

Youth employment solutions in COVID-19 and beyond

Prepared by the Brotherhood of St Laurence | May 2020



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty



National Youth
Employment Body

Youth employment solutions in COVID-19 and beyond

The Transition to Work National Community of Practice with the National Youth Employment Body are working collaboratively to improve employment outcomes for young people, business and local communities across Australia.

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1 Video: COVID-19 Snapshots

A snapshot of what's happening now for young people across Australia. This video also features business people who are Employer Champions working locally and nationally with Transition to Work providers to harness the community effort and create pathways to employment for young people.

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Transforming the Australian youth employment system in and after COVID-19: international evidence on what works and research and practice lessons from BSL's own service models.

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A selection of practical examples that illustrate how Community Investment Committees are building community-led solutions to youth unemployment.

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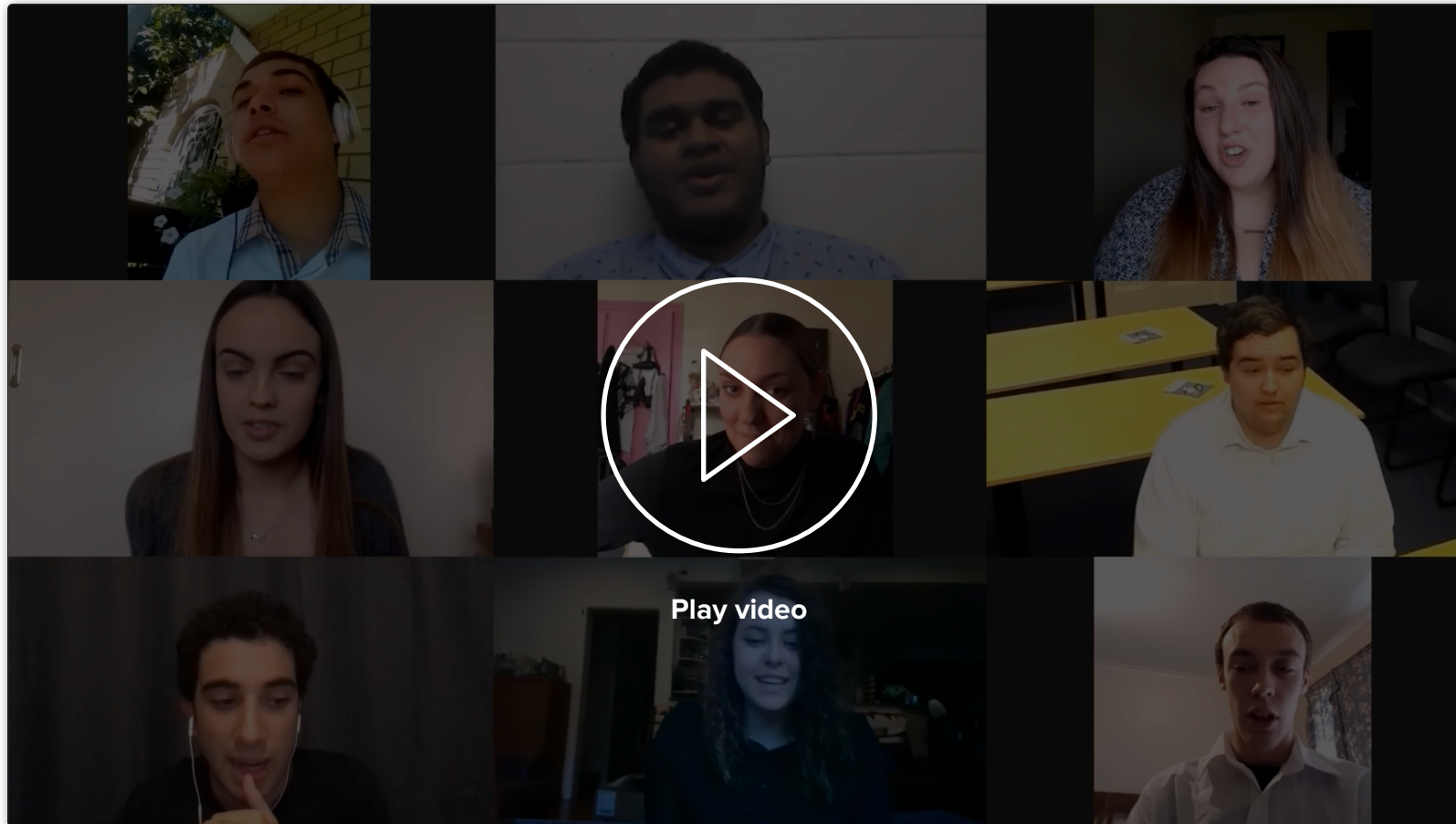
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Transforming the Australian youth employment system in and after COVID-19: international evidence on what works and research and practice lessons from BSL's own service models.

