Education, training and careers: Young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999

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No. 207/2000

ISSN 1036-1774
ISBN 0 7315 2642 2

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CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC POLICY RESEARCH

Foreword

In 1998, The Australian National University (on behalf of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR)) and the Department of Family and Community Services (Indigenous Policy Unit (IPU)) signed a five-year research agreement. As part of this agreement, CAEPR and IPU negotiated to undertake research seeking to examine how the aspirations of young Indigenous people in remote regions match the Commonwealth government's income support programs for the unemployed. The project aims to be longitudinal: it is scheduled to run over five years (1999 to 2003) and will consist largely of an analysis of data obtained from standard surveys of the same sample of Indigenous males and females aged between 15 and 24 in two remote locations, the Kimberley and Torres Strait. The study will attempt to reinterview the same cohort over the research period.

The initial survey was carried out Torres Strait in late 1999 and this paper is one of a set of three interrelated papers resulting from that work. The other two CAEPR Discussion Papers are numbers 205 and 206. These deal respectively with the job-searching and careers, and the career aspirations issues amongst young Torres Strait Islanders. These three papers are closely related and readers are encouraged to consider them holistically as a set.

The set of three discussion papers is based on a close collaboration between Bill Arthur, a CAEPR academic and Josephine David-Petero, a Torres Strait Islander, who is a member of the Hammond Island Council. Such collaboration is a very important element in CAEPR's Indigenous Engagement Strategy. Additional collaboration also occurred, of course, between the two researchers and the young Torres Strait Islanders who greatly facilitated the research by their availability for interview: it is hoped that the policy outcomes of the research are of direct benefit to them.

These discussion papers address very important and topical issues very evident in key words in their titles: job-searching, careers, aspirations, orientation to work, education and training. This research is based on primary data collection in the Torres Strait and should be of invaluable benefit in policy formulation.

Professor Jon Altman
Director, CAEPR
December 2000

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The principal aim of this paper was to determine what role, if any, young Torres Strait Islanders see education and training playing in their future careers.

As in human capital theory, young Islanders appear to value education and training as a form of investment that will allow them to further their careers. They say for example that they will stay at school to improve their prospects for further education, for training and for employment. Although they thought that education would helped them with their futures, several people felt that more emphasis could be placed on providing job related skills and life skills in school. Nonetheless, the general feeling about education was positive. In addition to valuing study and training as activities that can help them achieve their goals, they also appear to find these inherently interesting.

Although people, might want to stay on at school to Year 12 to improve their career prospects, it appears that sometimes this might have to take second place to family commitments; a compromise similar to that noted in other parts of this project. In addition, the data suggest some inverse relationship between travelling to the mainland for education and staying on to Year 12: students who went to the mainland for secondary schooling were likely to change schools more often and less likely to complete Year 12 than were those attending school on Thursday Island. However, these findings are not conclusive and require further research.

The fields of training in which people were involved reflected features of the regional economy and, to a degree, conventional male/female divisions. For instance, women were likely to want training for careers in education, health and administration, while males were more interested in training for trades. Although some young people had been involved in a deckhand's course, none were doing or planned to do any training associated with the commercial fishing industry. This apparent lack of interest amongst young people in increasing their formal engagement with the industry will be explored in future stages of the project.

It was noticeable that all of the trainees and apprentices interviewed in the survey were in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) communities. It appears therefore, that having CDEP gives a community the autonomy to offer training and apprenticeships to its members. In this way CDEP helps facilitate career pathways. However, having CDEP is not a sufficient condition for this to happen. Communities wishing to train their young members must also have the relevant levels of infrastructure, the instructors and a commitment from community leaders.

As noted in the foreword, this is one of a set of three papers from an initial survey in Torres Strait. The other two papers in the set deal respectively with people's careers and job searching techniques (*CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 205*) and with their career aspirations (*CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 206*). The initial survey that provided the data for this paper is part of a larger study. The study utilises the concept of career which facilitates an exploration of what people think about their future and embodies the idea of change over time. The project aims to determine

what may assist or deter people from fulfilling their aspirations, and how and why their ideas about their futures may change. In an attempt to capture these aspects of people's lives, those who were part of this initial survey will be interviewed again.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following people in Torres Strait for their assistance: members of the Tamwoy, Rose Hill, Aplin, Abednego, Waiben, Quarantine (TRAWQ) Community Council and Badu Island Council, the staff of Job Network on Thursday Island and on Badu Island, the Centrelink staff, the Principal and staff of Thursday Island State High School, and of course to all of those who gave their time to be interviewed. Special thanks must go to the CDEP and office staff of TRAWQ and of Badu Island for their help in making time and space available to interview their participants. Special thanks also to the Torres Strait Regional Employment Committee which provided invaluable office space, advice and support during the survey.

Thanks to Jerry Schwab, Boyd Hunter and Shirley Campbell of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) for their useful comments on drafts this paper, to Hilary Bek, Frances Morphy and Linda Roach for their usual high standard of editorial input, and to Wendy Forster for layout.

Introduction

The Indigenous Policy Unit of the Department of Family and Community Services (DFACS)[1] has negotiated with the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Research (CAEPR) to carry out research aimed at answering the following questions for the *remote* regions of Australia:

a) To what extent do the objectives of the 15 to 24 year-old Indigenous clients match the objectives of the Commonwealth Government's programs related to income support for the unemployed?

b) What are the particular local conditions which might be limiting or affecting the program objectives?

c) In what ways might the programs be modified to make the objectives more compatible?

The project aims to be longitudinal: it is scheduled to run over five years (1999 to 2003) and will consist largely of an analysis of data obtained from standard surveys of a sample of Indigenous males and females aged between 15 and 24 in two remote locations, the Kimberley and Torres Strait. The study will follow this cohort over the period.

In effect, the above questions are aimed at assessing the relevance of programs and at proposing how they might be made more relevant. The particular programs under consideration are Newstart and Youth Allowance. The approach to the project has been to adopt the concepts of 'career' and 'orientation to work' which allows an inquiry of what people want to do and why they want to do it (see Arthur 1999). This in turn allows an assessment of the relevance of the programs to people's careers in remote areas.

This paper is based on the results of a survey of 105 young people in Torres Strait carried out in late 1999. The survey results have revealed information that is usefully divided into three major categories which are:

- Job searching and careers: young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999;
- Career aspirations and orientation to work: young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999; and
- Education, training and careers: young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999.

This paper is the third of the above and presents data from the survey related to the pattern of secondary education and training within the survey sample. The aim of this analysis is to determine what role, if any, education and training appear to be playing in people's perceptions of their future careers. This approach provides information on one of the major labour market investments that economic theory suggests workers make, namely education (Gray and Hunter 2000: 5).[2]

Methodology and analysis

Based on a sample of only just over 100 people, the survey is small and this places in doubt the conclusions that can be drawn from individual questions. However, some general trends and patterns are shown in the paper.

