

Aspirations, expectations, experiences: VET in Schools and young women

WAVE Conference Friday 14th September 2012

Kira Clarke

Education, Policy & Leadership



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

GRADUATE
SCHOOLS

MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world



MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Overview

- ▶ VETiS Landscape
- ▶ Motivations & expectations of young women in VETiS
- ▶ Outcomes for young women through VETiS
- ▶ Structural dilemmas



Aspiration

SES

Prior achievement

Parents' education/occupation

Career guidance



UNIVERSITY

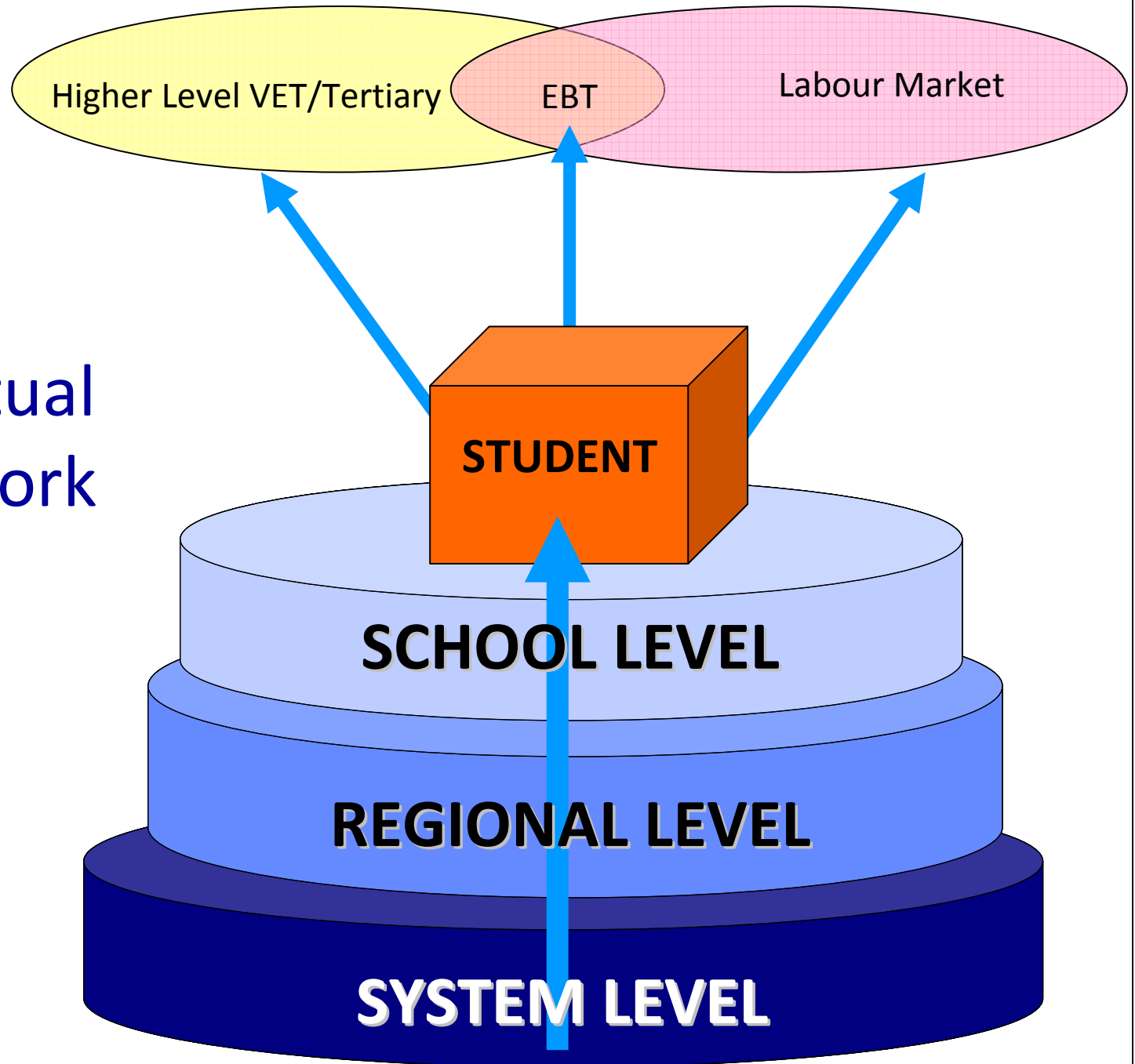
VET

APPRENTICESHIPS/
TRAINEESHIPS

LABOUR
MARKET

What sort of bridge does school build????