Find full Research and Evidence [here](#)

What can we do?

A local to national approach to transform the youth employment service system

We need to expand the current youth employment service offer, Transition to Work (TtW), and invest in Transition to Work PLUS. This should include:

- All young people who are unemployed to be referred to TtW and not to jobactive (adult focused employment service).
- An investment in **community-led solutions** that address local youth unemployment.
- Funding to support business-led **Community Investment Committees** that harness government and community resources. These committees directly link supply and demand in ways that will improve employment outcomes for business, young people and community.



TtW PLUS—a youth specific employment service

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TtW PLUS—a youth specific employment service

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Fidelity model driving effective pathways to employment

As a youth specific employment Service, TtW is best placed to meet the immediate service needs of young people and employers in an emerging economy. The **TtW PLUS** model builds on the youth focused and community embedded model of the TtW Service. It will harness multi-sectoral partnerships to align investments and efforts in place, including complementary alignment between state and territory employment and education initiatives and federal frameworks.

Capabilities Informed Practice

- Advantaged Thinking practice invests in young people's potential to build aspiration, motivation and engagement.
- Vocational Guidance and Exploration through goal setting, pathway planning and experiential learning.

Place-based Collaboration

Strong connections to local employers and education and training providers enabling:

- Rapid connections to emerging work opportunities in local labour markets.
- Skills building and career development through access to real world opportunities such as work experience, internships and apprenticeships.

Collaborative Commissioning

The TtW Community of Practice facilitates collaboration between TtW service providers to share learning and resources, enabling adaptation and innovation that responds to new economic contexts e.g. online service delivery and engagement.

Community Investment Committees

Link key players and networks in a local community including employers, education and training providers, employment services, community and all levels of government, to:

- Gain real time data and intel on local employment needs, and supply and demand issues of the local labour market.
- Co-design coordinated education and training responses that lead to flexible work pathways that are mutually beneficial for both young people and business.
- Provide all levels of government with a consistent line of communication to inform policy and programmatic responses throughout and beyond the COVID-19 crisis.



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Youth Transitions to Work: A promising response to youth unemployment

The Federal Transition to Work (TtW) service, announced by the Government in 2015–6 Federal Budget, provides a distinct, youth focused employment service which provides specialised, longer term support for 15–24 year olds at risk of long-term unemployment, including ‘intensive, pre-employment support to improve the work-readiness of young people and help them into work and/or education’.¹

A Youth Specific Employment Service

The introduction of TtW signalled a recognition of the specific needs of young people entering the workforce and the failure of mainstream employment services to adequately support them into work. The current mainstream employment service, Jobactive, (previously Job Services Australia), works with unemployed people of all ages and focuses on trying to quickly engage or re-engage job seekers with the labour market, by mandating activities and imposing penalties for non-compliance. Evidence suggests that this type of service is inappropriate and ineffective for young people who often have limited workplace experience and need support to become work ready.

A youth specific employment service ensures that providers can focus exclusively on what works in achieving sustainable outcomes for young people, recognising the specific set of challenges that young people face in their transition from school to work.

What works to achieve sustainable outcomes for young people?

Young people experiencing unemployment require access to quality training and education, real work experience opportunities, and specialised support and skills development. They also need positive relationships with those they are working with that engender trust, motivation and self-efficacy.

More than ever, in the context of COVID-19, it is imperative that employment services are enabled to provide demand and supply side solutions that can set young people up with the required capabilities and opportunities for medium and long-term economic security.² Young people need access to entry level jobs and employers willing to invest in and train them as well as skills development and experience. Employment services therefore need to create structural solutions to employment that are attuned to regional labour markets and local infrastructure, conditions and populations – as well as focusing on preparing the work readiness of individuals. This requires a collaborative effort across sectors; local, community embedded providers and a model and approach that is focused on motivating and enabling young people.

In contrast to the current (and previous) iterations of mainstream employment services, TtW was commissioned as a ‘collaboration focused market’ with only one provider being allocated across each of the 51 employment regions across Australia. To be successful, providers were required to be already embedded within their local communities and to have experience working with young people. This approach has greatly supported the capacity of providers to engage effectively with other support services, local council, education providers and employers to provide opportunities and support to participants. By removing the imperative to compete with each other, TtW providers have been able to devote time and resources to engaging with the community transparently and productively.

