

On Track 2020: Destinations of Victorian School Leavers

About the study

Since 2003, the annual On Track survey has followed the outcomes of Victorian students who finish Year 12 and those who leave school before completion. Between June and September 2020, the Department surveyed 26,735 students who completed Year 12 in 2019 (47 per cent of the Year 12 cohort) and 2,012 students who had left school in Years 10, 11 or 12 in 2019 (13 per cent of the non-completer cohort). This included 15,555 female, 13,163 male and 29 gender X (undefined) respondents. Gender X respondents' data are included in the analysis below.



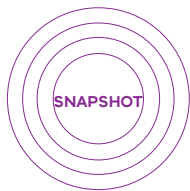
KEY FINDINGS 2020

The 2020 On Track survey results are mostly consistent with those of previous years, with noticeable disruptions to employment outcomes caused by COVID-19. While results in this snapshot focus on 2020, comparisons are made back to 2016.

Post-school destinations in 2020 are broadly consistent with previous years.

Differences between gender, location and sector are also consistent with previous years.

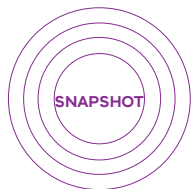
Young people who complete Year 12 are significantly more likely to continue their education and training journey than seek employment in the workplace.	75%	The majority of young people who complete Year 12 enrol in a Bachelor degree at university.	54%
For young people who do not complete Year 12, around half continue on to education and training.	52%	Nearly a third of young people who do not complete Year 12 choose to take up an apprenticeship or traineeship.	30%



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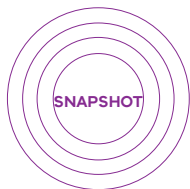
		2016	2019	2020
<p>While overall rates of young people entering further education and training and employment have remained stable, there has been some disruption caused by COVID-19 restrictions.</p>	<p>Lower proportions of Year 12 completers are continuing their education through a Certificate or Diploma.</p>			
	<p>The proportion of Year 12 non-completers gaining employment had increased between 2016 and 2019, but fell in 2020.</p>			
	<p>The proportion of Year 12 non-completers choosing an apprenticeship or traineeship in 2020 has returned to 2016 proportions after dropping three percentage points from 2019.</p>			

<p>Preferred employment destinations are somewhat similar between completers and non-completers, with preferences also reflecting those reported in 2016.</p>		Year 12 completers	Year 12 non-completers
	<p>'Sales/Store person' is the most popular employment field among Year 12 completers and the third highest for Year 12 non-completers.</p>		
	<p>'Food, Hospitality and Tourism' remains a popular employment field among Victorian young people, regardless of their level of school completion.</p>		
	<p>'Building and Construction' remains the most popular employment field among Year 12 non-completers.</p>		



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		2016	2020
<p>General trends are continuing for post-school destinations, along with consistency in study choices for young Victorians.</p>	Health remains the preferred course of study for students who completed Year 12.	17%	20%
	Health has recently surged in popularity for students who did not complete Year 12 (7 per cent in 2018).	10%	14%
	Society and Culture also remains popular among students who completed Year 12.	13%	17%
	Society and Culture is the preferred course of study for those who did not complete Year 12, holding stable for the last three years.	12%	16%
	Creative Arts continues a trending decline in popularity for students who completed Year 12.	14%	11%
	Food, Hospitality & Personal Services continues its trending decline in popularity for students who did not complete Year 12.	16%	11%



