

A graphic of a road sign with a black border and white background. The sign is tilted upwards to the right. The text "STAYING" is on the top black bar, "ON" is in the white diamond in the center, and "TRACK" is on the bottom black bar. The background is a teal color with a repeating pattern of small, dark, teardrop-like shapes.

STAYING ON TRACK

THE YOUTH DELIBERATIVE FORUM

Participants' Report

“ A VICTORIA IN WHICH EVERY YOUNG PERSON IS ABLE TO
REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL FOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL
HEALTH AND WELLBEING.”

– VICHEALTH'S VISION

YOUNG ADULTS, MENTAL WELLBEING AND WORK: HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOUNG ADULTS ON THEIR JOURNEY TO PURPOSEFUL WORK?

Staying on track
BRIGHT FUTURES



Partners and acknowledgements



Introduction

Young Victorians have spoken and we're delighted to bring you their point of view on how we can support them on their journey to purposeful work.



Innovation is embedded in the way VicHealth works and we are committed to discovering how to accelerate health and wellbeing outcomes for Victorians. We see tremendous opportunity in including the voice of everyday citizens, not only in our work, but also in informing mainstream

policy and practice. Governments have a history of using democratic models and deliberative processes to develop better, and more enduring public policy. VicHealth first explored this through our Citizen's Jury on Obesity in 2015, and have now partnered with Foundation for Young Australians, Reach, Resilient Melbourne, YMCA, YacVIC, Oaktree and Centre for Multicultural Youth to engage Victorian millennials in an important conversation about supporting their journey to purposeful work.

Our research with CSIRO, 'Bright Futures', shows that young adults have a radically different world than it was 30 years ago. They will face megatrends – complex challenges including the effects of globalisation and digital technology on jobs, and a more competitive job market. These issues will impact on young Australians' mental wellbeing. Staying on Track is about finding what is needed to support young adults as they live, work, learn and play in this shifting landscape. The knowledge

and experience of our partner youth organisations, who work directly with young people to support them in a range of ways, such as finding work, family relationships, community connections and providing opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, has also been invaluable to the process.

Staying on Track engaged a diverse group of 54 participants, 18-25 years old, who are directly affected by the current environment. The participants spent a significant amount of time considering a range of information, discussing their own experiences and deliberating on the question 'How can we support young adults on their journey to purposeful work?' They have developed and written the 11 'asks' that appear in this report.

This model of deep citizen engagement is of great value to VicHealth, our partners and other key stakeholders with an interest in supporting young adults. We are confident from the results of Staying on Track that our transparent and human-centred process has produced the set of 'asks' that our participants felt warranted action.

VicHealth identified an opportunity to once again test out the value of democratic innovation in public health. I hope you can join us in bringing the 'asks' to action.

Jerril Rechter
CEO VicHealth



‘Staying on Track’ is a deliberative process that brought together a jury of 54 young people aged between 18-26 to discuss the issues faced by youth in the workforce environment.

It brought together people from a range of backgrounds including: nationality, location, people with disability and different educational experiences. This three day process involved special speakers, submissions from various organisations which were reviewed by the jury, then synthesised with our own ideas.

The hopes of the jury is to use our lived and first hand experiences, knowledge and skills to help current and future generations on their journey towards gaining purposeful work. We believe by sharing our voice this will allow us to inform policy makers, organisations and other various stakeholders for the betterment of the youth of Victoria.

Young adults, mental wellbeing and work: How can we support young adults on their journey to purposeful work?

In response, a group of 54 young Victorians present you with their asks.

VicHealth and CSIRO's Bright Futures research shows that one of the key 'megatrends' or issues to impact young Australians' mental wellbeing over the next 20 years is the gap between education and finding purposeful work. This can take a lot longer than it did a generation ago, and it can take its toll on many young adults. Factors such as mass automation of jobs and production work going overseas have raised the bar considerably for young adults aged 18 to 25 years.

It now takes almost 3* years to get a stable job after finishing education, compared to 1 year a generation ago.

There are other important transitions with family and relationships as young adults become more independent. It's a critical window for individual development yet the data tells us our young people aren't doing so well during this time.

Supporting young adults through this challenging period – by helping them build resilience, coping skills and social connections – will help set a positive foundation, allowing them to thrive in the current and future work environment.



1 IN 4

YOUNG AUSTRALIANS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCES A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION – INCLUDING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION.



1 IN 8

YOUNG ADULT VICTORIANS ARE LONELY – A KEY RISK FACTOR FOR DEPRESSION.