The TtW model encourages knowledge of local labor markets as well as deep, collaborative networks in a community – this is essential for the delivery of evidence informed employment services that are attuned to, and can adapt to, local conditions.

¹ Department of Employment, *Transition to Work Evaluation Strategy*, May 2017

² OECD 2014, *OECD Reviews on Local Job Creation: Employment and Skills Strategies in Australia*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Transition to Work Community of Practice

The **TtW Community of Practice** has built on this collaborative approach by bringing together 11 TtW providers and their partners across 13 employment regions in every state and territory with the shared aim of developing and documenting an effective response to addressing youth unemployment, one that is underpinned by collaborative, multi-sectoral effort. Through delivery of a structured model and practice approach and shared resources, TtW CoP providers have, over the past three years, been able to exchange service based expertise and situated knowledge across the country, and as a result have been able to develop new skills, improve practice and collectively solve problems and generate new and innovative ideas and solutions. They have also been able to develop productive relationships within their local community.

A Youth Focussed Model and Approach

Broadly speaking, the TtW CoP Model consists of:

- 1 An innovative **practice approach called Advantaged Thinking**, which builds motivation and agency by:
 - a working with young people according to their talents and aspirations; and
 - b being intentional in how we invest in providing or sourcing opportunities, resources and networks to build their capabilities.
- 2 **Evidence informed Service Offers**³ which incorporate Vocational Guidance, Co-designed Planning, Skills and Capabilities Building and Real-World Opportunities.
- 3 **A structured approach to service delivery through Four Phases**, which focuses on exploration and inspiration to build motivation, and provides young people with a blue print for their journey to work.

The delivery of this service model is also supported by the establishment of **Community Investment Committees** – an employer-led mechanism for harnessing community effort to maximise local economic development for young job seekers⁴.

³ Evidence outlined in TtW CoP Practice Guide

⁴ See Community Investment Committee Fact Sheet for further information

Collectively the TtW CoP represents almost one quarter of all TtW providers, who deliver TtW to approximately 3,000 young people per year across the country. To date, the TtW CoP has achieved over 6,500 employment and education outcomes for young people, with nearly half of those young people still employed six months later.

Evidence to date suggests that it is the combination of the model and the practice approach that is key to motivating (activating) and inspiring (incentivising) young job seekers to engage in education, training and work.



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The National Youth Employment Body

Working towards sustainable youth employment while meeting local employer needs

The National Youth Employment Body brings together representatives from the key sectors needed to address youth unemployment – industry, education and training, employment and community – both nationally: to drive change, and locally: to own and develop solutions. The body is fostering collaboration that enables young people, employers, employment agencies, communities and policy makers to effectively respond to youth unemployment.

The body is led by an Advisory Group with representatives from business, education and training, unions, Indigenous communities and government. The Chair is Sam Mostyn, Chair of Citigroup Australia, and the Deputy Chair is Sara Caplan, CEO of PwC's Skills for Australia.

The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment funded the Brotherhood of St Laurence in 2018 as the enabling organisation responsible for establishing and coordinating the body. Citibank Australia will continue to fund the National Youth Employment Body.

The National Youth Employment Body model is based on evidence and the Brotherhood of St Laurence's practice and research expertise in what works to not only build the skills and capabilities of young people, but also the capability of the community and the broader structural system to support youth employment.

The National Youth Employment body enables young people, employers, employment agencies, communities and policy makers to effectively respond to youth unemployment.

Linking local efforts to national reach

The National Youth Employment Body has committed to an ambitious vision for system and practice change that will improve employment outcomes for young people, business and communities.

It is developing a coordinated and scalable national approach to youth employment that enables young people to secure decent work while addressing the needs of industry for a diverse workforce that can adapt and develop with changing conditions.

By bringing together people from the key sectors that can contribute to solutions the National Youth Employment Body enables a place-based focus with national reach.

Local communities are supported to harness their expertise in co-developing strategies to improve local youth employment pathways. Their work in turn provides real-time community knowledge to national policy makers and experts across industry, employment services and education and training organisations on how to align their efforts to build the capabilities of young people and meet the needs of employers at the local level.

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Key components of the National Youth Employment Body

The National Youth Employment Body achieves its approach of harnessing community effort and government investments to address youth unemployment through these key components:

- The Brotherhood of St Laurence is the **enabling organisation** that provides research, evidence, data, practice expertise and facilitative leadership to build the capacity of local communities to collaborate, and enable the sharing of key learnings between local and national groups and the wider community.
- Local **Community Investment Committees** are the mechanism for key sectors in a community to develop local solutions to address youth unemployment.
- The **National Advisory Group** provides guidance, expertise and access to networks and opportunities that support the Community Investment Committees to find community solutions. It marshals evidence and develops consistent strategies and practices that in turn are used to inform policy at a national level.
- **Employers** drive investment in the skills and capabilities of young people by co-designing work-entry pathways that align the aspirations and interests of young people with business needs.
- **Young people** share their experiences of navigating employment systems and contribute to decision-making locally and nationally to ensure actions and strategies are fit for purpose.

