

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT THE FACTS



Mission Australia

Young people have specific issues. They have the realisation of growing up, leaving school, getting work, leaving home, sexuality, just getting their head around the world.

(Community worker)

The employment, education and social pathways of young people have changed enormously over the last twenty years – with changes in patterns of full and part time work, educational retention rates and a later start to establishing homes of their own.

The result is a complex landscape for young people to navigate and a breakdown in the predictable pathways and secure foundations of the past. Attempts to respond to these changes have largely tinkered with a system established to meet the needs of the 1970s and 80s based on assumptions of a linear pathway from childhood to adulthood.

A bold new blueprint to guide this complex and multidimensional transition is presented in this series of publications. This snapshot outlines twelve key facts which highlight the changes which have occurred for young people and will underpin the blueprint for change.

Fact 1

Almost 40% of unemployed Australians are under age 25.

Not all young people have benefited from Australia's recent economic prosperity and declining levels of unemployment.

Australians aged 15 to 24 years comprise 19% of the total labour force aged 15-64, but account for 38.7% of unemployment (at August 2005).

Their share of unemployment is only slightly lower than it was at the height of the 1992 recession (40.3%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2005).

Fact 2

Around 7.5% or 212,000 of Australia's young people (aged 15 to 24) are unemployed and 127,300 of those are not in full time secondary or tertiary education.

There were over 2.8 million young Australians in 2005 and approximately 8% were looking for employment (ABS, 2005a).

More than half of this group were not participating in full time secondary or tertiary education (see Figure 1). This reduces the likelihood of them finding secure and meaningful employment in the short term and increases their risk of long term unemployment, or sporadic and low paid employment.

This in turn increases their risk of experiencing extended social dislocation and physical and mental health problems.

Fact 3

The unemployment rate for those aged 15-19 years is almost four times that of people aged over 25 years. The rate for young adults is double that of people over 25 years.

Whilst unemployment has declined since the early 1990s, Australian youth, particularly teenagers, have experienced significantly higher rates of unemployment than those aged 25-64.

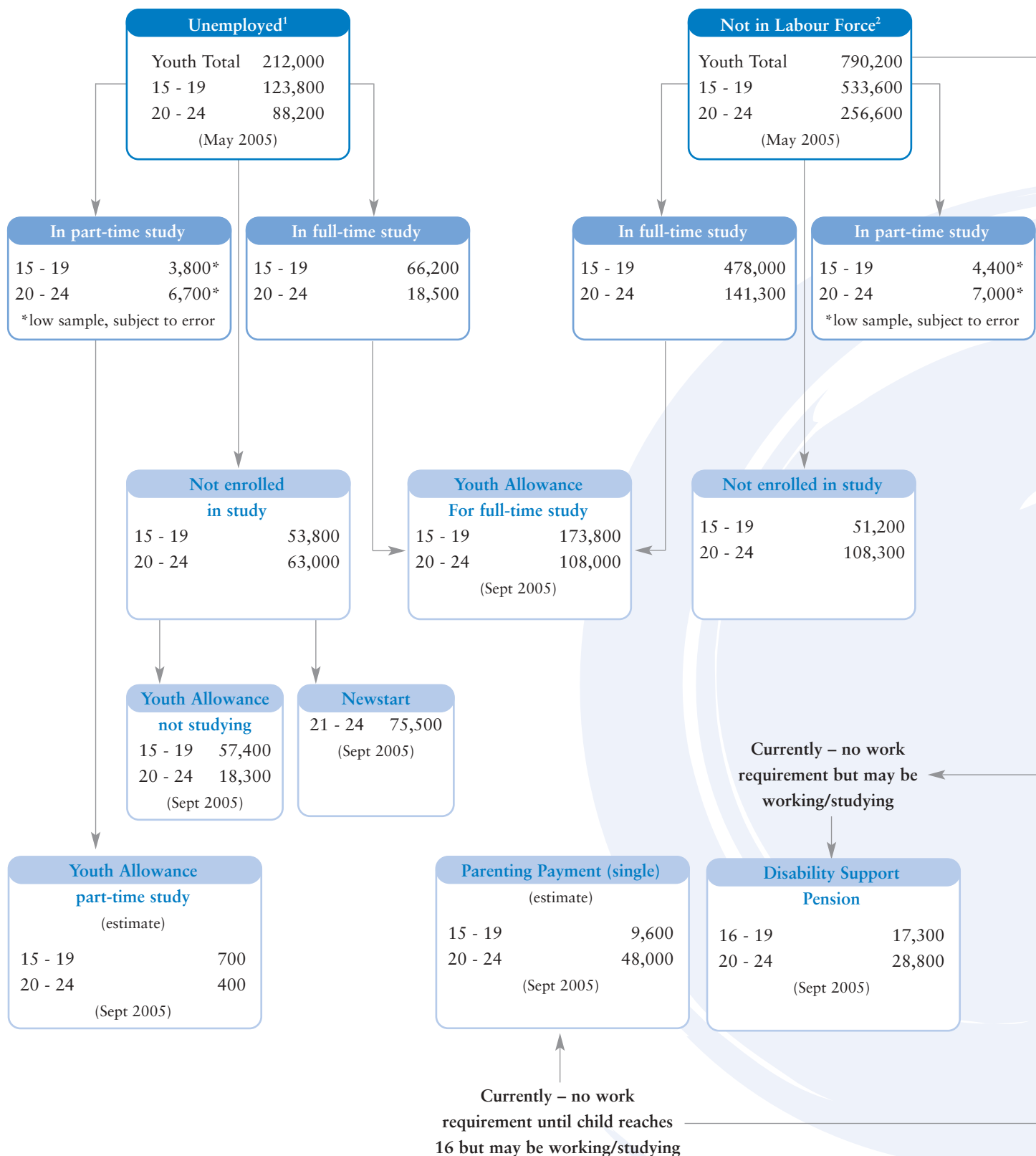
Table 1 – Unemployment rates (%)

Age	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2005
15-19	24.2	19.6	18.5	18.0	15.3	15.9	14.3
20-24	15.6	13.5	11.5	11.6	9.4	10.4	6.7
25+	9.4	8.8	8.3	7.7	4.6	4.6	3.6

Source: ABS 2005

Despite high economic growth over the past decade, international comparisons indicate Australia's unemployment rate of 11.7% in 2004 for 15-24 year olds was in the mid range, along with the United Kingdom, United States and Canada. Youth unemployment has been declining in New Zealand, Ireland and Denmark and in 2004 was between 8% and 9%. In contrast, Italy and France had rates above 20% (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2005).

Figure 1 – Young Australians, Unemployed or not in the Labour Force



¹ Unemployed: Persons aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the reference week, and: had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week; or were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

² Not In the Labour Force (NILF): Persons who were not in the categories employed or unemployed.

Sources: ABS 2005 – Catalogue No 6227.0; Centrelink Allowances 2005 September Quarter – unpublished data.

Fact 4

The unemployment rate for Indigenous young Australians is twice that of non Indigenous youth.

Indigenous young people face a greater range of difficulties in finding secure and meaningful employment than their non Indigenous counterparts. Key factors include lower participation rates in education, location in rural and remote areas and a possible reluctance to leave family, as well as a lack of finances to support extended education (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2003).

The proportion of Indigenous teenagers (aged 15 to 19) not fully engaged in work or education is almost three times that of non Indigenous teenagers. In addition close to 70% of Indigenous young adults (20 to 24 years) are not fully engaged with work or education compared to 30% of non Indigenous young adults (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2003).

Fact 5

54,800 young Australians have been unemployed for longer than six months.

The longer a person is unemployed, the more difficult it becomes to find secure and well paid work. This is

particularly so for young people seeking to establish themselves in the labour market.

Overall the numbers of young people experiencing extended periods of unemployment are declining, particularly for teenagers. However 37% of teenagers and 32% of young adults who were unemployed at August 2005 had been so for more than six months. Of this group, 8,300 young adults had been unemployed for more than two years (ABS, 2005).

Fact 6

At the 2001 Census, over half of youth unemployment was concentrated in 10% of Australia's Local Government Areas.

The burden of youth unemployment in Australia is not distributed evenly across communities. While the majority of Local Government Areas (LGAs) are generally well served by economic and social opportunities, over 53% of Australia's unemployed young people are concentrated in around 10% of local government areas (see Table 2).

These pockets of high youth unemployment occur in both rural and metropolitan locations, with many areas experiencing decades of persistent high levels of youth unemployment.

Table 2 – LGAs with over 10% youth unemployment and over 1000 unemployed young people

NSW	Total	VIC	Total	QLD	Total	SA	Total
Bankstown	1759	Ballarat	1526	Brisbane	12859	Charles Sturt	1145
Blacktown	3255	Brimbank	2395	Caboolture	1848	Onkaparinga	2122
Campbelltown	2194	Casey	1787	Cairns	1563	Playford	1359
Canterbury	1305	Darebin	1582	Caloundra	1011	Port Adelaide – Enfield	1524
Coffs Harbour	1080	Frankston	1385	Gold Coast	5990	Salisbury	1846
Fairfield	2497	Greater Bendigo	1357	Ipswich	1949	Tea Tree Gully	1072
Gosford	1659	Greater Dandenong	1732	Logan	3124	WA	
Lake Macquarie	2738	Greater Geelong	2597	Mackay	1027	Canning	1090
Liverpool	1743	Hume	1783	Pine Rivers	1417	Gosnells	1184
Newcastle	2746	Knox	1410	Redland	1523	Joondalup	1930
Parramatta	1314	LaTrobe	1159	Rockhampton	1140	Melville	1077
Penrith	2037	Melbourne	1241	Toowoomba	1463	Rockingham	1055
Randwick	1224	Monash	1690	Townsville	1704	Stirling	2343
Wollongong	2715	Moreland	1664			Swan	1051
Wyong	1699	Mornington Peninsula	1019			Wanneroo	1144
		Whitehorse	1157			TAS	Total
		Whittlesea	1372			Launceston	1164
		Yarra Ranges	1351			ACT	
						Unincorporated ACT	3767

Source: ABS Census 2001, Unpublished data

Note: The size and population of LGAs vary considerably and the table above provides a guide only to the distribution of youth unemployment. Within the LGAs, Brisbane is an anomaly as it has a significantly higher population (over 900,000) than any other.

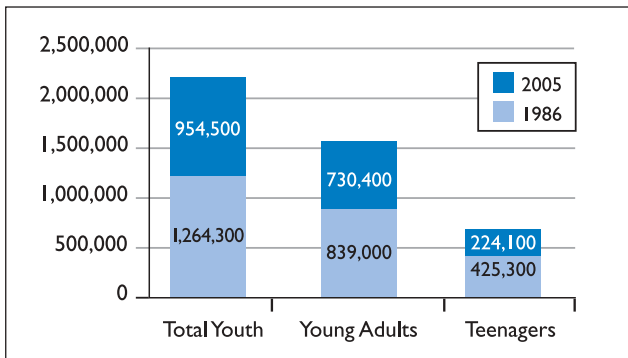
Fact 7

Full time employment for young people has dropped dramatically, with 309,800 fewer working in full time jobs over the last two decades.

Overall, full time employment in Australia increased by 25.4% between 1986 and 2005. However, only 16% of it was taken by young people.

The proportion of full time employment declined by 47% for teenagers and 13% for young adults (see Figure 2). In contrast, it increased by 40% for those aged 25 – 64 years (ABS 2005).

Figure 2 – Decline in full time youth employment



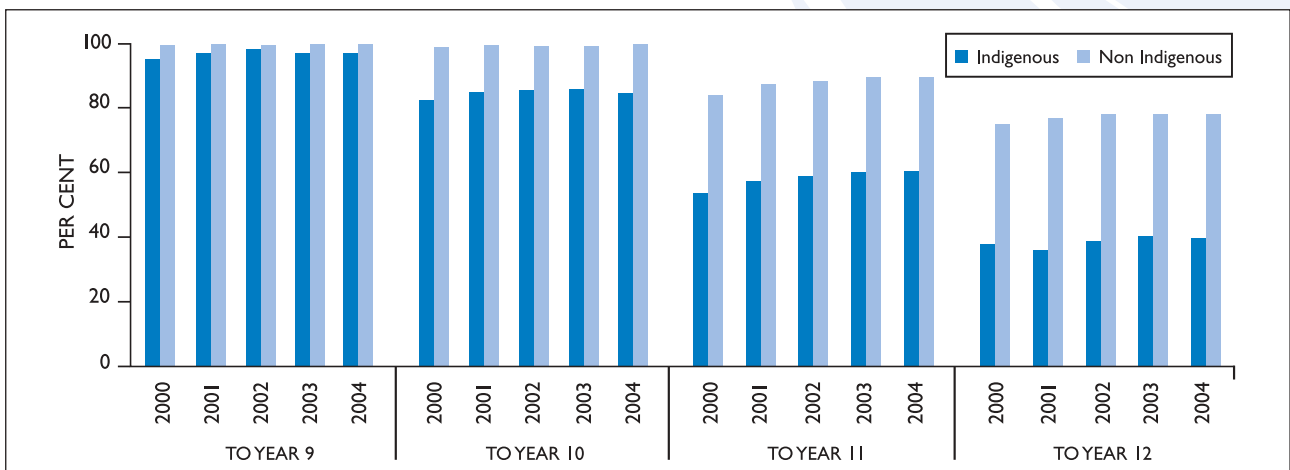
Source: ABS 2004

Fact 8

Part time work is increasingly the norm for people under 25 years, with 46% employed part time in 2005 compared with 20% in 1986.

