

Negotiating the maze
An analysis of employment assistance
for young people

331.13770994 DEA

by
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for
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Dusseldorp Skills Forum
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First published in April 2001 by the
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ISBN 1 876250 44 5

1. Unemployed - Government policy - Australia. 2. Youth -
Government policy - Australia. 3. Unemployed - Services
For - Australia. 4. Youth - Services for - Australia. I.
Title.

331.13770994

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Cover Design: Melanie Matthews Year 9 Monterey Secondary College.

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Foreword

The Creating Employment Pathways project is a partnership project initiated by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Hanover Welfare Services, Melbourne Citymission and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum. The partnership began in 1999 as a community response to the growing number of long-term unemployed people and a relatively limited program environment in employment services.

A project worker was employed in May 2000 for six months to examine the existing program environment in more detail and to explore new pathways into employment for young people.

Stage one involved a detailed audit and analysis of Federal and Victorian Government funded programs in the schools, adult, community and further education and the employment programs sectors for young people who were unemployed or 'at risk' of becoming unemployed. The purpose of the audit was to disentangle the complexity of the program environment so as to gain an understanding of the program gaps, the interactions between programs and the opportunities for program development. Data sources included web sites, policy documents, program guidelines, budget papers and to a lesser extent, program evaluations and reviews. Further clarification with departmental officials took place where necessary. In-depth interviews were also conducted with a range of stakeholders.

Stage two involved an analysis of broader systemic issues - the structural issues affecting young people's participation in existing programs - in conjunction with program development strategies. The generation of ideas for new models/pathways was assisted by consultations with service providers, relevant departmental representatives, funding bodies and other stakeholders.

The purpose of this report is not to critically evaluate the outcomes of individual programs in employment, education or training. What it aims to do is to illustrate how the system operates as a whole, to identify the gaps and overlaps, and to propose policy and program development initiatives that are needed to improve pathways through the system for young people. The focus of the report is on the way national and state programs interface in Victoria.

The report summarises the extent of fragmentation in the employment, education and training systems. By fragmentation we mean the disjointed nature of the program environment-the gaps and barriers in program provision, overlaps, lack of coordination and the lack of opportunities to participate in employment outcome focussed programs. Policy and program development recommendations to address these issues fall into three main areas. These are:

- age and eligibility restrictions between programs
- the program limitations in the employment services sector
- the lack of an appropriate gateway to the service system
- the lack of guidance and support to assist young people to negotiate the system.

The Creating Employment Pathways project partners acknowledge the work of the Project Officer, Liz Dearn, and thank her for writing and producing this report.

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Acronyms

ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Service
BSL	Brotherhood of St Laurence
CEP	Creating Employment Pathways project
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
DEWRSB	Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business
DFACS	Department of Family and Community Services
DSF	Dusseldorp Skills Forum
DSS	Department of Social Security
JSCI	Job Seeker Classification Instrument

Schools sector(*)

FSS	Full Service Schools program
JPP	Jobs Pathway Program
MIPs	Managed Individual Pathways
SFYS	School Focused Youth Services
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Adult community and further education (ACFE) sector(*)

ACE	Adult and Community Education
NAAP	New Apprenticeship Access Program
TAFE	Tertiary and Further Education

Employment sector(*)

CJP	Community Jobs Program
CBE	Community Business Employment Program
JPET	Jobs Placement, Employment and Training
WFD	Work for the Dole

*For a detailed program description, see the project audit document at:
<http://chirs.infoxchange.net.au/library>

List of recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1: RELAXATION OF AGE RESTRICTIONS

That DETYA, DEET and DEWRSB relax age-based eligibility guidelines to ensure that young people are able to access programs, and education and training re-entry points in particular, at the key stages in life when they are needed. Examples of how particular programs might be revised could include:

- *Extending JPET to 24 years*
- *Making the Victorian Youth Allowance TAFE Entitlement available to all 15 to 24 year olds.*

RECOMMENDATION 2: EXTENDED SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

As sustainable employment becomes more elusive for young people, it is important that every young person up to the age of 24 who is not in full-time work or full-time education is provided with an individual pathways broker or negotiator to ensure integrated employment placement and support, return to accredited education or training, or placement in a vocational program linked to further education or training.

RECOMMENDATION 3: RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIONS BETWEEN PROGRAMS

DETYA, DEWRSB, DFACS and DEET should relax restrictions between programs with a view to enhancing opportunities for young people to participate in combinations of programs. Examples of how participation in programs might be revised could include developing strong linkages between:

- *Work for the Dole and Victorian TAFE Youth Allowance Entitlement*
- *Work for the Dole and NAAP/New Apprenticeships*
- *Intensive Assistance and NAAP/New Apprenticeships*
- *JPET and NAAP/New Apprenticeships*
- *JPET and Greencorp*
- *JPP and JPET and Intensive Assistance*

RECOMMENDATION 4: TRIAL OF PROGRAM COMBINATIONS

DEWRSB and DETYA should support a trial of linkages between groups of programs providing opportunities for young people to participate in combinations of programs, for example:

- *JPET and NAAP/Greencorp/Intensive Assistance. A local JF?Eir'prOvlderc.o.qlii"be: funded to broker services from the local NAAP, Greenco(parJd.lofeO\$ive Assistance providers. Services users would be JPET clients, arjd.'1Jf3,~eligib.l~.'IQ basic education and training and ongoing support.*
- *Work for the Dole/New Apprenticeships/Intensive Assistance. Work for the Dole providers could be funded to broker services from NAAP and New Apprenticeships/Intensive Assistance that would provide accredited training or funding for training to Work for the Dole clients.*

RECOMMENDATION 5: GATEWAY POINT TO PATHWAYS

That DEET, DETYA, DEWRSB and Centrelink jointly develop a comprehensive information gateway to the programs and opportunities in employment, education and training for young people. Such an initiative would build on and better integrate projects such as The Source website and the proposed Victorian Youth Information Hotline.

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) would be funded to develop a local one-stop shop integrating generic employment, education and training services. It would provide a point of access for young people who have already dropped out of the system.

It is suggested that each Local Learning and Employment Network be required to develop local Youth Access Points in conjunction with DEET, DETYA, DEWRSB and Centrelink.

RECOMMENDATION 6: PERFORMANCE OF CENTRELINK

DFACS should commission and fund an independent research project to explore the impact of the dual role of Centrelink as the point of access to income support (involving regulatory, monitoring and breaching functions) as well as the key point of access to the services of the Job Network (involving assessment, enabling and supportive functions).

Such a project would examine how these roles can be better managed and how this crucial gateway can be better designed to cater for the needs and cultures of young people.

RECOMMENDATION 7: JOB NETWORK ACCESS & EQUITY AUDIT

DEWRSB should commission and fund an independent youth and young adult access and equity audit of the Job Network. The Department should also provide independent researchers with access to Job Network data and other relevant data sources.

RECOMMENDATION 8: RESEARCH SITE & INNOVATIVE EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS FUND

DEET with DEWRSB and/or DETYA, in consultation with the Creating Employment Pathways Project partners, establish a research site to trial:

- cross sectoral and pooled funding partnership initiatives for young people with multiple barriers to employment*
- the facilitation and support of best practice and innovative approaches to providing employment services to young unemployed people.*

That these departments jointly establish an Innovative Youth Employment Projects Fund to support such a trial between programs and sectors.

Introduction

Generally, how well do the education, employment and training systems meet the needs of disengaged young people? What inhibits the path of some young people through these systems? What are the key points of fragmentation and opportunities for better integration across the systems? What are some of the primary gaps in program provision and foundations for improved program development and delivery?

The Creating Employment Pathways (CEP) project brings together four organisations-Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), Dusseldorp Skills Forum (DSF), Hanover Welfare Services, and Melbourne Citymission-interested in answering these questions. The project documents and analyses the strengths and deficiencies in employment, education and training for young people who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment, and proposes new models and pathways through the complex systems facing young people.

Our conclusion from the analysis is that the effects of design weaknesses and resulting fragmentation may be felt no matter at which point young people enter employment, education or training systems. There are age and eligibility restrictions with consequent gaps and barriers; an overall lack of co-ordination and accountability for young people's needs; significant limitations to the types of programs provided; substantial difficulties attached to re-entering education and training; a lack of support and navigation for individuals moving through the system; and access for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people remains a significant problem.

Pathways through the systems are not visible and as a consequence, young people may not be aware of opportunities available to them. Paths are too often fractured and disjointed with the possibility of programs being inaccessible, inappropriate or unavailable at the key transition points where they might be needed.

The barriers to programs across the systems must be addressed in ways that are tailored to individual transition needs at points where they need them most. There is also an urgent need to better resource young people to negotiate the complexity of the systems.

It appears those who are benefiting least from present arrangements are those who are already most marginalised in the labour market and who require the most assistance. Young people, Indigenous people, people with disabilities and people from different cultural and language backgrounds are participating proportionally less in Job Network programs and have missed out on recent changes to employment services.

There is a range of initiatives and service options currently available for young people not in full-time education or employment. This report outlines ways of building on existing programs and services, as well as adding significant new alternatives to address these limitations. The purpose of this report is not to critically evaluate the outcomes of individual programs in employment, education or training. Instead, the aim is to describe how the system as a whole is operating, identify any major missing links and overlaps and outline policy and program development initiatives that are needed to improve the system as a whole.

