Haukka, Sandra and Choy, Sarojni C. (2006) Adult and community education: Performance trends: ACE data and outcomes: 2001 to 2005. In *Proceedings Adult Learning Australia 46th Annual National Conference*, Australia, Melbourne.

ACE data and outcomes: 2001 to 2005

Dr Sandra Haukka & Dr Sarojni Choy
Queensland University of Technology

Introduction

The full extent of the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector's contribution to human and social development in Australia remains unknown largely due to a lack of reliable, valid and comparable data on ACE activities and outcomes. The NCVER and State and Territory authorities collect some data on ACE outcomes mainly from public funded VET and non-VET activities – data that complies with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

ACE delivers a lot more than what is funded through public sources. There is compelling and anecdotal evidence indicative of ACE's assistance in re-engaging with learning and training, and initiating pathways to more training or employment. However, NCVER's own data suggests that up to one half of the total number of people who participate in ACE are excluded. For example, the NCVER (2002) estimated total ACE activity of between 1.1 to 1.3 million people in 2000; yet only 477,800 students were reported in the national VET data collection in that year.

To gain a better understanding of activities and outcomes of the ACE sector, Adult Learning Australia funded a small project to collect more current and comprehensive data. This paper presents key findings from this project and recommends possible next steps for further data collection.

Background

The task of profiling ACE has been a challenge for researchers across Australia. There is no dedicated system of education and training data collection for the ACE sector like AVETMISS for the VET sector. Although data is regularly collected by the NCVER, it is limited to publicly funded VET and non-VET activities. The full extent of the sector's contribution to human and social development remains unknown largely due to the lack of reliable, valid and comparable data on ACE activities and outcomes.

Five years ago, Borthwick, Knight, Bender & Loveder (2001) focussed on ways to improve data collection and reporting for the sector. They recommended collecting more information about participation in ACE through ABS' education and training survey or other relevant instruments; undertaking scoping exercises on ACE provision every three to five years (which would require State and Territory authorities keeping up-to-date registers of providers); and conducting a pilot project to assess the feasibility of collecting summary statistical information that would involve a diverse cross-section of ACE providers (pp. x-xi). These strategies were largely in response to the several gaps they identified in the reported data (p. 2):

- Most activity offered by the U3A and Schools for Seniors in States/Territories other than Victorian as well as some of Victoria's U3A activity.

- Some activity delivered by Community and Neighbourhood Houses, Community Adult Education Centres and Community Learning Centres.

- Non-TAFE activity in Western Australia.

- Non-vocational adult education programs and evening classes delivered at some Australian universities and libraries and by the Evening and Community College's Association.

- Some recreation, leisure or personal enrichment activity at TAFE centres, which allows community access to TAFE facilities in accordance with State/Territory policies

- Some activity at private and government secondary schools.

- Private recreation, leisure and personal activity, such as that provided through cultural associations like Alliance Francaise, health centres and dance studios.

At the start of this project, the most comprehensive data available in publication form was *Australian education and training statistics 2001: Adult and community education* – released by the NCVER in 2003. Summary data was available in NCVER's *Australian vocational education and training statistics: Student outcomes* publications, with data available up to and including 2005. The project team sought to collect the most up-to-date data about the ACE sector that was available through public/secondary sources. The first part of the project involved designing and populating an Access database of ACE providers with their details, and then categorising these providers into one of four broad tiers. The second part involved requesting the latest data on ACE enrolments and

outcomes from the NCVER and then analysing that data. This data covered the period from 2001 to 2005. These two parts of the project are now discussed.

National Database of ACE Providers

The initial purpose of designing and populating an Access database was to get an indication of how many ACE providers were operating in each State and Territory and then, where possible, to categorise them into four tiers:

- Tier 1: A large RTO with annual government funding of $100,000 and above (Victoria and New South Wales only[1]).

- Tier 2: A small to medium RTO with annual government funding of less than $100,000.

- Tier 3: An RTO that could not be categorised as Tier 1 or Tier 2.

- Tier 4: Non-RTO.

The database contains provider details that are available to the general public (see Figure 1). These details came from a range of sources such as the NCVER, State and Territory authorities with responsibility for ACE, the National Training Information System (NTIS), Google, individual provider websites, white pages, and learning networks/ associations. As complete data on enrolments, fee structures and outcomes was not readily available from public sources, it has not been included in the database.

Figure 1: Screen dump of Access database

---

[1] ACE providers from only Victoria and New South were categorised into Tier 1 or Tier 2. Data for Victoria was extracted from the ACFEB Annual Report 2004-2005. Funding data for New South Wales was from an unpublished source. Details about funding and/or student contact hour were not made available for other States and Territories. Although NCVER maintains data on individual RTOs, due to confidentiality reasons, such data is not available without written approval from the RTOs.
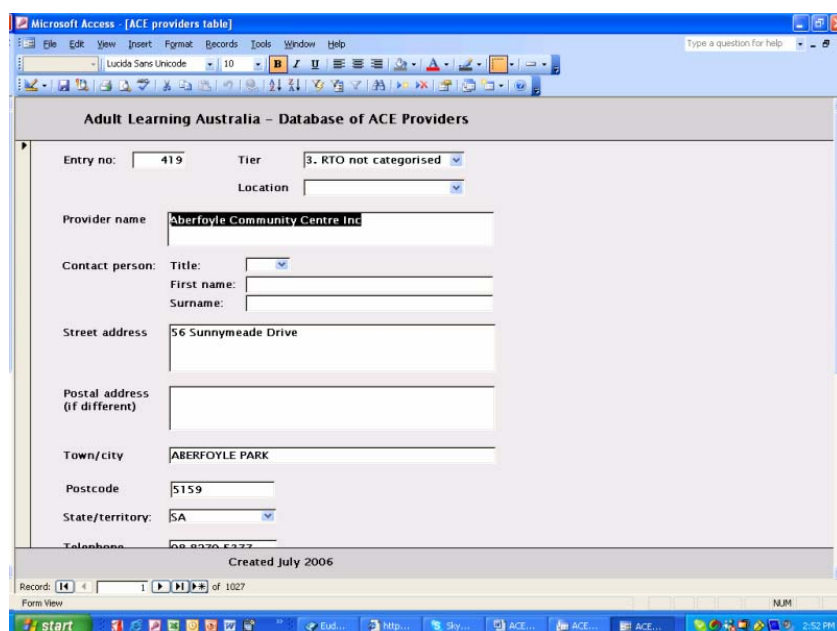
The Access database currently contains details of 1,027 ACE providers. Table 1 shows the distribution the tiers across the States and Territories. Data collected for this project shows that just over half (565 or 55%) of the 1,027 ACE providers are Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). This figure is slightly above the 537 community education providers recorded as RTOs by the NCVER (2006). The difference may be due to some State and Territory sources including private providers in their lists of adult and community education providers.

