



Link and Launch
Impact Study

2019-2022

Final report

Prepared for Queensland Department of
Education

Student Engagement team

18 November 2022

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Executive summary

In 2019 the Queensland Department of Education established Link and Launch – a first-of-its-kind initiative for any Australian education jurisdiction – to directly deliver case management services to improve the engagement of Year 12 completers in further education, employment or training.

Based on state school sites, the Link and Launch program helps young people navigate their post-school options and choose a pathway that will equip them to make a successful transition to education, training or employment.

Link and Launch serves as a bridge between services provided in school, such as guidance officers, and out-of-school youth support and labour market programs.

The objectives of the Link and Launch program are to:

- improve engagement outcomes for Year 12 completers in disengagement hot spots
- strengthen referral pathways between Link and Launch school/community sites and local services for Year 12 completers that require these connections
- prevent long term disengagement, defined as 12 months or more not in education, employment or training (NEET), for the students supported by the program.

As part of a broader government target to have 91 per cent of 15- to 24-year-olds engaged in education, employment or training by 2022, the Link and Launch program was introduced in four schools in areas of high youth disengagement in October 2019, and progressively scaled up to 30 locations by 2022.

At the time of commencement in 2019 there were approximately 7000 Year 12 completers who were NEET. In 2022, this figure reduced to approximately 4800¹ young people.

A key point of difference from other youth support, labour market and training programs is that because the Link and Launch program is based on school sites connections can be made before young people complete Year 12, enabling trusted relationships to be built and maintained.

The dedication and effort of the Link and Launch officers is critical to these relationships.

Link and Launch required nuance in its establishment and implementation because the oversight of young people once they complete Year 12 falls outside the legislative framework for state schools in Queensland – the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*. The Department's Student Engagement team in central office therefore carries the oversight for the program, not the schools from which the Link and Launch officers are based.

This independent evaluation was commissioned by the Student Engagement team to understand the program's impact. It was conducted alongside the program rollout, collecting participant data and administering longitudinal follow-up surveys to understand outcomes for participants from 23 October 2019 to 31 July 2022.

The evaluation involved analysis of two large data sets – the data recorded by the Link and Launch officers in the centrally hosted database according to a consistent data dictionary and verified by the department, and data collected by the evaluators through several time-series surveys of participants after they had been supported by the program to make a transition to education, employment or training.

¹ Department of Education, 2022, *Next Step survey, Destinations of Year 12 completers from 2021 in Queensland*. Queensland Government, Brisbane.
<https://alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/our-publications/reports/statistics/Documents/ns-2022-statewide-summary.pdf>

The global pandemic and improved labour market conditions had a dramatic impact on the social landscape throughout the reporting period. The program started before the COVID-19 pandemic and at a time when youth unemployment was averaging 12.0 per cent,² compared with 7.0 per cent at July 2022.³

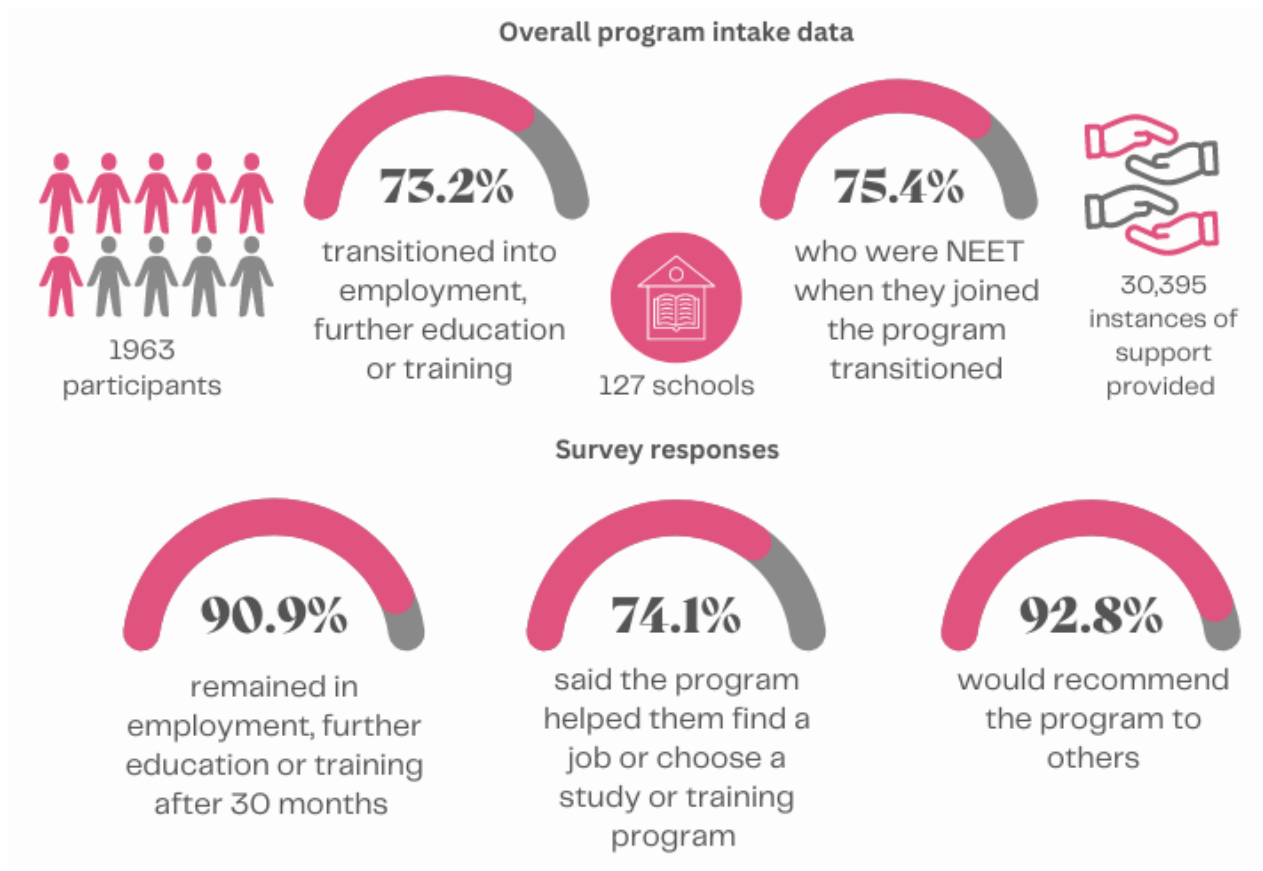
Nevertheless, despite the significant changes in the labour market and youth unemployment rates over time, the Link and Launch program has achieved several outstanding successes.

Overall, the majority of participants made a transition. The majority of those surveyed sustained those transitions into the long term.

Significantly, the majority of young people surveyed said they would recommend the program to their friends and felt that it helped them to make the transition to work, training or study. These results indicate that the service is seen as a valuable support for young people at a critical juncture in their lives.

Program highlights from the overall intake data and August 2022 survey responses are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Link and Launch program highlights 2019-2022



Key findings

Access

Despite the changing environment, the Link and Launch program has successfully supported 1963 young people across Queensland from its inception in October 2019.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (October 2019), *Labour Force, Australia*
<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/7d12b0f6763c78caca257061001cc588/3186fc58a764e1b0ca2584d4001c68b4!OpenDocument>

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (July 2022), *Labour Force, Australia*
<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/jul-2022>

As the program expanded from four to 30 school sites, its reach grew to support participants who completed Year 12 at more than 127 different schools, indicating the importance of outreach by Link and Launch officers. The program matured from being viewed as a service for single school sites to a service for Year 12 completers right across the community, irrespective of the school at which they completed their studies.

Intake at three of the four initial schools that started in the program in 2019 represented 30.1 per cent of the total program intake.

Of the total intake:

- 55.3 per cent were male
- 44.1 per cent were female
- 0.6 per cent did not identify a gender
- 13.7 per cent spoke a Main Language Other than English (MLOTE)
- 13.0 per cent identified as an Indigenous young person
- 8.3 per cent identified as having a disability.

64.3 per cent of participants were NEET at the time of intake.

Since the program began, transport has continued to be reported by participants as the most significant barrier to their engagement, followed by finance and mental health barriers.

Referrals into the program predominantly came via outreach activities, self-referral or referral from school staff.

Outcomes

The program transition rate improved over time with an overall transition rate of 73.2 per cent at 31 July 2022. The median time from first intake to transition was 43 days.

Ten schools (S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S8, S11, S12, S15 and S19) achieved total transition rates that were higher than the program average. Two of those (S1 and S3) achieved transition rates of more than 90 per cent.

The transition rates were consistent for both males (72.7 per cent) and females (73.9 per cent).

The program delivered outstanding outcomes for participants with complex needs:

- 77.0 per cent of participants who spoke a MLOTE transitioned
- 71.8 per cent of participants who identified as an Indigenous young person transitioned
- 66.0 percent of participants identified as having a disability transitioned.

Engagement rates remained high even after Link and Launch completed their transition support for the young people.

