



Australian Government

VET **Student** Loans



Annual Statistical Report -2022

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Data referenced in this report are from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

This report is for the 2022 calendar year data and reported as of the extraction date of 4 April 2023.

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Introduction

This annual report provides information on the level of VET Student Loans (VSL) provided to eligible students. Also included is a detailed analysis of the VSL student population, including a breakdown by age, gender, location, provider type and Indigenous status.

To be eligible, students must meet requirements under Part 2, Division 2, Section 9 of the *VET Student Loans Act 2016* (the Act). A student must:

- be enrolled in the course
- have provided the course provider with any information and documents required by VET Student Loans Rules 2016 (the Rules)
- meet any other requirements set out in the Rules
- be undertaking the course primarily at a campus in Australia, and
- have applied for a VSL for the course in accordance with Division 4.

The student must also be:

- an Australian citizen or
- the holder of a permanent humanitarian visa who is usually resident in Australia or
- a qualifying New Zealand citizen.

The two six-month reports for 2022 are not combined to provide the 2022 Annual Report as data can be updated by providers after the reporting period. Furthermore, student counts and enrolment counts are calculated across the entire year, so a student that studied in both halves of the year will only be counted once in this report, whereas they would have been reported in each of the six-monthly reports. As such, figures in this report represent a point-in-time.

Background

The VSL program commenced on 1 January 2017. It replaced the VET FEE-HELP scheme which closed to new students on 31 December 2016. The program offers income contingent loans to eligible students studying approved course(s) at the Diploma level and above.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department), as the regulator, has a range of powers including holding providers to account in cases of contravention of the Act.

The loan amount available to eligible students depends on the type of course they are enrolled in. The list of current VSL approved courses and maximum loan amounts by course is available in the [VSL \(Courses and Loan Caps\) Determination 2016](#).

The data tables provided as an attachment to this report provides detailed information on student numbers, approved course providers, loan amounts, courses, tuition, and course completions.

Executive Summary

In 2022, 30,003 eligible students undertook study of approved courses and/or training under the Australian Government VSL program. Tuition fees charged by approved providers to these students were around \$235 million. The total VSL amount paid to meet the cost of tuition was approximately \$222.7 million (about 95% of total tuition fees) and students paid the remaining \$11.8 million (5%) as upfront contributions.

Students can only use VSL to pay for approved courses, as prescribed under the Act.

There were 218 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that operated as approved course providers. TAFEs were the largest provider type in terms of the number of students that accessed the VSL program. TAFE Queensland was the largest provider enrolling about 20% (6,433 students) of VSL students.

The average amount charged in tuition fees was around \$7,800 (including aviation) and the average VSL loan per student was around \$7,400. Tuition fees charged for aviation-related courses have an upward impact on the average VSL loan amount. Excluding aviation courses, the average VSL amount is lower at about \$5,200.

VSL students reported undertaking their studies in various ways, including employer-based training and online attendance. In-person training remains the most popular mode of delivery for about 60% of courses.

Indigenous Australian students make up about 3.2% (960 students) of the total number of VSL students with an average loan amount of around \$6,000. This population distribution is broadly in line with the representation of Indigenous Australians in the general population. Of these about 43% (418) live outside major cities.

Approximately 3,230 VSL students reported to be living with disability. This is about 10.8% of the VSL student population.

Two-thirds of VSL students (20,317) identify as female. About a third (9,532) identify as male and a small number identified as indeterminate/intersex/unspecified.

Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds account for about 12% (3,603) of the VSL student population.

Young people under 25 years of age account for about half of the VSL student population, 26 – 35 years old account for a further quarter of the VSL student population.

Over 20% of VSL students reported as living outside the major cities. The average VSL amounts for students in remote areas (\$8,750) and very remote areas (\$9,500) are significantly higher than the general VSL average of around \$7,400.

The number of VSL students and VSL loan amounts have been decreasing year on year. Student numbers decreased from a peak of about 58,000 in 2018 to about 30,000 in 2022. This is about a 48% decrease in student numbers.

Additional information on VSL students' characteristics, including their Indigenous status, gender and location is provided in the analysis section below.

Key Findings

This section provides an overview of the VSL program from 2017 to 2022. The 2022 calendar year analysis includes a breakdown by provider type, monthly figures, state, gender, and Indigenous status.

