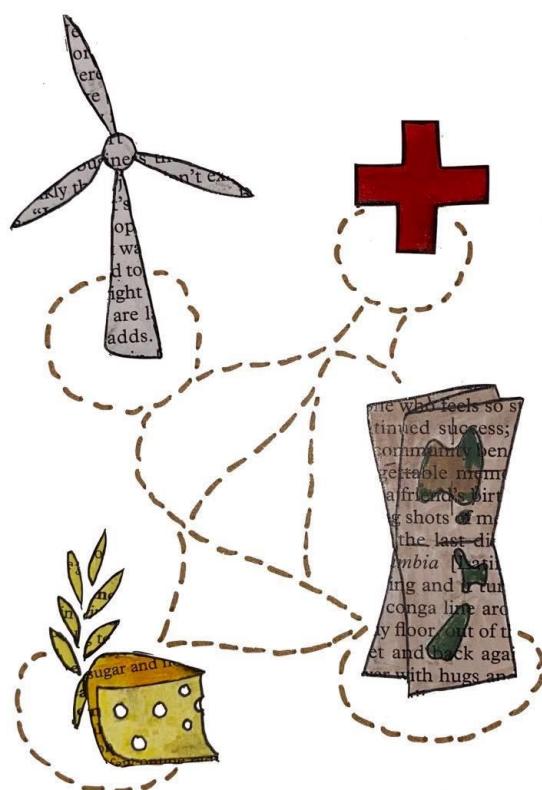


# How work works: getting young people employment in our growing industries



Youth-led research into jobs in growing industries, how to get them, and how governments can help

Loddon Campaspe

## **Prepared by**

Jeanette Pope, Freelance Strategy Policy and Research, 0421 859 541, [jeanettepope1@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jeanettepope1@yahoo.com.au)

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From research conducted by young interns:

Jordann Broad	Emma Linton
Prince John Caburnay	Mia Oberin
Whitney Eadon	Julia Sandeman
Mary Joy Estrella	Charlotte Verley
Grace Hosking	

And production assistance by young professionals:

Benjamin Pope (Art work)  
Emily Axford (editing)

## **For a partnership of Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)**

North Central LLEN, Campaspe Cohuna LLEN, Central Ranges LLEN and Goldfields LLEN (associate).

Victoria has 31 LLENs funded by the Victorian Government Department of Education and Training, through the School-Employer Engagement Support funding to increase school-employer engagement activities. This includes structured workplace learning, work experience and community work, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, guest speakers and presenters from different industries, workplace visits and industry tours, and work-readiness activities.

## **Commissioned by the Victorian Government**

The Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership was established by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, to present on our region's priorities annually. Each Regional Partnership is made up of community and business leaders, the CEOs of local councils, a representative of Regional Development Australia and a Victorian Government Deputy Secretary.



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# How work works

We are all worried about young people's futures as the nightly news outlines the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the industries where they find entry-level work. And yet, when we sent nine interns out to interview employers in growing industries in our region, everyone—both employers and interns—came out hopeful.

There is no doubt that the job market is tough, but this research shows that there are long-term opportunities for young people in regional areas and that many of our growing industries are experiencing skill shortages. Our largest industries need younger workers as they expand, and aging workforces retire. Young people in our regions could find advantages over their city counterparts by doing a stint of work here.

To make sure we can build both the jobs (demand) and pipeline of young workers (supply) in our growing regional industries, we need the right policy response in recovery. The future of a robust regional economy that provides food, energy, hospitality, and other products and services to all Victoria, depends on it.

## Our research

We trained nine young interns aged 17 to 20 in our regional area (Loddon Campaspe) to:

- » **interview 26 employers** in our growing industries about entry-level work<sup>1</sup>, and
- » **survey 258 young people** in, and post, secondary school about their interests.<sup>2</sup>

This report outlines what we found, in three sections:

- » **5 good news stories we need to hear**
- » **5 things young people can do**
- » **5 things we should do next (recommendations to government and other policy makers).**



## The good news

Our research found that **there is entry-level work in our region, a great diversity of jobs in a wide range of industries** and, despite COVID-19, **many industries are growing**. Employers need younger people to replace retiring workforces but they report skill shortages and recruitment challenges. Most are **willing to train people on the job**. Young people in the region could find opportunities that may be more competitive in the city.

<sup>1</sup> See employers Appendix A and survey in Appendix B

<sup>2</sup> Modified for rural areas from avatars from LLEN developed *Find Their Feet Careers* events: Pope J (2019) Draft Find their Feet evaluation (unpublished). To explore Find Their Feet go to the website: [www.findtheirfeet.org](http://www.findtheirfeet.org)

Our research also found that **young people's interests align with the jobs on offer** and they have a range of attributes (comfort with technology, contemporary ideas, enthusiasm and fitness, etc) that make them desirable candidates for employers.

## What young people need

But **young people do not know about the opportunities** because they are not hearing about pathways in school, have little chance to meet employers, and are **faced with a complex process to find work that is difficult to navigate if you don't know how it operates**. On top of that, there is an inaccurate view that a lack of skills is a young person's primary problem.

Employers report that, apart from finishing school (which is a must these days; VCE or VCAL – it doesn't matter), and getting a qualification if required, **the fundamental building block for a successful career—and the first thing they look for on a CV—is experience**. But employers don't mind what that experience is. It could be work, but it could also be community involvements, organising events, participating in sport—anything that shows a young person that can commit to something.

**Experience teaches young people how to work in a team and hones people, communication, and organisational skills.** These are the main skills employers are seeking and they are learned by doing. COVID-19 has taken away a cohort of young people's ability to get that experience through school placements, part-time work, community activity, and entry-level jobs post-school.

Our findings support the argument of the *International Labour Organisation*—that young people are specifically disadvantaged in tight labour markets because they:

- » **have less work experience,**
- » **lack job seeking and career management skills, and**
- » **have fewer networks to draw on.<sup>3</sup>**

## What we should do next

These are all things we can fix.

Governments are now considering their “road maps to recovery” and the inclusion of simple actions could, not only help the region to create a pipeline of workers into growing industries, but ensure young people get the experience they need.

This report recommends five things we should do next:

1. **Commit to building a pipeline of younger workers into growing industries in recovery planning**
2. **Fund a rural careers education model so young people can meet employers early in school**
3. **Develop work experience and gap-year internships for young people affected by COVID-19**
4. **Create a regional jobs information portal**
5. **Ensure every young person leaves school with: a driver's license, safety training, a Linked In profile, and basic financial literacy.**

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<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organisation in Mann A (2012) *Work Experience: Impact and Delivery – Insights from Evidence*. Education & Employers Taskforce: London

# 5 good news stories we need to hear...

1. Industries in our region have a diverse range of entry-level jobs (but young people don't know about them)
2. Despite COVID-19, some industries will likely grow in the future
3. Young people's interests in the region match what employers are looking for
4. Regional employers want young people and are willing to train them
5. Your first job won't be your best job: our CEOs started out in customer services, trades and administration.

