

2021 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey

Annual report

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation



Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) undertakes in-depth analysis of education programs and outcomes across early childhood, school, training, and higher education to inform whole-of-government, evidence-based decision-making. Put simply, it seeks to find out what works best. Its focus is all education in NSW. CESE's main responsibilities within the department are:

- qualitative and quantitative research, including data analysis, evidence papers and case studies that build understanding and uptake of evidence-based practice
- robust data collection to enable research and statistics for the education and training sector
- evaluating key policies and programs to strengthen quality delivery and student outcomes
- national engagement on research agenda and data strategy
- driving capability uplift in the use of data and evidence as part of everyday practice
- trialling innovative initiatives to improve student outcomes.

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Last we would like to thank the many NSW recent school leavers from 2020 who took the time to participate in the 2021 survey.

We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal people and pay our respect to Country.

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Introduction

The NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey collects information about students' main destination in the year after completing Year 12 or leaving school early.¹

There are 10 main school destinations that relate to further education and current employment: bachelor degree, VET certificate IV+, VET certificate III, VET certificate I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship,² full-time work, part-time work, looking for work, and not in the labour force³ or further education or training (NILFET).

The survey provides information on education pathways, attainments and destinations of young people in NSW, and informs policymaking related to students' post-school education, training and employment.

In 2021, **all** students who left school in 2020 were invited to complete the survey. The participants consisted of students who finished Year 12 in 2020 (called Year 12 completers) and students who left school sometime during 2020 and may have been in Year 10, Year 11 or Year 12 (called early school leavers). A total of 60,621 Year 12 completers and 20,307 early school leavers were invited to take part in the 2021 survey. Responses were received from 35,916 Year 12 completers and 6,472 early school leavers and are analysed in this report.⁴

1 This classification system is hierarchical and prioritises education-related post-school destinations over participation in employment. As such, it represents a young person's main destination since leaving school.

2 For an explanation of the difference between an apprenticeship and a traineeship, refer to [Benefits of apprenticeships and traineeships](#) on the NSW Department of Education website.

3 Not in the labour force means that a person is not working and not looking for work.

4 A detailed outline of the survey method, including eligibility guidelines and the selection process, can be found in the technical report.

Destinations of students who completed school or left school early in 2020

Year 12 completers

Figure 1

Proportion of Year 12 completers by main destination in 2021



Close to three-quarters (73.1%) of the 2020 Year 12 completers were in some form of education or training in 2021. The main post-school destination for this cohort was a bachelor degree (54.9%). Just over one-fifth (20.2%) were employed (7.5% full-time and 12.8% part-time), while a smaller proportion was looking for work (4.5%), or NILFET (2.2%).

Early school leavers

Figure 2

Proportion of early school leavers by main destination in 2021



In 2021, the main post-school destinations for 2020 early school leavers were substantially different from Year 12 completers. Almost 3 in 5 early school leavers (58.1%) were undertaking some form of education or training, compared to nearly 3 in 4 Year 12 completers (73.1%). The most common post-school destination among this cohort was apprenticeship (34.9%). Just under one-quarter of early school leavers were employed (9.4% full-time and 15.0% part-time), while a smaller proportion were looking for work (12.6%), or NILFET (4.8%).

Year 12 completers

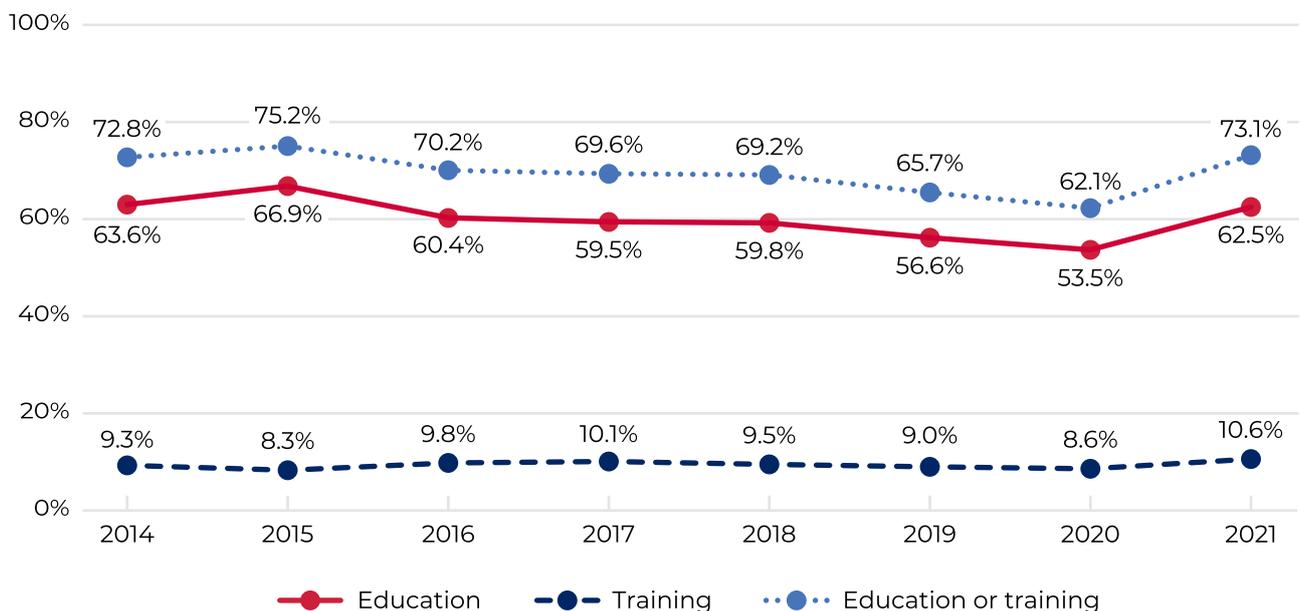
Year 12 completers in education or training

Overview

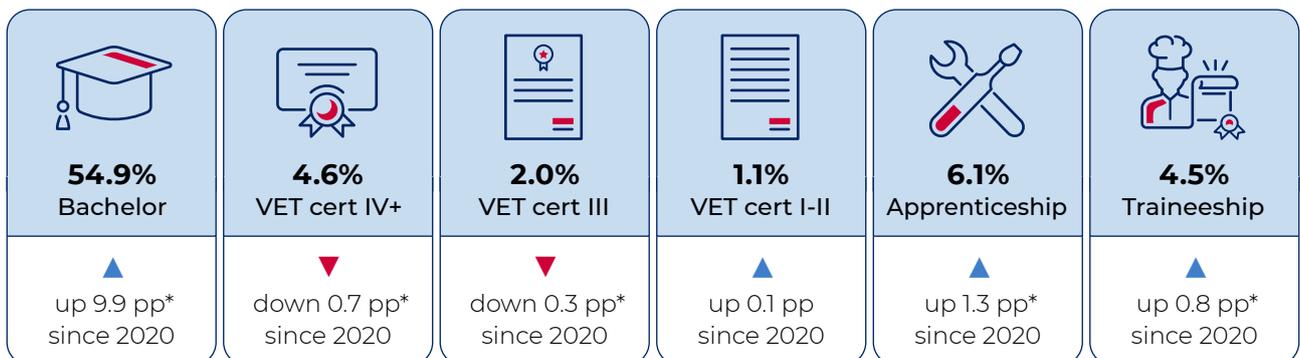
As mentioned earlier, close to three-quarters (73.1%) of Year 12 completers were in education or training in 2021. This is the highest proportion since 2015 with an increase from 2020 by 11 percentage points (pp). Education, compared with training, experienced a larger increase of 9 pp compared with 2 pp.

Figure 3

Proportions of Year 12 completers in education or training, 2014 to 2021



Bachelor degrees continue to be the most popular destination among Year 12 completers and this post-school destination saw the largest percentage point increase of nearly 10 pp. Of the Year 12 completers undertaking a bachelor degree in 2021, 28.0% were undertaking a double degree. Of the Year 12 completers who were enrolled to study in 2021 (both current and deferred), 78.4% enrolled at university and 15.4% enrolled through TAFE or a government vocational education and training (VET) provider.



Note. Changes in percentage points accompanied by an asterisk (*) are statistically significant at a 99% confidence level ($p < .01$). Statistical significance is determined by both the size of the groups being compared and the percentage point difference between them.



Types of education and training

For those undertaking a bachelor degree or VET certificate

Females were more likely than males to be studying:

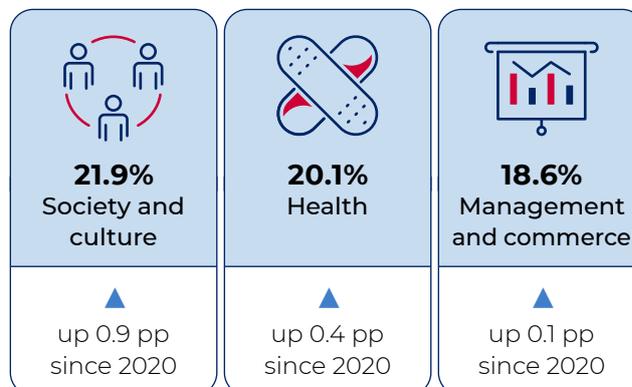
- health
- education
- society and culture
- food hospitality and personal services (for example, beauty therapy)
- creative arts.

