

Snapshot report

Destinations of female, male and non-binary or other school leavers

2024 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

This snapshot report provides a high-level overview of findings from the 2024 NSW Post-School Destinations and Experiences Survey relating to Year 12 completers and early school leavers who identify as female, male, or non-binary or other.



Survey sample

In 2024, 95,334 students (68,778 Year 12 completers and 26,556 early school leavers) from across NSW were invited to take part in the survey. Of these, it was estimated that:

- 34,621 (50.3%) Year 12 completers identified as female, 32,709 (47.6%) identified as male, 883 (1.3%) identified as non-binary or other and 565 (0.8%) did not report their gender.
- 10,545 (39.7%) early school leavers identified as female, 15,430 (58.1%) identified as male, 400 (1.5%) identified as non-binary or other and 180 (0.7%) did not report their gender.

The estimation was made based on responses from 30,752 Year 12 completers and 6,483 early school leavers. Of these responses, 16,623 Year 12 completers and 2,647 early school leavers identified as female, 13,453 Year 12 completers and 3,694 early school leavers identified as male and 417 Year 12 completers and 101 early school leavers identified as non-binary or other.

In reporting on the 2024 survey, results are based on an individual's gender as identified in their survey response. This decision to use self-identified gender information continues from the 2023 survey reporting and is a change from previous years, when this identification was based on an individual's sex in their school enrolment data. This change was made out of respect for recent leavers' understandings and expressions of their gender identity, to promote greater sensitivity and inclusivity, and to improve the recency and validity of the data provided. To ensure consistency and accuracy in this 2024 snapshot report, survey data from previous years has also been presented based on an individual's gender identity in their survey response.

Main post-school destinations in 2024

In 2024, an estimated 91.1% of all **female** recent school leavers, 94.1% of female Year 12 completers, and 81.3% of female early school leavers were in education, training or employment. For **males**, it was estimated that 88.8% of all leavers, 90.9% of Year 12 completers and 84.2% of early school leavers were in education, training or employment in 2024. For **non-binary or other** school leavers, 78.6% of all recent leavers, 85% of Year 12 completers and 63% of early school leavers were in education, training or employment in 2024.¹

For Year 12 completers there were more females in education, training or employment than males (a 3.1 percentage point, or pp, difference) and non-binary or other individuals (an 8.6 pp difference) in 2024. Conversely, for early school leavers there were more males in education, training or employment than females (a 3.0 pp difference) and non-binary or other individuals (a 20.9 pp difference) in 2024.

Figure 1: Estimated percentage of female Year 12 completers and early school leavers in education or training, employment, looking for work or NILFET in the year after leaving or completing school, 2024²

Year 12 completers



Early school leavers

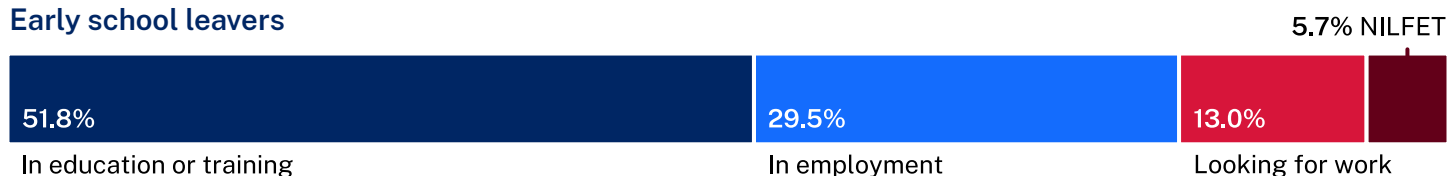


Figure 2: Estimated percentage of male Year 12 completers and early school leavers in education or training, employment, looking for work or NILFET in the year after leaving or completing school, 2024

Year 12 completers



Early school leavers



¹ Percentages in this snapshot report are rounded to the nearest whole number when group total estimates are less than 1,000 and when approximating minimal changes across time (for example, 'around 65%'). Refer to the technical report for further information.

² NILFET = not in the labour force, education or training.

