

# Australian young peoples' careers and skills: inequalities in both envisaged futures and attainment

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Disrupted futures: International lessons on how schools can  
best equip students for their working lives

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# Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri of the Kulin who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of University land. As we share our own knowledge practices within the University may we pay respect to the deep knowledge embedded within the Aboriginal community and their ownership of Country.

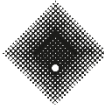
We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is a place of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin people's living culture has a unique role in the life of this region. VU is committed to building better relationships and fostering greater understanding between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

# CIRES - Who we are and what we do



**CIRES**

Centre for International Research  
on Education Systems



**VICTORIA  
UNIVERSITY**

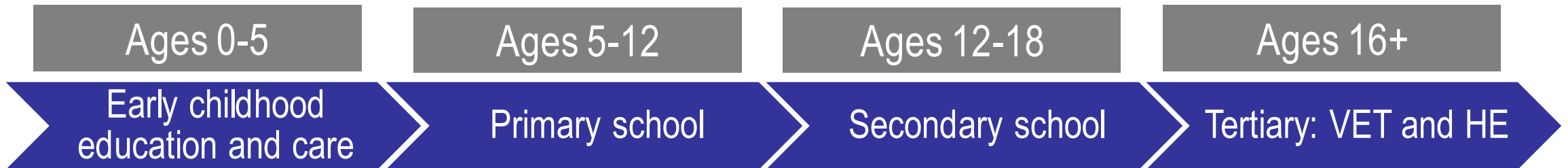
# CIRES overview

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## Our focus

Identifying how well education systems work, for whom, and how they can be improved to work well for all.

## Covering all ages and education types



## Approach

Undertaking both contract and academic research, with extensive partnerships developed with education departments and agencies across Australia.

# CIRES research areas

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**Performance** of Australia's education and training system

International **comparisons** of policy and practice

**School funding** to improve educational outcomes

**Measuring** the success of educational reform and innovation

Improving **transitions** from school to work and further education

Understanding the causes of, and solutions to, **educational inequality.**

# Presentation outline

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- Research aims
- Methodology
- Key findings
- Broader implications



# Literature

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# Research aims

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- To investigate the aspirations of Australian young people, as related to job skill levels, and their occupational attainment as young adults.
- To explore whether the relationship between aspirations and occupational attainment is influenced by socioeconomic background and other factors





