



Senior Secondary Certification: *What might the past tell us about the future?*

Queensland Studies Authority, 'Shaping Future Directions', June 24 2011

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Project Overview

'Senior Secondary Certification: Meeting the National Agenda?'

- Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project, in partnership with the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA)

Project Aim

- To use state legacies of development and innovation in senior secondary curriculum and certification to investigate options for future certification reform, in light of multiple emerging national demands.

Methodology

- Historical analysis, policy and governance analysis, interviews with policy actors and practitioners, and empirical analyses of patterns of participation and outcomes across the certificates and the states.

Project timeline



Historical perspectives, emerging contexts

Historical Perspectives

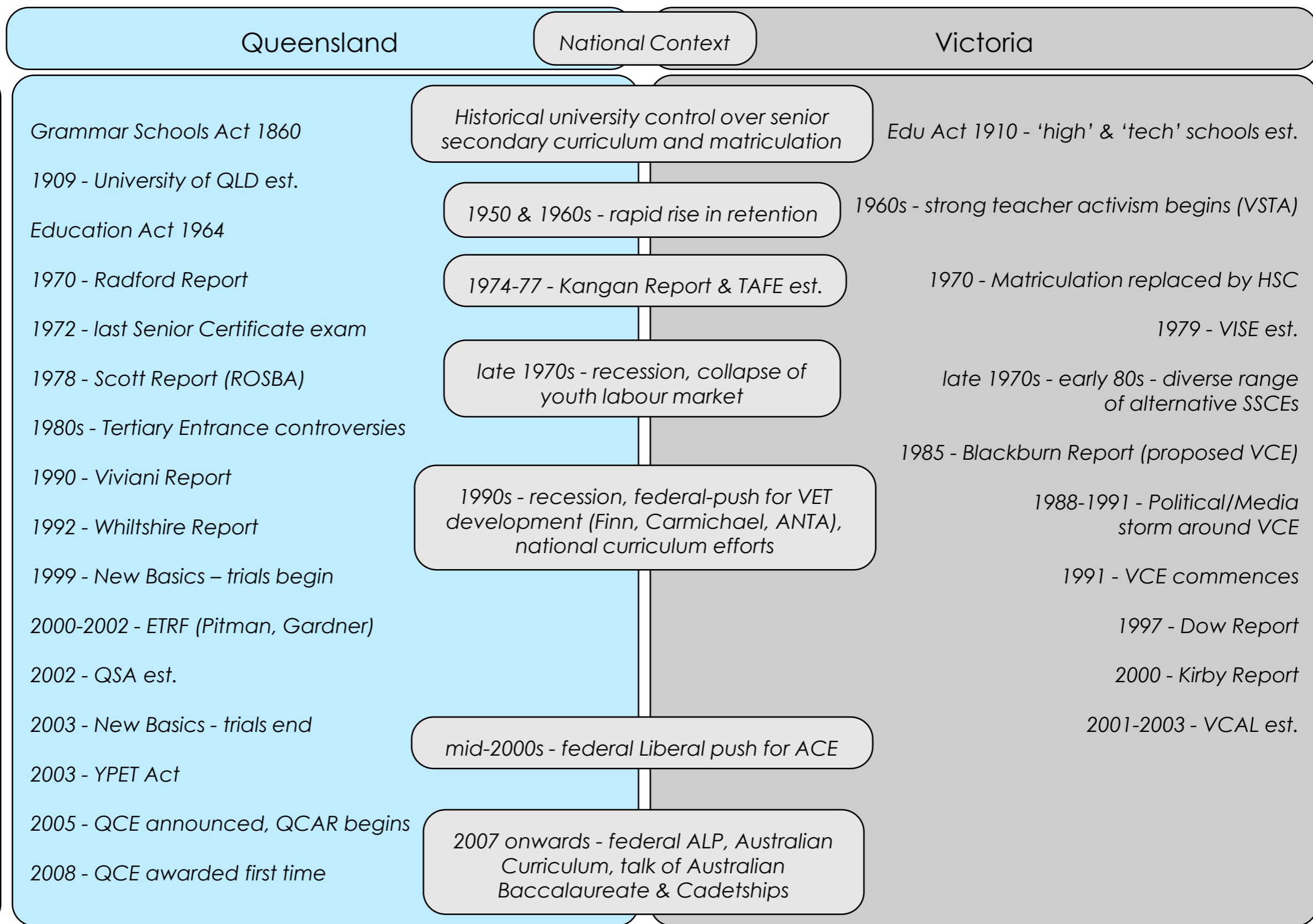
- Senior secondary certificates of education (SSCEs) reformed on numerous occasions in response to various state, national and international demands.
- SSCEs symbolic of both the democratic ideal of 'participation for all' and sites of individual positional competition.
- Multiple stakeholders invested in SSCEs and often-fragile political terrain around them (strong historical contestation over ownership, design and assessment)
- Historical link to labour market (industry needs, unemployment, productivity)

Evolving National Contexts and Demands

- SSCEs subject to an evolving set of national demands (e.g. Australian curriculum, renewed demands for year 12 completion, new state-federal governance arrangements, evolving tertiary sector)
- Key challenge for state agencies = how to respond to these emerging national imperatives and accommodate traditional and multiple state objectives.
- QSA and VCAA - both active innovators with major investments in SSCEs.
- Historically, VIC & QLD have implemented multiple, different and successful certificate innovations, however, they now face common sets of demands that are national rather than state-based.



