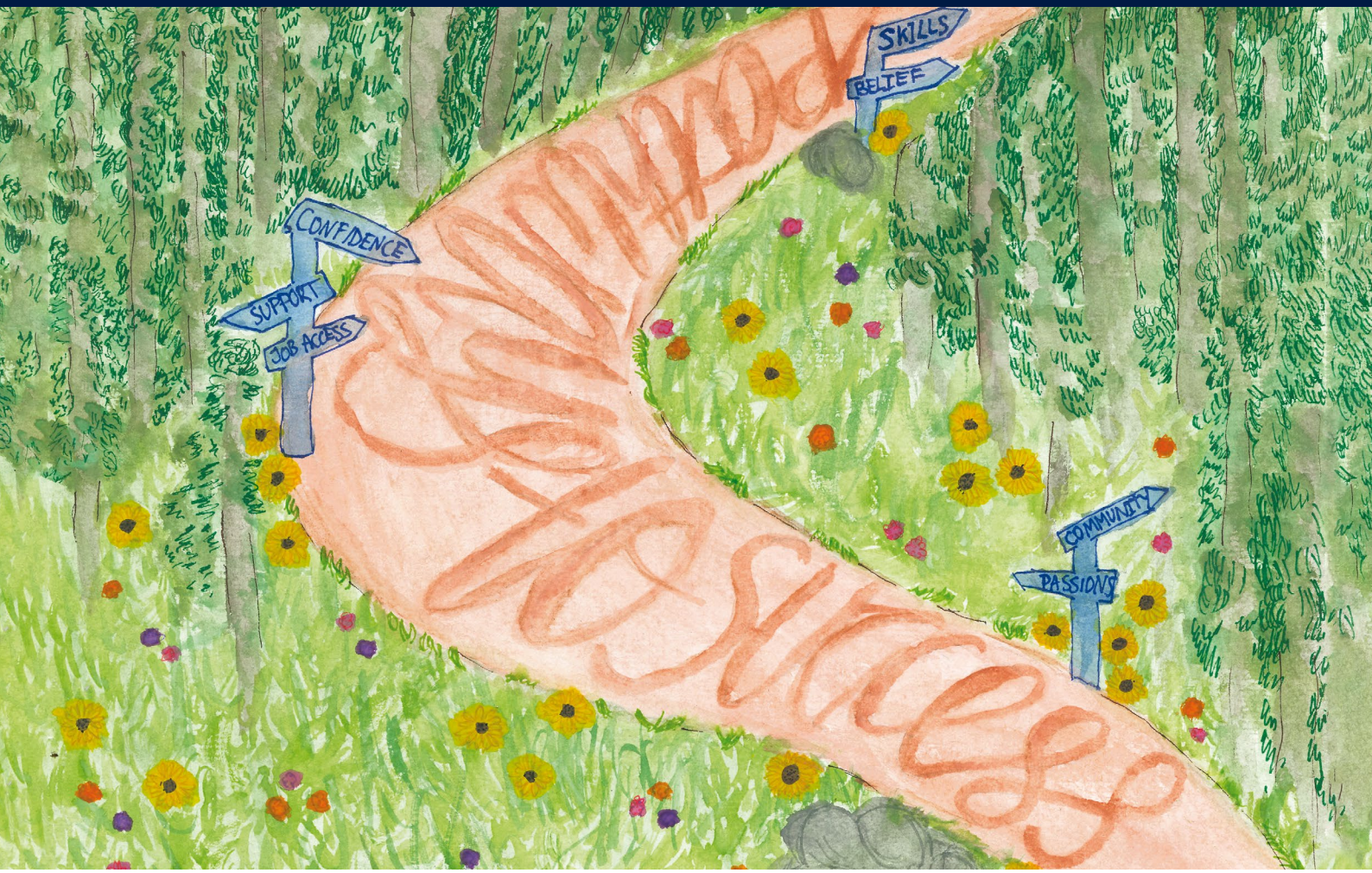
Brotherhood of St. Laurence

Inclusive Pathways to Employment pilot

Final evaluation report

Tracey Pahor, Sharon Bond and Jayne Pilkinton

2025



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Contents

Executive summary 4

Findings 4

Recommendations 5

1 Introduction 7

Employment services for young people with disability 7

IPE participants 11

The evaluation 13

2 Outcomes for young people with disability 15

Young people said IPE helped them progress towards their goals 17

Young people received sufficient opportunities and felt optimistic about career goals 22

IPE offered career support in schools to ease transitions 23

Some young people reached the education/training and employment stages in their journey 24

Many participants need more time and opportunities to achieve education/training outcomes 24

Outcomes data provides a limited snapshot of lengthy and unique career journeys 27

3 The value of IPE 28

IPE was an inclusive, accessible and positive experience for the vast majority of Stream A participants 28

IPE supported Stream A participants' career journeys 30

IPE engages young people in their career journey 33

4 How IPE built an inclusive youth employment service 34

Universal career-support pathways included young people with disability 34

Aspiration-focused and inclusive practice supported engagement and outcomes 35

Collaboration was integrated in pathways and practice 36

The pilot expanded the capability of youth employment services 39

Benefits of IPE in service capability and collaboration 41

5 Principles for inclusive youth employment services 42

1 Build inclusive employment pathways 42

2 Embed aspiration-focused and inclusive practice 43

3 Include cross-system collaboration in pathways and for practice 43

4 Invest in capability development for youth employment services and their staff 44

6 References 45

7 Appendices 46

Theory of change 46

Four phases of the IPE model 49

Data collection activities 50

Program data tables 51

Progressive Outcome Survey results 56

Executive summary

I actually never thought I'd see him go to a job five days a week, due to the whole overwhelming thought of it … I have struggled for ten years to get him to go to school five days a week … What this has given us – and the confidence that it has given this kid – is just mind blowing. Hopefully something may come out of where he's been doing the traineeship, or we can walk forward with something. But that [traineeship] can definitely go on his résumé.[1]

The Inclusive Pathway to Employment (IPE) pilot trialled ways mainstream youth employment services can support young people with disability to pursue their interests, aspirations and goals, and be socially and economically included in their communities. This pilot offered new access and enhanced support pathways along with the practice, cross-sector collaboration and service-capability development necessary to provide effective career support for young people with disability.

IPE was delivered in four youth employment services across different regions in Australia and overseen by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) National Collaboration on Employment and Disability (NCED). It included three streams:

- **Stream A:** Intensive support for young people with significant disability.[2]
- **Stream B:** Enhanced support for young people with disability already in the Transition to Work (TtW) youth employment service.
- **Stream C:** School and community-based career-development activities for young people in school or the community.

This evaluation aims to inform the development of programs and practice that create employment pathways for young people with disability, documenting outcomes, lessons learnt and recommendations for future implementation.

The evaluation has a primary focus on Stream A participants, followed by streams B and C. It explores the adaptation of the TtW service model focusing on young people's outcomes, the value of the practice approach and how employment services can be strengthened to support young people with disability.

Findings

The IPE pilot provided young people with disability early integrated transition support that offers a cohesive, aspiration-focused and inclusive service across systems. The pilot demonstrated the benefit of young people with disability receiving enhanced support from a youth employment service on their career journey that could start while they were still at school and be sustained.

Between mid-2023 and the end of 2024, there were 149 Stream A participants, 428 Stream B participants and 806 Stream C attendees.

There were positive outcomes for participants:

- **Activities:** Stream A and B participants had high engagement in initial career exploration and early Work Preparation activities. Note that engagement in Work Opportunities and Post-placement Support is likely to have increased after data collection for the evaluation concluded, which, for practical reasons, was six months before the end of the pilot.

1 Inclusive Pathways to Employment participant family member

2 'Significant disability' was defined in IPE as being either a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant; an individual receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP); an individual who has or had allocated 'additional educational funding' due to their disability while at secondary school; or an individual who has attended or is in a disability specialist school or a disability specialist class in a mainstream school.

- **Progressive outcomes:** Most surveyed Stream A participants reported IPE helped with their self-knowledge (84%), social connections and networks (83%), and employability skills (72%). Over a third (38%) reported IPE helped with lifeskills.
- **Opportunities:** Surveyed Stream A participants said their job service had given them enough opportunities to work towards what they wanted in a job (100%) and most agreed they felt more hopeful about reaching education/training goals (84%) or getting a job (80%) in the next six months.
- **Outcomes:** Some participants achieved education, training or employment outcomes (Stream A: 36%; Stream B: 46%), though many are still on their journey, and some may have achieved outcomes after data collection concluded.

Accounts offered by young people in Stream A and their families illustrate the value of IPE. Stream A participants said IPE offered a positive experience as an accessible, inclusive and supportive service. For example, most Stream A participants said the service was easy for people with disability to use (82%) and that service staff thought about what people needed and made things so everyone could join in (96%). IPE supported the career journey of young people with disability through facilitating a transition from school and opportunities for exploration as well as building young people's job readiness. One Stream A participant commented:

> ***This job service is easy for young people because they make sure that everyone is included with the activities and make it easy to discover what we want to do in the future as a job.***

Participants said IPE offered a positive experience as an accessible, inclusive and supportive service.

IPE built the capability of youth employment services to be inclusive and support young people with disability. To do this, it made new access points to youth employment services and enhanced existing systems to create universal career-support pathways that included young people with disability. IPE implemented aspiration-focused and inclusive practice to support engagement and outcomes through the practice model, a focus on accessibility and working with family members. Collaboration with family members and supporters, schools, employers and community organisations was core to implementing these pathways and practice.

The changes introduced for IPE expanded the capability of delivery partner services, relying on the expertise, time and buy-in of staff. The dedicated staffing funded by IPE was essential along with the models, practices, tools, reflection and other development activities facilitated by the NCED as an enabling organisation.

Recommendations

The evaluation has identified four principles that can inform the development of inclusive youth employment services to support career development for young people with disability:

1. **Build inclusive employment pathways by providing accessible career support for all young people with disability.** Effective universal services require developing integrated transition pathways that begin while young people with disability are still at school and offer sustained support. It is important to involve young people with disability when designing and implementing the career-support programs and policies that affect them.
2. **Embed aspiration-focused and inclusive practice that invests in young people's aspirations and provides the structural supports for success.** Do this by broadening outcomes so they value and measure exploration and progress in wider life domains. To deliver this practice and the outcomes for participants, provide inclusive and accessible service settings, offer individualised coaching and group activities, and provide coordinated key supports.

3. **Include cross-system collaboration in pathways and practice by integrating school, employment services and other supports so they provide integrated transition support.** This will facilitate starting employment service support in schools for a scaffolded transition. Young people with disability must be assisted to access opportunities and supports through navigation support and the funds to access opportunities and supports. Collaboration is also needed to improve the opportunities for young people by removing barriers to education and training, supporting inclusive workplaces, and offering community spaces and activities. For this cross-system collaboration to be an ongoing part of pathways and practice, networks will need to be facilitated and resourced beyond funding cycles to be sustained in the long term.
4. **Invest in capability development for youth employment services and their staff to implement more inclusive pathways and practice, while fostering collaboration.** Ensure organisational support within the youth employment service and resource an enabling organisation with the relevant professional expertise to coordinate and build capability. With this enabling support, the youth employment service should build their staff capability by employing staff with expertise to support young people with disability, enabling staff retention and transition, embedding inclusive practice, limiting caseload and group sizes, and fostering staff professional development and network-building.

For this cross-system collaboration to be an ongoing part of pathways and practice, networks will need to be facilitated and resourced beyond funding cycles to be sustained in the long term.

1 Introduction

A successful transition from school to work is a positive first step into employment for young people and contributes to a lower youth unemployment rate. However, young people with disability are less likely to enjoy early career-development success than their non-disabled peers. Only 49% of young people with disability aged 15 to 24 are employed, compared to 64% of young people without disability in that age group (AIHW 2024).

'Transition to employment for young people with disabilities is more complex, lengthier, and diverse than that recognized in the current policy settings …' (Stafford et al 2017). The current systems funded across levels of government (school, further education/training, social services and employment services) are not designed to support the career transition of young people with disability (Crosbie et al 2024) and are built on low expectations in which some young people's careers are not even considered, and they are transferred directly from school into adult disability services (Redgrove, Jewell & Ellison 2016). A lack of accessible and inclusive opportunities results in missed career-development opportunities, such as school-based work experience. Additionally, the lack of support when leaving school has been described by families as making the process a 'cliff edge' rather than a transition (Davies & Beamish 2009).

Employment services for young people with disability

Employment services for young people with disability are few. National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Local Area Coordinators discuss education/training and employment goals with participants and the NDIS can fund supports for its participants to access work, but eligibility for and the extent of this support is limited. Australia's employment service system includes employment services for those with disability (Disability Employment Services (DES)) – which, at the time of writing, has only a very small number of services labelled as youth specialists (but no youth-focused contracts), and segregated workplaces that are not required to pay minimum wage (Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs)).

These parts of the system have been found to have limitations and are undergoing changes (DSS & DES 2024). In addition to the disadvantages in pay and access, providing separate services for people with disability instead of making universal services accessible has been linked to segregation and dismissed as a solution to inequality by three of the five Disability Royal Commission Commissioners (Disability Royal Commission 2023).

Young people with disability do not usually have access to adequate support through the national youth employment service Transition to Work (TtW). Effective career support for young people with disability means starting well before the final stages of school; considering young people's broader development and aspirations across life domains; and recognising and celebrating stepping stone opportunities (e.g. lifeskills, first jobs) as significant progress (Crosbie et al 2024; Redgrove, Jewell & Ellison 2016; Warr & Bond 2023).

Only 49% of young people with disability aged 15 to 24 are employed, compared to 64% of young people without disability in that age group.

TtW services are not contracted to work in this way. They cannot engage young people while they are still at school, (to be eligible for TtW, young people must have experienced a period of disengagement from school), except in the cases of voluntary participation by First Nations Australians or ParentsNext participants (DEWR 2024b). The TtW outcome payment model does not incentivise prioritising participants who may need more intensive, earlier or longer lasting support to gain meaningful employment, so this cohort is generally not proactively engaged by TtW services. In addition, many young people with a diagnosed disability are automatically referred to DES services. Despite this, 16% of young people in TtW services have been identified as having disability (DEWR 2024a). This is likely an underestimate as it includes those who identified as having a disability in their Work Capacity Assessment or who are in receipt of a Disability Support Pension (DEWR 2024a), but many more may have undiagnosed disability or not have shared this information. There may also be barriers to TtW participants with disability getting effective outcomes as they are 19% less likely to have an education or employment outcome in their first year of service in TtW than those without disability (Henderson et al 2021).

Inclusive employment pathways within universal employment services

The Inclusive Pathways to Employment (IPE) pilot trialled ways TtW youth employment services can be adapted to support young people with disability to pursue their interests, aspirations and goals, and to be socially and economically included in their communities. The trial was developed drawing on evidence developed by the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) on employment services for people with disability (Brown & Mallett 2021; Mallett, Brown & Finnis 2021); young people, specifically the TtW Community of Practice's approach (Bond & Keys 2020); and young people with disability, the Pathways to Employment (P2E) trial (Warr et al 2022) and the Ticket to Work model (SVA Consulting 2020). The pilot introduced new access and enhanced support pathways for young people with disability into TtW services.

Additionally, it provided services with the model and capability development support to equip them with the practice and collaboration to be an effective universal service inclusive of young people with disability. It aimed to provide effective career support for young people with disability and gain insights into what would be needed for this to be offered through youth employment services.