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Community Investment Committees build local solutions to youth unemployment

Community Investment Committees are a core part of the place-based model used by the National Youth Employment Body (NYEB) and Transition to Work Community of Practice. Committees build community-led solutions to youth unemployment, beyond those achieved by programs and agencies working alone.

Each Committee brings together key local stakeholders, including **employers and industry, youth employment service providers, skills and training, all levels of government, young people and key community organisations**, to create and strengthen pathways that support young people into meaningful jobs.

Committees achieve this by leveraging existing efforts and government investments, drawing on real time data and local expertise to identify barriers and opportunities in youth employment, and developing strategies that benefit both young people and local employers and industry.

How Community Investment Committees work in place

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is supporting the establishment of Community Investment Committees in local communities across the country as a sustainable mechanism to drive action to improve local youth employment outcomes, beyond program and political cycles.

Community Investment Committees call on members to contribute and take collaborative action to:

- Align local work and learning opportunities for young people.
- Develop innovative approaches that enable young people to access opportunities.
- Support local businesses and the inclusive economic development of their community.

Community Investment Committees harness local expertise and investments to develop place-based solutions to improve youth employment.

“Community ownership is key...it’s place-based, so it needs to be focused around where we work, and there needs to be ownership and sustainability to everything we do.

— Shoalhaven CIC participant

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Committee members and others in the community work together to:

- Share diverse knowledge, and increase understanding of local labour markets, policy, government investments and other impacts on local youth employment pathways to inform local solutions that improve youth employment outcomes.
- Co-design and trial innovative approaches to youth employment that leverage community expertise, efforts and government investments.
- Ensure pathways are co-designed and driven by local employer champions, so that they are fit-for-purpose for local employment opportunities and support the local economy.
- Coordinate and strengthen work already taking place in the community to increase youth employment opportunities while also informing national policy and practice through the Transition to Work Community of Practice and National Youth Employment Body.
- Participate in wider campaigns and activities to improve youth employment, and promote a positive view about the potential of young jobseekers to contribute to their community.
- Contribute to the continuing review of the model underpinning the work of the Transition to Work Community of Practice and National Youth Employment Body by providing feedback on outcomes, and taking part in the Brotherhood's research evaluation of what works at a local level.

“ *With employment you actually need heavy involvement across every sector, including every level of government.*

— Shoalhaven CIC participant

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Community Investment Committees across National Youth Employment Body sites bring together members from key sectors of business, skills and training, employment, community and all levels of government, to collaboratively drive action that enables young people to gain meaningful jobs in their community.

Adelaide North Community Investment Committee

South Australia

The Adelaide North Community Investment Committee is refocusing its work in response to the COVID-19 crisis to ensure young people are not left behind.

Co-designing streamlined pathways to job opportunities for young people during the crisis

With the huge demand on call centres during the COVID-19 crisis, IT-based service provider Datacom is recruiting in Adelaide and Sydney for Services Australia. The Community Investment Committee is providing a coordinated mechanism for the recruitment of young people for Datacom call centre roles.

- Datacom HR manager, the employer champion and member of the Community Investment Committee, is providing industry insight on the preparation required for young people to gain call centre employment.
- National Youth Employment Body Lead Partner organisation, Workskil Australia, together with Datacom, is informing other members of the Committee about the recruitment process.
- All members are using their networks to share information and ensure young people are prepared to take up these job opportunities.

Co-designing training pathways to growth industries in health and aged care

The Adelaide North Community Investment Committee, drawing on labour market data from the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and the real-time expertise of local employers and community actors, has identified disability and aged care as a key growth sector in the area.

- The Committee is working with business and young people to develop a campaign to promote the opportunities and diverse roles available across the care sector to young people.
- Members of the Committee have connected with key local employers to begin to tailor a co-designed pathway into the sector for young people.
- The pathway is to involve a simulated employment and work experience module for sector specific training at the TAFE SA Hub. This builds on an existing simulated work-based learning model that engages learners in scenarios they would likely encounter at a work, which was developed by Committee members for another industry.