Males were more likely than females to be studying:

- engineering and related technologies
- information technology
- management and commerce
- architecture and building.

The most common study areas in the education category were:

- bachelor degree – society and culture (23.1%)
- VET certificate IV+ – creative arts (19.8%)
- VET certificate III – health (17.9%)
- VET certificate I-II – health (19.7%).



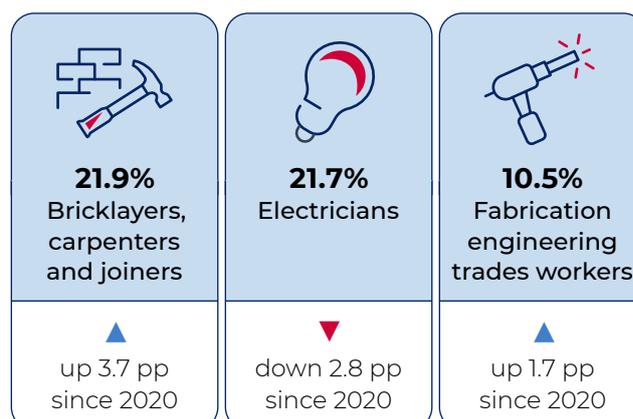
For those doing an apprenticeship

Females were more likely than males to be undertaking an apprenticeship as:

- hairdressers
- personal service (for example, beauty therapy) and travel workers
- food trades workers.

Males were more likely than females to be undertaking an apprenticeship as:

- bricklayers, carpenters and joiners
- electricians
- fabrication engineering trades workers
- mechanical engineering trades workers.



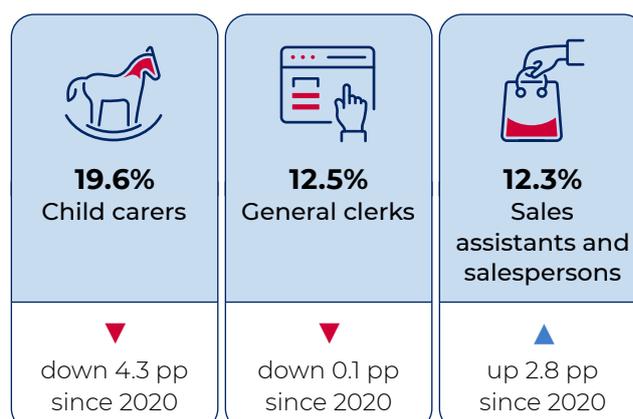
For those doing a traineeship

Females were more likely than males to be undertaking a traineeship as:

- child carers
- general clerks
- personal carers (for example, special care workers) and assistants
- receptionists.

Males were more likely than females to be undertaking a traineeship as:

- construction and mining labourers
- ICT and telecommunications technicians
- building and engineering technicians
- storepersons
- architects, designers, planners and surveyors.



Year 12 completers in employment

Overview

Just over one-fifth (20.2%) of Year 12 completers were employed and not in education or training in 2021. Since 2020, participation in part-time employment has significantly decreased by 6.3 pp, while participation in full-time employment has remained relatively stable. More than half (54.3%) of Year 12 completers whose main destination was part-time work would prefer to be working more hours.

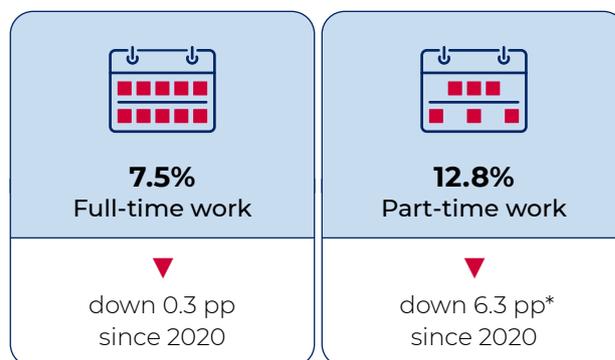
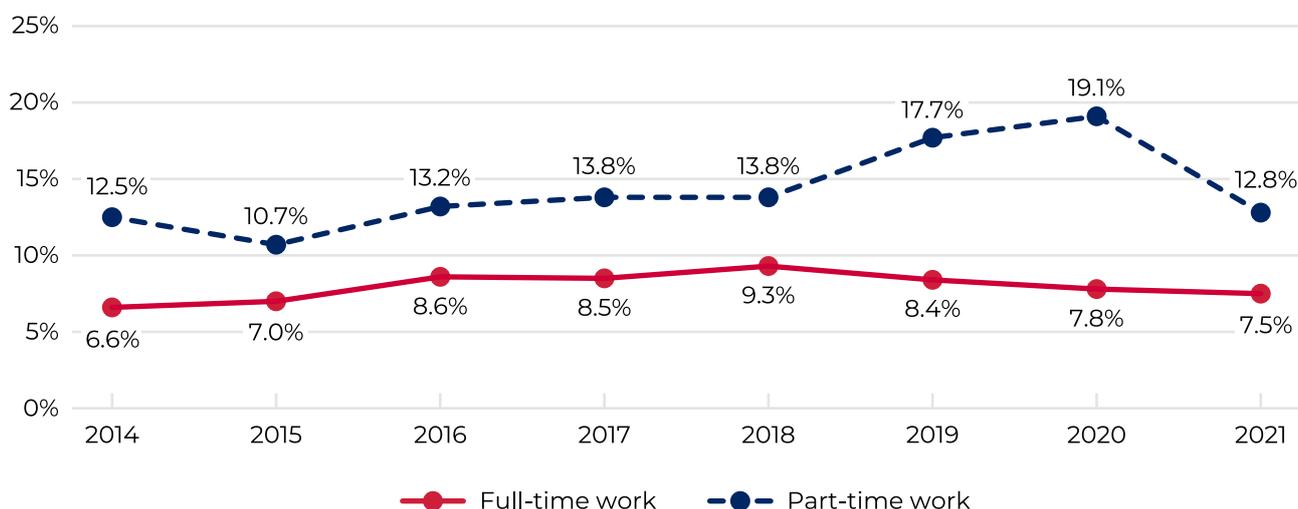


Figure 4

Proportion of Year 12 completers in full-time or part-time work, 2014 to 2021



Types of jobs

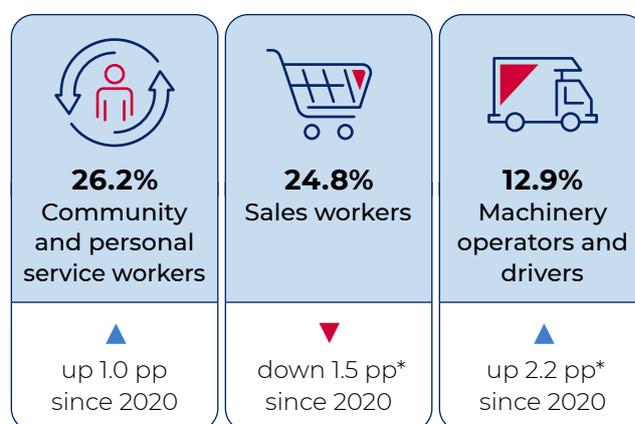
For those in paid jobs that were not part of an apprenticeship or traineeship

Females were more likely than males to be working as:

- sales workers
- community and personal service workers (for example, carers and aides)
- clerical and administrative workers.

Males were more likely than females to be working as:

- labourers
- machinery operators and drivers
- technicians and trades workers managers.



Year 12 completers looking for work or NILFET

Overview

Only 4.5% of the Year 12 completers were looking for work. This is the lowest proportion of Year 12 completers since we began recording this measure in 2014. Just over 2% of the Year 12 completers were not in the labour force, education or training (NILFET). This is the lowest proportion since 2015. Compared with 2020, the proportion of Year 12 completers who were looking for work or NILFET has significantly decreased by 3.2 pp and 1.1 pp respectively.

