

Choosing VET: aspirations, intentions and choice



Chair



Dr Genevieve Knight
Research Operations Manager
NCVER



RESEARCH REPORT
NCVER

Choosing VET: investigating the VET aspirations of school students

Jennifer Gore
Hywel Ellis
Leanne Fray
Maxwell Smith
Adam Lloyd
Carly Berrigan
Andrew Lyell
Natasha Weaver
The University of Newcastle

Kathryn Holmes
Western Sydney University



INFORMING POLICY AND PRACTICE
IN AUSTRALIA'S TRAINING SYSTEM

NCVER



Choosing VET: aspirations, intentions and choice

JO HARGREAVES AND KRISTEN OSBORNE
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH



INTRODUCTION

This summary brings together the findings from two research projects: *Choosing VET: investigating the VET aspirations of school students* and *in their words: student choice in training markets – Victorian examples*.

The research investigated school students' post-school aspirations for vocational education and training (VET), the drivers influencing their thinking and behaviour, and awareness of vocational training options and career pathways, as well as how post-school choices are made in a competitive training market. Importantly, both studies directly capture the voice of students. Wider discussions also took place in school and VET communities – with parents, teachers and trainers. The terms TAFE (technical and further education) and VET are used interchangeably, as this is how students talk about the sector.

Choosing VET: investigating the VET aspirations of school students surveyed students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 about their occupational and educational aspirations, with the survey repeated every year until the Year 9 group reached Year 12. The study focused on students who signalled an interest in VET in a sample of 6492 students from Years 3 to 12 in New South Wales government schools over a four-year period. The project was undertaken by Jenny Gore and a team of researchers from The University of Newcastle and Western Sydney University.

In their words: student choice in training markets – Victorian examples interviewed VET students about their experiences choosing a training provider and course. The research explores the extent to which the consumer model of training, aimed at increasing student choice, is changing the dynamics between prospective students and registered training organisations (RTOs). The project was undertaken by Justin Brown, from the Australian Centre for Educational Research.

RESEARCH REPORT
NCVER

In their words: student choice in training markets – Victorian examples

Dr Justin Brown
Australian Council for Educational Research



INFORMING POLICY AND PRACTICE
IN AUSTRALIA'S TRAINING SYSTEM

Presenters



Laureate Prof. Jenny Gore
Director, Teachers and Teaching
Research Centre
University of Newcastle



Dr Leanne Fray
Post-doctoral fellow,
School of Education
University of Newcastle

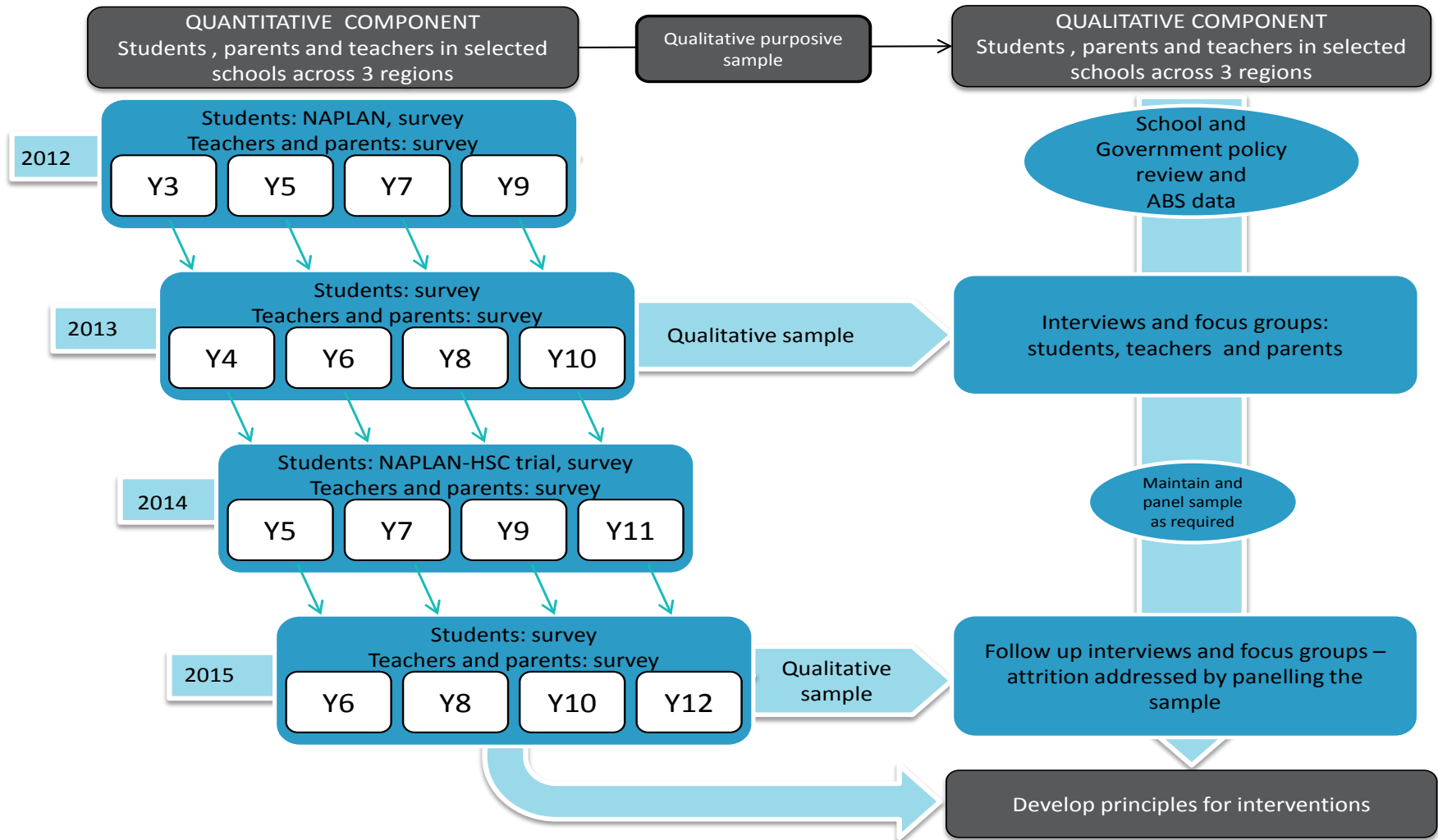


Dr Justin Brown
Senior Research Fellow,
Australian Council for
Educational Research



