

Best Practice Guide

# Youth Career Programs

February 2019



real skills for  
real careers



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## Introduction

This Best Practice Guide – Youth Career Programs has been compiled by AEN, with input from Group Training Organisations (GTOs), youth, schools and employers who have been involved in over 170 pre-apprenticeship programs during 2016-18. These programs trialed various themes in industries supporting apprenticeships and traineeships including:

- Engineering and Automotive
- Building and Construction
- Land, Food and Fibre
- Business and Community Care Services.

Programs were developed to:

- Assist youth in making better informed career choices
- Provide work ready candidates and recruitment support for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- Improve non-completion rates in Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

Current data indicates that 42% of apprentices and trainees do not complete their contract of training and almost 30% cancel within the first 12 months. There are undoubtedly many reasons why an individual fails to complete their apprenticeship, however high levels of non-completion or attrition, especially within the first 12 months, indicate that many young people make the “wrong choice” at the beginning of their journey.

Data collected on reasons for ‘non-completion’ in 2016-17 by NCVET in the Student Outcomes Survey shows that the single most significant reason for not completing the apprenticeship was “Changed job or started a new job – 32%” followed by “Family or personal reasons” – 16%. This follows similar results in earlier surveys and indicates that the ‘wrong choice’ contributes significantly to non-completion, thus supporting the need to provide ways to assist youth in making the ‘right choice’.

Each of these false starts consumes government, business and personal resources, money and time. The individual may lose future government funded training eligibility, motivation for employment and could experience delays in earning capacity, these losses and the emotional energy consumed can be avoided with the “right choice”. Supporting youth to make informed career choices in Apprenticeship/Traineeship industries is one way to assist in improving Apprentice and trainee completion rates. Research also suggests that business and employers can lose faith in supporting future youth in an apprenticeship when their apprentice fails to complete.

**“Schools must equip students to make informed work and study choices throughout their lives. Career education, work exploration and work-related curriculum are vital so that students can explore career options and understand the nature and expectations of different jobs and industries.”**

In the recent Career and Skills Pathways report, it was identified that career support in Australia exists but it may be inadequate. Two of the key areas where the current support model fails are:

- Career development skills are critical to employability and future career management, but users tend to have little to no awareness of career development until they are exposed to it through a career practitioner.
- Alternative pathways and work experience options are not always considered, or individuals lack the know-how, skills, or resources to investigate these options.

Two recommendations from The Apprenticeships Reform Advisory Group Report 2016 are:

- Recommendation 5 - “The Australian Government, in partnership with states and territories, develops a nationally consistent approach to the delivery of apprenticeship related career advice to school leavers. This career advice must more effectively promote apprenticeships and clearly outline pathways to an apprenticeship.”
- Recommendation 14 - “The Australian Government identifies options for building a systemic approach to developing work readiness among young people across the school and VET sectors, including clearly defining different stages of work readiness and linking training pathways and programmes that deliver language, literacy and numeracy (LLN), pre-employment, pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship skills and outcomes.”

The recently released “Preparing Secondary Students for Work - 2018” presented by the Department of Education and Training, sets out a framework for vocational learning and vocational education and training delivered to secondary students. It states that “schools must equip students to make informed work and study choices throughout their lives. Career Education, work exploration and work-related curriculum are vital so that students can explore career options and understand the nature and expectations of different jobs and industries.”

AEN utilised the research of reports like these to develop the guidelines for this program. GTOs were encouraged to design unique pilot programs to deliver multi-industry experiences which provided career guidance, work experience, job search and industry information to young people seeking a career in a vocational skills industry. The many successful programs designed and delivered have been evaluated to determine common themes and best practices to assist with the development of this guide.

## Background

In 2016, the Australian Government funded AEN to pilot a Multi-Industry School Based and Pre-Apprenticeship Support Project (MIP). Programs under the MIP aimed to better support young people make a more informed career choice through trialling a range of industries with a focus on hands-on training and real life work experience with host employers and supported by GTOs.

The aim of the pilot programs was to provide young people with multiple apprenticeship/traineeship pathways, relevant industry experience and to allow participants to explore:

- what vocational education and training (VET) and apprenticeships are like
- what skills and attributes are needed in specific trades/industries
- the career pathways VET and apprenticeships may lead to

During 2016-18 more than 170 different MIP programs were implemented by local Group Training Organisations (GTOs). The MIP supported over 2000 school based and under-employed youth across metropolitan and regional NSW, ACT, Victoria and Tasmania.

The programs trialled various methods to support participants through a range of industry experiences to assist young people make a more informed choice about further study or employment pathways in vocational (apprenticeship) industries.

Key aspects of the programs included:

- Hands-on experience and knowledge sharing in multiple industries and occupations
- Collaborative relationships between program stakeholders
- Supporting youth to make informed decisions to enter a vocational career pathway, and to gain and complete an apprenticeship or traineeship for those who choose this pathway
- Exploring 3-4 trade/industry areas and developing an understanding of the career needs in regards to:
  - Language Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) skills
  - Workplace readiness - understanding employer expectations
  - Sustainability and environmental requirements of particular industries
  - Legal requirements of working in particular industries
  - Business processes, project management and communication skills
  - New and emerging technology for particular industries
  - Career and further study pathways available in different industries

Program measures included:

- Young adults' knowledge of apprenticeships/traineeships and industries of theme at entry and exit of project
- Participants' assessment of value of various elements
- Assistance for participant's career decisions
- Work experience host employers' view of individual work and industry readiness, attitude and aptitude
- Work experience host employers' view of the value of, and experience needed, to host work experience.

**Over 50% of participants found their career of interest is now different to what they previously thought**



# Key Results 2016-18



**2205**  
Participants



**1046**  
Attending School



**22%**



**78%**

**90%**

of participants reported the program helped in making a career decision



**1159**  
Unemployed Youth

**7%**

Had a disability

**5%**

Non-english speaking background

**8%**

Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander

**36%**

Long-term unemployed

## Participants rating the elements of the project as very to extremely valuable



Work Placement



Practical Project Workshop



Industry Information



WHS Training for Industry



Specific Trade Subject



Sharing Industry Experience



Career Session



Work-ready and LL&N Training

**50%**



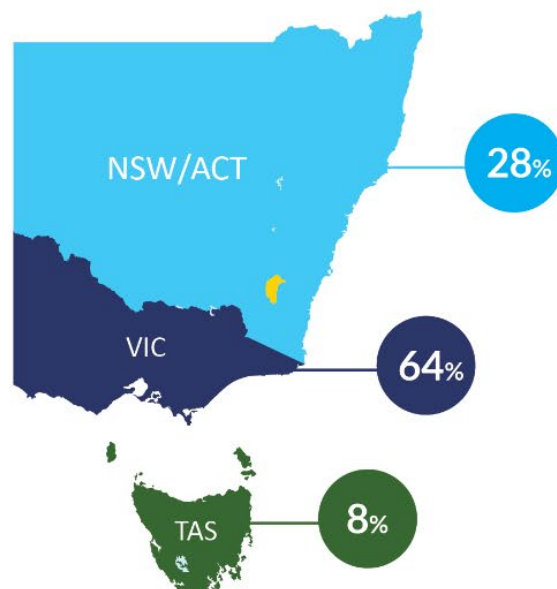
of participants had a change in career interest by the end of the program

**75%**



of participants' work-readiness rated 4.5 out of 5 by employers

## State Participation



## Program Themes



Building & Construction

**30%**



Engineering & Automotive

**13%**



Business & Services

**12%**



Land, Food and Fibre

**5%**



Combination

**40%**

# How do stakeholders benefit from a successful Youth Career Program?

## For Participants

- Practical hands-on experience
- Opportunity to explore multiple careers and build knowledge of options and personal aptitude
- Introduction to a range of pathways within industries, including less publicised career paths
- Information about working in different careers:
  - Basic skills
  - What it is like to work in a particular career
  - Information about the industry
  - An understanding of where the job can lead
  - Connection into the industry
- Industry outlook, an understanding of advancements in technology, and Job search information
- The opportunity to “trial” working in a business where the positives and negatives of a job are experienced
- Understanding of further training and working pathways
- Personal growth, motivation and direction
- Enhanced opportunity to enter a career providing job satisfaction and success

