EDUCATION AND WORK

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Information in this report has been derived from published and unpublished data from various sources including the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Department of Education Services.

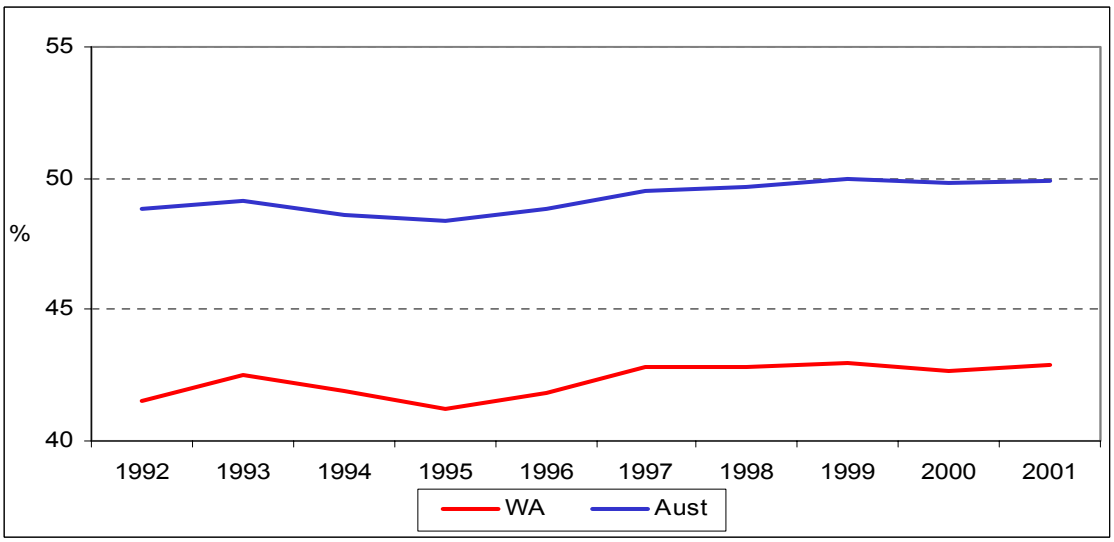
Unless otherwise stated, all the data used in this report are for Australia.

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 and the gap between the two is now 7.0 percentage points. School participation rates have gradually increased over the last decade and are now up 1.4 percentage points in WA and 1.0 percentage point nationally. Factors that affect school participation rates include economic conditions, an increasing emphasis on educational qualifications, enrolment policies and courses offered by schools such as vocational education and training. In 2001, 42.9 per cent of WA 15-19 year olds and 49.9 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 2001, the WA female school participation rate was 43.9 per cent, while for males it was 42.0 per cent.

