

NSW Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations and Expectations

2016 Annual Report



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Executive Summary

This report presents key findings from the 2016 NSW Survey of Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations. The survey consists of cross-sectional telephone interviews with students who completed Year 12 (n=3,287) or left school before completing Year 12 (n=3,700) in 2015. It also includes a longitudinal survey consisting of follow-up interviews (via online and telephone) with Year 12 completers (n=1,343), early school leavers (n=1,523) and Year 10 students (n=1,564) who took part in the 2014 NSW Survey of Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations and who had completed further follow-up interviews in 2015.

The main aim of the survey is to monitor and examine trends in, and correlates of, post-school education, training and employment destinations among secondary school students in NSW.

Main post-school destination

In 2016, 70.2% of Year 12 completers and 54.3% of early school leavers were in some form of education and training six months after leaving school.

Among Year 12 completers, the main post-school destination continues to be a Bachelor degree (51.2%), while 6.5% had entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma, 2.7% in a Certificate I, II or III, 5.5% in an apprenticeship and 4.3% in a traineeship. The remaining 29.8% of Year 12 completers were not participating in any form of further education and training. Typically, these Year 12 completers had entered full-time (8.6% of all Year 12 completers) or part-time (13.2%) employment, while 5.2% were looking for work and 2.8% were not in the labour force, education or training.

Since 2015, there has been a 5.0 percentage point decrease in Year 12 completers entering some form of education and training, which is now at its lowest point in the time series. This trend is associated with a decline in Year 12 completers entering a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma (down 2.4 points since 2015), or Certificates I, II or III course (down 2.1 points). The pattern of small annual increases (although not statistically significant from year to year) in the percentage of Year 12 completers entering a Bachelor degree since the 2010 survey appears not to have continued. The 2016 result was 2.0 percentage points lower than seen in 2015.

Initial post-school destinations among early school leavers continue to be very different to those who complete Year 12. The most common post-school destination for early school leavers continues to be an apprenticeship (27.8%), while 9.1% had entered a Certificate IV+, 9.6% had entered a Certificate I-III and 6.5% had entered a traineeship. Overall, 45.7% of early school leavers in 2016 were not participating in any form of further education. These early school leavers were typically looking for work (15.3%) or working part-time (13.5%) or working full-time (10.1%). A few (6.9%) were not in the labour force, education or training.

The main post-school destination of early school leavers in 2016 was comparable to earlier surveys in the time series. The only notable trend was a continued decline in the proportion of early school leavers participating in Certificate I-III courses (down 9.8 percentage points since 2010). The proportion not in the labour force, education or training has remained higher than seen in 2010.

Not in the labour force, education or training

The main activities of Year 12 completers and early school leavers not in the labour force, education or training (NILFET) were comparable with previous years of the survey.

Among Year 12 completers not in the labour force, education or training (2.8% of the cohort), the most common main activities related to recreation (41.3%) – typically framed as travelling or having a 'gap'

year (25.4%) and undertaking informal studying or training (28.2%). Reinforcing the finding that many were having a 'gap year', one-quarter (27.4% of the NILFET respondents) were enrolled in some form of education or training, but had deferred it.

Main activities among early school leavers not in the labour force, further education or training in 2016 were more diverse than seen among Year 12 completers. The most common activities were undertaking some form of informal studying or training (17.0%), recreation (16.3%), being unable to work due to illness (14.1%), performing home duties (13.7%) and looking after children / preparing for birth (13.2%). Few (3.8%) early school leavers not in the labour force, further education or training were enrolled in a course, but had not yet started it.

Reasons for leaving school early

The most common self-reported reasons for leaving school early in 2016 continued to relate to wanting to pursue employment and career opportunities and not liking school or teachers. Other less frequently cited reasons were not coping at school or failing subjects, school 'not being for them', finding school boring, ill-health, being bullied and wanting to study elsewhere.

Self-reported reasons for leaving school were largely comparable to previous surveys in the time series. The only significant changes noted were slight decreases in mention of wanting to pursue employment and career opportunities and not liking school / teachers, as well as slight increases in mention of looking / transitioning to other educational opportunities and school not being for them.

Career expectations

School leavers' expectations about their future career paths continue to be reasonably well aligned with their current post-school pathways and broadly consistent with previous years in the time series.

Year 12 completers typically expected to be working in professional roles by age 30 (56.4%). Fewer than one-in-ten expected to be working in other occupation categories and one-fifth (18.6%) did not know what career they expected to have at age 30. By comparison, early school leavers were more likely to expect they would be working in a technical or trade role (35.1%), or community or personal service role (12.9%) at age 30. About one-fifth expected to be working in a professional role (17.9%) or do not know what career they expected to have (22.7%).

Destination three years after leaving school

Among the longitudinal Year 12 completer cohort, two-thirds (60.2%) were participating in the same post-school destination as 2014. The main changes seen among the cohort related to an overall decrease in participation in Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma courses, Certificate I-III courses and those looking for work since 2014, but an increase in full-time employment.

The longitudinal early school leaver cohort continues to be much less likely than the Year 12 completer cohort to have remained in the same post-school destination (38.1%). Since the 2014 survey, there has been a sharp decrease in participation in Certificate I-III courses and those looking for work, but a significant increase in participation in Bachelor degrees and full-time employment.

The majority of the 2014 Year 10 student cohort was still enrolled in secondary school (90.1%) and undertaking Year 12 (89.7%) in 2016, while one-in-ten had left school early (9.9%). Their reasons for leaving school early were broadly consistent with results from the cross-sectional surveys.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and research objectives

The Survey of Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations provides a platform for the NSW Department of Education (DoE) and the NSW Skills Board to identify trends in, and correlates of, post-school education, training and employment destinations of secondary school students in NSW. The 2016 survey represents the third in the current annual time series, with the first wave conducted in 2014.

The Survey of Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations seeks to build on previous research. It provides critical information on education pathways, attainments and destinations of young people in NSW, as well as on the factors that drive their engagement, retention, educational achievements and pathway choices. The survey allows the DoE to more adequately monitor post-school pathways and will inform policy settings and planning for NSW. This will help to achieve the youth participation and attainment targets, and partially address the NSW Auditor General's recommendations relating to raising the school leaving age (2012) from 15 to 17 years of age on 1 January 2010 (Education Amendment Act 2009).

The NSW Skills Board (formerly, Board of Vocational Education and Training) had previously commissioned research to track and monitor the post-school destinations of NSW students and the importance of prior participation in vocational education and training (VET) in school. This included:

- Destination and Satisfaction Surveys in 2005 and 2006;
- Longitudinal Survey of Destination, Pathways and Satisfaction in 2005;
- Government School HSC Students in NSW Survey in 2007;
- Survey of Expectations and Destinations of Senior Secondary Students in NSW in 2010 (Marks, Underwood, Rothman & Brown, 2011); and
- Survey of Expectations and Destinations of NSW Senior Secondary Students in 2013 (Polesel, Leahy, Gillis, Dulhunty & Calvitto, 2013).

The overarching research objectives of the Survey of Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations are to identify trends in, and correlates of, post-school education, training and employment destinations in NSW.

The more specific research objectives to be investigated through the survey are to:

- Explore factors influencing student decisions to complete or not complete Year 12;
- Explore expectations of post-school education, training and employment destinations; and
- Examine the work and study status of respondents from the 2014 NSW Secondary Students' Post-School Destination Survey.

1.2. Methodology

The 2016 NSW Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations Survey consisted of three components:

- Cross-sectional telephone interviews with students who completed Year 12 in 2015 (hereafter called Year 12 completers),
- Cross-sectional telephone interviews with students who left secondary school in 2015 before completing Year 12 (hereafter called early school leavers),
- Longitudinal follow-up interviews via online and telephone with Year 12 completers, early school leavers and Year 10 students who were first interviewed in 2014.

Information collected by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for the purpose of managing the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations and results was used to identify potentially in-scope Year 12 completers and early school leavers from 2015. In addition, some enrolment information collected by the DoE for government school administration purposes was used to supplement NESA records.

Prior to surveys commencing, letters jointly signed by NESA and DoE were sent to potential participants to inform them about the purposes of the research and provide the opportunity to opt out. Letters were sent to students from all school sectors (Government, Catholic, and Independent).

Longitudinal follow-up interviews were undertaken with Year 12 completers and early school leavers who left school in 2013 and Year 10 students. These participants were first interviewed in the 2014 NSW Post-Secondary School Destinations and Expectations Survey, then completed a follow-up interview in 2015 and gave permission to be re-contacted. This cohort of current and former secondary school students were initially invited via a letter and/or email (depending on what contact information had been provided) to complete an online survey. Those who did not complete the survey online within two weeks were then contacted via telephone to participate in an interview.

The questionnaire instruments for the 2016 survey were designed by the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, DoE, with input from the Social Research Centre. The questionnaires largely replicated those used in previous surveys.

A more detailed outline of the methodology employed in 2016 is provided in Appendix 1.

1.3. About this report

This report is designed to provide a brief overview of the conduct of the 2016 NSW Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations Survey, as well as present key findings relating to the post-school destinations of secondary students in NSW and their future career expectations. This report primarily focuses on findings from the 2016 wave; however, where appropriate, comparisons are drawn to previous destinations and expectations surveys conducted in NSW. Further, it should be noted that it does not present results for all questions in the surveys.

This report is intended to be read by anyone in the community with an interest in patterns and trends in post-school destinations.

Several points should be kept in mind when considering the findings presented in this report. Firstly, before reporting, all data was weighted to match relevant population parameters. All charts and tables in this report, unless otherwise specified, show survey estimates that have been weighted in this

manner. The bases (n) shown in the tables and graphs are unweighted. Details of the approach taken to weight the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

Statistical tests were conducted to establish whether differences between the responses of subgroups, as well as between survey waves, were genuine rather than simply due to random variation. Testing of the statistical significance of differences between estimated proportions has been carried out using survey-weighted t-tests. These account for the survey design implemented in the Destination surveys, correctly calculating variances for stratified, disproportionate samples. The testing was undertaken in R (R Core, 2015) using the survey package (Lumley, 2012). Where results are reported as “different”, it implies that a statistically significant difference at a 99% confidence level has been established. Such differences are indicated by an asterisk (*) in tables and charts.

Further, results for subgroups are generally only noted if a statistically significant difference exists and the differences are substantial in size. This is because when a large sample size is involved, small subgroup differences (or change over time) may be statistically significant, but are likely to be of little practical importance. Given that these relatively small differences will sometimes be statistically significant, the commentary in this report does not mention every statistically significant difference, but rather draws out the main themes, trends and relationships in the data.

It should be noted that the trends presented throughout this report are based on simple bivariate analysis. That is, analysis examining the relationship between two variables in isolation. Although useful for providing an initial descriptive of key results, the main limitation of this analytical approach is that other factors are not taken into account. Due to this, caution should be taken when drawing conclusions from results based on the bivariate analyses.

Some of the tables in this report present survey data by a range of variables. For variables which are not self-evident as to how they have been constructed, the definitions used to create them are outlined below.

- **Region (SA4 clusters):** is based on the location of the school attended by a particular student. This variable defines eleven geographic regions across NSW. The regions are intuitive groupings of the 28 Statistical Area Levels (SA4) for NSW defined within the ABS Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). On occasion, these eleven regions were further grouped into Greater Sydney and other regions in NSW (see Appendix 2).
- **Parental socio-economic status (SES):** is an individual measure of SES derived from the respondent's answers to questions about their parent(s) main occupation and highest level of education. It was constructed following the principles outlined by Polesel et al. (2013), and is consistent with the approach adopted by Marks et al. (2011; see Appendix 2). The method provides a continuous measure of SES, however, for the descriptive results presented throughout this report, this measure was divided into quartiles. It should be noted that some revision to questionnaire items relating to parental (mother and father) highest level of education were made at the request of DoE in 2015.
- **Main post-school destination:** a total of nine post-school destinations were defined from responses to a number of items relating to participation in further education and current employment. This classification system prioritises education related post-school destinations over participation in employment. The nine main destination categories are:
 - o Bachelor degree
 - o VET Certificate IV+
 - o VET Certificate I-III

- o Apprenticeship
- o Traineeship
- o Full-time employment (35 hours or more per week)
- o Part-time employment (less than 35 hours per week)
- o Looking for work and
- o Not in the labour force, education or training (NILFET)

A full definition of each post-school destination is provided in Appendix 2.

The final point to consider when reading this report is that in some tables and figures the totals shown and/or mentioned in the accompanying text may differ slightly from the apparent sum of their component elements. This is simply due to the effects of rounding.

2. Post-school destinations

This section of the report examines post-school destinations for NSW students who exited the school system in 2015. Survey results are presented separately for those who completed Year 12 and those who left secondary school before completing Year 12 in 2015.

The primary focus of this section is on students' main post-school destination and its relationship with a range of socio-demographic factors. This section also presents selected results relating to participation in education and employment more generally, as well as some analysis of early school leavers and Year 12 completers who are not in the labour force or in further education or training.

2.1. Main destination

2.1.1. Year 12 completers

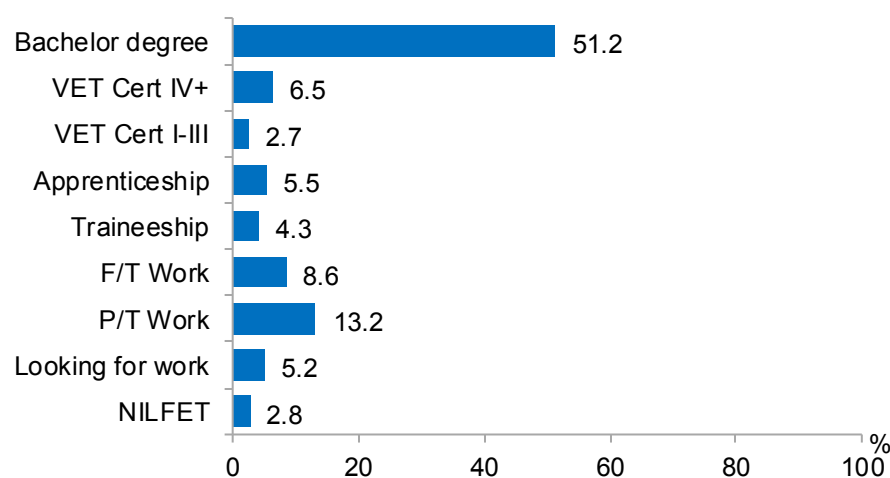
Main survey findings

The main post-school destination of NSW students who completed Year 12 in 2015 are summarised in Figure 1. The majority (70.2%) of Year 12 completers were undertaking some form of education and training when interviewed in 2016, while slightly more than one-quarter (27.1%) were employed or looking for work and a minority (2.8%) were not in the labour force, education or training.