Choosing VET: Investigating the VET aspirations of school students

Professor Jenny Gore · Mr Hywel Ellis · Dr Leanne Fray · Professor Max Smith · Dr Adam Lloyd ·
Miss Carly Berrigan · Mr Andrew Lyell · Dr Natasha Weaver · Professor Kath Holmes
NCVER Webinar, 31 October 2017



Sample and data collection

Survey data, 2012–2015

64 schools of all types

10,543 student surveys

1,362 parent surveys

1,258 teacher surveys

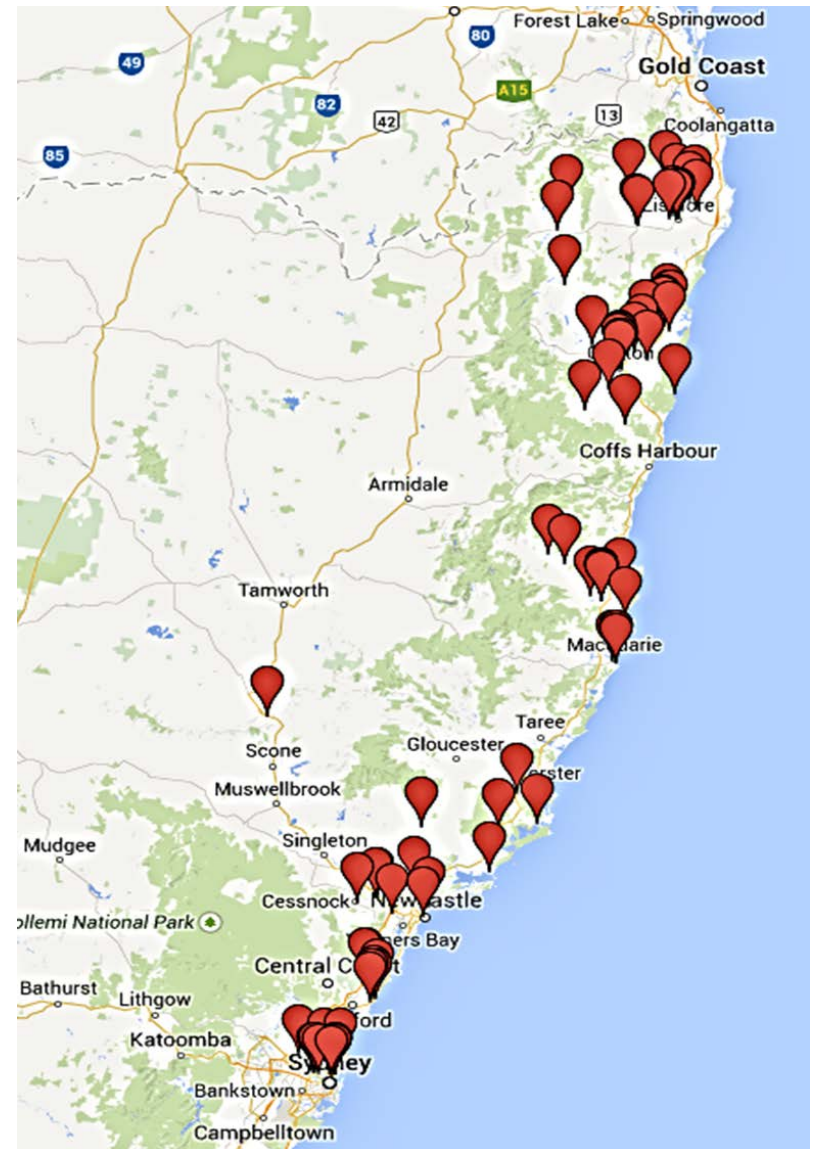
Focus group data, 2013–2015

