

4.5 Pathways for leaving school

Why this measure is included

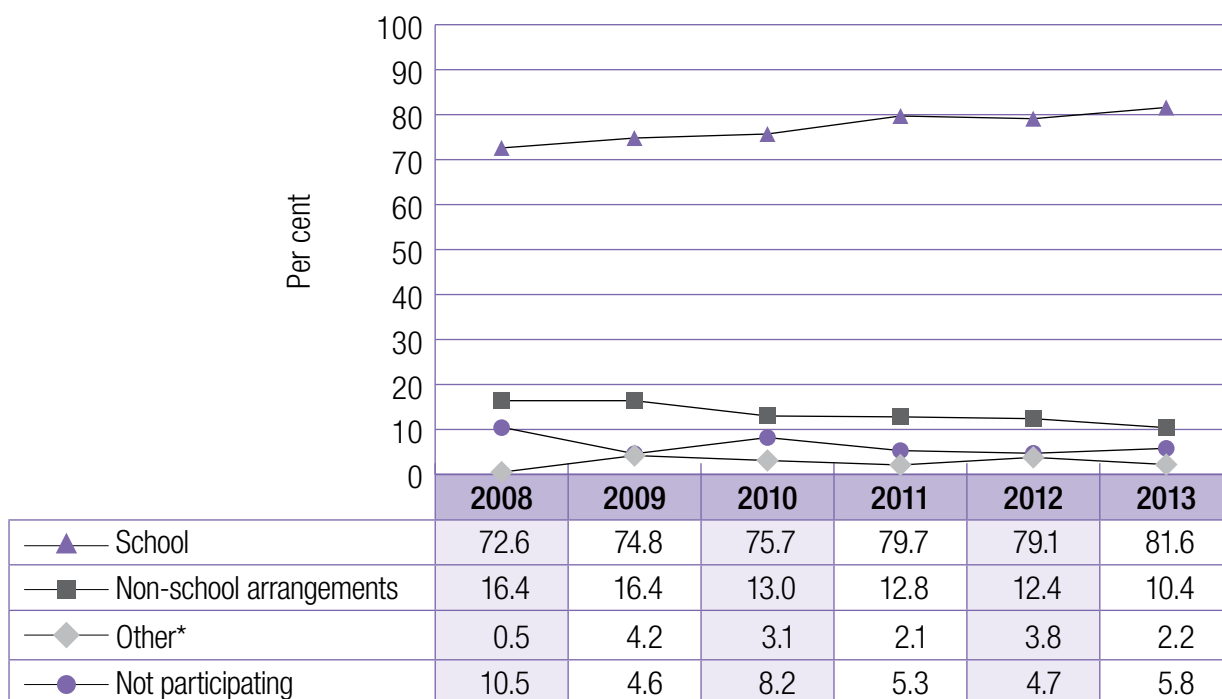
Young people who remain engaged in education, training or employment following their compulsory school years have better long-term prospects in the labour market, and consequently in life.

The Foundation for Young Australians noted in their 2013 report that there were growing opportunities for young people to get good jobs, but to do so they needed good qualifications and skills.³²¹ Young people who did not have qualifications or education would find it increasingly difficult to get a good job.³²² The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) noted that young people who were not in school, training or employment were at increased risk of being excluded from participating and contributing to society.³²³

The 2010 report by the Foundation for Young Australians on school leavers in Australia demonstrated that not completing Year 12 was a disadvantage for young people entering the job market directly from school. Those who had completed Year 12 were substantially less likely to be seeking work or not be in the labour force than those who left in Years 10 or 11.³²⁴

In Western Australia (WA), students are required to remain at school or participate in an approved non-school option (such as employment or training) until the end of the year they turn 17 years of age (from 2014, 17 years and six months), or graduate from high school.

Figure 4.4: Student participation: in per cent, year of turning 17 years of age, Western Australia, 2008 to 2013