Studying a Bachelor degree was the most common form of further education and training among Year 12 completers, with slightly more than half (51.2%) studying at this level. The main universities attended were Western Sydney University (15.7% of those studying a Bachelor degree), University of New South Wales (13.3%), University of Sydney (13.3%) and Macquarie University (10.4%).

In terms of other forms of further education among Year 12 completers, 6.5% were enrolled in a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma, 2.7% in Certificates I, II or III, 5.5% in an apprenticeship and 4.3% in a traineeship. Among those not currently undertaking further education or training, most were employed in full-time (8.6% of all Year 12 completers) or part-time work (13.2%), while 5.2% were looking for work and 2.8% were not in the labour force, education or training.

Figure 1 Main post-school destination in 2016 of Year 12 completers



Base: All Year 12 completers (n=3,287).

Comparison with previous surveys

Table 1 summarises the main post-school destination of Year 12 completers since the 2010 post-school destination survey. Notable variations over time include:

- A significant decrease in the proportion of Year 12 completers entering some form of education and training between 2015 and 2016. The proportion in some form of education and training is now similar to what it was in 2010.
- A significant decrease in the proportion of Year 12 completers entering VET courses not associated with an apprenticeship or traineeship (i.e. Certificate IV+ and Certificates I-III) in comparison to the 2015 survey results and in comparison to the 2010 figures.
- The trend seen over the past four survey waves for small increases in the proportion of Year 12 completers entering a Bachelor degree (although each increase from year to year was not statistically significant) has not continued in 2016, with participation down two percentage points from 2015.
- Entering into an apprenticeship or traineeship has remained reasonably stable across the time series, while the apparent decrease in participation in part-time employment noted in 2015 was not sustained in 2016.
- The proportion of Year 12 completers not in the labour force, education or training is higher than in 2010 and 2013, but is comparable to 2014 and 2015.

Table 1 Main post-school destination of Year 12 completers by year (2010 – 2016)

	2010	2013	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All Year 12 completers	2,087	1,945	3,581	3,490	3,287
Some form of education and training	71.8	75.5*	72.8	75.2*	70.2
<i>Bachelor degree</i>	47.4	51.9*	52.5*	53.2*	51.2
<i>VET Cert IV+</i>	9.9	9.3	7.3*	8.9	6.5*
<i>VET Cert I-III</i>	6.0	6.7	3.7*	4.8	2.7*
<i>Apprenticeship</i>	5.4	4.6	4.9	4.7	5.5
<i>Traineeship</i>	3.2	3.0	4.4	3.6	4.3
Employed	22.4	18.5	19.1	17.7	21.8
<i>F/T Work</i>	8.9	6.4*	6.6*	7.0	8.6
<i>P/T Work</i>	13.5	12.1	12.5	10.7*	13.2
Looking for work	4.8	5.0	5.5	5.0	5.2
NILFET	1.0	1.1	2.6*	2.1*	2.8*

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2010 ($p < .01$).

Socio-demographic differences¹

Gender

Female Year 12 completers in 2016 are more likely than their male counterparts to have entered a Bachelor degree (see Table 2). The gap between the proportion of female and male Year 12 completers entering a Bachelor degree in 2016 remains higher than seen in earlier surveys (7.5 points in 2010, 6.2 points in 2013 and 4.4 points in 2014) and similar to the gap in 2015 (8.4 percentage points).

In comparison, male Year 12 completers continue to be much more likely to have entered an apprenticeship and a little more likely to be looking for work (although the latter difference was not statistically significant). Further, in contrast to previous surveys, male and female Year 12 completers did not differ in terms of having entered full-time employment.

Table 2 Main post-school destination in 2016 of Year 12 completers by gender

Main destination	Gender	
	Male %	Female %
Base (n): All Year 12 completers	1,534	1,753
Bachelor degree	46.9	55.1*
VET Cert IV+	6.3	6.6
VET Cert I-III	2.1	3.3
Apprenticeship	9.6	1.7*
Traineeship	3.7	4.9
F/T Work	8.8	8.4
P/T Work	13.1	13.4
Looking for work	6.4	4.1
NILFET	3.1	2.4

* Indicates result is significantly different to males ($p < .01$).

Parental socio-economic status

There continues to be a strong relationship between parental SES (presented as quartiles)² and post-school destinations among Year 12 completers, especially relating to students entering a Bachelor degree (see Table 3 overleaf).

The proportion of Year 12 completers who entered a Bachelor degree in 2016 increased substantially with SES quartile. Entering a Bachelor degree was highest among Year 12 completers from the highest SES quartile (63.9%) and lowest among those from the lowest SES quartile (37.1%). However, the proportion of Year 12 completers who in 2016 entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma (and Certificate I-III to a lesser extent) or employment (full- or part-time) increased as SES decreased. Further, the proportion of Year 12 completers entering into an apprenticeship tended to be higher among those from the middle SES quartiles than either the highest or lowest quartiles.

¹ Socio-demographic differences are determined using bivariate analysis, a form of statistical analysis that examines the relationship between two variables. It should be noted that a relationship between variables does not imply the existence of a causal relationship.

² See Appendix 2 for a summary of how this measure was constructed.

Table 3 Main post-school destination in 2016 of Year 12 completers by socio-economic status quartile

Main destination	SES			
	Highest	Upper Middle	Lower Middle	Lowest
	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All Year 12 completers	1,101	814	722	617
Bachelor degree	63.9	50.3*	42.8*	37.1*
VET Cert IV+	4.3	6.6	8.1	9.2*
VET Cert I-III	2.4	2.1	3.0	3.5
Apprenticeship	2.3	7.1*	7.7*	5.5
Traineeship	3.6	4.9	4.2	5.2
F/T Work	6.1	7.2	11.9*	12.4*
P/T Work	9.7	13.2	15.5	18.0*
Looking for work	4.0	6.7	6.4	4.3
NILFET	3.7	1.9	0.5	4.8

* Indicates result is significantly different to highest parental SES quartile ($p < .01$).

School sector

Year 12 completers who attended a government school (45.0%) were less likely to have entered a Bachelor degree in 2016 than their Catholic (53.9%) or Independent (68.7%) school peers. Year 12 completers who attended a Catholic school were also less likely to have entered a Bachelor degree than those who had attended an independent school (68.7%, see Table 4).

By comparison, Year 12 completers from government schools were more likely than those from other school sectors to be engaged in part-time work or looking for work. Further, Year 12 completers from government and Catholic schools were more likely than those from the Independent sector to have entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma or traineeship.

Table 4 Main post-school destination in 2016 of Year 12 completers by school sector

Main destination	School sector		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
	%	%	%
Base (n): All Year 12 completers	1,474	935	878
Bachelor degree	45.0	53.9*	68.7*
VET Cert IV+	7.0	7.0	3.7*
VET Cert I-III	2.9	2.8	1.7
Apprenticeship	5.3	7.5	3.1
Traineeship	4.9	4.5	1.6*
F/T Work	9.0	8.9	6.9
P/T Work	16	10.3*	8.0*
Looking for work	6.8	3.2*	2.7*
NILFET	3.0	1.9	3.6

* Indicates result is significantly different to government sector ($p < .01$).

As has been noted in previous post-school destination reports (Polesel et al., 2013 and Myers et al., 2015a and 2015b), these results do not account for the influence of other factors, such as parental SES. More specifically, there is a strong relationship between parental SES and school sector, which is likely to account for some or all of the differences in destination outcomes among school sectors (see Table 5).

Table 5 Parental SES quartile by school sector among Year 12 completers (2016)

Parental SES quartile	School sector		
	Government	Catholic	Independent
	%	%	%
Base (n): All Year 12 completers	1,474	935	878
Highest	30.8	34.0	57.7*
Upper middle	23.7	28.4	21.7
Lower middle	22.3	21.9	12.6*
Lowest	22.1	14.5*	7.2*

* Indicates result is significantly different to government sector ($p < .01$).

Participation in VET while at school

Year 12 completers who undertook at least one VET course while at school continue to be less likely than those who had not undertaken a VET course to enter a Bachelor degree (24.5% vs. 65.5%; see Table 6). However, they were more likely to have entered all other post-school destinations, except not being in the labour force, education or training. This is broadly consistent with results reported in 2015, with the exception of the greater proportion of participants of VET while at school undertaking traineeships compared with students who did not participate in VET.

Table 6 Main post-school destination in 2016 of Year 12 completers by participation in VET while at school

Main destination	Participated in VET	Did not participate in VET
	%	%
Base (n): All Year 12 completers	1,140	2,147
Bachelor degree	24.5	65.5*
VET Cert IV+	9.3	4.9*
VET Cert I-III	4.5	1.7*
Apprenticeship	12.0	2.0*
Traineeship	7.3	2.7*
F/T Work	13.6	5.9*
P/T Work	17.7	10.8*
Looking for work	8.3	3.5*
NILFET	2.8	2.8

* Indicates result is significantly different to having undertaken a VET course while at school ($p < .01$).

Cultural and linguistic background

Year 12 completers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were less likely than others to have entered a Bachelor degree (26.5% vs. 51.9%). These young people were however, more likely to have entered a VET Certificate I-III course, a traineeship, employment (full or part-time) or be looking for work. In contrast to results from the 2015 survey, Year 12 completers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were no more or less likely to be not in the labour force, education or training than other year 12 completers.

Year 12 completers who spoke a language other than English at home were more likely than others to have entered a Bachelor degree in 2016 (65.8% vs. 45.7%). They were, however, less likely to have entered full-time or part-time employment (see Table 7).

Table 7 Main post-school destination in 2016 of Year 12 completers by cultural and linguistic background

Main destination	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		Language background other than English	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Base (n): All Year 12 completers	769	2,518	603	2,684
Bachelor degree	26.5	51.9*	65.8	45.7*
VET Cert IV+	7.3	6.4	6.0	6.7
VET Cert I-III	6.9	2.6*	1.8	3.0
Apprenticeship	5.3	5.5	3.8	6.2
Traineeship	7.6	4.2*	2.7	4.9
F/T Work	12.5	8.5*	5.0	10.0*
P/T Work	18.0	13.1*	8.0	15.2*
Looking for work	12.7	5.0*	3.9	5.7
NILFET	3.3	2.8	3.1	2.7

* Indicates result is significantly different to respondents identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples / having a language background other than English (p<.01).

Region (SA4 cluster)

Consistent with trends seen in previous iterations of the post-school destination survey, Year 12 completers from the Greater Sydney area – and especially those from Inner Sydney, Sydney North and Sydney South – were more likely to have entered a Bachelor degree than those from regional or rural areas of NSW (62.0% vs. 32.5%) (see Table 8).

By comparison, Year 12 completers from regional or rural areas of NSW were more likely to have entered a VET Certificate I-III course, traineeship or full-time or part-time employment (see Table 8).

Table 8 Main post-school destination in 2016 of Year 12 school completers by NSW region (SA4 cluster)

Main destination	NSW Total %	Greater Sydney							Rest of NSW					
		Sub- total %	Sydney Inner %	Sydney North %	Sydney North West %	Sydney South %	Sydney South West %	Sydney West %	Sub- total %	Central Coast Hunter %	North East NSW %	North West NSW %	South East NSW %	South West NSW %
Base (n): All Year 12 completers	3,287	1606	272	230	284	250	295	275	1681	369	359	321	320	312
Bachelor degree	51.2	62.0	66.4*	68.3*	59.8	65.1*	53.8	56.2	32.5*	33.9*	35.7*	28.3*	30.8*	30.5*
VET Cert IV+	6.5	6.0	4.3	2.0	6.5	9.0	9.2	6.7	7.3	6.1	9.1	8.0	9.0	4.5
VET Cert I-III	2.7	1.4	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.6	1.7	4.3	4.9*	6.9	4.1	3.6	3.7	4.1
Apprenticeship	5.5	5.1	2.4*	5.6	6.4	5.7	7.3	3.7	6.2	7.0	4.0	10.1	6.4	5.1
Traineeship	4.3	2.9	0.9	1.2	4.7	1.7	4.4	5.0	6.8*	4.3	7.3	5.7	8.4	9.4
F/T Work	8.6	5.9	5.3	6.3	6.7	4.0*	6.9	6.1	13.4*	13.5	10.0	15.2	9.1	21.4*
P/T Work	13.2	9.0	9.6	11.2	7.7	7.7*	10.8	5.9*	20.5*	20.7	22.1	21.4	20.5	18.1
Looking for work	5.2	4.8	5.0	1.4	6.1	4.9	4.9	7.5	6.0	5.3	6.8	7.0	7.6	3.6
NILFET	2.8	2.9	5.4	3.2	1.6	1.3	0.9*	4.6	2.5	2.4	0.9	0.7*	4.6	3.3

* Indicates result is significantly different to the average of all other regions (p<.01).

2.1.2. Early school leavers

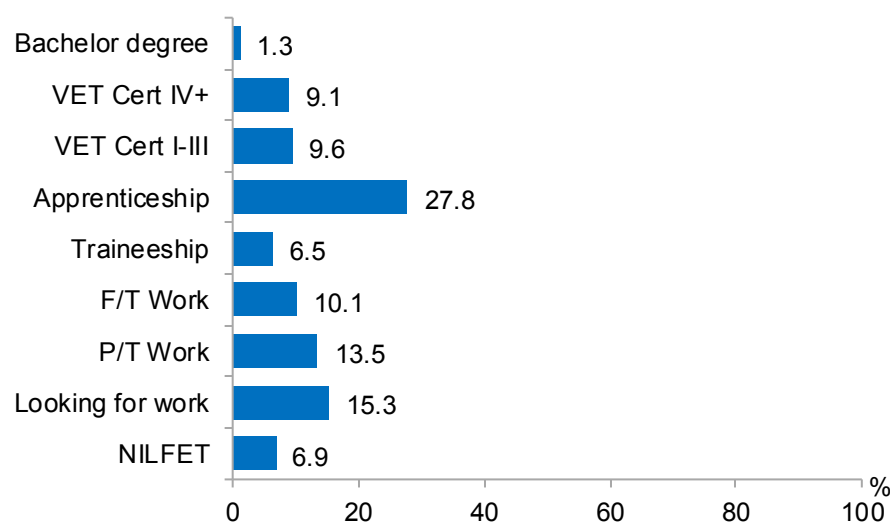
Main survey findings

The main post-school destinations among early school leavers continue to be substantially different to those previously described for Year 12 completers (see Figure 2).

