



AVETRA 2023 CONFERENCE

challenging times
VET + challenges of our time
challenges that lie ahead

27 & 28 April 2023, Melbourne



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Gold Partner



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Co-designing a foundational training offer for young people

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Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty



How do you simultaneously address youth unemployment, VET enrolments and completions and labour market shortages?

<p>Problem statements</p>	<p>Sustained high youth un/under-employment rates and disengagement from employment, education and training.</p>	<p>Declining uptake and completion of entry level agricultural programs, and a lack of sustainable entry level pathways for young people pursuing Food & Fibre careers.</p>	<p>Severe and long-term workforce shortages in agriculture.</p>
<p>Assumptions</p>	<p>A broad foundational set of skills will set young people up for agency and choice in career decision making.</p>	<p>A supported employment based delivery model will meet the needs of both employers and young workers.</p>	<p>Designing the training aligned with employer and youth voices will strengthen the utility of training and outcomes.</p>

A systemic response is needed

- ▶ A systemic change response aims to advance equity and wellbeing by transforming ways of thinking, institutional structures and practices so that persons, communities and populations can **expand their capability** to pursue lives they value. (see [Mallett et al. 2022](#))
- ▶ The applied systemic change methodology consists of **four practice components**

PRACTICE COMPONENTS

1 Create opportunities for change

- ▶ Build momentum
- ▶ Establish legitimacy

3 Develop an adaptive evidence making agenda

- ▶ Identify problem conditions
- ▶ Apply guiding ideas and frameworks
- ▶ Establish learning loops
- ▶ Develop impact measures

2 Specify a change agenda

- ▶ Assemble a multiskilled team
- ▶ Pursue a bold ambition together

4 Develop better systems

- ▶ Design and iterate
- ▶ Redistribute power
- ▶ Build implementation capability

Theory of change underpinning AgFutures

Outcomes	Young people	Employers	Practice model	System (local)
Mechanisms	Intentional reference group mechanisms	Diverse expert partner group, collaborative co-design, needs analysis, evaluative effort	Wrap around support, pre-employment offer, diverse expert partner group	
Assumptions	Designing the training aligned with employer and youth voices will strengthen utility and outcomes	A broad foundational set of skills will set young people up for agency and choice in career decision making	A supported employment based delivery model will meet the needs of both employers and young workers	
Strategic objectives	Centre the voices of young people and employers	Design and deliver a foundational employment based training product	Design and deliver a fit for purpose support model for young people and employers	
Problem statements	Severe and long-term workforce shortages in agriculture.	Sustained disengagement and youth high un/under-employment rates .	Declining uptake and completion of entry level agricultural programs, and a lack of sustainable entry level pathways for young people pursuing Food & Fibre careers.	

Evaluation context- AgFutures

- ▶ AgFutures is a place-based initiative that is testing a new approach to the design and delivery of entry-level employment based training.
- ▶ It is leveraging the expertise of local and national partners to provide young people in the Barwon South West region of Victoria a pathway into the agriculture sector.
- ▶ Year one focuses on the co-design of the training product and co-design of the model of delivery
- ▶ Year two focuses on delivering the pilot, reporting and preparing to scale.



Youth
Reference
Group

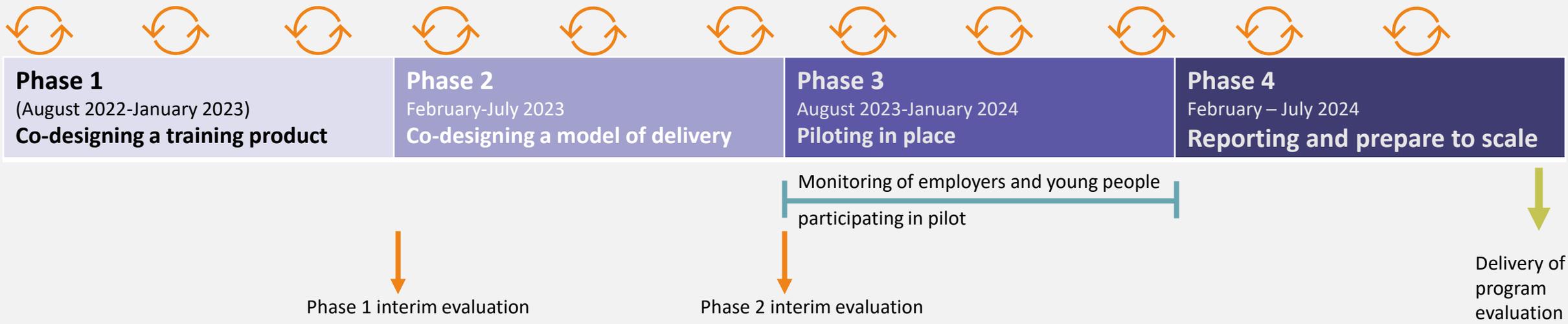
Employer
Reference
Group



Evaluation design

▶ 3 streams of evaluation: Developmental, programmatic, monitoring

Developmental learning loops are being sustained throughout the lifecycle of the initiative to enable real time adaptation.



