Review of Years 9 to 12 TASMANIA

Final Report

23 December 2016

Australian Council *for* Educational Research

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Support for the Review has been provided by a cross-sectoral Advisory Group comprising the following:

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Finally, on behalf of the Review Team and ACER, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the preparation of this Report, and commend it to the Minister of Education and Training in Tasmania.

Professor Geoff Masters AO
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Council for Educational Research
23 December 2016

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACACA	Australasian Curriculum and Assessment and Certification Authorities
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACSF	Australian Core Skills Framework
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AICS	Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ARIA	Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia
ARR	Apparent Retention Rate
ASGS	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
BOSTES NSW	Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, New South Wales
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DCR	Direct Continuation Rate
DoE	Department of Education
DSG	Department of State Growth
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
FTP	Flexible Teaching Pool
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICPA	Isolated Children's Parents' Association
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IST	Independent Schools Tasmania
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LAN	Local Area Network
LGA	Local Government Authority
LIFT	Learning in Families Together
LSAY	Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
n.d.	No date
NSSC	National Schools Statistics Collection
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP	Overall Positions
PA	Preliminary Achievement
PAT	Progressive Achievement Tests
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PLI	(Department of Education's) Professional Learning Institute
QC	Qualifications Certificate
QLD	Queensland
RLP	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SA	Satisfactory Achievement
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SARIS	Student Assessment and Reporting Information System
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SEW	Survey of Education and Work
SiAS	Staff in Australian Schools
SPR	School Participation Rate
SRP	School Resource Package
STEM	Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics
SWP	Structured Work Placements
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TASC	Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification
TCCI	Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
TCE	Tasmanian Certificate of Education
TCEA	Tasmanian Certificate of Educational Achievement
TCEO	Tasmanian Catholic Education Office
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
ToR	Terms of Reference
TQA	Tasmanian Qualifications Authority
TSCRTO	Tasmanian Secondary Colleges Registered Training Organisation
TTC	Trade Training Centre
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UTAS	University of Tasmania
VAL	Vocational and Applied Learning
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	VET in Schools
WA	Western Australia
WAN	Wide Area Network

Glossary

The following definitions are provided for key terms and phrases used in this Report. They have been derived from the Terms of Reference (ToR); Australian and Tasmanian Curriculum and course documents; and relevant literature.

Applied Learning

Practically based learning in realistic contexts is recognised internationally as being important for students in preparing for the world of work. Applied learning is essentially teacher-guided and student-centred. The role of the learner is integral to applied learning and the student plays an active role in managing the processes of applying knowledge. Through applied learning experiences, students broaden and deepen their understanding and are able to plan and guide their own learning.

Bespoke Courses

Bespoke courses are those designed for particular cohorts of students (e.g. for one school or a cluster of schools).

Course Document

A course document sets out the guidelines and rules for the knowledge and skills that must or may be included in a course of study, and that a learner must demonstrate to receive a specific award.

Enterprise Education

Enterprise education aims to equip students with a set of capabilities which they can apply to whichever context they choose. Student capabilities include:

- **Authentic Learning:** Students are given the opportunity to identify and investigate realistic, 'messy' or 'ill-structured' problems, using a variety of methods, within existing constraints, and perhaps as part of iterative processes. The problem could be set by an external partner.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Students are given the opportunity to use creative, critical and/or iterative thinking and working methods to develop and generate innovative ideas, solutions, products or artefacts, using differing approaches and lateral thinking.
- **Risk-taking:** Students have the opportunity to take measured risks, deal with and learn from uncertainty, and learn from mistakes and failure in a 'soft-landing' environment.
- **Taking Action:** Students are given the opportunity to develop leadership capabilities as part of self-directed learning, employing proactive attitudes and strategies to achieve self-defined outcomes.
- **Collaboration:** Students are given the opportunity to work in structured groups to work together using collaborative styles, and work with 'clients' and stakeholders responsively and effectively.

Official Curriculum

The 'official curriculum' refers to the formal and documented curriculum which outlines the objectives, content, learning experiences, resources and assessment expected to be offered by an education institution.

Pathways

'Pathways' refer to sequenced and mapped sets of subjects and learning outcomes from which students can choose, in order to achieve specified outcomes.

Project-based Learning

Students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an engaging and complex question, problem or challenge. Elements include:

- **Key Knowledge, Understanding and Success Skills** – Student learning goals include standards-based content and skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration and self-management.
- **Challenging Problem or Question** – Student learning is framed by a meaningful problem to solve or a question to answer, at the appropriate level of challenge.
- **Sustained Inquiry** – Students engage in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, finding resources and applying information.
- **Authenticity** – Student learning features real-world context, tasks and tools, quality standards, or impact – or speaks to students' personal concerns, interests and issues in their lives.
- **Student Voice and Choice** – Student learning involves decision-making about the project, including how they work and what they create.
- **Reflection** – Students and teachers reflect on learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry and project activities, the quality of student work, and obstacles and how to overcome them.
- **Critique and Revision** – Students give, receive and use feedback to improve their process and products.
- **Public Product** – Students make their project work public by explaining, displaying and/or presenting it to people beyond the classroom.

Senior Secondary Course

A senior secondary course is normally undertaken, or intended to be undertaken, during the final two years of secondary education in Tasmania (commonly known as Years 11 and 12), and are considered to be of a level of complexity at Level 1 or higher.

Vocational and Applied Learning (VAL)

VAL activities include the incorporation of a range of industry-oriented activities in the curriculum. These activities can include guest speakers, excursions, exchanges, industry visits, mentoring, shadowing, internships, team projects, research and development, manufacturing, community-based learning, service learning, project-based learning and enterprise learning.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

VET enables students to acquire workplace skills through nationally organised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course. A VET qualification is issued by a registered training organisation. The achievement of a VET qualification signifies that a student has demonstrated competency against the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace.

Vocational Education and Learning (VEL)

VEL helps secondary students explore the world of work, identify career options and pathways, and build career development skills. VEL is delivered within the broader curriculum. It supports students to gain career development skills and provides opportunities for students to 'taste' the world of work through one-off events, initiatives such as enterprise learning, or spending time in a real or simulated workplace.

Work Experience

Work experience is undertaken by secondary school students at an employer's premises. The student has a short-term placement with an employer, to gain insights into a workplace or an industry. The main purpose of work experience is for students to primarily observe and learn, rather than to undertake activities which require training or expertise.

Work Placement

Work placement is a planned opportunity in a host workplace that enables school students studying a particular industry-based course to practise and develop their industry competencies and their employability skills in a real workplace.

1 Executive Summary

The purpose of the *Review of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania* was to **'identify opportunities to improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes'** (Contract between ACER and the Tasmanian Department of Education, 2016).

The Tasmanian Government is currently implementing significant reforms to improve students' retention and attainment in Tasmania's schools. There is a concern in the Tasmanian community however, that their students' performances are among the lowest in the nation. Reasons nominated for these results include weak literacy and numeracy levels; low attendance rates; high anxiety around transitions between Year 10 and Year 11 by some students, especially among those living outside of the larger cities; students seeking alternative education options; and family, financial, health and carer based issues.

It is against this backdrop that the Australian Council *for* Educational Research (ACER) was commissioned to undertake an independent review of Years 9 to 12 concerning the following issues:

- student and workforce data
- curriculum policy and provision (including vocational education and training (VET)
- design and delivery for Years 9 to 12 (which includes the three Tasmanian education sectors: the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO), Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) and the Department of Education (DoE)).

This Report provides the following:

- an analysis of current
    - student performance and aspirational data
    - workforce characteristics
    - curriculum provision and design in Years 9 to12
- a report on VET and vocational education and learning (VEL) in Tasmania's government and non-government schools
- specific recommendations regarding
    - participation and transition policies and procedures that align with the findings of the report and the *Education Bill*
    - future curriculum provision and design for Years 9 to12
    - future workforce characteristics
    - VET and VEL in Tasmania's government and non-government schools.

The Review Team identified the following principles to inform the development of the recommendations arising from this Review:

1. Completion of Year 12 at school or its equivalent is an expectation of every student.
2. The structures and curriculum for Years 9 to 12 enable continuity of learning.
3. The pathways students pursue over Years 9 to 12 are different, based on individual learning needs.
4. School completion is accompanied by formal recognition of what the student has achieved over these years.

To inform the preparation of this Report and its recommendations, a Review Team from ACER used a range of approaches to gain input from the Tasmanian education and training communities and individuals. These approaches included the following, which were conducted between August and October 2016:

- public consultations held in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie
- call for public submissions
- online surveys for students and teachers to complete
- interviews and focus groups held with teachers, principals, students, and stakeholder groups and committees
- school visits
- document review and analysis.

A range of views from a deep and broad cross-section of stakeholders on a common set of issues were raised with the Review Team. Common issues on which there were diverse views included the following:

- the educational aspirations of students and parents
- the nature and use of data
- attendance and engagement of students at school
- the structure of Years 9 to 12 in the government sector
- the nature and extent of the curriculum offerings available in Years 9 to 12
- the scope and sequence of the curriculum offerings available in Years 9 to 12
- VET and VEL in the school curriculum
- issues arising from geography and demographics such as:
    - curriculum and timetabling options
    - public transport provisions
    - matching the workforce with demand
    - assessment, reporting and moderation approaches
    - credentialing of students who complete 12 years of secondary school
    - workforce issues.

As a result of the divergence of views on this range of issues investigated by the Review Team, recommendations to improve students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes are also likely to attract a diversity of opinions. As such, policy options have been proposed in addition to recommendations.

1.1 Findings

The following findings have informed the recommendations and policy options proposed by ACER in order to identify opportunities to improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes. These findings have been collated to address the key themes emerging from the review, and with the issues outlined in the ToR.

Assessment and reporting:

- It is the role of the curriculum, assessment and certification authorities around Australia (i.e. Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC)) to apply the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards.
- There is a lack of explicit and consistent statements about the curriculum and associated assessment and reporting requirements for TASC accredited courses.
- There are varying levels of clarity in the course documents about assessment and reporting of students.
- Moderation is a highly valued activity, but more for professional learning than for validating students' achievements.

Certification:

- It is possible for a student in Tasmania to reach the end of Year 12 and not receive a senior secondary certificate because of non-attendance (during the school term or the examinations), misadventure, the non-accumulation of credits, or not meeting the five standards.
- A tendency towards recognising the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) as the only and/or most important measure of Year 12 completion, while disregarding alternative certificates, such as the Qualifications Certificate (QC) and the Tasmanian Certificate of Educational Achievement (TCEA) has generated issues for students, schools and TASC.
- No other jurisdiction has a statement about completion that does not include the award of the senior secondary certificate.
- There is as yet no agreed national measure of completion of Year 12 across jurisdictions.
- There is a lack of consistency in the way the expected learning outcomes are expressed across the various TASC courses at the respective levels.
- There are anomalies which show a lack of consistency in the ways in which certain VET qualifications versus individual VET units within a qualification count towards the TCE. These anomalies can affect whether an individual student achieves the TCE, and heightens the stakes for teachers concerning the provision of accurate course and unit advice.
- All Australian states and territories have arrangements so that students undertaking VET can gain recognition in the form of credit towards the award requirement of senior secondary certification.
- The requirements for the five standards to be met to gain a TCE (i.e. the 'tick' system) is generally not well regarded both within and beyond the Tasmanian school education community.

Completion of Year 12:

- In the online student survey, the majority of respondents indicated they plan to complete Year 12, and the most common plan identified for post school study was to attend university.
- Only about a third of boys indicated they planned to attend university.

Curriculum provision:

- The Tasmanian Years 9 to 12 curriculum best serves those students who live in large, urban centres.

- The curriculum is less effective for those students who live in regional and rural locations; have a disability; are reliant on transport other than their own; or are Indigenous.
- The curriculum structure, content, assessment and reporting requirements across Years 9 to 12 is complicated, difficult to understand and contradictory in places.
- Course documents in Tasmania vary in their conformity to the official guidelines and structures governing such documents.
- The number of levels of courses, and the variations in the number of hours within and across each course offered in Tasmania, makes Tasmania unique compared to most other Australian states and territories.
- The extent of curriculum offerings available in senior secondary years is also a unique feature to Tasmania, given the small size of the secondary student population in Tasmania, when compared with other jurisdictions, and as such these arrangements are likely to have implications for the annual Education Budget in Tasmania.
- At the time of this Review, there was no explicit mention in the Tasmanian course documents, of the General Capabilities in the senior secondary courses, either in terms of their inclusion in the content standards, nor in terms of their relevance or visibility in the standards, although it is understood that in 2017, changes to course documents will be implemented.
- Similarly, at the time of this Review, the TASC accreditation requirements for courses did not require the inclusion of the General Capabilities or the Core Skills for Work, although it is understood that in 2017, changes are planned.
- There is more provision of Level 1 and 2 courses in Tasmania than there are in other Australian jurisdictions.
- The relationships between the three Level 4 courses and the links to the University College Program are unclear to external observers.
- The overall structure of the Tasmanian senior secondary curriculum is complicated to understand, and the public information provided is not housed in one single location.
- The senior secondary curriculum in Tasmania is aligned to the Australian Curriculum subjects of *English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography*.
- No Aboriginal Studies course is offered by TASC.
- There are a number of accredited senior secondary bespoke or boutique courses; several of which are out of date or of a low level and appear to have been written for a very specific cohort of students.

Culture and value of schooling:

- There is a lack of trust and a lack of a shared understanding among key stakeholders, school communities and the general public, about priorities in school education in Tasmania.

Data, evidence and statistics:

- In the government sector, there is no shortage of data available, particularly to school principals and the DoE through the edi management information system and public accountability mechanisms.
- Data published by the TASC on VET and VEL is generally limited in scope.
- Student destination data is considered to be valuable information to schools, but is not collected systematically across Tasmania.

Effectiveness and impact:

- Tasmania's extensive curriculum options, particularly for the less rigorous courses, makes this approach expensive.

Extension High Schools:

- The introduction of Extension High Schools in the government sector, as a way of broadening curriculum offerings and to therefore improve the attendance, retention and attainment of students living in regional and rural locations, is a resource intensive option, that may have low impact.
- There are concerns about the capacity of Extension High Schools to sufficiently offer VET in Schools programs (including concerns about access to suitably qualified trainers.
- The online surveys suggest that only 8 per cent of the student respondents in Years 9 and 10 plan to remain at their high school in Year 11.
- The administrative and assessment and reporting requirements on the small number of teachers in Extension High Schools is demanding, as the timelines for providing assessments and reports vary for students in Years 7 to 10; Years 11 and 12; and for VET studies.
- In some Extension High Schools there seems to be a misalignment between course offerings and employment opportunities in local communities.

Pathways planning:

- The introduction of *My Education* and the withdrawal of 'Pathway Planners' have not been universally welcomed.
- The responsibility for determining pathways is placed on students through the specified standards to be met to gain a TCE.

Policy responsibilities:

- A low proportion of teachers at high schools believe they have the necessary qualification to teach senior secondary courses, which has implications for high schools intending to offer such courses and implications for the courses on offer by teachers in Tasmania.
- Timetables in some schools are overly influenced by bus timetables.

Professional learning:

- More professional learning is required to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and the relevant assessments of students' performance.
- Moderation is a highly valued professional learning activity.

Single-year courses in Years 11 and 12:

- In all Australian states and territories students are able to enter and exit courses after one year of study.

Student attainment:

- Across several measures, overall, there is little difference between the attainment of students in Tasmania and that of students in other jurisdictions at Year 9.
- In 2016, the mean scale scores on NAPLAN for Tasmania were close to the mean scale scores for Australia, except for the following:
    - In Year 3, Tasmanian students were below the national mean scale score in spelling and grammar and punctuation.
    - In Year 9, Tasmanian students were below the national mean scale score in spelling.

Student attendance and retention:

- The statistics that best indicate completion of Year 12 – the Year 7–12 apparent retention rate and the Year 11–12 direct retention rate – are increasing, and the gap between Tasmania and other jurisdictions is decreasing.
- Between 2014 and 2015, the Apparent Retention Rate (ARR) for Tasmania increased by 3.3 percentage points, from 68.4 to 71.7, compared to an increase of 0.8 percentage points, from 83.6 to 84.4, for the rest of Australia. No other jurisdiction had as great an increase as did Tasmania between 2014 and 2015.
- Part-time students are mostly located in Year 12 and in government schools.
- VET/VEL courses appear to be one factor positively influencing the state's retention rate.

Students studying and working:

- Half of all students in Years 11 and 12 who responded to the online survey indicated that they have a paid job.
- The average number of hours worked per week that was reported by online survey respondents was 10 hours.

Transition from Year 10 into the senior years:

- While Tasmanian government schools in particular, are criticised for underperforming, it should be recognised that more Tasmanian adolescents than in the past are making the transition from high school to senior college, to complete Year 12.
- Unlike some schools in the non-government school sectors, there is a bifurcated system of schools in the government sector, with most students changing schools from high school to attend a college.
- Over the next few years, it is likely that there will be enrolment increases in the senior years, following recent trends of increases in progression rates from Year 10 to Year 11 and Year 7–12 apparent retention rates.
- About 10 per cent of the Year 9 and 10 student respondents to the online survey said that they were intending to leave school at the end of Year 10. The majority of respondents indicated they had every intention of going on to Year 11, with boys four times more likely (15 per cent) to say they intended to leave school after Year 10 than were girls (4 per cent).
- Students in urban locations were less likely to indicate they intended to leave school at the end of Year 10.

- More than 90 per cent of Years 9 and 10 respondents to the online survey attending a high school in an urban or provincial school indicated that they planned to attend a college for Year 11.

Vocational Education:

- VET and vocational learning in schools seem to be valued as essential components of the senior secondary curriculum with value for all students.
- VET and vocational learning across all three sectors is led by a small team of three people within the DoE, which only provides limited capacity for systemic change, or for new or futures-oriented work beyond sustaining existing requirements.
- Five industry groupings comprise more than 60 per cent of the VET qualifications awarded in 2015 in Tasmania, with 18.9 per cent of the qualifications awarded in Tourism, Travel and Hospitality.
- There are over 100 private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) operating in Tasmania.
- A greater percentage of online survey respondents in Years 9 and 10, located in outer provincial locations indicated they planned to study VET in Year 11 (about 25 per cent), compared to 16-18 per cent of respondents in urban areas.
- A greater proportion of students living in outer provincial locations indicated they were likely to consider school-based apprenticeships than students in urban areas, and the majority of these students were boys.
- The Tasmanian Secondary Colleges Registered Training Organisation (TSCRTO) is well regarded for its meticulous attention to detail and commitment to ensuring that quality assurance and compliance arrangements have been met.
- Tensions exist between what VET and VEL measures of performance, are valued at a systemic level, and what is valued by colleges and schools at a local level, with the success of VET for secondary students measured systemically by participation rates and completion rates, whereas teachers and schools tend to adopt a broader perspective on the trajectory of the student from pre-engagement to post-school/college destination.
- Tensions exist concerning the DoE funding model and the TasTAFE full cost-recovery service model.
- Most funding for VET in Schools is allocated on the basis of student enrolments in low-cost Certificate I and Certificate II qualifications.
- Pastoral care is an important component of VET in Schools programs.

University entrance:

- Close to 90 per cent of Tasmanian recipients of an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) in 2015, applied for a university place. Higher percentages of ATAR recipients applying for a university place only occurred in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.
- In 2015, 98 per cent of Tasmanian applicants to university were offered a place and 72 per cent of these offers were accepted.

Workforce:

- The average age of secondary teacher respondents to the online survey was 46.6 years.
- Very few teacher respondents indicated that they speak a language other than English at home.

- More than a quarter of secondary teachers indicated they studied their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course outside Tasmania.
- Senior colleges in the government sector have a more stable workforce than do high schools, and the staff in these senior colleges are the oldest teachers in the workforce.
- Schools in provincial locations have a higher proportion of teachers under the age of 30 years.
- Colleges and high schools have about the same proportion of new teachers (6 per cent); however, high schools have a greater number of teachers with up to 10 years of experience (40 per cent compared to 28 per cent in colleges).
- Colleges have more teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience (40 per cent compared to 32 per cent in high schools).
- More teachers in rural locations tend to have less experience than their counterparts in urban areas, with 29 per cent of teachers in outer provincial areas have up to five years of experience compared to 12 per cent of teachers in urban areas.
- There are twice as many leaders in outer provincial areas compared to those in urban schools, who have no more than two years of experience.
- The majority of leaders in outer provincial areas (55 per cent) reported they had no more than two years of experience in their current position, compared to 30 per cent in urban areas.
- The proportions of teachers who indicate that they are qualified to teach at Years 11–12 are considerably lower than at Years 7–10 in all subject areas except VET/VEL.
- Over a third of teachers of Years 7 to 10 in Tasmania are teaching out-of-field.

1.2 Recommendations and Policy Options

The recommendations arising from the Review of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania address the contracted purpose of the Review: to identify opportunities to improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes. Recognising these positive changes in data along with understanding promising approaches to future policies and practices in school education, has informed the findings and recommendations proposed from this Review.

These proposals comprise overarching recommendations which are then underpinned with specific recommendations and policy options Each of the following overarching recommendations listed below, is presented in Chapter 9, where each recommendation is discussed and expanded upon.

1. Take an holistic approach to system and sector improvements;
2. Review and update the formal curriculum, assessment, reporting and accreditation requirements;
3. Consider the establishment of multi-campus schools;
4. Initiate regular long-term strategies to change public perceptions about the value of school education and VET in Schools;
5. Implement a development strategy to support the rejuvenation of the workforce and potentially, the implementation of multi-campus schools;
6. Improve the status of VET and VEL in schools through community involvement in the development of a future vision and associated implementation strategy; and
7. Re-evaluate the nature and use of data collected.

These respective overarching recommendations are aimed at increasing students' attendance, retention and attainment by

- Improving the status and quality of school education in Tasmania;

- Re-invigorating and renewing the teaching workforce including the recruitment of suitably qualified senior secondary subject specialists;
- Creating an articulated and developmental curriculum through Years 9 to 12;
- Building on and where appropriate, formalising existing informal networks between schools where they already exist;
- Establishing networks of schools where informal relationships have not already been initiated; and
- Enabling students to move easily between the respective campuses by dedicating funding for buses of a suitable size for the number of students, and a bus driver who is allocated to specified regional and rural schools.

2 Context

The Tasmanian Government commissioned the Australian Council *for* Educational Research (ACER) to conduct an independent review of Years 9 to 12 in order to propose options for the improvement in students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes. To identify these opportunities for improvement, the Terms of Reference (Tore) identified that this Review should examine data, curriculum policies and secondary school provisions (including vocational education and training (VET)), and the design and delivery of schooling from Years 9 to 12 in the three Tasmanian education sectors: the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO), Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) and the Department of Education (DoE).

Tasmania's provision for schooling in the secondary years has been subjected to a number of changes in recent years. In May 2014, the Tasmanian Government announced that a Taskforce would be established to identify regional and rural high schools that would offer Years 11 and 12, with the belief that offering senior secondary schooling in these schools would encourage young people to remain in education. In 2014, six schools were selected to participate in the Extension High School program. In 2015, another six schools were identified. Earlier this year (2016), another 18 schools, including urban high schools, were identified to extend provision to Years 11 and 12 in 2017.

In addition to changes in Tasmanian secondary schools, there have been changes in the provision of VET and vocational education and learning (VEL). Over the past five to 10 years, the arrangement of vocational learning in schools and colleges has been subject to a period of ongoing reform and restructure. The 2012 review of the role and function of Tasmania's public sector VET providers (the *Simmons Review*) described the 'diffused identity and a damaged image' (p. 32) of VET in the state following the *Shaping a Thinking Future. Qualifications and Skills for Tasmania Tomorrow* (*Tasmania Tomorrow)* reforms (Government of Tasmania 2007). The *Simmons Review* identified a widely held perception at the time that the status and reputation of VET had suffered in the minds of employers and enterprises as well as students and parents.

Simmons (2012) also found a number of factors contributed to this perception, including:

- examples of duplication and competition that left users of the system puzzled, dismayed or even angry;
- examples of poor practice in training delivery, typified by 'tick and flick' processes in assessment; and
- Budgetary constraints on access to VET programs in some areas.

Nonetheless, the attractiveness of VET/VEL is one factor positively influencing the state's retention rate.

One of the challenges facing the Tasmanian schooling sector is how to interpret publicly available data. *Schools Australia* (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) cat. no. 4221.0, 2015) notes:

> In recent years, Tasmania has alternated between a single and multiple entity college structure. This has impacted on the number of students as these structural changes have seen some Year 11 and 12 students change classification between school and the vocational education and training sector and hence move in and out of scope of the National School Statistics Collection (ABS, 2015, p. 3).

These observations by the ABS suggest that Tasmania's official school statistics are negatively affected by how participation in education is counted and that the apparent retention rate could be higher if enrolment and counting conventions were different.

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the *Review of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania* was to provide a report, policy options and recommendations to the Minister for Education and Training that address the contracted purpose of the Review: to identify opportunities to improve student attendance, retention and attainment outcomes.

The ToR specified that the identification of these opportunities should occur following an analysis of:

- current curriculum provision, attainment data and pathway information for students in Years 9 to 12 in all Tasmanian schools, including VET
- the effectiveness within the local and national context of current curriculum provision including:
    - the breadth and depth of the curriculum
    - design and delivery of the curriculum from the perspective of teachers and students, together with business and industry
    - the alignment and effectiveness of assessment and moderation practices from Years 9 to 12
- proposed future directions with regards to Years 9 to 12 curriculum provision and design that aligns with:
    - the Australian Curriculum P–12
    - the Tasmanian Curriculum
    - a national review of VET in Schools (VETiS)
- workforce characteristics, including qualifications and specialisations (where available), particularly in Years 11 and 12.

2.2 Policy Settings

As outlined in the ToR, there has been considerable public and media commentary about data relating to Years 11 and 12. The Tasmanian Government is currently implementing several substantial reforms in order to improve Tasmania's retention and attainment data. These reforms include:

- the Extending Government High Schools to Years 11 and 12: http://tased-schools-11-12.blogspot.com.au/
- *The Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Act (2003)*, replacing the *Tasmanian Qualifications Authority Act (2003)*: http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/
- The *My Education* career and life-planning initiative in government schools: http://my.education.tas.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx
- The *Education Bill* (to progress through Parliament in 2016 and to be proclaimed in July 2017): www.education.tas.gov.au
- The Years 11 and 12 Curriculum website: http://11and12.education.tas.gov.au/
- The University of Tasmania (UTAS) – High Achiever Program and University College Program: refer to http://www.utas.edu.au/access-participation-and-partnerships

This *Review of Years 9 to 12* has taken into account the respective government's strategic directions in Years 9 to 12, which include:

- Learners First 2014–2017
- the Education Act Review
- Extending High Schools to Year 12 Programme
- *My Education* – Career and Life Planning
- partnership with the University of Tasmania – Centre for Educational Attainment
- Developing Our Workforce Initiative
- Creating a Job Ready Generation
- Office of the Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification.

Central to this *Review of Years 9 to 12* is the introduction of the new Education Act.

2.3 Review of the Education Act

This *Review of Years 9 to 12* has been conducted at the conclusion of the *Review of the Education Act*, and at the same time that a new Education Act was being considered by the Tasmanian Parliament. It is anticipated that the new Education Act will be proclaimed in July 2017. At the time of this Review, it was not possible for ACER to be provided with a copy of the new Education Act 2017.

According to the Department of Education (2016a), it is intended that the key features of the new Education Act will include:

- extending the compulsory years of education and training by lowering the school starting age from five years of age, to four years and six months, with a flow-on to kindergarten entry age of three years and six months. These new arrangements have been proposed to apply to children born in 2016
- lifting the minimum education and training leaving requirement to completion of Year 12 or equivalent (i.e. Certificate III, or apprenticeship), or until 18 years of age, whichever occurs first. These new arrangements will apply to students who are in Year 7 in 2016
- lifting the exemption from the education and training requirements for employment from 25 hours a week to 35 hours a week (full-time)
- introducing a new compulsory conciliation conferencing process with families to address issues associated with non-attendance, allowing for the collection of information to enable the development of risk management plans to support students with conditions which may cause behaviour that leads to a risk of harm to themselves or others
- creating the ability to set a minimum standard for adult behaviour in the context of schools, providing for dual enrolment of students with disability between a mainstream and special school across government and non-government sectors
- establishing for government schools, updated legislative provisions so that disciplinary actions sit within a broader behaviour management approach, and for non-government schools, increased options in the registration process – for the Non-Government Schools Registration Board in assessing applications, and for schools with the capacity to register as systems of schools
- establishing for home education, a stronger regulatory approach including standards for registration as a home educator and annual reviews of student achievement, and the ability to apply for partial enrolment in a school

- creating one piece of legislation, replacing the *Education Act 1994*, the *Youth Participation in Education and Training (Guaranteeing Futures) Act 2005 and the Education and Training (Tasmanian Academy) Act 2008* (Department of Education, 2016a).

2.4 Approach to Review of Years 9 to 12

ACER has undertaken an independent review of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania. To ensure independence, this Review has utilised several concurrent processes to collect information and to triangulate findings. These processes included to:

- review current data on enrolments, participation, retention and achievement
- prepare an Issues paper
- create a website to enable public submissions and to host relevant background papers (a list of the public submissions received is included at Appendix 1)
- host public consultations
- conduct online surveys of students in Years 9 to 12, and of teachers and school principals working in secondary schools and colleges (Appendix 2 provides the questions that were used in the survey)
- conduct interviews with personnel from the Department of Education, from across government departments and non-government agencies, and with senior academics from UTAS (a list of the scheduled meetings is included in Appendix 3)
- conduct focus groups with stakeholders (a list of the stakeholder groups who participated in this Review is included at Appendix 4)
- visit schools (a list of the school visits is also included in Appendix 5)
- review the policies, legislation, curriculum documents and assessment requirements.

Taken together, these multiple and concurrent approaches to the Review allowed the Team to triangulate findings and to identify common themes that emerged from different sources.

2.4.1 Review of Existing Data

ACER reviewed available data from a wide variety of sources, including the National School Statistics Collection (NSSC), which is managed and published by the ABS; the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER); the Department of Education; and the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification. In addition, ACER reviewed data from publicly available national and international assessment programs (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)).

2.4.2 Website and Public Submissions

To enable public submissions to ACER and to house relevant papers such as the ToR and background documents, ACER established a website (see https://www.acer.edu.au/tasmania-912-review). The Review Team received 41 public submissions and 3 non-public submissions through the website. This website will remain live until 31 January 2017. A list of the public submissions received is included at Appendix 1.

2.4.3 Public Consultations

Six public forums were held: two each in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. A total of 87 people attended these events: 15 people attended each of the public consultations in Launceston and Burnie, and 57 people attended the sessions held in Hobart. A copy of the advertisements placed into the local papers is included at Appendix 6.

2.4.4 Online Surveys

Two online surveys were hosted by ACER: one for students in Years 9 to 12, and one for teachers and school leaders working in schools catering for students in Years 9 to 12. These surveys were open from 12 September 2016 until 17 October 2016. Each system and sector (Government, Independent and Catholic) promoted and encouraged schools to get teachers and students to complete these surveys. Copies of the survey questions are included in Appendix 2.

2.4.5 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by teams of two members of the ACER Review Team with senior officers within the DoE; with leaders in several government and non-government agencies; with academics from UTAS; and with key advocates and stakeholders. A list of agencies where senior officers are working is included in Appendix 3. Notes from the interviews were prepared, and then the key themes emerging from the interviews were developed.

2.4.6 Focus Groups

More than 92 agencies were invited to attend focus groups which were conducted in Hobart and Launceston between 12 September and 14 October 2016. A list of these agencies is included at Appendix 4. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by two members of the ACER Review Team. Notes from the conversations were prepared from these focus groups, and then the key themes emerging from the focus groups were distilled.

2.4.7 School Visits

Members of the ACER Review Team visited government and non-government schools throughout the state. These visits always involved an interview with the school principal, and in many cases they also involved small focus groups with students and teachers. A list of the school visits conducted is included in Appendix 5.

2.4.8 Document Review

The review of the curriculum involved a desktop review of the official Australian and Tasmanian Curriculum documents and associated assessment, certification and accreditation guidelines for both the general curriculum and VET in Schools. Discussion in interviews and focus groups about the implementation of the official curriculum provided insights into its implementation.

2.5 Limitations to This Study

This Review has been conducted within a relatively short time frame. It formally commenced on 18 July 2016, with the final report submitted on 23 December 2016. Consultations, interviews and surveys were therefore conducted at the end of Term 3 and the beginning of Term 4 2016. The Review Team considered course documents that were in operation during this window of time.

The Review Team received some criticism about the timing and timelines, but given the outcomes arising from this Review may commence in 2017, these timelines were not seen as problematic from the point of view of the Review Team.

The Review Team visited several high schools and senior colleges as part of the review processes. These visits focused on schools outside of Hobart and Launceston, and although some non-government schools were visited, the schools visited were predominantly government schools.

While the Review Team can identify limitations to the Review, the Review Team has nonetheless collected and analysed comprehensive sets of data to inform the recommendations and policy options presented later in this Report.

3 Data Review

The policy options and recommendations arising from the *Review of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania* address the contracted purpose of the Review: **'to identify opportunities to improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes'**. To establish a basis for proposing options and recommendations, this chapter of the Report provides recent data upon which to base the discussions presented in the following chapters.

One of the concerns expressed to the Review Team was the 'inconsistency' of statistics that had been reported about education in Tasmania. These reports come from a variety of sources, such as lobby groups and external commentators who use publicly available information to support their views. The major statistic for this Review is the measure of Year 12 completion. In some cases, it is a problem of using the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) as the sole measure of Year 12 completion, ignoring alternative certificates, such as the Qualifications Certificate (QC) and the Tasmanian Certificate of Educational Achievement (TCEA). According to information available from TASC, both of these alternative certificates are awarded to students 'finishing their senior secondary education and training' (for QC, from http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/2429). TASC reports the number of TCEs awarded, but not the number of QCs or TCEAs awarded as distinct from the TCE.

One paper provided to the Review states that just over 50 per cent of Year 12 students in 2015 were awarded the TCE in that year.[1] The same authors have noted that fewer than one-half of Year 9 students in 2010 had been awarded the TCE in 2013, even though they had achieved close to the same NAPLAN results as did students in most other Australian states when in Year 9.[2] This mismatching of statistics, which has been repeated in other reports, contributes to the confusion in the public mind. The DoE and TASC release a wide variety of statistics which are not always consistent with statistics available from other official sources, such as the ABS and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), which are subject to their own strict protocols for enumeration. The Review Team appreciates that the DoE recognises this issue and is working with the TASC to ensure greater consistency in available statistics.

Given the concerns expressed to the Review Team about the lack of consistency in the use of statistics in Tasmania, this section examines the data and statistics from a variety of official sources in order to understand what is occurring in Tasmania in relation to student participation and completion.

3.1 Tasmanian Demographics

Tasmania has a small population compared to other states of Australia, with only the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) having smaller populations. According to the ABS, in September 2016, Tasmania's estimated resident population was 518 500 persons, compared to 244 000 persons in the NT, and 395 200 in the ACT (ABS, 2016a). The median age of the Tasmanian population, 41.9 years, is the oldest median age of all Australian states and territories (ABS, 2015). As at June 2015, the median age of those living in the Hobart region was 39.8 years, which is 2.1 years lower than the Tasmanian median, while the highest was in the Flinders Local Government Area (LGA), with a median

[1] Professors Michael Rowan and Eleanor Ramsay, 'Will harvesting the low hanging fruit end the TCE famine?' unpublished paper, August 2016.

[2] Professors Michael Rowan and Eleanor Ramsay, 'States' rate of conversion of above NAPLAN minimum standard results to Year 12 certificates', unpublished paper, n.d.

age of 55.8 years (ABS, 2015). Of the Tasmanian population, 18.2 per cent are children aged between 0 and 14 years. LGAs with more than 20 per cent of the population aged between 0 and 14 are Brighton (24.0 per cent), Circular Head (21.2 per cent), George Town (20.3 per cent) and Kingborough (20.7 per cent).

Compared to the rest of Australia, the Tasmanian population has a lower proportion of people aged between 20 and 44 years and a higher proportion of people over the age of 50 years (ABS, 2015). In addition, in the past decade, there has been only small growth in the school-age population of Tasmania, with annual age progression rates of less than one-half of one per cent. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of 13–18 year olds in Tasmania has declined from 41 600 to 39 500.[3] If these population trends continue, it is likely that the number of 13–18 year olds will decrease to 38 000 by 2019 and increase slightly to 39 400 by 2025.[4]

Like other parts of regional Australia, Tasmania's small and highly dispersed population offers 'thin' markets for VET, particularly in rural and remote areas. Tasmania also has comparatively high levels of unemployment and lower school retention rates. Tasmania has nearly 40 000 businesses across a range of sectors and over 95 per cent of these are small businesses (Department of State Growth, 2016).

3.2 Schools and Enrolments

Identifying the number of schools in Tasmania is dependent upon a number of definitions. In 2016, for the purposes of this Review, there are 248 schools identified to be operating in Tasmania on 269 campuses. These figures include 188 government schools (including four special schools and a correctional facility), 33 Catholic schools and 27 independent schools. Of these schools (by campus), there are 108 that cover Years 7–12; 99 schools that provide education to Years 9 and 10; 44 schools that accommodate students in Years 11 and 12 (nine of which cater only to 11–12); and 35 schools that provide for students in Years 9 to 12.[5]

Enrolments in Tasmanian schools have been relatively stable at approximately 81 000 students in all schools, and it is likely that they will remain so for the next decade. However, it is also likely that there will be enrolment increases in the senior years, following the recent trends of increases in progression rates from Year 10 to Year 11 and Year 7–12 apparent retention rates.

3.2.1 Senior School Enrolments

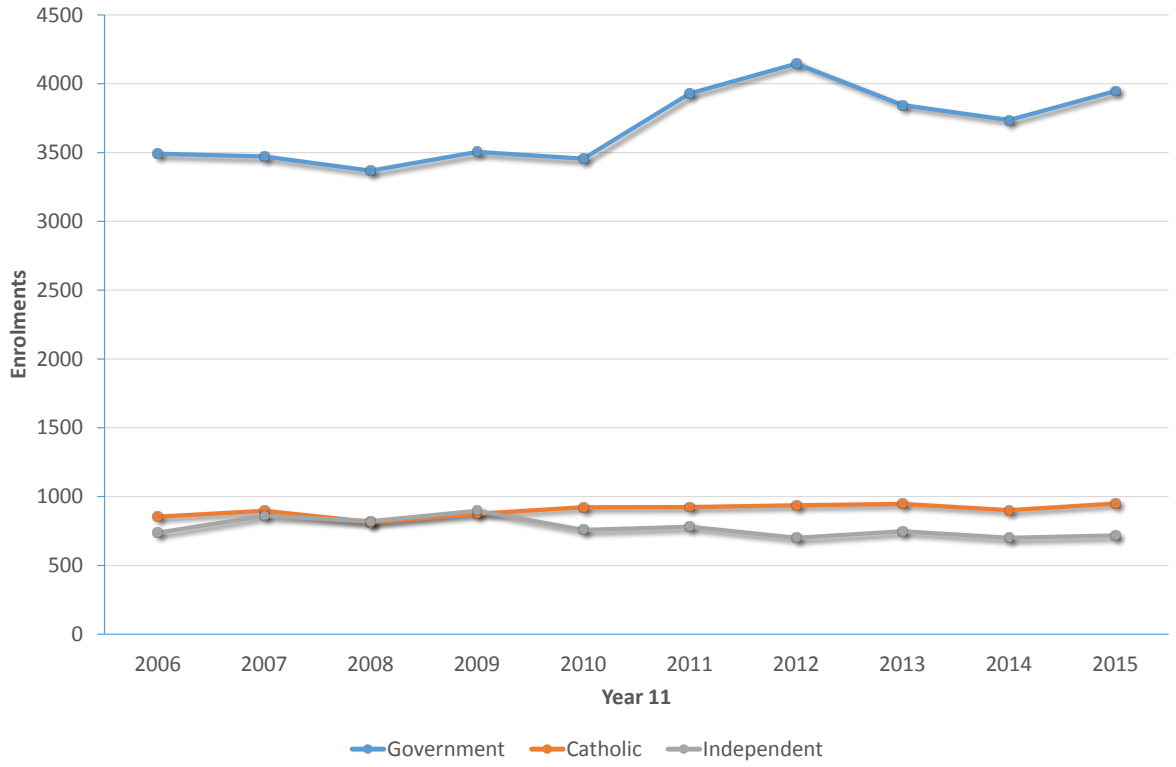
Enrolments in Year 11 in Tasmanian schools had been relatively stable from 2006 to 2010 (see Figure 1). There were approximately 3500 full-time students attending government schools, 800–900 attending Catholic schools, and 800–900 attending independent schools. After 2010, government school full-time enrolments in Year 11 increased to more than 4100 in 2012, then decreased until 2014 and increased

[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Demographic Statistics, Tasmania, Table 56, http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3101.0Mar%202016?OpenDocument, accessed 26 October 2016. Note that single-age intercensal counts are estimates.

[4] The ABS population projections for Tasmania indicate overall increases in two of three series (A and B), and a decline in the third (series C). Projections for this report are based on recent trends in the ERP each year and are subject to revision based on the 2016 census. Among secondary school–aged persons to 2025, there is no consideration of birth rates.

[5] School counts are based on the ACER sampling frame, which uses information for the previous year provided by the Australian Government Department of Education. In this case, the counts were current as at the end of 2015. At the midyear census in 2016, there were 192 government schools, 38 Catholic schools and 29 independent schools (ABS, 2017, Table 35b).

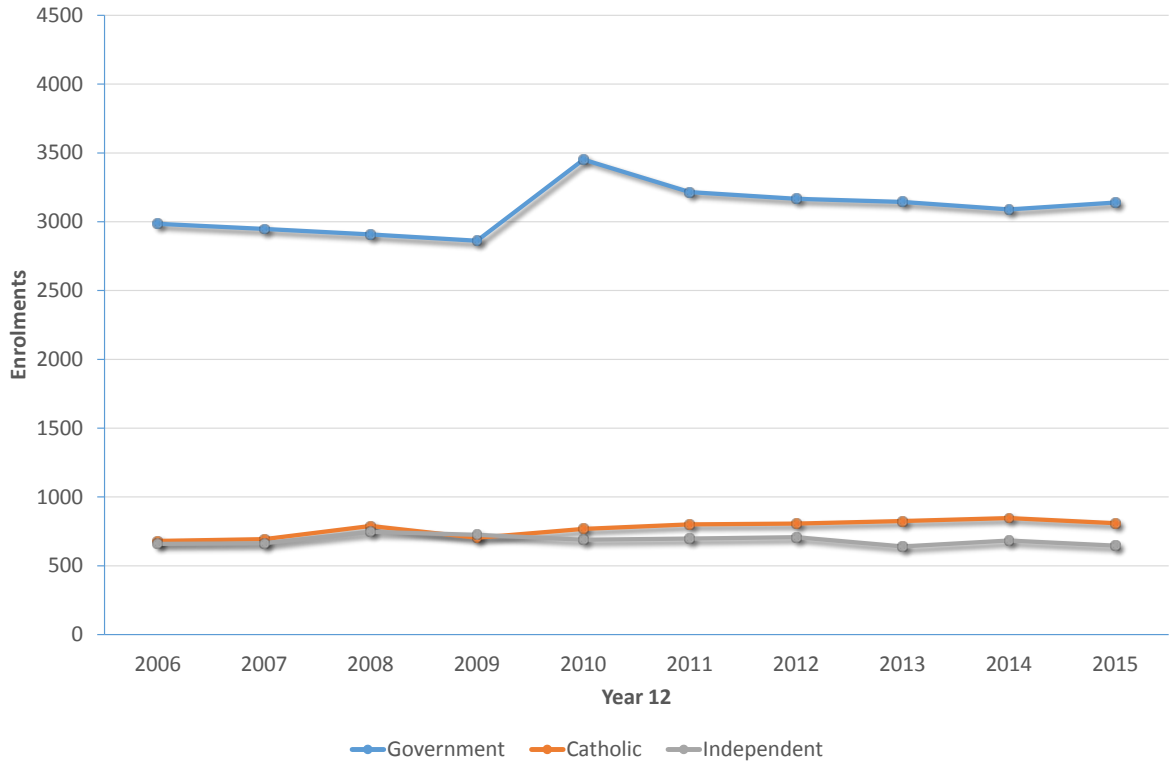
again for 2015. During that time, full-time Year 11 enrolments in Catholic schools remained stable or increased slightly, to 950, and decreased in independent schools, to approximately 700.



Source: ABS (2016b), Table 42b.

Figure 1 Enrolments in Year 11, by School Sector: Full-time Students, 2006–2015

Year 12 full-time enrolments also showed a dramatic shift between 2009 and 2010 (see Figure 2). In Government schools there were small declines in enrolments of less than 2 per cent from 2006 to 2008, followed by an increase of 20 per cent in 2010. This increase was then followed by a 7 per cent decrease in 2011, then smaller decreases of less than 2 per cent each year until 2014. For 2015 there was an increase of less than 2 per cent. Over the same period from 2006, Year 12 full-time enrolments in Catholic schools were relatively stable, between 700 and 800, and enrolments in Independent schools were between 600 and 700.



Source: ABS (2016b), Table 42b.

Figure 2 Enrolments in Year 12, by School Sector: Full-time Students, 2006–2015

The fluctuations between 2009 and 2010 reflect the change in the structure of post–Year 10 education in Tasmania, when four of eight government colleges, along with TAFE Tasmania, were restructured and brought under the authority of the Tasmanian Academy and the Tasmanian Polytechnic. The four remaining colleges continued under the authority of the Tasmanian Department of Education. During the period that the Polytechnic operated, *all* school-aged students attending the Polytechnic were considered to be in scope for the NSSC, in addition to those attending the other former colleges. This change in scope resulted in fluctuations in enrolments from 2009 to 2014, as noted in in *Schools Australia, 2015* (ABS, 2016b).

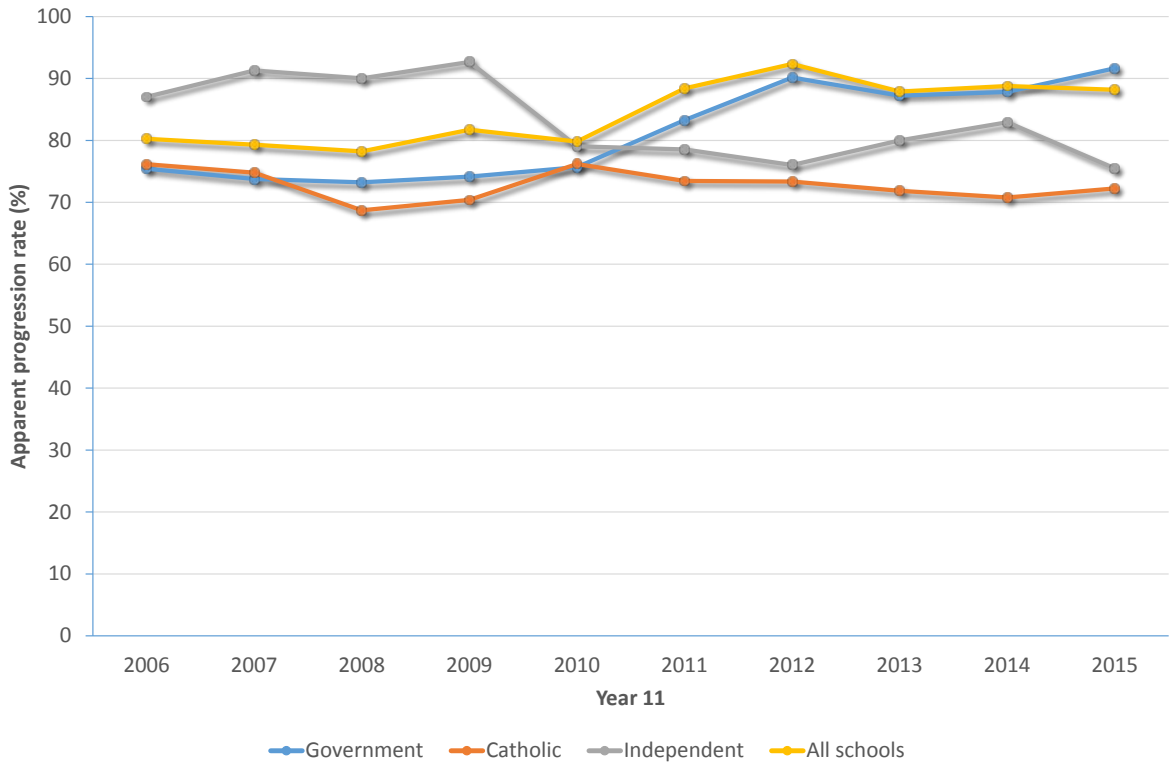
3.3 Progression and Retention

Progression and retention rates offer indications of how many students move from one year level into another year level between two different calendar years. These data are based on summary data for each unit (school, sector or jurisdiction), and not on actual tracking of individual students. As such, they are rough estimates of changes, but they provide valuable information when comparing those units or examining changes in school policy.

3.3.1 Apparent Progression Rates

The apparent progression rate (APR) is based on enrolments in two consecutive year levels over two consecutive calendar years. Figure 3 shows the APRs from Year 10 into Year 11 for the three school sectors as well as for all schools in Tasmania, each year from 2005–2006 until 2014–2015. The horizontal axis identifies the calendar year associated with Year 11. As highlighted with the enrolment

figures above, 2010 appears as a transition point in the trends, most likely as a result of changes associated with *Tasmania Tomorrow*. Independent schools had maintained a relatively high Year 10–11 APR of close to 90 per cent until 2009; from 2010 to 2015, that APR fluctuated around 80 per cent. The Year 10–11 APR for Catholic schools had decreased from 75 per cent to 70 per cent between 2006 and 2009; it increased to 75 per cent in 2010 and has since decreased to approximately 70 per cent. For government schools, the Year 10–11 APR had been around 75 per cent until 2010; it increased to 90 per cent for 2010 and is currently more than 91 per cent. With the majority of senior secondary students attending government schools, the overall Year 10–11 APR for Tasmania also increased between 2010 and 2011 and is currently at 88 per cent.



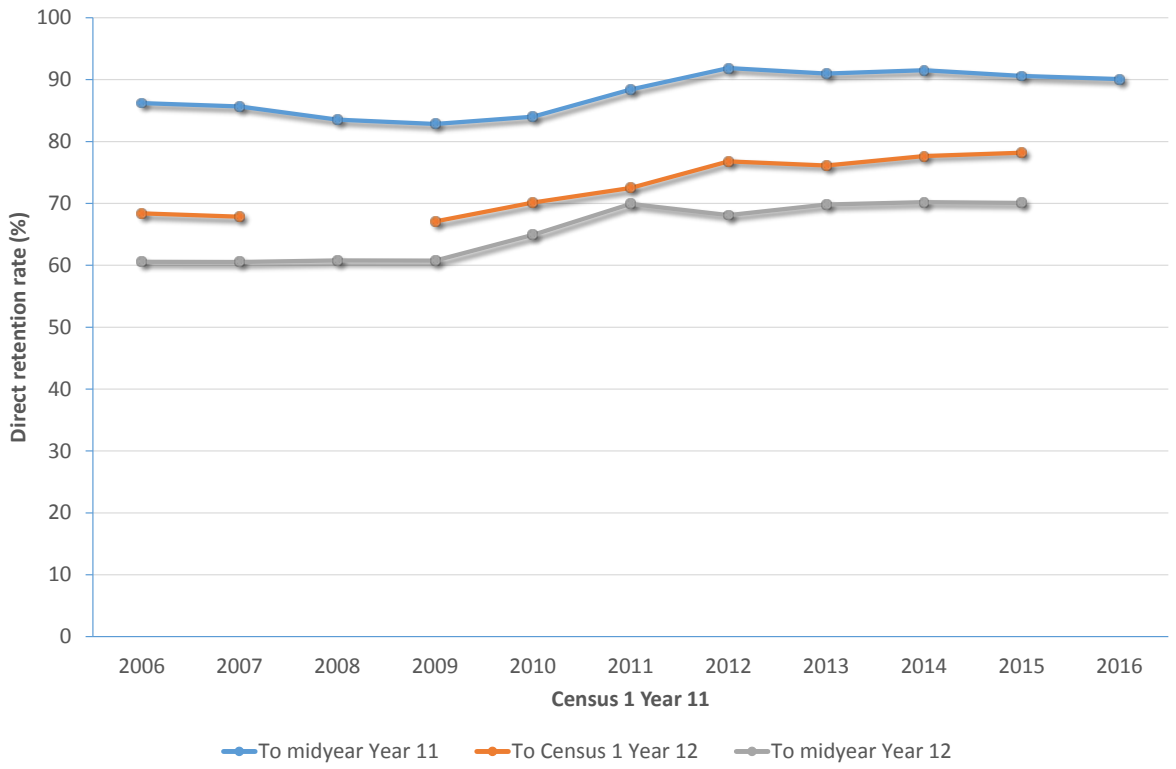
Source: Based on data contained in ABS (2016b), Table 42b.

Figure 3 Apparent Year 10–11 Progression Rate, by School Sector: Full-time Students, 2006–2015

3.3.2 Direct Retention Rates

The direct retention rate (DRR) is used by the DoE to track students from one census to another. The DRR is calculated for government schools, using students' unique student number to track their enrolments over time. In many ways it is similar to the APR, but DRRs only include government-school students who remain enrolled in a government school, even if a student has changed school. Overall DRRs from the beginning of Year 11 for cohorts who started from 2006 to 2016 are shown in Figure 4, with the latest cohort showing results to the Year 11 midyear census only. Figure 4 has three lines: one showing the percentage of Year 11 commencers who remained until the midyear census in Year 11, one showing the percentage who remained until the beginning of Year 12, and one showing the percentage who remained until the midyear census in Year 12.

The DRRs are similar to the government school enrolment trends based on the annual school census as discussed above. Both indicate increases in the proportion of students continuing into Years 11 and 12, with marked increases having occurred between 2009 and 2012.



Source: Department of Education, data supplied (DataExhibits Set C – Year 11-12 census and direct retention.xlsx, Tab DirectRetentionY11)

Figure 4 Direct Retention Rates from Census 1 Year 11 to Subsequent Censuses, Government Schools, 2006–2016

DRRs for Year 11 commencers differ between colleges and high schools (see Table 1). Among those who began their senior secondary studies in colleges, approximately 70 per cent were enrolled in a government school for the midyear census in the following year. Among those who began their senior secondary studies in a high school, the percentage still enrolled in a government school at the middle of Year 12 had increased from 41 per cent for the 2011 Year 11 cohort to 54 per cent for the 2015 Year 11 cohort. The increase for those who commenced Year 11 in a high school is numerically small – 46 more students enrolled in Year 12 in 2015.