The longitudinal survey of participants showed engagement in work, study or training remained consistently high after participants transitioned from the program. The August 2022 survey showed:

- 90.9 per cent remained engaged after 30 months (Cohort 1)
- 85.2 per cent remained engaged after 24 months (Cohort 2)
- 87.0 per cent remained engaged after 18 months (Cohort 3)

Fourteen of the total 114 respondents across the three cohorts were not working. Of these, nine were looking for work.

Critical elements of the program

The bridge that the program provides from school to work and/or further study of training is a point of difference from other services for young people.

Links between Link and Launch officers and senior schooling staff have built awareness of the program and its supports and forged strong referral pathways from schools for those young people most at risk of becoming NEET post-Year 12.

The relationships that Link and Launch officers develop with young people toward the end of their schooling provides an anchor that young people appear to value as they navigate their way through changing work and study situations and circumstances.

The correlation of direct contact and support with high intake and transition rates were indicators of program practices that were making a positive difference for young people.

The strength of community links and local networks of Link and Launch officers is also key to successful outcomes for young people, especially those who identify as an Indigenous young person, having a disability or who spoke a MLOTE. In this regard, sound working relationships and engagement with local Elders, and community leaders is vital in understanding specific needs and driving enduring and meaningful outcomes for young people.

One-on-one case work continued to be central to the program, with many participants requiring time and support to help them transition to an appropriate destination.

Overall, the program provided 30,395 instances of support with an average of 15.5 per participant.

Of the total intake of 1963 participants, 1109 (56.5 per cent) received between six and 20 instances of support, 432 (22.0 per cent) received more than 21 instances of support and 357 (18.2 per cent) received between three and five instances of support.

Case work was the main support activity (58.9 per cent), followed by outreach and liaison (17.4 per cent) and reminders and prompts (11.5 per cent).

Satisfaction

Participants' satisfaction rates, measured 12 months after they transitioned, were excellent with 92.8 per cent of Cohort 3, 89.5 per cent of Cohort 2 and 76.9 per cent of Cohort 1 survey respondents indicating they would recommend the program to others.

Recommendations

The changed economic conditions since the program's inception indicate a need to be able to ensure the program can be right-sized according to labour market conditions and local circumstances.

Key areas of focus for continuous improvement to ensure the program continues to meet its objectives of improving engagement outcomes for Year 12 completers in disengagement hot spots, strengthening referral pathways and preventing long term disengagement, include:

1. Maintaining a priority focus on young people who are NEET, especially for three months or more after completing Year 12.

While the program has been successful in transitioning almost three-quarters of participants it should maintain a priority focus on those young people who are NEET after completing Year 12. This is a benefit of locating Link and Launch officers on school sites where they can work with senior school staff and make good connections with young people before they complete Year 12.

2. Continuing to target Link and Launch resources to locations which are identified as disengagement hot spots.

The program is influenced by, as well as a response to, the broader economic conditions in each community. The department should retain some flexibility to ensure the program continues to reach the intended cohort as areas of disadvantage change over time.

Selection of future school sites should be based on local labour market data to ensure the program can deliver the best possible outcomes for young people. Recognising the strong outreach of the 30 sites so far, clustering arrangements may be effective in continuing to grow the reach of the program well beyond the specific host schools.

3. Ensuring Link and Launch officers build awareness of the program and maintain strong relationships with local cultural community leaders and networks and relevant local referral services.

While the program to date has produced good participation and transition rates for young people from disadvantaged demographic groups, enhanced awareness of the program and engagement from community leaders will improve delivery of culturally appropriate and specialist services.

4. Maintaining effort according to four main touch points for participants:
 - a. Before completion of Year 12: Engaging initially to ascertain whether they are likely to need support from the program.
 - b. Upon completion of Year 12: Providing support such as preparing resumes, and navigating entry to study and training, part time work etc to prevent them from becoming NEET.
 - c. After completion of Year 12: Providing intensive one-on-one case management to help place them into education, employment or training.
 - d. After transitioning from Link and Launch: Supporting sustained transitions by continuing the check-ins by Link and Launch officers with participants at one, three and six months after they have transitioned.
5. Helping to reduce the transport barrier by strengthening the focus on linking young people with supports to fund driving lessons, achieve the required 100 hours of driving time and confidently apply for a licence.

While transport is outside the remit of the department, the program data indicates a strong and ongoing need for referral supports to address this barrier. The department could play a proactive role in raising this with other agencies.

6. Continuing to develop a greater understanding of why some young people leave the program early. This may require changes to data entry guidelines/definitions relating to attrition to ensure the data collected is consistent and of sufficient detail to investigate the reasons behind attrition and whether any further refinement to program delivery would be of benefit.

Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework provides a suite of tools to assess the impact of the Link and Launch program.

The framework was designed to establish a baseline of measurements and allow subsequent consistent measurement of Link and Launch as the program scaled up each year through to a total of 30 school sites in 2022.

The framework is built on four key effectiveness factors for the Link and Launch program:

- the effectiveness in supporting young people NEET post-school to become engaged
- the impact on engagement and pathway outcomes over time
- the critical elements of the program (the success factors)
- participant satisfaction with the program.

This report – the final in a series of six reports about the impact of Link and Launch – is structured according to the four key evaluation questions (KEQs):

- Who is accessing the program?
- What are the outcomes and were they sustained?
- What are the critical elements of the Link and Launch program?
- How satisfied are Link and Launch participants?

Link and Launch school sites are de-identified and referred to throughout this report as S1 to S30.

Longitudinal survey

A critical component of the evaluation is a longitudinal survey of participants 12, 18, 24 and 30 months after they transitioned from the program.

Along with analysis of the overall program intake from October 2019 to July 2022, this report provides the results from surveys of three cohorts conducted in August 2022:

- Cohort 1 comprised 118 participants from S1 to S4 who transitioned from the program between 1 December 2019 and 28 February 2020. This was their fourth survey (30 months after transitioning from the program), enabling some comparison of the stability/sustainability of their engagement in education, training and employment destinations.
- Cohort 2 comprised 139 participants from S1 to S9 and S14 who transitioned from the program between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020. This was their third survey (24 months after transitioning from the program).
- Cohort 3 comprised 225 participants from S1 to S14, S20 and S22 who transitioned from the program between 1 September 2020 and 26 February 2021. This was their second survey (18 months after transitioning from the program).

In each survey, participants were asked about their current engagement status and details of their destination and industry. In the 12-month survey they were also asked questions about program satisfaction.

Survey responses

A total of 33 participants from Cohort 1, 27 from Cohort 2 and 54 from Cohort 3 responded to the August 2022 surveys. The response rates represented 28.0 per cent of the total Cohort 1, 19.4 per cent of the total Cohort 2 and 27.1 per cent of the total of Cohort 3.

Of the Cohort 1 respondents, 10 responded to all of the 12-month, 18-month, 24-month, and 30-month surveys. Four Cohort 1 respondents to the 30-month survey were first-time respondents who did not participate in previous surveys.

Of the Cohort 2 respondents, nine participated in the 12-month, 18-month and 24-month surveys. Nine of the 27 Cohort 2 respondents to the 24-month survey were first time respondents, who did not participate in previous surveys.

Of the Cohort 3 respondents, 44 participated in both the 12-month and 18-month surveys and 10 were first time respondents.

KEQ 1 - Who is accessing Link and Launch?

Analysis of the program participants drawn from data collected at each school provides detail about the young people who are referred to and/or entered into the program. The Next Step Year 12 Completers Survey data provides an indicative baseline of potential program participants with extrapolated numbers based on the percentage of actual respondents who reported they were NEET in the year after they left school.

Program intake

As of 31 July 2022, a total of 1963 young people had participated in the program. A breakdown of participants across each of the 30 school sites is shown at Table 1.

In most instances, the intake numbers reflected the amount of time the school has been in the program except for S4 which had much lower participant numbers than the three other schools that commenced at a similar time.

Table 1: Participants by school site to 31 July 2022

	Participants	Program commenced		Participants	Program commenced
S1*	228	Term 4 2019	S16*	16	March 2021
S2*	169	Term 4 2019	S17*	47	March 2021
S3	196	Term 4 2019	S18	91	January 2021
S4	77	Term 4 2019	S19*	35	May 2021
S5*	143	Term 1 2020	S20*	72	January 2021
S6*	68	Term 1 2020	S21*	16	January 2021
S7*	50	Term 2 2020	S22	54	January 2021
S8	59	Term 1 2020	S23	35	March 2021
S9	103	Term 3 2020	S24	22	January 2022
S10*	66	Term 3 2020	S25	16	January 2022
S11*	46	Term 3 2020	S26	16	January 2022
S12	60	Term 3 2020	S27*	12	January 2022
S13	85	End of Term 3 2020	S28	10	January 2022
S14*	66	Term 3 2020	S29*	7	January 2022
S15*	94	January 2021	S30*	4	October 2021

*= school sites in regional areas

Demographics

More males than females accessed the program, consistent with the higher number of males NEET from the department's Next Step survey.⁴

The participation of Indigenous young people (13.0 per cent) remained higher than the Indigenous representation of all full-time state Year 12 enrolments (7.7 per cent) in Queensland in August 2022.⁵

The demographic profile of participants is shown in Figure 2.

