

2003

## **Local learning and employment partnership: North Metro: environmental scan**

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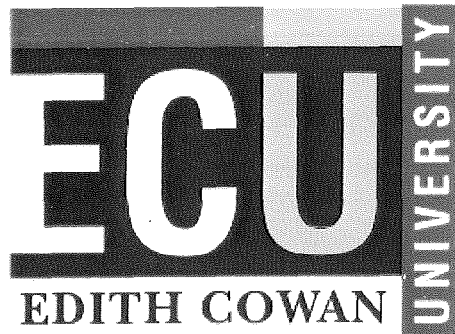
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Local Learning and Employment Partnership  
North Metro

Environmental Scan

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November 2003

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## Acknowledgements

This research was conducted by the Small and Medium Enterprise Research Centre (SMERC) at Edith Cowan University in conjunction with the Local Learning and Employment Partnership and funded by the Department of Education and Training.

We acknowledge the participation of the following people as the key contributors in the completion of the project.

Tania Cecconi	Manager, LLEP North Metro
Melanie Whitton	Research Assistant, Small and Medium Enterprise Research Centre
Reference Group	Participants included representatives from West Coast Service Centre, West Coast College of TAFE and the Department of Education and Training

The business operators who participated in the survey.

Students from West Coast TAFE and Carine TAFE who participated in the focus groups.

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## **List of Acronyms**

LLEP Local Learning and Employment Partnership

VET Vocational Education Training

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

ACER Australia Council for Educational Research

URP Usual Residents Profile

XCP Expand Community Profiles

DET Department of Education and Training

LGA Local Government Authorities

LSAY Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth

# **1. Executive Summary**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Young people are vital to all communities and encouraging and supporting them to participate in education and training is a significant way to ensure that communities maintain a skilled workforce. However, there are many barriers to young people staying in the community, not the least of which is a lack of appropriate jobs. That is, jobs that the young people want to do, but are sustainable for the individual as a career path and not on a casual basis. These jobs normally involve some form of training or further education. Marrying the needs of industry in terms of their current and future workforce requirements with the career or work aspirations of the up and coming workforce (the age cohort being the subject of the study) is seen as the major challenge. For example, retail is a predominant employer of young people but as they mature most leave the industry, principally because of the wage structuring of the sector. However, the sector in itself is a sustainable industry for the cohort.

It would appear that there is a misalignment with what is presently being offered in the VET sector and the current real employment needs and requirements of industry. Some VET options appear to be driven not necessarily from what local employers want in relation to employee skills, but rather from what the VET sector has expertise in. Furthermore, from a sustainability perspective a question that needs to be considered is what are the future needs of industry? In addition, have the strategic economic directions of the two local government authorities been reviewed to see what the long term plans for the area are in relation to industry attraction?

Part of the problem may well be the fast changing nature of business and industry today, precipitated on the supply side by technology and on the demand side by continuous industrial restructuring. However, this can be partly alleviated by education and training providers being more in touch with the community and engaging in more dialogue with local industry.

The primary goal of this environmental scan was the identification of employment issues for this specific age cohort, to make recommendations to strengthen the existing services and to identify an agenda for future strategic planning. It is important to recognise that the cohort should be seen in context rather than in isolation. That is, issues or problems develop before

young people reach this age bracket (15-19 year olds) and continue after they mature and move out of the age bracket.

Youth employment and unemployment is not a new issue and there are many and varied programs dealing with the situation, numerous reports written and reviews conducted. There is a plethora of existing secondary statistical data on these issues produced by various agencies over many years, the most salient of which has been captured for this report. Interestingly, most of the previous studies or reviews of the issue of employment for young people have been driven from the supply-side, that is, it is known that there is a continuous supply of new school leavers seeking work and therefore emphasis is on finding employment or further education or training avenues for these new entrants to the employment pool (indeed this study was essentially funded from the Department of Education and Training).

However, little emphasis has been placed on the demand-side, that is, the actual requirements of businesses as to what they want in relation to employee skills or attributes. This study has combined the existing supply-side information with newly collected demand-side information, the empirical data from local businesses as to what they want from employees and specifically young people. It should be recognised that employing staff is a significant operational and financial decision for many businesses, especially small business, who actually make up the vast majority of employers in the area. The business owners were asked their preferences for employee selection, and not surprisingly, based on previous data, young people were not normally the first age cohort that most employers look to employ. When asked why, several issues emerged, not the least of which was about the attitude of the young people.

This comment highlighted the real issue, that is, that most small business owners have no human resources experience. Consequently, employment of any staff is a real issue for them, so callow youth adds another layer of complexity because of the perceived problems that go with this age cohort. The solution for the small business owner therefore is often not to employ young people. The two main articulated reasons for not employing young people were that young people had an 'attitude' and that small business owners did not have the resources to take on inexperienced workers, they needed employees that can 'hit the ground running'.

There are two questions which come to mind:

- How can young people get the required work experience?
- How can we encourage small business owners to develop their own business skills?

The former question can only be answered long term if the latter question is addressed, that is business owners, essentially the demand-side of the equation, need to be assisted in developing their own human resource skills and encouraged overall to employ young people. This may be through more apprenticeships, traineeships, financial incentives and other incentive supports. Other additional encouragement may include general business assistance and advice, including VET programs, aimed at business owners which are more user-friendly and of a more just-in-time nature, thus assisting to build the skills of the business owner. This may lead to the eventual employment of young people but would certainly lead to better business practices, which would also be of significant benefit to the community overall.

## **1.2 Background**

The North Metro Local Learning and Employment Partnership (LLEP) was one of a series of bodies established by the Western Australian Government in 2003 and funded by the Department of Education and Training to improve the participation of young people in education, training and employment in their post-compulsory years. The North Metro LLEP commissioned this study as part of an effort to develop a co-ordinated response to improving youth employment in the areas of the Wanneroo and Joondalup Local Government Authorities and to facilitate more comprehensive and integrated approaches to planning, to build local community capacity, to minimise duplication and competition, and to promote community-wide responsibility for post-compulsory education and training.

The objectives of the scan included:

- Mapping the learning and work situation of young people in the 15-19 years cohort in the LLEP catchment area via secondary data collection of the participation of local young people in education, training and employment;
- Identifying gaps in data sources and suggest methodologies to overcome these deficiencies; and
- Recommending ways of strengthening existing services and points of cohesion, and identify an agenda for further planning and action.

### **1.3 Methodology and key results**

The data collection was done in several stages, with the secondary data being collected via desk-top research of available literature, followed by an administered questionnaire to relevant businesses, further in depth interviews with several business owners and triangulated with focus group sessions with the young people cohort.

Much is already known about the profile of young people in the LLEP's geographic area. Joondalup dominates numerically in the 15-19 cohort, just as it does in the overall figures. 13,971 15-19 year olds lived in Joondalup, compared to 6,071 in Wanneroo. Young people in the Wanneroo LGA have a lower educative profile than those in Joondalup, for example only 7.5% of Wanneroo 15-19 year olds attend university, compared with 14.7% from Joondalup. Wanneroo also has a higher unemployment rate amongst the cohort than Joondalup. In relation to VET in schools, there is strong VET activity in the government schools in the LLEP area and the corresponding area differences, with Wanneroo government schools having a higher percentage of programs than Joondalup schools. A positive outcome is reflected in a student from Clarkson Community High School, in Wanneroo, winning the 2002 Beazley Medal for the outstanding VET in Schools student.

Indeed, some local schools are doing extremely innovative programs which should be looked at by all other schools in the area to see if they can be replicated or modified to suit the individual needs of a particular school. There is little value in reinventing the wheel if good models already exist. Good communication is fundamental in ensuring this happens. Better communication between all stakeholders has the dual advantage of eliciting local responses which are reflective of the needs of the area as well as being seen to be collaborative and therefore more cost effective.

However when comparing these two areas including the significant socio-economic differences between them, regardless of where the young people reside, many of the employment issues are the same. There are some exceptions, such as young people living in the more rural parts of Wanneroo who are more disadvantaged than young people living close to the actual business hubs. Gender is also an issue as the number of young men leaving school in the post compulsory years overall is higher than that of young women.

Finally, in relation to indigenous students, there is a low number of this cohort remaining in post compulsory schooling in the area.

The industry category employing the biggest number of young people in the area is retail, which accounts for 48% of the cohort's employment. This is followed by accommodation, cafes and restaurants, manufacturing, property and business services and construction which have approximately 8% of young people employed in each category. In terms of occupation categories the highest group for all employment is elementary clerical (38%), particularly for young women. Then followed by trades and related workers (14%) and labourers and tradespersons (15%), particularly for young men. It should also be pointed out that even though the secondary data appears specific it does not drill down to what young people actually do within the industry classification, that is, what do young people actually do in retail?

All of the statistical data analysed reveals no real differences with this specific cohort (15-19 year olds) to the general youth population, so the findings that young people cluster at the bottom of the employment chain is not surprising. This has always been the case, however the differences today are in expectations, from both the employee on what a job delivers and what a job means, and from the employers perspective. The meaning of work for young people has changed over recent times, which is evidenced in the high number of young people seeking part-time work when not actively engaged in further study, as opposed to full-time work. This sometimes brings them to be at odds with potential employers and manifests itself in what employers perceive as the young people having 'an attitude'.

This can mask an important issue for many employers, which is a lack of human resource skills by the employer. It has already been stated that most employment in the area is actually in small enterprises and even though owners of small businesses are generally 'experts' in their field, they often have little if any training in human resource issues such as recruitment and selection, training or anything related to industrial relations. This can create a real 'fear' on the part of the employer that they might employ the wrong person and then not actually be able to terminate their employment.

A secondary consideration for most employers and especially small businesses, is their requirement to have 'ready to go' employees, that is employees who have the required skills set, as the businesses have little or no resources to provide training. This is both a cost factor and a time factor. The underlying issue here is also a communication issue, most small business proprietors do not have a good understanding of the incentive schemes that are available to them such as traineeships and apprenticeships. This is an area that needs to be much better promoted and reflects back to the need for better community partnerships with the education sector as a whole and local business.

Another avenue for potential employment for young people is self employment, there are several national programs that encourage young people to start their own enterprises. Young people are amazingly creative and energetic, what they lack in experience can be partly overcome by enthusiasm. This could have enormous benefits long term, especially in relation to these businesses growing to a size where they then need to employ someone.

#### **1.4 Summary**

To summarise, the North West Metro area has enormous potential. It has good natural resources, reasonable infrastructure and a growing population. This equates to having opportunities to create a vibrant community that can engage young people into the workforce. In order to achieve this there has to be more effective overall communication between all stakeholders and in particular the business community. Without this partnerships will not develop and all stakeholders loose out, not the least of whom are the young people seeking employment. Finally, the overall education and training young people receive should be applicable to the needs of businesses today, and from a sustainability perspective be applicable to emerging industries which will be the future for the community.



## 2. Recommendations

The recommendations provided in this report will require the active co-operation of schools and post-compulsory education and training providers and businesses to establish the framework for lines of communication that are collegiate and strategic between all stakeholders. It should be emphasised that this environmental scan was the initial step in what should be seen as an on-going process to better assist local 15-19 year olds to identify employment and training options. The scan was a snapshot of the situation as seen in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2003 and is not a definitive overarching document, rather the first brick in the pathway to the development of better partnerships with all relevant stakeholders.