## 1. Industries in our region have a diverse range of entry-level jobs (but young people don't know about them)

- » Many growing industries in the region have entry-level work for young people

This includes: health, social services, tourism, agriculture and food production, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, education, local government, and business support/professional services.

*"We are one of the three biggest employers in the region: local government, health and agriculture, and we all have plenty of opportunities."*

*"A young person having studied agriculture could take their pick of the jobs."*

*"We are a global business with the enviable task of manufacturing chocolate! We are constantly upgrading equipment and packaging solutions, and always have opportunities."*

*"Tourism/hospitality is a fun industry with lots of opportunities, and the skills are very transferrable. You could work in Bendigo now and London next."*

*"It's not hard at all to find jobs in health. People can come in at various levels of education and expertise."*



## » **Growing industries have a diverse range of jobs young people could do**

Entry-level jobs range from specialist roles (with qualifications), to hands on trade apprentice/traineeships, to administrative roles (business support, needed across industries).

*"There are so many different areas in this industry: hospitality, retail, accommodation, touring companies, marketing..."*

*"[Renewable energy] is a new industry and needs apprentices in trades as well as bookkeepers, customer services, website designers, business management. It's a 5-step process with seven players, including customers, so we need good business people."*

*"We make bespoke machines to move packaged goods around brewerie, etc. We hire trades – boiler makers, fitters, electricians – and office workers for software design, purchasing, etc."*

*'There are so many entry points in health! ... health promotion, nursing, community development, health prevention, administration, communications, marketing, social work...'*

*"We need food technologists, process operators, engineers, accountants, quality assurance, mechanical trades, electricians, HR, laboratory technicians..."*

*"We are a global exporter with a clear pathway through our business, or into related industries, from forklift driver, to shipment/despatch, to site management and customer service."*

## » **Young people don't know about jobs and don't meet employers to find out about them**

Research has shown that young people who could recall at least four employer contacts at school are more likely to do well and finish school, have smoother transitions from school to employment or further education, and end up in better paying jobs.<sup>4</sup> But LLENs reports that there is minimal career education in schools across Victoria<sup>5</sup> and that career advisors are part-time and have few resources to spend on student contacts with dispersed employers.<sup>6</sup>

**Our interns confirmed their careers education lacked contact with employers, and the types of jobs available just 'didn't jump out at them'.**

*"Where are these jobs they are all talking about! Where!"*

**Talking to the region's employers made them feel "encouraged", "relieved", "more hopeful". While some are focused on heading off for university, others did not want to move to the city, and were glad to hear there were opportunities to stay.**

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<sup>4</sup> Mann A (2012) *It's Who You Meet: Why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults*. Education and Employers taskforce: London

<sup>5</sup> Parliament of Victoria (2018) *Victorian Careers Education Parliamentary Inquiry*. Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, Victorian Government: Melbourne

<sup>6</sup> Clarke K (2015). Careers education must be for all, not just those going to university. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/careers-education-must-be-for-all-not-just-those-going-to-university-49217>

## 2. Despite COVID-19, industries will likely grow in the future

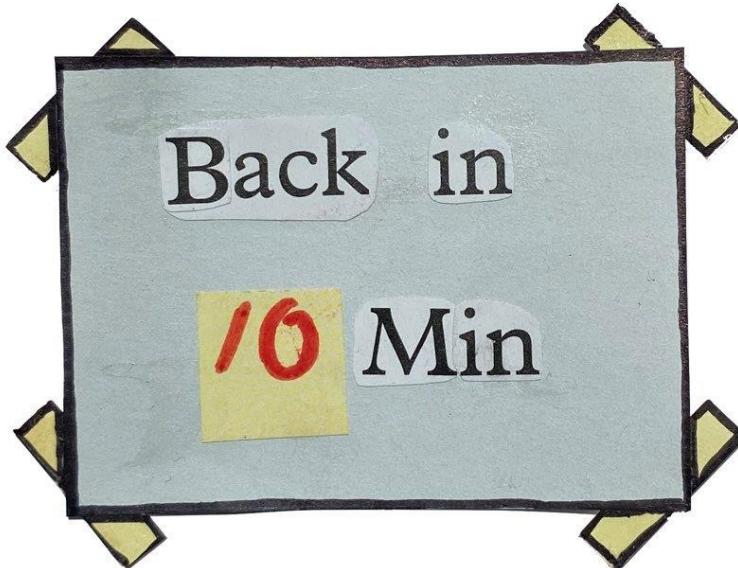
### » All industries have been disrupted by COVID-19

All industries reported COVID-19 has impacted on their staffing and operations and, for some, the impacts have been catastrophic (tourism, creative industries).

*"Our industry has been devastated. We have lost employers, marketing roles, hospitality, retail, tour companies ... we are practically at a standstill with 95% of businesses lost or closed."*

*"We have been hugely impacted by the travel bans. We can't get out to install, there are delays in parts from suppliers."*

*"The need for our services has increased. Parents are finding it harder to have kids with disabilities at home this second time round."*



### » Most industries have adapted, including some that have 'pivoted' into temporary new activities

*"We are still open and working, busy, just working a bit harder and slower with the COVID-19 regulations (distancing, OHS, COVID safe plans etc). Our industry is beholden to changes in policy anyway (the "solar-coaster"), so we are used to speed bumps."*

*"We were already working towards making the organisation more mobile before COVID-19, because we are growing. We were already looking at tele-health consultations to help clients access the healthcare system."*

*"Our production is running 24/7. We had a few struggles getting containers to get goods to our global customers, but that is now settled, and we are full steam ahead"*

*"We pivoted to building mask making machines in Shepparton. We turned the machine around in 6 weeks. So our industry has changed but not collapsed."*

## » **Most industries are confident they will grow in the future**

Many of the employers reported their industries are growing and data analyses from elsewhere show these growing industries represent Loddon Campaspe's strengths, or "comparative advantages" over other regions (Figure 1 below).

