger in 1988, participation by young people from remote areas was the lowest (5 per cent of the 15–19 year-old age group), followed by those from rural areas (7 per cent), and highest for those from urban locations (8 per cent). The differences among participation rates from the three areas varied between States being most pronounced where the distances from urban centres were greatest. Although full-time study was the most important form of enrolment regardless of home location, external study was more prevalent, and part-time study less prevalent, for those from remote as opposed to urban locations. There was a slightly smaller percentage of females among higher education students from remote and rural, compared to urban, locations. Higher proportions of rural and remote students were found in agriculture and education with an under-representation of these students in arts, and architecture.
A recent Victorian study also showed differences in higher education participation between metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions (VPSEC 1991). However it also noted that participation rates in many outer suburban regions were low and that there were differences between non-metropolitan regions. The report suggested that non-metropolitan regions where participation was low were those where there was no institution located in reasonable proximity. It is possible that the low rate of participation in higher education in outer suburban areas reflects the social composition of those areas in addition to problems of accessibility. From an earlier study Jones (1983) reported that colleges of advanced education, especially those in rural locations, showed a stronger regional characteristics in their enrolments than the centrally located universities. Jones (1983) showed that home location (using a more fine-grained measure than urban versus rural) influenced young peoples' decisions to apply for, and enrol in, higher education institutions. This was evident even after controlling for the influence of associated background characteristics.

Youth in Transition data reported by Williams et al (in press) show that participation in higher education was greatest for those in the most urban quartiles of their classification and lowest in the more rural quartiles. This pattern of difference was evident across all three cohorts at the age of 19 years, representing the late 1970s, the early 1980s, and the late 1980s, although the magnitude of the difference appears to have diminished over the decade. In the late 1970s the participation rates for the four rurality quartiles were 15, 13, 25, and 27 per cent compared to 27, 23, 30 and 35 per cent for the late 1980s. Adjustment for other background factors reduced the differences somewhat suggesting that part of the difference between urban and rural participation rates might be attributed to associated factors such as social status and wealth. Additional adjustment for mediating factors reduced the difference further suggesting that a further part of the difference between urban and rural participation rates arose through the proportions completing Year 12, encouragement for further study, and achievement. Clarke (1987), after an interview-based examination of rural participation in postsecondary education, suggests that major barriers to rural participation are attitudes (higher education is not linked to success in rural occupations), isolation (distance to education centres), and lack of information about the availability of places.

**Young Aboriginal People**

Despite recent changes it remains evident that Aboriginal people have low levels of participation in higher education in general
and, within higher education, tend not to study in science-based fields of study or business.

**Participation**

According to most compilations of statistics the representation of Aboriginal people in higher education is well below that of other Australians, despite a higher than average rate of increase through the 1980s (DEET 1990d). Two decades ago participation was miniscule with fewer than 100 Aboriginal people in higher education in 1969 (Hughes 1988). Between 1982 and 1989 the number of Aboriginal students in higher education increased fourfold compared to a general increase of 29 per cent so that, whereas in 1982 Aborigines comprised 0.3 per cent of higher education students, by 1989 the proportion had increased to 0.7 per cent (DEET 1990d). The Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force estimated that, in 1986, two per cent of Aboriginal people aged 18 to 20 years participated in higher education compared to 16 per cent for Australians as a whole (Hughes 1988). Even though most higher education institutions have some Aboriginal people enrolled, five institutions accounted for one third of all enrolments; the largest enrolments being at the South Australian College of Advanced Education and Macarthur Institute of Higher Education. The most notable was Batchelor College in the Northern Territory where all students were Aboriginal people (DEET 1990d).

The Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force attributes the low participation by Aboriginal people in higher education, in part, to “poor schooling circumstances” (Hughes 1988). It can be inferred from other evidence that a larger than average percentage of people living in remote areas, generally lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and a larger incidence of poverty would contribute to low rates of participation in higher education.

**Fields of Study**

In 1989 nearly two-thirds of Aboriginal students were in arts (35 per cent) and education (30 per cent) with business being the next most popular field of study (11 per cent) (DEET 1990d). Compared to other higher education students, Aboriginal students had higher relative representation in arts and education; lower representation in engineering, science, business, and health; and about proportionate representation in law, agriculture, and veterinary science. Over the period from 1982 to 1989 the preponderance of enrolments in education declined (from 47 per cent) with compensating rises in health, science, agriculture, and architecture. There was almost no change in
the percentage of Aboriginal students who enrolled in business or engineering.

The relatively high levels of Aboriginal students in education could well be a promising foundation for future developments for two reasons. Firstly, there could be a long term impact of Aboriginal teachers on the learning and subsequent participation by Aboriginal students. Secondly, teaching has fulfilled a traditional role as a generational stepping stone from non-participation to broader participation in higher education among low socioeconomic groups.

**Job Training and Other Provisions**

The previous three sections have discussed the participation of disadvantaged young people in the formal education sector. This section discusses participation in programs that, by and large, are not conducted in formal educational institutions. Three groups of activities are considered: job training for young workers; Commonwealth programs directed towards disadvantaged groups in the labour market; and 'other' educational institutions such as secretarial and business colleges. Job training is the most extensive of these activities and receives the most attention in what follows.

**Data on Job Training**

The participation of young workers in job training is not well documented. In comparison with formal education, little is known about the duration, quality, costs and benefits of training programs. The data base has improved in recent years with the publication by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) of How Workers Get Their Training, Australia 1989 and the release of information collected through the Australian Longitudinal Survey (ALS). However, to date, only the latter has been subject to much systematic analysis (principally by Miller 1987, 1990). The lack of historical data on job training in Australia means that it is not possible to discuss changes in the incidence and distribution of training.

A major reason for the lack of information about training is the difficulty of its definition and measurement. In the 1989 survey of worker training conducted by the ABS, education and training activities were distinguished in terms of the qualifications obtained. Educational qualifications were defined as those obtained by completion of approved courses of study in recognised educational institutions and other relevant institutions (e.g. nursing qualifications obtained at a hospital). Training courses were defined as "courses undertaken in order
to improve career opportunities, or to maintain or learn new job skills related to job performance" (ABS 1990a, p. 37). Such courses may or may not be undertaken in an educational institution, but they do not lead to a recognised educational qualification such as a degree or trade certificate. The ABS survey distinguished training courses as either in-house (organised by employers for their own employees, and using either their own staff or training consultants) or external (organised and conducted by establishments, agencies or consultants other than the worker's employer).

The ABS survey also measured the extent of on-the-job training, namely training that does not involve a structured course. This was defined as: "being shown how to do the job, watching others work (including examining other workers' product), asking questions of co-workers, and teaching self" (p. 37). The ABS definition of on-the-job training is broad. The other major source of data on training by young workers, the ALS study, used a narrower definition. Its questions about on-the-job training focus on the provision of job training by supervisors and other workers. Accordingly, the ALS records a lower level of participation by young people in on-the-job training than the ABS survey, and a lower level of training overall.

Both of these surveys rely on respondents reporting the extent and nature of their training experiences. Many surveys of educational participation also rely on self-report data. However, in the educational setting such responses can be cross-checked by reference to official enrolment data from educational institutions. At the present stage, no such validation is available in regard to the data on job training.

**The Extent of Job Training**

The majority of Australian workers receive some form of training in their employment. The ABS survey indicated that in 1989 almost 80 per cent of employees who had held a job in the previous 12 months reported that they had undertaken some training in that time. About 10 per cent of workers had undertaken an external training course, 35 per cent an in-house course, and 70 per cent had been involved in on-the-job training. These figures probably understate the 1991 level of training activity in the Australian workforce. The Commonwealth government's training levy commenced operation on 1 July 1990. This initiative is likely to have increased participation in training, especially in structured courses, above the levels reported for 1989.

Young workers report extensive participation in training. The ABS survey indicated that in 1989 more than 90 per cent of
15–24 year-old employees reported that they had undertaken some type of training in the previous 12 months (see Table 3). Evidence of high levels of training among young workers is also available from other sources. The ALS longitudinal study indicated that in 1985 around 74 per cent of the 15–24 year-old workforce reported receiving training (Miller 1990). In 1986 and 1987, as the survey group aged, the equivalent proportions were around 60 per cent. A study of 19 year-olds who had completed Year 12 but not enrolled in higher education indicated that about 80 per cent reported that they had received some form of job training (Alford & McKenzie 1990). All studies of job training by young people confirm that informal instruction is more common than training through formal courses.

Few young workers appear to miss out on training completely. Of those in the ALS who had been employed each year from 1985 to 1987 only 9 per cent reported that they had not received any training at all during that time (ALS 1989). Forty per cent of the group reported receiving some training in each of the three years, 29 per cent in two of the three years, and the other 22 per cent reported that they had received training in one year only.

The ABS survey indicated that young workers report a greater incidence of job training than older workers. Even within the 15-24 age group encompassed by the ALS survey, there is an inverse relationship between age and the reported incidence of training (Miller 1990). There are two main reasons for this. First, as relatively new entrants to the labour force young people are likely to need more training. Second, as people age employers, and workers themselves, are more likely to judge that investments in training may not be recouped. It is worth noting, though, that the inverse relationship between age and training appears to be strongest for on-the-job training. Attendance at formal training courses appears to increase slightly with age. This may reflect the importance of the length of job tenure as a factor governing access to formal courses.

Despite the apparently high incidence of training the resources allocated to training appear to be quite small. In terms of the youth labour market, Miller (1987) suggested that in 1985 the combined annual amount of direct expenditure on training and the opportunity costs of trainee time was only about $600 per person. Based on 1987 ALS data, Miller (1990) suggested that the average level of training amounted to only about 2 hours per week for those in receipt of training, although there appeared to be wide variations about this figure.
Table 3 15–24 Year-old Wage and Salary Earners Who Had a Job in the Previous 12 Months: Training Undertaken in the Previous 12 Months (per cent of group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training course</th>
<th>Some training undertaken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthplace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main English-speaking countries</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-metropolitan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour force survey (unpublished data). The terms are as defined in ABS, How Workers Get Their Training, Australia, 1989. (6278.0)

Job Training and Background Characteristics

In terms of participation in job training by young workers, gender is the most extensively analysed personal characteristic. This emphasis is not surprising given the evidence of substantial gender differences in the distribution of workers across occupations and industries. As will be seen later in this section, there are marked differences between industries and occupations in the extent of training provision. Some limited information is available on participation in job training by young people from different socioeconomic, immigrant, and regional backgrounds. There is no published information available on participation in job training by young Aboriginal workers.

Young Women

The ABS survey indicated that there are no real differences between young male and female workers in the proportions who report receiving training either on-the-job or through an external training course (see Table 3). However, young female workers are more likely than males to report attendance at an in-house training course.
The ALS study indicated that males in the 15-24 age group were slightly more likely to report receiving some form of training than females (Miller & Volker 1987; ALS 1989), and that males received slightly more hours of training per week (Miller 1990). The other major difference between the two data sources is that the ALS indicates that males were more likely than females to attend training classes conducted away from the workplace. In general, though, it appears that the incidence of training is very similar for young males and females (Miller 1990).

**Young People with Low Educational Attainment**

In general, the higher the level of educational attainment, the higher the level of participation in training. The ABS survey indicated that across the workforce as a whole in 1989, 84 per cent of those with post-school qualifications reported some training in the preceding 12 months, compared to 75 per cent of those without such qualifications. The highest reported incidence of training was among those with postgraduate qualifications (93 per cent), followed by holders of a degree or diploma (91 per cent), and those who had completed Year 12 (88 per cent). Low levels of training were reported by those with a trade qualification or apprenticeship (74 per cent), and especially by those who had left school at 15 years or younger (62 per cent).

There are at least three reasons for the positive relationship between education and training. First, education is likely to increase individuals’ interest in further training and their capacity to profit from training programs. Second, employers are likely to view well-educated people as more likely to benefit from training. Third, well-educated people are likely to be in jobs with greater demands and opportunities for training. These factors indicate that the background characteristics associated with inequalities in educational attainment will also be associated with inequalities in training participation. They also suggest that the economic advantages arising from education will be reinforced by differential participation in training.

Miller (1987) used multivariate analyses on the ALS data set to examine the relationship between initial education and subsequent training. Those analyses indicated that educational attainment and training are positively related, especially in regard to participation in formal training:

The differences between the probability of male degree holders and early school leavers receiving formal on-the-job training and formal off-the-job training are 32 and 55 percentage points respectively. The difference in the probability of receiving informal training from supervisors is 13 percentage points, while in the case of informal training from other workers the difference is 22 percentage points. The variation in training
opportunities by education level in the female labour market is similar to that in the male market. (pp. 13–14)

Lillard and Tan (1986) reported similar complementarities between education and training in the United States. As Miller (1987) noted, such results run counter to the view that the market helps to overcome initial deficiencies in education by additional investments in training.

As noted above, the differences in the reported incidence of training between tertiary-educated people and early school leavers are smaller for on-the-job training than for formal courses. This suggests that the better-educated are more likely to work in jobs that allow greater independence from supervisors and other workers (Miller 1990). Comparison of the ALS data between 1985 and 1987 also indicates a decline in the importance of educational attainment as an influence on the incidence of job training. It seems that in the early stages of working life educational attainment is used as a screen to determine access to training, but that as people mature the characteristics of their job increase in relative importance. As Miller (1990) noted, this finding suggests that training is associated with the job, not the worker.

**Young People from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds**

The only research which appears to have examined the relationship between socioeconomic background and participation in training is the study of Year 12 school leavers by Alford and McKenzie (1990). In that study there were no significant differences found in the extent to which different status groups (as measured by father's occupation) reported receiving job training. This finding may have been due to the relatively limited range of social backgrounds and post-school occupations encompassed by the survey group. However, it seems a reasonable hypothesis that socioeconomic background does not have a direct effect on participation in job training. Rather, the influence of home background is likely to indirect through its impact on educational attainment and the types of jobs that young people enter.

**Young People of Non-English Speaking Background**

As Table 3 shows, there are no differences in the reported incidence of training according to country of birth. The single exception is that young people born in a non-English speaking are less likely to report participating in in-house training courses. The minor role played by country of birth in explaining variations in the reported incidence of training is confirmed by the ALS data set (Miller 1987, 1990).
**Young People from Rural Locations**

The ABS survey indicated that young workers in metropolitan areas were slightly more likely to participate in in-house training courses than those in non-metropolitan locations. There are at least three factors that may explain this. First, there are likely to be differences in the industrial structure between metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions that affect the demand for training. Agriculture provides a clear example. As is discussed later, workers in agricultural industries participate far less in training courses than workers from any other industry. Second, attendance at external training courses by non-metropolitan workers may be more costly because of the need to travel to centres that provide such courses. Third, non-metropolitan regions are likely to have proportionately more small enterprises that are unable to mount in-house training courses. Overall, however, it seems that the region of residence plays only a very small role in accounting for variations in the incidence of job training among the young (Miller 1987).

**Job Characteristics and Training**

As has been noted several times already, the nature of the job which individuals hold is a major influence on their probability of receiving training. This section explores this relationship in more detail. The discussion is organised around three main issues: the nature of employment, the type of industry and the type of occupation in which individuals work.

**The Nature of Employment**

Young workers are more likely to undertake some training, especially in the form of training courses, if they have jobs that are full-time rather than part-time (Miller 1987; Alford & McKenzie 1990). Training also increases with duration of the current job (Miller 1990). These findings suggest that young people who work in short-term and part-time jobs are disadvantaged in their access to training opportunities.

The ABS survey indicated that, across the workforce as a whole, workers in the public sector were more likely (84 per cent) than private sector workers (77 per cent) to report having received training in the previous 12 months. Employees from these two sectors differed little in the extent to which they participated in on-the-job training. However, public sector workers were more likely to attend external and in-house training courses. Similar sectoral differences in job training were found in the study of recent Year 12 school leavers (Alford & McKenzie 1990).
There is a small, positive relationship between the incidence of training and the number of employees at the enterprise. The ABS survey indicated that at sites with less than 10 employees, 76 per cent of workers received some training, compared to 81 per cent for enterprises with more than 100 employees. In particular, larger enterprises appeared to place considerable emphasis on in-house training courses. Large enterprises are likely to have more scope than small businesses to operate their own training departments.

**Type of Industry**

The ABS survey indicated that, across the workforce as a whole, the incidence of training is relatively high in industries such as electricity, communication, finance, public administration, and community services. The incidence of training is comparatively low in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, and recreation services. Workers in those industries that have a high proportion of formal training courses also report a high incidence of on-the-job training. Correspondingly, workers in industries that report low participation in formal courses also tend to report relatively low on-the-job training. It seems that some industries are 'training rich' while others are 'training poor'.

As was the case for the workforce as a whole, the ALS study indicated considerable variation by industry in the proportion of young people who reported experiencing training. In 1987 this ranged from a low of 37 per cent in agriculture to a high of 78 per cent in mining (ALS 1989). Other relatively low-training industries were recreation (54 per cent), trade (57 per cent) manufacturing (58 per cent) and electric-construction (59 per cent). Relatively high training industries were community services (64 per cent), transport and communications (67 per cent), finance (71 per cent), and public administration (75 per cent). It appears that the most extensive training is provided in industries in the service and public sectors.

The multivariate analyses of the ALS data set by Miller (1987) confirmed the importance of the type of industry in explaining variations in the incidence of training among the young:

Formal on-the-job training is more likely to be provided in finance, public administration and community service industries than in other industry divisions. The probability of receiving formal training off-the-job is relatively high in the agricultural, finance and community service industries. Informal sources of training appear to be more prevalent in the finance and public industry groups than in other industry groups. (p. 15)

The ALS study also indicated that across all industries more informal than formal training was provided for young workers.
However, formal training was an especially small proportion of the reported incidence of training in agriculture, trade and manufacturing, and a larger proportion in public administration and community services. In only two industries (agriculture and electrical-construction) was the reported incidence of formal training away from work greater than at work.

**Type of Occupation**

The differences in training by educational attainment are reflected in the training by type of occupation. The ABS survey indicates that across the workforce as a whole, professionals (92 per cent) and para-professionals (89 per cent) reported the highest levels of training in the preceding 12 months. Plant and machine operators and drivers (64 per cent) and labourers and related workers (66 per cent) reported the lowest incidence of training. The ALS data confirmed that these general patterns also applied to the youth labour market (Miller 1990). Young people in professional, clerical, managerial and trades occupations reported a relatively high incidence of training. Differences in the provision of training opportunities were also evident when the occupational status of Year 12 school leavers’ jobs were examined (Alford & McKenzie 1990). Training was more likely to be received by those working in professional, white-collar and skilled occupations. Even by the age of 19 or 20 years among a relatively homogenous group, differential opportunities for training were being provided.

It is worth noting, though, that in occupations where training opportunities for young people appear to be more limited, the quantity of training provided to those receiving training tends to be greater (Miller 1990).

**Commonwealth Training Programs**

Major recommendations of the 1985 Kirby Report on labour market programs were that the number of separate Commonwealth programs be reduced and that programs targeted to young people and adults should be integrated. These recommendations have now been largely implemented.

The Kirby Report was also concerned to ‘avoid options that serve only to ostracise people from the mainstream of activities or to further entrench discrimination on the basis of sex, age, ethnicity or disability, however inadvertently.’ (p.10).

Accordingly, it did not propose a series of programs targeted specifically to disadvantaged groups. Rather, the strategy was to assist women and disadvantaged groups through all labour market programs, with special and enhanced provisions to ensure their participation. It was recommended that 50 per cent
of program participants should be women, and that within this broad division there should be an allocation of places to groups considered to be especially disadvantaged in the labour market. It was suggested that this allocation should be proportionate to the groups' shares of national joblessness and duration of unemployment.

Two of the major new Commonwealth labour market programs aimed at improving employment prospects through training (JOBTRAIN and SKILLSHARE) are discussed in this section. Information on program participants has been supplied by DEET. In light of the Kirby Report's recommendations, the data classifies program participants according to their principal and secondary reasons (e.g. long-term unemployment, Aboriginality, 'youth at risk') for participating in the program concerned. The discussion that follows concentrates on information about young program participants.

**Jobtrain**

JOBTRAIN, which was introduced in 1988–89, combined the former Youth Training Program (YTP) for job seekers aged under 21 years, and the Adult Training Program (ATP). The program aims to assist the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged job seekers by providing vocational training based on opportunities in the local labour market. Short-term vocational courses are developed at the local level based on participants' needs, their suitability for training, and skill requirements in the local area. Courses are usually provided on a fee-for-service basis through TAFE or other providers. Course participants receive the Formal Training Allowance (FTA), equivalent to their unemployment or job search allowance, plus ancillary allowances where needed for books, materials and living-away-from home; those aged 21 years and over also receive a training component of $30 per week.

In 1989-90 there were some 46,000 commencements in the JOBTRAIN program. Because of the emphases on the long-term unemployed and sole supporting parents, relatively few teenagers are involved in the program. Around 2,300 (5 per cent) participants were aged 15 to 17 years, and 7,500 (15 per cent) were aged 18 to 20 years. In 1989–90 females constituted the majority (56 per cent) of program participants, which is consistent with the Kirby Report's recommendation that, in general, females should constitute 50 per cent of the participants in labour market programs.

**Skillshare**

The SKILLSHARE program, which commenced in January 1989, was created from the integration of the Community Youth
Support Scheme (CYSS), the Community Training Program, and the Community Volunteer Program. The program aims to assist the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged unemployed people to obtain employment or proceed to further education or training through the provision of skills training and enterprise activities by groups in the community. The program attempts to assist those who are likely to benefit from a community-based approach or those who do not have ready access to other opportunities.

During 1990 there were just over 90,000 participants in Skillshare programs, of whom 22 per cent were aged less than 21 years. Females comprised the majority (62 per cent) of program participants. Almost one-half of all participants (46 per cent) had been unemployed for at least 12 months.

'Other' Educational Institutions

There is only limited information available on the students who attend institutions other than those in the school, TAFE or higher education sectors. The principal data source on 'other' institutions is the surveys on educational attendance conducted by the ABS. In these surveys 'other' educational institutions are defined to include business, commercial and secretarial colleges; religious and theological colleges; and overseas institutions. Since these surveys are based on samples of young people, and the numbers attending such institutions is small, it is difficult to obtain reliable estimates of the characteristics of these students.

These institutions appear to be more significant providers for people in their early twenties than for teenagers. In September 1989 there were 12,500 15–19 year-olds and 23,000 20–24 year-olds enrolled in 'other' educational institutions (ABS 1990b). These numbers represented about 1.5 per cent and 8 per cent respectively of each age group who were attending an educational institution at that time. Such institutions are also more significant as providers for females than males: in September 1989 females comprised about 75 per cent of the 15–19 year-old students and 60 per cent of the 20–24 year-olds. These proportions probably reflect the importance of business and secretarial colleges in this area.

In terms of school background, about 68 per cent of 15–24 year-old students in 'other' educational institutions had last attended a government school. In this respect these students lie about half-way between higher education students (58 per cent of whom had last attended a government school) and TAFE students (78 per cent from that school background). Students attending 'other' institutions are also about mid-way between the other two sectors in terms of the proportion (73 per cent)
who are in the labour force (in 1989 the corresponding proportions for 15-24 year-old students in higher education and TAFE were 60 per cent and 84 per cent respectively). This suggests that a relatively high proportion of students attend such institutions on a part-time basis.

Barriers

In sections 2 to 5 of this paper information was presented regarding the participation in postcompulsory education and training of various social groups considered to be potentially disadvantaged. The potentially disadvantaged groups were young women, young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, young people of non-English speaking background, young people from rural areas, and Aboriginal people. In addition, those sections drew attention to information regarding the participation by those who had low earlier school achievement and those who left school at an early stage. In those preceding sections information about participation was considered separately for each of four broad forms of postcompulsory education and training: postcompulsory schooling, TAFE, higher education, and job training. This section begins by bringing together this information in order to present an overall picture of participation for each group of young people. It then draws some inferences about the barriers which may inhibit participation.

Participation in Education and Training: A Summary

In the introduction to this paper it was noted that the concept of disadvantage in relation to participation in postcompulsory education and training needed to allow for the multiple pathways available and the consequences of those for subsequent life chances. It was argued that disadvantage needed to be considered across the range of education and training provisions. This part of the review attempts to integrate and summarise the more detailed information in sections 2 to 5.

Young Women

Since the mid-1970s young women have participated in postcompulsory schooling to a greater extent than young men. Since the early 1980s commencing enrolments in higher education by young women have been greater than young men and since the late 1980s there have been more female than male students in higher education overall. Over the 20 years since 1970 the change in participation by young women in these forms
of education and training has been substantial. There is
evidence that the higher levels of participation in
postcompulsory schooling and higher education by young women
is partly due to stronger interpersonal support for continued
education, and that the change is at least partly due to
changing social expectations regarding the education and careers
of women. Within both postcompulsory schooling and higher
education young women participate to a lesser extent than men
in courses based on physical sciences and advanced
mathematics, but there is evidence of narrowing of the degree
of differentiation by gender in enrolment patterns.

Young women are under-represented in the vocational and
preparatory courses of TAFE by comparison with young men,
but there are substantial differences between different types of
course. Young men predominate in initial trades (apprenticeship)
and trade technician training, young women are represented in
greater numbers than men in other forms of initial vocational
training, and there is a more even balance in preparatory and
paraprofessional technician courses. Just as apprenticeships
(especially in the engineering and building fields of study)
remain an almost exclusively male area, traineeships (which
mainly involve office and clerical work) are predominantly
undertaken by females. It should be noted that apprenticeships
are of longer duration than traineeships, involve greater
numbers of young people, and result in a qualification which
appears to be valued more highly in terms of further study and
future earnings. In terms of job training, higher proportions of
young women then young men participate in in-house training
courses with young men having only slightly higher participation
rates in on-the-job training.

**Young People From Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds**

Young people of low socioeconomic background participate to a
smaller extent than others in postcompulsory schooling and
higher education. Over the 1980s the extent of disadvantage in
postcompulsory schooling associated with socioeconomic
background has reduced somewhat as general levels of
participation have increased. During the same period there have
only been minor changes in the social composition of higher
education students. The term socioeconomic encompasses both
social and economic aspects of home background. In general it
appears that much of the observed relationship between
socioeconomic background and participation in these forms of
education arises from its association with earlier school
achievement and forms of interpersonal support such as parental
encouragement. However, even after allowing for these
associated influences, there is still evidence of an effect of
wealth and other aspects of socioeconomic background on
continued participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education. Some studies suggest that the influence of wealth and income may be stronger for the poorest sections of the community than for those in the main span of wealth distribution.

Within postcompulsory schooling students of low socioeconomic background tend to have lower participation rates than others in courses based on physical sciences and advanced mathematics. This arises partly because of the association between socioeconomic background and earlier school achievement which is itself linked to participation in mathematics-science courses. Since students from these courses tend to enter higher education in greater proportions than students from other courses this constitutes a source of disadvantage. However, the influence is observed mainly among female students. In particular, female students of high earlier school achievement participate in mathematics-science courses to a smaller extent than would be expected. Among male students who reach Year 12 socioeconomic background does not appear to be strongly related to participation in mathematics-science courses.

Differences between socioeconomic groups in participation in TAFE are smaller than for higher education. Over the 1980s participation increased among the middle and, to a smaller extent, lower groups but declined for the upper groups. The overall effect was a slight narrowing of the range. In apprenticeships there was a decline in participation among both the upper and lower groups and an increase for those from middle (skilled trades and white collar) socioeconomic backgrounds. There is some tentative evidence that participation in TAFE provides a link to higher education for some young people and thereby facilitates access to higher education for those of low socioeconomic background.

**Young People of Non-English Speaking Background**

Even though young people of non-English speaking background are often believed to be disadvantaged in terms of participation in postcompulsory education and training, the evidence reviewed does not support this belief. There has been consistent evidence since the mid 1970s that young people of non-English speaking background have higher rates of participation in Years 11 and 12, and completion of Year 12, than their peers of anglo-Australian background. Among students from Years 11 and 12 those of non-English-speaking background participate in mathematics-science oriented courses to a greater extent than other students. It is also evident that young people of non-English-speaking background participate in higher education to a greater extent than other young people. Over the 1980s the
magnitude of the differences in participation between those of non-English-speaking background and others has diminished; both for postcompulsory school and for higher education. There is some support in the research literature for the proposition that there are differences between national groups in educational participation. That evidence points towards an interpretation in terms of social processes in those groups where participation is low rather than as a contradiction of the general pattern. Higher levels of participation by young people of non-English speaking background arise despite their generally poorer socioeconomic background. Some of the evidence suggests that those participation rates arise in part because of interpersonal support, encouragement, values and attitudes.

There was some evidence, from the late 1970s and early 1980s, of lower than expected participation in TAFE, and especially in apprenticeship, by those of non-English-speaking background. However, by the late 1980s that pattern had changed so that in those sectors also there were higher levels of participation by young people of non-English speaking background than others. In terms of “in-house” training courses in industry there is some evidence of slightly lower participation among young people who were born overseas but the data are based on small samples and do not refer to the broader concept of non-English-speaking background.

Young People from Rural Locations

Young people from rural areas participate in postcompulsory schooling and higher education to a lesser extent than their peers from urban locations. This is partly attributable to the fact that those who live in rural areas are less likely to come from a high socioeconomic or non-English speaking background. It is also a consequence of lower levels of interpersonal support (ie. encouragement towards continued education) and earlier school achievement. In particular contexts (eg. where senior secondary colleges are located in larger towns) there is evidence of distance from a centre offering Years 11 and 12 influencing lower levels of participation in these forms of education. Differences in participation between rural and urban young people in higher education appear to be greater for females than for males. Both of these findings suggest that there are circumstances where the problems of access and distance contribute to lower participation rates by young people from rural areas even though these do not show out as strong general factors.

The patterns of subject choice in the senior secondary years are not substantially different between those from rural as opposed to city locations, although there is a tendency towards lower
participation in mathematics-science, or business, oriented courses and higher participation in courses with a technical or practical orientation. In higher education participation by those from rural areas is relatively stronger in education and agriculture but weaker in arts and architecture. Participation in TAFE does not differ greatly between young people from rural and urban locations. Indeed participation rates in TAFE in general, and apprenticeship in particular, appear to be greatest in semi-rural, but not remote, areas. Young people from rural areas participate in job training, mainly in-house courses, to a slightly lesser extent than those from urban locations.

**Aboriginal People**

In all the sectors of postcompulsory education and training young Aboriginal people participate to a lesser extent than other young people. Although the gap in participation rates in postcompulsory schooling has narrowed over the 1980s, it remains substantial: the retention rate to Year 12 for Aboriginal people is about half that of the national figure. For higher education the picture is also one of substantial relative improvement over the 1980s but still leaving a large difference. The concentration of Aboriginal students in teacher education courses, as well as arts, may provide the foundation for further improvement in learning and participation by Aboriginal students. The relatively low levels of participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education by Aboriginal people are not compensated by higher levels of participation in TAFE. Young aboriginal people participate in TAFE at less than one quarter of the rate for Australia as a whole.

Many sources of disadvantage, such as low socioeconomic background, living in remote areas, and low earlier school achievement are present to a greater extent among Aboriginal people. In interaction with opportunities which have been provided in terms of teaching methods, curricula and school environments, these influences militate against participation in postcompulsory education and schooling.

**Barriers to Participation**

As part of the review by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission of education and employment opportunities, Hayden (1982) grouped the factors affecting participation by young people in tertiary education under two broad categories: economic and social-psychological. These two categories provide part of the framework for discussing barriers which might impede the participation by young people in postcompulsory
education. Within the category described by Hayden (1982) as social-psychological the present review separates those factors which relate to earlier school achievement and attitudes to school from those factors which relate to expectations, values and encouragement to continue education and training. In the present review the term “financial factors” has been used instead of “economic” since it is concerned with the immediate barriers faced by individuals rather than a broader analysis of trends. Finally, the present review adds accessibility as a dimension which invokes both economic and social-psychological factors.

**Earlier School Achievement**

Earlier school achievement is probably the strongest correlate of completing a full secondary education and participating in higher education (Williams 1987; Williams et al in press). Those who do well at school are more likely to continue their education. Even subject choice in senior secondary school is strongly influenced by earlier achievement in numeracy (Ainley et al 1990). The inference drawn from several studies is that part of the reason why some groups have lower participation rates in postcompulsory schooling, and higher education, lies in differences in earlier school achievement. In other words, low earlier school achievement is a barrier to participation in some forms of postcompulsory education and training.

This could be partly a consequence of selection being based on a criterion similar to the earlier school achievement measures so that there is some correspondence in the ordering of students on each measure. In higher education selection involving tests of achievement is common, but a similar relationship between earlier school achievement and participation is observed for postcompulsory schooling. At secondary school level any selection tends to operate through advice rather than formal criteria. This suggests that there may be other paths of influence at work. One is that students who achieve highly are recognised as successful, develop a sense of competence, and choose to continue to pursue an activity in which they do well. Williams et al (1980) suggests that a student’s self-rated achievement, even after allowing for differences in actual measured achievement, was good predictor of continuing with school. A second interpretation is that early school achievement measures reflect the mastery of skills which are necessary for the learning of more complex material in postcompulsory schooling and higher education. According to this interpretation mastery of these basic areas of learning provides access to more advanced studies. A third, and related interpretation, is that students’ earlier school achievement influences the subjects
undertaken subsequently through a combination of choice and counselling. A consequence of this is that higher achieving students have a greater opportunity to learn in areas related to further education and training, and are more likely to experience an environment where further education and training is an expectation.

School achievement is not just a reflection of what is learned at school but partly reflects the differing aptitudes which individuals bring to school. To this extent there may be limits as to how much school programs aimed at lifting achievement can reduce disadvantage in participation. However, there are two inferences which can be drawn from the association between achievement and participation in the light of the perspective outlined in the previous paragraph. The first is that reducing differences in early school achievement between students from disadvantaged groups and others could reduce differences in participation. Consequently enabling a wider range of students to master important aspects of early schooling and thus have access to advanced studies could widen the range of opportunities for further study available to young people. The second inference is that recognising and rewarding a wider range of achievements at school might encourage more students to pursue various education and training options. This strategy could have particular ramifications for participation in initial vocational training such as that in skilled trades.