### 2.1 Recommendations A - Identification of information gaps

In order to round out the current data that is available on the employment pathways for this age cohort, several key measures should be collected on a regular basis to provide the additional data required to better inform the direction of planning and action, including:

- The collection of data concerning the proportion of school leavers within the LLEP area at a particular point in the year that are not in full-time or part-time employment and not in full-time education.
- The collection of data concerning the number and percentage of students accessing structured work placements and New Apprenticeships and traineeships on an annual basis.
- The identification of what industry categories or business sectors apprenticeships and traineeships are being offered in.
- An annual report on the labour market status, what jobs are available in LLEP at a given point in time.
- The identification of the proportion of young people from LLEP employed both full-time and part-time at a given point in time.
- The identification of the total number of enrolments in all VET courses.

- The identification of the number of young people in the LLEP enrolled in all VET courses.
- The identification of the disaggregation of the number of young people in VET courses by gender and indigenous status.
- Destination surveys tracking outcomes of 15-19 year olds over 2 years, 5 years and 10 years.

This second set of recommendations are aimed to provide workable options to bring together all the relevant stakeholders. The recommendations are not mutually exclusive and the implementation of these recommendations is at the discretion of the LLEP committee.

## **2.2 Recommendations B**

- Better overall communication between all stakeholders. This is clearly a priority and should include the education sector, the business sector and appropriate government departments from all three levels.
- A shift in emphasis from supply to demand via better identification of where the jobs actually are in the local area.
- A review of current VET courses and their applicability to existing local jobs.
- Identification of the gaps in the job market and what training is required to fill those gaps.

Identification of current models of best practice already existing in the area and promotion of these models to all stakeholders.

- Identification of the most appropriate provider of this training.
- Inclusion in decision making of identified marginalised youth groups, such as young people living in semi-rural areas, indigenous young people.

- Inclusion of the business community in decision making.
- The inception of an ‘innovation team ’ for future planning, including identify emerging industries and their alignment with post compulsory and VET education.
- The inclusion of local economic planning into the current education policy.
- The identification and promotion of a young ‘champions’. These would be selected 15-19 year olds who can show what the vast majority of young people are really like. This would lead to more good news stories promoting the positive achievements of young people.
- Identification of potential opportunities for self-employment and the development of strategies to promote these opportunities for young people in LLEP.
- Development of an evaluation mechanism to see the effect of any of the recommendations.

### **3. The Environmental Scan**

The North Metro Local Learning and Employment Partnership (LLEP) is one of a series of bodies established by the Western Australian Government in 2003 and funded by the Department of Education and Training to improve the participation of young people in education, training and employment in their post-compulsory years. The North Metro LLEP commissioned this study as part of an effort to develop a co-ordinated response to improving youth employment in the areas of the Wanneroo and Joondalup Local Government Authorities (LGAs).

#### **3.1 The Objectives of the Environmental Scan (E-scan)**

This particular project was developed by LLEP to facilitate more comprehensive and integrated approaches to planning for education, training and employment for young people, build local community capacity to address the issues, minimise duplication and competition among service providers, and promote community-wide responsibility for post-compulsory education and training.

The initial objectives of the environmental scan were to:

- map the learning and work situation of young people in the 15-19 years cohort in the Wanneroo and Joondalup LGAs;
- identify the service systems attending the needs of young people in the region;
- supply baseline information via secondary data collection of the participation of local young people in education, training and employment;
- identify gaps in data sources and suggest methodologies to overcome these deficiencies; and
- recommend ways of strengthening existing services and points of cohesion, and identify an agenda for further planning and action.

### **3.2 The LLEP region**

For the purposes of this study, North Metro LLEP includes Wanneroo and Joondalup, which are neighbouring LGA's located on the northern edges of the Perth metropolitan area. Wanneroo is the larger, covering 687.5 square kilometres and has a total population of 81,215. Joondalup covers only 96.8 square kilometres and yet has a total population of 149,236. Joondalup consists of residential and commercial properties, with some open land and parks whereas Wanneroo has approximately 310 sq km of rural land, and 335 sq km of regional reservations, and only 40 sq km of residential land.

The majority of the data for this study was collected from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) sources and in particular the Usual Residents Profiles (URP) from the most recent 2001 Census. The URP includes information about residents of LGA's who were present on Census night. Using the ABS data provided an opportunity to compare the LLEP region data with the Perth and the Australian data. Additional education information was taken from the Expanded Community Profiles (XCP). The Disaggregated data describing the employment by industry, occupation, age and sex of workers from both Wanneroo and Joondalup was collected from the ABS.

As the data used was collected in 2001, there may have been changes in the habits, experiences and situations of people aged 15-19 since that time. However, the Census provides an equal quality of data across jurisdictional boundaries without which comparisons of the LLEP region with other areas would be much more difficult.

Additional information was collected from the Western Australian Department of Education and Training (DET) and included figures for high school populations in the region, information on transition programs within schools, and data on destinations of students leaving school. West Coast TAFE also provided information on the selection of available programs and student enrolments from the region. Edith Cowan University provided information on young people from Wanneroo and Joondalup who were studying at the university and included the number of students studying at the Joondalup campus.

### **3.3 Difficulties with secondary data collection and analysis**

Different governmental and other bodies work within different spatial boundaries, with the result that overlaps and absences of facilities and services were evident. The Education Department's 'Joondalup cluster', relevant to VET (Vocational Educational Training) in Schools data is similar but not identical to the LLEP region. Therefore, some schools from the LLEP region do not appear in DET 'Joondalup' figures which presented some difficulties with the VET in Schools data. Student destination data was also made more problematic by these processes. DET destination data was received for the North Metro region, but the Departmental definition of 'North Metro' differed from the LLEP definition: two extra schools appeared, while at least one was omitted.

The Tannock Report into Education and Training noted that 'differing methods of data collection make it difficult to gain an accurate and comprehensive picture of either retention or participation' [1]. These difficulties involve geographic boundary issues and other problems including privacy and ownership issues. Different government departments and bodies collect their own data for specific purposes and often invoke their own age-ranges, categories for different parameters and questions to be answered. The combination of factors such as these make it particularly challenging to collect comprehensive data that will provide a complete picture. Private companies can prepare consolidated data within limits however this avenue of consultancy can become very expensive. For the purposes of this project this option was not considered.

In addition to the challenges in collecting the data, the restricted timelines involved in the project put pressures on to be expedient. The E-scan was developed at the same time DET was compiling its new census data, and this limited levels of assistance from DET personnel. By the time this report is presented, DET personnel will be freer to provide specialised data. This needs to be taken into account when further research is considered. Destination data is the preserve of individual schools, and permission had to be obtained from each school before access could be gained. These requests went out just before school holidays began, which meant three weeks were lost. Attempts to organise focus groups with young people – which are an obvious necessity in this study – were also hampered by short timelines.

Despite the difficulties, the report does bring together both secondary and up-to-date primary data which can be used for local benchmarking. It should also be acknowledged that this report was the first attempt to merge the existing secondary data with the collection of dedicated primary data in order to develop applicable localised strategies. These strategies will assist in moving forward on the issues that are known to exist regarding this age cohort and employment options and pathways.

This report is by no means definitive, rather it should be seen as a snapshot of the current situation and be used as a starting point for strategy building.

### **3.4 Methodology**

The data collection was completed in several stages, with the secondary data being collected via desk-top research of available literature. A self-administered survey was developed to provide information from business operators about their attitudes to working with young people. This information was collected by personal distribution and telephone. Following the collection of the survey data several in-depth interviews were conducted with business operators in both Wanneroo and Joondalup. The last stage of the data collection involved focus groups with young people from year ten who were participating in TAFE courses.

The E-scan project commenced with a review of both academic and non-academic literature. Data was compiled to present the picture of young people in the 15-19 cohort in the region. The tables and figures within the report are representative of the cohort in the Wanneroo and Joondalup areas, plus a combined LLEP-wide figure and where possible figures from the greater Perth region and national figures. An interim literature review was produced and presented to the E-scan reference group midway through the project.

The questionnaires to business operators were distributed by hand as there was not enough time to allow for postal returns. Clearly evident during this process was that most business operators are very busy and have little time to spare even though most were willing to participate. Many of the larger organisations were also unable to participate as the time of the year, (the period leading up to Christmas) is particularly busy for the human resource departments. The questionnaire collected quantitative data on the hiring practices of various types of businesses and organisations – from the main regional health facility employing 1250 people, to small business with as few as one employee. The survey also collected

qualitative information on reasons for, and against, employing young people. In-depth interviews were also conducted with six local business operators to gain more information on their specific hiring habits and their opinions on working with young people in general.

Finally, two focus groups were conducted with 15-19 year olds to discuss issues concerning their own views on the problems and the positives of transition. Only two focus groups were conducted as the tightness of the project timing meant that this part of the project fell over the school holidays, which made access to young people difficult. These focus groups did however bring some valuable insight into what young people think about this issue and their ideas have been incorporated into the report.



## 4. Literature Review

### 4.1 Introduction

A plethora of literature on the difficulties of transition for young people already exists mostly in the form of official reports from government appointed inquiries. There is also an increasingly large quantity of research reports dealing with survey data across various sized samples and timeframes and collected for different purposes. These reports sometimes overlap in content, with large research papers called for by investigating bodies. The Prime Minister's Taskforce reported on youth pathways in 2001 with *Footsteps to the Future*, to which were appended 220 pages of research reports [2]. The Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) have been conducted by the Australia Council for Educational Research (ACER) for many years and are based on long-term surveying of a cohort of Australians starting in the 1980s. The LSAY research poses some problems in that it is based on the life stories of people who left school nearly two decades ago. However, it does provide longitudinal data and as a result, it is possible to identify effects of earlier events and practices [e.g. 3, 4]. The Dusseldorp Skills Foundation has also produced numerous important policy arguments and reports that are focused on youth in general and in particular the transition from school to work [e.g. 5].

In addition to the volume of public and private reports is the academic literature, some of which is of an applied nature but most is of a contextual nature, which concentrates more on the analysis and interpretation of data rather than the application of the findings. This results in more of the same and whereas data collection is valuable, often adds little to what is already known, therefore only the most salient points from the literature have been included in this report.

### 4.2 Review results

There is almost universal agreement that transitions from school to work are now more difficult than ever [e.g. 6, p. 34, 7, p. 2]. They are not 'uniform or linear in the ways that they once were' [8]. Beyond any personal costs to individuals, there are 'significant' 'social and economic costs of not providing appropriate services' to young people at risk [9, p. 8]. This risk is higher and more persistent for young people aged 15-19 years [10, p. 23]. In Western Australia, 21% of students are 'at risk' of educational and possible transitional difficulties [11]. In addition 21% of Western Australian 15-19 year olds are not in education, training, or

full-time employment [1, p. 3] and across Australia approximately 25% of students leave school before completing the final year [12], confirming Lamb and McKenzie's Australian study which stated that 30% of students leaving school found the transition to work difficult [3, p. vii].

The category of 'at risk' is not well defined in the literature. The standard usage refers to 'students at educational risk'[e.g., 11 p. 42]. The Prime Minister's Task Force expanded this to: 'young people who are in danger of falling through the gaps in existing services, or who cannot relate to the help that is being offered [9, p. 2]. Whitely evokes the concept of young people 'engaged in marginal activities, having failed to make the transition to full-time study or employment [10, p. 23]. These definitions illustrate the fluidity of the concept and the problems it can pose. The less technical or academic the discussion, the more impressionistic is the use of 'at risk'.

