



Inquiry into the factors driving educational attainment

TEACHERS AND TEACHING RESEARCH CENTRE

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AND COLLEAGUES

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The Teachers and Teaching Research Centre (TTRC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the House Standing Committee on Education inquiry into the factors driving educational attainment.

Established in 2013, the TTRC is led by Distinguished Laureate Professor Jenny Gore AM and sits within the School of Education at the University of Newcastle. The TTRC is an Australian leader in high quality, high impact educational research into initial teacher education, quality teaching, teacher development, school change, leadership, student aspirations, equity, and STEM education.

Our submission draws on some of the most robust and comprehensive educational research undertaken in Australia to respond to the terms of reference. In particular, two major decades-long programs of research underpin this submission:

- Quality Teaching and Quality Teaching Rounds associated studies (2004-2027)
- Aspirations Longitudinal Study and associated studies (2012-2026)

These rigorous programs of research have drawn funding from the ARC, federal and state governments, philanthropists including the Paul Ramsay Foundation, and industry peak bodies such as ACSES and NCVER. Our research has involved thousands of teachers and tens of thousands of students in several hundred Australian schools, and involved sophisticated mixed method research from gold-standard randomised controlled trials to in-depth qualitative case study analysis.

Our submission is made of two parts: increasing excellence and equity in student educational outcomes, and nurturing educational and career pathways. We recommend that:

1. The Commonwealth Department of Education and statutory agencies develop a nationally consistent approach to and support the provision of evidence-based professional development for teachers.
2. The Commonwealth commits funding for Quality Teaching Rounds beyond mid-2027 to continue supporting transition of teachers into the profession and support better educational outcomes in disadvantaged schools.
3. The Commonwealth addresses the structural factors that produce community disadvantage and school funding gaps.
4. The Commonwealth provides funding for better careers education, including through the Aspirations and Little Yarns, Big Dreams resources.
5. Cross-jurisdictional stakeholders develop a nationally consistent approach to improving information about and perceptions of VET education.
6. The Commonwealth government commits to funding mental health services for young people and reduces barriers to accessing higher education such as the excessive debt burden perpetuated by the Job Ready Graduates program.

We welcome the opportunity to elaborate on the following evidence at the Committee's hearings.

CASE STUDY: TRANSFORMING OUTCOMES AT CESSNOCK HIGH SCHOOL

Cessnock High School is one of the most disadvantaged schools in NSW. Almost 25% of its students identify as Indigenous and more than 70% of families are positioned in the bottom quartile for socio-economic advantage. Before 2020, Cessnock High faced numerous challenges, including low engagement, poor academic performance, and behavioural issues.

In 2020, the University of Newcastle's Teachers and Teaching Research Centre began a partnership with the school, co-designing a four-year Quality Teaching Action Plan centred on Quality Teaching Rounds. The results achieved at Cessnock High School have been remarkable. From a school being below state average on all measures, Cessnock High:

- Ranked 7th in NSW for NAPLAN improvement in 2025, up from 11th in 2023, and 35th in 2022.
- Ranked 1st in the Hunter region for NAPLAN improvement since 2023.
- Ranked 2nd in NSW in 2024 for most improved Band 4, 5, and 6 HSC results.
- Increased student attendance in 2023 by 7% (triple the state average) which has been sustained.
- Significantly decreased negative behaviours and increased positive behaviour referrals.
- Experienced crucial improvements in teacher wellbeing, efficacy, school belonging, and leadership perceptions.

“We're not just trying to help kids through school here, we're trying to help the Cessnock community by producing kids who are capable of getting quality jobs, being able to operate as a community member, and adding to our community.”

“I want to be a teacher. The main reason is the teachers at this school. They've influenced me in a massive way.”

Peter Riley, principal

Charlotte White, student

Teacher Kelsey Kisina (centre) walks with Year 12 students Gabrielle and Charlotte



Increasing excellence and equity in student educational outcomes

Central to this submission is our work on Quality Teaching Rounds professional development. Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) is collaborative, pedagogy-focused professional development undertaken by small groups of teachers who observe, analyse, and discuss each other's lessons guided by the Quality Teaching (QT) Model.