IPE implementation started in 2023, with an initial meeting of the community of policy and practice in July 2023 and the first participant enrolments happening from that time. Service delivery for this pilot continued until mid-2025. Four TtW services offered the IPE pilot, each in a different region in Australia. These delivery partner services had flexibility in the way IPE staff worked in their service, but each service offered three mutually supporting streams. Each stream was defined around a cohort of participants who receive a service offer that was expected to contribute to their career-development outcomes.

- Stream A: Individualised support to young people with significant disability[3] who are typically excluded from TtW. This tests what works for inclusive practice approaches. [149 enrolled participants]
- Stream B: An enhanced service to young people with disability who are on the existing TtW caseload or who join through traditional referral processes during the pilot. This tests what works to build service capability. [428 enrolled participants]
- Stream C: A network that supports school-to-work transitions for young people with disability – a Student Transition Action Network (STAN) – is built to provide career-development opportunities to young people with disability, predominately in mainstream and specialist school environments, or as school leavers in the broader community. This tests approaches to collaborative effort between the delivery partner service and local community. [806 attended career-development opportunities]

3 'Significant disability' was defined in IPE as being a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participant; or an individual receiving the Disability Support Pension; an individual who has or had allocated 'additional educational funding' due to their disability while at secondary school; an individual who has attended or is in a disability specialist school or a disability specialist class in a mainstream school.

The IPE pilot was enabled by BSL's National Collaboration on Employment and Disability (NCED). The NCED is a multi-disciplinary team within BSL that works collaboratively with organisations and communities across Australia to enable successful post-school transitions into decent and meaningful employment for young people with disability. The team works to improve and drive change across the employment and education and training systems and to build the capability of organisations and people working within them through the translation of research and evidence into policy solutions and practical resources (see the theory of change in the Appendix).

Aspiration-focused and inclusive practice

IPE delivered an inclusive practice model for supporting young people with disability, drawing on Advantaged Thinking,[4] aspects of the customised employment approach[5] and other evidence-informed practice in education-to-employment transition. The IPE model acknowledges that young people with disability (as all people) require the right conditions to succeed.[6] The model invests in young people and incorporates a collaborative way of working to harness assets within local communities.

The IPE model acknowledges that young people with disability (as all people) require the right conditions to succeed.

The Advantaged Thinking approach, central to IPE, recognises that all young people have a vital contribution to make to the social and economic life of our communities and society, and that to do so all young people should have access to the opportunities and social networks that facilitate this social and economic participation. This moves the focus of work away from 'the problems faced by young people experiencing disadvantage', towards using 'individual young people's skills and aspirations as the starting point for career goals … [providing] the structural opportunities and resources needed to achieve these goals' (Bond & Keys 2020). The approach develops individual and community assets, and co-creates solutions – jobs, education and community connections – to enable young people to achieve independent adulthood. This aligns with aspects of customised employment approaches that fit a job to the person's skills.

Four phases of the IPE model

The IPE model has four phases, presented in the table below. These provide a structured 'pathway' for young people's career journeys. The young person drives the process, which supports them to explore career options, develop goals and access a range of opportunities and resources that will support them to achieve these goals. The phases are intended to help understand where the young person is at in the process. They do not need to be completed in order and support is still available after a young person starts education/training or a job as a career journey may not be a linear process. Ideally, participants exit – ending their enrolment in stream A or B of IPE – when they are set-up for success. However, based on current arrangements in TtW services, time in the program for Stream B participants was limited to 18 or 24 months of support (as per the standard TtW offering), depending on their non-vocational barriers, and support for Stream A participants was only available from their enrolment after mid-2023 to the end of the pilot in mid-2025.

4 The Advantaged Thinking approach was developed by Colin Falconer in the United Kingdom in 2009. It is a practice approach that BSL uses throughout its work.

5 'A customised job is one that is designed from the outset to fit the skills of a particular person. In that sense, it can be contrasted to the model where a person is recruited to match the skills of an available role.' (Australian Human Rights Commission 2024)

6 Conditions of success outline and define the job seeker's ideal conditions of employment, learning characteristics, interests, preferences, contributions, task competence and support needs. These conditions may also incorporate wider environmental and social conditions including transport, family responsibility and need, etc. Identifying and implementing conditions of success to help the job seeker thrive in employment is utilised in customised employment.

Table 1 Four phases of the model

Phase	Purpose	Activities young people may participate in recorded for the evaluation
Guidance and Exploration	Empower participants to develop their goals through a process of self-exploration, identifying unique strengths, capabilities, interests and aspirations as well as challenges and the impact of their disability on work through experiential learning and career development	Explore different career options and pathways Explore and discuss strengths and aspirations and identify goals (with coach and family) One-on-one sessions with a coach Group activities and events
Work Preparation: building skills and capabilities	Support individuals to develop high self-efficacy, skills and industry awareness so they can determine their career plan through experiential learning, accredited training and ongoing coaching	Develop job search skills (e.g. résumé writing, interview preparation and alternative hiring preparation – including video CVs, communicating with employers, and customised recruitment, induction and roles) Participate in workshops to prepare for working life (i.e. work rights, self-advocacy, personal presentation, routine planning) Guest speakers Employment tours Industry-specific training (e.g. industry tickets, pre-apprenticeship training) Develop IPE co-designed job plan Receive support with personal issues (e.g. housing, health, money) that have prevented or made it difficult to participate in education/training or to get a job
Work Opportunities: real-world opportunities	Provide individuals with practical, real-world work experiences and opportunities for active job searching that are inclusive and accessible to further develop capabilities, identify the participant's conditions for success and implement their career plan	Work taster, job shadowing (watching someone working), volunteering or internship Work experience Meet employers Prepare personal profile of adjustments (for participants to have the right conditions to succeed)
Post-placement Support	Give tailored support to participants and employers/education providers to establish conditions for success and celebrate achievements	Check in separately with both young people and employers/education providers to meet support needs

The staff in TtW services delivering IPE utilised the inclusive practice approach to offer career-development opportunities across the phases.

Common components of delivery across services

Delivery included the following components, which extended the work of youth employment services:

- **Youth and participant-focused environments:** Extends services' focus on accessibility and building participants' confidence at their site and includes schools and settings in the community.
- **Personalised coaching:** Uses a keyworker model so a coach is the participant's primary contact. This coach tailors the new IPE four-phase Advantaged Thinking model to the participant.
- **Inclusive group activities and training:** Expanded or established to develop employment and workplace skills, as well as offering social connection.
- **Working with family members and other supporters:** Where appropriate coaches also engage the family members and other supporters of participants. This occurs in IPE to a greater extent than is common in TtW services.
- **Employer engagement:** Staff use existing and new processes and practices to engage employers for providing opportunities in the community as well as to support job placements.
- **Building a network to enable and empower young people with disability in their career journey:** Delivery partner services working collaboratively with local communities to provide career-development opportunities and support pathways. Services are taking different paths to establish STANs to progress this as place-based work – drawing on the local resources and networks and driven by local leadership to respond to local needs.
- **Capability development of staff and services:** Staff in delivery partner services have training, formal learning, regular reflection and other types of knowledge sharing. The NCED plays an enabling role. Specialists in supporting young people with disability are employed within services to provide intensive coaching support to participants and build the capability of generalist staff.

IPE participants

A total 577 young people enrolled in IPE with around one-quarter assigned to Stream A and three-quarters to Stream B. A distinct feature of Stream A was the provision of employment services to enrolled school students (48%). Stream A tended to be younger than Stream B, with an average age of 17 compared to 20, and were at an earlier stage in their career journey. Male participants were overrepresented in Stream A (62%). Higher rates of identification, diagnosis and referral of young men to IPE, particularly by schools, is a potential reason for the imbalance, which did not occur in Stream B.

High proportions of both streams identified as having disability, although some participants chose to not to identify as disabled even though other people identify them as having disability. NDIS participation was higher in Stream A (36%) than Stream B (7%). Disability type differed across streams. In Stream A, 65 per cent identified as neurodivergent – having autism and/or ADHD. In Stream B, psychosocial disability (e.g. anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, borderline personality disorder, bipolar or schizoaffective disorder) was the most identified (69%).

Table 2 IPE participant characteristics, Stream A and B

Participant characteristics	Stream A no.	Stream A %	Stream B no.	Stream B %
Total participants	149	-	428	-
Age	15–22	-	16–26	-
Average age	17	-	20	-
School students when commenced IPE	71	48%	10	2%
In post-school training when commenced IPE	3	2%	37	9%
Male	92	62%	206	50%
Female	50	34%	194	47%
Non-binary and self-described gender	6	4%	12	3%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	10	7%	56	13%
Identify as having a disability	126	85%	350	82%
NDIS participant	50	36%	26	7%
Neurodivergence: autism and ADHD	92	65%	161	40%
Psychosocial disability	64	45%	277	69%
Intellectual/learning disability[7]	44	31%	59	14%
Sensory disabilities (e.g. vision, hearing, speech)	11	8%	15	4%
Physical disabilities	9	6%	35	9%

Stream C participants attended 121 activities between June 2023 and the end of 2024. A total of 806 young people with disability received career-development opportunities and attended events[8] entered in the STAN log (see Table 6) from commencement to the end of 2024 (excludes large events from April 2024 onwards). Activities tended to have more male attendees. Stream C events with more male attendees tended to have five or more participants while events with more female attendees tended to be small, with two or fewer participants.

Services suggested school inclusion staff were more likely to refer young men due to problematic classroom behaviour and their higher rates of disability diagnosis. Lower referral of young women was attributed by staff to young women being perceived as more compliant and capable, indicative of gendered social norms and limited understanding of the different presentation of some disabilities in women.

7 This category primarily includes participants with intellectual disabilities (including Down syndrome). The category of intellectual/learning disability was used in the original data request. This category is not common in Australia. Where further information was provided that specified 'ADHD' but no intellectual disability, participants were not included in this category. Where no further information was provided, or the further information specified 'learning disability' or 'learning difficulties', the participant was included in this category.

8 Stream C is a count of attendees at activities. It is not a distinct count of individuals.

The evaluation

The IPE pilot evaluation looks at approaches to delivering accessible, inclusive and effective mainstream[9] youth employment services that develop employment pathways for young people with disability. It aims to inform the development of programs and practice to enable better employment pathways for young people with disability, documenting outcomes, lessons learnt and recommendations.

The evaluation explores five key questions:

1. How has the TtW service model and practice approach been adapted to support young people with disability?
2. To what extent have young people achieved outcomes that were supported by IPE?
3. What is the perceived value of the adapted TtW approach to the development of employment pathways for young people with a disability within TtW?
4. How effective was the IPE approach in strengthening employment services to support young people with disability?
5. What has been learnt and what are the recommendations for policy and programs that support employment pathways for young people with disability?

The primary focus of this evaluation is Stream A participants – young people with significant disability and the cohort receiving the most intensive intervention. This is followed by Stream B then Stream C.

The evaluation approach was informed by a synthesis of published information as well as consultations regarding ethical and accessible data collection in projects about young people with significant disability undertaken with professionals and – through the Youth Disability Advocacy Service – young people with disability. This process affirmed the importance of including the perspectives of young people with disability and guided the tiered consent process for young people,[10] accessible language for survey tools and a flexible interview approach for direct use with Stream A participants. This project was approved by the Human Research Ethic Committee at BSL, application references P0138 and P0140.

Method

This evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative methods to consider a participant's holistic journey. To answer the evaluation questions about the outcomes achieved, the value and effectiveness of the pilot and how policy and programs can support employment pathways for young people with disability, young people's characteristics, activities, outcomes and experience of IPE were examined through program data, surveys and interviews. In participant surveys and interviews with participants and family members, supporters and employers, the focus was on Stream A participants, aligning with the evaluation's primary focus on this stream. Interviews with family members and supporters provided their perspective, but some also provided information about the journey of a participant who chose not to be interviewed. While this did not provide the same insight as the young person's own perspective, it meant a wider range of journeys were explored. Interviews, a focus group, surveys, logs and meeting minutes have been used to provide delivery partner service and NCED staff perspectives and answer the evaluation question about how the service and practice had been adapted.

9 TtW is a mainstream youth employment service. Young people with significant disability are generally directed to a Disability Employment Service (DES) provider rather than a youth-specific service. Currently there are a small number of DES providers that identify as youth specialists, but they are not contracted to deliver a youth service and they only cover small parts of Australia.

10 A tiered consent process for sharing program data with BSL was established to reduce the likelihood participants would be excluded from the evaluation due to not being able to provide informed consent. Informed consent was obtained from young people, or from a parent/carer or from two professionals/workers familiar with the young person.

As the three streams each had a different intended cohort and service offer, most data and findings are presented here by stream. The evaluation also reports where there were differences in outcomes between participants with different characteristics or if those with or without outcomes had different journeys within each stream. Bivariate analysis was conducted to identify statistically significant relationships between participant characteristics (e.g. age, gender, Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander origin, disability) or their time in IPE (months) with participation in IPE activities, progressive, education/training and employment outcomes.

Findings are presented for the pilot as a whole, rather than by service. Qualitative data sources have been used to assist with the analysis and reporting of the quantitative data in the context of small participant numbers compounded by variation in implementation between services. We note that this report is a contribution to understanding implementation, young people's journey to and the value of outcomes, and recommendations for practice and policies.

This report is a contribution to understanding implementation, young people's journey to and the value of outcomes, and recommendations for practice and policies.

2 Outcomes for young people with disability

Young people progressed in their career journeys during IPE. This chapter explores their progress and outcomes in relation to participation in career development activities, being supported to progress in key life domains (Stream A) and the achievement of education, training and employment outcomes as at the end of 2024. Outcomes are described by IPE streams separately due to differences in the cohorts, including likely impact of disability on participants' daily life, and the intensity of supports provided by IPE.[11] More detail, including tables and graphs, may be found in the Appendices.

Young people engaged in career development activities

Participants engaged in activities across the four phases of the IPE model (described in Table 1) to varying degrees (see Table 16 and Table 17). Stream A and B participants had very high engagement in the initial Guidance and Exploration phase activities, high engagement in Work Preparation and low to moderate engagement in Work Opportunities and Post-placement Support. This may be because young people had not moved through the phases at the time of data collection, or they moved into education/training or employment and changing phase was not appropriate. Although progress through the phases was not necessarily linear, overall, the more time participants had in IPE, the more likely they were to complete activities. This was particularly the case for Stream A where the longer they had been in IPE, the more likely they were to complete at least one activity across each of the four phases (Correlation[12] +0.242; p[13]=<0.003 (explanation of statistical terms below)).[14] Stream C participated in a wide range of career-development activities as part of IPE services' STAN effort.

Guidance and Exploration activities were completed by most participants

There was very high engagement by young people in Phase 1 Guidance and Exploration activities: 97 per cent of Stream A and 98 per cent of Stream B participated in one or more activity.

Almost all young people in both streams participated in 'one-on-one sessions with a coach' (97% of streams A and B) after which the most completed activities were 'explore different career options and pathways' and 'explore and discuss strengths and aspirations and identify goals (with coach and family)'. As Phase 1 represents most young people's first steps in the service, this very high engagement is to be expected.

11 Methodological note: The evaluation's primary focus on Stream A is a further reason for the disaggregation. A limitation of this evaluation (small numbers and data quality issues) means that results need to be interpreted with caution. Qualitative data sources (e.g. interviews) have been used to provide further support for numeric findings.

12 **Correlation** is the Pearson's correlation coefficient, measuring the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the two variables. Strength: a correlation coefficient below 0.3 is regarded to be a weak correlation. Direction: coefficients with negative numbers indicate negative correlations or relationships between variables, and positive numbers represent positive relationships.

