The aspirations for Vocational Education and Training of students in regional and remote locations

Dr Leanne Fray, Laureate Professor Jenny Gore, Dr Sally Patfield | The University of Newcastle | No Frills | Sydney, 15 – 17 August 2018
Context

Vocational Education and Training in NSW:
Report into access and outcomes for young people experiencing disadvantage.

Joint report
Youth Action - Uniting - Mission Australia
February 2018
VET aspirations of school students

- VET and VET-related occupations appeal to certain kinds of students

- Perceptions of VET as a place of practical learning, offering great opportunities, especially for less academically inclined students
Aspirations Longitudinal Study, 2012 - 2015

Survey data, 2012–2015
64 schools of all types
   10,543 student surveys
   1,362 parent surveys
   1,258 teacher surveys

Focus group data, 2013–2015
263 focus groups in 30 schools
   553 students
   60 parents and carers
   156 teachers and principals
Locating Aspirations Study

- Extend the *Aspirations Longitudinal Study* into regional and remote areas
- Aimed to understand the role of geographic location and cultural ‘place’ in producing differences in and between communities
Aspirations for VET in regional and remote locations

- Extend our previous research on VET aspirations of school students
- Little research on VET aspirations of school students from regional and remote locations
- Who amongst students from regional and remote areas aspires to VET or VET-related careers and the challenges these students face
Locating Aspirations Study Sample, 2017

Surveys: 35 schools

- 1,525 student surveys
- 57 parent and carer surveys
- 152 teacher surveys

Interviews/focus groups: 244 in 26 schools

- 147 students
- 42 parents and carers
- 55 teachers and principals
### Profile of students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non-Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner regional</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer regional</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote / Very remote</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Profile of students

## Language background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>LBOTE</th>
<th>ESB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner regional</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer regional</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote / Very remote</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Socio-Economic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner regional</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer regional</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote / Very remote</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Q1 lowest quartile
## Profile of students

### Prior Achievement (NAPLAN)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner regional</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer regional</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote / Very remote</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### School ICSEA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner regional</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer regional</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote / Very remote</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Q1 lowest quartile
Educational aspirations by location

- **Remote/Very Remote**
  - High School: 21%
  - TAFE: 18%
  - University: 37%
  - Don’t know: 25%

- **Outer Regional**
  - High School: 21%
  - TAFE: 17%
  - University: 37%
  - Don’t know: 24%

- **Inner Regional**
  - High School: 20%
  - TAFE: 17%
  - University: 39%
  - Don’t know: 24%
Aspirations Study, variables considered

**Student-related**
- Gender
- Year level
- Socioeconomic status
- Language background
- Indigenous status
- Geographic location of school
- Cultural capital

**School-related**
- Prior academic achievement
- Out-of-school tutoring
- Self-perception of relative academic performance
- ICSEA of school
Logistic regression –
Generalized Estimating Equation

- a method robust against violations of normality and
  missing data assumptions
Who among ‘rural’ students chooses VET?

- Males more likely than females (OR = 3.01, Strong)

- Lower NAPLAN quartiles more likely (Quartile 1: OR = 2.15, Moderate) (Quartile 2: OR = 2.11, Moderate)

- Lowest SES quartile more likely than all other SES quartiles (Quartile 1: OR = 2.05, Moderate)

- Lowest Cultural Capital quartile more likely than other quartiles (Quartile 1: OR = 1.94, Moderate)

- Year 9 - 10 students less likely than all other Year levels (OR = 0.51, Moderate)

- Average more likely than above or below average (OR = 2.00, Moderate)
Interest in VET occupations by Year level
### Top 5 VET occupations – Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inner Regional</th>
<th>Outer Regional</th>
<th>Remote/Very Remote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Hairdressers</td>
<td>Sportspersons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Attendants and Trainers</td>
<td>Animal Attendants and Trainers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers</td>
<td>Beauty Therapists</td>
<td>Aged and Disabled Carers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chefs</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Animal Attendants and Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportspersons</td>
<td>Sportspersons</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Occupational aspirations - Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Aspiration / Reason</th>
<th>Year/Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>To protect people.</td>
<td>Year 7, remote school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals attendants</td>
<td>Because I like animals and like helping animals</td>
<td>Year 9, outer regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsperson</td>
<td>[Jockey] I love riding horses and looking after them</td>
<td>Year 7, outer regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
<td>I've always enjoyed mucking around with hair since I was 8 years old</td>
<td>Year 10, outer regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Therapist</td>
<td>Currently undertaking School-Based Apprenticeship and adjoining TAFE course in this area</td>
<td>Year 11, outer regional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Top 5 VET occupations – Males