**Attitudes to School**

There is also evidence that more favourable views of school life are associated with continuing at school and that favourable views of school life are not closely associated with high achievement (Ainley et al 1991). A sense among young people that school work is relevant to their future, that they feel successful in their school work, and general satisfaction with school are associated with staying at school. Two inferences can be drawn from this observation. The first is that programs aimed at raising achievement which had the unintended consequence of reducing students' satisfaction with these aspects of school life might prove counter-productive. The second is that these are aspects of the school environment which can be addressed through curriculum, organisation and assessment policies.

It seems that the experience of a young person at school is important in terms of continuing with school and in terms of subsequent education and training. It has been noted above that higher earlier school achievement is associated with entering higher education. In section 5 it was observed that there were higher levels of participation in training associated with
employment among those who had continued their initial education for a longer number of years.

**Expectations and Orientations**

Expectations for continued education conveyed by significant others, especially parents, appear to be associated with participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education. There is evidence that expectations, values and interpersonal support are involved in processes which result in higher participation rates by those of non-English speaking background, those of relatively higher socioeconomic background, and young women compared to young men. Conversely, one can infer that low expectations for education and training constitute a barrier to participation.

Changing expectations regarding education may have contributed to two of the changing patterns of participation in postcompulsory schooling. Firstly, the change in the relative participation rates of young women and young men has corresponded to a period in which community attitudes to the education and careers of women has broadened substantially. Secondly, the growth in participation through the 1980s was among the children of the first group of young Australians to experience secondary education on a wide-spread basis and who associated an extended education with better prospects in life. It seems reasonable to infer that the expectations of those parents for the education of their children was manifest in growing participation rates. If this pattern applies one might expect a diminished influence of expectations on participation as a wider range of people expect their children to continue at school.

Wilson and Wyn (1989) suggest that this may have already happened although studies reviewed in this review report that differences in interpersonal support are still associated with differences in participation.

Against this background it can be noted that participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education tends to be low among young men of low socioeconomic and anglo-Australian background and that this may reflect a pattern of expectations which has not changed. In one sense these young people may constitute a disadvantaged group, in terms of participation in these sectors, which is not widely recognised (see Davis 1988). This disadvantage becomes more important at a time of contracting opportunities for apprenticeship training, a traditional avenue for continued education and training among young men.

Expectations can influence patterns of participation in specific fields of study. One example concerns the participation of young women in mathematics and science oriented courses in senior
secondary school. In general young women participate in mathematics-science courses to a smaller extent than young men. However, among young women of high levels of achievement in numeracy but low socioeconomic background participation in these courses is much lower than would be expected, by comparison with young women of high achievement and high socioeconomic background. For young men achievement in numeracy is related to participation in mathematics-science courses but socioeconomic background is not. One interpretation of these patterns is that traditional expectations about appropriate careers influence the choices of young women from low socioeconomic backgrounds in a way which does not operate to the same extent for their peers of high socioeconomic background.

Rising levels of participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education have implications for technical education and vocational training. The present paper has noted evidence of a decline in participation in apprenticeship and technical education among high achievers at school and an increase in participation among low achievers. This suggests that capable young people are less inclined now than previously to choose apprenticeship and entry to trades training. Sweet (1990b) has argued that senior secondary programs, being historically oriented towards a preparation for higher education, develop interests, and foster expectations, away from apprenticeship training and technical education. Sweet (1990a) has argued for enhancing the role of schools in recognised vocational preparation. Such a development could be linked to a wider provision of technical studies of high standing in schools. It might provide a means by which students of high earlier achievement retain an interest in technical occupations and also cater for a wider range of interests among potential students.

**Financial Factors**

It would be expected that financial factors could act as a barrier to participation and training in two ways. Firstly, participation might be impeded by costs involved in the course; such as fees, books, tools, materials, or transport. Secondly, participation might be impeded as a result of income foregone by not being able to work full-time. Income foregone could be a barrier for young people living away from home and for those where supplementary income was especially important to the well-being of the family. Income foregone has a link to the expectations of young people in terms reducing a sense of financial independence and the expectations of families for young adults to contribute to household resources.
Both costs and income foregone would be expected to impact to a greater extent on those with more limited financial resources and this would lead one to expect that participation would be associated with family wealth and income, and with socioeconomic background. However such an association might not be immediately evident if it was non-linear. By way of elaboration it seems plausible that costs could act as a barrier for the very poorest members of the community and yet not differentiate between low middle and upper groups within the main span of wealth. The economic context would be expected to affect the ways in which financial factors influence participation. During an unfavourable economic climate, when employment prospects are poor, the influence of income forgone might be less than in a better economic climate but the influence of costs might be stronger because of greater poverty. In addition the extent to which income foregone might influence participation might be affected by young peoples’ perceptions of the rewards associated with completing a course. For these, and other reasons, an examination of the association between socioeconomic background, or even family wealth, and participation will not be a perfect test of whether financial factors act as a barrier to education and training.

In the studies reviewed in the present paper there was consistent evidence of associations between socioeconomic background and family wealth (income) and participation in both postcompulsory schooling and higher education. These factors influence both the completion of secondary school and the transition from secondary to higher education. This runs counter to the view that family background only affects for completion of Year 12 and is relatively unimportant for the transition to higher education. Although this suggests that financial factors act as a barrier to participation it is an association which deserves closer scrutiny.

In studies where detailed analysis was possible, allowing for concomitant differences in psychological support (eg parental encouragement to continue with education) and achievement, reduced the associations substantially. In other words, much of the observed difference in participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education between rich and poor results from social conditions and influences on earlier development.

Although this suggests that financial factors might not present a general barrier to participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education it requires qualification. It is possible that expectations are restricted by a knowledge of what is financially feasible, so that allowing for expectations has removed the influence of financial barriers from the analysis. In addition there is evidence of financial barriers operating in some contexts.
It seems possible that financial factors influence participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education among the poorest groups and those no longer supported by the families financial resources to a much greater extent than those in the main span of wealth distribution. This seems evident from studies of programs of financial assistance and studies of young people in poverty. In addition it may be that these factors are more important for higher education than for secondary education, given an expectation of financial independence among older adolescents (ANOP 1988). Trends over the 1980s suggest that the impact of financial factors on patterns of participation is dependent on the prevailing economic climate (see Williams et al in press). Between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, higher education participation dropped most among those of lowest socioeconomic background, suggesting that the economic recession of the early 1980s impacted most severely on those who were most vulnerable. From the late 1970s to the late 1980s there was a decline in higher education participation among those from the poorest quartile of families (especially if nursing is excluded from the figures for the late 1980s).

In general it seems that a large part of the association of socioeconomic background, or wealth, with participation in postcompulsory schooling and higher education is associated with stronger interpersonal support for continuing in education, and higher achievement, among those from the wealthier backgrounds. However, there is a number of circumstances in which financial factors can impede participation.

Participation in TAFE reflects the general socioeconomic distribution within the community to a greater extent than higher education. In terms of wealth there is evidence of contradictory patterns between the late 1970s and early 1980s. During the earlier time it seems that greater wealth favoured participation in TAFE. In contrast in the late 1980s it appeared that the less wealthy participated in TAFE to a greater extent than the more wealthy. A possible interpretation of this change could involve the increased role of programs directed to the disadvantaged in TAFE. If this is the case it suggests that participation in the vocational training courses, other than those which are preparatory, favours the more wealthy. Powles (1990) noted the effects on enrolments of the introduction of fees for some courses in TAFE and the lack of part-time work among full-time TAFE students. All this suggests that financial factors may be a barrier to participation in vocational training in TAFE to a greater extent than is commonly supposed.
Accessibility

Accessibility has been included as a potential barrier because it links expectations and finance. For students in rural and remote areas location can operate in two ways as a barrier to participation. Firstly, it acts as a barrier because there are fewer examples in the community of the activities and occupations associated with further education and training. This means that there is less likely to be interpersonal support for continued education. Secondly, the need for a participant to move to a major population centre to study means that the financial costs of continued education are greater than for a person from an urban area. It could be added that the personal costs of moving from friends and family are also greater. There is evidence of accessibility being a barrier to participation in several specific contexts such as for young people from rural areas where senior secondary school involved long travel or living away from home.

An Interactive Perspective

This section began by presenting an overview of the research evidence about the extent of disadvantage in various forms of postcompulsory education and training. From that overview it was possible to draw inferences regarding the barriers which impeded participation. That process involves separating barriers in a way which overlooks the ways in which those barriers interact. For example, the effects of low socioeconomic background may be masked by high aspirations among those of non-English speaking background or the influence of location is compounded by low expectations and socioeconomic background among those in remote areas. In examining the participation by various groups account needs to be taken of the interactions between factors as well as of the factors themselves.

Previous Strategies and Their Impact

Since the early 1970s there has been a widely recognised need for initiatives to increase the participation by disadvantaged young people in education and training programs. This section outlines the major strategies that have been used in Australia and reviews the evidence on their impact. The discussion concentrates on policies designed to operate primarily in, or alongside, the early postcompulsory years of schooling. As noted by the Quality of Education Review Committee, measures to cope with educational disadvantage can also operate at three other stages: early in students' school life; in junior secondary school;
and in adulthood as a means of providing a second chance (Karmel 1985). Measures that operate primarily at these other three stages, although vitally important, lie outside our terms of reference.

Six major types of strategies are reviewed: programs designed to raise educational expectations and awareness; school programs, especially curriculum change in senior secondary school; new combinations of employment, education and training, including traineeships; labour market programs targeted at disadvantaged groups; special entry programs in higher education; and financial support for further study.

At the outset, it should be said that there is only limited evidence on the impact of the programs conducted under the various strategies. This is not because program evaluations have not been undertaken. Rather, the evaluation of such programs is a difficult task. The conceptual and methodological problems include:

• the multiple objectives that programs are often expected to achieve, many of which are expressed in very general terms;
• the diversity of local conditions under which programs are implemented;
• the fact that such programs are often incremental to mainstream education and labour market activities; and
• the difficulty of obtaining an adequate control group.

These problems are compounded by the fact that the history of programs aimed primarily at the early post-compulsory years is short, and many of the programs themselves have had relatively short lives. The latter is especially so in regard to labour market programs, but those in education have also been subject to frequent changes in objectives, funding and operating mechanisms.

Raising Educational Expectations and Awareness

It is axiomatic that educational participation will be low where young people and their families hold low expectations for their educational and occupational futures, and have only limited knowledge of available opportunities. A marked development since the mid-1980s has been the use of the mass media and outreach programs by educational authorities to communicate with groups that traditionally hold low educational expectations. Prominent examples are provided by the 1990 Victorian program ‘Maths Multiplies Your Chances’ and the 1991 South Australian program ‘Maths Means More Chances for Girls’, both of which are aimed at improving female participation in upper secondary mathematics. These programs use videos, posters and teacher
information kits to communicate in a lively manner the long-term benefits to girls from studying mathematics. Although it is too early to judge their effectiveness, the early signs are encouraging: anecdotal evidence from Victoria suggests higher female enrolments in mathematics in 1991. More generally, such programs have considerable potential to provide a cost-effective means of reinforcing initiatives taken by schools and raising teacher morale by endorsing the value of education.

At another level, tertiary education institutions have put resources into increasing the awareness of the benefits of further education among low-income and disadvantaged secondary students. Several of these programs are discussed in Toomey (1987). The Northern Metropolitan Melbourne Participation Project is a joint initiative of La Trobe University, Phillip Institute of Technology, and Preston College of TAFE. The project started with the premise that attitudes towards tertiary education are shaped in the early secondary years. It involved a project officer working with local secondary teachers and students to develop audio-visual and printed materials aimed at increasing awareness of the benefits of tertiary education, and the nature of the tertiary experience. The Tertiary Awareness Program (TAP) in south-western Sydney has a similar focus, supplemented by direct approaches to the community through radio interviews, leaflets distributed at shopping centres, and presentations at parent-teacher meetings and career information sessions.

A. extensive evaluation of TAP has been conducted by Moses, McKenzie and Roe (1990). They reach cautious conclusions about the long-term value of programs such as TAP. Through innovative marketing and dissemination strategies such programs can raise general awareness of tertiary education opportunities and benefits. If well targeted and resourced the programs can also be an effective means of reaching disadvantaged groups. However, as the authors note, making people aware is only a first, and relatively easy, step. Much more difficult is the task of devising a coherent strategy so that disadvantaged young people who act on their awareness and enter tertiary education receive the support necessary for effective participation. Although it may be difficult to raise educational expectations in the short-term, there is little doubt that more can be done to improve awareness of the programs that are available.

Secondary schools, in particular, have an important role to play in this respect. It is noteworthy, for example, that virtually none of young people who commenced in the Australian Traineeship Scheme (ATS) in 1986–87 nominated school as their first source of information about traineeships (DEET 1989b). Although this situation may have improved in recent years, it is important that traineeships become better known at school level
if their potential as a bridge between school and work is to be realised. A survey of recent Year 12 school leavers who did not enrol in higher education reported that around 30 per cent of the survey group emphasised the need for better career guidance and counselling provisions at school (Mellor 1990). It appeared that many of them lacked knowledge of viable alternatives when faced with the situation that their Year 12 results were inadequate to gain a higher education place.

More generally, the increasing number of different programs, and the greater diversity of the student body, make it essential that information and guidance is central, rather than ancillary, to the postcompulsory education phase (OECD 1989). This is particularly so for disadvantaged young people who may lack the home and other resources needed to make them fully informed about their options.

**School Programs**

Schooling is the only educational experience that is common to all young people. As such, schools play a vital role in shaping attitudes towards further education and training, and in developing the capacities to benefit from educational opportunities. Australian programs to increase the value of schooling for disadvantaged young people, and to raise their participation in postcompulsory schooling, largely date from the work of the Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission (Karmel 1973). This seminal report identified group differences in educational participation and achievement as the principal indicators of educational inequality, and proposed that schools serving disadvantaged communities be the focus of compensatory programs.

This section does not discuss general compensatory programs such as the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP) and the Country Areas Program (CAP) since they do not focus on the postcompulsory school years (although, of course, many school initiatives funded through these programs have had such a focus). For the same reason, the supplementary staffing policies operated by most government school systems to provide additional resources to disadvantaged schools are not considered here. The discussion concentrates on school initiatives to make upper secondary schooling more attractive to a broader group of young people, and to facilitate the transition from school to employment.

**Alternative Curriculum Structures**

There is clear evidence that the nature of the schooling experience differs from school to school. Schools that serve
similar student populations can differ markedly in students' cognitive and affective outcomes and the retention of students to Year 12. The type of curriculum provided seems to be important in this respect. In a study of Victorian government high schools Ainley et al (1984a) found that after controlling for students' social characteristics (father's occupation, country of birth, and the geographic location of the school) retention rates from Year 11 to Year 12 were higher in schools that offered alternatives in addition to the mainstream Group 1 HSC subjects. The effect of curriculum on retention to Year 12 was most marked in the schools that offered the HSC Group 2 approved study structure known as STC. This particular course offered a flexible structure that emphasised student involvement in the development of the course, student responsibility for learning activities, and student participation in assessment.

A later, longitudinal study of the group of Victorian government schools that offered the STC curriculum alongside the more traditional Group 1 course (Batten 1989) found that, relative to their peers, the STC students reported higher perceptions of the relevance of their schooling, feeling successful as a student, and the achievement of academic and personal development. The differences between the two groups continued once students entered employment or tertiary education. One year after high school graduation, the former STC students reported relatively stronger views about the value of their Year 12 than did the former Group 1 students. Similar results were reported by Campbell and McMeniman (1983) in a study of alternative and mainstream Year 11 programs in Queensland and South Australia.

At the level of the school system, there is some evidence of higher retention rates to Year 11 in those States where the Year 11 curriculum is less closely linked to that at Year 12 and to tertiary study (Ainley et al 1984b). Evidence of the general attractiveness of alternative curricula in Years 11 and 12 is provided by the fact that for much of the 1980s such programs, although enrolling relatively few students, accounted for much of the general rise in school retention rates (Ainley 1989). In Western Australia, at least, there was evidence that senior curricula less rigidly geared to preparing students to enter higher education were particularly attractive to females, students with relatively low achievement, students from government schools, and those from country regions (Parker 1986). In Victoria, the spread of the STC course was most marked in the western and northern suburbs of Melbourne, areas that have traditionally been associated with educational disadvantage.
More Comprehensive Curricula

Since the late 1980s several States, most notably Victoria and South Australia, have removed the distinctions between 'mainstream' and 'alternative' by developing new, 'comprehensive' upper secondary curricula. These initiatives are intended to ensure that all students participate in major curriculum areas, and that all students' achievements are recognised through a common credential.

The need for the upper secondary school to respond to the growing diversity of the student population has been the major stimulus to these substantial curriculum reforms. It is too early to assess the impact of the new programs on educational participation by disadvantaged groups. However, the work of Batten and others in the 1980s suggests that to maximise the potential of these programs it will be important that they are sensitive to the needs of students who have traditionally experienced little academic success in school.

School-TAFE Links

One important means by which schools can broaden their upper secondary curricula is by developing linkages with TAFE colleges. The potential benefits from closer cooperation between schools and TAFE are three-fold: the broadening of choice for students; enabling a mix of subjects that may provide a better basis for tertiary study than school-based subjects alone; and stimulating the more efficient use of resources in both schools and TAFE (Mulqueeny 1990). Programs which increase awareness of TAFE among secondary students and which facilitate their transition to TAFE programs are likely to be particularly important for disadvantaged groups. The reported success of school-TAFE programs with a particular focus on female students who had experienced limited success in mathematics, Aboriginal students, and students of non-English speaking background (Mulqueeny 1990) provide useful pointers in this regard.

School to Work Transition

The Transition Education Program was a Commonwealth program that commenced in 1980 with a grant of $25 million and the promise of $150 million over the next five years. Its aim was to make unemployment the 'least acceptable alternative' for 15–19 year-olds by providing a range of options in education, training and employment. A major objective was to provide school experiences which would make more employable the students considered most likely to be unemployed on leaving school. In 1984 the Participation and Equity Program (PEP)
subsumed the Transition Education program. PEP is discussed below.

Fraser and Kennedy (1990) reviewed the Transition Education Program, drawing on case studies of school programs in three States that were mandated as part of the Program. Implementation of these Commonwealth program was a State responsibility. Accordingly, States varied in their ‘interpretations, emphases and modes of organisation’ (p.27) of the programs. Such variations, and possible divergences from the original conception of the program, make the evaluation task more difficult. It is also made difficult by the fact that the case study materials upon which evaluations such as this are based are almost all essentially descriptive in nature.

A number of positive outcomes were evident from the school case studies:

- improved self-esteem and enjoyment of school experienced by student participants;
- creation and legitimation of content and process alternatives to the traditional school curriculum;
- improved teacher-student relationships;
- increased student participation in decision making;
- stronger school-community linkages;
- improved harmony at school and in students’ homes; and
- wider recognition of school initiatives.

Some negative effects of the program were also evident, most notably an increase in teachers’ workloads, anxiety and stress.

A number of factors were identified as critical to the project’s success in schools: support of the school principal and other senior staff; support from the school system; external financial support; availability of coordinators; support of the project committees; availability of staff on time release; support and cooperation from non-participant teachers; low turnover of staff. Where these features are present in only limited form, or missing altogether, there is little prospect of the project’s benefits being incorporated into the longer-term life of the school.

**Participation and Equity Program**

PEP’s objectives were somewhat broader than the Transition Education Program, namely, to increase the overall participation rate in postcompulsory education, especially among groups that had traditionally been under-represented. The national evaluation of PEP (Hartley & Owen 1989) was built on a series of case studies of schools conducted in 1986. As was noted earlier in Section 2, the PEP schools tended to address broad
participation issues rather than to focus on the needs of special groups. As such, in their program development schools paid most attention to the broad group of students characterised as under-achievers, early school leavers, and non-academically inclined students. Only one school appeared to approach equity issues through the targeting of a particular group, in this case girls.

In their use of PEP resources, most of the schools addressed whole-school issues. In the schools' view, increased participation by disadvantaged groups in the postcompulsory years required curriculum renewal and teachers' professional development across all year levels and not just Years 11 and 12. The most common impact statement from the case study schools was that PEP acted as a catalyst, an impetus, a focus and a legitimising agent for changes, some of which may have occurred without PEP, but at a slower rate. The PEP resources assisted students' curricula options to be broadened, and teachers' professional development to be encouraged. However, relatively little progress was reported towards increased participation by students and parents in significant decision making in the schools. A potentially important outcome was that the PEP schools tended to become 'lighthouse' schools in their systems or regions. In this way the benefits of PEP were disseminated more widely than the schools which constituted the program.

A more recent joint Commonwealth-State initiative to improve participation by disadvantaged groups is the Students at Risk Program, which commenced in 1990 for a two-year trial period. This program, which is targeted at government schools, is funded on 2:1 ratio by the States and Commonwealth. In 1990 about 250 government schools were engaged in a wide range of activities supported through the program. At present a review of the program is being undertaken which will help determine whether the program continues beyond 1991.

**New Combinations of Education, Work and Training**

The continuing decline in full-time youth employment during the 1980s prompted considerable debate and policy formation on new ways of combining education, work and training. The most prominent development was the introduction of traineeships through the Australian Traineeship System (ATS) in 1985–86.

**Traineeships**

The ATS represents a new direction in vocational training for young Australians. It aims to achieve long-term improvements in training arrangements for young people in non-trades employment, and thereby develop new paths of labour market entry and career development. In its implementation, however,
the ATS appears to have fallen short of the objectives established by the Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs (Kirby 1985). There is evidence, though, that the scheme has been relatively successful for the young people who have undertaken a traineeship.

Since the inception of the ATS in 1985–86 the numbers of traineeship commencers have increased steadily, but slowly. In 1988–89 there were 13,600 commencers, a figure that falls far short of the recommended number of at least 75,000 traineeship places by 1988 (Kirby 1985). There appear to be three main reasons why the ATS has failed to become a major component of postcompulsory education and training: traineeships have not been attractive to sufficient numbers of employers; traineeships have not developed prestige in the eyes of young people; and, in a related way, upper secondary schools have become more attractive for young people.

Although the ATS is not geared explicitly to serving disadvantaged groups there may be perceptions that this is the case. The rapid rise in school retention rates during the 1980s could have led to traineeships being seen as a ‘second-best’ option for those unable or unwilling to stay at school. For traineeships to have appropriate status requires that they be perceived as a viable alternative to continuing at school, entering tertiary education, or obtaining an apprenticeship (Anderson 1985).

However, even in terms of its equity objectives, the scheme faces difficulties since selection for a traineeship lies ultimately with the employer. Despite the fact that a higher training allowance is paid to those who take on disadvantaged trainees, this may be insufficient to offset what the employer may see as the higher costs of taking on the disadvantaged and long-term unemployed. In the 1986-87 intake, about 15 per cent of trainees were classified as disadvantaged (DEET 1989b). As the balance of the scheme shifts to the private sector, the proportion of disadvantaged participants could be expected to fall below the target figure.

The operation of the ATS reiterates an issue that has been raised in connection with alternative curricula in schools. If programs are targeted to serve disadvantaged groups, or perceived to be so targeted, may have difficulty in gaining wide acceptance from employers and other educational institutions. Under these circumstances, and no matter how worthy the program concerned, participation by the disadvantaged may not provide them with the means to enter mainstream employment or education. A second issue that can be illustrated by the operation of the ATS is the practical difficulties of gaining cooperation from a wide range of education and labour market groups in the development of youth programs.
There is evidence that the ATS has worked well for the young people and employers who have taken part. In a survey of a sample of 1986-87 trainee commencers, almost all the trainees (96 per cent) considered they had acquired new skills through the traineeship, and 83 per cent felt that the skills would be useful or very useful in future jobs (DEET 1989b). Almost 90 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with their traineeship job, and three-quarters felt that the traineeship certificate would be useful or very useful for future job prospects.

On the more negative side, two-thirds felt that their off-the-job training was not well timed with their work tasks and vice-versa. Around half reported that they found the off-the-job training course to be of some difficulty. In general, those who had completed the least schooling found the training component to be the most difficult. Around 30 per cent of the trainee survey group did not complete their traineeship; the characteristics of completers and leavers were very similar. The most common reason (27 per cent) for not completing was to start another job, while 20 per cent reported that they had been laidoff, sacked or retrenched.

A large majority (87 per cent) of trainee completers were in employment three months after the end of the traineeship period, compared to 73 per cent of leavers. Since the other characteristics of the two groups were similar this suggests that completion of the traineeship did assist in gaining employment. Disadvantaged trainee completers had a slightly lower chance of being in employment (79 and 87 per cent respectively). Almost 90 per cent of trainee completers who were in employment at the time of the survey were employed in a field related to their traineeship. The majority (81 per cent) of trainee completers felt that their traineeship had helped them get their current job, made them better at that job (76 per cent), and had helped them to get a better job than if they had not done the traineeship (65 per cent).

Employers who participated in the ATS also reported support for the scheme (DEET 1989c). The majority (72 per cent) felt that their investment in the scheme had been worthwhile, and about two-thirds indicated that they intended to take on more trainees in the future. One-half reported that they believed the ATS would become a permanent point of entry to their organisation, and a substantial majority (87 per cent) intended to permanently appoint trainees who successfully complete their traineeship. In this sense, therefore, the traineeship was operating successfully as an entry to employment. However, it appeared to be less successful as an entry to further education. A survey of providers of the off-the-job training component indicated that it is recognised to only a limited extent as a means to further education or training (DEET 1989d).
Prevocational and Pre-apprenticeship Programs

In the late 1970s, and since, and a number of state TAFE authorities have initiated full-time programs designed to help school leavers in the transition from school to work. Those more directly geared to entry to apprenticeship, and which result in exemptions from part of the college component of an apprenticeship, have been referred to as pre-apprenticeship and those which are more generally oriented to work have been referred to as prevocational.

The prevocational programs introduced in Queensland are best described as polytechnical. They are structured around general studies and technical studies, with a progressive focusing on specialisation within a family of trades in the technical studies component (Ainley & Fordham 1979ab). At present they involve four specialised areas: engineering, building, motor mechanics and electrical. Phase 1 is common to all areas, introduces students to the skills and careers in each of the trade areas. It lasts for six weeks. In phase 2, which extends over 8 weeks students enter one of two semi-specialised programs: engineering or construction. In phase 3, which extends over 26 weeks, students learn the specialised skills and knowledge associated with one of the four specific areas. An evaluation of the programs in the late 1970s showed that students valued the programs, were successful in gaining employment, and some entered apprenticeship. The challenge in such programs is to identify generic skills and to structure courses which develop those skills to a high standard which enables them to be applied in particular trade context. If there is to be greater integration between senior school curricula and vocational preparation much could be learned from the experience of these programs.

Pre-apprenticeship programs are more formally oriented to entry to apprenticeship. Students study full-time at a TAFE college for varying periods but typically for one year. Although these programs exist in many states they have been most prevalent in New South Wales. A range of pre-apprenticeship programs were introduced in that state in the late 1970s with the dual aims of assisting in the transition from school to work and rectify problems in the apprenticeship training system. Heller and Naylor (1978) showed that pre-apprenticeship covered a wide range of trades but was most widely used in carpentry and joining fitting and machining, automotive welding, and automotive engineering. One of the opportunities offered is to provide for better integration of theory and practice. Ainley and Fordham (1979ab) describe how the carpentry and joinery pre-apprenticeship program involved a realistic construction project (groups of eight students and one instructor each built a house for a years project with the house being handed over to the state housing authority) in which each phase of the construction
was closely related to the instructional program at the college. Typically students would spend half of each week at college and half on the project site. Students from this and other pre-apprenticeship programs, usually found work but not necessarily as apprentices (Putt 1979).

Ainley and Fordham (1979ab) reported that a major feature of both prevocational and pre-apprenticeship programs was the attempt to create an environment similar to that of work. Students regarded their environment as between school and work. Generally students were satisfied with the programs but recorded greatest interest in the practical, applied aspects of their courses.

**Labour Market Programs**

As youth unemployment started to climb dramatically in the mid-1970s, there was an increasing emphasis on labour market programs for youth, especially disadvantaged youth. The major programs included the Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY) and the Special Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP). Rao and Jones (1986) reviewed a number of these programs and concluded that completion of the programs significantly improved young people’s labour market performance. They also concluded that employment-based programs (such as SYETP and General Training Assistance On-the-Job) were generally more successful than education-based programs (for example, School-to-Work Transition Program elements, Pre-Apprenticeship and General Training Assistance programs) in improving the chances of subsequent continuous full-time employment. The employment-based programs appeared to have proportionately larger benefits for the most disadvantaged participants.

Rao and Jones (1986) suggested that the key factors in program success were:

- testing placements for occupational demand;
- higher skill content of the program;
- subsidised work or pre-apprenticeship experience as opposed to allowance for further education; and
- longer subsidy period as opposed to remedial or preparatory education.

By the mid-1980s there had been a proliferation and fragmentation of labour market programs for the disadvantaged and long-term unemployed. The 1985 Kirby Report argued for a major reorientation in which education and training were to be emphasised rather than short-term job creation. As proposed by Kirby, the primary objective of labour market programs should
be to improve long-term employment and earnings prospects, and there should be much closer integration of education, labour market and social programs.

In the period since 1985 many of Kirby recommendations have been implemented, including integration of individual labour market programs to reduce the number of programs but increase the flexibility of their delivery (Stretton & Chapman 1990). Changes in the provision of unemployment benefits for youth, so as to reduce the incentive to leave school early, are evidence of greater integration in policies. In general, the practice of separate labour market programs for youth and adults has ceased. The delivery of programs for the long-term unemployed has been integrated in that local Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) managers are given a single appropriation and flexibility in tailoring programs suited to individual circumstances and local labour market conditions.

In their extensive review, Stretton and Chapman (1990) analysed three main types of Commonwealth labour market programs: vocational and job search training schemes for the unemployed; wage subsidies to private employers; and direct public sector job creation. Based on a review of evidence of the costs and benefits of the different program types, they authors concluded:

- the net cost of creating an additional job is about the same under wage subsidy and direct job creation schemes;
- wage subsidy jobs are likely to last longer than the period of assistance from direct job creation;
- labour market programs do appear to assist the long-term unemployed back into employment, although the effectiveness of direct job creation appears to be marginal;
- wage subsidies and training programs are much less expensive than direct job creation; and
- during a recession the demands for labour market programs increase but their effectiveness in assisting the long-term unemployed falls.

The latter point is particularly pertinent in the present economic circumstances. As Stretton and Chapman (1990) point out, during a recession there is less potential for programs to affect employment prospects, so the equity arguments increase in relative importance, although the scope for programs to assist disadvantaged groups also falls. In these circumstances it is important that training programs ensure that the skills they impart are relevant to employment needs when economic recovery eventuates.
Special Entry Programs to Higher Education

All higher education institutions make provision for students to gain entry other than by the conventional means of gaining an aggregate score based on Year 12 performance. Most of these provisions have a clear equity focus, namely, to enable people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enrol in higher education who would not have qualified under normal criteria. It is worth noting, though, that not all special entry schemes necessarily have an explicit equity orientation. For example, the alternative admissions scheme through which half of the entrants to medicine at the University of Newcastle are selected is based on a view that qualities other than academic excellence are important for medical practice (Murphy 1987).

As practised in Australia, there are two broad types of special entry schemes. The first is where applicants' aggregate scores are weighted more heavily if they are able to demonstrate educational disadvantage due to language problems, financial difficulty or other factors at home that made study difficult. The Special Admissions Scheme at the University of Melbourne is an example of such a program (Ryan & Speechley 1987). This scheme applies to the admission of between 5 and 10 per cent of the first-year quotas for faculties. It is particularly targeted at schools that have been traditionally under-represented among the University's entrants, and encourages them to identify potential applicants for the scheme. The second broad type of scheme is aimed at adults who may not have satisfied mainstream entry requirements, but who nevertheless can demonstrate a capacity to benefit from higher education. In 1990 around 40 per cent of mature age undergraduate commencers entered higher education other than through normal entry requirements (DEET 1990i); female mature age students were slightly more likely to gain entry through such schemes than males.

As a group, mature age commencers represented 45 per cent of all higher education commencing undergraduate students in 1989 (DEET 1990i). This represented the lowest proportion for a decade, which suggests that access to higher education by adults may have become more difficult during the 1980s. If anything, such difficulties are likely to have been more pronounced for adults from disadvantaged backgrounds. If this is the case, it is to be regretted, since there is now a reasonable body of evidence that mature age students perform relatively well in higher education, and that such schemes provide an important second-chance for disadvantaged school leavers (West, Hore, Eaton & Kermond 1986). For this success to be achieved, though, it seems that institutions need to commit considerable
resources to selection procedures, bridging courses, and counselling and guidance facilities.

Financial Support for Further Study

Commonwealth government financial support for participation in postcompulsory education is mainly in the form of AUSTUDY, a non-competitive means-tested allowance payable to full-time students aged 16 or over. For 16–17 year-olds the maximum weekly allowance in 1991 is $102, and for 18–20 year-olds it is $113. Some assistance under AUSTUDY is paid to about 35 per cent of secondary students aged 16 years and over, and to about 40 per cent of full-time tertiary students.

A number of analyses of the impact of student financial assistance on secondary school enrolments has been undertaken (for example Meade 1982; Beswick et al 1983; Ainley et al 1984a; Braithwaite 1986, 1989). As was noted in Section 2, in general these evaluations have found that direct financial support for students has, at most, only a modest impact on decisions to continue with schooling. It seems that students' views on participation beyond the postcompulsory school years are established early in their school life. Except in a few cases, the availability of financial support will not of itself be sufficient to dissuade committed school leavers. It may prove more persuasive for students (and their families) who are undecided about whether to continue beyond age 15, but there is other evidence that the number of 'undecided' school leavers is relatively small. However, there is also evidence that support through schemes such as AUSTUDY can be an important consideration for families in financial difficulty (Sheen 1988).