## For Industry and Employers

- Provides industry with new entrants who have chosen an apprenticeship after experiencing a range of options
- The opportunity to “trial” potential apprentice candidates in their business where they can evaluate the participants’ on the job skills and aptitude
- Opportunity to work with schools and training organisations to develop a pipeline of skilled staff for industry

## For Group Training Organisations and Employment Agencies

- Candidates for apprenticeships can make an informed decision about the career they want to pursue
- Successful programs attract interested young people and create links to organisations in the community
- Opportunity to seek host employers’ feedback and provide motivated candidates for hosts, improving relationships and trust



## For schools and training providers

- More engaged students
- Support for school career programs and co-ordinators
- Feedback and support on students' progress
- Links to industry and jobs
- Stronger engagement with parents/family

## For the wider community

- Guidance and support for young people to transition into a career
- Direct linkages to local employment opportunities
- Stronger understanding of career and education pathways
- Enhance community networks
- Link industry with schools and training providers for greater community engagement
- Support for job seekers experiencing disadvantage, including:
  - Women in non-traditional trades
  - Youth with a disability
  - Indigenous
  - Long-term unemployed
  - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)
  - Youth from a non-English speaking background



## Attributes of Successful Youth Career Programs

In reviewing the projects that have been implemented over the past three years, five key success factors have been identified for designing and implementing a successful Youth Career Program:



# Success Factor 1.

Aligning with Local Employment Opportunities



## Success Factor 1. Aligning with Local Employment Opportunities

Assisting young people to make career choices that lead to employment is a key goal of any Youth Career Program. Designing programs to meet employment needs both locally and further afield, in addition to providing skills and information about those employment opportunities is essential for success.

### Local industry

Having a strong connection to local industry and business, getting in early with new developments, knowing where new jobs are coming online and knowing where there are employee shortages are essential for a successful program. Understanding the pathways from entry-level local jobs to careers in the region is a critical part of the role of agencies helping youth into careers.

If you are not a GTO, build a strong relationship with local GTOs, employment agencies, and local employers. If you are a GTO, look to your host employers with new contracts or recent expansion. Understanding and building local employer relationships is critical.

### Employer and Youth expectations and obligations

Career expectations and career opportunities are often misaligned. This can be at a personal level, a skills level or a geographical level. Programs need to take participants into the reality of their aptitude, expectations and opportunities. Understanding yourself and your own circumstances is a critical part of making a career decision which is realistic. It is the role of the program to:

- Liaise with local employers to understand their needs and expectations, discuss realistic expectations in the region
- Teach youth about employers needs and expectations
- Alert youth to the good and the bad side of different forms of employment and various careers
- Provide youth and employers with the knowledge of their obligations, expectations and entitlements in the work place
- Ensure all parties are aware of information you have provided to the other in a transparent and concise manner
- Show all parties where to go if they need help
- Provide youth with the tools to investigate and research different career options and pathways available locally and further afield
- Assist youth to monitor industry growth and development for employment opportunities



## Incorporate multiple experiences

Select a range of skills for multiple pathways available in your region for your program. An attractive mix of experiences will:

- Allow youth to compare available options
- Provide business with job matched candidates
- Provide job seeking youth with more than one career preference
- Increase community knowledge of the local opportunities
- Assist in arranging 'real' and valuable work experience opportunities matched to the needs of youth and employers

For further information please visit:

Preparing secondary students for work: <http://www.pssfw.myskills.gov.au>







# Success Factor 2.

Engaging with stakeholders



## Success Factor 2. Engaging with stakeholders

Youth Career Programs work predominately with two cohorts of participants, those still at school and those who have left school and are under-employed. Recruitment and stakeholder involvement varies for the different cohorts.

### School Based programs

The success of School Based programs is highly dependent on the relationship with the school and their staff. Programs working with multiple schools need to be tightly coordinated and planned.

Considerations include:

- planning with the school well in advance
- meeting the student's and the school's needs
- gathering support from the principal and school/careers teachers
- scheduling the program into the school timetable
- communicating with parents and students
- supervision requirements
- travel requirements
- parent/guardian consent
- planning school release for work experiences
- arranging host employers prior to commencement so that they meet school requirements

### Programs for under-employed youth

To connect with under-employed youth, use local employment agencies, community and social enterprises, local government and the media to help with the recruitment of participants. Promotion through social media, sporting and community clubs can greatly assist with improving the promotion of career programs.

Links with employment agencies will additionally provide connection with potential local employment opportunities. Engagement needs to be initiated well before the program starts and include local knowledge of the job market to design a program to meet the local employment needs.

### Engagement with Employers

The experience of Youth Career Programs indicates that having employers come into programs early to meet with participants and talk about what their world is like and their expectations, is a very effective way to deliver industry knowledge. If you are able to connect with employers who are interested in local youth and the skill needs of their industry, these relationships may:

- lead to greater work experience opportunities
- promote participants to employers
- provide clear examples and understanding of workplace expectations

## Working closely with Training Providers

Working early and closely with your training provider is essential. Youth Career Programs don't have to deliver accredited training, so you have the opportunity to design innovative and unique programs.

Discuss with your internal or external training provider:

- the complete program concept, your needs as the program driver in regards to content, delivery, scheduling, communications with all stakeholders and the intended outcomes
- financial arrangements –allocations of costs/income
- who has the expertise and will be responsible for each element of the program
- what range of industry skills and type of exposure will be provided
- delivery of supporting work readiness training
- the LLN needs for the industry
- opportunities for hands-on projects and simulated work and methods of evaluation

## Group Training Organisations (GTOs)

GTOs are the single biggest employer of apprentices and trainees in each state and territory, and nationally. GTOs' experience in working with youth leads them to the understanding that young people are at the critical point of deciding what career path they wish to follow and that they need to be equipped with as much experience and information about the opportunities available to them as possible.

GTOs are represented across Australia and have a strong presence in regional areas. They have large networks relating to training and employment within their industries and localities.

GTOs provide the link between all stakeholders in Youth Career Programs.

## Establish a Support Network

Working with youth, in particular disadvantaged and disengaged young people, can lead to issues which you and your team may not be equipped to handle. Establishing a support network of specialist providers will allow you to refer participants to the appropriate support agency in a timely manner. This will take the pressure off your staff, allow for the program to continue with minimal disruption and provide suitable professional care when needed.



## Elements of program design demonstrating high levels of engagement

- A dedicated person/resource to communicate with stakeholders and participants. Groups of pre-apprentices responded well to a single point of contact who they saw as a peer. A successful pre-apprentice summarised this with the comment 'youth respond to youth'.
- Both school and pre-apprenticeship groups with a single point of GTO contact delivered excellent outcomes including a high level of work experience host satisfaction.
- Detailed schedule design to best match practical training with work experience, ensure appropriate work readiness and WHS knowledge for industry prior to work experience.
- A comprehensive induction outlining to participants the program design, detailed scheduling, intended benefits and outcomes and commitment required to complete the program.
- Considerable planning and communication with local employers to schedule work experience and explain the need for the participants to experience the world of work and multiple skills.
- Requesting that participants treat the program co-ordinator and work experience host as their 'employer' and work experience hosts treat their participant as an apprentice.
- Work Experience Guidelines developed for participants and host employers.
- Work Experience reporting and discussion with all stakeholders providing opportunity to reiterate the value of the opportunity to 'try' a trade prior to commitment.
- Sharing industry information acquired at work experience between participants, and participants hearing from employers in the industry.

For further information, please visit:

Preparing secondary students for work <http://ww.pssfw.myskills.gov.au>





## Engaging with Stakeholders – Actions in practice

**Find partners to complement your expertise** – An apprentice employer organisation teamed with a youth welfare organisation to present a pre-apprenticeship program providing a range of trade experiences. Both organisations supported the participants throughout the program. They clearly defined their roles so they did not duplicate, complicate or contradict services or advice given to their participants.

