



Brotherhood
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

Response to the

Industry Skills Fund Youth Pilot Programmes discussion paper

Brotherhood of St Laurence

November 2014

About the Brotherhood

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is an independent non-government organisation with strong community links that has been working to reduce poverty in Australia since the 1930s. Based in Melbourne, but with a national profile, the Brotherhood continues to fight for an Australia free of poverty. We undertake research, service development and delivery, and advocacy with the objective of addressing unmet needs and translating the understandings gained into new policies, new programs and practices for implementation by government and others.

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Our work in supporting Youth Transitions

The Brotherhood's key work in supporting the transitions of young people through school and into work includes:

- delivery of the **Youth Connections program** in the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula region to connect young people to school or further study.
- the community-based **Victoria Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)**, which provides a flexible learning option for students in years 10 to 12 for whom mainstream school is no longer an option.
- establishment of **Education First Youth Foyers** in TAFE institutes in partnership with Hanover Welfare Services and the Victorian Government, to enable young people experiencing homelessness to continue their education and move into work.
- the **Youth Transitions Program** which operates in unemployment hotspots in growth corridors of Melbourne. Youth Transitions focuses on developing job skills and work experience, with tailored career support, coaching and introductions to potential employers. The program provides six months of support to young people and their employers as they move into the workforce.
- **Work and Learning Centres** which assist public housing tenants and other clients of social services, many of whom experience long-term unemployment. Almost half of the clients are young people. Funded by the Victorian Government and operating in five locations across Victoria, the Work and Learning Centres partner with businesses and community agencies to place jobseekers into local jobs. The Centres provide jobseekers with career guidance, job-readiness training, personal coaching and support not available through Job Services Australia agencies.
- a range of supported employment programs delivered through the Brotherhood's Group Training Organisation. Our flagship program, **Given the Chance**, partners with employers to develop customised pre-employment training, employer preparation and supported work placements for marginalised jobseekers.
- delivery to learners experiencing disadvantage of **accredited and non-accredited training** programs, incorporating coaching, work experience and job search support through the Brotherhood's Registered Training Organisation.
- the **Resource Program** for young refugees and the **Employment Pathways for Young Asylum Seekers**, which support recently arrived young people to learn about, navigate and enter the Australian job market. The programs include access to work experience and mentoring.
- **a demand-led employment program** known as the **Industry Employment Initiative**, which the Brotherhood is piloting in collaboration with Social Ventures Australia, Mission Australia, Jesuit Social Services and the Business Council of Australia. Working with a small group of national employers, the pilot is seeking to prepare and support young people who have been unemployed for a year or more, into work.
- a broad range of **research projects** looking at the interface of young people with work and learning.

Recommendations

- 1 Pilot a national Youth Transitions Service to enable young people who are unemployed to become work-ready, connect with employers and sustain employment opportunities.

In the design of the Training for Employment Scholarships and the Youth Employment Pathways pilot programs:

- 2 Ensure that the skills, resources and networks of the local community are harnessed to tackle high levels of youth unemployment and disengagement. This will require an approach that fosters engagement with local businesses, skills and training providers, service and sporting clubs, and community organisations.
- 3 Assist young people to overcome transport barriers that would prevent them from taking up Training for Employment Scholarship opportunities. This could be done by supporting employers to connect with local networks that could deliver solutions such as car pooling or community transport to ensure that young people can get to work. Employers should be encouraged only to require a drivers licence or personal vehicle when it is essential to the role.
- 4 Require employers to enter an agreement to provide a supportive workplace environment, as a condition of receiving funding for a Training for Employment Scholarship. Obligations of employers would include establishing clear goals based on a young person's capabilities, providing structured supervision for the young recruit and ensuring that external and on-the-job training are complementary.
- 5 Target the Training for Employment Scholarships pilot towards young people experiencing disadvantage in the labour market and limit participation to young people who are registered as unemployed or meet other definable criteria that place them at high risk of ongoing unemployment, including those without a Year 12 qualification, refugees and asylum seekers, and young single parents.
- 6 Preference organisations that are embedded in their local community to deliver training and support services to young people. They should be well networked with local business, skills and training organisations, service and sporting clubs, and community organisations and should have a proven track record of successfully supporting young people who have experienced disadvantage to move into sustained work.
- 7 Use an early intervention approach that seeks to rapidly re-engage a young person in study or work, rather than delaying assistance until there is an extended period of disengagement.
- 8 Make available six months of individualised support for a young recruit and their employer as part of the Training for Employment Scholarships pilot, as a way of maximising the chances of ongoing employment. Group Training Organisations are well equipped to provide this coaching and field support.
- 9 Require organisations delivering foundational and soft skills training to pre-qualify to deliver support for the Training for Employment Scholarships pilot. This will enable employers to be confident they can engage local organisations that will deliver well-targeted support and that have a strong track record of supporting young people at risk to sustain work. Technical and vocational skills training providers could be recognised on a rolling basis according to local need.

