



Australian Government

# AUSTRALIA'S YOUTH POLICY FRAMEWORK



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# MINISTERS' FOREWORD

Young Australians are resilient and have every reason to be optimistic as we navigate the pandemic as a united and cohesive society. We are pleased to present the Australian Government's Youth Policy Framework (the Framework) which outlines the Government's commitment to supporting young people and the issues facing them.



In 2019 and 2020, extensive consultations were undertaken across Australia both in person and online by a time-limited Youth Taskforce within the Department of Health. In December 2020, following our appointments as Minister for Education and Youth and Assistant Minister for Youth and Employment Services, the Government established a dedicated and ongoing team within the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (the Department) to build upon the work undertaken by the time-limited Youth Taskforce.

We thank the Youth Taskforce for the important groundwork they undertook. This work formed the foundations of the Framework; capturing the issues that we heard are important to young people, connecting young people to Australian Government services; and providing an important step in ensuring young people have a greater say on the policies and programs that impact and are important to them.

Being a young person is a time of immense transition, from childhood towards adulthood, from school to further study, training or employment, and dependence to independence. Each young person has their own goals and a successful transition is an important

factor to achieving these ambitions. Throughout the consultation process, education, employment, mental health and social/community activities were some of the things that young people identified as most important to them in their transition to adulthood. We can see that the two most important of these factors for young people to thrive during and after this transition are:

- **Purpose:** the opportunity to engage in something meaningful each day that moves young people towards independence, such as education, training or employment; and
- **Support:** ensuring the right supports are in place for young people to benefit from strong mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

If young people are supported to have these two fundamental factors in place, they will be set on a course towards success, happiness and being able to reach their full potential. That's why the Australian Government is committed to delivering practical measures to support young Australians.

We know that while COVID-19 continues to impact all young Australians, its effects vary across states and territories, and across 2020 and 2021.

In Victoria, for example, school students experienced extensive periods of remote learning and university students remained off-campus. In contrast, school students in the Northern Territory and Western Australia experienced only very brief disruptions to face-to-face learning. Additionally, in mid-2021, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and part of Queensland went into further lockdowns, the economic and social effects of which may not become clear for a number of months.

While some effects of COVID-19 on young people are emerging, it is important to note that the full impact will only be understood over time. The mental health toll on Australians both collectively and individually has been a heavy one. We know that lockdowns and other measures are particularly impacting mental wellbeing and social connectedness among young Australians, and so we are delivering record investment in mental health to ensure young people have the support they need.

In spite of these sudden and devastating impacts, the resilience of young Australians, coupled with the Government's management of the pandemic, means that our economy will recover from the effects of COVID-19. The youth unemployment



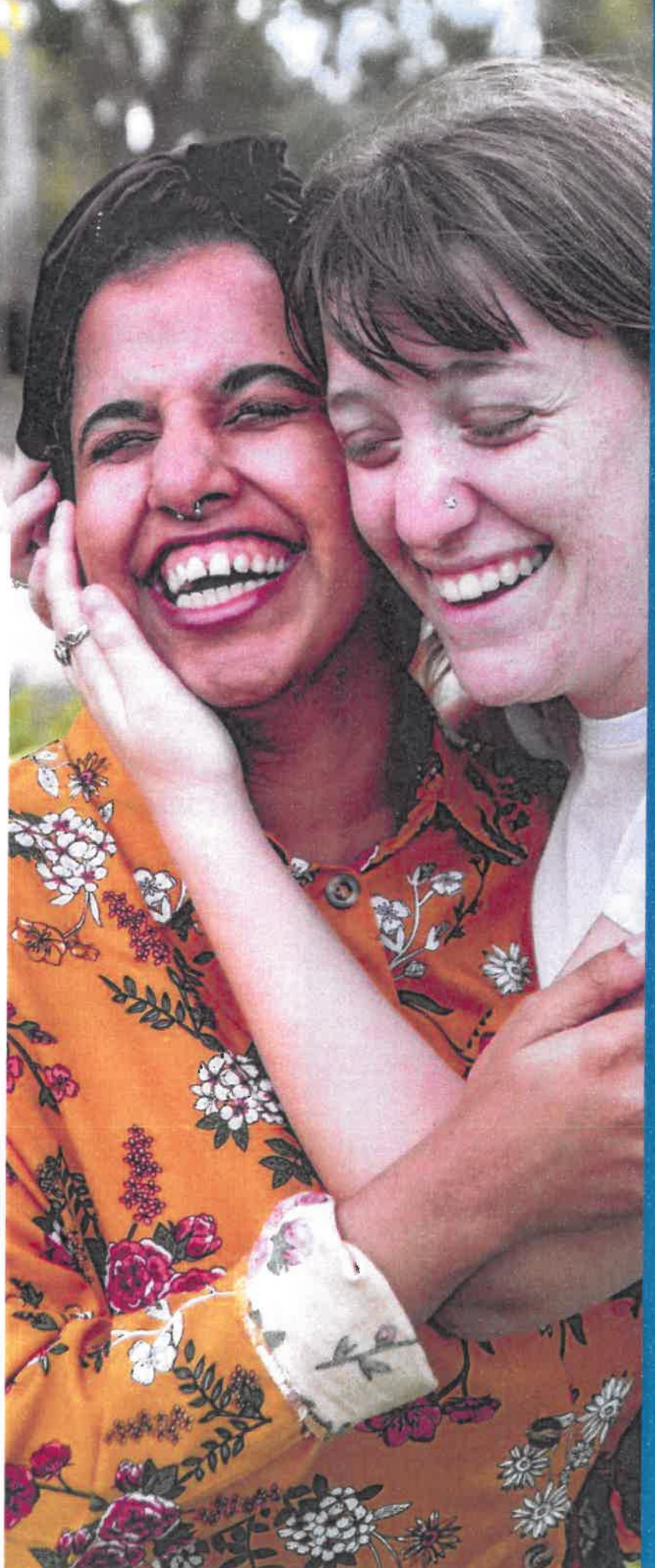
rate in May 2021 was lower than it was at the onset of the pandemic in March 2020. This is an encouraging sign. However, we still face significant challenges as COVID-19 has not yet been defeated.

We want all young Australians to be proud and empowered to contribute to and participate fully in our democracy, and in the social, economic and civic life of our nation. We encourage young people to continue to engage in their communities through volunteering and other activities to build social cohesion and to boost their own life experiences. We are backing young Australians with a comprehensive set of practical programs targeted at education, employment and training pathways and support for good mental health and wellbeing.

Together, the Government will continue to back young Australians both as we navigate the pandemic and move confidently into the future.

**THE HON. ALAN TUDGE MP**  
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION  
AND YOUTH

**THE HON. LUKE HOWARTH MP**  
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND  
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



# INTRODUCTION

The Youth Policy Framework outlines how Australian Government policies and programs are supporting and improving the lives of young Australians. It reflects on disruptions to education, employment and social opportunities for young people caused by COVID-19.

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The Australian Government is committed to delivering practical measures to support young Australians.

The measures in this Framework are focused on listening to young people about what matters to them most and supporting young people to have purpose, wellbeing and security. The Government is listening and the conversation will continue.

## Goals of the Framework

The Youth Policy Framework:

- Captures the voice of young people on policies that affect them, building off the consultations of the interim report
- Outlines the services and programs available to young people
- Supports young people to have a greater say on the policies and programs that impact and are important to them.



## Working in partnership

The Australian Government is also committed to working with state and territory governments to ensure that policies and programs directed at Australia's young people are delivered in a consistent manner, with young people at the centre of all decisions.

Importantly, in 2020, the Australian Government became a signatory to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement), which was developed and agreed to in genuine partnership between all Australian governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations.

The National Agreement recognises that a strong start in life is critical, laying the foundation for the years ahead. The National Agreement includes a focus on national coordinated early childhood policy and ensuring Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong; are engaged in high-quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education and care; are safe and thriving in their early years; are not overrepresented in the child protection and juvenile justice systems; and are engaged in study, training or work.

As well as our agreements and partnerships at home, Australia operates in a co-operative global context and has a number of international responsibilities with regard to the rights of children and young people in Australia. These include the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Finally, for the purpose of this Framework, the terms 'young people' and 'youth' are used to refer to people aged 15 to 24 years in accordance with the United Nations definition of youth. However, this definition can vary across policies and programs depending on their objectives.

# YOUNG AUSTRALIANS IN 2021

Key demographic information for young people in Australia aged 15–24



# 12%

of Australia's population is aged 15-24 years

3.2 million young people

ABS estimated resident population, September 2020

## 5%



of Australia's young people identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Source: ABS Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders estimates and projections and estimated resident population, 2020

## 23%



of Australia's young people were born overseas

The top three countries of birth for young people are China, India and New Zealand. At the time of the 2016 Census, almost half of Australia's young people aged 12-24 were either first or second-generation migrants and one in four young Australians aged 18-24 years were born overseas.

Source: ABS estimated resident population, 2020. Department of Home Affairs, 2021.

## 6%



of Australia's young people have unpaid caring responsibilities for a disabled or older person

Source: ABS survey of disability, ageing and carers, 2018

## 9%

of Australia's young people are people with disability

(290,600 young people).



Source: ABS survey of disability, ageing and carers, 2018

## Around 6%

of Australia's young people identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual

(180,500 young people).



Source: ABS general social survey, 2019



## Young people are more urban than the rest of the population

Source: ABS regional population by age and sex.

**75%**

**live in major cities**

Compared with 72% of  
Australians of other ages

**16%**

**live in inner  
regional areas**

Compared with 18% of  
Australians of other ages

**7.2%**

**live in outer  
regional areas**

Compared with 8.2% of  
Australians of other ages

**1.6%**

**live in remote or  
very remote areas**

Compared with 2.0% of  
Australians of other ages



Young Australians born between approximately 1997 and 2005 are the first generation to have lived their whole lives with the presence of the internet. As Government has heard, this generation is highly connected and uses a range of social media platforms to connect with peers.<sup>1</sup> Some researchers believe Generation Z is on track to be the most well-educated generation yet seen.<sup>2</sup> With the internet in their pockets, a deep familiarity with social media and an entrepreneurial mindset, young Australians are entering the economy equipped with the tools and attitudes to thrive and make their own distinct mark on the 21st century.

<sup>1</sup> Parker K, Graf, N and Igielnik, R (2019), 'Generation Z looks a lot like Millennials on key social and political issues', *Social and Demographic Trends*, Pew Research Centre, 17 January, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/>

<sup>2</sup> Parker K, Graf, N and Igielnik, R (2019), 'Generation Z looks a lot like Millennials on key social and political issues', *Social and Demographic Trends*, Pew Research Centre, 17 January, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/>

## The Government is committed to supporting young Australians and ensuring they have the opportunities to thrive in the 21st century

### Key 2021-2022 Budget measures

The 2021–22 Budget includes further investment in ensuring more young Australians will have access to the opportunities they need to start their career and to help lock in Australia's long-term economic recovery from COVID-19.

