



We thank all the young research participants who gave generously of their time and insight, and professionals delivering services to young people in the Parramatta region, and professionals from peak bodies who encouraged organisations to participate. We also

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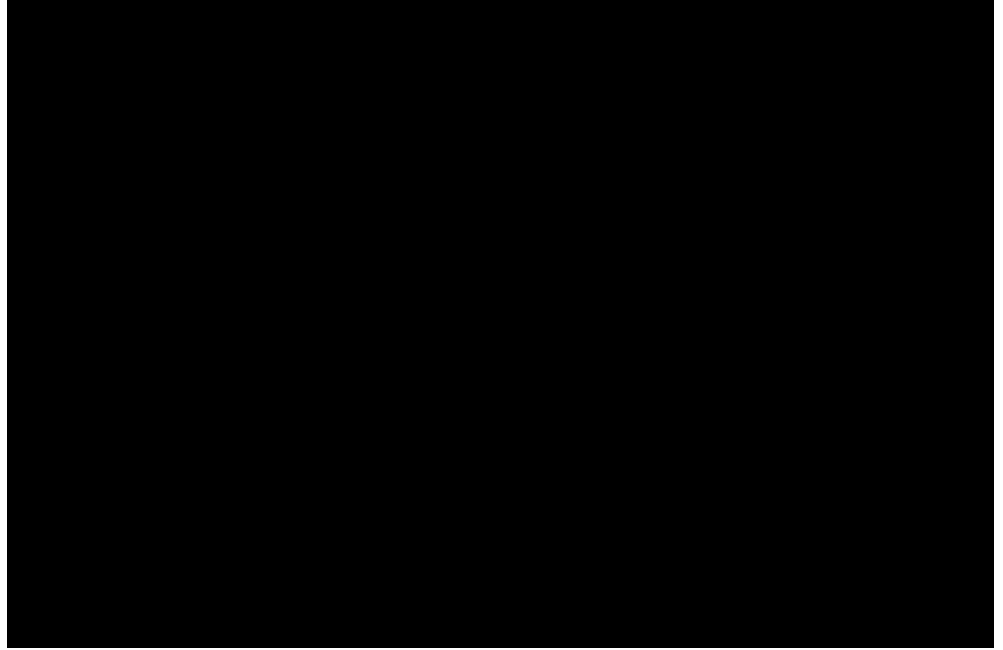
AB	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADFA	Australia Defence Force Academy
AIH	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AAT	Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank
B	Brotherhood of St Laurence
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBD	Central Business District
C	Census of Population and Housing
CAG	Council of Australian Governments
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
EU	European Union
EFLW	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
FYA	Foundation for Young Australians
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GA	Local Government Association of Australia

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The education to employment system

Internationally, a wide array of policies and programs operate at national, state and local levels to strengthen youth employment. They can be classified loosely into three broad categories:

- 1. Education focussed programs** develop non-cognitive skills and dispositions valued in workplaces, broaden



Universal supports programs that build employment capital, non-cognitive skills and knowledge of pathways are not universally available or even available on request. The selection of young people for programmatic supports is often driven by needs other than those of young people who need additional supports. Young people with complex needs or those who might have presented challenges for mentors or partner employer groups are missing out.

These programs need to be delivered to all students including young people out of conventional schooling. Alternative learning programs redress this gap to some extent in so far as they deliver services to young people who have disengaged from formal schooling but employment related supports in this sector are often less systematically available than in disadvantaged mainstream schools.

Professional development there is a lack of knowledge about labour market demand and career and job information among teachers and youth workers who are in direct contact with young people who need this information. There is a need for centralised resources with genuine experts available - who can resource teachers, parents, service providers and the mentors who work with them.

A holistic systemic approach programs located within a mutual obligation framework that take a holistic systemic approach, (as in the implementation of a Youth Guarantee in some European countries) have the advantage of delivering timely services that connect young people to jobs. However, Youth Guarantees may not be the most appropriate mechanism to address structural problems, such as lack of skills.

Employer engagement and incentives employers have a crucial role in engaging with education providers and fostering job opportunities for young people. Labour market intermediaries also have a key role in brokering relationships between young people, schools, communities and employers. Policy levers such as well regulated, targeted, monitored and supported wages subsidies are needed to generate job opportunities for young people.

System coordination, regulation and quality assurance: there is a crowded market of training organisations,

Elements of good practice in system coordination that have been identified by the OECD (2013) include:

Mechanisms to tackle fragmentation and duplication, such as shared targets for local areas, promotion of information sharing and joint service commissioning, embedding schools in the partnerships, service level agreements to outline roles and responsibilities of local stakeholders, and external groups to monitor progress.

Developing the right incentives and success measurement structures, for example: removing perverse incentives for organisations to focus on young people most likely to succeed within an outcomes-based incentives structure by rewarding progress points rather than outcomes.

Encouraging appropriate local referrals by adequately resourcing local level referral agencies and mechanisms.

Improving data availability - a starting point in local youth employment strategy processes should be understanding the nature of local skills supply and demand and whether mismatches are due to a lack of skills or local job design and quality,

Promoting employer ownership and ensure that firms invest in their future workforce,

Supporting cross-sectoral approaches to bring together educational institutions, industry organisations, employment agencies and other government departments to develop career pathways, articulating skills requirements and connecting youth to the local economy,

Adapting funding arrangements in the context of reduced public spending, for example through social enterprises, and

Monitoring the implementation of programs and evaluating successes.

