

Positive Futures: Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Queensland

Submission by Independent Schools Queensland

Introduction

Queensland independent schools cater for students from varied socio-economic backgrounds and educate more than 120,000 students at 200 schools, representing 15 per cent of all Queensland school students, and nearly 20 per cent of secondary students in the state. Independent schools are located across the state, with 15% of independent schools classified as rural or remote.

Independent Schools Queensland welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Jobs Queensland Discussion Paper *Positive Futures: Apprenticeships and Traineeships in Queensland*.

The feedback provided focuses on school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

Over 79% of Queensland independent schools offer Vocational Educational and Training as part of their education programs, with 72% having registered school-based apprentices or trainees. Much of this provision is at the senior secondary level. Within the sector, there are several independent schools which exclusively provide technical education including apprenticeships and traineeships¹.

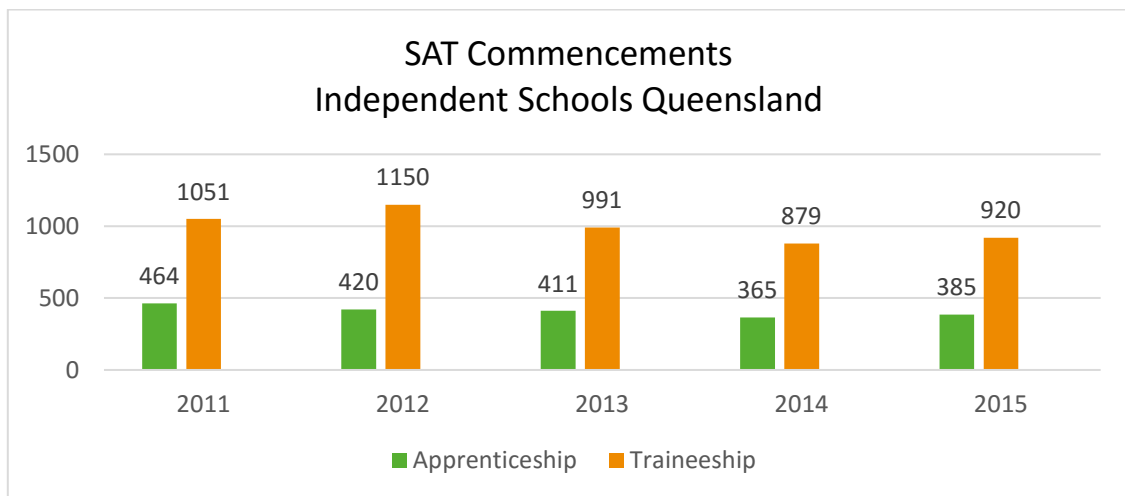
49 independent schools are Registered Training Organisations, whilst other independent schools utilise TAFE or other RTOs to support their provision of VET.

Independent Schools Queensland administers on behalf of the Queensland Government Vocational Education and Training funding for independent schools. The funding is targeted at supporting schools in the provision of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships as well facilitating independent schools to introduce Vocational Education and Training initiatives. Professional learning support is also provided for teachers in the area of VET.

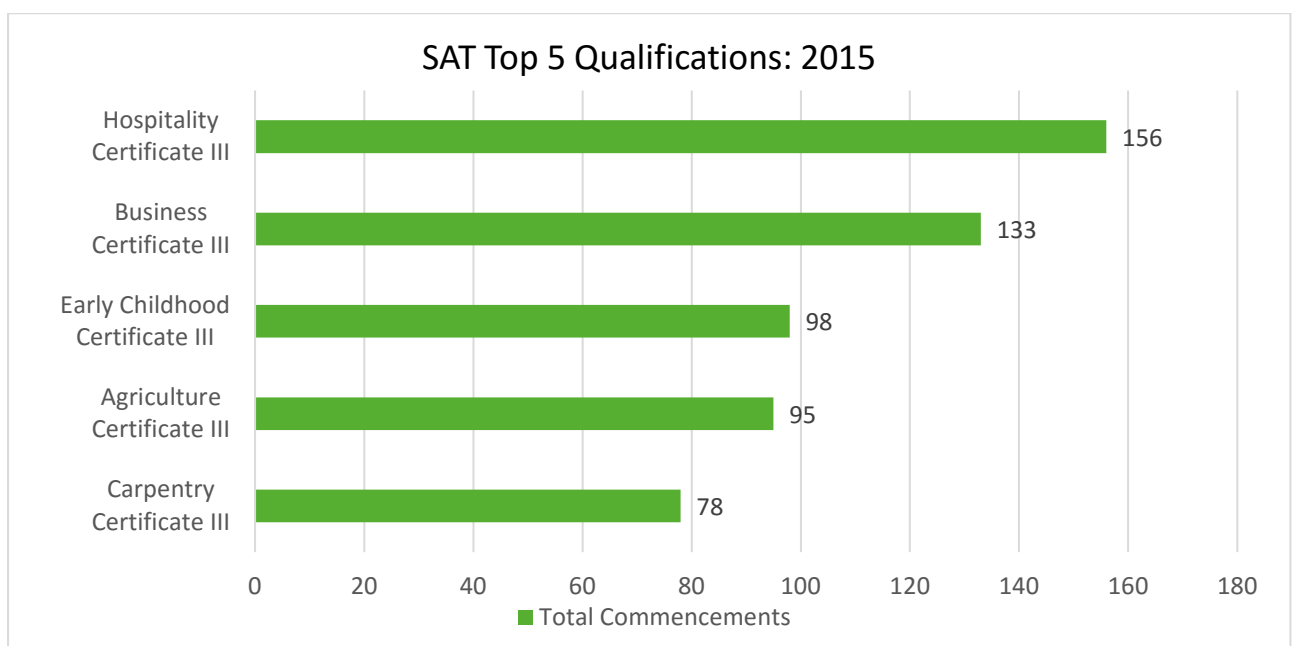
SAT Commencements in the Independent Sector

