

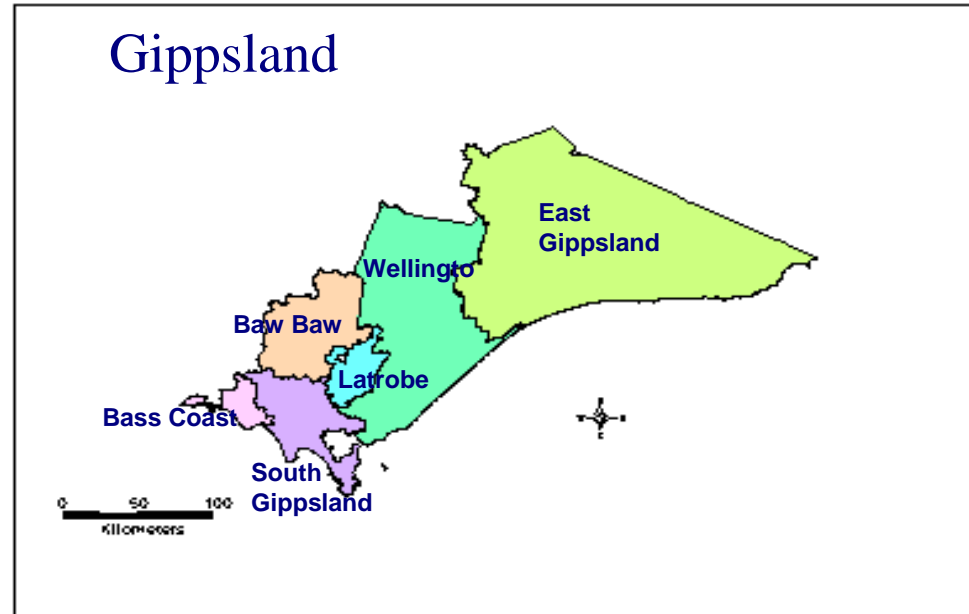


# Gippsland Apprenticeship Research Project

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# Background and funding



- Regional Development Victoria
- Monash University Gippsland
- The six shires of The Gippsland Local Government Network
- Baw Baw Latrobe Local Learning and Employment Network



# Background

- Against a background of current debates around skills shortages and substantial public investment in the VET sector.
- Concerns of local stake holders including:
  - local and state government representatives,
  - trade unions,
  - trainers,
  - youth workers and
  - educationalists
- About seemingly high rates of non-completion
  - Reportedly anywhere from 25% to 65% depending on industry and scheme
- Why are apprentices and trainees failing to complete their training?



# Objectives

- to ascertain the real level of attrition in the region
- to identify the factors which lead to attrition
- to compare the reasons for non-completion given by the apprentices and trainees with the perceptions of other stakeholders
- to compare the different experiences of non-completers with completers and those still in-training
- to compare the experiences of apprentices with those of trainees.
- to provide recommendations to address the issues identified by the research, both for the local region and with a view to broader application



# Methodology

- Methodologically, the project was divided into three stages which comprised:
  - The analysis of existing literature and statistical data
  - Forums, meetings and in-depth interviews with local stakeholders
  - Interviews with apprentices and trainees, both in training and non-completers.