Of the 1,027 ACE providers in the database (as at July 2006):

- 13.7% are Tier 1: large providers (Victoria and New South Wales only)

- 28.6% are Tier 2: small-medium providers (Victoria and New South Wales only)

- 12.7% are Tier 3: RTO not categorised

- 45% are non-RTOs.

Table 1: Tier categorisation of ACE providers

State/Territory	Tier 1: Large RTO	Tier 2: Small-medium RTO	Tier 3: RTO not categorised	4: Non-RTO	Total ACE Providers
VIC	100	284	6	58	**448**
NSW	41	10	UNKNOWN	11	**62**
SA	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	76 *	55	**131**
QLD	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	32	110	**142**
TAS	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	116	**116**
ACT	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	16	21	**37**

WA	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	72	**72**
NT	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	19	**19**
AUSTRALIA	**141**	**294**	**130**	**462**	**1027**

*The NCVER included 78 ACE providers of publicly funded VET from South Australia in its appendix of training providers for 2005. Although most of these providers have been treated as RTOs in this project, they do not appear in the NTIS database as RTOs.

From the data made available, in Victoria, 22.3% of providers were categorised as Tier 1; 63.4% as Tier 2; 1.3% as Tier 3; and 12.9% as Tier 4. The data shows that most ACE providers are small to medium in size. In New South Wales, 66.1% of the ACE providers were categorised as Tier 1; 16.1% as Tier 2; and 17.7% were non-RTOs. Unlike in Victoria, most ACE providers in New South Wales were large in size and supported with over $100,000 public funds.

Trend Data on ACE Enrolments and Outcomes (SAROJNI – CUT BACK THIS SECTION)

The NCVER provided the project team with nine sets of ACE data for each State and Territory and for Australia as a whole, covering the period 2001 to 2005:

- Students, subject enrolments and annual hours by program type and state/territory

- Students by sex by program type and state/territory

- Students by age group by program type and state/territory

- Students by geographic region by program type and state/territory

- Students by highest education level, highest school level completed and program type for Australia

- ACE annual hours by delivery type by program type and state/territory

- ACE annual hours by field of study (2001 only) / field of education (2002-2005) by program type and state/territory (2001-2005)

- ACE annual hours by qualification level by program type and state/territory

- ACE subject enrolments by subject outcome by program type and state/territory

It is necessary here to caution readers about drawing any general conclusions from the analysis in this section. Some basic understanding of the nature of the ACE data is fundamental for correct conceptualisation of the analysis. Firstly, a recap of how ACE is defined by NCVER (2006, p. 3):

> "… all educational and training activity which is delivered by community-based or community-managed organisations that provide learning opportunities for adults."

The following points are of significance when viewing the NCVER data:

- Vocational ACE data = programs that have a vocational focus and are designed to equip students with specific skills. These are delivered by ACE providers who meet the above definition.

- Non-vocational ACE data = programs that are primarily directed at the overall personal, cultural and social development of an individual. This data includes non-vocational programs and activities delivered by not only the traditional ACE providers, but also by TAFE, enterprises and other RTOs, and non-RTOs.

Considering the nature of the NCVER data on ACE activities, it is indeed difficult to talk in terms of the provision of vocational or non-vocational programs by the ACE sector. Only vocational programs delivered by traditional ACE providers are differentiated. The NCVER dataset remains the most comprehensive set and can be said to have reasonably captured ACE activities across Australia. In an environment when reporting on ACE activities is not mandatory, there are pockets of data that remain outside these data sets. For example, some non-vocational ACE activities (e.g. recreation) from New South Wales are not added. Similarly, there are other data that could be added to the existing sets.

ACE students, subject enrolments and annual hours by program type
In 2005, 376,449 students participated in vocational and non-vocational programs delivered by the ACE sector. These students accounted for 791,708 subject enrolments and just over 19 million annual hours. Although these latest figures are lower than that recorded in the peak year of 2001, the number of "vocational" hours delivered by the ACE sector was at an all time high of 15.3 million annual hours in 2005. The decline in ACE students, enrolments and annual hours in 2004 was due in part to problems with software compatibility when many providers introduced new systems in New South Wales.

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of students participating in vocational and non-vocational ACE between 2001 and 2005. The total number of students enrolled in

vocational ACE as a proportion of all ACE activities and as a proportion of all VET delivered across Australia between 2001 and 2005 is shown in Table 2.

