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Deferring a University Offer in Victoria

2009 Year 12 Graduates - Three Years Out

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April 2013



**Deferring a University Offer in Victoria
2009 Year 12 Graduates - Three Years Out**

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Deferring a University Offer in Regional Victoria is a
longitudinal study involving the Local Learning Employment
Networks (LLENs), The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
and The Education Policy and Leadership Unit, Melbourne
Graduate School Of Education, University of Melbourne.
Copies of the earlier publications from this study can be
obtained through YACVic. The project partners would like
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Executive summary

This report is based on research commissioned by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) and the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), and funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). It presents the 2012 results from a longitudinal survey that was designed to capture the transition experiences, over a two year period, of 2009 school completers who had deferred a place at university. It complements the previous report (Polesel *et al* 2012) that reported on this cohort's destinations in 2011.

While annual surveys of school leavers provide a picture of their initial destinations, they do not provide a longer-term view of study and labour market transitions. For the target group of this study – students who have deferred a place at university – the longer term perspective is particularly important. Discovering what proportion of this group take up their deferred study (or another course) and understanding the barriers for those who do not are major issues. Describing the circumstances of those who are working or unemployed or not in the labour market are also important avenues of investigation if we are to ensure that the transition from school is a successful one for all young people. This longitudinal study of school completers in Victoria, who deferred their place at university, aims to do these things. It tracked the regional and metropolitan deferrers from the 2009 Year 12 cohort, who were first contacted in 2010, and further recontacted, in 2011 (Polesel *et al* 2012) and again in April/May 2012 (this report). It is recommended that this report is read in conjunction with three previous studies of a 2006 Year 12 cohort (May 2009, January 2011 and March 2012).

The current report, based on the recent 2012 recontact of the 2009 Year 12 cohort, comments on the destinations, activities and views of regional and metropolitan deferrers in their third year out of school, outlining their study and labour market activities since they were first identified as deferrers in 2010.

Key findings:

The study compared the main activities of 2009 Victorian school completers in their second year out of school (2011) and in their third year out of school (2012). The study found that:

- In 2011, 77.1% of all deferrers were in some form of recognised education or training, with 61.0% of the group attending university. The activities of this group in 2012 were not dissimilar. The proportion in education or training was moderately higher than in the previous year (2010) – 79.1% with a slight increase in the proportion of students at university (63.2%).
- Some students who were at university in 2011 progressed through to another destination in 2012 but most of those in university in 2011 were still there.
- In the case of young people who discontinued university in 2012, most of them progressed to full-time or part-time work.
- 25.0% of those unemployed and 25.0% of those working part-time in 2011 progressed to university in 2012, as did 23.3% of those employed full-time in 2011.

The study also compared the main activities of both metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers. The study found that:

- Deferrers from non-metropolitan Victoria are more likely to continue their studies in university in their third year out of school than are students from the city. The 2012 destination of the metropolitan deferrers who entered university the previous year shows that 88.2% were still in university. The non-metropolitan group, however, were more likely to continue their university degree in their third year out of school (91.7%).
- The non-metropolitan group was less likely to leave university for full-time or part-time work.
- Deferrers from metropolitan Melbourne were more likely to be in vocational education and training. Of the metropolitan students doing entry level VET in 2011, 34.8% continued study at entry level, with the remaining students most likely to progress to employment (43.3%). In contrast, the non-metropolitan deferrers studying entry-level VET

in 2011 were most likely to progress to advanced VET courses (22.2%) or to university (27.8%) with only 22.3% progressing to employment and 16.7% continuing study at entry level.

- With respect to apprenticeships and traineeships, the differences between the two groups were not large, with metropolitan students slightly more likely to be apprentices.
- Approximately two-thirds of the deferrers did not receive youth allowance. However, non-metropolitan deferrers were much more likely to be youth allowance recipients (51.4%).
- The most common reasons for not taking up study was cited as “found something else” (38.4%) or “don’t feel ready for more study at the moment” (16.8%).
- 47.7% of all non-metropolitan deferrers surveyed in 2012 had to relocate to commence their study, compared with only 13.3% of metropolitan deferrers.

Satisfaction with choices of metropolitan and non-metropolitan respondents:

- High proportions of both groups were satisfied with their current destination and believed that things had worked out the way they wanted since leaving school. The satisfaction levels of the non-metropolitan group (86.6%) were consistently a little higher than for their city counterparts (82.3%).
- Amongst university students, 96.1% of metropolitan students and 95.9% of non-metropolitan students expressed satisfaction with their life choices since leaving school.
- Deferrers who did not take up university study also expressed satisfaction with their lives since leaving school – 92.8% of metropolitan and 94.0% of non-metropolitan deferrers.
- Dissatisfaction levels with their education options were somewhat higher for deferrers with non-university destinations in 2012. From the metropolitan area, 13.2% of deferrers with non-university destinations were dissatisfied, compared with 7.8% of university students, while in the non-metropolitan area, 10.8% were dissatisfied, compared with 5.7% of the university students.

The study concluded that:

- High proportions of young people from metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas three years out of school were in education or training or full-time work, although approximately four in ten metropolitan deferrers and three in ten non-metropolitan deferrers were not in university in 2012.
- The proportion in education or training was moderately higher than in the second year out of school (79.1%). Most of those in university in 2011 were still there (89.9 %) and many of those who were not in university in 2011 started a university course in 2012.
- There is a persistent pattern in the deferral rate which shows that young people from rural regions defer university study at twice the rate of their counterparts from metropolitan location.
- Our research confirms the findings of our previous other reports that in their second year out of school approximately two-thirds of those who deferred university entry take up the university study.
- Our findings show that deferrers from non-metropolitan Victoria are more likely to take up a place at university in their second year out of school, and continue their study in their third year, than are students from the city. However, it is important to keep in mind that the deferral rate for non-metropolitan students remains significantly higher than that of metropolitan students, and that the overall proportion of regional students who go to university is still lower than for those from Melbourne.

