

2011 ACT school students: Where are they now?

This publication presents an overview of the 2012 destination of all students who attended an ACT school in February 2011 together with more detailed information from a survey of students in years 9 to 12 who left the ACT school system in 2011. Students who completed an ACT Year 12 Certificate or NSW Higher School Certificate at an ACT school are described as school graduates and students who left school prior to completing an ACT Year 12 Certificate or NSW Higher School Certificate are described as school leavers.

Key Findings

- The majority of students (87%) enrolled in the ACT school system in February 2011 remained in the system in 2012. Of those students who left the system, just over half had been in year 12
- Ninety-four percent of year 12 students who graduated in 2011 were employed and/or studying in 2012, compared with 81 percent of years 9 to 12 school leavers in the survey
- Fifty-seven percent of year 12 students who graduated in 2011 were studying in 2012 and a further 33 percent intended to start some study in the next two years
- Thirty-eight percent of the years 9 to 12 school leavers in the survey were studying in 2012 and a further 32 percent intended to start some study in the following two years
- Twenty-nine percent of years 9 to 12 school leavers in the survey were undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship in 2012
- The unemployment rate for year 12 students who graduated in 2011 was 12 percent compared with 21 percent for years 9 to 12 school leavers in the survey
- Overall, 97 percent of year 12 students who graduated in 2011 and 70 percent of year 12 students who left school in 2011 without obtaining a year 12 certificate found years 11 and 12 worthwhile
- Sixty-six percent of parents of years 9 to 11 school leavers were satisfied with the school their child most recently attended

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Introduction

This publication presents an overview of the destination of all students who attended an ACT school in 2011 together with more detailed information from a survey of students in years 9 to 12 who left the ACT school system in 2011 (School Leaver Survey).

The information in this publication has primarily been obtained from the ACT School Census and the School Leaver Survey.

- The ACT School Census is conducted in February each year and includes all public, Catholic and independent school students from preschool to year 12. In this publication, information from the 2011 School Census and the 2012 School Census have been used to determine the movement of students enrolled in the ACT school system.
- The School Leaver Survey is an annual survey of students in years 9 to 12 who left the ACT school system in the previous year. This publication includes a summary of the results of the second annual survey which was conducted in May and June 2012 and covered students who left the ACT school system in 2011. The survey excluded full fee paying students whose usual residence was overseas, students who left a special school, students who experienced a traumatic event, students who returned to school prior to May 2012, school leavers who moved interstate or overseas and school leavers from a small number of ACT non-government schools who chose not to participate in the survey.