Table 1 **Percentage of Year 11 Commencers Remaining to Midyear Census in Year 12, by Type of Commencing School, 2011–2015**

	Commencing school					
	High School			College		
Year 11 cohort	Year 11 (n)	Year 12 (n)	**DRR (%)**	Year 11 (n)	Year 12 (n)	**DRR (%)**
2011	158	65	41.1	4068	2890	71.0
2012	213	86	40.4	4098	2850	69.5
2013	178	90	50.6	4314	3047	70.6
2014	182	82	45.1	4179	2979	71.3
2015	205	111	54.1	4278	3031	70.9

Source: Department of Education, data supplied (DataExhibits Set C – Year 11-12 census and direct retention.xlsx, Tab DirectRetentionY11)

3.3.3 Apparent Retention Rates

One of the most commonly cited rates is the apparent retention rate (ARR). This is calculated as the number of students in Year 12 divided by the number of students in Year 7 five years earlier. In jurisdictions where secondary school begins in Year 8, the number of students in Year 12 is divided by the number of students in Year 8 four years earlier. The ARR is purported to show the 'holding power' of secondary schools or school systems, on the assumption that all students progress through secondary school at the same rate and there is no movement between schools, systems or jurisdictions. The ARR is based on total enrolments, not on individual students. The ARR for Tasmania is lower than for all other jurisdictions, except the Northern Territory (see Table 2).

Table 2 **Year 7/8-to-12 Apparent Retention Rates by Jurisdiction, Australia, 2010–2015**

Jurisdiction	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
New South Wales	72.5	74.6	75.0	76.7	78.1	78.2
Victoria	81.1	82.0	82.2	83.7	85.2	86.4
Queensland	82.5	83.0	83.7	85.2	87.1	88.4
South Australia	81.9	86.3	88.8	90.6	93.0	95.7
Western Australia	78.3	78.4	79.5	82.2	89.3	82.8
Tasmania	71.0	69.8	67.6	68.7	68.4	71.7
Northern Territory	53.0	55.3	55.6	55.8	59.6	53.7
Australian Capital Territory	90.8	89.4	89.8	91.6	94.6	96.6
Australia	*78.0*	*79.3*	*79.9*	*81.6*	*83.6*	*84.4*

Source: ABS (2016b),

The ABS calculates ARRs for each jurisdiction based on the midyear census counts of full-time students only. ARRs for Year 12 in each of the years from 2006 to 2015 are shown in Table 3. From 2006 until 2009, there were small decreases in the ARR. In 2010, with changes in the organisation of senior secondary schooling in Tasmania, there was an 11.5 percentage-point decrease in the ARR for independent schools, a 9.6 percentage-point increase in the rate for government schools and a 3.1 percentage-point increase in the rate for Catholic schools. Overall, the Tasmanian ARR increased from

63.8 per cent in 2009 to 71.0 per cent in 2010. This period was marked by inconsistencies in how senior secondary students were enumerated, which can be seen in Figure 5, so it is more appropriate to examine changes in the ARR since 2010.

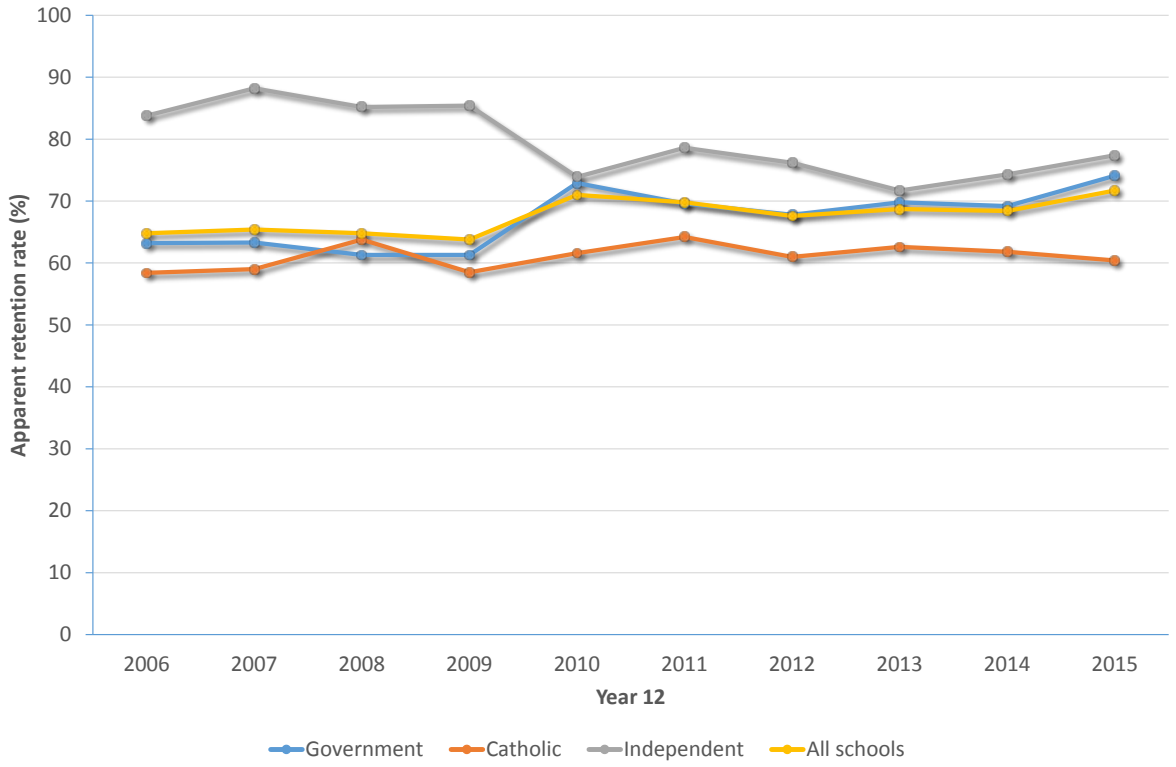
In Tasmania, the senior colleges in the government system, especially since the 2010 Year 12 cohort, have had an effect on the ARR across the sectors. In 2010, as indicated in Table 3 and Figure 5, there was an 11.6 percentage point increase in the ARR for government schools, an 11.5 percentage point decrease in the ARR for Independent schools and a 3.1 percentage point increase in the ARR for Catholic schools. From 2011 to 2015, the ARR for each sector has fluctuated, indicating movement across sectors.

Table 3 Year 7–12 Apparent Retention Rate, Full-time Students, by Sector, 2006–2015

	Year 12 cohort									
Sector	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Government	63.2	63.3	61.3	61.3	72.9	69.6	67.8	69.8	69.2	74.1
Catholic	58.4	59.0	63.8	58.5	61.6	64.2	61.0	62.6	61.8	60.4
Independent	83.8	88.2	85.2	85.4	73.9	78.6	76.2	71.7	74.3	77.4
All schools	64.8	65.4	64.8	63.8	71.0	69.8	67.6	68.7	68.4	71.7

Sources: ABS (2016b), Table 42b, and ABS (2008), Table 42a.

Between 2014 and 2015, the ARR for Tasmania increased by 3.3 percentage points, from 68.4 to 71.7. For Australia overall, that increase was 0.8 percentage points, from 83.6 to 84.4. No other jurisdiction had as great an increase as did Tasmania between 2014 and 2015, although in previous years, Tasmania's ARR had decreased after 2010 and remained stable at approximately 68 per cent, while ARRs in jurisdictions were slowly increasing.



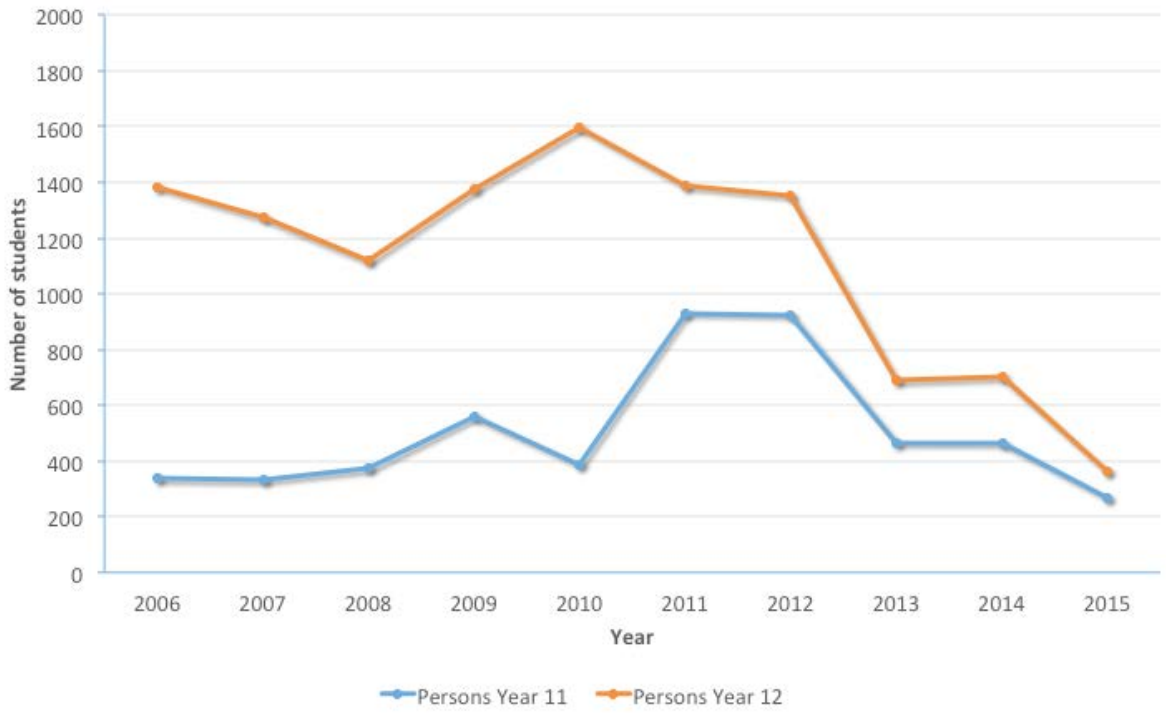
Sources: ABS (2016b), Table 42b, and ABS (2008), Table 42a.

Figure 5 Year 7–12 Apparent Retention Rate, by School Sector, 2006–2015

3.3.4 Part-time Students

The inclusion of part-time students can increase various rates, but it can cause problems in its calculation. A part-time student, for example, may be enrolled in Year 12 for two or more years. That student is then either included in the Year 12 count for two separate calendar years or is included in the Year 12 count for only the full-time equivalence (FTE) of his or her enrolment. Even if the latter option is used, a choice must be made about the cohort to which the student belongs.

In 2006, Tasmania had 1720 students in Years 11 and 12 who were enrolled for an FTE of 955.3. More than one-half of those students – and most of those were in Year 12 – were 21 years of age or older, and the vast majority were in government schools. By 2011, there were 2319 students enrolled for an FTE of 1325.3. Since then, part-time enrolments have decreased, to 629 Year 11–12 students for an FTE of 411.2 in 2015, all in government schools (see Figure 6). The APR and ARR, as published by the ABS, do not include these part-time students. As a result, part-time students who are completing their Year 12 studies are not included in the calculation of the ARR, which is often used as a proxy for a Year 12 completion rate.



Source: ABS (2016b), Table 41b.

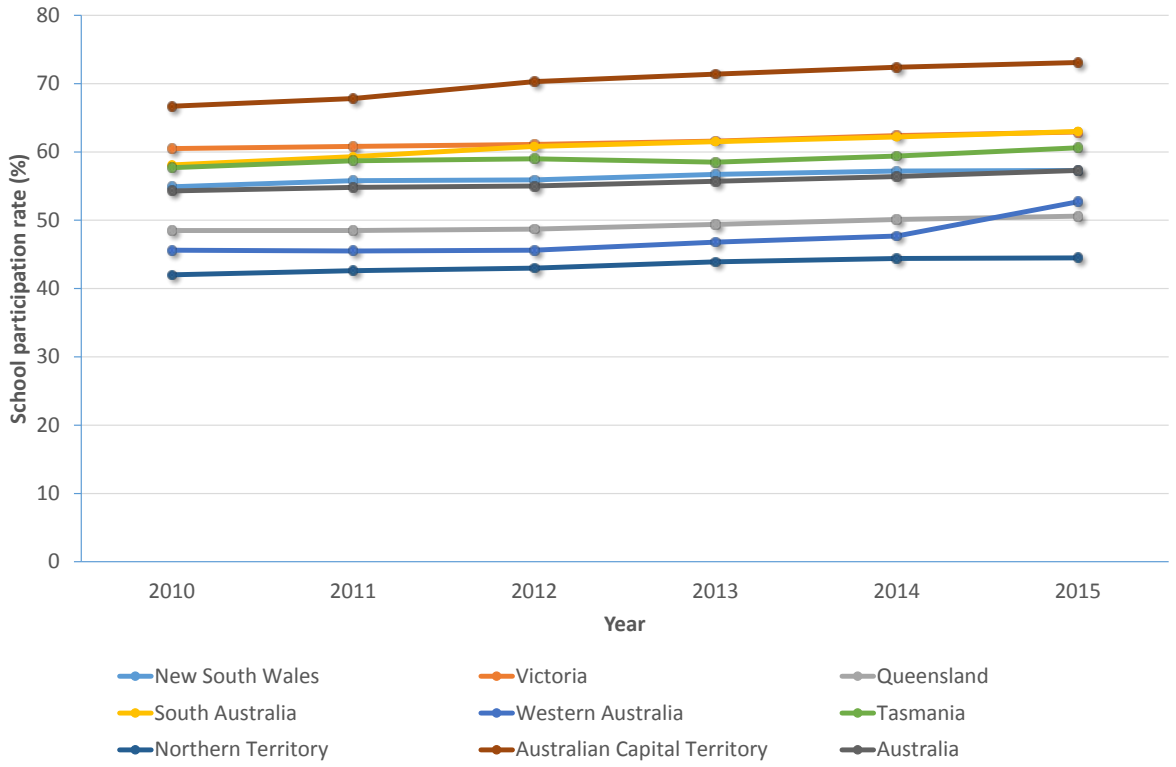
Figure 6 Number of Students Enrolled Part-time in Government Schools, Years 11 and 12, 2006–2015

3.4 School Participation Rates

In addition to enrolments in schools, the ABS reports the school participation rate (SPR) for each jurisdiction. The SPR is the proportion of persons participating in school education. As part of the NSSC, this rate is reported for the population of 15–19 year olds. The SPR is affected by the structure of schooling in each jurisdiction, including the organisation of secondary schools, the school starting age and the minimum school leaving age. It is calculated as the proportion of persons in the population who are enrolled in schools, and is based on full-time students only. The population is based on the estimated resident population (ERP) for the jurisdiction.

When comparing the states and territories on the SPR, Tasmania performs well, as indicated in Figure 7. The highest performing jurisdiction is the ACT, where more than 70 per cent of 15–19 year olds are enrolled in schools. The Australian SPR increased from 54 per cent in 2010 to 57 per cent in 2015; in Tasmania during the same period, the SPR increased from 58 per cent to 61 per cent.

The issue of how part-time students are included affected many census counts. In 2011 and 2012, the increases were 10 per cent; in 2013 and 2014, the increases added 5 per cent to the SPR; and in 2015, 3 per cent. In terms of the SPR, Tasmania gains the most from the inclusion of part-time students. In other jurisdictions, the dividend gained by including part-time students in the calculation of the SPR is between 0.3 per cent and 2.7 per cent.



Source: ABS (2016b), Table 66a.

Figure 7 School Participation Rates, 15–19 Year Olds, by Jurisdiction: Full-time Students, 2010–2015

3.5 Completion of Year 12

One focus of this Review is the proportion of Tasmanian students who complete Year 12. The *National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions* (Council of Australian Governments (COAG), 2009), which operated from January 2010 until December 2013, did not use the term 'Year 12 completion'; rather, it referred to the receipt of a Year 12 or equivalent certificate. In Tasmania, it is possible for a student to reach the end of Year 12 and not receive a senior secondary certificate that is considered equivalent to the TCE in regard to completion, because of non-attendance (during the school term or the examinations), misadventure, the non-accumulation of credits or other reasons. There is as yet no agreed national measure of 'equivalent completion' across jurisdictions. A number of jurisdictions now include a statement about completion, based on meeting the requirements for a certificate. Some jurisdictions recognise a number of certificates as a mark of completion within a state or territory. In Victoria completion refers to receipt of one of four certificates: the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) at either Senior or Intermediate level, and the International Baccalaureate (IB). But no jurisdiction has a statement about completion that does not include award of the senior secondary certificate.[6] It is still possible, however, to be enrolled in education until the end of Year 12 and not be considered a completer for those who do not received the senior secondary certificate.

[6] This information was collected as part of a survey of jurisdictions on Year 12 attainment (Rothman, 2013).

3.5.1 Completion of Year 12 or Equivalent

The *National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions* established that Certificate III should be considered the equivalent to Year 12 completion (see also Lim & Karmel, 2011). Using Certificate III as the vocational equivalent, the Mitchell Institute for Health and Education Policy reports that, as at 2015, 74 per cent of young people had attained a Year 12 or equivalent certificate by age 19 (Lamb, Jackson, Walstab & Huo, 2015). For Tasmania, the figure is 60 per cent. Lamb, et al., also identify differences by geographic location, noting that 78 per cent of those in major cities meet the completion milestone, as do 64 per cent of those in inner regional locations, 62 per cent in outer regional locations, 56 per cent in remote locations and 43 per cent in very remote locations. Tasmania has no location categorised as a major city under the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

At present it is not possible to precisely enumerate all 19 year olds who have met the standard of Year 12 completion or equivalent. Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC) reports on the number of TCEs and VET certificates awarded each year and the percentage of young people eligible to attain a certificate. The eligibility is based on a weighted estimate of young people from age 15 to age 19, inclusive, who would be in the age cohort for Year 12 students. This is a nationally-agreed formula to estimate the rate of attainment of Year 12 or its equivalent. For the previous five cohorts – the Year 10 cohort of 2009 to the Year 10 cohort of 2013 – the percentage of students who have achieved the TCE within two years has increased from 39 per cent to 51 per cent, and the percentage attaining a VET certificate within two years has increased from 15 per cent to 24 per cent.

The ABS Survey of Education and Work (SEW; cat. No. 6227.0) is an annual survey of persons in the workforce. The SEW provides annual information on a range of key indicators of educational participation and attainment of persons aged 15-74 years, along with data on people's transition between education and work. The survey uses a subgroup of persons sampled for the monthly Labour Force Survey. According to the SEW, the proportion of 20–24 year-olds who have completed Year 12 or Certificate III or higher had increased to 77 per cent by 2016, which is 12 percentage points lower than the Australian proportion (see Table 4). Although the SEW does not differentiate between those who may have attended school in Tasmania from those who may have attended school elsewhere, there are indications that the attainment of a Year 12 or equivalent certificate is increasing.

Table 4 Year 12 or Equivalent Non-school Qualification (Certificate III or Above), Persons Aged 20–24 Years, Tasmania and Australia, 2007–2016

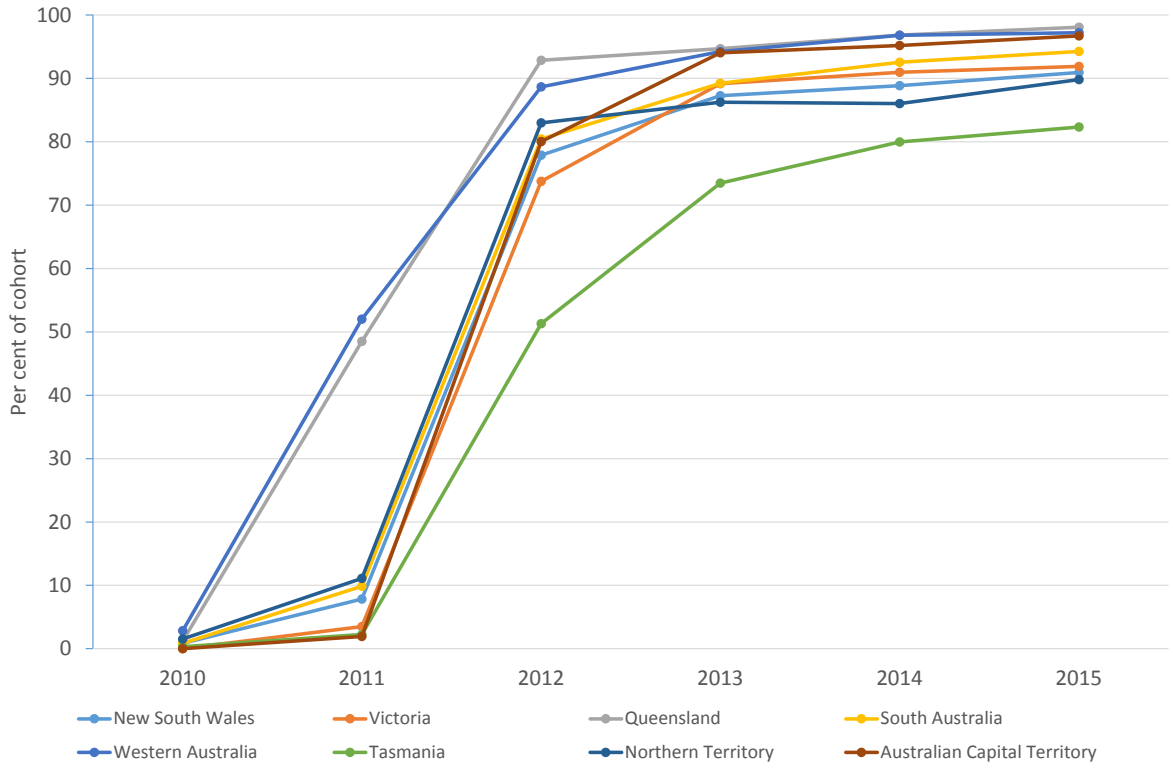
Jurisdiction		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Tasmania	%	73.1	70.3	68.8	73.3	73.8	68.4	81.2	70.2	68.5	77.1
	RSE	4.7	4.9	6.0	5.4	5.3	5.8	3.7	4.4	6.4	4.2
Australia	%	82.3	83.2	83.5	84.5	82.7	84.6	85.7	84.9	87.1	89.2
	RSE	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.9

Note: '%' indicates percentage of persons in the population of 20–24 year-olds who have completed Year 12 or gained an equivalent qualification. 'RSE' is the relative standard error of the estimate.
Source: ABS (2016c), Table 32.

Another alternative source of data on young people is the Longitudinal Surveys of Australia Youth (LSAY), a sample survey program funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training with support from state and territory governments. LSAY has followed a number of cohorts since 1995. The cohorts are samples recruited in schools from the age of 14 or 15 years and interviewed

annually to the age of approximately 25 years. Among a number of strands, the surveys ask participants about qualifications obtained, including Year 12 certificates and VET certificates.

In 2009, an LSAY cohort was recruited from 15 year olds who had participated in the OECD PISA study. In Tasmania, the majority of these students were in Year 9, and would have reached Year 12 later than most other participants. Figure 8 shows the percentage of the cohort in each jurisdiction who had obtained a Year 12 certificate or a VET Certificate II in each subsequent year. In 2010, very few students had obtained one of these qualifications, and by 2011, very few students in Tasmania, Victoria or the ACT had done so. By 2012, 51 per cent of Tasmanian participants had obtained a Year 12 certificate or VET Certificate III; in all other jurisdictions that figure was more than 73 per cent. The gap between Tasmania and the other jurisdictions closed by 2014. At the last collection from the cohort, 82 per cent of Tasmanians had attained a Year 12 certificate or a VET Certificate III compared to 91 per cent in New South Wales and up to 98 per cent in Queensland.



Source: Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, Y09 cohort.

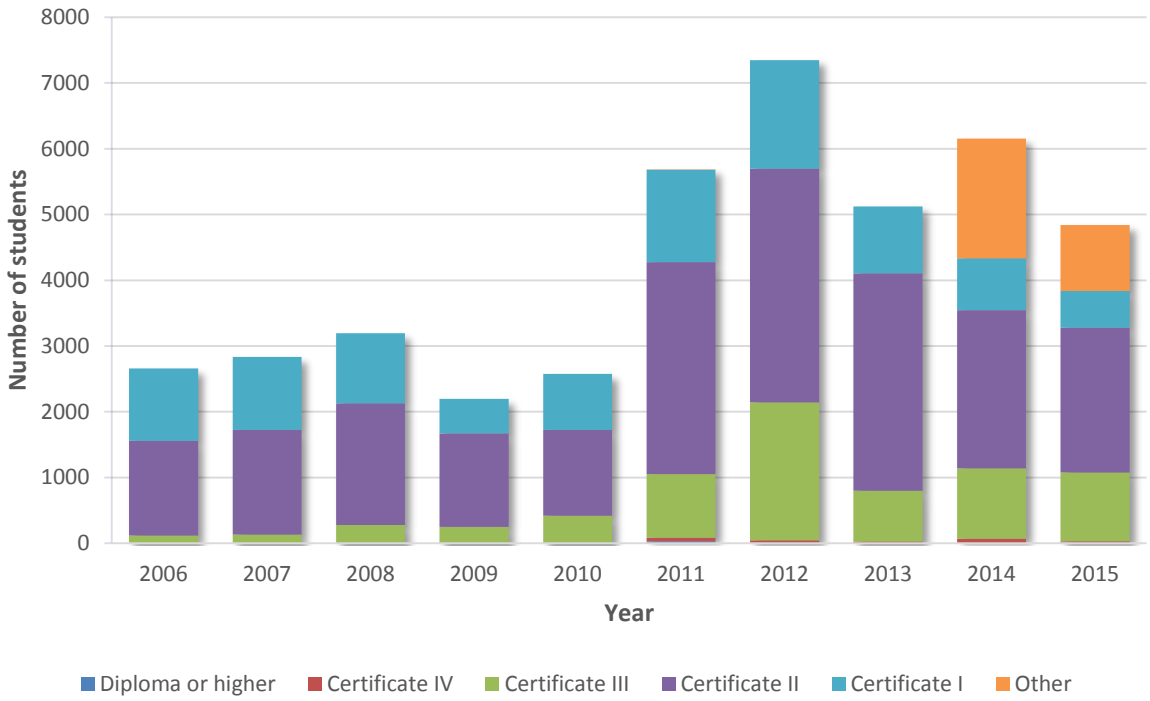
Figure 8 LSAY Y09 Cohort Completion of Year 12 or Certificate III, by Jurisdiction by Year

3.6 Enrolments in VET For Secondary Students

Vocational learning opportunities are offered through secondary colleges and high schools (Government, Catholic and Independent); TasTAFE; and an unspecified number of private registered training organisations. Many of these programs and providers are affiliated through consortium arrangements with the federally funded Trade Training Centre facilities.

Overall participation levels in vocational education and training in schools (VETiS) vary depending on the datasets and definitions that are applied. For the five years before the *Tasmania Tomorrow* reforms

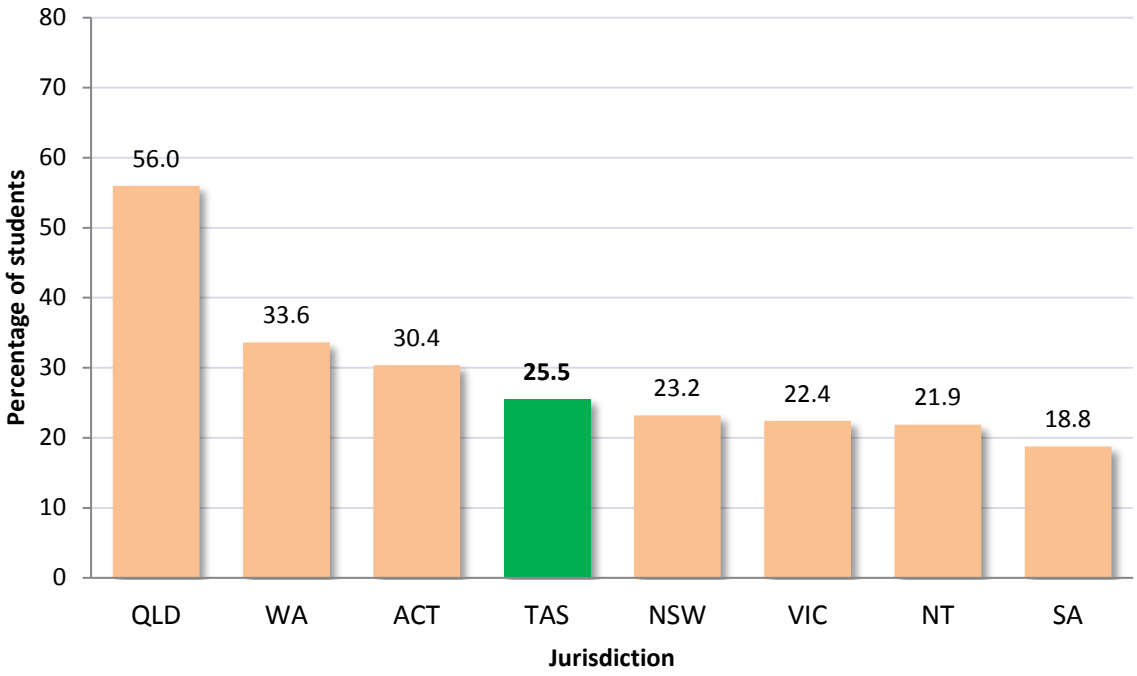
(Government of Tasmania, 2007) there were between 2000 and 3000 students in VETiS programs in Tasmania. This number surged to more than 7000 in 2012 before returning to approximately 5000 students in 2015 (see Figure 9). Approximately 60 per cent of VETiS occurs at Certificate II level, 30 per cent at Certificate III level and 10 per cent in Certificate I level. There is a longer-term trend away from Certificate I courses in schools in Tasmania and towards higher-level courses, such as Certificate III.



Source National VET in Schools Collection (NCVER 2016)

Figure 9 VET in Schools Students Aged 15–19 Years, All Schools, 2006–2015

The proportion of 15 to 19-year-old full-time school students undertaking VET in Tasmania in 2013 was around 25 per cent (see Figure 10). This figure places Tasmania behind Queensland, Western Australia and the ACT, which have greater percentages of students participating, but ahead of New South Wales (NSW), Victoria, the Northern Territory (NT) and South Australia (SA).



Sources: National VET in Schools Collection (NCVER 2014); *Schools Australia* (ABS 2013).

Figure 10 Proportion of 15–19-year-old Full-time School Students Undertaking VETiS, by Jurisdiction, 2013

3.7 Student Achievement

A number of different indicators can be used to identify the achievement of Tasmanian students in relation to other jurisdictions of Australia. This review focuses on NAPLAN, OECD PISA, and the TCE.

3.7.1 NAPLAN

The Australian NAPLAN measures student achievement in five separate domains: reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy. It is administered every year to all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. A small percentage of students are exempted by their schools each year, a small percentage are withdrawn by their parents, and a small percentage of students are absent on the day of each test. NAPLAN began in 2008; participation remains high, with more than 90 per cent of students in the designated year levels sitting all tests. NAPLAN is reported as a scale score and as an achievement band. There are 10 achievement bands across the four year levels; each year level has six achievement bands. The scale scores and achievement bands in the tested year levels overlap.

NAPLAN scores are reported for each jurisdiction and for Australia overall. Tasmanian students tend to perform well in all domains of NAPLAN and at all tested year levels, with some exceptions. In 2016, the mean scale scores for Tasmania were close to the mean scale scores for Australia, except for the following:

- In Year 3, Tasmanian students were below the national mean scale score in spelling and grammar and punctuation.

- In Year 5 and Year 7, Tasmanian students' mean scale scores were close to the national mean scale scores.
- In Year 9, Tasmanian students were below the national mean scale score in spelling.

The most recent results for Tasmania and Australia are shown in Table 5. Among Year 9 students, the percentages of Tasmanian students at or above the national minimum standard i9 n each domain were similar to the percentages for Australia overall in reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy, and lower in spelling.

Table 5 Year 9 NAPLAN Results for Tasmania and Australia, 2016

	Tasmania		Australia	
Domain	**Mean scale score**	**Per cent at or above national minimum standard**	**Mean scale score**	**Per cent at or above national minimum standard**
Reading	578.6	92.7	580.8	92.8
Writing	548.0	82.4	549.1	82.9
Spelling	564.9	86.5	580.3	90.4
Grammar and Punctuation	566.9	89.9	569.3	90.5
Numeracy	576.5	95.7	588.9	95.2

Source: ACARA (2016a).

Table 6 provides NAPLAN results in reading and numeracy for Tasmania and Australia for students in Year 9 from 2008 to 2016. Over time, students in Tasmania have performed well relative to Australia overall. While the mean scale scores for Tasmania have been below the national mean scale scores, the differences have tended not to be statistically significant.

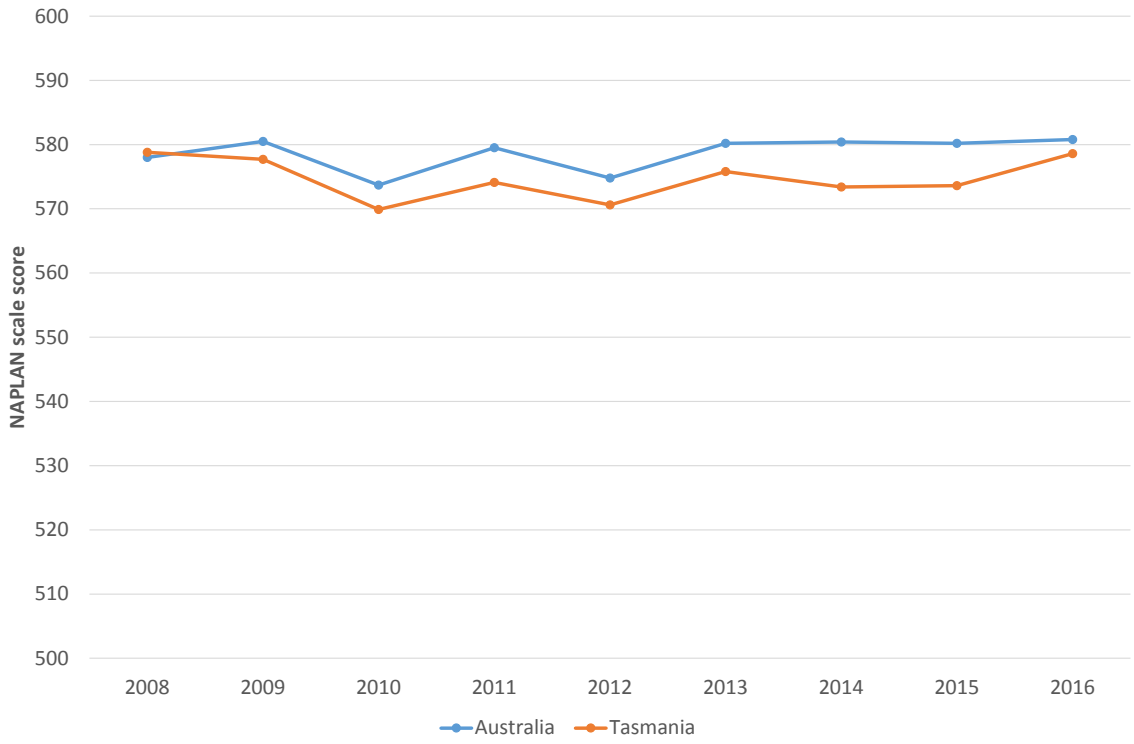
Table 6 Year 9 NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy Results for Tasmania and Australia, 2008–2016

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Reading									
Tasmania									
Mean	578.8	577.7	569.9	574.1	570.6	575.8	573.4	573.6	578.6
SD	(67.9)	(68.2)	(66.2)	(68.2)	(69.0)	(65.5)	(68.6)	(67.2)	(65.8)
%AANMS	93.0	91.2	90.2	90.6	89.9	91.8	90.5	91.4	92.7
Australia									
Mean	578.0	580.5	573.7	579.5	574.8	580.2	580.4	580.2	580.8
SD	(67.0)	(66.3)	(66.2)	(66.2)	(66.8)	(63.4)	(67.6)	(67.5)	(65.8)
%AANMS	92.9	92.2	90.8	92.4	91.4	93.4	92.1	92.3	92.8
Numeracy									
Tasmania									
Mean	568.0	572.9	571.4	567.1	567.5	565.5	572.8	577.3	576.5
SD	(65.1)	(61.2)	(61.8)	(66.3)	(65.0)	(73.5)	(63.0)	(60.0)	(58.2)
%AANMS	92.3	93.7	92.4	90.9	92.4	88.0	93.5	95.8	95.7
Australia									
Mean	582.2	589.1	585.1	583.4	584.2	583.6	587.8	591.7	588.9
SD	(70.2)	(67.0)	(70.4)	(72.1)	(72.4)	(82.2)	(70.9)	(67.8)	(66.8)
%AANMS	93.6	95.0	93.1	93.0	93.7	90.6	94.1	95.7	95.2

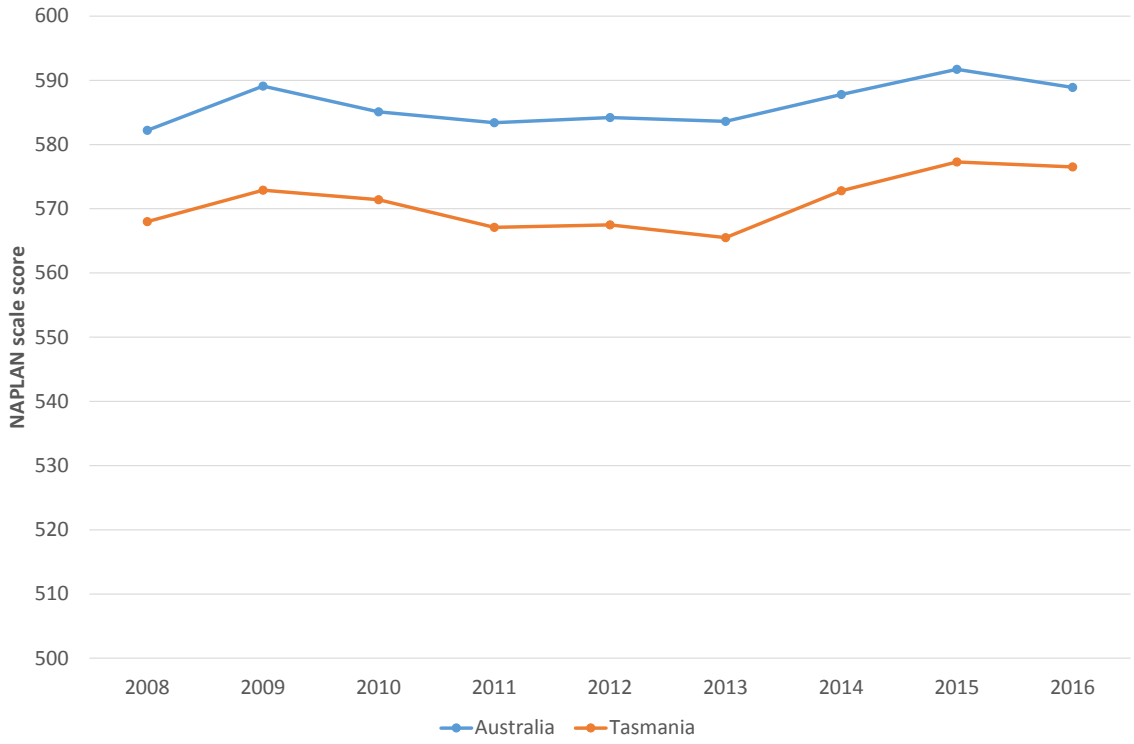
Notes: Table shows mean scale score ('Mean'), standard deviation ('SD') and per cent of students at or above national minimum standard ('%AANMS').
Sources: ACARA (2016a).

The time series in Figure 11 show the differences between the Tasmanian mean scores and the Australian mean scores in reading and numeracy. In reading, the differences have not been statistically significant over time; in numeracy, the differences of 14 to 18 score points have been statistically significant every year from 2009 to 2015.

Reading



Numeracy



Source: ACARA (2016a).

Figure 11 Year 9 NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy Mean Scale Scores for Tasmania and Australia, 2008–2016

3.7.1.1 NAPLAN by Geographic Location

In the annual NAPLAN reports, results for each domain at each year level are reported by geographic location, using ASGS. ACARA (2015) has reported that students attending schools in major cities have higher mean scores than students attending schools in all other geographic locations. As noted earlier, Tasmania has no school in a major city; Hobart and Launceston, the State's two largest cities, are classified as inner regional, with approximately three-quarters of Year 9 students attending schools in inner regional locations. By contrast, in New South Wales, 75 per cent of Year 9 students attend school in a major city location, with 20 per cent in an inner regional location.

When results for Tasmania's students attending schools in inner regional locations are compared with results for students in similar locations in other jurisdictions, Tasmanian Year 9 students achieve very well. In all domains except numeracy, Tasmanian students achieved the highest mean scale score, although the differences are not statistically significant (see Table 7).

Table 7 Year 9 NAPLAN for Students Attending Schools in Inner Regional Geolocations, by Jurisdiction, 2016

	Reading		Writing		Spelling		Grammar and Punctuation		Numeracy	
Jurisdiction	**Mean**	**%**	**Mean**	**%**	**Mean**	**%**	**Mean**	**%**	**Mean**	**%**
New South Wales	570.9	91.6	528.0	75.9	563.9	87.6	556.4	88.4	570.9	93.4
Victoria	574.9	92.8	547.9	83.6	562.3	87.3	558.3	89.7	575.1	94.5
Queensland	566.8	91.4	524.8	75.2	563.5	88.2	558.6	88.4	571.5	94.6
Western Australia	575.7	94.6	541.1	82.8	566.8	88.8	561.4	91.1	582.6	96.3
South Australia	572.1	92.8	536.2	79.6	563.9	87.2	559.9	90.0	569.4	94.6
Tasmania	584.0	93.2	553.5	84.0	570.6	87.8	571.5	90.4	581.2	95.9
Australia	572.8	92.3	536.3	79.2	564.2	87.7	559.1	89.2	573.7	94.3

Notes: Table shows mean scale score ('Mean') and per cent of students at or above national minimum standard ('%').
There is no school in an inner regional geolocation in the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory.
Source: ACARA (2016a).

3.7.2 PISA

PISA is an international study directed by the OECD.

> PISA seeks to measure how well young adults at age 15 (and, therefore, near the end of compulsory schooling in most participating education systems) are prepared to use their knowledge and skills in particular areas to meet real-life challenges. PISA's orientation reflects a change in the goals and objectives of curricula, which increasingly address how well students are able to apply what they learn at school. (Thomson, De Bortoli & Buckley, 2012, p. vii)

PISA is a two-stage sample study, in which schools and students within schools are selected to participate. Results are not reported for individual students but for systems. In Australia, results are available for each jurisdiction and for subgroups of students, such as by sex or by Indigenous status. The results for Tasmania and Australia overall, for each assessed domain. are presented in Table 8

Table 8 PISA Mean Scale Scores for Tasmania and Australia, 2000–2015

	2000		2003		2006		2009		2012		2015	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Reading Literacy												
Tasmania	514	9.7	508	7.2	496	4.6	483	5.8	485	3.6	476	4.4
Australia	528	3.5	525	2.1	513	2.1	515	2.3	512	1.6	503	1.7
Mathematical Literacy												
Tasmania			507	9.4	502	3.8	487	5.1	478	3.4	469	4.1
Australia			524	2.1	520	2.2	514	2.5	504	1.6	494	1.6
Scientific Literacy												
Tasmania					507	4.6	497	5.3	500	3.8	483	4.0
Australia					527	2.3	527	2.5	521	1.8	510	1.5

Notes: Trend data commence when the assessed domain is the major domain for the PISA cycle. Reading literacy was the major domain in 2000 and 2009; mathematical literacy was the major domain in 2003 and 2012; scientific was the major domain in 2006 and 2015.

Source: Thomson, De Bortoli & Underwood (2016); Thomson, De Bortoli & Buckley (2012).

The results in Table 8 indicate that the mean scores for Tasmanian students are below the national mean scores in all three assessed domains. In 2012, mean scores for Tasmania were statistically significantly lower than mean scores for all other jurisdictions except the Northern Territory. Tasmanian students have had, in general, one less year of schooling than students in the other jurisdictions. Among the Tasmanian sample, 30 per cent of students were in Year 9 and 69 per cent in Year 10; among the Western Australian sample, 57 per cent were in Year 11 and 42 per cent in Year 10.

3.7.3 TIMSS

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is an international study directed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). TIMSS has a primary goal of providing comparative information about educational achievement across countries to improve teaching and learning in mathematics and science. Conducted on a regular four-year cycle, TIMSS has assessed students' achievements in mathematics and science since 1995. The latest assessment was in 2015. Students in Year 4 and Year 8 participate in TIMSS.

Table 9 shows that the mean scale scores for Year 8 students in Tasmania are close to the mean scale scores for all Year 8 students in Australia in some years. The differences in mathematics have fluctuated between 11 and 30 points over the different administrations of TIMSS; in science the differences have fluctuated between eight and 23 points.

Table 9 Year 8 TIMSS Mean Scale Scores for Tasmania and Australia, 1995–2015

	1995		2003		2007		2011		2015	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Mathematics										
Tasmania	496	11.6	477	13.0	485	7.0	475	7.2	493	8.4
Australia	509	3.7	505	4.7	496	3.8	505	5.2	505	3.1
Science										
Tasmania	514	11.8	504	11.9	507	7.2	496	6.7	503	8.0
Australia	514	3.9	527	3.9	515	3.6	519	4.7	512	2.7

Notes: TIMSS comparisons do not include 1999, as there were differences in the Australian sample. Data for 1995 were re-scaled after the 1999 study and do not match the results originally reported.
Source: Thomson, Hillman & Wernert (2012); Thomson, Wernert, O'Grady & Rodrigues (2016); Thomson, Wernert, Underwood & Nicholas (2008).

3.7.4 TCE and ATAR

The TCE is Tasmania's senior secondary school certificate. The TCE was introduced in 2009, after consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including employers, industry bodies, education and training providers, parent and community bodies, schools and colleges. To obtain the TCE, a person must meet or exceed requirements for standards in:

- everyday adult reading, writing and communication
- everyday adult mathematics
- everyday adult use of computers and the internet
- the amount and level of participation and achievement in education and training
- pathway planning.

The requirements for the TCE can be met through schools and colleges, an apprenticeship, a registered training organisation or TasTAFE (TASC, 2016).

The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is used to assess a student's eligibility for university entrance. Individual university programs may require a minimum ATAR for entry. While the ATAR is not the only method to gain admission to a university program, it is the most common route after Year 12. Prior to 2016, it was possible for a student in Tasmania to complete Year 12 and obtain an ATAR without being awarded the TCE. The University of Tasmania now requires a student to receive the TCE to be eligible for an ATAR.

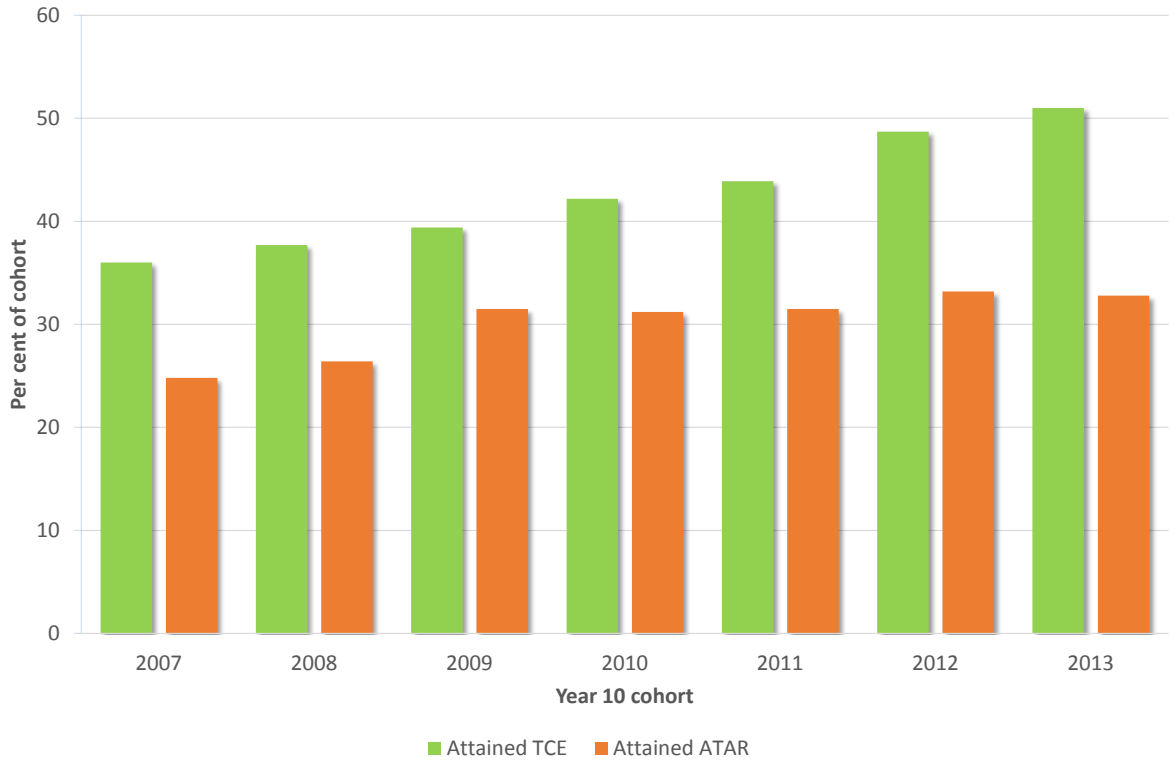
TASC reports the number of certificates awarded each year, based on the Year 10 cohort to which a student belongs. The numbers are reported for those who are included in 'direct continuation' statistics: those who are in Year 12 two years after Year 10. These data exclude part-time students who do not gain enough credit points in Year 11, or who may leave school and return at a later date. It is probable that the statistics reported in Table 10 are lower than the actual statistics because they take longer to complete the requirements for a TCE, but it is not possible to determine from the available data the magnitude of the differences.

Table 10 Percentage of Year 10 Students Attaining a TCE or an ATAR within Two Years, 2007–2013 Year 10 Cohorts

Year 10 cohort	Number of students	Attained TCE		Attained ATAR	
		N	%	N	%
2007	6655	2394	36.0	1696	24.8
2008	6575	2482	37.7	1824	26.4
2009	6539	2579	39.4	2059	31.5
2010	6699	2827	42.2	2092	31.2
2011	6803	2988	43.9	2144	31.5
2012	6644	3235	48.7	2209	33.2
2013	6269	3196	51.0	2055	32.8

Sources: Cohorts 2007 and 2008, number of students and TCE data: TQA Annual Report, 2014, Statistics Related to Post–Year 10 Attainment in Education and Training, Table 3; Cohorts 2007 and 2008, ATAR data: DoE, n.d. *Industry Pathways: Future directions for Years 11 and 12 vocational and applied learning in Tasmania: Discussion Paper*; Cohorts 2009 to 2013: TASC Annual Report, 2015–16, Post–Year 10 Attainment Data, Table 2.

Over the past seven cohorts, the percentage of students attaining the TCE has increased from 36 per cent to 51 per cent. The percentage of students attaining an ATAR has also increased, from 25 per cent to 33 per cent. The changes can also be seen in Figure 12, which highlights the steady growth in the attainment of the TCE and a levelling off in the attainment of an ATAR.



Sources: Cohorts 2007 and 2008, number of students and TCE data: TQA Annual Report, 2014, Statistics Related to Post–Year 10 Attainment in Education and Training, Table 3; Cohorts 2007 and 2008, ATAR data: DoE, n.d. *Industry pathways: Future directions for Years 11 and 12 vocational and applied learning in Tasmania: Discussion Paper*; Cohorts 2009 to 2013: TASC Annual Report, 2015–16, Post–Year 10 Attainment Data, Table 2.

Figure 12 Percentage of Year 10 Students Attaining a TCE or an ATAR within Two Years, 2007–2013 Year 10 Cohorts

3.7.5 VET Certificates

In addition to the TCEs awarded, the TASC also reports the number and percentage of VET certificates – at any level – awarded to each cohort. From the 2009 Year 10 cohort until the 2013 Year 10 cohort, the percentage of students who were awarded a certificate within two years of Year 10 had increased from 15 per cent to 24 per cent (see Table 11).

Table 11 Percentage of Year 10 Students Attaining a VET Certificate Within Two Years, 2009–2013 Year 10 Cohorts

		Attained VET Certificate	
Year 10 cohort	**Number of students**	**N**	**%**
2009	6539	992	15.2
2010	6699	1220	18.2
2011	6803	1359	20.0
2012	6644	1600	24.1
2013	6269	1481	23.6

Sources: TASC Annual Report, 2015–16, Post–Year 10 Attainment Data, Table 2.

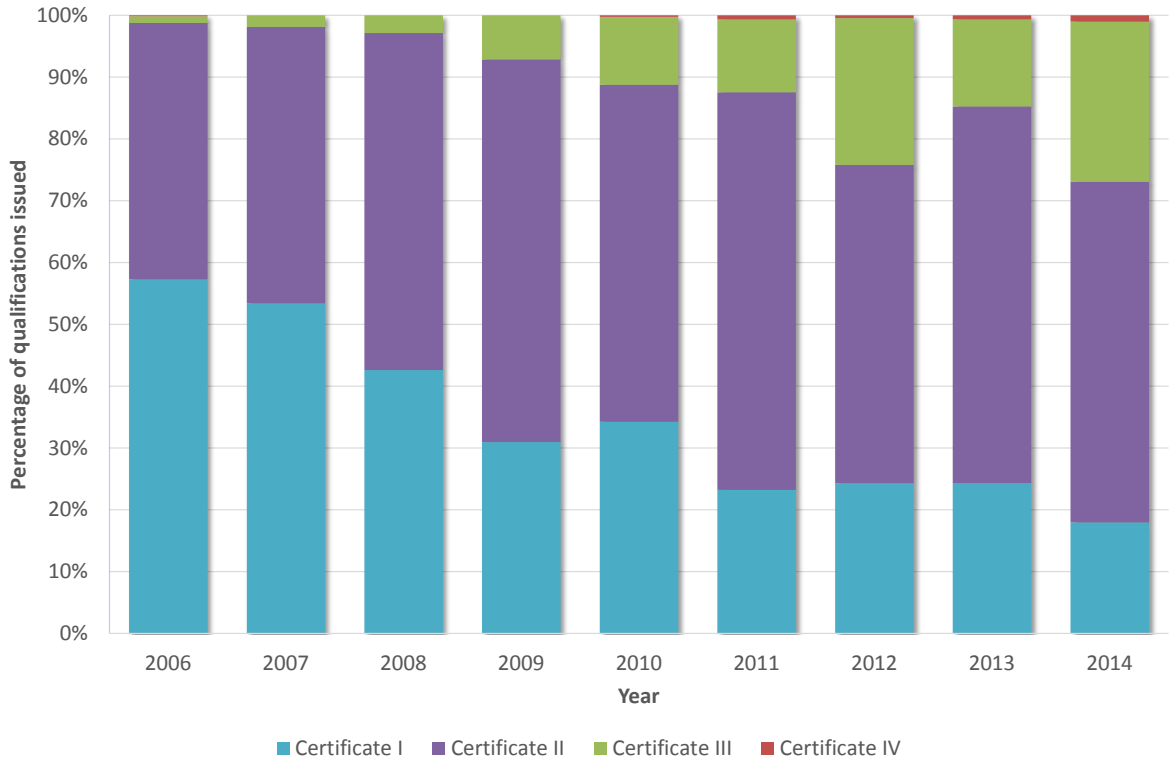
Other data indicate the level of certificates awarded, but they are not based on particular cohorts. The VETiS database of NCVER contains data on certificates issued to VETiS students. Before 2009, the number of VETiS students between the ages of 15 and 19 who were issued a certificate decreased slightly, from 1281 in 2006 to 1190 in 2008 (see Table 12). From 2009 onwards, that number has fluctuated between 750 and 900. The change in the number of certificates issued is associated with the level of certificate issued. Up to 2008, Certificate II was the most frequently issued certificate, and it has remained the most common certificate issued. During that same period, certificates at Level I dropped from 57 per cent of all certificates issued in 2006 to 18 per cent in 2014, when certificates at Level III made up 26 per cent.