* The Foundation for Young Australians' (FYA) New Work Order report series, launched in 2015, revealed that the average transition time from education to work is 4.7 years compared to 1 year in 1986. At the time of printing this report, FYA's publication The New Work Reality 2018, provided a revision. Upon investigating this period further, removing common activities that young people do, such as gap years and returning for further education, FYA found that it took on average 2.6 years to transition from leaving education to full-time work. The reality is while nearly 60% of young Australians aged 25 hold a post-school qualification, 50% of them are unable to secure more than 35 hours of work per week.¹

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Census table builder. Available at: www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/tablebuilder



The process: deliberative forum

A deliberative forum places decision making in the hands of a selected group of participants. It works on the premise that people can deliver smart, long-term decisions which earn public trust if they're given enough information and the time to properly consider all angles.

For Staying on Track, that meant putting young Victorians at the centre of the conversation to convey what solutions are important from their perspectives.

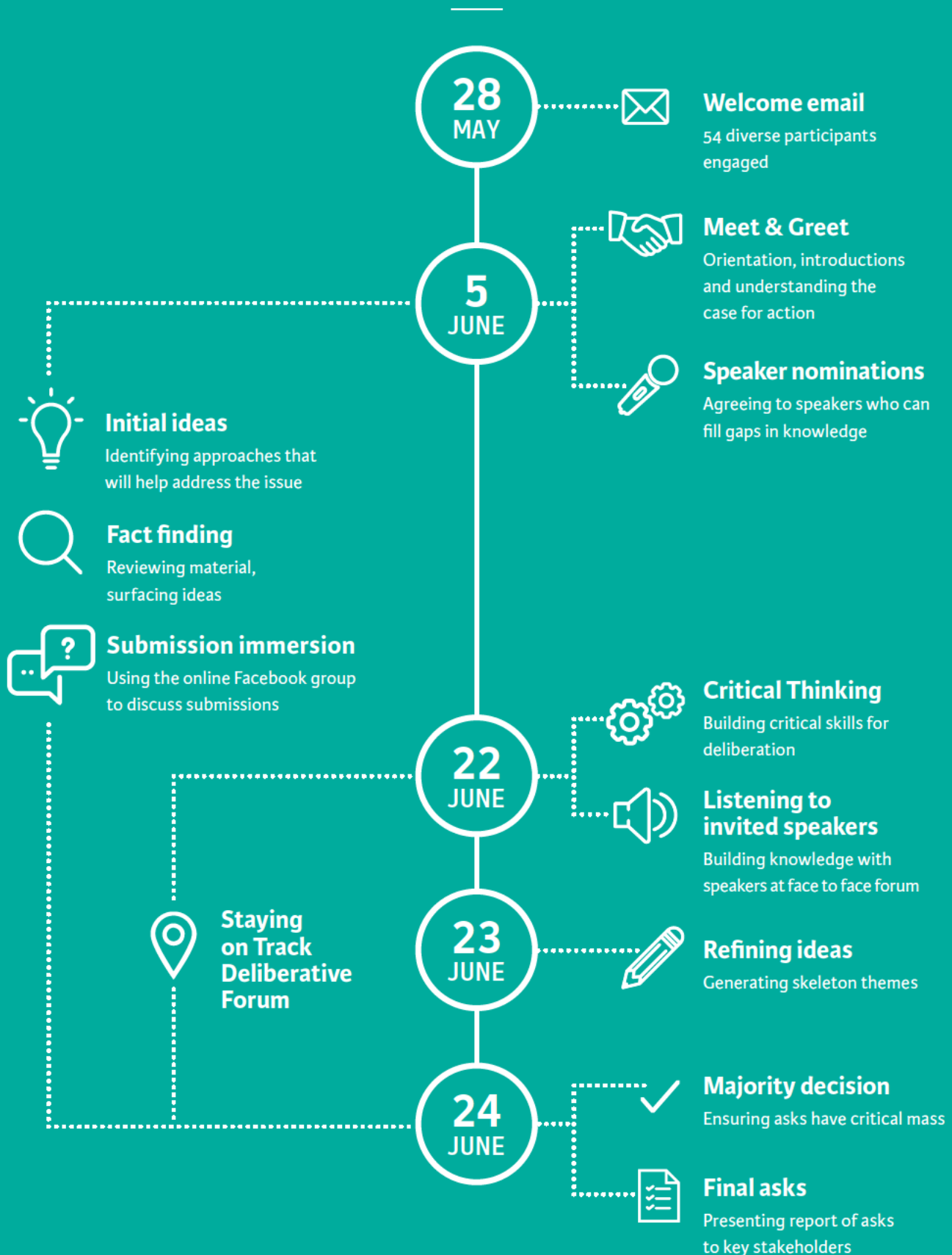
The participants' roles were to consider the information presented to them, discuss with other participants and arrive at a consensus point of view.