Not all commentary focuses on the problems of transition; some at least mention other possibilities. The international comparison of transition by Ryan states that the 'difficulties' posed by non-linear transitions to work is most often 'a temporary phase, and for many it offers experiential and matching benefits' [6, p. 82]. Raffe also points out that much discussion is too focused on economics and 'linearity', ignoring other personal and societal influences and outcomes affected by transition [13, p. 4]. In Australia, the LSAY study found that for two thirds of students, transition from school to work 'can be a relatively smooth process' [3, p. vii], so whereas transition may be a problem for some students it is not the case for all students.

The reasons for leaving school early are varied. 'Leaving school is not necessarily a step taken to end a negative experience'; many want or need work; other often cite a lack of interest in school work; fear of unemployment can also lead to early leaving [12]. There is something of a consensus view on the predictors for those that have transition difficulties. There is over-representation of young people from:

- divorced or separated families;
- lower socio-economic cohorts;
- families where parents have low educational achievement.

In addition, young women are more likely to be outside the labour force and education, often due to child-care issues. Rural young people are also over-represented, although this may be due to special employment possibilities/limitations in rural and regional areas [e.g. 3, 7].

Internationally and in Australia, educational success is seen as 'highly predictive of transition outcomes' [e.g. 7, p.2, 13, 14, p. 7]. The LSAY project found that the first post-compulsory year might to some extent be predictive of later ease or difficulty in articulation into the work force. The earlier young people ended schooling, the more likely they were to face difficulties. Coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds was also strongly related to difficulties in transition [3, p. 53]. Athanassou stated that 'the most powerful influences on ultimate educational achievement might well be (in order of effect size): literacy, numeracy, the completion of year twelve, type of vocational interest, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and rurality' [15, p. 137].

One major response from governments to the problems of transition has been to increase the place and importance of TAFE and Vocational Education Training (VET), and to seek to improve the local 'networking' activities [1, pp. 9-10]. Learning for work, an idea entrenched in the VET and TAFE experience, 'has become the darling of public policy' [16]. In Western Australia, the Tannock Report had over two pages of recommendations dealing with TAFE and VET [1, pp. 8-10]. A recent innovation has been the introduction of VET into schools [1, p. 15]. The Western Australian experience is comparable at a national level, where VET in school numbers rose nationally from 60,000 in 1996 to 170,000 in 2001 [1, p. 17].

This is not uncontested ground, however. VET has been described as 'a rigid system that is narrowly focused on work-related competencies to the exhaustion of broader education that is able to equip students to respond to rapidly changing technological, economic, and social developments' [17, p. 303]. One of the potential outcomes of the new 'competency based training' might be that TAFE and other qualifications will no longer be easily transferable to universities: 'This is because training packages do not stipulate curriculum, or even learning outcomes. They contain only the competencies deemed to be required in the workplace by the relevant Industry Training Advisory Board'; 'As higher education courses are based on a curriculum model, this poses significant problems in determining the extent to which articulating students share the same knowledge base. The inevitable result will be credit transfer arrangements negotiated individually at the course, department and institution levels,

rather than systemic credit transfer arrangements at a state or federal level' [17, p. 312]. Education unions are also worried that while VET has a worthy reputation for 'expanding education pathways, improving senior-year student-retention rates and delivering greater curriculum options', that 'diversity has come at a cost'. More intensive teaching and 'rubbery' funding make the experience harder for educators, and 'too-heavy industry influence' might disrupt the quality of the educational experience [18]. Another problem raised in the literature deals with the difficulties of meaningfully involving small business in localised VET and TAFE initiatives and as Billett succinctly states, 'increasing small business participation in VET is a 'hard ask'' [19].

A final area of concern is unemployment. 'High unemployment among 15 to 19 year olds is a major policy concern for both Federal and State governments in Australia. It is also a major focus of media attention, particularly with regard to commonly quoted youth unemployment figures of up to 30 per cent. Figures such as this are misleading however' [20, p. 1]. 'Of all Western Australian teenagers only 5 per cent are not in employment or education. For those teenagers in the labour force the unemployment rate is 14.4 per cent. This rate is double that of the labour market as a whole, and may be explained by the particular characteristics of the teenage labour market, reflecting both supply and demand pressures in that market' [20, p. 29].

### **4.3 Summary**

The position of young people in today's economy is still considered to be an uncertain one, especially in the period of transition from schooling to post-compulsory education and/or employment and that uncertainty continues to escalate. The need for assistance during this period of transition is well recognised and many programs are targeted toward providing a smoother, more effective transition for these young people. There are subpopulations within the 15-19 cohort that would appear to experience more challenges than others in making this transition and these include young males, indigenous young people and those from more disadvantaged backgrounds. There are also various residential locations which create additional transition problems for young people, in particular those living in regional and rural areas.

More recently, the concerns about education, training and employment particularly in the transition stages are seen as a community issue and the notion of community integrated solutions are more favourable. It would appear from the literature that the most effective short-term response lies in the strengthening of VET programmes that are made available to young people and of equal importance, aligning those programs with the employment opportunities that are available in the area.

## 5. The Wanneroo and Joondalup General Population

### 5.1 Size and structure

The 2001 Census indicated that the population of the two Local Government Authorities (LGAs) was nearly 230,500 with Joondalup representing approximately 65% at the time of the Census. Joondalup was only exercised from Wanneroo in 1998 at which time it was created as a distinct LGA. Further population details are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1  
*LGA population*

	Wanneroo	Joondalup	LLEP
Total person	81,215	149,236	230,451
Indigenous (as % total)	2.2	0.4	1.0
Australian born (as % total)	61.4	62.2	61.9
Employed	34,595	76,904	111,499
Not in Labour Force	20,045	31,833	51,878
In Labour Force	38,026	81,671	119,697
Unemployed	3,431	4,767	8198
Unemployed (as % labour force)	9.0	5.8	6.8

*Source: ABS 2001 Census Usual Residents Profiles (hereafter: ABS URP)*

The Indigenous population of Wanneroo is nearly six times as large as that of Joondalup in percentage terms, and nearly three times as large in real terms – 1,788 people to 622.

### 5.2 Employment and income

The unemployment figures for the two LGAs are different as 9% of people in the Wanneroo labour force were unemployed compared to 5.8% in Joondalup (the labour force figures are calculated by adding the number of employed to the number seeking employment in a particular region). The LLEP unemployment was 6.8% which is below the Australian figure of 7.4%. Labour force non-participation was higher in Wanneroo (24.7%) compared to Joondalup (21.3%). This makes a LLEP figure of 22.5%. Again, both LGA figures and LLEP figures are below the Australian figures of 28.0%.

Table 5.2  
*LGA employment*

	Wanneroo	Joondalup	LLEP
Total person	81,215	149,236	230,451
Employed	34,595	76,904	111,499
Not in Labour Force	20,045	31,833	51,878
In Labour Force	38,026	81,671	119,697
Unemployed	3,431	4,767	8198
Unemployed (as % labour force)	9.0	5.8	6.8

Source: : ABS URP)

These employment differentials can in part be explained by the actual geographic area, that is that Joondalup is a much more compact centralised area and Wanneroo has pockets of semi-rural residents, with little localised employment. The employment/unemployment figures may also explain the household income differentials, with the average household income for Wanneroo being \$750 per week, which matches the Australian average and is close to the Perth average of \$850. However the Joondalup figure is much higher, with an average weekly income of \$1,100.

### 5.3 Age structure

The Joondalup, Perth and Australian median ages are all similar – either 34 or 35 years whereas the Wanneroo median age 31 years. The 0-9 years cohort in Wanneroo is much larger than the other regions, as is the 30-39 years cohort. The 40 years and over population in Wanneroo is considerably lower than that in Joondalup, Perth and the national figures (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3  
*Age structure*

Age	% Wanneroo pop	% Joondalup pop	% LLEP pop	% Perth pop	% Aus pop
0-9	18.0	13.6	15.1	13.3	13.7
10-19	15.8	18.2	17.4	15.0	14.2
20-29	13.3	12.1	12.5	14.3	13.6
30-39	17.0	14.1	15.1	15.1	15.1
40-49	14.2	18.2	16.8	15.1	14.7
50+	21.6	23.7	22.8	27.2	28.6

Source: ABS URP

## 5.4 Summary

There are some differences in the population and employment structures of Wanneroo and Joondalup, therefore it is important to provide discrete figures for the two areas as well as those of the combined LLEP area.

Although Wanneroo is not as densely populated as Joondalup there is a greater proportion of the population unemployed which can be partly explained by the lower socio-economic status, depicted by the lower average weekly income in the Wanneroo area, and the larger extent of regional and rural areas.



## 6. The 15-19 Cohort

### 6.1 Age and population structure

This section presents the structure and numbers of the 15-19 years cohort in the Wanneroo and Joondalup LGAs. The total population in each year and the population in the total cohort (15-19 year olds) are reported in Table 6.1 in addition to the comparative figures for Wanneroo, Joondalup, LLEP and the state and national figures.

Table 6.1  
*Age and Comparative Age Structure*

Age	Age Structure: Numerical			Comparative Age Structure: % of total population				
	Wanneroo	Joondalup	LLEP	Wanneroo	Joondalup	LLEP	Perth	Australia
15	1,286	2,879	4,165	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.4
16	1,305	2,964	4,269	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.4
17	1,167	2,833	4,000	1.4	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.4
18	1,172	2,678	3,850	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4
19	1,141	2,617	2,758	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.4
15-19	6,071	13,971	20,042	7.5	9.4	8.7	7.7	7.0

Source: ABS URP

There are significant differences in the numbers of 15-19 year olds in the two areas with 69.7% of the 15-19 cohort for the North Metro region living in Joondalup, and 30.3% in Wanneroo. Joondalup also has a higher percentage of its population in the 15-19 cohort (9.4%) compared to Wanneroo (7.5%). The LLEP-wide the figure is 8.7%, which is above the Perth (7.7%) and national (7.0%) figures (Table 6.1). So although the Wanneroo median age is considerably lower than that for Joondalup, the 15-19 cohort is larger in Joondalup in both raw numbers and as a percentage of the LGA population. The Wanneroo figures sit close to the Perth and Australian figures, while the Joondalup numbers are consistently higher than all three. It should be noted that the size of the Joondalup population affects the LLEP figures across the board.

## 6.2 Indigenous population

The proportion of Indigenous young people living in the LLEP region needs to be considered in the discrete LGA regions to provide any meaningful and comparative information and these figures are presented below in Table 6.2. The proportion of 15-19 year old Indigenous young people living in Wanneroo (3.5%) is much higher than those living in Joondalup (0.5%). The proportion of 15-19 year old Indigenous young people living in Joondalup is significantly lower than both the state (2.1%) and national (3.2%) proportions. The national figures are however only just below the figures from Wanneroo.

Table 6.2  
*15-19 year old Indigenous population*

	Wanneroo	Joondalup	LLEP	Perth	Australia
Indigenous population as % 15-19 cohort	3.5	0.5	1.4	2.1	3.2

Source: ABS URP

The proportions of the total Indigenous population that 15-19 year olds comprise in the discrete sectors are reported below (see Table 6.3). This cohort makes up a large percentage of the total Indigenous population and there are no real differences between the figures from Wanneroo or Joondalup.

Table 6.3  
*Indigenous 15-19 cohort as percentage of total Indigenous population*

LGA/region	Percent
<b>Wanneroo</b>	11.8
Joondalup	11.1
LLEP	11.6
Perth	11.0
Australia	10.3

Source: ABS URP

### **6.3 Summary**

The combined LLEP North Metro region statistics for the 15-19 year old cohort are higher than the state and national figures, but in context Joondalup statistics are considerably higher whereas Wanneroo statistics are comparable to the national statistics. When considering the Indigenous populations in these areas, the Wanneroo statistics are significantly higher than Joondalup statistics, but comparable to the national statistics. Clearly from this information Joondalup has a very low proportion of indigenous young people which is not surprising in light of the high socio-economic status evident in the Joondalup area.