Figure 2: Percentage of students in vocational and non-vocational ACE (2001-2005)
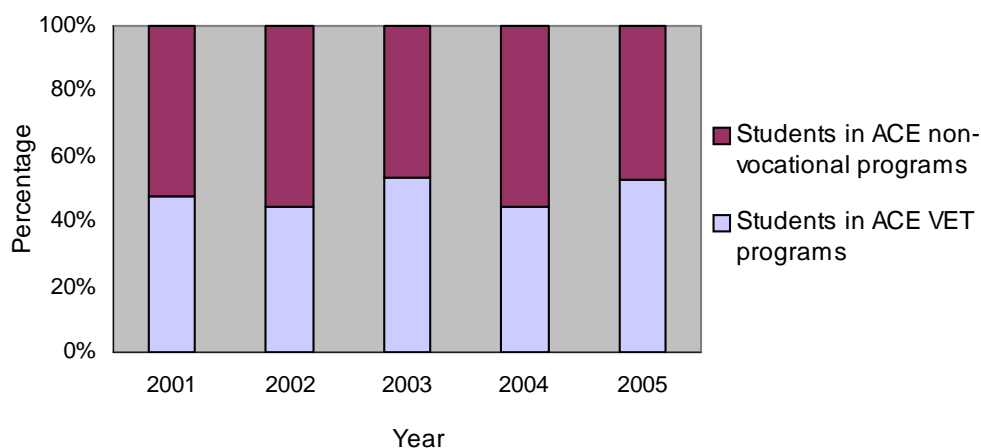

Table 2: Proportion of ACE students participating in vocational and non-vocational ACE programs and all VET programs (2001-2005)

	Students in vocational ACE programs	**Students in non-vocational ACE programs**	**Students in vocational ACE as a proportion of students in all VET**
2001	48.0%	52.0%	14.2%
2002	44.6%	54.4%	12.7%
2003	53.6%	46.4%	14.2%
2004	44.3%	55.7%	10.7%
2005	53.1%	46.9%	12.2%

The distribution of student enrolments in vocational and non-vocational ACE programs ranged between about 44.3% and 53.6%. Just over half of the students enrolled in ACE participated in non-vocational activities in 2001, 2002 and 2004. The proportion of students in vocational ACE was higher in 2003 (53.6%) and 2005 (53.1%).

Students enrolled in vocational ACE programs ranged between 10.7% and 14.2% of students enrolled in all VET programs in Australia over the last five years (Table 2). On average about 12.8% of VET was recorded as vocational ACE during the period from 2001 to 2005.

The spread of students in all ACE programs and vocational ACE programs across Australia in 2005 is as follows:

- New South Wales accounted for 44.4% of all ACE students in Australia and 48.1% of ACE students enrolled in vocational programs in Australia.

- Victoria accounted for 41% of all ACE students and 42.3% of ACE students enrolled in vocational programs.

- Queensland accounted for 0.3% of ACE students enrolled in vocational programs but did not report any non-vocational programs.

- South Australia accounted for 10% of all ACE students and 9.2% of ACE students enrolled in vocational programs.

- Western Australia accounted for 4.3% of all ACE students but did not report any vocational programs.

- Tasmania accounted for 0.03% of all ACE students but did not report any vocational programs.

- Northern Territory accounted for 0.04% of ACE students enrolled in vocational programs but did not report any non-vocational programs.

- Australia Capital Territory did not report ACE student numbers in vocational and non-vocational programs.

The percentage of students in vocational ACE as a proportion of students in all VET in each State and Territory in 2005 is as follows: New South Wales (17.1%), Victoria (18.4%), Queensland (0.2%), South Australia (16%), Western Australia (0%), Tasmania (0%), Northern Territory (0.4%) and Australian Capital Territory (0%).

Subject enrolments

The spread of subject enrolments in vocational and non-vocational ACE between 2001 and 2005 is displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Percentage of subject enrolments in vocational and non-vocational ACE (2001-2005)
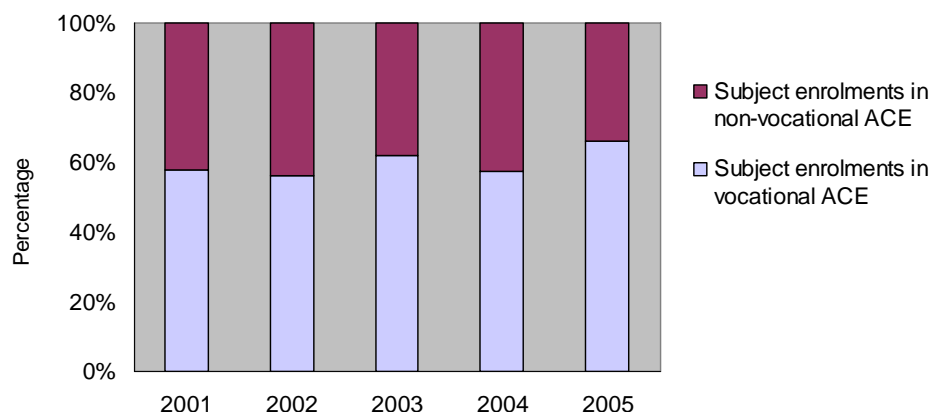
Subject enrolments in vocational ACE as a proportion of all ACE activities ranged between 56.1% and 66.2% between 2001 and 2005, as shown in Table 3. The analysis of data shows that subject enrolments in vocational ACE programs are higher than for non-vocational programs. Subject enrolments in vocational programs in ACE accounted for between 3.9% and 4.8% of subject enrolments in all VET programs in Australia over the last five years. ACE providers in Victoria (53.6%) and New South Wales (38.6%) accounted for the bulk of ACE subject enrolments in vocational programs.

Table 3: Proportion of ACE subject enrolments in vocational and non vocational programs (2001-2005)

	Subject enrolments in vocational ACE programs	Subject enrolments in non-vocational ACE programs	Subject enrolments in vocational ACE programs as a proportion of subject enrolments in all VET
2001	58.1%	41.9%	4.8%
2002	56.1%	43.9%	4.5%
2003	61.9%	38.1%	4.6%
2004	57.5%	42.5%	3.9%
2005	66.2%	33.8%	4.5%

Annual hours

The spread of the annual hours in vocational and non-vocational ACE between 2001 and 2005 is shown in Figure 4. Vocational programs made up a larger proportion of ACE annual hours, rising from 69.8% in 2001 to 80.5% in 2005 (see Table 4 for exact numbers).

