

3.18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples training for health-related disciplines

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in tertiary education for health-related disciplines

Data sources

Data for this measure come from the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training's Higher Education Student Statistics Collection and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research collection.

Higher Education Student Statistics Collection

The Higher Education Student Statistics Collection is an annual collection of enrolments and completions. These data are held by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (formally Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)). This collection includes data sources from all Australian universities.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) collection

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) collection is an annual collection of enrolments and completions by field of education in the vocational education and training sector. These data are held by the NCVER.

Analyses

Higher education sector

Data on Indigenous students enrolled and who have completed health-related courses in the higher education sector are available from DEEWR (formally DEST). Data for 2006 are presented below.

- In 2006, there were approximately 1,016 Indigenous undergraduate students enrolled in health-related courses and 152 Indigenous undergraduate students who completed a health-related course (Table 3.18.1). This represented 15% of all Indigenous undergraduate students enrolled in study and 14% of all Indigenous undergraduate students who completed study in 2006.
- The most common type of health-related course in which Indigenous undergraduate students were enrolled or had completed in 2006 was nursing (460 enrolled and 48 completed) followed by public health (350 enrolled and 78 completed).
- About 1.6% of all undergraduate students enrolled in health-related courses in 2006 were Indigenous. Only 1.2% of undergraduate students who completed a health-related course in 2006 were of Indigenous origin.
- Public health had the highest Indigenous representation of all health-related courses. Approximately 9% of students enrolled in this course were Indigenous and 10% of

students who completed this course in 2006 were Indigenous. The majority of Indigenous students studying public health courses were studying Indigenous health. Approximately 89% of students enrolled in Indigenous health in 2006 were Indigenous and 96% of students who completed Indigenous health in 2006 were Indigenous.

- The proportion of university students enrolled in health-related courses who were of Indigenous origin was similar in most states and territories (between 1% and 2%) except in the Northern Territory where around 17% of students enrolled in health-related courses were Indigenous (Figure 3.18.1).
- There was a decline in the proportion of university students who completed health-related courses who were Indigenous between 2001 and 2002 (from around 5% to 3%). Indigenous representation in health-related course completions remained at around 3% between 2002 and 2004 after which it increased to around 5% in 2005 and 2006 (Figure 3.18.2). A similar pattern was evident for enrolments in health-related courses.

Table 3.18.1: Undergraduate students^(a) enrolled in and completed health-related courses^(b), Indigenous and total students, 2006

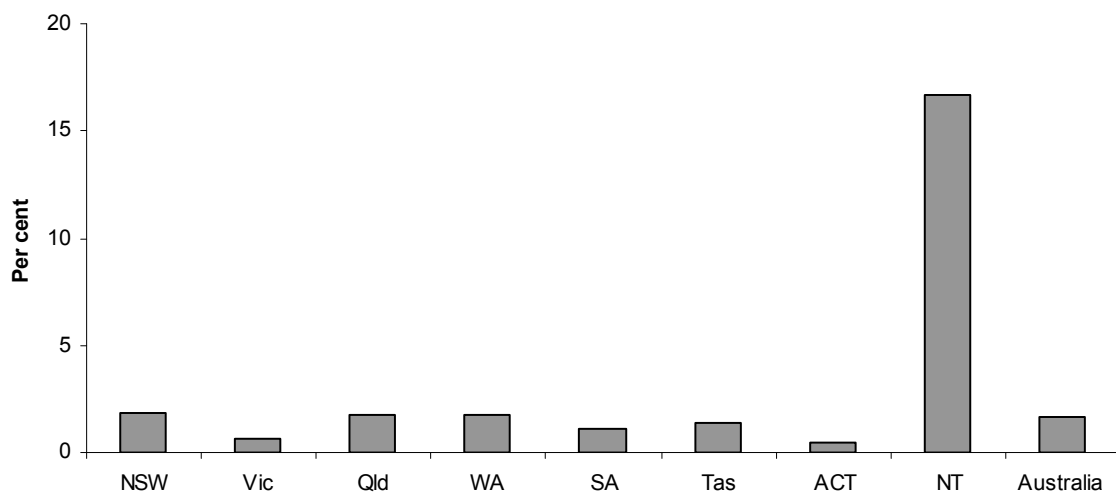
	Enrolled			Completed		
	Indigenous	Total	Indigenous as a proportion of total	Indigenous	Total	Indigenous as a proportion of total
Nursing	460	29,293	1.6	48	5,965	0.8
Public health	350	3,751	9.3	78	768	10.2
Indigenous health	222	250	88.8	50	52	96.2
Other public health	128	3,501	3.7	28	716	3.9
Medical studies	116	9,736	1.2	12	1,390	0.9
Rehabilitation therapies	61	11,163	0.5	6	2,308	0.3
Dental studies	10	1,845	0.5	2	308	0.6
Pharmacy	9	4,088	0.2	2	858	0.2
Radiography	7	1,671	0.4	3	630	0.5
Optical science	3	494	0.6	1	87	1.1
Total^(c)	1,016	61,815	1.6	152	12,268	1.2