The QT Model draws together global evidence on teaching practices which improve student outcomes.¹ It synthesises these practices in a clear and powerful model of pedagogy for teachers.

The QT Model was developed by Associate Professor James Ladwig and Laureate Professor Jenny Gore for the NSW Department of Education in 2003 and has been subjected to extensive and rigorous testing during the past two decades.

Assumptions about teaching quality

Any inquiry into factors affecting student attainment must bring attention to influences on teachers and teaching quality. Teaching is the most important *in-school* factor influencing student achievement. However, many false assumptions about the quality of teaching persist across the sector and in policy.

Using the QT Model we have tested assumptions about teaching quality in different contexts – such as rural and remote schools and hard-to-staff schools in disadvantaged communities. This evidence is of great importance given these contexts experience higher rates of attrition, more difficulties in recruitment, and are more likely to employ beginning teachers and those teaching out of field.

- Experience: we found no significant difference between beginning and experienced teachers in the quality of teaching delivered. Two possible explanations with merit are: a) universities are doing an increasingly good job at preparing graduates; and, b) most current professional development is not having a meaningful impact on the quality of teaching practice.²
- Disadvantage: we found a statistically significant relationship between quality of teaching and school-level advantage using ICSEA as a measure. However, the relationship is primarily leveraged by the poorer schools. In schools with an ICSEA above 950 the relationship no longer exists, that is, there is no difference in quality of teaching delivered between mid-ICSEA and high-ICSEA schools.³
- Location: we found a small but significant difference in the quality of teaching between rural and urban schools. However, in our sample there were no urban schools at the lower end of the ICSEA range and no rural schools at the upper end. When we look only at schools with overlapping ICSEA, the relationship no longer exists.

¹ Ladwig, J., & King, M. (2003). *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: An annotated bibliography*. NSW Department of Education and Training Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate.

² Gore, J., Rosser, B., Jaremus, F., Miller, A., Harris, J. (2024). Fresh evidence on the relationship between years of experience and teaching quality. *Australian Educational Researcher*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00612-0>

³ Gore, J., Jaremus, F., Miller, A. (2021). Do disadvantaged schools have poorer teachers? Rethinking assumptions about the relationship between teaching quality and school-level advantage. *Australian Education Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-021-00460-w>

Given that teachers in all ICSEA bands produced higher quality teaching after participating in QTR, the result in low-ICSEA (and rural) schools suggests that the issue is less about the quality of teaching or teachers and more to do with enduring and pervasive structural disadvantage.

Quality Teaching Rounds

QTR involves just four days of in-school teacher-led professional development and is applicable across grades and subject areas and for teachers at all stages of their careers. It has also been used in diverse settings such as distance education, hospital schools, Schools for Specific Purposes, and environmental education centres, with positive results for both students and teachers, including casual relief teachers.⁴

With Australian teachers educating between 20 and 100 students each year in primary and high schools, the potential long-term impacts of improving teaching quality are exponential.

Impact on student achievement

QTR was first evaluated under randomised controlled trial conditions in 2014/15, which established direct causation for its ability to improve teaching quality and teacher morale.⁵

Based on these promising findings, in 2018, the Paul Ramsay Foundation provided \$17.2m to rigorously evaluate the impact of QTR on student outcomes.

Three of the four PRF-funded randomised controlled trials demonstrated clear and significant impact of QTR on student achievement in mathematics⁶ (Figure 1) and reading.⁷ The fourth trial was seriously underpowered due to COVID disruptions. Given that education research is notoriously complex, and significant findings are rare these results are exceptional on a global scale. Even more remarkably, the trials demonstrated the efficacy of this *pedagogy-focused* intervention⁸ in improving student achievement, rather than relying on professional development targeted specifically on mathematics or reading instruction.