Overview

The Australian economy has changed. While the modern economy offers great opportunities, it also comes with significant risks. Securing that first step on the job ladder has become much harder. The current labour market is a tough environment for young people. Those seeking full-time work are confronted with a decreasing number of entry-level opportunities, and high competition for the available jobs. The premium placed on education and skills is rising. Employers are increasingly looking to recruit workers who are already qualified, skilled and experienced. We are facing a significant mismatch between the needs of employers and the skills and capacities of the young people who are looking for work. Personal networks have also become increasingly important: who you know helps open the doors to employment.

It is the Brotherhood's experience that young people who are unemployed want to take control of their future and build a good life. They understand that to do this, they need a steady job. Too often they are frustrated by the knock-backs they receive and end up losing heart; however, with timely and targeted supports they have the capacity to thrive and build a strong future.

It is also our experience that employers are eager to play an increased role in providing sustainable employment opportunities for young disadvantaged jobseekers, if given the right support.

Reducing youth unemployment is undeniably a complex issue, with no single solution. Multiple strategies are required, as are effective coordination and concentration of the efforts of governments, business and community. Strong employment growth is critical to the future prospects of our young people. However, to go hand in hand with this we need a comprehensive approach that ensures that young people are work-ready, helps build their skills and qualifications, and forges the connections with employers. We also need to assist employers to provide structured opportunities, so that young people can secure a job that will enable them to develop their skills and build their future.

While this approach is vital for all young people, the Brotherhood's chief concern is those groups at highest risk of long-term unemployment. These include early school leavers; those who do not have the experience, qualifications or skills required in the Australian labour market; newly-arrived communities; and those living on the urban fringe or in regional or remote locations with poor training and employment opportunities.

The next wave of Australia's Employment Services does not incorporate many of the critical elements that have been proven to assist young people experiencing disadvantage into work, including targeted skills development, hands-on experience in real workplaces, individual coaching, careers advice that is matched to aspirations, and strong and responsive links to local employers and labour market opportunities. The high caseloads (of over 100) and delay in receiving intensive assistance, coupled with stronger compliance requirements, will perpetuate the risks of young people facing prolonged periods of unemployment and marginalisation. The larger employment regions which are a feature of the new model will involve generalist rather than specialist provision. This will dilute the opportunity to support particular groups of jobseekers, including young people. We need a different approach to unlock the productive potential of our young jobseekers, over half of whom are not receiving Centreline payments or assistance through the Job Services Australia system.

The national Youth Connections program which re-engages teenagers with learning has been defunded by the Australian Government and will end in December 2014. Youth Connections is in high demand and has been a very effective program. Last year, it worked with over 30,000 teenagers¹, most of whom were no longer going to school. Its closure will mean that for the first

time in over 20 years Australia will be without a national program to assist young people to return to learning. It is of concern that our existing Employment Services are not equipped to fill this gap and provide young people with a clear line of sight to education, training or a job.²

The Brotherhood acknowledges the intent of the Industry Skills Fund Youth Pilot Programmes to test, on a small scale, approaches aimed at connecting young people with learning and work in a number of regional and peri-urban areas. While this is a positive addition to the program landscape, we anticipate that the effectiveness of the pilots may be hampered by:

- the risk that the Training for Employment Scholarships Pilot, if not well designed, may fail to reach young jobseekers experiencing disadvantage and may instead subsidise employers for taking on young people that they would have employed in any event
- the absence of assistance for young people who are uncertain about their vocational options to access careers guidance, work tasters and work experience as a way of informing their interests and options so that they are well matched to a Pathways or an Employment Scholarship opportunity
- the lack of a system to connect and match jobseekers and potential employers. The forthcoming Apprenticeship Support Service arrangements include a pre-commencement service that provides information, advice and matching. A similar approach could be considered for the Employment Scholarships pilot
- the absence of a dual focus that both supports the young recruit to build their skills and the employer to provide an environment in which the young person can thrive. We know this is critical for enabling young people experiencing disadvantage to sustain ongoing work
- the potential disaggregation of support services that employers can access and the economy-of-scale challenges for training providers.

We put forward a proposal for a comprehensive approach to enable young people to successfully transition into employment via the piloting of a Youth Transition Service.

We also provide specific responses to some issues raised in the Discussion Paper to inform the design of the upcoming Training for Employment Scholarships and Youth Employment Pathways pilots.

In particular, we want to see the Employment Scholarships specifically designed to cater for young jobseekers experiencing disadvantage in the labour market. In many instances, these young people will require foundational and 'soft' or 'employability skills' development, in addition to technical and vocational skills. It is our experience that individualised support provided concurrently to both the young recruit and their workplace is highly effective at enabling marginalised jobseekers to meet employer needs and sustain work. We believe this approach would be well suited to the pilot. It is critical that organisations providing training and support services are equipped to work effectively with young people experiencing disadvantage and are well networked into their local communities.

Feedback on the Discussion Paper

A different approach to supporting young people into employment

With Australia's high levels of youth unemployment and disengagement, there is an urgent need for young people across Australia to be supported to build the capabilities needed to be active participants in our workforce, and for employers to be supported to employ and develop our young workforce. In 2014, the nation's 15–24 year olds are experiencing unemployment at almost three times the rate of those aged over 25 years, up from around twice the rate in earlier years. The number of young people experiencing long-term unemployment has tripled since 2008.³ Additionally, there is a growing number of young people who can be described as the 'invisible unemployed': they are not studying, not in work and not looking for a job.⁴

The Brotherhood has developed a model for a national Youth Transitions Service to provide a more effective response to enable young people aged 17–24 years to meet labour market needs. The design is based on evidence of what works and is strongly rooted in our practical experience of delivering employment programs for marginalised young people. Our Youth Transitions Program, currently delivered in some of Melbourne's outer urban growth corridors, has seen over 70 per cent of participants transition into work and further education. It involves working with both young jobseekers and local businesses to enable young people to sustain work.

Using a preventative approach, the Youth Transitions Service would intervene before there is a prolonged separation from the labour market. A suite of services would be available, including careers guidance and support to navigate the vocational education system, work 'tasters', supported work experience, coaching, mentoring, support to find and retain employment, and connections with other labour market programs. The service would be flexible enough to offer different elements based on the assessed needs of the young person. Key features of the service are outlined in the following table:

| How the Youth Transitions Service will prepare young people to sustain work | |
|---|---|
| Taking rapid action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active engagement in employment preparation and placement on becoming unemployed |
| Careers and vocational guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realistic career advice and guidance which responds to local labour market conditions Informed decisions about the vocational education system to avoid the trap of being churned through mismatched training courses that do not lead to jobs |
| A plan for action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual learning and employment action plans with concrete actions and responsibilities that the young person has to meet |
| Coaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching by trained staff to support and develop a young person's employability Addressing young people's barriers and perceived impediments to work |
| Providing work 'tasters' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A roster of workplace visits Learning from those already in work Identifying interests and skills Learning about what employers want from their workers |