Coordination

Effective systems of coordination to address issues underpinning youth unemployment across tiers and portfolios of government.

Greater clarity about federal, state and local government responsibilities.

A national framework with flexible policy structures to support local area initiatives and innovations.

Improved service system collaboration through longer-term funding, quality assurance systems and less local competition.

Addressing gaps in universality

Policy initiatives that respond to differing concentrations of socio-economic and employment disadvantage and service the 81 per cent of disadvantaged young people living outside of areas of concentrated disadvantage.

Better resourcing for schools to integrate employment information holistically in curriculum.

Improved access to information.

Quality assurance systems for training organisations.

Removal of incentive structures with negative impacts on young people.

This report accompanies a more detailed technical report which contains background detail from the policy and program reviews and a full account of the local study. Snapshots and case studies from the local area mixed method study are used in this report to illustrate how policy and program features play out in the everyday lives of young people.

This report aims to:

Identify elements of good practice approaches in promoting transitions to, and retention in, education, training and employment (to address the question of 'what works?') and to also inform the other research components.

Identify gaps in policy and community support systems for young people; and identify which policy and program levers will be most effective in improving participation in employment, education, and training.

Consider the diversity of young people who are classified as NEET – for example long-term unemployed young people, disengaged youth, and young people who are unavailable for paid employment due to caring responsibilities or health and disability issues and so address different needs and strengths.

Contribute to knowledge about the diversity of pathways and issues that young people face when engaging with employment, education and training.

Research questions:

1. What is currently known about youth diversity of pathways to employment, education and training?

Labour markets and transition opportunity structures are changing rapidly, but the groups that experience inequalities are surprisingly constant.

Labour markets and opportunities have changed structurally over the last few decades. Economic changes are transforming work through automation, globalisation and more flexible work (FYA, 2015; CEDA, 2015). Employment opportunities in manufacturing and industrial work sectors are declining while opportunities in service and technology sectors are expanding (ABS, 2011). This has changed the skill requirements and nature of available jobs for young people in countries such as Australia (The Smith Family, 2014; Eurofound, 2014). There are fewer entry-level jobs between entry-level jobs, new forms of enterprise and sourcing income. Many young people experience complex and sometimes difficult transitions to their first full-time job (Cuervo and Wyn, 2011). Changes to technology and labour markets mean that today's young people are likely to have many different jobs over their lifetime. Lifelong learning, the capacity to navigate towards and adapt to new types of employment are likely to be critical skills (Cuervo and Wyn, 2011).

While longitudinal analysis of youth labour markets show significant changes in the characteristics of the opportunity structures that support successful transitions from education to employment, they also indicate that inequalities and disadvantages in the labour market are surprisingly constant across generations. Young people from families who are disadvantaged in the labour market continue to be the young people most challenged by school to work transitions (Roberts, 2009, Thompson, 2011; Gale et al, 2013; MacDonald et al, 2014; McInerney & Smyth, 2014).

The effect of delayed and unsuccessful transitions to employment can lead to economic, social and personal disadvantages for young people.

Such disadvantages may become acute if young people become discouraged from seeking work and withdraw from the labour market altogether (BSL 2015; Buddlemeyer and Heralut, 2010; Anlezark, 2011).

1.1 Key patterns in youth transitions in Australia

Increased education participation and attainment and structural changes in the labour market and available jobs means that transitions to decent work are more complex and occurring at a later age.

Federal, state and territory governments have implemented policy measures which have attempted to address youth attainment and transitions in light of structural changes in global and national labour markets. These policy measures have themselves triggered shifts in the way that young people transition.

Secondary and higher education participation and attainment is increasing, while participation in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and apprenticeships is declining.

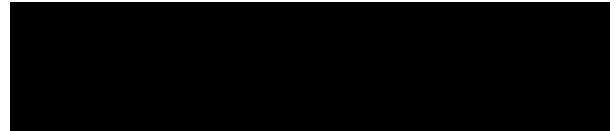
Full-time employment is decreasing, and part-time and casual employment have increased.

Unemployment and underemployment has increased

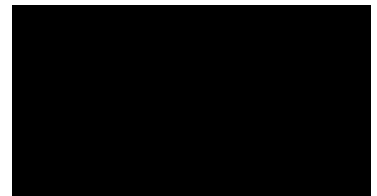
Graduate employment has decreased.

Transitions to full-time work, on average, are occurring at an older age, particularly for young women. (FYA, 2014)

F 3 A → 2000-2013



%



Source: OECD Labour Force status – indicators by age and Sex [accessed 8 Jan 2015]

Long-term unemployment rates have increased: in August 2015, 51,000 young people had been searching for employment for 52 weeks or more, up from 19,500 ten years before (August 2005) (ABS, 2015b: Data cube UM3). 367, 200 young people were underemployed in August 2015 (ABS, 2015^a: Table 22).

Underemployment rates for young people have increased over the last few decades to 17.5 per cent in August 2015 (ABS, 2015^a: Table 22) with the increase in casual and part-time jobs.