⁴ Led by Jenny Gore, Jess Harris, Drew Miller, Leanne Fray, and Jacquie Briskham, the study was funded by the NSW Department of Education (2021–2022) and is titled “Investigating the efficacy, complexity and sustainability of teacher change.” https://www.newcastle.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/956351/Appendix-F-Casual-Teacher-Project-Report-to-NSW-DOE.pdf

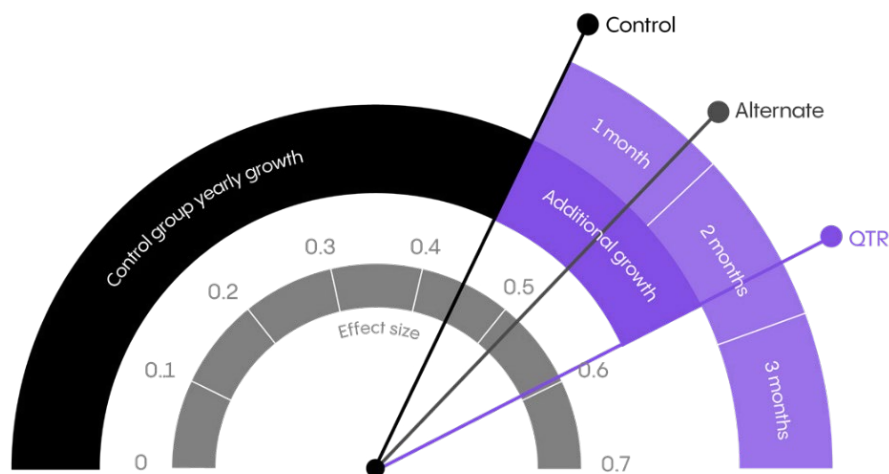
⁵ Gore, J., Lloyd, A., Smith, M., Bowe, J., Ellis, H., & Lubans, D. (2017). Effects of professional development on the quality of teaching: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.007>

⁶ Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., Harris, J., & Prieto-Rodriguez, E. (2021). Improving student achievement through professional development: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103297>

⁷ Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., & Patfield, S. (2023). *Building capacity for quality teaching in Australian schools 2018–2023: Final report to the Paul Ramsay Foundation*. Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, The University of Newcastle. <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/1493345>

⁸ Gore, J., & Rosser, B. (2020). Beyond content-focused professional development: Powerful professional learning across grades and subjects. *Professional Development in Education* <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1725904>

Figure 1: Impact of Quality Teaching Rounds on mathematics (2019 RCT)



Across the RCTs, positive effects on student achievement were found in:

- two subjects (maths and reading)
- two stages (Years 3–4 and Years 5–6)
- two states (NSW and Queensland)
- two modes (face-to-face and fully online PD), and
- an independent trial conducted by the University of Queensland.^{9,10,11}

Impact on equity, attendance, engagement and attainment

These PRF-funded studies involved more than 14,000 students, 1,400 teachers and 430 schools in three Australian states. Crucially, the results were stronger in disadvantaged settings, signalling the potential for this approach to narrow longstanding equity gaps.

As shown in the case study above, the four-year partnership with Cessnock High School (2020–2024) demonstrates the significant impact of implementing QTR at a whole-school level on student equity, producing the following results:

- The highest growth in Year 7 to Year 9 NAPLAN results in the Hunter Region and the 7th highest in the state in 2025.
- Ranked 2nd in the state for growth in HSC scores in 2024, following improvements of more than 50% in each of 2022 and 2023.
- Experienced a three-fold increase in attendance relative to the state average.
- Increased positive behaviour referrals by 130% between 2022 and 2023, while negative behaviours significantly decreased.

⁹ Gore, J., Miller, A., Fray, L., Harris, J., & Prieto-Rodriguez, E. (2021). Improving student achievement through professional development: Results from a randomised controlled trial of Quality Teaching Rounds. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 101, Article 103297. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103297>

¹⁰ Harris, J., Miller, D., Gore, J., & Holmes, M. (2022). *Building capacity for quality teaching in Australian schools: QTR Digital RCT final report*. Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, The University of Newcastle. https://www.newcastle.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/909005/QTR-Digital-RCT-Report-with-ISBN.pdf

¹¹ Povey, J., Porter, M., Kennedy, L., Potia, A., Bellotti, M., & Austerberry, S. (2023, February). *Building capacity for quality teaching in Australian Schools: Queensland replication study – final report*. Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland. https://www.newcastle.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/909004/QLD-RCT-Final-Report-with-ISBN.pdf

- More students are engaging in post-school education through TAFE and university, leading to better employment outcomes and additional associated long-term benefits to health, wellbeing and civic participation.¹²
- More parents than ever before are engaging with the school as partners in supporting student learning.