The report is based on research that included a review of data sources including departmental internet sites, policy documents, program guidelines, budget papers and program evaluations, as well as consultations with key stakeholders through a series of interviews and workshops. Appendix A lists the participating agencies for key informant interviews and workshops.

A detailed audit document (see: <http://chirs.infoxchange.net.au/library>) has been produced and provides an overview of programs in each sector; the aims of each program; age and eligibility restrictions; activities; the number of program places; and the funding source and relationships to other programs. A condensed list of programs in the audit is provided in Appendix B.

The key program objectives adopted in the project guided the development of improved employment models and pathways. These were to:

- focus on the individual needs of at risk young people
- enhance entry to and transitions through the system
- address problems of access to and support by Centrelink and the Job Network
- build on existing initiatives and enhance linkages that already exist
- improve client and provider knowledge of pathways and options and develop a stronger culture of shared learning and better practice

- address the need for knowledge and attitudinal change among service providers and policy makers
- develop policy approaches and service offerings that have maximum transferability between localities and states.

The project has focused most strongly on the employment services sector where there is currently a range of initiatives and emerging partnerships, but little overarching and cohesive strategy to improve the employment prospects of young people. The high degree of fragmentation in the education, employment and training sectors must be addressed if young people's individual transition needs are to be met. A more integrated program environment with enhanced cooperation between funders and providers will make the service system more effective.

Part one: Young people, unemployment and institutional responses

1. Youth unemployment and marginalisation

Despite a decade of economic growth in Australia, youth unemployment remains disproportionately high with significant numbers of young people failing to make the transition from education and training into full-time employment. Changes to the labour market through the nineties have led to a decline in full-time employment, an increase in part-time work and an increase in unemployment for young people (McClelland, Macdonald and MacDonald 1998). Policy and program responses for dealing with the intransigence of the problem have failed to make an overall impact.

Young people's disadvantage in the labour market has been well documented by the DSF. The publications *Australia's youth: reality and risk* (DSF 1998) and *Australia's young adults: the deepening divide* (DSF 1999), provide a national perspective on developments that have affected young people aged 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 over the nineties. The recent report, *How Young People are Faring* (DSF 2000) use the following three key indicators to assess the participation of young people in employment, education and training:

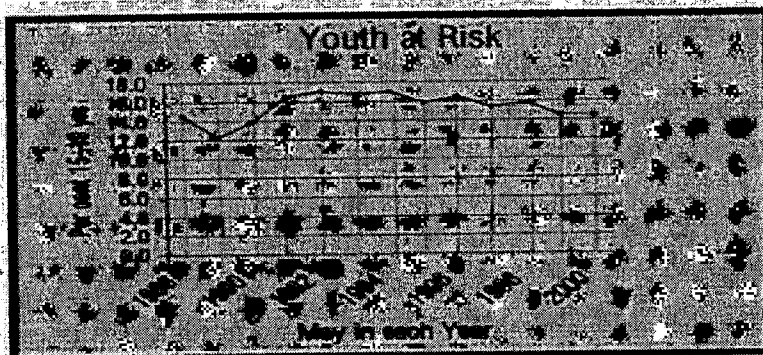
- the proportion of the population aged 15-24 not in full-time education and not in full-time employment
- the ratio of the unemployment rate among 15-24 year-olds to the unemployment rate among 25-54 year-olds
- the proportion of the population aged 20 to 24 who have completed year 12 or a post-secondary qualification.

The report concludes that on all three key indicators there has been only marginal improvement for young people over the last ten years despite improved economic growth (DSF 2000).

The proportion of all young people aged 15 to 19 years not engaged in full-time employment, education or training has remained relatively steady over the past ten years.

Figure 1 below charts over time those young people at risk of experiencing major difficulties in their transition to full-time work. These young people are defined as those who are either unemployed, or working part-time and not improving their qualifications, or who have dropped out of the labour market. People in these groups can be defined as engaged in 'marginal' activities (DSF 2000).

Figure 1 Proportion of all young people aged 15 to 19 years not in full-time education or full-time work, Australia, May 1988 to May 2000 (Reproduced from DSF 2000)



Source: Labour Force Australia, specified years, ASS Cat. No. 6203.0.

The importance of education and training arrangements for young people is reinforced by the findings of the joint NATSEM/Smith Family study of poverty in Australia (Harding and Szukalska 2000) showing that the risk of poverty for Australians without post-school qualifications is twice that of those with such qualifications. There is an integral connection between employment outcomes and education and training as evidenced by research that shows a more than doubled incidence of marginalised activity for early schoolleavers compared to those who leave school at Year 12 (McClelland, MaGdonald and MacDonald 1998). Those most at risk of poverty are no longer groups such as single parents and the aged. The position of younger single Australians who have left their parents and left school early has become perilous, with almost one-third of them being in poverty.

Young people are clearly bearing the brunt of unemployment with those aged 15 to 24 experiencing two and a half times the level of unemployment recorded for adults aged 25 to 54. This disproportionate ratio shows that economic growth alone will not ensure the employment of young people (DSF 2000). The one important mechanism for helping young people to compete in employment is education and training.

Education and training targets to increase school retention rates were introduced by the Commonwealth and State Governments in Australia through the Finn Review in 1991. However, by May 1999, 17 per cent of 19 year-olds had not attained a minimum level of education to be competitive in the labour market in the long term (DSF 2000).

Several states are responding to the disaffection that significant numbers of young people are demonstrating with mainstream schooling options. In Queensland ambitious goals have been set for school retention by 2010; and in South Australia regional partnerships and new local enterprise modules have been introduced. At a national level, the Commonwealth has introduced school-based part-time apprenticeships to improve 'the holding power' of schools, and the Federal Opposition has committed itself to a reform agenda designed to boost school retention.

The Victorian Government has announced new goals for post-compulsory education and training in Victoria. These are to:

- increase the percentage of young people who complete year 12 or equivalent
- increase the number of adults undertaking education and training and so increase the overall level of educational attainment and literacy levels in Victoria
- increase the level of participation and achievement in education and training in rural and regional Victoria and among groups where it is presently low
- make near-universal participation in post-school education and training the norm in our society (Victorian Government website 2000, <http://www.eduvic.vic.gov.au/postcomp/index.htm>).

In addition to school retention mechanisms, broader institutional change may be required to assist young people to make successful transitions from education to work.

...Higher levels of education participation alone are not sufficient. Also of importance are the quality of outcomes and experience; linkages with employment; broader community responsibility and greater program and institutional flexibility (Kirby 2000, p42).

The Kirby review was undertaken to identify the strategies needed to improve participation and outcomes in education and training for young people. In the final report a strong connection is made between young people's employment outcomes and the way the system is structured. It is argued that greater collaboration and integration between providers; stronger linkages between education and training, industry, other government agencies and the community; more devolved responsibilities to local communities; and additional funding will achieve a more 'seamless' system for young people leading to improved education and employment outcomes.

These policy shifts and responses are in line with the international review of policies and programs focusing on the transition to working life across fourteen OECD countries conducted by the OECD between 1997 and 1999 (OECD 1999). The review illustrates the institutional changes that have taken place to enhance young people's competitiveness in the labour market. Changes have included the broadening of vocational programs, the creation of linkages between general and vocational education, the development of combinations of school and work-based learning, and the development of more flexible education and training pathways into employment.

The transition to working life is defined by the DECO as encompassing two periods- the period spent in post-compulsory education and the period spent settling into work after completing education. These transition periods have increased over the nineties, although the length of transition varies between countries. After leaving initial education, full-time work may be interspersed with spells of unemployment, part-time work and part-time study and/or labour market entry may be postponed for travel.

Factors that magnify the risk potential include living in workless households, having limited work experience since leaving school, and gender (DECO 1999). Girls who leave school early are more likely to be economically disadvantaged. "Boys who leave school at year 11 are more than twice as likely as girls to be in a full-time job (66 per cent compared to 31 per cent) (Kirby 2000).

For young people who are more vulnerable to experiencing difficulties in finding and sustaining stable employment, highly targeted institutional strategies are needed. To limit the incidence of long-term marginalisation, systems must aim to be responsive to students at risk of leaving school early and those who are unemployed or engaged in marginal activities. An inclusive approach commonly entails a dual strategy, as stated in the DECO report:

Inclusive transitions systems for youth seek at the one time to keep the numbers who are not in education, training and employment low, and to ensure that the small numbers who do fall through the cracks are closely monitored and rapidly re-inserted into education and training (DECO 1999, p10B).

A dual strategy is implemented in Nordic countries and, according to key indicators, is highly successful. Denmark and Norway are the only two DECO countries where the incidence of long-term unemployment of teenagers has fallen during the nineties. The incidence of long-term youth unemployment is among the lowest in the DECO in Denmark, Finland and Norway (DECO 1999). Nordic safety nets for early school leavers and unemployed young people focus on prevention and remediation, integrate education, labour market and welfare policies, and provide locally managed delivery systems that track early school leavers and coordinate services across several portfolios and several levels of government (DECO 1999).