# Parameters of the research

## □ Industries:

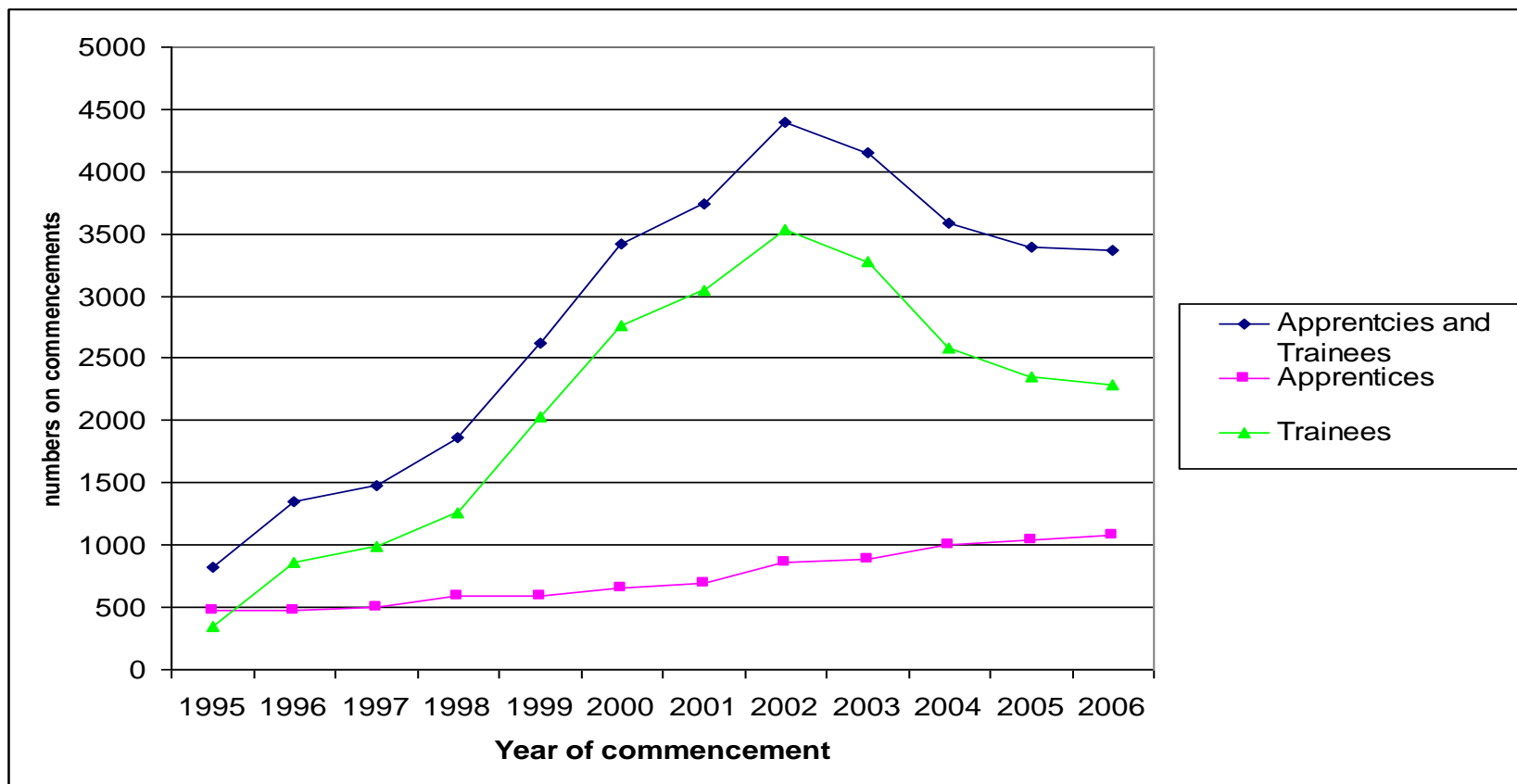
- Construction
- Engineering
- Retail
- Hospitality

## □ Timeframe:

- In training data was collected for those in training from 2000-2007
- Completion data for those commencing from 1995-2000

# Statistics:

■ Chart 1. Apprentice and trainee commencements in Gippsland 1995-2006



Note: A traditional apprentice is defined by NCVET as: “those contracts in the trades or related workers occupational group at AQF level III qualification or above with more than two years expected duration for fulltime contracts and more than eight years ... for part time or school based contracts”

# Statistics:

## Completion rates in Gippsland

Table 2: Apprentice Completion Rates for Cohorts Commencing 1995-2000 (%)

Year of Commencement	Completion rate (%)
1995	72.9
1996	75.1
1997	71.3
1998	77.5
1999	72.1
2000	69.6
<b>Average completion rate</b>	<b>73.1</b>

Table 3: Trainee Completion Rates for Cohorts Commencing 1995-2002 (%)

Year of Commencement	Completion rate (%) (n=14832)
1995	57.4
1996	56.1
1997	56.3
1998	58.3
1999	59.7
2000	56.4
2001	58.1
2002	58.5
<b>Average completion rate</b>	<b>57.6</b>

# Statistics:

## Completion rates in Gippsland

Table 4: Apprentice Completion Rates by Occupation for Cohorts Commencing 1995-2000 (%)

Year of Commencement	Engineering (n=551)	Construction (n=651)	Cookery (n=231)
1995	86.4	73.2	53.0
1996	81.2	81.2	52.1
1997	84.5	80.3	26.8
1998	92.7	78.7	52.9
1999	78.1	76.6	51.2
2000	83.0	77.3	51.0
Average completion rate	84.3	77.9	47.8

# Statistics:

## Completion rates in Gippsland

Table 5: Trainee Completion Rates by Occupation for Cohorts Commencing 1995-2002 (%)

Year of Commencement	Retail (n=2779)	Hospitality (n=980)	Business Administration (n=1514)	Meat (n=757)
1995	59.6	*20.0	*65.5	*20.0
1996	78.8	*36.4	80.4	*40.2
1997	50.6	*37.8	71.4	58.5
1998	57.5	45.7	68.9	51.4
1999	59.8	60.3	77.6	47.3
2000	59.7	57.1	81.4	35.9
2001	51.2	65.0	78.4	28.3
2002	53.0	66.2	74.0	26.8
<b>Average completion rate</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>38.6</b>

\*Small numbers of trainees in this category may influence completion rate outcomes.