The growth in youth employment since 1986 has been through the rapid increase in part time work (less than 30 hours per week) and casual employment. By August 2005, more than two-thirds of teenage employment was part time and one third for young adults (ABS, 2005).

Figure 3 – Apparent retention rates of Indigenous and non Indigenous students



Source: Productivity Commission, 2005

Australia is moving to a situation where every second youth job will be part time.

This may lead to tensions between employer demand for labour force flexibility and employee concerns regarding job security. The desire for increased hours of employment is already evident, with almost one in four of all part time workers wanting more hours and just under 60% wanting full time employment (ABS, 2004).

Fact 9

Between 1986 and 2005, teenage participation in full time education increased by almost 18%. Participation in full time tertiary education increased by around 20% for young adults.

Participation in education in Australia has increased over the last two decades as full time employment has been declining. Young adult participation in tertiary education rose from 8.0% to 28% between 1986 and 2005 and teenage participation in school and tertiary education increased from just under 54% to 72% between 1986 and 2005 (ABS, 2005).

Fact 10

Retention of Indigenous students to Year 12 is almost half that of non Indigenous students.

School participation rates are generally increasing for Indigenous young people. However, as Figure 3 shows, their retention rate to Year 10 was still 12% below that of all non Indigenous students in 2005. Retention to Year 12 was 39.5%, compared with 76.8% for the non Indigenous student population (ABS, 2005b).

Fact 11

Almost 26,000 young Australians leave school early each year and are not in the labour force or in further education and training in the year after leaving.

Some teenagers leave school early with mixed results. Of those who leave school early, approximately one third proceed to further education and one third obtain full time or part time work. One third however, are neither in the labour force nor in full time education and are at increased risk of long term unemployment (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005).

A report for the Business Council of Australia and Dusseldorp Skills Forum (Applied Economics, 2002) found that 59% of young women and 21% of males who left school in Year 9 were unemployed seven years later. By comparison, only 7% of those who completed Year 12 were still unemployed.

Fact 12

There has been significant growth in TAFE enrolments, New Apprenticeships and Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools and school based apprenticeships in the decade to 2004.

Total VET enrolments delivered by TAFE and other publicly funded agencies rose by 41% between 1994 and 2004. In the same period, enrolment of Indigenous students in VET increased by just under 150% (NCVER, 2002; 2004; 2005).

Vocational Education and Training in schools reached about 50% of senior secondary students in 2004 and has lifted teenage educational participation rates (Teese and Polesel 2003; NCVER, 2005).

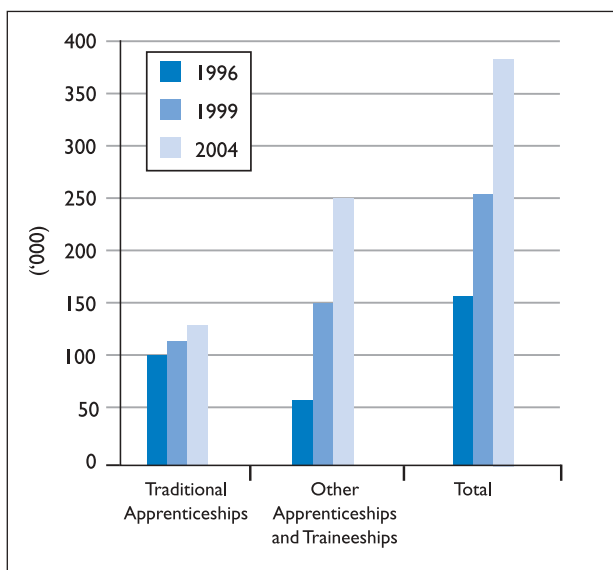
New Apprenticeships (traditional four year apprenticeships and new traineeships of one to two years) increased by 134% in the nine years to 2004, with growth mainly in traineeships (see Table 3 and Figure 4).

Table 3 – Apprentices and Trainees in training

	Traditional Apprenticeships ('000)	Other Apprenticeships and Traineeships ('000)	Total ('000)
1996	101.3	62.0	163.3
1999	107.9	147.3	255.2
2004	129.6	252.8	382.4

Source: NCVER 2004; NCVER 2005a

Figure 4 – Apprentices and Trainees in training



Conclusion

These facts illustrate that contemporary pathways for young people present opportunities and risks. Some young people are navigating this dynamic environment well, usually with family and community support. However, the new landscape presents very significant challenges for some young people and current policies are inadequate to meet their needs. The blueprint for supporting young people at risk is articulated in another publication in this series.

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Mission Australia's vision is to spread the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and meet human need.

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YOUTH EMPLOYMENT VOICES



Mission Australia

Introduction

I tried to get work at so many places. I looked in the newspapers and places like that. In the newspapers it's only for people with big things, certificates and stuff, and mostly jobs you have to be qualified for.

These are the words of a young Australian who left school early and is experiencing the challenges of today's labour market.

He is discovering that without at least senior school qualifications, finding employment is much more difficult compared to 15 years ago. If he fails to find work soon, or enrol in additional education and training, this young man may become one of Australia's long-term unemployed young people. He may disengage from the community, experience poverty, poor physical and mental health and homelessness, and may be at risk of developing drug and alcohol problems and possibly involvement in criminal activities.

Ensuring young people make a smooth transition from school to further study or employment is thus more critical today than ever before. Understanding the opportunities and challenges they face is vital if Australia is to respond with adequate and appropriate measures and initiatives that help young people move successfully from school into further study or employment.

This Snapshot features the words of young job seekers, those who work with them, and employers. Approximately 50 consultations were conducted by Mission Australia across Australia, ranging from one-on-one discussions with unemployed young people, to focus group discussions with specialist staff in employment, training, youth and community services. Over 40 managers of Mission Australia's Job Network employment centres were also consulted.

Their voices provide a powerful insight into the different perceptions and realities of today's youth labour market, how young people are faring, and what young people require to make a successful transition from school to work.

They highlight that the foundations for a smooth transition from school to further study or employment are laid years before young people leave school. The development of employability skills (eg communication skills, the ability to work in a team) during their school years is seen as important as academic achievement, along with the ability to set goals and find the support and assistance they need.

The different perceptions and experiences of individuals from diverse personal situations and geographical locations emphasises the need for effective responses to youth unemployment to be targeted. Responses must target the most disadvantaged individuals and communities and include longer-term support and assistance.

Perceptions of the youth labour market

Yes there are jobs out there if you want them.

(Unemployed male teenager, regional city)

No – that's actually bull..., it's really hard for people my age to get work...

(Unemployed male teenager, outer suburb, capital city)

When two young people express such opposite views about the opportunities today's labour market offers them, which one is right?

Both teenagers are correct, but their different experiences and perceptions are influenced by their individual situations.

The first teenager lives in a prosperous regional city, and with the right skills and opportunities will obtain secure employment. The second teenager is from an outer suburb of a capital city that has high unemployment and socio-economic disadvantage.

Mission Australia's consultations revealed the same varying experiences and perceptions among community professionals who help young people to find work, as well as those from the business sector.

Just over two-thirds of Mission Australia's Job Network managers described the youth labour market as 'buoyant'. However, the remaining managers working with young people in areas experiencing little or no economic growth, or in small communities located considerable distances from major towns and cities, were much less optimistic.

A youth service coordinator working with young people at risk of long-term unemployment perceived today's labour market as very much a "buyers' market not a sellers' one". Another noted the low-skilled jobs that many young people might have worked in a decade ago were fast disappearing. She also observed a growing trend for industries to recruit directly through TAFE, which meant young unemployed people not enrolled in study had significantly reduced opportunities to find work.

Employers and human resource managers offered similarly mixed assessments. Some employers Mission Australia consulted considered that young people today had numerous job opportunities.

No business will turn away a young person with the right personality, outlook, drive, determination and the overall package. Business is about finding the right people to grow it. In this industry many young people often hold responsible positions by the time they're in their early twenties. (Recruitment, Clothing chain)

We have ongoing demand for all sorts of people in our business including young people. In some areas, we struggle to attract people in the youth market to our businesses because the retail industry in general is not always viewed as a 'career-of-choice' by this demographic. While this is a generalisation, in less affluent areas we are usually able to attract people from a youth demographic. (Recruitment, Retail)

Part-time work: Stepping stone or dead end?

Part-time and casual work is increasingly the most likely employment young people find today, particularly when 'getting started' in the labour market.

The low proportion of full-time and permanent jobs available to young people through Job Network centres operated by Mission Australia demonstrates this. Over half of Job Network centres said less than 40% of jobs available for young people were full-time or permanent positions.

The impact of this increase in part-time and casual work was viewed differently by employers and those working with young unemployed people.

Some considered the increased number of part-time and casual jobs provided more opportunities for young people to get a 'foot in the door'. Many thought it provided benefits to those combining work with study.

The new work arrangements give businesses and their staff much more flexibility. Our staff is a mix of full-time committed people and part-timers. If a casual staff member wants more hours they can usually get them.

(Employer, Retail clothing)

Most people don't recognise that registering for casual work [with an agency] can be a pathway to permanent employment and is one method that companies use to identify workers with potential.

(Corporate Social Responsibility manager)

While these comments are certainly true, what isn't highlighted is the impact of part-time and casual work on some young people. The inability to find ongoing and secure employment can affect their attitude and motivation for finding work, as explained by a youth worker below:

Casual seasonal work is available to young people, which isn't bad money but it is very transient. Young people are still developing their ideas and perceptions of the world and part-time and casual work breeds a culture of short term thinking. Once it gets embedded, it's there. (Community worker)

A community worker highlighted how young people working in casual and part-time positions often felt they were less valued as employees:

Many employers who take on casual or part time workers are mainly interested in their output and achieving their business goals. They are not interested in helping young people develop and the kids see this. They really take that on board – 'I'm only here for what they can get out of me, not what I can get for the future'. (Community worker)

I organised a job for a young guy who was a computer whiz through one of the group training organisations. I got him a job putting up industrial sheds, and the way he was treated - after two weeks he came back and said 'listen I don't think I really want to work if this is what you get treated like'. He was used - there was no respect given and I think if employers don't give respect to youth, they react. (Community worker)

The low pay rates many young people received in their first jobs was highlighted as an issue by some during Mission Australia's consultations. Low pay rates often reduced motivation to work, particularly if young people felt they were being treated poorly by employers.

At the start there may not be much money - an apprenticeship is like being unemployed. There's not much money and three years is too long to keep happy. I know people who hate the job but they need the job. The amount I'm getting now from Centrelink would be the same as if I got a job. (Young person)

Getting started and job readiness

Young people experience a range of challenges when getting started in the labour market, which vary in their intensity and duration. Some young job seekers Mission Australia consulted were acutely aware of the challenges that lay before them.

*It's hard to get cos of low self esteem – I don't feel good.
It isn't easy to find – we need someone to tell us.*

They highlight that specialised services are required for some young people to help develop skills, knowledge and confidence that more experienced job seekers possess.

Employers consulted by Mission Australia provided diverse views on the 'job readiness' of young people today. They identified that some young people require further support and assistance to develop 'the fundamentals' for succeeding in employment.

Some young people already have the basics and are ready to start...Schools do seem to try to prepare young people....Grooming, presentation and personality are important.

(Human Resources, International hotel chain)

Some young people present from school or training without the fundamentals in place. They don't seem to understand the 'process' of getting a job or have a clear sense of the 'tools' they bring or need. Some young people are characterised by a lack of goals, low self confidence and seem to be drifting.

(Human Resources, Banking)

An experienced youth services coordinator observed that:

Too many of the young people we see rely on hope and luck rather than effective planning, a strong skills set and high levels of self belief. Many of our clients have low self confidence, poor literacy and numeracy skills, trouble at home and lack of role models.

Of the more than 40 Job Network managers surveyed by Mission Australia, 83% indicated that less than 40% of their young clients were job ready, due mainly to lack of motivation.

Just under 50% of Job Network managers identified low motivation as the most important factor contributing to extended periods of youth unemployment. Other factors identified were lack of transport (15%), low language, literacy and numeracy skills, (7% each) substance abuse, cultural factors and family conflict (5% each).

But what is motivation and why do Job Network managers believe lack of motivation is the main reason many young people are not job ready?

Employers who Mission Australia consulted defined motivation as having drive and determination, ambition and goals.

It's about confidence first and foremost...if someone lacks confidence and fears failure then this becomes a self perpetuating cycle. If you think everyone hates me then you have to get these things into perspective – there will be people who like you but you may need some good pointers and programs to help you on your way. (Recruitment, national clothing chain)

However, for young people experiencing multiple personal and social problems, it can be hard to find the motivation to secure and maintain employment. As two teenagers commented:

I get in a lazy space and that's where I stay.