Key historical moments - Queensland and Victoria



Current certificate landscape: Queensland and Victoria*

*Does not include Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement or International Baccalaureate

	Queensland	Victoria	
Focus	<p>Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)</p> <p>Common Certificate</p>	<p>Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)</p> <p>Academic-focus</p>	<p>Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)</p> <p>Vocational-focus</p>
Learning Options	<p>Recognises a broad range of academic, vocational, workplace and community learning options and types</p>	<p>Academic learning options with limited vocational and workplace integration</p>	<p>Vocational options (Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Levels), with limited academic options</p>
Subject/Unit Types	<p>Authority and Authority-registered subjects; VET and 'QSA-supported VET'; School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships; other recognised learning types/projects</p>	<p>VCE, VET, and combined VCE-VET subjects; School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships; some VCAL units can be credited towards VCE</p>	<p>VET subjects compulsory; plus four compulsory curriculum strands focused on 'employability skills'</p>
Eligibility Requirements	<p>20 credits, at a set standard, in set pattern, plus literacy and numeracy requirements</p>	<p>Satisfactory completion of 16 units, including minimum three English units, and 'Unit 3 and 4 sequences' (Year 12 eqv.) in three other subject areas.</p>	<p>10 credits, including minimum curriculum/unit components; plus literacy and numeracy requirements</p>
Assessment	<p>School-based Assessment; Moderation via Queensland Core Skills Test; VET competencies assessed via national training package standards</p>	<p>School-based Assessments and External Examinations for VCE units (direct link to ATAR); moderation via General Achievement Test; VET competencies assessed via national training package standards</p>	<p>VCAL units school-assessed; no external examinations; VET competencies assessed via national training package standards</p>
Tertiary Entrance	<p>'OP-eligible' and 'OP-ineligible' categories; Tertiary Entrance Statement (inc. OP & FPs for eligible students) limited 'QSA registered' VET subjects contribute to OP</p>	<p>VCE Units 3 and 4 (typically year 12) contribute to ATAR; some combined VCE-VET subjects contribute to ATAR</p>	<p>Does not qualify for ATAR unless combined with VCE</p>
		<p>Combined VCE-VCAL pathways (less than 2% of students)</p>	