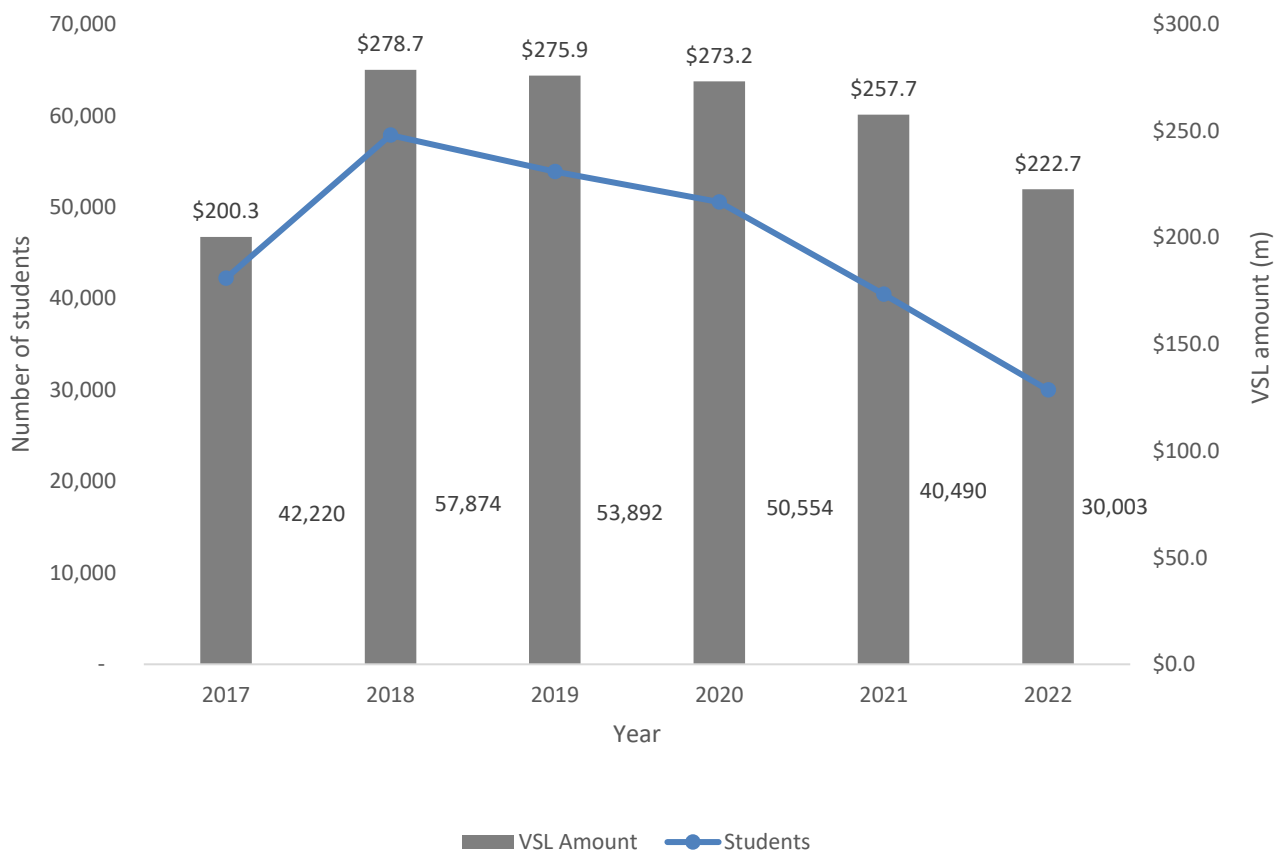
Time series analysis of the VSL program – 2017 to 2022

Between 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2022, the Australian Government provided around \$1.5 billion in fiscal outlays through the VSL program to eligible students to study at approved providers. Over this period, the program assisted about 46,000 students with about \$251 million in VSL per year, on average.

The number of VSL students and VSL loan amounts have been decreasing year on year, see Figure 1 below.

Student numbers decreased from a peak of about 58,000 in 2018 to about 30,000 in 2022. This is about a 48% decrease in student numbers. Demand for VSL has been impacted by economic factors such as a tight labour market and the implementation of programs such as JobTrainer and Fee-Free TAFE.

Figure 1: VSL Student numbers and VSL Loan amount (2017 to 2022)



Approved provider type

There were 218 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) that operated as approved course providers. Of these, 155(71 per cent) providers reported students that accessed the VSL program.

A breakdown of the 155 approved course providers with VSL students in 2022 is below:

- 23 were TAFEs
- 9 were other public institutions (including public universities and other non-TAFE publicly owned providers), and
- 123 were independent providers (including independent universities, and both not-for-profit and for-profit independent providers).

TAFEs, as the state and territory governments' main providers of vocational education and training, have the largest number of VSL students among provider types. TAFE Queensland is the largest VSL provider, and its delivery of the Diploma of Nursing, which is the most popular VSL course, contributes to the higher proportion of VSL students in TAFEs compared to the other provider types.

Public providers (TAFEs and other public providers) account for about 64% of students that accessed VSL in 2022. See Table 1 below for further information.

Table 1: Number and percentage of VSL providers and students by provider type, 2022

Provider Type	Providers		Students	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
TAFE	23	14.8	14,028	46.7
Other Public	9	5.8	5,187	17.3
Independent	123	79.4	10,846	36.1
Total*	155	100.0	30,061	100.0

* The total is not a unique count of students as some students studied across multiple provider types

Of the total VSL amount paid, independent providers accounted for 57% (\$127.4 million) despite only accounting for about 36% (10,846) of students. Conversely, public providers accounted for around two-thirds of VSL students but only accounted for less than half (about \$95 million) of the VSL paid amount. The average VET student loan for a TAFE student is about \$4,600, other public provider student is about \$5,850 and independent provider student is about \$11,750.