Australia takes a highly segmented and dual-strategy approach. Programs in schools, the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) sectors and in the employment sectors provide a range of programs targeted at young people at risk of early school leaving and those who are unemployed. However, there is an increasing recognition that, despite the number and range of programs, the systems are not providing a comprehensive response to young people's transition needs.

2. A fragmented system

A highly complex, confusing and fragmented service system in employment, education and training has evolved in Australia. For young people at risk of unemployment, or who are engaged in marginal activities, the lack of integration of services has been the underlying theme in several recent Australian reviews.

The relationship between young people's employment outcomes and service system responses is explored in the Victorian Post Compulsory Education and Training Review (Kirby 2000); the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce (forthcoming); and in the Boston Consulting Group's report for the Business Council of Australia, *Pathways to work: tackling long-term unemployment (2000)*.

The Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce was established to provide advice to government on how young people's pathways to independence could be improved with a particular focus on strengthening a range of services such as education, employment, training, family, and income support. Findings from the initial consultations included the need for:

- better coordination of services
- better collaboration between agencies
- better links with schools
- more flexible curriculum options for those at risk
- mentoring and case management for those at risk
- funding systems that respond to local needs as part of a holistic approach (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) 2000).

The Boston Consulting Group reported to the Business Council of Australia in 2000 on ways to engage, track and monitor young people as part of a broader strategy to tackle long-term unemployment. The report acknowledged the importance of economic growth in addressing unemployment, but focused on the critical part that programs for at risk youth have to play in the solution. They conclude that there is a need to ensure that:

- program outcomes are able to be measured in a meaningful way
- programs are tailored to individual needs
- local communities and agencies become responsible for ensuring young people are supported during the years of transition
- funding is targeted to areas where it is likely to have the most impact (Boston Consulting Group 2000).

3. Principles for youth employment, education and training services

The transition from education and training into employment is seen as a stepping stone into the adult world for young people. However, the concept of a linear transition is no longer necessarily applicable. It is not uncommon for young people to be combine full-time and part-time study with periods of full-time, part-time and casual work and unemployment. Disproportionately high rates of youth unemployment, diminishing opportunities for full-time work, and the persistence of casual and part-time work as the most ready employment options, mean that transitions from school to employment may be fractured, extended and uncertain (ryvyn and White 1997).

There are young people who may benefit from remaining in school but who feel compelled to leave before completing year 12 or its equivalent. For young people who do not complete their secondary schooling, interrupted educational pathways may have long-term consequences. They have difficulty re-entering employment, education and training systems and generally incur long-term disadvantage from this exclusion.

Systems need to be responsive and flexible to young people's need to access different parts at different times. Young people need opportunities to access appropriate education, training and employment programs and appropriate advice and support to assist them in negotiating the system. For young people who have not completed their education, it is important that opportunities to return to education or training are available. For those young people who become disengaged, it is vital that quality employment programs are available and that links to education and training and employment experience are made accessible and flexible.

The following program principles can be used to help evaluate and develop existing education, employment and training programs targeted at young people for better responses to their circumstances. These program design principles are to:

- target support and resources towards those most at risk from an early age
- engage young people through better combinations of magnets and resources
- develop local responses to the needs of young people through supporting stronger local community capacity and integrated service provision
- track young people over time to provide continuous support and rapid response to changing status

- provide a range of customised routes for progression which meet all young people's needs, enabling each young person to build up the range of capital (material, knowledge, social, cultural and psychological)
- provide young people with brokering support to mediate between family, opportunities and services and knit together fragmented resources
- evaluate the long-term effectiveness of work with young people
- fund and reward services according to their effectiveness (Bentley and Gurumurthy 1999).

In Australia there are currently a number of programs for young people at risk. But the pathways are not well organised and there is no guarantee that programs will be available at points in a young person's transition when they need them most. Part two explores young people's pathways through the employment, education and training program environment.

Part two: Findings and discussion-looking at the pathways

The term 'pathways' is a useful concept for describing opportunities available to young people making the transition into employment. The concept 'establishes a link between the routes by which young people move between education and training programs, the content of these programs, the qualifications to which the programs lead, and the destinations to which the qualifications provide entry' (DECO 1999, p56). However, the pathways in Australia are increasingly pot-holed, disjointed and frustrating, and sometimes lead to dead ends rather than enriching destinations.

A range of programs are funded across the employment, education and training sectors-in schools, Adult Community Education (ACE) and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) or ACFE, and employment services-to meet the needs of young people who are unemployed or at risk of long-term unemployment. However, despite the range of programs provided, there are significant problems with the way the service system is structured. This fragmentation of the program environment has a significant impact on young people's pathways into employment.

1. Mapping the key pathways

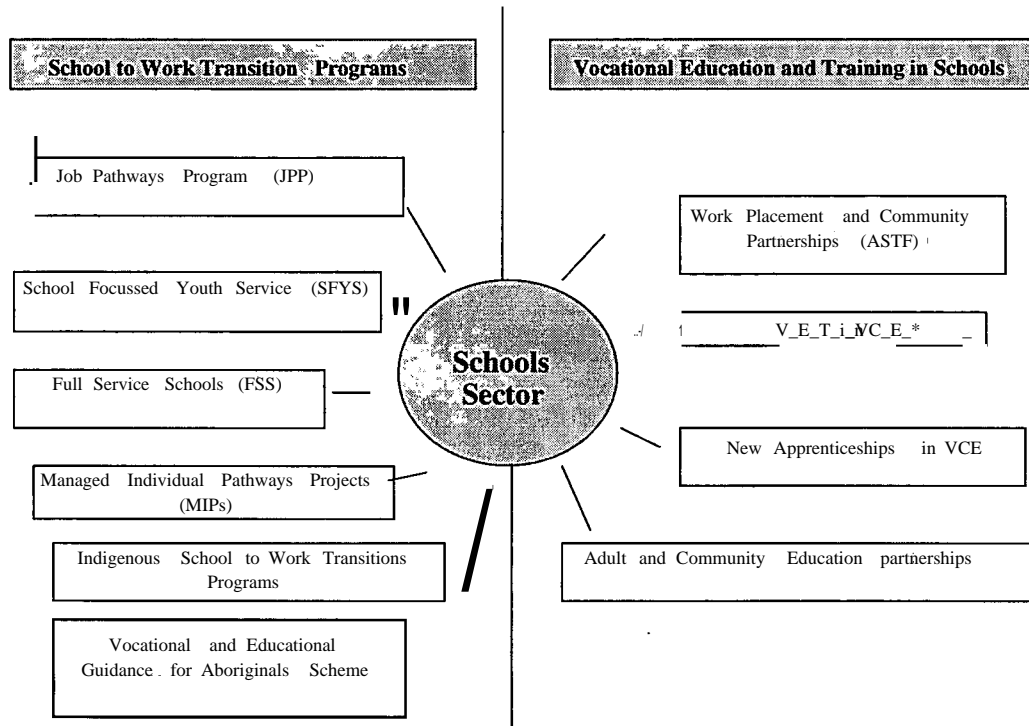
In Australia, a range of programs are funded across the employment, education and training sectors to meet the needs of young people who are unemployed or at risk of long-term unemployment. These are provided in three sectors: in schools, in ACE and TAFE, and in employment services.

1.1 Schools sector

The constraining nature of the school curriculum and dissatisfaction with the school environment are commonly cited as causes for early school leaving (Dwyer et. al 1998). Schools need to provide a suitable environment for all students, those academically and vocationally orientated, as well as those disenfranchised by mainstream schooling. A special need is to reinforce the responsibility of education systems to provide accessible and supportive opportunities for disengaged students to return to formal learning at a later stage in life. Interestingly, the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century adopted by the Commonwealth and States in 1999 make no reference to this as a formal goal of Australian education systems.

There is a range of school to work transition programs in schools that may cater for at risk students. They include those that offer guidance and support, such as Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) in Victoria and those that provide access to vocational education and training and work-based experience (Enterprise and Careers Education Foundation) projects and the Jobs Pathways Program (JPP) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Programs in the schools sector



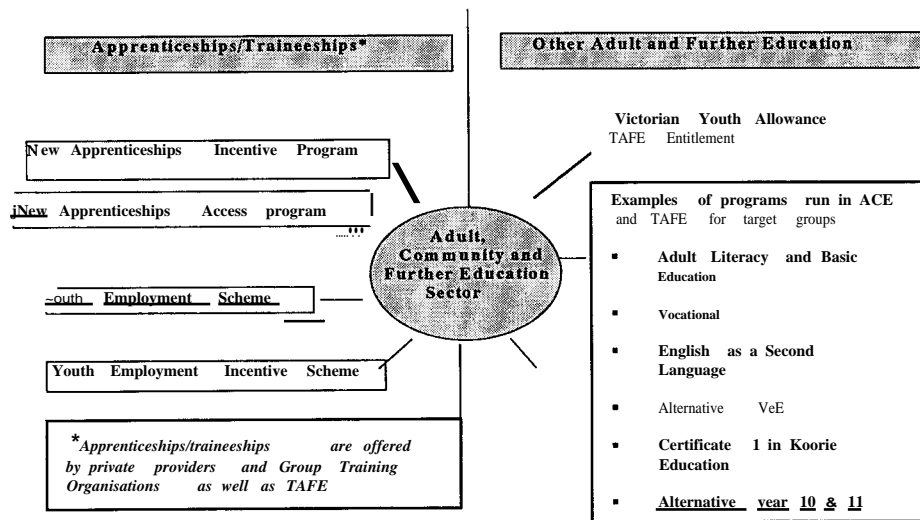
* Vocational education and training (VET) in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE).