Adequate financial support is likely to become a more critical influence on young people's decisions about educational participation as they contemplate moves to the less-familiar and more adult surroundings of TAFE and higher education. In these post-school sectors, too, students are older and more likely to live away from home so that their financial needs are greater. Community surveys support the argument that financial assistance to encourage increased participation is relatively more important at tertiary than secondary level (ANOP 1988). Such support is likely to be particularly important for disadvantaged groups.

Possible Future Strategies

The present paper began with an assertion that education is valuable of itself, because of what is learned, and because of the individual and social benefits that flow from education. This
assertion is recognised by the community in requiring attendance at school up to the age of 15 or 16. In recent times there has been a dramatic growth in participation in schools beyond the compulsory school years. That change would be sufficient to cause reflection on the nature of the provision for postcompulsory education and training. Added impetus for reflection comes from concurrent changes in the structures of society, industry and commerce. However, it is important that any re-examination of postcompulsory education should not only be concerned with ways and means but also with purposes and opportunities.

The present paper is primarily concerned with opportunities for disadvantaged young people in postcompulsory education and training. However, it is based on the premise that participation in these forms of education should provide young people with skills and knowledge which enable them to adapt to changing employment opportunities and to understand the principles on which practices are based. Training which was so specific as to inhibit the development of a wider understanding would limit, and therefore disadvantage, individuals in terms of their active participation in society, and be unlikely to lead to a more productive workforce.

The strategies and policies suggested point to general directions rather than specific programs. Evidence from research is seldom sufficiently unambiguous to point to specifics, but usually provides guidance as to areas of action which are likely to prove most fruitful. The first two of the directions which are mentioned refer to the compulsory years of schooling rather than postcompulsory education and training as such. That is inevitable. As we move from selective to mass participation in further education, the postcompulsory years become comprehensively linked to the compulsory years.

**Earlier School Achievement**

Participation in most of forms of postcompulsory education and training, especially the more prestigious, is associated with earlier school achievement. This is evident for postcompulsory schooling and higher education in particular. Many of those disadvantaged through lack of participation in those forms of education and training are impeded by low levels of earlier achievement. A common approach to examining dropping out from school has been in terms of a “frustration-self-esteem model” which sees poor performance leading to a low sense of self-efficacy and withdrawal from the context where that occurs (the school) (Finn 1989). At least part of a program to redress disadvantage ought to be concerned with what happens in primary school so that students who are not mastering
important aspects of those early years of learning receive special help. The way this has been worded is deliberate. Although schools where there is more than an average proportion of students in need of special assistance might be identified in terms of the social characteristics of the school population, it needs to be stressed that the purpose of such assistance is to help individuals who are not learning effectively. Individual schools are best placed to identify who receives that assistance and how it is provided.

Even though much of the preceding paragraph may seem self-evident it is important to stress what seems a clear message from the research reviewed in this paper. More importantly it serves to warn against an emphasis on developing structures for postcompulsory education and training to the neglect of the earlier years of schooling. Those early years provide the foundation on which any system of postcompulsory education and training must build.

**Learning Environments**

Some of the research reviewed pointed to the role of students' views of school life in influencing participation in postcompulsory schooling; in particular a sense that school work was relevant to one's future, a sense of feeling successful, and general satisfaction with school. The contribution of attitudes to school was largely independent of achievement. This provides a caution regarding a concentration on earlier school achievement. If approaches were adopted which reduced students' sense of satisfaction with these aspects of school life there could be negative consequences for future participation. Interpreted in a more positive light this result suggests the importance of curriculum and reward systems in developing a continuing involvement in learning. Inclusion of technical-practical activities could not only improve the quality of school life but could reduce inequalities in participation and broaden students' expectations of the range of fields to which further education might be relevant.

Finn (1989) has argued for looking at withdrawing from school in terms of a "participation-identification" model rather than a frustration-self esteem model. The participation-identification model views dropping out in terms of behaviour (participation in and outside the classroom) and psychological orientation (identification with the school). This approach focuses attention on school environments and curricula in shaping participation and identification and thus on decisions by students to continue their education. Wehlage (1986) argues that schools "must find curricula experiences that can both retain student interest and
engagement on the one hand, and result in worthwhile learning and development on the other" (p. 25).

Expectations and Orientations

In addition to suggesting that low earlier school achievement was a barrier to participation in postcompulsory education and training, a number of the research studies reviewed indicated that interpersonal support, or the expectations of significant others, played a role in shaping educational participation. A major challenge in providing equitable participation in postcompulsory education and training is to promote the importance of continuing learning in a wide range of occupations. It could be that further education, and continuing learning, is still popularly associated with a limited number of professions rather than with occupational skill in general. If such views prevailed amongst people who had not needed to continue learning beyond school but who had fared well in terms of employment, it would be consistent with the observed low participation rates in postcompulsory education among males from low socioeconomic anglo-Australian backgrounds. This interpretation points to a need to promote a wide expectation of recurrent education in the development of occupational skills. In a more general sense it suggests the desirability of developing what Husen (1986) referred to as "a learning society"; but one in which learning included the development of skills and knowledge with occupational applications.

Senior School Curricula

On numerous occasions this paper has mentioned the dramatic changes in participation rates in postcompulsory schooling over the 1980s. Accompanying those changes have been a number of changes in senior secondary school curricula. Curriculum changes have been designed to provide a broader range of studies and a wider scope of study modes. As a generalisation, new curricula have not often involved science studies, or studies which link science and technology, although many have been developed with vocational goals in other fields such as commerce and office practice. At the same time there has been a decline in the participation by those of high levels of early school achievement in vocational and technical training. In Section 6 the paper drew attention to the argument by Sweet (1990a) that there was a need to "enhance the role of schools in recognised vocational preparation". Sweet argues that such a role for schools is likely to provide a better "combination of personal and occupational competencies than traditional
programs which focus only on technical skills”. It is argued that this helps reduce disadvantage by opening wider options within an accepted educational setting, by reducing the need to obtain a job before gaining access to vocational education, and by providing a wider basis for continuing education in the workforce. In Section 5 the paper noted that those with a more extended experience of initial education were also those who benefited by higher levels of participation in job training. In another place Sweet (1990b) has suggested that traditional senior secondary curricula tend to orient young people away from technical education. Changing school curricula in this way could show that vocational education was a respectable form of study in senior secondary school. These suggestions link also to the issue of expectations and orientations discussed above.

**Links Between Sectors**

In the research reviewed in this paper it was evident that there was a more even representation of social groups (including those considered to be disadvantaged) in TAFE than in higher education. There was also some evidence of transfer from TAFE to higher education, although the data were not sufficiently detailed to allow an analysis of which groups of people, and from which TAFE courses, this was most prevalent. At least it can be inferred that there is evidence of potential for TAFE to be a bridge to higher education for disadvantaged young people. In a more general sense there is a need to build more strongly the articulation of links between different educational sectors.

**Targeted Financial Assistance**

In terms of participation the evidence suggests that some people in poor financial circumstances are deterred from participation in postcompulsory education and training. It might be expected that in straightened economic times financial factors would affect a wider range of people. The paper did not examine the role of financial factors on aspects other than participation. However, there is a need to examine the role of finance on student performance in postcompulsory education and training and investigate whether the necessity for part-time work reduces the ability of students to learn as effectively as possible. In addition, some of the studies suggested that financial assistance was of equal importance for those in technical and vocational courses as for those in higher education. Even for the part-time students personal costs of further study can be high.
A Comprehensive Framework

Towards the end of the 1970s there was a considerable amount of policy discussion about developing a comprehensive youth policy, or at least a set of integrated youth policies. Under this approach issues concerned with social, employment and education policies as they applied to youth would be considered together. A decade later the patterns of participation in postcompulsory education and training have changed somewhat but the need to consider the field in a coherent framework remains. High levels of participation in secondary school to Year 12 compel a rethinking of how postcompulsory education and training might build on that foundation, and a new examination of how to provide for the continuing education of the minority who do not complete Year 12.

References

Ainley, J. & Fordham, A. (1979a) Between school and adult life: An approach to the evaluation of pre-vocational education in TAFE. Hawthorn, Vic.: ACER.


Australian Bureau of Statistics (1990b) Labour force status and educational attendance (persons aged 15 to 24), Australia, September 1989 (6272.0). Canberra: ABS.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (1990c) Transition from education to work, Australia 1990. (6227.0) Canberra: ABS.


Braithwaite, J. (1986) Staying or leaving? Commonwealth financial assistance to secondary students. Sydney: School of Education, Macquarie University, NSW.


Coppell, W.G., (1986) To stay or leave—that is the question: A pilot survey of the factors influencing the decisions of Aboriginal students to stay at school or to leave at the end of year 10. North Ryde, NSW: School of Education, Macquarie University.


Department of Employment Education and Training (DEET) (1990d) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. (Higher Education Series Report No. 3) Canberra: Author.


Karmel, P. (Chair) (1985) Quality of education in Australia. Canberra: AGPS.


Madden, K.E. (1980) Selection of post grade 10 options. some insights into the decision making process in two high schools. (Research Study No. 53). Hobart: Research Branch, Education Department of Tasmania.


Rosier, M. (1978) Early school leavers in Australia: Family, school and personal determinants of 16 year old Australians' decisions to remain at school or leave. IEA Monograph Series, No. 7. Hawthorn, Vic.: ACER.


State Training Board of Victoria (1988b) People from non-English speaking countries in TAFE: A report on their access and participation. (Student Profile Survey. Report No. 2) Melbourne: Author.


Appendix 2(C)

Dislocated Transitions: Access and Participation for Disadvantaged Young People

An Issues Paper Prepared for the Australian Education Council Review of Post-Compulsory Education and Training

by JOHN FREELAND With Research Assistance by ZOE THOMPSON Department of Social Work and Social Policy The University of Sydney

July 1991
## Contents

1. Introduction

PART A: CONTEXT AND PERSPECTIVES

2. Changing Participation Patterns
   2.1 Full-Time Employment
   2.2 Educational Participation
   2.3 Part-Time Employment

3. At Risk and Vulnerable Groups
   3.1 Young People from Low Socio Economic Status Households
   3.2 Young People from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds
   3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People
   3.4 Rural and Remote Area Young People
   3.5 Young Women
   3.6 The Young Homeless
   3.7 Conclusion

4. Aspirations and Broken Transitions
   4.1 Broken Transitions
   4.2 Making Their Own World

PART B: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

5. Schools, Pedagogy and Equity
   5.1 Schools and Unequal Outcomes
   5.2 Reducing Labour Market Inequality and Closure
   5.3 Fostering Equal Educational Opportunity

6. The Reform Agenda
   6.1 Reducing External Barriers
   6.2 Equality of Educational Resources
   6.3 Decentralisation and De-Bureaucratisation
   6.4 Pedagogy and Teacher Education
   6.5 The Democratic Curriculum

Bibliography
**Introduction**

The general Term of Reference for this Issues Paper is:

- To consider current barriers to the effective participation of disadvantaged young people in post-compulsory education and training, and strategies for increasing their participation and improving their educational and labour market outcomes.

The specific Terms of Reference expand on the general Term of Reference, viz, to consider:

- The issues confronting young people from different disadvantaged groups (and those who influence them) at the point where decisions are being made about activity after post-compulsory schooling, including perceptions of different post-compulsory school options (noting that a separate paper will be commissioned in relation to people with disabilities);
- Barriers which restrict the participation of different groups of disadvantaged young people in post-compulsory education and training or which reduce the value or effectiveness of participation for those groups;
- The perceived and real effectiveness of major measures and programs introduced in Australia to increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in post-compulsory education and training and to improve their education and training outcomes, noting key strengths and weaknesses in those programs from the perspective of different disadvantaged groups (recognising that only limited data will be available on some of these issues);
- Options for new or amended strategies in relation to post-compulsory education and training to achieve improved educational and labour market outcomes for different disadvantaged groups; and
- Advice in relation to key areas where necessary data is currently unavailable and requirements for further research.

Time constraints severely limited the range of sources that could be tapped, the materials that could be considered, and the range of people consulted.

An early decision was made not to directly consult young people themselves. Given the time and resource constraints it was not possible to develop any reliable means of directly accessing the views and concerns of young people in both 'disadvantaged' and 'advantaged' social groups. It was decided to rely on published survey and ethnography based materials, and on a number of interviews and workshops with people working with young people in a diversity of capacities in Sydney, Wagga Wagga and Melbourne.
In seeking to identify those who are 'disadvantaged' it was decided to focus on those who can be considered to be at risk in the transition from childhood dependence to adult independence. The broad, heterogeneous and frequently over-lapping social groups identified as being at risk are:

- those living in low income circumstances;
- those living in rural and remote and other structurally disadvantaged regions;
- Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders;
- recently arrived migrant young people from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- early school leavers and those with no post-compulsory qualifications;
- those living in emotionally and physically abusive households;
- those who are without stable and secure accommodation; and
- Wards of the State and those living in State institutions.

In all groups young women are relatively more 'disadvantaged' than young males, and it should be recognised that the factors contributing to disadvantage (and, conversely, advantage) frequently over-lap and compound each other. In many cases those who are at risk are struggling against multiple adversities and discriminations including the lack of accommodation, the lack of qualifications, the lack of adequate and regular income, the lack of adequate nutrition, and a sense of overall rejection by society.

It is more productive to examine the multiplicity of inter-related factors which contribute to the discrimination and inequalities of access and outcome experienced by particular groups of young people rather than to examine broad categories of young people whose 'disadvantage' is artificially reduced to a single determining factor such as class, race, gender, ethnicity or region.

Approaches which measure the degree of disadvantage (and which set policy objectives) by means of drawing comparisons between un-differentiated 'disadvantaged' groups on the one hand and an un-differentiated 'mainstream' population have to be questioned. While we all share certain aspects of life and social existence based on our common humanity, there are significant differences between us. For example, the subjective awareness and aspirations of young male and female Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, and between urban and provincial and rural town Aboriginal young males and females, Torres Strait Islanders, and young Aborigines living in the communities. Similarly, the so-called 'mainstream' population is marked by class, gender, ethnicity and regional divisions. The language of 'advantage' and 'disadvantage' presents as polar or dualist
opposites social phenomena which are more productively represented as lying on a continuum.

Moreover, a focus on 'disadvantaged' and, by implication, 'advantaged' groups tends to direct the search for solutions towards the groups themselves — to individuals. A focus on inter-related factors contributing to inequalities in the patterns of participation and outcomes directs the search for solutions towards the contributory factors, not the people. If the structural factors contributing to inequality can be addressed, individual young people, their families and their sub-cultural groups will encounter fewer barriers to their effective access to and successful participation in post-compulsory education and training.

Despite the diversity and complexity of factors contributing to the social inequalities faced by young people, it is important to recognise that young people confront their problems while seeking a common or shared objective. That objective is to develop their personal and social identity, to make a successful transition from childhood dependence to the emotional and economic autonomy of adulthood. They form their identity through their participation in family and sub-cultural group activities, and not as unconnected, context-less individuals. Their identities will be marked by the gender, class, racial, ethnic and regional divisions of society, but the search for autonomy and independence is common. Moreover, they undertake their search in a society structured by western industrialised capitalism and in which English is the language of access and participation.

Young people's decisions about their participation in post-compulsory education and training and in the labour market will be analysed from this perspective. Similarly, the barriers to their successful participation will be analysed, and the proposed policy responses will be developed with a view to providing disadvantaged young people with a greater range of viable opportunities—with the physical and cultural resources necessary for effecting successful transitions.

Because of time constraints the Issue Paper does not analyse policies and programs in all States and Territories. Workshops and interviews were conducted in Sydney, Wagga Wagga and Melbourne. Teachers, careers teachers, school welfare officers and counsellors, migrant youth workers, accommodation workers, drop-in centre workers, CES officers, Skillshare project officers, TAFE teachers, workers with young Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, academics, welfare sector researchers, DSP teachers and administrators, and policy developers and administrators were consulted.

Details were collected on Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victorian, Queensland and Tasmanian policies and programs
most recent in a years schooling over of them can be traced to an structural change young peoples' patterns of social participation. The most obvious manifestation changes is the youth unemployment problem, but the fundamental changes have been in teenage employment patterns. 

1

In August 1966 some 58 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds held a full-time job. By August 1990 this had fallen to only 28 per cent. The present recession will most probable see the proportion fall to 25 per cent. For males the decline from 1966 to 1990 has been from 59 to 33 per cent, and for females it has been from 58 to 23 per cent. By August 1991 the proportions will probably be around 30 per cent for males and only 20 per cent for teenage females (see Table I).

The actual number of 15 to 19 year olds in full-time employment fell from 615,000 in 1966 to 390,100 in 1990. From 1966 to 1990 the number of teenage males employed full-time fell from 318,800 to 230,900, a loss of 87,900 full-time jobs. For females the loss was 137,100, from 296,200 in 1966 to only 159,100 in 1990.

Although the collapse did not translate into abnormally high levels of teenage unemployment until 1974-75, the full-time employment collapse has been long term, starting almost a decade before the onset of recession in 1974, and eight years before the changes in Adult-Junior wage relativities. The rates of decline have not been the same for males and females, with female full-time employment in more or less steady decline while the pattern for males has been quite erratic.

The loss of teenage male full-time jobs tends to be concentrated in the years of recession (1974-75, 1982-83, and 1990-91) with greater stability and part recovery between recessions. This pattern is explained by the severe down-turns in apprenticeship indentures in recessionary years and strong recovery with the ensuing recovery, so that in 1989 apprenticeship numbers were
at an historically high level. Over 90 per cent of apprenticeships are held by males, and apprenticeships account for over 50 per cent of teenage male full-time employment. In short, the apprenticeship system has acted as a protected labour market reserve for young males making the transition from school to employment. In addition, it has acted as a barrier to skill fragmentation and casualisation.

Table I: 15 to 19 Year-old Full-time Employment by Sex, Selected Years 1966 to 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (May; '000)</td>
<td>540.9</td>
<td>617.8</td>
<td>659.4</td>
<td>709.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-Time (Aug; '000)</td>
<td>318.8</td>
<td>294.5</td>
<td>269.7</td>
<td>230.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Emp. to Pop. Ratio (%)</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (May; '000)</td>
<td>514.6</td>
<td>594.9</td>
<td>631.8</td>
<td>680.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-Time (Aug; '000)</td>
<td>296.2</td>
<td>253.2</td>
<td>203.8</td>
<td>159.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Emp. to Pop. Ratio (%)</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persons</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (May; '000)</td>
<td>1055.5</td>
<td>1212.7</td>
<td>1291.2</td>
<td>1389.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-Time (Aug; '000)</td>
<td>615.0</td>
<td>547.7</td>
<td>473.5</td>
<td>390.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Emp. to Pop. Ratio (%)</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Gender based labour market segmentation means that teenage females have not generally enjoyed the protections offered by the apprenticeship system. The long term resilience of the apprenticeship system has been the major cause of the differential rates of decline in teenage male and female full-time employment. The development of the Australian Traineeship System since 1975 has not provided an equivalent level of protection for the non-trade occupations, significantly because possession of an ATS certificate is not an award pre-condition for employment in the occupations covered by the System.

Disaggregating the teenage labour force statistics by single year of age demonstrates the differential impact the long term changes in full-time employment have had on fifteen to nineteen
year olds (see Table II). From 1983 until 1990 only 3 per cent of fifteen year olds held a full-time job, and the current recession has reduced it to only 1.7 per cent in February 1991. Despite the rapid growth in total full-time employment from 1983 to 1990, the number of sixteen and seventeen year olds in full-time employment continued to decline, and in August 1990 only 13 per cent of sixteen year olds and 24 per cent of seventeen year olds held a full-time job. In 1983 the proportions were 17 and 36 per cent respectively. The number of eighteen and nineteen year olds with a full-time job actually increased from 1983 to 1990, but the full-time employment to population ratios continued to fall from 49 to 43 per cent for eighteen year olds and from 56 to 53 per cent of nineteen year olds.

Table II:  Teenage Full-time Employment by Single Year of Age, Aug 1983 and 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population ('000)</td>
<td>25.36</td>
<td>251.8</td>
<td>246.9</td>
<td>248.9</td>
<td>257.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-Time ('000)</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>123.0</td>
<td>145.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Seeking F-T Employment ('000)</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Labour Force ('000)</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>121.2</td>
<td>161.1</td>
<td>181.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T to Pop. Ratio (%)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Unemp. to Pop. Ratio (%)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Unemp. Rate (%)</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population ('000)</td>
<td>257.8</td>
<td>266.6</td>
<td>277.9</td>
<td>290.6</td>
<td>296.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-Time ('000)</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>124.1</td>
<td>156.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed Seeking F-T Employment ('000)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Labour Force ('000)</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>154.1</td>
<td>184.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Emp to Pop Ratio (%)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Unemp to Pop Ratio (%)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Unemp Rate (%)</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


168
Teenage males' full-time employment is increasingly concentrated in industries (manufacturing, electricity, gas and water, building and construction and wholesale) and occupations (the trades and labouring) experiencing long term structural declines in total employment shares. On the other hand teenage female full-time employment is concentrated in industries (retail, finance, community services, and recreation) and occupations (clerical, sales and service) which are rapidly expanding. However, their share of full-time employment in those industries and occupations is declining.

The current recession is causing further declines in teenage full-time employment for all years. The virtual exclusion of 15 to 17 year olds (particularly females) from the full-time labour market will be confirmed. While the hold of 18 and 19 year olds is becoming more tenuous, there is some evidence from previous recessions that at least for males there will be significant recovery during the upturn. The evidence suggests that 18 and 19 year old women will not share in post-recession full-time job growth.

2.2 Educational Participation

Teenage full-time education participation patterns have mirrored the changes in full-time employment. As the 15 to 19 year old male full-time employment to population ratio fell from 59 to 35 per cent between 1966 and 1989, the full-time schooling to population ratio increased from 30 to 43 per cent. For females the full-time employment to population ratio fell from 58 to 25 per cent and the full-time schooling to population ratio increased from 25 to 45 per cent (see Table III).

To draw attention to this relationship is not to argue that either invariably causes the other. While a causal relationship does appear to exist, it does not always operate in the one direction. In the years from 1966 to 1974 the declining full-time employment to population ratio did not result in increased unemployment before translating to increased educational participation. It would therefore appear that until early 1974 increased school retention contributed significantly to the decline in full-time employment. During that period the female school participation rate increased more rapidly than did the male rate, so that the significant gap between male and female school participation was almost closed by 1974–75.
TABLE III: 15 to 19 Year Old Male Participation in Full-time Employment and Full-time Schooling, 1966, 1974, 1982 and 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (June, '000)</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full Time (Aug, '000)</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>29.45</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time School (June, '000)</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>303.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Employment to Pop. Ratio (%)</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T School to Pop. Ratio (%)</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (June, '000)</td>
<td>514.6</td>
<td>594.9</td>
<td>631.8</td>
<td>685.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-Time (Aug, '000)</td>
<td>296.2</td>
<td>253.2</td>
<td>203.8</td>
<td>159.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time School (June, '000)</td>
<td>126.4</td>
<td>200.0</td>
<td>228.6</td>
<td>300.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T Employment to Pop Ratio (%)</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-T School to Pop Ratio (%)</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*May 1990 statistics

ABS, Australian Demographic Statistics, Cat. No. 3101.0, June 1990
Commonwealth Department of Education unpublished statistics
ABS, Transition from Education to Work, Australia, Cat. No. 6227.0, May 1990

However, from 1974 onwards the pattern changed. The falls in teenage full-time employment in the 1974–75 and 1982–83 recessions and in the 1978–79 mini-recession translated into dramatic increases in teenage unemployment and subsequently into increases in school retention rates for both males and females, thus indicating that the causal factor was declining employment opportunities. Male school participation and retention rates fell marginally in the latter half of the 1970s as their full-time employment opportunities increased with the apprenticeship recovery. However, female employment opportunities continued to decline and their school participation rates continued to rise so that by 1982 female school participation rates were significantly higher for females than
males. The evidence indicates that from 1974–75 to 1984–85 the labour market was the causal factor underlying changes in school participation rates.

After the collapse of teenage full-time employment and the subsequent jump in school retention in 1983–84 all governments adopted strong policies aimed at further increases—the Commonwealth government aimed at a retention rate of 60 per cent by 1990. Curricula reform, increased income support for full-time secondary students aged 16 years and over, and a general media push for increased schooling combined with the continued stagnation in the non-apprenticeship full-time teenage labour market to maintain the rapid increases in school participation and retention rates. In 1983 only 35 per cent of the age cohort completed year 12 of schooling, but by 1989 it had increased to 60.3 per cent. In 1989 some 91 per cent of 15 year olds, 73 per cent of 16 year olds and 49 per cent of 17 year olds were in full-time schooling.

Female participation rates (45 per cent) remain higher than those of males (43 per cent), and the female Year 12 retention rate was higher than that for males—65 and 56 per cent respectively. The higher female rates reflect their weaker hold on the full-time labour market which, in turn, is largely the result of their segmented exclusion from the apprenticeship system, and the lack of equivalent recognition of the competency and training requirements in what are the traditional female occupations.

As could be predicted, the retention rate in the private school system was higher than that for the public system—76 compared with 54 per cent. In turn the non-Catholic private schools had a higher retention rate than do the Catholic schools—98 as to 66 per cent. The major exception to this pattern was the ACT, where the retention rate in the public Senior Colleges was 97 per cent, compared with a 75 per cent retention rate in the private non-Catholic system and 68 per cent in the Catholic schools.

Table IV: Apparent Retention Rates, Males, Females and Persons, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>Year 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Private</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Catholic Private</td>
<td>103.0</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL MALES</strong></td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

171
The retention rates to Year 12 also differ markedly between the various States and Territories. The very high retention rate in the ACT (86 per cent) can be explained by reference to the socio-economic composition of the ACT population and to the Senior College system. Similarly the low retention rate in the Northern Territory (44 per cent) can be explained by reference to the lack of equitable provision and access for the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (a higher proportion in the total school age population), and the general socio-economic characteristics of the total population. However, the significant differences between the rates in Queensland and NSW (70 and 54 per cent respectively), and the lower rates in Tasmania (40 per cent) do require attention. Part of the explanation for the higher retention rate in Queensland is to be found in the age structure of the total school population. In Queensland most students complete Year 12 at age 17, while in NSW a much larger proportion complete Year 12 at age 18 years. Accordingly, the 15 to 19 year old school participation rate in Queensland (40 per cent) is significantly lower than that in NSW (46 per cent) despite the former’s higher school retention rate. The gap in Year 12 retention rates between urban and rural students has been reduced since the early 1980s, but the significant gap between the retention rates of remote area students and others has not been reduced. In 1984 the Year 12 retention rates for urban, rural and remote area students were 46, 38 and 33 per cent respectively. By 1989 the rates had increased for all locational groups (to 60, 56 and 47 per cent for
urban, rural and remote area students respectively), but the greatest increase was for rural students. For all three locational groupings, the Year 12 retention rates were higher for females than for males.

Table V: Estimated Year 12 Completion Rates by Locality and Sex, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: As for Table IV

Socio-economic status is a strong indicator of the likelihood of young people completing 12 years of schooling. In 1989 the Year 12 completion rates for males and females in the top socio-economic status decile were 75 and 87 per cent respectively, while the equivalent rates for males and females in the bottom decile were 40 and 48 per cent respectively. From 1984 to 1989 the Year 12 completion rate for males in both the top and bottom socio-economic status deciles increased by 11 percentage points, but for females the increases were 18 percentage points for the top decile group and only 10 percentage points for the bottom group.

Table VI: Estimated Year 12 Completion Rates by Socio-Economic Status, by Sex, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Economic Status Decile</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: As for Table IV
Further insight into the combination of socio-economic status, gender and locational factors on post-compulsory participation is provided by analysing Year 12 completion rates by administrative region within the States. Table VII demonstrates the wide gap in completion rates for students within the Sydney metropolitan area. In 1988 the Sydney Metropolitan North region had year 12 completion rates of 66 and 74 per cent for males and females respectively, while for the Metropolitan South West region they were only 42 per cent for males and 52 per cent for females. The Hunter region had the lowest completion rates in N.S.W., with only 38 per cent of males and 48 per cent of females completing Year 12.

The most striking gap in educational participation is that which exists between Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders on the one hand and non-Aboriginal Australians on the other (see Table VIII). In 1989 apparent retention rates to Year 10 and to Year 12 were 77.5 and 29.7 per cent respectively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in receipt of Abstudy allowances. The parallel rates for all students were 99 and 76.3 per cent respectively.

Table VII: Estimated Year 12 Completions by Gender and Education Department Administrative Region, NSW 1988 (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Region</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan East</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan North</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan South West</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan West</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Metropolitan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Western</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N.S.W.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, The Restless Years: an inquiry into year 12 retention rates, Canberra, AGPS, P. 12
Table VIII: Apparent Retention Rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Who Are in Receipt of Abstudy Allowances and of All Students to Year 10 and Year 12, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students</th>
<th>Government School Students</th>
<th>Non-government School Students</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Year 10</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>97.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Year 12</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: As for Table IV

2.3 Part-Time Employment

In August 1966 some 36,400 or 3.5 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds held a part-time job. By August 1990 teenage part-time employment had grown to 276,300 or 20 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds. As with the decline in teenage full-time employment, the rapid expansion in teenage part-time employment has not been distributed evenly across the age group and between males and females.

The number of teenage males in part-time employment grew from 18,900 to 112,600 between 1966 and 1990, while for females the increase was from 17,500 to 163,700. Between 1966 and 1990 the teenage male part-time employment to population ratio increased from 3.6 to 16 per cent, and for females the increase was from 3.4 to 24 per cent. In August 1990 the number of 15 to 19 year olds females with a part-time job out-numbered those with a full-time job. The overwhelming majority of teenage part-time employment (81 per cent in 1990) is held by full-time students. For females the proportion was 80.5 per cent and for males it was 82 per cent. Moreover, part-time employment is concentrated among school age students, with 63 per cent of teenage part-time jobs being held by 15 to 17 year olds in 1990.

From this brief overview it is apparent that part-time employment has become increasingly important for teenagers making the transition to adulthood. It should not be seen, however, as a viable substitute for access to full-time employment. The available research indicates that the part-time jobs do not go to either the early school leavers or those most at risk of falling within the school system.

Most teenage part-time employment is non-union and casual, averaging fewer than ten hours per week, and it is rarely associated with any long term career prospects. While part-time
In August 1990 the teenage official unemployment rate was 16.5 per cent, while for adults aged 20 years and over the rate was only 6.0 per cent. For fifteen year olds the unemployment rate was 24.2 per cent, and for 19 year olds it was 13.4 per cent. The impression gained from these statistics is that unemployment is a much greater problem for teenagers than it is for adults, and a significantly greater problem for fifteen year olds than it is for nineteen year olds. These impressions, however, are distorted by the aggregations inherent in the accepted measures.

First, the unemployment rate excludes those who are not in the labour market. To arrive at a more realistic understanding of proportion at risk in the transition from schooling to employment it is desirable to calculate the number unemployed as a proportion of the relevant age group. When this is done it is clear that despite the higher unemployment rate for fifteen year olds, unemployment among fifteen year olds is less of a problem than unemployment among nineteen year olds. In August 1990 only 19,100 or 7.4 per cent of fifteen year olds were unemployed, compared with the 31,800 or 10.7 per cent of nineteen year olds who were unemployed.

These figures also fail to provide the best estimate of the at risk teenage population because they fail to distinguish between those who are unemployed but who are either full- or part-time students, and those who are unemployed and not in education. A more accurate estimate of those at risk in the transition to adulthood is gained by identifying the number of 15 to 19 year olds not participating in full-time education and who are unemployed. In August 1990 some 88,400 or 6.4 per cent of the 15 to 19 year old population fell into this category. There were 4,000 or 1.6 per cent of the fifteen year old population (compared with 27,900 or 9.4 per cent of nineteen year olds) unemployed and not in full-time education.

However, this estimate is too restrictive in that it excludes many young people with no contact or only marginal contact with and involvement in the two mainstream forms of social participation for teenagers: education and training, and the labour market. This restrictiveness can be overcome by incorporating two additional groups at risk. These categories are
those who are not in full-time education and who are not in the labour market; and those who are not full-time students and who are employed part-time. The former group includes those who are in receipt of social security pensions or benefits and not seeking employment, those in state institutions and those who are homeless. The latter group includes a number who could well have combined part-time participation in education and employment to secure a trouble free transition to stable full-time employment, but for the majority of people in the not in full-time education and in part-time employment category, the part-time job would be the only basis for a successful transition. Thus the bulk of people in the not in full-time education and employed part-time category have to be seen as being at risk. In August 1990 there were 50,500 or 3.6 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds in the not in full-time education and not in the labour market category, and 52,200 or 3.8 per cent in the not in full-time education employed part-time category.

In total, the three at risk groups made up 191,100 or 13.8 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds in August 1990. The numbers of fifteen and nineteen year olds at risk were 7,300 (2.8 per cent) and 63,300 (21.3 per cent) respectively. For males 84,200 or 11.9 per cent were at risk and for females there were 106,800 or 15.7 per cent. The difference between the male and female proportions is explained by the higher percentages of females in the not in full-time education and not in the labour force category, and in the not in full-time education and employed part-time category. From February 1990 to February 1991 the number of teenagers at risk increased from 218,600 to 250,800 (from 15.6 to 18.3 per cent). For males and females the increases were from 12.6 to 16.3 per cent and from 18.8 to 20.3 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds respectively. In February 1991 only 3 per cent of fifteen year olds were at risk, while for 18 and 19 year olds the proportions were 28.9 and 26.9 per cent respectively.

As is to be expected not all teenagers experience the same probability of being at risk in the transition to adulthood. Those most likely to be at risk tend to be members of households and groups experiencing socio-economic and cultural discrimination and disadvantage, namely:

• those in the lower socio-economic deciles;
• those living in areas with a dirth of social and economic infrastructure;
• those in recently arrived non-English speaking background migrant families, particularly those from traumatised backgrounds;
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people;
• those living in remote rural areas;
- State wards and those living is State institutions;
- those in families with no or low educational qualifications;
- those living in single parent families; and
- those in physically and psychologically violent households.