- The Government is providing **\$2.7 billion over four years from 2020-21 to expand the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements wage subsidy**. Eligible businesses and Group Training Organisations may get a wage subsidy of up to 50% for 12 months if they engage an Australian Apprentice between 5 October 2020 and 31 March 2022.
- Young people and job seekers will be further assisted to access free or low fee training in areas of identified skills need with the extension of the **JobTrainer Fund**. Under the JobTrainer Fund the Australian Government provided \$500 million in 2020-21, matched by state and territory governments, providing around 300,000 additional training places. As part of the 2021-22 Budget, an **additional \$500 million** was committed, to be matched by state and territory governments, to extend the program to 31 December 2022 and provide up to 163,000 additional training places, subject to state and territory agreement.
- The Government is also providing a further **\$481.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to reform and expand the youth employment services program, Transition to Work**, to help vulnerable and disadvantaged young people (aged 15-24) transition from school to work.
- The **continuation of Transition to Work** will complement the Australian Government's new employment services model, which is replacing jobactive from July 2022, and will allow job-ready job seekers to self-service online, while providing enhanced services to those who need them most.
- **\$128.4 million** over three years for a **new Indigenous Skills and Employment Program**, which will replace a number of existing employment programs.
- A total of **\$111 million** to the **Community Development Program (CDP)** to meet the increased caseload resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and to develop a **new remote jobs program to replace the CDP** from 2023.
- More young people will be supported to start careers in fast growing and in demand digital jobs through the investment of **\$47.3 million** over six years in two programs of competitive national scholarships, the **Next Generation Artificial Intelligence (AI) Graduates Program**, and the **Next Generation Emerging Technology Graduates Program**, to attract and train job-ready specialists in emerging technologies, such as robotics, cyber security and quantum computing.
- To support digital skills, **\$10.7 million** will go to a **Digital Skills Cadetship trial** to support up to four innovative trials for digital career paths in emerging and priority digital fields, such as cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, data analytics, game design and animation.

The Budget includes investment to ensure young people have access to mental health support when they need it. This record **\$2.3 billion investment** through the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan includes:

- **\$278.6 million** over four years from 2021-22 to **enhance and expand the headspace youth mental health services**.
- **\$111.2 million** to **create a world-class digital mental health service system**, including commencing transformation of the Head to Health gateway into a comprehensive national mental health platform.
- **\$487.2 million** for the initial establishment of 8 new **Head to Health adult mental health centres** and 24 satellite centres, and ongoing funding for the 8 currently funded centres.



# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

## Disruptions to education, employment and social opportunities for young people

A year unlike any other, 2020 was confronting for all Australians. It started as the 2019–2020 bushfires caused devastation across the nation, followed by floods and a global pandemic the likes of which the world had not seen for 100 years. Young Australians' lives shifted notably, and continue to shift as restrictions change across Australia in 2021.

Consequently, in 2021, this Framework has been refined to ensure that it explores the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on Australia's young people:

We all know that the economic and social impacts associated with COVID-19 disproportionately affect young people; from disruptions to face-to-face learning, through to job losses in the industries hit hardest by the pandemic. These challenges, along with lockdown requirements, have exacerbated social isolation, disengagement and mental health concerns.

COVID-19 highlights and heightens existing issues for some young people. Some of the effects of COVID-19 on young people continue to emerge, and so it is important to note that the full impact on young people is complex and not yet fully understood.<sup>3</sup>

In particular, COVID-19 negatively impacts on Australians' mental health, with young adults aged 18–24 reporting higher levels of psychological distress in May, August and October 2020 than before the pandemic.<sup>4</sup>

An ongoing focus on addressing these health and social impacts of COVID-19 will continue to be important through 2021 and beyond, drawing on additional evidence as it becomes available.

*"The biggest issue I have been dealing with this year is having a lack of motivation for life. I think because of the pandemic and not being able to do the things I usually would, I have been feeling like I have nothing to look forward to."<sup>5</sup>*

(Female, aged 17, QLD)

3 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021). 'Australia's Youth'. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

4 Biddle N, Edwards B, Gray M & Sollis K (2020). 'Mental health and relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic' COVID-19 briefing paper. Canberra: Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods, and Biddle N and Gray M (2020). 'Tracking outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic (October 2020)'. Canberra: Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods.

5 Greenland, N, and Hall, S (2021). 'Young Voices of the Pandemic: -- Youth Survey COVID-19 Report 2020'. Mission Australia.

## Indicators of the negative impacts COVID-19 had on young Australians

The impact of COVID-19 on young people has been significant and, in some cases, is ongoing as restrictions tighten and ease across the country. Significantly, at the start of the pandemic, in April 2020, youth employment decreased by 226,200.

Research commissioned by the Australian Public Service<sup>6</sup> captured some of the early effects of the pandemic on young people. Of survey participants, 57% reported their plans for future study had changed since the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Experiences of the pandemic vary across time and location, which may account for increases and decreases that seem counter intuitive.

For young people, the potential effects of school closures and a shift to remote learning due to COVID-19 disrupted their education. All states and territories, except the Northern Territory and Western Australia, closed schools for extended periods, with parts of Victoria and NSW having additional periods of extended school closures. As well, there were many localised closures throughout the year due to school or area-specific cases.<sup>7</sup> In some states and territories, closures have continued into 2021 in response to outbreaks.

A more immediate health consequence of the pandemic has been the adverse impact on young people's mental wellbeing, including the ability to cope, worries, and levels of psychological distress. Results for some of these measures have varied at different times during the pandemic.

Since the pandemic began, UNICEF Australia has released three reports with findings from a series of national surveys among young people aged 13–17. Published in June 2021 and based on surveys undertaken in December 2020 to January 2021, the third report found:

- There are early indications that the impact of COVID-19 on young people's ability to cope is beginning to recover: two thirds (65%) now report it is good, compared to 45% in April 2020. However, it is yet to reach the level of 81% positive responses reported in the beginning of 2020.
- There has also been a shift from the first two reports where young people were more likely to report negative effects of the pandemic. At the time, more young people in Australia feel a positive impact of COVID-19 on many aspects of their life including their day-to-day life (40% positive compared to 24% negative) and social connectedness (38% compared to 28%). The large majority (73%) said their level of hope for the future is good or very good, although 31% of young people said their levels of stress and anxiety have been negatively impacted.
- This shows early signs that young people have been able to return to some level of normalcy, and that the pandemic may have left some young people with a new positive perspective and resilience (UNICEF Australia 2021).<sup>8</sup> However, changing restrictions during 2021 may stall or impact this progress.

Phone and online support organisations reported substantial increases in demand for their services during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>9</sup> These organisations included Kids Helpline, a free 24/7 Australian telephone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.

In 2020, answerable contact attempts (call, webchat and email) peaked during April and August, coinciding with national and Victorian lockdown periods respectively.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to recognise that the impact of COVID-19 on young Australians and their associated economic security, social experiences and mental health can shift rapidly, with snap lockdowns occurring into 2021 across Australia.

6 Monash University (2020). 'Young adults' experience with Australian public services' p. 13 Report to the Australian Government.

7 Biddle N, Edwards B, Gray M & Sillis K (2020). 'Experience and views on education during the COVID-19 pandemic' Canberra: Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods.

8 Productivity Commission (2020). 'Mental Health: Report no. 95', Canberra, p 97-98; UNICEF (2021). 'Children's Voices In a Changing World: 2021 UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador Report' Sydney: UNICEF Australia.

9 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020). 'Looking back on health in 2020' Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

10 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021). 'Mental health services in Australia. The mental health impact of COVID.' Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

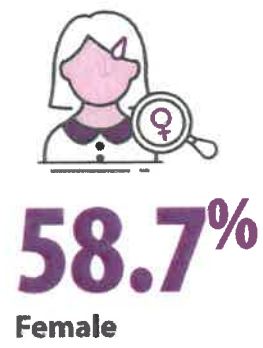
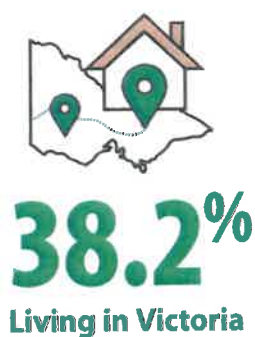


## Mission Australia Young Voices of the Pandemic – Youth Survey COVID-19 Report 2020<sup>11</sup>

Mission Australia conducts an annual survey of young Australians aged 15-19.<sup>12</sup> The survey (known as the *Youth Survey*) provides a platform for young people living in Australia to speak up about issues that concern them. One of the questions in the 2020 *Youth Survey* prompted young people to describe their biggest personal concern with the below question:

***“In the past year, what is the biggest issue that you have been dealing with? What do you think needs to be done about it?”***

In 2020, young people identified COVID-19 as one of the top three issues they were faced with. Respondents provided written responses sharing their experiences through the COVID-19 pandemic between April and August 2020. Of respondents who expressed concern about COVID-19, a large proportion wrote about its impact on their education, sense of isolation and mental health. A breakdown of these respondents is below.