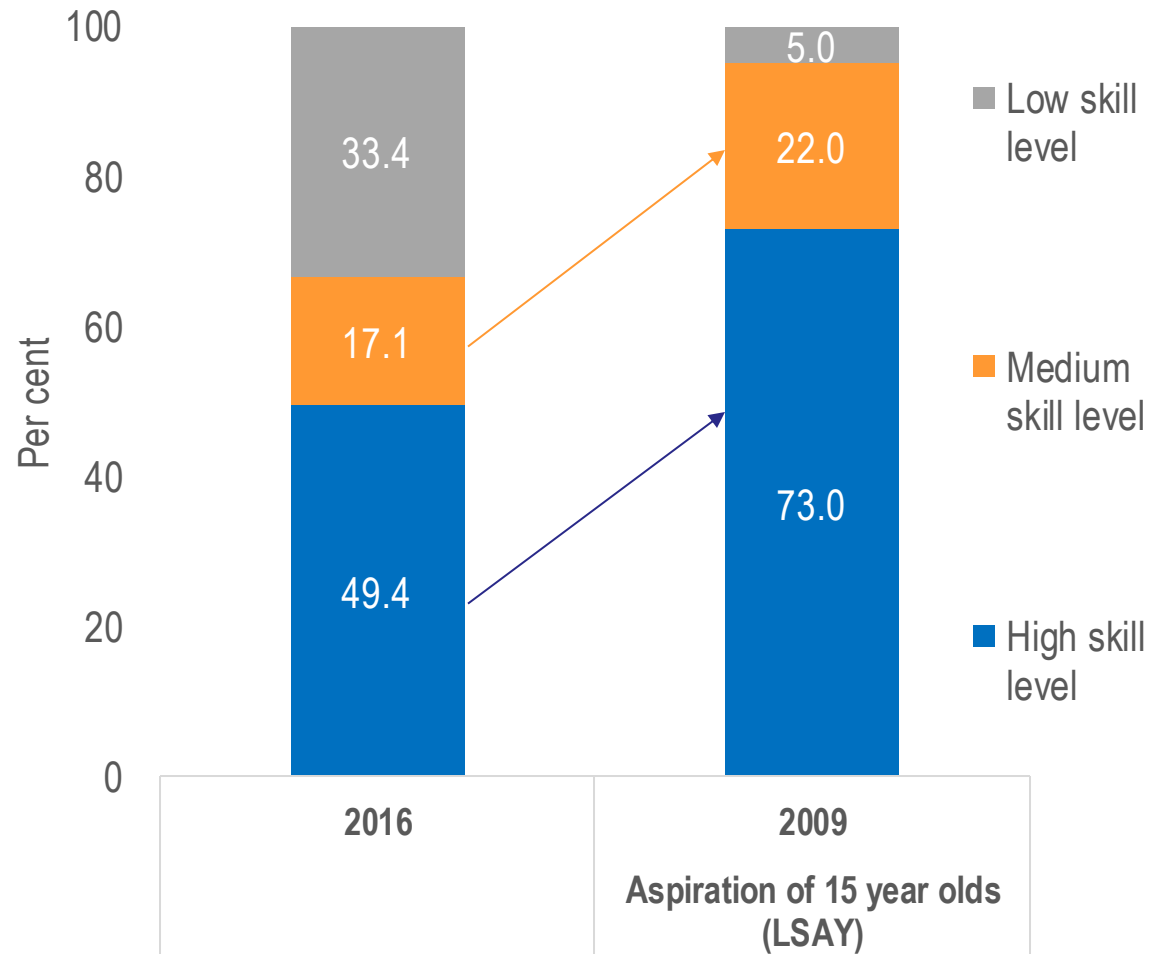
# Data and methodology

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- Data from the 2009 cohort of the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY)
- LSAY is a nationally representative survey program that follows young Australians over 11 years, from 15 to 25 years of age, as they move through school to further study, work and beyond.
- Australian Census of Population and Housing (employment and occupation data of the population)
- Limitation of LSAY ( attrition and potential bias for some population group)
- Largely descriptive statistics



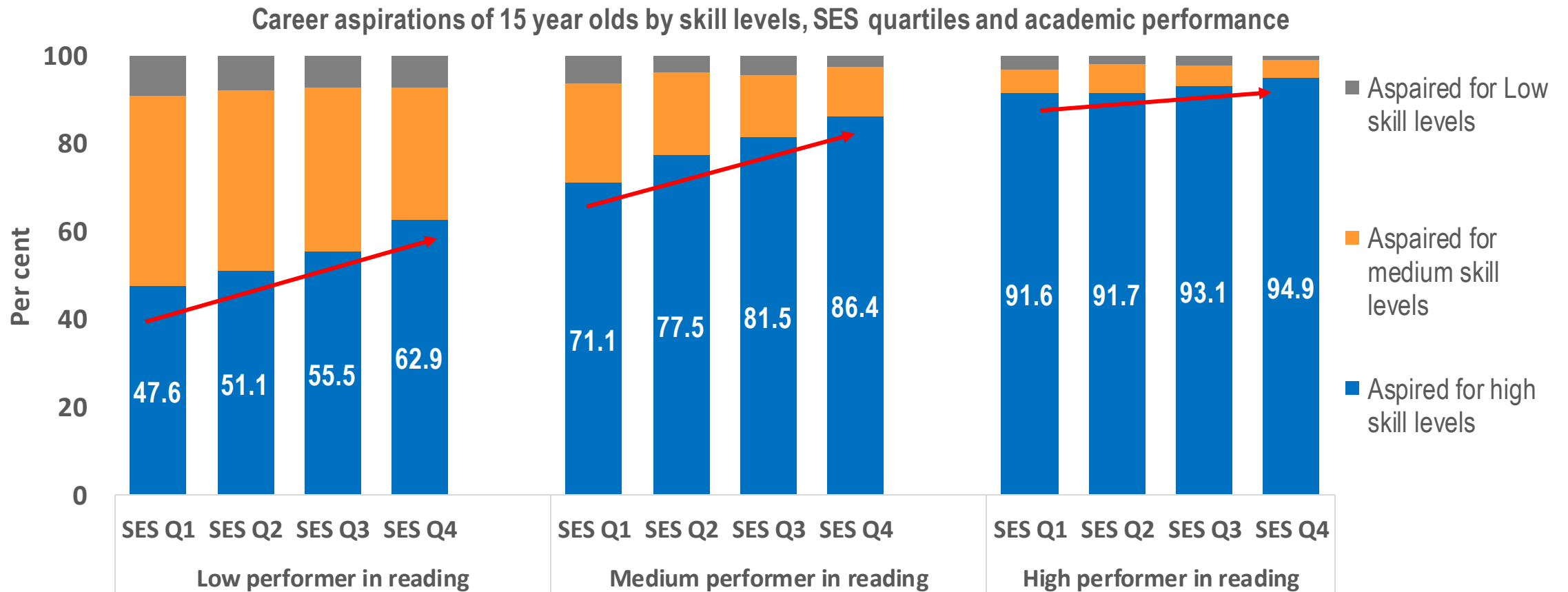
# Findings: Aspired occupational skill levels of 15 year olds



