SUPPORT DOCUMENT

Students with a hearing loss in VET in Australia—A statistical snapshot: Support document

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This document was produced by the author based on research for the report *Connecting the dots: A successful transition for deaf students from vocational education and training to employment* and is an added resource for further information. The report is available on NCVER's website: <http://www.ncver.edu.au>

Contents

Tables and figures

Numbers of people in Australia who have a hearing loss

People with hearing loss[1] make up one of the largest disability groups in Australia with 17% of Australians reporting problems with hearing that *'cause sufficient difficulties in engaging in conversation with more than one person'* (2000-2001 Annual Report of the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care). To understand the impact of hearing loss on learning in an educational setting, it is necessary to understand the degrees of hearing loss and how they impact on our ability to hear sound.

Hearing loss is measured in decibels, which is a measurement of the intensity or loudness of sound. The higher the decibel required for sound perception to occur, the louder the sound and hence, the greater the hearing loss and its impact on everyday communication. There are four main categories of hearing loss in people: mild, moderate, severe and profound. A person with a loss of greater than 65dB (severe and profound) has difficulty understanding speech sounds and is greatly affected by background noise. Being at a great distance from the speaker further exacerbates this difficulty. Table 1 (p.2) introduces the reader to some common sounds and the decibel range they are at. From this table, you can see that for someone with a profound hearing loss of 110 dB (such as that of the author of this research) may hear a Road Drill or Jet Engine without the need of hearing aid amplification.

Therefore, if a person is unable to engage fully in a social conversation that involves more than two people, they will most likely encounter difficulties in a mainstream educational setting such as a VET course. The majority of these people will, however, benefit from either the use of a hearing aid or a cochlear implant and may able to manage independently without any other form of support. It is important to note that hearing loss alone cannot determine whether a person can manage independently in the classroom. Other factors may be the onset of hearing loss (i.e. at birth or as an adult), prior education, literacy and/or social and communication skills.

Every four years, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) analyses data taken as part of the Australian Census and compiles information into a report – "National Health Survey". The last survey was completed in 2001. This report indicates that there are 2,012,800 people with a hearing loss or 13.5% of the population (National Health Survey ABS 2001 p 21). Inquiries into the research methodology used by ABS revealed that household surveys were conducted with a specific question asking people if they had a hearing loss. All ABS household surveys are voluntary. If a person revealed that they or a member of their household had a hearing loss, they were asked further questions as to whether the hearing loss was perceived to significantly affect their ability to undertake daily activities (i.e. following conversation, talking on telephone etc). For the purposes of the survey, those that reported a hearing loss were identified in the 'hearing loss' category while those who reported that their hearing loss affected their daily activities were identified in the 'hearing loss and disability' category. The 'hearing loss and disability category identified 920,200 people in Australia as having a significant hearing loss, but the survey did not determine the degree or severity of their loss. (ABS: Disability Ageing and Carers Australia: Disability and Long Term Health Conditions 2004) Conditions 2004) However, it is safe to

[1] People with a hearing loss generally identify themselves into two sub-groups. People who have a mild or moderate hearing loss and benefit from a hearing aid and communicate using speech generally call themselves hard of hearing or hearing impaired. People who have a severe or profound hearing loss generally have difficulty understanding speech, may not benefit from a hearing aid, and generally identify themselves as being deaf and communicate using Australian Sign Language.

assume that if 920,000 people have a hearing loss that affects their daily communication then they will have difficulties in an educational setting and may have a hearing loss greater than 45dB, which would affect their ability to engage in quiet conversation in a quiet room (i.e. moderate, severe or profound loss).

Table 1: Decibels Produced By Common Sound Sources

Decibel	Sound Source
0	Silence – threshold of hearing
10	Rustling paper
20	Whispering
30	Ticking watching 1m from the ear
40	Quiet Room
50	Quiet Conversation
60	Normal Conversation
70	Loud Conversation
80	Heavy Traffic
90	Engineering Workshop
100	Boilermakers Shop
110	Road Drill
120	Jet Engine
130	Threshold of pain
140	Shotgun Blast

Source: Serra, Bailey and Jackson,1986:102. cited in Listen Hear! The Economic Impact and Cost of Hearing Loss in Australia (2006) Access Economics Pty Ltd

In an empirical study conducted by Wilson et al (1998) for the South Australian Department of Human Services on the epidemiology of hearing impairment in Australia there were 1,477,349 people with hearing loss greater than 45dB in 2001. This study is believed to be the most accurate measure of the number of people with hearing loss in Australia and is certainly endorsed by the Commonwealth Government, which refers to the statistics in its annual reports. This study indicated that approximately 22% of the Australian population had a degree of hearing loss in their worse ear and 17% had a degree of hearing loss in their better ear. (Table 2).