1.2 Adult, community and further education sector

The adult, community and further education sector (consisting of ACE and TAFE organisations) may provide an alternative educational setting for students at risk of leaving school early or those who are returning to education and training.

There are a number of programs specifically for young unemployed people or those at risk of long-term unemployment in this sector. General and preparatory courses, alternative VeE, and various apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities may be available (see Figure 3 for examples).

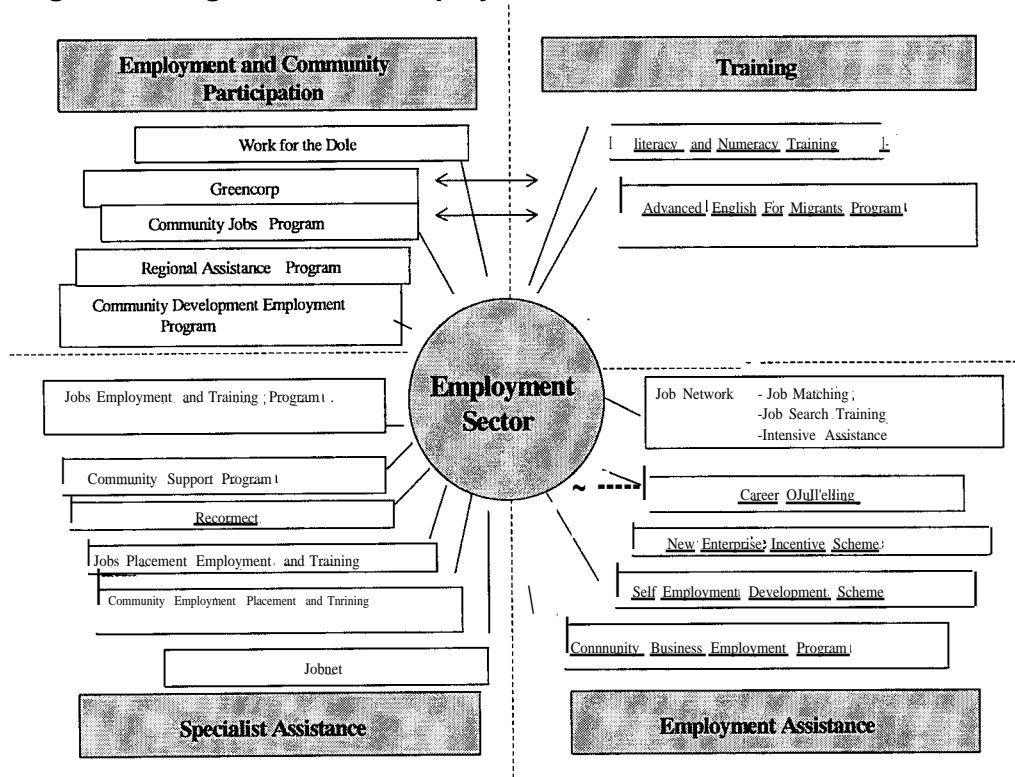
Figure 3 Programs in the adult, community and further education sector (ACE & TAFE)



1.3 Employment sector

In the employment sector the main employment services are provided under the Job Network in three areas: Job Matching, Job Search Training and Intensive Assistance. The services are offered by a variety of community-based, government and private organisations. In addition to the Job Network, there are also some specialist Commonwealth-funded programs for young people, including Greencorp, Reconnect, and the Jobs Placement, Employment and Training Program (JPET). While Work for the Dole (WFD) is not exclusively aimed at young people, they are the primary target group for the program. Figure 4 provides an overview of programs in the employment sector.

Figure 4. Programs in the employment services sector



2. Points of fragmentation across employment, education and training systems

Programs for youth at risk in the employment, education and training sectors are variously funded by Commonwealth¹ and State² Governments and by a number of different departments within each sphere of government. As a generalisation it is true to say that the Commonwealth has primary responsibility for employment policy and programs and the State has primary responsibility for education. However, there is a strong substitution effect where the Commonwealth may fund programs in areas where there are gaps left by the States and vice versa (see Table 1 below).

This shared, but often not negotiated, responsibility results in confusing program design and is the source of many of the age and eligibility restrictions in programs, and gaps and overlaps between programs. Adding further complexity is the number of programs for youth at risk which are shared between non-government organisations and different levels governments.

¹ Includes Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA); Department of Employment, Workplace Relations, and Small Business (DEWRSB); and Department of Family and Community Services (DFACS).

² In Victoria, includes Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), and Department of Human Services (DHS).

Table 1: Primary examples of Commonwealth and Victorian Government program funding

PROGRAM TYPE	FUNDING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-to-work transition projects -Jobs Pathways Program -Full Service Schools -School Focused Youth Services -Managed individual Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth (DEYA) Commonwealth (DEYA) State (DHS/DEET) State (DEET)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational Education and Training -Enterprise and Careers Education Foundation programs -Youth Employment Incentive Scheme -Youth Employment Scheme -Vocational Education and Training -New Apprenticeship Access Program -ACEITAFE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth (DEYA) State (DEET) State (DEET) Shared Shared Shared
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment programs -Work for the Dole -Job Network -Community Support Program -Reconnect -Community Development Employment Program -Greencorp -New Enterprise Incentive Scheme/Self Employment Development scheme -Advanced English for Migrants Program -Community Jobs Program -Community Business Employment Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth (DEWRSB) Commonwealth (QEWRSB) Commonwealth (DEWRSB) Commonwealth (DEACS) Commonwealth (DFACS) Commonwealth (OERYS) Commonwealth (OEWRSB) Commonwealth (DEYA) State (DEET) State (DEET)

2.1 Age restrictions

As each agency and department attempts to develop programs designed to meet the needs of its own defined target group, confusing and sometimes conflicting eligibility criteria for programs emerge. For example, age-based entry restrictions into programs mean that as a young person travels through the program environment between the ages of 15 and 24, programs drop in and out of availability. This is often a reflection of the origin of the program and department funding it rather than a reflection of what young people need at certain ages and stages.

As a consequence, from the ages of 15 to 24 young people will have various education, training and support needs that may or may not be met by the employment, education and training service system. Table 2 provides an overview of program eligibility restrictions based on age.

Table 2: Examples of age-based program restrictions

PROGRAM	15	16 - 17	18	19	20	21	22 - 24
Schools							
Full Service Schools				X	X	X	X
Pathways Project					X	X	X
Enterprise and Careers Education Foundation				X	X	X	X
Jobs Pathways Project					X	X	X
ACE/TAFE							
Youth Employment Incentive Scheme							
Youth Employment Scheme							
Youth Allowance TAFE Entitlement	X		X	X	X	X	X
New Apprenticeship Access Scheme							
Employment							
Job Network							
Intensive Assistance							
Community Support Program							
Jobs Placement, Employment & Training							X
Reconnect				X	X	X	X
Community Business Employment.							
Community Jobs Program							
Community Employment Placement and Training							
Jobnet							
Career Counselling							
Literacy/numeracy							
Adult English for Migrants Program							
N-w Enterprise Incentives Scheme	X	X					
Greencorp	X					X	X
Work for the Dole	X	X					

For example, as shown in Table 2 above, the Victorian Youth Allowance TAFE Entitlement, funded by DEET, which provides funding for up to 400 hours of education or training is available to young people aged 16 and 17 only. It originated as an initiative to assist young people being compelled to return to education and training³. However, there are many young people for whom cost is a barrier to returning to education and training and who therefore cannot benefit from this scheme.

Similarly JPET, funded by the DETYA, is provided to a restricted age group- young people aged 15 to 21. Outside school to work transition programs, JPET is one of the main support programs for young unemployed people. But it is not available to young people aged 22 to 24. See Table 2 for examples of age-based program restrictions.

³ The introduction of the Commonwealth Youth Allowance required young people aged 16 and 17, from January 1999, to participate in full-time education or training.

A better-integrated program environment would result from the relaxation of program age restrictions. In this way, access to programs would become more flexible resulting in a service environment that could better meet young people's individual needs.

RECOMMENDATION 1: RELAXATION OF AGE RESTRICTIONS

That DETYA, DEET and DEWRSB relax age-based eligibility guidelines to ensure that young people are able to access programs, and education and training re-entry points in particular, at the key stages in life when they are needed. Examples of how particular programs might be revised could include:

- *Extending JPET to 24 years*
- *Making the Victorian Youth Allowance TAFE Entitlement available to all 15 to 24 year olds.*

RECOMMENDATION 2: EXTENDED SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

As sustainable employment becomes more elusive for young people, it is important that every young person up to the age of 24 who is not in full-time work or full-time education is provided with an individual pathways broker or negotiator to ensure integrated employment placement and support, return to accredited education or training, or placement in a vocational program linked to further education or training.