Figure 4: Percentage of annual hours in vocational and non-vocational ACE
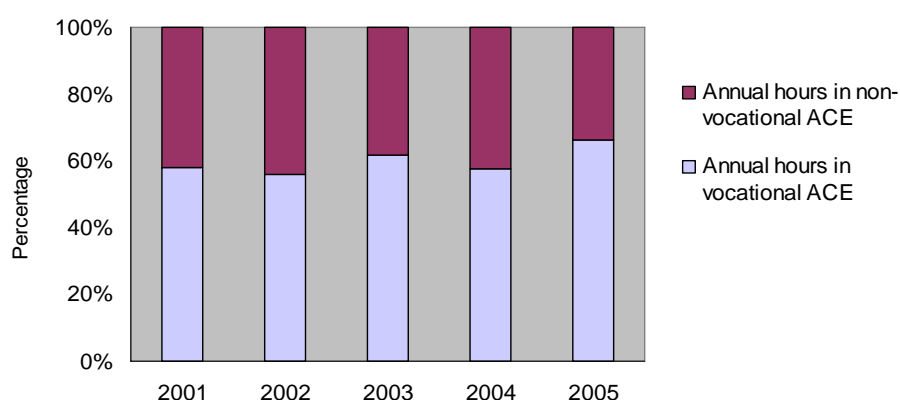
The percentage of annual hours of vocational ACE decreased during 2001 and 2002. In 2003 it increased and then decreased again in 2004. The percentage of annual hours of vocational ACE increased in 2005.

There was a slight decrease in student numbers, enrolments and annual hours of vocational ACE between 2001 and 2002. Such a decrease was also evident in the national total for all VET delivered during the same period. While the figures for the three sets (students, enrolment and annual hours) increased between 2002 and 2003, slight changes were noted at the national level in student numbers and enrolments.

Table 4: Proportion of annual hours in vocational and non-vocational ACE and of all VET programs (2001-2005)

	Annual hours of vocational ACE programs	**Annual hours of non-vocational ACE programs**	**Annual hours of vocational ACE programs as a proportion of all VET**
2001	69.8%	30.2%	4.2%
2002	68.9%	31.1%	4.0%
2003	75.4%	24.6%	4.0%
2004	72.5%	27.5%	3.6%
2005	80.5%	19.5%	4.3%

There was no change in annual hours during the same period. A decrease was noted between 2003 and 2004 which influenced the proportion at the national level. The decrease in 2004 could be attributed to discrepancies in the NSW data. A rise of around 8% was noted in all three data sets between 2004 and 2005. The national figures also increased as a result. The 8% increase related to vocational ACE, the largest experienced over the last five years, could reflect increases in funding for the provision of VET by ACE providers in Victoria and New South Wales. Whether the increase in participation was from the supply side or the demand side cannot be established. However, the figures imply that ACE clients did engage in VET activities.

Annual hours for non-vocational ACE programs have declined from 30.2% to 19.5% over the five year period. Although more annual hours of vocational ACE programs were delivered, this as a proportion of annual hours in all VET is still relatively low.

The bulk of annual hours of vocational ACE programs was delivered in Victoria (58.3%) and New South Wales (38.2%).
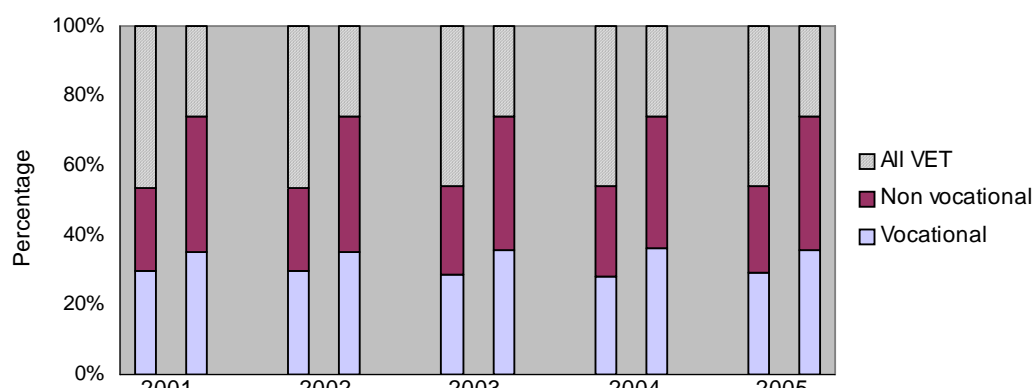
ACE students by sex and program type

Table 5 displays participation rates by women and men in vocational and non-vocational ACE and in all VET. The data shows that women's participation in vocational ACE (as a percentage of total vocational activities within ACE) is almost two thirds greater when compared to participation by men. For non-vocational ACE programs, women's participation has been generally over 70%. This implies that larger numbers of women (compared to men) access both vocational and non-vocational ACE programs. Women's participation in all ACE activities (as a percentage of total vocational and non-vocational activities) remained just over 68% for the last five years. Participation by men in all VET programs is marginally higher than by women as illustrated in Figure 5.