## 7. Education participation

### 7.1 High School population

There are 15 state high schools in the LLEP region, and 13 independent other schools, of which nine are religious based. There are 9 state schools in the Joondalup region with a total of 4,342 students enrolled in years ten to twelve whereas Wanneroo has a total of 1,777 students in six state schools enrolled in years ten to twelve. Comparative there are 3,193 students enrolled in year ten to twelve attending non-state schools in Joondalup and only 860 attending non-state schools in Wanneroo. In interpreting these figures it is important to be cognisant of the fact that these figures, which are presented in Table 7.1, are based on school years and not age and do not necessarily represent which area students are from who attend the schools.

Table 7.1  
*School populations for years 10 to 12*

State Schools	LGA	Pop	Other Schools	LGA	Pop
Belridge Education Support Centre	Joondalup	37	Mater Dei College	Joondalup	555
Belridge Senior High School	Joondalup	487	Lake Joondalup Baptist College	Joondalup	486
Craigie Senior High School	Joondalup	213	W. A. International College	Joondalup	50
Duncraig Senior High School	Joondalup	595	Sacred Heart College	Joondalup	582
Greenwood Senior High School	Joondalup	416	St Mark's Anglican Community School	Joondalup	422
Ocean Reef Senior High School	Joondalup	805	Prendiville Catholic College	Joondalup	550
Padbury Senior High School	Joondalup	377	Montessori School	Joondalup	15
Warwick Senior High School	Joondalup	462	St Stephen's School	Joondalup	533
Woodvale Senior High School	Joondalup	950	Mercy College	Wanneroo	389
Burbridge School	Wanneroo	15	Quinns Baptist College	Wanneroo	31
Clarkson Community High School	Wanneroo	536	Peter Moyes Anglican Community School	Wanneroo	125
Girrawheen Senior High School	Wanneroo	385	Kingsway Christian College	Wanneroo	302
Mindarie Senior College	Wanneroo	324	Aboriginal Community College	Wanneroo	13
Wanneroo Senior High School	Wanneroo	490			
Yanchep District High School	Wanneroo	27			

Source: DET

The figures are not classified by age, but by school Years. The Years Ten to Twelve seem the best fit for the 15-19 cohort, but there will be inclusions from outside the range.

With regard to the number of student enrolments on average per state school, Joondalup with an average of 482 students has significantly more enrolments in year ten to twelve than Wanneroo does which has an average of 296 enrolments. The figures for the non-state schools follow the same trend. Joondalup has an average of 354 enrolments in years ten to twelve and Wanneroo has an average of only 172 enrolments.

## 7.2 Comparative education

Caution should be exercised when using the combined figures and reporting on LLEP in isolation to the discrete figures for Wanneroo and Joondalup. It is clear by the results presented in Table 7.2 that there are some significant differences in the education direction of the cohort for the two LGA areas and in the comparisons with state and national figures. Young people in Wanneroo are clearly not participating in university education to the extent that young people in Joondalup are (7.5% and 14.7% respectively) and the Wanneroo figure is significantly lower than the state and national percentages. The percentage of young people in Joondalup not studying (23.8%) is comparative to the state and national figures (26.2% and 24.0% respectively) however Wanneroo has a significantly larger proportion of young people not studying in any of the education sectors at 33.7%.

Table 7.2  
*Comparative education as percentage of the 15-19 cohort\**

	Wanneroo	Joondalup	LLEP	Perth	Australia
High School	42.0	45.8	44.6	42.5	49.1
TAFE	11.2	11.6	11.5	10.8	9.2
University	7.5	14.7	12.5	14.5	10.8
Not studying	33.7	23.8	26.8	26.2	24.0

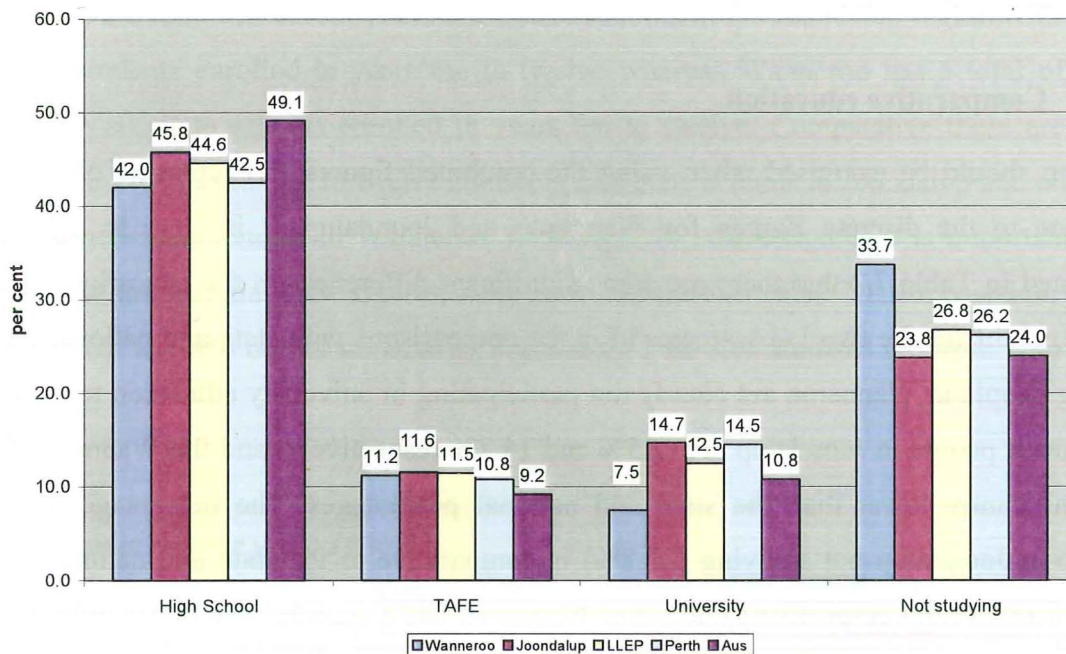
Source: ABS XCP

\*these figures have been rounded, and omit the 'not stated' and some other categories. Thus they do not total 100%.

\*this includes those studying full-time and part-time, working and not working.

In section 10 of this report, it is found that young people in Wanneroo are not only involved in fewer education sectors but there are also more unemployed young people and people seeking full-time work. This discussion will be raised in conjunction with employment directions and unemployment details.

The information presented in Figure 7.1 visually demonstrates that in terms of proportion of the total 15-19 year old cohort, those young people from Wanneroo involved in TAFE studies is higher than the proportion involved in university studies. This is not the case for the Joondalup, Perth or young people at a national level.

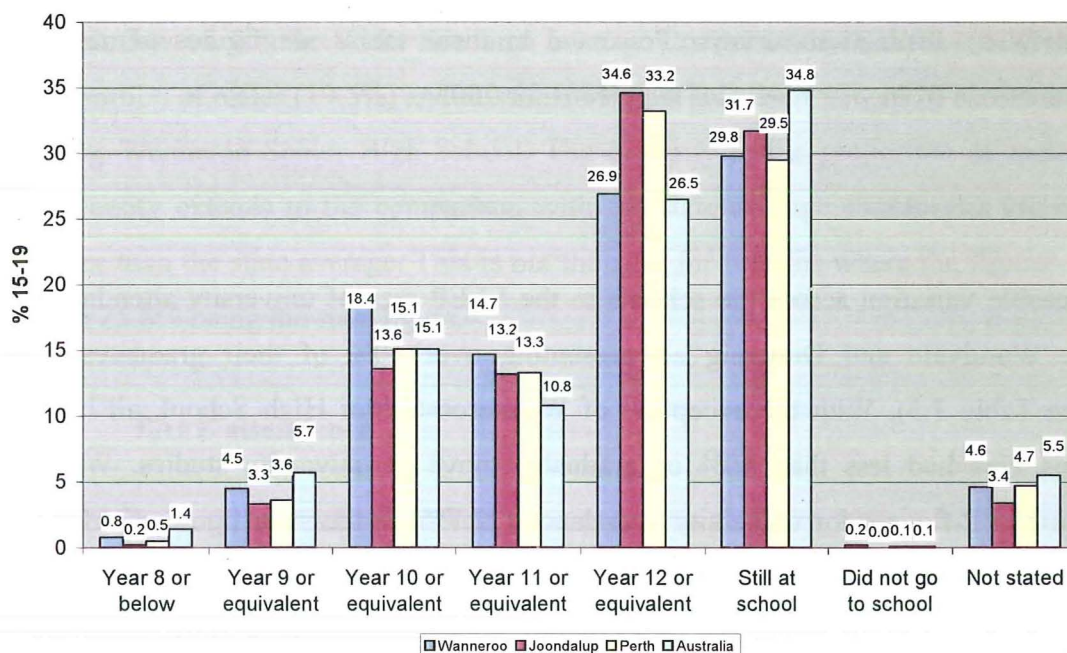


Source: ABS XRP

Figure 7.1. Comparative education

The figures presented in Figure 7.2 (see below) provide educational endpoints or exit points from the education system for those in the 15-19 cohort. Not surprisingly, there is a larger proportion still attending school, very few who exited from year eight and even fewer who did not go to school. The high proportion of the cohort still attending school at a national level could well be a reflection of the finishing ages in both New South Wales and Victoria in conjunction with the difficulties that Western Australia has in retaining students in schools.

These figures also provide us with evidence that a larger proportion of young people in Joondalup are completing year twelve (34.6%) and as indicated in the previous figure, going on to attend university. These figures are similar to the proportion of the cohort in Perth who exited from year twelve (33.2%) and are significantly higher than both the Wanneroo proportions (26.9%) and the national proportions (26.5%).



Source: ABS URP

Figure 7.2. Highest level of education achieved

A figure that may be cause for concern is the high proportion of the cohort from Wanneroo who have exited school from year ten (18.4%) compared to only (13.6%) of young people in Joondalup. What is known from previous research is that the more economically successful populations are, the more likely they are to remain in education longer, compared to those populations who are economically challenged [12]. The weaker retention in Wanneroo could partly be explained by this phenomenon. It would appear, however, that although Wanneroo has a high proportion of the cohort exiting school from year ten, Joondalup has a considerably low proportion exiting from year ten in comparison to the state and national figures. Again, this could be explained by the socio-economic status of that particular economy.

Note:

There is an observed discrepancy between the numbers presented in Figure 7.1 where the proportion of the cohort recorded to be still at school are approximately 42% to those presented in Figure 7.2 where the figure is approximately 30%. These figures are both provided by the ABS 2001 Census.

The next series of tables are prepared from data provided by the Department of Education and Training (DET) destination surveys. Presented in these tables are figures of actual education destinations from year twelve of the cohort for 2003.

### 7.3 University attendance

There is noticeable variation across the schools in the LLEP area of university attendance with Craigie, Woodvale and Duncraig all presenting over 30% of their graduates to university (see Table 7.3). With the exception of Wanneroo Senior High School, all high schools in this area had less than 10% of graduates move to university studies. When comparing the LLEP figures for university attendance (22.7%) to the state figures (24.0%) there is little difference but clearly the majority of schools in the Joondalup area are above the state average.