2.2 Participation restrictions between programs

Reflecting the differing target groups and limits on eligibility by government departments, numerous restrictions exist between participation in programs. Restrictions on participation in programs offered by one department and between various departments are common. There are restrictions between participation in two DEWRSB funded programs and between DEWRSB and DETYA programs. There are also limitations on participation between some State and Commonwealth programs.

For example participation in the Victorian Community Business Employment Program (CBE) is not considered a valid activity for meeting Mutual Obligation activity requirements, and participation in CBE or the Victorian Government's Community Jobs Program (CJP) and Commonwealth-funded Intensive Assistance in the Job Network is disallowed.

'Double dipping' is the term used to describe the unauthorised use of funds from more than one program to provide a service to a participant. See Table 3 below for examples of restrictions between programs.

Table 3: Restrictions between programs

Program (funding source)	Restriction on participation
CSP (DEWRSB)	Job Search Training Intensive Assistance Work for the Dole
JPET (DETYA)	Another JPET JPP Intensive Assistance New Apprenticeship Access Program (NAAP) Reconnect
Reconnect (DFACS)	JPET
CBE (DEET)	Not a mutual obligation activity
CJP (DEET)	Intensive Assistance
CEPT (DFACS)	Intensive Assistance
Literacy/numeracy (DETYA)	Job Search Training Intensive Assistance
NEIS/SED (DEWRSB)	Job Search Training Intensive Assistance
Greencorp (DETYA)	JPET
Work for the Dole (DEWRSB)	Intensive Assistance

Governments could encourage a more integrated program environment by mandating the linking of programs. This would add value to the program environment for young people. For example, linking JPP with JPET and Intensive Assistance would provide young people with support, training and work placement.

RECOMMENDATION 3: RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIONS BETWEEN PROGRAMS
DETYA, DEWRSB, DFACS and DEET should relax restrictions between programs with a view to enhancing opportunities for young people to participate in combinations of programs. Examples of how participation in programs might be revised could include developing strong linkages between:

- *Work for the Dole and Victorian TAFE Youth Allowance Entitlement*
- *Work for the Dole and NAAP/New Apprenticeships*
- *Intensive Assistance and NAAP/New Apprenticeships*
- *JPET and NAAP/New Apprenticeships*
- *JPET and Greencorp*
- *JPP and JPET and Intensive Assistance*

RECOMMENDATION 4: TRIAL OF PROGRAM COMBINATIONS

DEWRSB and DETYA should support a trial of linkages between groups of programs providing opportunities for young people to participate in combinations of programs, for example:

- *JPET and NAAP/Greencorp/Intensive Assistance. A local JPET provider could be funded to broker services from the local NAAP, Greencorp and Intensive Assistance providers. Services users would be JPET clients and be eligible for basic education and training and ongoing support.*
- *Work for the Dole/New Apprenticeships/Intensive Assistance. Work for the Dole providers could be funded to broker services from NAAP and New Apprenticeships/Intensive Assistance that would provide accredited training or funding for training to Work for the Dole clients.*

2.3 Youth Allowance as an entry point to the program environment

One of the most significant challenges for young people has been the restructuring of federal income support arrangements since 1998. The Youth Allowance is an income support payment for both full-time students and unemployed young people that integrates a range of former payments including AUSTUDY, Sickness Benefit and the Youth Training Allowance. Payments to people aged under 21 are subject to parental means testing.

Some of the major impacts since the introduction of the Youth Allowance have been:

- an increased dependence on their parents by young people who do not qualify for Youth Allowance,
- the obligation of 16 and 17 year-olds to return to full-time education or training, and
- the requirement that 18 to 20 year-olds look for full-time work or be in full-time education or training.

Eligibility for the Youth Allowance has also been used to determine the entitlement of young people to Federal Government employment, education and training assistance. A series of complex steps, and formidable gates face young people in need of income support and intensive employment assistance during the period of transition to sustainable employment-job seeker registration, Youth Allowance eligibility, job seeker classification, waiting periods, monitoring, reporting, regulation and so on. Pathways to employment can sometimes be seen more as a series of roadblocks than easy access points.

It is difficult to quantify the impact of the Youth Allowance on participation by young people in employment programs because its introduction coincided with establishment of the Job Network. However, Centrelink staff and Job Network members interviewed for the Job Network evaluation were concerned that 'young job seeker's contact with employment services had been reduced with the introduction of the Youth Allowance (at the same time as the Job Network)' (DEWRSB 2000).

Since the introduction of the Job Network, the Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) has been used to identify job seekers for Job Search Training, those who are in need of Intensive Assistance and those with special needs. According to the initial Job Network evaluation undertaken by DEWRSB (2000), young people and Indigenous job seekers were less likely to have been classified by the JSCI than other job seekers (partly because of the voluntary nature of registration for young people not in receipt of Youth Allowance). This may result in their exclusion from services like Intensive Assistance and the Community Support Program (DEWRSB 2000).

People working fewer than 15 hours per week, not in full-time education and training and not in receipt of income support are eligible for Job MatChing services and technical eligible for Job Search Training or Intensive Assistance, however they must first initiate an assessed at Centerlink and as they are not in receipt of income they are unlikely to be aware let alone initiate the assessment. Hence it is reasonable to question whether this distribution of program resources reaches far enough to potentially include disengaged and transitional young people. A Job Seeker ID number is an entrance requirement for many employment, education and training programs. Gaining this number requires contact with Centrelink, something young people who are not eligible for income support may perceive as a deterrent.

Young people still at school (and all other students) who are looking for work are not eligible for Centrelink services except for assessment for Youth Allowance. They cannot get a Job Seeker ID number from Centrelink and can only use Job Network services if the provider agrees to assist them and is not expecting payment for a placement.

Similar complications may occur for the young person attempting to access the Victorian Youth Allowance TAFE Entitlement, eligibility for which is determined (with the actual entitlement, or 'voucher' as it is commonly known, being issued) by Centrelink, which requires a young person to be a Health Care Card holder. While it is positive in this instance that there is a Commonwealth-State gateway to a state-based program, approaching Centrelink remains problematic for a number of young people. There are a series of complicated administrative steps that must be made between Centrelink and the educational institution before access is gained.

For Indigenous job seekers, an Indigenous Job Seeker card provides entitlement to a range of specialist programs and assistance and is gained through contact with Centrelink. Despite it now being Centrelink policy to ask all clients who register with them if they are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, recent research into referral processes with Indigenous job seekers in Melbourne's west illustrates a number of case studies where this did not occur. This raises serious questions about access to entitlements for Indigenous job seekers (Geia 2001).

2.4 Lack of continuity in program provision

Short-term and pilot funding of programs for youth at risk has become increasingly common. The audit document produced for this analysis gives some indication of the number of programs operating on short-term or pilot funding. One of the consequences of precarious funding is that the program environment and networks established to oversee programs continually change, leading to client and provider frustration and diminished program effectiveness. For example, the Full Service Schools Program was introduced by the Federal Government in 1998, but, by the time consortiums had been established in local areas to support the project, there were only twelve months of implementation in some areas before funding ran out in December 2000.

Another implication of short-term and pilot funding is on the development and retention of local knowledge. Our consultations indicated that there was a high degree of confusion in the sector, from service funders and service providers alike, about employment, education and training programs provided for this target group. Young people need a level of familiarity before services become well known and trusted. Boston Consulting Group (2000) highlighted as a key issue the lack of a 'knowledgeable buyer' of local employment, education and training services for young people. The funding environment of open tendering and short-termism is having a corrosive impact on the continuity of expertise, training and planning, with a culture of 'grantsmanship' emerging sometimes at the expense of focusing on service quality.

An important part of providing an effective community-based service is developing a trusted relationship between agencies and service users. It is difficult for agencies to develop this rapport when there is no guarantee that a program will continue beyond the establishment phase. This is particularly the case in the competitive environment that has emerged from the open tendering process.

2.5 Gaps and overlaps resulting from a lack of coordination

In Australia there are a large number of players, both funders and providers, across the systems providing services for at risk young people. But there is no single body with overall responsibility for the planning or coordinating programs, and no accountability for the destinations of young people, especially early school leavers. Boston Consulting Group (2000) pointed to the unclear accountabilities of schools and TAFE and employment agencies in the Job Network as symptomatic of the broader confusion between the Commonwealth and States in the youth transition area.

This lack of overall coordination results in *ad hoc* program provision with gaps and overlaps in program availability. For example, program coverage is often patchy - in some geographical regions there may be one program such as JPP or JPET, in others there may be several, and in others there may be no program available at all. In terms of the availability of alternative educational programs, there are similar inconsistencies (see Kirby 2000 and Stokes 2000 for gaps and inconsistencies in program availability for young people returning to education).

Some young people may have an alternative VCE available within the school setting or not, depending on where they are living (Kirby 2000). This results partly from poorly coordinated program provision and partly from the lack of a common framework for alternative educational programs to deal with the diversity of student needs. The Victorian Post-Compulsory Education and Training Review has acknowledged the need to make non-school-based education and training for young people more accessible and to make VCE more widely available, especially through TAFE and ACE, particularly for young refugees, people with disabilities and Indigenous students.

