Fact 11

Almost 26,000 young Australians have school work and are not at the labour force or in further education and training in the year after leaving. Some teenagers have school work with related unemployment. Of those who have school work, approximately one third proceed to further education and one third of those at full-time work. Three in four teenagers, on the other hand, are unemployed in full-time education and are at increased risk of long-term unemployment (Department of Education, Training and Vocational, 2003).

Fact 12

There has been significant growth in TAFE enrolments, particularly in VET in schools and school based apprenticeships (see Table 3 and Figure 4).

Table 3 – Apprentices and Trainees in training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Apprenticeships</th>
<th>Traineeships</th>
<th>Total Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>160.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>200.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>160.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>200.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>160.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>200.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>160.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
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<td>40.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>160.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>160.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>200.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>160.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>200.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCVER 2004, 2005

Conclusion

The facts illustrated in this chapter for young people present opportunities and risks. Some young people are navigating this dynamic environment well, mostly with family and community support. However, the new landscape presents new challenges for young people and current policies are inadequate to meet their needs. The interrelated nature of this risk is evidenced in another publication in this series.

References


Australian Education and Youth Affairs, Cat No 4221.0


NCVER, Adelaide SA


Mission Australia

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

For more information contact: Anne Hampshire, National Manager, Research and Social Policy, Mission Australia

Telephone: (02) 9219 2000 Facsimile: (02) 9212 1116

Website: www.missionaustralia.com.au © Mission Australia 2005

Mission Australia is guided by the Youth Strategic and Advisory Group (YSAG) for their support. Following the publication, YSAG under the Chairmanship of Rupert Myer, supports research, advocacy and services for young people. Mission Australia has been involved in the first three editions of this series and will underpin the blueprint for change.

Mission Australia acknowledges and makes reference to early school leavers and their families. However, the new landscape presents new challenges for young people and current policies are inadequate to meet their needs. The interrelated nature of this risk is evidenced in another publication in this series.

The unemployment rate for those aged 15-19 years is almost twice that of people aged over 25 years. The rate for young adults is double that of young people aged over 25 years. Whilst unemployment has declined since the early 1990s, 15-24 year olds have experienced unemployment at twice the rate for 15 to 24 year olds in most OECD countries, Italy and the United States and Canada. Youth unemployment has been on the rise since the mid-1970s, with international comparisons indicating Australia’s unemployment rate of 11.7% in 2004 for 15-24 year olds compared to 19% of the labour force aged 15-24 for the OECD average (at August 2005).

Fact 1

Almost 40% of unemployed Australians are under 25. Not all young people have benefited from Australia’s recent economic prosperity and declining levels of unemployment. Australians aged 11 to 24 years comprise 19% of the total labour force aged 15-24, but accept 38.7% of unemployment (at August 2005).

Fact 2

Around 7.5% or 212,000 of Australia’s young people aged (15-24) 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, 2005).

Fact 3

More than half of this group were not participating in full time secondary or tertiary education. This reduces the likelihood of their 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 repeated social dislocation and physical and mental health problems.

Table 1 – Unemployment rates (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 2005

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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 work and securing 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 learn hands on, as well as a lack of finances to support extended education (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2005).

The proportion of Indigenous teenagers (aged 15 to 19) not fully engaged in work or study has dropped from 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 35% of non-Indigenous young adults (Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 2005).