**Good communication is the key** – A program provider delivering a school-based work experience project developed a strong engagement program for parents, contacting them prior to and after each round of work experience. These conversations led to excellent participant attendance rates with families supporting transport to and from work experience blocks and assisting their children to manage other commitments. Successful programs develop various methods to communicate with a range of stakeholders. Methods include individual follow up with participants, parents, schools and host employers, and broader communication through social media, newsletters, surveys and local media.

**Plan your program with your partners** – A provider of pathways to SBATs developed their relationship with a local school, offering innovative hands-on work experience in the school. Together they explored each other's program needs and outcome requirements, their organisational strengths and limitations in youth pathways and integrated their programs to achieve excellent outcomes for all stakeholders.

**Spread the word** – An organisation that employs school-based apprentices approached their local TAFE colleges to develop 'Taster' programs across a broad range of skills that matched local employment opportunities. The high level of unified and consistent communications by the program partners to other stakeholders provided the local community with clear expectations of the programs. This in turn raised support from employers, businesses and other organisations in the wider community.

**Keep everyone well informed** – Providers of multi-skill pre-apprenticeship programs engaged with their local employer networks by:

- being the central communication 'hub', communicating regularly with those attending work experience, their work experience hosts and participants' parents and schools
- preparing work experience guides for hosts, journals for work experience participants to complete and surveys seeking feedback from hosts

**Develop strong partnerships** – Providers of successful programs developed strong partnerships across a range of stakeholders. Examples include working with job search and youth pathways providers to reach out to underemployed and unemployed youth, remaining in close contact with these supporting partners and setting up communication and collaboration networks with each organisation to ensure all stakeholders were aware of their own and each other's responsibilities.

**Engage with government and departments** – Organisations which managed their engagement with all levels of government were well positioned to understand the state and federal funding initiatives related to career decision programs and relevant training opportunities. These organisations were then able to develop programs offering substantial support to participants including those with significant barriers to employment.

## What have employers thought about Youth Career Programs in the past?



## Why do employers (SMEs) participate in work experience programs?

- 87.1 % - Help young people understand the industry
- 29.6 % - Find a suitable future apprentice/trainee

# Success Factor 3.

Meaningful Program Design



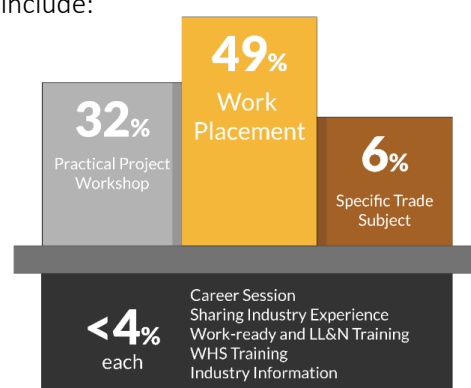
## Success Factor 3. Meaningful Program Design

The design of a Youth Career Program provides the opportunity for wide interpretation and innovation but there are some core elements to any program, which aims to prepare young people for the world of work. These core elements provide participants with the basic skills and knowledge to fully benefit from a work experience opportunity. The program needs to provide a range of experiences and knowledge so the participant can make an informed decision about their future career path. To ensure that these key learnings are provided and the program is a success, a range of core elements should be considered.

Feedback from past program participant surveys reinforces that participants enjoy programs that have a wide variety of experiences. Program design considerations should include:

### Hands-on training

Hands-on experience in a range of industries is essential – this experience does not need to be part of a traditional or accredited program. The idea is to provide participants with the opportunity to explore and learn work skills, to develop a basic understanding of the trades they are interested in, and enough skills to manage work experience in these trades, and to provide an understanding of their interests, aptitude and abilities.



*A summary of past surveys indicates participants enjoyed practical elements*

### Engaging under-represented youth

Designing a program that encourages and supports youth from a wide range of backgrounds is critical. Take time to understand the needs of individuals and the support they might require at various stages of a program. Under-represented groups may include:

- Women in non-traditional trades
- Youth with a disability
- Mental health issues
- Indigenous
- Long-term unemployed
- CALD

### Full range of industry information

Although the training does not have to be extensive, the information you provide to participants has to be substantial. Two of the most popular ways to provide industry information is to have guest speakers from the industry, and group discussions following work experience. The basic information that should be provided includes:

- the type of work and work environment
- pay and conditions
- career qualifications, roles and pathways
- industry expectations
- Workplace Health & Safety considerations and skills
- emerging career options and technologies
- skills and aptitude requirements of industry

## Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) training for relevant industries

WHS needs to be an integral part of all programs which are preparing youth for a career. It can also be a great way to value add to trade themed programs. WHS induction qualifications provide the relevant information, skills and an outcome, however it is not always appropriate for the program you are presenting.

Please refer to your industry and state-based regulations relating to:

- the work which can be undertaken during work experience programs
- work experience limitations for people still attending school
- industry specific requirements such as working from heights or in confined spaces
- industry specific guidelines and regulations

## Engaging content

Matching content to participant's skills and learning style is critical. Although programs can deliver all or part of an accredited course, you can also use non-accredited training to deliver the range of training needed. Non-accredited training is often much more flexible in providing engaging and unique content. Each state and territory government has different funding arrangements for training delivery so it is important to do your research and communicate openly with your training provider when designing a program. Look within your own organisation for a range of skills and knowledge your staff and hosts can provide. Relevant and trusted content will be highly valued by youth.

## Informal or formal accredited training?

Depending on the training provider preferences and funding available to support a program, the program may utilise informal training experiences or formal nationally recognised qualifications. Both options have their advantages, however it is critical to not disadvantage the potential job seeker with too many qualifications prior to making an informed choice of the career pathway they want to follow. Over-qualifying the participant too early may make them less attractive to potential employers due to increased wage costs and future government funded training eligibility.

## Practical program workshops

The feedback from participants when practical workshops are included in a program is very positive. Practical workshops in training are a fun way to provide basic introductory training, especially for the more hands-on learners. Ensure sufficient time is allocated to each trade area for the instructor to take participants through a full range of skills and tasks in the trade and allow them to try the tasks hand-on. This will provide an understanding of the work entailed in the trade and assist in career decision making at which time accreditation of entry-level skills can be further developed.



## Sharing industry experience and information

This can be managed in a number of ways. Guest speakers, industry visits and debriefing after work experiences are the most common. Feedback from participants indicates that sharing work experience stories provides great opportunity for positive reinforcement and support, especially for participants who are anxious about entering the work force. Youth tend to engage well in conversations with peers.

## Work readiness training including Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN)

It is important at the outset that the LLN requirements of each trade being explored are outlined. This will assist youth in matching their level of LLN or ability for further skills development to suit the trade.

LLN assessment and support plus appropriate support for participants, particularly those from a CALD background or with a disability is an essential part of any program.

Work ready training is critical for youth hoping to move into full-time employment. There are a number of programs available which are designed specifically for assessment and support of people entering the workforce who may lack the knowledge or skill to cope in the initial stages of employment.

Work readiness training can cover a wide range of topics, and the basics should include:

- What are the LLN levels needed in the work place and that industry in general?
- What can I do if my LLN is not adequate?
- Where am I going and how will I get there – this may include trying out public transport routes?
- What do I do when I arrive, who do I ask for?
- What are the award conditions for an apprenticeship in that industry, including salary?
- What is superannuation and how is it paid?
- How does the tax system work?
- What are the employers' expectations?
- What do I do when something goes wrong?

## Career sessions

Successful sessions include both job seeking skills, such as resume writing and extensive information about the trade areas which are being presented in the program. The aim of these programs is to provide enough information for participants to make an informed choice about the career decision which is right for them. This should include:

- Apprenticeship and traineeship occupational pathways
- What does an employer's business look like – web site research?
- What is expected in the range of workplaces being investigated – clothes, behaviour?
- What "extra" training is needed in the range of workplaces being investigated – to complete the apprenticeship, plant and equipment operation or licences?
- Where can this training be done and how can it be accessed?
- What are the working environments of each trade/industry?
- What are typical types of businesses and who are their customers?
- What are the typical hours of work, work site locations and conditions of each trade?