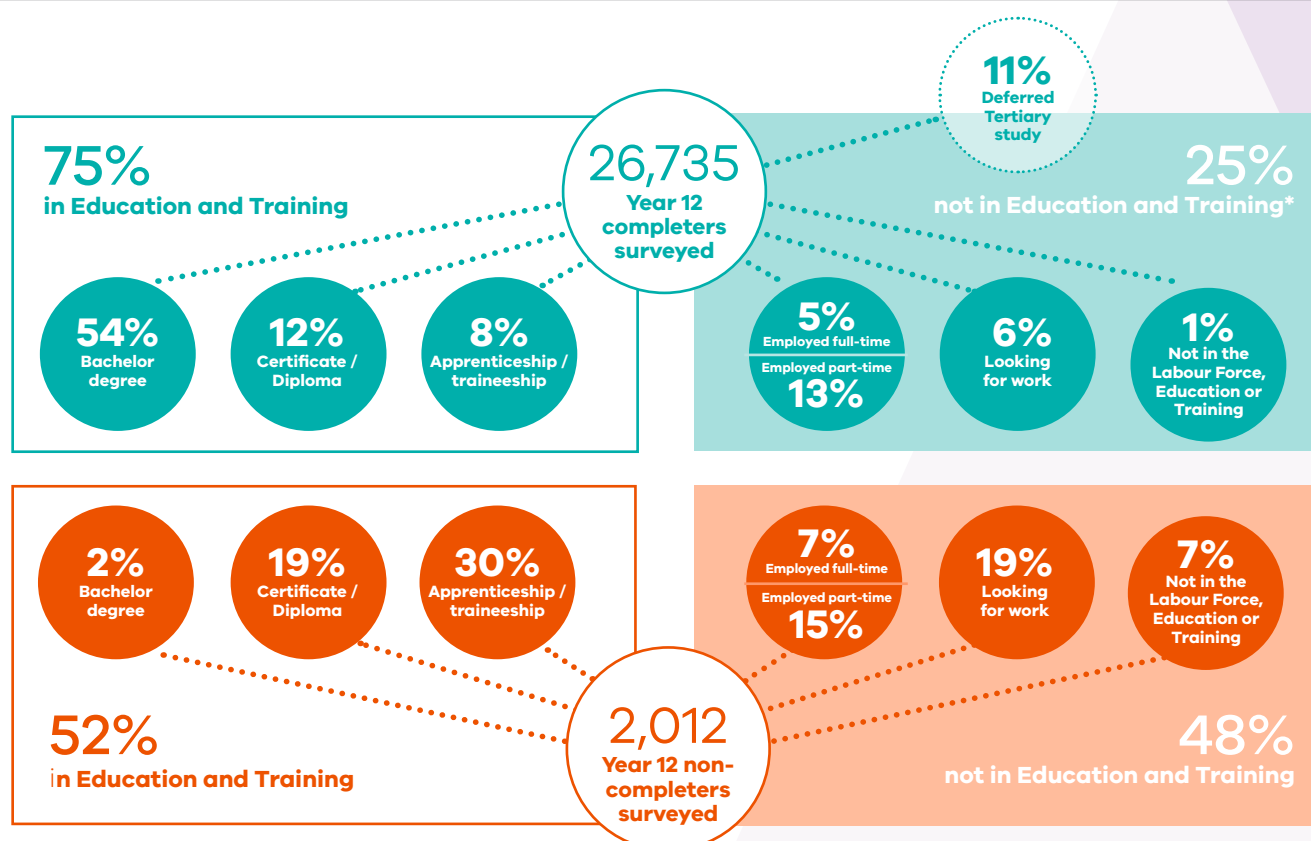
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Destination patterns of Year 12 completers and non-completers differ.

Despite minor fluctuations across years, young people who complete Year 12 continue to pursue further education or training opportunities at greater proportions than those students who leave school prior to Year 12 completion. In 2020, three quarters of Year 12 completers were enrolled in education or training six months after finishing school, compared with just over half of those who left school early.

A significantly greater number of students who complete Year 12 continue their studies through a Bachelor degree than any other education or training pathway. At just under 55 per cent in 2020, this figure has remained stable for the last five years.

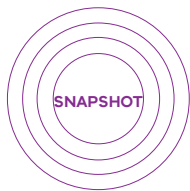
There has been a near three to four percentage point decrease in those attaining employment in 2020 compared to last year. The proportion of Year 12 completers not in the labour force, education or training (NILFET) remained stable from 2015 to 2019 at 1 per cent, but increased to 1.5 per cent in 2020. Conversely, the proportion of Year 12 non-completers NILFET was in a state of decline between 2016 (5.9 per cent) and 2019 (4.7 per cent), but increased to 7 per cent in 2020. These disruptions were likely caused by COVID-19 restrictions.



*Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Note: Please note that (a) data relating to total proportions of Year 12 completers does not include students who had deferred tertiary study (11% in 2020, a figure consistent with previous reports) and (b) throughout the report, total percentages may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

*Formerly referred to as early leavers.

