Reference No. 114

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Title of Research:
Education and Training: The 2002 NATSSIS

Research Publication:


Name of Researcher(s):
R.G. Schwab

Time period:
2002

Geographic location:
National level information, including some remoteness breakdowns.

Methodology:
Statistical analysis of the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), with reference to baseline 1994 NATSIS information.

Aims:
This paper analyses trends between 1994 and 2002 in key educational indicators, early school leavers, participation in VET and factors associated with attaining non-school qualifications.

Selected findings and insights:
The study identified the major reasons why early school leavers left school:

- between 25% - 30% of early school leavers left school before completion of Year 12 because they 'did not like school', depending on location and gender;
- some 11% of males in remote areas had left school because Year 12 was not available in their community, identifying access to education as a significant issue for educational authorities.
- in general terms, females were more likely to leave for personal and family reasons; and
- between 15% and 18% left early to get a job or apprenticeship or at least wanted to get one (unfortunately NATSSIS did not distinguish between these two options).

For those unemployed the major difficulties in getting a job differed between those living in remote and non-remote regions:

- in remote areas the main reasons were that there were no jobs available, either locally or in their line of work and, to a lesser degree, insufficient education, training or skills; and
• in non-remote regions, insufficient education, training or skills was clearly the most important reason.

Large numbers of the Indigenous working-age population had attended training in the 12 months prior to the 2002 NATSSIS survey:

• those living in non-remote regions more frequently attended training, with 34% of males and 27% of females having attended a training course in the 12 month period; this compared to

• about 23% of males and 17% of females living in remote regions having attended a training course in the 12 month period.

Furthermore training was seen as highly beneficial with more than 80% indicating that they had used their training for work or to help get a job.

Finally, the study identified some key characteristics of those that had completed a non-school qualification compared to those who had not continued with their education after leaving school:

• those who had a further qualification were less likely to be a smoker (a health indicator), more likely to be in mainstream employment and less likely to not be in the labour force, had greater access to money, being more able to get to places and were more inclined to undertake voluntary work (a possible indicator of social cohesion).

• for those without a further qualification, increased levels of secondary education from Year 9 or below through to Year 12 showed a lessening of the negative impacts of not attaining a further qualification.

Educational implications:

The large proportion of school leavers who had left because they did not like school should be of concern to those developing secondary school curricula relevant to those most at risk of leaving school early. Development of policies and practices to increase Year 10 participation levels is therefore a top priority for jurisdictions. Yet this is unlikely to be achieved for those students ‘at risk’ of leaving before completion of Year 10 unless the students can see a pathway through either training or completing secondary schooling which will then lead to meaningful employment. Therefore secondary schools need to develop curricula, as many are now doing, with this purpose in mind (and which is taken up in other CAEPR research studies). [‘at risk’ students]

Related to this is the need to develop and encourage participation in courses which provide skills that relate to local employment opportunities for those resident in urban areas, requiring in turn a close relationship between school, training providers and the local business community. [pathways]

Relevance:

Domain 5: Pathways to training, employment and higher education

   Student aspirations and key transition points

   Participation, retention and achievement in post-compulsory schooling, training and higher education