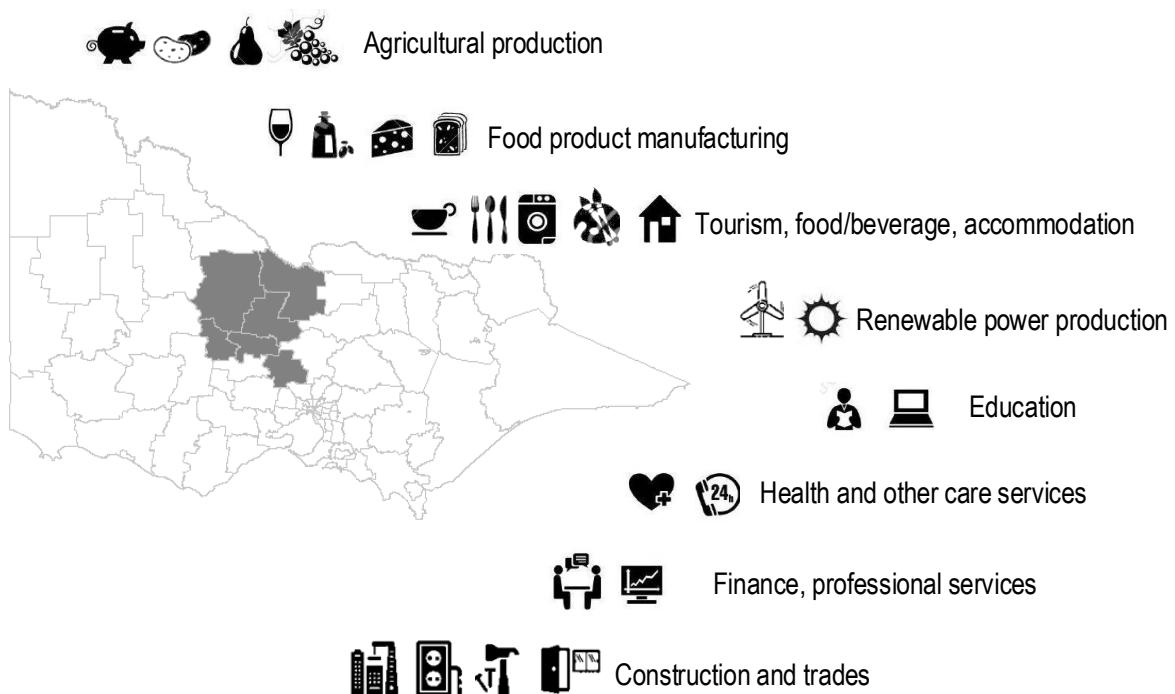
*"Confectionary has weathered the storm. Demand has been stronger than the same time last year. The food industry is future proofed because Australia has fantastic raw materials."*

*"I'm very optimistic for job growth. Tourism is a high-repeat market and we should return quickly to 60% of what it used to be pre COVID-19."*

*"Agriculture is stronger than ever and lots of government initiatives out of COVID have strengthened the industry. People still need to eat!"*

*"We provide business support to small businesses. At first we were worried, but people saw business support as important to get them through, and we've had a boom in new clients."*

**Figure 1. Some industries are our region's "comparative advantage" over other regions**

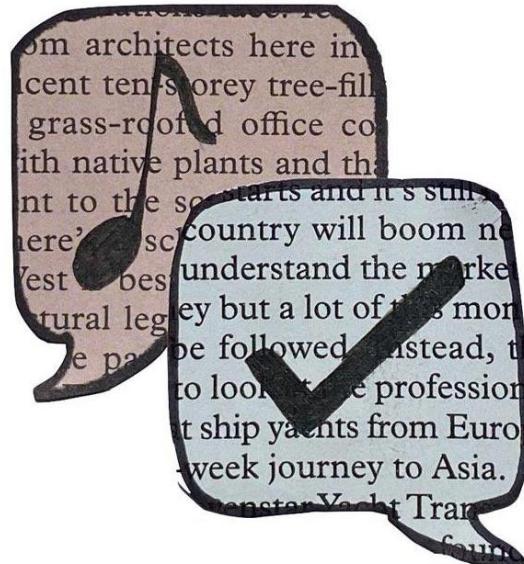


Source: Infrastructure Victoria Industry Profile 2019 and the RDV Regional Partnership Road Maps 2019.

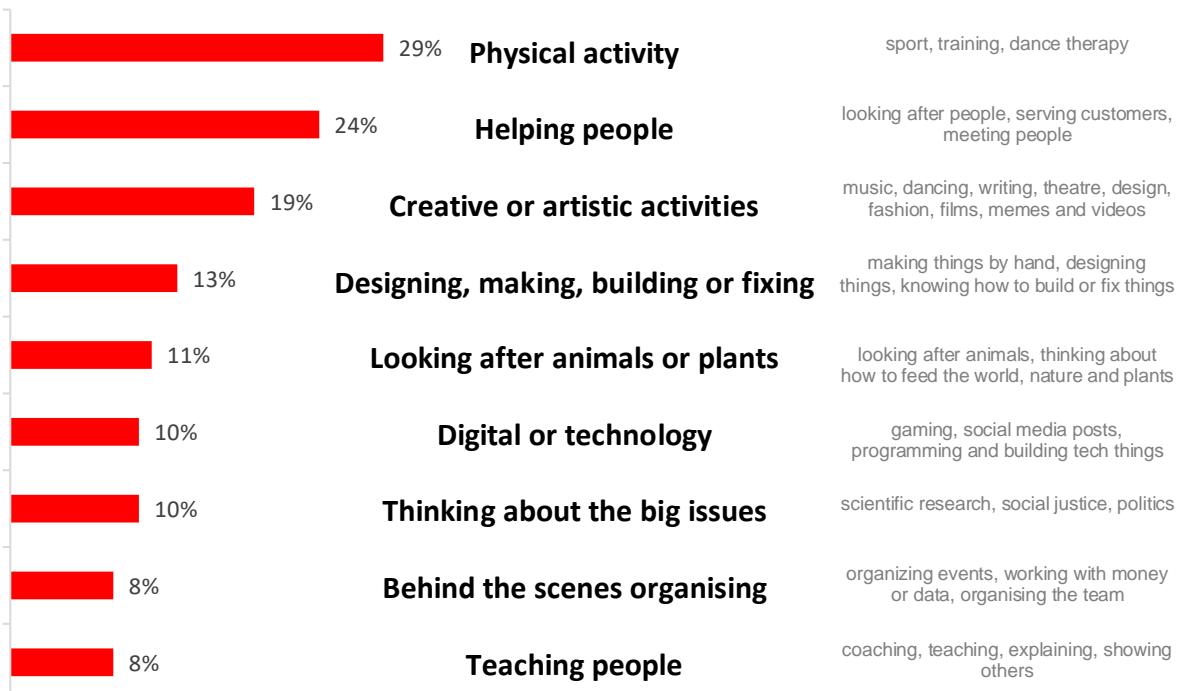
### 3. Young people's interests match what employers are looking for

#### » Young people's interests match the jobs opportunities available

While only a small sample (259), the survey shows young people's interests match the jobs on offer and the things employers are looking for. Careers education is needed to help young people explore opportunities that would suit their interests, particularly in places they would not expect. This includes the industries in Figure 3 that are projected to grow faster than the rest of regional Victoria.