Figure 3: Estimated percentage of non-binary Year 12 completers and early school leavers in education or training, employment, looking for work or NILFET in the year after leaving or completing school, 2024



Post-school destinations in 2024

School leavers across NSW in education

	Bachelor	VET cert IV+	VET cert III	VET cert I–II
Female Population estimate: 45,166	43.9% ~ no change since 2023	5.4% ▼ down 0.2 pp since 2023	5.4% ▼ down 0.1 pp since 2023	1.8% ▲ up 0.2 pp since 2023
Male Population estimate: 48,139	33.5% ▲ up 0.6 pp since 2023	3.3% ▼ down 0.4 pp since 2023	2.0% ~ no change since 2023	1.1% ~ no change since 2023
Non-binary or other Population estimate: 1,283	31.0% ▲ up 1.5 pp since 2023	19.5% ▲ up 0.3 pp since 2023		

School leavers across NSW in training or employment

	Apprenticeship	Traineeship	Full-time work	Part-time work
Female Population estimate: 45,166	3.3% ▼ down 0.2 pp since 2023	6.5% ▼ down 0.5 pp since 2023	7.6% ▼ down 1.0 pp since 2023	17.2% ▲ up 0.6 pp since 2023
Male Population estimate: 48,139	22.5% ▼ down 0.8 pp since 2023	3.4% ▼ down 0.5 pp since 2023	8.5% ▼ down 1.4 pp since 2023*	14.4% ▲ up 1.2 pp since 2023*
Non-binary or other Population estimate: 1,283	5.0% ▼ down 3.8 pp since 2023		5.1% ▲ up 0.8 pp since 2023	17.9% ▲ up 0.5 pp since 2023

* indicates statistically significant change (refer to [technical report](#) for details).

Note: Comparisons discussed in ‘Post-school destinations in 2024’ refer only to statistically significant changes (refer to technical report for more details). Due to the low sample size for non-binary and other respondents, VET certificate IV+, III and I–II were combined and apprenticeships and traineeships were combined.

Compared to 2023 there was a higher percentage of males in part-time work (up 1.2 pp) and a lower percentage of males in full-time work (down 1.4 pp) in 2024.

In 2024, more **female** school leavers were:

- studying bachelor's degrees (a 10.4 pp difference), VET certificate courses (6.1 pp) or in part-time work (2.8 pp) than male leavers
- studying bachelor's degrees (a 12.8 pp difference), in training (4.7 pp) or full-time work (2.5 pp) than non-binary or other leavers.

In 2024, more **male** school leavers were:

- in training (a 16.1 pp difference), full-time work (0.9 pp), looking for work (1.7 pp) or NILFET (0.6 pp) than female leavers
- in training (a 20.9 pp difference) or full-time work (3.4 pp) than non-binary or other leavers.

In 2024, more **non-binary or other** school leavers were:

- in VET certificate courses (a 6.9 pp difference), looking for work (8.8 pp) or NILFET (3.7 pp) than female leavers
- in VET certificate courses (a 13.0 pp difference), part-time work (3.5 pp), looking for work (7.1 pp) or NILFET (3.1 pp) than male leavers.

School leavers in education or training³

Since 2021, the estimated percentage of male, female and non-binary or other school leavers in education was consistently higher for Year 12 completers than for early school leavers. Compared to males there was a higher percentage of female and non-binary or other Year 12 completers and early school leavers in education, although there were slightly more non-binary or other Year 12 completers in education than male Year 12 completers.

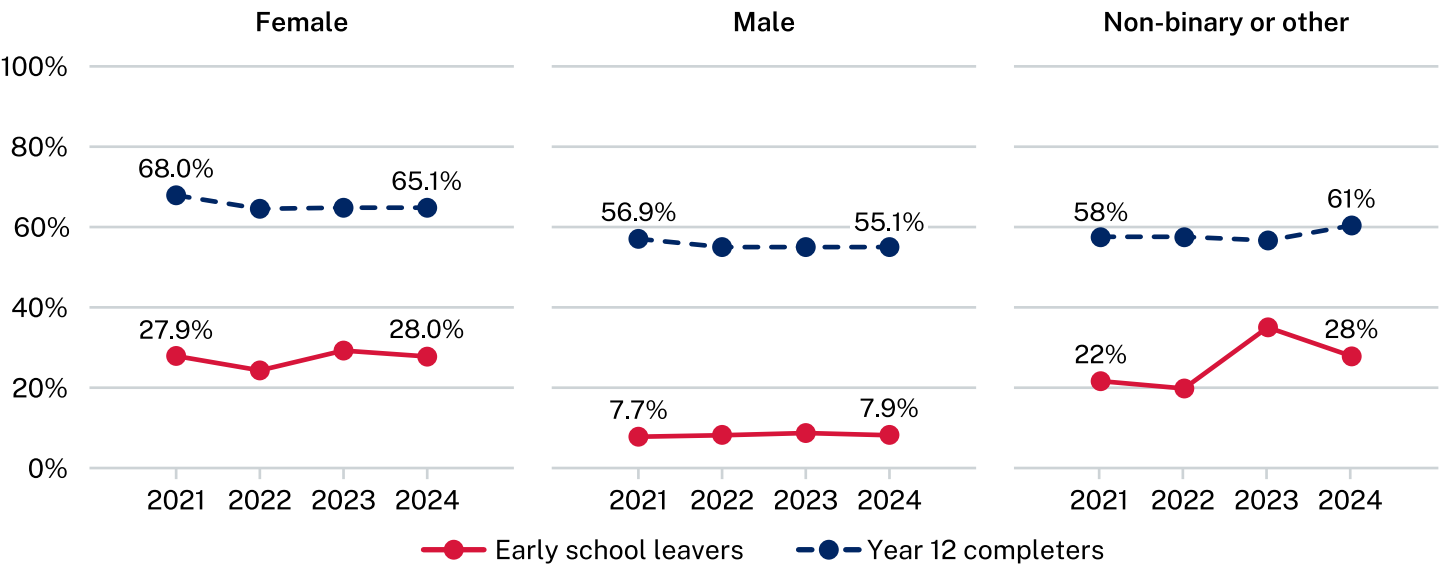
Among Year 12 completers, the estimated percentage of female and male school leavers in education declined by 3.2 pp and 1.7 pp respectively between 2021 and 2022. From 2022 to 2024, the percentages for both female and male Year 12 completers remained relatively stable at around 65% and 55% respectively. The percentage of non-binary or other Year 12 completers was relatively stable between 2021 and 2024 (around 59%).