What does our research tell us? 2006-2012

- Our research confirms the findings of our other reports that in their second year out of school approximately two-thirds of those who deferred university entry take up the university study.
- Of the remaining deferrers, approximately 15.9 per cent undertook vocational education and training (including apprentices and trainees), while approximately 12.0 per cent are working full-time. Only a small proportion of deferrers, around 8.3 per cent, were situated in what might be classified as an 'at risk' destination of part-time work, unemployed or inactive.
- There is a persistent pattern in the deferral rate which shows that young people from rural regions defer university study at twice the rate of their counterparts from metropolitan locations. The phenomenon of higher rates of deferral amongst non-metropolitan school completers in Victoria may be a widespread occurrence across rural Australia.
- Metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers who took up their place at a university in 2011 also differed in the universities they entered. Almost 40 per cent of the deferrers from the non-metropolitan area took up university places that are located in regional areas, whereas 5.4 per cent of metropolitan deferrers took up regional places. This suggests that factors such as university location, the travel involved and a desire to stay at home are more likely to affect non-metropolitan students. It may also be the case that their study pathways may be partially determined by the location of their preferred study options.
- The majority of university students were working. However, there are large differences between students from metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions in their likelihood of working and in the number of hours worked. Non-metropolitan students are much more likely not to be working at all – 48.6% in 2011, compared with 27.9 % of metropolitan students - with the result that over seven in ten metropolitan students are working while at university compared with just over five in ten non-metropolitan students.

- Approximately two-thirds of the students did not receive youth allowance. However, non-metropolitan deferrers were much more likely to be youth allowance recipients (51.4%). This is important as it is indicative of the importance of assisted independence while studying, particularly for the non-metropolitan students, who are more likely to be living away from home. Furthermore, those from non-metropolitan location who received youth allowance were more likely to study at university in their third year out of school (84%) comparing with only 68.9% of university students from metropolitan location who receive youth allowance.
- Overall, the findings from these studies suggest that non-metropolitan deferrers are in need of the greatest support in their first two years out of school. This is when financial pressures and travel barriers are felt most keenly. While their rates of university take-up and continuation are strong in later years, there is a case for more effective structures of initial support both to prevent deferral in the first place and to assist those who do defer in taking up their university offer sooner.

Introduction

This report is based on research commissioned by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) and the Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), and funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). It presents the 2012 results from a longitudinal survey that was designed to capture the transition experiences, over a two year period, of 2009 school completers who had deferred a place at university. It complements the previous report (Polesel et al 2012) that reported on this cohort's destinations in 2011.

This study reports on school completers from the 2009 Year 12 cohort who were identified as deferrers when contacted during the 2010 On Track survey. The On Track survey of 2010 identified 3253 deferrers. The achieved sample of the survey in 2011 was 2565 while the final achieved sample of the survey conducted in 2012 was 1921 (resulting in a response rate of 74.9 per cent). It is important to compare this final achieved sample with all deferrers identified in 2011 – the broader cohort from which this sample was drawn. This is to ensure that the achieved sample does not differ too greatly from the population from which it was drawn in terms of its geographical location, achievement, gender, and socio-economic status (SES) profiles.

Table 1 compares these characteristics of the survey respondents contacted in 2012 with those contacted in 2011 and all the deferrers identified in the 2010 On Track survey. It can be seen that on all the measures reported, the final achieved sample is virtually identical to the original cohort of deferrers identified in the On Track survey, including the proportion of metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers. This reduces the likelihood of bias in the outcomes reported for the respondents in 2012 and strongly suggests that the final survey sample is representative of the broader cohort identified in the 2010 On Track survey (from the 2009 Year 12 cohort).

Table 2 compares the metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers in our sample. It shows that, in gender terms, the two groups are very similar. In academic terms, they are also similar, although there is a higher proportion of the metropolitan group in the highest quartile of achievement. In terms of

socio-economic status (SES), the two groups are very different, with nearly half the metropolitan deferrers in the highest quartile of SES, compared with 18.4 per cent of the non-metropolitan deferrers. Although there are some issues of reliability with the use of postcode for establishing SES in non-metropolitan locations, given their more heterogeneous character, this finding is still indicative of a difference in the socio-economic

background of the two groups of deferrers, with the non-metropolitan young people much less likely to come from a wealthy background.

In regional Victoria this rate has risen from 9.9% in 2004 to 16.5% in 2012, although in terms of actual numbers, the rise is even more significant – from 541 young people in 2004 to 1439 young people in 2012.

