

# SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION

This report analyses information on transitional issues from education to work with particular emphasis on youth.

The definition of “youth” for this report is 15-24 year olds. However, the report also differentiates between the age cohorts of 15-19 year olds (referred to as “teenagers”) and 20-24 year olds (referred to as “young adults”), as there are significant differences between the labour market and educational experiences of the two groups.

Information in this report has been derived from published and unpublished data from various sources including the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Department of Education Services.

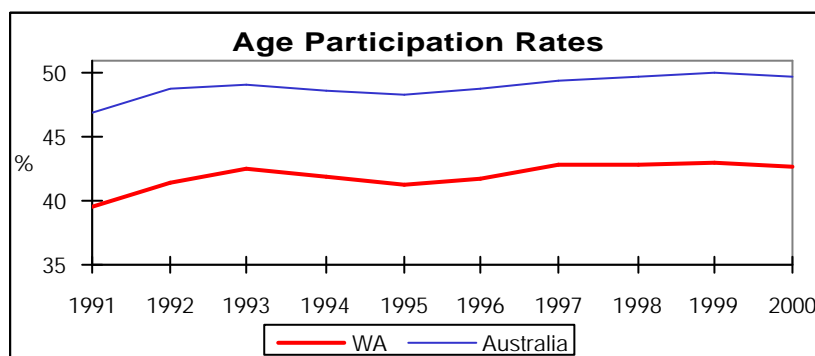
Unless otherwise stated, all the data used in this report are for Australia.

## School Participation Rates

The school participation rate measures the proportion of the 15-19 year old population who are attending school. An increase in the school participation rate generally results in a fall in the youth labour force participation rate. If an increase in the labour force participation rate is not accompanied by increased employment opportunities for young people, the youth unemployment rate will rise.

WA’s school participation rate has traditionally been lower than the national average, however, the gap between the two has been gradually decreasing. School participation rates increased during the early 1990s and again over the period 1997-1999, however, they fell by 0.3 percentage points in 2000. Factors that affect school participation rates include economic conditions, an increasing emphasis on educational qualifications and courses offered by schools such as vocational education and training. In 2000, 42.7 per cent of WA 15-19 year olds and 49.8 per cent of Australian 15-19 year olds were full-time school students. In addition, the participation rate for females is higher than that for males. In 2000, the WA female school participation rate was 44.2 per cent, while for males it was 41.3 per cent.

Figure 1: Participation Rates of Students Aged 15-19 Years, WA and Australia



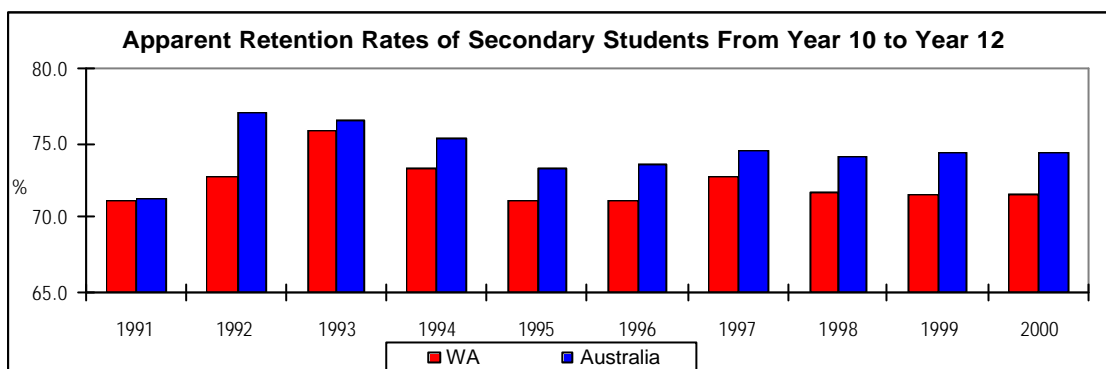
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Schools Australia*, Catalogue No. 4221.0

## Retention Rates

The retention rate is the percentage of students in a given age cohort who continue to a particular year of education. Table 1 therefore represents the percentage of students who continued to Year 12 in 2000 from their respective cohort group in Year 10. It is evident that over the last seven years the apparent retention rate of WA students who have completed secondary school is slightly below the national average. However, care should be taken in interpreting retention rate figures because a range of factors affect the calculation of apparent retention rates. At the Australian level these include students repeating a year of education, migration and other net changes to the school population. At the state level, additional factors affect the data, such as enrolment policies and interstate movements of students.