Themes from the past, informing the future

1 - Changing Labour Market Contexts

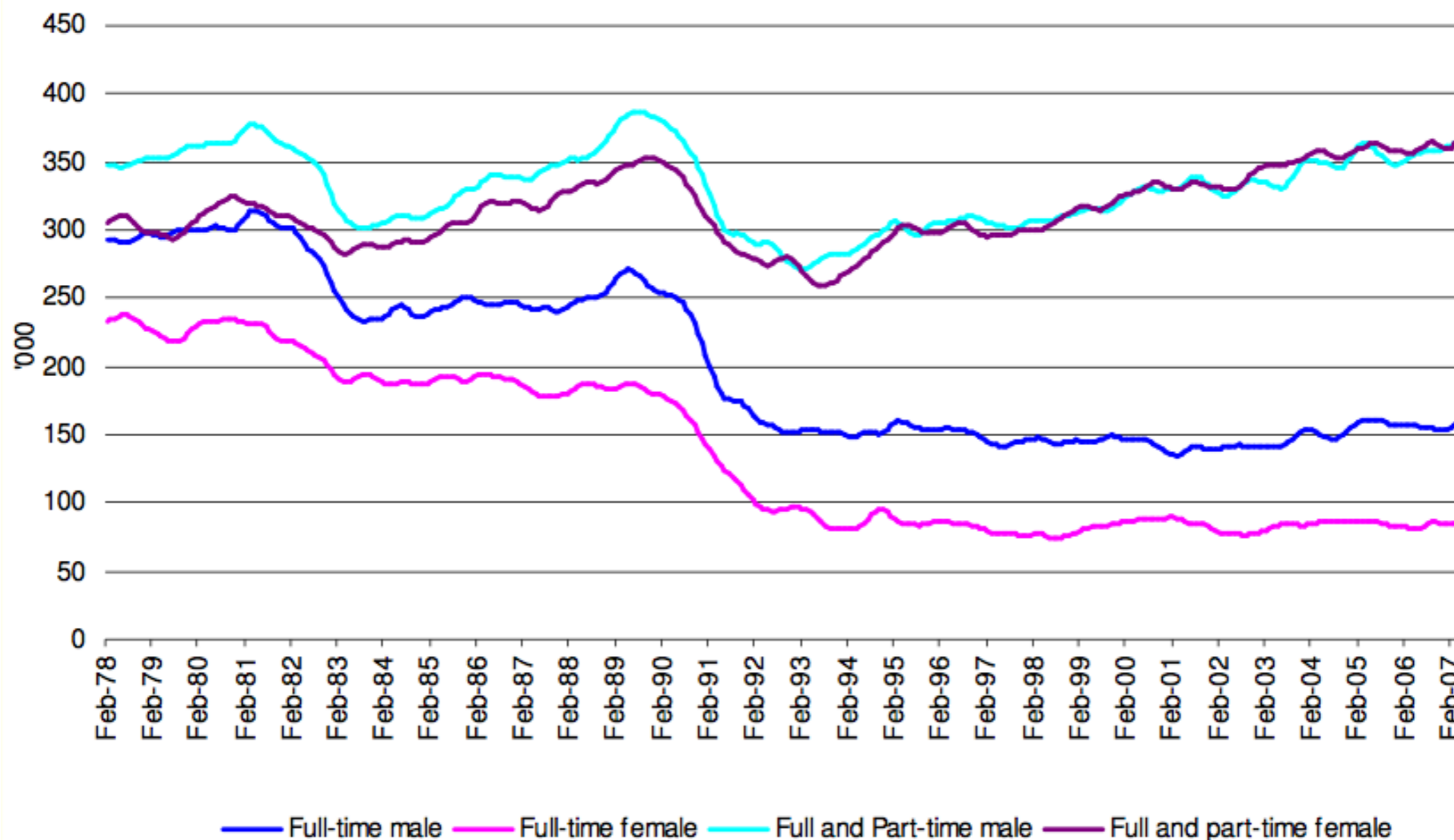
2 - Changing agendas and governance

3 - Senior Secondary Certificates: Historical Innovations, Future Trajectories

Themes from the past, informing the future

1 - Changing Labour Market Contexts

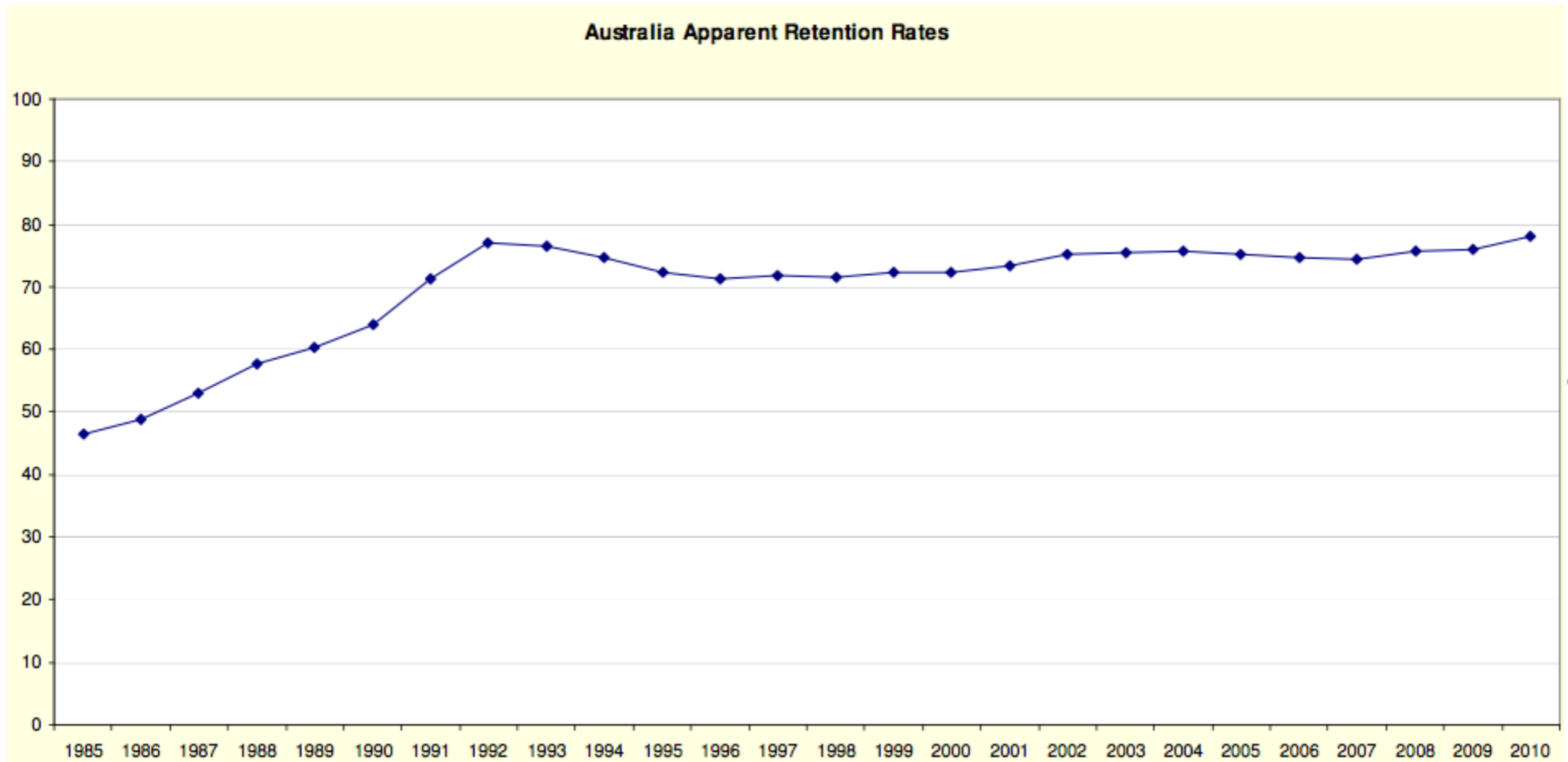
Changing full and part-time youth employment