⁴ Department of Education, 2022, *Next Step survey, Destinations of Year 12 completers from 2021 in Queensland*. Queensland Government, Brisbane.

<https://alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/our-publications/reports/statistics/Documents/ns-2022-statewide-summary.pdf>

⁵ Queensland Department of Education, 2022, *State school enrolments 2018-22*, Released July 2022. Corporate enrolment collections, Brisbane.

<https://qed.qld.gov.au/our-publications/reports/statistics/Documents/enrolments-summary.pdf>

Figure 2: Intake by demographic group

1086 participants (55.3 per cent) were male.
866 participants (44.1 per cent) were female.
11 participants (0.6 per cent) did not identify a gender.
270 participants (13.7 per cent) spoke a MLOTE.
255 participants (13.0 per cent) identified as an Indigenous young person.
183 participants (8.3 per cent) identified as having a disability.
57 participants (2.9 per cent) reported a history of having lived in out of home care.
8 participants (0.54 per cent) identified as having been involved with the youth justice system.

Engagement status on intake

Of the 1963 total participants, 1262 (64.3 per cent) were NEET at the time of intake, indicating the Link and Launch program was continuing to find its intended cohort.

Participants who were engaged in part-time employment at the time of joining the program comprised 28.8 per cent (566) of total intake. In many cases, these young people were working casually but seeking assistance to also enrol in training, or to transition from part-time to full-time work.

There were 71 participants (3.6 per cent) in part-time education, 39 (2.0 per cent) in full-time education and training and 25 (1.3 per cent) in full-time employment, as shown in Figure 3.

Of those NEET at the time of intake, 579 (57.1 per cent) were NEET short-term, ie for less than three months, 238 (23.5 per cent) where NEET three to six months and 197 (19.4 per cent) were NEET six months or more, as shown in Figure 4. This reflects the importance being placed by Link and Launch officers on locating and providing transition support to young people early, before disengagement becomes entrenched.

Figure 3: Engagement status on intake

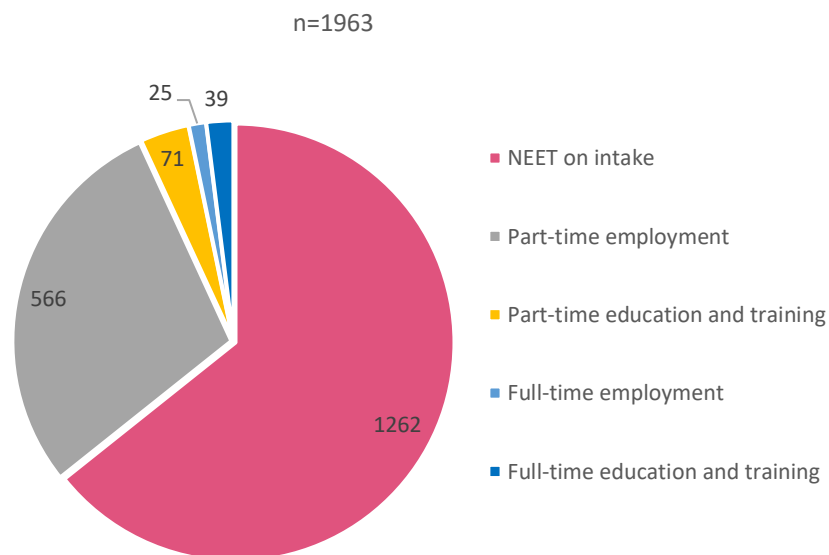
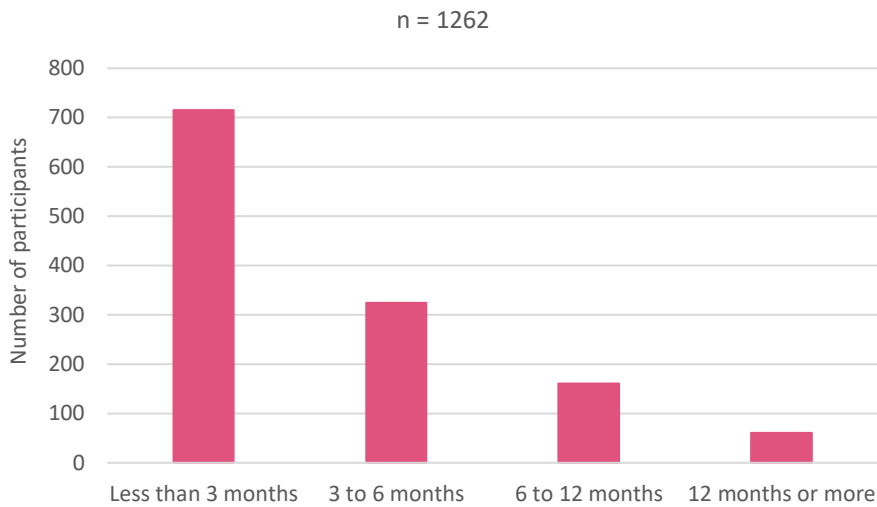


Figure 4: Participants by length of time NEET on intake



Achievement level at school

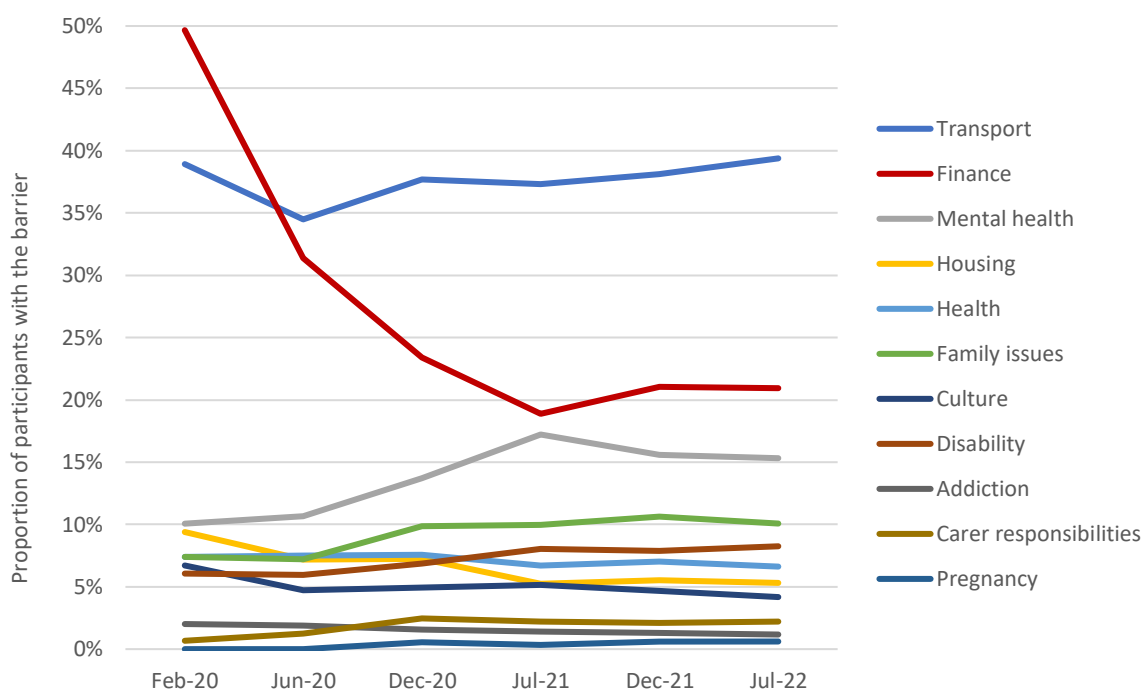
Of the total intake:

- 12.7 per cent received an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) at school
- 71.2 per cent achieved Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications at school.

Barriers

Of the 1963 total participants, 1225 (62.4 per cent) reported experiencing at least one barrier to participation in education, employment and training and 587 (29.9 per cent) reported two or more barriers. Transport and finance were consistently the most frequently reported barriers, as shown in Figure 5. Finance became less of a barrier during COVID-19 and appeared to stabilise as the jobs market improved. Conversely mental health as a barrier steadily increased during the first year and a half of COVID-19.