Slightly more than half (54.3%) of early school leavers surveyed in 2016 were undertaking some form of education and training in 2016, while approximately two-fifths (38.9%) were employed or looking for work. The most common form of further education and training among early school leavers in 2016 was an apprenticeship, with slightly less than three-in-ten (27.8%) training at this level. Further, 9.6% had entered a Certificate I-III, 9.1% a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma and 6.5% had entered a traineeship.

Most of those not undertaking further education were employed in part-time (13.5% of all early school leavers) or full-time work (10.1%), while 15.3% were looking for work and 6.9% were not in the labour force, education or training.

Figure 2 Main post-school destination in 2016 of early school leavers



Base: All early school leavers (n=3,700).

Comparison with previous surveys

Table 9 summarises the main post-school destination of early school leavers from the past five waves of post-school destination surveys in NSW. The number of early school leavers surveyed in 2010 and 2013 was very low and used a different sampling method (clustered by school), which limits the potential for meaningful comparison with these years; however, these data are presented for completeness.

Overall, the main post-school destination of early school leavers in 2016 was very similar to earlier years of the post-school destination survey. The only notable trend is a continued decline in the proportion of early school leavers participating in Certificate I-III courses (down 9.8 percentage points since 2010). In addition, the proportion of early school leavers whose main post-school destination was not in the labour force, education or training remained higher than that recorded in 2010 and 2013.

Since the 2014 survey there has been a number of small changes in the main post-school destination of early school leavers in NSW. Notably, there has been a significant decrease in participation in Certificate I-III courses (down 3.3 points in 2015 and 5.0 percentage points from 2014 to 2016).

Table 9 Main post-school destination of early school leavers by year (2010 – 2016)

Main destination	2010 %	2013 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %
Base (n): All early school leavers	311	193	7,000	3,135	3,700
Some form of education and training	55.1	64.9	56.0	53.8	54.3
<i>Bachelor degree</i>	0.4	0.0	0.9	1.1	1.3
<i>VET Cert IV+</i>	6.7	7.7	7.8	9.6	9.1
<i>VET Cert I-III</i>	19.4	22.8	14.6	11.3*	9.6*
<i>Apprenticeship</i>	25.7	28.6	26.2	26.0	27.8
<i>Traineeship</i>	3.0	5.8	6.5*	5.8	6.5*
Employed	29.7	22.4	20.5	22.3	23.6
<i>F/T Work</i>	13.6	10.4	8.3*	9.7	10.1
<i>P/T Work</i>	16.0	12.0	12.2	12.6	13.5
Looking for work	11.8	11.5	17.2*	16.4	15.3
NILFET	3.5	1.2	6.4*	7.6*	6.9*

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2010 ($p < .01$).

NOTE: Diploma and Advanced Diploma are grouped with VET Cert IV+

Socio-demographic differences

Gender and age

Consistent with results from previous surveys, gender differences associated with post-school destinations continue to be more pronounced among early school leavers than among Year 12 completers. Female early school leavers were more likely to have entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma, Certificate I-III, part-time employment or not be in the labour force, education, or training (see Table 10). By comparison, male early school leavers were more likely to have entered an apprenticeship (41.8% vs. 6.6%) or full-time employment (11.7% vs. 7.8%).

The main post-school destination of early school leavers also varied by age (defined as age at the end of 2015). Survey results indicated having entered an employment-related destination (particularly full-time employment and looking for work) tended to increase with age, while having entered an apprenticeship tended to decrease with age.

Table 10 Main post-school destination in 2016 of early school leavers by gender and age

Main destination	Gender		Age at the end of 2015			
	Male	Female	15	16	17	18+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All early school leavers	2,360	1,340	298	1,805	1,272	325
Bachelor degree	1.2	1.4	0.2	0.8	1.2	2.9
VET Cert IV+	4.8	15.7*	10.9	9.2	8.2	10.6
VET Cert I-III	6.0	15.1*	13.2	9.5	8.9	10.2
Apprenticeship	41.8	6.6*	37.6	34.8	26.5*	12.2*
Traineeship	5.5	8.0	8.9	7.1	6.8	3.5
F/T Work	11.7	7.8*	4.5	9.2*	10.0*	14.7*
P/T Work	9.9	18.8*	12.0	11.6	14.0	16.7
Looking for work	14.0	17.1	8.9	12.6	16.4*	20.7*
NILFET	5.0	9.6*	3.8	5.3	8.0*	8.5

* Indicates result is significantly different to males (for gender) or 15 year olds (for age at the end of 2015) (p<.01).

NOTE: Diploma and Advanced Diploma are grouped with VET Cert IV+

Parental socio-economic status

The relationship between SES and main post-school destination among early school leavers continues to be more complex than seen for Year 12 completers (see Table 11).

The 2016 survey results indicated that the relationship between SES and entering an apprenticeship was less pronounced than in previous surveys. Early school leavers from the lowest SES quartile tended to be least likely to have entered an apprenticeship. However, only the difference to the lower middle SES quartiles was statistically significant. Results also indicated that entering employment (either full- or part-time) and looking for work tended to increase as SES decreased. Further, unlike Year 12 completers, the percentage of early leavers entering a higher-level VET course tended to increase with SES quartile.

Table 11 Main post-school destination in 2016 of early school leavers by socio-economic status quartile

Main destination	SES			
	Highest	Upper Middle	Lower Middle	Lowest
	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All early school leavers	526	885	1,075	1,141
Bachelor degree	3.0	1.1	0.8	1.1
VET Cert IV+	13.2*	11.2	8.7	6.3*
VET Cert I-III	12.0*	10.2	6.8*	10.1
Apprenticeship	28.0	29.4	31.6	23.6
Traineeship	5.9	7.1	7.6	5.7
F/T Work	7.5*	8.8	10.2	12.6*
P/T Work	10.4	12.3	14.3	15.6
Looking for work	12.5	15.0	13.6	17.2
NILFET	7.4	5.0	6.4	7.8

* Indicates result is significantly different to highest parental SES quartile ($p < .01$).

School sector

Compared to earlier survey results, there were limited differences in early school leavers' post-school destinations by school sector.

Early school leavers from the Independent school sector continue to be the most likely to have entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma course, while early school leavers from the government school sector tended to be the least likely (see Table 12). Further, early school leavers from the government school sector were more likely than others to be looking for work.

Early school leavers from the Catholic school sector were more likely than others to have entered an apprenticeship and were the least likely to be looking for work or not in the labour force, education or training.

Table 12 Main post-school destination in 2016 of early school leavers by school sector

Main destination	School sector		
	Government %	Catholic %	Independent %
Base (n): All early school leavers	2,783	617	300
Bachelor degree	1.1	1.3	2.5
VET Cert IV+	7.7	13.9*	16.7*
VET Cert I-III	9.6	8.6	11.3
Apprenticeship	25.6	41.6*	27.0
Traineeship	6.7	6.2	4.7
F/T Work	10.6	8.4	7.9
P/T Work	14.1	10.8	11.8
Looking for work	17.0	7.1*	11.4
NILFET	7.6	2.1*	6.8

* Indicates result is significantly different to government ($p < .01$).

Participation in VET while at school

The main post-school destinations of early school leavers in 2016 were not strongly associated with whether an early school leaver had participated in a VET course while still at school.

Consistent with previous years, results indicated that early school leavers who had participated in a VET course while at school were less likely to have entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma course than those who had not (see Table 13). No other significant differences were noted.

Table 13 Main post-school destination in 2016 of early school leavers by participation in VET while at school

Main destination	Participated in VET %	Did not participate in VET %
Base (n): All early school leavers	1,514	2,186
Bachelor degree	1.0	1.5
VET Cert IV+	6.0	11.7*
VET Cert I-III	8.0	10.9
Apprenticeship	28.0	27.6
Traineeship	7.1	6.0
F/T Work	11.6	8.9
P/T Work	14.8	12.4
Looking for work	17.3	13.6
NILFET	6.2	7.4

* Indicates result is significantly different to having undertaken a VET course at school ($p < .01$).

Cultural and linguistic background

Early school leavers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were more likely than others to be looking for work or not in the labour force, education or training. Although not statistically significant, but consistent with trends noted in previous years, early school leavers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples tended to be more likely to have entered a Certificate I-III course. Further, early school leavers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were

less likely than others to have entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma course or an apprenticeship.

Early school leavers who spoke a language other than English at home were more likely than those who spoke English only to have entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma course (see Table 14). Similar to results from the 2015 survey, no other significant differences were noted by language spoken at home.

Table 14 Main post-school destination in 2016 of early school leavers by cultural and linguistic background

Main destination	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		Language background other than English	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Base (n): All early school leavers	432	3,268	383	3,317
Bachelor degree	0.6	1.3	2.6	1.1
VET Cert IV+	1.9	10.0*	15.0	8.4*
VET Cert I-III	13.0	9.2	9.7	9.6
Apprenticeship	14.9	29.3*	25.1	28.1
Traineeship	7.1	6.4	4.4	6.8
F/T Work	7.8	10.4	11.1	10.0
P/T Work	11.7	13.7	9.1	14.1
Looking for work	30.9	13.4*	14.4	15.4
NILFET	12.0	6.2*	8.5	6.6

* Indicates result is significantly different to identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples / having a language background other than English ($p < .01$).

Region (SA4 cluster)

Consistent with patterns seen in previous years of the post-school destination survey, the early school leavers in Greater Sydney were more likely than those in regional or rural areas of NSW to have entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma course or an apprenticeship (see Table 15). There was a high degree of variability in the proportion of early school leavers entering an apprenticeship within the Greater Sydney region and the rest of NSW overall. For example, entering an apprenticeship was higher among early school leavers who attended a secondary school in Sydney South (39.9%) and South West NSW (36.3%), but lower among early school leavers who attended a secondary school in Sydney Inner (16.5%) and North East NSW (18.2%).

The 2016 results also indicated that those who lived in regional or rural areas of NSW were more likely to have entered a Certificate I-III course.

Table 15 Main post-school destination in 2016 of early school leavers by NSW region (SA4 cluster)

Main destination	NSW Total	Greater Sydney	Sydney Inner	Sydney North	Sydney North West	Sydney South	Sydney South West	Sydney West	Rest of NSW	Central Coast Hunter	North East NSW	North West NSW	South East NSW	South West NSW
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All early school leavers	3,700	1,558	163	169	340	263	362	261	2,142	677	381	253	448	383
Bachelor degree	1.3	1.8	2.8	1.5	0.7	0.5	2.0	3.0	0.9	1.6	0.2	1.2	-	0.9
VET Cert IV+	9.1	11.2	14.9	10.9	11.3	9.1	11.1	10.7	7.6*	10.0	4.2	6.5	10.7	3.7
VET Cert I-III	9.6	7.3	10.6	12.1	8.8	4.6	4.3	6.8	11.3*	8.3	16.3*	12.0	10.9	11.5
Apprenticeship	27.8	30.4	16.5*	27.6	34.1	39.9*	33.1	27.2	25.8*	24.4	18.2*	24.5	28.2	36.3*
Traineeship	6.5	6.0	2.4	5.7	8.4	5.4	6.2	6.7	6.9	5.5	9.7	4.3	6.1	8.7
F/T Work	10.1	10.5	8.0	13.3	8.5	13.1	10.0	10.7	9.8	9.7	8.4	10.3	11.9	9.0*
P/T Work	13.5	12.0	13.6	9.5	14.2	10.8	11.9	11.3	14.6	16.9	16.7	15.2	12.8	9.0
Looking for work	15.3	13.4	21.7	12.5	8.2*	10.4	13.9	14.7	16.7	16.4	16.9	19.9	16.4	15.0
NILFET	6.9	7.5	9.4	6.9	5.7	6.2	7.5	8.9	6.4	7.1	9.3	6.0	3.0	5.9

* Indicates result is significantly different to the average result of all other regions (p<.01).

2.2. Educational status

Overall participation in further education or training continues to differ markedly between Year 12 completers and early school leavers (see Table 16).

Slightly less than three-quarters (70.2%) of Year 12 completers were currently participating in some form of further education or training, while another 6.1% were enrolled but had not yet commenced. The proportion of Year 12 completers currently participating in some form of further education and training was significantly lower than in 2015 (down 5.0 percentage points to 70.2%), but comparable with 2014. This decrease was offset by an increase in Year 12 completers not enrolled to study (up 4.9 percentage points to 23.7%).

By comparison, approximately half (51.2%) of early school leavers were currently participating in some form of further education or training, while 2.8% were enrolled but had not yet commenced. Since 2014, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of early school leavers not studying and a slight decrease in those enrolled to study but not yet commenced.

Table 16 Education status among Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Education status	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All respondents	3,581	3,490	3,287	7,000	3,135	3,700
Currently studying	72.0	75.2	70.2	53.3	53.1	51.2
Enrolled, but not yet started	7.8	6.0	6.1	4.8	2.3*	2.8*
Not studying	20.2	18.8	23.7	42.0	44.7	46.1*

* Indicates result is significantly different to the 2014 result ($p < .01$).

2.2.1. Areas of study

The areas of study in further education and training being undertaken by Year 12 completers and early school leavers (excluding those undertaking an apprenticeship and traineeship) are summarised in Table 17.

The main areas of study among Year 12 completers in 2016 were society and culture (23.6%), management and commerce (21.3%), health (15.1%), creative arts (11.8%) and natural and physical sciences (10.6%). This is consistent with previous survey years.

As in previous surveys, the profile of main areas of study among early school leavers differs from that of Year 12 completers. In 2016, the most common area of study for early school leavers was society and culture (15.4%), but this was followed by creative arts (15.0%), management and commerce (14.4%), food, hospitality and personal services (12.8%), and agriculture and environment (8.8%). Since 2014 there has been an increase in early school leavers' participation in further education relating to agriculture and environment, as well as creative arts, and a decrease in mixed field programmes.

However, when the area of study undertaken by Year 12 completers and early school leavers is compared at the equivalent level of study (e.g. Certificate IV+ and Certificate I-III), no statistically significant differences are seen between the cohorts (see Table 18).