(a) Domestic students

(b) Based on ABS narrow fields of education.

(c) The data take into account the coding of combined courses to two fields of education. As a consequence, counting both fields of education for Combined Courses means that the totals may be less than the sum of all fields of education.

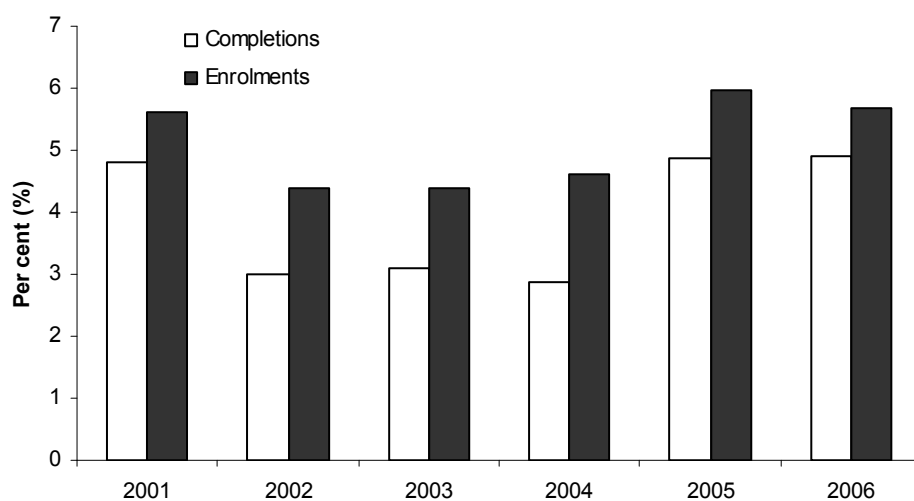
Source: AIHW analysis of Higher Education Student Statistics Collection.



Note: The calculated proportion for Australia includes other territories.

Source: AIHW analysis of Higher Education Student Statistics Collection.

Figure 3.18.1: Proportion of university students enrolled in health-related courses who were Indigenous, by state/territory, 2006



Note: Domestic students.