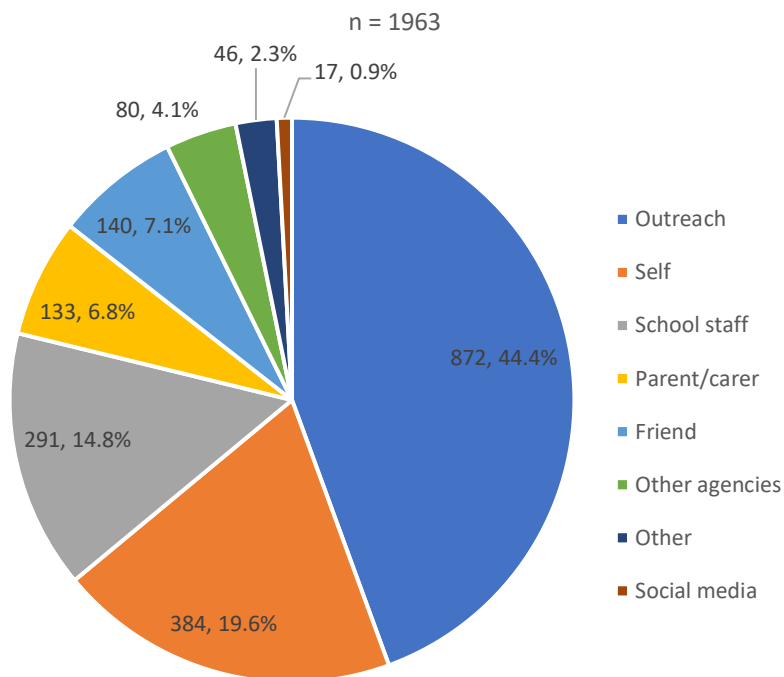
Figure 5: Proportion of participants experiencing barriers to participation



Referrals into the program

Outreach, self-referral and school staff were the main sources of referral into the program, as shown in Figure 6. Program participants completed Year 12 at more than 127 schools – well beyond the program’s 30 host sites. Nearly half of all participants joined the program as a result of active outreach strategies implemented by the Link and Launch officers, such as promotion of the program on school assemblies and visiting local youth centres. Referrals from school staff increased over time, reflective of growing staff understanding and recognition of the program and its benefits.

Figure 6: Sources of referrals into the program



KEQ 2 - What are the outcomes and were they sustained?

Transition outcome data recorded by Link and Launch officers during service delivery provides information about whether participants successfully transitioned from the program to education, training or employment destinations. Building on this initial picture of success, the time series (longitudinal) survey results tracked whether those participants sustained their transitions at 12, 18, 24 or 30 months.

Transitions – overall program

Transitioned participants are those who have transitioned to a destination and are no longer receiving active case management.

Of the 1963 participants, 1436 (73.2 per cent) had made successful transitions to further education, training or employment or employment-related and other services at the time of the data download, while 242 (12.3 per cent) remained under active case management.

The transition rate for those NEET on intake was 75.4 per cent (952) participants. The median transition time from intake to first transition was 43 days.

The proportion of total transitions who were NEET on intake was 66.3 per cent.

Figure 7 shows the overall transition rates from February 2020 to July 2022.

Figure 7: Overall transition rates

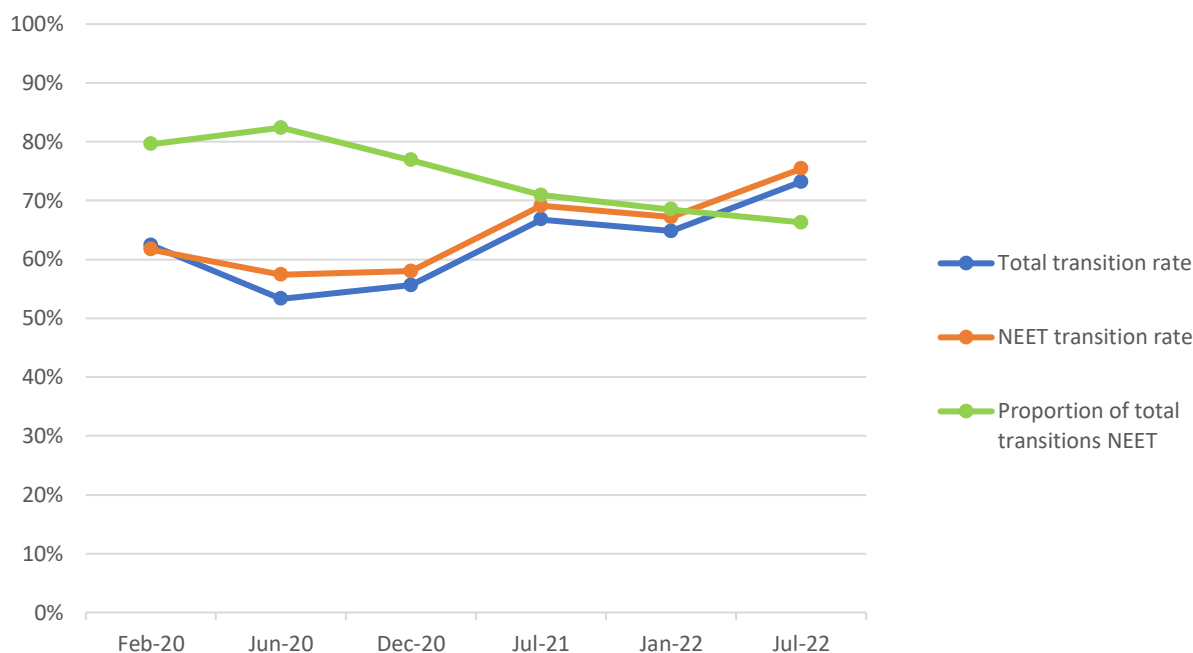


Table 2 shows the number of participants and their engagement status at intake, overall and by school, compared with the total and NEET transition rates and the proportion of those transitioned who were NEET.

Ten schools (S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S8, S11, S12, S15 and S19) achieved total transition rates that were higher than the program average. Two of those (S1 and S3) achieved transition rates of more than 90 per cent. Link and Launch officers at both of these schools were extremely connected with their local communities, understood diverse and individual needs and were able to access their networks to produce good outcomes for participants.

Seven schools (S24 to S30) were still in the establishment phase at the time of the download which accounts for the lower intake numbers.

Table 2: Transition rates to July 2022 by school

	Intake (n)		Transition rates (%)		
	Participants	Participants NEET on intake	Total transition rate	NEET transition rate	Proportion of total transitions NEET on intake
Overall	1963	1262	73.2	75.4	66.3
S1*	228	168	90.4	89.3	72.8
S2*	169	93	75.1	73.1	53.5
S3	196	175	92.3	92.6	89.5
S4	77	47	50.6	55.3	66.7
S5*	143	95	79.0	78.9	66.4
S6*	68	41	70.6	68.3	58.3
S7*	50	25	52.0	64.0	61.5
S8	59	32	76.3	87.5	62.2
S9	103	69	75.7	78.3	69.2
S10*	66	39	63.6	61.5	57.1
S11*	46	19	80.4	84.2	43.2
S12	60	35	78.3	82.9	61.7
S13	85	61	70.6	73.8	75.0
S14*	66	35	53.0	48.6	48.6
S15*	94	70	87.2	85.7	73.2
S16*	16	10	43.8	40.0	57.1
S17*	47	20	59.6	50.0	35.7
S18	91	58	60.4	65.5	69.1
S19*	35	17	74.3	76.5	50.0
S20*	72	45	72.2	66.7	57.7
S21*	16	8	43.8	25.0	28.6
S22	54	44	64.8	65.9	82.9
S23	35	10	51.4	30.0	16.7
S24	22	13	54.5	84.6	91.7
S25	16	8	56.3	50.0	44.4
S26	16	6	43.8	50.0	42.9
S27*	12	8	41.7	25.0	40.0
S28	10	6	60.0	50.0	50.0
S29*	7	3	28.6	66.7	100.0
S30*	4	2	25.0	0.0	0.0

*= school sites in regional areas

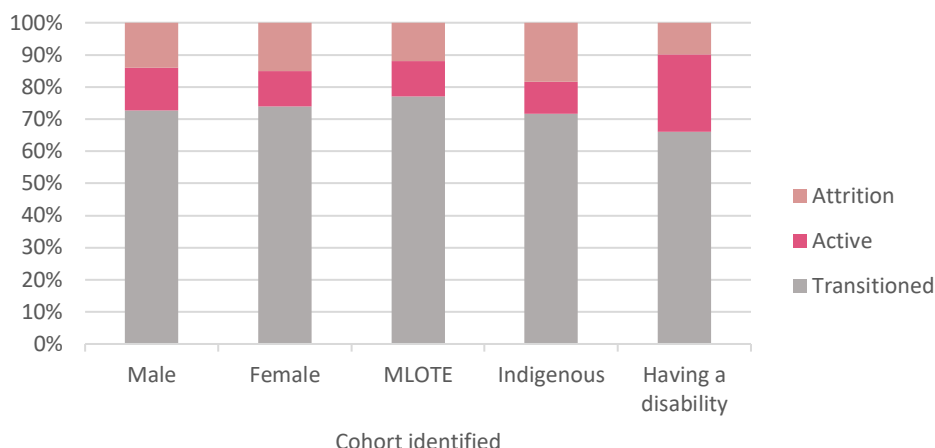
Demographics

The transition rates were consistent for both males (72.7 per cent) and females (73.9 per cent).

The program produced outstanding results for participants with complex needs including a 77.0 per cent transition rate for participants who spoke a MLOTE – which was higher than the overall program transition rate.

Further, 71.8 per cent of those who identified as an Indigenous young person transitioned and 66.0 per cent of participants who identified as having a disability transitioned, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Proportion of transitions by demographic group



Engagement status on intake

Of the total 1436 participants who transitioned, 952 (66.3 per cent) were NEET on intake including:

- 575 (40.0 per cent) of the total transitions were NEET less than three months
- 239 (16.6 per cent) were NEET three to six months
- 103 (7.2 per cent) were NEET six to 12 months
- 35 (2.4 per cent) were NEET 12 months or more.