**Table IX: Fifteen to Nineteen Year Olds at Risk by Sex and Single Year of Age, Feb 1990 and 1991**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emp P-T '000</th>
<th>Unemp '000</th>
<th>Not in L F '000</th>
<th>At risk Pop '000</th>
<th>Total Pop '000</th>
<th>Per Cent At Risk %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>713.3</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>114.3</td>
<td>700.2</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>128.6</td>
<td>685.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>136.6</td>
<td>671.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>218.6</td>
<td>1399.2</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>112.5</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>250.8</td>
<td>1371.8</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>261.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>255.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>271.3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>263.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>283.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>272.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>293.3</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>284.8</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>290.1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>295.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, it should be remembered that young women are relatively more disadvantaged than are young males, a reality which mirrors gender based inequality and discrimination throughout society which are evidenced in the more rapid demise of female teenage full-time employment, and in their greater vulnerability to sexual abuse within the family. Similarly, it has to be stressed that many of the bases of discrimination and disadvantage overlap, and the multiple consequences of such factors compound each other. In many cases those who are at risk in the transition to adulthood are struggling against a multiplicity of adversities and discriminations including homelessness, a lack of school and post-school qualifications, joblessness, a lack of physical and/or emotional security, a lack of adequate nutrition, an inadequate income, a lack of social skills and 'cultural capital', and discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity and sexuality. They frequently experience an overwhelming sense of being rejected by society and in a defensive reaction turn against society, its values, institutions and agencies.

3.1 Young People From Low Socio-Economic Status Households

Research indicates that unemployment falls disproportionately in terms of rates and duration on people with lower levels of school and post-school qualifications and lower levels of recognised negotiable occupational competencies. In February 1989 the unemployment rates were 3.5 and 6.1 per cent for teenage males and females with post-school qualifications respectively, while for those without post-school qualifications the unemployment rates were 9.2 and 9.1 per cent respectively. Possession of post-school qualifications also has a significant impact on labour force participation rates. For teenage females without post-school qualifications the labour force participation rate was 45.6 per cent, and for those with post-school qualifications the participation rate was 66.3 per cent. For teenage males the participation rates for those without and with post-school qualifications were 74.9 and 83.8 per cent respectively in February 1989.

The type of post-school qualification also has a significant impact on young peoples’ chances of securing employment and the type of employment attained. The vast bulk of teenage male school leavers with a post-school qualification have trade and technician certificates whereas labour market gender segmentation has virtually excluded teenage women from these areas. Traineeships, however, tend to be strongest in the traditional female occupational areas such as clerical, retail and hospitality areas, but they do not carry the same credibility in the labour market as do trade certificates. This is partly due to
their shorter duration and their comparative newness as a form of structured training, but the most significant reason is that industrial awards covering occupations with a traineeship entry system do not make it compulsory to employ credential holders in the occupational areas for which they are trained and credentialed. The latter fact is a reflection of the difficulty in securing equivalent recognition of vocational competency requirements in male and female occupational areas and the relative lack of trade union organisation to secure such recognition in industrial awards. Until industrial awards treat the apprenticeship and traineeship systems similarly, the value of traineeship training will be overlooked by many employers, and the opportunity cost of either a teenager undertaking a traineeship or an employer taking on a trainee will not reflect its true contribution to individual, company and national productivity. This is not to argue for the artificial protection of unnecessary training. Rather, it is to argue for the full and proper recognition of the generic and specific occupational competencies necessary in many jobs which presently are not covered by any systematic training and credentialing system. With the move towards a competency based, as opposed to a time based occupational training and credentialing system the inclusion of compulsory competency criterion in all industrial awards can only serve to increase the intake of trainees and enhance the overall level of occupational skill. Moreover, such a competency based system will not compell all seeking employment in a particular occupational area to undertake a full traineeship. People who are able to demonstrate their competence would be eligible for full credentialing and employment under the award.

Research demonstrates that those with low levels of educational qualification and with no post-school qualifications are more likely to come from and remain in low income groups. Research also demonstrates that the unemployed are drawn disproportionately from low income groups, with the low income being connected with periods of unemployment and social security dependency and with a marginal attachment to the low paid margins of the secondary labour market. People experiencing unemployment consistently have a lower median income when employed than do people not experiencing unemployment. Young people living in lower socio-economic status households characterised by low household incomes, parent/s with low educational and occupational credentials, and parents in the margins of the secondary labour market are significantly disadvantaged in their pursuit of adult independence. They are less likely to complete twelve years of schooling and to secure a recognised vocational credential, less likely to live in an area
with adequate social and economic infrastructure, less likely to have ready contact with and access to the dominant social and cultural institutions, and they are less likely to have close personal contact with people holding higher educational qualifications and holding secure primary labour market jobs. The latter point is particularly important because the most common way young people secure employment is through the personal and family networks.

3.2 Young People From Non-English Speaking Backgrounds

The available research does not support the general belief that all young people from a non-English speaking backgrounds are disadvantaged and at risk in the transition to adulthood. On the whole young people from of non-English speaking backgrounds have higher participation rates in post-compulsory schooling than do Anglo-Australians. There are, however, significant differences in the patterns of labour force participation between 15 to 19 year olds born in Australia and those born outside Australia (see Table X). Overseas born 15 to 19 year olds have a much lower labour force participation rate than their Australian born peers (60.1 and 44 per cent respectively), and a higher unemployment rate (16.2 per cent compared with 19.6 per cent). The differences are much more pronounced for females than for males.

Table X: 15 to 19 Year Old Labour Force Participation Rates and Unemployment Rates By Birthplace, Aug. 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Participation Rate (%)</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Australia</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Born in Australia</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While these statistics indicate a significant difference in labour market access and participation between Australian born and non-Australian born 15 to 19 year olds, they also disguise more significant differences in labour market performance on the basis of country of birth, social class position in the country of origin and the circumstances and period of arrival. In August 1990 the unemployment rate among the Australian born labour force was
6.7 per cent, but for people born in Lebanon, Vietnam and Poland the respective unemployment rates were 24.2, 18.5 and 14.5 per cent. For people born in Malaysia, Italy and the Netherlands, the unemployment rates were only 4.6, 4.0 and 4.9 per cent respectively.

For overseas born people who arrived between 1971 and 1975 the unemployment rate was 9.3 per cent in August 1990, but it varied from 5.5 per cent for those who were born in America to 11.8 per cent for those born in Oceania (including New Zealand). The unemployment rates for those who arrived in Australia between 1981 and 1985 averaged 10.2 per cent, and ranged from 2.9 per cent for those born in America to 14.6 per cent for those born in Asia. People who arrived in 1989 and 1990 had an unemployment rate of 19.0 per cent, but it ranged from 10.0 per cent for those born in America to 20.4 per cent for those born in Asia and 39.4 per cent for those born in non-English speaking European countries.

It is apparent that period of arrival has a significant impact on employment prospects, but that it is compounded by the country of origin, social class in the country of origin, and the circumstances of arrival. The highest rates of unemployment occur among those with a non-industrialised socio-economic background and who are fleeing untenable situations in their country of origin. In August 1990 the highest rate of unemployment was among the Lebanese and Vietnamese communities, and the lowest were experienced by the Italian and Malaysian communities. The most disadvantaged groups have frequently been traumatised in their country of origin and such trauma has a profound impact on the ease with which their children adjust to schooling.

**Table XI: Unemployment Rates by Birthplace, August 1990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

182
Europe 6.1 6.5 6.3

Italy 4.1 3.7 4.0

Netherlands 4.4 5.6 4.9

Poland 14.2 14.9 14.5

UK & Ireland 5.8 5.5 5.7


Table XII: Unemployment Rates for Civilian Labour Force Born Outside Australia by Period of Arrival, August 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK &amp; Ireland</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Period of Arrival

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK &amp; Ireland</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Europe</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: As for Table XI

The above statistical overview indicates that although young people of non-English speaking background have higher participation rates in post-compulsory schooling and in the maths and science areas, this participation does not necessarily translate into a stronger position in the labour market. The higher educational participation rates are frequently the result of family and ethnic community encouragement and pressure on young people to achieve within the education system which is seen as a primary vehicle for social mobility. However, the hopes, expectations and pressures are not always reflected in educational and labour market success, and the major barriers remain a lack of proficiency in the English language and a lack of cultural literacy in terms of being able to negotiate life chances within the dominant Anglo-Australian culture.
3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People

As previously indicated, the apparent retention rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to Year 12 was, in 1988, only half that for all students. The participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in TAFE and in higher education is even more inequitable. In 1986 only 31.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 16 and 17 year olds participated in education, compared with an educational participation rate of 74.5 per cent for all Australians. For 18 to 20 year olds the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rate was only 4.1 per cent compared with 20.4 per cent for all Australians (see Table XIII).

These inequalities in education participation rates persist despite the fact that the retention rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have improved significantly over the past decade. For example the proportion of the age cohort who completed a tertiary qualification increased from 4.1 per cent in 1981 to 9.0 per cent in 1986. (However, the 9.0 per cent was only one third of the tertiary education completion rate for the whole population). Moreover, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education participation is disproportionately concentrated in specifically designed courses in education, health, social welfare and law, with approximately 50 per cent enrolled in teacher education courses. Moreover, many of the courses are bridging as opposed to mainstream courses. These approaches have been supported by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as a means of partly redressing gross inequalities, and of providing much needed Aboriginal and Islander teachers, teacher aids, nurses and welfare workers. It is important, however, to recognise that attention has to be given to broadening the range of tertiary course participation, and to building on the bridging course foundations. In too many cases these bridging courses fail to lead on to participation in mainstream courses, and all too infrequently do the bridging course credentials provide credit in mainstream courses. Recent moves to articulate the Cairns TAFE teacher aid course with the James Cook University teacher education degree offers an example of how these problems can be overcome.

The crucial importance of tertiary education and of education in general for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is evidenced in employment statistics (see Table XIV). Those with fully recognised tertiary education qualifications have similar employment rates to non-Aboriginal Australians. The lower the post-compulsory qualifications and the lower the achieved level of formal schooling the greater the difference between the employment rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.
Table XIII: Education Participation Rates* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People and for All Australians, 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Pop.</th>
<th>All Australians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>99.0 (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 &amp; over</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>7.9 (b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The education participation rate for those aged 5 to 9 years include pre-school and school participation, for 10 to 15 years it included school participation only, and for all other age groups it includes schooling, TAFE and higher education.

(a) estimated.
(b) For people aged 25 to 65 years only.

Sources: Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force (1988), Report, Canberra

These statistics have to be seen in relation to overall labour force participation rates and unemployment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 1986 the Aboriginal and Islander labour force participation rate was 50.9 per cent compared with a participation rate of over 60 per cent for all Australians, and some 18 per cent of the Aboriginal and Islander work force age population was unemployed compared with under 5 per cent for the total population. Approximately 33 per cent of the eligible Aboriginal and Islander population was employed, while for the total population the proportion was approximately 55 per cent. These inequitable figures reflect the legacy of 200 years of racism and cultural negation, the regional disadvantages faced by the many Aborigines and Islanders who live in traditional remote communities, and a disproportionate reliance on Social Security transfer payments without adequate and appropriate provision for housing, health care and employment generation.
### Table XIV: Employment Rates and Education Qualifications for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal People, 1981 and 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification Level</th>
<th>Proportion of People Aged 15+ Who are Employed</th>
<th>All Australians 1981</th>
<th>Aborigines 1981</th>
<th>Aborigines 1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Degree/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Award</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Certificate</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (a)</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Post-School Quals</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without Post-School Qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Qualifications</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still at School</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Without Post-School Qualifications</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Not classifiable or inadequately described.

Source: Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force (1988), Report, Canberra

### Table XV: Labour Force Status of Aboriginal and Islander Population, 1981 and 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Per cent Employed</th>
<th>Per cent Unemployed</th>
<th>Per cent in Labour Force</th>
<th>Per cent not in L.F.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What the statistics do not convey is the impact of mass joblessness on young Aboriginal and Islander school students. A particularly telling comment about the education, training and employment prospects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, made by Linda Burney of the Sydney based Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, turned on its head the conventional wisdom that young people were staying on in post-compulsory education to improve their employment prospects. She stated: "If you're a Koori kid living in Wilcannia, and Aboriginal unemployment there is something like 98 per cent, then school may not seem like a very good idea" (Consultation, 26 April 1990). The point was reiterated by Tjanara Goreng-Goreng of the N.S.W. Ministry of Youth Affairs:

We need the infrastructure so that those young people (in Wilcannia) can go into a job. They say 'What is the point if there is nothing there? Why do I want to stay in training for the rest of my life? . . . If there's no jobs what is there to do? Who cares?'

3.4 Rural and Remote Area Young People

As indicated in Section 2.2 there remain significant regional differences in post-compulsory education participation between urban, rural and remote area young people. The difficulty in analysing these differences and in developing policies and programs to achieve more equitable participation rates and educational outcomes lies in the fact that not all the difference is attributable to remoteness and isolation. In 1989 N.S.W. male and female Year 12 completion rates were higher for remote area students than for the lowest socio-economic decile group and for the regions with the lowest retention rates:

- 41 and 54 per cent for males and females living in remote areas;
- 40 and 48 per cent for males and females respectively in the lowest socio-economic decile group; and
- 38 (for the Hunter) and 48 per cent (for the Hunter and the South Coast) on a regional basis.

It is apparent that the major causes of the lower post-compulsory participation rates in rural and remote areas can be found in the fact that rural and remote area populations have a lower socio-economic profile than do metropolitan and urban areas, have a lower representation of non-English speaking background young people, and have a larger proportion of Aboriginal and Islander people than do the metropolitan areas. The conclusion that the primary barrier to access and participation in rural and remote areas is poverty was supported by the participants in the Wagga Wagga consultation. When asked which policy initiative they would take to reduce the
barriers to access and participation faced by rural and remote area young people more than two thirds of the workshop participants identified poverty and the need for more adequate financial support. In the majority of cases homelessness and supported accommodation were cited in conjunction with the need for financial support.

The socio-economic basis of much disadvantage experienced by rural and remote area young people is compounded by the isolation and lack of access to the full array of post-compulsory options. The problem is best explained by reference to the situation of young people in Junee, a small township outside the provincial city of Wagga Wagga. The railway was a major direct and indirect source of employment for Junee school leavers, and its closure has caused very high levels of unemployment. There is no CES Office in Junee, TAFE provision is minimal at best, and there is no regular bus service to Wagga Wagga (one bus to Wagga Wagga early in the morning and a return trip in the early evening). School leavers in Junee face the prospect of leaving home for further education or to secure employment in Wagga Wagga or further afield, commuting to Wagga Wagga, or confronting an insecure existence in Junee itself. The long term future of many young people in remote rural townships is being made increasingly precarious by the rationalisation of railway services and the centralisation of many State government services in provincial centres.

As the impact of these policies takes hold young people living in remote areas are becoming increasingly isolated from the mainstream post-compulsory options of society. They do not have access to the full array of Year 11 and 12 courses, have much less access to TAFE and higher education facilities and programs, and if they are unemployed they do not have ready access to the full array of CES support services and labour market programs. Moreover, because of their isolation they are not as likely to be aware of all the post-compulsory options available in the regional and metropolitan centres. If they are aware of the options, and if they do travel to secure access, they face the additional financial and emotional costs inherent in such participation.

3.5 Young Women

The disadvantages faced by young women are the product of a combination of general social-economic, racial, ethnic and regional inequalities and discriminations compounded by specific gender based discrimination and inequalities. In all the above sections evidence has been presented to demonstrate that young women face a more tenuous path to adult independence, a situation which can be traced to their weaker hold on the
gender segmented full-time labour market and the gendered roles and expectations permeating family and public life. Thus young women's higher post-compulsory education participation rates are not an indication of any educational or transitional advantage over young males. Rather it is a refracted indication of educational and transitional disadvantage. This does not mean that all young women are equally disadvantaged. All young women are disadvantaged relative to the males within the same cultural and socio-economic groupings.

The major indicators of the continuing gender inequality in opportunities and outcomes are the male and female balance in the post-compulsory courses undertaken, and the nature of entry level training and credentialing for typically male and female occupations. Despite recent improvements young women remain under-represented in the high purchase mathematics and physical science subjects in both the school and higher education systems. The current practice of tertiary entrance scoring systems giving more weight to mathematics and the physical sciences serves to re-enforce both the reification of those subjects and the systemic disadvantaging of young women.

3.6 The Young Homeless

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission Report (1989), Our Homeless Children, estimated that there were at least 20,000 to 25,000 homeless young people under 18 years of age in Australia, and probably another 30,000 to 45,000 at serious risk of becoming homeless. The commission's estimate was that there were around 8,500 homeless people aged 12 to 15 years. While it is not the direct responsibility of this issues paper to make recommendations in relation to issues not directly relating to post-compulsory education and training, it is important to recognise that youth homelessness is one of the major indicators of what can be termed 'deep disadvantage', and that it is a major barrier to mainstream social participation and transition.

The Report also indicated that while there was (and still is) a shortage of short term crisis accommodation for the young homeless, the major bottle-necks are caused by the extreme shortages of medium term and long term accommodation. The consequence of the latter shortages is that many of the long term young homeless are forced onto what is termed the 'refuge circuit', alternating between short term stays at youth refuges and periods on the streets and in the parks.

For many the experience of youth homelessness is compounded by previous physical and psychological abuse within the family, a lack of basic social and life skills, nutritional deprivation, illiteracy, and a lack of regular income as a result either of their failure to register with the CES and/or DSS or of their
failure to meet DSS eligibility criteria. Once on the circuit, there is very little prospect of a young homeless person continuing with their education or training, and an increasing prospect of their being involved in street offences, breaking and entering, prostitution and substance abuse offences. The younger the young homeless person the more damaging the consequences of homelessness and its attendant economic and emotional vulnerability.

Participants in the workshops held in Sydney, Wagga Wagga and Melbourne identified youth homelessness as the second major barrier, after the inadequacy of income support, to access and participation. They stressed that the solution had to be integrated to include adequacy of income support, a flexible array of crisis, short term, medium term and long term accommodation, co-ordinated access to counselling and support services, and access to education and training opportunities. While these accommodation services would address the immediate needs of individuals it should be recognised that the causes of youth homelessness are generally structural and not the inadequacies of individual young people. There would remain a need to address the underlying gaps in family support and counselling services.

3.7 Conclusion

This section started with an estimate that approximately 16.3 per cent of 15 to 19 year old males and 20.3 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds females were at risk in their transition to adulthood in February 1991. These proportions are roughly equivalent to Sweet's (1987) estimates of those at risk in June 1983: 14.3 per cent for males and 20.8 per cent for females. Sweet estimated that in June 1983 there were some 220,500 teenagers at risk, and in February 1991 the number was 250,800. What this means is that despite the very significant increases in post-compulsory education participation rates since the early 1980s, and despite the more than full recovery in apprenticeship numbers from 1983, both the numbers of 15 to 19 year olds and the proportion of the 15 to 19 year old population failing to make a trouble free transition to adulthood has not been diminished.

The combination of long term structural change in the teenage full-time labour market and the impact of recession on recruitment practices can not be negated by increased education participation rates alone. In this sense increased schooling can defer the manifestation of the transitional problem, but it has not and will not provide a solution to the collapse in employment opportunities. Increased educational participation rates will reduce the proportion of 15 to 19 year olds at risk only if the long term collapse in the teenage full-time labour market is stemed.
Not only do we today have roughly the same proportion of the age group being at risk, those who are at risk are relatively more disadvantaged than their equivalent group was in 1983. In 1983 there were more full-time jobs available for those outside the education and training system: in 1983 there were full-time jobs for approximately 30 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds, and in 1991 there are jobs for only 25 per cent. In 1983 the competition for those jobs was not as qualified: the year 12 retention rate has increased from 35 per cent in 1983 to 60 per cent in 1989. Thus for those at risk today there are fewer full-time jobs and more qualified competition for those jobs than ever before.

Given this stark reality, factors such as socio-economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, region and homelessness combine to determine just who will be most vulnerable in the transition to adulthood. For policy purposes, those at risk can be broken into two groups:

- those at risk but with some prospect of making an effective transition as the economy recovers; and
- those who are deeply disadvantaged and not likely to make an effective transition without substantial integrated assistance.

The latter group includes most Aborigines and Islanders, the young homeless, young Indo-Chinese and Labanese refugees, state wards and those in institutions, those living in physically and psychologically abusive households, those with low achievement levels in primary school and with low levels of literacy, and those who are remote from the full array of post-compulsory opportunities as a result of their socio-economic-cultural position.

Until entry level recruitment and training are reformed to provide a flexible and articulated structured training system as the basic point of entry into each occupational area, and until the industrial award system is reformed to embrace that recruitment and induction system, the transition from compulsory schooling to adult independence will be problematic for at least 10 per cent, and up to 20 per cent of the age group.

4. Aspirations and Broken Transitions

The understanding we develop of social disadvantage influences the development of policy and program prescriptions aimed at reducing those disadvantages and their consequences. Western thought has tended to focus on developing discrete categories and has a tendency to see things in dualist terms: human behaviour is best explained either as the product of autonomous individuals making decisions and acting on them, or the pre-
determined product of some greater force (some deity or a
determining social structure such as the economy or the state).
English sub-cultural analysis is marked by a strong tendency to
see a fundamental divide between those young people who
conform to the dominant norms and expectations of school and
those who resist; between those who conform to and those who
resist dominant notions of femininity.

These either-or mentalities tend to artificially reduce complex
situations to one dimensional caricatures with the effect of
confining solutions to one dimensional prescriptions. We tend to
be presented with solutions which place all the onus on the
dysfunctional maladjusted individual to change courses in mid-
stream, or which see the total solution in fundamental structural
change. All too infrequently do we see solutions proposed which
are based on an understanding of the complex interaction of
individual, small groups, and institutional structures and
processes.

People develop their own cultural groupings and their own
understandings of the world. They negotiate the obstacles
encountered in their everyday lives, and they chart their own
life paths. They develop their own belief systems and their own
subjective identities. Those belief systems and subjective
identities influence and are influenced by their actions in the
physical and social world.

But they do not do these things in a vacuum.

They do these things in an always already structured world.
Those structures range from the form and dynamics of
interpersonal relationships in the family and peer group and on
to the structures of broad socio-cultural-economic institutions.
Those structures are for ever changing and being changed by
individual, collective and institutional actions which are on the
whole intentional and rational (given the resources at hand),
but which do not always produce the anticipated or desired
result. The structures carry meanings, reflect intentions and
belief systems, and they influence both the behaviours and
beliefs of all social participants, including young people.

This section will explore the emergence in the post-war period
of a new phase in the transition from childhood dependence to
adult independence—the phase we call “youth”—and it will
develop an integrated analysis of the concerns of young people,
of how they form their world view and chart their life paths,
and of the barriers they encounter. It will also draw from these
analyses a broad orientation for policies and programs aimed at
reducing inequalities in post-compulsory education and training
access, participation and outcomes.
4.1 Broken Transitions

In their report for the OECD, Becoming Adult in a Changing Society, Coleman and Husen (1985) provided valuable insight into the historical nature of concepts such as 'adolescence' and 'youth' which identify discrete stages of life between childhood and adulthood, and of the problems associated with the transition from childhood to adulthood. Childhood is characterised by physiological immaturity, emotional and economic dependence and by primary ties with parents and siblings. Adulthood is characterised by physiological maturity, emotional and economic autonomy, and by primary ties with the adult partner and children. The transition involves the provisional resolution of a range of questions relating to personal morality, sexuality, politics and economics, all of which contribute to one's personal identity.

The concept of an adolescent stage starting with puberty and ending with the completion of schooling (in the mid-teens for most people) was developed in the first quarter of this century. It was seen as embracing not only puberty and emerging physiological maturity, but also the acquisition of culturally defined characteristics of psychological and social maturity.

After the Second World War increasing numbers of young people extended their period of schooling and, in so doing, prolonged the period of transition from childhood to the labour market and adulthood. The prolongation of economic dependence combined with the lessening age of puberty and an emerging youth popular culture centred on rock and roll music to generate a prolongation in transition and alienation among the young. These tensions were first recognised in popular culture with films such as East of Eden, On the Waterfront, The Blackboard Jungle and Rebel Without a Cause in the 1950s. Then in the late 1960s and early 1970s Keniston argued that changing patterns of teenage participation in education and the labour market had resulted in 'the emergence on a mass scale of a previously unrecognised stage of life', a stage between adolescence and adulthood youth (Coleman & Husen: 1985, p.11).

In Australia, the 'youth revolt' of the late 1960s and early 1970s was a manifestation of the general emergence of a disaffected generation in the developed capitalist world. On closer examination the disaffection and alienation from mainstream society was a minority phenomenon largely confined to those who were a part of the tertiary education explosion. They were a part of a lucky full employment post-war generation which was able to defer the transition to adulthood and challenge the prevailing social values without threatening their ultimate transition. There was an opportunity to pose fundamental questions about the quest for unremitting economic growth,
about undiluted materialism and about the family. It was a time to experiment with drugs and to overturn sexual mores. The concerns of the minority in the tertiary education institutions found some resonance with social groups which had never achieved their place in the sun: Aboriginal and Islander people, the poor, women, and people with non-English speaking backgrounds.

While many of the concerns raised in those years retain their resonance, and while many of the movements initiated retain their strength today, it is worth noting that the message bearers made successful if postponed transitions to adulthood. For the bulk of the 1960s generation the transition to adult independence was smooth and it occurred after the completion of ten years of schooling and with a trouble free entry to the labour market.

The identification of the completion of compulsory schooling as the end point of the adolescent phase is indicative of the importance of work (both public and domestic) in the transition from childhood to adulthood. While emerging physiological maturity is a biological imperative, emotional and economic autonomy are significantly dependent on the receipt of one's own income. Employment after 10 years of schooling was the primary means to such autonomy (particularly for males), but for many young women the transition to adulthood was effected by moving from economic dependence on parents to employment, and then on to economic dependence on a spouse with its attendant responsibilities for household management and caring work.

The long term structural collapse of the teenage full-time labour market has severely dislocated these processes. The experience of transition has been prolonged for all young people, and there is an identifiable stage of life wedged between adolescence and adulthood. However, the experience of this prolonged transition phase is not uniform. It is marked by social divisions based on class, gender, race, ethnicity and region.

For teenagers in emotionally and economically secure households and intent on pursuing professional careers, the only impact the labour market changes have had on their lives is the increased competition to secure entry to their preferred tertiary institution and course. The expansion of part-time employment opportunities has provided them with access to an independent source of income to supplement family provided and/or Austudy allowances. Their transition is not threatened and they face a secure and affluent adulthood. For those students with a preference for a job at the end of Year 10 but who stay on for Year 11 or 12 and who achieve a reasonable grade, the changes mean an imposed extension of emotional and economic dependence, but their transition to adulthood is not at risk.
For those who continue to leave school at the end of Year 10, the search for employment will probably fail unless they have personal networks which put them in contact with a job. Those who fail in the search for employment are more disadvantaged than the equivalent group of ten years ago in that there are now fewer available jobs and in that the competition for those jobs is more intense. For this group the transition to adulthood is broken and they face an unknown period of dependence on family and inadequate Job Search Allowance.

For young people in low income families which expect their children to secure an early job and contribute to the household finances, the failure to secure employment defers the transition to adult independence and imposes an extended period of poverty on the family. The possibility of family tension and resentment is heightened. As previously indicated, for the most severely disadvantaged a history of school failure and rejection combine with the ever diminishing employment prospects to produce a sense of hopelessness. For these young people there is no prospect of an easy transition to adulthood, only the prospect of an uncertain life marked by an uncertain and inadequate income from their tenuous connections with the labour market and/or from Social Security.

For young people who have the effects of poverty compounded by the impact of racism, isolation, ethnocentrism, domestic abuse, and/or of homelessness, the transition to adulthood is unconventional and traumatic. Many of these deeply disadvantaged young people have been failed by the inability of the schooling system to understand them and address their needs. Many of these deeply disadvantaged young people have been permanently excluded from the teenage full-time labour market by long term structural change. Governments have not provided adequate counselling and support programs for abusive families and for families at risk of becoming abusive. Commonwealth and State authorities have failed to cater for the increasing numbers are unable to live in the parental household and find themselves in the refuge circuit and/or on the streets. White society has failed to understand and make provision for the many Aboriginal and Islander young people who have been directly affected by third world health conditions and by the cycle of substance abuse and its attendant violence, all the result of imposed cultural anomic and economic destitution. Despite years of ‘non-sexist’ educational program intervention, and despite the introduction of anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunities programs, young women are still denied equitable access to a gender neutral labour market.

These failings on the part of our society represent the range structural barriers faced by the deeply disadvantaged. They also indicate the areas in need of reform, for there can be no
significant reduction in the existing inequalities in post-
compulsory education and training access, participation and
outcomes if the structural barriers are not demolished. The
barriers are not only educational. They are not only to be found
within the schools and the training system, and they do not
even start within the schools. As previously argued, young
people are born into an always already structured society, and
those structures constitute barriers to equitable access and
participation well before the child reaches school age.

While stressing the need for deep structural reform it is
important to remember that even if the structural barriers were
demolished, socio-cultural-economic legacies live on in people’s
world views and continue to influence their decisions and
actions. It is therefore essential to have an adequate
understanding of how young people develop their world view,
their identity, of how they view their life chances, and of how
they develop and pursue their life paths.

4.2 Making Their Own World

“How much do you actually want to hurt those people?”

“Oh . . . well . . . just enough to let ‘em know that, you know,
what I can do, and let me self know that I can do better.”

“How good is better?”

“Well . . . . enough to do like . . . . um . . . . that would be to
kill someone. But enough damage to be to put ‘em in hospital.”

“You’ve killed someone, haven’t you?”

“Yeah.” (Craig, 17 years, Poplar House, Melbourne, on ABC TV,

This brief interview tells a lot about the everybody’s
motivations, but particularly about young people’s. It tells a lot
about how people subjectively experience the world as active
individuals. It tells a lot about how individuals look to others
for affirmation. And it tells a lot about how constrained
circumstances can lead to very destructive manifestations
of people’s motivations.

Craig’s objective was to improve himself, to be more effective in
his chosen task—to do better. In short he was seeking a positive
self image. The key to a positive self image was self
improvement as judged by the established criteria. The task
evaluation was performed passively by the victim, and actively
by Craig—to let himself know that he could do better (than last
time)—and the others in the gang through their affirmation of
his prowess. The criteria for success were established
collectively by Craig’s street gang which developed random
street mugging as its form of cultural expression and as the
basis of identity for the group and the individual members. The
preferred form of cultural expression was very active and had maximum impact on the world—Craig was the pro-active party, not the passive powerless party.

If the specifics of his actions are ignored, it is obvious that Craig was doing what every middle class parent would want of their son. The importance of a positive self image is well understood, and every parent wants their son to achieve in his chosen vocation. It is desirable to seek to improve oneself, and to refuse to rest complacently upon one’s laurels. Most parents want their son to be active in the world and to refuse to be one of the passive followers. Most parents want their son to have a close knit group of friends.

The unanswered question is what led Craig to seek a positive self image, to seek personal improvement in such a destructive manner?

Craig is one of many young people living by moral codes which have little regard for the rights and entitlements of those outside the small group to which they belong. There are those who refuse to take a job as a supermarket check out operator because it would be boring, because they would have to conform to another set of (imposed) rules about dress and presentation of self, and because a low paid repetitive job is seen as a very poor alternative to life on the street where they quickly can make as much money by mugging somebody or by selling their body and where they can be with their friends. There are those who are unemployed and homeless but who refuse to register with the CES and DSS because they are illiterate—to attempt to register is to expose oneself to public humiliation and a sense of personal failure. There are those without the basic life and social skills necessary to negotiate a successful transition in mainstream society.

All of these are extreme examples of young people who are not making a successful transition and who frequently are imposing suffering on others. But they are examples at the end of a continuum of behaviours, values and attitudes. They are not examples from another planet—examples which can not be understood through the application of the accepted array of analytical devices. What differentiates them is the specifics of their behaviour, not the intent of the behaviour. What has to be understood is the set of personal and structural circumstances which lead them to pursue their positive identities in such anti-social and hostile ways.

Perhaps one of the most fruitful books on young people and schooling to be published in past five years is Walker’s (1988) Louts and Legends which presents the product of an extended five year ethnographic study of inner city working class Anglo
and non-English speaking background males from Year 10. The study is limited in that:

- it deals with young males but not with young women;
- it deals with working class males but not with middle class males;
- it deals with urban males but not outer suburban, rural or remote young males; and in that
- it does not deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young males.

Despite these limitations the book does provide insights into the way young people operate in the world to make sense of it and to chart life courses for themselves.

More specifically, the book is about the experience of growing up as a young man, in and beyond a very specific school setting, and through a variety of cultural modes. The variations turned on social class, ethnic, sexual, family, educational and other social factors... Sport, ethnicity and gender stood out as three dimensions along which group and individual development moved (p. xii-xiii).

The relations between and within four fairly autonomous but interrelated friendship groups the ‘footballers’, ‘the Greeks’, ‘the three friends’, and ‘the handballers’ were studied in the specific inner city school context, but the ways they confronted and went about solving their every day life problems, and the group and individual identities they constructed resonate with the experience of most school students. In their general form those insights are applicable to all young people. This view was confirmed by the workshop participants who argued that while each identifiable group of disadvantaged young people had its specific problems and barriers to access, that while each group has its own specific problems of transition, there exists a range of factors and experiences common to them all.

