



Youth Pathways Consultations: Industry workshop

An addendum to the Final Youth Pathways Consultation Report prepared by project Learning Partners the Social Policy and Research Centre, of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty

**Let's make
change
that lasts**

Youth pathways consultations: Industry workshop

Overview

Following on from the first round of youth pathway consultations, Jobs Tasmania sought to canvass industry stakeholders for their critical perspectives on youth pathways to further inform the development of the Youth Jobs Strategy. To this end, a standalone industry workshop was conducted in the weeks following the first round of consultations. This workshop sought to test the findings generated by the previous youth pathway consultations from an industry perspective, to ensure the key challenges for industry in engaging young people had been correctly identified, and any critical missing elements could be captured. The workshop also provided a platform where industry could test the solution ideas that emerged from the previous consultations, and to put forward any others as they saw fit.

This industry workshop was attended by a range of stakeholders with critical industry insights from across the state, including:

- Government stakeholders from relevant youth-adjacent departments and agencies, including DECYP, Skills Tasmania and Jobs Tasmania
- Industry peak bodies and employers
- Early Learning Centres
- Skills and training providers
- Youth and disability advocates

Methodology

Workshop participants were split into three groups, each with a combination of the aforementioned stakeholder representatives. (One group had a concentration of representatives from organisations with an early childhood focus.) The first, **testing** phase of the workshop had participants, in their groups, review the pathway 'themes' (and their related challenges) which had been identified during the previous consultation round. They then indicated which challenges (if any) resonated with them and their experience, and if there were any challenges we hadn't captured (or captured accurately). Groups then reviewed the solution ideas the previous stakeholder groups had already put forward to address these challenges, answering questions such as:

- Which solutions might have the biggest impact and why?
- Are there examples where this is already happening?
- Any solutions that you would change?
- Any new ideas for solutions that we've missed?

Following this discussion was the second, **solution prioritisation** phase of the workshop, where each group was asked to select what they considered to be the most promising solution, and then explore what might be needed for it to be implemented effectively. This discussion involved prompts such as:

- What would it look like in practice?
- What impact it would have?
- Who needs to be involved to make that happen?

To end the workshop, each group was allotted time to review the challenges and solution ideas in relation to each theme, as well as the discussion points and responses other groups had tabled. This approach allowed the three workshop groups to provide each other with feedback and to indicate agreement with any particular points or solution ideas.

Pathway themes*

EMPLOYER CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY	INDUSTRY DISCONNECTION FROM SCHOOLS	COMPLICATED, INCONSISTENT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Many young people lack soft and employability skills needed for entry-level work Some employers don't have the capacity or motivation to accommodate young employees Young people and employers have differing expectations of what entry-level work entails	Many employers and industries as well as service providers are disconnected from schools and unsure how to build links that can help young people transition from school to work Young people and employers have differing expectations of what entry-level work entails	Complicated linkages between young people and employment opportunities creates uncertainty for job seekers and employers Young people are reliant on informal networks to connect with employers and services