Barriers

The Link and Launch program showed success in transitioning young people who reported experiencing barriers to participation when they joined the program.

A total of 892 (62.1 per cent) of all participants who transitioned reported at least one barrier and of these 48.0 per cent (428) had two or more barriers.

Transport and finance (186), transport and mental health (92) and transport and family issues (88) were the most common dual barriers for participants who transitioned.

Yet to transition

Active participants are those receiving ongoing case management and transition support from Link and Launch officers.

At 31 July there were 242 participants (12.3 per cent) of the total intake who were still being supported by the program. Of those, 59.1 per cent were male, 39.7 per cent were female, 16.1 per cent identified as having a disability, 12.4 per cent spoke a MLOTE and 10.3 per cent identified as an Indigenous young person.

Of the 242 active participants, 136 (56.2 per cent) were NEET on intake, comprising:

- 66 (27.3 per cent) who were NEET less than three months
- 44 (18.2 per cent) who were NEET three to six months
- 18 (7.4 per cent) who were NEET six to 12 months
- 8 (3.3 per cent) who were NEET 12 months or more.

A total of 176 (72.7 per cent) of the 242 (active) participants yet to transition had achieved a VET qualification at school, while 29 (12.0 per cent) had received an ATAR.

Attrition rates

A total of 285 participants (14.5 per cent) left the program without making a transition. Of those, 47 (16.5 per cent) identified as an Indigenous young person, 32 (11.2 per cent) spoke a MLOTE and 16 (5.6 per cent) identified as having a disability.

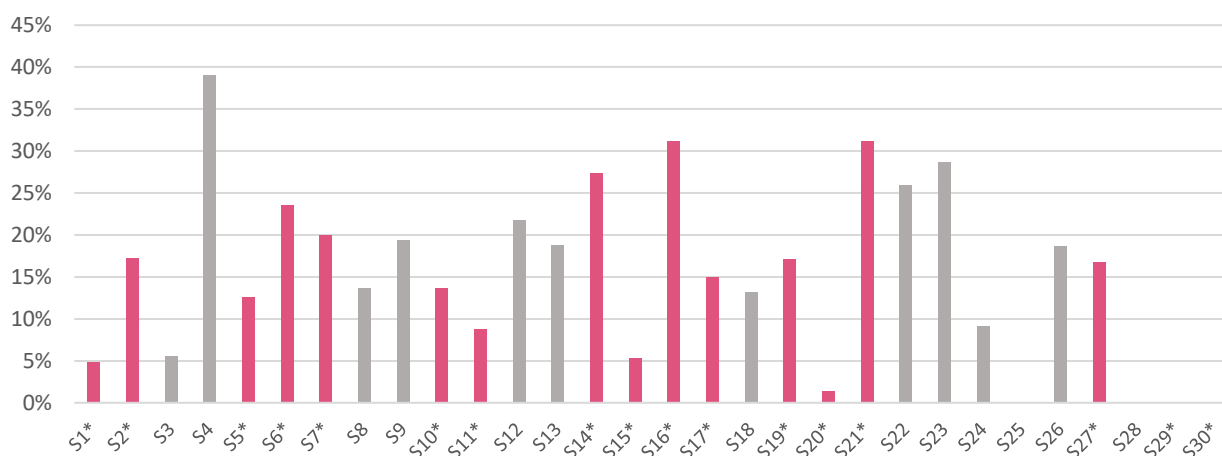
Participants leave the program without making a transition for a range of reasons, including moving interstate, becoming uncontactable, or seeking alternative services.

The 2021 Next Step survey identified the Indigenous NEET rate as 23.3 per cent compared with 9.4 per cent NEET overall.⁶ While 71.8 per cent of those who identified as an Indigenous young person transitioned from the Link and Launch program, this group had the highest attrition rate of the demographic groups.

The average attrition rate across all 30 schools was 9.5 per cent.

S4 had the highest attrition rate (39.0 per cent), followed by S16 and S21 which both had attrition rates of 31.2 per cent, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Attrition rate by school site



*= school sites in regional areas

Sustained transitions – longitudinal survey respondents

The surveys tracked the engagement status of participants 12 months, 18 months, 24 months and 30 months after transitioning from the program.

Cohort 1

August 2022 survey responses demonstrated a strengthening in engagement outcomes over time for this cohort, from the 12-month survey through to the 30-month survey. These young people first transitioned just before COVID-19, and many would have been impacted by the pandemic’s early economic shocks before recovering and becoming engaged at higher rates by mid-2022.

Survey responses showed that 30 of the 33 respondents (90.9 per cent) from Cohort 1 remained in work, training or study 30 months after transitioning from the program.

⁶ Department of Education, 2022, *Next Step survey, Destinations of Year 12 completers from 2021 in Queensland*. Queensland Government, Brisbane.
<https://alt-qed.qed.qld.gov.au/our-publications/reports/statistics/Documents/ns-2022-statewide-summary.pdf>

This compared with 24 of the 30 respondents (80 per cent) from Cohort 1 who were engaged 24 months after transitioning from the program, and 34 of the 43 respondents (79.1 per cent) from Cohort 1 who were engaged 18 months after transitioning from the program.

Three Cohort 1 respondents to the 30-month survey were NEET, and none of these NEET respondents reported that they were currently looking for work.

Cohort 2

Survey responses from Cohort 2 showed that 23 of the 27 respondents (85.2 per cent) remained in work, training or study 24 months after transitioning from the program, compared with 87.2 per cent at the 18-month survey and 76.9 per cent at the 12-month survey.

Cohort 3

47 of 54 respondents (87.0 per cent) of Cohort 3 remained in work, training or study 18 months after transitioning from the program, compared with 81.2 per cent at the 12-month survey.

Table 3 shows the responses from Cohort 1 at 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, and 30 months after they transitioned, the responses from Cohort 2 at 12 months, 18 months, and 24 months after they transitioned, Cohort 3 at 12 months and 18 months after they transitioned.

Table 3: Survey responses and engagement rates

	12-month survey		18-month survey		24-month survey		30-month survey	
Cohort 1	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
In work, training or study	43	82.7	34	79.1	24	80.0	30	90.9
Not engaged in work, training or study	9	17.3	9	20.9	6	20.0	3	9.1
Total respondents	52	100.0	43	100.0	30	100.0	33	100.0
Cohort 2	n	%	n	%	n	%		
In work, training or study	30	76.9	34	87.2	23	85.2		
Not engaged in work, training or study	9	23.1	5	12.8	4	14.8		
Total respondents	39	100.0	39	100.0	27	100.0		
Cohort 3	n	%	n	%				
In work, training or study	82	81.2	47	87.0				
Not engaged in work, training or study	19	18.8	7	13.0				
Total respondents	101	100.0	54	100.0				

For Cohort 1, at the 30-month mark, 16 of the 26 engaged respondents who were working (61.5 per cent) remained in the same job, compared with 58.3 per cent (14 of the 24) at 24 months.

For Cohort 2, at the 24-month mark, 17 of the 21 engaged respondents (80.9 per cent) remained in the same job, compared with 22 of the 29 (75.9 per cent) at the 18-month mark.

For Cohort 3, at the 18-month mark, 33 of the 41 engaged respondents (80.5 per cent) remained in the same job.

Across all survey cohorts, there was consistent improvement in engagement rates from the January 2022 survey to the August 2022 survey, reflecting the strengthening labour market and youth unemployment at record lows at the time of the final survey.

Destinations – overall program

The 1436 participants who transitioned had a total of 2030 destinations.

The vast majority (734 or 73.8 per cent) of those who transitioned had one destination. There were 260 participants (26.2 per cent) who had more than one destination, 49 had more than two and 10 had more than three transition destinations. In these cases, participants may have been supported to make one transition and then subsequently returned for further support at a later date, or may have been supported to two simultaneous transitions, such as into higher education as well as to part-time work.

Most transition destinations (1895 or 93.3 per cent) were to study or work, including VET, higher education, part-time employment, full-time employment and Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs.