Table 5: ACE students by sex and program type (2001-2005)

	Vocational ACE	Non-vocational ACE	All ACE	All VET
2001				
Male	32.6%	26.1%	29.2%	51.1%
Female	65.2%	71.9%	68.7%	48.5%
2002				
Male	32.7%	26.5%	29.3%	51.6%
Female	65.7%	72.2%	69.3%	48.1%
2003				
Male	31.0%	27.6%	29.4%	50.1%
Female	66.7%	71.3%	68.8%	48.6%
2004				
Male	31.7%	29.1%	30.2%	52.1%
Female	66.3%	70.0%	68.8%	47.1%
2005				
Male	32.5%	27.8%	30.3%	51.6%
Female	66.2%	71.5%	68.7%	48.1%

Figure 5: Male and female student participation in ACE and all VET (2001-2005)

The data shows that women are the main beneficiaries of vocational and non-vocational ACE programs. Men participate more in vocational ACE programs than in non-vocational ACE programs, and dominate in all VET.

ACE students by age group and program type

Table 6 shows the number of students of these age groups in vocational and non-vocational ACE programs. Shaded figures highlight the highest values for each group. Percentages in the brackets indicate the proportion against the total numbers for vocational, non-vocational, all ACE and all VET.

Almost two thirds (65.4%) of ACE students were aged 30 years and over in 2005, with adults aged between 30 and 49 years continuing to dominate student numbers in ACE programs over the last five years. (Note: those aged 49 and over are not included in the table above). Of those students undertaking vocational ACE programs, 64.3% were aged 30 years and over, compared to 47.5% in all vocational courses in Australia.

Table 6: ACE students by age group and program type (2001-2005)

	Vocational ACE	Non-vocational ACE	All ACE	All VET
2001				
Age 30-34	20,707 (8.7%)	23,185 (9.1%)	43,892 (9.2%)	166,475 (10%)
Age 35-39	22,721 (9.5%)	21,630 (8.4%)	44,351 (9.3%)	161,643 (9.6%)
Age 40-44	23,603 (9.9%)	21,915 (8.5%)	45,518 (9.2%)	153,548 (9.1%)
Age 45-49	20,613 (8.6%)	20,891 (8.1%)	41,504 (8.3%)	122,195 (7.3%)
All age groups	238,734	258,717	497,451	1,679,141
2002				
Age 30-34	18,945 (8.8%)	26,072 (9.8%)	45,017 (9.4%)	167,736 (10.1%)
Age 35-39	20,427 (9.5%)	23,182 (8.7%)	43,609 (9.1%)	157,306 (9.3%)
Age 40-44	21,855 (10.2%)	23,402 (8.8%)	45,257 (9.4%)	154,608 (9.2%)
Age 45-49	19,618 (9.1%)	22,832 (8.6%)	42,450 (8.9%)	124,759 (7.4%)
All age groups	214,430	266,475	480,905	1,682,946
2003				
Age 30-34	21,036 (8.6%)	20,800 (9.8%)	41,836 (9.2%)	170,872 (10.0%)
Age 35-39	21,402 (8.8%)	18,329 (8.7%)	39,731 (8.7%)	154,968 (9.0%)

Age 40-44	23,920 (9.8%)	19,134 (9.0%)	43,054 (9.4%)	156,591 (9.1%)
Age 45-49	22,392 (9.2%)	18,690 (8.8%)	41,082 (9.0%)	129,405 (7.5%)
All age groups	244,389	211,576	455,965	1,717,795
2004				
Age 30-34	14,563 (8.5%)	21,310 (9.9%)	35,873 (9.3%)	155,463 (9.7%)
Age 35-39	15,684 (9.1%)	18,154 (8.4%)	33,838 (8.7%)	141,457 (8.8%)
Age 40-44	17,891 (10.4%)	18,983 (8.8%)	36,874 (9.5%)	142,068 (8.9%)
Age 45-49	16,762 (9.8%)	18,874 (8.8%)	35,636 (9.2%)	119,838 (7.5%)
All age groups	171,472	215,389	386,861	1,595,232
2005				
Age 30-34	17,215 (8.6%)	16,968 (9.6%)	34,183 (9.1%)	154,468 (9.6%)
Age 35-39	17,954 (9.1%)	14,614 (8.3%)	32,568 (8.7%)	143,223 (8.7%)
Age 40-44	19,361 (9.7%)	15,019 (8.5%)	34,380 (9.3%)	142,209 (8.7%)
Age 45-49	19,258 (9.6%)	15,680 (8.9%)	34,938 (9.3%)	123,545 (7.5%)
All age groups	199,842	176,607	376,449	1,641,254

Each of the age cohorts have maintained about 9% to 10% of the enrolments in vocational and non-vocational ACE programs and also in all VET. Of the four age groups in Table 6, the 30 to 34 year olds had the largest representation in all VET in Australia. Their numbers were also highest for non-vocational ACE activities, except for the year 2004 when a greater number of students aged 40 to 44 years were noted. The 40 to 44 year olds accounted for the largest number of students in the vocational ACE. Their numbers were highest for all ACE activities except in year 2004 when the number of 45 to 49 year olds were the highest.

While the highest number of all VET participants were in the age range of 15 to 24 years and made up about 35% to 36% of the total students in each year, the 30 to 49 year age group made up similar numbers at 34% to 36%. A major difference in VET access by the younger and older participants in all VET is that the older age groups access more of the VET learning as vocational ACE.

The largest number of young people aged between 15 and 19 years participating in vocational programs delivered by ACE was recorded in 2001. Their numbers declined in years 2002, 2003 and 2004. In 2005, there was a slight increase to 14,759 students, with Victorian ACE providers accounting for 59.1% of young people participating in vocational programs delivered by ACE.

ACE students by geographic region and program type

Students from capital city locations made up the highest proportion in vocational and non-vocational ACE as well as in all VET activities. Students from rural areas were the next, followed by other metropolitan regions, and then those from remote areas. This pattern of participation was consistent over the last five years. Although students from capital cities made up the largest proportion of ACE participants, among the remaining groups it was students from other areas (rural, other metropolitan, remote) who took up more vocational ACE than non-vocational ACE. Students from rural regions made up the highest proportion who took on vocational ACE except in 2001 when remote students outnumbered them. Table 7 shows the students from each geographical region. The percentages show the proportion for all ACE and vocational ACE as a proportion of all VET.