*NB: pathway themes have been slightly amended to emphasise industry focus

Youth pathways consultations: Industry workshop

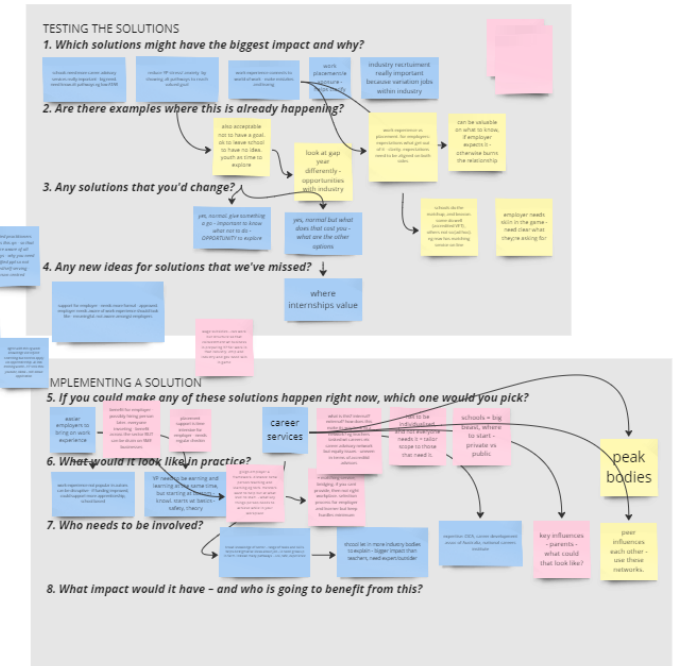
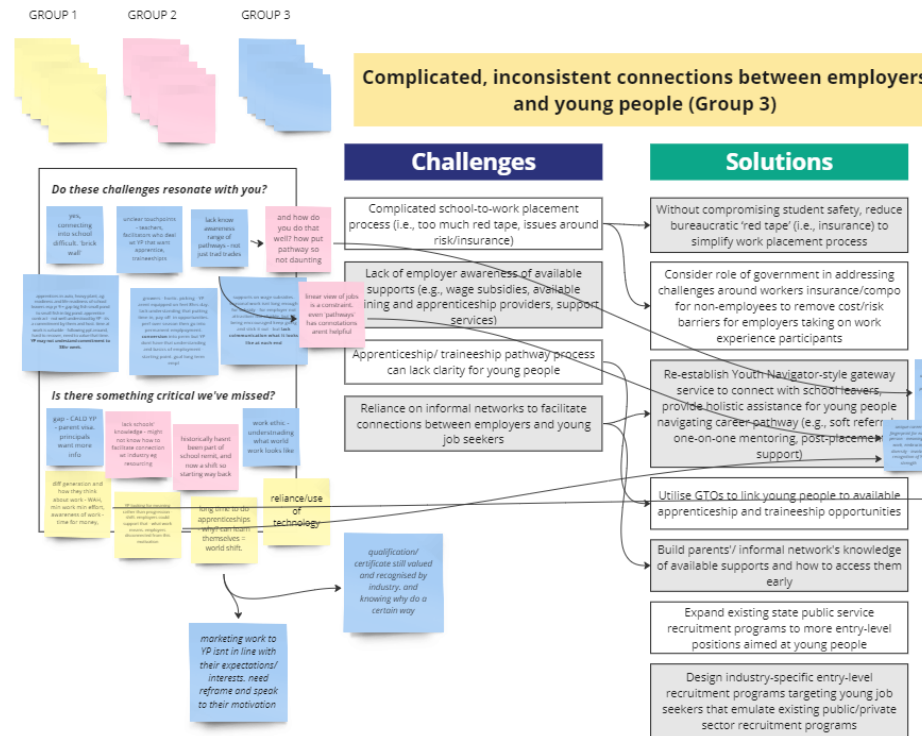
Outputs

This workshop activity provided a wealth of industry insights around the specific challenges experienced by employers and industry when engaging with young people, and new and revised solution ideas for how to address them. These insights and findings are examined further in the following slides:

- **Testing youth pathway challenges and solutions:** commonalities and points of difference between first consultation round participants and industry stakeholders (*Slides 5-7*)
- **Prioritising and developing solutions:** solutions recommended by industry stakeholders to address youth pathway challenges (*Slides 9-11*)

It should be noted that all information presented on the following slides, including comments, recommendations and solution ideas, was directly informed by the industry workshop discussions.

That SPARC has collated and presented this information does not imply an endorsement of these recommendations and ideas. Jobs Tasmania's involvement in organising and observing this consultation process also does not imply an endorsement on its behalf. Rather, Jobs Tasmania is willing to explore opportunities to further develop these suggestions.



Discussion notes for Theme 3, as part of the workshop activity.

Testing youth pathway challenges and solutions

Commonalities and points of difference between first
consultation round participants and industry
stakeholders

Employer capability and capacity

CHALLENGES

Which challenges resonated	Comments	Anything critical we may have missed
Many young people lack soft and employability skills needed for entry-level work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of young people's employability and soft skills is one of the biggest barriers to employers employing young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assumption that 'soft skills' look the same across different employers and industries is problematic, and highlights that education is needed to provide clarity on these definitions There's a lack of clear information regarding pathway steps, such as the range of roles available in an industry, how to move within and across industries, and the particular skills and experience employers need to enable effective pathway planning. Young people also need help to understand and identify what are transferable skills
Some employers aren't equipped to accommodate youth challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reluctance by industry to take on young people without sufficient internal resources, such as HR role 	
Some employers are reluctant or unable to take on young people due to cost and other labour market pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost is a major barrier to youth employment, particularly for small businesses, and means only limited opportunities can be offered Many employers are not sufficiently aware of the funded supports/incentives available to assist with taking on young people While some employers view youth employment as a long-term investment, many see it as a cost and potential for high turnover; need to shift focus from immediate benefits for individual businesses to long-term collective benefits of investing in youth workforce 	
Young people and employers have differing expectations of what entry-level work entails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misaligned expectations between young people and employers of what's required to facilitate successful entry-level employment opportunities is a key challenge to successful employment outcomes Younger generations think about work differently, so providing them an awareness of what world of work looks like is critical to establishing work ethic and understanding of what's required 	
Unsuccessful placements of young people leads to high turnover of staff for employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System barriers such as limited regional access of services (e.g., transport, housing) shows need for wraparound supports to assist workforce 	