Themes from the past, informing the future

1 - Changing Labour Market Contexts

Increasing retention rates, 1985-2010

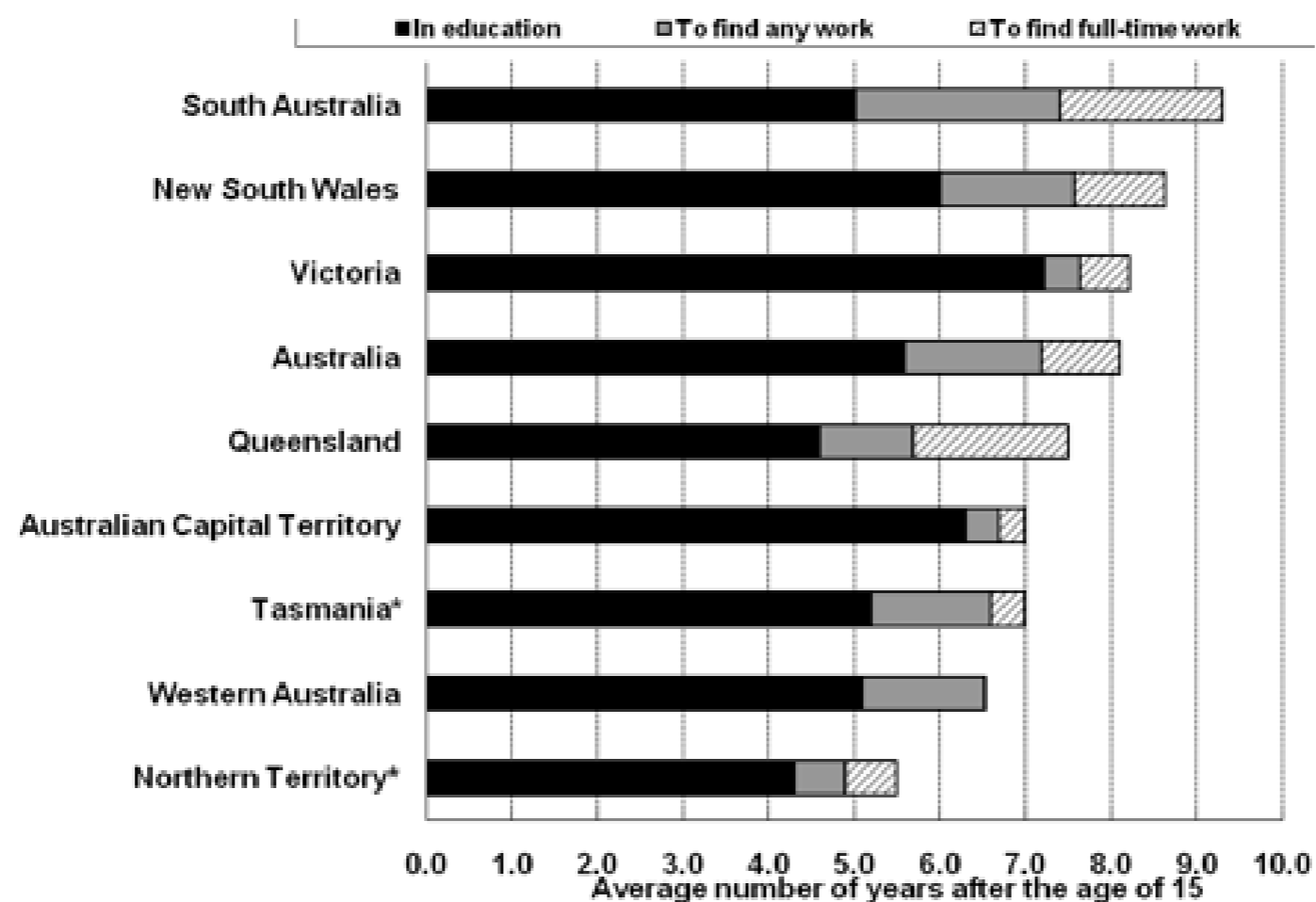


Source: ABS: Cat No. 4221.0 Education and Work

Themes from the past, informing the future

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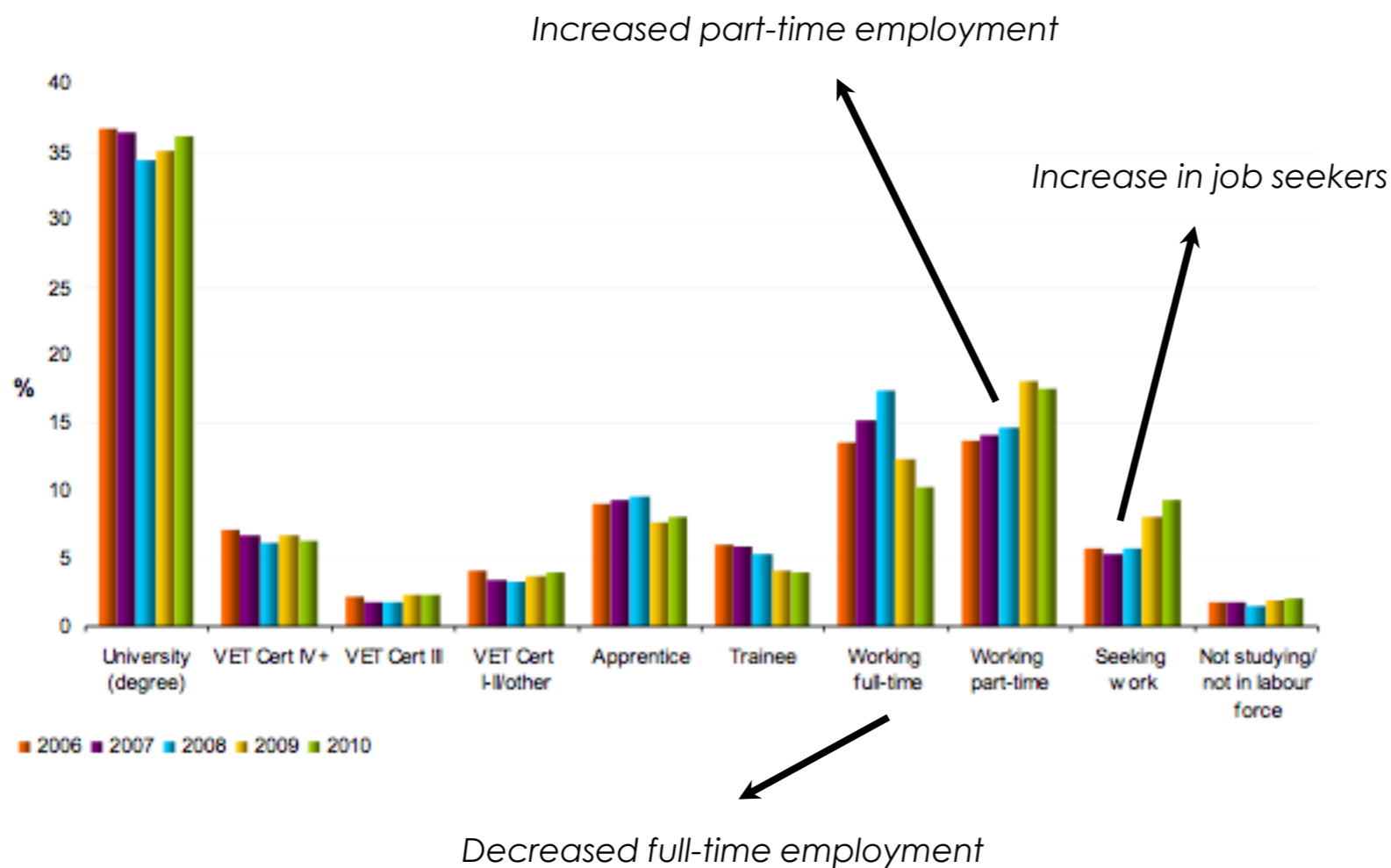
Transition period and processes: duration in education and work