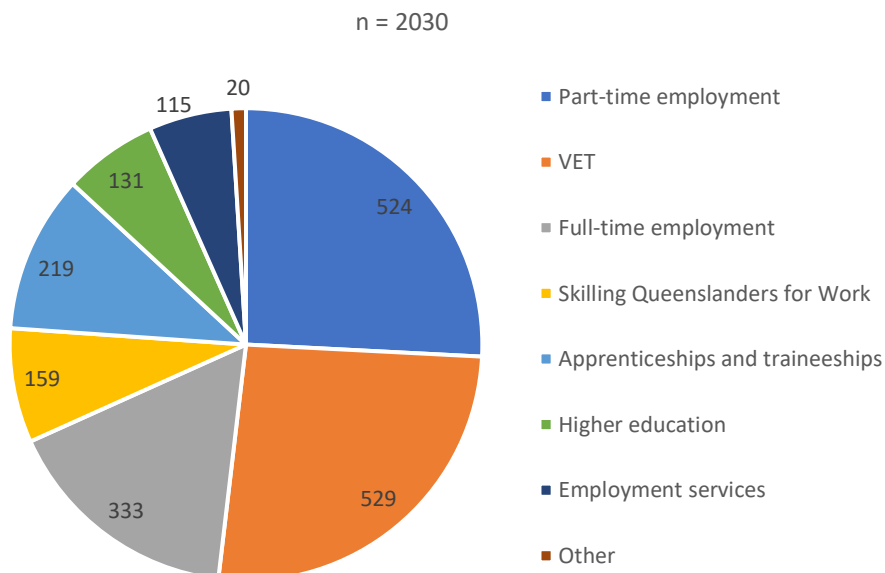
The most common destinations for those who transitioned were VET (26.1 per cent), part-time employment (25.8 per cent) and full-time employment (16.4 per cent).

Males reflected this same top three order while for females, part time employment destinations were slightly higher than VET (29.6 per cent compared with 28.0 per cent). For both males and females, full-time employment was well behind in third place (males 18.4 per cent and females 14.0 per cent).

The full breakdown is shown in Figure 10.

Apprenticeships and traineeships were more common destinations for males who transitioned (12.9 per cent) than females (8.0 per cent). Higher education was more common for females (8.6 per cent) than males (4.8 per cent).

Figure 10: Breakdown of destinations for participants who transitioned



Long-term destinations – survey respondents

The longitudinal surveys included questions designed to collect information relating to respondents’ longer-term destinations, presenting them with a number of options. This data provides insights into their point-in-time engagement status, as well as into the pathways experienced by these respondents over time since they completed working with their Link and Launch officer.

Work, study and training

Cohort 1

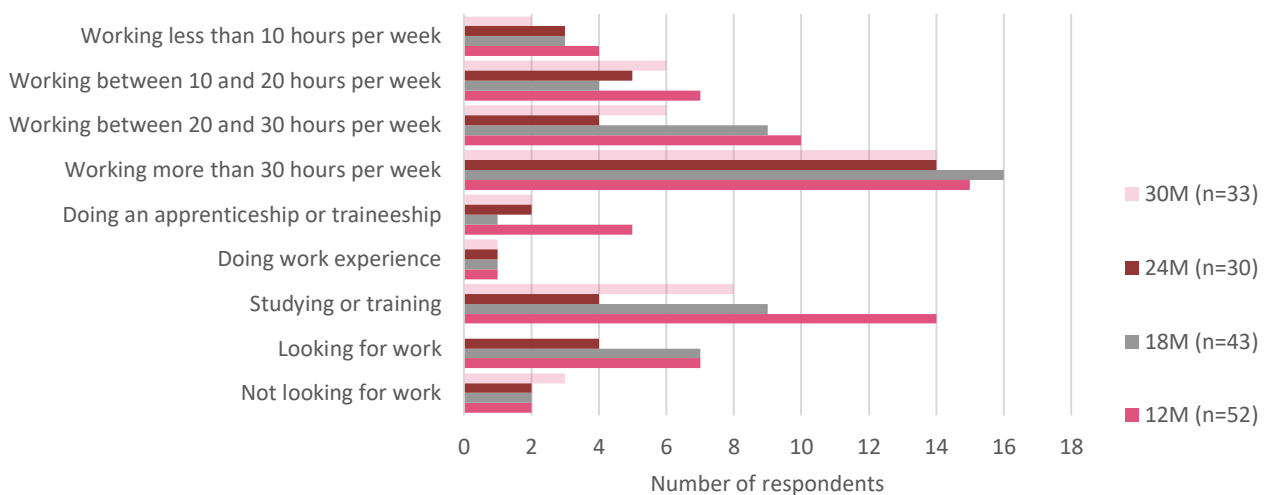
Survey responses from participants who transitioned from the program showed that at 30 months, 30 of the 33 were in work or study destinations, or a combination of both. Of the 10 respondents who had changed jobs since the last survey, five were offered better jobs in other industries, three moved to another area, one was offered a better job in the same industry, and one was no longer needed.

Responses indicated:

- 14 participants were working more than 30 hours a week
- six were working 20 to 30 hours a week
- two were undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship
- one was undertaking work experience
- eight were studying or training.

The comparison of these results with the 12-month, 18-month and 24-month surveys is shown in Figure 11. There were no significant changes in the distribution to note, other than other than that none of the NEET respondents in the 30-month survey were looking for work.

Figure 11: Survey responses – Work, study or training destinations at 12, 18, 24 and 30 months



Cohort 2

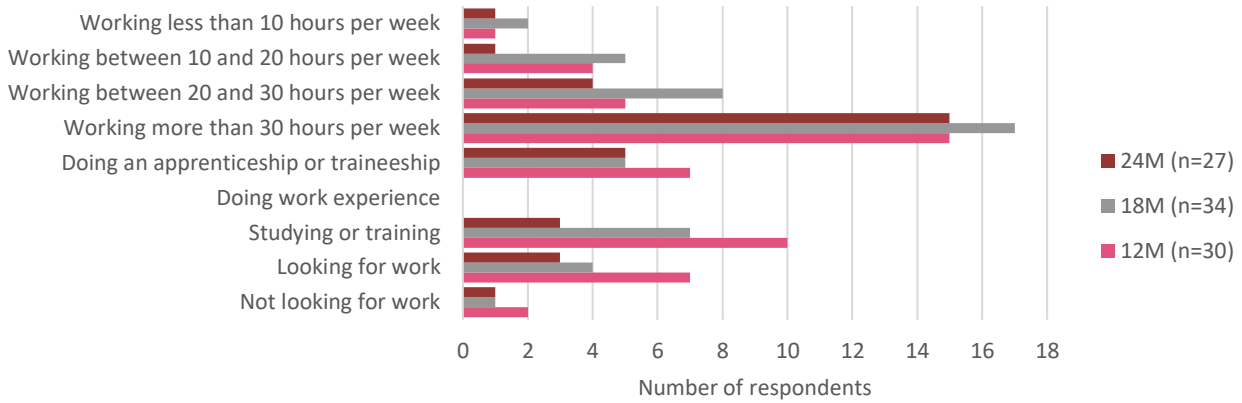
Survey responses from participants 24 months after transitioning from the program showed that 23 of the 27 were in work, training or study destinations, or a combination of both. Four respondents changed jobs since the last survey. Of these, two moved to another area and two were offered better jobs in other industries.

Survey responses indicated:

- 15 participants were working more than 30 hours a week
- four were working 20 to 30 hours a week
- five were undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship
- three were studying or training
- none were doing work experience.

The comparison of these results with the 12-month and 18-month survey is shown in Figure 12, with no significant change in the distribution, however there was a slight decline observed in the proportion of respondents undertaking study or training.

Figure 12: Survey responses – Work, study or training destinations at 12, 18 and 24 months



Cohort 3

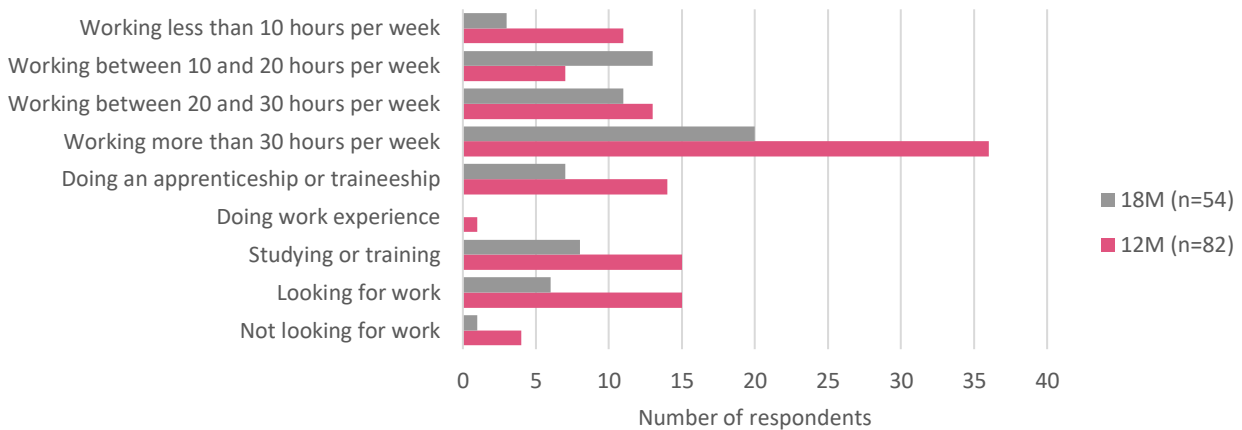
Survey responses from participants 18 months after transitioning from the program showed that 47 of the 54 respondents were in work, training or study destinations, or a combination of both. Eight respondents changed jobs since the last survey. Of these, two moved to another area, two were offered better jobs in other industries, one was offered a better job in the same industry and three did not provide a specific answer.