The study by Wilson et al (1998) conducted hearing tests to confirm participants' hearing loss, compiled detailed surveys about their lifestyle, how hearing loss impacts on their lifestyle and also used statistical data to come to various conclusions. This makes the information valid, reputable and highly reliable.

From the data obtained from ABS and Wilson et al (1998) we can therefore assume between 920,000 and 1,477,349 people will most likely have a severe or profound hearing loss (i.e. greater than 45dB). It is fair to say that between 1 to 1.5 million Australians will have a hearing loss that will affect their ability to participate fully in a mainstream classroom. This figure was further supported by data from Access Economics Pty Ltd (2006) which further analysed the Wilson (1998) data and data from Australian Hearing 2005 and arrived at an estimated figure of 1.2 million Australians have a moderate to profound hearing loss in their worse ear (Access Economics Pty Ltd 2006 pp 41)

Table 2: Hearing impairment in Australia – Population Statistics

based on ABS statistics (Australian / Victorian population 1999) and Centre for Population Studies in Epidemiology 1998 study [1]

	1999 (ABS)	2001 (approx.) [2]		
Australian population	18,966,790	19,438,800 [3]		
Victorian population (24.844%)				
Population statistics – 1998 study **% prevalence of 2001 population.**	**Australia** **Better ear**	**Australia** **Worse ear**	**Victoria** **Better ear**	**Victoria** **Worse ear**
> 25dB [4]	3,226,840 5 (16.6%)	4,315,413 (22.2%)	801,686 (16.6%)	1,072,134 (22.2%)
> 35dB	1,341,277 (6.9%)	2,332,656 (12.0%)	333,231 (6.9%)	579,532 (12.0%)
> 45dB	544,286 (2.8%)	1,477,349 (7.6%)	135,224 (2.8%)	367,036 (7.6%)
> 65dB	97,194 (0.5%)	485,970 (2.5%)	24,147 (0.5%)	120,736 (2.5%)

Source:

1. Wilson, DH et al. (1999) "The epidemiology of hearing impairment in an Australian Adult population." International Journal of Epidemiology. Vol. 28 2. Oxford University Press. [A South Australian study by the Centre of Population Studies in Epidemiology in partnership with the S.A. Department of Human Services. Data relates to people from the age of 15 years and over].
2. Based on average annual growth % over last five years (1.3%)
3. Population calculation includes all ages
4. dB means decibel (hearing threshold levels)

Calculation is by 19,438,800 @ 16.6% (includes all ages including excluding age group not in the study > 0-14 yrs).

Overview of people with disabilities in VET

A critical aspect of the Australian VET system is its ability to provide opportunities and cater for adults from all walks of life (including people with a disability) and to acknowledge the barriers or restrictions adults, may have and to assist them to develop new skills. The VET system has been responding to the needs of adults wanting to re-train and remain competitive in the workforce. One of the key aims is to remove barriers that may restrict an individual's access to educational opportunities (Ball 2001). Over three million Australians have a disability (ANTA, 1999). An economic analysis commissioned by ANTA and compiled by Dockery et al (2001) noted that in 1998, 16.7% of Australians of working age had a disability and that they *'face markedly lower labour market participation rates, employment rates and earnings relative to other Australians',* and yet persons with disabilities make up only 3.6% of the VET population. Dockery et al (2001) argued that by providing sufficient funds to increase the opportunities for people with a disability to undertake vocational education and training, the economic return would be far greater than the initial outlay. A preliminary analysis of the gross gain to the economy if 9.6% of working age people with a disability were participating in VET in 2001, would be $3.7 billion (Dockery et al 2001). This analysis assumed that they were able to make a significant contribution to the Australian economy by participating in the workforce, obtaining more highly paid employment where they would contribute to the tax system and no longer be dependent on welfare payments.

