VET providers, associate and bachelor degrees, and disadvantaged learners

Report to the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC), Australia

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1| Executive summary

This report on *VET Providers, Associate and Bachelor Degrees, and Disadvantaged Learners*,[1] is derived from research commissioned by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) and conducted by researchers at Deakin University and the University of Ballarat. It is particularly concerned with the impact for disadvantaged learners of associate and bachelor degrees offered by vocational education and training (VET) providers.

The Australian Government and its agency – the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) – registers VET providers that also offer higher education (HE), as other private providers (OPPs) of HE, irrespective of whether or not they are public providers of VET (i.e. established by state/territory governments). In contrast, this report identifies three categories of VET providers of HE: private, public and 'partnered'. The third category involves a blurring of boundaries between public and private providers, as well as between VET and HE provision. One effect of this partnering is that student equity agendas are often diminished and sometimes absent altogether from the operations of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. The same can also be said of these degrees offered by public and private VET providers.

The marketisation of VET and of HE is implicated in these arrangements. Offering associate and bachelor degrees affords VET providers a point of distinction from other VET providers in the VET market and an additional revenue stream through the enrolment of full fee paying domestic and international students. Some also claim that VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees also help to meet equity – and thus expansion – targets set by the Australian Government. Expanding the Australian HE system is important for reconfiguring the nation's workforce to make it more competitive in the global knowledge economy. Expansion beyond current student participation levels in associate and bachelor degrees necessarily requires increased participation by traditionally under-represented or 'equity' groups.

However, the evidence in this report is that disadvantaged learners are under-represented in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. This is consistent with previous studies (e.g. Wheelahan 2009; Rothman et al. 2013) that show that the higher the AQF level in VET-provided courses, the less equity is evident. The under-representation of disadvantaged learners in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees is also greater than in associate and bachelor degrees offered by Australian universities. Other findings from the analysis of system-wide data include:

- There has been a substantial increase in the number of students enrolled in VET-provider bachelor degrees between 2006 and 2011;
- The majority of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees are offered by private providers rather than state-funded TAFE institutions;
- Student enrolments in VET-provider degrees are concentrated in a few fields of study: Society and Culture, Health and Creative Arts;

[1] Gale, T., Hodge, S., Parker, S., Rawolle, S., Charlton, E., Rodd, P., Skourdoumbis, A. & Molla, T. (2013). *VET Providers, Associate and Bachelor Degrees, and Disadvantaged Learners*. Report to the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC), Australia. Centre for Research in Education Futures and Innovation (CREFI), Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. www.deakin.edu.au/arts-ed/efi/pubs/VET-associate-bachelor-degrees-disadvantaged-learners.pdf

- Compared to university students undertaking associate and bachelor degrees, few VET-provider associate and bachelor degree students appear to complete their awards;
- Students from equity groups are less likely to complete their VET-provider degrees;
- There are more inequities for students from equity groups in terms of enrolments and completions for VET-provider associate degrees than for VET-provider bachelor degrees;
- Data collection and reporting of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees is problematic due to different accountabilities to a variety of state and federal government bodies.

The report includes five case studies of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees:

1. Associate Degree in Business, Sydney Institute of Business and Technology, New South Wales;
2. Associate Degree in Civil Engineering, Southbank Institute of Technology, Queensland;
3. Associate Degree of Arts, Business and Sciences, Deakin University, Victoria, in partnership with a number of Technical and Further Education institutions (TAFEs);
4. Bachelor of Applied Music, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, Victoria; and
5. Bachelor of Applied Management, University of Ballarat, Victoria, in partnership with a number of TAFEs.

Each case describes: the institution; the degree course; community and industry relations; student origins, enrolment and destinations; and support and implications for disadvantaged learners. Emerging from these case studies and from the system-wide data, the report identifies five challenges: (1) defining VET-provider HE activity; (2) defining disadvantage in VET-provider degrees; (3) blurred boundaries between public and private HE provision; (4) diverse staff views about what constitutes equity; and (5) the vocational relevance of VET-provider degrees.

The report concludes that, in student equity terms, there is a contrast between VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees and those offered by Australian universities. In particular, the disadvantage of students from equity groups is exacerbated in VET-provided associate and bachelor degrees. Their greater participation in comparable Australian university degrees is most probably because Australian universities have been held accountable to specific Australian Government equity policy and supported in their efforts through access to financial incentives (i.e. the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program) to expand the participation of disadvantaged learners.

Similar policy and incentives applied to VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees should deliver improvements for disadvantaged learners. There is also potential to pursue equity in the context of the curricula and pedagogy of associate and bachelor degrees. VET providers often claim that the distinctive pedagogical style of their VET programs suits disadvantaged learners. Translating this pedagogic style into their HE provision could enable greater participation of disadvantaged learners in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

The report concludes with seven targeted recommendations for action by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC).

Recommendations

To address the challenges to equity policy identified in this report, the following recommendations for actioning by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) are proposed:

1. NVEAC should advise COAG's Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) to extend existing policy or introduce new HE equity policy to include VET-providers of HE, requiring them to demonstrate how they are contributing to national equity targets and giving them access to HEPPP-style incentives to address these national goals.

2. NVEAC should promote understanding of HE equity policy and practices among staff involved in the design, delivery and management of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

3. NVEAC should commission research to identify the distinctive contribution of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, in terms of their content, pedagogy and outcomes (for industry and communities, and as pathways to further study or employment), particularly the equity elements of these.

4. NVEAC should advise SCOTESE to subject VET providers of HE to the same reporting requirements as Table A providers, with respect to disadvantaged learner participation and completion rates in HE. This could be included as a requirement of their registration as a HE provider with the national Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

5. NVEAC should advise SCOTESE to require all HE providers delivering associate and bachelor degrees in partnership with VET providers, to report data on disadvantaged learner participation and completion rates connected with these partnerships. This will ensure that degrees delivered through partnered VET providers of HE can be scrutinised in terms of equity.

6. NVEAC should advise SCOTESE to confirm responsibility for collecting data on the participation and completion rates of disadvantaged learners in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, in the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE). DIICCSRTE has a track record in robust data collection in relation to equity groups and HE.

7. NVEAC should extend its annual *National Report on Social Equity in VET* to include participation and completion rates of disadvantaged learners specifically enrolled in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

2| Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to this report on VET providers, associate and bachelor degrees, and disadvantaged learners. The report is informed by research commissioned by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) and conducted by researchers at Deakin University and the University of Ballarat. The chapter includes background information important for understanding the chapters that follow. It also includes an account of the research aims and approach, and a brief overview of each chapter.

2.1 *VET providers engaged in Australian higher education*

The focus of this report is on the provision of higher education (HE) by Australian institutions that are also and/or traditionally have been providers of vocational education and training (VET). This includes where the HE provision is achieved through partnerships between (1) HE providers (e.g. universities) and (2) public (i.e. Technical and Further Education institutions; TAFEs) or private VET providers.[2] Specifically, the report focuses on the provision of associate and bachelor degrees by or in partnership with VET institutions. In two cases, the report includes associate and bachelor degrees offered by universities but specifically developed for delivery in VET-provider settings. The report collectively refers to the above as 'VET providers of HE' and to 'VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees'.

Compared with universities, there are very few VET-provider associate and bachelor degree students and programs in Australia. For example, in 2011, students participating in these programs constituted 3.4% of all Australian students participating in associate and bachelor degrees (DIICCSRTE data request 2013; see also Chapter 4). However, their participation levels have been steadily rising. In 2006, there were 4,868 Australian students participating in associate and bachelor degree programs offered by VET providers of HE. By 2011, this had risen to 20,274 students (DIICCSRTE data request 2013). Similarly, the number of VET institutions providing associate and/or bachelor degrees in 2006 was 18; in 2011, it was 38.[3]

This increased involvement by VET institutions in Australian HE provision reflects a trend among OECD nations. Further Education Colleges in the UK now offer 'foundation' degrees (two year programs similar in standing to associate degrees) and, increasingly, bachelor degrees. Similar entry-level 'college' degrees are offered in the USA. Importantly, this expanded provision of non-university associate and bachelor degree programs is occurring at the same time as the introduction of national targets to increase the proportion of citizens with an associate and/or bachelor degree. For instance, as part of its widening participation policies of the 2000s, the Blair/Brown UK Government set a target of 50% of 30 year olds to hold a degree by 2010 (DfES 2003). In the USA, the Obama administration has a target of 60% of 25 to 34 year olds to hold a college degree by 2020 (Kelly 2010: 2). The Rudd/Gillard Australian Government's more conservative target for Australian HE is 40% of 25 to 34 year olds to hold a bachelor degree by 2025 (Australian Government 2009).[4]

[2] See below for a more nuanced account of the variety of institutions and institutional arrangements involved.
[3] See Chapter 4 for a more detailed account of access, participation and completion figures in VET associate and bachelor degrees, and how these compare with similar students and programs in Australian universities.
[4] At the time of writing, the outcome of the September 2013 Australian federal election was not known. Thus references in this report to the current Australian Government and its policies relate to the Rudd/Gillard-led Australian Labor Party, which came to office at the federal election of November 2007.

2.2 *The rationale for higher education expansion*

The rationale informing the expansion of HE provision, from mass to universal participation (Trow 1974, 2006), is primarily economic. In a context of diminishing dominance of the global industrial economy, OECD nations are seeking to re-assert their importance through their dominance of the global knowledge economy (Spence 2011). Increasing the number of knowledge workers (i.e. people with associate and bachelor degrees) is the current strategy to achieve and maintain such dominance. There is also a somewhat secondary political agenda informing Australian HE expansion, expressed in the *Review of Australian Higher Education* (Bradley et al. 2008) as a recommendation for the formation of a 'unified' tertiary education sector (see also Wheelahan et al. 2009). To date such proposals have most traction among VET institutions that are also HE providers in search of Australian Government funding, rather than with governments or in the HE policy arena generally, which is divided by different federal-state government responsibilities and agreements.

These economic and political rationales for HE expansion are mediated by an equity agenda. Given that HE participation is at near saturation levels for people from high and mid socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds (DIISRTE 2012), most OECD nations recognise that expanding HE cannot be achieved without the inclusion of people from traditionally under-represented groups. Hence, in setting targets for Australian HE, the Australian Government (2009) noted that its expansion target (i.e. 40% of 25-34 year olds to hold a bachelor degree by 2025) is dependent on achieving its equity target (i.e. 20% of undergraduate students to come from low SES backgrounds by 2020).

Unlike their counterparts in the UK and the USA, VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees are not the subject of Australian Government HE expansion and equity policy. The Australian Government has only charged the nation's universities with contributing towards achievement of its HE targets (Australian Government 2009). Reasons for excluding private and non-university institutions from these targets are related to public/private institutional distinctions: governments are less interested in funding private HE providers, although there are some exceptions. Current federal and state government relations, specifically their distinct responsibilities and agreements in post-secondary education, also explain these distinctions (see below for a fuller discussion of these). That is, TAFEs – which are state owned – are treated as private HE providers in the Australian HE context and are not eligible to receive funding from the Australian Government to provide HE, although again there are a few exceptions.[5]

VET providers of HE – particularly TAFEs that are subject to current state government fiscal constraint – have become increasingly frustrated by their exclusion from Australian Government funding to support the provision of associate and bachelor degrees (see below). Given current projections that the Australian Government's HE expansion target is unlikely to be achieved (Birrell et al. 2011, Sellar et al. 2011), some commentators (e.g. Mitchell 2011) have drawn attention to the increasing demand for VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees (see above and Chapter 4) and their potential to make a positive contribution to the

[5] Some private HE providers (e.g. Tabor College in South Australia) and some non-university public HE providers (e.g. Holmsglen in Victoria) are in receipt of Australian Government funding – i.e. Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) – to support the provision of their associate and bachelor degrees. These are exceptions to Australian Government policy, approved by the relevant Australian Government Minister on the basis of individual and ad hoc institution submissions.

nation's HE expansion target. Importantly, these observations have been made in relation to the potential contribution of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees to the HE expansion target. TAFE Directors Australia (TDA 2010) has also recently reaffirmed its commitment to equity and suggested that associate and bachelor degrees offered by TAFE institutions contribute to this agenda through the more supportive pedagogical experiences of their courses and their more applied orientations (see also Wheelahan et al. 2009).

2.3 *Equity in Australian higher education*

Definitions of equity in Australian HE have their origins in the 1990 Australian Government policy statement, *A Fair Chance for All*. The statement identified six target or 'equity groups', which were deemed at the time to be under-represented in Australian HE: people from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds, Indigenous Australians, people from regional and remote areas, people with disabilities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), and women in non-traditional areas.[6] The subsequent 1994 report, *Equity and General Performance Indicators in Higher Education* (Martin 1994), provided specific statistical definitions for these groups, which has allowed for their annual monitoring. Informed by these statistical definitions, equity is deemed to be achieved when the representation in HE of the target group is proportional to the group's representation within the general population.[7] For example, 25% of the Australian population are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Their equitable representation within HE would be achieved when they constitute 25% of the university student population.[8] The Martin Report (1994) also defined equitable representation for each of the target groups in terms of student access, participation, success and retention, which have formed the basis of Australian Government reports on the HE sector for the past two decades. Chapter 4 draws on these data in reporting on VET providers of HE and student participation in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

Whereas most target groups remain *under*-represented in Australian HE (see Chapter 4), they tend to be *over*-represented in Australian VET. This has provided some in VET with cause for celebration:

> While higher education is concerned with low participation of some groups, VET can justifiably boast that a number of disadvantaged groups are well catered for. One example is that if you look at the proportion of students from regional and remote areas, in VET it is actually higher than their population share. And similarly, if you look at the number of Indigenous students in VET it is higher than their population share. (Karmel 2010)

However, such accounts fail to recognise the distribution of equity groups across Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) levels that are specific to VET (i.e. Certificate I-IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma). On closer inspection, equity groups tend to be over-represented at lower AQF levels of VET and under-represented at higher AQF levels of VET (Rothman et al.

[6] The first three of these were re-affirmed as target groups in the 2009 Australian Government policy statement, *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System*.
[7] The National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) has embarked on a similar approach to monitoring equity in the VET sector, with the introduction of its annual report, the *National Report on Social Equity in VET 2013* (Rothman et al. (2013). NVEAC includes additional equity groups (i.e. 'second chance learners') not monitored in HE.
[8] Thus, if achieved, the Australian Government's target that, by 2020, 20% of HE students are to come from low SES backgrounds, will not actually achieve equity.

2013). This is a pattern of participation that has continued into VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. In fact, the under-representation of students from equity groups is greater in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees than in university associate and bachelor degrees (see Chapter 4). This is despite claims by TAFE managers and teachers that the 'smaller classes, higher levels of pastoral care, more student focused pedagogy and seamless pathways between qualifications' (Wheelahan et al. 2009: 8) contribute to widen the participation of VET-provider associate and bachelor degree students from low SES backgrounds.

Nevertheless, references to different student experiences and different kinds of knowledge that characterise VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, raise questions about what constitutes equity in Australian HE. In the context of Australian universities, Gale (2012) notes that the current 'bums on seats' accounting of student equity in HE is useful for policy and institutional purposes but is largely superficial with respect to students' experiences of equity. He suggests that a deeper and richer account of student participation is needed that moves 'towards a southern theory of student equity in Australian higher education' (Gale 2012b) or what Indigenous scholars have referred to as 'epistemological equity' (Dei 2010). That is, there are equity implications for HE curriculum and also for HE pedagogy. On the latter, Gale and Mills suggest that:

> … there are three principles on which to build a socially inclusive pedagogy: a belief that all students bring things of value to the learning environment; a design that values difference while also providing access to and enabling engagement with dominance; and actions or practice that **'**work with**'** rather than **'**act on**'** students and their communities. (Gale & Mills 2013: 15-16)

Informed by these principles, Hockings, Cooke & Bowl (2010: 101-106) have developed a collection of 'connectionist pedagogies' for HE, which emphasize:

- Creating collaborative and inclusive spaces in which students are *encouraged to share their beliefs, knowledge and experiences*.
- Developing student-centred strategies involving *flexible and tailored activities* that 'enable students to ground their learning in something relevant to them as individuals'.
- Connecting with students' lives through subject matter perceived as *relevant to students' immediate lives* or their *imagined roles and identities* as professionals.
- Being culturally aware, including the use of *culturally relevant examples*, anecdotes and stories to aid learning, as well as using a *non-academic frame of reference* for teaching (i.e. teaching beyond the academic culture).

The brief for this report (see below) called for an account of equity defined primarily in quantitative terms (see Chapter 4) rather than this more qualitative accounting of the curricula and pedagogy experienced by students. However, the report's case studies (see Chapters 6-10), which are largely framed by a quantitative definition of equity, also include qualitative equity dimensions.

2.4 *Higher education provider categories in Australia*

As alluded to above, the field of Australian HE is characterised by a broad range of provider types. The Australian Government's *Higher Education Support Act 2003* distinguishes between three categories of HE provider: 'Table A' lists Australian public universities; 'Table B' lists Australian private universities; and 'Table C' lists universities established internationally but which operate within Australia. A fourth category, 'Other Private Providers' (OPPs), includes HE providers not explicitly named in the Act although they are subject to it and are included in Australian Government reports on HE. In 2011, there were 88 registered OPPs, 38 of which were also VET providers.[9] In 2013 the number of registered VET providers offering HE programs rose to 52, of which 42 (10 public; 32 private) offered associate and bachelor degrees.

It is important to note that *public* VET providers of HE (i.e. TAFEs) are listed as 'Other Private Providers' and treated as *private* HE providers by the Australian Government. This is because they are state government HE providers, not Australian Government HE providers (i.e. Table A providers), and were not subject to the inter-government agreement reached in the early 1970s that resulted in the Australian States handing over financial and managerial responsibility for the nation's universities to the Australian Government.

2.5 *Government funding and accreditation of VET-provider higher education*

Only HE providers in Table A and, in some circumstances, in Table B have access to Australian Government funding in the form of Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) for students enrolled in associate and bachelor degrees. While the creation of the category of OPP has allowed VET providers to also register as HE providers, with access to HE markets (see Chapter 3), this has not included access to Australian Government funding. Even public VET providers (i.e. TAFEs), which are state/territory government funded institutions, are excluded from this funding (see note above), except in circumstances where their courses are linked directly to current National Priorities or where the institution has research grants linked to National Priorities. Access to CSP funding on these grounds requires submission to the relevant Australian Government minister for a specific ruling.

These special cases provide recipient VET providers of associate and bachelor degrees with the opportunity to offer CSPs and hence for their students to access the Australian Government's HECS-HELP student loan scheme to assist them in paying for their tuition costs.[10] As an alternative, OPPs can offer their students access to the 'FEE-HELP' loan scheme,[11] although in comparison to CSP courses that allow access to HECS-HELP, this is relatively costly for students. For example, as reported in Chapter 3, a Bachelor of Music degree at Monash University over three years incurs student fees of $18,000, while a Bachelor of Music degree at Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE over three years attracts student fees of $36,000.

As part of the condition of receiving CSPs, Table A and B providers are required to sign mission based 'compacts' with the responsible Australian Government minister. While OPPs

[9] The listing of VET providers of HE as OPPs is complicated by the fact that Australia's 'dual sector' universities (Australian universities that also provide VET) are listed in Table A.
[10] See http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/helppayingmyfees/hecs-help for details of this Australian Government loan scheme for post-secondary students.
[11] See http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/helppayingmyfees/fee-help/ for details of this Australian Government loan scheme for post-secondary students.

do not sign mission based compacts, their registration as a HE provider is conditional on meeting entry requirements regulated by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and on other conditions as determined by the minister, who has direct responsibility for signing off on each HE provider application. That is, associate and bachelor degrees offered by OPPs require accreditation by TEQSA whereas under current legislation, Table A, B and C providers of HE have authority to accredit their own associate and bachelor degrees (although these are subject to regular TEQSA review).

2.6 *Public and private VET providers of associate and bachelor degrees*

The OPP category makes no further distinction between provider types, although it is possible to group VET providers of associate and bachelor degrees according to whether they are public (i.e. state government TAFEs) or private HE providers. For example, in 2013, the 10 public VET providers in the OPP of HE category included:

- Box Hill Institute of TAFE (VIC)
- Chisholm institute of TAFE (VIC)
- Holmesglen Institute of TAFE (VIC)
- Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (VIC)
- William Angliss Institute of TAFE (VIC)
- Canberra Institute of Technology (ACT)
- Polytechnic West (WA)
- Southbank Institute of Technology (QLD)
- TAFE South Australia (SA)
- TAFE New South Wales (NSW)

In 2013, private VET providers in this category numbered 32, including:

- Adelaide College of Divinity Inc. (SA)
- Australian Institute of Management South Australian Division Inc (AIM SA)
- Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors Pty Ltd (Australia-wide)
- Cengage Education Pty Ltd (VIC)
- Holmes Institute Pty Ltd (Australia-wide)
- Le Cordon Bleu Australia (Australia-wide)
- National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) (NSW)
- Raffles College of Design and Commerce (NSW)
- SAE Institute Pty Ltd (Australia-wide)
- Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (Navitas), (SIBT) (NSW)
- Tabor College (Victoria) Inc (VIC)

Several private VET providers on the OPP list belong to parent companies (such as Navitas) or are affiliated with religious organisations. Navitas is the biggest private non-university degree provider (Wheelahan et al. 2012). It is an international company offering HE and VET courses in Australia, the UK, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Kenya. In Australia, Navitas offers associate and bachelor degree courses through the Australian College of Applied Psychology, the Australian Institute of Public Safety, SAE Institute/Qantm College and a number of Institutes of Business and Technology including the Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT; see Chapter 6).

Six private VET providers on the OPP list have links with religious organisations and offer associate and bachelor degrees in areas of theology, ministry and bible studies. For instance,

Avondale College of Higher Education offers an Associate Degree of Theological Studies and a Bachelor of Ministry and Theology. Other private VET providers on the OPP list have a clear single-industry focus. For example, the Australian Guild of Music Education offers a Bachelor of Music while the Academy of Information Technology offers a Bachelor of Information Technology and Associate and Bachelor degrees in Interactive Media.

2.7 *'Partnered' VET providers of associate and bachelor degrees*

Apart from public and private VET providers that feature on the OPP list, there are also VET providers – for the most part, not on the OPP list – that offer HE qualifications accredited by other registered HE providers. While in some cases the Australian Government has acted to block some arrangements that allow VET providers to deliver HE qualifications accredited by registered HE providers (Maiolo 2013), several partnership arrangements are currently in place that allow primarily public VET providers to deliver associate and bachelor degrees accredited with other providers. In a recent announcement (University of Canberra 2013),[12] the Australian Government approved the formation of an 'Australian Polytechnic Network' with the University of Canberra serving as the supplier of degrees (and CSPs) to be delivered through four public VET providers: Holmesglen Institute (VIC), Northern Sydney Institute (TAFE NSW), South Western Sydney Institute (TAFE NSW), and Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE (QLD).

In this category of 'partnered providers', it is possible to distinguish between arrangements where the registered provider has more direct control over delivery and those where the delivery institution takes greater control. An example of the former is the 'Deakin at your Doorstep' partnership program. In this model, Deakin University equips and maintains facilities at Victorian TAFEs and delivers one associate and two bachelor degrees in conjunction with those institutes. Deakin University also recruits and employs staff to assist in the delivery of the programs. An example of a less centralised model is the University of Ballarat's 'Dual Sector Partnership' (DSP) project, which is supported by a grant from Australian Government structural adjustment funds. Under this DSP, a small number of bachelor degrees accredited by the University of Ballarat are delivered at public VET providers around Australia.[13] Under this arrangement, a proportion of the CSP funding for each student attending the DSP institute is given over to the delivering provider. These institutes employ the delivery staff under their own terms and maintain delivery facilities.

It is difficult to determine precisely how many VET providers deliver associate and bachelor degrees within partnership arrangements but the category appears to be dominated by public providers. Examples of partnered providers (along with partnering institutions) include:

- Advance TAFE (VIC) (Deakin University, University of Ballarat)
- Academies Australasia Polytechnic (VIC) (University of Ballarat)
- Chisholm Institute (VIC) (Deakin University)
- Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (QLD) (Southern Cross University)
- Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE (QLD) (Holmesglen Institute, University of Canberra, University of Southern Queensland)
- Illawara Institute (NSW) (University of Wollongong)

[12] See http://www.canberra.edu.au/media-centre/2013/may/new-tertiary-network
[13] The University of Ballarat also delivers these bachelor degrees in overseas institutions.

- Canberra Institute of Technology (ACT) (Charles Sturt University, Australian National University)
- Le Cordon Bleu Australia (SA) (University of South Australia, Victoria University)

This list illustrates some of the complexities of the partnered VET provider category. Advance TAFE, for example, is not on the OPP list but it delivers associate and bachelor degrees 'owned' by the Table A providers, Deakin University and the University of Ballarat. (See Appendix 2 for a full list of Australian universities that offer associate degrees.) At the same time, Chisholm Institute is on the OPP list and offers its own associate and bachelor degrees but also delivers a Deakin University associate degree. Holmesglen Institute, another VET provider on the OPP list, is set to deliver University of Canberra degrees but also offers its own degrees, which are also delivered by another VET provider (Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE). Holmesglen is thus a public HE provider (a state government TAFE but treated as a private HE provider by the Australian Government), a partnered provider (under the Australian Polytechnic Network arrangement) and a partnering provider. The list of example partnered HE providers above also includes two private VET providers (Academies Australasia Polytechnic and Le Cordon Bleu Australia) that deliver degrees owned by other institutions but also offer associate and bachelor degrees in the own right (as OPPs).

2.8 *Project aims and approach*

The above provides background to this report on VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. It is informed by research commissioned by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) and conducted by researchers at Deakin University and the University of Ballarat. In agreement with NVEAC, the research aimed to identify and analyse:

1. *participation and completion rates* for VET-provider associate and bachelor degree students, from 2006-2011.[14] The initial intention was to report these in 'disadvantaged learner' categories as defined by NVEAC[15] and then to compare them with (1) VET-provider associate and bachelor degree students as a whole and with (2) comparable student categories in university associate and bachelor degrees. As explained in Chapter 4, difficulties in accessing data in NVEAC's 'disadvantaged learner' categories and the comparability of data across HE provider categories, directed the research team to source equity group data derived from the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE).

2. *changing patterns of delivery* of associate and bachelor degrees by VET providers from 2006-2011, including by (1) jurisdiction, (2) industry area and (3) provider type. See Chapter 4.

3. *influences* on the provision of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees of (1) government policy, (2) community and industry needs and (3) education markets. See Chapters 3 and 6-11.

4. *equity implications* for disadvantaged learners and their communities (derived from specific cases and informed by system-wide data) particularly in relation to (1)

[14] This time period (which excluded 2012) was selected for comparative purposes, given that Australian Government data for the full 2012 year were not available at the time of the research.
[15] See NVEAC's Equity Blueprint 2011 – 2016: Creating Futures: Achieving Potential through VET.

support for disadvantaged learners to participate in and complete VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, (2) government and institutional barriers to their participation and completion, and (3) pathways into and beyond VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. See Chapters 6-11.

The approach taken by the research team included: (1) content analysis of publicly available documents, including institutional documents and government policy documents; (2) descriptive statistical analysis of system-wide quantitative data specifically requested from DIICCSRTE (previously the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education; DIISRTE); and (3) case studies of five VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, which included interviews with key staff at each institution. The rationale for their selection is explained in Chapter 5. The five cases are:

1. Associate Degree in Business, Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT), New South Wales;
2. Associate Degree in Civil Engineering, Southbank Institute of Technology (SBIT), Queensland;
3. Associate Degree of Arts, Business and Sciences, Deakin University, Victoria, in partnership with a number of Technical and Further Education institutions (TAFEs);
4. Bachelor of Applied Music, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, Victoria; and
5. Bachelor of Applied Management, University of Ballarat, Victoria, in partnership with a number of TAFEs.

2.9 *Report structure*

The report is comprised of eleven chapters plus a comprehensive reference list and a complementary set of appendices. Lists of tables and figures appearing in the report follow the Contents page. A full list of acronyms used in the report can be found in Appendix 1.

Chapter 1, the executive summary, provides an overview of the report as a whole. It also includes a list of the report's recommendations. Chapter 2, this chapter, provides background to the report and a brief overview of the research aims and approach that inform the report. Chapter 3 gives an account of the VET and HE markets and policy/industry context influencing the offering of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive descriptive analysis of system-wide statistical data on student participation in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. The Chapter pays particular attention to the participation of students in equity or target groups, and compares data from Table A providers (i.e. public universities) with data from VET providers of HE. Chapter 5 introduces the five case studies, providing a rationale for their selection and a comparative table of key features. Chapters 6 to 10 are the five case studies. Each case describes: (1) the institution; (2) the degree course; (3) community and industry relations; (4) student origins, enrolment and destinations; and (5) support and implications for disadvantaged learners. Chapter 11 concludes the report with a discussion of challenges derived from the research and a set of recommendations. Five main challenges are identified: (1) defining VET-provider HE activity; (2) defining disadvantage in VET-provider degrees; (3) blurred boundaries between public and private HE provision; (4) diverse staff views about what constitutes equity; and (5) the vocational relevance of VET-provider degrees.

3| The policy context

This chapter outlines the policy context particular to vocational education and training (VET) institutions that also provide higher education (HE). It considers what makes HE provision a desirable option for VET providers and concludes that much incentive is derived from the imperatives of VET and HE markets. The discussion touches on rationales provided in public discussions, such as providing an additional revenue stream through domestic and international students, acting as a point of distinction from other VET providers, and/or to help meet equity – and thus expansion – targets set by the Australian Government (Chapter 2).

Such public discussion highlights that there are two different markets discussed in the Chapter and that part of the policy discussion revolves around the boundaries of each market and their respective conditions of entry. For VET providers choosing to offer HE, this entails registration as a HE provider separate from their VET registration (Chapter 2). It also implies balancing provision between two markets – the VET market and the HE market – with different rules, regulations, rewards, risks and players. Thus equity can be differently practiced and experienced within the one VET provider, depending on whether students are enrolled in its traditional VET offerings or in its associate and bachelor degrees where different rules and regulations apply.

The chapter begins, though, with an account of common policy drivers in VET and HE. These four policy themes, particularly their commonality, go some way in explaining the impetus for VET providers to become providers of HE. They also underpin the sections that follow, which progressively trace the trajectory of the introduction of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

3.1 *Policy themes in VET and HE*

Four major policy themes are common to both VET and HE. The first is increasing acceptance that Australia needs to position itself as a knowledge-based economy – in light of international competition in industrial sectors – and to fashion its qualification and capacity profile to enable growth of new and emerging industries (Australian Government 2001, 2008). The problem associated with this push is the notion of credential inflation, where there is a gradual increase in qualifications necessary for entry into particular professions or trades (Teese 2000).

A second theme is closely linked: the misalignment between numbers of qualifications offered and student demand and industry need (MacKenzie 2006). This is highlighted in the ebbs and flows of skill shortages in particular trades and professions, over-supply in other professions, under-resourced human capital needs for emerging markets and unmet demand for particular qualifications. This also relates to ways of enabling ongoing skill development in light of changes in technology and industry need.

A third policy theme is the ongoing set of reforms designed to fashion VET and HE into markets, and to enable greater economic exploitation and benefit to result from the provision of VET and HE. This theme of marketisation and the development of separate VET and HE markets in Australia are considered in some detail in this Chapter.

A fourth policy theme is the acceptance by successive governments that there are productivity gains to be made in relation to VET and HE, and that for Australia to remain

competitive among other nations, these sectors are key to leading the nation's industrial sectors (Productivity Commission 2011).

These four broad policy themes provide context for understanding the impact that provision of HE by VET providers has on disadvantaged learners. For example, as noted in Chapter 2, even if they are public VET providers, all of their HE provision is undertaken as Other *Private* Providers (OPP). As private providers, OPPs do not have the same incentives ('carrots' as well as 'sticks') for pursuing equity as do Table A providers (i.e. Australian public universities). This repositioning of public providers as private is thus central to the rise of VET providers of HE and to their regard for equity.

3.2 *Establishing markets in VET*

VET providers in Australia have experienced two decades of 'training reform' at state and then federal levels, prompted by economic challenges faced in the 1980s. The Australian 'Training Reform Agenda' included a shift to competency-based training and the 'marketisation' of VET (Billett & Hayes 1999). Marketisation was linked with the growth of the VET sector, as employment programs and award restructuring created demand for training (Smith & Keating 2003). A 'Training Costs Review Committee' was set up in 1990 by the Conference of Commonwealth and State Labour Ministers to investigate options to address this demand. The *Deveson Report* (1990) issued by the Committee recommended an 'open training market' to reduce costs through promoting competition. It anticipated that such a market would allow the activity of non-TAFE or private VET providers to be incorporated into an expanded system. Another reason for embracing an open training system was the conviction held by Australian governments and industry that the existing VET system was 'supply driven' rather than 'demand driven', with educators rather than industry in control (Harris & Hodge 2009). An open training market was seen as one measure that would shift this dynamic.

From 1992, successive state governments have implemented a market model in Australian VET. This has been informed by COAG's 1992 'National Vocational Education and Training System' six objectives, which included:

- an effective training market, with public and private provision of both high level, advanced technical training and further education opportunities for the workforce and for the community generally;
- an efficient and productive network of publicly funded providers that can compete effectively in the training market.