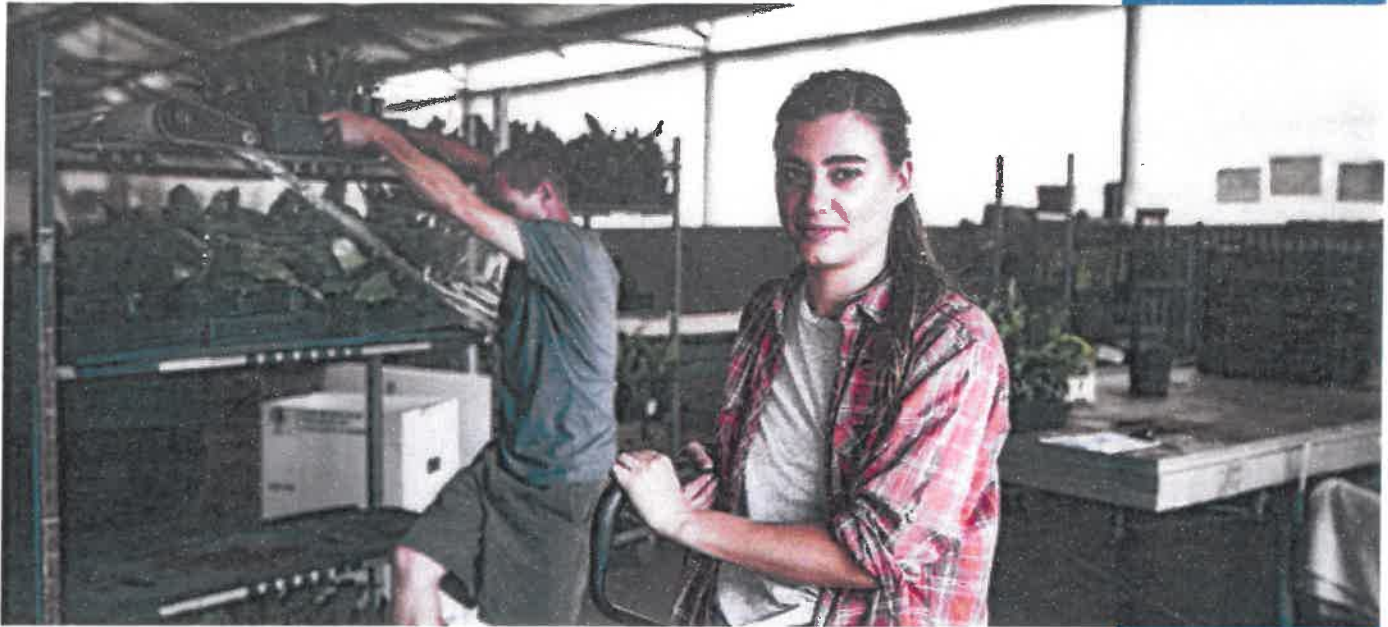


The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many aspects of young people’s lives, including disruption to their education, feelings of isolation from their community and worries about their futures. Young people’s experiences of living through the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to continue for all young people as the nation grapples with managing the virus.

***“The biggest issue I have been dealing with is having to adjust to living under restrictions, put in place due to COVID, and coping with stress that originates from worrying about an uncertain future as well as deciding what I want to do with my future. I think in order to deal with these issues I would like to have more support from my school and maybe try to find a way that I can relax/start a routine in order to decrease my stress.”***

(Female, aged 16, NSW)

<sup>11</sup> Greenland, N, and Hall, S (2021). ‘Young Voices of the Pandemic – Youth Survey COVID-19 Report 2020’. Mission Australia.  
<sup>12</sup> Tiller, E, Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Greenland, N., Liyanarachchi, D., Di Nicola, K., 2020. Youth Survey Report 2020. Mission Australia, Sydney, NSW.



While the concerns identified were reflective of issues faced by the wider Australian community, the survey highlighted the specific ways in which young people were impacted by the pandemic, including not being able to seek support from their peers and their usual support networks through going to school and attending community activities and events.

The pandemic brought about or intensified poor mental wellbeing with some reporting family-related stress when isolating at home, increased financial pressures and family responsibilities. Young people were also concerned about the wellbeing and experiences of their peers, family and wider community throughout the pandemic.

The survey also highlights young people's insights into how they can be supported to address the concerns and issues they described.

*"Students also need to be given techniques to handle stressors such as mindfulness strategies. Teenagers don't automatically know how to deal with stress. This is a skill they need to be taught. I have found education in mental wellbeing particularly lacking in my years at school. In my opinion teaching students strategies to deal with stress should be an absolute must in all schools."*

(Female, aged 17, QLD)

Young people proposed solutions to challenges they were experiencing in relation to their education, isolation and mental health, and suggested support mechanisms including:

- supporting young people to help themselves with resources to help them identify when they might be in need and to seek out or be offered formal and informal supports.
- greater wellbeing resources in schools and extra support for young people undertaking their final years of schooling.
- an increase in the availability of Government services to support the mental wellbeing of young people, particularly preventative and early intervention delivered in flexible formats to address issues that may arise during isolation.

# Findings of the Department of Health's Youth Taskforce Consultation 2019-20

## WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

### PRIORITY AREAS

- Youth empowerment and engagement
- Opportunity and security
- Safety inclusion respect and acceptance
- Health and wellbeing
- Navigating the system
- The environment

### HOW YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO BE ENGAGED

- Engagement needs to be interactive with a genuine two-way exchange of ideas and decision-making.
- Multiple points of access with a good mix of approaches, both online and face-to-face.
- Engagement to be culturally appropriate and safe.

### WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE WANT FROM GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Holistic and centred on their experiences.
- Information regarding services to be easy to access and comprehend.
- Streamlined and cohesive services
- Services across the Government to be consistent and reliable

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- At every consultation, mental health was raised as a priority issue facing young people.
- Young people want reliable, consistent, culturally appropriate services.
- Mental health services to consider intersectionality including economic circumstances of young people.





## Young people are critical to our nation's recovery

It is becoming more apparent that this pandemic is different from other economic shocks due to its speed and nature, including necessitating changes in restrictions and impacts on employment and businesses. The fact that the JobKeeper program helped maintain the connection between employees and their workplaces made a real difference, with 44% of businesses reporting in April 2020 that JobKeeper helped keep staff employed.<sup>13</sup>

COVID-19 has had a strong impact on the employment prospects of all Australians, including young Australians. In July 2020, the unemployment rate had increased to 7.5%,<sup>14</sup> however, by June 2021, it had decreased to 4.9%,<sup>15</sup> while in June 2021 the youth unemployment rate decreased to its lowest rate since January 2009.<sup>16</sup>

The labour force participation rate was 66.2% in June 2021, close to the record high of 66.3% in March 2021, and in May 2021 was above its pre-COVID rate of 65.9%.<sup>17</sup>

Young people's mental health and wellbeing is likely to involve a slower recovery, however there may be early indications improvements could be already underway.

The ANU's January 2021 poll showed that levels of psychological distress had dropped for all age groups, including young people, since its increase in April 2020, back to levels similar to February 2017.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, young people were optimistic about the future; two-thirds of those surveyed believed their life would be 'much' or 'a little' better in 2022.<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that research into the full mental health impacts of COVID-19 on

young people is ongoing, and these impacts are complex and dynamic, with outcomes subject to change quickly when conditions shift (for instance with the introduction or easing of restrictions).<sup>20</sup>

The early successes of Australia's recovery from COVID-19 were underpinned by the significant support measures provided by the Australian Governments during 2020. The Government responded rapidly, with targeted supports to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on young people's employment, education and mental health, and continues to support young people who have been impacted by the pandemic in 2021.

13 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Business Indicators, Business Impacts of COVID-19, April 2020, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/business-conditions-and-sentiments/apr-2020>

14 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, July 2020, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-jul-2020>  
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, March 2021, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-mar-2021>

15 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, June 2021, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-june-2021>

16 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, June 2021, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-june-2021>

17 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, June 2021, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-june-2021>

18 Biddle N and Gray M (2021). 'Tracking outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic (January 2021)—cautious optimism.' Canberra: Australian National University, Centre for Social Research and Methods.

19 Biddle N and Gray M (2021). 'Tracking outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic (January 2021)—cautious optimism.' Canberra: Australian National University, Centre for Social Research and Methods.

20 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021). 'Australia's Youth.' Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

## Government support for the recovery effort from COVID-19

In 2020, the Government provided critical support to help young people through the pandemic.

The Government supported young people's education, training and employment through providing:

- The **Higher Education Relief Package** which slashed the cost of studying online short courses, as well as guaranteed government funding for universities at pre-pandemic levels.
- The **Job-ready Graduates** package lowers the cost of studying courses in areas of future job growth and areas of national priority. This has led to an additional 37,000 domestic undergraduate enrolments in 2021 alone. Through this package, the Government is reducing the cost of degrees in key areas such as agriculture (down by 59%); maths (down by 59%); a nursing or teaching degree (down by 42%) and science, engineering or IT degree (down by 18%).
- Under the **JobTrainer Fund** the Australian Government provided **\$500 million in 2020-21**, matched by state and territory governments, providing around 300,000 additional training places. As part of the 2021-22 Budget, an **additional \$500 million** was committed, to be matched by state and territory governments, to extend the program to 31 December 2022 and provide up to 163,000 additional training places, subject to state and territory agreement.
- \$1.2 billion to encourage employers to take on apprentices and trainees through the **Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements (BAC)** wage subsidy. As part of the 2021-22 Budget, the Government announced it will invest an additional \$2.7 billion to extend and expand the BAC wage subsidy. In total, the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements program is expected to support opportunities for up to 270,000 apprentices and trainees.
- The **Supporting Apprentices and Trainees wage subsidy** to help up to 90,000 small and medium sized businesses to keep around 180,000 apprentices and trainees across the country in work and training.
- **\$89 billion for the JobKeeper payment**, allowing businesses affected by COVID-19 to retain eligible employees.
- **\$250 million for the JobMaker scheme** to support Australia's creative industry, including performers, artists and creatives, roadies, stage builders and front of house staff.
- Over **\$18 million through the National Careers Institute for the delivery of the Enhanced Support for School Leavers measure**. The measure provides young people aged 15-24, and their influencers, with access to information about their current and future education, training and work pathways in a labour market affected by COVID-19.

The Government, through consultations with young people, heard what matters most to them particularly during the pandemic. As a result, the Government provided enhanced physical and mental health support during 2020, including:

- **Approximately \$500 million for mental health and suicide prevention** announced between January and May 2020, including \$64 million for suicide prevention, \$74 million for preventative mental health services, \$10 million for Beyond Blue to create a dedicated COVID-19 wellbeing support line, \$5 million for Lifeline, and a significant proportion of the \$669 million telehealth package to support Medicare subsidised treatments provided by GPs, psychologists, psychiatrists and other mental health professionals.
- Youth specific measures to combat the mental health impacts of COVID-19, such as: **\$2.8 million for Kids Helpline** to bolster the capacity of mental health support providers, **\$6.75 million for headspace** to deliver the headspace digital work and study service in addition to eheadspace, and a further **\$5 million for headspace services in Victoria** to increase outreach services to young people in the community.

These significant measures helped young people to stay in work and minimise the impact of COVID-19 on their mental health and social outcomes.

# YOUTH POLICY FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

## Backing young Australians to reach their full potential

Listening to young people about what matters to them most

...through establishing new channels of engagement:

- Approximately **\$900,000** across eight youth organisations as part of the **Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme** to give Australian young people a greater voice and encourage wider participation through establishment of the National Youth Advocacy Network.
- **\$1.1 million** for the **Youth Action Projects Grants Scheme** which supports small community-based projects to improve the outcomes or wellbeing of young people and for COVID-19 recovery efforts.
- Establishing the **Young Leaders and Advocates Fellowship** which will enable Government to engage with a diverse group of young people on issues that affect them.
- **\$11.1 million to support social cohesion programs** to foster greater sense of belonging, including **\$3.0 million** to support the **High Resolves program** and **\$8.1 million** to increase the scope of **Together for Humanity's program**.
- **\$3.0 million** to support disadvantaged young people to participate in the **Duke of Edinburgh International Award**.
- **\$1.2 million** to co-sponsor the **Young Australian of the Year** to showcase the exceptional leadership and achievements of young Australians.
- Expanding activities for students to learn about civics and citizenship through piloting an **expansion of the National Schools Constitutional Convention**.