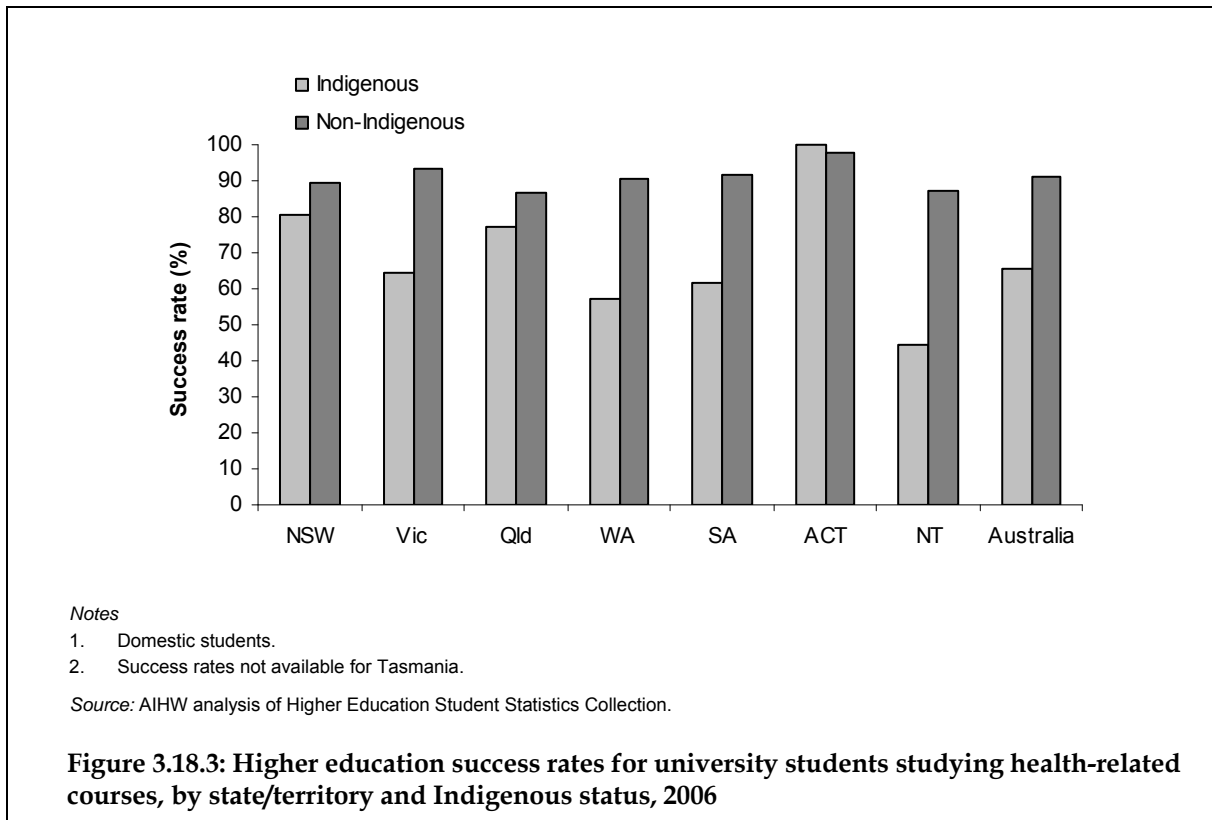
Source: AIHW analysis of Higher Education Student Statistics Collection.

Figure 3.18.2: Proportion of university students completing health-related courses who were Indigenous, 2001- 2006

Success rates

The success rate for higher educational institutions is based on the proportion of units passed within a year compared with the total units enrolled.

- In 2006, the success rate for Indigenous university students studying health-related courses was 65%. This compared with 91% for non-Indigenous university students studying health-related courses. The success rate for Indigenous students varied by state and territory, ranging from 44% in the Northern Territory to 100% in the Australian Capital Territory (Figure 3.18.3).



Vocational education and training (VET) sector

Data on Indigenous students enrolled and who have completed health-related courses in the VET sector are available from NCVET. Data for 2006 are presented below.

- In 2006, there were approximately 3,165 Indigenous students representing 5,149 enrolments in health-related courses in the VET sector, and 431 completions of health-related courses by Indigenous students in the VET sector (Table 3.18.2). This represented 5% of all Indigenous students enrolled in VET courses and 3% of all Indigenous students who completed VET courses in 2006.
- The most common type of health-related course in which Indigenous VET students were enrolled or had completed in 2006 was public health (2,856 enrolments and 201 completions) followed by nursing (357 enrolments and 43 completions).
- About 5% of all VET sector enrolments or completions in health-related courses in 2006 were for students of Indigenous origin.

- Indigenous health and medical studies had the highest Indigenous representation of all health-related courses. Approximately 95% of VET sector enrolments in a course in Indigenous health and 100% of VET sector completions of a course in Indigenous health in 2006 were for Indigenous students. Approximately 22% of VET sector enrolments in a course in medical studies and 95% of VET sector completions in a course in medical studies in 2006 were for Indigenous students. The high proportion of Indigenous students completing a course in medical studies is due to the fact that only two courses under this category had qualifications completed in 2006 – Certificate III in Aboriginal Primary Health Care and Diploma of Anaesthetic Technology. All of the students who completed the Certificate III in Aboriginal Primary Health Care were Indigenous (104) although all of the students who completed the Diploma of Anaesthetic Technology were non-Indigenous (5).
- The proportion of VET sector enrolments in health-related courses who were for students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin ranged from 0.5% in the Australian Capital Territory to 57% in the Northern Territory (Figure 3.18.4).
- The proportion of VET sector completions in health-related courses who were for students of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin increased between 1996 and 2002 (from around 2% to 7%) after which there was a decline until 2005 (to around 2%) and then a sharp increase again in 2006 to around 5% (Figure 3.18.5).