Policy makers have faced challenges in implementing an open training market in Australia (Karmel 2009). Like education more generally, VET presents a complex problem for marketising efforts. Some argue that a free market model is inappropriate for training (e.g. Denniss 2009). Instead, 'market design' and 'quasi-market' approaches have prevailed in the Australian VET policy context, including regulation of qualifications. As Karmel (2009: 10) points out, 'one might expect that education and training markets would need to be regulated so that a potential consumer could be assured that the qualification they wish to acquire would be of good quality'. The central mechanism for the regulation of qualifications in Australian VET is national 'Training Packages'. These documents are prepared by national

'Industry Skills Councils' (ISCs) funded by the Australian Government. Training Packages – regulated by the National Skills Standards Council[16] – are collections of competency standards, qualification construction rules and industry-specific assessment advice that establish consistent qualifications across the nation.

3.3 *From regulating providers to regulating qualifications*

While there are hundreds of qualifications prepared by the nation's eleven ISCs, very few awards are specified at the postgraduate level and none at AQF level 7 (bachelor degree level). Most training packages fall into the Certificate I to Advanced Diploma range and enrolment figures show that delivery is mostly in the Certificate III to Diploma range (NCVER 2013). Although associate degrees are at the same AQF level as advanced diplomas (i.e. level 6), the nomenclature of Training Package qualification titles does not include the term 'degree'. Since AQF level 7 is not addressed by any Training Package qualification and because AQF level 6 Training Package qualifications are called advanced diplomas, associate and bachelor degrees are not offered as VET qualifications in Australia. That is, associate and bachelor degrees are considered to be HE qualifications rather than VET qualifications, even though they are represented on a continuum in the AQF.

VET providers now direct their curriculum, pedagogy and accreditation efforts towards delivering qualifications from Training Packages and they compete with each other in offering the 'same' qualifications. The regulation of qualifications has shifted consumer attention from VET 'producers' to VET 'products', while Training Packages have facilitated a 'decoupling' of providers and qualifications.

These have led to more ambitious market reform efforts such as those announced in the *Skills for Victoria* (2008) policy. *Skills for Victoria* introduced the state to a 'full contestability' market model within which public funds can be claimed by any registered training provider, public or private, for the delivery of accredited (i.e. Training Package) programs. Public providers in Victoria are thus exposed to the most open training market in Australia. The policy has created some quality problems for Victoria (Heatherington & Rust 2013) but remains in force, leading to unprecedented growth in private provider delivery of publicly funded VET (see Table 3.1 below).

Table 3.1. VET enrolments by provider type and funding type, 2008–2012

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change 2008-2012	% change 2011-2012
Victorian Government subsidised	ACE	73,800	68,300	63,800	64,600	80,200	9%	24%
	PRIV	54,000	57,400	99,800	220,700	308,800	472%	40%
	TAFE	253,500	251,100	263,300	263,500	281,400	11%	7%
Domestic fee-for-service	TAFE	89,400	100,800	103,700	102,200	124,900	40%	22%
Total		**470,700**	**477,600**	**1,478,900**	**650,900**	**795,300**	**69%**	**22%**

Source: Victorian Training Market Quarterly Report Full Year 2012 (p. 40). Note that 'ACE' refers to the Adult and Community Education sector. Providers in this sector are being actively encouraged by government to take advantage of full contestability to augment their traditional adult education programs.

A recent policy announcement, *Refocusing Vocational Training in Victoria*, has further entrenched the open market model but promises to 'support' public providers to 'be efficient

[16] Professor Gale – an author of this report – is a past member of this Council, when it was known as the National Quality Council.

and able to effectively compete in a demand-driven, contestable training system' (DEECD 2012: 7). In line with COAG commitments, market policies and new market conditions in VET have spread across all Australian states and territories.

3.4 *Towards entrepreneurial public VET providers*

Public VET providers in all states have responded to market policies and new market conditions by transforming their organisational cultures to make them more entrepreneurial and competitive. For example, the provision of associate and bachelor degrees allows VET providers to make themselves more competitive by providing diversified income streams across two distinct markets. Because of regulatory and quality requirements distinct to these two markets, VET providers must also 'work across' these if they are to participate in both.

A study of organisational change in a NSW TAFE institution (Ellis-Gulli & Carter 2010) illustrates the embrace of the 'edu-business' model. The institution's three-year strategic plan was guided by the principle that 'a market based approach will improve our service to customers and make us more competitive' (p. 2). According to Ellis-Gulli and Carter, the plan includes 'business targets to address government reforms and to significantly adjust training options. The organisation has allocated a range of business targets to each of its colleges' (p. 2). They add that:

> At the college level, the introduction of new targets has meant changes to the focus of college business. At an operational level, the college will need to deliver more courses in the workplaces in addition to courses delivered on campus. More qualifications will need to be delivered through partial or full on-line delivery options and by offering recognition for work experience and previous study. New infrastructure in administrative management systems, technical resources, plant and equipment has also been allocated to support the new training environment. The three year time frame for achieving these business sustainability imperatives has been segmented into three annual plans. The first annual plan includes specific targets for three differentiated market segments. (Ellis-Gulli & Carter 2010: 2)

Among the outcomes of adopting an edu-business approach by public providers is the development of fully commercial 'income streams' generated by 'fee-for-service' offerings to supplement income from public sources. Although data are not readily accessible for the level of fee-for-service or commercial income for individual TAFEs or for all jurisdictions, national figures show a 35% increase in fee-for-service income between 2007 and 2011 for public VET providers (NCVER 2012). In Victoria, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) publishes quarterly training market reports in which figures reveal a 40% increase in domestic fee-for-service enrolments in public providers between 2008 and 2012 (DEECD 2013).

3.5 *The private VET provider boon*

Data like these suggest that efforts to transform organisational cultures in public providers may be paying off, but the same report indicates private providers have been even more competitive than their public counterparts. In 2012, the 'fully contestable' market environment was a boon for private providers, with private provision of Victorian Government funded training overtaking public provision for the first time. As Table 3.1 above shows, private provision of Victorian Government-subsidised programs has grown by 472% since 2008, the

year of the introduction of the fully contestable market model. In the context of an expanding VET market in Victoria, TAFE has only grown by 11% during the same period, representing a loss of ground in absolute terms. This suggests that despite efforts to transform organisational culture in TAFEs and some success in developing income streams to supplement government subsidies, an open VET market is proving to be a tough challenge for public providers.

3.6 *The international student market in VET*

Another opportunity for public providers to supplement reduced revenue streams from government has been the international student market. The VET sector entered the international student market comparatively late. As Tran and Nyland (2009) note, the sector did not have the access and exposure to the international market that HE enjoyed from the 1960s, a legacy of the 'Colombo Plan' (a policy through which the first Asian students became eligible to study at Australian universities). In what Smith and Smith (1999) describe as the process of 'internationalisation' of the VET sector, the Australian Government announced in March 1985 that overseas students could be enrolled in Australian VET institutions on an unlimited basis. International student enrolment into the VET sector grew steadily from 1990. Indeed, since 2005 VET has been the fastest growing sector of the international student market in Australia (Tran & Nyland 2009: p.2). According to 2009 figures, the number of international students enrolled in publicly funded VET within Australia tripled between 2002 and 2008 (Senate Standing Committee 2009: 13).

International student enrolments in private VET providers in Australia also increased dramatically during this period, jumping from 5,911 students in 2005 to 26,667 students in 2008 (Senate Standing Committee 2009: 13). Commensurate with this growth in international student enrolments, the VET sector itself experienced a surge in growth. Nationally, the number of private VET providers catering to this market increased from 363 in 2004 to 464 by 2008 (Senate Standing Committee 2009: 14). However, changes to visa requirements and migration laws in 2010 resulted in a decline in international student enrolments across all sectors of the Australian education industry. These declines in international student enrolments were felt most acutely by the VET sector, which after its considerable growth between 2006–07 and 2008–09 (up 150%), declined by more than a third (37%) between 2008–09 and 2010–11 (ABS 2011: 2).

Thus while the international student market has been a boon for VET providers (notwithstanding recent declines), public VET providers have not been as competitive in this field as private providers, although revenue from international student enrolments has added to the 'bottom line' of public VET providers. This competition within the VET market has meant that venturing into other revenue streams – such as associate and bachelor degrees – has considerable potential for VET providers.

3.7 *In search of new markets in HE*

Taking into account jurisdictional variations, the design of the VET market in Australia allows VET providers few opportunities to distinguish themselves. As noted above, when they compete in the VET market they are compelled to offer the 'same' qualifications as their competitors who are frequently able to undercut them on price and offer other inducements. One traditional point of distinction for public providers has been the extent of infrastructure and services to support disadvantaged learners. In most states, governments provide grants

directly to public providers to help maintain these services. Yet this kind of support does not constitute a decisive advantage in the market and is also subject to shifts in policy. In Victoria, for example, the 'base funding grants' that have supported the social mission of public providers have been withdrawn as part of recent reforms.

However, in the late 1990s and early 2000s public VET providers in some jurisdictions conceived of a new kind of product that promised a form of market distinction they were unable to derive from the uniform stock of national Training Packages. South Australian records show that in the late 1990s the introduction of TAFE degrees was promoted as filling an industry demand for higher level accreditation in areas usually serviced by VET qualifications, such as in music teaching, musical accompaniment and hotel management. The viability of these qualifications was premised on the flexibility provided by the newly developed AQF. These courses were linked directly to a perceived industry need. Further justification for the provision of these qualifications was the expectation that they would attract international students and allow graduates to be competitive in international markets (SA Hansard 11 February 1997).

In Victoria in the early 2000s, a group of Melbourne TAFEs began to canvas the Victorian Government Office of Higher Education, the state body then responsible for accrediting HE qualifications outside universities, seeking accreditation of their own bachelor degrees. For example, the Box Hill Institute of TAFE reported in 2001 that:

> An accreditation proposal for the Bachelor of Computer Systems (Networking) was submitted to the Office of Higher Education in 2000. The degree combines high level technical skills with analytical and problem solving competence in networking and systems operation and four 'vendor' qualifications (e.g. Microsoft Systems Engineer). The Institute is awaiting approval and working with other Victorian TAFE Institutes to persuade the State Government that such vocational degrees can make a valuable contribution to Vocational Education and Training (VET) delivery both locally and globally. (BHI 2001: 41)

Although Box Hill TAFE and other TAFEs indicated in this statement – Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT), Holmesglen, William Angliss and Chisholm institutes – were not initially successful in their bid, their applications were approved after winning support from the Victorian Government. In the *Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy* policy document released in 2002, it was announced that:

> TAFE Institutes will be able to seek approval to deliver degrees under the same processes that currently apply to any other providers approved to deliver higher education courses under the Tertiary Education Act 1993. It would be expected that these degrees would be strongly vocational in focus and show clear linkages to the Training Package competencies in the relevant industry sector. (Kosky 2002: 9)

Approval of and enrolments into Victorian TAFE institution degrees soon followed. NMIT began enrolments in 2004, Box Hill followed in 2005 and in 2006 both Holmesglen and William Angliss Institutes accepted their first bachelor degree student enrolments. Chisholm was the last of the group to enrol students into a bachelor degree in 2011. TAFEs in South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Queensland have also been allowed to offer associate and bachelor degrees by their respective state HE accrediting

bodies, which predated the introduction of the national Tertiary Education Qualification and Standards Authority (TEQSA): now the authority for approving such applications.

3.8 *'Partnered' VET providers of HE*

Other VET providers participate in the HE market through partnerships with universities and/or designated OPPs. In this report we refer to these VET providers as 'partnered' providers in the context of HE provision (see Chapter 2). The list of 'partnered' providers in Appendix 3 includes these VET providers, although it includes some that are also HE providers in their own right. The presence of partnered providers in the HE field may be attributed at least in part to initiatives to establish 'pathways' for learners from VET into HE. Student 'traffic' between the two sectors has been researched (e.g. Harris, Rainey & Sumner 2006) and the potential for facilitated flows from VET to HE has been identified in policy (e.g. COAG 2012). Numerous collaborations between HE and VET providers have sprung up to facilitate pathways. The 'Deakin at Your Doorstep' program, which is the subject of one of the case studies in this report (see Chapter 8), can be seen as an example of an arrangement based on the pathways concept.

Collaborations between universities and VET providers to facilitate pathways obviously serve the interests of learners who intend to move from VET into HE (through expedited enrolment, credit arrangements and gaining familiarity with the target HE provider). VET providers also stand to gain through increased enrolments into the recognised feeder qualifications. VET providers may also view the collaborations as ways to gain experience in HE practices ahead of possible moves to establish themselves as HE providers, although some research suggests VET providers prefer to retain collaborations based on pathway models than enter into direct competition with universities by becoming HE providers themselves (Wheelahan et al. 2009). Figures on VET provider income through these partnerships is not available across the sector, although the cases presented in this report suggest that some arrangements may be relatively lucrative for VET providers (e.g. through funding formula based on a proportion of the CSP funding; for example, in the case of the University of Ballarat and its Dual Sector Partnership project – see Chapter 10).

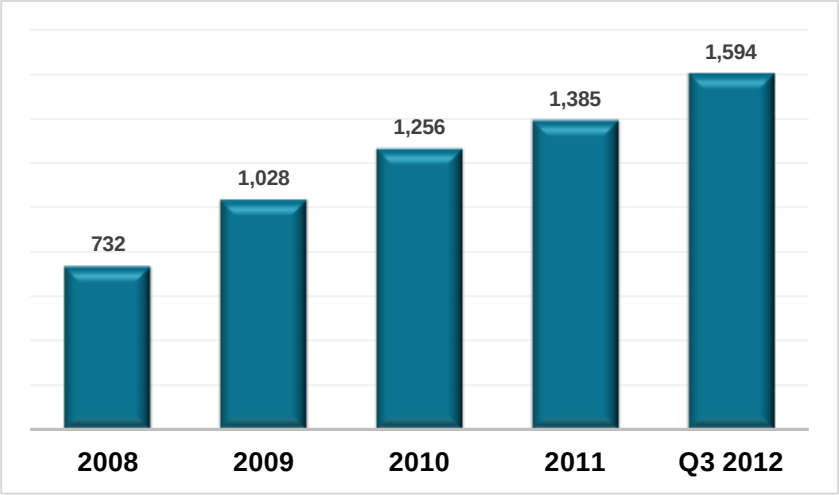
3.9 *Barriers to VET provider participation in HE*

VET providers that have gained a foothold in the HE market – specifically, those who offer their own degrees – have faced challenges accessing relatively lucrative Australian Government subsidies for student enrolments. Those that have secured CSPs have done so on the grounds of alignment between qualifications and identified national priorities (see Chapter 2). Examples of such providers are Holmesglen Institute (which attracts CSPs for its Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Early Childhood Education) and Avondale College of Higher Education (which allocates a number of CSPs in education and nursing programs based on academic merit). However, ongoing access to CSPs by VET providers is not guaranteed and other associate and bachelor degrees offered by VET providers (including Holmesglen and Avondale College) are on a full fee basis.

When the Victorian Government first signalled its support for VET-provider degrees, it clearly stated that funding would be on a full fee-for-service basis with an additional 'industry funding' option (Kosky 2002). Industry funding has not emerged as an ongoing form of support for VET provider degrees but students have proved willing to bear the full and relatively high costs of undertaking these qualifications. As Figure 3.1 shows, students in Victoria are opting

for VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees at an increasing rate, with enrolments into them more than doubling between 2008 and the third quarter of 2012.

Figure 3.1 Undergraduate enrolments reported by Victorian VET sector institutions



Source: Skills Victoria, Victorian Training Market Quarterly Report Q3 2012: 13

This increase is noteworthy given the relative costs of VET-provider and university associate and bachelor degrees. For example, in 2012 a three-year Bachelor of Music degree at Monash University incurred student fees of $18,000[17] while a three-year Bachelor of Music degree at NMIT cost $36,000.[18] This difference is exacerbated by payment options available to students enrolled in each program. A student studying the Monash University degree has the option of paying each semester's fees up front or deferring the tuition fees with an income-contingent loan that attracts no interest, although it is subject to increases in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In contrast, the NMIT student must either pay up front or defer the payment on an Australian Government-administered 'FEE-HELP' plan, which is also an income-contingent loan but subject to a flat 25% fee. Thus the NMIT student may incur a $45,000 debt if they are unable to pay the full costs up front while their Monash University counterpart will incur an $18,000 debt that increases only with CPI rises.

A number of stakeholders have noted the inequities for students of the higher cost of VET-provider degrees as well as the constraints this places on the further growth of the VET-provider degree market. For example, the peak body representing the interests of public VET providers, TAFE Directors Australia (TDA), has recently argued for access to CSPs for VET provider degrees. In its *Blueprint for Australia's Tertiary Education Sector* (2010), nine 'positions' are outlined including one on tertiary education funding. The Blueprint calls for, 'in the first instance, TAFE institutes to receive funding for Commonwealth Supported Places in priority areas of national skills shortage' (TDA 2010: 25). Currently, VET providers offering associate and bachelor degrees are able to access CSPs for programs that address national priority areas. This includes private providers, going beyond TDA's call, which only specifies CSP access for public providers. In addition, the TDA position includes a longer-term call for 'TAFE institutes offering degrees to have access to funding for Commonwealth Supported Places' (2010: 25), suggesting that public VET providers envisage a staged approach to the introduction of the same or similar access to CSPs enjoyed by Australian public universities.

[17] See http://www.monash.edu.au/study/coursefinder/course/0821/
[18] See http://www.nmit.edu.au/courses/bachelor-of-music/fees

The peak body for private VET and HE providers, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), has also been advocating for access to CSPs by its HE-provider members. The Council's *Annual Report 2012* explains that:

> ACPET commissioned research by the Allen Consulting Group on income-contingent loan schemes in higher education, to support its advocacy for fee-deregulation and the extension of Commonwealth Supported Places to private higher education and improve the equity of the current loan administration arrangements. (ACPET 2012:14)

ACPET claims that 'the most dynamic part of the higher education sector is the private sector, which has grown, thrived and contributed to our economic productivity largely independent of taxpayer assistance' (ACPET 2012:14) and for this it should be rewarded. Yet their argument – at least in this expression – appears to support the opposite policy response. There is no incentive for Australian Governments to financially support private providers that are already financially viable. However, there are equity reasons to extend HECS-HELP to qualifying students enrolled in private VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. This would require extending CSPs to these private HE providers (including private VET providers of HE). At present, in the absence of this government support, students without the financial means to pay private HE provider fees are likely to be excluded.

The accreditation process for qualifications presents another barrier to VET-provider participation in the HE market. As noted above, all but two providers on the OPP list are non-self-accrediting. HE providers listed in Tables A, B and C of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* enjoy self-accrediting status, which means that the provider develops and approves its own qualification. In contrast, non-self-accrediting providers must constitute a board with membership drawn from self-accrediting providers, which scrutinises programs and qualifications and is responsible for approving them. Ostensibly a quality control mechanism, the process also limits the freedom of VET providers in the HE market and their ability to respond rapidly to changed industry conditions.

3.10 *VET provider associate and bachelor degrees*

As noted above, a significant justification for the introduction of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees in Australia was their framing as 'applied degrees' in 'niche' industry-oriented markets that universities were not servicing. In parallel with this development has been debate about the relationship between the type of knowledge that comprises HE qualifications such as degrees and the knowledge developed in Training Package qualifications. For example, according to Skills Australia, one of the rationales for expanding degree programs in TAFEs is the facilitation of enhanced employment-related skills. As stated in their *Skills for Prosperity* paper:

> A greater number of 'intermediate occupations' are now demanding degrees rather than VET credentials, therefore it makes sense for VET to offer degrees in areas where it has always had expertise. (Skills Australia 2011: 132)

At a state level, the Victorian TAFE Reform Panel supports the provision of what it calls 'applied degree' programs in TAFEs, primarily for the economic advantages they offer. The Panel argues that by delivering applied degrees, TAFEs can play a critical role in producing the workforce required to meet the skill forecast at below-university cost (DEECD 2013).

For example, when Box Hill Institute of TAFE applied to the Victorian Government to have a Bachelor of Computer Systems (Networking) accredited, it also submitted an application for a Bachelor of Applied Music (BAMusic) and advised that an application for a Bachelor of Biotechnology and Innovation was being prepared (BHI 2003). In 2006, it reported 'substantial enrolments' into the BAMusic and the Bachelor of Computer Technology (Networking) (BHI 2006). By 2013, the Institute was offering 22 associate and bachelor degrees, an expansion of 1100% in eight years, of which the BAMusic is its most popular. (The Box Hill Institute Bachelor of Applied Music is the focus of one of the case studies in this report; see Chapter 9). Other examples of industry-focused applied degrees offered by public VET providers include:

TAFE SA (South Australia)

- Associate Degree of Electronic Engineering
- Bachelor of Dance Performance
- Bachelor of Visual Arts and Design

Polytechnic West

- Associate Degree in Aviation (Aeronautics)
- Associate Degree in Aviation (Maintenance Engineering)
- Associate Degree in Aviation (Operations Management)
- Associate Degree in Hospitality Management
- Associate Degree of Business
- Associate Degree of Fashion Business
- Associate Degree of Network Technology

TAFE NSW (New South Wales) Higher Education

- Associate Degree of 3D Art and Animation
- Associate Degree of Accounting
- Bachelor of 3D Art and Animation
- Bachelor of Applied Finance (Financial Planning)
- Bachelor of Design (Interior Design)
- Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and Care (Birth-5)
- Bachelor of Information Technology (Network Security)

Private VET providers have also developed industry-specific applied degrees such as:

Australian Institute of Music

- Bachelor of Entertainment Management
- Bachelor of Music (Arts Management)
- Bachelor of Music (Audio)
- Bachelor of Music (Classical)
- Bachelor of Music (Composition and Music Production)
- Bachelor of Music (Contemporary)
- Bachelor of Music (Music Theatre)
- Bachelor of Performance

Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors

- Bachelor of Counselling
- Bachelor of Psychological Science

Harvest Bible College

- Associate Degree of Ministry
- Bachelor of Arts (Biblical Studies)
- Bachelor of Arts (Ministry)

In addition to these 'strongly vocationally focussed' (Kosky 2002) degrees, VET providers have more recently moved into curriculum areas that have been the sole preserve of universities. It is more difficult to promote the applied or vocational focus of these degrees except by way of association with the 'institutional habitus' (Thomas 2002) of the provider. Examples of both public and private VET-provider degrees with titles similar or identical to parallel offerings by universities include:

Holmesglen Institute

- Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
- Bachelor of Nursing

Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT)

- Bachelor of Accounting
- Bachelor of Business

Avondale College

- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Business
- Bachelor of Nursing
- Bachelor of Science

Raffles College of Design and Commerce

- Bachelor of Commerce

Of the 295 VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees currently offered in Australia and listed in Appendix 5, approximately one third may be regarded as similar in title to traditional university degrees, leaving around two-thirds with clear occupational specificity. This estimate is based on a survey of qualification titles only. As yet there has not been any research into the difference between the content and structure of degrees that may be able to confirm that the variation in titles reflect different curricula, and whether similarity of titles obscures a difference of curricula.

3.11 *Conclusion*

A primary reason for VET providers moving into HE provision is in response to market pressures within the Australian VET sector. Associate and bachelor degrees offer VET providers with access to new markets and income streams. This is particularly important for public VET providers (TAFEs), which have experienced progressive funding cuts by their respective state and territory governments. However, public VET providers face significant challenges in the HE field, including competition from other public and private HE providers as well as having to negotiate a regulatory environment in which they are public providers but treated as private ones. This dual identity within public VET providers has implications for disadvantaged learners. Equity does not feature very often in the design and delivery of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, as the data on student participation in the following chapter attest.

4| Student participation

This Chapter reports on 2006-2011 student enrolments and completions in associate and bachelor degrees provided by vocational education and training (VET) institutions, as recorded by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE).[19] In 2011, 38 higher education (HE) providers fell into this category, as listed in Appendix 4. Excluded from the data are students enrolled with HE providers that are not VET providers and are not universities.[20] The Chapter reports on data for the years 2006-2011. This provides a six-year time frame to facilitate the identification of trends over time, with 2011 the most recent full year of data available from DIICCSRTE at the time of the report's completion.[21]

DIICCSRTE data were provided to the research team via a special data request. Initially data were sought from NCVER, drawn from its annual National VET Provider Collection. However this data set is largely focused on Certificate I-IV and 'Diploma and above' level courses. It also reports only on 'publicly funded training programs delivered by government funded and privately operated training providers'.[22] Fee-for-service private providers are not included in NCVER data except when they are in receipt of competitive or other public funding (NCVER 2013). Thus most NCVER data on associate and bachelor degree enrolments and completions were found to be incomplete and are used sparingly in this Chapter. (The NCVER data in question are included as Appendix 6 to illustrate the issues encountered.)

For comparative purposes, the Chapter includes data on associate and bachelor degrees offered by Australian universities (i.e. Table A providers) (See Appendix 7). This is useful for comparing the participation rates of equity groups. These data were sourced from DIICCSRTE through a specific data request. As all data in this report originate from the same source (i.e. DIICCSRTE), methods of measurement and definitions of equity groups are consistent across the data. This is in contrast to NCVER data that use different equity-group definitions (e.g. see NCVER definition of socioeconomic status).[23] DIICCSRTE collects data on the HE participation of equity groups as defined in the 1994 Martin Report.[24] This includes data on students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds, Indigenous students, students with disabilities, students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESBs), women in non-traditional areas, and students from regional and remote areas. Data on 'recent arrivals' and 'second chance learners' are unavailable and/or difficult to derive and hence are not reported in this Chapter.[25]

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[19] VET institutions here refer to both publicly funded (i.e. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions) and private fee-for-service institutions that provide courses at AQF levels Cert I – Advanced Diploma.
[20] In Australia there are 28 non-VET and non-university HE providers that provide associate and bachelor degrees.
[21] Data from 2012 was released too late for inclusion in this report.
[22] See http://www.ncver.edu.au/avetmiss/21055.html
[23] For example see Rothman et al. 2013 where the reporting of SES by NCVER is by quintile and measured in terms of the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage. In contrast, SES data from DIICCSRTE is reported in quartiles and uses the Index of Education and Occupation.
[24] *A Fair Chance For All* (DEET 1990) identified these equity groups: People from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds [now referred to as 'low socioeconomic status backgrounds']; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people [now more commonly referred to as 'Indigenous Australians']; Women (in non-traditional areas); People with disabilities; People from Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds (NESB); People from rural and isolated areas [now referred to as 'regional and remote areas']. Martin (1994) devised operational definitions of these groups in the *Equity and General Performance Indicators in Higher Education* report.
[25] The recent *National Report on Social Equity in VET* (Rothman et al. 2013: xiii) also found that "the definition of 'second chance learners' is unclear, with available data difficult to obtain".

Based on these data, it is apparent that the majority of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees are offered by private providers. That is, only a small proportion of these courses are offered by state-funded TAFEs. There has been a substantial growth in student enrolments in these courses since 2006: while 38 institutions offered associate and bachelor degrees in 2011, only 18 did so in 2006. Further, the number of bachelor degrees greatly out-numbers the number of associate degrees (as is the case among universities). These associate and bachelor degrees are also concentrated in a few fields of study. As at 2011, Victoria enrolled the largest number of students in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

The data suggest that when compared to universities, provision of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees is less equitable. Fewer students from disadvantaged backgrounds are enrolled in these courses; associate degrees are even less equitable than bachelor degrees. The data also show that completion numbers are low compared with enrolments. This may be partly due to students moving onto higher level qualifications before completing all of the formal requirements of their awards. However, data and anecdotal evidence from at least one case study institution (SIBT; see Chapter 6) suggest comparatively low retention rates in these courses. Disadvantaged groups are almost entirely absent among students that do attain an associate or bachelor degree from a VET provider.

The following sections set out the detail on which these observations (and others) are made.

4.1 *Degree delivery patterns: by jurisdiction, provider type and industry*

Table 4.1 indicates the number of students enrolled in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. There has been significant growth in student enrolments (over 300%) in these qualifications from 2006 to 2011. Bachelor degree enrolments (94.3% of the total in 2011) far outweigh enrolments in associate degrees (5.7%).

Table 4.1: Public and private VET-provider associate and bachelor degree students

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
VET-provider bachelor degree (pass & honours)	4,851	8,518	11,558	14,296	17,291	19,118
VET-provider associate degree	17	280	576	661	1,202	1,156
Total	**4,868**	**8,798**	**12,134**	**14,957**	**18,493**	**20,274**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

Table 4.2 is based on NCVER data and indicates a much smaller number of VET-provider associate and bachelor degree enrolments. The relatively low numbers – particularly for 2007 and 2008 – and the zero figure for associate degrees in 2008, suggest that NCVER data are incomplete.

Table 4.2: TAFE-provider associate and bachelor degree students, as reported by NCVER

Australia	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
VET-provider bachelor degree (pass & honours)	1,350	431	427	2,021	2,193	2,478
VET-provider associate degree	154	263	-	188	190	93
Total	**1,504**	**694**	**427**	**2,209**	**2,383**	**2,571**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Student enrolments by state

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 below (based on DIICCSRTE data) illustrate the spread of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees across Australia's states and territories from 2006 to 2011. Victoria is the state with the greatest provision, both in terms of student numbers and the number of VET providers offering degrees, with NSW a close second. Tasmania, WA and the ACT have very small student numbers. More students are enrolled in multi-state VET providers than in any single state. This share of students has increased markedly since 2006 when there were no students enrolled in degrees in multi-state VET providers. VET providers with campuses in more than one state were the third largest in 2011.

Table 4.3: VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments by state

VET-provider bachelor degree	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ACT	0	0	0	0	54	62
NSW	2,323	3,196	4,762	5,358	5,365	5,578
QLD	0	0	0	0	31	46
SA	569	940	625	650	586	551
TAS	0	0	0	0	0	0
VIC	1,959	3,820	4,729	5,471	6,031	6,374
WA	0	0	0	45	56	46
Multi-State	0	562	1,442	2,745	5,168	6,461
Total*	**4,851**	**8,518**	**11,558**	**14,296**	**17,291**	**19,118**

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *These totals vary slightly from those presented in Table 4.1, due to suppressed or unpublished data*

Victoria enrols very few students in VET-provider associate degree programs, with fewer than 150 in each year (with a peak of 137 in 2010). Whereas in Queensland in 2011, there were approximately 10 times as many VET-provider associate degree students as VET-provider bachelor degree students. NSW is the state with the next largest number of VET-provider associate degree enrolments followed closely by multi-state institutions (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: VET-provider associate degree enrolments by state

VET-provider associate degree	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ACT	0	0	0	0	0	0
NSW	<5	78	167	195	354	343
QLD	0	0	0	0	378	420
SA	17	19	19	25	20	24
TAS	0	0	0	0	0	0
VIC	0	37	60	92	137	70
WA	0	0	<5	14	33	54
Multi-State	0	146	330	335	280	245
Total	**17**	**280**	**576**	**661**	**1,202**	**1,156**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. NB: Where there are less than five students DIICCSRTE suppresses the actual number to preserve the confidentiality of the students. When calculating totals these <5 figures are treated as 0s.

Student completions by state

Tables 4.5 and 4.6 below indicate the number of VET-provider associate and bachelor degree completions across the states and territories. In 2011, VET-provider bachelor degree completions accounted for 12.6% of enrolments. Figures for previous years were lower, ranging from 9.3% in 2006 to 11.8% in 2007. These per centages do not constitute completion rates as such. Without tracking specific cohorts of students it is difficult to discern which students enrolled in previous years count as completions in later years. In any case, the figures are quite low. By way of comparison, bachelor degree completions in universities as a proportion of enrolment were higher, in the range of 18-20%.

Table 4.5: VET-provider bachelor degree completions by state

VET-provider bachelor degree	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ACT	0	0	0	0	15	26
NSW	248	472	492	535	495	621
QLD	0	0	0	0	91	7
SA	98	141	112	118	89	91
TAS	0	0	0	0	0	0
VIC	69	327	420	458	553	705
WA	0	0	0	0	<5	<5
Multi-State	0	54	106	439	657	959
Total	**451**	**994**	**1,130**	**1,550**	**1,900**	**2,409**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

Table 4.6 VET-provider associate degree completions by state

VET-provider associate degree	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ACT	0	0	0	0	0	0
NSW	0	9	43	33	92	86
QLD	0	0	0	0	0	8
SA	7	6	14	7	14	5
TAS	0	0	0	0	0	0
VIC	0	5	26	18	34	34
WA	0	0	0	<5	7	6
Multi-State	0	0	86	138	107	54
Total	**7**	**20**	**169**	**196**	**254**	**193**

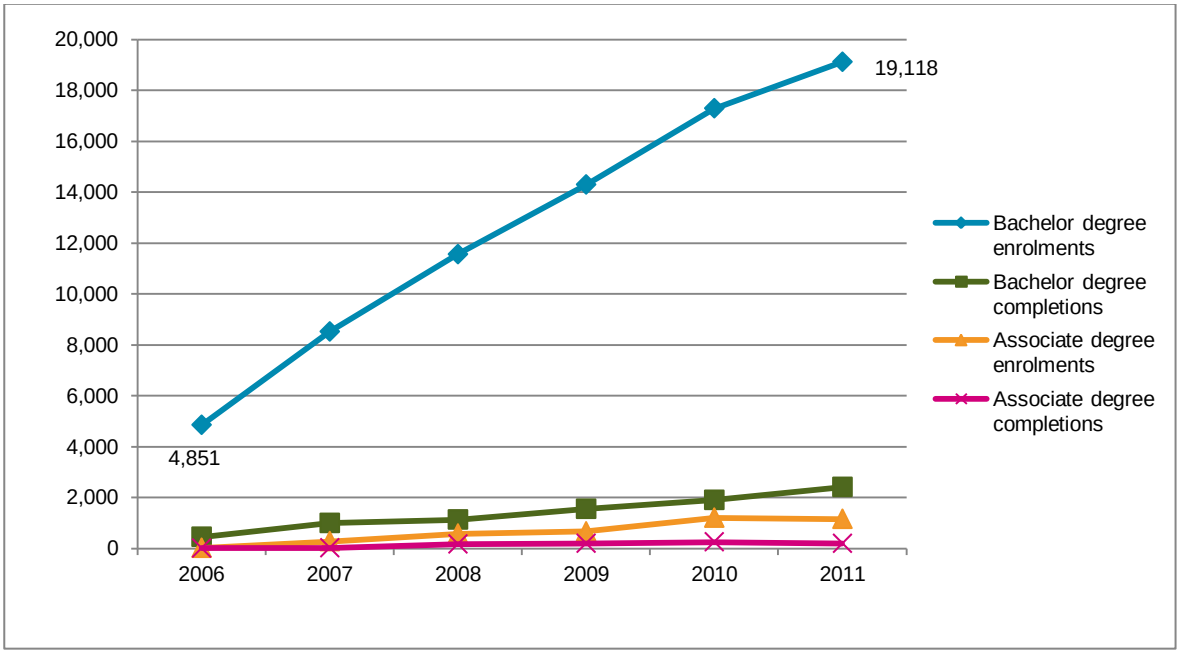
Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

Overall growth in VET-provider degrees

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the significant growth in VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments from 2006-2011 compared to fairly static numbers of completions and VET-provider associate degree enrolments and completions. In 2011 there were 14,267 more VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments than in 2006, a growth of 294%. In the same period, VET-provider bachelor degree *completions* increased by 1,958. While VET-provider associate degree student enrolments and completions both increased by over 2,000% from

2006-2011, in absolute terms the growth was small (growing by 1,139 and 186 respectively) compared with VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments.[26] Figure 4.1 also shows the relatively small number of award completions compared with enrolments and that completions have not kept pace with the number of new students entering VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

Figure 4.1: VET-provider associate and bachelor degree enrolments and completions



Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

Fields of study

Table 4.7 below shows that VET-provider bachelor degrees are concentrated in four main fields of study. In 2011 the largest share of enrolments was in the fields of Creative Arts (with over 6,000 enrolments), Health (4,469), Society and Culture (4,438), and Management and Commerce (2,281). Fewer than 1,000 students were enrolled in Education-related VET-provider bachelor degrees. Growth over the 2006-2011 period was steady and substantial for three of these groups of study: Creative Arts, Health, and Society and Culture.

