

Enrolment Trends in International Bachelor Pathways in Australia: Foundation Programs, Higher Education Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas

Academic Bachelor degree pathways play an important role in preparing international students for successful undergraduate study in Australia, and are now being copied in other countries. The main specific pathway programs are:

- Foundation Programs (FPs), requiring completion of year 11 equivalent, and giving entry to year 1 of an undergraduate course
- Higher education (HE) Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas, requiring completion of year 12, and giving entry to year 2 undergraduate or later.

Note that HE Diploma data includes some courses that are not designed specifically as Bachelor pathways, especially in the creative and performance fields; nevertheless the great majority of HE Diploma international students (as opposed to VET) are in Bachelor pathway programs, with a curriculum based closely on the corresponding year 1 of the degree. Data will include Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas. HE Diploma numbers are much greater than Advanced Diplomas.

International students of course enter Bachelor degrees via other paths, including schools, ELICOS and Vocational Education and Training (VET).

In 2016, international FP commencements increased by 32%, and HE Diplomas (Including Advanced Diplomas) by 1% (PRISMS data). There are many public/private partnerships in this sector, although the distinction is somewhat arbitrary, and inconsistent in some cases.

There are currently (at Feb 2017) some HE and VET courses wrongly listed as FPs on CRICOS, but enrolments are minor. There are currently 82 actual FPs at 24 providers. There are also several academic pathway courses similar in structure and content to FPs, but with VET Cert IV accreditation, and not classified as FPs.

Table1: International student commencements in FPs and HE Diplomas

		2013	2014	2015	2016	2016/15
FPs	Govt	3,743	4,659	5,473	6,300	15%
	Non-Govt	1,841	2,505	3,146	5,035	60%
	Total	5,584	7,164	8,619	11,335	32%
HE Diplomas	Govt	1,833	2,537	2,054	2,763	35%
	Non-Govt	9,068	10,175	10,667	10,062	-6%
	Total	10,901	12,712	12,721	12,825	1%

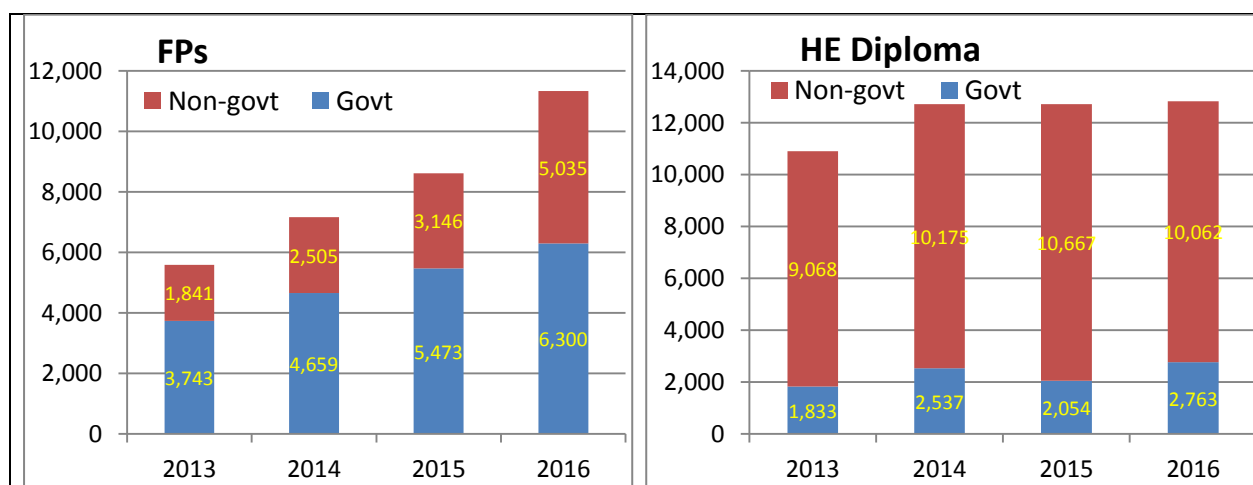
Table 2: International FP commencements by state and territory