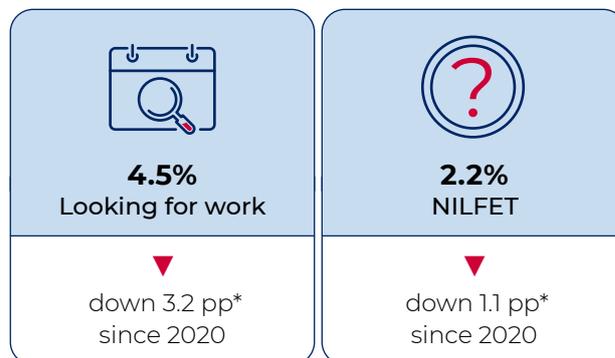
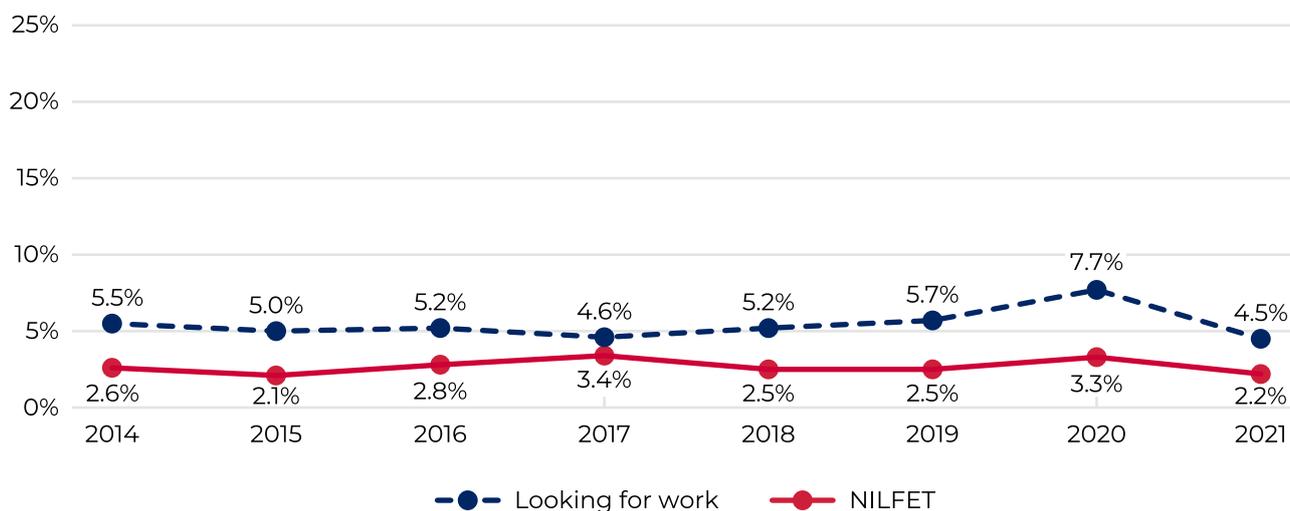


Figure 5

Proportion of Year 12 completers looking for work or NILFET, 2014 to 2021

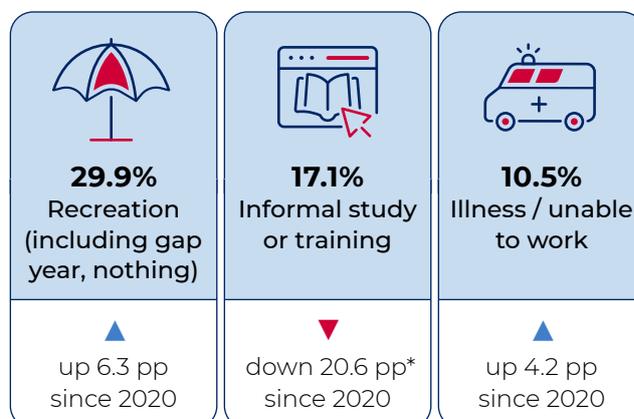


Types of activities

For those not in the labour force, education or training

Females were more likely than males to report:

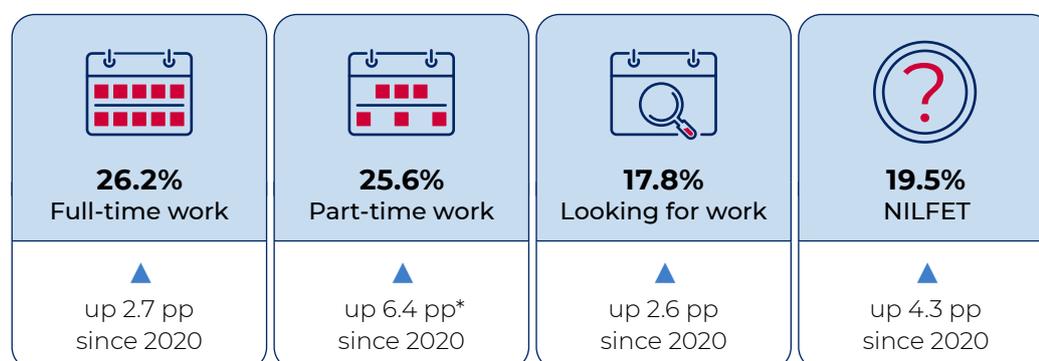
- looking after children / preparing for birth as their main reason for not being in the labour force, education or training.





Year 12 completers who deferred further education

Almost 1 in 5 (19.5%) Year 12 completers who were NILFET indicated they were enrolled in a course of study but had deferred to 2021. Comparative rates of deferment were higher for those in employment and slightly lower for those looking for work. Compared to 2020, the percentage of Year 12 completers who deferred study in 2021 increased in the below 4 destination categories.



Subgroup differences in destinations

Female school leavers more likely than male school leavers to report their destination as:

- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate IV+
- VET certificate III
- Traineeship

Male school leavers more likely than female school leavers to report their destination as:

- Apprenticeship
- ◆ Full-time work
- Looking for work
- NILFET

Government school leavers more likely than non-government school leavers to report their destination as:

- VET certificate IV+
- VET certificate III
- VET certificate I-II
- ◆ Full-time work
- ◆ Part-time work
- Looking for work
- NILFET

Non-government school leavers more likely than government school leavers to report their destination as:

- Bachelor degree

School leavers with a **higher parental SES**⁵ more likely than school leavers with a lower parental SES to report their destination as:

- Bachelor degree

School leavers with a **lower parental SES** more likely than school leavers with a higher parental SES to report their destination as:

- VET certificate III
- Apprenticeship
- Traineeship
- ◆ Full-time work
- ◆ Part-time work
- Looking for work
- NILFET

School leavers who **speak a language other than English** at home more likely than school leavers who only speak English to report their destination as:

- Bachelor degree

School leavers who **only speak English** at home more likely than school leavers who speak a language other than English to report their destination as:

- VET certificate III
- Apprenticeship
- Traineeship
- ◆ Full-time work
- ◆ Part-time work

Aboriginal⁶ school leavers more likely than non-Aboriginal school leavers to report their destination as:

- VET certificate III
- Apprenticeship
- Traineeship
- ◆ Full-time work
- ◆ Part-time work
- Looking for work
- NILFET

Non-Aboriginal school leavers more likely than Aboriginal school leavers to report their destination as:

- Bachelor degree

School leavers **living in Greater Sydney** more likely than school leavers living in the rest of NSW to report their destination as:

- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate IV+

School leavers **living in the rest of NSW** more likely than school leavers living in Greater Sydney to report their destination as:

- VET certificate III
- Apprenticeship
- Traineeship
- ◆ Full-time work
- ◆ Part-time work
- Looking for work
- NILFET

- In education or training
- ◆ In employment
- Looking for work or NILFET

Note. On this page, if a destination category (for example, VET certificate IV+) does not appear for a group comparison (for example, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal) then it means that the destination did not differ significantly (at a 99% confidence level ($p < .01$)) between those groups.

5 Parental socioeconomic status (SES) is an individual measure of SES derived from school leavers' recollection of the main occupation and highest level of education of their parent(s). Refer to technical report for further information.

6 In this report 'Aboriginal' refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Achieving the HSC minimum standard

Overview

A sub-sample of 1,355 Year 12 completers was asked questions related to the HSC minimum standard test. This sample included:

- all 242 responding Year 12 completers who, at the time of the survey (2021), had finished Year 12 in 2020 but had not achieved the HSC minimum standard
- a random sample of 1,113 Year 12 completers who did achieve the HSC minimum standard.

Have you achieved the HSC minimum standard?

Figure 6

Self-reported responses from the Year 12 completers sub-sample initially identified as having not achieved the HSC minimum standard regarding their HSC minimum standard status at the time of the survey



Of those Year 12 completers initially identified as having not achieved the HSC minimum standard, 38.5% reported that they had gone on to achieve the HSC minimum standard between being targeted for the survey and completing it. Of those Year 12 completers who had still not achieved the HSC minimum standard, 47.7% confirmed they would be interested in achieving it in the future.

Year 12 completers who achieved the HSC minimum standard

How did your school prepare you for the HSC minimum standard?

More than four-fifths of Year 12 completers (84.1%) indicated that their school helped them prepare for the HSC minimum standard test through using one or more of the following support strategies:

1. Teachers helped students develop the skills needed for the tests (80.9%).
2. Teachers provided feedback to students about their skills in relation to the tests (70.4%),
3. The school ran information sessions for the students' year level (68.9%).
4. The school offered students practice tests to sit (68.5%).
5. Students were given advice about when they would be ready to sit the tests (53.4%).
6. Students received some 'other' form of preparation support (1.5%).

Did you find any aspects of the HSC minimum standard test difficult?

Figure 7

Views of the Year 12 completers sub-sample on the difficulty of the HSC minimum standard test



Almost two-thirds (63.8%) of Year 12 completers indicated that they found the HSC minimum standard test difficult for one or more reasons.