Conceptual Framework





MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Participation

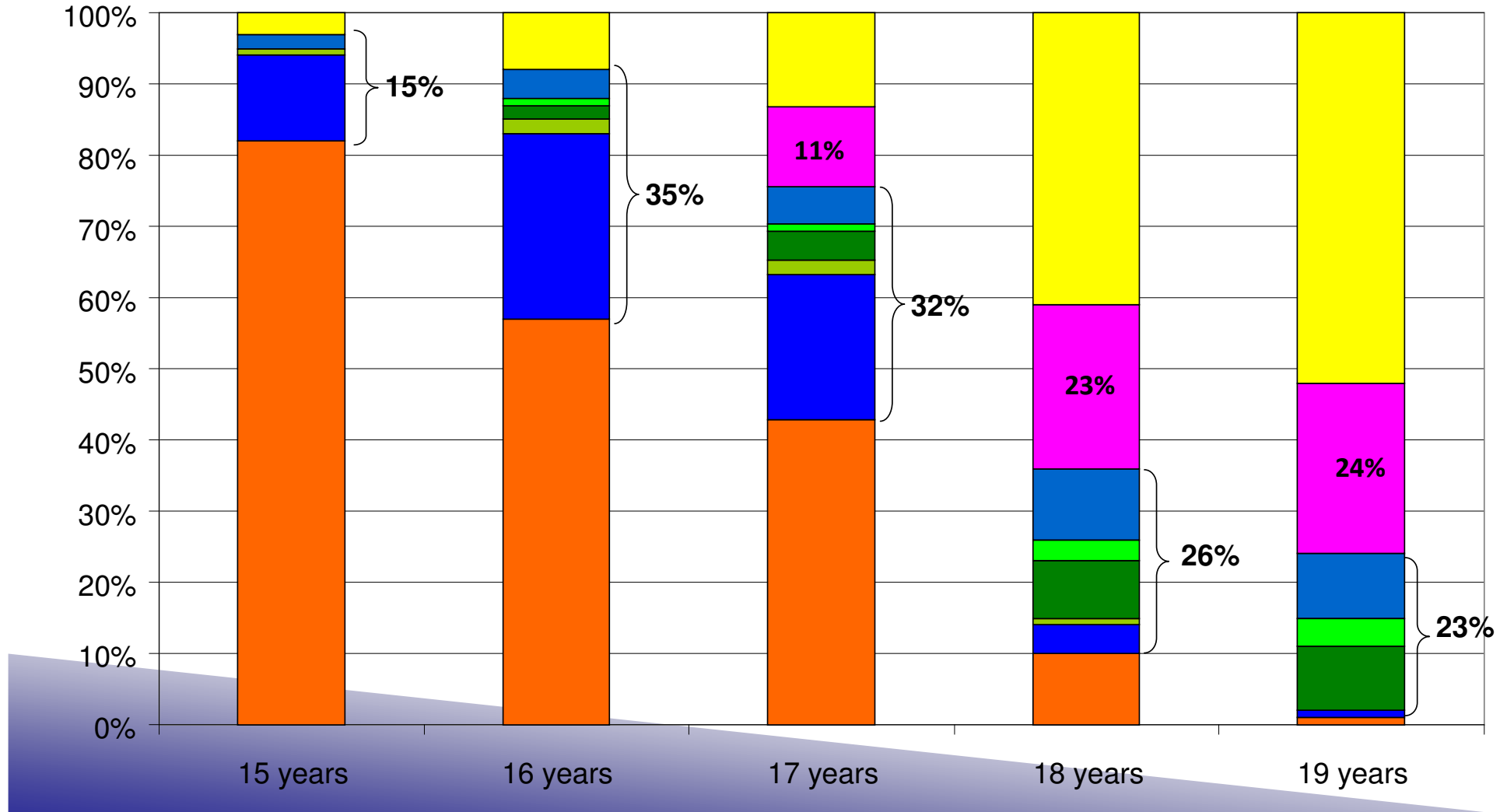
Who participates in VET in Schools?
At which levels?



Role of VET for the 15-19 year old cohort

- School w/o VET
- VETiS
- SBATs
- Trade Apprenticeship/traineeship
- Non-trade Apprenticeship/traineeship
- Other VET
- Higher Education
- Not in E&T

Source: ACARA 2009





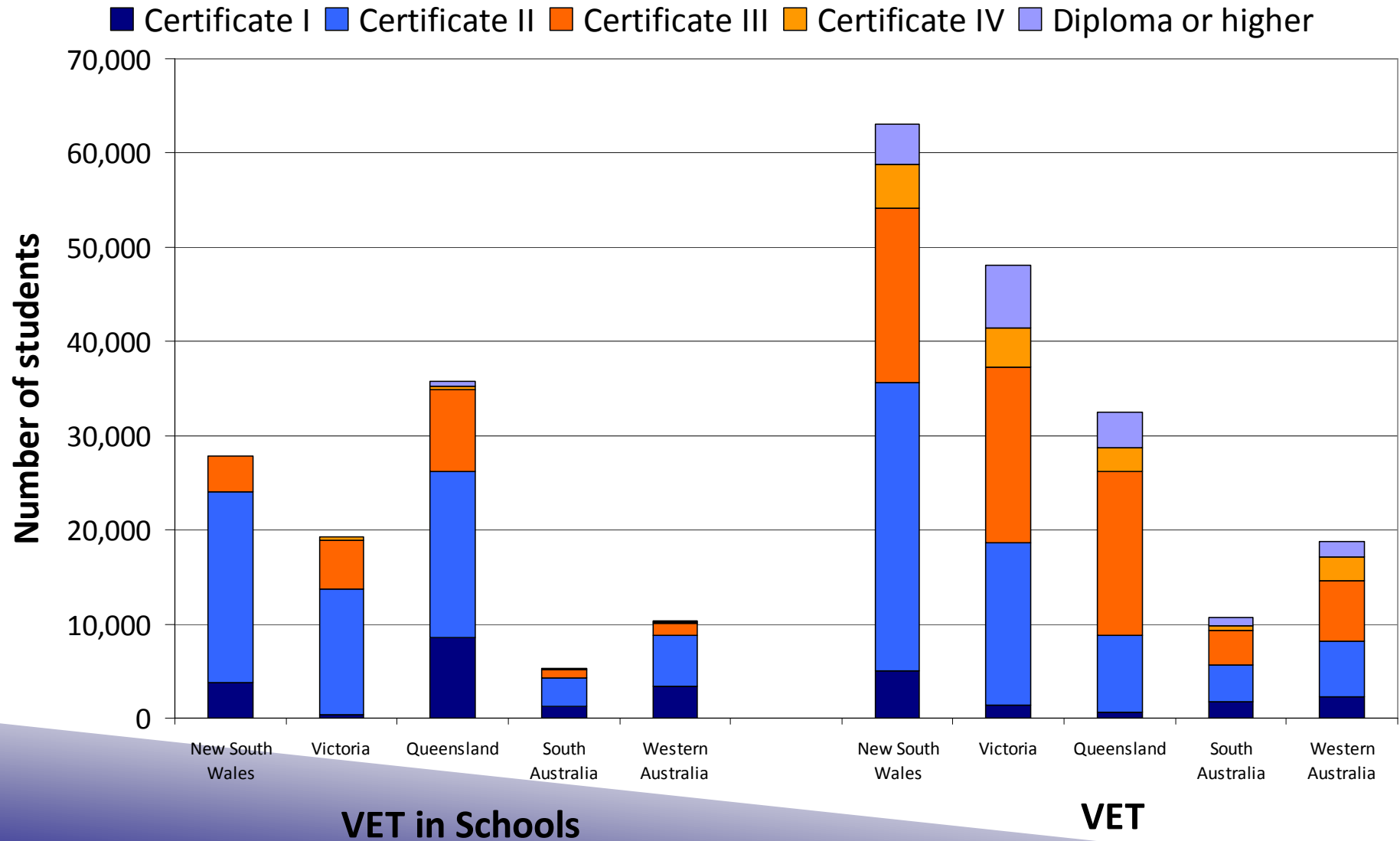
MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