Young people generally do not operate as isolated individual subjectivities. They do experience subjectively the concrete specifics of their social context, but they tend to do so from within cultural groups. They form small cultural groups which appropriate elements of the mainstream cultural environment and develop them as their own cultural form which gives group identity and individual identity within the cultural group. The cultural group identity significantly is based on the perceived differences between their own group and other groups which are frequently seen in oppositional terms. Cultural groups develop their own understanding of the world they encounter, generate their own meanings, their own means, ends, priorities and values. In short they develop their own view of the world and
of their particular place in that world view. These cultural products are not merely ideational, they dispose group members to particular courses of action in particular situations—they define appropriate behaviour and ways of seeing. Individuals are of course a product of their history, of their life cycle membership of a number and range of cultural groups, both sequentially and simultaneously. Those cultural groups have their own ways of seeing, their own behavioural dispositions and their own modes of problem solving, and individuals are constituted by the diversity of personal relationships they have with members of their cultural groups and with people outside their own groups. The cultural groups to which an individual may belong (sequentially and at any point in time) will generally have a number of common elements in terms of cultural understandings and behavioural dispositions. There generally will be some common ground in terms of situations experienced, problems encountered and ways of seeing and solving those problems, between an individual's own cultural groups and other external groups. It is the existence of this common ground or, as Walker calls it “touchstone”, both within specific cultural groups and between them which forms the basis of “intracultural” and “intercultural articulation” respectively. In turn it is such communication which is the basis of people being able:

- to talk and work with each other;
- to understand and solve new problems as they are encountered and thus to grow and learn;
- to develop a more complex and inclusive understanding of the world and more sophisticated modes of operating in the world; and thus
- to play an individual and group part in the making of the social and physical world. The cultural resources that an individual (and group) can bring to bear on a problem will reflect the structural location of that individual, and their experiences and understandings of class, ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality. Thus the cultural resources, the world view and the behavioural dispositions that a young member of Walker's “Greeks” would bring to an encountered problem, differ in significant ways from those of young members of his Aussie “footballers”, the “handballers” or the “three friends”. The cultural resources they have at their disposal for problem solving will provide more or less successful outcomes. If the outcome is successful the existing cultural learnings and understandings and the existing behavioural dispositions will be reinforced. If the outcome is not successful something new will have been learned and the search will begin for modified or new ways of solving the problem.
It should also be noted that the processes of problem solving are rational and pragmatic. Walker’s young people can be seen to be acting rationally to secure the most effective solutions to the problems they encounter. Their world view informs their identification, perception and understanding of a problem, their prior cultural learning and their cultural (ideational, economic and social) resources are brought to the task of forming a hypothesis about the most appropriate course of action to solve the identified problem. If the decided course of action is successful it confirms the provisional correctness of their world view. If it is unsuccessful their initial hypothesis has been found wanting, they learn from that experience and they develop a new or modified hypothesis and act upon it.

While rational, the problem solving behaviour is marked by the group’s and the individual’s access to and control of cultural (ideational, economic and social) resources. The more limited the resources and the more restricted the range of phenomena encompassed in the world view, the greater the likelihood that the understanding of problems, the hypotheses and the solutions will be restricted and confined within the bounds of relatively few (perceived) options. (If you corner a snake it will strike). The richer the cultural resources the broader the array of phenomena included in the analysis and understanding, the wider the range of possible courses of action available to the individual and the cultural group. Even if an action does not provide a completely satisfactory solution, there will be no alternative attempted if the world view fails to provide or indicate the possibility of an alternative course of action. In this way young people are much the same as any scientist who operates within the parameters provided by the scientific culture, and develops hypotheses consistent with the operating paradigm. If the hypothesis is found wanting an alternative is usually sought from within the paradigm, and the probability of moving outside the established cultural boundaries is not very high. Similarly, unless young people are convinced that alternative understandings and courses of action are available to them, and unless they are convinced that those alternatives will provide a better solution to the problem, they will be very reluctant to accept world views that fall outside their own paradigm or cultural boundaries.

Walker’s study also demonstrates the central importance for the individual group members of negotiating a positive personal identity through their personal relationships in cultural groups, through their intracultural and intercultural articulation, and through their problem solving activity. For his young males the search for identity involved the struggle to define masculinity and to become a real man, and this process encompassed questions of sexuality, national and ethnic identity, and
occupation. But the search was from the context of cultural group participation:

What needs special emphasis, however, granting personal differences between individuals, is that we are all cultural beings, and that culture is always a personal matter. Individuals work out their own personal ‘careers’ using cultural programmes; they draw on culture to develop coping strategies, to negotiate working relations with others, cultural colleagues or not; and perhaps most importantly culture is indispensable in an individual’s struggle to work out their own personal identity, to answer the questions ‘What kind of person am I?’ and ‘Where do I belong?’ An individual values membership of a group, or acts within its culture, because of the experienced problem solving power of the culture, its capacity to contribute to answering such questions as these, and proposing consonant courses of action. (Walker: 1988, p.36. Author’s italics).

This means that intervention based on withdrawing an individual young person from their group cultural contexts, and securing their individual contextless cooperation in seeking alternative, more effective solutions will be unlikely to succeed if those efforts fail to take into account the cultural rootedness of the person’s world view and actions. Moreover, if the intervention fails to provide a new cultural setting for action, it most probably would be negated by the impact of the young person’s re-emersion in their organic cultural group practices. Craig’s actions in seeking to improve his performance in his culturally valued practices is best understood in terms of his seeking to establish a positive male self identity, to solve the problems posed by severely restricted access to cultural (ideational, economic and social) resources, and severely constrained prospects. Walkers’ Aussie “footballers” hetrosexist, ethnocentric and racist values and behaviours, their attitudes to schooling, and their perceptions of their adult occupational prospects are best understood as the provisional product of their cultural activities in a context marked by structurally constrained access to cultural resources. The values and aspirations of the “Greeks” are the product of their personal histories of family and cultural group relations.

Craig will not be motivated to change his behaviour until he is convinced that there exist alternative options for solving the problems his current group membership and practices identify, define and solve, and not until he is convinced that those options are open to him.

That the solutions pursued by certain individuals and groups sometimes will serve to entrench their pre-existing structural disadvantage, and that they sometimes will serve to harm and
oppress others has to be recognised. Structurally, disadvantaged young people have access to fewer cultural resources and life cycle opportunities, and as such have less to work with in their search for solutions to the problems of identity and transition. However, the existence of structural barriers should not blind us to the reality that they are active participants, through their cultural group memberships, in the identification and definition of their transitional options, and in their pursuit of those options. Moreover, they have to be active participants in the identification, definition and pursuit of less restrictive and restricting life options.

If disadvantaged young people in the groups identified in Section 3 are to be provided with more equitable prospects they have to be provided with a less restrictive array of ideational, economic and social resources which open up the possibility for those groups to identify and pursue those more equitable life options. This has implications for policies relating to the lessening of external structural barriers to educational participation and performance—barriers such as financial poverty, homelessness, remoteness, institutional racism, sexism, and so on. It has implications for pedagogy and curriculum in terms of:

- the need to begin by establishing the basis for intercultural communication with young people in a wide diversity of male and female cultural groups;
- the need to provide the basis for expanding the array of resources available to young people in their effort to understand their lives and their world;
- the need to provide young people with the security of cultural and personal identity to enable them to entertain the possibility of different life cycle options; and
- the need to provide them with the resources necessary for them to develop alternative hypotheses and pursue alternative more equitable solutions to their identity and transitional problems.

Last it should be remembered that while there is a plurality of cultural forms and identities in modern Australian society, it is not a plurality of equally effective and powerful cultural forms and identities. The dominant cultural form is western, industrialised, middle class, male and Anglo-Australian. Any policy which seeks to expand the options, opportunities and prospects for young people living and forming their world views in minority cultural contexts, must address the need to provide those structurally disadvantaged young people with access to the dominant cultural forms. Literacy in the dominant culture is a prerequisite for more equitable educational and employment outcomes for disadvantaged young people.
5. Schools, Pedagogy and Equity

It is widely recognised that children's experience in the early years of schooling, usually seen more narrowly as their early school achievement, is a very strong, perhaps the strongest predictor of later school success and of the ease of people's school to employment transition. The Issues Paper prepared by Ainley and McKenzie (1991:58–59) for the Review Committee identifies a number of factors which contribute to this effect:

- the impact of early school success on self image and self confidence;
- the degree of similarity and overlap in the competence requirements of early and later school learning; and
- the combination of choice and the influence of encouragement, role modeling and counselling from parents and teachers.

They also point out that there are limits to just what a school can do to reduce inequalities in participation and outcomes because "school achievement is not just a reflection of what is learned at school but partly reflects the differing aptitude which students bring to school" (p59). They do argue however, that schools can help by developing means of improving the early school performance of children from disadvantaged backgrounds (and thus reducing the gap in performance levels), and by actively recognising and accrediting a broader range of achievements and competencies at school (thus providing a more positive early school experience for a larger proportion and more diverse array of children).

These observations are valuable in that they implicitly recognise that there has to be action at the systemic level, at the school level and at the individual level if there is to be any reduction in educational inequalities. There is as previously argued no magic or key systemic reform which can eradicate inequality, and equally there is no way in which all responsibility can be loaded onto the individual teachers and students.

This section will extend these approaches to reducing educational inequality by placing them in a broader analysis of how schools exist to produce not only differentiated but unequal outcomes. It will identify two broad approaches to minimising the immediate and long term impact of those inequalities of educational outcomes: first by reducing labour market inequalities and rigidities caused by occupational closure; and second by reducing barriers to equality of educational opportunity.
inequalities in education are relationships that exist between schools and the labour market. The centre piece of these relationships is the credentialling function of schools, where the term credentialling refers to the on-going interdependence of internal step-by-step (grade-by-grade) distribution of merit and exit point certificates, diplomas and degrees (p30).

Mark Blaug, in his paper Where Are We Now in the Economics of Education?, commissioned by the OECD Directorate for Social Affairs, Manpower and Education in 1985, elaborated on the role of the educational credential:

The beauty of such filters as age, sex, race, marital status, years of work experience and, above all, educational qualifications is that at least some of them are generally regarded as socially legitimate, ‘just’, ‘fair’ and so on. Educational credentials, in particular, are widely held to be a product of individual effort and to that extent their use in recruitment and promotion meets the approval of workers, employers and customers alike . . . .

It may be that schooling increases the productivity of individuals by making them more effective members of a production team or better able to handle machines and materials, but it would matter little if it were not so provided everyone thought it was so . . . . What is important is that every worker accepts the principles on which some are paid more and some are paid less (p25).

As the more traditional filters such as age, gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality progressively lose their social legitimacy and become subject to anti-discrimination legislation, the emphasis on educational credentials as the only legitimate filter increases. This increasing emphasis points to is another limit on the degree to which schooling can reduce the inequalities of educational outcomes. The limits are not imposed solely by the natural range of abilities and attributes brought into the schooling system by the different students, but also by the structural relationship between the schooling system and the unequally divided and segmented labour market. So long as the
ties exists between educational certificates, diplomas and degrees and specific points of access to an unequal labour market, schools will be limited in what they can do to reduce inequalities in education outcomes.

A number of implications flow from this analysis for those who seek to reduce existing inequalities in educational access, participation and outcomes. First, the actual harm caused by the inequality of educational outcomes depends significantly on the depth of the inequalities in the labour market, and on the degree of closure existing within the labour market. Second, while there are limits on how far down the equality of outcomes road the schooling system can travel, it is possible for schools to contribute to a more just and equitable society by more effectively ensuring equality of opportunity to participate in the race for exit credentials.

5.2 Reducing Labour Market Inequality and Closure

Policies which reduce the depth of labour market inequalities and the degree of labour market closure around specific occupations will reduce the life cycle impact of the imposed inequalities in educational outcomes. Industrial relations, taxation and social security policies aimed at reducing the overall gap between the lowest and highest net disposable incomes can reduce the inequitable consequences of unequal educational outcomes. Policies designed to secure the long term return to full employment can reduce, to the extent they succeed, both the immediate and life long impact of school failure. Policies and programs aimed at securing full recognition of the occupational competence requirements of all occupations can and will reduce the existing level of gender discrimination in the labour market. Anti-discrimination legislation, equal employment opportunities programs, and parental leave entitlements are working slowly to break down labour market closure based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexuality and so on. Active policies and programs designed to foster an equitable gender division of unpaid domestic and caring work will provide a more equitable basis for males and females to participate in the education and training system and in labour markets.

Of more direct relevance for the Review, the immediate and life long impact of unequal educational outcomes can be reduced by policies aimed at:

* rationalising and broad banding the existing range of narrow occupational classifications;
* policies aimed at creating an articulated vocational education, training and credentialling system paralleled by articulated award based occupational career paths; and
policies aimed at creating a unified vocational training and entry system.

The latter point means collapsing the present distinctions between the apprenticeship and traineeship systems to create one flexible structured training system. The composite system would have to be founded on the principles of broad based or generic training to deliver maximum utility and flexibility for employers and employees. It would have to be an articulated system so that no matter which point of entry was taken, a person would have the opportunity to progress through a lifelong career. It would have to be comprehensive so that all competencies in all occupations could be recognised and incorporated into the training, credentialling and career system. It would have to be competency based so that while the majority of people would continue to pass through a sequenced on- and off-the-job training program, there could be the possibility of short circuiting the system and securing recognition of, and credentialling for occupational competencies gained by alternative means.

There would have to be special provision made for disadvantaged jobseekers so that they could make a staged and subsidised entry to an occupation. Such a staged entry could involve a period of subsidised on-the-job experience before the participant would be expected to enter a period of structured training to acquire the required occupational competencies, or to have their existing competencies tested and credentialled.

5.3 Fostering Equal Educational Opportunity

Three broad approaches to ensuring equal educational opportunities can be identified in the history of Australian public education. They are: the pre-World War II restrictive elite approach; the 1950 and 1960s comprehensive meritocratic approach; and the 1970s unequal provision to ensure equal opportunity approach.

The pre-World War II approach entailed the equal provision of educational facilities and courses at the primary school level, restricted examination based entry to streamed secondary schooling, and higher education for the elite, with scholarships for the most able. Highly centralised schooling bureaucracies controlled the distribution of resources and teachers, and specified in minute detail the content of prescribed courses. Teacher education was initially on the apprenticeship model, with trainee teachers learning the broad principles and the fine points of the craft from the master teachers, and supplementing their on-the-job learning with part-time (frequently correspondence) courses. The inspectorate system was used to keep a tight rein on teaching practice, and the external
examination system was the basis of university control over what was taught. (In Queensland the University controlled the Year 8 end of primary school Scholarship, the Year 10 Junior and the Year 12 matriculation Senior Examinations).

The underlying assumptions of this approach were basically elitist and conservative, characterised by the view that education existed to inculcate learnings appropriate for people's position in society. The basics and the traditional disciplines were assumed to be effective in teaching these essential learnings. These views were not uncontested, and increased youth unemployment during the depression contributed to an increasing pressure to increase the school leaving age to the end of Year 10, and to develop a comprehensive secondary schooling system which would enable the working class to improve itself and compete equally for the more privileged positions in society.

In most States the school leaving age was increased to 15 years during or immediately after the war, and the subsequent period to the early 1960s was marked by the educational bureaucracies adjusting to the reality of universal schooling to the age of 15 years. In 1946 the NSW Board of Secondary School Studies submitted to the Minister for Education in that State a set of four principles for the reform of the lower secondary curriculum:

- Secondary education should be adapted to the needs and capacities of adolescents.
- It should be closely related to the interests and experiences of life.
- It should be 'all round', at the same time providing adequate opportunities for the pursuit of adequate opportunities for the pursuit of individual interests.
- It should not be regarded merely as preparation for tertiary education; it should stimulate in all students a desire to go on learning.

Despite the understanding of what was required there was for the following ten years a marked inability to develop and effective and comprehensive response to the educational challenge posed by universal schooling to the age of 15 years. Until 1951 piecemeal school based reforms were encouraged so long as they did not disturb the mainstay 'academic' curriculum. After 1951 an Alternative Curriculum for Secondary Schools was introduced for those students seen as being unsuited to the academic fare. The ineffectiveness of these marginalising reforms were identified in the 1957 (Wyndham) Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in New South Wales:

Many of the pupils concerned were leaving school . . . More significant than this was the fact that, for
many, their experience in secondary school meant a record of failure and, for an even greater number, an experience which had little relevance in terms of their abilities and interests.

The Wyndham Report in N.S.W. came to epitomise the liberal reforms of the 1950s and 1960s, with secondary schooling becoming universal for all until the end of Year 10, and with the introduction of a comprehensive curriculum which offered a wide range of subject choice for all. Victoria retained its streamed system of Technical High Schools and Queensland developed a four streamed and largely gendered approach with ‘academic’, ‘industrial’, ‘commercial’ and ‘domestic science’ courses. Teacher education was based on the professional model and was provided by the Universities and Teacher Colleges which were to become the initial Colleges of Advanced Education in the late 1960s. Control over the curriculum and teacher placement remained centralised, and the inspectorate and the external examination systems remained in tact.

Under this approach the education system was seen to have ensured equal opportunity if the basic provision was equal for all in terms of formal access and if the competition was formally fair. The examination system was seen to be the fair and just arbiter of students’ abilities. Those with talent and who put in the effort would be rewarded with entry into the world of higher education. This clear meritocratic view was supported in the 1960s by the development of human capital theory and its early application to education. In the days before analyses of dual labour markets and labour market segmentation, first generation human capital economists theorised a clear contribution of both general and vocationally specific education to productivity, and argued that productivity differentials were reflected in wage differentials. The Martin Committee quite explicitly used first generation human capital theory to justify its arguments for a rapid expansion of a vocational tier of tertiary education between the universities and the technical colleges—the Colleges of Advanced Education.

As with the pre-War view of equal opportunity, the post-war meritocratic view was not uncontested, and it was subjected to increasing challenge in the 1960s and early 1970s. Analysis of the labour market became more sophisticated, poverty in the midst of affluence was ‘rediscovered’, and major studies of inequality provided evidence that the formal provision of equal facilities and access did not provide all with equal opportunity to compete, let alone with equal prospects of success within the educational system. Major reports in the United States, Britain and in Australia indentified the contribution of education to inequality, and identified groups which were systematically disadvantaged in and by the schools. In the United States the
Head Start Program, in Britain the Educational Priority Areas program, and in Australia the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP) were developed to address some of the bases of educational inequality.

All were based on an assumption that there has to be an unequal provision of education resources if all students are to have an equal opportunity to compete and achieve in the schooling system, if they are to have equal prospects of educational success. In Britain and Australia it was decided to attack the problem in a structural, systemic and non-individualistic way. The underlying basis of educational inequality were seen to be socio-economic-cultural, as being inherent in the structures of society, and the most effective approach to redressing those inequalities was seen to lie in effecting qualitative changes in the schools servicing disadvantaged areas, and in improving the relationships between the people of disadvantaged areas and their schools. The DSP was complemented by the Innovative Schools Program, specific programs designed to counter sexism and ethnocentrism in education, and the Country Areas Program (CAP). A number of them continue today—the DSP and CAP, the counter sexism policies and programs, the multi-cultural education policies and programs. More recently, they have been supplemented by the Aboriginal Education Policy and the Students At Risk program. Other programs such as the Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY), the School to Work Transition Education Program and the Participation and Equity Program (PEP) had quite limited lives.

In addition to these measures a number of employment and training programs have been established to provide assistance specifically for young people at risk: the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS), the Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP), the Youth Training Program (YTP), the Community Youth Special projects (CYS), the Voluntary Youth Program (VYP), a range of apprenticeship support schemes, and the Australian Traineeship System (ATS). More recently all of these programs except the apprenticeship and traineeship support programs have been integrated into the general array of employment and training programs such as the Skillshare, Jobtrain, Jobstart, Jobs Education and Training (JET) and Newstart programs.

All of these initiatives are prefaced on the assumption that more resources have to be provided for the disadvantaged population if they are to be afforded less unequal prospects for education success, and more equal chances in the transition to employment. In the 1980s an increasing concern with the quality and efficiency of schooling has at times been seen to come into conflict with the equity and participation objectives established
in the 1970s. Employers and trade unions have called for a more immediate link between schooling and the labour market and for a tighter control on the teaching of ‘the basics’. Calls for a closer tie between schools, technical colleges and the universities and the labour market are viewed suspiciously by educational progressives who see the credentialling role of schooling as inherently inequitable and divisive, and by those conservatives who resist any dilution of what they see as the traditional disciplines.

As I have argued elsewhere, the division between the educational progressives and some of those calling for greater coherence between schooling and the world of work is counter-productive. There is a necessity to synthesise the equity, participation, quality and efficiency objectives:

There is no possibility that government, industry and unions will accept the terms of a proposed educational settlement if they exclude . . . quality and efficiency concerns. . . . A certain degree of economic instrumentalism is an inevitable and unavoidable element of schooling systems, and perhaps it is better to address it openly (and reduce its long term impact). Similarly, any provisional settlement which attempts to negate the cherished equality objectives will be very unstable and significantly dependent on coercion (Freeland 1991: 80).

The terms of that necessary synthesis have to include policies identified in Section 5.2 as contributing to articulated training and credentialling pathways in a more equitable and open labour market, and education policies designed to pursue the equity objectives of society. A possible starting point or foundational principle for educational reform is provided by Smith (1985:35):

equality in education must have as its first principle the breaking down of socially determined limitations on the educational development of students which exclude them from participation in the determination of general affairs and from the conscious bringing about of social changes (Author's italics).

Smith goes on to identify some necessary areas of intervention if there is to be greater equality of opportunity. They include:

1. A redistribution of general educational resources to create “individual equality of educational provision in relation to plant, personnel and equipment, . . . to equalise expenditures on a State-to-State basis, . . . and (to) provide special resources for local initiatives” (p36).

2. “(S)chools should be de-bureaucratised, and if alternative organisational forms are unknown, they should be developed . . . (so that) teachers, students and their parents are
involved in decisions that affect their work situations and access to school knowledge.” The teaching and administrative work load involved in testing and evaluation is immense and the changes should include a reduction in assessment to provide more time for teaching (p87-88).

3. “Different pedagogical techniques are required that account for differences in backgrounds (p39).”

To this list must be added a range of measures to ensure that economic poverty, isolation, discrimination and destructive domestic situations do not prevent active participation in education. These measures would necessarily include adequate income support, more effective student welfare measures, home-school-community liaison services and measures to assist the young homeless.

Last there is a need to radically reform the school curriculum to ensure that it is relevant for the whole school population. The school curriculum should assist students in their efforts to understand, participate in and change themselves and their worlds, to broaden the range of cultural resources and options they have at their disposal to resolve the problems they encounter in their transition to adulthood.

This list provides the educational reform agenda for efforts to break down socially determined barriers and limitations to equitable patterns of access to, participation in and outcomes from the education and training systems. That agenda includes:

- Measures to reduce external socio-economic-cultural barriers to access and participation in the compulsory and post-compulsory years of schooling;
- Measures to ensure an equality of general educational resources (plant, personnel and equipment) for all, and an enhanced provision for structurally disadvantaged students;
- Measures to break down the centralised bureaucratic control of schooling and to facilitate teacher, student and parent participation in educational decisions;
- Measures to radically de-construct and re-construct the work of teachers; and
- Measures to radically de-construct and re-construct the school curriculum.

6. The Reform Agenda

6.1 Reducing External Barriers to Participation

In consultations conducted for the Committee poverty was the most commonly identified barrier to participation in post-compulsory schooling, and more adequate income support for
students, the young homeless and the young unemployed was identified as the most pressing need. The existing array of age and activity related income support allowances and benefits have been determined on the basis of their relativities to adult pension and benefit rates and to junior award wages rather than on the basis of any study of young peoples’ costs of living and sources of income. They are also based on the assumption that if they have the means parents have an ongoing responsibility to provide for their children until they are 25 years of age if they are students and to the age of 18 if they are unemployed. That they are totally inadequate is undisputed.

There is a need to establish a thorough youth costs of living and sources of income study, and there should be interim increases to the existing payments pending the outcome of the study. A commonly identified starting point is the replacement of the current Job Search Allowance three aged based differentials (for 16 and 17 year olds, for 18 to 20 year olds and for adults) by a two aged based differentials system of payments, with the current intermediate rates being paid to 16 and 17 year olds, and the current adult rates being paid to all recipients aged 18 and over. The two-tier Austudy system should be modified by replacing the present 16 and 17 year old rates by the present 18 years and over rates, and by paying all recipients aged 18 years and over the basic independent rate with provision for supplementary allowances.

Education leavers have to wait for 13 weeks before they become eligible for the Job Search Allowance. This is quite discriminatory and imposes a considerable financial burden on the families of unemployed education leavers. The inequity is exacerbated by the fact that the young unemployed are more likely to come from lower socio-economic status households. The 13 week Job Search Allowance waiting period for education leavers should be reduced to six weeks.

The young people in greatest economic need are the young homeless under the age of 18 years, many of whom fail to register with the CES as unemployed and with the DSS for a benefit or allowance. Although the waiting period has been significantly reduced from six to two weeks, the eligibility criteria are too restrictive and the administrative procedures too cumbersome to facilitate timely financial assistance. The recommended costs of living study should include the cost of living encountered by the young homeless. In the interim, the existing rate should be replaced by a rate equivalent to the adult Job Search Allowance, the same amount recommended for unemployed people aged 18 years and over.

Young unemployed people who participate in recognised employment and training program courses such as those run by Skillshare and Jobtrain are not eligible for the Formal Training
Allowance supplement to the Job Search Allowance, despite the fact that adults are eligible for the payment. Eligibility for the Formal Training Allowance should be extended to those under 20 years of age.

Most States have made provision for special cash and in kind payments to students living in poverty. In NSW each school is provided with a set amount which is then disbursed as the school sees fit to students in cash payments or in kind support (free lunch, books, nit shampoo, etc). In Victoria students living in families in receipt of social security pensions or benefits qualify for an annual payment. The diversity in eligibility, forms of assistance and amounts available between the States is quite inequitable and is inconsistent with the principle of equal entitlements. There is a need for the diversity of State provided student funding support schemes to be rationalised and replaced by the one fair and equitable system.

As has been evidenced by the Burdekin Report and by subsequent hearings of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, youth homelessness remains a major barrier to educational participation for people as young as 9 and 10 years of age. Society has displayed a belated willingness to recognise the existence of domestic violence and of domestic sexual assault and abuse, but it has not yet developed the mechanisms to adequately cater for the victims and their families. Schools are expected to notify authorities of suspected cases of child abuse, but all too frequently there are inadequate support services. All too frequently all that exists for a young person who is forced to leave an untenable domestic situation, to leave a physically and psychologically violent household, is an inadequate array of emergency short stay youth refuges and a more inadequate array of medium and long term accommodation services. In most cases the newly homeless end up in the refuge circuit or on the streets, with little prospect of continuing their education.

What is needed is a capacity for a young homeless person to continue their education in their school and with their peer group. A number of schools have developed their own accommodation support systems ranging from boarding out for young students through to longer term rented accommodation for those ready for independent living. All schools should have access to adequate flexible accommodation support for their short and long term young homeless students. The need for this facility was expressed as strongly in Wagga Wagga as it was in Melbourne and Sydney.

The accommodation should be organised and integrated with other support services by a home-school-community liaison service coordinated by a home-school-community liaison officer who would be responsible for working with other school based
welfare related staff and bodies (school counsellors, careers teachers, social workers, school to work transition officers and school welfare committees), and with community based welfare and service bodies including Social Security, the CES, State housing and welfare service departments, and local community welfare groups.

6.2 Equality of Educational Resources

Despite the existence of a Community Standard set by the Schools Commission as a guide to acceptable or desirable levels of school resourcing, there remains a great disparity in the levels of school resourcing. The federal government has indicated that by 1992 all government schools and all non-government schools in funding categories 1-7 (out of 12 categories) will be resourced to at least the Community Standard benchmark, and that per capita grants to category 8-12 non-government schools will be increased in real terms so that all schools will be resourced to at least the Community Standard by the year 2000.

While the realisation of this target is desirable it will not guarantee equal resourcing for schools in terms of plant, personnel and equipment. The first National Report on Schooling in Australia (1989) indicated the existence of a significant gap in per capita funding (public and private) between non-Catholic private schools, public schools and catholic system schools. Within the public system there are significant differences between per capita funding levels in different States, and between schools in affluent areas and those in areas classified as disadvantaged. In 1988-89 the per capita student funding for government secondary schools in Victoria was $5,091, compared with only $3,887 in Queensland.

These differentials and their impact on student opportunities can not be eradicated by a guarantee of equal basic resourcing for all schools. It should be remembered that the provision of equal plant, personnel and equipment will require the expenditure of different per capita amounts on different schools in different areas. Moreover, it is important that the existing range of special programs for disadvantaged areas and groups should be continued. The Disadvantaged Schools Program and the Country Areas Program have played an important role in both upgrading the resource levels of disadvantaged and remote area schools, and in providing a stimulus to school based reform. These programs should be continued as the base equity programs for Australian schools, but there appear to exist sound grounds for rationalising them to form one Disadvantaged and Remote Area Schools Program.
These base equity programs have been supplemented by a range of equity programs targeted at specific population groups: the counter sexist education programs, the multi-cultural education policies and programs, the Aboriginal Education policies and programs, special programs for students with disabilities, special literacy programs. There would appear to be good reason to retain the array of special policies and programs for particular disadvantaged student groups, but they will fail to effect the desired changes if they are not properly resourced. The development of official national and state policy objectives and the requirement that each school develop strategies to implement the policies does not mean that the objectives have been or will be realised. There will be limited progress in these areas until the policy objectives and the strategies to realize those objectives become an integral aspect of mainstream everyday school identity and activity.

In addition there have been a range of special initiatives aimed at improving the transition chances of students seen to be at risk: the Education Program for Unemployed Youth, the National School to Work Transition Program, the Community Youth Support Scheme, the Participation and Equity Program, and the current two year Students At Risk initiative. These programs have had variable outcomes but they have served to provide valuable information about effective practice. The early evaluations of the State versions of the Students At Risk program are promising, but there is a need to extend the program for a further three years to enable the full development and evaluation of the various initiatives.

The mainstreaming of the previously existing youth employment and training programs has meant that unemployed and jobless young people's access to community based support and training services has been reduced. It is important to ensure that there exist suitable community based alternatives for those unemployed and jobless young people who find the formal schooling system alienating.

6.3 Decentralisation and De-Bureaucratisation

Over the past five years some significant steps have been taken in relation to the decentralisation of educational decision making, and teachers and schools are being asked to assume responsibility for a wider range of educational and administrative tasks. They are being expected to open up their schools to parental and local community scrutiny and participation. Third, they are being expected to assume a greater responsibility for addressing the welfare needs of students and for participating in the provision a range in non-school services relating to issues such as child abuse, youth homelessness,
emergency cash relief for 'in-need' students. A fairly typical array of school committees in a N.S.W. high school includes the:

- School Council Committee;
- Curriculum Committee;
- Student Welfare Committee;
- Staff Development Committee;
- Girls Education Strategy Committee;
- Multi-Cultural Education Committee;
- Aboriginal Education Committee;
- Computer Committee;
- Talented Child Committee;
- Buildings and Grounds Committee; and the
- Finance Committee.

In addition there are regular Executive Meetings, each subject area has its regular Faculty Meetings, and there is usually a Students' Council. While not all N.S.W. high schools have all of these committees fully operating at all times the list does give an appreciation of the increased responsibilities of teachers. To this list can be added the increased responsibilities teachers have been asked to assume for school based assessment, and the increased work load involved in providing a relevant course structure for the increasing numbers of post-compulsory students.

These reforms have been introduced at a time of overall fiscal constraint, and Commonwealth and State educational funding has not been exempt. Teachers who are being asked to take on ever greater responsibilities, and teachers who believe that they are being forced to shoulder a disproportionate responsibility for achieving overall fiscal targets will be less inclined to be willing partners in developing a decentralised de-bureaucratised education system. If teachers are to be expected to transform their orientation to knowledge, their basic pedagogy and to transform their work practices, there will have to be guarantees of adequate school resourcing, of retraining and staff support, and industrial awards will have to be restructured to reflect the new structure and practices of schooling and teaching. The necessary reforms can not be introduced without the co-operation and support of our best teachers.

### 6.4 Pedagogy and Teacher Education

The dominant rhetoric of teaching labels children as 'equal' individuals when it is known a priori that individuals vary according to social background. To treat children as 'equals' in the application of teaching techniques then presupposes that all are equally able to appropriate school
learning... (S)chools frequently fail to 'teach' so that outcomes are not closely tied to the social origins of the child, even when children are judged to be 'bright' Smith (p1985, 39).

The bottom line of improving the early school performance and of making more equal the educational and transitional prospects of all students is the teaching force. The bottom line of educational reform is the teaching work force. The responsibilities of teachers are rapidly changing but all of those reforms are taking time away from what is perhaps the central need—the de-construction and re-construction of teaching. That the change Smith advocates is needed is recognised by most teachers who have to face the alienating realities of teaching students every Monday morning (whether they be failing, hostile, passive or instrumentally committed, and whether they be anti-social and aggressive or co-operative and creative).

But teachers are the same as all other people, and knowing that the existing system and pedagogy are not working is not in and by itself sufficient to provoke the necessary changes. Teachers have to survive on a day-to-day basis and before they change from the discredited but at least functional (in terms of survival) pedagogy they have to be convinced that viable alternatives do exist, that the alternatives are open to them, and that the necessary transition from one system to the unknown new system will be manageable. (In this sense teachers are no different from the young people studied by Walker). As Smith observed in 1985:

> Whether it is palatable or not, an immediate obstacle (to reform) is the teaching force itself. Because of their biographies, training and on-task socialisation, relatively few teachers seem able on their own, to transcend the present patterns of school, to see through the minutiae of their daily existence (p40).

The essential task is to provide the basis for a transformation of the teaching force so that teachers can recognise the differences that students bring to the school room and accord them recognition and integrate them so that all students have a positive self image no matter what their socio-economic-cultural differences. Without such recognition and affirmation children from the minority social and cultural groups will in all probability fall behind in early school learning. Their capacity to resist the cultural negation experienced in the school will be determined by the strength of cultural identity provided at home. If the cultural identity of the parents is insecure and if the parents feel culturally isolated from the school and the teachers, there is every probability that the children will from day one be earmarked for school failure and an early departure.
from the education and training system—why stay in a system which has systematically negated your existence.

This process of negation by the school in the first years of schooling is interpreted as early school failure or, in less, perjorative terms, as a lower level of early school achievement, and is well illustrated in research into Aboriginal children’s experience of schooling.