As previously discussed in relation to participation rates, the Year 12 retention rate increased in the early 1990s as employment opportunities decreased, but has subsequently declined marginally.

Figure 2: Apparent Retention Rate of Secondary Students to Year 12, Australia



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Schools Australia, Catalogue No. 4221.0

Table 1 indicates the marked differences between the Year 12 apparent retention rates of males and females. Over the last decade, females have had an apparent retention rate to Year 12 more than 10 percentage points higher than males. The retention rate in non-government schools also tends to be much higher than for government schools with the (in 2000 the rates in WA were 80.2% compared with 67.3% respectively).

Table 1: Apparent Retention Rates of Secondary Students, From Year 10 to Year 12

Year	Australia			WA
	Males	Females	Persons	Persons
1991	66.1	76.7	71.3	71.1
1992	72.5	82.0	77.1	72.8
1993	71.9	81.4	76.6	75.8
1994	70.6	80.2	75.3	73.4
1995	68.4	78.7	73.4	71.1
1996	68.6	78.7	73.6	71.1
1997	69.3	79.9	74.5	72.8
1998	68.9	79.4	74.1	71.8
1999	68.9	79.9	74.4	71.5
2000	69.0	80.0	74.4	71.6

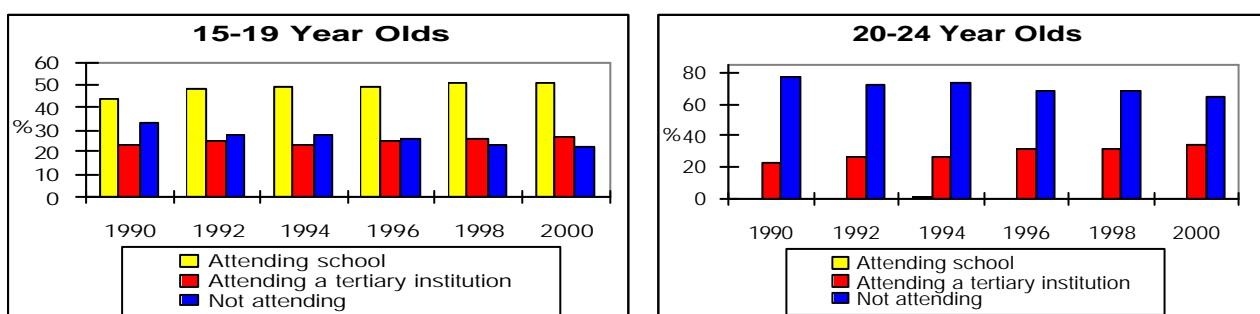
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Schools Australia, Catalogue No. 4221.0

### Proportion of Youth Studying/Not Studying

Figure 3 depicts how the proportion of young people studying at an educational institution has steadily increased in the 1990s.

WA figures indicate that in 1999, 43.4 per cent of 15-19 year olds were studying at school, a further 28.4 per cent were studying at a tertiary institution while the remaining 28.2 per cent were neither attending school nor a tertiary institution. While the proportion at school has increased over the last decade, the more significant increase for this age group has been amongst those attending a tertiary institution. Nearly seventy per cent (68.8%) of 20-24 year olds in WA were neither attending school nor a tertiary institution with the remaining 31.2 per cent attending a tertiary institution.