Questions in the survey were generally left open rather than being multiple choice. This creates the difficulty of coding but it has the advantage that it allows people to give their own replies. This is in the spirit of the project which is directed at finding out how young people perceive their future and the relevance of the government services. People were asked to answer all of the questions and the interviews were administered by the authors.

An abridged version of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A. Where applicable, a note is provided with each of the tables indicating from which question or set of questions the results are derived.

Torres Strait and the sample

Torres Strait is an archipelago lying between the tip of Cape York and the Western Province of Papua New Guinea. Approximately 7,500 people live in Torres Strait[3] of whom around 80 per cent are Indigenous. The two major industries are commercial fishing and a public sector servicing the population. The region is often considered as made up of three sub-regions: the Inner Islands, the Outer Islands and the Cape Islander communities (Fig. 1). The islands and communities and their populations are shown by sub-region in Table 1. (For a full description of the region and the socioeconomic status of Torres Strait Islanders see Arthur 1999.)

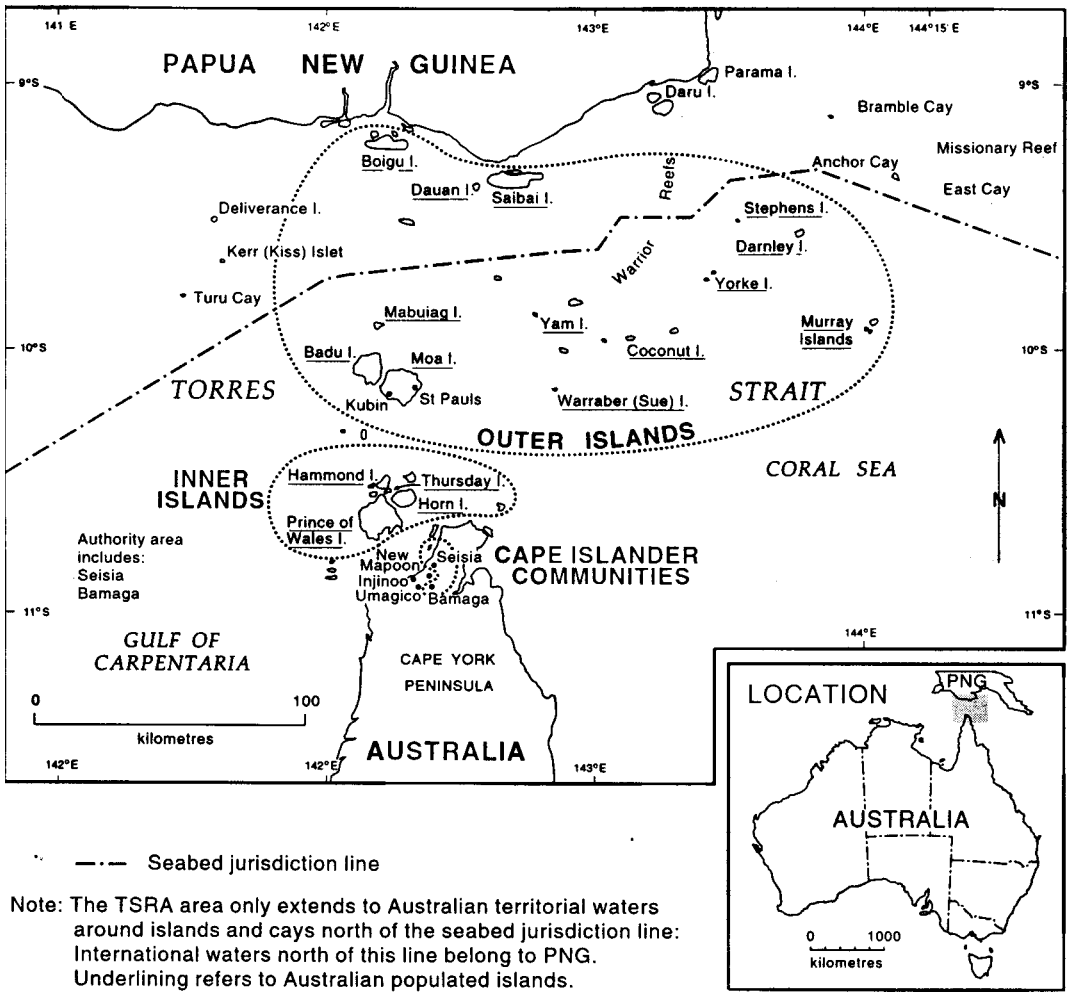
The Torres Strait sample was split equally between males and females (Table 2) and between two locations in Torres Strait. These were the regional centre of Thursday Island located in Inner Islands, and on Badu Island which is one of the Outer Islands. These are akin to a regional town or service centre on the mainland and a remote Indigenous community. These two locations have very different socioeconomic environments (Arthur 1999). In brief, Thursday Island has a recognised labour market as well as a medium-sized Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme, while Badu has virtually no labour market and a significant CDEP scheme under the control of an island community council.[4] The area offices of Centrelink and Job Network are on Thursday Island. On Badu there is a community agent of Centrelink and a Job Network agency was being established only during the survey. The respective area offices for both agencies are on Thursday Island.

Taking the 1996 Census as a base, the sample represents 17 per cent of Indigenous people aged 15 to 24 years on Thursday Island, 70 per cent of those on Badu, and 10 per cent of those in all of the Torres Strait. Where relevant and where the data allow, the analysis provided here describe males and females separately and Thursday Island and Badu separately. However, because the

sample is small (105 people) and not all people responded to all of the survey questions, this procedure is not always possible or valid in the tables.

Of the sample on Thursday Island, 16 were still at school there. Only one of the sample was married, 84 were single and the remaining 20 were in de facto relationships. More than one-third of the women in the sample had children.

Figure 1. The Torres Strait Region



—·— Seabed jurisdiction line

Note: The TSRA area only extends to Australian territorial waters around islands and cays north of the seabed jurisdiction line: International waters north of this line belong to PNG. Underlining refers to Australian populated islands.

It is unclear how representative the sample is. More than half of those not in school were involved in CDEP in some way while only three of the sample were unemployed (Table 3). Centrelink on Thursday Island were unable to give an accurate assessment of the number of people on Newstart Allowance on Thursday Island. However their estimate ranged from five to ten people. If this is the case, then the sample may not be too unrepresentative. Only two people in the sample gave their main source of income as Newstart or Youth Allowances, while almost

half (48 people) were part of a CDEP scheme (Table 4). This accords with other data provided below and indicates that labour market oriented payments (Newstart and Youth Allowances) are relatively insignificant in the lives of people aged 15 to 24 years, and that CDEP is extremely significant.

Table 1. Population of Torres Strait, 1996

Island	Indigenous population	Total population
Inner Islands		
Thursday Island	1657	2472
Horn Island	274	476
Prince of Wales Island	35	99
Hammond Island	192	201
Inner Islands sub-total	2158	3248
Outer Islands		
Boigu Island	227	243
Dauan Island	120	126
Saibai Island	243	272
Badu Island	527	562
Moa Island	399	443
Mabuiag Island	174	180
Yorke Island	250	283
Warraber Island and Coconut Island	348	391
Yam Island	150	150
Murray Islands	405	414
Darnley Island	204	225
Stephens Island	86	92
Outer Islands sub-total	3133	3381
Cape Islander communities		
Bamaga Islander Community	609	754
Seisia Island Community	117	184
Cape Islander Communities sub-total	726	938
Total	6017	7567

Source: From Sanders (1999a).