13 **p** is the probability of obtaining a result like this, or more extreme, if there were actually no real association between the variables. A p-value less than 0.05 means there is less than a 5% chance that the result occurred by random chance, which suggests a statistically significant association.

14 While the longer they were in the IPE the more likely Stream A participants were to complete activities, progression through phases and activities is guided by individual goals, so phases may be skipped, and progress may not be linear.

Conversely, 'group activities and events' had lower participation (Stream A: 66%; Stream B: 72%). This may be because activities were not aligned with young people's goals or because disability (e.g. social anxiety) reduced their uptake.

Work Preparation activities had high engagement

Engagement in Phase 2 Work Preparation activities was high: 89 per cent of Stream A and 85 per cent of Stream B had participated in one activity or more. While overall engagement was high, the percentage engaging in single activities was lower than in the previous phase, suggesting young people participated in different activities from each other (see Table 17). Varied participation in activities could indicate differences in participant stage and readiness to take up opportunities or the relevance of the activities to participants' goals.

- The activities with the highest completion were 'Receive support with personal issues (e.g. housing, health, money) that have prevented or made it difficult for me to participate in education/training or to get a job' (Stream A: 69%; Stream B: 58%); 'Develop job search skills (e.g. résumé writing, interview preparation and alternative hiring preparation – including video CVs, communicating with employers, and customised recruitment, induction and roles)' (Stream A: 69%; Stream B: 56%); and 'Participate in workshops to prepare for working life (i.e. work rights, self-advocacy, personal presentation, routine planning)' (Stream A: 56%; Stream B: 71%).
- The activity with the lowest completion was 'Develop IPE co-designed job plan' (Stream A: 15%; Stream B: 12%). 'Industry-specific training (e.g. industry tickets, pre-apprenticeship training)' was also low for Stream A (15%; Stream B: 27%).

Engagement in Phase 2 activities highlights the focus on access and inclusion by supporting people with personal issues, and on the provision of building elementary job skills and work readiness. Lower engagement in industry-specific training indicates that some young people had not yet chosen career paths or been ready to pursue them through training.

Work Opportunities had low to moderate engagement and was substantially higher among Stream A participants

Engagement in Phase 3 Work Opportunities was moderate: 52 per cent of Stream A and 41 per cent of Stream B participated in one activity or more. Work Opportunities had the lowest level of participation of the phases, possibly because some had not reached this phase.

Some 44 per cent of Stream A and 34 per cent of Stream B participants completed at least one of the following activities: 'work taster, job shadowing (watching someone work), volunteering or internship'; 'work experience'; and/or 'meet employers'. That Stream A was more likely to complete activities may indicate that, as intended, more intensive support was being provided, and those in IPE for longer were moderately more likely to have completed a work opportunity activity (Correlation: +0.289; p=<0.001).

Moderate numbers reached the Post-placement Support phase

Engagement in Phase 4 Post-placement Support: 'check in separately with both young people and employers/education providers to meet support needs' was completed by around half of Stream A (48%) and Stream B (49%) participants. This is to be expected as young people not yet in education/training or employment did not receive post-placement support through IPE. Delivery partner service staff identified that more young people **may have** received post-placement support but, when a separate department provided it, the support may not have been recorded for evaluation purposes.

IPE career development was offered in schools

IPE delivery partner services, as part of their effort to develop STANs, worked with the community to identify career-development needs and together delivered these activities to students with disability in the region. Stream C participants were represented at 121 activities between June 2023 and the end of 2024. A total of 806 young people with disability had career-development opportunities and attended events entered in the STAN log from commencement to the end of 2024.[15]

The types of activities with the highest number of attending young people were large events (e.g. careers expos) and Stream C IPE information and recruitment sessions. Other activities were careers event (e.g. mock interviews), informal training/capacity building (e.g. NDIS, disability and career pathways information), community engagement events and workplace tasters and tours.

Young people said IPE helped them progress towards their goals

This evaluation took a holistic approach by broadening the measurement of progress beyond education/training and employment outcomes to consider achievement across four life domains: self-knowledge, connections, lifeskills and employment skills (i.e. progressive outcomes). Given IPE participants were at different points in their career journey and young people with disability may require support over a longer period in their transition from school to work, progress should be celebrated and valued as a step towards eventual education/training and employment outcomes.

Stream A participants in IPE for two months or more were asked if IPE helped with four life domains with the option to respond: 'No: It has not helped'; 'Unsure: I am unsure if it helped', 'A little bit: It helped a little bit' or 'A lot: It helped a lot.' (see description in Table 10). This section reports the percentage saying IPE helped, which is the combined percentage of those saying IPE helped 'a little bit' or 'a lot'. The headline findings for progressive outcomes across the life domains showed an average of:

- 84 per cent who said IPE helped with self-knowledge (70–92%)
- 83 per cent who said IPE helped with social connections and networking (72–96%)
- 72 per cent who said IPE helped with employment skills (54–82%)
- 38 per cent who said IPE helped with their lifeskills (13–56%).

Improved self-knowledge helped inform career direction

The survey domain 'self-knowledge' aligns closely with the Guidance and Exploration phase of IPE. This domain considers progress in terms of 'working out what is important to me, feeling more confident, working out what I'm good at and feeling in control of my life' – all of which represent self-knowledge that is facilitated by career development and informs career direction. As one participant noted:

> ***I'm starting to learn more about myself and what I want to do. I know I want a casual job to start off with that's not working with lots of people.***

Some 70 to 92 per cent of participants reported that IPE helped to build their self-knowledge (Figure 1). One participant noted the change in their sense of direction and accomplishment:

> ***Before starting IPE I did not know what to do with myself. But now I am in [a youth program] and looking into disability support after I finish. I now feel like I am doing something.***

15 STAN log figures exclude large events from April 2024 onwards because they inflate attendance and could be misleading. For example, it is not representative of IPE's support if several hundred young people attended a large event with fairly minimal involvement by their service.

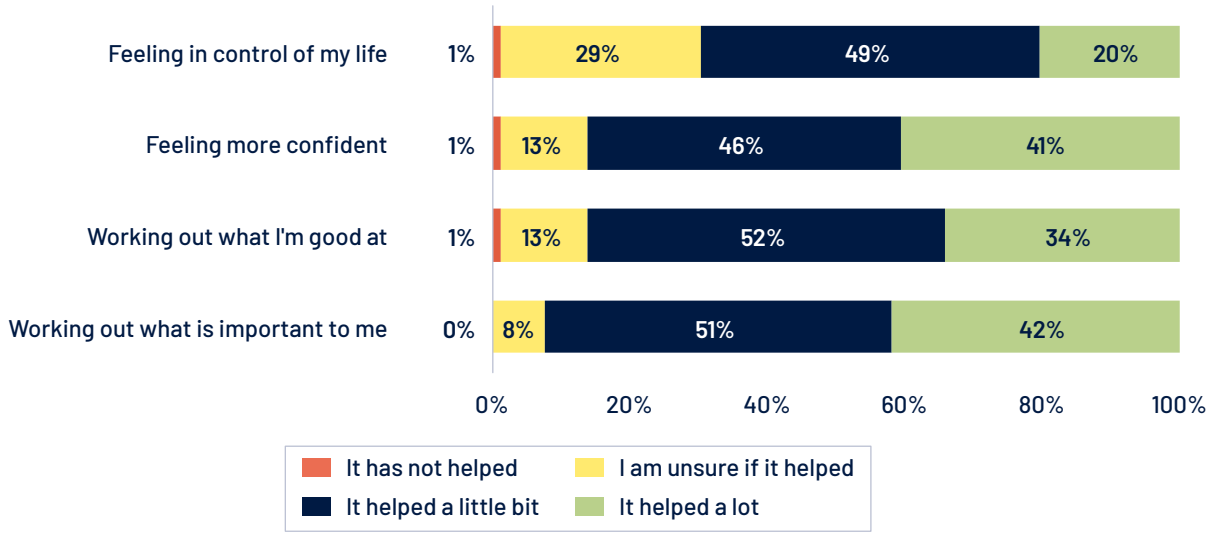
Comments also included that IPE helped young people find the environments that work for them, see that there are options out there for them, receive help and support in relation to career and personal issues as well as referral to other services such as Centrelink, the NDIS and entering education/training.

> ***I can do what I want. There are options for me with the help. It's better than school.***
>
> ***– IPE participant***

> ***They have helped me with so much since I left school. I have been linked in with someone to help me apply for youth allowance and someone to help me go to TAFE next year.***
>
> ***– IPE participant***

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants were less likely to say IPE helped with self-knowledge, which may be because the service was less likely to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants in this area or because they already had strong self-knowledge (Correlation: -0.245; Chi Square[16]: 4.627, p=0.052). For example, an Aboriginal interviewee joined IPE already considering a career as a cultural facilitator. The young person contributed to cultural events at the service and, by celebrating their identity, was a potential support for other Aboriginal people at the service.

Figure 1 Participant assessment of IPE's contribution to 'self-knowledge' (n=79)



IPE helped young people find the environments that work for them, see that there are options out there for them, receive help and support in relation to career and personal issues as well as referral to other services.

16 **Chi Square** is the test statistic for a Chi-squared test of independence between variables.

Building connections with people

Building connections with people refers to relationships with peers, professionals and networks, including through community and group activities, which may build support for and progress towards careers. Some 72 to 96 per cent of participants reported IPE helped build connections (Figure 2).

Through IPE, participants said they were making friends, enjoying group activities and connecting with staff and other services:

> ***I really enjoy meeting new friends and doing fun activities, I'm doing stuff I have never done before with good, fun people.***

> ***I still am getting to know people. I've come to drop in to meet friends and my coach has helped me with this. I got put into [the jobseeking club] with small groups of people and that was good.***

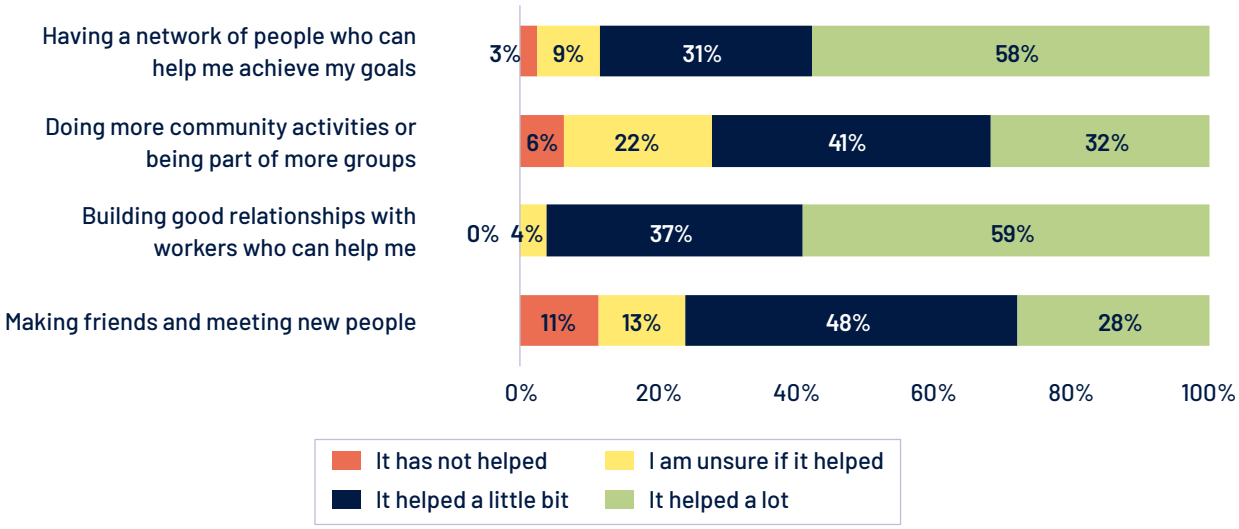
> ***This is where I have found friends that I can rely on and talk to. Every day is something different here and it is safe for me.***

> ***[I'm] working with different people now to help me.***

Neurodivergent participants (with autism and/or ADHD) were less likely to feel IPE helped with connection (Correlation: -0.269; Chi Square: 5.58, p=0.018). While acknowledging accommodations to support their inclusion (e.g. smaller group sizes, quiet spaces), survey comments indicated group activities remained challenging and were not the preferred activities for some.

> ***I like to be on my own.***
>
> ***– IPE participant***

Figure 2 Participant assessment of IPE's contribution to 'connections with people' (n=79)



IPE helped build employability skills

Some 76 to 82 per cent of participants said IPE helped build basic or preliminary employability skills around reliability, presentation, problem solving and communication skills (Figure 3). While some survey respondents commented that they already had some of these skills, many participants said IPE helped them learn new ones and to know what to expect in a job, including through training in workshops and courses:

> ***I got taught about routines and a weekly planner has helped me. I'm learning to speak up more and can hold better conversations. I have done three workshops and that is what's helping me.***

> ***Being part of different workshops and being listened to in what I want to achieve has helped me heaps. I've been taught how to look at things differently and anything I want to achieve is made possible for me to do. I'm happy to keep going into different stuff to get more skills and knowledge.***

> ***I did [an employment skills] course that helped me learn about employment and what to expect. I know I want to be a beautician and have been given advice how to get started.***

They also acknowledged the support provided by their coach. As one participant said:

> ***I have had lots of information and help in getting a job, what's expected of me and how to present myself. I feel my coach understands me and wants to support and work with me.***

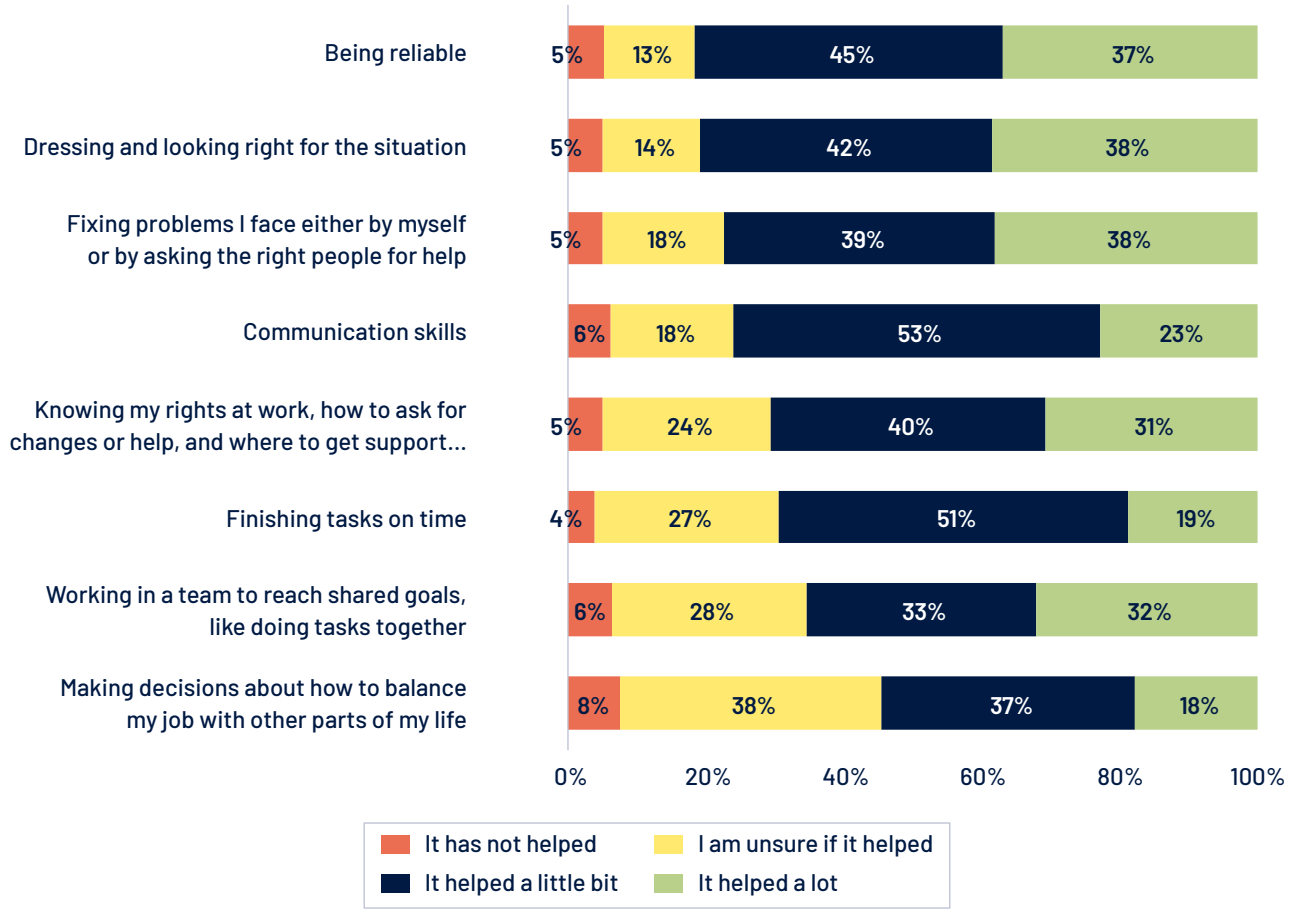
Many of these participants had yet to start a job. This may have contributed to lower proportions saying IPE helped with secondary skills such as understanding rights at work, time management, teamwork and managing work life balance (54–71%). One participant reflected on employability skills, staff support and the progress they observed in their own life:

> ***I have noticed a progression of maturity in my life and I am able to ask for help when I need it.***

Participants with psychosocial disability were more likely than participants without a psychosocial disability to say that IPE helped with their employability skills (Correlation: +0.273; Chi Square: 5.297, p=0.021). Many participants experienced anxiety, which may make participating in Work Preparation activities more challenging. However, the personalised coaching and responsive model supported young people to build their capabilities, nonetheless. For example, one family member described in an interview that a young person was too anxious to go to their first mock interview. With support, the young person continued engaging with their coach and went to subsequent mock interviews.

Participants who said IPE helped with their employability skills were more likely to start education/training (Correlation: +0.265; Chi Square: 4.972, p=0.026). Interviewees said participants were assisted to obtain work uniforms, practice teamwork, build communication skills, develop routines and build stamina for working full-time hours, and learn which work environments would suit them. Some staff and participant interviewees positively described the sequenced nature of the service, for example, first building skills through Certificate III training, then focusing on jobs. Employability skills were also built on the job. For example, one young person started a six-month traineeship related to their career interests. A family member said the participant was supported to learn the expectations of that work environment and the skills to maintain the traineeship which would also be transferrable into other roles. Many people described IPE as contributing to young people becoming more confident.

Figure 3 Participant assessment of IPE's contribution to 'employability skills' (n=79)



Some young people improved lifeskills when this was a goal

Lifeskills such as accessing transport, and managing health, money and housing are important for enabling progress towards gaining and sustaining work. Some participants shared specific goals, such as:

> ***I would like to learn more about saving money and how to invest money.***

Participant circumstances, skills and existing supports varied so these were not goals for everyone. Some were already receiving support:

> ***My parents control most of this. Sometimes we have done travel training, but Mum and Dad like to take me everywhere by car. If I need to see a doctor my mum takes me – she looks after everything.***

> ***I'm capable of managing my money so I do not require help. My mum drives me around ... I have stable accommodation ... I have had help linking me to support groups for my condition and getting therapy.***

The proportion who said IPE helped with lifeskills ranged from 13 to 56 per cent (Figure 4). One example of how lifeskills developed, shared by a family member in an interview, was a participant who, for the first time, attended a medical appointment independently rather than attending with a supporter, and enjoyed lunch out rather than returning straight home. Participants shared the effects of learning improved lifeskills:

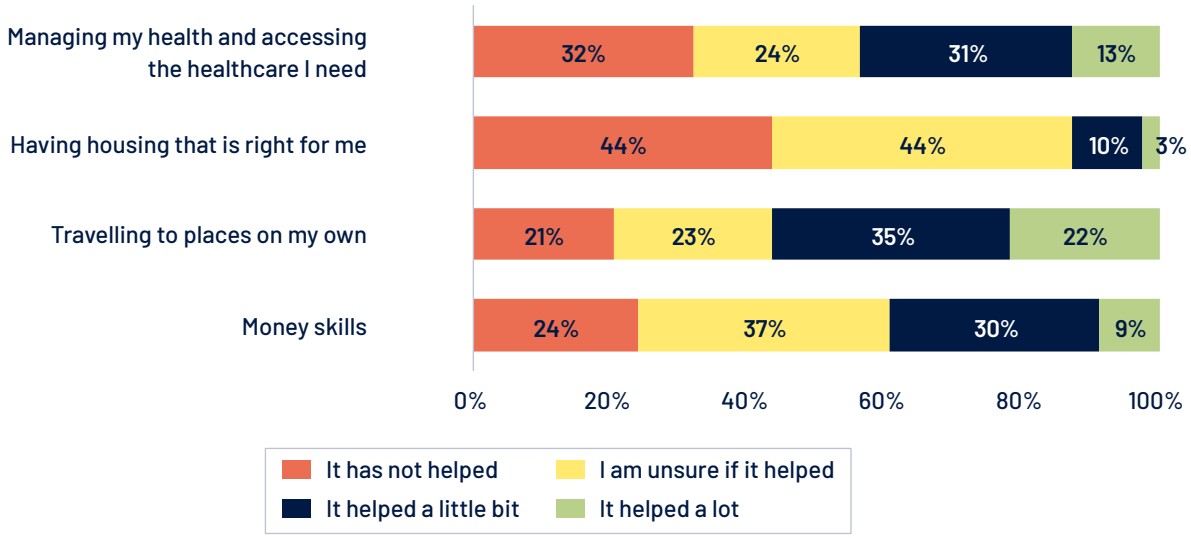
> ***I am learning to look after myself better and places I can go when I need help.***

> ***[My service] has helped me with dealing with Centrelink and with my medical issues.***

Neurodivergent participants (with autism and or ADHD) were less likely to feel IPE helped with lifeskills (Correlation -0.338; Chi Square: 7.557, p=0.006). As one put it:

> ***I'm independent.***

Figure 4 Participant assessment of IPE's contribution to 'lifeskills' (n=79)



Young people received sufficient opportunities and felt optimistic about career goals

Progress, as the previous section indicates, is highly individual and dependent on personal goals, capacity and the pace of change. Irrespective of these differences, another way to consider IPE outcomes is to explore whether it offered young people sufficient opportunities and if they felt more optimistic about entering study and or employment. The answer to these questions was overwhelmingly yes.

Of Stream A participants attending their service for two months or more who completed the Participant Experience Survey (see description in Table 6):

- 100 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that their job service had given them enough opportunities to work towards what they wanted in a job
- 84 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that they felt more hopeful about reaching education or training goals in the next six months
- 80 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that they felt more hopeful about getting a job in the next six months.

Respondents wrote survey comments indicating the support they received helped boost their confidence, improve their social skills, move them closer to a career, and plan further training. Chapter 3 contains more detail about IPE participants' experience.

IPE offered career support in schools to ease transitions

Increased access to career support (Stream C)

IPE also provided opportunities for young people in school who were not enrolled in IPE streams A or B. Across the sites, a key contribution of STANs for Stream C participants was the effort to link with schools through workshop programs, 1:1 individualised support for young people, discussion of post-school options and referral. IPE sites also offered support to disability professionals within schools. At two of the sites, the STAN/IPE role helped address the post-school 'cliff edge' by building familiarity with – and pathways into - community supports such as the IPE service, local youth spaces and other local services. Some of those who stayed at school moved from Stream C to Stream A and received more intensive support in the school setting.

In the STAN log from June 2023 to the end of 2024, the most reported STAN-generated opportunities for Stream C young people were: supporting young person and family with training/exploring options and/or connection to the NDIS, and job skills (résumé advice, mock interviews and exploration of industries). This was followed by industry exposure (e.g. through tours, talking with employers, apprenticeship employment and work experience), although this was less of a focus in the final quarters of the evaluation period.

Services described other activities that contributed to opportunities for young people and were indicative of early stages of STAN development. The most reported were: working with schools to plan and run careers and IPE information sessions and events for families and department staff; planning STAN projects and networking. Information sessions were more frequently reported in earlier quarters whereas work with schools rose to prominence in the October to December quarter.

Individualised support in schools (Stream A)

While the education and employment service systems are set up with the expectation that young people either attend school or seek employment with support from an employment service, a distinct feature of IPE Stream A is the inclusion of secondary students. Stream A participants could continue as school students while preparing for the transition to employment. This enables earlier engagement, a more seamless experience between the school and employment service, and less of a steep transition between systems. Some 71 young people (48%) were enrolled in school and three in vocational and other post-school training. Thus, half of all Stream A participants were already enrolled in education or training when they started IPE (n=74; 50%).

Far fewer Stream B participants were already in education or training when they enrolled in IPE (n=47; 11%). Most (n=37) were participating in vocational education and other post-school training (including traineeships) and 10 in school.

Stream A participants could continue as school students while preparing for the transition to employment. This enables earlier engagement, a more seamless experience between the school and employment service, and less of a steep transition between systems.

Some young people reached the education/ training and employment stages in their journey

The career journeys of young people with disability are unique and often non-linear. They may require support for longer and face additional barriers to opportunities. This should not mean that young people with disability need to wait until later in life to enjoy meaningful employment. Career-development support must start earlier and provide equitable opportunities. During the evaluation period, some young people reached the education/training and employment stages of their journey. With education/training and employment together (i.e. the number who started 'something' during IPE whether this be education, training, employment or a combination), participation was as follows:

- Stream A: 36 per cent started education/ training or an employment placement (n=54 out of 149 participants). They were in IPE for between 3 and 16 months, or an average of 8.2 months, when they exited or at the end of data collection. At the end of 2024, four had exited IPE. There was a weak but statistically significant positive correlation between time in program and starting education/training or employment (Correlation: +0.183; p=0.025).
- Stream B: 46 per cent started education/ training or an employment placement (n=199 out of 428 participants). They were in IPE between 1 and 19 months, or an average of 8.6 months in IPE before obtaining a placement. At the end of 2024, 17 had exited IPE. There was a moderate positive correlation between time in program and starting education/training or employment (Correlation: +0.300; p=0.001).

Note that TtW outcome payment requirements regarding the minimum level at which the participant needed to be studying, or the number of hours a week a participant needed to study or work were mistakenly applied by some service staff when they reported IPE data. Thus, the results of IPE are likely under-reported.

Many participants need more time and opportunities to achieve education/training outcomes

Coaches reported that many IPE participants were keen to leave school because of negative experiences and needed a few months before considering further education or training.[17] This is supported by program data indicating those who had been at IPE longer were slightly more likely to start training (Correlation: +0.225; p=<0.001) and provides important context for the modest training outcomes reported in the evaluation period.

Some 28 per cent of Stream A (n=41) and 31 per cent of Stream B (n=132) participants started education/training. At the end of the data collection period for this evaluation, these participants were in IPE 3 to 16 months, or an average of 8.1 months, in Stream A and 1 to 19 months, or an average of 8.8 months, in Stream B. Of these participants, 38 Stream A and 125 Stream B participants who started education/ training were still in IPE and so continued to receive support at the end of data collection. There was a weak but significant correlation between time in program and starting an education or training placement in Stream B (Stream A correlation: +0.133; p=0.105; Stream B correlation: +0.256; p=<0.001).

Stream A participants were most likely to participate in a Certificate II (n=18, 44%) or III (n=12, 29%) or a short accredited course (n=8, 20%). Stream B participants were most likely to participate in Certificate III (n=66, 50%) or a short non-accredited course (n=58, 44%), such as TtW employment preparation programs, and introductions to key industries (e.g. manufacturing, civil, retail and food services). Stream A participants enrolled in both high school and IPE were less likely to start new training or education (Correlation -0.191; Chi Square: 5.515, p=0.019) probably due to their ongoing school enrolment.

17 This explains why returning to secondary school was less common (Stream A: n=4; 8%. Stream B: n=6; 3%).

Participation in IPE and education/training was influenced by service implementation and state-government policy. In most states Stream A participants started engaging in IPE alongside school. For example, one service collaborated with an alternative school and disability specialists in mainstream schools to coach students on campus and offer Stream A group activities. These activities focused on exploration and connection-building and were not always logged as training. However, in one state, Stream A participants aged under 17 could only participate in IPE if they were enrolled in training that exempted them from being at school. The IPE service had to obtain approval from senior Department of Education staff and lobby their local member of parliament to secure the exemption for young people aged under 17 to participate. Stream B participants were typically not in school because they were enrolled in both the pilot and TtW, which targets school leavers.

Another factor in education/training outcomes is initial underreporting due to IPE services excluding placements that would not qualify for TtW outcomes payments.

Education/training completion

Modest proportions of participants completed education/training. Just as it takes time for young people to be ready to undertake further education/training, it takes time to complete it, and this does not always line up with evaluation periods. At the time of the final data collection, services indicated more young people were 'on the brink' of achieving education outcomes.

- Stream A: Of the 41 Stream A participants who started education or training, 22 (51%) completed their training. Those spending more time in IPE were moderately more likely to complete their training (Correlation: +0.345; p=<0.001) as were those with an intellectual and or learning disability (27% compared to 10% of others. Correlation: +0.215; Chi Square: 6.972, p=0.008). Note that not all IPE participants identified as having a disability but those who did were less likely to attain their qualification (6%) than those who did not identify as having a disability (27%)(Correlation: -0.256; Chi Square: 9.920, p=0.002).

  A total of 12 Stream A participants (29%) achieved 26 weeks' full-time participation in an education program. We note while counting only full-time participation aligns with TtW practice, it misses the achievement of young people who participate part-time so they can balance study with their disability and health needs. While full-time requirements can be waived for TtW participants, their service needs to refer the participant for assessment to determine that they have capacity to study, or work a reduced number of hours weekly (DEWR 2024b). This process may prove a further barrier.
- Stream B: Of the 132 Stream B participants who commenced training, 47 (36%) completed their training. At the end of 2024, 59 (45%) had reached 26 weeks' full-time participation in education program outcome.

A small proportion had reached the employment stage of their journey

While only modest proportions of participants gained employment, in both streams A and B time in IPE increased the likelihood of starting employment.

- Stream A: Some 16 per cent (n=24) of Stream A participants started employment. A small number started more than one job. The longer they were in IPE, the more likely Stream A participants were to start employment (Correlation: +0.247; p=0.002). Those who started a job were in IPE between 3 to 16 months, or an average of 9.5 months, by the end of data collection for the evaluation. At the end of 2024, 22 of the participants who started employment were still in IPE and so continued to receive support .

  One service, focused particularly on pathways into employment and traineeships, achieved higher employment outcomes for Stream A. The service leveraged a relationship with a social enterprise to source volunteering and traineeship opportunities that provided experience and training in line with young people's interests. A relationship was also developed with an employer 'champion' that resulted in job opportunities for participants. The Stream A coach focused on workshops and activities related to job searching, finding opportunities in the community for exploratory experiences (some of which even led to paid offers), openly discussing conditions for success and the need for workplace

accommodations. However, a challenge was that some traineeships had a full-time requirement with no part-time option.