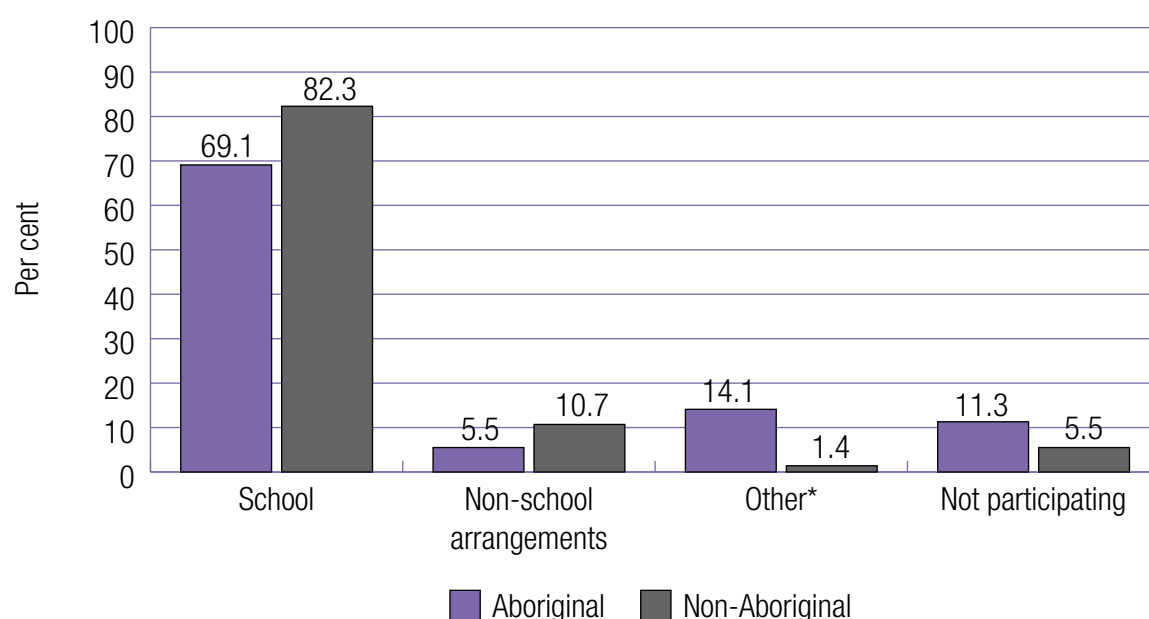


Source: Data supplied by WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority, custom report, 2013

* 'Other' includes students who have left WA, already graduated, are working with the Department of Education's Participation Unit, have passed away, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Figure 4.5: Student participation: in per cent, year of turning 17 years of age, by Aboriginal status, Western Australia, 2013



Source: Data supplied by WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority, custom report, 2013

* 'Other' includes students who have left WA, already graduated, are working with the Department of Education's Participation Unit, have passed away, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

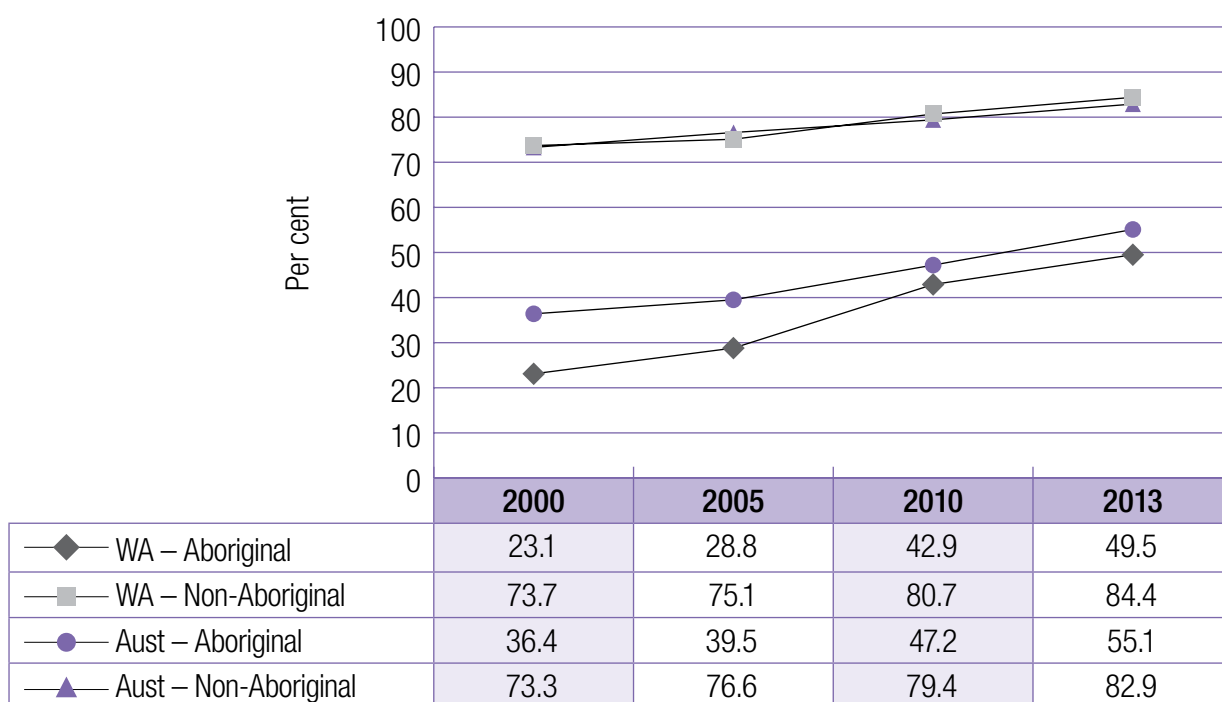
Table 4.22: Students in non-school arrangements or not participating during year of turning 17 years of age: number, by gender, Western Australia, 2013