SOLUTIONS

Which solution ideas resonated	Comments	New solution ideas suggested
Expand internships, work-based learning, and school-based apprenticeships that are connected to real work opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunity for young people and employers to assess each other and provides greater exposure to a range of pathway options within industry Opportunity to do this for small business owners; e.g., several employers each offer one type of taster, creating rotation across suite of pathway options within an industry and connecting to work based learning opportunities Make it easier for employers to engage with young people (i.e., removing red tape, costs, admin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build family capacity to develop young people's work readiness (e.g., workplace expectations, work ethics) Develop a toolkit resource but for supply side, around soft/employability skills to build readiness to take on entry-level positions; there's already a range of resources out there which can be built on
Utilise Group Training Organisations to frame youth employment as a value proposition to local businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GTOs are for profit and hence not set up to provide these functions, however they often do (albeit financially motivated) – what elements of this work can be drawn/built upon, and who should provide it? 	
Programs that assist small businesses to tailor recruitment/onboarding processes and create positive, culturally safe workplaces for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing business mentoring/capability building programs need to evolve and use tech advances to adapt tools to meet diverse needs (e.g., AI) and look to close the gap between young and older employee Resourcing and support for employers to be best employer they can be 	

Industry disconnection from schools

CHALLENGES

Which challenges resonated	Comments	Anything critical we may have missed
Industry engagement with schools is made difficult due to high staff turnover at schools, lack of clear contact points, uncertainty around how to engage schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting into schools is difficult; like a 'brick wall' • Connections between schools and industry can be unreliable as they're often place-dependent and ad hoc • High staff turnover in schools undermines often person-dependent relationships with schools, which frustrates industry • Schools and their staff are too busy to establish and manage relationships with industry • While education department may have structures for connections between schools and industry, there's missing piece around who performs that conduit role facilitating those relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with school-to-work placement process aren't due to complexity as they are to communication • Staff turnover for employers also leads to uncertainty in relationships with schools • The transient nature of industry roles and programs makes it hard for schools to keep up with available opportunities • Schools being driven by completion rates means students can miss out on opportunities prior to year 12 • Connectedness with schools varies across industries; some are highly engaged 'favourites'
Career education isn't aligned with industry opportunities in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be a mindset shift away from focusing on 'orthodox' pathways towards all other pathway types • Career education in schools lacks variety, alignment to young people's interests, and clarity for students around why it may be in their interests to seek work experience • Schools need more career advisory services, with a particular focus on knowing 'alternative' pathways for those with low ATAR 	

SOLUTIONS

Which solution ideas resonated	Comments	New solution ideas suggested
Develop career education model that involves various touch points along young people's journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DECYP are connecting different streams of work and preparing to deliver in 2024 a new suite of resources and models/prototypes around career education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to understand why employers and industry are feeling disconnected
Design senior school and training programs around growth sectors in that region to develop local industry pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DECYP in 2024 aiming to design senior school/training programs to this end 	

Complicated, inconsistent connections between employers and young people

CHALLENGES

Which challenges resonated	Comments	Anything critical we may have missed
Complicated school-to-work placement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's critical to ensure safety in school-to-work placements Lots of red tape and other barriers such as hours limits, risk and insurance requirements Many schools lack knowhow in connecting with industry; historically not in their remit Young people lack awareness of range of pathways beyond traditional trades Linear view of jobs and 'pathways' carries connotations that aren't accurate or helpful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business supports sometimes aren't fit-for-purpose (e.g., seasonal work isn't long enough to qualify for wage subsidies) Young people are looking for meaning rather than just career progression and employers are disconnected from this motivation (NB: previous stakeholder groups instead believed young people are too focused on progress and not participation) Marketing of work to young people isn't in line with their expectations or interests – need to reframe and speak to their motivation Young people's use and reliance on technology
Apprenticeship/traineeship pathway process can lack clarity for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity for both young people and teachers/supporters who want to facilitate apprenticeship/traineeship, such as unclear touchpoints, confusing contracts, lack of understanding of work commitments and expectations Many young people don't understanding 'putting time in' now will convert to future career opportunities and permanent employment Significant duration of apprenticeships can be a disincentive for young people; other qualifications and certificates are also recognised by industry and may be better options for young people 	

