Australian Government | Jobs and Skills Australia

Pathways to economic mobility and improved equity
At a glance

VET National Data Asset

The VET National Data Asset

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) National Data Asset (VNDA) was established by Jobs and Skills Australia in partnership with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). VNDA links records from the Total VET Activity data collected by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research with other government administrative data, including data from the ABS, the Australian Taxation Office, the Department of Education and the Department of Social Services.

The latest VNDA data release and the report, Pathways to economic mobility and improved equity: Unlocking advanced VET analysis through the (VET) National Data Asset, provide statistical insights on domestic, non-school students that completed a nationally recognised VET qualification in the 2020–21 financial year. The analysis explores the economic, employment and further study outcomes of VET graduates.

Key Insights

VET continues to deliver strong outcomes for graduates, with graduates achieving higher income, improved employment, and reduced reliance on income support after completing VET:

VET graduates experienced a median income uplift of $14,100 in the year following completion, with even higher gains for First Nations graduates.

Employment rates increased by 16 percentage points post-training, with priority cohorts such as First Nations, CALD communities, women, and people with disability seeing post-training employment rate increases that were above the national average.

Nearly one in three graduates enrolled in further VET study within a year, supporting lifelong learning and career progression.

Almost 1 in 2 graduates who previously relied on income support no longer need it – demonstrating VET's critical role in fostering economic independence.

Progress in closing equity gaps Priority cohorts – including First Nations people, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, women, and people with disability – are seeing solid improvements compared to pre-training. However, gaps in income and employment outcomes for these groups remain and require continued focus.

Evidence for policy and investment By examining student outcomes across cohorts, fields of study and courses, VNDA provides robust statistical insights to inform national skills policy, targeted interventions, and future investment in Australia's workforce.

Graduate Outcomes at a Glance

Outcome	National	First Nations	CALD	Female	Disability
Median Income (post training)	$51,100	$46,800	$48,500	$43,600	$28,400
Median Income Uplift	$14,100	$15,700	$13,900	$12,800	$10,300
Employment Rate (post training)	88%	84%	82%	88%	73%
Employment Rate Uplift	+16 pts	+18 pts	+22 pts	+18 pts	+20 pts
Further VET Study	29%	34%	33%	29%	35%
Income Support Exit Rate	48%	36%	51%	43%	23%

Source: Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA), 2002–2023, VET National Data Asset, ABS DataLab. Findings based on use of PLIDA data.

Note: This report analyses outcomes for individuals that have completed a VET qualification. It does not include data on completion rates or outcomes for students that have partially completed a qualification. Income support exit rate is defined as the percentage of graduates not on income support as at June 2022 (one year after VET course completion), given they were on income support before course enrolment.

Comparison with Previous Cohort and COVID-19 Context

This year's VNDA results (2020–2021 cohort) show clear improvements compared to the previous cohort (2019–20).[1]

Median income for VET graduates increased from $48,500 to $51,100

Employment rates rose from 84% to 88%

Income support exit rates increased from 39% to 48%.

These gains were observed across most priority cohorts.

It is important to interpret these improvements in the context of significant external factors. Outcomes for 2020–21 VET graduates are measured in 2021–22 – a period when Australia's economy was recovering from the initial COVID-19 shock. After nationwide lockdowns in early 2020, which brought much of the economy to a standstill, conditions shifted to gradual reopening and increased economic activity from late 2020 onward. Australia's labour market had recovered strongly, with the unemployment rate still well below its pre-COVID level and job vacancies well above pre-pandemic levels.

This broader recovery contributed to improved outcomes for VET graduates.

Further, there have been methodological changes since the previous VNDA report. For example, pathways to higher-level study now refer to higher-level VET study only, with higher education data excluded from this release.[2]

As such, direct comparisons with previous years' releases should be made with caution, as both methodological changes and the unique impacts of the pandemic have influenced the scale and nature of graduates' outcomes.

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1   All comparisons use nominal values from each year's data release and are not adjusted for inflation or methodological adjustments.

2   Higher education enrolment data that aligns with the post-training period was not available in the ABS Datalab environment at the time of this report.

What's New

This year's VNDA report introduces several important enhancements and new data insights:

Expanded cohort analysis

For the first time, outcomes are reported for CALD graduates and by socio-economic status, providing a broader lens on equity and diversity in VET outcomes.

Employment type

The report includes new breakdowns by part-time and full-time employment, offering a more comprehensive view of graduate pathways and earnings.

Progression to further VET study

The methodology now tracks progression to any other VET qualification, not just higher-level VET or higher education. This provides new insights into lifelong learning and career development within the VET sector.

Partial completers

This report also presents high-level results for students who partially completed a VET qualification. These results help illustrate the transformative potential of VET, through improved outcomes with respect to employment, income and reduced reliance on income support, and highlight that partial completion should not be viewed as failure.

Data definitions and limitations

The report continues to refine its approach to measuring outcomes, including inflation-adjusted income figures, clearer definitions of employment and income support exit rates, and expanded technical notes.

How can you use VNDA?

In addition to being a useful policy tool, this data can help inform school leavers, students, teachers, parents, and those considering future VET study, about their potential outcomes and further demonstrate the opportunities that can be realised in pursuing VET pathways.

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