## Work experience

Successful Youth Career Programs offer multi-employer and multi-industry work experience. Providing multiple work experiences is critical to youth making informed career decisions. It is highly challenging to arrange and co-ordinate multiple workplace rotations, and it requires co-ordinating entities to establishing linkages with businesses and the expertise in providing safe and supported work environments for youth. The most efficient and effective programs require training providers, work experience hosts and participants to treat the training and work experience as an apprentice employment relationship. The results of previous participant surveys consistently show that work experience is the most popular and valuable part of programs. Programs with a strong emphasis on work experience delivered higher employment outcomes.

Planning for work experience needs to start well in advance of the experience itself and cannot be left solely to participants to source. When designing your program, it is imperative that work experience hosts are included from the outset. This ensures that your hosts feel their contribution is valued, they can inform you of appropriate timeframes as well as the numbers and rotations their business is able to manage. Your program schedules and participant numbers must be commensurate with work experience opportunities. Notably, programs with work experience early in the program (rather than at the end) achieved higher completion rates.

An excellent way to prepare participants for work experience is simulated work projects or other forms of hands-on experience. Working closely with the training provider can produce innovative ideas for alternatives to host employer work experience.

## Full documentation

It is crucial that all parties involved in a program have a central administration reference point and can maintain continuity if staffing arrangements change. Continual communication to all stakeholders is critical. This should include full documentation of roles, responsibilities and expectations for host employers and participants.

Critical information that must be safely stored includes:

- parent or guardian consent forms
- school consent
- timetable and program content
- reports and reporting requirements
- enrolment/registration forms and attendance records
- all personal information

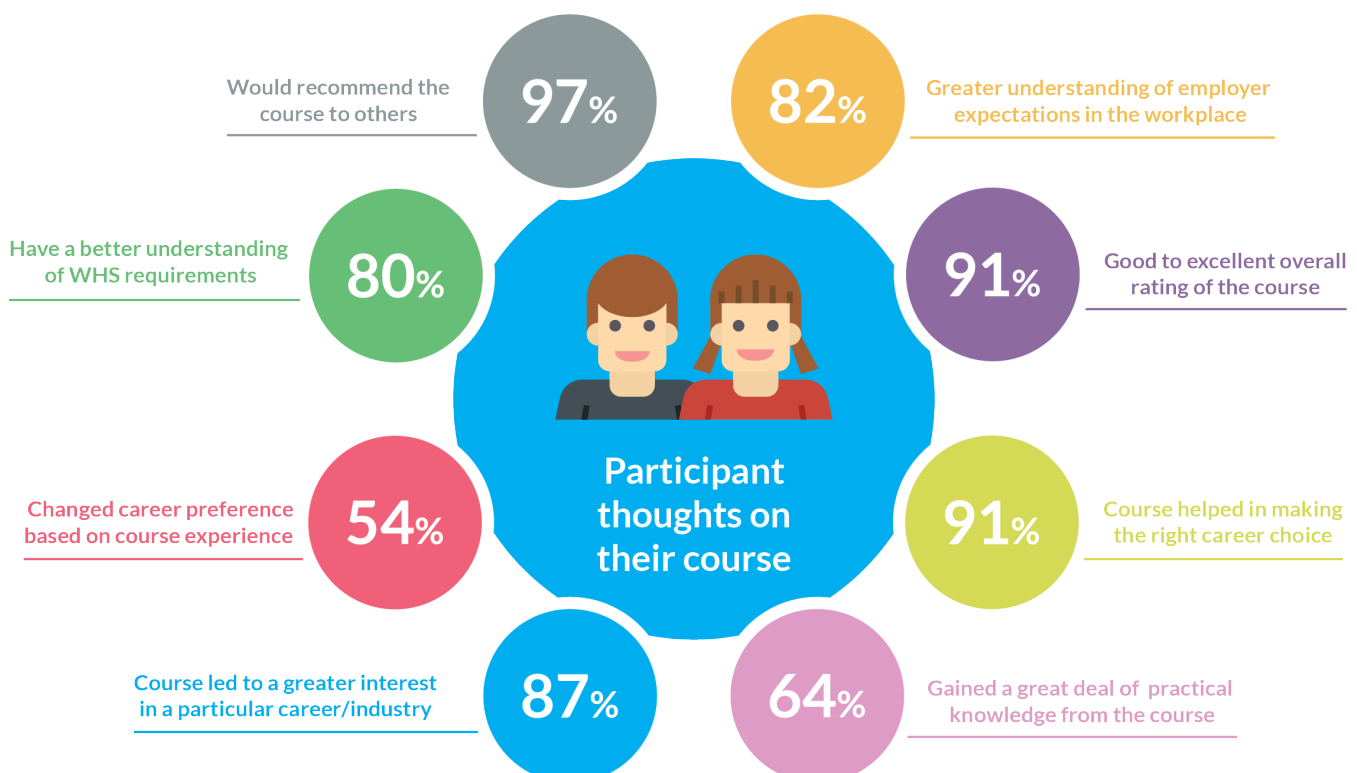
## Other elements of program design that are essential include:

**Duration** – programs need to provide for enough time for participants to explore career options in depth and their individual suitability to these possible industries. Despite ongoing rapid changes in the modern workforce, there is still the belief that the correct initial career choice is vital. Programs need to have enough time allocated to cover all the information and participant research and work experience so students can gain a well-rounded view of different industries. Questions which need to be considered include:

- How long should the work experience be and how many rotations should it have?
- How long can participants concentrate for, how will they be engaged?
- How do you provide the opportunities for multi-industry training within the time frame?
- How do you keep the interest levels up for the whole program?
- What other commitments do your participants have?

**Resourcing** of a multi-experience program can be difficult. Plans need to be detailed and realistic. Ensure you are adequately resourced and have the skill base available to:

- administer, deliver and coordinate your program
- work with the participants, the industry your participants want to work in and sufficient employer networks in that industry
- undertake post program follow-up and review
- complete documentation of the program which can assist if you experience staffing changes
- make sure there is a sufficient budget for everything you need as part of the program including:
  - training delivery, especially if this is through a partner organisation
  - participant resources such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), WHS and travel
- support host employers and participants especially if you are catering for under aged youth or participants with higher needs.



**Regulations** – Regulations, especially in relation to work experience, curriculum requirements, training delivery and funding, and industrial relations vary from state to state. This important information can be found at:

- Your state Department of Education
- WorkCover/WHS provider
- Employment agencies
- Fair Work Ombudsman

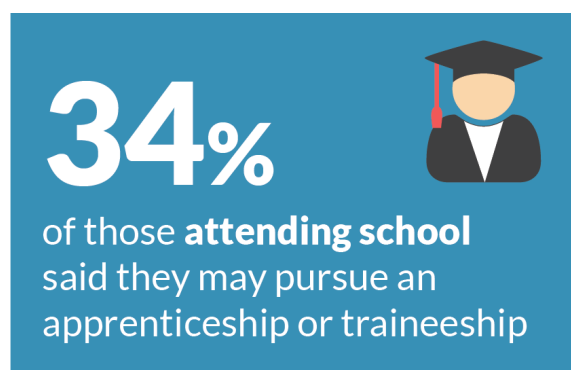
You must also ensure you comply with any state-based regulations and funding compliance and reporting. Be sure to:

- Read contracts
- Ask questions
- Plan processes to accommodate contract/funding requirements
- Monitor regularly

If you choose to deliver accredited training, make sure you are not disadvantaging your participants if they move into an apprenticeship or full-time study. This is particularly important for programs accessing training funding and providing qualifications, which could jeopardise individual eligibility for future government funded training. It is also important to assess the industrial relations impact of prior accreditation when entering an apprenticeship particularly competency based trades and/or those with progression pay increments.

**Trade knowledge delivery** – If you chose to use a training partner to deliver training, find an organisation with the expertise you need and is willing to assist with the design and delivery of an innovative and flexible program.