263 focus groups in 30 schools

553 students

60 parents and carers

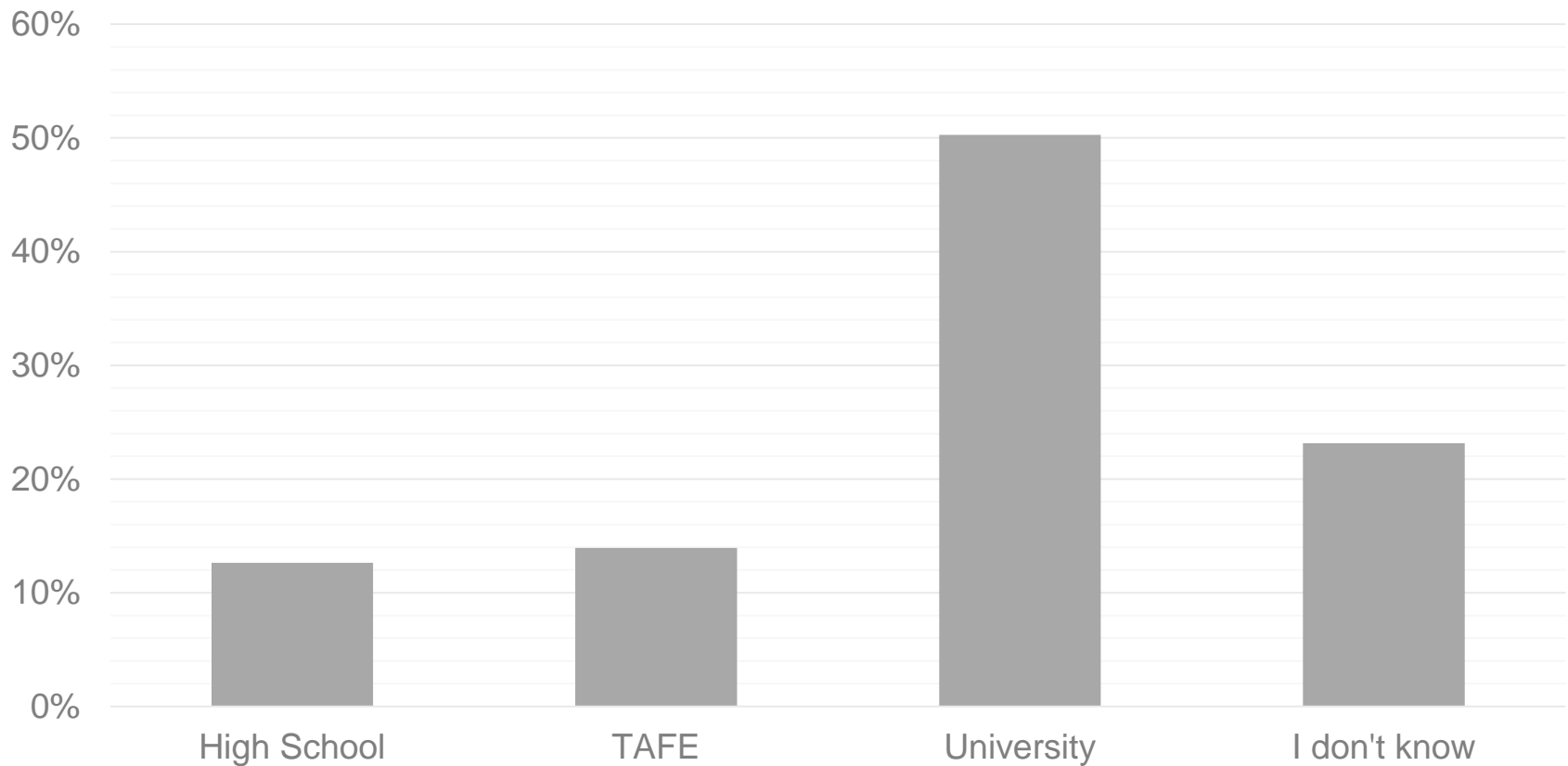
156 teachers and principals



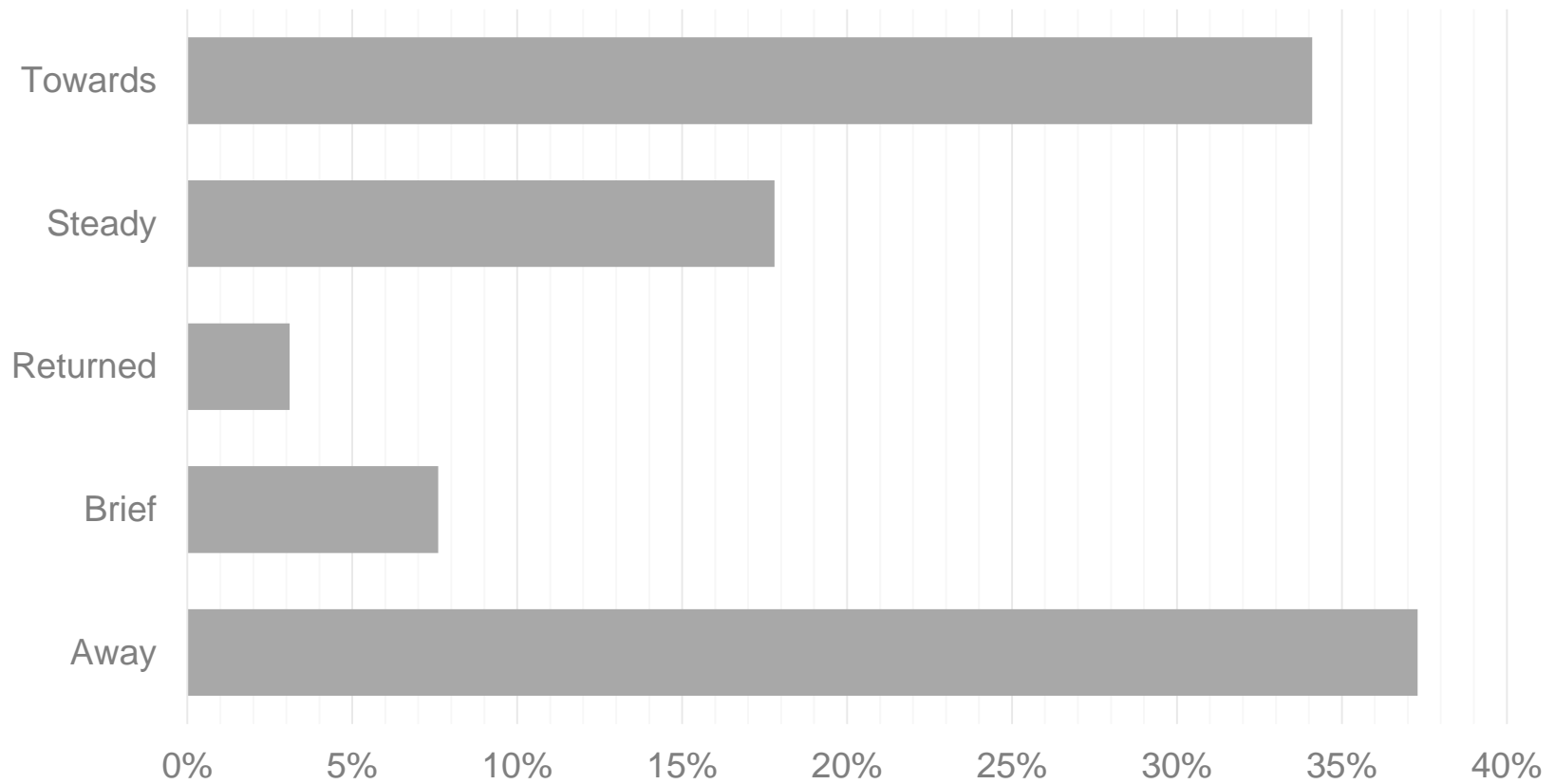
Educational Aspirations



Educational aspirations



Patterns of interest in VET over time



Logistic regression – Generalised Estimating Equation

- a method robust against violations of normality and missing data assumptions
- adjusts for the correlation of outcomes within students due to repeated measures