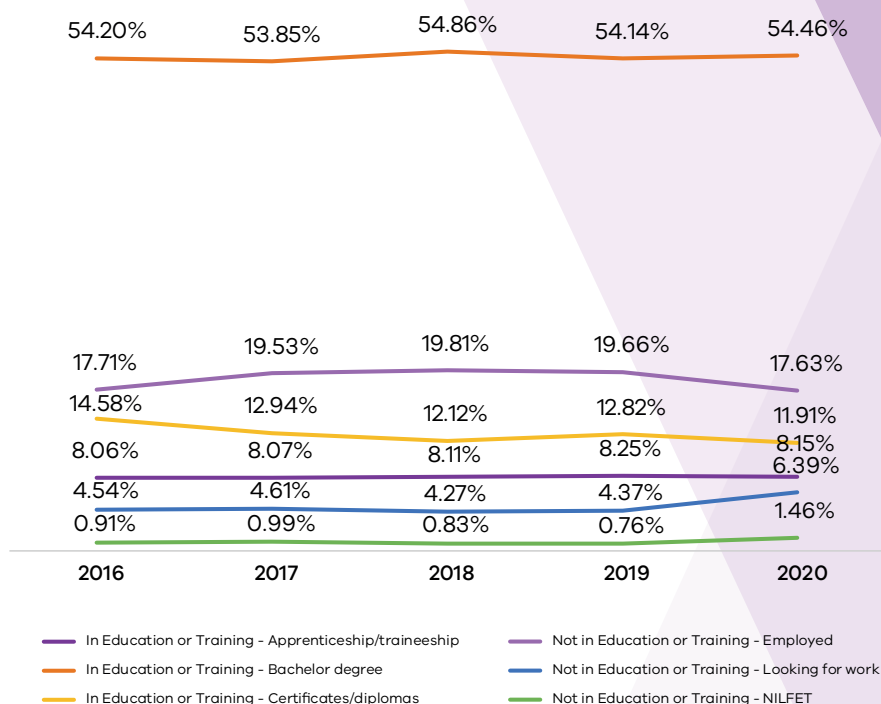


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The proportion of students completing Year 12 and pursuing a Certificate or Diploma has dropped over the past five years.

The 2020 On Track survey results show that the proportion of Year 12 completers going on to study a Certificate or Diploma has declined (12 per cent in 2020 compared with 15 per cent in 2016). This is the most significant change for this cohort over the past five years of the survey; proportions of young people reporting that they were studying a Bachelor degree remain stable (at just over half of all Year 12 completers surveyed).

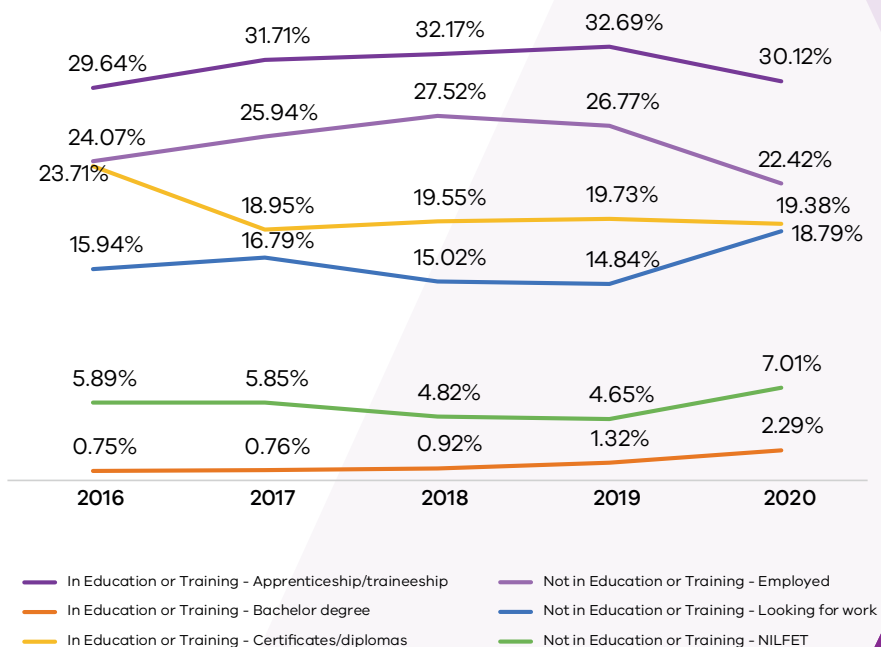
DESTINATION PROFILE, YEAR 12 COMPLETERS, 2016–2020

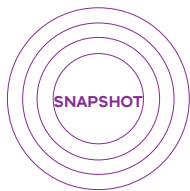


The largest proportion of students not completing Year 12 undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship.