### What have students thought about Youth Career Programs in the past?



## Program Design - Actions in practice

A range of Youth Career Programs developed by GTOs provided a selection of innovative programs introducing youth to multiple trade career options. Participants were youth 15-24 years old and either attending school or under-employed.

Successful school-based programs were designed to:

- **allow year 10 to 12 students to explore three - five different trades/industries**  
Programs with hands-on trade sessions with TAFE, where each trade is comprehensively covered over a number of days.
- **minimise impact to school timetable** - Programs built predominately on work experience across three or more trades conducted in weekly blocks over the school year with a trade rotation each term.
- **integrate the needs of all stakeholders** – An even spread of work experience and trade school, one day each per term across three traditional trades.
- **offer a varied experience** – Try-a-trade, work ready and industry Information sessions were delivered over one to two terms incorporating industry tour days, industry speakers, hands on skills days at TAFE where several trades are demonstrated, one week of work experience at the end in the industry of choice.
- **support existing programs in the community** – Trade school and multi-trade experience in a ‘simulated’ employment environment working on a community project. One program provided work experience in a social enterprise with extensive garden upkeep and building maintenance needs.

Successful programs for participants not attending school were designed to:

- **expose youth to three - five apprenticeship trades with local employment availability** – Programs with ‘trade clusters’ within a particular industry exposing participants to all trade pathways available e.g. refrigeration, gas, air conditioning, welding and plumbing.
- **maximise local apprenticeship employment opportunities** - A ‘skill set’ addressing 3 trades within an industry with work experience offered at the end in the trade of most interest. Trades in skill sets moved across traditional training packages offering units from engineering, automotive, carpentry, electrical, and plumbing.
- **utilise existing pathway styles and funding opportunities** - Training package qualifications that worked well included Certificate II qualifications in Construction, Automotive Studies, Engineering Pathways and Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways.
  - Automotive included panel, paint, auto electrician, mechanic –light vehicle and heavy diesel, tyre fitting and parts interrupting.
  - Building and Construction included carpentry, bricklaying, plaster and paint, joinery/cabinet making, paving and tiling.

The examples above show the breadth of trades available in these pathway Certificate IIs. Programs often included additions relating to other industries such as electrical, refrigeration, plumbing and welding.



# Success Factor 4.

Targeted Promotion & Recruitment



## Success Factor 4. Targeted Promotion & Recruitment

Promotion of and recruitment for your Youth Career Program is as critical as the content design. The style of recruitment and promotion for school-based programs will be different to that for out of school programs. In both cases, lack of attention in these areas can lead to insufficient participants for financial viability or programs with low numbers where participants are difficult to keep engaged and motivated. The promotion must accurately outline the opportunity and clearly indicate the program benefits, content, commitment required and intended outcomes.

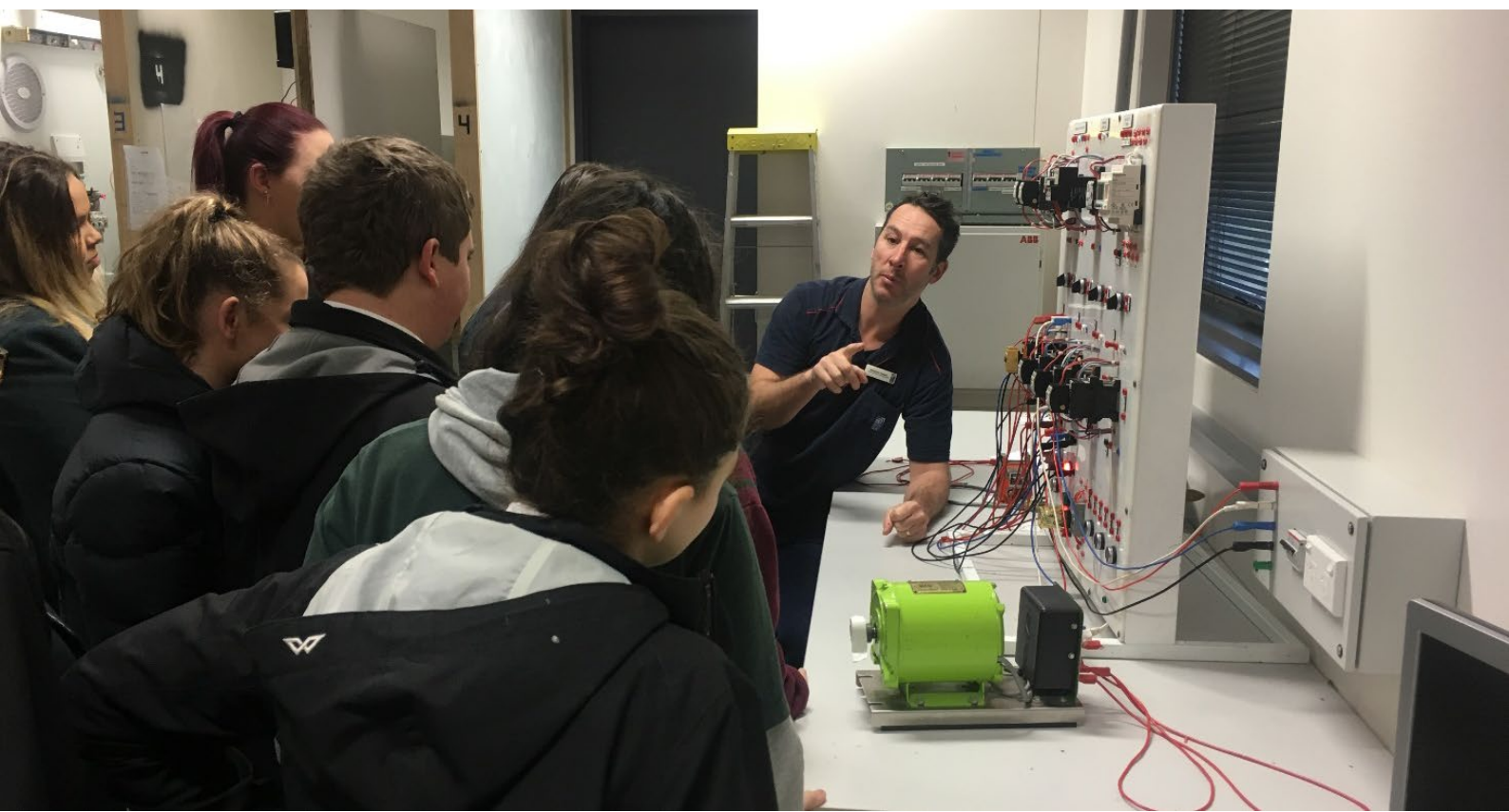
### School Based Programs

School based programs need to be promoted to the students, parents and staff within the schools you are working with. Recruitment within schools is essential. The decision to participate must be that of the student, supported by parents and the school. Students who feel that they are in a program because they were told to participate tend to not engage with or complete the program. An application process and commitment form completed by the student and signed off by a parent and a school representative is an excellent way to recruit genuinely interested participants.

Support and encouragement from home and school can keep a participant in a program through any rough patches. Hence, engagement and ongoing communication with the school and parents or guardians is important

Working with schools well in advance is essential for a successful multi-experience program. Critical for this is an enthusiastic staff member, supported by the principal in each school you are working with. You need someone in the school who can champion the program and provide information and answers to students, parents and staff. If the timetable and expectations of other subject managers aren't supporting participants, the program will not survive.

Marketing the privilege and valuable opportunity of the program such as a "scholarship" or selection process assists with attracting participants committed to the program.



## Out of school programs

Recruitment of participants not attending school can be a difficult process. Without sufficient numbers the program is not viable and taking in unsuitable or unenthusiastic participants is equally hazardous. Allow a realistic timeframe for recruitment and work closely with your network. Opportunities for recruitment of participants include:

- using your social media and job boards
- promoting with employment agencies and TAFEs
- talking to organisations that work with youth such as sporting and social clubs
- the pre-apprenticeship finder:  
<http://www.aapathways.com.au/job-hunting-for-australian-apprenticeships-and-tra/pre-apprenticeship-search>
- media releases and online publishing of reviews, testimonials and outcomes
- advertising alongside your job vacancies

Make sure your program fits the community and the cohort you want to work with. This will also help with finding sufficient enthusiastic host employers.