Variables considered

Student-related

- Gender
- Year level at baseline
- Socioeconomic status
- Language background
- Indigenous status
- Geographic location of school
- Parent in same occupation
- Survey year
- Cultural capital

School-related

- Prior academic achievement
- Out-of-school tutoring
- Self-perception of relative academic performance
- ICSEA of school



Student aspirations for vocational education



Males more likely than females
(OR = 1.33, Weak)



Quartiles 1, 2 and 3 more likely
than Quartile 4
(Q1, OR = 2.17, Moderate)
(Q2, OR = 2.15, Moderate)
(Q3, OR = 1.81, Moderate)



ESB more likely than LBOTE
(OR = 1.99, Moderate)



Quartiles 1, 2 and 3 more likely
than Quartile 4
(Quartile 1, OR = 1.74, Moderate)
(Quartile 2, OR = 1.53, Moderate)
(Quartile 3, OR = 1.26, Weak)



Students in metropolitan
locations more likely than those
from provincial
(OR = 1.41, Weak)



Student aspirations for vocational education



Quartiles 1, 2 and 3 more likely than Quartile 4
(Quartile 1, OR = 4.07, Strong)
(Quartile 2, OR = 2.59, Moderate)
(Quartile 3, OR = 1.66, Moderate)



Years 7 – 8 and Years 9 – 10 more likely than all other Years
(Year 7 – 8, OR = 2.02, Moderate)
(Year 9 – 10, OR = 1.41, Weak)



Quartiles 1 and 2 more likely than Quartile 4
(Q1, OR = 2.15, Moderate)
(Q2, OR = 1.86, Moderate)



Average, below average, and well below average more likely than well above average
(Average, OR = 2.17, Moderate)
(Below average, OR = 2.40, Moderate)
(Well below average, OR = 2.04, Moderate)



VET as a place of practical learning

It's kind of laid back but you're still learning and doing lots of different things ... it's theory and practical. (Tiffany, female, Year 11)

My brother did, like, welding courses and that there and they say... it's like more activity with actually learning what you're going to do instead of studying what you're going to do. (Tristan, male, Year 9)



VET as an opportunity

When you go to TAFE it gives you opportunities and it opens up opportunities. (Lina, female, Year 7)

There's a big push to go to uni [...but] there's so much out there that you don't need to go to uni for, and it's not for everyone. (Polly, female, Year 9)



VET as lacking prestige

[TAFE is for people who are] lazy ... for people who don't want to work as hard. (Shanae, female, Year 9)

I think I might do that [TAFE] because I'm pretty dumb. (Sandy, female, Year 9)



Uncertainty about VET

Is TAFE a coffee shop? That's what I heard. (Name not supplied, male, Year 5)

I don't really focus on TAFE itself. I don't know. I don't know enough about it. (Lindsay, male, Year 11)