The positive change that is occurring at Cessnock High School and the impact on school culture and community are highlighted in the following statement by one of the school's deputies:

We're still a very disadvantaged community, but just because you're poor doesn't mean you can't learn. The expectation is classrooms are for learning. We say it all the time to the kids, and they can finish that sentence – "classrooms are for learning." That's what's going on, and we have high expectations of kids being engaged in the learning and doing well.

Cessnock High School, School Executive

This partnership approach is being trialled at scale with an additional \$4.3M grant from PRF, supported by NSW Department of Education. The *Thriving Schools* project involves partnerships between the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre and 20 of the most disadvantaged NSW government primary schools. The project will report outcomes in 2027, but early indicators are extremely positive.

Impact on teachers and schools

When teachers participate in QTR they experience enhanced morale and stronger individual and collective efficacy, and the culture of their schools improves^{13 14 15}. These are crucial factors in improving learning experiences and outcomes for students.

National expansion of QTR is currently being funded by the Australian Government (\$5M) as part of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan to improve retention and job satisfaction of 1,600 teachers¹⁶.

Findings to date in this *Strengthening Induction through Quality Teaching Rounds* project show that teacher participation in QTR has reduced burnout and improved wellbeing (Figure 2).

¹² Deloitte Access Economics. (2020). Quality Teaching Rounds – Cost Benefit Analysis. <https://qtacademy.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Deloitte-Access-Economics-QTR-Cost-Benefit-Analysis-Final-report-9-Sept.pdf>

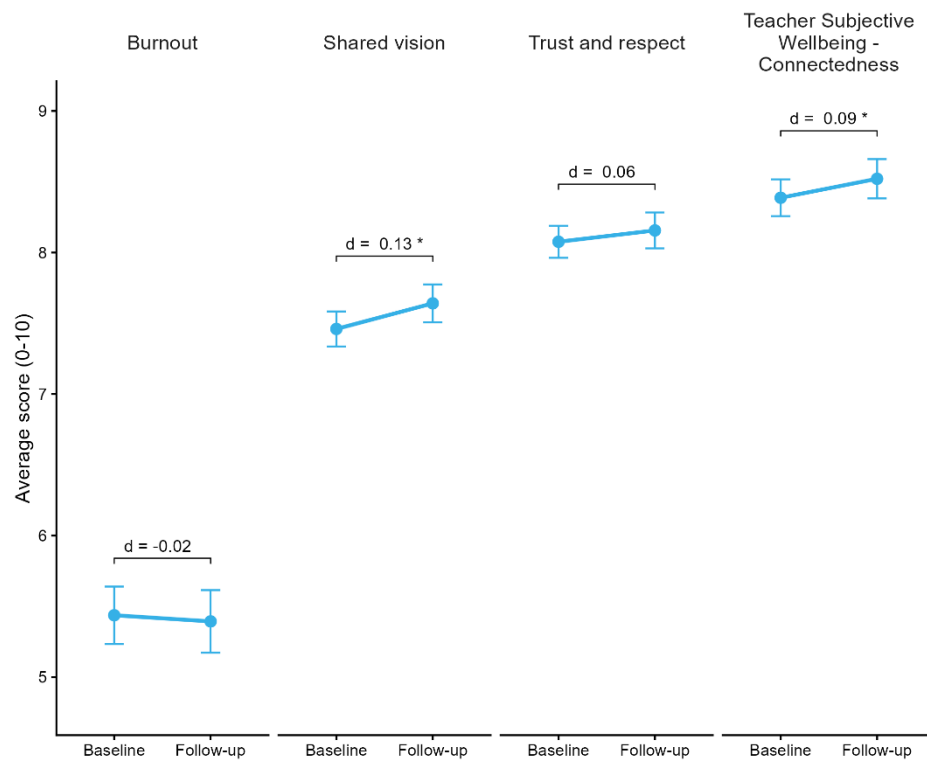
¹³ Gore, J. Rickards, B. (2020). Rejuvenating experienced teachers through Quality Teaching Rounds professional development, *Educational Change*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-020-09386-z>

