

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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Healey, J. (2015). *Youth unemployment*. Thirroul, N.S.W: Spinney Press.

RECOMMENDATIONS: OPPORTUNITIES TO BOOST YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE FROM ITS REPORT, 'INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE'

Assist young people to build their job readiness

1. Establish a national Youth Transitions Service to enable young people who are unemployed to become work-ready and connect with employment opportunities. It will be underpinned by strong partnerships with employers, and be responsive to local labour market needs. This service would operate at minimal cost to the budget by making better use of funding available through the vocational education and training system and redeploying resources from the national Job Services Australia network.
2. Tailor the implementation of Work for the Dole and the Green Army to provide a stepping stone into ongoing mainstream employment for young people experiencing disadvantage in the labour market.

Lift school outcomes for our most disadvantaged young people

3. Intensify efforts to raise educational outcomes by establishing a COAG target for 90 per cent of young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds to complete Year 12.
4. Work with the states and territories to establish a system to immediately identify, and engage support for, those who leave school prematurely.

5. Work with the states and territories to overhaul the delivery of VET in schools so that it provides an effective pathway into higher-level vocational study or work.

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Reform the training system to better prepare young people for work

6. Lift the performance of the vocational education and training system by:
 - a. Weighting funding for training providers more heavily towards course completion rather than commencement, to lift training completion rates.
 - b. Providing public training subsidies only to vocational training courses that include work experience.
 - c. Specifying the minimum hours of face-to-face training delivery for vocational qualifications (as distinct from online delivery) to ensure learners can develop and demonstrate their competence.
 - d. Accrediting and funding specialist providers of foundation-level qualifications to deliver the support that is critical to assisting early school leavers and other disadvantaged learners move into higher level study and work.
7. Assist young people to break the cycle of homelessness and disadvantage by opening a network of Youth Foyers in TAFE Institutes across Australia that focus on education, training and skills development.

Stimulate the availability of entry-level opportunities for young people

8. Establish a youth-specific wage subsidy program targeted at 19 to 24 year olds that prepares young people for work and supports employers to develop the skills of the young person. It could be funded by a redesign of existing wage subsidy programs and through sharing the Job Commitment Bonus between a young person and their employer.
9. Arrest the decline in apprenticeships and traineeships by:
 - a. Expanding opportunities for businesses to take on young people without carrying the employment risk. This will require stronger support for the ongoing sustainability of Group Training Organisations, which facilitate this





employment model.

- b. Creating incentives for employers to hire young people as apprentices and trainees in areas of skills shortage and priority occupation areas.

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10. Establish a dedicated trainee and apprenticeship scheme in the Australian public sector to ensure that entry-level opportunities are available in government departments and agencies for young people who experience disadvantage in the labour market.
11. Require contractors undertaking publicly-funded projects of substantial size to provide structured employment and training opportunities for young people.

Harness the efforts of business, governments and communities to tackle youth unemployment

12. Trial a collective impact approach to harness community-wide efforts to address youth unemployment in ten areas of socioeconomic disadvantage.
13. Establish a Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Employment that reports to Cabinet, to drive a whole-of-government approach to boosting youth employment. The taskforce would be charged with the responsibility of developing and coordinating

delivery of a Youth Employment Action Plan, in consultation with business, unions and the community sector.

Brotherhood of St Laurence (June 2014). *Investing in our future – opportunities for the Australian Government to boost youth employment*, pp. 4-5. Retrieved from www.bsl.org.au on 15 October, 2014.