Staying on Track involved:

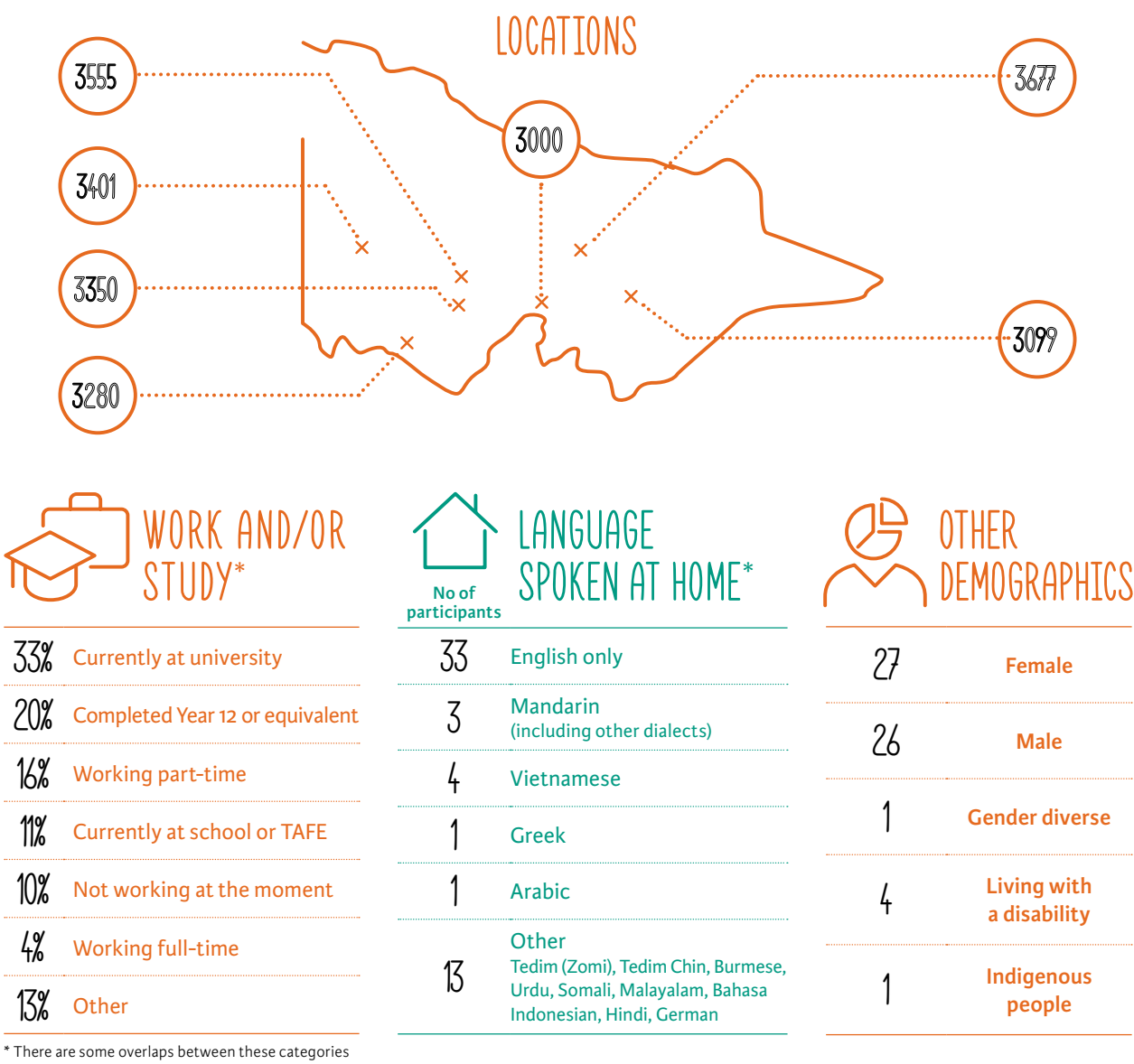
- > a diverse group of Victorians, 18-25 years old
- > a clear question to focus the deliberation
- > a broad range of information addressing the question (submissions)
- > time for the participants to consider and deliberate on the evidence
- > identification of key speakers by the participants
- > expert facilitators in deliberative processes and citizens juries
- > group negotiation where the majority decision (more than 80%) was carried
- > a report of asks, delivered at the end of the forum.