VET in Schools - effective mechanism for retention?



Serving the 15-19 year old female cohort: VET and VETiS





MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

VET in Schools – the working class pathway?





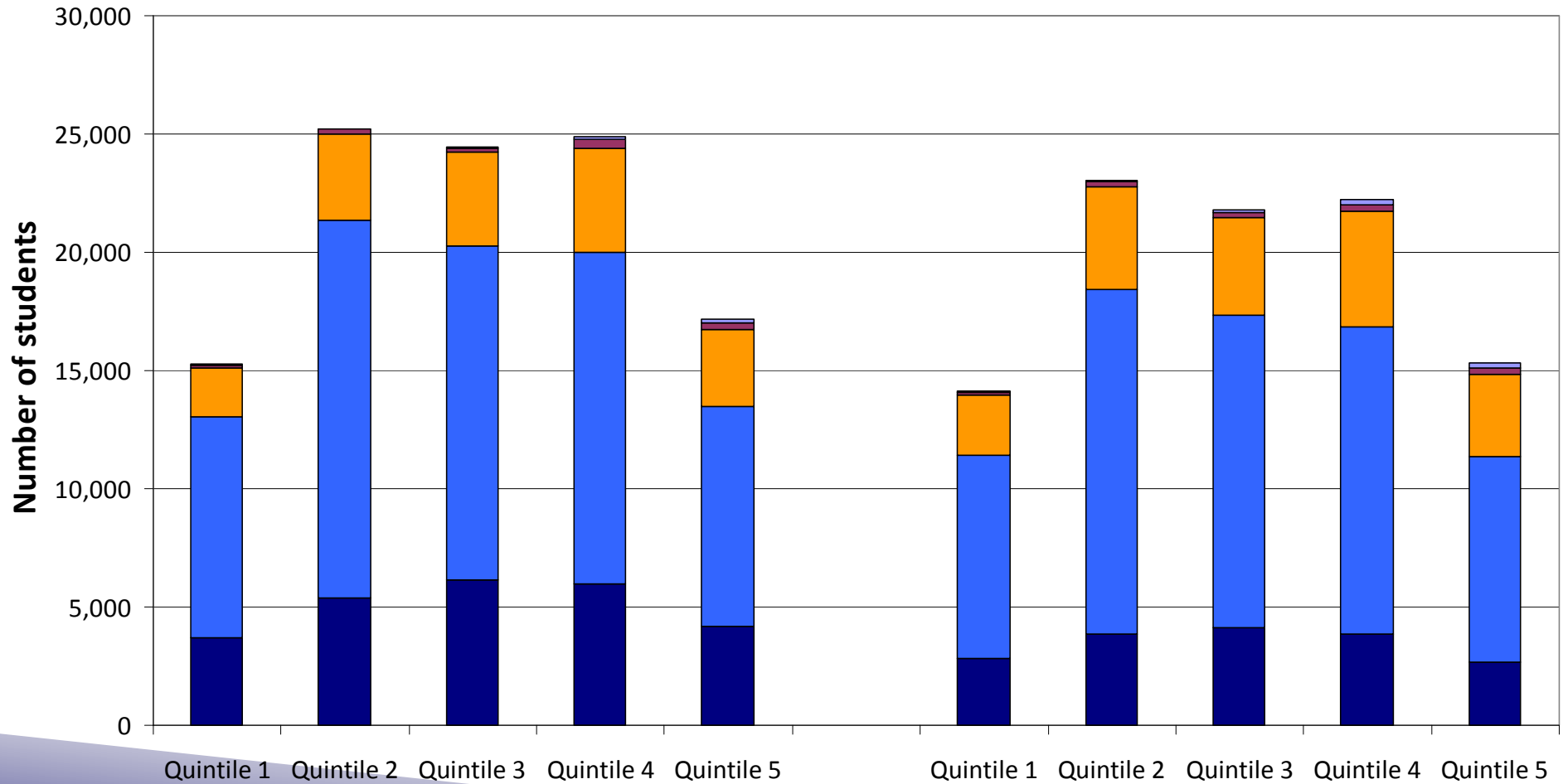
GRADUATE
SCHOOLS

MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Serving the 15-19 year old cohort: participation by AQF level

■ Certificate I ■ Certificate II ■ Certificate III ■ Certificate IV ■ Diploma or higher



Males

Females

Source: NCVET Vocstats, 2010



MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Overview

- ▶ VETiS Landscape
- ▶ **Motivations & expectation so young women in VETiS**
- ▶ Outcomes for young women
- ▶ Structural dilemmas





MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

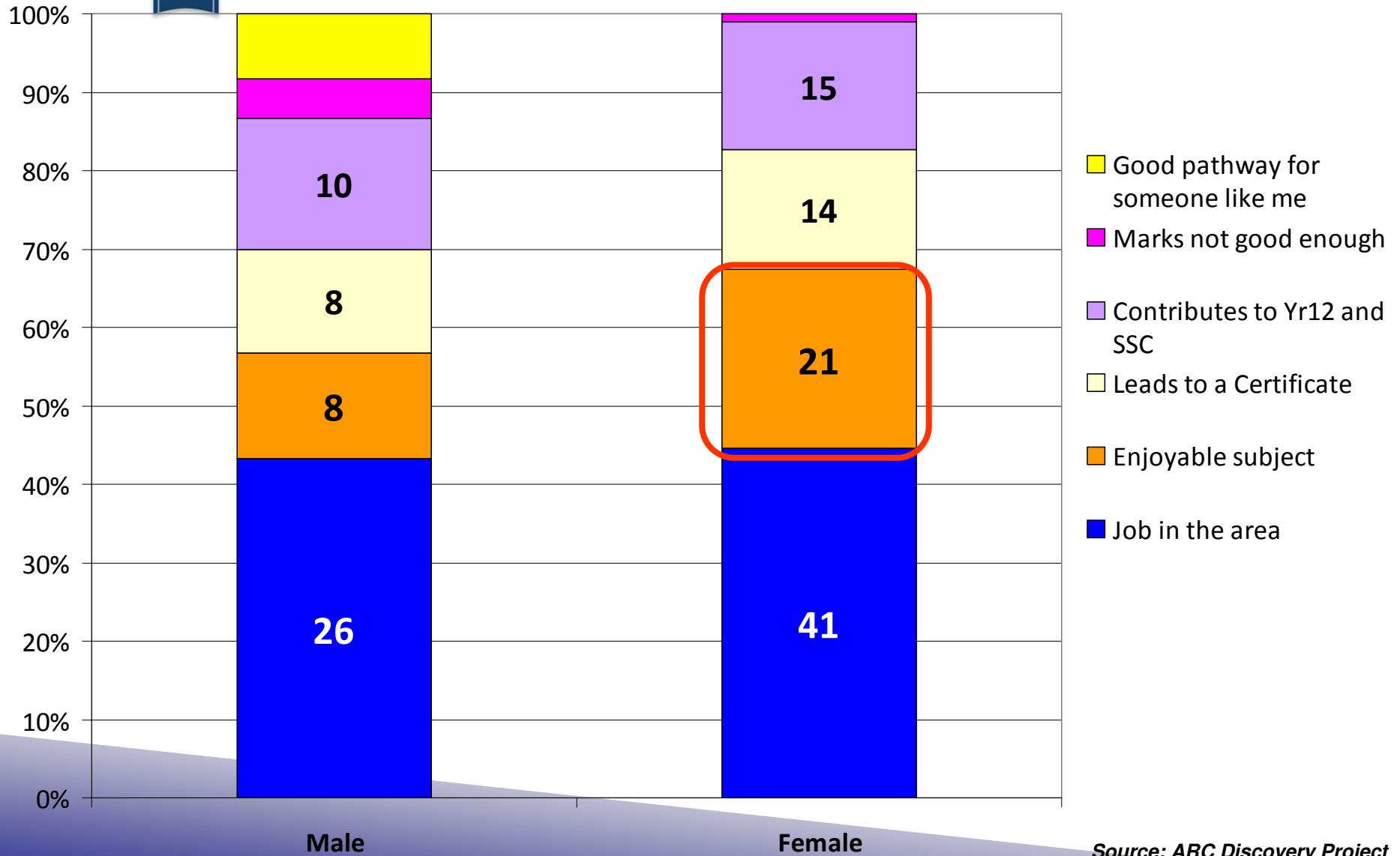
Motivations for choosing VET in Schools



Student views

- ▶ “I was going to drop out in Year 10 and go work in the hospitality industry but the school convinced me to stay.” (Year 11 VET student)
- ▶ “I just thought maybe [academic subjects] would be a bit too much for me and I just thought VET was more hands on and more what I wanted to do.” (Year 11 VET student)
- ▶ “I was told that with VET there wasn’t any exams and stuff and I always thought I was better with like more hands on kind of thing.” (Year 11 VET student)
- ▶ “I was in school just wanting to buy time to see what I would like to do when I’m older, so VET seemed like a good idea.” (Year 11 VET student)
- ▶ “I want to be a nurse but my marks are pretty bad so thought doing [aged care] might give me a chance to get some experience” (Year 11 VET student)

Main reason for choosing VETiS





MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Factors influencing VET choices