Table 7.3  
*University attendance as percentage of Year Twelve students*

School	Males	Year Twelve	Females	Year Twelve	Total	Year Twelve
	(no)	Percentage	(no)	Percentage	(no)	Percentage
Craigie Senior High School	10	33.3	18	36.7	28	35.0
Woodvale Senior High School	30	28.6	55	39.6	85	34.8
Duncraig Senior High School	22	31.0	22	34.4	44	32.6
Greenwood Senior High School	17	22.7	18	31.6	35	26.5
Ocean Reef Senior High School	19	21.3	29	30.9	48	26.2
Warwick Senior High School	14	21.5	13	24.1	27	22.7
Wanneroo Senior High School	12	24.0	12	17.4	24	20.2
Padbury Senior High School	5	10.9	11	22.0	16	16.7
Belridge Senior High School	2	3.7	9	13.0	11	8.9
Clarkson Community High School	3	4.8	6	8.1	9	6.6
Girrawheen Senior High School	0	0.0	4	7.8	4	4.4
LLEP	134	19.5	197	25.6	331	22.7
State average		22.0		25.8		24.0

Source: DET



On examination of the gender differences in university attendance it can be observed that the proportion of females from this area who go to university (25.6%) is greater than the proportion of males (19.5%) and this is true for all individual schools with the only exception being Wanneroo Senior High School. The disparity in the proportion of males who go to university extends to the comparison with the state average, that is the LLEP figures are lower than the state average. This is not the case for females where the figures are the same with 25.8% being the state figure.

### 7.3 TAFE attendance

There are very few schools which have programs that can sustain both the academically focussed curriculum and the more technical focussed curriculum. As a result, schools generally have particular strengths in one of these two areas. An examination of the figures presented in Table 7.4 supports this fact where most schools which had large proportions of students attending university have lower proportions of students attending TAFE. One exception to this is Craigie Senior High School who also have more than 30% of their students going to TAFE from year twelve which should be considered a significant achievement. Girrawheen Senior High School with the largest proportion of year twelve's going on to TAFE studies is clearly targeting towards this curriculum.

Table 7.4  
*TAFE studies as percentage of Year Twelve students*

School	Males	Year Twelve	Females	Year Twelve	Total	Year Twelve
	(no)	Percentage	(no)	Percentage	(no)	Percentage
Girrawheen Senior High School	20	50.0	22	43.1	42	46.2
Belridge Senior High School	18	33.3	34	49.3	52	42.3
Padbury Senior High School	16	34.8	20	40.0	36	37.5
Craigie Senior High School	10	33.3	17	34.7	27	34.2
Clarkson Community High School	16	25.8	30	40.5	46	33.8
Woodvale Senior High School	37	23.7	33	23.7	70	28.7
Wanneroo Senior High School	10	20.0	22	31.9	32	26.9
Ocean Reef Senior High School	22	24.7	26	27.7	48	26.2
Warwick Senior High School	17	26.2	14	25.9	31	26.1
Duncraig Senior High School	16	22.5	15	23.4	31	23.0
Greenwood Senior High School	12	16.0	12	21.1	24	18.2
LLEP	194	28.2	245	31.8	439	30.1
State average		25.7		26.4		26.1

Source: DET

The LLEP figures comparative to the stage averages and total proportion of school leavers going to TAFE from LLEP (30.1%) is higher than the stage average (26.1%). This trend is consistent with the disaggregated figures for males and females.

Another important fact is the close spread of figures dealing with TAFE students, especially compared to the great disparity in university transition and the fact that the LLEP average of 30.1% is higher than the State figure of 24%. In this regard, nine of the LLEP schools top the state average and both male and female figures for students in the LLEP region are above the state average in regard to TAFE.

The combined figures for university and TAFE as a destination from year twelve, show that of the eleven schools which are reported on in this section, seven had figures above the stage average of 50.1% (see Table 7.5). The figures for the combined LLEP schools (52.8%) are higher than the state.

Table 7.5

*Combined TAFE and University studies as percentage of year 12 students*

School	TAFE	University	Total
Craigie Senior High School	34.2	35.0	69.2
Woodvale Senior High School	28.7	34.8	63.5
Duncraig Senior High School	23.0	32.6	55.6
Padbury Senior High School	37.5	16.7	54.2
Ocean Reef Senior High School	26.2	26.2	52.4
Belridge Senior High School	42.3	8.9	51.2
Girrawheen Senior High School	46.2	4.4	50.6
Warwick Senior High School	26.1	22.7	48.8
Wanneroo Senior High School	26.9	20.2	47.1
Greenwood Senior High School	18.2	26.5	44.7
Clarkson Community High School	33.8	6.6	40.4
LLEP	30.1	22.7	52.8
State	24.0	26.1	50.1

Source: DET

### 7.3 Summary

Overall the educational attainments and achievements of the 15-19 cohort in the combined LLEP region are positive and in some situations, such as destination from year twelve are higher than those presented at the state level. It would appear on the basis of this information that the state schools in the North Metro area are experiencing, on average, a good level of post compulsory schooling for their exiting students, with higher than the state averages articulating to university or TAFE. Schools in the Joondalup area for example, have a significantly higher proportion of the 15-29 cohort involved in secondary and post compulsory education than the national population.

There are however a few potential areas of concern when reviewing the LGA data separately. Wanneroo has some current challenges in keeping young people at school and encouraging them to participate in post compulsory education. Most schools in the Wanneroo area have low proportions of students going on to university studies, but encouragingly greater numbers of students are going on to TAFE studies. Also young males experience educational transition problems to a greater degree than young females and this is true for students in most of the schools from Wanneroo and Joondalup.

Leaving school to attend university or TAFE are just two options available for young people post schooling and the following section presents details about participation in vocational education training for the LLEP north metro area.

## 8. Vocational Education Training

In 2002 there were a total of 14,542 students who commenced Vocational Educational Training (VET) programs in 133 schools in Western Australia, representing 45.9 % of the year eleven and twelve student cohort. The nature of VET has changed in recent years and whereas it was once advantageous to complete year eleven or year twelve as a basis for being accepted to a VET course of study this is not necessarily the current practice. There has been a noticeable shift to encourage year ten VET courses of study so for the purposes of reporting these data, figures are included for year ten to twelve in addition to those for year eleven to twelve.

In 2000 there were a total of 927 placements in VET courses of study offered in the schools listed in Table 8.1 below. The schools listed were the only ones for which figures were available. The number of enrolments in 2002 was 1632 representing a significant increase of 76%. The numbers reported indicate that the increase in VET placements in the area from 2001 to 2002 was only 7.4% whereas the state figures for the same period show an increase of 11%. The proportion of indigenous students undertaking VET courses of study in these schools only accounts for 1.5 per cent of all students.

Table 8.1  
*Student numbers in VET courses of study*

School	2001 (no.)	2002 (no.)	Year Ten to Twelve (%)	Year Eleven to Twelve (%)
Belridge Senior High School	297	338	69.4	106.0
Greenwood Senior High School	174	218	52.4	83.5
Belridge Education Support Centre	20	18	48.6	72.0
Warwick Senior High School	193	146	31.6	49.2
Ocean Reef Senior High School	231	245	30.4	49.8
Wanneroo Senior High School	55	146	29.8	50.9
Girrawheen Senior High School	90	103	26.8	66.4
Padbury Senior High School	56	87	23.1	32.8
Duncraig Senior High School	108	130	21.8	34.1
Clarkson Community High School	138	88	16.4	32.7
Craigie Senior High School	67	21	9.9	19.1
Woodvale Senior High School	91	92	9.7	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>1632</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>46.6</b>

Source: DET

When looking at the proportion of students from years ten to twelve who are involved in VET placements it is important to recognise that there was very little data available for this scan on VET activity in schools located in the Wanneroo area so interpretation should be made with caution. Accepting that, there appears to be strong VET activity in the government schools in the LLEP. Large proportions of students from years ten to twelve are involved in VET placements with most of the schools involving more than 20% of their students. Additional evidence is available to support this and includes the commendable achievement from a student who attended Clarkson Community High, Wanneroo, who won the 2002 Beazley Medal for the outstanding VET in Schools student. Another example involves Belridge Senior High School, also a strong performer in VET in schools and in 2002 ranked equal 12<sup>th</sup> across all schools in the State in successful completion of Units of Competency by year twelve students. This involved 67% of the 118 students who studied Units of Competency in year twelve in 2002.

The picture of VET involvement in the North Metro area reflects the same picture which has been documented in a recent DET report [21]. In this particular report the message was that the following areas of VET were strong in the state of Western Australia in comparison to the national figures:

- Automotive
- Community Services
- Engineering and Mining
- Primary Industries

In the same report it was noted that Tourism and Hospitality was less commonly studied in Western Australia than in the rest of the nation, which actually contrasts the North Metro picture where Tourism and Hospitality is the most common course of study in VET programs. The questions that need to be asked about the availability of jobs for students who graduate from these VET courses are, where they will go and what they will do should employment prove difficult to find in the areas they have studied?

Another area to be considered is the availability of courses that are traditionally more suitable for young males and young females, and what the involvement is in VET by gender in the North Metro area. When we look at the overall state involvement the numbers are similar to the North Metro where 55% of the students in VET are males and 45% are females. The only VET course of study offered in the North Metro that has a higher proportion of females participating is Tourism and Hospitality where there are only 30% males. Those courses which are particularly dominated by male participation include Automotive, Building and Construction, Textiles and Engineering and Mining. A shortcoming of the information regarding VET courses is the unavailability of any statistical data in relation to numbers and percentages of enrolments in specific courses, therefore alignment with employment opportunities could not be made.

## **8.2 Summary**

The information, though limited, indicates that VET activity is healthy in the schools in the LLEP region. One fact likely to be of strategic importance from this investigation of VET activity in the LLEP area is that Tourism and Hospitality is uncharacteristically popular in the North Metro region when compared to the state. This is also the VET program attracting the largest number of female enrolments. There is a commendable level of success in VET achievement in the region as indicated by examples in the previous sections. It would be of benefit to actually study the different schools where successes have been realised to ascertain best practice models and develop strategies for future involvement and collaboration in other schools in the area.

## 9. Transition

The following tables and commentary present further details about the destinations of government high school students across the LLEP area in 2003. The data was compiled by the Department of Education and Training and again relates to the actual destinations of the students who participated in the survey. This information involves all students who were at the time in either year ten (n = 2,236), eleven (n = 2,015) or twelve (n= 1,457). This is inaugural data collected by DET in 2002 and as such cannot yet be used to identify any trends in the destination patterns in the area. The retention rates in government schools in Western Australia is presented below and show that there has been little change in the proportions of students remaining at school over the last three years.

There were a total of 5,708 government school students enrolled in years ten to twelve during 2002, however of this total there were 346 students who did not take part in the destinations census. The results presented in Table 9.1 clearly show that the destinations for students in the LLEP area are not different to those at the state level. Over 60% of students return to school while a further 19% continue to other options for post compulsory education or training. The figures presented in Table 9.1 are mutually exclusive and so those students who go into part-time employment are not also involved in study or training so either chose to only work part-time or are seeking other options and working part-time in the interim. Employment assistance involves programs such as employability workshops, career guidance and work experience.

