



Building pathways to local jobs for young people

City of Kingston Youth Employment Strategy

Funded by a grant from the
Department of Victorian Communities

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September 2006

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Acronyms

ACC	Area Consultative Committee
ACE	Adult Community Education provider
AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Service
ANICA	Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers
BGKLLLEN	Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network
CGEA	Certificate of General Education for Adults
CMYI	Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
DET	(Victorian) Department of Education and Training
DIMIA	(Federal) Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
DVC	(Victorian) Department of Victorian Communities
EMC	Ecumenical Migration Centre
JPET	Job Placement, Employment and Training
JYP	Jobs for Young People
LLEN	Local Learning and Employment Network
MIPs	Managed Individual Pathways
RTO	registered training organisation
SBNA	School-based New Apprenticeship
SEAAC	Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council
TAFE	(Institute of) Technical and Further Education
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET	Vocational Education and Training
YPP	Youth Pathways Program

Acknowledgments

The authors of this report would like to thank all of those who contributed to the development of the discussion paper, including the many providers of services and training for young people who generously offered their time. We would especially like to express our thanks to the young people, parents and employers who shared their experiences and valuable insights.

Summary

This study was undertaken in the City of Kingston in Melbourne's southeast, to identify reasons for persistent youth unemployment while employers were reporting difficulties in filling entry-level positions. It aims to identify strategies to help young people access quality careers, and to enable employers to attract young people who will become skilled and valuable employees.

The study was based on an analysis of ABS census data, a survey of employers in Kingston, and consultations with young people, parents, employers and local providers of education, employment and support services to young people. It focuses on young people aged 15 to 24 years, and on two areas where unemployment is higher than average: Chelsea, Bonbeach and Carrum in the south of the municipality; and Clayton South and Clarinda in the north, where there is a high proportion of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

More than 2,400 young people aged 15 to 24 in the City of Kingston are 'at risk': that is, they are not in full-time education or work. Instead they are looking for work, working part-time or casually (often in low-skilled and low-paid jobs), or not in the labour force at all. Research indicates that these young people are likely to experience long-term disadvantage, including unemployment, job instability and lower incomes. Young people with low levels of education are far more likely to be 'at risk'.

Consultation findings

Information

Consultations indicated that limited careers education, careers counselling and job search support had made the transition to work difficult for many young people.

Schools lack adequate resources to provide careers information and counselling, and some young people leave school early, before the main emphasis on career choices. Further, schools and parents often promote university pathways and professional careers and provide little information about—or even direct young people away from—vocational pathways and trades.

Services such as the Job Network also face funding obstacles to supporting young people out of school. In addition, both fragmentation of services and inadequate referrals make it difficult for young people to access those supports that are available.

Skills

Young people face the barrier of inexperience and lack of skills: basic literacy, numeracy and English language skills; work readiness skills; and vocational skills.

Young people also face numerous obstacles to improving their skills. There is a limited range of vocational subjects or alternative programs in schools to support those who are not succeeding academically. The cost of vocational education and training (VET) both in school and out of school is sometimes prohibitive. Few vocational training programs are designed to suit young people with either low basic skills or personal problems. Child care and transport difficulties also affect some young people.

Employment

Employers experience frequent difficulties in recruiting and employing young people. Some applicants are unsuitable. Some employers are concerned about the costs of training young people or increased occupational health and safety risks. Others lack the staff to supervise or train

inexperienced workers. Still others need to manage fluctuating workloads, so they hesitate to take on inexperienced workers.

Suggested responses

To build strong pathways into jobs in Kingston requires initiatives to: prevent young people from leaving school unprepared; support transitions from school into work and training; and re-engage those young people who are not linked to services and are out of the workforce or working in low-skilled jobs. To maximise benefits from scarce resources, strategies should target young people most at risk, including young people with low skills and refugees. They should involve employers, young people and parents, and create integrated programs of support and training, rather than addressing only one aspect of youth unemployment.

Improving information, guidance and referrals

Both school students and their parents need exposure to a broader range of career options (especially those involving vocational training) and job search techniques. Career education (including workplace visits) needs to commence in the early years of high school, before young people begin looking for work or leave school. There is also a need for more careers counselling. Schools require more resources, and could also benefit from partnerships with local employment support agencies and employers to provide training for young people. Employers seeking to attract young people need to be more proactive in promoting industry career opportunities through local schools. Improved referrals to support services are also important, but more resources are needed for employment services to assist young people who are out of school. Gaps in services can be tackled through partnerships, particularly using outreach approaches to reach young people who are not accessing formal services.

Increasing skills and support

To address gaps in skills training, there is a need to explore new vocational and alternative programs in schools for young people in Years 8, 9 and 10. Bridging and general education programs are also needed to enable young people with lower skills to take the first step towards further training and work; existing training programs need to ensure that they are accessible by all young people.

Building employment opportunities

Many employers' concerns can be addressed by improving young people's skills and knowledge, but engaging employers in developing and sharing successful strategies for recruiting, training and retaining young people is essential. Employers also need support to increase their skills in these areas. Alongside private sector training and employment, Kingston City Council can play a vital role through direct employment and using its purchasing power to support local job creation and training for young people.

Coordinating the building of pathways to jobs

Many gaps and barriers in pathways to employment arise because there is no organisation with the authority and capacity to identify gaps and ensure that programs are meeting the needs of both communities and employers. The City of Kingston can provide valuable oversight and coordination to ensure that local services and training organisations contribute to increased youth employment and enhanced international competitiveness of businesses.

I Introduction

The Kingston City Council commissioned the Brotherhood of St Laurence to undertake this study investigating the extent and causes of the coexistence of youth unemployment and skills shortages in Kingston, particularly in manufacturing. It was prompted by reports that employers in Kingston were finding it hard to attract suitable young people into their businesses, while at the same time many young people were reporting difficulties in finding jobs.

The study sought to identify the barriers preventing young people from accessing jobs that could provide training stability and career paths in Kingston generally and manufacturing in particular; the factors which support young people to undertake training and work; and the gaps in supports which would enable young people to access and maintain employment.

From this analysis the framework for a youth employment strategy was developed, outlining key areas of action to support young people in the City of Kingston to gain employment in jobs leading to skilled work, and to assist employers to attract the capable young people they require to develop a skilled and competitive workforce.

The study focused on areas of Kingston where the youth unemployment rate is significantly higher than the average for Kingston and for Melbourne as a whole. To compare the experiences of young people from different backgrounds, two different areas of Kingston were selected: Clayton South and Clarinda in the north, where there are many people from a variety of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds; and Chelsea, Bonbeach and Carrum in the south, where the population is predominantly from an Anglo-Celtic background.

Methodology

The research, conducted from September to December 2005, concentrated on the causes of unemployment, underemployment and non-participation in the labour market for those young people who are most at risk of long term disengagement from the labour market and social exclusion. In particular: young people who have not completed Year 12 and those facing other personal issues.

Literature review

Key topics of the literature review included:

- youth unemployment
- skills shortages issues overseas and elsewhere in Australia
- strategies used by local governments elsewhere to develop local employment initiatives
- international experiences in creating local employment strategies and youth employment strategies

Data analysis

In the absence of more recent figures on the numbers of 'at risk' young people aged 15–24 for smaller areas within Kingston, customised data from the most recent (2001) Census was obtained and analysed.

To explore the extent of recruitment difficulties and employment opportunities and barriers for young people a survey was developed and distributed to 1875 employers in Kingston, resulting in 156 responses. Manufacturing employers were especially targeted due to reported labour and skills shortages in that industry. In-depth interview were also carried out with four manufacturing employers.

Consultations

Qualitative research involved focus groups and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders across Kingston. Consultations sought to identify the barriers in the pathways to work which stopped young people in Kingston from achieving their aspirations and the gaps in the services and programs to assist them.

Where possible, consultations sought to identify issues particular to the focus areas: the suburbs of Chelsea, Bonbeach and Carrum (henceforth 'Chelsea area'), in the south of the municipality and the suburbs of Clayton South and Clarinda (henceforth 'Clayton South area') in the north.

City of Kingston staff provided initial contacts with service providers and community members; these contacts enabled additional potential interviewees to be identified.

Consultations with young people

Focus groups and phone interviews were conducted with 45 young people aged from 13 to 24 years. Eight of them had children.

All focus groups included young people from both Anglo-Celtic and CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds, though the majority were Australian-born. The focus group in the Clayton South area comprised young people and parents from just one local CALD community. Attempts to consult directly with young people who had recently arrived through humanitarian programs were not successful.

Most had attended schools in the Kingston area. Around two-thirds had left school early and nine had completed Year 12. Five young people were still at school, in Years 8 to 11. Three had gone to university. Seventeen of the young people were second or third year engineering apprentices undertaking training at TAFE, and eight were doing other courses at TAFE.

In addition, some young service users were asked to complete a short survey about career interests and educational history.

Consultations with parents

Parents were interviewed by phone in the Chelsea area, and in Clayton South parents participated in a focus group discussion with young people.

Interviews with education, employment and youth service providers

More than 40 interviews were undertaken, in person and by phone, with providers of education, training and support services for young people, employment services providers, and staff from the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) (see Appendix C).

Limitations of the study

The researchers did not undertake an exhaustive assessment of all programs and services in Kingston or in the Chelsea and Clayton South areas. Rather, they relied on interviewees' reports of gaps. It is therefore possible that gaps have been identified where in fact services and supports exist. Such instances warrant further investigation, however, to ascertain why those services were not recognised by interviewees.

The project also did not seek to identify ready-made program models for implementation in Kingston; however, where information about successful [or promising] programs arose during the research, it is included to inform the development of appropriate local projects and programs.

Analysis of quantitative data from the ABS and employer survey in some instances relies on small sample sizes; consequently care should be taken in the interpretation of results.

2 'At risk' young people in Australia

Youth unemployment is a significant problem in Australia. In August 2005 the unemployment rates among young people aged 15–19 and 20–24 were significantly higher (14.6% and 6.9% respectively) than the overall rate amongst those aged 15–65 (5.0%). Young people also have a higher rate of long-term unemployment, 1.8% (15–19 year olds) and 1.4% (20–24 year olds) compared with an overall rate of 1.2%; and higher rates of underemployment, 12% (15–19 year olds) and 8.3% (20–24 year olds) compared with an overall rate of 5.6% (ABS 2005).

Of particular concern are the group of young people not in full-time education or full-time employment. This group overlaps with those unemployed¹ and in May 2005, included almost 15% of 15–19 year olds (or 208,400 people). This is slightly lower than early 1990s levels, but has remained stable in recent years. Among 20–24 year olds, 24% of young adults (or 352,000 people) were not in full-time education or employment (Long 2005a). This group is often referred to as being 'at risk' of longer term exclusion. This can include exclusion from the labour market and further education and training as well as resource, income and social exclusion more broadly.

While many young people spend short periods outside full-time education or employment after leaving school, research indicates that extended periods outside full-time education or employment can have a long-term scarring effect.

Long periods outside work and education have been associated with long-term disadvantages including higher levels of unemployment, reduced likelihood of returning to the labour force or full-time education, more part-time and casual work, a shorter working life, lower income, and increased likelihood of ending up in poor-quality jobs with few opportunities for career development. Non-employment impacts can include increased levels of depression, living in lower quality housing and (among young women) a greater likelihood of early parenting (McIntyre, Freeland & Melville 1999) (Chapman & Gray 2002) (Bynner & Parsons 2002; Hillman 2005; Long 2005b).

Such impacts have considerable economic and social costs. A report by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling in 1999 estimated the cost to Australia of each year's cohort of early school leavers (who do not obtain further formal qualifications) at \$2.6 billion (King 1999). Long estimated that investment in a package of reforms to halve the current number of young people leaving school early would produce a rate of return between 8% and 10% (Long 2005b).

Labour shortages

In addition to high youth unemployment, Australia also faces growing skills shortages. Professional occupations listed by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations as in short supply in Victoria in 2004 include:

- child-care workers
- civil and electrical engineers
- registered nurses
- midwives and other health professionals
- secondary teachers in some subject areas

¹ This varies from the official unemployment rate by including young people who are not studying AND are working part-time or not in the labour force: but excluding unemployed young people who are studying.

Amongst trades, widespread shortages exist in areas including:

- engineering
- vehicle trades
- electrical/electronics
- construction
- food
- printing
- wood
- other trades such as hairdressing and upholstery (DEWR 2004).

Traditional trades and engineering have particularly severe shortages caused by an ageing population and decline in number of apprentices completing training. It is estimated that over the next five years 170,000 people will leave the industry and only 40,000 will enter it (ACTU 2004).

There is minimal information on the number and location of vacancies related to skills shortages and what exists is imprecise. For example, it is often not clear whether an employer reporting a skill shortage has a vacancy or a skill deficit in the existing workforce. Moreover, a skills shortage in a particular location does not mean jobs are available for all job seekers. This is because employers may require specific sets of skills, experience and/or qualifications.

Understanding the causes of local unemployment is a complex task. Factors involved can include:

- Search: job seekers and employers may use different channels for job search and recruitment. The unemployed may not search widely and local labour market information may be imperfect.
- Location: the job opportunities may be in the 'wrong' places, difficult for the unemployed to access.
- Skills mismatch: the available jobs may require skills that the workless do not possess.
- Employability: people without work may not be 'work ready', suffering from problems which make obtaining a job an unrealistic expectation.
- Net Worker Benefit: the available jobs may not be attractive because their wage and working conditions do not compare favourably with the job seeker's current situation.
- Detachment: employers may prefer to employ workers other than those without work. People without work may, over time, become detached from the labour market because of the scarring effects of worklessness.
- Discrimination: employers may consciously or unconsciously discriminate against some job seekers on grounds of personal characteristics such as ethnicity, age, or postcode (Campbell 2001)

Rationale for local action

Once the local causes of unemployment have been determined, local labour market strategies can provide significant benefits. Above all, they can be adapted to meet local circumstances and needs based on local knowledge:

The value of local schemes lies in their capacity to 'get to grips' in detailed and specific terms with the 'micro-processes' which operate in local labour markets to exclude long-term unemployed people from work (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1999, p.3).

In addition, the local area is where many workers and employers actually look for work, and is where unsatisfied community needs can be identified and the supply of jobs organised.

Local government can either develop new employment initiatives to complement programs provided by other levels of government, or foster new approaches to delivery of existing services. Potential benefits of a local employment strategy include the ability to:

- pursue more refined, focused objectives targeting specific labour market problems
- fully utilise local labour market knowledge
- facilitate collaboration between all relevant agencies
- promote involvement of the local community
- promote increased ownership of local labour market issues
- achieve improved policy coordination and integration (Monné 2004) (Campbell 2000; Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1999, p.3)

A local employment strategy can enhance the operation of the local labour market by:

- reducing unemployment among target groups
- improving the matching of job seekers to available jobs
- improving the skill base and information and advice about skill development
- preventing discrimination against particular groups (Campbell 2000)

However, it is also important to recognise constraints affecting local employment initiatives. Local councils, for example, have little influence over macroeconomic policies shaping the demand for labour, or labour market programs and education and training provided by state and federal governments. Nevertheless, effective partnerships with other levels of government may be able to reduce these constraints.

Local government

Local governments can play a key role in the development of a local employment strategy due to being:

- well placed to identify the gaps in services funded by other levels of government
- most attuned to community needs and priorities
- most able to provide access points for citizen input
- well positioned to facilitate and sustain partnerships of relevant stakeholders (Spierings 2001) (Bradford 2005)

A local employment strategy can contribute directly to local government goals such as improved outcomes and living standards for residents, as well as supporting local industries and economic development plans.

Good practice in local employment

Previous research investigating local employment initiatives has recognised the following elements as important:

- initiatives customised to the targeted client group and local conditions
- an approach tightly targeted to those suffering the greatest disadvantage, through outreach and marketing of services
- strong orientation to the open labour market, with training closely connected to existing vacancies

- use of targeted employment subsidies and intermediate labour markets (intermediate labour markets provide an opportunity for supported employment and training in a structured work environment)
- high quality counselling and information
- comprehensive support services to address broader personal problems
- development of young people's informal networks to increase opportunities and engagement with broader, sometimes resistant, social and family networks (Breen 2005; Campbell 2000; Dressner, Fleisher & Sherwood 1998; HRDC 2000; Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1998).

In relation to at risk youth, particularly those with low skills, simply gaining employment is often insufficient to improve long-term employment outcomes due to the high likelihood of their obtaining poor quality jobs with few career options and the risk of subsequent job loss. For these young people there is a need for greater emphasis on training and the attainment of qualifications (Kieselbach, Beelmann & Traiser 2002). In addition, some young people may not be immediately ready for the adult work environment and can be better served by programs that allow for a process of transition into employment (Dressner, Fleisher & Sherwood 1998).

An essential attribute of effective local initiatives, particularly for those experiencing the greatest disadvantage, is the development of integrated packages of initiatives rather than stand-alone programs addressing only one aspect of the youth unemployment problem (Breen 2005; Campbell 2000; Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1999). These can include measures aimed at prevention and early intervention with individuals 'at risk', 'activation' of job seekers, improved matching, job pathways and skills acquisition and training for those currently out of work, as well as long-term post-employment supports to ensure people stay in and progress once in employment.

In terms of program design two of the most important attributes identified are effective partnerships at both strategic and operational levels and the full involvement of employers (Campbell 2000; Monné 2004). Partnerships should include all local players as well as different levels of government. Employer involvement needs to be as both partners and as clients, including the identification of needs, development of responses and provision of work experience and work placements. Other important design elements include connection to the broader regional labour market, a strong integration with other local development strategies, building capacity of local staff, adequate resources and administrative support and coordination with other agencies to encourage cross referrals.

Good practice also includes a bottom-up approach based on a comprehensive analysis of local needs and skills, incorporating youth consultation and input (Monné 2004); setting of clear baselines and objectives; and building in of good information systems to support evaluation and monitoring (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1999) (Breen 2005).

3 Characteristics of Kingston industry and employment

The city of Kingston in Melbourne's southeast contains the largest concentration of small to medium industrial enterprises in Melbourne and has the highest number of manufacturing jobs of any Victorian municipality. In excess of 70,000 people are employed in businesses across the municipality.

For statistical purposes, some Australian Bureau of Statistics and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations publications divide Kingston into north and south areas (see Appendix Table 8.1 for suburbs). The population in the north (85,447) is roughly double that in the south (42,724).

Employment

As Table 3.1 shows, manufacturing stands out as the biggest employer in Kingston, followed by retail trade, property and business services, and health and community services. Overall, the north has around twice as many employees in most industries, corresponding with its population share.

Table 3.1 Employment by industry in Kingston

Industry	Kingston	North Kingston	South Kingston
Manufacturing	11,509	7,757	3,752
Retail trade	9,261	6,279	2,982
Property and business services	6,904	4,715	2,189
Health and community services	5,255	3,381	1,876
Construction	4,182	2,490	1,690
Wholesale trade	4,124	2,590	1,534
Education	3,530	2,381	1,149
Finance and insurance	2,839	1,907	933
Personal and other services	2,188	1,400	791
Transport and storage	2,092	1,383	708
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	2,082	1,396	686
Government administration and defence	1,628	1,095	535
Cultural and recreational services	1,546	1,045	501
Communication services	1,407	945	460
Electricity, gas and water supply	289	178	109
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	262	159	105
Mining	44	32	10
Total	60,570	40,114	20,458

(ABS 2003a; ABS 2003b; ABS 2003c)

For young people aged 15–24 a slightly different picture emerges (see Table 3.2). Retail trade is by far the biggest employer, with more than three times the employment of any other industry. This is followed by manufacturing, property and business services, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, construction, health and community services and wholesale.