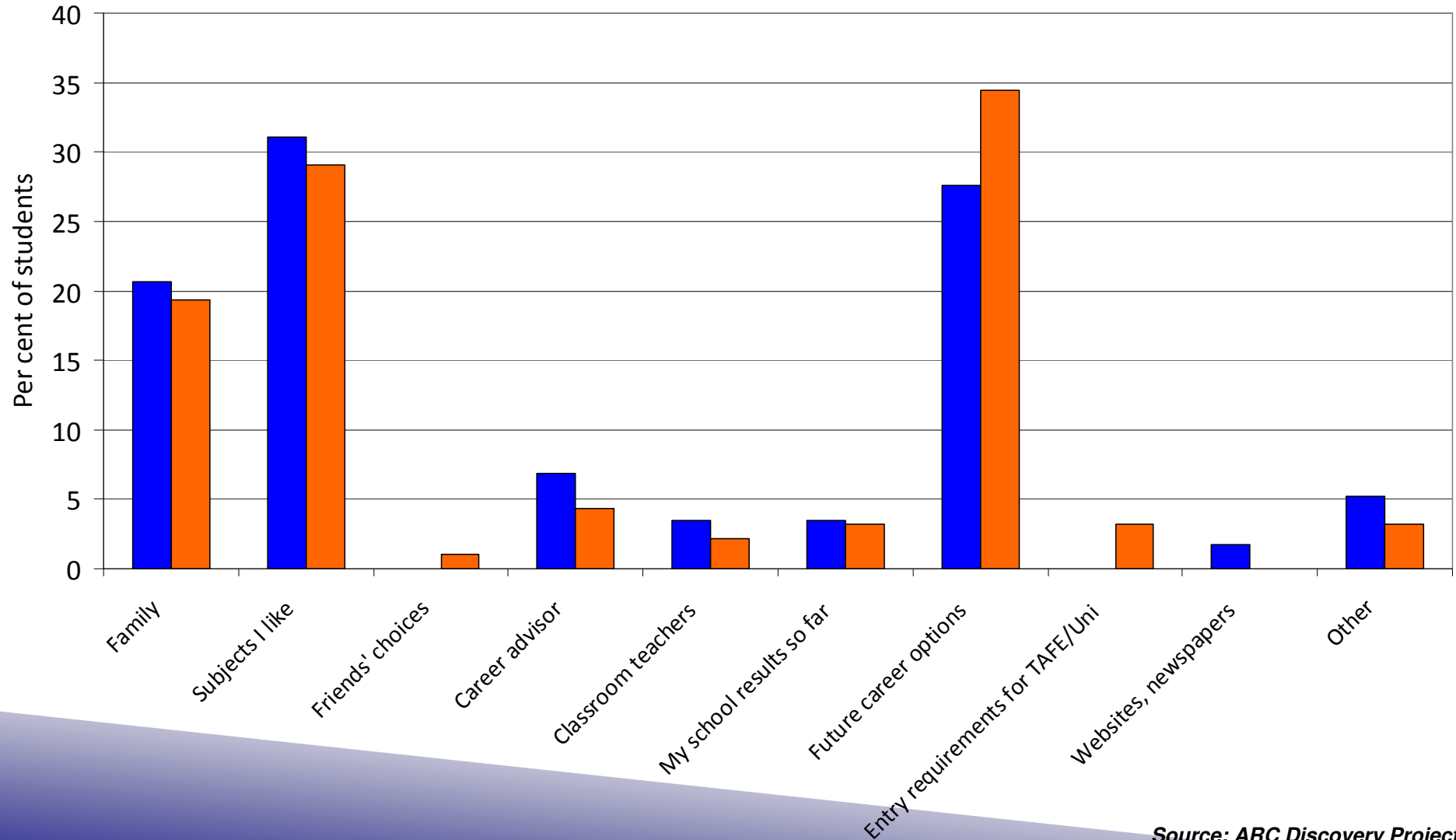
GRADUATE
SCHOOLS

MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Factors influencing VETiS choices

■ Male ■ Female



Source: ARC Discovery Project

Career Guidance

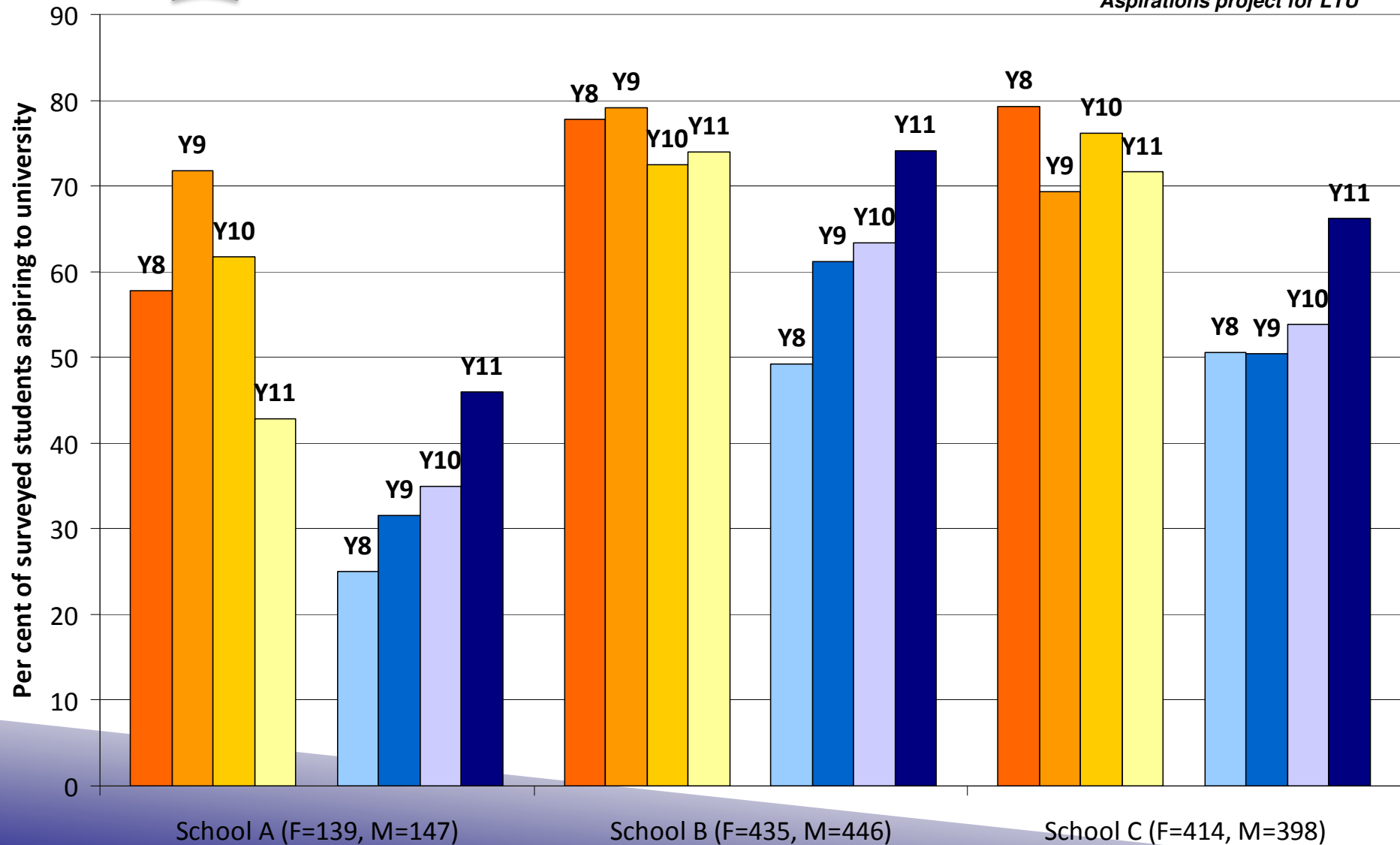
- ▶ *'young people need occupational structures and well-established and reasonably secure routes into the labour market through vocational education'* (Winch & Clarke 2003, p.250)
- ▶ *'students self-select into school VET programs because they see these programs as providing a better match with their (self) perceived academic ability'* (Anlezark et al 2006, p.7).
- ▶ *'an over emphasis by career practitioners on higher education pathways'* (VETiS School Stakeholder)