Table 12 VET Qualifications Issued to 15–19 Year Olds Who Participated in VETiS, 2006–2014

Qualification	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Certificate IV	2	0	0	0	2	5	4	6	9
Certificate III	14	24	34	57	85	89	209	128	225
Certificate II	531	570	649	494	422	485	453	553	478
Certificate I	734	681	507	247	265	175	214	221	156
All certificates	*1281*	*1275*	*1190*	*798*	*774*	*754*	*880*	*908*	*868*

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.
Source: NCVER (2016), VOCSTATS

The shift in the number of certificates issued at each level, as indicated in Table 12, can be seen in Figure 13. The relative increase in the number of certificates at Level III, which is considered the equivalent of a Year 12 certificate, has been associated with the decrease in the percentage of certificates at Level I. There is a growing recognition that Certificate I does not lead to jobs, but they are used by schools and other institutions to provide diversity in the curriculum, especially for students with disability.



Source: NCVER (2016), VOCSTATS

Figure 13 Distribution of VET Qualifications Issued to 15–19 Year Olds who participated in VETiS, 2006–2014

3.8 Transitions to Higher Education

There are several different routes that young people can take to enter university in Australia. The direct school-to-university pathway remains the most common, particularly for recent school-leavers.

3.8.1 University Admissions

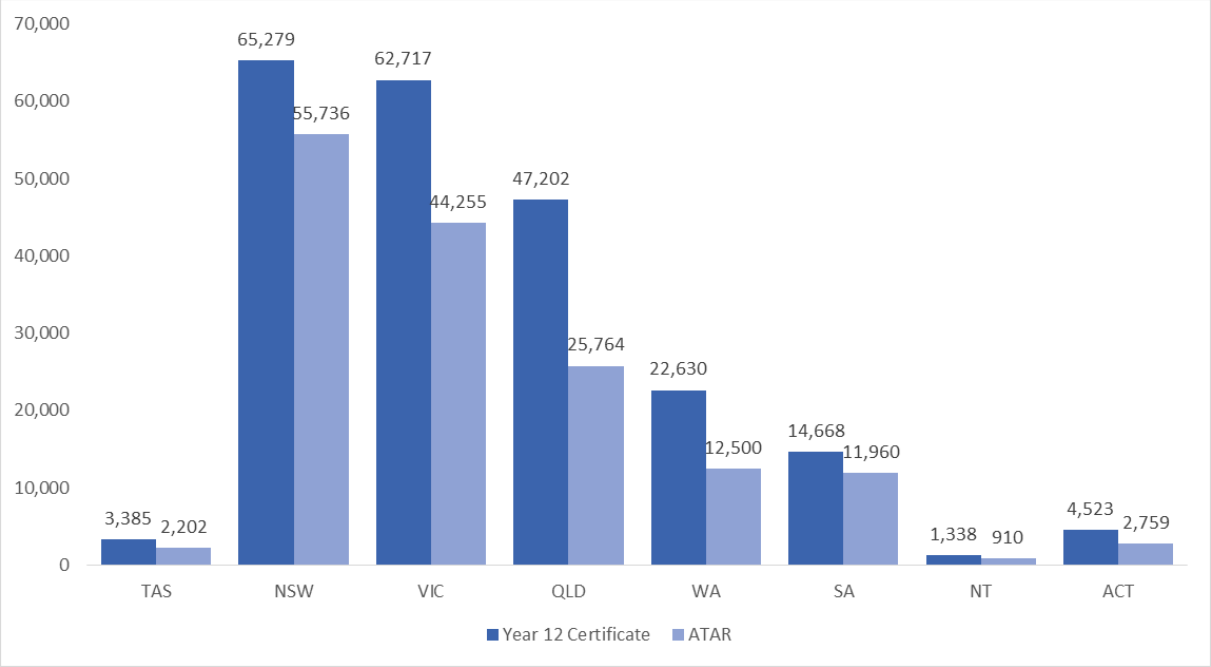
In nearly all states and territories in Australia, except Queensland, the main metric used by universities to select recent school-leavers is the ATAR.[7] The rank is derived from an aggregated score based on students' achievement in subjects taken during the final year of schooling. The ATAR allows students' results to be compared with other students who have taken completely different subjects or who have completed their schooling in a different year. The ATAR is a percentile rank that theoretically ranges from 0 to 99.95, and takes into account the whole age cohort, including students who have left schooling as well as those completing Year 12.

Most undergraduate university courses select applicants on the basis of their ATAR, and often publish a 'cut-off' ATAR that is required for entry to the course. Although the ATAR is not the only method of

[7] The Queensland Overall Positions (OP) is mapped to the ATAR using an agreed scale. Queensland will discontinue the OP and introduce the ATAR in 2019.

selection used, the majority of current Year 12 students (in 2015, 55.8 per cent) are offered a university place based on their ATAR.

Figure 14 shows the number of young people who were awarded each jurisdiction's senior secondary school certificate in 2015 and how many received an ATAR. A total of 3385 students successfully completed the TCE, and 2202 students received an ATAR. Approximately 65 per cent of students who achieved the TCE were awarded an ATAR. Nationally, approximately 70 per cent of students who achieved a Year 12 certificate were awarded an ATAR. In Tasmania, however, until 2016 it was possible to gain an ATAR without also gaining a TCE.



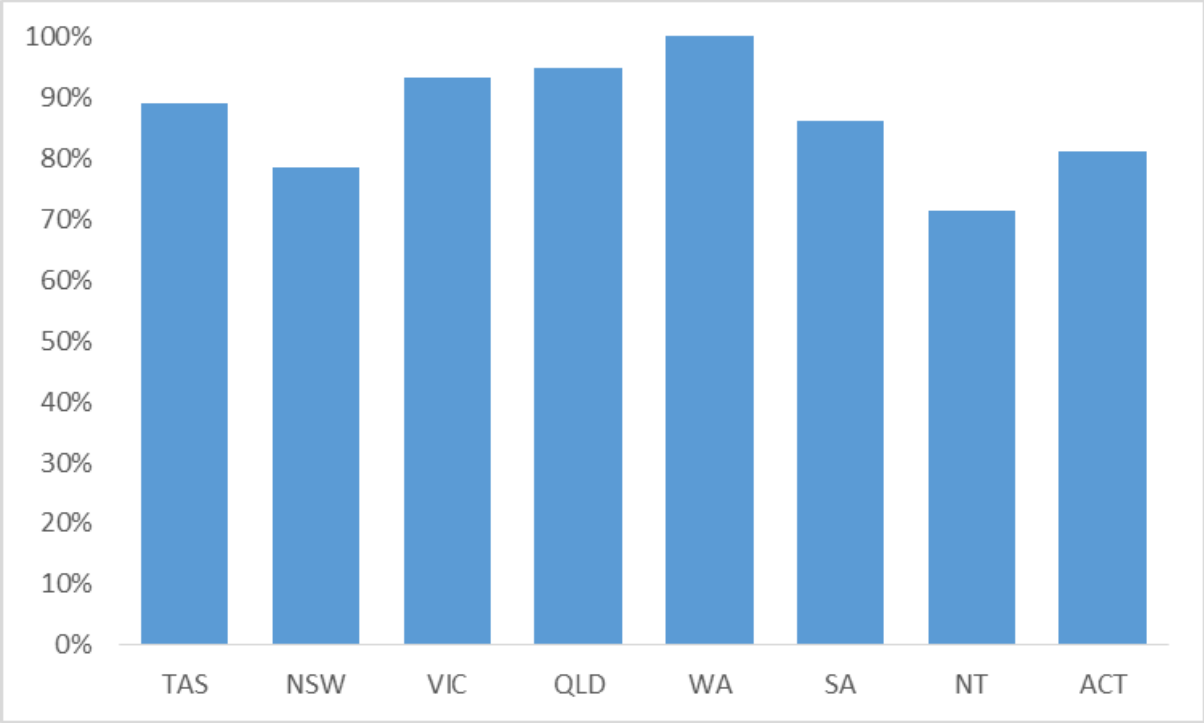
Source: Custom tables extracted from the Higher Education Information Management System, Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2016.

Figure 14 Number of Students Who Received a Year 12 Certificate or ATAR by State and Territory, 2015

3.8.2 Applications

For the 2015 university year, 2058 current (in 2014) Year 12 students from Tasmania applied to study an undergraduate qualification at an Australian university. Of these, 1809 applications were made to the UTAS and 249 were made to a university located outside of Tasmania.

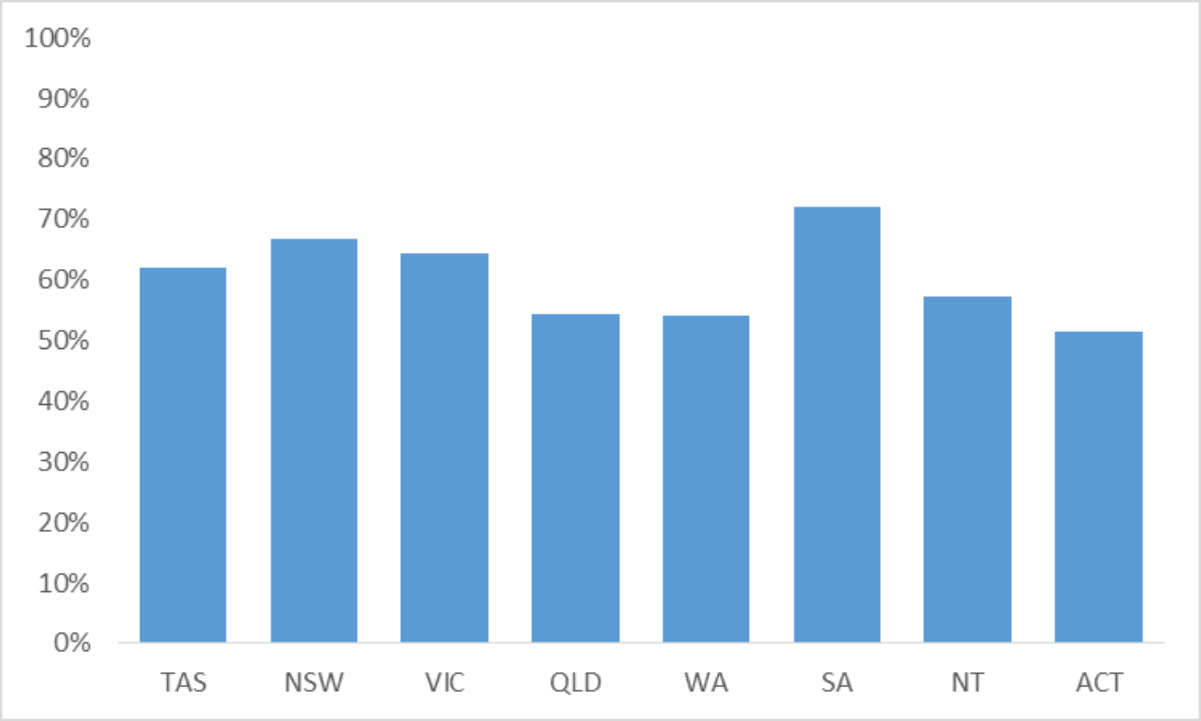
Figure 15 shows the percentage of current Year 12 students who were awarded an ATAR who applied to an Australian university for 2015. Close to 90 per cent of Tasmanian recipients of an ATAR applied for a university place. Only in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia did higher percentages of ATAR recipients apply for a university place.



Source: Custom tables extracted from the Higher Education Information Management System, Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2016.

Figure 15 Percentage of 2014 Year 12 Students Who Were Awarded an ATAR Who Applied to an Australian University for 2015

Figure 16 shows the percentage of Year 12 certificate recipients who applied to an Australian university for attendance in 2015. Percentages for Tasmanian students were close to those for Victorian and New South Wales Year 12 students and lower than those for South Australian students.

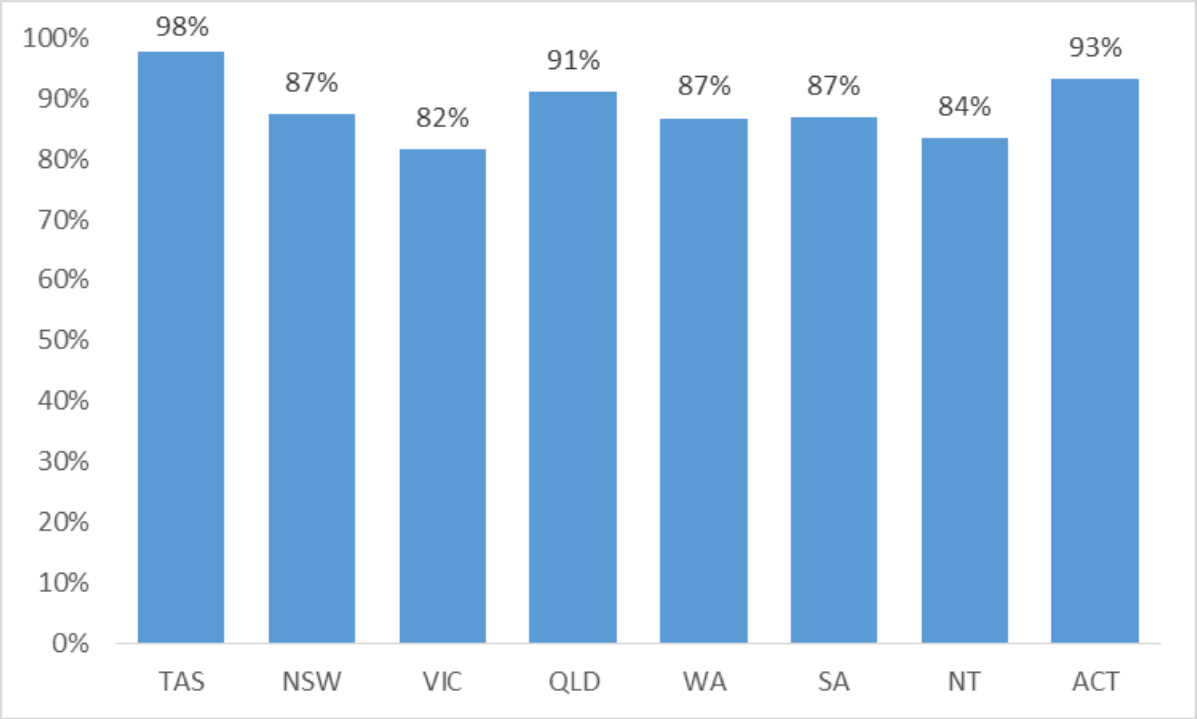


Source: Custom tables extracted from the Higher Education Information Management System, Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2016.

Figure 16 Percentage of 2014 Year 12 Students Who Were Awarded a Year 12 Certificate Who Applied to an Australian University for 2015

3.8.3 Offers

Applicants in Tasmania were more likely to have received an offer of a university place than were applicants in any other Australian jurisdiction. For university entry in 2015, nearly all applicants in Tasmania (98 per cent) were offered a place. By contrast, 82 per cent of applicants in Victoria received an offer (see Figure 17).

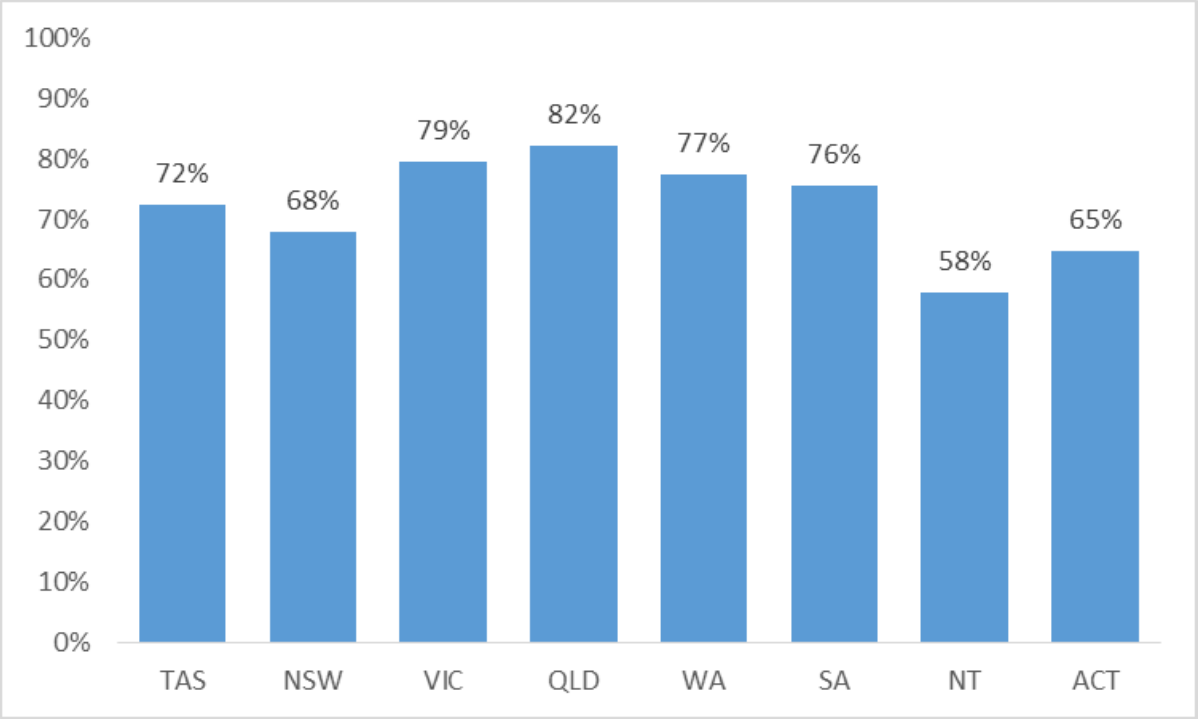


Source: Custom tables extracted from the Higher Education Information Management System, Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2016.

Figure 17 Percentage of 2014 Year 12 Applicants Who Received an Offer to an Australian University for 2015

3.8.4 Acceptances

Once an offer is made to an applicant, it can be accepted or rejected. Reasons for rejection of an offer are not collected from applicants. In Tasmania for 2015, 72 per cent of the offers were accepted. This is a higher acceptance rate than for New South Wales (68 per cent), the ACT (65 per cent) and the Northern Territory (58 per cent). In Queensland, 82 per cent of offers were accepted (see Figure 18).



Source: Custom tables extracted from the Higher Education Information Management System, Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2016.

Figure 18 Percentage of Offers for a Place in an Australian University to Current Year 12 Applicants That were Accepted for 2015

3.9 Summary

The data reviewed here indicate that Tasmanian education is doing well by comparison with other States and Territories of Australia. Results on Year 9 student assessments are slightly lower for NAPLAN, although not statistically significant in most domains. Many of these differences between Tasmania and other Australian States and Territories may be attributed to the State's lack of a major city, as classified under the ASGS. Results in PISA are also affected by the composition of the students involved: in this case, the majority of Tasmanian students have had one year less exposure to schooling. Overall, there is little difference between student achievement in Tasmania and student achievement in other jurisdictions of Australia at Year 9.

'Completion' of schooling and its related measures, including university entry, are not as easy to understand in the Tasmanian context. The data do show lower apparent retention rates and lower rates of senior secondary school certificate awards, but this is in absence of an agreed definition of an alternative to Year 12 completion. Compared to other jurisdictions, Tasmanian students more frequently leave secondary school and continue their studies with a VET provider; by age 25, there is much less difference in rates of completing Year 12 or an equivalent certificate. Among those who do remain at school and receive a TCE, there is little difference between Tasmania and other jurisdictions in the award of an ATAR, university applications, university offers and student acceptances of those offers.

4 Tasmanian Secondary Student Survey

To inform the policy options and recommendations arising from the *Review of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania*, concerning opportunities to improve students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes, ACER conducted a student survey designed for students in Years 9–12. Students were asked about their intentions to complete school and go on to further study. A copy of the online survey is included in Appendix 2. The survey was open from 12 September to 17 October 2016, a total of five weeks, although this time included the two-week mid-term break.

The survey was a voluntary census survey, in that all schools, in all sectors, with students in any of Years 9 to 12 were eligible and encouraged to participate. As the survey was voluntary and undertaken in a short period of time it was not expected that all students would participate. More than 5000 students took part, or about 21 per cent of the total student population in Years 9–12.

As about one in five students participated, it is necessary to look at how these responses are distributed in order to get a sense of how representative the respondents are of the student population.

4.1 Sample Characteristics

Table 13 shows a breakdown of the number of students in Tasmanian schools in 2015 by year level and sector. Table 14 shows how many students attended the schools that participated in the survey. Table 15 shows the number of respondents by year level and sector.

Table 13 Student Enrolments in All Schools in Tasmania for Years 9–12 in 2015, by Sector

		Enrolments				
Sector	**Schools**	**Year 9**	**Year 10**	**Year 11**	**Year 12**	**Total**
Catholic	14	1321	1339	950	810	4420
Government	66	4200	4404	4126	3368	16 098
Independent	28	930	860	719	646	3155
Total	*108*	*6451*	*6603*	*5795*	*4824*	*23 673*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 14 Student Enrolments in Schools Participating in Survey, by Year Level and Sector

		Enrolments				
Sector	**Schools**	**Year 9**	**Year 10**	**Year 11**	**Year 12**	**Total**
Catholic	9	897	917	804	674	3292
Government	40	2900	3074	4080	3326	13 380
Independent	3	206	210	219	195	830
Total	*52*	*4003*	*4201*	*5103*	*4195*	*17 502*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 15 Student Response by Year Level and Sector

Sector	Schools	Respondents				
		Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Total
Catholic	9	423	241	137	33	834
Government	40	1391	1126	751	651	3919
Independent	3	71	68	73	85	297
Total	*52*	*1885*	*1435*	*961*	*769*	*5050*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 16 provides an overview of school and student response rates. There was a strong response from the government and Catholic sectors, with more than 60 per cent of schools participating. Independent school participation was low and is therefore less likely to be representative of independent school students.

Table 16 Secondary Schools and Students Participating in the Survey, by Sector

Sector	Schools	Schools participating	%	Students participating	Proportion participating from schools %	Proportion participating of total students %
Catholic	14	9	64.3	834	25.3	18.9
Government	66	40	60.6	3919	29.3	24.3
Independent	28	3	10.7	297	35.8	9.4
Total	108	52	48.1	5050	28.9	21.3

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 17 shows the proportion of students who responded to the survey based on the approximate number of students enrolled in participating schools (student enrolments are based on 2015 data). In-school response rates varied considerably, from five schools with fewer than 10 per cent of students (in eligible year levels) responding, to six schools with a response rate of more 70 per cent.

Year 9 students had the highest response rates in Catholic and government participating schools, with almost half of students taking part. More than one-quarter of Year 10 students in participating Catholic schools completed the survey, as did more than one-third of Year 10 students in participating government schools. One-third of students in Years 9–11 took part in participating independent schools.

Fewer Year 11 and Year 12 students participated, which is likely to be due to the logistics of offering students time to complete the survey in a college setting. High schools average about 150 students per year level (Years 7–10) and much smaller numbers in Years 11–12 (20–30), whereas government-sector colleges (which enrol more than 60 per cent of all Year 11–12 students in Tasmania) have around 400–500 students at each year level. All government colleges participated in the survey, which is why response rates for all Year 11–12 students in the government sector in Table 18 are about the same as for the in-school response rates reported in Table 17.

Table 17 Proportion of Respondents by Student Population in Participating Schools, by Year Level and Sector

	In-school response rate (%)				
Sector	**Year 9**	**Year 10**	**Year 11**	**Year 12**	**Total**
Catholic	47.2	26.3	17.0	4.9	25.3
Government	48.0	36.6	18.4	19.6	29.3
Independent	34.5	32.4	33.3	43.6	35.8
Total	*47.1*	*34.2*	*18.8*	*18.3*	*28.9*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 18 Proportion of Respondents by Total Student Population, by Year Level and Sector

	Sector response rate (%)				
Sector	**Year 9**	**Year 10**	**Year 11**	**Year 12**	**Total**
Catholic	32.0	18.0	14.4	4.1	18.9
Government	33.1	25.6	18.2	19.3	24.3
Independent	7.6	7.9	10.2	13.2	9.4
Total	*29.2*	*21.7*	*16.6*	*15.9*	*21.3*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 19 provides a separate breakdown of participating schools with Year 11 and 12 students, by sector. More than 70 per cent of government schools (including all eight colleges) participated.

Table 19 Secondary Schools with Year 11–12 Students, by Sector

		Schools participating		Students participating
Sector	**Schools**	**n**	**%**	
Catholic	6	4	66.6	170
Government	22	16	72.7	1,402
Independent	16	3	18.8	158
Total	*44*	*23*	*52.3*	*1,730*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 20 provides an alternative breakdown of the figures, showing participating schools and students by school type. That is, among schools serving secondary students (the primary years of a K–10 or K–12 school are not considered), a school may enrol Years 7–10 only, Years 7–12, or Years 11–12 only.

Table 20 Schools and Students Participating in the Survey by Year Levels Enrolled in the School

	Schools participating		Students participating		Sex (%)		
School type	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**Female**	**Male**	**Other**
Years 7–10	23	52.3	2775	54.9	41.1	54.6	4.3
Years 7–12	12	27.3	861	17.0	60.3	36.1	3.6
Years 11–12	9	20.5	1414	28.0	51.7	45.0	3.3
Total	*44*	*100.0*	*5053*	*100.0*	*47.4*	*48.7*	*3.9*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 21 shows the overall proportion of female and male students in Tasmanian schools by year level, based on student numbers from 2015. Three girls' schools and two boys' schools participated in the survey; only one of these had students in Years 11 and 12. The Year 9 and 10 students in the boys' schools had much higher response rates than did the girls' schools and this is likely to explain the slightly lower overall proportions of females responding to the survey in Years 9 and 10, as indicated in Table 22.

Table 21 Proportion of All Tasmanian Students by Gender, by Year Level

Gender	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Total
Female	47.4	48.6	50.3	51.7	49.6
Male	52.6	51.4	49.7	48.3	50.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 22 Proportion of Student Respondents by Gender, by Year Level

Gender	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Total
Female	44.9	42.9	53.3	54.4	47.4
Male	51.1	52.6	43.6	42.2	48.7
Other	4.0	4.5	3.1	3.4	3.9
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.1.1 Parents' Schooling and Qualifications

Students were asked to indicate their parents' highest level of schooling and highest qualification. Table 23 shows that about one-fifth of students did not know. Of those who were able to answer the question, a majority indicated that at least one parent had completed Year 12. Of those parents who did not complete Year 12, nearly all had completed Year 10 and many had undertaken some study beyond Year 10.

Table 23 Parents' Highest Level of Schooling

Highest level of schooling	Parent 1 (%)	Parent 2 (%)
Completed Year 12	44.5	37.7
Completed Year 10 or 11 and then did some study at TAFE	13.2	11.3
Completed Year 10	19.2	22.0
Completed some secondary, but not more than Year 9	3.2	5.2
Completed primary school only	0.5	0.5
Did not complete primary school	0.5	0.6
Don't know	18.8	22.8
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 24 shows that about half of all students did not know their parents' highest qualification. Of those that did, just under half indicated that one or both parents had a university degree. About one-quarter said that at least one of their parents had the equivalent of a Certificate IV qualification and about one-fifth had parents with a diploma.

Table 24 Parents' Highest Qualification

Qualifications	Parent 1 (%)	Parent 2 (%)	One or both (%)
A TAFE Training Certificate IV (e.g. in Hairdressing or Bricklaying)	13.3	12.8	12.7
A TAFE Diploma (e.g. Diploma in Accounting, Diploma in Veterinary Nursing)	8.8	6.1	9.8
A university degree – Bachelor, Graduate Diploma or Masters	20.7	16.4	23.9
A doctorate (PhD) or equivalent doctoral program	3.3	1.8	4.2
Don't know	53.9	62.9	49.4
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.2 Year 9 and 10 Students: Intention After Year 10

Year 9 and 10 students were asked to indicate their intentions after Year 10. Table 25 presents the results of this question by year level, gender, school type, location and parental qualification. Overall, about 10 per cent of students said that they were intending to leave school. The vast majority, therefore, had every intention of going on to Year 11. The breakdowns show some differences: boys were four times more likely (15 per cent) to say they intended to leave school after Year 10 than were girls (4 per cent). Year 9 students were slightly more likely to intend to leave than Year 10 students, suggesting that some Year 9 responses are not yet definite.

Students in urban areas were less likely to intend to leave (9 per cent) than those in outer provincial areas (15 per cent), as were those based in a school that offered Years 11–12 (5 per cent). Levels of parental qualification also made a difference, although it should be noted that in all cases, those who intended to stay in education far exceeded those who did not.

Table 25 Year 9 and 10 Students' Intentions after Year 10, by Gender, Year Levels Enrolled at School, School Location and Parents' Highest Qualification

Intentions after Year 10	Go on to Year 11 (%)	Leave school (%)	Total (%)
Year 9 students	88.4	11.6	100.0
Year 10 students	91.1	8.9	100.0
Female	96.3	3.7	100.0
Male	84.6	15.4	100.0
School to Year 10	88.6	11.4	100.0
School to Year 12	94.7	5.3	100.0
Urban	91.1	8.9	100.0
Provincial city	89.6	10.4	100.0
Outer provincial	84.7	15.3	100.0
Parents Certificate IV	84.4	15.6	100.0
Parents TAFE diploma	87.1	12.9	100.0
Parents degree or higher	97.0	3.0	100.0
Total	*89.6*	*10.4*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 26 provides a further breakdown of intentions by year level. In most cases, students in Year 10 were less likely to indicate that they intended to leave than students in Year 9. Girls and students in schools that catered to Years 7–12 were less likely to intend to leave after Year 10. Students in urban areas were also less likely to intend to leave.

Table 26 Students' Intentions after Year 10 by Gender, School Type and Location, by Year Level

	Year 9 students		Year 10 students	
Intentions after Year 10	Go on to Year 11 (%)	Leave school (%)	Go on to Year 11 (%)	Leave school (%)
Female	95.9	4.1	96.9	3.1
Male	83.0	17.0	86.6	13.4
School to Year 10	87.1	12.9	90.5	9.5
School to Year 12	94.4	5.6	95.3	4.7
Urban	91.1	8.9	91.2	8.8
Provincial city	88.0	12.0	92.2	7.8
Outer provincial	82.6	17.4	87.2	12.8
Total	*88.4*	*11.6*	*91.1*	*8.9*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

The students who indicated that they intended to leave school after Year 10 (12 per cent in Year 9, 9 per cent in Year 10) were asked what reasons they had for their intention (see Table 27). Students could choose as many of the seven options that were provided as were appropriate to them, or they could provide a text response under the 'Other' option. The most common answer, ticked by a majority of

Year 10 students, was 'I want to earn my own money'. About one-quarter indicated that they did not need to complete Years 11–12 for the job they wanted. About the same proportion said that they did not like school in general while a smaller proportion did not like their current school or they were not doing very well at school, and the last two reasons showed notably lower proportions for students in Year 10.

Table 27 Students' Reasons for Intending to Leave School after Year 10, by Year Level

Reasons for leaving school after Year 10	Year 9 students (%)	Year 10 students (%)
I want to earn my own money	43.1	53.1
I don't need to complete Year 11 or 12 for the job I want	29.4	24.2
I don't like school in general	27.1	23.4
I want to do study or training that isn't available at school	16.1	16.4
Other	13.3	24.2
I'm not doing very well at school	12.8	7.8
I don't like this school	11.0	6.3
I don't like the subjects offered at school	5.5	2.3

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

A majority of those who answered 'Other' indicated that they wanted to do an apprenticeship or traineeship. A few said they wanted, or had, a full-time job, or intended to go to TAFE or join the Australian Defence Force. As TAFE or apprenticeships may be considered further training, these students could better be included in the proportion of those who intend to undertake further study post–Year 10.

Students who intended to go on to Year 11 (90 per cent of Year 9–10 respondents) were asked where they planned to continue their schooling. Table 28 shows that the majority of respondents intended to go on to a college.

Table 28 Location of Planned Year 11 Study, by Gender and Year Level

	Year 9 students		Year 10 students	
Where plan to start Year 11	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
A college	74.6	77.6	81.6	88.1
This school	19.0	11.9	13.1	6.0
A different school	4.9	8.4	2.9	4.3
Other	1.2	1.8	2.0	1.2
Home study	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.5
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

More than 90 per cent of Year 9-10 students attending a high school in an urban or provincial city location plan to attend a college for Year 11 (see Table 29). These students are currently in schools in Hobart and Launceston and from George Town (Port Dalrymple) to Wynyard. Among those attending

a high school in an outer provincial area, eight per cent of Year 10 students plan on remaining at their schools. Among those attending urban schools that cater for students up to Year 12—the majority of which are non-government schools—90 per cent of those in Hobart intend on remaining in their schools for Year 11. In other areas—provincial cities and outer provincial areas—schools that cater for students up to Year 12 are government schools; approximately 20 per cent of those intending to continue to Year 11 plan to do so in their local schools, with 72 per cent planning on attending a college.

Table 29 Location of Planned Year 11 Study, by Geographic Location, School Type and Year Level

	Up to Year 10		Up to Year 12	
Location	**Year 9**	**Year 10**	**Year 9**	**Year 10**
Urban				
This school	0.4%	0.4%	95.7%	88.1%
A different school	7.1%	5.3%	2.9%	1.5%
A college	91.3%	93.4%	1.4%	7.5%
Home study	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1.1%	1.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Provincial city				
This school	2.2%	4.0%	75.8%	62.5%
A different school	4.9%	2.5%	8.1%	8.3%
A college	91.7%	90.9%	13.3%	20.8%
Home study	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.9%	2.3%	2.8%	8.3%
Outer provincial/Island				
This school	0.9%	7.8%	15.3%	23.9%
A different school	13.8%	2.9%	12.5%	2.8%
A college	79.3%	85.4%	70.8%	73.2%
Home study	0.9%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	5.2%	1.0%	1.4%	0.0%

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.3 VET/VEL Study

Students who intended to go on to Year 11 were also asked whether they planned VET/VEL study in their senior secondary years. Table 30 shows that about one-quarter of students in Year 10 planned to do so. Of the rest, about half did not plan VET study and about half had not made any plans.

Table 30 Students Planning VET/VEL Study, by Gender and Year Level

	Year 9 students		Year 10 students	
Plan VET/VEL study in Year 11 or 12	**Female (%)**	**Male (%)**	**Female (%)**	**Male (%)**
Yes	16.4	16.8	23.6	23.2
No	19.6	16.8	40.1	36.9
Don't know	64.0	66.5	36.4	39.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 31 shows that VET/VEL study was being planned by a greater proportion of students in outer provincial areas (about 25 per cent) than in urban areas (16–18 per cent).

Table 31 Students Planning VET/VEL Study, by Gender and Location

	Female		Male	
Location	**Yes (%)**	**No (%)**	**Yes (%)**	**No (%)**
Urban	16.4	33.3	17.8	30.3
Provincial city	19.8	25.8	20.2	21.9
Outer provincial	25.7	26.8	25.6	21.3

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Students who intended to go on to Year 11 were also asked whether they planned on doing a school-based apprenticeship. Table 32 shows that this was being considered by 12 per cent of girls and 18 per cent of boys at Year 9, but these proportions had dropped in Year 10 to 7 per cent of girls and 11 per cent of boys. A considerable proportion had not made plans either way.

Table 32 Students Planning to Do a School-based Apprenticeship, by Gender and Year Level

	Year 9 students		Year 10 students	
Plan school-based apprenticeship	**Female (%)**	**Male (%)**	**Female (%)**	**Male (%)**
Yes	12.1	18.0	6.6	11.3
No	27.0	22.5	51.6	46.2
Don't know	60.9	59.5	41.8	42.5
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 33 shows that a higher proportion of students, and particularly boys, in outer provincial areas were likely to consider a school-based apprenticeship than students in urban areas.

Table 33 Students Planning to Do a School-based Apprenticeship, by Gender and Location

	Female		Male	
Location	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Urban	8.6	35.9	12.2	38.0
Provincial city	10.4	38.1	16.6	29.4
Outer provincial	10.1	38.5	21.3	26.9

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Students in Years 11 and 12 were also asked about their participation in VET/VEL subjects. As noted in Table 34, almost one-quarter of Year 11 students, male and female, were doing or had done a VET/VEL course. In Year 12, a slightly higher proportion of girls reported participation.

Table 34 Students Who Are Doing or Have Done VET/VEL Courses, by Gender and Year Level

	Year 11 students		Year 12 students	
Currently doing/done VET/VEL	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
Yes	23.3	23.1	31.2	24.1
No	73.8	72.0	65.9	71.9
Don't know	3.0	4.8	2.9	4.0
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 35 suggests that a considerably higher proportion of students in schools/colleges in outer provincial areas had participated in VET/VEL courses in comparison with those in urban and provincial areas.

Table 35 Students Who are Doing or Have Done VET/VEL Courses, by Gender and Location

	Female		Male	
Location	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Urban	25.5	71.9	19.8	76.0
Provincial city	23.0	74.2	23.8	71.8
Outer provincial	64.4	26.7	57.4	35.2

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.4 Year 12 Completion

Students in Years 9 and 10 who had indicated that they intended to go on to Year 11 (90 per cent of Year 9–10 respondents) and all students in Years 11 and 12 were asked about their intention to complete Year 12. The response was very high, with more than 95 per cent of students indicating that they planned to complete Year 12, as shown in Table 36.

Table 36 Intention to Complete Year 12, by Gender and Year Level

	Yes	
Plan to complete Year 12	**Female (%)**	**Male (%)**
Year 9 students	98.0	96.1
Year 10 students	97.7	95.3
Year 11 students	95.3	94.3
Year 12 students	99.0	98.5

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.
Note: Only Year 9 and 10 students answering that they intended to go on to Year 11 were asked this question (90% of Year 9 and 10 respondents).

4.5 Plans after Leaving School

All participating students were asked about their plans for the year after leaving school. They could select only one of the options presented. Table 37 shows the options in the order in which they were chosen overall. As can be seen, the most common plan was to go to university. This was also the case among Year 9 and 10 students, who were clearly already considering study beyond school. The proportion increased somewhat from 34 per cent in Year 9 to 41 per cent in Year 12.

While there is every chance that plans will change, particularly for the younger year levels, very few actually chose the 'Don't know' option, with 16 per cent at Year 9 and just 4 per cent at Year 12. Seventeen per cent of Year 12 students indicated that they planned to take a gap year.

Table 37 Students' Plans for the Year After Leaving School, by Year Level

Activity	**Year 9 (%)**	**Year 10 (%)**	**Year 11 (%)**	**Year 12 (%)**
Go to university	34.4	39.5	38.7	41.0
Look for work/get a job	12.4	12.5	14.7	13.9
Don't know	16.0	13.0	10.4	4.1
Take a gap year	9.2	9.5	10.7	17.2
Get an apprenticeship	12.4	11.6	7.6	4.4
Go to TasTAFE	4.6	4.0	7.9	7.3
Have time off for an unspecified time/go travelling	4.4	3.0	4.0	3.4
Other	3.5	3.1	3.0	4.0
Do some other course or training elsewhere	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.5
Get a traineeship	1.0	1.7	0.7	2.2
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

The list of intentions for the year after leaving school looks somewhat different by gender. Table 38 shows the list for girls in order of the most responses overall, while Table 39 has the same list for boys. A higher proportion of girls intend to go to university than do boys, and girls may well have made that decision as early as Year 9, given very little difference in the proportions over each of the year levels

asked. Only about one-third of boys say they intend to go to university and the proportion is lower in Year 9. More girls (17 per cent in Year 12) than boys (9 per cent in Year 12) are considering a gap year, while a much higher proportion of boys are considering an apprenticeship.

By Year 12, only 3 per cent of girls say they don't know what they plan to do, compared to 13 per cent of boys.

Table 38 Female Students' Plans for the Year After Leaving School, by Year Level

Activity	Year 9 (%)	Year 10 (%)	Year 11 (%)	Year 12 (%)
Go to university	41.9	44.1	40.7	43.7
Take a gap year	11.6	12.0	12.2	17.2
Don't know	16.1	13.9	10.0	3.3
Look for work/get a job	10.5	12.4	12.4	13.6
Go to TasTAFE	5.1	4.7	10.8	7.8
Have time off for an unspecified time/go travelling	6.6	3.7	4.8	3.5
Get an apprenticeship	2.8	3.5	3.3	2.8
Do some other course or training elsewhere	2.7	2.3	3.5	2.3
Other	2.1	1.2	1.7	2.8
Get a traineeship	0.6	2.3	0.6	3.0
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Table 39 Male Students' Plans for the Year After Leaving School, by Year Level

Activity	Year 9 (%)	Year 10 (%)	Year 11 (%)	Year 12 (%)
Go to university	28.2	35.4	36.5	33.1
Get an apprenticeship	21.7	19.3	12.5	17.5
Look for work/get a job	14.2	12.8	17.3	14.4
Don't know	15.9	12.8	11.0	12.7
Take a gap year	6.8	7.7	9.4	8.8
Go to TasTAFE	4.3	2.8	4.6	4.2
Other	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.1
Have time off for an unspecified time/go travelling	2.1	2.2	3.1	2.4
Do some other course or training elsewhere	1.4	1.7	1.0	1.6
Get a traineeship	1.3	1.4	0.5	1.2
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.5.1 Highest Level of Study Planned

Table 37 showed that about 40 per cent of students planned to go to university once they finished school. Table 40 shows that the numbers who are intending to go to university are higher, whether that is after

a gap year or other plans immediately following school. Two-thirds of Year 12 students intend to obtain a university degree.

Table 40 Highest Level of Study Planned, by Year Level

Level of study	Year 9 (%)	Year 10 (%)	Year 11 (%)	Year 12 (%)
Certificate I or II	5.1	8.2	4.8	2.4
Certificate III or IV	8.1	13.2	13.6	13.5
Diploma, Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate	7.6	5.9	6.9	6.8
University degree (Bachelor, Master or Doctorate)	33.7	41.5	49.7	66.1
Don't know	45.6	31.1	25.0	11.2
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.6 Students Researching Future Pathways

All students who responded to the survey were asked if they had done or experienced any of the 13 future study or work options listed in the question. The question focused on what students had accessed in the current year, so it is likely that older students may have experienced some opportunities in previous years and may have accessed some options multiple times over the years.

Table 41 shows that about one-third of students in Year 10 and Year 12 had attended an information day at the UTAS, and in Year 12 the university had visited colleges and reached 40 per cent of respondents. About one-third of students in Years 10 and 12 had been assisted by a teacher to investigate career- and life-planning options. Work placements were most common in Year 10, although only just over one-quarter of students had experienced this opportunity in that year (at the time of the survey). TAFE and VET information by providers reached fewer than 10 per cent of students in any year level.

The *My Education* website was used predominately by Year 10 students, with more than half of that year level indicating that they had accessed it. About four in 10 students had used the site in Year 9, while only about one-quarter had used it in Years 11 and 12.

Personal research was common at all year levels, with more than half of students looking for careers information online from Year 10 on. Guest speakers were also common each year, with one in four to one in five students hearing about careers directly from people in those jobs.

Job fairs or career expos were attended by higher proportions of students each year, doubling by Year 12 to 31 per cent, from 16 per cent in Year 9.

Table 41 Proportion of Students Accessing Options to Find Out about Future Study or Work, by Year Level

Activity	Year 9 (%)	Year 10 (%)	Year 11 (%)	Year 12 (%)
I researched the internet for information about careers	40.8	52.2	52.8	60.3
Guest speakers have come to school to talk about their job or workplace	40.2	50.8	41.9	47.5
I researched options for further study	29.9	46.9	47.1	59.6
I used my network of family and peers to find out about work	33.7	40.7	40.5	43.4
A teacher at school helped me investigate career and life planning options	20.6	33.5	31.7	36.4
I attended an information day at the University of Tasmania	14.4	33.9	17.3	38.7
I visited a job fair or career expo	16.3	20.6	28.9	30.9
Someone from the University of Tasmania has visited to discuss study options	8.6	19.6	21.7	40.2
I did an internship, work experience or work placement	10.2	27.2	18.6	18.3
I attended job shadowing or work-site visits	5.7	8.5	6.3	8.3
Someone from TasTAFE or another VET provider has visited to discuss study options	3.6	9.3	7.6	9.1
I attended an information day at TasTAFE or another VET provider	4.1	8.5	4.5	8.3
I have used the *My Education* website*	51.8	67.8	35.3	29.4

Note: The My Education website is a resource intended for the use of students in the government sector. Figures reported here include respondents from the government sector only.
Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.7 Students Currently Working

All students who participated in the survey were asked whether they currently had a job. The results are presented in Table 42. Half of all students in Years 11 and 12 had a job. There was a noticeable difference by gender, with a higher proportion of girls in all year levels working compared to boys.

Table 42 Percentage of Students Who Currently Have a Job, by Year Level and Gender

Gender	Year 9 (%)	Year 10 (%)	Year 11 (%)	Year 12 (%)
Female	32.0	51.6	54.3	58.8
Male	25.4	38.4	44.8	36.8
Total	*28.9*	*43.8*	*49.9*	*49.5*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

Students who were working were asked how many hours they worked in a typical week. As shown in Table 43, the average hours increased slightly with age, with the average per week being about 10 hours.

Table 43 Hours Students Work in a Typical Week, by Year Level

Hours	Year 9 (%)	Year 10 (%)	Year 11 (%)	Year 12 (%)
<3 hours	11.2	8.1	7.2	4.2
3.1–6 hours	24.3	22.4	18.2	17.6
6.1–9 hours	20.4	21.4	18.8	16.8
9.1–12 hours	21.6	20.9	25.6	25.4
12.1–15 hours	10.4	13.3	14.3	17.0
15.1–18 hours	3.9	3.4	4.5	5.3
18.1+ hours	8.2	10.6	11.4	13.7
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Average hours worked	*9.5*	*10.2*	*10.7*	*11.8*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.8 Making Decisions About the Future

All students who responded to the survey were asked how well they felt they had been prepared to make decisions about their future study or work plans. Table 44 presents the results by different groups. The clear indication is that most students feel at least somewhat well prepared, and the results do not differ noticeably by any of the variables considered. One in five students consider themselves very well prepared to make decisions about the future, and the proportions are slightly higher in the two year levels facing the largest changes (Year 10, 23 per cent and Year 12, 24 per cent). About two-thirds of students feel somewhat well prepared and only about 15 per cent of students do not feel well prepared.

Table 44 Extent to Which Students Feel Well Prepared to Make Decisions about the Future, by Year Level, Gender, School Type, School Sector and Location

	Very well prepared (%)	Somewhat well prepared (%)	Not well prepared (%)
Year level			
Year 9 students	18.8	63.9	17.2
Year 10 students	22.8	64.0	13.1
Year 11 students	20.3	63.1	16.6
Year 12 students	24.4	61.4	14.3
Sex			
Female	17.5	66.5	16.0
Male	24.4	61.1	14.4
School type			
Up to Year 10	20.6	63.9	15.5
Up to Year 12	20.5	64.7	14.8
Year 11–12 only	22.5	61.6	15.9
School sector			
Catholic	24.2	63.7	12.1
Government	20.7	62.9	16.4
Independent	18.0	69.3	12.7
Geographic location			
Urban	22.4	62.2	15.5
Provincial city	19.6	65.3	15.1
Outer provincial	20.5	62.1	17.4
Total	*21.1*	*63.4*	*15.5*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary student survey, September–October 2016.

4.9 Summary

The student survey was completed by approximately 21 per cent of all students in Years 9-12, with the highest response rate among those attending Government schools. There were separate surveys for students in Years 9-10 and students in Years 11-12. Response rates were higher among the lower year levels. Of the Year 9-10 students who completed the survey, 90 per cent indicated that they intended to go on to Year 11. This rate was highest in Hobart and Launceston, and was 85 per cent among those attending schools in outer provincial locations. A positive response was higher among students in Year 10 than among those in Year 9. Approximately 20 per cent intended to include some VET/VEL as part of their studies in Year 11. Among all students, approximately 40 per cent said they intended to attend university after leaving school.

5 Teacher Workforce

Opportunities to improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes are in part dependent on the demographic profile and expertise of the teachers and school leaders able to teach the Tasmanian Curriculum, and make appropriate assessments of student performances. To determine whether the Tasmanian school education workforce matches the 21st century requirements for the design and delivery of curriculum for Years 9 to 12 (which includes the three Tasmanian education sectors), has required a workforce analysis. Here, this analysis is presented to two parts:

- Analysis from the *Staff in Australia's Schools* surveys; and
- Analysis of the findings from the survey of teachers and principals in all three school sectors in Tasmania, conducted for this Review.

5.1 Staff in Australia's Schools

A count of the number of schools in Tasmania is dependent upon a number of definitions. For example, for the purposes of sampling schools in the Staff in Australia's Schools (SiAS) project, primary and secondary schools were sampled separately and therefore combined schools (such as F–10 or F–12) were treated as two separate schools (McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy & McMillan, 2014). In the same way, schools with more than one campus in geographically separate locations were treated as separate schools. The SiAS project differentiated between primary and secondary, but did not further differentiate secondary schools by those that taught senior secondary (Years 11–12) and those that did not. The SiAS project reported overall response rates by state but did not break these down by sector. The number of secondary schools and teachers participating in SiAS is shown in Table 45.

Table 45 Staff in Australia's Schools Survey

Tasmania	Secondary schools SiAS survey 2013
Number of schools sampled	82
Number of schools responded	47
School response rate	*57%*
Number of teachers sampled	1287
Number of teachers responded	658
Within-school teacher response rate	*51%*
Final teacher response rate 2013	*29%*
Final teacher response rate 2010	*32%*

Source: McKenzie, et al. (2014).

SiAS data from 2013 showed that the average age of secondary teachers (46.6 years) in Tasmania was slightly higher than the Australian average (45 years) and the highest reported average by state and territory. The proportion of female (57.1 per cent) and male (42.9 per cent) secondary teachers was about the same as the Australian average. Very few secondary teachers spoke a language other than English at home (3.4 per cent), compared to other states and territories, and Australia (10.8 per cent).

More than one-quarter of secondary teachers (27.7 per cent) indicated that their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course (referred to as pre-service training in SiAS) was undertaken outside Tasmania.

That is, 72.3 per cent of teachers in Tasmania were teaching in the same state as their ITE course, down from 79.5 per cent in SiAS 2010 (McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon & Murphy, 2011).

Only 65.4 per cent of secondary teachers in Tasmania were full-time in 2013. This was considerably lower than the Australian average (82.4 per cent) and lower than the average across provincial locations (79.1 per cent) and low socioeconomic status (SES) schools (82.3 per cent). The Tasmanian result in this instance had a reasonably large standard error (3.2) in comparison with other variables (1.0 to 1.9). In SiAS 2010, 73.1 per cent of secondary teachers in Tasmania worked full-time, which was also the lowest reported, compared to an Australian average of 82.4 per cent.

On average, secondary teachers in Tasmania had 17.6 years of experience (the Australian average was 17.3 years), and had been at their current school for nine years, which was similar to the Australian average (9.3 years) and breakdowns by school location and SES.

A recent analysis of SiAS 2013 data found that 37 per cent of secondary teachers in Tasmania, teaching Years 7–10, were teaching out-of-field at least some of the time.

5.2 Tasmanian Secondary Teacher Survey

The Tasmanian secondary teacher survey was designed to ask teachers about the level of their qualifications and what they were teaching this year. To simplify the survey and ensure that it was brief, subject areas were limited to the nine learning areas covered in Tasmanian senior secondary courses. That is, teachers were asked whether they were qualified to teach, and were currently teaching, within the science learning area, rather than specifically in chemistry or biology, for example. Some demographic data was collected as well, including age and years of experience.

The survey was open from 12 September to 17 October 2016, a total of five weeks, although this time included the two-week mid-term break.

5.2.1 Participation

The survey sample was based on an understanding that there are 108 schools in Tasmania with secondary students (Years 7–12). Where schools have multiple campuses in different geographic locations, they have been counted separately. Four special schools are also included in this total. The number and proportion of secondary schools participating in the survey, and the total number of teachers by sector, are presented in Table 46.

Table 46 Secondary Schools and Teachers Participating in the Survey, by Sector

Sector	Number of schools	Schools participating		Teachers participating
		N	%	
Catholic	14	12	86	157
Government	66	47	71	856
Independent	28	4	14	49
Total	*108*	*63*	*58*	*1062*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

The Tasmanian government sector has a college system where the majority of students attend a secondary school from Year 7 to Year 10 and then attend a college in Years 11 and 12. There are eight government colleges for Years 11–12, all of which are represented in this survey. According to the ACER sample frame data (collected in 2015), an additional 14 government secondary schools had students in Years 11 or 12 (as well as Years 7–10). The number of senior secondary students in these schools was low, ranging from two to 32 in Year 11 and no more than 16 in Year 12. Of these 14 schools, four were special schools and did not participate. Of the remaining 10 schools, all but one participated. Excluding the special schools, 17 of 18 government schools with students in Years 11–12 participated in the teacher survey (94 per cent).

The Catholic sector has 14 secondary schools, all called colleges, although only six of them have students in Years 11–12. Guilford Young College has two campuses and is the only Catholic college that caters to Years 11–12 alone. The other four colleges with Years 11–12 also cater for Years 7–10. All six are represented in this survey.

The independent sector has 28 secondary schools, of which 16 have students in Years 11–12. All 16 schools also cater for Years 7–10. Teachers from four of these schools participated in the survey. Table 47 shows the proportion of schools and teachers participating by sector for schools serving the Year 11–12 student population in Tasmania.

Table 47 Secondary Schools with Year 11–12 Students, by Sector

Sector	Number of schools	Schools participating		Teachers participating
		N	%	
Catholic	6	6	100	97
Government	22	17	77	337
Independent	16	4	25	49
Total	*44*	*27*	*61*	*483*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 48 provides an additional demographic breakdown showing the number of schools and teachers participating based on the three different year-level groupings catered to by secondary-level schools. Government and Catholic schools are represented in all three school types. Independent schools are only included in schools with enrolments from Years 7–12.

Table 48 Participating Secondary Schools and Teachers by Year Levels Enrolled at the School

School type	Schools participating		Teachers participating	
	N	%	N	%
Years 7–10	37	58.7	579	54.5
Years 11–12 only	10	15.9	307	28.9
Years 7–12	16	25.4	176	16.6
Total	*63*	*100.0*	*1,062*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 49 shows the proportion of participating teachers by gender, sector, SES and geographic location, for each school type and in total. The majority of secondary teachers are female. There is a slightly higher proportion of female respondents in schools enrolling Years 7–12. Teachers in government schools account for a large majority of participants in schools enrolling Years 7–10 and Years 11–12. This reflects the greater number of schools in the government sector.