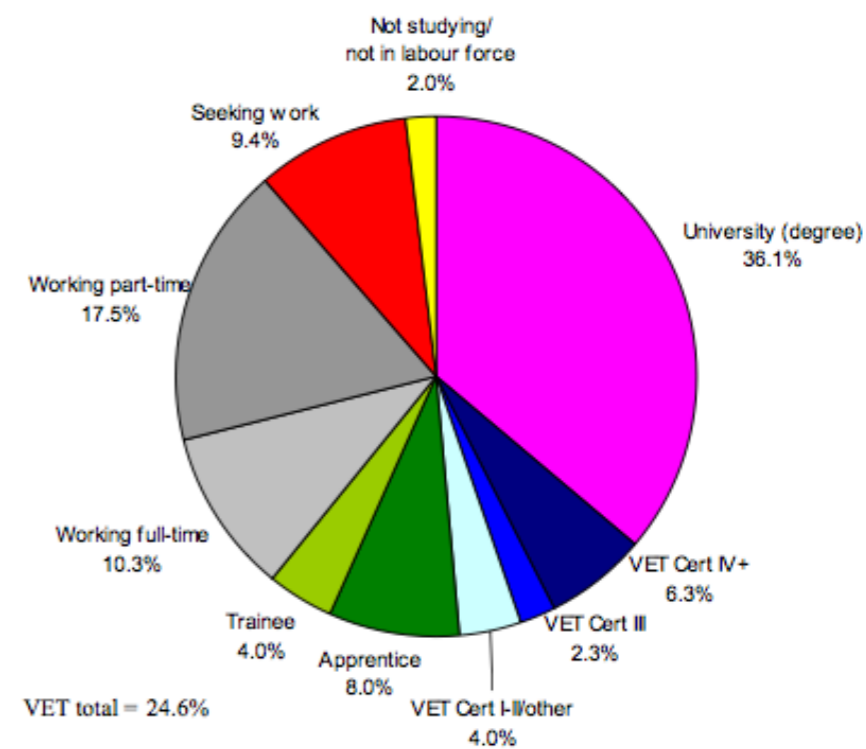
Themes from the past, informing the future

1 - Changing Labour Market Contexts

Destinations of Year 12 completers
Queensland 2006-2010



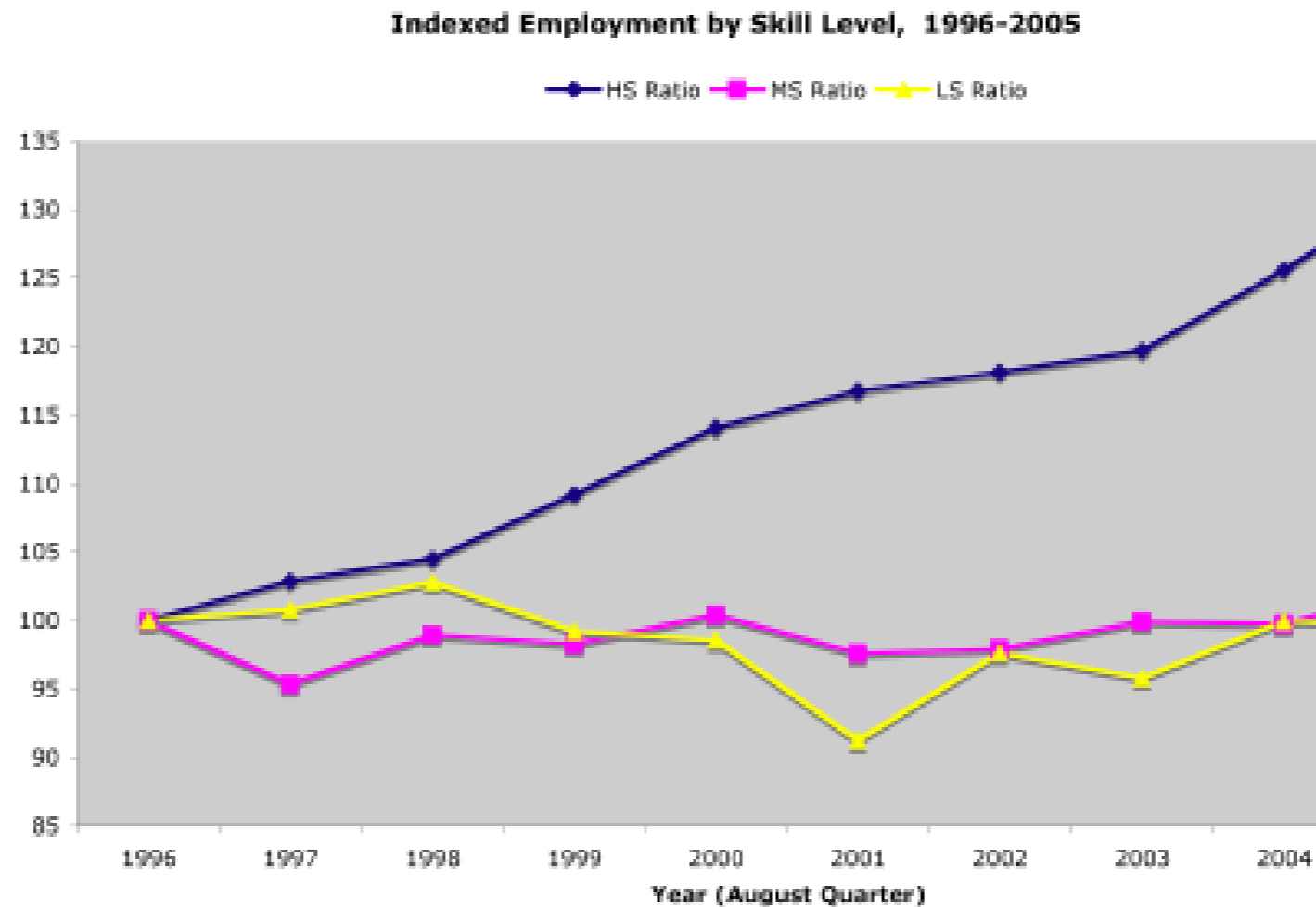
Destinations of Year 12 completers Queensland 2010



Themes from the past, informing the future

1 - Changing Labour Market Contexts

Comparison of demand for high, medium and low skilled labour in Australia
(full-time workers) 1996-2005



Themes from the past, informing the future

1 - Changing Labour Market Contexts

Growth in year 12 completions, Victoria 2009-10

Certificate	Contribution % points	Change From 2007
VET certificates	7.5	+1.0
VCAL Senior	1.2	+0.2
VCAL Intermediate	4.0	+0.8
IB	0.8	-
VCE	66.4	+0.2

Themes from the past, informing the future

1 - Changing Labour Market Contexts

Future outlook and challenges?

There's no crystal ball, but current trends suggest....

Increasingly competitive and globalising job markets, demanding higher skills and qualifications (high vulnerability for low-skilled individuals)

Growing importance of Year 12 completion & access to higher education
- Widely documented social and economic disadvantages for non-completers
- Currently poor Year 12 completion and access to higher education amongst indigenous, rural and low SES students

Need to improve transitions from VET to higher education

Importance of maintaining applicability and credibility of senior certificates in changing labour market contexts

Maintenance and possible expansion of 'high needs' groups – social and economic exclusion - What are the limits of school capacities?