The unemployment and underemployment rate combine to produce a labour underutilisation rate of 30.4 per cent (ABS, 2015^a: Table 22) (unemployment plus underemployment), which is a waste of investment in young people's human capital.

Unemployment rates in Australia are higher for young people who are Indigenous and live in areas of lower socio-economic status (AWPA, 2014).

1.3 Young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)

Young people who are NEET comprise a heterogeneous group, yet overall with young women are more likely to be NEET.

Policies and programs aimed at supporting young people who are NEET or at risk of NEET encompass a number of types of support relating to housing, transport, income, support for child care or caring responsibilities, social and emotional supports, skills development, job search and job readiness and work experience. The policy concern with young people who are NEET is that extended periods outside of the labour force and training 'may cause reduction in human capital, poverty and have a scarring effect on long-term prospects' (Carcillo et al., 2015:10)

1.4 What are the explanations for youth unemployment?

The way we understand the causes of youth unemployment is important because it underpins how we decide to direct resources to address the problem and who is most responsible to take action to address the issue. Policy and program responses vary in the weight they put on individual or structural factors.

Conceptual ahrces to ateo ahr.

Focus on individual factors:

Here significance is accorded to individual aspirations and motivations, employability and 'soft' skills and the role and responsibilities of families and social networks, education and training providers, governments, NGOs, agencies and employers in addressing youth unemployment. Programs focussed on individual factors aim to intervene on the level of personal aspirations and circumstances, education qualifications, skills and employability, geographic mobility, and specific disadvantages and barriers.

on individual factors:

1.5 Understanding and measuring youth transitions to employment

Youth transitions encompass multiple destinations, varying durations, linear pathways as well as more complex non-linear trajectories. The experiences of diverse and disadvantaged groups points to the key role of supporting practitioners.

Inter-country variations in the pattern of school to work transitions have formed a rich site for research.

Key elements of transitions;

Destinations: The question of what constitutes a 'destination' is also an important defining element in research, policy and practice about transitions. A variety of outcomes and indicators are analysed to assess if transitions have occurred focusing on education, employment and quality of job outcomes:

- Average age of transition to full time job (FYA, 2014)

- The ILO has defined the concept of school to work transitions in two ways – the first to a 'regular' or 'satisfactory' job and, the second to a 'decent' or 'satisfactory' employment. A transition is "the passage of a young person (aged 15-29 years) from the end of schooling to" one of these types of jobs (ILO, 2009:8-12).(See Technical Report for definitions)

- Eurofound (2014) has five indicators:

- average age of young people leaving education
- proportion of students combining work and education
- average time finding the first job after completing education
- the labour market status of school leavers one year after completing education.
- The types of jobs held by school-leavers one year after completing education. (Eurofound 2014)

Durations: transitions may be classified as short, middling and lengthy (ILO, 2009)

Summary

Labour markets and transition opportunity structures are changing rapidly, but the groups that experience inequalities are surprisingly constant

Increased education participation and attainment and structural changes in the labour market and available jobs means that transitions to decent work are more complex and occurring at a later age.

Youth unemployment, underemployment, long-term unemployment and NEET rates have been rising after the GFC, with different effects for young men and women.

Policies and programs addressing the issue are embedded in explanations for youth employment emphasising individual and structural factors and supply and demand elements.

The way we understand the causes of youth unemployment is important because it underpins how we decide how to direct resources to address the problem and who is most responsible to take action to address the issue.

The experiences of diverse and disadvantaged groups points to the key role of supporting practitioners.

Youth transitions encompass multiple destinations, varying durations, linear pathways as well as more

Longer-term policies aimed to address the integration of the education system and young people's readiness for work, strengthen vocational education, and assist in transitions to employment are needed (OECD, 2013).

Approaches to conceptualising policies to address youth unemployment and youth transitions in different national and cultural contexts draw on a range of indicators and frameworks.

Eurofound (2014) define seven different types of approaches among European countries based on education duration, combinations of education and work, duration of time to first job and type of jobs young people are able to obtain. This analysis underscores the importance of national educational, training, labour market and social protection policies in providing the structures that enable and constrain young people's pathways and transitions.

The question of 'What works?' has been consistently identified by researchers as a very difficult question to answer. The factors that contribute to youth employment are multidimensional, enduring

2.2.1 Career development and guidance

Career development is a continuous process that enables citizens at any age to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work (ELGPN, 2014:7).

Long term career management orientations:

In an increasingly dynamic and insecure labour market, career development is critical. Disadvantaged young people in particular often need sustained incremental career development knowledge that facilitates well-informed and realistic decisions about career choices, educational pathways and employment options' (Polvere and Lim, 2015:5). The cmnertfareer cg-1.1(u)-1icd-3.6(n)-1.5(n)-4.8(dc-7.1(e))TJT[(a)78.54t)-1014(r)-24.3(-)-1.6(d)-.5(i)-4(3(t)-10