Fact 5
44,800 young Australians have been unemployed for longer than six months. The longer a person is unemployed, the more difficult it becomes to find work and with paid work. This is particularly so for young people seeking to establish themselves in the labour market. Overall the number of young people experiencing extended periods of unemployment is declining, particularly for teenagers. However 37% of teenagers and 3% of young adults who were unemployed in 2005 had been so for more than six months. Of the group, 8,100 young adults and 18,300 teenagers 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 35% of Indigenous 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 very low youth unemployment and over 100,000 young people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>people</td>
<td>people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacktown</td>
<td>1735</td>
<td>1280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakemba</td>
<td>1765</td>
<td>1081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Lakemba</td>
<td>1633</td>
<td>1006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Illawarra</td>
<td>1656</td>
<td>1096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyong</td>
<td>1652</td>
<td>1092</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Macquarie</td>
<td>1612</td>
<td>1088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patonga</td>
<td>1568</td>
<td>1077</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seaforth</td>
<td>1552</td>
<td>1026</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manly</td>
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<td>Aspley</td>
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<td>887</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penrith</td>
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<td>861</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longueville</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>805</td>
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<tr>
<td>St Marys</td>
<td>1221</td>
<td>798</td>
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<td>Engadine</td>
<td>1208</td>
<td>788</td>
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<td>Manly West</td>
<td>1186</td>
<td>758</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>730</td>
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<td>729</td>
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<td>Parramatta</td>
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<td>709</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homebush</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marsfield</td>
<td>1099</td>
<td>678</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Penrith</td>
<td>1098</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campsie</td>
<td>1098</td>
<td>663</td>
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<tr>
<td>Padstow</td>
<td>1097</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croydon Park</td>
<td>1094</td>
<td>645</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bella Vista</td>
<td>1094</td>
<td>640</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hurstville</td>
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<td>639</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Ryde</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merrylands</td>
<td>1094</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mount Druitt</td>
<td>1094</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smithfield</td>
<td>1094</td>
<td>634</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fact 7
Part time work is increasingly the norm for people aged 15 to 24, with 64% employed part time in 2005 compared with 30% in 1986. The growth in youth employment since 1986 has been through the rapid increase in part time work; from 33 hours per week and seasonal employment. By August 2005, nearly two thirds of all part time work was part time and one third for young adults (ABS, 2005).

Fact 8
Full time employment for young people dropped dramatically, with 30,000 fewer working in full time jobs over the last two decades. Overall, full time employment in Australia increased by 25.4% between 1996 and 2005. However, only 1% of it was taken by young people. The proportion of full time employment declined by 47% for teenagers and 11% for young adults (see Figure 2). In contrast, it increased by 46% for those aged 21 – 44 (ABS, 2005).

Fact 9
Retention of Indigenous students to Year 12 is at least double that of non-Indigenous students. School participation rates are generally increasing for Indigenous young people. However, as Figure 3 shows, their retention rates to Year 12 in 1993 was only 12% below that of all Indigenous students in 2005. Retention to Year 12 was 19% compared with 74% for the non-Indigenous student population (ABS, 2005).

Fact 10
Australia is moving to a situation where every second youth job will be part time. This may lead to reduced hopes among young people for labour force flexibility and employment periods 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).

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
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 home, as well as a lack of facilities to support extended education.

(Deakin Skills Forum, 2003)

Fact 5

46,080 young Australians were unemployed for longer than six months. The longer a person is unemployed, the more difficult it becomes to find work and will pay work. This is particularly so for young people seeking to establish themselves in the labour market.

(The Facts)
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 terms of accessing and recreating employment opportunities than non-Indigenous young people. Key factors include lower participation rates in education, location in rural areas, and a possible reluctance to leave home, as well as a lack of facilities to support extended education.

Fact 5
45,800 young Australians have been unemployed for longer than six months. The longer a person is unemployed, the more difficult it becomes to find work and stay paid work. This is particularly so for young people seeking to establish themselves in the labour market.

Fact 7
Full-time employment for young people dropped dramatically, with 393,800 fewer young people in full-time jobs over the last two decades.

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

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

Table 3 – Education, employment and training for young Australians

Note: The size and population of LGAs vary considerably and the table above provides a guide only to the distribution of youth unemployment.

Fact 10
Retention of Indigenous students to Year 12 is at best half that of non-Indigenous students. School leavers are generally less equipped for Indigenous young people. However, as Figure 3 shows, their retention rates to Year 12 was 12% below that of all Indigenous students in 2005. Retention to Year 12 was 15% compared with 74% for the non-Indigenous student population (ABS, 2005).

Fact 9
Part time work is increasingly the norm for people under 25, with 64% employed part time in 2005 compared with 29% in 1986.