Ball (2000) states that Australia has worked towards ensuring that most equity groups are represented significantly within VET. The exception to this is to people with disabilities. This view is supported by research over the last five years which shows that while people with disabilities are accessing the VET system, they are still largely under-represented when compared with the representation from other equity groups (i.e. women and indigenous Australians) and the general population (Dumbrell, de Montfort, Finnigan in Bowman 2004; ANTA 2003; Barnett 2002, Ball 2000). The economic analysis conducted by Kenyon et al (2001) further supports this finding based on an economic hypotheses which determined that if people with disabilities of working age (ie 15-64 years of age) participated in VET at the same rate as other Australians of working age, then approximately 9.6% of people with a disability would actually participate and would account for 12.9% of the total VET population in Australia. In 1998, 3.6% of people with a disability participated in VET (Dockery et al 2001), this figure increase slightly over a 5 year period and in 2003, there were 5.3% of people with a disability were actually participating in VET (NCVER 2004). This figure only changed marginally over until 2005 when the figure increased to 5.9%. Only by eliminating access barriers for people with disabilities will we achieve the desired target of 9.6% participation rate in VET, for this equity group.

Participation rates of people who are deaf in VET

The NCVER annually publishes a snapshot of the VET population and the participation rate of people with disabilities and other equity groups. The data collected by the NCVER as with the ABS data, relies of students self-reporting that they have a hearing loss. Anecdotal evidence suggests that not all students who request extra assistance for their studies from the Student Services departments within Victorian TAFE institutes record their 'hearing disability' on the enrolment form. This is often the case for people who are severe or profoundly deaf and use Auslan, as this group does not perceive themselves as having a disability.

The published data on people with a hearing loss was not detailed enough to answer our research questions given we were focussing on a particular age range and a single disability type. It was not possible to break down the figures from the public data, therefore, a list of questions were provided to the NCVER to obtain more specific data for the purposes of our research. The following statistics were requested for the years 2003-2005 for three different groups - general VET population, VET disability population and hearing disability population:

- Numbers of students by age, by states and territories
- Numbers of vocational students aged 15-30 by highest school level completed, by states and territories
- Number of vocational students aged 15-30 in Victoria by major ANTA industry group by highest school level completed
- Number of vocational students aged 15-30 in Victoria by major qualification level, by highest school level completed
- Number of vocational qualifications completed by age group, by state/territory
- Number of vocational qualifications completed by students aged 15-30 by state/territory
- Number of vocational module/unit of competency enrolled by age group by state/territory
- Number of vocational module/unit of competency 3enrolled by students aged 15-30 by state /territory
- Number of vocational module/unit of competency successfully completed by age group by state/territory
- Number of vocational module/unit of competency successfully completed by students aged 15-30 by state/territory
- A snapshot of the VET population for the three different groups between the years of 2003-2005 is shown below:

Table 3: Student VET population in Australia by all ages and the 15-30 age group.

Age group	Total Australia			National Reported Disability			National hearing loss		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
All ages	1,717,795	1,595,232	1,641,254	91,439	90,199	96,338	10,558	10,158	10,836
15-30	844,687	816,742	839,745	39,608	40,178	42,543	3,165	3,054	3,277
Percentage	49.2%	51.2%	51.2%	43.3%	44.5%	44.2%	30.0%	30.1%	30.2%

Source: Data on numbers of students with a hearing loss provided by NCVER, unpublished, September 2006

Table 4: Percentage of Australian VET population and National Disability population has a hearing loss.

Age group	Percentage of the Australian VET population with a hearing loss			Percentage of the National Disability VET population with a hearing loss		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
All ages	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	11.5%	11.3%	11.3%
15-30	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	8.0%	7.6%	7.7%

Source: Data on numbers of students with a hearing loss provided by NCVER, unpublished, September 2006

As mentioned earlier using the statistics from ABS (2001) and Wilson et al (1998) we can assume that between 13.5% and 22.2% of the Australian population has a hearing loss of some degree as described in Table 1 above. There are no ABS or other national statistics for the year 2003 but the researchers envisage that the situation would not have changed dramatically within the two year period. Given there are between some 1 and 1.5 million Australians, as discussed previously, who have a hearing loss and would require support in an educational setting, it is of some concern that less than 1% of the population of people identified participated in VET in 2003 even given this group's tendency to under report their disability. As outlined under the Bridging Pathways National Strategy, ANTA noted that the 'proportion of all Australians who currently participate in VET was 11% in 1998 and expected to rise to 12% by 2005'. The same report noted that only 2.5% of people with a disability participated in VET, and according to the figures provided by NCVER in 2006 less than 1% of Australians with a hearing loss have participated in VET since 2003.