Overview of the deliberative process



Participants



COUNTRY OF BIRTH



Participants' hopes for the group

To influence change within our society

I hope that the ideas we can come up with will support young people balancing school and trying to

To make meaningful change in the form of policy recommendations that others could not get the chance to do so

To learn from challenges in their place and which help support

Find out new things and be able to come up with some great solutions for getting into the workforce

To find a practical solution to better assist young people in the transition from study to work

Work on and create some real actionable solutions to support students during and after education

To work with a practical, functional solution that gets used to help in

To draw together the different knowledges and experiences in the group in the best support the organisations

To have my experiences heard, acknowledged and my insights validated. I would hope my contribution is used positively to benefit society in Melbourne and bridge gaps in youth employment difficulties

To give my opinion on how we can help 18-25 year olds to get into work and make it easier to get into employment

Hope to learn / discover methods to deal with this issue personally and as a community and to articulate purposeful work

To impact the sector in a way that brings to light the value of young people and support the well being of employees

That we are heard! I hope that my thoughts and experiences help to make a change for all young people

Submitters

- > 4GR and Likewise
- > Be Collective
- > Business Higher Education Round Table
- > City of Greater Dandenong
- > Foundation for Young Australians
- > Girl Geek Academy
- > Headspace
- > Juno Consulting
- > Jobgetter
- > Orygen
- > Swinburne University
- > VicHealth
- > Vision Australia
- > Young Workers Centre
- > Youth CONNECT

Invited speakers

As per the design of a deliberative process, the participants collectively norminated industry representatives to fill their gaps in knowledge.

N'arweet Carolyn Briggs, Boon Wurrung Elder, Boon Wurrung Foundation

Gina Chinnery, National Vocational Services Manager, Orygen

Catherine Deveny, writer, comedian, author, social commentator and speaker

Donna Mak, Recruitment Consultant, Sharp and Carter

Bridgit O'Bree, Online Youth Career Consultant, Orygen

Beverley Oliver, Alfred Deakin Professor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education, Deakin University

Evana Seneviratne, Sales & Marketing, Sharp & Carter

Andrew Synnot, Vocational Youth Peer Worker, Headspace

Craig Turnett, Youth Programs coordinator, STREAT

Irene Verins, Manager, Mental Wellbeing, VicHealth

Sid Verma, Founder & Executive Director, BrainSTEM

Louise White, Career Practitioner and Director, Likewise

Giorgio Xindara, Recruitment Consultant, Sharp and Carter

Delivery partners

Facilitators (Mosaiclab)

Rachael Brodie

Keith Greaves

Nicole Hunter

Additional facilitators and consultants

Kochava Lilit, Youth Disability Advocacy Service Steering Committee

Lea Stevens, Director of Recruitment and Diversity, Oaktree

Wellbeing Support

Alex Hardy, Reach

Volunteers

Nicole Krishtul, Resilient Melbourne

Ella Quinn, Resilient Melbourne

Consultants

Sarah Alexander, YLab Design Director, FYA

Fraol Aliko, Ylab Associate, FYA

Rachel Andrew, Crew, Reach

Sam Champion, Youth Participation & Development Coordinator, YacVIC

Eliza Lu, YacVIC

Jane Marx, Program Leader, Pathways, Centre for Multicultural Youth

Laura Munns, Communication Manager, YMCA

Rebecca Rennie, Portfolio Manager, Youth and Mental Health, Resilient Melbourne

Mehak Sheikh, Ylab, Associate, FYA

Mitch Stent, Crew, Reach

Sandra Tay, Project Officer, Young People Strategic Development Team, YMCA Victoria

Nivek Thompson, Deliberatively Engaging

Karen White, National Manager, Wellbeing, Reach

Sashenka Worsman, CEO, Oaktree

Venue

Reach Foundation



ONE key ASK that would support young adults to achieve purposeful work

A short title (5-7 words):

Diverse representation on local council
(including young people)

Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK.

to provide opportunities and outcomes
want to young people
ensure a fair representation
the community — in par
recognise gaps and fill

These are the final asks from the participants reproduced exactly as developed by the participants of 'Staying on Track' and submitted on 24th June 2018.

VicHealth

Staying on Track

Youth Deliberative Forum

*Remit: 'Young adults, mental wellbeing and work:
How can we support young adults on their journey to
purposeful work?'*

Participant Report

22nd - 24th June 2018

Introduction

‘Staying on Track’ is a deliberative process that has brought together a jury of 54 young people aged between 18-26 to discuss the issues youth face in the workforce environment. This has brought together people from different backgrounds including: nationality, location, people with disability and education experience. This 3 day process has involved special speakers, submissions from various organisations which were reviewed by the jury, then synthesised with our own ideas.