Table 49 Distribution of Participating Teachers by Gender, Sector, SES and Geographic Location, by School Type

	Up to Year 10 only (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11-12 only (%)	Total (%)
Gender				
Female	57.9	61.5	57.5	58.4
Male	41.4	38.5	41.5	40.9
Other	0.7	--	1.0	0.7
Sector				
Catholic	10.4	31.3	13.7	14.8
Government	89.6	40.9	86.3	80.6
Independent	--	27.8	--	4.6
SES (Tasmania)				
Low	34.4	41.5	34.9	35.7
Medium	32.5	18.2	--	20.7
High	33.2	40.3	65.1	43.6
Geographic location				
Urban	34.9	27.8	58.6	40.6
Provincial city	52.3	27.3	41.4	45.0
Outer provincial	11.7	44.9	--	13.8
Island	1.0	--	--	0.6
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

SES is based on the ABS measures of SES conditions by geographic area known as the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA).[8] The Tasmanian state measure was used. An issue with using SEIFA is that school SES is determined by the school's geographic location rather than by information on the student population. This is the likely cause of considerable differences in the proportions of teachers by SES in schools enrolling Year 7–12 and Year 11–12 students. As a result of these differences, responses to the questions that follow have not been disaggregated by SES.

School postcodes determine how schools are classified by geographic location in this Report. Participating Tasmanian schools fall into four zones determined by population size. 'Urban' refers to major urban statistical districts with a population of 100 000 or more (e.g. Hobart). 'Provincial city' refers to Provincial City Statistical Districts with a population of 50 000–99 999 (e.g. Launceston). 'Outer provincial' refers to the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) and includes areas

[8] See http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/seifa

considered reasonably close to provincial areas but otherwise with a low population density (e.g. Huonville, St Helens). Responses from remote areas were very low and these responses are not included in data presented by geolocation.

5.2.2 Current Position

Respondents were asked about the nature of their current position. Table 50 shows that the majority of respondents were teachers who spend most of their time in the classroom. One-quarter of respondents combined teaching with a management role. Approximately 5 per cent of respondents respectively were in senior management roles, specialist support, and a combination of specialist support and classroom teaching.

Table 50 Current Position by Year Levels Enrolled at School

	Year levels at school			
Position	**Up to Year 10 (%)**	**Up to Year 12 (%)**	**Year 11–12 only (%)**	**Total (%)**
Current teachers	*89.4*	*88.9*	*87.0*	*88.9*
Mainly classroom teaching	58.5	60.3	55.7	58.6
Combination classroom and management	26.1	20.8	29.0	25.0
Classroom and specialist support	4.8	7.8	2.3	5.3
Senior management	*6.4*	*3.6*	*9.7*	*6.1*
Specialist support	*4.1*	*7.5*	*3.4*	*5.0*
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.2.2.1 Areas of Responsibility

All respondents except those in senior management roles (94 per cent) were asked to indicate areas for which they had responsibility in their current role. Respondents could tick more than one area, and the areas have been listed in Table 51, in order of the most common ticked Leadership in a learning area was the most common area of responsibility, ticked by just over one-quarter of respondents. On the whole, responsibilities in high schools (Years 7–10) and colleges (Years 11–12) were similar and undertaken by similar proportions, with the exception of grade coordinators, which were not common in colleges, and student services, which were more prevalent in colleges.

Table 51 Areas of Responsibility by Year Levels Enrolled at School

Area of responsibility	Year levels at school: Up to Year 10 (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	Total (%)
Learning area leadership	26.9	29.6	25.5	26.9
Transition support	19.0	19.1	23.4	20.3
Enrichment programs	13.7	15.8	20.7	16.1
Grade coordinators	22.4	17.8	3.1	15.9
Professional learning communities	13.4	16.4	15.5	14.5
Events management	15.1	11.2	12.4	13.7
Staff wellbeing	10.7	11.8	14.1	11.9
Flexible provision	12.2	11.8	10.3	11.6
First aid	11.1	10.5	9.7	10.6
Student services	8.5	8.6	13.8	10.1
Timetabling and scheduling	8.9	11.8	7.6	8.9
School ICT policies/procedures/management	6.4	7.2	7.2	6.8
Public relations/publications/marketing	4.7	7.9	6.2	5.7

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.2.2.2 Specialist Support

Ten per cent of respondents indicated that their role included specialist support. Table 52 shows the proportion of these respondents by specific areas of specialist support, in the order of those most commonly selected. The majority of respondents (58 per cent) were in a learning support role, and one-third were catering for special needs. More respondents in these areas were based in high schools than in colleges. There were large differences in the proportion of respondents working in libraries, school counselling and VET, with greater representation of these areas in colleges.

Table 52 Areas of Specialist Support by Year Levels Enrolled at School

Specialist support	Year levels at school: Up to Year 10 (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	Total (%)
Learning Support	69.2	40.0	48.9	57.8
Special Needs	42.3	10.0	27.7	33.0
Career and Life Planning	17.3	20.0	27.7	22.0
Behaviour Management	21.2	--	17.0	17.4
Library	5.8	20.0	23.4	14.7
School Counselling	7.7	--	17.0	11.0
Vocational Education and Training	1.9	--	6.4	3.7

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.2.2.3 Age Band

Survey respondents were asked to indicate which age band they were in and the results for all respondents by school year level enrolments are shown in Table 53. It is clear that colleges (enrolling Year 11–12 only) have an older population overall, with only 6 per cent of respondents under the age of 30 compared to about 12 per cent in high schools and 7–12 schools. Conversely, colleges also have higher proportions of staff over age 50 (47 per cent) compared to high schools (36 per cent). This may have implications over the next five to 10 years as about a third or more of staff in colleges will reach retirement age.

Table 53 Age Bands of All Respondents by Year Levels Enrolled at School

	Year levels at school			
Age band	**Up to Year 10 (%)**	**Up to Year 12 (%)**	**Year 11–12 only (%)**	**Total (%)**
20–29 years	11.7	11.5	5.9	10.0
30–39 years	29.8	20.1	16.3	24.3
40–49 years	22.1	30.5	30.7	26.0
50–59 years	28.7	25.9	35.0	30.1
60–69 years	7.3	9.8	11.8	9.0
70+ years	0.3	2.3	0.3	0.7
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 54 shows that there are differences in the age range or school staff by location as well, although these results are affected by the presence of the colleges in largely urban areas. Schools in outer provincial areas have a higher proportion of staff below age 30 than do denser population areas.

Table 54 Age Bands of All Respondents by Location

	Location			
Age band	**Urban (%)**	**Provincial city (%)**	**Outer provincial (%)**	**Total (%)**
20–29 years	4.7	12.2	18.4	10.0
30–39 years	26.3	22.3	24.5	24.3
40–49 years	26.8	25.1	27.2	26.0
50–59 years	30.5	30.9	25.9	30.1
60–69 years	10.8	8.8	4.1	9.0
70+ years	0.9	0.6	--	0.7
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 55 shows the age bands of those who indicated that they were mainly classroom teachers. The same distribution is present as with all staff: colleges have an older teaching workforce than high schools.

Table 55 Age Bands of Mainly Classroom Teachers by Year Levels Enrolled at School

Age band	Year levels at school			Total (%)
	Up to Year 10 (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	
20–29 years	16.1	14.3	9.2	13.7
30–39 years	31.0	25.5	18.9	26.5
40–49 years	21.4	28.6	29.7	25.0
50–59 years	22.3	20.4	30.8	24.6
60–69 years	8.6	10.2	10.8	9.5
70+ years	0.6	1.0	0.5	0.6
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.2.2.4 Current Teachers – Years Teaching

Years of teaching experience reflect the proportions of ages in the previous section. Table 56 shows that colleges and high schools have about the same proportion of new teachers (6 per cent); however, high schools have a greater number of teachers with up to 10 years of experience (40 per cent compared to 28 per cent in colleges), while colleges have more teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience (40 per cent compared to 32 per cent in high schools). This is reflected in the average years of experience: teachers in high schools have about 16 years of experience on average, while teachers in colleges have about 19 years of experience on average.

Table 56 Current Teachers, Years Teaching, by Year Levels Enrolled at School

Years	Year levels at school			Total (%)
	Up to Year 10 (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	
Up to 2 years	6.2	6.5	6.2	6.3
3–5 years	11.1	9.2	8.4	10.0
6–10 years	22.7	20.9	13.9	19.9
11–15 years	17.3	11.8	13.9	15.4
16–20 years	10.5	14.4	17.2	13.1
21–25 years	8.5	13.1	12.1	10.3
26–30 years	8.5	9.8	9.5	9.0
31+ years	15.1	14.4	18.7	16.0
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Average years	*16.4*	*17.5*	*18.7*	*17.2*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Similarly, Table 57 shows that teachers in more rural locations tend to have less experience than their counterparts in urban areas: 29 per cent of teachers in outer provincial areas have up to five years of experience compared to 12 per cent of teachers in urban areas.

Table 57 Current Teachers, Years Teaching, by Location

Years	Location			Total (%)
	Urban (%)	Provincial city (%)	Outer provincial (%)	
Up to 2 years	5.3	6.1	9.9	6.3
3–5 years	6.9	10.0	19.1	10.0
6–10 years	22.1	18.4	18.3	19.9
11–15 years	17.0	14.2	14.5	15.4
16–20 years	13.3	13.3	11.5	13.1
21–25 years	8.8	11.0	13.0	10.3
26–30 years	8.5	10.7	5.3	9.0
31+ years	18.1	16.3	8.4	16.0
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Average years	*17.8*	*17.7*	*14.0*	*17.2*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.2.2.5 Current Teachers – Years Teaching Years 11–12

All current teachers were also asked how much experience they had teaching senior secondary students (Years 11–12). Table 58 shows, not surprisingly, the majority of teachers in high schools (Years 7–10) have had no experience teaching Years 11–12.

Table 58 Current Teachers, Years Teaching Years 11–12, by Year Levels Enrolled at School

Years	Year levels at school			Total (%)
	Up to Year 10 (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	
No experience	*66.4*	*19.7*	--	*39.7*
Up to 2 years	14.0	23.7	15.8	16.1
3–5 years	8.3	14.5	18.7	12.3
6–10 years	6.4	12.5	22.7	12.1
11–15 years	2.7	5.9	14.3	6.6
16–20 years	1.6	8.6	14.3	6.4
21+ years	0.6	15.1	13.9	6.8
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Average years	*5.5*	*10.8*	*11.2*	*9.3*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.
Note: Average years includes only those teachers with experience.

5.2.3 Currently in Management Position or Role

In total, 31 per cent of respondents indicated that they were in a management role, either wholly or in addition to their teaching role. Table 59 shows the proportion of these respondents in each role.

Table 59 Role of Those in Management Positions, by Year Levels Enrolled at School

Role	Year levels at school			Total (%)
	Up to Year 10 (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	
Principal	10.6	10.6	6.7	9.7
Assistant Principal	20.7	22.7	24.0	21.9
Subject/learning area leader	25.5	19.7	36.0	26.7
Advanced Skills Teacher	19.1	9.1	10.7	15.2
Other	23.9	37.9	22.7	26.4
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.2.3.1 Currently in Management Position – Years in a Leadership Position

The experience profile of staff in leadership positions in high schools and colleges appears to be similar to that of teachers: leaders in colleges tend to have had slightly more experience than their counterparts in high schools, as shown in Table 60. There are about 39 per cent of leaders in high schools with up to five years of experience, compared to 31 per cent in colleges.

Table 60 Years in a Leadership Position of Those Currently in a Management Position, by Year Levels Enrolled at School

Years	Year levels at school			Total (%)
	Up to Year 10 (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	
Up to 2 years	15.4	24.2	12.0	16.4
3–5 years	23.4	15.2	18.7	20.7
6–10 years	28.7	19.7	34.7	28.3
11–15 years	14.4	15.2	12.0	14.0
16–20 years	11.7	12.1	13.3	12.2
21+ years	6.4	13.6	9.3	8.5
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Average years	*9.2*	*10.2*	*10.4*	*9.7*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

The levels of experience are notably different between schools in urban areas and those in outer provincial areas (Table 61), where there are twice as many leaders with no more than two years of experience.

Table 61 Years in a Leadership Position of Those Currently in a Management Position, by Location

Years	Location			Total (%)
	Urban (%)	Provincial city (%)	Outer provincial (%)	
Up to 2 years	13.4	15.6	26.4	16.4
3–5 years	24.6	19.1	15.1	20.7
6–10 years	26.9	27.0	34.0	28.3
11–15 years	11.9	18.4	7.5	14.0
16–20 years	12.7	12.8	9.4	12.2
21+ years	10.4	7.1	7.5	8.5
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Average years	*10.1*	*9.8*	*8.2*	*9.7*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.2.3.2 Currently in Management Position – Years in a Leadership Position at Current School

Table 62 shows how long respondents had been in a leadership position at their current school. On average, leaders in colleges had been in the position in their current school for about six years, slightly longer than leaders in high schools (5.3 years). A larger proportion of leaders in high schools had been in the position for no more than two years (37 per cent) compared to those in colleges (29 per cent).

Table 62 Years in a Leadership Position at Current School, of Those Currently in a Management Position, by Year Levels Enrolled at School

Years	Year levels at school			Total (%)
	Up to Year 10 (%)	Up to Year 12 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	
Up to 2 years	36.7	36.4	29.3	35.0
3–5 years	28.7	13.6	32.0	26.4
6–10 years	19.7	24.2	25.3	21.9
11–15 years	9.6	12.1	5.3	9.1
16+ years	5.3	13.6	8.0	7.6
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Average years	*5.3*	*7.1*	*6.1*	*5.9*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 63 shows that leaders in outer provincial areas tend to lack experience in comparison to leaders in urban areas. The majority of leaders in outer provincial areas (55 per cent) had no more than two years of experience in their current position, compared to 30 per cent in urban areas. Almost one-third of leaders in urban areas had been in their position for three to five years, compared to 12 per cent of leaders in outer provincial areas.

Table 63 Years in a Leadership Position at Current School, of Those Currently in a Management Position, by Location

Years	Location			Total (%)
	Urban (%)	Provincial city (%)	Outer provincial (%)	
Up to 2 years	29.9	31.9	54.7	35.0
3–5 years	31.3	27.7	11.3	26.4
6–10 years	25.4	19.1	20.8	21.9
11–15 years	4.5	14.2	7.5	9.1
16+ years	9.0	7.1	5.7	7.6
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
Average years	*6.1*	*6.1*	*4.6*	*5.9*

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.3 Qualifications

All respondents currently teaching (88.9 per cent – see Table 50) were asked to indicate the broad subject areas in which they were qualified to teach. Table 64 indicates qualifications as a proportion of the respondent pool. Teachers could indicate more than one area and more than one level at Years 11–12.

English, mathematics, the sciences and humanities and the social sciences were the areas with the highest proportion of qualified respondents and this was similar to results for tertiary education in the SiAS 2013 survey (English 27.5 per cent, mathematics 24.5 per cent, general science 23.4 per cent and (for example) history 19.3 per cent).[9] As can be seen, the proportions of teachers who indicate that they are qualified to teach at Years 11–12 are considerably lower than at Years 7–10 in all subject areas except VET/VEL.

[9] McKenzie et al (2014), Table 4.9 – proportion of teachers with training in teaching method by subject area. History has been included here as the largest single subject in the humanities.

Table 64 Subject Areas in Which Current Teachers are Qualified

Subject area	Years 7–10 (%)	Years 11–12 (%)					
		Prelim.	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total
English	32.6	15.5	14.2	15.5	14.2	10.7	19.7
Mathematics	29.1	14.1	12.9	13.8	10.5	7.3	18.3
Science	27.1	14.2	12.1	12.4	12.6	10.7	18.2
Languages	4.7	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.3	1.7	2.8
Technologies	17.2	8.3	7.3	8.3	6.5	3.5	11.8
Health & Physical Education	19.0	10.5	9.2	9.4	9.0	5.9	12.1
Humanities & Social Sciences	29.1	14.8	14.0	14.8	15.4	11.4	20.0
The Arts	16.7	8.8	8.9	9.2	9.1	8.4	10.7
Mixed Field	5.4	2.3	2.3	2.6	1.5	0.6	3.7
VET/VEL	5.7	7.0	7.8	9.1	5.0	3.5	12.1
Special Needs	5.0	3.0	2.5	1.6	0.5	0.5	3.4
Other	5.5	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.3	3.2

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.
Note: Teachers indicated all areas in which they are qualified, so totals do not sum to 100%.

In most subject areas, the majority of teachers—generally around 90 per cent—stated that they are qualified to teach their subjects in Years 7-10, regardless of where they were located (see Table 65). The ability to teach the senior years was related to geographic location for many subject areas. Teachers in schools in outer provincial areas least frequently said they were qualified to teach at the higher levels of Years 11 and 12 in English, mathematics, science, languages, technologies, humanities and social sciences, and the arts. A greater percentage of VET/VEL teachers in outer provincial areas stated they were qualified to teach Years 11 and 12 compared to those in other locations.

Table 65 Teachers' Qualifications by Year Level, by Subject Area and Geographic Location

Subject area/Location	Years 7-10	Years 11-12				
		Prelim.	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
English						
Urban	91.4%	50.4%	47.5%	51.8%	43.2%	34.5%
Provincial City	91.3%	41.3%	37.3%	40.0%	40.0%	28.7%
Outer provincial area	91.5%	29.8%	25.5%	29.8%	29.8%	21.3%
Mathematics						
Urban	83.9%	42.0%	42.0%	47.3%	35.7%	25.0%
Provincial City	92.8%	46.1%	39.5%	39.5%	31.6%	22.4%
Outer provincial area	95.2%	38.1%	35.7%	40.5%	26.2%	16.7%
Science						
Urban	84.5%	42.7%	37.9%	38.8%	44.7%	34.0%
Provincial City	92.8%	52.2%	42.8%	43.5%	42.8%	39.1%
Outer provincial area	93.2%	40.9%	36.4%	38.6%	31.8%	27.3%
Languages						
Urban	91.7%	50.0%	50.0%	58.3%	54.2%	50.0%
Provincial City	89.5%	36.8%	47.4%	47.4%	47.4%	21.1%
Outer provincial area	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Technologies						
Urban	79.4%	42.9%	41.3%	49.2%	38.1%	19.0%
Provincial City	83.8%	40.4%	35.4%	39.4%	33.3%	18.2%
Outer provincial area	100.0%	37.9%	27.6%	27.6%	13.8%	10.3%
Health & Physical Education						
Urban	86.2%	55.4%	50.8%	53.8%	52.3%	33.8%
Provincial City	95.0%	52.0%	44.0%	44.0%	41.0%	26.0%
Outer provincial area	96.3%	40.7%	37.0%	37.0%	37.0%	29.6%
Humanities & Social Sciences						
Urban	86.7%	47.6%	46.2%	49.0%	49.0%	37.1%
Provincial City	88.5%	43.5%	39.7%	41.2%	44.3%	34.4%
Outer provincial area	85.4%	36.6%	34.1%	39.0%	41.5%	24.4%
The Arts						
Urban	91.9%	59.7%	59.7%	64.5%	61.3%	56.5%
Provincial City	95.1%	48.1%	50.6%	50.6%	51.9%	45.7%
Outer provincial area	95.7%	30.4%	26.1%	26.1%	26.1%	30.4%
VET/VEL						
Urban	32.3%	50.0%	58.1%	69.4%	33.9%	24.2%
Provincial City	47.1%	49.0%	52.9%	60.8%	37.3%	27.5%
Outer provincial area	62.5%	62.5%	68.8%	75.0%	43.8%	25.0%

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.
Note: Each subject area is treated separately, so percentages in this table may not match percentages reported in Table 64.

Table 66 shows the subject areas in which teachers are currently teaching, or have taught this year.

Table 66 Subject Areas in Which Current Teachers are Teaching or Have Taught This Year

Subject area	Years 7–10 (%)	Years 11–12 (%)					
		Prelim.	Level 1	Level 2	Prelim.	Level 4	Total
English	21.7	1.2	1.4	4.8	4.4	1.2	7.8
Mathematics	21.4	2.1	1.8	6.7	4.9	0.8	10.8
Science	19.4	0.5	0.5	2.4	4.4	1.9	7.1
Languages	2.4	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.2	1.0
Technologies	12.9	1.0	1.7	4.1	2.4	0.5	5.8
Health & Physical Education	13.7	1.0	1.7	3.1	2.4	0.3	4.7
Humanities & Social Sciences	20.9	0.5	1.0	3.6	6.3	1.9	8.3
The Arts	11.3	2.3	2.6	3.5	3.8	2.4	4.4
Mixed Field	1.9	0.6	1.4	2.1	0.8	0.5	3.0
VET/VEL	2.6	2.3	3.0	6.3	1.3	0.4	7.5
Special Needs	3.7	1.4	1.9	0.7	--	--	2.4
Other	4.4	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.3	1.2

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.
Note: Teachers indicated all areas in which they are currently teaching, so totals do not sum to 100%.

A comparison of Table 64 and Table 66 shows that more teachers are qualified than are teaching. It is also the case that some teachers who are not specialists in a given area will be teaching out-of-field in that area. On the basis of teachers' responses to the questions on qualifications and current teaching, Table 67 provides an indication of the proportions teaching and not teaching, qualified and not qualified, by subject area, for Years 7–10.

For English and the humanities, there are as many teachers who are qualified and not teaching as there are those who are qualified and teaching. In all subject areas, there are more who are qualified and not teaching than there are those who are not qualified and teaching.

Table 67 Proportion of Respondents per Subject Area, Teaching or Qualified to Teach, Years 7–10

	Years 7–10 (%)				
Subject area	**Qualified and teaching**	**Qualified and not teaching**	**Not qualified and teaching**	**Not qualified and not teaching**	**Total**
English	16.2	16.4	5.5	61.9	100.0
Mathematics	16.4	12.7	5.0	65.9	100.0
Science	15.8	11.3	3.6	69.3	100.0
Languages	1.6	3.1	0.8	94.5	100.0
Technologies	9.9	7.3	3.1	79.8	100.0
Health & Physical Education	10.9	8.1	2.8	78.3	100.0
Humanities & Social Sciences	14.4	14.7	6.5	64.4	100.0
The Arts	9.2	7.5	2.1	81.1	100.0
Mixed Field	1.0	4.4	1.0	93.6	100.0
VET/VEL	1.9	3.8	0.7	93.5	100.0
Special Needs	1.6	3.4	2.1	92.9	100.0
Other	1.8	3.7	2.6	91.8	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 68 considers only those who are qualified in each subject area and shows the proportions who are and are not currently teaching in Years 7–10. This kind of survey is a snapshot of a given point in time so it is quite possible that some teachers not currently teaching in a subject area in which they are qualified may well do so next year. As most teachers are qualified in more than one subject it is likely that many teachers will not be teaching in one area because they have a full load in one or more other areas.

Table 68 Of Those Qualified in a Subject Area at Years 7–10, Proportions Currently Teaching and Not Currently Teaching

	Years 7–10 (%)		
Subject area	**Qualified and teaching**	**Qualified and not teaching**	**Total**
English	49.7	50.3	100.0
Mathematics	56.4	43.6	100.0
Science	58.2	41.8	100.0
Languages	34.1	65.9	100.0
Technologies	57.4	42.6	100.0
Health & Physical Education	57.5	42.5	100.0
Humanities & Social Sciences	49.5	50.5	100.0
The Arts	55.1	44.9	100.0
Mixed Field	17.6	82.4	100.0
VET/VEL	33.3	66.7	100.0
Special Needs	31.9	68.1	100.0
Other	32.7	67.3	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 69 considers only those who are teaching in each subject area in Years 7–10 and shows the proportions who have indicated that they are out-of-field. In English, about one-quarter of current teachers have indicated that they are not qualified, and the figure is similar for mathematics and technologies. These results are in line with recent analysis of SiAS data on out-of-field teaching, which found that about 37 per cent of Year 7–10 teachers in Tasmania were currently teaching out-of-field for at least some of their teaching load (Weldon, 2016).

Table 69 Of Those Qualified in a Subject Area at Years 7–10, Proportions Qualified and Not Qualified to Do So

	Years 7–10 (%)		
Subject area	Qualified and teaching	Not qualified and teaching	Total
English	74.6	25.4	100.0
Mathematics	76.7	23.3	100.0
Science	81.4	18.6	100.0
Languages	65.2	34.8	100.0
Technologies	76.2	23.8	100.0
Health & Physical Education	79.8	20.2	100.0
Humanities & Social Sciences	69.0	31.0	100.0
The Arts	81.3	18.7	100.0
Mixed Field	50.0	50.0	100.0
VET/VEL	72.0	28.0	100.0
Special Needs	42.9	57.1	100.0
Other	40.5	59.5	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 70 looks at teachers who are qualified to teach and currently teaching students in Years 11–12. Once again there are considerable numbers of teachers who are qualified and not teaching and low proportions of out-of-field teachers overall.

Table 70 Proportion of Respondents per Subject Area, Teaching or Qualified to Teach, Years 11–12

	Years 11–12 (%)				
Subject area	Qualified and teaching	Qualified and not teaching	Not qualified and teaching	Not qualified and not teaching	Total
English	6.9	12.7	1.0	79.4	100.0
Mathematics	9.2	9.0	1.6	80.2	100.0
Science	6.6	11.4	0.5	81.5	100.0
Languages	0.8	1.9	0.1	97.1	100.0
Technologies	4.3	7.2	1.5	87.0	100.0
Health & Physical Education	4.0	7.8	0.6	87.5	100.0
Humanities & Social Sciences	7.9	12.1	0.3	79.7	100.0
The Arts	4.1	6.6	0.3	89.0	100.0
Mixed Field	1.4	2.1	1.6	94.9	100.0
VET/VEL	6.1	5.6	1.4	86.9	100.0
Special Needs	1.3	1.9	1.2	95.7	100.0
Other	0.6	2.3	0.5	96.5	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Teachers were asked to indicate to what level they were qualified to teach in Year 11–12 courses. Teachers could tick as many boxes in each level as they chose, so Table 71 shows the proportion of responses by the highest level ticked by individual teachers for each subject level. There may have been some misunderstanding about how to answer this question and it may be that teachers indicated that they were qualified to teach based on the highest level they were actually teaching, rather than the highest level they were qualified to teach. It is unclear why some teachers indicated that they are qualified to teach at Preliminary, level 1 or level 2 and no higher. Teachers with a degree in a given subject who have a teaching qualification that includes methods for senior secondary would be qualified to teach at all levels. It is not clear what qualification enables a teacher to teach only to level 2.

The most common responses in Table 71 are for levels 3 and 4 and in most cases the highest proportions are in level 4.

Table 71 Highest Level Course Qualified to Teach at Year 11–12, by Subject Area

	Years 11–12 (%)					
Subject area	**Prelim.**	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Total**
English	11.3	1.6	11.8	21.0	54.3	100.0
Mathematics	8.1	6.4	23.1	22.5	39.9	100.0
Science	11.0	2.3	8.7	19.2	58.7	100.0
Languages	3.8	3.8	3.8	26.9	61.5	100.0
Technologies	14.4	2.7	23.4	29.7	29.7	100.0
Health & Physical Education	13.2	2.6	7.0	28.1	49.1	100.0
Humanities & Social Sciences	6.9	2.6	6.3	27.0	57.1	100.0
The Arts	3.0	2.0	3.0	13.9	78.2	100.0
Mixed Field	11.4	2.9	42.9	25.7	17.1	100.0
VET/VEL	10.5	7.0	39.5	14.0	28.9	100.0
Special Needs	18.8	31.3	31.3	3.1	15.6	100.0
Other	6.7	10.0	13.3	30.0	40.0	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Teachers who indicated that they were qualified to teach level 2 or higher were grouped together and those qualified to teach as a proportion of all respondents are provided by school type in Table 72. For example, 17 per cent of all respondents indicated that they could teach English at level 2 or higher. Of all respondents teaching in a Year 7–10 school, 12 per cent were qualified to teach Years 11–12 at level 2 or higher, whereas 27 per cent of all respondents at a college were qualified. The table shows that a much smaller proportion of teachers in high schools are (or believe themselves to be) qualified to teach at senior secondary level. This suggests that quite a low proportion of teachers at high schools believe that they have the necessary qualification (by which they may mean either pedagogical or content knowledge) to teach senior secondary courses, which has implications for high schools intending to offer such courses, and implications for the courses on offer for teachers in Tasmania.

Table 72 Proportion of Teachers Qualified to Teach Subjects at Years 11–12, by School Type and Overall

Subject area	Up to Year 10 (%)	Year 11–12 only (%)	Total (%)
English	12.8	25.6	17.5
Mathematics	10.9	26.6	16.3
Science	11.4	21.3	16.1
Languages	1.6	4.9	2.5
Technologies	7.1	17.7	10.3
Health & Physical Education	9.2	14.4	10.6
Humanities & Social Sciences	11.4	27.9	17.9
The Arts	7.1	13.1	9.6
Mixed Field	0.9	7.5	3.1
VET/VEL	4.9	22.3	10.5
Special Needs	1.0	6.6	2.8
Other	2.4	3.0	2.7

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Table 73 considers only those who are qualified in each subject area and shows the proportions who are and are not currently teaching in Years 11–12. As was the case with Years 7–10, high proportions of qualified teachers are not teaching. As noted above, only a small part of these numbers can be attributed to qualified teachers working in 7–10 schools. It is more likely that high proportions of teachers who are qualified and not teaching the subject are teaching in a different area.

Table 73 Of Those Qualified in a Subject Area at Years 11–12, Proportions Currently Teaching and Not Currently Teaching

	Years 11–12 (%)		
Subject area	Qualified and teaching	Qualified and not teaching	Total
English	35.1	64.9	100.0
Mathematics	50.6	49.4	100.0
Science	36.5	63.5	100.0
Languages	30.8	69.2	100.0
Technologies	37.6	62.4	100.0
Health & Physical Education	33.9	66.1	100.0
Humanities & Social Sciences	39.7	60.3	100.0
The Arts	38.6	61.4	100.0
Mixed Field	39.4	60.6	100.0
VET/VEL	52.3	47.7	100.0
Special Needs	40.0	60.0	100.0
Other	21.4	78.6	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

Out-of-field teaching is less prevalent at senior secondary than at Years 7–10, with a large majority of teachers teaching within their field in most subjects. About one-quarter of teachers were teaching out-of-field in technologies and the figures were high for mixed field and special needs (see Table 74).

Table 74 Of Those Currently Teaching in a Subject Area at Years 11–12, Proportions Qualified and Not Qualified to Do So

	Years 11–12 (%)		
Subject area	**Qualified and teaching**	**Not qualified and teaching**	**Total**
English	87.8	12.2	100.0
Mathematics	85.3	14.7	100.0
Science	92.5	7.5	100.0
Languages	88.9	11.1	100.0
Technologies	74.5	25.5	100.0
Health & Physical Education	86.4	13.6	100.0
Humanities & Social Sciences	96.2	3.8	100.0
The Arts	92.9	7.1	100.0
Mixed Field	46.4	53.6	100.0
VET/VEL	81.7	18.3	100.0
Special Needs	52.2	47.8	100.0
Other	54.5	45.5	100.0

Source: ACER, Tasmanian secondary teacher survey, September–October 2016.

5.4 Summary

Two data sources were used to examine issues relating to the Tasmanian teacher workforce: SiAS 2013 and an online survey. Data from SiAS show that secondary teachers in Tasmania were slightly older than teachers in other jurisdictions, with a lower percentage teaching full-time and a higher percentage teaching a subject out of their area of specialisation. Results from the survey conducted for this review are consistent with results for Tasmania for SiAS concerning teachers' ages and years of experience. Responses to the current survey indicate that teachers in outer provincial locations were younger than those in urban locations and had less experience teaching in Years 11 and 12.

Out-of-field teaching was more common among teachers of Years 7-10, with more than 25 per cent teaching a subject outside their area of expertise. Among teachers of Years 11 and 12, the rate of out-of-field teaching was less than one-half the rate among teachers of Years 7-10.

6 Findings from the Review of the Tasmanian Curriculum: Years 9 to 12

This section of the Report provides the findings from a desktop analysis undertaken of the official curriculum documents used to guide teaching and learning in Years 9 to 12, and that of VET and VEL for secondary students. The purpose of this section is to inform the opportunities proposed to improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes of students. This review of the curriculum documents has been complemented with information provided in the public submissions, and through the school visits, interviews and focus groups. The documents reviewed were those available in hard copy or online, and in the public domain. These documents included:

- *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework* (Government of Tasmania, 2016);
- *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Overview* (8 September 2015) (DoE, 2015a);
- TASQ *Course Accreditation* guidelines (Office of the Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016);
- Various *Australian Curriculum* statements; and
- Various TASQ general and vocational course documents.

In Tasmania, course documents have been created over many years and in accordance with changing sets of guidelines. In 2016, course documents are 'developed by the Department of Education, Tasmania (DoE) in collaboration with the non-government sector' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016a, p. 3). Given this context, it is understandable that the course documents in Tasmania vary in their conformity to the official guidelines and structures governing such documents. As such, they are artefacts in time.

The current practice sees course documents accredited by the Office of the Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC), under authority of a parliamentary act. It should be noted however, that the *Senior Secondary Course Accreditation Criteria* (TASC 2016b), state that the TASC has the 'power to accredit senior secondary courses'. These criteria do not mention TASC having the authority to accredit 'course documents'; only the courses. It is not clear then, whether the two phrases – 'course documents' and 'senior secondary courses' are intended to be interchangeable; nor is it clear whether these terms have been used consistently throughout official documents. That is, language in the documents is not precise, nor precisely applied.

In December 2012 and August 2013, Ministers of Education endorsed the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects for *English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography*, 'as the agreed and common base for development of state and territory senior secondary courses' (ACARA, 2013, p1).

It is against this backdrop, this section informs responses to the 'Issues' part of the ToR regarding curriculum provision and design of Years 9 to 12, and provides a basis for the analysis and presentation of policy options regarding opportunities to improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes as specified by the contract for this work.

6.1 Years 9 to 12 Curriculum

Key curriculum issues identified by the Tasmanian Government for review were to provide insights into Tasmanian secondary curriculum issues, in light of national comparisons. These issues include:

- Tasmania's single-year courses in Years 11 and 12
- Tasmania's 50-, 100- and 150-hour courses in Years 11 and 12, and where relevant alignment to the Australian Curriculum
- Tasmania's use of criterion-based assessment for internal and external assessment purposes in Years 11 and 12
- The alignment between the Australian Curriculum Kindergarten–Year 10 (K–10) and Years 11 and 12 curriculum and assessment practices
- The nature, quality of the delivery and cost effectiveness of VET/VEL in sectors and schools and how this aligns with student pathways
- Public perception (including that of employers) of VET/VEL undertaken in school.

The Review Team was also tasked with giving consideration to the TCE as a qualification for all Tasmanians who reach the prescribed standards. To complete the TCE students must meet the specified compulsory requirements along with achieving the required amount and level of participation and achievement in education and training, defined as 120 credit points with at least 80 of these credit points studied at TASC Level 2 courses or above. Students must successfully complete their courses achieving a PA (Preliminary Achievement) or higher to generate credit points. The compulsory requirements of the TCE, often referred to colloquially as the 'tick system', include:

- everyday adult reading and writing in English
- everyday adult mathematics
- everyday adult use of computers and the internet
- participation and achievement standard
- pathway planning standard.

The TCE is now required as a prerequisite for the calculation of an ATAR.

Discussion and policy options in relation to the issues listed above, and options for improving attendance, retention and attainment outcomes of students, now follows. Each part follows the relevant section as presented in the ToR, and is structured so there is an introductory section which provides an overview of the issues. This then followed by key points from the findings arising from the Review. These key points are then discussed, and the policy options are provided. Each part is focused on the contracted requirement of identifying opportunities to improve attendance, retention and attainment by students.

6.2 Single-year courses in Years 11 and 12

The Review Team found there are differing views across Tasmania, about the extent and quality of the senior secondary curriculum, with some arguing there are too many courses in Years 11 and 12 from which to choose, while others argue that the extent of the choice enables students in Tasmania to gain similar senior secondary school experiences to their mainland counterparts. Still others argue that the concept of single year courses in Years 11 and 12 is a curriculum strategy to increase the accessibility of the senior secondary curriculum to a broader range of students. The Review Team considered the single-year courses in light of proposing policy options to improve attendance, retention and attainment outcomes of students.

6.2.1 Findings - Key points

- In all Australian states and territories students are able to enter and exit courses after one year of study.
- There are differing views in both the Tasmanian and Australian education communities about the value of single-year courses in the final two years of school.
- The number of levels of courses, and the variations in the number of hours within each course offered in Tasmania, makes Tasmania unique compared to other Australian states and territories (with the possible exception of ACT).
- This extent of curriculum offerings is also unique given the small size of the secondary student population in Tasmania, when compared with other jurisdictions, and are likely to have implications for the annual Education Budget in Tasmania.
- It is unclear if this curriculum strategy of providing various courses at different levels actually improves attendance, retention and attainment outcomes of students who transition into the senior years of schooling.

6.2.2 Comments about the findings

In Tasmania, courses are provided at Levels 1 to 4. In general, levels 1-3 and 4 are aligned to the AQF levels I – III.

In other Australian jurisdictions, courses are provided for Years 11 and Year 12, sometimes as separate, single courses for each year level (e.g. South Australia, Western Australia, New South Wales), and sometimes as two-year courses (Queensland and Victoria).

What is unique to Tasmania is the number of levels (1-4) and the size value (amount of time allocated) to courses. The notion of single-year courses is a strategy intended to improve access for students to the curriculum. It would seem though, that there is more provision of Level 1 and 2 courses in Tasmania than there are in other Australian jurisdictions (with the possible exception of ACT).

While there are claims across the education community in Tasmania, that single-year courses support students who are disengaged, to remain at school, it is unclear if this strategy of providing various courses at different levels actually improves attendance, retention and attainment outcomes of students. The design of the curriculum provision means that there are no 'foundation-type' courses that focus on literacy and numeracy at Year 12 level. The design invites students who are not strong in literacy or numeracy in their Year 12 year, to study a Level 2 or 1 course. It is questionable however, the degree to which such courses are required, given the TCE result summary from 2015 indicates that between two thirds and three quarters of students in that year studied 15 credit point subjects. Table 75 below, illustrates this point. Nonetheless, such courses (e.g. English), while they may not be 'required' at Year 12, they may be useful for attendance, retention, and attainment outcomes.

Table 75 TCE result summary 2015

Excluding 0-point subjects	Number	Enrolments	Enrolments in <Year 11	Enrolments in Year 11	Enrolments in Year 12	Enrolments in Year 13	Male Enrolments	Female Enrolments
5 points	9.6%	20.9%	16.4%	22.1%	19.5%	21.5%	22.4%	19.4%
10 points	15.2%	9.2%	6.9%	9.5%	8.8%	11.7%	10.8%	7.5%
15 points	75.2%	69.9%	76.7%	68.4%	71.7%	66.8%	66.8%	73.1%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: TASC (2015)

It is unclear from the available data though, the extent to which students in Year 12 specifically choose to do a 5 or 10 credit point course in Year 12. A deliberate attempt to collect data and report on these students would provide insights into whether the extent of level 2 subjects provided in the senior secondary years really do address attendance, retention and attainment outcomes.

6.2.3 Policy options

- A specific, longitudinal investigation is conducted to determine whether the policy approach being undertaken is actually working for Tasmanian students, and if so, what level of impact is being achieved.
- A detailed financial analysis is undertaken to determine the costs and return on investment of providing such an extensive set of single year curriculum offerings in Years 11 and 12, to determine whether it achieves the purpose of improving attendance, retention and attainment outcomes of students.

6.3 Tasmania's 50, 100 and 150-hour courses in Years 11 and 12, and alignment to the Australian Curriculum

All TASC accredited subjects are designated according to their complexity and length of study: courses are either 50, 100 or 150 hour courses. Based on both the length and complexity of courses, each course is allocated a number of 'credit points'. In addition, TASC identifies courses according to level. TASC courses range from level 1 to level 4. Level 1 and 2 subjects are non-pre-tertiary and do not count towards an ATAR. They are preliminary or foundation programs, while TASC Levels 3 and 4 courses are nominated as acceptable for tertiary entry. This arrangement of courses is a complicated curriculum design that the Review Team found it is often not explicit, nor well understood by teachers, students and school communities.

6.3.1 Findings: Key points

- There is extensive choice in the Tasmanian curriculum for Years 11 and 12, particularly at the less complex course levels (levels 1 and 2).
- Approaches taken to integrating the senior secondary Australian Curriculum into the TASC courses has involved revision and adjustment to the learning outcomes and course content of some subjects, and/or referencing to the Australian Curriculum descriptions for the course.
- The Tasmanian Curriculum is consistent with the Australian Curriculum concerning the number of hours of recommended instruction students should spend studying particular courses.

- In the Tasmanian courses, at Level 2 in particular, there seems to be a predominance of content-based learning outcomes that lead to criteria and standards that are not challenging enough for this level. The curriculum does not require students to do enough analysis, evaluation or synthesis.
- There are variations in the complexity of requirements across courses with the same level and number of hours, but it is unclear what criteria are used to determine how the required curriculum outcomes and the nominated hours are matched.
- It is difficult to find accessible public information on the TASC website about how the courses and nominated hours are matched.
- There is a lack of explicit inclusion of the General Capabilities, the Cross Curriculum Priorities and Core Skills for Work in existing course documents, although the Review Team was advised that this issue is being addressed in newly accredited course documents.
- The model of Extension High Schools in the government sector, is a resource-intensive attempt to provide Tasmanian students with access to a comprehensive curriculum in the local community.

6.3.2 Comments about the findings

The Review Team was able to identify that there are currently 159 accredited Year 11 and Year 12 courses presented on the TASC website, from which students in schools and colleges can choose. The *2017 Course Information handbook for Years 11 and 12* (DoE, 2016d) includes details about both the general curriculum offerings and the breadth of VET units available to students in Years 11 and 12. In addition, the University College Program (UCP) offered by UTAS allows Year 11 and 12 students to study university level units at the same time or in addition to their TCE studies.

It is difficult to find in a 'one-stop-shop' location such as on the TASC website to easily access public information about the requirements and articulation arrangements for the extension courses. The possible consequence of having such a wide suite of curriculum offerings available to a comparatively small cohort of students, is that not all schools can offer a meaningful and comprehensive curriculum in Years 11 and 12, which makes the Extension High School model, very expensive and likely to have low impact, and is probably unsustainable.

Fifteen senior secondary subjects across *English, Mathematics, Science, History* and *Geography* were endorsed by the Education Council of federal, state and territory education ministers 'as the agreed and common base for the development of state and territory senior secondary courses' (ACARA, n.d.**,** c, p. 1) by August 2013.

> The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for each subject specifies content and achievement standards. The content describes the knowledge, understanding and skills that are to be taught and learned. The achievement standards describe the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) expected of students who have studied the content for the subject. … State and territory curriculum, assessment and certification authorities are responsible for determining how the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards are to be integrated into their courses. (ACARA, n.d., c, p. 1)

It is also important to note that:

> The state and territory authorities also determine assessment and certification specifications for their courses and any additional information, guidelines and rules to satisfy local requirements, including advice on entry and exit points and credit for completed study. (ACARA, n.d., c, p. 1)

The level of change in the TASC courses arising from the implementation of the Australian Curriculum has varied considerably: in some courses there have been major changes, when for example, large parts of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum course content have been adopted almost without change; while in others there have been minor changes.

When reporting to ARARA on the integration process and level of changes to courses in August 2014, the Tasmanian response stated that it had 'referenc(ed) appropriate Australian Curriculum content in English, mathematics and science' (ACARA, 2014, p. 1), and expressed their progress in the following way:

Table 76 Tasmania's Report to ACARA, August 2014

English:	Amendments to accommodate Tasmanian model
Mathematics:	Essential Mathematics not implemented; rearrangement of content of other mathematics subjects to accommodate Tasmanian model.
Science:	Biology adjusted to form 2 courses; not implementing Earth and Environmental Science; Units 1 and 2 in Chemistry and Physics referred in one course. Units 3 and 4 referenced in separate Physics and Chemistry courses (ACARA, 2014, p. 3).

It seems that TASC adopted two approaches to integrating the Tasmanian and Australian senior secondary curricula:

1. referencing to national standards; and
2. reviewing, renewing and adjusting the curriculum.

6.3.2.1 Referencing national curricula and frameworks

It appears that the main strategy adopted by the TASC has been to reference its locally accredited courses to their national counterparts. This referencing has been used to identify whether the Tasmanian courses are equivalent to the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects or to other national accredited courses. This referencing has taken place against national subjects and frameworks derived from the schooling sector (e.g. secondary courses developed and published by ACARA), or from the vocational educational and training sector (e.g. training packages from the Australian Qualifications Framework).

To accommodate this 'referencing approach', the identification of the content standards has involved adding a new section to existing level 2 and 3 courses, entitled: 'Expectations Defined by National Standards' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016c, p. 24). The purpose of this section is explained in a similar manner in the respective course documents, to the following extract found in the *English Communications* (ENC315116) course[10]:

[10] At the time of the Review the course *English Communications* (ENC315116) was being taught. The *English Communications* (ENC315116) has been used to illustrate the 'referencing approach' which is applicable across a range of

> The statements in this section, taken from ACARA-developed *English* Units 3 & 4 documents endorsed by Education Ministers as the agreed and common base for course development, are to be used to define expectations for the meaning (nature, scope and level of demand) of relevant aspects of the sections in this document setting out course requirements, learning outcomes, the course content and standards in the assessment' (underlining added) (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016c, p. 24)

In some courses, referencing to national training frameworks have also been introduced. Table 77 below shows (with red lettering) which of the course documents in the *Technologies* Learning Area are referenced to national frameworks (i.e. training packages from the Australian Qualifications Framework).

Table 77 List of Accredited Courses in the Technologies Learning Area, Showing Courses that Reference National Frameworks from the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Preliminary
CGD315113: Computer Graphics & Design ELT315114 Electronics FDN315113 Food & Nutrition HDS315113: Housing and Design ITC315113: Computer Science ITS315113: Information Systems & Digital Technologies TEG315115: Technical Graphics	AMT215116: Automotive and Mechanical Technologies CGD215113: Computer Graphics and Design - Foundation DAP215116: Design and Production ELT215114: Electronics - Foundation ESC205114: Essential Skills - Using Computers and the Internet FDN215113: Food, Cooking and Nutrition FHE215116: Food and Hospitality Enterprise ICT205114: Computer Applications TEG215115: Technical Graphics - Foundation	FCE110114: Food and Cooking Essentials ICT110114: Basic Computing WTE110114: Workshop Techniques - Introduction	PRE015315: Prepare to Live Independently

In the Level 2 courses, there is a predominance of content-based learning outcomes that lead to criteria and standards that are not challenging enough for this level; there is not enough analysis, evaluation or synthesis expected of students. Furthermore, the description and use of criterion-based assessment varies across subjects and levels.

In addition, several of the courses listed above have idiosyncratic characteristics that illustrate the general finding that there is a lack of consistency in the nature of course developments and in the TASC accreditation processes. This variability in the courses makes it difficult for teachers to understand how

courses. It is understood by the Review Team, that in 2017 the *English Communications* (ENC315116) will be replaced by ENG315117, which is intended to be a fully aligned Australian Curriculum course.

to go about judging performance. Moderation dialogue among teachers (within and across courses) is not helped by differences in the descriptions of the criteria and standards.

Idiosyncratic characteristics identified in the various courses reviewed include the following:

- CGD315113: *Computer Graphics & Design* (Level 3) does not follow the usual template when describing the criteria and standards. This course adds information to further explain the criteria, which suggests the criteria are not clear enough on their own.
- ELT315114 *Electronics* and FDN315113 *Food & Nutrition* (both Level 3), have many content-based learning outcomes listed in the course document, and they are not criteria or standards-based.
- HDS315113: The *Housing and Design* course (Level 3) is one that is not usually found in the list of subjects of other jurisdictions. The standards are not of the same type as in other courses.
- ITC315113: This Level 3 *Computer Science* course shows that there are substantial differences in the description of the standards in subjects. In this course, the assessment tasks that form the basis for the evidence for granting C, B, or A ratings, seem to require more differentiation between the different grade levels (i.e. a student receiving an 'A' rating should be required to show that they are able to undertake more complex tasks, than those receiving a 'C' grade).
- CGD215113: *Computer Graphics and Design - Foundation* and DAP215116 *Design and Production* (both Level 2 courses) appear to be boutique or bespoke courses designed for a small group of students.
- ESC205114: *Essential Skills – Using Computers and the Internet* course (Level 2) does meet the requirements of the unit of competence 'FSKDIG03'. But this course only relates to achieving the TCE minimum standard, and provides an explanation only for a 'C' rating.
- FDN215113: *Food, Cooking and Nutrition* (Level 2) is a low level course that requires updating or being deleted completely.
- ICT110114: The *Basic Computing* (Level 1) course meets the requirements of the unit of competency FSKDIG02 'Use digital technology for simple workplace tasks' from the *Foundation Skills Training Package.*

6.3.2.2 Reviewing, renewing, and adjusting the content

In addition to the courses being referenced to their national counterparts, another strategy adopted by the then Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA) (now replaced by TASC), has been to review, renew, and adjust the content in some of the courses through the process of integrating the senior secondary Australian Curriculum. This approach has tended to generate minor changes to some course documents themselves, as the following example from *English Communications* (ENC315116), illustrates. This work has meant that little of the existing course was changed: a quasi-appendix (referencing the senior secondary Australian Curriculum was simply added). So minor changes to the course document were made, seemingly accepting virtually all the Australian Curriculum. However, more changes to the expectations in teaching senior secondary English were foreshadowed by TASC. The Review Team was advised that this English course will cease on 31 December 2016, when will be replaced by ENG315117.

6.3.2.2.1 English

In *English Communications* (ENC315116) being taught during the timeframe for the Review, the focus has been on aligning the course content to the content descriptions. It is unclear to the Review Team whether the revised course (ENG315117) to be introduced in 2017 addresses the following issues

raised, as the new course was not accredited during the timeframe for this Review. As such, the issues concerning *English Communications* (ENC315116) are presented here as a potential way of reviewing the newly introduced course.

In *English Communications* (ENC315116)the majority of the content descriptions from the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject: *English,* Units 3 and 4 are referenced (listed) to the course content in the section 'Expectations Defined by National Standards' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016c, p. 24), in the TASC course documents.

It is interesting to examine which content descriptions were not deemed useful to reference to the *English Communications* (ENC315116). Table 78 shows, in **bold** type, the content descriptions from English (Australian Curriculum) that were not referenced to the national standards, and some content descriptions, in ***bold italics*** type, that have nevertheless found their way into the Criteria and Standards of the TASC course.

Table 78 Referencing of Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum Content Descriptions for English Units 3 and 4 with English Communications (ENC315116)

From Unit 3:

Compare texts from similar or different genres and contexts by:

- analysing language, structural and stylistic choices (ACEEN041)
- explaining how each text conforms to or challenges the conventions of particular genres or modes such as crime fiction, advertising or short films (ACEEN042)
- **analysing and evaluating how similar themes, ideas or concepts are treated in different texts. (ACEEN043)**

Compare and contrast distinctive features of genres by:

- analysing the techniques and conventions used in different genres, mediums and modes (ACEEN044)
- considering how the conventions of genres can be challenged, manipulated or parodied (ACEEN045)
- **examining how genres and their conventions have changed and adapted over time. (ACEEN046)**

Analyse and evaluate how the conventions of texts influence responses including:

- the ways language patterns can create shades of meaning (ACEEN047)
- how expectations of genres have developed and the effect when those expectations are met or not met, extended or subverted (ACEEN048)
- **how responses to texts and genres may change over time and in different cultural contexts. (ACEEN049)**

Create a range of texts:

- transforming and adapting texts for different purposes, contexts and audiences (ACEEN050)
- **making innovative and imaginative use of language features (ACEEN051)**
- **using and experimenting with text structures and language features related to specific genres for particular effects (ACEEN052)**
- **sustaining analysis and argument (ACEEN053)**
- using appropriate referencing, for example, footnotes, in-line citations and reference lists (ACEEN054)
- **using strategies for planning, drafting, editing and proofreading (ACEEN055)**
- using accurate spelling, punctuation, syntax and metalanguage. (ACEEN056)

Reflect on their own and others' texts by:

- analysing and evaluating how different texts represent similar ideas in different ways (ACEEN057)

- **explaining how meaning changes when texts are transformed into a different genre or medium (ACEEN058)**
- comparing and evaluating the impact of language conventions used in a variety of texts and genres. (ACEEN059)

From Unit 4

Investigate and evaluate the relationships between texts and contexts by:

- undertaking close analysis of texts (ACEEN060)
- examining how each text relates to a particular context or contexts (ACEEN061)
- **comparing the contexts in which texts are created and received. (ACEEN062)**

Evaluate different perspectives, attitudes and values represented in texts by:

- analysing content, purpose and choice of language (ACEEN063)
- analysing the use of voice and point of view such as in feature articles, reporting of current events or narration (ACEEN064)
- **exploring other interpretations and aspects of context to develop a considered response. (ACEEN065)**

Evaluate how texts convey perspectives through:

- the selection of mode, medium, genre and type of text (ACEEN066)
- the ways points of view and values are represented (ACEEN067)
- the selection of language features that generate empathy or controversy, for example, juxtaposition of image and text. (ACEEN068)

Create a range of texts:

- ***using appropriate language and stylistic features to sustain a personal voice and point of view (ACEEN069)***
- ***using nuanced language (ACEEN070)***
- ***synthesising ideas and opinions to develop complex argument (ACEEN071)***
- substantiating and justifying their own responses using textual evidence (ACEEN072)
- using appropriate referencing, for example, footnotes, in-line citations and reference lists (ACEEN073)
- ***using strategies for planning, drafting, editing and proofreading (ACEEN074)***
- using accurate spelling, punctuation, syntax and metalanguage. (ACEEN075)

Reflect on their own and others' texts by:

- analysing and evaluating how different attitudes and perspectives underpin texts (ACEEN076)
- ***questioning the assumptions and values in texts (ACEEN077)***
- ***identifying omissions, inclusions, emphases and marginalisations (ACEEN078)***

discussing and evaluating different readings of texts. (ACEEN079)

From the summary above, it would seem that the integration process undertaken by the then TQA concluded that the two courses (*English Communications* ENC315116 and *English Australian Curriculum*) were similar, and that all that was required was a listing of the content descriptions (from the English Australian Curriculum) to provide a reading of the meaning of 'the course requirements, learning outcomes, the course content and standards in the assessment' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016c, p. 24) in *English Communications* ENC315116. This course document requires that teachers have deep understandings of the course and assessment requirements, which in turn requires considerable professional learning time.

6.3.2.2.2 Mathematics

A similar approach to that used for *English*, appears to have been taken in the *Mathematics* subjects. It is not clear in these subjects, however, whether the:

- listing of the selected senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject's content descriptions simply mirror the pre-existing course requirements/learning outcomes/content/standards; or
- content descriptions add a new perspective to pre-existing course content; or
- content descriptions introduce new course content to be covered.