The top 3 difficulties selected by these school leavers were:

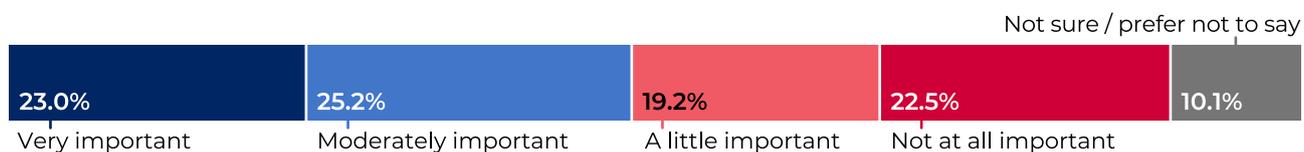
1. The tests were stressful (58.3%).
2. The questions were challenging (44.0%).
3. The way questions were worded made them difficult to understand (44.0%).

HSC credential and the future

In the future, how important is it to you that you achieve an HSC credential?

Figure 8

Views of Year 12 completers yet to attain the HSC minimum standard about the importance of an HSC credential

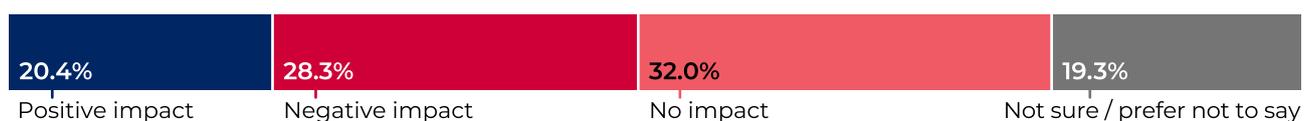


Close to half (48.2%) of Year 12 completers who had not yet attained the HSC minimum standard felt that the HSC credential was very or moderately important for their future.

What impact (if any) do you feel **not** achieving an HSC will have on your career opportunities in the future?

Figure 9

Views of Year 12 completers yet to attain the HSC minimum standard about the perceived impact of **not** having an HSC credential on career opportunities



Close to a third (32.0%) of Year 12 completers who had not yet attained the HSC minimum standard felt that not achieving their HSC would have **no impact** on their career opportunities in the future. Just over one-quarter (28.3%) felt that not achieving their HSC would have a negative impact on future career opportunities and 20.4% felt it would have a positive impact.

Early school leavers

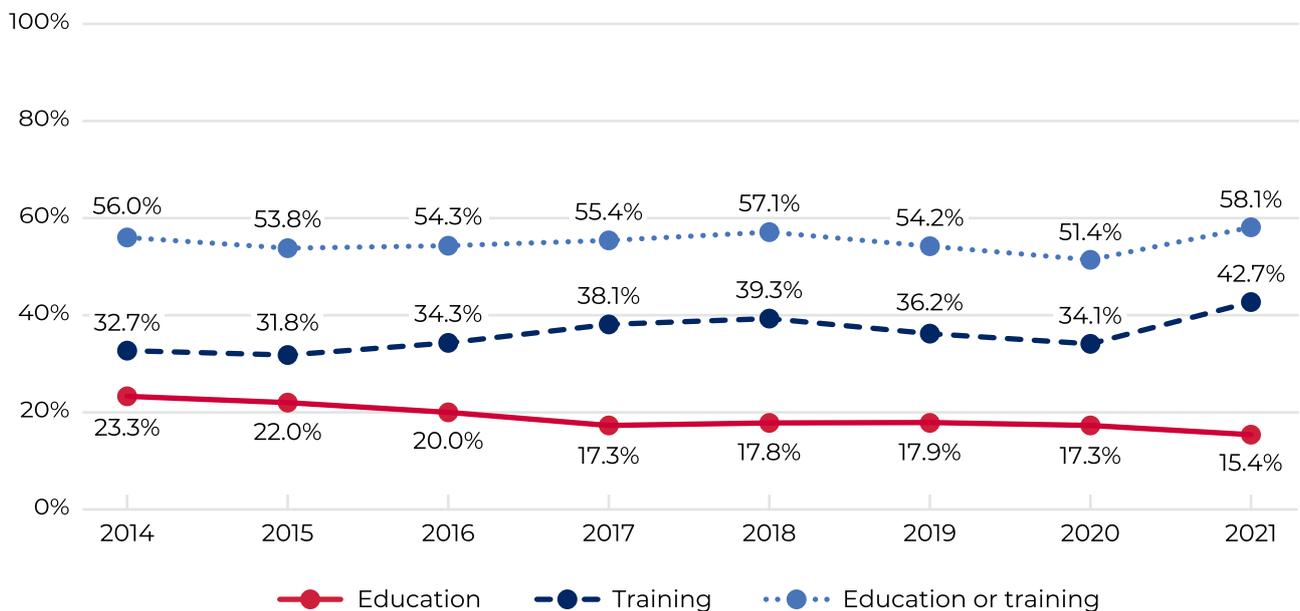
Early school leavers in education or training

Overview

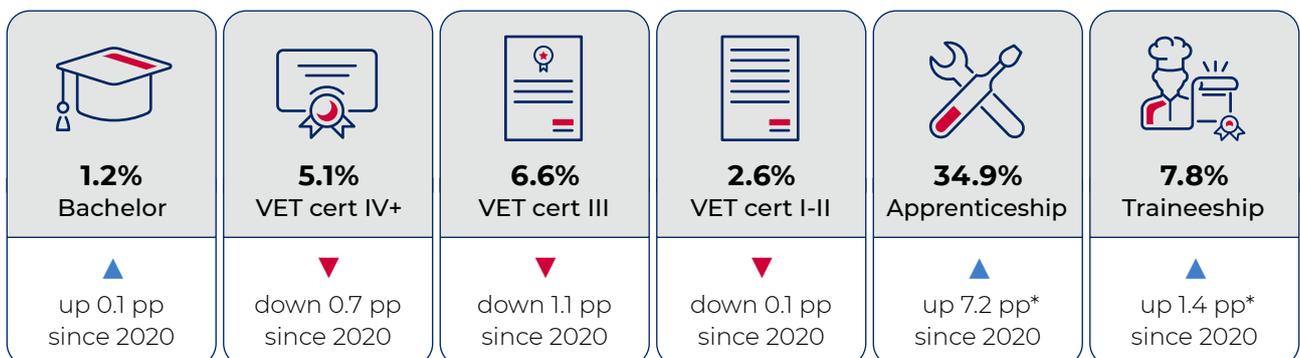
Over half (58.1%) of early school leavers were in education or training in 2021. This is the highest proportion of early school leavers since we began recording this measure in 2014. Compared with 2020, the proportion of early school leavers in training has significantly increased by 8.6 pp, while the proportion of early school leavers in education has decreased by 1.8 pp.

Figure 10

Proportion of early school leavers in education or training, 2014 to 2021



Apprenticeships continue to be the most popular destination among early school leavers and this post-school destination saw the largest percentage point increase of over 7 pp. Of the early school leavers in education, 92.3% were studying or enrolled to study a VET certificate.



Types of education and training

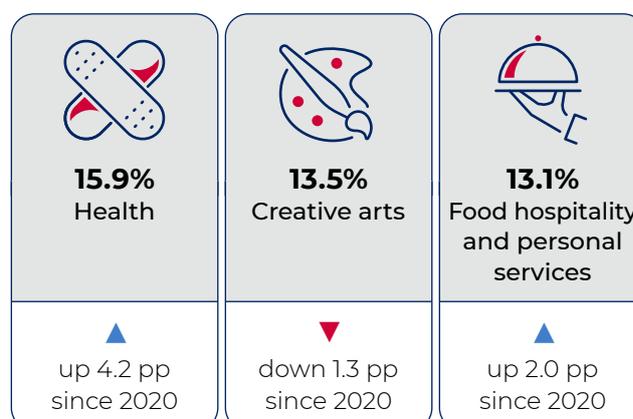
For those undertaking a bachelor degree or VET certificate

Females were more likely than males to be studying:

- health
- education.

Males were more likely than females to be studying:

- engineering and related technologies
- information technology.



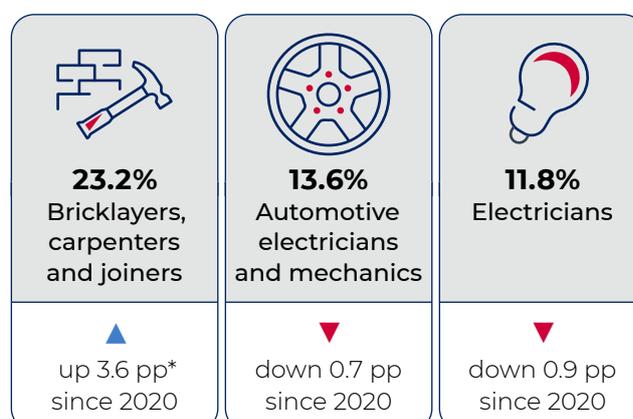
For those doing an apprenticeship

Females were more likely than males to be undertaking an apprenticeship as:

- hairdressers
- personal service (for example, beauty therapy) and travel workers
- food trades workers.

Males were more likely than females to be undertaking an apprenticeship as:

- bricklayers, carpenters and joiners
- plumbers
- fabrication engineering trades workers
- automotive electricians and mechanics
- electricians
- mechanical engineering trades workers
- glaziers, plasterers and tilers
- horticultural trades workers.