Table 1: Comparison with 2010 and 2011 deferrers

		2010 all deferrers* (%)	2011 achieved sample (%)	2012 achieved sample (%)
N		3253	2565	1921
Gender	Male	42.0	42.2	42.8
	Female	58.0	57.8	57.2
Geographical location	Metropolitan	56.4	56.3	56.0
	Non-metropolitan	43.6	43.7	44.0
Socio-economic status	Lowest quartile	14.9	14.2	13.9
	Next lowest quartile	23.6	22.7	22.7
	Next highest quartile	27.3	27.4	27.7
	Highest quartile	34.2	35.6	35.7

Table 2: Comparison of gender, achievement profile and socio-economic status of metropolitan and non-metro deferrers

		Non-metro deferrers (%)	Metro deferrers (%)
Gender	Male	44.2	41.7
	Female	55.8	58.3
GAT	Lowest quartile	14.2	14.1
	Next lowest quartile	24.8	21.4
	Next highest quartile	31.8	30.0
	Highest quartile	29.2	34.5
Socio-economic status	Lowest quartile	20.4	8.7
	Next lowest quartile	32.5	15.0
	Next highest quartile	28.6	27.0
	Highest quartile	18.4	49.3

Table 3: Growth in deferral rate (metropolitan and non-metropolitan) 2004-2012

Year	Metro	Non-metro
2004	5.5%	9.9%
2007	6.4%	15.7%
2008	8.2%	15.9%
2009	8.7%	21.6%
2010	7.8%	15.2%
2011	8.4%	15.6%
2012	8.1%	16.5%

The current study has the following aims:

To compare the outcomes of the 2009 Year 12 cohort of metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers, in terms of their take-up of their university offer or their transition to other education, training and labour market destinations over a period of three years.

The key aims of this project are:

- Improved access to university for all students regardless of their home location.
- Improved support services for youth completing school.
- Improved support services for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As students deferring a place at university do not constitute a homogenous group, with the needs of students varying according to their home location and their socio-economic status background, improved targeting of services and support is seen as an important issue to address.

The history of the study since 2006

This report is part of an ongoing study on the destinations of school leavers who deferred a university place.

Our first report (Polesel, 2008) presented the 2008 results from the longitudinal survey of regional school completers from the 2006 Year 12 cohort, who, when contacted as part of the Victorian On Track survey of school leavers in 2007, had deferred a place at university. This group of non-metropolitan young people was re-contacted in 2008, 2009, 2010, and for a final time in 2011 (Polesel 2009 and Polesel, O’Hanlon and Clarke 2011).

We also tracked school completers from the 2009 Year 12 cohort, who, when contacted as part of the Victorian On Track survey of school leavers in 2010, had deferred a place at university (Polesel, Klatt and O’Hanlon 2012). This cohort included metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers. This is the second report in this survey series.

Reports on the progress of these young people through their study and labour market trajectories were prepared and published for the commissioning bodies – the regional Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) and the then Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD).

Key findings of the previous report on the 2009 Year 12 cohort

- The report on the 2009 Year 12 cohort from metropolitan and regional Victoria found that approximately six in 10 (61.0 %) respondents were attending university in total. However, only 56.6% of the metropolitan cohort did so, compared with 66.6% of the regional cohort (Polesel, Klatt and O’Hanlon 2012)..
- Deferrers from non-metropolitan Victoria were more likely to take up a place at university in their second year out of school than were students from the city, although this still does not compensate for the higher initial rate of deferral in non-metropolitan Victoria (Polesel, Klatt and O’Hanlon 2012).
- The report shows a clear social pattern, which is most evident in the proportions of respondents from each socio-economic (SES) quartile entering university.
 - While 54.5 per cent of respondents in the lowest SES quartile took up a place at university, this rises steadily as socio-economic status rises, reaching a peak of 63.9 per cent for respondents from the highest quartile.
 - The transition rates to other destinations, especially the labour market destinations, tends to rise as socio-economic status falls.
 - For students from metropolitan Melbourne, the rate of transition to university rises as SES rises, while for non-metropolitan students, it remains very similar across the four different SES categories.
- While there appears to be a relationship between SES and take-up for metropolitan deferrers, the take-up of a university place is not so strongly affected by SES in the non-metropolitan regions. Having said this, there are much greater proportions of low SES youth in the non-metropolitan regions. It is likely, therefore, that factors such as financial and distance related barriers may be influencing the take-up of a university place too. Students from non-metropolitan location were four times more likely to report they did not take up their studies because they had been waiting to qualify for Youth Allowance (Polesel, Klatt and O’Hanlon 2012).

Main activities in 2012

This section examines the main destinations of Victorian school completers from the 2009 Year 12 cohort who had deferred their university place in 2010, in their third year out of school (in 2012).

It is important to note that the young people contacted in the survey were asked detailed questions regarding both their study and their labour market situations. These were used to construct “main” destinations, for example, university student or apprentice or full-time worker. These are reported in Table 1.1. However, students may also be in the labour market, usually as part-time workers, but sometimes seeking work. Conversely, it is possible to be neither a student nor in the labour market, i.e. not working and not seeking work. These more detailed destinations, which illustrate both the labour market and study and training destinations of our respondents, are presented in Table 1.6.

Main activities in 2011 and 2012

This section presents a summary of the destinations in 2011 and 2012 of deferrers who had completed Year 12 in 2009 (see Table 1.1). The left side of the table shows their 2011 destinations, while the right shows their destinations when contacted in 2012.

This table shows that 61.0% of the group was attending university in 2011. A further 11.8% were in a VET program and 4.3% were combining employment with training as apprentices or trainees. In total, 77.1% of respondents were in some form of recognised education or training. The remaining respondents were not in education or training of any kind. Most were working full-time or part-time – 20.0%. Few were unemployed (1.9%), and a very small group (1.0%) was inactive, i.e. they were not in education or training and were neither working nor looking for work.

The activities of this group of young people in 2012 were not dissimilar. There was a slight increase in a proportion of students in university (63.2%). Almost the same proportion (11.1%) were in VET as the year before but the proportion in apprenticeships had risen to 3.1% while the number of trainees fallen to 1.7%. Overall, the proportion in education or training was moderately higher than in the previous year – 79.1%.