My mum and dad were pretty much alcoholics – they'd get home and abuse the hell out of me and my brothers. They didn't care what was going on so I used to stay at home.

Young people in these situations require intensive and often long-term support. They need one-on-one support, encouragement and services.

Factors contributing to long-term youth unemployment

There is no single determinant that places a young person at risk of long-term unemployment. Rather, a complex mix of factors affects their transition years from school to further study or employment. These include:

Poor educational outcomes

Many Mission Australia staff working with young people in Complementary Employment Programs (a range of specialised employment programs that meet the needs of jobseekers who are not yet ready for Job Network) highlighted poor literacy and numeracy skills as contributing to long-term difficulty in finding employment. These skills shortfalls were often the consequence of a history of poor school results and attendance, often in conjunction with family problems.

As one young person put it:

You need qualifications because if they think you don't have qualifications you're dumb and they don't want to put dumb people on.

Poor health

Physical and mental health issues can impede a young person's smooth transition to employment, further study and community belonging. Young people can experience a range of physical and mental health issues during the important transition years from school to study or work. At the extreme end, they may suffer a severe mental illness combined with entrenched risk-taking addictive behaviours, along with high levels of anger or emotional withdrawal. Three quarters of mental illnesses begin between the ages of 15-25 years.

Mission Australia's consultations included speaking to four young people living at a 24 hour drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. When asked about their future, two spoke of looking no further than six months ahead, while one did not particularly care. The fourth dismissed the question, saying they couldn't look six months ahead – this 15 year old was just intent on surviving. As staff working with young people expressed it:

Some of them end up back on unemployment, they can be very angry, often have drug issues, they have left home and have no partners, their skills are low, they are in poor health. (Work for the Dole Coordinator)

Having a good general health and mental health advice service or person is important, especially in relation to drugs and alcohol and needs to be based out of the offices.

(Personal Support Program (PSP) co-coordinator)

Lack of family support

The level of family support provided to young people is an important influence on their journey to independence. Entrenched family conflict makes it much more difficult for young people to complete and succeed in their studies, and to find secure and satisfying employment.

Job Centre managers and community development workers surveyed by Mission Australia emphasised the importance of family support for young people.

We have a problem with parents encouraging young people not to participate adequately as they themselves have been long term unemployed... We have a lot of young people who are using pot, speed and engaging in chroming.

Location

The proportion of young people at risk of long-term unemployment varies significantly across communities. Outer metropolitan regions and rural and regional towns may provide limited job opportunities and support services and have poor transport options. This highlights the need for support and assistance to be targeted at these 'hot spots' to ensure those in most need are helped.

This town has become a dumping ground for kids without skills, as work dries up. The impact of drought means no farm work is available and farming families have moved into town in search of work. In my work, I've seen an increase in crime, domestic violence, drug and alcohol use and family breakdown. Life is about survival.... There's a lack of professionals to deal with these issues. There's no direct transport for outlying towns. (Counsellor, government agency)

Even in this city the young people are isolated, have no licence and there is no public transport.

(Community worker)

One teenager living in a regional town that Mission Australia spoke with had completed several automotive

certificates but was frustrated and despondent about finding work. He had applied for more than 100 jobs, and had lost confidence in his ability to find work. While moving to the city could increase his employment prospects, this option usually depends on having family or friends there who can provide accommodation and support.

Young Indigenous people in particular often experience additional obstacles in finding employment. For those living in remote communities, access to educational facilities is a major issue. Once they have completed their primary school years, most leave their families to board in larger towns where secondary schools are located. Whilst recognising that schools are trying to accommodate Indigenous students and respond to their needs, one youth worker Mission Australia surveyed was critical of the lack of support available to assist them into further education and training or employment.

After school, they return home to nothing... VET is available but doesn't lead to anything. ... There is no evidence of a commitment by business to employ and upskill Indigenous young people... There's a need for training that might lead to job creation. (Youth worker)

A service with approximately 600 young clients, of whom 80% were Indigenous, spoke of young people being on the streets, bored, with little family support and lacking role models. They were disengaged from school, often depressed and had experienced considerable bullying.

In Australia's northern states and territories, the climate also impacts on the ability of young people to find secure employment. For example, many jobs on fishing boats and in the tourism industry in these regions disappear once the weather breaks. One company in northern Australia referred to by Mission Australia staff employed up to 180 workers in the peak season, but 10 or less during the off-season.

Accommodation and financial issues

Young people and community support workers surveyed by Mission Australia often remarked that the availability of accommodation influenced success in finding work.

Many of the young people we see have got special needs and fixing their accommodation and financial issues are the first priorities.

(Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET) staff)

The coordinator of an Employment Skilling program located in a busy outer suburban area of a capital city reported that finding secure housing for his clients was extremely difficult. Many had juvenile justice issues, and stringent rental conditions excluded them from finding rental accommodation. Waiting lists for public housing often extended to seven years. This coordinator reported that just one of his clients had found secure accommodation in the past year.

The consequences for young people unable to find secure accommodation can include moving through a range of jobs, becoming unemployed and eventually floundering

outside a mainstream that some may have already rejected. They may get involved in criminal activity, work in the black economy or drop out completely.

When you're bored you can get destructive and do stupid stuff... like smash mail boxes and windows and break into cars. (Young person)

Self-medication, ping ponging with housing, lack of socialisation and a need for structure and consistency, feeling that wherever they go, they're often a burden.

(JPET staff)

Other challenges

Navigating complex income and employer support services can also cause some young unemployed people to disengage completely.

There are a lot of hurdles, such as navigating employment services. They have to go through Centrelink employment services, get their numbers and then they have to do resumés, and then they are excluded from going to and from service providers to get work. Even if they know about work that's going they have already linked in to other service providers and that excludes them. The whole bureaucracy of how employment is delivered to that age bracket becomes too hard. (Community development worker)

Smoothing the way: What makes a difference?

Providing appropriate support and assistance to young people at risk of long-term unemployment helps enormously. Mission Australia canvassed individuals and organisations about what makes a difference for young people, especially those with multiple issues:

Intensive long-term support specifically for young people

Those people with significant experience working with highly disadvantaged young people emphasised not only the importance of providing dedicated services, but also the need for intensive long-term support. Case management, mobile services, referral and advocacy were seen as important components of this support.

There needs to be a realisation from people delivering services that youth are specific. They have specific issues and problems which you and I don't have. They have the issues of growing up, sexuality, leaving home, getting work, leaving school, just getting their head around the world. There has to be a whole nurturing component embedded into the youth delivery service model that people realise what happens here ripples on into the next step that young people take.

(Community development worker)

Programs need to be tailored to the complex backgrounds of young clients while building up their skills. (Youth worker)

We need to allow time to foster trust and a confidence that someone is there to share their journey.

(Youth worker)

The more disconnected people are the more they need support. Otherwise they become invisible or lost.

(PSP worker)

After-care, placement and follow up is a key to success with these young people. (Youth worker)

A PSP coordinator stressed the benefits of planning for exiting clients and developing close relationships with employment services. 'Smoothing the way' was important if disengaged young people were to make a successful transition to employment. The PSP coordinator also suggested that exiting youth needed on-going support once they find work.

A complementary services manager suggested that funds from Job Network training accounts be used to purchase specialist services, or to include a specialist component for working with young people.

Almost one quarter of Job Network managers surveyed by Mission Australia recommended boosting the number of specialist youth employment coordinators at their centres. One manager felt his centre needed twice the current amount of intensive support provided to young job seekers to meet demand.

A whole-of-community response

Given the complex mix of issues confronting some young people today, greater coordination between services is needed (eg youth, employment, drug and alcohol, education). Many people Mission Australia spoke to emphasised the importance of a whole-of-community response to effectively tackle youth unemployment.

Stronger interactions and coordination between key stakeholders, government, Job Network, schools, community youth organisations is needed.

A focus on practical issue management not an administrative focus. (Job Network respondent)

Developing employability skills

Mission Australia's consultations highlighted the importance of employability skills to young people's transition into work. Skills, such as communication, planning and organisation, self management and problem solving were seen as important to helping young people find employment, particularly those at risk of long-term unemployment.

Our program is exceptionally beneficial, we work with Indigenous young people and they can come to us when they have nowhere else to go. We help them develop support skills, self esteem, social skills, attitudes, employability. (PSP Staff)

We are very successful at working with longer term young unemployed people but it does not always lead to a job. (JPET staff)

While one staff member emphasised the importance of employability skills, the challenges of measuring them were also highlighted:

They are not always measurable and are often overlooked in more clinical program evaluations.

Educational opportunities

The importance of intensive literacy and numeracy support for young people experiencing difficult personal and labour market transitions was highlighted by numerous Work for the Dole, PSP and JPET staff surveyed by Mission Australia.

Returning to education was a viable option for some young people. One young female Mission Australia spoke with had left school early and was not keen to return. She was too young to enrol at TAFE, but found a bridging program that allowed her to finish Year 10 before moving to TAFE. Her desire to complete Year 12 was based on her observations of the impact that limited education had on family members, and she understood her employment opportunities would improve if she continued her schooling.

For others, completing secondary school was simply not an option. A fifteen year old male spoke about 'going through a stage' and how he had left school due to discipline and peer problems. He had experienced family issues and was living with an aunt, enrolled in a TAFE certificate course and working casually.

Alternative educational settings which provide a flexible and applied approach to learning were seen as important for young people dealing with a range of issues. It was recommended that this learning involve accredited studies and be complemented by counselling, advocacy and referral to other services such as mental health and housing where required.

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Mission Australia's vision is to spread the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and meet human need.

Conclusion

The voices of young unemployed people and those who work with them highlight that young people require targeted and specialised assistance to ensure they make a smooth transition from school to study or employment.

They require more support and assistance than older Australians who have a foothold in the labour market and more personal skills to respond to the challenges of finding work.

Young people need to be much more prepared for the transition than in the past due to the complex changes in the labour market, and there needs to be a consistent national agenda to ensure this. For example, employability skills are essential and should be a feature of school education.

The factors that contribute to youth unemployment are clearly identified, including:

- Poor educational outcomes
- Poor health
- Lack of family support
- Location
- Accommodation and financial issues.

Given that some young people have a combination of these factors impacting on their participation, a co-ordinated and integrated approach is needed.

What works in supporting young people at risk of long term unemployment is also clearly identified:

- Intensive long term support specifically for young people
- A whole of community response
- Developing employability skills
- Educational opportunities.

The voices all point to the need for innovative responses and a national approach to effectively help young people make the transition from school to study or employment.

Mission Australia is grateful to the Youth Strategy and Advocacy Group (YSAG) for their support in producing this publication. YSAG, under the Chairmanship of Rupert Myer, supports research, advocacy and services for young people.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT RESPONSES



Mission Australia

Introduction

This Snapshot describes a selection of transition policy initiatives and programs in place across Australia to help young people make a successful journey from school to work or further education. A number of these programs are a response to the recommendations of the *Footprints to the Future Report* (2001) and intended to improve and enhance transitions for all young Australians.

The OECD (2000:15) notes that transition outcomes are more effective when: *Young people have available to them learning pathways and qualification frameworks that are clearly defined, well organised and open, designed and developed in a lifelong learning perspective, with effective connections to post school destinations, whether work or further study.*

The transition period for young people is the combined sum of time spent in post-compulsory education and the time taken to settle into work after leaving education. In Australia, the average time taken for a young person to complete the transition to independence and employment is just under 6.5 years and comes into effect at 21.5 years. It takes an average of 7.4 years in OECD countries (2000: 69).

Allowances and Payments

The following overview of allowances and payments are subject to Consumer Price Index (CPI) or legislative adjustment (Data current as at 2006).

Youth Allowance: The most common financial support provided to young people in Australia is the Youth Allowance (YA). It supports young people aged 16-24 years who are undertaking full time education or training, or those aged 16-20 years who are unemployed and looking for work, or undertaking an approved combination of activities.

Those eligible for a YA (subject to assets and income testing) are:

- 16-24 years and studying or undertaking a New Apprenticeship (NA) full time
- 16-20 years and looking for work full time, undertaking Centrelink approved activities, or have a temporary exemption (eg due to illness)
- 15 years and assessed as independent
- aged 25 and over and studying or undertaking a NA full time but only if student was receiving YA immediately before

turning 25 and is still doing the same course or NA. (Other full time students aged 25 and over apply for AUSTUDY).

YA provides \$183.20 a fortnight for those aged under 18 years who are living at home, and \$334.70 a fortnight for those living away from home (Rent Assistance may also be available). Those aged 18 years and over and living at home receive \$220.30, and those living away from home receive \$334.70 (Rent Assistance may be available).

In 2005, there were just over 2,800,000 young Australians aged 15 to 24 (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2005). Approximately 50% (1,416,200) were undertaking full time education and of this group approximately 20% were assessed as eligible for a Youth Allowance (282,000) (ABS, 2005a). Centrelink data also indicates that around 75,677 non-students and approximately 1,100 part-time students were receiving YA (Centrelink unpublished data, 2005 September Quarter).