- Similar to the discussion paper findings, the number of students commencing school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland independent Schools peaked in 2012.
- Commencements over the last 4 years have been inconsistent.

¹ These include Tec-NQ, Australian Trade Industry College (Gold Coast and Redlands) and Australian Trade College North Brisbane. These schools will be joined by the Australian Technology and Agricultural College in 2017.



- Changes in government priority funding has had a negative impact on participation in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in independent schools.
- Information available to schools and industry on User Choice funding and employer incentive payments needs to be simplified, as the current presentation of information is complex and therefore not widely understood. Practical examples of potential gap training fees across a variety of qualifications may be beneficial to VET in Schools staff. A simple flyer that illustrates commencement and completion incentive payments may be of use to schools in sourcing new employers.
- The top 5 qualifications undertaken by school-based trainees and apprentices in independent schools in 2015 were: -

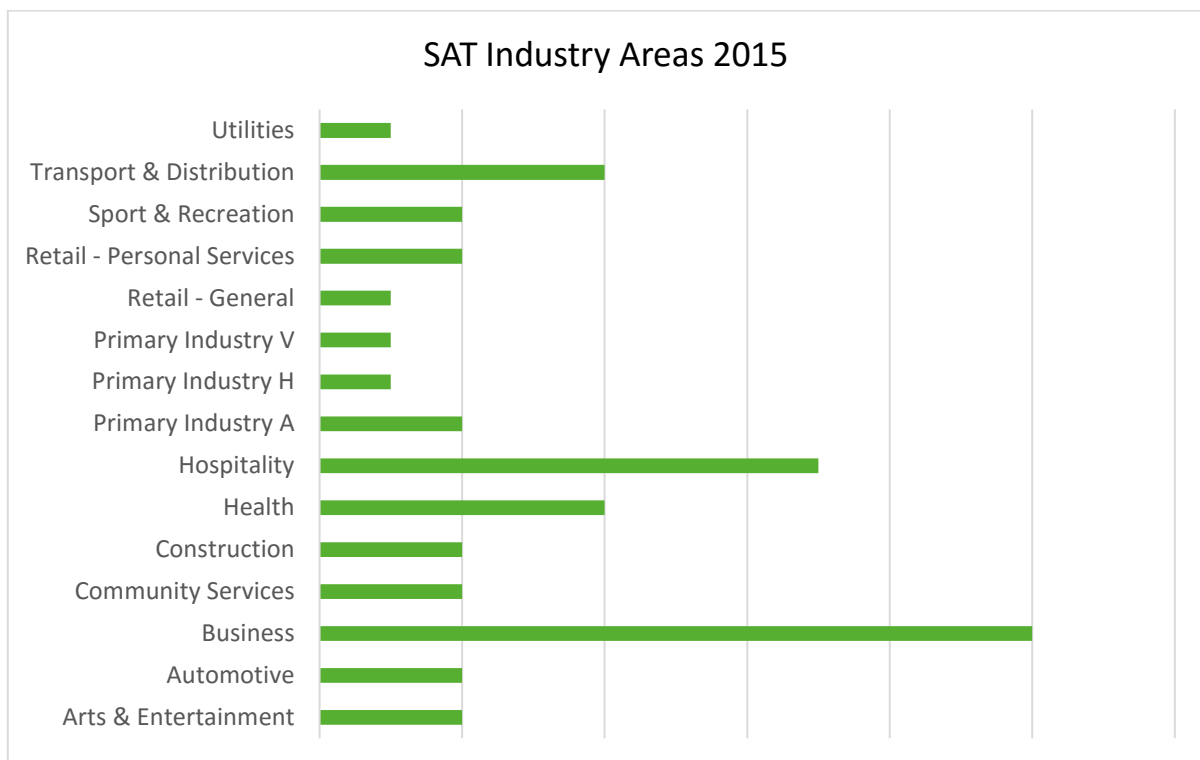


- The above qualifications have consistently been in the top 5 list since 2012. The data indicates funding changes have not increased the presence of priority 1 courses over other courses.