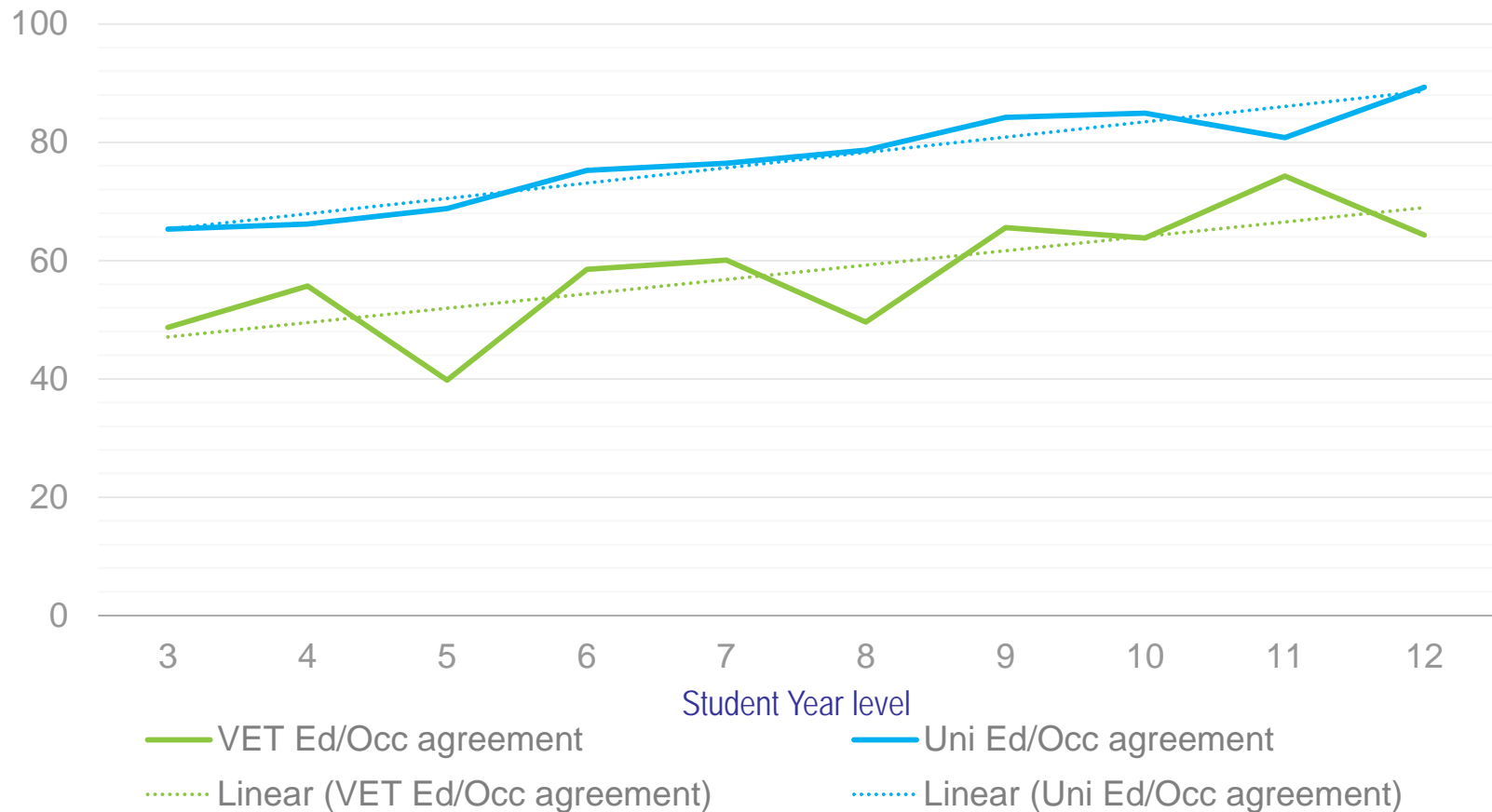


Negotiating a pathway to VET

[The careers adviser is] not a lot of help for me. Like, when I go and speak to her ... she's really off topic... she's got her mind set on going to Uni ... It's just hard to speak to her about what would be better. ... she doesn't talk about other options, other than Uni, so like either going into the army or Uni. (Ellen, female, Year 12)



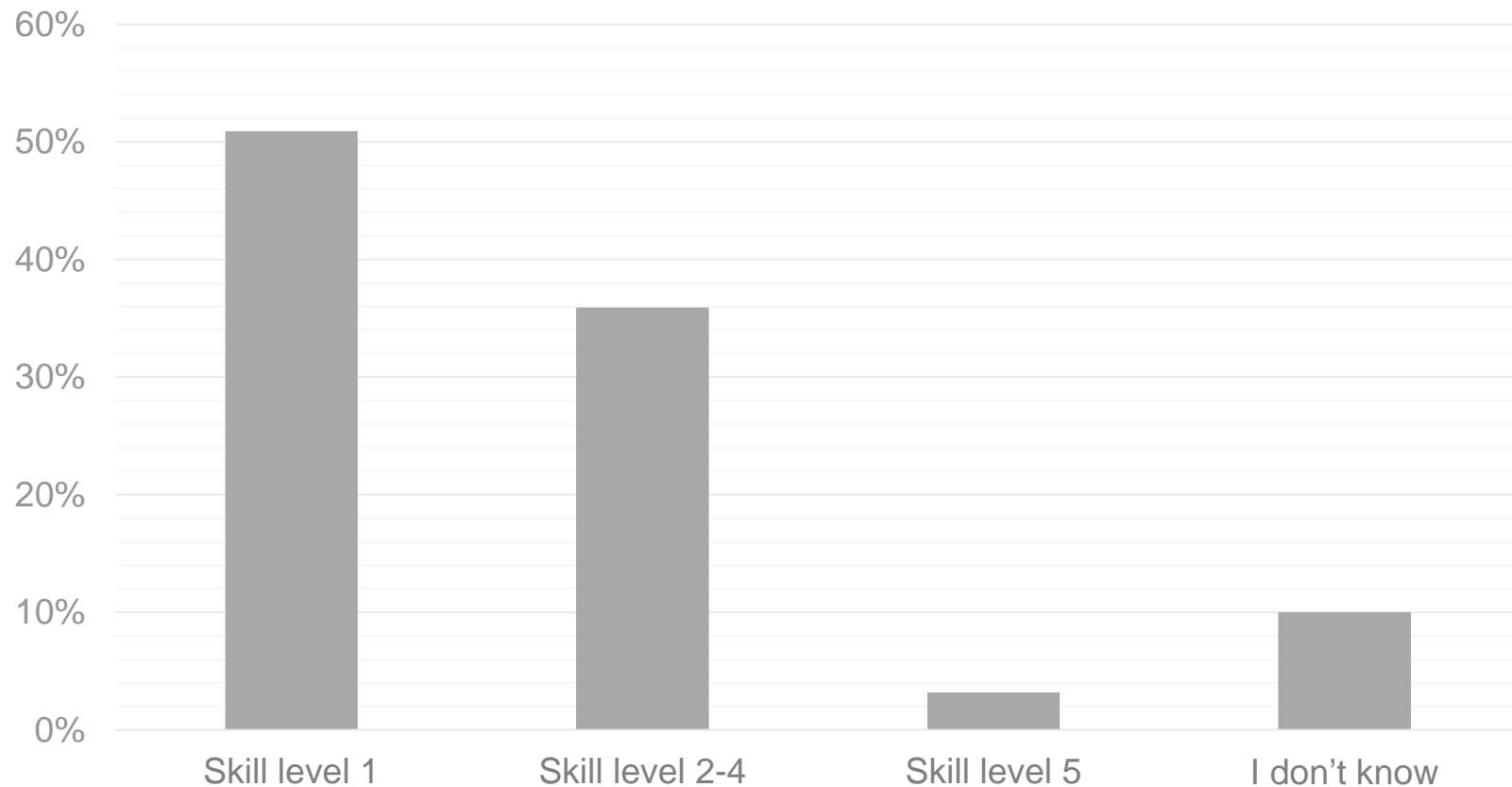
Alignment of educational and occupational aspirations