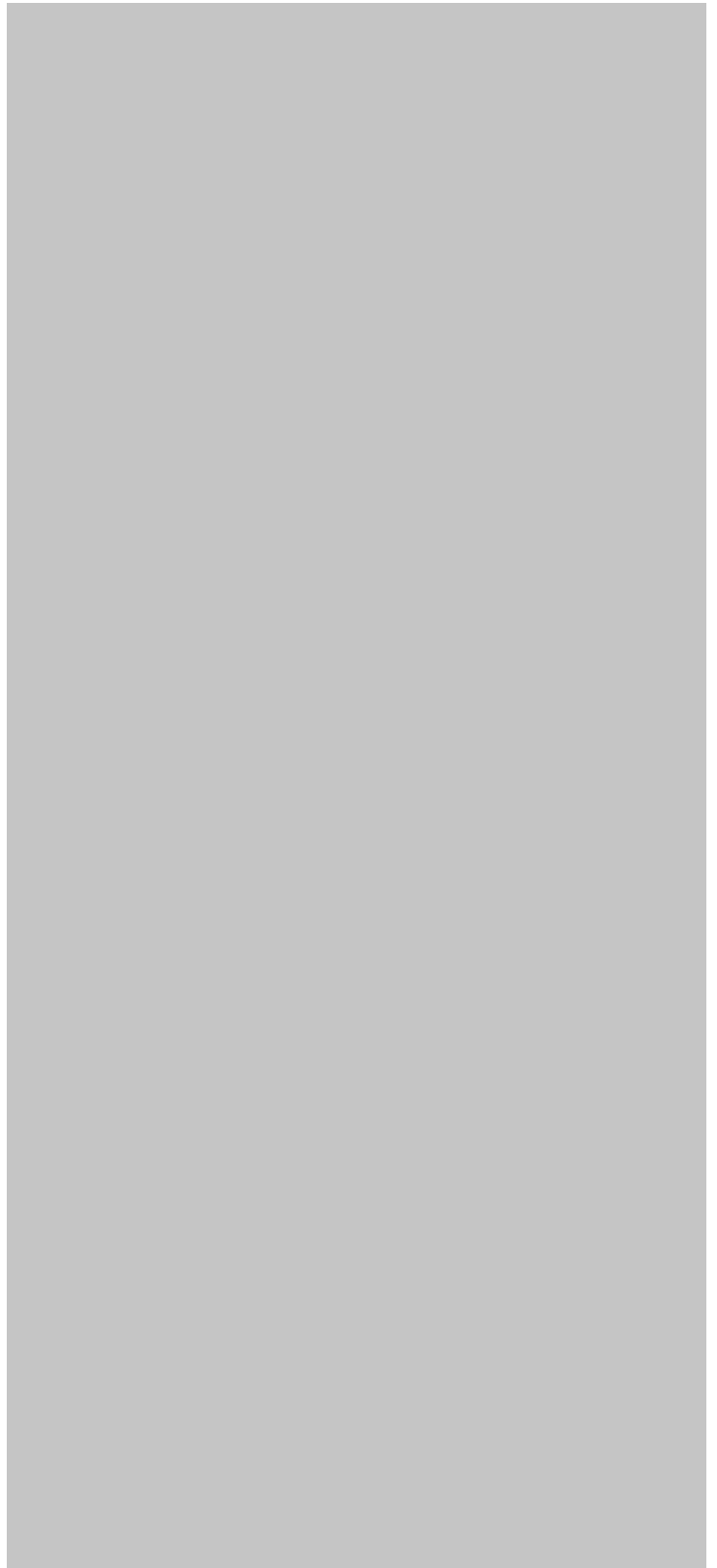
'Raising aspirations' is a widespread policy approach. Aspirations are viewed as important influences on the way young people's conceptualise their career development and thus their engagement with learning.

Programs that aim to raise aspirations encompass diverse approaches and may focus on improving 'self-esteem, self-efficacy or self-belief, motivation or engagement' (SVA, 2013). Programs identified in the literature encompass interventions partnering with parents, extra-curricular activities, volunteering and peer education, interventions with a primary focus on changing attitudes (Cummings et al., 2012). Many of these programs involve offer relationship based career development learning through one-on-one mentoring.

In Australia, the Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent, & Scales, 2008) found that students from low socio-economic backgrounds have considerably less knowledge about what careers higher education prepares students for, what higher education entails, how it can benefit the student in the longer term, and what is required to access these opportunities. The problem of poor retention rates for low socio-economic status (SES) students in school and tertiary programs was identified. This report triggered federal government targets to increase the proportion of people holding bachelor level qualifications to 40 per cent of 25–34-year-olds by 2025; and the higher education participation of people from low SES backgrounds to 20per cent by 2020 (Australian Government, 2009). A considerable number of programs have been developed to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds consider a broavo

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Case study: Lucinda

Lucinda was a sporty student who lived in an area where there is high unemployment. She attended an innovative local high school that actively addressed the employment futures for their student population. They specialised in subjects and curriculum that prepares students for labour market demand based on an analysis of the local labour market and forecasting of the skills and attributes required in the future. They maintained strong links with local businesses in their immediate area and in the business hub in their region.

Lucinda was from a family where adults moved in and out of precarious employment. She was selected by her school to participate in a program aimed at broadening employment horizons. The school selected students who showed potential but were lacking in direction with regard to career paths. The program placed Lucinda in a cohort approach of about 12 students and they were into the regional business hub for a series of activities and engagements over a 12 month period. They were each connected with mentors

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... are critical for many young people who do not have the material and social-emotional support that enables them to thrive in formal schooling

.....