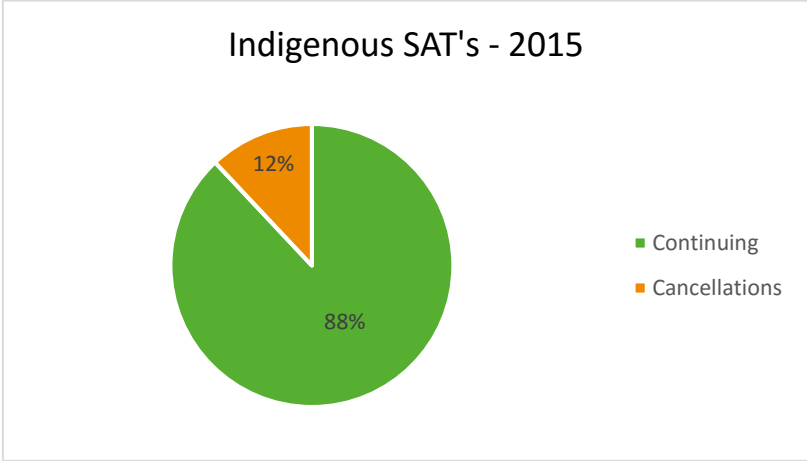
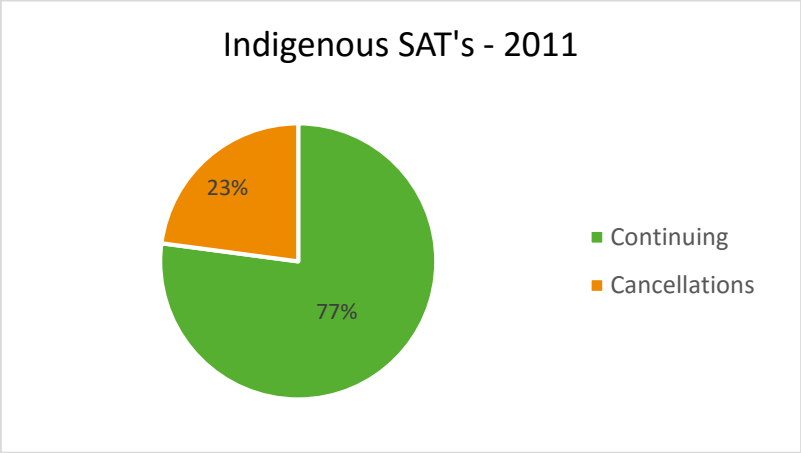
Qualification	Priority Funding	Potential to access no gap fee training
Certificate III in Early Childhood and Care	1	√
Certificate III in Carpentry	1	√
Certificate III Agriculture	2	√
Certificate III Hospitality	3	√
Certificate III Business	3	√

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Apprentices and Trainees in the Independent Schools Sector

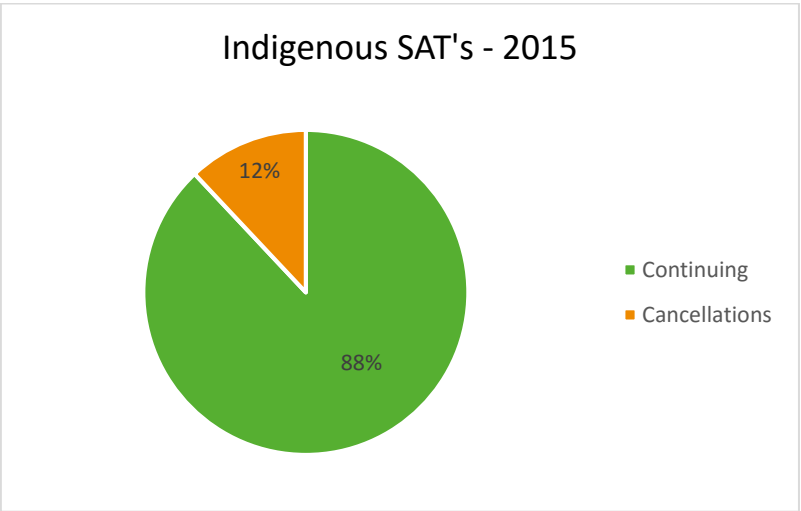
- There is greater variation in the qualifications undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students: -