As can be seen from Table 1.1, a large proportion (36.8%) of all 2010 deferrers was not at university. Some students who were at university in 2011 progressed through to another destination in 2012 but most of those in university in 2011 were still there and many those who were not in university in 2011 started university course in 2012 (see Table 1.3).

The destinations of metropolitan and non-metropolitan respondents can also be examined in terms of gender differences, as reported in Table 1.2.

The data from 2012 confirm the trend reported in the previous report which showed that female respondents from both the non-metropolitan and the metropolitan cohorts were more likely to take up a place at university.

The 2012 destinations are examined below in terms of progression from the activity which respondents reported when surveyed in 2011. The 2012 destinations of the cohort are shown in Table 1.3 on the basis of their 2012 main activity. The table presents row percentages, which are the proportions of each group identified in 2011. For example, the first row shows that, of the deferrers who entered university in 2011, 89.9% were still in university. Similarly, of the respondents who were apprentices when surveyed in 2011, 82.1% were still apprentices in 2012. In the case of young people who discontinued university in 2012, most of them progressed to full-time (3.3%) or part-time (3.4%) work.

Table 1.1: Main destinations in 2011 and 2012

	2011		2012	
	#	%	#	%
University (degree level)	1564	61.0	1214	63.2
VET	303	11.8	214	11.1
Apprenticeship	51	2.0	60	3.1
Traineeship	59	2.3	33	1.7
Employed full-time	326	12.7	242	12.6
Employed part-time	189	7.3	124	6.5
Unemployed	48	1.9	23	1.2
Inactive	26	1.0	11	0.6
Missing (excluded from analyses)	1	0	1	0
Total (included in analyses)	2566	100	1922	100

Table 1.2: Cross-tabulation of study level and gender and location

	Destination in 2012	Gender	
		Female	Male
Metropolitan	University	63.8%	52.7%
	Vet Cert 4+	10.5%	12.5%
	Entry-level VET	2.4%	1.8%
	Apprenticeship	.5%	5.4%
	Traineeship	1.3%	1.6%
	Working full-time	10.8%	12.9%
	Working part-time	7.7%	9.6%
	Unemployed	1.6%	2.5%
	Inactive	1.4%	1.1%
	Total (%)	100.0	100.0
Non-metropolitan	University	72.7%	59.9%
	Vet Cert 4+	5.5%	7.0%
	Entry-level VET	2.5%	1.6%
	Apprenticeship	0.0%	3.2%
	Traineeship	3.8%	2.9%
	Working full-time	8.7%	15.0%
	Working part-time	4.4%	6.4%
	Unemployed	1.9%	2.7%
	Inactive	0.4%	1.3%
	Total (%)	100.0	100.0

Table 1.3: Main progressions from 2011-2012

2011 Activity	2012 Activity (%)										Total #
	University	VET Cert IV+	Entry-level VET	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	Full-time work	Part-time work	Unemployed	Inactive	Total %	
University	89.9	1.5	0.5	0.2	0.7	3.3	3.4	0.4	0.2	100.0	1203
VET Cert IV+	11.4	62.3	2.3	0.6	0.0	10.9	10.3	1.7	0.6	100.0	175
Entry-level VET	19.5	12.2	26.8	4.9	0.0	19.5	14.6	2.4	0.0	100.0	41
Apprenticeship	2.6	2.6	0.0	82.1	0.0	10.3	2.6	0.0	0.0	100.0	39
Traineeship	6.8	18.2	2.3	0.0	15.9	43.2	13.6	0.0	0.0	100.0	44
Full-time work	23.3	6.7	2.2	7.2	4.5	48.0	5.4	1.3	1.3	100.0	223
Part-time work	25.0	11.0	4.4	4.4	5.1	20.6	22.1	5.1	2.2	100.0	136
Unemployed	25.0	10.0	7.5	2.5	2.5	27.5	15.0	10.0	0.0	100.0	40
Inactive	23.8	4.8	9.5	0.0	0.0	28.6	19.0	0.0	14.3	100.0	21

A quarter of those unemployed and working part-time in 2011, as well as 23.3 % of those employed full-time, progressed to university in 2012. As a result the number of 2010 deferrers in university in 2012 was slightly higher than the number of university students from 2011. The majority of those in destinations considered to be 'at risk' (inactive, unemployed and part-time work) progressed to full-time work or education and training.

Table 1.4 presents a cross-tabulation of study level and labour market destinations, providing a more nuanced picture than that presented in Table 1.1. For example, while university degree students were previously presented as a single category, it is possible to see now their labour market destinations – working full-time or part-time, looking for work or not in the labour market.

This is also the case for young people in other study destinations. This shows that the proportion of young people in the labour market is actually much higher than shown in Table 1.1. For example, the number of part-time workers and the number of young people seeking work is much higher than can be gleaned from the summary destinations, even though most of these are university or VET students, whose labour market status may not constitute their primary activity or focus. Similarly, the large number of respondents who are not in the labour market is principally made up of university students who are not working and not seeking work.

Table 1.4 Study and labour market destinations 2012

	University degree		VET/app/ train		Not in education or training		All #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Not in the labour force	211	17.4	27	8.8	12	3.0	250
Apprentice/trainee	0	0.0	93	30.3	0	0.0	93
Working full-time	42	3.5	31	10.1	242	60.3	315
Working part-time	837	68.9	136	44.3	124	30.9	1097
Unemployed	124	10.2	20	6.5	23	5.7	167
Total	1214	100.0	307	100.0	401	100.0	1922

Main activities: metropolitan and non-metropolitan respondents

The focus of this project has, in the past, been on deferring students from regional Victoria. The recruitment and surveying of a new group of deferrers from the 2009 Year 12 cohort allows comparisons to be made, for the first time, between respondents living in metropolitan Melbourne and those living in regional Victoria. This chapter considers the main activities of these two groups of respondents in their third year out of school.