Table 9.1  
*Years Ten to Twelve LLEP student destinations 2002*

Destination	Number	Per cent	State %
Return to School	3569	62.5	61.0
Studying at University	343	6.0	6.2
Studying at TAFE	540	9.5	8.6
Apprenticeship	93	1.6	1.6
Traineeship	52	0.9	1.1
Other study/training	51	0.9	1.0
Full-time employment	312	5.5	5.2
Part-time employment	141	2.5	2.8
Employment assistance	261	4.6	5.2
Total*	5362		

Source: DET

\* 356 students did not take part in the Census

## 9.1 Full-time employment

An option for some school leavers is to enter into full-time employment and the figures above in Table 9.1 indicated that 5.5% made this choice for 2003. Of particular interest in this study is the proportion of young people leaving from year ten to go into full-time employment and the gender differences. The results presented in Table 9.2 show that of the 5.5% of all school leavers going into full-time employment, 2.4% are exiting from year ten. The proportion of males leaving school after year ten (3.5%) for employment is significantly higher than females (1.1%) and also higher than the state proportions (2.1%). These combined LLEP figures are inflated by the very high proportions of males exiting from year ten to employment and who have attended Girrawheen (8.0%), Clarkson (6.0%) and Yanchep (9.1%). However caution needs to be used in making judgements and subsequent actions based on combined figures without looking at sectors in isolation. The figures from Yanchep District High School may not be too surprising as the school does not have a year eleven or twelve.

Table 9.2  
*Transition to full-time employment from Year Ten*

School	Male (no)	Year 10 %	Female (no)	Year 10 %	Total (no)	Year 10 %
Girrawheen Senior High School	7	8.0	0	0.0	8	4.4
Clarkson Community High School	8	6.0	1	0.9	9	3.7
Yanchep Senior High School	1	9.1	0	0.0	1	3.7
Greenwood Senior High School	4	5.2	1	1.4	5	3.4
Craigie Senior High School	2	3.7	1	2.3	3	3.1
Padbury Senior High School	4	6.1	0	0.0	4	3.0
Wanneroo Senior High School	3	2.6	3	2.9	6	2.8
Belridge Senior High School	2	2.3	2	1.9	4	2.1
Ocean Reef Senior High School	4	3.3	2	1.2	6	2.1
Woodvale Senior High School	6	2.8	0	0.0	6	1.6
Warwick Senior High School	0	0.0	2	2.6	2	1.2
Duncraig Senior High School	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
LLEP Total	41	3.6	12	1.1	54	2.4
State average		2.1		1.3		1.7

Source: DET



The proportion of LLEP students exiting from year eleven and going into full-time employment in 2003 (3.5%) are not different from the state proportions (3.4%). When we look at the figures presented in Table 9.3 for males and females enrolled in LLEP schools these figures are also no different from those at the state level. There does appear to be a greater proportion of females entering full-time work from year eleven in this region than there are males and from Greenwood Senior High School and Duncraig Senior High School there are no males who left from year eleven to go to work.

Table 9.3  
*Transition to full-time employment from Year Eleven*

School	Male (no)	Year 11 %	Female (no)	Year 11 %	Total (no)	Year 11 %
Clarkson Community High School	4	4.3	8	8.1	12	6.3
Warwick Senior High School	5	5.5	5	6.0	10	5.7
Girrawheen Senior High School	5	9.4	0	0.0	5	4.4
Belridge Senior High School	3	3.3	6	5.2	9	4.3
Ocean Reef Senior High School	8	5.2	4	3.0	12	4.2
Padbury Senior High School	3	4.0	2	2.6	5	3.3
Woodvale Senior High School	3	2.0	5	3.6	8	2.8
Wanneroo Senior High School	3	4.0	1	1.4	4	2.7
Craigie Senior High School	1	1.9	2	3.5	3	2.7
Greenwood Senior High School	0	0.0	2	2.9	2	1.4
Duncraig Senior High School	0	0.0	1	1.3	1	0.5
LLEP Total	35	3.4	36	3.6	71	3.5
State average		3.8		3.1		3.4

Source: DET

Note: Yanchep District High does not have Year Eleven or Twelve students

As expected, there is a greater proportion of students leaving from year twelve to enter full-time employment and the figures presented in Table 9.4 indicate that the combined LLEP figures (12.9%) are again no different to the state figures (12.8%). Some schools show other trends such as Greenwood Senior High School having 22.7% of the male year twelve's and only 7.0% of the females year twelve's leaving for full-time work and the converse gender ratio for Wanneroo Senior High School with 20.3% of female year twelve's and 14% of male year twelve's leaving for full-time work. More information about the programs offered at these schools and the types of enrolments students are participating in is required prior to making further comment. The overall picture for males and females from the majority of the other schools in the area is similar to what is happening at a state level.

Table 9.4

*Transition to full-time employment from Year Twelve*

School	Male (no)	Year 12 %	Female (no)	Year 12 %	Total (no)	Year 12 %
Wanneroo Senior High School	7	14.0	14	20.3	21	17.6
Greenwood Senior High School	17	22.7	4	7.0	21	15.9
Ocean Reef Senior High School	13	14.6	16	17.0	29	15.8
Clarkson Community High School	11	17.7	8	10.8	19	14.0
Belridge Senior High School	9	16.7	8	11.6	17	13.8
Woodvale Senior High School	9	8.6	21	15.1	30	12.3
Duncraig Senior High School	10	14.1	4	6.3	14	10.4
Warwick Senior High School	7	10.8	5	9.3	12	10.1
Girrawheen Senior High School	4	10.0	5	9.8	9	9.9
Padbury Senior High School	4	8.7	5	10.0	9	9.4
Craigie Senior High School	1	3.3	6	12.2	7	8.9
LLEP Total	92	13.4	96	12.5	188	12.9
State average		14.1		11.7		12.8

*Source: DET***9.2 Traineeships and apprenticeships**

Transitioning from school to apprenticeships or traineeships is not a common option for young people in the LLEP area and as reported previously in Table 9.1, only 2.5% of all students in the DET census took up this option. A total of 1.1% of students who exited from year ten took up an apprenticeship or traineeship, 2.1% from year eleven and 5.3% from year twelve. There are schools in the LLEP region which clearly lead the way in the proportion of students leaving school and taking up apprenticeships or traineeships and these include Clarkson Community College, Duncraig Senior High School and Ocean Reef Senior High School (see Table 9.6). The combined LLEP proportions for student's selecting this option after year twelve is the same as the picture at the state level and when we look at the figures for males and females separately we can see that a larger proportion of males in the LLEP region and at a state level go into apprenticeships or traineeships from year twelve.

Table 9.6

*Year Twelve transition into Traineeships and Apprenticeships*

School	Male (no)	Year Ten %	Female (no)	Year Ten %	Total (no)	Year Ten %
Clarkson Community High School	8	13	5	6.8	13	9.6
Duncraig Senior High School	6	8.4	3	4.9	9	6.6
Ocean Reef Senior High School	9	10.1	4	4.3	13	7.1
Girrawheen Senior High School	2	5	0	0	2	2.2
Belridge Senior High School	4	7.5	3	4.3	7	5.7
Craigie Senior High School	1	3.3	1	2.0	2	2.5
Greenwood Senior High School	6	8.0	2	3.6	8	6.0
Padbury Senior High School	2	4.3	1	2.0	3	3.1
Wanneroo Senior High School	3	6.0	3	4.3	6	5.0
Warwick Senior High School	3	4.6	2	3.7	5	4.2
Woodvale Senior High School	5	4.8	4	2.9	9	1.6
LLEP total	49	7.1	28	3.6	77	5.3
State average		6.8		4.0		5.3

Source: DET

### 9.3 Summary

The transition patterns that appear in the data from DET for schools in the LLEP region are similar to those at a state level and this is true between males and females and also total populations. The most significant difference is that TAFE is a more common option for students exiting school from the LLEP region than WA students in general. The data that is provided here from the destination surveys is critical to the strategic educational planning in the area and may be pivotal in addressing problems such as retention that are observed in the LLEP area. The issues of advantage and well-being in conjunction with socio-economic factors need to be considered in interpreting and using any of the data presented.

## 10. Employment

The following information provides detail about the employment characteristics of the 15-19 cohort in the LLEP region. Starting with employment status, be it full-time or part-time, the data is then broken into two Australian Bureau of Statistics category types, which are employment by industry and employment by occupation. These category types are taken from the Usual Residents Profile (URP) and are used throughout this section and although they are not as informative as further desegregated data would be, they are the only figures available and provide comparative options.

### 10.1 Employment status

The proportion of young people in full-time employment in Wanneroo is significantly higher than the state and national proportions and those in Joondalup (see Table 10.1). The figures presented here for young people involved in part-time employment includes those who are also still involved in some type of study be it a school, TAFE or university. Of particular interest are the large numbers of young people employed part-time in Joondalup and as with many other employment facts may be explained by the existence of the shopping precinct.

Table 10.1  
*Employment as percentage of 15-19 cohort*

	%	%	%	%	%
Age	Wanneroo pop	Joondalup pop	LLEP pop	Perth pop	Aus pop
Employed full-time	17.8	14.9	15.8	13.9	12.7
Employed part-time	23.1	34.7	31.9	28.9	26.5
total	40.9	49.6	47.7	42.8	39.2

Source: ABS URP

### 10.2 Employment by occupation

By far the greatest occupation area for all regions is the Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers (see Table 10.2). The Joondalup precinct and retail hub contributes to explaining the high proportion of employment in these occupations in that area (39.4%). Wanneroo on the other hand has a more extensive area of manufacturing and industrial and this is one reason for the relatively lower figure (33.6%). The figures presented in Table 10.2 below, indicate which occupations young people in the LLEP region are the most likely to be employed in and these include not only sales, which is likely to be dominated by females, but labourers and tradespersons where the majority of males are likely to be employed.

Table 10.2

*Employment by occupation as percentage of employed 15-19 population*

Occupation	Wanneroo	Joondalup	LLEP	Perth	Australia
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	33.6	39.4	37.8	37.2	37.6
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	14.6	16.1	15.7	16.6	16.0
Labourers and Related Workers	17.9	13.6	14.8	15.3	15.4
Tradespersons and Related Workers	15.1	14.2	14.4	13.3	13.7
Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	9.1	7.7	8.1	7.6	6.6
Associate Professionals	3.8	4.3	4.1	4.1	3.8
Professionals	1.1	1.7	1.5	1.9	2.2
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.2
Managers and Administrators	1.0	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.8

Source: ABS URP

There are a total of 5,702 young people employed in the LLEP area and the majority of these jobs (71%) are available in Joondalup. The figures presented in Table 10.3 show the numbers of jobs available for young people in the areas but doesn't indicate where the young people come from. This information is critical to determine what occupations to target for education and workplace training and to develop work experience programs. The majority of jobs available for young people in both Joondalup and Wanneroo are in clerical, sales and service. There are 363 (22.1%) jobs available in labouring and trades work in Wanneroo.

Table 10.3

*Jobs in LLEP North Metro by Occupation*

Occupation	Wanneroo	Wanneroo %	Joondalup	Joondalup %	LLEP	LLEP %
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	573	34.8	2066	50.9	2639	46.3
Labourers and Related Workers	363	22.1	583	14.1	946	16.6
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	188	11.4	593	14.6	781	13.7
Tradespersons and Related Workers	281	17.1	262	6.4	543	9.5
Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	140	8.5	323	8	463	8.1
Associate Professionals	42	2.6	168	4.1	210	3.7
Professionals	9	0.5	42	1.0	51	0.9
Managers and Administrators	36	2.2	6	0.1	42	0.7
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	12	0.7	15	0.4	27	0.5
Total	1644		4058		5702	

Source: ABS unpublished data

### 10.3 Employment by industry

The other way that employment is categorised by the ABS is by industry and the figures presented in Table 10.4 show the percentage of the working 15-19 cohort who are employed in these industries in the LLEP region. Clearly the majority of young people are employed in the retail trade in both Wanneroo (46.0%) and Joondalup (48.7%) and these figures are representative of those at the state and national level. Other industries that are popular employment options for young people in the area include accommodation, cafes and restaurants, manufacturing, property and business services and construction. The most noticeable difference in these figures to the state and national ones is seen in Wanneroo where the proportion of young people employed in accommodation, cafes and restaurants is less than Joondalup, state and national proportions. However the proportion of young people employed in manufacturing in Wanneroo is higher than Joondalup, state and national proportions. This again may be explained by the contextual differences in the business operations in Wanneroo.