It should be noted however, that there are a number of content descriptions that do not seem to have been referenced for teaching and learning in *Mathematics Specialised* – from Unit 3, 92-115; and Unit 4, pp131 -144. These include the following areas: Functions and sketching graphs (pp92-100); Vectors in 3 dimensions (pp101-115); and Statistical inference (pp137-144) (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016e). Furthermore, it is not clear what role the referenced content descriptions are intended to play in the internal and external assessment requirements. It is dubious to argue however, that referencing what already exists in a national framework constitutes 'alignment' with national courses.

6.3.2.2.3 Science

In the *Science* subjects integration has meant both changes to course learning outcomes and course content, as well as referencing to content descriptions:

> The Australian Curriculum course documents for *Biology*, *Chemistry* and *Physics* have been used to define expectations concerning course learning outcomes and course content in five Tasmanian Year 11/12 science courses: *Life Sciences* level 2, *Biology* level 3, *Physical Science* level 3, *Chemistry* level 4 and *Physics* level 4. … The interim Biology course BIO315114 will be replaced by a new course in 2016 that has greater alignment with the Australian Curriculum (underline added).
>
> The process of aligning Tasmanian Year 11/12 courses with the Australian Curriculum has been largely centred on changing course content to include contemporary science and the use of the Australian Curriculum's construct of three interrelated strands: *Science Understanding*, *Science Inquiry Skills*, and *Science as a Human Endeavour*' (State of Tasmania 2016b, p. 3).

The level of change as a result of the integration process in the Sciences can be shown using *Chemistry* (CHM 415115) as an example. The learning outcomes and course content have been adjusted to incorporate the three strands: *Science Understanding, Science Inquiry Skills, and Science as a Human Endeavour*. Learning Outcome 3, expressed as 'identify ways in which knowledge of chemistry interacts with social, economic, cultural and political considerations in a range of contexts' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016g, p. 3), can be presumed to have been included to teach and assess activities from *Science as a Human Endeavour* Strand. However, this is not made explicit in the course document. Examples of internal assessment tasks for this Strand are provided in an appendix in the course document.

The Tasmanian *Chemistry* course document outlines the content of all three Strands, focusing particularly on *Science Understanding*. Teachers' attention is drawn to 'new content' as a result of the integration process. (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016g, p. 12). In terms of the referencing to the national standards, **all** of the content descriptions of *Science Understanding* from *Chemistry* Units 3 and 4 (Australian Curriculum) are referenced to the course content in *Chemistry* 4, CHM415115. (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification,

2016g). Interestingly, there is no referencing of any of the content descriptions for either *Science Inquiry Skills* nor for *Science as a Human Endeavour*.

6.3.2.2.4 History and Geography

In *Modern History* (HSM315115), the approach to integration has gone well beyond referencing. In this subject, the course content in the (then) TQA accredited course duplicates its correlated senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject. Not only is the course content identical, but the content descriptions in the 'Expectations Defined by National Standards in Content Statements Developed by ACARA' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016f) are listed almost without exception.

In *Ancient Civilisations* (ANC315115), the TASC accredited course follows the *Ancient History* (Australian Curriculum) published subject fairly closely. The only real point of difference is that the TASC course offers only three of the topics for study (Egypt, Greece, or Rome) that are on offer through the Australian Curriculum.

Australia in Asia and the Pacific (AAP315116) references some of its content to a selection of content descriptions in *Modern History* (Australian Curriculum) Units 3 and 4, and *Geography* (Australian Curriculum) Units 3 and 4. Although connections can be seen between these subjects, it would be difficult to claim that the TASC course is aligned to the senior secondary Australian Curriculum. Similarly, *History and the Environment* (HAE215115) references some content descriptions from *Geography* (Australian Curriculum) Units 1 and 2; *Ancient Studies* (Australian Curriculum) Unit 2, and *Modern History* (Australian Curriculum) Units 1 and 2. However, the alignment is only in regard to very generic content descriptions such as the following:

> Identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, change and continuity over time (ACHMH001)
>
> Use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding (ACHMH002). (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016j).

Geography (GGY315115) has followed the specifications in *Geography* (Australian Curriculum) closely, covering three units of study, *Sustainable Places, Human Impact on Land Cover Change*, and *Globalisation* (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016k).

6.3.2.3 Bespoke courses

TASC has accredited a number of small 'boutique' or 'bespoke' courses, which appear to have been developed by a school with a very specific group of students in mind. It is questionable that these courses are forward thinking, global in perspective, or inventive.

6.3.2.4 Workforce Expertise and Extension High Schools

Aligned with integrating the Australian Curriculum with the Tasmanian Curriculum, it is the necessity to match workforce expertise with the courses being offered. More detail about the Tasmanian teaching workforce is presented in Section X, which shows that out-of-field teaching is common, but is less prevalent at senior secondary than at Years 7–10, with a large majority of senior secondary teachers teaching within their field in most subjects.

The ToR for this Review indicates that one of the strategies being implemented by the Tasmanian Government, to improve Tasmania's retention and attainment data is the introduction of the *Extending Government High Schools to Years 11 and 12 Programme*. This initiative is aimed at broadening curriculum offerings to students living in regional and rural locations, but it is a very resource intensive option. The success of this initiative is dependent on schools, particularly in regional and rural locations, having access to suitable, qualified teachers to deliver the expanded curriculum.

It can be seen in Chapters 5 and 7 that one of the challenges facing Tasmania is the lack of expertise in specific disciplines including VET. Although the extent of courses accredited by TASC is extensive, given the likely small numbers of students who are expected to access courses in an extension high school, the current signs are that the *Extending Government High Schools to Years 11 and 12 Programme* is expensive and likely to have a low impact, thereby reducing its efficiency. A more efficient option is to 'network' schools together so that the courses and the workforce expertise, match.

6.3.3 Policy options

- Update all TASC accredited courses so that they take account of the General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum Priorities outlined in the Australian Curriculum.
- Cull the number of small, bespoke courses offered, or redevelop them so that they are suitable for Tasmanian students, irrespective of location, and where courses are redeveloped, ensure the new courses are inventive, forward thinking, and global in perspective.
- Publish explicit criteria that match the outcomes and hours to be achieved from the respective 50, 100 and 150 courses, and review all courses to ensure they are consistent with the published criteria.
- Consider removing nominated hours and ensure instead, there are explicit and robust outcomes to be achieved that are consistent with the appropriate Australian Curriculum subjects.
- Review Level 2 courses with a view to:
    - increasing the outcomes required by students;
    - increasing the consistency of expectations on students across all courses at this level.
- Review the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Extension High Schools over a two year period.
- Build on existing informal networks and the infrastructure established for the Extension High Schools to phase-in curriculum for students in Years 7 to 12 through the use of multi-campus schools that enable a comprehensive suite of curriculum offerings to be made available to all students enrolled.
- Conduct targeted professional learning to bring teachers and school principals up-to-date with curriculum requirements and assessment and reporting expectations, in light of the introduction of the Australian Curriculum.

6.4 Tasmania's use of criterion-based assessment for internal and external assessment purposes in Years 11 and 12

Along with the other Ministers of Education, in December 2012 and August 2013 the Tasmania endorsed the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects for *English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography*, 'as the agreed and common base for development of state and territory senior secondary courses' (ACARA, 2013, p. 1).

As outlined earlier, it is not clear from easily available public information, what role the referenced content descriptions in the TASC course documents are intended to play for the purposes of internal and external assessment requirements. There is a lack of explicit statements about the curriculum and associated assessment and reporting requirements for TASC accredited courses.

TASC claims it has adopted a 'criterion-based assessment' system: 'a form of outcomes assessment that identifies the extent of learner achievement at an appropriate end-point of study.' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016e, p. 10). The course documents outline a number of criteria (associated to each of the learning outcomes). Some are identified for internal assessment and others for external assessment, and all of which are elaborated into standards describing quality of performance at ratings (e.g. A, B, and C). But criterion and standards-based assessment practices do not easily marry with the notion of 'time-served', which underpins the levels 1 to 4 of TASC course documents.

In comparison, the senior secondary Australian Curriculum published documents provide advice in terms of Achievement Standards, which 'describe the quality of learning (the depth of understanding, extent of knowledge and sophistication of skill) expected of students who have studied the content for the subject' (ACARA, n.d., c, p. 1). Further, the aforementioned Ministerial agreement made in 2012-13 at the Education Council confirmed the role of the curriculum, assessment and certification authorities to apply these Achievement Standards.

It is important to recognise, that although they are embedded in the content, ACARA does not 'represent' the General Capabilities in the achievement standards in the F-10 curriculum. It is clear that the State and Territory school authorities 'will determine whether and how student learning of the general capabilities will be further assessed and reported' (ACARA, 2013, p2). At the time of the Review, the senior secondary courses offered in Tasmania make no explicit mention of the General Capabilities in the, either in terms of their inclusion in the content standards, nor in terms of their relevance or visibility in the achievement standards.

Along with varying levels of clarity in the course documents about assessment and reporting, in comparison to other state and territory jurisdictions, the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Tasmania seems to have been accompanied with comparatively little professional learning for teachers to support Tasmania's approaches to interpreting the requirements of the curriculum, assessment and reporting.

6.4.1 Findings: Key points

- The curriculum structure, content, assessment and reporting requirements across Years 9 to 12 is complicated, difficult to understand and contradictory in places.
- The curriculum model and assessment and reporting approaches across Years 9 to 12, are not supportive or sympathetic to each other, and do not easily assist students or teachers to determine students' progress or achievement.
- The TASC requirements for assessment and reporting across all courses, are not sufficiently explicit, consistent nor unambiguous.
- There is a lack of explicit guidelines for the writing of assessment items, so there is a lack of consistency in the degree of complexity of outcomes expected across courses of the same level.
- There is a lack of clarity of meaning in the criteria used in some courses.

- There is a multiplicity of assessment and reporting requirements (i.e. Years 7 to 10, Years 11 and 12 and VET) placed on teachers in Extension High Schools which is too arduous and possibly not sustainable.

6.4.2 Comments about the findings

There are specific challenges in regard to assessment processes used in Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania. Different models to assessment and reporting are implemented at different levels of schooling, and these are accompanied by different timings for each of the respective reporting cycles. Years 9 and 10 are expected to follow a standards-based curriculum, while Years 11 and 12 essentially utilise a criterion-based curriculum. All Year 11 and 12 courses are internally assessed by teachers, while pre-tertiary courses (which do not include VET courses) are also externally assessed. Final results are determined by a combination of moderated school assessment and external ratings.

These different approaches to assessment and reporting are implemented at different times during the school year, and so the respective administrative requirements for providing the different year levels of students with their assessments and reports, are constant throughout the school year. This mixture of assessment and reporting practices causes considerable disruption, particularly in the Extension High Schools where the number of teachers and therefore the curriculum offerings are limited, but the assessment and reporting demands are the same as those for a large senior college. It is questionable whether such an approach is sustainable, and whether it is the most suitable approach for gaining improvements in students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes.

Several of the course documents lack overarching directions as to how much assessment should be undertaken, and the conditions under which they should be undertaken with students. The assessment instruments that are presented in most of the course documents are traditional pen and paper assessments, and are not 'futures oriented'. Any formative and summative assessments students undertake should be adjusted to ensure they are 'fit-for-purpose', and generate the information expected.

6.4.3 Policy options

- Prepare and publish a set of guidelines for curriculum writers about how to prepare assessment items for outcomes based curricula.
- Ensure the accredited curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements are consistent across all schools and year levels for Years 9 to 12.
- Update the Years 9 to 12 curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements to ensure there is consistency across the year levels to ensure that students' learning is developmental and progressive, rather than comprised of a number of 'one-off' learning experiences.
- Update TASC accredited courses to include assessment and reporting of the General Capabilities
- Improve the rigour of the moderation processes so they meet the purpose of ensuring consistency of standards achieved by students across Tasmania, in a given course, and to provide professional learning for teachers in how to conduct criterion-referenced and standards-based assessment and reporting approaches.
- Review national Ministerial agreements to ensure the policies and practices in place in Tasmania, honour existing agreements made.

- Reconsider the assessment and reporting requirements made of staff in Extension High Schools, to make the effectiveness of the respective reporting requirements informative of students' achievement; inform the next steps the teachers and students should take to progress in the students' learning; and create a more achievable and reasonable assessment and reporting regime in light of teachers' workloads. The establishment of multi-campus schools would assist with addressing this recommendation.

6.5 The alignment between the Australian Curriculum: Kindergarten–Year 10 (K–10) and Years 11 and 12 curriculum and assessment practices

The desktop review of curriculum documents, along with the input provided through school visits, interviews and focus groups demonstrated that in some courses there is a lack of scope and sequence in the curriculum and assessment approaches between K to 10 and Years 11 and 12. Unlike the ACT, this situation is not assisted by students having to change schools at the end of Year 10. Furthermore, the government-sector Extension High Schools do not address the issues of 'curriculum and assessment transition' but may instead, exacerbate them. Current opportunities to improve students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes, are therefore confounded.

6.5.1 Findings: Key points

The alignment of TASC courses to those of the Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum is shown in Table 79 below.

Table 79 Alignment of Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum Subjects with TASC Subjects by Learning Areas

Learning Area	Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum Subjects	TASC Courses
English	Literature U1 & U2 Literature U3 & U4 English U1 & U2 English U3 & U 4 Essential English U1 & U2 Essential English U3 & U4 EAL/D Bridging U1 & U2 EAL/D U1 & U2 EAL/D U3 & U4	English Literature 3 General English 2 English Communications 3 Applied English 2 EAL/D1 EAL/D2 EAL/D3
Mathematics	Specialist Mathematics U1&U2 Specialist Mathematics U3&U4 Mathematical Methods U1&U2 Mathematical Methods U3&U4 General Mathematics U1&U2 General Mathematics U3&U4 Essential Mathematics U1&U2 Essential Mathematics U3&U4	 Mathematics Specialised 4 Mathematical Methods 3 Mathematical Methods Foundation 2 General Mathematics 3 General Mathematics –Foundation 2 Workplace Mathematics 2

Science	Physics U1 & U2 Physics U3 & U4 Chemistry U1 & U2 Chemistry U3 & U4 Biology U1 & U2 Biology U3 & U4 Earth and Environmental Science U1 & U2 Earth and Environmental Science U3 & U4	Physics Sciences - Foundation 2 Physical Sciences 3 Physics 4 Physics Sciences - Foundation 2 Physical Sciences 3 Chemistry4 Life Sciences 2 Biology 3
History	Modern History, U1 & U2 Modern History, U3 & U4 Ancient History U1 & U2 Ancient History, U 3 & U 4	Modern History 3 Ancient Civilisations 3 Australian in Asia and the Pacific 3 (some Modern History and Geography) History and the Environment 2 (some Geography, Ancient Studies, and Modern History) There are no Level 2 History courses that are correlated to Modern History and Ancient History (ACARA).
Geography	Geography U1 & U2 Geography U3 & U4	Geography 3

It can be said that in terms of learning outcomes and content, the Tasmanian senior secondary courses do align with the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects. Tasmania offers 12 of the 15 courses at Level 3 or 4 (with gaps in *General English*, *Essential English*, *Earth and Environmental Science*, and *Essential Mathematics*).

However, at Level 2, there are some gaps, with no equivalent course in *Modern History*, *Ancient History*, *Geography*, or *Earth and Environmental Science*. In terms of the courses in *English* and *Mathematics*, there seem to be comparable equivalents. In *Science*, *Physical Sciences 3* articulates with both *Chemistry 4* and *Physics 4* (however, how well it does this requires investigation). Some course documents appear to have received idiosyncratic and inconsistent levels of treatment, particularly in relation to the assessment criteria, that has resulted in variable quality and levels of inconsistency across the courses.

A question arises though, about the effectiveness of these approaches to alignment. In those subjects that have made few or no changes to the course content, but have referenced their course content to the content descriptions, it is difficult to know how effective this strategy has been to the integration of a course, in the formulating a new or revised course. It is not clear, for example, how teachers or students use or interpret the additional listings of content descriptions to the original course. These lists could be seen to provide an additional reading: that is 'used to define the meaning … of relevant aspects of the sections in [this] document' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016c, p. 24), (i.e. of the course requirements, learning outcomes, the course content and standards in the assessment). This additional reading could either help to clarify the requirements or perhaps, to confuse the requirements.

Although course developers for the senior secondary education are reminded that if they 'are considering the development of senior secondary course for accreditation, [they] must ensure that it aligns with the Tasmanian Curriculum Framework for Years 11 and 12' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016a, p. 3), there does not seem to be a policy that explains how the General Capabilities and Core Skills are to be represented in the senior secondary courses.

The accreditation criteria for course documents, for example, do not include explicit statements about General Capabilities or Core Skills (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016b). This lack of policy is of concern given the Tasmanian Government has made commitments to its local constituency by stating that 'all learners develop proficiency in literacy and numeracy, the general capabilities and the core skills for work to equip them for their futures' (DoE, 2015a, p. 8).

Unlike other jurisdictions, there has been little professional learning provided to teachers and principals, about how to implement the Tasmanian-Australian Curriculum; particularly in how to implement the General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum.

6.5.2 Comments about the findings

The following subsections address the 'issues' part of the ToR, in order to present findings and policy options to improve students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes, as specified by the contract. These subsections are:

- Developmental learning;
- General capabilities and Core Skills;
- Quality of the curriculum;
- Literacy and numeracy and ICT;
- Coherence and transferability in the curriculum; and
- Productive pathways through the curriculum;

Issues of relevance and currency of the curriculum are woven throughout the following sections.

6.5.2.1 Developmental learning

The Tasmanian Years 9 to 12 curriculum best serves those students who live in large, urban centres, where the breadth of options available through TASC can be offered. The curriculum is less available to those students who live in regional and rural locations; have a disability; and/or are reliant on transport other than their own. The Review Team could not find any examples of curriculum initiatives specifically aimed at supporting Indigenous students. Furthermore, unlike other jurisdictions, an Indigenous studies course is not offered by TASC in the senior secondary years

The quality of education in Tasmania is unreasonably influenced by public transport timetables, rather than by a concern for students to perform to the best of their abilities. The professional learning of teachers about how to implement the Australian Curriculum in their discipline seems to have been inadequate, which affects the quality of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Tasmania.

An analysis of the effectiveness of school education in Tasmania for supporting diverse student learning needs, sees the emergence of the following comments about the findings.

- Tasmanian secondary schooling, particularly in the government sector, does not easily facilitate smooth transitions for learners from Year 10 to Year 11; from Year 11 to Year 12; and from Year 12 to further learning/training and/or work. This is particularly the case for students with disabilities, and for those students who identify as being Indigenous. In the district high schools located in regional and rural locations visited by the Review Team, students can only undertake a limited number of VET units, depending on the specific expertise available in the local community or online. In most cases, those students who want to pursue a general secondary education in Years 11 and 12, in the most part, still have to re-enrol in a College.
- Neither the senior secondary years curriculum and nor the schooling structure encompass sufficient scope for **all** students to build on the skills and knowledge gained in prior learning.
- There are more pathways available within subjects and through the learning areas from Years 9 to 12 for students located in the larger, urban centres, compared to those living in regional and rural locations.
- The responsibility for determining pathways is placed on students through the specified standards to be met to gain a TCE.
- The complicated curriculum structure works against students having clear developmental pathways.
- Some but not all of the learning outcomes and content in the Tasmanian senior secondary courses align with the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects.
- Tasmania offers 12 of the 15 courses at level 3 or 4 (with gaps in *General English, Essential English, Earth and Environmental Science, Essential Mathematics*).
- At level 2, there are gaps between the Australian and the Tasmania curricula, with no equivalent Tasmanian courses in *Modern History*, *Ancient History*, *Geography*, *Earth and Environmental Science*.
- There are some comparable equivalents in Tasmania for courses in *English* and *Mathematics*.
- In Science, the course *Physical Sciences 3* articulates with both *Chemistry 4* and *Physics 4*, although how well this is done is debatable.

6.5.2.2 General Capabilities and Core Skills

The Review Team was asked whether the General Capabilities and the Core Skills for Work, where appropriate, are embedded in senior secondary courses. As indicated earlier, although course developers for the senior secondary education are reminded that if they 'are considering the development of senior secondary course for accreditation', they 'must ensure that it aligns with the Tasmanian Curriculum Framework for Years 11 and 12' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016a, p. 3), there does not seem to be a policy that explains how the General Capabilities and Core Skills are to be represented in the senior secondary courses. The accreditation criteria for course documents, for example, do not include explicit statements about General Capabilities or Core Skills (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016b).

6.5.2.2.1 General Capabilities

The Tasmanian Curriculum Framework indicates that both the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities and the *Core Skills for Work Framework* (Australian Government, 2016) underpin the Tasmanian school curriculum. The Australian Curriculum makes explicit that teachers should address both the Cross-Curriculum Priorities and the General Capabilities, as appropriate, in Years 9 to 12. In the Australian Curriculum, the representation of the General Capabilities in the F-10 curriculum continues into the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects, whereby:

> Each [senior secondary Australian Curriculum] subject includes a description of the opportunities for students to continue to develop their general capabilities and understanding of cross-curriculum priorities in ways that are relevant to the subject (ACARA, n.d., c).

According to ACARA, the General Capabilities are 'a key dimension of the Australian Curriculum' (ACARA, 2013, p. 3), as the following statement illustrates:

> capability' encompasses knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions. Students develop capability when they apply knowledge and skills confidently, effectively and appropriately in complex and changing circumstances, in their learning at school and in their lives outside school (ACARA, 2013, p. 5).

ACARA nominates seven General Capabilities:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Information Communication Technology Capability
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal and Social Capability
- Ethical Understanding
- Intercultural Understanding.

ACARA embeds the General Capabilities in the official curriculum of Australia, on the understanding that to meet the changing expectations of society young people will require a wide and adaptive set of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions.

How the General Capabilities are conceptualised as a curriculum element is important. ACARA, as do many state and territory education jurisdictions, use different metaphors to explain the role and place of General Capabilities in the curriculum. ACARA uses verbs such as 'includes' and 'embeds' to describe the place of the General Capabilities within the curriculum, and particularly the 'content descriptions' of the F–10 Curriculum and 11–12 Curriculum. These verbs connote the idea that the General Capabilities are 'integrated' or 'woven' into the curriculum; that they form an important and natural part of the description of knowledge, understandings, and skills. Verbs such as 'includes' and 'embeds' suggest that they 'underpin' the learning, rather than form the raison d'être for the learning (which is usually considered the role of the discipline or learning area).

6.5.2.2.2 General Capabilities in the Tasmanian Curriculum

The Tasmanian Curriculum is organised into learning areas and subjects, and it also includes common 'elements' of the General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum priorities which are intended to add richness and depth to the learning areas and help students see the interconnectedness and relevance of their learning. According to ACARA, these elements – the General Capabilities and Cross-Curriculum priorities – form a critical part of the curriculum. Indeed, the Tasmanian submission from the DoE to the Review of the Australian Curriculum, applauds the Cross-Curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities on the basis that a subject 'should not be perceived as an isolated discipline but taught in ways that emphasise the development of 21st century skills' (Australian Government, n.d.).

At the overarching policy level, the General Capabilities have been adopted as an essential part of the F–12 curriculum in Tasmania. The diagrammatic representation of the Tasmanian F–12 Curriculum in the *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework* builds on the *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework*

Overview (version 8, September 2015) (DoE, 2015a), which is supported by three additional frameworks:

- *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework*
- *Years 11 and 12 Curriculum Framework,* which is based on the principles and values of the *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework* and is intended to guide the future development of TASC Accredited Courses
- *Senior Secondary Accreditation Framework*.

The *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework* makes it clear that the 'General Capabilities from the Australian Curriculum' are intended to underpin the 'Vision, Learning Goals, Principles, and Birth to Adulthood' curriculum (Government of Tasmania, 2016). This position is supported in the *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Overview* (8 September 2015) (DoE, 2015a):

> The general capabilities underpin the Framework and its stated values. It is through the development of the capabilities that young people learn to manage their own wellbeing, relate well to others, make informed decisions about their lives, become citizens who behave with ethical integrity, relate to and communicate across cultures, work for the common good and act with responsibility at local, regional, and global levels (DoE 2015a, p. 9).

As previously mentioned however, there is no reference to the General Capabilities in any of the Office of the Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification Authority (TASC) senior secondary course documents. Given that there is no official indication to teachers of the definition, nature, and role of the General Capabilities in the Tasmanian senior secondary courses, it is difficult to indicate the extent to which the General Capabilities have been embedded into the senior secondary courses. It is questionable that the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subjects of themselves provide enough direction for teachers to teach and assess general capabilities to the extent that they are incorporated within each learning area.

The Review Team found differing views of the value of and extent to which the General Capabilities (and Cross Curriculum Priorities) are considered worthwhile to include in classroom practices. Some argued that the inclusion of a description of the General Capabilities at the beginning of a senior secondary course would not provide sufficient evidence that the General Capabilities are embedded within the course, and that more than an introductory statement would be required.

Others argued that the very nature of the General Capabilities (knowledge, skills, behaviours, dispositions) militates against them being easily described, signposted, or located in a senior secondary course; and that to a large extent, developing the General Capabilities requires the skills of professional and expert teachers to be able to read the curriculum for opportunities to develop capabilities in students.

Others again held that there is no need to make explicit statements about the General Capabilities in the published curriculum for each subject, nor to pinpoint and draw them to the attention of the teacher. They argued that the General Capabilities are not new concepts, ideas or 'learnings', but have been the underlying intention of courses for a long time; that there is nothing particularly new or peculiar about developing 'literacy' skills and dispositions in the 21st century. They argue that extricating the General Capabilities from the content of the subject is a skill, the essence of good teaching.

If any of these views had been deliberately adopted, it would have been reasonable to expect to see evidence of professional learning in line with such a philosophy; but no such evidence was found. While

members of the Review Team heard these different explanations, it remains unclear for what reasons TASC has decided to remain silent on the matter of General Capabilities in the revision of their senior secondary courses.

Remaining silent on this matter, although problematic, does not mean that the General Capabilities are not embedded within the courses, however. Appendix 7 provides an analysis of one TASC course, *English Communications (ENC315116)* (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016c), looking for evidence of the opportunities it may offer teachers to focus on particular General Capabilities, in comparison to the opportunities for teaching the General Capabilities as described in *English* (ACARA, n.d., b). This analysis shows that the General Capabilities are embedded within this senior secondary course *English Communications (ENC315116)*, despite not explicitly pointing them out to teachers or other readers of the course document. Appendix 7 illustrates how this is achieved.

This analysis underscores the difficulty and complexity in making the official curriculum intentions explicit in documents. The task of identifying and deciphering the General Capabilities in a course, whether signposted in a narrative style adopted by ACARA, or in the non-explicit, embedded style adopted by the TASC, is challenging. The role of the professional teacher in interpreting the written word, in identifying opportunities to focus on particular General Capabilities, is therefore crucial.

Importantly, the analysis in Appendix 7 shows that not explicitly mentioning the General Capabilities in the course document does not necessarily mean that they are not implicitly embedded within the course. The General Capabilities are embedded within the curriculum, even if this was unintended. What is problematic is that the curriculum intentions are not clear and explicit to teachers. Participants at the recently held public forums as part of the community consultation for the *Tasmanian Review of Years 9–12*, 30 August – 2 September 2016, had very little to say about the General Capabilities/Core Skills for Work. This silence is problematic given both the local and global priorities on General Capabilities, in their various forms.

The Review Team found though, that while the curriculum policies advocate for the inclusion of the General Capabilities, the organisational structure for school education in Tasmania does not lend support to teachers to facilitate the development of these capabilities by students. Indeed, the Review Team saw little evidence that most students are actively supported to learn the General Capabilities. As outlined above, although it is a key principle of the Tasmanian school curriculum policy that 'all learners develop proficiency in literacy and numeracy, the General Capabilities and the Core Skills for Work to equip them for their futures' (DoE, 2015a, p. 8); the Review Team saw little evidence that there is a commensurate commitment in practice to the policies for implementing (where appropriate), the General Capabilities. Furthermore, it is difficult to find evidence of a policy commitment to students learning the Cross-Curriculum Priorities.

Indeed, the importance of General Capabilities as enduring learnings is supported by many educational and training research institutions around the world (see, for example, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2014). There is a call for bringing these enduring learnings to centre stage in learning, and increasingly also in assessment. As such, curriculum experts must find ways of best representing these General Capabilities, as curriculum intentions and expectations, in the official curriculum.

6.5.2.3 Core Skills

The *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Overview* (version 8 September 2015) (DoE, 2015a) nominates *Core Skills for Work* is one of the principles that underpins the curriculum:

> All learners develop proficiency in literacy and numeracy, the general capabilities and the core skills to equip them for the futures (DoE, 2015a, p. 8).

In a similar fashion to the General Capabilities, in Tasmania, a set of career development and work skills are identified for explicit inclusion, 'where appropriate, in senior secondary courses'. The *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework* (Government of Tasmania, 2016) nominates the *Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework* (Australian Government, 2013), as defining these skills. In 2016 the subject *Work Studies* has been implemented in the context of *My Education* (DoE, 2016b).

The *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Overview* (DoE 2015a, p. 9) indicates that students should acquire 'transferable skills such as communication, critical thinking and teamwork, and personal attributes such as adaptability, resilience, resourcefulness, creativity and enterprise' to 'increase an individual's employability in this changing work environment'. In terms of supporting 'Career Development and Work Skills', the *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Overview* points to three informing documents:

- The Australian Curriculum: *Work Skills*, Years 9–10 (ACARA, 2016b)
- *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEEDYA), 2010)
- The *Core Skills for Work Development Framewor*k (Australian Government, 2013).

It is an expectation that the *Core Skills for Work Development Framewor*k (Australian Government, 2013), play a significant part in the description of the curriculum, given its place in the *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework*. The *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, however, does not appear in the *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework*, although it is listed in the *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework, Overview* (DoE, 2015a).

The *Core Skills for Work Framework* describes a set of generic skills, knowledge and understandings that underpin successful participation in work. There are 10 skill areas, grouped under three clusters:

Cluster 1 – Navigate the world of work

a. Manage career and work life
b. Work with role, rights and protocols

Cluster 2 – Interact with others

a. Communicate for work
b. Connect and work with others
c. Recognise and utilise diverse perspectives

Cluster 3 – Get the work done

a. Plan and organise
b. Make decisions
c. Identify and solve problems

d. Create and innovate
e. Work in a digital world (Australian Government, 2013).

The *Core Skills for Work Framework* describes 'core non-technical skills that have been identified by Australian employers as important for successful participation in work' (Australian Government, Department of Education and Training, 2016, p. 1). These 'core non-technical skills' have been referred to in previous reports as 'employability skills' or 'soft skills', and, with regard to secondary school students, have been advocated by employers in a quest for students to be 'work ready'.

For some educators and employers, there is much in common between the 'core non-technical skills', the General Capabilities, and the *Australian Core Skills Framework*, and there has been some useful mapping of the shared common ground between these three ways of expressing the skills and capabilities that students should develop (Australian Government, 2013).

However, for the majority of employers, the development of 'core non-technical skills' occurs best within particular contexts, whether in courses that focus on vocational learning (Australian Government, 2015), or through attaining VET qualifications.

> Employer confidence is increased when the outcomes of vocational learning and VET reflect their expectations of the skills and work–related competencies that students will develop. General employability skills are set out in the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework—a set of non-technical skills, knowledge and understanding that underpin successful participation in the workplace. For VET, the work-related competencies are set out in training packages (Education Council, 2014, p. 13).

Some educators argue that the 'core non-technical skills' are promoted and taught in general education courses, such as *English* and *Mathematics*. They argue that it is possible to see how a student undertaking a substantial independent research project in English can develop and demonstrate skills in 'planning and organising' and 'making decisions'.

In many TASC senior secondary courses there is an explicit focus on the skills in Cluster 3 (*Core Skills for Work Framework*). For example, in *Mathematics Specialised* (MTS415114), students are expected to 'be self-directing, be able to plan their study, persevere to complete tasks and meeting deadlines (Learning Outcome 1)' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016d, p. 3). This Learning Outcome has a corresponding assessment criterion, 'Plan, organise and complete Mathematical tasks', explicated as follows:

> Rating 'C'. A student:
>
> - uses planning tools to achieve objectives within proposed times
> - divides a task into sub-tasks as directed
> - selects from a range of strategies and formulae to successfully complete straightforward problems
> - monitors progress towards meeting goals and timelines
> - meets specified timelines and addresses most elements of the required task (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016d, p. 12).

Similarly, *English Communications* (ENC31515116) has well-described learning outcomes and accompanying criteria and standards that relate specifically to Cluster 3 skills:

> Criterion 8: work collaboratively with others; and
>
> Criterion 9: apply time management, planning and negotiation skills (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016e).

In *Modern History* (HSM315115) criterion 8 is described as applying time management planning and negotiation skills to a historical inquiry (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016f).

In *Chemistry* (CHM415115) criterion 11 is described as 'be self-directing; be able to plan their study; persevere to complete tasks and meet deadlines; have cooperative working skills related to the study of Chemistry' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016g, p. 2). And the 'non-technical skills' (Cluster 3 skills) are embedded, albeit implicitly, in many of the *Technologies* course documents.

However, these readings should be made with caution. In many subjects the same criterion is often described in the following manner, 'Plan, organise and complete activities' (see, for example, Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016h, p. 2), giving the impression that similar or the same learning outcomes may have been included in most course documents to ensure that students complete all assessment tasks that have been set, rather than to measure the actual skills of the process of planning or the techniques of organising.

As such, although it can be argued that the *Core Skills for Work Framework* skills can be found in senior secondary courses, the attention of teachers is not drawn specifically to them. They appear, it would seem, as an implied consequence of the description of the subject, rather than a direct and conscious inclusion by the course developers.

6.5.2.4 Quality of the curriculum

It is an expectation that all Australian school-aged students have access to a high quality curriculum that is engaging, relevant and challenging. Quality assurance mechanisms provide processes which ensure that students achieve the required standards. The challenges facing the Tasmanian school education sector concerning policy options to improve students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes, include the following:

- Ensuring effective quality assurance and moderation processes are in place, and help to ensure required standards are achieved; and
- Ensuring the learning outcomes, content, and standards of Tasmanian senior secondary courses align with the Australian Curriculum and senior secondary courses in other jurisdictions.

Given Tasmania's unique approaches to curriculum, assessment and reporting, in line with the ToR, the Review Team considered other factors that ought to be taken into account when developing contemporary learning experiences for all Tasmanian students. Other options considered include the establishment of some multi-campus schools.

These issues are further explored below, and are followed by some policy options aimed at improving students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes.

6.5.2.4.1 Quality assurance

An initial discussion of the quality assurance processes to accredit the Tasmanian Curriculum has been discussed above. The *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Overview* (version 8 September 2015) (DoE, 2015a, p8) indicates that

> All learners have access to a high-quality curriculum that is engaging, relevant and challenging, and based on high expectations and standards.

TASC has as its core function the responsibility to determine standards and qualifications. As outlined earlier, the TASC Act outlines the powers of the Office including investigations, inspections and undertaking audits. The legislation also states that the Office has the responsibility to set or adopt standards for the provision and assessment of senior secondary courses. Quality assurance meetings for Level 2 courses, external examinations for Level 3 courses and auditing of providers to ensure the required standards are being met, are all approaches used by TASC to ensure the quality of the curriculum documents.

TASC aims to ensure that relevant standards are being met through the audit and the aforementioned quality assurance processes. There is no additional financial burden to the sectors for these quality assurance processes. These are a requirement specified in the 'TASC Legislation'.

Also as outlined earlier however, there appears to a mismatch between the aspirations outlined in the policy documents guiding the development and implementation of the curriculum in Years 9 to 12, and the curriculum and assessment documents that have been developed. Similarly, the nature of some of the courses in Tasmania vary to those found on the mainland. Assessments of students' work are central to criterion and standards-based approaches, and as such, they should be directly linked to the content the student is expected to learn.

6.5.2.4.2 Moderation

One mechanism used in Tasmania to ensure quality student outcomes that are consistent across the state, and are comparable with students' mainland peers, is the process of moderation. Moderation is managed for all schooling sectors by Curriculum Services within the DoE.

The Tasmanian school education sector utilises processes of moderation with the identified purpose of gaining consistency in the way achievement standards are allocated, and to ensure there is consistency about interpretations of students' performance. That is, moderation is intended to lead to interpretations and applications of the standards in equivalent ways that confirm teachers' judgments about their students' work.

Moderation involves teachers sharing their expectations and understandings of the assessment standards with each other on one day, so that there is consistency in their decisions about students' learning outcomes. Consistency in the standards applied to students' outcomes is important for public confidence as well as for teachers to use to inform their students' learning. According to individual parents and parent association members such as those from the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA) met by the Review Team, it would seem there is little confidence in school communities about the consistency of standards achieved by students across Tasmania, and even less confidence in the standards achieved by Tasmanian students compared to their mainland peers. As such, moderation processes are important not only to teachers and their students, but for the broader community as well.

Based on the data collected by the Review Team then, the use of moderation is well regarded across Tasmania, but it would seem, it is valued more for the professional learning it affords teachers, than to ensure there are consistent standards of performance students that are administered across the state.

Moderation days in Tasmania are promoted by the DoE in a pamphlet called *School Terms and Professional Learning Days in Tasmanian Government Schools* (Tasmanian Government, 2016b). In this pamphlet, the moderation days are promoted along with professional learning days. It is little wonder then, that some teachers in government schools consider the moderation days as a professional development activity, rather than a day to validate student assessments. Both the Catholic and Independent school sectors however, do promote moderation days to gain consistency of student assessments. It was noted however, that in some cases, teachers have to pay a fee to attend the moderation day(s). Such an approach sends the wrong message to teachers about the purpose and importance of moderation processes for ensuring consistency of standards across students' learning outcomes, across Tasmania.

While moderation processes in several jurisdictions over many years, (e.g. SA), have been considered an excellent professional learning activity, these processes are dependent on consistent and explicit statements of the outcomes students are to achieve. The lack of emphasis on scope and sequence in the official Tasmanian curriculum, is of concern as it suggests that moderation is not treated as a serious activity in itself, especially given its impact on students' learning outcomes.

The Review Team received mixed messages from different stakeholders, about the extent of financial and philosophical commitment to moderation was actually in place. As such, it was unclear to the Review Team whether the Tasmanian Government or the non-government sectors financially and philosophically support the moderation processes conducted in Tasmania.

Given these findings, it is the view of the Review Team, that while moderation is a highly valued activity, it is valued more as a professional learning activity, than for ensuring consistency in the standards applied to students' work. The quality assurance and moderation processes operating in Tasmania are not focused on their primary purpose (i.e. to ensure consistency across Tasmania of students' outcomes on the achievement standards). While this learning probably helps teachers to understand what is required for particular standards to be achieved, there was no evidence provided to the Review Team to show that the current approaches to quality assurance and moderation are either effective or efficient for improving students' attainment outcomes.

6.5.2.4.3 Achievement Standards

Linked to quality assurance and moderation processers are the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards. The Standards have been developed to assist teachers to make 'on-balance' judgements about the quality of learning demonstrated by their students at the end of a period of teaching. As part of the formal reporting processes, teachers are required to make summative judgements about the quality of students' learning each semester, against an A-E rating scale. The intention of the Achievement Standards are that they

- Describe the expected achievement for students who have been taught the associated Australian Curriculum content for a particular year of schooling;
- Emphasise the depth of conceptual understanding, the sophistication of skills and the ability to apply essential knowledge expected of students; and

- Present an ordered sequence of learning across F-10 with the difference between one standard and the next clear and unambiguous (ACARA, n.d.d).

6.5.2.5 Literacy and numeracy and ICT

The ToR questioned whether there are opportunities in the senior secondary years for students to gain the required skills, including literacy and numeracy and ICT, for their futures? The description of the curriculum requirements in the TASC accredited courses that were reviewed (with varying degrees of connection to the national subjects), retain the principal role of outlining what is to be learned, and this description is generally referenced to national standards as described in the correlated senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject. The Tasmanian course documents do not address the expectations of students' learning and assessment of the General Capabilities.

In comparison, ACARA asserts that:

> Literacy, Numeracy and Information Communication Technology capability are fundamental in students becoming successful learners and are thus likely to be addressed in all subjects. However, Personal and Social capability, Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding, as they focus on ways of being, behaving and learning to live with others are likely to more strongly be represented in some learning areas rather than others (ACARA, 2013, p1).

Whether or not all of the General Capabilities, or only a selection of them, should be represented in the content standards of the Australian Curriculum subject has been a matter for ongoing debate. ACARA's position is that the 'General Capabilities are represented to different degrees in each of the learning areas (ACARA, 2013, p1). As outlined earlier, the challenge for Tasmania is to accommodate the General Capabilities in a consistent manner across the curriculum for Years 9 to 12.

6.5.2.6 Coherence and transferability

The *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Overview* (DoE, 2015a, p8) indicates that 'coherence and transferability' underpin the *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework* and inform curriculum developments. 'Coherence and transferability' are described in the *Draft Tasmanian Curriculum Framework Overview* (version 8 September 2015) (DoE, 2015a, p8), as follows:

> A coherent and sustainable curriculum across the learning areas that provides the breadth, balance and depth of learning appropriate to learners' phases of development. It should enable learners to progress smoothly through the stages of schooling.

Underpinning notions of 'coherence and transferability' are concepts of scope and sequence across each course or subject and across year levels. Coherence in the curriculum means that what students' undertake is developmental in nature and builds coherently or logically, on previous learnings.

Issues raised concerning coherence and transferability of the Tasmanian curriculum include the following:

- The breadth (or coverage) of the curriculum as well as depth (levels of learning);
- The extent to which there is accommodation of a range of:
    - interests and capabilities of students;
    - entry levels of learning for students; and
    - varying rates of learner development.

- Whether the learning pathways
    - meet diverse needs and aspirations that transition to further education, training and employment; and
    - are cohesive, where early learning builds into later learning in meaningful ways.
- Alignment with the content and outcomes of the Year 10 Australian Curriculum, and
- Alignment with the structure and content of senior secondary Australian Curriculum courses.

6.5.2.6.1 The breadth and depth of the curriculum

Tasmania has placed its senior secondary courses into the following nine learning areas:

- English
- Health and Physical Education
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Mixed Field
- Science
- Technologies
- The Arts.

This spread of these learning areas is comparable to other jurisdictions, as shown in Table 80.

Table 80 Learning Areas in a Selection of Jurisdictions

Australian Curriculum	**Tasmania**	**SACE Board of South Australia**	**Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board**	**BOSTES (NSW)**
The Arts	The Arts	The Arts	The Arts	Creative Arts
English	English	English	English	English
Health and Physical Education	Health and Physical Education	Health and Physical Education	Health and Physical Education	Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
Humanities and Social Sciences	Humanities and Social Sciences	Humanities and Social Sciences	The Humanities	Human Society and its Environment
Languages	Languages	Languages	Languages	Languages
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
Science	Science	Science	Science	Science
Technologies	Technologies	Business, Enterprise, and Technology	Technologies	Technology
	Mixed Field	Cross-disciplinary Studies		

Unlike some other jurisdictions, it should be noted however, that TASC does not provide a course in Aboriginal Studies.

Issues in relation to the breadth and depth of curriculum are related to the single year courses and the various credit points allocated to courses, which were discussed earlier in this report. It is the view of the Review Team, that the philosophy underpinning single year level courses at Years 11 and 12 undermines notions of 'scope and sequence' in the curriculum, and as a consequence, also undermines the implementation of the Assessment Standards outlined in the Australian Curriculum.

6.5.2.6.2 Analysis of the Humanities and Social Sciences Courses

To more deeply explore the issues of breadth and depth of the curriculum for this review, all the course documents in the *Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Area* were analysed, to

- reveal whether the curriculum and assessment constructs do provide pathways between accredited courses (breadth of courses; entry levels of learning); and
- ascertain the demands and expectations of the courses at the various levels (depth of courses).

The following sections provide a summary of these courses according to Levels, and the findings are illustrated more fully in Appendix 9

6.5.2.6.2.1 Preliminary Level Courses

In the *Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Area,* this analysis shows that there two subjects offered as Preliminary Level Courses. These courses are intended for students with high learning needs. These courses are written to the same specifications as all other courses.

6.5.2.6.2.2 Level 1 courses

The following Level 1 courses are available in the *Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Area:*

- BHC115116 *Focus on Children*. This is a practical course that develops basic knowledge and skills required to interact appropriately with children and others in a range of child care environments, including the home.
- BHY105116 *You, Your Family and the Community*. This is a very basic course, and is similar to *Community Studies* in South Australia.
- BST105116 *Financial Literacy*. This subject adopts a 'work requirement' approach to standards. For example, for Criterion 2, Set Personal Financial Goals, a 'C' rating (satisfactory standard) is awarded if the learner lists personal financial goals; categorises financial goals into short term, medium term and long term; [and] lists steps necessary to achieve a financial goal' (p.5). This course is partnered with *You, Your Family and the Community*.
- CAC110112 *Community Access*. This course covers basic knowledge about services and organisation in students' local communities and the skills required to interact effectively with those organisations and the people involved in them. This course appears to have been developed by a school to meet particular local needs. Satisfactory Achievement is the highest level that can be awarded.
- RSE105115 *Basic Road Safety*. This is a basic course, and there is also a Level 2 course in road safety.

While all the above courses are specified as being at Level 1, the criteria and standards are described in different ways across the respective subjects. These variances make it difficult for both teachers and

students to understand and accommodate these differences in nomenclatures. In addition, several of the Level 1 courses above, have as many as ten or 11 learning outcomes, with several of them being content-based learning outcomes (e.g. describe, identify). These outcomes are very low level, which begs the question, are these learning outcomes appropriate? Furthermore, several of the Level 1 courses reviewed have been written with particular students' needs in mind. It does not appear that there are quality assurance processes in place for these courses to ensure they are contemporary, innovative, and worthwhile beyond those for whom the course was immediately written. This approach means these courses are in a danger of being idiosyncratic and therefore expensive to the Tasmanian Government.

6.5.2.6.2.3 Level 2 courses

Level 2 courses in the *Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Area* include:

- RSE205115 *Road Safety Education*. This course goes into more depth than its Level 1 equivalent, but essentially covers similar material. Students are able to get an Exceptional Achievement in this subject. This course is not likely to be found in other jurisdictions.
- BHC215116 *Working with Children*. This Level 2 course is designed to be an introduction to studies in early childhood education and general education in child care environments, as well as developing the parenting skills of learners. This type of subject is also available in other jurisdictions, but at the equivalent level to Level 3.
- BHF215116 *Exploring Issues in Societ*y. This course has a major focus on Australia, and is designed to help learners gain an understanding of the complexities of a broad range of matters of public concern relating to the world in which we live. In this course there some indication in the Work Requirements of the type of product (essay, report, multimodal presentation, and the recommended word length), that the student is expected to complete. There is little specification of the assessment tasks (as compared with specifications in most other jurisdictions).
- BHX215116 *Introduction to Sociology and Psychology*. This course brings together *Sociology* and *Psychology* (from an Arts perspective rather than from a Science perspective). *Introduction to Sociology and Psychology* Level 2, uses an interdisciplinary approach, through which learners are expected to develop an understanding of themselves and other individuals, groups and institutions within society and across cultures.
- BST215116 *Business Studies - Foundation*. This course focuses on business knowledge, reasoning, decision-making, and communication.
- CSL205113 *Community Service Learning*. This is a subject that allows students to take part in a Community Service. Students are able to gain a High Achievement in this subject.
- HAE215115 *History and the Environment*. This is an unusual, but interesting course. It has the characteristics of a boutique or bespoke course. The subject has seven compulsory topics and two compulsory case studies. The *History and the Environment* course enables learners to study the environmental and historical factors that have shaped their world. Through a focus on both the ancient and recent past, the course encourages learners to make connections with the present. The course focuses primarily on the three distinct cultures of Australia, China and India. This subject has some connections, although very general, to the ACARA *Modern History* course. This is the subject at Level 2 that leads to *History* at Level 3.
- LST215115 *Legal Studies - Foundation*. The course covers six topics (laws, legal and non-legal rules; the Constitution; the three levels of government; police powers; consumer law; family law). The work requirements seem minimal – two reports. The language in the standards has an emphasis on rote-learning (i.e. describing), as the following example illustrates: 'correctly describes sources of law, and differences between processes employed'.

- RLP205115 *Making Moral Decision*s. This is a course on ethics.
- RLP215115 *Religion in Society*. This is a comparative religions course. It makes tenuous connections with three Australian Curriculum subjects – *Modern History*; *English*; and *Essential Englis*h. The demand, reflected in the standards, seem to favour rote learning – for example, locates, sorts, discusses, describes, uses, accurately describes, argues, explains, accounts, records. There is an absence of requiring students to analyse, evaluate and synthesise.

In summary, there does not seem to be an overarching framework for assessment items or procedures that apply across all courses at one level, nor does there appear to consistent development of learning outcomes as courses become more complex. As such, although there are courses into which students at varying levels of ability can enter, and for some there are pathways into similar courses at a higher level, there does not seem to be a consistent approach to learning outcomes, and assessment and reporting requirements, across all Level courses, nor for all students. Furthermore, there is very little specification of assessment items in the Level 2 courses, and the evidence used by teachers as the basis for judging the quality of the students' work against the criteria and standards, is often low-level and is certainly not 'futures oriented'. In the case of *Working with Children*, BH215116, the Work Requirements are described as including compiled worksheets; a report; practical resources made by the student; and documentation of elective studies (pp.10-11).

Further, there does not seem to be any external assessments required for Level 2 courses. While most Level 2 courses outline 'Work Requirements', the information about what assessment tasks to use in an assessment scheme for the school assessment varies from subject to subject. In many subjects the decision of selecting the assessment instruments (the type, the conditions under which they take place, the length in terms of words or minutes) is left to the teacher. There should be some guidelines about these matters.

6.5.2.6.2.4 Level 3 Courses

Level 3 courses in the *Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Area* include:

- AAP315116 *Australia in Asia and the Pacific*: This course enables learners to study the social, cultural, religious and geographical diversity of the Australia, Asia and Pacific region. This subject is aligned to some of the content descriptions in *Modern History* and *Geography*. It has a lot of school assessment and a three hour examination. The criteria descriptions use 'synthesis' – which should be seen at this level of study.
- ACC315116 *Accounting*: Through engagement with *Accounting*, Level 3, it is intended that learners develop an understanding of the fundamentals on which accounting and financial management are based. The storing, processing and accessing of digital data and information are included as essential parts of current accounting practices. This course compares favourably with other similar courses offered on the mainland. The Standards are well articulated. There is a strong use of technologies (see Criterion 5: use an accounting software package and digital technologies to record, report and interpret financial information and Criterion 7: use inquiry skills to plan and undertake a financial investigation, which are particularly good). There is also a range of assessment instruments promoted in the Standards (e.g. multimodal presentations).
- ANC315115 *Ancient Civilisations*: This course enables learners to study life in an early civilisation based on the analysis and interpretation of physical and written remains. This course has links to the Australian Curriculum. The criteria are a mixture of 'describes…' and 'assesses'. In this course, there are clear differences between C, B, and A ratings, moving from

identifies (C rating), analyses (B rating), and evaluates (A rating) (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016o, p27).

- BHS315116 *Sociology*: This is a demanding course that mirrors the demands and approach taken in *Psychology*, and includes a strong focus on students undertaking analyses.
- BST315116 *Business Studies*. This Level 3 course is similar in approach to its Level 2 counterpart.
- ECN315116 *Economics*: This course investigates how individuals, groups and societies use scarce resources in the best possible way. Heightened media coverage of economic events has created a growing perception of the relevance of studying economics and its implications for individual, business and government decision-making.
- LST315116 *Legal Studies*. Many of the students outcomes included in this course are content-based, and this is reflected in the Standards.
- PHL315113 *Philosophy*: This is a demanding course. It provides good differentiation between the requirements for the different grades, as can be seen from the following illustration:

correctly identifies and names at least one type of reasoning used in relevant philosophical arguments	provides explanation of at least one type of reasoning used in relevant philosophical arguments	provides insightful explanation of at least one type of reasoning used in relevant philosophical arguments

- REL315116 *Studies of Religion*. This is a comparative religions course. There are many content-based learning outcomes, and an overuse of 'describes' for a Level 3 course.

6.5.2.6.3 Level 3 courses compared to similar courses in other jurisdictions

To determine whether there are sufficient opportunities, or courses, for students, an analysis has been undertaken that compares the courses that are available at Level 3, Year 12, in other major jurisdictions in Australia. Level 3 courses were chosen for analysis, as these are generally the highest level available for study in Tasmania. Appendix 8 provides the details of this analysis. Three subjects, *Mathematics Specialised*, *Physics* and *Chemistry* have Level 4 status. In addition, please note that in many cases, courses with the same title and under the same learning area may have major differences in their approach or content. In some cases, subjects (such as *Psychology*) that have been placed in a learning area by a state or jurisdiction have been placed in another learning area in this paper to aid comparisons to be made.

It can be seen in Appendix 8, that students in Tasmania are afforded similar opportunities to study Level 3 courses in the Arts as in other states. Of interest is *Art Theory and Criticism* that does not seem to be offered as a full subject in other jurisdictions. The influence of the integration of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum into the *English* offerings around Australia has begun to makes its mark. It should be noted that Tasmania, ACT, South Australia/Northern Territory, Western Australia, and Victoria have completed the integration process, while Queensland and New South Wales have begun the process recently.

There is no equivalent to a subject devoted totally to writing, *English Writing* in other states or territories. In some jurisdiction there are opportunities for students to study *Essential English* or *Foundation English*, at 'Year 12 level', in their 12th Year. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for *Essential English* provides for four units of this subject, with Units 3 and 4 undertaken in Year 12. In Tasmania, these opportunities also exist, but at Levels 2, 1, and Preliminary. The structure of Preliminary, Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 which exists in Tasmania, may militate against some students continuing to Year 12. Thus, while a student in South Australia might be studying *Essential English* in

Year 12, which does not have the same complexity rating as *English Literary Studies*, the student is considered to be studying a Year 12 subject.

Another interesting aspect of this array of *English* courses is the varying approaches to *English as an Additional Language* by the states and territories. This later subject has eligibility criteria which vary across the states and territories. The courses also vary in nature and purpose, where in some states and territories the courses veer towards teaching the subject as 'another language', while in other jurisdiction they lean towards teaching the subject as 'English'.

All Australian Year 11 and 12 jurisdictions have a similar approach to language teaching, learning, and assessment. Tasmania facilitates students' access to any of the languages on offer through the *Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages* (CCAFL).The subjects offered by TASC at Level 3 are *Chinese, French, German, Italian* and *Japanese*. A further 32 languages are offered through cooperation with Victoria, NSW, South Australian, and Western Australia. What is actually taught in schools however, is limited by the expertise within workforce (which is discussed further in Section 5).