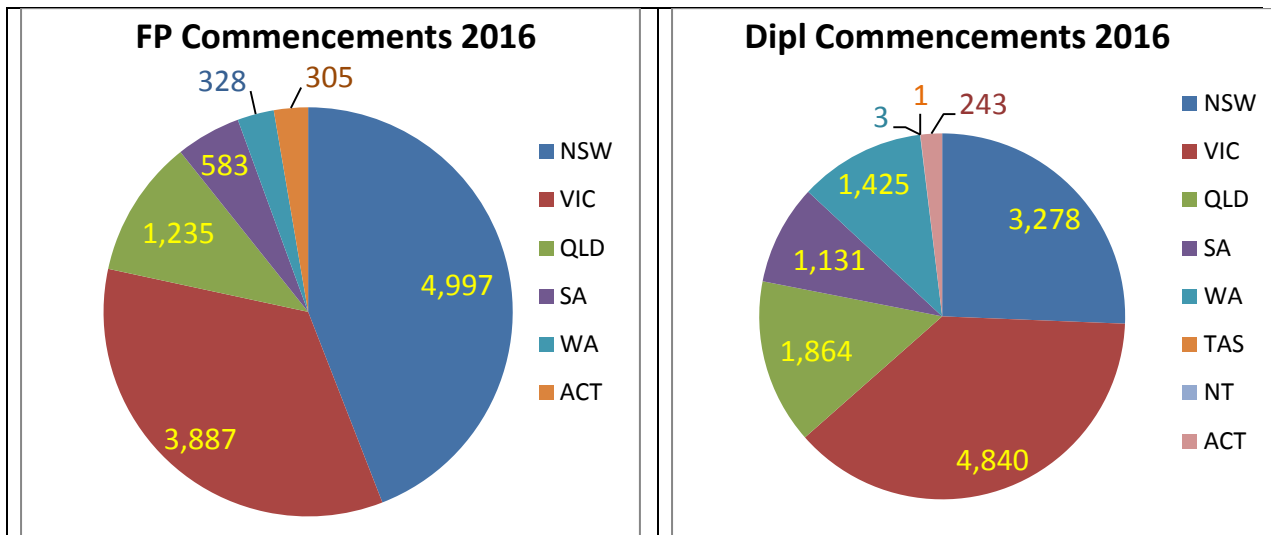
	2013	2014	2015	2016	Share 2016	2016/15
NSW	2,570	3,302	3,964	4,997	44%	26%
VIC	2,161	2,752	3,407	3,887	34%	14%
QLD	7	13	21	1,235	11%	NA
SA	304	431	581	583	5%	0%
WA	412	484	402	328	3%	-18%
ACT	130	182	244	305	3%	25%
Total	5,584	7,164	8,619	11,335	100%	32%

Table 3: International HE Diploma commencements by state and territory

	2013	2014	2015	2016	Share 2016	2016/15
NSW	2,984	3,129	3,582	3,278	26%	-8%
VIC	3,351	4,303	4,308	4,840	38%	12%
QLD	1,887	1,968	1,818	1,864	15%	3%
SA	740	1,106	1,084	1,131	9%	4%
WA	1,101	1,317	1,325	1,425	11%	8%
TAS	5	2	8	1	0%	-88%
NT	5	3	0	3	0%	
ACT	311	434	282	243	2%	-14%
NAT	11	0	0	0	0%	
Total	10,395	12,262	12,407	12,785	100%	3%

There are some trend differences between states and territories. NSW has the largest share of FP 2016 commencements (44%), but Victoria has the most HE Diplomas (38%). FP classification changes may distort some year-on-year comparisons.

Figure: FP and HE Diploma Commencements



Links: Austrade PRISMS data: <http://www.austrade.gov.au/Education/Student-Data>

DET Data: <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/Pages/Data-and-Research.aspx>