- Stream B: Some 26 per cent (n=110) of Stream B gained employment. The longer they were in IPE, the more likely they were to start employment (Correlation: +0.205; p=<0.001). Those who started a job were in IPE between 1 to 18 months or an average of 8.7 months before the end of data collection for the evaluation. At the end of 2024, 96 of the participants who started employment were still in IPE.

  Stream B had a total of 157 job placements, and some started more than one job, gaining experience of that career and workplace before moving on to a new role. Some participants started a job but realised it was not right for them, so tried another job or even another career path. Young people may also have worked short-term jobs or more than one job simultaneously, perhaps to gain sufficient hours and pay (common in some industries, such as food services), or to explore different options.

As with education outcomes, initially services omitted employment outcomes that did not reach the requirements for Commonwealth TtW outcomes payments. This included omitting jobs under 15 hours per week and those that lasted only a short period. In the IPE pilot broader measures were used for the reasons described earlier. It is unclear the extent to which services were able to provide missing data after the issue was identified, so outcomes may be under-reported.

Participants, their family members and other supporters, and staff all told us that any experience from young people starting a first job can provide lessons and hold value (e.g. building confidence), even if the job was just a few hours and offered experience but was not continued (see also Bond & Keys 2020). Counting all jobs is important for tracking progress on young people's journeys. Furthermore, NCED staff identified that, in the worst-case scenario, the way employment service staff interpret contractual imperatives can result in young people who cannot meet a threshold of working hours being excluded/referred elsewhere or not properly supported ('parked') which does not recognise the value of the range of work arrangements that accommodate people's life needs.

Sustaining employment

In TtW, services report when a participant sustains a job for 12 weeks and 26 weeks. Of the IPE participants who started a job enough weeks prior to the end of the data collection period to reach the milestone, over half reached the 12-week milestone. This was 57% in Stream A and 61% in Stream B. Over a quarter of eligible participants reached the 26-week outcome, with 25% in Stream A and 32% in Stream B. There were many additional participants who had started jobs too recently to reach the milestone (see Table 21 and Table 22 for more information). These participants may have reached this outcome at the end of the pilot, albeit outside the evaluation data collection period.

In Stream B, time in IPE increased the likelihood of achieving 12 and 26-week outcomes (12-week outcome: Correlation: +0.205; p=<0.001. 26-week outcome: Correlation: +0.235; p=<0.001). This was not the case for Stream A. This is likely due to their younger age and earlier stage in IPE, and the longer transition period for those with significant disability. The evaluation data collection period was not long enough to capture sustained employment outcomes.

Participants, their family members and other supporters, and staff all told us that any experience from young people starting a first job can provide lessons and hold value … even if the job was just a few hours.

Outcomes data provides a limited snapshot of lengthy and unique career journeys

IPE participant outcomes provide a point-in-time assessment in a much longer career journey. When reflecting on IPE outcomes it must be remembered that participants did not share a common starting point in their journey towards career outcomes and, as a result, were at very different points at the time of assessment. These different starting points occurred because some participants were already exploring employment options prior to IPE; IPE had a rolling intake with participants commencing between May 2023 and the end of 2024; participants varied in age, education level and work readiness; journeys can be nonlinear (e.g. changing career track and returning to explore alternatives); and young people with disability need to go at their own pace, and have lengthier periods of transition than non-disabled young people.

Just as participants' career journeys began before they signed up, the training and employment outcomes reported here are not the end of their stories. IPE sites tell us of young people who gained qualifications after the collection of evaluation data and their journey will continue beyond the scope of this pilot, potentially with outcomes realised and claimed by their next employment service.

3 The value of IPE

Accounts offered by young people in Stream A and their families have been collected to help explore the value of IPE. Perspectives of IPE staff and other interest holders have also been included to complement – and add detail to – accounts of the role and function performed by IPE for this cohort.

IPE was an inclusive, accessible and positive experience for the vast majority of Stream A participants

IPE was regarded as accessible and inclusive by most Stream A participants. Of the respondents to complete the Participant Experience Survey (see description in Table 10) who had participated in IPE for two months or more:

- 82 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that 'this job service is easy for people with disability to use' (i.e. it is accessible)
- 96 per cent strongly agreed/agreed that this job service 'thinks about what people need and makes things so everyone can join in' (i.e. it is inclusive).

Survey comments described IPE as accessible and inclusive, offering accommodations and supports. One respondent commented:

> ***This job service is easy for young people because they make sure that everyone is included with the activities and make it easy to discover what we want to do in the future as a job.***

The vast majority strongly agreed or agreed with statements indicating IPE was a positive experience (see Box 1). These statements were designed to test whether participants had a service experience aligned with Advantaged Thinking practice. Across the statements, 82 to 96 per cent said that IPE staff believed in them and their goals, helped them plan and access relevant opportunities, helped them explore and helped them adapt on their path to a career.

Survey comments also described IPE as a service consistent with Advantaged Thinking principles, relevant opportunities and outcomes. For example, one respondent commented:

> ***[My coach] has shown me my capabilities as an individual.***

Box 1 Proportion of Stream A participants who strongly agreed/agreed with positive statements about IPE

96%	If things don't go as planned, I can learn from what happened, and the job service staff will help me work out a new plan.
96%	My job service worked with me in a way that met my needs.
96%	Job service staff believe in me and that I can achieve my goals.
93%	I am happy with the services I have received.
91%	My job service helped me do things that are relevant to what I want to learn and do for work.
87%	My job service connects me with people (for example, teachers, employers) who can help me work towards my goals.
84%	My job service helped me learn and get better at what I do.
82%	My job service helps me make plans for my future.
82%	My job service helped me find out what I like, what I'm good at and what jobs I might want to do.

Access to the youth employment service environment

Most Stream A participants had been to the service site and described it in positive terms in surveys and in interviews. Family members also noted that young people must have found it satisfactory as they were happy to go there. The friendly staff – and the availability of snacks – created a welcoming atmosphere that contrasted positively with other settings. Many young people appreciated the quieter or closed-off areas, or even having the option to attend on a quieter day, which allowed them to feel comfortable during coaching sessions. So too did accommodations such as turning lights off for a participant who found the space too bright. This feedback indicates young people were given options from which to choose.

Personalised coaching

Coaches facilitated accessible and tailored supports. Young people frequently mentioned the importance of being able to talk to their coach, with some expressing a desire for more time with them. Coaches were able to provide or facilitate access to support in life domains beyond employment, which contributed to the service working with young people in a way that met their needs.

However, challenges such as staff turnover and the need for more time to address barriers may have impacted coaches' ability to maintain focus on employment goals. Despite these challenges, the commitment of coaches to understand participants and provide personalised support in multiple aspects of their lives was a key strength of the program and many participants would be unlikely to have had such a positive experience without it.

Creative and fun group activities and training

Engaging activities were described as challenging and positive, contributing to an enjoyable and social experience. In response to the question about why they enjoy the activities, one participant mentioned that socialising and facing the challenge of meeting new people was fun and helped them learn new things:

> ***[I enjoy] socialising, getting out there, facing your– because most people don't like meeting new people, or they feel awkward. I like to face that, basically just to get out there, have fun, learn new things and how to do other things.***

Even for young people experiencing anxiety, IPE was delivered in a way that was fun and enjoyable. Participants appreciated that the activities were engaging and not anxiety-inducing, contrasting with other programs that seemed boring, such as in the following example:

> ***They make different activities and stuff fun and enjoyable to me. I was very shy when I started, as [the coach] said. I'm not as shy around [my coach] as much now, because they make things enjoyable, and not as anxious for me.***

This was not by chance. Staff set out to provide enjoyable experiences and build connections between participants to make it less uncomfortable for them to attend activities. Games were used in many services to encourage thinking about different careers, such as working as a group to think of all possible careers that started with a particular letter or 'celebrity heads careers' with all cards being different careers instead of celebrities. These, along with ice breakers before workshops and social activities were also intended to build connection and support young people through a successful transition. One staff member explained:

> ***... inviting young people into things that they enjoy and then saying, 'hey, this is what we're going to do' makes things a little bit less intimidating ... as work is really scary for young people. It's like, you're leaving school and then you have to get a job.***

The IPE staff observed coaches were willing to contribute to running the group activities, as they could see the value in terms of young people realising outcomes that then also translated into meeting TtW coaches' KPIs.

Making content fun was also a key change made to make workshop activities more accessible to young people who are neurodivergent. While this cohort may be more likely to experience anxiety, the extra barriers to engaging with content may also be addressed through creative delivery. Therefore, when young people described IPE as being valuable because it offered fun activities, this can be understood as not an optional extra but a core part of inclusive practice that enables young people to engage.

IPE supported Stream A participants' career journeys

Many participants joined the program to make plans for their future, expressing sentiments like, 'I didn't even know what I was going to do after school … So maybe this program would help me try and figure out what I want to do' or 'To help me with my future'. Some young people might have had an idea of what to do, but had questions, such as: 'How am I going to get into work and start going out there and stepping my foot in [that industry]?'

A supported transition

Participants valued having a supported transition as part of their career journey. In an interview, one Stream A participant gave the following feedback:

> ***[Services should] find ways to make it less of a life slope from going from school life to work life … the thought of someone going from becoming a student to an office worker where different things are expected and those that do all those other stuff – it gets overwhelming.***

For many, this was a transition from school. Stream A coaches facilitated this by working with participants both in and beyond school, often in familiar spaces alongside other supporters. This approach provided a connected and smoother transition. This stronger pathway did not seem to reduce agency but rather facilitate meaningful engagement. One family member noted that engaging at school allowed the participant to communicate confidently and take more initiative while in familiar surroundings.

Some young people mentioned taking a break after school, but this was coupled with financial constraints. At least two interviewees noted not having an income as preventing them from taking a break after school. A more supported transition could reduce burnout and provide time and supports for the young person to explore what it is they want to be and do. Being part of IPE could help with this, and at least one coach focused on ensuring young people leaving school had a plan and connection to community supports. Some young people and others suggested that more community spaces with affordable activities for young people would be beneficial, highlighting the value of this during the transition from school.

For young people who are disengaged from study and work, transition support is even more important, albeit challenging. Some coaches identified that IPE went some way to providing support where family was not available or offered more intensive or personalised support than could be provided at school. Other young people were not able to benefit from IPE when family members did not agree to let the young person participate. This may indicate that transition support may also need to be directed at family members and other members of the young person's network.

For young people who are disengaged from study and work, transition support is even more important, albeit challenging.

Opportunities for career-focused exploration

IPE supported participants to explore future careers. This contrasted positively with more 'forceful' employment services:

> ***[The other employment service] didn't help me find something I was interested in, they just, 'What do you want to do?' and then I just picked something. Even if I didn't like it, they would still try and apply for jobs that I don't like. They were very forceful with things, where with [my IPE provider], they work with me, not against me.***

Participants described how activities they enjoyed as part of IPE contributed to them getting a broader understanding of potential careers.

> ***I was only looking at a small part of the jobs which I wanted. They took me to a [job expo] ... They have people come in to IPE to explain what they do and what type of industries they have. They expanded my knowledge of different types of jobs out there which I didn't know of ... They helped me get some certificates which I needed if I want to find a job, which I really wanted. They helped me ... connect with new people. They helped me with getting out there ...open my eyes. There's a lot more jobs I can do in the world, which I've just looked at a couple. – IPE participant***

Expos or similar events where employers presented to participants were one way some participants found out about jobs. Young people also visited workplaces, did work experience or volunteered and even started jobs to explore what careers would be a good fit. One participant described being supported to try out a role:

> ***I have had ... a work experience ... One of my friends from IPE worked there, and they needed another person... So, IPE said that ... I can attempt to do the job. It wasn't really for me, and they understood that. [The employer] basically said, 'It's more of a work experience, and put me as your referee and just say – it wasn't you, just it looked like it wasn't really your thing.' I was like, 'Yeah, I understood. It really wasn't, but I gave it a shot.' ... It was my first job anyway. So most people say your first job isn't your last.***

Even though the young person did not continue in this position, it provided them a learning experience.

Another young person recommended that other young people join IPE because of the work experience opportunities. Although this participant had decided not to pursue a career in either of the roles they did work experience in, they found the work experience helpful.

Building up capability at the young person's pace

Young people were positive about IPE supporting them to build their capability. Participants described the skills and qualifications they were getting, and how they would help them in their career.

> ***I'm just still building up my skills and then we're going to hit my goals for jobs.***
>
> ***– IPE participant***

Young people also visited workplaces, did work experience or volunteered and even started jobs to explore what careers would be a good fit.

As identified in Chapter 2, some young people shared in interviews that they were not immediately ready for employment or further study. This may be due to their age or needing a break after school. One participant described the time taken to explore interests and aspirations as a valuable part of IPE:

> ***It's not a rushed-type thing. When I first went there, I think one of the questions was, 'Do you plan to get a job?' or something like that. And I said, 'No, not planning,' because there were stepping stones in between that. There were things I wanted to do first, like volunteer to get more comfortable in a different place. And so I don't feel rushed in having to just do stuff right away. Yeah, it doesn't make me feel rushed or I have to be quick. It makes me feel like I can take my time.***

Capacity building included building up hours of activity. For example, one young person was able to complete a part-time course through IPE, contrasting it with a full-time traineeship they did not finish before IPE. They suggested this approach for others:

> ***[I recommend] some kind of course where it's a few days a week, because they're young adults transitioning into adulthood. It's not just careers and paths. So, I know going into full-time work for me was hard, because I did do it for a little while, and that broke me and broke my passion for [the field I wanted to work in]. I think that slow transition of, you're still studying, you're still getting the knowledge of what you want to do, but also it's not just straight in into the deep end. I mean, some people would thrive off that, but I know some people just don't.***

Other family members and supporters also placed importance on stepping stones. For example, one family member shared what they thought would be helpful for other young people:

> ***Go back to when I was 14, I was able to get a little Saturday job, and so gradually, bit-by-bit, my world expanded. That's what we have to do for these young people ... [offer] stepping stones.***

However, there was not always agreement on how gentle the transition into work should be for young people. Some coaches and other supporters said that young people should accept the discomfort that comes with working full-time or doing new activities while they build their tolerance.

Routines were valued by supporters as part of transitioning into further study or work, with one noting that even if the activity did not lead to an immediate income, the process of looking for and applying for a job and the extra support led to significant personal progress.

> ***But even if it wasn't an income per se, even just the kind of routine of finding a job and the extra support around that. Because yeah, from where she was to where she is now, she's progressed a lot ... I feel like she has gotten everything that she wants out of the program and is still getting that. I think she is very grateful for all the support that she gets, because every little bit helps. And she knows deep down that every meeting it's one step closer to finding employment, or if she does want to study, one step closer to studying. And I feel like she does feel empowered, and she does feel supported, because she keeps turning up as well. That's also another factor. I've had other young people that don't want to go. But she for some reason wants to keep going, and there's always a reason why.***
>
> ***– Supporter of an IPE participant***

Family members noted that the positive experience of IPE extended to young people taking on new challenges and building connections beyond the program. Support building routines and making progress lifted the aspirations of young people's families. One family member expressed surprise at seeing their child go to a job:

> ***I actually never thought I'd see him go to a job five days a week, due to the whole overwhelming thought of it. One of the most positive things out of [IPE] putting him forward and getting this [paid] traineeship for six months is I've seen him go and do something five days a week. I have struggled for ten years to get him to go to school five days a week … What this has given us – and the confidence that it has given this kid – is just mind blowing. Hopefully something may come out of where he's been doing the traineeship, or we can walk forward with something. But that [traineeship] can definitely go on his résumé that this is what he's actually done.***

This might also be the case for other young people. As one participant explained, 'I feel a lot more confident since being with the IPE. I have higher hopes.'