1. Programs that seek to facilitate the transition from school into the first post-school job, for example:

- Youth guarantees- holistic support within a mutual obligation framework

- 'One stop shop' - service coordinated approaches

- Encouraging self-employment opportunities

2. Measures to foster employability:

- Focusing on soft and technical skills to address skills mismatch

- Providing work experience

3. Measures to remove barriers to employment:

- Providing fi i/ActualTextti4pu7trn-1.5(n5-12.9(s.9(l)3.15(r)-22((n)-3.9 k)16(l)5s4ty (e)-.8(e)-2091(e)-12.96(l)-3.2(o)611 a.5(50.

Elements of good practice: Work experience

Coordination between schools, businesses and workplaces

Careful selection processes matching young people to employers

Brokerage to support both young people and employers

Clear purpose, aims and objectives which are discussed and agreed with the young person, school/college and employer/training provider

Planning and preparation to ensure that all parties understand their role and responsibilities

Induction once the young person starts their placement

Matching individual young people with appropriate placements according to their interests and needs

Addressing their needs for and while they are on the placement

Monitoring and review during and after the placement, to help the young person make use of what he or she has learnt (Sources: UK Department for Education, in Mann, 2012)

2.3.2 Youth guarantees

All member states of the European Union were directed to adopt a youth guarantee “to ensure that young people up to age 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed”.

In response to the high rates of youth unemployment in Europe after the Global Financial Crisis, in 2012, EU member states adopted a youth guarantee to address rising youth unemployment (European Commission, 2012; OECD, 2014:8). Approaches to implementing the youth guarantee vary across European countries in terms of support provided, duration of assistance and compensation provided under the schemes (ILO, 2013). Youth guarantees also are implemented in a framework of activation and mutual obligation and aim to provide a rapid response to assist young people to transition from unemployment or ‘inactivity’ (Eurofound, 2012b).

Figure 2.3.2: Nordic countries : Nordic countries have had Youth Guarantees in place since the 1980s and 1990s. An evaluation in Sweden found that the intervention assisted participants to find a job faster, but no effect on the likelihood of being unemployed one year after the program, while evidence from Finland suggested positive effects in reducing unemployment (ILO, 2013).

Figure 2.3.3: Youth guarantees in Europe (Eurofound, 2012b: 3). It is argued, however, that they may not be so effective for more disadvantaged young people, who may require a more holistic approach (Eurofound, 2012b:3). Furthermore, their success appears to relate to the local labour market conditions and such programmes may not provide solutions to structural issues such as lack of qualifications (Eurofound, 2012b:3). Here the distinction between guaranteeing opportunities and guaranteeing outcomes and the challenges of the latter is important (OECD, 2014:52).

Elements of good practice: Youth guarantees

Local areas have flexibility in policy design and delivery – this included flexibility to and within the local context to adjust the programs to local labour market opportunities and skills requirements of participants

Strong local partnerships enable holistic interventions, coordination across a range of stakeholders and enable data sharing

Programs have sufficient human and financial resources

Staff have limited caseloads so that they can provide the intensive support to young people at risk

Programs incorporate a range of methods to ensure early intervention

Follow up support is structured into programs (for example a pathways approach)

Policy sharing occurs between areas with similar local contexts

Effective data collections at local levels

Programs are underpinned by national frameworks that ensure quality of placements

Mobility grants are provided to support young people moving to labour markets with better opportunities (OECD, 2014:8-10).

2.3.3 Employer engagement and incentives

Employer engagement and incentives encompass a spectrum of activities, including engagement with education systems and wage subsidies.

Studies of outcomes of a range of employer engagement programs have explored the impact on education attainment and employment outcomes. As Mann and Dawkins (2014) outline, employers may engage with education providers through:

- Work experience and related activities, such as job shadowing, part-time working and pupil volunteering
- Career talks, career networking and mock interviews
- Workplace visits
- Business mentoring
- Enterprise competitions
- Curriculum enrichment and real world learning resources (including work related learning qualifications).

Employer engagement programs have been the subject of studies considering preparation for the work place, skills development and labour market outcomes (AIR UK, 2008; Mann and Percy, 2013). Research reviews of evaluations of employer engagement programs have found evidence of positive effects on labour market outcomes, including higher wages (Mann and Dawkins 2014). It is argued that in the British context, the relatively short duration of many employer engagement programs and the lack of integration into the curriculum offer limited opportunity for skill development. These programs thus enhance the social and cultural capital of disadvantaged young people rather than actual employability or work performance (Mann and Dawkins 2014:30). The research suggests nevertheless that such programs provide important insights for young people into work and labour market opportunities (AIR UK, 2008; Mann and Dawkins 2014). In Australia, a range of programs exist to link education providers with employers. Work integrated learning is a key feature of vocational and higher education in Australia.

A useful typology of employer engagement programs recognises a continuum of employment engagement from corporate social responsibility to labour demand. It moves from activities that support job readiness, knowledge of pathways to employment to vacancy-led approaches (Van Kooy et al, 2014). This typology distinguishes programs that may be regarded as addressing needs of young people from programs that are demand-led in the sense that there is the potential for an employer to provide a job for a young person (Van Kooy et al, 2014).

Many approaches to addressing youth unemployment focus on the supply-side factors and the needs and skills of young people. Increasingly, policies have explored questions of labour demand and strategies to enhance employer's capacities to employ young people.