Other fields have virtually no enrolments for a range of possible reasons: e.g. degrees in Engineering and Related Technology are more likely to be offered in universities, while courses in Food, Hospitality and Personal Services are more common below the degree level (i.e. Certificate and Diploma levels).

[26] By contrast, bachelor degree enrolments in universities (Table A institutions) rose by over 77,000 or 15.2%

Table 4.7: VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments by field of study

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	17	40	53	62	104	112
Architecture and Building	36	84	116	133	288	328
Creative Arts	905	1,572	2,784	4,048	5,212	6,185
Education	525	685	531	683	719	833
Engineering and Related Technologies	0	0	0	0	0	<5
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	<5	<5	6	22	30	39
Health	1,527	3,280	3,847	4,142	4,629	4,469
Information Technology	<5	30	52	77	80	100
Management and Commerce	116	289	444	704	1,599	2,281
Natural and Physical Sciences	60	57	65	44	72	62
Society and Culture	1,608	2,402	3,559	4,254	4,420	4,438

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

Table 4.8 illustrates the enrolments for VET-provider associate degrees. As with VET-provider bachelor degrees, numbers are concentrated in specific fields of study, although the particular fields differ slightly for VET-provider associate degree courses. Management and Commerce courses accounted for the largest number of students in 2011, with Engineering and Related Technologies accounting for the second largest enrolment (enrolments grew from zero in 2009 to 400 in 2011). Creative Arts was the third most common field of study, although enrolments have been declining since 2008. Most other fields of study had very small or negligible numbers of enrolled students or had none enrolled at all.

Table 4.8: VET-provider associate degree enrolments by field of study

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	0	0	0	0	0	<5
Architecture and Building	0	0	0	0	<5	0
Creative Arts	0	59	304	291	223	201
Education	0	0	0	0	<5	np
Engineering and Related Technologies	0	0	0	<5	366	401
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	0	0	0	<5	np	np
Health	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	0	<5	0	0	0	np
Management and Commerce	0	125	241	276	439	429
Natural and Physical Sciences	0	0	<5	5	0	<5
Society and Culture	17	19	19	25	20	37

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

4.2 *Teaching staff qualification levels*

As Table 4.9 below indicates, the majority of academics in universities have doctorates. The proportion has been steadily rising over the reporting period such that in 2011, close to two-thirds of university academics had PhD qualifications.

Table 4.9: Number of full-time and part-time university academics by highest qualification

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Doctorate by research or coursework	57.1%	58.9%	60.4%	60.9%	62.2%	64.0%
Master by research or coursework	17.9%	17.2%	16.7%	15.9%	15.3%	14.8%
Other Postgraduate	3.3%	3.1%	3.2%	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%
Bachelor	13.2%	13.1%	12.5%	12.5%	11.7%	10.9%
Other	1.3%	1.3%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
No Information	7.2%	6.5%	6.1%	6.7%	6.7%	6.2%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: DIISRTE, Selected Higher Education Statistics – Staff, Table 4.2 various years

NCVER does not collect data on staff qualifications and DIICCSRTE does not collect data on staff qualifications for VET providers of bachelor and associate degrees. Thus staff qualification comparisons between universities and VET providers of HE are not possible.

4.3 *Student applications*

This section briefly considers learner/community perception of VET-provider associate and bachelor degree course quality. As there is no direct data available on this, numbers of student applications for VET-provider degrees are used as a proxy.

Based on available DIISRTE data, Table 4.10 below shows a rise in applicants to universities of nearly 37,000 (or 15.5%) from 2008-12. For most of this time there was a substantial amount of unmet demand (i.e. eligible applicants not being offered a place). Even in the context of the current 'demand driven' higher education system, approximately 20% of applicants are unable to secure a place (DIISRTE 2012).

Table 4.10: Student applications for university places, 2008-2012

State	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
NSW/ACT	76,782	81,101	83,108	84,415	86,999
VIC	62,381	67,457	71,984	71,202	72,275
QLD	48,228	50,055	57,205	55,852	56,512
WA	17,863	18,650	20,834	20,532	19,304
SA/NT	22,628	23,279	24,235	24,766	26,425
TAS	8,550	9,201	9,630	10,443	11,652
Total	**236,432**	**249,743**	**266,996**	**267,210**	**273,167**

Source: DIISRTE 2012: 12; DEEWR 2009: 12

Table 4.11 shows the number of applicants to university according to field of study. Health attracted the largest number of applicants (25% of all applications for the 2012 academic year) in both 2011 and 2012, followed by Society and Culture (20%). Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies was least popular, amounting to only 1.5% of applications in 2012.

Table 4.11: Student applications for university places, by field of study

Field of Study	2011	2012
Natural and Physical Sciences	20,932	23,199
Information Technology	6,712	6,891
Engineering and Related Technologies	17,159	18,224
Architecture and Building	9,428	9,137
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	4,231	4,203
Health	66,156	68,861
Medical Studies	*12,681*	*11,814*
Nursing	*21,596*	*22,176*
Dental Studies	*4,084*	*3,964*
Veterinary	*2,100*	*2,302*
Health Other	*25,695*	*28,605*
Education	23,402	23,542
Teacher Education	*22,401*	*22,661*
Education Other	*1,001*	*881*
Management and Commerce	34,790	35,182
Society and Culture	55,024	55,231
Creative Arts	27,455	26,417
Total	**267,210**	**273,167**

Source: DIISRTE 2012: 15

No data are available from DIICCSRTE to determine applications to VET-provider degrees on the basis of course or field of study. However, data previously requested from the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) go some way towards depicting learner/community interest in VET-provider degrees. Victorian data are of particular interest given it is the state with the highest number of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees and the nation's largest VET sector.

Table 4.12 below shows the number of total and first preference applications for Victorian TAFEs offering associate and bachelor degrees. In the context of Tables 4.5 and 4.6 above – which indicate that in 2011, 705 students were enrolled in VET-provider bachelor degrees and 34 students were enrolled in VET-provider associate degrees within Victoria – 575 first preferences for a VET-provider associate or bachelor degree in 2012 is a strong result and suggests that VET-provider degrees are held in high community regard.

Table 4.12: No. of preferences for Victorian TAFE-provider bachelor or associate degrees, 2012

VET-provider	Number of *all* preferences	Number of *first* preferences
Holmesglen	1,625	176
Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE	1,205	180
Box Hill Institute of TAFE	659	151
William Angliss Institute of TAFE	260	60
Chisholm	13	5
University of Ballarat TAFE	12	3
Total	**3,774**	**575**

Source: VTAC, Data Request, 2012

4.4 *Financial support for students and for student support services*

Students studying VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees may be eligible for FEE-HELP or VET FEE-HELP. These are deferred loan repayment schemes similar to HECS-HELP available for university students. FEE-HELP loans incur a 25% loan fee, while some VET FEE-HELP loans incur a 20% loan fee. According to the Australian Government:

> VET FEE-HELP is available to assist eligible students studying higher level vocational education and training (VET) qualifications to pay their tuition fees. Higher level VET qualifications are at the diploma level and above; VET FEE-HELP is not available for certificate level courses.[27]

However, it is not immediately clear which courses attract VET FEE-HELP or FEE-HELP. In addition to the 20-25% premium on loans, tuition fees for VET-provider degrees (covered by VET FEE-HELP or FEE-HELP) are higher than tuition fees for an equivalent degree from a university (covered by HECS-HELP). For example, as reported in Chapter 3, the total cost (over three years) to a student undertaking a Bachelor of Music at Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) is $36,000 while the total cost (over three years) to a student undertaking a Bachelor of Music at Monash University is $18,000. In addition, for HECS-HELP students, future repayments will rise each year in accord with Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases. For FEE-HELP students, future repayments will rise 20-25% per annum.

4.5 *Disadvantaged learner participation rates in VET and University*

This section concentrates on the absolute and proportional representation of equity groups. As the data have been provided by DIICCSRTE, these equity groups (their definitions dating back to the early 1990s; see Martin 1994) do not correspond exactly with the disadvantaged learner groups identified by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC). Some of NVEAC's categories are not reported at all (e.g. 'second chance' learners, recent arrivals).[28]

VET-provider bachelor degrees

Tables 4.13 and 4.14 below outline enrolments in VET-provider bachelor degrees for DIICCSRTE-specified equity groups. Female students are also included.

[27] See http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/helppayingmyfees/vet-fee-help/pages/vet-fee-help

[28] See Rothman et al. 2013 for an interpretation of 'second chance learners'. Despite their use of proxies to measure this group, Rothman et al. conclude that there is limited data on which to make assessments and the very definition of the term is unclear.

Table 4.13: Equity group enrolments in VET-provider bachelor degrees, numbers

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	3,308	5,845	7,636	9,287	10,957	11,945
Low SES	739	1,217	1,840	2,206	2,646	2,656
NESB	32	119	155	172	192	206
Indigenous	29	39	87	107	128	111
Regional	616	1,037	1,604	1,948	2,239	2,312
Remote	27	41	47	57	57	77
Disability	131	219	265	416	578	1,540
Women in Non-traditional Areas	124	284	438	662	1,366	1,861
Total bachelor degree enrolment	**4,851**	**8,518**	**11,558**	**14,296**	**17,291**	**19,118**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. NB: When data are disaggregated by field of study, the totals are lower (different) due to some fields of study for some institutions being reported as <5 or not published.

Table 4.14: Equity group enrolments in VET-provider bachelor degrees, per cent

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females*	68.5%	68.6%	66.1%	65.0%	63.5%	62.8%
Low SES	15.2%	14.3%	15.9%	15.4%	15.3%	13.9%
NESB	0.7%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%
Indigenous	0.6%	0.5%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%
Regional	12.7%	12.2%	13.9%	13.6%	12.9%	12.1%
Remote	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.4%
Disability	2.7%	2.6%	2.3%	2.9%	3.3%	8.1%
Women in Non-traditional Areas	2.6%	3.3%	3.8%	4.6%	7.9%	9.7%

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *calculated as a % of known males and females, not total enrolments*

All equity groups presented here are under-represented in VET-provider bachelor degree courses. To be proportionally represented, the participation rate of each group needs to be on par with the group's representation in the population as a whole (or of the working age population). 'Parity' refers to proportional representation based on the Australian working-age population.[29] Table 4.15 outlines these 'reference values' (as they are described by DIICCSRTE) as a proportion of the total population.

Table 4.15: Target group reference values as a per centage of the Australian population

Aged 15-64 in 2011	Low SES	NESB	Disability	Regional	Remote	Indigenous	Women*
Reference values	25.0%	4.66%	8.0%	23.32%	0.6%	2.23%	40%

*Source: DIICCSRTE Students: Selected Higher Education Statistics, Equity Groups and Equity Performance Data, 2011, Table 5.14. *The Martin Report (1994) deemed women to be enrolled in non-traditional areas when female student enrolment was less than 40%.*

[29] Proportional representation is the dominant way of understanding equity in the university sector (notwithstanding the Federal Government's low SES target of 20% which is below parity). However, there are other ways of understanding equity including what is referred to as 'epistemological equity' (Dei 2010) or a 'southern theory' of student equity (Gale 2012b) that focus on not only access and participation, but the types of knowledges and ways of knowing embedded in higher education curriculum. See Chapter 2.

The data in Table 4.15 above show that under-representation in VET-provider bachelor degrees is consistent and persistent across all groups. Students in VET-provider bachelor degrees who are from low SES backgrounds are represented at a slightly lower rate (hovering at around 15%) than undergraduate students in universities who are from low SES backgrounds (hovering around 16.5%; see Table 4.19). Students in VET-provider bachelor degrees and from remote areas, although small in number, are nearing proportional representation or parity with existing equity reference values. Indigenous students in VET-provider bachelor degrees are significantly under-represented at around 0.5%-0.8% of all VET-provider bachelor degree students. There is very little change over time in the proportional representation of these groups. The exception is students with disabilities whose representation in 2011 approached parity (8%), although it was much lower in preceding years. Females are slightly over-represented at over 60% of all VET-provider degree enrolments.

VET-provider associate degrees

Tables 4.16 and 4.17 below show equity group enrolments in VET-provider associate degrees. Again, it is apparent that equity groups are significantly under-represented in these courses. Of particular note is that no Indigenous students, no students from remote areas, and very few students from non-English speaking backgrounds have been enrolled in VET-provider associate degrees between 2006 and 2011. Students with disabilities are also significantly under-represented, participating at about one-sixteenth of parity (i.e. 0.4% compared with their population representation of 8%) in 2011. There are insufficient numbers of regional students to calculate a participation rate.

Students in VET-provider associate degrees and from low SES backgrounds are participating at higher rates than other equity groups apart from females, but still below par (although this is increasing – from less than 8% to just over 14%). In absolute terms, students from low SES backgrounds have increased substantially from six in 2006 to nearly 200 in 2011. Still, this is a very small number in terms of the overall higher education cohort. (The high participation rate for low SES students in 2006 appears to be due to low overall numbers of students.) Given these data, student participation in VET-provider associate degrees is more inequitable than student participation in VET-provider bachelor degrees.

Table 4.16: Equity group enrolments in VET-provider associate degrees, numbers

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	11	167	303	296	361	346
Low SES	6	21	54	76	151	170
NESB	0	6	15	<5	13	14
Indigenous	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Regional	<5*	17	34	44	70	73
Remote	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Disability	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	5
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0	79	138	159	293	273
Total associate degrees	**17**	**280**	**576**	**661**	**1,202**	**1,156**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. NB: Where multiple <5 is reported, the total is given as <5. All <5s count as 0 in calculation of the 'Total associate degrees' figure.

Table 4.17: Equity group enrolments in VET-provider associate degrees, per cent

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females*	64.7%	59.6%	53.3%	47.0%	33.0%	31.3%
Low SES	35.2%	7.5%	9.4%	11.5%	12.6%	14.7%
NESB	0.0%	2.1%	2.6%	<5	1.1%	1.2%
Indigenous	0.0%	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Regional	<5**	6.1%	5.9%	6.7%	5.8%	6.3%
Remote	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Disability	0.0%	<5	<5	<5	<5	0.4%
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0.0%	28.2%	24.0%	24.1%	24.4%	23.6%

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *calculated as a % of known males and females, not total enrolments*
***<5 denotes actual number of students enrolled is suppressed and so per centage cannot be calculated*

Comparisons with university students enrolled in associate and bachelor degrees

The ongoing issue of the under-representation of equity groups in universities has been well documented and discussed. Following the *Review of Australian Higher Education* (Bradley et al. 2008), the Australian Government's response (Australian Government 2009) and related policies such as HEPPP and university compacts, there has been a concerted effort by universities to increase the participation rates of disadvantaged groups, particularly students from low SES backgrounds. Given this policy backdrop, the prevailing view is that student equity in universities is an issue that needs to be addressed.

The enrolment data for VET-provider bachelor degree students suggest that equity (in terms of proportional representation) is an even more pressing issue for VET providers. Table 4.18 compares the participation rates of students in selected equity groups at the bachelor degree level in both VET providers and universities. It shows that the under-representation of equity groups in bachelor degrees is greater for VET providers than for universities. This is particularly the case for students from low SES backgrounds, whose proportional representation is falling. However, the proportional representation of students with disabilities is rising.

Table 4.18: Comparison of VET-provider and university enrolments, bachelor degree

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) %	**2009**		**2010**		**2011**	
	VET	**Uni**	**VET**	**Uni**	**VET**	**Uni**
Low SES	15.4%	16.2%	15.3%	16.5%	13.9%	16.8%
NESB	1.3%	3.2%	1.1%	3.2%	1.1%	3.2%
Indigenous	0.7%	1.2%	0.7%	1.3%	0.6%	1.3%
Regional	13.6%	18.6%	12.9%	18.8%	12.1%	18.9%
Remote	0.4%	0.9%	0.3%	0.9%	0.4%	0.9%
Disability	2.9%	4.5%	3.3%	4.6%	8.1%	5.0%

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

Table 4.19 reveals that these inequities are exacerbated in associate degrees in at least two respects. First, students from equity groups enrolled in VET-provider associate degrees are *under*-represented to an even greater extent than in VET-provider bachelor degrees. Second,

students from most equity groups (with the exception of NESB and disability) are *over*-represented in associate degrees at *universities*. That is, when students from disadvantaged backgrounds enrol in undergraduate studies at universities, they are more likely to participate in lower level courses (i.e. associate degrees rather than bachelor degrees).

Table 4.19: Comparison of VET-provider and university enrolments, associate degree

Associate degree %	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	Uni	VET	Uni	VET	Uni
Low SES	11.5%	27.8%	12.6%	27.1%	14.7%	26.5%
NESB	<5	1.5%	1.1%	1.8%	1.2%	2.1%
Indigenous	<5	5.8%	<5	5.5%	<5	5.2%
Regional	6.7%	34.3%	5.8%	33.6%	6.3%	32.6%
Remote	<5	2.4%	<5	2.4%	<5	2.3%
Disability	<5	3.6%	<5	4.1%	0.4%	4.0%

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

Fields of Study

Table 4.19 above shows that student enrolments in VET-provider bachelor degrees are concentrated in certain fields of study. In what follows, the participation rates of equity groups in the three fields with the largest number of VET-provider degree students in 2011 – Creative Arts, Health, and Society and Culture – are examined. Again, a pattern of under-representation is evident. For example, in the Creative Arts, all equity groups are significantly and persistently under-represented. Students from low SES backgrounds participate at less than half the rate required to be equitable (11.8% in 2011). This is also true of students with disabilities with only 4% of Creative Arts students in 2011 coming from this group (parity is 8%). Even so, this is an improvement on previous years – see Table 4.20 below.

Table 4.20: VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments in Creative Arts by selected equity groups

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females*	48.0%	41.2%	36.7%	36.8%	37.0%	37.8%
Low SES**	11.6%	12.7%	12.8%	12.3%	12.9%	11.8%
Regional	9.6%	13.0%	13.0%	12.2%	12.2%	11.9%
Disability	2.8%	1.3%	1.5%	2.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Women in Non-traditional Areas	1.0%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *Females calculated as a % of known males and females, not total enrolments; total of males + females can equal more than total number of students due to some data suppressed (<5) or not published. **Other equity groups calculated as a % of total number of reported students*

Table 4.21 shows a similar increase in VET-provider degree students with disabilities in 2011, this time in Health-related courses. Without 2012 data, it is difficult to discern if this increase is an anomaly or indicative of a persistent trend of greater participation by this group. The Table also suggests the gendered nature of studies in the Health field with well over eight in 10 VET-provider degree students being female in each of the years reported. Aside from these differences, participation rates in Health are broadly similar to those in the Creative Arts.

Table 4.21: VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments in Health by selected equity groups

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females*	82.1%	84.9%	82.8%	84.6%	84.3%	85.0%
Low SES**	10.7%	10.1%	11.9%	12.0%	12.5%	12.8%
Regional	10.0%	9.7%	11.7%	13.0%	12.4%	12.9%
Disability	2.6%	3.4%	1.6%	3.0%	4.8%	11.4%
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *Females calculated as a % of known males and females, not total enrolments; total of males + females can equal more than total number of students due to some data suppressed (<5) or not published. **Other equity groups calculated as a % of total number of reported students*

Females also constituted a higher than par proportion of VET-provider degree students in the field of Society and Culture, although to a lesser extent than for Health courses (69-75%). Again, other equity groups remain under-represented, although also to a lesser extent. For example, low SES students constitute around 20% of VET-provider degree students, which is equivalent to the government's university target (although below parity at 25%). However, as Table 4.22 indicates, this figure fluctuates from year to year. The Table also reveals that VET-provider degrees in Society and Culture are more equitable for students from low SES backgrounds than are courses in other fields of study. That is, low SES students are more concentrated in these disciplines.

Table 4.22: VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments in Society/Culture by select equity groups

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females*	70.9%	68.9%	73.6%	74.6%	73.9%	74.8%
Low SES**	18.5%	18.2%	21.2%	21.1%	20.6%	19.6%
Regional	16.9%	15.1%	18.2%	17.6%	16.4%	15.8%
Disability	2.8%	2.6%	4.0%	4.1%	3.9%	4.5%
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *Females calculated as a % of known males and females, not total enrolments; total of males + females can equal more than total number of students due to some data suppressed (<5) or not published. **Other equity groups calculated as a % of total number of reported students*

By comparison, low SES student participation in university bachelor pass degrees in the field of Society and Culture, ranges from 14.1% (2006) to 15.1% (2011).

The low number of enrolments in VET-provider associate degrees makes it difficult to disaggregate these data by both equity groups and field of study. The high occurrence of data either supressed or not published means that meaningful observations about the data are not possible. However, given the pattern of low representation of equity groups among VET-provider associate degrees (see above), it is reasonable to suggest that equity issues identified in the data persist or are amplified when considering particular fields of study.

4.6 *Disadvantaged learner degree completion rates in VET and University*

Although the number of enrolments in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees has risen greatly in recent years, the same cannot be said for VET-provider degree completions. Table 4.23 shows that although there has been some growth in the number of course

completions, the overall figure is still relatively small. The Table also illustrates that, overall, student completions constitute a small proportion of student enrolments.

Table 4.23: Number of VET-provider associate and bachelor degree award completions

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
VET-provider bachelor degrees	451	994	1,130	1,553	1,900	2,409
VET-provider associate degrees	7	20	174	196	254	193
Total	**458**	**1,014**	**1,304**	**1,749**	**2,154**	**2,602**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

VET-provider bachelor degrees

Compared with enrolment numbers, the representation of equity groups among students completing VET-provider bachelor degrees is lower. Table 4.25 in particular shows the extent to which these groups are under-represented.

Table 4.24: Equity group completions in VET-provider bachelor degrees, number

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	250	590	631	756	910	1,262
Low SES	49	73	75	158	221	207
NESB	5	<5	10	0	18	0
Indigenous	0	<5	0	<5	0	0
Regional	45	59	65	109	159	170
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	7	10	5	12	23	185
Women in Non-traditional Areas	5	31	62	102	145	212
Total Bachelor Degree completions	**451**	**994**	**1,130**	**1,553**	**1,900**	**2,409**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

Table 4.25: Equity group completions in VET-provider bachelor degrees, per cent

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females*	58.1%	60.5%	60.8%	52.1%	51.9%	55.1%
Low SES**	10.9%	7.3%	6.6%	10.2%	11.6%	8.6%
NESB	1.1%	<5	0.9%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%
Indigenous	<5	<5	0.0%	<5	0.0%	0.0%
Regional	10.0%	5.9%	5.8%	7.0%	8.4%	7.1%
Remote	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disability	1.6%	1.0%	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%	7.7%
Women in Non-traditional Areas	1.1%	3.1%	5.5%	6.6%	7.6%	8.8%

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *Females calculated as a % of known males and females, not total completions; total of males + females can equal more than total number of students due to some data suppressed (<5) or not published. **Other equity groups calculated as a % of total number of reported students*

As an example of the inequities of enrolment and completion of equity groups, low SES constitutes 25% of the population but individuals in this category accounted for around 15% of bachelor degree enrolments in 2006-2011, and 6-11% of completions (see Table 4.26).

Similarly, the reference value for students with a disability is 8%, but they constitute less than 4% of students in 2006-2010, and less than 2% of completions (although 2011 showed a significant improvement). A similar pattern is evident for students from remote areas (see Table 4.26).

Table 4.26: Comparison of VET-provider bachelor degree students by select equity groups

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
LOW SES (Reference value 25%)						
Enrolment	15.2%	14.3%	15.9%	15.4%	15.3%	13.9%
Completion	10.9%	7.3%	6.6%	10.2%	11.6%	8.6%
DISABILITY (Reference value 8%)						
Enrolment	2.7%	2.6%	2.3%	2.9%	3.3%	8.1%
Completion	1.6%	1.0%	0.4%	0.8%	1.2%	7.7%
REGIONAL (Reference value 23.3%)						
Enrolment	12.7%	12.2%	13.9%	13.6%	12.9%	12.1%
Completion	10.0%	5.9%	5.8%	7.0%	8.4%	7.1%

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

A further indicator of the equity issues in VET-provider bachelor degrees is the comparison with university completions shown in Table 4.27. This Table shows that the under-representation among completing VET-provider bachelor degree students for each equity group is even greater than is the case for their university peers. VET-provider bachelor degree students from all equity groups complete at lower rates than their university peers, with virtually no Indigenous students or students from NESB or remote backgrounds completing VET-provider bachelor degrees.

Table 4.27: Comparison of VET-provider and university student completions, bachelor degree

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) %	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	Uni	VET	Uni	VET	Uni
Low SES	10.2%	14.6%	11.6%	14.7%	8.6%	14.9%
NESB	0.0%	2.7%	0.9%	2.7%	0.0%	2.8%
Indigenous	<5	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%
Regional	7.0%	17.3%	8.4%	17.0%	7.1%	17.0%
Remote	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%
Disability	0.8%	4.1%	1.2%	4.2%	7.7%	4.3%

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

VET-provider associate degrees

Similarly, Tables 4.28 and 4.29 below show that very few VET-provider associate degree students from equity groups complete their award. In most cases there were either no students or less than five completing students between 2006 and 2011. However, women appear to be doing well, constituting approximately half of all those who do complete.

Table 4.28: Equity group completions in VET-provider associate degrees, number

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	np	<5	90	86	102	87
Low SES	0	0	5	14	6	13
NESB	0	0	<5	<5	5	<5
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	<5	0
Regional	0	<5	6	<5	<5	<5
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	<5
Disability	0	0	<5	<5	<5	<5
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0	8	35	30	50	54
Total Associate Degree completions	**7**	**20**	**174**	**196**	**254**	**193**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

Table 4.29: Equity group completions in VET-provider associate degrees, per cent

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females*	np	<5	58.1%	50.3%	48.3%	52.7%
Low SES	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	7.1%	2.4%	6.7%
NESB	0.0%	0.0%	<5	<5	2.0%	<5
Indigenous	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<5	0.0%
Regional	0.0%	<5	3.4%	<5	<5	<5
Remote	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<5
Disability	0.0%	0.0%	<5	<5	<5	<5
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0.0%	40.0%	20.1%	15.3%	19.7%	28.0%

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *calculated as a % of known males and females, not total completions*

As Table 4.19 above indicates, there is a marked difference in the representation of equity groups *enrolled* in associate degrees at VET providers and universities. Students from low SES and regional backgrounds are over-represented in universities in associate degrees (around 27% and 33% respectively) and at significantly higher rates than their peers enrolled with VET providers. This differentiation is also evident in the proportions of students in equity groups *completing* their associate degrees, as Table 4.30 below shows.

The most significant difference between associate degree completions at VET providers and universities is again for students from regional and low SES backgrounds, with approximately one-quarter of student completions in universities coming from either of these two groups. By contrast, for VET providers, students from low SES backgrounds comprised 2-7% of completions in 2009-2011, while there are insufficient students from regional background to calculate a completion rate. Similarly, almost every other equity group in every year (with the exception of NESB students in 2010) were not represented at all or were represented in very small numbers (<5) among completing VET-provider associate degree students. To put this more starkly, virtually no students with a disability, from remote areas, with an Indigenous background, and very few students of non-English speaking backgrounds were awarded a VET-provider associate degree between 2009 and 2011.

Part of this low completion rate can be explained by low numbers of students from these groups enrolling in VET-provider associate degrees (see Table 4.16), which in itself is an equity concern. Given that between 6 and 14 students from non-English speaking backgrounds were enrolled in VET-provider associate degrees between 2007 and 2011 (Table 4.16), it might be expected that some of these students would complete their award. However this is not the case and the acute absence of these students in the completion figures highlights equity issues for this group in particular.

Table 4.30 illustrates the stark difference in completion rates between VET-provider and university associate degree students. In most cases there are insufficient completing VET-provider students (i.e. <5) to calculate a per centage. VET-provider associate degree students from low SES backgrounds complete at very low rates compared with their university peers (the latter figure is relatively high – around 25% – an important finding in itself).

Table 4.30: Comparison of VET-provider and university completions, associate degree

Associate degree %	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	Uni	VET	Uni	VET	Uni
Low SES	7.1%	25.1%	2.4%	23.6%	6.7%	24.6%
NESB	<5	1.2%	2.0%	1.1%	<5	1.6%
Indigenous	0.0%	2.9%	<5	2.9%	0.0%	3.8%
Regional	<5	26.0%	<5	25.4%	<5	29.3%
Remote	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	2.0%	<5	1.8%
Disability	<5	3.1%	<5	3.1%	<5	4.2%

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

Fields of Study

As would be expected, completions of both VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees are in the same fields of study as enrolments. However, when compared with student enrolments, award completions are very low. For example the number of completions in Society and Culture VET-provider bachelor degrees across the 2006-2011 period is approximately one-tenth of the enrolment numbers.

It would be instructive to tease out these completion data by equity group and field of study in greater detail as per Tables 4.25 and 4.26 above. However as illustrated by Tables 4.32 and 4.33 below, the number of students completing VET-provider associate or bachelor degrees is quite low, and further disaggregation by equity group and field of study results in even lower figures, which is problematic for meaningful analysis. When dealing with such low student numbers, the incidence of suppressed data (<5) and data not published becomes more frequent and has a more significant impact on the calculation of completion rates. Thus these calculations are of questionable value and meaning for this report. Again, it is important to note that, overall, completion is very low and almost non-existent for students in some equity groups.

Table 4.31: VET-provider bachelor degree completions by field of study

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	np	np	95	145	116	102
Architecture and Building	0	np	np	np	91	15
Creative Arts	155	393	429	693	857	1,240
Education	214	309	319	384	345	299
Engineering and Related Technologies	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	8	0	np	20	<5	<5
Health	75	290	329	357	326	418
Information Technology	0	<5	<5	18	5	9
Management and Commerce	6	22	62	166	178	394
Natural and Physical Sciences	<5	8	13	6	10	18
Society and Culture	454	535	718	560	531	778

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

Table 4.32: VET-provider associate degree completions by field of study

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	0	0	np	np	21	5
Architecture and Building	0	0	0	0	<5	<5
Creative Arts	0	<5	81	136	93	44
Education	0	0	0	<5	0	13
Engineering and Related Technologies	0	0	0	0	<5	8
Food, Hospitality and Personal Services	0	0	0	<5	<5	5
Health	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	0	<5	0	0	<5	0
Management and Commerce	0	<5	98	50	94	82
Natural and Physical Sciences	0	0	<5	<5	0	0
Society and Culture	5	16	9	12	34	41

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013.

4.7 *Disadvantaged learner progression to employment and further study*

Little data are available specifically on disadvantaged learners' post-study destinations. Graduate Careers Australia collects and publishes data on university graduates' progression to work or further study, very little of which includes equity groups. Table 4.27 represents the extent of these data. It includes data on some but not all equity groups. Data on the progression to employment and further study of disadvantaged learners beyond VET degrees is neither collected nor available.

Table 4.33: University bachelor degree graduates available for FT employment, 2011, per cent

	In full-time employment	Seeking full-time employment, not working	Seeking full-time employment, working part-time or casual	Total seeking full-time employment	Total %	Total number
All graduates	76.3	8.7	14.9	23.6	100	44,176
Disability	66.2	16.7	17.1	33.8	100	1,127
Indigenous	86.8	6.5	6.7	13.2	100	403
NESB	67.0	15.8	17.2	33.0	100	7,275
Regional	78.8	7.4	13.7	21.1	100	10,610
Metropolitan	75.4	9.2	15.4	24.6	100	32,143

Source: Graduate Careers Australia 2012: 15

4.8 *Graduate satisfaction data*

NCVER does collect data on graduate satisfaction. However, as the data are collected via a voluntary post-study survey, the response rate for students from public VET providers studying associate and bachelor degrees is very low. When further disaggregated by disadvantaged learner groups, the sample was so small that the NCVER was unwilling to provide the research team with the data, on the basis that this would threaten the anonymity of the students.