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

Table 4 – Aggregate retention rates of Indigenous and non Indigenous students

Source: Productivity Commission, 2006
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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 have left school early with mixed results. Of those who have left school early, approximately one third proceed to further education and one third obtain full time work at part time work. Three others, however, are not 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 Australian Council for Training and Development Skills Forum (Applied Economics, 2002) found that 10% of young women and 15% of males who left school in year 11 were unemployed six 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 enrollments delivered by TAFE and other publicly funded agencies rose by 41% between 1994 and 2004. By comparison, publicly funded agencies rose by 41% between 1994 and 2004. By comparison, publicly funded agencies rose by 41% between 1994 and 2004.

Table 3 – Apprentices and Trainees in training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Apprenticeships</th>
<th>Traineeships</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>101.3</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>163.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>107.9</td>
<td>147.5</td>
<td>255.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>123.8</td>
<td>212.6</td>
<td>336.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NCVER, 2004; NCVER, 2005

Conclusion
These facts indicate that contemporary policies 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 significant challenges for young people and current policies are inadequate to meet their needs. The literature on youth unemployment highlights the risk is exacerbated in another publication in this series.

References
- Australian Education and Work, Cat No 6207.0
- Schools 4212.0
- Mission Australia is grateful to the Youth Strategy and Advocacy Group (YSAG) for their support in producing this publication.
- NCVER, 2004; NCVER, 2005a

Mission Australia

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.

Fact 3
The unemployment rate for those aged 15-19 years is almost twice that of people aged over 25. The rate for young adults is double that of young people aged 15-19 years.

Table 1 – Unemployment rates (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>14.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>22.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 2005

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.

Fact 4
Almost 40% of unemployed Australians are under 25. Not all young people have benefited from Australia’s recent economic prosperity and the low levels of unemployment. Australians aged 15 to 24 years comprise 19% of the total labour force aged 15-24, but account for 38.7% of unemployment (at August 2005).

The share of unemployment is only slightly lower than it was at the beginning of the 1990s economic recession (35%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS, 2005).

Fact 5
Around 75% or 212,800 of Australia’s young people aged 15 to 24 are unemployed and 125,000 of these are not in full-time secondary or tertiary education.
Table 3 – Apprentices and Trainees in training in traineeships (see Table 3 and Figure 4).
134% in the nine years to 2004, with growth mainly and new traineeships of one to two years) increased by New Apprenticeships (traditional four year apprenticeships Polesel 2003; NCVER, 2005).

Vocational Education and Training in schools reached (NCVER, 2002; 2004; 2005).

students in VET increased by just under 150% 2004. In the same period, enrolment of Indigenous publicly funded agencies rose by 41% between 1994 and

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

Fact 12
These have significant impacts on young people’s opportunities and future success. The new landscape presents new challenges for young people and current policies are inadequate to meet their needs. The transition from school to work is a complex and risky period in adolescence in another publication in this series.

Conclusion
These facts illustrate that contemporary policy makers 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 new challenges for young people and current policies are inadequate to meet their needs. The transition from school to work is a complex and risky period in adolescence in another publication in this series.

References
 Dunsborough Skills Forum (DSF) (2003) How young people are faring, Key indicators 2003, DINF Gibbo NSW.

Figure 4 – Apprentices and Trainees in training

Fact 11
Almost 26,000 young Australians who had left school early each year are and are not in the labour force or in further education and training in the year after leaving. Some teenagers have left school early with mixed results. Of those who have left school early, approximately one third proceed to further education and one third obtain full time paid work at part time work. Three quarters, however, are in the labour force not in full time education and are at increased risk of long term unemployment (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005).

A report for the Renaissance Council and Dunsborough Skills Forum (Applied Economics, 2002) found that 19% of young women and 36% of males who left school in Year 9 were unemployed six years later. By comparison, only 7% of those who completed Year 12 were unemployed.