¹⁴ Gore, J., Rosser, B. (2020). Beyond content-focused professional development: Powerful professional learning across grades and subjects, *Professional Development in Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1725904>

¹⁵ Gore, J., Bowe, J. (2015). Interrupting attrition? Re-shaping the transition from preservice to inservice teaching through Quality Teaching Rounds, *International Journal of Educational Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2015.05.006>

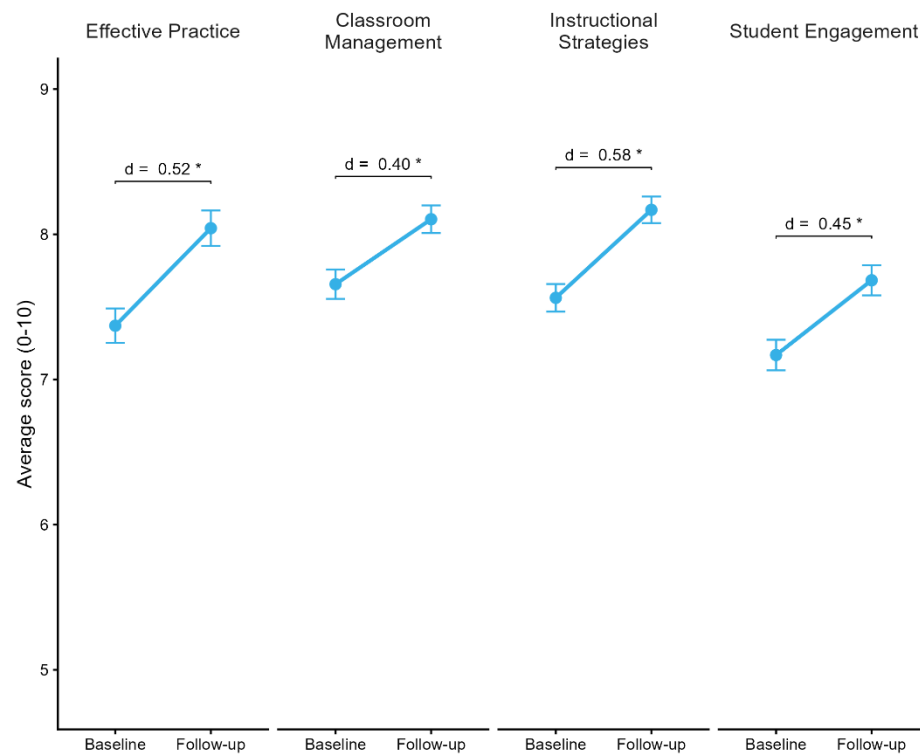
¹⁶ Clare, J. (2023). Expansion of Quality Teaching Rounds program. *Ministers' Media Centre*. <https://ministers.education.gov.au/clare/expansion-quality-teaching-rounds-program>

Figure 2: Impact of Quality Teaching Rounds on teacher wellbeing (n= 462)



Participation in QTR has also increased teacher efficacy in general (effective practice), and in the specific domains of classroom management, instructional strategies and student engagement (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Impact of Quality Teaching Rounds on teacher efficacy (n = 462)



QTR is also having a positive effect on teacher retention. Teachers who report some (> 0) intention to leave the profession on a 0-10 scale show a statistically significant reduction in average intention to leave score after participating in QTR (Figure 4). 12-24 months after participating in QTR, teachers also report its positive effect on their intention to remain in teaching (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Reduction in teachers indicating their intention to leave the profession ($n = 159$)