Ethnographic research (Malin:1990) has demonstrated that an European teacher with has no understanding of the cultural differences which exist in the way Aboriginal and Anglo Australian parents raise their children can make a profound contribution to the Aboriginal student’s ‘failure’ in the first year of schooling. Culturally valued behavioural attributes in an Aboriginal family are different from those pertaining in an Anglo Australian family, and the unaware teacher will in all probability penalise the Aboriginal child for inappropriate and unacceptable classroom behaviour. The impact of such cultural rejection and negation, subjectively experienced by the young Aboriginal child as personal failure and rejection, will in all probability lead to a stigmatisation which parallels and reinforces the dominant racist characterisation of Aboriginal people. By treating all the students as the same and with the same expectations the unaware teacher has contributed to the production of very unequal educational prospects for the Aboriginal student. The intent and the practice are not intentionally racist, but the effect is to re-produce racial inequality. The existence of these forms of unintended institutional racism was stressed in consultations with Koori educators, and they argued that the existence of an Aboriginal Education Policy and Aboriginal Studies Curriculums will not change the reality of such institutionalised modes of classroom behaviour.

The same processes take place across Australia every day, and many students experience cultural and personal negation at the hands of hard working and well meaning teachers. The analysis applies equally to children from non-English speaking backgrounds, to Torres Strait Islander children, to girls, to children with disabilities, and to children without access to the dominant forms of cultural expression.

It is of fundamental importance that all teachers be provided with every opportunity to develop the capacity to recognise and value socio-cultural diversity and to develop teaching practices which build positively on that diversity.

Most teacher education programs include consideration of issues relating to racism, sexism and ethno-centrism in education, but very few make these issues and the policies and strategies related to them a central or core part of the curriculum. It is
not adequate to provide a one Semester option on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, or a few lectures on sexism and education. All teacher education programs have to ensure that their graduates have the understandings and orientations to teaching identified by Kalantzis and Cope (1989:3-5) as constituting the perspective of equitable multiculturalism:

- Cultural variety . . . to be understood both in the context of elements common to us all as humans, and the structures and core culture of western industrialism in contemporary Australia. . . .
- We are all ethnic . . .
- Empowerment (comes) through (acquiring) skills of social literacy for western industrialism, knowledge and awareness of one's becoming a social being; and the ability to choose and participate in the making of diversity. . English is the language of social enablement in Australia and, as such, more than just a 'community' language. . . .
- Whilst being based on locally-relevant inquiry, there are certain core issues to multiculturalism which should be addressed by all students equally: What is culture? How does socialisation occur? How do we all acquire culture? What is racism?
- Equal emphasis needs to be placed on open processes (to ensure relevance) and common core content. . . .
- Rather than being an addition to curricula, the issues and tasks of multiculturalism should be part of mainstream areas and whole school arrangements. . . .
- Self-respect emanates more from what schools do generally than from gestures to difference.
- Different pedagogies (recognising plurality for adequate servicing) are needed, but with singularity of end; those essential forms of English language and cognition that allow access to higher education, social literacy and social participation. . . .

In addition to core curriculum designed to develop these characteristics, there should be core curriculum designed to ensure that all graduating teachers are familiar with existing policies and programs relating to equity in educational access, participation and outcome.

Given the importance of a positive personal cultural identity and of a positive early school experience, and given the trend toward greater parental involvement in the work of schools, there is a need for teachers to develop a greater capacity to understand, involve and work with the parents of all students, not just those parents who share the cultural values of the
teachers and the school. The employment of home-school-community liaison officers could help in this process.

The importance of parental and community involvement has been recognised in relation to Aboriginal and Islander education, and a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher aid and bridging courses have been developed. As previously argued, it is important to continue these initiatives, but it is equally important to ensure that those courses provide access to mainstream teacher education courses. The underlying principle of active parental involvement also could be applied to non-English speaking background communities.

Effort should also be directed to providing a major boost to in-service teacher education with a view to developing the above orientations to teaching and to encouraging the development of concomitant pedagogical practices.

A five year National Teacher Development Program should be established to improve the scope and quality of pre-and in-service teacher education.

6.5 The Democratic Curriculum

I have argued elsewhere (forthcoming) that the task of deconstructing and reconstructing the curriculum is of central importance.

The false dualist division between the 'academic' and 'non-academic' curriculums has long served to entrench the false distinction between general or true education and vocational education or, as it is usually called, training. In turn, this distinction has reinforced the notion of a gap between mental and manual labour. These untenable divisions have been the essential foundation for both the conservative education lobby which seeks to preserve the privileged position of select forms of knowledge, and the liberal progressives of the 1970s who sought the development of education in its own right. The divisions have thwarted every attempt to introduce a truly comprehensive curriculum into Australian schooling systems. They continue to give a false legitimacy to the notion that a high level of abstract mathematical knowledge is an essential characteristic of an educated person and an essential life skill, when in fact the vast majority of educated people get by quite well with just the rudimentary mathematical skills.

Increased retention rates have posed a major dilemma for the post-compulsory curriculum. Should it remain streamed as in N.S.W., or should it be converted into a modest comprehensive curriculum as in Victoria? Should the post compulsory years of schooling have compulsory subjects, a compulsory core, or no compulsory subjects? Is there a place for the study of work and
for vocationally specific courses such as computer science in the post-compulsory curriculum?

These questions neglect the reality that they cannot be adequately answered until the issues relating to the compulsory secondary curriculum are resolved. The retention of the subject divisions between the 'academic' and 'non-academic' in the compulsory years would influence the post-compulsory curriculum decisions. The alternative is to totally dispense with the streamed or divided curriculum in the compulsory years, and replace it with a common core curriculum. Such a common core curriculum would be truly comprehensive, as opposed to the false comprehensive reforms of the 1960s.

The organising principle of a lower secondary comprehensive curriculum should be that of fostering the development of active democratic citizenship. Active democratic citizenship involves full participation by all in the private domestic, and the public social, cultural, political and economic life of society, and education prefaced on the principle of fostering democratic citizenship has as its central objective the development of the essential competencies for such active participation. As such the curriculum would legitimately include the study of work in its generic sense of both paid and unpaid productive activity, but it would not reduce the educational endeavour to the task of vocationally specific education which is currently the preserve of the technical education system and the higher education system).

A competency based approach to developing a curriculum for democratic citizenship and to teaching that curriculum would be a people or student based approach to education as opposed to the current inculcation of privileged knowledge based approach. The objective would be to develop individual student's knowledge, understanding and capabilities to play an active citizenship role, not on preserving and developing the understandings of selectively anointed disciplines.

The common core curriculum would entail the de-construction of the existing subject and disciplinary boundaries and the construction of new non-divisive subject areas. At all times the primary question should be that of what competencies understanding and knowledge are desirable for an active democratic life. The range of courses should include:

- English language and communication;
- other languages and cultures;
- the physical sciences;
- Australian society;
- mathematics;
- the creative arts and creative expression;
• life skills (incorporating physical education, health education, financial management, drug education, vocational counselling, sex education, and the current gendered subjects relating to office work, domestic and caring work and workshop work); and

• the generic study of work in society.

These subjects could be taught at levels of complexity appropriate to the abilities of students. Schools and teachers would continue to be responsible for student assessment as integral aspects of the teaching and learning processes, but there would be an expectation that all students have an entitlement to an agreed minimum level of achievement in all areas of learning. Such a guarantee should not, however, require the introduction of a national system of testing.

If the opportunity is taken to introduce such comprehensive reform in the lower secondary years, and if the current reforms seeking to break down labour market closure and open up career pathways, it would be possible to totally open up the post-compulsory curriculum, with only a bare minimum of compulsion. Students aged from 16 to 19 are almost or already young adults, and they should be provided with the necessary supports to enable them to make subject decisions for themselves. The issue of vocationally specific courses in the post-compulsory years should not be a matter for debate. Young people should be able to select the subjects they wish to take and those subjects should include offerings from the schools and the technical education colleges. They should be able to pursue courses designed for tertiary preparation, and they should be able to combine part-time study with part-time employment.

If fully implemented these reforms of the compulsory and post-compulsory curriculum would go a long way towards making the schooling system a much less alienating place for many of the young who are presently ill served by the schools. The possibility of much greater course 'relevance' would be open to the schools and students. However, the desirability of the proposed curriculum reforms is dependent on the concomitant labour market reforms designed to reduce the life long impact of unequal educational outcomes. If those labour market reforms are not pursued the recommended curriculum reforms should be reconsidered.
Bibliography


Australia (1989), National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy: Joint Policy Statement, DEET, Canberra.

Australian Broadcasting Commission (1989), Nobody’s Children, Parts I & II, ABC, Sydney, 17 & 18 May,


Connell, R.W., Johnston, K.M. White, V., et.al. (1988-90), Poverty, Education and the Disadvantaged Schools Program (DSP), Reports 1-7, Sociology Department, Macquarie University.


Income Security Standing Committee (1990), Income Security for Homeless Young People, Report to the Inter-Departmental Committee on Youth Homelessness, Canberra, August.


National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1990), Country Areas Program, AGPS, Canberra.

National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1990), The Shape of Teacher Education: Some Proposals, NBEET, Canberra.

National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies (1989), Responses to Burdekin: selected responses to Our Homeless Children, National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, University of Tasmania, Hobart.


Schools Council (1990), Getting it Right: Schools Serving Disadvantaged Communities, AGPS, Canberra.

Smith, Richard (1985), The Inequalities Debate: an interpretive essay, Deakin University, Deakin University.


Taylor, Janet (1990), Leaving Care and Homelessness, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.


Appendix 2 (D)

Post-Compulsory Education and Training: Participation of Young People with Disabilities

An Issues Paper

May, 1991

This paper was prepared by Dr R.J. Andrews for the Australian Education Council Review of Post-Compulsory Education and Training

The author acknowledges contributions to the paper through discussions with contact persons in school authorities, higher education and TAFE institutions, and non-government agencies. Dr M. A. Howell, Senior Associate assisted with data collection, and Dr N. Pyle and Professor J. Elkins with the literature review.
Executive Summary

This paper addresses the participation of young people with disabilities in post-compulsory education and training in the context of the terms of reference for the Review. Development of the paper was assisted by a series of discussions with contact persons in school and TAFE authorities and higher education institutions in all States and Territories. It identifies issues and barriers in the education and training sectors concerned, and proposes measures and strategies to help increase participation and the benefits from education and training for these students. The barriers, measures and strategies relating to post-compulsory schooling and to post-secondary education and training are summarised in Table 2 (page 248) and Table 4 (page 269) respectively.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of participation by students with disabilities</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues facing students with disabilities at the end of compulsory schooling</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to participation in post-compulsory schooling</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options and strategies to increase participation in the senior secondary school</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues in post-secondary education and training for students with disabilities</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to participation in post-secondary education and training</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options and strategies to increase participation in post-secondary education and training</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-Compulsory Education and Training: Participation of Young People with Disabilities

An Issues Paper

Introduction

Significant changes in post-compulsory education and training in the last decade have potentially added to the education and employment prospects of people with disabilities. These changes have included a national emphasis on increasing the retention rates for all students in senior secondary schooling; the broadening of the secondary school curriculum to provide a wider array of subjects for students, leading to external and school level certification; and a review of assessment procedures employed in secondary schools and the relationship of assessment to certification and entrance to tertiary education. Efforts to develop curriculum and credit links between the secondary and tertiary levels of education, especially the senior secondary school and TAFE institutions, and the progressive adoption by tertiary institutions of measures to support people with disabilities undertaking tertiary studies are other examples of these changes.

The reality for students with disabilities in secondary schools, however, is that there has been little application of these developments in post-compulsory schooling to specifically ease the difficulties they face in achieving a full secondary education, and maximising their opportunities in further education and training. Nor has there been a clear commitment across the tertiary education sector to expediting their entry to post-secondary courses, and providing a coordinated and well resourced support program for them. While there have been important initiatives in the transition to post-secondary education and training for people with disabilities, they have tended to be isolated developments, without wide application, and without planning and coordination across the education sectors.

Government school authorities, and most non-government school authorities, have established programs which are designed to provide support for students with disabilities to participate in schooling during the compulsory school period. These policies also generally apply to students in post-compulsory schooling, but programs which provide an educationally appropriate curriculum for students with disabilities and the support services they require to benefit from study in the senior secondary years, are not found in all schools and colleges. On the other hand, a number of schools have established programs
which are designed to prepare students with disabilities for early placement in employment. In tertiary education, most higher education institutions and TAFE authorities in the States and Territories have equity policies which set out statements in support of students with disabilities. Tertiary education institutions typically enrol these students in ‘mainstream’ courses when support arrangements are possible. Some TAFE authorities also make provision for people with disabilities in special or alternative education and training programs. However, despite the established programs at school level referred to above, and the emerging support programs in tertiary institutions, students with disabilities remain significantly under-represented in post-compulsory education and training.

In this context the Commonwealth government in 1988 declared its commitment “to improving access to and success in the higher education system for a much wider range of Australians”, and to providing funding to “give institutions greater flexibility to change the composition of their student body to reflect more closely the structure and composition of society as a whole” (1). This focus on student groups under-represented in the past includes students with disabilities. Two of the strategies which were proposed to redress the situation were the provision of grants through Commonwealth equity programs and enhanced student assistance benefits. Assistance is also provided by the Commonwealth to school authorities through special education grants, with the stated objective of improving ‘the educational participation and outcomes of young people with disabilities’ (2) in the school sector.

The current emphasis on participation of young people with disabilities in tertiary education and training has built on a number of significant developments in school-level education. For students with sensory impairments, their relocation from segregated residential schooling to community residential placements and attendance at regular schools over the last two decades represented a marked change in policy by school authorities, and a major expansion in the educational opportunities available to them.

Students with moderate and severe intellectual or multiple disabilities also experienced, as a group, a marked increase in participation in schooling as a result of their inclusion in special school programs in the 1960s and 70s. This was followed by the movement of many severely disabled children from institutional placements to school and residential services within the community. At the same time, some students with disabilities were progressively integrated into regular school programs, to provide them with ‘less restrictive’ educational and social environments, and increased opportunities to participate in the mainstream community.
These changes were supported by major curriculum developments and new teaching approaches in special schools, representing a significant shift in views on the education of students with disabilities. There also were increases in the type and amount of support provided to them in regular school settings, including some attempts at curriculum modification. These developments were essential to effective provisions.

The emphasis on the enrolment of students with disabilities in regular schools built on a situation where the majority of these students were already to be found in regular schools. While students in segregated special schools continue to be the focus of discussions on equity issues, as a result of pressures for their enrolment in regular schools and inclusion in the mainstream of education and training programs, some two-thirds of all identified students with disabilities have for some years been enrolled in regular schools. A small group of young people with disabilities, and especially individual students with academic performance commensurate with their peers, have successfully completed secondary education in the past and entered tertiary level programs. Most of these students later entered the labour market as well qualified and skilled workers, and obtained employment.

However, for the majority of students with disabilities this scenario has not been a reality. While today virtually all children with disabilities engage in school-level programs, few are provided with a well-developed and well-supported education and training program past the compulsory school years. This situation is not due to the differing length of schooling which is formally provided in special and regular schools for students with disabilities in the different States and Territories. In most cases it results from a lack of policies and programs which seek to sustain their participation into the senior secondary school, or participation in programs for the equivalent age-group in special or supported school settings. Indeed some schools and parents place greater weight on getting students with disabilities into work as soon as possible than on exploring opportunities in post-compulsory education and training. This is done in the belief that it avoids students facing later competition for jobs. These schools generally use an active program of parent-supported community links and utilise TAFE-school links if they are available, to achieve this objective.

An overview of the literature (3) indicates that, in the transition to adult life, people with disabilities still face a number of difficulties. Most continue to have poor academic skills, including in literacy and numeracy. Most have inadequate social skills which affect their performance in the community as adults and success in tertiary level education and training, or employment. In personal terms, people with disabilities are often
dependent on their parents and families for a place to live. They may need to rely on family or on former links with school for contacts with possible employers. Many need their parents or other adults to advocate for them in negotiating independent living in the community.

As a group, people with disabilities also face problems in the labour market which may include —

- difficulties with demonstrating adequate work skills and social behaviours
- high unemployment levels
- underemployment
- limited advancement in employment or limited career movement
- lower incomes than average, and
- a lack of understanding by prospective employers of their limitations and the abilities they can bring to the work place.

When in employment problems faced in the work place may include —

- employer expectations which require from all employees good levels of academic skills, positive attitudes to work, acceptable social relationships, and personal autonomy
- difficulties with employer-employee relationships which are evident when there is criticism of their performance, a need to negotiate with supervisors, a lack of constructive attitudes in cooperating with other workers, or difficulties in demonstrating their capacity in the work situation, and
- inadequate work place performance as a result of limited academic skills and social behaviours, impulsiveness and being less socially mature, and a lack of adaptation of the work environment (4).

Development of the Paper

This issues paper was prepared following an extensive series of discussions with contact persons in school authorities, TAFE and higher education institutions and non-government agencies in all States and Territories. The consultations were carried out as part of a project being undertaken concurrently for the Department of Employment, Education and Training to locate and collect existing data on students with disabilities in senior secondary schooling and tertiary education, as a component of a review of assistance to students.#

The discussions, held with contact persons in more than fifty authorities, institutions and agencies sought comments on the range of issues in the transition of students with disabilities from schooling to further education and training, covering the period from the end of compulsory schooling to completion of post-secondary education and training programs. Other views were obtained in telephone discussions and written comments. The discussions canvassed views on barriers to participation, ways to remove the barriers, and the support arrangements needed by students in the different education sectors. The project included a literature search to locate policy documents, research studies and relevant reports and articles on the topic.

**Definitions**

Most young people with disabilities have in common a significant difficulty with learning and educational achievement. This 'group' of students includes those with clearly identifiable disabilities of a physical or sensory nature and those with intellectual disabilities, who generally are less easily identified unless their condition is severe. In addition to the above students, most of whom have 'developmental disabilities', the group includes significant numbers of students with severe learning problems or learning disabilities. These may be developmental in origin but may also result from one of a range of other factors leading to a disorder in basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in the use of language. For education and training purposes, this latter group of learning disabled students needs to be considered in the arrangements made for students with disabilities, due to the nature and long-term effect of their learning problems. The group, students with disabilities, also includes students with physical disabilities, emotional or behavioural problems, and those with difficulties which result from injury or accident trauma. It is common practice to recognise students with medical or health related difficulties as possibly requiring specific types of support in education and training programs, especially at the tertiary level.

Therefore, reference to persons with disabilities in this paper includes persons with—

- visual impairments
- hearing impairments
- physical disabilities
- multiple disabilities
- intellectual disabilities
- psychological disabilities
- learning disabilities
and other disabilities including:
- emotional and behavioural difficulties
- medical and health conditions.

For this broad group of students with disabilities, education in the context of the paper includes secondary education as well as education and training programs in the tertiary sector. It is also considered to include adult and community education (or fourth sector education), which can be a life-long emphasis and a potential basis for later entry to tertiary education and training for people with disabilities.

While education and training courses in TAFE and higher education are an important locus for educational participation by disabled people in the post-compulsory school years, the value of adult and community education should not be overlooked. It can contribute markedly to the 'social improvement gained by individuals and communities' (5), and is considered to have potential for enlarging the quality of life for people with disabilities (6). In all these contexts, education includes academic learning as well as socialisation and developmental experiences. Successful school-level education, including a full secondary education, is the essential foundation for post-school education and training, and for employment, for all people with disabilities.

Training for people with disabilities is undertaken in mainstream, modified or alternative training programs in the tertiary sector, and especially TAFE, in training courses delivered by private training bodies and industry, as well as formal and informal training in the workplace and training provided through the vocational programs of non-government organisations. This latter group, supported by the Department of Community Services and Health, is currently moving toward the establishment of supported employment, competitive employment and independent living training programs, which have a much clearer focus on 'training' activities than the former array of services provided by them for people with disabilities.

While the definitions above have been set out to be intentionally inclusive of the range of education and training programs and options available to people with disabilities, the discussion to follow in this paper will refer largely to the secondary and tertiary education and training sectors.

**Extent of Participation by Students with Disabilities**

Because of the policies adopted by State and Territory school authorities over the last two decades, and the range of educational settings provided for students with disabilities, participation during the compulsory school years is very high.
Children with profound and multiple disabilities are today provided with developmental programs designed to assist their communication, physical, social, and cognitive development in school settings, on the same basis as other children.

However, the extent of participation in the post-compulsory school years cannot be estimated as readily as for the younger age group. This is because comprehensive collections of data on students with disabilities are not always made by school authorities. If available, data are generally provided as broad numbers of students in special schools or in ‘integrated’ settings in regular schools. There are difficulties in comparing or combining data across school systems due to the different student categories used and the varying purposes for data collection. It is known that many students with disabilities leave school at the minimum leaving age due to a lack of schooling opportunities, or to decisions to seek competitive or supported employment, but the extent of this attrition is not always apparent.

The recent study to help clarify the extent of participation of students with disabilities in the transition from schooling to tertiary education and training, undertaken for the Department of Employment, Education and Training, has provided some data on participation. However, in the sectors under review (post-compulsory education, TAFE and higher education), the data available across systems and institutions does not give a comprehensive picture of the characteristics and needs of the students, and only gives a tentative picture of the numbers of students with disabilities involved in education and training in the post-compulsory years.

It can also be noted, as has been found in other countries (7), that data available from authorities are most likely to reflect the availability of provisions in education rather than the extent of student need for support, or the need for planning. Indeed very little systematic collection of data at a system or institutional level which is directed to policy development and student participation was being undertaken in early 1991.

As a broad estimate approximately only 2.80 percent of students enrolled in Years 9–12 of secondary schools in Australia, or students of equivalent age in special schools, are reported to be students with disabilities. This estimate is based on data provided by school systems, and reflects widely different sources used by those authorities for the data. There are also some differences in the groups of students included in the data. When learning disabled students and/or those supported by specialist staff in regular classrooms because of learning problems are excluded, the percentage of students with disabilities in this age group reduces to approximately 1.53 percent. Translated into
students with disabilities for Years 9-12, this represents at least 25,000 nationally if the proportion of 2.50 percent is used and nearly 14,000 students if the proportion of 1.5 percent is used. It can be noted that if a 'moderate' prevalence level of 12 percent for all students with disabilities in school programs as defined above is used, and corrected using retention data for 1990, some 108,000 students with disabilities would be enrolled in Years 9-12. Of these, more than half would be in regular schools.

The number of students with disabilities for the TAFE sector also can only be estimated from an incomplete data base. From the data provided, however, the picture emerging is that there could now be fewer students with disabilities in TAFE programs nationally than there were reported by the colleges in 1986 (8). For seven States and Territories, not including South Australia, the number of students reported in 1990/91 is approximately 7,000, compared with approximately 10,000 for these states in 1986.

Again, the data for higher education institutions are not complete, but it is estimated that identified students are 0.99 percent of students in higher education. This can be compared with 0.90 percent estimated from a study in 1987 (9). If this proportion is reasonably reliable, it means that some 4,800 students in Australia's universities and higher education colleges have a disability. It is noted that the Heath Centre in the United States is reported to have estimated that 10.6 percent of US college students have disabilities, including learning disabilities (10), or more than ten times the prevalence rate estimated for Australia.

**Issues Facing Students with Disabilities at the End of Compulsory Schooling**

Students with disabilities who have undertaken their education in a special school will have followed a program emphasising basic academic skills; personal, physical and social development; and communication and life skills. In addition, the curriculum for secondary school age students can be expected to include an element of pre-vocational training to develop skills which are important in future employment. Students with disabilities enrolled in regular schools will have followed the general curriculum of the school, or in some cases a modified study program in one or more teaching areas in response to learning problems faced by the students, or needs related to their disabilities.

Most schools develop a general perspective of a disabled student's future, and have some expectation of the path into
employment and adult life likely to be followed on completion of schooling. There is, however, little evidence in Australia of broad and full consideration in schools, with the participation of parents and student, of the range of education and training options available to individual students with a disability as they approach the end of compulsory schooling. Curriculum planning and the educational experiences provided to students are most likely to be in the context of meeting student needs and preparing them for adult life ‘as a group’, but with some individualisation of content. The general perspective referred to may also reflect low expectations for these students held by teachers, parents or carers.

As with all students in secondary education, a major issue facing parents and students with disabilities in the middle secondary school is the availability of information on possible future education and training options; the availability of comprehensive assessments of student achievements and characteristics; and the availability of guidance and career counselling. A further issue is whether these support services will be available during the senior secondary years as students continue to plan and prepare for adult life.

Without a supportive climate, such as is inferred above, many students with disabilities get messages about their future options which are based on low expectations of them as disabled people, and low expectations of their capacity for post-compulsory education. Rather than taking a prospective view of their students' life chances after compulsory schooling, most schools focus on their responsibility for the students up to their leaving school. However, whether a disabled student chooses to explore further education, employment training, or employment prospects, there is another range of issues that arise.

For all students exploring education or training options these issues tend to be the same. Common questions that need answers include the following.

- **How relevant will the curriculum available in post-compulsory education and training be? Will a modified curriculum be available if needed? Will the senior secondary school curriculum constitute a useful training for employment, as well as a link to tertiary education?**

- **What support services will be available to enable achievement of different educational goals? Will this support continue in the senior secondary school? Can it respond to the changing needs of disabled students in Years 11 and 12? Will it be sufficient to attempt tertiary education selection? Will the selection process to gain admission to tertiary education or future training be responsive to the special needs of students with disabilities?**
For students exploring employment options, common questions include those set out below.

• How will educational achievements at Year 10, or at the end of compulsory schooling, help in gaining employment? What kind of employment? What school studies are particularly useful for employment? How will a student’s abilities and disabilities be assessed by employers? How does the labour market respond to people with disabilities?

• Are there options in education and training that should be explored as alternatives to employment? How can they be weighed against employment options?

• Will the school-based supports available to students with disabilities be available on entering employment? What assistance is available after school to help in the transition to a working and adult life? Is it possible to receive income support, if needed?

The above questions do not purport to fully represent the issues facing disabled students and their families as options for the future are considered in the middle secondary school years. Apart from those given, there is a range of questions about future living arrangements, transport difficulties in respect to tertiary education and employment, and coping with new and potentially difficult physical environments, that need answers. While the transition from school to tertiary studies or working life is generally difficult for all students, the difficulties, as well as the decisions to be taken, can be expected to be significantly greater for disadvantaged student groups. Often they present as significant barriers (Table 1).

**Barriers to Participation in Post-compulsory Schooling**

The data reported above have helped to quantify the number of disabled students in Years 9 to 12 of regular secondary education, and those students of equivalent age in special schools or support settings. With an increasing emphasis in the last two decades on providing education for all students with disabilities, virtually all children and young people with disabilities are to be found in school programs at least to the end of compulsory schooling. Some States make formal provision to age 18, and in the case of South Australia, for example, provision is made to the age of 20 for these students.

**Barrier One**

From the recent review however, there is evidence of a consistent lack of appropriate programs in the senior secondary school which also lead to further education and training options
for students with disabilities. This barrier to participation is evident in two major ways. For students in special programs, there is evidence that the importance of a full secondary education is not always acknowledged in practice. This is indicated by the lack of an appropriate or extended curriculum for the years beyond compulsory schooling, even in cases where provision is 'officially' made for students with disabilities to continue in schooling to at least 18 years. The curriculum in many special settings is also oriented toward actively placing students with disabilities in employment training and work as soon as possible after compulsory schooling, ostensibly with little consideration of other education and training options that may be available to them.

Table 1
Barriers to participation in post-secondary schooling

1. A lack of programs in the senior secondary school which lead to further education and training options for all students with disabilities.
2. Diminished or lack of support services for students with disabilities in the senior secondary school.
3. An absence of individual transition planning for disabled students in secondary schooling.
4. An absence of constructive links between schools and post-secondary education and training institutions.

In regular schooling, where significant numbers of students with disabilities are to be found, curriculum development to meet the learning needs of many of these students has not been consistently undertaken. While numbers of the students concerned can and do follow the curriculum prepared for students generally in compulsory and post-compulsory schooling, others require a specially focussed or modified curriculum, or curricular modules, in order to continue effectively their education in the senior secondary school. Many education authorities acknowledge that this has become a significant impediment to the retention of students with disabilities in Years 11 and 12. Lack of curriculum development denies these students a full secondary education, and an opportunity to prepare for further education or training at the tertiary level. The transition to adult life for students with disabilities "requires a sense of independence", which is founded on good academic and social skills, "strong self-advocacy skills, and the ability to transfer learning strategies across curricular boundaries and into the real world. Secondary programs must be enhanced to do more than just ensure survival...in high school" (11).
A corollary of the lack of appropriate curriculum development to support the participation of students with disabilities in the senior secondary school, which was raised frequently in discussions, is the lack of awareness by teachers of the learning needs of these students, and a lack of knowledge and skills to ensure the students benefit fully from the study programs undertaken. Curriculum modification, and the development of alternative curriculum for students needs to be clearly linked to inservice training and development for teachers and other school-level staff members.

**Barrier Two**

A second and related barrier is the absence of support services for students who seek to continue their schooling past the compulsory period. Some school authorities report the discontinuation of support services for students with disabilities after the minimum school leaving age. It is also noted that in some States students with disabilities are not targeted for Commonwealth support funds after the compulsory school period. Rather students are eligible for support from the available funds on the basis of, for example, severity of disability and their need to achieve basic academic skills. Other school authorities, especially in the non-government sector, report an inability to devote resources to providing support for these students in Years 11 and 12, because of the lack of appropriate curriculum and the high cost of providing the assistance essential to their successful completion of one or two years of post-compulsory schooling.

While it is clear that there are resource allocation decisions in the above circumstances, the position also suggests a view by many teachers, schools and school authorities that post-compulsory schooling focused toward tertiary level education and training is not a valid option for students with disabilities. This failure to envisage a full secondary education for all students, including students with disabilities, leading to a wide and relevant range of education and training options, is denying many of them opportunities for completing secondary school studies. It has resulted in little consideration of how these students can continue their education beyond compulsory schooling, as a valid option among the pathways available to them as they approach adult life.

**Barrier Three**

A third barrier to post-compulsory schooling for students with disabilities centres on an absence of transition planning. While Individual Education Plans (IEPs), or plans identified by an equivalent term in some States, are now generally accepted as
an important part of an effective teaching program for students with disabilities, transition planning is not always a critical part of that process. Individual Transition Plans (ITPs) were the central proposal for improved secondary schooling set out in A Strategy for Disabled Youth in Transition, a 1985 Australian report in support of an OECD project on the topic (12), to which all States and Territories and the Commonwealth contributed, through a number of agencies or departments in each case. With few exceptions, the importance of transition planning has not been responded to in Australia.

Transition planning is the use of assessments of student performance in basic skills and competencies within the school curriculum as the basis of planning for entry into post-compulsory education and training or entry into employment or other activities in adult life. It involves the use of vocational planning and assessment, and counselling in career options for students which are instigated at least by the end of Year 9 of secondary schooling, and earlier for those students likely to leave before completing Year 12. Transition planning involves students, parents, teachers and support staff. It takes place within a context of planning and cooperation between schools and the full range of institutions providing post-school education and training options for the students, and with full consideration of future employment options (13).

There is evidence, however, to indicate that the need to promote transition planning for students with disabilities in secondary schooling is beginning to be recognised. For example, a 1990 interdepartmental report in Western Australia (14) made a series of recommendations about disabled school leavers and, in respect to realising the benefits of continuing education for the students, supported the use of transition plans which are negotiated by the consumers (students), parents and service providers. The report also sought the development of a curriculum framework in education support policies for that State, referenced to future adult life and community living, and including Individual Transition Plans and curriculum development; the provision of resources to ‘formally extend’ education support to Years 11 and 12; and inclusion of students with disabilities in policy statements on post-compulsory studies. It also proposed that the Ministry of Education in Western Australia develop formal links with agencies, departments and other bodies to facilitate coordination and provision of post-school options.

It can be noted that the above report expressed concern at the lack of opportunities past Year 10 for students with disabilities, and the lack of curricular underpinning for their education in the post-compulsory years. Transition plans were to include the acquisition and development of skills for post-school options, as
a subset of individual program planning. Transition plans would define learning objectives, strategies, outcomes at school plus education and training to assist in transition.

In Queensland, the Individual Education Plans developed for students with disabilities in special settings are regarded as Individual Transition Plans from age 14, and re-oriented to the purpose of planning a student's educational and employment future. A New South Wales Transition Education Project has been placing an emphasis on transition planning since 1989 and is currently being tested with students in 34 schools in eight areas (15). Appendix 2 sets out details of the introduction of ITPs, and illustrates their place in the overall transition education project.

A 15–18 Year Old Project established in Victoria for 1991 is addressing specific issues of cooperation among services for the age group. This project arose out of earlier studies which highlighted the needs of young people with disabilities moving out of school with expectations of appropriate opportunities for training and/or employment. It is highlighting cooperation among government and non-government agencies in service provision, services in the local community, and access to information and participation by students and their families (16).

**Barrier Four**

The final barrier to be discussed here concerns the links between schools enrolling students with disabilities and higher education and TAFE institutions providing future education and training options. To some extent these are administrative links, but they can also be expressed in active contacts between the sectors in recognition of the fact that special needs students in schools must make an effective transition to further education and training. The transition planning referred to above would utilise these links. Student recruitment programs in the tertiary sector, designed for disadvantaged student groups, would also utilise them in their search to attract students who are the focus of their equity programs, and the target of their equity goals.

A strong interest in establishing such links developed in the 1980s in respect to school-TAFE curriculum collaboration. An area of particular interest was the provision by TAFE institutions of training and work related programs for students with disabilities. However, with few exceptions, most of this collaboration has now ended, due especially to a failure to resolve the question of which sector should fund the educational activities provided. Programming for students with disabilities in
secondary schools, and transition planning, have been made more difficult under these circumstances (17).