Figure 3: Proportion of Youth Studying and Not Studying, Australia



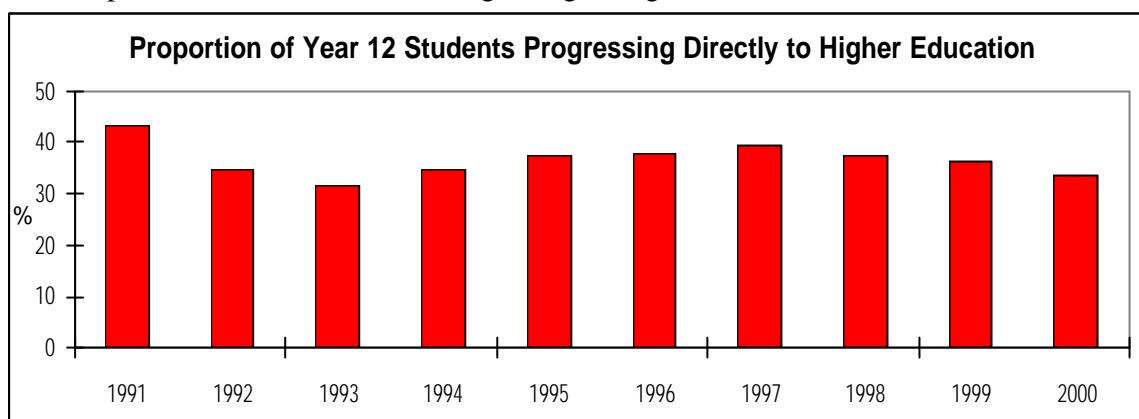
Source: ABS, Transition From Education to Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

The long-term rise in educational attendance is probably due to a combination of factors including a recognition of the importance of qualifications and skills acquisition for employment, government policies to increase school retention and prevailing economic conditions.

### Transition from Year 12 to Higher Education

Figure 4 depicts how the proportion of Year 12 students progressing to higher education has fluctuated over the last decade, from a high of 43.6 per cent in 1990 to a low of 31.7 per cent in 1993. In 2000 the proportion fell slightly over the previous year to 33.6 per cent or 6,198 students progressing to higher education.

Figure 4: Proportion of Year 12 Students Progressing to Higher Education, WA

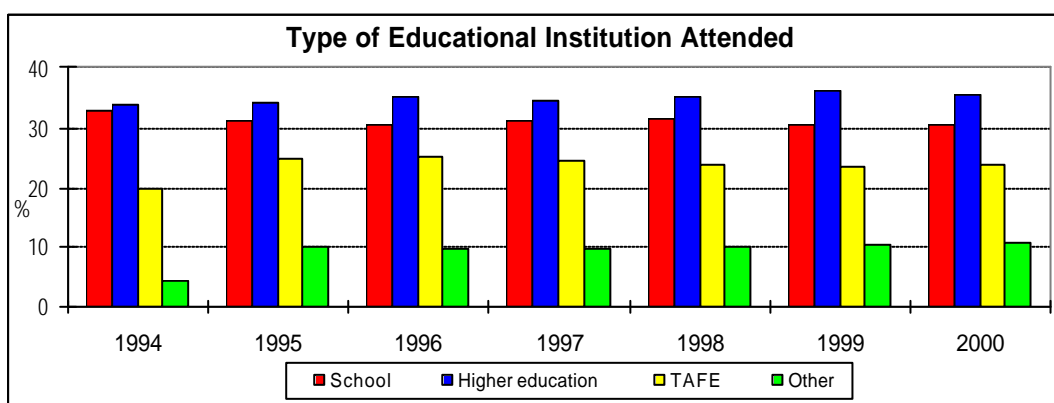


Source: Department of Education Services, 2000 Statistics, Higher Education in Western Australia

### Type of Educational Institution Attended

Figure 5 shows only a minor variation in the proportion of persons aged 15-64 attending the various types of educational institutions over the last six years although the proportion in school has dropped slightly while those attending tertiary institutions has increased. Other educational institutions includes establishments that offer educational courses that involve commercial and business training, and those where insufficient information was available to determine the type of educational institution.

Figure 5: Persons Aged 15-64 Years - Type of Educational Institution Attended, Australia



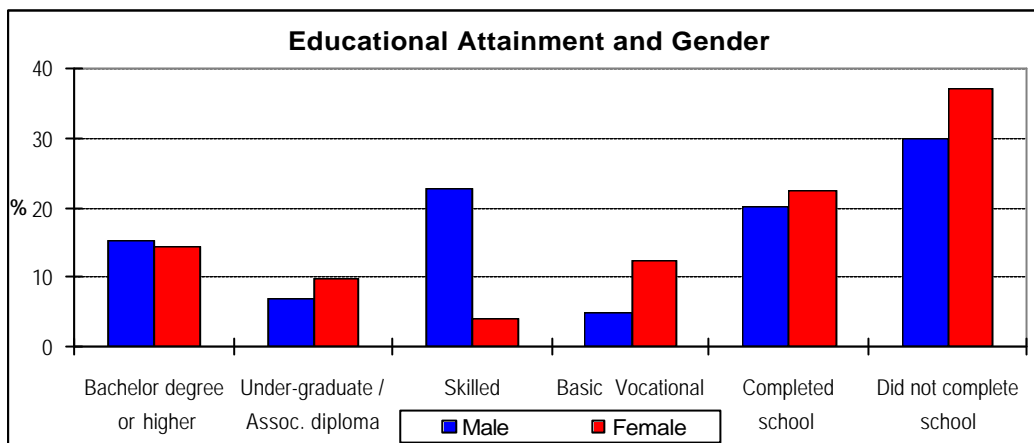
Source: ABS, Transition From Education to Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