Data collection

SGG= Strategic governance group
ERG= Employer reference group
YRG= Youth reference group



Needs analysis workshop, Nov 23

End of phase 1 interviews partners

Co-design workshop, Feb 2

Community of Practice, Mar 21

Key data collection activities

Baseline interviews with partners

Surveys with employers

Phase 1
August 2022-January 2023
Co-designing a training product

Phase 2
February-July 2023
Co-designing a model of delivery

Governance mechanism

SGG 1

SGG 2

SGG 3

SGG 4

SGG 5

SGG 6

ERG
YRG

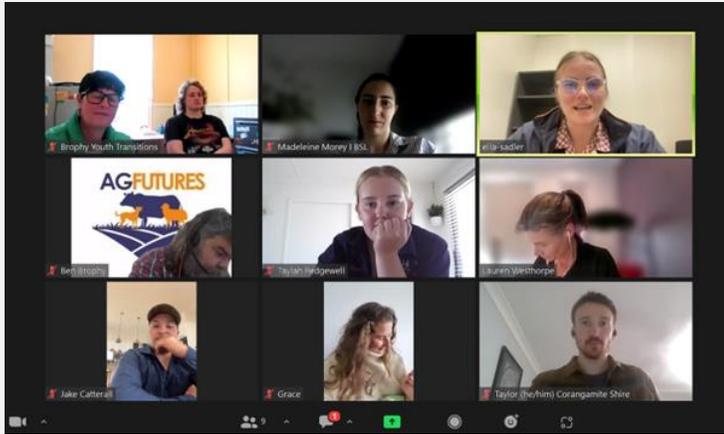
ERG
YRG

Feedback loops

What has the evaluation revealed so far?



Centring young people's voices in the co-design



- ▶ Co-designing the pre-employment pathway with the YRG has enabled us to refine what needs to be included.
- ▶ Communicating the value the YRG places on mental health training to the ERG resulted in the ERG agreeing that employers taking part in AgFutures would need to do a mental health first aid course
- ▶ Hearing from young people helps to shift the mindset of stakeholders in the local region, including youth services and employers



Engaging employers takes time

- ▶ AgFutures is challenging how employers in the sector have traditionally operated and their perceptions of young people.

“I think a lot of dairy farmers particularly have let's say been burnt in the past by that type of workforce [young workers] because of the workforce shortage”

- ▶ Employer champions play an important role in building trust and establishing legitimacy.



Engaging diverse stakeholders in co-design

- ▶ Valuing of the expertise each partner brings
 - “I think the that governance group is really good. I like the fact that we call each other out on things and that we're prepared to if we don't think something's quite right, [to] put our hand up and say it.”*
- ▶ Developing a shared ambition while allowing space for each partner to have their own ambition.
- ▶ Tensions between programmatic and systemic objectives amongst partners

“I think there's still good intent and good will If we can get to a bit more of a strategic thought pattern [in SGG meetings], it's in that capability [of other partners]”



Implications of these learnings

Assumptions	What has the evidence indicated so far?	Implications for the VET system
<p>Designing the training aligned with employer and youth voices will strengthen utility and outcomes</p>	<p>Young people want the opportunity to have a say on how training is delivered for young people. They also want to shift the mindset of stakeholders connected to the training system.</p>	<p>We need to move beyond a tripartite view of the system. We need a system that actively and meaningfully engages diverse voices in the design and delivery of training.</p>
<p>A broad foundational set of skills will set young people up for agency and choice in career decision making</p>	<p>Valuing and respecting the expertise of different stakeholders is enabling the co-design of a training product that meets the collective and individual ambitions for AgFutures.</p>	<p>Improving the efficacy of the VET system requires valuing the expertise local stakeholders have of their community and training needs to set learners up with career agency and mobility.</p>
<p>A supported employment based delivery model will meet the needs of both employers and young workers</p>	<p>Engaging employers is a challenge as they do not see the connection between labour shortages and the training system. Employer champions play an important role in building legitimacy and trust.</p>	<p>Training providers need to do more to engage and work with local employers beyond creating custom training pathways. Strengthening the relationship with employers will lead to greater alignment between training products and the labour market.</p>

Any questions?

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▶ Check out our website and

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