Supporting young people to have purpose, wellbeing and security

...through providing unprecedented levels of funding:

- An estimated **\$315.2 billion** over 2018-2029 to Australian schools.
- **\$20 billion in university funding**, including the Job-ready Graduates Package.
- **\$6.4 billion in funding for vocational education and training (VET)** in 2021-22, including **\$2.0 billion** as a contribution to the state and territory governments to support local delivery.
- **\$600.3 million for the Youth Jobs PaTH program** and an increased investment of **\$481.2 million** in youth employment services as part of the **new employment services model**.
- A further **\$1.8 billion** for other initiatives in **employment services**.
- **\$2.3 billion in the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan** to lead landmark reform.
- **\$278.6 million to enhance and expand the headspace youth mental health services**.
- More than **\$200 million to design and deliver an enhanced myGov over the next two years**, supporting young Australians to discover information about government payments and services that are directly relevant to their circumstances and connect with government online.
- **\$3.4 billion for new measures to improve outcomes for women's safety, economic security, health and wellbeing**.
- Expecting to invest **more than \$20 billion in low emissions technologies over the decade to 2030**, in order to drive at least \$80 billion of new investment and support 160,000 jobs over the next ten years.

# LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

The Government is committed to ensuring the voices of young people are heard. Through consultations, young people have told us they want to be better represented in Government's service design and delivery.

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The Government is listening to young Australians on issues relating to them to:

- better understand the issues, ideas and concerns of young people;
- identify where young people experience challenges accessing government programs; and
- increase awareness of services that support young people.

In 2019, a time-limited Youth Taskforce was established within the Department of Health to lead a collaborative approach across government to improve youth participation in policymaking. The Taskforce ran a series of nationwide consultations to engage with young Australians. Findings were released publicly in August 2020 as an interim report.

This interim report presented valuable feedback on how young people engage with government and participate in decision-making processes. It also looked at options for improving youth engagement and identifying what makes a service or program work well for young people, particularly for those who are marginalised or experience disadvantage.

Across all phases of the consultation undertaken by the Youth Taskforce, young people made it clear that they want to participate in a national dialogue on issues that matter. The Taskforce heard that young people are interested in issues such as employment, education, mental health, access to government and government services, transport and affordable housing.

From this wide ranging consultation, the Youth Taskforce identified six priority areas:

- **Youth empowerment and engagement:** Young people have the opportunity to be heard and participate in the development of Australian Government policies and programs that impact their lives.
- **Opportunity and security:** Young people can access stable, high-quality education and skills development which leads to meaningful, stable, and secure employment and a steady income. Young people can also access safe, affordable and stable housing and can access reliable transport.
- **Safety inclusion respect and acceptance:** Young people are able to live and feel safe in their community and online, free from the risk of racism or discrimination, violence, sexual abuse and bullying including access to culturally safe and informed services.
- **Health and wellbeing:** Young people have access to services to support physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- **Navigating the system:** Young people are appropriately supported to access government services, including education, income support, Medicare and other services that support their transition to adulthood.
- **The environment:** Young people have confidence in the Australian Government's actions to protect the health of Australia's environment and climate for future generations.

These comprehensive priorities identified through consultations by the Taskforce are important inputs for all departments in their policy development and have been shared across government mechanisms.

Practically, the above priorities informed the development of the Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme and informed the focus of its grant projects.

The Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme was announced in late 2020 and provided funding to support the creation of a nationwide advocacy network to help the government regularly connect with young people and the issues that affect them.



## 2020 Review of *Disability Standards for Education 2005*

In 2020 the Government conducted a review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*, which seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability. Public consultations conducted during the Review included specific measures to ensure the voices of young people could be heard, such as online focus groups for young people and discussion boards for young people who prefer to engage through writing. Consultations had a focus on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disability and also actively sought to hear from students with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and regional and remote Australia. A **Young Person's Advisory Group** was established to directly inform the Review about the experiences of young people with disability participating in education.

## Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme

The Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme (YASGS) was announced in December 2020 by the Government.

Funding ranging from approximately \$100,000 to \$140,000 was delivered across seven youth organisations to give Australian youth a greater voice.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition received a further \$150,000 injection to boost its efforts to underline the issues affecting young people, encourage wider participation and establish the National Youth Advocacy Network and the Young Leaders and Advocates Fellowship.

The funded groups act as a youth advocacy network, with projects spanning a variety of youth demographics across vast geographic areas from the city to regional, rural and remote communities.

The projects have a strong focus on supporting marginalised young Australians, including those with a disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse

backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, young carers, young people with mental illness and the gender diverse. Leadership and advocacy skills will be a key feature of several funded projects with a strong focus on empowerment and development. This program offers support through 2021.

The Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme recipients were:

- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia
- YMCA Australia
- CREATE Foundation Limited
- yourtown
- Little Dreamers Australia
- NT Council of Social Services
- Australian Youth Affairs Coalition.

<sup>21</sup> Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck (2020) 'Grants to strengthen youth advocacy across Australia', media release, 14 December, <https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/senator-the-hon-richard-colbeck/media/grants-to-strengthen-youth-advocacy-across-australia>

**The Government is also committed to ensuring that engagement with young people is meaningful**

### **Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme: MYAN – Amplifying CALD voices**

Under the Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme, the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Australia (MYAN) is supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) youth to build their knowledge and skills to contribute to Australian government policy. MYAN has participated in consultations to inform the Australian Government's development of an inaugural Social Cohesion Statement. MYAN provided a valuable CALD youth perspective on Australian values and principles regarding social cohesion.

The Australian Government will publish Australia's first Social Cohesion Statement, which will build on the Multicultural Statement released by the Australian Government in 2017. As we collectively respond to and recover from COVID-19, the Statement will set out a blueprint for keeping Australians together in the face of emerging challenges to our social cohesion.

The Government knows that engaging citizens in the development of policies that impact them is vital to developing policies that work. This is no different for policies that affect young Australians. To support this, a Young Leaders and Advocates Fellowship is being developed to bring together a diverse and representative group of young people with lived and learned experience. This group will be called upon to contribute to government decision-making processes on issues affecting young people and their future.

### **Development of a pool of young Australians for Government to engage with on issues young people care about**

The Australian Government engaged the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition in 2021 to establish a Young Leaders and Advocates Fellowship.

The Fellowship will ensure a broad range of young people are represented and engaged regularly, have relevant skills training, and are actively involved in submissions, co-design and policy input.

With the initial support of Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, and its partner networks, the Fellowship will ensure engagement with young people is culturally appropriate and supportive.



## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER YOUTH

The Australian Government recognises the unique position Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold in our country. With a younger population spread, and approximately 17 per cent living in remote and very remote areas, it is important we consider the different experiences of young Indigenous people today. We know that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a range of complex and compounding factors that impact their engagement — intergenerational trauma, racism and prejudice, and socioeconomic disadvantage. The Government is committed to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are able to pursue their pathway of choice.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who complete Year 12 or a higher qualification are substantially more likely to be employed, to work full-time and in higher skilled occupations than early school leavers. Between 2008 and 2018-19, Indigenous Year 12 attainment increased from 45% to 66%, representing a narrowing of the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Year 12 attainment.<sup>22</sup> In 2016, around 40% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth aged 15-24 were fully engaged in full-time work, full-time study or combining both, however around 42% were not engaged in education, employment or training.<sup>23</sup> This shows there is still much work to do to improve outcomes for Indigenous youth and the Australian Government is committed to supporting young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to reach their potential.

<sup>22</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2020). 'Closing the Gap Report 2020'. Commonwealth of Australia. Accessed at: <https://ctgreport.niaa.gov.au/>

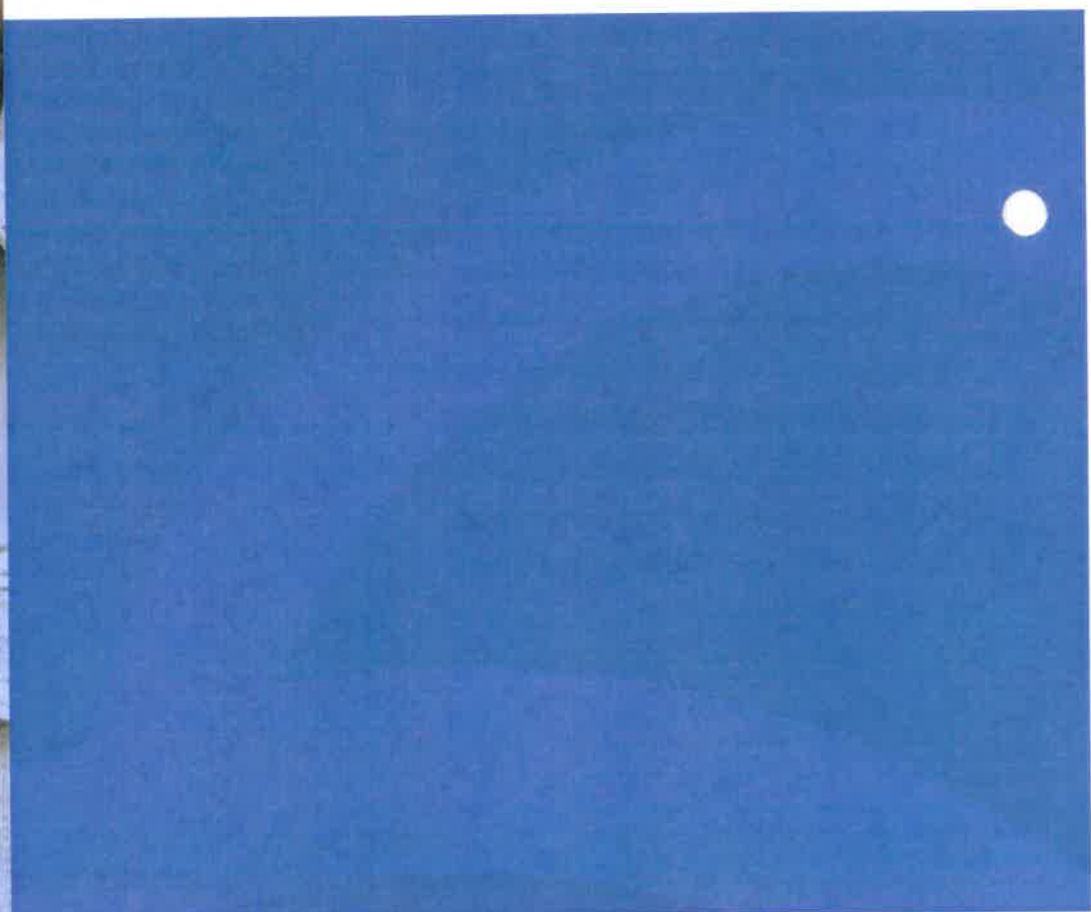
<sup>23</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018). 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescent and youth health and wellbeing 2018'. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Accessed at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/atsi-adolescent-youth-health-wellbeing-2018/contents/summary>



## Indigenous Voice

Meaningful engagement needs to occur with all young Australians and the Australian Government has made a specific commitment to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through a co-design process to develop proposals for an Indigenous Voice. Ensuring representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in the proposed structure of the Indigenous Voice has been a key consideration.