Even if these data were available, they only cover public VET-provider associate and bachelor degree student numbers reported to NCVER (which is in itself incomplete) and excludes the much larger number of students recorded by DIICCSRTE. There is no system-wide, coordinated mechanism of measuring student satisfaction among all of these degree offerings.

4.9 *Conclusions*

The data presented in this chapter reveal a number of key issues:

- The majority of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees are offered by private providers rather than state-funded TAFE institutions;
- There has been a substantial increase in the number of students enrolled in VET-provider bachelor degrees between 2006 and 2011;
- Student enrolments in VET-provider degrees are concentrated in a few fields of study: Society and Culture, Health and Creative Arts;
- Compared to university students undertaking associate and bachelor degrees, few VET-provider associate and bachelor degree students appear to complete their awards;
- Students who are representative of equity groups are more under-represented in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees than they are in university associate and bachelor degrees;
- Students from equity groups are less likely to complete their VET-provider degrees;

- There are more inequities for students from equity groups in terms of enrolments and completions for VET-provider associate degrees than for VET-provider bachelor degrees;
- Data collection and reporting of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees is problematic due to different accountabilities to a variety of state and federal government bodies.

Most studies on equity in VET (e.g. Rothman et al. 2013) have found that equity groups are generally represented at above parity. However, some studies (e.g. Wheelahan 2009) have shown that students from equity groups (particularly students from low SES backgrounds) are concentrated in the 'lower end' of VET qualifications (i.e. Certificates I-IV) and are under-represented in 'diploma and above' AQF levels. The data presented here are consistent with these findings and suggests that the higher the AQF level in VET-provided courses, the less equity is evident.

5| Introduction to case studies

This Chapter provides an introduction to the report's five case studies. The following chapters, Chapters 6-10, detail these cases. They are cases of associate and bachelor degrees provided by and/or in partnership with vocational education and training (VET) providers. The specific cases are:

1. Associate Degree in Business, Sydney Institute of Business and Technology, New South Wales;
2. Associate Degree in Civil Engineering, Southbank Institute of Technology, Queensland;
3. Associate Degree of Arts, Business and Sciences, Deakin University, Victoria, in partnership with a number of Technical and Further Education institutions (TAFEs);
4. Bachelor of Applied Music, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, Victoria; and
5. Bachelor of Applied Management, University of Ballarat, Victoria, in partnership with a number of TAFEs.

5.1 *Case selection*

The case studies have been purposefully selected. Three are drawn from Victoria: the jurisdiction with the most number of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees (see Chapter 4). A further two have been selected from Queensland and from New South Wales, which have smaller but growing numbers of VET providers of higher education (HE). Together the five cases cover the most populous states in the nation, which are also the jurisdictions with the most active VET providers of associate and bachelor degrees (see Chapter 4).

The cases were selected to represent the variation in the kinds of VET provision of associate and bachelor degrees. Informed by the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3, this involved considerations of the different kinds of VET providers and their different responses to VET and HE markets. The selection process produced the following cases:

- one HE provider (SIBT) registered with the Tertiary Education Qualification and Standards Authority (TEQSA) as an Other Private Provider (OPP)[30] and whose parent company (Navitas) is also a private provider of VET;
- two HE providers listed as OPPs (SBIT and BHI), which are also public providers of VET;
- a dual sector provider listed as a Table A provider of HE (Ballarat University) and which is also a public provider of VET; and
- a Table A provider (Deakin University) that offers associate degrees in partnership with and on campuses of public VET providers.

This coverage of HE provision by or in association with VET providers gives a snapshot of the way HE is provided by OPPs in a variety of circumstances, with varying commitments of providers to the needs of disadvantaged students, and which reflect their location as specific kinds of education providers.

[30] A secondary rationale for the choice of this provider is that its provision of education services covers similar offerings to TAFEs in terms of pathway programs from school education into university.

5.2 *Case descriptions*

Each case provides rich description of: the institution; the degree course; community and industry relations; student origins, enrolment and destinations; and support and implications for disadvantaged learners. Each case also includes statistical data on student enrolments in associate and bachelor degrees offered by or in association with the VET-provider. These elements help to build an institutional picture of the specific context for VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. The consistency of these elements also allows for a reading across the cases, in building a bigger picture of VET providers in Australian higher education (HE) and of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. In turn, this 'bigger picture' should be read against the backdrop of Chapter 3, which outlines the context of the marketisation of VET and HE.

The case studies were developed from a variety of sources in response to a set of standard guiding questions (see Appendix 8). Sources of information included publicly available materials, documents supplied by the institution, and interviews with key people involved with the associate and bachelor degrees. The specific sources are noted in each case study within the text and also in a footnote on the first page of each case study. Not all institutions were equally involved in supplying information so there are some limitations related to the availability of data for some cases. In general, universities tend to generate more detailed data about their students than do VET institutions, particularly with regard to equity groups and their participation and completion rates. In addition, some elements are more heavily weighted in some cases than in others, reflecting the individual character of each associate and bachelor degree and the importance this element plays in understanding the provider and the degree.

5.3 *Disadvantaged learners*

The above layering of case descriptions is important in drawing out the full implications and impact on disadvantaged learners of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees (see Chapter 11). The different legislative and funding responsibilities of state and Australian Governments for different kinds of VET and HE providers, affords one example of how the 'bigger picture' impacts specifically on disadvantaged learners. One consequence of this is the extent to which data on disadvantaged learners are collected, how they are reported and to which government authorities. Chapter 4 notes that the learner groups identified in the National VET Equity Advisory Council's (NVEAC's) VET Equity Outcomes Framework are not exactly the same groups monitored by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE). Where possible, the case studies make comment on NVEAC's identified groups, although the absence of reporting on these groups and/or the public availability of data has constrained this aspect of the case descriptions.

5.4 *Overview of case studies*

Table 5.1 provides an overview of the five case studies. For each listed degree and provider, the table provides comparative data on: program length and delivery; program costs; delivery sites; student numbers; target groups; prerequisites and entry methods; and any equity considerations.

Table 5.1: Overview of case studies

Degree	Provider	Program length & delivery	Program cost	Delivery sites	Student #s	Target groups	Prerequisites, entry method	Equity considerations
Case Study 1 Associate Degree in Business Started 2011	Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT)	2 year course FT only AQF level 6 TEQSA accredited.	***Total for two years:*** $97,920 (international students) $81,280 (domestic students) ***Consists of:*** 14 x 1st year units at $3,000 (international) and $2,490 (domestic) each unit, and 9 x 2nd year units at $3,000 (international) and $2,590 (domestic) each. Full-fee paying	One delivery site: North Ryde Campus of Macquarie University.	Approx. 20 students each year.	Course tailored to students who seek employment in large and small business, but also those seeking entry into the Bachelor of Business Administration at Macquarie University. Designed for students who initially did not meet Macquarie entry requirements.	No prerequisites Direct Application	Provides an alternative pathway into HE but no specific equity considerations beyond this. Significant financial cost to students.
Case Study 2 Associate Degree in Engineering Started 2006	Southbank Institute of Technology (SBIT)	2 years FT (PT equiv.) AQF level 6 TEQSA accredited.	***Total for two years:*** $29,000 ***Consists of:*** $1,812.50 per unit FEE-HELP available	One delivery site: Southbank on-campus.	Approx. 450 students in 2013	Stand-alone rather than pathway.	Year 12 completion QTAC	Extended support for students with difficulties in numeracy.
Case Study 3 Associate Degree of Arts, Business & Sciences Started 2010	Deakin University (DU)	2 years FT (PT equiv.) AQF level 6 Registered with TEQSA, but self-accrediting.	***Total for two years:*** $13,180 (this is approximate due to variation for TAFE-based students according to diploma costs, which are managed by TAFEs) ***Consists of:*** Equivalent of 16 units at $823 per unit. CSP for Deakin units. FEE-HELP for TAFE units.	Eight delivery sites: 1. Deakin Waurn Ponds 2. Deakin Warrnambool 3. GOTAFE Wangaratta 4. Chisholm Rosebud 5. Chisholm Dandenong 6. Advance TAFE Bairnsdale 7. SuniTAFE Swan Hill 8. South West TAFE Portland	Approx. 190 students in 2013	Students who would like entry to a bachelor degree program but lack the entry requirements/ confidence/ educational experience. Primarily low ATAR school leavers and mature-age students without pre-requisites.	No prerequisites Direct Application Interview intake process	Explicit equity objective: Rural & regional, supported entry, disadvantage. Explicit about building social capital, and up-skilling students to enable seamless transition into bachelor degree programs.

Degree	Provider	Program length & delivery	Program cost	Delivery sites	Student #s	Target groups	Prerequisites, entry method	Equity considerations
Case Study 4 Bachelor in Applied Music (3 streams) Started 2005 (a non-degree version was available prior to this)	Box Hill Institute of TAFE (BHI)	3 year FT on-campus 390 students in 2013 over all three year levels; students may opt to exit after 2 years with an AD. AQF level 7 TEQSA accredited.	***Total for three years:*** $42,336 ***Consists of:*** $14,112 per year. FEE-HELP available.	One delivery site: Whitehorse Campus.	Approx. 300 students in 2012.	Designed to provide music training and education for students interested in developing skills in contemporary music	VTAC	No explicit equity objective indicated by BHI. Class sizes often small and intimate. Course costs are very high.
Case Study 5 Bachelor of Applied Management Started 2009	University of Ballarat (UB) Dual-sector university (TAFE and University)	1 year FT, (PT equiv.) Single 'capstone' year with credit counted from completed VET-sector Diploma & Advanced Diploma and 1200 hrs of management-oriented work experience. AQF level 7; Registered with TEQSA, but self-accrediting.	***Total for one year:*** $9,792 ***Consists of:*** Six units at $1,224 and one unit at $2,448 CSP (Note CSP income per student is divided between UB and the partner organisation, with the partner receiving about two thirds of the funds).	Twelve delivery sites: ***3 at UB:*** • Mt Helen Campus, • off-shore (Malaysia & Singapore) ***9 TAFEs:*** *6 in Victoria:* • Kangan Institute • Wodonga TAFE • AdvanceTAFE Bairnsdale • GippsTAFE Traralgon • GOTAFE Shepparton • BRITAFE Bendigo *3 in New South Wales* • South-Western Institute • Western Institute • Western Sydney Institute	Approx. 100 students at Australian sites, and 100 students off-shore.	Designed for those with substantial work experience and career success who have little or no experience in higher education (or even secondary ed.). Attractive to individuals not inclined to undertake 'traditional' university programs, but a HE qualification that gives them substantial credit.	Students who have completed TAFE diploma and 1200 hours in the workplace.	Although the program was not designed with an explicit equity agenda, it was created for a type of student who may have felt that university was 'not for them.'

6| Case 1: Associate Degree in Business (Sydney Inst. of Business & Technology)[31]

6.1 *Institution details*

The Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT) is a private provider of higher education (HE) offering a range of mainly Certificate IV and Diploma level courses. SIBT is part of Navitas, an Australian private educational provider business. Its 2012 annual report indicates that its educational services are delivered via more than 100 colleges and campuses, including 13 sites in North America, three in Asia, two in Africa, 22 in Europe, 12 in the UK, 11 in Australia and one in New Zealand. In Australia, Navitas institutions cater to a predominantly international student market. The annual report claims that Navitas is the largest private provider of English language training courses in Australia, offering courses from basic tuition to teacher training. It employs over 1000 staff and delivers programs to more than 25,000 students each year. According to its website, Navitas provides 'educational services and learning solutions'. These educational programs are offered by 'members of the Navitas group' (e.g. SIBT) and include:

> English language training, high school, university preparation, university programs, career advancement programs and migrant settlement services to students, professionals and migrants from all over the world in campuses located in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.[32]

In its financial report Navitas (2012) states that in the 2012 financial year it had an operating revenue of almost 700 million dollars, of which just over 190 million went to external and service costs. The remaining almost 500 million is referred to as 'total wealth distributed', including almost 130 million in the form of 'payments to university and consortia partners', almost 150 million as 'payments to teaching and academic staff', and 73 million to shareholders (2012: 23).

Navitas has a series of divisions, including a University Partnerships division, an English Language division, a division that delivers media technology, a workforce division, and a student recruitment division. SIBT is part of the University Partnerships division. According to its annual report (Navitas 2012: 29) the University Partnerships division covers 'pre-university', 'managed campus' and university pathway programs. In the 2012 financial year this division offered certificate, diploma, associate degree, bachelor and masters programs. These were offered to 'more than 18,500 students in 30 colleges and managed campuses across Australia, Singapore, the UK, USA, Canada, Sri Lanka and Kenya' (2012: 29). This distinction between colleges and managed campuses can be seen in Australia in the difference between its Institutes of Business and Technology (IBTs), such as SIBT, and colleges that offer diplomas, such as those offered through Newcastle International College or Curtin College. How these 'members' are constituted and how these partnerships operate are hard to determine.

Navitas' partnership arrangements with universities across the world include; the UK (6), Canada (2), USA (5), Singapore (1) and Australia (10). University partnerships in Australia include links with LaTrobe, Curtin (Perth and Sydney), Deakin, Macquarie, Edith Cowan,

[31] This case study is based on analysis of publically available documents and on an interview with the SIBT College Principal. NB: QIBT was initially approached to be a case study in this research but declined. Both SIBT and QIBT are owned by Navitas

[32] http://www.navitas.com/corporate.htm

Griffith, the University of South Australia, Adelaide University and the University of Newcastle. When it comes to the various IBTs, the course offerings differ. For example, Deakin has been in partnership with Melbourne Institute of Business and Technology (MIBT) since 1996. MIBT, based at three of Deakin's four campuses (Burwood and two Geelong campuses), is promoted as offering alternative entry to Deakin for 'people who have not completed year 12 at an Australian school'. MIBT offers a certificate course, which may qualify students for first-year entry to university, and diploma courses that can enable 'entry to undergraduate studies at Deakin in second year' through regular application processes (Deakin University 2013e). In contrast, Queensland Institute of Business and Technology (QIBT) is affiliated with three universities: Central Queensland University, James Cook University and Griffith University, and is located on the Mt Gravatt and Gold Coast campuses of Griffith University. Perth Institute of Business and Technology (PIBT) is located on a campus at Edith Cowan University while the South Australian Institute of Business and Technology (SAIBT) is at a campus of the University of South Australia. While all IBTs offer diplomas and credit transfers into Bachelor degrees at their partner universities, three of these institutes – QIBT, SAIBT and SIBT – also offer Associate Degrees. QIBT offers an Associate Degree in Commerce and Business, SAIBT offers an Associate Degree in Management, and SIBT offers an Associate Degree in Business.

SIBT offers students an alternative pathway into undergraduate degree courses at Macquarie University (its partner institution). In the main, a SIBT diploma course can count as credit for the first year of a bachelor degree course at Macquarie University and these pathways have been mapped in a number of areas, including: commerce, accounting, media and a series of engineering pathways. As an example, the Diploma of Commerce (with a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 1.5) gives entry to the second year of the Bachelor of Commerce. The main Macquarie University campus is located in North Ryde, Sydney. There is also a central CBD location situated in York Street, Sydney. SIBT operates on both campuses.

6.2 *Course details*

The Associate Degree in Business (ADB) is a two-year course taught at the North Ryde campus of Macquarie University. According to the College Principal, SIBT provides graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary to work in a business environment. The course is tailored towards students who seek employment in large and small businesses but also to those seeking entry into the Bachelor of Business Administration at Macquarie University. The Bachelor of Business Administration currently has a GPA of 2.0. The SIBT course was designed for students who initially did not meet Macquarie University entry requirements. As the College Principal explained:

> It was designed for students who, you know, we were going to have – the university was going to have to reject because they didn't meet the entry requirement, and we thought that it would be better for them to be able to be given a higher qualification, rather than a diploma that they could get an associate degree for this particular course.

Specific prerequisite entry requirements for the Bachelor of Business Administration at Macquarie University require substantial knowledge of mathematics (Higher School Certificate (HSC) General Mathematics or international equivalent). The entry-level Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) is 85.00. There are also English language requirements.

These are satisfied if students have completed senior secondary studies equivalent to the NSW HSC and/or one year of Australian or comparable tertiary study.[33]

The ADB may only be undertaken by students enrolled on a full-time basis. The course has been operating since 2011. According to the College Principal, the number of students studying the course is not more than 20 in any one year. Since ADB's inception, student numbers have generally stayed constant. A major reason for this is that the ADB has been designed for a limited number of students.

The course consists of 16 units completed over the two years. Table 6.1 below outlines the core and elective units that make up the ADB.

Table 6.1: Course structure, Associate Degree in Business (SIBT)

Year One Units	*Year Two Units*
Core Units	
Academic Communication Business and Economics	Fundamentals of Management Accounting
Accounting 1A and Accounting 1B **or** Accounting Information for Decision Making	Introduction to International Business
Techniques and Elements of Finance	Business Law
Principles of Management	
Microeconomics Principles	
Introduction to Human Resources	
Elective units	
Organisational Behaviour	Business Models and Organisation Structure
Macroeconomic Principles	Financial Management
IT and Society	Human Resource Learning and Development
Introduction to Business Information Systems	Consumer Behaviours
Marketing Fundamentals (core and elective)	Marketing Research
Introductory Statistics (core and elective)	

Source: SIBT website[34]

Upon graduation from the ADB, and with a minimum Grade Point Average of 2.0, students can enter into the third year of the Bachelor of Business Administration. However, according to the College Principal, the majority of students do not successfully enter this program. She explained that 'because they've come in at a low base, they don't actually reach the GPA'.

Students undertaking the ADB must pay full upfront tuition fees. The total cost over the two years varies depending on citizenship status (i.e. international or Australian students). Fees are outlined in Table 6.2 below. There are fourteen year-one units (courses of study) priced at $3,000 per unit for international students and $2,490 per unit for Australian students. In second year, nine units of study are offered priced at $3,000 per unit for international students and $2,590 per unit for Australian students. Thus international and Australian student fees over the two years total $99,840 and $82,880 respectively.

[33] http://courses.mq.edu.au/international/undergraduate/degree/bachelor-of-business-administration
[34] http://www.sibt.nsw.edu.au/images/PDF/SIBT_Associate%20deggree_WEB.pdf

Table 6.2: Student costs, Associate Degree in Business (SIBT)

Year	International	Australian
2012	A$48 000 (A$3 000 per unit)	A$39 840 (A$2 490 per unit)
2013	A$49 920 (A$3 120 per unit)	A$41 440 (A$2 590 per unit)

Source: SIBT website

SIBT staff are grouped in 'teams': Executive, Academic, Marketing, Admissions, Student Services, Student Administration, Finance, Administration, IT, Quality and Compliance. There are 18 listed staff at SIBT as per the institutional website. Staff profiles include:

- A College Principal
- Five listed academic positions variously termed Academic Co-Ordinators
- Seven administration positions
- Four finance positions
- Two IT positions
- Six marketing positions
- Five admissions positions
- Two quality and compliance positions
- Three student support positions.

Academic staff qualifications are at a minimum masters level with some also holding doctor of philosophy (PhD) degrees. According to the college principal, all of the staff working on the ADB have been associated with SIBT in one form or another for several years. SIBT has quite a stable staff base to draw upon (both sessional and ongoing staff members). Some staff are employed by SIBT directly. However, SIBT also employs Macquarie University staff in the delivery of the ADB.

6.3 *Community and industry relations*

SIBT's community includes students and staff as well as Macquarie University and the broader north Sydney community. There is not a clear sense of the course meeting specific local industry needs because, as the College Principal explained, students in the ADB do not tend to exit into industry. Rather SIBT students tend to look for a pathway into university (albeit a goal that few reach). According to the College Principal, student perceptions of the course are positive.

The distinction between SIBT and Macquarie University is not always clear. When asked about community relations, the College Principal commented, 'we call the university the community'. On this point, the ADB seems directly related to the institutional aims of the university. As the College Principal explained, the ADB was designed to facilitate subsequent entry into a Macquarie University degree program:

> …it was, in fact, their [Macquarie University's] suggestion that if we were bringing students in to study – international students to study overseas – and if they couldn't meet the GPA hurdle we didn't want to send them home, you know, without having helped them, so that was what gave rise to the establishment of the Associate Degree program.

Thus, the ADB was designed to cater for a consistent but small number of mainly international students coming out of the SIBT Diploma of Business who do not originally meet fixed GPA hurdles for the Macquarie University Bachelor of Business Administration. Nevertheless, the College Principal was explicit about positioning the program as a University level course, particularly in terms of curriculum content and pedagogy, and believed that the students also viewed the course in this way. As the College Principal remarked:

> It's exactly the same. So in terms of the curriculum and the content it's exactly the same as the curriculum content that's offered at the university.…Because for those that are successful, the idea is that if they want to go in to complete their third year of university, they can, so they have to make sure that they're up-skilled to enter third year.

Broader community and industry relations/perceptions of the ADB are not as easy to determine. SIBT does not collect specific information relating to these. When asked about employer perceptions, the College Principal stated: 'No, we haven't looked at any of that', although she did acknowledge that 'in the wider community we also know that in certain countries an associate degree has a degree of respectability'.

6.4 *Student enrolment, origins and destinations*

Both domestic and international students enrol at SIBT. The SIBT website states that 3,200 Australian and international students study at SIBT. Specific student demographic information is not publicly available and SBIT did not make this information available to the research team. However, SIBT makes much of the internationality of the student population, highlighting the opportunities available for students to establish links with fellow students from all over the world. For example, on the website under the heading 'students', there are profiles of five student alumni, including students from Australia, Saudi Arabia, Cambodia and Myanmar.

The College Principle explained that students in the ADB are 'mainly international'. Local students are also part of the ADB cohort but do not make up a significant proportion of the student numbers. Students applying for entry into an SIBT program make direct application. Typically, the majority of local students who enrol into the ADB are straight from secondary school or equivalent. A small number of these students possess a VET background but exact numbers were not supplied.

While SIBT did not provide specific details on outcomes, the annual report claims that students within the University Partnership division of Navitas 'performed as well as international students who had gained direct entry to university' (Navitas 2012:29). In other measures garnered from 'annual academic tracer studies and benchmarking' it is claimed that the overall quality of teaching is rated at 96%. It is further revealed that Navitas runs a student satisfaction survey and that 95% of respondents rated teaching, learning environment and customer service as 'excellent', 'good' or 'satisfactory'.

However, student retention and success rates in SIBT's ADB were not made available. The College Principal acknowledged that a proportion do not finish the ADB. As previously mentioned, she noted that not many students have come out of the program with a GPA that enables access into the Bachelor of Business Administration. She said:

> I suspect most of them would go into either employment or into another course, because what we've done is we have set a GPA requirement out of the associate degree to go into the third year of a degree at Macquarie, but we haven't had many who have met the GPA.

In summary, not a lot of data are available about SIBT student enrolment, origins and destinations. It would appear that these data are not collected in a systematic way by SIBT. What is collected and available suggests that this mainly international student cohort is small and that the obstacles to success are significant. As the College Principal commented:

> Because they haven't met the GPA to go from first year into second year, we've actually raised the bar from second year into third year. So it's really – so it's really giving the students who, you know, as some do in first year, they just sort of miss the mark, it takes them a year to get their act together and to understand what tertiary involvement requires. And so, for a handful, they actually realise what needs to be done and they can raise, you know, they can really bring their grades up, and then they can complete the degree.

However, currently the majority do not make this transition.

Data on disadvantaged learner participation and completions in the ADB sourced directly from DIICCSRTE (see Tables 6.3 and 6.4) indicate that the ADB has not been catering to equity groups, with some participation by females and none by other equity groups. Participation rates are too small for useful comparisons to be drawn with completion rates.

Table 6.3: Student enrolments, Associate Degree in Business (SIBT)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	0	0	0	0	<5	<5
Low SES	0	0	0	0	0	0
NESB	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regional	0	0	0	0	0	0
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0	0	0	0	0	<5
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**<5**	**17**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

Table 6.4: Award completions, Associate Degree in Business (SIBT)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	0	0	0	0	0	<5
Low SES	0	0	0	0	0	0
NESB	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regional	0	0	0	0	0	0
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0	0	0	0	0	<5
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**6**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

6.5 *Support and Implications for disadvantaged learners*

Navitas's 2012 annual report makes no reference to equity. Rather, students are positioned as consumers. As the Chief Executive Officer describes:

> With the number of global tertiary enrolments and globally mobile students set to keep increasing due to demographic and economic drivers, I believe Navitas remains well positioned to realise significant growth opportunities from the growing demand for high quality education (2012: 16).

While the College Principal referred to the ADB as an 'equity opportunity' in that it is as 'a recognised qualification in certain parts of Asia' that provides an alternative pathway into university, this opportunity is rarely realised. As noted above, ADB students tend to be low achieving and rarely manage to raise their GPA sufficiently to gain entry into the Macquarie University Bachelor of Business Administration.

In terms of specific support to assist students with their study, SIBT claims to offer its students the same services that all Macquarie University students access: 'All the facilities at the university … the way Macquarie operates here is they regard any of our students as their students … they've got access to everything' (College Principal). Given their access to Macquarie University services, SIBT students have access to the following: disability support, academic support, learning support and classroom facilities. These are outlined on the student services website, providing a general indication of SIBT's commitment to supporting students, promoting 'strategies to develop a flexible teaching and learning environment which is able to meet the needs of a diverse range of students', and to helping them 'achieve their academic potential while also developing personally and maintaining a balanced lifestyle'.

This support includes academic and welfare guidance, such as workshops run by academic advisors in skill areas essential to university studies, including time management, goal setting, essay preparation, examination techniques, stress and relaxation. Support is also available in terms of literacy and numeracy skills. ADB students are offered individual advice on interpreting essay and assignment questions, exam strategies, academic English language and effective study techniques. Numeracy support is also available, such as individual assistance with statistics and mathematics through the Numeracy centre. With

respect to content questions, SIBT lecturers are available for individual consultations and students are encouraged to contact their lecturer to make an appointment.

The ADB learning environment is also framed as providing support for learners. Small class sizes (no more than 20 at any one time) appear a particularly strong 'selling point' with respect to the specific support provided by SIBT to its students, suggesting a level of individual attention. To further enhance the students' learning experience, all SIBT lecture rooms contain audio-visual equipment, allowing lecturers to deliver course content using interactive technologies including video, audio, DVD and visual presentations. There are also computer facilities available to students. SIBT students have access to six computer laboratories located within the SIBT building, including free use of over 200 computers, internet connection, printing facilities and access to online study material. Dedicated IT personnel are available to assist students. SIBT students are also encouraged to make use of the wireless internet available on campus. Again it is not clear whether these facilities are separate to the facilities offered by Macquarie University itself.

Finally, pastoral support is available to students upon entry to SIBT. This begins with orientation and enrolment. Orientation days are held each semester during the week prior to the commencement of classes. During orientation students are organised into small groups, each led by a mentor. Students attend an information session, design their own personal timetable, complete administrative tasks and join their group for a campus tour and a shared lunch.

Specific implications for disadvantaged learners at SIBT are difficult to determine. The College Principal mentioned none. The ADB at SIBT offers a pathway to further tertiary study, but at a significant financial cost to students. This in itself presents an equity issue. On the other hand, the ADB has been developed (albeit by a private provider and with the assistance and imprimatur of an Australian university) in order to provide an alternative way into HE study, particularly for students who do not meet specific GPA hurdle requirements. It could be argued that this is a 'real life' example of equity (if cost is no obstacle) in that students who may have missed out on a position at university can, after two years in the ADB and meeting certain requirements, proceed into the Bachelor of Business Administration at Macquarie University. This may be the case for a local student; indeed the SIBT College Principal certainly views the ADB in this way. But for the most part, the ADB is tailored for international students who may have missed out on their preferred university course.

7| Case 2: Associate Degree in Civil Engineering (Southbank Inst. of Technology)[35]

7.1 *Institution details*

Southbank Institute of Technology (SBIT) in Queensland is a public provider of vocational education and training (VET) and a private provider of higher education (HE), and one of the largest of the 13 institutes within TAFE Queensland[36]. It is located within a popular tourist area, Southbank, on the banks of the Brisbane River and close to the Brisbane CBD.

SBIT can be characterised as a diverse, high-level qualification campus, providing pathways into local Brisbane-based universities. It offers 114 courses in 12 schools including: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies; Business; Community Service and Education; Creative Arts; Engineering and Architecture; English Language and Migrant Services; IT, Media and Design; Nursing; Physical Health and Wellbeing; Professional Studies; Science and Dentistry; and Tourism and Hospitality (SBIT 2012). The courses are weighted towards 'higher qualification levels', in line with initial justifications for the formation of SBIT as a statutory body (see below). The courses are strongly linked to industry and include a high proportion of students enrolled in programs above Certificate III level (14,577 students) (SBIT 2012). The Southbank campus has a large number of international students, although the international market has been affected by recent restrictions to visas and the strength of the Australian dollar. SBIT's annual report declares a commitment to equity in the form of 'making education accessible' and through references to specific processes and options for student support (SBIT 2012: 23).

SBIT, originally named the Southbank Institute of TAFE, was formed in 1993 from the amalgamation of six smaller Brisbane TAFEs (the smaller campuses have since been sold or removed from SBIT). In 2008, SBIT was established as a separate statutory body by the then Queensland Labour Government, based on reforms initiated by previous Premier Peter Beattie. This made it legislatively different from other TAFEs and meant that it answered directly to the Minister rather than to the Department. SBIT was formed as a part of a broader reorganisation of the Brisbane TAFE sector, located on the site of the previous Southbank TAFE, but with a significant investment of capital in the development of the campus.[37] Along with the renaming of the institution, SBIT was charged with responsibility for technological and high-level skills, training and education and providing a 'bridge between technical education and university' (Queensland Government 2006: 17). As one part of this refocus, SBIT was given responsibility for developing associate degrees, university pathways and articulation arrangements. Alongside these educational aims, SBIT was provided with greater scope to form links with industry and to shape its own direction in VET and HE markets, although with a range of restrictions related to work pay and conditions being attached to TAFE and public service awards.

[35] This case study is based on analysis of publically available documents and on an interview with the Program Director.
[36] http://www.tafe.qld.gov.au/
[37] This legislation will be repealed in July 2013 and SBIT reabsorbed into the newly formed Statutory Body, TAFE Queensland on the changeover day of 1 July 2013 (TAFE Queensland Regulation 2013, Subordinate Legislation 2013 No.109).

SBIT has an enrolment of 21,500 students (2013), including a relatively large international cohort (10%), and offers a wide range of qualifications. In line with other TAFEs in Queensland, SBIT has been subject to significant restructuring in recent years, including two separate forms of governance since 2008, with a third form imminent. As a result of the passing of the TAFE Queensland Act on 3rd June 2013, SBIT is in a transition arrangement as part of a broader reshaping of TAFE under the Newman Liberal-National State Government. This act involves the formation of TAFE Queensland as a separate, industry-led and commercially oriented statutory body with direct responsibility to the Minister, separated from the broader operations of the Department of Education in Queensland.

Following the passing of this Act, TAFE Queensland will become a controlling body for all TAFE institutes and campuses, employing TAFE personnel directly and separately from Department regulations. As a direct consequence of this Act, TAFEs such as SBIT will no longer act with the previous degree of autonomy from one another, but will be charged with carrying out service provision for the one entity, TAFE Queensland. This overall entity will be a commercially oriented, though not-for-profit, provider competing with private providers. This is a unique arrangement that is not mirrored in other Australian states or territories, in that it treats the State's collection of TAFEs as one commercially oriented entity, competing as a whole in the market place. In contrast, other states such as Victoria treat individual TAFE institutions as separate, commercially oriented entities, which as a result compete as much with each other as with private providers for students. Thus, although Queensland is consistent with other states in promoting a commercial and industry relevant TAFE, the commercial model that forms the basis for reform is strikingly different.

7.2 *Course details*

The course that forms the focus of this case study is the Associate Degree in Civil Engineering (ADCE). In Queensland, apart from SBIT, a civil engineering associate degree is only offered in universities and so has no direct comparison degrees within TAFE Queensland. Other civil engineering qualifications at associate degree level are offered at the University of Southern Queensland and Central Queensland University, with whom SBIT has established pathways for entry into their relevant bachelor degrees. At SBIT, the ADCE began as a diploma in the VET sector and was subsequently developed, adapted and registered in 2006 as an associate degree. From the outset, the course has been closely aligned with industry and there have been considerable efforts to negotiate pathways for students to enter degree courses in civil engineering in local universities.

The ADCE is offered on a two-year full-time basis or as a part-time course taken over four years. After one year, full-time students who have completed units in advanced computer-aided design (CAD) as one of the electives are eligible to receive a Diploma of Computer-aided Drafting. The Program Director explained the rationale for the original diploma and its continuing demand:

> I think the original diploma [is] a very unique program [and provides a unique] set of skills that [students] walk away with. It was a drafting course, a design drafting course, which morphed into an associate degree but kept the design drafting flavour. It's heavily computer-aided drafting and other computer drafting packages … so we fill a niche in the industry of para-professionals. There's usually four or five of those per engineer within a company or within a government department and yeah it's just been

> terrific. Because of the boost in infrastructure as well as the mining etc. and the growth of population in South East Queensland it's been a very busy place here for civil engineering in the last sort of 10 years or so and I think we've just fed that market.