In the early school leavers cohort, the estimated percentage of female school leavers in education dropped by 3.8 pp between 2021 and 2022, then increased by 5.4 pp between 2022 and 2023, but was about the same in 2024 as it was in 2021 (around 28%). The percentage of male early school leavers in education has remained relatively stable since 2021 (around 8%). Among non-binary or other early school leavers the estimated percentages fluctuated between years and saw a noticeable jump of 15 pp between 2022 and 2023.⁴

³ Education includes the main destinations of bachelor's degree, VET certificate IV+, VET certificate III and VET certificate I–II. Training includes the main destinations of apprenticeship and traineeship.

⁴ Note that the larger and more noticeable year-to-year fluctuations for non-binary or other early leavers (including those in the 'School leavers in employment only' section) and non-binary or other individuals from both leaver types in the 'Education areas for bachelor and VET students' section can be at least partially attributed to much smaller sample sizes for this group.

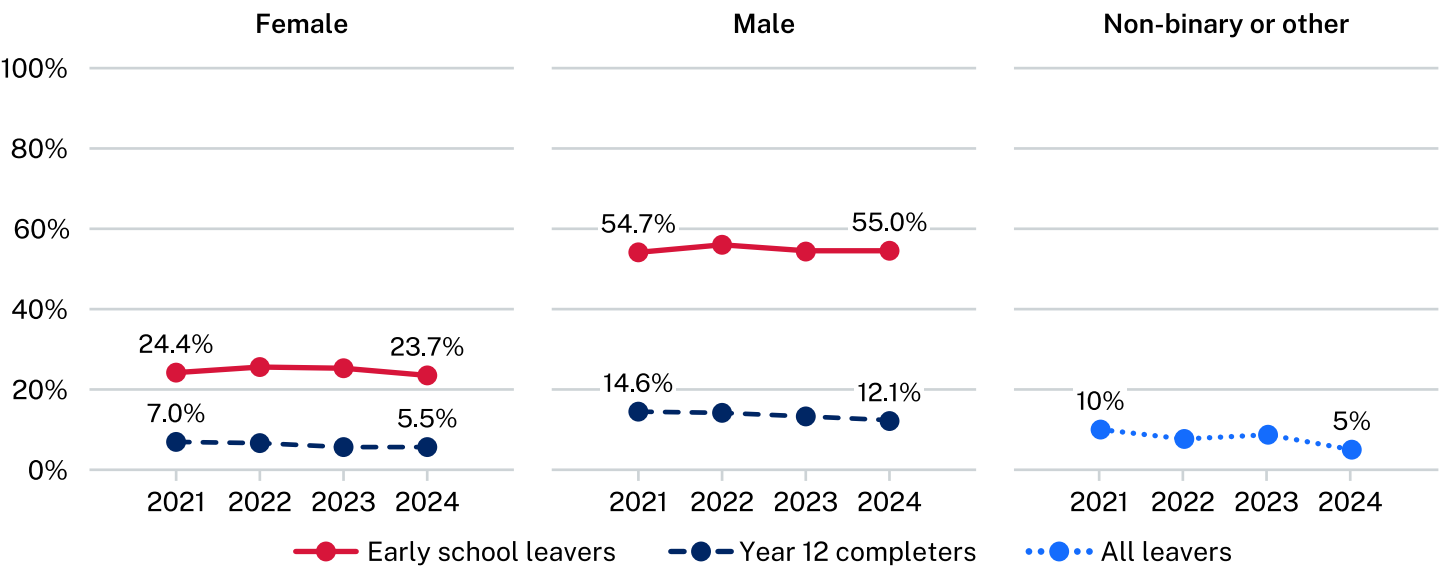
Figure 4: Estimated percentage of female, male, and non-binary or other NSW school leavers in education in the year after leaving or completing school, 2021 to 2024



Since 2021, the estimated percentage of female and male school leavers in training was consistently higher for early school leavers than Year 12 completers. Overall, males were also more likely to be in training than both female and non-binary or other leavers. Note that for non-binary or other school leavers, Year 12 completers and early school leavers were combined due to low sample sizes.