The Australian Government is learning from and modelling similar approaches across its agencies and departments to ensure that the voices of all Australian youth, including of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples, are heard when providing advice to government on issues that affect them.







## BACKING AND SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

The journey to adulthood involves many rites of passage. This creates opportunities and at times challenges for young people.

It is important for young people to be able to access appropriate and supportive services in this critical period of their lives to help them take advantage of the opportunities available.

### Access to education, training and employment

The Australian Government understands there is no one-size-fits-all pathway for young Australians. For that reason, it has delivered an unprecedented and comprehensive suite of practical measures to support young Australians into a job, study or training. This aims to ensure young people have purpose and opportunity and help to avoid the effects of previous economic downturns.

From the earliest stages, quality schooling provides the foundation for young people to have a well-rounded skillset that supports them in further education and employment. Gaining a year 12 certification (or equivalent qualification) is linked to improved social and economic outcomes for young people.<sup>24</sup> It also means young people are more likely to go on to further study or training, gain employment and be paid a higher wage.

Although the path for some young Australians is not so straightforward, the Government is working to support young people at risk of or already disengaging with education or work due to disability or other potential barriers such as socio-economic, geographic or cultural and linguistic barriers.

### Australian Defence Force Cadets

The Australian Defence Force Cadets (ADF Cadets) is a personal development program for young people, supported by the Australian Defence Force in partnership with the community. ADF Cadets is an inclusive and non-discriminatory program that provides opportunity for 13-18 year olds from all backgrounds to participate. The program is designed to provide young Australians with opportunities to grow self-confidence and resilience, enhance self-esteem, build self-discipline and develop leadership skills.

Young people can access information through the cadetnet website: [www.cadetnet.gov.au](http://www.cadetnet.gov.au)

<sup>24</sup> Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2020). 'School to work transitions', [www.dese.gov.au/school-work-transitions](http://www.dese.gov.au/school-work-transitions), last updated November 2020.

## The Australian Government is providing funding to support young people in need to have the opportunity of participating in the Duke of Edinburgh program

The Government is providing **\$3.0 million** to support 14–24 year olds who require additional assistance to participate in the **Duke of Edinburgh International Award**. The Award is a youth development program open to all young Australians aged 14–24. To achieve an Award, each young person must learn a skill, improve their physical wellbeing, volunteer in their community and experience a team adventure in a new environment. The Disadvantaged Youth

Program provides young people with disability, aged 14 to 24, and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, refugee backgrounds, regional and remote communities and marginalised youth, aged 14 to 18, with opportunities to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The Disadvantaged Youth Program has provided assistance to more than 6,750 disadvantaged young people across Australia since 2015.

## Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians

The Commonwealth Scholarships Program is awarding young Australians up to \$13,000 to study a vocational education and training (VET) qualification and complete a paid internship.

The Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians is part of the Australian Government's \$585 million Skills Package, Delivering Skills for Today and Tomorrow. The aim of the program is to support young Australians and ex-Australian Defence Force personnel to gain critical employability skills, which are embedded in VET qualifications, as well as hands on work experience through completing an internship, enabling them to enter and stay in the workforce.

The Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians provides scholarships of up to \$13,000 for young Australians from select regions to undertake an eligible VET qualification at the following levels:

- Certificate III
- Certificate IV
- Diploma
- Advanced Diploma

The scholarships target occupations identified in projected growth industries and in-demand occupations within each region.

It is well understood that, in the coming years, new jobs will be created that require different skill sets. This underlines the importance of ensuring young people are supported to identify transferable skills, training and re-training opportunities. This will help them manage these transitions in a globalised and technology-rich job market. Given the skills shortages facing the Australian economy, young people and the contributions they can make are more important than ever before.

The Australian Government's commitment to strengthening and modernising the careers advice is the work of the National Careers Institute (the NCI), established in 2019. The NCI is an important component for the COVID-19 recovery, helping people at all ages and stages of their careers find and understand the education, training, or employment pathway that best suits their skills and interests. The NCI is responsible for delivering the Government's Enhanced Support for School Leavers measure, specifically designed to help 15-24 year olds navigate their education, training and work options.

The Australian Government knows that without intervention, the effects of COVID-19 on young people can lead to different (and less desirable) social, educational and employment outcomes. Our systems are working to support diverse needs and to provide different pathways that enable young people to be prepared for a range of economic scenarios.

This will support our young people who are vulnerable to economic shocks and more likely to experience negative outcomes than other population cohorts. This is why every dollar invested now in practical programs and policies to support young people into jobs, education, training and mental health and wellbeing support services is critical for Australia's long-term economic and social recovery.



## YMCA Online Forum: Seeking views on youth unemployment and economic participation

With the support of the Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme (YASGS), YMCA Australia (the Y) is building the capacity of youth to contribute to government policy development about economic participation and employment pathways. In May 2021, the Y hosted a successful online forum where 63 young people across Australia participated in a question and answer panel on how to improve employment and economic participation for young people. They discussed essential issues such as the barriers to accessing and keeping employment. The Hon Luke Howarth MP, Assistant Minister for Youth and Employment Services, attended the panel to hear directly from young people on these issues and help feed attendees' insights into policy design.



### Create Foundation: National Youth Advisory Project

CREATE Foundation's (CREATE) National Youth Advisory Group (NYAG) project, funded under the Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme, provides young people with the opportunity to advise the Federal Government on key issues that affect their lives.

For the first stage of the NYAG project, CREATE's state/territory teams held Youth Advisory Group (YAG) meetings with approximately 50 children and young people in care to discuss the topic opportunity and security, focusing

on education and employment. After each state/territory YAG, CREATE staff selected one participant to represent their state/territory at NYAG.

NYAG brings together state representatives to share experiences across jurisdictions and advocate together on education and employment solutions. The outcomes of these discussions will be captured in a report that includes the experiences, issues and solutions discussed by young people in care.

## Investing in education, training and employment opportunities

For Australia's recovery from the pandemic to be as strong as possible, the Australian Government is ensuring training provided to young Australians is of a high standard, meets the expectations of industry, as well as those of apprentices, students and trainees. This includes making sure people have the right skills to plug current shortages and that pursuing a training qualification leads to a job.

The Australian Government is providing record funding for Australian schools in all sectors, amounting to an estimated **\$315.2 billion** over 2018-2029.

In October 2020, the Government announced the Faster Connections and Greater Support for Young People measure, investing **\$21.9 million** in three initiatives for young people aged 15-24, helping early school leavers connect to services more quickly and providing specialist youth assistance to young job seekers in online employment services.

In 2021 the Australian Government is providing **\$20 billion in university funding**, including the Job-ready Graduates Package, which is estimated to provide an additional 100,000 university places by 2030 to meet expected increased demand in emerging labour market priority areas.

In 2021-22, the Australian Government is investing an estimated **\$6.4 billion in vocational education and training (VET)**, including \$2.0 billion as a contribution to the state and territory governments to support local delivery. The Government is also working with state and territory governments to develop a new National Skills Agreement. These reforms will ensure all Australians, including young people, have access to high quality and relevant training.

As part of the 2021-22 Budget the Government is providing a further **\$481.2 million to improve youth employment services** as part of the new employment services model. This will bring the Government investment in the successful **Transition to Work employment service to a total of \$1.2 billion over four years from 2021-22.**

Transition to Work providers are an important nexus between a young person and the broad range of Government investments available to them. Since the start of the program in 2016, there have been more than 134,160 young people who have commenced in the service, almost 73,820 job placements and more than 46,630 placements in accredited education and training.<sup>25</sup>

The Government also supports the Youth Jobs PaTH (Prepare, Trial, Hire), a flagship youth employment program, that helps young people who are struggling to enter the labour market to gain work experience. It has three elements:

- **Prepare**—Employability Skills Training helps young people better understand what employers expect of them in the workplace and equips them with the skills and behaviours to be successful in finding and keeping a job.
- **Trial**—voluntary PaTH Internships of 4 to 12 weeks give young unemployed people a chance to show what they can do in real workplaces.
- **Hire**—a Youth Bonus Wage Subsidy of up to \$10,000 (GST inclusive) has been available since 1 January 2017 to help more businesses hire young people.

The program offers a flexible approach and job seekers may participate in any element, in any order. At the individual element level Youth Jobs PaTH is also contributing to positive employment outcomes for young Australians. Since it commenced in 2017, more than 122,900 young people have participated in at least one element of the PaTH program, with over 77,700 (or 63.3%) achieving a recorded job placement.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Department of Education, Skills and Employment data, as at 31 May 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Transition to Work data, as at 31 May 2021.



## CASE STUDY: TRYSTEN ON THE PATH PROGRAM

Youth Jobs PaTH is an employment program that helps young people to gain the skills and work experience they need to get and keep a job. The program supports internships that lead to employment.

Trysten Trajkovic, 19, was registered with Enterprise Training Company (ETC), a Transition to Work provider, for more than a year before landing an internship with Frizelle's Automotive. Trysten was signed up for a four-week internship which ended early after just two weeks, as Trysten was offered a full-time automotive mechanic apprenticeship. Trysten is now in the second year of his apprenticeship and has managed to buy his dream car. Trysten said the internship has changed his life.

Frizelle's Automotive Group is one of the largest motor vehicle dealers in Queensland. They have been using the Youth Jobs PaTH program to find employees since 2019, with support and assistance from local Transition to Work providers in the region. They have hosted almost 60 young people through the PaTH Internships program with more than half of them referred from Transition to Work providers. Those young people have been placed into a range of roles including car detailing, spray painting and automotive mechanics.

Of those young people who participated in the PaTH Internships program through Transition to Work providers, 23 interns went through to completion with all 23 gaining ongoing employment at Frizelle's Automotive and, of these, 29% secured an Australian Apprenticeship.

A PaTH Internship is a great pathway into an Australian Apprenticeship. It allows an employer to see if a young person has the right skills and aptitude for the apprenticeship before taking the next step, and allows the young person to try out an industry to see if it's right for them.