| | |
|---|--|
| Building employability and vocational skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programs to develop job readiness and the skills needed to identify, secure and retain a job • Foundation skills, including literacy, numeracy and IT skills (where needed) • Reinforcing personal skills such as team work, communication, customer and business awareness |
| Connecting young people to mentors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching young people with volunteer mentors, such as the emerging cohort of retired baby boomers, to promote intergenerational exchange • Access to networks and employment opportunities |
| Supported work experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured unpaid work experience (tied to accredited training) connected to career goals • Building an understanding of workplace expectations and culture |
| Connecting with local employers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong connections with local employers about their labour requirements • Gaining local business and labour market knowledge • Work experience, work tasters and employment opportunities • Support for employers to take on young people • Enabling young people build their networks into the world of paid work |
| Support to find and retain employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to find full-time and part-time jobs • Field support and mentoring to help young people retain their job • Entry into further labour market programs if work skills still need to be developed • Use of wage subsidies where these would boost a young person's employability |

Piloting a Youth Transitions Service in 15 locations across Australia could be achieved for a modest sum, with almost half of the costs potentially offset by the use of state training funding that many young people are already entitled to through the VET system. Such an approach would better utilise existing resources and holds the promise of significantly improving outcomes for young people, employers and the Australian economy. A detailed proposal and costing of the Youth Transitions Service is available on request.

Piloting a Youth Transitions Service would provide a strong complement to the Training for Employment Scholarships program by:

- enabling young people who are uncertain about their vocational options to access careers guidance, work tasters and work experience as a way of informing their future pathways and ensuring the investment in their training is well targeted
- building an understanding of employer expectations to support successful transitions into work
- connecting and matching jobseekers and potential employers
- offering ongoing support (employment coaching) to the young recruit and their employer during the period of the Employment Scholarship to maximise the chances of continuing employment.

A Youth Transitions Service would also complement the forthcoming Youth Employment Pathways program. Several core elements of the Youth Transitions Service model could also inform the design of this new initiative.

Response to specific issues raised in the Discussion Paper

Target regions

What local conditions are required for the pilots to be effective?

Local collaboration

To maximise the effectiveness of the pilots, there is a need to design a model that can harness the altruism, skills, resources and networks of the local community to tackle high levels of youth unemployment. This requires an avenue to:

- engage with local employers, business leaders and business organisations
- engage with local skills and training organisations about meeting employer requirements
- engage with service clubs (such as Rotary) and sporting clubs to support the engagement and participation of young people in the community
- engage with relevant levels of government to foster local economic development and employment opportunities.

The Employment Services model does not provide the architecture to foster such localised collaboration, given the large employment areas and the competitive, multi-provider approach. Some regional and outer urban locations already have existing networks—such as active economic development committees of local governments, and local chambers of commerce—that could potentially be enlisted to support delivery of the pilots. The Brotherhood, as part of its Work and Learning Centre networks has established Local Advisory Panels in a number of the potential pilot locations in Victoria, including Geelong, Shepparton, La Trobe–Gippsland (Moe) and Ballarat (see box below for further information⁵.)

Work and Learning Centres – harnessing community effort

The Brotherhood, in partnership with the Victorian Government and local service providers, is delivering Work and Learning Centres in areas with high concentrations of public housing residents and Department of Human Services clients. Work and Learning Centres have been operating for just over two years. Almost half of their clients are under 25 years old. Nearly half had been unemployed for at least a year before coming to a Centre.

This model provides a markedly different approach from Job Services Australia. The Centres engage directly with employers and bring together vocational and non-vocational training, employment and support for local participants. Each site has its own Local Advisory Panel with representatives from business, JSA providers, training organisations, service clubs, local community organisations and all levels of government.

The Work and Learning Centres are proving highly effective at helping local employers meet their workforce needs and assisting people experiencing disadvantage to build their skills, get work experience and secure employment. As at 31 October 2014, the Centres had assisted over 950 people into work, engaged with more than 250 local employers who helped place people into work or participated in local advisory panels, supported 480 people to complete accredited training and had 65 per cent of all clients participate in job clubs or receive job search support. A recent evaluation reported that participants increased their income, reduced their reliance on income support payments, improved their life satisfaction, indicated more positive mental health and vitality, and increased their confidence.