Table 3.2 Employment of young people (15–24) by industry

	Kingston	North Kingston	South Kingston
Retail trade	3,259	2,270	989
Manufacturing	1,091	779	312
Property and business services	822	597	225
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	687	492	195
Construction	612	375	235
Health and community services	529	356	175
Wholesale trade	479	331	148
Cultural and recreational services	364	258	106
Personal and other services	307	201	106
Finance and insurance	293	211	82
Education	241	167	74
Transport and storage	164	104	60
Communication services	153	106	45
Government administration and defence	93	70	24
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	42	21	21
Electricity, gas and water supply	23	12	8
Mining	3	3	0
Non-classifiable economic units	48	31	15
Not stated	255	179	76
Total	9,465	6,563	2,896

(ABS 2003a; ABS 2003b; ABS 2003c)

Table 3.3 displays the percentage of young people in the ten industries with the greatest share of youth employment in Kingston. Retail trade, the second largest employer in Kingston has the highest percentage of youth employment 35%. This is followed by accommodation, cafes and restaurants (33%) and cultural and recreational services (24%). Interestingly, manufacturing, the industry employing the greatest number of people in Kingston, has a much lower percentage of young people employed at only 9%. This low figure combined with other evidence of skills shortages in the industry suggest the presence of barriers preventing young people taking up employment.

Table 3.3 Employment of young people as a percentage of total industry employment

	Kingston	North Kingston	South Kingston
	%	%	%
Retail trade	35	36	33
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	33	35	28
Cultural and recreational services	24	25	21
Construction	15	15	14
Personal and other services	14	14	13
Wholesale trade	12	13	10
Property and business services	12	13	10
Finance and insurance	10	11	9
Health and community services	10	11	9
Manufacturing	9	10	8
Average for all industries	16	16	14

(ABS 2003a; ABS 2003b; ABS 2003c)

Unemployment

The unemployment rate in official ABS and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations figures is calculated as unemployed people as a proportion of the labour force (all persons in a particular category, for example 15–19 year olds, that are either working or looking for work). Many young people, particularly in the 15–19 year old age group, are studying and not working or looking for work and hence are outside the labour force.

The most up-to-date unemployment figures for the city of Kingston, from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations *Small Area Labour Market* series, show that the unemployment rate in September 2005 was 3.8% in Kingston North and 4.3% in Kingston South, compared with 5.1% for Melbourne and 5.5% for Victoria; unfortunately the series does not include data by suburb or for youth only. Unemployment fell substantially over the previous year, from 5.3% and 5.8% in Kingston North and South respectively. This reduction was greater than across Melbourne and Victoria (where unemployment fell from 5.5% and 5.7% in September 2004), suggesting a significant tightening in the Kingston labour market (DEWR 2005). However, this does not necessarily indicate an improved employment situation for young people.

The most recent data on youth unemployment by suburb in Kingston, from the 2001 Census (see table 3.4), shows that while overall unemployment amongst 15–19 year olds in Kingston (12%) was lower than across the Melbourne Statistical Division (15%), a number of suburbs had significantly higher unemployment. Highett (19.2%), Bonbeach (18.5%) and Clayton South (17.2%) reported the highest unemployment rates.

Unemployment rates for 20–24 year olds also vary widely, with the highest recorded in Highett (13.2%), Clayton South (12.3%) and Chelsea (12.2%)—all higher than rates for Kingston and Melbourne overall.

Table 3.4 Unemployment in Kingston by suburb and age group

Suburb	15–19 years (%)	20–24 years (%)	25 years and over(%)
Aspendale	13.9	6.1	4.8
Aspendale Gardens	7.6	6.9	3.3
Bonbeach	18.5	8.7	7.1
Carrum	13	9	4.4
Chelsea	15	12.2	6.9
Chelsea Heights	10.9	8.5	4.2
Cheltenham	10.2	6.4	3.8
Clarinda	15.5	10	6.0
Clayton South	17.2	12.3	8.6
Dingley Village	7.3	4	2.4
Edithvale	9.6	9.1	5.5
Heatherston	9.7	0	2.1
Highett	19.2	13.2	5.1
Mentone/Moorabbin Airport	8.4	9.3	4.9
Moorabbin	11.1	4	4.0
Mordialloc/Braeside	14	6.1	4.6
Oakleigh South	19.7	8.4	5.1
Parkdale	10.6	7.3	3.6
Patterson Lakes	10	5.3	2.1
Waterways	0	0	0.0
City of Kingston	12	8.5	4.8
Melbourne Statistical Division	15.4	10.4	5.4

(City of Kingston 2006, from ABS 2001 census)

4 Skills shortages and young people in Kingston’s businesses

To gain an improved understanding of the employment situation for young people in Kingston, an employer survey was mailed to around 2000 businesses across the municipality. Due to anecdotal evidence of skills shortages, surveys were directed predominantly to manufacturing firms. Returned surveys numbered 156, a response rate of 7.8%.

Business characteristics

The survey was to be completed by the person responsible for recruitment. In most cases this was done by the general manager, director, managing director, CEO or owner/partner (see Appendix Table 8.2).

Just under two-thirds of responding businesses were manufacturers (see table 4.1), 11% in each of construction and wholesale trade, 6% in business services (mostly accounting), 5% in retail trade and the remainder in community services, communication services and personal and other services.

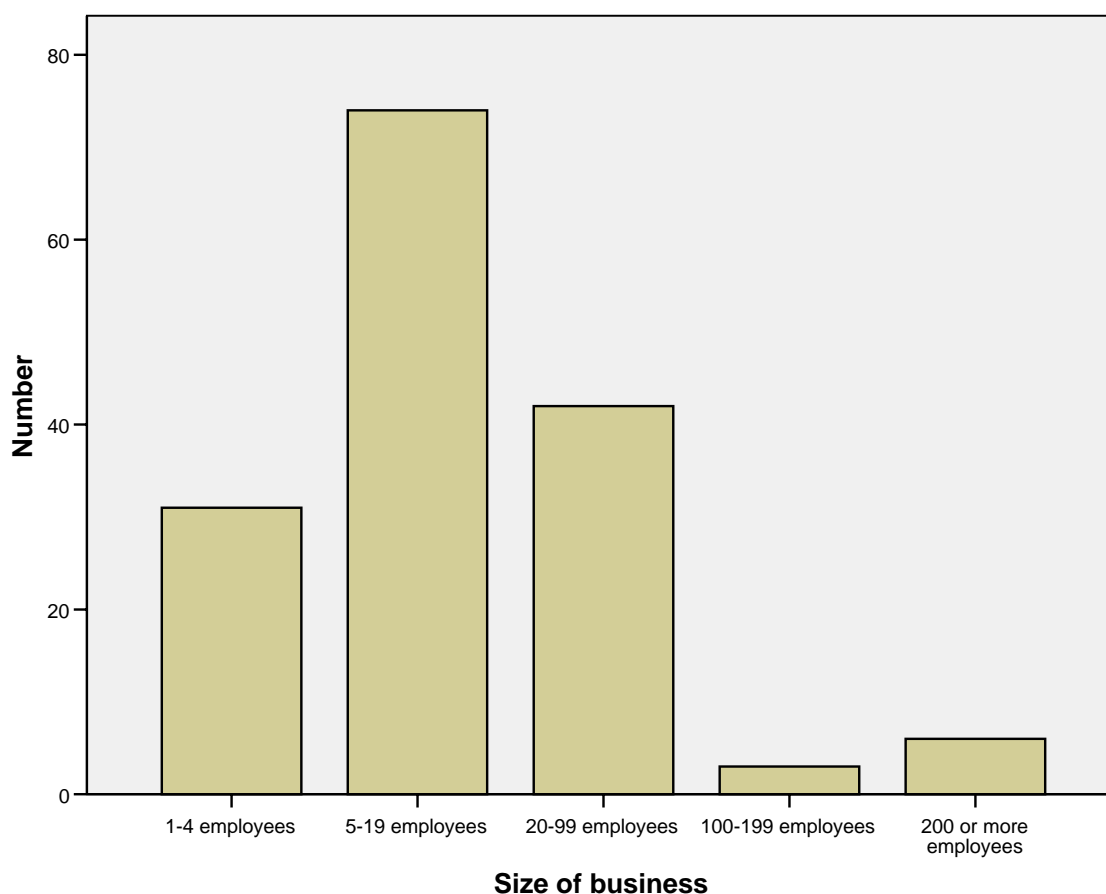
Table 4.1 Number of responses by industry

Industry	Number	Percentage
Manufacturing	97	62
Construction	17	11
Wholesale trade	17	11
Business services	10	6
Retail trade	7	5
Community services	2	1
Communication services	2	1
Personal and other services	1	1
Not stated	3	2
Total	156	100

Responses were received from businesses in 15 suburbs, but two-thirds of responses received were from the four major manufacturing suburbs; Moorabbin, Braeside, Cheltenham, and Mordialloc (see Appendix Table 8.3).

As figure 4.1 shows, the largest group of responding businesses had between 5 and 19 employees. The number of employees ranged from 1 (in four cases) to 497 (in one case). The average was 31, but 75% of business had 26 employees or less, which is consistent with the Kingston business profile overall.

Figure 4.1 Number of employees



Most employment in businesses surveyed was full-time. Around 29% or 45 businesses had no part-time or casual employees and for 50% of the sample part-time and casual employment made up less than 12% of their total workforce. The average percentage of part-time or casual employees was 19%, substantially lower than the rate of part-time and casual work in the Australian workforce generally. As table 4.2 shows, there were substantial differences between industries: manufacturing firms had a much lower percentage of part-time and casual employees, while business services and firms in ‘other’ industries each had almost 40% part-time and casual employees.

Table 4.2 Percentage of part-time and casual employees in Kingston businesses, by industry

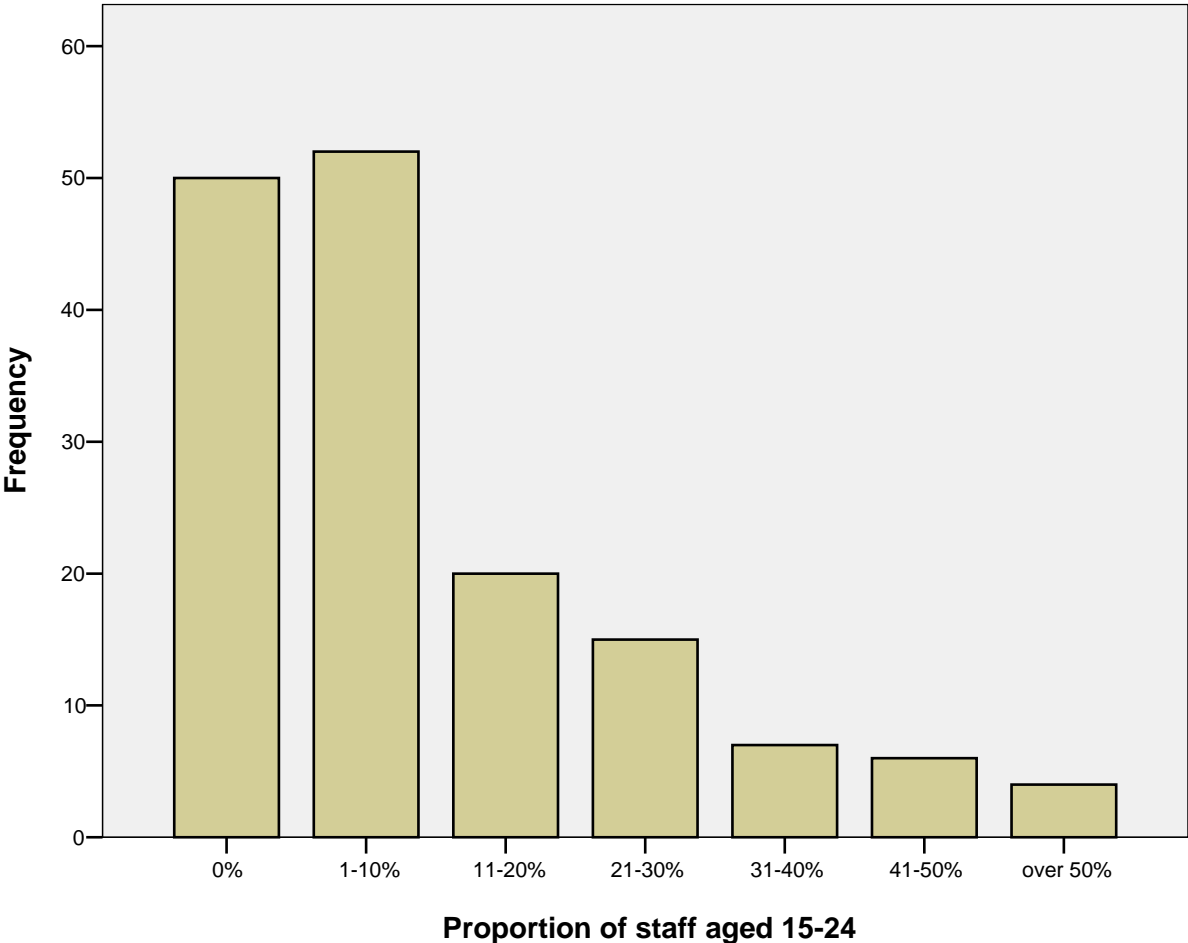
Industry	Average %
Manufacturing	13
Wholesale trade	21
Construction	25
Business services	39
Other	39
Total	19

Youth employment

Levels of youth employment

Young people generally made up a small percentage of the workforce. Just under one-third of businesses had no employees aged 15–24 and another third reported less than 10% of their workforce (see figure 4.2). Around 13% of businesses had 11–20% of their workforces made up of young people and 10% had 21–30% of their workforces made up of young people. Few firms reported that more than 30% of the workforce was aged 15–24.

Figure 4.2 Percentage of young people (15–24 years)



As Table 4.3 shows, most workplaces with high percentages of young people were smaller in size. However, small businesses were also more likely to report having no young people, over 50% of firms with 1–4 employees and around 40% of firms with 5–19 employees employed no young people compared with only 4% of firms with 20–99 employees. This suggests that perceived or real barriers may prevent smaller firms taking on young employees.

The breakdown by industry (see table 4.4) indicates that firms in the construction or manufacturing industries more likely to employ some young people than firms in other industries and that firms in wholesale trade are less likely to have higher percentages of young people.

Table 4.3 Percentage of staff aged 15–24 by business size

Number of staff	Percentage of young people							Total
	0%	1–10%	11–20%	21–30%	31–40%	41–50%	over 50%	
1–4	18	0	0	2	2	5	3	30
5–19	29	19	11	10	3	1	1	74
20–99	2	28	7	3	2	0	0	42
100–199	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
200+	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	6

Table 4.4 Businesses by percentage of staff aged 15–24 and by industry

Industry	Percentage of young people							Total
	0%	1–10%	11–20%	21–30%	31–40%	41–50%	over 50%	
Manufacturing	29	35	12	11	4	4	1	96
Construction	4	3	3	3	1	0	2	16
Wholesale trade	6	7	4	0	0	0	0	17
Business services	5	3	0	0	1	1	0	10
Other	6	4	1	1	1	1	1	15

Apprenticeships and traineeships

Businesses were also asked whether they employed young people through apprenticeships or traineeships. Of the 104 businesses that employed young people, just over one-third reported employing young people through apprenticeships, 9% through traineeships and 4% through both. The majority (52%), however, did not use either apprenticeships or traineeships.

Table 4.5 Young people employed through apprenticeships or traineeships

	Number	Percentage
Apprenticeship	36	35
Traineeship	9	9
Apprenticeship and traineeship	3	4
No	54	52
Missing	1	1
Don't know	1	1
Total	104	100

The use of apprenticeships or traineeships to employ young people (by businesses that indicated they do employ young people) varied little by size (see Appendix Table 8.4), but noticeably by industry. No firms in the business services sector (mostly accounting) reported using apprenticeships or traineeships and wholesale traders also have lower levels of usage than manufacturing, construction or 'other' industries (see table 4.6). Although we do not have data on numbers of people employed through apprenticeships or traineeships, the analysis suggests that these are an important pathway into work in industries other than wholesale trade and business services (where alternative pathways may operate).

Table 4.6 Percentage of businesses employing young people that use apprenticeships and traineeships by industry

Industry	Percentage of businesses
Construction	55
Manufacturing	50
Wholesale trade	27
Business services	0
Other	56

Recruitment difficulties and skills shortages

Entry level recruitment difficulties

Respondents were asked whether they had faced frequent, occasional or no difficulties when recruiting for entry level positions in the last 12 months (see table 4.7). Of the 104 businesses that had so recruited, 43% had experienced some level of difficulty. Of those reporting difficulties, 80% had experienced frequent difficulties.

Table 4.7 Recruitment difficulties for entry level positions in last 12 months

	Number	Percentage
Frequent difficulties	36	34
Occasional difficulties	9	9
No difficulties	51	49
Don't know	3	3
Not stated	5	5
Total	104	100

Note: 52 other businesses had not recruited for entry-level positions in the last 12 months.

Table 4.8 shows the percentage of businesses experiencing recruitment difficulties by industry. As predicted by other research, manufacturing firms are experiencing the greatest recruitment difficulties, with 50% of businesses that have recruited for entry level positions in the last 12 months reporting some level of difficulty. Many wholesale traders (45%) also reported difficulties, which may be linked to a lack of pathways into employment suggested by their low use of apprenticeships or traineeships. The significant industry differences point to the need for industry-specific solutions to overcome barriers and link young people with available jobs.

Table 4.8 Businesses experiencing difficulty recruiting for entry level positions by industry

Industry	Experiencing difficulty %
Manufacturing	50
Wholesale trade	45
Construction	22
Business services	17
Other	30

Positions and applicants

The 45 respondents that reported recruitment difficulties identified 67 positions they were having difficulty filling. These covered a wide variety (see Appendix Table 8.5), with 22 (33%) apprentice positions of some type. Fifty-three were full-time positions, 4 were part-time and 10 unspecified.

As Table 4.9 shows, around 40% of positions had no qualification listed as a requirement, 8% required year 10 or 11 and a further 9% required Year 12. Post-school qualifications, either certificate 3 or below (7%) or a trade qualification (9%), were required for 17% of positions.

Table 4.9 Minimum qualification required for entry level positions

Qualification required	Number	Percentage
None	27	40
Year 10	5	7
Year 11	1	1
Year 12	6	9
Certificate 3 or below	5	7
Trade qualifications	6	9
Not stated	17	25

The two job-related factors that respondents most commonly thought to be causing recruitment difficulties were the work not being seen as attractive and not being interesting to young people, both selected by around 50% (see Table 4.10). Uncompetitive remuneration was selected by 40% of firms. Problems of the industry/job not being well understood, poor public transport, and difficult or physically demanding work were each identified by around a fifth of firms. Several of these factors appear to be linked to poor perceptions of the jobs on offer or a lack of information.

Table 4.10 Factors causing difficulty in recruitment for entry level positions

Factor causing difficulty	Number	Percentage
Work not seen as attractive	23	51
Work not interesting to young people	22	49
Wages/remuneration not competitive	18	40
Industry/job not well understood	10	22
Poor public transport	9	20
Difficult/physically demanding work	8	18
Position pays youth wage	6	13
Remote or difficult to reach location	4	9
Lack of appropriate local training	3	7
Unsocial hours/shift work	2	4
Lack of progression opportunities	1	2
Licensing or registration requirements	0	0
Casual/seasonal work	0	0
Don't know	7	16

In relation to filling positions, lack of suitable applicants was seen as the main recruitment difficulty by 42% of respondents, while 27% saw a lack of applicants per se as the main difficulty. A further 22% reported both difficulties (see Table 4.11). The high proportion of respondents reporting a lack of suitable applicants, despite the low formal qualifications required (see Table 4.9), suggests a lack of 'soft' or vocational skills, or other issues related to applicants' personal attributes.

Table 4.11 Main difficulty in recruiting for entry level positions

	Number	Percentage
Lack of applicants	12	27
Lack of suitable applicants	19	42
Both	10	22
Not stated	4	9
Total	45	100

Indeed as Table 4.12 indicates, young people's lack of soft skills was identified by businesses as a key issue. By far the greatest factor identified was lacking the right attitude, selected by 60% of respondents. A lack of interest in the job was also reported by a considerable percentage of businesses (45%), and poor personal presentation by 17%.