Physical Education is a very popular subject at Year 12 in other states and territories. Appendix 8 shows in relation to *Health and Physical Education*, that *Sport Scienc*e in Tasmania (SPT3151113) is a theoretical course. There does not seem to be a Level 3 course where students can practice their sport. This is in contrast to most other jurisdictions that have courses at Level 3 that consist of both practical and theory components. *Physical Education* in most jurisdictions attracts an ATAR. Practical courses in sport in Tasmania can be found at Levels 1 and 2.

The respective jurisdictions provide several options for students to study *Humanities and Social Sciences* courses at Level 3. TASC has housed *Psychology* in this learning area because it has been coupled with *Sociology* (in a very interesting manner). Some of the other jurisdictions have taken a more strongly scientific approach to the study of *Psychology*. New South Wales and Queensland do not offer this subject.

There are some subjects that are only offered in particular states, e.g. *Women's Studies* (South Australia), and *Texts and Traditions* (Victoria), and *Australia in Asia and the Pacific* (Tasmania). As outlined earlier, TASC does not provide a course in *Aboriginal Studies*.

In relation to *Mathematics*, in Tasmania *Mathematics Specialised* is one of the three Level 4 subjects. Ironically, the Tasmanian teaching workforce lacks sufficient expertise in the teaching of mathematics. As in the *English* learning area, in other states and territories, *Essential Mathematics* is offered as a Year 12 subject, a Level 3 subject. Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria have completed the integration process of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum for Mathematics.

It is not clear what real changes have been made by 'referencing' the learning outcomes and course content in the current TASC courses to the senior secondary Australian Curriculum courses (as discussed earlier concerning the alignment with Australian Curriculum).

It is difficult to classify courses into the *Technology* Learning Area. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, this is an area that has seen major change due to the impact of the information communication technologies (ICT). Secondly, the advent and influence of the vocational education and training sector's qualifications on senior secondary courses has been profound. For example, most jurisdictions have a whole series of 'school subjects' that are essentially vehicles for the teaching and assessment of units

of competency in qualifications. Courses such as furnishing, fashion, hospitality, tourism, building and construction, manufacturing, engineering, textiles have all been influenced by these qualifications.

In Tasmania (as in South Australia), the policy has been not to embed the units of competency of a VET qualification into a school subject, but rather to allow students to undertake the qualification as nationally designed and accredited, from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (which may or may not be a school). Tasmania has also allowed for students to undertake Certificate I through to higher levels, and record the achievements in these on the Qualification Certificate.

Computer Science is a course that jurisdictions are currently redesigning to ensure that the curriculum is contemporary. The work is being influenced by the recent rethinking of the *Technologies* learning area curriculum undertaken by ACARA. Courses that focus on coding and computational thinking are being developed. *Food and Nutrition* is another area that is experiencing strong pressure to change. Some states see this course as *Food Technology*, while others see it as a science, e.g. *Nutrition*.

Housing and Design is not offered in any other state, other than Tasmania.

Courses that deal with workplace learning also find their way into the *Technology* learning area, albeit uncomfortably.

There is a lot of similarity across the states and territories in the *Science* learning area. At the time of the Review, Tasmania did not have courses that explicitly related to agriculture or horticulture, which seemed unusual given the primary industry operating in Tasmania. TASC advised the Review Team however, that it was anticipated that a Level 2 course called 'Agriculture Enterprise' and a Level 3 course 'Agricultural Systems' would be accredited at the end of 2016, ready for implementation in 2017. The effectiveness of *Physical Sciences* as a foundation for both *Chemistry* and *Physics* in Tasmania may also be a place where 'authentic learning' about 'agriculture, could be incorporated.

In conclusion, this analysis (more full explicated in Appendix 8), shows that in Tasmania, there are many more courses offered at Level 3 compared to other jurisdictions; and the breadth of these offerings is comparable to other states and territories.

6.5.2.6.4 Accommodation of a range of interests and capabilities of students; entry levels of learning for students; and varying rates of learner development

The TASC, like other certification authorities in Australia, provides a range of accredited courses for students undertaking the post-compulsory phase of school education. In all jurisdictions the stated aim is to provide courses for all students – mindful of their needs, abilities and aspirations.

Although the aim of providing appropriate courses for students is universally accepted by the state and territory jurisdictions, they differ in the strategies to provide access to them. For example, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority offers its post-compulsory students with access to:

- accredited courses towards the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE);
- accredited courses towards the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL); and
- VET courses – particular qualifications, not for example Certificate I level qualifications towards the VCE.

In Tasmania, there is a clear understanding that the post-compulsory cohort consists of a wide range of learners – be they senior secondary students who undertake their studies predominantly in schools, or

learners/workers/adults who undertake their studies in a variety of other education and training organisations.

TASC supports all learners by providing them with access to a wide range of courses, or recognising the learning they have undertaken through the study of:

1. TASC accredited courses (Preliminary and Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4);
2. Vocational Education and Training qualifications (access to all qualifications within the AQF); and
3. Other courses accredited by other accrediting bodies.

When considering the breadth of curriculum provision to ensure it takes account of all students, it is important to make a distinction between the award of the TCE; the reporting provided on the Qualification Certificate (QC); and the issuance of the Tasmanian Certificate of Educational Achievement (TCEA).

The Review Team found that very few teachers, students, principals or other stakeholders realised that TASC provides these three different certificates.

6.5.2.6.4.1 The Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE)

The opportunity to be granted a Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) is provided to everyone. The award of the TCE is dependent on both the learner's results in accredited courses, as well as the learner demonstrating that he or she meets or does better than the requirements for standards in:

> everyday adult reading, writing and communication, mathematics, and use of computers and the internet; requirements for amount and level of participation and achievement in education and training; and requirements for pathway planning (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016a; 2016b).

The learner is able to demonstrate that they meet the standards in a number of ways:

> People can meet these requirements in different ways, in different settings and over different periods of time (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016a; 2016b).

Interestingly, TASC also provides some course documents specifically designed to meet the minimum standards of the TCE. Even though information is included on the front page of the TASC course documents, how courses are allocated with the status of meeting the standards for the TCE is a mystery to almost everyone in schools and most curriculum writers the Review Team met.

Other jurisdictions also include generic standards that have to be met in order to achieve an end-of-school certificate. Along with Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia and have defined literacy and numeracy standards for students to meet so they qualify for their senior school credential. (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2015; South Australian Certificate of Education 2015; the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2015). From 2016, Western Australian students have had to meet a required standard of Level 3 of the *Australian Core Skills Framework* in reading, writing and numeracy, to attain the Western Australian credential (Western Australian School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2015; Australian Core Skills Framework, 2012).

Overseas, Finland requires senior secondary students to sit the National Matriculation Examination, which determines their eligibility to graduate, and to progress to further studies. New Zealand's

National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) requires at least 10 credits each year over a three-year period for both literacy and numeracy from approved standards. (Matriculation Examination Board, 2015; and New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2015).

6.5.2.6.4.2 The Qualifications Certificate (QC)

TASC reports, or in some cases records, the results and achievements of learners on the Qualifications Certificate. This certificate is available to all Tasmanians who gain one or more post-compulsory qualifications accredited or recognised by TASC. The Qualifications Certificate shows all qualifications with awards in TASC accredited senior secondary courses, qualifications (and awards where applicable) in TASC recognised courses, and VET qualifications and units of competency the learner has achieved (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016m).

6.5.2.6.4.3 Tasmanian Certificate of Educational Achievement

The Tasmanian Certificate of Educational Achievement (TCEA) is designed for a small number of students whose learning and achievement is not adequately recognised by standardised approaches to certification, and instead describes achievement through narratives. The TCEA is intended to be complementary to the TCE and is issued at the same time as the TCE and the QC.

6.5.2.6.5 Provision of Courses for Learners with High Needs

Tasmania provides 'a suite of courses designed to provide basic skills to students learners with high needs, many of whom have a learning difficulty or disability.' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016i, p. 2). These courses include:

- *Basic Communication* (PRE015115)
- *Sport and Recreation for Life* (PRE015615)
- *Prepare for Work* (PRE015715)
- *Basic Number Skills* (PRE015215)
- *Building Connections* (PRE010113)
- *Environment and Nature* (PRE015415)
- *Prepare to Live Independently* (PRE015315)
- *Expression through the Arts* (PRE15514).

These courses have 'a whole-of-life approach' (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016i), and are preliminary to Level 1 of the TCE. The courses are structured in the same manner as Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 courses, with descriptions of learning outcomes, course content, criteria and standards, and they are not considered to be part of the Australian Qualifications Framework, as their standard is below Certificate 1. Students' performances are reported as either Satisfactory Achievement (SA) or Preliminary Achievement (PA).

These courses state that the achievement in the qualifications (i.e. senior secondary courses) do not contribute credit points towards meeting the participation and achievement standard of the TCE qualification, but that the qualifications available can be listed on the Qualifications Certificate issued by the TASC (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016i).

This strategy of providing access to a post-compulsory curriculum for learners with high needs through a suite of subjects is similar to strategies in some other state and territory jurisdictions. The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) Board of South Australia provides access to a suite of 'modified subjects', (SACE Board, n.d.), for students who have an identified intellectual disability. The

Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards, New South Wales (BOSTES NSW) provides access to a set of 'Life Skills courses for Stage 6 in each broad area of learning' (BOSTES NSW, 2015, p. 1), which lead to Higher School Certificate students with special education needs. This provision in NSW recognises the principle that the post-compulsory years of schooling should cater for all students choosing to participate (BOSTES NSW, 2015).

6.5.2.7 Productive Pathways

The Review Team was also asked to investigate whether there are well defined pathways that lead to positive and sustained pathways, in the current suite of Tasmanian senior secondary courses. Issues of interest were whether there are

- Coherent subject pathways from Years 9-12;
- Structured, progressive levels of sophistication, with clearly defined articulation points;
- Curriculum that is supportive of student transitions into university, TasTAFE and employment;
- Effective provision of the number of levels of learning available to students; and
- Effective provision for specific career/pathways information to all students.

The Review Team observed that the pathways between courses at Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 have been well documented. 'Pathway maps' are provided for all learning areas in a series of papers provided by the DoE (see, for example, State of Tasmania, 2016a).

It is a legislative requirement that every Year 10 student develop a transition plan (DoE, 2015b). At the time of the Review, the online program *My Educatio*n had been recently introduced with mixed reactions from teachers and students, and the 'Pathways Planners' had been removed as a result of the changing legislative and associated organisational arrangements.

6.5.2.7.1 My Education

In government schools, the *My Education Framework 2015–2017* (DoE, 2015b) is intended to support an explicit focus on career education and work exploration in conjunction with the newly introduced online career planning system, *ME Online* (DoE, n.d.). With the introduction of *ME Online*, the state funding for 'Pathway Planners' through the *Guaranteeing Futures* legislation (Parliament of Tasmania, 2005) has been removed.

The *My Education Framework 2015–2017* (DoE, 2015b) highlights that where possible, schools should establish collaborative strategies to better utilise business and community resources to expose learners to the world of work and to develop their understanding of local, national and global employment opportunities (DoE, 2015b). In addition to individual school efforts, the Tasmanian Government has contributed an additional $5 million to the $10 million committed by the Beacon Foundation to facilitate these processes on a broader scale (Hodgman, 2016).

6.5.3 Policy Options

To improve students' attendance, retention and attainment outcomes the following policy options are proposed:

- The structure of the Years 9 to 12 curriculum is simplified and pathways through it are made more explicit.

- The quality of the course documents at Levels 2 and 3 are improved to be more rigorous and consistent across the Level for all courses.
- Clarity about the expectations on teachers and performance criteria for students when allocating grades to students work is enhanced.
- Guidelines for course accreditation are reviewed and updated.
- Alternatives to the required standards to achieve a TCE are considered.
- Tasmanian students should be expected to achieve General Capabilities while at school, and as such, it is reasonable to expect that teachers and school principals ensure that learning activities at school, encompass these General Capabilities.
- Designers of the courses be expected to require the demonstration of the General Capabilities, by including in each course document a specific description of the role that General Capabilities and Core Skills should play in each student's learning, in that course.
- Sustained professional learning for teachers and school principals is conducted to build their capabilities to teach, assess and report upon the General Capabilities.

7 VET and VEL in Schools

7.1 The nature, quality of the delivery and cost effectiveness of VET/VEL in sectors and schools and how this aligns with student pathways

This section of the Report focuses directly on VEL and VET in Years 9–12 and addresses the following:

- Identity and territory of VET and VEL for internal and external stakeholders
- Nature and quality of VET and VEL programs
- Current VET and VEL data across all educational settings
- Cost of delivering VET and VEL programs in schools

This discussion is then followed by the findings of the Review Team concerning public perceptions of VET/VEL undertaken in schools.

7.1.1 Identity and territory of VET and VEL for internal and external stakeholders

While vocational learning in schools is the responsibility of the DoE, the broader VET system sits with Skills Tasmania in the Department of State Growth (DSG). That is, the VET system in Tasmania involves two Ministers of the Crown and associated government departments: the Department of Education and the Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania, 2016a). The Skills Tasmania website defines the VET system as follows:

> provides skills and knowledge for work through a national training system, which provides for Australians: entering the workforce for the first time or re-entering the workforce; retraining for a new job; or upgrading skills for an existing job in accordance with the Government's social and economic policy. (Skills Australia, 2015, p. 1)

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) definition of VETiS is 'programs undertaken as part of a student's senior secondary certificate that provide credit towards a nationally recognised VET qualification' (NCVER, 2009, p.6). However, VETiS is just one subset of a broader conception of vocational learning for secondary students.

More recently, the national policy framework titled *Preparing secondary students for work – A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students* ('*the Framework*') was developed by a working group established under the Education Council (i.e. the Council of Education Ministers from all states and territories). Endorsed by this Council in December 2014, *the Framework* provides a consistent national approach to vocational learning and VET in secondary schools.

For school students, vocational learning:

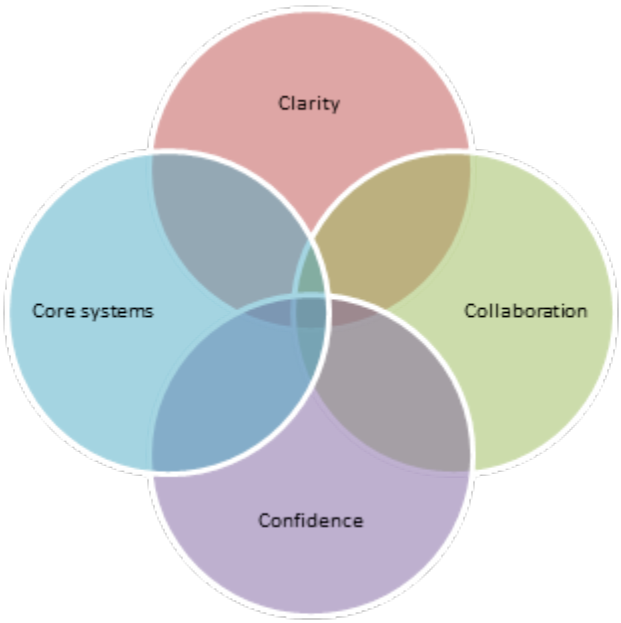
> helps secondary students explore the world of work, identify career options and pathways, and build career development skills. Vocational learning is delivered within the broader curriculum. It supports students to gain career development skills and provides opportunities for students to 'taste' the world of work through one-off events, initiatives such as enterprise learning, or spending time in a real or simulated workplace. (Education Council, 2014, p. iii)

VET:

> enables students to acquire workplace skills through nationally recognised training described within an industry-developed training package or an accredited course. A VET qualification is issued by an RTO. The achievement of a VET qualification signifies that a student has demonstrated competency against the skills and knowledge required to perform effectively in the workplace. (Education Council, 2014, p. iii)

The *Framework* states that the aim of vocational learning and VET is to ensure that all secondary students 'experience quality vocational learning and have access to quality VET courses' that are 'seamlessly integrated into secondary schooling and valued by students, parents, teachers and employers' (Education Council 2014, p. 7). As illustrated in Figure 19, *the Framework* identifies four interdependent components required to achieve the vision:

- clarity of purpose and definition
- collaboration between diverse stakeholders
- confidence in the quality of the system and outcomes
- core systems designed and aligned to make provision of high-quality programs as easy as possible.



Source: Education Council, 2014.

Figure 19 Achieving the Vision: Key Components

These components provide a basis for an analysis of the review findings that follow.

7.1.1.1 Ministerial priorities

Current priorities for all vocational education and training in Tasmania are identified in the DSG–Skills Tasmania document *Ministerial Priorities for Training and Workforce Development 2016* (Skills Tasmania, 2016a). This statement is issued in accordance with *Section 5 Training and Workforce Development Act 2013* (Parliament of Tasmania, 2013).

The third priority in the *Ministerial Priorities for Training and Workforce Development 2016*, links two objectives together: 'Building business capability and entrepreneurial spirit, and helping young Tasmanians to succeed at work' (Skills Tasmania, Department of State Growth, 2016a p. 7). On the latter point, the Ministerial priorities are to:

> Continue to support innovative initiatives that provide Tasmanian youth with opportunities for education and training with a direct employment outcome; and
>
> Enable Tasmania's young people to reach their potential and succeed in their working lives by overcoming barriers to employment such as literacy and numeracy, language, confidence and preparation (Skills Tasmania, Department of State Growth, 2016a)

Actions listed to support these objectives include:

> Ensure that Tasmanian Government–subsidised qualifications are validated by industry so that young people can be confident that the qualifications they complete are a valued step to securing employment.
>
> Enable young people to pursue training that suits their personal capability and that reflects the needs of the Tasmanian economy (Skills Tasmania, Department of State Growth, 2016a).

It is noteworthy for the purposes of this Review that these ministerial priorities include no use of the word 'school'.

7.1.1.2 Providers and Facilities

Nationally endorsed VET qualifications must be delivered through Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that meet the requirements of the regulatory authority, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). These requirements include a set of key regulations about who can provide training and undertake assessments. All trainers and assessors must hold a Certificate IV Training and Assessment (TAE); have industry experience within the last three years; and maintain industry currency (i.e. a minimum of five days every two years).

Tasmanian DoE schools have discretion to choose the RTO, or RTOs, they utilise. There are a number of ways in which schools could organise these arrangements. The majority of government schools with secondary enrolments have elected to join the Tasmanian Secondary Colleges Registered Training Organisation (TSCRTO) as their auspicing body. First registered in 2006, the TSCRTO currently manages the training and assessment for VET programs at 14 sites: the eight public senior secondary colleges; and six district high schools.

7.1.2 Nature and quality of VET and VEL programs

A key principle underpinning the Tasmanian school curriculum is that 'all learners develop proficiency in literacy and numeracy, the general capabilities and the core skills for work to equip them for their futures' (DoE, 2015a, p. 8). As outlined in Table 81 below, students may be undertaking VET units and qualifications as a general preparation for entry into the world of work rather than as preparation for entry into a particular industry. Indeed, within the senior secondary context, the consultations for this Review suggest that VEL subjects, and VET units and qualifications, are being used for a range of different purposes. At the school and system levels, various VET qualifications seem to be used as a legitimate alternative to pre-tertiary study: as a way of building the skills, confidence and aspirations of

students who might otherwise leave school early; and a way to broaden the learning experience for students on tertiary pathways.

Table 81 The Identified Purposes of VEL and VET Programs in the Senior Secondary Curriculum

	Student purposes	VEL	VET
1	To gain some understanding of the world of work and develop associated core skills for work	X	X
2	To gain exposure to the world of work and get a taste of what might be involved in one or more industry sectors	X	X
3	To test a potential career pathway		X
4	To develop knowledge and skills relevant to work in one or more industries (through applied leaning subjects or VET units)	X	X
5	To develop the knowledge and skills to work in a specific industry (with a recognised qualification to demonstrate achievement of the industry standard)		X
6	To take the first steps towards an apprenticeship, traineeship or higher VET qualification		X
7	To develop practical skills relevant to an area the student may wish to study at university	X	X
8	To develop skills/gain certification useful when seeking part-time work during further study	X	X
	School/system purposes		
9	To attract and engage students who do not wish to undertake pre-tertiary subjects in order to keep them in education or set them on a pathway to employment	X	X
10	To provide achievable options for students who may not have the skills or interest to undertake pre-tertiary subjects in order to give them an opportunity to achieve their TCE	X	X
11	To ensure that there is a broad range of subject choices to available for all students, especially at Year 11	X	X
12	To build a student's confidence and self-belief through the award of a nationally recognised qualification		X

The *My Education* framework provides a clear statement of purpose for VEL-oriented subjects and activities. Consultations for this Review suggest that teachers generally understand and value the role of career planning and Australian Curriculum *Work Studies* within the K–10 Curriculum. Within senior secondary curriculum offerings, the role of *Mixed Field* Subjects – particularly *Work Readiness 1 and 2 and Pathway Planning* – are also understood within the schools consulted. However, while some teachers value *Work Readiness* as a flexible vehicle for the development of a student's foundation skills, others see it as an 'easy' way for some students to meet the TCE standards and to gain the necessary 'TASC ticks'. In this Review, those who saw the *Work Readiness* suite of subjects as a vital component of study for a student on a non-academic pathway, there was strong support for the increased clarity and rigour of the new versions of the courses to be implemented in 2017.

7.1.2.1 Vocational learning opportunities for students in Years 11 and 12

In 2006, 'Vocational and Applied Learning' (VAL) was added to the *Tasmanian Curriculum Framework* to cover the many technology, enterprise, business and community learning opportunities that were being offered to students from Year 7 to 10. Ten years on, systems are being put in place for vocational learning to become a central component of children's schooling from K–12, with VAL gradually being replaced by the Australian Curriculum's *Work Studies*, which

> focusses on developing the capacities individuals need for full and effective participation in life, learning and work. Through exposure to work-related learning, students develop the self-knowledge,

> contemporary work skills and entrepreneurial behaviours and resilience necessary to thrive in the twenty-first century. (ACARA, 2016b)

Students may also have the opportunity to engage in work-related activities and learn new practical skills through the Options programs offered in high schools. The nature of these offerings is highly dependent on the skills available within the school and the local community. It is not a requirement that students undertake work experience. Where a school does elect to auspice this, there are strict guidelines to be followed (Tasmanian Government, 2016). Although, as can be seen from the student survey results presented in Chapter 4, nearly 50 per cent of students in both Year 11 and Year 12 have paid work outside of school. These students undertake an average of about 10 hours paid work per week, which could suggest that work experience opportunities may not be a high priority for some schools or students.

Several *Mixed Field* courses provide general and personal development education, including career planning, with an emphasis on applied learning that is intended to assist students develop skills for community and workforce participation (State of Tasmania, 2016c). These courses include *Prepare for Work*, *Work Readiness 1 and Personal Pathway Planning*, and *Project Implementation 2* (State of Tasmania, 2016c). There are also a small number of other TASC accredited courses that could be classified as VEL, e.g. *Community Services Learning* and *Road Safety Education Level 2*. Further, some TASC courses are grounded in 'applied learning', e.g. *Art Making and Technical Theatre Production* (Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification 2016l).

7.1.2.2 VET for secondary students, the TCE and Qualifications Certificate

The TCE and the Qualification Certificate (QC) record achievement of accredited VET courses, the assessment of which is competency-based. All Year 11 and 12 courses are internally assessed, while pre-tertiary courses (which do not include VET courses) are also externally assessed, with final awards determined by a combination of moderated school assessment and external ratings. VET courses are dual-assessed, once for the TCE (criterion-based) and once for the AQTF (competency-based). TASC points are allocated at the unit level, and so it is not essential that a student complete a full qualification.

TASC recognises (but does not record in detail), any nationally endorsed VET qualifications and/or units of competency and nationally recognised accredited courses towards the achievement of a TCE. This includes VET achievement outside of a school arrangement. Most senior secondary students select from the VET qualifications that are available through their school, but there are some arrangements where students go to another school or Trade Training Centre (TTC) for a specific program, including students from Independent and Catholic schools accessing courses offered within the public system (e.g. *Electro-technology, Animal Studies, Agriculture, Aquaculture*).

Most VET programs make use of work placements. Interviews with departmental officers, principals and VET coordinators suggest there is an expectation that VET secondary students will spend a substantial amount of their time undertaking workplace training – usually between 20 and 30 days per academic year. Students at Rosny College, for example, undertake work placement for approximately 80 hours throughout the year (Rosny College submission to this Review, p.1). The TSC RTO states:

> The majority of our VET programs offer an additional work placement component. This element has a threefold advantage; students experience real work, employers have the opportunity to assess the student as a potential employee and VET coordinators are able to validate assessment. (TSC RTO submission to this Review, p. 2)

Within the DoE, it is policy that VET programs are not available before Year 11. There has also been an understanding that the focus should be on Certificate I and II qualifications, and only a handful of Certificate III qualifications would be offered within the public system. With the exception of the Certificate II in Agriculture and the Certificate II in Aquaculture, all Certificate II qualifications undertaken by Tasmanian secondary students are considered to be pre–entry level qualifications. In comparison, some Independent such as Circular Head Christian School, offer Year 10 students full Certificate II qualifications. Catholic secondary schools offer Year 9 and 10 students three to six units of competency from Certificate I and II.

Table 82 below outlines the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) general expectations of outcomes for graduates of Certificates I or II.

Table 82 Australian Qualifications Framework: Learning Outcomes Associated with Certificate I and II Qualifications

	Certificate I	**Certificate II**
Summary	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for initial work, community involvement and/or further learning	Graduates at this level will have knowledge and skills for work in a defined context and/or further learning
Knowledge	Graduates at this level will have foundational knowledge for everyday life, further learning and preparation for initial work	Graduates at this level will have basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge of a defined area of work and learning
Skills	Graduates at this level will have foundational cognitive, technical and communication skills to: undertake defined routine activities identify and report simple issues and problems	Graduates at this level will have basic cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply appropriate methods, tools, materials and readily available information to: • undertake defined activities • provide solutions to a limited range of predictable problems
Application of knowledge & skills	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy in highly structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy and limited judgment in structured and stable contexts and within narrow parameters

Source: Australian Qualifications Framework Council (2013).

7.1.2.3 VET and Student pathways

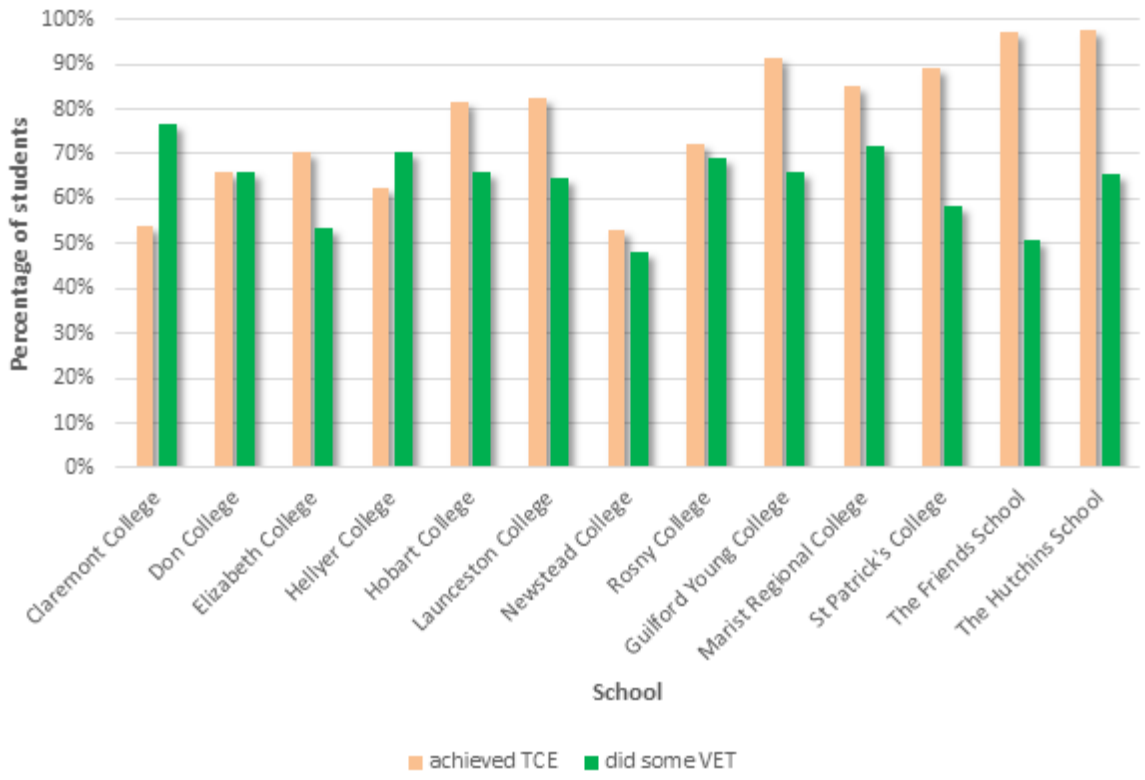
Like Tasmania, all Australian states and territories have arrangements so that students undertaking VET can gain recognition in the form of credit towards the award requirement of senior secondary certification (ACACA, 2014). The 2014 ACACA position paper, *Recognition of Vocational Education and Training towards Senior Secondary Certificates of Education*, provides guidelines for how jurisdictions are to approach and apply recognition.

In Tasmania, there were concerns raised by stakeholders in five key areas:

1. lack of consistency with which credit points for VET at different Certificate levels count towards the TCE and completion of Year 12.

2. the relationship between VET programs and the TCE 'ticks', particularly in terms of ICT VET qualifications.
3. the contribution of Statements of Attainment (as opposed to full VET qualifications) towards the TCE.
4. the arrangements by which VET can count towards the calculation of the ATAR or other tertiary entrance system.
5. the general 'fit' of competency-based qualifications inside the broader TCE offerings and policy architecture.

In Tasmania, current practice is to provide credit for the volume of learning. The TCE points attained from VET qualifications are varied; however, the RTO expectation is that the minimum points for each program must reflect the timetabled hours assigned to the VET program at the site. A Certificate II qualification that runs over 300 hours or two lines on a timetable will gain a minimum of 30 TCE points. A Certificate III qualification timetabled over 600 hours or four lines will gain a minimum of 60 TCE points. Unlike TASC courses, students who do not successfully complete a course may still receive some units in a statement of attainment and points towards their TCE. While around two-thirds of students in the college system had 'done some VET' by age 19, there is considerable variation at the college level, as Figure 20 below, illustrates.



Source: TASC, selection of Catholic and independent schools with more than 50 enrolments in 2015, of Year 12/13/adult students aged 15–19 who had achieved TCE and/or 'did some VET'.

Figure 20 Students Achieving a TCE and 'Did Some VET', 2015

7.1.2.4 Core Systems

The nature and quality of VET and VEL programs are heavily influenced by the core systems that support these programs. Core systems are defined here to include policy settings, governance arrangements, regulatory environments and resourcing decisions. When they are appropriately configured and functioning as designed, these systems underpin quality vocational learning and ensure its sustainability over time. In its submission to the Simmons Review of public provision across the VET sector (in schools and beyond), Skills Tasmania pointed to some issues that have been problematic in the Tasmanian context in recent years by drawing a distinction between the structural arrangements and the cultural divides:

> The principal issues remain the structural (including funding) arrangements for delivery and the *cultural* (academic – vocational) divides within education and training communities and the Tasmanian community more generally. (Simmons, 2012, p. 57)

While these comments relate to the overall VET system in Tasmania, the Review Team found that these issues may be all the more acute in the senior secondary years.

Core systems that influence the nature and quality of VET programs include the leadership and high-level support available to schools. This capacity within Tasmania is limited by budget constraints. In Tasmania, the policy for VET for secondary students and its resourcing is the responsibility of the DoE. Responsibility for school-based apprenticeships is shared between DoE and the DSG (Skills Tasmania, 2016a).

It is important to acknowledge the work of a small but well-regarded team of three full-time staff who have a direct responsibility for vocational policy and programs in the DoE. One full-time officer is responsible for VET for secondary students and Trade Training Centres. A further two officers are responsible for the administration of the school-based apprenticeship system in Tasmania. In addition to working at a policy and program level, these roles include direct contact with students, employers, schools and other stakeholders. The oversight of the VET for secondary students, Trade Training Centres and school-based apprenticeships by this small team means that there is limited capacity for this Team to focus on matters outside core systems and core business.

While the small number of personnel involved with VET and VEL in the DoE have extensive expertise, it would seem that there is insufficient capacity at present to bring about meaningful systemic change. This is not a reflection on the expertise and experience of the current personnel, but rather, the existing workload allocations only provide for addressing the existing minimum requirements. The budgetary constraints set limits on what can be feasibly achieved in the current climate. The cost of delivering VET and VEL programs in schools is discussed further, later in this section of the Report.

The Review Team then, observed a lack of capacity and therefore limited leadership from within the DoE for VET and VEL in schools. The *Secondary Schools Framework* however, states that:

> The first responsibility of core systems is to provide clear guidance to the different stakeholders involved in the delivery of vocational learning and VET to secondary students … School systems can reduce the burden on schools, and give them confidence that they are making the best choices for students, by advising schools on the different models; their cost, resourcing and quality implications; and ways to identify quality external RTOs. (Education Council 2014, p. 18)

One submission to this Review noted that:

> The Tasmanian Department of Education, once a strong proponent of VET, largely ignores it now. The DoE website is limited to some very general comments about enrolling in VET programs with the suggestion that the enquirer go to secondary college websites for more detail. There are no longer any VETiS director-level positions within the agency. By contrast the NT Department of Education has two directors responsible for VET in schools.

At the school level, the eight college principals and three regionally based executive officers form the Board of Management of the Tasmanian Secondary Colleges (TSC) RTO. At each site there is a quality manager who facilitates the implementation of the *TSC RTO Quality Management System* and supports the site's VET coordinators, who are responsible for the training and assessment of the qualifications. There appear to be clear governance arrangements in place to support the TSCRTO, as recognised by recent ASQA audits.

7.1.3 Current VET and VEL data across all educational settings

In September 2014, the COAG Industry and Skills Council agreed to the 2015 RTO Standards. They apply to all RTOs, including schools. There are a range of ongoing challenges faced by the TSCRTO in terms of meeting these standards. A key element of ASQA compliance is the collection and reporting of VET activity for national data collections. This includes full Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) data, in accordance with the *National VET Provider Collection Data Requirements Policy*. In Tasmania, the TSCRTO is well regarded for its meticulous attention to detail and commitment to ensuring that quality assurance and compliance arrangements have been met.

The Review Team identified that, as with the wider secondary schooling architecture, there is no shortage of data available, particularly through the edi management information system and public accountability mechanisms. However, what is published on VEL and VET is quite limited in its scope. For example, the publication *Key data – March 2016* (DoE, 2016), includes no data on VET participation, attendance, completion or outcomes. TASC reporting includes students who have 'done some VET' in the Senior Secondary Attainment Profiles for each school but without definition of what this includes. Clarity is required about the purposes for these data (e.g. annual public accountability mechanism, workforce planning, VET for secondary students' funding, educational participation).

Table 83 below, provides a summary of the number of qualifications and Statements of attainment were delivered by TSCRTO by AQF level and industry in 2015.

Table 83 Number of Qualifications and Statements of Attainment Delivered through TSCRTO, by AQF Level and Industry, 2015

	Number		Percentage of total	
	Qualifications	Statements of attainment	Qualifications	Statements of attainment
Certificate I	**206**	**224**	**18.8**	**22.2**
Automotive Retail, Service and Repair	115	**129**	10.5	12.8
Foundation Skills	27	**33**	2.5	3.3
Furnishing	16	**18**	1.5	1.8
Metal and Engineering	12	**20**	1.1	2.0
Sport, Fitness and Recreation	13	**10**	1.2	1.0
Defence Force	18	**2**	1.6	0.2
Tourism, Travel and Hospitality	3	**5**	0.3	0.5
Construction, Plumbing and Services		**7**	0.0	0.7
Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management	1		0.1	0.0
Retail Services	1		0.1	0.0
Certificate II	**787**	**634**	**71.9**	**62.8**
Tourism, Travel and Hospitality	178	**179**	16.3	17.7
Community Services	120	**56**	11.0	5.6
Sport, Fitness and Recreation	74	**66**	6.8	6.5
Foundation Skills	51	**85**	4.7	8.4
Construction, Plumbing and Services	49	**82**	4.5	8.1
Business Services	86	**30**	7.9	3.0
Agriculture, Horticulture and Conservation and Land Management	35	**34**	3.2	3.4
Integrated Telecommunications	50	**15**	4.6	1.5
Hairdressing	41	**15**	3.7	1.5
Electrotechnology	23	**22**	2.1	2.2
Animal Care and Management	27	**10**	2.5	1.0
Retail Services	18	**13**	1.6	1.3
Music	11	**9**	1.0	0.9
Beauty	8	**4**	0.7	0.4
Metal and Engineering	6	**5**	0.5	0.5
Furnishing	6	**4**	0.5	0.4
Live Performance and Entertainment	4	**1**	0.4	0.1
Textiles, Clothing And Footwear		**4**	0.0	0.4
Certificate III	**97**	**26**	**8.9**	**2.6**
Sport, Fitness and Recreation	38	**2**	3.5	0.2
Tourism, Travel and Hospitality	26	**9**	2.4	0.9
Community Services	17		1.6	0.0
Health		**12**	0.0	1.2
Screen and Media	10		0.9	0.0
Music	6		0.5	0.0
Integrated Telecommunications		**2**	0.0	0.2
Business Services		**1**	0.0	0.1
Certificate IV	**4**		**0.4**	**0.0**
Screen and Media	4		0.4	0.0
Short course		**125**	**0.0**	**12.4**
Tourism, Travel and Hospitality		**115**	0.0	11.4
Beauty		**10**	0.0	1.0
Grand Total	***1094***	**1009**	***100.0***	***100.0***

Source: Unpublished data provided by TSCRTO, 2016.

The TSCRTO's current scope of registration includes 71 qualifications and eight units of competence, offering 183 VET programs across Tasmania. These are delivered by 130 VET coordinators across the 14 sites to 2021 students. These courses range from Certificate I to IV level, with around two-thirds occurring at the Certificate II level (see Table 79).

Five industry groupings comprise more than 60 per cent of qualifications awarded in 2015:

1. Tourism, Travel and Hospitality (18.9 per cent)
2. Community Services (12.5 per cent)
3. Sport, Fitness and Recreation (11.4 per cent)
4. Automotive Retail, Service and Repair (10.5 per cent)
5. Business Services (7.9 per cent).

Consultations with school leaders and staff suggested that providing a broad range of options was essential for engaging young people with schooling. There is a considerable depth and breadth of provision in terms of academic and vocational programs. There is less emphasis on VET-focused courses. One submission to the Review noted that:

> The Tasmanian Assessment Standards and Certification Authority (TASC) includes virtually no VET qualifications on its list of available courses and so no capacity on its program building tool to build a VET focused course. There is almost no reference to VET on the TASC website, not even a link to https://training.gov.au - the principal website for VET qualifications and training packages.

A key feature of any well-functioning VET system is the use of data and performance measures to inform and improve policy and practice over time. The ACACA secondary schools framework states that:

> Measurements of performance depend on a clear and accepted definition of what is success. To be recognised as fair and accurate, the definition of success for any activity needs to reflect the purpose and intended outcomes. School and VET systems need to ensure that their data collections reflect the purpose of VET delivered to secondary students as outlined in this framework – primarily aimed at skills acquisition, but also a valid and valuable way for students to test career possibilities.

It appears that in recent times, there has been a lack of definition, direction and leadership for VET in Years 9–12 that has been exacerbated by a lack of accurate and finely-tuned VET data to address identified problems. The data audit conducted for this Review revealed that tensions exist between what measures of performance that are valued at a system level and what is valued by colleges and schools at a local level. Increasingly, the success of VET for secondary students is measured by participation rates and completion rates, whereas teachers and schools tend to adopt a broader perspective on the trajectory of the student from pre-engagement to post-school/college destination. The emphasis placed upon pastoral care and student wellbeing was emphasised by teachers and trainers who participated in this Review. They were interested in understanding improvements in a student's self-esteem and self-awareness, and the sense of achievement many students had never experienced prior to enrolling in and/or completing a training course.

Current DoE information systems are not responsible for holding and reporting data on students where VET is delivered by external RTOs. Funding for VET for secondary students programs flow to the school and the school makes the necessary arrangements to engage an RTO. However, it was discovered over the course of this Review that schools may not necessarily engage RTOs from a list of preferred providers compiled by Skills Tasmania. Although the proportion of VET delivered to school students

by external RTOs is currently low, the total number of private RTOs operating in Tasmania is estimated at more than 100. Capturing and reporting this VET activity will become increasing important for Tasmanian VET programs in schools, whether or not they maintain RTO status, including for accountability and reporting purposes.

As outlined earlier in this Report, between 2010 and 2011 there appears to have been statistical and definitional changes in how VET data are collected and reported upon. Notes attached to the data suggest that:

> The increase in student numbers in Tasmania between 2013 and 2014 is due to improved data collection processes. This has particularly improved the coverage of data on VET delivered by private training providers in 2014 compared with previous years' data. (NCVER 2015, p. 24)

The change in Tasmanian VET for secondary student numbers over the 2011–2013 period was mainly due to changes in the post-compulsory education and training system in Tasmania. This affected the methodology for counting VET for secondary students because 2012 data were collected using a methodology different from other years. As a result, 2011 and 2013 and onwards data are not comparable with 2012 data, and caution should be exercised in comparing data between years.

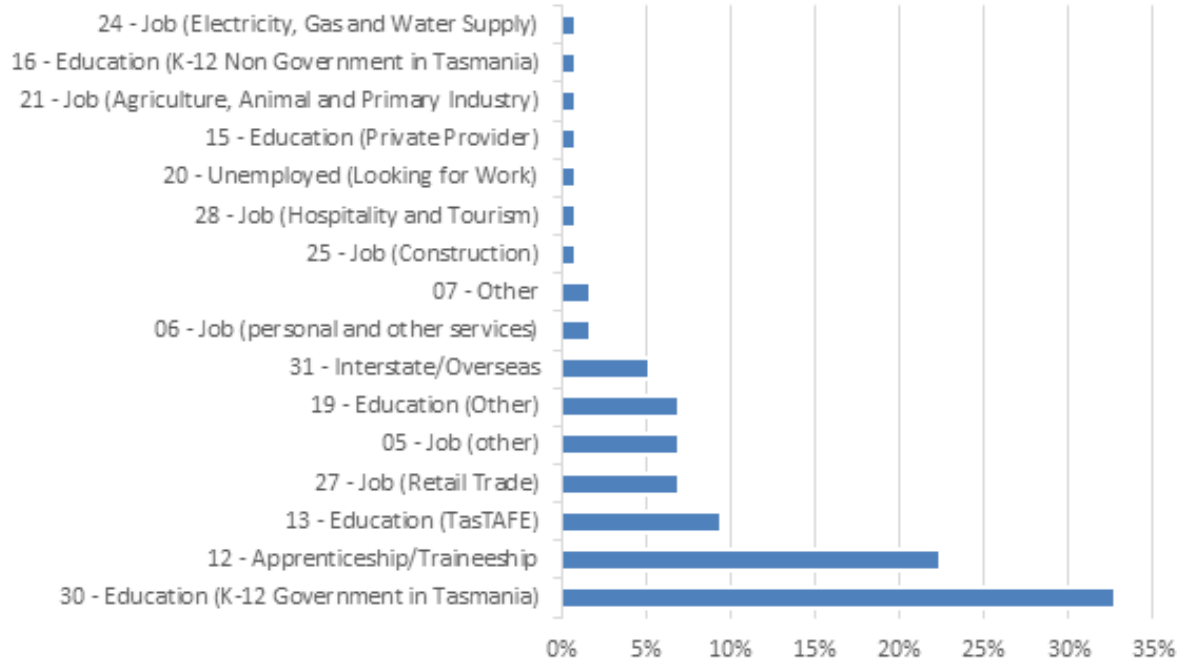
Table 84 Number of VET in Schools Students, 2006–2015

Year	Diploma or higher	Cert IV	Cert III	Cert II	Cert I	Other	Total	Annual change
2006	0	2	115	1441	1103	0	2661	
2007	0	0	134	1592	1109	0	2835	6.5%
2008	0	2	274	1853	1066	0	3195	12.7%
2009	0	2	246	1422	528	0	2198	-31.2%
2010	0	2	417	1303	853	0	2575	17.2%
2011	32	49	971	3222	1406	4	5684	120.7%
2012	4	40	2097	3555	1653	0	7349	29.3%
2013	0	25	775	3305	1016	0	5121	-30.3%
2014	0	68	1072	2407	787	1822	6156	20.2%
2015	9	23	1044	2199	562	1004	4841	-21.4%

Source: NCVER, VOCSTATS

Student destination data is valuable to schools, and as such, these data are being collected by some at the individual secondary college level. These data, albeit patchy, suggest that students leave the formal education and training system and transition to apprenticeships, employment, courses at colleges and so on. These various activities and outcomes supplied to the Review were coded against a 'Reason for Leaving Code'. At the college level, these data offer interesting insights into the positive post-school pathways taken by some young people.

Some examples are included in Figure 21. These data also show the numbers in which some young people leave a secondary college and move into either different college or TasTAFE; or an apprenticeship or traineeship. There appeared to the Review Team to be support for developing a more systematic and cross-sectoral approach across Tasmania to collecting and analysing data on post-school destinations.



Source: Unpublished data, 2016.

Figure 21 Reasons for Leaving School at One Senior Secondary College

7.1.4 Cost of delivering VET and VEL programs in schools

The ToR for the Review identified themes for investigation in relation to VET, one of which was to look at the cost of delivering VET and VEL programs in schools. The Review Team were also encouraged by some senior leaders within the DoE to examine the funding and resourcing model for VET and VEL for secondary students.

There are issues relating to the funding and resourcing model for vocational learning in secondary schools and colleges. There is evidence of tensions in the DoE funding model and the TasTAFE full cost-recovery service model. The positioning of TasTAFE in relation to vocational learning for secondary students requires clarification. A full cost-recovery service model does not meet the needs of the schools and colleges that seek the services of an RTO.

The Simmons Review has also previously reviewed the funding arrangements for provision of VET, recommending that the funding model be reviewed to move towards closer alignment with the true cost of VET delivery. This Review Team examined the current budget allocations for 2015–2016 and some qualitative information provided by DoE and school leaders.

As with other jurisdictions, Tasmania funds most of its VET for secondary students from the schools budget with the exception of school-based apprenticeships, which are funded through Skills Tasmania. In Tasmania, state secondary colleges and high schools receive a set amount of funding for VET through the DoE VET for secondary students budget. This funding contributes to the cost of employing a 'quality manager' at the TSCRTO. All other costs are met from the schools' global budget. In 2015, the total funding amount was $729 607. Proposed allocations for 2016 were $632 085. Although it is

subsidised by the government, there may be a cost associated with particular programs that are passed on to the student.

The VET for secondary students funding model is based on certificate levels and numbers of hours. Student numbers for the upcoming year, in each category, are adjusted using a conversion formula. The formula = Certificate level x number of hours / 100. The base allocation is $7000 for schools and colleges with fewer than 49 students and $10 000 for schools and colleges with 50 or more. Certificate II–level courses are subdivided into three categories (150, 300, 450). The Review heard from school leaders about the limitations of applying the 150-hour bracketing in the funding model for VET for secondary students. These stakeholders noted that other jurisdictions tend to use 120 hours as the cut-off. In their view, the 150-hour approach has had a negative effect on which programs receive funding (and therefore what can be offered and at what cost) depending on the bracket into which they fall.

One submission to the Review noted that:

> School VET programs are still viewed as being expensive. There is considerable rigidity around what can be offered to students, very often determined by staff funding allowing 600 hours per student per year. VET qualifications don't easily fit the standard 50–100 150 hours for TCE courses which makes standard 4-line teacher load building more challenging.

VET teachers appear to be employed by schools on the same basis as other teachers, and schools receive funding to cover their salaries and on costs, as is the case for other teachers. The cost of building and sustaining a viable VET for secondary students program was recognised as an ongoing issue. The analysis of the current model by the Review Team indicates that the majority of funding is allocated on the basis of student enrolments in low-cost Certificate I and Certificate II qualifications. There also appears to be no differentiation in the funding model for industry or program. There appears to be little weighting or adjustment, if any, that incentivises provision based on policy priorities (e.g. student outcomes).

An undifferentiated and non-discriminating funding model is difficult to justify in light of the criticisms levied from industry about quality and relevance. There are also examples where students are asked to pay additional fees for special equipment. There is no doubt that VET programs can be expensive to deliver and administer to a level that meets regulatory requirements, particularly for those that require ongoing use of equipment, facilities and materials to deliver.

The Review Team were shown various training environments that ranged from metal and wood workshops, commercial kitchens, cafes, beauty salons, sporting equipment, outdoor education facilities, and child-care facilities. Some of these facilities were not being used and had not been used for the whole of 2016.

This Review suggests there is a lack of coherence in the delivery of VET across Tasmania. As such, there is a need for the education community to determine:

- what VET for secondary students funding levels should be allocated for VET in Schools across the government, Catholic and Independent sectors;
- the level of annual disbursement at a global and school level;
- the underlying drivers and assumptions of the VETiS funding model; and
- understanding the 'true' cost of VET for secondary students program delivery and administration.

In addition, it appears that state government funding for VET for secondary students in non-government schools has been progressively reduced over the past several years. It should be noted that not all funding for VET for secondary students is disbursed from state training and school system budgets. For example, the multimillion-dollar federal government *Trade Training Centres Program* has covered multiple sites across Tasmania and the *National Specific Purpose Payment* has previously included some funding for VET for secondary students in non-government schools.

One secondary college was able to provide an example of the quoted cost TasTAFE services across selection of courses (see Table 85). Five courses were quoted, at an average cost per student of around $3900. The amount of government funding disbursed to schools by the DoE per VETiS student will be $343.51 in 2016 – less than one-tenth of the cost quoted. Examples such as these highlight the distortions that exist within the current funding model for public provision of VETiS programs.

Table 85 TasTAFE Proposed Fee Schedule for Delivery of Selected VET Courses for Secondary Students, 2015

Course	Days per week	Cost	Fees	No. of students	Cost per student
Certificate II in Retail Make-up and Skin Care	2	$80,000	$295 kit	~16	~$5000
Certificate II in Electrotechnology (Career Start)	2	$80,000	..	~16	~$5000
Certificate III in IT (Digital Media and Technology)	2	$6388	..	2	$3194
Certificate II in Animal Studies	2	$30,965	..	11	$2815
Certificate III in Animal Studies	2	$6986	..	2	$3493

Source: Unpublished data provided, 2016. Key themes from public submissions

The tensions in the funding model have had implications for the arrangement and partnering of schools and RTOs for the delivery of programs for VET secondary students. It was noted through the public consultations that the direct involvement of TasTAFE in school VET is not strong in Tasmania compared with other states, with its VET for secondary students market share declining in recent years. Where TAFE has been involved in the VET for secondary students and youth market, there are tensions in the funding model. TasTAFE currently operates on a full cost-recovery pricing model for its services. This model appears to have placed prohibitive barriers on the extent to which colleges and schools can draw on TasTAFE's services to auspice, deliver and/or assess training.

7.2 Public perception (including that of employers) of VET/VEL undertaken in school

It was consistently reported to the Review Team that VET qualifications are a critical component of the senior curriculum, with many school leavers having 'done some VET' by the time they leave school. While the outcomes of VET delivered in secondary schools must be the same as in any other context,

the training component is only one part of a broader approach including pastoral care and educational support, designed to assist young people to make the transition to the next stage of their lives.

Across all stakeholder groups, there were concerns expressed about the Tasmanian Government's move to shift career guidance online, and there was limited faith in a process that relied on input from teachers who, through no fault of their own, did not have the experience or understanding of the broad range of work options beyond the school gate. It was reported to the Review Team that some schools have appointed specialist staff to offer guidance, and most industry representatives consulted called for a system-wide policy to increase the number of qualified staff available to support students in this important area.

7.2.1 Views of respondents from schools

School-based stakeholders were almost universally supportive of the role of VET qualifications within the curriculum, and spoke highly of the quality of delivery and outcomes. They welcomed the versatility of VET-based studies because they feel the learnings from these studies can be applied within the wider senior secondary curriculum. Principals at the colleges visited indicated that VET was an essential component of the senior secondary curriculum with value for all students.

Several non-VET teachers spoke in support of VET, and expressed concerned about its future in the senior secondary curriculum in Tasmania. They spoke of the structure and rigour of VET qualifications through the TSCRTO. They also spoke of the value of learning in non-classroom environments where high expectations about effort and behaviour could be reinforced. The Review Team were provided with examples of students whose lives had been turned around through their involvement in a study program built around a VET qualification and a commitment to pastoral care.

There seemed to be only limited concerns about the blurring of VET and VEL roles in schools, although there were concerns expressed about the use of VET units as 'tasters'. VET trainers suggested the 'taster' experiences belonged in Years 9 and 10, rather than in the senior secondary years of school.

One stakeholder argued that there were fundamental differences in the underpinning concepts of VET in Tasmania. These differences can be summarised as either those who assert that VET is 'education for work', or those who assert that school education, (regardless of the form it takes), should take into account the student and his or her learning as the primary concern. These issues are longstanding, both in Tasmania and across Australia. Simmons (2012), for example, identified what she called a 'cultural divide' between those who valued VET in the school curriculum for providing options for less academically oriented students, particularly for those at risk of disengaging with education, and those who saw VET's major role as providing the skills required by the Tasmanian economy. Those who wanted to maintain what they saw as the integrity of VET argued that, apart from School Based Apprenticeships, schools should focus on VEL, offering a range of applied learning subjects that gave the student the opportunity to learn specific skills and had the potential to gain industry certification through the VET system's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process.

On the other hand, several schools involved in this Review indicated that they favour using VET qualifications precisely because they are recognised by industry and are nationally recognised. Several principals suggested that for some students, gaining a VET certificate was more important, and carried more weight with their parents and local community, than gaining a TCE. Other teachers and trainers in schools valued the way in which entering a VET qualification became a rite of passage for students who had to think carefully about whether they were prepared to undertake the program; make a formal

application; maintain their commitment to the externally determined requirements for the duration; and demonstrate that they were ready to undertake a structured work placement that might gain them a job offer.

It is difficult to see how these respective world views can be reconciled in a school setting where many young people are typically not ready to commit to a particular career or occupational pathway. Many students require time to explore options, and additional support to develop the skills and attitudes valued by employers. Not all industry representatives consulted, however, saw these issues as binary concerns. Some industry representatives indicated they are supportive of secondary students undertaking VET for multiple purposes, including as a 'recruiting ground' to replace ageing and retiring workforces. Similarly, many of the school-based VET trainers suggested it was a positive outcome for all concerned when students tested a potential career pathway, and decided whether or not it was for them.

7.2.2 Employers' views

There are a number of employers in Tasmania who regularly provide structured work placements for secondary students undertaking VET. Industry associations and employers spoke about the importance of engaging with schools and colleges to ensure future workforce requirements are being addressed. A number of examples were provided to the Review Team, of students being offered apprenticeships or jobs as a result of work placements, and/or after an employer had approached a trusted VET trainer for recommendations and references.