Figure 1: School Participation Rates of Persons Aged 15-19 Years

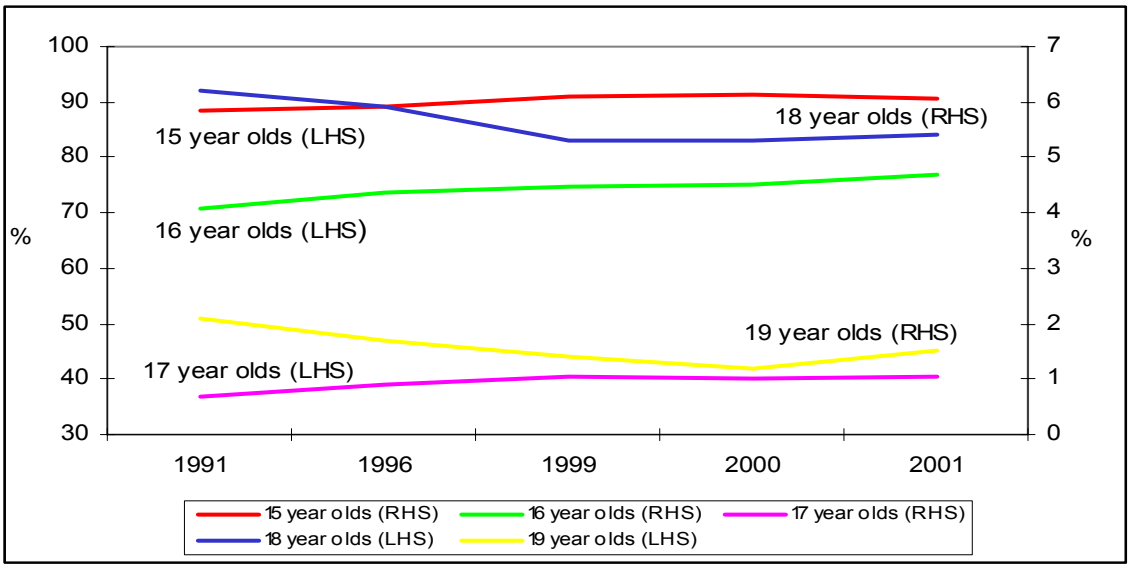


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Schools Australia, Catalogue No. 4221.0 (Unpublished data)

While the school participation rate for 15-19 year olds as a whole has been rising over the last decade, the situation for the individual ages has varied. As Figure 2 illustrates, while the younger ages have been increasing (15 year olds by 2.0 percentage points, 16 year olds by 6.2 percentage points and 17

year olds by 3.7 percentage points), the older ages have actually decreased (18 year olds by -0.8 percentage points and 19 year olds by -0.6 percentage points)

Figure 2: School Participation Rates of Students Aged 15-19 Years, WA and Australia



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Schools Australia, Catalogue No. 4221.0 (Unpublished data)

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 from their respective cohort group in Year 10. It is evident that over the last seven years the apparent secondary retention rate of WA students 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.

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

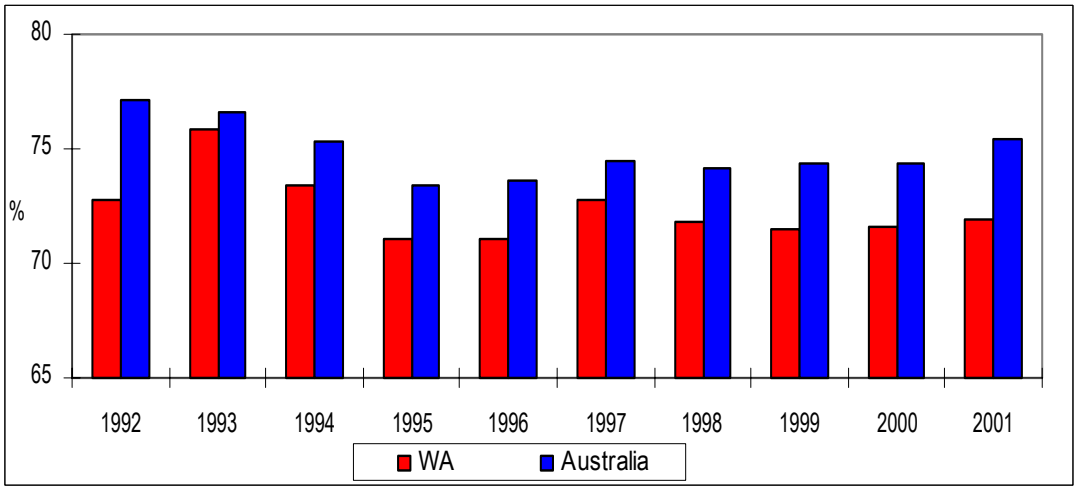
	Australia			Western Australia		
Year	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
1992	72.5	82.0	77.1	na	na	72.8
1993	71.9	81.4	76.6	na	na	75.8
1994	70.6	80.2	75.3	na	na	73.4
1995	68.4	78.7	73.4	na	na	71.1
1996	68.6	78.7	73.6	65.6	76.7	71.1
1997	69.3	79.9	74.5	na	na	72.8
1998	68.9	79.4	74.1	na	na	71.8
1999	68.9	79.9	74.4	66.2	77.1	71.5
2000	69.0	80.0	74.4	66.0	77.5	71.6
2001	70.8	80.1	75.4	67.6	76.5	71.9

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

The Year 12 retention rate increased in the early 1990s as employment opportunities decreased, but has subsequently declined marginally.