Around 15% of firms reported poor literacy and numeracy, and 12% each reported inadequate customer service/communication skills and poor quality of applications. Inadequate English skills were reported by 6% of respondents. Lack of experience was reported by 22% of respondents, and lack of technical skills by 17%, indicating that job related skills also need to be addressed if young people are to be matched to entry level positions. An issue of a different kind was young people's lack of transport, selected by 12% of employers.

Table 4.12 Main reason(s) young people have not been suitable for entry level jobs

	Number	Percentage
Lack of right attitude	93	60
Lack of interest in job	70	45
Lack of experience	34	22
Poor personal presentation	27	17
Lack of technical skills	26	17
Poor literacy/numeracy	23	15
Inadequate customer service/communication skills	19	12
Lack of own transport	18	12
Poor quality applications	18	12
Inadequate English language skills	10	6
Lack of qualifications	9	6
Lack of physical strength/fitness	7	4
Over-qualified	5	3
Inadequate IT skills	4	3
Lack of suitable referees	3	2
Other reason not suitable	17	11
Don't know	3	2

Examining the three highest responses by industry reveals considerable variation (see Table 4.13 and Table 4.12). Young people lacking the right attitude was most commonly reported in the wholesale trade, 71%, compared with only 35% of construction firms. Lack of interest also varied considerably, from only 20% in business services and 35% in construction to 65% in wholesale trade. Lack of experience was reported as a problem by 20–25% of all firms other than business services, where 40% listed it. These differences indicate that work-related factors may play an important role in influencing young people's attitudes and that any initiatives should work with both employers and schools.

Table 4.13 Main reasons young people have not been suitable for entry level jobs by industry

Industry	Lack of right attitude	Lack of interest in job	Lack of experience
	%	%	%
Manufacturing	62	45	20
Construction	35	35	24
Wholesale trade	71	65	24
Business services	60	20	40
Other	60	47	20

Response to recruitment difficulties

When asked to identify responses to recruitment difficulties from a list, 47% of businesses reported that they re-advertised (see Table 4.14). Smaller numbers changed the advertising strategy (36%) or hired someone not really suitable (33%). Around 20% of firms reported changing the work structure/conditions, while 13% had trained existing staff and 11% offered higher pay. These findings did not suggest a strong focus on overcoming either of the two most significant obstacles, the work not being seen as attractive, or work not being interesting to young people.

Table 4.14 Employers' response to recruitment difficulties

Response	Number	Percentage
Re-advertised	21	47
Changed advertising strategy	16	36
Hired someone not suitable	15	33
Changed work structure conditions	9	20
Trained existing staff	6	13
Offered higher pay	5	11
Other response	0	0

Recruitment methods

Of methods used in the last 12 months to recruit for entry level positions, most common were the local newspaper and referrals from family, which were both used by over one-third of businesses. The internet and recruitment agencies had each been used by around 30% of firms and *The Age*, labour hire and Job Network had each been used by around 20%. The sizeable number of firms using recruitment agencies, labour hire, Job Network and group training companies suggest that these would be important partners in a youth employment strategy.

Table 4.15 Recruitment methods used for entry-level positions in the last 12 months

Recruitment method	Number	Percentage
Local newspaper	64	41
Referrals from family	57	37
Internet	47	30
Recruitment agency	45	29
<i>The Age</i>	36	23
Labour hire	33	21
Job network	30	19
Group training companies	21	13
Contacted local TAFE	20	13
Australian Job Search database	17	11
<i>Herald-Sun</i>	17	11
Contacted local school	17	11
Other recruitment method	8	5

As Table 4.16 indicates, the businesses which recruited for entry-level positions using a third party such as a labour hire company or a recruitment agency and those using referrals from family were least likely to report difficulties, although it is possible businesses were using a third party due to previous difficulties. By contrast, those advertising through daily newspapers, the Job Network or the Australian job Search database were most likely to report difficulties. Recruitment methods associated with fewer difficulties appear to be more effective.

Table 4.16 Percentage of firms reporting NO difficulty recruiting for entry-level positions by recruitment method used in last 12 months

Recruitment method	Percentage of firms reporting no difficulty
Labour hire	64
Recruitment agency	64
Referrals from family	63
Contacted local TAFE	60
Local newspaper	53
Internet	49
Group training companies	48
Contacted local school	47
<i>The Age</i>	42
Job Network	40
Australian Job Search database	29
<i>Herald-Sun</i>	29

Higher level positions

Survey respondents were also asked about difficulties recruiting for higher level positions (see Table 4.17). Fifty businesses (32%) reported occasional or frequent difficulties, 39% reported no difficulties, 1% did not know, and 29% did not answer the question. More firms reporting difficulties filling higher level positions (50) than entry level positions (45). Firms that reported difficulty filling entry level positions were more likely to report difficulty filling higher level positions, 49% compared to 32% overall.

Table 4.17 Businesses reporting recruitment difficulties for higher level positions in the last 12 months

	Number	Percentage
Yes – frequent difficulties	25	16
Yes – occasional difficulties	25	16
No	60	39
Don't know	1	1
Not stated	45	29
Total	156	100

Note: All responding businesses had recruited for higher positions in the last 12 months.

As with entry level positions, manufacturing firms most commonly reported recruitment difficulties (39%). Firms in 'other' industries reported the second highest level of recruitment difficulties, followed by wholesale trade and business services. Construction reported much less difficulty (6%) (see Table 4.18). Wholesale trade and construction both appear to have fewer problems recruiting for higher positions than entry level positions, while other industries face similar levels of difficulty for both higher and entry level positions. Provided internal pathways exist, industries needing staff across occupational levels should be able to offer good long-term career advancement prospects.

Table 4.18 Businesses experiencing difficulty recruiting for higher level positions by industry

Industry	Experiencing difficulty %
Manufacturing	39
Wholesale trade	24
Construction	6
Business services	20
Other	33

Recruitment difficulties for higher positions were less prevalent in smaller firms: only 16% of firms with 1–4 employees and 26% of firms with 5–19 employees reported difficulties, compared with 48% of firms with 20–99 employees.

Table 4.19 Businesses experiencing difficulty recruiting for higher level positions by size

Business size	Experiencing difficulty %
1–4 employees	16
5–19 employees	26
20–99 employees	48
100–199 employees	33
200 or more employees	83

The 50 respondents that reported recruitment difficulties for 'higher level' positions identified 70 diverse vacancies, some of which seemed to fit the survey's definition of entry level (requiring a Certificate III or lower qualification, and/or one year's experience or less), for example junior shop assistant, factory hand, cleaner, apprentice (see Appendix Table 8.6). This suggests some unwillingness of employers to invest in basic training.

Again the majority of these positions (57) were full-time, 5 were part-time and 8 were unspecified. Table 4.20 shows the minimum qualifications required, although no minimum was stated for 29 positions. A trade was the most common qualification required, for 26% of positions, followed by a degree for 19%. Only 4% of positions were reported as requiring no qualification or less than Year 12.

Table 4.20 Minimum qualifications required for higher level positions

Qualification required	Number	Percentage
None	2	3
Below year 12	1	1
Certificate 3 or below	4	6
Trade	18	26
Diploma	3	4
Degree	13	19
Not stated	29	41

Around 50% of firms also listed previous experience as a requirement, one-fifth of whom asked for a minimum of five years' experience. This suggests that there might be benefits for employers in recruiting and training young people to gain in-house experience and in time move into higher level positions.

5 Participation of young people in Kingston

Labour force participation

To explore patterns of participation, risk factors and characteristics of at risk youth in the Kingston area, customised census data was obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. As specified in the project brief, two areas within Kingston with contrasting populations were targeted in addition to Kingston overall: the Clayton South area and the Chelsea area. Due to the small numbers in some population sub-groups, some caution should be exercised in interpreting figures.

Young people at risk of long-term exclusion have been defined as young people not studying and: unemployed, working part-time or not in the labour force. The proportion of young people unemployed was obtained by dividing the number of unemployed young people by the population sub-group, not the labour force as in the ABS unemployment rate. This 'unemployed' measure also excludes young people that are studying part or full-time and looking for work. It is important to note that because of these differences the figures below will be lower than the ABS measure of unemployment.

In Kingston overall, 15% of young people were at risk, but the figure was substantially higher among the 20–24 year old age group than among 15–19 year olds. In the older group, 21% were at risk, compared with 9% in the younger group.

Table 5.1, Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 show the percentage of young people that are employed part-time, unemployed or not in the labour force, as well as the total number of 'at risk' young people, in the Clayton South area and the Chelsea area and Kingston as a whole. The Chelsea area has noticeably higher percentages of young people in all the at risk categories and in both the 15–19 and 20–24 years age groups.

The percentage of at risk 15–19 year olds in the Chelsea area (16%) is more than 50% higher than in the Clayton South area (10%) and Kingston overall (9%). Across Kingston, the percentage of 'at risk' youth in the 20–24 age group is around double that amongst 15–19 year olds. The Chelsea area has a significantly higher percentage of at risk young people (29%) than the Clayton South area (22%) or Kingston overall (21%). However, the actual numbers of at risk young people are larger in the Clayton South area in both age groups.

These figures represent a total in Kingston of 2431 young people aged 15–24 at risk in 2001. Of these, 1699 were aged 20–24 and 732 were aged 15–19.

Table 5.1 At risk young people (15–19 years) by locality

	Working part-time		Unemployed		Not in the labour force		<i>Total 'at risk'</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Clayton South area	4	51	2	35	3	49	10	135
Chelsea area	5	41	4	33	6	46	16	120
Kingston	4	295	3	195	3	238	9	732

Table 5.2 At risk young people (20–24 years) by locality

	Working part-time		Unemployed		Not in the labour force		<i>Total 'at risk'</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Clayton South area	8	119	5	75	8	121	22	315
Chelsea area	13	115	7	65	8	78	29	258
Kingston	10	817	5	397	6	485	21	1699

Table 5.3 At risk young people (15–24 years) by locality

	Working part-time		Unemployed		Not in the labour force		<i>Total 'at risk'</i>	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Clayton South area	6	170	4	110	6	170	16	450
Chelsea area	10	156	6	98	8	124	23	378
Kingston	7	1112	4	592	5	723	15	2431

As shown in table 5.4, there is little difference between the percentages of 15–19 year old males and females at risk, though males in the Clayton South area slightly more likely to be at risk. In the 20–24 age group, the percentage of females at risk is higher than the corresponding male figures in all areas.

Table 5.4 At risk young people by gender and location

	At risk 15–19 years		At risk 20–24 years	
	%		%	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Clayton South area	11	8	19	24
Chelsea area	16	16	25	33
Kingston	10	9	19	23

Table 5.5 identifies the percentage of at risk youth amongst three population sub-groups: young people with a language other than English spoken at home, young people who arrived in Australia between 1996 and 2001, and young people who arrived in Australia prior to 1996. Disengagement rates for these groups are generally similar to, or slightly lower than, those for the whole 15–24 Kingston population. One exception is that 9% of young people who arrived in Australia 1996–2001 are not in the labour force, compared with 5% in Kingston overall, 6% in the Clayton South area and 8% in the Chelsea area. This indicates a group which may have minimal contact with mainstream employment support services and may require outreach.

It should be noted that these figures do not include latest wave of new arrivals from places such as the Horn of Africa.

Table 5.5 At risk young people (15–24) by population sub-groups

	Working part-time		Unemployed		Not in the labour force		<i>Total 'at risk'</i>	
	%		%		%		%	<i>n</i>
Language other than English spoken at home	5		4		5		14	518
Arrival in Australia 1996–2001	5		3		9		17	139
Arrival in Australia prior to 1996	6		3		5		14	283
Kingston	7		4		5		15	2431

Levels of education

As with the Australian population generally (Long 2005), low levels of education are strongly associated with an increased likelihood of being 'at risk' in Kingston (see table 5.6). Of young people aged 20–24 whose highest level of education is year 8, 64% are at risk; this drops to 43% for those with Year 9, 37% with Year 10 and 32% with Year 11—and just 18% for those with Year 12. Importantly, young people with low levels of education are much more likely to be not in the labour force, which could be described as the most disengaged of the 'at risk' categories. These figures illustrate the critical need for a strong prevention component, assisting young people to complete Year 12 or equivalent, in any youth employment strategy.

Table 5.6 Percentage of young people (20–24) in Kingston ‘at risk’ by highest level of education completed

Highest level of schooling completed	Working part-time	Unemployed %	Not in the labour force %	Total ‘at risk’
	%	%	%	%
Year 8	17	9	38	64
Year 9	11	9	24	43
Year 10	14	11	13	37
Year 11	13	9	10	32
Year 12	10	4	4	18

Not surprisingly, then, those with low levels of education make up a large percentage of all at risk young people in Kingston. Approximately 40% of 15–19 year old and 30% of 20–24 year olds ‘at risk’ in Kingston have year 10 or less as their highest level of education, and 57% and 45% of 15–19 and 20–24 year olds ‘at risk’ have less than year 12 (see table 5.7). Further over 80% of 15–19 year olds and around 60% of 20–24 year olds have no post-school qualifications (see table 5.8). Young people in the Chelsea area have markedly lower levels of education on the three measures examined. Low levels of education suggest the need for basic skills training in addition to simply linking people with entry-level job opportunities.

Table 5.7 Percentage of ‘at risk’ young people who have low levels of education

	15–19 years			20–24 years		
		%		%		%
	Clayton South area	Chelsea area	Kingston	Clayton South area	Chelsea area	Kingston
Year 10 or less	35	56	40	27	39	30
Less than year 12	56	71	57	43	57	45

Table 5.8 Percentage of ‘at risk’ young people who have no post-school qualifications

	15–19 years			20–24 years		
		%		%		%
	Clayton South area	Chelsea area	Kingston	Clayton South area	Chelsea area	Kingston
No post-school qualifications	87	87	81	57	63	62

As Table 5.9 and table 5.10 illustrate, education levels vary between different categories of ‘at risk’ young people (unemployed, working part-time, not in the labour force) and between age groups and areas.

Young people not in the labour force are more likely to have lower levels of education, and are less likely to have post-school qualifications than those who are unemployed or working part-time across the 15-19 and 20-24 year old age groups. Across Kingston, young people working part-time have higher levels of education than those that are either unemployed or not in the labour force. Young part-time workers from the Chelsea area have significantly lower levels of school education than young part-time workers in the Clayton South area and in Kingston generally. This indicates that young people in these three at risk categories require a different mix of support and assistance to move them into stable full-time employment.

Table 5.9 Percentage of ‘at risk’ young people aged 15–19 (by category) that have low levels of education

	Clayton South area				Chelsea area				Kingston			
	%				%				%			
	PT	UE	NIL	AR	PT	UE	NIL	AR	PT	UE	NIL	AR
Year10 or less	18	45	46	35	50	57	59	56	25	51	51	40
Year 11 or less	36	68	68	56	63	68	80	71	40	68	69	57
Year 12 or equivalent	52	30	10	31	37	32	14	26	57	30	21	38
No post-school qualifications	87	83	90	87	78	91	93	87	81	77	83	81

PT = working part-time; UE = unemployed (see p.21); NIL = not in the labour force; AR= total at risk

Table 5.10 Percentage of ‘at risk’ young people aged 20–24 (by category) that have low levels of education

	Clayton South area				Chelsea area				Kingston			
	%				%				%			
	PT	UE	NIL	AR	PT	UE	NIL	AR	PT	UE	NIL	AR
Year10 or less	13	25	31	23	22	32	47	32	17	27	36	25
Year 11 or less	26	44	45	38	40	54	66	51	30	45	53	40
Year 12 or equivalent	72	56	49	59	58	46	30	47	69	54	41	58
No post-school qualifications	43	58	71	57	65	65	70	63	50	69	70	58

For abbreviations refer Table 5.9

Additional characteristics

Census data used also provided information about other characteristics of ‘at risk’ young people in Kingston (see Table 5.11). The percentages of ‘at risk’ young people born outside Australia, speaking a language other than English at home and speaking English ‘not well’ or ‘not at all’ were all substantially higher in the Clayton South area than the Chelsea area or Kingston as a whole—a result matching the total population.

The Clayton South area also has a small percentage, 4%, of ‘at risk’ young people with poor spoken English skills, compared with almost none in the Chelsea area and 1% in Kingston overall. In both the Clayton South area and Kingston overall young people with poor spoken English are more concentrated too few to be concentrated in the ‘not in the labour force’, where they can be described as most disengaged and likely to have less connection with required support services and assistance.

Lone parents are a small percentage of ‘at risk’ young people: 5% in the Chelsea area, 3% in the Clayton South area and 4% in Kingston overall. Like young people with limited education or poor spoken English, lone parents are concentrated in the ‘not in the labour force’ category, although this is partly to be expected given parents’ caring responsibilities. Finally, Indigenous people made up a very small percentage of at risk young people: 1% in both the Chelsea area and Kingston overall and even smaller in the Clayton South area.

Table 5.11 Percentage of at risk young people (15–24) with selected characteristics

	Clayton South area				Chelsea area				Kingston			
	%				%				%			
	PT	UE	NIL	AR	PT	UE	NIL	AR	PT	UE	NIL	AR
Born outside Australia	44	39	49	44	8	13	23	15	16	18	27	20
Language other than English spoken at home	54	43	55	52	6	14	12	10	18	23	26	21
Speaks English 'not well' or 'not at all'	2	0	9	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1
Lone parent	2	3	5	3	3	0	11	5	2	2	8	4
Indigenous	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	1

For abbreviations refer Table 5.9

To assess the quality of part-time employment of 'at risk' young people, the percentage employed in the two lowest occupational categories (elementary clerical, sales and service workers, and labourers and related workers [see Appendix Table 8.7 for the complete list]) was compared with the percentage of all employed 15–19 and 20–24 year olds (this includes young people studying and working part-time, young people working full-time and those working part-time but not studying). As table 5.12 shows, 'at risk' young people are more likely to be working in lower level occupations. This over-representation was most marked for 15–19 year olds in the Clayton South area (with 61% of at risk part-time workers in lower level occupations), whereas among 20–24 year olds it was greatest in Chelsea area.

While this is a rough measure of job quality, it is probable that many young people employed part-time in lower level occupations have limited access to career pathways, training and skill development that are crucial for improving long-term employment and earnings outcomes.

Table 5.12 Percentage of part-time workers employed in lower level occupations

	15–19			20–24		
	%			%		
	Clayton South area	Chelsea area	Kingston	Clayton South area	Chelsea area	Kingston
'At risk young people'	43	61	56	43	34	36
All employed young people	36	41	38	26	22	20

6 Consultation findings: gaps and barriers in pathways to employment

As the statistics for Kingston show, around 2,500, or 15 per cent, of young people in the City of Kingston aged 15 to 24 years are unemployed, working part-time or not in the labour force at all, and are not studying. These young people are ‘at risk’ of long-term unemployment and poverty. At the same time, many employers report difficulties attracting applicants for both skilled and entry-level jobs.

To investigate the causes of youth unemployment, underemployment and recruitment difficulties in Kingston, consultations were undertaken with young people, service providers, educators and employers (see Chapter 1 for further details).

Factors that increase the likelihood of Kingston’s young people being at risk

Consistent with findings from ABS data, consultations with education and service providers indicated that young people in Kingston who are unemployed or underemployed frequently:

- have low skills (poor literacy, numeracy or English language skills)
- left school before completing Year 12 – sometimes as early as Year 8 or 9
- have parenting or other care responsibilities
- suffer from social isolation
- recently migrated from non-English speaking countries.

One group frequently mentioned in consultations (but not covered by the 2001 census data) were young people from Southern Sudan and Somalia who arrived in more recent refugee intakes.

At risk young people seen by services and in education programs were also reported commonly to have:

- had negative experiences of schooling, including school failure;
- lacked support at home, and in some cases experienced abusive family situations;
- come from families that have little familiarity with the Australian work environment and were unable to provide guidance
- come from families where parents have experienced long-term unemployment
- experienced financial stresses or pressure to work due to living independently or in low-income households;
- been homeless or in insecure accommodation;
- had mental health problems, particularly depression, which can be both a cause and an effect of unemployment and is often related to the above factors.

As other research has found, the likelihood of unemployment was greatly increased for young people who faced more than one of these barriers. However, consultations also showed that young people from all backgrounds could experience unemployment. Some young unemployed people in Kingston have good family supports, and young people from more affluent backgrounds could also experience a lack of parental support, homelessness and early school leaving.