Table 10.4

*Employment by Industry as percentage of employed population*

Industry	Wanneroo	Joondalup	LLEP	Perth	Australia
Retail Trade	46.0	48.7	48.0	47.4	46.8
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	6.6	10.2	9.2	10.4	10.5
Manufacturing	9.7	5.7	6.8	7.4	6.9
Property and Business Services	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	5.5
Construction	6.6	6.0	6.2	4.9	4.8
Wholesale Trade	4.2	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.3
Health and Community Services	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.3
Personal and Other Services	3.1	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.2
Cultural and Recreational Services	2.5	4.5	3.9	3.6	3.3
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2.7	0.6	1.2	0.9	2.4
Finance and Insurance	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.2
Education	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.5
Government Administration and Defence	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.6
Transport and Storage	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.2	1.2
Communication Services	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5
Mining	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Source: ABS URP

To provide a clearer picture of where young people are employed taking gender into account, the data from the previous table has been further disaggregated to male and female proportions. The assumption that the majority of young people working in retail would be female and in construction and manufacturing would be males is confirmed (see Table 10.5). For example, of the total number of young people working in retail in Wanneroo, 42.4% are males and 57.6% are females and of the total number of young people working in retail in Joondalup, 42.3% are males and 57.7% are females. These figures are not as disparate as the figures for manufacturing and construction where between 85% and 95% of all young people working in either manufacturing or construction are males and this is true for both Wanneroo and Joondalup. The table below provides detail about the proportions of young people working in the different industries by gender as a proportion of the total number of people employed in the industry and as a proportion of the total number of young people employed in the industry.

Table 10.5  
*LLEP Employment by industry by sex*

Industry	Wanneroo		Joondalup	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
	% Cohort (% Total)	% Cohort (% Total)	% Cohort (% Total)	% Cohort (% Total)
Retail Trade	19.5 (42.4)	26.5 (57.6)	28.1 (57.7)	20.6 (42.3)
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	2.7 (40.9)	3.9 (49.1)	6.1 (49.8)	4.1 (40.2)
Manufacturing	8.3 (85.6)	1.4 (14.4)	0.8 (14.3)	4.8 (85.7)
Construction	6.2 (93.3)	0.4 (6.7)	0.5 (8.3)	5.5 (91.7)
Property and Business Services	2.6 (41.9)	3.6 (58.1)	2.8 (44.4)	3.5 (55.6)
Health and Community Services	0.5	3.2	3.1	0.7
Wholesale Trade	2.8	1.4	1.2	2.1
Cultural and Recreational Services	1.2	1.2	2.1	2.4
Personal and Other Services	0.6	2.4	2.6	0.9
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1.9	0.7	0.2	0.5
Finance and Insurance	0.2	0.9	1.1	0.4
Transport and Storage	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.6
Education	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.4
Government Administration and Defence	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4
Communication Services	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.4
Mining	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1

Source: ABS URP

To provide targeted education, training and employment programs it is critical to be aware of the local employment opportunities available. Joondalup provides a total of 4058 jobs for the 15-19 cohort while Wanneroo provides a total of 1646 jobs for this cohort (see Table 10.6). In the LLEP region the proportion of jobs available in the retail industry (60.1%) far exceeds that of any other industry and this is particularly evident in Joondalup where 64.5% of the jobs available are in retail compared to Wanneroo where 49.4% of the jobs available are in retail. This difference has already been discussed in the overall socio-economic context of the two LGA's.

In considering what jobs are available in these local areas it becomes clear what industry sectors should be targeted for training purposes for young people and also if current post compulsory education and training programs are effective in preparing young people to be competitive in the local workforce.

Table 10.6  
*Jobs in LLEP North Metro by Industry*

Industry	Wanneroo		Joondalup		LLEP	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	83	5.0	9	0.2	92	1.6
Retail Trade	813	49.4	2617	64.5	3430	60.1
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	78	4.7	498	12.3	576	10.1
Manufacturing	220	13.4	39	1.0	259	4.5
Cultural and Recreational Services	33	2.0	214	5.3	247	4.3
Property and Business Services	48	2.9	181	4.5	229	4.0
Construction	122	7.4	91	2.2	213	3.7
Personal and Other Services	42	2.6	143	3.5	185	3.2
Health and Community Services	56	3.4	120	3.0	176	3.1
Wholesale Trade	115	7.0	57	1.4	172	3.0
Education	15	0.9	27	0.7	42	0.7
Transport and Storage	9	0.5	26	0.6	35	0.6
Finance and Insurance	0	0	15	0.6	15	0.3
Government Administration and Defence	9	0.5	9	0.2	18	0.3
Communication Services	0	0	9	0.2	9	0.2
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0	0	3	0.1	3	0.0
Mining	3	0.2	0	0	3	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1646</b>		<b>4058</b>		<b>5704</b>	

Source: ABS unpublished data



#### 10.4 Alignment of industry classifications to VET courses

Comparing the two different ABS categories of industry and occupation, retail is the dominant industry, and Elementary clerical is the dominant occupation. Figures presented in Tables 10.3 and 10.6 show there are 5704 jobs inside the LLEP area, and 3430 of these are in the retail industry. That equates to 60.1% of all jobs in the LLEP for this cohort. Of these 3430 jobs, 2639 positions are at the Elementary Clerical level. Thus, 46.2% of all jobs in the LLEP are Elementary Clerical positions in the Retail industry.

It is difficult to align industry classifications to occupational classifications. This is further complicated by the VET sector using its own course classifications, resulting in extreme difficulty aligning the current courses offered, with employment and occupational opportunities (see Tables 10.2, 10.3 & 10.6). As occupational classifications are vague and somewhat inapplicable to this cohort only employment by industry category will be discussed.

#### 10.5 Local Employment retention

From the community capacity building perspective it is desirable to have local people employed in the area and the issue of retaining people and their commensurate skills is a challenge for most local communities. The figures presented below in Table 10.7 show that of the total number of young people from the Wanneroo and Joondalup (10,058) approximately half are locally employed.

Table 10.7  
*Employment retention*

	Wanneroo residents	Joondalup residents	LLEP residents
Employed	2800	7258	10,058
Employed in LLEP	1293	3759	5052
Employed elsewhere	1507	3499	5006

*Source: ABS unpublished data and URP*

The proportion of young people who are employed in Wanneroo who are also residents is 66.7% (see Table 10.8). The proportion of young people who work and reside in Joondalup is 84.8%, which is an indication of the different employment options in each location. The proportion of young people from Joondalup who travel out of the LLEP area to work is greater than the proportion of young people from Wanneroo who work outside of the LLEP area, however this could be explained simply by the greater number of young people in Joondalup generally and who are seeking employment.

Table 10.8  
*Employment retention*

	Employed in Wanneroo	Employed in Joondalup	Totals
Wanneroo resident	862 (67%)	431 (33%)	1293
Joondalup resident	573 (15)	3186 (85%)	3759
Elsewhere	211 (32%)	441 (68%)	652
Totals	1646 (29%)	4058 (71)	5704

*Source: ABS unpublished data*

Just as local young people travel each day to employment outside of the area there are other young people who reside outside and travel into the LLEP region to work. We know that there are a total of 5,704 jobs available for young people in the LLEP region and of these there are 604 jobs (10.6%) which employ outside workers (see Table 10.9). The discrepancy in the figures in this table and the table above where it is reported that over 11% of jobs are filled by young people from outside the LLEP area are a result of a small number of job categories not being included in the table. This information may be useful in terms of structuring training programs to be able to fill these positions with young people from the local areas as an alternative to employers having to seek in other locations to fill potential vacancies.

Table 10.9

*Outside workers employed in LLEP*

Industry	Per cent
Construction	21.1
Personal and Other Services	17.8
Cultural and Recreational Services	17.0
Property and Business Services	14.4
Manufacturing	14.3
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	12.8
Wholesale Trade	10.5
Health and Community Services	9.6
Retail Trade	9.4
Total	10.6

Source: ABS unpublished data

## 10.6 Summary

The employment picture in Wanneroo and Joondalup is not too disparate from that at a state or a national level. The majority of young people are employed in the retail industry followed by manufacturing and construction, and the most common occupation for these young people is elementary clerical and labouring and the trades. The difficulty comes with trying to match occupation and industry and make meaningful interpretations from the data presented. The collection of more detailed data would certainly help address this challenge, for example it would be advantageous to have data available that indicates what specific retail industries employ young people and what type of manufacturing companies employ young people. Not all types of employment are suitable for all ages and targeting training to the jobs which are available in the area, particularly those which are more likely to provide potential career paths for young people is an essential element in effective strategic planning for education, training and employment for these young people.

# 11. Unemployment

## 11.1 Introduction

This final section looks at the unemployment figures of the total 15-19 cohort. As with all other data it was collected from the ABS Usual Resident Profile.

## 11.2 Unemployment status

The figures presented below in Table 11.1 include young people who have registered at an employment centre (for example Centrelink) and do not include young people who may also be studying. The percentages are calculated from the total 15-19 cohort. Clearly the unemployment rates are higher in Wanneroo (5.4%) than Joondalup (3.7%) and also higher than those at the state (4.6%) and national (4.3%) level. If we were to use the LLEP figures to describe the unemployment situation in the area we would not see the potential problems that are particularly evident in Wanneroo.

Table 11.1  
*Unemployment as percentage of 15-19 cohort*

	%	%	%	%	%
Age	Wanneroo pop	Joondalup pop	LLEP pop	Perth pop	Aus pop
Unemployed seeking full-time work	5.4	3.7	4.4	4.6	4.3
unemployed seeking part-time work	3.8	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.0
total	9.2	8.1	8.7	8.9	8.3

Source: ABS URP

When considering the unemployment figures for this cohort as a percentage of the labour force Wanneroo has a significantly high proportion of their young people unemployed (see Table 11.2). Joondalup has a significantly lower proportion of the cohort labour force unemployed than Wanneroo and these figures are more positive than those at both the state and national level.

Table 11.2  
*Unemployment as percentage of 15-19 labour force*

	%	%	%	%	%
Region	Wanneroo pop	Joondalup pop	LLEP pop	Perth pop	Aus pop
15-19 year old	18.1	13.4	14.8	16.4	16.7

Source: ABS URP

## **11.2 Summary**

There are some significant employment challenges highlighted for Wanneroo in these data where the proportions of young people unemployed is higher than those in other areas reported. Many of these young people are actively seeking either full-time or part-time work, however there are also many who are not. Joondalup does not appear to be experiencing the same difficulties as Wanneroo but even though the unemployment figures are lower than those at the state and national level, there are still over 700 young Joondalup people not employed and not involved in any kind of education or training.