The hopes of the jury is to use our lived and first hand experiences, knowledge, and skills to help current and future generations on their journey towards gaining purposeful work. We believe by sharing our voice this will allow us to inform policy makers, organisations and other various stakeholders for the betterment of the youth of Victoria.

Purposeful work is...

A subjective concept based on the individual's current personal goals, values and needs for work.

Improving internship outcomes and recognising time financially.

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

Some people require work to earn money during the time that they are on placement/internship. It is important to establish an outcome-driven and financially supported framework for volunteering and internships that focuses on tangible results at the end of the said internship or placement.

Unpaid work undertaken with the intention of upskilling for career advancement - volunteering, internships, work experience or otherwise - should be separated from other kinds of unpaid work. This is important to ensure that young people are able to be reimbursed for their time.

It's not about abolishing these opportunities for people, but making them more accessible to people who are unable to do placements, because they cannot afford to stop their job at the time.

Educate young adults before doing their apprenticeships so they aren't taken advantage of during their internship. This means that if young adults feel that they are being taken advantage, feeling stressed, or have anxiety, they are able to seek the proper help for the problems they may be facing. For this a crash course to be offered by whichever relevant (company or education provider) institution before the start of the internship/placement.

In case of any concerns regarding the reduction of offered opportunities, there should be a program offered by the local/state/national government for reimbursement (incentive).

*Why this ASK is so **important**. Outline your **reasoning**, **evidence** or **rationale** for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

We like our time to be valued properly.

Time is money: we need money for rent, bills, necessities.

By being able to support yourself you are able to support the broader society.

Clear expectations about the outcomes of internships so that youth can make better decisions.

Being aware of the expectations and our rights as young adults during employment is vital so that young adults are not taken advantage of.

Diverse representation of minorities (people such as people of colour, people living with disabilities and also people who identify as LGBTIQA+)

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

Dismantle structural barriers such as systemic discrimination that youth face based on race, gender, religion, sexuality, disability and other minority groups. This can be done by providing employers correct training to learn how to deal with changes.

Minority groups should be hired for their skill sets rather than what society perceives them to be. Some ideas to combat the difficulty of this includes blind hiring practices, the education of employers, mandating the hiring process through feedback or quota initiatives, or government and company initiatives.

*Why this ASK is so important. Outline your reasoning, evidence or rationale for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

The struggle for purposeful work for youth in Australia is more keenly felt by those who already face other structural barriers. It is vital when facing the challenge of youth employment to prioritise and engage in the position of marginalised groups. A majority of professional industries are traditionally stagnant, lack diversity and they are resistant to change.

Due to that being the case, minorities struggle to secure a professional job at higher rates when compared to

It is important as it provides opportunities and outcomes to relevant young people by, ensuring fair representation. It reduces biases Improves mental health of minorities. Removes stigma that is attached to these communities

Diversities within such sectors also reduces biases and prejudices upheld on communities To provide equal opportunity and outcomes that are relevant to young people.

Provide an equal level playing field when applying for job, and also when working at said job for minorities

- To ensure a fair representation of all different minorities within all professional industries
- Makes business more profitable

High-school students gaining life skills and knowledge through experience.

*Description of what this ASK is trying to **achieve**. The **intention** of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

Provide more opportunities/programs for life experiences and knowledge throughout secondary school, focusing on Year 9 so that young people can develop life skills. It is required that these skills are built and recognised within supportive environments prior to entering the workforce.

Opportunities can include - work experience, encouraging part-time work, community service, external programs such as leadership camps, student exchange, study tours overseas, volunteering overseas, student representative council, peer mentoring and career counseling.

**Different socioeconomic status and other population groups need to be considered when providing opportunities.*

Education/Knowledge can include: knowledge on unions, rights of the workers, utilizing available resources, navigating employer/employee relationships and dealing with super and tax. This addition to the curriculum would provide them with key tools to avoid exploitation of workers.

Life skills include: resilience, persistence, adaptability, critical/creative thinking, communication and confidence.

*Why this ASK is so **important**. Outline your **reasoning, evidence or rationale** for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

Young people feel they haven't been able to build life skills and vital knowledge that they need to apply for jobs universally across the workforce and many roles they may be employed in.

Employees recognise the importance of having life skills. The lack of life skills has been highlighted by various stakeholders, including university professors, career coaches and recruitment staff. It is crucial to acknowledge that life skills cannot be taught, but are rather developed through experience.