Job Network staff suggested that there may be a lot of hidden youth unemployment in Kingston, with young people at home and not in the official unemployment statistics. This was supported by the ABS statistics showing that five per cent of all young people in Kingston are not looking for work or working, or studying. Young people with low levels of schooling, recent arrivals and young people with poor spoken English skills are all significantly more likely to be in this category.

Though difficult to gauge from statistics, underemployment, insecure employment and ‘churning’ (movement in and out of work) were problems for many of the young people consulted, highlighting the need for an employment strategy to extend beyond those who are unemployed or outside the labour force.

Consultations were held with young people from a range of backgrounds and circumstances, focussing particularly on young people who had experienced one or more of the factors that placed them at risk of unemployment: many were early school leavers, and most had experienced periods both of unemployment and insecure or low-skilled employment. Some had experienced homelessness, mental health problems, or poverty, and many had children.

The following sections present findings from consultations regarding the gaps and barriers in young people’s pathways to work in Kingston. These are grouped under the categories of information, skills and employment. The paper then presents suggested responses to assist young people into work and support employers to meet their skills needs.

Gaps in information, guidance and referrals

Consultations with young people revealed a very mixed range of career aspirations and perceptions of the world of work. Work to which young people aspired included factory work, child-care, retail, sales, computing, graphic design, veterinary work and law. The majority of young people consulted were interested in work requiring on-the-job training or vocational qualifications.

While many of the young people were or had been unemployed, almost all the young people consulted had had at least one job, and many were currently working; some had worked in a series of jobs. Often the work was low-skilled and casual. Retail and hospitality work was very common.

Young people’s understanding of work and training pathways was gathered from many sources, including families, friends, media, school and training organisations. Reports from family and friends were important influences on young people’s views of work in particular occupations or industries. First hand experiences, including subjects taken at school, social activities and hobbies, and their own previous experiences of work, were extremely important in either attracting or deterring them from some career options.

Regardless of their aspirations, almost all young people consulted said that a lack of information and guidance had made finding work difficult. They wanted more information and support to find out about different occupations and how to enter them.

Information and guidance available from parents

Consistent with Australian and overseas research (Perkins 2005), young people said their parents had been important in providing guidance in their career decisions. Parents also helped find work experience placements or jobs, often in their own workplaces or at the workplaces of customers and friends.

Limited understanding of training and career options

Parents sought to offer general support to their children and were able to provide valuable information about their own employment field. However, parents themselves conceded that their knowledge of other occupations and industries was limited. This was consistent with research on the Mornington Peninsula, showing that while parents wanted to assist their children, very few felt they had the knowledge of employment or labour market options to do so effectively (Perkins 2005).

My old man thinks the [engineering] job's good. He's a bus driver, and he knows the trades need people so he doesn't really care, he's just happy that I've got a job. [Engineering apprentice, TAFE]

Many parents in Kingston were also said to have a poor understanding of training pathways such as TAFE, apprenticeships and traineeships. It was widely reported that parents often push their children towards university and professional or 'office' jobs, and away from vocational training. In many instances the parents had experienced low-skilled factory jobs and wanted 'something better' for their children.

Our parents want us to be lawyers and accountants. [Young woman, Clayton South area]

The parents [in our community] coach their children not to work in the factories and to work in a better place. [Young parent, Clayton South area]

The issue was most frequently raised in relation to CALD communities, but was also noted by a teacher in the Chelsea area.

Parents sometimes placed unreasonable pressure on their children to complete school and go on to university, leading in some cases to tensions and family breakdown:

Coming from a different culture and then entering into Australia, and having to blend into another culture as well, I find that a lot of parents are very insecure and they sort of put the pressure on children: 'You've got to work hard, you've got to study hard.' I've done that to my kids, and they know the pressure, and it sort of brings a tense place into the family itself and you can get into a place where they actually break up, you know, explode or just can't be comfortable at all. [Parent, Clayton South area]

Both services and parents themselves said that the parents least able to assist their children were those who had limited experience of work in Australia. Immigrants, especially recently arrived refugees, had a poorer understanding of the labour market and employment services. Parents who had spent long periods unemployed were also less able to provide advice and guidance or to 'model' participation in work for their children. Importantly, parents from these groups also had fewer networks they could draw on to arrange work experience and employment for their children.

Other parents were said to be unable to support their children along their career paths because they were facing too many difficulties of their own—relationship problems, unemployment and poverty, drug and alcohol or mental health problems, or problems of establishing themselves in Australia after immigrating. Some parents in difficult financial situations were said to be encouraging their children to leave school to find work.

Barriers to parents' access to information

Parents wanted to be able to better support their young people in choosing careers, and recognised that they needed more information to do so. However, current methods of delivering information may not be reaching some parents, especially those from communities where unemployment is highest. For example, parents from the Clayton South area said that they tended not to read written information about employment. A parent from the Chelsea area pointed out that mail-outs through

schools would often not reach the parents of the most at risk children, as many of these young people are no longer attending school. She also emphasised that some parents do not feel comfortable attending information and training sessions at the school; this view was also put forward by educators in the Chelsea area.

Other barriers such as transport, child-care and costs made it difficult to attend seminars in neighbouring areas:

A: Some families here, they don't have transport, in Clayton South, so they depend on the train station, or buses ... It's very hard to get good access when it comes to buses or anything.

[...]

B: I mean, if I need to ask these people, 'Let's go down to there [to Dandenong or Frankston] because they're running this session there', they won't even go. It's just too far. And plus their families, the majority of families have kids, and they won't leave their kids at home. It's just the father working, and only one income earner, and it's hard ... and transportation can also be a cost issue too. [Parents and young people, Clayton South area]

This group said that it would even be difficult to travel to Clarinda from Clayton South to attend a seminar or workshop because of poor transport in the evenings and on weekends.

For newer CALD communities, language and literacy can be additional barriers, as well as unfamiliarity with the system.

Box 6.1 Good practice example: engaging communities in learning and work

A long-term community development project undertaken by the Kingston City Council in the Clayton South area yielded a variety of excellent outcomes relating to education, training and employment, as well as stimulating community members to become more involved in their local community.

Discussions between the community development worker and local parents identified that community members would be interested in undertaking training in child-care work, and that this would address their concerns about leaving their children with strangers. The community development worker arranged for the training to be delivered near the trainees' homes at a community centre where child-care arrangements could be made easily. Several participants also undertook leadership training that had also been organised by the Council.

Community members said that the project had produced multiple outcomes. In addition to gaining formal qualifications and work in child-care, they had increased their understanding of principles of early childhood learning, had learnt new ways to support their teenage children through their schooling and work, and had become aware of a whole range of services available locally and through the council. They said that participation had helped them to better support their children, particularly to place less pressure on their children:

They also reported many other positive and often unintended outcomes. Their children's participation in early childhood learning had increased dramatically, and parents anticipated that this would improve their children's success when they started school. The participants had decided to organise a local youth event to bring all local communities together and provide positive activities for young people. Community members had held a seminar to educate local residents on financial issues and services; and some members of the group were planning to undertake further, higher-level studies.

While targeted mail-outs to CALD communities by Centrelink have proved very effective in providing information about training and work (see below), it is likely that these mail-outs would not reach those parents in the Clayton South area who bypass Centrelink and the Job Network system (perhaps because they are ineligible for assistance or have found work through other means—particularly through community networks):

I think with us, we come here, and we all work in the factory, and a person that you know, they just take you there, and work there, instead of going through the services. Yeah. Like your cousin or your brother or all this, they got a job, they'll take you there, that's how it goes, through families. [Parent, Clayton South area]

Box 6.2 Good practice example: informing CALD communities about education, training and work

Centrelink staff in Oakleigh recognised that many adults from local CALD communities lacked a good understanding of the labour market and education and training pathways. To reach these communities, Centrelink provided seminars targeting particular language groups. Invitations were sent out in both English and the community languages, and interpreters were provided at the events. Seminars were held close to the areas where communities lived. Centrelink staff reported that these seminars were attended by 'hundreds' of people.

Gaps in information and guidance for young people in school

Schools are central sites for the delivery of careers information and guidance to young people. Consultations did not aim to assess the quality of careers education in each school in Kingston, but rather to highlight experiences of young people who had attended schools across the area.

Career education under-resourced

Several young people reported receiving useful information and assistance through careers education classes and from teachers. However, a problem clearly identified by consultations in Kingston is that schools have limited resources to inform and guide young people about jobs and training. Careers teachers in Victorian schools are not required to be qualified careers counsellors, and funding for careers teacher positions is limited—often the position is part-time. The resulting workload can be considerable. For example, it was reported that the careers teacher at one Kingston school was funded to work two days a week to assist around 800 students.

Careers teachers consequently have little time to develop detailed, up-to-date knowledge of numerous industries, occupations and training pathways, or to establish links with local employers and training providers. Staff also have limited time for individual career counselling and guidance to support young people to identify suitable occupations, and time available to assist in arranging work experience can be insufficient, even where young people have primary responsibility for arranging their placements.

The overwhelming majority of young people consulted felt that a lack of opportunities to learn about career options and pathways in schools had contributed to difficulties in their transitions from school to work.

Careers education delivered too late to reach early leavers

Many young people said that they or their peers had missed out on careers education and job search training because it was delivered in the senior years, after they had left school.

A: By the time I got to Year 11, I think they actually, you know you filled out a sheet of what you like, that tells you what sort of job you'd probably like, but it's a bit late, I reckon.

B: Yeah, way too late for that sort of thing ... I feel like, a lot of guys generally I've found, they drop out at Year 10 and go looking for work and stuff, and if they do that [careers education] in Year 11, then there's no point in a sense to doing it because everyone's already dropped out and left and looking for trades or this, that ... [Engineering apprentices]

Young people who wanted to stay at school also felt that job search training should be provided in Year 9, when young people started to look for casual work, rather than in Year 10 when they had already found their first jobs.

Non-university options not promoted

Young people felt that schools promoted university, while little information was provided on other work and training options:

Well [at school] they don't really talk about the trades or other options apart from going to uni. 'Cause I went to an all-private Catholic girls and everyone thought okay from here you've all got to go straight to university and be a lawyer or be a doctor or whatever. They sort of didn't really put any emphasis on other things like hairdressing or bricklaying or other things, just straight to university. [Young woman, JPET program]

They don't ask you at school what you want to be when you're older. They just, if you're not going to be you know a doctor or something like that, they're not interested in you. [Young man, engineering apprentice]

This emphasis was also noted by education and service providers, including some school staff. Young people and employers were also concerned that options other than university study or office jobs were portrayed as inferior by their schools, and that TAFE, apprenticeships and traineeships were seen as options of last resort for those who had 'failed'.

[At school] they say if you don't go to uni you won't do anything good ... [Young man, JPET program]

I get angry, because I think there's too much of a push that you're not going to be anything if you don't go to university. I found that really hard in Year 12—the pressure ... and it got me depressed, and if anything it made me rebel. [Young mother, Chelsea area]

In some cases young people felt they had also been steered away from careers they were interested in. One young woman who, several years on, was still interested in child-care said:

I spoke to my careers counsellor and I said I wanted to do child-care ... and he told me that I was stupid, and that I wouldn't enjoy it, and that it was low money and that I was pretty much silly for going and looking into that area. [Young mother, Chelsea area]

Young people—including some who had gone to university—frequently said they would have liked more information about trade apprenticeships and other vocational training opportunities.

I would have done the trade [instead of] going to uni if I knew about it in school. I would've just gone straight into the trade [instead of starting an Engineering degree at university]. [Engineering apprentice, TAFE]

Lack of meaningful information about jobs

Young people wanted more opportunities to develop a real sense of what a job would be like.

I think you get the information but you really don't know what it's like to be there, what it feels like. [Young mother, Chelsea area]

They said that they wanted to see videos, and to hear talks or speak to people about work. Work experience provided an important opportunity to find out about different jobs and also to rule out occupations they were not suited to. Young people often said that they would have liked to do more work experience:

There should be more opportunities that when you're in school to actually look into fields of work that you would like to do ... like one day a week and getting your foot in the door and seeing what it's really like, because you're expected to go straight from school and know what you want to do, and about 80% of people really do not know what they want to do. [Young mothers' group]

Some said that work experience was needed in Years 8 and 9 as well as Year 10; others said that it was also needed up to and including Year 12. Again, young people emphasised the need to reach those who would leave school early:

They should actually move job placement or whatever to Year 9, 'cause most people leave in Year 9 so they don't get to get a chance to experience it till Year 10.

However, young people also said that they needed guidance to identify and organise work experience that would be of value to them. Several young people had undertaken work experience placements, not because they were genuinely interested in the work, but because they were able to arrange them easily through family contacts or through large employers in the retail industry.

[W]hen you do work experience you need people who'll give you help to choose something, because I just, I couldn't find something in time that I liked so I worked in a nursery and they made me paint shelves for a week, instead of working in the garden. [...] And I painted shelves. So I don't want to paint shelves for the rest of my life. [Young woman, VCAL group]

Young people wanted and appreciated practical activities:

A: The Job Seeking Skills class we did helps heaps...

A: We had practice interviews. We watched ourselves being interviewed.

B: That was weird. It was good.

A: We got told what to do if you get bullied. [VCAL group]

Limited careers counselling services

Young people reported that they needed more one-on-one guidance and support, to identify employment options they might not have considered and to assess which types of work would suit their interests and capacities, and to plan their pathways to get there. Instead, they reported that the emphasis of careers education was primarily on subject selection to enable further study.

Gaps in information, guidance and referrals for young people out of school

Many young people out of school in Kingston said that they had experienced difficulties getting information and support to take the next step into work or training:

These girls have been trying for ages to get information and they haven't been able to, about courses, and about what they should be doing now and how to get their foot in the door. [Young mothers' group, Chelsea area, aged 24]

Consultations identified several gaps in the provision of careers information, guidance and job search support for young people who have left school.

Limited services through Job Network

The Job Network is one of the primary services in Kingston funded to help young people to find work. However, the funding model provides limited resources to Job Network agencies to assist young people. From 2005, young people who register with the Job Network receive job search training immediately (previously young people were only eligible for training after 12 months). They are also able to use the agency's computers and fax machines to search for work and apply for jobs, and can ask for information about vacancies listed through the Job Network system. However, unless young people are judged to be highly disadvantaged, they have to wait until they have been continuously unemployed for 12 months to become eligible for 'Intensive Support' where they receive services such as developing a job search plan, and financial support for things such as travel to appointments, work clothes and training courses. There are also limited resources available to Job Network agencies for counselling and support for personal issues. Moreover, the funding regime for the Job Network encourages services to move people quickly into work rather than developing career plans and training pathways. These limitations were all seen as a serious problem by current and former Job Network staff and by providers of youth services.

Comments by many young people, parents and service providers reflected on the limited service they had received from some of the Job Network agencies. Many said that the service had provided them with no help, or that it had referred them to jobs that did not suit their interests, skills or even their ability to get to the place of work.

They say, 'Oh you have to come back later', or 'We'll give you a call later', and they don't just call at all. [Young man, JPET program]

Other young people had succeeded in getting assistance after changing agencies, while others received useful assistance once they were long-term unemployed.

Box 6.3 Good practice example: personalised comprehensive support to develop pathways into employment

Young people who have left school need careers information and guidance; some also need information about services and support for other personal issues. In Kingston, one service that provides this personal approach and holistic support for young people with higher support needs is the federally funded Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET) program. JPET works primarily with young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, but also with young people in or exiting the juvenile justice system, refugees, young people in care and state wards.

JPET provides careers counselling, job search training and support, together with support for personal barriers. In Kingston, the JPET service is delivered in Moorabbin and Oakleigh through Taskforce, and another JPET targeting young people from CALD backgrounds, especially refugees, has been run through the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) in Dandenong, and is accessible for young people in the Clayton South area.

JPET clients emphasised the value of the personalised support, careers counselling and intensive assistance they had received, and felt it helped them to link into other services:

A: If you want to go apply for a particular job, they've got ways to help you apply for it. Such as helping maybe with money, or...training.

[...]

B: And they actually sort of care about you personally, not just about having another client. My worker here says 'Hey, how are you going, good y'know, what have you been doing?' They genuinely care and they're interested to see how you're going whereas [...] you're just a number to [the Job Network agencies]. Here it's pretty easy to be able to find what you need 'cause there's always someone who'll be able to tell you where to go. [Young woman, JPET program]

Young people also said that they had been unable to get job search training through the Job Network. Recent changes enabling young people to access immediate job search training through the Job Network may have rectified this problem. However, many young people who are not engaged with the Job Network or are ineligible because they already have some work also need job search training.

By contrast, young people's very positive comments about the JPET service (see above) indicate the benefits of funding that enables services to provide a more holistic service offering, as required, information, careers counselling, pathway planning, and support for personal issues.

Job search training and pathway planning are funded as important elements of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning VCAL (alternative Year 11 and 12 program) and the Longbeach Place programs for young early school leavers. Some job search training and support was reported to be available through other youth services.

Limited employment services for CALD communities

Several service providers felt that there was a significant gap in services for young people from CALD backgrounds. Parents and young people in the Clayton South area said that there were no local Job Network services, or 'if there are, we don't know about them'. The JPET service delivered through CMYI in Dandenong is the only service in the Kingston area specifically catering for CALD young people. The client group is made up largely of young people from Southern Sudan and Afghanistan. It has been reported, however, that CMYI will not be offering this service in 2006. The Multicultural Resource Centre (MRC) in Dandenong reported that it is no longer funded to provide job search assistance to young people from CALD backgrounds, while Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) in Dandenong caters primarily to older people from CALD backgrounds.

Possibly as a result of the lack of employment support services for young people—and perhaps because young people feel more comfortable with youth services—some youth services for young people from CALD backgrounds are also being asked for careers assistance. The Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council (SEAAC), for example, reported that around 70 per cent of young people who approach their service request assistance in job seeking, even for casual and low-skilled jobs. However, these organisations' capacity to help is limited, both by resources and by staff skills and understanding of the complex employment and training systems. SEAAC is not funded to provide careers and job search support for young people, but it had previously offered some support through a staff member with prior experience in this field, and had also referred young people to MRC. This staff member has since left, and, as noted, state government funding previously provided to MRC to support young people has been removed.

Inadequate referrals and links

A significant problem identified in Kingston is that services, supports and programs exist, but young people and their families are sometimes not aware of them. For example, anecdotal reports from several Job Network staff suggest that the service may be underutilised by young people; several providers reported that they have few young people on their books.

Referring young people to services and programs that can help them—especially as they are leaving school—is an essential preventive measure against young people becoming long-term unemployed. Young people and service providers indicated that those who leave school, or are considering leaving school, are not always referred to appropriate programs of support or education and training options:

School had info nights. They didn't explain it [leaving school] well. No one at school knew what to do after school. [Young woman, VCAL program]

It appeared that the key reason that referrals are not occurring is that schools and service providers may be unaware of the range of services and education and training options available in Kingston. This is partly because the system of employment support, education and training is fragmented, complicated and confusing, with eligibility criteria and programs constantly changing, and staff find it difficult to keep up-to-date relevant information to advise and refer young people. As one provider of youth services for refugees said,

'I'm lost when it comes to any of those employment services... If I'm confused, how is a young person supposed to get help?' [Refugee youth services provider, Clayton South area]

At the same time, however, there are insufficient links and referral mechanisms between organisations to reduce this fragmentation and ensure that young people are informed about where to get help. For example, all three Job Network providers consulted said they did not have strong links with local schools. Instead, Job Network receives most of its referrals through Centrelink. This is problematic, however, as consultations indicate that many young people in Kingston do not register with Centrelink, and so are unlikely to be referred to the Job Network services.

Staff at several organisations recognised this as a problem and said that they would like to better understand the employment support system and improved their links with employers and employment services. The two JPET providers said that they would like better contacts with employers to be able to provide work experience and employment opportunities for their clients. The JPET provider in Dandenong expressed interest in strengthening links and developing partnerships with local schools, possibly through the Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) program.