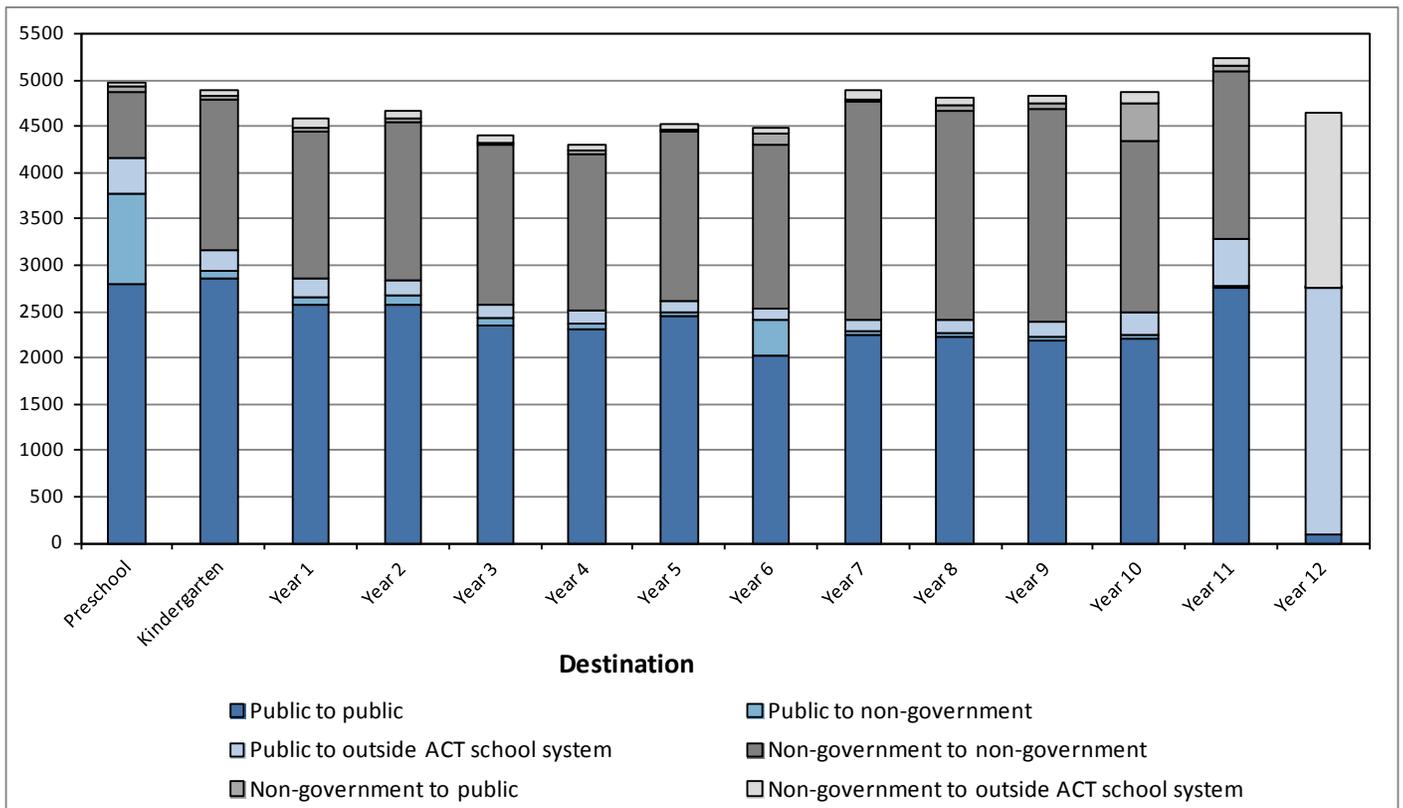
In this publication students who completed an ACT Year 12 Certificate or NSW Higher School Certificate at an ACT school are described as school graduates and students who left school prior to completing an ACT Year 12 Certificate or NSW Higher School Certificate are described as school leavers. The school leavers group may include a small number of students who completed a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification prior to leaving school.

2012 destination of all students who were attending school in 2011

In February 2011, there were 66,144 students attending ACT schools. There were 39,010 students (59%) attending public schools and 27,134 (41%) attending non-government schools. [Figure 1](#) shows the 2012 destination of these students.

The majority of the students (72%) in years 9 to 12 who exited the ACT school system between February 2011 and February 2012 were school graduates. Approximately 16 percent were school leavers, five percent moved interstate, five percent moved overseas and two percent returned to school prior to May 2012.

Figure 1: Number of students who were enrolled in an ACT school in 2011, by 2011 year level and 2012 destination



Of the 8,281 students who exited the ACT school system between February 2011 and February 2012, 55 percent were in year 12 in 2011. Movement of public school students to outside the ACT school system occurred most often for students enrolled in preschool and year 11 in 2011.