While there are no long-term historical data available for WA, in 2000 25.8 per cent of enrolments at educational institutions in this State were in schools, 35.0 per cent were in higher education institutions, 26.6 per cent were with TAFE and 12.7 per cent were at other forms of educational institutions.

## Educational Attainment and Gender

Figure 6 indicates that there are some significant differences in the educational attainment of West Australian males and females. The majority of males and females have either completed the highest level of school or obtained a higher level of educational qualification (70.5% and 64.2% respectively). While the highest level of education for large proportions of both males and females is the completion of school (16.3% and 20.6% respectively), a larger proportion of males have obtained a skilled vocational certificate (21.2%).

Figure 6: Persons Aged 15-64 Years: Educational Attainment and Gender, May 2000, WA

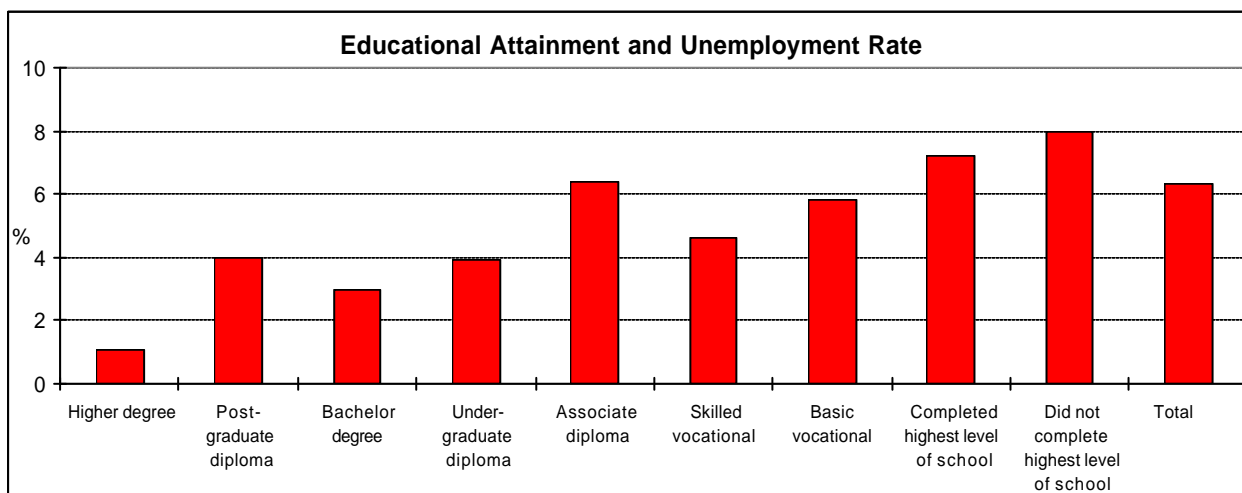


Source: ABS, Transition From Education to Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

## Educational Attainment and Labour Force Status

Figure 7 depicts how higher levels of education attainment influence labour force status in WA in May 2000. As might be expected, individuals with higher levels of educational attainment could generally expect to experience a lower rate of unemployment. However, this data should be viewed with caution because of the very low numbers involved in some categories of those with post-school qualifications.

Figure 7: Educational Attainment and Unemployment Rate in 2000, WA



Source: ABS Transition from Education to Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

\* This estimate has a relative standard error of between 25-49 per cent and care should be exercised when using it.

Those with post-school qualifications in 2000 had an unemployment rate 3.4 percentage points lower than those without post-school qualifications. Those with post-school qualifications also had a significantly higher participation rate (84.6% compared with 71.7%) and were more likely to be employed full-time than part-time (78.1% compared with 68.3%).