Table 2. The composition of the sample, 1999

	TIb Male	TIb Female	TIb Total	Badu Male	Badu Female	Badu Total	Total Male	Total Female	Total
Age									
15-16	4	4	8	2	6	8	6	10	16
17-19	12	14	26	7	6	13	19	20	39
20-24	9	11	20	15	15	30	24	26	50
Total	25	29	54	24	27	51	49	56	105
At school	9	7	16	0	0	0	9	7	16
Marital status									
Married			1			0			1
Single			45			39			84
De facto			8			12			20
Women with									
0 children		21				14			35
1-3 childrena		8				13			21

Notes: a. Pregnant women were counted as having one child.
b. TI = Thursday Island.
Source: Derived from question 1, see Appendix A.

Table 3. Employment/education status, 1999

	Total
Employed CDEP	48
Employed non-CDEP	36
Voluntary workers	2
Unemployed	3
School	16
Total number	105

Source: Derived from questions 17 and 46, and 47 see Appendix A.

The remainder of this paper presents an analysis of the patterns and perceptions of education and training amongst the sample population.

Table 4. Main source of income, 1999

	Thursday Island[a]	Badu	Total
From main job (CDEP or non-CDEP work)	33	48	81
Other part-time, casual work	5	1	6
Abstudy	3	0	3
Newstart Allowance	1	0	1
Youth Allowance	0	1	1
Parent Allowance	4	1	5
Not applicable/stated	9	0	9
No. of responses	55	51	106

Note: Includes those at school on Thursday Island.
Source: Derived from questions 42, 46 and 47, see Appendix A.

Some principles of education and training

Depending largely on one's political standpoint, education and training can be viewed as having either negative or positive outcomes for individuals and society. The more negative views of education include that it is a device that exists primarily to serve the interests of capital by, for example, providing employers with a skilled workforce (Bowles 1976: 31; Schwab 1997: 8). Education is also seen as something which justifies society's patterns of inequality and transmits and perpetuates its dominant values (Bourdieu 1976: 110; Cordasso 1970: 8; Sarup 1978: 15). As a transmitter of these 'dominant' values education is viewed by some as a threat to the continuation of Indigenous culture (Harris 1990: 5–8). In other respects, it has been suggested that Indigenous people may view education negatively because of the associations it has with their history of domination and dislocation by the state (Schwab 1997: 8).

A rather more positive spin can be put on education and training by what is termed the 'human capital' approach. In this approach, education and training are viewed as a form of investment which result in economic and social returns to individuals and to society as a whole (Long et al. 1999a Musgrave 1965; Tees et al. 1995). For example, by providing work skills, education and training improve one's chances of finding employment which in turn leads to higher incomes and to a generally more productive society (Long et al. 1999a: 18; Schwab 1996). Education and employment also helps toraise social status, lower rates of incarceration, improve levels of health, and generally assist citizens to participate more fully in all aspects of society (Long et al. 1999a: 1, 18; Junankar and Liu 1996: 1). In a similar vein, education can be viewed as a liberating force which raises people's awareness of the workings of society and gives them the ability to become the agents of social change (Shaull 1982: 9).

Recent Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research work tends to support the notion that education results in some returns to Indigenous people and to society

at large. For example, Junankar and Liu (1996: 13–14) found that the cost of crime to society is lower amongst Indigenous people who stay at school longer. In addition, the employment prospects and the incomes are higher amongst Indigenous people who complete Year 12 and/or gain a qualification of some kind (Daly and Liu 1995: 1, 14; Hunter 1996: 3, 4; Long et al. 1999b: 15, 101).[5] Indeed, Hunter identifies education as the single most significant determinant regarding Indigenous employment outcomes (Hunter 1996: 1).

Long et al. (1999b: 13) propose however that Indigenous students might have a greater awareness of TAFE than of school and that it is vocational education and training that increase employment and career options. Although this may be the case, Schwab warns that Indigenous people may not always utilise their education and training to maximise their returns in a purely economic sense (Schwab 1996: 131). For instance, rather than take courses that might result in them getting the most highly paid jobs, some Indigenous people take on training that enables them to work in their home communities or simply for reasons of personal development or enjoyment (Boughton 1998; Schwab 1996: 15; 1997: 10). We should note here that deciding to continue with education for its enjoyment value is not unique to Indigenous students (see Long et al. 1999a: 18). The lower than average educational status of Indigenous people is well recorded as is their propensity to leave school early (Schwab 1999). For these reasons, Long et al. (1999b: 13) suggest that some Indigenous people become involved in training, and in particular pre-vocational training, simply to 'catch-up'.

In any case, it seems obvious to suggest that schooling provides the basis for participation in further education and work (Long et al. 1999b: 33). Additionally, education and training represent at least two strategies on a pathway to a career. whether this be in the formal labour market or not. DFACS and Centrelink are responsible for providing both payments and information in order to increase Indigenous access to education and training (Centrelink 1998: 37–8). Other research in this series of three papers has highlighted that it is these payments which make up the bulk of Centrelink's articulation with young people in Torres Strait (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b: 14). For these reasons alone it is worthwhile considering in this paper how young people approach education and training.

Secondary education

The pattern of secondary schooling

Only primary schooling is available on the outer islands of Torres Strait. Secondary schooling is available to people locally at one State high school on Thursday Island and one at Bamaga Community on Cape York (see Fig. 1). However, not all local people attend these schools and many get their secondary education in the major towns and cities of the mainland (Table 5). There appear to be several reasons for this. One is that the local schools are too small, a second is that there is limited accommodation for boarding students locally, and a third is that people feel that the quality of education and the educational environment

are better on the mainland (Arthur 1990). The survey data suggest that people from Badu Island were more likely to go to the mainland for their secondary education, whereas those interviewed on Thursday Island were more likely to go to school there or to obtain some of their schooling there and some on the mainland (Table 5).

Table 5. Where people get secondary schooling, 1999

Schooling	Thursday Island %	Badu %	Total %
Thursday Island High[a]	65	14	40
Mainland schools	6	73	38
Thursday Island + mainland	29	13	22
Total	100	100	100
No.	54	51	105

Note: a. Includes 16 people in the survey still at school.
Source: Derived from question 6, see Appendix A.

The mainland schools attended by those in the survey are shown in Table 6. The vast majority of these were in Queensland and often in the northern coastal towns. This distribution reflects the population distribution of Torres Strait Islanders residing on the mainland (see Arthur 2000). Most were State schools, a pattern normal to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations (Hunter and Schwab 1998: 8; Schwab 1999: 20). However, informants in Torres Strait indicated that the decision over which particular school to enrol in and hence in some respects to location is often, though not always, made on religious grounds. Though not shown in Table 6, many of the non-State schools attended were church schools.