SOLUTIONS

Which solutions resonated	Comments	New solution ideas suggested
Re-establish Youth Navigator-style gateway service to connect with school leavers, providing holistic assistance for young people navigating career pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce stress for young people by showing 'alternative' pathways to reach valued goal; however it's also acceptable not to have goal as youth is time to explore different industry opportunities Need qualified practitioners who are aware of all pathways options and take person-centred approach that embraces diversity, strengths and 'unique career fingerprint' of each person Qualified practitioners who aren't biased and self-serving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage subsidies can work but need to include co-investment with business in preparing young people for work in that industry; employers, industry and government need skin in game
Simplify work-placement process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear expectations on what employers and young people want to get out of work placements/exp Reform Working with Vulnerable People check requirement; a holistic approach is needed e.g., potential policy change to shift processes around worksite safety Insurance could be made responsibility of private sector; risk assessments could be put onto employers to ease burden on young people and schools Schools to match young people to work placements, assisted by organisations like Beacon 	
Design industry-specific entry-level recruitment programs targeting young job seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry recruitment is really important because of the variation of jobs within industry 	

Prioritising and developing solutions

Solutions recommended by industry stakeholders to address youth pathway challenges

Recommended solutions

Employer capability and capacity

Recommended solution	Enhanced post-placement support to address challenges in the workplace as they arise (e.g., misaligned expectations between young people and employers; young employee's soft/non-vocational barriers)
What would it look like in practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Functions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved data collection, feedback mechanisms and information sharing to identify and disseminate effective approaches across industry/ies• Pre-placement assessment (with employers and young people) to understand what their post-placement needs will be• Suite of offerings that can be tailored to account for different needs of employers and young people• Navigating language differences (between employers and young people) to ensure they are on same page• Building capability to have conversations focused on solutions and different approaches (e.g., round table discussions)• Employers having someone to help identify and coordinate the post-placement support they need• Logistics:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to determine frequency of support (weekly/monthly/once and then check-in later/check-in as needed); capacity to flex up and down as required and for different modes for delivery (e.g., face-to-face/online/AI tools)• To bear in mind:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to design for the different structural and support access barriers that each region presents
Who needs to be involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Range of employers across industry to understand what helps to resolve the major barriers at the local level and to design the intervention• Industry peaks can provide post-placement support• Young people (i.e., through YNOT) to determine what is most useful to them• Skills Tasmania to supply data and learnings around apprenticeships that have broken down as to better understand what's needed• JT needs to identify how current government-funded programs and supports can contribute to and enable this priority solution• Subject matter experts, depending on who's involved (e.g., cultural diversity, disability)
Potential impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employers build capability and confidence to retain young employees and adapt their approach to young people where necessary• Greater alignment of expectations between young people and employers – of what's required of each other and of entry-level work• Support that is tailored to individuals and to place

Recommended solutions

Industry disconnection from schools

Recommended solution Establishing and/or expanding a conduit role between schools and industry/employers

What would it look like in practice?

- Functions:
 - Intermediary role between supported environment (school) and next (usually unsupported) phase
 - Leading and facilitating as the labour market and EET ecosystem changes
 - An industry registrar that provides information and is a point of contact for industry
 - The Transition to Work 'network role' is potentially comparable
 - Logistics:
 - An individual conduit role or advisor per specific industry
 - Could be a conduit per region
 - Components of the role could be broken up across a team or organisation, potentially comprising several individuals; the function of the role is more important than who performs it; means it's not person-dependent
 - The role could sit within an existing organisation
 - Could be a youth facilitator within industry bodies
 - Potentially established via longer term funding (e.g., 26TEN model)
 - To bear in mind:
 - Skillset for industry engagement is different to building relationships with young people and mentoring
 - Needs to be consistent across Commonwealth system
 - Needs to be stable and to generate ongoing stability – Youth Connectors can lead some of this work
-

Who needs to be involved?