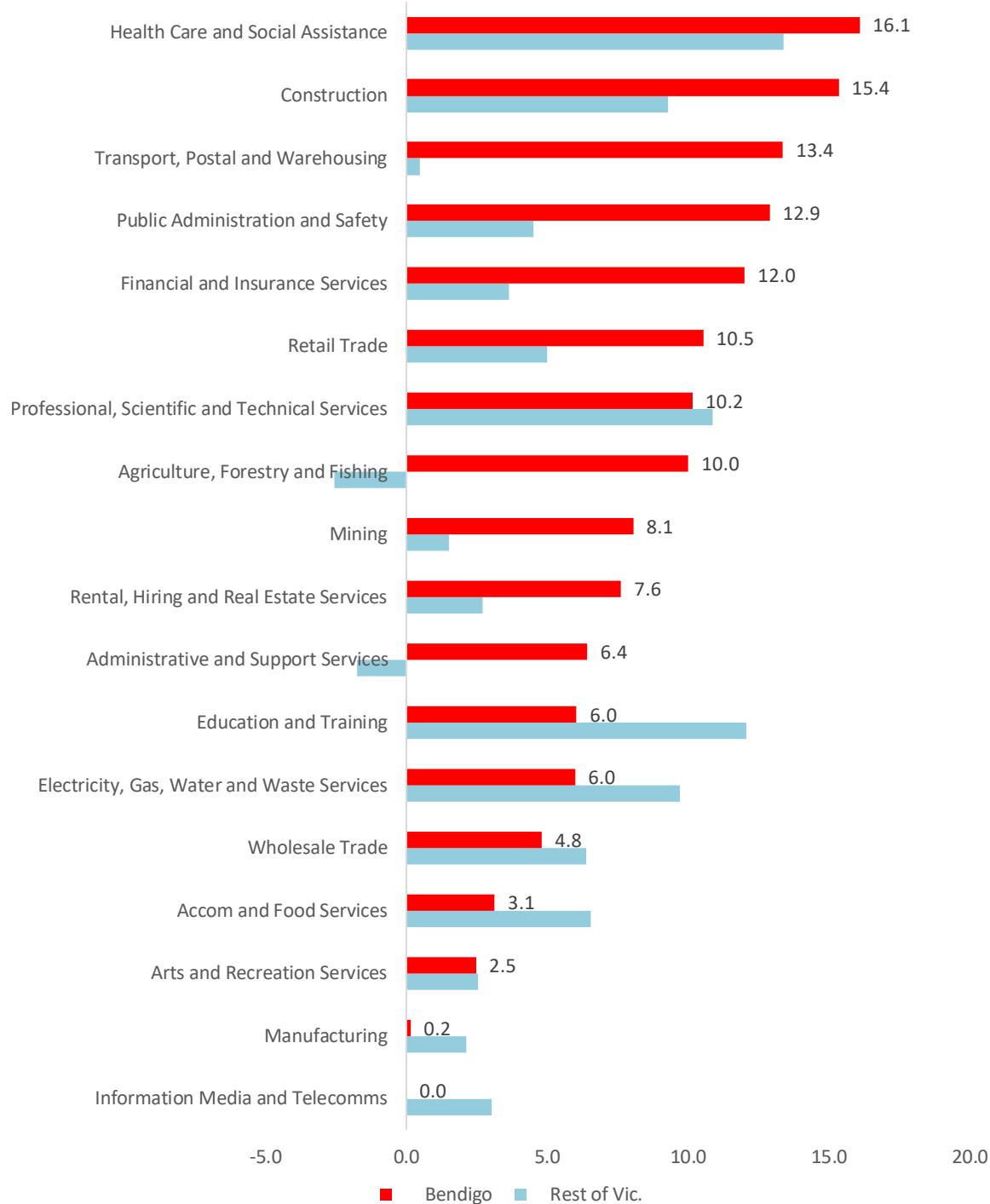


**Figure 2. Young people are interested in the things employers are looking for<sup>7</sup>**



<sup>7</sup> Survey of 258 young people across Year 7 (15%), Year 8 (14%), Year 9 (24%), Year 10 (18%), Year 11 (11%), Year 12 (11%), Finished school in the last year or two (5%) – some respondents selected more than one interest

**Figure 3. Many industries in our region are showing employment growth, some faster than others<sup>8</sup>**



<sup>8</sup> Department of Jobs and Small Business (2018) *Employment Projections, five years to May 2023*. Available at <http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/GainInsights/EmploymentProjections> Accessed 28 October 2019

## 4. Regional employers want young people and are willing to train them

- » We asked: 'What would deter you from employing young people?'

We heard a resounding...

**"Nothing!"**

*"It's not just a responsibility, but a delight to bring entry level graduates in."*

*"Young employees are an asset to a workplace as they bring fresh ideas and have a level of enthusiasm and motivation that more established workers can lack."*

- » Employers want to attract young people back to the region after study

Employers reported there will be a lot of opportunities for young people in the coming decade as large numbers of older workers retire, migration slows (due to COVID-19), and more people take a break from the city, increasing the demand for services and things to do in the region.

*"We are currently focused on crafting a clear story of what our jobs entail to attract young people, and looking at how we can set up a professional group, and encourage social life and community involvement, to encourage them to stay."*

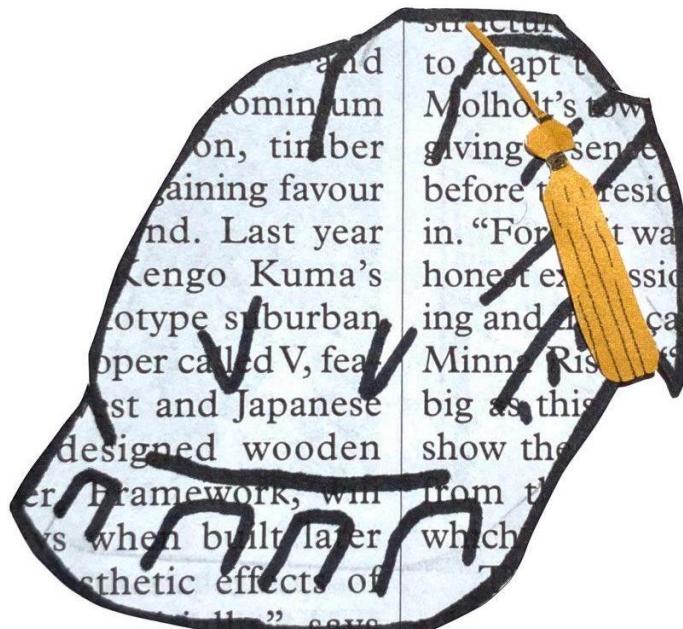
- » Employers are willing to train the right people

Many employers are willing, and in some cases would prefer, to train people on the job.