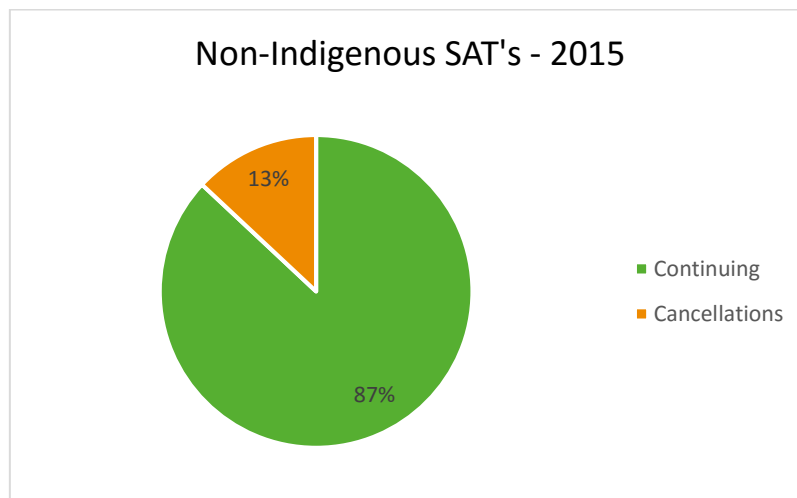


- This is driven by to the fact that students who are of Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander origin are part of a 'Priority Population Group' and therefore receive the full government contribution towards training.
- Since 2011, there has been a significant decrease in the number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students cancelling their traineeship or apprenticeship: -



- The gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous commencements and cancellations has closed significantly across Independent Schools: -





It is considered that the ability to choose a qualification suited to the needs of the student is a key driver in closing the gap, as well as increased school-based support in career advice.

Benefits of School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

- Smooth transition to post-school employment and guaranteed employment.
- Apprentices may potentially complete their first year of apprenticeship, meaning they are eligible for second year wages following Year 12. This is a significant benefit for some students, particularly those living independently or transitioning from care situations.
- Engaging in a SAT can provide the motivation some students require to remain at school and complete their Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), which can enhance future transitions to tertiary study and employment.
- SATs may contribute between 5 and 8 credits towards the QCE.
- Students acquire and apply core skills for work and foundation skills prior to finishing school and as such, are 'work ready' post Year 12.

Challenges of School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

- Release time during the school term for students to engage in on and off-the-job training, particularly if the employer requires the apprentice to complete a block of on-the-job training (e.g. 'fit out' with a carpenter; opportunity to experience the preparation required for different shifts in a commercial cookery environment).
- There is always the risk of cancellation due to the young persons' lack of occupational / industry understanding, or work experience, prior to the sign-up.
- Career Education needs to begin prior to the SET Planning process in Year 10 if students are to understand the long-term commitment required to complete an apprenticeship, and the difference between an apprenticeship and traineeship.
- Raising the status of VET and traditional trades in school environments – apprenticeships and traineeships are still often viewed as a second-rate option for those students not 'academically' inclined.

- The provision of specialist and well-trained school personnel who are experienced in the SAT system. This could be resolved by targeted government funding to schools.

Initiatives to address these challenges would considerably contribute to the decline in the number of commencements experienced in independent schools since 2012.

Examples from Independent Schools; School-based Traineeship leading to tertiary study

Case Study 1:

- Year 12 Traineeship; Certificate III in Sport and Recreation
- Post Year 12 TAFE: Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled)
- University study; Bachelor of Nursing

Case Study 2:

- Year 12 Traineeship: Certificate III in Education Support
- Post Year 12 TAFE: Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care
- University study: Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Independent schools in Queensland make a significant contribution to the presence of Vocational Education and Training, including SATs. There are many outstanding examples of individual student achievement, which have been formally recognised at the Queensland Training Awards and through the Australian Vocational Student Prize, including Prime Minister's Awards for Skills Excellence.

Conclusion

Independent Schools Queensland supports the ongoing provision of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in secondary schools, and their contribution towards the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). SATs are a popular option for students, whether their post-school aspirations include work and / or further study at TAFE or University. They are a vehicle for real-world learning experiences, equipping young people with both the technical skills required for work in specific industries, and the generic skills that can be transferred from one workplace to another.

If the challenges associated with SATs are addressed, students will continue to benefit from a course of study that caters to their individual needs, and facilitates the transition from school to a diverse range of education, training and employment pathways.