The multiple applications of VET was of concern to some employers, industry and government agency representatives. These stakeholders indicated that they believe that the content of the VET programs undertaken by secondary students are watered down, with standards lowered to ensure that a student passes. A small number of industry stakeholders indicated that in their view, VET was mainly used to keep non-academic students occupied. In these particular industries, VET qualifications were seen as an 'easy option' for students at risk. These representatives argued that many of the students involved were not actually suited to working in their particular industry, and that schools were actively counselling the better students away from VET, and from their industries.

In the consultations undertaken, it was claimed by some, that VET units and qualifications had figured prominently in the programs of students who had high rates of absenteeism. In the consultations with senior secondary principals, teachers, school-based trainers and students, however, the Review Team found little to suggest that VET is being used as a mechanism to keep recalcitrant students occupied in the education and training system until they are no longer compelled by legislation to attend. Instead, teachers spoke of how critical VET was for students who were not on an academic pathway. It was argued that gaining a recognised qualification helped these students to build their confidence; experience a sense of achievement; develop aspirations for the future; and identify a pathway from school to work. As one principal observed:

> Our students need to be convinced of the value of education and VET is one of the main ways we can do this. It makes the link between education, industry and work explicit … If it wasn't available we'd lose the ability to focus and provide courses with the best interests of the kids at heart. (Secondary College Principal).

This Review noted that the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI), in association with Skills Tasmania, has recently developed a pilot program to help people develop a set of essential skills

identified in consultation with local employers (Employer Validated Work Readiness Project)[11]. They reported that this had been very successful in both building the evidence base and creating real opportunities for the young people who participated. Conversely, it is unclear, if this Project has been formally evaluated.

TCCI has publicly stated in a response to Skills Tasmania's industry feedback mechanisms that the effectiveness of VET for secondary school students, as a pathway for young people varies across industry sectors, and indicates that generally industries have low expectations of VET undertaken by secondary students, as compared to an individual who has completed the same qualification as a trainee. The TCCI explains that:

> Industry feedback generally indicates value when delivery is by someone with an industry background and effective networks within the industry. There are some excellent examples of this working and some terrible examples of students holding meaningless qualifications (TCCI n.d., p. 7).

The reasons provided for the variability in quality and outcomes included a lack of workplace exposure, vocational competence and industry relevance. The TCCI also noted that its members find it difficult to engage with schools and that its engagement can be fragmented.

A summary of stakeholder views of the purposes, value and quality of VEL and VET in the senior secondary curriculum is summarised in Table 86 below.

[11] Resulting in a publication 'Qualities Employers are looking for in Employees' (Skills Tasmania, 2016b)

Table 86 Stakeholder Views: the Purpose, Value and Quality of VEL and VET in the Senior Secondary Curriculum

Focus	Purpose	Schools	Industry peak bodies	Influential stakeholder
Emphasis on generic skills	Develop contextualised LLN and core skills for work	Valued. VEL alone cannot provide the structured work placements needed to develop employability skills. For some students, best to combine of Work Readiness and VET	Employer groups critical of quality of young people's foundation skills and have taken steps to address this themselves. A general criticism of schooling but suggests that VET/VEL not being well utilised to develop employability skills	Absolutely essential but schools not succeeding. Employers highly critical of young people's LLN and employability skills
Emphasis on work exploration	Provide a taster – exposure to the world of work and possible pathways	Mixed. Needs to be more serious. Tasters are for Year 10	Prefer structured work placement to work experience	Role of applied learning not VET
	Provide opportunity to test a potential career pathway	Highly valued. Useful whether a student decides to continue on pathway or not	Has some value as a filtering device. May attract or deter – either is good	Role for VEL not VET
Focus on structured 'education for work'	Gain skills for work in a specific industry and a nationally recognised qualification	Highly valued. Provides structure and rigour. Gives students a sense of purpose and helps them connect education to real life. Raises confidence and aspirations. SWPs a powerful way of overcoming postcode discrimination	Some place high value and recruiting students undertaking VET for secondary students or VET graduates. Others disparaging about skills quality. Issue with CII IR/wage implications clouds perceptions of purpose and value for some	What VET is supposed to be for, but not what is happening in schools. Replace most VET with VEL and/or use accredited subjects like those in the Victorian Certificate of Education
	Provide a defined pathway towards an apprenticeship,	Strong support from all stakeholders for School Based Apprenticeships		
	Develop skills/certification to gain part-time work during further study	Not a primary purpose but useful, given the fact that so many young people work while in further education	Stakeholders did not raise	Stakeholder did not raise
	Provide practical skills training relevant to an area they may wish to study at university	Beneficial. Not extensively utilised, but starting to happen, e.g. child care studies or CIII give practical skills for someone wanting to go into teaching	Stakeholders did not raise	Stakeholder did not raise
Raise skills, confidence and aspirations	Offer a viable alternative to academic subjects to keep students at risk of dropping out at of school	Highly valued in all schools. In some schools, VET is seen as the only way to retain and engage young people and give them a solid foundation for the future	Believe this is the primary purpose and do not support	No – use applied learning subjects
Broaden curriculum choices	Provide alternative pathways that will assist more students to complete the TCE	Valued but if it came to a choice, some believe the VET certificate is of more benefit than the TCE for some students, and that these students and their parents also place greater value on VET.	Mixed response. Some feared that students who are not interested in their industry are being sent on work placements and/or students without the necessary skills are gaining certificates without work experience	No – use applied learning subjects
	Provide broader subject choices for all students, especially at Year 11	Useful. Pre-tertiary students do not have to narrow their focus too soon. Suggestion many find VET and VEL interesting	Some say this is useful if it attracts the 'better' students to their industry	No – not education for work, not building economy

7.2.3 Confidence in the Tasmanian system

Given the national external regulatory process, the Review Team took the view that there should be no material difference between the VET qualifications gained in a school context and those delivered elsewhere. This is a position supported by ACACA (2016c). Notwithstanding differences of opinion regarding the primary purposes of VET and VEL, stakeholder confidence depends largely on their perceptions of the quality of the delivery and the outcomes students achieve. As one submission to the Review observed, perceptions of quality 'can be damaged by one bad experience, by one badly run

program or by one negative or uninformed voice'. It is also possible that supporters and advocates for VET for secondary students may also inadvertently diminish its weaknesses.

Consultations with stakeholders found diverse opinions on the effectiveness of current approaches to VET and VEL. Some industry associations and employers were concerned that neither VET nor VEL – nor perhaps the Tasmanian school system more generally – was equipping students with the literacy, numeracy and employability skills they required.

Some external stakeholders were critical of the quality of VET delivery and outcomes. The main issues or claims raised with the Review Team were that:

- some school-based trainers do not seem to have a genuine understanding of what it means to work in the industry for which they are preparing young people;
- some school-based trainers are not able to develop or maintain industry currency and may not have the qualifications required by ASQA;
- some students are being 'taught the wrong things', and that some of those who have entered the workforce or gone on to a higher certificate have had to be retrained;
- the available facilities did not genuinely reflect those of the industry (e.g. a home economics centre compared to a commercial kitchen), and the equipment was out of date;
- there is a reliance on workplace simulations rather than authentic work placements, and a 'soft' approach by school-based VET trainers; and
- some students have an unrealistic idea about the industry in which they were working, and did not develop the resilience required to make an effective transition from school into the workplace.

7.2.3.1 Investigating Claims

The Review Team investigated several of the claims about the quality of and confidence in VET for secondary students, by focusing on VET delivered through schools managed by the TSCRTO. The TSCRTO is responsible for the majority of VET delivered to Tasmanian secondary students. Like all RTOs, the TSCRTO has been subject to several audits by the ASQA and has met all requirements. The ASQA recently renewed the registration of the TSCRTO for seven years. This endorsement from the national regulator concurs with the strong reputation held by the TSCRTO across a broad cross-section of stakeholders found in this Review. AQIS employer satisfaction surveys in the 2015 Quality Indicator AQIS benchmark report indicated that 77 per cent of learners were satisfied with their learning experience and 78 per cent of employers were satisfied with the TSCRTO. These outcomes mean that the certificates TSCRTO issues are of equal value to those issued by any other RTO.

The Review Team also explored the oft-stated criticism that VET students are not adequately exposed to the industry for which they may be preparing. It should be noted that the regulatory arrangements on TSCRTO requires them, along with all other RTOs to provide proof that all trainers have recent industry experience and maintain industry currency. The Review Team found that students are being taught by trainers who have worked for a number of years in the relevant industry. We followed up on a range of industry sectors, including those whose representatives had been most critical, and found that the majority of trainers working in schools originally did come from the industry concerned – many quite recently.

For example, the Review Team found that while *Home Economics* and *Technical Studies* teachers taught accredited TASC subjects and might take a VET qualification at Certificate I level, there was little evidence that this was occurring at the Certificate II level. The Review Team interviewed a number of industry-trained staff members who stressed the importance of setting and maintaining high standards, and described the range of ways in which they sought to provide multiple opportunities for students to put skills into practice in authentic contexts within the school. This was in addition to the structured work placements of up to 80 hours per year undertaken by the majority of students in exactly the same way as their counterparts in other learning contexts.

It would be misleading, however, to suggest that students undertaking VET as part of secondary schooling have the same experiences as adult learners in other contexts. Secondary students in Tasmania undertake a set of subject offerings that includes a full VET qualification or some units of a qualification. A full qualification at Certificate II level is covered over a full school year (as opposed to a similar offering in another context that could be completed in two or three months). This approach provides considerably more time to practise skills and revisit theory if required. Even where secondary school VET learners are training offsite at an external RTO, they are still part of a group of students for whom a designated teacher or teachers undertake a pastoral care role which involves the teachers taking an active interest in each student's wellbeing and educational progress, providing tailored support as required and maintaining a legal duty of care.

Thus, the VET qualification a secondary student achieves is equivalent to that awarded in any other context. Further though, stakeholders within the secondary system in Tasmania argued to the Review Team that the 'wrap around' support that distinguished VET for secondary students should be seen as a positive feature of the current model. It was reported to the Review Team that the school-based approach was helpful for most students, but particularly for those who were disengaged with school. These young people were in the process of transitioning to adulthood but may not have developed the self-management skills and resilience to undertake self-directed learning, or to take on the responsibilities associated with learning in an adult environment, such as TAFE. In the senior secondary environment, school-based trainers and other teachers saw it as a key part of their role to provide support, while gradually increasing the level of challenge. There was a pervasive belief that this was not a role that TAFE trainers were expected to take on.

7.2.4 Collaboration

To be effective, both VET and VEL require interaction with the world of work. In turn, this requires effective collaboration between individuals, organisations, institutions and government agencies, each of which has its own purposes, priorities and resource issues. While the Review Team identified evidence of successful collaborations between individual schools and between schools and local businesses, the Review Team could only find limited collaboration occurring at a system level.

Schools would not be able to offer enough structured work placements each year unless they had well-established relationships with a number of local businesses. Although there is an increasing investment of time at school management level, the bulk of this time-consuming work appears to be undertaken by school-based VET trainers and coordinators. It should be noted that this work occurs with little formal release time. With more than 1000 businesses registered with the TSCRTO to provide work placements, and a large number with the Catholic sector, it would appear that collaboration at this level is adequate to maintain the current numbers of students. However, this vital component of VET delivery appears to

be highly dependent on the energy, time and goodwill of VET trainers, and could act as an in-built limit to further growth.

A key issue of collaboration is that which occurs between industry and schools. To improve work in this area, Skills Tasmania developed an *Industry Advice Framework* in late 2013. The Framework comprises existing and new structures that provide strategic and operational advice on training and workforce development matters. An issue raised by this industry mechanism was that of 'providing more resources for VET in Schools' (Skills Tasmania, 2014). The industry advice to Skills Tasmania indicates that there is 'concern that VET in Schools programs are not suitably aligned to the world of work or the needs of industry'. It argues, more specifically, that 'many VET programs in schools seem to be general in nature and not focused on industry standards'.

Skills Tasmania has also conducted a series of 'Regional Industry Leaders' Forums', through which business leaders in regional areas have been consulted on their training and workforce development needs. Skills Tasmania has also conducted 'Community Conversations', where advice has been received from individuals, small businesses and community groups. It is the view of this Review, that these two sets of consultations should continue into the future, along with 'RTO Conversations' sessions, so that advice from Tasmania's RTOs on training and workforce development requirements in Tasmania can continued to be harvested.

Although several industry bodies indicated to the Review Team that they are interested in working more closely with schools, they suggested that this was difficult. A key reason raised by industry bodies for these difficulties was that there is no obvious central point of contact to make it easy for them to contact schools on a regular basis. Several of these bodies reported having organised one-off events in the past, but with limited resources available, they were unable to do this often. Some respondents observed that the lack of direct contact between industry and employer associations and school-based VET programs contributed to misunderstandings on all sides, and meant that schools were largely operating without industry-level input.

The Beacon Foundation model was spoken of highly by stakeholders, particularly in terms of their work across sectors. The delivery of VET programs in 'thin' markets, and the capacity of schools, colleges, Trade Training Centres and other stakeholders to build a critical mass of enrolment in a local area is problematic, and these characteristics have implications for issues of access, particularly in more rural and remote parts of Tasmania. Concerns were also raised about the capacity of the Extension High Schools to offer a sufficiently broad range of VET programs as standalone providers, and that a more collaborative approach would be preferable.

7.2.5 Summary

There were several key findings identified by the Review Team about the VET and VEL for secondary students. These findings included the view that TSCRTO provides an appropriate mechanism to ensure the schools under its auspices meet the requirements of the external regulator, ASQA. Its member schools appear to have voluntarily made arrangements to collaborate with the TSCRTO; pool their knowledge and resources; and maintain a commitment to quality student learning outcomes.

It is noted that current provision through the TSCRTO meets all ASQA requirements and is well regarded by employers in annual satisfaction surveys. However, there is evidence at the local level of misalignment in course offerings and employment opportunities; an imbalance between student choice

and employer demand; and employer concerns about the work-readiness and employability skills of graduates.

Linked to the issue of expectations of vocational learning in the secondary curriculum, there is a need to ensure confidence in both the employer and broader community that VET programs for secondary students can broaden and enhance the post-school opportunities available to young people – be that employment or otherwise. Some senior colleges collect data on the post-college destinations of their students, in the absence of such data being collected state-wide.

Concerns and uncertainty were expressed about how VET subjects and units contribute to points for TCE attainment, particularly in terms of equivalence and consistency between academic and VET subjects and across VET units.

8 Challenges

The following challenges for Tasmania emerged from the public consultations and submissions, interviews and focus groups. There were varying views on most of these issues, including in the description of the issues, the causes and the solutions:

1. the educational aspirations of students and parents
2. the nature and use of data
3. the attendance and engagement of students at school
4. the structure of Years 9 to 12 in the government sector
5. the nature and extent of the curriculum offerings available in Years 9 to 12
6. VET and VEL in the school curriculum
7. issues arising from geography and demographics, such as:
    a. curriculum and timetabling options
    b. public transport provisions
    c. matching the workforce with demand
8. assessment, reporting and moderation approaches
9. credentialing of students who complete 12 years of secondary school
10. workforce issues
11. silences.

8.1 The Educational Aspirations of Students and Parents

There is a view that some students and their parents have low educational aspirations, and that these low expectations and aspirations are linked to high rates of intergenerational poverty. It is claimed that many families do not see education as a way out of poverty, and are unconvinced of the need to continue school beyond Year 10. This view is used to explain why students are absent from school and/or are not retained in the final two years of school. Students' responses to the ACER online survey, however, show that students do have aspirations to continue school into Years 11 and 12.

Linked to the aspirations of students and parents is the overall culture of Tasmanian school education. Any changes to the organisation, structure and conduct of education requires considerable community consultation.

8.2 Nature and Use of Data

Tasmanian education has a great supply of data. Government schools are linked through the education information portal called edi, which allows them to access reports based on data provided to the DoE's data warehouse. DoE also uses the data available in its data warehouse to report to the public and to state and Commonwealth agencies, including annual submissions to the NSSC. There is, however, an overabundance of statistics, based on the data, made available to the public, resulting in conflicting reports on the status of education in Tasmania: some of these reports are produced by the DoE itself, and some are produced by commentators with an interest in Tasmanian education. This arises because some of the publicly released data are more appropriate for internal planning, by schools or the DoE, and not for public consumption.

Inconsistencies in reporting can also be explained by a lack of clear definitions of terms or a clear understanding of the derivation of reported statistics. Perhaps the most important and misunderstood concept is 'completion of Year 12'. This concept can sometimes also be conflated with 'staying on' and 'finishing school'. Some of the confusion arises from the requirements for the award of the TCE. It is possible to be fully engaged in education until the end of Year 12 and not receive the TCE. Some young people pursue VET study—through schools or through other providers—to a level that is considered the equivalent of Year 12. Some young people undertake study in schools and are eligible for a TCEA at the end of Year 12. Both groups, however, are not considered to have completed Year 12. They are not recognised as Year 12 completers in the official statistics in Tasmania or in most other Australian states and territories.

Many of the inconsistencies arise from the misuse of the official statistics, particularly in how data can be linked. In one example, results for NAPLAN have been linked to TCE attainment. The challenge for the DoE is to ensure that statistics are reported using consistent data that report on individual students. This may be possible with edi and the unique student identifier, as long as it can be taken up by all education providers.

Further, while edi provides principals with considerable information at their fingertips, it would seem that these data could be used more extensively, and in particular to understand and meet the needs of specific cohorts of students such as Indigenous students and students with disabilities. Professional learning for school principals about how to apply evidence to school improvement strategies to address these issues may be beneficial.

8.3 Attendance and Engagement of Students At School

There is a view that within the senior years completion rates are relatively low. The use and misuse of statistics underpinning these concerns has been discussed earlier in this Report; however, there is also a view that many students have fallen behind in their learning and have developed poor attitudes to school from an early age. A number of people pointed out that these 'poor attitudes' have had their origins long before Year 9. Absenteeism is seen as an issue from the earliest years of schooling for some students, even though Tasmania's attendance rates are equivalent to or better than rates in other Australian states throughout the primary years (ACARA, 2016c, Tables 17-19). Principals interviewed and those who participated in focus groups all seemed well aware of the necessity to ensure the best student attendance possible. Discussion in the public forums and focus groups indicated that awareness-raising about the importance of regular school attendance is required in the community.

The transition from Year 10 to Year 11 for all students was reported as a risky one, as all students have to re-enrol in a new school for Year 11. The transition from Year 10 to Year 11 for specific cohorts of students was specifically singled out as being problematic. Other reviews and evaluations have also identified that the transition points for school students can adversely influences attendance and enrolment data (see Brewer & Beswick, 2016; Donohoe, 2007; McDonald, 1992). Several of these reports also indicate that a 'student-centred approach' is fundamental for all students to transition from one school to another. All students making the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 have to learn skills to handle change and to cope with different school arrangements, as well as to changing school expectations. Some students cope with these changes better than others. Ensuring that students with special needs are suitably catered for, therefore, is an important consideration for the future of school education in Tasmania.

8.4 The Structure of Years 9 to 12 in the Government Sector

Related to the issues of attendance and participation is the structure of Years 9 to 12. It seems there is considerable support for the government senior college system. It is seen to largely meet the needs of students who currently attend senior colleges, offering breadth of study and a learning environment appropriate to students of that age. On the other hand, there are concerns that the current system works against students, particularly those from rural areas, who see going to a senior college as a major transition and, for some, a 'bridge too far'. The structure of Years 9 to 12, particularly in the government sector where students make the transition from high schools to separate senior colleges, has created a disjuncture for some in their schooling.

'Leaving' high school after Year 10, however, is more disruptive for some students than for others. The transition to senior colleges and their different learning environments is a good educational decision for some students. The reasons for these differing experiences vary according to individuals, their respective educational and family lives, and the available personal and public transport beyond home. Commencing the next phase of their schooling (i.e. Years 11 and 12) for some students means a move away from home, with limited student support, and living at a boarding house or entering the private rental market. The completion of Year 10, then, is commonly seen as the 'end' of school (associated with 'leaving'), particularly for those who have to leave home to attend a senior college. Where students successfully change schools or campuses at the end of Year 10, there are usually extensive, fully-funded transition programs to support all students and their parents, irrespective of their particular learning needs.

There is also a level of opposition to the government's decision to introduce Years 11 and 12 into high schools. The reasons seem to be that it will undermine the senior colleges; high schools cannot provide the same breadth of study in the senior years; and it will require workforce capacity that the high schools do not have (e.g. some high schools do not have well-qualified senior mathematics teachers). There is particular opposition to this decision in relation to high schools in Hobart, where students have the option of attending a senior college. A view also was expressed that the culture of high schools was inappropriate for students in the senior years and that high schools would struggle to create a culture for senior students similar to that of the senior colleges. In the meantime, a number of senior colleges have formed partnerships with high schools to assist them in the introduction of Year 11 and 12 courses (e.g. sharing courses and staff).

8.5 The Nature and Extent of the Curriculum Offerings Available in Years 9 to 12

There are differing views about the extent of the curriculum, with some arguing there are too many courses from which to choose, while others argue that the extent of the choice enables students in Tasmania to gain similar senior secondary school experiences to their mainland counterparts.

As outlined earlier, the Tasmanian school curriculum comprises a number of levels (1–4), with variations in the size and length of the courses. This approach seems to be employed to improve the access of students to the curriculum. It would seem, however, that there is more provision of Level 1 and 2 courses in Tasmania than there are in other Australian jurisdictions. In the Level 2 courses, there seems to be a predominance of content-based learning outcomes that lead to criteria and standards that

are not challenging enough for this level. The curriculum does not require students to do enough analysis, evaluation or synthesis.

There also appears to be little scope and sequence between courses at Level 1 and Level 2 or beyond. Some see this lack of development or articulation between different levelled courses as a strength that maintains considerable choice for students. Others see this characteristic of the curriculum as a weakness, as it means students can undertake several Level 1 or 2 courses without achieving any depth in their studies.

There are also some gaps in the Level 2 Tasmanian school curriculum when compared to the Australian Curriculum. There are no equivalent courses in *Modern History, Ancient History, Geography, Earth and Environmental Science*. Furthermore, there does not seem to be an overarching framework for assessment items, guidelines or procedures that applies across all Level 2 courses to ensure consistency across the state.

There are some differences in Tasmania between how the Level 3 courses have been integrated with the Australian Curriculum, when compared with other jurisdictions. These are outlined in more detail in Appendix 8. To illustrate, however, the Tasmanian Curriculum includes the course *Sport Science* (SPT3151113), which is a theoretical course. It appears there is not a Level 3 course where students can practise their sport. In most other jurisdictions that have courses at Level 3, there are both practical and theory components. Practical courses in sport in Tasmania can be found at Levels 1 and 2. *Physical Education* is a very popular subject at Year 12 in other states and territories, and in most jurisdictions, *Physical Education* attracts an ATAR.

Further, the structure of Preliminary and Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 may work against some students continuing to Year 12. While a student in South Australia (for example) might do *Essential English* in Year 12 (which does not have the same complexity rating as *English Literary Studies*), the student is nonetheless considered to be studying a Year 12 subject. A similar situation exists in Mathematics: in other states and territories, *Essential Mathematic*s is offered as a Year 12 subject; i.e. a 'Level 3' subject.

Computer Science is a course that jurisdictions are currently redesigning to ensure that the curriculum is contemporary. The work is being influenced by the recent rethinking of the Technologies learning area curriculum undertaken by ACARA. Courses that focus on coding and computational thinking are being developed. *Food and Nutrition* is another course in the Technology field that is experiencing strong pressure to change. Some states see this course as 'food technology', others as a science, called '*Nutrition*'. *Housing and Design* is not offered in any other state than Tasmania. Again, there appears to be little scope and sequence between courses at Level 2 and Level 3 and beyond.

Finally, there seems to be distinction made in the minds of some people with whom the Review Team spoke, concerning the nature of the teaching and learning (or pedagogies) used for 'pre-tertiary' courses and vocational education courses, with VET courses being seen as having a 'hands-on' approach that was of relevance to students' learning, and the 'pre-tertiary courses' being characterised as 'chalk and talk' courses. While this binary distinction may be a bit bald, these discussions point to unfortunate dichotomies in the teaching and learning used in these different types of courses.

8.6 VET and VEL in the School Curriculum

The learning area of Technologies houses the VET courses. Courses that deal with workplace learning also find their way into the Technologies learning area, albeit uncomfortably. There is not a TASC course for workplace learning at Level 3.

In Tasmania the policy has been not to embed the units of competency of a VET qualification into a school subject, but instead, to allow students to undertake the qualification as nationally designed and accredited, from an RTO (which may be a school). Tasmania also has allowed students to undertake Certificate I and beyond, and to record students' achievements on their Qualifications Certificate (QC).

The current model for VET for secondary students indicates that the majority of funding is allocated on the basis of student enrolments in low-cost Certificate I and II qualifications. The model does not recognise the fixed costs for secondary college RTOs, including registration, compliance and audit costs. Despite its weightings, it does not sufficiently incentivise enrolments at Certificate II and III level in qualifications that provide strong student outcomes. Enrolments at these Certificate levels also attract additional costs associated with the provision of structured workplace learning opportunities and, in the case of apprentices, support for work placements.

8.7 Issues Arising from Geography and Demographics

Issues for Tasmania arise in the provision of education and training to a relatively small population dispersed across a wide area. There is also a perception that many Tasmanians associate strongly with local areas (and see distances and travel times as a barrier). There are concerns on the part of families and communities that young people will leave their local areas and not return. A related concern is that Tasmania may lose its more able young people to the mainland and overseas. Furthermore, for those rural families who want their children to attend senior colleges, there are the costs of transport and possibly boarding or renting accommodation outside of the family home.

8.7.1 Curriculum and Timetabling Options

Given the geography and demographics of the student population in Tasmania, it is possible for schools outside the major urban centres to offer a limited number of courses. While blended learning opportunities through the use of technologies can expand the curriculum offerings available, the number of courses a school in a small rural town can offer in the secondary years is more limited than in the larger schools. Further, in those schools where students' attendance is dependent on public transport, the curriculum in these schools is governed by the bus timetables.

8.7.2 Public Transport Provisions

Convenient transport is an issue in some rural areas. Students travel on both public and private systems. Public buses and transport routes are organised by Transport Tasmania, which operates under different legislation and priorities from that of the DoE. The Review Team met students who were catching three buses in each direction to attend school. The level of motivation to attend school by these students was remarkable, but it left the Review Team wondering why attending school was made so difficult for these students. The Review Team also heard that many of the buses servicing schools were overcrowded, and that the only adult on the bus was the bus driver. The degree of risk associated with

maintaining the current system of bus transport for school students seems to outweigh its benefits, and would seem to be a considerable influence on the attendance rates at some schools.

8.7.3 Matching the Workforce with Demand

As outlined in Chapter 6 of this Report, there are challenges for Tasmania in matching teaching expertise with the courses to be taught in Years 9 to 12, including in the delivery of the VET courses. There are courses offered where there is a lack of teachers with suitable specialist qualifications or experience, and so there is considerable out-of-field teaching occurring. It can also be expected that over the next decade the most experienced teachers will retire. This issue is discussed further below.

8.8 Assessment, Reporting and Moderation Approaches

There are specific challenges in regard to assessment processes used in Years 9 to 12 with different models to assessment implemented and different timing required for reporting: Years 9 and 10 follow a standards-based curriculum, while Years 11 and 12 essentially utilise a criterion-based curriculum. All Year 11 and 12 courses are internally assessed by teachers, while pre-tertiary courses (which do not include VET courses) are also externally assessed. Final results are determined by a combination of moderated school assessment and external ratings.

Students undertaking VET courses experience a competency-based approach to assessment. VET courses are dual-assessed, once for the TCE (criterion-based) and once for the AQTF (competency-based). TASC points are allocated at unit level so it is not essential that a student complete a full qualification.

These different approaches to assessment are implemented at different times during the school year, and so the respective administrative requirements of assessing and reporting are constant throughout the school year.

The use of moderation is well regarded across Tasmania but, it would seem, it is valued more for the professional learning it affords teachers than to ensure consistent standards of performance are administered across the state.

8.9 Credentialing of Students Who Complete 12 Years of Secondary School

It was outlined earlier (in Chapter 7), that Tasmania seems to be out of step with other jurisdictions in regard to the recognition given to students undertaking VET qualifications. Achievement of accredited VET courses is recorded on the TCE and Qualifications Certificate (QC).

8.10 Workforce Issues

The teaching workforce in the government sector experiences two different forces concurrently: in high schools there are a number of ‘acting’ positions at all levels of leadership, which then influences the degree of stability experienced across the system in high schools. At the same time, the personnel located in the senior colleges is comparatively stable, with few ‘acting’ positions and a lower rate of turnover of teaching staff.

It can also been seen in Chapter 5 that many teachers in high schools believe they are not adequately experienced to teach senior secondary subjects, particularly in specific teaching fields such as mathematics. Further, with the introduction of the Extension High Schools, there is a challenge with sourcing suitably qualified VET trainers, for the courses to be taught.

A key criticism underpinning the current system is that the profile of the teacher workforce drives much of what is offered in the way of both general and vocational subjects in schools. The quality and outcomes of what vocational learning is offered in secondary schools is, in large part, dependent on the qualifications and experience of the teacher/trainer workforce, and how the people match the local demands. In addition, the efforts of the VET for secondary students workforce to remain compliant with ASQA requirements, through the TSCRTO, is an ongoing challenge for the Tasmanian secondary schooling system.

The age profile of the Tasmanian school education teachers and school leaders suggests that over the next decade a substantial number of the workforce will leave or retire. It is now timely to ensure the extent of curriculum offerings expected, and the number of schools requiring teachers is addressed through a succession plan.

Aligned with the recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and school leaders, is the issue of ongoing professional learning. There appears to be a considerable demand for professional learning, particularly about the curriculum and assessment requirements throughout Foundation to Year 12.

8.11 Silences

As telling as the information provided to the Review Team are the silences, where no information is forthcoming. One obvious silence, or gap, concerns Indigenous students in Tasmania. The Review Team noted that the Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Association has ceased operations. The following information concerning Indigenous education in Tasmania was received by the Review Team:

> The present circumstances are that there is currently no Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) in Tasmania. Ideas are currently being explored as to how to establish a consultative body for a number of purposes. This exploration is in its very early stages. The Department is therefore unable to assist ACER in accessing a consultative body that can effectively represent the view of Aboriginal people in Tasmania.

The Review Team also noted that in comparison to other jurisdictions, that TASC does not provide a course in *Aboriginal Studies*.

A problem for Aboriginal students in Years 9-12 reported to the Review Team was that Indigenous students often lack targeted support in identifying pathways towards achieving an ATAR. The removal of the pathway planners from schools has meant that there are fewer people for Indigenous students to access advice on subject choices. It was reported that the introduction of the *My Education* website has not been an adequate alternative for Indigenous students, particularly if they do not have the support of a teacher to help them in understanding how to effectively navigate the site.

9 Recommendations and Policy Options

This Report demonstrates there are major policy issues relating to educational provision for Year 9 to 12 students in Tasmania at the present time. It is also expected that the diversity of needs of Tasmanian Year 9 to Year 12 students will continue into the future. As such, ACER has taken a *long-term perspective* to the provision of recommendations and policy options. Here, the design features for future educational provision for Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania are presented with the aim of providing opportunities for improvements in students' attendance, retention and attainment. The recommendations and policy options presented here summarise the proposals presented in the body of the Report, and stem from a desire to maximise students' engagement and participation rates, and thereby, successful learning for all Tasmanian students.

The following principles have been employed to inform the recommendations proposed below.

- Completion of Years 9 to 12 is an expectation of every student.
- The structures and curriculum for Years 9 to 12 enable continuity of learning.
- The pathways students pursue over Years 9 to 12 differ according to individual learning needs.
- School completion is accompanied by formal recognition of what the student has achieved over their years at school.

The recommendations and policy options that relate to the Years 9 to 12 curriculum provision and design, are provided so that there is alignment is achieved with:

- the Australian Curriculum F–12 and the Tasmanian Curriculum; and
- a national view of VET for secondary students.

Specifically, this section presents recommendations regarding:

- participation and transition policies and procedures that align with the findings of the report and the *Education Bill;*
- future curriculum provision and recognition - Years 9 to 12;
- workforce development strategy (particularly for Years 11 and 12);
- VET and VEL in Tasmania's government and non-government schools; and
- collection and use of data.

These respective overarching recommendations are aimed at increasing students' attendance, retention and attainment by

- improving the status and quality of school education in Tasmania;
- re-invigorating and renewing the teaching workforce including the recruitment of suitably qualified senior secondary subject specialists.
- creating an articulated and developmental curriculum through Years 9 to 12;
- establishing networks of schools where informal relationships have not already been initiated;
- building on and where appropriate, formalising existing informal networks between schools where they already exist; and
- enabling students to move easily between the respective campuses by dedicating funding for buses of a suitable size for the number of students, and a bus driver who is allocated to specified regional and rural schools.

9.1 Recommendation 1: Take an holistic approach to system and sector improvements

Given the highly inter-connected nature of the issues impinging on strategies to improve the attendance, retention and attainment of students, it is proposed that any changes are planned and implemented in an holistic way at the sector, system and school levels. Changes will take time to implement and will require work at the local level to ensure that there are shared understandings of the changes to be implemented. Such an approach will require acknowledging the inter-connectedness of curriculum, infrastructure, budget and workforce recruitment requirements and capacity building.

9.2 Recommendation 2: Review and update the formal curriculum, assessment, reporting and accreditation requirements

As outlined in this Report, there are several challenges concerning curriculum provision, recognition and accreditation of achievements of students in Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania. To address these challenges the following recommendations are offered:

- Update course documents for Levels 1 to 4 so there is scope and sequence across all courses and consistency of expectations across all Years;
- Review and update the single year courses;
- Increase the explicit inclusion of the General Capabilities and Core Skills for Work in TASC approved course documents;
- Provide guidance about the nature of assessment and reporting that is expected;
- Review and/or remove the TCE standards (ie the 'tick system'); and
- Provide targeted and sustained professional learning.

9.2.1 Update Course Documents for Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4

It is recommended that the TASC course documents are updated to achieve the following:

- Improve the consistency in the descriptions of the criteria and standards in Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 courses (in some courses the standards are expressed as work requirements, in others as differences in the quality of work).
- Align local course documents (e.g. *English Communications*) to their national counterparts (i.e. senior secondary Australian Curriculum English) to ensure coherence and clarity.
- Simplify the structure of the Years 9 to 12 curriculum and ensure the pathways through it are made more explicit.
- Improve the quality of Level 2 courses. There is a predominance of content-based learning outcomes that lead to criteria and standards that are not challenging enough for this level.

- Improve the curriculum continuity between Level 2 and Level 3 courses.
- Review and update course accreditation guidelines.
- Package Level 2 and 3 courses that provide discrete Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) pathways.

In the process of updating course documents, the programs of study should be assessed in terms of their contemporaneity and relevance to students.

9.2.2 Review or update the single year courses

- Undertake a specific, longitudinal investigation to determine whether the policy approach being undertaken is actually working for Tasmanian students, and if so, what level of impact is being achieved.
- Conduct a detailed financial analysis to determine the costs and return on investment of providing such an extensive set of single year curriculum offerings in Years 11 and 12, to determine whether it achieves the purpose of improving attendance, retention and attainment outcomes of students.

9.2.3 Revise and update the 50, 100 and 150 hour courses

- Cull the number of small, bespoke courses offered, or redevelop them so that they are suitable for Tasmanian students, irrespective of location, and where courses are redeveloped, ensure the new courses are inventive, forward thinking, and global in perspective.
- Publish explicit criteria that match the outcomes and hours to be achieved from the respective 50, 100 and 150 courses, and review all courses to ensure they are consistent with the published criteria.
- Review Level 2 courses with a view to:
    - increasing the outcomes required by students;
    - increasing the consistency of expectations on students across all courses at this level.

9.2.4 Explicitly include the General Capabilities and Core Skills for Work in TASC course documents

It is recommended that the General Capabilities outlined in the Australian Curriculum and the Core Skills for Work are explicitly included as appropriate, in the approved TASC course documents. Currently, the General Capabilities and the Core Skills for Work are not explicitly mentioned in TASC courses. To focus the attention of teachers on the General Capabilities and the Core Skills for Work, it is recommended that

- each course document includes a specific description of the role that the General Capabilities and the Core Skills for Work play in student learning; and
- the processes for the accreditation of courses take due account of the representation of the General Capabilities and the Core Skills for Work in the course documents.

Consideration could be given to whether recognition of other core skills and competencies should also be provided.

9.2.5 Provide guidance about the nature of assessment and reporting that is expected

- The clarity about the expectations on teachers and performance criteria for students when allocating grades to students work is enhanced.
- Common guidelines are provided to teachers and students about the type of assessment instruments that should or could be used to enhance validity and reliability and that are 'fit for purpose' depending on the nature of the learning being undertaken. It is also recommended that overarching directions are provided to teachers and curriculum writers about how much assessment of students work should be undertaken, and the conditions under which these assessments are administered.
- Courses are reviewed to use outcomes-based assessments for internal and external assessment purposes in Years 11 and 12 to ensure the accredited curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements are consistent across all schools and year levels for Years 9 to 12.
- The Years 9 to 12 curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements are updated to ensure there is consistency across the year levels to ensure that students' learning is developmental and progressive, rather than comprised of a number of 'one-off' learning experiences.
- The rigour of the moderation processes are improved so they meet the purpose of ensuring consistency of standards achieved by students across Tasmania, in a given course.
- National Ministerial agreements are reviewed to ensure the policies and practices in place in Tasmania, honour existing agreements made.

9.2.6 Review the requirements for determining whether students meet the TCE standards

It is recommended that the existing requirements for meeting the five standards underpinning the TCE are either removed in their present form, or other ways in which these standards can be met are identified. If the standards system underpinning the TCE is to be maintained, the tests should be updated. For example, the ICT literacy test should be computer based and more closely aligned with current curriculum priorities. It is also possible to identify other existing approaches to acknowledging students' literacy, numeracy and ICT literacy levels. These approaches include:

- Reaching Level 8 on NAPLAN in reading, spelling and numeracy;
- Embedding the General Capabilities and the Core Skills for Work; and/or
- Reviewing all existing course documents to update which courses receive recognition that successful completion of the course also brings with it one or more ticks.

9.2.7 Provide professional learning targeting changes in the curriculum and in alternative assessment and reporting approaches

- Conduct targeted professional learning to bring teachers and school principals up-to-date with curriculum requirements and assessment and reporting expectations, in light of the introduction of the Australian Curriculum.
- Provide specific professional learning for teachers in how to conduct criterion-referenced and standards-based assessment and reporting approaches.
- Provide professional learning for teachers and school principals about how to undertake project based learning, design STEM learnings and integrate enterprise education within the context of the Australian and Tasmanian curriculum frameworks.

- Provide teachers and school principals with professional learning about how to develop the General Capabilities and Core Skills for Work within their teaching and learning.

9.3 Recommendation 3: Consider the establishment of multi-campus government schools

Build on existing informal networks and the infrastructure established for the Extension High Schools to phase-in curriculum for students in Years 7 to 12 through the use of multi-campus schools that enable a comprehensive suite of curriculum offerings to be made available to all students enrolled.

This recommendation is proposed to address participation and transition policies and procedures, and to establish the foundation for the cultural changes about remaining in school beyond Year 10, is to establish multi-campus schools. Discourse about the roles of high schools and colleges in Tasmania tends to be presented in binary terms: either maintain the status quo, where high schools and colleges are kept separate, or add Years 11 and 12 to all schools with students currently in Years 7 to 10. Such discourse is not constructive to determining how to best ensure that all Tasmanian students achieve to their full potential.

The recommendation here is to establish several multi-campus schools for Years 7 to 12, although it could be that in some locations developing F-12 multi-campus schools may be beneficial. Multi-campus schools in Australia usually comprise a number of campuses that work together as a single educational entity. Each campus has its own speciality: for example, some campuses target the needs and interests of particular groups of students, such as junior secondary campuses being designed to support the learning of young adolescents; and senior secondary campuses being designed to provide more adult learning environments. Some multi-campus schools are co-located with TAFE and university campuses; while others constitute private-public partnerships.

There are many examples across Australia including in the non-government school sector in Tasmania, where networked, multi-campus arrangements have been put in place. Multi-campus schools in other states and territories include:

- Sydney Secondary College in New South Wales, with campuses in Balmain, Leichhardt and Blackwattle Bay;
- Dubbo College in New South Wales, with two junior campuses (Delroy and South) and one senior campus;
- Denison College of Secondary Education in New South Wales, with campuses in Bathurst and Kelso;
- Castlemaine Secondary College in Victoria;
- Caulfield Grammar in Victoria which has five campuses (three in Melbourne, Yarra Junction, and Nanjing – China);
- The Roma Mitchell Secondary College in SA which includes a co-educational campus, a girls' education campus and a special education campus; and
- Southern Cross Catholic College, Scarborough, Queensland.

Here it is proposed that several multi-campus schools are created, where high schools and colleges are networked together to formally construct one collegiate secondary school for Years 7 to 12 across several campuses. The establishment of multi-campus schools could formalise existing networks, such as the group of five schools that are already collaborating with Don College; or could be developed over time through processes of community consultation, and leadership from the respective school communities in particular locations.

Each of the collegiate secondary schools would have one administration responsible for all campuses, and be governed by one parent council drawing membership from across the respective campuses. An Executive Principal would be responsible for the whole school, across all campuses, and be assisted with a distributed leadership team comprising Campus Heads and small administrative units at each school campus.

It is proposed that staff allocations be made to the school as a whole, rather than to an individual campus, and the curriculum offerings and the workloads of staff be considered across the whole school, not simply on the basis of individual campuses or year levels taught. Staff would be considered as secondary school teachers, with the expectation that they work in Years 7 to 12, as required. Highly experienced teachers would be expected to provide professional mentoring and coaching support and guidance to less experienced staff across the campuses within the school, with a special focus on the requirements for the delivery of the curriculum in Years 11 and 12.

Students would enrol once in Year 7, and that enrolment would then continue through to the end of Year 12. Students would be provided with the opportunity to complete Year 12 undertaking subjects selected from the full suite of subject offerings the school is able to offer across its campuses. Such an approach would place control of the timetable at a central level within each multi-campus school, and would facilitate study options across all campuses.

If multi-campus collegiate secondary schools were created, these schools are likely to have total enrolments of between 1500 and 3000 students. To support students' access to the different campuses within the school, it is proposed that schools be provided with dedicated school buses and drivers, where required. That is, schools would control the movement of students between campuses, and the dependency of schools on externally provided transport systems would be removed. In addition, existing schools with attached boarding facilities could have the use of these facilities coordinated across the respective campuses.

9.3.1 Meet the pre-requisites required

To ensure that the establishment of any multi-campus schools in Tasmania is successful, the following prerequisites would have to be satisfied:

- Specific proposed options be developed in consultation with local stakeholders for different regions;
- Extensive community consultations be undertaken and support gained;
- Supporting infrastructure be put in place:
    - Buses and drivers be allocated to the multi-campus schools;
    - Technologies be used to broaden curriculum offerings, that are supported with teachers specifically trained to support blended learning;

    - Administrative IT infrastructure and associated common protocols be put in place so that there is a secure Local Area Network (LAN) across all campuses and within the Wide Area Network (WAN) of the school education sector;
- Professional learning for all staff and the school community be provided to build a cohesive school identity that is inclusive of all campuses;
- Relevant Acts of Parliament, Administrative Guidelines and Policies are put in place to support the implementation of multi-campus schools; and
- Appointment of highly competent principals is undertaken.

9.3.2 Establish a philosophy and identity for each multi-campus school

To ensure community acceptance of the multi-campus school model, it would be incumbent on each Executive Principal to build a strong school philosophy, vision and identity that takes account of local demands, expectations and requirements. Those appointed to the role of Executive Principal would therefore have to be exemplary leaders and managers who can draw communities together and coordinate education provisions across multiple sites.

To ensure the community continues to identify with their local schools, it is proposed that the name of the location is maintained in the new name of the school, such as Triabunna Campus of the Eastern Collegiate School.

9.3.3 Establish an implementation plan

It is recommended that the establishment of multi-campus schools occurs after careful consultation with the relevant school communities. It is anticipated that the first collegiate secondary schools could commence from the beginning of the school year in 2019. This timeline would provide time for the following activities.

2017	Education Act is proclaimed
	Decisions are made about which current schools form the new schools
	Community education and consultations about new arrangements are commenced
2018	Executive Principals are selected
	Parent Councils are elected
	Changes to administrative guidelines are completed
	Students are enrolled into the new schools
2019	New schools commence

9.3.4 Identify Potential Multi-campus Collegiate Secondary Schools

It is recommended that the multi-campus schools are established with one of the eight senior colleges within each cluster of schools. Other multi-campus schools could be established, based around the four largest district high schools. In addition, it may be beneficial for non-government and government schools to consider the potential to form multi-campus schools using shared resources; and similarly it may be beneficial to consider multi-campus schools that are F to 12, and therefore include primary and secondary schools.

It is recommended that where clusters of schools already have informal clustering or networking arrangements in place, these existing arrangements are leveraged and formalised.

To implement this proposal it is recommended that a coordinating group, with adequate resources and community involvement, be established to facilitate communication and collaboration across government and non-government agencies, and with other stakeholders.

9.3.5 Build on the Strengths and Mitigate Against the Risks

9.3.5.1 Strengths

This recommendation offers the following strengths:

- It provides a structural response to address the long-term cultural changes required to encourage students to remain at school beyond Year 10;
- It builds upon current education theory advocating that schools work in networks (e.g., National College for School Leadership, 2006; State Government Victoria, 2016; University of Melbourne, 2016).
- It would generate an overall net saving on the costs for the administration of student enrolments, as most students would enrol once for their secondary schooling and the transition points would be minimised.
- The school curriculum would be conceptualised as a secondary curriculum with scope and sequence built into students' learning from Years 7 to 12.
- The proposal builds on existing informal structures.
- All existing infrastructure would continue to be used and built upon.
- Staffing arrangements would be formalised across a cluster of schools, all considered to be one school on several campuses.
- Changes to existing arrangements would be minimised.
- The proposal would overcome some of the problems associated with the introduction of Extension High Schools.
- Career paths for secondary teachers would be clearly established from Year 7 to Year 12.
- Coaching and mentoring approaches across schools could be formalised into a whole school improvement plan.
- The proposed approach would provide opportunities to adopt a strategic approach to VET.
- Each multi-campus school could be part of the TSCRTO, and could supplement VET courses with local providers.
- Within the context of multi-campus schools, efforts could be undertaken to support and enhance current collaboration at school and regional levels to arrange clusters of VET activity that builds a critical mass of vocational programs and allows for different schools to specialise in industries specific to the respective local communities.

9.3.5.2 Risks

The following risks impinge on this proposal:

- The new Education Act is interpreted as a barrier rather than an enabler of this recommendation.
- There is a lack of willingness in local communities to see their local school become a campus in a larger organisational structure.

- The establishment of explicit career paths and expectations that all secondary teachers are to teach students in Years 7 to 12, is resisted.
- Transport Tasmania does not support the changed arrangements.
- Suitable transport within the control of schools is not arranged.
- The status quo is maintained.

9.3.6 Establish funding provisions to support the introduction of multi-campus schools

In addition to the usual school resourcing provisions, to support the establishment and sustainability of multi-campus schools, it is proposed that funding is provided for the following:

- communication and consultation strategies within communities;
- school buses and drivers as required;
- professional learning for teachers and school principals; and
- in-school research and evaluation to support school improvement processes.

9.4 Recommendation 4: Initiate regular long-term strategies to change public perceptions about the value of school education and VET in Schools

Cultural changes in the way that school education is perceived in Tasmania was raised as a concern by many participants in this Review. Changes in culture require a long-term commitment to that change. As foreshadowed earlier, public perceptions about the value of school education vary across Tasmania. Some students and their parents highly value school education, while other families are less convinced of the value of remaining at school or in training until the end of Year 12.

It is recommended that

- community awareness-raising workshops and campaigns are put in place, with the deliberate message to encourage students to remain at school beyond Year 10; and
- the three school sectors work with local employers and peak industry groups to improve the collaboration between schools and the world of work.

9.5 Recommendation 5: Implement a development strategy to support the rejuvenation of the workforce and potentially, the implementation of multi-campus schools

Irrespective of whether Recommendation 3 outlined above is adopted or not, the Tasmanian community is dependent upon a futures-oriented workforce development strategy. Several strands to the workforce strategy are proposed here:

- School improvement plans;
- Professional learning for teachers, school principals and curriculum writers;
- Career paths from initial teacher education and beyond; and
- Succession planning.

9.5.1 Support School Communities to Develop Improvement Plans

It is recommended that all school communities continue to prepare their four year strategic plans, annual operational plans, annual reviews and external reviews, and to makes these publicly available on schools' and sector websites. The annual operational plans should specifically identify approaches to deliberate school improvement, where the curriculum goals, approaches to improving students' learning outcomes and approaches to professional learning within the schools, are deliberately articulated and inter-connected.

9.5.2 Support Ongoing Professional Learning Consistent with AITSL Standards and Guidelines

It is recommended that teachers, school leaders, school communities and curriculum writers are all provided with accredited and tailored professional learning that is scheduled over time. It is further recommended that the professional learning provided is in line with the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2014a); the *Australian Professional Standard for Principals* (AITSL, 2014b); and with associated policy guidelines and support documents including the following:

- how to identify and focus on the General Capabilities and Core Skills for Work in the senior courses;
- how to use blended learning with technologies;
- using evidence to inform practice;
- establishing and sustaining research-based professional learning communities;
- coaching and mentoring for deliberate school improvement;
- how to build and sustain formal and informal networks of schools to support professional learning between experienced and more experienced teachers; and
- building the capacity for distributed leadership and facilitation at all levels (see, for example, National College for School Leadership, 2006).

9.5.3 Establish Explicit Career Paths Linked to the Australian Professional Standards

Career paths for teachers in Tasmania generally consist of the aim to become a college lecturer of senior secondary students or to become a principal in a high school or college. It is recommended that the career paths for teachers are linked more strongly and explicitly to the career progression outlined by the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL 2014a), and that professional learning is provided to support teachers to move through these respective stages of their careers.

9.5.4 Undertake Succession Planning

It can be seen in Chapter 5 of this Report that many teachers and school principals are approaching retirement age. Informed by the above aforementioned approaches to workforce development, it is proposed that the three school sectors undertake a detailed analysis of the likely workforce trends over the next decade, and on the basis of this analysis put in place detailed succession plans for the

replacement of teachers and school principals. It is further proposed (and as outlined below), that post-graduate programs are made available to enable selected high quality teachers who are aspiring to be school principals, to undertake an extended program of preparation bout school leadership.

9.6 Recommendation 6: Improve the status of VET and VEL in schools through community involvement in the development of a future vision and associated implementation strategy

This Review has revealed that improvements in the status, value and statewide leadership in VET is required. As such, it is recommended that the Tasmanian Government facilitate community involvement to develop a statewide vision and implementation strategy for VET for secondary students.

9.6.1 Develop a Statewide Vision for VET for Secondary Students to 2030

It is recommended that a statewide vision to 2030 for VET for secondary students is required. To support the establishment of a statewide vision, it is proposed that a high-level strategic forum is convened involving representatives from the three education sectors, TASC, the TSCRTO, CEO RTOs, TasTAFE, Skills Tasmania, and key business and industry groups. The aim of this forum would be to contribute to a vision for VET and VEL in the secondary curriculum. Following this forum, the draft vision could be canvassed and consulted upon across the three school sectors prior to its confirmation.

9.6.2 Develop an Accompanying Implementation Strategy

Based on the statewide vision, it is recommended that an implementation strategy is developed that includes approaches to both statewide and local leadership of VET for secondary students in the context of multi-campus schools.

Associated with the development of an implementation strategy for VET for secondary students it is proposed that:

- the Tasmanian Government facilitate closer engagement with industry associations and schools (e.g. by targeting and prioritising key industry sectors on a rotational basis, to run regular forums in training areas identified as current policy priorities);
- industry associations work proactively and closely with VET trainers in schools, and with employers, to prepare students for the world of work; and
- the TCE requirements are adjusted to increase the recognition of VET for secondary students for the achievement of a TCE.

9.7 Recommendation 7: Re-evaluate the nature and use of data collected

As outlined throughout this Report, there is a need to re-evaluate which statistics are reported publicly and how these statistics are reported to the public.

9.7.1 Identify Differences When Reporting Nationally Agreed Data

The data collected from schools are necessary for monitoring and planning, but not all of the data has to be placed into the public domain. There are reporting statistics that all jurisdictions have agreed to use, such as the number of students who enrol in Year 12 full-time as a percentage of students enrolled in Year 10 two years earlier. It is recommended that related statistics are reported with a clear explanation of differences in regard to Tasmanian schools.

9.7.2 Develop a State Definition for Equivalence Between VET Units and Year 12

There are a number of reporting issues yet to be agreed among and within jurisdictions, including the reporting of the number of young people who complete a local equivalent of Year 12, the majority of which is done through a VET pathway. This is an issue for Tasmania, as the state, when compared to the other Australian jurisdictions, has a greater proportion of young people who choose the VET pathway. But with no alternative certificate that is considered equivalent to the TCE, it is difficult to report how many young people are reaching the target of Year 12 or its equivalent.

9.7.3 Afford VET Data a Higher Profile in Public Reporting

The Review recommends that the Tasmanian Government afford VET data a higher profile in public reporting. This approach would be consistent with a greater emphasis on the availability of a strong VET component in the school structures proposed in this Report. There must, however, be an emphasis on quality over quantity of data. Such data must also take a broad perspective on the role of vocational learning in the secondary curriculum overall, and not be relegated to the ‘also studied’ and ‘other’ categories of data on student participation.

9.7.4 Recognise Positive Changes in Trends When Reporting to the Public

It is recommended that positive changes in trend data are positively reported to the public. There is the impression that Tasmanian schools are underperforming when, in fact, more young people than previously, are remaining at school to complete Year 12, which means that there have been positive changes that have occurred in recent years. The review of the data for this Report has found that the statistics that best indicate completion of Year 12—the Year 7-12 apparent retention rate and the Year 11-12 direct retention rate—are increasing and that the gap between Tasmania and other jurisdictions is decreasing. Recognising the positive changes in data through incorporating an historical perspective into public reporting is one strategy to change public perceptions.

9.7.5 Comment on Reports from Outside Sources and Issue Reports Using Official Statistics

No matter what actions the government takes in relation to the reporting of education statistics, there will always be members of the public who will reassemble those statistics for various purposes. As such, it is recommended that when statistics are presented by outside agencies and individuals, the Tasmanian Government responds to these reports. In some cases, the arguments presented are spurious, as they rely on undisciplined uses of data and a mismatch of publicly available statistics. But the Review Team has not been able to identify government responses to the misinterpretation of statistics, although there have been internal discussions about this matter. It is recommended, therefore, that the government be prepared to comment on reports from outside sources and issue its own reports using official statistics that include the positive changes that have occurred over time.

Finally, it is suggested that information systems and inter-governmental protocols should ensure smooth and timely transfer of data across the responsible agencies and authorities—e.g., provider (TSCRTO), funding (DoE), regulator (ASQA) and TCE issuing body (TASC)—and include non-government schools so that basic monitoring can be achieved to the benefit of all students in all schools.