- Most young people have a greater expectations or higher hopes for their future careers or jobs than the labour market reality
- Nearly two thirds (73%) of the 15-year-olds in the cohort aspired to work in an occupation of high skill levels
- The 2016 Australian Census shows lower levels of skill attainment for jobs at high and medium skill level, compared to aspirations

\* Data were collected in PISA and results are derived based on skills level associated with the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) digit 4

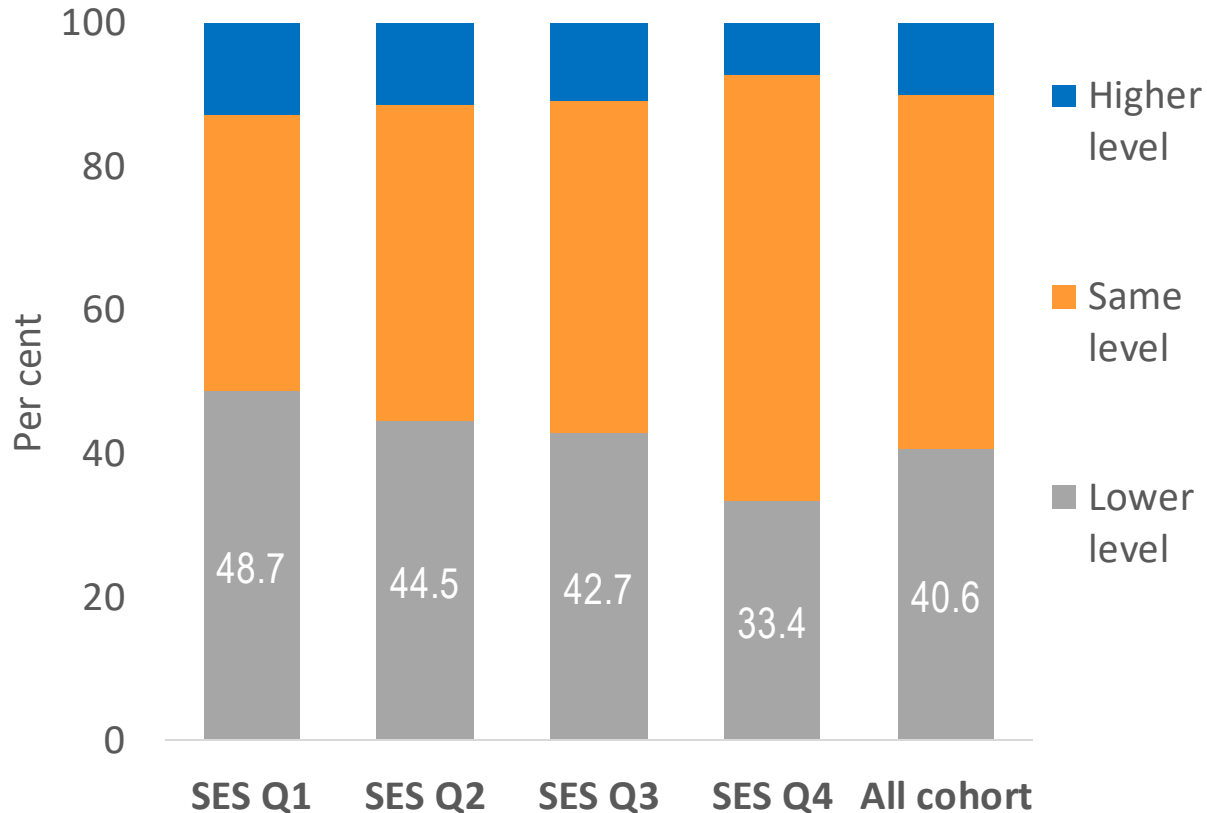
# Key findings: social inequalities in young peoples' aspirations