Among Year 12 completers, the estimated percentage of female and male school leavers in training declined by 1.4 pp and 2.5 pp respectively in 2024 compared to 2021. For early school leavers, the percentages of female and male leavers in training have remained relatively stable since 2021 (around 25% and 55% respectively). Across both leaver types, the percentage of non-binary or other school leavers in training also decreased by 5 pp in 2024 compared to 2021. Overall, a higher percentage of male early school leavers and Year 12 completers were in training compared to their female counterparts.

Figure 5: Estimated percentage of female, male, and non-binary or other NSW school leavers in training in the year after leaving or completing school, 2021 to 2024

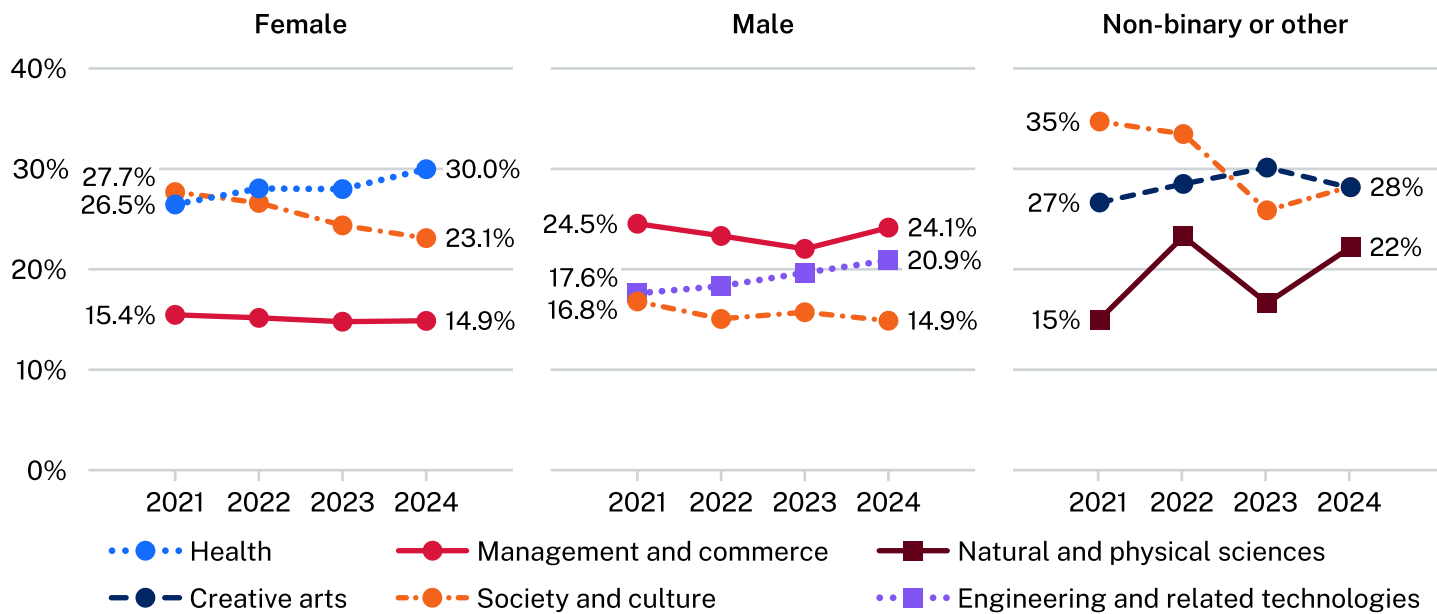


Education areas for bachelor and VET students⁵

In 2024, for leavers whose main destination was a bachelor’s degree, society and culture featured among the top 3 fields of study for all gender groups and management and commerce was among the top 3 for both male and female leavers. For females, the top 3 fields of study were health, society and culture, and management and commerce. This pattern was also reflected among all school leavers in NSW (refer to ‘Education areas for bachelors and VET students’ in the annual report). Among male school leavers, the top fields of study were management and commerce, engineering and related technologies, and society and culture. For non-binary or other school leavers, the top fields were society and culture, creative arts, and natural and physical sciences.