Themes from the past, informing the future

2 - Changing agendas and governance

Changing role of the commonwealth and states in education governance

- Increased centralisation & state control, yet new devolved/local forms of governance
- New national agendas in curriculum and school governance
- Rise of 'audit culture' (new targets, goals, standards and accountabilities)

Amplified role of economic/industry actors

- New networks of policy actors, blurring the private/public divide
- Increased industry involvement in education and curriculum design (e.g. Gateway School Projects, School Industry Trade Centres)
- Growing economic rationalisations of education (especially 1990s onwards)

Increasingly 'global policy environment'

- Increased role of OECD and other global actors, influencing thinking about senior secondary education (e.g. pathways, transitions, qualifications)
- Amplified and high-stakes international comparisons (system-level)

Themes from the past, informing the future

2 - Changing agendas and governance

A new tertiary sector'?

- How will the post-Bradley context evolve? Possible breaking up of the TAFE sector? Continued shift towards universal higher education? The role of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)? A new policy architecture for the tertiary sector?

New landscape of 'Qualifications Frameworks'

- Evolving Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); 'credit matrix' developments, etc

Themes from the past, informing the future

2 - Changing agendas and governance

Future outlook and challenges?

Responding to new state and national demands

- *The Australian Curriculum: Managing the transition; Where will VET sit?; fit with P-12 syllabus?*
- *Meeting state and national targets*
- *New national certificates? The Australian Baccalaureate? Cadetships?*
- *Managing AQF developments; location of senior certificates?*

Planning for a new tertiary sector

- *What will this mean for the QSA? A more complex situation due to changing provision?*
- *The role of schools and SSCEs in meeting Bradley degree qualification targets?*

Applicability and transferability of certificates in new contexts

- *Transferability of senior certificates between systems (national, international)*

Managing and developing emerging networks of governance

- *Growing importance of partnerships and local networks of governance*
- *Potential benefits and pitfalls of industry/corporate involvement*

Changing institutions

- *Capacity of schooling to deliver for more of the cohort? Alternative models? Implications for SSCEs? (e.g. common framework? common award? umbrella certificate? group award? parallel awards?) Can the AQF help?*

Themes from the past, informing the future

3 - Senior Secondary Certificates: Historical Innovations, Future Trajectories

Changing conceptions of education and the role of senior secondary schools

- *Loosening of university control post-1960s, but continued influence of universities*
- *Notable shifts from 'education for democracy and citizenship' (1970s-80s) to 'education for economy and productivity' (1990s onwards)*
- *Increased focus on 'pathways' and senior years as a 'transition phase' to further learning/employment*
- *Education for new times?*

Ongoing debates about 'knowledge' and 'skills'

- *History reveals ongoing tensions about which knowledges and skills are valued and counted*
- *'Academic' and 'Vocational' knowledge - a perennial and unresolvable dilemma?*
- *Increasingly diverse range of learning options count towards certificates (QCE as exemplar)*
- *Growing focus on 'generic competencies' and 'general capabilities'*
- *Maintenance and amplification of high-stakes indicators of academic excellence*
- *The meaning and construct of knowledge*

Themes from the past, informing the future

3 - Senior Secondary Certificates: Historical Innovations, Future Trajectories

Diverse and competing demands on senior certificates

- Selection vs. Retention - a perennial dilemma
- Growing impact of multiple state and commonwealth targets
- The certificates and tertiary selection
- Issues of credibility and sustainability

Certificate Architecture and Design

- Core dilemma = common or multiple certificates?
- Increasingly diverse and flexible menu of learning options on offer
- How should different areas of learning and knowledge be structured?
- Inclusion of VET in the certificates
- Assessment & Reporting

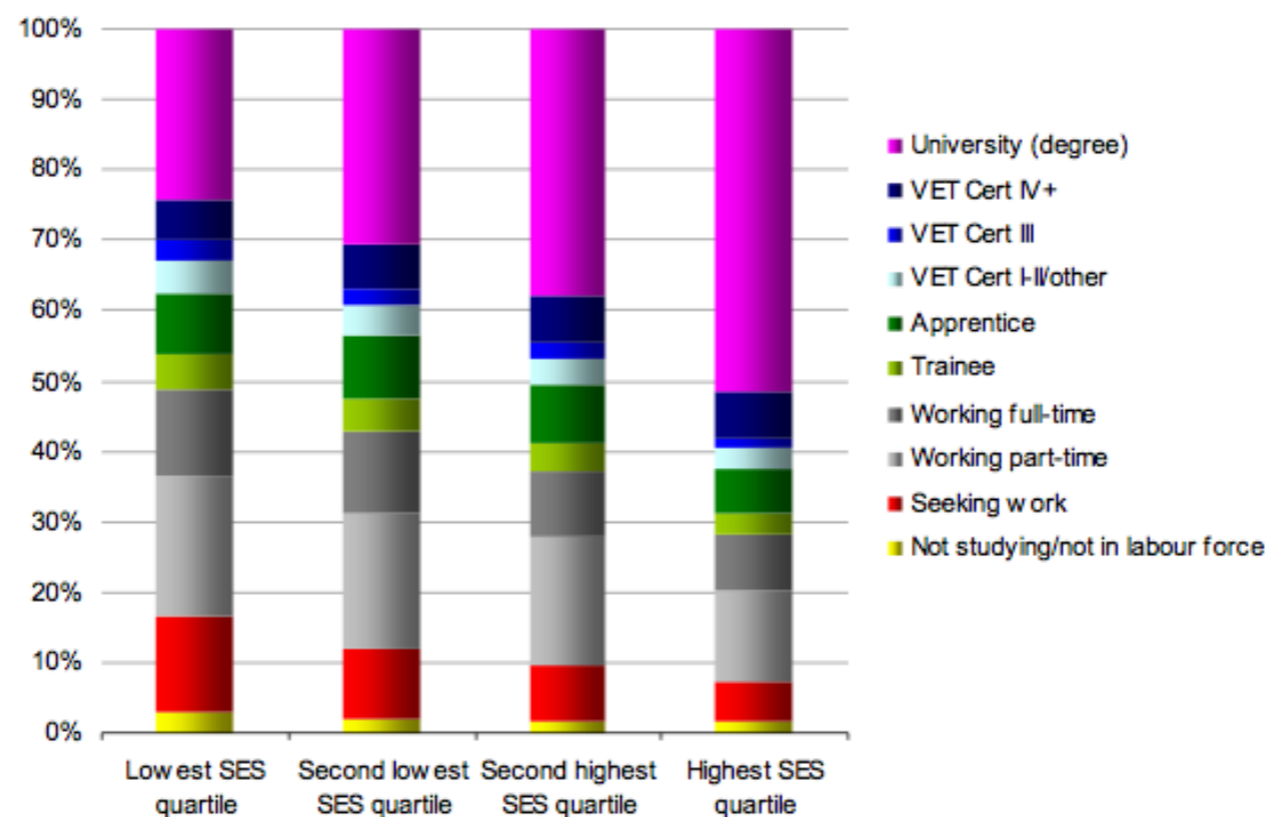
Themes from the past, informing the future