It can be seen that respondents had attended what appeared to be a considerable number of different schools. The 105 respondents had attended a total of secondary 37 schools, one on Thursday Island and 36 on the mainland. People interviewed on Thursday Island had attended a total of 19 different schools and those interviewed on Badu Island had attended a total of 30 different schools. Of course there is nothing particularly negative about a population attending a large number of schools. However, one reason that so many schools were identified in the survey was that many people attended more than one school. Table 7 shows that 52 per cent of all people had attended more than one school, and 15 per cent had attended three or four schools. This situation was more noticeable on Badu Island where 20 per cent of students had attended three or four schools (Table 6). Although there is no comparable data from other regions, this seems quite a high rate of student/school turnover. The survey did not reveal why people attend so many schools.

Table 6. Location of secondary schools attended outside Torres Strait region, 1999

Location	State schools	Non-State schools	Total
Queensland			
Cairns	4	3	7
Townsville	4	3	7
Brisbane	3	1	4
Rockhampton	1	1	2
Herberton	0	2	2
Toowoomba	1	1	2
Atherton	1	0	1
Charters Towers	0	1	1
Ingham	1	0	1
Innisfail	1	0	1
Nambour	1	0	1
Warwick	0	1	1
Weipa	1	0	1
Other States			
Northern Territory (Darwin)[a]	3	0	3
South Australia[a]	1	1	2
Total no.	22	14	36

Note: a. Students' parents were living in these locations.
Source: Derived from question 6, see Appendix A.

Table 7. Number of schools attended, 1999

	Thursday Island %	Badu %	Total %
1 school	53	45	48
2 schools	39	35	37
3 schools	5	14	10
4 schools	3	6	5
Total	100	100	100
No.	38	51	89

Source: Derived from question 6.5, see Appendix A.

Staying on at school

Other research has shown that Indigenous students are considerably less likely to stay on at school to Year 12 than are non-Indigenous students (Arthur 1999; Long et al. 1999b: ix; Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs 1998: 97; Schwab 1999: 5, 11). If we accept that career prospects are improved the longer people stay at school, and in particular to Year 12, it is relevant to consider this here. The data show that about half of those in the survey who had left school had stayed on to Year 12 (Table 8). The data also show that almost 80 per cent of those interviewed on Thursday Island stayed on to Year 12, while those on Badu were more likely to leave school earlier and were much less likely to enrol in or to complete Year 12. We have already seen how Badu people often go to the mainland for secondary schooling, while people living on Thursday Island are more likely to go to school on the island. Therefore, the data on retention can be reinterpreted to suggest that people who go to school on mainland are less likely to stay on to Year 12, while students who get their schooling on Thursday Island are more likely to stay to Year 12.

Other research has indicated that nationally females are slightly more likely stay on to Year 12 than are males whether they are Indigenous or not (Schwab 1999: 19; Long et al. 1999b: 37). Although not shown in Table 7, this was the case overall in the survey.[6]

Table 8. Year left school, 1999

School year	Thursday Island %	Badu %	Total %
Year 9	0	6	3
Year 10	8	24	17
Year 11 completed	5	26	17
Year 12 completed	79	31	52
Year 11 not completed	3	0	1
Year 12 not completed	5	14	10
	100	100	100
No.	38	51	89

Source: Derived from question 6, see Appendix A.

Reasons for leaving school

It has been noted in other research that the factors affecting school retention are complex, numerous, and interrelated (Schwab 1999). They may include absenteeism, socioeconomic background, arrest, parents' occupation, gender, location, and Indigenous culture and history (Schwab 1999: 23). The following is intended as only a brief account of the factors identified in the survey which appear to relate to why people may not stay to or complete Year 12.

In general, there is some similarity between the reasons for leaving school given by the respondents in the survey, and those given in a survey of Year 10, 11 and 12 students in Torres Strait in 1997 (Table B.1 in Appendix B' also see Arthur 1999). People gave a number of reasons for leaving school before completing Year 12 (Table 9). Most commonly (76%) these related to personal problems of various kinds experienced at home or at school. The distribution of the data did not allow a reasonable comparison between Thursday and Badu Islands. However, some difference between males and females could be detected. In particular, females were much more likely to leave school because of personal problems at home as shown in Table 9. These problems included having to take care of ageing or infirm family members, and becoming pregnant. As noted in other related research, this reflects in part the role played by females in fulfilling commitments to ageing and sick relatives (Arthur and David-Petero 2000a). On the other hand, males seem more likely to leave school due to social problems experienced at school. Family responsibilities also impact on higher education students such as those attending the University of Queensland annex on Thursday Island. Schwab has also found that Indigenous students have to balance commitments to education with those to family and community (Schwab 1997: 8). A small number of females who were attending mainland schools indicated that they left school during the holiday break when they returned home to Torres Strait. It would seem that this issue is more likely to be associated with a form of schooling which involves moving out of the region. Although personal issues seem to influence whether Torres Strait Islanders stay on at school, it should be noted that this is also case amongst non-Indigenous students (Meade 1981: 46, 108).

A small number of people indicated that they left school because they had problems with accommodation. Although not shown Table 9, this issue was more common on Thursday Island and reflects an ongoing problem there with accommodation for both secondary and tertiary students (Arthur 1990). Other research has suggested that Indigenous and non-Indigenous students are likely to leave school to get a job to earn money or to do training (Long et al. 1999a: 18; Meade 1981: 36, 246; Poole 1990: 84). Only a small number of respondents in the survey said they left school early to get a job. It has already been noted that students on Thursday Island may interrupt their schooling to assist relatives with commercial fishing (Arthur 1999). However, no-one in the survey gave this as a reason for quitting school altogether.

A small number of young people who had left school early indicated that they wanted to return to finish their education. This has been noted in other research and suggests that it is important that Indigenous early leavers are provided with the facility to re-enter the education stream at some later stage (see Long et al. 1999b: 18).

Table 9. Why did not stay to complete year 12, 1999

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Personal problems at home, family commitments, pregnancy, peer pressure	29	67	51
Personal problems are school, lack of interest, distance ed. too hard	43	13	25
To get job	14	7	10
Accommodation	14	3	8
Relocated, failure to return after holiday in TS[a]	0	10	6
Total	100	100	100
No. of responses[b]	21	30	51

Notes: a. TS = Torres Strait.
b. Some people gave more than one reason.
Source: Derived from question 6.2, see Appendix A.

We have already noted that those surveyed appeared to attend a significant number of different schools. It seems logical to suggest that changing schools may have some negative affect on retention. The data suggest this might be the case (Table 10). Of the 45 people in the survey who had completed Year 12, 62 per cent had attended one school and 36 per cent had attended two schools. The likelihood of completing Year 12 then fell off sharply with only 2 per cent of those who had attended three schools and none finishing who had attended four schools. The lower retention rates at Badu, already noted, may be associated with this pattern of education. We have seen how Badu students are more likely to attend school on the mainland and to change schools more often. It may be that this propensity to change schools may result in Badu students leaving school early. These data suggest that a student's educational prospects may not necessarily be increased by going to school on the mainland or by changing schools too often.