Newstart Allowance: This financial support is provided to Australians aged 21 years and over who are unemployed. It provides \$410.60 a fortnight for singles with no dependants and \$444.20 for those who are single with dependants.

ABSTUDY: Assists Indigenous students to stay at school or go on to further studies. ABSTUDY consists of a fortnightly living allowance as well as additional components to help with the costs associated with attending education.

Rent Assistance: A maximum of \$100.60 per fortnight is provided to eligible young people aged under 25 years who are single without dependants. For those sharing accommodation, the maximum provided is \$67.07 per fortnight.

Remote Area Allowance: For those young people receiving income support and living in a remote area, an additional \$18.20 per fortnight may be provided.

Disability Support Pension: For those of working age and assessed as having a physical, psychological or intellectual disability and unable to work more than 15 hours a week, or who are permanently blind. Under 18 years pension: \$277.90 living at home, \$429.40 living independently. 18 to 20 years pension: \$315 living at home and \$429.40 living independently.

Family Tax Benefit (Part A): Families with incomes up to \$40,000 receive a fortnightly benefit of: \$179.76 for each dependant aged 13-15 years; \$45.36 for each dependant aged 16-17 years; and \$61.04 for each dependant aged 18-24.

(Part B): Sole parents with dependants under 16 and 16-18 year olds (if a full-time student not on Youth Allowance) receive \$82.04 fortnightly. Benefits also apply in two parent families if lower income does not exceed \$4,234, after which a sliding scale applies.

Indicative list of national, state/territory and local responses

The following list of programs is indicative of the range of initiatives in place to support young people in their transition from school to work or further education/training. Some specifically target young people, others are part of the more general support structure to assist people into employment/training. The programs are grouped according to their coverage under four broad headings: National, Indigenous, State/Territory and Local.

The programs vary considerably in size and scope, with funding coming from a range of sources including Commonwealth and State/Territory across a range of Departments, as well as Local Governments and non-government and corporate organisations.

Other than the major federally funded national initiatives, programs have limited coverage resulting in a patchwork effect, with excellent initiatives sometimes limited to small populations, geographical areas or short term pilots.

NATIONAL

PROGRAM NAME

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Job Network (JN)

Funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), Job Network provides support for unemployed Australians, including young people, through a national group of private and community organisations. Those on either Newstart or Youth Allowance undertake Job Search Training (JST). Initially most receive Job Search Support (JSS) which provides Job Placement and Job Matching services, such as lodging resumés on Job Search (automated matching to job vacancies) and ongoing access to Job Search kiosks. Young people with multiple risk factors can immediately access Intensive Support (IS). Those unable to find work after three months of receiving JST are also eligible for IS. It provides one-to-one assistance in job search techniques resumé writing, interview techniques and presentation skills, until they find employment. After six months, those aged 18 years and over are referred to Work for the Dole for a period of six months. If 12 months of sustained employment is not achieved, a referral is made to Customised Assistance, which provides services to suit individual need. This can include training for work, work experience and counselling.

Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET)

Assists students and unemployed young people aged 15-21 years (priority given to 15-19) who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. JPET clients are assisted to address personal and social barriers that severely limit their capacity to participate in their communities and in education, employment and vocational training. They may have drug and alcohol dependencies, mental health issues, low education levels, or been recently released from the criminal justice system. They may also be geographically isolated, young parents, refugees or Indigenous.

JPET offers a range of support and referral services and draws on existing support services for young people in their local community. There are 96 organisations (133 sites) delivering JPET services to around 14,600 young people who commenced the program in 2004-05, with a funding allocation of \$20.1 million (DEWR, Annual Report 2004-5).

Personal Support Program (PSP)

PSP bridges the gap between crisis services and employment assistance programs and helps unemployed people, including young people, who face multiple barriers to employment. These barriers may include homelessness, drug and alcohol dependencies, poor mental health and family breakdown. PSP is available for a maximum of two years and is delivered from around 600 sites across Australia. Young people who are eligible are aged 15-20 years who are registered as unemployed with Centrelink but not receiving income support. The program assisted 50,000 participants in 2004-05, with an allocated budget of \$53.4 million. Participant numbers are expected to grow to around 60,000 in 2006-07.

According to DEWR, 43% of participants exited PSP with social outcomes and 27% exited with sustainable economic outcomes (13 weeks duration of employment, training or referred to other employment programs within the past 12 months) (DEWR, Annual Report 2004-5).

Work for the Dole (WfD)

People aged 18 years and over and receiving Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment or Disability Support Pension can be referred or volunteer for Work for the Dole, which involves participation in community-based work projects. Participants can earn a Training Credit of up to \$800 for approved training courses as well as a Passport to Employment, a package of assistance that includes training to identify and follow-up job leads; writing and updating resumés; obtaining references; preparing job applications; and managing job interviews. In 2004-05, DEWR spent \$168 million to fund 81,866 WfD places (DEWR, Annual Report 2004-5).

Green Corps

A youth development and training program for 17-20 year olds, providing opportunities to work and train on environmental and heritage conservation projects. Participants receive a 'participant allowance' and may not necessarily be receiving income support or be registered as unemployed. The Commonwealth allocated \$24.4 million for 2005-06 to deliver 170 projects and 1700 placements (DEWR, Annual Report 2004-5).

Mentor Marketplace

Uses mentoring to improve outcomes for 12 to 25 years olds, particularly those at greatest risk of disconnection from family, community, education, training and the workplace. Approved projects provide access to mentoring for a wide range of young people, including those in foster care; young carers; young people with disabilities; Indigenous young people; and those from disadvantaged groups and localities. In 2005 twelve projects were running, with a further 14 having received funding from the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA) for 2006.

Youth Pathways (formerly Job Pathways Program)

Assists those aged 13-19 years at risk of leaving school or who have left school in the previous 12 months, before completing Year 12 and without study options or employment. It provides one on one support that includes personal development, careers counselling, job search preparation and referral to other study options and employment. Around 17,000 young people at high risk participate each year, with a funding allocation of \$24 million per annum (DEST 2005 Youth Pathways 2006-08 Programme Guidelines).

New Apprenticeships Access Program (NAAP)

Provides disadvantaged job seekers with pre-vocational training, support and assistance to obtain an apprenticeship. The program provides 150 hours prevocational training and up to 13 weeks each of job search assistance and post placement support. Between 2002-04, 6,000 15-19 year olds participated in NAAP at an average cost of \$2,350 for each (2004-2005 Budget estimates hearing, DEST).

Australian Technical Colleges

In 2006, the Commonwealth Government began establishing 25 Australian Technical Colleges to provide both academic and vocational education for around 7,200 Years 11 and 12 students each year. The colleges will be located in regions with skill shortages, a high youth population and strong support from local industries. Students will be enrolled in school-based New Apprenticeships and also undertake academic and business courses. Just over \$62 million has been budgeted for 2005-2006 (Portfolio budget statements 2005-06 DEST).

Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM)

Funded by the Department of Education Science and and Training (DEST), POEM involves young people who have disconnected from schooling in projects focussed on improving life skills and education, self esteem and employability skills. The initial pilot has been extended until December 2006, with federal funding of \$7.9 million (2002-06). Between 2002-04, 4,110 young people were engaged in education, training and life skills programs.

Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisors (ANICA)

Provides a national career and transition support network for 13 to 19 year olds. This initiative has been informed by the Career and Transition (CAT) and POEM Pilots, both of which emanated from recommendations in the *Footprints to the Future* (2001) report. Delivered through Local Community Partnerships, funding of \$143.2 million from 2005-06 to 2008-09 has been allocated. ANICA will build on existing programs to further improve the career choices of young people and increase levels of student engagement (DEST website).

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP)

DEST's LLNP aims to improve jobseekers' chances of obtaining work or undertaking study/training. Free support is provided to all 15-20 year olds jobseekers for up to 200 hours of training at 340 sites. Funding of \$49.7 million (2005-06) will support 20,450 training places.

Reconnect

Provides early intervention support for young people aged between 12 and 18 years who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and for their families. Services include counselling, adolescent mediation and practical support. At June 2005, there were 97 Reconnect services, 14 were Indigenous-specific or had a strong Indigenous client focus. Reconnect has assisted 4,696 young people, 4,161 families, and 9,148 groups, and has a budget allocation of \$20.4 million (FaCS annual report 2004-05).

Youth Activities Services (YAS) and Family Liaison Worker Program (FLW)

Provides practical support and guidance for young people aged 11-16 years engaged in or moving into risk-taking behaviour and also for their families. A range of structured, unstructured and specialised programs are designed to improve self confidence, strengthen relationships and connection with the local community and respond to local needs. In 2005, the program cost \$6.9 million. There were 227,970 contacts with young people, which actively engaged 25,725 young people and 10,758 families (FaCS Annual Report 2004-05).

Innovative Health Services for Homeless Youth (IHSY)

Supplies primary health care for homeless and otherwise at-risk young people who fall outside the mainstream health services. Matched funding (\$7.4 million for 2004-07) is provided by the Department of Health and Ageing to the states, for advocacy, counselling, referrals, health prevention and mobile outreach services.

INDIGENOUS

Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants (IYECs)

Linked to Job Network providers, IYECs work with Indigenous youth to encourage a successful transition from school through work and further vocational education and training. Funding of \$13.1 million over four years from 2004-05 to 2007-08 through DEWR, for up to 30 consultants.

Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP)

Provides unemployed Indigenous people with activities designed to meet community needs, develop participants' skills and improve their employability in order to assist them to move into employment outside the CDEP. These activities can also lead to the development of business enterprises. CDEP accounts for around one quarter of Indigenous employment (32,000-37,000 participants). Participants can be on CDEP for a maximum of 12 months.

Indigenous Employment Centres (IECs)

Provides assistance to participants in CDEP to help them move into other employment. Assistance includes job search skills, training, work experience, help to find a job and to access support services and ongoing mentoring and support including post-employment. 33 IECs are operating, funded through DEWR.

Indigenous Youth Mobility Program (IYMP)

Part of the national *Indigenous Australians Opportunity and Responsibility* commitment, \$23.1 million has been allocated over four years commencing 2006 through DEST, to provide at least 600 young people from remote Australia with training and employment opportunities in major centres. It also includes mentoring support and accommodation.

National Indigenous Cadetship Program (NICP)

The National Indigenous Cadetship Program is a collaboration between DEWR and participating agencies. NICP links Indigenous students with employers to gain work skills and professional employment. Students must be undertaking approved full time study. Since 1999-2000, there have been 682 commencements. In 2003-04, there were 219 commencements, 36% with the private sector.

Structured Training and Employment Project (STEP)

STEP provides flexible funding through DEWR, for projects that lead to sustainable employment for Indigenous job seekers. Assistance is tailored to business needs and can, for example, include funding for apprenticeships, mentoring and other innovative approaches. In the year ending March 2005, there were 4,340 commencements.

STATE/TERRITORY

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Young Adults at Risk - Developing Skills (YARDS)

For those at risk of not completing Year 10, long-term unemployed people aged 18-25 years or exiting the justice system. YARDS provides individual case management that includes personal, educational and social support.

School-Based New Apprenticeship Program (SNAP)

Employs young people who are completing a part-time traineeship while completing Years 10-11. SNAP programs operate for 18-24 months, with at least one day each week in on-the-job training and a minimum of three hours training with a Registered Training Organisation.

Training Pathways Guarantee (TPG)

Young people who have not found work or enrolled in further education or training a year after leaving school are guaranteed 12 months vocational training under this program.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Skills Gap Training Program

Provides intensive training in areas of identified skills shortage, targeting young people who are long-term unemployed. The NSW Department of Education and Training, with Commonwealth funding assistance, also offers a school-based part-time traineeship program.

Links to Learning: Helping Early Leavers Program

Links to Learning is aimed at young people aged 12-24 years who are at risk of leaving school early or have left school and are unemployed. It offers participants innovative and creative activities within informal learning settings and aims to link them back to education and training. Local strategies are developed that are responsive to the needs of young people in the area.

Gateways

School-based early intervention program to improve retention rates for students in government schools in disadvantaged metropolitan or regional areas of NSW.

Plan-It Youth Community Mentoring Program

Matches TAFE trained mentors with young people who are at risk of leaving school early. Mentors help them plan education or training and employment pathways and provide support with personal or relationship issues.

Priority Communities Program

Funding for over 220 apprenticeships primarily in carpentry/joinery and landscaping.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Employer Incentive Scheme

Government incentives are provided to businesses to encourage them to employ apprentices in skills shortage areas.

Tangentyere Job Shop

Indigenous operated Job Network and Personal Support Program provider. It partners with Job Futures, based in Alice Springs. 90% of clients have been classed by Centrelink as highly disadvantaged. It has strong links with the local community, government and business and provides a comprehensive range of services and supports.