This expression of the importance of links between the school and post-school education sectors was only a partial demonstration of the value and nature of the links which would be in the interests of students with disabilities. At least one project already referred to includes cooperative TAFE courses as a transition measure. This is the NSW Transition Education Project (see Appendix 2). Another pilot project has begun in Victoria to expedite the transfer of adult students from special school settings to adult education and training settings. This 18+ project involves some 100 students from seven schools in 1991, and includes work to develop an appropriate curriculum for the students. "The curriculum will be modular and flexible and will be submitted for accreditation". It will be "consistent with principles of recognition of prior learning and competency based training . . . (and) be gender inclusive, and will articulate into further vocational training courses . . . it will provide an accredited program and framework which will be appropriate not only for students transferring from special schools, but also people with an intellectual disability seeking to undertake a vocational training program at a TAFE college" (16).

Options and Strategies to Increase Participation in the Senior Secondary School

*Context for the Measures Proposed*

The debate on the nature of secondary education and the relevance of education to employment and the national economy has borne out the importance for all young people of a full secondary education and a sound vocational preparation (18). There is wide support for the position that all students also need to have the opportunity to take up a broad vocational preparation in the immediate post-compulsory school years. This perspective has stimulated some significant changes to secondary school subject offerings. The changes have resulted from a re-conception of the range of subjects and content that should be available to students in secondary education, and of the subject matrix needed to deliver a broad curriculum to all students as retention increases. It has also resulted from an understanding of the approaches required to deliver this curriculum to the range of student abilities, backgrounds and interests found in secondary schools. The changes have helped confirm the view that higher education-bound students are one group among all students enrolled in the senior secondary school, and that other groups, who may be employment and employment training bound after post-compulsory schooling, must also be provided for.
In advocating for change, the Blackburn Report (19) discussed in depth the need to encourage higher participation levels in the post-compulsory years, emphasising that the education system has an obligation to ensure that it does not, by intent or default, exclude young people who could be given developmental opportunities within it, including those with minimal schooling and without work-related studies. The report also emphasised that successful schooling to the end of Year 12 is a key factor in more socially equal post-school opportunities. Some years earlier, Hauritz (20) had highlighted many of the same barriers to post-secondary education for students with disabilities that are evident today. These included the lack of long-term planning for students in the compulsory or post-compulsory years of schooling, and reluctance by many schools to develop and provide an alternative curriculum for those requiring this provision to proceed to successful education in the upper secondary school.

The presence of students with disabilities in secondary schools has major implications for curriculum development, the delivery of secondary education, and the capacity of teachers to present an increasingly wide range of learning experiences for young people which also link into employment, training and education options beyond the secondary school. In regular secondary schools, they require a range of curriculum options which should include mainstream and modified academic courses leading to certification and tertiary education and training, as well as modified or alternative curriculum options with a vocational emphasis. This range of study options will generally be needed to respond to the learning capacities of all students with disabilities.

Curriculum options must be supported by information, counselling and career advice for students and parents, and assistance in the selection of courses and institutions which are most likely to meet students' transition needs. Transition planning should stress the basic skills and competencies needed by students for the various options considered; content information and learning strategies required for each option; levels of personal independence required; social skills training and social relationships; and advocacy skills. Transition plans for students with disabilities may require extended secondary schooling, for example an additional year (Year 13). Inservice programs for staff should focus on the importance of the senior secondary school and the transition process for students with disabilities, with an emphasis on transition planning and movement to post-secondary education and training as an option to leaving school and seeking employment.

These changes need to be reinforced, within counselling and teaching activities, by advice to students and families based on
realistic assessments of student achievements, and the appropriate forms of support and guidance students are likely to need. This process would include recognition that the support needs students will have in post-compulsory activities may differ from the earlier school years in some important ways. At the same time, teaching in the senior secondary school years should reflect the demands students are likely to experience in post-school options.

A number of other factors that must be addressed in secondary schooling include—

- general attitudes to disability and the educational futures of students with a disability
- the practical applications of support programs for students, especially the provision of adequate numbers of support personnel, and the continuation of support throughout secondary schooling
- management issues in many schools due to their lack of previous experience with students with disabilities, and of making provision for them in overall school organisation
- the identification and support of students with mild intellectual disability and those with specific learning disabilities
- the capacity of teachers to work in specialised areas such as augmentative communication and braille, if required
- access to transport for students with severe mobility problems
- the capacity of schools to accommodate students with disabilities in the curriculum strands available, to adopt a modified curriculum for students when necessary, and adapt their assessment and recording procedures appropriately, and
- the tendency to provide courses that are largely directed to employment in low skilled jobs in service industries, or which provide training only in living skill areas, when this is considered inappropriate.

The effective provision of secondary schooling for students with disabilities will include the following.

- Appropriate education programs beyond compulsory schooling and into the senior secondary years, including transition programs.
- Management processes in schools which promote the students' education program by setting out procedures for student and parent participation, with staff and the school community, in the identification, establishment and review of school programs and support initiatives.
Negotiated planning and implementation of an individual education plan, including a transition plan, for each student with a disability.

It is an advantage if the transition process for students with disabilities is conceptualised in three stages.

Stage one: The final years of schooling which emphasise pathways leading to options in further education and training and/or employment.

Stage two: The transition process itself which includes an increased emphasis on the role of counselling, career education, guidance and information in reaching decisions about the future.

Stage three: The period of support in post-secondary education and training and/or employment as people with disabilities establish their autonomy and adult status (12).

Adopting an approach of this kind, however, will require some important changes. First, there are difficulties arising out of the lack of articulation between the education sectors involved. This is illustrated by a lack of policy and program coordination across the sectors, and the difficulties that have arisen in the past in respect to cooperative school-TAFE links, referred to above. There is also a lack of understanding generally of transition issues, and assessments of the effectiveness of different school experiences for students with disabilities and the way they relate to their transition needs. There is a lack of understanding of the use of individual programming in the transition context, and the major changes that are necessary in all sectors in respect to curriculum development and support for students, if effective educational programs are to be provided in all post-compulsory education and training options available to them. To achieve these changes as they apply to secondary schooling will be a major challenge to most schools. Brolin has suggested that, in our conceptualisation of this stage of transition, we should “not let schools’ responsibility end until the student has acquired all the necessary life-career development competencies” (21).

Finally, the range of options or pathways available to students with a disability after secondary schooling needs reconsideration. In the past, simple progression from school to higher education, TAFE, competitive or supported employment, or life skills training, has been largely accepted. Little attention has been given to longer term alternatives, and prospective planning. Education and training options have been sought in TAFE institutions and to some extent in higher education, or in community organisation services providing employment-linked life skills programs. Other pathways possible can involve linking a range of options in sequence in response to the learning needs of individual students. Thus students may progress to activities
in TAFE and later to advanced studies in those institutions or higher education; or from life skills training or supported employment, coupled with activities in adult and community education (22), to future enrolment in a TAFE program. This linking together of post-school options should always be in the context of a planned expansion of education and training opportunities for each student, and focussed on employment and adult status.

This array of pathways is consistent with provisions reported in other OECD countries (23). These include continuing courses for students with disabilities after the compulsory school age in colleges of further education, with an emphasis on personal, social and life skills alongside general and specific vocational programs; schools which link all resources and programs for students with disabilities in a compulsory/post-compulsory/post-school transition arrangement; and post-compulsory schooling linked to the education and training programs in coordinated and integrated ways, and with continuity of access and provisions. In Denmark, a 'kurator', who works with students with disabilities from age 13 or 14 to at least 2 years after leaving school, is part of the provision of continuation schools, which emphasise equality, participation in practical tasks, vocational preparation and social life and skills, with relevant continuing education programs over the years 14 to 19.

Measures and Strategies

The major barriers to participation in post-compulsory schooling by students with disabilities are summarised in Table 2. To reduce the effects of these barriers on student participation and benefits from schooling, a number of measures and strategies are proposed. These focus on the senior secondary school, and the changes considered to be necessary for the effective participation of students with disabilities in a full secondary education.

In brief these are—

1. Modified and alternative curriculum development projects in the senior secondary school. Within the range of initiatives taken in the last decade to expand the senior secondary school curriculum and provide studies more relevant to students and their future adult and working lives there are a number, already referred to, which have advantaged students with disabilities. A major problem still to be addressed is the development of a modified curriculum or curricular modules for some students with disabilities following a mainstream senior secondary school program. Modification of the curriculum will be required in some elements where it is necessary to account for students’ specific educational needs.
A second and more extensive approach to curriculum change is required to provide other students with an alternative curriculum. This is needed by students for whom a mainstream curriculum is inappropriate, but who are enrolled in regular secondary schools, and who will benefit from an extended educational program, and by senior secondary school aged students in special schools. An example of this provision is the Life Skills approach promulgated by the Queensland Department of Education.

Two measures are proposed to help make major progress towards achieving this important development. The first is to include projects by education systems to develop guidelines or frameworks for schools for the provision of modified or alternative curriculum for students with disabilities as a priority in the Intervention Support Joint Grants Element of the Commonwealth Special Education Program. In addition to the above school systems should undertake the development of modified curriculum modules in key subject areas, and alternative curriculum projects for specific groups of students in secondary schools. It is important that these projects focus on curriculum changes for Years 11 and 12. Alternatively the curriculum developments proposed might be funded through a Commonwealth grants program targeted to achieving curriculum relevance for all students with disabilities in the senior secondary school years.

2. **Recognition of the achievements of all students in secondary school assessment and certification procedures.** This measure is linked to the curriculum development proposal above. A number of States have already made progress in the area. State-level boards established to provide external assessments and/or certification of student achievements have sought to accommodate the recent changes to secondary school curriculum in their assessment and certification procedures. It can also be noted that reviews of the curriculum are being undertaken in a number of States. In South Australia, for example, attention is being given to the need to develop a full range of curriculum modules in each selected curriculum study area to meet the needs of students with differing academic achievements. Attention is also being given to encompassing the full range of assessment levels necessary to reflect student achievements. This is planned to include the range of achievements among students with disabilities. Similar benefits are expected from the Victorian Certificate of Education program.

These developments need to be extended to assessment and certification procedures generally in order to include all students with disabilities as they begin to benefit from an expanded
range of education and training options in the senior secondary school. Access to certification will clearly benefit students with disabilities as they move to post-secondary education and training programs. It is proposed that this matter be referred to appropriate statutory boards in each State and Territory.

Table 2  Barriers, Equity Measures and Strategies : Post-Compulsory Schooling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified barriers</th>
<th>Equity measures required</th>
<th>Strategies proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lack of programs in the senior secondary school which lead to further education and training options for all students with disabilities.</td>
<td>1 Modified and alternative curriculum development projects in the senior secondary school.</td>
<td>1 Include as a priority in the Intervention Support Joint Grants Element of the Commonwealth Special Education Program, OR fund through a Commonwealth grants program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Recognition of the achievements of all students in secondary school assessment and certification procedures.</td>
<td>2 State and Territory Ministers to refer to appropriate statutory boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diminished or lack of support for students with disabilities in the senior secondary school.</td>
<td>3 Support services for students with disabilities in the senior secondary school.</td>
<td>3 State and Territory Ministers to refer to school authorities for priority implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Direct grants to assist students with disabilities and high support needs in Years 11 and 12.</td>
<td>4 Incorporate into the assistance for students program of the Commonwealth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identified barriers | Equity measures required | Strategies proposed
---|---|---
Absence of individual transition planning for disabled students in secondary schooling. | 5 Individual transition planning for students with disabilities. | 5 State and Territory Ministers to refer to school authorities for priority implementation. |
Absence of constructive links between schools and post-secondary education and training institutions. | 6 Links between secondary schools and tertiary institutions to improve planning and student support. | 6 Refer to Table 4. |

3. **Support services for students with disabilities in the senior secondary school.** It was noted in the discussion on barriers that some school systems do not provide the support which is essential to participation by students with disabilities in regular post-compulsory schooling. In other systems, support for disabled students has not been initiated as a general policy in the secondary school years. While a number of students with disabilities require only minimum and basic support measures to enable them to participate in a full secondary education in regular schools, others require high levels of individual support, especially students with severe physical or sensory disabilities. It is ironical that this support may not be available at a stage of secondary schooling when it is critical to student participation and achievement. Special measures are needed to ensure this provision. While this is clearly a resource allocation issue, it is sufficiently central to the participation of students with disabilities in the senior secondary school to urge that schools and school authorities develop clear policies and provisions which will ensure that appropriate support is provided to these students, as a priority.

The general nature of the support required by these students is well known to most school systems, and the provisions, where required, will be an extension of existing support programs. For a few school systems the provision of support services will be more difficult. A number of non-government systems will need to initiate or arrange support programs for students with disabilities across the secondary school years in order to incorporate services for students in Years 11 and 12. It is proposed that the Commonwealth assist with provisions in the senior secondary years for students with high support needs as
set out below, while the general support infrastructure referred to here be the responsibility of education systems.

4. **Direct grants to assist students with disabilities and high support needs in Years 11 and 12.** The group of students with high support needs in the senior secondary school is the focus of this equity measure. These students comprise a small group among students with disabilities, but their participation in post-compulsory education and training is more likely to be impeded as a result of their need for individual support. The group includes students with severe hearing or visual impairments, and students with severe physical disabilities. Their needs can generally best be met by the provision of equipment essential to communication, personal study and academic progress; the provision of support personnel such as interpreters or personal learning aides on campus; or braille and audio materials. That is, assistance without which these students cannot access an educational program.

Many school systems report that they are unable to provide the assistance needed by these students because of its high cost. There are examples of these services being made available by non-government organisations, especially for students with visual impairment. These organisations provide a range of support measures which are highly specialised and may not otherwise be available. They include the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind and the Royal Blind Society (NSW). Examples of the cost of the provision are $10,000 per student for interpreter support for deaf students or braille and audio support for blind students, for each academic year; or up to $7,000 for special items of equipment such as a lap-top computer with touch screen for students with severe physical disabilities.

While the education of students in Years 11 and 12 is the responsibility of State and Territory education authorities, it is proposed that a program of direct grants to students to provide these high support measures in the senior secondary school is undertaken by the Commonwealth as a transition measure, and be linked to the program of direct grants proposed later in this paper for students in post-secondary education and training institutions. It is envisaged that individual students would apply for grants supported by the institution in which they are enrolled. Applications would give details of course requirements and the support needed by the student, together with quotations for equipment purchase or from the institution or an external agency for the provision of specialised support. Students with disabilities receiving grants would authorise payments indicating their agreement to the arrangements. The United Kingdom recently initiated such a measure for these students, and the maximum grants available equate with the amounts given above.
5. **Individual transition planning for students with disabilities.** Individual transition plans (ITPs) were discussed above in some detail. This measure is considered to be an important initiative to increase participation of students with disabilities in post-compulsory education and training. It has been a major development for these students in some comparable countries in the past decade (24). The use of individual education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities has progressively increased in school systems in Australia in recent years and it is important that this measure be linked to that development. ITPs should be incorporated into IEP procedures. Their major distinction from IEPs as generally used is that they take a prospective view of the student’s educational program and educational and training options, in the context of eventual employment and adult life in the community. They are periodically updated as decisions are taken and the students move along the pathways selected from the options available.

A further distinction is that, as part of planning, links are made with post-secondary education and training agencies and resources at appropriate points. This ensures the availability of full and detailed information on future options, advice on selection of courses, institutions and placements, and the pre-planning of assistance to support students when a change is made in the institution or agency with which students are primarily affiliated. Elements of a transition program for students with disabilities should include activities or projects which seek to develop:

- self-esteem and confidence
- interpersonal and social skills
- independent living skills
- work skills and attitudes
- leisure and recreation skills, and
- problem solving and decision making skills (12)

all within a framework of academic and vocational studies linked to post-compulsory education, training and employment options.

In secondary education itself, some broad educational and training options for students with disabilities might be:

- a full secondary school program leading to higher education or education and training options in TAFE
- a full but modified secondary school program which includes an increased emphasis on vocational studies, work experience and community contacts, and use of job-training models and community employment networks
• an alternative secondary school program for students with more severe learning difficulties, including academic courses and/or courses directed toward viable vocational outcomes

• a secondary school program leading specifically to employment options after secondary school and possible access to post-secondary training options in the future.

As indicated above, more deliberate attention within school systems to individual transition planning for students with disabilities is most appropriately undertaken in coordination with current developments in the use of individual education plans. It is therefore proposed that school systems give high priority to implementation of this measure.

6. Links between secondary schools and tertiary institutions for planning and student support. Some of the advantages of improved links between secondary schooling and post-secondary education and training were discussed in the context of transition planning for students with disabilities. They are referred to more fully in a later section, where the establishment of disability support centres as collaborative projects among groups of tertiary institutions is proposed as a measure to help increase the participation of students with disabilities in tertiary education and training. These centres will also be a key resource for secondary schools, students and parents in the development of individual transition plans leading to decisions on post-secondary education and training options.

Issues in Post-Secondary Education and Training for Students with Disabilities

A small group of people with disabilities has successfully attended higher education and TAFE institutions in the past and completed courses in a range of disciplines and employment areas. Many institutions began to provide physically accessible buildings and campuses in the 1970s and 1980s, and adapted administrative practices to expedite the study and examination of these students. It can be expected that students with disabilities who completed tertiary level education and training and gained employment at this time, were those who were academically able to meet the demands of their chosen courses, and able to undertake their studies with the limited assistance available to them.

As with other disadvantaged groups (25), however, participation of people with disabilities in tertiary education is influenced by a range of factors. These include a lack of personal confidence, self-esteem, career aspirations, and role models; the absence of adequate information and guidance on options in post-compulsory studies; and uncertain employment prospects. Other
factors may be the location and accessibility of education and training institutions; on-campus access to classrooms, student resource areas and social facilities; the availability of bridging courses and course structures which facilitate participation; and financial need. When enrolment in tertiary education is achieved, many of these difficulties are still to be faced, together with the recurring problem of the availability of support measures required for the successful completion of a study program.

The recent overview of the transition of students with disabilities from the post-compulsory school years to further education and training, undertaken for the Department of Employment, Education and Training (see page 231), confirmed the view that the support programs available to these students among tertiary education authorities and institutions included some which were comprehensive and well coordinated, and others which were recently established and at a comparatively early stage of development. There also was evidence that the differences in support programs for disabled students reflected different levels of commitment to equity provisions among tertiary education authorities and institutions. There are examples where minimum resources and provisions are applied to the task of providing support; examples where there are well established policies but little central planning and coordination of service development; and examples where a clear priority is given to equity issues, and programs are at an advanced stage of development. This latter group included the TAFE program in New South Wales and the Vera White Disability Resource Centre program at Deakin University in Victoria.

With such a range of responses among authorities and institutions in the complex world of TAFE and higher education in Australia, it would be expected that a significant number of issues would prevail. In the TAFE sector, these issues include—

- Low participation levels for students with disabilities, generally acknowledged among TAFE authorities and institutions.
- A lack of central data collection on students identifying as disabled, data to describe the programs offered to the range of people with disabilities in a TAFE authority, and data on the staff resources and the qualifications among staff to meet student needs.
- Few attempts to actively recruit students with disabilities into the mainstream or special programs of TAFE. Exceptions to this position include the special program for students with intellectual disability in Western Australia, and the special units in TAFE colleges in Queensland for visually and
hearing impaired, and physically and intellectually disabled students.

• The delegation of responsibility for support programs to college level with little external support or assistance, including assistance from central or regional support units.

• Gaps in support services across TAFE systems, including instances where assistance is not available to a particular group of students, such as those with hearing impairment, or where resources are not available for tutoring and remedial services to support students with learning disabilities in mainstream courses.

• A lack of staff development programs in the area of student disabilities, curriculum adaptation, teaching developments and support services.

• Continuing difficulties with physical access on campuses, including access to teaching facilities and learning resource areas.

• A recognition that the special role TAFE could adopt in providing for a full range of programs for students with disabilities is being frustrated by the lack of decisions on the nature and extent of that role, and action to implement support arrangements and special programs as an integral part of the TAFE program nationally.

There is a similar range of issues in higher education which were particular concerns that arose in discussions on the participation of students with disabilities. These included—

• Low participation levels across higher education, with significant differences among institutions in the number and proportion of students identifying as having a disability.

• The lack of data collection for planning and coordination of support services for students.

• An absence of formal structures to ensure student support in institutions, especially provision of a dedicated staff position; established in an equity or student services unit, with assistance in meeting student needs from on-campus generic student and university services; and identified funds to help provide support as required by students' study programs.

• The need for special provisions in teaching facilities and learning resource areas, including audio loops, library assistance, and a resource area housing a range of basic equipment for improved student access to course materials and general library resources.

• The need for staff awareness and development programs in the area of students with disabilities.
Continuing difficulties with physical access on campuses, including access to teaching facilities and learning resource areas.

The need, at some institutions, for special accommodation for students with mobility problems and those who require attendant care as part of campus residential provisions.

Barriers to Participation in Post-Secondary Education and Training

Many of the issues referred to above are factors which significantly affect the participation by students with disabilities in post-secondary education and training. Eight major barriers are discussed below (Table 3), before consideration is given to measures that would assist these students to participate in and benefit from tertiary education and training.

**Barrier One**

Evidence from recent discussions with contact persons and officers in TAFE authorities and tertiary institutions supports the view that many agencies are unclear or undecided on their roles in tertiary education and training for students with disabilities, and on the planning and support services needed for a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of these students.

For example, the TAFE sector has for a number of years been seen as a relevant tertiary provision for students with disabilities. A number of studies and reports have been directed to discussion of this position (26), and the TAFE sector has itself undertaken reviews of its roles, responsibilities and programs in meeting the educational needs of people with disabilities (27). However, the overview of current provisions in TAFE indicates that there remains a number of impediments to TAFE institutions fulfilling the role for these students that has generally been claimed. These impediments include a lack of experience in some TAFE systems in providing for students with disabilities; the complexity of such provision; the range of courses and programs that would be required to meet all needs; the general restriction of funds to meet the educational and training requirements of students with disabilities, and initiate the support programs they would require; and the long-term cost implications evident from the special programs and level of support which some institutions have been able to mount. In higher education institutions the same lack of clarity or decision is evident in institutions which have made some key access provisions but have not provided appropriate staffing and resources to enable detailed planning and coordination of support services.
A lack of clarity and decisions by tertiary authorities and
institutions on their full role in education and training
provisions for students with disabilities.

A low level of student identification at tertiary institutions
which impedes planning and support service development for
students with disabilities.

An inappropriate approach to students' need for support, which
is basically reactive to individual student circumstances.

An absence of modified and alternative curriculum and courses
in post-secondary education and training.

An absence of constructive links between schools and post-
secondary education and training institutions.

A lack of liaison and recruitment programs to increase
participation by students with disabilities.

Inadequate physical access at many tertiary education and
training institutions

A lack of post-school options for students with disabilities
completing secondary education.

Because of the nature of tertiary education arrangements in
Australia, each individual institution is the appropriate location
for the development of services for students with disabilities.
There is, however, as has been noted, a marked difference in
the response of institutions to the needs of these students. In
higher education institutions this has partly been the result of
the commitment by some of them of resources to this area prior
to the recent requirements of the Commonwealth for them to
submit equity plans and targets. The needs of disabled students
in higher education became an interest of a number of
institutions in the 1970s. By 1978, six universities had
established an advisory committee on students with disabilities,
characterised by a broad membership and comprehensive terms
of reference. Today, most if not all higher education institutions
have such committees.

In the interim period, and with few exceptions, higher education
institutions provided support on demand—by reacting to
individual needs of students wherever possible. They utilised
existing health, counselling or administrative staff, and
contributed small amounts of funds when necessary to meet
student needs. Because the responsibility to provide support has
generally been placed on individual colleges in the TAFE sector,
the response has depended significantly on individual staff.

---

Table 3
**Barriers to participation in post-secondary education and training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lack of clarity and decisions by tertiary authorities and institutions on their full role in education and training provisions for students with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A low level of student identification at tertiary institutions which impedes planning and support service development for students with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An inappropriate approach to students' need for support, which is basically reactive to individual student circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An absence of modified and alternative curriculum and courses in post-secondary education and training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An absence of constructive links between schools and post-secondary education and training institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of liaison and recruitment programs to increase participation by students with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate physical access at many tertiary education and training institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of post-school options for students with disabilities completing secondary education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
members in colleges and/or the policies and commitment of each institution.

The more general support measures to be found today in tertiary institutions include assistance with application procedures, assistance with campus orientation, and additional time for assessments and examinations, as part of a general counselling or health service. Tutoring services and specialised resource programs are not commonly provided.

Tertiary institutions making provision for students with disabilities have generally not contributed to the literature in this field or undertaken research to help other institutions or secondary schools implement transition or support programs (28). More attention has been given to administrative arrangements within the institutions, and development of an almost totally reactive approach to individual student enrolments. Little attention has been given to assessing the needs of students who undertake courses, and to tracking their achievements and progress. There is virtually no collection by institutions of comprehensive data on students identifying as disabled, such as their schooling backgrounds, characteristics, or range of needs for participation in tertiary education.

In the TAFE sector, where there is a central authority in each State and Territory, there also is little central collection of data for planning purposes, or the development of guidelines or support structures to assist individual institutions in their task. A very comprehensive set of data with supporting program statements is produced by the Disabilities Unit of the NSW Department of TAFE (29). Data collected for 1990 indicates that 4,144 students with disabilities were identified in that year, and an additional 300 were supported in vocational courses as part of a transition education program. The 4,144 students were enrolled in initial vocational training (28%), retraining/vocational enhancement (39%) and vocational support/pre-vocational skills programs (24%). Nine percent were enrolled in independent living skills and personal enhancement programs.

In addition, the Disabilities Unit has produced a very detailed forward plan for the five-year period 1989-94 (30). The plan presents detailed objectives for each of four key support areas (hearing and visual impairments and intellectual and physical disabilities) and strategies to help meet the objectives. Although these administrative arrangements fit the centralised nature of the authority, it is a good example of the importance of and benefits from adequate data collection to support planning and program development. The emphasis in the plan is, however, on support services development; no student numbers are projected, nor are any targets set for 1994.
Barrier Two

A second barrier is the considerable difficulty being experienced in tertiary education in respect to student identification, an important prerequisite to providing any assistance needed. This barrier involves both TAFE and higher education institutions. The fact that students with disabilities will choose whether to identify themselves as disabled and in need of assistance, or not, must be acknowledged and respected. Many of these students understandably adopt the view that after years of perceived dependence in schooling they want to demonstrate their independence as adults, and demonstrate their capacity to succeed as autonomous individuals in tertiary programs. There is also evidence that these students have no wish to be 'labelled'; and frequently have serious doubts that any useful benefit or value would result from their providing tertiary institutions with information about difficulties they have in accessing a chosen education or training path. These circumstances reflect both the right of choice which people with disabilities have in identifying themselves as 'disabled', as well as a number of contentious questions about the best way to ask, or encourage, students to identify themselves as students with special needs. Some TAFE authorities and universities include an identification question on official enrolment forms, and may ask students to indicate their 'disability'. Others see this approach as intrusive and perhaps capable of leading to discrimination, such as in selection for admission. No matter which procedure is used to request students to identify themselves, it is generally reported that the response from students is at times very low, reflecting concerns they hold or a desire not to seek special assistance in their studies. Some students later come to the attention of support staff through coordinator interviews for course entry, teaching staff encouragement, the need to resolve difficulties faced in the areas of access or progress with studies, or when requesting special consideration in assessment or examinations.

Barrier Three

The third barrier is the approach to support for students with disabilities adopted by most tertiary institutions. With few exceptions, support for these students is given as a 'response' to particular expressed needs of students. That is, individual support and assistance is provided if possible by an institution as a response to a request. While this 'reactive' approach may be considered to work well, and be appropriate to 'low key' assistance which does not unduly separate students with disabilities from their peers, it carries with it a number of disadvantages. These include that 'ad hoc' or 'one off' responses tend not to lead to the development of comprehensive or
coordinated on-campus provision. In addition, there is limited value in the approach for institutional or authority planning, or for establishing designated budget arrangements to support students with disabilities. Neither does it tend to lead to an understanding of the overall needs of students across the programs of an institution in respect to support services development, nor lead to proactive approaches to increasing participation by students with disabilities within the institution.

There are a number of reasons put forward for the approach referred to being adopted by institutions. The responsibility for meeting support needs for this student group in the past usually became an additional task for a member or members of equity, student services, counselling or health staff. While this may be appropriate at an early stage of campus provision, it can soon become inappropriate. In addition, finance needed to provide building modifications, special equipment and other access measures is made available from maintenance or central administration funds, where possible. On a case by case basis, needs are readily judged to be met. The lack of a dedicated budget for the support of students with disabilities under the control of those who provide the support is unlikely to encourage the coordination of services, and may inhibit the planning of support provision and development of integrated services across campuses.

There is a general view among those involved in providing support that increased participation by students with disabilities will best be achieved if more deliberate planning and equity initiatives were undertaken. Planning will be the basis of extending services, such as the development of information and recruitment activities, appropriate admission procedures, special orientation arrangements in response to student needs, full or part-time tutoring, a reader and note-taker service, counselling, special student assessment arrangements, and general campus advocacy on behalf of students with disabilities—all of which are among the services likely to be required by the students (see Appendix 1).

**Barrier Four**

Another barrier centres on the availability of education and training programs for students with disabilities outside of mainstream programs. Some TAFE institutions, as already indicated, provide a special or alternative curriculum for students with disabilities who cannot be accommodated in mainstream programs due to their educational backgrounds. These, however, are the exception. The limited provision of modified and alternative curriculum and courses excludes many students from post-secondary school options needed for their
continued education and future employment. Special programs should include some which qualify as bridging courses for students who require them. Special courses should be linked to mainstream vocational courses in ways which clearly enable the students to move into those courses as they are able.

This lack of special course options in TAFE has resulted in part from the withdrawal of link programs which were designed to provide a school to work or further education nexus for secondary school-age students with disabilities, referred to on page 13. Many of these courses were initiated and funded under the Commonwealth Participation and Equity Program. TAFE authorities report that this has occurred for funding reasons generally associated with questions of which education sector should pay for the provision (31). In student benefit terms, the problem has resulted in the withdrawal of a number of link programs between schools and TAFE which were the start of a valuable contribution to help increase the participation in education of students with disabilities in their post-school years. This barrier represents a national funding issue in post-secondary provisions.

The provision of appropriate courses for the full range of students with disabilities in tertiary education is not only a 'who should pay' issue. Modified or alternative curriculum options, and their availability in tertiary education and training institutions as an aid to increasing participation, are important measures that need to be addressed. These curriculum developments should be clearly linked to disability awareness programs for staff, and professional development programs which assist staff to understand the learning needs of students with disabilities. Early in 1991 TAFE State Disability Advisers, with the support of the Department of Employment, Education and Training, met to discuss a national strategy for development and implementation of a program of professional development for TAFE staff. The project is to focus on—

- facilitating the participation of people with a disability in mainstream TAFE programs,
- comprehensive instructional skill development of TAFE teachers to meet the vocational education and training requirements of people with a disability,
- national recognition of a training program, and
- use of a 'train the trainer' model for the delivery of the program.

The Centre for Deafness Studies and Research at Griffith University, Queensland, is developing a series of materials and resources for staff in higher education and TAFE institutions in Queensland which promote awareness of disability issues and help staff develop skills in important areas where they can
assist students with disabilities in their studies. This project is being undertaken for the Open Learning Centre Network.

**Barrier Five**

The above discussion highlights a fifth barrier in the area of participation which has already been referred to in comments on post-compulsory schooling. Formal and informal links between schools and post-secondary education are acknowledged as an important element of appropriate secondary education for most students. But these links between secondary and tertiary education and training programs are as important from a tertiary institution viewpoint as they are from the secondary school viewpoint. Apart from helping to ease the movement of students between sectors in both a personal and educational sense, they make an important contribution to the transition process, and expedite access to further education and employment preparation for students with disabilities.

The nature of beneficial links between schools, further education and training agencies, and work has been well canvassed in recent years (18) and there are few reports on the topic of transition that do not bear out their importance. It is also important to note, however, that when these links between school and post-compulsory education and training fail to provide a full range of post-secondary options for disabled students, the possible benefits for them from their 10 to 12 years of schooling may be reduced. From a tertiary education position, these links, and the strength of the support available to students with disabilities in tertiary institutions, will help determine whether student progression is impeded, and whether they are able to move on to further education and training.

**Barrier Six**

A sixth barrier concerns the recruitment of students with disabilities into post-secondary education and training. There are few examples of tertiary institutions undertaking recruitment activities specifically to increase the participation of students with disabilities. The generally accepted approach is to wait for students to enrol, and then seek to provide a measure of assistance—a 'reactive' rather than a 'proactive' position. The recent provision by the Commonwealth of equity initiatives grants (32) has provided an opportunity for tertiary institutions in some States to begin to redress this situation. While recruitment initiatives can be undertaken by individual institutions, the collaborative activities to be undertaken through these grants can be expected either to lead to cross-institutional recruitment programs, or to information projects and planning that will support a more active and collaborative approach to
recruitment, with consequent contributions to participation levels. It can be noted that a number of student support units in government school authorities in recent years have been building links to the tertiary sector to help promote early identification and recruitment of students with disabilities by tertiary institutions. This has especially been the case in respect to visually and hearing impaired students.

An example of this practice is to be found in project work undertaken in collaboration between the University of Queensland and the Queensland Department of Education (33). A project on enhancing opportunities for students with disabilities has found that students are more thoroughly prepared for university enrolment through early identification procedures which alert tertiary institutions to prospective students. It also found that the development of more open communication between school systems and tertiary institutions results from joint planning which ensures transition assistance, and that students benefit from familiarization with a selected tertiary campus and improved career planning in the secondary school. Benefits also resulted from continuity in the technology required for learning assistance, the sharing of information on successful teaching strategies for each student, and the availability of university resources to students during the senior secondary school.

Another example of recruitment-related work in tertiary institutions is the development of ‘taster’ courses at the University of Tasmania at Launceston (34). These short and especially designed courses have been developed to provide people with disabilities an opportunity to experience tertiary studies and gain confidence to attempt a study program. The ‘taster’ courses include two approaches. The first is a HOST (How to survive tertiary education) course comprising a 4-module, self-paced, independent learning package for people with disabilities who are considering a tertiary study option. The second is a TEST (Tertiary education study taster) course, which, in its pilot form, involved people with disabilities planning to enter a university degree or diploma program actually enrolling in a regular second semester unit (History 2) to ‘taste’ a real unit of study in an academic setting, before commencing a mainstream course. Course attendance was reinforced by additional tutor and peer support plus continual support on assignment presentation, time management and materials organization.