Example: The 2015-26 Budget in Australia included the Youth Wage Subsidy which will be available to employers to hire eligible young jobseekers aged 15-29 years after 6 months. (Mann and Dawkins 2014:30). (ILO, 2013:67).

Wage subsidies have been found to be a useful incentive that encourages employers to employ young people. These need to be well structured so they feed into career ladders rather than lead young people to 'churn' through a series of subsidised positions without gaining a foothold in secure employment.

Example: Governments should address structural barriers where employment regulations structure temporary and permanent jobs in such a way it is difficult to move from temporary jobs to permanent jobs. Temporary jobs should be a stepping stone into permanent jobs

Elements of good practice: Employer engagement and incentives

Brokers that invest in long term relationships with employers and understand the nature of businesses and support the development of entry level positions

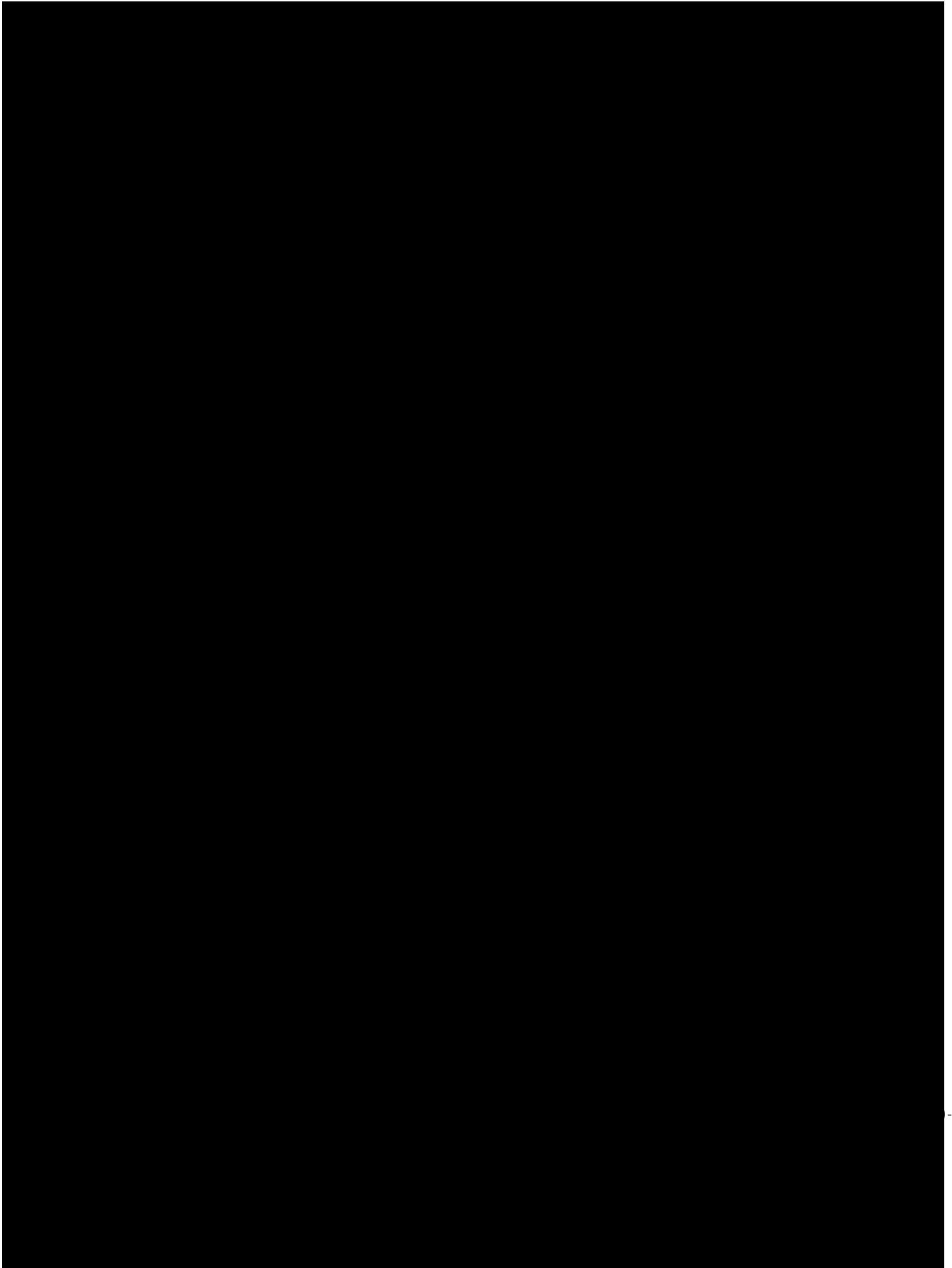
Single communication brokerage points which reduce the burden on business

Government/business investment in funds that promote new skills for new jobs

Subsidies that support the employment of young people

Where there is a gap between employment regulations for temporary and permanent jobs this should be reduced so that temporary jobs become a stepping stone to permanent jobs rather than a trap. (OECD 2010:19; OECD 2015^a)