Footprints Forward Inc (Alice Springs)

Links Indigenous school students with paid work experience and employment, promotes cultural understanding and provides mentoring support and pre-employment training for employees and employers.

QUEENSLAND

Breaking the Cycle Program

This is an umbrella for a range of programs. 57% of participants are aged 15-24 years.

Get Set for Work funds partners, including schools, community organisations and local authorities, to assist those aged 15-17 years who are at risk of leaving school early, together with early school leavers who are unemployed or have minimal employment, to engage in education, training or employment (\$18.9 million 2004-07).

Youth Training Incentives provides business subsidies for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in rural and remote areas of Queensland. A total of \$4,000 is provided per student and 2,100 students will be assisted by 2006/07.

Community Jobs Program offers paid work placements for three to six months, training and employment assistance.

First Start Program is an employment program providing 2,400 public sector traineeships within state, local and non government and community organisations at a cost of \$30.9 million (2004-05).

Start Up provides funding for disadvantaged young people to purchase work related clothing and equipment. The \$300,000 initiative provides up to \$300 per person.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Youth Traineeships

State Government subsidies to local government to employ trainees and apprentices (aged 17-24). A higher incentive payment is attached for people who are long-term unemployed, Indigenous, have a disability, are under guardianship, or for regional or locational disadvantage.

Youth Cadetship Pilot

Provides employment in the South Australian public sector. Eligibility criteria is Year 12 or vocational training participant/graduate.

Youth Employment Program

Provides nine Youth Development Officers to work with young unemployed people to help them overcome barriers to employment.

Youth Conservation Corps

Young people aged 15-24 years who are unemployed or under-employed obtain work experience and skills, through part-time voluntary work on projects to conserve natural and cultural heritage.

Learn to Earn

Helps young people (16-24) to develop employment and life skills. Priority is for those who have left school early, are unemployed or have insecure employment. Participants work on community-based projects, and are provided with career counselling and services that boost their industry specific, literacy and numeracy skills. Participants who successfully complete the program receive a Certificate II in Vocational Education and Training.

TASMANIA

Youth Recruitment Program

State Government Departments offer fixed term or permanent positions to young people and a range of employment incentives to small business to employ extra staff.

Youth Learning Officers (YLOs)

YLOs work intensively with students identified as being at risk of disengaging from education and training, helping them make post-Year 10 destination choices. They also assist students to identify and address barriers that may prevent them from achieving their post-Year 10 goals.

Project U-Turn

A diversionary program for young people who have been involved in, or who are at risk of becoming involved in, motor vehicle theft. The core component is a ten-week automotive training course in car maintenance and body work, delivered in a workshop environment. Other components include case management and personal development; links to employment and further education; recreational activities; literacy and numeracy education; road safety education and post-course support. Due to the program's success, it is now funded by the Tasmanian government with support from public and local stakeholders. In other states, U-Turn is jointly funded by the Australian Government's National Crime Prevention Program and the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council.

VICTORIA

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

Available to students in Years 11 and 12. It emphasises practical learning and mixes part-time work with school. An example of VCAL is a program operated by RMIT University at its digital design hub, the Lab 3000 Incubator. In 2003, 14 VCAL students worked with Lab 3000 on 'real world' design projects.

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN)

A network of over 30 LLENs bring schools, local education providers, businesses and community agencies together to create educational opportunities and provide encouragement and support for students at risk of leaving school early and not enrolled in further education or training or in secure employment.

Jobs for Young People

A one-off subsidy of \$9,000 per participant is available for New Apprenticeships (apprenticeships or traineeships) in local government organisations. Approximately 275 people have participated each year over four years.

Youth Employment Scheme (YES)

Apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities within the public sector for those aged 15-24. Provides a one-off wage subsidy of up to \$4,500 for a full time or part time trainee, up to \$7,500 over three years for a full time apprentice, or up to \$1,800 for School-Based New Apprenticeships.

Indigenous Tertiary Scholarship Program

The Department of Infrastructure offers scholarships for students undertaking relevant university undergraduate studies and diploma level studies in related fields.

Community Jobs Program (CJP)

Supports community organisations, local government and agencies to employ local jobseekers on community projects, particularly in communities that are disadvantaged or have high unemployment.

Indigenous Secondary School Partnership

Offers students work experience placements with the State Government.

Priority Education and Training Program (PETP)

Targets disengaged youth and also Indigenous people, and people with disabilities. It provides training for those who are not apprentices or trainees, in skills and regions that have been identified as industry and/or Victorian Government priorities.

Workforce Participation Partnerships

Provides sustainable jobs for Victorians who face barriers to employment and assist employers to meet their skill and labour needs. Young people are among the target groups and the program places them into sustainable employment. It also provides case management services and better use of existing resources, programs and infrastructure.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Public Sector Clerical Traineeships

Public Sector Clerical Traineeships help Indigenous young people under 25 years to gain skills and knowledge for entry level clerical jobs.

The Youth Skills Investment Initiative

Allows current employees to access training and achieve a qualification.

Employment Directions Network (EDN)

One-stop-shop established throughout Western Australia, some providing youth specific job search advice, training and career development.

School Leaver Program (EDN delivered)

Provides school leavers in Years 10-12 with careers advice, information and support on appropriate post-school placement.

LOCAL

Unilever World of Work (NSW)

Provides long term unemployed young people with 13 weeks of full-time work, training and a mentor. Participants are paid a real wage and work the same hours as other employees.

ACULink (NSW)

An early-intervention program run by the Australian Catholic University, to improve the awareness of students from socially and economically disadvantaged areas about post-secondary education and training. It operates across five Catholic secondary schools in Sydney's outer west and works with students from Year 8 onwards.

The No Dole Program

Developed by the Beacon Foundation (TAS), the program is for secondary students, generally those in Year 10, to help them gain an understanding about careers, the workplace and appropriate employment skills. Partnerships between businesses, the local community and education are critical elements in the program's success. Participants sign a voluntary commitment to pursue positive pathways through education, training and work. The program provides career information and support and links students to employers for mentoring, work experience and for careers advice. Forty-two schools across Australia ran the program in 2005.

Education and Parenting (VIC)

Corio Bay Secondary College (VIC) offers young parents, generally females, programs and facilities that respond to their educational and parenting needs. The College is one of only two schools in the country to provide on-site childcare to support young parents who might otherwise disengage from schooling. The school also employs a dedicated parent support worker.

Youth Education Centre (SA)

Initially a POEM pilot, the Youth Education Centre is state funded and assists those who have left school early and have poor literacy/numeracy skills; behaviour issues that prevent them from attending mainstream education; disengaged from family and are possibly homeless; drug and alcohol issues; or are young parents. Programs include personal support, education and training, and employment support. A new mentoring program for businesses willing to work with severe risk young people and provide work experience was launched in 2005. Programs are delivered at a wide variety of sites and locations, including remote communities.

Woolaning Homeland Christian College (NT)

A pilot project funded by DEST, the boarding school is self-managed within a community management governance model. The building was designed with local input and built by Indigenous trainees who achieved their Certificate II in Construction. Prior to the opening in 2002, there were 700 local children of secondary school age and only 11 were attending regularly. In 2005, there were 60 enrolments and 10 students graduated into Year 10. Young people from the region attend during the week and return home to their communities at weekends.

Regional Environmental Employment Program (REEP) Bendigo and Shepparton (VIC)

Operated by Mission Australia, REEP aims to combat youth unemployment, help the environment and build community partnerships in rural Victoria. Trainees earn a wage whilst undertaking formal training in Conservation and Land Management, working on environmental projects for local authorities and also for a private employer. The 12 month program leads to an accredited Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management and provides a direct stream into the Diploma of Conservation and Land Management.

Great Alternative Program (GAP) (QLD)

An annex of Urangan State High School designed to assist young people at risk of not completing Year 10. The program incorporates literacy and numeracy and a wide variety of learning experiences such as living skills, welding, spray-painting, nutrition, drug awareness programs, health education, metal art and basic mechanical skills. Classes are undertaken in an informal setting and the program works closely with community bodies to re-engage students into further education or other options.

Flat Track Flexi (FTF) WA

Fast Track Flexi provides education to a growing group of 16-21 year olds isolated from mainstream education through behaviour, circumstance or health issues. Students work at their own pace on a set curriculum that is available on-line. FTF uses the principles of student centred learning to provide an adult learning environment.

There are a significant number of programs targeting young people in transition, however their geographical patchwork coverage is evident from the above list. Of equal significance is the lack of coverage of the diversity of young people articulated in the Youth Employment Participation Continuum snapshot. Most programs target the 'precarious engagement' or 'disengaging' groups with few targeting the most marginalised.

Best practice

Mission Australia's research on young people in transition has identified a range of Australian and international best practice initiatives, grouped together under the following streams:

1. Integrated youth transition support
2. Innovative education and training provisions
3. Labour market initiatives
4. Intensive youth support.

These initiatives address what the research has identified as the particular needs of young people and a number specifically focus on the most marginalised. Many of them involve government, community and business partnerships and respond flexibly and comprehensively to the multiple needs of young people. Some of these initiatives are national in scope (eg New Deal), however the vast majority are relatively small local initiatives, often with an insecure funding base.

Stream 1: Integrated youth transition support

Macarthur Youth Commitment, New South Wales

This whole-of-community response is a partnership of relevant organisations and local, state and federal government departments, with the common goal that all young people in the region have the appropriate skills and capacities to participate in the market place. It particularly focuses on young people at risk of exiting school before completing Year 12 or an equivalent level of education or training and aims to develop methods to assist these young people in the transition from school to work or training. Includes a range of initiatives: Transition brokers; a resource kit for school leavers; and the documenting of local youth demography, youth services and data on participation in education, training and employment. Similar youth commitments have been established in other parts of Australia.

Learning Unlimited, South Australia

Mission Australia, in partnership with young people, local communities, government departments and schools has developed *Learning Unlimited*, a cluster of services and programs for young people who have disengaged or at risk of disengaging from their communities and their education.

The programs include accredited and non-accredited content and address issues such as bullying, personal development and resilience training, numeracy and literacy. It targets students who are experiencing difficulties transitioning between year levels, students who are under the age of 16 and have left or are at risk of leaving school, and those who are over the age of compulsory attendance and require additional assistance to develop job preparation and employment skills.

Off campus programs offer accredited schooling to young people who need an alternative to mainstream school life. Delivered from community settings they provide a bridge, enabling young people to complete their studies and to find a sense of purpose for the future.

Visy Cares Centre One Stop Shop, Victoria

The Centre in Dandenong provides a broad suite of more than twenty services for young people aged 12-25 years living in the region. Young people can obtain specialist advice and referral on areas such as employment, careers and job applications, housing, legal matters and finances. Training and workshops on employment and job skills training, parenting skills, and entrepreneurial activities are conducted. An on site health care service provides counselling for drug and alcohol, depression, suicide, sexual assault, and care and support for young mothers. The Centre also provides space for youth oriented activities and meetings.

Rumbalara Football Netball Club, Victoria

Rumbalara refers to the Indigenous community in the Goulburn Valley area of Victoria. The Rumbalara Football Netball Club which has been operating since 1997, acts as a meeting place for the region's Indigenous young people and their families. While sport is the primary attraction, its aim is to encourage healthy lifestyles, encourage cultural pride and cultural awareness and encourage acceptance of Aboriginal people within the wider community. A leadership/mentoring program recruits and trains members of the senior teams to become community leaders and to act as role models and mentors for young people. Evaluation of the club's programs has shown that involvement with juvenile justice, substance misuse and youth suicide decrease markedly among young people who are active within the club.

Safety net for teenagers, Denmark

Municipalities are legally required to follow up all young people under 20 who leave education without a qualification. The identification extends beyond unemployed young people to those who are in insecure work. Youth Guidance Service personal advisers or mentors work with young people to develop a personal action plan which can include work, education or training. The young person must have two interviews a year to check progress and benefits are conditional on evidence that they are undertaking the plan.

New Deal for 18-24 year olds, United Kingdom

The New Deal program is a key part of the Blair Government's Welfare to Work strategy. It is mandatory for young jobseekers aged 18-24 years who have registered as unemployed for six months or more. A Personal Adviser helps each jobseeker find work or improve their education and skills. If they have not found employment within three to six months, New Deal participants receive a package of full-time support, which can include work experience, training and courses, interview practice and other practical assistance.

Youth Employment Strategy (YES), Canada

YES focuses on providing work experience opportunities for people aged 15-30 years. Introduced in 2003, YES has three main strands: *Skills Link* funds community organisations and employers to provide work experience opportunities; the *Summer Work Experience* program helps secondary and post secondary students find summer jobs; and *Careers Focus* helps post secondary graduates develop advanced skills and establish careers in their chosen field.

Stream 2: Innovative education and training provisions

There are a range of system wide reforms that aim to bridge the gap between academic and practical studies, increase exposure to work and increase school and business links. There is a strong emphasis on retention and return to study.