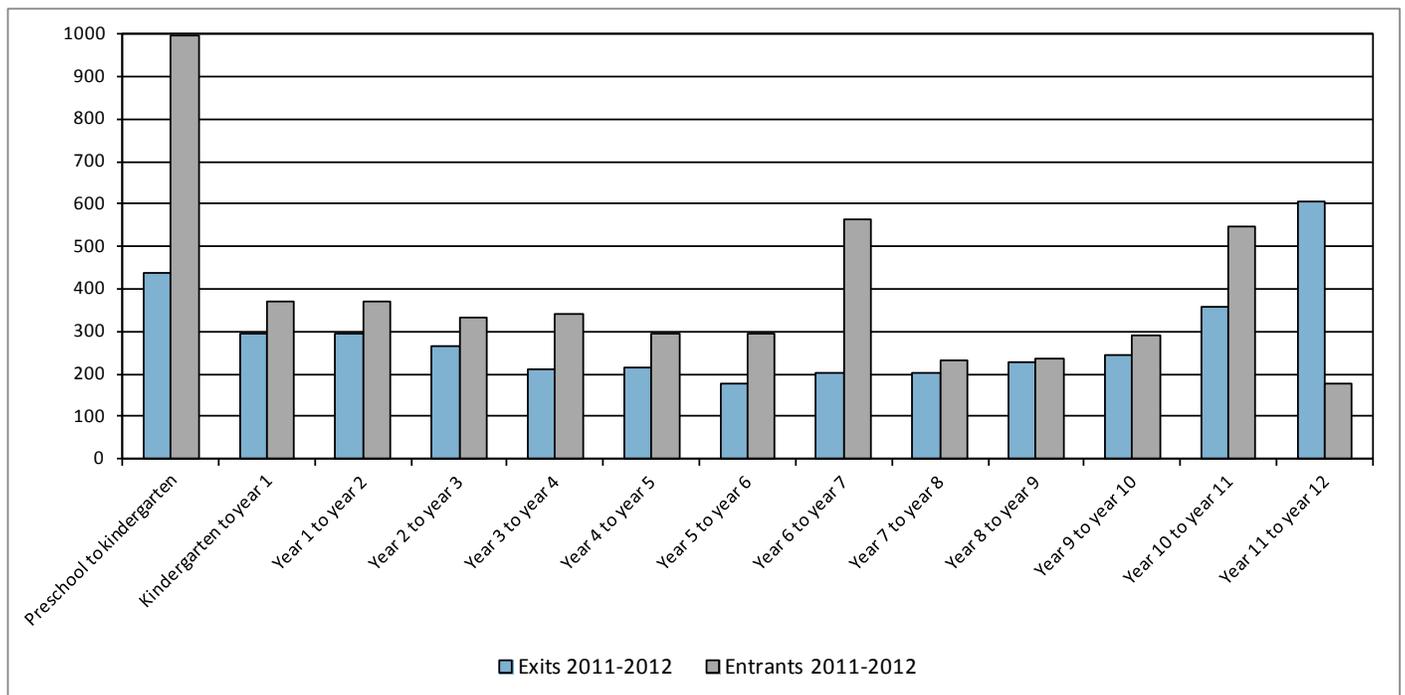
Overall, the greatest movement occurred at the traditional transition points (the end of preschool, year 6 and year 10), with substantial movement from the public to non-government sector for students at the end of preschool and year 6 in 2011, and movement from the non-government to public sector for students at the end of year 10 in 2011 ([Figure 1](#)).

Entries and exits from the ACT school system

Of the 66,144 students enrolled in ACT schools in February 2011, 8,281 left the ACT school system prior to February 2012. During the same period 9,683 students entered the ACT school system. This resulted in a slight increase in the total number of students enrolled in ACT schools between February 2011 and February 2012. Forty-eight percent of the new students started preschool in 2012. The number of preschool entrants (4,637) was slightly more than the number of year 12 exits (4,546).

Figure 2 details the number of students who entered and exited the ACT school system between February 2011 and February 2012. For most year levels the number of exits was similar to the number of entrants. However, between preschool and kindergarten, year 6 and year 7 and year 10 and year 11 there were more entrants than exits. Between year 11 and year 12 there were more exits than entrants. As kindergarten is the first compulsory year of schooling in the ACT it is understandable that there were more entrants than exits between preschool and kindergarten. Fifty-two percent of the entrants into year 7 and 24 percent of entrants into year 11 had a NSW home address in 2012.

Figure 2: Number of students that entered and exited the ACT school system between February 2011 and February 2012, by year level.



Destinations of students who left school in 2011

Key Outcomes

Table 1 details the percentage of school graduates and school leavers employed and/or studying in 2012.