One of the goals of the Bridging Pathways National Strategy was to increase the participation rate of people with disabilities in VET from 3.6% (in 1998) to an equivalent rate of Australians participating in VET by 2005 (12%). In 2003, people with a hearing loss made up the sixth highest disability type behind Physical, Medical, Vision, and Learning disabilities (NCVER September 2004)

By investing significant funds to increase accessibility to VET, it was envisaged that the participation rate would increase and students would have better completion and graduation rates. This would result in better employment outcomes, reduce the drain on public resources and contribute to the national taxation regime.

In addition, by comparing statistics from the NCVER we can build a picture of the situation for people who are deaf in VET. Because our project has focussed particularly on Victoria, the data shows over the three year period on average:

- In Australia, on average over the three year period 10,500 VET participants (the lowest participation rate was in 2005) identified themselves as having a hearing loss; 3,165 (30%) were 15-30 years of age
- On average between 2003 and 2005, 3,030 people with a hearing loss (28.8%) were studying in the VET sector in Victoria and 877 people were 15-30 years old (27.7%). The participation rate in Victoria increased each year.
- On average 37.2% of the VET participants with a hearing loss in Victoria in the 15-30 age group completed year 12 prior to commencing in VET and there was an average total of 38.7%, who completed year 12, nationally.
- On average over the three-year period, of the Victorian Year 12 completers, only 10% and 21% studied at Advanced Diploma and Diploma levels respectively; 14% and 29% studied at Certificate IV and III levels while 17% studied at Certificate I and II level.

- ✧ It appears that the majority of deaf students aged 15-30 who studied in the VET sector in 2003 in Victoria did so at the Certificate II or III level (25%)
- ✧ The most popular areas of study by industry groupings for Year 12 completers in VET in 2003 were Community Services, Health and Education (13%), Business and Clerical (11%), and Tourism and Hospitality (9%). In 2004, this changed slightly to Business and Clerical (20%), General Education and Training (9%); Tourism and Hospitality (9%) and Community services, Health and Education (9%). In 2005, it was different again with the most popular being Business and Clerical (19%), Tourism and Hospitality (10%) and Building and Construction (10%)
- ✧ For students who completed Years 9, 10 and 11 prior to attending VET, the most popular industry area of study was General Education and Training (37%, 21% and 18% respectively) on average over 3 years.

The total percentage of people with a hearing loss participating in VET is less than 1% of the total VET student population in Australia in 2003 and 11.5% of the disability population that participated in VET during 2003

Given that the participation rate of people with a hearing loss in VET is less than 1% and only 12% of the total disability population, the researchers posed some questions as to why this may be the case:

1) Are all deaf people participating in VET disclosing their hearing loss?
2) Do people with a hearing loss perceive they do not require support in a learning environment and therefore do not see themselves as having a 'disability'?
3) What percentage of people who did not disclose their hearing loss would benefit from additional support in the classroom but choose to 'cope' with the situation rather than disclose their disability and request assistance for fear of discrimination or repercussions?

It is outside of the scope of this research to consider these questions but certainly the researchers believe that these questions are worth exploring in future research.

Qualification level and industry type studied by deaf people

A demographic study was conducted a survey of 858 profoundly deaf people in NSW whose primary communication mode was Australian Sign Language (Hands Up NSW: Bonser and Burns, 1998). This is the only published Australian research that lists the types of jobs that deaf people are currently employed. However, anecdotally, we know that range of jobs are greater than those listed below. The research method used in Bonser and Burns (1998) to visit deaf communities in Sydney and regional NSW and conducted information sessions where people would be on hand to explain the survey questions to enable people to give accurate responses. The research gathered is the most comprehensive demographic study of deaf people undertaken in Australia to date. The data revealed that of the 858 deaf people surveyed only 342 (39.9%) were employed in NSW. What the study does not reveal is the level of employment scale they are employed at. These people worked in the following categories of employment in 1998:

Table 5: Categories of Employment held by deaf people in NSW (1998)

Employment Categories listed by respondents	Total Responses No.	%
Trade and Services	116	33.9
HR and Office Administration	51	14.9
Education/Culture/Science	40	11.2 (sic)
Engineering/Building/Transport	26	7.6
Health and Welfare	21	6.1
Hospitality and Tourism	17	5.0
Information Systems	16	4.7
Accounting/Finance/Insurance	14	4.1
Primary and Mining	14	4.1
Publishing and Entertainment	9	2.6
Nil responses	8	2.3
Sales and Marketing	7	2.0
Legal	3	0.9
Course and Tuition	1	0.3
Total	342 (sic)	100

Source: Hand ups NSW, Deaf Society of NSW Bonser and Burns (1998) pp 28.

The three most common industry groups (as defined by ANTA) that were studied by VET participants with a hearing loss between the ages of 15-30 (apart from 'General Education and Training - 20%) during 2003 were 'Tourism and Hospitality', Community Services, Health and Education' and Business and Clerical. As can be seen from the demographic study above, the majority of deaf people are successful in obtaining employment in the trade and services category, at least 25% of the VET participants aged 15-30 were studying courses that were trade related (ie automotive, building and construction and primary industry as examples). The second highest category of employment is HR and Office Administration, which according to Bonser and Burns (1998) were mostly clerical officers employed in the Public Service. Courses that were in this employment field include Business and Clerical fields of study. Another large area of employment is Engineering/Building and Transport, of which approximately 13% of VET participants aged 15-30 in 2003 with a hearing loss were enrolled in Victoria. By comparing the types of employment deaf people have and the course they are doing, it can be seen that their training is

reflected in the types of employment opportunities being sought by them. The least common industry types in 2003 that deaf people aged 15-30 in Victoria studied were in the Process Manufacturing, Finance, banking and insurance, and Communications.

Table 6: Types of major VET qualifications studied by people with a hearing loss aged 15-30, compared to the general VET population in Victoria.

AQF qualification	Students aged 15-30 with a hearing loss			General student population		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
Bachelor Degree or above	0	0	0	233	285	607
Diploma or higher	136	129	143	41150	38490	36928
Certificate IV	68	67	74	26004	26189	22295
Certificate III	196	242	294	70819	74575	80442
Certificate II	197	192	215	48741	46204	46104
Certificate I	96	105	124	11584	10293	10093
Year 12	12	28	26	3321	3835	3696
Non award courses	17	2	14	3927	3328	4087
Miscellaneous education	33	48	45	25655	25263	21823
Subject Only	40	38	51	13162	9365	7732
Total	795	851	986	244596	237827	233807

Source: Data on numbers of students with a hearing loss and general VET student population in 2003-2005 provided by NCVER, unpublished, September 2006

From the above data in Victoria we can see:

- There have been no students with hearing loss enrolling into Bachelor or Graduate Diploma courses offered within VET, however there are an increasing number of people with disabilities enrolling in Bachelor and Graduate Diploma courses and this is also reflected in the general VET population.
- In 2003, 17.1% of students with a hearing loss enrolled in Diploma or Advanced Diploma courses but between 2004 and 2005, this number dropped to 2.8% as a percentage of total students within VET. This was despite the actual student numbers increasing slightly each year.
- The largest proportion of students who have a hearing loss were enrolled in Certificates II and III with small increases in Certificate 1. Miscellaneous and Subject only enrolments fluctuated over the three year period.

The extremely low percentage level of VET students in Victoria with hearing loss who are between 15-30 years of age compared to the general Victorian population (0.33%) in 2003 and the disability population (8%) may be attributed to a number of factors. It may be that educational barriers, negative educational experience or lack of awareness of support services influence participation rates. If this is the case, then the case studies may provide a clearer picture as to why students are not enrolling in such courses and identify their thoughts on perceived pathways.

The system for providing support to students with disabilities varies from state to state and is managed by the state/territory education departments. In Victoria, for example, the type of support available to deaf students will vary depending on whether they attend a public or private VET provider.