Survey responses indicated:

- 20 participants were working more than 30 hours a week
- 11 were working 20 to 30 hours a week
- seven were undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship
- eight were studying or training
- none were doing work experience.

The comparison of these results with the 12-month survey is shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Survey responses – Work, study or training destinations at 12 and 18 months



Industry destinations

The most common destination for all three survey cohorts was working more than 20 hours a week. This comprised 60.6 per cent (20) of survey respondents from Cohort 1 and 70.4 per cent (19) of survey respondents from Cohort 2 and 61.1 per cent (33) of survey respondents from Cohort 3. Of these, 43.4 per cent (14) of Cohort 1 respondents and 55.6 per cent (15) of Cohort 2 respondents and 37.0 per cent (20) of Cohort 3 respondents were working more than 30 hours a week.

Accommodation and food services was the most common of the specified industry destinations for all cohorts, measured 12 months after transitioning. This was followed by retail trade, and health care and social assistance and construction. Notably the majority of respondents in each cohort were working in industries other than those specified in the survey, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Industry destination by cohort 12 months after transitioning

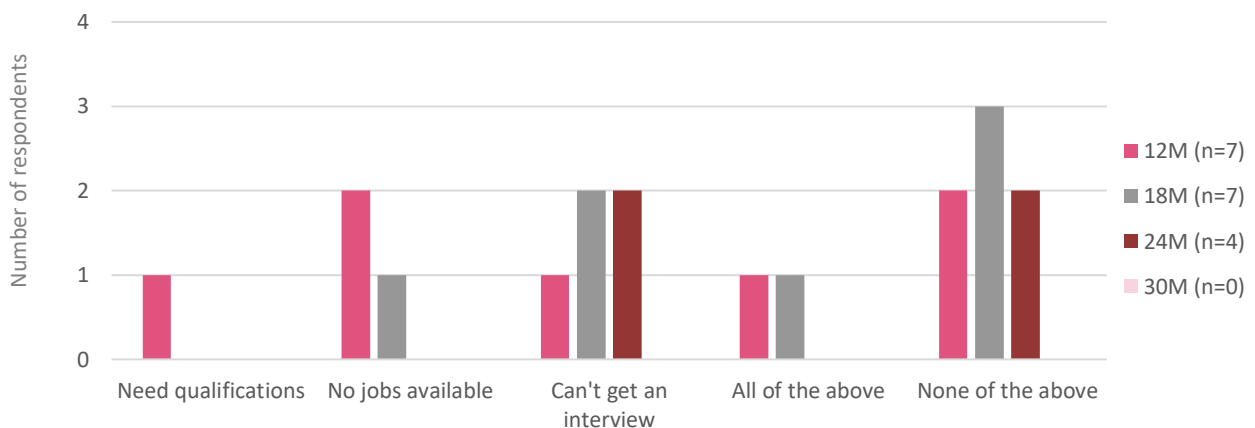


Barriers to looking for work

Cohort 1

The barriers for respondents from Cohort 1 who were NEET and looking for work were mainly the inability to get an interview, or other unknown factors at 24 months, compared with their responses at 12 months and 18 months, as shown in Figure 15. None of the respondents at the 30-month survey were looking for work.

Figure 15: Survey responses – Barriers to work at 12, 18, 24 and 30 months



Cohort 2

Figure 16 shows the responses of the three participants who were NEET and looking for work 24 months after transitioning. In this case, one respondent felt the barrier was an inability to get an interview. The remaining two respondents indicated that their barriers were not listed in the survey options.

Figure 16: Survey responses – Barriers to work at 12, 18 and 24 months

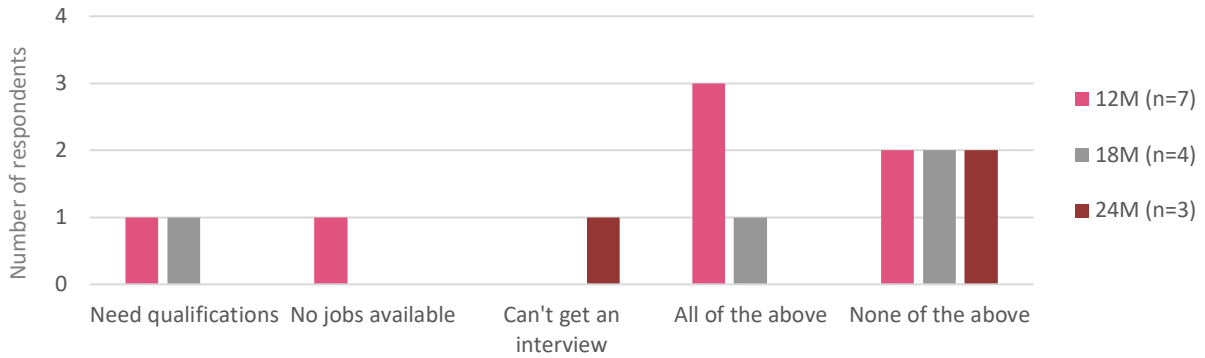
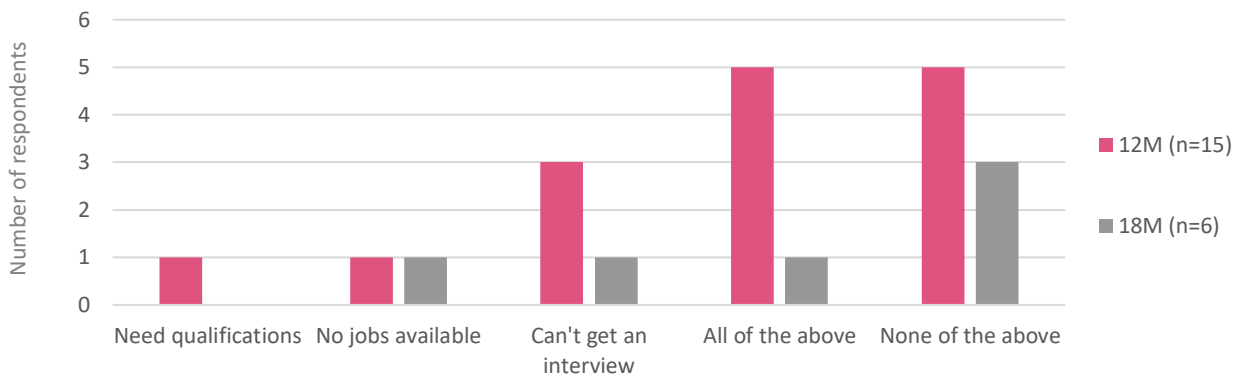


Figure 17 shows the responses of the six participants who were NEET and looking for work 18 months after transitioning. The one respondent who was both NEET and not looking for a job indicated that none of the suggested answers in the survey represented the barriers faced.

Figure 17: Survey responses – Barriers to work at 18 months



KEQ 3 - What are the critical elements of Link and Launch?

The critical elements (success factors) relating to the support provided to young people to achieve the re-engagement outcome were identified using quantitative analysis of the program data and survey responses.

This is the first time the state school system has case managed and tracked the post-school transitions of disengaged young people.

Because the oversight of young people once they complete Year 12 falls outside the legislative framework for state schools in Queensland – the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* – the department’s Student Engagement team in central office carries the oversight for the program not the schools from which the Link and Launch officers are based.

With a single officer at each location there is potential for highly variable ways of working and inconsistency from site to site.

The program guidelines, data definitions, induction processes and supervision from the department’s Student Engagement team are a critical element in supporting high-quality case management and a shared understanding and commitment to the objectives of the program.

The bridge that the program provides from school to work and/or further study or training is a point of difference from other services for young people.

The relationships that Link and Launch officers develop with young people toward the end of their schooling provides an anchor that young people appear to value as they navigate their way through changing work and study situations and circumstances.

One-on-one case work was a central feature throughout the program which increased proportionately for each of the three cohorts observed.

The correlation of direct contact and support with high intake and transition rates were indicators of program practices that were making a positive difference for young people.

From October 2019 to July 2022 the program provided 30,385 instances of support, representing an average of 15.5 per participant.

The strength of community links and local networks of Link and Launch officers is also key to successful outcomes for young people, especially those who identify as an Indigenous young person, having a disability or who spoke a MLOTE. In this regard, sound working relationships and engagement with local Elders, and community leaders is vital in understanding specific needs and driving enduring and meaningful outcomes for young people.