This lack of co-ordination also has important results for another set of clients in employment, education and training systems-employers. A multitude of related programs are frequently canvassing employers for job vacancies, work placement, apprenticeships and other requests, often with diminishing dividends. Employers are forced to attend to a host of competing and unco-ordinated Job Network brokers, Group Training Companies, New Apprenticeship centres, structured workplace learning clusters, and so on. Again, there are few 'one-stop shops' or local clearing-houses where employers can deal with these demands efficiently.

There are other significant deficiencies in the program environment. Gaps exist in student guidance and support, especially for young people in vocational pathways. There are multiple program gaps in relation to opportunities for funded work placement. Some of these are the result of changes to the policy environment. A more detailed discussion of gaps in the employment services sector features in the following section.

2.6 Program limitations in the employment sector

Since 1996, there has been major restructuring of the way employment assistance services are planned, funded and delivered. Expenditure on employment programs has been significantly reduced; elements of the Department of Social Security (DSS) and Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) were amalgamated to create Centrelink; other services previously offered by Skillshare and the CES were contracted out; labour market programs were 'cashed out' to fund the Job Network; and private providers and new social enterprises were established to deliver employment placement services. For a discussion of changes to the employment services operating environment see Considine (1999).

For young people, the biggest impacts have included the closure of youth dedicated services such as Youth Access Centres; increased complexity about eligibility to income support and employment assistance; and a major focus on Mutual Obligation at the expense of strategies to improve skills and access to subsidised work and training.

2.6.1 Mutual Obligation

Mutual Obligation is the organising principle within which employment services are offered to young people.⁴ Mutual Obligation activity tests are applicable to all job seekers aged 18 to 24 after six months of receiving unemployment benefits. In general, while the expectations placed on young people through Mutual Obligation have increased, the notion of their entitlement to services and individual assistance in response has been diminished (Macdonald 1999). All recipients of Youth Allowance and Newstart must meet activity test requirements in order to maintain eligibility. Breaches of activity test requirements are met with a reduction of benefit or withdrawal of benefit for a period of time.

WFD was introduced in 1997 as one of the centrepiece Mutual Obligation requirements. It has doubled in size since 1997 making it one of the largest funded government programs for unemployed young people outside the Job Network. In the extensive literature about WFD the following criticisms are often made:

- it does not have employment outcomes as its chief objectiveS
- projects are not required to provide recognised training, specific skills development, or structured pathways to other forms of assistance, and
- projects are not tailored to individual needs or participant career aspirations.

According to the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), the limitations of WFD 'are particularly significant, given that it is the only component of employment assistance that has grown in real terms in recent years' (ACOSS 1999, p1).

⁴ The concept of Mutual Obligation encompasses the guiding principle that 'unemployed job seekers, supported financially by the community, should, in addition to actively seeking work, undertake another activity to improve their competitiveness in the labour market and/or contribute to the local community' (Centrelink 2000).

⁵ Programs that offer paid employment experience and recognised training are likely to achieve better employment outcomes for disadvantaged job seekers than those without those components. WFD has poor outcomes compared to previous 'Working Nation' labour market programs that also provided paid work experience (Jobstart and Jobskills) and training (Jobskills). Outcomes include: WFD (27%), Jobstart (59%) and Jobskills (41%), Intensive Assistance (36%) (ACOSS 2000a).

There is a range of other activities that young people can participate in to meet the activity test requirements of Mutual Obligation (see Appendix C). However, results of the audit for this project illustrate that there are a number of limitations in the types of programs available to young people. That is, opportunities to participate may be restricted and single programs may not be comprehensive enough to meet the needs of many job seekers.

For example, opportunities to participate in the more comprehensive programs (offering support and access to work experience and training) like JPET and JPP, have restricted age and eligibility criteria. The fact that Job Network services like Job Search and Intensive Assistance that are offered on a 'capacity to benefit' (outcomes focused) basis means that people who are long-term unemployed with more intensive (and expensive) needs tend to be overlooked (ACOSS 2000b).

Training opportunities like Greencorp (also with restrictive age and eligibility criteria) and New Apprenticeships are oriented to young people with clearly defined vocational orientations. Single programs-literacy and numeracy, career counselling, voluntary work-in isolation, only offer aspects of what a young job seeker may require.

2.6.2 Complexity of the system

The findings of the initial Commonwealth Job Network evaluation suggest that substantial numbers of young people are confused about their rights and responsibilities under Mutual Obligation. Although there are 14 programs from which to choose to meet the requirements of the activity test, it remains unclear to what extent young people understand the options for participating in programs outside the WFD program. There is some concern about the availability of accurate information by Centrelink (DEWRSB 2000).

The overall complexity of the employment, education and training program environment, as illustrated in previous sections of this report, makes it essential that young people have an appropriate gateway to access income support and the program environment. For young people outside educational settings, the extent to which this is available is questionable.

There is an urgent question as to who is providing advocacy and support for young people who are not eligible for the Youth Allowance and who are not in direct contact with Centrelink (Stokes 2000).

A critical point raised by service providers is the problematic nature of Centrelink's dual role administering the requirements of Mutual Obligation, with its monitoring and breaching role, which is often at odds with its enabling role as the primary gateway to income support and employment assistance support for young people. Hence, this research suggests that there is currently a need for an alternative entry point to the service system. Some TAFE institutes offer an alternative entry point to the program environment and some community-based providers (like JPET) act as an entry point to the program environment for young people through word of mouth. However, these are *ad hoc* measures and there is a lack of continuity in community-based entry points to employment services, both inside and outside educational settings.

It is difficult to quantify the effect of the removal of the Youth Access Centres on young people's pathways. The need for this service, which was based on the results of DSS Youth Pilot Projects in the 1990s, remains. Many young people are reluctant to seek assistance. They are often unaware of or are confused by services available to them, consider DSS unapproachable, and find the processes for obtaining income support complex and insensitive to their needs ...' (DSS 1994, cited in Pinkney and Ewing 1999).

RECOMMENDATION 5: *GATEWAY: A local one-stop shop integrating information gateway to the programs and training for young people. Such an information gateway projects such as The Source website and the proposed Hotline.*

Such a Youth Access Point would provide a local one-stop shop integrating resources relating to employment, education and training services. It would provide generic information as well as a specialist focus for young people (aged 15 to 24) who have already dropped out of the system.

Each Local Learning and Employment Network be required to develop local Youth Access Points in conjunction with DEET, DETYA, DEWRSB and Centrelink.

RECOMMENDATION 6:**PERFORMANCE OF CENTRELINK**

DFACS should commission and fund an independent research project to explore the impact of the dual role of Centrelink as the point of access to income support (involving regulatory, monitoring and breaching functions) as well as the key point of access to the services of the Job Network (involving assessment, enabling and supportive functions).

Such a project would examine how these roles can be better managed and how this crucial gateway can be better designed to cater for the needs and cultures of young people.

2.6.3 Lack of opportunities for funded work placement

With the right design, targeting and management, wage and training subsidies can be an important element of an effective back-to-work strategy, but this option is limited in the current environment.⁶ Apart from Intensive assistance there are few mainstream labour market programs that provide subsidised, integrated work placement and training as a stepping stone into sustainable employment.⁷ However, according to the ACOSS (2000b) analysis of the Job Network evaluation less than 20 per cent of Intensive Assistance clients were receiving job specific skills training or opportunities for paid employment assistance.

Greencorp is the only Federal Government funded program that incorporates accredited training and work placement. It provides a training wage and accredited training specifically in environmental projects to young people aged 15 to 20 only. The Victorian Government funds CJP for young people aged 15 to 24. It also provides a training wage and accredited training in community projects for those with multiple barriers to employment, but is limited by its duration and reach. Similarly the Victorian Youth Employment Incentive Scheme provides incentives for employers to recruit long-term unemployed youth, but this initiative is limited in capacity and scope.

Sit is outside the scope of this report to look at apprenticeships and traineeships in detail. State and Federal governments fund particular programs and employer subsidies for disadvantaged job seekers. For example, DETYA funds the New Apprenticeships Access Program and the New Apprenticeships Incentives Program, providing (respectively) pre-apprenticeship training for young unemployed people and a range of incentives to both apprentices and employers, including support for employers employing apprentices with disabilities. Various wage subsidy/employer incentives in the apprenticeship/traineeship area are also funded.

⁷The Federal Government supports and targets New Apprenticeships as an industry skills development program rather than as a labour market assistance program, hence its funding through DETYA rather than DEWRSB.

The Federal Government's Indigenous Employment Strategy includes two programs that offer more substantial paid work experience, in some cases linked with training. Wage Assistance subsidises six months full-time paid employment experience with private sector employers, and the Structured Training and Employment Program provides paid employment experience and structured training (ACOSS 2000a).

The results of the first stage of the Job Network evaluation suggests that young people are not participating proportionately as well as others in the Job Network (along with Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities). It is also significant that young people are participating disproportionately in Intensive Assistance and that only 40 per cent of referrals of young people to Intensive Assistance result in commencements, despite Intensive Assistance subsuming most specialist programs for young people (DEWRSB 2000).