Student views

- ▶ “They didn’t give us a choice, I was just told I was doing Retail.” (Year 11 VET student)
- ▶ “This is the only [VET] they offer. They are just training us for the factories” (Year 12 VET student)
- ▶ “They [careers counsellor] saw me as a hands on person and they didn’t see me completing the [senior certificate], so I ended up in VET.” (Year 12 VET student)
- ▶ “I heard one of my teachers say you shouldn’t do VET subjects as they scale you down.” (Year 11 VET student)
- ▶ “They [teachers] haven’t said it but you can just tell it’s not as important in their eyes, they never talk about it.” (Year 11 VET student)

Young women & declining aspiration

Source: unpublished data from Aspirations project for LTU



Gender differences in VET

- ▶ Strong policy focus on trade apprenticeships.
- ▶ Overwhelming message from students interviewed that there are “boys subjects & girls subjects”.
- ▶ Apprenticeship pathway strong for both early leaving and school completing young men.
- ▶ *A gender gap may be emerging* - women who leave school early obtain casual, part-time and often low-skilled jobs and experience a highly competitive job market, with precarious and/ or under-employment (Spierings, 2005; McMillan and Curtis, 2008).



MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

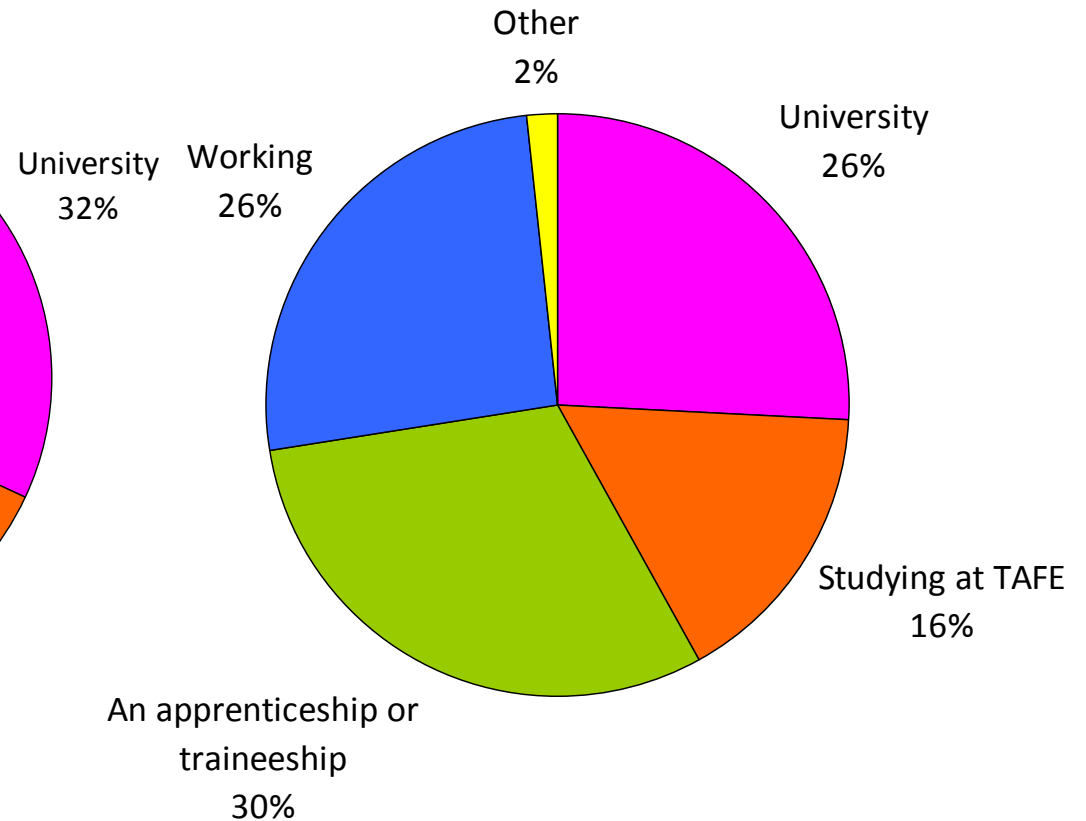
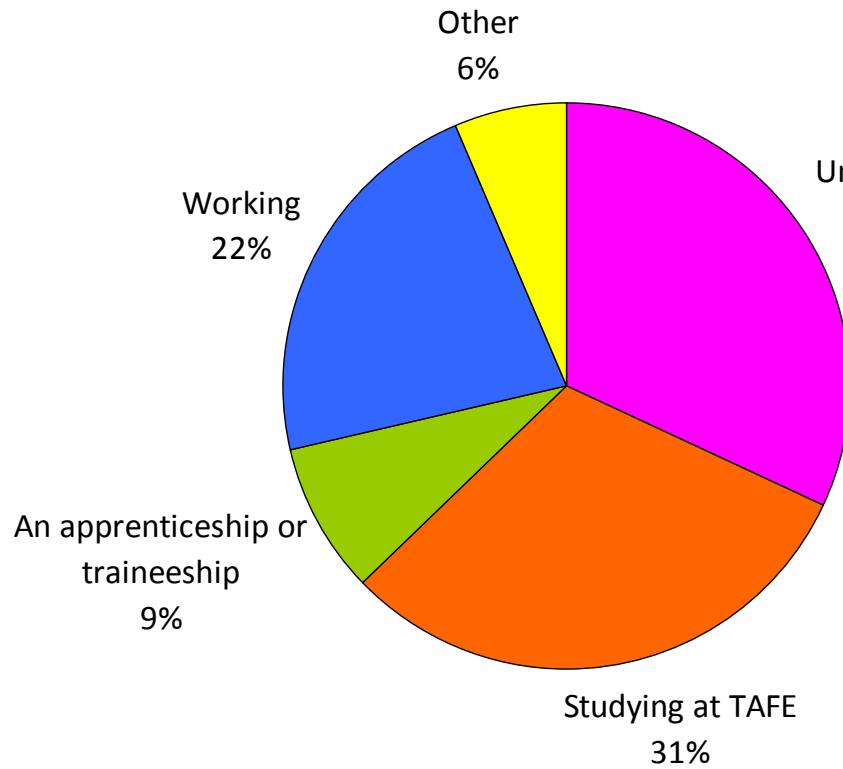
Expectations from VET in Schools?