One-third of Year 12 non-completers undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship in the year after they leave school. This proportion has steadily increased since 2016 (33 per cent in 2019 compared to 28 per cent in 2015), driven by growth in the uptake of apprenticeships as opposed to traineeships (where participation has actually declined). In 2020, this steady increase dropped back to 2016 proportions, reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced by young people this year. The proportion of non-completers undertaking Certificates/Diplomas has also decreased substantially over the last five years, dropping from one-in-four in 2016 to one-in-five in 2020.

DESTINATION PATTERNS, YEAR 12 NON-COMPLETERS, 2016–2020





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Why do students leave school early?	Reason for leaving school early		2019	2020
	PUSH FACTORS	School was not for me/ school was not a good environment/I was not learning.	9%	10%
		Did not like school/ teachers/ was not interested in going.	16%	12%
		Ill health.	11%	10%
	PULL FACTORS	Work or career reasons.	23%	23%
		Study elsewhere/TAFE/different course.	5%	7%

Reasons for leaving school are categorised as either 'push' factors (negative/adverse experiences of school) or 'pull' factors (positive alternatives to pursue). Commonly cited 'push' factor reasons for students leaving school early include 'a feeling that school wasn't good for them', 'they didn't like school' or that 'they found it too hard'. Results for the 2020 cohort show slight differences in the most common 'push' factors for students leaving school early when compared to 2019.

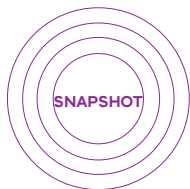
'Work or career reasons' remain the most common 'pull' factor for leaving school without completing Year 12, with 23 per cent of non-completers reporting this as the reason they left school (stable when compared to 23 per cent in 2019). The second most commonly reported 'pull' factor was to study elsewhere, at TAFE, or a different course (7 per cent).

Employment preferences have remained relatively consistent, while there has been some variations in chosen fields of study.	Top primary fields of study 2016-2020		
	2016	2018	2020
Year 12 completers	17.6%	19.5%	20.7%
	Management & Commerce	Health	Health
Year 12 non-completers	16.1%	17.0%	16.5%
	Food, Hospitality & Personal Services	Food, Hospitality & Personal Services	Society & Culture

What are Victorian young people choosing to study?

Health remains the most popular field of study for Victorian Year 12 completers, with one-in-five (20.7 per cent) undertaking health related studies as part of a Bachelor degree, Certificate or Diploma course at a University or TAFE. Society and Culture is the second most popular field of study for Year 12 completers, increasing to 17 per cent in 2020 from 13 per cent in 2016. There has been a trending decline in the proportion of Year 12 completers studying Management and Commerce or the Creative Arts when compared to figures for 2016.

Society and Culture has remained the most popular field of study for Year 12 non-completers for the last three years. Health has experienced a surge in popularity in 2020 and is now the second most popular field of study for Year 12 non-completers (up to 14 per cent in 2020 from 10 per cent in 2016). Changes in study preferences may in some way be explained by changing social priorities. For example, heightened awareness of the future need for healthcare workers may partly be driving the increasing numbers of Year 12 completers and non-completers choosing this course of study.



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Where are Victorian young people seeking employment?

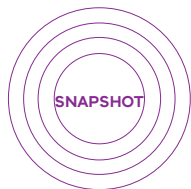
At the time of the 2020 On Track survey, 18 per cent of Victorian young people were in part-time (13 per cent) or full-time (5 per cent) employment, and 7 per cent looking for work.

For those in employment, the preferred workforces have remained largely unchanged when compared with previous years. In 2020, the three most popular employment destinations reflected those in 2016 for both cohorts. Young people in Victoria who do not continue in education or training are most likely to enter employment in Food, Hospitality and Tourism, Sales Assistants and Store persons, or Labourers, Factory and Machine Workers, regardless of whether they completed Year 12 or left school early.

Increases in the proportions of young people seeking employment in Building and Construction (Year 12 non-completers) and as Labourers, Factory and Machine workers (Year 12 completers) may reflect Victoria's increased investment and focus on improved infrastructure.