The main destinations of the cohort broken out by geographic location are shown in Table 2.1. The table presents evidence to suggest that deferrers from non-metropolitan Victoria are more likely to continue their studies in university in their third year out of school than are students from the city. On the other hand, students from metropolitan Melbourne are more likely to be in vocational education and training. With respect to apprenticeships and traineeships, the differences between the two groups are not large, with metropolitan students slightly more likely to be apprentices. The labour market differences between the two groups are largely related to the hours worked. Both groups have a similarly low likelihood of being unemployed or inactive, but metropolitan students are more likely to be working full-time hours.

The 2012 destinations of metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers can also be examined in terms of progression from the activity which respondents reported when surveyed in 2011. The 2012 destinations of the metropolitan and non-metropolitan cohort are shown in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 on basis of their 2012 main activity. These tables present row percentages, which are the proportions of each group identified in 2011.

Table 2.1: Main destinations – metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers

	Metropolitan		Non-metropolitan		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
University (degree level)	635	59.1	579	68.4	1214	63.2
VET Cert 4+	113	10.5	63	7.4	176	9.2
Entry-level VET	24	2.2	14	1.7	38	2.0
Apprenticeship	35	3.3	24	2.8	59	3.1
Traineeship	18	1.7	15	1.8	33	1.7
Working full-time	148	13.8	94	11.1	242	12.6
Working part-time	80	7.4	44	5.2	124	6.5
Unemployed	13	1.2	10	1.2	23	1.2
Inactive	9	0.8	3	0.4	12	0.6
Total	1075	100.0	846	100.0	1921	100.0

Table 2.2: Main progressions from 2011-2012 – metropolitan deferrers

2011 Activity metropolitan	2012 Activity metropolitan (%)									
	University	VET Cert IV+	Entry-level VET	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	Full-time work	Part-time work	Unemployed	Inactive	Total %
University	88.2	1.7	0.8	0.2	0.6	3.5	4.4	0.5	0.2	100.0
VET Cert IV+	11.5	62.3	2.5	0.0	0.0	11.5	9.8	2.5	0.0	100.0
Entry-level VET	13.0	4.3	34.8	4.3	0.0	21.7	21.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
Apprenticeship	3.7	0.0	0.0	77.8	0.0	14.8	3.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
Traineeship	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.0	26.7	53.3	6.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
Full-time work	22.2	6.3	1.6	7.1	3.2	49.2	7.1	1.6	1.6	100.0
Part-time work	20.9	12.1	3.3	3.3	6.6	26.4	19.8	4.4	3.3	100.0
Unemployed	23.8	19.0	9.5	0.0	0.0	33.3	9.5	4.8	0.0	100.0
Inactive	21.4	7.1	7.1	0.0	0.0	14.3	28.6	0.0	21.4	100.0

Table 2.3: Main progressions from 2011-2012 – non-metropolitan deferrers

2011 Activity non-metropolitan	2012 Activity non-metropolitan (%)									Total %
	University	VET Cert IV+	Entry-level VET	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	Full-time work	Part-time work	Unemployed	Inactive	
University	91.7	1.2	0.2	0.2	0.7	3.2	2.3	0.4	0.2	100.0
VET Cert IV+	11.5	63.5	1.9	0.0	0.0	9.6	11.5	0.0	1.9	100.0
Entry-level VET	27.8	22.2	16.7	5.6	0.0	16.7	5.6	5.6	0.0	100.0
Apprenticeship	0.0	8.3	0.0	91.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Traineeship	6.9	24.1	3.4	0.0	10.3	37.9	17.2	0.0	0.0	100.0
Full-time work	24.7	7.2	3.1	7.2	6.2	46.4	3.1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Part-time work	33.3	8.9	6.7	6.7	2.2	8.9	26.7	6.7	0.0	100.0
Unemployed	26.3	0.0	5.3	5.3	5.3	21.1	21.1	15.8	0.0	100.0
Inactive	28.6	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	57.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

The progressions of the metropolitan deferrers who entered university in 2011 shows that 88.2 % were still in university. The non-metropolitan group, however, were more likely to continue university degree in their third year out of school (91.7%). The non-metropolitan group was less likely to leave university to work full-time, or part-time. This suggests that progression to university for non-metropolitan students in the third year out of school is higher than in the case of metropolitan students, but also it suggests that young people from regional Victoria need more time to take up a university place.

Table 2.4 reports on the study destinations reported in the third year out of school by metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers in relation to their achievement level. Consistent with the 2011 results, deferrers in country Victoria whose achievement profile was low were less likely to take up a university place than others. However, the data also shows that this group was more likely to take up a university place than their counterparts from metropolitan Victoria. Given that the achievement profiles of the two groups are almost identical (see Polesel et al. 2012), this is a positive finding, suggesting that achievement is less of a barrier to university take-up for the non-metropolitan deferrers.