Passive information provision

The second reason for information gaps was the way that information was delivered. It was clear from our consultations that passive provision of information—that is, providing information on demand—is not enough to reach many young people, and is especially inappropriate for those who need it most. This is because young people may not have the confidence to ask for help, or don't know that it is available. Low self-esteem and confidence were said to be a serious problem for many young people in the Chelsea area who had left school early, often worsening during periods of unemployment, and a youth services worker said of young unemployed refugees, 'These young people are so afraid, of everything'.

Young people agreed and said they needed more proactive approaches to engage them and encourage them to use services or access programs. This applied to schools:

They just signed my release form and let me go. I would've liked a bit of help ... They need to stay in contact with you after you leave, ask how you're going, if you need help. [Young woman, VCAL group]

There was also a need for such approaches for young people out of school, including one-on-one advice and encouragement:

You almost need an adult careers counsellor, if that makes sense. [Two others agree] It's even if like, you might be the sort of personality that doesn't have the confidence to just walk into a TAFE and pick up books off the shelves and go up to someone and say, 'Yeah this is what I want to do, now show me the courses.' You know, like you may not actually have the confidence to make those steps, you may need someone—like I'm not that personality but I know people who are, and it'd be hard for them and daunting to just walk in there and say, 'Where do I start?' sort of thing. [Young mothers' group]

Where this sort of support was available, it had led to many young people pursuing further studies. Parents and young people in Clayton South were taking the next step in their studies as a result of

the advice and encouragement provided by the Kingston City Council's community development worker:

A: Amara's told us, she keeps us informed of what stuff is available, like what ...

B: When we go to next year, the diploma and all that, she already informed us about that. And also encourage us to go through, to take it. You know, to push us to go forward. [Young people and parents, Clayton South area]

Members of this group also said that they had benefited from participating in a leadership training program organised by the Council.

Young mothers were very critical of the fact that Centrelink staff often did not proactively offer information that clients might find helpful:

You have to know to a degree what you're ringing up about. ...My experience has been that people don't like Centrelink and that they don't tell me extra information, they only tell you what you need to hear, instead of saying 'There's a whole range of things around this.' You know. And instead I have to talk to friends, who say, 'Oh did you know they have this' and then I go, 'Oh okay,' and I'll ring them back an hour later and say, 'Why didn't you tell me about this? Can I get this?' [Young mother, Chelsea area]

Similarly, they said that they had been unaware of financial support available through the Victorian Government's 'Parents returning to work' scheme until other mothers had told them about it. As most of these young women were receiving support from Centrelink, this information should not have been difficult to distribute.

Some young mothers were able to rely on peer networks that had emerged through a training program initiated by the local health centre:

I found out a lot of my information from [another woman in the group], and if I didn't have her holding my hand, I wouldn't know as much as I do. [Young mother, Chelsea area]

Staff at one refugee service noted that some single mothers in CALD communities are socially isolated even from their own ethnic groups, making it also unlikely that they could access information via social networks.

Other barriers: child-care

The cost or availability of child-care was noted on several occasions as a barrier to young women's participation in information seminars, training programs and work. In addition, particular concerns among some groups in Kingston about using child-care, as well as lack of knowledge of the services available were said to inhibit use of available child-care services.

Information about careers in skills shortage areas: engineering case study

A number of industries in Kingston have difficulties recruiting people for entry-level positions and higher-level skilled positions. To examine some of the issues leading to recruitment difficulties in Kingston, consultations and surveys sought to identify what might prevent young people from working in the engineering trades in the manufacturing industry, which is the largest employer in Kingston and experiences considerable skills and labour shortages.

Engineering trades include fitting and turning, welding, sheetmetal work and toolmaking. Qualifications are gained through an apprenticeship of three to four years involving work and training (usually delivered through a TAFE or in the workplace). It should be noted that work in the engineering trades is a very different and far more 'hands on' job distinct from engineering requiring a university degree.

The gaps and barriers identified in the pathways into engineering exemplified many of the more general problems identified in Kingston.

Lack of information

Work in engineering (as in a number of other skills shortage areas) was often poorly understood by young people, parents, and teachers. Many of the engineering apprentices consulted had had a poor understanding of the work before they undertook practical training or work experience, and many had stumbled onto their apprenticeship almost by chance:

I had no knowledge of it until I sort of actually got into it, and now I realise you can do all this different stuff, within the trade. [Engineering apprentice]

Very few of the engineering apprentices said that they had received information about engineering from their schools. Many had left school before they had the opportunity to undertake careers education and work experience or significant vocational education and training subjects, but in any case most of their schools had not offered 'Metals' as a subject. It also appeared that there had been a lack of careers resources available for teachers on engineering trades.

Several of the apprentices had parents or friends working in the trade, and these people had been key sources of information about the work. Other parents were unable to provide information to their children about the trade.

The engineering apprentices said that the type of information that would have stimulated their interest in the trade was highly specific: they would have wanted to know about the nature of the tasks involved, pay rates, security of employment, and the future career possibilities. Apprentices said that, rather than written information, the types of information that other young people needed were opportunities to see for themselves what might be involved in the work, through work experience, open days and videos:

I mean the amount of videos you're watching on business classes and stuff, that are just pathetic, [they should] do the exact same thing, [show you] how model cuts are made or something like that, I wouldn't have had any clue how that was done until the start of this year. [Engineering group]

Many of the apprentices had experienced unemployment or a succession of low-skilled casual jobs, some over a number of years. Several said that if they had received more information about the trade earlier, they would not have had such difficulties in finally finding stable work. Another young apprentice who had tried an engineering degree said that he would have gone directly into the trade training, if he had understood the industry better.

Engineering apprentices also said that they would not have sought out information about engineering for themselves—particularly as they often did not know the trade existed—but would have benefited from proactive efforts to introduce it to them.

Lack of resources and coordination to promote engineering opportunities

Investigations into the reasons why young people did not know about engineering pointed primarily to the lack of a strategic, coordinated and adequately resourced effort to promote specific occupations and skills shortage areas. As noted, schools have limited resources to promote careers in specific industries. At the same time, there is currently no local body in Kingston, or south-eastern Melbourne, with either the responsibility or the necessary resources for this task.

Existing efforts to promote engineering in Kingston are small in scale, under-funded and overly dependent on the initiative of concerned individuals or organisations. For example Youth Connect manages an engineering program that offers Year 10 students the opportunity to undertake Certificate I in Engineering, followed by the school-based new apprenticeship (SBNA) in Year 11.

This program provides a very good model for exposing young people to opportunities in engineering trades, but it is still small and there is a need for similar programs tailored for other industries. Individual staff in TAFEs and group training companies are involved in the promotion of some training opportunities, but these organisations have limited resources for industry promotion which is not their core business. For example, a teacher in Engineering at one local TAFE regularly delivers talks to schools about the benefits of a career in engineering in his own time because, though resources are insufficient to pay him, he wishes to support the industry. Given the size of the manufacturing industry in Kingston, and given that engineering is one of the most serious skills shortage areas in Kingston, it is highly problematic that promotion depends on voluntary initiatives.

The Melbourne Development Board Area Consultative Committee, a federal body that supports economic development to increase employment, currently oversees a project to promote work in manufacturing in the south-east of Melbourne, but this is limited to mature-aged job seekers.

Gaps in skills training and support

Once a young person has identified possible jobs or careers that interest them, a lack of skills and experience present another significant barrier to getting and keeping a job. Consultations with young people and service providers indicated that many young people lack a range of competencies including generic or 'soft' skills as well as vocational skills

Work ready skills

Perhaps the most significant barrier to young people's employment was a lack of 'work ready' or 'soft' skills. While only around a fifth of employers surveyed said that lack of experience or lack of qualifications was the reason that young people were not suitable, 60 per cent identified 'lack of the right attitude'. For example, asked what would encourage the employment of more young people, one employer said:

[A] strong work ethic, punctuality, reliability, willingness to learn and ability to remember tasks regularly, pride in work.

'Attitude' is often synonymous with 'work ready skills', which encompass such generic skills as being punctual, knowing to call in when sick, being able to communicate with staff and customers, and taking initiative in addressing problems. Providers of services to unemployed young people (including Job Network staff) also said that young people sometimes resisted work because they lacked confidence, or did not understand the possibilities for progression beyond entry-level work.

Other young people are not 'work ready' because they are experiencing personal issues such as mental health problems, drug and alcohol dependence issues, or insecure housing. Others are too young; and others have parenting or other caring responsibilities:

Some people can go all the way through school to Year 12 and then go into uni and that's fine. There's other people that go through a part in their life where they're not interested in learning because too many other things are happening ... [Young mother, Chelsea area]

A lack of work ready skills was said to be a particular problem for new arrivals who lacked an understanding of the Australian culture and work environment, and for young people whose parents were themselves unemployed. Some service providers suggested that young refugees' poor understanding of Australian employers' expectations results in poor performance and frequent job loss. Most of the young people who were out of school reported having had a number of low-skilled jobs.

Basic skills – literacy, numeracy and English language skills

ABS data indicated that 16 per cent of males aged 20–24 years in Kingston, and 9 per cent of females, had completed Year 10 or less. Many young people in this group would have low basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and English language. Young people with low basic skills have a very high risk of unemployment, underemployment, and long-term poverty. Fifteen per cent of employers said that poor literacy or numeracy was a reason for the unsuitability of young applicants, and education providers said that low basic skills affected many young people's ability to undertake education and training.

The myriad of issues underlying low basic skills in literacy, numeracy and English language are largely beyond the scope of this project, but the key themes raised during consultations will be noted below.

Vocational skills

As discussed earlier, 17 per cent of employers surveyed said that young people's lack of technical skills was one of the main reasons that young people were unsuitable for the positions they had available; 22 per cent cited a lack of experience. Young people knew that a lack of experience was a serious barrier, even in getting low-skilled work such as waiting or sales.

Gaps in skills training for young people in school

Consultations indicated that there are not enough programs in Years 8, 9 and 10 in Kingston's schools to provide young people who are not academically inclined with education that seems relevant to them and that can help them to get the skills they need to get work.

Insufficient supports to retain young people in school

Young people, parents and service providers said more support is needed for young people who are having difficulties at school. A young man who had attended school on the Mornington Peninsula said:

I was just put in the bad class, 22 male students in the one class that they couldn't handle and they just threw 'em in the one class and ... they just sort of gave up, gave up on anyone that couldn't learn or had learning disabilities or anything... [Engineering apprentice]

Several service providers felt that schools could do more to offer subjects and programs that were better suited to the learning styles and interests of young people who were not academically inclined or were struggling at school. For example, young engineering apprentices who had not done well in mathematics at school said that they had learnt far more effectively once it was applied to real problems in their TAFE studies. Echoing the recommendations of numerous studies, they suggested that schools embed basic skills teaching in practical activities:

I reckon as well they should introduce, with their maths and that, [examples of] where it can be used in industry. Like, with maths, when you're working in the maths at the school, all it is is a whole lot of numbers; when you start working you can actually see where those numbers will work, are used. So they should introduce that in high school ... It makes you understand it more for some people. [Engineering apprentice]

Almost all young people consulted said that their schools especially needed more practical and 'hands on' programs that would be more relevant to them:

I find at school they sort of teach you stuff that you don't need. Stuff like algebra. If you're not going to be a mathematician, then who's going to want to, you know, study algebra? Personally I would've rather gone and done like a business course instead of an algebra class, you know what I mean? Like, they need to incorporate more sort of life skills, that are more useful. [Young woman, JPET program]

Young people also said that they needed more support for and recognition of the personal issues that they were facing, often related to problems with their families:

I moved out of home when I was in Year 9, and as you can imagine, things were up and down, up and down, and, the teachers ...sort of didn't really care about anything else other than the fact that I was needing to pass Year 9. ... They really needed to have more support, and they needed to understand that kids are going through a rough stage, so like, even with other things like puberty and family problems and all that sort of thing. [Young woman, JPET program]

Though schools in Kingston have various programs in place to support students with personal issues, school staff consulted felt they lacked adequate resources. Tightening of eligibility requirements for assistance through the Jobs Pathways Program (JPP) program could create a further gap in the support schools can offer to young people. JPP, delivered in the Kingston area by Youth Connect, supports young people at risk of early school leaving. It provides personalised support, guidance, job search assistance and referrals to young people to either remain in school, find employment, or move into other education and training programs.

VET at school provided too late

Vocational education and training (VET) provides training related to a specific occupation and often incorporates significant work experience.

Many of the more comprehensive VET subjects that are delivered in schools in Kingston are offered in Years 11 and 12, but one in six Kingston young people aged 20 to 24 have left school prior to Year 11. These are the young people who would most benefit from vocational training in schools. Engineering students who had left school early said that they would have valued the opportunity to undertake VET studies at school, and that this would have helped them to stay on:

Maybe they should start doing it earlier in the year, like start in Year 8 or something like that. I got to Year 10, and I was just frustrated, 'cause all I was doing was just maths and English, and cooking and drama, and that was it—there was nothing, no woodwork, no metalwork, nothing interesting ... just stupid pointless classes. [Engineering apprentice]

I think the options should be there for students to take up a trade, say for instance in Year 9 and Year 10. [Engineering apprentice]

For those young people who do stay on into the senior years of school, undertaking VET in Years 9 and 10 can help them to develop or identify interests prior to choosing their subjects for the senior years or undertaking work experience in Year 10. While some vocational education and training programs are offered in these earlier years, engineering apprentices said that more substantial programs are needed for young people to really understand and develop an interest in a vocation:

Get the schools actually showing them what [engineering] is, instead of them having it being an elective of one term, have it as an actual full subject. [Engineering apprentice]

Limited range of VET subjects

A number of education and training providers were concerned that the range of VET options in many schools in Kingston is limited. Though Patterson River Secondary College was reported to have a very wide range of VET options, and the increased provision of VCAL through Holmesglen TAFE is likely to increase the number of VET subjects available, there was concern that many students at other Kingston schools will still not have access to a sufficiently broad range of VET options.

Due to the costs and difficulties of delivering VET programs, schools in Kingston, as elsewhere, are more likely to offer subjects that can be delivered in classrooms by existing teachers, such as Information Technology and Business. As a result the subjects available in schools do not

necessarily reflect local industry needs, nor do they necessarily provide pathways into work for young people.

Cost barriers to taking VET at school

Several education providers said that the costs of VET in schools is the primary barrier to increased participation in VET for young people.

Because of the way that VET in schools is funded, the cost to parents for one VET subject can be as high as \$1,500 per year. While some schools may refund part of this amount, parents can still be required to pay as much as \$900 for one subject, on top of other school fees and materials.

For a family where no-one works, or where there is only one low income, such high fees are a serious disincentive. Yet these are the families whose children are at greatest risk of early leaving, low academic achievement and unemployment. The result, as one education provider put it, is that:

The kids who need it the most are least able to afford it.

The costs are highest for VET subjects such as trades which require expensive and specialised equipment, facilities and tools. When student numbers are small, programs costs become even greater per student. This further contributes to the limited range of subjects available in schools. One school reported that as a result of low demand they would cut the number of VET programs offered in 2006. While VET clusters can reduce costs by increasing the numbers of students per subject, there is currently no VET Cluster operating in the Kingston area; transport between schools was said to be one obstacle.

Limited vocational pathway programs for young women

A staff member at Youth Connect commented that there is no vocational training pathway program with widespread appeal to young women in Year 10 that resembles the engineering program managed through Youth Connect which attracts predominantly young men. Youth Connect have sought to develop a program that will have broader appeal to young women based around three vocational training areas, but currently they are uncertain whether they will be able to offer the program.

Inadequate supports for young refugees

Young refugees often face very great barriers to succeeding in education and work. On arrival in Australia, some may have had only two or three years' schooling due to disruptions to education in their home country and transit countries. Under the DIMIA funding system, they are eligible for six months of English language and basic skills training, sometimes extended to 12 months. The young people are then placed in mainstream schools based on their biological age, rather than their educational achievement. This can mean, for example, that a young person with three or four years' education and still limited English language skills, is placed in a Year 10 class with other students who have 10 or 11 years of formal education. The current system of education for refugees is, as one provider of services to refugees put it, 'setting young people up to fail', and is manifestly inadequate to equip young refugees to successfully compete in the Australian workforce.

Gaps in skills training for young people out of school

Insufficient bridging programs for young people with low skills

One of the most significant gaps identified in Kingston was the lack of bridging programs: short, engaging programs aimed at young people who have left school and are not yet ready to move directly into work or more demanding education and training programs, especially those who have low skills, and may also have higher personal support needs or be very young,

Young refugees and very young people were specifically noted as missing out. There was real concern within CALD communities and among service providers that unemployed young refugees are becoming alienated and disengaged from their communities because they are not linked into positive social activities, and do not have access to the programs they need to support them to move into work, education or training. This concern was also raised in relation to young people in the Chelsea area, where many young people 'hang out' at train stations in the area.

Interviewees said that there was a lack of programs in Kingston that could engage young people in practical activities through which they could gain vocational skills, basic skills, work-ready skills and job search skills. Though suitable programs are available in Dandenong and on the Peninsula, both travel times and accessibility via public transport impede young people's access. The loss of organisations like Best in Kingston and the closure of the Visy Cares Centre in Springvale were reported by some providers to have contributed to this problem. One education provider said that there is also no longer a local provider of the federally funded New Apprenticeship Access Program aimed at disadvantaged unemployed people.

Claims that there is unmet demand for short, well-supported programs incorporating vocational training for people with low skills were supported by reports from a provider of the Community Jobs Program (a pre-vocational program for all age groups) that they had received (from both young people and adults) 70 applications for one administrative position; and 40 applicants for 13 child-care positions.

Although short pre-vocational programs do operate in the Kingston area, they do not necessarily cater to young people with very low skills or high support needs, who are most at risk. Pre-vocational programs also do not necessarily offer sufficient literacy, numeracy and language support to enable participation by young people with low skills. Popular courses, such as pre-apprenticeship programs for some trades, sometimes use screening methods that exclude young people who are not job-ready.

With regard to pre-apprenticeship programs in engineering, the picture was mixed. Staff at one TAFE reported that they had developed and run a successful pre-apprenticeship program, using DET funding. However, although the program had moved a high number of young people into apprenticeships, funding was discontinued. Nevertheless, the numbers of apprentices at this TAFE have slowly increased over the past three years. Staff at another TAFE, however, said that they were struggling to attract enough applicants, possibly indicating a lack of information about their program and the subsequent career opportunities.

Service providers also felt that programs were needed that could engage and support young people who are working in insecure work and disengaged from their communities, and young mothers who were socially isolated.

Shortage of alternative general education programs

There may be a level of unmet need for places in general education programs (leading to a Year 10 or 11 equivalent qualification) for young people who have left school. For example, the 2006 VCAL program at Holmesglen TAFE had already been filled by October 2005. Education providers also said that there is a need for more part-time general education programs in the area for young people who are unable to undertake full-time study.

Neighbourhood Houses are ideal settings for such programs, but in Kingston not all cater to young people; some continue to focus primarily on older people. Though the local TAFE offers a range of programs at various levels, a number of service providers said that there were no appropriate programs for their higher-need clients. These reports require further investigation.

Insufficient basic skills support offered in vocational training

Currently some young people are excluded from vocational training and work because of literacy and numeracy, and English language requirements. Some employers reject applicants for apprenticeships because their level of education is too low, while some training organisations (including TAFE) and group training companies screen these young people out from training opportunities through testing, particularly where demand for training places is great. The JPET provider in Dandenong, which serves young refugees, said that a number of young women interested in nursing were prevented by the numeracy and science requirements of the course.

However, interviewees pointed out that low skills need not be a barrier to participation if adequate support is incorporated into the program.

Costs of vocational and prevocational training

Cost barriers, even in skills shortage areas, may be preventing some young unemployed people from undertaking training. JPET staff reported that many young refugee women were interested in going into nursing, child-care or aged care. However, the cost of initial training in personal care was said to be a barrier, deterring some and leading others to take out personal loans to cover fees. The problem of cost was also raised by young people and parents in relation to training for Child-care Certificates.

Young people whose course fees were paid by Job Network because they qualified for Intensive Support said that they would not have been able to study otherwise.