RECOMMENDATION 7: JOB NETWORK ACCESS & EQUITY AUDIT

DEWRSB should commission and fund an independent youth and young adult access and equity audit of the Job Network. The Department should also provide independent researchers with access to Job Network data and other relevant data.

Sources: 1

RECOMMENDATION 8: RESEARCH SITE & INNOVATIVE EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS FUND

DEET with DEWRSB and/or DETYA, in consultation with the Creating Employment Pathways Project partners, establish a research site to trial:

- cross sectoral and pooled funding partnership initiatives for young people with multiple barriers to employment*
- the facilitation and support of best practice and innovative approaches to providing employment services to young unemployed people.*

That these departments jointly establish an Innovative Youth Employment Projects Fund to support such a trial between programs and sectors.

2.7 Invisible pathways

As transitions become less clear, young people need to construct individualised routes through education and training. Internationally, information and guidance have become an increasingly important aspect of labour market measures for young people, especially for the long-term unemployed and for others at risk of being excluded. There is a growing recognition that advice and guidance must be an integrated element of the assistance provided to unemployed and at-risk youth (Martin 1998, cited in DECO 1999).

For young people who are unemployed or engaged in marginal activities the audit has identified only two youth focused nationally available programs that provide support and guidance, but both have significant restrictive age and eligibility criteria. JPP provides guidance and support for young people up to one year after leaving school and is only available to people aged 15 to 19. In addition, funding anomalies mean that students in some regions have very limited access (Kellock and Bruce 2000). The JPET program targets young people with multiple barriers to employment, but is only available to people who are aged 15 to 21. It is a relatively cost effective program yet there are only 138 projects funded nationally, meaning there are wide gaps in the provision of JPET in a number of communities.

In Victoria, as a result of the Kirby Review of post-compulsory education, there will be an injection of money into schools, ACE and TAFE organisations for guidance and support for young people. This new funding is known as 'Managed Individual Pathways' or the MIPs program. Similar pathways negotiators (offering brokerage, guidance and support) are needed for young people who are already unemployed and who are outside educational settings. These negotiators can then provide guidance and support to assist young people to negotiate the complexity of the employment services sector and to assist them to make the link back to education and training.

Conclusion

This research has focused on the effects of fragmentation across the employment, education and training sectors for young people and made recommendations about how services can be made more efficient and effective. While the project began with a more limited objective, it became clear that multiple strategies were needed for meaningful change to occur.

The research has shown that there are many points of fragmentation in the employment, education and training systems for young people at risk. As a result, existing pathways may be invisible, disjointed and fractured. Programs may not be appropriate, accessible or available at points in young people's lives when they need them most. Program gaps include the lack of an appropriate gateway to the service system for young people, the lack of continuity in support and guidance and the lack of opportunities for young people to participate in outcome-focused employment programs. The development of more integrated program options and broader policy changes are all required to facilitate young people's pathways through the service system into employment. The service system audit conducted for this project shows that cross-sectoral integration between schools, ACEFT AFE and the employment services sector is needed to overcome fragmentation across the system.

In terms of policy direction, Australia needs to move closer to the directions evident in the UK and Nordic countries where there is a more balanced interpretation of mutual obligation with government providing more extensive, relevant and effective services to young people. In these countries there is a recognition of the importance of support and guidance; there are a range of program types to choose from including programs that offer accredited training and funded work placement; there are funded opportunities to re-enter education or training; and young people are assisted as early as possible after becoming unemployed.

Strategies for achieving changes to the employment, education and training system in Australia will most likely take place through the development of partnerships or cooperative arrangements between funders and providers.

Whether the problem is addressed at a local, regional or a broader level, cooperation between governments, departments, and between providers will be critical. It is also vital that any new initiatives are integrated within the program environment, cross-sectorally linked and connected to the needs of local areas.

A systematic policy priority backed by clear objectives and resources is urgently needed in Australia to ensure young people with multiple barriers to employment do not become permanently disengaged and marginalised.

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Appendix A: List of participating agencies for key informant interviews and workshops

Senior representatives from government

Federal Government departments

Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs, Canberra, ACT

Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business, Canberra, ACT

Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business, Regional Assistance Program

Department of Family and Community Services, Centrelink - Student and Youth Branch

State Government departments

Department of Education, Employment and Training:

- Employment Division
- Schools Division
- Adult, Community and Further Education
- Office of the Secretary

Researchers from institutions

Youth Research Centre
Melbourne University
Parkville, Victoria

Australian Centre for Equity and Education
Canberra, ACT

Australian Centre for Educational Research
Camberwell, Victoria

Network of Women in Further Education
Victoria

Service providers/managers from organisations

Access Training and Employment Service
Collingwood, Victoria

School Focused Youth Service
Berry Street Services
Collingwood, Victoria

Transition Program
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Frankston, Victoria

Darebin Indigenous Youth and Student Services Preston (Centrelink)

Disability Employment Action Centre (DEAC), Melbourne, Victoria

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
Carlton, Victoria

Community Support Program
Hanover Welfare Services
Southbank, Victoria

Jobs Australia, Carlton, Victoria

Jobs, Placement, Employment and Training Program (JPET), Melbourne
Citymission, Footscray, Victoria

Jobs Pathways Program, Melbourne Citymission, Footscray, Victoria

JPET Program
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Fitzroy, Victoria

Reconnect Program
Melbourne Citymission

Full Service Schools Program
Moreland City Council, Victoria

Youth Unit
Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE
Preston, Victoria

Enterprise Services
Kangan Batman TAFE

Northern Interactive Education Coordinated Area Program (NIECAP)

Education and Training Unit
Victorian Employer Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Melbourne, Victoria

WorkPlacement
Melbourne, Victoria

Youth Access Centre
Gordon TAFE
Geelong, Victoria

Faculty of Further Education
Northern Metropolitan Institute of TAFE
Preston, Victoria

Appendix B: Audit of education, training and employment programs (as at December 2000).

Schools Sector

(i) School to Work Transition Programs

The *Job Pathways Program* began as a \$2m pilot program in 1995 and has grown to a \$13m program with 74 organisations delivering 95 projects across Australia. It is the most established of the current school to work transitions programs and began with the aim of providing a linkage between year 11 and 12 school leavers and jobs. The program has since broadened to include all school leavers and combines a preventative approach to school leaving with post-school support. The way the program is delivered on the ground varies and may include support, brokerage and the development of alternative curriculums.

The Victorian Government in response to the Youth Suicide Taskforce Recommendations funded *School Focused Youth Services* in 1998. DHS and DEET jointly funds them. Forty-one clusters with 755 schools are based on regional boundaries. Each cluster receives \$50,000. The aim of the program is to integrate programs providing services to at risk young people and to create collaborative relationships between schools and communities. The model has linkage rather than case management as its focus. Funding is due to cease in October 2001.

The *Full Service Schools Program* was funded in 1988 by DETYA in response to community concerns that changes to the Commonwealth Youth Allowance for under 18-year-olds would lead to many returning to school and schools unable to resource their support needs. There are eight programs operating in Victoria in 14 Local Government Areas managed by Area Network Committees with 105 schools participating. They provide a holistic service with broad parameters, including health, social and educational issues. Strategies vary, but include case management, referral, vocational learning, literacy and numeracy opportunities and mentoring. Commonwealth funding ceased in December 2000.

The *Victorian Pathways Projects* began in August 2000 in 12 Local Government Areas and are funded by the Victorian Office of Post Compulsory Education and Training. Each pilot will receive \$45,000. The aim of the projects is to assist young people to plan pathways from school to work. The target group is 15 to 19 year-olds at risk of leaving school before year 12. Each project will work with two to four schools, TAFE, ACE and other relevant providers. Activities include the development of individual case management plans and the identification of resources in local areas. Pathways Projects will flow into *Managed Individual Pathways*, a \$46.5m initiative over three years resulting from the Post Compulsory Education and Training Review. Resources will go to TAFE, ACE and schools.

DETYA has allocated \$5m in the first year to 18 *Indigenous School to Work Transition Projects*. The projects will be managed as special projects of the Enterprise and Careers Education Foundation. Their aim is to make vocational learning more available to Indigenous Australians.

(ii) Vocational Education and Training programs in Schools

The *Enterprise and Careers Education Foundation Work Placements and Community partnerships* aim to provide structured workplace learning opportunities for students. Current priorities include support for overcoming barriers to participation. Pilot projects for 1988-1999 in years 9 and 10 will illustrate the benefits of vocational learning for younger students. The current four-year funding arrangement (2000-2004) will ensure continuing support for school-industry partnerships.

The *Australian National Training Authority* provides \$4.6m to State Training Authorities towards *VET in VCE* in Victoria (out of a total of \$20m provided by the Training Authority to VET in Victoria). Certificates are within the VCE and endorsed by the Australian Qualifications Framework.

New Apprenticeships in the VCE aim to provide students with an opportunity to undertake part-time apprenticeships while still at school. A Registered Training Provider who may be located in or outside the school offers training.

Adult Community Education partnerships with schools usually offer alternative courses in schools for students aged 15 to 19 at risk of not completing a general or basic education. Courses of study include vocational education and training programs as well as other accredited training units.