Students from rural and remote areas are the most frequent users of vocational ACE programs (see Figure 6). On the whole, students from rural areas made up the largest proportion of the student population in vocational ACE. Students from the rural region also made the largest proportion of the student population in all VET programs. The spread of students from the different geographic areas in all VET programs is illustrated in Figure 7.

Table 7: ACE students by geographic region and program type (2001-2005)

	Vocational ACE	Non-vocational ACE	All ACE	All VET
2001				
Capital city	40.8%	59.2%	310,574	13.7%
Other metropolitan	57.6%	42.4%	27,085	12.9%
Rural	60.8%	39.2%	143,085	16.6%
Remote	68.2%	31.8%	4,313	4.5%
Total*	238,734	258,717	497,451	1,679,141
2002				
Capital city	37.2%	62.8%	296,764	12.0%
Other metropolitan	50.5%	49.5%	27,312	11.6%
Rural	58.8%	41.2%	141,489	15.6%
Remote	57.4%	42.6%	3,660	3.2%
Total	214,430	266,475	480,905	1,682,946
2003				
Capital city	46.2%	53.8%	276,721	13.5%
Other metropolitan	58.6%	41.4%	24,100	11.5%

Rural	67.1%	32.9%	138,565	17.1%
Remote	62.8%	37.2%	3,340	3.4%
Total	244,389	211,576	455,965	1,717,795
2004				
Capital city	36.3%	63.7%	242,759	10%
Other metropolitan	43.9%	56.1%	22,271	8.8%
Rural	62.9%	37.1%	110,447	13.7%
Remote	49.8%	50.2%	2,504	2.3%
Total	171,472	215,389	386,861	1,595,232
2005				
Capital city	44.9%	55.1%	242,827	12%
Other metropolitan	56.2%	43.8%	20,930	10.1%
Rural	70.6%	29.4%	105,876	14.5%
Remote	55.4%	44.6%	2,727	2.5%
Total	199,842	176,607	376,449	1,641,254

*Includes overseas and unknown

Students from the capital city areas made up the next largest proportion, followed by those from other metropolitan areas. The proportion of students from remote areas participating in all VET was comparatively low.

Figure 6: Distribution of students from four regions in vocational and non-vocational ACE programs (2001-2005)
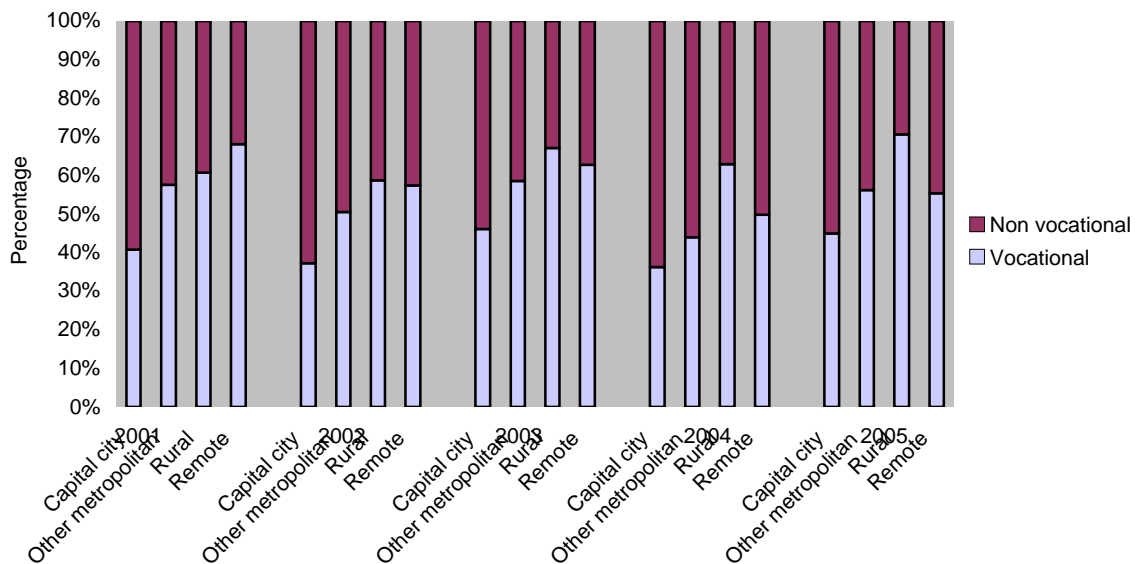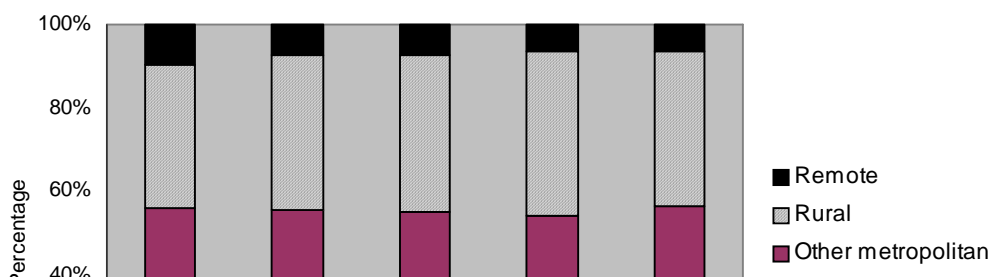

Figure 7: Spread of students from the different geographic areas in all VET programs (2001-2005)

ACE students by highest education level completed and program type

During 2001 and 2002, students with Year 10 qualifications made up the largest cohort of ACE programs (both vocational and non-vocational). Table 8 shows the figures for each qualification level completed by program type.