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 approximately 10 percentage points higher than males. The retention rate in non-government schools also tends to be much higher than for government schools (in 2001 the rates in WA were 81.9% compared with 67.0% respectively).

Figure 3: Apparent Retention Rate of Secondary Students from Year 10 to Year 12



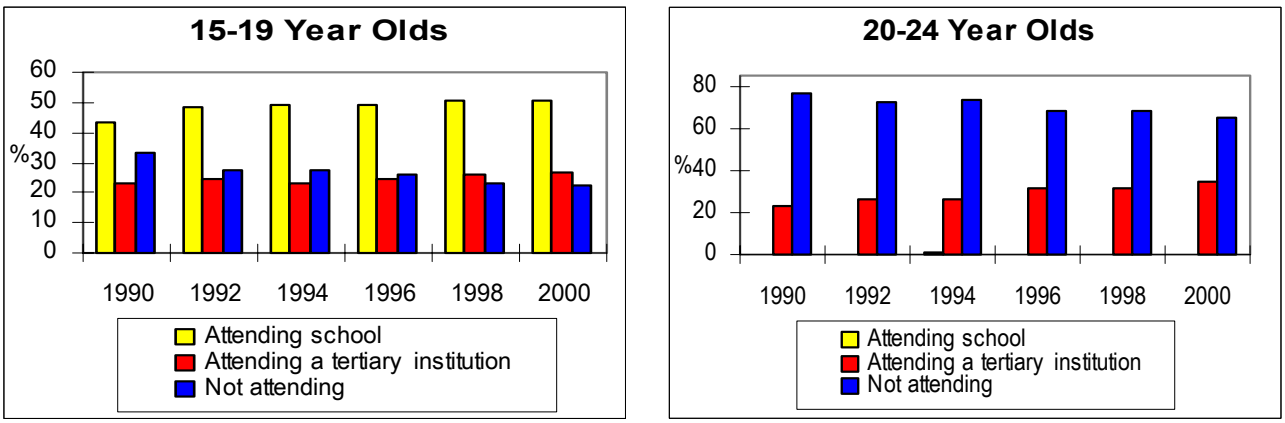
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Schools Australia, Catalogue No. 4221.0, (Unpublished data)

Proportion of Youth Studying/Not Studying

Figure 4 depicts how the proportion of young people studying at an educational institution has steadily increased in the 1990s.

WA figures indicate that in 2000, 58.8 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. (Data are not available for subsequent years.)

Figure 4: Proportion of Youth Studying and Not Studying, Australia



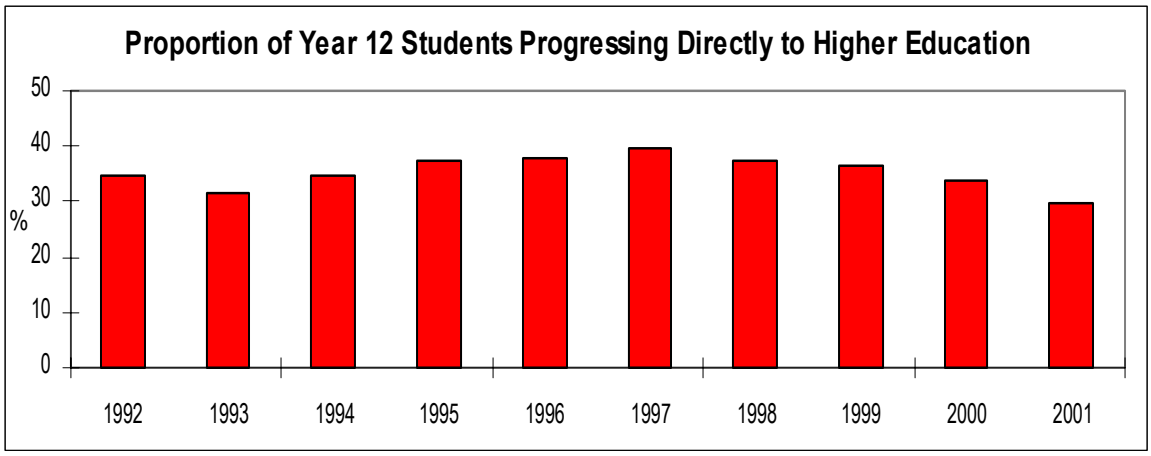
Source: ABS, Education and Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