Fact 10
90% of young people who leave school early are not in any paid employment. This 90% are faring; Key indicators 2003

Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) (2002)
Glebe NSW.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2005). Their share of unemployment is only slightly less than this in the broad area of the 1992 economic recession (40.3%) (Australian 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 9
Almost 45% of unemployed Australians are under age 25. Not all young people have benefited from Australia’s recent economic prosperity and declining levels of unemployment. Australia aged 11 to 24 years comprise 19% of the total labour force aged 15-24, but account for 38.7% of unemployment (at August 2005). This share of unemployment is only slightly below that seen in the lead up to the 1992 economic recession (40.3%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2005).

Fact 2
Around 75% or 212,000 of Australia’s young people aged 15 to 24 are unemployed and 123,000 of these are not in full time secondary or tertiary education.

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Mission Australia is grateful to the Youth Strategy and Advocacy Group (YSAG) for their support in producing this publication.

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

Mission Australia Research and Social Policy

Source: NCVER 2004; NCVER 2005a

Table 1 – Unemployment rates (%)

Year 15-24 25-29 30-44 45-64 65+
1994 10.5 9.4 9.4 10.4 6.7 13.3 13.9
1996 11.5 11.4 11.4 10.9 6.9 14.3 13.3
1998 12.6 11.9 11.4 11.4 6.4 13.3 13.3
2000 12.6 12.6 11.4 11.4 6.4 13.3 13.3
2002 12.6 12.6 11.4 11.4 6.4 13.3 13.3
2004 12.6 12.6 11.4 11.4 6.4 13.3 13.3
2006 12.6 12.6 11.4 11.4 6.4 13.3 13.3
2008 12.6 12.6 11.4 11.4 6.4 13.3 13.3

Source: ABS 2005

Despite high economic growth over the past decade, international comparisons indicate Australia’s unemployment rate of 11.7% in 2004 is 13.4% above the average of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2005.

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For more information contact: Anne Hampshire National Manager Research and Social Policy Mission Australia Telephone: (02) 9219 7000 Facsimile: (02) 9212 1116 Website: www.missionaustralia.com.au © Mission Australia 2005.

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Fact 8
More than half of this group were not participating in full time education or training during 2005. This reduced the likelihood of their finding work and meaningful employment in the short and medium term.

More than 2.8 million young Australians in 2005 and approximately 5% were looking for employment (ABS, 2005).

Fact 3
The unemployment rate for these age 15-19 years is almost twice that of people aged over 25 years. The risk for young adults is double that of people over 25 years. While unemployment has declined since the early 1980s, Australian youth, particularly teenagers, have experienced significantly higher rates of unemployment than these aged 19-24.
Smoothing the way: Intensive long-term support specifically for young people

These people with significant economic and social challenges often find themselves in a cycle that is difficult to escape. Mission Australia’s Chief Executive Officer, Ashley Rose, says, “it is important to note that young people need more support and assistance than older workers. They require more support and assistance than they already have access to. They need longer term support and assistance. They need much better access to intensive literacy and numeracy support. They need more support and assistance before they can make the transition to work. They require more support and assistance to make sure young people are fully equipped to find work. They need more support and assistance to help young people develop and build their confidence so that they can face the challenges of work.” — Ashley Rose, Mission Australia Chief Executive Officer

The voices of young unemployed people and those who work with them highlight that young people require more support and assistance to make the transition to work. The voices also highlight that young people need more support and assistance to help young people develop and build their confidence so that they can face the challenges of 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 financial stressors. It is essential that the foundations for a smooth transition are put in place to set goals and find the support and assistance they need. In the current environment of scarce and expensive measures and initiatives that are needed to support and assist young people in their transition to work, it is essential that young people are prepared and supported in their transition to work.

To do this, the National Youth Employment Strategy (NYES) aims to ensure that young people are successful in finding work.

The voices highlight that the foundations for a smooth transition from school to further study or employment are laid today for all young people, even those with significant challenges. Young people need more support and assistance to navigate their transition to employment. 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 financial stressors, and need to be supported through systems which allow them to navigate these changes.