*"We are eager to recruit trainees. Young people coming early for work experience is great!"*

*"Our recruitment specifies that experience is preferred, but not necessary, because we provide full training and encourage new workers to work alongside experienced operators."*

*"We are really open to have new grads join us, even if they don't have much background/experience. New grads will be heavily supported".*



## 5. Your first job won't be your best job: our CEOs started out in customer services, trades and administration

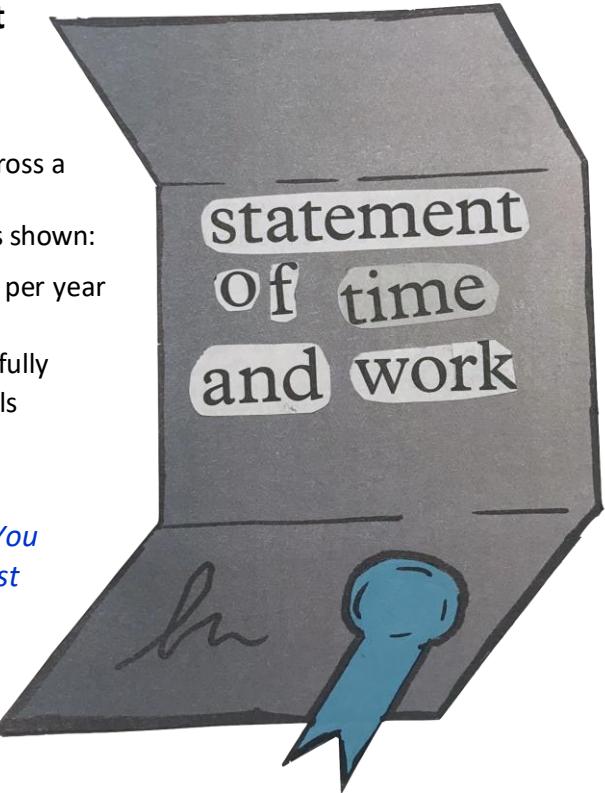
- » Finishing school is important – it doesn't matter if it's VCE or VCAL – school increases lifetime earnings

Finishing school leads to better work and income across a person's lifetime, and hones literacy, numeracy, communication, and team work skills. Research has shown:

- » a young person's lifetime earnings increase 10% per year of school completed past year <sup>9</sup>
- » post-school labour market interventions do not fully compensate for the transferable knowledge/skills acquired earlier in the education system <sup>10</sup>

*"We are a reasonably high skilled trade industry. You need literacy, maths, communications skills. The last few people have turned up thinking because it's a trade based job they can have left school by 16, but that won't cut it anymore."*

*"Education is extremely important, regardless of where you want to end up. It gives you options."*



- » Your first job won't be your best job, but will get you ahead in a tough labour market

The key thing that most employers are looking for is experience from work or anything else that shows a person can commit and have endurance. Employees reported that 'your first job won't be your best job' but is important for getting the experience and 'work readiness' that makes it easier to find the next, better job.

*"Make the most of any job commitment. Work is a big part of your life, be happy doing it. Find some engagement, keep developing, and then look ahead."*

*"Once you are in you can start moving within the industry. It can take time to find what you love and work out why you do what you do."*

*"If you stick at the first bit, and take an interest in what the whole process is for, you'll pick up things that'll be a good grounding for opportunities in this and a lot of other businesses."*

<sup>9</sup> Leigh A & Ryan C (2008) Estimating returns to education using different natural experiment techniques. *Economics of Education Review*. 27: 149-1560. ANU: Canberra

<sup>10</sup> ILO (International Labour Office) (2016) *Interventions to Improve Labour Market Outcomes of Youth: A Systematic Review*: ILO: Geneva

*"You might start as a boiler maker but if you want to be a computer programmer, talk to your bosses and say "I'm really interested in this. I've been doing this course, can I do a few hours in the software team? We'll help anyone who wants to be helped."*

**Figure 4. The first jobs of CEOs in our study**



» **There are a few challenges that might make an employer hire someone older**

A few employers reported issues that would sway them towards hiring an older person, including if they didn't think the person was going to stay in the job or industry.

*"Big fan of investing in someone if they're committed to the [health and social services] cause, but reluctant to invest that time if unsure they'll stick around."*

*"There are times I'll go with an older person with more experience, just because it's too big of commitment to hire someone young with absolutely no experience, train them, just to watch them go."*

*"I'm happy to be flexible but some young people can ask too much. Like I'm paying a travel allowance, but they still won't turn up to a job unless we go and pick them up."*

*"Some young people want to come in at the top, and they can't work with others, and won't take direction."*

# 5 things young people can do ...

1. Experience is the main thing employers look for on a CV; get some (and it might not be what you think)
2. Who you are, your attitude, and how you fit with the team are what employers are looking for in an interview
3. Young people have advantages over older people; use them to sell yourself
4. Referral is an important part of work; get good referees
5. You will need to look for jobs in a number of ways.

## 1. Experience is the main thing employers look for on a CV; get some (it might not be what you think)

- » Experience that shows you can commit to something is the first thing employers look for on a CV

It could be a part time job but it could also be community activity, coaching, aged or child care, a holiday program for kids, tutoring, organising an event or group activity, sport, captaining a team ...

*"The number one thing I look for is commitment to something. Experience: work or other activity. It doesn't matter what ... I just want to see that you can see something through."*

*"Experience does matter! You have to have experience with something, whether that is volunteering, a past job, or some sort of role in your school/uni/workplace etc."*

*"We look for community or sporting involvement because it demonstrates our Bank's purpose, to build community and connectedness. It also demonstrates initiative and teamwork."*

*"We prefer you have some experience in a place where you have to follow a process: like Burger King or Macdonalds."*



- » Experience gives you highly valued skills in being organised, people/customer service, communication, and teamwork

*"You don't have to have all the skills, but you need warmth and relationship skills."*

*"We are essentially looking for people with experience working with other people. Working in a team takes time to learn. You need skills to both drive something for yourself and work with others."*

*"We'll never discount a young person, we'll take a gamble on them if we feel they have a good work ethic and communication skills."*

- » Academic skills are important, but are not a deal breaker

*"I don't want to see just an academic report, but instead, how you applied those learned skills in your life. I'm not too worried about specific skills - they can be taught."*

*"Never discount academic results, they demonstrate endurance, however, other things may be more important. On-the-job learning is more important to me than academic results."*

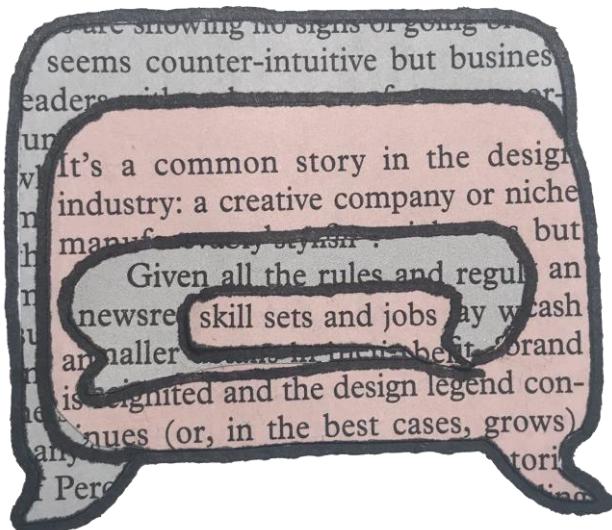
*"I don't want to employ the smartest guy, I want someone who is keen to work, and willing to just have a go."*

## 2. Who you are, your attitude, and how you fit with the team are what employers are looking for in an interview

- » You need a personalised application to get an interview

The best way to make your CV and application letter stand out is to be authentic and say something genuine about you. One employer asks for a short video introduction as well as a cover letter so they can weed out those who get others to write their applications.