Access to transport

Access to transport can present a major barrier to employment for young people.⁶ Public transport in many regional and peri-urban areas is limited. This presents real difficulties for accessing employment opportunities in regional areas. Furthermore many entry-level jobs require a personal vehicle or at least a drivers licence.

Enabling young people to overcome transport barriers is a key condition to strengthen the effectiveness of the pilot. We would like to see this considered in the design of the pilot and for employers to be connected with local networks that may be able to deliver solutions such as car pooling and community transport to ensure that young people can get to work. We would also like to see the pilot design build an awareness among employers that large numbers of young people may be excluded from applying for work if a drivers licence or personal vehicle is stated as a requirement, even when not essential to the role.

Who is eligible?

Training for Employment Scholarships

Should any further criteria apply to business seeking access to scholarships?

It is critical that employers seeking to access the Employment Scholarships are committed to providing a supportive employment environment that develops the skills of their young recruit. This would involve workplaces:

- providing structured supervision, including regular clear feedback and performance reviews
- setting clear goals based on the young person's capabilities and adjusting these as they develop
- ensuring that the external and on-the-job training are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Use of a workplace coach or field officer (discussed further below) could assist employers to provide the necessary environment for their young recruits to succeed.

It is unclear in the discussion paper whether young people will be paid by their employer for the time they spend in external training. We consider it is important that the situation is clarified.

Should there be a focus on those who have been unemployed for a minimum period (e.g. 6 months)

We suggest that young people should need to be registered as unemployed to be eligible for the pilot, with no minimum period of unemployment required. In our experience most young people registering as unemployed have already tried to seek work, and many are experiencing circumstances that place them at a disadvantage in the labour market.

The pilot should also be available to other young people who are not working and meet definable criteria that place them at high risk of remaining on the fringes of the labour market, including those without a Year 12 qualification, refugees and asylum seekers, and young single parents.

The longer a young person is unemployed or disengaged, the harder it is for them to move into work. Young people who experience prolonged periods out of work are more likely to experience long-term or recurrent unemployment and welfare dependence in later life.⁷ Accordingly, we do not support a six-month waiting period for an unemployed young person to access the pilot.

We do believe, however, that the pilot should be designed to encourage employers to take on young people they would otherwise pass by, rather than subsidising employment of those more likely to find work without this assistance, such as young people finishing university.

Youth Employment Pathways

What criteria should be applied to organisations?

The program should be delivered by organisations that are embedded in the local community, rather than an organisation whose staff merely visit the area. It is critical that organisations can demonstrate strong relationships with a range of local employers, education and training providers, community agencies, sporting and service clubs.

It is our experience, through operating Work and Learning Centres and the Youth Transitions Program (both discussed elsewhere), that active engagement of local business and civic leaders makes a real difference in opening up opportunities for young people experiencing disadvantage and helping them to sustain work over a longer period.

To be able to reach young people, organisations need to be located at a place that young people feel comfortable going to (such as a community hub) and can easily access. Young people should be able to access information and advice without an appointment.

Organisations should be expected to demonstrate a strong track record of outcomes in connecting young people to learning and employment. Some who have successfully delivered the Youth Connections Program may be well placed to deliver the Youth Employment Pathways pilots.

Should there be a waiting period after leaving school before young people are eligible for this support?

The Youth Employment Pathways pilot should be immediately open to a young person who leaves school before completing Year 12.

The longer a young person is disengaged from learning, the harder it is for them to return to it. Some of the most successful early intervention models, implemented in Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands, identify school drop-outs quickly, and construct flexible programs to get them back to learning.⁸

What activities are eligible?

Training for Employment Scholarships

What training will be most effective?

Employers should be allowed to use funding for a broad range of activities that will enable a young person experiencing disadvantage to sustain ongoing employment with them.