Table 2.5 reports destinations by quartile of socio-economic status (based on the socio-economic characteristics of the students' home address). It displays a clear social pattern, which was evident also in the previous report (Polesel et al. 2012). For the metropolitan cohort, 44.7% of respondents in the lowest quartile take up a place at university, which rises steadily as socio-economic status rises, reaching a peak of 66.0 % for respondents from the highest quartile. By comparison, the SES pattern is much flatter for the students from non-metropolitan Victoria, with more than 65% of students from each SES quartile taking up their place in university. This finding should be treated with caution, given that the residential measure of SES used in the analysis may be less discriminating in the more homogeneous units of residential location used outside metropolitan Melbourne. It should also be noted that the proportions of young people in each quartile are very different, as between metropolitan and non-metropolitan locations

Table 2.4: Cross-tabulation of achievement level and main destinations and location

	Destination in 2012	GAT* quartile (%)			
		Lowest	Lower-middle	Upper-middle	Highest
Metropolitan	University	23.0%	47.1%	59.8%	81.8%
	Vet Cert 4+	23.6%	12.9%	10.8%	6.1%
	Entry-level VET	2.7%	3.1%	2.8%	0.8%
	Apprenticeship	2.7%	4.9%	2.5%	0.8%
	Traineeship	3.4%	1.3%	0.6%	0.6%
	Working full-time	23.6%	16.4%	12.0%	3.6%
	Working part-time	14.2%	9.8%	8.5%	5.0%
	Unemployed	3.4%	3.1%	1.9%	0.8%
	Inactive	3.4%	1.3%	0.9%	0.6%
	Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Non-metropolitan	University	42.0%	58.7%	66.3%	87.3%
	Vet Cert 4+	11.8%	8.7%	4.1%	3.3%
	Entry-level VET	2.5%	3.8%	2.2%	0.4%
	Apprenticeship	2.5%	2.4%	1.5%	0.0%
	Traineeship	9.2%	4.3%	2.6%	0.8%
	Working full-time	21.0%	14.4%	13.5%	2.0%
	Working part-time	6.7%	5.8%	5.2%	4.5%
	Unemployed	3.4%	1.4%	3.4%	0.8%
	Inactive	0.8%	0.5%	1.1%	0.8%
	Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*The General Achievement Test (GAT) is undertaken as part of the Victorian Certificate of Education. GAT tests general knowledge and skills in written communication; mathematics, science and technology; and humanities, the arts and social sciences.

In the case of VET programs at Certificate IV level or above, both metropolitan and non-metropolitan students had similar progression rates, with 62.3% and 63.5% respectively. The differences are more pronounced in the progression rate of entry-level VET. Of the metropolitan students, 34.8% continued study at entry level with the remaining students most likely to progress to employment (43.3%). In contrast, the non-metropolitan students studying entry-level VET in 2011 were most likely to progress to advanced VET courses (22.2%) or to university (27.8%), with only 22.3% progressing to employment.

The number of apprentices from non-metropolitan Victoria staying in this destination was very high 91.7%, compared to 77.8% from the metropolitan area.

The metropolitan apprentices leaving were most likely to progress to full-time work (14.8%). A similar trend also characterises the group of non-metropolitan trainees, with 37.9% progressing to full-time work but also 24.1% undertaking VET programs at Certificate IV level or above. Metropolitan trainees' destinations in 2012 included remaining in training (26.7%) and full-time work (53.3%).

Table 2.5: Study level, main destination and socio-economic status

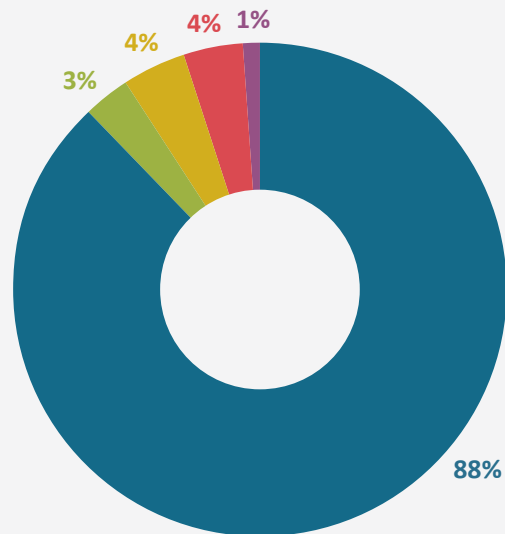
	Destination in 2012	SES (IRSED)* quartile			
		Lowest	Lower-middle	Upper-middle	Highest
Metropolitan	University	44.7%	49.7%	56.6%	66.0%
	Vet Cert 4+	16.0%	19.9%	10.0%	8.7%
	Entry-level VET	3.2%	1.9%	1.7%	2.3%
	Apprenticeship	4.3%	5.0%	1.7%	1.9%
	Traineeship	2.1%	3.1%	1.4%	0.8%
	Working full-time	13.8%	10.6%	14.5%	10.2%
	Working part-time	11.7%	8.7%	9.3%	7.4%
	Unemployed	3.2%	0.6%	3.1%	1.5%
	Inactive	1.1%	0.6%	1.7%	1.3%
	Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Non-metropolitan	University	65.3%	69.5%	65.3%	67.3%
	Vet Cert 4+	6.4%	6.2%	6.2%	5.8%
	Entry-level VET	1.2%	1.8%	2.9%	2.6%
	Apprenticeship	2.3%	0.4%	1.7%	1.9%
	Traineeship	4.0%	2.9%	4.1%	2.6%
	Working full-time	10.4%	10.5%	13.2%	11.5%
	Working part-time	5.2%	6.5%	4.1%	5.1%
	Unemployed	4.0%	1.5%	2.1%	1.9%
	Inactive	1.2%	0.7%	0.4%	1.3%
	Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* The Index of Relative Socio-economic Index (IRSED) provides a method of determining and comparing social and economic disadvantage in given areas at a given time.