- RJH/Youth Connectors
 - Industry peak bodies, however need to be cognisant of variation in capacity to perform this role across different peak bodies
 - Apprenticeship centres
 - Skills Tasmania (i.e., schools-based apprenticeship unit)
-

Potential impacts

- Industry will see value of role
- Intersects with/encompasses all other solutions ideas related to this theme
- Less person dependency in relationships between schools and industry stakeholders
- Smoother transitions for young people between school and the next phase in their journey to employment

Recommended solutions

Complicated, inconsistent connections between employers and young people

Recommended solution	Career guidance services
What would it look like in practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Functions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A resource with broad knowledge of the sector/s, with a range of skills• Needs to be individualised• Clear understanding of the various pathway options available; not just school to university or apprenticeship• Schools letting in more industry bodies to explain their sector to young people• Logistics:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools and the education system are complicated; it isn't clear where to start (i.e., private, public)• To bear in mind:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Its scope should to be tailored to those who need it, for some would benefit while others don't require it
Who needs to be involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peers influence each other – use these networks• Peak bodies as an expert 'outsider' in schools• Parents are a key influence and consideration should be given to how they can be leveraged• Harness the expertise of the Career Industry Council of Australia, Career Development Association of Australia, National Careers Institute
Potential impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps destigmatise young people's ideas about jobs and work• Having industry bodies come into schools to connect directly with students as an external expert will have a bigger impact on young people's knowledge and understanding of careers than teachers

Conclusion: comparing industry workshop with previous consultation findings

Commonalities

A principle aim of this industry workshop was to test the insights and findings from the first round of consultations. Generally, we found there to be strong alignment across both consultation rounds, both in terms of the key challenges facing young people that were identified, and the solutions put forward to address them. Many of the insights generated over the first consultation round resonated with industry stakeholders, such as the need to strengthen connections between industry, schools and young people; the complexity of school-to-work placements – both for young people and employers; misaligned expectations between these two groups about what’s required of themselves and each other in entry-level roles; the occasional reluctance or inability of employers to hire young people, often due to lack of resourcing and financial pressures; and the mutual benefits of increasing young people’s exposure to the range of pathway options within industry. These commonalities across the first consultation group, and the industry stakeholders, are detailed on the preceding pages. There was also clear overlap in the ‘recommended solutions’ each group put forward (shown in table, right).

Industry workshop proposed solutions	Consultation round 1 proposed solutions
Enhanced post-placement support to address challenges in the workplace as they arise	Solution idea 2.1.3: Strengthen and expand post-placement support interventions to support both employers and young people, ensuring mechanisms are in place to pre-emptively identify and resolve challenges in the workplace
Establishing and/or expanding a conduit role between schools and employers/industry	Solution idea 1.2.3: Establish a conduit role that is consistent across schools, to provide a touch point for employers and service providers, and provide training to guide teachers on the process of referring students to school conduit role
Bolstered career guidance services	Solution idea 1.3.1: Establish and sustain Youth Navigator-style gateway service, working in concert with school conduit role to connect with young people upon leaving school, that provides holistic assistance for young people navigating career pathway; Solution idea 3.1.2: Develop a career education model that involves various touch points along young people’s journey aligned to each developmental stage (e.g., aspiration building and ‘dreaming’ from early age; vocational guidance and industry exposure throughout secondary school; post-school transitional support)

Differences

There were however some points of difference between the two consultation groups. For example, in terms of *Employer capability and capacity*, industry stakeholders said it was misguided to assume that ‘soft skills’ look the same across different employers and industries. They said education is needed to clarify these definitions and to ascertain the specific skills employers need.

In terms of *Industry disconnection from schools*, while similar themes emerged around high staff turnover and the lack of clear contact points at schools, industry stakeholders spoke of how staff turnover for *employers*, and the transient nature of industry programs and roles, can make this connection piece equally challenging for schools. It was also pointed out that while many industries are indeed disconnected from schools, some are in fact closely connected, and that the cause of this inconsistency needs to be addressed.

For *Complicated, inconsistent connections between employers and young people*, a notable difference was that industry stakeholders didn’t focus on the ‘reliance on informal networks’ as much as previous consultation groups, if at all. The consultation groups also diverged in their views of young people’s motivations for pursuing employment. For instance, some industry stakeholders considered young people to value meaningful employment over mere career progression, while previous consultation stakeholders believed young people are too focused on career progress, and not enough on meaningful EET participation. Industry stakeholders also gave important insights into access issues around business supports, which they’ve found sometimes have eligibility criteria which are not fit-for-purpose.

Capturing where industry insights challenge or qualify our existing findings provides us with a perspective we either weren’t aware of or hadn’t given much credence to. This testing process strengthens the consultation process as a whole.