We believe these opportunities should be focused on Year 9 as this is when students consider various pathways, as well as taking part in the workforce in a casual or part-time role. Additionally, the Year 9 demographic has been proven to be a critical time in development for young individuals which is often overlooked by educational curriculum and facilitators.

Changing career-building culture in schools, universities and families

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

Ensure training course advisors understand the current job market, and are better able to support students, informing them of all pathways that can lead to purposeful work, including:

- more personal/one-on-one support from course advisors.
- course advisors complete mental health training to better support students struggling with mental health.

Promote equal importance of all career pathways (including VCAL, VET, TAFE, etc.) throughout middle school in positive ways with the intent to spread awareness to parents/families. E.g. holding multiple, accessible information evenings/opportunities to obtain further information (for parents/guardians/students).

Teaching parents what success can be and look like in many different forms. Teaching teachers and parents how success has changed/is changing because of the work landscape.

*Why this ASK is so important. Outline your reasoning, evidence or rationale for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

There are many pressures and expectations from families to achieve success through traditional means. This can lead to lots of anxiety and more mental health problems.

- To make sure young people are getting advice from a well-informed career adviser.

-Increasing exposure to multiple career pathways will reduce the time spent trying to find purposeful work and a suitable career.

Education and harsher penalties for employee mistreatment

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

By educating employers and enforcing worker rights. If you don't know your rights, you might be exploited therefore harder to enjoy work.

Educate employers which improves self esteem for workers.

- We need to educate young people about worker rights and where to go when those rights are violated
- Further educating business owners to know their requirements and obligations to employees.
- Place more barriers in front of new business owners that ensure they know their obligations, ie. a test when registering an ABN (australian business number)
- More accessible options inside local community for worker rights inquiries
- Have employers face more long term penalties for wage theft and poor treatment.
- Fill the casual worker loophole (being able to remove shifts as penalty without dismissal)
- Foster education by distribution and sharing of knowledge on worker rights throughout workplaces

*Why this ASK is so important. Outline your reasoning, evidence or rationale for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

By educating employers on how to treat employees, the employees may experience a better work life balance and hence improve their mental wellbeing. Additionally, by implementing harsher penalties for employers that do not obey regulations, they may be inclined to act more responsibly towards their employees. This in turn is beneficial for employees to work with more purpose, as they know they are being fairly treated.

- It is an issue that a lot of young people face
- It disengages young people from wanting to work because of the bad experiences.
- It puts unnecessary stress on those working towards purposeful work through casual roles to support study etc.
- Once the youth are educated on these issues, generational change will occur once they are in higher positions/starting their own businesses
- More barriers would help to ensure business owners/operators know their obligations and confirm to the authorities that they recognise these obligations before starting a business.

Building Work Readiness

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

Work readiness of young people can be built through identifying, marketing and developing soft skills through education. Soft skills are skills that incorporate communication and interpersonal abilities that are essential in a work environment. To an extent, some of these skills develop during education, but these skills should be more explicitly taught.

These could be skills such as:

- Leadership skills
- Creativity
- Resilience
- Problem solving
- Teamwork
- Tech skills (the ability to use required software and devices)
- Presentation and communication skills

We would like soft skill development clearly embedded into curriculums throughout educational institutions, including secondary and tertiary.

*Why this ASK is so **important**. Outline your **reasoning, evidence or rationale** for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

Often youth can become demotivated when faced with what employers might consider they should have, and undervalue their existing transferable skills and capabilities

This tool will help young people to acknowledge their strengths and sell themselves to employers. Improving awareness and clarity of experiences and skills can assist young people to be more confident when applying for a job.

This program will give youth something tangible to market to employers. Many young people struggle to find employment after the completion of education, whether that be high school or further study. Statistics show that the average time to find purposeful work is 4.7 years.

Supporting casual and part-time workers in secure work

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

Ensuring casual and part-time workers' rights are respected and enforced, and they are informed through a transparent approach from employers. We should also investigate ways that casual work can become more secure, through both providing pathways to part time and full time positions and ensuring casual work is valued as legitimate, respected in its own right as well as ensuring that the casual and part-time workers are dealt with by employers in the same way as full-time. This can be achieved through:

- Education of young people and better regulation of employers.
- Protecting and ensuring casual workers rights (improving the current situation)-
- Empowering casual and part-time workers to employ their rights - through education integrated into the school curriculum.
- Enforcing punishment/penalty of wage theft or underpayment of employees - would be worth exploring the criminalisation of wage theft and its enforcement can be looked at by further regulations that are achieved by political lobbying
- Enforcing rights for casual/part-time workers working within 5% of full time hours e.g. casual worker working 37.5 hours per week, when full time is legally classified as 38 hours per week.
- Combination of education for employees and stricter enforcement of laws.
- Rating system for employers, that measures objective factors such as the law and compliance to OH&S.
- Political lobbying to make sure that it is followed through and implemented: local councils and MPs can play their part and can use it as their campaign motives for gaining the youth vote

*Why this ASK is so important. Outline your reasoning, evidence or rationale for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

The casualisation of the workforce is increasing and a feature of the world today. We should embrace and support casual workers and take steps to make casual work more secure on its own such as a minimum number of shifts and limit on how many days before a shift can be cancelled. A flexible workforce shouldn't be at the cost of workers rights.