The analysis shows a SES gradient in young people's career aspiration, regardless of their academic capabilities (in both reading and mathematics)

# Findings: social inequalities in occupational attainment at age 25

Occupation skill level compared to aspirated level



- Further analysis compared the occupation skill levels between early career aspiration at age 15 and their post-training employment at age 25
- One in two (49.1%) young peoples' occupational skills match their aspired jobs at age 16.
- The results vary according to socio-economic status (SES).
- Young people from high SES are the most likely to attain a job that matches their levels of aspired skill levels (58%) compared to low SES young people (39.8%).
- Indigenous students, those with Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE) or those from non-metropolitan areas are less likely to achieve their career dreams, but the results are not statistically significant

# Implications

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- The research underscores the importance of addressing disadvantage as part of post-pandemic economic recovery efforts.
- Practice not just highly skilled occupational information access but also contextualised understandings of how to use it and at all levels.



# Implications

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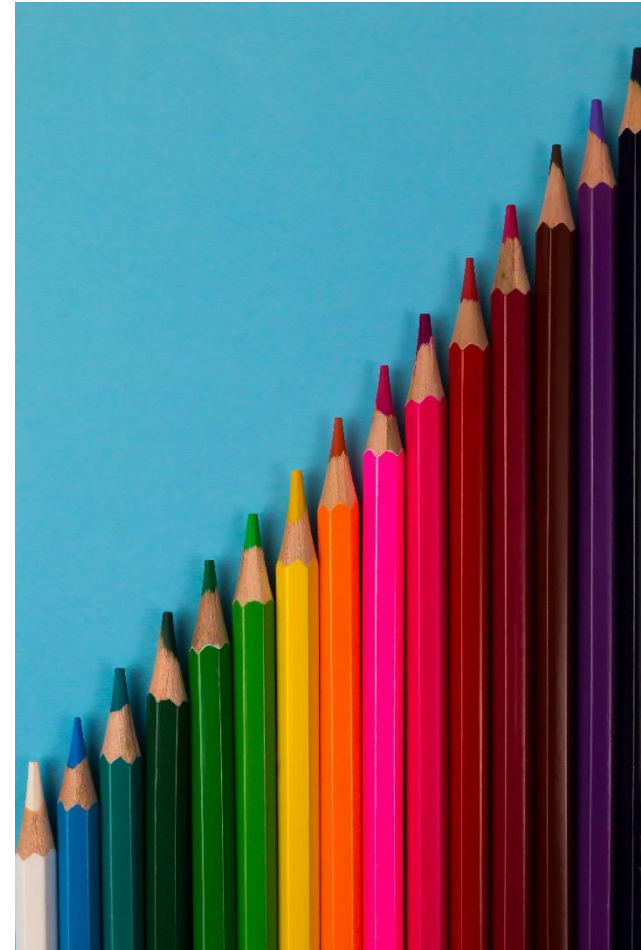
- Opportunity Awareness from the Law & Watts' DOTS model (Hooley, 2015) needs to be more broadly understood.
- Horizontal diversity in occupational awareness should be a feature not just vertical aspirations to higher education and professions.



# Wider implications

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- Students should have wider access to occupational information around which to form and make career decisions.
- Universal quality career education and access to appropriate, up to date career information is important for all students but particularly to support students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds



# Thank you and questions

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