Approximately 98.5% (\$95.3 million) of total tuition fees charged to VSL students at public providers (TAFEs and/or other public VSL providers) are covered by VSL. This share is marginally lower for VSL students at independent providers (92.5%). See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Tuition fees, VSL amount and amount paid upfront by provider type, 2022

Provider Type	Tuition Charged Amount		VET Students Loan Amount		*Upfront Paid Amount	
	(\$, m)	Percentage	(\$, m)	Percentage	(\$, m)	Percentage
TAFE	66.0	28.1	65.0	29.2	1.1	9.0
Other Public	30.8	13.1	30.4	13.6	0.4	3.6
Independent	137.7	58.7	127.4	57.2	10.3	87.4
Total	234.5	100.0	222.7	100.0	11.8	100.0

*Total fees charged minus VSL amount. Figures may not add up due to rounding.

Monthly breakdown of tuition fees charged, VSL amount and impacted students

Around 30,000 students accessed the VSL program in 2022, accounting for about \$222.7 million in loans. The monthly (census date) breakdown of VSL students is shown in Figure 2. The values of VSL paid and tuition for study undertaken during each month is shown in Figure 3.

About 60% of VSL students reported to have enrolled in the first quarter of the year. The student monthly figures, and the subsequent tuition fees charged, and VSL loans amount paid are higher in March and August, noting this movement is broadly in-line with expectation and is consistent with the commencement period of courses.

Figure 2: Monthly VSL student numbers, 2022

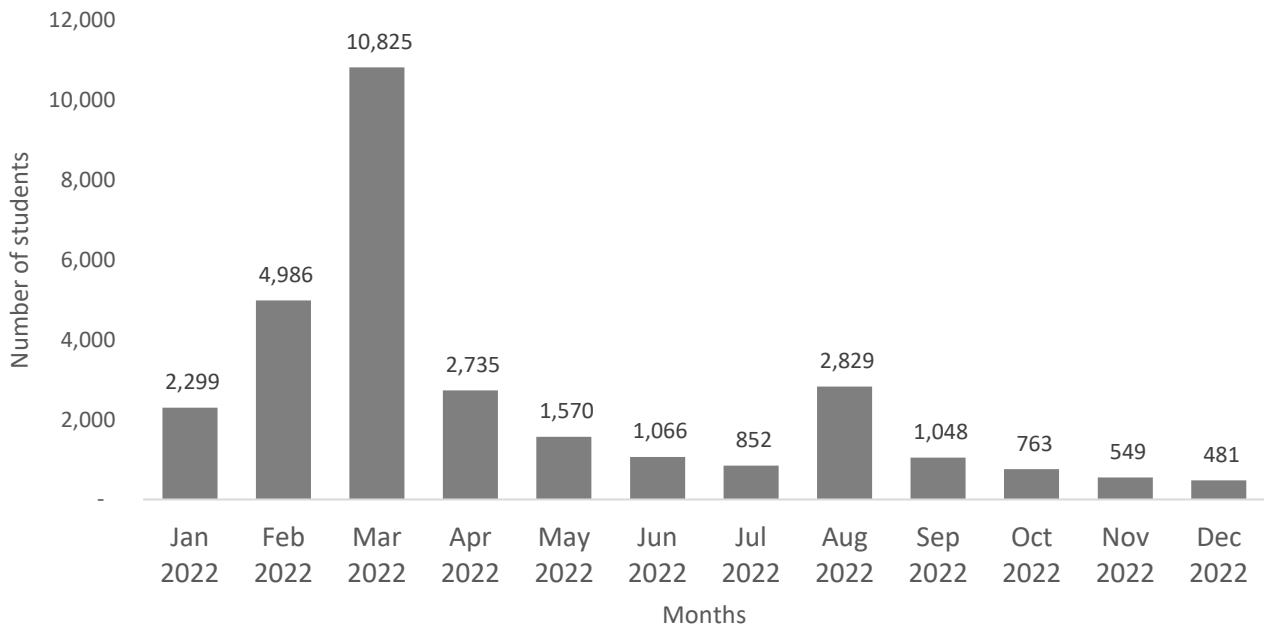
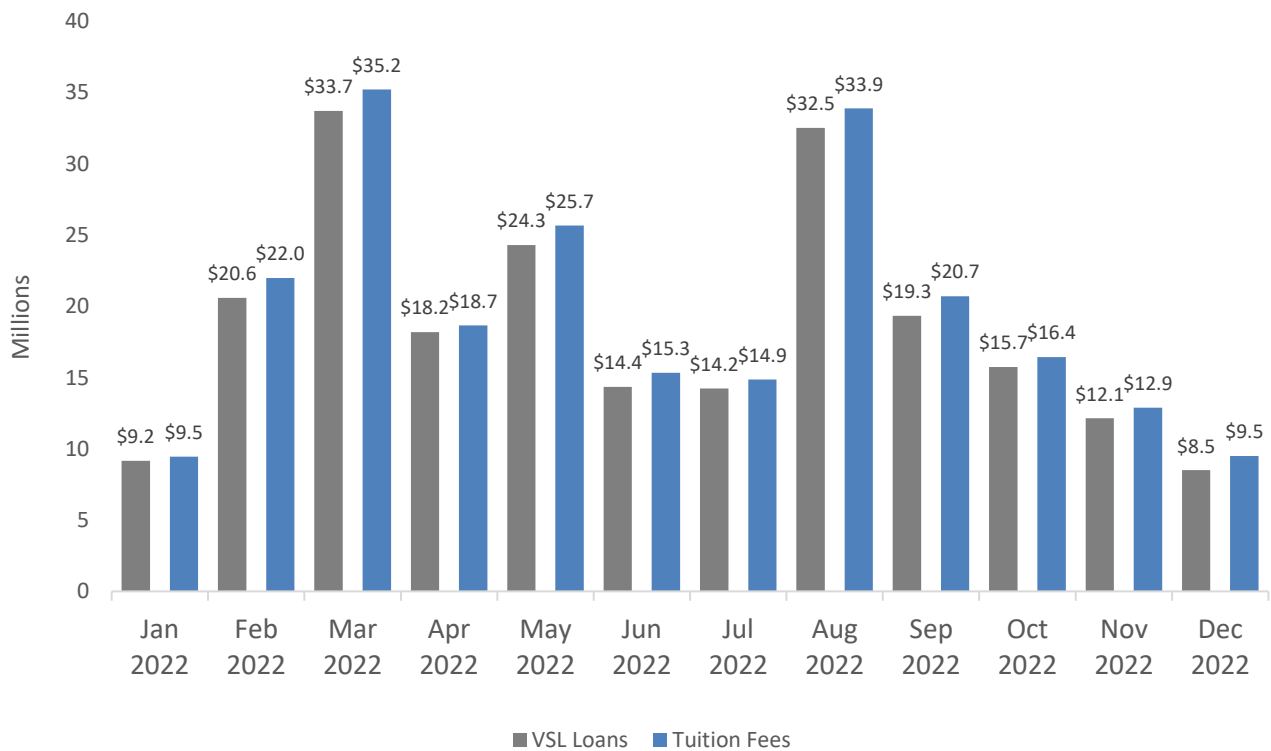


