

The costs of lost opportunity for early school leavers

Counting the costs of lost opportunity in Australian education

Twelve per cent or one in eight Australians will never attain a Year 12 certificate or equivalent qualification.

Disparities in educational attainment lead to major differences in many areas of life: people who miss out face increased likelihood of experiencing unemployment or underemployment, poor health, crime and public welfare dependency.

Completion of Year 12 or an equivalent qualification is an indication of whether young people have developed knowledge and skills to prepare them for further study or participation in the workforce. It is one of the benchmarks that separates those who will proceed to further study and training, and on to a productive and independent adult life, and those who will not.

	Annual cost per cohort	Lifetime cost per cohort
Lost taxes 	\$217.1m	\$8.7bn
Health 	\$4.9m	\$200m
Crime 	\$19.1m	\$800m
Welfare 	\$91.1m	\$3.6bn

Annual cost per cohort Lifetime cost per cohort

Fiscal **\$315.3m** **\$12.6bn**



Social **\$580.7m** **\$23.2bn**



It is clear that Year 12 achievement is largely locked in by age 25 – if you do not achieve an equivalent qualification by then, you are unlikely ever to.

For more information visit our website at www.mitchellinstitute.org.au