		Male		Female		Total
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number
Non-school arrangements	TAFE / full-time study	496	51.7	463	48.3	959
	Apprenticeship / traineeship	1,146	76.0	361	24.0	1,507
	Employment	384	58.7	270	41.3	654
	Combination of options	8	19.0	34	81.0	42
	Pending	62	49.6	63	50.4	125
Not participating	Left school	213	55.8	169	44.2	382
	Not re-registered this year	79	59.0	55	41.0	134
	Rejected / cancelled	694	52.5	629	47.5	1,323
	Other*	338	49.9	340	50.1	678

Source: Data supplied by WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority, custom report, 2013

* 'Other' includes students who have left WA, already graduated, are working with the Department of Education's Participation Unit, have passed away, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

Figure 4.6: Apparent retention rates of full-time students in Years 7 or 8 to Year 12: in per cent, by Aboriginal status, Western Australia and Australia, 2000 to 2013



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014, *Schools, Australia 2013*

What is this measure?

This measure shows the percentages of students undertaking various educational and vocational pathways from school. The data used for this measure is collected by the WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority and includes all students in WA who turn 17 years in the relevant year. It shows the percentage of these students who are in full-time school-based education, the percentage who are engaged in approved non-school arrangements (such as employment, training, an apprenticeship or a combination of options) and the percentage who are neither attending school nor participating in non-school arrangements.

The data has been prepared to show differences by gender and Aboriginal status of students.

Additional data has been sourced through the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publication *Schools, Australia 2013*. It shows apparent retention rates of full-time students in Years 7 or 8 to Year 12 for all states and territories for the period 2000 to 2013.³²⁵

Commentary

In 2013, 92.0 per cent of WA students participated in education, employment, training or some combination of these. The percentage of students remaining in full-time education increased from 72.6 per cent in 2008 to 81.6 per cent in 2013 (Figure 4.4).³²⁶

The percentage of WA students not participating in any option has decreased from 10.5 per cent in 2008 to 5.8 per cent in 2013. During the same period, the percentage of WA students counted in category 'Other' (this includes students who have left the State, have already graduated, are working with the Participation Unit,³²⁷ have passed away or whose whereabouts are unknown) has increased from 0.5 per cent in 2008 to 2.2 per cent in 2013 (Figure 4.4).

Overall, males are about twice as likely as females to be in non-school arrangements and the majority of those males are in apprenticeships or traineeships (Table 4.22). This has remained consistent over several years.

The percentage of Aboriginal students participating in education, employment, training or some combination of these has fluctuated, increasing from 77.4 per cent in 2009 to 79.0 per cent in 2011, and then declining to 74.6 per cent in 2013. The percentage of Aboriginal students participating in education or an approved option is smaller than non-Aboriginal students in this category. In comparison to non-Aboriginal students, fewer Aboriginal students participated in education or an approved option, and a greater percentage are represented in the categories 'Not participating' and 'Other'. This result has been consistent over the period 2009 to 2013 (Figure 4.5 and Table 4.24).

This data is not comparable to other states because it combines education, employment and training outcomes for 17 year-olds. An appropriate comparison between WA and Australia can be made from apparent retention rates of students from Year 7 or Year 8³²⁸ to Year 12, which is collected annually by the ABS (Figure 4.6).³²⁹ This data shows the percentage of students who continue from the first year of high school to graduation. It does not show the destinations of those who do not stay in school, so it is not possible to know whether students are leaving for employment or training.

The apparent retention rate for WA non-Aboriginal students for Year 7 or 8 to Year 12 was 84.4 per cent in 2013 (up from 73.7% in 2000), which is above the Australian average of 82.9 per cent. The apparent retention rate for Aboriginal students is significantly below that of non-Aboriginal students. Just one-half of WA Aboriginal students continue from the first year of high school to graduation (49.5%). Nationally, 55 per cent of Aboriginal students complete Year 12 (Figure 4.6).

Research suggests that socio-economic differences play a significant role in Year 12 attainment rates. The 2013 report by the COAG Reform Council on educational achievement showed there was almost a 20 per cent gap in Year 12 attainment between young people from the lowest and highest socio-economic areas (73.7% compared to 93.2%).³³⁰

Strategies

Training together – Working together: Aboriginal Workforce Development Strategy, WA Government (released 2010)

This strategy seeks to increase the number of Aboriginal people in training for sustainable employment in Western Australia. The strategy focuses on improving attainment and graduation rates (linked to the 'Closing the Gap' initiatives), mentoring, and youth transition and support. Further information is available at www.dtwd.wa.gov.au/employeesandstudents/aboriginalworkforcedevelopmentcentre/trainingtogether-workingtogether/Pages/default.aspx

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010–2014, Council of Australian Governments

This plan will be undertaken at the national, state and local level to close the gap between the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. These actions are linked to six priority areas that evidence shows will have the most impact on closing the gap, including pathways to real post-school options. The plan is available at http://scseec.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/ATSI%20documents/ATSIEAP_web_version_final.pdf

Western Australian Youth Mentoring Reform Strategic Framework, Department for Local Government and Communities (released 2012)

The framework aims to reform in the way in which the government and the youth mentoring sectors work together to improve outcomes for young West Australians.