Figure 3: Monthly VSL amount and Tuition fees, 2022



Location - states and territories

At the State and Territories distribution of VSL students, Queensland (32.8%), Victoria (30.1%), and New South Wales (16.3%), accounts for most of the VSL recipients. The spread of VSL students is broadly in line with the national population spread in all states except for Queensland and Victoria which are overrepresented and New South Wales which is underrepresented (see Table 3).

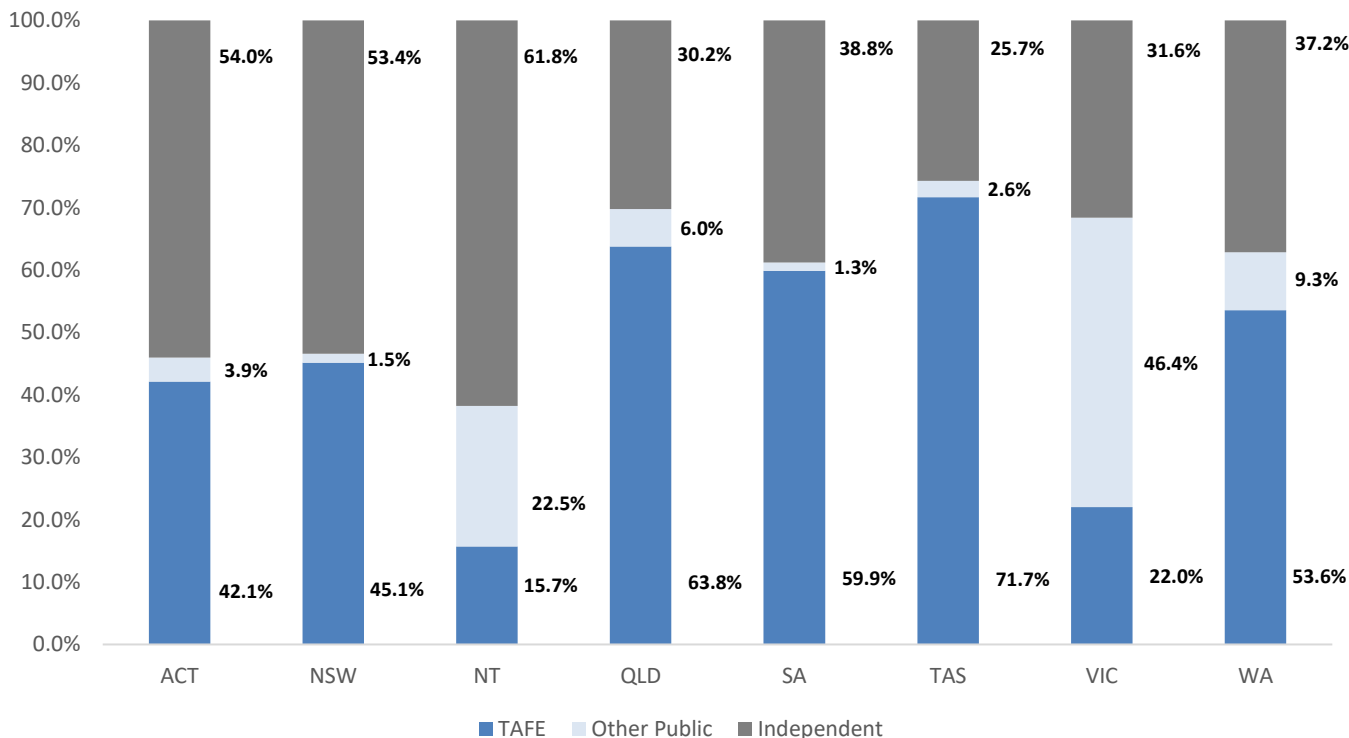
Table 3: Number of VSL students by States and Territories, 2022