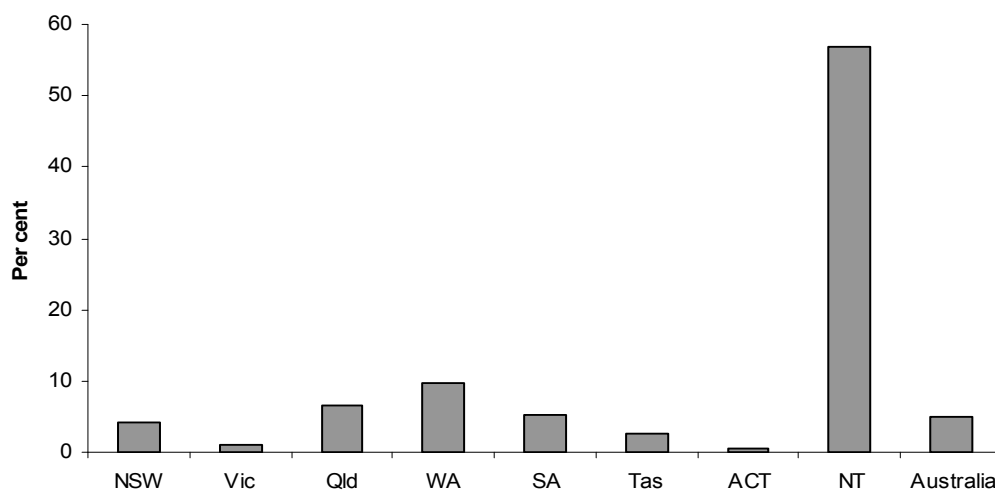
Table 3.18.2: Vocational education and training sector students enrolled and completed health-related courses^(a), 2006

	Enrolled			Completed ^(b)		
	Indigenous	Total	Indigenous as a proportion of total	Indigenous	Total	Indigenous as a proportion of total
	No.	No.	%	No.	No.	%
Public health	2,856	39,957	7.1	201	1,917	10.5
Indigenous health	145	153	94.8	38	38	100.0
Other public health	2,711	39,804	6.9	163	1,879	8.7
Nursing	357	17,631	2.0	43	2,916	1.5
Medical studies	130	586	22.2	104	109	95.4
Dental studies	46	3,662	1.3	9	1,203	0.7
Complementary therapies	26	3,204	0.8	5	948	0.5
Rehabilitation therapies	56	829	6.8	1	102	1.0
Optical science	5	1,068	0.5	—	118	—
Pharmacy	—	30	—	—	4	—
Other health	1,673	35,426	4.7	68	849	8.0
Total	5,149	102,393	5.0	431	8,166	5.3

(a) Qualification field of education classification.

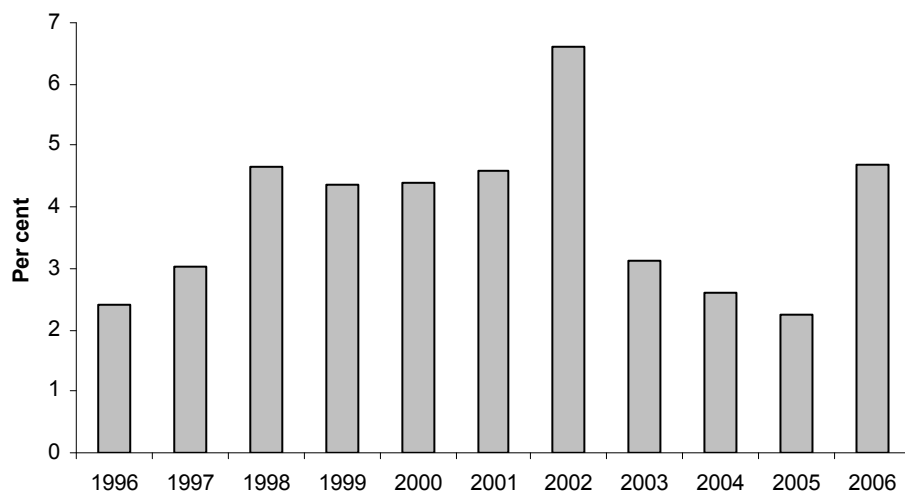
(b) Excludes course completions for statement of attainment, bridging and enabling courses for which there were 2,121 course completions for Indigenous students in 2006.

Source: AIHW analysis of NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2006, data.