Table 10. Number of schools attended by those completing Year 12, 1999

	Total %
Completed Year 12 and attended 1 school	62
Completed Year 12 and attended 2 schools	36
Completed Year 12 and attended 3 schools	2
Completed Year 12 and attended 4 schools	0
Total	100
Total no. who completed Year 12	45

Source: Derived from question 6, see Appendix A.

Reasons for 'staying on' at school

Most educational research focuses on those who leave school early and little is known about those 'who stay on'[7] although it is thought that the reasons for staying at school are as varied and complex as those that influence students to leave school early (Schwab 1999: 38). Those people in the survey who had stayed on to Year 12 were asked why they had done so. In a considerable proportion of cases (60%) the responses indicated that people stayed on at school to get a good education and, associated with this, to improve their prospects for employment (Table 11). This again mirrors the perceptions of other Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in general (Long et al 1999a: 18; Meade 1981: 244; Rosier 1978: 184; Wilson and Wyn 1987: 44, 47) and seems to belie the suggestion that Indigenous people in remote areas may not see a connection between education and employment (see Arthur 1991; Long et al. 1999b: 14;). Similarly, several people stayed on at school because they understood that this would improve their chances of continuing with further (tertiary) education; this was particularly the case amongst females. Although it has been suggested that Indigenous people are as likely to value education for its inherent interest or for the facility it provides for being with friends (Teese et al. 1995: 17, 24) the above responses indicate that, as with students in general, those surveyed who had stayed on valued education as a means to an end (Rosier 1978: 184). In this they appeared to ascribe to the human capital view of education discussed earlier in this paper.

As with students in general (Long et al. 1999a: 18) a smaller proportion of respondents in the survey had stayed at school simply because they liked the learning environment. The influence of parents and the attitudes of others were also significant factors. Several people had stayed to Year 12 because they were forced to by their parents and others did so because they were keen to present good role models for other young people.[8] The distribution of the data did not allow an analysis of the difference between Thursday Island and Badu Island and there was no appreciable difference between the views of males and females.

Table 11. Reasons for staying on to Year 12, 1999

	Total %
Desire to graduate, to get a good education.	36
Improve employment prospects.	24
Like school environment, like subjects.	15
Parent pressure, sibling role model.	14
Improve prospects for further studies.	11
Total	100
No. of responses[a]	84

Notes: a. Some people gave more than one reason.
Source: Derived from question 6.3, see Appendix A.

Perceptions of secondary education

A very high proportion (almost 90%) of all people in the survey felt that their education had been fully or partly useful to them (Table 12) matching earlier findings that Islanders place a high value on education (see Arthur 1990, 1999; Davis 1998). (An anecdote from the late 1980s is also informative here. When a school on the mainland wrote to a student's parents in the Strait informing them that he was under-performing, the student's father took the plane south to discuss the issue with the principal.) There was little appreciable difference in this view between Thursday Island and Badu or between males and females. This differs to a degree with research amongst Indigenous students on the mainland of Australia which found that girls tend to be more positive about schooling than are boys (Teese et al. 1995: 21).

Table 12. Perceptions of secondary education, 1999[a]

	Total %
Useful	79
Partly useful	10
Not useful	9
n.s.[b]	2
Total	100
No. people	105

Notes: a. These data include those still at school (16 people).
b. n.s = not stated.
Source: Derived from question 10, see Appendix A.

Responses to the survey indicate that it was often the case that, people found school useful because it improved their written and spoken communicating skills in English (29%) and their knowledge of maths and science (17%) (Table 13). Grouping these together suggests that people placed some considerable value on the basic elements of education, namely literacy and numeracy. Not a great deal of difference could be detected between Thursday Island and Badu, though people on Badu appeared to value school more for reading and writing than did those on Thursday Island (not shown in Table 13). A survey of non-Indigenous students in Sydney found that only around 14 per cent view numeracy and literacy as valuable in school (Meade 1981: 123), contrasting with Torres Strait Islander students. Respondents in Torres Strait indicated that being skilled in English increased their self-confidence as it gave them the power and the freedom to communicate with others. According to one, if Islanders can communicate in English then everything else works out 'okay'. To be skilled in English was thought particularly relevant because English was seen as the Islanders' second language.[9] This may help account for the different value Islanders and non-Indigenous people appear to place on literacy in schooling noted above. Other research has highlighted the importance of numeracy and literacy for Indigenous students, arguing that a lack of skills in these areas inhibits people's educational

and occupational mobility; that is, their ability to move between school, higher education, training and employment (see Long et al. 1999b: 13, 16).

Long et al. (1999b: 17) argue that education should be embedded in work experience. This proposition is significant when examining responses to the torres Strait survey relating to perceptions of education. A sizeable proportion of people (22%) found the range of school classes relating to business and office work useful. These included classes in administration and computer work. A particularly high value was given to these classes on Thursday Island where they included joint ventures between the school and the TAFE college. Females valued the those classes oriented towards business studies more than did males, mirroring females' interest in careers in office work and administration (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). On the other hand, males valued classes in manual arts more than females which may reflect *their* interest in careers in trades (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). Males were also interested in some aspects of office work, particularly those related to computers. For example, one male in the survey indicated that the computer course at school had led him directly into a similar TAFE course. Similarly, several people in the survey indicated that school maths had helped them in their apprenticeships.

People also valued classes which improved their lifeskills. Related to this, it was felt that schooling in general increased one's confidence and ability to find a job. Learning job-related skills and social skills have also been identified as important to non-Indigenous students (Meade 1981: 123).

Surveys of Indigenous students in urban and rural schools across the country showed that the quality of the school's social environment had an impact on whether they stayed on at school (Long et al. 1999b: 11, 13). This appeared to also be the case for Torres Strait Islanders. A small proportion of people valued school because of the quality of the teachers. They valued the encouragement given by their teachers and the information they could supply on careers. This was particularly the case for those on Thursday Island (see also Arthur and David-Petero 2000a). One respondent in the survey said that her teacher in Year 12 had made this 'the best year of my life'. Some ex-students on Thursday Island planned to return to school to ask their former teachers for career advice and information (see Arthur David-Petero 2000a), an option not easily taken up by those who went to school only on the mainland. The importance of this kind of support from teachers has also been noted amongst Year 11 non-Indigenous students in urban Australia (Meade 1981: 249).

Only a few respondents (17) indicated that they had not found their education useful (Table 14). Mostly they were negative about their education because they felt they had missed their chance by choosing the wrong subjects, or because school had not given them the skills that they valued; in particular students wanted more life skills and office skills. Some expressed dissatisfaction with schooling in terms of particular personal or social problems in the classroom. This may further explain the reasons why people might leave school noted in Table 9.