Table 17 Area of study for those currently in further education (2014 – 2016)

Area of study	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): Currently studying Bachelor degree, VET Cert IV+ or VET Cert I-III	1,998	2,106	1,886	1,569	727	697
Natural and physical sciences	12.0	11.7	10.6	0.7	2.5	0.8
Information technology	5.8	4.7	4.7	4.7	5.2	4.5
Engineering and related technologies	9.1	8.1	7.7	4.2	3.9	2.7
Architecture and building	2.2	2.4	4.2	5.7	2.6	4.5
Agriculture, environment and related	1.0	0.7	1.5	3.9	4.0	8.8*
Health	15.1	16.8	15.1	7.3	11.7	7.5
Education	8.2	7.5	6.4	6.2	6.6	6.4
Management and commerce	22.1	21.2	21.3	18.6	17.4	14.4
Society and culture	23.5	23.9	23.6	12.3	12.5	15.4
Creative arts	9.3	10.5	11.8	9.1	10.9	15.0*
Food, hospitality and personal services	1.7	2.3	1.1	15.2	14.7	12.8
Mixed field programmes	1.6	1.9	1.9	12.2	8.5	4.7*
Other	0.0	0.2	1.9	0.2	0.4	0.7
Don't know/Refused	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0

* Indicates result is significantly different to the 2014 result ($p < .01$).

Table 18 Area of study for Year 12 completers and early school leavers by selected education-based post-school destinations in 2016

Area of study	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	Bachelor degree	VET Cert IV+	VET Cert I-III	Bachelor degree	VET Cert IV+	VET Cert I-III
Base (n): Currently studying Bachelor degree, VET Cert IV+ or VET Cert I-III	1,565	204	117	41	310	346
Natural and physical sciences	11.8	4.7	0.2	1.8	0.0	1.4
Information technology	4.0	11.4	3.5	19.7	4.7	2.4
Engineering and related technologies	8.1	5.5	6.6	1.8	0.3	5.0
Architecture and building	3.6	8.9	3.9	1.6	4.8	4.6
Agriculture, environment and related	1.3	0.6	7.6	1.4	4.2	14.3
Health	16.4	8.4	6.1	20.6	7.6	5.8
Education	6.4	5.9	7.8	3.9	9.5	3.8
Management and commerce	22.6	13.3	16.7	2.2	13.5	16.8
Society and culture	25.1	13.6	18.8	21.2	17.7	12.5
Creative arts	11.5	16.9	5.7	22.7	22.2	7.2
Food, hospitality and Personal services	0.2	8.0	1.3	2.6	14.4	12.6
Mixed field programmes	0.8	4.0	17.5	0.0	2.1	7.7
Other	2.0	0.1	4.0	1.9	0.4	0.8
Don't know/Refused	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note: No significant differences are noted in the above table

2.2.2. Likelihood of undertaking further education

Year 12 completers and early school leavers not currently studying or enrolled in further education or training were asked an additional question about intentions. Specifically, they were asked how likely it is that they would start some study or training in the next two years that would lead to a qualification.

The majority of Year 12 completers (85.4%) and early school leavers (80.5%) who were not currently studying or enrolled in any form of further education or training believed it was 'extremely' or 'somewhat' likely they would start some study or training in the next two years (see Table 19). About one-in-ten said it was 'not very likely' they would start some study or training, while about one in twenty or fewer stated it was 'not at all likely'.

Self-reported likelihood to undertake further study or training was comparable between Year 12 completers and early school leavers. Results were consistent with those seen in previous surveys.

Table 19 Likelihood of undertaking further education in the next two years among Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Likelihood of undertaking further education	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %
Base (n): Not currently studying or enrolled in further education and non-proxy interview	807	761	782	2,613	1,173	1,337
NET: Likely	85.3	86.8	85.4	81.4	81.0	80.5
<i>Extremely likely</i>	48.2	48.8	43.0	44.2	40.2	40.9
<i>Somewhat likely</i>	37.1	37.9	42.5	37.2	40.8	39.6
Not very likely	8.9	9.4	7.9	10.3	11.4	12.1
Not at all likely	3.8	2.7	5.5	5.3	4.4	5.8
Don't know / Refused	2.0	1.1	1.2	3.1	3.2	1.6*

* Indicates result is significantly different to the 2014 result ($p < .01$).

Year 12 completers and early school leavers who were not currently studying and stated they had no plans to undertake further study in the next two years were asked why they held that intention.

The main reasons given by early school leavers related to being disengaged with education (21.6%), employment (15.9%) and beliefs they do not need a qualification (14.9%, see Table 20). Although not statistically significant, there appears to have been an increase in the proportion of survey participants who mentioned that they did not like studying and a decrease in employment-related reasons.

Results for Year 12 completers not planning to undertake further study are not presented due to the very small base (n<50).

Table 20 Reason for planning to not undertake further study among early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Main reason	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %
Base (n): No intention to undertake further study	137	53	71
Disengaged with education	24.0	24.6	21.6
<i>Don't like studying</i>	12.9	11.1	20.2
<i>Never planned or intended to study</i>	11.1	13.5	1.4
Employment related	23.0	28.5	15.9
<i>Wanted to start career right away</i>	12.1	10.2	7.6
<i>Wanted to start earning own money</i>	11.0	18.4	8.3
Too busy or caring for family member	10.4	3.0	4.9
Don't need a qualification	7.1	4.8	14.9
Didn't know what to do	5.7	3.0	11.3
Already completed a qualification	4.8	-	1.8
Unable to study due to health issues	2.5	7.9	1.1
Courses not available locally	2.2	4.3	-
Planning on studying / Waiting for course to start	1.9	1.4	2.1
Would have had to travel too much	1.4	-	0.6
Wanted to take a gap year	1.3	-	-
Planning on joining the army / navy	1.2	2.3	5.1
Other	8.1	9.0	14.9

Note: No significant differences are noted in the above table.

2.3. Employment status

2.3.1. Labour force participation

Approximately two-thirds of Year 12 completers (68.3%) and early school leavers (66.8%) were working in some capacity at the time of the 2016 survey (see Table 21).

Although overall participation in employment was similar between Year 12 completers and early school leavers, the basis for employment was quite different. Specifically, employment among Year 12 completers was more likely to be part-time employment, while among early school leavers it was more likely to be full-time employment.

Labour force participation among Year 12 completers in the 2016 survey was broadly comparable to that seen in 2014 and 2015. The only notable change since 2014 has been a slight decrease in the proportion of Year 12 completers looking for work.

Among early school leavers, there has been a 5.0 percentage point decrease since 2014 (and 2.8 points since 2015) in the proportion currently looking for work and a corresponding increase in the proportion currently in employment, especially full-time employment.

Table 21 Employment status of Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Employment status	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %
Base (n): All	3,581	3,490	3,287	7,000	3,135	3,700
Working	64.6	65.4	68.3	62.1	63.1	66.8*
35+ hours	15.6	15.8	18.0	37.5	38.8	41.5*
Under 35 hours	49.0	49.6	50.4	24.6	24.3	25.2
Looking for work	22.3	18.5*	18.5*	26.6	24.4	21.6*
Not looking for work	13.1	16.1*	13.2	11.3	12.6	11.6

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 ($p < .01$).

Table 22 (overleaf) shows employment status by post-school destination for Year 12 completers and early school leavers.

Table 22 Employment status of Year 12 completers and early school leavers by Destination

Employment status	Year 12 completers					Early school leavers				
	Bachelor degree %	VET Cert IV+ %	VET Cert I-III %	Apprenticeship %	Traineeship %	Bachelor degree %	VET Cert IV+ %	VET Cert I-III %	Apprenticeship %	Traineeship %
Base (n): All	1565	204	117	173	159	41	310	346	1225	265
Working	62.7	56.1	47.0	97.9	95.1	58.4	50.0	38.8	99.9	98.4
35+ hours	2.0	4.0	6.1	90.5	67.2	7.1	4.1	6.5	92.8	70.3
Under 35 hours	60.7	52.2	40.9	7.4	27.8	51.3	45.9	32.3	7.1	28.1
Looking for work	20.9	21.6	33.8	2.0	3.5	21.9	30.8	33.00	0.1	0.4
Not looking for work	16.3	22.3	19.1	0.1	1.4	19.6	19.2	28.2	-	1.2

Note: Only education post-school destinations are shown as results for each employment based post-school destination align with employment status outcomes

2.3.2. Preference to work more hours

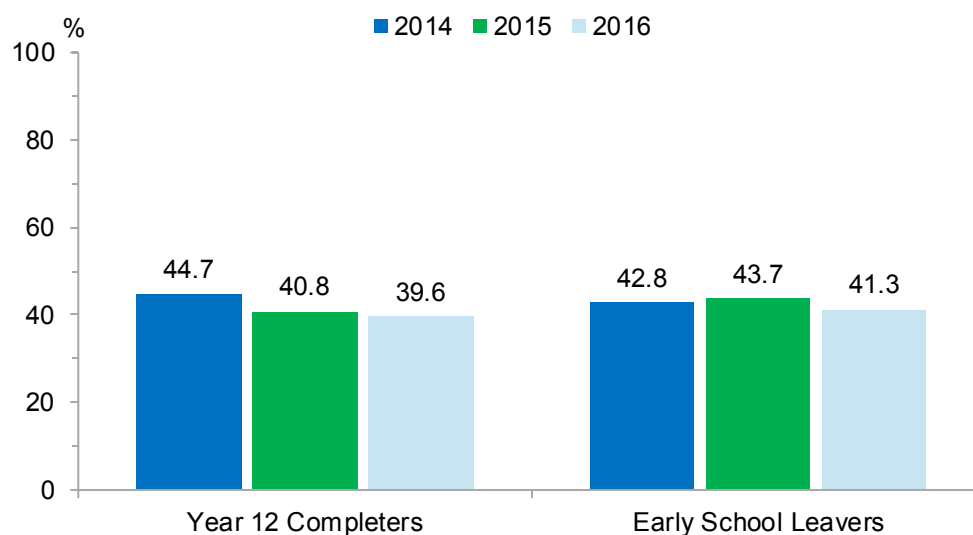
Year 12 completers and early school leavers who currently had a paid job, were asked if they would prefer to be working more hours than they currently do.

Overall, approximately two-fifths of Year 12 completers (39.6%) and early school leavers (41.3%) currently employed said they would prefer to be working more hours (see Figure 3). These results were consistent with those seen in previous surveys.

Further, also consistent with results from previous post-school destinations surveys, there were no significant differences between Year 12 completers and early school leavers in relation to their preference to work more hours. However, when preferences are examined by average weekly hours worked, early school leavers are more likely than Year 12 completers to report having a preference to work more hours, especially when working 11-25 hours per week (see

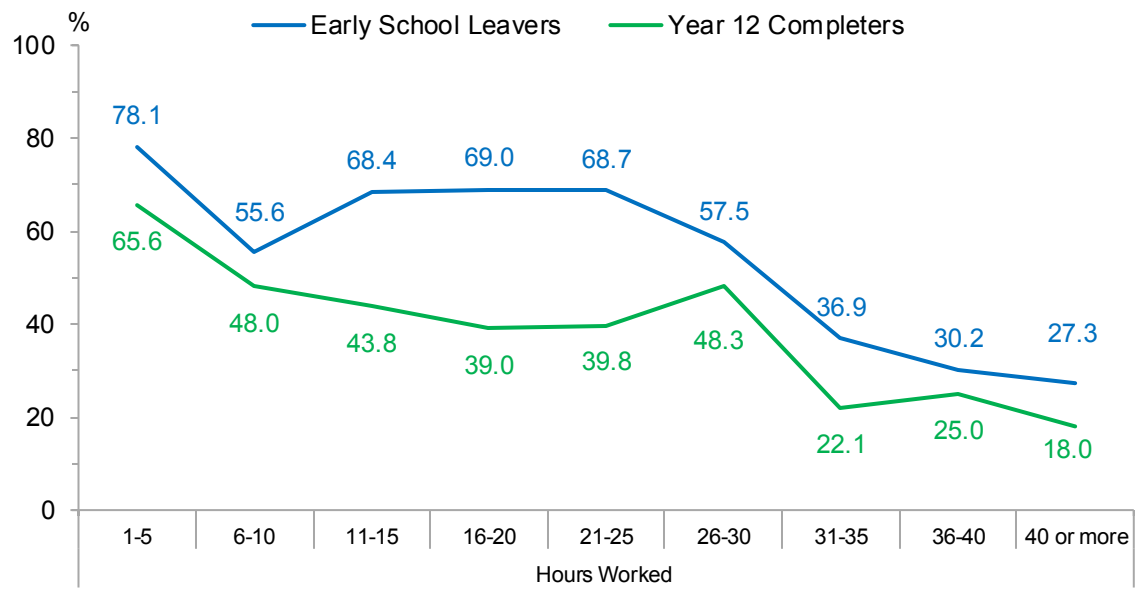
Figure 4). This trend is likely to reflect the prominence of employment as the main post-school destination among early school leavers.

Figure 3 Preference to work more hours among early school leavers and Year 12 completers (2014 – 2016)



Base: Currently employed (Early school leavers: 2014, n=4,225; 2015, n=1,870; 2016, n=2,390; Year 12 completers: 2014, n=2,182; 2015, n=2,150; 2016, n=2,106).

Figure 4 Preference to work more hours among early school leavers and Year 12 completers by average hours worked each week (2016)



Base: Currently employed (Early school leavers, n=2,390; Year 12 completers, n=2,106). 2016 survey data.

2.3.3. Employment satisfaction

Satisfaction with their current job continues to be very high among Year 12 completers and early school leavers. Nearly all Year 12 completers and early school leavers reported liking their current job, with the majority liking it 'a lot' and between one-fifth and one-third liking it 'somewhat' (see Table 23). Job satisfaction tended to be slightly higher among early school leavers than Year 12 completers and results were comparable to previous surveys in the time series.

Consistent with results from previous post-school destinations surveys, satisfaction tended to be higher among Year 12 completers and early school leavers whose main post-school destination was an apprenticeship (76.1% of Year 12 completers and 87.3% of early school leavers liking it 'a lot'). Job satisfaction was also higher for Year 12 completers in a traineeship (77.4%) than Year 12 completers in general (57.3%), but among early school leavers job satisfaction for those who were in traineeships (69.0%) was similar to (or a little lower than) early school leavers overall (72.3%). Satisfaction tended to be lowest among those whose main post-school destination related to some form of further education (including Bachelor degrees and VET courses of all levels) or part-time employment.

Table 23 **Extent to which Year 12 completers and early school leavers 'liked' their job (2014 – 2016)**

Liked current job	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): Currently employed	2,303	2,262	2,242	4,493	2,011	2,613
NET: A lot / Somewhat	90.9	89.9	91.8	92.9	93.8	93.4
<i>A lot</i>	54.1	54.3	57.3	69.8	70.5	72.3
<i>Somewhat</i>	36.9	35.6	34.5	23.1	23.3	21.1
Not very much	6.6	7.1	5.9	4.4	4.2	4.4
Not at all	1.1	2.6*	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.3
Don't know/Refused	1.3	0.4	0.7	0.9	0.5	0.9

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 ($p < .01$).