The ADCE is offered on-campus at Southbank and attracts both domestic and international students. It is a full-fee paying course costing $29,000 (2013 rates) for the two years, with the option of Australian Government FEE-HELP once enrolled. At rates for semester 2, 2013, this equates to $1,812.50 per unit. The course is accredited by TEQSA and Engineers Australia, and graduates qualify for membership in the Engineering Associate category.[38]

In line with the initial rationale for the development of SBIT as a statutory body, the main markers of success for the course relate to industry, which most importantly include employment destinations of students within the industry but also direct feedback from employers and industry in relation to students within the course. In addition, the overall post-SBIT destination data are considered as part of the markers for success, including students taking university pathways.

As an associate degree, the course has run for seven-and-a-half years. One of the distinctive features of the course has been its focus on drafting, which makes it a unique option for students. According to the Program Director, anecdotal feedback and reported destination data suggest that it is equally and highly valued by local industry and government bodies that employ graduates. One of the major differences in the course structure and support offered by SBIT is related to the fact that the course does not have a minimum 'Overall Position' (OP)[39] entry score, and in 2013 accepted all qualified applicants through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC). The student cohort is partially selected by required subjects at school and is academically diverse in comparison to other university associate degree courses in civil engineering.[40] This translates into a greater need for academic support for students in the first year of the course, particularly in relation to mathematics. In contrast to the standard support offered to university students, emphasis is placed on the development of mathematical skills and knowledge. As the Program Director explained:

> In our first semester we spend quite a lot of time trying to get them up to speed. Our first semester maths course basically starts at grade eight algebra, holds their hand, they have five-and-a-half hours face-to-face contact with one person [per week], they usually have at least two hours over and above that where they can get extra help if they need, in a more traditional tutorial mode where there might be a lecturer in a room for an hour or two hours and five students may come in and say 'I can't do this'. But in the classroom generally the class numbers in maths are around 35 to 45 for five-and-a-half hours in a high school classroom type setting, never in a lecture theatre, never five-and-a-half hours.

In explaining the rationale for this intensive support, the Program Director commented that a major difference from similar degrees at university was that mathematics was not used as a surrogate selection device for the exclusion of students from further study. However, the commitment to providing considerable support for students created some concerns for

[38] http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/
[39] 'Overall Position' is the Queensland equivalent of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).
[40] As a comparison, entry to associate degrees in civil engineering at universities in Queensland start from OP19 / ATAR 63 at Central Queensland University (http://www.qtac.edu.au/).

stakeholders. There were problems in justifying this design to bodies like TEQSA because the design was unlike university courses, against which the course was compared. Hence, each time a new person was assigned to evaluate SBIT's course for re-accreditation, the justification for the support needed to be re-established as it did not correspond with the routine support levels at universities. In addition to external concerns, the same issue arose internal to the institution, when new Directors of Higher Education were employed and whose experience with support levels had been based on their experiences at universities.

Despite these ongoing battles to justify greater support levels, the Program Director was convinced of the ADCE's value. In interview, he noted high numbers of students in the course, high success rates throughout the course and positive feedback about the course from graduates and employers, in spite of the fact that the cost of an equivalent course to students at university would be about half the price (see Chapter 3). Ultimately the increasing numbers of students completing the course provided the warrant for internal support to the course, as this increase has occurred in spite of some instability in possible employment in local government councils, from whom funding had been reduced under the current state government.

This battle was important to the Program Director. As he explained, '(m)orally that's a wonderful thing to do but you have to fight TEQSA and Engineers Australia ... endlessly because your first year doesn't match the university standards, requirements etc.'. Nevertheless, the course has been accredited by Engineers Australia, indicating some degree of benchmarking in relation to other associate degree courses in engineering (mainly university courses). However the comparison is more difficult as it is a specialised course focussing primarily on CAD and drafting.

Within the ADCE there are seven full time staff employed and nine part-time or casual staff on either a fractional work-load or attached to a subject for two lessons a week, which involve intensive face-to-face work. The course is highly computer based, with typically 20 students in a room under instruction. Staff qualifications range from PhD, a few staff with masters degrees, and the remainder with bachelor degrees. The longest serving staff member has been teaching in the course for seven years, three have been in the course for five years and the remainder have been teaching for between two and three years. No staff members have carried over from the preceding diploma course.

The Program Director noted that there were some issues in attracting and retaining staff, related to the adoption of TAFE pay scales throughout SBIT. Though now a statutory body and with separate forms of governance from other TAFEs as a result, the pay scales are still in line with TAFE staff generally. For most courses in SBIT this is not an issue as they are TAFE courses. However the ADCE course is a HE course and so requires teaching staff with a minimum of a bachelor degree (AQF level 7). Staff from HE therefore must take a pay-cut to work in the course and in the case of staff previously employed at universities, this was a considerable pay-cut (to approximately $70,000 a year). In practice the effect of this has been that current staff are a blend of people retired from engineering practice but wanting to share their experience and teach, and others who work in the field and come in part-time to work at night with higher pay rates. The Program Director noted that this has been effective for the course in terms of stability of staff once recruited, as it has meant that no one was working in the course only for the money. However, this limits the attractiveness of working in the course when new staff are required.

7.3 *Community and industry relations*

According to the Program Director, feedback to staff and at career expos and open days highlighted that the general community was not aware of the distinction between TAFE courses and the ADCE, and held no informed opinion of the course, although it was suggested that students would regard the ADCE as a VET program. The Program Director claimed that employer perceptions were excellent, as illustrated by the number of students who work as cadets at companies or government bodies during the day and come to SBIT at night. This positive perception is also apparent through unsolicited feedback in the form of emails and phone calls from people employing SBIT graduates from the course.

The Program Director suggested a number of factors to which this could be attributed. The most important of these was the effort that staff in the program made to elicit feedback from companies and government bodies that employed their graduates and to include this feedback in decision-making about the course. One illustration of this approach is of the Program Director and the CAD teacher consulting with company managers about assessment items that were going to be used in the course, in order to ensure that the assessment task was aligned with current practices. Another more formal illustration of this approach is regular program advisory committee meetings that include local universities and industry representatives, in which the entire program was discussed. These were two of a wide range of ways that staff in the program interacted with industry. Though not all feedback and suggestions would be acted upon in relation to course design, the act of including industry in these discussions was viewed as important to positive employer perceptions. The Program Director believed that within SBIT, the ADCE was considered to have the closest and most beneficial industry links of all courses offered.

When discussing prospective students' perceptions of the course, the Program Director indicated that they initially mirrored community perspectives. In the main students thought that the ADCE was a VET course because it was offered at SBIT and not a named 'university'. The Program Director thought that students believed they would spend 'lots of time playing on a computer and designing or drawing up drawings on a computer'. On the other hand, prospective students are excited about the course:

> … but they don't think they're going to have to work really very hard and when I do this I can go to university whereas in fact by the time they hit second year this is a university course well and truly, it's not a TAFE course so their perceptions are a little bit out of line with the reality that they're going to be hit with.

The resources that are used by the course include rooms and computer labs within the Institute and two specialised engineering labs, one located at a nearby campus of the Queensland University of Technology and another at a private company for geoscience work involving tensile testing, compression testing of concrete and slump testing. As the emphasis of the course is on drafting, approximately half of the 17 subjects involve the use of computers with specialised software packages. To cover surveying subjects, the course has a set of surveying stations and uses a nearby park 'nine or 10 times for three hours during the course of the program to do a variety of prop surveying exercises'. To cover other aspects, SBIT has recently purchased equipment such as channel flow apparatus for looking at suspension bridges loads, portal frames, beams and loads and bending moments.

7.4 *Student enrolment, origins and destinations*

The ADCE currently has approximately 450 enrolled students, the majority of whom study full-time. Numbers in the course have increased significantly over time, with a steady increase in enrolments until around 2009 and then from 2009 there has been an increase of 10-15% in student numbers per semester. The course has been one of SBIT's success stories and is featured in its public promotion material. The Program Director estimated that 40% of the students come directly from high school, 20% via industry, 15% from overseas and 15% mature entry. The final 10% come from the VET sector. Following completion of the ADCE, the Program Director estimated that on average 80% find employment in the industry immediately doing design work, 15% move onto university to undertake degree studies and 5% go onto destinations unrelated to the industry or further studies. The course has negotiated pathways into engineering courses at Queensland University of Technology, Central Queensland University and the University of Southern Queensland.

In terms of participation by disadvantaged learners in the ADCE, DIICCSRTE figures (Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3) indicate that SBIT is contributing to HE equity participation and expansion targets, although completion rates for equity groups are poor.

Table 7.1: Student enrolments, Associate Degree in Civil Engineering (SBIT)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	0	0	0	0	55	43
Low SES	0	0	0	0	62	70
NESB	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	<5	<5
Regional	0	0	0	0	16	14
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0	0	0	0	55	43
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**366**	**401**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

Table 7.2: Student enrolments, Associate Degree in Civil Engineering (SBIT), per centages

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	0	0	0	0	15.0%	10.7%
Low SES	0	0	0	0	16.9%	17.5%
NESB	0	0	0	0	-	-
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	-	-
Regional	0	0	0	0	4.4%	3.5%
Remote	0	0	0	0	-	-
Disability	0	0	0	0	-	-
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0	0	0	0	15.0%	10.7%

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

Table 7.3: Award completions, Associate Degree in Civil Engineering (SBIT)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low SES	0	0	0	0	0	<5
NESB	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regional	0	0	0	0	0	<5
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**8**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

7.5 *Support and implications for disadvantaged learners*

As an institution, SBIT reports broadly on support for disadvantaged learners and there are two major categories that it draws explicit attention to in this reporting, including support for students with disabilities and fee-support for low-income students. SBIT draws attention to the goal of 'eliminating barriers that cause under-representation'. Support includes student support and counselling teams for students with disabilities, with 2047 disability support appointments in 2011-2012; an increase of 20% from the previous year. This also implies a positive perception of SBIT students with disabilities and in particular for students with greater needs. SBIT also offers FEE-HELP and VET FEE-HELP services to allow entry to courses. Other disadvantaged learners are not directly identified in official SBIT reporting.

In relation to the ADCE, the Program Director made explicit comment about support for, and the needs of, students with physical disability, auditory processing disorders and other learning and behavioural disabilities such as Asperger, and estimated that 5-10% of students in the course had educational support needs. The Program Director also noted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students, although he was not sure about the numbers. In terms of other populations, the course has approximately 15% international students and 15% students are female. (The Program Director specifically noted this due to continuing concern about the numbers of women in engineering.)

The course currently provides one scholarship for students and encourages people to enrol through career expos and high school visits. Close links to industry partners provide other encouragements for students to enrol in the course. The Program Director noted that one of the biggest encouragements to enrol in the course came from the employment opportunities in civil engineering and the high likelihood of employment after completing the course.

In sum, there appears to be substantial academic support for students and acknowledgement by the Program Director of the needs of different equity groups. There is a sense of representational justice in the practices within the course. There is also an emphasis on the demands on students in relation to mathematics in particular and support structures for the development of skills and capacities in mathematics are comprehensive. However, there is a high financial cost that may be a disincentive to students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, although growth in numbers highlights the value that students place on the course.

8| Case 3: Associate Degree in Arts, Business and Sciences (Deakin University)[41]

8.1 *Institution details*

Located in Victoria, Deakin University offers courses at AQF levels 6-10 and operates at four campuses: Geelong Waurn Ponds, Burwood, Warrnambool and Geelong Waterfront. Since 2011, Deakin's annual student enrolment has exceeded 40,000, including nearly 10,000 students studying off-campus, over 7,000 international students and 10,000 students enrolled in postgraduate programs.

The Associate Degree of Arts, Business and Sciences (ADABS) was initiated within the 'Deakin at Your Doorstep' (DAYD) project, funded from 2010 by an $8.2 million grant from the Australian Government's Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund. The University's application for funding recorded Deakin's intent for DAYD to create a pathway 'no other Victorian university is providing', specifically a 'new model of University/TAFE partnership' (Walker 2008: 3).

The ADABS was first offered in 2010. Its curriculum draws from the disciplines of Arts, Education, Business, Life and Aquatic Sciences, and Health. From its beginnings the ADABS has been delivered both on-campus and at Technical and Further Education institute (TAFEs) partner sites. In 2010 the ADABS was delivered at Deakin's Warrnambool campus and at TAFE partner sites: Chisholm Institute (Dandenong), Sunraysia TAFE (Swan Hill) and Advance TAFE (Bairnsdale). In 2011, Deakin's partners expanded to include GO TAFE (Wangaratta) and South West TAFE (Portland), and the partnership with Chisholm Institute extended to its Mornington Peninsula campus. In 2012, the ADABS was also made available at Deakin's Waurn Ponds campus and a partnership began with the Kangan Institute at the Hume Global Learning Centre. In each partnership, Deakin University funds the building of teaching spaces and the employment of part-time staff (known as tutorial support officers; TSOs) at the partner sites.

The ADABS is the only Associate Degree offered at Deakin University, although there is an Associate Degree of Management offered through Deakin's corporate arm – DeakinPrime.

8.2 *Course details*

The ADABS is a two-year full time (or part-time equivalent) program, framed as a supported pathway to a series of Bachelor programs offered at Deakin. It can also be a stand-alone, two-year exit qualification. It is a 'course that introduces school leavers and non-school leavers to university study in a supported tertiary environment', providing 'students in rural and regional areas greater access to higher education [HE] and the opportunity to study close to home' (Deakin University 2013a).

The ADABS is distinct at Deakin University because it is currently targeted at a domestic market. In addition, it provides a guaranteed pathway into a Bachelor degree program (upon successful completion of the ADABS), and offers commonwealth-supported places (CSPs). The course involves the simultaneous study of target degree bachelor level units combined with core units from the ADABS for students studying at the Warrnambool and Waurn Ponds

[41] This case study is based on analysis of publically available documents and on interviews with three staff members associated with the program: an administrator, the project coordinator and a lecturer. The case study was written by a Deakin staff member who teaches in the program.

campuses, and simultaneous study of ADABS core units at AQF level 6 in the first year, with diploma subjects at the TAFE sites. In the second year, TAFE-based students study their diploma in conjunction with units at AQF level 7. This is different to other degrees in that the pathway into university includes simultaneous study of university-level units with diplomas and AQF level 6 units. Combined with its cross-disciplinary nature, this means that the course sits awkwardly with AQF requirements. It is also unique on a national scale in that it is a preparatory program that transitions students into multiple disciplines.

While places in the ADABS are funded by the Australian Government, so that students are able to access HECS-HELP to pay their university tuition fees, students on TAFE sites are able to access FEE HELP for their diploma studies. The indicative annual fee for ADABS students in 2013 is $6,590, although this is the estimated cost for Warrnambool and Waurn Ponds students. Costs for TAFE-based students vary due to diploma costs (Deakin University 2013d). The overall cost of the ADABS is therefore $13,180, with variation for the TAFE-based students based upon their diploma costs (see also Chapter 3).

As discussed above, the ADABS is comprised of a combination of core and 'elective' units for students at Deakin campuses, and core and elective units in conjunction with a diploma for TAFE-based students. Elective units are core units in the chosen target degree. Table 8.1 outlines the course structure.

Table 8.1: Course structure, Associate Degree in Arts, Business, Sciences (DU)

		Students at Deakin campuses	**TAFE-based students**
Year One	**Tri 1**	***Core units*** Learning for a knowledge society E-literacy for contemporary learning ***Elective Units (2)***	***Core units*** Learning for a knowledge society E-literacy for contemporary learning and TAFE diploma units
	Tri 2	***Core units*** Work and the sustainable society (2 credit points) ***Elective Units (2)***	***Core units*** Work and the sustainable society (2 credit points) and TAFE diploma units
Year Two	**Tri 1 and Tri 2**	***Elective Units*** 8 first or second year level units of a target bachelor degree	***Elective Units*** Between 1 – 4 first or second year level units from a target bachelor degree and TAFE diploma units

Source: adapted from Deakin University 2013b

Students must complete 16 credit points comprised of four credit points from core units, 12 credit points from elective units and credit given for diploma qualifications.

Table 8.2 below outlines what students must successfully complete.

Table 8.2: Course rules, Associate Degree in Arts, Business, Sciences (DU)

Students at Deakin campuses	TAFE-based students
1. Four credit points of core units in year 1, Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 2. Four credit points of elective units in year 1 (chosen from an approved selection of units offered at the Warrnambool Campus or the Geelong Waurn Ponds Campus) 3. At least four credit points at level one from their target degree, and 4. No more than four credit points at level two from their target degree.	1. Four credit points of core units in year 1, Trimester 1 and Trimester 2 2. A minimum of one and maximum of four credit points in year 2 from an approved selection of units. The number depends on the TAFE diploma being undertaken as they have differing credit arrangements. 3. The remaining credit points (of the total 16) are deemed to be the equivalent of the TAFE Diploma and credited to the ADABS.

Source: Deakin University 2013b

In addition to the core units, in the first year TAFE-based students do their diploma units, while Deakin campus-based students complete electives. In the second year TAFE-based students transition into what is referred to as 'supported off-campus mode' (Deakin University 2013d: 3). TAFE-based students select from online units but support continues through the TSOs and includes the ability to meet with them and peers regularly, and to access the TAFE library, computers and teaching spaces. Thus Warrnambool and Waurn Ponds students engage in an integrated supported pathway – undertaking units from their target degree at the same time as doing core ADABS units. However, TAFE-based students engage in more of a linear supported pathway – completing the core units prior to engagement with units from their target degree.

While students can target other bachelor programs, the Bachelor Degree pathways that have been mapped are into Arts, Commerce, Management, Education (Primary), Nursing, Health Sciences, Psychology, Environmental Science, and Fisheries and Aquaculture. The credit transfer arrangements differ depending upon the faculty. For example, the agreed credit transfer ranges from up to seven into the Bachelor of Environmental Science, to up to 16 into the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education. At graduation, the title of the award that students receive depends on the degree students have studied. For example, a student transitioning into a Bachelor of Arts will graduate with an ADABS (Arts Studies) and a student transitioning into a Bachelor of Management or a Bachelor of Commerce will graduate with an ADABS in Business Studies.

Students enrolled in the ADABS can select from a range of target degrees. However, these choices are not available at all TAFE sites. The diplomas and pathways available through each TAFE site can be seen in Table 8.3 below.

Table 8.3: Available Diplomas linking to target degrees, by TAFE campus

TAFE Diploma	Campus	Target Degree
Advanced Diploma of Information Tech. (Software Development)	Dandenong	Bachelor of IT
Diploma of Accounting	Bairnsdale, Swan Hill and Wangaratta Dandenong (ceased in 2011, now with La Trobe University) Portland (ceased 2012)	Bachelor of Commerce Bachelor of Management Bachelor of Arts
Diploma of Business	Bairnsdale	Bachelor of Commerce Bachelor of Management Bachelor of Arts
Diploma of Business Administration	Bairnsdale (ceased 2013)	Bachelor of Commerce Bachelor of Management Bachelor of Arts
Diploma of Children's Services	Bairnsdale, Dandenong, Swan Hill, Mornington Peninsula, Portland, Wangaratta	Bachelor of Education (Primary) Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Bachelor of Health Sciences Bachelor of Nursing Bachelor of Applied Science (Psych) Bachelor of Arts
Diploma of Community Services Work	Bairnsdale, Dandenong Wangaratta, Swan Hill	Bachelor of Health Sciences Bachelor of Psychology Bachelor of Arts
Diploma of Disability Work	Bairnsdale	Bachelor of Health Sciences Bachelor of Psychology Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Nursing
Diploma of Employment Services	Bairnsdale (ceased 2013)	Bachelor of Health Sciences Bachelor of Psychology Bachelor of Arts
Diploma of Graphic Design	Bairnsdale,(ceased 2013) Wangaratta	Bachelor of Creative Arts (Visual Communication Design)
Diploma of Human Resource Management	Bairnsdale	Bachelor of Commerce Bachelor of Management Bachelor of Arts
Diploma of Management	Bairnsdale, Swan Hill	Bachelor of Commerce Bachelor of Management Bachelor of Arts
Diploma of Visual Arts	Bairnsdale (ceased 2013)	Bachelor of Creative Arts (Visual)
Diploma of Conservation & Land Management	Mornington Peninsula, Portland, Wangaratta (all ceased in 2012)	Bachelor of Environmental Science (Marine or Freshwater Biology)

Source: Deakin University 2013b, updated in interview process

Students at TAFE sites can select from additional target degrees if they have an existing diploma.

Table 8.4 below provides an overview of the degrees that newly commencing ADABS students have identified as their target. Education has consistently been popular. The Faculty of Health, offering pathways into psychology, nursing, social work and health services, is also popular.

Table 8.4: Target degrees stated at enrolment

Target Degree (by Faculty)	2010	2011	2012	Total
Education	23	37	61	121
Arts	4	12	13	29
Sciences	1	17	13	31
Health	12	35	38	85
Business	23	29	8	60
Exit with Associate Degree/ Exit Early	1	0	1	2
Unclear/undecided	11	5	4	20
Total	**75**	**135**	**138**	**348**

Source: Adapted from Deakin University, School of Education, Associate Degree Advisory Board, Annual Course Review 2013.

Deakin's ADABS is limited to a domestic market, which was one of the requirements of the initial funding. This may change following the conclusion of the three-year funding cycle and the relocation of the program to within Deakin's School of Education.

The core units are designed to provide a generic and grounded introduction to university study. The assessment students encounter within the first year of the ADABS is intended to cover the range of tasks they are likely to encounter in Bachelor Degree units. However, the emphasis is not on stand-alone skills. Rather, these skills are grounded within the context of a range of disciplines such as Education and IT. As a lecturer in the program explained:

> I think universities have all of these hidden rules about how to be a successful student, and many students, not just Associate Degree students, don't have [the] 'cultural capital' to understand how to operate within those rules, even to understand what those rules are. Within the Associate Degree we explicitly teach those rules to the students.

Students in the ADABS are explicitly taught to navigate the particularities of Deakin's online learning management system, how to prepare for oral presentations and exams, how to write essays and reports, and how to participate effectively in groups. Assessment tasks are also included that support learning at a university level, such as: using databases and the library catalogue to find resources; reading and summarising academic chapters, books and articles; referencing; using collaborative online programs such as Google docs and e-live; and using specific programs such as Word, PPT and Excel. Thus the curriculum, assessment and pedagogy are deliberately explicit about supporting students in developing proficiency in skills and understanding needed to be successful at university.

Deakin staff within the ADABS include three lecturers, two based at Warrnambool and one at Waurn Ponds, with the support of some sessional staff. The lecturers all have PhDs. On TAFE sites, tutorials are delivered by local staff (often also employed by the TAFE in other capacities), referred to as 'tutorial support officers' (TSOs). These staff attend lectures and participate in face-to-face bi-annual planning intensives and video-conferenced fortnightly meetings. They are also responsible for marketing the program locally. The TSOs all hold Bachelor degrees and some have Masters. TSOs are a central source of academic information for current and prospective students. They provide advice on assessment, pedagogical leadership and support with language and expression, interpret lectures and the reading material, liaise with other staff, and support the students in becoming independent learners. Some of the TSOs have been newly appointed in 2013 as a direct result of staffing changes within TAFEs, due to funding cuts experienced in 2012.

8.3 *Community and industry relations*

There are multiple levels of community and industry relations associated with the ADABS: the Deakin community, the broader local communities across Victoria, and relations with industry and government. Initially concerns were voiced from within Deakin University around the ADABS. This manifested in some obstruction to unit and course approval, and discussion around the potential for students entering into the ADABS to succeed at the bachelor degree level. The project manager expanded on the kinds of concerns being voiced internally. He argued that part of this concern related to engagement with TAFE providers and the capacity of the students to succeed:

> They were certainly concerned about the students, and the students' capacity to achieve at a higher level if they were coming in from the TAFE system – coming in from a Diploma. And also because, that we weren't targeting students with an ATAR above 50, but those in that 40-50 bracket. I think there was some perception, within some circles, that why would we want to be picking up these students when they would only fail.

Internal concern about the ADABS was also articulated by the DAYD administrator. She stated that outside of the planning group the response was quite 'sceptical':

> We had early meetings with all the course advisers and all the people from the various schools and faculties around who very kindly and genuinely made – were concerned about what would happen to students; they weren't coming in at a particular level with a particular prerequisite – how would that affect them? Would they just fail – was this an unkindness?

In terms of relations with the TAFE partners, the project manager claimed the partnership was strong 'because we're not competing directly with the TAFEs'. The partnerships bring benefits to both the TAFEs and Deakin University, where the TAFEs receive resources such as teaching spaces, collaboration between services such as IT, and marketing potential, while Deakin benefits from the credibility within a community usually inaccessible. The project manager commented:

> We get the opportunity to be engaged in community where traditionally universities haven't had a presence … the TAFEs are the major provider in a majority of the locations that we operate. So, their credibility as a provider of education is something

> that we get to piggy back … but also they're intricately involved in the communities, through their staff, who are involved in netball and football, and community groups. So, all of those spin offs come into Deakin, if we do it right.

In terms of relationships with local industry, the ADABS is essentially a preparatory program for university degrees rather than preparation for the workplace. As a result, the relationship with industry is more connected with the bachelor degrees into which the students transition. While the opportunity to study locally is the main focus in media/online representation within the TAFEs, connections are also made to meet local skill shortages.

These political and contextual issues have broader impact on the delivery of programs like the ADABS. The initial funding was a response to a federal agenda for increasing the number of students engaged in HE. In addition, there was also a state government agenda to increase partnerships between TAFEs, private providers and universities. As the ADABS administrator outlined:

> The $8 million came from the structural adjustment funding which was about services for rural and regional Australia and this obviously was a way of providing located learning, and doing that in an innovative way without building university campuses or semi-campuses on other sites, so it's responded very much to the federal agenda in that way, and also the federal agenda for the transforming education which is about the numbers of students who will have university qualifications by 2020 and all of that which can't happen – was never going to happen using exactly the same recruitment strategies, exactly the same things as we'd always done … State-wide it certainly, to the thing about government wanting higher education partnerships with TAFEs and private providers and universities; so having that more seamless transition through, and we've certainly done that so I think we've actually been in a bit of a policy kind of nirvana – I don't know if the government changes whether we'll continue to be in that.

8.4 *Student enrolment, origins and destinations*

The ADABS is aimed at school leavers and mature-age students without the necessary pre-requisites into their bachelor degree course of choice. As a result, the entry requirements for the ADABS differ from bachelor degree programs. The program has no subject prerequisites and there is no requirement of a particular Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). The application process involves a direct application form, a personal statement, and attendance at an information session where a literacy exercise is completed. While most students who apply are offered a place within the program, there are students who are not made an offer as a result of an assessment of their application and of their interview.

Over the four years of the ADABS, over 400 students have moved, or are moving, through the first year. In 2010 there were 75 students over the initial four sites. In 2011, with three additional sites, the numbers of first year students increased to 135, with 46 students continuing from 2010. In 2012, with an additional university campus, there were 135 commencing students and 85 returning, and 2013 began with 94 students, with 97 returning.

See Table 8.5 below for an overview of these numbers.

Table 8.5: Commencing students, Associate Degree in Arts, Business, Sciences, by year

	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTALS
Warrnambool (Deakin Campus)	34	52	38	41	165
Dandenong (Chisholm Institute)	11	10	10	2	33
Swan Hill (Sunraysia TAFE)	6	14	6	1	27
Bairnsdale (Advance TAFE)	24	20	8	11	63
Mornington Peninsula (Chisholm Institute)		20	13	3	36
Portland (South West TAFE)		6	9	4	19
Wangaratta (GOTAFE)		13	8	1	22
Waurn Ponds (Deakin Campus)			46	31	77
TOTALS	**75**	**135**	**138**	**94**	**442**

Source: Adapted from Deakin University, School of Education, Associate Degree Advisory Board, Annual Course Review 2013

There are a few things to note in these data. First, the rate of return of the students is not entirely accurate. Students targeting education and nursing as their bachelor degree option, transition into these bachelor degree programs at the end of the first year due to course requirements relating to practical placements – students who are to complete work-place practical components need to be enrolled in the degree. In 2010, there were around 28 students intending to take these pathways. In 2011, over 40 students across all sites were targeting into nursing or education. From 2012, the education students remain in the ADABS, but the number of students transitioning into nursing was around 20. Thus the above numbers of returning students is not reflective of the whole.

Second, a distinct drop in TAFE-based enrolments can be seen in both 2012 and 2013. The 2012 drop is attributed to a state-wide trend of a reduction in TAFE enrolments due to increased competition from universities, increased TAFE fees, and a linear progression model which removes state government funding for students who have already completed a qualification at the same AQF level. The drop in 2012 is additionally thought to be a result of the funding cuts to TAFEs in 2012, which have affected the delivery of TAFE diplomas. Some diplomas are no longer offered (for example, the Diploma of Accounting is no longer available at South West TAFE Portland campus), and some two-year diplomas have been collapsed into one year resulting in a workload/timetable that is incompatible with simultaneous study at university (which has happened at GOTAFE Wangaratta). In addition, the diploma costs have increased.

In terms of the basis of admission, from 2010 to 2012 between five and 17 per cent have been of mature age, between 13 and 18 per cent have completed a TAFE course, and between 49 and 68 per cent entered following the final year of secondary school.

Table 8.6 below shows the proportion of students undertaking the ADABS in terms of the basis of their admission.

Table 8.6: Associate Degree in Arts, Business, Sciences students, by basis of admission

Basis of Admission	2010	2011	2012
Access and Equity: disability or long term medical condition	2%		
Access and Equity: mature age	17%	14%	5%
Completed TAFE course	18%	13%	13%
Final year of secondary school OS or Australia	49%	60%	68%
Incomplete TAFE course	0%	2%	1%
Incomplete undergraduate course	1%	1%	
Other basis	14%	10%	10%
Previously studied year 12 or equivalent			3%

Source: Adapted from Deakin University, School of Education, Associate Degree Advisory Board, Annual Course Review 2013

The highest proportion of students enter the ADABS following the completion of secondary school, although there is a significant population who enter from TAFE or as mature-aged students. Some students have downgraded Bachelor Degrees to the ADABS by completing the core units, which accounts for the proportion from HE pathways.

The main difference between the ADABS cohort and the student profile of Deakin University students as a whole relates to the youngest age group. Over 50% of students in the ADABS are under 19, whereas at Deakin University in general this per centage is 26%. At Deakin University, in general 36% of students are between 20 and 24, 27% are aged between 25 and 39, and 11% are above 40.

ADABS enrolment tends to be skewed towards part-time. However, these numbers do not accurately reflect the student cohort in the ADABS. In 2010, 30% of ADABS students were studying full time. In 2011, this grew to 35%, and in 2012 the proportion was 50%. However, these statistics misrepresent the student cohort because almost all TAFE-based students are seen as part-time Deakin students, yet are consecutively studying their diploma through their TAFE institution, often with quite a significant study load.

Across Deakin University the general rate of retention is 80%, so the rates within the ADABS, which were 77% in 2010, and 65.9% in 2011, are a little lower than for Deakin University as a whole. In 2011, there was a difference between the retention of students at Deakin University campuses (76.6%), and TAFE-based students (59.4%).

The rate of success, where the success rate is determined by EFTSL passed divided by base EFTSL, generally sits around 85% at Deakin University. Students within the ADABS in 2010 had a 65% success rate, and in 2011 this increased to 79%. A total 51 students have graduated from the ADABS: 29 in 2012, and 32 in 2013. While Deakin University does conduct surveys of graduates, the latest report is from 2011. In terms of the course status of students who have undertaken the ADABS by their year of commencement, internal data suggest that a large proportion of students discontinue from the ADABS, with 58% of

students who commenced in 2010 having since discontinued the course, 42% in 2011, and 13% in 2012.

DIICCSRTE's data on disadvantaged learner participation in the ADABS (Tables 8.7 and 8.8) underscore the relative success of the degree in targeting equity groups, although completion rates for disadvantaged learners are poor (Table 8.9).

Table 8.7 Student enrolments, Associate Degree in Arts, Business, Sciences (DU)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Low SES	11	9	np	7	13	49
NESB	0	0	0	0	<5	5
Disability	<5	<5	0	0	9	21
Regional	np	<5	6	<5	56	126
Remote	0	0	0	0	<5	0
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	0	<5
Total	**75**	**58**	**47**	**32**	**94**	**185**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

Table 8.8: Student enrolments, Associate Degree in Arts, Business, Sciences (DU), per centage

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Low SES	14.7%	15.5%	-	21.9%	13.8%	26.5%
NESB	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-	2.7%
Disability	-	-	0.0%	0.0%	9.6%	11.4%
Regional	-	-	12.8%	-	59.6%	68.1%
Remote	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-	0.0%
Indigenous	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-

Source: DIICCSRTE Data Requests, 2013

Table 8.9: Student completions, Associate Degree in Arts, Business, Sciences (DU)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Low SES	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	<5
NESB	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	0	<5	0	0	0	0
Regional	<5	0	0	<5	0	0
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**np**	**np**	**9**	**14**	**<5**	**np**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

8.5 *Support and implications for disadvantaged learners*

Disadvantaged learners of all categories are notable within the student cohort of the ADABS. While emphasis remains on providing students in rural and regional areas opportunities to access higher education, the ADABS was developed to provide access to people who would

not otherwise have entered HE at that time. As the administrator explained, 'the first purpose of the ADABS is to provide access to university for students who normally would not have a way of getting that – I mean that's equity pure and simple'. The partnerships with TAFEs are intended to provide opportunities for students to access HE in their local area. As the administrator explained:

> That's the whole rationale – that thing about learning where you live and not having to move away; for some people we know that's not possible financially, for family reasons, for whatever, for some people it's not advisable personally, and so yeah it's a very real attempt to actually do that and if you look at the places where we are – Bairnsdale is really, really east and Wangaratta and Swan Hill are really north and Portland's almost an hour away from the western border of the state.

