Decent Work

Decent Work Funding Goal

Employer driven, innovative models for work that integrate learning to ensure young people gain the work and experience they need and value

Decent Work Funding Outcomes

- Increased employer engagement in work-based learning relevant to the needs of local industry
- Increased entry-level jobs for young people
- Smoother transitions to decent secure work from entry level jobs



Learning from stakeholder consultations



School system

Not enough locally relevant info about jobs and careers that can inform choices

Academic pathways are the default but not right for many

Students lack access to real workplaces to inform choices Young people can feel they have to leave their community to start work and study Outline means this is more challenging in rural and regional areas

Further education

Literacy / numeracy levels too low for enrolment and/ or success

Regional access to the full range of courses s limited

Young people in regions need but don't get learning support for VET A surge in apprenticeship starts creates risks for non-completion of courses

VET study debts and the eligibility rules for subsidised studies restricts choice

Poor internet access in regions harms learning outcomes

Looking for work

Confusion about job / study options due to urgency of compulsory job search

Lack of work experience makes a first job harder to get Pressure to go for any job results in poor job matching

Some young workers can be exploited

Housing costs and transport options can make some jobs or apprenticeships unviable

In and out of work

Pressures to go for 'any job' Young people in first jobs need training and coaching that not all employers provide Casualised working conditions can mean the need for multiple jobs Apprenticeship wages are a poor incentive, at a third less than minimum wage Young people are at risk of changing jobs rather than work through problems

The realities of fitting into what work is available makes career goals too hard

Employers

Struggle to fill entry level jobs in some sectors

Struggle to retain apprentices at the wage rates offered

Churn of young people in and out is bad for business

Can hold prejudices about some groups of young locals

Recruitment and HR practices are not fit for purpose for youth



Employment programs can be characterised as having a focus on:

- the labour supply-side of the labour market, which means ensuring that candidates meet the requirements and expectations of employers
- the labour demand-side, which means working with employers and industries to create and/or offer roles that can attract, recruit, retain, and improve skills and progression prospects for young people

VFFF focuses on the demand side of employment.



Analysis of social enterprises in scope

- Though the social enterprise sector is growing, the pipeline of prospects for Decent Work funding is narrow.
- Work Integrated Social Enterprises (WISEs) are scarce in regional and rural areas and there are fewer of them in NSW/Qld compared with Victoria.
- Youth-specific WISES are rarer too.
- Another challenge is aligning the kinds of skills and jobs typically found in social enterprises with future workforce skills in demand, and relevant training/qualifications.
- White Box Enterprises, a VFFF grantee, is developing WISEs across diverse job types in NSW/Qld, but more development work is needed to achieve for workers the minimum 20 hours required for the WBE outcomes-based funding trial in progress, and/or to establish employment progression beyond the WISE.

Analysis of skills in demand

- Youth unemployment (ABS Jan 2022) is still high at 9%, while skills shortages are becoming more obvious, with significant jobs growth and entry level opportunities in health care and social assistance, construction, and some IT/technical work.
- Region-focused industries such as mining, manufacturing, and agriculture, forestry and fishing have ageing workforces and need staff too.
- Where skills shortages are acute, employers need to take new approaches to job design and better work conditions and progression pathways, informed by youth perspectives.
- Innovation thinking and new partnerships are needed with employers and industry.



Analysis of not for profit sector capacity to propose Decent Work projects

- 1. Many not-for-profit and employment services organisations face **resource constraints** and **a lack of staff expertise** to adopt new youth employment solutions, which might call for things like: the data to demonstrate needs, evidence of what works or could work; consulting and co-design with young people and/or employers; new service models or practices, new partnerships and business models.
- **3. Competition between providers** for funding combines with limited time and resources, meaning dampened collaboration capacity. Yet there are many examples of complementary skills, strengths and resources in the community, social enterprise, and employment services sectors.
- 4. A **newly reformed and contracted employment services system** is starting in July 2022, meaning some changes in providers and services to be delivered.
- 5. There is a **need to work more closely with industry sector peaks/employers.** The mining, digital skills, or human services care are obvious examples, and the agribusiness industry is looking at its image and appeal to workers.