2.3.4. Occupational classification

Year 12 completers and early school leavers undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship were asked to describe the area in which they were undertaking their apprenticeship or traineeship. Those employed in roles not associated with an apprenticeship or traineeship were asked to describe their main job. Responses to all questions were coded according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO; ABS, 2009).

Table 24 summarises the main areas of specialisation (minor level classification) among Year 12 completers and early school leavers employed as an apprentice.

The most common apprenticeship area among Year 12 completers surveyed in 2016 was electrician (21.2%), followed by bricklaying, carpentry and joinery (19.5%) and plumber (16.3%). The proportion of Year 12 completers undertaking apprenticeships in plumbing has increased substantially since 2014 and 2015 and is associated with a decline in the proportion undertaking apprenticeships as automotive electricians and mechanics.

The distribution of apprenticeship areas among early school leavers differs from that of Year 12 completers. The most common areas among early school leavers were bricklaying, carpentry and joinery (23.8%) followed by automotive electrician and mechanic (14.6%), electrician (11.4%), plumber (11.2%), food trades (8.7%) and hairdresser (5.8%). There has been little change in the distribution of apprenticeship areas among early school leavers since 2014, except for a small increase in bricklayers and a small decrease in fabrication and mechanical engineers.

Table 24 Apprenticeship area among Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Occupation	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %
Base (n): Doing apprenticeship	180	173	168	1,952	846	1,222
Bricklayers, and Carpenters and Joiners	22.4	16.0	19.5	18.5	23.0	23.8*
Automotive Electricians and Mechanics	13.3	13.4	4.9	15.0	12.2	14.6
Food Trades Workers	10.8	11.1	9.1	9.7	7.9	8.7
Plumbers	4.6	7.0	16.3*	9.5	10.0	11.2
Electricians	16.3	17.9	21.2	9.3	9.0	11.4
Hairdressers	5.5	2.9	5.8	8.2	7.5	5.8
Fabrication Engineering Trades Workers	1.6	-	2.7	4.8	1.2*	2.9*
Mechanical Engineering Trades Workers	5.4	4.1	6.1	4.0	6.2	2.4*
Glaziers, Plasterers and Tilers	1.0	3.3	0.4	3.0	3.2	3.0
Horticultural Trades Workers	3.6	5.5	3.9	2.7	3.9	3.1
Electronics and Telecommunications Trades Workers	2.4	2.0	0.4	2.1	2.6	2.8
Wood Trades Workers	1.7	1.5	0.4	2.0	1.7	1.0
Other occupation	11.4	13.7	9.3	10.7	11.6	8.6
Don't know / Refused	-	1.4	-	0.4	-	0.9

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 ($p < .01$).

Table 25 summarises the main areas of traineeship specialisation (minor level classification grouped by sub-major) among Year 12 completers and early school leavers.

The most common traineeships in 2016 among Year 12 completers were roles as a child carer (20.9%), general clerk (13.8%) and sales person or assistant (9.6%). Among early school leavers, the most common traineeships were roles as a sales person or assistant (23.1%) and child carer (13.4%). Some differences in traineeship areas are noted between Year 12 completers and early school leavers, however it should be noted that relative standard errors between survey years were too large (typically greater than 50 percentage points) to reliably report any differences.

Table 25 Traineeship area among Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Occupation	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): Doing traineeship	195	161	152	443	181	259
Managers	3.9	1.9	3.6	0.6	3.2	4.2
Professionals	12.9	8.2	13.8	2.1	4.7	2.7
<i>Accountants, Auditors and Company Secretaries</i>	4.3	0.1	1.3	0.2	0.4	-
<i>School Teachers</i>	2.6	1.1	2.2	0.2	-	-
<i>Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals</i>	2.4	-	0.1	0.2	-	-
Technicians and Trades Workers	6.1	11.4	4.2	16.9	22.5	16.9
<i>Food Trades Workers</i>	0.1	2.1	1.3	2.2	4.9	2.7
<i>Bricklayers, and Carpenters and Joiners</i>	-	1.2	-	1.8	3.6	0.8
<i>Automotive Electricians and Mechanics</i>	1.1	0.1	-	1.8	-	1.7
<i>Construction Trades Workers</i>	-	2.1	0.4	1.7	4.3	0.3
<i>Building and Engineering Technicians</i>	2.8	0.1	-	0.2	0.9	0.5
Community and Personal Service Workers	33.0	34.1	29.8	28.3	27.0	21.3
<i>Child Carers</i>	16.9	15.2	20.9	15.2	15.4	13.4
<i>Hospitality Workers</i>	10.2	11.8	4.4	6.0	7.1	4.3
<i>Personal Service and Travel Workers</i>	0.7	-	-	3.1	0.5	0.6
<i>Personal Carers and Assistants</i>	1.2	0.1	0.3	2.4	2.9	1.2
Clerical and Administration Workers	12.7	16.5	26.0	11.1	6.9	13.2
<i>General Clerks</i>	9.3	10.3	13.8	8.1	3.7	10.0
Sales Workers	24.6	23.3	15.6	26.6	24.6	24.0
<i>Sales Assistants and Salespersons</i>	24.6	20.0	9.6	24.9	21.7	23.1
Machinery Operators and Drivers	0.1	0.6	1.5	2.0	1.1	1.7
Labourers	5.8	2.2	4.3	9.0	7.8	13.2
<i>Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers</i>	1.2	2.1	-	4.9	2.4	5.5
<i>Construction and Mining Labourers</i>	1.6	0.1	2.7	1.2	2.0	3.1
<i>Factory Process Workers</i>	2.9	-	-	0.2	-	0.4
Not enough information provided	0.9	1.7	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.5
Don't know / Refused	0.1	-	0.3	2.5	1.2	2.3

Note: No significant differences are noted in the above table.

Table 26 summarises the main occupation classifications among Year 12 completers and early school leavers not in an apprenticeship or traineeship.

The most common occupation categories among Year 12 completers in 2016 were sales workers (32.6%) and community and personal services (26.0%). The profile of occupations among early school leavers was similar to that seen among Year 12 completers. The most common occupation categories among early school leavers included sales (30.7%), labourers (26.8%) and community and personal services (18.4%).

The profile of occupations among Year 12 completers and early school leavers in the 2016 results was broadly consistent with previous surveys, although a trend towards decreasing employment as checkout operators and office cashiers was noted across both cohorts.

Table 26 Main occupation among Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Occupation	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): Currently have paid job, not apprenticeship or traineeship	1,928	1,928	1,922	2,098	984	1132
Managers	2.4	1.7	0.9*	1.1	1.1	2.2
Professionals	7.3	7.3	7.7	2.0	1.1	3.3
<i>Miscellaneous Education Professionals</i>	5.5	4.6	5.6	0.3	0.1	1.0
Technicians and Trades Workers	3.2	3.2	3.7	8.2	6.9	7.1
Community and Personal Service Workers	28.0	26.7	26.0	16.3	19.7	18.4
<i>Hospitality Workers</i>	17.1	16.8	16.3	10.6	12.8	11.6
Clerical and Administration Workers	4.8	6.5	8.8*	4.3	5.5	3.0
<i>Receptionists</i>	1.3	1.6	2.6	1.6	2.2	1.2
Sales Workers	32.9	35.2	32.6	31.7	27.4	30.7
<i>Sales Assistants and Salespersons</i>	20.9	25.3	25.0	17.0	16.1	20.9
<i>Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers</i>	11.6	8.2*	6.5*	14.1	10.6*	8.8*
Machinery Operators and Drivers	5.5	5.2	6.9	7.5	6.9	6.7
<i>Storepersons</i>	4.6	3.9	5.8	5.3	4.6	4.3
Labourers	14.9	13.8	12.5	27.6	29.6	26.8
<i>Food Preparation Assistants</i>	7.3	7.0	6.1	10.9	10.8	8.5
<i>Construction and Mining Labourers</i>	1.6	1.2	1.2	4.7	6.3	6.9
<i>Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers</i>	1.4	0.9	1.0	3.8	4.1	3.7
Not enough information provided	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.3	1.1	0.5
Don't know/Refused	0.4	0.2	0.5	1.0	0.8	1.4

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 ($p < .01$).

2.4. Not in the labour force, education or training

A relatively small proportion of Year 12 completers (2.8%) and early school leavers (6.9%) reported being neither in the labour force, nor engaged in further education or training in 2016. The following section provides a summary profile of this group and reports their current main activity.

2.4.1. Socio-demographic profile

There were no socio-demographic differences related to Year 12 completers being classified as not in the labour force, education or training in 2016 (see Section 2.1).

Among early school leavers however, a small number of socio-demographic differences were noted in 2016. These differences indicated that early school leavers who were not in the labour force, education or training were more likely to have left school at an older age (17-18 years), be female, have attended an Independent or government school and have identified as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.

2.4.2. Main activity

Year 12 completers and early school leavers who were not working or looking for work were asked about their main activity. Table 26 provides a summary of their responses.

The most common main activity for Year 12 completers not in the labour force, education or training in 2016 continued to be recreation (41.3%), typically in the context of having a 'gap' year (25.4%). One-quarter (28.2%) were undertaking some form of informal study or training (i.e. study that was not classified as a VET course or recognised as an apprenticeship or traineeship). Other activities were infrequently mentioned.

Main activities among early school leavers not in the labour force, education or training in 2016 were more diverse than those seen among Year 12 completers. The most common main activities included undertaking some form of informal study or training (17.0%), recreation (16.3%-typically framed as doing 'nothing', 14.0%), being unable to work due to illness (14.1%), performing home duties (13.7%) and looking after children / preparing for birth (13.2%). The latter was primarily mentioned by female early school leavers (21.6% vs. 2.2% males).

Table 27 Main activity of Year 12 completers and early school leavers not in the labour force, education or training (2014 – 2016)

Main activity	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %
Base (n): NILFET	109	86	90	393	223	196
Recreation / nothing	45.5	51.7	41.3	28.4	29.6	16.3
<i>Nothing</i>	1.8	7.8	9.0	15.2	21.4	14.0
<i>Recreational activities</i>	10.5	10.8	6.8	10.7	5.9	-
<i>Travel / gap year</i>	33.2	33.2	25.4	2.6	2.3	2.4
Looking after children / preparing for birth	1.9	1.9	0.3	19.0	15.1	13.2
Undertaking informal study or training	21.0	23.4	28.2	15.3	11.2	17.0
Unable to work due to illness	10.2	6.3	2.9	9.0	16.2	14.1
Performing home duties	5.8	5.4	4.0	8.7	7.9	13.7
Waiting for course to start / looking to enrol	-	2.7	2.4	3.7	4.6	2.0
Unpaid work	12.7	1.9	4.9	2.9	5.4	0.9
Carer for another person	0.3	4.6	0.1	2.4	2.0	1.8
Other	2.7	2.1	12.8	7.0	2.8	4.1
Don't know / Refused	-	-	0.8	3.6	3.2	13.2

Note: No significant differences are noted in the above table.

2.4.3. Deferring further education

Approximately one-quarter (27.4%) of Year 12 completers who were not in the labour force, education or training indicated they were enrolled in a course of study, but had deferred it. This proportion was similar to 2015 (28.2%), but lower (albeit not statistically significantly different from) than 2014 (43.0%). It is also comparable with rates of deferred further education among other non-education destinations. For example, 23.7% of those in full-time employment, 17.8% of those in part-time employment and 11.7% of those looking for work had deferred a place in further education.

Rates of deferred further education among early school leavers who were not currently in the labour force, education or training in 2016 were very low (3.8%). This proportion was comparable to 2015 (2.8%), but lower than 2014 (9.3%).

3. Reasons for leaving school early

This section of the report explores early school leavers' self-reported reasons for leaving school in 2015 before completing Year 12. It also reports on the relationship between these reasons and a range of socio-demographic factors, as well as post-school destinations.

3.1. Main survey findings

Early school leavers were asked about their main reason for leaving school early. Those who provided a main reason were then asked about other reasons for leaving school.

The most common self-reported reasons for leaving school early in 2016 related to wanting to pursue employment and career opportunities and not liking school or teachers (see Table 28). Other less frequently cited reasons for leaving school were not coping at school or failing subjects, school 'not being for them', finding school boring, ill-health, being bullied and wanting to study elsewhere.

Self-reported reasons for leaving school have remained reasonably consistent since the 2014 survey. The only significant changes noted were slight decreases in the proportion of early school leavers wanting to pursue employment and career opportunities, or not liking school / teachers, as well as slight increases in the proportion looking for or transitioning to other educational opportunities and school "not being for them".

Relative to results from the 2014 survey, there was a slight but significant decrease in the proportion of early school leavers reporting being bullied as a reason for leaving school.

Table 28 Self-reported reasons for leaving school early (2014 – 2016)

Reason for leaving	Main reason			Other reason			Total mention		
	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %
Base (n): All early school leavers	7,000	3,135	3,700	7,000	3,135	3,700	7,000	3,135	3,700
Disillusioned	37.4	34.9	39.9	17.2	16.0	16.4	48.9	45.8*	50.8
<i>Didn't like school / teachers</i>	20.5	16.9*	17.2*	8.5	6.9	6.0*	28.2	23.5*	23.2*
<i>School not for me</i>	10.3	10.6	14.8*	5.3	6.1	7.0*	15.5	16.5	21.8*
<i>Was not interested in going / bored</i>	6.6	7.4	7.9	3.9	3.6	4.6	10.5	11.0	12.5
Academic or behavioural difficulties	14.5	15.4	13.7	6.5	6.7	6.5	20.4	21.3	19.9
<i>Not coping well at school</i>	10.7	11.1	10.1	5.3	5.9	5.9	15.8	16.8	16.1
<i>Asked to leave / expelled / got in trouble</i>	3.8	4.3	3.6	1.3	0.8	0.5*	5.0	5.0	4.1
I was bullied	4.3	3.3	3.2	2.8	2.3	2.1	6.9	5.6	5.3*
Work reasons / Career reasons	24.8	24.8	22.0*	12.5	12.1	11.1	36.9	36.5	33.1*
Looking / went to other educational opportunities	5.3	6.3	6.9*	3.6	3.3	5.0	8.6	9.4	11.6
Study elsewhere / TAFE / different course	3.8	4.7	5.5*	2.4	2.4	3.5*	6.2	7.0	9.0*
Other external factors	9.5	10.8	9.9	5.4	5.7	4.5	13.9	15.4	13.9
<i>Ill health / sickness</i>	4.5	5.4	5.5	2.0	1.6	1.6	6.4	6.8	7.1
<i>Family commitments</i>	1.5	2.0	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.9	2.6	2.8	2.1
<i>Pregnancy</i>	1.4	0.7*	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.1	1.5	0.9*	0.9
Other	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.8	4.1	4.1	5.1
No main/other reason	0.5	0.2	-	53.3	54.9	56.4	0.5	0.2	-
Don't know/Refused	1.7	2.3	0.0	0.7	0.5	0.7	1.7	2.3	1.9

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 (p<.01).