Specific outcomes of the mentoring reform will include:

- greater collaboration, coordination and exchange of information across sectors and agencies
- improved training and professional development opportunities in the mentoring sector
- new models for sharing resources
- increased numbers of quality programs meeting national mentoring benchmarks
- a long-term program of research and evaluation
- clear policy, planning, management and governance guidelines for mentoring programs and funding agencies.

Further information is available at: www.communities.wa.gov.au/Documents/Youth/YO43%20Youth%20Mentoring%20booklet%20final.pdf

School Business Community Partnership Brokers Programme, Commonwealth Government (released 2010)

This programme is focused on building partnerships to help young people achieve Year 12 or equivalent qualifications, encouraging a whole-of-community approach to improving education and transition outcomes for young people. A national network of partnership brokers builds partnerships between four key groups – education and training providers; business and industry; parents and families; and community groups. Information is available from <http://education.gov.au/schools-business-community-partnership-brokers-programme>

Youth Connections Programme, Commonwealth Government (released 2011)

Youth Connections aims to support young people who are early school leavers or who are at significant risk of leaving school early. The services are intended to help young people stay in or re-engage with school or training. More information is available from <http://education.gov.au/youth-connections>

Want to know more?

Research, reports and articles

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority Annual report 2012–13 is available at www.scsa.wa.edu.au/internet/Publications/Reports/Annual_Reports

How Young People are Faring is an annual report on the learning-and-earning situation of young Australians published by the Foundation for Young Australians and available on their website www.fya.org.au/research/research-publications/

Other information

The Career Centre website provided by the Department of Training & Workforce Development is available at www.careercentre.dtwd.wa.gov.au/Pages/CareerCentre.aspx

Information on the Department of Education is available on their website www.det.wa.gov.au

Information on the implementation of vocational education and training in government schools can be obtained from the Department of Education website at www.det.wa.edu.au/curriculum-support/vetis/detcms/portal/

For young people entering Years 11 and 12 there are a range of approved options to meet the participation requirement of the *School Education Act 2009*. These pathways can broadly be described as school-based, training-based, and community-based. Further information on the participation requirement under the *School Education Act 2009* is available at <http://det.wa.edu.au/participation/detcms/navigation/young-people/?oid=Article-id-320590>

The *Acts Amendment (Higher School Leaving Age and Related Provisions) Act 2005* is available at www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/num_act/aaslaarpa200522o2005594/

The Youth Attainment and Transitions website provides information, resources and services that aim to improve educational attainment and support successful transitions to further education, training and employment. The information is available at <http://transitions.youth.gov.au/Sites/transitions>

The report by the Smith Family, *Preparing students for the transition to work or further study – Engaging students: Building aspirations*, is available at www.thesmithfamily.com.au/about-us/research-and-advocacy/research-and-evaluation

Additional tables

Table 4.23: Apparent retention rates of full-time students in Years 7 or 8 to Year 12: in per cent, all states and territories, 2000 and 2013

	NSW	VIC	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust.
2000	67.5	77.2	77.3	65.4	71.3	69.5	49.7	87.1	72.3
2010	72.5	81.1	82.5	81.9	78.3	71.0	53.0	90.8	78.0
2013	76.7	83.7	85.2	90.6	82.2	68.7	55.8	91.6	81.6

Source: ABS 2014, *Schools, Australia 2013*

Table 4.24: Student participation: in per cent, year of turning 17 years of age, by Aboriginal status, Western Australia, 2009 to 2013

		School	Non-school arrangements	Other*	Not participating
2009	Aboriginal	68.4	9.0	12.4	10.2
	Non-Aboriginal	75.1	16.8	3.7	4.3
2010	Aboriginal	61.9	6.5	11.6	19.9
	Non-Aboriginal	76.6	13.4	2.5	7.5
2011	Aboriginal	73.5	5.5	10.7	10.3
	Non-Aboriginal	80.0	13.2	1.7	5.0
2012	Aboriginal	66.1	6.5	16.2	11.2
	Non-Aboriginal	79.9	12.7	3.1	4.3
2013	Aboriginal	69.1	5.5	14.1	11.3
	Non-Aboriginal	82.3	10.7	1.4	5.5

Source: Data supplied by WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority, custom report, 2013

* 'Other' includes students who have left WA, already graduated, are working with the Participation Unit, have passed away, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.