## **12. Employers' Surveys**

A critical element in preparing this environmental scan was to communicate the voice of local employers from Wanneroo and Joondalup and to this end a survey was developed and administered across the two LGAs. In the first stage, businesses were contacted, either in person or by telephone, with the request that they participate in the study by completing the survey and indicating their willingness to be involved further. In the second phase, a smaller sample of business people, again from both LGA's were interviewed to collect further information on those issues raised in the initial survey that the researchers felt required further clarification or discussion. The nature of the survey and the interviews was to collect data about the current and potential employment of young people and the attitudes of employers toward working with young people. In this section the survey data and the interview data is combined to provide a more complete picture.

### **12.1 Demographics**

The first stage of the study involved 109 business operators who agreed to participate and subsequently completed the survey that was personally delivered to them. These businesses were from both Joondalup and Wanneroo and included a proportionate sample of the types of industries that employ young people in the region. For example, given the majority of young people in the region and beyond are employed in retail, the majority of the businesses surveyed were retail businesses.

Male and female operators jointly control 46% of the businesses surveyed; 32% are controlled by a male only and 8% by a female only. Fifty five percent of the businesses surveyed were operating as a family business with 21% having family members work in the business.

In addition to the businesses who participated in the survey, six in depth interviews were conducted, four from Joondalup and two from Wanneroo. The purpose of these interviews was to provide more detail and depth to what was ascertained from the surveys and to find out additional information regarding reasons for not employing young people and what would encourage business operators to consider employing young people. The survey results provide an overview of the general picture from the business operator's position and the interviews add further explanation for many of the more common responses.

Sixty two percent of businesses stated that they employed 15 to 19 year olds, 34% said they did not and 4% declined to answer the question. The numbers of young people employed ranged from one (47%) to more than fifty (3%) with the average being approximately less than four young people employed (74%). The larger stores involved in this study such as Target and K-Mart employ the larger numbers of young people.

## 12.2 Recruiting young people

The operators were asked where they generally recruit young people from and these results are reported in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1

*Recruitment of young people*

Recruit from	Percent
General advertising	26
Word of mouth	26
Family or relatives	12
Local school	10
TAFE	6
Private placement company	5
Job network	5
Centrelink	4
Government scheme	3

*Source: survey data*

Clearly, recruitment from TAFE, Job network, government schemes and Centrelink is very low. Most business operators recruit via word of mouth or general advertising. From the interviews it was clear that the many young people who come to be employed are there because they know someone in the business or know someone by association. Very few businesses use formal employment agencies to recruit young people. Two reasons given for this were that it can take too long and that there is too much risk involved. The underlying feeling of the business operators was that many young people were not suitable.

There are many opportunities for business operators to work with young people under various schemes that are operating in the North Metro areas of Joondalup and Wanneroo ranging from volunteer and mentoring programs to graduate and university programs. The responses to this question are reported in Table 12.2.

Table 12.2

*Business operators working with young people from employment programs*

Program	Per cent
Work experience	28
School/uni/TAFE	12
Trainees	11
Apprentices	9
Structured workplace	6
Volunteer	3
Mentoring	2
Graduate programme	1

*Source: survey data*

The figures presented in Table 12.2 indicate that 28% of business operators surveyed work with young people on a work experience program; 12% involved people from school, university or TAFE employment programs. Twenty percent of those surveyed declared they had either trainees or apprentices. This figure is well above the school transition figures shown in Table 9.2, but it deals with employers rather than employees, of course. However, the category of ‘School/uni/TAFE’ probably overlaps with the ‘Trainees’ and ‘Apprentices’ categories. If the two categories are combined, 32% of employers are involved with one of these types of employment. Caution should again be used in interpretation of the figures as these questions were all multiple choice, and thus the implicit overlap might result in one system of employment appearing more than once in the same answer.

The interviews revealed that many business operators are happy to have young people for work experience. The main reasons were:

- it costs the employers nothing, the young people are only there for a short time,
- the practice ameliorates perceived problems of terminating employment if things do not work out, and
- it provides a short term help in the business.

These reasons are more relevant and sustainable for businesses that do not require too much specialised training, such as retail. Given the dominance of retail employment for this cohort, the power of work experience raises interesting questions.

The other methods and programs for employing young people had little impact in the survey group. The possible exception was Structured Workplace Learning, which was mentioned by 6% of employers.



### **12.3 Barriers to working with young people**

There were no surprises in the reasons given by participating business operators for not working with young people. The most common theme that arose from the survey was that the attitudes of the young person were not 'appropriate'. The problem of attitude can be categorised into social attitude, personal attitude and work attitude. The following phrases all appeared in survey answers, and demonstrate the thinking of business operators toward young people. The comments are all concerned with young people themselves:

- lack of respect
- attitude to work is not positive
- attitude, dress sense, willingness to learn
- laziness, tardiness, lack of motivation
- work ethic, communication skills
- bad attitude and general social skills
- lack of experience
- lack of available hours for casual work
- lack of people skills.

In addition to the issues of personal qualities and attributes mentioned above, business operators reported that there were operational issues that acted as barriers to working with young people. Most small business operators are time poor and therefore having to set aside time to train new staff was simply not an option for them. Others mentioned a lack of financial support, claiming that where apprenticeships could be offered financial support only lasted for the first twelve months, and that was not sustainable by the business.

Another significant barrier to employing young people was the fear of the situation 'not working out'. This in fact dealt with terminating employment, or not being able to 'get rid of them'. Being accused of unfair dismissal was given as a reason by several business operators for not hiring young people. Some people who participated in the survey had previously had bad experiences and were not willing to run the risk on another occasion.

During the in-depth interviews it emerged that some people believed that given the right circumstances and a different way of viewing the employment of young people it is possible for there to be a good relationship between employer and employee. One interviewee stated that in the early years of running a business she was very cautious of young people working for her and had very clear, if somewhat unrealistic expectations. Now after several years of operating a business, her view of young people has changed and her expectations had become more realistic. This has had positive outcomes for her in terms of employment and staff relationships.

#### **12.4 Encouragement to work with young people**

When asked what would encourage employers to work with young people, the most common responses revolved around a number of interconnected issues, predominantly based around financial matters. These included:

- financial assistance to employ young people;
- a need for higher turnover in the business, to allow for such employment;
- the existence of young people already in possession of experience in the job so that no time was needed to train them;
- a prerequisite that the business grew.

Some respondents said they would not employ young people because their customers preferred having mature people serve them, and that these customers trusted older people more than young people. The allocation of a training allowance was mentioned as a potential incentive to employing young people, but this rested on there being enough work to keep such employees on. The following quotes from interviewees sum up much of the thinking on the subject:

*“Only if the business grew and there was a need for more staff and I could employ someone who was already trained.”*

*“Better financial government support. I can’t afford to employ young people who don’t bring in enough business to pay for their wages”*

*“If a young person demonstrated above standard skills and attributes”*

*“Most of the customers prefer to be served by older more mature people as they are seen to be more trustworthy”*

It is clear from these results from the business operators who were surveyed and interviewed that there is a mismatch between issues being flagged as barriers to employing young people and issues that would encourage employers to work with young people. On the one hand business operators are saying that the ‘problem’ is all about the young people and their perceived lack of experience, their poor attitudes and unreliable behaviours. These issues would seem at first glance to be major barriers. However, when asked what would encourage employers to work with young people, rather than issues of attitudes or behaviours, the most common responses relate to issues of finance and training.

There is an obvious discrepancy between the issues that the employers identify as limiting their involvement with young employees and the issues that would entice them to employ more of this cohort. The personal attributes and qualities enunciated by the employers might be seen as a necessary set of qualities. It is obvious, however, that this required skill set is not sufficient to gain employment. It seems that the inducements to employment rest outside the qualities a young person can bring to the situation.

### **13. Young people's perceptions**

Having gained some impressions of the issues facing employers in the region, the views of the actual cohort under investigation were also sought. The young people who participated in the focus groups were still at school and were aged at the lower end of the 15-19 spectrum. They were year ten students from the LLEP area who were participating in VET programs that involved out of school study one day a week at a TAFE. 19 students, from three High Schools were interviewed in two groups at different campuses. They were studying different courses towards receiving a Certificate II on completion. Although there were differences between the selection processes at each school, overall the students had been selected because they were deemed at risk of not moving beyond compulsory education into years eleven and twelve. In all cases the students were the first from their schools to participate in such a program.

The students were overwhelmingly positive about the program and studying at TAFE. There appeared to be some sense of superiority gained from being out of school and studying at TAFE, but there was also a sense that the study itself was worthwhile. This differed somewhat between the two groups, but in each case there were individuals interested in following the course into its next stage, and some interested in following the subject as a career. More importantly, perhaps, there was some interest in going on to other types of study if and when they left school. The VET experience was apparently very popular with other students not yet involved, and both groups were certain that many other young people would like to be involved if more places were available.

Most of the students interviewed held part-time employment, most in the fast-food area, working after school and/or on weekends. The other types of employment generally came about through word of mouth – from family or other connections to the company involved.

One aspect of the interviews was that none of the young people had serious doubts that they might gain real employment if they went down that path next year. The very real possibility of unemployment did not appear to be an issue for them. It is difficult to know whether this reflects the general human trait that sees all bad things happening to other people or a failure to grasp reality, or a combination of the two.

A number of the students interviewed declared that they were intending to go on to years eleven and twelve. Again, it is unclear if the VET program being currently offered assisted this decision (or if the decision will be acted upon), but given the apparent selection criteria employed in this program the outcome would be a positive one, even if the program's input was minimal.

Finally, the young people were asked what attributes they believed employers were looking for in employees. The responses were almost identical to those provided by employers:

- neatness and tidiness
- professionalism
- maturity
- being on time.

It seems that both potential employers and potential employees agree as to the basic attributes necessary to gain employment. However, there is still reluctance on the part of some business operators to employ young people, especially operators of small businesses. Size of business does appear to be a deciding factor with the obvious reason being lack of human resource skills on the part of the operator.

Larger organisations such as the multi-nationals have human resource departments and use selection criteria, however minimal, for initial employment. They also give new staff training and often use other young people to assist train new staff. This is not the case for small businesses, as there is rarely the luxury of having spare staff that have the time to do basic training or even give induction information. In addition most operators of small businesses have no formal human resource training, including issues that concern selection and recruitment, or employment or termination issues. It is believed that this lack of skills is a key contributor to the disparity of the employment attributes that business operators say they require of young people and what they actually have the capacity to absorb into their businesses.

The aspect of 'attitude' is normally attributed to the attitude of the young person, however business operators also have an 'attitude' towards young people. This is partly because most business operators are over 40 years old and may not be as familiar with today's young people, having ones own children is no guarantee of understanding young people. In addition most small business operators start their own businesses for personally defined reasons which may not include having to employ people as they are often the experts in their fields but have few management competencies therefore human resource issues are extremely difficult for them. As has already been stated, most business operators are both time poor and financially stretched and there have limited capacity to absorb new untrained staff, regardless of the age of the person seeking employment.

To conclude, if young people are to successfully move from school to either non-compulsory education or straight into the workforce, then both the requirements of the students and the needs of eventual employers should be considered in the process. It appears that the majority of previous thinking on this subject has concentrated on the supply side of the equation, however there needs to be more thought given to the demand side, which includes not only the skills that the employers require but how the employees acquire those skills. This includes the VET sector and the appropriateness of the courses being offered to to align with the current and future needs of industry. Successful transition will be achieved if all parties recognise that the common goal is to have a healthy and vibrant economic community with an appropriately skilled workforce, which includes both employees and employers and one in which all parties are working together to achieve common rather than individual goals.

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