The ADABS is explicit about targeting disadvantaged groups and about providing support for such students to succeed. This support begins from the application process, where staff meet with students prior to offers being made and where application processes include a personal statement. Upon enrolment, staff are explicit about communicating the levels of support available to students across all sites, including access to student retention officers as well as study and emotional support. Throughout the course of the first year, students have high levels of contact with their lecturers and tutors, with one-on-one contact built into tutorials. In summary, the alternative entry nature of the program, with the accompanied increased levels of support, provides opportunities for students whose outcomes or working experiences would not usually have allowed them access to university.

Other equity issues that have emerged in the delivery of the ADABS relate to institutional negotiation around conceptualisation of a new model of student engagement. As noted earlier, within the application for the funding that enabled the initiation of the ADABS there was acknowledged intent that this program would promote 'significant structural reform'. The introduction of TAFE-based degree students is one of the areas in which reform is ongoing, as a lecturer in the program explained:

> The categories that the university has had, they don't work for these kinds of students. So we've traditionally had this on-campus/off-campus mentality. These students fall in-between, but the university insists on forcing them to fit within one category or another, but it also changes its mind. So for this the students are classed as on-campus, for that they're classed as off-campus. It's not consistent. It's hugely problematic, and it means that the students can't access services that they would otherwise be able to in areas like support for a disability, study skills and language support, financial assistance, just a whole range of different ways … In theory they should be able to [access these areas], but in practice what seems to happen is an individual service area will decide, 'Oh no, you're not really Deakin students, and so we won't'. So you nearly have to argue each battle on a case-by-case level, and that's exhausting.

Areas that have required advocacy have included the eligibility of TAFE students to apply for technology schemes, funding of extracurricular activities, and professional development for TAFE-based staff.

In summary, the ADABS has a range of equity implications for Australian students, as well as for regions throughout Victoria. While within the student cohort there are students from the

spectrum of disadvantaged learners, the ADABS is explicit about targeting rural and regional areas, and providing students in these areas with opportunities to access HE in a supported manner. Rather than disadvantage being reinforced through the course, the ADABS aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills to succeed at university. Not all students opt to remain in the ADABS and while there are long-term ramifications of negative encounters with HE, for some students who enrol in the ADABS success is indicated by their active decisions about engagement with university.

9| Case 4: Bachelor of Applied Music (Box Hill Institute of TAFE)[42]

9.1 *Institution details*

Box Hill Institute (BHI) is a large Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute with three main campuses, each located in Box Hill (within a few kilometres of each other) in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne (approximately 14 kilometres from the CBD). There are two additional, smaller campuses utilised for specific training purposes, the Ceylon Campus in Nunawading, situated in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and an automotive training site also located in Box Hill. Students travel to BHI from a wide geographical catchment.

The industry focus of BHI's courses is typical of a large metropolitan TAFE, offering vocational education and training (VET) courses in a range of traditional vocational disciplines. It offers a number of courses, from secondary school level (Victorian Certificate of Education [VCE] and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning [VCAL]) to certificate (I-IV), diploma, advanced diploma and associate and bachelor degree level qualifications. Most enrolments are at the certificate (I-IV) level (see Table 9.1 below). In addition to the 1,459 programmes BHI offers, there are also fee-for-service training courses. Delivery of these courses is often characterised by the tailored nature of its training, often delivered on-site in businesses that are seeking a specific skill outcome for their staff.

See Table 9.1 below for a breakdown of BHI courses and student numbers.

Table 9.1: Student enrolment profile, BHI, 2012

Domestic:				63,146
International Inbound VET students:				879
International Inbound Higher Education students:				90
International Offshore:				6,457
Total:				***70,572***
	Student Enrolments		**EFT**	
Higher Education	Australia	International	Australia	International
Degrees	598	90	359	63
Diploma and Advanced Diplomas	3,356	2,486	2,425	2,381
Total:	***3,954***	***2,576***	***2,784***	***2,444***
Vocational Education & Training	Australia	International	Australia	International
Apprenticeships & Traineeships	3,340		1,916	
Non-Apprentice Certificates I-IV	20,071	2,547	7,051	1,965
Total:	***23,411***	***2,547***	***8,967***	***1,965***
Secondary School	Australia	International	Australia	International
Total:	***1,261***	***203***	***812***	***147***
Adult Continuing Education	Australia	International	Australia	International
Total:	***34,520***	***2,100***	***1,399***	***343***
Total:	***70,572***		***18,861***	

Source: Box Hill Institute[43]

In addition to its domestic student enrolment, BHI also has a large offshore enrolment, offering on-location VET courses in thirteen countries. In 2012, this involved 6,457 students. Most of these courses are delivered in partnership with local training organisations. In 2012, BHI reported employing 1,745 staff, with a full-time effective equivalency of 968.15.

[42] This case study is based on analysis of publically available documents and on an interview with BHI's Manager of the Centre for Creative Industries. The author of this case study has been previously affiliated with Box Hill Institute.
[43] 'Key Data' 2012: http://www.bhtafe.edu.au/about/Pages/Key-data.aspx

BHI has chosen to consistently minimise the public appellation of its TAFE status, choosing instead to emphasise the range of its qualification offerings and its international reach. BHI's slogan, emblazoned across its signage alongside its name, reads: Higher Education Provider offering 'Degrees of Choice'. As a public VET provider, BHI receives a large proportion of its funding from state government sources. However, it has been one of the more entrepreneurial Victorian TAFEs, diversifying into a wide range of fee-for-service training services for clients in the public and private sectors. As a result of this, it has withstood recent state government funding policy shifts and cuts. In 2012, state government funded delivery accounted for 55.9% of BHI's income.

BHI has cultivated relationships with four Victorian universities (the Australian Catholic, Deakin, Latrobe and Monash universities), which provide formal and informal pathway agreements for VET students. In recent years, BHI has expanded its qualification offerings into the field of higher education (HE), offering degrees and associate degrees in the following areas: music, fashion, commerce, sustainable built environments, biotechnology, computer systems, hospitality management and early childhood education. The declared focus of these bachelor and associate degrees is applied learning and knowledge, combining a practical approach to learning with development of theoretical knowledge and skills. BHI sees its associate and bachelor degrees as offering something distinctly different from degrees offered by universities. It describes this difference in the following way:

> A university degree usually has a strong theoretical focus whereas at Box Hill Institute the focus is on the practical side. We want our graduates to be ready to tackle the workforce so we put the emphasis on job skills. Box Hill Institute degrees also cater for intended career paths defined by industry sectors.[44]

For example, BHI represents its Bachelor of Commerce (Applied) degree qualification as involving practical, business focused capabilities and skills that make students job ready and competitive for a contemporary workplace'.[45] Internships and other practicum style components feature as core units of many of the degrees. However, as elaborated below, the Bachelor of Applied Music (BAMusic) does not have a formal internship component of the degree.

Each degree offered by BHI is administered by a 'Head of Degree', who reports to the relevant teaching Centre Manager. Administrative, regulatory and accreditation management of the degree programs is overseen by a senior administrator. Each degree course is advised by a Course Advisory Committee (CAC) comprised of external academic and industry experts active in the discipline area of the specific degree and also members of BHI management and teaching staff. BHI's Higher Education Board of Studies (HEBOS) oversees the general operation of BHI's HE provision. This board is comprised of external academics in a range of representative disciplines and members of BHI's senior executive staff.

BHI describes the objective of achieving equitable access for all members of the community as one of its guiding principles. However, the achievement of equity has proven problematic within its degree programs. According to DIICCSRTE data on national equity groups, BHI's

[44] http://www.bhtafe.edu.au/courses/Pages/bachelor-associate-degrees.aspx
[45] http://www.bhtafe.edu.au/courses/local/Pages/BDC02.aspx

degree enrolments fall short in almost all categories (see Tables 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 below). The exceptions are in the areas of women in non-traditional areas and students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Effectively addressing issues of equity for disadvantaged students (enrolled and prospective) are ongoing challenges for BHI in its delivery of HE. These are taken up further in the discussion of the BAMusic degree.

9.2 *Course details*

The BAMusic is BHI's first degree-level course, offered for the first time in 2005 as a fully accredited bachelor degree qualification. It is a three-year full-time bachelor degree qualification and is offered only on-site, at BHI's Whitehorse campus. In the 2013 academic year there are 390 students enrolled in the BAMusic across the three years of the degree. Students may exit the course after successful completion of the first two-years of the course, qualified with an Associate Degree in Applied Music.

Staff involved in teaching the BAMusic are trained and practising musicians. In 2013, there were twenty-one teachers employed in the degree program by BHI on short-term and ongoing contracts, while an additional forty staff were contracted to teach in the course on a casual or sessional basis. Many of the ongoing staff have been involved with the course since its inception in 2005. The academic qualifications of the teaching staff are varied. While BHI was unwilling to disclose exact data on the levels and academic disciplines of the BAMusic teachers' qualifications, it is understood that a small number of staff hold PhDs, while the majority possess masters level qualifications. The disciplines of these qualifications also vary between music, music education and education.

While the BAMusic was first accredited and offered as a degree qualification in 2005, the course has a longer history. For many preceding years, BHI taught a very similar course to the BAMusic, run as a three-year advanced diploma. This predecessor qualification was offered to students as a fee-for-service course and was not a VET training package. Students who graduated with this three-year advanced diploma qualification were entitled to enter graduate diploma level courses at various universities. Commonly, these graduates articulated into graduate diplomas of education, qualifying them to teach music at primary and secondary school levels.

Admission into the BAMusic is assessed on a combination of academic results (e.g. Victorian Certificate of Education; VCE), audition, a theoretical 'musicianship' test, and an interview. Students are selected on their merit, based on the combination of academic and practical entry skills and standards. Prospective students seeking admission into the BAMusic apply through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC).

The BAMusic has three streams in which students specialize: composition, performance or audio production. In all three streams, the BAMusic combines the teaching of relevant theory and music history with practical instruction, providing formalised opportunities for performance. Students are assessed through various methods. These include oral presentations, written assessment, practical assessment including performance, group and individual project work, examination or testing and online assessment. While there is no formalised industry work experience component of the BAMusic, according to BHI's Manager of the Centre for Creative Industries, students are given unstructured opportunities to engage with members of the professional music community. Specifically, music students often perform at BHI functions both on campus and within the broader community. Opportunities

for performance and informal networking with professional musicians often arise through the development of connections between staff and students. The Manager of the Centre for Creative Industries stressed that the nature of music, and of the creative arts more broadly, did not easily lend itself to formalised industry based internships. Rather, students who undertake the BAMusic and who seek a career in music must become self-reliant, building an artistic portfolio of their work and generating their own contacts in the artistic community. In this sense, the BAMusic is significantly divergent from the overarching culture and language used by BHI in relation to their degree programs, which, on the whole, claim to be overtly structured around practical, industry-connected and industry-centric learning.

BHI emphasises the contemporary nature of the course, asserting that the BAMusic offers a contemporary music course at a time when most HE music programs concentrate on classical musical composition and appreciation. In this sense, BHI argues, the BAMusic symbolises a significant departure from the traditional music degree courses taught by universities. However, in recent years other Victorian based HE institutions have begun to diversify their music degree programs, entering the more contemporary music space. Notably, the most directly comparable degree is offered by the Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE (NMIT). NMIT offers a Bachelor of Music Industry and a Bachelor of Music. Melbourne University's Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) also offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in contemporary music, performance and composition. There is also a small, private Melbourne based RTO, Collarts, which offers degree-level music programs comparable to the BAMusic. The BAMusic BHI undertakes benchmarking against similar courses, most notably the music degree qualification offered by NMIT.

There is no intentional equity objective informing or governing the direction of the BAMusic at BHI. As noted above, BHI receives no state or Australian Government funding to provide its HE courses. However, students studying for the BAMusic are able to access FEE-HELP. For 2013, the basic tuition fee for one academic year (two full-time semesters) of the BAMusic was $14,112. While no exact figures were made available for the purposes of this research, it is understood that a majority of students who undertake the BAMusic opt to utilise the FEE-HELP loan scheme. The total cost of the program is just over $42,000. If students opt to access FEE-HELP, the cost further increases by 25% of the basic tuition cost (see also Chapter 3).

BHI has consistently lobbied for access to Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) funding for its degrees and thus for students who undertake degrees at BHI to have access to HECS-HELP. According to the Manager of the Centre for Creative Industries – who has been involved with the degree since its inception – upon being accredited to offer degree level qualifications, BHI was optimistic about securing access to government subsidised funding for its degree provision. Those who oversaw the development and growth of the BAMusic believed strongly that its success and popularity with its students would demonstrate to the Australian Government that it was a deserving recipient of funding equal to that received by universities for comparable courses. However, in recent years this initial optimism about the funding situation has diminished. The BAMusic's Centre Manager says that prospects for sourcing Australian Government funding are looking more negative.[46]

[46] See the discussion in Chapter 2 concerning the ineligibility of VET providers (and Other Private Providers generally) to receive Australian Government funding to provide HE, except for a specific submission and ruling by the relevant Australian Government minister.

BHI's Manager for the Centre for Creative Industries described the significance of achieving access to CSP funding for students as potentially opening up the course to a wider cohort of prospective students:

> I think there are some discerning school leavers who pick our course anyway because they know what we can offer is what they want, for them the price doesn't matter, but there would be others I think who have mums and dads who would push for CSP places. I think it would help definitely.

BHI offers a learning environment for its HE students that differs in some significant ways from that of a large university. Class sizes are often small and intimate, and students and teaching staff share facilities and resources, such as recording equipment and rooms. While the common structure of music courses often demands an individual tuition approach, opportunities for one-on-one tuition are more likely to occur frequently and spontaneously in such an environment.

9.3 *Community and industry relations*

BHI argues strongly that its music courses cater to a niche student market, filling what was a notable gap in the Melbourne music community. Specifically, the BAMusic is designed to provide music training and education for students interested in developing skills in contemporary music. The course remains popular with students, steady enrolments signifying the good reputation within the community. While BHI does conduct student satisfaction surveys, it was unwilling to share this information with the researchers for the purposes of this report.

The music industry broadly is diffuse and eclectic. As noted, many of those who teach the BAMusic course are engaged in the professional music scene and a Course Advisory Committee oversees the quality, design and direction of the degree. A focus on the BAMusic's continuing relevance to the contemporary music industry is discussed through this forum.

9.4 *Student enrolment, origins and destinations*

No specific data were made available by BHI for the purposes of this research concerning student enrolment, graduate outcomes, completion rates and pathway destinations of graduates of the BAMusic. However, some general points may be made relating to these issues. BHI's total enrolment for 2012 was 70,572. Of those, 63,146 were domestic students. In the same year there were 688 students enrolled in associate or bachelor degrees. More than 300 of those were enrolled in the BAMusic. In the main, the students who undertake the BAMusic do so immediately upon completion of high school, though there has also been a sizable minority of mature age students who have studied for the degree across the lifetime of the BAMusic. As noted, while BHI made no data available pertaining to the student demographic enrolled in the BAMusic, it is understood that very few are international students. Similarly, very few, if any, students who undertake the BAMusic identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Data obtained from DIICCSRTE on BAMusic (Tables 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4) indicate that the degree is proving attractive to some disadvantaged learner groups, although their completion rates are not strong.

Table 9.2: Student enrolments, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, bachelor degrees

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	40	72	95	122	150	189
Low SES	18	29	30	24	36	47
NESB	<5	13	11	9	8	9
Indigenous	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	<5
Regional	15	34	21	29	39	53
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	9	10	8	9	14	13
Women in Non-traditional Areas	14	22	41	49	57	66
Total	**168**	**285**	**342**	**391**	**454**	**550**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

Table 9.3: Student enrolments, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, bachelor degrees, per centages

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	23.8%	25.3%	27.8%	31.2%	33.0%	34.4%
Low SES	10.7%	10.2%	8.8%	6.1%	7.9%	8.5%
NESB	-	4.6%	3.2%	2.3%	1.8%	1.6%
Indigenous	-	-	-	-	0.0%	-
Regional	8.9%	11.9%	6.1%	7.4%	8.6%	9.6%
Remote	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disability	5.4%	3.5%	2.3%	2.3%	3.1%	2.4%
Women in Non-traditional Areas	8.3%	7.7%	12.0%	12.5%	12.6%	12.0%

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

Table 9.4: Award completions, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, bachelor degrees

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Females	7	8	7	np	27	22
Low SES	0	<5	<5	0	6	<5
NESB	0	0	<5	<5	0	<5
Indigenous	0	<5	0	0	0	0
Regional	<5	5	<5	<5	<5	6
Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	<5	<5	<5	0	<5	0
Women in Non-traditional Areas	0	<5	6	8	10	11
Total	**22**	**34**	**31**	**13**	**52**	**54**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Requests, 2013

For graduates of the BAMusic, the career trajectory is often not immediate or linear. According to the Centre Manager responsible for administering the degree, 'it's very often a portfolio career', which necessitates a willingness to pursue various industry-related opportunities. Graduates 'do some teaching, they do some working [sic] as a performer and then they do some of this and then it evolves and it's usually three, four, five years down the track before their real career has really cemented'.

9.5 *Support and implications for disadvantaged learners*

As a large TAFE institution, BHI offers a range of support services, personnel and facilities that are made available to all their students. These services range from disability liaison staff, counseling, indigenous and international student support, international student exchange programs, IT assistance, a mothers' room for breastfeeding, financial counseling and referral, learning assistance and careers counseling. BHI also has a student council. The Student Activities and Representative Committee (SARC) runs a number of social and sporting programs and student media, as well as facilitating student representation on BHI's Board. Most of these student support services are targeted at VET students, although they are available to students undertaking all levels of qualifications. The majority of these services operate out of the Centre for Student Support Services, located on the Nelson Campus, which sits between the Elgar and Whitehorse campuses. No specific support services are made available to BAMusic students.

As noted, BHI describes one of the key planks underpinning its approach to education as being 'equitable access for all'. However, the costs of undertaking the three-year degree qualification are, as noted, relatively high and would be generally prohibitive to many prospective students from low SES backgrounds. The BAMusic has a steady enrolment of students who have been continually willing and able to pay the tuition costs required of students in the course. The Manager of the Centre for Creative Industries replied to questions concerning equity in the design, rationale and intent of the course with reference to the community need broadly. The BAMusic, she argued, responds to community-based equity objectives indirectly, by filling a market gap in the music tuition. She explained:

> degrees in TAFE were allowed in the very first place – back in 2004 – to fulfil a niche where it wasn't being served by the university. So in terms of serving the community, the degree that we offer was designed to fill that gap.

BHI is conscious of the high cost to students of undertaking the course and the debt that many of them must incur is an ongoing concern for those who operate the BAMusic. As the Manager of the Centre for Creative Industries explained, 'we try to keep our costs as reasonable as we can because we know it's fee-for-service and that the students are building a significant debt by the end of it.' However, issues of equity appear not to impact directly on BHI's rationale for the course and its provision. The success of the BAMusic, as signified by the steady student interest in the course, represents something of an anomaly when compared to many other TAFE degrees. Its continued popularity with students is testimony to the perceived high quality of the course and of the ability of a TAFE to accurately assess a gap in the HE market and to provide a 'product' to fill that gap. However, the BAMusic challenges assumptions held about the sector concerning the reach of equity and access as guiding features determining the nature and objectives of the courses run by TAFEs in the HE space. Put simply, despite the significant personal cost of completing the degree, students have continued to demonstrate a willingness to undertake the BAMusic, albeit few of these students are from equity groups.

10| Case 5: Bachelor of Applied Management (University of Ballarat)[47]

10.1 *Institution details*

The University of Ballarat (UB) is a regional institution with its main campus located in Mt Helen just outside the city of Ballarat. It also has campuses in the western Victorian centres of Stawell, Ararat and Horsham. UB is one of Victoria's four 'dual sector' institutions, combining university operations with a TAFE (public provider of vocational education and training; VET). The TAFE arm also operates a senior secondary college that offers the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Across its campuses UB employs 558.3 full-time equivalent (FTE) general staff, 162.7 FTE TAFE teaching staff and 303.9 FTE academic staff.

UB's infrastructure is very similar to that of other universities with a wide range of teaching spaces, student buildings and residences. The University has traditionally catered for students from regional areas and centres, and has developed a suite of support services geared to this clientele. Support services include counseling, a health centre, disability support, a careers and employment unit, student advisory service and a Student Experience service that runs clubs and societies, sports and recreation facilities and a student senate. International student support is also available. The library offers a wide range of services including study support attuned to the needs of students from non-traditional backgrounds.

The model of integration of VET and higher education (HE) at UB has been shaped by recent changes in VET policy at the state level. Public VET providers (including UB) recently experienced base funding cuts and reductions in the amount of funding received for certain program areas that the Victorian Government deemed to be facing lower unmet skill demand. A restructure of TAFE operations at UB has resulted in a number of its schools (i.e. UB academic units) becoming 'dual sector' schools, while a dedicated VET program centre – the Industry Skills Centre – retained the traditional trades and other programs with an explicit industrial focus. The Bachelor of Applied Management (BAManag) is offered through the dual sector Business School.

In 2012 there were 23,187 students enrolled in UB programs. Domestic enrolments make up 73% of this, while 51% of all enrolments attend part-time. Fifty-four per cent of enrolments are in HE programs and 46% in VET. Table 10.1 below shows the distribution of enrolments in programs by Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels and sector accreditation. Table 10.2 shows the distribution of fields of study across UB's VET and HE areas.

[47] This case study is based on analysis of publically available documents and on interviews with one staff member responsible for conceptualising and designing the program and with another staff member responsible for coordinating the program at UB. The author of the case study is a staff member at the University of Ballarat, although he does not teach in the Bachelor of Applied Management and is not located in the University's School of Business.

Table 10.1: Student enrolment profile, UB

Sector Accreditation	AQF Level	Qualification	Number of students	Per centage of enrolments
Higher Education	10	Research Degrees	214	1%
	9			
	9	Masters Degree by coursework	2 406	10%
	8	Graduate Diploma	926	4%
		Graduate Certificate	274	1.1%
	7	Bachelor Degree	7 946	32%
	6	Associate Degree, Advanced Diploma	194	0.8%
Vocational Education and Training	8	Graduate Certificate	115	0.5%
	6	Advanced Diploma	508	2%
	5	Diploma	1 381	6%
	4	Certificate IV	2 076	8%
	3	Certificate III	3 604	14%
	2	Certificate II	3 726	15%
	1	Certificate I	767	3%

Source: Adapted from UB Pocket Statistics 2012, p. 2.

Table 10.2: Fields of study, VET and HE, UB

Vocational Education and Training	Higher Education
• Food Sciences • Primary Industries • Equine • Nursing • Occupational, Health and Safety • Children's Services • Adult, Community and Further Education • General Manufacturing • Automotive • Metals and Engineering • Building and Construction • Primary Industry and Forest • Business Services • Public Administration and Safety • Community Services and Health • Tourism and Hospitality • Cultural and Recreational • Transport and Storage • Electro Technology and Communications • Wholesale, Retail and Personal Services	• Biomedical Science • Food Sciences • Human Movement and Sports Science • Visual and Performing Arts • Education • Humanities and Social Sciences • Business • Psychology • Information Technology and Computing • Sciences • Nursing • Management • Engineering

Source: University of Ballarat Annual Report 2012: 26.

10.2 *Course details*

The BAManag is a qualification taught and issued by UB, and offered at the Mt Helen campus. It is also offered and taught by 11 additional partner institutions. Two of these institutions are off-shore, in Malaysia and in Singapore. The other nine partner organisations are Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions based in Victoria and New South Wales. The Victorian institutions are Kangan Institute in Melbourne and the regional institutes of Wodonga TAFE, AdvanceTAFE (based at Bairnsdale), GippsTAFE (based at Traralgon), GOTAFE (based at Shepparton) and SuniTAFE (Mildura). The TAFE New South Wales institutes include South-Western Institute, Western Sydney Institute and Sydney Institute.

The BAManag is an AQF level 7 program open only to students who have completed VET-sector Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualifications and who can demonstrate 1200 hours of management-oriented work experience. With these qualifications and work experience, students are eligible for two years of credit (240 credit points) against a nominal three-year degree program (360 credit points). This leaves a single 'capstone' year (120 credit points) that students study to graduate with the BAManag.

Students study seven courses in the BAManag:

- Project Management
- Strategic Human Resource Management
- Marketing for Managers
- International Business Management
- Applied Workplace Practice
- Entrepreneurship
- Accounting for Managers

The BAManag can be completed in one year in full-time mode or in two years part-time. Students in the Australian BAManag delivery sites are taught using a blended mode. The Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) run by UB provides a platform for learning support resources such as lecture notes, readings, podcasts and links to relevant websites. The LMS also hosts discussion forums and can be used for synchronous learning events. Partner Institutes are asked to customise the LMS for their own students. Regular workshops are held at delivery sites but attendance is not compulsory. Practical workplace-based projects make up a substantial component of the assessment complemented with more traditional university forms of assessment (e.g. invigilated examinations).

Each course is coordinated by a UB-based academic staff member who oversees teaching across all delivery sites. At each site the course is taught by a lecturer employed by the partner institution. These lecturers are generally TAFE teachers who possess appropriate qualifications and experience. The local site lecturer manages a Moodle online site specifically for local students and also conducts the workshops. The UB coordinator monitors activity in the Moodle online sites, arranges regular communication (e.g. through teleconferencing) between the course teaching staff, and manages assessment processes and moderation. Local lecturers may teach in more than one course although, according to the UB based BAManag coordinator, recruitment to these positions is on the basis of discipline expertise, which means that at any given site a number of lecturers are engaged to teach the program. These lecturers are recruited against UB lecturer criteria. Most lecturers satisfy Level B lecturer criteria, including holding at least a masters degree and discipline-

specific expertise. To date, the retention rate for lecturing staff employed at Australian delivery sites has been high. Some challenges for the BAManag delivery model stem from the fact that partner institutions employ local lecturing staff on their own conditions, with the result that there are variations in the level of non-teaching time allocation (i.e. for resource, course and relationship development). A BAManag program coordinator is based at UB, while each of the partner institutions employ a local 'Higher Education Coordinator' or 'Location Coordinator' who oversees BAManag operations at the delivery site and liaises with UB and local lecturing staff.

Australian students enrolled in the BAManag are offered Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) and may be eligible for financial support through HECS-HELP. The year of the BAManag costs just under $10,000 consisting of six units at $1,224 and one at $2,448. UB-based students pay an annual 'Student Services and Amenities Fee' (SSAF) which is $273 for full-time and $204 for part-time students. Students based at other Australian locations do not pay UB's SSAF, but may be liable for student fees charged by partner institutions. In terms of income from enrolments, CSP income per student is divided between UB and its partner organisations, with each partner receiving about two thirds of the funds.

The BAManag was originally developed by UB teaching staff with VET sector backgrounds. According to one of the designers, the intent was to create a program that would be distinguished from more 'academic' management degrees by its coherent VET to HE pathway (i.e. VET sector Diploma and Advanced Diploma to Bachelor degree) and 'applied' pedagogy. The applied pedagogy in question was conceptualised as building on *skills* (the VET sector qualifications), developing *knowledge* (the HE component) and bringing them together through *application* to practical, work-based tasks and challenges.

The pedagogy explicitly draws on the principles of adult learning associated with the work of humanist educator Malcolm Knowles. As such, the program was designed for learners with substantial work experience and career success who had little or no experience in HE. Indeed, they might not have completed a secondary education. The intended target audience includes individuals who are not inclined to undertake 'traditional' university programs, but may be attracted to a HE qualification that gives them substantial credit for work experience and VET-sector qualifications.

The designers believed that a one-year university program would appeal to the target audience and were aware that some traditional management degrees did not offer credit for VET sector qualifications and work experience. Although the program was not designed according to an explicit equity agenda, it was created for a type of student who may have felt that university was not 'for them.'

10.3 *Community and industry relations*

At each delivery site of the BAManag, local co-ordination staff are expected to build and maintain a network of organisations and business leaders to promote the program and as a source of learning opportunities and resources for students. The delivery institutions also promote the BAManag and foster ties with local organisations. According to the UB BAManag program coordinator, it takes some time to build up local networks and the 'older' partners have generally succeeded in establishing an awareness of the BAManag in business circles of their respective regions. Community and business relations are thus promoted at two levels: (1) the personal networks built up by individual local lecturing staff and generally

specific to the focus of the course or courses the lecturer teaches; and (2) institution-centred networks that might not be focused specifically on promoting the BAManag but do serve to facilitate community and business awareness of the program.

Partner delivery site lecturers are expected to draw on their local networks to make learning and networking opportunities available to students. Support and motivation to develop these networks and opportunities is provided by the UB Course Coordinators and through face-to-face meetings of all course lecturing staff prior to the start of each semester. Lecturers share experiences and insights at these meetings and the UB Course Coordinator monitors and shares innovations made at individual sites for the benefit of students at other sites.

The site lecturers are also expected to customise the content of their courses for local conditions within the constraints of the course curriculum framework. The lecturers monitor developments in their region that have implications for the course they teach and if they do identify relevant opportunities, they undertake changes to their course content in consultation with the UB Course Coordinator. For instance, the UB Program Coordinator said that:

> If you were doing Strategic Human Resource Management next semester in Kangan in Broadmeadows, you'd be making it relevant to the Ford retrenchments and what's happening there and how they were handling that sort of situation and the press releases and that sort of industry, and then saying, 'Well if this was you, how would that happen in your organisation? Do you think this is a reasonable procedure to be following?' Get [the students] to sort of think critically about it, and 'How would you feel if you were this worker?' – those sorts of things. That's the sort of things that you should put [into the course].

At the level of partner delivery sites, the institutions draw on their close ties with the community to promote the BAManag:

> They all have information nights and they share knowledge around what they know about their own local region and what's going, they lobby local businesses and they market to their own students. They have information nights to which advertised in the local papers and invitations are sent out to various people to come and usually someone from UB goes as well to actually be there that night and represent the university and the program and they'll do that a couple of times before – they're doing them now as a matter of fact getting ready for second semester which starts at the end of July.

The BAManag Program Coordinator was not aware of any formal processes for measuring the extent to which the program addressed or satisfied community and business needs but indicated that anecdotally a growing number of businesses were registering the benefit of having employees in the program. The Coordinator explained that some organisations were putting employees into the program as a pilot with a view to having more employees participate in it in future. It was pointed out that each partner institution has its own methods for determining market satisfaction with programs but at this point there was no formal system in place to share data about perceptions of the program in local communities.

10.4 *Student enrolment, origins and destinations*

First enrolments were accepted into the BAManag in 2009 and the program has, according to its UB-based coordinator, 'grown tremendously'. At present there are about 100 students

enrolled across the nine Australian sites and a further 100 enrolled in the off-shore programs. Around 10 students study at each Australian delivery location.

As indicated above, prerequisites for enrolment into the BAManag are a VET sector Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualification and 1200 hours work experience. The actual BAManag curriculum comprises a one-year (full time) 'capstone' program with no provision for progression to it through first and second-year undergraduate studies. As a result, no school leavers directly enter the BAManag program. Most students who enroll in the BAManag at a given site are recent graduates from an Advanced Diploma program from the same institution and live and work in the same region. Previous to this, most students completed a Diploma, again at the same institution. Most students studied their Diploma and Advanced Diploma programs part-time while working.

The youngest Australian students in the BAManag are in their mid-20s, with a spread of ages through to 60s. A high proportion of them occupy team leader, supervisor or manager roles, with some students occupying senior management and CEO positions. On this point, the Program Coordinator explained that:

> Some of the CEOs [and] Managing Directors we've had…want to do the course to see what it's all about and they probably don't have an undergraduate degree themselves, either, and they might have risen up to that position without having any formal academic qualification. But they might have a lot of business world professional development stuff, and obviously a lot of expertise and experience but they don't have formal qualifications.

However, not all students entering the program are currently employed, while others have experienced vicissitudes in the labour market resulting in redundancy or moving between jobs. Overall, the cohort studying the BAManag is extremely diverse in terms of age, length and type of work experience, and current roles.

The fact that practical or 'applied' assessment is such an important aspect of the BAManag means that students in the program require access to a workplace to complete the program. Indeed, one of the benefits of the program pointed out by the Program Coordinator is that a substantial proportion of the assessment involves applying theory to normal work tasks and reflecting on work, creating close alignment between assessment and work demands.

Upon completion of the BAManag, graduates do not tend to continue into postgraduate studies. In interview, the Program Coordinator indicated that since the students have tended come into the course through studies in their local TAFE, and are still based in this same institution while they complete their BAManag studies, they are comfortable in this setting. That is, to embark on postgraduate studies means leaving the institution. The Coordinator explained that, 'the challenge for them … is that if they want to do that, they're going to have to leave that comfortable TAFE environment.' In effect, the discomfort of leaving the familiar place of their post-school studies created a barrier to further study.

In terms of reasons for undertaking the BAManag, the Program Coordinator identified a number of motives. Some students enroll for highly personal reasons:

> … a lot of it's to do with their own self-satisfaction and self-esteem. I think a lot of them are mature aged people and it's the ability to be able to say, 'I could do it and I've now got a degree.'

Other students enroll to improve their career prospects:

> For some of them it means they could actually apply for a promotion, it consolidates their work and seems to – I don't know what is it – they're more secure in their work because they've actually got it. Some [students] are very challenged by [the] 'new graduate from uni' to come and work in a place who seem to know more about the 'wheres' and the 'why-fors'.

For these students, the BAManag throws light on the theory behind the way things work. The Program Coordinator also suggested that the BAManag improved the position of female students in workplaces:

> If I think of some of the women who are mature age women who do these courses who feel a bit disempowered by their job, they feel like [the BAManag program] will empower them to make a difference and be different and go on. And [the BAManag program] gives them another I suppose outlet, like [they] could say 'Well, I don't need this job any more – I can go and do this now, or I can go and do this post graduate study now or I can go and do this now because I have an undergraduate degree and I've got confidence.