9.8 Other policy options

Several of the recommendations and policy options outlined above are dependent upon policy and practice changes by UTAS. The following policy options are proposed to take account of these dependencies:

- Support UTAS to introduce quotas within the respective strands of initial teacher education
- Support UTAS to increase the ATAR level required by applicants into initial teacher education
- Support UTAS to align the demands for teachers in Tasmania with the number of successful applicants into initial teacher education
- Align qualifications with teaching and leadership requirements

9.8.1 Support UTAS To Introduce Quotas Within The Respective Strands of Initial Teacher Education

It is proposed that UTAS is supported to put in place quotas on the number of early childhood and primary teachers prepared, and that an increased emphasis is placed on recruiting ITE students to become secondary teachers, particularly in the fields where there are known shortages. To achieve this outcome, it is recommended that the three school sectors liaise with UTAS about the nature and number of specialist teachers required.

9.8.2 Support UTAS To Increase The ATAR Level Required By applicants into initial teacher education

To raise the quality and status of teachers in Tasmania, it is recommended that UTAS requires ITE students have ATARs that are in the top 30 per cent of UTAS student applications.

9.8.3 Support UTAS To Align The Demands For Teachers in Tasmania With The Number Of Successful Applicants Into Initial Teacher Education

To ensure that teachers are prepared by UTAS that will meet the requirements of government and non-government schools in Tasmania, it is recommended that the number of initial teacher education applicants to UTAS are matched to the demand for teachers identified by the three school sectors. That is, the intake of students into ITE courses at UTAS is limited to the expected demand within Tasmania.

9.8.4 Align qualifications with teaching and leadership requirements

To support workforce development for teachers and principals, it is recommended that consideration be given to creating the following scholarships and post-graduate programs:

- post-graduate scholarships for teachers to retrain in subjects or disciplines where there are known shortages of appropriately qualified teachers (e.g. STEM);
- post-graduate programs for aspiring school principals; and
- post-graduate programs for current school principals.

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11 Appendices

Appendix 1	List of Public Submissions Received
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11.1 Appendix 1: List of Public Submissions Received

Also interviewed Professor Maggie Walter, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Aboriginal Research and Leadership, University of Tasmania, with Alison Stone, PhD candidate

Organisation	Name
Guilford Young College	
Hobart College	
Isolated Children's Parents' Association - Tasmanian State Council	
Newstead College	
Southern Tasmanian Catholic College Trade Training Centre	
Tasmanian Association for the Gifted Inc.	
The Tasmanian Secondary Colleges (TSC) Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	
	Adrian Drane
Warren's training services	Allan Warren
Tasmanian Greens	Andrea Dawkins
St Mary's College	Andrew Baker
Scotch Oakburn College	Andy Müller
Assistant Principal, VET Quality Manager, Newstead College	Brad Cottam
	Brendan Schmidt
	Caroline Bounds
TASSO	Cassandra Wells
Rosny College	Deb Day
Education Ambassadors	Eleanor Ramsay Michael Rowan
	Gail Dennett
	Grant MacDonald
	James Orpe
Claremont College	Janine Bowes
Australian Education Union (AEU) Tasmanian Branch	Jeff Garsed
National Educational Associations of Tasmania (NEAT)	Jill Abell,
Claremont College	Jim Ransom
Youth Network of Tasmania	Joanna Siejka
Catholic Education Tasmania	John M Mula
Claremont College	Kaleb Smith
	Kathleen McMahon
	Maree-rose Jones
	Mark Kingsley
TASITE	Martin Chambers
	Mike Frost
	Mike Middleton
Rosny College	Mr Bill Shoobridge
	Patrick Midson
	Peter Rowe
Managing Director, CACSA	Reg Allen
Live Well Tasmania	Robin Krabbe
	Saul Eslake
	Deborah Brewer

11.2 Appendix 2: Surveys

Teacher Survey

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is conducting a review of Years 9 to 12 in Tasmanian schools on behalf of the Minister for Education and Training. One objective of the Review is to identify the qualifications and specialisations of the workforce, particularly among teachers of students in Years 11 and 12. This survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. All information will be kept confidential. Your responses will remain anonymous. ACER will ensure that no individual teacher or school can be identified by the responses.

We will use questions about you and your school only to determine whether your school is a college or is a high school participating in the *Extending Years 11 and 12 Programme*, and whether students have access to other education opportunities. We will report by aggregating information we receive so that no school or individual can be identified.

ALL

1. What is the name of your school?

[OPEN TEXT]

ALL

2. What is your gender?

○ Female ○ Male ○ Other [OPEN TEXT]

ALL

3. How old are you?

○ 20-29 ○ 30-39 ○ 40-49 ○ 50-59 ○ 60-69 ○ 70+

ALL

4. Which of the following ***best*** characterises your current position in the school? (please tick one box only)

○ Mainly classroom teaching	GO TO 5
○ Senior management (no regular classroom teaching)	GO TO 13
○ A combination of classroom teaching and management	GO TO 5
○ Mainly providing specialist support to students	GO TO 11
○ A combination of classroom teaching and specialist support	GO TO 5

WITH CURRENT CLASSROOM TEACHING DUTIES (Q4=1, 3 or 5)

5. How many years have you been teaching? (include this year as one of your teaching years)

[OPEN TEXT]

WITH CURRENT CLASSROOM TEACHING DUTIES (Q4=1, 3 or 5)

6. How many years have you taught a subject in Year 11 or Year 12?

[OPEN TEXT]

WITH LEADERSHIP DUTIES (Q4=2 or 3)

7. How many years have you been in a school leadership position? (include this year as one of your teaching years)

[OPEN TEXT]

WITH LEADERSHIP DUTIES (Q4=2 or 3)

8. How many years have you been in a school leadership position at this school?

[OPEN TEXT]

WITH CURRENT CLASSROOM TEACHING DUTIES (Q4=1, 3 or 5)

9. In the matrix below, please indicate in which learning areas you are ***qualified*** to teach. We are collecting this information for *broad learning areas* only, and not specific subjects or programs within each learning area.

	Years 7-10	Senior Secondary				
Subject Area		**Preliminary**	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**
English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Languages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technologies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health and Physical Education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Humanities and Social Sciences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mixed Field	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
VET/VEL	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Special Needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify) [OPEN TEXT]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

WITH CURRENT CLASSROOM TEACHING DUTIES (Q4=1, 3 or 5)

10. In the matrix below, please indicate in which learning areas you are teaching this year. Please include learning areas and levels you may have taught earlier this year or will teach in Term 4, 2016. We are collecting this information for *broad learning areas* only, and not specific subjects or programs within each learning area.

	Years 7-10	Senior Secondary				
Subject Area		**Preliminary**	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**
English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Languages	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technologies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health and Physical Education	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Humanities and Social Sciences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mixed Field	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
VET/VEL	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Special Needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify) [OPEN TEXT]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

STUDENT SUPPORT TEACHERS (Q4=4 or 5)

11. What type of specialist support do you provide in the school? (please tick all that apply)

Library	☐
Special Needs	☐
Learning Support	☐
Behaviour Management	☐
School Counselling	☐
Career and Life Planning	☐
Vocational Education and Training	☐

CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND STUDENT SUPPORT TEACHERS (Q4=1, 3, 4, or 5)

12. Do you have responsibility for any of the following in your school? (please tick all that apply)

Transition support	☐
Grade coordinators	☐
Flexible provision	☐
Timetabling and scheduling	☐
Enrichment programs	☐
Learning area leadership	☐
Public relations/publications/marketing	☐
Student services	☐
First aid	☐
Professional learning communities	☐
Staff wellbeing	☐
School ICT policies/procedures/management	☐
Events management	☐

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ROLES (Q4=2 or 3)

13. What is your leadership/management role in the school? (please select one)

○ Principal
○ Assistant Principal
○ Subject/Learning Area Leader
○ Other (please specify) [OPEN TEXT]

COMBINATION OF ROLES (Q4=3 or 5)

14. Approximately what percentage of your school time is devoted to each of your roles? (please ensure that your responses sum to 100%)

Classroom teaching	[OPEN TEXT]
Leadership/management	[OPEN TEXT]
Student support	[OPEN TEXT]
Total	[Calculated field, sum of three above]

ALL

15. Which of the following qualifications do you hold? Please indicate the academic discipline of each qualification.

Degree or diploma	Discipline
☐ Bachelor degree	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Master's degree	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Doctorate	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Diploma of Teaching	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Diploma of Education	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Graduate Diploma	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Graduate Certificate	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Certificate I	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Certificate I	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Certificate III	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Certificate IV	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Diploma	[OPEN TEXT]
☐ Other (please specify) [OPEN TEXT]	[OPEN TEXT]

ALL

16. What are the biggest challenges facing your school for addressing the needs of students in years 9 to 12? What are your suggestions for how to meet these challenges?

[OPEN TEXT]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

Student Survey

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is reviewing the curriculum for Years 9–12 in Tasmania. We are interested in what you plan to do about school and study in the coming years and whether the current arrangements meet your needs. This survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. All information will be kept confidential. Your responses will remain anonymous.

All students

1. What is the name of your school?

[OPEN TEXT]

All students

2. What is your gender?

○ Female ○ Male ○ Other [OPEN TEXT]

All students

3. What year are you in?

○ Year 9	GO TO 4
○ Year 10	GO TO 4
○ Year 11	GO TO 7
○ Year 12	GO TO 7

Year 9 or 10 students only

4. Do you plan to complete Year 10?

○ Yes	GO TO 5
○ No	GO TO 8

Year 9 or 10 students who plan to go on to complete Year 10 (Q4=YES)

5. Do you plan to go on to Year 11?

○ Yes	GO TO 6
○ No	GO TO 13

Year 9 or 10 students who plan to go on to Year 11 (Q5=YES)

6. Where do you plan to start Year 11?

This school	
A different school	NAME OF SCHOOL [OPEN TEXT]
A college	NAME OF COLLEGE [OPEN TEXT]
Home study	CHECK IF THIS IS AN OPTION
Other	[OPEN TEXT]

All students

7. Do you plan to complete Year 12?

○ Yes	GO TO 13
○ No	GO TO 13

Year 9 or 10 students who don't plan to complete Year 10 (Q4=NO)

8. What are your reasons for leaving school before completing Year 10? You may choose more than one reason [You may select up to 3 reasons]

○ I'm not doing very well at school	
○ I want to do study or training that isn't available at school	
○ I don't like school in general	
○ I don't like this school	
○ I want to earn my own money	
○ I don't need to complete Year 10 for the job I want	
○ Other reason (please specify) [OPEN TEXT]	

GO TO Q13

Year 9 or 10 students who plan to go on to Year 11

9. Do you plan on doing any VET/VEL study in Year 11 or 12?

○ Yes	
○ No	
○ Don't Know	

Year 9 or 10 students who plan to go on to Year 11

10. Do you plan on doing a school-based apprenticeship in Year 11 or 12?

○ Yes	
○ No	
○ Don't Know	

Year 11 or 12 students only

11. Are you currently doing or have you done any VET/VEL study in Year 11 or 12?

○ Yes	
○ No	
○ Don't Know	

Year 11 or 12 students only

12. Are you currently doing or have you done a school-based apprenticeship in Year 11 or 12?

○ Yes	
○ No	
○ Don't Know	

All students

13. What do you plan to do in the year *after* you leave school?

○ Go to University [SHOW THIS RESPONSE ONLY IF Q7=YES]	GO TO 15
○ Get an apprenticeship	GO TO 15
○ Get a traineeship	GO TO 15
○ Go to TasTAFE	GO TO 15
○ Do some other course or training elsewhere	GO TO 15
○ Look for work/get a job	GO TO 14
○ Take a gap year	GO TO 15
○ Have time off for an unspecified time/go travelling	GO TO 14
○ Other (SPECIFY [OPEN TEXT])	GO TO 14
○ Don't Know	GO TO 14

14. Do you plan on doing any study or training at any time after leaving school?

○ Yes	GO TO 15
○ Yes – I'm already doing some other study/training	GO TO 15
○ No	GO TO 16
○ Don't Know	GO TO 16

15. What is the highest level of study you plan to do?

○ Certificate I or II	
○ Certificate III or IV	
○ Diploma, Graduate Diploma or Graduate Certificate	
○ University degree (Bachelor, Master or Doctorate)	
○ Don't Know	

16. This year, have you done any of the following to find out about future study or types of work? [TICK ALL THAT APPLY]

○ I did an internship, work experience or work placement	
○ I attended job shadowing or work-site visits	
○ I visited a job fair or career expo	
○ I have used the *My Education* website	
○ Guest speakers have come to school to talk about their job or workplace	
○ I attended an information day at the University of Tasmania	
○ Someone from the University of Tasmania has visited to discuss study options	
○ I attended an information day at TasTAFE or another VET provider	
○ Someone from TasTAFE or another VET provider has visited to discuss study options	
○ I researched options for further study	
○ I researched the internet for information about careers	
○ I used my network of family and peers to find out about work	
○ A teacher at school helped me investigate career and life planning options	
Other (please specify) [OPEN TEXT]	

17. Do you currently have a job outside school hours?

○ Yes	GO TO 18
○ No	GO TO 21

All students who have a job (Q17=YES)

18. About how many hours do you work in a typical week?

[OPEN TEXT]

19. What is your job?

[OPEN TEXT]

20. Is this the type of job you would like when you are 21 years old?

○ Yes	
○ No	

All students

21. What type of job would you like to have when you are 30 years old?

[OPEN TEXT]

22. Do you feel well prepared to make decisions about your future study or work options?

○ Yes – very well prepared	
○ Yes – somewhat well prepared	
○ No – not well prepared	

23. What is the highest level of schooling completed by your parents/guardians?

	Parent 1	Parent 2
Completed Year 12		
Completed Year 10 or 11 and then did some study at TAFE		
Completed Year 10		
Completed some secondary, but not more than Year 9		
Completed primary school only		
Did not complete primary school		
Don't know		

24. Do your parents/guardians have any of the following qualifications?

	Parent 1	Parent 2
○ A doctorate (PhD) or equivalent doctoral program		
○ A university degree – Bachelor, Graduate Diploma or Masters		
○ A TAFE Diploma (e.g. Diploma in Accounting, Diploma in Veterinary Nursing)		
○ A TAFE Training Certificate IV (e.g. in Hairdressing or Bricklaying)		

○ Don’t Know		

25. Any other comments?

[OPEN TEXT]

Thank you for completing this survey

11.3 Appendix 3: List of the Scheduled Meetings

Scheduled Meetings in Hobart

Monday 12 September 2016	**Tuesday 13 September 2016**	**Wednesday 14 September 2016**	**Thursday 15 September 2016**	**Friday 16 September 2016**
Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interview	Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interview	Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interview	Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interview	Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interview
• Tasmanian Equal Opportunity Commissioner – Robyn Banks	• Division of Communities, Sport and Recreation – Dr Suzanne Mallick, Principal Liaison Officer – Multicultural Plus another	• Organisation supporting students with disabilities FG	• Sectors	• Principals FG
• Curriculum Framework Advisory Group	• CSIRO	• Support Education/ Curriculum Support FF	• Professional Associations	• Framework Advisory Council
• Tasmanian Commission for Children – Mark Mossissey	• UTAS – Karen Swabey & Associate Professor Helen Chick	• Support Education / Curriculum Support FF	• Unions	• International Baccalaureate – Chris White, IDBP Coordinator
• Beacon Foundation – Scott Harris		• Catholic Education Office – John Mula	• Standards Agencies	
		• DoE Curriculum Teachers Leaders FG	• Professors Ramsay & Rowan	
			• Shadow Minister of Education and Chief of Staff	
			• Parents	

Scheduled Meetings outside of Hobart

Monday 19 September 2016	**Tuesday 20 September 2016**	**Wednesday 21 September 2016**	**Thursday 22 September 2016**	**Friday 23 September 2016**
Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interviews	Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interviews	Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interviews	Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interviews	Scheduled Focus Group Meetings and Interviews
Location: Launceston	Location: West Smithton	Location: West Roseberry	Location: West Queenstown	Location:West Glenora
• Disability Focus Group	• Smithton High School (started Year 11 in 2015)	• Rosebery District High School (started Year 11 in 2016. Duncan Murfet (Principal) and Sam Mawer (AST)	• Mountain Heights District School (started Year 11 in 2016 • Andrew Woodham, Principal	• Meeting with Adam Potito, Principal
• Supporting education programs	• Circular Head Christian School	• Tasman District High School (Tasman Peninsula) Duncan Murfet (Principal) and Sam Mawer (AST)		
• Principals Focus Group	• Circular Head Trade Training Centre			
• Public consultation	• Principal: Keith Billing ???			
	Location: East	Location: East	Location: East	Location: East
	• Port Dalrymple School (to start Year 11 in 2017)	• St Helens and St Marys District High Schools (in partnership, started Year 11 in 2015)	• Meetings with ICPA and LGA in Swansea. Leanne Dann.	• ICPA Southern Midlands Council, Oatlands Mandy Burbury Midlands Branch Treasurer, ICPA
	• George Town Trade Training Centre	• Break O'Day Trade Training Centre	• Triabunna District School (to start Year 11 in 2017) (east coast. Paul Dalla-Fontana, Acting Principal	
	• Focus groups or interviews in Scottsdale	• Campbell Town District High School		

11.4 Appendix 4: List of the Stakeholder Groups who participated in This Review

- Curriculum Framework Advisory Council
- Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner
- Department of Premier and Cabinet, Community Development Division, Dr Suzanne Mallick, Principal Liaison Officer – Multicultural; and Matt Bowditch, Policy Division
- CSIRO Education
- OAK Training & Development Services
- Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT)
- Australian College of Educators
- Tasmania Association for the Gifted
- Independent Schools of Tasmania
- Independent Education Union:
- Tasmanian Council
- Australian Education Union
- Parents' representatives:
- St Mary's College
- Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO)
- Department of Education
- DoE - MyEducation
- DoE - MeOnline
- DoE - Curriculum
- DoE - Strategy and Performance
- Skills Tasmania
- Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (TASC)
- TasTAFE
- Tasmanian Secondary Colleges RTO
- Catholic Education Tasmania (CAT)
- Group Training Tasmania
- Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (TCCI)
- Tasmanian Automobile Chamber of Commerce
- Civil Contractors Federation Tasmania
- Dairy Tas
- Master Builders Tasmania
- TasICT
- Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board
- Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association
- Tasmanian Hospitality Association
- Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council
- Tasmanian Small Business Council
- Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania
- Beacon Foundation
- Ms Bobby Coma
- National Educational Associations of Tasmania

- AST High School College Transition
- Huonville High school
- New Town High School
- Kingston High School
- Rose Bay High School
- St Marys District School
- Don Association
- Brendan-Shaw College
- PHS Association
- BighART
- Marist Regional College
- Education Ambassadors UTAS
- Don College
- Live Well Tasmania
- Burnie High School
- Parklands High
- Burnie City Council
- Possability
- Launceston College
- Examiner
- Greens Representative
- Kings Meadows High School
- Parents
- Retired Teachers
- Calvin Christian School
- Rosny College
- The Friends School
- The Hutchins School
- OAK Tasmania
- The Friends School
- TEA
- Cires Victoria University
- Beacon Foundation
- MacKillop Catholic College
- Save the Children
- UTAS
- Guildford Young College
- AEU
- St Aloysius College
- St Mary's College
- St Virgils College
- Dominic College
- Office of Tasmanian Labor Leader
- Youth Network of Tasmania
- Calvin Christian School

- St Mary's College
- Engineers Australia
- Mike Frost & Associate
- Huon Valley Trade Training Centre (Grade 11/12 Expansion)
- Smithton High Trade Training
- Catholic Trade Training Centre

11.5 Appendix 5: List of Schools that were Visited by the Review Team

- Port Dalrymple School, George Town
- Scottsdale High School
- St Helens District High School
- Campbell Town District High School
- Triabunna District School
- Claremont College
- Hellyer College
- Hobart College
- Launceston College -
- Rosny College
- The Don College
- Elizabeth College
- Jordan River Learning Federation
- Smithton High school
- Mountain Heights High school
- New Norfolk High school
- Glenora High school
- Rosebery District High School

Trade Training Centres

- George Town TTC
- Circular Head TTC
- Break O'Day TTC
- Huon Valley TTC
- West Coast TTC / Mountain Heights HS
- South East TTC

11.6 Appendix 6: Copy of the Advertisements Placed in Newspapers to Advertise the Public Consultations

Review of Years 9-12
Public consultations and call for public submissions

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is conducting an independent review of education for Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania on behalf of the Minister for Education and Training. ACER will report on and make recommendations to Minister Jeremy Rockliff regarding:

- current curriculum provision, including vocational education and training
- assessment and moderation practices in Years 9 to 12
- workforce characteristics, and
- proposed future directions.

You are invited to attend a public consultation with Professor Geoff Masters AO (CEO of ACER) and his research team.

Date: **1 September 2016**
Time: **6.30pm**

Date: **2 September 2016**
Time: **1.00pm**

Venue: **Best Western Hobart**
156 Bathurst Street
Hobart

Call for public submissions

ACER is also seeking public submissions. All members of the public are invited to make a submission through the ACER website. The website contains more information about the Review of Years 9 to 12. Public submissions will be accepted until 30 September 2016.

www.acer.edu.au/tasmania-912-review

Australian Council for Educational Research ACER

Review of Years 9-12
Public consultations and call for public submissions

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is conducting an independent review of education for Years 9 to 12 in Tasmania on behalf of the Minister for Education and Training. ACER will report on and make recommendations to Minister Jeremy Rockliff regarding:

- current curriculum provision, including vocational education and training
- assessment and moderation practices in Years 9 to 12
- workforce characteristics, and
- proposed future directions.

You are invited to attend a public consultation with Professor Geoff Masters AO (CEO of ACER) and his research team.

Date: **30 August 2016**

Time: **1.00pm or 6.30pm**

Venue: **Bayviews**
2 North Terrace
Burnie

Call for public submissions

ACER is also seeking public submissions. All members of the public are invited to make a submission through the ACER website.

The website contains more information about the Review of Years 9 to 12.

Public submissions will be accepted until 30 September 2016.

www.acer.edu.au/tasmania-912-review

Australian Council for Educational Research ACER

Review of Years 9-12

Public consultations and call for public submissions

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- current curriculum provision, including vocational education and training
- assessment and moderation practices in Years 9 to 12
- workforce characteristics, and
- proposed future directions.

You are invited to attend a public consultation with Professor Geoff Masters AO (CEO of ACER) and his research team.

Date: **31 August 2016**
Time: **1.00pm**

Date: **19 September 2016**
Time: **6.30pm**

Venue: **The Tailrace Centre**
Waterfront Drive
Riverside

Call for public submissions

ACER is also seeking public submissions. All members of the public are invited to make a submission through the ACER website. The website contains more information about the Review of Years 9 to 12. Public submissions will be accepted until 30 September 2016.

www.acer.edu.au/tasmania-912-review

Australian Council for Educational Research

ACER

11.7 Appendix 7: General Capabilities in the Tasmanian Curriculum

The first column in Table 81 lists each of the seven General Capabilities.

The second column in Table 81 provides extracts from 'Representation of the General Capabilities' statement in ACARA's senior secondary subject *English* — the equivalent subject to *English Communications (ENC315116*). The intention here is to examine how ACARA:

- represents the General Capabilities in this subject (the nature, level, and extent of description)
- connects each of the seven General Capabilities to the study in the subject.

Please note that the dot points in Column 2 are a selection by the reviewer of the points made in the statement 'Representation of the General Capabilities' for *English* (ACARA).

The third column in Table 81 seeks to show how one reader of *English Communications ENC315116* (in this case the reviewer) might interpret the course requirements with reference to each of the seven General Capabilities in this subject. Please note that the dot points in Column 3 are a selection of points by the reviewer, taken from the Learning Outcomes and the Content (the Five Strands) in English Communications (EN315116).

Table 87 Comparison in the Representation of the General Capabilities in English, Australian Curriculum (ACARA) and English Communications ENC315116 (TASC)

	ACARA Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum subject, English	**TASC course, English Communications, (ENC315116)**
Literacy	learn to make increasingly sophisticated language choices learn about language and how it works, and apply this knowledge to the practical skills understand how the language in use is determined by the many different social contexts and specific purposes critically interpret information and evaluate the way it is organised in different types of texts	communicate accurately and effectively in written English (Learning Outcomes, p.1) how language is used to position audiences (Learning Outcomes, p.1) explain how text structures and features are used, and their effect (Learning Outcomes, p.1) apply language to inform, entertain, persuade, and analyse (Ongoing Elements Strand, p.9) develop their skills as confident and effective communicators (Ongoing Elements Strand, p.8)
Numeracy	learn about analytical images like figures, tables, diagrams, maps and graphs, and how they affect and complement verbal information in factual and persuasive texts	opportunities to create and analyse text-types such as reports, tables, diagrams, informational texts (Applications Strand, pp.6–7)
ICT Capability	interpret and create print, visual and multimodal texts research online, and collaborate and communicate with others electronically access, analyse, modify, and create hybrid, digital and multimodal texts, using digital publishing	create oral, written, and multimodal texts for a range of purposes, contexts and audiences (Learning Outcomes, p.1) demonstrate understanding of the socio-cultural factors that influence the construction and interpretation of ICT texts (Ongoing Elements Strand, p.9)
Critical and Creative Thinking	analyse the opinions, points of view and unstated assumptions embedded in texts explore the impact of subjective language, feeling and opinion on the interpretation of text	explain how texts, as social constructs, represent ideas and issues (Learning Outcomes, p.1) explain how language is used to position audiences (Learning Outcomes, p.1)

	ACARA Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum subject, English	**TASC course, English Communications, (ENC315116)**
	consider the innovations made by authors, imagine possibilities, plan, explore and create ideas for imaginative texts based on real or imaged events	produce an individual and original text (Communications Project Strand, p.7) produce tangible, original, learner-generated products (Applications Strand, p.6) create alternative readings of texts (Texts and Contexts Strand, p.5)
Personal and Social Capability	understand that language is central to personal and social identity through exploring narrative point of view and the way it shapes different interpretations and responses in readers. able to articulate their own opinions and beliefs and to interact and collaborate with others	work collaboratively with others to achieve group goals (Learning Outcomes, p.1) develop deeper understandings of themselves and the world around them (Ideas and Issues Strand, p.3) work collaboratively to investigate a communications media (Applications Strand, p.6)
Ethical Understating	study the social, moral and ethical positions and dilemmas presented in a range of texts apply the skills of reasoning, empathy and imagination to consider and make judgements about actions and motives	apply the principles of academic integrity (p.1) articulate a reasoned personal positon in response to texts (p.1) demonstrate awareness of the complexity of issues as they develop ethical and valued ways of being and acting in the wider world (Ideas and Issues Strand, p.3)

	ACARA Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum subject, English	**TASC course, English Communications, (ENC315116)**
Intercultural Understanding	engage with literature from a wide range of cultural groups, languages, speakers, and writers explore the role of myth, symbolism and life matters in perspectives on people and ideas, from the past and present question stated and unstated cultural believes and assumptions create texts that present diverse cultural perspectives	describes how language creates cultural representations in texts (p.1) investigate an idea or issue through a variety of perspectives using a range of texts (p.3) study 'Imagining Australia', 'Belonging', and 'Telling Truths' (Ideas and Issues Strand, p.3) focus on three concepts: the positioning of audience, genre, and the creation of culture through representations. (Text and Contexts Strand, p.5)

11.8 Appendix 8: Provision of Level 3 Courses

In order to find out whether there are sufficient opportunities, or courses, for students, the following analysis compares the courses that are available at Level 3, Year 12, in other major jurisdictions in Australia.

What courses are available in the various learning areas in the major jurisdictions in Australia? Are there comparable courses offered to students in Tasmania?

Please note that in many cases, courses with the same title and under the same learning area, may have major differences in their approach or content. In some cases, subjects (such as Psychology) that have been placed in a learning area by a state or jurisdiction, have been placed in another learning area in this paper to aid comparisons to be made.

Table 88 The Arts

Tasmania	Queensland	South Australia	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
ARA315116 Art Theory and Criticism					
ART315112 Art Production ART315214 Art Studio Practice	Arts in Practice Visual Art Visual Art in Practice	Visual Arts- Art Visual Arts - Design	Visual Arts	Visual Art Design	Art Visual Communication – Design Studio Arts
DNC315115 Dance Choreography and Performance	Dance Dance in Practice	Dance	Dance	Dance	Dance
MED315112 Media Production	Media Arts in Practice Film, TV, and New Media	Media		Media Production and Analysis	Media
MSM315115 Music	Music Music Extension Music in Practice	Solo Performance Ensemble Composition and Arranging Music Styles Musicianship	Music 1 Music 2 and Extension	Music	Music Performance Music Investigation Music Style and Composition
SDD315115 Drama SDP315115 Theatre Performance	Drama Drama in Practice	Drama	Drama	Drama	Drama Theatre Studies
	Creative Arts	Creative Arts			

As can be seen in this chart, students in Tasmania are afforded similar opportunities to study Level 3 courses in the Arts as in other states. Of interest is 'Art Theory and Criticism' that does not seem to be offered as a full subject in other jurisdictions.

No doubt, some art theory and criticism would be part of some subjects such as Visual Art. Two states offer generic Creative Arts courses that is cross-disciplinary. Media is not always placed within The Arts.

Table 89 English

Tasmania	Queensland	South Australia	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
EAL315115 English as an Additional Language or Dialect	English for ESL Learners	EAL	ESL	EALD	Bridging English as an Additional Language
ENC315116 English Communications	English Communi-cation	English	English	English	English Language
ENL315114 English Literature	English English Extension	English Literary Studies	HSC English Extension 1 HSC English Extension 2	Literature	Literature
ENW315114 English Writing					
	Functional English Literacy	Essential English	Fundamentals of English		Foundation English

The influence of the integration of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum into the English offerings around Australia has begun to makes its mark. It should be noted that Tasmania, ACT, South Australia/Northern Territory, Western Australia, and Victoria have completed the integration process, while Queensland and New South Wales have begun the process recently.

There is no equivalent to a subject devoted totally to writing, 'English Writing' in other States. In some states there are opportunities for students to study Essential English or Foundation English, at 'Year 12 level', in their 12th Year. The senior secondary Australian Curriculum for Essential English provides for four units of this subject, with Units 3 and 4 undertaken in Year 12.

In Tasmania, these opportunities also exist, but at Levels 2, 1, and Preliminary. The structure of Preliminary, Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 which exists in Tasmania, may militate against some students continuing to Year 12. Thus, while a student in South Australia might be studying Essential English in Year 12, which does not have the same complexity rating as English Literary Studies, the student is considered to be studying a Year 12 subject.

Another interesting aspect of this array of English courses is the varying approaches to English as an Additional Language by the States and Territories. This subject has eligibility criteria which vary across the states. The courses also vary in nature and purpose, where in some states the courses veer towards teaching the subject as 'another language', while in other states they lean towards teaching the subject as 'English'.

Table 90 Health and Physical Education

Tasmania	Queensland	South Australia	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
HLT315113 Health Studies	Health Education	Health	Personal Development, Health & Physical Education	Health Studies	Health and Human Development
OXP315113 Outdoor Leadership		Outdoor Education	Personal Development, Health & Physical Education	Outdoor Education	Outdoor and Environmental studies
SPT315113 Sport Science	Physical Education Recreation	Physical Education	Personal Development, Health & Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education
	Early Childhood Studies	Child Studies	Community and family Studies	Children, Family & the Community	

Sport Science (SPT3151113) is a theoretical course. There does not seem to be a Level 3 course where students can do practice their sport. This is in contrast to most other jurisdictions that have courses at Level 3 that consist of both practical and theory components. Practical courses in sport in Tasmania can be found at Levels 1 and 2. Physical Education is a very popular subject at Year 12 in other States and Territories. Physical Education in most jurisdictions attracts an ATAR.

Table 91 Humanities and Social Sciences

Tasmania	Queensland	South Australia	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders Studies	Aboriginal Studies	Aboriginal Studies	Aboriginal and intercultural Studies	
AAP315116 Australia in Asia and the Pacific					
ACC315116 Accounting	Accounting	Accounting		Accounting and Finance	Accounting
ANC315115 Ancient Civilisations	Ancient History	Classical Studies Ancient Studies	Ancient History	Ancient History	History - Ancient History Classical Studies
BHP315116 Psychology		Psychology		Psychology	Psychology
BHS315116 Sociology	Study of Society	Studies of Society	Society and Culture		Sociology
BST315116 Business Studies	Business Studies Business Management	Business and Enterprise studies	Business Studies	Business Management and Enterprise	Business Management
ECN315116 Economics	Economics	Economics	Economics	Economics	Economics
GGY315115 Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography	Geography
HSM315115 Modern History	Modern History	Modern History Australian History	Modern History HSC History Extension	Modern History	History, Australian Revolutions Renaissance Italy
LST315116 Legal Studies	Legal Studies	Legal Studies	Legal Studies	Politics and Law	Legal Studies
PHL315113 Philosophy	Philosophy and Reason	Philosophy		Philosophy and Ethics	Philosophy
REL315116 Studies of Religion	Study of Religion	Religion Studies	Studies of Religion	Religion and Life	Religion and Society
		Australian and International Politics			Global Politics Australian Politics National Politics Political Studies
					Texts and Traditions
	Tourism	Tourism			
		Women's Studies			

States and Territories provide several options for students to study Humanities and Social Sciences courses at Level 3.

TASC does not provide a course in Aboriginal Studies.

TASC has housed Psychology in this learning area because it has been coupled with Sociology (in a very interesting manner). Some of the other jurisdictions have taken a more strongly scientific approach to the study of Psychology. New South Wales and Queensland do not offer this subject.

There are some subjects that are only offered in particular states, e.g. Women's Studies (South Australia), and Texts and Traditions (Victoria), and Australia in Asia and the Pacific (Tasmania).

Languages

Tasmania facilitates students accessing any of the languages on offer through Collaborative Curriculum and Assessment Framework for Languages (CCAFL).

The subjects offered by TASC at Level 3 are Chinese, French, German, Italian and Japanese.

A further 32 languages are offered through cooperation with Victoria, NSW, South Australian, and Western Australia.

All Australian Year 11 and 12 jurisdictions have a similar approach to language teaching, learning, and assessment.

Table 92 Mathematics

Tasmania	Queensland	South Australia	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
MTS415114 Mathematics Specialised	Maths C	Specialist Maths	Maths Ex 2 Maths Ext 1	Maths Specialist	Algorithmics Specialist Mathematics
MTM315114 Mathematics Methods	Maths B	Maths Methods	Mathematics	Maths Methods	Mathematics Methods
MTG315115 General Mathematics	Maths A	General Maths	Maths General	Maths Applications	General Maths Further Mathematics
	Numeracy Functional Mathematics Prevocational Mathematics	Essential Maths		Maths Essential Maths Functional Maths Preliminary	Foundation Mathematics

Mathematics Specialised is a Level 4 subject.

As in the English learning area, in other states and territories, Essential Mathematics is offered as a Year 12 subject, a 'Level 3' subject. Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria have completed the integration process of the senior secondary Australian Curriculum for Mathematics.

It is not clear what real changes have been made by 'referencing' the learning outcomes and course content in the current TASC courses to the senior secondary Australian Curriculum courses. (See discussion on alignment with Australian Curriculum).

Table 93 Mixed Field

Tasmania	Queensland	South Australia	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
SDI315113 Student Directed Inquiry		Research Project			Extended Investigation
		Integrated Learning			
		Cross-disciplinary Studies			
		Community Studies			

Table 94 Technologies

Tasmania	Queensland	South Australia	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
	Technology Studies Industry Technology Skills Furniture Skills	Design and Technology – Material Products	Design and Technology	Materials Design and Technology	Product Design and Technology
CGD315113 Computer Graphics & Design TEG315115 Technical Graphics	Graphics Industrial Graphics	Design and Technology – Communications Products		Design	
ELT315114 Electronics					
FDN315113 Food & Nutrition	Home Economics Hospitality Practices	Food and Hospitality	Food Technology	Food Science and Technology	Food and Technology
HDS315113 Housing and Design					
	Building and Construction Skills			Building and Construction	
ITC315113 Computer Science		Information Technology		Computer Science	Computing - Informatics
ITS31511 Information Systems & Digital Technologies	Information and Communication Technology Information Technology Systems Information Processing and Technology	Design Technology- Systems and Control Products Information Processing and Publishing	Information Processes and Technology Software Design and Development Information and Digital Technology Curriculum Framework	Applied Information Technology	Computing - Software Development Systems Engineering
	Engineering Skills Engineering Technology Manufacturing		Engineering Studies	Engineering Studies	
	Fashion		Textiles and Design		
		Workplace Practices	Industry Technology	Career and Enterprise	Industry and Enterprise

It is difficult to classify courses into the Technology Learning Area. There are several reasons for this.

First, this is an area that has seen major change due to the impact of the information communication technologies.

Second, the advent and influence of the vocational education and training sector's qualifications on senior secondary courses has been profound. For example, most jurisdictions have a whole series of 'school subjects' that are essentially vehicles for the teaching and assessment of units of competency in qualifications. Courses such as furnishing, fashion, hospitality, tourism, building and construction, manufacturing, engineering, textiles have all been influenced by these qualifications.

In Tasmania (as in South Australia), the policy has been not to embed the units of competency of a VET qualification into a school subject, but rather to allow students to undertake the qualification as nationally designed and accredited, from a Registered Training Organisation (which may be a school). Tasmania has also has allowed for students to undertake Certificate I through to higher levels, and record the achievements in these on the Qualification Certificate.

Computer Science is a course that jurisdictions are currently redesigning to ensure that the curriculum is contemporary. The work is being influenced by the recent rethinking of the Technologies learning area curriculum undertaken by ACARA. Courses that focus on coding and computational thinking are being developed.

Food and Nutrition is another area that is experiencing strong pressure to change. Some states see this course as 'food technology', others as a science, 'Nutrition'.

Housing and Design is not offered in any other state.

Courses that deal with workplace learning also find their way into this learning area, albeit uncomfortably. There is not a TASC course of this kind at Level 3.

Table 95 Science

Tasmania	Queensland	South Australia	New South Wales	Western Australia	Victoria
BIO315116 Biology	Biology	Biology	Biology	Biology	Biology
ESS315114 Environmental Science and Society	Earth Science	Earth and Environment-al Science	Earth and Environment-al Science	Earth and Environment-al Science	Environment-al Science
PSC315114 Physical Sciences	Science in Practice	Scientific Studies	Senior Science	Integrated Science	
PHY415115 Physics	Physics	Physics	Physics	Physics	Physics
CHM415115 Chemistry	Chemistry	Chemistry	Chemistry	Chemistry	Chemistry
	Agricultural Science Agricultural Practices	Agricultural and Horticultural Studies	Agriculture	Animal Production Systems	Agricultural and Horticultural Studies
	Aquatic Practices Marine Science			Marine and Maritimes Studies	
	Aerospace Studies			Aviation	
	Science21				

There is a lot of similarity across the states and territories in this learning area. Tasmania does not seem to have courses that relate explicitly to agriculture and horticulture. Perhaps this is because study in this area is better placed in the vocational education and training space?

The effectiveness of Physical Sciences as a foundation for both Chemistry and Physics in Tasmania is worth investigating.

11.9 Appendix 9: Scope and Sequence

Analysis of the Humanities and Social Sciences Courses

In this Appendix all the course documents in an example learning area — the Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Area[12] — are analysed, to reveal whether there are some aspects of the curriculum and assessment constructs that require further investigation. In particular, the courses are analysed to assess:

- assess the pathways between accredited courses (breadth of courses; entry levels of learning)
- ascertain the demands and expectations of the courses at the various levels (depth of courses).

Table 96 Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Area

Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Preliminary
AAP315116 Australia in Asia and the Pacific ACC315116 Accounting ANC315115 Ancient Civilisations BHP315116 Psychology BHS315116 Sociology BST315116 Business Studies ECN315116 Economics GGY315115 Geography HSM315115 Modern History LST315116 Legal Studies PHL315113 Philosophy REL315116 Studies of Religion	BHC215116 Working with Children BHF215116 Exploring Issues in Society BHX215116 Introduction to Sociology and Psychology BST215116 Business Studies - Foundation CSL205113 Community Service Learning HAE215115 History and the Environment LST215115 Legal Studies - Foundation RLP205115 Making Moral Decisions RLP215115 Religion in Society RSE205115 Road Safety Education	BHC115116 Focus on Children BHY105116 You, Your Family and the Community BST105116 Financial Literacy CAC110112 Community Access RSE105115 Basic Road Safety	PRE015615 Community and Me PRE015715 Prepare for Work

Some observations are offered of the accredited subjects offered in the learning area.

Preliminary Level Courses

- Two subjects are offered at this level for learners with high needs. These courses are written to the same specifications as other courses.

Level 1 Courses

- BHC115116 Focus on Children. This is a practical course that develops basic knowledge and skills required to interact appropriately with children and others in a range of child care environments, including the home.
- BHY105116 You, Your Family and the Community. A very basic course. Similar to Community Studies in South Australia.
- BST105116 Financial Literacy. This subject adopts a 'work requirement' approach to standards. For example, for Criterion 2, Set Personal Financial Goals, a C rating (satisfactory standard) is awarded if the learner lists personal financial goals; categorises financial goals into short term, medium term and long term; lists steps necessary to achieve a financial goal' (p.5). This course is partnered with You, Your Family and the Community.
- CAC110112 Community Access Community Access covers basic knowledge about services and organisation in students' local communities and the skills required to interact effectively with those organisations and the people involved in them. (p.1). This course appears to have been developed by a school to meet particular local needs. Satisfactory Achievement is highest level that can be awarded.
- RSE105115 Basic Road Safety. Basic course. There is also a level 2 course in this area.

Observations:

- The criteria and standards are described in different ways across subjects. Do teachers and students understand these differences?
- Many courses have many learning outcomes (10 or 11), and many of these are content-based learning outcomes (describe, identify, etc.). Is the nature of the learning outcomes appropriate?
- Many courses have been written with particular, perhaps local students' needs in mind. How does TASC ensure that these courses are contemporary, innovative, and worthwhile? Is there a danger that these bespoke courses become idiosyncratic?

Level 2 courses

- RSE205115 Road Safety Education. This course goes to more depth than its Level 1 equivalent, but essentially covers similar material. Students are able to get an Exceptional Achievement in this subject. This course is not likely to be found in other jurisdictions.
- BHC215116 Working with Children *Working with Children*, Level 2, is designed to be an introduction to studies in early childhood education and general education in child care environments, as well as developing the parenting skills of learners. This type of subject is also available in other jurisdictions at Level 3.
- Most courses outline 'Work Requirements'. The evidence from these is used as the basis for judging the quality of the students' work against the criteria and standards. In the case of Working with Children, BH215116, the Work Requirements are described as including compiled worksheets; a report; practical resources made by the student; and documentation of elective studies (pp.10-11). There does not seem to be an overarching framework for assessment items or procedures that apply across all courses.

  The information about what assessment tasks to use in an assessment scheme for the school assessment varies from subject to subject. In many subjects the decision of selecting the assessment instruments (the type, the conditions under which they take place, the length in

terms of words or minutes) is left to the teacher. Should there be some guidelines about these matters?

- BHF215116 Exploring Issues in Society. This course has a major focus on Australia, and is designed to help learners gain an understanding of the complexities of a broad range of matters of public concern (issues) relating to the world we live in. In this course there some indication in the Work Requirements of the type of product (essay, report, multimodal presentation, and the recommended word length) that the student must complete. There is little specification of the assessment tasks (as compared with specifications in most other jurisdictions).
- BHX215116 Introduction to Sociology and Psychology. This course brings together Sociology and Psychology (from an Arts perspective rather than from a Science perspective). *Introduction to Sociology and Psychology*, Level 2, uses an interdisciplinary approach through which learners develop an understanding of themselves and other individuals, groups and institutions within society and across cultures.
- BST215116 Business Studies - Foundation. This course focuses on business knowledge, reasoning, decision-making, and communication. There is very little specification of assessment items in the Level 2 courses. There does not seem to be any external assessment for Level 2 courses.
- CSL205113 Community Service Learning. This is a subject that allows students to take part in Community Service. Students are able to gain a High Achievement in this subject.
- HAE215115 History and the Environment. This is an unusual, but interesting course. The subject has seven compulsory topics and two compulsory case studies. The *History and the Environment* course enables learners to study the environmental and historical factors that have shaped their world. Through a focus on both the ancient and recent past, the course encourages learners to make connections with the present. The course focuses primarily on the three distinct cultures of Australia, China and India. This subject has some connections, although very general, to the ACARA Modern History course. This is the subject at Level 2 that leads to study History at Level 3. Is this a boutique course?
- LST215115 Legal Studies - Foundation. The course covers six topics (Laws, legal and non-legal rules; the Constitution; the three levels of government; Police Powers; Consumer Law; Family Law). The work requirements seem minimal – two reports. The language in the standards has an emphasis on rote-learning (describing), e.g. 'correctly describes sources of law, and differences between processes employed'.
- RLP205115 Making Moral Decisions. This is a course on ethics.
- RLP215115 Religion in Society. This is a comparative religions course. It makes tenuous connections with three Australian Curriculum subjects – Modern History; English; and Essential English. The demand, reflected in the standards, seem to favour rote learning – for example, locates, sorts, discusses, describes, uses, accurately describes, argues, explains, accounts, records.

Level 3 Courses

- AAP315116 Australia in Asia and the Pacific *Australia in Asia and the Pacific* course enables learners to study the social, cultural, religious and geographical diversity of the Australia, Asia and Pacific region. This subject is aligned to some of the content descriptions in Modern History and Geography. It has a lot of school assessment and a three hour examination. The criteria descriptions use 'synthesis'
- ACC315116 Accounting

- Financial matters affect every member of our society. Through engagement with *Accounting*, Level 3, learners develop an understanding of the fundamentals on which accounting and financial management are based. The storing, processing and accessing of digital data and information are now essential parts of current accounting practice (p.2). Excellent course; standards are well articulated. There is a strong use of technology. Criterion 5: use an accounting software package and digital technologies to record, report and interpret financial information and Criterion 7: use inquiry skills to plan and undertake a financial investigation are particularly good.[13] Also, there is range of assessment instruments promoted in the standards (e.g. multimodal presentations).
- ANC315115 Ancient Civilisations This *Ancient Civilisations* course enables learners to study life in an early civilisation based on the analysis and interpretation of physical and written remains. This course has links to the Australian Curriculum. The criteria are a mixture of 'describes…' and 'assesses'. In this course, there are clear differences between C, B, and A ratings, moving from identifies (C rating), analyses (B rating), and evaluates (A rating) (p.27).[14]

• identifies interpretations and historical arguments differing from own.	• assesses reliability and validity of interpretations and historical arguments differing from own.	• evaluates reliability and validity of interpretations and historical arguments differing from own.

- BHP315116 Psychology. Good differentiation in the standards. For example:

Criterion 2: Analyse Perspectives about psychobiological processes		
• describes strengths and limitations of psychological perspectives that are used to explain psychobiological processes	• analyses strengths and limitations of psychological perspectives that are used to explain psychobiological processes	• critically evaluates strengths and limitations of psychological perspectives that are used to explain psychobiological processes
Analyse the theories about human learning, criterion 3. P. 25		
• describes theories of human learning	• analyses theories of human learning	• critically evaluates theories of human learning[15]

BHS315116 Sociology is a demanding course that mirrors the demands and approach taken in Psychology. It is strong on analysis.

BST315116 Business Studies. Similar in approach to its the Level 2 program.

ECN315116 Economics investigates how individuals, groups and societies use scarce resources in the best possible way. Heightened media coverage of economic events and issues has created a growing

[13] http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/_course/ACC315116, Accounting ACC315116, p. 16, viewed 16 September 2016.

[14] http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/_course/ANC315115, Ancient Civilisations ANC315115, p. 27, viewed 16 September 2016.

[15] http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/_course/BHP315116, Psychology, p. 24, viewed 16 September 2016.

perception of the relevance of studying economics and its implications for individual, business and government decision-making.

GGY315115 Geography See comments under the next section, Australian Curriculum

HSM315115 Modern History See comments under the next section, Australian Curriculum

LST315116 Legal Studies. Many outcomes are content-based, and this is reflected in the standards.

PHL315113 Philosophy. Good differentiation. This is a demanding course. It also has good differentiation between the ratings:

correctly identifies and names at least one type of reasoning used in relevant philosophical arguments	provides explanation of at least one type of reasoning used in relevant philosophical arguments	provides insightful explanation of at least one type of reasoning used in relevant philosophical arguments

REL315116 Studies of Religion. Comparative religions course. Many content-based learning outcomes. Over uses ‘describes’ for a Level 3 course.

11.10 Appendix 10: Minor Changes in English Communications

English Communications (ENC315116) is an example of minor changes, where the focus was on referencing the course content to the content descriptions. In this subject the majority of the content descriptions from the senior secondary Australian Curriculum subject: English, Units 3 and 4 are referenced (listed) to the course content in the section 'Expectations Defined by National Standards'. [16]

It is interesting to examine which content descriptions were not deemed useful to reference to the English Communications (ENC315116). Table 97 shows, in **bold** type, the content descriptions from English (Australian Curriculum) that were not referenced to the national standards, and some content descriptions, in ***bold italics*** type, that have nevertheless found their way into the Criteria and Standards of the TASC course.

Table 97 Referencing of Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum Content Descriptions for English Units 3 and 4 with English Communications (ENC315116)

From Unit 3:

Compare texts from similar or different genres and contexts by:

- analysing language, structural and stylistic choices (ACEEN041)
- explaining how each text conforms to or challenges the conventions of particular genres or modes such as crime fiction, advertising or short films (ACEEN042)
- **analysing and evaluating how similar themes, ideas or concepts are treated in different texts. (ACEEN043)**

Compare and contrast distinctive features of genres by:

- analysing the techniques and conventions used in different genres, mediums and modes (ACEEN044)
- considering how the conventions of genres can be challenged, manipulated or parodied (ACEEN045)
- **examining how genres and their conventions have changed and adapted over time. (ACEEN046)**

Analyse and evaluate how the conventions of texts influence responses including:

- the ways language patterns can create shades of meaning (ACEEN047)
- how expectations of genres have developed and the effect when those expectations are met or not met, extended or subverted (ACEEN048)
- **how responses to texts and genres may change over time and in different cultural contexts. (ACEEN049)**

Create a range of texts:

- transforming and adapting texts for different purposes, contexts and audiences (ACEEN050)
- **making innovative and imaginative use of language features (ACEEN051)**
- **using and experimenting with text structures and language features related to specific genres for particular effects (ACEEN052)**
- **sustaining analysis and argument (ACEEN053)**
- using appropriate referencing, for example, footnotes, in-line citations and reference lists (ACEEN054)
- **using strategies for planning, drafting, editing and proofreading (ACEEN055)**
- using accurate spelling, punctuation, syntax and metalanguage. (ACEEN056)

Reflect on their own and others' texts by:

- analysing and evaluating how different texts represent similar ideas in different ways (ACEEN057)

[16] http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/_course/ENC315116, English Communications, p.24, viewed 7 September 2016.

- **explaining how meaning changes when texts are transformed into a different genre or medium (ACEEN058)**
- comparing and evaluating the impact of language conventions used in a variety of texts and genres. (ACEEN059)

From Unit 4

Investigate and evaluate the relationships between texts and contexts by:

- undertaking close analysis of texts (ACEEN060)
- examining how each text relates to a particular context or contexts (ACEEN061)
- **comparing the contexts in which texts are created and received. (ACEEN062)**

Evaluate different perspectives, attitudes and values represented in texts by:

- analysing content, purpose and choice of language (ACEEN063)
- analysing the use of voice and point of view such as in feature articles, reporting of current events or narration (ACEEN064)
- **exploring other interpretations and aspects of context to develop a considered response. (ACEEN065)**

Evaluate how texts convey perspectives through:

- the selection of mode, medium, genre and type of text (ACEEN066)
- the ways points of view and values are represented (ACEEN067)
- the selection of language features that generate empathy or controversy, for example, juxtaposition of image and text. (ACEEN068)

Create a range of texts:

- ***using appropriate language and stylistic features to sustain a personal voice and point of view (ACEEN069)***
- ***using nuanced language (ACEEN070)***
- ***synthesising ideas and opinions to develop complex argument (ACEEN071)***
- substantiating and justifying their own responses using textual evidence (ACEEN072)
- using appropriate referencing, for example, footnotes, in-line citations and reference lists (ACEEN073)
- ***using strategies for planning, drafting, editing and proofreading (ACEEN074)***
- using accurate spelling, punctuation, syntax and metalanguage. (ACEEN075)

Reflect on their own and others' texts by:

- analysing and evaluating how different attitudes and perspectives underpin texts (ACEEN076)
- ***questioning the assumptions and values in texts (ACEEN077)***
- ***identifying omissions, inclusions, emphases and marginalisations (ACEEN078)***
- **discussing and evaluating different readings of texts. (ACEEN079)**

It would seem that the integration process undertaken by the TQA (and now replaced by TASC) concluded that the two courses (*English Communications* ENC315116 and *English* Australian Curriculum) were similar, and that all that was required was a listing of the content descriptions (from English Australian Curriculum) to provide a reading on the meaning of 'the course requirements, learning outcomes, the course content and standards in the assessment' in *English Communications* ENC315116.

11.11 Appendix 11: Alignment of Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum Subjects with TASC Subjects by Learning Areas

How well do the content, learning outcomes and standards of Tasmanian senior secondary courses align with the Australian Curriculum?

Table 98 Alignment of Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum Subjects with TASC Subjects by Learning Areas

Learning Area	Senior Secondary Australian Curriculum Subjects	TASC Courses
English	Literature U1 & U2 Literature U3 & U4 English U1 & U2 English U3 & U 4 Essential English U1 & U2 Essential English U3 & U4 EAL/D Bridging U1 & U2 EAL/D U1 & U2 EAL/D U3 & U4	English Literature 3 General English 2 English Communications 3 Applied English 2 EAL/D1 EAL/D2 EAL/D3
Mathematics	Specialist Mathematics U1&U2 Specialist Mathematics U3&U4 Mathematical Methods U1&U2 Mathematical Methods U3&U4 General Mathematics U1&U2 General Mathematics U3&U4 Essential Mathematics U1&U2 Essential Mathematics U3&U4	 Mathematics Specialised 4 Mathematical Methods 3 Mathematical Methods Foundation 2 General Mathematics 3 General Mathematics –Foundation 2 Workplace Mathematics 2
Science	Physics U1 & U2 Physics U3 & U4 Chemistry U1 & U2 Chemistry U3 & U4 Biology U1 & U2 Biology U3 & U4 Earth and Environmental Science U1 & U2 Earth and Environmental Science U3 & U4	Physics Sciences - Foundation 2 Physical Sciences 3 Physics 4 Physics Sciences - Foundation 2 Physical Sciences 3 Chemistry4 Life Sciences 2 Biology 3
History	Modern History, U1 & U2 Modern History, U3 & U4 Ancient History U1 & U2 Ancient History, U 3 & U 4	Modern History 3 Ancient Civilisations 3 Australian in Asia and the Pacific 3 (some Modern History and Geography) History and the Environment 2 (some Geography, Ancient Studies, and Modern History) There are no Level 2 History courses that are correlated to Modern History and Ancient History (ACARA).
Geography	Geography U1 & U2 Geography U3 & U4	Geography 3