States and Territories	Number of students	Share of total
Australian Capital Territory	311	1.0%
New South Wales	4,894	16.3%
Northern Territory	102	0.3%
Queensland	9,843	32.8%
South Australia	2,592	8.6%
Tasmania	607	2.0%
Victoria	9,035	30.1%
Western Australia	2,608	8.7%
*N/A	11	0.0%
Total	30,003	100%

*Missing reported addresses/state indicator

Figure 4 below shows the proportion of VSL students per provider type across states and territories. Victoria and Northern Territory have proportionately large numbers of VSL students in other public approved providers. This can be attributed to the location of dual sector universities with proportionately large numbers of VSL students.

Figure 4: Proportion of VSL students share by state* and provider type, 2022



* The state is based on the student's home address.

Location – remoteness

Table 4 shows the spread of VSL students by remoteness. About 20% of VSL students live outside the major cities.

Table 4: Number of VSL recipient students by remoteness, 2022

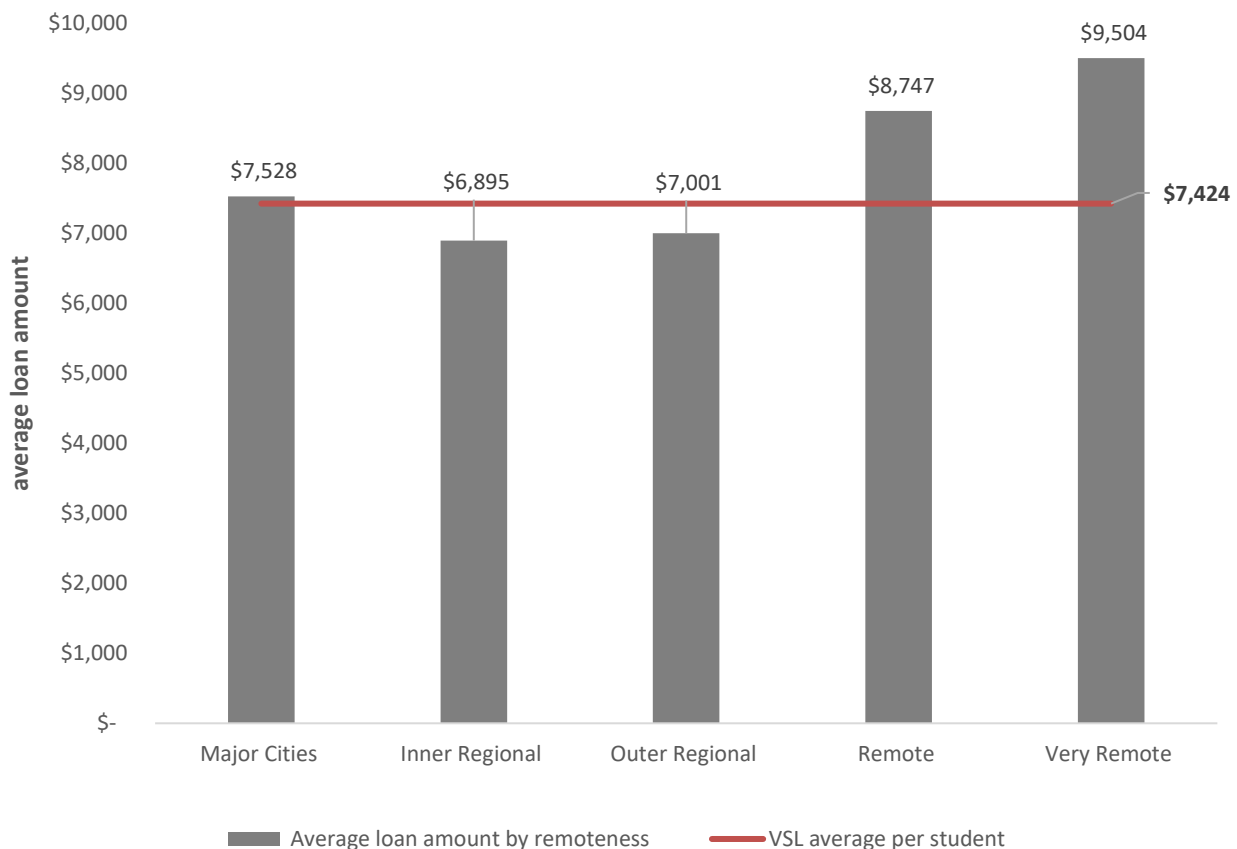
Remoteness	Number of Students	Share of total
Major Cities of Australia	23,799	79.3%
Inner Regional Australia	4,234	14.1%
Outer Regional Australia	1,670	5.6%
Remote Australia	188	0.6%
Very Remote Australia	84	0.3%
*N/A	28	0.1%
Total	30,003	100%

* Missing addresses/remoteness indicator

The average VSL amount per student in remote and very remote areas is higher than the general VSL population student average.