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 5 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 2001 the proportion fell slightly over the previous year to 29.7 per cent or 5,998 students progressing to higher education.

Figure 5: Proportion of Year 12 Students Progressing to Higher Education, WA

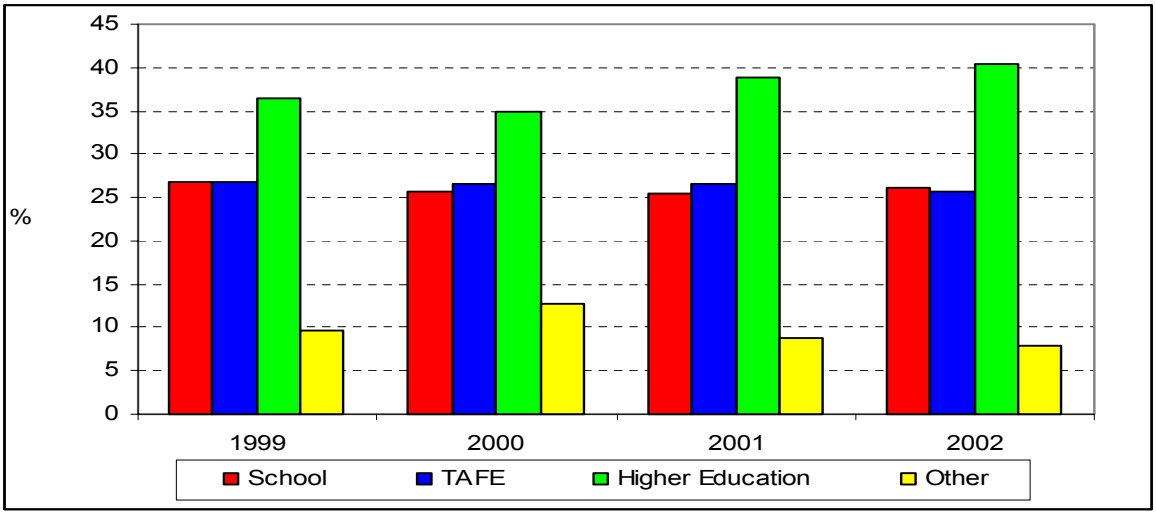


Source: Department of Education Services, 2001 Statistics, Higher Education in Western Australia

Type of Educational Institution Attended

Figure 6 illustrates that the proportion of persons aged 15-64 attending the higher education has increased over the last four years (3.8 percentage points) at the expense of other educational institutions (-1.8 percentage points), TAFE (-1.3 percentage points) and schools (-0.7 percentage points). 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 6: Type of Educational Institution Attended, WA