What works? Good practice principles

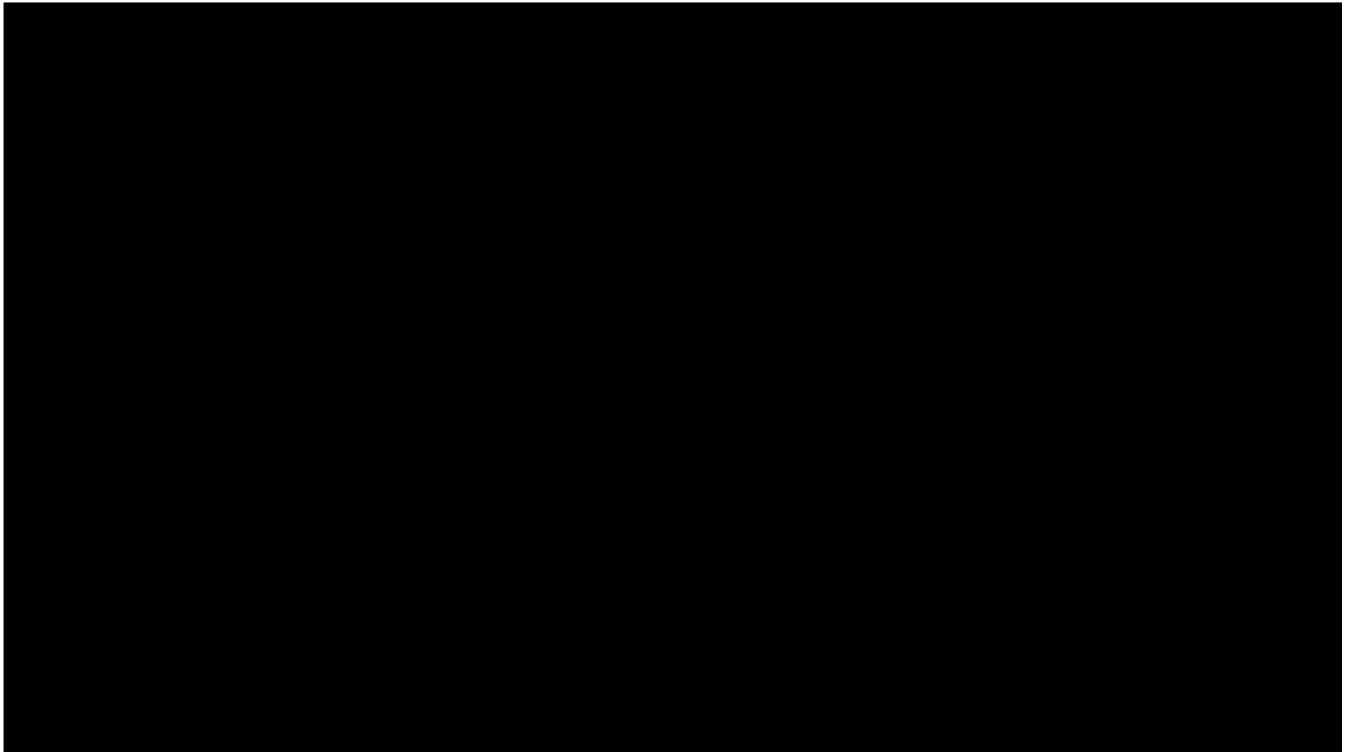


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C... Key evaluations of mechanisms that coordinate programs at a system level in Australia found a high level of partnership activity, sharing of resources and expertise which had improved outcomes for young people and identified the voluntary nature of partnerships as a key component (Dandalo Partners 2014:75, SVA Consulting 2013).

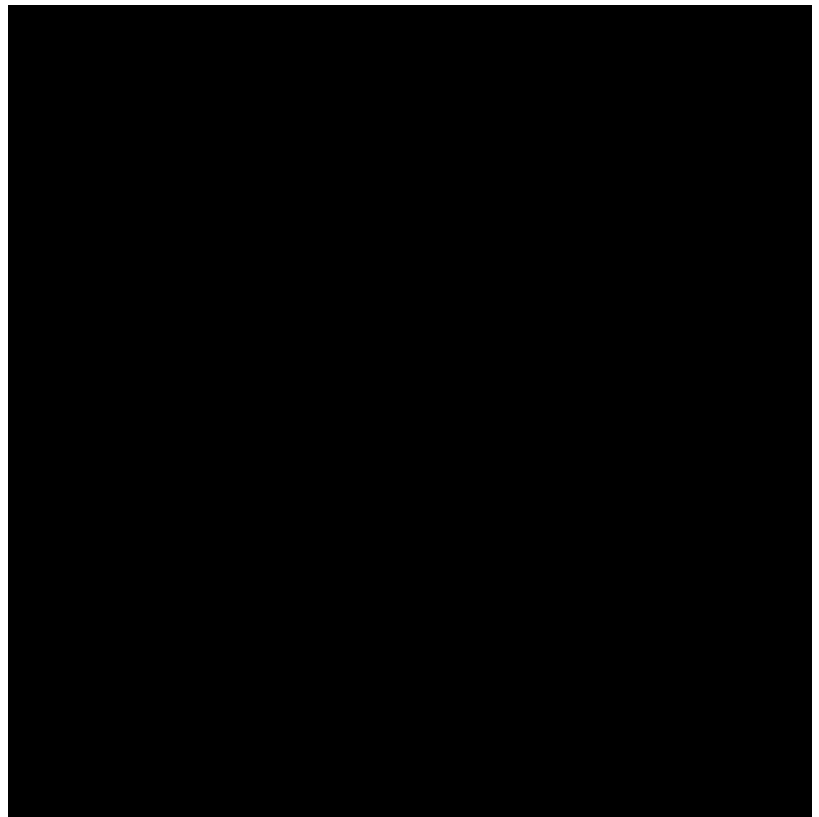
The diversity of the characteristics and experiences of the group of young people who are identified in the NEET category has brought attention to the 'comprehensive and multifaceted' range of policies and supports that may be required to assist young people to make transitions into employment (Eurofound, 2012c).