3.2. Socio-demographic differences

The 2016 survey results continue to illustrate that early school leavers' self-reported reasons for leaving school are associated with a range of socio-demographic factors, as well as post-school destination (see Tables 28-30 overleaf).

The following section outlines the profile of seven main reasons for leaving early in 2016: being disillusioned with school (n=1,475); experiencing academic or behaviour difficulties (n=507); experiencing bullying (n=120); wanting to pursue employment opportunities or advance a career (n=812); seeking other education opportunities (n=254); external factors or pressures (n=367); and residual 'other' reasons (including no reason and being unable to give a reason; n=165). Some findings presented in this section should be interpreted with caution due to low prevalence of some reported main reasons for leaving school early.

3.2.1. Disillusioned with school

The proportion reporting this reason for leaving school was reasonably uniform across socio-demographic factors, such as gender, cultural background, SES and school sector. The only notable difference was that mentioning disillusionment with school as a main reason for leaving tended to decrease with age. In terms of their post-school destinations, those who mentioned disillusionment with school as a reason for leaving were more likely than others to have entered an apprenticeship (31.3%), as well as less likely to be looking for work (11.8%) or not in the labour force, education or training (4.5%).

3.2.2. Academic or behavioural difficulties

Early school leavers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (18.8%) were more likely than others to cite academic or behavioural difficulties as their main reason for leaving school. Mention of this reason for leaving school also tended to increase with age. In terms of their post-school destinations, early school leavers who cited academic or behavioural difficulties as a reason for leaving were more likely than others to be looking for work (27.4%) and were less likely to have entered an apprenticeship (16.2%) or Certificate IV+ (5.7%).

3.2.3. Bullying

Early school leavers who cited being bullied as the main reason for leaving school early were more likely than others to be female (5.0%) and less likely to have attended a Catholic school (1.6%). Mention of this reason for leaving school also tended to increase as SES decreased. This group of early school leavers were the most likely to be looking for work (36.0%). They were also less likely than others to have entered an apprenticeship (5.0%).

3.2.4. Employment or career

Early school leavers citing employment or career-related reasons as their main reason for leaving school were more likely to be male (28.8%), have attended a Catholic school (28.2%), have not identified as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person (22.7%), and not speak a language other than English (22.7%). They were also substantially more likely than others to have entered an apprenticeship (49.3%). They were less likely to have entered a VET course (not associated with an apprenticeship or traineeship), be looking for work or not be in the labour force, education or training.

3.2.5. Looking for other education opportunities

Early school leavers who stated they had left school to seek other education opportunities in 2016 were more likely to be female (9.2%) and have attended a Catholic school (10.0%), but less likely to have identified as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person (3.5%). Mention of this reason for leaving school also tended to increase with SES. In terms of their post-school destinations, these early school leavers were the group most likely to have entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma (27.5%). They were also less likely than others to be working full-time (4.2%).

3.2.6. External factors or pressures

This reason for leaving school early represents a collection of circumstances relating to personal illness, caring for and having children. Early school leavers who stated they had left high school due to these reasons were more frequently females (16.2%) and identified as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person (15.6%). Mention of this reason for leaving school substantially increased with age. This group of early school leavers were also less likely to have attended a Catholic school.

In terms of their post-school destinations, these early school leavers were the group most likely to be classified as not being in the labour force, education or training (24.4%), while many were looking for work (20.3%). Conversely, they were least likely to have entered an apprenticeship (3.6%) or traineeship (1.8%).

3.2.7. Other reasons

Early school leavers who provided a response not grouped into one of the previous six themes were more likely to be female (6.1%) and aged 18 years (8.4%). They were less likely to have attended a Catholic school (2.2%). This group of early school leavers was less likely than others to have entered an apprenticeship (5.0%), while over one-quarter were looking for work (28.4%).

Table 29 Self-reported main reasons for leaving school early by gender, school sector and SES (2016)

Reason for leaving	Gender		Government	Sector		Independent	SES		
	Male %	Female %		Catholic %	Highest %		Upper Middle %	Lower Middle %	Lowest %
Base (n): All early school leavers	2,360	1,340	2,783	617	300	526	885	1075	1141
Disillusioned	41.1	38.1	39.5	41.0	41.7	36.1	38.7	44.4*	38.3
Academic or behavioural difficulties	13.7	13.8	14.6	10.9	9.5*	13.4	12.2	13.3	15.4
I was bullied	2.1	5.0*	3.6	1.6*	2.6	1.6	3.1	2.9	4.0
Work reasons	28.8	11.7*	21.0	28.2*	20.8	20.5	20.8	25.2	21.3
Looking for other educational opportunities	5.3	9.2*	6.2	10.0*	7.9	10.9*	8.7	4.7*	5.4*
Other external factors	5.8	16.2*	10.3	6.2*	12.8	12.6	12.1	6.6*	9.9
Other/No reason/Don't know/Refused	3.3	6.1*	4.8	2.2*	4.8	4.9	4.4	2.8	5.5

* Indicates result is significantly different to males / government / highest parental SES quartile ($p < .01$).

Table 30 Self-reported main reasons for leaving school early by cultural background, participation in VET and age (2016)

Reason for leaving	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		Language background other than English		VET in school		Age			
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %	15 %	16 %	17 %	18+ %
Base (n): All early school leavers	432	3,268	383	3,317	1,514	2,186	298	1,805	1,272	325
Disillusioned	35.5	40.4	35.4	40.5	39.4	40.3	48.6	46.0	37.5*	29.3*
Academic or behavioural difficulties	18.8	13.1*	19.5	12.9	15.1	12.6	10.5	9.4	15.9	18.3
I was bullied	5.9	2.9	2.3	3.4	2.4	3.9	4.4	3.9	2.8	2.3
Work reasons	15.6	22.7*	16.3	22.7*	23.7	20.5	22.8	22.4	23.2	17.3
Looking for other educational opportunities	3.5	7.3*	10.9	6.3	6.0	7.6	7.8	6.8	6.7	6.9
Other external factors	15.6	9.3*	9.5	10.0	9.4	10.4	3.8	7.5*	10.0*	17.5*
Other/No reason/Don't know/Refused	5.0	4.4	6.1	4.2	4.1	4.7	2.1	3.9	3.8	8.4*

* Indicates result is significantly different to comparison group, namely Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, having a language background other than English, having undertaken a VET course while at school and 15 year olds ($p < .01$).

Table 31 Main post-school destination by self-reported main reasons for leaving school early (2016)

Reason for leaving	Disillusioned %	Academic or behavioural difficulties %	I was bullied %	Work reasons %	Looking for other educational opportunities %	Other external factors %	Other/No reason/DK/ REF %
Base (n): All early school leavers	1,593	438	118	854	242	327	128
Bachelor degree	1.2	1.3	2.5	0.4	4.4	1.0	1.0
VET Cert IV+	8.7	5.7*	4.6	5.4*	27.5*	12.6	10.0
VET Cert I-III	9.0	7.9	15.3	5.9*	12.3	16.1*	16.1
Apprenticeship	31.3*	16.2*	5.0*	49.3*	21.8	3.6*	5.0*
Traineeship	8.4*	5.5	5.5	6.9	5.3	1.8*	3.9
F/T Work	10.5	10.5	12.7	12.0	4.2*	6.2	11.6
P/T Work	14.6	15.9	12.9	11.0	10.7	14.0	11.6
Looking for work	11.8*	27.4*	36.0*	7.9*	9.2	20.3	28.4
NILFET	4.5*	9.6	5.4	1.3*	4.5	24.4*	12.4

* Indicates result is significantly different to the average of other self-reported reasons ($p < .01$). DK = Don't know . REF = Refused to provide reason.

4. School engagement

This section of the report explores measures relating to school engagement among Year 12 completers and early school leavers. Respondents were asked what they enjoyed most about school and what they least enjoyed about school. Early school leavers were also asked about the extent to which the aspect of school they enjoyed the least had influenced their decision to leave school early.

4.1. Aspects most enjoyed about school

The majority of Year 12 completers (92.9%) and early school leavers (86.1%) were able to identify at least one thing they liked about school (see Table 32).

Consistent with patterns seen in previous iterations of the post-school destination survey, this typically was socialising or friends and specific subjects (most commonly sports or physical education). Other aspects were mentioned by only small percentages of respondents. The only notable changes evident in the 2016 survey have been a slight increase since 2014 in mentioning socialising or friends among early school leavers and a corresponding decrease in mentioning specific subjects generally (and sports or physical education specifically).

Further, the distribution of aspects liked most about school was similar for Year 12 completers and early school leavers, although the proportion citing each factor did vary a little. Year 12 completers were more likely than early school leavers to mention socialising or friends, and good teachers as the aspect they enjoyed most about school. By comparison, early school leavers were more likely to mention specific subjects, especially sports or physical education, as well as that there was nothing about school they had liked.

Table 32 Aspects most enjoyed about school among Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Most enjoyed about school	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All	3,581	3,490	3,287	7,000	3,135	3,700
Total	91.9	94.5*	92.9	83.1	85.1	86.1*
Socialising / friends	52.0	53.6	55.0	42.6	44.4	48.0*
Specific classroom subjects	14.5	16.6	14.3	28.3	26.2	23.8*
<i>Sport / Physical Education</i>	3.7	4.4	4.6	10.4	9.8	8.5*
<i>Engineering / Metalwork / Woodwork</i>	0.8	0.8	0.2	3.7	3.1	2.7*
<i>Visual Art subjects</i>	1.9	1.6	1.6	2.7	2.2	2.7
<i>English subjects</i>	0.9	1.4	1.0	2.0	2.1	1.6
<i>Maths subjects</i>	1.5	0.9	1.0	1.7	1.6	1.6
School in general / learning	8.5	6.0*	8.5	4.0	4.3	3.8
Good teachers	5.7	7.4	5.1	3.2	4.3	4.3
Lunch / Breaks	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.5	2.1	1.6
Other	10.5	10.1	9.1	3.5	3.8	4.5
Nothing	3.5	3.3	3.2	12.3	10.9	9.8*
Don't know / Refused	4.6	2.2*	3.9	4.6	4.0	4.1

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 ($p < .01$).

4.2. Aspects least enjoyed about school

The majority of Year 12 completers (83.0%) and early school leavers (83.9%) surveyed could identify at least one thing they did not like about school (see Table 33).

Among Year 12 completers, the most frequently mentioned aspect was the assessable components of subjects, such as exams and homework (29.9%), followed by specific subjects (10.4%), school structure (10.3%) and teachers (6.2%).

These aspects of school were also mentioned by early school leavers, although the rank order varied to some extent between the two groups. Consistent with Year 12 completers, early school leavers most frequently mentioned school work or the assessment process as the least enjoyed aspect of school (30.8%). This was followed by issues to do with teachers (14.1%), specific subjects (13.0%), other students (8.7%) and school structure (6.3%).

There has been little change between surveys in terms of the aspects Year 12 completers and early school leavers enjoyed least about school. The only notable change has been an increase in mention of stress / anxiety / pressure among Year 12 completers (up 5.1 percentage points since 2014 and 3.6 percentage points since 2015).

Table 33 Aspects least enjoyed about school among Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Least enjoyed about school	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All	3,581	3,490	3,287	7,000	3,135	3,700
Total	81.1	81.7	83.0	81.9	83.7	83.9
School work / Exams	31.3	31.8	29.9	26.1	26.0	30.8*
Specific subjects	11.9	13.4	10.4	15.9	13.9	13.0*
<i>Maths subjects</i>	5.7	4.8	3.7*	7.9	7.0	7.0
<i>English subjects</i>	3.6	5.7*	4.3	4.3	4.1	3.2
Teachers	8.0	7.5	6.2	15.6	15.1	14.1
Other students / Bullied	6.8	5.0	5.8	10.0	10.3	8.7
School structure	9.6	10.5	10.3	6.6	8.4*	6.3
<i>Daily routine</i>	6.6	7.5	7.2	4.7	5.5	4.2
<i>Discipline / rules</i>	2.9	3.0	3.1	1.9	2.9	2.1
Everything / School in general	0.7	0.5	0.8	2.9	3.1	3.8
Other	12.9	12.9	19.7*	4.7	6.8*	7.3*
<i>Stress / Anxiety / Pressure</i>	5.5	7.0	10.6*	0.7	2.0*	2.0*
Nothing	10.8	14.1*	9.0	8.2	9.0	6.8
Don't know / Refused	8.1	4.2*	7.9	9.8	7.3*	9.2

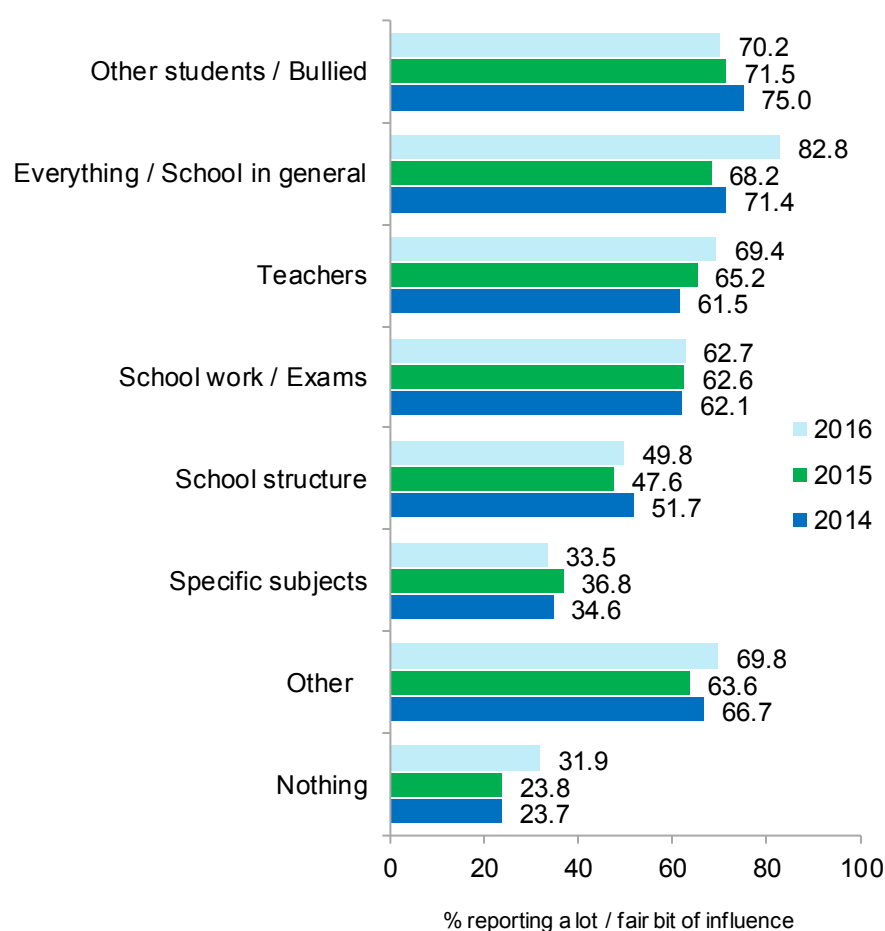
* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 (p<.01).