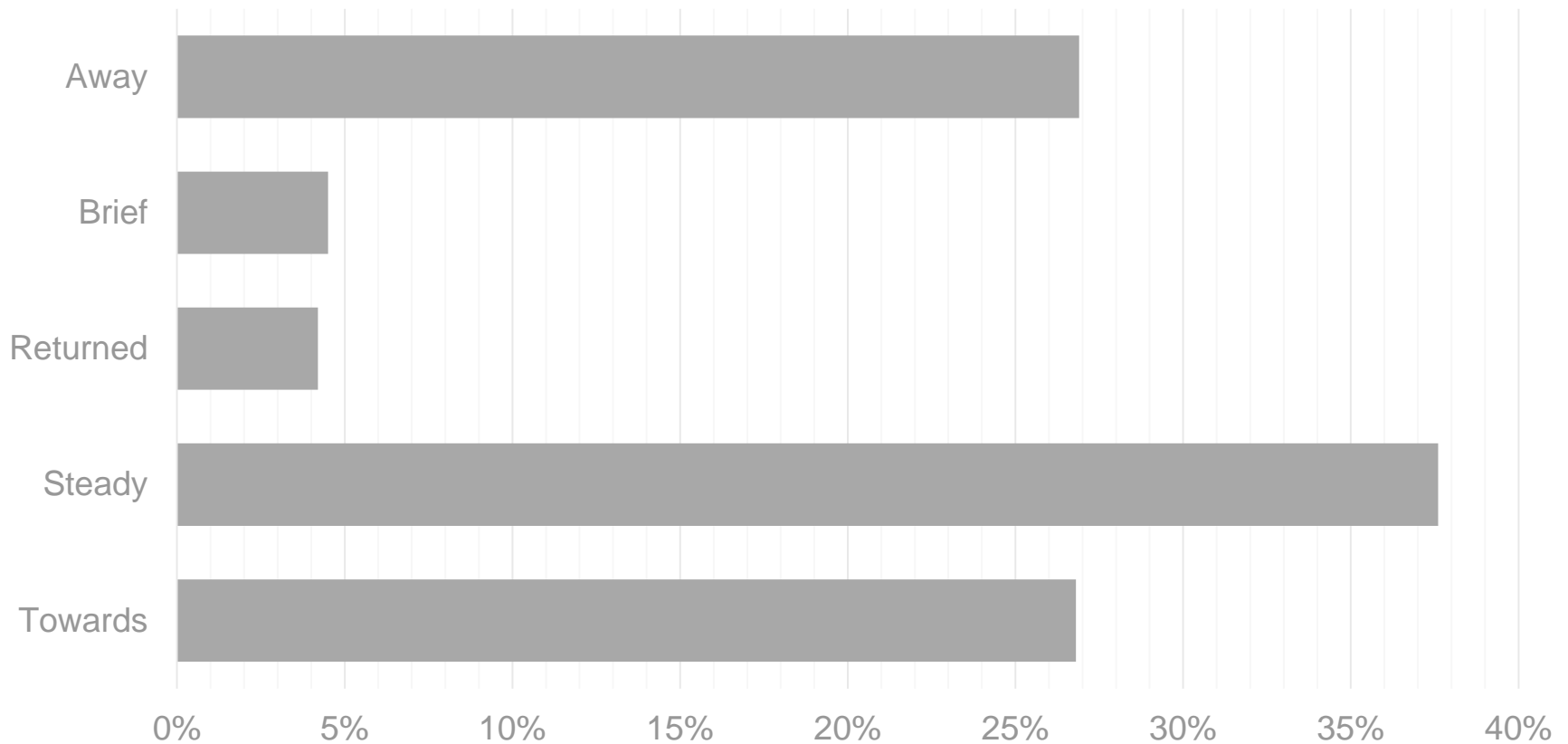
Occupational Aspirations



Interest in VET-related occupations



Patterns of interest in VET-related occupations over time



Aspirations for VET-related occupations



Males more likely than females
(OR = 2.46, Moderate)



Quartiles 1, 2 and 3 more likely than
Quartile 4
(Q1, OR = 1.35, Weak)
(Q2, OR = 1.41, Weak)
(Q3, OR = 1.24, Weak)



ESB more likely than LBOTE
(OR = 1.32, Weak)



Quartiles 1, 2 and 3 more likely than
Quartile 4
(Quartile 1, OR = 2.07, Moderate)
(Quartile 2, OR = 1.77, Moderate)
(Quartile 3, OR = 1.30, Weak)



Students who receive tutoring
more more likely than those
who don't
(OR = 1.23, Weak)



Aspirations for VET-related occupations



Quartiles 1, 2 and 3 more likely than Quartile 4

(Q1, OR = 1.57, Moderate)

(Q2, OR = 2.15, Moderate)

(Q3, OR = 3.71, Strong)



Year 5 – 6, Years 7 – 8, Years 9 – 10, and Years 11 – 12 less likely than Years 3 – 4

(Years 5 – 6, OR = 0.68, Moderate)

(Years 7 – 8, OR = 0.56, Moderate)

(Years 9 – 10, OR = 0.45, Moderate)

(Years 11 – 12, OR = 0.52, Moderate)



Quartiles 1 more likely than all other Quartiles

(Quartile 1, OR = 1.30, Weak)



Average, below average, and well below average more likely than well above average

(Average, OR = 1.64, Moderate)

(Below average, OR = 1.39, Weak)

(Well below average, OR = 1.94, Moderate)

