

## Education



**What difference does in-school vocational education and training (VET) make to Year 10-12 students? Does VET in school improve Year 12 retention? How likely are those students to go on to further education? What are their employment outcomes? How can we improve these outcomes?**

In answering those questions, the [Census and Vocational Education and Training in Schools project](#) addressed a critical gap in our understanding of the post-school outcomes for students undertaking VET in Schools.

In fact, the project demonstrated that students who do VET in Schools and do not go on to higher education have better engagement and employment outcomes. It also showed that male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who do VET in Schools are more likely to complete Year 12 and that male VET in Schools students who study a trade gain better employment outcomes.

Dr Patrick Korbel from the [National Centre for Vocational Education Research \(NCVER\)](#) said that while the annual VET in Schools data gave information about students in the year of collection, it didn't provide any post-school insights.

"However, by linking NCVER's training data from 2006 with 2011 Census data we could see the educational and employment outcomes of those students 5 years down the track," Dr Korbel said.

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"We could see whether the students went on to any further study, the highest level of qualification they attained, whether they were currently employed or still studying and the level of income they had attained. All of this information could paint the picture of the benefits of the VET training they had undertaken at school."

By linking NCVER's VET data about students' education with Census employment outcomes we capture new and important information.

"It's really valuable information and it revealed that one of the main predicted benefits of in-school vocational training – to keep students in the school system until they finish Year 12 – is happening," Dr Korbel said.

"The new standard is a Year 12 education – gone are the days of leaving school at Year 10 and taking up a trade.

"Now we can show who is participating in the workforce and the outcomes they are achieving. It's a great basis for future research to see what is working and what is not."

Where policy makers used to make assumptions about efficacy and impact, they now have evidence.

"Surveys are expensive and time consuming and it's very difficult to trace these students once they leave school. If you wanted to follow up with another survey it would not only be cost prohibitive, it would be unfeasible to track them.

"Data integration is crucial and the premise is collect once, use many times. Now that we have linked this data once, it will be easier next time and since NCVER collects information from across the VET sector, the opportunities are endless to learn about the outcomes these programs and policies achieve."

Find out more about ABS data integration on our [FAQ page](#).