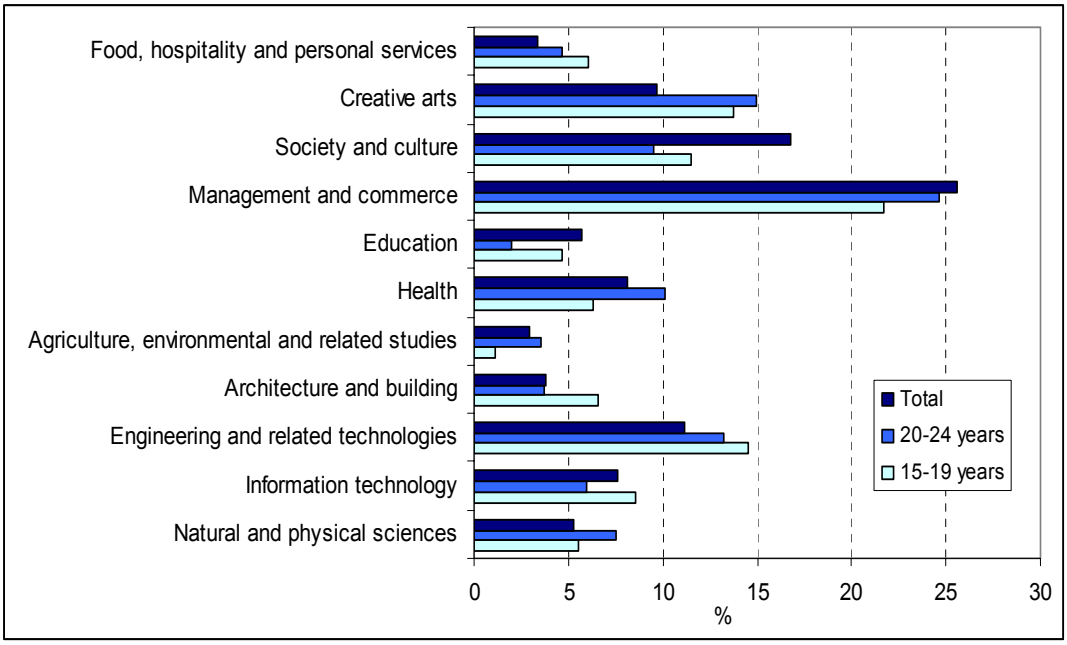


Source: ABS, Education and Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

Main Field of Education

Other than Mixed field programmes, which includes persons studying for Year 12 or below, the most commonly reported main field of eduction of current study of persons enrolled for a qualification was Management and commerce (25.6%) followed by Society and culture (16.8%). For the younger age groups Management and commerce was also the most commonly reported field of study (21.7% for 15-19 year olds and 24.7% for 20-24 year olds) followed by Engineering and related technologies for 15-19 year olds (14.6%) and Creative arts for 20-24 year olds (15.0%).