Table 8: ACE students, highest education level completed and program type

	ACE			
	Vocational	Non-vocational	Total	All VET
2001				
Bachelor degree or higher	9.8%	12.2%	10.8%	7.9%
Year 12	23.7%	19.7%	22.0%	37.0%
Year 11	10.6%	5.9%	8.6%	12.1%
Year 10	32.0%	38.2%	34.7%	28.1%
Miscellaneous education	14.1%	20.3%	16.7%	3.1%
Year 9 or lower	9.8%	3.7%	7.2%	9.9%
Total student no.*	**1**	**2002**	**1**	**0.981**
2002				
Bachelor degree or higher	9.6%	11.8%	10.6%	8.5%
Year 12	26.5%	26.5%	26.5%	36.9%
Year 11	12.5%	6.9%	10.0%	14.3%
Year 10	33.2%	40.2%	36.3%	27.9%
Miscellaneous education	6.7%	10.5%	8.4%	1.9%
Year 9 or lower	11.5%	4.1%	8.2%	10.5%
Total student no.*	**1**	**6007**	**1**	**1**
2003				
Bachelor degree or higher	13.3%	18.3%	14.9%	8.6%
Year 12	30.5%	36.1%	32.2%	38.1%
Year 11	13.5%	9.4%	12.2%	14.2%
Year 10	22.3%	17.2%	20.7%	26.6%
Miscellaneous education	7.5%	12.8%	9.2%	1.6%
Year 9 or lower	13.2%	6.0%	10.9%	11.0%
Total student no.*	**1.003**	**14017.998**	**1.001**	**1.001**
2004				
Bachelor degree or higher	13.0%	16.6%	14.4%	9.2%
Year 12	31.4%	39.5%	34.6%	38.1%
Year 11	14.5%	9.7%	12.7%	14.4%
Year 10	22.4%	17.9%	20.6%	25.7%

Miscellaneous education	4.4%	9.8%	6.5%	1.4%
Year 9 or lower	14.3%	6.4%	11.2%	11.2%
Total student no.*	**1**	**30040.995**	**1**	**1**
2005				
Bachelor degree or higher	14.8%	19.6%	16.2%	9.8%
Year 12	32.5%	38.1%	34.1%	38.1%
Year 11	13.0%	9.9%	12.1%	14.2%
Year 10	22.3%	18.3%	21.1%	25.3%
Miscellaneous education	3.6%	7.5%	4.8%	1.4%
Year 9 or lower	13.8%	6.7%	11.7%	11.4%
Total student no.*	**1**	**62087.991**	**1**	**1.002**

*The total figures include Bachelor degree or higher degree level; Advanced diploma or associate degree; Diploma; Certificate IV; Certificate III; Year 12; Year 11; Certificate II; Year 10; Certificate I; Miscellaneous education; Year 9 or lower.

This pattern changed from 2003 when students with Year 12 qualifications made up the highest numbers in ACE programs. The number of students with a Bachelor degree or higher degree qualification increased in ACE programs, particularly in non-vocational programs. Comparing all six groups, those with a Year 9 qualification made up the lowest numbers in non-vocational ACE over the five years.

In vocational ACE, those with a Year 12 qualification made up the highest numbers followed by those with Year 10, then Year 11, Year 9, Bachelor degree or higher degree, and lastly by those whose miscellaneous education who met the entry requirements.

In all VET programs, those with a Year 12 qualification made up the highest numbers followed by those with Year 10, then Year 11, Year 9, Bachelor degree or higher degree, and lastly by those whose miscellaneous education who met the entry requirements. This pattern was consistent throughout the five year period. Participation in all VET by students with a Bachelor degree or higher degree qualification declined during 2003 and 2004, but a large increase in vocational ACE and all VET was recorded in 2005.

Table 9: Percentage of annual hours by field of study, vocational, non-vocational and all ACE (2002 – 2005)

Field of study	2002	2003	2004	2005
Vocational				
Management and Commerce	16.8	14.1	15.6	16.2
Society and Culture	18.6	24.8	20.5	20.2
Mixed Field Programmes	17.4	19.5	23.0	20.3

Subject only - no field of education	29.3	24.8	24.1	24.7
Non-vocational				
Management and Commerce	7.3	2.1	10.8	1.2
Society and Culture	17.3	8.3	14.2	1.0
Mixed Field Programmes	2.9	15.3	8.2	2.6
Subject only - no field of education	36.2	33.5	39.3	81.7
All ACE				
Management and Commerce	12.4	11.1	12.5	13.3
Society and Culture	18.2	20.7	18.8	16.5
Mixed Field Programmes	12.9	18.4	18.9	16.8
Subject only - no field of education	31.4	26.9	28.2	35.4

Note: 2001 data was not included because data for the above four fields were collected since 2002.

ACE annual hours by delivery type and program type

Campus based delivery, particularly in vocational ACE programs, was most popular with students in all program types over the last five years. Considering the three known delivery types (campus based, remote access and employment based), remote access was least popular for vocational and non-vocational ACE as well as for all VET. This implies that ACE students prefer campus based or face-to-face interactions to other modes of delivery.

Annual hours by field of study

Subject only – no field of education maintained the highest number of annual hours in all ACE programs over the last five years. The top three fields of study in the ACE sector (based on the proportion of annual hours in a particular field) since 2002 were Mixed Field Programmes, Society and Culture, and Management and Commerce (see Table 9). These fields also accounted for the most annual hours in vocational ACE programs. The highest numbers of annual hours recorded in all VET programs were in Engineering and Related Technologies, Management and Commerce, and Society and Culture. Enrolment hours in *subject only – no field of education* was highest (totally 81.7%) in non-vocational ACE during 2005.

Annual hours by qualification level and program type

Table 10 illustrates the spread of annual hours in each program type in the top three known qualifications.