TOP 5 EMPLOYMENT DESTINATIONS, ON TRACK 2016 AND 2020

	2016	Rank	2020
YEAR 12 COMPLETERS	Sales Assistants and Storepersons 33.4%	1	33.8% Sales Assistants and Storepersons
	Food, Hospitality and Tourism 29.0%	2	27.0% Food, Hospitality and Tourism
	Teaching, Childcare and Library 6.5%	3	6.5% Teaching, Childcare and Library
	Health, Fitness, Hair and Beauty 6.2%	4	5.2% Health, Fitness, Hair and Beauty
	Building and Construction 4.1%	5	4.5% Labourers, Factory and Machine Workers
YEAR 12 NON-COMPLETERS	Building and Construction 22.5%	1	24.1% Building and Construction
	Food, Hospitality and Tourism 20.1%	2	15.3% Food, Hospitality and Tourism
	Sales Assistants and Storepersons 13.5%	3	15.2% Sales Assistants and Storepersons
	Labourers, Factory and Machine Workers 6.3%	4	6.9% Electrical and Electronics Trades
	Motor Vehicle Service and Repair 6.1%	5	6.3% Motor Vehicle Service and Repair



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Post-school destinations change according to different student characteristics.

The On Track survey provides information on post-school pathways by selected student characteristics, including gender, location and English speaking background. For both cohorts of students (those who complete Year 12 and those who don't) the following trends can be seen:

- males are more likely to commence an apprenticeship or traineeship, while females are more likely to pursue further education*
- higher proportions of students with a language background other than English enrol in a Bachelor degree or Certificate /Diploma than those of English-speaking backgrounds
- young people in non-metropolitan Victoria are more likely to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship than their metropolitan counterparts.

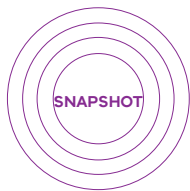
**Please note that data represented by gender is described as male and female. This analysis does not include respondents who identified as undefined gender or incomplete responses. Statewide results include all respondents (male, female, undefined, self-described and incomplete responses).*

Perceptions of careers advice and education vary for Year 12 completers and non-completers.

Young people who completed Year 12 in 2019 found careers advice more useful than non-completers overall (78 per cent of completers reporting somewhat/very useful compared with 61 per cent of non-completers).

Attendance or participation in career activities is mixed across the two groups. Generally speaking, higher proportions of Year 12 completers engaged with career activities, the only exception being TAFE taster programs or information sessions organised through the student's school. 39 per cent of young people who did not complete Year 12 attended such a program, compared to 21 per cent of Year 12 completers. The top three activities of choice for each group of students have remained the same (albeit with some movement in ranking) over the last five years.

	2020 results and rank			
	Year 12 completers	RANK		Year 12 non-completers
Have a one-on-one talk with the school's career advisor	85%	1	1	69%
Search on-line for career options at school	82%	2	2	61%
Receive written material about career and study options	79%	3	3	59%

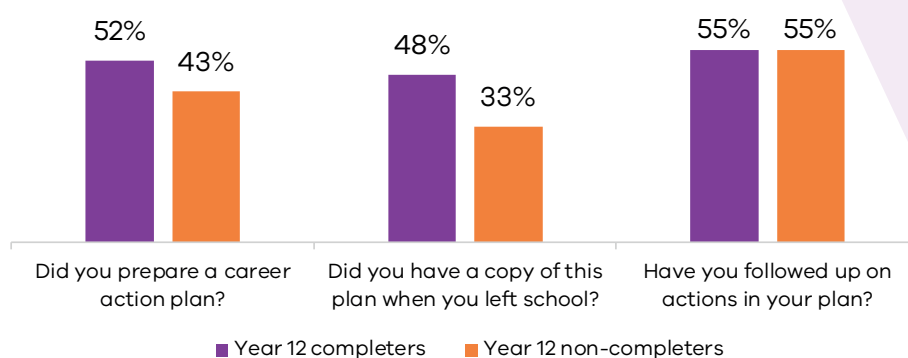


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Of those students who answered questions relating to Career Action Plans...

...52 per cent of Year 12 completers and 43 per cent of those students who did not complete Year 12 completed a Career Action Plan prior to the end of 2019. Not all students who completed a career plan took a copy with them when they left school. However, the majority of both Year 12 completers and non-completers who prepared a career action plan followed up on actions in their career plan after school (55 per cent).