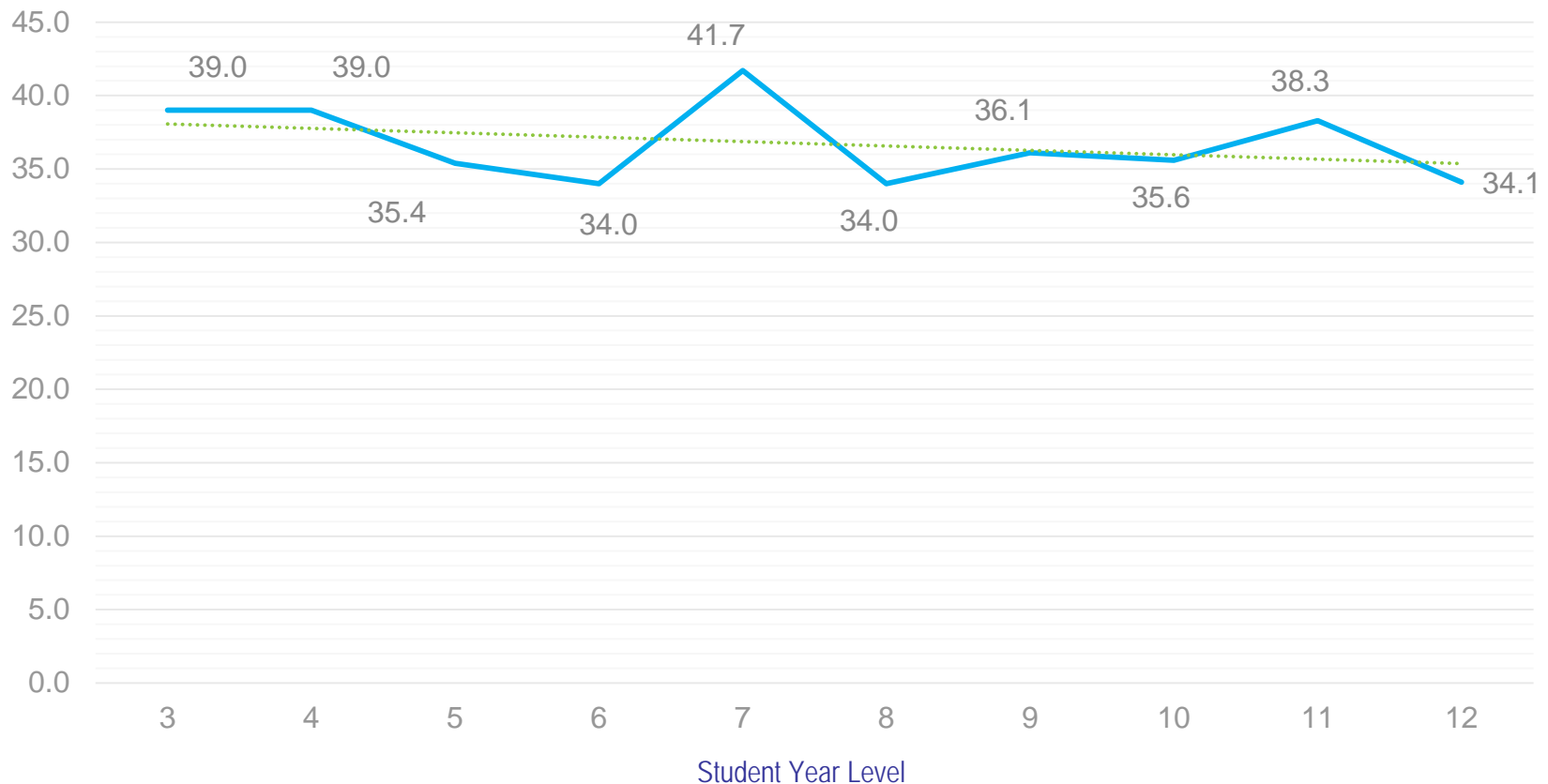


Most popular VET-related occupations

Males			Females		
	n	%		n	%
Sportspersons	848	28.8	Animal attendants	361	17.9
Police	316	11.1	Hairdressers	234	11.6
Defence Force	311	10.9	Sportspersons	207	10.3
Motor Mechanics	220	7.7	Beauty therapists	142	7.0
Carpenters	123	4.3	Police	134	6.6



Interest in VET-related occupations across the school years



Reasons for choosing VET-related occupations

Males			Females		
	n	%		n	%
Enjoyment	890	38.9	Enjoyment	951	32.2
Experiences	338	14.8	Benefit of the job	528	17.9
Help others/altruism	268	11.7	Experiences	312	10.6
Benefit of the job	214	9.4	Help others/altruism	193	6.5
Personal suitability	163	7.1	Personal suitability	218	7.4



Enjoyment or interest

I love cooking and food so I want something like that, like something I will enjoy. But there's not much out there involving cooking. But if you like — something in the navy and you get good pay for that as well. I just want something that I get good pay for and something I will enjoy, like cooking. (Zach, male, Year 10)



Financial considerations

Well when I was little I said I wanted to be a hairdresser, but then my dad's just like, 'you won't get any money', so I decided not to do that.

(Kalista, female, Year 5)



Experiences

[My career aspiration has] changed a lot since I've started at TAFE because I suppose the thing is that I love my teacher at TAFE and our class is so tightknit and we're all really close. ...So I suppose that just makes it a lot easier to pick what I want to do because I love it.

(Ellen, female, Year 12)



Helping others

Because I like doing hair and make up and photography and I would love to help people on their big day.

(No name provided, female, Year 9)



Personal suitability

I want to do this because I love animals and I loved them ever since I was born. I've always wanted to look after animals and when I get the chance I will take the job. And I have expertise in catching lizards and snakes and I love to look after birds and other animals and insects as in the spiny leaf insects.

(No name provided, female, Year 9)



Key findings

- VET and VET-related occupations appeal to certain kinds of students
- More interest in VET-related occupations than in VET, with some misalignment between the two
- Schools had a significant role to play in the timing and substance of careers education, particularly related to VET study and subsequent careers requiring VET qualifications



In their words: student choice in training markets - Victorian examples

Dr Justin Brown
Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)



Overview

- Research questions
- Methodology
- Findings
- Implications
- Questions



Research questions

- What do we know about the concept of choice, as applied in the VET sector, from existing literature and data?
- From the perspective of the student, what are the main drivers influencing their choice of provider and course?
- How can current approaches to measurement and reporting on VET choice be broadened to reflect more comprehensive outcomes?