Of the school graduates, 94 percent reported they were employed and/or studying in 2012. In contrast, only 81 percent of school leavers were employed and/or studying in 2012.

Table 1: Proportion of 2011 school graduates and school leavers employed and/or studying in 2012, by sex (%)

	Employed	Currently studying	Employed and/or studying
School leavers	70.7	37.6	81.3
Females	61.0	34.3	76.2
Males	77.5	40.0	84.9
School graduates	78.0	57.0	94.3
Females	80.7	55.8	95.4
Males	74.9	58.5	93.1

Male school leavers were more likely to be employed and/or studying than the female school leavers. However, for the school graduates the outcomes for males and females were similar.

Study

Table 2 shows the percentage of school graduates and school leavers studying full-time and part-time in 2012, by 2011 year level (the year the student was in when they left school). In this survey studying means actively undertaking some study in the year following school departure, including those attending university, technical and further education (TAFE), undertaking an apprenticeship or studying a secondary school qualification outside the traditional school environment.

Fifty-seven percent of all school graduates indicated that they were undertaking some study in 2012, with 48 percent of graduates studying full-time. Thirty-eight percent of school leavers indicated that they were undertaking some study in 2012, with 20 percent of school leavers studying part-time. The majority of school graduates and year 12 school leavers who were studying in 2012 were studying full-time. About half of the year 9 and 10 school leavers (53%) were studying whereas about a quarter of the year 12 school leavers (26%) were studying.

Table 2: Proportion of 2011 school graduates and school leavers studying in 2012, by 2011 year level (%)

	Studying			Not studying
	Part-time	Full-time	All	
School leavers	19.5	17.1	37.6	62.4
Year 9 or 10	26.7	24.0	52.5	47.5
Year 11	21.7	15.4	37.8	62.2
Year 12	10.3	14.1	25.6	74.4
School graduates	9.0	47.8	57.0	43.0

Note: The percentages in this table do not all add to 100 percent due to rounding and a small percentage of 'don't know' responses.

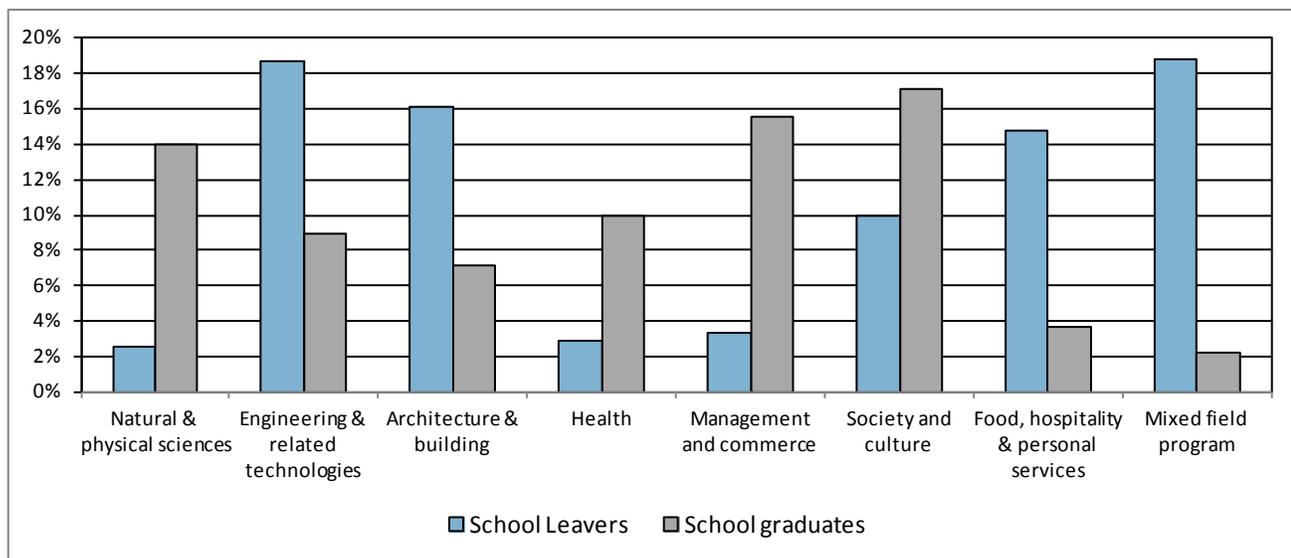
For school graduates the most common subjects of study related to:

- society and culture (17%). This includes fields such as political science, psychology, law, economics, sport and literature.
- management and commerce (16%). This includes fields such as accounting, business management, marketing and finance.
- natural and physical sciences (14%). This includes fields such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, geology and biology.

For school leavers, the most common subjects of study related to:

- engineering and related technologies (19%). This includes fields such as panel beating, cabinet making, vehicle mechanics, refrigeration mechanics and welding, as well as engineering.
- mixed field program (19%). This includes programs such as general school level education, social skills and employment skills.
- architecture and building (16%). This includes fields such as landscape architecture, interior design, regional planning, bricklaying, carpentry and plumbing.
- food, hospitality and personal services (15%). This includes fields such as hospitality, food hygiene, cookery, beauty therapy and hairdressing.

Figure 3: Proportion of 2011 school graduates and school leavers studying in 2012, by main field of study (%)



Sixty-eight percent of school graduates who were studying in 2012 reported they were studying at a Bachelor Degree level or higher. Thirteen percent of school graduates were studying at Certificate III in 2012 compared with 51 percent of the school leavers. Eighteen percent of school leavers who were studying were undertaking a secondary school qualification outside the traditional school environment.

Twenty-nine percent of school leavers and 17 percent of school graduates reported undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship in 2012. Of the school leavers who were undertaking an apprenticeship most were technicians or trade workers studying engineering and related technologies or architecture and building.

Fifty percent of school graduates and 25 percent of school leavers who were studying in 2012 said that the main reason for choosing their course was because "it's a course that interests me". The most common main reason for not studying in 2012 was "taking a gap year" for school graduates and "got a job" for school leavers.

Seventy-seven percent of the school graduates and 51 percent of the school leavers who were not studying in 2012 intended to start some study in the next two years.

Labour Force Status

Table 3 details the 2012 labour force status of school leavers and school graduates. Seventy-eight percent of school graduates reported having a paid job whilst seventy-one percent of school leavers reported having a paid job. Nineteen percent of school leavers said they did not have a paid job but were actively looking for work compared with 10 percent of school graduates. The unemployment rate was 21 percent for school leavers and 12 percent for school graduates.

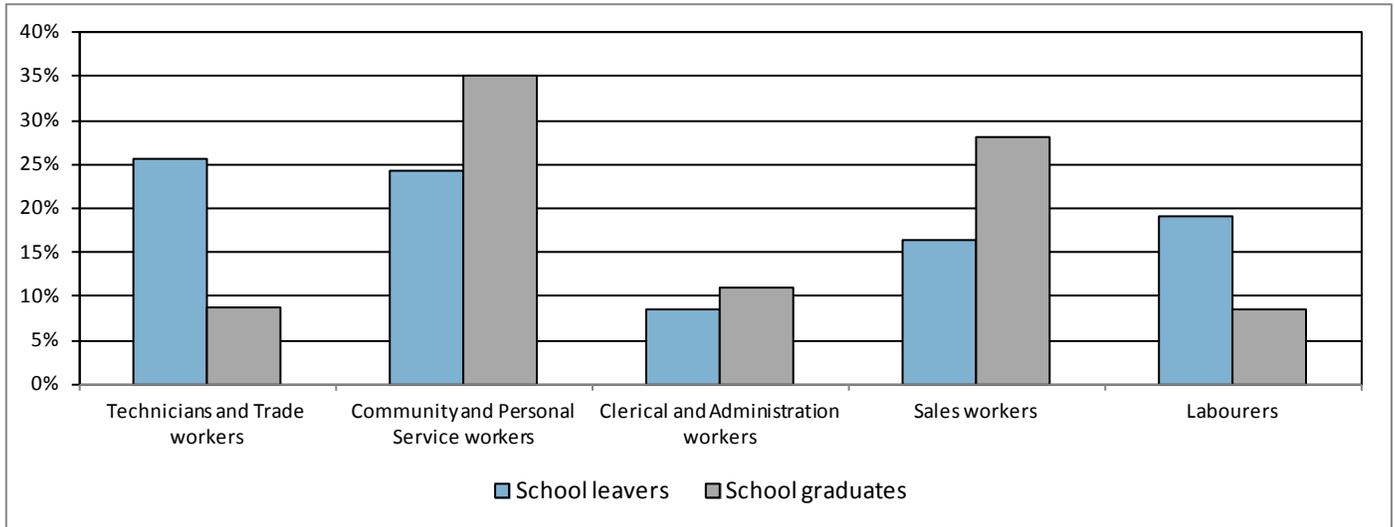
Table 3: Proportion of 2011 school leavers and school graduates, by labour force status in 2012 (%)

	School leavers	School graduates
Employed	70.6	78.0
Full-time	46.6	28.8
Part-time	19.8	47.8
Don't know/Refused	4.2	0.0
Unemployed	19.0	10.3
Looking for full-time work	6.6	1.5
Looking for part-time work	6.3	8.0
Looking for full or part-time work	5.7	0.8
Don't know	0.3	0.0
Total in labour force	89.6	88.3
Not in labour force	10.4	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Unemployment rate	21.2	11.7

The majority of school leavers who were employed in 2012 were employed full-time. The opposite trend was recorded for the school graduates with the majority employed part-time.

Of the school graduates who had a paid job in 2012, the most common occupations were community and personal service workers (35%), sales workers (28%) and clerical and administration workers (11%). For school leavers, the most common occupations were technicians and trade workers (26%), community and personal service workers (24%), labourers (19%) and sales workers (16%).

Figure 4: Proportion of 2011 school graduates and school leavers employed in 2012, by occupation (%)



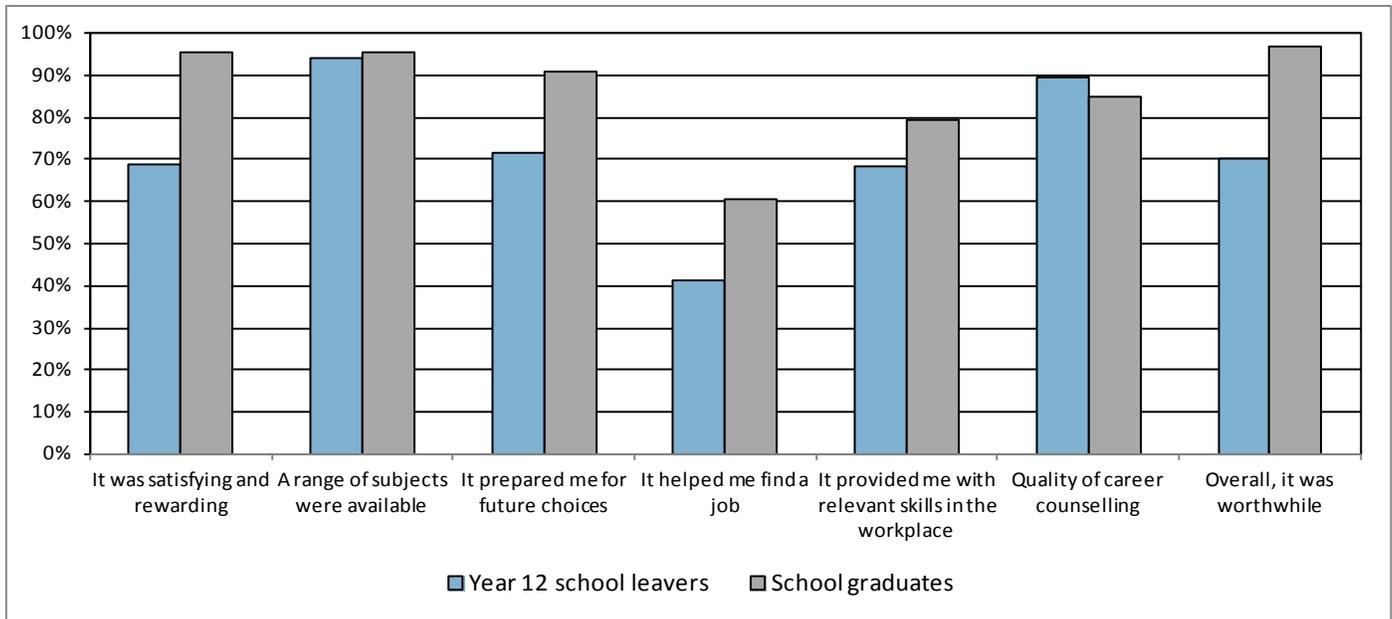
Characteristics of students who left school in 2011

Satisfaction with School

Parents of years 9 to 11 school leavers were asked about their level of satisfaction with the school the student most recently attended. Sixty-six percent of parents were satisfied with the school. In contrast, the 2011 School Satisfaction Survey showed that overall 83% of parents were satisfied with the school their student attended.

Year 12 school leavers and school graduates were asked about their level of agreement with seven statements regarding their experience in years 11 and 12 in the ACT (Figure 5). Responses of strongly agree or agree were classified as “satisfied”, responses of strongly disagree or disagree as “not satisfied” and responses of neither agree nor disagree as “neutral”. Overall 70 percent of year 12 school leavers and 97 percent of school graduates found year 11 and 12 worthwhile. School graduates were generally more satisfied than year 12 school leavers.

Figure 5: Proportion of 2011 school graduates and year 12 school leavers satisfied with various aspects of their year 11 and 12 experience (%)



Fifty-three percent of the school graduates and 54 percent of years 9 to 11 school leavers received career counselling at school. For the year 12 school leavers, 41 percent received career counselling at school.

Reasons for leaving school

Parents of years 9 to 11 students who left school in 2011 were asked the reasons why their child decided to leave school (Table 4). The most common responses were the child wanted to earn their own money (71%), the child wanted to get a job (70%), the child wasn't doing very well at school (54%) and the child had a job to go to (47%).

Table 4: Most common responses parents gave regarding why their child (who was in year 9, 10 or 11 in 2011) left school

Response Categories	Percentage
Wanted to earn his/her own money	71.5
Wanted to get a job	70.2
Not doing very well at school	54.1
Had a job to go to	47.4
Wanted to do study or training that wasn't available at school	34.5
Didn't get on with the teachers and/or students at school	30.2

Note: The percentages in this table do not add to 100 percent, as respondents could provide more than one response.

Explanatory Notes

Career counselling in schools may include one on one or group discussion between students and career advisors, industry experts and representatives from universities and CIT about various aspects of student pathways planning, such as course choices, work experience and developing a resume.

Currently studying refers to respondents who were actively undertaking some study in the year following school departure, including those attending university, technical and further education (TAFE), undertaking an apprenticeship or studying a secondary school qualification outside the traditional school environment.

Labour force status provides data on whether a respondent was employed (full or part-time), unemployed (looking for full or part-time work) or not in the labour force at the time of the survey. Labour force status was derived from responses to a number of questions on the survey form.

Survey Methodology. Prior to the School Leaver Survey being undertaken a primary approach letter was sent to year 12 school graduates, year 12 leavers and parents of years 9 to 11 school leavers. This provided information about its purpose and importance: the broad content of the survey, the amount of time the interview would take and confidentiality provisions. The survey was undertaken by telephone from 7 May 2012 to 4 June 2012. Of the 3,662 school graduates who were sent a primary approach letter, 2,855 completed the survey, providing a response rate of 78 percent. Of the 470 school leavers who were sent a primary approach letter, 289 completed the survey, providing a response rate of 61 percent.

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