

Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Students of Victorian Adult and Community Education Providers: Analysis of 2021 Data

18 November 2022

About This Report

This report from Community Colleges Australia (CCA) details the performance of not-for-profit Victorian adult and community education (ACE) providers in reaching vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. This report is part of a series that analyses government-funded vocational education and training (VET) students by provider type, based on 2021 data compiled by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).¹

Overview

Community education providers delivered 7.1% of Government funded training in Victoria in 2021, down from 7.8% in 2020. Over the same period TAFE delivered 42.3%, Universities 13.0%, Private providers 38.5%, Schools 2.8% and enterprise providers 0.6%. Total Victorian government-funded student numbers rose from 301,745 to 331,780², with TAFE and private providers delivering most of this increase. Community providers experienced a very slight rise in student numbers (195), not surprising given how many of the disadvantaged cohorts they serve were impacted by COVID-19 in 2021. Schools, universities and enterprise providers also experienced minimal increases: all were down slightly in percentage term when compared to 2020.

On almost all tracked measures of vulnerability and disadvantage, Victorian ACE providers consistently over-perform compared to TAFE, private for-profit and other VET providers, disproportionately catering for students from the state's most disadvantaged groups and regions.

In 2021, Victorian community education providers achieved the following percentage proportions of their government-funded VET student populations:

- **73.6% female students**, compared to 44% of TAFE students, 52.3% private for-profits, 45.6% universities, 40% schools and 43.5% enterprise providers;

¹ Data source: National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Total VET students and courses 2021*, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/total-vet-students-and-courses-2021>.

² This increase was particularly due to JobTrainer funding; see <https://www.skills.vic.gov.au/s/jobtrainer>.

- **10.9% students with a disability** (14.2% in 2020), compared to 7% of TAFE, 3.8% private for-profits, 7.8% universities, 3.7% schools and 3.8% enterprise providers;
- **47.6% most disadvantaged students** (bottom two SEIFA quintiles; 50.3% in 2020), compared to 37.3% TAFE, 38.7% private for-profits, 31.6% universities and 39.2% of schools;
- **46.2% speak a language other than English at home** (43% in 2020), compared to 17.6% of TAFE, 23.3% of private for-profits, 31.6% universities and 39.2% of schools;
- **23.9% regional students** (25.3% in 2020), compared to 30.9% TAFE students, 24.4% private for-profits, 19.2% of universities, 23.9% schools and 24.3% enterprise providers; and
- **31.5% older** (age 45+) students (29.9% in 2020), compared to 14% TAFE, 17.9% private for-profits, 11.6% universities, 4.9% schools and 14.4% for enterprise providers; and
- **1.9% Indigenous students**, compared to 2.3% of TAFE, 1.5% of private for-profits, 1.3% universities, 2.0% schools and 1.1% enterprise providers.

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Table 1: Gender: Government-Funded VET in 2020 and 2021: by provider type

Victorian Government-Funded VET (TVET Collection) - by gender, provider type and by percentage 2020 and 2021								
Provider Type	2020				2021			
	Male	Female	Not known	Total	Male	Female	Not known	Total
State-wide				301,745				331,780
TAFE	73,500 57.0%	54,860 42.6%	565 (plus 5 'other') 0.4%	128,930	77,760 55.5%	61,725 44.0%	730 (plus 5 other) 0.5%	140,225
Community	6,795 28.9%	16,590 70.6%	110 0.5%	23,495	6,140 25.9%	17,435 73.6%	115 0.5%	23,690
Private	53,285 49.2%	54,525 50.4%	445 (plus 5 other) 0.4%	108,260	60,230 47.2%	66,705 52.3%	655 (plus 5 other) 0.5%	127,595
University	23,005 55.2%	18,535 44.5%	150 0.4%	41,690	23,275 53.9%	19,690 45.6%	200 plus (10 other) 0.5%	43,170
Schools	5,470 59.5%	3,700 40.3%	20 0.2%	9,190	5,535 59.5%	3,725 40.0%	40 0.4	9,305
Enterprise	1,035 57.3%	760 42.1%	10 0.6%	1,805	1,045 55.7%	815 43.5%	15 0.8%	1,875

Source: NCVET 2022, Total VET students and courses 2021: students DataBuilder, 18 August 2022. Numbers rounded to the nearest 5.³

³ Available at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/total-vet-students-and-courses-2021>.