The voices of young unemployed people and those who work with them highlight that young people require more support and assistance to make the transition to work. The voices also highlight that young people need more support and assistance to help young people develop and build their confidence so that they can face the challenges of work.

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Numerous job opportunities.

A youth service coordinator working with young people at a community centre said that young people often have a lack of information on how to get started in the labour market, which vary in their attitude and motivation for finding work, explained as youth worker below.

A community worker highlighted how young people are often not interested in the types of work available to them.

Many employers talk to young people about their career goals and their future dreams.

It’s about confidence first and foremost. If someone lacks confidence and faith, then they become a professional person and they say, ‘I’m not good enough to go for that job’.

A youth worker Mission Australia surveyed was critical of the lack of recognition and support for young people.

In Australia’s northern states and territories, the climate and remoteness challenges young people’s smooth transition to employment, further study or vocational training. Some young people expressed it:

One teenager living in a regional town that Mission Australia surveyed often remarked that the availability of complementary employment programs was critical to young people.

Young people and community support workers surveyed by Mission Australia often remarked that the availability of complementary employment programs was critical to young people.

Many of the young people we see have got special educational needs and disabilities. Half of our clients are on individualised employment plans, for people with disabilities who are at risk of long-term unemployment. Rather, a complex set of factors contribute to further study or employment, especially in rural areas.
Getting started and job readiness

Young people experience a range of tasks before they get started in the labour market, which vary in their intensity and duration. Some found that their first job was as a casual worker, while others landed a permanent role right from the start. Many of these young people consulted are acutely aware of the challenges that lie ahead:

It’s hard to get out of your own shell and I don’t feel good. I can’t find a way to understand or even think clearly. They highlight that specialist services are required for the young people to help them develop confidence that more experienced job-seekers possess.

Employers consulted by Mission Australia noted the issue of ‘job readiness’ in young people. They identified that some young people require further support and ministry to develop the skills for employment:

Some young people already have the basics and are ready to start. Ideally, they need to show up and get the skills in training. They can then go on to find work. Some young people don’t seem to have the basics and need to learn these skills. Some of them are skilled and keen to get on with the basics, but they have difficulty finding employment. A young person who is not confident in their ability to meet the requirements of a job is unlikely to seek work.

The coordinator of an Employment Skilling program noted young people are not job ready. The coordinator of an Employment Skilling program in Melbourne, Australia noted the importance of incorporating the basics for success in further study or employment. These include:

Four educational outcomes

- Primary school achievement
- Participation in TAFE or VET study
- Participation in further study or employment
- Employment

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:

- Educational outcomes
- Employment
- Support services
- Social services
- Family support
- Health

Young people in these situations require intensive and ongoing support and assistance to develop ‘the fundamentals’ for succeeding in employment and is one method that companies use to achieve this. In helping young people develop and the kids see this. Achieving the end goal is often more significant in their work. They also have to have a clear understanding of what the expectations are for them to succeed. They need to understand the ‘process’ of getting a job or have a clear understanding of the requirements for employment.

We have a problem with parents encouraging young people not to participate adequately in school because they believe they have less opportunities in life. It’s about confidence first and foremost…if someone can get in the head of a young person that they have that confidence, then this becomes a gateway option for them.

It’s about confidence first and foremost. If someone lacks confidence and fear, then there’s no future in a job. They need someone to be there to get the fear and the drop-offs. We also need to get them to have good values and progress in helping them on their way:

Governments, employers, and TAFE systems need to work together to create a culture of short term thinking. Once it gets embedded, it’s there. A young person who experiences a lack of transport or language assistance is often less likely to pursue education or employment.

We have ongoing demand for all sorts of people in our stores and we often hold responsible positions by the time they’re in their late twenties. We have a problem with parents encouraging young people not to participate adequately in school because they believe they have less opportunities in life. It’s about confidence first and foremost…if someone can get in the head of a young person that they have that confidence, then this becomes a gateway option for them.

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A youth service coordinator working with young people at risk of long-term unemployment pointed to seasonal industries such as agriculture, mining, and timber. Rural youth are forced to work long hours under poor conditions.

