

AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICES

Economic Participation and Employment Pathways Project

Synopsis Report

Young people have told us about the barriers that impact their ability to gain and maintain meaningful employment.

80%

Of the more than 300 young people surveyed told us that they, or someone they know, had faced challenges in finding or retaining employment.

90%

Of young people living in regional or remote areas told us there were not enough opportunities to work in the area they live.

53%

Of young people surveyed told us they don't believe what they learnt at school helped them find the job they want.



At a glance

This project was funded through the Australian Government's Youth Advocacy Support Grants Scheme.

We engaged ten youth advocates to speak to 662 young people across Australia.

We have seven policy recommendations related to youth employment.

Here's their solutions

Life skills and employability skills

The development of a comprehensive national initiative that focuses on life-ready and work-ready skills and experience for young people. A systemic approach is required that includes the involvement and partnership between teachers and schools, community organisations, business and employer networks, and parents and carers.

"You need experience to get a job, but it's hard to get that experience first to be able to get a job. It's a catch 22."

– Survey respondent

“Schools and education settings should help by generating connections with employers and work environments to educate students on taxes, resumes, interview skills, superannuation, mortgages, etc.”

– Consultation participant

“Co-funding entry level jobs for young people that offer training and opportunities for career progression. In particular, making these available to disengaged and disadvantaged young people who may not yet have the confidence to seek out such opportunities.”

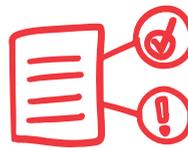
– Survey respondent

“After being rejected constantly for 2.5 years I had completely given up and told people that I was going nowhere in life because I had been rejected so much. I didn’t know physically, mentally or emotionally what to do anymore. It took a lot of people telling me not to give up and to keep trying to get into the mindset to keep trying and keep going. It’s one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to do.”

– Consultation participant

“I studied for so long to work in the construction industry to be put down because I’m a girl and I’m too little and young still. It’s things like this that put youth down instead of building them up. Discrimination is still happening in our workplace.”

– Consultation participant



Curriculum reform

The consideration of secondary education curriculum reform that addresses and incorporates aspects such as redesign of the ATAR system, greater focus on skills-based student outcomes, and universally implemented workplace experience programs at each year level of senior secondary education.



Youth-targeted job creation

The design and investment in youth-specific and youth-targeted employment initiatives that are localised and respond to the needs of young people. Place-based solutions that focus on job creation and incentivising local employer networks to open more opportunities for young people will be critical.



Mental health and wellbeing initiatives

The design, funding and implementation of mandatory minimum requirements for mental health and wellbeing support in the workplace. This would incorporate raising awareness and education, accreditation of mental health first aid in the workplace, and the introduction of legislated mental health leave provisions.



Diversity and inclusion initiatives

The funding and development of a suite of programs and initiatives co-designed by people with lived experience. This is to implement a range of measures that will ensure all work environments are psychologically safe for all employees, where all forms of discrimination are prevented, and systemic barriers are identified and addressed.

“There needs to be more cultural awareness in workplaces to better understand family and cultural commitments like needing to care for younger siblings etc. This could involve local elders and the local Land Councils.”

– Consultation participant

“I want to work for a charity/NFP but there’s not many jobs that I can actually do where I live - most available are for experienced people in the sector, there’s not many entry-level full-time jobs.”

– Survey respondent



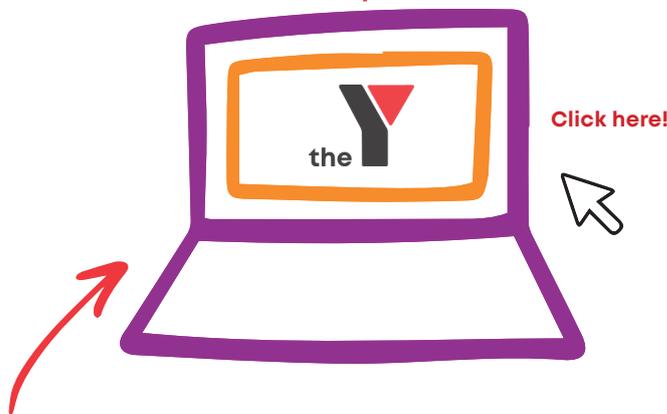
Culturally aware employment practices

The funding and development of a suite of programs and initiatives co-designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations. These programs would ensure culturally safe employment practices, education and awareness raising for employers, and the establishment of collaborative and meaningful partnerships with community.



Regional and remote initiatives

The design and funding of targeted place-based initiatives in regional, rural and remote areas to optimise the engagement and employment of young people living in these areas within the labour market. A recommended place-based initiative might include greater investment in regional and remote transport options to ensure young people living in these areas can participate in further education and/or the workforce in a safe and affordable manner.



The full report including an in depth look at all policy recommendations can be found on the Y Australia website.

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