Table 2: Disability status: Government-Funded VET in 2020 and 2021: by provider type

Victoria Government-Funded VET (Total VET Collection) – Disability status provider type and by percentage 2020 and 2021								
Provider Type	2020				2021			
	Disability	No disability	Not known	Total students	Disability	No disability	Not Known	Total students
TAFE	9,325	100,975	18,625	128,930	9,835	111,290	9,835	140,225
	7.2%	78.3%	14.4%		7.0%	79.4%	13.6%	
Community	3,325	15,485	4,685	23,495	2,590	17,095	4,005	23,690
	14.2%	65.9%	19.9%		10.9%	72.2%	16.9%	
Private	4,460	78,665	25,135	108,260	4,895	94,910	27,790	
	4.1%	72.7%	23.2%		3.8%	74.4%	21.8%	
Universities	3,395	31,795	6,500	41,690	3,370	33,500	6,305	43,170
	8.1%	76.3%	15.6%		7.8%	77.6%	14.6%	
Schools	395	2,175	6,615	9,190	345	2,265	6,690	9,305
	4.3%	23.7%	72.0%		3.7%	24.3%	71.9%	
Enterprise	4,460	78,665	25,135	108,260	4,895	94,910	27,790	127,595
	4.1%	72.7%	23.2%		3.8%	74.4%	21.8%	

Source: NCVER 2022, Total VET students and courses 2021: students DataBuilder, Total, Provider type, Australia (onshore) total, State/territory of delivery location, Funding source, Disability status by Year. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5.

Table 3: Indigeneity: Government-Funded VET in 2020 and 2021: by provider type

Victoria Government-Funded VET – Indigenous status provider type and by percentage 2020 and 2021								
Provider Type	2020				2021			
	Indigenous	Not Indigenous	Not known	Total students	Indigenous	Not Indigenous	Not Known	Total students
TAFE	3,370	123,405	2,150	128,930	3,245	135,300	1,680	140,225
	2.6%	95.7%	1.7%		2.3%	96.5%	1.25	
Community	440	22,925	130	23,495	450	23,135	100	23,690
	1.9%	97.6%	0.6%		1.9%	97.7%	0.4%	
Private	1,685	105,725	850	108,260	1,900	124,940	755	127,595
	1.6%	97.7%	0.8%		1.5%	97.9%	0.6%	
Universities	605	40,680	400	41,690	580	42,320	270	43,170
	1.5%	97.6%	1.0%		1.3%	98.0%	0.6%	
Schools	180	8,915	95	9,190	190	9,030	85	9,305
	2.0%	97.0%	1.0%		2.0%	97.0%	0,95	
Enterprises	30	1,760	20	1,805	20	1,840	15	1,875
	1.7%	97.5%	1.1%		1.1%	98.1%	0.8%	

Source: NCVET 2022, Total VET students and courses 2021: students DataBuilder, Total, Provider type, State/territory of delivery location, Funding source, Indigenous status by Year. Numbers rounded to nearest 5.