Employers want staff who are work-ready and understand the job role and workplace requirements.⁹ They are looking for staff with strong personal skills like initiative, motivation, good communication and the ability to fit into the workplace.¹⁰ Young jobseekers have to overcome the negative preconceptions of some employers that they may not be work-ready, and that they lack commitment, a good work ethic and skills.¹¹

Young people need opportunities to develop employability skills such as teamwork, problem solving and understanding the expectations of employers. These are not innate qualities but are learned from good role models, participation in work experience and links with employers.

For the many young people who leave school prematurely, experience learning difficulties or are from non-English speaking backgrounds, foundation-level training may be needed to build core skills such as literacy, including digital literacy, and numeracy.

Foundational skills and soft employment skills have been identified as within the scope of the Training for Employment Scholarships pilot. Our experience tells us that these are particularly important skills for young jobseekers to develop, but that to be effective, tailored and flexible training is needed which takes account of each jobseeker's circumstances.¹² We are concerned that generic training will fail to meet the needs of young people and employers.

As part of the Brotherhood's Youth Transitions Program, we have developed an intensive program designed for young people experiencing marginalisation from the labour market. The program strengthens the soft skills of young people who are facing challenges in finding and sustaining work and also assesses and targets foundational skills gaps where needed.

We have also developed supported employment programs that embed parallel support for both the recruit and their employer and these have proven highly effective. We believe this approach would be well suited to the Training for Employment Scholarships pilot. Core elements that we recommend include:

- workplace orientation for the young recruit to build an understanding of expectations and workplace culture, their role and responsibility as a new employee, the role of their employer, how they should undertake the role, and most importantly, how they should communicate with their supervisor and colleagues to ensure they understand and acquit what is required of them
- financial orientation to help young people understand the tax and income implications of being a wage-earner and their choices with regard to superannuation and long-term financial prospects
- advice for employers and supervisors on creating a supportive workplace, including equipping key staff to understand and address some of the key issues and barriers faced by young people at risk, strategies for managing the young person and enhancing their learning capacity, allocation of a workplace buddy, setting of clear goals, and structured supervision for their young recruit
- support for supervisors to conduct baseline skills checks to identify strengths and weaknesses in a young recruit's skills from the outset. The skills check would be accompanied by a work plan, in which agreed goals and expectations are clearly laid out, and adjusted regularly. (For example, see Attachment A, the Behavioural Skills checklist developed by the Brotherhood for Given the Chance, one of its supported employment programs.)
- ongoing coaching for both the jobseeker and supervisor for 26 weeks to guide, trouble shoot and help constructively address any issues that arise. Field officers form a team with the recruit and supervisor, facilitating communication through their third-party perspective
- advice about ongoing career possibilities and longer term goals, tailored to their employer's industry.

The focus on small to medium enterprises, the diversity of employer requirements and the small number of young people who will be taking up the Scholarships over a staggered time period point to the appropriateness of an individualised coaching approach that is principally delivered by a field support officer.

Group Training Organisations would be well placed to provide these coaching services, which are akin to the support they provide for apprenticeships and traineeships for young people experiencing disadvantage. They are experienced in working with ‘at risk’ jobseekers and collectively represent the largest employer of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and of young people with a disability.¹³ Further, GTOs already have strong relationships with SMEs and an expansive regional presence.

The Brotherhood’s Given the Chance program (see box below) delivers personalised coaching which involves training, specially developed tools, workplace visits and contacts with both the recruit and their employer. Attachment B sets out the types of support delivered through Given the Chance. Based on costing from this program, we would anticipate that comparable support over six months could be provided for approximately \$2000.

Given the Chance supported employment program

The Brotherhood’s Given the Chance Program works with jobseekers from diverse backgrounds, including refugees, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and youth at risk, supporting labour hire placements, traineeships and apprenticeships with a range of small, medium and large employers.

ANZ are one of the major partners in Given the Chance. As part of this arrangement, the Brotherhood deliver customised pre-employment training, employer preparation training (Building Bridges) and supported six-month work placements. This has proved highly effective, with 91 per cent of those who complete the program with ANZ securing ongoing employment.

We support the proposal to include technical training such as obtaining a drivers licence, forklift licence or industry tickets within the scope of activities funded by the pilot.

What training should be excluded from scope?