IPE engages young people in their career journey

IPE offered an inclusive, accessible and positive experience for the vast majority of participants. Young people described how services engaged them through fun and creative career exploration activities at their own pace that enabled them to expand their horizons job-wise. This was coupled with the provision of supports and opportunities that enabled participants to expand their capability, build essential skills and gain qualifications for working life.

Family members noted that the positive experience of IPE extended to young people taking on new challenges and building connections beyond the program.

4 How IPE built an inclusive youth employment service

In the preceding chapters, we outlined the outcomes realised by participants and the value identified in the pilot for young people with disability. This chapter explores how IPE contributed to youth employment services being better able to support participants.

Universal career-support pathways included young people with disability

Delivery partner services signed up to provide the three streams of IPE, which strengthened their ability to provide a career-development pathway for young people with disability.

Making new pathways for access to youth employment services

Stream A introduced a new pathway into youth employment services, providing access to the youth-focused employment support for young people with significant disability who may not otherwise be proactively engaged in TtW. Participants who accessed this pathway were supported to pursue employment.

Stream C extended career-development support to young people with disability in the community, including those not enrolled in either IPE or TtW. This was intended to assist young people to take important steps in their journey and get them closer to a career they value. The focus was on young people at school. Delivery partner services used a collaborative approach as well as STANs to provide a wider group of young people early career-development support. For example, a young person who did not join Stream A because those around the young person thought the young person's needs would not be met could still participate in opportunities through Stream C. The network also built the awareness and other capabilities of STAN members to actively support the career development of young people with disability. It helped connect them to relevant opportunities, offering more inclusive and effective pathways.

Enhancing existing pathways

Stream B offered enhanced support to young people who could already participate in TtW but had a diagnosis or self-identified as having a disability. Support for Stream B participants was generally not as intensive as in Stream A[18] but included key elements of the inclusive practice model discussed below and support across broader life domains. This was important as many young people may enrol in TtW youth employment services but may not progress due to access barriers. In this way, IPE was not just about new pathways into a service but also strengthening pathways through the transition process.

18 At least one delivery partner leveraged the Stream A offering to provide an alternative for young people who wished to access mainstream TtW but were unlikely to benefit without the more intensive service offer of Stream A. These participants were still part of the TtW service and were able to meet their mutual obligation requirements. This was possible due to the philanthropic funding pilot intentionally allowing dual servicing, and strengthened the delivery partner service's capability to offer a person-centred response with tailored pathways for a wider range of young people who came to TtW.

The way IPE was delivered in existing youth employment services helped create more flexible and inclusive support for young people. As young people could access the streams based on what suited them – rather than being excluded because they did not meet strict criteria – it was possible to tailor support to individual needs. This flexibility allowed services to focus more on what each young person needed, rather than which category they fit into. However, this also created confusion. Staff needed time and support to understand how different parts of the program worked together and to implement IPE. Staff also had to work through different ideas within their own services about how the program should be delivered – for example, whether one coach should be responsible for all Stream B support, or if tasks should be shared across staff, and how. Working through this while young people were being supported allowed these solutions to be informed by participants, their family members and other supporters, and staff, which created more inclusive pathways.

Aspiration-focused and inclusive practice supported engagement and outcomes

The IPE pilot emphasised aspirational goals and inclusive practice to support young people to work towards open employment. Being part of IPE helped services start more conversations about disability and offer better support for young people with disability. Staff said they were becoming more aware and inclusive in the way they worked with all young people.

An aspirational and inclusive practice model

The NCED's four-phase aspirational and inclusive practice model used in IPE was grounded in Advantaged Thinking. Some services were already implementing Advantaged Thinking approaches for TtW. These aligned with IPE, and the services were able to connect the pilot with their existing work.

The flexible and non-prescriptive model allowed coaches to tailor their support to the individual needs of participants. The model was designed to help coaches start where each young person was, and provide meaningful opportunities for them to try new things (with the dignity of risk). The four phases – Guidance and Exploration, Work Preparation, Work Opportunities and Post-placement Support – all included activities that could be reflected on in personalised coaching to identify, develop and work towards goals. Work experience was a key opportunity, as described in Chapter 3. While there are significant barriers to TtW services organising work experience without access to the insurance schemes provided by states for school-based work experience, some coaches were able to work around this. Coaches facilitated access to work experience through school for Stream A participants who were still enrolled, engaging the employers and providing the one-to-one support some participants needed to have this opportunity. Coaches also supported young people to access volunteering opportunities.

A focus on accessibility

Advantaged Thinking also facilitated practices that enabled coaches to enhance accessibility. Commonly, this included making adjustments such as sitting with participants in an area of their choice during initial meetings (see Chapter 3) and enquiring about young people's interests to build rapport and engagement. Where simply asking young people about their interests was not effective, coaches used creative approaches. For example, coaches used picture prompts, drawing on training on image-assisted planning organised by the NCED. Most services developed access guides (documents with images and descriptions of what to expect at the service) and some services provided them to young people before they first visited the site. Such practice improved accessibility for young people with disability. Additionally, Stream B coaches and managers at some of the delivery partner services said these practices were being used beyond IPE, which strengthened TtW practice.

Working with family members

Recognising the central role of family members in supporting the lives of many young people with disability, as part of delivering IPE, services engaged positively with family members. The NCED provided training and practice support, along with a tool, for working with family members and supporters. This was in addition to the broader IPE approach that intentionally encouraged positive engagement.

In some cases, coaches needed to balance the involvement of family with Stream A participants' autonomy and exploration, and the IPE model enabled this. Family involvement did facilitate access to IPE, with family members often encouraging participation, providing or arranging transport and offering strong encouragement for young people to attend. Some family members could give coaches information about what was or was not proving helpful for the young person and this informed tailored support for service activities, or in Post-placement Support for participants who started jobs. Coaches were also committed to hearing directly from young people, often building more of this into their practice over time. The model's emphasis on exploration showed family members, carers and supporters that young people could find the right path while maintaining their dignity of risk.

Collaboration was integrated in pathways and practice

The IPE pilot was set up to foster and use collaboration for inclusive pathways and practice for young people with disability.

Working with schools and other sectors

Collaboration was crucial for reaching young people at school and providing early career-development support. Collaboration across formal system supports and personal supports could also contribute to enhanced services and opportunities. The approach of starting early and utilising various supports and funding sources – braiding and sequencing funded supports (Crosbie et al 2024) – informed the IPE pilot. This was intended to provide the necessary supports for young people to succeed in open employment.

Beginning employment service support in school

Young people could still be at school and participate in streams A or C, meaning they could receive support earlier in their journey. Having access to support may prevent young people with disability from starting employment later in their life compared to their non-disabled peers (Crosbie et al 2024). Being jointly enrolled in school and IPE (as described in Chapter 3) facilitated initial engagement in the familiar setting of school and a supported transition. Being at school could also give young people work opportunities. For example, as described above, IPE coaches could use schools' work experience arrangements, including insurance, for students and employers to access work experience opportunities for young people.

IPE staff identified early in the pilot that relationships with local schools were essential for reaching and enrolling Stream A participants, and they leveraged NCED support to refine their outreach strategies. For example, NCED staff provided guidance on key messaging, timing for outreach and help identifying key contacts within schools. Additionally, the NCED facilitated workshops where IPE staff could share ideas and strategies, helping to overcome initial challenges in establishing relationships with school staff.

Cross-system servicing

IPE facilitated cross-system collaboration to create stronger pathways. Notably, it did not require participants to restart their journey with a different program or service as other supports became available or mandated. Delivery partner services leveraged relationships with schools and other supports to reach potential Stream A participants and provide enhanced support to stream A and B participants. When mandated as part of mutual obligation requirements or found eligible to be a voluntary participant, Stream A participants could dual-enrol in TtW or DES for a period of blended support without immediately needing to leave IPE. This provided access to brokerage, additional support (including in the Post-placement Support phase) and/or supports that could continue after the pilot to support the

longer journey to outcomes that many Stream A participants were on.

Staff identified gaps in available supports as a barrier to full participation, particularly for young people without NDIS packages. Some family members of Stream A participants also told us they did not want to bring forward NDIS plan reviews that may have been able to add extra employment supports because they considered it very likely that in the current climate a review would remove valued supports.

Engaging and supporting employers

Engaging employers was a key aspect of IPE. Staff used existing and new service arrangements, including for proactive outreach to potential or new employers of participants, to connect participants with opportunities and to support job placements.

Young people's interests could direct initial outreach to employers. In the most straightforward cases, coaches used cold-calling to strike up initial contact with employers. Rather than requesting the employer's involvement in a collaborative project, or even offering a job, employers were simply asked if they were willing to speak with the young person so they could learn more about the job and industry. Preferably, this would be on the job site. These inquiries sometimes led to work experience opportunities. A few opportunities grew even further; some young people received a job offer after work experience. Employers also went on to offer work experience opportunities or even jobs to other young people. Opportunities could also be provided for groups. For example, a small business owner provided hands-on tours of the workplace as part of a course in that field. The business owner was enthusiastic about providing this opportunity and went on to offer a young person a job based on their participation.

Employers valued the support provided by coaches, especially preparing young people for interviews and job readiness including training and sourcing uniforms. Summing up what it was like to offer roles to IPE participants, one employer described IPE as an effective way to 'give back' and help young people with disability get started in their careers, as well as finding candidates:

> ***I did my apprenticeship … and I wanted to give other young kids the opportunity to do their trade as well … get them in the system under our supervision and training systems, and help build them up to a qualified tradesperson … and then give them the confidence they need to go off and take on the big bad world.***

> ***[The Stream A coach]'s great, so I now ring when I need someone … which is so good from a business point of view … [The coach] talks it through with them first and gets them their confidence for me to interview. My interviews are basic and no stress … but most of the candidates when they come in, they're highly nervous and I can see that … Then of course then it's up to me – I won't say yes to everyone, I'm still looking for … personality and whatnot.***

Employers also described young people having opportunities to build their confidence and communication as mutually beneficial. As one said:

> ***I just think it all comes back to them being able to communicate effectively with adults … we've all come from different backgrounds, we all have a different story, but just coaching how to not be just so timid … they're so shy. … If you can communicate, then you become far more teachable as well.***

Young people were encouraged and supported to self-advocate for their needs, including how and whether to share their disability with others. In coaching and group activities, young people were supported to identify the conditions they needed to secure these conditions in workplaces, as well as training and other activities. This built the young person's capability and helped employers learn how to be more inclusive.

Challenges generally could be resolved. Even in the event of an employee not being able to continue in a position, the employer described it as a positive experience as the young person left on good terms and with a better understanding of roles that might suit them.

While most experiences were positive, not all employers upheld inclusive practices. In at least one case, a young person was supported to find a new workplace after a negative experience with an employer. Staff in some delivery partner services sought to secure further support for young people or find workplaces that were designed to be more accessible by setting up relationships with DES or ADEs. However, the NCED team had concerns about practices in some services not aligning with IPE's aspiration-focused and inclusive approach, particularly if the service did not hold the aspiration of young people working in open employment for a full wage. NCED staff encouraged delivery partner service staff to work with services that aligned with IPE's goals.

Professional collaboration through local networks and establishing Student Transition Action Networks

Collaboration also occurred through STANs established at three of the four sites. These local networks brought professionals from across sectors together to improve the career transition of young people with disability.

IPE staff and/or delivery partner service managers worked to establish the STAN activities as part of seeking to build the capacity of their local community to support school-to-work transitions for young people with disability. As part of this, they developed relationships that could be used to bring in external professional development opportunities (e.g. inviting an autism peak body to provide staff training). This built staff capacity and grew the network and knowledge available to support career development for young people with disability.

Services invested considerable staff effort into building these networks. While local interest holders were eager to collaborate, and delivery partner service staff were often enthusiastic to share coordination with other network members, variable attendance of these busy professionals impacted momentum. An approach adopted by two STANs was to use half of the meeting time for action-focused subcommittees. This was engaging and made effective use of expertise. Subcommittees worked on projects including holding sessions with young people with disability and employers at a business breakfast; surveying young people with disability to identify unmet needs, and interest in volunteering and work experience; and plain language NDIS explainers for parents and young people. While ideally the networks will mature over time, because STANs must be coordinated by paid staff this may mean they cease activity when funding ends.

Although some delivery partner services were enthusiastic about offering workshops in schools, they were not pursued. One delivery partner service trialled running workshops in classes, but diversity in the needs of this group meant it was not a conducive learning environment, so this was shelved in favour of sessions with individual participants.

Community information sessions (such as sessions on the NDIS) were widely implemented. They played a dual role of explaining the pilot to recruit IPE participants and providing additional access to information and connections for a broader group of young people and their supporters. These community information sessions did highlight the challenge of organisational change. One site struggled to realise plans for a larger community information event when the leadership at the school they were working with changed.

Collaboration within local areas could only go so far and may need structural change to secure access to opportunities. For example, one major issue identified by a family member of a Stream A participant was the need for more inclusive TAFE pathways. This included having part-time options. There were also challenges where, rather than the TAFE or other services providing young people the language, literacy and numeracy support they needed for success, low results in Language Literacy and Numeracy assessments were used by the TAFE as grounds for exclusion. Challenges such as this were fed back to the NCED and discussed in community of policy and practice meetings in the hope of identifying ways to make change.

The pilot expanded the capability of youth employment services

During the pilot, youth employment services had resources and capability development dedicated to improving their support of young people with disability. The NCED provided the model and associated practices and tools, training and practice support, which proved essential for implementation. As the enabling organisation (see below), the NCED brought services together to share ideas as they addressed challenges and found what worked to support young people with disability. It tailored support with practice or implementation to each organisation and each delivery partner service made their own choices regarding how to implement IPE within their organisational and local context.

Dedicated staffing is essential

IPE funding paid for staff in addition to those already working in the TtW service. This dedicated staffing was crucial as it made it possible to implement the three streams, including delivering the more intensive support and collaboration needed to provide enhanced support for some young people – particularly young people with significant disability. IPE staff:

- brought disability-specialist knowledge and experience into the service
- provided coaching directly to young people or supported other staff to do so
- facilitated participant activities for individuals and groups
- led or helped with case reviews and team activities
- identified staff training opportunities and contributed to planning training.

Having disability-specialist staff in services helped to provide tailored information to TtW staff. This was important as TtW staff were less receptive to participating in group training and engaged more easily when they were seeking tailored information to support participants on their own caseload.

NCED as an enabling organisation

The NCED enabled the implementation of IPE. It worked with delivery partner services to trial the new pathways (for streams A and C, as described above), more inclusive practice and collaboration. The NCED's oversight function provided accountability, using challenges and successes to guide capability development activities.

Although the NCED provided the practice model and tools (see Table 3), along with guidance, training and support to address challenges, NCED staff and delivery partner service staff identified the importance of leadership support and conducive organisational policies and procedures – an authorising environment – to embed IPE practices and build lasting relationships in the community. Notes from regular (fortnightly, then monthly) check-in meetings between the NCED and IPE staff indicated that solving implementation challenges within the organisation, local context or broader systemic context – such as building buy-in with staff in the organisation or other interest holders for collaboration – were common topics of discussion. Some staff in delivery partner services worked with their internal communications teams, and one service worked with their youth advisory group, to facilitate implementation.