The average VSL loan amount for students in major cities is broadly in line with the total VSL average. Students in inner-regional and outer-regional areas have marginally lower average loan amounts than the total VSL average (see Figure 5 below).

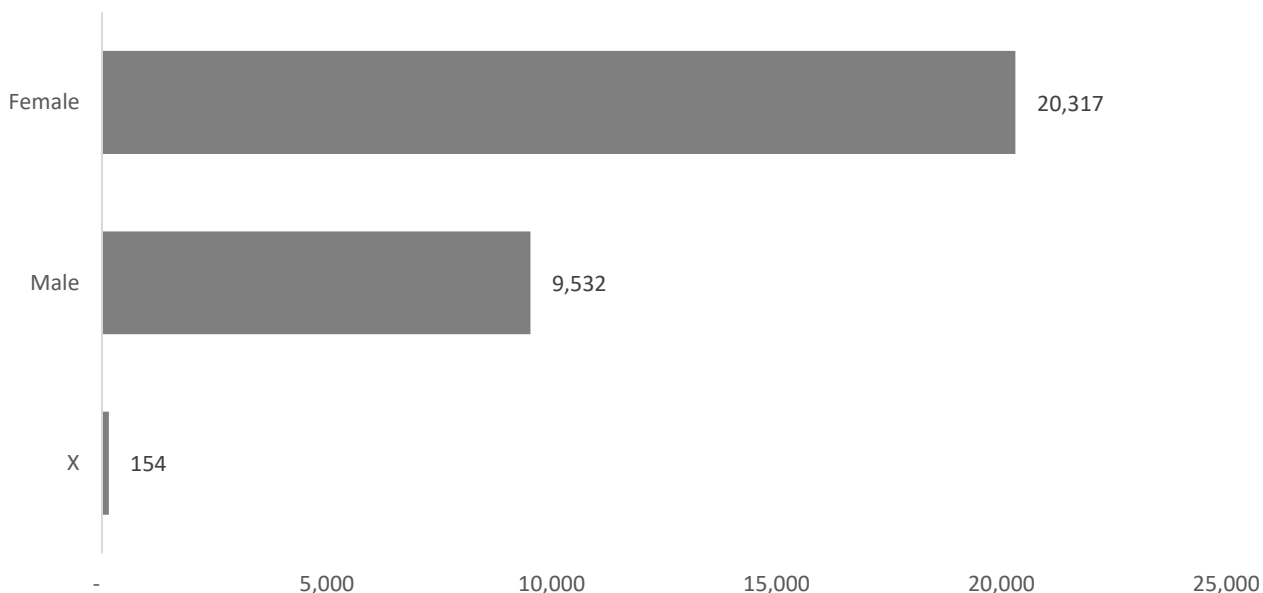
Figure 5: Average Loan amount per student by remoteness, 2022



Demographic profile

Female students accessed VSL more than other gender categories. Of the around 30,000 VSL students in 2022, two in every three students (20,317) identified as female and about 75% of those were under the age of thirty-five (35). Students that identified as male account for about a third (9,532) of VSL students (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Number of VSL student by gender, 2022



The most popular courses studied by VSL students are Diploma of Nursing, Diploma of Beauty Therapy and Diploma of Screen and Media. Further information on the courses studied by VSL students and gender breakdown is at Tables 5 and 6 below.

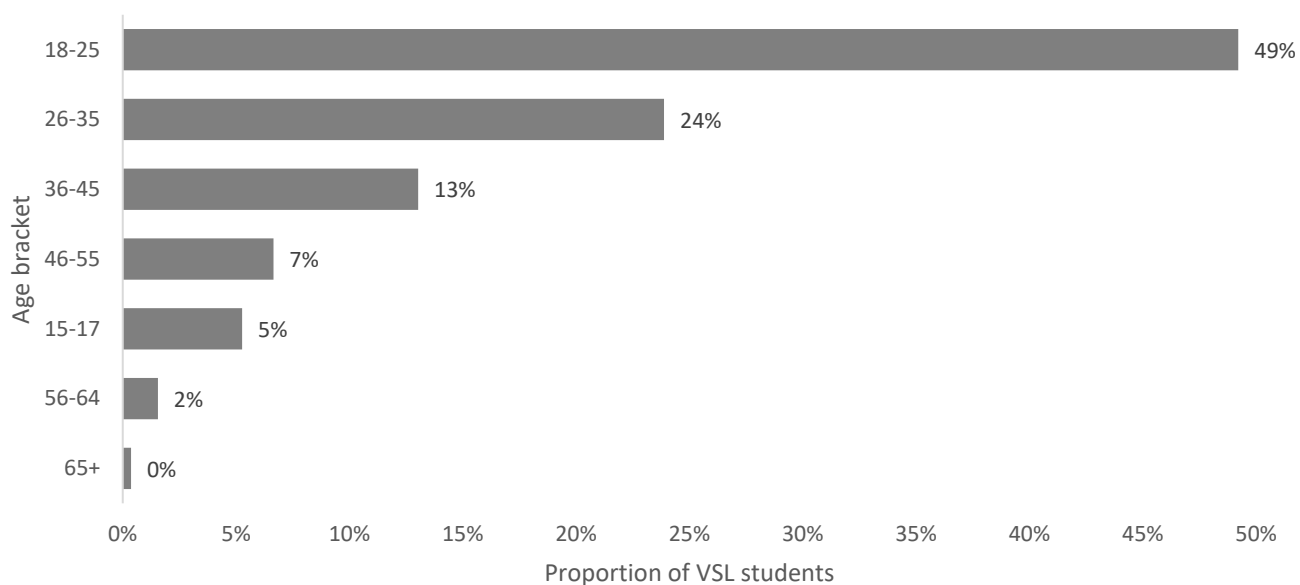
Table 5: Top 10 courses studied by female VSL students, 2022

