

## Access to vocational education reduces crime—new research

July 27 2016, by Laura Soderlind

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Credit: University of Melbourne

The crime rate, especially drug crime, decreases significantly when more 16-44 year olds have access to affordable Vocational Education and Training, (VET) according to a new University of Melbourne report.

Drug [crime rate](#) decreased 13 per cent when more people had access to a publicly-funded place in VET. The research also recorded a five percent and 11 per cent decrease in personal and property [crime](#) respectively, including assault, theft and burglary.

Report author, Dr Cain Polidano from the Melbourne Institute found that the extra public funding of VET (TAFE and private colleges) reduced the costs of crime.

"We found that for every extra dollar spent on VET, the community saved 18 cents in avoided crime costs, such as lost productivity, health and rehabilitation costs," said Dr Polidano.

"We already know that investment in [vocational education](#) has widespread economic benefits, including increased employment and earnings, but policy makers should take note of the flow on savings for the justice and health systems," he said.

The report, Vocational Education and Training: A Pathway to the Straight and Narrow, also found that increased VET participation reduces crime by more among mature-age groups (26-44) than among young people (16-25).

"We see greater impacts for mature-age people because they are more likely to use increased opportunities in VET to find legitimate jobs," said Dr Polidano.

The research cross-referenced 2010-2013 crime rates in NSW and Victoria, with the VET participation rates. In 2010 Victoria uncapped the number of publicly-funded places in VET, which saw participation increase by 75%, while participation remained largely unchanged in NSW.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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