# The Apprentices' and trainees' views

*"I think about leaving every day. Doesn't everyone?"*

**Table 6: Contract status of participants**

Status of interviewee	<i>n</i>	%
Non completers	39	37.1
At risk of not completing	26	24.8
Likely to complete - satisfied	22	21
- dissatisfied	10	9.5
Completed	8	7.6
Total	105	100

# The Apprentices' and trainees' views

**Table 7: Reasons for non-completion of apprenticeships and traineeships**

<b>Most important factors in apprentice/trainee non-completion</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Problems with the workplace</b>	<b>46.4</b>
<b>Problems with the training</b>	<b>17.4</b>
<b>Low wages</b>	<b>11.6</b>
<b>Laid off</b>	<b>7.3</b>
<b>Issues with travel</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>Fired</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Incidental/personal reasons</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>It was only ever a temporary job</b>	<b>2.9</b>

# The Apprentices' and trainees' views

**Table 8: Reasons for potential non-completion amongst those currently in-training but at-risk**

<b>Potential reasons likely to contribute to withdrawal from training</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Problems with the workplace</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Low wages</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Problems with the training</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Lack of support</b>	<b>10.6</b>
<b>It is a requirement of what is probably a temporary job</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>Wrong career choice</b>	<b>2.1</b>

# The Apprentices' and trainees' views

**Table 9: Reasons for dissatisfaction with their apprenticeship/traineeship amongst those currently in-training but likely to complete**

<b>Issues for concern raised by those in-training but likely to complete</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Problems with the workplace</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Problems with the training</b>	<b>18.8</b>
<b>Lack of support</b>	<b>18.8</b>
<b>Low wages</b>	<b>12.4</b>

# Construction Apprentices' views

- Problems with the workplace:

*I started being paid apprenticeship wages and that was before I even signed any papers ... I found out later that I wasn't the first guy. There had been about three other guys my age who I went to school with who all started that job and who all quit for the same reason, because they were being just stuffed around and used for cheap labouring basically (male, construction apprentice, non-completer, aged 19).*

# Construction Apprentices' views

- Problems with the workplace:

*I reckon a lot of people in the trade end up giving it up after the first six months it is just because of this old bloody respect thing that you have got to go through ... they think they are going to sort of beat it into you in a way like give you all the dodgy jobs and I know it is all part of it, but sometimes it turns them off (male, construction apprentice, in-training, aged 23).*

# Construction Apprentices' views

- Quality of Training (on the job)

*the guy that was teaching me [on the job] left ... and I got sent out by myself and had to teach myself as well as another apprentice at the same time ... I was an apprentice trying to learn myself while trying to teach someone else ... then your boss is hounding you because you are not as fast or as qualified when you haven't been trained (male, construction apprentice, non-completer, aged 20).*

# Construction Apprentices' views

- Quality of training (off-the-job)

*It is the way it is being run ... two years I have been there so far and it has just been farcical and the main instructor that we did have was so busy with administrative tasks he never had time to actually instruct and then everyone they have had since him has just been a joke... they are poor teachers ... They are not really qualified to be a teacher. They are not really concerned about whether the kids do anything ... One teacher that they did have that was really good they stopped hiring — because he cost too much was their excuse — and now we get substandard teachers for a cheaper fee. I don't know it just seems a waste of time to me (male, construction apprentice, in-training, aged 22).*

# Construction Apprentices' views

- Lack of support:

*I hadn't seen anyone in a year and a half, I wasn't looked after, no one came to see me and so I was just sort of dropped off the book (male, construction apprentices, non-completer, aged 20).*

*Supposedly if you have any problems you are meant to be able to ring your field officer and he turns up but I haven't seen him in about 18 months. I don't even know who it is any more (male, construction apprentice, in-training, aged 24).*

# Construction Apprentices' views

- Wages

*I could not survive on the apprenticeship wage, I couldn't, and that is what stopped me. I would be gung ho, I would be there tomorrow if they could give me the wage that I am on now (female, construction apprentice, non-completer, aged 38).*

*If I was living out of home and trying to run a car it would probably be a bit hectic, but its enough for me to go and have some fun on weekends with my friends and stuff like that (male, plasterer apprentice, in-training, aged 17).*



# Summary of findings

- General agreement on factors contributing to non-completion between apprentices/trainees and stakeholders, exceptions:
  - Travel less of an issue than stakeholders had perceived
  - Most apprentices and trainees wanted challenging and “real” training
- for many there were multiple contributing factors with the most commonly expressed being:
  - Problems within the workplace, poor quality training, lack of support and low wages



# Summary of findings cont...

- Those most satisfied with their training were likely to be:
  - those employed by large companies and receiving their training from TAFE
  - those employed by group training companies doing their training at TAFE who had been successfully placed with a range of good host employers
- A general cynicism about the system has developed



# Selected Recommendations

- Closer monitoring of employment conditions and training quality
- Minimise the number of traineeships and apprenticeships which are solely on-the-job.
- Provide better support for apprentices and trainees, especially in the early stages of their contracts.
- Australian Apprenticeship Centres should be independent government bodies – this would enhance their support role



# Selected Recommendations

- Increase wages for apprentices and trainees.
- Restructure financial incentives to employers to better reflect the difference in time and commitment between traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Further research into links between the quality of training, the training system and skills shortages to deliver better outcomes for all VET stakeholders and the Australian labour market.