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WITH A CAREER ACTION PLAN BY COMPLETION STATUS, 2020



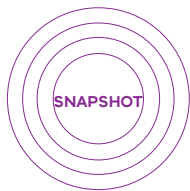
Differences in student pathways between school sectors remain evident.

Students from the non-government sector continue to complete their schooling and pursue a Bachelor degree at greater proportions than students from Victoria's government schools. Subsequently, students from the government sector are more likely to undertake a Certificate/Diploma, apprenticeship or traineeship, or be employed six months after leaving school.

2020 On Track results show that close to two-thirds of students who left a non-government school after completing Year 12 went on to study a Bachelor degree, compared to just under one-half of students from the government sector. The proportion for students from government schools in a Bachelor degree six months after school's end is also under the Victorian average (54 per cent).

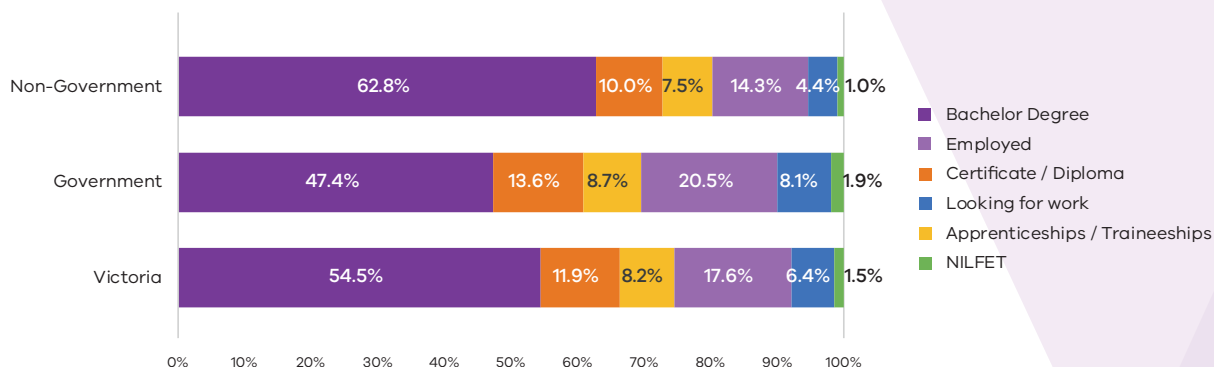
Key findings across sectors over time

- There has been a consistent decline in government school students continuing on into education and training after completing Year 12 (decreasing from 73 per cent in 2016 to 70 per cent in 2020), compared to rates for non-government school students remaining stable (81 per cent in 2016 and 80 per cent in 2020).
- There has been a slight and steady increase in the proportion of Year 12 completers from government schools proceeding to Bachelor degree studies (47 per cent in 2020, up from 46 per cent in 2016).
- While the employment opportunities for both government and non-government school leavers were disrupted by COVID-19, students leaving a government school after completing Year 12 were employed in higher proportions (20 per cent) than their counterparts from non-government schools (14 per cent).
- Between 2016 and 2020, there has been a steady increase in the number of both government and non-government school students looking for work.



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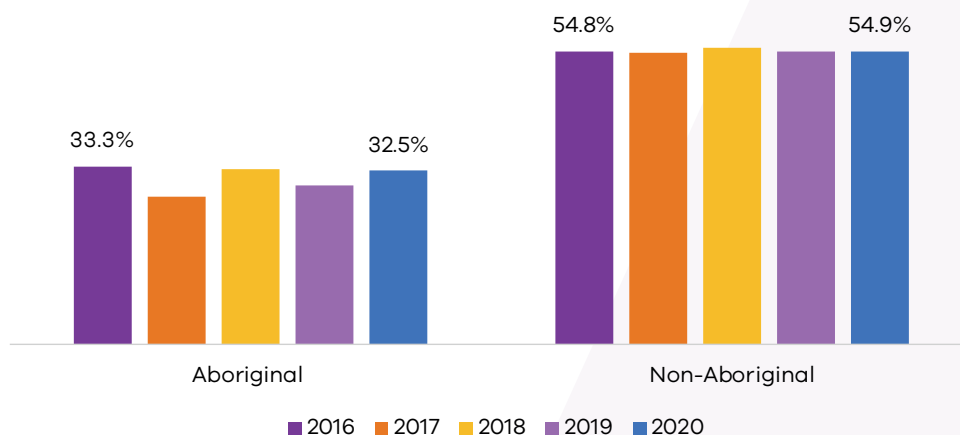
DESTINATION PROFILE , YEAR 12 COMPLETERS BY SCHOOL SECTOR, 2020