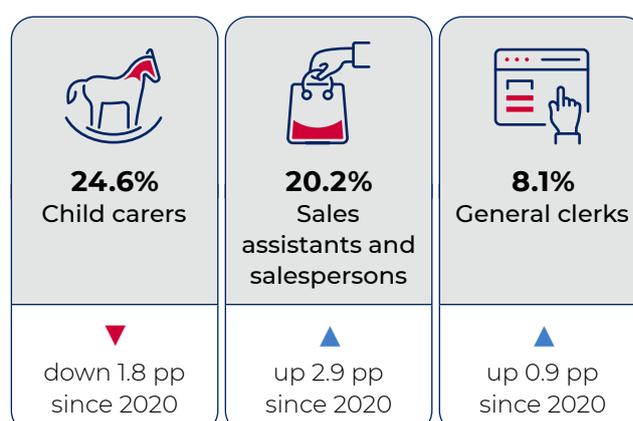
For those doing a traineeship

Females were more likely than males to be undertaking a traineeship as:

- child carers
- general clerks.

Males were more likely than females to be undertaking a traineeship as:

- farm, forestry and garden workers
- construction and mining labourers.



Early school leavers in employment

Overview

About one-quarter (24.5%) of early school leavers were employed and not in education or training in 2021. Since 2014, participation in part-time and full-time work has remained relatively stable. Close to 60% of early school leavers whose main destination was part-time work would prefer to be working more hours.

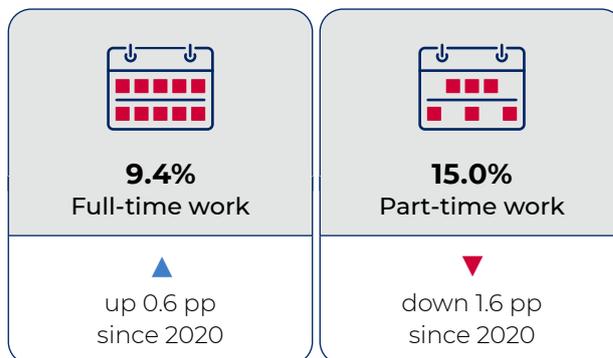
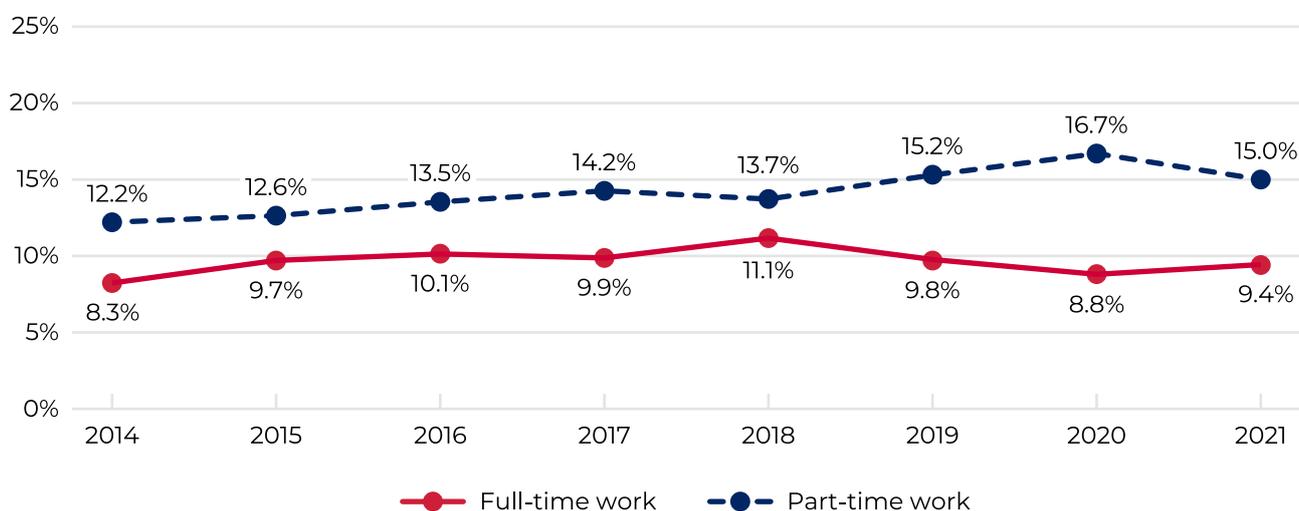


Figure 11

Proportion of early school leavers in full-time or part-time work, 2014 to 2021



Types of jobs

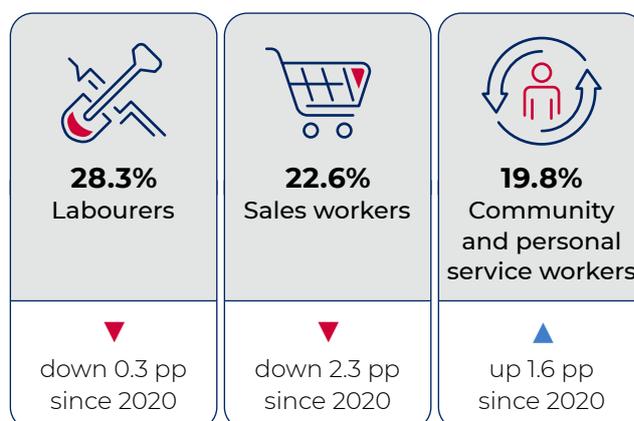
For those in paid jobs that were not part of an apprenticeship or traineeship

Females were more likely than males to be working as:

- community and personal service workers (for example, carers and aides)
- sales workers
- clerical and administrative workers.

Males were more likely than females to be working as:

- labourers
- technicians and trades workers
- machinery operators and drivers.



Early school leavers looking for work or NILFET

Overview

Only 4.8% of early school leavers were not in the labour force, education or training (NILFET) in 2021. This is the lowest proportion of early school leavers since we began recording this measure in 2014. Compared with 2020, the proportion of early school leavers who were NILFET has decreased by 1.1 pp.

Close to 13% of early school leavers were looking for work in 2021. This is the lowest proportion of early school leavers since we began recording this measure. Since 2020, the proportion of early school leavers looking for work has significantly decreased by 4.7 pp.

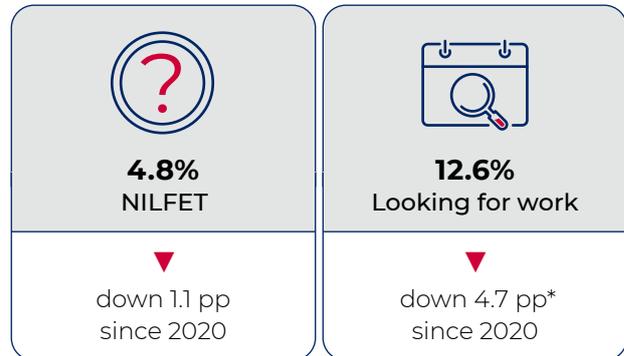
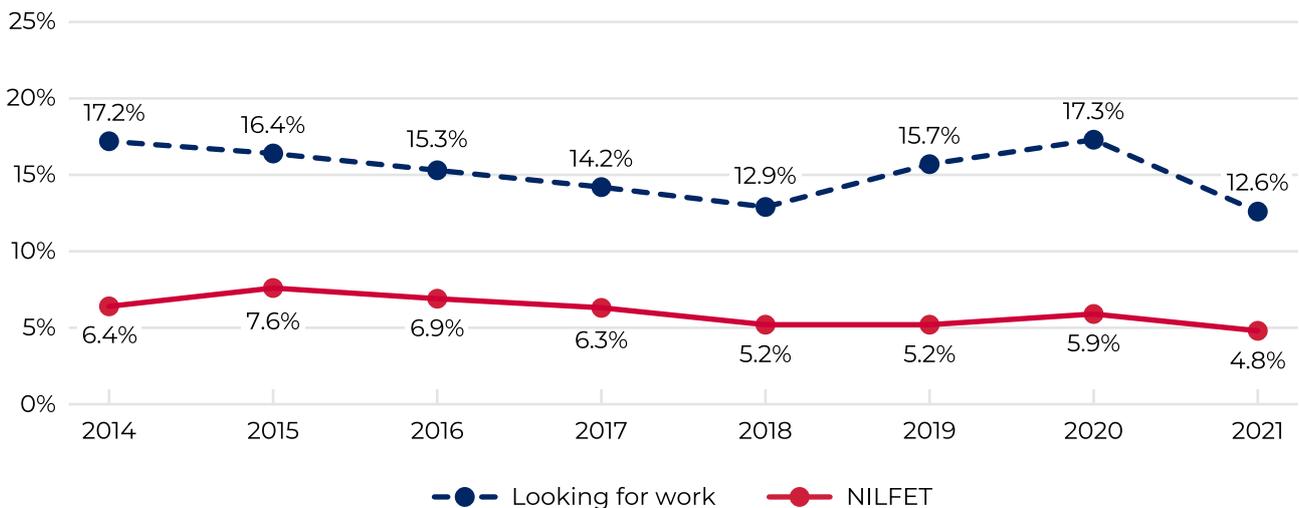