The annual hours for vocational ACE programs led largely to *Subject only – no qualification*. The number of annual hours for Certificate II and III qualifications were the second and third highest respectively during 2001 to 2003. This changed in 2004 and 2005 when the total annual hours recorded for these qualifications was higher for Certificate III than for Certificate II.

The annual hours for non-vocational ACE programs eventuated mainly as *non award courses*, *Subject only – no qualification* and *Statement of attainment* during 2001 to 2003. This changed in 2004 when high annual hours were recorded for *Subject only – no qualification, non award courses* and *Statement of attainment*. Another change was noted in 2005 when high annual hours were seen in *Subject only – no qualification,*

Year 12, and *non award courses*. These changes influenced the total annual hours for all ACE programs.

Table 10: Spread of annual hours in each program type in the top three known qualifications (2001 to 2005)

	Vocational ACE	**Non-vocational ACE**	**All ACE**	**All VET**
2001	Subject only – no qualification (26.7%) Cert. II (21.6%) Cert. III (14.7%)	Non award courses (56.8%) Subject only – no qualification (39.1%) Statement of attainment (8.4%)	Subject only – no qualification (30.4%) Non award courses (24.4%) Cert. II (15.1%)	Cert. III (27.2%) Cert. II (18.4%) Diploma (15.4%)
2002	Subject only – no qualification (29.3%) Cert. II (19.9%) Cert. III (15.7%)	Non award courses (39.5%) Subject only – no qualification (36.2%) Statement of attainment (1.7%)	Subject only – no qualification (31.4%) Non award courses (18.2%) Cert. II (13.7%)	Cert. III (27.6%) Cert. II (17.1%) Diploma (15.5%)
2003	Subject only – no qualification (24.8%) Cert. II (16.6%) Cert. III (15.8%)	Non award courses (37.9%) Subject only – no qualification (33.5%) Statement of attainment (0.8%)	Subject only – no qualification (26.9%) Cert. II (12.5%) Cert. III (11.9%)	Cert. III (29.6%) Cert. IV (15.4%) Cert. II (15.1%)
2004	Subject only – no qualification (24.1%) Cert. III (21.4%) Cert. II (17.6%)	Subject only – no qualification (39.3%) Non award courses (31.3%) Statement of attainment (1.4%)	Subject only – no qualification (28.2%) Cert. III (15.5%) Non award courses (13.1%)	Cert. III (31.1%) Cert. IV (15.7%) Diploma (15.1%)
2005	Subject only – no qualification (24.3%) Cert. III (23.7%) Cert. II (18.4%)	Subject only – no qualification (81.7%) Year 12 (0.5%) Non award courses (0.03%)	Subject only – no qualification (35.4%) Cert. III (19.1%) Cert. II (14.8%)	Cert. III (31.9%) Cert. IV (15.0%) Diploma (14.8%)

During 2001 and 2002, the top three known qualifications that had the highest annual hours for all VET were Certificate III, Certificate II and Diploma respectively. In 2003, it was Certificate III, IV and II respectively. In 2004 and 2005, highest annual hours were recorded against Certificate III, IV and Diploma respectively. The highest number of annual hours was noted at the Certificate III in all VET over the five year period.

Subject enrolments by subject outcome and program type

Of the total subject enrolments in vocational ACE, over 80% recorded either *achieved* or gained a *pass or satisfactorily completed* record between 2001 and 2005 (see Table 11).

Table 11: Percentage of ACE subject enrolments with an *achieved* or *pass or satisfactorily completed* by program type

		Vocational	**Non-vocational**	**All VET**
2001	Achieved/pass or satisfactorily completed	86.5%	90.0%	71.0%
2002	Achieved/pass or satisfactorily completed	84.9%	98.4%	73.0%
2003	Achieved/pass or satisfactorily completed	85.3%	99.1%	73.7%
2004	Achieved/pass or satisfactorily completed	82.5%	98.6%	74.0%
2005	Achieved/pass or satisfactorily completed	80.0%	98.2%	74.8%

In non-vocational ACE, the pass/satisfactory completion rate was well over 90%, with over 98% between 2002 and 2005. The pass/satisfactory completion rates of subject enrolments in all ACE were well above the rates for all VET (of between 71% and 74.8%) over the five year period.

Conclusion

SANDRA – ADD MORE KEY TRENDS IN DATA, PLUS RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE DATABASE, ALSO VERIFICATION OF DETAILS BY PROVIDERS.

- In 2005, 376,449 students participated in vocational and non-vocational programs delivered by the ACE sector. These students accounted for 791,708 subject enrolments and just over 19 million annual hours.

- The number of "vocational" hours delivered by the ACE sector was at an all time high of 15.3 million annual hours in 2005

- On average about 12.8% of VET was recorded as vocational ACE during the period from 2001 to 2005.

- Collectively, New South Wales and Victoria accounted for 85.4% of all ACE students in Australia.

SAROJNI – DO YOU HAVE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS/COMMENTS AROUND ACE DATA COLLECTION ETC? (e.g. the NCVER doing it a more regular basis), USE OF THE DATABASE, WHERE TO NEXT?

References

Borthwick, J., Knight, B., Bender, A. & Loveder, P. (2001). *Analysis of exiting information in national education and training data collection Volume 1*. Adelaide: NCVER.

Choy, S., Haukka S., & Keyes L. (2006). *ACE's Role in Developing Australia's Human Capital: A Meta-Analysis*. Adult Learning Australia. Canberra: DEST.

Choy, S. & Haukka S. *A National Database of ACE Providers. Preliminary Analysis of Sector Size, Enrolments and Outcomes 2001-2005*. Adult Learning Australia. Canberra: DEST.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). (unpublished). *Unpublished data on ACE 2001-2005*. Adelaide: NCVER. (SANDRA – CHECK REF STANDARD FOR UNPUBLISHED SOURCES).

National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). (2003). *Australian education and training statistics 2001: Adult and community education*. Adelaide: NCVER.