Well, the course that the employment place paid for, if I had to pay for it, for a one week course, it was like 500 dollars and I wouldn't have been able to pay for that. [Young woman, JPET program]

Prevocational programs and short courses may also cost more than unemployed young people can afford.

Other barriers: transport, child-care and flexibility of courses

Poor public transport limited young people's options for work and learning and involvement in community activities and recreation. This was specifically mentioned in relation to:

- access to evening work (for example in the hospitality sector)
- access to factories in Braeside
- travel between Clayton South and Clarinda
- isolation of Clayton South and Clarinda from the rest of Kingston.

Services in the evenings and at weekends were said to be particularly poor:

'Catching public transport is really hard, especially if you work on a Sunday.' [VCAL]

'A lot of the positions that I've gone for, say for example, again in the like marketing sort of area, they want you to be at least 18 or 19. I went for this one, this job in Collingwood, but you were travelling sort of here and there to all the different shopping centres and stuff and they wanted you to at least have a car, or again be a bit older.' [Young woman, JPET program]

Other factors such as child-care responsibilities and course hours compounded these difficulties in accessing training:

TAFE [courses] aren't available at the hours you want to do if you want to do part-time, or you pay by semesters if you want to do full-time. It's very unlikely that [people from our community] want to do full-time because they want to work. So, it might be even doing

correspondence work, like study from home. It costs thousands doing a course like that. But it makes it difficult wanting to do it because you have to go to work and you can't go to school because you have to look after your kids, and go to work, so then ... During the day is the only time that you can, with your kids at school, then you can go to work, and then come home and eat and do a night course, but then again transport—difficulties with transport are remarkable. [Young parent, Clayton South area]

Barriers to employing young people

Employer survey responses and consultations in the City of Kingston pointed to a variety of factors that impeded employers' ability to hire, train and retain more young people. All quotes below are taken from the open-ended responses in the employer survey.

Difficulties attracting young applicants

Many employers said that they wanted to and sought to employ young people but (as outlined in Chapter 3) experienced difficulties attracting young applicants:

We would love to employ more younger people to fill vacancies... [and would employ more if we received] applications from interested young people.

Employers identified a number of factors contributing to the problem of a lack of applicants.

Confirming findings from consultations with young people, employers felt that a lack of knowledge about their industry and the emphasis on university contributed to a lack of interest, misconceptions and negative images of some occupations and industries:

Make apprenticeships/traineeships more attractive, stop pushing youth towards uni education. Our bottom labourers earn more than a qualified engineer.

To address this problem they suggested such strategies as 'educating youth about technical trades' or 'local school support and awareness of industry'. While young people agreed that a lack of knowledge prevented them pursuing some careers, several also indicated that their own or peers' unsatisfactory workplace experiences had led them to reject some job options. This suggests that initial impressions and effective communication are important in encouraging young people to pursue careers.

In other cases, employers recognised that recruitment difficulties were due to some degree to unappealing working conditions, remuneration, working hours, or a lack of future opportunities:

We look for young people, however our work is unskilled and offers little career advancement

Some employers recognised that apprenticeship wages were not attractive to many young people. In other cases the structure of the work was not attractive or not suitable for those young people who wanted to work in the industry. Employers in the child-care industry, for example, reported difficulties in retaining staff due to the split shifts involved in the work, as illustrated in a survey response from an employer in the child-care industry:

Have 70 staff across three centres, 40 of these are under 25 [years old]. Hard because is maternity age, we train them and they come back wanting only part-time or school hours.

At the same time, young women with young children reported difficulty in finding work that was part-time and provided set hours.

Some employers recognised that the social environment was not attractive to younger people:

Majority of staff have been there for over 20 years, older environment discourages young people from wanting to work there.

Employers had also recognised that recruitment methods could contribute to difficulties in attracting applicants. Some indicated that changing recruitment methods had been effective; many others said that they had developed internal training pathways for existing low-skilled staff, rather than continuing to seek already skilled new staff to address skills needs. The use of labour hire and recruitment agencies was also common.

Employers also recognised that poor public transport could be an impediment to attracting young people. This view was confirmed by young people's reports that they preferred to work close to where they lived, especially when they did not have their own car:

I got eight phone calls back in about three weeks and I just took the closest one. It's only a suburb distance so I was just like ... yeah, I'm not going to travel to McKinnon when I can travel one suburb. [Young man, engineering apprentice]

Young people lacking basic skills or appropriate attitude

As discussed in the previous two sections, young people's lack of appropriate skills, interests and work-readiness were serious impediments to employers' ability or willingness to take on more young employees. For example, one employer said that they would be encouraged to employ more young people if they had 'higher written and verbal skills – spelling and grammar.'

As detailed in Chapter 3, employers frequently reported problems with young applicants' and employees' work readiness and attitude, as illustrated by this employer's who said that they would be encouraged to employ more young people if they could:

Find[...] people with a good attitude and willing to learn, reliable and not on the mobile every five minutes

A number of employers indicated in surveys that they were reluctant to hire young people because of previous negative experiences with young employees. Employers reported that deterrents to employing more young people included young people's

unrealistic expectations of wage rates, e.g. wanting \$600 a week without experience and at the same time abusing leave conditions and being unpunctual.

Others felt that problems were not specific to young people, as indicated by this response to the question of what could encourage them to employ more young people:

Nothing – young people can be brilliant or dreadful, just like middle-aged people – age is irrelevant.

Costs of training

The cost of training a young person was a concern for a significant number of employers. These included the costs of apprenticeship wages, Workcover, payroll taxes and the unproductive time of new employees during training, as indicated in this employer's suggestions of what might support them to take on more young people:

Payroll tax relief for apprentices, Workcover, government rebates – move in line with actual costs to send students to school.

Another cost disincentive to employing young people was the higher cost of insuring younger drivers.

Employers were also reluctant to invest in training a young person who might then leave, saying that they would be encouraged to take on more young people by:

being convinced the time put in will be returned by long term employment.

knowing that the effort in training young employees will be rewarded with long term employment.

On the other hand, another employer noted that 'hiring apprentices through [a group training company] works as if we run out of work we can send them back'.

A number of employers said that they could not take on additional young employees unless there were 'huge business growth'; 'more work – will hire apprentices'.

Lack of capacity to train

Employers identified the lack of supervisory capacity or capacity to pay additional staff as a further barrier to employing and training more young people. This was particularly a problem where workloads and business income fluctuated, and in industries where international competition was reducing profitability:

Do not employ apprentices as do not have supervisors available to train them, future in offset printing is not encouraging for young people.

Unpredictable work environment and work load, inflexible apprenticeship schemes.

Commitment on the business is too large, unpredictable work levels

Foreign imports have impacted the industry.

Lack of mechanisms to support local industry progression planning

Employers recognised that a decline in training and skills shortages presented real problems for continued growth and competitiveness in their industries. Some reported scaling back the size of their operations as a response to recruitment difficulties. Some employers felt that there was a need for increased training efforts by employers themselves:

Companies need to change thinking and look at training employees rather than limiting applicants by their experience.

To support employers to address industry-wide skills shortages in the longer-term, many employers suggested that strategic efforts and support from government were required:

Teach kids at school about manufacturing as not all can be IT people, get government to help the industry.

7 Suggested responses

Overview

The responses offered in this chapter are designed to benefit all young people, whatever their aspirations and capacities: to equip them to identify a career that suits their individual interests and capacities, and provide them with the skills they need to enter and undertake the work successfully. Young people who anticipate going to university, as well as those who choose to leave school early, will benefit, for example, from greater opportunities to receive careers counselling and explore different career options through work experience and vocational education and training. Young people who want to get a casual job while they are at school, as well as those who are forced to search for work to support themselves, will benefit from earlier training in how to search for work. Young people already working but are simply ‘drifting’ in unskilled, casual work, will benefit from being able to access affordable and flexible training leading to a skilled, stable job.

At the same time, bearing in mind that resources are limited, there is also need to ensure that initiatives achieve the greatest possible benefit to young people and employers. To add the greatest value and have the greatest possible impact on unemployment, initiatives must avoid duplicating services and instead focus efforts most sharply on gaps in supports for young people most at risk of unemployment, who are currently less well catered for. Strategies should therefore aim to provide assistance to young people who are at risk of leaving school early, or who are unemployed, not in the labour force or working part-time. In Kingston there is a need to especially aim to reach those who face the highest risk of unemployment: young people from communities in Kingston that have high proportions of at risk young people (specifically in the Chelsea and Hihett areas, and especially areas of public housing); young people from refugee backgrounds; young people with low levels of education or basic skills; and young people with children. Young people who face more than one of these barriers will be in particular need of support to access employment. If an initiative can reach and benefit these young people, it will also benefit other young people who need less intensive supports.

Likewise, when deciding where to focus efforts to promote industries and support employers, resources should in the first instance be targeted to industries that are facing recruitment difficulties and skills shortages, most especially where these industries are currently or potentially able to offer quality skilled work and strong career paths for young people.

It is beyond the scope of this project to specify the exact design of initiatives, but these should be informed by the following principles:

- full employer involvement as both partners and clients, including the identification of needs, development of responses and provision of work experience and placements
- utilisation of effective partnerships at both strategic and operational levels including all local players as well as different levels of government
- involvement of young people and the local community in the development of initiatives
- the development of integrated packages of initiatives, providing complete pathways and supports for young people, rather than stand-alone programs addressing only one aspect of the youth unemployment problem.

The process should also include the scoping of appropriate models developed elsewhere and aim, where possible, to pool resources to achieve maximum effectiveness with minimum duplication.

Where possible, consideration should be given to how outcomes will be measured at the design stage. This will enable the success of projects to be assessed and will also support advocacy efforts. However it should also be recognised that some approaches, such as community development, are difficult to measure but over time can achieve significant outcomes. Moreover for young people who face significant personal barriers, the first goal might be engagement in positive activities, with education, training and employment outcomes a secondary goal; measurement of outcomes should be capable of recognising such goals and achievements.

The following presents suggested strategies in the areas of information, skills and employment. These strategies are summarised in chart form at the end of the chapter (see page 64).

Improving information, guidance and referrals

The first objective of the Kingston Youth Employment Strategy should be to ensure all young people, especially those at risk, receive the information, guidance and support they need to plan training and employment pathways.

▶▶ Action area 1

Increase young people's understanding of the full range of career options and training pathways before they leave school

The whole community taking responsibility for its young people

Within all communities there are a certain number of young people who get lost, both within and outside of the education and training system. Ensuring that all young people in the City of Kingston achieve Year 12 or an equivalent vocational education and training qualification (including employment with structured training), the acknowledged minimum education required for work and life in the 21st century, will contribute to the development of healthy and creative communities with the skill base necessary for a strong and dynamic regional economy and society.

Strategy 1.1

Develop as a community, a holistic range of concurrent supports that are able to meet the needs of a wide range of individual young people.

Equipping parents to support their children's career choices and transitions

Parents from the two study communities strongly emphasised that they needed and wanted more information about how they could better support their children through school and into work.

Strategy 1.2

Encourage schools and other relevant community agencies to regularly provide information and training for parents about employment and training options to enable them to better support their children's career pathway planning.

It is suggested that strategies be developed to engage parents and assist them to support their children in planning their career paths.

The delivery of information through small information seminars and workshops was seen by parents as particularly useful. Reports by Centrelink of high levels of attendance at seminars also suggests a high level of demand for this type and form of information.

Efforts should focus on delivering information within, and engaging with, local communities. Community-based approaches to addressing unemployment and providing information were very strongly supported by parents in both Clayton South area and Chelsea areas:

I think the days of Centrelink assisting people to get a job are over. I think now it's more if we could bring it back into the community. I think communities would have more impact in that area. Like with even the local councils. They can do a better job. I mean I've seen this group come through in so many ways, and today, the council's just done a better job than Centrelink itself. [Parent, Clayton South area]

It would be much better if [parenting programs and information seminars] were advertised through public notices, major campaigns through the local paper... to bring it right out into the open and make it a community thing, not just a school thing...because these are community issues. [Parent, Chelsea area]

Particular efforts should be made to engage parents who themselves may be unemployed or working in low-skilled work. For these parents, community development approaches to encourage participation may be most appropriate to overcome the possible reluctance and low confidence of parents to participate. It is suggested that sites other than schools be considered for the promotion and delivery of workshops and seminars.

Programs similar to the Parents as Careers Transition Supports (PACTS) program could be ideal for addressing the problem of pressure to go to university. This program provides training to parents about how to support their children to make decisions about education, training and employment, and the options available to them, and is already being delivered through some schools in the Kingston area through Youth Connect. Parents who took part in a recent evaluation of the PACTS program reported that it helped them to understand the system better and to consider options for their child other than university. As a result, they said that they felt less anxious and placed less pressure on their children to go to university and felt better able to support their children.

Increasing schools' capacity to support young people's career choices and transitions

There is a significant gap in schools in the availability of information about jobs reached via non-university pathways. There is a particular lack of opportunities to learn about work in skills shortage areas. However, schools currently have a very limited capacity to address those gaps without support.

Strategy 1.3

Support partnerships to meet the need for:

- more effective, more practical and earlier career education opportunities;
- more work experience opportunities; and
- more effective and earlier job search training.

Employment support services in Kingston have considerable expertise in providing careers counselling, job search training, and an excellent, up-to-date knowledge of employers' skills needs, expectations, and available vacancies. Many will also have a good knowledge of local training pathways to access those jobs. Rather than expecting teachers to be able to develop and maintain detailed knowledge of local career opportunities, career education and job search training might be more efficiently and effectively delivered by local employment services.

Partnerships developed elsewhere between schools and employment services have drawn on this valuable expertise to deliver high-quality career education to young people in schools. The Transition Broker model, in which staff work part-time at a Job Network service and part-time at schools, is used in the Frankston area and could offer a useful starting point.

It is suggested that schools and employment support services explore the potential for such partnerships. Benefits for employment services are likely to include improved awareness of and referrals to their service, greater two-way exchanges of information between the partners, and staff capacity building in each of the partner organisations.

Strategy 1.4

Support industry and schools to work together to develop careers education resources and learning opportunities for school students in Years 8 and 9, with a particular focus on proactively offering careers education about areas of local skills shortages.

If young people in schools are to receive information about careers available in Kingston prior to leaving, there is a need for industry to take a proactive approach to offer schools new careers education opportunities.

Initiatives should offer a range of practical, experiential learning opportunities such as industry tours (see Appendix B), work experience or shadowing opportunities, videos, newsletters promoting opportunities in skills shortage areas, talks by employers, and tours of TAFEs provided on school days. Initiatives should seek to build parents' and teachers' knowledge and links at the same time as educating young people. Young people who leave school early are more likely to be interested in non-professional careers. Therefore, these efforts should begin early, in Years 8 and 9, to reach young people before they leave school. Efforts will also be needed to work with schools to encourage them to present a more positive view of alternatives to university and professional careers.

However, responsibility for promoting careers in local industries cannot rest solely with training or employment organisations, or on the efforts of individual employers. The Kingston City Council, together with the BGKLLLEN, can manage the necessary role of intermediary between schools and industries and support local industry bodies to provide advice and input.

The new federally-funded Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisors (ANICA) will go some way to addressing this gap, and should be taken into account in the development of new initiatives.

Strategy 1.5

Improve resourcing of careers education and counselling for young people in schools

Though these initiatives will go some way to addressing gaps in information and guidance services in schools, but ultimately more resources for schools are required if young people are to learn about a wider range of career options.

It is suggested that the Kingston City Council confer with the BGKLLLEN on advocating for greater resources for careers education in Victorian schools. Council should also advocate for a faster roll out of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development.

Strategy 1.6

Encourage and support young people to see that running their own small business is a viable career option.

While the primary emphasis in career development is focussed on ensuring that young people have the skills to successfully obtain fulfilling employment, there are a number of young people with ideas that could, with appropriate support and guidance, lead to successful business ventures. Young entrepreneurs should be encouraged to explore small business and self employment as a real possibility.

▶▶ Action area 2

Provide all young people with referrals to prevent disengagement

Improving links between services, schools and employers

A lack of information about and referrals to existing services is a key barrier to young people's access to career information and guidance when they are out of school. Limited resources and fragmentation of services inhibit better information exchanges and referrals between organisations. Good referrals, resulting in early interventions, can prevent the development of more entrenched problems such as, mental health problems and lack of confidence among young people.

Strategy 2.1

Improve information sharing and develop referral mechanisms.

Efforts are required to develop better links and improve referrals. Partnerships involving sharing resources, staff, and premises or developing clear agreements between organisations can help to overcome some of these problems. Special attention should be given to developing agreed referral mechanisms from schools to other services, in particular referrals from schools to the Job Network, JPET and JPP. As a central preventive measure, all schools in the Kingston area should have a clearly defined process for supporting and referring young people who want to leave school or who have just left school.

The Kingston City Council can support these initiatives through offering premises or other in-kind resources, or considering how its own youth and other services might support greater integration.

Many young people are unsuccessfully approaching employers for work or applying for training. From employers' reports, a great number of young people would benefit from prevocational training, basic skills training and job search training, but it is likely that many of these young people are not aware of the supports available to them. Referrals directly from these employers and training providers could offer an excellent means of reaching these young people and providing assistance, especially to those who are more difficult to reach because they are not registered with Centrelink.

▶▶ Action area 3

Address gaps and fragmentation in information, careers counselling and job search support services for young people out of school

Building the capacity of education and service providers to support young people's career choices and transitions

Gaps in services and fragmentation of services inhibit young people's access to appropriate information and support.

Strategy 3.1

Support partnerships to meet the need for:

- careers information and counselling and pathway planning for young people not in education and training;
- delivery of job search training and support through local community centres and youth services;
- more holistic support, including case management and early intensive assistance, through employment support services;
- employment services catering especially to CALD and refugee young people;
- employment support services in the Clayton South and Clarinda area; and
- advocacy to address service gaps for 20-24 year olds.

Partnerships between services have the potential to address gaps and offer more comprehensive services to young people who are out of schools.

Options to be considered would include:

- delivery of employment support services through community venues, particularly those accessed by young people;
- the creation of a 'one-stop' shop, or co-location of complementary services such as employment support and youth services;
- explore options to improve access to services and training through improved transport and child-care;
- explore how funding might be shared to concurrently deliver services and programs.

Strategy 3.2

Use proactive outreach methods to provide information and support to at risk young people who are not engaged with services.

Young people who are out of school and disengaged from formal programs and supports (such as working part-time or parenting) need proactive efforts to engage them with information about employment and training. Young people who are alienated or lack confidence will need additional encouragement and support to consider the information and supports being offered.

Linking information delivery to other activities can be one means of engaging these young people. The Kingston City Council could consider how its youth activities might link recreation to information and employment support services.

Strategy 3.3

Provide mentoring and youth leadership programs to provide encouragement, guidance and role models for disadvantaged and disengaged young people.

To support and guide young people who lack confidence, or who lack adult support to make career decisions, mentoring programs were seen by youth service providers and Job Network staff as an important strategy for proactively providing careers guidance and job searching support to young people, along with this personalised support and encouragement. Holmesglen Employment said that they had experienced considerable success with their mentoring program for Sudanese young people. Young engineering apprentices also said that they would have valued the opportunity to speak to someone, and said that they would be happy to provide some advice and support to other young people:

'Cause I know how much I struggled when I was that age and just being able to help one young kid understand the trade a bit better, or any trade, it'd give me a good feeling.... As long as you can *help* someone... [two others agree] I just know how hard it was for me, when I was that age, just trying to figure out what I wanted to do, and no-one to talk to, school didn't give a crap, parents didn't give a crap... and there was nothing out there that could show me what was going on. [Engineering group]

Leadership programs were also suggested by several different youth services staff as a means of increasing young people's interest and confidence, of engaging young people who are disengaged from services or community networks, providing role models, disseminating information and supporting other young people to take an interest in particular industries.

The experience of the young mothers group in training to be 'Peer Educators' of other young people illustrated how the opportunity to participate in programs can be as of great a benefit to the young mentors or leaders as to the young people they are assisting, increasing confidence, informing them and linking them into other new steps and opportunities as well as social networks.