Compared to 2021, the estimated percentage of female school leavers studying a bachelor’s degree in health increased by 3.5 pp to 30.0% in 2024, making it the most common area of education. There was also an increase between 2021 and 2024 in the percentage of males studying engineering and related technologies (+3.3 pp). In contrast, in the same period the percentage studying society and culture dropped for females (–4.6 pp) and males (–1.9 pp).

Figure 6: Top 3 education areas for all leavers whose main destination was a bachelor’s degree, 2021 to 2024

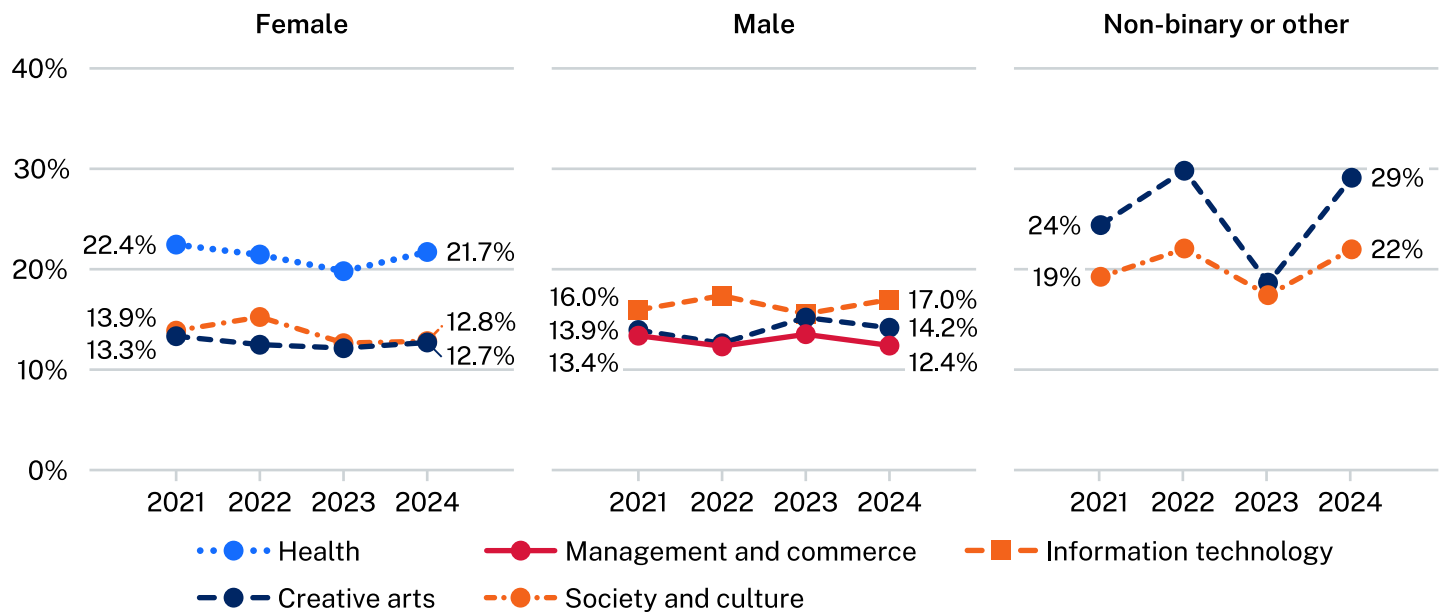


5 Education trends correspond to broad fields of education in the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001. In contrast to earlier reports, only recent leavers who said they were currently studying a bachelor or VET-level course that did not form part of an apprenticeship or traineeship were included in the base for reporting.

In 2024, creative arts featured among the top 3 areas of study for all gender groups. Among female school leavers whose main destination was a VET certificate course, the top 3 fields of study were health, society and culture, and creative arts. A similar pattern was also seen among all school leavers in NSW (refer to ‘Education areas for bachelors and VET students’ in the annual report). Among male school leavers, the top fields were information technology, creative arts, and management and commerce. For non-binary or other school leavers, the top fields were creative arts and society and culture.⁶

Across all gender groups, the proportion taking up each VET education area in 2024 was similar to 2021, with some year-to-year fluctuations observed.

Figure 7: Top 3 education areas for female, male, and non-binary or other leavers whose main destination was a VET certificate course, 2021 to 2024



Society and culture, management and commerce, and creative arts were featured in the top areas of study for both bachelor’s degrees and VET certificate courses for all gender groups. Notably, health was the top area of study for female school leavers for both bachelor’s degrees and VET certificate courses.