The majority (58.5%) of early school leavers who mentioned something they had enjoyed least about school also stated that it had exerted 'a lot' or 'a fair bit' of influence on their decision to leave school before completing Year 12.

The extent to which the least enjoyed things about school influenced a student's decision to leave school early varied greatly. The aspects rated as having the greatest influence on the decision to leave early continue to be 'expressing a general dislike for school' and having 'problems with other students or their peer group', including being bullied (see Figure 5). These were followed by issues with 'teachers and school work' or 'the assessment processes. Issues that appear to have the least influence were those relating to 'school structure' and 'not enjoying specific subjects'.

Overall, these results were comparable with previous years. The level of influence of school in general appeared to have increased in 2016, but the increase was not statistically significant.

Figure 5 Influence of the least enjoyed aspects of school on the decision to leave (2014 – 2016)



Base: Gave response for what they enjoyed least about school (2014, n=6,322; 2015, n=2,916; 2016, n=3,353).

The figure shows the proportion of students indicating a particular aspect had 'a lot' or a 'fair bit' of influence on their decision to leave school.

5. Career expectations

The following section outlines the career expectations of Year 12 completers and early school leavers. Career expectations were defined by the kind of job respondents expected to have by age 30. Table 34 summarises the main expected careers (at the ANZSCO minor level) among Year 12 completers and early school leavers over the past three years.

The profile of expected careers among Year 12 completers in 2016 was comparable to that of previous cycle's surveys. A little more than half (56.4%) of Year 12 completers expected they would be working in a professional role by age 30.

The most common professional careers that Year 12 completers expected to have at age 30 included:

- School Teachers (6.7%)
- Engineering (4.8%)
- Social and Welfare (4.2%)
- Legal Professionals (3.7%)
- Midwifery and Nursing (3.6%)
- Natural and Physical Science (3.6%), and
- Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors (3.4%)

Fewer than one-in-ten Year 12 completers surveyed in 2016 expected to be working in other occupational categories. Further, approximately one-fifth (18.6%) did not know (or were unable to say) what career they expected to have at age 30. The only notable change in Year 12 completers' career expectations since 2015 has been a decrease in community and personal service workers roles.

Consistent with previous post-school destination surveys, the profile of expected careers at age 30 among early school leavers was very different to Year 12 completers. Early school leavers were more likely to expect they would be working in a technical or trade role (35.1%), or community or personal service role (12.9%) at age 30, but were much less likely to expect to be working in a professional role (17.9%). They were also more likely than Year 12 completers to not know what career they expected to have at age 30 (22.7%).

The specific expected careers at age 30 mentioned by early school leavers were quite diverse. The most common were:

- Bricklayers, and Carpenters and Joiners (7.3%)
- Automotive Electricians and Mechanics (6.2%)
- Personal Service and Travel (3.9%)
- Electricians (3.4%)
- Plumbers (3.3%)
- Defence Force Members, Fire Fighters and Police (3.0%)
- Food Trades (2.7%), and
- Midwifery and Nursing (2.3%)

The only notable change in early school leavers' career expectations since 2015 has been a decrease in the very small percentage expecting to be in labourer roles.

Approximately three-quarters (75.7%) of Year 12 completers surveyed who articulated their career expectations at age 30 believed the courses offered at their school had prepared them well for their future career path. This was much higher than among early school leavers (41.8%). The percentage who perceived benefit in the courses offered at their school was comparable to the figures in 2014 (73.3% among Year 12 completers and 45.0% among early school leavers) and 2015 (74.9% and 45.6%).

Table 34 Expected career at age 30 among Year 12 completers and early school leavers (2014 – 2016)

Career	Year 12 completers			Early school leavers		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Base (n): All	3,581	3,490	3,287	7,000	3,135	3,700
Managers	6.2	5.6	7.0	5.0	5.0	6.2
Professionals	53.9	56.2	56.4	15.8	18.6*	17.9
<i>School Teachers</i>	8.8	8.3	6.7	3.9	2.5*	2.1*
<i>Engineering</i>	4.2	3.9	4.8	0.5	1.0	1.0
<i>Legal Professionals</i>	3.6	4.1	3.7	0.4	0.3	0.2
<i>Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors</i>	3.5	3.4	3.4	1.5	1.4	1.7
<i>Health Therapy</i>	3.4	3.0	2.8	0.2	0.3	0.3
<i>Midwifery and Nursing</i>	3.3	4.0	3.6	1.6	2.3	2.3
<i>Medical Practitioners</i>	3.3	3.2	2.9	0.3	0.3	0.1
<i>Natural and Physical Science</i>	3.0	3.4	3.6	0.8	1.6	1.1
<i>Social and Welfare</i>	2.3	4.1*	4.2*	1.1	1.5	1.2
<i>Arts Professionals</i>	2.1	2.4	2.5	1.8	2.2	2.2
<i>Health Diagnostics and Promotion</i>	1.5	1.9	1.8	0.1	0.3	0.2
<i>Media Professionals</i>	2.0	2.2	1.7	0.7	1.2	0.9
<i>Accountants, Auditors and Company Secretaries</i>	2.3	2.8	2.0	0.3	0.3	0.7
Technicians and Trades Workers	8.3	7.8	8.2	34.6	33.5	35.1
<i>Bricklayers, and Carpenters and Joiners</i>	1.7	0.8	0.6*	6.2	6.7	7.3
<i>Automotive Electricians and Mechanics</i>	1.0	1.1	0.3	5.8	6.0	6.2
<i>Electricians</i>	1.1	0.9	1.5	3.2	2.8	3.4
<i>Food Trades</i>	0.8	0.9	1.1	3.0	2.6	2.7
<i>Hairdressers</i>	0.3	0.1	0.1	2.9	2.2	2.2
<i>Plumbers</i>	0.2	0.2	0.7	2.7	2.7	3.3
<i>Animal Attendant and Trainers, and Shearers</i>	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.7	2.1	2.1
Community and Personal Service Workers	8.2	8.6	5.8*	13.2	14.2	12.9
<i>Health and Welfare Support</i>	1.9	1.3	0.9	1.6	1.4	1.3
<i>Defence Force Members, Fire Fighters and Police</i>	3.1	3.8	1.8	3.4	3.2	3.0
<i>Personal Service and Travel</i>	0.6	0.7	1.0	3.0	3.3	3.9
<i>Sports and Fitness</i>	1.7	0.9	0.9	1.9	1.6	1.1*
<i>Child Carers</i>	0.3	1.2*	0.6	1.7	2.8*	2.1
Clerical and Administration Workers	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.7	1.4	1.1
Sales Workers	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.9	1.5	1.6
Machinery Operators and Drivers	0.1	0.2	0.3	1.5	1.3	1.0
Labourers	0.4	0.4	0.2	1.9	1.8	0.7*
Not enough information provided	1.0	0.4	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.4
None	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.4
Don't know/Refused	18.9	17.5	18.6	23.5	21.3	22.7

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 (p<.01).

6. Destination three years after leaving school

The following section provides a brief overview of the main post-school destinations of Year 12 completers, early school leavers who left school in 2013 before completing Year 12 and former Year 10 students, who participated in the 2014 survey and agreed to be re-interviewed in 2015 and 2016. More specifically, the section compares the main post-school destination in 2014 of these longitudinal cohorts to the main post-school destination in 2015.

A total of 1,343 Year 12 completers, 1,523 early school leavers and 1,564 Year 10 students completed the follow-up survey in 2016. Retention rates since the 2015 survey were 72.6%, 58.1% and 83.7%, respectively. Retention rates since the 2014 survey were 49.1%, 29.9% and 61.3%, respectively.

6.1. Year 12 completers

Table 34 summarises the main post-school destinations of the Year 12 completer longitudinal cohort (now consisting of 1,343 former Year 12 completers) in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

As can be seen, there have been changes in the main post-school destination of this cohort since 2014. Of note, there has been a significant decrease in VET course participation at all levels (Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma down 4.0 percentage points and Certificate I-III courses down 3.1 percentage points), possibly reflecting the typical length of these types of courses. There has also been a non-significant decrease in the proportion actively looking for work (down 2.9 percentage points).

The noted decrease in VET course participation and the proportion of those looking for work was associated with an increase in the proportion of the Year 12 completer longitudinal cohort entering full-time employment (up 6.3 percentage points).

Table 35 Main post-school destination among Year 12 completer cohort by year (2014 – 2016)

	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%
Base (n): All respondents	1,343	1,343	1,343
Some form of education and training	78.1	79.5	77.3
Bachelor degree	56.3	62.1	61.8
VET Cert IV+	8.2	5.4	4.2*
VET Cert I-III	4.1	2.1	1.0*
Apprenticeship	4.7	6.1	6.2
Traineeship	4.7	3.8	4.1
Employed	15.0	15.5	18.6
F/T Work	4.6	7.6	10.9*
P/T Work	10.4	7.8	7.7
Looking for work	5.8	4.1	2.9
NILFET	1.2	0.9	1.2

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 (p<.01).

Among the Year 12 completer longitudinal cohort in 2016, around three-fifths (60.2%) were participating in the same post-school destination as in 2014. Continuity in post-school destination varied considerably by 2014 post-school destination (Table 36). Possibly due to the typical length of these educational programs, the least amount of change was seen among Year 12 completers who in 2014 had entered a Bachelor degree (89.9%) or apprenticeship (60.0%).

In contrast, fewer than one-in-three Year 12 completers who had been classified in other post-school destinations in 2014 were still undertaking the same activity in 2016. In terms of what these Year 12 completers were doing in 2016, the following were noted:

- The majority of Year 12 completers who entered full-time (55.8%) or part-time (60.7%) employment in 2014 had transitioned to some form of education or training by 2016.
- Year 12 completers who entered a Certificate I-III course in 2014 had the highest rate of transition to other activities. Half (48.7%) had entered some other form of education or training by 2016; typically, a Bachelor degree (18.1%) or Certificate IV+ (14.0%) or traineeship (13.4%). Further, nearly one-sixth (17.2%) of this group were looking for work and 18.6% were employed.
- Year 12 completers who entered a traineeship in 2014 appeared to be split in 2016 between continuing their traineeship (26.0%), entering some other form of education or training (33.8%) and entering employment (40.1%).
- Slightly fewer than half (45.4%) of Year 12 completers who entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma in 2014 were employed in 2016, while about two-fifths (37.0%) had transitioned to some other form of education or training (typically a Bachelor degree, 25.1%).
- Two-fifths of Year 12 completers who in 2014 were classified as looking for work were employed (41.8%) in 2016, or in some form of education or training (39.7%). Further, those who had been classified as not in the labour force, education or training in 2014 were either employed (54.4%) or have entered a Bachelor degree (31.7%) in 2016.

Table 36 Transitions in main post-school destination among Year 12 completers by main post-school destination from 2014 to 2016

	Total	Bachelor %	VET IV+ %	VET I-III %	Apprenticeship %	Traineeship %	F/T work %	P/T work %	Looking for work %	NILFET %
Base (n): All	1,343	706	98	66	56	69	97	157	78	16
No change in destination	60.2	89.9	13.4	11.6	60.0	26.0	33.2	15.6	13.1	6.2
Some form of education and training	21.1	4.0	37.0	48.7	12.9	33.8	55.8	60.7	39.7	33.7
Bachelor degree	11.2	-	25.1	18.1	11.4	21.6	36.3	38.0	14.7	31.7
VET Cert IV+	3.1	0.6	-	14.0	1.4	7.4	5.3	11.7	4.8	2.0
VET Cert I-III	0.5	-	0.7	-	-	0.8	4.8	0.1	2.6	-
Apprenticeship	3.4	1.0	9.5	3.4	-	4.0	5.9	6.5	14.0	-
Traineeship	2.9	2.4	1.7	13.4	-	-	3.5	4.4	3.6	-
Employed	15.5	4.9	45.4	18.6	21.1	40.1	7.4	18.9	41.8	54.4
Looking for work	2.1	1.0	3.8	17.2	-	0.1	3.6	3.2	-	5.6
NILFET	1.1	0.3	0.4	3.9	6.1	-	-	1.6	5.4	-

Note: 'Some form of education and training' and 'Employed' categories exclude the 2014 main post-school destination for each column.

6.2. Early school leavers

Table 36 summarises the main post-school destination of the early school leaver longitudinal cohort (now consisting of 1,523 former early school leavers) in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Overall, the trends noted in 2015 have largely continued. Since the 2014 survey, there has been a significant decrease in participation in Certificate I-III courses (down 11.6 percentage points) and those looking for work (down 7.2 points), and a significant increase in participation in Bachelor degrees (up 3.9 points) and full-time employment (up 11.3 points).

Table 37 Main post-school destination among early school leaver cohort by year (2014 – 2016)

	2014	2015	2016
	%	%	%
Base (n): All respondents	1,523	1,523	1,523
Some form of education and training	57.9	52.0	49.2
Bachelor degree	0.9	3.6*	4.8*
VET Cert IV+	8.7	7.8	6.2
VET Cert I-III	16.2	7.4*	4.6*
Apprenticeship	25.5	28.8	28.8
Traineeship	6.6	4.4	4.9
Employed	20.0	28.3	34.2
F/T Work	8.5	15.3*	19.8*
P/T Work	11.5	13.0	14.5
Looking for work	17.2	15.0	10.0*
NILFET	4.9	4.7	6.5

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2014 ($p < .01$).