Gatehouse Project, Victoria

This project of the Centre for Adolescent Health in Melbourne, commenced in 1997 with a focus on the role of schools in promoting adolescent emotional wellbeing and the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, depression and suicide. Research was undertaken at selected schools in Victoria to identify issues related to students' family and social connections, emotional wellbeing, substance use and behaviours that impact on health and wellbeing. Each school, with assistance from Gatehouse staff, used the findings to tailor intervention strategies and curriculum for all students, ranging from developing a caring, trusting and supportive school environment through to addressing bullying behaviours. Subsequent activities have been the dissemination of information to schools about the influence of social environments on adolescent health and wellbeing and strategies and processes that can help to bring about change in individuals and school cultures. Gatehouse also collaborates on other school-based projects such as drug education, support for students at risk of disconnecting from school and promoting mental health.

Production Schools, Denmark

Young people who are unemployed longer than three months must accept an 'activation offer' which requires them to spend 30 hours each week in a program that helps them find work. Delivered through local government, initiatives include subsidised employment in private or public enterprises and Production Schools, which focus on upgrading basic skills and knowledge of participants. Over 100 Production Schools each service 20-40 people who are unemployed or have not yet completed their formal education in 6-12 month programs. Two thirds of Production School participants are aged 18-23 years. Young people in Years 8-10 are also able to enter for short stays.

Maturite Professionelle, Switzerland

Students are able to study for a double qualification – namely an apprenticeship and a tertiary qualification. Under this arrangement students attend school-based learning two days per week and can complete their apprenticeship, usually four years, and then proceed to higher education studies.

Cooperative Education Studies, North America

In Canada and the United States quite large numbers of upper secondary vocational study students undertake practical studies in enterprises – 12 weeks in the first year, followed by at least 16 in the second of three years. The students are paid and the enterprise receives a tax credit or subsidy of up to 40% of the student's salary. Key benefits are thought to be the opportunity for ongoing work, making school based studies more relevant and motivating

for students. It also increases links between teachers and enterprises through visits and liaison responsibilities.

Individual Upper Secondary Learning Program, Sweden

An individual learning program is provided in addition to the two general and 14 vocational programs in post compulsory education in Sweden. The program is geared towards the 10% of students who enrol in upper secondary schooling and have weaker results in Swedish, English and maths. Students can remain in the program for three years but it is intended to be a stepping stone back into mainstream study and approximately 60% return to a standard national program.

Dubbo Leadership & Cultural Development Program, NSW

The Program is for young Indigenous students and assists them to develop leadership skills, cultural awareness and remain at school. Students in Years 8 and 9 from local Junior High Schools participate in educational, vocational, cultural and fun activities. Community members engage informally with students to build their trust and confidence. A camp program contributes to increasing their cultural understanding, developing positive relationships with Elders and improving their interpersonal skills.

Ntec Manufacturing and Technology Centre, Victoria

The Ntec facility was developed alongside Northland Secondary College to improve the employment and further education and training opportunities and outcomes of students at the College and other schools in the region that deliver Vocational Education and Training programs. Ntec was a response to a shortage of workers with relevant manufacturing and technology skills and the community's desire to increase long term, full-time employment opportunities for young people and other job-seekers. The Centre also targets Indigenous students (who comprise 25% of the school population), female students and students at risk who are generally underrepresented in manufacturing and technology.

Stream 3: Labour market initiatives

There are a number of work creation projects with a strong focus on disadvantaged people including young people, long term unemployed, homeless people and people with disabilities.

YP4, Victoria

This is a three year trial which began in 2005 and aims to achieve sustainable outcomes for young people in four areas - employment, housing, health and personal development. It is based at four sites in Melbourne and regional Victoria, and participants include 240 homeless jobseekers aged between 18 and 35, with half aged 18 to 25, and receiving Newstart or Youth Allowance. Key objectives are to pool available resources and deliver services in more joined up ways. Each participant receives the equivalent of a living wage. The annual budget cost per client is \$11,500 including evaluation costs. Three quarters comes from the pooling of existing employment, program and income support funds. Employment opportunities are in catering and hospitality, business reception/cleaning/

security/sales, landscaping and maintenance, child care and personal and aged care.

Rubicon Programs, United States

Provides work, housing and education support to disadvantaged people including young people with a special focus on mental illness. Assists participants into health care and biotechnology work placements and runs a bakery and landscaping business. The program partners with local community colleges to provide industry specific vocational training.

Group Terre Enterprises, Belgium

This is a long established community based social enterprise that creates jobs through the salvaging and sale of textiles and paper as well as the manufacturing and installation of insulation and partition panels. It has a strong focus on long term unemployed young people. The model has been replicated in Spain, Portugal, France and England.

Stream 4: Intensive youth support

Programs catering to young people with severe social and personal challenges but seeking to reconnect them to ongoing work.

Creative Youth Initiatives, New South Wales

This inner city Sydney service run by Mission Australia, provides a highly specialised and supportive learning environment for young people aged 16-24 years who are homeless or marginalized. Many of the 30-40 young people who attend the six-month program have severe mental health, financial and personal health issues. The key focus is on creative learning, working with others and rebuilding their lives. Programs designed to engage them in music, photography, art and other disciplines are offered.

Miller Live 'N' Learn Campus, New South Wales

This pilot project provides accommodation and life skills and training opportunities for young people aged 16-25 years at risk of being homeless but with low support needs. Accommodation is provided in bedsits in a Department of Housing complex in the western Sydney municipality of Liverpool.

Triple Care Farm, New South Wales

Triple Care Farm is a holistic residential alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation program for young people aged between 16 and 24 years. This specialist three month

program assists young people to address complex alcohol and other drug issues, homelessness, mental illness, abuse and trauma, in a rural setting in the NSW Southern Highlands. The program offers individual and group counselling, case management support, accredited and non accredited vocational training, music, arts and media programs and trade programs. The program also offers six months of aftercare support as program participants re-enter the community.

TRACE Trajets d'accès à l'emploi or Pathways to Jobs, France

This is an outreach community-based program that provides stable employment to young people who have left education with few or no qualifications. Many participants have been outside school for over three years. Participants meet a counsellor each fortnight and usually receive multiple services including financial and health care assistance, public funded training, and part time work.

Conclusion

There are a significant number of programs targeting young people in transition. However the approach is quite fragmented, particularly for those who are most marginalised. The evidence exists for successful models which assist these young people. These models need to be implemented more broadly within a national integrated strategic framework.

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Mission Australia's vision is to spread the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and meet human need.

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YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION CONTINUUM



Mission Australia

Participation continuum

Young people today are often faced with significant personal, labour market and economic challenges.

- Do they have the support of family and friends?
- Do they have the skills to obtain work in a market which is increasingly segmented into high or low skilled jobs?
- Do they have the personal attributes and resilience to address life's challenges and barriers?

The vast majority of young Australians can answer 'yes' to these questions. By the time they reach their mid twenties they have developed solid foundations for social and economic participation. They have a range of options and achievable aspirations.

Others experience a degree of difficulty and may need support and extra time before they eventually negotiate the transition.

A small but significant group experience even more turbulent times and broken transitions and it is this group that Mission Australia is particularly concerned about. Their foundations for adulthood are shaky and their capacity to actively shape their future is extremely limited. Minor interventions and extra time will have little impact on improving their outcomes. Unlike their contemporaries, they are a long way from social and economic participation and are at risk of long term exclusion.

Why is the journey easier and more direct for the majority of young people and yet fraught with problems and obstacles for others? This snapshot, focusing on the 'participation continuum', examines the factors that play a critical role in developing young people's resilience and their capacity to successfully negotiate the transition to a fulfilling and rewarding adult life.

Foundations for social and economic participation

Mission Australia has identified nine factors which play a critical role in the transition journey.

1. Connectedness

Family is the primary place where children experience care and behaviours are learnt. At school age contacts broaden, enabling young people to make choices about who they want as friends and associates. Later on, networks are extended through work and new family formations.

In recent times, major shifts have occurred within family structures. In 2001, there were 368,000 lone parent families with children aged 15-24 years. This is estimated to reach 430,000 in the next 20 years (ABS, 2005).

The impacts of these changes do not necessarily translate to dysfunction within families. However, for some young people the experience of family is not always positive. Apart from separation, divorce and new partnering, families may be dealing with one or a mix of issues such as physical and mental health problems, unemployment and financial stress, or alcohol and drug use. The effect of such pressures can either solidify family relationships, or create conflict and possibly lead to family breakdown. When family/social relationships are strained or broken, young people can be faced with situations that are overwhelming, risky and possibly life threatening.

2. Physical and mental wellbeing

Young people are one of the healthiest groups of Australians – two-thirds of them report their own physical and emotional health as excellent or very good (AIHW, 1999). They are an active group who participate in their communities and their levels of illness are generally low (Commonwealth Government, Living Choices website).

However an AIHW (2003) survey found almost one in ten rated their health as either poor or fair. This group of young people have higher rates of early school leaving and unemployment. They are also more likely to measure their quality of life as 'mostly dissatisfied/unhappy/terrible'.

3. Social and emotional resilience

Young people who feel loved, valued and respected generally have a healthy measure of confidence, self esteem and motivation and are better prepared for the transition to adulthood, knowing that advice and support are there if needed. As their reference points expand beyond home

and family, they learn to interact, express opinions and negotiate and resolve issues.

Without these capacities, young people's sense of self is likely to be poorly developed and their ability to make choices and decisions about their lives is impeded. They may feel self-doubt, anger and lack motivation. They are likely to be far removed from participation in employment, their social engagement is restricted and they may begin to develop behaviours that compound their existing problems and impact on the broader community.

4. Affordable, secure housing

Most people have a space to call home where they eat, sleep, socialise, can be alone or contactable, feel safe, keep possessions or can have a pet. When access to housing is unstable or restricted, all aspects of life are negatively affected and young people in particular are exposed to multiple risks. On any given night in Australia, around 100,000 people are homeless and one quarter are young people (Chamberlain and McKenzie, 2003).

Young people who are no longer living at home and are unable to afford or access secure housing have limited options. If they are eligible for public housing, they may be subject to long waiting lists. Supported accommodation is available for those in need of emergency accommodation and has no age restrictions, but is generally short term and demand far outstrips supply. As a result, young people can become transient, staying with friends or acquaintances ('couch surfing') or sleeping rough and forced to shelter in squats, cars or public places, and part of the 'hidden' homeless.

5. Appropriate education and training

Full-time participation in education or training is critical to ensure young people are equipped for a successful transition to secure work and independence. Despite this, some young people continue to leave school early. Research by Lamb et al (2004: 13) found that 42.5% left because they had or wanted a job; 35% had schooling problems associated with achievement and motivation; 16% left for personal, family or other reasons; and 3.5% felt staying would not improve their job prospects.

Young people may leave school early to take up an apprenticeship or traineeship. However, others have difficulty finding or maintaining employment or lack the confidence, motivation or support to get a toehold into work. According to Teese and Polese (2003:133) "completing school has become an economic necessity for most young people". Successful entry into what has become a very competitive labour market is strongly dependent on the acquisition of the appropriate mix of academic credentials, training and employability skills.

For those young people who lack them, career and other life choices are likely to contract rather than expand.

They drop out, struggle to find work (or give up), and neglect or reject the vocational training options that would help them on the road to independence.

...The decision to quit (school) is a gamble they will continue to pay for, for the rest of their lives, counting on the market to find them the place they could not find at school (Teese and Polese 2003: pp149-150).

6. Employability skills

There is broad agreement that all young people need a set of personal attributes and skills that prepare them for both employment and further learning. Ongoing employability is dependent on having a set of relevant skills, as well as a capacity for ongoing learning (Department of Education Science and Training, 2002).

The Employability Skills Framework developed by The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry identifies a range of skills that employees require. These capacities include the ability to: communicate; work in a team; problem solve; plan and organise; continue to learn; initiate and be enterprising; self-manage; and embrace technology (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, 2003).

Most young people will be at different stages of developing these skills. They will develop them further through: interaction with family, friends and community, participation in school and further education and employment.

However, young people who are disconnected from family and education are at risk of failing to develop these skills to an appropriate level. They struggle in their day to day interactions and face significant barriers to employment and general wellbeing.

7. Rewarding and secure employment

Structural and technological changes in the labour market have re-enforced that highly skilled and innovative individuals have greater opportunities to obtain rewarding, well paid and secure work.

Cully (2003) noted that many traditional entry points into full time work have either disappeared or been professionalised and that the introduction of knowledge driven systems and processes has resulted in a 'hollowing out' of middle level jobs in areas such as the public, financial and clerical sectors, and nursing.

There has also been a growth in jobs that Cully suggests are 'a product of affluence', most noticeably in retail, hospitality and personal services (eg cleaning, gardening etc).

Much of this work is part-time or casual, less secure and low skilled with commensurate pay rates. The past two decades has seen a tripling in the number of young adults in part-time work and more than a doubling of teenagers; while full-time employment for both these groups has declined (ABS, 2005c). There is less likely to be an ongoing relationship with employers or a clear sense of a career path.