The use of peer networks for the exchange of information is also very important for young people. Efforts should seek to consider how employment and training information can be offered to young people engaged in recreational or other programs, with the expectation that it will be shared more widely through peer groups.

Increasing skills and supports

The second key objective of the Kingston Youth Employment Strategy should be to ensure that young people have the skills they need to get and successfully undertake skilled work.

▶▶ Action area 4

Provide more opportunities for young people, especially those at risk of early leaving, to gain work readiness, basic and vocational skills in years 8, 9, and 10

Supporting schools to train and retain young people

Supporting young people to remain and succeed at school should be the first priority in efforts to ensure young people have the skills they need to get work. This requires increasing the range of programs that offer practical learning activities and higher learning supports in Years 8, 9 and 10.

Strategy 4.1

Develop new vocational education and training opportunities for young people in schools that provide pathways into local quality jobs in areas of skills shortages.

Vocational education and training is essential to both helping to retain young people in school and ensure that, if they do leave early, they will have skills they need to get work.

Employers are more willing to take on a young person who has basic skills and some experience specific to their industry and, further, vocational training or ‘hands on’ experience of work is also a key way for young people to develop an interest in work in a particular field, as observed by the engineering apprentices:

At my school they only had woodwork, so everyone wanted to become like carpenters or cabinet makers. [Engineering apprentice]

In addition, vocational training can:

- build confidence, particularly for young people who are not academically inclined or struggle at school;
- improve school retention by providing young people with ‘relevant’ studies and thus a reason to attend;
- improve young people’s generic skills such as literacy and numeracy, by embedding development of these skills in practical activities that are meaningful to young people;
- develop young people’s work-ready skills (including their ‘attitude’ to work) by introducing the routines and expectations of ‘real’ work and training, particularly when training is conducted outside of school and involves structured work placements;
- improve young people’s workplace communication skills;
- improve employment retention rates by enabling young people to ‘try out’ a job before entering formal employment;
- provide young people with the occupational health and safety skills they require in employment; and
- provide young people with evidence to demonstrate to employers an interest in the job.

Vocational training that offers work experience (especially the longer and more formal structured work placements) can also serve as a direct pathway into employment, as it enables employers to ‘try out’ a young person before committing to hire them.

Vocational education and training offered in schools also provides an excellent source of potential apprentices and trainees for employers.

Box 7.1 Good practice example: vocational training for young people in schools

Youth Connect Engineering School-Based New Apprenticeship (SBNA) program

Youth Connect runs a program to support young people in schools into engineering. The program provides at risk school students in Year 10 with one day per week of training at TAFE in the Certificate I in Engineering. This provides them with vocational skills and ‘soft’ or ‘work ready’ skills. During the program, staff at Youth Connect support young people to plan their pathways. If young people choose to continue with engineering, the next step is into a School-Based New Apprenticeship (SBNA) in Engineering in Year 11, working one day per week and undertaking one day per week of training at TAFE while undertaking their VCAL at school.

The program helps at risk young people to stay at school by engaging them in vocational training early, offers a structured pathway to support them into further training or employment in engineering, and provides participants with vocational skills and generic work ready skills that will assist them should they leave school.

It is suggested that schools, employers and services explore how the range of vocational education and training subjects offered in schools can be increased to better meet the skills needs and employment opportunities in the Kingston area, while at the same time providing young people with useful and appealing subject options. Ideally these programs should be intended as the first step in a series of training opportunities that will lead young people into good jobs in Kingston. To reach the young people who will get the greatest benefit, significant vocational education and training should be offered from Year 8 onwards, and should include courses attractive to young women at risk of early leaving.

Strategy 4.2

Advocate for equitable access to VET in schools for all young people.

The cost of VET at school has been a problem for some years in Victoria. Much of the debate around this issue has focused on whether schools or the Department of Education and Training (DET) is responsible: on the one hand, DET and TAFE argue that DET provides funds to schools to deliver VET, and schools choose whether or not to pass on additional costs to students. Schools on the other hand argue that this amount is insufficient to cover the real costs of VET, and that they cannot afford to cross-subsidise, particularly if they are serving a poorer community. Research indicates that there is in fact a greater expense to small schools and schools with smaller classes in senior years (which are typically schools in poorer areas) and schools offering subjects (such as engineering) that require expensive specialised equipment that cannot be delivered at the school (Burke, Underwood & Beaver 2004). Schools that do not cluster can also face higher costs.

Regardless, given the value of VET courses to young people and to industry, this problem must be addressed. It should cost young people and families no more to take a VET course than an academic subject. It is essential that the Victorian Government and DET develop solutions to make VET courses available and affordable for all students who would benefit from them, without disadvantaging small schools or schools that service poorer communities, and ensure that young people have access to a range of subjects that meet local industry’s skills needs, including those that are more expensive to deliver.

Strategy 4.3

Facilitate discussions to develop a range of complementary alternative programs for young people in Years 8, 9 and 10 to develop work readiness, vocational and basic skills.

To enable all young people in school to succeed, schools require support to offer a wider variety of programs and greater levels of learning and personal supports. Partnerships with other education and training providers to create alternative programs for students still at school have the potential to meet these needs. Partnerships can be particularly useful in enabling schools to offer subjects that require specialised teaching skills or equipment, in areas such as literacy, numeracy and English language teaching, and vocational training. There are also recognised benefits in delivering programs off-site: young people who are experiencing difficulties at school often respond well to the opportunity to study in a different environment, and exposure to other institutions can lead them to consider new training options. Teaching styles used in TAFEs and other adult learning environments can be particularly effective with young people who are at risk of early leaving, and teachers trained in these methods may be willing to provide professional development for school teachers.

Initiatives used elsewhere in Victoria to support success and retention in schools of young people with low and very low skills include:

- holiday ‘catch up’ programs for young people who would otherwise have to repeat a year or leave school;
- programs delivered through Neighbourhood Houses or TAFEs with flexible entry and exit to allow young people ‘time out’ from school until they are ready to return; and
- partnerships between schools and Neighbourhood Houses or TAFEs to offer training in basic skills, possibly embedded in vocational training and practical projects, to provide alternative subjects for young people with low skills who are still at school.

It is suggested that the BGKLLLEN initiate discussions within Kingston and with neighbouring LLENs to more precisely identify gaps and develop partnerships to ensure that alternative subject options are available for at risk young people in all Kingston schools. These options should be available from Year 8 onwards.

As noted earlier, schools have limited resources to compensate for the inadequacy of initial education for young refugees. Though it would in no way substitute for appropriate funding, there may be scope to increase the numbers of volunteer tutors to support young people to succeed in basic education, through partnerships between Holmesglen TAFE (which delivers training in literacy and numeracy teaching for volunteers), and organisations such as Monash University (to identify young people willing to tutor students). While young refugees would be a group particularly likely to benefit from such support, many other young people would greatly benefit from this support. The Kingston City Council could encourage discussions between these organisations.

Strategy 4.4

Advocate for improved provision of initial education and training for young refugees, and for young refugees in the workforce who have low skills.

The inadequacy of initial education for young refugees has been raised as an issue in other research by CMYI and La Trobe University, and is a concern for other local governments with large refugee populations. Schools are not adequately resourced to compensate for the inadequacy of initial education provided upon arrival in Australia, and young refugees are inevitably failing school and moving into low-skilled work or unemployment. A preventive approach, providing education sooner rather than later, is preferable.

It is suggested that Kingston City Council investigate the possibilities for partnerships with such organisations to advocate for improved resources for the education of young refugees.

►► Action area 5

Ensure that all young people out of school with low skills can access education, training and work.

Increasing access to skills training and support out of school

Consultations indicated that many young people in Kingston with low skills lack access to programs they require to develop skills and successfully undertake skilled work.

Strategy 5.1

Develop programs to re-engage and support young people with high needs and low skills who are out of school and not ready or able to move into full-time formal training or employment.

There is a need for flexible, short-term practically-oriented programs in Kingston that can offer positive activities and support to young people who are disengaged from education, training and work, at risk of disengagement, or have very high personal support needs.

Suggested program models include the basic vocational skills training program Handbrake Turn, delivered in Dandenong, and the Jesuit Social Services' Gateway program in Collingwood that offers basic vocational training in areas such as jewellery making.

The Kingston City Council can play an important role in providing premises, resources and support for the types of programs needed to re-engage and support disengaged young people. Programs delivered around 'youth' leisure and recreation activities can provide an ideal opportunity to reach and re-engage young people. It is suggested that local government consider supporting the development of a community garden, as suggested by Taskforce, in partnership with the local JPET and possibly with Adult and Community Education providers (ACEs). Funding through JYP for landscaping apprenticeships could be incorporated into the program. Possible models include the Jesuit Social Service's Collingwood gardens and, on a larger scale, the CERES² site built on reclaimed industrial wasteland in Brunswick. There might be potential for such initiatives to also improve the amenity of industrial areas in Kingston or address the demand recreational activities for young people.

Strategy 5.2

Develop strategies to address gaps in training programs accessible by young people with low skills

Young people with low skills need more training programs suited to their needs. It is suggested that local providers seek to identify more precisely where the needs are, through consultation with referring organisations, and develop plans to meet those needs.

In developing programs, consideration should be given to:

- Increasing the number of general and occupation-specific pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship programs;
- increasing the range of youth programs delivered through Neighbourhood Houses;
- increasing TAFE access for 14 and 15 year-olds and young people with higher learning and personal support needs;

² CERES is the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies, located in Lee Street, Brunswick

- providing opportunities for young people aged 18 and over to gain or improve basic skills;
- increasing literacy, numeracy and English language supports in mainstream training programs;
- providing English-language training for young people not in school, including those in work through community centres;
- increasing the availability of low-cost vocational short courses; and
- improving the accessibility of programs to young people with work or caring responsibilities.

Where possible, programs should also seek to offer work placements to overcome the problem young people face in having limited prior work experience.

Box 7.2 Good practice example: general education for young people with low basic skills

Youth Pathways Program, Longbeach Place Neighbourhood House, Chelsea

Longbeach Place offers a Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA) program aimed at 15 to 19 year-olds who have not completed Year 10. The program incorporates flexible timetabling based on consultations with participants, and provides considerable personal support for careers guidance and personal problems. The setting is small and informal and suits young people with low confidence and low skills.

Prevocational programs should offer the first step towards work for young people who face difficulties getting work because of a lack of skills. They should therefore provide sufficient learning supports to enable successful participation by young people with low skills.

It is suggested that the Department of Education and Training, together with relevant providers, ensure that all prevocational programs are accessible by people with low skills.

Box 7.3 Good practice example: vocational training for young people with low basic skills

The TAFE Engineering apprenticeship program does not screen applicants for literacy and numeracy as is now commonly the case in the more popular trades and in group training companies. Instead, staff have incorporated additional literacy and numeracy supports to enable the young apprentices to gain the skills required for their work and assessments.

The apprentices' success in undertaking their training is evidence of how integrated programs can support young people with low basic skills into employment. Only five of the 17 had completed Year 12 (often the minimum level of education sought by employers), while seven had not gone past Year 10. Several had experienced difficulties at school, especially with maths. In other more popular trades, many of these young people would probably have been excluded by course and employer selection methods.

Increasing access to training in skills shortage occupations

In some instances barriers are preventing interested and suitable young people from accessing training leading to work in occupations that face skills shortages.

Strategy 5.3

Facilitate regional discussions to identify and develop strategies to address cost or skills barriers to entry-level training in skills shortage areas.

The extent to which costs are a barrier for unemployed young people to access training requires further investigation on an industry by industry basis. If it emerges that young people are not

entering areas of serious skills shortages because of these initial barriers, it is in the interests of young people and industry that the issue be raised with relevant organisations at a state or national level.

Strategy 5.4

Develop training pathways for at risk young people to access employment and training areas of skills shortages.

Many young people in Kingston who are at risk and have low skills are open to the idea of working in areas of skills shortages: many are already working in unskilled jobs within these industries or have applied unsuccessfully for entry-level jobs. With training and support, these young people could become valuable employees for industries experiencing skills shortages. Efforts to recruit these young people are also likely to be more effective than efforts to attract Year 12 leavers who have already developed other career goals.

Several projects in the Kingston area offer an integrated program to support employers to recruit and train staff. (see Box 7.4). These programs are typically tailored to meet the needs of both a local industry and a target group (such as young early school leavers) Their success and employer demand indicates that there is considerable potential for expansion of such projects.

Industry-specific training pathways to support these young people into employment in areas of skills shortages must be an essential element of youth employment strategies in Kingston. To meet good practice, these pathways should incorporate initial outreach to engage young people who are disengaged from services or social supports, and offer holistic support, pre-vocational training, work-based training through traineeships or apprenticeships, and post-placement support for young people and employers. Several programs in Kingston, such as the Youth Connect engineering program and the Mature Aged Jobseekers in Manufacturing Project, already offer many of the necessary program elements.

Serious consideration should be given to encouraging significant participation by young refugees, many of whom are reportedly already working in unskilled roles in industries facing skills shortages (such as manufacturing and personal care), and could greatly benefit from the opportunity to increase their skills. Efforts should also target young people from English-speaking backgrounds living in the Chelsea and Highett areas. Efforts to encourage participation of young people with higher needs will require the incorporation of all of the 'best practice' elements recommended.

Box 7.4 Good practice example: industry-specific youth training and employment programs

Efforts to address skills shortages in Kingston have demonstrated the benefits of programs that are tailored to meet the specific employment and training needs of both an industry and of a target group. Successful projects in the Kingston area include the engineering project run by Youth Connect and the Mature-Aged Job Seekers in Manufacturing Project, and a Victorian Brick and Blocklaying Training Foundation project to increase participation in the industry by young people.

These projects are developed and delivered through a broker, or intermediary, such as a training organisation, group training company or employment service provider. Brokers can identify training needs, work with training providers to create pathways that are appropriate for employers and for the trainees, and support employers to recruit and employ young people. They also add value to programs through promoting employer participation, and providing ongoing education and practical support to employers and young people. Brokers can be especially useful in supporting young people with high needs to transition into work.

Building employment opportunities

The third objective of the Kingston Youth Employment Strategy should be to ensure that employers are able to attract and retain young people to build a skilled and competitive workforce.

►► Action area 6

Develop industry capacity to identify and address the causes of labour and skills shortages

Supporting employers to address recruitment and training problems

As discussed earlier, a number of the problems identified by employers can be addressed through increasing young people's knowledge and skills. To complement these efforts, however, employers also need to be engaged in identifying problems and effective solutions. Close partnerships with employers will be the key to the success of Kingston's youth employment strategy.

Strategy 6.1

Support the formation of local industry networks in skills shortage areas to identify and develop initiatives to address skills needs and youth recruitment, training and retention problems.

Enabling employers to respond to problems together as an industry will help to reduce cost, effort and risk for individual employers and distribute costs and burdens more evenly across industries. Many of Kingston's employers have already developed effective strategies to recruit, induct, train and retain young employees; providing opportunities for Kingston's employers to share their most effective strategies will minimise duplication of effort. Furthermore, the success of most of the suggested strategies will require strong partnerships with employers.

Therefore, as a first step, it is suggested that local government, together with state and federal governments, facilitate the creation of local industry-specific networks or groups (focusing in the first year on only one or two industries experiencing skills shortages) that can engage employers to examine recruitment and skills issues within their own industry and develop industry-specific initiatives. Initiatives might address:

- Increasing awareness of career opportunities by promoting the industry to young people and their parents, including: facilitating industry tours; providing speakers; enabling apprentices to mentor or speak to school students; proactively offering work experience placements or teaching resources.
- Reducing risks and costs of employing young people, particularly in the initial training period, and particularly for small to medium sized employers with fluctuating workloads, through ensuring the availability of and access to appropriate training pathways and employment supports. Consideration might be given to: group training initiatives; creating new school-based apprenticeships and VET; and developing or promoting prevocational and pre-apprenticeship training.
- Changing work organisation to attract and retain young people. This could include: examining the potential within the industry for using part-time, casual and low-skilled work as the first step in a structured pathway into training and skilled work or considering how work times might be rearranged or roles combined to attract and retain suitable employees.
- Developing local transport solutions to facilitate access by young people to Kingston workplaces facing labour or skills shortages.
- Identifying areas for advocacy directed towards state and federal governments.

Poor transport currently inhibits the engagement of communities in work, education and training. There is potential for the Kingston City Council to support partnerships and increase access to services through providing transport, either independently or in partnership.

Given young people's reliance on public transport, the possibility of developing suburb-level initiatives could be canvassed in relation to recruitment difficulties faced by employers in some locations of Kingston such as Braeside.

These networks should not just seek to support progression planning for individual employers, but give attention to how to maximise participation in training for the benefit of the local industry as a whole. To prevent 'reinventing the wheel', planning should commence with consultation with local employers and regional or peak industry bodies and scoping of successful relevant initiatives developed in Kingston and elsewhere. Possible models for such networks might include the Northern Stainless Steel Skills Development Group formed in the north of Melbourne.

▶▶ Action area 7

Develop employers' youth recruitment and training skills

Many individual employers who are not part of targeted skills-shortage industries would also benefit from support in employing and training young people. Therefore more general initiatives are required to encourage and support employers to employ young people.

Strategy 7.1

Provide opportunities for employers to develop their skills in attracting, training and retaining young workers and to improve employer perceptions of young people.

Employers' responses indicate that they need and want support in areas such as:

- attracting and recruiting suitable young people;
- providing effective induction for young people;
- creating youth-friendly workplaces;
- training and supporting young employees to achieve best performance;
- realistic understandings of what can be expected of new young employees;
- communicating effectively with young people; and
- encouraging young people to stay on and move into higher-level roles.

Consultation with employers will identify the best means through which support could be offered, but could include workshops, seminars, and opportunities for employers to share their successes with others. To complement these employer-devised initiatives, the Kingston City Council could also examine the potential for developing programs to:

- support employer involvement in workshops and other initiatives through using 'lighthouse' employers to signal 'good' industries or employers to the youth labour market as well as to other employers; and
- improve employers' perceptions of young people.

Consultations suggest that these programs would need to also address discrimination against young people from CALD backgrounds and young people with a disability, and would also usefully incorporate efforts to encourage the employment of women in traditionally male trades.

The 'Top Jobs' program currently being piloted in Frankston through the Brotherhood of St Laurence offers training for employers and promotes 'employers of choice' to young people, and could provide a model for consideration in Kingston.

It is likely that contracted intermediary or broker organisations, rather than employers or Kingston City Council, will in many cases be best placed to take direct responsibility for the more detailed development and implementation of initiatives.

▶▶ Action area 8

Increase public sector employment of young people who face barriers to gaining skilled employment

As one of the largest local employers and also with a mandate to promote social as well as economic goals, the Kingston City Council is ideally placed to take the lead in creating training and employment opportunities for young people. The Council would play a role not met by other local organisations through:

- leading by example to encourage private sector employers to participate in youth employment programs;
- using employment efforts to provide a supply of skilled young people for Kingston's employers;
- addressing gaps in employment and training opportunities for young people who have higher support needs or face discrimination in the labour market; and
- addressing local gaps in training opportunities in some skills areas.

The Kingston City Council already provides a number of employment and training opportunities for young people in the Kingston area. It employs trainees through the Victorian Government's Jobs for Young People traineeship program, and offers work experience placements for young people. Individual staff members also support careers training in partnership with local schools. Community development officers employed by the local government have produced excellent results in engaging communities in education and training to produce employment outcomes in child-care, for example. Consultations indicated that the local government's efforts in these areas are very well supported by the community.

A strategic approach to the Kingston City Council's youth employment efforts could significantly increase the range and number of employment opportunities for young people in Kingston.

Strategy 8.1

Increase the employment of young people, especially those from communities facing higher unemployment, through accessing appropriate Government funding.

The Kingston City Council can increase direct employment and training of young people through programs such as Jobs for Young People, a program that subsidises the costs to local government of employing young people or other programs as they become available. Maximum benefit can be gained by targeting the program towards young people from communities that are currently

underrepresented on the Kingston City Council staff and are likely to face barriers to obtaining work through open recruitment processes.