The NCED staff supported delivery partner service staff to tailor the actions and messages they used to generate staff buy-in. These were tailored to the staff roles and existing forums in delivery partner services. One example is using team meetings for case reflections to highlight opportunities for aspiration-focused inclusive practice and collaboration. Leaders in each organisation were sometimes able to adjust duties and allocate staff time to deliver IPE to young people, to build networks and to participate in training. However, progress took time, and this was always limited by the delivery partner service's business model, contractual requirements and the local context in which they were trying to hire and retain staff.

When staff needed to influence team members to adopt more aspiration-focused and inclusive practices, they often succeeded with individuals, but improvements were not maintained when those staff left the service. Some delivery partner services found more success by making changes to staff duties and guidance within the length of time available for the pilot, which created more enduring improvements.

Table 3: Advantaged Thinking practice tools provided by the NCED and how they were implemented

Tool	Model phase	NCED description	Implementation
The Deal checklist	1	The Deal communicates high expectations while preparing young people for real-world challenges. This fosters a culture of respect and encourages young people to recognise their own potential and the unique contributions they can make. The Deal engages both young people and their coaches, ensuring that each party understands their commitments and the support they can expect through the process	Coaches had conversations for setting up or reinforcing expectations
Weekly Routine Planner	1	This tool allows coaches and the young people they are working with to explore how young people use their time. This allows a coach to discover a young person's strengths and interests and supports planning that enables young people to reach their goals	Most widely used tool. One service expanded the idea and had young people put their routine plan in their mobile phone
My Vision	1	My Vision allows coaches to work with a young person to create a big picture vision for their life. It provides a way for young people to identify their aspirations, or how they would like their life to be. The My Vision tool acknowledges that there are many dimensions to building a happy life and specifically targets employment, education, health and wellbeing, lifeskills, and social and community connections	Different creative approaches used by coaches, including drawing on the image-based or visual planning training and guidance provided in the pilot
Co-design Plan	2	The Co-design Plan is a collaborative framework where young people, with the guidance of their employment coach, outline their career and personal goals. It's a pivotal component of creating a tailored pathway that empowers individuals to take charge of their future	Most coaches did not use the tool to document the plan. Services and individual coaches had their own tools
Family and Supporters Guide	1	The guide is designed to have conversations around the following: defining roles and responsibilities, outlining service delivery, discussing expectations, agreeing upon communication methods and frequency, and setting up the process to address any concerns or future action points	Generally, the guide was not used but managing engagement with family was described as important by coaches in all services

The NCED and all delivery partner services invested time in various activities to inform delivery and enable reflection and documentation for broader ambitions (see Table 4). Having regularly scheduled check-ins provided a space for ongoing reflection and helped the NCED team stay updated on implementation to guide advice and professional development activities. A key focus of NCED enablement was increasing staff use of effective practices that support young people with disability, which was aligned with the pilot's purpose. There was an increasing focus on STANs and employers in 2024. This may reflect progress in pilot implementation. Once the more programmatic offering of the model was underway, further attention could be turned to opportunities for young people.

Table 4: NCED pilot activities with delivery partner services

Activity	Description	Role in enabling the pilot
Fortnightly check-ins	Regular Teams chat between NCED practice staff and a delivery partner service to share pilot progress and workshop challenges	Central to enabling reflection and troubleshooting implementation. Initially held fortnightly before being moved to monthly
Case conferencing	Every second month. Workshop individual cases	Professional development activity
Deep dive training	Monthly webinar exploring disability theory and practice	Professional development with content selected by the NCED team
Basecamp	Online discussion forum where delivery partner services can post questions for each other and participate in regular discussions	Played a smaller role in the pilot and the NCED practice team reduced their focus on this
Community of policy and practice	Twice-yearly meetings between all four delivery partner services and BSL to share practice lessons and challenges	A key activity. The focus moved from providing training and guided activities, to enabling practice, to the policy context
Email and phone	NCED staff are available via phone and email as needed	Used for site-specific support and ad hoc queries. There was a reduction in emails and phone calls over the pilot, perhaps indicating fewer ad hoc queries
Website	Online access to Advantaged Thinking and inclusive practice resources	This was the repository for tools and other information. The new website was rolled out during IPE
Site visit	NCED staff visited the partner service for a range of activities	Used to provide professional development and to hear from a wider staff group

Benefits of IPE in service capability and collaboration

IPE contributed to youth employment services supporting young people with disability. The pilot trialled more inclusive pathways, inclusive practices and collaboration for supporting career development. Each of these changes expanded the capability of delivery partner services and relied on the expertise, time and buy-in of staff, supported by practice reflection and development.

The pilot trialled more inclusive pathways, inclusive practices and collaboration for supporting career development.

5 Principles for inclusive youth employment services

The IPE pilot provided young people with disability early integrated transition support that offers a cohesive, aspiration-focused and inclusive service across systems. The career-development outcomes (Chapter 2) and value (Chapter 3) for young people with disability participating in IPE were positive. This highlighted the benefit of young people with disability receiving enhanced support from a youth employment service on a career journey that could start while they were still at school and be sustained.

Four key principles derived from the evaluation findings can inform the development of inclusive youth employment services as part of systems working together to support career development for young people with disability.

1 Build inclusive employment pathways

Chapter 4 describes how the IPE pilot design enabled the provision of accessible and inclusive youth employment services and enhanced support for young people with disability through an inclusive and collaborative practice model. We recommend the following in inclusive employment pathways for young people with disability:

1.1 Provide career support for all young people with disability: Ensure all young people, including young people with disability, receive accessible and inclusive career support that enables them to explore their interests, build their capability and successfully transition from school (regardless of the hours per week they can work or supports they require).

1.2 Provide universal services: Provide universal, inclusive career transition support services for all young people, including young people with disability.

1.3 Develop integrated pathways: Develop student transition pathways with youth employment services that are integrated with schools and involve personal support networks (including family members).

1.4 Begin early: Begin career support and provide employment experiences while young people with disability are still enrolled at school. This may include supporting young people to have 'after-school jobs'.

1.5 Sustain support: Offer sustained support that recognises the type of progress and the pace at which it occurs is highly individualised.

1.6 Include voice in design and implementation: Prioritise being informed by young people with disability and those with lived experience when designing and implementing the career-support programs and policy that affect them. For policies and programs to be meaningfully informed by young people with disability and those with lived experience, this may require use of proxies or intermediaries as well as input from professionals and members of personal support networks who would be part of an integrated pathway.

2 Embed aspiration-focused and inclusive practice

Chapter 4 identified the importance and value of an Advantaged Thinking approach for investing in young people's aspirations and providing structural supports for success. We recommend the following for aspiration-focused and inclusive practice:

2.1 Invest in young people through opportunities: Invest in young people's aspirations and capabilities by providing career-development opportunities, including work experience, education and training, and employment. Any necessary supports should be provided so support requirements do not prevent access to opportunities while maintaining the dignity of risk.

2.2 Use a broad concept of progress: Broaden measured outcomes beyond achievements in education/training or employment to recognise self-knowledge, social connections and networks, and lifeskills as progress towards career goals.

2.3 Value exploration: Value career exploration, including trying different careers and workplace settings for the young person with disability to build their understanding of career options and what is needed for conditions of success in employment.

2.4 Provide inclusive and accessible settings: Service settings should have friendly staff, snacks and options including a quiet setting and starting in familiar settings (e.g. schools).

2.5 Offer individualised coaching: Offer individualised, intensive coaching that facilitates reflection and further goal development alongside tailoring the opportunities, settings, activities and supports for young people with disability.

2.6 Offer group activities: Group activities should be offered that are accessible and provide accommodations. These should be fun, challenging and offer a setting in which participants feel comfortable (rather than anxious) to facilitate connections with other participants and learning. Limit group sizes to those participants are comfortable with.

2.7 Provide coordinated key supports: Coordinate with key supports across young people's systems (e.g. family and other personal supporters, school, employers, Centrelink, NDIS, etc.) to address issues/secure conditions for success and support the career journeys of young people with disability.

3 Include cross-system collaboration in pathways and for practice

Chapter 4 showed that IPE's collaboration across schools, service sectors, employers and personal networks was essential for enabling career-development support for young people with disability. We recommend the following for cross-system collaboration in pathways and for practice, so young people with disability have effective career-development support:

3.1 Integrate school, employment services, training and other supports: Integrate supports (including NDIS) into a cohesive career-development pathway with braided and sequenced supports that can start early while young people are still at school.

3.2 Start employment service support in schools: Remove barriers to youth employment services supporting students at school.

3.3 Make study accessible: Remove barriers to education and training. This includes use of full-time or other minimum-hour requirements or language, literacy and numeracy skills as grounds for excluding entry to education and training.

3.4 Support inclusive workplaces: Provide employers with the support needed to create inclusive workplaces. This may include identifying and navigating other supports and offering post-placement support.

3.5 Provide information and support for navigation: Provide information and support so young people with disability and their supporters, including family members, can navigate access to supports for a successful career pathway.

3.6 Offer community spaces and activities: Provide community spaces and activities that are accessible and affordable to enable opportunities for community connection.

3.7 Facilitate access to funds for opportunities and supports: Reduce barriers to brokerage for opportunities and funding for supports. This may include improving access to NDIS-funded supports but will also require more flexible supports for those not eligible for NDIS or who are waiting for changes to their plan.

3.8 Facilitate long-term networks: Facilitate long-term local networks that can work collaboratively to achieve and sustain the cross-system collaboration essential for enabling career-development support for young people with disability (see 3.1–3.7 for more detail).

3.9 Provide resources for sustained networks: Provide resources to sustain collaborative action by community networks (see 3.1–3.7) beyond funding cycles.

4 Invest in capability development for youth employment services and their staff

Chapter 4 also described how an authorising environment and dedicated staff within IPE pilot employment services, along with support and facilitation by an enabling organisation, helped with the implementation of more inclusive pathways and practice, as well as fostering collaboration. We recommend the following to invest in capability development for staff and services, so they can provide the inclusive pathways, practice and collaboration for supporting the career journeys of young people with disability:

4.1 Create an authorising environment: Ensure organisational support for inclusive employment services and capability building for implementing sustainable improvements.

4.2 Include specialists who support young people with disability: Have specialists in supporting young people with disability in employment services to contribute to initial and ongoing service and staff capability development. Although specialists may have an ongoing role in capability development, as expertise in supporting young people with disability becomes core to staff and service capability in all youth services, young people with disability may not need specialist coaches.

4.3 Enable staff retention and transition: Maintain service continuity for participants through effective staff retention and transition strategies in programs.

4.4 Embed inclusive practice: Specify the skills and responsibility for providing inclusive services as core to all employment service staff roles.

4.5 Limit caseload and group sizes: Limit the number of participants on each staff member's caseload and in group activities so adequate support can be given to young people with significant disability.

4.6 Include staff professional development: Build the capability of existing and new staff with professional development activities including case reviews, mentoring and training.

4.7 Embed network-building: Include network-building as a core capability for employment services.

4.8 Resource enabling organisation for coordination and building capability: Resource an enabling organisation with professional expertise to coordinate and build service capability for employment services to deliver inclusive and accessible support.

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7 Appendices

Theory of change

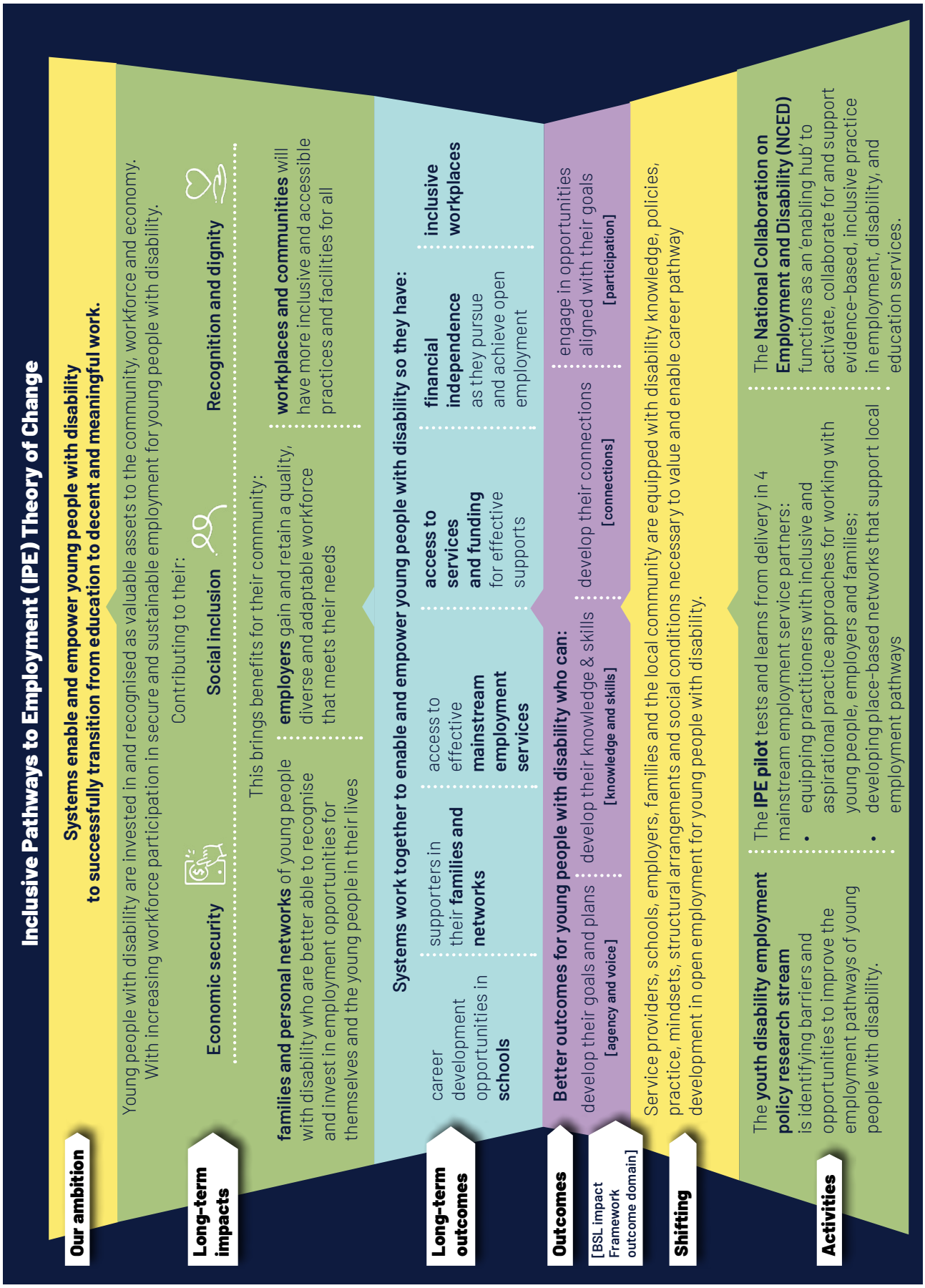
About the IPE theory of change

The IPE systemic change initiative brings together policy, practice and research. It aims to create systems that can enable and empower young people with disability to successfully transition from education to decent and meaningful work, and be socially and economically included in their communities.

The IPE pilot is a key part of the initiative, testing the implementation of inclusive practice approaches to determine what works within mainstream youth employment services and their local communities. Achieving this ambition requires working beyond employment services and understanding and influencing the broader ecosystem that determines the types of opportunities and outcomes young people with disability can access and achieve.