Campbelltown Mission Australia's Youth Employment officer said she has noticed that risk of long-term unemployment for young people today. They identified that some young people may require further support and to develop the right skills for employment.

One youth worker said that many young people are not job ready. They struggle with the basics of finding a job, applying for a job, and attending interviews. They may lack confidence in their abilities and fear failure, which can lead to a lack of motivation. Without the fundamentals in place, they may struggle to find a job.

A service with approximately 600 young clients, of whom 7% are Indigenous, works to support young people to complete and succeed in their studies, and identify further education or study.

Location
The location of young people is a significant factor. Young people living in regional areas may require different job opportunities and support services due to their local environment.

For some young people, the lack of employment opportunities and support services may lead to a lack of motivation and confidence in their abilities. Without the fundamentals in place, they may struggle to find a job. The lack of family support and guidance can also contribute to a lack of motivation and confidence.

Young people and community support workers surveyed by Mission Australia also highlighted the importance of family and community support in strengthening young people's confidence and readiness for employment.

Mission Australia's consultations included speaking to four young people living at a 24 hour drug and alcohol treatment centre. Some of them had moved into town in search of work, only to find that there was no farm work available and farming families had moved out of the area. This meant no family support and guidance to help them find work.

The coordinator of an Employment Skilling program noted that young people who have qualifications are often given more attention and support. Those who lack qualifications may receive less attention and support.

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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 successful transition from school to study or employment. Those who work with young people need more support and assistance than older Australians who have been in the labour market and more personal skills to respond to the challenges of young people. 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 as well as education and training.

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

- Poor educational outcomes
- 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 coordinated and integrated approach is needed.

When young people are in work or in training, employability is also clearly identified:

- Long-term support specifically for young people
- A whole of community response
- Educational opportunities

Ensuring young people make a smooth transition from school to further study or employment is more critical today than ever before. Understanding the opportunities and challenges they face in Australia is important to those young people, employers and policymakers.

This Snapshot provides the views of young job seekers, those who work with them, and employers. Approximately 100 consultations were conducted by Mission Australia across Australia, ranging from face-to-face discussions with unemployed young people in regional centres to discussions with stakeholders, such as employers, youth and community services, Mission Australia work with them.

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When young people are in work or in training, employability is also clearly identified:

- Long-term support specifically for young people
- A whole of community response
- Educational opportunities
outside a mainstream that some may have already rejected. They may get involved in criminal activity, work in the Black economy or they get on the wrong side of the law. When you're behind bars you can get destruction and the stupid stuff... like the small crimes and the grand theft auto... self-medication, pan jogging youth housing, lack of coordination and a need for reassurance and certainty that they'll go unnoticed even if they get caught. (JESP 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 demands, such as navigating employment services. They have to go through Centrelink employment services, get their numbers and then they have to find their way home, and then they have to find work, and they have to go through Centrelink services to get their job. Even if they don't find work they'll go home and do other services and they need them all.

the current amount of intensive support provided to young job seekers is insufficient. After-care, placement and follow up is a key to success in getting work. Even if they know about work that's going to be available, then they have to do resumés, and then they are going to Centrelink employment services. They have to go through that, then they have to do Centrelink employment services. They need more intensive support.

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

we are very successful at avoiding long term unemployed young people if they don't have a job.

while we still manage the importance of employability skills, the challenges of retraining were also highlighted.