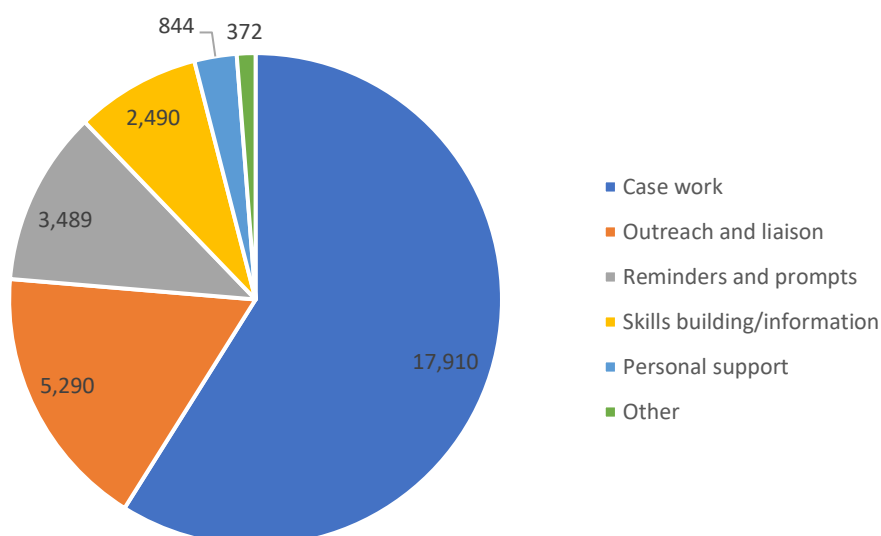
Post transition, the program’s embedded check-ins at one month, three months and six months are also important in ensuring young people sustain their transitions.

Case work

The use of case work overall remained consistent at 59.3 per cent of all contacts, followed by outreach and liaison at 18.9 per cent which was 1.5 per cent lower than July 2021 while reminders and prompts increased by 1.8 per cent.

Figure 18 shows the profile of support activities provided to program participants overall.

Figure 18: Support activities profile



Instances of support

The instances of support varied across the cohorts as shown in Table 4.

The majority of Cohort 1 (53.2 per cent) and Cohort 3 (51.4 per cent) survey respondents required between six and 20 instances of support, consistent with the overall program intake where 56.5 per cent of participants required between six and 20 instances of the support.

The majority of Cohort 2 survey respondents (53.9 per cent) required more than 21 instances of support.

Table 4: Instances of support received

	Overall program		Survey respondents					
			Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Cohort 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
0 – 2 instances of support	65	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	3.6
3 – 5 instances of support	357	18.2	13	21.0	9	14.3	8	7.2
6 – 20 instances of support	1109	56.5	33	53.2	20	31.7	57	51.4
21 + instances of support	432	22.0	16	25.8	34	53.9	42	37.8
Total	1963	100.0	62	100.0	63	100.0	111	100.0

Mode of support

Telephone support and messaging apps were the predominant modes of support for program participants, followed by email and one-on-one, as shown in Table 5.

Overall, Cohort 1 had significantly more support provided via telephone compared to Cohort 2 and Cohort 3.

The latter two cohorts had a significantly higher proportion of supports provided via messaging apps or email, when compared with Cohort 1. There was no significant difference between cohorts for the proportion of support provided via one-on-one sessions or small group sessions.

Table 5: Modes of support

	Overall program		Survey respondents					
			Cohort 1		Cohort 2		Cohort 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Telephone	9628	31.7	815	45.0	1047	33.3	552	25.9
Messaging apps	9460	31.1	357	19.7	936	29.8	714	33.5
Email	5932	19.5	288	15.9	641	20.4	492	23.1
One-on-one	4853	16.0	303	16.7	399	12.7	342	16.0
Small group session	522	1.7	49	2.7	123	3.9	34	1.6
Total	30395	100.0	1812	100.0	3146	100.0	2134	100.0

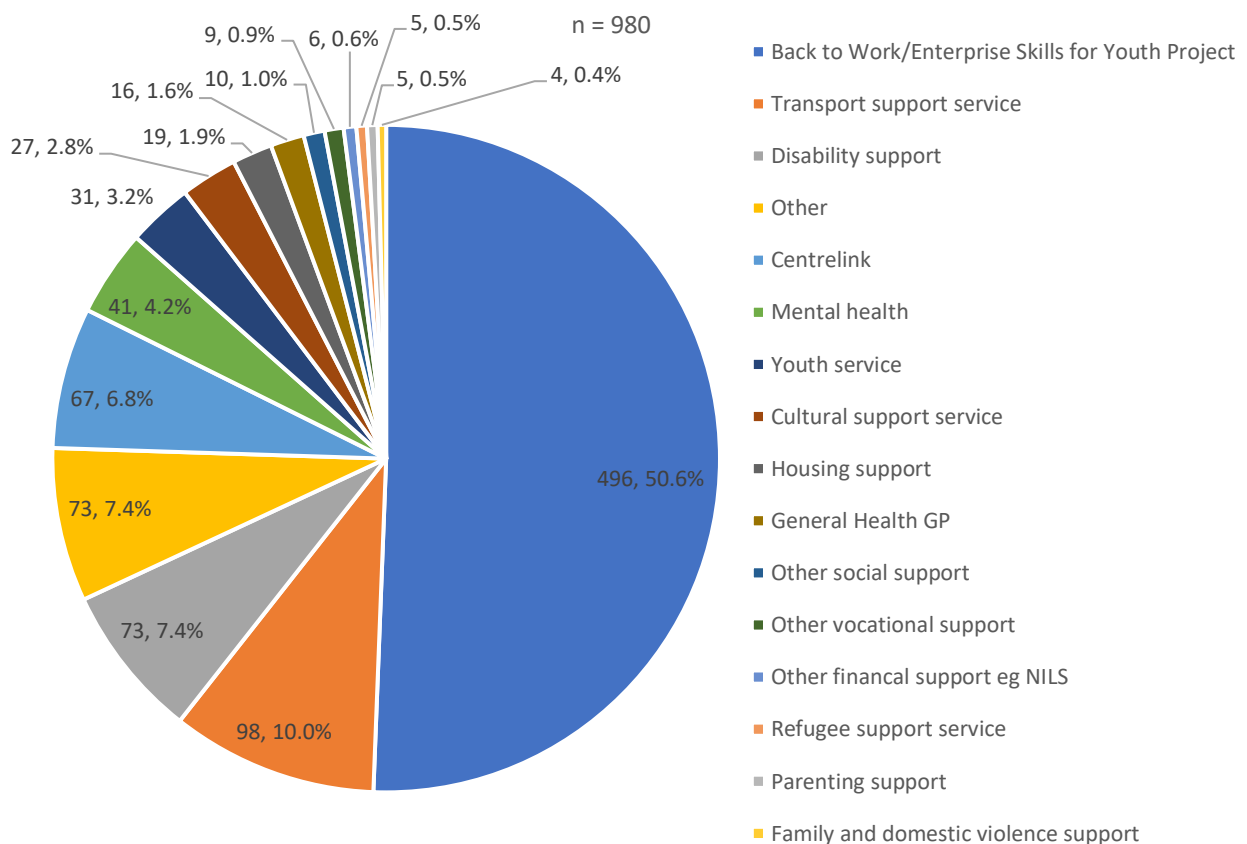
Referrals to support services

Link and Launch officers make referrals to other support services to assist participants to address barriers to engagement.

Back to Work/Enterprise Skills for Youth Project had the largest number of referrals, comprising 496 (50.6 per cent) of the 980 referrals to support services, as shown in Figure 19.

This service covers funding for a broad range of short courses, driving lessons, tickets and industry licences. Given it assists in addressing both financial and transport barriers through funding, it is not surprising that this is the most frequently used referral pathway.

Figure 19: Referral to support services



KEQ 4 - How satisfied are Link and Launch participants?

The measure of whether participants are satisfied with the program and would recommend it to others was based on their survey responses 12 months after they transitioned.

Participants' perceptions of the value of the program were also assessed according to their survey responses 12 months after they transitioned from the program.

Satisfaction was high for the sample sizes. Survey responses showed:

- 92.8 per cent of Cohort 3 respondents
- 89.5 per cent of Cohort 2 respondents
- 76.9 per cent of Cohort 1 respondents

would recommend the program to others.

Participants indicated the program was helpful to them in becoming engaged. Survey responses showed:

- 74.1 per cent of Cohort 3 respondents
- 76.2 per cent of Cohort 2 respondents
- 44.0 per cent of Cohort 1 respondents

agreed that the program had helped them find a job, apprenticeship, work experience or study destination.

Conclusions

Despite changing economic, social and environmental conditions, the Link and Launch program has had a positive impact on participants.

Transition rates were high and attrition comparatively low. Outcomes for participants with complex needs and sustained transition rates were especially encouraging.

Given the significantly improved labour market conditions since the program started, its reach of 30 school sites may have peaked. However, the complexities of youth transitions into the labour market are well documented, and youth unemployment remains much higher than the overall unemployment rate in the community.

There remains a role for the program to support the most vulnerable young people in making a strong school-to-work transition. There are opportunities to consolidate the ways of working within the program, however detailed local needs analysis should be undertaken before expansion to further school sites.

Data limitations

Care must be taken when interpreting the survey results because some bias in the response rate may be present.

While the August 2022 survey response rates of 28.0 per cent for Cohort 1, 19.4 per cent for Cohort 2 and 27.1. per cent for Cohort 3 are very high compared with most surveys which usually produce a response rate of around five to 10 per cent, the limited absolute number of responses (33 of 118, 27 of 139 and 54 of 225) implies a moderate level of confidence in interpreting the results.

Hence, care must be taken to not extrapolate the survey results nor read too much into them in isolation due to the strong probability of bias due to the effect of sampling error.