Aspirations of VETiS Students

Women

Men





MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Overview

- ▶ VETiS Landscape
- ▶ Motivations & expectations of young women in VETiS
- ▶ **Outcomes for young women**
- ▶ Structural dilemmas



A vision for VET in Schools

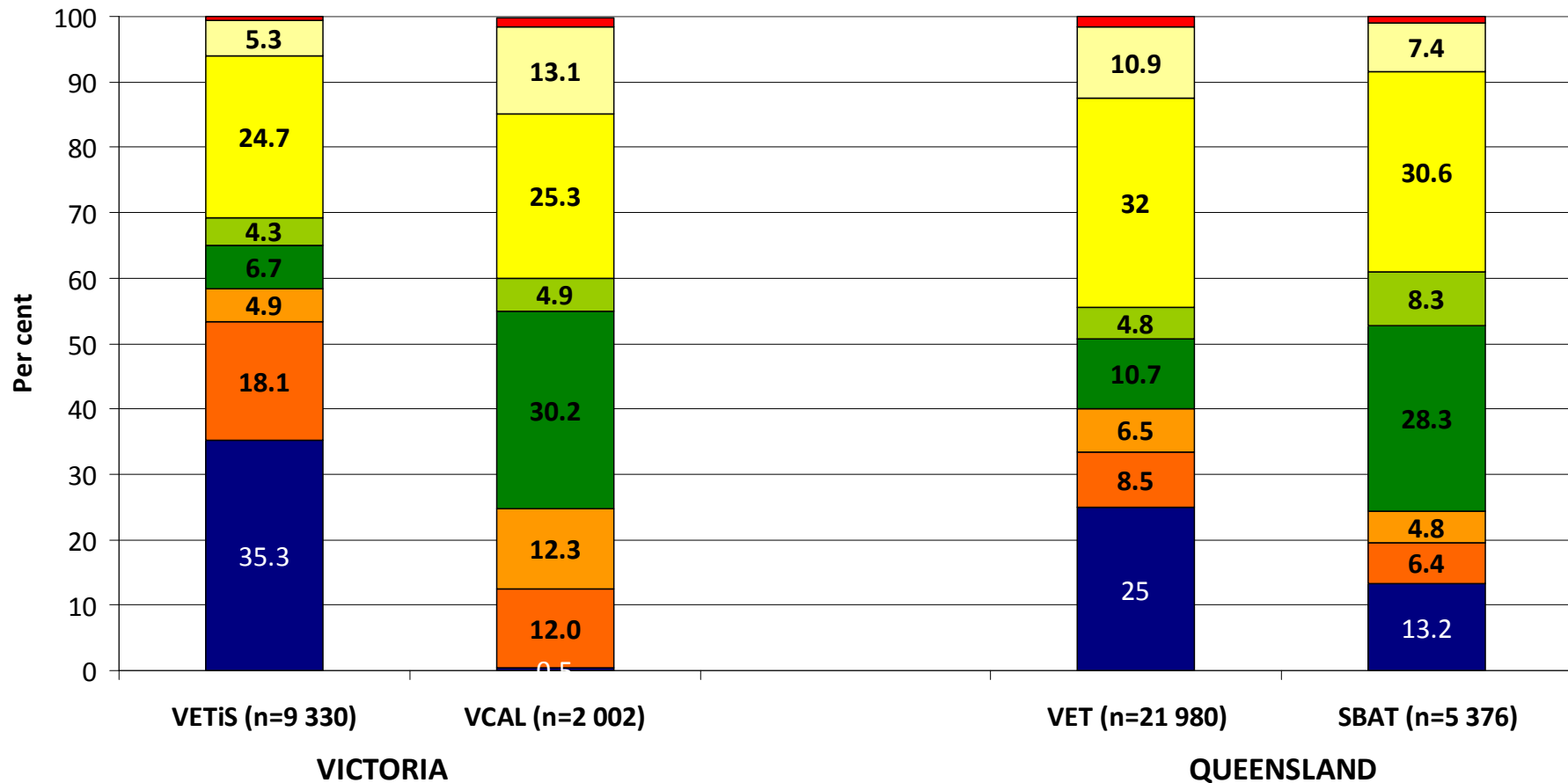
- ▶ *“Vocational education in schools assists all young people to secure their own futures by **enhancing their transition to a broad range of post-school options and pathways**. It engages students in work related learning built on strategic partnerships between schools, business, industry and the wider community”*

(MCEETYA 2000, p11).