Investigating new employment opportunities for young people in agriculture

Adelaide North Community Investment Committee members identified agriculture as an area that could provide job opportunities for young people in a COVID-19 landscape, due to a shortage of itinerant workers for the upcoming citrus picking season in the Riverland area of South Australia.

- Members harnessed their expertise to identify what training and other support is needed to prepare young people for new agricultural jobs, and the funding and resources that could be leveraged to make it happen.

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- The Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment representative on the Committee is providing feedback from the group to the Department on what is required for young people to be ready for work in the agricultural industry.
- The two community organisations on the committee, Workskil Australia and Community Corporate, are working on how to best prepare a group of interested young people for a successful transition into agricultural work.

The Shoalhaven Community Investment Committee **New South Wales**

The Shoalhaven Community Investment Committee is developing new employment pathways for young people in communities recently hit by bushfires coordinated by National Youth Employment Body Lead Partner organisation, Mission Australia.

Building a work-ready trade labour force for the Shoalhaven City Council and wider community

The Shoalhaven Community Investment Committee is designing a pre-employment pathway to support young people into trade apprenticeships with the Shoalhaven City Council and other employers.

- A member of the Committee from Local Council will work with a group training organisation to design a bespoke pre-employment package for roles with the Council, enhancing and coordinating existing efforts.
- Youth employment service providers on the Committee will then ensure that a group of interested young people are ready to complete the pathway and move into employment.
- The program aims to provide young people with skills, workplace visits and work-readiness preparation to gain employment in Council recruitment rounds later in the year.

Designing aviation training to meet local labour market needs

Members of the Shoalhaven Community Investment Committee identified local demand for manufacturing skills, and are designing a streamlined skills and training pathway for young people who are disengaged, that would lead to paid work placements, traineeships and capabilities for Shoalhaven's growing aviation and high-level manufacturing industries.

Co-designing employment opportunities for young people in bushfire recovery projects

Members of the Shoalhaven Community Investment Committee are working with key sectors involved in post-bushfire rebuild efforts, to design a coordinated employment pathway that aligns to current and emerging business needs and builds the skills required for young people to contribute.

- A Committee member from the Local Council's Economic Development team, and another who is a Regional Employment Facilitator, have connected with local construction companies to develop work preparation packages, co-designed with TAFE and youth employment services, so that young people can be trained and ready to work in bushfire recovery projects, such as the School Creek bridge rebuild.
- Community Investment Committee members are collaborating with the contract manager of the bridge rebuild company, Fulton Hogan, to gain industry insights on labour needs and encourage the company to employ local young people. As a result, the manager of the bridge rebuild project has expressed his motivation to employ well-prepared young people.
- Members of the Committee from state and federal government are providing information on funding streams that can be drawn on to ensure both the employer and young person are well supported throughout the employment pathway.

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Logan-Beautesert Community Investment Committee

Queensland

Designing a community pathway to provide young people with experience of diverse roles in health and aged-care

The Logan-Beautesert Community Investment Committee identified the need for an agile skills and training pathway in health and aged care. This is a growth sector that struggles to attract young people due to a lack of awareness and barriers to accessing the roles, such as requiring a licence and car, or the full completion of a Certificate III before starting work.

- All members of the Committee are reaching out to local employers in the health and aged-care sector to co-design a pathway that meets the needs of both young people and employers.
- TAFE QLD has committed to co-designing a flexible training package tailored for local health and aged-care employers and young people.
- National Youth Employment Body Lead Partner organisation, yourtown, are designing an initiative to place young people in volunteer positions in local aged-care organisations, to provide them with career development and experience of working in the sector, to be implemented in a COVID-19 recovery landscape.
- The community organisations on the Committee, Youth and Family Services (YFS) and yourtown, will draw in a wider group of young people to ensure a pool of motivated and well-prepared candidates are ready to fill the positions.

Supporting small and medium businesses to train and invest in young people, creating local employment opportunities

The Logan-Beautesert Community Investment Committee, with insights from its employer members, is developing pathways that enable small and medium businesses to train and recruit young people.

- An employer champion on the Committee, who is a 7-Eleven franchise owner, contributed his knowledge of the industry's business needs and the support required for businesses to prepare young people for work in retail. Small and medium business employers are often hesitant to employ young people as they lack the time, resources or capacity to train them.
- The 7-Eleven franchise owner, supported by the National Youth Employment Body Lead Partner organisation, yourtown, is designing a simple tool for recruiting and training young people that is tailored to convenience stores. He is training young people from the local Transition to Work program, who on completion will be placed in employment at other convenience stores.
- Members of the Committee will reach out to other employers to adapt the tool and pathway for use with other small and medium businesses in the Logan-Beautesert region.

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