Secure and rewarding employment brings economic and social benefits for the individual and society generally. Unemployment and under-employment, especially when they become entrenched, place a young person at risk of disengagement and marginalisation. The effects of unemployment include lost social networks, poverty, poor health and anti-social behaviours.

Youth unemployment remains 5% higher than for the overall rate (ABS, 2005c). Australia risks an entrenched group of unemployed young people becoming increasingly distanced from participation.

8. Financial security

Financial security is a critical element of independence and adulthood. It influences choices and plans and affects when/if a person can borrow for a home, have children and engage socially. For those without financial security, choices become extremely limited; life is more circumspect and about day to day survival. According to a study of people with low incomes:

A lack of financial resources reduced their choices and opportunities in life and led to a range of interconnecting problems including poor housing, limited access to health services, lower levels of nutrition, reduced social participation, poorer educational outcomes and reduced employment opportunities (Saunders et al 2006: 7).

Young people without financial security will not be able to engage in all aspects of society and risk missing out on the opportunity to plan their future with confidence.

9. Aspirations/goals

The United Nations' Youth Agenda includes the following principles for all young people:

- They have aspirations and want to participate fully in the lives of their societies.
- They should live under conditions that encourage their imagination, ideals, energy and vision to flourish to the benefit of their societies.

Having aspirations and goals allows young people to feel they have some control over their lives. Aspirations and goals are influenced by a range of factors such as ability, ambition, knowledge and finances. They may also be impacted by obstacles such as low confidence and motivation.

A study of students from Years 10-12 involved in the Learning for Life program (for children from disadvantaged families and communities), found most were optimistic about further education and the world of work and believed their future would not be affected by their background. 80% believed that by age 25 they would have the job they most wanted and less than 1% expected to be unemployed (Beavis et al, 2005). However, the same study highlighted potential hurdles for around 14% of the students who had underestimated the level of education they required for their preferred job.

Most concerning was the pessimism of those who assessed themselves as poor students.

They were more likely not to know what they wanted to do, or if they do, to be less likely to know how to get their preferred job. They were more likely to expect that they will not get their preferred job. They were more likely to expect to be unemployed (Beavis et al 2005: 62).

The continuum of social and economic participation

The above factors come into play at different stages and to varying degrees in the transition journey. Table 1 categorises young people across a participation continuum using the nine factors. It provides a generalised indication of where young people might be at any point in time but also recognises that where they fit can vary over time.

At one end of the continuum ('fully engaged/actively engaging') are young people who have generally achieved, or are close to achieving, a successful transition. In the main, the factors are woven together to form a strong foundation and the young people participate in society to a degree that satisfies them.

Further along the continuum ('precarious engagement') are young people who may have had problems at home or school or with finding a stable job. However, with support and early intervention they are capable of negotiating their way, albeit more circuitously and having taken a little longer.

Young people who are the most distant from social and economic participation ('disengaging/marginalised') are often the ones with whom Mission Australia and similar organisations come into contact. They are dealing with a complex mix of issues such as family conflict and breakdown, early school leaving, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, poor mental health and experience of the justice system or state care. They live at the margins, managing to survive but ill-equipped and generally unable to stabilise or improve their personal circumstances. Their choices are limited and likely to remain so without appropriate professional intervention.

Table 1: Participation Continuum

Factors influencing participation	Fully Engaged	Actively Engaging	Precarious Engagement		Disengaging	Marginalised
			Participating	Limited Participation		
Connectedness 15-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable and supportive family and friends Leadership roles Socially active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable and supportive family and friendships Socially active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from either family or friends Socially engaged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some family conflict Other social support if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family conflict and some breakdown Reducing social network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little family contact Peers experiencing similar personal difficulties Isolated, alone
Physical and mental wellbeing 15-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good health Ready access to appropriate treatment Some level of anxiety and stress 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor/periodic health issues Reasonable access to treatment but not necessarily early intervention Higher level of anxiety and stress 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untreated health problems Emerging risk taking behaviour Depression Substance misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor physical health and neglect Substance addiction Depression and/or self harming Anti social behaviour
Social and emotional resilience 15-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident Motivated and enthusiastic Flexible, capacity to adapt Positive self image 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally confident Some self doubt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack assurance Self doubting Frustrated and lack fulfillment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low self esteem and self worth Low morale; demoralised Anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very low level of social and emotional resilience Low self esteem and self worth Low morale; demoralised Anger
Affordable, secure housing 15-19 years 20-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living at home Possibly still living at home Secure and affordable independent or shared accommodation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living at home but in some cases would prefer independent living Living at home due to finances Independent or shared accommodation but periodic returns to home due to cost, insecure renting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have precarious living arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transient Living with other family members, friends Periodically at home Experience of child protection or being in care Living with other family members, friends Seeking to establish separate housing but not yet successful Government / agency housing Some contact with police/courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless, living rough or in supported accommodation Transient In or exiting juvenile justice, child protection Experience of being in care In or exiting prison Homeless, living rough or in supported accommodation Intensive treatment facility
Appropriate education and training 15-19 years 20-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 12 Tertiary/post graduate study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 12 or equivalent Tertiary /further education Tertiary/further education qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early school leaver Completed Yr 12 – but may not have clear plan Average literacy and numeracy skills TAFE/training May have commenced or be considering further education/training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early school leaver Below average literacy or numeracy skills Short term plans May be considering further education/training May be considering further education/training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early school leaver and not in education/training No clear plans Basic or below literacy and numeracy Not studying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below Year 9 standard Persistent low achievement and academic failure Disengaged from education and training

Table 1: Participation Continuum continued

Factors influencing participation	Fully Engaged	Actively Engaged	Precarious Engagement		Disengaging	Marginalised
			Participating	Limited Participation		
Employability Skills 15-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well organised and self-managing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised but needs some support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires direction and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reacts poorly to real/perceived pressure Requires intensive support and direction 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very good/excellent communication skills 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some communication difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has difficulty communicating 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity to work co-operatively in a team Capacity to resolve problems 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can work in a team May have difficulty resolving conflict or problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have difficulty working in a team May have difficulty resolving conflict or problems 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology skills including advanced school based/ tertiary qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology skills including formal qualifications and school based experience 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some technology skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal technology skills qualifications, but may have informally acquired skills 	
Rewarding and secure employment 15-19 years 20-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combining work/study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combining work/ study Secure full time employment Advanced service work, trades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combining work/study Apprenticeship / traineeship Available for work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some difficulty finding work Periodic unemployment Casual work and/or intermittent part-time work Full time work – may be low skilled, low paid, insecure May need intensive course or training to get them job ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to establish themselves in labour market Unemployed 6-12 months Significant skill deficits including literacy, communication, and personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed 12 months plus No steady work history Not job ready and a long way from active labour market participation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combining work/study May have commenced high skilled, well paid work In high demand 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combining work/study Apprenticeship / traineeship Available for work 			
Financial security 15-19 years 20-24 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family financial support May have some income 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family financial support May have some income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family dependent, some government support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government allowance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government allowance May have no income at all
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family financial support May have part time income In or on track for high skill, full time employment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At or below minimum wage Family financial support if needed Minimal savings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low income Some government assistance No savings Some debt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermittent income Government allowance or pension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government allowance or pension May have no income at all Significant debts or fines
Aspirations/goals 15-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational success Career and salary satisfaction Many job opportunities Travel plans Relationship/family Home ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational success Career and salary satisfaction Job opportunities Travel plans Relationship/family Home ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further training/study Home ownership (not assured) Family Relationship/family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding full time, secure work Living independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day to day survival Short term plans, goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day to day survival No plans, goals

Table 2: Participation Continuum

Table 2 identifies young people who are missing out to some degree in one or more of the nine factors influencing participation. A problem in one of the factors does not necessarily result in marginalisation or low social and economic participation.

Factors influencing participation	Who is missing out?
Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13% of 12-17 year olds surveyed in the National Mental Health Survey reported their family's ability to 'get along' was fair and 3% reported it as poor (AIHW, 2003). • There were 11,600 young people aged 10-17 years under care and protection orders in 2005 (AIHW,2006). • There were 5,176 people under 24 years of age in prisons across Australia in 2004. Of these, 4,854 were male and 322 female and 1,430 were Indigenous. There were 564 10-17 year olds in juvenile detention of whom 258 were Indigenous (ABS, 2004; Veld and Taylor, 2005).
Physical and mental wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 217,000 or 14% of young Australians aged 12-17 years experience a mental illness each year (AIHW, 2003). 75% of mental illnesses begin between the ages of 15 and 25 years (Hickie et al, 2004). • 6.4% of people with a disability (approximately 232,000) are aged 15-24 years (Land and Pitman, 2004). • In 1999-00, 3,300 14-17 year olds were hospitalised for alcohol related injury or disease and in the nine years to 2002, 100,000 15-24 year olds were similarly hospitalised (Chikritzhs and Pascal, 2004; Chikritzhs et al, 2004b). • Unemployed young people and those not in the labour force are 4.4 times more likely to die prematurely than young people who are employed or students (Muir et al, 2003) • 45% of Indigenous boys and 54% of Indigenous girls will live to 65 years, compared to 85% of non Indigenous boys and 89% of girls (HREOC website). • Approximately 388,800 young people under 26 years are caring for their parents and are at significant risk of isolation, health problems and poor education (FACSIA, 2002). • A study of young people in juvenile detention found that 84% reported symptoms consistent with a clinical mental illness; 19% of males and 24% of females had seriously considered suicide; and 90% used cannabis (Pritchard and Payne, 2005). • Among males 15 to 24 years, the rural suicide rate is more than double the metropolitan rate (HREOC website).
Social and emotional resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2003, 300 young Australians aged 15 to 24 years committed suicide (ABS, 2004b). • 14% of 15-24 year olds surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with 'feeling part of a community' (AIHW, 2003). • A survey of students in 26 schools found that 20% of Year 8 students reported poor social links (no one to talk to, no one to depend on) (RCHM). • A questionnaire completed by carers as part of the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey indicated 20.5% of Aboriginal young people were at high risk of clinically significant emotional or behavioural difficulties (Blair et al, 2005).
Affordable, secure housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 26,000 12-18 year olds are homeless each night and 46% of homeless Australians are aged under 25 years (Chamberlain and McKenzie, 2003). • One third (32,700) of clients of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program are aged 15-24 years. 37% are males and 63% are females (AIHW, 2006b). • 26% of Indigenous people aged 15 years and over live in overcrowded housing. In remote and very remote areas the rates are around 60% (SCRGSP, 2005). • High rents and housing affordability was the most important housing issue for 80% of 15 to 24 year olds living independently and receiving Commonwealth Rent Assistance (Burke et al, 2002). • 6,300 young people with acquired disabilities live in nursing homes for older people (DHA, 2004).
Appropriate education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79% of young people from high socio-economic background complete year 12 compared to 59% of those from low socio-economic background (MCEETYA, 2004). • Year 12 completion rates are 70% in metropolitan areas, 63% in provincial areas and 54% in remote areas (MCEETYA, 2004). • Year 12 completion rates for males are lower than for females (62% and 73% respectively) (MCEETYA, 2004). • Indigenous school participation rates have increased but Indigenous students are still half as likely to progress to Year 12 as non Indigenous students (ABS, 2005b). • Between two thirds and three quarters of homeless students do not complete the school year (DFYCC,1999). • One third of 15-24 year olds with a disability complete Year 12 compared to 53% of those without a disability (AIHW,2003). • A study of young people in juvenile detention found that 11% had not been in education past Grade 6 and 76% had stopped attending between Years 7 to 9. Almost 60% had been expelled (Pritchard and Payne, 2005).

Table 2: Participation Continuum continued

Factors influencing participation	Who is missing out?
Employability skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 9% of all students and 29% of Indigenous students did not achieve the reading benchmark in Year 7. 18% of all students and 48% of Indigenous students did not achieve the numeracy benchmark (MCEETYA, 2004). • 50% of Mission Australia Job Network managers identified low motivation as the most important contributor to unemployment amongst young clients (Mission Australia, 2006). • 83% of Mission Australia's Job Network managers indicated that less than 40% of their young clients were job ready (Mission Australia, 2006). • 16% of surveyed employers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'Senior secondary students are creative and have innovative ideas to contribute to business' (ACCI, 2003).
Rewarding and secure employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 212,000 Australians aged 15 to 24 years are unemployed and 54,800 of this group have been unemployed for longer than six months. • Indigenous young people experience unemployment at twice the rate of their non Indigenous counterparts. Labour force participation rates for young Indigenous women are 27% below their Indigenous male counterparts (SCRGSP, 2005). • 59% of young women and 21% of males who left school in Year 9 were unemployed seven years later (Applied Economics, 2002). • In 2001 half of Australia's youth unemployment was concentrated in 10% of Local Government areas and often in areas already experiencing economic and social disadvantage (ABS, unpublished 2001 Census data). • 212,800 15-24 year olds working part time want more hours (ABS, 2005).
Financial security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservatively, there were 145,000 young Australians aged 15-24 years living in poverty in 2000 (Mission Australia, 2003). • Between 1986 and 1997 the wealth of 15-24 year olds fell from \$17,000 to \$13,000 (NATSEM cited in Sydney Morning Herald 4 June, 2003). • Most young carers live in families experiencing financial hardship (Youth Coalition of the ACT, 2005).
Aspirations/goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey of students in Years 10-12 found that 31% of males and 17% of females viewed schools as a prison (Polesel and Helme, 2003). • A comparison of educational aspirations of Year 9 students found that 60% of Indigenous students intended to complete Year 12 compared to 75% of their non Indigenous counterparts. 15% were planning to leave early, 6% higher than for non Indigenous students (ACER, 2005). • Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are significantly less likely than other students to believe that a university course would offer them the chance of an interesting and rewarding career (James, 2002). • A survey of financially disadvantaged students in Years 11 and 12 found about a quarter underestimated the level of education required to achieve their preferred job (Beavis et al, 2006).