**Barrier Seven**

The barrier of physical access to tertiary education institutions continues to be of concern to students. Despite many years of an emphasis on campus and building design and construction to
remove physical barriers to students with disabilities, free movement around many tertiary education campuses is still not possible. Ironically some buildings which have been completed as recently as the last academic year have inaccessible areas. Problems of accessing multi-storey buildings remain. Inappropriate doors and ramps are common. There are instances of the lack of graded pathways on campuses, impeding movement by students with mobility problems on sloping sites.

An example of a concern by institutions and student groups to find ways around the access problems on a tertiary education campus, is to be found in two projects undertaken at the University of Tasmania at Hobart in 1990. These were an access survey prepared by the ACROD Tasmanian Division for the Student Services Branch (35), and a report on Disability and Access (36). These reports enabled an evaluation of the access needs of students and potential students, with recommendations for improving equity and increasing enrolment, retention, and graduation at the University.

**Barrier Eight**

This barrier might better be located in the group of barriers identified in respect to post-compulsory education. However it has been included here because discussion of its importance in the context of post-secondary education and training allows for an emphasis on the need to conceptualize further education and training for people with disabilities as a continuum and not as a dichotomy of options. That is, one series for those who can proceed along academic pathways, and another for those who must choose among pathways which are less academic and more employment or long-term training based. In discussion on the breadth of options and pathways to employment and adult life which are needed for people with disabilities (see page 244), it was emphasised that simple progression to higher education, or TAFE, or supported employment training or life skills training was an approach to be avoided. It was also noted that the benefits which could be derived for people with disabilities from continuing education in an ‘adult and community education’ context should be acknowledged. This ‘fourth sector’ of education can be beneficial to people with disabilities in its own right, or as an important link to further education and training in TAFE, for example, through provision of adult-level educational opportunities.

Other post-school options that help make up the array of pathways for people with disabilities, including people with intellectual disabilities, are to be found in the training programs which are offered by community organizations with the assistance of the Department of Community Services and Health.
opportunities are possible and in on-the-job training. Together these make up a wide range of education and training options available to people with disabilities, among which they can choose in adopting an individual transition program. The association of 'training' pathways with 'education' pathways in the immediate post-compulsory years, or later in life as is appropriate to each individual, is an important concept. It needs to be noted, however, that this set of pathways does not exist in reality if access for disabled people to the options indicated is not available due to lack of places or training courses. In particular, this is often the case for people with disabilities seeking entry to alternative or special programs in TAFE, or to the various training options provided with the support of the Department of Community Services and Health. A number of State-level reports have drawn attention in the last two years to this lack of post-school opportunities for many people with disabilities (37).

Figures 1 and 2 seek to illustrate the range of options discussed above, without which a major barrier to participation in post-compulsory education and training exists for people with disabilities. They illustrate that TAFE and higher education will not provide all the post-secondary options needed by people with disabilities, but that they are a key source for educational and training options along a pathway to employment and adult life.

Options and Strategies to Increase Participation in Post-secondary Education and Training

Context for the Measures Proposed

Discussion in the previous section set out general conclusions from a recent review of the factors in post-secondary education and training which constitute barriers to participation for students with disabilities. These build on the barriers set out in respect to post-compulsory schooling; and many are interwoven with them. It needs to be emphasised that in many ways there is a divided responsibility for the transition of students from compulsory schooling to employment and adult life, involving schools and school systems, TAFE and higher education institutions, private training bodies, on-the-job and industry-based training programs. All of these are important links in a necessarily comprehensive approach to transition planning.

Reference was also made to the apparent lack of decisions by tertiary education and training institutions on their roles and responsibilities in the provision of post-secondary school options.
Figure 1

Examples of pathways for people with disabilities in post-compulsory education and training: competitive employment outcomes
Examples of pathways for people with disabilities in post-compulsory education and training: other outcomes
for students with disabilities. This criticism is often targetted at TAFE authorities and institutions, due to the widely accepted view that they have an educational focus to provide a range of beneficial education and training options for these students, including in non-academic areas. However, higher education institutions also need to accept a greater responsibility for students who seek to enter their teaching faculties but require special assistance due to learning difficulties or other circumstances which may impede their learning and progress, but which will not necessarily inhibit success in their studies. This may require tutoring provisions and modified course components, as well as variable progress and other provisions to be built into institutional support arrangements.

Recent statements on national employment initiatives for people with disabilities have tended to overlook the relationship of education and training to employment preparation, and the viable options this sector can provide to complement specific pre-employment training courses, or on-the-job training after employment. For most people, "employment and employability constitute the prime impetus to undertake education and training, and employment itself is the primary vehicle through which to undertake further education and training" (38).

It is important therefore that post-secondary education and training institutions regard employment for people with disabilities as a major consideration. Student services must focus on employment planning and career guidance as part of their support program for these students; taking a 'job creation approach' where necessary to assist students achieve their work objectives. It will also be necessary for them to support new community initiatives to generate alternative pathways to employment, such as the development of organisations which link together competitive employment programs and the development of specialised transition services for young people with disabilities (39).

As has been indicated, one of the major areas of neglect in respect to post-secondary education and training for these students is the links which institutions have with the school sector, and the manner in which students have to attempt the transition to tertiary education and training. A recent review by Power and Stephens (40) highlighted the lack of 'outreach' and recruitment programs, lack of information and literature in accessible formats, and the lack of well established and effective support structures in tertiary institutions to encourage participation and assure potential students that the provision of necessary support is a feature of institutional activities. The findings were confirmed in this review. The 1991 equity initiatives program of the Commonwealth provided four grants to consortia of institutions in four States 'to provide a
The implementation of the selected by each group is now the subject of consideration by those concerned. Some are likely to be directed toward the preparation of information statements, student recruitment, staff awareness and development programs, and reviews of appropriate support arrangements in institutions.

One of the benefits of these projects will be the sharing of ideas, information and plans among tertiary institutions in a process directed to collaboration and improvement of support services. Because of the early stage of development most institutions are at in this field, institutions could also benefit from advice and assistance in their efforts to establish an appropriate organisation and program in this important equity area, as well as in respect to elements of their support services for students, especially those which are highly specialised.

The collaborative activities arising from the initiatives referred to should form the basis for a series of disability support centres or units affiliated with groups of tertiary institutions. They would be an effective contribution to recruitment, increasing participation levels, and the provision of information to senior secondary schools on student options in post-secondary education and training. It could be expected that there would be considerable benefits to students and institutions from collaboration in this form. At the same time, it is emphasised that such centres or units will not negate the importance of an appropriate support infrastructure for students within each tertiary institution (Table 4).

Viable activities for disability support centres to undertake on behalf of the collaborating institutions could include the provision of information and advice for schools, students, parents, and secondary education student support services. This would be in accessible formats, and would detail study opportunities, courses, and support available in each institution. Other activities might be joint student recruitment programs; information on and assessments of special equipment items for students; information and advice to secondary schools and students to inform transition planning for students; collaboration with school-level counselling and careers centres; liaison with school support services on potential students and their transition plans on behalf of institutions; and an information and resource centre for parents of disabled students involved in transition planning with schools and school support staff. The centres would also be an avenue for advice on external agencies providing student support, and equipment available, together with assessments of the advantages and capacity of the comprehensive range of support programs for students with disabilities' (41). The grants ranged from $150,000 to $300,000 per consortium. The implementation of the projects and activities selected by each group is now the subject of consideration by those concerned. Some are likely to be directed toward the preparation of information statements, student recruitment, staff awareness and development programs, and reviews of appropriate support arrangements in institutions.
equipment items. In this way disability support centres would be an important transition initiative.

Among the external agencies providing support to students in tertiary institutions are organisations providing specialist services for students with sensory impairments and the program of the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service. State organisations for people who are blind or deaf, or those with significant visual or hearing impairment, are often a source of valuable assistance to students. As would be expected, the organisations in the larger States are more likely to provide comprehensive programs, and some make their services available in the smaller States where the support program is not otherwise available. The Royal Victorian Institution for the Blind is a good example. It has a support program for students in tertiary studies which is relied on by many institutions in Victoria and elsewhere. Appendix 3 provides information about this service.

Table 4
Tertiary institutions: Some elements of the infrastructure needed to support people with disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General provisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A campus designed and landscaped for free movement by people with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings designed and constructed to be accessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special access provisions in respect to learning resource areas (eg lecture rooms, furniture, libraries, laboratories, computer facilities), student amenities and social facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A campus committee to advise on the participation and needs of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of a disability coordinator as an established position within institutional equity arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate financial resources to provide essential student support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support services within generic campus services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school liaison and recruitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, career guidance, personal and study counselling, and advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment assistance, orientation, induction, special assessment and examination provisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging courses; tutoring as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative teaching and learning arrangements as required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study skills programs, including problem solving and learning strategies.

Health and welfare services.

A network of faculty/departmental contacts.

Staff awareness and professional development programs.

Student support groups to assist them to maintain confidence and personal identity.

*Examples of specific support services*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal reader service</td>
<td>Interpreters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scribes/note-takers</td>
<td>Braille support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taped lectures and materials</td>
<td>Typing access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment loans and provisions</td>
<td>Campus travel support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-campus accessible accommodation</td>
<td>Communication aids</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service provides sponsored academic training to assist people with a disability to obtain employment through the attainment of formal qualifications. Among the conditions of sponsorship is the requirement that the person's disability limits their capacity to undertake training independently, to the extent that the student has ongoing rehabilitation needs which cannot otherwise be met. The support available includes assistance in determining vocational goals and the steps necessary to obtain employment, and assistance during the training period. The payment of approved costs of a tertiary education program and the Training Allowance are provided (42). Institutions and students in tertiary education report some difficulties in the operation of this program, especially in terms of what is perceived as the selective application of the benefits based on the rehabilitation and employment focus of the support, and the apparent differences in application of the policy and guidelines for the program among regional units. There was a clear view among discussants to the review that a more educationally focussed support program in post-compulsory education and training for students with disabilities would provide many advantages to students.

It needs to be noted that institutions have some dependency on the support services available from external agencies, especially as there is, in most cases, a funding vacuum for the services within the institutions themselves. There are strong arguments for building these agencies into a national program of support for students with disabilities.

In recent years staff members of tertiary institutions who coordinate support programs for students with disabilities have
established a series of networks or organisations to enable them to develop their knowledge in the field and advance their professional development. Examples of these groups are the Higher Education Disability Network in Queensland and the Disability Information Network in Victoria. There are such clear benefits from this professional approach to improving services for students with disabilities that it should be encouraged by institutions and government.

There have also been suggestions for a national centre to provide a stronger focus among those working in this equity area, and as a resource for people with disabilities. Two examples of national centres are available. The first is SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities in the United Kingdom. The main work of the Bureau is the dissemination of information to people with disabilities as well as to both professional and voluntary organisations. Enquiries range from general queries regarding education, training, and employment to benefits and grants, specialized equipment and support services. The Bureau also offers practical support to promote structured staff development programs, information, and training. These programs are offered within educational and training organisations and the general workplace. The Bureau has developed training packages, and publications to help ensure that opportunities for people with disabilities to progress towards greater skills and independence are built into the education and training process (43).

The second example is the Heath Centre in the United States. This is a program of the American Council on Education, and operates as a national clearing house on post-secondary education for persons with disabilities. It has a legislative mandate to collect and disseminate information on disability issues in post-secondary education. It promotes educational and training opportunities and the types of accommodation required for full participation by people with disabilities, and recommends strategies which enable them to pursue further education and training in the least restrictive and most productive environment possible (44).

**Measures and Strategies**

The major barriers to the participation in post-secondary education and training by students with disabilities are summarised in Table 5. Measures to reduce the effects of these barriers on student participation and benefits from tertiary level studies are also set out, together with proposed strategies to implement them. The measures relate to the barriers listed, but focus on seven major actions by government and tertiary
institutions which are judged to be critical to achieving changes to present arrangements. In brief these are

1. **Tertiary institutions and authorities to review equity measures to ensure appropriate education, training and support responses are made for a range of students with disabilities.** It has been noted elsewhere that the range of options for some secondary school leavers is limited, including in respect to further education and training opportunities. While an appropriate level of academic achievement is important for success in advanced studies in TAFE, and for studies in higher education institutions, there is considerable room for concern that under-representation of groups of disadvantaged students in these institutions is, to some extent, due to a lack of preparedness by institutions to undertake course and subject modifications which will enable a wider range of students to participate. Apart from modified course structures and curriculum, the availability of assistance such as bridging courses, tutoring, and remedial help can enable students with severe disabilities and high support needs, as well as students with specific learning disabilities, to succeed in studies in these institutions. Australia lags considerably behind in these developments, especially in assistance to students with learning disabilities (45).

TAFE institutions cover a wide range of education and training courses at a number of academic levels. They enrol many students with disabilities, and provide individual support programs wherever possible. As discussed in an earlier section, the development in the 1980s of alternative courses for people with low levels of educational achievement has foundered nationally because of limited resources and a lack of decisions about who should pay the costs of school–TAFE link programs and special courses. This remains a significant gap in the array of education, training and employment options available to a large group of students with disabilities. It has been noted as a major policy and services problem in many States and Territories. The significance of this discussion here is that urgent reviews of the roles and responsibilities of TAFE and other tertiary agencies are needed with a view to early clarification of the issue. These reviews should not focus on funding deficiencies, but policies that are appropriate to the respective authorities and agencies. It is particularly important that TAFE authorities nationally determine their roles in these provisions. There is wide expectation in Australia that the experience in overseas countries, including the United Kingdom, will demonstrate the need for a major new education and training emphasis to meet the needs of this group of people with disabilities (46).
### Table 5
**Barriers, Equity Measures and Strategies: Post-Secondary Education and Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Equity measures required</th>
<th>Strategies proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional response</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of clarity and decision by tertiary authorities and institutions on full role in training provision for students with disabilities.</td>
<td>1 Tertiary institutions and authorities to review equity measures to ensure appropriate education, training and support responses are made for a range of students with disabilities.</td>
<td>1 Refer to institutions and TAFE authorities for review of equity plans. Also refer to items 4 and 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An appropriate approach to students' need for support, which is basically reactive to individual student circumstances, and</td>
<td>2 Support an appropriate infrastructure in tertiary institutions to plan services and support students with disabilities.</td>
<td>2 Commonwealth grants to establish and maintain an appropriate infrastructure in institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A low level of student identification at tertiary institutions which impedes planning and support measures.</td>
<td>3 Direct grants to assist students with high support needs in tertiary education and training institutions.</td>
<td>3 Incorporate into AUSTUDY and/or the assistance to students program of the Commonwealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An absence of modified and alternative curriculum and courses in post-secondary educating and training</td>
<td>4 Modified and alternative curriculum development projects in institutions.</td>
<td>4 Commonwealth grants for alternative curriculum projects in higher education and TAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>Equity measures required</td>
<td>Strategies proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transition planning and facilitation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An absence of constructive links between schools and post-secondary</td>
<td>5 Establish collaborative disability support centres or units among groups of tertiary</td>
<td>5 Commonwealth grants to establish centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education and training institutions, and</td>
<td>institutions to promote options and support in post-secondary education and training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of liaison and recruitment programs to increase participation by</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students with difficulties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical access</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate physical access at tertiary education and training</td>
<td>6 Support for the removal of barriers to physical access at tertiary institution</td>
<td>6 Refer to higher education institutions and TAFE authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>institutions.</td>
<td>campuses. Require all publicly funded buildings to be constructed with full access</td>
<td>Commonwealth special grants to support high-cost projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provisions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-school options</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of post-school options for students with disabilities completing</td>
<td>7 Support for the expansion of alternative education and training options in TAFE.</td>
<td>7 Establish a Commonwealth program for this purpose as a transition measure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary education, especially alternative programs in TAFE and</td>
<td>Support for the expansion of places in supported employment and other training options</td>
<td>Refer to the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supported employment and independent living training offered through</td>
<td>in community agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community agencies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Support an appropriate infrastructure in tertiary institutions to plan services and support students with disabilities.** Some institutions already have a well-developed program for these students based on appropriate organisational structures. These, however, are in the minority. In the last year or so, others have established full-time liaison or counselling positions to provide a service for students with disabilities. Other institutions, however, rely on arrangements that have emerged over time, utilising staff in a number of generic student services who contribute toward a pattern of assistance. A few institutions continue to rely on one staff member from the student services area who is allocated a few hours weekly to undertake a support role.

Although the staff concerned are characteristically enthusiastic and responsive to students' needs, there is evidence that, in general terms, many of these arrangements have proved to be inadequate. It is suggested that the low identification rate for students with disabilities in many institutions may reflect this situation, as well as student perception of the support likely to be available. The collective experience of institutions seems to suggest that at least one full-time staff member is required as a basic provision. Preferably this staff member would be located in a section of the institution associated with equity concerns, and be backed by the range of other student services on a campus, which would be utilised by students with disabilities as required. The staff member needs to establish links with other institutions and off-campus support agencies. There needs to be an appropriate level of funding available to meet the costs of providing the services and supports offered by institutions to students on the campus.

The Commonwealth has made grants to some individual institutions for the appointment of a staff member to initiate planned services for students with disabilities. This action should be expanded to other institutions where appropriate. A table of some of the elements of the infrastructure needed to support students with disabilities was provided in Table 4. A special program of support for deaf students in tertiary education has been established at Griffith University in Queensland. The Centre for Deafness Studies and Research provides a deaf students support program for students in undergraduate and graduate programs at the University, with the objective of increasing the participation of deaf student and maximising their educational opportunities. The Centre also collaborates with TAFE in Queensland to provide an adult tertiary preparation program at certificate level for deaf students in a metropolitan TAFE college. In 1991, 20 students were enrolled in the university program, and 19 were participating in the TAFE Access Ability program.
3. **Direct grants to assist students with high support needs in tertiary education and training institutions.**

This measure has already been discussed in some detail in earlier sections in respect to students with high support needs in the senior secondary school (page 248). The proposal is particularly made in respect to students in post-secondary education and training. This is perhaps the most difficult support area for institutions. For this reason, and because of the nature of the personal learning assistance required by the students concerned, it has been proposed as a key transition measure which will both increase participation levels and help maintain students during their tertiary studies, and into employment.

As has been the experience in the school sector in developing support services for students with disabilities, funds are needed above standard student costs to ensure that these students have access to educational programs through support arrangements which are essential to their participation. This ‘positive discrimination’ has been practiced in tertiary education in Australia in recent years to increase participation among a number of under-represented student groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Apart from the existence of support services being one determinant in student decisions to attempt a tertiary education program or not, there is anecdotal evidence that a number of students are not able to sustain their study program due to the inability of institutions to provide the supports required. It can be expected that few if any institutions can provide the high cost personal learning assistance required by some students, including learning assistants (personal care and note-taking for physically disabled students), scribes, interpreters (for hearing impaired students), braille materials, and communication and learning equipment.

It is noted that the range of grants for students with disabilities in higher education in the UK in 1991 is, in equivalent funds—

- A general allowance of up to $2,500 per annum for book costs, and extra costs of studying at home.
- A specialist equipment allowance of up to $7,500 over an entire course for items such as a computer or word processor, recorder, and radio microphone system.
- A non-medical helpers allowance of up to $10,000 per annum for the costs of, for example, sign interpreters, note-takers, and mobility aides (47).

The strategy proposed is that all institutions should have access to ‘above standard cost’ funding to help provide the infrastructure needed to support students with disabilities, and that grants to meet the high cost learning support needs of individual students be incorporated into a direct grants program.
associated with Austudy and/or an assistance to students program of the Commonwealth.

4. **Modified and alternative curriculum development projects in institutions.** While all tertiary education and training institutions need to look at the issue of modified and alternative curriculum development, as discussed above, the major group of institutions which can be expected to undertake this work will be TAFE institutions providing mainstream vocational courses for students with disabilities, and an alternative curriculum for students enrolled in special programs. This is an important development for TAFE institutions, which will not be equipped to respond to the range of educational and training needs of people with disabilities until it is achieved.

Some progress in this area can be noted. This includes special studies programs in Tasmanian TAFE colleges, and a series of alternative subjects provided by the Disability Support Unit of TAFE in Perth. Many modified curriculum projects will be specific to individual courses and subjects in tertiary institutions, and can be expected to be undertaken by the institutions. It may be necessary however to stimulate this activity by seeding grants which have the purpose of enabling institutions to develop guidelines and procedures for this support service, and encouraging staff awareness of the needs of students for such assistance.

Where the development of an alternative curriculum is necessary, especially in TAFE programs, Commonwealth grants are proposed to ensure the early implementation of these long-term projects.

5. **Establish collaborative disability support centres or units among groups of tertiary institutions to promote options and support services in post-secondary education and training.** Some detail on the role and functions proposed for these centres was given earlier in this section. Their key purpose, in addition to avoiding duplication and competition in information and recruitment activities, and enhancing collaboration among tertiary institutions, is to provide a link between schools and tertiary institutions which strongly supports the transition of students with disabilities from school to further education and training (see page 266).

The disability support centres are envisaged as being established through a Commonwealth grants program, but later funded and operated by the consortium of tertiary institutions involved with each centre.

6. **Support for the removal of barriers to physical access on tertiary institution campuses.** This issue has long been on the agenda of measures needed to improve participation of
students with mobility difficulties and other access needs. It is no less important in the 1990s. Institutions report that action to improve campus access over recent years has been dependent on the availability of funds. Major physical barriers remain at most institutions. For a number of reasons it can be expected that some institutions will not be able to resolve all these difficulties. These include cases where building alterations cannot be undertaken in cost-effective ways, and where historical buildings cannot be altered. Institutions regularly try to find ways around the access problems of individual students by actions which include the reallocation of lecture and seminar rooms.

A major concern in this area is the continuing construction of new buildings on campuses which do not meet established standards for access. While governments generally require buildings they construct or occupy to be accessible to people with disabilities, they should also take steps to ensure that all publicly funded buildings, such as schools and tertiary institutions are constructed to be accessible by students with disabilities.

It is proposed that institutions continue to improve campus access through normal budgetary arrangements, but that Commonwealth grants should be available through appropriate capital grants programs to help fund high cost projects needed to increase the accessibility of tertiary institutions to students with disabilities.

7. Support for the expansion of alternative education and training options in TAFE, and the expansion of places in training options provided by private and community agencies. This proposal builds on the measures proposed for a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of tertiary education and training institutions in providing for students with disabilities, and support for the development of modified and alternative curriculum. Its focus however is on the large gap in provisions for students with disabilities on leaving secondary school. This has been highlighted by recent projects being undertaken by education authorities in a number of States (see page 261). This measure proposes a significant injection of funds into the TAFE system nationally to establish a new group of courses especially for students with intellectual disabilities and severe learning disabilities. These should be prepared at a number of achievement levels, and emphasise pathways which link into mainstream courses.

Complementary to the above action is an expansion of places in the training programs of private and community organisations supported by the Department of Community Services and Health. Together, the provisions in TAFE and the community organisations referred to are inadequate to meet present
demand, whereas they must form the basis for a series of post-school options for a significant group of people with disabilities. If an adequate array of education and training options is to be available for these people, urgent action is required in this area.

Conclusion

This paper has canvassed a wide range of issues in the education and training of people with disabilities. It is a complex subject, and selection of the issues and barriers to participation to include in a document such as this is itself difficult. The paper covers post-compulsory schooling, the transition period from schooling to further education and training or employment, and post-secondary education and training in institutions of TAFE and higher education.

The topics are even more complex when recognition must be given to the full range of disabling conditions people experience and the different effects these conditions have on them, including their educational and training needs. The educational capacity of the group, people with disabilities, ranges from those who can succeed in the most academically demanding study programs to those for whom practical life skills and personal development programs in a vocational context are most beneficial. However the paper avoids such a dichotomy wherever possible, and tries to break the long-held assumption that post-compulsory education and training is not for all people. It highlights the importance of significantly re-thinking the group of students with disabilities for whom post-compulsory education and training is relevant.

Participation in education equals improved life chances. All young people are entitled to benefit as fully as possible from the educational provisions made in the community. As a nation Australia generally lags behind comparable countries in post-compulsory education and training options for people with disabilities, and in recognising that this stage of education is for all people regardless of their abilities, backgrounds and interests.

Students with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities, would be better accommodated in education and training courses if the focus was on their educational handicap rather than their 'disabilities'.

Equity measures in secondary schooling and tertiary education and training will not work unless they are adequately planned and resourced. In the case of tertiary institutions, there is a need for a positive government approach to recognition and support for measures taken to up-grade the assistance given to students with disabilities. There are already important changes occurring as a result of recent Commonwealth initiatives in higher education through grants to improve student support
programs, to establish collaborative projects among institutions, and to help fund equity initiatives in institutions. The requirement for the development of equity plans and targets for improved participation by students with disabilities is also stimulating important change. These developments can be significantly built on through the proposals set out in this paper.
References


3. See for example, Bramley, J et al. Understanding young women with disabilities. Fred & Eleanor Schonell Special Education Research Centre, University of Queensland, 1990.

and


15. NSW Department of School Education. Transition program for students with disabilities as an initiative in the Special Education Plan, 1989.


17. See reference 8 and Walker, E. Description of services in TAFE for people with disabilities in each state of Australia. Department of Community Services, 1986.


25. See for example, documents on the participation of women and Aboriginal students in tertiary education.


27. See reference 17, for example.

39. For example, in Western Australia Association for Competitive Employment Student Transition Services Career Plan Services PE Personal Emtech Work Plus
41. See reference 32.
43. Townsend, J. A study of facilities and support services for tertiary students with disabilities in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America. Deakin University, Vera White Disability Resource Centre, 1989.

45. See references 43 and 44.

46. See references 12 and 26.

47. Information provided by SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (UK).
Appendix 1

Examples of statements on services in post-compulsory education and training

A. Deakin University

Vera White Disability Resource Centre: Services

It is the role of the Disability Resource Centre to minimize the disadvantages which may be experienced by students with disabilities in studying their chosen courses. One aim of the Centre is to adapt the learning materials and study programs of Deakin courses for study by students with any disabilities whether temporary or permanent. All services and equipment are provided free of charge to all on and off campus students.

Specific Services Include:

• loan of specialized equipment
e.g. 4 track tape recorders
dictaphone
large print and light touch typewriters
• provision of tone indexed and braille labelled audiotapes of course materials and textbooks for students with a print handicap
• transcription of course materials into other formats in response to the individual needs of students
• alternative arrangements for examinations and assignments
• personal reader services for print handicapped students
• provision of on-campus accessible accommodation
• personal notetakers for students with a hearing impairment
• information on eligibility for special benefits and other community support services.

(Extract from a student information brochure).

B. The University of Sydney

Services and assistance for students with disabilities

This section attempts to comprehensively list the forms of assistance and services available for students with disabilities. While the list is divided into campuses you should remember that many forms of assistance are transferable from one campus to another. If you need help of some kind not mentioned on the list, simply apply for it, and if possible it will be provided.
a) Main Campus
   Requests for special facilities should be made to the Special Services Officer.

General
- student specific furniture (e.g. higher desks) located in lecture rooms
- free photocopying where necessary
- liaison with teaching staff on behalf of students
- if you wish, a letter to your heads of department outlining your situation and needs, with copies for you to hand to tutors, lecturers etc as the need arises
- peer note taking scheme under consideration
- variable examination arrangements (e.g. amanuenses, extended time, enlarged print papers, ergonomic furniture etc)
- annual loan of recording equipment (tape recorder, tapes, battery recharger, batteries, blank videos).

For students with a mobility impairment
- disabled parking places
- parking stickers, if you have a recent medical certificate or other good reason, see the Special Services Officer, if you have no recent medical certificate, apply at the Health Service
- wheelchair accessible toilets (see list at the end of this section)
- relocation of lectures (where possible) for better access
- construction of footpath ramps
- alterations to building entrances
- free use of appropriately located lockers.

For students with a sight impairment
- closed circuit TV system (colour) in Fisher Library to provide print enlargement for students with low vision
- Kurzweil machine in Fisher Library to transfer printed words to computer disk for use in computers with speech synthesis
- a bold map and a braille map, each with keys, of the University's Main Campus 55

For students with a hearing impairment
- hearing loops in nine lecture theatres (a further two in planning stages)
- phonic ear and FM transmitting/receiving devices.

Library services (Fisher Library)
- arranging loans, returns and renewals
- inter-library loans for undergraduates (usually only available to postgraduates)
- extended loans (books can be sent to Royal Blind Society for brailling or recording)
- extended use of 'Special Reserve' items or private copy of journal articles
- catalogue assistance
- book location service
- private study rooms
- closed circuit TV system (colour) providing print enlargement for readers with low vision
- enlargement photocopying
- seats located where queues form e.g. photocopiers
- wheelchair height catalogue terminals.

In the main library make enquiries for these services at the Information Desk near the catalogue. At Branch Libraries make enquiries with the Branch Librarian.

b) Cumberland College of Health Sciences

- Requests for special services should be made to the Student Counsellor.

General
- parking
- photocopying assistance (Resource Centre)
- variable examination arrangements e.g. extended time, amanuenses (scribes), brailled examination papers
- feasibility of a peer notetaking scheme under review by Students' Union
- tape recorders, scientific calculators for casual use. (Resource Centre) For long term loans notice required.
- First Aid Room in the Sport Sciences Research Centre.

For students with a mobility impairment
- all buildings are wheelchair accessible
- wheelchair lifts are available in the Jeffrey Miller Administration Building (A Block) in the Resource Centre, in S Block and in J Block.
- personnel lifts are in B, M and T blocks and in the corner of L and R blocks
- tennis and basketball courts have wheelchair access
- low telephones are located in the canteen area
- lockers for disabled students are available on the Ground Floor in the Jeffrey Miller Administration Building
- wheelchair toilets.
For students with a sight impairment
- liaison with Royal Blind Society through the Resource Centre. Notice required to arrange translation or audiotaping of text books
- voluntary readers/scanners organized by the Student Union
- closed circuit TV system (CCTV), vantage software, limited access
- IBM (Vista software), limited access.

For students with a hearing impairment
- FM A4 pickup unit
- volume controlled television in the Jeffrey Miller Administration Building.

Library services (enquire at Resource Centre)
- extended loans
- photocopying service in conjunction with Students' Union.

(Extract from Getting There : Information for Students with Disabilities. Reference to the main campus and the campus of the Cumberland College of Health Sciences only are reproduced).
Individual transition planning

Development of the NSW model of Transition Education within the Department of School Education has meant the introduction and establishment of an individual transition planning process for students with disabilities from 12 years of age onwards.

This process involves the assessment of student needs in a number of life spheres; consultation with the student, parents and significant others; negotiation and development of realistic long term goals and short term, specific objectives in relevant curriculum areas; determination of tasks, strategies and methods to achieve the objectives; and agreement as to who will be responsible for the implementation of each task.

Individual transition plans (ITPs) begun during 1989 and 1990 in the four original pilot areas were examined to determine the effectiveness of the system and procedures, and teachers directly involved in the establishment of the ITP process were surveyed.

Results

During 1989, ITPs for 156 students with disabilities had been commenced. This represented 56 percent of the potential number of 258 students with disabilities for whom teachers in 16 schools were responsible. By the end of June 1990, the number of written ITPs commenced in 18 participating schools in the original four pilot areas had increased to 340 or 74 percent.

Students with a range of disabilities were included although the majority of ITPs to date have been developed for students with intellectual disabilities.

ITPs have facilitated program planning based on student needs, as identified by parents, students, teachers and other relevant school and community personnel. This, for many, represents a substantial change in the model of service delivery, from curriculum driven programs provided to all students regardless of need, to an individual needs based system.

Advantages of the ITP system, as nominated by teachers in both special schools and units in high schools, included, in addition to the programming and goal setting areas, increased levels of student and parent involvement and increased vocational options for students.

The establishment and evaluation of the ITP process has assisted in a clearer understanding and identification of the benefits and issues arising from the introduction of such a
system. One of the keys to future success has been identified as that of continuing professional development needs within the schools. The ability of staff to faithfully and credibly implement many of the individual transition plans that have been prepared will no doubt be affected by the ability of the Department of School Education to support teachers and meet these important staff training needs.

Source: Extracted from a summary provided by the Unit for Rehabilitation Studies: Macquarie University.
The Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind Tertiary Resource Service

The Institute, through its Library and Communications Services division, has offered resource support to tertiary students with visual impairments and print handicaps for approximately 20 years. The service operates from the Institute's Melbourne headquarters and currently supports 160 students in higher education, TAFE and adult education programs. It is also available to graduates and persons who require specific information relating to their studies, employment or personal needs.

Resource materials are provided in audio, braille, large print, disk or tactile formats, which include raised line drawings of graphs and diagrams. There is also a technical assistance program which enables students to purchase equipment to access a tertiary education and training program. The materials are provided through a pattern of services including resource counselling. Counsellors work closely with students during their studies. Full records of their requirements and study program are kept, and the counsellors articulate the identification of resource materials required by students, its preparation and production, and availability to students. They work closely with institution teaching and advisory staff in this process.

The services available also include—

• a personal reading service
• the loan of books already on tape
• arrangements for books and materials to be read on tape
• preparation of examination papers and materials in special formats, and
• repair, modification and assessment of equipment items.

In addition to counselling, production, technical and administrative staff, the Tertiary Resource Service depends on large numbers of volunteers who train as narrators in the preparation of audio formats of text books and study materials for students. Many of these narrators have expertise in the discipline covered in the resource material. The total service costs approximately $700,000 per year. Support for each student in an audio format averages from $3,500–$4,000. Among the many institutions and organisations assisted, the Service has provided all external studies materials required in alternative formats for Deakin University students since 1981.
Flow chart showing the place of Individual Transition Plans within school-based and community-based transition initiatives and employment training options: NSW Transition Education Project.