The early school leaver cohort continues to be much less likely than the Year 12 completer cohort to remain in the same post-school destination (38.1% vs. 60.2%).

Apprenticeships continue to be the most stable post-school destination among early school leavers, with 81.6% of those who had entered an apprenticeship in 2014 still undertaking an apprenticeship in 2016 (see Table 37). In terms of other post-school destinations:

- Early school leavers who entered a Certificate I-III course in 2014 continue to have the highest rate of transition. In 2016, almost two-fifths (38.1%) of this group had entered employment, while around one-third (35.4%) were in some other form of education or training, typically an apprenticeship (11.0%), Certificate IV+ (10.0%) or traineeship (7.9%).
- Approximately half of early school leavers who entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma course (45.6%) or a traineeship (52.2%) in 2014 have transitioned to employment by 2016. Although a similar proportion of these groups have continued to some other form of education or training, the nature of the education or training was different. Among those who had entered a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma course, one-fifth (20.5%) have entered a Bachelor degree, while among those who had entered a traineeship, 14.1% have entered an apprenticeship.
- Early school leavers whose main destination in 2014 had been looking for work appeared to be evenly split in 2016 between still looking for work (27.0%), entering some form of education or training (30.5%) and entering employment (28.0%). Further, being categorised as NILFET in 2016

continued to be more common among those who had been looking for work or had not been in the labour force, education or training in 2014.

Table 38 Transitions in main post-school destination among early school leavers by main post-school destination from 2014 to 2016

	Total %	Bachelor %	VET IV+ %	VET I-III %	Apprenticeship %	Traineeship %	F/T work %	P/T work %	Looking for work %	NILFET %
Base (n): All	1,523	15	132	227	520	107	119	173	175	55
No change in destination	38.1	55.1	10.9	7.6	81.6	18.9	48.4	28.1	27.0	27.6
Some form of education and training	24.5	16.6	34.0	35.4	2.9	23.4	36.8	29.2	30.5	34.1
Bachelor degree	4.3	-	20.5	6.6	0.4	2.0	1.1	4.2	2.1	5.6
VET Cert IV+	5.2	5.0	-	10.0	0.8	6.4	7.4	6.4	6.6	8.6
VET Cert I-III	3.4	7.1	6.1	-	1.3	0.9	-	4.4	7.7	11.8
Apprenticeship	8.0	-	3.9	11.0	-	14.1	22.0	10.0	9.1	8.1
Traineeship	3.6	4.4	3.4	7.9	0.4	-	6.3	4.3	5.0	-
Employed	26.9	23.3	45.6	38.1	13.0	52.2	8.4	27.0	28.0	22.8
Looking for work	5.3	5.0	5.2	12.6	1.7	2.1	2.2	11.3	-	15.5
NILFET	5.2	-	4.3	6.3	0.9	3.3	4.2	4.3	14.5	-

Note: 'Some form of education and training' and 'Employed' categories exclude the 2014 main post-school destination for each column.

6.3. Year 10 students

A total of 1,564 of the Year 10 student cohort in 2014 completed a follow-up interview in 2016. While the majority were still enrolled in secondary school (90.1%) and undertaking Year 12 (89.7%), approximately one-in-ten had left school early (9.9%).

Members of the Year 10 student cohort who had left school before completing Year 12 were more likely to be male (11.3%), have attended a government school (12.4%), have been aged 17 years at the end of 2013 (39.5%), be from the lowest SES quartile (22.0%), have identified as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person (22.2%) and reside in regional or rural parts of NSW (16.1%). The reasons these students reported leaving school early were broadly consistent with results presented in Section 3. The most common reason related to not liking school or teachers (47.3%), followed by work or career reasons (35.1%), not coping at school or failing subjects (18.8%), looking for other educational opportunities (16.1%) and external factors (12.0%). A further 6.1% mentioned other reasons and 5.3% said they had left due to being bullied.

Approximately half (51.5%) of the Year 10 student cohort who had left school before completing Year 12 were undertaking some form of further study in 2016, while 4.1% were enrolled but had not yet started. Among those currently studying (n=73), most were full-time (59.3%) and were undertaking a Certificate I-III course (57.3%) or Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma (30.2%). Approximately half of those undertaking some form of further study in 2016 were doing so as part of an apprenticeship (48.3%) or traineeship (3.8%).

The majority (68.6%) of the Year 10 student cohort who left school before completing Year 12 were working in some capacity. Approximately half (47.7%) were in full-time employment, one-fifth (20.9%) were in part-time employment and one-quarter (25.3%) were looking for work. Further, a minority (6.1%) were not looking for work.

7. Summary and conclusions

The key findings of the 2016 NSW Secondary Students' Post-School Destinations Survey are summarised in the following section. The primary aim of the survey is to provide a platform to monitor and examine trends in, and correlates of, post-school education, training and employment destinations among secondary school students in NSW.

7.1. Year 12 completers

Entering a Bachelor degree continued to be the most common main post-school destination for Year 12 completers, with 51.2% reporting this destination. The main universities attended were Western Sydney University (15.7% of those studying a Bachelor degree), University of New South Wales (13.3%), University of Sydney (13.3%) and Macquarie University (10.4%).

Commencing a Bachelor degree in the year after leaving school continues to vary between sub-populations of Year 12 completers. In 2016, those who entered a Bachelor degree were more likely to be female, from higher parental SES backgrounds, have attended a non-government school (although it should be noted that SES and school sector are highly correlated), have not undertaken a VET course while at school, speak a language other than English at home and have attended a school in Greater Sydney – especially Inner Sydney, Sydney North or Sydney South. Year 12 completers identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were less likely than others to have entered a Bachelor degree.

In terms of other post-school destinations, 6.5% of Year 12 completers were enrolled in a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma, 2.7% in a Certificate I, II or III, 5.5% in an apprenticeship and 4.3% in a traineeship. In total, around two-thirds (70.2%) of Year 12 completers were in some form of education and training. The proportion of Year 12 completers in some form of education and training is now at its lowest point in the time series. This trend is associated with a significant decrease in the proportion of Year 12 completers entering a Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma, or Certificate I, II or III course. Further, the trend of small annual increases (while not statistically significant) in Year 12 completers entering a Bachelor degree seen since the 2010 survey did not continue, with the 2016 result 2.0 percentage points lower than that of 2015.

Among those not currently undertaking further education or training, most were employed in full-time (8.6% of all Year 12 completers) or part-time work (13.2%), while 5.2% were looking for work and 2.8% were not in the labour force, education or training.

7.2. Early school leavers

The initial post-school destinations of those who leave the school system prior to completing Year 12 continue to be very different to those who complete Year 12.

Early school leavers are significantly less likely than Year 12 completers to have entered any form of further education (54.3% vs. 70.2%). This is despite early school leavers being more likely to have entered an apprenticeship (27.8%), Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma (9.1%), VET Certificate I-III course (9.6%) or traineeship (6.5%). The difference in further education participation between the two cohorts primarily reflects the finding that very few early school leavers enter a Bachelor degree (1.3%) in the year after leaving school.

Early school leavers were no more likely than Year 12 completers to have entered full-time (10.1%) or part-time (13.5%) employment, but were more likely to be looking for work (15.3%) or not in the labour force, education or training (6.9%).

This profile of main post-school destination among early school leavers is comparable to previous surveys in the time series. The only notable trend has been a continued decline in participation in Certificate I-III courses (now down 9.8 percentage points since 2010). Further, the proportion of early school leavers whose main post-school destination was not in the labour force, education or training remained higher than that seen in 2010 and 2013. However, some caution should be taken when interpreting the later results, as the apparent increase may reflect changes in the survey design in 2014, which saw the introduction of proxy interviewing with parents/carers and used a different sampling methodology (clustered by school in 2010 and 2013).

7.3. Not in the labour force, education or training

The life circumstances of Year 12 completers and early school leavers who were not in the labour force, education or training continue to be quite different. Results for each cohort were broadly consistent with findings from previous years of the survey.

The main activity of Year 12 completers not in the labour force, education or training was recreation-related (41.3%); typically framed as travelling or having a 'gap' year (25.4%) – or undertaking informal studying or training (28.2%). Other main activities were infrequently mentioned. Reinforcing the finding that many were having a 'gap year', around one-quarter (27.4%) were enrolled in some form of education or training but had deferred it.

The main activities of early school leavers not in the labour force, education or training in 2016 were more diverse than seen among Year 12 completers. The most common main activities included undertaking some form of informal studying or training (17.0%), recreation (16.3%), being unable to work due to illness (14.1%), performing home duties (13.7%) and looking after children / preparing for birth (13.2%). Consistent with general trends noted in previous surveys, female early school leavers were much more likely to say they were looking after children or preparing for birth (21.6% vs. 2.2%). A further difference between the cohorts was that few early school leavers (3.8%) not in the labour force, further education or training were enrolled in, but had deferred, further study.

7.4. Reasons for leaving school early

The most common self-reported reasons for leaving school early in 2016 continued to relate to wanting to pursue employment and career opportunities and not liking school or teachers. Other less frequently cited reasons were: not coping at school or failing subjects, school 'not being for them', finding school boring, ill-health, being bullied and wanting to study elsewhere.

Self-reported reasons for leaving school were largely comparable to previous surveys in the time series. The only significant changes noted were slight decreases in mention of wanting to pursue employment and career opportunities and not liking school / teachers, as well as slight increases in mention of looking for or transitioning to other educational opportunities and school 'not being for them'.

The following outlines the socio-demographic and post-school destination profile of seven main reasons for leaving school early in 2016.

Disillusioned with school	• Decreases with age • Higher participation in apprenticeships • Lower looking for work or NILFET
Academic or behavioural difficulties	• Increases with age • Higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • Lower participation in apprenticeships or Certificate IV+ and higher looking for work
Bullying	• Increases as SES decreased • Higher among females and lower among Catholic sector • Lower participation in apprenticeships and higher looking for work
Employment or career related	• Higher among males and not identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • Highest participation in apprenticeships • Lower in VET courses, looking for work or NILFET
Other education opportunities	• Increases with SES • Higher among females, Catholic sector and not identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • Higher participation in Certificate IV+ and lower working full-time
External factors or pressures	• Increases with age • Higher among females, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, lower among Catholic sector • Highest NILFET and lower participation in apprenticeships or traineeships
Other reasons	• Higher among females and 18 year olds • Lower among Catholic sector • Lower participation in apprenticeships and higher looking for work

7.5. School engagement

Consistent with patterns seen in previous post-school destination surveys, socialising or friends and specific subjects (typically sports or physical education) continue to be the aspects most liked about school among Year 12 completers (55.0% and 14.3%) and early school leavers (48.0% and 23.8%). Year 12 completers were more likely than early school leavers to cite socialising or friends, but less likely to mention specific subjects, especially sports or physical education. Since the 2014 survey there has been a slight increase among early school leavers who report socialising or friends and a decrease mentioning specific subjects (sports or physical education specifically).

School work and exams were the aspects liked least about school among Year 12 completers (29.9%) and early school leavers (30.8%). However, there were differences between the cohorts in the general profile of aspects mentioned. Year 12 completers were more likely to mention the stress or pressure of schooling, as well as the daily school routine. By comparison, early school leavers were more likely to mention issues with teachers or other students and school in general.

The impact of the different least liked aspects of school on early school leavers' decision to leave school varied greatly, but was generally consistent with previous surveys. Aspects rated as having the greatest influence were problems with other students (including being bullied) and expressing a general dislike for school.

7.6. Career expectations

School leavers' expectations about their future paths continue to be reasonably well aligned with their current post-school pathways and broadly consistent with previous years in the time series.

Year 12 completers typically expected to be working in professional roles by age 30 (56.4%). Less than one-in-ten expected to be working in non-professional occupations and one-fifth (18.6%) did not know what career they expected to have at age 30. By comparison, early school leavers were more likely to expect they would be working in a technical or trade role (35.1%), or community or personal service role (12.9%) at age 30. One-fifth (17.9%) expected to be working in a professional role or did not know what career they expected to have (22.7%).

7.7. Destination three years after leaving school

The 2016 post-school destinations survey included a longitudinal follow-up of Year 12 completers and early school leavers who left school in 2013 and Year 10 students who had taken part in the 2014 cross-sectional survey.

Among the Year 12 completer cohort, around two-thirds (60.2%) were participating in the same post-school destination as in 2014. The main changes seen among the cohort related to an overall decrease in participation in Certificate IV, Diploma or Advanced Diploma courses (down 4.0 percentage points), Certificate I-III courses (down 3.1 points) and those looking for work (down 2.9 points; albeit not statistically significant) since 2014. These decreases were associated with an increase in the proportion in full-time employment (up 6.3 points). Further, the majority of those who had entered a Bachelor degree (89.9%) or apprenticeship (60.0%) in 2014 were still involved in this type of further education or training.

The early school leaver cohort continued to be much less likely than the Year 12 completer cohort to have remained in the same post-school destination (38.1%). Since the 2014 survey, there has been a significant decrease in participation in Certificate I-III courses (down 11.6 percentage points) and those looking for work (down 7.2 points), but a significant increase in participation in Bachelor degrees (up 3.9 points) and full-time employment (up 11.3 points). The most stable post-school destination among early school leavers was an apprenticeship, with 81.6% of those who had entered an apprenticeship in 2014 still undertaking one in 2016.

The majority of the Year 10 student cohort was still enrolled in secondary school (90.1%) and undertaking Year 12 (89.7%) in 2016. Members of the Year 10 student cohort who had left school before completing Year 12 were more likely to be male (11.3%), have attended a government school (12.4%), have been aged 17 years at the end of 2013 (39.5%), be from the lowest SES quartile (22.0%), have identified as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person (22.2%) and reside in regional or rural parts of NSW (16.1%). The reasons they had left school early were broadly consistent with results from the cross-sectional early school leaver survey.

List of abbreviations and terms

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics

ANZSCO – Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations

ASGS – Australian Statistical Geography Standard

BOSTES – Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW

CC – Connected Community

DoE – NSW Department of Education

Full-time employment – usually works 35 hours or more per week

HSC – Higher School Certificate

IB – International Baccalaureate

LS – Life Skills

NESA – NSW Education Standards Authority

NILFET – Not in the labour force or further education or training

Part-time employment – usually works less than 35 hours per week

SA4 – Statistical Area Level 4

SEIFA – Socio-economic Indexes for Areas

SES – Socio-economic Status

TAFE – Technical and Further Education

VET – Vocational education and training

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