Adult, Community and Further Education Sector

(i) Apprenticeships/traineeships

New Apprenticeships were introduced in 1998 by the Commonwealth Government and subsume traineeships and apprenticeships. The main differences to the former apprenticeship/traineeship system is that there is no eligibility restriction by age, new flexibilities brought about by user choice of training provider, and flexible training packages have been developed. Training is undertaken by Registered Training Providers, some of whom are TAFE organisations.

The *New Apprenticeships Incentives Program* is provided by DETYA and offers a range of incentives available to both apprentices and employers, including support for employers employing apprentices with disabilities. DEWRSB provides the wage subsidy for Indigenous job seekers as part of its Indigenous Employment Strategy.

The *New Apprenticeships Access Program* aims to assist disadvantaged young people into apprenticeships, particularly those who have left school early. The program is funded by the DETYA and a minimum of 2,500 places are made available for this target group.

DEET has recently introduced its *Youth Employment Scheme* which aims to increase the number of public sector training places available to young people. The specific target group for this program is young people aged 15-24 and there is a quota of 30 per cent of places targeted specifically to those who are long-term unemployed or disadvantaged in the labour market.

The Victorian Government's *Youth Employment Incentive Scheme* provides incentives to ensure that employers provide extra support and training when they employ long-term unemployed or disadvantaged youth aged 15-24. Employers are eligible for a \$1250 placement subsidy when the young person has been employed for six months.

GO For It is a small Victorian Government program that provides 125 places for young people aged 16-20 for traineeships in IT, communications or multimedia. Training is through registered training organisations and ongoing post-traineeship support is provided.

The *Wage Assistance Program*, is funded by DEWRSB and provides up to six months-funded placement with a private employer for Indigenous job seekers.

M Other Adult and Further Education

The Victorian *TAFE Allowance Voucher* was introduced by the Victorian Government to meet the needs of young people under 18 having to return to education or training because of changes to the Youth Allowance. Centrelink acts as the central referral point and up to 400 hours is provided. Forty-one per cent of vouchers have been presented to the ACE sector.

The *ACFE* sector (ACE and TAFE) run a number of programs exclusively for young unemployed people. The range of courses includes Adult Literacy and Basic Education, English as a Second Language, VCE, general preparatory education and vocational education. Examples of courses specifically for young people include the Certificate 1 in Koorie Education and the Future Connections program in Bendigo that provides pre-vocational training and support.

The provision of programs specifically for disadvantaged youth varies throughout the *TAFE Sector*. The Youth Unit at Northern Metropolitan TAFE, established in 1999, aims to provide supportive pathways into TAFE for those locked out of mainstream education. Programs provided include Certificate 1 in VET in conjunction with secondary schools, literacy programs, ESL and young refugee programs, alternative years 10 and 11, and specific programs for young Indigenous people.

Employment Sector

(0 Employment and community participation

The aim of *Work for the Dole* is 'to provide work experience, activities and opportunities for eligible job seekers to participate in the life of the community' through participation in community projects such as environment, tourism, sport, community services, restoration and maintenance of community facilities. It is compulsory for 18 to 19 year-olds receiving income support three months after completing year 12; for other 18 to 24 year-olds receiving income support for six months, and for 25 to 34 year-olds after 12 months. DEWRSB funded the program at \$105m for 2000/01.

Community Development Employment Program provides a voluntary work program for Indigenous job seekers. Participants receive wages commensurate with income support through the program instead of direct from Centrelink.

There are 13 projects running in Victoria. DFACS funds the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and Torres Strait Regional Association to manage \$71.4m over four years.

Area Consultative Committees-funded by DEWRSB administer the Regional Assistance Program. \$30m is available annually to provide approximately \$30,000 seeding funding for individual projects over a 12-month period. The program guidelines include tackling disadvantage and encouraging regional growth. Individual projects are usually funded in partnership with other funding sources at the community level.

(ii) Training

The *Greencorp* program provides accredited training in the context of community conservation activities for young people aged 17-20. The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers is funded to run the entire program and participants are paid under the national training award.

DEET funds the *Community Jobs Program*. The program offers funding to assist local job seekers in community initiated projects. Projects provide a combination of work experience and personal development strategies (including accredited training).

Literacy and Numeracy Training is targeted by DETYA to young unemployed people subject to Mutual Obligation requirements. The program offers up to 400 hours training in TAFE or ACE settings.

Migrant or refugee job seekers are eligible for the *Advanced English for Migrants Program*. This program offers full time training for a minimum of eight fortnights, with up to four terms of part-time study provided. Participants under 18 are provided with full-time training in an English Language School, and those over 18 attend courses in Adult Migrant Education Service settings.

(iii) Employment assistance

The *Job Network* is funded by DEWRSB. Services are provided competitively by the public provider Employment National, and private and community providers.

Services provided include the following:

- *Job Matching* involves matching eligible job seekers with employers and facilitating job seeker access to other Job Matching providers, meeting with eligible job seekers, identifying their skills, and preparing resumes for them. Job Matching providers are paid on the basis of employment outcomes.
- *Job Search Training* is aimed at assisting those with a need and the 'capacity to benefit'. The selection of applicants is based on job readiness, lack of job search skills, and the potential to achieve a sustainable employment outcome. To be eligible, a job seeker must be registered as unemployed with Centrelink for three months or more. The service is provided for a period of 15 consecutive days of job search training followed by seven fortnights of intensive job search activity.

- *Intensive Assistance* provides individually tailor assistance to those who are long-term unemployed or disadvantaged in the labour market. Eligibility is determined through the JSCI and assistance is provided for up to 52 weeks, with extensions possible.

Career Counselling aims to assist young people make career choices. Target groups for the service include young job seekers meeting the activity test aged 18-24 and young people aged 15-20 who are not eligible for income support, but who are registered with Centrelink. The service involves attendance at two small group two-hour career counselling sessions with the option for referral to professional counsellors.

DEET funds the *Community Business Employment Program* to provide services to people not well resourced by the Job Network. Young people aged 15-24 are one of the target groups. Assistance includes pre-employment training, employment assistance and post placement services.

The *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme* is available to eligible job seekers aged 18 years and over. The aim of the program, funded by the DEWRSB, is to help unemployed people to establish and run viable new businesses. There are 1800 places available throughout Victoria. Training includes small business management skills, mentor support during the first year of business operation, and income assistance.

The *Self Employment Development Scheme* is funded by DEWRSB to enable people to undertake research for a business idea for up to 12 months before undertaking a NEIS Scheme. People may also use it whose business idea to not meet NEIS eligibility (for example, a franchise or taking over an existing business).

(iv) *Specialist Assistance*

Through the *Jobs Education and Training Program*, \$3m is made available annually through DETYA and DFACS to assist carers returning to the workforce. Teenagers are particularly targeted through the program and can access funds for training and education.

To assist job seekers who are not ready to participate in Intensive Assistance or the Job Network, the *Community Support Program* was established in May 1998. The program is aimed at people who have multiple barriers to gaining employment. Young people not on income support or in full-time education or training are eligible. Referral to the program is for up to two years. Funded by DEWRSB at \$45m over four years, nearly all contracts are held by community-based organisations. Outcomes of the program include transfer to appropriate income support, Intensive Assistance or employment.

Formerly known as the Youth Homelessness Early Intervention Program, *Reconnect* aims to improve the level of engagement of homeless young people or those at risk of homelessness with family, work, education and training and the community. The target group is young people aged 12-18. The program is funded by DFACS at \$60m over four years. One strategy is to improve the coordination of services delivered by the government and community sector.

Specifically targeted to young people aged 15-21 with multiple barriers to education, vocational training and employment is the *Jobs Placement*

Employment and Training program. The priority target group is young people aged 15-21 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Strategies include brokerage, counselling, facilitating links to education, training or work. Nationally, 138 projects are funded and DETYA renewed its commitment in the 2000/01 Federal Budget for four years.

The *Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme* aims to assist Indigenous people to make informed education and career choices. The program is funded through the Indigenous Education Unit of DETYA.

Jobnet is a service for people with disabilities. A target of 50 per cent must be aged between 15 and 24. There are five Jobnet services in Victoria funded by DFACS.

The *Community Employment Placement and Training Program* is provided specifically for people with disabilities, 50 per cent of whom must be aged between 15 and 24. There are 60 such services in Victoria funded by DFACS.

Specialist Job Network providers, jointly funded by DFACS and DEWRSB, provide a service for people with disabilities from specific target groups, for example, people who are hearing or sight impaired.

The *Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service* is funded by DFACS at a cost of \$100.46m to provide rehabilitation programs to eligible consumers on a fee for outcome basis. A component of this work is employment related.

Appendix C: Activities permissible under Mutual Obligation

- Part-time paid work
- Part-time study in an approved training or education course
- Work for the Dole
- Community Development Employment Projects
- Voluntary Work
- Greencorp
- Approved Literacy and Numeracy Training
- New Apprenticeships
- Job Search Training
- Advanced English for Migrants Program
- Intensive Assistance
- Jobs Pathways Program
- Job Placement, Employment and Training
- Career Counselling