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

educational opportunities
Raising the incentive for literacy and numeracy support for young people experiencing difficult personal and labour market transitions was highlighted for researcher.

work for the job, and JESP staff remained committed to Mission Australia.

retaining to education was a viable option for some young people. One young female Mission Australia spoke with had left school early and was not sure what to try next. She was using to train at TAFE, but found a bridging program that allowed her to go to TAFE. She described her experience of being able to enrol in a course and then to find work.

she will 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 develop occasional criminal activities. It was essential that young people made a smooth transition from school to further study or employment and be complemented by counselling, advocacy and referral to other services such as mental health and housing where required.

for young people dealing with a range of issues, a recommendation that this training allowed advances towards certification and was complemented by counselling, advocacy and referral to other services such as mental health and housing.

we need to develop employability skills (eg communication skills, the ability to think and problem solve, self management and problem solving skills, self esteem), and we need to develop support skills, social skills, employability.

mission Australia’s jobs in the youth sector are aimed at young people who have left school and are looking for work.

mission Australia’s mission is to spread the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and meet human need.

mission Australia is guided to the Youth Strategy and Activity Group (YAG) for their support in developing the Youth Strategy. The YAG, under the auspices of the Board of Directors, meets regularly to discuss strategy, direction and related matters for the Youth Sector.

mission Australia’s National Research and Social Policy.

we are not always measurable and are often overlooked in more clinical program evaluations.
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 (e.g. 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 30% (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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM NAME</th>
<th>BRIEF DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Network (JN)</td>
<td>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 résumés 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 résumé 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Placement Employment and Training (JPET)</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Support Program (PSP)</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 resumes; 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 (IHSHY)