Table 13. Aspects of education considered useful, 1999

	Males %	Females %	Total %
Spoken and written communication	36	22	29
Business, accounting, office, computer, admin., (pathways) TAFE at school	14	30	22
Life skills, confidence, helped get a job	15	19	18
Maths, science	14	12	13
Manual arts, marine, hospitality, home economics	14	4	9
Teacher and career support	4	12	8
Sports, school rules	3	0	1
Total	100	100	100
No. of responses[a]	58	67	125

Note: a. People may have given more than one response.
Source: Derived from question 10, see appendix A.

In some respects, the things that were viewed negatively about school are a mirror image of those that were viewed positively. So, for example, while some people valued being taught work/office and life skills (Table 13), others felt that they had not been given enough access to these (Table 14) The desire for more work related and life skills in education has also been noted amongst Indigenous people in Northam, Western Australia (Morgan 1999: xi). As with other factors noted above, these criticisms of education are not limited to Islander students. Research on non-Indigenous students' perceptions of education shows that they are also feel that their schooling had generally under valued job or work related tasks, and had not given them enough information about the world of work (Meade 1981: 108, 248, 249; Poole 1990: 84). As a result, what students wanted was a greater link between their school subjects and work skills (Wilson and Wyn 1981: 45) and generally more 'education for life' (Poole 1990: 84). We suggest that similar findings emerge for Torres Strait Islanders, as shown on Table 13.

Table 14. Aspects of education considered not useful, 1999

	Total no.
Took wrong subjects, wanted more office skills and life skills	8
Problems in class[a]	7
Have not had a job to use education.	2
No.	17

Note: a. For example, disruption in class, lessons too fast, could not understand classes in south.
Source: Derived from question 10, see Appendix A.

Training

Until recent national policy changes to the training landscape (see Campbell 2000), the vast majority of training in Torres Strait was carried out by the public sector training institution, TAFE. A substantial TAFE college is located on Thursday Island and its campus includes a facility at the tip of Cape York. In addition, the University of Queensland has an annex on Thursday Island (administering a Batchelor of Applied Health Science course) and this utilises the TAFE college teaching facilities.

One intention of the national policy changes described by Campbell (2000), was to introduce vocational training into high schools and this has occurred in Torres Strait. The TAFE college on Thursday Island is immediately adjacent to the State High School which, we would argue, has facilitated this development. TAFE also attempt to facilitate access by providing a scheme which allows students to pay for courses in instalments, and by arranging student travel to the mainland when this is required. Another intention of the policy changes was to increase the number of private registered training organisations (RTOs) into the training sector across Australia. This has occurred in Torres Strait, and RTOs, often from the mainland, now compete with TAFE across the region. In addition, at least one island council has become registered as an RTO. While Badu Island is not an RTO, the island council hosts trainers from either TAFE or the private sector.

Despite these facilities, it should be remembered that Torres Strait is an archipelago and so is subject to many of the constraints of such regions (Arthur 1999). For instance, communication and transport in Torres Strait are particularly difficult, and the majority of movement between islands is by light plane. This has an impact on mobility and on the provision of education and training.

Trainees

In other parts of the survey we have noted that people want training (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). Around 40 per cent of all those in the survey had been, or were currently, engaged in some form of traineeship at the time of the survey (Table 15) and this was as likely to be the case amongst males as females. It should be noted, however, that the concept of trainee used here is quite liberal as people consider themselves trainees if they are undertaking any form of training. The term 'trainee' does not necessarily indicate someone who is in, for example, a 12 month Commonwealth traineeship.

People on Thursday Island were more likely to have been some form of trainee than those on Badu (Table 15) possibly reflecting the greater variety of occupations and industries there (see Arthur 1999). (However, as we shall see below, this pattern is reversed for apprenticeships.)

Table 15. Currently or ever a trainee, 1999

Ever a trainee	Thursday Island % (1)	Badu %	Total %
Yes	55	33	43
No	45	67	57
Total	100	100	100
No. of people[a]	38	51	89

Note: a. The 16 Thursday Island people still attending school have been excluded.
Source: Derived from question 8, see Appendix A.

Table 16 shows the types of traineeships in which people have been involved. The vast majority of these have been in administration and trades which reflects the interest people show in these two broad job categories and, to some degree, the local job market (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). Though the numbers involved are small, it was noticeable that administrative traineeships were more prevalent on Thursday Island while trades positions were more common on Badu. Again, this may reflect Thursday Island's position as an administrative centre.

Table 16. Types of trainees, 1999

	Total %
Office and administration related	42
Trades related	28
Social/community services, education	15
Health/dental	15
Total	100
Total no.	39

Source: Derived from question 8, see Appendix A.

Table 17 shows the employer groups that have sponsored trainees. This indicates the relatively important role played by island community councils in sponsoring training. At the time of the survey, the community council on Thursday Island had sponsored four trainees in the survey group, and Badu island council had sponsored 14. As has been suggested elsewhere (Arthur and David-Petero 2000a, 2000b) community councils, being a form of Indigenous local government, are relatively free from some of the fiscal and cross-cultural constraints that might inhibit non-Indigenous employers from sponsoring trainees. An added advantage is that potential trainees are already participants in the community-controlled CDEP scheme, which can be used to cross-subsidise the trainee's wage.

Other significant sponsors of trainees include State government departments and instrumentalities. For those people in the survey these sponsors included the Islanders Board of Industry and Service (IBIS)[10] which incorporates the local Job Network office, and the State government Departments of Health and Education.

The Commonwealth government and the private sector are less well represented. This may reflect sample bias but may also indicate that it is relatively more difficult to place trainees in the private sector than in the government sector; that the State government has a significant presence in Torres Strait; and that the State mounted a public service career strategy in the late 1990s (see Arthur 1999).

Table 17. Sponsors of trainees, 1999

	Total %
Community councils (4 on Thursday Island and 14 on Badu)	46
State government and instrumentalities[a]	36
Commonwealth government and instrumentalities[b]	8
Non-government community organisations	5
Private sector	5
Total	100
Total no.	39

Notes: a. Includes: Job Network (2); IBIS (1); Health (4); Education (2).
b. Includes: Australian Fish Management Authority; TSRA; Aust Customs.
Source: Derived from question 8, see Appendix A.

Apprentices

In other parts of this survey we have seen how people (especially males) aspire to enter into apprenticeships (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). Table 18 shows the number of those who were apprentices or who had been apprentices at the time of the survey, all of whom were males on Badu. That is to say, none of those interviewed on Thursday Island were currently or had been apprentices. On the other hand, several of those people interviewed on Thursday Island expressed the wish to be apprentices (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b

The fact that there were no apprentices amongst those interviewed on Thursday Island does not necessarily mean that there are no apprentices there. All of those in Table 18 had their apprenticeships sponsored by island or community councils. As noted above with respect to trainees, this suggests that councils may find it relatively easy to facilitate Indigenous apprenticeships. Again as noted elsewhere (Arthur and David-Petero 2000a, 2000b), this may be because the councils have fewer financial pressures than private industry and they can cross-subsidise apprenticeships through the CDEP scheme. In communities with CDEP most people are employed in the scheme part-time, and they are paid a part-time CDEP wage. Councils on these communities can enrol these part-time workers as apprentices and subsidise their full-time apprenticeship wage with their part-time CDEP wage. As a point of comparison, research in La Perouse, New South Wales, has suggested that the capacity of private employers to take on Indigenous

apprentices is limited by the amount of subsidy available from the government (Morgan 1999: iv).