This policy and program range includes flexible, tailored, personalised advice focussed on the needs of the young person, good quality career advice and guidance, and the need to set young people up on a sustainable pathway to stable employment rather than focussing on short-term goals (Eurofound, 2012^a: 2-3). Similarly Australian researchers have identified the need for stable economic supports, supportive relationships and networks, the capacity to assess labour market



Collective Impact:
 ... (BSL: 2014b).

Collective impact models have been promoted as a mechanism for community action to support disadvantaged young people or 'Opportunity Youth' in the United States (Corcoran et al., 2012). The elements of Collective impact models include developing a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone support organisations (Corcoran et al., 2012). This model is yet to be trialled and evaluated for youth unemployment approaches in Australia.



Effective systems of coordination to address issues underpinning youth unemployment across tiers and portfolios of government

Greater clarity about federal, state and local government responsibilities

A national framework with flexible policy structures to support local area initiatives and innovations

Improved service system collaboration through longer-term funding, quality assurance systems and less local competition

Developing the right incentives and success measurement structures, (for example: removing perverse incentives for organisations to focus on young people most likely to succeed within an outcomes based incentives structure by rewarding progress points rather than outcomes)

Promoting employer ownership and ensure that firms invest in their future workforce

Adapting funding arrangements in the context of reduced public spending, for example through social enterprises

Policy initiatives that respond to differing concentrations of socio-economic and employment disadvantage and service the 81% of disadvantaged young people living outside of areas of concentrated disadvantage

Monitoring the implementation of programmes and evaluating successes

Support cross sectoral approaches to bring together educational institutions, industry organisations, employment agencies and other government departments to develop career pathways, articulating skills requirements and connecting youth to the local economies

Mechanisms that tackle fragmentation and duplication at all levels

Service level agreements that outline roles and responsibilities of local stakeholders and monitor progress

Shared targets for local areas

Information sharing and joint service commissioning

Embedded partnerships between schools welfare services and employers

Well resourced local area referral agencies

Support for collective impact models in areas where there are significant numbers of young people in disadvantaged circumstances

There is clear evidence that career development and guidance is needed to support young people to navigate from education to work in rapidly changing labour market structures. Young people's views of their work futures are continuously forming and curriculum from the primary years onwards needs to make explicit links to work futures. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often benefit from programs that aim to enhance their non-cognitive employability skills as well as broaden their knowledge of the opportunities available and how to navigate towards these opportunities. Governments, business and non-government organisations need to collaborate to increase the number and quality of opportunities available for young people.

Effective career development requires interventions which support disadvantaged young people to make successful transitions by facilitating well-informed and realistic decisions about career choices, educational pathways and employment options and which build young people's employment 'capital' so they can navigate to jobs in the future.

Empirical work with young people suggested that programs that connect cohorts of students to workplaces for substantial periods (longer than three month periods) make a difference to young people's worldviews. Yet these experiences require considerable follow-up within school settings so that young people can assimilate new information into concrete and workable career plans and understand how to navigate to specific career pathways.

The role of parents in offering guidance to young people in terms of their education and employment choices was highlighted in both program reviews and in the empirical research with young people. Many parents are not able to help their children navigate the education and employment service options. Programs that support parents to take up this role effectively are important.

Alternative learning options and wrap around supports have a significant role to play for young people who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging with education and employment systems. Key features of successful alternative learning programs are that they create meaningful learning opportunities, provide significant support for learning, build genuine and caring relationships, provide practical support for living, engage with community, and carry out reflection and evaluations. These programs need to offer recognised and valuable credentials and provide opportunities for young people to connect to mainstream opportunities. The overwhelming majority of exemplary programs in schools are locally developed and internally implemented.

Work experience programs can provide a mechanism through which young people expand their career horizons and become more familiar with the world of work. Yet work experience may be underutilised if young people predominantly source opportunities through their own networks, which may reinforce existing social and gendered inequalities.

Work experience programs embedded in mutual obligation schemes have been shown to have mixed effects and may impinge on job search activity due to program 'lock in' effects. Youth guarantees, as implemented in some European countries, have strengths in the quality and speed of their services. However, they may not be most appropriate for disadvantaged young people and may not address structural problems, such as lack of skills.

The diversity of the characteristics and experiences of the group of young people who are identified in the NEET category has brought attention to the need for more targeted interventions. The NEET category has brought attention to the need for more targeted interventions.

One of the reported consequences of changes to federal policy on Youth Attainment and Transitions is a significant drop in service system coordination that needs to be addressed. Many service providers do not feel linked in with other services or information about good practice/programs and policy directions. Recent policy changes

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The opportunity for meaningful work, which promotes dignity, wellbeing and social inclusion, should be a fundamental right of all individuals in each generation.