

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## *VET programs boost employment prospects*

Participation in Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs improves the employment prospects and earning power of recent school leavers, a report released today by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) concludes.

There are benefits to young men and women in undertaking a VET program rather than entering the workforce without any form of post-school education and training, with completion of a program providing even greater benefits.

The VET pathways from school to work taken by more than 6000 young Australians were examined. Data were collected annually from 1995 when the study's participants were in Year 9, until 2004 when most were aged 23 and had entered the workforce. By that age, approximately 20 per cent of school leavers had done no post-school study or training, 40 per cent had commenced a university course and 40 per cent had undertaken a VET qualification.

All three VET pathways analysed – apprenticeships, traineeships and non-apprenticeship VET programs (mainly TAFE courses) – provide greater access to full-time employment. Of the young people who were employed, many more of those who had completed a VET qualification said their job was part of their intended career path.

The findings suggest that young women who complete a traineeship are more likely to find full-time employment than those who do no post-school study. Young men who complete apprenticeships experience very high levels of full-time employment and earn substantially higher wages than those who do no post-school study.

Traineeships are particularly important post-school pathways for Indigenous Australians and for those living in rural and remote areas.

Students who do not complete secondary schooling and who do no post-school training experience relatively poor labour market outcomes.

ACER's chief executive Professor Geoff Masters said the study underlines the importance of career advice in the early years of secondary schooling, when students form intentions about their future study and work.

“A lack of clear information about potential VET qualifications and careers is likely to lead to individuals having poorer labour force outcomes than they might otherwise achieve,” Professor Masters said.

Further information and additional findings are available in the report, *VET Pathways Taken by School Leavers* by David D. Curtis. The study is research report number 52 in the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY), a program funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) with support from state and territory governments.

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