Empowering and increasing the feeling of security in the casual workforce will increase young people's confidence in their rights. This will be beneficial for both employees and employers. A secure and happy workforce will lead to increased productivity. Additionally the betterment of workers, employees and the economy will occur due to the prevalence of youth in the casual employment bracket. Often casual workers are made up of minorities and disadvantaged groups, who may struggle to find full time or part time work and should not be deprived because of their rights and education because of it.

Mentorship and programs for high school and university students through organisation initiatives to guide students and allow them to engage in different career options.

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

- Providing early and sustained intervention beginning at year 7 and continuing through to post secondary education (university, TAFE)
 - Mentorship programs (past student, workers, different employees and employers) providing advice about their careers (i.e. the mentors can go to school and provide their experiences with work)
 - Early (year 7-12) identification of what young people enjoy, providing young adults with different opportunities to explore different career options and passions to find what they enjoy and what they could envision themselves doing for purposeful work.
 - Continuing this program to support these students through their education (tertiary, vocational) to aid them in understanding their career options and finding purposeful work.
 - Career guidance should also be provided to aid young adults in writing CVs, career options and the available pathways (vocational, tertiary, internships etc) and current opportunities/programs that exist.
 - Pairing with a mentor could mean that people learn about the other non-tertiary related pathways that are available.
- This initiative could be done a specific private entity, specialising in different fields to provide students different opportunities that are available in the Australia job market. This should not be limited to local councils, as people move from area to area throughout their education and in their pursuit of purposeful work.

*Why this ASK is so important. Outline your reasoning, evidence or rationale for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

Young people aren't given the necessary support at this age to make informed decisions about future job opportunities and the Victorian work environment.

This program will help students combat the issues young people face when on the hunt for purposeful employment. Being informed from a early age will help mitigate poor mental health and low self esteem, contributing to a positive inclination of mental health amongst youth.

Through this initiative, young people will be given an understanding of the different pathways to employment. This will broaden their views allowing them to resist the pressures they face to go down a predetermined path to employment (ie formal university education or apprenticeship). It will also build students confidence, capabilities and resilience, allowing to them make informed decisions as they go into VCE, VCAL or leave school.

Investigation into current and future professional landscape

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

This ask is essentially trying to give support to young people by providing some clarity on the professional landscape in Australia for the next decade.

We want information about:

- Employment trends for young people in the past e.g. location of jobs, work mode (e.g.office, home, digital), work type (casual, part-time, full-time), growing vs shrinking industries, who are the major employers for young people.
- Analytical predictions for future industry growth
- Job pathways - how current workers have gotten where they are, in order to give direction to actions young people can take now

This research needs to be better resourced and coordinated in order to provide a holistic picture.

The information needs to be provided in an easily accessible and clear-to-understand format for young people

*Why this ASK is so **important**. Outline your **reasoning, evidence or rationale** for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment*

Conducting this research is important so that young people have a good idea of which areas will be in demand in the future and they can make their study/work choices accordingly.

We are told a lot that employment is changing rapidly but not given direction as to how to prepare for this change, which can lead to young people feeling helpless and becoming passive in their preparation for work.

Increase and promote local government engagement/support for purposeful work

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.*

Local communities to use their resources and networks to aid job seeking young people find purposeful work.

This can be achieved by:

- Mentorship programs between young adults and employers (specifically for those who face systematic disadvantage i.e. disability).
- Councils can hold fairs, networking events, connecting local employers with local employees (young people).
- Have young people on council committees to share insights and opinions on issues regarding their peers.
- Local governments to provide CV building workshops and guides to navigating online jobs, mock interviews.
- Local governments to collaborate with one another to provide greater scope in serving young people who are mobile/are looking for opportunities outside of their council area.
- Local government to help bridge the gap between high school education and employment (Increasing exposure to different jobs after high school)
- Improve interactions between the local government and job seeking organisations. For example interactions between non for profit organisations such as Headspace.
- Youth centres aiding in people upskilling (i.e. education, training eg: Streat) to aid in finding purposeful employment.