## Promotion to the business community

Promoting your program to potential employers during the planning stage will make implementation and success much easier. Engaging with your trusted group of host employers, a major employer in the region or an industry association or peak body are all strategies which have successfully been used in previous Youth Career Programs.

Promote the “try before you buy/supporting local youth/supporting your industry/your business’s social/community contribution” concepts.

Opportunities for promotion and recruitment for host employers include:

- contacting industry associations and employer organisations
- using media and social media
- developing high profile social enterprise or community projects
- job pledges –local commitments from employer on specific jobs available
- incentives for providing work experience
- publishing media releases with outcomes, online reviews and testimonials
- utilising word of mouth by encouraging participants and influences to promote Youth Career Programs



## Promotion and Recruitment – Actions in practice

**Single ‘driver’ and source of information** – A provider of a new and innovative program to year 10 students at schools provided comprehensive information on their website outlining the values and structure of the program. This provided schools, parents and potential participants with a single reference point for a sound understanding of the program and commitment required. The organisation presented the concept to the schools of the region who had previously been consulted on timetabling and availability of students to participate. The schools in turn directed their year 10 students to the provider’s website for more information and encouraged them to apply for a place in the program. The organisation had four times more applicants than places available.

**Industry led promotion** – An industry organisation providing a pathways program to school leavers communicated closely with local VET providers to source and promote the program to youth that had expressed an interest in a VET pathway. Their program was offered as a scholarship opportunity and was very successful in attracting participants.

**Program application and selection processes similar to employment** – GTOs promoted their courses on job boards and social media. They requested applications and conducted interviews. Compared with other cohorts, participants tended to be more committed which was attributed to the interview process by an industry employer.

**Link to job outcomes** – Regional apprenticeship organisations successfully attracted participants with media releases and ‘stories’ published in local media. Subsequent programs became easier to fill through graduation and other success stories in local media and promotion on websites including video testimonials from participants, parents and employers.

**Source connections with providers of services to youth** – A provider of a Youth Career Program networked with their local TAFE, Job Search agencies and the community. This raised awareness of apprenticeship pathways in the community which then provided referrals to their program.

**Make it fun** – A provider of a Youth Career Program with work experience rotations developed innovative marketing to promote and attract employers able to provide work experience. They ran a raffle for employers in which each work experience an employer could provide would put them in the draw to win a dinghy.

**Engage the local business community** – GTOs offering Youth Career Programs were able to tap into their existing host employers for work experience opportunities. Often at the end of the program, the hosts had more work ready participants than they had jobs. To counteract this they developed ‘job pledge’ programs to run in conjunction with their Youth Career Programs. This raised employment outcomes, work experience opportunities and assisted ‘word of mouth’ promotion of their programs in the wider community.

# Success Factor 5.

## Implementation & Review



## Success Factor 5. Considered Implementation & Ongoing Review

### Considered Implementation

There is a wide range of aspects that need to be considered when successfully implementing a Youth Career Program:

**Staffing** – Contingency plans including realistic staffing allocation, clear documentation and sufficient support are essential. Key staff members leaving or moving to a different role can cause programs to fail. Consistency of staff or a thorough handover where that is not possible can minimise the disruption and possible damage.

**Administration** – All programs come with reporting and milestone requirements, which should not be missed as this, may hinder funding. Effective and efficient administration and back-up is equally essential. Poor administration, reporting and follow-up can mean that the program is not managed efficiently and effectively. It may also result in oversights and an inability to adequately report on the program.

**Planning** – A solid base for your program with flexibility to change when needed will help you achieve your goals. Unplanned last minute changes or a failure of essential resources such as host employers will cause distress for participants and delivery staff.

**Host Employers** – Creating positive, supportive relationships with Host Employers will lead to great work experience for the participants and improved chances of apprenticeship outcomes. Without genuine host employer involvement, your program is unlikely to lead to apprenticeship outcomes.

**WHS considerations** – When recruiting host employers, choosing a training provider or choosing an enterprise project, the safety of participants must be a primary consideration.

**Recruitment** – The right participants who are keen and interested in your program create success for themselves and for your organisation.

**Good Partnerships** – All partners involved must commit to the partnership. All partners involved in the development and delivery of the program must continuously communicate and engage with each other. Good relations with quality partners will allow you to create a program which is innovative and enjoyable. Creative content, imaginative delivery style and practical technique are critical to a good program.

**High levels of involvement** – It is essential for the program “owner” to have a high level of involvement. They need to be consistently involved in supporting all participants and partners in the program and negotiating solutions. Maintaining high levels of communication between all parties is essential, especially during work experiences. In particular, programs that are new or unique in design and have multiple parties involved need to be constantly monitored.

**Ongoing support** – The purpose of Youth Career Programs is to assist young people to make an informed decision about their career path. These decisions may not be made during the program and may change over time. Hence, it is important that the trusted relationship formed during the program remains for an extended period which may vary depending on each individual.



Questions you will need to consider include:

- How do you encourage participants to make decisions based on what they enjoy and are good at, rather than what they have been encouraged towards by family or peers?
- How do you manage changes in industry needs and local job markets?
- How to support those participants who have an apprenticeship/traineeship outcome?
- What assistance can you provide for those who want an apprenticeship/traineeship outcome but do not have one immediately?
- What can you do for those participants who choose a different career path? Can you assist these participants find “alternative” employment access points, such as:
  - volunteering
  - part time work
  - the hidden job market – word of mouth/networking/dropping in
  - leveraging networks such as sporting clubs, family or friends
  - work experience or internship
  - starting in an alternative role which might ultimately lead to the chosen career path.
  - further study such as pre-apprenticeship, LLN skilling, targeted development to overcome employment barriers.
- Can you provide good news stories to media, (potential) participants and industry to keep them engaged?



## Implementation – Actions in practice

**Communicate concept and seek input from stakeholders** – A potential provider for a Youth Career Program liaised with all stakeholders prior to commitment seeking ideas that would support the requirements of the program, the youth and the stakeholders they relied on. Prior to committing to the program, they reviewed all aspects of the program and considered the value they could deliver to their stakeholders. With a clear understanding of their own capacity, they developed a program that met the needs of young people and employers alike.

**Seek out and communicate closely with your partners** – A GTO partnered with their local TAFE to deliver a Youth Career Program. They communicated closely to understand each other's expectations and priorities, shared program content and co-delivered. In addition to the successful and aligned outcomes for the GTO, TAFE, local youth and employers, they were recognised in their state awards for their collaborative partnership.

**Share information within your team** – A GTO delivered a Youth Career Program at multiple sites. Small teams in each region developed the programs according to local needs and availabilities. Due to the small size of the teams, it was not possible to dedicate resources solely to the Youth Career Programs. Instead, all staff contributed to the programs. While the programs the teams developed differed greatly due to local opportunities and networks, they shared ideas and supported each other with administration and reporting.

**Clearly defined responsibilities** – A Youth Career Program provider achieved great outcomes providing a program to schools state-wide. A significant strength in the well-planned program was that information was clearly communicated from the outset to all stakeholders including industry, employers, participants, parents, schools and TAFE. Everyone involved knew what to expect what their role was and the intended outcomes of the program. The program delivered a 95% completion rate against similar Youth Career Programs delivering 70%.

**Ongoing Support** – providers of Youth Career Programs implemented a range of strategies and practice to provide well-managed programs to well-supported participants. The range of measures introduced included Facebook groups/social media for participants and co-ordinators to stay in touch after completion of the formal part of the Youth Career Program. Participants could support each other with job seeking and would be able to receive mentoring as required.



## Ongoing Review

The value of review or “continuous improvement” cannot be over-estimated. Analysing program elements, their implementation and outcomes can assist in refining future programs and promoting results to participants, host employers and other stakeholders.