Training that is already funded elsewhere should be excluded from scope. This includes training available through the Employment Services system and training that a young person is eligible for under their National Training Entitlement (administered by state and territory governments).

However, it is critical that the pilots:

- offset gaps in training funding, which have been widening in some jurisdictions following reduced public subsidies for some courses
- be used to meet skills gaps where a young person has already ‘burnt’ their entitlement to training subsidies but does not have the qualifications or the standard of training required by the employer. The Brotherhood has identified groups from communities experiencing disadvantage, including refugees and those living in public housing, who have been targeted by poor quality providers. These young people may complete courses with minimal hours of training, undertaken predominantly online and with few screening restrictions. They end up with a ‘qualification’ but no job search skills, no relevant work experience and sometimes a

poor understanding of, or lack of suitability to, the industry they have been trained for. For example, some have a qualification in aged care, but have had no work experience in an aged care facility. They are unable to secure employment, but have exhausted their entitlement to subsidised training.

Youth Employment Pathways

What support will be most effective for disengaged youth?

The national Youth Connections program, which has re-engaged teenagers who are out of school with learning, has been defunded by the Australian Government and will end in December 2014. Employment Service providers are not equipped to fill this gap and provide young people with a clear line of sight to education, training or a job.¹⁴

Key elements of the Youth Connections program can help inform the design of a Youth Employment Pathways Pilot. The Brotherhood's model for a Youth Transitions Service, outlined above, has core elements that would also be relevant to the Youth Employment Pathways Pilot.

Expressions of interest from training providers or community organisations

Training for Employment Scholarships

Would it be favourable for training providers to be pre-qualified, or should this occur on a rolling basis as employers apply for a scholarship?

Pre-qualification of training providers delivering foundational skills is recommended. Victoria already has a list of approved foundation skills providers: they are required to demonstrate their capacity to effectively support young learners experiencing disadvantage. We would want to ensure that foundation skills providers in other jurisdictions can similarly demonstrate their capacity to support young people at risk to build the skills needed for employment.

Training providers with a track record of supporting young people experiencing disadvantage into work, and collaborating with local businesses, services and their surrounding community, should be preferred for delivery of the Training for Employment Scholarships pilots. These providers should also have strong connections with agencies that can support jobseekers with addressing wellbeing issues (such as mental health, addiction, homelessness) that present a barrier to sustaining employment.

Pre-qualification of organisations delivering coaching / field support is also recommended. For the reasons outlined above, GTOs would be well placed to deliver this support.

This would enable employers to be confident they can engage local organisations that will deliver well-targeted support and have a strong track record of supporting young people at risk to sustain work. It would also enable qualified providers to work with jobseekers and prospective employers to understand how to take up the opportunities.

It makes sense for technical, industry specific and vocations skills training providers to qualify on a rolling basis, according to local need.

¹ Youth Connections National Network 2013, *Outside the school gate: a National Youth Activation & Transition Service*, Youth Connections National Network, NSW.

² Jobs Australia 2014, *Policy on youth transitions*, Jobs Australia, Carlton South, Vic.

³ In April 2014 more than 50,500 young people had been on the unemployment treadmill for more than a year—nearly 19 per cent of unemployed young people. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2014, *Labour force April 2014*, Cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, ABS, Canberra, data cube UM3.

⁴ Based on June 2012 data, it is estimated that 30,000 young people under the age of 20 may fall into this group. Their absence from the labour market cannot be readily explained by other factors. Sweet, R 2014, Private correspondence; see also R Sweet 2014, Address to the Balmain Institute, unpublished.

⁵ Bodsworth, E 2014, *Investing in local people and harnessing local communities: a progress report on Victoria's Work and Learning Centres*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic., <http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Bodsworth_Pathways_that_work_2012.pdf>.

⁶ Bodsworth, E 2012, *Pathways that work: lessons from the Youth Employment Project in Caroline Springs*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic.,

<http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Bodsworth_Pathways_that_work_2012.pdf>;

Bodsworth, E 2014, *Investing in local people and harnessing local communities: a progress report on Victoria's Work and Learning Centres*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic.,

<http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Bodsworth_Pathways_that_work_2012.pdf>.