*Why this ASK is so **important**. Outline your **reasoning, evidence or rationale** for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

- Young people should have a voice in the local community in regards to employment prospects and pathways.
- People out of highschool are unaware of the breadth of jobs on the market, and hence education and guidance is beneficial in aiding employment search in highschool.
- Increasing awareness is imperative for the application process to jobs as often young adults are unaware of how to write a job application (i.e. CV).

Implementing workplace policies to increase awareness and support for mental health challenges.

*Description of what this ASK is trying to achieve. The intention of this ASK. Make sure it is meeting the remit - think about **mental health support** during the journey to purposeful work.* Preparing workplaces for mental health challenges that may arise. Workplaces should be safe spaces for those with mental health challenges and neurological differences. Workplaces that are safe for people with mental health challenges and neurological differences are:

- Workplaces that implement wellbeing strategies for everyone - such as meditation and mindfulness.
- A place that encourages discussion around mental health, and not create stigma.
- Adaptable to different needs - such as extended breaks when necessary, flexible hours.
- Acceptance of taking sick days for mental health.

*Why this ASK is so important. Outline your reasoning, evidence or rationale for this being an important ASK to **support** young adults and **improve mental wellbeing** while finding purposeful employment.*

Asking if someone is 'ok' is only the first step - there needs to be a practical understanding of what to do, how to support diverse workers, and be adaptable to the fact that mental health issues on any scale can affect anyone. It is important to ensure that people do not feel like a burden, or that they are able to contribute effectively. The economic cost of not supporting workers with mental health challenges is much higher than supporting workers to sustain employment in the first place

For example:

- Worker turnover costs employers money
- A preventative, supportive approach is economically viable

There is a higher prevalence of mental health concerns amongst young people than other age brackets. Many mental illnesses begin under the age of 25.

Minority Reports

Ask's that were not supported by a super majority:

Grants, guidance and education for youths starting new businesses.

Reduce financial risk for young people by creating more youth targeted grants.
 Encourage more people to see starting their own business as a viable career option and opportunity for purposeful work.
 Should receive advice on scoping and viability advice with industry experts.
 Young people starting businesses should receive more grants from investors and government. Connect with industry mentors and networks to help build knowledge and growth.

Young people do not have the financial backing of older individuals to start their own businesses, many see starting their own business as a goal/purposeful work.
 Young people hire other young people, encouraging generational change and support for younger workers over time. Helps them to recognize life challenges / problems as opportunity. Trains youth to become leaders and create more businesses and opportunities.
 Helps people to explore and discover new or untapped markets.

Encouraging employers to be more supportive of youth

We need to educate employers on being more open to hiring young people or people at an entry level. We need them to stop being so rigid about resumes, cover letters and interview performance, and instead look at the person behind these things (passion, values, attitude). By hiring young people, employers are able to hire young adults into their organisations, driven by passion, perspective (including current knowledge), and more receptive. This means that the next generation is able to get into the industry. These are advantages that hiring managers should be encouraged to look into rather than dismiss.

The focus of this report applies to entry-level aspiring workers, graduates, and any individual trying to forge a career in purposeful work.

The current work climate is having serious and detrimental impacts on people both within and outside of the 18-25 year old "youth" bracket - 26-30 year olds are having the same challenges breaking into the workforce, being underemployed, being exploited through unpaid "work experiences" that have no intention of providing pathways or valid experience to ongoing work.

What an 18 year old needs, and what a 25 year old needs, in terms of being supported towards purposeful work, are different. This is critical. The submissions of this report have been provided by a group of people with real experiences, frustrations, and difficulties facing them now and into the foreseeable future - do not leave them to provide recommendations that do not have a direct impact on them too. This is not just for future generations - do something for the graduates and job seekers out there NOW. People are being told to 'keep trying' with nothing out there to try for.



Call to action

Staying on Track has elicited a range of considered asks which have been endorsed by young Victorian adults.

Over the coming year, VicHealth will actively work with a range of organisations on uptake of these asks. We will be looking to incorporate them into our own work, and will also monitor the aligned actions of other organisations.

You can help drive action on the asks by sharing this report with others who can progress the asks, or implementing action on the asks yourself, and let us know what you are doing.

Help drive action on the asks

- 1. SHARE** this report.
- 2. IMPLEMENT** action on the asks yourself.
- 3. LET US KNOW** what you're doing by completing our survey at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/SOTaction

THIS IS A GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF
THE YOUTH DELIBERATIVE FORUM PROCESS

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOUNG ADULTS ON THEIR JOURNEY TO purposeful work?



THE ASKS...





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