Mechanisms to measure value should be built into the design of a program so that feedback is part of the program not an afterthought. Opportunities for feedback should be delivered throughout the program. Feedback opportunities should also be easy for the stakeholder to undertake. For example, host employers and participants should be asked for feedback as soon as the work experience finishes, and feedback mechanisms should be concise, requiring simple answers. Feedback part way through the placement may also give valuable insights into any potential issues of a placement.

Questions that guide a program review could include:

- What you have done in past programs and how this differs from the current program?
- What outcomes were achieved in previous programs compared to the current program? (outcomes can include completion rate, employment rate, return to school rate and even the number of participants who have changed their career direction)
- What did participants enjoy and what didn't they enjoy?
- What did your partners and stakeholders think of the program?
- What did your own staff think about the program?
- Has the program been successful? Why? Why not?
- What could be done differently?



All programs, especially those that use government funding, require significant amounts of information to be gathered for milestone requirements and to inform final reports and recommendations. Within the limits of privacy and confidentiality the information gathered should be available for use by all stakeholders for program review.

The information, which AEN gathered from past Youth Career Programs included:

#### **Host employer surveys.**

- Your participant has or will experience a range of industry experiences. How keen do you think they are on the type of work they experienced with you?
- How would you rate the industry knowledge of this participant?
- How would you rate the participant's understanding of WHS for your industry?
- How would you rate the participant's foundation skills level (LLN) for your industry?
- How would you rate the general work readiness of this participant – courteous, punctual, reliable, shows initiative/interests, attitude to others, work and tasks?
- How would you rate the "hands-on"/practical skills of this participant?
- What is one key area you would recommend the participant work on to be successful in your industry?
- From an employer's perspective, how strongly would you rate this participant for employment in your industry?

#### **Participant survey – about the Youth Career Program placement**

- School year level
- How valuable did you find each element of the program?
- What part did you enjoy the most?
- How many days work experience?
- How many host employers did you do work experience with?
- How many industry types did you try?
- What type of work did you enjoy the most?
- Has the program led you to be more interested in a particular career or industry?
- Is this different to what you thought prior to the program?
- Rate how well you think you understand the WHS requirements of the industries you learnt about.
- How would you rate your understanding of career opportunities in your favourite industry in the program?
- Do you think you might pursue an Apprenticeship or Traineeship?
- What is your plan for the next 12 months?
- Do you know what employers expect of you in the workplace?
- Please indicate your current understanding of Apprenticeship and Traineeship Career Pathways?
- Please indicate your current understanding of the industries/careers you explored in the programs.
- Rate the level of your involvement in this program.
- How much practical knowledge have you gained from this program?
- What is your overall rating of this program?
- Would you recommend it to others?
- Do you think this program has helped you in making a career decision that is right for you?

### **Participant survey – about their career path**

- What is your plan after school (only for those still at school)?
- Are you currently in a school-based apprenticeship?
- Are you attending full time training/study that's not an Apprenticeship (TAFE, University, or Similar)?
- Are you currently in a full time Apprenticeship or Traineeship?
  - What is the name of your apprenticeship or traineeship?
  - Do you think you will complete your apprenticeship or traineeship?
- Would you like us to contact you to discuss your situation?
- Are you actively searching for full time employment?
- Are you considering an apprenticeship or traineeship?
- Would you like advice on where to obtain assistance?

Having participants complete surveys after a program is delivered can be difficult, it is recommended that completion of surveys be built into the final days of formal delivery.

### **Completion report**

A report prepared by the lead organisation and reported to all stakeholders can highlight the achievements and program learnings, and acknowledge the support from all stakeholders.



## Review – Actions in practice

**Seek feedback from all stakeholders** – A provider of a Youth Career Program to disengaged youth sought feedback from their training providers, work experience hosts and participants. They had a number of participants leave the program early and had followed up with these participants to understand the reason for not completing. Their review lead them to develop:

- a process for parent (for those living with family) communication at the time of recruitment
- rescheduling work experience to occur earlier in the program to increase engagement
- rescheduling and incorporating more work ready training

**Review all elements including ‘traditional’ offerings** – Several providers of Youth Career Programs with accredited training found their participants to be daunted or bored by the theory components. They reviewed and adjusted units and scheduling to allow participants to experience the practical learnings before the provision of basic theory. Experiencing the practical aspects prior to the in-depth theory allowed them to link their understanding more effectively and stay more focused and engaged.

**Strive for continuous improvement across the pathway journey** – A provider of a Youth Career Program with excellent completion rates was disappointed, on review, with the job outcomes. They developed a journal for participants to keep during the program to build a portfolio and profile to assist the individual in identifying their strengths and being able to convey these to potential employers.

**Analyse results, identify strengths and weaknesses** – All providers of Youth Career Programs had access to their participants’ survey results. They compared the participants’ ratings with those of work experience hosts and training partners. Following these comparisons, common adjustments made to programs include:

- Additional support for participants to assist with anxiety and shyness in relation to work experience
- Adjusted program scheduling to increase engagement
- Adjusted program scheduling to lessen the impact on stakeholders. For example, a work experience was changed to alternating days each week so participating school students could avoid continuously missing the same subjects at school.
- Rescheduling and adjusting work experience to better cater to host employers and participants needs.



## Additional Resources and Information

**Apprenticeship Support Network providers** - <https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au>

This website is designed to provide quick and easy access to information regarding Australian Apprenticeships.

**Australian Apprenticeship Traineeship Information Service** - <http://www.aapathways.com.au>

This Service provides up to date information and a range of resources on all aspects of Australian Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

**Jobactive providers** - <https://jobsearch.gov.au/serviceproviders>

If you are an employer looking for staff, your local provider can find job-ready candidates that fit your needs, at no cost to you.

If you are a job seeker, your local provider can help you get and keep a job.

**Fair Work** - <http://fairworkhelp.com.au>

Free Fair Work Act Help Line for Businesses & Employers

**Fair Work Ombudsman** - <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/>

Detailed information and advice relating to workplace rights and obligations.

**Real skills for real careers** - <https://www.myskills.gov.au/more/resources/>

This website includes resources from the *real skills for real careers* initiative. These are helpful resources to use in the promotion of VET pathways.

### Worksafe Australia & state authorities

WHS compliance, injury reporting, licensing and compensation claims

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au>

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au>

<https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au>

<http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au>

<http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au>

<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au>

<http://www.worksafe.nt.gov.au>

<https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au>

## Group Training Organisations

Group Training organisations work with local communities and employers to match young people with meaningful work and provide a safety net and flexibility for both the apprentice and host employer over the period of their training.

<http://www.naen.com.au> – National

<http://aen.org.au> – Victoria

<http://aennswact.com.au> – New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory

<http://gtasa.com.au> – South Australia

<http://www.apprenticeemploymentnetwork.com.au> – Queensland & Northern Territory

<http://aenwa.com.au> – Western Australia

## Departments of Education

<https://www.education.gov.au> – Australian Government

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au> – Victoria

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au> – New South Wales

<http://education.qld.gov.au> – Queensland

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au> – Tasmania

<http://portal.det.wa.edu.au> – Western Australia

<https://www.education.act.gov.au> – Australian Capital Territory

<https://nt.gov.au/learning> – Northern Territory

**ASQA** - <https://www.asqa.gov.au>

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector.

**Training.Gov.au** - <https://training.gov.au>

Links to other VET sector websites

**VRQA – the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority** - <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au>

The VRQA regulates all education and training providers in Victoria from home schooling to higher education including overseas secondary student exchange organisations.