Table 4: Language other than English spoken at home (LOTE), by provider type and by percentage 2020 and 2021

Victorian Government-Funded VET (TVET Collection) - by language other than English spoken at home (LOTE), provider type and by percentage 2020 and 2021								
Provider Type	2020				2021			
	LOTE	English	Not known	Total	LOTE	English	Not known	Total students
TAFE	20,445	89,7851	18,700	128,930	24,650	96,405	19,165	140,225
	5.9%	69.6%	14.5%		17.60%	68.8%	13.7%	
Community	10,100	8,555	4,840	23,495	10,945	8,405	4,335	23,690
	43.0%	36.4%	20.6%		46.2%	35.5%	18.3%	
Private	25,150	55,750	27,360	108,260	29,715	66,515	31,365	127,595
	23.2%	51.5%	25.3%		23.3%	2.1%	24.6%	
University	10,445	27,870	3,375	41,690	9,920	29,490	3,765	43,170
	25.1%	66.9%	8.1%		23.0%	68.3%	8.7%	
Schools	1,020	1,595	6,570	9,190	910	1,735	6,660	9,305
	11.1%	17.4%	71.5%		9.8%	18.6%	71.6%	
Enterprise	255	1,085	470	1,805	200	1,190	490	1,875
	14.1%	60.1%	26.0%		10.7%	63.5%	26.1%	

Table 5: Remoteness: Victorian Government-funded VET students as reported within the Total VET Collection 2020 and 2021 by Provider Type

Victoria Government Funded VET - by remoteness, provider type and by percentage 2020 and 2021					
Victoria	Remoteness	2020		2021	
Total students		301,745	%	331,780	%
TAFE	Total TAFE students	128,930	42.7	140,225	42.3
	Major cities	84,410	65.5	92,990	66.3
	Inner Regional	33,500	26.0	34,990	25.0
	Outer Regional	7,830	6.1	8,210	5.9
	Remote	75	0.1	85	0.1
	Very Remote	10	0.01	5	0.004
	Not known	3,020	2.3	3,920	2.8
Community	Total Community Students	23,495	7.8	23,690	7.1
	Major cities	16,995	72.3	17,305	73.0
	Inner Regional	4,870	20.7	4,490	19.0
	Outer Regional	1,080	4.6	1,155	4.9
	Remote	5	0.0	5	0.0
	Not known	540	2.3	735	3.1
Private	Total	108,260	35.9	127,595	38.5
	Major cities	77,995	72.0	92,275	72.3
	Inner Regional	22,865	21.1	26,060	20.4
	Outer Regional	4,605	4.3	5,135	4.0
	Remote	50	0.05	55	0.04
	Very remote	5	0.00	15	0.01
	Not known	2,690	2.5	4,025	3.2
University	total	41,690	13.8	43,170	13.0
	Major cities	32,580	78.1	33,340	77.2
	Inner Regional	7,180	17.2	7,455	17.3
	Outer Regional	765	1.8	805	1.9
	Remote	10	0.0	5	0.0
	Not known	1,140	2.7	1,560	3.6
Schools	Total	23,495	7.8	23,690	7.1
	Major cities	16,995	72.3	17,305	73.0
	Inner Regional	4,870	20.7	4,490	19.0
	Outer Regional	1,080	4.6	1,155	4.9
	Remote	5	0.0	5	0.0
	Not known	540	2.3	735	3.1
Enterprise	Total	1,805	0.6	1,875	0.6
	Major cities	1,340	1.0	1,310	69.9
	Inner Regional	360	0.4	365	19.5
	Outer Regional	60	0.2	90	4.8
	Remote	-	-	-	-
	Not known	45	0.6	110	5.9

Table 6: SEIFA Disadvantage: Victorian VET students 2020 and 2021 (Total VET collection)

Victoria	SEIFA	2020		2021	
Total students		930,025		1,070,765	
			%		%
	Quintile 1: most disadvantaged	140,350	15.1	152,335	14.2
	Quintile 2	173,045	18.6	192,865	18.0
	Quintile 3	178,750	19.2	206,035	19.2
	Quintile 4	176,305	19.0	205,760	19.2
	Quintile 5: least disadvantaged	149,360	16.1	174,795	16.3
	Not known	112,210	12.1	138,985	13.0

Victoria Government Funded VET - by SEIFA category, provider type and by percentage 2020 and 2021