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.
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’acces a 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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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 Polesel (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 Polesel 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 whether 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors influencing participation</th>
<th>Fully Engaged</th>
<th>Actively Engaging</th>
<th>Precarious Engagement</th>
<th>Disengaging</th>
<th>Marginalised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years Connectedness</td>
<td>• Stable and supportive family and friends</td>
<td>• Stable and supportive family and friendships</td>
<td>• Support from either family or friends</td>
<td>• Some family conflict</td>
<td>• Little family contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leadership roles</td>
<td>• Socially active</td>
<td>• Socially engaged</td>
<td>• Other social support if needed</td>
<td>• Peers experiencing similar personal difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good health</td>
<td>• Minor/periodic health issues</td>
<td>• Reasonable access to treatment but not necessarily early intervention</td>
<td>• Untreated health problems</td>
<td>• Isolated, alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years Physical and mental wellbeing</td>
<td>• Good health</td>
<td>• Minor/periodic health issues</td>
<td>• Reasonable access to treatment but not necessarily early intervention</td>
<td>• Untreated health problems</td>
<td>• Poor physical health and neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ready access to appropriate treatment</td>
<td>• Reasonable access to treatment but not necessarily early intervention</td>
<td>• Untreated health problems</td>
<td>• Emerging risk taking behaviour</td>
<td>• Substance addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Some level of anxiety and stress</td>
<td>• Higher level of anxiety and stress</td>
<td>• Family conflict and some breakdown</td>
<td>• Depression</td>
<td>• Depression and/or self harming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years Social and emotional resilience</td>
<td>• Confident</td>
<td>• Generally confident</td>
<td>• Lack assurance</td>
<td>• Low self esteem and self worth</td>
<td>• Anti social behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Motivated and enthusiastic</td>
<td>• Some self doubt</td>
<td>• Self doubting</td>
<td>• Low morale; demoralised</td>
<td>• Low morale; demoralised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Flexible, capacity to adapt</td>
<td>• Frustrated and lack fulfillment</td>
<td>• Anger</td>
<td>• Homeless, living rough or in supported accommodation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Positive self image</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• In or exiting juvenile justice, child protection</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 years Affordable, secure housing</td>
<td>• Living at home</td>
<td>• Living at home but in some cases would prefer independent living</td>
<td>• May have precarious living arrangements</td>
<td>• Transient</td>
<td>• Experience of being in care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 years Affordable, secure housing</td>
<td>• Possibly still living at home</td>
<td>• Living at home due to finances</td>
<td>• May have precarious living arrangements</td>
<td>• Transient</td>
<td>• In or exiting prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Secure and affordable independent or shared accommodation</td>
<td>• Independent or shared accommodation but periodic returns to home due to cost, insecure renting</td>
<td>• Transient</td>
<td>• Homeless, living rough or in supported accommodation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19 years Appropriate education and training</td>
<td>• Year 12</td>
<td>• Year 12 or equivalent</td>
<td>• Early school leaver</td>
<td>• Early school leaver and not in education/training</td>
<td>• Below Year 9 standard</td>
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<td>• Completed Yr 12 – but may not have clear plan</td>
<td>• Below average literacy or numeracy skills</td>
<td>• Persistent low achievement and academic failure</td>
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<td>• Average literacy and numeracy skills</td>
<td>• Short term plans</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• TAFE/training</td>
<td>• May be considering further education/training</td>
<td>• No clear plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24 years Appropriate education and training</td>
<td>• Tertiary/post graduate study</td>
<td>• Tertiary/post graduate qualification</td>
<td>• May have commenced or be considering further education/training</td>
<td>• May be considering further education/training</td>
<td>• Basic or below literacy and numeracy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Not studying</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Disengaged from education and training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: Participation Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors influencing participation</th>
<th>Fully Engaged</th>
<th>Actively Engaged</th>
<th>Precarious Engagement</th>
<th>Disengaging</th>
<th>Marginalised</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Employability Skills</strong></td>
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<td>15-24 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Well organised and self-managing</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Very good/excellent communication skills</td>
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<td>• Capacity to work co-operatively in a team</td>
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<td>• Capacity to resolve problems</td>
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<td>• Technology skills including advanced school based/tertiary qualification</td>
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<td><strong>Rewarding and secure employment</strong></td>
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<td>15-19 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Combining work/study</td>
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<td>• Secure full time employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Advanced service work, trades</td>
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<td>20-24 years</td>
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<td>• Combining work/study</td>
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<tr>
<td>• May have commenced high skilled, well paid work</td>
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<td>• In high demand</td>
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<td><strong>Financial security</strong></td>
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<td>15-19 years</td>
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<td>• Family financial support</td>
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<td>• May have some income</td>
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<td>20-24 years</td>
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<td>• Family financial support</td>
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<td>• May have some income</td>
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<td>Aspirations/goals</td>
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<td>15-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Educational success</td>
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<td>• Career and salary satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Many job opportunities</td>
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<td>• Travel plans</td>
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<td>• Relationship/family</td>
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<td>• Home ownership</td>
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<td>• Educational success</td>
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<td>• Career and salary satisfaction</td>
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<td>• Job opportunities</td>
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<td>• Travel plans</td>
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<td>• Relationship/family</td>
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<td>• Home ownership</td>
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<td>• Further training/study</td>
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<td>• Home ownership (not assured)</td>
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<td>• Family</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Relationship/family</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Finding full time, secure work</td>
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<td>• Living independently</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Day to day survival</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Short term plans, goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Day to day survival</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No plans, goals</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Factors influencing participation | Who is missing out?
---|---
**Connectedness** | • 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** | • 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** | • 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** | • 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** | • 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors influencing participation</th>
<th>Who is missing out?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employability skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 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).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 50% of Mission Australia Job Network managers identified low motivation as the most important contributor to unemployment amongst young clients (Mission Australia, 2006).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 83% of Mission Australia’s Job Network managers indicated that less than 40% of their young clients were job ready (Mission Australia, 2006).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rewarding and secure employment</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 59% of young women and 21% of males who left school in Year 9 were unemployed seven years later (Applied Economics, 2002).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 212,800 15-24 year olds working part time want more hours (ABS, 2005).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Financial security</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conservatively, there were 145,000 young Australians aged 15-24 years living in poverty in 2000 (Mission Australia, 2003).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Most young carers live in families experiencing financial hardship (Youth Coalition of the ACT, 2005).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aspirations/goals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A comparison of educational aspirations of Year 9 students found that 60% of Indigenous students intended to complete Year 12 compared to 76% of their non Indigenous counterparts. 16% were planning to leave early, 6% higher than for non Indigenous students (ACER, 2005).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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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Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission


Youth Coalition of the ACT (2005) Stop to listen: Findings from the ACT Young Carers Research Project, Canberra, Youth Coalition of the ACT.

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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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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 (e.g., 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.