Disadvantaged learner participation rates for the BAManag could not be disaggregated from data supplied by DIICCSRTE, but figures on Australian SES group participation made available by UB (below) indicate that low-SES students form a substantial proportion of enrolments.

Table 10.3: Student enrolments by SES groups: University of Ballarat, BAManag

	2011					2012				
Course	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**N/A**	**Total**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**N/A**	**Total**
Bach. of Applied Management	17	13	3	3	36	18	22	2	2	44

Source: UB, Data Request, 2013

10.5 *Support and implications for disadvantaged learners*

UB promotes itself as an inclusive institution. Its Charter emphasises its commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and lists service to its communities among its values. As a regional institution it has developed specific services to cater for non-traditional university students alongside a more mainstream range of student services. These services include access to guaranteed residential places, child care centres, a counseling service including after-hours emergency psychiatric services, telephone counseling and walk-in counseling available to all students and a disability liaison unit.

Students enrolled in the BAManag at Australian partner sites have formal access to these UB services. However, the institution has not traditionally been a provider of off-campus education and most of its services are not equipped to provide a complete service to remote students. Yet students enrolled in BAManag at partner sites do have access to all services and facilities maintained by the partner institution. These include the kinds of services

provided by TAFE institutions, including study skills programs, counseling and advice. Nevertheless, the support requirements of students in HE programs places different demands on partner institution services, especially libraries. The Program Coordinator explained that:

> The libraries talk to each other and support each other and books can go backwards and forwards between libraries, but the lending to students is somewhat different… The library staff here talk to the library staff at every other location and now I think through DSP [a separate 'Dual Sector Partnership' network encompassing most of the Victorian institutions offering the BAManag], they've got a person appointed who does that so that's been useful.

The Coordinator indicated that the contracts that each partner institution signs with UB includes provisions for student support:

> … in the contract it sets out what they've got to provide and so I've got to be aware of that in case I get asked for, say, this student needs this in this exam and can you help them with that….[E]ach DSP partner, of course…is supposed to have a higher ed hub where higher ed students can go and use computer services and access resources and talk to each other and talk to lecturers…I'm not sure how far advanced that is, but say if you've got a partner that's not in that DSP project then they're expected to provide certain services to the student as per their contract and then the university is supposed to support those behind that. But things like academic writing referencing, plagiarism stuff, are the services that we provide, and support to enrol the university provides, like the school provides those first few I just said but then we assist them with enrolments from here if we need to.

Apart from the formal support provided by UB and the partner institutions that host the BAManag, more informal kinds of support have emerged to help students overcome obstacles peculiar to the program. In terms of facilitating entry into the BAManag, the Program Coordinator gave examples of assistance offered to students applying for entry into the BAManag through partner institutions who could not demonstrate 1200 hours relevant work experience. For example:

> [One institution] had two students who were students with them who did an Advanced Diploma of Management with them and wanted to do the Bachelor Applied Management [but] didn't have the work experience requirement. So they actually negotiated with the [local council] out there, one of the councils anyway out there to get these two people: one volunteer work and the other one like a traineeship in lots of ways, so that they could build on their experience and then they were able to use those to then springboard into the program.

The Coordinator went on to explain that these same students were found work placements to continue their studies once they were accepted. Speaking of the partners in general, the Coordinator commented that:

> They have a lot of industry contacts at [the partner institution in question], so they often try and find work for people – like a placement for people even if it's unpaid –just so that they can actually be in industry and see how it all works and apply what they're learning in the class to what's actually happen[ing] there, even though they mightn't be employed by them, so [the partners] do various things like that.

The UB BAManag program offers a number of benefits to non-traditional students of management. In terms of gaining access to the program, prospective students are able to

count on their VET sector qualifications as steppingstones to entry and their experience in the workplace is also valued as an entry criterion. As the BAManag Program Coordinator pointed out, entry into other management degrees was a fraught process for typical BAManag students whose VET sector qualifications were often not valued or simply dismissed while work experience did not positively contribute to entry requirements. Even UB's own full-length undergraduate management programs do not offer such generous recognition of VET sector credentials and experience. In this respect, the BAManag plays a role in enabling non-traditional students to participate in HE.

The BAManag is also an attractive option for those whose life and employment situation precludes years of study or more intrusive study modes (such as intensives or on-campus classes). The generally mature-age and working BAManag student cohort enjoy a more truncated pathway to an undergraduate degree taught in a way that accommodates career and family exigencies. A one- or two-year program is something that these non-traditional students can see themselves completing. For those who see the BAManag as a way to consolidate their position in an organisation or to improve their promotion prospects, the program's duration is ideal.

For some students the attraction of the BAManag is that they do not need to leave their region to study a university degree. Distance education degrees have been available to such students for many years but the possibility of studying at an institution in which they have already experienced academic success (through graduating with Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualifications) and are familiar and in which they feel secure, makes university study a qualitatively different option. However, what attracts regional students to this option also serves as a barrier to enrolment in postgraduate study. Aware of this challenge, the BAManag Program Coordinator explained that they were in the process of making postgraduate programs available to BAManag graduates, already offering a Master of Leadership in some sites, with plans to make more postgraduate programs available. The Coordinator confirmed that there was demand for postgraduate options from both BAManag graduates and partner institutions.

Some partners and staff demonstrated that they were willing to use their local networks to secure employment and volunteer positions for both prospective students who needed to log more hours of work experience to become eligible to enter the BAManag or to complete their studies once in the program. However, apart from these informal instances of intensive student support, most students in the BAManag access a restricted range of standard student services offered by UB (restricted because service delivery is generally geared to the needs of on-campus students), complemented by local services provided by TAFE partner institutions.

Although the BAManag was designed to appeal to and benefit a non-traditional cohort of the students, equity goals were never formally espoused by its curriculum designers. Rather, as a program designed for senior business people or those aspiring to business leadership it was always going to be the case that the program would cater to the needs of relatively privileged students and serve to reinforce such privilege. However, at a broader level, the BAManag has potential to address disadvantage across the regional areas in which it is taught by providing higher level knowledge and skills to business people in regional areas. A net improvement of economic conditions may be anticipated even if disadvantage at an individual level is not explicitly addressed by the BAManag.

11| Emerging challenges

A clear conclusion from the research detailed in this report is that disadvantaged learners are under-represented in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees and exhibit poor completion rates (Chapter 4). These data present a challenge to HE equity policy and for VET providers of HE. In this Chapter some of the complexities of addressing this challenge are outlined and recommendations offered for addressing them.

The Chapter begins by canvassing the difficulties surrounding the delimitation of VET-provider HE activity. Related to this is the challenge of data clarity, particularly for the purposes of monitoring for equity. The Chapter then examines the development of dual public-private identities in public VET providers, highlighting the impact on (state/territory government) providers with public missions of being designated a private provider (by the Australian Government). A fourth challenge is the diversity of staff understandings of VET-provider HE activity, indicating that awareness of equity policy and issues is not necessarily well developed. Finally, the Chapter questions the design of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, in which industry and vocational relevance is not always evident and equity principles are seldom a consideration.

These issues, detailed in the sections that follow, suggest a range of difficulties for HE equity policy in this growing area of HE provision.

11.1 *Challenges of defining VET provider HE activity*

A persistent issue faced by the research team was building a clear picture of VET-provider HE activity. One challenge is categorising these providers. Research by Wheelahan et al. (2009) suggests distinguishing between 'dual-sector' and 'mixed-sector' providers. In each of these categories institutions deliver both VET and HE qualifications. In Wheelahan et al.'s terms, dual sector providers possess well-established administrative systems to support substantial delivery of each kind of qualification (VET and HE), whereas 'mixed sector' institutions are focused on one sector yet deliver in the other, with stronger administrative systems in the focus sector and a lower number of qualifications and students in the secondary delivery area. Australia's identified 'dual sector' universities fall into the 'dual sector' category although other providers potentially fall into it as well. Wheelahan et al.'s category of mixed sector applies to most of the institutions identified in our research, although some provision of associate and bachelor degrees that we examined falls under arrangements not accommodated by the mixed sector category.

The Australian Government's own categorisation of HE providers is also relevant to most of the associate and bachelor degrees and institutions we examined. Chapter 2 introduces the categories of Table A, B and C providers (roughly public, private and international universities) and the miscellaneous category of 'Other Private Providers' (OPPs). This last category contains the bulk of institutions considered in this report, although Table A contains dual sector providers including one that formed a case study (see Chapter 8). We used the OPP list as the basis for our categorisation, extracting from it providers that are also current registered VET providers and whose HE provision includes associate and/or bachelor degrees. This filtering yielded a list of 42 providers that we separated into categories of public (10) and private (32) VET providers. However, the list did not encompass all delivery of associate and bachelor degrees by VET providers. A number of registered VET providers are

partnered with HE providers, often providers on Table A but also with providers on the OPP list, to deliver associate and bachelor degrees. Most of these 'partnered' organisations are VET providers that do not appear on any of the Australian Government's lists of HE providers, although interestingly some of them also appear on the OPP list. In short, it is difficult to develop a definitive list of partnered providers of associate and bachelor degrees. Our investigation of provider websites turned up a list of 20 partnered VET providers (mostly public VET institutions; TAFEs) delivering associate and bachelor degrees accredited with other providers (see Appendix 3).

More challenges to delimiting the area of HE delivery by VET providers stem from the level of flux and complexities of branding in the market. The OPP category has swollen in the last few years as providers – including some Table A providers (e.g. University of Wollongong) – have staked a claim in the private HE market. One result of this growth is that data collection lags behind developments to the extent that valid conclusions are more difficult to draw than might otherwise be the case. Organisation branding poses a further complication in developing a clear picture of HE activity by VET providers. Public VET providers have to varying degrees signalled their repositioning by modifying their brand, sometimes dropping the use of 'TAFE' in marketing (e.g. Holmesglen Institute) or adopting new branding altogether (e.g. Swan TAFE in WA has become Polytechnic West).

In the private sphere, complex and changing organisational structures bedevil efforts to clarify provider activity. For instance, Cengage Education (a US-based company) was until 2011 a private provider of VET and HE. In 2010, it was acquired by the Nexus Education Group Pty. Ltd., which in late 2011 changed the name of its Australian provider to Open Colleges. Somewhat confusingly, on its website Open Colleges refers to its VET programs as 'TAFE courses' (a reference to public provision and ownership that is out of place in the context of marketing by a private VET provider). A further example of the complexity of this sphere is the activity of Navitas Pty. Ltd. As Navitas Professional Institute Pty. Ltd. (a legal entity), it trades as the Australian College of Applied Psychology and Navitas College of Public Safety. As Navitas Bundoora Pty. Ltd., it trades as La Trobe Melbourne. It also owns Sydney Institute of Business and Technology Pty. Ltd., Melbourne Institute of Business and Technology Pty. Ltd., Perth Institute of Business and Technology Pty. Ltd., Queensland Institute of Business and Technology Pty. Ltd., and the South Australian Institute of Business and Technology Pty. Ltd.

Considering these challenges to building a clear picture of VET provider delivery of HE, it follows that there will be a corresponding challenge to monitoring participation of disadvantaged learners in this part of the HE market.

11.2 *Challenges of defining disadvantage in VET-provider degrees*

A related challenge is that of comparing data about participation by disadvantaged learner groups in VET-provider degrees. Chapter 4 canvassed the issue presented by the use of diverse definitions of disadvantage. DIICCSRTE, NCVER and NVEAC each employ definitions of disadvantage derived from different classifications. The data analysed in Chapter 4 were based on DIICCSRTE's definitions of 'equity groups' developed in the early 1990s. NCVER defines equity groups differently, and crucially reports SES in terms of the Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage rather than the Index of Education and

Occupation preferred by DIICCSRTE. NVEAC's own classification scheme also includes additional categories, including 'second chance' learners and 'recent arrivals'.

There is also the challenge of accessing data on student participation and completion rates for VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. Participation data were sought from both the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE). Although NCVER does collect some data on associate and bachelor degrees offered by VET providers, its data set proved incomplete for the purposes of our research, both in terms of coverage of HE delivery activity by VET providers and of categories of data collected. In contrast, DIICCSRTE collects more detailed data and on a wider range of HE delivery activity, although data on activity by 'partnered' providers are not easily distinguishable within the set. Indeed, DIICCSRTE was compelled to develop new computer programs to extract the data requested for this project, suggesting that the data accessed and analysed were done so for the first time in this research.

The interest in and collection of data on VET provider activity in the HE market by multiple organisations reflects the unique position of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees. However, any effort to measure equity outcomes is impeded by the involvement of multiple agencies using different classifications of disadvantage.

11.3 *Blurring the boundaries between public and private provision*

The identity of public VET providers becomes problematic for equity policy once they cross into the HE market. These providers subscribe to an identity that traditionally embraces a social mission and which promises to articulate readily with the interests of equity policy. Historically, public VET providers have promoted their social credentials (Goozee 2001) and, as pointed out in Chapter 3, receive public funds to support this mission. Public providers continue to emphasise this point of distinction. For example, in their *Blueprint for Australia's Tertiary Education Sector* (2010), TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) stress the commitment of public VET providers to 'invest in social inclusion/community service obligations' (2010: 3) and argue that 'TAFE institutes are ideally placed to deliver the key policy drivers – quality, participation, student attainment, access and pathways – which will lead to improved national productivity' (TDA 2010: 4). Although the Blueprint does not make this argument specifically in relation to HE provision, public VET providers have elsewhere articulated an extension of this commitment to provision in HE. A number of these providers make it clear in their submissions to the most recent *Review of Australian Higher Education* (Bradley et al. 2008) that their degrees would contribute to both expansion and equity agendas in HE.

Chapter 4 indicates that VET providers have not been uniformly successful at contributing to equity goals, although growth in demand for their degrees supports the contention that VET-provider degrees can contribute to HE expansion goals. Most of the case studies show that from the design through to the implementation of their associate and bachelor degrees, equity goals have been secondary concerns at best for VET providers. Rather, their focus has been on the opportunities of the HE market. The description of the VET market offered in Chapter 3 may account for the market focus of these VET providers. There we suggested that the marketisation of VET, which entails exposing public providers to versions of an open training market, induced the development of commercial organisational cultures in public providers and an interest in identifying and exploiting market opportunities to generate

income independent of public funding sources. We also noted that marketing and delivering HE qualifications afforded public providers a means of distinguishing themselves in a marketplace characterised by regulated uniformity of products. If associate and bachelor degrees are viewed by providers as a commercial activity with not only financial but distinction yields in their primary market, then relatively poor participation and completion rates by disadvantaged learners in VET-provider degrees – whether these institutions are public or private VET providers – may come as no surprise.

The structure of the HE market may serve to compound the challenge for VET providers – particularly public VET providers – to prioritise equity goals. When any VET provider moves into the HE market they are added to the OPP list and are automatically positioned as a 'private provider': thus providers that are public in one sector are treated as private in another. Once again, it may be that as a result of conditioning by reforms to their primary market, public VET providers have developed a repertoire of commercial responses that may come into play when the organisation is positioned as a private provider. The blurring of the boundaries between public and private missions confronts public VET providers with complex identity challenges when they enter the HE market and the significance of equity policy appears to be ambiguous in such a setting. For private VET providers on the other hand, there is no identity-driven challenge to address in relation to equity.

11.4 *Diverse staff views about equity*

Related to this last point is evidence from the case studies of diverse staff views on equity. Case study informants were predominantly managerial and administrative staff. The majority of informants demonstrated that they held views about equity that do not accord with those of relevant policy. Rather, equity was understood in the loose sense of providing opportunities for prospective and current students to satisfy enrolment ambitions that may have been frustrated through more traditional routes. For example, the Principal of Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT) explained equity in a way that corresponded with the rationale of the institution – of providing an alternative pathway into a Macquarie University degree for international students who were unsuccessful in their direct application. The fact that the SIBT pathway is relatively expensive and targets relatively wealthy international students by their home country standards, did not appear to detract from the claim that this pathway promotes equity. Similarly, the administrator of the Deakin University degree espoused the equity orientation of the program in terms of gaining access to HE, specifically by students from regional and rural backgrounds. That is, equity is conceived narrowly in terms of 'bums on seats' (see Chapter 2).

More generally, understandings and practices of equity among case study staff appeared to be haphazard. This suggests that there is scope for building awareness of HE equity policy among staff involved in VET-provider associate and bachelor degree program management and delivery. It may be that clearer understanding of this policy, particularly among management, may lead to measures that address the relatively low participation and completion rates of disadvantaged learners in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

11.5 *The vocational relevance of VET-provider degrees*

VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees fall into three broad, overlapping categories. In terms of their naming, the majority of these degrees conform to the rationale for VET-provider HE articulated in Victorian Government policy of the early 2000s. The justification for these

degrees was that they will address industry skill needs that universities were not addressing (Kosky 2002), for example in the area of equine studies. Industry specificity is reflected in the titles of approximately two-thirds of the associate and bachelor degrees identified in this research. Another kind of VET-provider degree is titled in ways that are consistent with current university offerings (e.g. Bachelor of Nursing). In this case again, industry skill needs are one justification for their existence although the naming of the degrees brings these offerings into direct competition with comparable university degrees. A third type of VET provider degree is the feeder qualification, such as the associate degree delivered by SIBT. Graduates of this award gain entry into a Macquarie University bachelor degree with an agreed level of credit. Several providers like SIBT, and all members of the Navitas group, offer dedicated feeder degrees. The Deakin University associate degree is another feeder qualification but in contrast with the SIBT degree, graduates who progress may choose between a wider range of bachelor degrees.

Although the naming and positioning of the bulk of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees imply tight integration with industry, some of the case studies suggest that in practice industry links may be tenuous. In the case of the University of Ballarat degree, the informant was not aware of ongoing efforts to gauge industry relevance of the qualification in the locations it was delivered by VET providers, while the SIBT informant was not aware of employment outcomes for graduates who did not progress to the Macquarie University bachelor degree but who sought instead to enter the labour market with their associate degree. In the Box Hill Institute case, formal provision for student work placement was not in place, although marketing for their other degrees emphasised the importance of placement in the context of vocational degrees.

If improving the status of VET-provider degrees is dependent on building strong links with industry and ensuring good employment outcomes for graduates (Wheelahan et al. 2009), providers may need to commit to developing and maintaining mechanisms for realising the vocational promise of their degrees.

11.6 *Disadvantaged learners in VET-provider degrees: challenges for equity policy*

In sum, this report provides evidence that disadvantaged learners are under-represented in VET associate and bachelor degrees. Based on DIICCSRTE data and definitions of disadvantage, all equity groups are under-represented in VET-provider bachelor degrees and are even more under-represented in VET-provider associate degrees. University participation data were also reviewed and, although under-representation of equity groups characterises these data as well, the under-representation is less acute in university awards than it is in VET-provider degrees. Disadvantaged learners are also completing VET-provider degrees at lower rates than their counterparts in university degrees.

The under-representation of disadvantaged learners in VET-provider degrees and poor completion rates judged in relation to Australian population reference values is consistent with findings in other research that show disadvantaged groups are represented at above-parity rates at Certificate I-IV level qualifications (i.e. AQF levels 1-4) and are under-represented in 'higher' VET sector qualifications (Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas – AQF levels 5-6) (Wheelahan et al. 2009, Rothman et al. 2013). The findings presented in this report suggest that this pattern is extended when these providers deliver associate and bachelor degrees (AQF levels 6-7). Whatever the factors are that underlie VET providers'

success at catering to disadvantaged learners in VET qualifications, these do not appear to be at work when these providers offer HE qualifications. Research is needed to identify ways to extend the success of VET providers at attracting and retaining disadvantaged learners in certificate-level qualifications to higher level qualifications, including their associate and bachelor degrees.

The contrast between the success of university and VET providers at attracting and engaging disadvantaged learners in associate and bachelor degrees can be understood in part as a function of the penetration of equity policy, facilitated by financial incentives, into the thinking and practice of universities. To further its HE expansion and equity agendas, the Australian Government has actuated the levers of the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) and the specification of obligations in university compacts to stimulate Australia's universities to exercise ingenuity in attracting and retaining disadvantaged learners. DIICCSRTE figures suggest that Australian Government equity policy in HE is gaining traction (2012), heightening the contrast between disadvantaged learner participation rates in VET and HE provider degrees. This policy environment now needs to incorporate the provision of HE by OPPs, including VET providers of HE.

Addressing the challenges posed to HE equity policy by VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees will involve redrawing the boundaries of HE equity policy, ensuring that incentives to apply equity policy are offered to all HE providers. It will also involve refocusing data collection and reporting on disadvantaged learner participation in HE so that contributions to policy goals by VET providers of HE can be measured.

11.7 *Recommendations*

To address the challenges to equity policy identified in this report, the following recommendations for actioning by the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) are proposed:

1. NVEAC should advise COAG's Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) to extend existing policy or introduce new HE equity policy to include VET-providers of HE, requiring them to demonstrate how they are contributing to national equity targets and giving them access to HEPPP-style incentives to address these national goals.

2. NVEAC should promote understanding of HE equity policy and practices among staff involved in the design, delivery and management of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

3. NVEAC should commission research to identify the distinctive contribution of VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, in terms of their content, pedagogy and outcomes (for industry and communities, and as pathways to further study or employment), particularly the equity principles in these.

4. NVEAC should advise SCOTESE to subject VET providers of HE to the same reporting requirements as Table A providers, with respect to disadvantaged learner participation and completion rates in HE. This could be included as a requirement of their registration as a HE provider with the national Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

5. NVEAC should advise SCOTESE to require all HE providers delivering associate and bachelor degrees in partnership with VET providers, to report data on disadvantaged learner participation and completion rates connected with these partnerships. This will ensure that degrees delivered through partnered VET providers of HE can be scrutinised in terms of equity.

6. NVEAC should advise SCOTESE to confirm responsibility for collecting data on the participation and completion rates of disadvantaged learners in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees, in the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE). DIICCSRTE has a track record in robust data collection in relation to equity groups and HE.

7. NVEAC should extend its annual *National Report on Social Equity in VET* to include participation and completion rates of disadvantaged learners specifically enrolled in VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees.

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Appendix 1 | List of acronyms

Acronym	Text in full
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACN	Australian Campus Network
ACPET	Australian Council for Private Education and Training
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADABS	Associate Degree of Arts, Business and Sciences
ADB	Associate Degree of Business
ADCE	Associate Degree of Civil Engineering
AIM SA	Australian Institute of Management South Australian Division Inc
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
ATSI	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
BAManag	Bachelor of Applied Management
BAMusic	Bachelor of Applied Music
BHI	Box Hill Institute of TAFE
CAC	Course Advisory Committee
CAD	Computer-aided Design
CAE	Centre for Adult Education
CBD	Central Business District
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSP	Commonwealth Supported Places
DAYD	'Deakin at Your Doorstep'
DEECD	Victorian Government Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
DEET	Australian Government Department of Employment, Education and Training
DEEWR	Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations
DIISRTE	Department of Industry Innovation Science Research and Tertiary Education
DIICCSRTE	Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
DSP	Dual Sector Partnership
DU	Deakin University
EFTSL	Equivalent Full Time Student Load
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
FT	Full-time
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GPA	Grade Point Average
HE	Higher Education
HEBOS	Higher Education Board of Studies
HECS	Higher Education Contributions Scheme
HEPPP	Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IBT	Institute of Business Technology
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ISCs	Industry Skills Councils
IT	Information Technology
MIBT	Melbourne Institute of Business and Technology
NESB	Non-English Speaking Backgrounds
NIDA	National Institute of Dramatic Art
NMIT	Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE
NSW	New South Wales

Acronym	Text in full
NVEAC	National VET Equity Advisory Council
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
OP	Overall Position
OPP	Other Private Provider
PT	Part-time
QIBT	Queensland Institute of Business and Technology
QLD	Queensland
QTAC	Queensland Tertiary Admission Centre
RUN	Regional Universities Network
RTO	Registered Trading Organization
SA	South Australia
SAIBT	South Australian Institute of Business and Technology
SARC	Student Activities and Representative Committee
SES	Socioeconomic status
SIBT	Sydney Institute of Business and Technology
SSAF	Student Services and Amenities Fee
SBIT	Southbank Institute of Technology
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TAFE NSW	Technical and Further Education, New South Wales
TAFE SA	Technical and Further Education, South Australia
TAS	Tasmania
TDA	TAFE Directors Association
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TSOs	Tutorial Support Officers
UB	University of Ballarat
VCA	Victorian College of the Arts
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VIC	Victoria
VRQA	Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
VTAC	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
WA	Western Australia

Appendix 2 | Australian public universities that offer associate degrees

University (Table A HE provider)[48]
Australian Catholic University
Central Queensland University
Charles Darwin University
Charles Sturt University
Curtin University of Technology
Deakin University
Monash University
Murdoch University
RMIT University
Southern Cross University
Swinburne University of Technology
The Australian National University
The University of Melbourne
The University of Queensland
University of Ballarat
University of Canberra
University of South Australia
University of Southern Queensland
University of Tasmania
University of the Sunshine Coast
University of Wollongong
Victoria University

Source: relevant university websites

[48] Australian universities in receipt of funding from the Australian Government to provide students with higher education are listed in Table A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003.* They are thus sometimes referred to as Table A higher education providers or institutions.

Appendix 3 | Partnered VET providers of associate and bachelor degrees, 2013

Partnered VET Providers	HE Provider Partner(s)
Advance TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University
	University of Ballarat
Academies Australasia Polytechnic (VIC)	University of Ballarat
Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors	Australian Institute of Psychology
Bendigo TAFE (BRIT) (VIC)	University of Ballarat
Canberra Institute of Technology (ACT)	Charles Sturt University
	Australian National University
Central Gippsland TAFE (GippsTAFE) (VIC)	University of Ballarat
Chisholm Institute (VIC)	Deakin University
Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (QLD)	Southern Cross University (SCU College)
GO TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University
Illawarra Institute (NSW)	University of Wollongong
Kangan Institute of TAFE (VIC)	University of Ballarat
Le Cordon Bleu (SA, NSW, VIC)	Northern Sydney Institute
	Victoria University
	University of South Australia
Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE (QLD)	Holmesglen
	University of Canberra
	University of Southern Queensland
North Coast TAFE (NSW)	Southern Cross University (SCU College)
Southbank Institute of Technology (QLD)	University of Sunshine Coast
South West Institute of TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University
South West Sydney Institute (NSW)	University of Ballarat
Sunraysia TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University
	University of Ballarat
	University of Ballarat
Wodonga TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University
	University of Ballarat
Western Sydney Institute (NSW)	University of Ballarat

Source: Table A provider websites

Appendix 4 | Public and private VET providers of associate and bachelor degrees, 2006-2011

VET providers	State	Public** / private
Academy of Information Technology Pty Ltd	NSW	Private
Adelaide College of Divinity	SA	Private
Alphacrucis College	Multi-State	Private
Australian Institute of Music Ltd	NSW	Private
Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors Pty Ltd	Multi-State	Private
Avondale College of Higher Education	NSW	Private
Box Hill Institute of TAFE*	VIC	Public
Canberra Institute of Technology	ACT	Private
Chisholm Institute of TAFE	VIC	Public
Endeavour College	VIC	Private
Gordon Institute of TAFE	VIC	Public
Harvest Bible College	VIC	Private
Harvest West Bible College	WA	Private
Holmes Institute	VIC	Private
Holmesglen Institute of TAFE	VIC	Public
International College of Hotel Management (ICHM)	SA	Private
International College of Management, Sydney (ICMS)	NSW	Private
Jansen Newman Institute Pty Ltd	NSW	Private
Jazz Music Institute	QLD	Private
National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA)	NSW	Public
Nature Care College Pty Ltd	NSW	Private
Navitas Professional Institute Pty Ltd	NSW	Private
Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE	VIC	Public
Oceania Polytechnic Institute of Education Pty Ltd	VIC	Private
Polytechnic West	WA	Public
QANTM	Multi-State	Private
Queensland Institute of Business and Technology (QIBT)	QLD	Private
Raffles College of Design and Commerce	NSW	Private
SAE Institute and Qantm College	Multi-State	Private
Southbank Institute of Technology*	QLD	Public
Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT)*	NSW	Private
Tabor Adelaide	SA	Private
Tabor College NSW	NSW	Private
Tabor College Victoria	VIC	Private
TAFE NSW	NSW	Public
The JMC Academy	Multi-State	Private
Think Education Group	Multi-State	Private
Whitehouse Institute	VIC	Private
William Angliss Institute	VIC	Public

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013. *Case study institution. ** Public VET providers are Technical and Further Education institutions (TAFEs) and are state-funded. In the context of higher education, the Australian Government treats them as private HE providers.*

Appendix 5 | Associate and bachelor degrees offered by public, private and partnered VET providers, 2012-2013

Public VET Providers	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
Box Hill Institute (VIC)	Associate Degree in Applied Business in Music Industry Associate Degree in Applied Music Associate Degree in Biotechnology Associate Degree in Computer Systems (Networking) Associate Degree in Fashion Technology Associate Degree of Commerce (Applied) Associate Degree of Hospitality Management Bachelor of Applied Business in Music Industry Bachelor of Applied Music Bachelor of Biotechnology and Innovation Bachelor of Commerce (Applied) Bachelor of Computer Systems (Networking) Bachelor of Early Childhood (Education and Care) Bachelor of Fashion Bachelor of Hospitality Management Bachelor of Sustainable Built Environments
Chisholm Institute (VIC)	Bachelor of Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Bachelor of Engineering Technology Bachelor of Interactive Media Design
Holmesglen Institute (VIC)	Associate Degree in Business (Executive Administration) Associate Degree in Screen Production Associate Degree of Business (Accounting) Bachelor of Applied Science (Built Environment) Bachelor of Building Surveying Bachelor of Business (Accounting) Bachelor of Business (Executive Administration) Bachelor of Business (Marketing Management) Bachelor of Business Administration Bachelor of Construction Management and Economics Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Bachelor of Facilities Management Bachelor of Fashion (Apparel Engineering and Design) Bachelor of Hospitality Management Bachelor of Nursing Bachelor of Screen Production Bachelor of Sports Media
Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) (VIC)	Associate Degree in Agriculture and Land Management Associate Degree in Illustration Associate Degree in Writing and Publishing Associate Degree of Accounting Associate Degree of Aquaculture and Environmental Management Associate Degree of Business Associate Degree of Early Years Studies Associate Degree of Equine Studies Associate Degree of Hospitality Management Associate Degree of Information Technology Associate Degree of Music Associate Degree of Music Industry Associate Degree of Tertiary Studies Associate Degree of Viticulture and Winemaking Bachelor of Accounting Bachelor of Agriculture and Land Management Bachelor of Aquaculture Bachelor of Aquaculture and Environmental Management Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Early Years Studies Bachelor of Education (Early Years) Bachelor of Enterprise Learning Bachelor of Equine Studies Bachelor of Hospitality Management Bachelor of Illustration Bachelor of Information Technology Bachelor of Music Bachelor of Music Industry

Public VET Providers	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
	Bachelor of Viticulture and Winemaking Bachelor of Writing and Publishing
William Angliss Institute (VIC)	Bachelor of Culinary Management Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management
TAFE SA (SA)*	Associate Degree of Electronic Engineering Bachelor of Dance Performance Bachelor of Visual Arts and Design
Canberra Institute of Technology (ACT)	Bachelor of Design (Fashion Design) Bachelor of Forensic Science (Crime Scene Examination) Bachelor of Games and Virtual Worlds (Programming) Bachelor of Photography
TAFE NSW Higher Education (NSW)	Associate Degree of 3D Art and Animation Associate Degree of Accounting Bachelor of 3D Art and Animation Bachelor of Applied Finance (Financial Planning) Bachelor of Design (Interior Design) Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and Care (Birth-5) Bachelor of Information Technology (Network Security)
Southbank Institute of Technology (QLD)	Associate Degree in Civil Engineering
Polytechnic West (WA)	Associate Degree in Aviation (Aeronautics) Associate Degree in Aviation (Maintenance Engineering) Associate Degree in Aviation (Operations Management) Associate Degree in Hospitality Management Associate Degree of Business Associate Degree of Fashion Business Associate Degree of Network Technology

*Source: TEQSA, training.gov.au; Table A provider websites. *No data from these providers were used in the analyses of Chapter 4. The analysis in Chapter 4 was based on provision from 2006-2011. Not all VET providers on the 2012 OPP list were represented in the 2006-2011 data*

Private VET Providers	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
Academies Australasia Polytechnic (VIC)*	Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management
Academy of Information Technology	Associate Degree of Interactive Media Bachelor of Information Technology (Accelerated) Bachelor of Information Technology (Standard) Bachelor of Interactive Media (Accelerated) Bachelor of Interactive Media (Standard)
Adelaide College of Divinity (SA)	Associate Degree of Ministry Bachelor of Ministry
Alphacrucis College	Bachelor of Applied Theology (Korean) Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry
Australian College of Applied Psychology* (=training.gov.au RTO name)(TEQSA provider name: Navitas Professional Institute)	Associate Degree of Applied Social Science Bachelor of Applied Social Science Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Coaching) Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Counselling) Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Management) Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Sport and Performance) Bachelor of Psychological Science Bachelor of Psychological Science (Honours)
Australian Guild of Music Education Inc.*	Bachelor of Music
Australian Institute of Business*	Associate Degree of Management Bachelor of Accounting Bachelor of Business Administration Bachelor of Business Administration (Entrepreneurial Management) Bachelor of Business Administration (Financial Management) Bachelor of Business Administration (Human Resource Management) Bachelor of Business Administration (Logistics and Supply Chain Management) Bachelor of Business Administration (Marketing) Bachelor of Business Administration (Tourism and Hospitality Management)
Australian Institute of Music	Bachelor of Entertainment Management Bachelor of Music (Arts Management) Bachelor of Music (Audio)