Victoria	SEIFA	2020		2021	
Total students		301,745	%	331,780	%
TAFE		128,930	42.7	140,225	42.3
	Quintile 1: most disadvantaged	21,820	16.9	22,340	15.9
	Quintile 2	28,295	21.9	29,970	21.4
	Quintile 3	26,845	20.8	29,600	21.1
	Quintile 4	23,965	18.6	27,445	19.6
	Quintile 5: least disadvantaged	23,255	18.0	25,505	18.2
	Not known	4,750	3.7	5,370	3.8
Community	Total	23,495	7.8	23,690	7.1
	Quintile 1: most disadvantaged	6,895	29.3	6,515	27.5
	Quintile 2	4,935	21.0	4,750	20.1
	Quintile 3	4,700	20.0	4,850	20.5
	Quintile 4	3,785	16.1	4,000	16.9
	Quintile 5: least disadvantaged	2,530	10.8	2,680	11.3
	Not known	650	2.8	900	3.8
Private Providers	Total	108,260	35.9	127,595	38.5
	Quintile 1: most disadvantaged	18,985	17.5	22,055	17.3
	Quintile 2	23,655	21.9	27,280	21.4
	Quintile 3	23,595	21.8	28,110	22.0
	Quintile 4	22,750	21.0	26,905	21.1
	Quintile 5: least disadvantaged	15,370	14.2	17,715	13.9
	Not known	3,910	3.6	5,530	4.3
Universities	Total	41,690	13.8	43,170	13.0
	Quintile 1: most disadvantaged	6,995	16.8	7,065	16.4
	Quintile 2	6,430	15.4	6,555	15.2
	Quintile 3	8,745	21.0	9,090	21.1
	Quintile 4	10,290	24.7	10,625	24.6
	Quintile 5: least disadvantaged	7,565	18.1	7,770	18.0
	Not known	1,665	4.0	2,065	4.8
Schools	Total	9,190	3.0	9,305	2.8
	Quintile 1: most disadvantaged	1,875	20.4	1,925	20.7
	Quintile 2	1,810	19.7	1,720	18.5
	Quintile 3	1,845	20.1	1,840	19.8
	Quintile 4	2,060	22.4	2,095	22.5
	Quintile 5: least disadvantaged	1,465	15.9	1,540	16.6
	Not known	135	1.5	185	2.0

About Community Colleges Australia

Community Colleges Australia (abbreviation: “CCA”) is the peak national body that represents community-owned, not-for-profit adult and community education (ACE) providers. Our vision is for dynamic and vibrant communities, informed and empowered through learning. To make our vision a reality, CCA works to empower Australia’s community education sector by increasing the awareness of the sector and its place in the economic and social fabric of our nation. CCA advocates at all levels of government on the value of the community education sector, and for our members’ activities and programs.⁴

CCA assists the ACE sector to sustain and grow, promoting learning innovation, focussed especially on vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. ACE providers focus on student welfare and are strongly committed to employment outcomes for their learners.

The ACE sector has been providing flexible and dynamic education and training opportunities to individuals, groups and businesses for a long time – in some instances almost 110 years. As well as operating in accredited VET, ACE providers offer a range of other learning opportunities, including non-accredited training, lifestyle and lifelong and cultural learning courses – education for which they are historically well-known. These educational activities help build self-esteem, re-engage “missing” learners and create and sustain social and community networks, all of which help to reinforce and sustain the communities in which ACE providers operate.

Our sector’s history permits our members to be strategic and innovative in their flexibility to employ a wide range of tools. Our sector plays a strategic role because our members have the freedom to take considered risks. They are not bound by government structures in the way that TAFEs are, nor are they beholden to private shareholders to supply cash returns in the way of for-profit private providers.

Our sector has an historic commitment to invest in their communities and respond to the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians, including a commitment to foundation skills. They do this through small class sizes, focussing on personal support, and creating connections to and collaborations with local non-government organisations, government agencies, social services and employers.

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⁴ See <https://cca.edu.au/who-we-are/about-us/>.