Public providers of VET, such as TAFE institutes, receive funding from the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) to provide additional support to students with disabilities. Some of the support services available are:

- ✧ An Auslan interpreter
- ✧ A notetaker
- ✧ A participation assistant
- ✧ Extra tutorial time
- ✧ Extra time during mid-year and final year examinations
- ✧ Technological equipment such as an FM system to assist with classroom learning

✧ The annual survey of the Centre of Excellence for students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing at NMIT produced the following statistical returns. Within the Victorian TAFE system, approximately 26,000 student contact hours (SCH) of Auslan interpreting support, 20,000 SCH of note-taking support, 2000 SCH of participation assistance and 2000 SCH of out of class tutorial support were provided to more than 100 deaf students. This figure can only increase as a consequence of the Disability Standards on Education (2005).

From research done by the Centre, it is evident that students who are deaf do not necessarily identify themselves as having a hearing loss – usually those who require support do not indicate that they have a hearing loss on an enrolment form. For this reason, it is difficult to compare statistics of people enrolled in VET, obtained by the NCVER, with the numbers of students who actually receive specialist support.

Student outcomes

It is difficult to determine the proportion of students who attempt a VET course and go through to graduate with a qualification. This is because VET courses vary in length and duration and cannot be measured using an annual data collection tool such as AVETMISS. To properly determine student completion rates against student numbers would require a longitudinal study to be conducted.

a) Completion

Table 7: Number vocational qualifications completed by students in the 15-30 age group by population grouping.

	Total Australia			National Reported Disability			National hearing loss		
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**
VET Qualification completed	162,766	163,011	151,097	6,390	6584	6,460	559	470	456

Data on numbers of students with a hearing loss and general VET student population in 2003-2005 provided by NCVER, unpublished, September 2006

Table 8: Number of module/unit of competency enrolled/ successfully completed by students in the 15-30 age group by population grouping.

Module/unit of competency	Total Australia			National Reported Disability			National hearing loss		
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**
Enrolled	7,494,618	7,283,846	7,455,233	376,046	379,856	405,635	31,310	29,533	31,233
Successfully Completed	5,393,187	5,290,984	5,435,872	240,690	243,752	265,644	22,116	21,214	22,541
Percentage	72%	73%	73%	64%	64%	65%	71%	72%	72%

Data on numbers of students with a hearing loss and general VET student population in 2003-2005 provided by NCVER, unpublished, September 2006

The above table (Table 7) shows that there has been an 18% decrease in the number completions recorded amongst deaf students between 2003-2005. However, there is a 1% increase in the number of completions for students with a disability over the same period. For the general population, there is an 8% decrease in number of completions.

Further, when we compare module/units of competency completion rates between students aged 15-30 (Table 8), over the three year period for all three groups (hearing disability, disability and general student populations), both the general student population and hearing disability cohorts showed similar completion rates, yet the general disability rates were around 9% lower. From this data, we can envisage that students with a hearing loss are quite committed to their courses and want to achieve good outcomes. On paper, these statistics show that deaf students are achieving better outcomes than the general disability population. The data collected using student enrolment forms, as discussed previously in this document, where students are asked to disclose if they have a disability. For someone who is deaf or hard of hearing they are asked to indicate

whether or not they have a 'hearing disability'. It does not disclose the degree of hearing loss nor whether the hearing disability will have an impact on their learning and whether they will require additional support as previously discussed. This is an important distinction as it is well known that students who have a severe or profound hearing loss require additional assistance to complete their studies and this assistance is costly and not always available. As the case studies will show, the outcomes of the latter group many not be as high as shown in the table 8.

Nor does it confirm that students with a hearing loss are performing equivalent to or better than the national average as once again, we are unable to determine how many of these students have a hearing loss that greatly affects their ability to manage in an educational setting. .

b) Employment outcomes

In 2003, NCVER published the first ever statistical compendium on people with disabilities by disability type undertaking VET. The results showed that 48.7% of deaf students were employed at the time of their enrolment, whilst 20.9% were unemployed (looking for work) and 28.5% were not in the workforce. It is also not clear whether those students that were employed at the time of their enrolment, were undertaking a course of study or module that was related to their current employment, and if so, whether they obtained better employment with greater remuneration and employment conditions or whether they were looking to change their career in the future. Once again we do not know from this data whether the 'dots are connecting' when students complete their secondary school education, enrol in vocational training and then obtain employment that directly relates to their course of study which will allow them to have a successful career.