Source: AIHW analysis of NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2006 data.

Figure 3.18.4: Proportion of vocational education and training sector students enrolled in health-related course who were Indigenous, by state/territory, 2006



Note: 2006 data on qualifications completed are preliminary estimates.

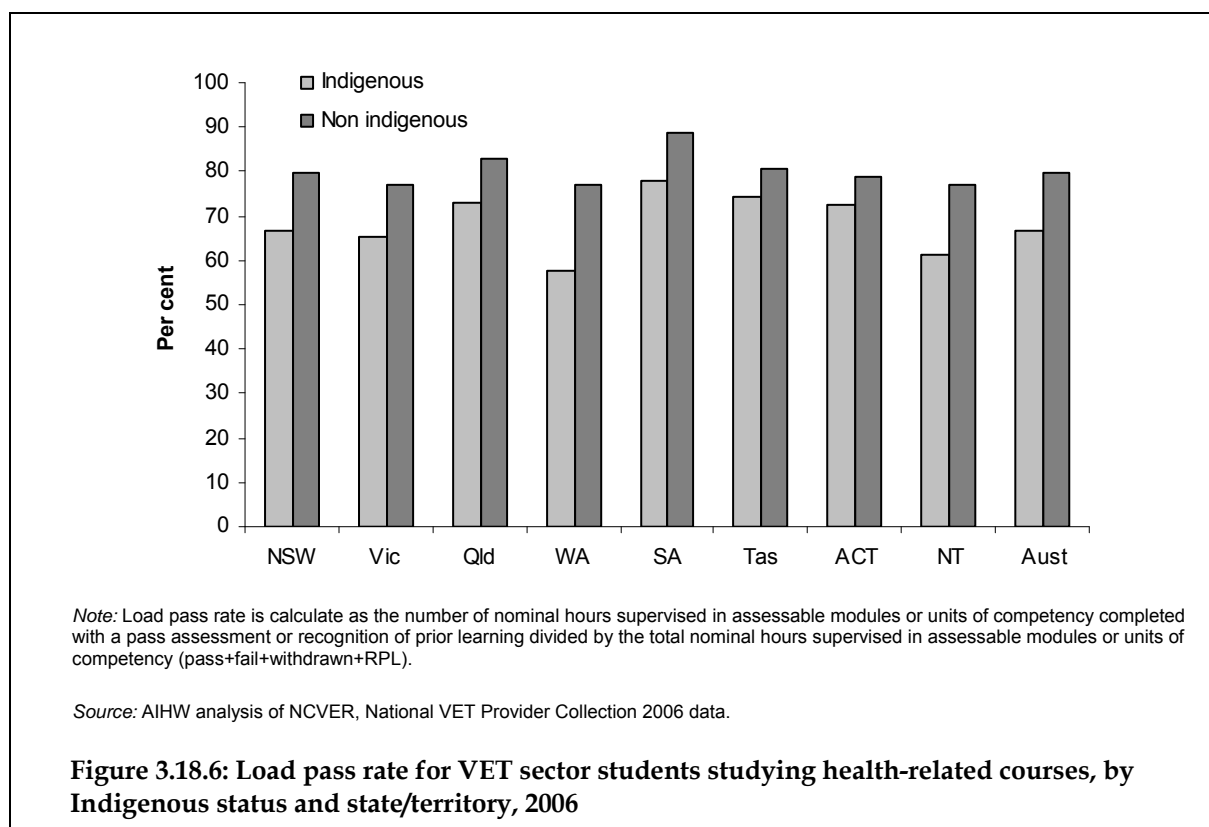
Source: AIHW analysis of NCVER, National VET Provider Collection 2006 data.

Figure 3.18.5: Proportion of vocational education and training sector students completing health-related courses who were Indigenous, 1996-2006

Load pass rates

The VET load pass rate indicates the extent to which students pass assessment in an assessable module or unit of competency. Load pass rates are calculated as the number of nominal hours supervised in assessable modules or units of competency completed with a pass assessment divided by the total nominal hours supervised in assessable modules or units of competency.

- In 2006, the VET load pass rate for Indigenous students studying health related courses was 67%, compared with 80% for non-Indigenous students. The load pass rate for Indigenous students studying health related courses ranged from 58% in Western Australia to 78% in South Australia (Figure 3.18.6).