Although there is a significant level of construction of public works and housing in Torres Strait, this is often carried out by companies and contractors from the mainland. This environment may not always be conducive to taking on local apprentices as contractors are invariably working to a tight schedule and require skilled workers. In contrast, island councils are relatively autonomous and can design their own working environment to utilise the lower skills and possibly different approaches to work of some Islanders.

Councils may also be able to make the work-place more culturally friendly. For instance, some apprentices seemed to value the ability of their supervisor to 'speak broken'; that is to speak Torres Strait Creole. Findings from other parts of the survey show that people value a working environment where they can be with friends and/or with those who have both skills and who can communicate them, and/or in an Indigenous organisation (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). Other studies have found that CDEP schemes can allow people to be in a work environment in which they feel comfortable (Gray and Thacker 2000; see Smith 1994, 1995, 1996).

Not all of the apprentices on Badu were interviewed. However, the trades shown in Table 18 are indicative of the general pattern. As indicated in an earlier profile of the region (see Arthur 1999), mechanical and/or building related trades are in demand in Torres Strait. Given the size of the Badu community and the extent of its infrastructure and building program, the current apprenticeships would seem to provide good career opportunities. For instance, the island has a heavy vehicle workshop, a building workshop, a service station, a large health clinic, a comprehensive child care centre and a sizeable stock of community housing. In fact, it is this level of infrastructure that provides the basis for the council to provide apprenticeships and to hire the requisite supervisors. There are likely to be fewer such prospects on several other island communities which have smaller populations and community infrastructure (see Table 1). In addition, the Badu council would appear to be oriented towards development and this can explain why they facilitate apprenticeships. It is instructive that training only became a goal on one of the other islands when a leader who saw training as valuable was elected as chairperson.

In any event it is noticeable that of those surveyed, none were apprentices with the State or Commonwealth governments or in the private sector. This could reflect a bias in the sample, although two males in the survey had tried unsuccessfully to get apprenticeships in the private sector. Boughton (1998: 26, 28) has argued that Indigenous organisations should operate like development agencies to dovetail vocational training with CDEP to produce training and local economic activity that is relevant to the host community. The Badu council would appear to be doing just this and as such can be likened to a form of development agency, providing career opportunities or pathways where the formal labour market cannot. This in turn emphasises the 'developmental' nature of the CDEP scheme.

Amongst those interviewed it was possible to identify a variable commitment to their apprenticeships. For example, when asked what might stop them continuing some suggested that they might not always be punctual or turn up for work (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000a). Indeed, as shown on Table 18, not all of those who had started apprenticeships had completed them. This largely appeared to be because they had chosen a trade that they later found they did not like. Most of those interviewed on Badu expressed the aim to continue with their apprenticeship in the coming year and to become qualified (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). Further, several people who were not apprentices aspired to become so.

In the year preceding the survey, several young people attended a deckhand's course in Tasmania and, of these, some expressed the desire to become coxswains (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). However, despite the fact that the major industry in the region is commercial fishing (Arthur 1999), no one in the survey had taken or was planning to take any training directly associated with the fishing industry. It was also noted none of the young people interviewed expressed the desire or intention to make a career in commercial fishing (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). This is despite the fact that, at other times, Torres Strait Islander leaders have indicated a desire to see Islanders move into parts of the industry in which they are not presently represented, such as the prawn fishery or fish marketing. This apparent lack of interest amongst young people in increasing their formal engagement with the industry will be explored in future stages of the project.

Table 18. Number, location and types of apprentices, 1999

Trade	Location and sponsor			
	Badu Island Council	Injinoo Council	Bamaga Island council	Total
Carpentry	5[a]	-	-	5
Motor mechanics	2	-	-	2
Landscaping	1	-	-	1
Plumbing	1	-	-	1
Panel beating	-	1[b]	-	1
Painting	-	-	1[c]	1
Total no.	9	1	1	11

Notes: a. One of these started in 1997, stopped and then restarted in 1999.
b. Dropped out after two weeks.
c. Dropped out after four months.
Source: Derived from question 9, see Appendix A.

Conclusions

The principal aim of this paper was to determine what role, if any, people see education and training playing in their future careers.

Human capital theory, noted at the outset of this paper, indicates that people might value education and training as a form of investment that will allow them to further their careers. The data from the first stage of the Torres Strait section of the project suggests that this is often the view of young Islanders; they say, for example, that they will stay at school to improve their prospects for further education, for training and for employment. In addition to valuing study and training as activities that can help them achieve their goals, they also appear to find these inherently interesting. The value that young people appear to place on interesting work or training has been noted elsewhere in this project (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000a, 2000b).

Although people thought that education would helped them with their futures, several of them felt that more emphasis could be placed on providing job related skills and life skills in school. Nonetheless, the general feeling about education was positive, including the recent association between the local TAFE and secondary school. This mirrors the positive view students have of TAFE noted elsewhere in the survey (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000a). Interestingly, the most valued aspects of education appeared to be its ability to increase skills in verbal and written communication. In any event, young people seem to make a fairly strong link between education and training and their futures.

Although people, might want to stay on at school to Year 12 to improve their career prospects, it appears that sometimes this might have to take second place to family commitments; a compromise similar to that noted in other parts of this project (see Arthur and David-Petero 2000a, and 2000b). In addition, the data suggest some inverse relationship between travelling to the mainland for education and staying on to Year 12: students who went to the mainland for secondary schooling were likely to change schools more often and less likely to complete Year 12 than were those attending school on Thursday Island. However, these findings are not conclusive and require further research.

The fields of training in which people were involved reflected features of the regional economy and, to a degree, conventional male/female divisions. For instance, women were likely to want training for careers in education, health and administration, while males were more interested in training for trades. Although some young people had been involved in a deckhand's course, none were doing or planned to do any training associated with the commercial fishing industry (see also Arthur and David-Petero 2000b). This apparent lack of interest amongst young people in increasing their formal engagement with the industry will be explored in future stages of the project.

A great many of the people interviewed had undertaken or were planning to undertake training in their CDEP community. A significant but smaller proportion had been trained in the State and Commonwealth government sector; very few people had received training in the private sector. This distribution partly reflects

the regional economy: many people are involved in CDEP and governments, especially the State government, have a significant regional presence. However, it was noticeable that all of the trainees and apprentices interviewed in the survey were in CDEP communities. It appears therefore, that having CDEP gives a community the autonomy to offer training and apprenticeships to its members. In this way CDEP helps facilitate career pathways (see also Arthur and David-Petero 2000a). However, having CDEP is not a sufficient condition for this to happen. Communities who wish to train their young members must also have the relevant levels of infrastructure, the instructors and a commitment from community leaders.