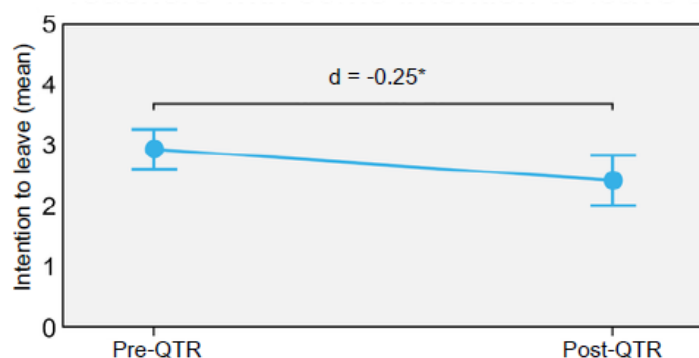
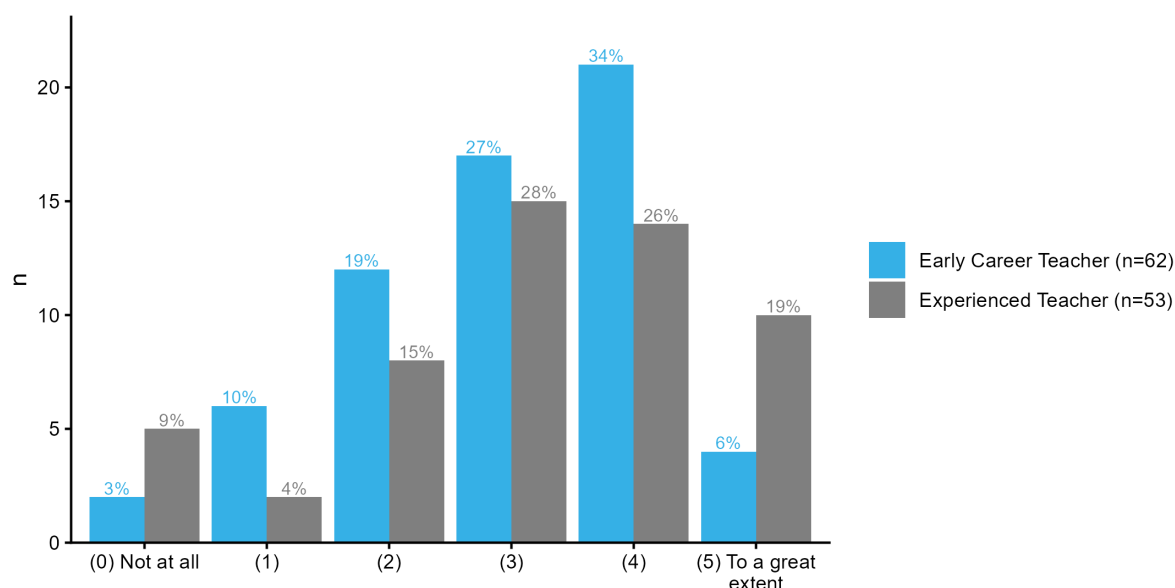


Figure 5: Impact of QTR on intention to stay in the profession, 12-24 months post QTR



While structural and systemic issues of disadvantage and inequity play a huge role in determining outcomes for students, our evidence points to an approach that can simultaneously address some of the key challenges facing education systems.

Participation in QTR is improving teacher retention, wellbeing, efficacy, and most importantly teaching quality. Gold standard randomised controlled trial evidence has demonstrated the impact of QTR on student attainment, with greater effects in disadvantaged schools. QTR is producing greater academic results, better attendance and engagement outcomes, and opening more opportunities for further education and rewarding careers, ultimately helping to break cycles of disadvantage.

Nurturing educational and career pathways

Over the past decade, the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre has conducted one of the largest studies to date investigating the educational and occupational aspirations of Australian young people. The Aspirations Longitudinal Study (2012-2018) produced comprehensive evidence on factors that shape aspirations of school students aged 8-18 years old. It has since spurred 10 additional research projects exploring various topics including the aspirations of first-in-family students, Aboriginal students, and students from regional and remote Australia, as well as the impact of teachers, schools and communities on aspirations.

This research provides important insight into how young people are thinking about their post-school futures and the barriers to accessing vocational and higher education.

Aspirations for tertiary education

A 2025 study returned to six NSW high schools that had participated in the original ARC-funded Aspirations Longitudinal Study. Using this massive data set, we looked at how students a decade ago felt about their futures compared to students in 2025.

This study produced three major findings:

1. Students are overwhelmingly uncertain about their futures compared to a decade ago due to firsthand experiences of the impact of cost of living and housing crises, as well as worries about climate change and global instability.
2. This uncertainty and these crises are driving a surge in mental ill-health. The pandemic and post-pandemic challenges continue to be a factor in mental health concerns.
3. Students are approaching education and career pathways with greater pragmatism. In the original study, we often heard negative views about VET, whereas now students are more carefully weighing their options, considering the value of university against the risk of debt, alongside the potential for stronger job prospects and earnings through VET.