3 - Senior Secondary Certificates: Historical Innovations, Future Trajectories

Equity issues - transitions from the QCE to post-school destinations

- Next Step 2010 suggests Queensland has a strong patterning of post-school destinations via socio-economic, gender, geographic and indigenous categories:

Figure 7.12: Main destinations of Year 12 completers, by socioeconomic status, Queensland 2010



Note: Socioeconomic status is based on residential address.

Socioeconomic Status

Themes from the past, informing the future

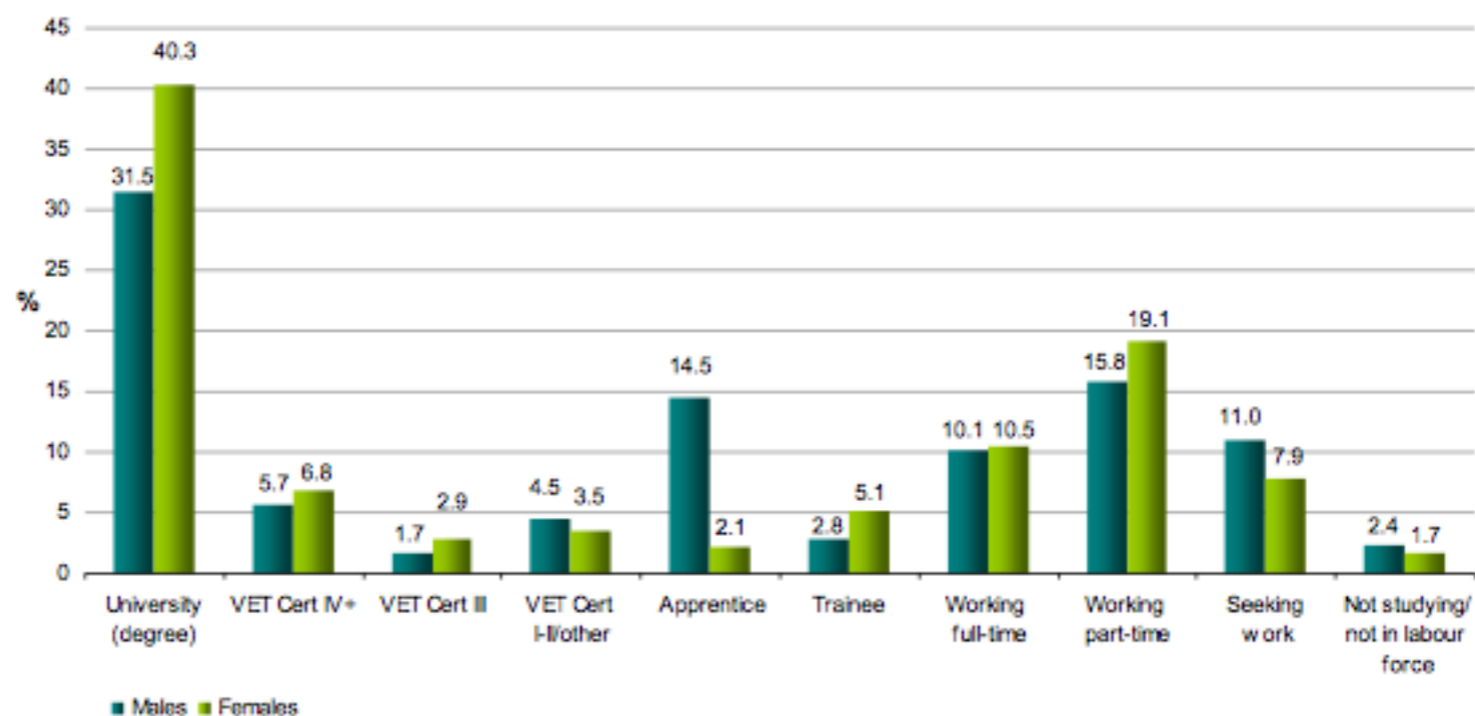
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Gender