Post-school Outcomes (QLD, VIC)

- University
- Certificate IV+
- Certificate I-III
- Apprenticeship
- Traineeship
- Employed
- Looking for work
- NILFET

Source: DEECD Victoria; QLD DET



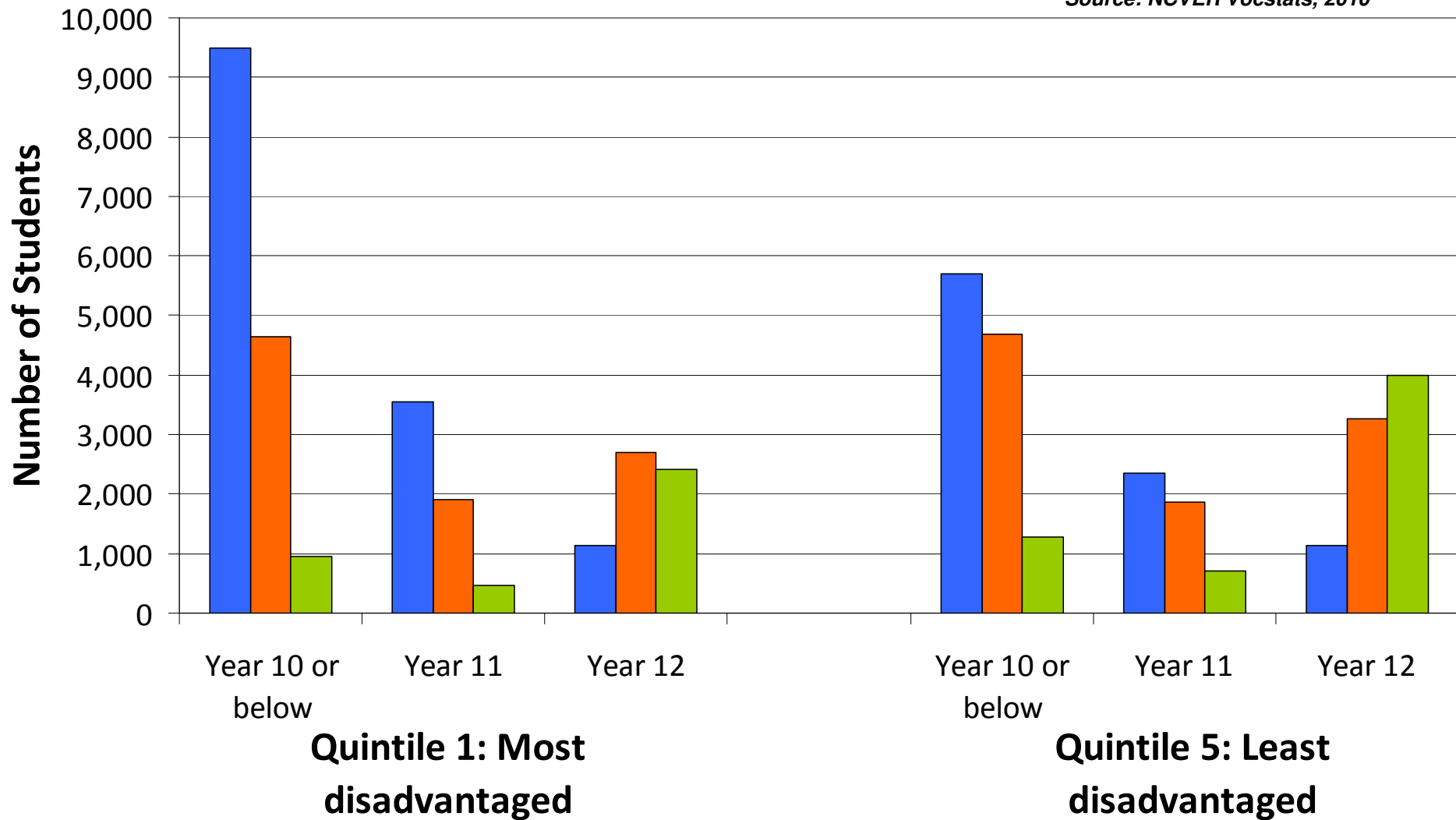
Female school completers in VET

■ Certificate I/II

■ Certificate III

■ Certificate IV+

Source: NCVET Vocstats, 2010





MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Overview

- ▶ VETiS Landscape
- ▶ Motivations & expectations of young women in VETiS
- ▶ Outcomes for young women
- ▶ **Structural dilemmas**



The Senior Secondary Certificates

- ▶ Significant variation in location and value of VETiS within the senior secondary certificates
- ▶ Of 141 school staff surveyed in a related ARC Discovery project, there was overwhelming endorsement (95.2%) of VET in Schools as *'part of a modern secondary school's core mission'*.
- ▶ *"Students are forced to choose – they either commit to VET and cut off [any] chance of a university rank, or they do a bit of VET on the side which doesn't really amount to much and will be pretty well useless for a job."* (Policy-level stakeholder)



MELBOURNE GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

What is the purpose of VET within the senior secondary curriculum?

- ▶ **‘Work ready skills** and knowledge that underpins industry workplace requirements.’
- ▶ ‘Facilitat[ing] a **smoother transition for all young people into employment.**’
- ▶ “Provision of relevant vocational training with a workplace learning component that leads into strong future vocational pathways that **address emerging and current skill shortages and aligns with employer and industry needs.**”
- ▶ ‘provid[ing] [non-university entrance] eligible students with a **viable interacting transition to work.**’
- ▶ “To facilitate a **smoother transition for all young people into employment, society and the general community** and provide life skills and work skills that are transferable and support youth transition more effectively than the traditional school curriculum.”

Dilemmas influencing effectiveness

- ▶ Disconnect between the education pathway model of VETiS and the community expectation of VETiS as an employment pathway.
- ▶ An unclear purpose for VETiS potentially undermining strength of pathway.
- ▶ Lack of transparency and/or knowledge of VETiS to post-school VET pathways.
- ▶ Lack of sufficient and appropriate workplace learning that is integrated with theoretical learning
- ▶ The problematic moniker “VET in Schools”.



A Strong Foundation?



MELBOURNE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Shaping minds, shaping the world

Thank you.

Contact: kirac@unimelb.edu.au

Entry to Vocations Discussion Paper available online at
ncver.edu.au