A 2021 study¹⁷ also extended our initial work by following up with students from the original Aspirations Longitudinal Study one-to-five years post-school.

We found that the majority of participants' career aspirations (64%) and their educational aspirations (60%) had changed either "to a great extent" or "somewhat" since leaving school. Less than a third of participants indicated that their education (29%) and career (21%) aspirations had not changed at all.

The most prevalent and disruptive obstacle for participants in meeting their aspirations was mental ill-health. A conglomeration of personal, relational, and economic challenges drove both acute and long-term episodes of mental ill-health. Such episodes were common among participants who felt compelled to abandon their desired educational and/or occupational pathways and begin a new journey. The experiences of mental ill-health shared by many of these students are a reminder of the vulnerability of young people.

¹⁷ Jaremus, F., Sincock, K., Patfield, S., Prieto, E., Fray, L., & Gore, J. (2022). Aspirations, equity and higher education course choice: The path travelled. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Jaremus_UON_Final.pdf

Students also commented that the career education they received at school was insufficient to prepare them for the realities of life after school, including participation in higher education.

Supporting pathways for students from equity backgrounds

For more than three decades, Australian higher education policy has been guided by a national equity framework focused on six underrepresented target groups: Indigenous Australians, people from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, people from regional and remote areas, people with disabilities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, and women in non-traditional areas of study.

Our studies also found first-in-family students are more likely to identify as Indigenous, come from a lower SES background, and live in regional or remote Australia – the three longstanding and unmet targets of higher education equity policy^{18, 19, 20}.

Prospective first-in-family students were less likely to aspire to university than their peers with university-educated parents. Our findings suggest prospective first-in-family students begin to rule out the idea of higher education from an early age, with some foreclosing on this possibility from as early as Year 3.

Even after accounting for other socio-economic and demographic factors, logistic regression analysis showed that young people with university-educated parents were just over 1.6 times more likely to aspire to university than their prospective first-in-family peers. This finding mirrors enrolment trends; if a young person has a university-educated parent, it almost doubles their odds of attending university²¹.

Arguably, first-in-family status should be the quintessential concern of university equity agendas. These students face unacknowledged hurdles in navigating a different pathway from the one their families took. Their triumph in 'being first' should also be recognised for the new course it sets in family and community histories, often against great odds.

First Nations Australians

We found that the occupational aspirations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are similar, with the main differences being related to gender²². For example, 'Sports and fitness workers' was the most popular occupational aspiration for both Indigenous males (21.9%) and non-Indigenous males (15.1%). This was followed by 'defence force members, fire fighters and police' for both Indigenous males (16.2%) and non-Indigenous males (11%). For females, the top four occupational aspirations for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students were also similar. 'School teachers' was the most popular occupational aspiration for Indigenous females (16.6%) and was rated second by non-Indigenous females (11.4%). In

¹⁸ Patfield, S., Gore, J., & Fray, L. (2021). Reframing first-generation entry: How the familial habitus shapes aspirations for higher education among prospective first-generation students. *Higher Education Research & Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1773766>

¹⁹ Patfield, S., Gore, J., & Fray, L. (2022). Degrees of 'being first': Toward a nuanced understanding of first-generation entrants to higher education. *Educational Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2020.1740172>

²⁰ Patfield, S., Gore, J., & Weaver, N. (2022). On 'being first': The case for first-generation status in Australian higher education equity policy. *Australian Educational Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-020-00428-2>

²¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2012). *Education at a glance 2012: OECD indicators*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org>

²² Gore, J., Patfield, S., Fray, L., Holmes, K., Gruppetta, M., Lloyd, A., Smith, M., & Heath, T. (2017). The participation of Australian Indigenous students in higher education: a scoping review of empirical research, 2000–2016. *Australian Educational Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-017-0236-9>

comparison, 'arts professionals' was the most popular occupational aspiration for non-Indigenous females (14.1%) and was second for Indigenous females (10.4%).²³

This similarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in occupational aspirations was reinforced by the finding that, in the presence of socio-demographic and school-related variables, Indigenous status was not a significant predictor of the aspiration to attend university.