Consideration should be given to how to coordinate the employment and training of young people across the Council to ensure they and their supervisors have the support and skills they need. Effective use of training subsidies and employment outcome payments can enable coordinator positions to be effectively cost-neutral, as for example at the La Trobe Shire Council.

Bringing it all together – building pathways to jobs for young people in Kingston

The three previous sections have outlined the gaps in the pathways to work for young people, with particular reference to industries in Kingston that are experiencing skills shortages. This final section examines the reasons why these gaps exist and suggests the need for a more coordinated response.

Strategic coordination of training and employment pathways

Effective pathways to support young people into work link all three elements discussed above: information, guidance and referrals; skills and support; and employment opportunities. In Kingston, many young people are unemployed or underemployed because some of these elements are missing or do not meet their needs, or because programs and services are poorly linked.

A major cause of these gaps and missing links is the lack of oversight and strategic coordination in the construction of pathways between young people and employers. Education, training and employment programs and services are often the result of disparate, often uncoordinated, initiatives of a variety of agencies, each of which has a different purpose, goal, and client group. There is no authority with the oversight to ensure that they are developed in a strategic coordinated manner. As a result services and programs fail to meet the needs of some young people and some industries.

To ensure that education and training supports both employment and economic development, a coordinating role is required to identify these gaps and initiate responses. Some agencies in the Southeast region already go some way to providing such a role. For example, the Bayside Kingston Glen Eira Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLEN) and the federally-funded Melbourne Development Board Area Consultative Committee are tasked with increasing employment in the Kingston area and Southeast through partnerships. However, these agencies have very limited resources, especially when compared with similar structures internationally, and are too small for their wide geographical scope of responsibility to be able to take on the tasks required.

The final objective of the Kingston Youth Employment Strategy should be to ensure the development and coordination of the required set of youth employment initiatives.

▶▶ Action area 9

Create local capacity to provide strategic oversight and coordination of youth employment initiatives

Local governments in Australia are well-placed to address the need for local strategic coordination. They have a broad mandate to support both economic and social development, have detailed knowledge of their communities and industries, excellent links with employers, and a very broad

range of local and higher-level organisations. The Kingston City Council is ideally placed to provide leadership, direction and support to coordinate the varied activities and organisations that contribute to supporting young people from education into training and work.

Strategy 9.1: Create staff positions within Kingston City Council to provide leadership and strategic oversight in coordinating education, training and employment initiatives across Kingston to ensure that these meet Kingston's social and economic development goals.

To provide the capacity to undertake this very substantial coordination and oversight role, a number of councils in Australia—the City of Casey being a local example—and local municipalities overseas are creating specialised Education and Employment Officer positions and units. Similar roles of Employment and Learning Coordinators have been created through the state government's Neighbourhood Renewal projects. These officers fill a gap in the existing framework for identifying education and training initiatives that meet community and economy's needs and link these into community development and positive employment opportunities.

It is suggested that Kingston City Council create staffing capacity, possibly located in the Economic Development Unit, to provide this strategic coordination role. These staff would have an ongoing role in:

- identifying where existing delivery of programs and services by providers across the City of Kingston had left gaps that impacted on community needs, skills development and employment and economic development; and
- instigating, coordinating and supporting initiatives through partnerships to address gaps and develop training and employment opportunities for local residents.

These positions should provide the capacity to:

- work with communities and young people to identify needs and coordinate appropriate responses;
- support industries experiencing skills shortages to identify and address skills and training needs;
- identify employment and training initiatives needed to realise the Kingston City Council's broader economic and social development goals; and
- manage Kingston's internal youth employment efforts.

Consideration should be given by DVC, DIIRT and relevant federal programs and bodies to supporting the creation of this local capacity.

The strategies outlined in the above chapter are summarised in chart form on the following pages.

Kingston Youth Employment Strategies: summary chart

Objective 1: Ensure all young people, especially those at risk, receive the information, guidance and support they need to plan training and employment pathways.

Action Area 1: Increase young people’s understanding of the full range of career options and training pathways before they leave school.	
Key strategies	Suggested activities and initiatives
1.1 Develop, as a community, a holistic range of concurrent supports that are able to meet the needs of a wide range of individual young people.	<p>Implement the Youth Options Guarantee program, based on 4 key areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive young person focused engagement in education and training; • Transition to work; • Supported intervention for young people at risk of early school leaving; and • Provision of re-integration support for early school leavers.
1.2 Encourage schools and other relevant community agencies to regularly provide information and training for parents about employment and training options to enable them to better support their children’s career pathway planning.	<p>Provide regular seminars/workshops providing information about careers and training and services.</p> <p>Develop a social marketing campaign on specific industries to increase parent and community acceptance of a wider range of careers.</p>
1.3 Support partnerships to meet the need for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more effective, more practical and earlier career education opportunities; • more work experience opportunities; and • more effective and earlier job search training. 	<p>Explore means to have employment support services deliver careers information and job search training in schools, such as shared funding arrangements and arrangements in which employment services staff also work part-time for schools.</p>
1.4 Support industry and schools to work together to develop career education resources and learning opportunities for school students in Years 8 and 9, with particular focus on proactively offering careers education about areas of local skills shortages.	<p>Facilitate local industry input into the development of promotional initiatives such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • industry tours; • work experience; • TAFE open days during school hours; • youth employment and training newsletters; • talks by employers or apprentices and trainees; • videos and DVDs; and • employment expo. <p>Advocate for the expansion of the State Government’s Careers in Manufacturing Program.</p>
1.5 Improve resourcing of careers education and counselling for young people in schools.	<p>Advocate for the implementation of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development.</p> <p>Facilitate an annual careers teachers’ forum.</p> <p>Support MBA careers teachers’ participation.</p>
1.6 Encourage and support young people to see that running their own small business is a viable career option.	<p>Develop a Young Entrepreneurs program</p> <p>Investigate partnership opportunities for social enterprise programs.</p>

Action Area 2: Provide all young people with referrals to prevent disengagement.

2.1 Improve information sharing and develop referral mechanisms.

Investigate the development of a website for young people, parents, service providers and the wider community to access localised, up-to-date information in relation to education, training and career development.

Action Area 3: Address gaps and fragmentation in information, careers counselling and job search support services for young people out of school.

3.1 Support partnerships to meet the need for:

- careers information and counselling and pathway planning for young people not in education and training;
- delivery of job search training and support through local community centres and youth services;
- more holistic support, including case management and early intensive assistance, through employment support services;
- employment services catering especially to CALD and refugee young people;
- employment support services in the Clayton South and Clarinda area; and
- advocacy to address service gaps for 20-24 year olds.

Provide venues for outreach delivery of employment services.

Investigate the potential for a ‘one-stop’ shop or co-location of services.

Explore options to improve access to services and training through improved transport and child-care.

Explore how funding might be shared to concurrently deliver services and programs.

3.2 Use proactive outreach methods to provide information and supports to at risk young people who are not engaged with services.

Link employment information and delivery of support services to recreational activities and other programs.

Deliver information, services and supports within local communities and in young people’s meeting places.

3.3 Provide mentoring and youth leadership programs to provide encouragement, guidance and role models for disadvantaged and disengaged young people.

Investigate evidence based program models and partnerships for delivery of programs.

Objective 2: Ensure young people have the skills they need to get and successfully undertake skilled work

Action Area 4: Provide more opportunities for young people, especially those at risk of early leaving, to gain work readiness, job search, basic vocational skills in Years 8, 9 and 10.	
Key strategies	Suggested activities and initiatives
4.1 Develop new vocational education and training opportunities for young people in schools that provide pathways into local quality jobs in areas of skills shortages.	<p>Support schools to identify and implement opportunities for young people.</p> <p>Engage industry and training organisations to identify industry training needs and support program implementation.</p> <p>Support VET clustering among schools by providing transport solutions.</p>
4.2 Advocate for equitable access to VET in schools for all young people.	Advocate for adequate funding measures to enable young people to access a wide range of VET options at least from Year 10 at a cost no greater than ‘academic’ subjects, without disadvantage to schools, especially those serving lower socioeconomic populations and small schools.
4.3 Facilitate discussions to develop complementary alternative programs for young people in Years 8, 9 and 10 to develop work ready, vocational and basic skills.	<p>Facilitate discussions between schools, Neighbourhood Houses and TAFEs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess current delivery and identify gaps; • source successful models, curricula and resources used elsewhere; • support the development of appropriate curricula; and • consider the potential for qualified staff in ACE or TAFE to provide professional development for secondary teachers in literacy, numeracy. <p>Discuss with schools and Neighbourhood Houses the possibility of increasing tutoring support for refugees and other young people with low skills, and liaise if required with the Monash Volunteer Centre, TAFE and Monash University.</p>
4.4 Advocate for improved initial education and training for young refugees, including those in the workforce who have low skills.	Undertake research to identify issues faced by young refugees and determine the most appropriate response.
Action Area 5: Ensure that all young people out of school with low skills can access appropriate education, training and work.	
5.1 Develop programs to re-engage and support young people with high needs and low skills who are out of school and not ready or able to move into full-time formal training or employment.	Examine potential for integrating a variety of youth programs and community building initiatives with formal and informal learning opportunities for young people.
5.2 Develop strategies to address gaps in training programs accessible by young people with low skills.	<p>Give consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the number of general and occupation-

	<p>specific pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship programs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the range of youth programs delivered through Neighbourhood Houses; • increasing TAFE access for 14–15 year olds and young people with higher learning and personal support needs; • providing opportunities for young people aged 18 and over to gain or improve basic skills; • increasing the number of general and occupation-specific prevocational and pre-apprenticeship programs; • increasing literacy, numeracy and English language supports in mainstream training programs; • providing English-language training for young people not in school, including those in work, through community centres; • increasing low-cost vocational short courses including literacy and numeracy support; • improving the accessibility of programs for young people with work or caring responsibilities; and • increasing range and awareness of alternate education models eg LEEP.
<p>5.3 Facilitate regional discussions to identify and develop strategies to address cost or skills barriers to entry-level training in skills shortage areas.</p>	<p>Develop project proposal based on evidence of other relevant projects.</p>
<p>5.4 Develop training pathways for at risk young people to access employment in areas of skills shortages.</p>	<p>Develop programs targeted at and promoted to disadvantaged groups combining prevocational training, high levels of personal and learning support, linked to traineeship or apprenticeship work-based training with post-placement support for young people and employers.</p>

Objective 3 Ensure that employers are able to attract and retain young people to build a skilled competitive workforce

Action Area 6: Develop industry capacity to identify and address the causes of labour and skills shortages.	
Key strategies	Key actions and projects
6.1 Support the formation of local industry networks in skills shortage areas to identify and develop initiatives to address skills needs and youth recruitment, training and retention problems.	Identify industry- and area-specific issues that contribute to youth recruitment, training and retention. Share examples of good practice.
Action Area 7: Develop employers' youth recruitment and training skills.	
7.1 Provide opportunities for employers to develop their skills in attracting, training and retaining young workers and to improve employer perceptions of young people.	Deliver seminars and workshops to share examples of good practice.
Action Area 8: Increase public sector employment of young people who face barriers to gaining skilled employment	
8.1 Increase the employment of young people, especially those from communities facing higher unemployment, through accessing Government funding.	Monitor all available funding opportunities.

Objective 4 Ensure the development and coordination of the required set of youth employment initiatives

Action Area 9: Ensure the development and coordination of the required set of youth employment initiatives	
Key strategies	Suggested key activities and initiatives
9.1 Investigate possible partnerships to fund a staff position within Kingston City Council to coordinate the implementation of the action plan.	Map all services and programs currently offered by various agencies within the region across the employment and training sectors. In partnership with other agencies develop a comprehensive implementation plan. Maintain communication with businesses to monitor existing skill shortages and emerging employment opportunities. Investigate the mechanisms available to Council to develop a internal youth work experience and recruitment policy.

8 Appendix A Supplementary tables

Table 8.1 Suburbs included in Kingston North and South statistical areas

Kingston North	Kingston South
Cheltenham	Aspendale
Clarinda	Aspendale Gardens
Clayton South	Bonbeach
Dingley Village	Carrum
Heatherton	Chelsea
Highett	Chelsea Heights
Mentone/Moorabbin Airport	Edithvale
Moorabbin	Patterson Lakes
Mordialloc/Braeside	
Oakleigh South	
Parkdale	
Waterways	

(ABS 2002)

Table 8.2 Position of person completing survey

	Number	Percentage
General manager/director/ CEO/managing director/owner/partner	81	52
Admin/office manager	28	18
Personnel/HR/employee relations manager	11	7
Production manager	3	2
Other	20	13
Not stated	13	8
Total	156	100

Table 8.3 Location of responding businesses by suburb

	Number	Percentage
Moorabbin	35	22
Braeside	30	19
Cheltenham	22	14
Mordialloc	20	13
Chelsea Heights	7	5
Dingley	7	5
Oakleigh South	6	4
Mentone	6	4
Clayton	5	3
Aspendale	4	3
Highett	3	2
Edithvale	3	2
Patterson Lakes	2	1
Heatherton	1	1
Clarinda	1	1
Not stated	4	3
Total	156	100

Table 8.4 Percentages of businesses that use apprenticeships and traineeships by size (of those that do employ young people)

Business size	Percentage using apprenticeships and traineeships
1–4 employees	46
5–19 employees	51
20–99 employees	40
100–199 employees	50
200 or more employees	60

Table 8.5 Entry level positions with which firms experienced recruitment difficulties

Position name	Number	Position name	Number
1st class sheet metal apprentice	1	Mail clerk	1
2nd class sheet metal apprentice	1	Marine mechanic	1
2nd year apprentice	1	Mechanic	1
3rd year apprentice	1	N.c lathe operator	1
Admin person	1	N.c milling m/c	1
Apprentice	8	Office worker	1
Apprentice baker	1	Operator	1
Apprentice bookbinder	1	Packers	1
Apprentice cabinet maker	2	Pick packer	1
Apprentice fitter & turner	4	Process worker	1
Apprentice joiner	1	Receptionist	3
Apprentice sign manufacture	1	Sales trainee	2
Assembler	1	Service desk attendant	1
Biscuit maker level	1	Sign builder	1
Brake press operator	1	Sign installers	1
Child-care assistant	1	Sign manufacturer	1
Cleaner	1	Stone worker	1
Delivery person	1	Store person	1
Driver	1	Trades assistant	3
Factory hand	1	Trainee baker	1
Factory worker	2	Utility worker	1
Fitter and turner	1	Vinyl cutter	1
Fitter machinist	1	Warehouse assistant	1
Food process workers	1	Welder	2
Lasorer	1	Total	67

Table 8.6 Higher level positions with which firms experienced recruitment difficulties

Position name	Number	Position name	Number
Accountant	2	Motor mechanic	1
Accountant – trainee	1	Office administrator	1
Apprentice	1	Office manager	1
Assembler	1	Optical and design engineer	1
Automotive machinist	1	Painter	1
Boilermaker	2	Panel beater	1
Book keeper	1	Power tool mechanic	1
Cabinet maker	3	Press operator	1
Cleaner	1	Printer(s)	1
Cnc operators & setters	1	Production manager	2
Coordinator	1	Project engineer	1
Customer service officer	1	Qualified cse	1
Diesel mechanical fitter	1	Quality auditor	1
Draft supervisor	1	Quality engineer	1
Engine technician	1	Receptionist/account	1
Engineer	2	Refrigerator technician	1
Executive assistant	1	Sales engineer	1
Experienced sign maker	1	Sales rep	3
Factory hand	2	Sales/customer service	1
Fitter machinst	1	Service fitter	1
Forklift driver	1	Service technician	1
Guillotine operator	1	Set out person	1
Installer	1	Sheetmetal	1
Internal sales person	2	Tradesman	1
Junior shop assistant	1	Truck body builders	1
Kindergarten teacher	1	Welder	3
Labourer	1	Wireworker	1
Leading hand	1	Workshop manager	1
Line fitter	1		
Machine operator	1	Total	70

Table 8.7 Census occupational categories

Occupation

- 1 Managers and Administrators
 - 2 Professionals
 - 3 Associate Professionals
 - 4 Tradespersons and Related Workers
 - 5 Advanced Clerical and Service Workers
 - 6 Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers
 - 7 Intermediate Production and Transport Workers
 - 8 Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers
 - 9 Labourers and Related Workers
-

9 Appendix B Industry tours

Manufacturing Youth Jobs youth training and employment program, Liverpool City Council, NSW

Liverpool City Council in 2004 ran Manufacturing Youth Jobs, a program to increase the numbers of young people going into apprenticeships in the local manufacturing industry. (In the following year the council ran a similar program called Building Youth Jobs, to promote jobs in the construction industry).

Project aims

Manufacturing Youth Jobs sought to educate school students, as well as their parents and careers advisors, about the benefits of undertaking an apprenticeship in the manufacturing trades.

Project outcomes

The project target of 30 apprentices was exceeded with a total of 42 young people going into manufacturing apprenticeships by the end of the project. Careers teachers and parents involved in tours gained a better understanding of the work available in their local area.

Through engaging industry and training providers in discussion, the project also helped to encourage some TAFEs to consider changing the way training is provided to better meet employers' preferences. It also encouraged employers to offer structured workplace learning places for students in the following year.

Program structure

The program involved onsite tours of local manufacturing businesses. Buses took groups of parents and students (together or separately), as well as careers teachers, to visit local businesses. Opportunities were provided for employers to speak with the groups, and for students to speak directly with young apprentices and see first-hand their types of work. Participants received written information highlighting the benefits of apprenticeships and potential pathways into work and/or further studies at university.

Target group

The program targeted Year 9 and particularly year 10 school students as well as Year 11 and 12 students. The aim in targeting younger students was to reach them before they chose electives in Year 10, or undertook their structured workplace learning placements in the senior years. The project did not target schools with high numbers of early leavers, but it did prioritise schools that offered electives in Years 10 and up that provided a potential pathway into manufacturing jobs.

Parents and careers teachers were included out of recognition that they may often know very little about current manufacturing jobs, or might have misconceptions about the nature of the work and opportunities. The tours helped to address community misconceptions about apprenticeships: for example, some parents believed that they would have to pay the employers for their child's training.

Project design and management

The project was shaped by the Council with input from project partners. The Council provided \$20,000 for the project, as well as in-kind contributions in the form of printed promotional materials, postage, and venues for meetings, and staff time for project supervision and management, including bringing stakeholders and partners together. Additional funding was provided by the NSW Premier's Department and the Greater Western Sydney Economic

Development Board. In-kind contributions were received from various local private bus companies, which provided the buses free of charge.

Delivery of the project was subcontracted to the local small business incubator, Liverpool Business Growth Centre. Project partners included the Department of Education and Training, TAFE, employers and schools. Other stakeholder organisations such as the Australian Industry Group and the Australian Business Council were briefed on the project; these organisations assisted by promoting the program to their members.

Bruce Macdonnell, Manager, Central Business District and Economic Development, Liverpool City Council, is happy to speak about Liverpool's initiatives in this area> he can be contacted by e-mail <b.macdonnell@liverpool.nsw.gov.au> or phone: (02) 9821 8845.

I0 Appendix C Organisations consulted

Education and training providers

Longbeach Place
Holmesglen and Chisholm TAFE (youth programs)
Holmesglen and Chisholm TAFEs (engineering programs)
Two secondary colleges in Kingston

Employment and Youth Service providers - general

Centrelink (Frankston)
Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network (current and former staff)
Taskforce (Job Placement, Employment and Training program provider)
Recruitnet (Community Jobs Program (CJP) provider)
Youth Connect

Employment and Youth Service providers – young people from CALD and refugee backgrounds

Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES)
Centrelink (Oakleigh)
Clayton South and Clarinda Community Network
Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (Job Placement, Employment and Training program provider)
Multicultural Resource Centre
Southern Ethnic Advisory and Advocacy Council (SEAAC)

Other

Kingston City Council
Melbourne Development Board Area Consultative Committee
Australian Industry Group (AIG)
City of Liverpool
Yarra City Council
Top Jobs Program, Frankston Mornington Peninsula LLEN.

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