Figure 12

Proportion of early school leavers looking for work or NILFET, 2014 to 2021

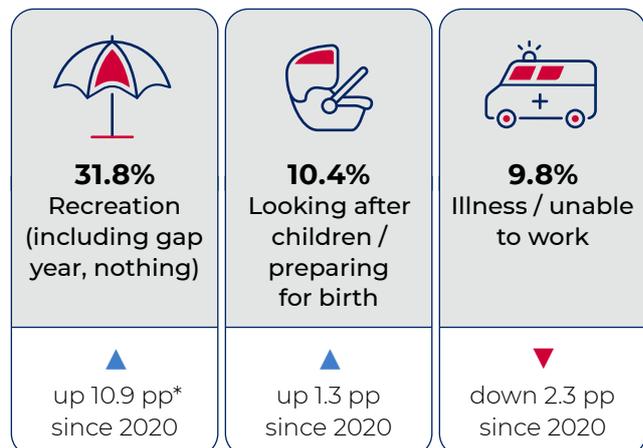


Types of activities

For those not in the labour force, education or training

Females were more likely than males to report:

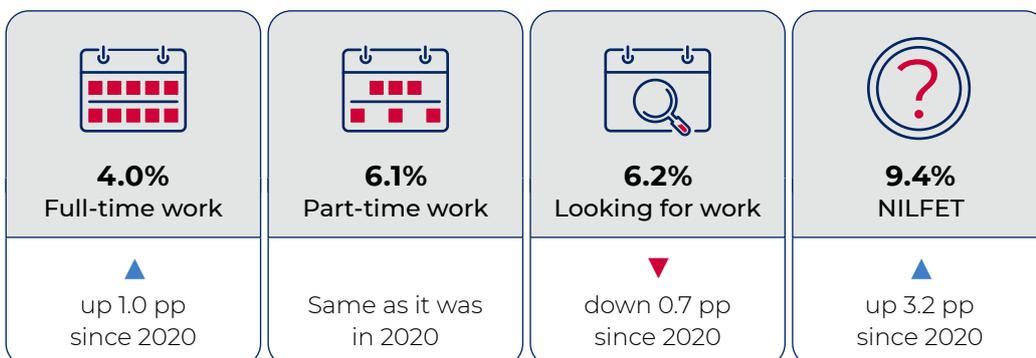
- looking after children / preparing for birth as their main reason for not being in the labour force, education or training.





Early school leavers who deferred further education

Approximately 1 in 11 (9.4%) early school leavers who were NILFET indicated they were enrolled in a course of study but had deferred it in 2021. Lower rates of deferment were found for those in employment or looking for work compared to those who were NILFET.



Subgroup differences in destinations

Female school leavers more likely than male school leavers to report their destination as:

- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate IV+
- VET certificate III
- VET certificate I-II
- Traineeship
- ◆ Part-time work
- NILFET

Male school leavers more likely than female school leavers to report their destination as:

- Apprenticeship
- ◆ Full-time work

Leavers who left school **before the age of 17 years** more likely than those who left school aged 17 years or older to report their destination as:

- Apprenticeship

Leavers who left school **aged 17 years or older** more likely than those who left school before the age of 17 years to report their destination as:

- ◆ Full-time work
- ◆ Part-time work
- NILFET

Government school leavers more likely than non-government school leavers to report their destination as:

- ◆ Full-time work
- Looking for work
- NILFET

Non-government school leavers more likely than government school leavers to report their destination as:

- VET certificate IV+
- Apprenticeship

School leavers with a **higher parental SES** more likely than school leavers with a lower parental SES to report their destination as:

- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate IV+

School leavers with a **lower parental SES** more likely than school leavers with a higher parental SES to report their destination as:

- ◆ Full-time work
- Looking for work

School leavers who **speak a language other than English** at home more likely than school leavers who only speak English to report their destination as:

- NILFET

School leavers who **only speak English** at home more likely than school leavers who speak a language other than English to report their destination as:

- ◆ Part-time work

Aboriginal school leavers more likely than non-Aboriginal school leavers to report their destination as:

- Looking for work

Non-Aboriginal school leavers more likely than Aboriginal school leavers to report their destination as:

- VET certificate IV+
- Apprenticeship

School leavers **living in Greater Sydney** more likely than school leavers living in the rest of NSW to report their destination as:

- VET certificate IV+

School leavers **living in the rest of NSW** more likely than school leavers living in Greater Sydney to report their destination as:

- Traineeship

- In education or training
- ◆ In employment
- Looking for work or NILFET

Note. On this page, if a destination category (for example, traineeship) does not appear for a group comparison (for example, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal) then it means that the destination did not differ significantly (at a 99% confidence level ($p < .01$)) between those groups.

Experiences at school

Top 5 main reasons leavers chose to leave school early

1. Work or career reasons (25.0%)
2. School not for me or not a good environment for learning (18.0%)
3. Did not like school or teachers (11.5%)
4. Mental health issues (7.9%)
5. Not coping well at school, failing or school is too hard (6.7%)

Sociodemographic differences in reasons why leavers chose to leave school early

Females were more likely than males to report leaving school early due to:

- Mental health issues (14.0% vs. 4.0%)
- Bullying (5.5% vs. 1.5%)
- Studying elsewhere, such as TAFE (7.0% vs 3.7%)
- Physical illness (1.8% vs. 0.5%)
- Pregnancy (0.7% vs. 0.1%)
- School not being for them or not being a good environment for learning (20.0% vs. 16.7%)
- Moving away from the area (1.5% vs. 0.6%)

Males were more likely than females to report leaving school early due to:

- Work or career reasons (31.3% vs. 14.9%)
- Not liking school or teachers (13.6% vs. 8.3%)
- Not being interested in going to school or being bored (7.7% vs. 4.6%)
- Being asked to leave, expelled or getting in trouble (2.3% vs. 0.9%)

Aboriginal school leavers were more likely than non-Aboriginal school leavers to report leaving school early due to:

- Bullying (6.4% vs. 2.6%)
- Do not know (2.3% vs. 0.5%)

Non-Aboriginal school leavers were more likely than Aboriginal school leavers to report that they left school early due to:

- Work or career reasons (25.7% vs. 20.1%)
- Studying elsewhere, such as TAFE (5.2% vs. 2.9%)
- Physical illness (1.1% vs. 0.1%)

School leavers **under 17 years** were more likely than school leavers 17 years or older to report leaving school early due to:

- Work or career reasons (27.6% vs. 22.8%)
- Not liking school or teachers (13.8% vs. 9.6%)
- School not being for them or not being a good environment for learning (19.9% vs. 16.3%)

School leavers **17 years or older** were more likely than school leavers under 17 years to report leaving school early due to:

- COVID-19 (4.1% vs. 0.7%)
- Mental health issues (9.5% vs. 6.1%)
- Family commitments (1.3% vs. 0.4%)
- Physical illness (1.4% vs. 0.5%)

What was the final year of study for early school leavers in 2020?

Figure 13

Proportion of early school leavers whose last year at school was Year 10, 11 or 12



Over half (51.7%) of the early school leavers were in Year 11 for their final year of study.

Significant differences between groups by final year of study

- Early leavers from **non-government schools** were more likely than those from government schools to leave in Year 10 (41.7% vs. 30.2%).
- Early leavers with **high parental SES** were more likely than those with low parental SES to leave school in Year 11 (53.5% vs. 49.9%).
- Early leavers from **government schools** were more likely than those from non-government schools to leave in Year 12 (17.2% vs. 9.4%).



Achieving the HSC minimum standard

Overview

A random sub-sample of 1,042 early school leavers was asked additional questions about the HSC minimum standard test.

Have you achieved the HSC minimum standard?

Figure 14

Proportion of responses from early school leavers in answer to the question 'Have you achieved the HSC minimum standard?'



Early school leavers in **education, training or work** (28.9%) were more likely to report achieving the HSC minimum standard compared to those who were either looking for work or NILFET (17.5%).

To what extent was the HSC minimum standard a reason for you to leave school before you completed Year 12?

Figure 15

Views of early school leavers about the impact of the HSC minimum standard on the reason for leaving school early



Close to two-thirds (65.4%) of early school leavers reported that the HSC minimum standard **was not a reason** for leaving school before completing Year 12.

Early school leavers who completed the HSC minimum standard

How did your school prepare you for the HSC minimum standard?

Just over two-thirds of early school leavers (67.5%) indicated that their school helped them prepare for the HSC minimum standard test by using one or more of the following support strategies:

1. Teachers helped students develop the skills needed for the tests (72.0%).
2. The school ran information sessions for the students' year level (63.4%).
3. Teachers provided feedback to students about their skills in relation to the tests (58.4%).
4. The school offered students practice tests to sit (55.9%).
5. Students were given advice about when they would be ready to sit the tests (49.5%).
6. Students received some 'other' form of preparation support (7.6%).

Did you find any aspects of the HSC minimum standard test difficult?

Figure 16

Views of early school leavers on the difficulty of the HSC minimum standard test



Just over a third (36.4%) of early school leavers indicated that they found the HSC minimum standard test difficult for one or more reasons.

The **top 3** difficulties selected by these school leavers were:

1. The tests were stressful (52.8%).
2. The questions were challenging (50.0%).
3. The way questions were worded made them difficult to understand (44.7%).