Methodology

- Mixed method design (quantitative followed by qualitative)
- Data sources
 - Primary analysis of secondary/archival source documents
 - Primary analysis of secondary/archival data
 - Primary data collection – qualitative data collected from 150+ students located in Victoria

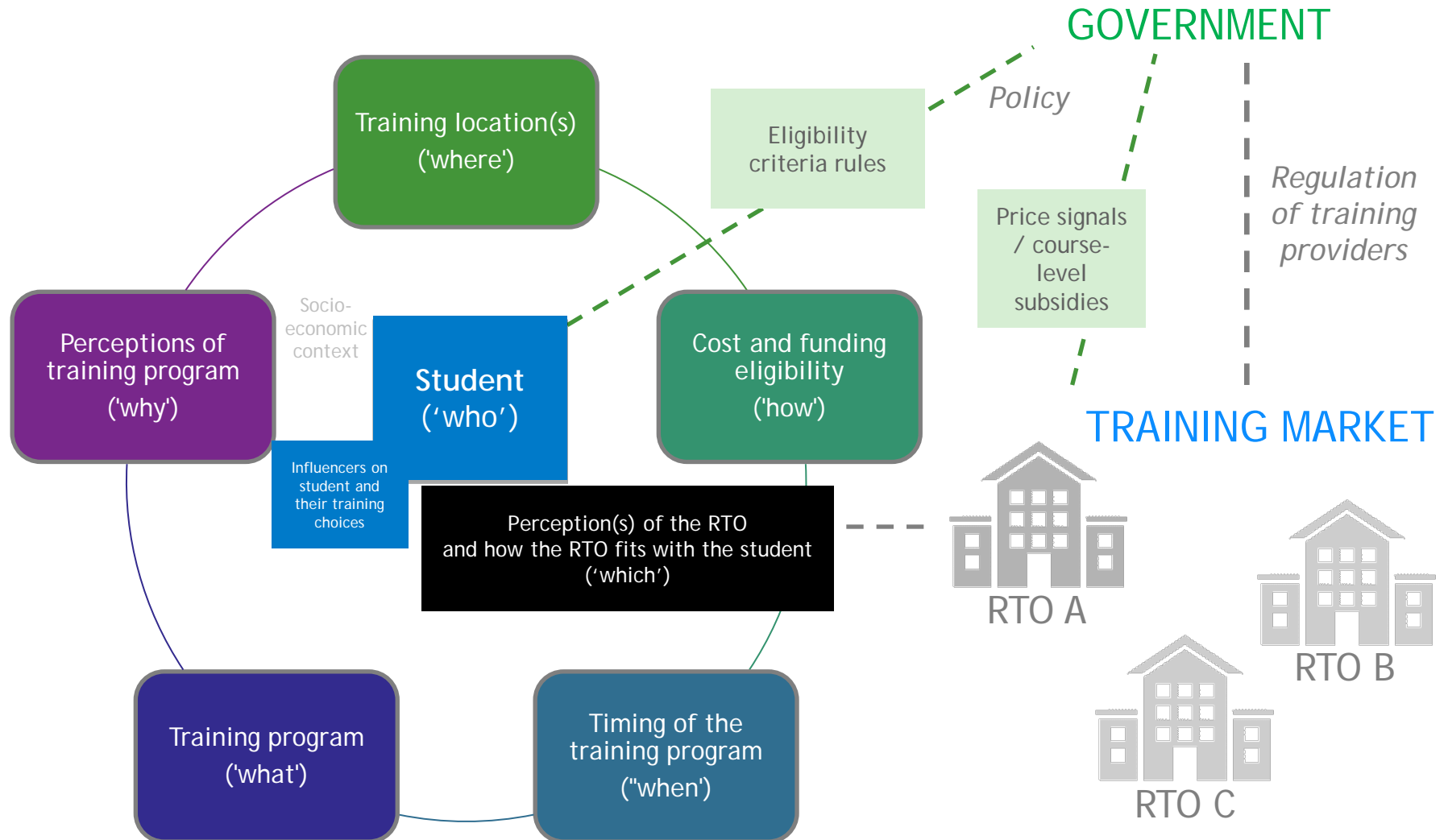


What we learn from the secondary research

- Since 2009, the national training systems in Australia have been undergoing **significant and ongoing reforms**.
- Student choice has been positioned as the **centrepiece of the reform agenda**, consistent with broader national reforms to competition policy in Australia.
- **The concept** of student choice in VET is a worthy policy aspiration, although the potential problems associated with the concept have not been identified or adequately addressed.
- At a system level, training choices appear to be **imprecisely and inferentially measured** by proxy through routinely used performance indicators (for example, numbers of students participating, reasons for choosing training and numbers of training providers).



Building a model of VET student choice



A few implications for...

Policy

A need to narrow the gap between:

- a) what training information is **currently provided to prospective students** and the mechanisms through which it is communicated AND
- b) what information is **required and trusted by prospective students** to enable them to make an informed choice of training provider, course and career.

Practice

A need to acknowledge the increasingly important role of careers practitioners in **supporting** potential VET students in their navigation of the VET system and in **assisting them to make choices and identify their preferences.**

Research

A need for research into models that lead to **tailored, relevant and accessible information** and decision-support tools for various segments of prospective and enrolled students.

Coming soon...

Engaging young early school leavers in vocational training

- Brotherhood of St Laurence

Flow of school students into and through the VET system

- Kristen Osborne

Stay connected

Subscribe

at www.ncver.edu.au

Follow



twitter.com/ncver or [@ncver](https://twitter.com/ncver)



[linkedin.com/company/ncver](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ncver)

Connect with Teachers and Teaching

w: www.newcastle.edu.au/aspirations

e: aspirations@newcastle.edu.au



[twitter.com/teachers & teaching](https://twitter.com/teachers_and_teaching) or [@UON_TTRC](https://twitter.com/UON_TTRC)