- Some (but not all) employers go straight for your CV. You can start it with an opening sentence about who you are and what you are interested in (hobbies, interests, ideas) so they can get a feel for you. Also, make sure your CV:



- is well set out – list your experience, qualifications, awards, and sporting achievements with the most recent thing first in each category
- is only 1 or 2 pages at entry-level
- explains any gaps or short jobs.
- Most employers will go straight to your cover letter, so make sure you:
  - write it specifically for the job (NEVER use a standard letter)
  - address the selection criteria – they are what the organisation needs. Use your experience to demonstrate you meet each of the criteria and give examples. If you don't have any experience, tell them why you would be good at the job. If you can't meet one aspect, they may still consider you if you have other strengths.
  - proofread it – many employers use poor grammar, spelling and typos as a way to filter down a large number of applicants to a smaller number.

*"It is so important the cover letter is not a standard letter, that you impart some of your personality, experience, things you've done outside of work (volunteering, sport, etc) and goals into it. We just want some insight into who you are. We often ask for a short video of you introducing yourself as well, because it cuts out the people who are just cutting and pasting."*

*"Sporting achievements are great to put on a CV – mastering a sport shows that you have dedication, commitment, teamwork, resilience dealing with highs and lows, sportsmanship."*

*"For me the cover letter is more important than the CV and I always read it first. It needs to be written by you and tell me something about you. Address the criteria but also don't be worried if you are missing some. Send it anyway, there might be another role, and you can get useful feedback. Criteria are not the end of the story."*

*"The first thing we look for is bad grammar, spelling mistakes, or bad punctuation. It is the way we weed out the masses from the large volume of applicants. If applicants can't get the fundamentals right, particularly when they're trying to put their best foot forward, that's a deal breaker and shows a lack of attention to detail."*

## » In an interview they are looking to see if you are a good fit with the team

Employers know you will be nervous in an interview and are sympathetic to that. They just want to talk to you and find out whether you are a good fit for them. Don't be afraid to take a moment to think or ask them to repeat questions. Present well (like you are serious about the job) and make sure you:

- know something about the organisation – jump on their website and social media and research the company
- show you want to work with them (attitude) – always prepare an answer for why you want the job and give it even if they don't ask
- give succinct answers and use real-world examples to illustrate your experiences and show you will fit in (don't waffle!)
- always have a question up your sleeve to ask them at the end.

*"We know its nerve-wracking selling yourself to complete strangers. But we are just looking for that human connection. We want to know how we would feel having to sit next to you five days a week!"*

*"Anyone can put anything on paper. It's about fronting up and having a good conversation. We walk you through the plant and talk. That way you can see what the work entails, and we can get a feel for you."*

*"If it's down to two candidates we will go with the one that complements our current staff best or aligns most with the direction they want to head in terms of staff culture. Workplace fit is a big decider."*

*"For me it comes down to attitude. If someone is eager and keen to learn, I'd be willing to take an inexperienced person and teach them at the entry level."*

### **3. Young people have advantages over older people; use them to sell yourself**

#### **» A few things make young people very attractive to employers**

Employers are interested in young people who are comfortable with technology, social media, etc and are quick to pick up new technologies and adapt to change. This is important with the rise of technology in all workplaces.



*"Technology changes every day and young people are super comfortable with it and can keep up with the changes. They can help our older employees."*

*"You can just get on a computer and do just about anything. Young people have a huge jump on older workers who need more IT support training programs to upskill in this area."*

Young people bring contemporary thinking, up-to-date knowledge (from their education and training), and fresh perspectives into a business. This helps businesses stay modern and adaptive which will help them grow.

*"You can bring new information that you have learnt from your degree/qualification to the team."*

*"Think about what other skills you have, that aren't clinically based, and promote them."*

*"Younger teachers are often enthusiastic, have good ideas, bring modern knowledge."*

Young people also bring energy, freshness, and fitness to the workplace. They can make a workplace more enjoyable, and expose an organisation to lifestyles and culture that can give it currency, make it more enterprising, and helping it find new customers.

*"Young people bring different ways of looking at life – fresh thinking is important – organisations need diverse thinking to grow."*

Finally, young people can be more open to learning new things which makes them more adaptable and able to change.

*"Their sheer adaptability and openness to learning new things — older people can be stuck in their thinking/ways."*

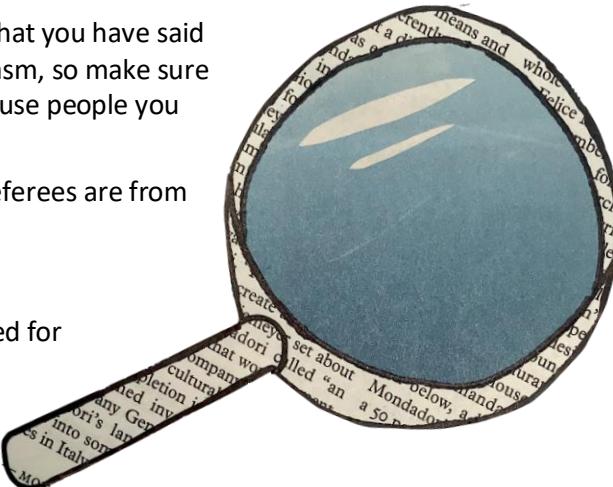
## 4. Referral is an important part of work; get good referees

### » Employers will check your referees

Employers will check references to confirm what you have said and find out about your attitude and enthusiasm, so make sure you have given your referees notice and only use people you know will back you. They will need to be:

- recent - it doesn't look good if your referees are from three years ago
- not a family member.

Consider using a teacher, someone you worked for or did work placement with, and someone who knows you from other experiences (a coach, someone you volunteered for, etc).



*"A referee check means you have nearly got the job. I contact referees last, and use them to confirm judgements. They are really important."*

*"I don't really do interviews. Just read CV, contact referees and give them a go."*

*"We ring the references and often find 'honesty' during this process. For example, I've had calls that have said "such and such is a good kid, but he's quite lazy"."*

### » Employers might also do some other asking around about you

While some employers will go on the information you give them, others will do some extra digging. This could include checking-out your social media or asking around about you.