Frizelle's Automotive Group has a 100% employment rate by employing every young person who successfully completed their PaTH Internship, making a real difference in young people's lives. Trysten is just one of the many success stories who undertook an internship placement through Transition to Work and is now in secure ongoing employment.

## Strong mental health and wellbeing

Another strong protective factor allowing young people to thrive is strong mental health and wellbeing from an early age. Good physical and mental health mean young people are more likely to thrive and have a smooth transition to employment, enjoy a healthy adult lifestyle and experience fewer challenges when starting families and parenting.<sup>27</sup>

Young people in the Youth Taskforce consultation process raised mental illness and rates of suicide as a key area of concern. Physical and mental health is also highly valued by young people. The Mission Australia 2020 Youth Survey found almost two-thirds of young people placed a high value on mental health (65.9%) and physical health (65.4%).<sup>28</sup>

While the majority of young people report good health in Australia, most causes of poor health are mental health-related rather than physical health related.<sup>29</sup> In 2017–18, an estimated 339,000 young people aged 18–24 (15%) experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress.<sup>30</sup> In 2015, tragically suicide and self-inflicted injury was the leading cause of the total burden of disease for young people aged 15–24, followed by anxiety disorders and depressive disorders.<sup>31</sup>

Young people aged 16–24 experience higher rates of mental illness than the rest of the adult population, and around three-quarters of adult mental health disorders occur by 24 years of age.<sup>32</sup> Young people have also reported the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on their levels of stress and anxiety.<sup>33</sup>

Mental ill-health can impact young people's economic participation and affect their future wellbeing; including the opportunities further education and employment can offer. According to the Productivity Commission's Report into Mental Health, around 12% of Australia's 15 to 24 year olds seeking help for mental health problems were not engaged in employment, education or training.<sup>34</sup> Conversely, participation in the workforce can have protective factors for mental health as it may provide purpose, a sense of personal achievement and increase social connections.<sup>35</sup>

The Australian Government takes mental ill health seriously. Recent reports by the Productivity Commission and National Suicide Prevention Adviser have highlighted the importance of providing an integrated and coherent response to the challenges of supporting mental health and suicide prevention. The Government has comprehensively responded to these reports and invested strongly in initiatives to ensure young people have access to the mental health support that is right for them and at the time they need it. It is the Government's aim to ensure that every young Australian is set up for success.

*"My friends come to me with their mental health concerns and I have no idea how to help them out. I'm concerned for them and scared for their mental and physical health and I wish I could give worthwhile advice when they don't feel safe to ask adults."*

(Female, aged 16, WA)<sup>36</sup>

27 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020). 'Health of young people', AIHW, 23 July, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-of-young-people>

28 Tiller E, Fildes J, Hall S, Hicking V, Greenland N, Liyanarachchi D, and Di Nicola K (2020). 'Youth Survey Report 2020: Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020), 'Health of young people', Australia's Health 2020, 23 July, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-of-young-people>

29 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020). 'Health of young people', AIHW, 23 July, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-of-young-people>.

30 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018). 'National Health Survey: first results, 2017–18 Australia.' ABS cat. no. 4364.0.55.001. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

31 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019). 'Australian Burden of Disease Study: impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2015.' Australian Burden of Disease series no. 19. Cat. no. BOD 22. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

32 Productivity Commission (2020). 'Mental Health: Report no. 95', Canberra, p 255.

33 Productivity Commission (2020). 'Mental Health: Report no. 95', Canberra, p 97-98; UNICEF (2021). 'Children's Voices in a Changing World: 2021 UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador Report.' Sydney: UNICEF Australia.

34 Productivity Commission (2020). 'Mental Health: Report no. 95', Canberra, p 48.

35 Productivity Commission (2020). 'Mental Health: Report no. 95', Canberra, p 927-928.

36 Tiller, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Greenland, N., Liyanarachchi, D., Di Nicola, K., 2020. Youth Survey Report 2020. Mission Australia, Sydney, NSW.



## Record investment to support strong mental health in young people

In the 2021-22 Budget, the Government provided a record **\$2.3 billion in the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan** to lead landmark reform.

The Government is investing **\$278.6 million over four years from 2021-22 to enhance and expand headspace youth mental health services** to continue to safeguard the wellbeing of young Australians aged 12-25.

This includes expanding the national headspace network by establishing 10 new headspace centres and upgrading 5 satellite services, and working jointly with states and territories to boost clinical capacity at existing headspace services.

The Government is also providing **\$487.2 million** for the initial establishment of 8 new Head to Health adult mental health centres and 24 satellite centres, and ongoing funding for the 8 currently funded centres.

**\$111.2 million will also be provided to create a world-class digital mental health service system**, including commencing the transformation of the existing Head to Health gateway into a comprehensive national mental health platform, and providing support to existing digital mental health services, including to manage the continuing

increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2019-20 summer bushfires.

A further **\$13.1 million will be invested to support ReachOut Australia** to continue delivering free and high quality digital mental health services to young Australians aged 12-25 as well as their parents, carers and schools. The Government has also provided **\$26.9 million to provide additional support for people with eating disorders and their families**, including training, research and working in partnership with states and territories to explore opportunities to establish additional eating disorder day programs.

In the 2020-21 Budget, a **\$100.8 million investment doubled the number of Medicare subsidised individual psychological therapy sessions**.

The Government is also providing Beyond Blue with funding of **\$154.9 million over seven years from 2016-17 for the Be You initiative**. Be You provides free online training, practical resources and guidance so teachers and educators can confidently support the mental health of children and young people and look after their own mental health and wellbeing.

*Access to counselling services/people to talk to. Even if there are no major issues I think we still have a long way to go with destigmatising mental health and wellbeing. I believe all young people would benefit from some sort of counselling, and especially those who don't feel they have friends, parents, teachers etc. they can talk to so making platforms easily available and accessible that allow people to just talk and relieve stress would be incredibly beneficial, and making people aware of these options more than they already are.*

(Female, aged 16, VIC)<sup>37</sup>

37 Tiller, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Greenland, N., Liyanarachchi, D., Di Nicola, K., 2020. Youth Survey Report 2020. Mission Australia, Sydney, NSW.



## Other key Government policies and programs supporting young Australians

As well as establishing an ongoing, dedicated youth team within the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, the Government has also invested strongly in the areas of improving social cohesion, protecting our environment and ending violence against women and children.

These investments are outlined below, organised against the priority areas identified by the Youth Taskforce.

Priority area	Government action
<p><b>Youth empowerment and engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Government has funded <b>approximately \$900K</b> towards eight youth organisations as part of the <b>Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme</b> to give Australian youth a greater voice and encourage wider participation through the establishment of the National Youth Advocacy Network. This funding also supports the creation of the Young Leaders and Advocates Fellowship which will enable Government to engage with a diverse group of young people on issues that are important them.</li> <li>● The Government has also provided <b>\$1.1 million</b> for the <b>Youth Action Projects Grants Scheme</b> which supports small community-based youth projects to improve the outcomes or wellbeing of young people and for COVID-19 recovery efforts.</li> <li>● The Government is investing <b>\$11.1 million to support social cohesion programs</b>. This includes \$3.0 million to support the High Resolves program and \$8.1 million to increase the scope of Together for Humanity's program that educates students, teachers and parents about diversity to foster greater inter-cultural understanding and sense of belonging.</li> <li>● A further <b>\$3.0 million</b> will support 14–24 year olds who require additional assistance to participate in the <b>Duke of Edinburgh International Award</b>. The Disadvantaged Youth Project will allow young people greater opportunities to build self-esteem, resilience and leadership skills.</li> <li>● The investment of <b>\$1.2 million</b> over the next four years to <b>co-sponsor the Young Australian of the Year</b> award will also showcase the exceptional leadership and achievements of young Australians.</li> <li>● The Government is also funding the expansion of activities for students in Years 9 and 10 to learn about civics and citizenship, through piloting an <b>expansion of the National Schools Constitutional Convention</b>.</li> <li>● The Australian Government supports regional youth through the <b>Heywire and Trailblazers program</b>. These programs bring inspirational regional Australians aged 16 to 22 together to lead conversations and pose solutions to a range of issues including mental health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion, access to jobs and suicide prevention.</li> <li>● The <b>Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) Tackling Tough Times Together (TTTT)</b> program provides funding towards leadership, education and training courses for those in local communities, including youth. The TTTT program gives drought-affected communities across remote, rural and regional Australia the opportunity to access funds that benefit their immediate and long-term needs.</li> <li>● In the 2021–22 Budget, the Government extended the <b>National Careers Institute's Partnership Grants program</b> to include a dedicated grant funding round addressing young people's specific needs. A total of \$2.5 million is available to fund innovative projects that assist young people into further learning and work, including in jobs in demand.</li> <li>● The Morrison Government is providing \$17.7 million to rapidly establish <b>mental health clinics to support Australians in lockdown</b> in NSW (for young people aged 18 and over) and Victoria (for young people aged 12 to 25 years). This will include 10 Head to Health pop-up mental health support sites for areas currently facing extended COVID-19 restrictions in and around Greater Sydney and to extend the operation of at least 12 clinics in Victoria until 30 June 2022.</li> </ul>

## Priority area

## Government action

### Opportunity and security

- The Australian Government is providing **record funding for Australian schools** in all sectors, amounting to an estimated **\$315.2 billion** over 2018-2029.
- In 2021 the Australian Government is providing **\$20 billion in university funding**, including the Job-ready Graduates Package.
- The Australian Government is providing additional support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls' education with **\$63.5 million for Girls Academies**, to support 12,600 places by December 2023.
- In 2021-22, the Australian Government is providing **\$16.6 million for boarding providers with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**, under the Schools and Youth – supporting students, teachers and young Australians cross-portfolio package.
- In 2021-22, the Australian Government is investing an estimated **\$6.4 billion in vocational education and training (VET)**, including \$2.0 billion as a contribution to the state and territory governments to support local delivery. The Government is also working with state and territory governments to develop a new National Skills Agreement. These reforms will ensure all Australians, including young people, have access to high quality and relevant training.
- There is also a further **\$1.8 billion** for other initiatives in **employment services**.
- This includes an increased investment of **\$481.2 million for Transition to Work** to be expanded as the youth specialist service within the new employment services model. More than 134,160 young people have commenced in the service since 2016, with almost 73,820 job placements and more than 46,630 placements in accredited education and training (as at 31 May 2021).
- The Government is also investing **\$600.3 million for the Youth Jobs PaTH program**. More than 122,900 young people have participated in at least one element of the PaTH program, with over 77,700 (or 63.3%) obtaining a recorded job placement (as at 31 May 2021).
- As part of the **Boosting Apprenticeship Commencement wage subsidy** 5,000 gateway services for women and in-training support services for women commencing in a non-traditional trade occupation will be provided.
- To provide effective career guidance and counselling that assists young people transition from the education system to work, **the Australian Government has committed over \$18 million** through the Enhanced Support for School Leavers measure. This provides young people aged 15-24, and their influencers, with access to information about their current and future education, training and work pathways. Information sent through schools invited young people to access the online School Leavers Information Kit and information service 1800 CAREER, which provides young people access to a free, personalised careers guidance session with a qualified Career Practitioner.
- In the 2021-22 Budget **the Australian Government committed to investing over \$17 million** to support the education needs of nearly 3,500 students each year through the Education Schemes and the Long Tan Bursary annually. These students are the children and dependants of current and former Australian Defence Force members who have died, or been severely injured as a result of their service. In addition to an education allowance, eligible full time primary, secondary and tertiary students can also access student support services, scholarships, special assistance, guidance and mental health counselling.
- **The Australian Government provides bursaries of up to \$12,000**, paid over three years of full-time continuous study, to children and grandchildren of Vietnam veterans to assist with the cost of post secondary education.



## Priority area

## Government action

### Safety inclusion respect and acceptance

- The Government has invested **\$1.1 billion to prevent and respond to violence against women and children**, building on the Government's previous and current commitments, including under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22* which includes:
  - \$35.1 million for new programs to expand national primary prevention campaigns to address new and emerging issues targeted at young people, better inform young Australians about consent and respectful relationships, as well as continuing the award-winning campaign, *Stop It At The Start*.
  - \$3 million for the eSafety Commissioner to develop and implement a new program to provide support for children experiencing technology-facilitated abuse and resources for children's support services.
  - The Government has also committed \$3 million over two years to develop pilot software to assist in the rapid identification of image-based abuse material and an additional \$15 million for the eSafety Commissioner to bolster its investigations team into image-based abuse, adult cyber abuse, cyberbullying and harmful online content, which will allow the eSafety Commissioner to respond rapidly to reports of harassment and abuse.
  - \$23 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family safety measures under the Women's Safety Package. This includes \$17 million to support the expansion of the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Program, and \$6 million to improve the quality, capability, and cultural safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous family violence services.
- The Government has also provided **\$5.2 million** in 2021-22 for a **National Online Safety Awareness Campaign** to inform Australians of the new Online Safety Act and the services and support available through the eSafety Commissioner. The campaign will include a dedicated youth component.
- To further grow the pool of women in STEM, the Government is investing **\$42.4 million** over seven years to **support women to participate or reskill in STEM** through industry co-funded scholarships for STEM tertiary qualifications.

## Priority area

## Government action

### Health & Wellbeing

- The Government has provided a record **\$2.3 billion in the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan** to lead landmark reform.
- The Government is investing **\$278.6 million to enhance and expand the headspace youth mental health services** to continue to safeguard the wellbeing of young Australians, including expanding the national headspace network and upgrading select satellite services, and working jointly with states and territories to boost capacity.
- The Government is also providing **\$487.2 million** for the initial establishment of 8 new Head to Health adult mental health centres and 24 satellite centres, and ongoing funding for the 8 currently funded centres.
- A **\$111.2 million** investment will **create a world-class digital mental health service system**, commencing the transformation of the Head to Health gateway and providing support to existing digital mental health services.
- **\$13.1 million** will be invested to support ReachOut Australia to **continue delivering free and high quality digital mental health services to young Australians** and their parents, carers and schools.
- The Government has also provided **\$26.9 million to provide additional support for people with eating disorders and their families**, including training, research and working in partnership with states and territories.
- The Government is providing Beyond Blue with funding of **\$154.9 million** over seven years from 2016-17 **for the Be You initiative**.
- As part of the 2020-21 Budget, the Government provided **\$100.8 million to double the number of Medicare subsidised individual psychological therapy sessions** nationally, providing up to 20 sessions per calendar year.

### Navigating the system

- In the 2021-22 Budget, the Government committed more than **\$200 million to design and deliver an enhanced myGov over the next two years**. This will support young Australians to discover information about government payments and services that are directly relevant to their circumstances and connect with government online.
- The Government has strongly invested in **effective communication about the COVID-19 pandemic to young people**, including:
  - Investing **\$30 million on a National Communications Campaign** – across all media – to provide people with practical advice on how they can play their part in containing COVID-19 and staying healthy.
  - Investing an additional **\$1 million** through the Department of Home Affairs to **translate fact sheets into 63 different languages and the COVID Safe app** into Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Greek, and Italian, which represent the largest languages other than English in Australia.
  - **Creating a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities COVID-19 Health Advisory Group** to further support a coordinated and evidence-based response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The group also provides recommendations and options to improve health outcomes and mitigate the health impact of COVID-19, for people and communities from multicultural backgrounds.

## Priority area

## Government action

### Our environment

- The Government is committed to practical environmental outcomes and long term national reform, with **\$486.3 million in new environmental funding for oceans, biodiversity, recycling and waste, and climate resilience.**
- Australia's position as a global leader on ocean and marine management will be further strengthened with an additional **\$100.1 million for a new Oceans Leadership Package**, supporting our environment and regional employment opportunities. The package includes **\$39.9 million to support Australian Marine Parks** reinforcing Australia's position as a world leader in marine park management.
- The Government is building on our billion dollar transformation of Australia's recycling and waste industry with **\$77.9 million in new investments to reduce waste impacts on our environment, create jobs and grow the economy.** \$67.0 million will be invested in new food organic and garden organic waste (FOGO) initiatives, **establishing a Food Waste for Healthy Soils Fund** to divert 3.4 million tonnes of organic material from landfill for productive use in agricultural soils. The fund will generate \$401 million in industry value, create up to 2,700 additional jobs and establish an important model for wider recycling and soil partnerships.
- The Government is providing **\$29.1 million of additional funding to protect native species** from the threats posed by invasive pest animals and weeds in our native environment. This complements existing investments in bushfire recovery for native species and habitat, safe havens, and a **new ten year Threatened Species Strategy.**
- The Government is securing Australia's recovery with investment of **more than \$3.5 billion to boost jobs, reduce emissions, and support affordable and reliable energy** in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 Budgets.
- The Government expects to invest **more than \$20 billion in low emissions technologies over the decade to 2030**, in order to drive at least \$60 billion of new investment and support 160,000 jobs over the next ten years. This includes **\$314 million to develop up to five clean hydrogen hubs in regional Australia and support further hub design and work studies**, increasing the Government's commitment to building an Australian hydrogen industry to more than \$1 billion.

## Helping young people navigate the system

Consultations have highlighted that young people want to learn more about the government services that are available to support them. Many young people identify online channels, such as myGov and apps, as their preferred method to access and apply for government services, with email being the next preferred option. Phone calls and individual face-to-face interactions are preferred when issues are more complex.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of raising awareness of government support to assist people and in particular vulnerable young people through challenging times. These experiences were heightened among certain cohorts of young people, such as women and those from migrant and non-English speaking backgrounds. It has raised public awareness of services and lifted levels of trust in government by providing a unified response across government and the private sector.<sup>38</sup>

Young people have reported they do not always know what government services exist to support them. Without an easy-to-navigate, streamlined system, young people may inadvertently rely on misinformation or put off getting support. This can lead to poor outcomes and a lack of confidence in government services.

We know young people find accessing and engaging with government services through myGov useful, secure and a reliable way to interact with government online. However it can be challenging to know what services are available and which government agency provides them.

In the 2021-22 Budget, the Government committed more than \$200 million to design and deliver an enhanced myGov over the next two years. The enhanced myGov will become the digital front door to government services; providing young Australians a central place to discover relevant government services and securely engage and transact with government. An enhanced myGov will make it easier than ever to find the government services young people need online, without needing to understand which payment is provided by which agency.


The enhanced myGov will offer a more tailored and personal whole-of-government service experience for all users based on their circumstances.

### Linking up with other services

More is being done to connect government services and identify opportunities to refer young people on to relevant supports, such as through the Your Career website and the Head to Health website, which helps people find digital mental health services from some of Australia's most trusted mental health organisations.

The Government is also transforming how it delivers government employment services. The new employment services model will provide better connections between job seekers and employers, match employment opportunities and support training and reskilling.

This will provide a digital platform to help young people find a job and access support when needed. It also provides young job seekers with links to other programs they are eligible for, such as Employability Skills Training.



Bringing services for young people together on the mygov website

<sup>38</sup> Child J, Dillon R, Erasmus E and Johnson J (2020), 'Reflecting on Australia's COVID-19 response', McKinsey and Company, 15 December, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/collaboration-irv-crisis-reflecting-on-australias-covid-19-response#>

## Key contacts for young people

Service	How it supports young people	Get in touch
<b>Mental Health Support Services</b>		
<b>headspace</b>	headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25-year olds, helping with mental health, physical health, alcohol and drug services, and work and study support.	Young people can access support by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling the National Office: (03) 9027 0100</li> <li>• Visiting the website: <a href="http://headspace.org.au">http://headspace.org.au</a></li> <li>• Visiting their local headspace centre, which can be located at <a href="http://www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres">www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres</a></li> <li>• Through eheadspace at <a href="https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/">https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Kids Helpline</b>	Kids Helpline is a free, confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for people aged 5 to 25.	Young people can access support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling the Helpline: 1800 55 1800</li> <li>• Visiting the website: <a href="https://kidshelpline.com.au/">https://kidshelpline.com.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>ReachOut</b>	ReachOut is an online mental health service for young people and their parents. It provides self-help information, support for parents, peer-support programs and referral information to other key services.	Young people can access support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling ReachOut on 02 8029 7777</li> <li>• Accessing online services through <a href="mailto:info@reachout.com">info@reachout.com</a> or <a href="https://au.reachout.com/">https://au.reachout.com/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Lifeline</b>	Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.	Young people can access support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling the crisis support line: 13 11 14</li> <li>• Texting the text line: 0477 13 11 14</li> <li>• Visiting the website: <a href="https://www.lifeline.org.au/">https://www.lifeline.org.au/</a></li> <li>• The online chat service: <a href="https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/">https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	Beyond Blue is a mental health and wellbeing organisation providing support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.	Young people can access support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636</li> <li>• Visiting the website at <a href="https://www.beyondblue.org.au/">https://www.beyondblue.org.au/</a></li> <li>• The online chat, email or online forums accessed through <a href="https://www.beyondblue.org.au/">https://www.beyondblue.org.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>WellMob (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)</b>	WellMob brings together online resources made by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Resources include websites, apps, podcasts, videos, helplines, social media and online programs all with a focus on social and emotional wellbeing. WellMob is aimed at frontline health and wellbeing workers, including those in youth services.	Frontline workers, including those in youth services, can access resources through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://wellmob.org.au/e-health-topics/our-mob/young-people/">https://wellmob.org.au/e-health-topics/our-mob/young-people/</a></li> </ul>

