



Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee
the council of Australia's university presidents

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Low completion rates for Indigenous students identified in ACER Report

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) has today welcomed the report [Completing University: Characteristics and Outcomes of Completing and Non-Completing Students](#) by The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

"The Report shows the value of university study to career progression, even during the early stages of people's careers. University graduates were found to be in higher status occupations and already earning \$143 a week more than Year 12 completers who did not enrol in university," AVCC President Professor Sutton said.

"Australia's universities produce well prepared competitive students who go on to deliver real economic, social and environmental benefits to the nation.

However, Professor Sutton said that it was concerning that the Report showed low completion rates for Indigenous students, compared to non-Indigenous students.

"What is alarming is that almost half (49 per cent) of Indigenous students in the study withdrew from the course they initially enrolled in, compared to 15 per cent of non-Indigenous students.," Professor Sutton said.

"It is estimated that 70 per cent of all Indigenous students in the study will not complete a university qualification, compared to 18.2 per cent of non-Indigenous students.

"Indigenous education is a priority for the AVCC and universities are currently looking at ways of improving participation and retention within the sector, and in partnership with relevant government bodies.

"Leading into the 2007 Federal Election the AVCC is focussing on three key areas to immediately enhance Indigenous participation and retention in higher education:

- pathway scholarships to provide financial assistance to assist Indigenous students from Year 9 on complete a higher education course;
- scholarships for Indigenous students currently in the workforce who aspire to a university education or a postgraduate qualification can do so; and
- incentives for Indigenous students to undertake higher education through grants to cover student contributions for first year full-time study.

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