*"My advice don't put something on social media that you don't want your potential employer to see. We have disqualified candidates in the past because of racial memes, jokes that are*

*derogatory towards women, or things related to drugs. We get rid of at least 10 candidates each time due to photos that show them drunk."*

*"We might talk to schools, or to people we know that would know them, to check up on the students and if they'll be a good fit."*

## 5. You will need to look for jobs in a number of ways

- » **Employers advertise for people in a range of ways so you will need a broad search strategy including:**

**Online employment websites and social media channels** including (in order of mentions) SEEK, Linked In, Facebook, Indeed, Ethical Jobs, Instagram, or an area's community pages. Create your own Linked In profile and start following potential employers to learn about what they do. You can also set up searches on sites like Seek or Ethical Jobs to get a daily/weekly email.

**The employment section of their company website** (including the **recruitment in schools** website for government schools) – if there is someone you would like to work for, it's worth doing a regular check.

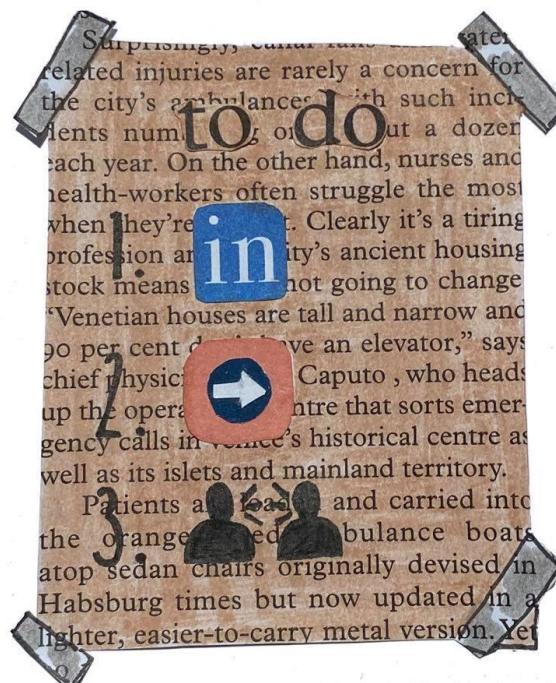
**Word of mouth and referrals from people they already know or have working for them** is a major way employers recruit for jobs. Employers say they will "ask our networks if there is anyone to send our way". This is why it is important to let people around you know what you want, what skills you have, and where you want to go. Some organisations also recruit by **individuals dropping in their resumes** and having a face to face conversation.

**Work experience** (including school placements, traineeships and apprenticeships) gives employers a chance to get to know you and assess your attitude and abilities.

**Schools, TAFES and Universities** – participate in activities offered to meet employers.

Nestle Australia has a **graduate program** where grads are given a 2-year rotation throughout the company and then placed permanently in the business.

Some jobs can be found through specific profession agencies (for example nursing), but employers reported not using the generic "job agencies" or recruitment agencies.



## » **Use your networks to help you explore**

Older people want to help you so don't be afraid to ask if you want to explore a job or pathway. You can take an employer out for a coffee to get their advice about what you need to do and let them know you are looking.

*"Ask for help, ask for support and you'll get it; you'll absolutely get it."*

*"Networking is a really important skill for a young job seeker."*

## » **Once you have a job, you can make the next step easier**

Employers unanimously reported that once you find a job, you need to learn what work is like, give things a go, keep learning, ask for help when you need it, and start making valuable work friends and networks. This will mean that when the time comes you can take the next step.

*"Get in and give it a go. A good attitude is rewarded with good opportunities and a good reputation."*

*"Be open to learning, ask questions, be a sponge, connect with staff and build those important work networks."*

*"We are looking for junior position level people to invest in and train so they can be our leaders of the future. We inject new talent into the business with the prospect that they will be able to fill some of those gaps emerging in our business pipeline."*

*"I was doing year 12 and I didn't want to go to uni. I went for an interview and I got a job filing. I then became office manager, then portfolio manager, and now I'm staff manager. The organisation has given me all the training I've needed."*

# 5 things we should do next (recommendations)...

1. Commit to building a pipeline of younger workers into growing industries in recovery planning
2. Fund a rural careers education model so young people can meet employers early in school
3. Develop work experience and gap-year internships for young people affected by COVID-19
4. Create a regional jobs information portal
5. Ensure every young person leaves school with: a driver's license, safety training, a LinkedIn profile, and basic financial literacy.

Our recommendations are in line with those of the recent Parliamentary Inquiry into Disadvantaged Jobseekers (2020) and government investments made as a result of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Victorian Careers Education (2018).

## 1. Commit to building a pipeline of younger workers into growing industries in recovery planning

Ensuring young people succeed requires a “jobs first” approach that unlocks employment opportunities and builds a pipeline of young workers into our growing industries. Our industries have skill shortages, while our young people need experience to get work. Recovery planning can fast track projects in these industries that provide experience in a tight labour market. It can also find innovative ways to address barriers, such as providing campus-style accommodation in the larger centres, to make entry-level work in the regions appealing.

**Recommendation:** That regional recovery planning commits to building the systems that will create a pipeline of young workers into jobs in growing industries. Targeted investment by government in place-based approaches will be best for linking the components needed (schools/education, community, employers).

*“The only real problem at the moment is that we don’t have the pipeline of older trainers to provide good training in Renewable Energy because it is such a new field.”*



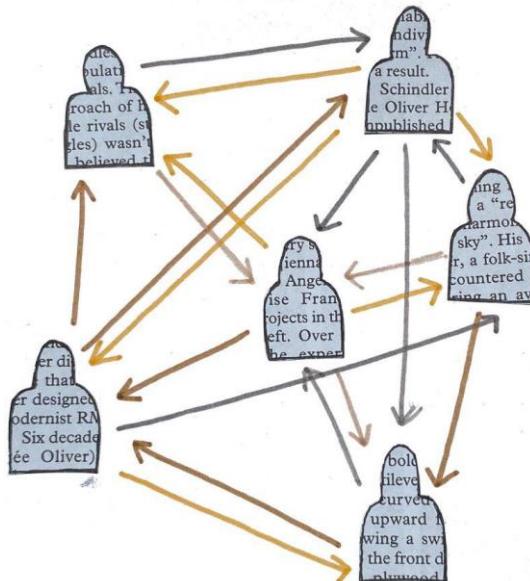
## 2. Fund a rural careers education model so young people can meet employers early in school

Job opportunities exist in the region but young people don't know about them. Young people need early opportunities to match their interests to growing industries and talk to employers. Careers education is not meeting these needs because it is underinvested in, starts too late, and does not connect young people and employers.

LLENs are developing a model for a scalable, low cost, rural careers education that complements existing investments, using careers specialists to:

- » facilitate an online course that explores growing opportunities and connects young people with employers based on young people's interests (overcoming distance)
- » helps young people one-on-one match their individual planning (choosing subjects, applying for courses, find activities outside of school to build skills, networking, discuss options with parents, etc) with growing regional industries and pathways.