Service	How it supports young people	Get in touch
<b>Deadly Choices (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)</b>	<p>Deadly Choices is a health promotion initiative of the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (UIH).</p> <p>It aims to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make healthy choices for themselves and their families – to stop smoking, to eat good food and exercise daily. Deadly Choices also encourages our people to access their local Community Controlled Health Service and complete an annual 'Health Check'. They have a number of programs aimed at youth.</p>	<p>Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://deadlychoices.com.au/">https://deadlychoices.com.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Education, Training and Employment Support</b>		
<b>National Careers Institute (NCI)</b>	<p>The NCI provides Australians with access to authoritative and accurate careers information and support irrespective of their age or career stage.</p> <p>The Your Career website connects to further education, training or work options to support current career needs and goals.</p> <p>Tailored support for school leavers is provided through the School Leavers Information Kit and Schools Leavers Information Service.</p>	<p>Young people can access information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Careers Institute website: <a href="https://nci.dese.gov.au/">https://nci.dese.gov.au/</a></li> <li>• Your Career website: <a href="https://www.yourcareer.gov.au/">https://www.yourcareer.gov.au/</a></li> </ul> <p>School Leavers can access information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling: 1800 CAREER line (1800 227 337)</li> <li>• Texting: SLIS2021 to 0429 009 435</li> <li>• Emailing: <a href="mailto:schoolleavers.nci@dese.gov.au">schoolleavers.nci@dese.gov.au</a></li> </ul>
<b>Course Seeker</b>	<p>Course Seeker helps young people make informed decisions about their future study by providing clear, meaningful, and transparent information about the higher education sector.</p>	<p>Young people can access information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Course Seeker website: <a href="https://www.courseseeker.edu.au/">https://www.courseseeker.edu.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>My Skills website</b>	<p>The My Skills website is the national directory of vocational education and training organisations and courses. It enables consumers to search for and compare courses and training providers.</p>	<p>Young people can access information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting the My Skills website: <a href="https://www.myskills.gov.au/">https://www.myskills.gov.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>jobactive</b>	<p>jobactive is a free online jobs website with vacancies listed across all industries and regions within Australia.</p>	<p>Young people can access information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing the jobactive website: <a href="https://jobsearch.gov.au/">https://jobsearch.gov.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Transition to Work</b>	<p>Transition to Work provides young people aged 15-24 years with intensive pre-employment support with a strong focus on helping them understand and develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours employers expect.</p>	<p>Young people can access information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DESE website: <a href="https://www.dese.gov.au/transition-work">https://www.dese.gov.au/transition-work</a></li> </ul>



Service	How it supports young people	Get in touch
<b>Australian Apprenticeships</b>	The Australian Apprenticeships website has information and resources about Australian Apprenticeships and support available.	Young people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing the Australian Apprenticeship website: <a href="https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/">https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Study Assist</b>	Study Assist provides young people with information about Australian Government assistance to help them finance their tertiary studies.	Young people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing the Study Assist website: <a href="https://www.studyassist.gov.au/">https://www.studyassist.gov.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Fair Work Ombudsman</b>	The office of the Fair Work Ombudsman is an independent government agency. It helps employers and employees understand their rights and responsibilities under Australian workplace law.	Young people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Fair Work Ombudsman customer service line on 13 13 94</li> <li>● The Fair Work Ombudsman's website: <a href="https://www.fairwork.gov.au/">https://www.fairwork.gov.au/</a></li> <li>● The Fair Work Ombudsman also provides tailored advice to young people, which can be accessed through its website: <a href="https://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/young-workers-and-students">https://www.fairwork.gov.au/find-help-for/young-workers-and-students</a></li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal Employment Service</b>	Aboriginal Employment Service (AES) is a national Aboriginal recruitment and group training company that empowers Indigenous people through brokering employment opportunities and supporting candidates to have successful careers through mentoring, coaching, training and specialist support. AES helps with all the basics in applying for an opportunity such as development of your CV/Resume and a career plan, identifying the best careers for you, and interview coaching.	Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access information and support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://aes.org.au/">https://aes.org.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Indigenous Employment Australia</b>	Indigenous Employment Australia provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers in the areas of government, health and natural resource management.	Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://atsijobs.com.au/">https://atsijobs.com.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Youth Advisory Sessions</b>	The Youth Advisory Sessions is an initiative for young people aged 15-24 years in online employment services to help them maintain their work readiness. Young people can get up to three free one-hour advisory sessions with a Transition to Work youth consultant.	Young people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The JobSearch website: <a href="https://jobsearch.gov.au/yas">https://jobsearch.gov.au/yas</a></li> </ul>

Service	How it supports young people	Get in touch
<b>Australian Government support</b>		
<b>myGov</b>	myGov is a secure way to access government services online in one place.	Young people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing the myGov website: <a href="https://my.gov.au/">https://my.gov.au/</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">[link to be provided to the myGov tile here]</a></li> </ul>
<b>Australian Taxation Office</b>	The Australian Taxation Office provides assistance to those who need help understanding their tax and super obligations and entitlements.	Young people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Emergency Support Infoline on 1800 806 218</li> <li>● The individual support line on 13 28 61</li> <li>● The Australian Taxation Office website: <a href="https://www.ato.gov.au/">https://www.ato.gov.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Centrelink</b>	Centrelink delivers social security payments and services to Australians, including support targeted to young Australians such as Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY.	Young people can access information on these payments through Services Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Youth Allowance: <a href="https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/youth-allowance">https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/youth-allowance</a></li> <li>● ABSTUDY: <a href="https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/abstudy">https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/abstudy</a></li> </ul>
<b>Safety, Inclusion and Respect</b>		
<b>eSafety Commissioner</b>	<p>The Office of the eSafety Commissioner provides online safety education for Australian young people, educators and parents, with comprehensive advice and support available on its website. The office provides a complaints mechanism for young people who experience serious cyberbullying, and for all Australians to report image based abuse and illegal or offensive online content.</p> <p>Following the passage of the <i>Online Safety Act 2021</i>, from early 2022 the eSafety Commissioner will also have expanded powers to address serious cyber abuse of Australian adults, and to take action against cyberbullying of young people on a broader range of platforms.</p>	<p>Young people can report online abuse through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing the website <a href="https://www.esafety.gov.au/report">https://www.esafety.gov.au/report</a></li> </ul> <p>Young people can contact the Commissioner through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing the eSafety Commissioner website: <a href="https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/contact-us">https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/contact-us</a></li> </ul>
<b>1800RESPECT</b>	1800RESPECT is Australia's national sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling service. It provides confidential counselling, support and information for people affected by sexual abuse or domestic and family violence.	<p>Young people can access support through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Calling 1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732</li> <li>● Accessing the 1800RESPECT website: <a href="https://www.1800respect.org.au">https://www.1800respect.org.au</a></li> </ul> <p><b>If you are in need of immediate assistance call 000 now</b></p>

Service	How it supports young people	Get in touch
<b>Youth Health Forum (YHF)</b>	The Youth Health Forum is a network of over eighty young leaders aged 18-30 from across Australia who work together to determine and champion youth perspectives on the current health system.	Young people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting the Youth Health Forum's website: <a href="https://chf.org.au/youth-health-forum">https://chf.org.au/youth-health-forum</a></li> <li>• Young people can apply to be part of the forum by filling out an application on the YHF website.</li> </ul>
<b>Young Carer Network</b>	The Young Carers Network is a resource by Carers Australia for young carers to learn about support services, access resources and share their story and opinions. Young carers can find support services, share their stories, learn about financial support, among other resources.	Young people can access information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting the website: <a href="https://youngcarersnetwork.com.au/">https://youngcarersnetwork.com.au/</a></li> <li>• Contacting the network online: <a href="https://youngcarersnetwork.com.au/YCNContact">https://youngcarersnetwork.com.au/YCNContact</a></li> </ul>
<b>Carer Gateway</b>	Carer Gateway provides phone counselling, an online carer forum, and self-guided coaching and skills courses to give carers support, skills and information.	Young people can access support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling Carer Gateway on 1800 422 737 to be connected to a service in their area.</li> <li>• Requesting to be called by Carer Gateway at <a href="http://www.carergateway.gov.au">www.carergateway.gov.au</a></li> </ul>
<b>Youth Law Australia</b>	Youth Law Australia provide free and confidential legal advice, assistance and referrals to young people and their advocates. Anyone under 25 can request and receive free and confidential legal advice through the 24/7 online service.	Young people can access support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling Youth Law Australia on 1800 950 570</li> <li>• Emailing: <a href="mailto:advice@lawmail.org.au">advice@lawmail.org.au</a></li> <li>• Visiting the website: <a href="https://yla.org.au/">https://yla.org.au/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Reconnect</b>	The Reconnect Program is a community based early intervention and prevention program for young people aged 12 to 18 years (or 12 to 21 years in the case of newly arrived youth) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and their families.	Young people can access support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing the Reconnect website at: <a href="https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children/reconnect-for-young-people">https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children/reconnect-for-young-people</a></li> </ul>
<b>Step Together</b>	Step Together is a helpline and digital support service for the prevention of violent extremism. The service aims to provide early intervention support, advice and referrals so people can intervene and protect those they care about from involvement in dangerous behaviour.	Young people can access support through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calling Step Together on 1800 875 204</li> <li>• Visiting the website: <a href="http://www.steptogether.nsw.gov.au">www.steptogether.nsw.gov.au</a></li> </ul>



## CONCLUSION

The Australian Government is committed to continuing to support young Australians through the implementation of the Government's youth policy agenda, delivering practical measures with real outcomes.

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As outlined, the Government has a wide range of targeted measures designed to educate young Australians, get them into work and support their mental health during one of life's most crucial stages. It is our aim to provide reassurance, confidence, and the support to which so many have said they require access. To be successful, government services must adapt to the community in which their service is delivered. This includes maintaining strong connections with community organisations and other service providers. By investing and driving improvements, every young Australian can be given a purpose and access to the right mental health and wellbeing support. Our goal is to ensure our young people move into adulthood happy and healthy.

So, no matter where you look, government support is available. And with the resilience that millions of young Australians have shown to tackle the challenges of the pandemic head on, the Government is confident we can work together to create a bright future that can be enjoyed not just by the young Australians of today, but also the young Australians of tomorrow.

**AUSTRALIA'S  
YOUTH POLICY  
FRAMEWORK**