The most significant difference, when comparing progressions of the metropolitan and non-metropolitan deferrers, can be seen in the progression of young people who were not in education or work in 2011 (“inactive” category). The non-metropolitan deferrers were most likely to start full-time work (57.1%) or go to university (28.6%) while the metropolitan group, who were inactive in 2011, was most likely to work part-time (28.6%) or start a university course (21.4%).

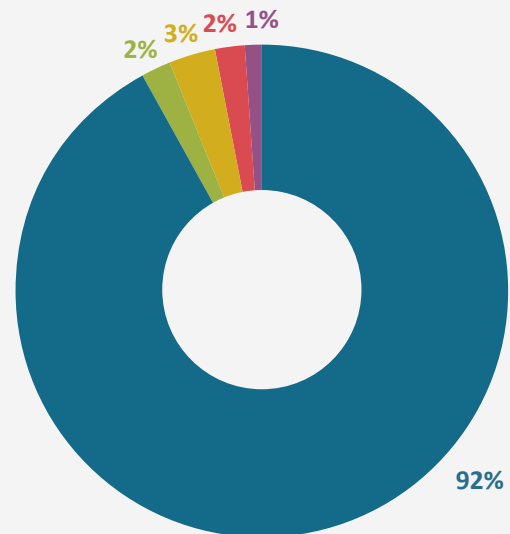
It must also be pointed out that none of the “inactive” non-metropolitan students continued in this category in 2012, while 21.4% of metropolitan students continued to be neither in education or work. However, these are very small numbers, comprising only 12 respondents in 2012.

Figure 2.1: Progressions of metropolitan university students 2011-2012



- Still at the same university
- In different study/course/training
- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Inactive/unemployed

Figure 2.2: Progressions of non-metropolitan university students 2011-2012



- Still at the same university
- In different study/course/training
- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Inactive/unemployed

Table 2.6 and Table 2.7 show a cross-tabulation of youth allowance status and geographical location. Approximately two-thirds of the students did not receive youth allowance. Metropolitan deferrers were more likely than non-metropolitan deferrers to be working as well as studying at university. However, non-metropolitan deferrers were much more likely to be youth allowance recipients (51.4%), compared with metropolitan deferrers (18.3%). This is important as it is indicative of the importance of assisted independence while studying, particularly for the non-metropolitan students, who are more likely to be living away from home. Furthermore, while those from metropolitan Melbourne were equally likely to take up their university place, irrespective of Youth Allowance, those from a non-metropolitan location who received youth allowance were much more likely to do so (84%) compared with those who did not receive youth allowance (68.9%), suggesting again how important this means of support is for young people living outside Melbourne.

Table 2.8 presents a cross-tabulation of reasons why study was not taken up in 2012 by geographical location. The most common reason for not taking up study was cited as “found something else” (38.4%). The other most likely reason not to take up their university offer was “not feeling ready for more study” (16.8%). These responses were similar among both groups from the metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

As confirmed in Table 2.9, 47.7% of all non-metropolitan deferrers surveyed in 2012 had to relocate to commence their study, compared with only 13.3% of metropolitan deferrers. What is important here is that by the second year out from school, the impact of costs, financial pressures and distance problems has diminished significantly for the non-metropolitan group. Where these factors were cited much more often by the non-metropolitan deferrers in 2011, this is not the case in 2012.

Table 2.6: Youth allowance recipients – metropolitan and non-metropolitan

		Metropolitan	Non-metropolitan	Total
Yes	#	151	357	508
	%	18.3	51.4	33.4
No	#	674	338	1012
	%	81.7	48.6	66.6
Total	#	825	695	1520
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2.7: Youth allowance recipients – metropolitan and non-metropolitan – and Destinations

	Destination in 2012	Youth Allowance Recipient	
		Yes	No
Metropolitan	University	68.9%	70.9%
	Vet Cert 4+	17.2%	11.9%
	Entry-level VET	0.7%	3.1%
	Apprenticeship	0.7%	0.7%
	Traineeship	9.9%	11.6%
	Working full-time	2.0%	1.2%
	Working part-time	0.7%	0.6%
	Unemployed	100.0	100.0
	Inactive	84.0%	68.9%
	Total (%)	6.4%	8.9%
Non-metropolitan	University	0.0%	3.6%
	Vet Cert 4+	1.4%	2.4%
	Entry-level VET	7.0%	14.2%
	Apprenticeship	0.8%	1.5%
	Traineeship	0.3%	0.6%
	Working full-time	8.7%	15.0%
	Working part-time	4.4%	6.4%
	Unemployed	1.9%	2.7%
	Inactive	0.4%	1.3%
	Total (%)	100.0	100.0

Table 2.8: Reasons why studies not taken up after deferring in 2010 – metropolitan and non-metropolitan

Main reasons haven't gone to university	Metropolitan		Non-metropolitan		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
You have found something else	111	34.9	92	43.6	203	38.4
You don't feel ready for more study at the moment	54	17.0	35	16.6	89	16.8
Other	40	12.6	18	8.5	58	11.0
Never really wanted to go to university	15	4.7	13	6.2	28	5.3
You wanted to travel or take a gap year	16	5.0	7	3.3	23	4.3
You never planned or intended to study	15	4.7	7	3.3	22	4.2
The costs of study are a barrier	11	3.5	6	2.8	17	3.2
Completed study/course	14	4.4	3	1.4	17	3.2
It would have been difficult to support yourself	7	2.2	6	2.8	13	2.5
There is too much travel involved	6	1.9	7	3.3	13	2.5
You tried to get into your preferred course, but were not successful	9	2.8	4	1.9	13	2.5
Financial pressure on your family	6	1.9	3	1.4	9	1.7
The costs of travel are a barrier	2	0.6	3	1.4	5	0.9
It's not worth building up a HECS debt	3	0.9	1	0.5	4	0.8
You were unsure whether you would be able to cope with the work	1	0.3	3	1.4	4	0.8
You have or are about to become a full-time parent	4	1.3	0	0.0	4	0.8
You only managed to get into a fee-paying course	2	0.6	0	0.0	2	0.4
It would have meant leaving home	1	0.3	1	0.5	2	0.4
The course you wanted was not offered locally	1	0.3	1	0.5	2	0.4
You are waiting to qualify for Youth Allowance	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.2
Total	318	100.00	211	100.00	529	100.0