⁷ Scarpetta, S, Sonnet, A & Manfredi, T 2010, *Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: how to prevent negative long-term consequences on a generation*, DELSA/ELSA/WD/SEM(2010)6, OECD, Paris.

⁸ For example, the Innovative Community Action Network in South Australia. ARTD Consultants 2013, *Innovative community action networks: a sustainable evidence-based approach for engaging young people in learning*, ARTD Consultants, Sydney.

⁹ Business Council of Australia, ACOSS & ACTU 2014, *Partnerships to secure jobs for disadvantaged jobseekers*, viewed 14 November 2014, <<http://www.bca.com.au/publications/partnerships-to-secure-jobs-for-disadvantaged-jobseekers>>.

¹⁰ Department of Employment 2014, *Regional reports of employers' recruitment experiences*, viewed 29 May 2014, <<https://employment.gov.au/regionalreport>>. See, for example, the regional presentations for Geelong Priority Employment Area and Central Coast – Hunter Priority Employment Area, which reveal that many employers did not interview job applicants because they lacked the experience they were looking for.

¹¹ Marsh, E & Perkins, D 2006, *Building pathways to local jobs for young people: City of Kingston Youth Employment Strategy*, Kingston City Council and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne; VECCI & BSL 2010, *Barriers to hiring disadvantaged or vulnerable workers: Victorian employers' attitudes survey*, Melbourne; Mission Australia 2013, *Survey of employers*, Sydney.

¹² Bodsworth, E 2012, *Pathways that work: lessons from the Youth Employment Project in Caroline Springs*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic., <http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/Bodsworth_Pathways_that_work_2012.pdf>.

¹³ Group Training Association of Victoria 2014, *Budget statement 2014*, Carlton, Vic.

¹⁴ Jobs Australia 2014, *Policy on youth transitions*, Jobs Australia, Carlton South, Vic.

The Brotherhood provides extensive support to employers and employees

The Brotherhood of St Laurence has a unique approach to employment, spending time with both potential employees, as well as time with employers to learn about their business and to understand the requirements of their particular workplaces. Recognising that employers need people who have the necessary skills for the job, and are genuinely motivated to work and succeed, the Brotherhood has worked in partnership with various employers to provide recruitment and work placement opportunities, by sitting outside of the mainstream employment services system, (Job Services Australia), and using its role as a broker and single point of contact between government, employers and the community, to act as a genuine intermediary in workforce development services to improve diversity.

Where required, specialised support is provided pre, during and post any work placement. This assists employers to engage a diverse range of candidates, knowing they have the support to make it successful. This model also strengthens the employee's confidence, during the transition period, as required.

Support services for the Employer

Relationship Manager

A relationship manager is appointed to support supervisors, field questions and identify further support where needed

Building Bridges Cultural Awareness training

The Building Bridges workshop helps develop manager skills to assist with integration into the workplace and provides practical tools and information to help navigate cultural differences that may arise.

Field Officer

Each employee under a labour hire or traineeship model is appointed a Field Officer to help navigate the transition to employment. They also provide valuable cultural transition advice to the supervisor on an individual basis.

Workforce Development

Employers can access ongoing consultation on how to develop a diversity employment program, which groups to target, and the program features required to meet their needs

Support services for the Employee

Job preparation support

Potential employees are provided one-on-one support to navigate the recruitment process, undergo any necessary screening, such as medical and police checks, as well as prepare CV's and interviewing skills

Crossing Bridges pre vocational training

Tailored job preparation training with an emphasis on workplace culture and behavior. Training can be tailored to business need, eg: library crew participants will need to be able to sort a trolley of books as per the dewey system upon completion.

Field Officer

Each employee is appointed a Field Officer (as above) to assist with questions which they may not feel comfortable, or it is not appropriate, for them to raise with their direct line manager

BSL Social Support Services

BSL provides a range of social support services which can be accessed by employees and further referrals provided where necessary. Support to transition to other jobs using their program experience is also provided under most models