**Recommendation:** Support the LLENs development of a rural careers education model for secondary schools that takes a localised approach to helping young people navigate regional industries.



## 3. Develop work experience and gap-year internships for young people affected by COVID-19

Experience is a critical foundation for successful careers but a cohort of young people have missed the opportunity to develop it – at school, in the community, or post-school – because of COVID-19. Youth internships (with a stipend) could be established for young people to undertake meaningful short work projects, in teams, that solve community and business challenges (a website for a community group, an online shop for a sole trader, an engagement plan for a health care organisation, a community engagement panel for local government...). The scheme would be similar to Working in Victoria except with projects run by LLEN brokered partnerships of employers, community organisations, local governments, and training agencies (a library, Neighbourhood House, or small business trainer), all of which would bring a range of mentors to the project.

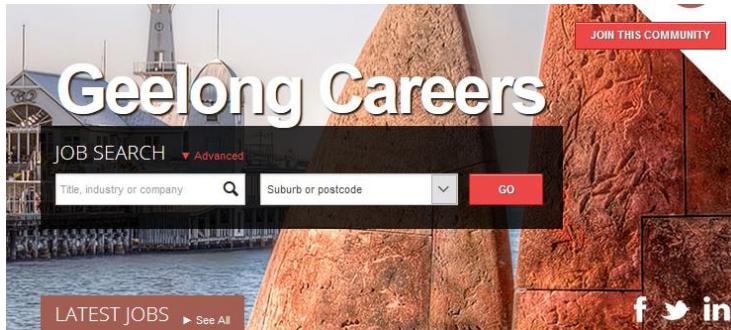
**Recommendation:** That a two-to-three-year program of youth internships (with stipends) be created for post-school leavers in the region.



*"I would love to see something created – a shorter program of formal credentialed work experience – that did some meaningful."*

#### **4. Create a regional jobs information portal**

Young people, their parents, career specialists, and others need access to local labour market information. To line up careers education with its radically transforming economy, a partnership brokered by the LLEN – including employers/industry, education and training, health and wellbeing providers, employment providers, local councils, community groups and government agencies – built *Geelong Careers* ([www.geelongcareers.org.au](http://www.geelongcareers.org.au)). *Geelong Careers* is an online one-stop-shop that



connects young people, and those that support them, to labour market information about trending industries, pathways, opportunities for work experience, and live jobs. The site is used in all secondary schools and could be scaled to all Victorian communities, including our region, to provide accurate labour market information to young people.

**Recommendation:** That a regional information portal is developed to give young people, parents and schools, access to up-to-date information about the labour market and careers exploration.

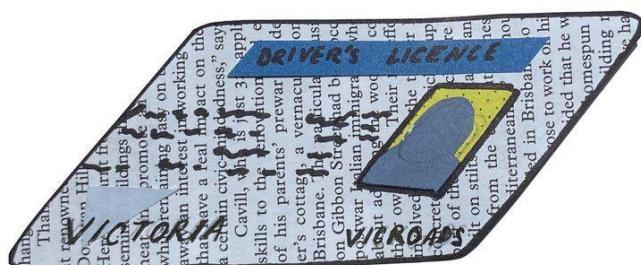
*"Young people need to be able to see the pathways – some kind of flow chart or road map that made them see where an entry level job could take them, so they will stick with it."*

**5. Ensure every young person leaves school with: a driver's licence, safety training, a Linked In profile, and basic financial literacy**

Our young interns identified four things that would help young people in regional Victoria be “work-ready”. They could be gained as part of their formal education by broadening the LLENs remit to including brokering these activities with community and business organisations, for example, with the L2P Learner Driver Mentor Program.

**Recommendation:** Ensure every young person leaves school with:

- A driver's licence
  - Safety training (depending on their interests):  
Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA), white card, First Aid Certificate, working with children check, Life Saving Medallion
  - An up-to-date Linked In profile
  - Training in personal finances related to work: getting a Tax File Number, superannuation, etc.



## **Appendix A. The employers**

### **Agricultural production**

Geoff Walker, Co-Owner  
Simon Rogers, Site Manager Boort  
Glenda Nichol, Co-Owner

**Hay Australia**  
**Sawers farms**  
**Nichol Trading**

### **Food production manufacturing**

Melanie Davidson, HR Manager

**Kagome Australia**

### **Health and other care services**

Mandy Hutchinson, CEO  
Tricia Currie, CEO  
Anne de Vrieze, HR Manager  
Donna Doyle, Director of Clinical Services  
Michelle Kenny, Team Leader

**Northern District Community Health**  
**Women's Health Loddon Mallee**  
**Community Living and Respite Service**  
**Boort District Health**  
**Noahs Ark Inc. Bendigo**

### **Tourism, food & beverage, accommodation**

Kathryn Mackenzie, CEO  
James Reade, CEO  
Christian Leavesley, Artistic Director

**Echuca Moama Tourism**  
**Bendigo Heritage Attractions**  
**Arena Theatre Company**

### **Education**

Bev Millar, Human Resources Coordinator  
Scott Trewella, Community Engagement & Wellbeing

**Bendigo Senior Secondary College**  
**Echuca Primary School**

### **Construction and trades**

Maree Stephens, Director  
Leigh Henson, Director  
Tom Nicholson, Manager  
Caitlin Ryan, Rail Academy Manager

**Riverport Engineering**  
**O'Brien Electrical**  
**Sprayon Concrete Transformations**  
**Level Crossing Removal Project**

### **Manufacturing**

Tim Ford, Operations Manager  
Carolyn Gray, HR Business Partner

**Foodmach PTY LTD**  
**Nestlé Australia Ltd**

### **Finance, professional services**

Rochelle Hannon, Client Service Manager  
Chelsea Harris, Recruitment Manager  
Jo Doye, Owner

**Insurance House**  
**Bendigo Bank**  
**Alluvia Finances**

### **Renewable energy**

Matt Wilson, Owner

**Central Spark**

### **Local government**

Trevor Budge, Manager Regional Development  
Michael Tudball, CEO (pilot interview)

**City of Greater Bendigo**  
**Southern Grampians Council**

## **Appendix B. The interview questions**

### **<JOB VACANCIES>**

- 1. Tell us a bit about your industry and why it's a great industry for young people to look into?**
- 2. How is your organisation travelling at the moment?**
- 3. How hard do you think it will be to find entry-level jobs in your industry post COVID-19?**

### **<RECRUITMENT>**

- 4. How do you go about recruiting entry-level employees (how would young people find out about jobs with you)?**
- 5. What, if anything, might deter you from employing young people?**

### **<WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR: CVs / INTERVIEW>**

- 6. What are the key things you look for on a CV or in an interview?**
- 7. What skills might young people have that older workers might not?**

### **<ISSUES WITH YOUNG WORKERS ONCE THEY ARE IN A JOB>**

- 8. Finally, what advice would you give young people to succeed once they have their entry-level job in your industry?**