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker occupations

Tables 3.18.3 and 3.18.4 present the number and rate of VET sector students completing a course aimed at Indigenous health workers in 2006.

- In 2006, approximately 202 VET sector students had completed a course aimed at Indigenous health worker occupations in Australia. The majority of these course completions were at the certificate III or IV level (166, or 82%) (Table 3.18.3).
- Queensland had the highest number of students completing a course aimed at Indigenous health worker occupations (77), followed by Western Australia (61).
- Of all VET sector students who had completed a course aimed at Indigenous health worker occupations in 2006, 80% were female (162 course completions) and 20% were males (40 course completions) (Table 3.18.4).

Table 3.18.3: Number of vocational education and training sector students completing a program aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker occupations^{(a)(b)}, by qualification type and state/territory, 2006

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Australia
Certificate I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Certificate II	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Certificate III	—	—	61	31	—	—	—	6	98
Certificate IV	—	—	12	23	31	—	—	2	68
Diploma or higher	7	—	4	7	18	—	—	—	36
Total	7	—	77	61	49	—	—	8	202

(a) Australian Standard Classification of Occupations code 3493—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers.

(b) An Australian Standard Classification of Occupations code assigned to the courses indicates the most likely occupation associated with this course. It should also be remembered that students may enrol in more than one course.

Note: Rates (no. per 1,000 population) have not been presented as the numbers are too small to produce rates.

Source: NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2006 data.

Table 3.18.4: Number of vocational education and training sector students completing a program aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health worker occupations^{(a)(b)}, by qualification type and sex, 2006

	Males	Females	Persons
	Number		
Certificate I	—	—	—
Certificate II	—	—	—
Certificate III	17	81	98
Certificate IV	13	55	68
Diploma or higher	10	26	36
Total	40	162	202

(a) Australian Standard Classification of Occupations code 3493—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers.

(b) An Australian Standard Classification of Occupations code assigned to the courses indicates the most likely occupation associated with this course. It should also be remembered that students may enrol in more than one course.

Note: Rates (no. per 1,000 population) have not been presented as the numbers are too small to produce rates.

Source: NCVET, National VET Provider Collection 2006 data.

Data quality issues

Higher Education Student Statistics Collection

The Higher Education Student Statistics Collection only includes information from higher education institutions in Australia as determined under the Higher Education Funding Act 1988. This includes:

- *institutions that receive block operating grant funding for teaching and research activities*
- *other public higher education institutions that receive some level of operating grant funding*
- *the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, the National Institute of Dramatic Art and the Australian Defence Force Academy*

Private institutions are not required to report statistical data to the Department of Education, Science and Training and are therefore outside the scope of the collection (ABS 2003). The collection of data from private higher education institutions is being trialled (ABS 2004).

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) has provided institutions with suggested wording for questions relating to Indigenous status (ABS 2003).

Approximately 3% of students in this data collection have a 'not stated' Indigenous status. At the moment, these are recorded as non-Indigenous although plans are under way to separately record the 'Not stated' responses.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research

This collection gathers information from providers (in receipt of public VET funding) about activity of the VET system in Australia. The collection encompasses all delivery funded either wholly or in part from public funds. In-scope activity includes all VET delivered by:

- *technical and further education organisations*
- *higher education institutions*
- *other government providers (for example, agricultural colleges)*
- *community education providers*
- *government-funded private registered training organisations*
- *schools funded through government allocations for VET*
- *all other Australian Government and state recurrent and specific-purpose funded VET, regardless of the location of the training organisation.*

Out-of-scope activity includes:

- *all delivery at overseas campuses other than overseas Australia territories*
- *all fee-for-service delivery by private training organisations*
- *all delivery by private training organisations to full fee-paying overseas clients*
- *all non-VET activity (ABS 2003).*

The completeness of the Indigenous status of students needs to be considered when interpreting these data. In 2006, 4% of government-funded VET students in Australia identified themselves as Indigenous, although 15% of students did not report their Indigenous status (NCVER unpublished data).

References

ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2003. Directory of Education and Training AVETMISS Vocational Education and Training (VET) Provider Collection. ABS cat. no. 1136.0. Canberra: ABS.

ABS 2004. Measuring learning in Australia: plan to improve the quality, coverage and use of education and training statistics. ABS cat. no. 4231. Canberra: ABS.

SCRGSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision) 2005. Report on government services 2005. Vol. 2. Canberra: Productivity Commission.