Conclusion

All young people are situated somewhere along the participation continuum (see Table 1), with movement between categories relatively common for those who are 'fully engaged' or 'actively engaging', because of their capacities in all or most of the participation factors.

The further away young people are from 'full engagement', the harder it is for them to move towards this level of engagement because of serious issues in all or many of the participation factors. For those in the 'precarious engagement' and 'disengaging' categories, some programs are in place to support them, with varying degrees of success.

However of greatest concern are those young people who are 'marginalised' and 'missing out' (see Tables 1 and 2). These young people are dealing with a complex range of personal problems, health issues and behavioural problems, with access to only ad hoc or possibly very limited support. Some for example, may not even have accessed available income support due to their very significant disengagement. They have major issues in all or most of the nine participation factors and require a multi-

layered support system which provides a surrounding network of assistance as they struggle to deal with their complex issues. The successful models for comprehensive and integrated support exist, but are extremely rare and frequently operating with a fragile financial base.

The personal cost for these young marginalised people is profound and potentially lifelong. Their immediate family and social relationships are strained or broken and the broader community is also affected. The community as a whole bears the financial costs of youth disengagement, through lost productivity and ongoing shortages of skilled workers, costs to the health and justice systems, as well as prolonged periods on welfare payments. There is also a social cost to the suburbs and regions that are characterised by an over-representation in unemployment and poverty.

The evidence exists for successful models which assist the most marginalised young people. Broader and more sustained implementation of such models will provide these young people with rewarding social and economic participation and reduce the potential long-term economic and social costs to the Australian community.

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Mission Australia's vision is to spread the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and meet human need.

Mission Australia is grateful to the Youth Strategy and Advocacy Group (YSAG) for their support in producing this publication.
YSAG, under the Chairmanship of Rupert Myer, supports research, advocacy and services for young people.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT BLUE-PRINT



Mission Australia

The first four Youth Employment snapshots – *Facts*, *Voices*, *Responses* and *Participation Continuum* – give an analysis of issues impacting on young people’s transition. They provide:

- A clear statistical picture of transition and its challenges (*Facts*)
- An opportunity to listen to the voices of young people and other stakeholders (*Voices*)
- A summary of policies and programs for young people in transition, including best practice (*Responses*)
- A comprehensive matrix identifying the key foundations for social and economic participation and an indication of the young people who are ‘missing out’ on some of these foundations (*Participation Continuum*).

The snapshots provide the foundations for the Blueprint to ensure young people have the opportunity to participate fully in the social and economic life of Australia. The intention of all recommendations is either to move young people towards the ‘fully engaged’ end of the *Participation Continuum* or to ensure young people who are already fully engaged remain so.

A. Principles of good practice

The actioning of strategic issues will be guided by the following principles:

1. Equal opportunity

All young people, regardless of gender, culture, social background or where they live, will have the opportunity for full social and economic participation.

2. Employability

Young people will have the opportunity to develop the skills – technical, personal and social - required to both gain employment and progress within an enterprise.

3. Entrepreneurship

Skills to identify and scope viable opportunities and enterprises will be fostered during formal schooling and in the post-school period, especially for early school leavers who experience transition difficulties.

4. Adaptability

Young people will have the opportunity to develop the skills to respond to a dynamic labour market.

5. Sustainability

Access to life-long learning and meaningful work will help young people develop and maintain a reliable engagement with the labour market, while achieving work/life balance.

B. Recommendations

Universal recommendations

• National Participation Agenda for Young People

The nine *Foundations for Social and Economic Participation* identified by this research highlight the critical need for an overarching policy framework - *A National Participation Agenda* - for young Australians.

The Agenda will ensure the framework for greater integration and coordination across the diverse portfolios, including health, education, employment, community services and juvenile justice, which impact on the wellbeing of young people.

The Agenda will drive initiatives across a comprehensive suite of interventions, including early intervention and prevention. *A National Participation Agenda for Young People* would be in line with, and draw on the learnings of, the recent development of National Agendas for Children and for Ageing.

• Better integration and holistic responses

Enhanced assessment and planning processes that integrate Federal, State and Local Governments’ policies and programs with the work of the non-Government, business and philanthropic sectors. All sectors need to work together more effectively using a *Participation Framework* to implement holistic policies and programs that meet the diversity of needs of young people.

This would ensure that maximum impact is achieved from the many initiatives that are currently underway to support young people such as the Commonwealth Government's *Headspace* initiative, the Victorian Government's *Local Learning and Employment Networks* and the local *No Dole Program*. Such integration should include clear funding and coordination responsibilities and accountability mechanisms.

- **Responses to reflect diversity of young people**

Programs and policies targeting young people to reflect and respond to their diversity and circumstances, including age, gender, cultural background, location and where they are on the *Participation Continuum*.

- **Responses across the spectrum**

Strategies for early intervention and prevention to be a key focus of all programs targeting young people, including education, community and employment programs. These should be complemented by targeted integrated interventions for young people who have become marginalised or are at risk of disengaging.

- **Council of Australian Governments' Agenda**

That in the further development of the COAG Human Capital Agenda, significant attention be given to the needs of young people across the *Participation Continuum*.

- **Youth friendly government services**

Mainstream services (eg employment, health, training, supported accommodation) should ensure their service delivery recognises the particular needs of young people.

- **Involvement of young people in developing strategies**

That young people be involved in all levels of the development and implementation of policies and programs which impact on them. This should include active and meaningful consultation with them.

- **Employability skills**

Strategies to enhance employability skills should be part of all programs that engage young people, including all levels of education, training and employment and community programs and activities. Skills development such as confidence building, decision making, problem solving and team working should be a key focus of these strategies.

- **Mentoring**

That there be an expansion of a diverse range of mentoring opportunities for young people, including innovative programs such as *Elevate*, the Mission Australia PricewaterhouseCoopers program and *Circles of Care*. *Elevate* is a leadership program for young people aged 14 to 19 years from diverse backgrounds. *Circles of Care* aims to

create within schools a supportive community that "is there" for the young person throughout their school career, and provide ongoing support, encouragement and advocacy.

- **Community participation**

Implement strategies that enhance the engagement of young people, especially young adults, in a broad range of community activities such as sport, arts/culture and volunteering. Mission Australia's 2006 *National Youth Survey* shows that only 42% of young adults participate in sport, compared to three quarters of 11 to 14 year olds.

- **Sources of advice and support**

That strategies for providing advice and support for young people incorporate the preferred sources identified by young people themselves.

Mission Australia's annual *National Youth Survey* has consistently identified the top three sources of advice and support for young people as friends, parents and relatives/family friends.

- **Schools and non government organisations' interface**

Schools and community, employment and training organisations need to work in partnership to address the barriers to participation experienced by some young people. These partnerships should focus on strengthening young people's foundations for participation as outlined in the *Participation Continuum*. They should also include flexible funding arrangements. Programs such as *Learning Unlimited* and the *Dubbo Cultural Leadership Program* have shown the success of this approach.

- **TAFE/schools**

Introduce greater flexibility to the minimum number of students required for TAFE course approvals and for the number of students required to maintain a teaching position in non-metropolitan areas. This will contribute to increasing educational attainment levels for young people living in rural and regional communities.

- **Role for business**

That employers recognise the particular needs of young people in transition and implement strategies that provide opportunities for them to develop and enhance their skills, including leadership, and consolidate their careers.

- **Communities for Children model**

Consideration should be given to extending the Communities for Children's community capacity building model to areas of service delivery impacting on young people. The model allows flexible responses to local needs and would be particularly useful in Local Government Areas with high levels of youth unemployment.

- **Opportunity card**

That the implementation of the *Youth Opportunity Card* initiative in the United Kingdom be monitored with a view to piloting it in Australia. The *Opportunity Card* is a smartcard which provides discounts on a range of activities. It can be topped up with money to spend on accredited providers of sports and other constructive activities which can have a positive impact on young people's self-esteem and wellbeing.

- **Evidence based and cost benefit analysis**

Programs for young people should be evidence based and subject to cost benefit analysis to ensure programs are producing outcomes effectively and efficiently.

- **Data systems**

Ensure the development of data systems that accurately capture a picture of the complexity of the demography of young people. Such data systems would contribute to the development of a Wellbeing Index for Young Australians. Current work being undertaken by COAG will contribute to this.

Targeted recommendations

- **Single income support**

Introduce (in managed stages) an integrated payment system which provides adequate income support and incentives for participation, including a common based payment for all eligible young people, needs based additional payments according to different circumstances (eg people with disabilities) and participation supplements to assist with the cost of achieving economic participation.

- **Income support to help stay at school**

That the implementation of the United Kingdom's Education Maintenance Allowance (EMAs) be monitored. EMAs are designed to tackle the financial barriers to participation in education experienced by some young people.

- **Expand funding for effective programs working with marginalised young people**

That broader financial support from all sectors be provided to those intensive programs which have been shown to be working effectively with the most marginalised young Australians. Currently these programs are primarily supported by private funding through the non-government and philanthropic sectors.

- **Expand the Jobs Placement Employment and Training program**

Expand the number of young Australians supported by the Jobs Placement Employment and Training program. Currently this program supports around 14,000 young people per annum.

- **Mental health**

The new national youth mental health initiative *Headspace* will contribute significantly to addressing mental health issues experienced by young people. It is recommended that there be an increased focus on early intervention and the prevention of mental health problems for young people.

Strategies to increase the economic and social participation of young people with a mental illness should be a key component.

- **Dual diagnosis of mental health and drug/alcohol misuse**

Enhance the capacity of service systems to support young people with a dual diagnosis of a mental health problem and drug/alcohol misuse.

A 2005 survey of Mission Australia Jobs Placement Employment and Training program staff highlighted the limited capacity of existing arrangements to support young people with a dual diagnosis and the lack of appropriate services for young people with a mental illness.

- **Particular strategies for Local Government Areas with high levels of unemployment**

Given the high percentage of unemployed young people who live in a small identified number of Local Government Areas, extra targeted resources and approaches that meet the particular needs of these young people and their communities are required.

These initiatives need to be flexible to cater for changing labour market conditions and have clear funding and accountability arrangements. Mobile services could play a key role in catering for locational changes of high youth unemployment.

- **Use of mobile services**

Greater use of mobile outreach and information technology based service delivery should be encouraged to reduce the level of social exclusion, particularly for young people in disadvantaged communities including small rural towns and remote areas.

Mobile services can be used to provide integrated employment, training and community services to young people.

Expand mobile educational outreach services that fully utilise the potential of information/satellite technology and mobile teaching unit services to improve educational outcomes for young Indigenous people living in rural and remote areas.

- **Rural apprenticeships for young women**

Develop and implement a specific *Young Women's Rural Apprenticeship Program* that provides training and local career development opportunities for young women living in rural and regional areas. Research shows that the main reasons young women give for having to leave rural areas include the lack of employment opportunities and the need to access higher education.

- **Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants**

Expand the Indigenous Youth Employment Consultants to cover other regions with high Indigenous youth unemployment.

- **Employment opportunities for Indigenous young people**

Develop and implement a national *Local Needs Local Jobs* scheme to train young rural Indigenous people to work in the mainstream economy as mental health, maternity and aged care nurses and aides as well as teachers, teachers aides and environmental cultural officers.

It is envisaged that such a scheme would assist in addressing clearly defined rural skills shortages as well as employment and training needs of young Indigenous people living in rural and remote communities.

- **Expand Indigenous Youth Mobility Program**

Explore the possibility of expanding the Indigenous Youth Mobility Program of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

- **Strengthening Families initiative**

Monitor the implementation of New Zealand's *Strengthening Families and Children and Young People with high and complex needs* initiatives, with a view to piloting a similar approach in Australia.

- **Sole parents and young people with a disability**

Significant support be provided for young people who are sole parents or have a disability to enhance their participation and ability to manage both the transition and the extra challenges in their lives.

- **Post institutional arrangements**

Special integrated programs to meet the complex needs of young people exiting care, the juvenile justice system and prisons. Exiting these arrangements can be very challenging and requires a suite of programs to assist young people to make a smooth transition.

- **Re-entry pathways**

Ensure re-entry pathways to education exist for the small but significant group of young people who leave school early but are not in education, employment or training.

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