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Remote/Very Remote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sportspersons</td>
<td>Sportspersons</td>
<td>Sportspersons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence Force Members</td>
<td>Motor Mechanics</td>
<td>Motor Mechanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Defence Force Members</td>
<td>Electricians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Mechanics</td>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck Drivers</td>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>Animal Attendants and Trainers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Occupational aspirations - males

**Sportsperson**
Because it is worth a bit of money and because it is the sport/job that I have always wanted to do it. (Year 7, remote)

**Defence Force**
I've always had a passion for army and I feel I would suit well for this kind of job. (Year 12, outer regional)

**Police**
To protect and serve my community. (Year 10, remote)

**Motor Mechanic**
Because so I can help people with the cars that have broke down or other stuff. (Year 9, remote)

**Electrician**
So I can have my own business. (Year 9, remote)
Student views of VET

I always just assumed that it was pretty much the same as university, just a bit better. (Anton, male, Year 8, Outer regional)

TAFE is a lot shorter and quicker than university. (Sylvie, female, Year 5, Outer regional)

Well, if I’m not good enough to get into university, I’ll go to TAFE. (Janina, female, Year 9, Outer regional)
Limited VET opportunities

When I’ve been talking to some parents about going to TAFE or whatever, I mean there is a TAFE here that is limited in subject selection and whatever, but they’d be going to Dubbo.

(Brenda, female, teacher, remote)

TAFE reduced a large number of courses, so that kind of killed a lot of that which is a shame.

(Lars, male, teacher, outer regional)
Challenges in accessing VET - distance

I mean, when it comes down to just those basic things like I said of kids not even being able to access TAFE or stuff like that, that’s really challenging. I mean, to go to the nearest bigger town with a Woolworths for example takes at least an hour.

(Lola, female, teacher, outer regional)
Challenges in accessing VET - distance

Every term, once a term, or maybe twice a term, we go to [a town]...two, three hours from here. We do like TAFE courses. I've done my first aid, and this time I've got my applying makeup. The first aid was two days, and the applying makeup was four days - so we have to go back and do another two days on it.

(Lena, female, Year 10, Very remote)
Challenges in accessing VET - cost

Look I'd say monetary for a few of our families, they don't have much money. Some of these families struggle to think that it's an achievable option, it's an affordable option. **It's just out of their reach.** So I'd say the dollar signs are a big concern for some families.

(Lars, male, teacher, outer regional)

Money to do training or TAFE or any extracurricular non-school based training. **Basically if it needs money outside of government funding a lot of our kids will never be able to access it** unless they fund it themselves and they are often supporting their families.

(Ursula, female, teacher, outer regional)
Challenges in accessing VET – community connection

I would say that there’s **not a lot of opportunities** in our community, but we also have a real... I don’t know... like a real... kids don’t want to leave either, because they’ve spent their whole lives here.

(Julienne, female, teacher, remote)
Challenges in accessing VET – support

I think they get really kind of maybe shell shocked and isolated and don’t have that small close knit community. Then they come back and they don’t finish ... their uni course, their TAFE course... I think that’s kind of where our kids get let down is that they don’t have the support in place to help them once they finish here at school and they’re out of town.

(Julienne, female, teacher, remote)
Challenges in accessing VET - relocating

They need to go to TAFE. They’ve finished all they can do through school; they now need to go to Toowoomba or Tamworth, and do a year block...I took one of them up in the January holidays last year, already, and it’s just very hard, with no family. She worried about where she’s going to live; financial... so she came home, and since has had a baby. She still wants to go and do it, but it’s just... it’s hard.

(Wynona, female, teacher, remote)
Challenges in accessing VET - relocating

... and I think a little bit more help as far as the enrolment process, finding accommodation and all of those things. Like I said, the big policymakers need to do something about inequity because it really is inequitable ... It’s frustrating. I just don’t see how they don’t see that if a kid has to actually relocate, you know, it’s massive... If only someone would listen to that.

(Lola, teacher, outer regional)
Challenges in accessing VET – online course delivery

It's video conferencing TAFE...we access a lot of video conferencing equipment out here because we’re so remote, and that’s the way we do that out here.

(Yukiko, female, teacher, very remote)

They do it by VC... a lot of our kids really struggle with that. It’s really hard, especially for Indigenous kids, because talking on a video conference is not what they like. I don’t think you can make a rapport with the teacher on the other side.

(Sandra, female, teacher, remote)
Key points

• Males, from lowest SES, prior achievement and cultural capital quartiles are most likely to aspire to VET

• Regional and remote students face significant challenges in accessing VET
  - Limited opportunities
  - Distance
  - Cost
  - Relocation

• Next steps
  - understand the role of geographic location and cultural ‘place’ in producing differences in and between communities
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