Employment areas for apprentices and trainees

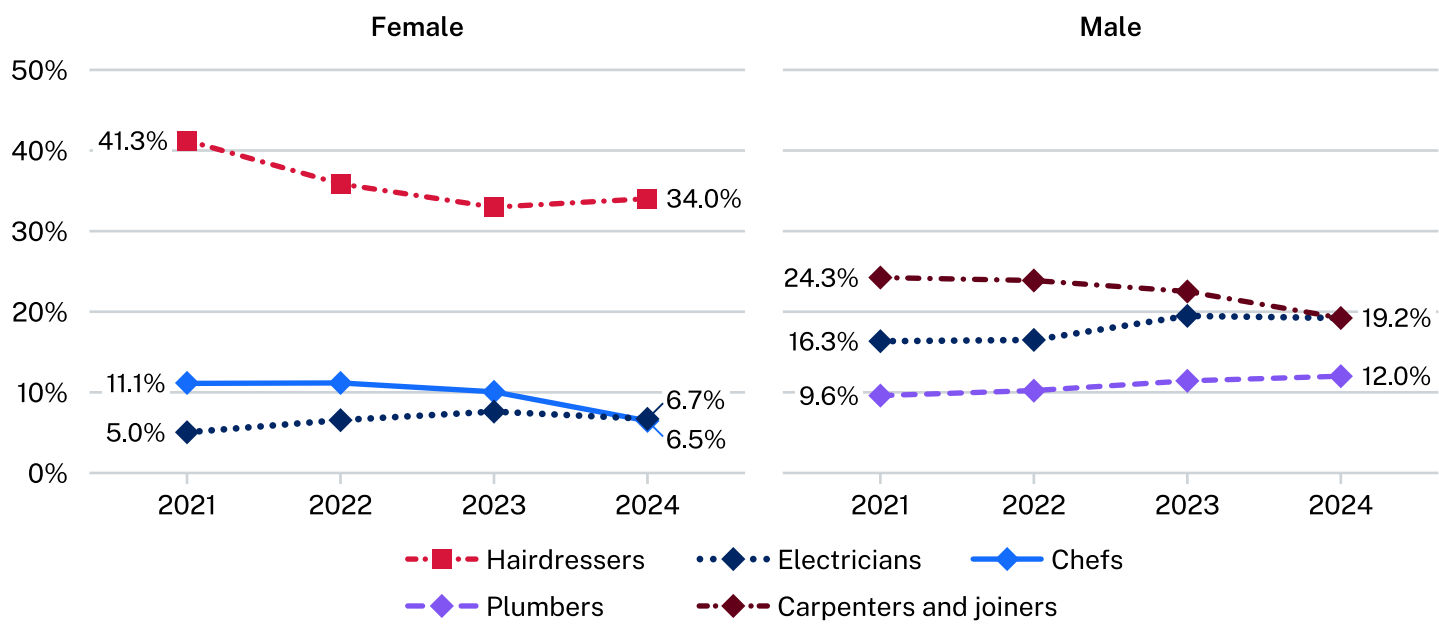
In 2024, the top 3 most common employment areas for female school leavers in apprenticeships were hairdressers, electricians and chefs.⁷ For male school leavers the top areas were carpenters and joiners, electricians and plumbers. The apprenticeship employment area profile and rankings for males were similar to those seen for all school leavers at the state level (refer to ‘Employment areas for apprentices and trainees’ in the annual report).

Compared to 2021, the percentage of female school leavers working in apprenticeships as hairdressers decreased by 7.3 pp in 2024. Those working as chefs also decreased by 4.7 pp from 2021 to 2024. Among male school leavers, the percentage opting to work as carpenters and joiners declined by 5.0 pp to 19.2% in 2024 compared to 2021, while those choosing to work as plumbers increased by 2.4 pp to 12.0% in 2024 compared to 2021. Males working as electricians increased by 2.9 pp from 16.3% in 2021 to 19.2% in 2024.

6 Note that for non-binary or other individuals (including in the ‘Employment areas for apprentices and trainees’ and ‘Employment areas for those in paid work only’ sections) common areas were not reported in instances where data was suppressed in accordance with the NSW Department of Education [Data Suppression Standard](#) published on Metadata.NSW.

7 Employment areas are defined by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) unit-level groups. Refer to the ANZSCO release for more information. Estimated percentages for employment in this part of the snapshot report include recent school leavers whose main destination was an apprenticeship.

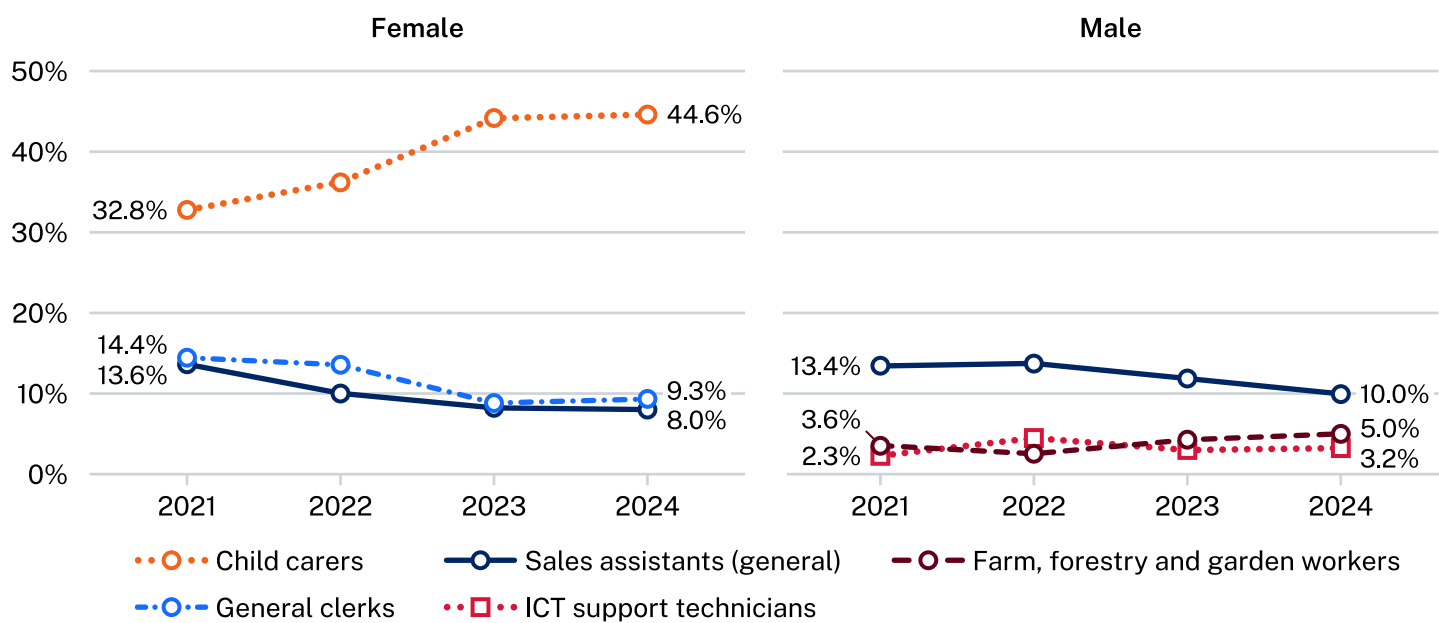
Figure 8: Top 3 employment areas for female and male leavers whose main destination was an apprenticeship, 2021 to 2024



In 2024, the top 3 most common areas of employment for female school leavers in traineeships were child carers, general clerks and sales assistants (general).⁸ Among all school leavers in NSW, child carers was similarly the top-ranked area of work, while sales assistants (general) was the second-most common area of work (refer to ‘Employment areas for apprentices and trainees’ in the annual report). For male school leavers the most common areas were sales assistants (general), farm, forestry and garden workers, and ICT support technicians.

There was an increase of 11.8 pp in female school leavers working as child carers, rising from 32.8% in 2021 to 44.6% in 2024. Over the same period, the percentages of female leavers working as general clerks decreased (by 5.1 pp to 9.3%), as did sales assistants (general) (by 5.6 pp to 8.0%). Similarly, the percentage of males doing traineeships as sales assistants (general) was lower in 2024 than it was in 2021 (–3.5 pp). Among male school leavers, farm, forestry and garden workers ranked third in 2022 and moved up to second place in both 2023 and 2024.

Figure 9: Top 3 employment areas for female and male leavers whose main destination was a traineeship, 2021 to 2024



⁸ Estimated percentages for employment in this part of the snapshot report include recent school leavers whose main destination was a traineeship.