Private VET Providers	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
	Bachelor of Music (Classical) Bachelor of Music (Composition and Music Production) Bachelor of Music (Contemporary) Bachelor of Music (Music Theatre) Bachelor of Performance
Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors	Bachelor of Counselling Bachelor of Psychological Science
Avondale College of Higher Education (NSW)	Associate Degree of Classroom Support (Primary) Associate Degree of Theological Studies Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching (Honours) Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Teaching Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Teaching (Honours) Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)(Honours) Bachelor of Education (Primary) Bachelor of Education (Primary) (Honours) Bachelor of Education (Secondary) Bachelor of Education (Secondary) (Honours) Bachelor of Ministry and Theology Bachelor of Ministry and Theology (Honours) Bachelor of Nursing Bachelor of Science Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Teaching Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Teaching (Honours) Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) (Honours) Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary) Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary) (Honours) Bachelor of Theology Bachelor of Theology (Honours)
Cambridge International College Australia*	Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Business (Accounting) Bachelor of Business (Community Service Management) Bachelor of Business (Management) Bachelor of Business (Marketing)
Endeavour College of Natural Health (Australian College of Natural Medicine Pty Ltd)	Bachelor of Health Science (Acupuncture) Bachelor of Health Science (Homeopathy) Bachelor of Health Science (Musculoskeletal Therapy) Bachelor of Health Science (Naturopathy) Bachelor of Health Science (Nutritional Medicine) Bachelor of Health Science (Western Herbal Medicine)
Group Colleges Australia Pty Ltd*	Associate Degree of Accounting Associate Degree of Business Bachelor of Accounting Bachelor of Business
Harvest Bible College	Associate Degree of Ministry Bachelor of Arts (Biblical Studies) Bachelor of Arts (Ministry)
Harvest West Bible College	Bachelor of Arts (Biblical Studies) Bachelor of Arts (Ministry)
Holmes Institute (VIC)	Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Fashion and Business Bachelor of Information Systems Bachelor of Professional Accounting
International College of Hotel Management (SA)	Associate Degree in Hospitality Management Bachelor of Business (Hospitality Management) Bachelor of International Hotel Management Bachelor of International Hotel Management (Swiss Hotel Association)
International College of Management	Associate Degree of Business Bachelor of Business Management Bachelor of Events Management Bachelor of Hospitality Management Bachelor of International Tourism Bachelor of Property Services Management Bachelor of Retail Services Management Bachelor of Sports Management

Private VET Providers	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
Jansen Newman Institute Pty Ltd	Associate Degree of Applied Social Science (Community Services) Associate Degree of Applied Social Science (Counselling) Associate Degree of Applied Social Science (Human Resource Management) Associate Degree of Applied Social Science (Leadership Development) Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Community Services) Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Counselling) Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Human Resource Management) Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Leadership Development) Bachelor of Counselling and Human Change
Jazz Music Institute (QLD)	Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance
Le Cordon Bleu Australia (SA)*	Bachelor of Business (Food Entrepreneurship) Bachelor of Business (International Hotel Management) Bachelor of Business (International Restaurant Management) Bachelor of Business (Wine Entrepreneurship)
National Institute of Dramatic Art, NIDA (NSW)	Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Acting) Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Costume) Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Design) Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Production) Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Properties) Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Staging)
Paramount College of Natural Medicine (WA)*	Bachelor of Health Science (Homeopathy) Bachelor of Health Science (Mind Body Medicine) Bachelor of Health Science (Naturopathy) Bachelor of Health Science (Nutritional Medicine) Bachelor of Health Science (Western Herbal Medicine)
Phoenix Institute of Australia Pty Ltd (VIC)*	Associate Degree of Holistic Counselling Bachelor of Holistic Counselling
Queensland Institute of Business & Technology (QIBT) (QLD)	Associate Degree in Commerce and Business
Raffles College of Design and Commerce (NSW)	Associate Degree of Commerce Associate Degree of Design Associate Degree of Visual Communication Bachelor of Accountancy Bachelor of Arts (Visual Communication) Bachelor of Commerce Bachelor of Design
SAE Institute Pty Ltd (NSW)	Bachelor of Audio Production Bachelor of Creative Media Bachelor of Film Production Bachelor of Interactive Entertainment
South Australian Institute of Business & Technology (SA)*	Associate Degree of Management
Stott's Colleges	Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Business (Accounting) Bachelor of Business (Community Services Management)
Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (Navitas), SIBT* (NSW)	Associate Degree of Business
Tabor Adelaide (SA) (TEQSA provider name: Tabor College Incorporated)	Associate Degree in Arts (Creative Writing) Associate Degree in Arts (Humanities) Associate Degree in Social Science (Counselling) Associate Degree of Intercultural Studies Associate Degree of Ministry Associate Degree of Social Science (Youth Work) Associate Degree of Theology Bachelor of Arts & Education (Middle School) Bachelor of Arts & Education (Secondary) Bachelor of Arts (Creative Writing) Bachelor of Arts (Education Studies) Bachelor of Arts (Humanities) Bachelor of Arts (Music) Bachelor of Arts (TESOL/ESL) Bachelor of Education (Middle School) Bachelor of Education (Primary) Bachelor of Education (Secondary) [Graduate Entry] Bachelor of Intercultural Studies Bachelor of Ministry Bachelor of Social Science (Counselling)

Private VET Providers	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
	Bachelor of Social Science (Youth Work) Bachelor of Theology Bachelor of Theology and Ministry
Tabor College (NSW) Ltd	Associate Degree of Christian Counselling Associate Degree of Ministry Associate Degree of Theology Bachelor of Christian Counselling Bachelor of Ministry Bachelor of Theology
Tabor Victoria (VIC)	Associate Degree in Theology Bachelor of Arts Bachelor of Arts in Christian Counselling Bachelor of Theology Bachelor of Theology (Biblical Studies) Bachelor of Theology (Ministry) Bachelor of Theology (Mission Studies) Bachelor of Theology (Theological Studies)
The JMC Academy (NSW)	Associate Degree of Audio Engineering and Sound Production Associate Degree of Audio Engineering and Sound Production (Accelerated) Associate Degree of Audio Engineering and Sound Production (Standard) Associate Degree of Creative Arts (3D Animation) Associate Degree of Creative Arts (3D Animation) (Accelerated) Associate Degree of Creative Arts (3D Animation) (Standard) Associate Degree of Creative Arts (Film and Television) Associate Degree of Creative Arts (Game Design) (Accelerated) Associate Degree of Creative Arts (Game Design) (Standard) Associate Degree of Entertainment Business Management Associate Degree of Music (Contemporary Performance) Bachelor of Creative Arts (3D Animation) (Accelerated) Bachelor of Creative Arts (3D Animation) (Standard) Bachelor of Creative Arts (Film and Television) Bachelor of Creative Arts (Game Design) (Accelerated) Bachelor of Creative Arts (Game Design)(Standard) Bachelor of Creative Technology (Audio Engineering and Sound Production) Bachelor of Creative Technology (Audio Engineering and Sound Production)(Accelerated) Bachelor of Creative Technology (Audio Engineering and Sound Production)(Standard) Bachelor of Creative Technology (Digital Animation) Bachelor of Creative Technology (Digital Television Production) Bachelor of Entertainment (Business Management) Bachelor of Music (Contemporary Performance)
Whitehouse Institute of Design, Australia (NSW)	Bachelor of Design

*Source: TEQSA, training.gov.au; Table A provider websites. *No data from these providers were used in the analyses of Chapter 4. The analysis in Chapter 4 was based on provision from 2006-2011. Not all VET providers on the 2012 OPP list were represented in the 2006-2011 data*

Partnered VET Providers**	Partner	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
Advance TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University	Associate Degree in Degree Arts, Business and Sciences
	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Applied Management
Academies Australasia Polytechnic (VIC)	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Business Bachelor of Business (Marketing) Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) Bachelor of Management Bachelor of Management (Human Resource Management) Bachelor of Information Technology (Business Systems) Bachelor of Information Technology (Computer Games)

Partnered VET Providers**	Partner	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors	Australian Institute of Psychology	Bachelor of Psychological Science
Bendigo TAFE (BRIT) (VIC)	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Applied Management Bachelor of Applied Management (Design)
Canberra Institute of Technology (ACT)	Charles Sturt University	Bachelor of Business Studies Graduate Certificate in Management (Professional Practice)
	Australian National University	Associate Degree Specialising in Science
Central Gippsland TAFE (GippsTAFE) (VIC)	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood) Bachelor of Sports Management Bachelor of Engineering Technology Bachelor of Applied Management (Design) Bachelor of Applied Management Masters of Leadership
Chisholm Institute (VIC)	Deakin University	Associate Degree in Degree Arts, Business and Sciences Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
Gold Coast Institute of TAFE	Southern Cross University (SCU College)	Associate Degree of Business
GO TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University	Associate Degree in Degree Arts, Business and Sciences
Illawarra Institute (NSW)	University of Wollongong	Bachelor of Digital Media Bachelor of Commerce (Event Management, Tourism Management, Hospitality Management)
Kangan Institute of TAFE (VIC)	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Applied Management
Le Cordon Bleu	Northern Sydney Institute	Bachelor of Business (International Hotel Management) Bachelor of Business (International Restaurant Management)
	Victoria University	Associate Degree of Business (Culinary Management) Bachelor of Business Degree (Culinary Management)
	University of South Australia	Bachelor of Business (International Hotel Management) Bachelor of Business (International Restaurant Management) Bachelor of Business (Food Entrepreneurship) Bachelor of Business (Wine Entrepreneurship)
Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE	Holmesglen	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Bachelor of Business (Accounting)
	University of Canberra	Bachelor of Screen Production Bachelor of Fashion (Apparel Engineering and Design)
	University of Southern Queensland	Bachelor of Business (Tourism and Events Management)
North Coast TAFE (NSW)	Southern Cross University (SCU College)	Associate Degree of Arts, Associate Degree of Business
Southbank Institute of Technology	University of Sunshine Coast	Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) Bachelor of Justice and Legal Studies Bachelor of Business (Tourism, Leisure and Event Management)
South West Institute of TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University	Associate Degree in Degree Arts, Business and Sciences Bachelor of Early Childhood Education
South West Sydney Institute	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Applied Management Bachelor of Applied Management (Design)
Sunraysia TAFE (VIC)	Deakin University	Associate Degree in Degree Arts, Business and Sciences Bachelor of Early Childhood Education

Partnered VET Providers**	Partner	Associate and Bachelor Degree Programs
	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Applied Management Bachelor of Applied Management (Design)
	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Applied Management
Wodonga TAFE (VIC)	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Applied Management Bachelor of Applied Management (Design)
	Deakin University	Associate Degree in Degree Arts, Business and Sciences Bachelor of Applied Science (Psychology)
Western Sydney Institute	University of Ballarat	Bachelor of Applied Management Bachelor of Applied Management (Design)

*Source: TEQSA, training.gov.au; Table A provider websites. **Data relating to the delivery of degrees by partnered providers (column 1) are aggregated in data relating to the partner institutions (column 2).*

Appendix 6 | NCVER data on VET-provider associate and bachelor degree student participation

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) data on VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees proved to be incomplete compared with other data sources. This can be explained in several ways. First, NCVER only collects data from public (i.e. state-funded) TAFE institutions and excludes private fee-for-service VET providers. Second, there appear to be issues with the collection of data. For example, a report from Skills Victoria (which collects its own data directly from VET providers) records 'undergraduate' enrolments delivered by VET providers in Victoria as being 1,292 in 2008, 1,859 in 2009, and 2,330 in 2010 (2011: 21). However, NCVER data provided by special request indicate significantly different numbers of students. The Table below shows the discrepancies between the different data sources (NCVER, Skills Victoria and DIICCSRTE). These data reveal that NCVER significantly under-count the number of VET-provider degree students, even when reporting on only publicly and part-publicly funded VET providers.

Victorian VET-provider bachelor degree enrolments, data differences by source

Data Source	2008	2009	2010
NCVER	-	1,859	1,007
Skills Victoria	1,292	1,856	2,330
DIICCSRTE	5,471	6,031	6,374

Source: NCVER National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013; Skills Victoria 2011; DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

Further data requests from DIICCSRTE showed that the extent of public VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees is small compared with private provision. The NCVER-derived data are included here partly to illustrate the extent of the under-counting of degrees in NCVER's Provider Collection and also for report completeness.

Patterns of delivery

All students in AQF course levels by state (public VET)

#	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
NSW	363,535	363,560	372,466	387,922	423,874	443,371
VIC	344,681	339,288	349,119	378,868	416,728	507,011
QLD	226,446	232,644	248,374	254,596	267,400	283,144
SA	67,502	73,207	75,459	79,498	88,337	94,887
WA	120,486	125,854	133,029	145,706	153,896	156,754
TAS	38,060	39,958	42,617	40,740	46,892	43,959
NT	19,798	20,870	19,509	20,900	21,187	21,806
ACT	19,234	19,708	20,187	21,774	24,413	24,096
Total	**1,199,742**	**1,213,089**	**1,260,760**	**1,330,004**	**1,442,727**	**1,575,028**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Student enrolments in AQF course levels in public VET

Australia	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Graduate diploma	63	77	58	144	200	142
Graduate certificate	941	1,075	1,310	1,773	1,433	2,260
Bachelor degree (Honours)	23	-	-	-	-	-
Bachelor degree (Pass)	1,327	431	427	2,021	2,193	2,478
Advanced diploma	38,165	34,932	35,007	38,093	39,260	39,583
Associate degree	154	263	-	188	190	93
Diploma	127,007	129,187	135,266	157,792	189,739	217,683
Certificate IV	177,610	188,665	190,203	218,525	254,100	305,948
Certificate III	463,549	476,785	520,066	525,807	553,345	608,073
Certificate II	292,559	281,619	287,044	295,568	312,289	314,881
Certificate I	98,344	100,055	91,379	90,093	89,978	83,887
Total AQF	**1,199,742**	**1,213,089**	**1,260,760**	**1,330,004**	**1,442,727**	**1,575,028**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

The Table above shows that the number of public VET-provider associate and bachelor degrees is small compared with all of public VET (see Table below).

Table: All students in AQF course levels by provider type (public VET)

Australia #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Publicly funded – TAFE	917,232	927,227	950,678	981,853	1,017,434	1,014,435
Publicly funded – Other Govt	52,984	50,056	48,556	47,977	50,778	8,381
Contestable funded – ACE	62,333	66,126	62,606	69,523	64,431	62,463
Contestable funded – Other	161,079	162,374	188,881	218,537	294,294	468,829
Mixed providers	6,114	7,306	10,039	12,114	15,790	20,920
Total	**1,199,742**	**1,213,089**	**1,260,760**	**1,330,004**	**1,442,727**	**1,575,028**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Disadvantage learner participation, across all AQF levels

Disadvantaged learner groups in public VET, all AQF, number

All AQF #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	194,787	210,415	221,727	226,169	249,980	274,957
Indigenous	51,715	55,043	56,591	59,545	68,540	74,570
With a disability	72,318	70,705	70,361	74,975	85,224	96,660
Non-English speaking background countries	162,412	170,785	183,008	203,274	217,421	237,034
Regional	451,497	456,358	475,265	494,561	543,351	583,559
Remote	57,760	60,231	60,613	61,505	64,522	67,828
All students	**1,199,742**	**1,213,089**	**1,260,760**	**1,330,004**	**1,442,727**	**1,575,028**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Disadvantaged learner groups in public VET: all AQF, per cent

All AQF % (excludes 'Not known'*)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	18.1	18.2	18.5	18.0	18.3	18.5
Indigenous	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.1
With a disability	7.2	6.8	6.5	6.5	6.9	7.1
Non-English speaking background countries	15.5	15.7	16.1	17.0	16.5	16.4
Regional	38.0	38.0	37.9	37.5	38.1	37.7
Remote	4.9	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.4

*Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013. *proportion of 'Not known' in each category for VET is sometimes higher than % of the particular disadvantaged learner group.*

Comparison of disadvantaged learner groups in VET and University, all AQF

All AQF % (excludes 'Not known')	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	**Uni**	**VET**	**Uni**	**VET**	**Uni**
Low SES*	18.0	16.3	18.3	16.7	18.5	17.0
Indigenous	4.9	1.32	5.1	1.38	5.1	1.41
With a disability	6.5	4.5	6.9	4.8	7.1	5.0
Non-English speaking background countries	17.0	3.2	16.5	3.1	16.4	3.2
Regional	37.5	18.8	38.1	19.1	37.7	19.2
Remote	4.7	0.97	4.5	0.95	4.4	0.93

*Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013; National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013. *Low SES reporting varies by sector: VET lowest quintile (20%); University lowest quartile (25%). Both use SEIFA Index of Education and Occupation (IEO)*

The following tables provide data on VET-provider bachelor degrees and comparisons with university bachelor degrees.

Disadvantaged learner groups in public VET: bachelor degree, number

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	71	17	14	67	149	105
Indigenous	3	-	1	3	6	1
With a disability	57	14	20	64	78	84
Non-English speaking background countries	429	4	15	878	1,208	1,266
Regional	84	38	46	137	79	145
Remote	2	-	-	-	2	-
All bachelor degree	**1,350**	**431**	**427**	**2,021**	**2,193**	**2,478**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Disadvantaged learner groups in public VET: bachelor degree, per cent

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) (excludes 'Not known')	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	8.5	4.2	3.4	5.4	14.8	7.8
Indigenous	0.3	-	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.04
With a disability	10.1	10.3	7.8	3.3	4.9	3.4
Non-English speaking background countries	44.3	4.7	10.0	51.2	67.3	51.2
Regional	6.3	9.0	10.8	6.8	3.6	5.9
Remote	0.1	-	-	-	0.1	-

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Comparison of disadvantaged learner groups in VET and university, bachelor degree

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) (excludes 'Not known')	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	Uni	VET	Uni	VET	Uni
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	5.4	16.2	14.8	16.5	7.8	16.8
Indigenous	0.2	1.24	0.3	1.3	0.04	1.34
With a disability	3.3	4.52	4.9	4.85	3.4	5.03
Non-English speaking background countries	51.2	3.22	67.3	3.17	51.2	3.22
Regional	6.8	18.6	3.6	18.8	5.9	18.9
Remote	-	0.93	0.1	0.92	-	0.89

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013; National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

The following tables provide data on VET-provider associate degrees and comparisons with university associate degrees.

Disadvantaged learner groups in public VET: associate degree, number

Associate degree #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	17	33	-	13	14	4
Indigenous		1				
With a disability	6	8	-	5	10	5
Non-English speaking background countries	28	43	-	58	56	42
Regional	11	12	-	5	26	9
Remote	-	-	-	-	-	-
All associate degree	**154**	**263**	**-**	**188**	**190**	**93**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Disadvantaged learner groups in public VET: associate degree, per cent

Associate degree % (excludes 'Not known')	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	11.6	13.3	-	8.9	10.3	9.3
Indigenous	-	0.4	-	-	-	-
With a disability	4.1	3.2	-	2.7	5.3	5.4
Non-English speaking background countries	18.3	16.8	-	31.0	29.6	45.7
Regional	7.1	4.6	-	2.7	13.8	9.8
Remote	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Comparison of disadvantaged learner groups in VET and university, associate degree

Associate degree (pass & honours % (excludes 'Not known')	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	Uni	VET	Uni	VET	Uni
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	8.9	27.8	10.3	27.1	9.3	26.5
Indigenous	-	5.8	-	5.5	-	5.2
With a disability	2.7	3.6	5.3	4.1	5.4	4
Non-English speaking background countries	31.0	1.5	29.6	1.8	45.7	2.1
Regional	2.7	34.3	13.8	33.6	9.8	32.6
Remote	-	2.4	-	2.4	-	2.3

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013; National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Disadvantage learner course awards, across all AQF levels

Disadvantaged learner group course awards VET: all AQF (number)

All AQF #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1(Lowest education and	46,118	51,739	58,314	64,689	72,380	73,475
Indigenous	8,235	9,330	10,803	12,784	15,606	16,891
With a disability	15,991	16,163	17,369	19,889	23,237	25,577
Non-English speaking background countries	48,143	54,289	60,822	70,716	82,161	80,191
Regional	102,024	111,865	125,739	137,789	153,729	149,331
Remote	9,640	10,352	12,612	12,490	15,129	14,652
All AQF	**292,144**	**319,147**	**351,556**	**393,854**	**443,501**	**444,481**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Disadvantaged learner group course awards VET: all AQF (per cent)

All AQF % (excludes 'Not known')	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	17.6	17.4	17.8	17.8	17.7	17.7
Indigenous	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.9	4.1
With a disability	6.4	5.7	5.5	5.7	6.0	6.4
Non-English speaking background countries	18.6	18.7	18.7	19.7	19.9	19.1
Regional	35.2	35.3	36.0	35.2	35.1	34.1
Remote	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.5	3.3

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013; National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Comparison of disadvantaged learner groups award completions in VET and university, all AQF

All AQF / Undergraduate, per cent (excludes 'Not known')	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	Uni	VET	Uni	VET	Uni
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	17.8	14.8	17.7	14.9	17.7	15.1
Indigenous	3.6	0.9	3.9	0.9	4.1	0.9
With a disability	5.7	4.1	6.0	4.2	6.4	4.4
Non-English speaking background countries	19.7	2.7	19.9	2.7	19.1	2.7
Regional	35.2	17.6	35.1	17.5	34.1	17.2
Remote	3.2	0.7	3.5	0.7	3.3	0.7

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013; National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

The following tables provide data on VET-provider bachelor degrees and comparisons with university bachelor degrees, by disadvantaged learners.

Disadvantaged learner group course awards VET: bachelor degree, number

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	4	4	7	5	6	7
Indigenous	-	-	1	-	-	-
With a disability	3	6	4	9	11	6
Non-English speaking background countries	3	-	5	30	84	119
Regional	16	15	19	14	15	10
Remote	-	-	-	-	-	-
All bachelor degree	**172**	**174**	**131**	**190**	**274**	**184**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Disadvantaged learner group course awards VET: bachelor degree, per cent

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) % (excludes 'Not known')	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1(Lowest education and occupation status)	3.1	2.5	5.5	3.0	2.7	9.3
Indigenous	-	-	1.0	-	-	-
With a disability	7.0	9.7	4.1	5.0	4.1	3.3
Non-English speaking background countries	7.3	-	9.4	34.1	47.2	64.7
Regional	9.7	8.9	14.7	7.4	5.6	5.4
Remote	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Comparison of disadvantaged learner groups award completions in VET and university, bachelor degree

Bachelor degree % (excludes 'Not known')	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	Uni	VET	Uni	VET	Uni
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	3.0	14.6	2.7	14.7	9.3	14.9
Indigenous	-	0.83	-	0.81	-	0.81
With a disability	5.0	4.1	4.1	4.2	3.3	4.3
Non-English speaking background countries	34.1	2.7	47.2	2.7	64.7	2.8
Regional	7.4	17.3	5.6	17.2	5.4	17.0
Remote	-	0.68	-	0.69	-	0.71

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013; National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

The following tables provide data on VET-provider associate degrees and comparisons with university associate degrees, by disadvantaged learners.

Disadvantaged learner group course awards VET: associate degree, number

Associate degree #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	-	2	-	-	2	2
Indigenous	-	-	-	-	-	-
With a disability	-	-	-	-	2	-
Non-English speaking background countries	-	-	-	-	9	7
Inner regional	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outer regional	-	-	-	-	1	-
Remote	-	-	-	-	-	-
Very remote	-	-	-	-	-	-
All associate degree	**-**	**5**	**-**	**13**	**34**	**24**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Disadvantaged learner group course awards VET: associate degree, per cent

Associate degree % (excludes 'Not known')	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
SES Quintile 1(Lowest education and occupation status)	-	40.0	-			13.3
Indigenous	-	-	-	-	-	-
With a disability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-English speaking background countries	-	-	-			29.2
Regional	-	-	-			-
Remote	-	-	-			-

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Comparison of disadvantaged learner groups award completions in VET and university, associate degree

Associate degree % (excludes 'Not known')	2009		2010		2011	
	VET	Uni	VET	Uni	VET	Uni
SES Quintile 1 (Lowest education and occupation status)	-	25.1	7.1	23.6	13.3	24.6
Indigenous	-	4.2	-	4.6	-	5.3
With a disability	-	3.1	5.9	3.1	-	4.2
Non-English speaking background countries	-	1.2	26.5	1.1	29.2	1.6
Regional	-	26.0	2.9	25.4	-	29.3
Remote	-	1.5	-	2.0	-	1.8

Source: DIICCSRTE Data Request, 2013; National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Funding source, all AQF

Funding source: all AQF, number

#	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Publicly funded – TAFE	238,814	258,117	273,114	296,162	314,109	271,208
Publicly funded – Other Govt	1,545	1,447	1,524	1,391	1,477	1,990
Contestable funded – ACE	9,494	13,385	15,162	16,532	17,745	16,364
Contestable funded – Other	42,291	46,225	61,756	79,769	110,170	154,919
Total	**292,144**	**319,174**	**351,556**	**393,854**	**443,501**	**444,481**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Funding source: all AQF, per cent

%	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Publicly funded – TAFE	81.7	80.9	77.7	75.2	70.8	61.0
Publicly funded – Other Govt	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4
Contestable funded – ACE	3.2	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	3.7
Contestable funded – Other	14.5	14.5	17.6	20.3	24.8	34.9
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

VET-provider bachelor degrees

Funding source: bachelor degree, number

#	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Publicly funded – TAFE	57	54	25	74	157	184
Publicly funded – Other Govt	115	120	106	116	117	-
Contestable funded – ACE	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contestable funded – Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**172**	**174**	**131**	**190**	**274**	**184**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Funding source: bachelor degree, per cent

%	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Publicly funded – TAFE	33.1	31.0	19.1	38.9	57.3	100.0
Publicly funded – Other Govt	66.9	69.0	80.9	61.1	42.7	-
Contestable funded – ACE	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contestable funded – Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

VET-provider associate degrees

Funding source: associate degree, number

#	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Publicly funded – TAFE	-	5	-	13	34	24
Publicly funded – Other Govt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contestable funded – ACE	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contestable funded – Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**5**	**-**	**13**	**34**	**24**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Funding source: associate degree, per cent

%	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Publicly funded – TAFE	-	100.0	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
Publicly funded – Other Govt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contestable funded – ACE	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contestable funded – Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**100.0**	**-**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Field of study

Field of study: all AQF, number

All AQF #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Natural and physical sciences	1,337	1,551	1,855	1,974	2,470	2,410
Information technology	9,976	9,252	8,059	8,398	8,366	7,243
Engineering and related technologies	46,485	50,922	55,858	62,204	68,830	73,079
Architecture and building	14,035	16,162	19,161	21,746	24,092	20,811
Agriculture, environmental and related studies	11,812	11,816	12,911	14,367	15,733	16,180
Health	11,083	12,938	15,692	17,116	21,224	19,628
Education	10,834	16,133	17,842	19,296	23,129	23,740
Management and commerce	81,561	91,949	102,191	110,773	123,335	131,216
Society and culture	53,666	50,621	55,017	67,158	78,643	83,574
Creative arts	9,988	9,416	9,589	11,810	14,243	12,391
Food, hospitality and personal services	26,671	29,132	32,056	34,080	35,424	32,139
Mixed field programs	14,696	19,282	21,325	24,932	28,012	22,070
Total	**292,144**	**319,174**	**351,556**	**393,854**	**443,501**	**444,481**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Field of study: all AQF, per cent

All AQF %	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Natural and physical sciences	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5
Information technology	3.4	2.9	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.6
Engineering and related technologies	15.9	16.0	15.9	15.8	15.5	16.4
Architecture and building	4.8	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.4	4.7
Agriculture, environmental and related studies	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.6
Health	3.8	4.1	4.5	4.3	4.8	4.4
Education	3.7	5.1	5.1	4.9	5.2	5.3
Management and commerce	27.9	28.8	29.1	28.1	27.8	29.5
Society and culture	18.4	15.9	15.6	17.1	17.7	18.8
Creative arts	3.4	3.0	2.7	3.0	3.2	2.8
Food, hospitality and personal services	9.1	9.1	9.1	8.7	8.0	7.2
Mixed field programs	5.0	6.0	6.1	6.3	6.3	5.0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

VET-provider bachelor degrees

Field of study: bachelor degree, number

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Natural and physical sciences	6	23	11	-	9	-
Information technology	-	-	-	5	14	2
Engineering and related technologies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Architecture and building	-	-	-	21	23	20
Agriculture, environmental and related studies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
Management and commerce	21	-	-	18	58	112
Society and culture	-	-	-	-	-	-
Creative arts	145	151	116	136	156	30
Food, hospitality and personal services	-	-	4	10	14	20
Mixed field programs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**172**	**174**	**131**	**190**	**274**	**184**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Field of study: bachelor degree, per cent

Bachelor degree (pass & honours) %	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Natural and physical sciences	3.5	13.2	8.4	-	3.3	-
Information technology	-	-	-	2.6	5.1	1.1
Engineering and related technologies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Architecture and building	-	-	-	11.1	8.4	10.9
Agriculture, environmental and related studies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
Management and commerce	12.2	-	-	9.5	21.2	60.9
Society and culture	-	-	-	-	-	-
Creative arts	84.3	86.8	88.5	71.6	56.9	16.3
Food, hospitality and personal services	-	-	3.1	5.3	5.1	10.9
Mixed field programs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

VET-provider associate degrees

Field of study: associate degree, number

Associate degree #	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Natural and physical sciences	-	-	-	-	-	-
Information technology	-	-	-	-	2	2
Engineering and related technologies	-	5	-	-	-	-
Architecture and building	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agriculture, environmental and related studies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
Management and commerce	-	-	-	-	3	1
Society and culture	-	-	-	13	27	21
Creative arts	-	-	-	-	2	-
Food, hospitality and personal services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mixed field programs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**5**	**-**	**13**	**34**	**24**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Field of study: associate degree, per cent

Associate degree %	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Natural and physical sciences	-	-	-	-	-	-
Information technology	-	-	-	-	5.9	8.3
Engineering and related technologies	-	100.0	-	-	-	-
Architecture and building	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agriculture, environmental and related studies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
Management and commerce	-	-	-	-	8.8	4.2
Society and culture	-	-	-	100.0	79.4	87.5
Creative arts	-	-	-	-	5.9	-
Food, hospitality and personal services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mixed field programs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**100.0**	**-**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Award completions by state

Award completions, by state: bachelor degree, number

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bachelor degree (pass & honours)						
NSW	115	120	106	116	117	6
VIC	-	-	7	74	157	178
QLD	-	-	-	-	-	-
SA	24	-	-	-	-	-
WA	-	-	-	-	-	-
TAS	-	-	-	-	-	-
NT	-	-	-	-	-	-
ACT	33	54	18	-	-	-
Total Bachelor	**172**	**174**	**131**	**190**	**274**	**184**
Associate degree						
NSW	-	-	-	-	-	-
VIC	-	-	-	13	34	24
OLD		5	-	-	-	-
SA	-	-	-	-	-	-
WA	-	-	-	-	-	-
TAS	-	-	-	-	-	-
NT	-	-	-	-	-	-
ACT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Associate	**-**	**5**	**-**	**13**	**34**	**24**
Total HE	***172***	***179***	***131***	***203***	***308***	***208***

Source: National VET Provider Collection, Data Request, 2013

Appendix 7 | Australian university associate and bachelor degree enrolments and completions

Australian universities associate and bachelor degree enrolments

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bachelor Degree	509,671	519,630	522,944	543,109	568,265	587,034
Associate Degree	4,685	5,472	6,437	6,962	7,727	8,192
Total	**514,356**	**525,102**	**529,381**	**550,071**	**575,992**	**595,226**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

Australian universities associate and bachelor degree completions

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Bachelor Degree	104,247	102,401	100,649	100,228	102,799	105,985
Associate Degree	375	861	1,647	1,208	1,406	1,334
Total	**104,622**	**103,262**	**102,296**	**101,436**	**104,205**	**107,319**

Source: DIICCSRTE, Data Request, 2013

Appendix 8 | Case study indicative interview questions

How long has the course been offered?

How many students are enrolled?

Have student numbers increased over time? Stayed the same? Decreased? Why?

What are the highest qualifications of the teaching staff?

How long have the staff been involved in the course?

What are the community perceptions of the course/qualification? Employer perceptions? Prospective student perceptions? How do you know? Are these groups surveyed? If so, can we access these data?

Where do students come from (into the course)? From school? From a VET course?

Where do students go after the course? Into employment? To another course?

What support is available to students to do the course?

What encouragement do students receive to enrol?

What support do students receive to gain employment after the course?

Does the institution survey students about the reasons for doing the course? Can we access this?

Does the institution conduct an exit survey of students post-graduation, about the course but also about what they are doing post graduation? Can we access this?

Does the institution have enrolment data on students that distinguish by student equity type? (e.g., disability, Indigenous, etc.) Can we access this?

What resources (including infrastructure) of the community does the institution utilise to run the course?

To what extent is the course linked/responding to the needs of the community? Includes industry/employer needs but also more broadly.

To what extent is the course contributing to or responding to a 'place based' approach to education provision and service provision more broadly?

How is the course different or the same as a similar qualification offered by a university?

How is the pedagogy different/similar?

How is the curriculum and assessment different/similar? Is the difference/similarity deliberate? If so, why?

Why was the course developed? What is its purpose? Does this include an equity purpose?

How do the courses/qualifications contribute to the needs of communities?

How is the course influenced by state and federal government policy and funding arrangements?

What barriers, if any, does government present for these courses?

Are there distinct pathways into and out of these courses? If so, what are they?