Course Name	Number of students	Share of total
Diploma of Nursing	6,076	29.9%
Diploma of Beauty Therapy	2,325	11.4%
Diploma of Screen and Media	1,102	5.4%
Diploma of Remedial Massage	874	4.3%
Diploma of Counselling	873	4.3%
Diploma of Community Services	771	3.8%
Diploma of Interior Design	711	3.5%
Diploma of Visual Arts	624	3.1%
Diploma of Business	501	2.5%
Diploma of Library and Information Services	435	2.1%

Table 6: Top 10 courses studied by male VSL students, 2022

Course Name	Number of students	Share of total
Diploma of Aviation (Commercial Pilot Licence - Aeroplane)	851	8.9%
Diploma of Nursing	834	8.7%
Diploma of Screen and Media	704	7.4%
Diploma of Business	470	4.9%
Advanced Diploma of Building Design (Architectural)	417	4.4%
Diploma of Information Technology	407	4.3%
Diploma of Visual Arts	388	4.1%
Diploma of Remedial Massage	350	3.7%
Diploma of Aviation (Instrument Rating)	321	3.4%
Diploma of Sport	299	3.1%

Figure 7: Proportion of VSL students by age breakdown



Approximately half the VSL student population is 25 years old or younger and people aged between 26 to 35 years account for about a quarter of the students (see Figure 7 above).

About 3.2% (960) of the VSL population identified as an Indigenous Australian. Of which:

- about 80% are female (13% higher than the general VSL population)
- around 43% (418) live outside the major cities, and
- approximately 54% (521) studied in TAFE.

Students from CALD backgrounds account for about 12% (3,603) of the VSL student population.

About 3,230 VSL students reported to be living with disability. This is about 10.8% of the VSL student population.

Unit of study completions

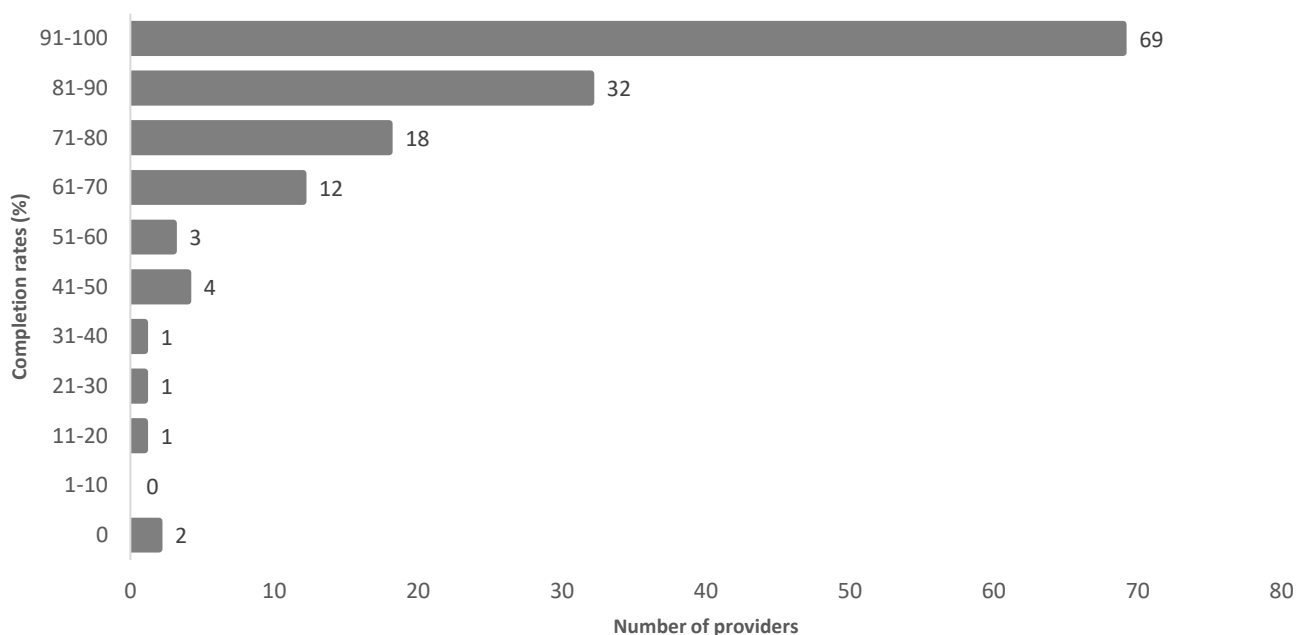
The unit completion rate for 2022 is 82.3%. Figure 8 shows the unit of study completion rates breakdown by proportion of providers.