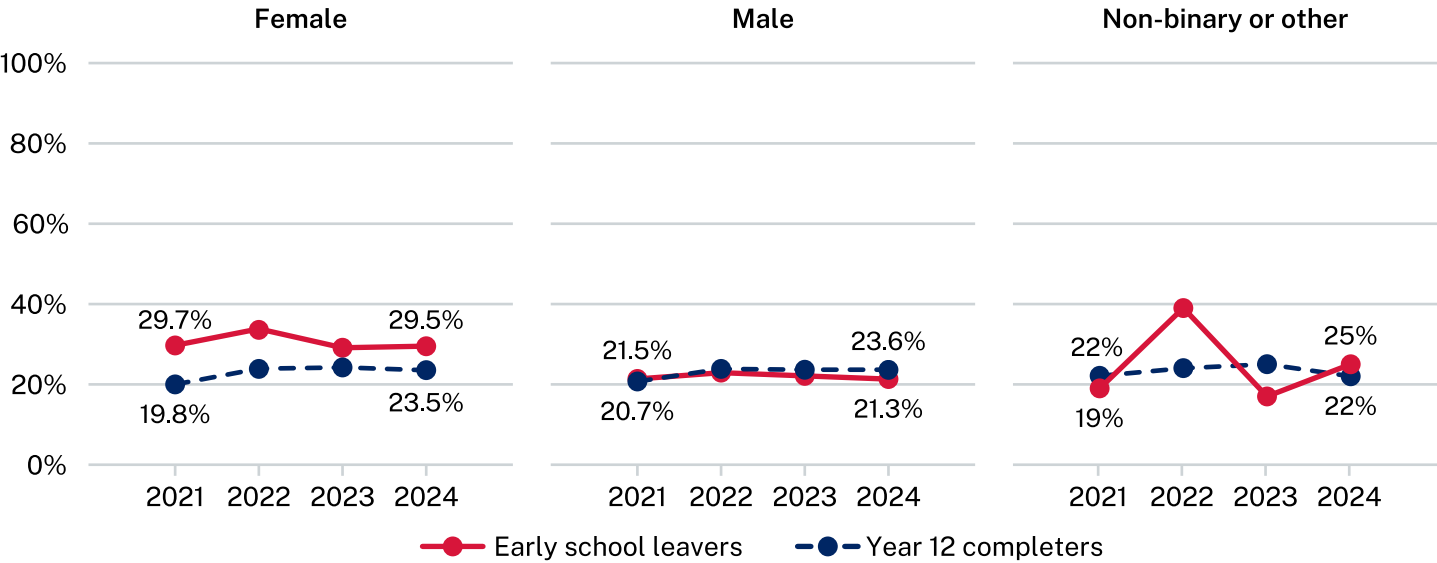
School leavers in employment only⁹

Since 2021, the estimated percentage of female early school leavers in employment was higher than the female Year 12 completer cohort. Among male school leavers the percentages of Year 12 completers and early school leavers were similar – except in 2024, when 21.3% of male early school leavers were in employment, compared to 23.6% of Year 12 completers.

For Year 12 completers, the estimated percentage of both female and male school leavers in employment increased (by 4.1 pp and 3.0 pp respectively) between 2021 and 2022 and remained relatively steady through to 2024 at around 24% for both females and males. For Year 12 completers who were non-binary or other, the percentage in employment only was the same in 2024 as it was in 2021 (around 22%).

For female early school leavers there was a noticeable jump in the estimated percentage entering paid employment as their main destination in 2022 (up 4.1 pp from 2021). This dropped again (–4.6 pp) in 2023. In 2024, the percentage was about the same as in 2021 at around 29%. Similarly, for early school leavers in the non-binary or other group there was a jump in the percentage entering employment between 2021 and 2022 (20 pp). This was followed by a drop of a similar amount (–22 pp) between 2022 and 2023. For male early school leavers, the percentage in paid employment has remained relatively consistent and was about the same in 2024 as it was in 2021 (around 21%).

Figure 10: Estimated percentage of female, male, and non-binary or other NSW school leavers in paid employment only, 2021 to 2024



9 Employment trends and areas include those whose main destination was part-time or full-time work but exclude those in an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Employment areas for those in paid work only

Overall, sales assistants (general) featured among the most common employment-only areas for female and non-binary or other school leavers while storepersons was the most common among male school leavers. The top 3 most common employment areas for female school leavers in paid work were sales assistants (general), storepersons (for example, warehouse assistants) and café workers. This was similar among all school leavers at the state level, with sales assistants (general) ranking first and storepersons ranking second, while kitchenhands ranked third (refer to 'Employment areas for those in paid work only' in the annual report). Among male school leavers the top 3 most common employment areas were storepersons, sales assistants (general) and kitchenhands. Kitchenhands was also the third-most common area of employment among all school leavers in NSW (refer to 'Employment areas for those in paid work only' in the annual report). Among non-binary or other school leavers the most common employment areas were sales assistants (general) and café workers.

Compared to 2022, the estimated percentage of female school leavers working as café workers decreased by 2.0 pp to 7.2% in 2024. Among male school leavers, the percentage working as kitchenhands increased by 1.5 pp, from 7.7% in 2023 to 9.3% in 2024. For non-binary or other school leavers, the percentage working as café workers increased by 3 pp from 8% in 2022 to 11% in 2023 and remained the same in 2024.

Figure 11: Top 3 employment areas for female, male, and non-binary leavers whose main destination was in paid work, 2021 to 2024