**VCAA - The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority** - [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au)

The VCAA provides high quality curriculum, assessment and reporting to enable learning for life

## National VET Websites

Australian Industry Skills Committee

<https://www.education.gov.au/AISC>

Australian Qualifications Framework Council

<http://www.aqf.edu.au/>

Education Services Australia

<http://www.esa.edu.au/>

My Future

<http://www.myfuture.edu.au/>

My Skills

<http://www.myskills.gov.au/>

National Centre for Vocational Educational Research

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/>

WorldSkills Australia

<http://www.worldskills.org.au/>

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AEN MIP Steering committee:

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- Australian Government Department of Education and Training
- Group Training Association of NWS & ACT
- Group Training Association of Tasmania
- NSW Department of Education
- Tasmania Department of Education
- Victorian Department of Education – Higher Education and Skills
- VRQA – the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
- VCAA - The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

## References

Understanding the non-completion of apprentices

By Alice Bednarz NCVER Occasional paper June 2014 ISBN 978 1 922056 85 6

<http://www.careers.govt.nz/plan-your-career/helping-young-people-make-decisions/influences-on-career-decisions/>

Guidance: supporting youth to manage their careers

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/et/toolkits/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/intervene/intervention-approaches/guiding-young-people-make-right-choices>

From school to VET: choices, experiences and outcomes

Kristen Osborne & Michelle Circelli – National Centre for Vocational Education Research

<https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/from-school-to-vet-choices,-experiences-and-outcomes>

In their words: student choice in training markets – Victorian examples

Dr Justin Brown – Australian Council for Educational Research

[https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0024/1142628/In-their-words-student-choice-in-training-markets-victorian-examples.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0024/1142628/In-their-words-student-choice-in-training-markets-victorian-examples.pdf)

Preparing Secondary Students for Work

A framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students

<http://www.pssfw.myskills.gov.au/media/1174/preparing-secondary-students-for-work-2014.pdf>

## Useful information

VET program completion rates 2016: NCVET data slicer – August 2018

This report uses the most recent NCVET data to estimate completion rates for government-funded VET programs commencing between 2012 and 2016, and for total VET programs commencing in 2015 and 2016.

	Program completion rate (%)				
	Observed actual		Projected		
Apprentice/trainee status	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Apprentices and trainees undertaking off-the-job training	57.0	54.8	56.2	58.3	57.1
Not an apprentice or trainee	36.3	36.2	42.9	46.6	47.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>49.4</b>

These figures indicate a completion rate across the full range of apprenticeships and traineeship hovering around 57%, thus an average attrition rate of 43%, which may not seem too high, however when you break this number down by trade there are certain sectors which have a much higher attrition rate.

The following research looks at attrition rates by trade or industry.

Contract attrition rates are based on contracts of training data, using the latest National Apprentice and Trainee Collection, no.95 (March 2018 estimates).

Table 4 – Contract attrition rates in trade and non-trade occupations, for contracts commencing in 2011–14

Occupation (ANZSCO) group	2011	2012	2013
<b>Technicians and trades workers</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>48.0</b>
31 Engineering, ICT and science technicians	35.3	37.0	34.3
32 Automotive and engineering trades workers	46.6	47.4	47.1
<b>33 Construction trades workers</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>54.6</b>	<b>54.9</b>
34 Electrotechnology and telecommunications trades workers	45.0	43.3	39.7
<b>35 Food trades workers</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>60.5</b>
36 Skilled animal and horticultural workers	48.2	45.0	48.3
39 Other technicians and trades workers	46.0	42.0	45.9
<b>391 Hairdressers</b>	<b>62.6</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>62.5</b>
392 Printing trades workers	34.5	35.5	28.1
393 Textile, clothing and footwear trades workers	45.8	45.5	48.9
<b>394 Wood trades workers</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>57.0</b>	<b>60.6</b>
399 Miscellaneous technicians and trades workers	30.8	29.3	37.2
<b>Community and personal service workers</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>39.5</b>
41 Health and welfare support workers	33.4	33.9	32.2
42 Carers and aides	32.9	30.8	30.8
43 Hospitality workers	46.9	42.7	51.1
44 Protective service workers	35.4	28.0	32.6
45 Sports and personal service workers	34.9	34.1	38.6
<b>Total trade occupations</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>48.0</b>
<b>All occupations</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>39.5</b>	<b>42.0</b>

## How do youth make career choices?

The role of career guidance in preventing drop-out is widely acknowledged. Research suggests that students who have a career plan are more likely to remain in and engage more positively with education. Systematic career education and guidance can also help at transition points – to other levels and pathways of education and training, or to work.

Quality career guidance is particularly important to support young people in choosing Vocational Education and Training (VET) as a positive option, rather than ‘ending up’ in VET due to a negative selection process.

The following outcomes can be expected at individual level:

- Defining learning career goals
- Developing a positive attitude to learning and education and training
- Gaining a better understanding of education options
- Raising aspirations – formulating long-term career plans
- Making informed choices
- Acquiring career management skills
- Improving self-awareness – understanding of own abilities, aptitudes and interests
- Lower absenteeism
- Gaining a better understanding of job roles
- Reduced risk of early leaving due to wrong or negative orientation, or to a lack of a positive future vision of oneself.
- Reduced rates of early leavers.

Youth may be influenced by:

### Family

- Career choices and interests of their older brother or sister
- Needs, opinions and work of their parents
- Family work traditions or family aspirations for the future
- Limits to family's experience of different career options
- Negative beliefs such as “He’ll never amount to anything”, or “I’m a failure and so is she”.

### Friends

- Pressure to make the same choice as friends about careers and leaving school
- Friends may be good or poor role models
- A boyfriend or girlfriend may put pressure on to choose study or a job in their town.

### Culture

- The neighbourhood, ethnic group and social group can have a big influence
- Popular culture such as TV and movies
- Role models – successful and famous people
- Money – lack of money can limit choices
- Government policy and economics both local and globally.

### Teachers/career advisers

- Inspire, motivate and inform your child
- See your child's talent, skills and aptitudes for certain careers
- Offer resources, work experience opportunities and guidance.

### Media

Your child can find career information from:

- Online career websites, apps and newspapers
- Career planning and self-help books.

Source: <https://www.careers.govt.nz/plan-your-career/helping-young-people-make-decisions/influences-on-career-decisions/>

## VET-related occupational aspirations

Personal experience with an occupation or related activities, either formally or informally, is a common reason for aspiring to a VET-related job. For some young people, participating in VET in Schools programs helps to form such aspirations. Having undertaken a vocational certificate or traineeship at school is a significant driver for VET-related aspirations (Hargreaves & Osborne 2017).

Some VET in Schools students go on to an occupation in the same field as their VET in Schools qualification. This is particularly the case in the technician and trade areas, where approximately half of the students who completed their training and gained a qualification were employed in a related field five years later (Misko, Korbelt & Blomberg 2017). For these fields, it seems that the opportunity to experience their preferred occupation through a VET in Schools program has resulted in a continued desire to pursue that occupation.

## What do we know influences young people to undertake VET post-school?

Post-school VET choices can be driven by students' personal experiences and VET-related occupational experiences, demonstrating the importance of exposing students to possible VET options in both formal settings (such as VET in Schools) and informal settings (such as classroom activities).

Recent school leavers respond well to the practical, hands-on nature of VET and can find it a secure path to quality employment (Dommers et al. 2017).

Source:

<https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/from-school-to-vet-choices,-experiences-and-outcomes>  
*From school to VET: choices, experiences and outcomes* Kristen Osborne & Michelle Circelli  
National Centre for Vocational Education Research

## Implications for policy and practice

More than five years after the introduction of the Victorian Training Guarantee, the Mackenzie and Coulson review of VET funding in Victoria stated that 'at the heart of the VET system, both as currently designed and under the Review's future model, is the concept of student choice' (2015, p.104). The review described how (p.62). One of the biggest problems with the system as it currently operates is that students are making too many bad choices — too many are training in programs that do not lead to the job outcomes they want, and too many of them are going to training providers that are not providing quality training (p.103).

Source:

[https://www.ncver.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0024/1142628/In-their-words-student-choice-in-training-markets-victorian-examples.pdf](https://www.ncver.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/1142628/In-their-words-student-choice-in-training-markets-victorian-examples.pdf)  
*In their words: student choice in training markets – Victorian examples* Dr Justin Brown  
Australian Council for Educational Research