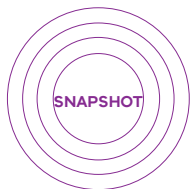


More than half of Aboriginal students go on to either employment or study a bachelor's degree.

One third of Aboriginal students who completed Year 12 in 2019 were enrolled in a Bachelor degree six months later. Whilst this is low compared to non-Aboriginal Year 12 completers (55 per cent) and the overall figure for Victoria (55 per cent), significantly lower numbers of Aboriginal young people surveyed makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions about what this data is telling us, given that small movements in such small numbers would lead to large fluctuations in proportions of the population (in 2020, the number of young people surveyed who identified as Aboriginal was around one per cent of the total survey sample).

YEAR 12 COMPLETERS ENROLLED IN A BACHELOR DEGREE AT A UNIVERSITY OR TAFE BY ABORIGINAL STATUS, 2020



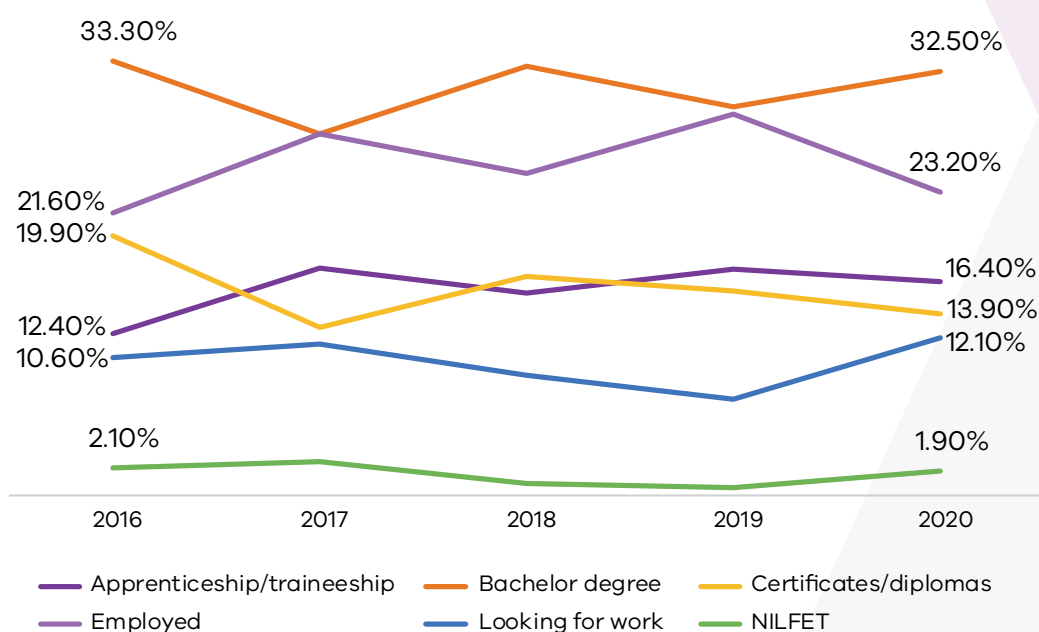


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Despite fluctuations between years, some general trends have emerged over the past five years in the destinations of Aboriginal students who go on to complete Year 12.

Each year since 2016, between 50-to-60 per cent have gone on to either employment or study at the Bachelor degree level. Reflecting statewide trends, there has also been a decrease in the proportion pursuing a Certificate or Diploma. Unlike most school leavers, COVID-19 does not appear to have disrupted the trend of more Aboriginal Year 12 completers pursuing an apprenticeship/traineeship (16 per cent in 2020, up from 12 per cent in 2016). COVID-19 has also unsettled the consistent reduction in the proportion of Aboriginal Year 12 completers looking for work.

DESTINATION PATTERNS, YEAR 12 COMPLETERS, BY ABORIGINAL STATUS, 2016-2020



Find out more

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