Most VSL students reported to have studied in 2022 are unlikely to complete their course by 31 December 2022. About two-thirds (143) of approved providers reported some unit of study completions and the remaining third (75) reported all their students' units of study as in progress.

Of the 143 providers with reported unit of study completion rates:

- 134 (94%) had completion rate above 50%
- Over two-thirds reported a completion rate of above 80%
- A small number reported study completion rate below 50%.

Figure 8: Distribution of VSL student unit of study completion rates and number of providers



Excludes 75 providers that reported all their students as having courses as in progress.

Completion rate is determined on the following bases:

- The report only covers students who used the VSL program in the 2022 calendar year
- This report includes course completion data reported as of 4 April 2023. Therefore, a completed course that had a final census day in 2023 may be excluded in the report if completed after 4 April 2023.

A course is usually more than one unit of study (referred to as 'parts of the course' in the Rules). Thus, reporting on unit of study completion rates provides an alternative way of presenting information on VSL students' progression through their courses at this early stage of the program.

The unit of study completion rate is the proportion of units of study successfully passed as a share of total units of study undertaken. These units of study are in Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL) rather than student numbers.

Units of study includes units that providers reported VSL students to have withdrawn from, failed, or successfully completed.

Additional Information on VSL Providers and Courses

The Addendum Table 1 provides the VSL data listed in the report for the reporting period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.

The Addendum Tables 2 to 6 provide additional information on approved course providers and eligible courses offered.

These tables rank providers in order of VSL students (Table 2), value of loans paid (Table 3), and rank courses in order of VSL students (Table 4) and in order of value of loans paid (Table 5) and total value of loans paid to individual VSL provider including the course breakdown (Table 6).

These tables also provide the following:

- VSL student numbers (Table 2 and 3)
- course enrolment numbers (Tables 4 and 5)
- Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) by provider and by course
- tuition fees charged
- the amount of the tuition fees paid up-front (paid directly to the provider by the student, rather than deferred through a VSL loan)
- the value of VSL loans
- tuition fees per student (Tables 2 and 3)
- tuition fees per course enrolment (Tables 4 and 5)
- tuition fees per EFTSL
- loan amount per student (Tables 2 and 3)
- loan amount per course enrolment (Tables 4 and 5)
- loan amount per EFTSL
- enrolments, loans, tuition fees, students completing courses and unit of study completion rates by provider and course (Table 6).

Half of the top ten providers ranked by value of total loans paid were public providers. In terms of student numbers, seven out of the top ten providers were public providers.

Diploma of Nursing is the highest-ranked course in terms of course enrolments and Diploma of Aviation (Commercial Pilot Licence - Aeroplane) is ranked highest in terms of value of loans paid.

In order, nursing, beauty therapy and screen and media qualifications are the next most popular with VSL students by student enrolments.

Only two of the top ten courses ranked by student enrolments in 2022 were not on the corresponding list in 2021 (Diploma of Visual Arts and the Diploma of Early Childhood Education).

In this reporting period (Jan-Dec 2022), forty-four courses appear twice in Tables 4 and 5 as both superseding and superseded courses exist.

Glossary

Term	Definition/Meaning
Approved Course	A Course that meets the requirements of Section 13 (Division 3) of the Act.
Approved Course Provider	Bodies that are approved to offer VSL in accordance with the Act. This may include TAFEs, other public providers, and independent providers.
Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	The Commonwealth department that administers the VSL program.
Census Year	The reporting period for the report: 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.
Course Completion rate	The proportion of units of study that were passed, of the total units of study undertaken, with units of study measured in Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL).
Eligible Students	To be an eligible student for VSL, the person must satisfy section 9 (Division 2) of the Act. This includes the citizenship and residency status, enrolment and application and academic suitability requirements.
Enrolment	The number of courses students studied in the reporting period.
Loan amount	The VSL amount paid by the Commonwealth to an eligible student to undertake approved courses as described in the Act, excluding upfront amounts paid and/or contributed by the student.
Provider Type	Whether the provider is a TAFE, other public provider (including public universities and other non-TAFE publicly owned providers) or independent provider (including private universities and both not-for-profit and for-profit independent providers).
VET Student Loans Act 2016	The principal Commonwealth legislation governing the VSL program.
VET Student Loans Rules 2016	The Rules as made by the Minister for Skills and Training under the Act to provide for the administration of the requirements of the Act.
VSL Students	Students that paid tuition fees partly or fully using the VSL program.
VET Student Loan	See Loan Amount
Tuition Fees	Fees charged by Approved Providers to students for their courses.