HSC credential and the future

In the future, how important is it to you that you achieve an HSC credential?

Figure 17

Views of early school leavers on the importance of the HSC as a credential for the future



Close to half (48.7%) of early school leavers feel that the HSC credential is not at all important for their future.

What impact (if any) do you feel **not** achieving an HSC will have on your career opportunities in the future?

Figure 18

Views of early school leavers about the impact of **not** achieving an HSC on their future career opportunities



Just over half (50.6%) of early school leavers felt that not achieving their HSC would have **no impact** on their career opportunities in the future. About a quarter (24.9%) felt that not achieving their HSC would have a **negative impact** on their future career opportunities and 15.4% felt it would have some sort of **positive impact**.

| Methodology

This report provides a brief overview of the main findings of the 2021 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey. Several points should be kept in mind when considering the findings.

How respondents are assigned into their main post-school destination

Respondents are assigned to one of 10 post-school destinations based on their survey responses to a series of questions about education, training and work. Where respondents indicate several destination choices, a hierarchical system facilitates prioritisation of education-related post-school destinations over participation in employment. As such, it represents a young person's main destination since leaving school. The post-school destinations include: bachelor degree, VET certificate IV+, VET certificate III, VET certificate I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship, full-time work, part-time work, looking for work, and not in the labour force or further education or training (NILFET). A full discussion of the classification system can be found in the technical report.

The weighting of data to ensure results represent the population

All data was weighted to match relevant population parameters. Survey-weighted multinomial logistic regression analyses were conducted to assess differences between subgroups and between survey waves using STATA (Version 17). Results reported as 'different' in the main report or marked with asterisks (*) in the appendices were statistically significant at a probability value (p) of $p < .01$. This significance level, rather than $p < .05$, was chosen due to the large sample sizes.

Additional points to note

- In some cases, values may differ from the apparent sum of their component elements. This is due to the effects of rounding.
- Where appropriate, comparisons have been made to previous survey waves.
- **Education and occupation coding:** 'Field of Education' was coded using the Australian Standard Classification of Education (Australian Bureau of Statistics catalogue number 1272.0). 'Occupation' was coded to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (Version 1.3, Australian Bureau of Statistics catalogue number 1220.0).

For further information about the survey background and method, please refer to the 2021 technical report.

Appendix:

Main destinations tables

Table 1

Year 12 completers by year, 2014 to 2021

Main destination	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %	2021 %
Base (n): all Year 12 completers	3,581	3,490	3,287	3,529	3,529	18,777	18,865	35,916
Bachelor degree	52.5	53.2	51.2*	50.1*	50.6*	48.4*	45.0*	54.9
VET cert IV+	7.3*	8.9*	6.5*	6.0*	5.5	5.1	5.2*	4.6
VET cert III	1.9	2.1	1.7	1.8	2.4	2.1	2.3*	2.0
VET cert I-II	1.8	2.7*	1.0	1.7	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.1
Apprenticeship	4.9	4.7*	5.5	5.8	5.7	5.1*	4.8*	6.1
Traineeship	4.4	3.6	4.3	4.3	3.8	3.9*	3.7*	4.5
Full-time work	6.6	7.0	8.6	8.5	9.3*	8.4*	7.8	7.5
Part-time work	12.5	10.7*	13.2	13.8	13.8	17.7*	19.1*	12.8
Looking for work	5.5	5.0	5.2	4.6	5.2	5.7*	7.7*	4.5
NILFET	2.6	2.1	2.8	3.4*	2.5	2.5	3.3*	2.2

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2021 (p<.01).

Table 2

Early school leavers by year, 2014 to 2021

Main destination	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %	2021 %
Base (n): all early school leavers	7,000	3,135	3,700	3,466	4,470	6,135	5,978	6,472
Bachelor degree	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.8	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.2
VET cert IV+	7.8*	9.6*	9.1*	7.3*	8.0*	5.9	5.8	5.1
VET cert III	7.6	6.4	6.6	5.5	5.9	7.3	7.7	6.6
VET cert I-II	7.0*	4.9*	3.0	2.7	2.7	3.2	2.6	2.6
Apprenticeship	26.2*	26.0*	27.8*	30.0*	32.4	29.1*	27.7*	34.9
Traineeship	6.5*	5.8*	6.5	8.1	6.9	7.1	6.4*	7.8
Full-time work	8.3	9.7	10.1	9.9	11.1*	9.8	8.8	9.4
Part-time work	12.2*	12.6*	13.5	14.2	13.7	15.2	16.7	15.0
Looking for work	17.2*	16.4*	15.3*	14.2	12.9	15.7*	17.3*	12.6
NILFET	6.4*	7.6*	6.9*	6.3*	5.2	5.2	5.9	4.8

* Indicates result is significantly different to 2021 (p<.01).

Table 3**Year 12 completers and early school leavers, 2021**

Main destination	Year 12 completers %	Early school leavers %
Base (n): all	35,916	6,472
Bachelor degree	54.9	1.2*
VET cert IV+	4.6	5.1
VET cert III	2.0	6.6*
VET cert I-II	1.1	2.6*
Apprenticeship	6.1	34.9*
Traineeship	4.5	7.8*
Full-time work	7.5	9.4*
Part-time work	12.8	15.0*
Looking for work	4.5	12.6*
NILFET	2.2	4.8*

* Indicates result is significantly different to Year 12 completers ($p < .01$).

Table 4**Year 12 completers by gender, 2021**

Main destination	Female %	Male %
Base (n): all Year 12 completers	19,873	16,043
Bachelor degree	58.9	50.4*
VET cert IV+	5.0	4.1*
VET cert III	2.7	1.3*
VET cert I-II	1.2	1.0
Apprenticeship	1.4	11.2*
Traineeship	5.5	3.4*
Full-time work	6.7	8.3*
Part-time work	13.1	12.4
Looking for work	3.6	5.4*
NILFET	1.8	2.6*

* Indicates result is significantly different to female Year 12 completers ($p < .01$).

Table 5**Early school leavers by gender, 2021**

Main destination	Female %	Male %
Base (n): all early school leavers	2,457	4,014
Bachelor degree	1.9	0.7*
VET cert IV+	8.8	2.7*
VET cert III	13.0	2.6*
VET cert I-II	3.8	1.8*
Apprenticeship	10.9	49.9*
Traineeship	12.9	4.7*
Full-time work	8.0	10.3*
Part-time work	21.4	11.1*
Looking for work	13.4	12.1
NILFET	6.0	4.1*

* Indicates result is significantly different to female early school leavers ($p < .01$).

Table 6**Year 12 completers by socioeconomic status quartile, 2021**

Main destination	Higher parental SES			Lower parental SES		
	Highest %	Upper middle %	Subtotal %	Lower middle %	Lowest %	Subtotal %
Base (n): Module G completers	2,835	1,612	4,447	1,143	1,031	2,174
Bachelor degree	63.3	49.2*	58.1	39.0*	27.7*	33.6**
VET cert IV+	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.5	6.0	5.2
VET cert III	1.3	1.9	1.5	3.8*	4.2*	4.0**
VET cert I-II	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.8	1.6
Apprenticeship	4.0	8.9*	5.8	8.1*	8.0*	8.1**
Traineeship	3.9	5.3	4.4	6.7*	6.4*	6.6**
Full-time work	6.3	8.4	7.1	12.2*	10.8*	11.6**
Part-time work	10.4	14.0*	11.7	15.0*	18.6*	16.7**
Looking for work	3.6	5.5*	4.3	6.9*	12.7*	9.7**
NILFET	1.8	1.7	1.8	2.4	3.7*	3.0**

* Indicates result is significantly different to Year 12 completers from highest parental SES quartile ($p < .01$).

** Indicates result is significantly different to Year 12 completers from the subtotal of higher parental SES ($p < .01$).

Note. In 2021 parental SES questions were only included for the random sample of Year 12 completers assigned to Module G ($n = 6,782$). Refer to the technical report for further details. The Module G completers base also excludes respondents for whom socioeconomic status quartile could not be calculated ($n = 161$).

| **Table 7****Early school leavers by socioeconomic status quartile, 2021**

Main destination	Higher parental SES			Lower parental SES		
	Highest %	Upper middle %	Subtotal %	Lower middle %	Lowest %	Subtotal %
Base (n): all early school leavers	1,119	1,621	2,740	1,585	1,673	3,258
Bachelor degree	2.9	1.3	2.0	0.9*	0.2*	0.6**
VET cert IV+	8.6	6.6	7.4	2.7*	3.4*	3.1**
VET cert III	7.7	6.5	7.0	6.3	6.3	6.3
VET cert I-II	3.8	2.4	3.0	2.0	2.2	2.1
Apprenticeship	31.3	41.0*	36.9	39.3*	29.1	34.1
Traineeship	6.7	7.3	7.0	9.4	7.5	8.4
Full-time work	7.0	8.1	7.6	10.7*	11.4*	11.1**
Part-time work	15.7	14.6	15.1	13.6	16.1	14.9
Looking for work	10.8	8.6	9.5	11.6	17.9*	14.8**
NILFET	5.5	3.6	4.4	3.4	5.8	4.7

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

** Indicates result is significantly different to early school leavers from the subtotal of higher parental SES ($p < .01$).