Table 2.9: Number of students who relocated to study – metropolitan and non-metropolitan

Had to relocate to commence study in 2012	Metropolitan (%)	Non-metropolitan (%)
Yes	13.3	47.7
No	86.7	52.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Satisfaction with choices – metro and non-metro

This chapter examines the respondents' satisfaction with their life and study options since leaving school.

Overall, there appears to be little difference between the proportions of non-metropolitan and metropolitan participants who reported satisfaction with their current circumstances or that “things have worked out” the way they wanted since leaving school, although the satisfaction levels of the non-metropolitan group (86.6%) are consistently a little higher than for their city counterparts (82.3%).

In general, the findings suggest that high proportions of both groups were satisfied with their current destination and believed that things had worked out the way they wanted since leaving school. This is consistent with the findings of the previous report.

Amongst university students, 96.1 % of metropolitan students and 95.9 % of non-metropolitan students expressed satisfaction with their life choices since leaving school. Similarly high numbers (92.1 % of metropolitan students and 94.3 % of non-metropolitan students) were satisfied with their education options (see Tables 3.3 to 3.6). Deferrers who did not take up university study also expressed satisfaction with their lives since leaving school – 92.8% of metropolitan and 94% of non-metropolitan deferrers.

Dissatisfaction levels with their life were somewhat higher for deferrers with non-university destinations in

2012. From the metropolitan area, 13.2% of deferrers with non-university destinations were dissatisfied, compared with 7.8% of university students, while in the non-metropolitan area, 10.8% were dissatisfied, compared with 5.7% of the university students.

Table 3.1: Cross-tabulation of level of satisfaction and geographic location

Satisfaction level	Metropolitan (%)	Non-metropolitan (%)
Very satisfied	18.7	17.7
Satisfied	63.6	68.9
Dissatisfied	14.9	11.7
Very dissatisfied	2.8	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 3.2: Things “worked out” the way you wanted since leaving school

	Metropolitan (%)	Non-metropolitan (%)
Yes	83.0	87.6
No	17.0	12.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 3.3: University students' satisfaction with life since leaving school

University students	Metropolitan (%)	Non-metropolitan (%)
Very satisfied	38.6	38.2
Satisfied	57.5	57.7
Dissatisfied	3.6	3.6
Very dissatisfied	0.3	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 3.4: Deferrers with non-university destinations' satisfaction with life since leaving school

Deferrers with non-university destinations	Metropolitan (%)	Non-metropolitan (%)
Very satisfied	42.3	41.6
Satisfied	50.5	52.4
Dissatisfied	6.4	4.9
Very dissatisfied	0.9	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 3.5: University students' satisfaction with their education options

University students	Metropolitan (%)	Non-metropolitan (%)
Very satisfied	30.4	32.1
Satisfied	61.7	62.2
Dissatisfied	7.2	5.2
Very dissatisfied	0.6	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 3.6: Deferrers with non-university destinations' satisfaction with their education options

Deferrers with non-university destinations	Metropolitan (%)	Non-metropolitan (%)
Very satisfied	22.5	25.8
Satisfied	64.3	63.3
Dissatisfied	11.4	9.7
Very dissatisfied	1.8	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Concluding remarks

In examining the situation of young people from metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas three years out of school, it is noted that there is a high proportion in education or training or full-time work, which is a very positive sign.

However, there remains a significant number of young people who have qualified for an offer of a university place but have not taken it up. This runs contrary to national and state efforts focused on increasing the number of Victorians who hold a Bachelor degree or above.

The findings indicate that the proportion in education or training was moderately higher than in the second year out of school (79.1%). Most of those in university in 2011 were still there (89.9 %) and many of those who were not in university in 2011 started university course in 2012. Relatively few (only 8.4%) were situated in what might be classified as an at-risk destination (working part-time, unemployed or inactive).

Having said this, it is important to keep in mind that the deferral rate for non-metropolitan students remains significantly higher than that of metropolitan students. Nevertheless, the report presents evidence

to suggest that deferrers from non-metropolitan Victoria are more likely to continue in their university degree in their third year out of school (91.7%). This suggests that progression to university for non-metropolitan students in the third year out of school is higher than in the case of metropolitan students, but it also suggests that young people from regional Victoria need more time to take up a university place.

Furthermore, once they are at university, the non-metropolitan group is less likely to leave university to work full-time, or part-time. These findings indicate that the highest level of support for the non-metropolitan group is required within the first year out of school, a time during which young people from non-metropolitan Victoria are most likely to decide if they would be able to take up their university place. They also suggest that such support represents a sound investment in this group given the strong likelihood that they will continue in their studies.

A majority of the respondents (over 95 %) in university education reported being satisfied with their life choices since leaving the school. There appears to be little difference between the proportions of non-metropolitan and metropolitan students stating this. However, the overall satisfaction of all participants was moderately lower, with 86.6% from the non-metropolitan group and 82.3% from the city feeling satisfied, which shows that those respondents who are not currently at university are somewhat less satisfied with their choices.

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