As noted in the foreword, this is one of a set of three papers from an initial survey in Torres Strait. The other two papers in the set deal respectively with people's careers and job searching techniques (*CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 205*) and with their career aspirations (*CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 206*). The initial survey that provided the data for this paper is part of a larger study. The study utilises the concept of career which facilitates an exploration of what people think about their future and embodies the idea of change over time. The project aims to determine what may assist or deter people from fulfilling their aspirations, and how and why their ideas about their futures may change. In an attempt to capture these aspects of people's lives, those who were part of this initial survey will be interviewed again.

Notes

1. DFACS replaces the former Department of Social Security. DFACS now has the responsibility for designing and assessing the programs administered by Centrelink.
2. The other two major labour market investments people make are job-searching and migration (Gray and Hunter 2000).
3. This is the region under the jurisdiction of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA).
4. It should be noted that the CDEP scheme is predominantly an Indigenous 'work for the dole' scheme. Participation in it involves people working for those payments that would in other circumstance comprise their unemployment benefits, or Newstart.
5. The effect of this was greater for females than males (Hunter 1996: 3).
6. For simplicity, and because the sample is relatively small, the gender split is not always shown in tables.
7. Long et al. (1999a: 18) provide information on students who stay on at school.
8. Long et al. (1999b: 16) found that positive role models can influence the transition from school to higher education.
9. For many, their common language is Torres Strait Creole (see Schnukal 1985).
10. IBIS is a Queensland State Government instrumentality. It has a Torres Strait Islander board, and is accessible to Torres Strait Islanders for employment.

Appendix A. Abridged questionnaire

Age? Sex? Married?

1.0 How many children do you have or look after?

2.0 Who do you live with?

3.0 Do your parents have a job? If yes what is it? 3.1 Father? 3.2 Mother?

4.0 Have you ever used Centrelink? 4.1 What for? 4.2 Was that successful for you or not? 4.3 In what way?

5.0 Have you used Job Network? 5.1 What for? 5.2 Was this successful for you or not? 5.3 In what way?

6.0 What grade did you leave school?
- 6.1 How old were you when you left school?
- 6.2 Why did you leave then?
- 6.3 If you stayed at school to year 12 or after, why did you do this?
- 6.4 Where was your last school?
- 6.5 Which secondary schools did you go to? (list them all and give location)

7.0 What qualifications did you get after you left school?

7.1 What college or University did get these at? (list them all)

8.0 Have you ever been a trainee? 8.1 When? 8.2 Where?

9.0 Have you ever been an apprentice? 9.1 When? 9.2 Where?

10.0 Do you think your education has helped you? 10.1 If yes, in what way? 10.2 If not, why not?

11.0 Where were you last year at this time?

12.0 What were you doing last year at this time?
- 12.1 Was it full-time part-time, casual?
- 12.2 If you were you doing more than one thing, what were they?

13.0 What was the main reason you were doing this last year?

Mark below, the things you have done over the last year?

14.0 Which three of these things were best for you?

15.0 Why were they best?

16.0 What are the things you have done since you left school?

17.0 What are you doing now? You can give more than one thing.

18.0 About how many hours do you do these things (part-time, full-time, casual)

19.0 What is the main reason you are doing these things?

20.0 Is this what you planned to be doing a year ago?

21.0 If it is, what things did you do to achieve this?

22.0 If it is not, what stopped you doing what you wanted to do?

23.0 If you have a job now, how did you get this

24.0 What would you like to do over the next year?

25.0 What would you like to be doing this time next year?

26.0 What is the main reason you want to do this?

27.0 What things will you do to achieve this?

28.0 Do you think any of the following can help you achieve the thing you want to do next year?

Mark against each how useful you think they would be from 1 to 4 with 4 meaning that it would very useful, 1 meaning not useful at all.

- 28.1 Centrelink
- 28.2 Job Network
- 28.3 Family
- 28.4 TAFE
- 28.5 University
- 28.6 School
- 28.7 CDEP
- 28.8 Work Other than CDEP
- 28.9 Other

29.0 Of these, which one do you think would be most useful to you?

30.0 In what way?

31.0 If you do not think they can help you, why not?

32.0 Do you think there are things which would stop you doing what you want to do next year?
- 32.1 If so what are these?

33.0 Where would you most like to live next year?

33.1 Why?

34.0 What would you like to be doing when you are 30 years old?
34.1 Why?

35.0 Generally, would you rather work:
- 35.1 full-time
- 35.2 part-time/seasonal
- 35.3 not work at all?

36.0 Why?

37.0 Do you hunt, fish or make a garden for your own or family's food?
- 37.1 If so, when?
- 37.2 If not why not?

38.0 Who do you most like to work with? 38.1 Why?

39.0 Give each of these things a mark from 1 to 4 depending on how important they are to you for work. A 4 means the thing is important, a 1 means it is not important at all:
- 39.1 Level of pay
- 39.2 Being with others you know
- 39.3 Working in an Indigenous controlled company/organization

39.4 Not to have stress or worries at work
39.5 Working part time
39.6 Making your own working hours
39.7 Getting promoted
39.8 Being your own boss
39.9 Having a secure job
39.10 One other thing that **you** can choose.

40.0 Say the first three most important for you?

41.0 Why are these important?

42.0 In the last year have you received?

42.1 Abstudy

42.2 Newstart Allowance

42.3 Youth Allowance

42.4 Parent Allowance

43.0 Did you have any problems meeting the requirements for any of these payments?
43.1 If so what were they?

44.0 Did you know that you may still be able to get a reduced rate of Newstart or Youth Allowance even if you are doing casual, temporary or part-time work?

45.0 Are there any changes you feel should be made to these payments?

45.1 If so can you say which payments what changes these could be?

46.0 What is the main way you make a living now?

47.0 What are the other ways you make a living now?

48.0 How much is your income each week from your jobs (to take home, after tax).

48.1 Say if any loans, rent or other deductions are made from your pay.

49.0 Is this enough for you?

49.1 If not, why not?

50.0 How much would you like to get now each week (to take home)?
50.1 Why?

51.0 What are the three things you have to spend most money on each week? Make the biggest expense number 1

52.0 Tell me the three most important things for you in life.

53.0 Why are these important?

54.0 What would you most like to do in life?
54.1 Why?

55.0 Where would you most like to live?
55.1 Why?
55.2 If you are not living there, why not?

Appendix B

Table B.1. Reasons why Indigenous students may leave school, Torres Strait, 1997

	Per cent
Issues outside school	
Pregnancy	12.9
Need to earn money	12.9
Lack of self-confidence, self-esteem	9.6
Peer pressure	9.6
Home difficulties	6.5
Funerals	6.5
Issues inside school	
Trouble with other students	22.5
Difficulties with teachers	6.5
Expelleda	6.5
Homesickness	6.5
Total	100.0
No.	31

Note: a. Often due to problems with attendance.
Source: School destination survey of 126 Year 10, 11 and 12 students on the islands of Torres Strait, 1997 (see Arthur 1999).

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