Note. The all early school leavers base excludes respondents for whom socioeconomic status quartile could not be calculated ($n = 474$).

| **Table 8****Year 12 completers by school sector, 2021**

Main destination	Government %	Non-government		Subtotal %
		Catholic %	Independent %	
Base (n): all Year 12 completers	21,506	6,318	8,092	14,410
Bachelor degree	48.1	56.3*	68.7*	63.3*
VET cert IV+	5.2	4.4*	3.5*	3.8*
VET cert III	2.6	1.7*	0.8*	1.2*
VET cert I-II	1.3	1.0*	0.7*	0.8*
Apprenticeship	6.2	7.9*	4.4*	5.9
Traineeship	4.6	5.6*	3.4*	4.4
Full-time work	8.2	7.4	5.9*	6.6*
Part-time work	14.7	11.8*	9.3*	10.3*
Looking for work	6.1	2.8*	2.0*	2.3*
NILFET	3.0	1.1*	1.3*	1.2*

* Indicates result is significantly different to Year 12 completers from the government school sector ($p < .01$).

Table 9**Early school leavers by school sector, 2021**

Main destination	Government %	Non-government		Subtotal %
		Catholic %	Independent %	
Base (n): all early school leavers	5,417	563	492	1,055
Bachelor degree	1.0	1.7	2.3	2.0
VET cert IV+	3.8	6.4	12.0*	9.2*
VET cert III	6.7	4.0*	9.1	6.5
VET cert I-II	2.5	2.5	3.2	2.8
Apprenticeship	32.4	47.9*	38.0	42.9*
Traineeship	7.5	12.5*	5.3	8.9
Full-time work	10.3	7.8	5.1*	6.5*
Part-time work	15.7	10.9*	14.9	12.9
Looking for work	14.7	4.6*	6.5*	5.6*
NILFET	5.5	1.8*	3.6	2.7*

* Indicates result is significantly different to early school leavers from the government school sector ($p < .01$).

Table 10**Year 12 completers by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021**

Main destination	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	
	Yes %	No %
Base (n): all Year 12 completers	1,251	34,665
Bachelor degree	23.9	56.0*
VET cert IV+	4.1	4.6
VET cert III	3.8	1.9*
VET cert I-II	1.4	1.1
Apprenticeship	8.7	6.0*
Traineeship	8.1	4.4*
Full-time work	12.9	7.3*
Part-time work	17.8	12.6*
Looking for work	14.4	4.1*
NILFET	4.8	2.1*

* Indicates result is significantly different to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Year 12 completers ($p < .01$).

Table 11**Early school leavers by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021**

Main destination	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	
	Yes %	No %
Base (n): all early school leavers	690	5,782
Bachelor degree	0.7	1.3
VET cert IV+	2.4	5.4*
VET cert III	7.4	6.5
VET cert I-II	2.7	2.5
Apprenticeship	22.8	36.5*
Traineeship	6.2	8.0
Full-time work	9.0	9.5
Part-time work	18.6	14.6
Looking for work	24.3	11.0*
NILFET	5.9	4.7

* Indicates result is significantly different to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early school leavers ($p < .01$).

Table 12**Year 12 completers by language background other than English status, 2021**

Main destination	Language background other than English	
	Yes %	No %
Base (n): all Year 12 completers	11,143	24,773
Bachelor degree	68.2	49.4*
VET cert IV+	5.0	4.4
VET cert III	1.5	2.2*
VET cert I-II	1.1	1.1
Apprenticeship	3.3	7.2*
Traineeship	2.5	5.3*
Full-time work	3.7	9.0*
Part-time work	8.1	14.7*
Looking for work	4.3	4.5
NILFET	2.2	2.2

* Indicates result is significantly different to Year 12 completers with a language background other than English ($p < .01$).

Table 13**Early school leavers by language background other than English status, 2021**

Main destination	Language background other than English	
	Yes %	No %
Base (n): all early school leavers	883	5,589
Bachelor degree	2.2	1.0
VET cert IV+	6.8	4.8
VET cert III	8.2	6.4
VET cert I-II	3.1	2.5
Apprenticeship	31.1	35.4
Traineeship	7.3	7.9
Full-time work	8.0	9.7
Part-time work	10.8	15.7*
Looking for work	14.6	12.3
NILFET	7.8	4.4*

* Indicates result is significantly different to early school leavers with a language background other than English ($p < .01$).

Table 14**Early school leavers by minimum school leaving age, 2021**

Main destination	Aged under 17 years %	Aged 17 years and over %
Base (n): all early school leavers	2,918	3,554
Bachelor degree	0.8	1.5
VET cert IV+	4.8	5.3
VET cert III	7.0	6.4
VET cert I-II	2.6	2.5
Apprenticeship	41.1	29.5*
Traineeship	8.8	7.0
Full-time work	7.0	11.5*
Part-time work	12.4	17.2*
Looking for work	11.6	13.4
NILFET	3.8	5.7*

* Indicates result is significantly different to early school leavers aged under 17 years ($p < .01$).

| Table 15

Year 12 completers by NSW region (Statistical Area Level 4 cluster), 2021

Main destination	NSW total %	Sydney Inner %	Sydney North %	Sydney North West %	Sydney South %	Sydney South West %	Sydney West %	Central Coast Hunter %	North East NSW %	North West NSW %	South East NSW %	South West NSW %
Base (n): all Year 12 completers	35,916	3,953	4,966	3,103	3,804	4,331	4,142	3,876	2,156	1,015	2,511	2,059
Bachelor degree	54.9	71.0*	71.6*	59.1*	61.4*	55.3	60.5*	42.0*	35.9*	25.7*	43.1*	30.3*
VET cert IV+	4.6	4.3	3.3*	4.4	6.7*	7.0*	4.9	3.6*	3.1*	3.1*	5.0	3.5*
VET cert III	2.0	1.1*	0.6*	1.4*	1.7	2.4	1.6	2.7*	4.3*	3.4	2.4	3.1*
VET cert I-II	1.1	0.6*	0.7*	1.2	1.4	1.1	1.1	2.2*	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.2
Apprenticeship	6.1	3.8*	3.7*	6.8	5.9	5.7	5.0*	7.8*	6.2	11.8*	8.8*	8.8*
Traineeship	4.5	2.5*	2.6*	4.1	3.1*	3.4*	4.6	6.8*	6.3*	6.7*	6.3*	8.1*
Full-time work	7.5	3.6*	4.3*	6.3	4.4*	6.3*	5.3*	8.8*	12.9*	19.7*	8.7	19.4*
Part-time work	12.8	9.1*	10.0*	11.0*	9.1*	10.1*	9.6*	18.0*	21.7*	19.4*	15.9*	18.7*
Looking for work	4.5	2.4*	1.8*	3.9	4.0	5.9*	5.3*	5.8*	5.8*	6.0	6.4*	4.4
NILFET	2.2	1.6*	1.5*	1.6	2.3	2.9*	2.1	2.3	2.9	3.5	2.3	2.6

* Indicates result is significantly different to the average of all other subregions for Year 12 completers ($p < .01$).

| Table 16

Early school leavers by NSW region (Statistical Area Level 4 cluster), 2021

Main destination	NSW total %	Sydney Inner %	Sydney North %	Sydney North West %	Sydney South %	Sydney South West %	Sydney West %	Central Coast Hunter %	North East NSW %	North West NSW %	South East NSW %	South West NSW %
Base (n): all Year 12 completers	6,472	232	305	547	469	721	457	1,196	720	357	795	673
Bachelor degree	1.2	4.6	3.3	1.3	1.2	0.6	0.9	1.3	0.9	0.2*	1.0	0.0*
VET cert IV+	5.1	10.9	10.0	8.2	5.9	4.7	7.8	4.4	2.5*	2.0*	4.6	1.4*
VET cert III	6.6	6.2	6.7	7.1	6.9	6.8	6.2	6.2	7.4	5.4	6.6	7.4
VET cert I-II	2.6	5.3	2.5	2.3	4.0	1.9	2.1	2.5	2.9	2.0	1.2*	2.8
Apprenticeship	34.9	28.9	27.2*	40.7*	45.2*	33.0	28.3*	34.2	31.9	35.3	36.3	40.2*
Traineeship	7.8	2.6*	4.8	6.5	7.8	7.8	7.4	9.4	8.5	6.6	9.7	8.6
Full-time work	9.4	4.1*	8.9	7.9	6.3*	10.9	10.3	9.8	8.6	14.4*	8.6	11.8
Part-time work	15.0	17.2	17.9	10.8*	7.5*	14.1	15.1	16.2	18.6	13.4	17.0	13.9
Looking for work	12.6	13.6	10.9	10.9	11.1	15.1	15.4	11.7	14.0	15.6	10.7	10.7
NILFET	4.8	6.6	8.0	4.2	4.1	5.1	6.7	4.2	4.8	5.1	4.3	3.2

* Indicates result is significantly different to the average of all other subregions for early school leavers ($p < .01$).

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