Figure 7: Persons Enrolled for a Qualification, Main field of education of study

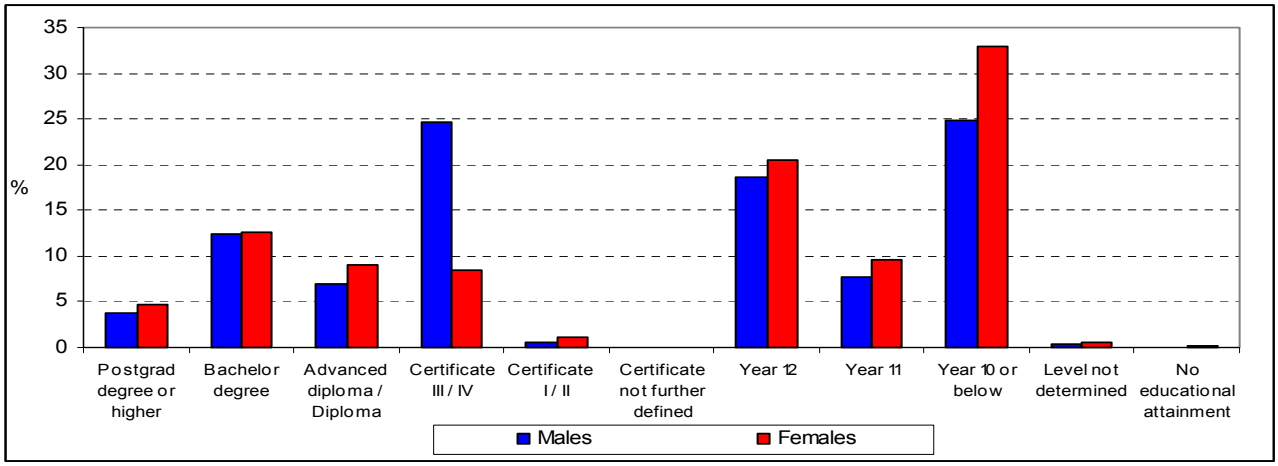


Source: ABS, Education and Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

Educational Attainment and Gender

Figure 8 indicates that there are some significant differences in the educational attainment of West Australian males and females. The highest level of education for large proportions of both males and females is the completion of school to Year 10 or below (24.8% and 33.0% respectively). The next largest proportion of males have obtained a Certificate III or IV (ie skilled vocational certificate) (24.6%) while females are then most likely to have completed Year 12 (20.5%).

Figure 8: Educational Attainment and Gender, May 2002, WA, Persons aged 15-64 years

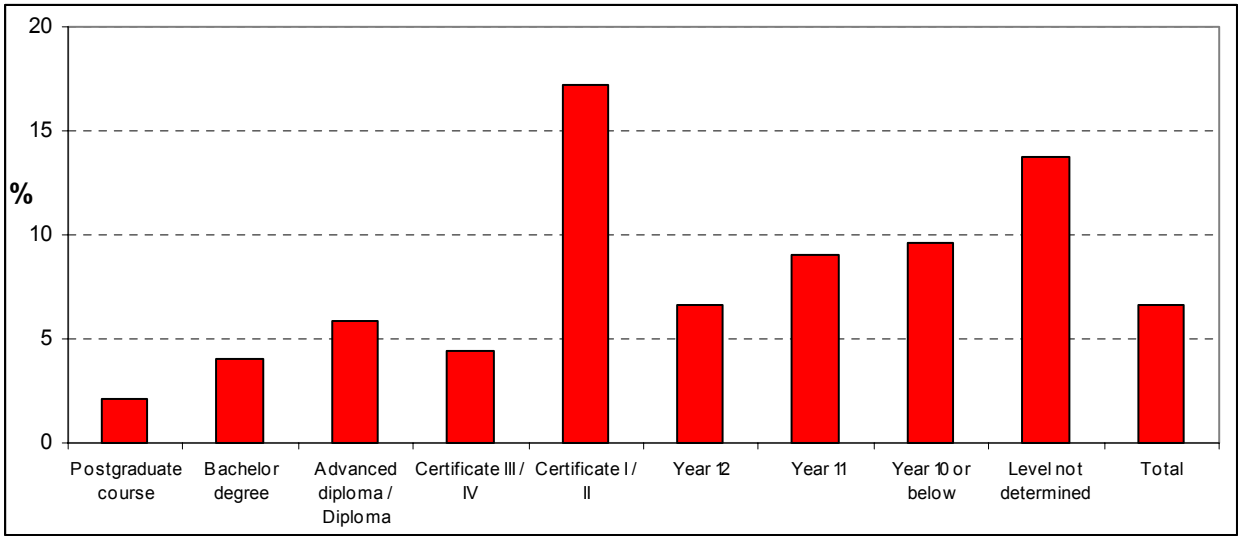


Source: ABS, Education and Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

Educational Attainment and Labour Force Status

Figure 9 depicts how higher levels of education attainment influence labour force status in WA in May 2002. As might be expected, individuals with higher levels of educational attainment could generally expect to experience a lower rate of unemployment.

Figure 9: Educational Attainment and Unemployment Rate in 2002, WA, Persons aged 15-64 years



Source: ABS Education and Work, Catalogue No. 6227.0 (Unpublished data)

Those with a Certificate III/IV or higher qualification in 2002 had an unemployment rate 4.2 percentage points lower than those with a Certificate I/II qualification or no post-school qualification. Those with Certificate III/IV or higher qualifications also had a significantly higher participation rate (84.0% compared with 69.8%) and were more likely to be employed full-time than part-time (79.3% compared with 63.5%).