The policy and research stream is identifying barriers and opportunities to improve employment outcomes for young people with disability within the broader ecosystem. This ecosystem includes policies, practices, services and structural arrangements across education, employment, health, disability and social services as well as industry and infrastructure. A second report will inform broader policy recommendations as well as key considerations for practice and implementation.

Figure 5 IPE theory of change diagram (see also text version of the IPE theory of change)



Text version of the IPE theory of change

Our ambition

Systems enable and empower young people with disability to successfully transition from education to decent and meaningful work.

Long-term impacts

Young people with disability are invested in and recognised as valuable assets to the community, workforce and economy.

With increasing workforce participation in secure and sustainable employment for young people with disability. Contributing to their:

- economic security
- social inclusion
- recognition and dignity.

This brings benefits for their community:

- **Families and personal networks** of young people with disability who are better able to recognise and invest in employment opportunities for themselves and the young people in their lives.
- **Employers** gain and retain a quality, diverse and adaptable workforce that meets their needs.
- **Workplaces and communities** will have more inclusive and accessible practices and facilities for all.

Long-term outcomes

Systems work together to enable and empower young people with disability so they have:

- career-development opportunities in **schools**
- supporters in their **families and networks**
- access to effective mainstream employment services
- access to **services and funding** for effective supports
- **financial independence** as they pursue and achieve open employment
- **inclusive workplaces**.

Outcomes

The related BSL impact framework outcome domain is in square brackets.

Better outcomes for young people with disability who can:

- develop their goals and plans [agency and voice]
- develop their knowledge and skills [knowledge and skills]
- develop their connections [connections]
- engage in opportunities aligned with their goals [participation].

Shifting

Service providers, schools, employers, families and the local community are equipped with disability knowledge, policies, practice, mindsets, structural arrangements and social conditions necessary to value and enable career pathway development in open employment for young people with disability.

Activities

The **youth disability employment policy research stream** is identifying barriers and opportunities to improve the employment pathways of young people with disability.

The **IPE pilot** tests and learns from delivery in four mainstream employment service partners: equipping practitioners with inclusive and aspirational practice approaches for working with young people, employers and families; developing place-based networks that support local employment pathways.

The **NCED** functions as an 'enabling hub' to activate, collaborate for and support evidence-based, inclusive practice in employment, disability and education services.

Four phases of the IPE model

Table 5 Four phases of the IPE model (version used by the NCED for supporting implementation)

	Phase 1 Guidance & Exploration	Phase 2 Skills & Capabilities Building	Phase 3 Real-world Opportunities	Phase 4 Post-placement Support
Key Activities	Identify strengths, interests and aspirations Experiential learning Career guidance Develop goals and co-design a plan Ongoing coaching	Work preparation Industry-specific training Experiences of work Accredited or pre-accredited training Ongoing coaching	Work experience, internships and volunteering Pre-employment workshops Ongoing coaching Celebration	Tailored support for the participant Tailored support for the employer/education provider Celebration
Indicators	Regular engagement Able to articulate their talents and interests Has explored different career pathways Has set employment or education and personal goals and is motivated to work towards them Has identified any barriers to achieving their goals, and is linked in with relevant supports	Developed transferrable skills and capabilities to gain and maintain employment Completed relevant industry-specific training for their career pathway. Prepared their own application tools e.g. résumé, cover letter Completed interview preparation Started searching and applying for jobs in various ways Is aware of their workplace rights and responsibilities	Has built experience in relevant areas Has contacts and networks in relevant industries Has supported their personal growth by continually building on their transferrable skills Has practiced sharing information about their disability to request adjustments Is prepared for first day of work/study	Continues to engage with IPE through their preferred method of communication Achieves a sustainable outcome in their chosen area, which is both fulfilling and beneficial to them Workplace adjustments in place and supported where required Is linked with any required external supports Has future career-development aspirations

Data collection activities

Table 6 Summary of data collection activities

Method	Stream	Frequency	No. participants	Focus
Young people				
Program data	A & B	Quarterly	577	Characteristics, activities and outcomes
Progressive Outcomes survey	A	Twice	79*	Extent to which IPE helped across 4 life domains
Participant Experience survey	A	Twice	65#	Participant experience of IPE: accessibility, inclusion, opportunities
Interviews	A	Once	13	Life before IPE, service experience, career plans
Family members, carers and supporters				
Interviews	A	Once	13	Career support, service experience, career plans
Employers				
Interviews	-	Once	3	Employee and employer support, service experience
Delivery partner services				
Survey	-	Once	4	Host organisation characteristics, accessibility, inclusion, networks
Interviews	-	Once	12	Experience of IPE implementation
Log: Student Transition Action Network (STAN)	C	Quarterly	-	No. of STAN activities, participants and their types
NCED				
Log: NCED enabling activities	-	Quarterly	-	Training, support and practice development activities
Interviews	-	Once	3	NCED enablement activities
Focus group	-	Once	5	Reflection on NCED enablement of the pilot
Secondary data				
Check-in meetings	-	Fortnightly/monthly	-	Minutes of NCED meetings with sites

Notes:

* Progressive Outcomes surveys were conducted in February and November 2024. Chapter 2 reports data from 79 IPE participants who had been at the service two months or more at the time of the survey. Of these, 66 completed the survey in November and 13 in February.

Participant Experience surveys were conducted in June/July and November/December 2024. Chapters 2 and 3 report data from the 45 of the 65 respondents to the November/December 2024 survey who had been at the service two months or more at the time of the survey.

Program data tables

Table 7 Exited and continuing IPE participants by stream (at the end of 2024)

Status	Stream A	Stream B
Exited	17	66
Continuing	132	362
Total	**149**	**428**

Participant characteristics

Table 8 Age at registration

Age at registration (years)	Stream A (no.)	Stream B (no.)
15	13	0
16	28	8
17	38	36
18	37	67
19	21	102
20	5	63
21	2	43
22	4	35
23	0	28
24	0	20
25	0	21
26	0	5
Total	**148**	**428**
Number of non-responses	1	

Table 9 Gender

Gender	Stream A	Stream B
Female	50	194
Male	92	206
Non-binary	6	12
Prefer to self-describe (not further defined)	0	4
Total	**148**	**416**
Number of non-responses	1	12

Table 10 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person	Stream A	Stream B
No	134	360
Yes, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	10	56
Total	**144**	**416**
Number of non-responses	5	12

Table 11 If studying full-time at registration, type of study

If studying full-time, type of study	Stream A	Stream B
Secondary school	71	10
Vocational education and training (including traineeships)	1	31
University	0	2
Other, not further defined	2	4
Total	**74**	**47**
Number of non-responses	0	4

Table 12 Identify as having a disability

Identify as having a disability	Stream A	Stream B
Yes	126	350
No	6	49
Other (Please describe)	3	0
Total	**135**	**399**
Number of non-responses	14	29

Table 13 NDIS participant

NDIS participant	Stream A	Stream B
Yes	50	26
No	87	331
Total	**137**	**357**
Number of non-responses	12	71

Table 14 Disability type, ungrouped

Disability type	Stream A	Stream B
Acquired Brain Injury	0	2
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	37	81
Autistic	76	111
Blind or low vision	1	1
Deaf or hard of hearing	2	7
Epilepsy	0	6
Intellectual disability (includes Down Syndrome)	9	11
Learning disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia)	13	24
Intellectual disability/Learning disability not further defined	23	26
Psychosocial disability (mental health)	64	277
Speech impairment (sensory/speech)	8	9
Other physical disability	9	30
Other – not identified	1	14
I don't have a disability	1	5
Not answered	7	27

Note: This table presents the number of participants identifying as having each disability. Participants could select more than one disability.

Table 15 Disability type, grouped

Disability type – grouped	Stream A	Stream B
Neurodivergent: autism, ADHD	92	161
Psychosocial disability (mental health)	64	277
Intellectual/learning disability (n.b. due to not further defined category)	44	59
Sensory (vision, hearing, speech)	11	15
Physical disability	9	35
I don't have a disability	1	5
Not answered	7	27

Note: This table presents the number of participants identifying as having each disability. Participants could select more than one disability.

Participation in activities

Table 16 Engaged in 1+ activity in the IPE phase

Phase	Stream A	Stream B
Guidance and Exploration	136	392
Work Preparation	124	341
Work Opportunities	73	166
Post-placement Support	67	196
Number of participants with 1+ activity recorded in any phase	**139**	**397**
Number of participants with no activity recorded in any phase	**1**	**5**
Number of participants missing from the dataset	9	26

Table 17 Activities in phases (engaged in at least once)

Phase	Activities	Stream A	Stream B
Guidance and Exploration	Explore different career options and pathways	118	358
	Explore and discuss strengths and aspirations and identify goals (with TtW coach and families)	110	346
	One-on-one sessions with a coach	136	391
	Group activities and events	93	288
Work Preparation	Develop job search skills (e.g. résumé writing, interview preparation and alternative hiring preparation – including video CVs, communicating with employers, and customised recruitment, induction and roles)	96	225
	Participate in workshops to prepare for working life (i.e. work rights, self-advocacy, personal presentation, routine planning)	78	287
	Employment tours	29	109
	Guest speakers	34	87
	Industry-specific training (e.g. industry tickets, pre-apprenticeship training)	21	108
	Develop IPE co-designed job plan	21	49
	Receive support with personal issues (e.g. housing, health, money) that have prevented or made it difficult to participate in education/training or to get a job	97	232
Work Opportunities	Completion of at least one of: work taster, job shadowing, volunteering or internship; work experience and/or meet with employers	62	137
	Work taster, job shadowing (watching someone working), volunteering or internship	21	49
	Work experience	30	64
	Meet with employers	46	95
	Prepare personal profile of adjustments (to have the right conditions to succeed)	29	70
Post-placement Support	Check in separately with both young people and employers to meet support needs	67	196

Outcomes

Table 18 Education/training or employment starts

Placement type	Stream A participants	Stream A placements	Stream B participants	Stream B placements
Started education/training	41	44	132	173
Started employment	24	28	110	157
Started education/training or employment	54		199	

Note: This table contains columns with counts of participants and counts of placements. Note that some participants had more than one placement.

Education/training outcomes

Table 19 Completed or reached 26 weeks of participation in education/training

Description	Stream A participants	Stream A placements	Stream B participants	Stream B placements
Completed training	22	28	47	66
26 weeks of full-time participation in an education program	12	12	59	77
26 weeks of hybrid participation in education/training and employment	0	0	17	22
Completed training or reached 26 weeks of participation in education/training, full-time or as part of a hybrid outcome	26		78	

Note: This table contains columns with counts of participants and counts of placements. Note that some participants had more than one placement.

Table 20 Level of education/training

Education/training level	Stream A	Stream B
Secondary education	4	6
Certificate level I	2	3
Certificate level II	18	3
Certificate level III	12	66
Certificate level IV		2
Advanced diploma or diploma level		1
Bachelor degree level	1	4
Short course (accredited)	8	5
Short course (non-accredited)	2	58

Note: This table presents the number of participants that started each level of education/training. Note that some participants had started education/training at more than one level.

Employment outcomes

Table 21 Employment – 12-week outcome

12-week outcome	Stream A participants	Stream A placements	Stream B participants	Stream B placements
Reached 12 weeks	8	8	49	70
Ended before 12 weeks	4	4	11	15
No information provided	2	4	20	27
Total with a placement that started 12+ weeks prior to end-2024	**14**	**16**	**80**	**112**
Number that started less than 12 weeks prior to end-2024	10	12	30	50

Notes: Reached 12 weeks relates to employment started before 1/10/2024
This table contains columns with counts of participants and counts of placements. Note that some participants had more than one placement.

Table 22 Employment – 26-week outcome

26-week outcome	Stream A participants	Stream A placements	Stream B participants	Stream B placements
Reached 26 weeks*	3	3	18	25
Ended before 26 weeks	2	2	14	16
No information provided	7	7	25	37
Total with a placement that started 26+ weeks prior to end-2024	**12**	**12**	**57**	**78**
Number that started less than 26 weeks prior to end-2024	12	16	53	84

Notes: Reached 26 weeks relates to employment started before 1/7/2024.
This table contains columns with counts of participants and counts of placements. Note that some participants had more than one placement.

Months in IPE by outcomes

Table 23 Months in IPE for those who obtained an education, training or employment placement, by stream

Months in IPE	Stream A no.	Stream A %	Stream B no.	Stream B %
Up to 2 months	0	0%	11	6%
3–6 months	27	50%	60	30%
7–12 months	15	28%	88	44%
13 months and over	12	22%	40	20%
Total	**54**	**100%**	**199**	**100%**

Table 24 Months in IPE for those who obtained an education or training placement, by stream

Months in IPE	Stream A no.	Stream A %	Stream B no.	Stream B %
Up to 2 months	0	0%	8	6%
3–6 months	22	54%	38	29%
7–12 months	9	22%	55	42%
13 months and over	10	24%	31	24%
Total	**41**	**100%**	**132**	**100%**

Table 25 Months in IPE for those who obtained an employment placement, by stream

Months in IPE	Stream A no.	Stream A %	Stream B no.	Stream B %
Up to 2 months	0	0%	4	4%
3–6 months	8	33%	33	30%
7–12 months	9	38%	52	47%
13 months and over	7	29%	21	19%
Total	**24**	**100%**	**110**	**100%**

Progressive Outcome Survey results

Table 26 The extent to which IPE helped with Progressive Outcome Survey domains

Domain	Statement	It has not helped	I am unsure if it helped	It helped a little bit	It helped a lot
Self-knowledge	Working out what is important to me	0%	8%	51%	42%
	Working out what I'm good at	1%	13%	52%	34%
	Feeling more confident	1%	13%	46%	41%
	Feeling in control of my life	1%	29%	49%	20%
Connections with people	Making friends and meeting new people	11%	13%	48%	28%
	Building good relationships with workers who can help me (e.g. my coach)	0%	4%	37%	59%
	Doing more community activities or being part of more groups (online or in person)	6%	22%	41%	32%
	Having a network of people who can help me achieve my goals (e.g. teachers, health workers, employers)	3%	9%	31%	58%

Domain	Statement	It has not helped	I am unsure if it helped	It helped a little bit	It helped a lot
Employability skills	Making decisions about how to balance my job with other parts of my life (e.g. when I work, I still have enough time to look after my health)	8%	38%	37%	18%
	Working in a team to reach shared goals, like doing tasks together	6%	28%	33%	32%
	Finishing tasks on time	4%	27%	51%	19%
	Knowing my rights at work, how to ask for changes or help, and where to get support with problems	5%	24%	40%	31%
	Communication skills (e.g. how to talk to people about problems, say no to requests and ask for more information or help)	6%	18%	53%	23%
	Fixing problems I face (like in school, work, or social life) either by myself or by asking the right people for help (like parents, a coach, boss, teacher or health worker)	5%	18%	39%	38%
	Dressing and looking right for the situation	5%	14%	42%	38%
	Being reliable (e.g. arriving on time and doing what I said I would do)	5%	13%	45%	37%
Lifeskills	Money skills (e.g. saving and budgeting)	24%	37%	30%	9%
	Travelling to places on my own (e.g. by car, public transport, bike, walking)	21%	23%	35%	22%
	Having housing that is right for me (e.g. renting, share house, supported accommodation, other	44%	44%	10%	3%
	Managing my health (e.g. food, sleep) and accessing the healthcare I need (doctors, dentists, allied health professionals)	32%	24%	31%	13%

Inclusive Pathways to Employment pilot

Final evaluation report

Tracey Pahor, Sharon Bond and Jayne Pilkinton
2025

Acknowledgement of Country

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways on which our organisation operates. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present.

Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty