NSW Department of Education

All school leavers

2021 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey

This fact sheet provides a high-level overview of findings from the 2021 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey relating to all NSW recent school leavers, including early school leavers and Year 12 completers.
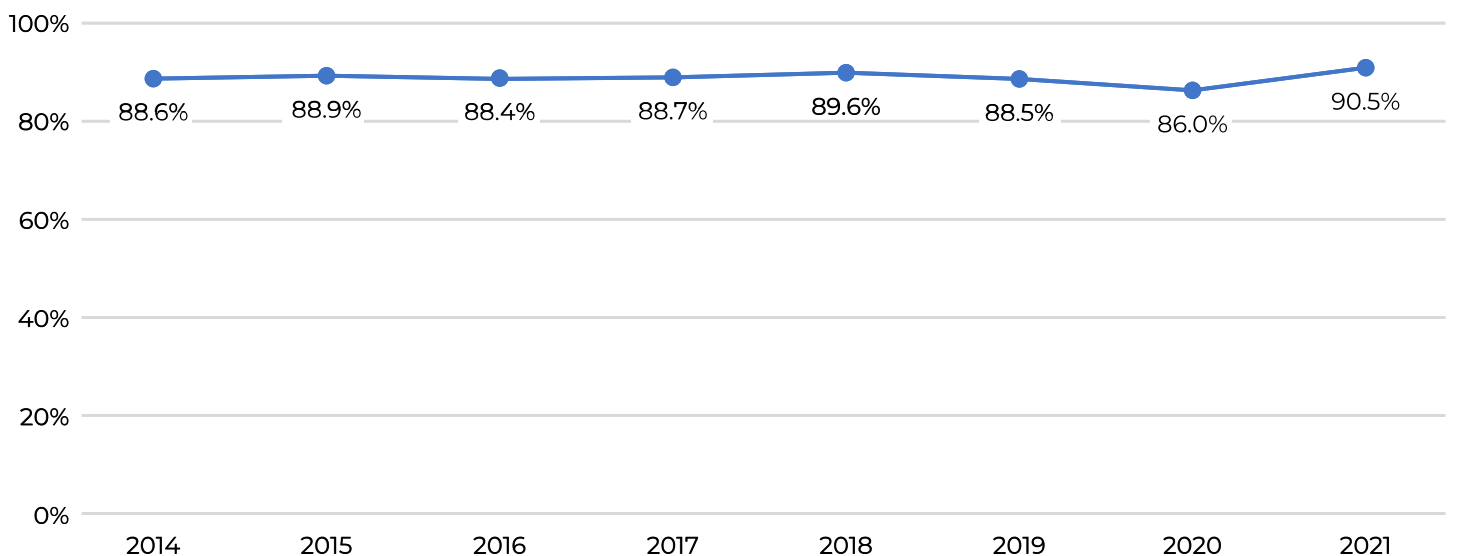
In 2021, a total of 42,388 school leavers completed the survey.

Post-school destinations of all school leavers in 2021

In 2021, 90.5% of all school leavers were in education, training or employment. The remainder were either looking for work or not in the labour force, education or training (NILFET).
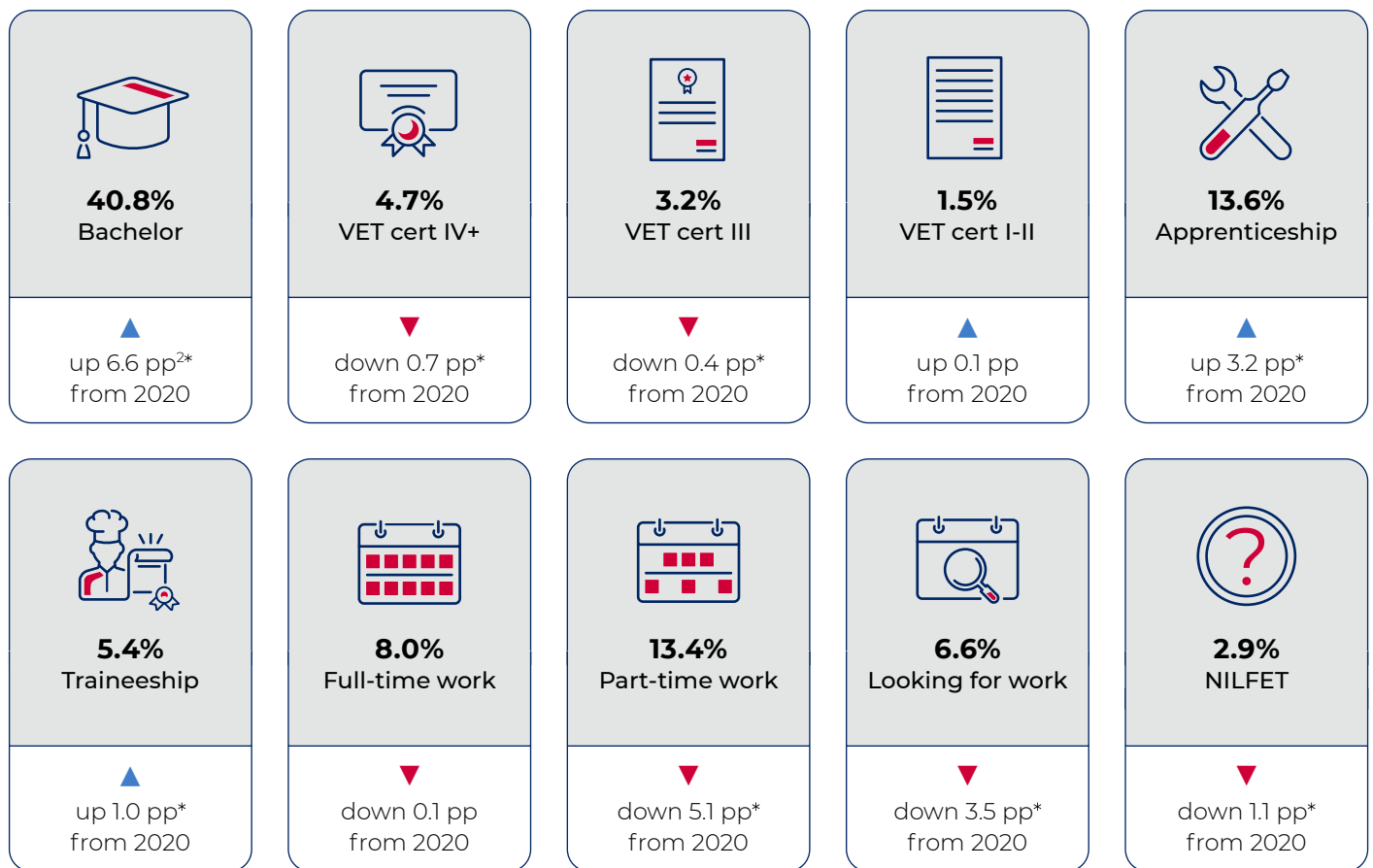
2.9% NILFET*

69.2%	21.4%	6.6%	
In education or training	In employment	Looking for work	

The proportion of recent school leavers involved in higher education, training or employment was significantly[1] higher in 2021 than in any previous year of the survey, except for 2018.

* NILFET means not in the labour force, education or training.

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1   Statistically significant at p<0.01.

Changes in all school leavers' post-school destinations since 2020

40.8%
Bachelor
▲
up 6.6 pp[2]*
from 2020

4.7%
VET cert IV+
▼
down 0.7 pp*
from 2020

3.2%
VET cert III
▼
down 0.4 pp*
from 2020

1.5%
VET cert I-II
▲
up 0.1 pp
from 2020

13.6%
Apprenticeship
▲
up 3.2 pp*
from 2020

5.4%
Traineeship
▲
up 1.0 pp*
from 2020

8.0%
Full-time work
▼
down 0.1 pp
from 2020

13.4%
Part-time work
▼
down 5.1 pp*
from 2020

6.6%
Looking for work
▼
down 3.5 pp*
from 2020

2.9%
NILFET
▼
down 1.1 pp*
from 2020

Top 3 areas of education school leavers enter post-school:

1. Building (6.8%)
2. Teacher education (5.6%)
3. Business and management (5.6%)

Top 3 post-school work roles for school leavers:

1. Sales assistants and salespersons (18.3%)
2. Hospitality workers (15.9%)
3. Storepersons (10.3%)

Note. Changes in percentage points accompanied by an asterisk (*) are statistically significant at a 99% confidence level (p<.01). Statistical significance is determined by both the size of the groups being compared and the percentage point difference between them.

2   pp = percentage points.

What are the subgroup differences in destinations?

Females more likely to be in a:
- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate III
- Traineeship
- VET certificate IV+
- VET certificate I-II
- Part-time work

Males more likely to be in an:
- Apprenticeship
- Full-time work
- Looking for work

Recent school leavers who **speak a language other than English at home** more likely to be in a:
- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate IV+

Recent school leavers who **do not speak a language other than English** at home more likely to be in a:
- VET certificate II
- Traineeship
- Part-time work
- Apprenticeship
- Full-time work
- Looking for work

Aboriginal* recent school leavers more likely to be in a:
- VET certificate III
- Traineeship
- Part-time work
- NILFET
- Apprenticeship
- Full-time work
- Looking for work

Non-Aboriginal recent school leavers more likely to be in a:
- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate IV+

Recent school leavers living in **Greater Sydney** more likely to be in a:
- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate IV+

Recent school leavers living in **Rest of NSW** more likely to be in a:
- VET certificate III
- Traineeship
- Part-time work
- NILFET
- Apprenticeship
- Full-time work
- Looking for work

Recent school leavers with a **higher parental SES†** more likely to be in a:
- Bachelor degree
- VET certificate IV+

Recent school leavers with a **lower parental SES** more likely to be in an:
- Apprenticeship
- Full-time work
- Traineeship
- Looking for work

Government school leavers more likely to be in a:
- Bachelor degree

Non-government school leavers more likely to be in a:
- VET certificate III
- Apprenticeship
- Part-time work
- NILFET
- VET certificate I-II
- Full-time work
- Looking for work

Legend:
- ● In education or training
- ◆ In employment
- ■ Looking for work or NILFET

† SES means socioeconomic status.

* Aboriginal refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Note. On this page, if a destination category (for example, VET certificate I-II) does not appear for a group comparison (for example, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal) then it means that the destination did not differ significantly between those groups.

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