Figure 2.2: Main destinations of Year 12 completers, by sex, Queensland 2010



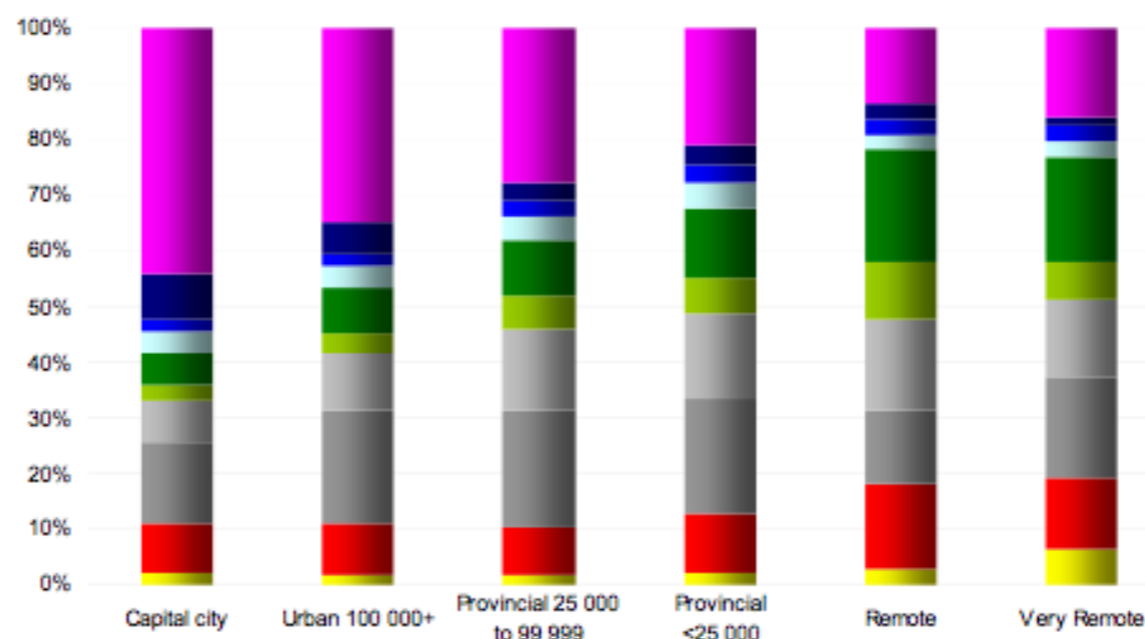
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Figure 6.3: Main destinations of Year 12 completers, by MCEECDYA geographical location, Queensland 2010



Geography

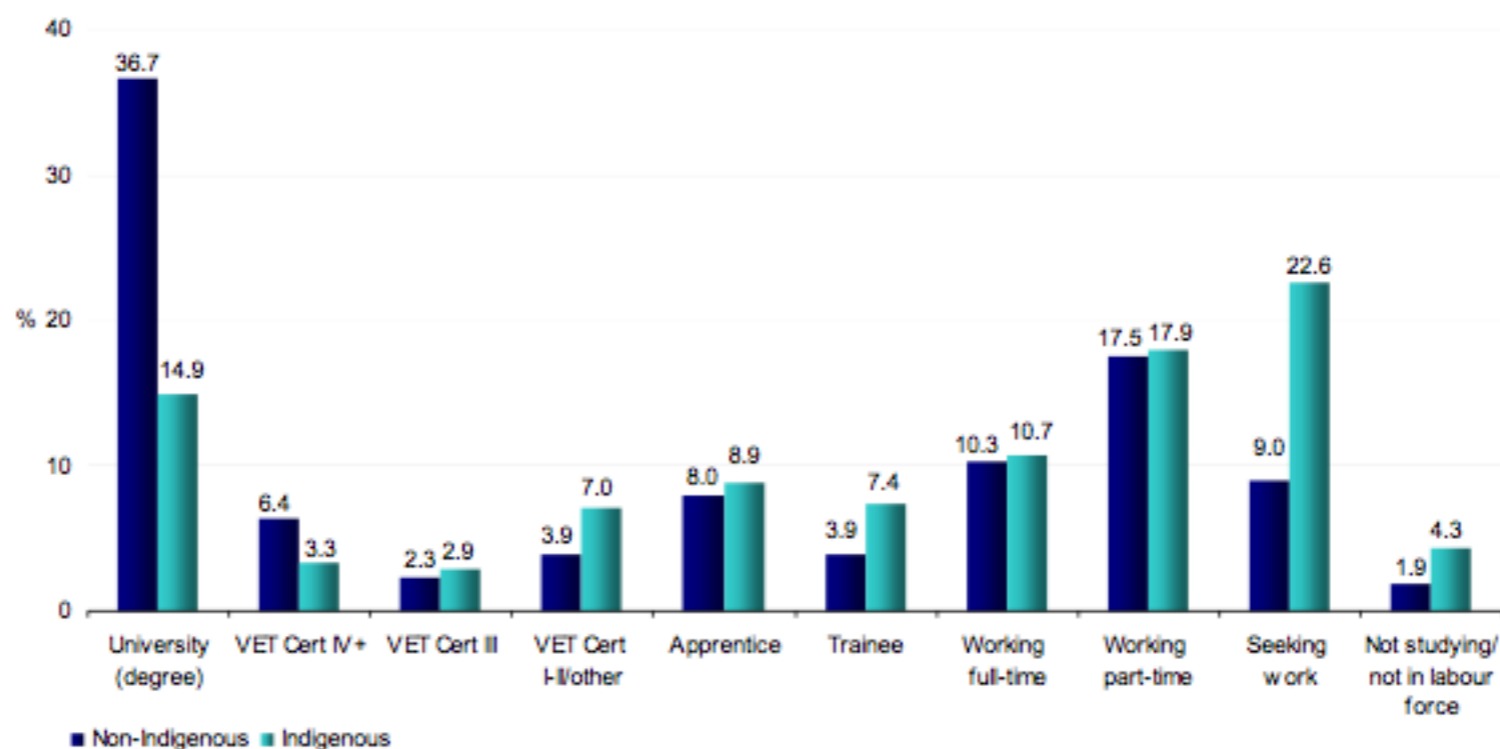
Themes from the past, informing the future

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Equity issues - transitions from the QCE to post-school destinations

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Figure 7.7: Main destinations of Year 12 completers, by Indigenous status, Queensland 2010



Indigenous

Themes from the past, informing the future

3 - Senior Secondary Certificates: Historical Innovations, Future Trajectories

Future outlook and challenges?

How to reconcile tensions between certificates as: 'tools of equity' vs. 'tools of differentiation'?; 'tools of recognition' vs. 'tools of engagement'; 'tools of education'?

Sustainability and credibility of QCE in light of changing national and international agendas

Ensuring the architecture and design of the certificates maximise: young people's post-school opportunities; and Queensland's ability to meet state and national qualification targets

Ensuring the mix of knowledge and skills in the senior years remains relevant in changing social, cultural and economic contexts

Awareness of both the possibilities and risks associated with economic/industry drivers of certificates

Awareness of the positives and negatives of personalisation/differentiation

Themes from the past, informing the future

Questions?