Despite occupational aspirations being similar between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, Indigenous students in our study were significantly less likely than their non-Indigenous peers to hold university aspirations.

While 72% of non-Indigenous students in the top NAPLAN quartile aspired to go to university, only 43% of Indigenous students in the same quartile said they wanted to go. For Indigenous students, aspiring to university is likely to require negotiation of race, class, and cultural divides in ways that are not shared by non-Indigenous students. Fundamentally, it is not just about making higher education possible, but rather, making university a place where Indigenous young people will want to pursue and attain their occupational aspirations.²⁴

The connection between VET and higher education systems

Our research found that school students who express interest in vocational education and training (VET) are demographically opposite to those students more likely to express interest in university²⁵. Using logistic regression analysis we found that students who indicated VET as their highest level of intended education are most likely to be characterised by one or more of the following: from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds; from a metropolitan location; male; from an English-speaking background; attending a socio-educationally disadvantaged school (measured by school ICSEA, publicly available on the MySchool website); and, perceiving themselves as 'average' or 'below average' for academic performance relative to their peers.

Our survey data also revealed that there is more interest in VET-related occupations than in VET as an educational pathway and clear misalignment between educational and occupational aspirations²⁶. For example, it was quite common for a young person to express interest in a VET-related career such as hairdressing, motor mechanic, beauty therapist, or fitness instructor, yet also express interest in university as an educational pathway.

Our research also demonstrates that males were not only more likely to express an interest in VET-related occupations than females, but their specific occupational interests were also very different from those of the female students. The gendered nature of occupational choice was clear, with traditional male and female occupations dominating the lists of most popular occupations for both boys and girls.

²³ Patfield, S., Gore, J., Fray, L., & Gruppeta, M. (2022). The untold story of middle-class Indigenous Australian school students who aspire to university, *Critical Studies in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2019.1572022>

²⁴ Gore, J., Patfield, S., Holmes, K., Smith, M., Lloyd, A., Gruppeta, M., Weaver, N., & Fray, L. (2017). When higher education is possible but not desirable: Widening participation and the aspirations of Australian Indigenous school students. *Australian Journal of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944117710841>

²⁵ Gore, J., Holmes, K., Smith, M., Fray, L., McElduff, P., Weaver, N., & Wallington, C. (2017). Unpacking the career aspirations of Australian school students: towards an evidence base for university equity initiatives in schools. *Higher Education Research & Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1325847>

²⁶ Gore, J., Ellis, H., Fray, L., Smith, M., Lloyd, A., Berrigan, C., Lyell, A., Weaver, N., & Holmes, K. (2017). Choosing VET: Investigating the VET aspirations of school students. National Centre for Vocational Education Research. <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/choosing-vet-investigating-the-vet-aspirations-of-school-students>

While our 2025 follow up study found improvements in the perceptions of VET, outdated portrayals of the sector and confusion about the pathway into VET-related study and careers remain prevalent.

The misalignment between educational and occupational aspirations and confusion about VET indicate that many students lack clear, accurate and contemporary information about the sector. It suggests that schools, VET providers and the government have more to do in ensuring that students and their parents/carers have a greater awareness of what pathways are available and where they might lead.

In Australia, the assumption that aspirations take shape around the middle high school years results in the provision of most careers education in Year 10. However, the data from across the Aspirations Longitudinal Study and associated studies clearly show interest in different careers appear and change throughout schooling, starting in primary school. These results reinforce the importance of robust career education throughout schooling to meet Australia's skills needs now and into the future.

Based on our research, and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, we developed a free 10-hour accredited online professional development course²⁷ that explores how aspirations are formed and provides strategies for teachers, career advisers and school leaders to nurture aspirations in their students. A second free online course provides similar information for parents, carers, and community members working with children to support strategies for nurturing their aspirations. The TTRC was also commissioned by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Careers Institute to develop resources for teachers, parents and community members to support conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students about potential career pathways.²⁸

²⁷ University of Newcastle. (2018). Aspirations: Supporting Student Futures <https://www.aspirations.edu.au>

²⁸ Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. Careers Institute. Little Yarns, Big Dreams. <https://www.yourcareer.gov.au/resources/little-yarns-big-dreams>