

National Youth Commission

Terms of Reference

Context:

Australia as a country and an economy has many advantages – abundant resources, a strong agricultural sector, a world-class education system and a relatively small population that enjoys a first world standard of living – hence the term the ‘lucky country’.

Yet one in four young Australians do not complete their Year 12 certificate. Some recover their education by undertaking vocational education and training in TAFE, but about 50 per cent never do. Many young people who are successful in their secondary and tertiary studies cannot move forward and find employment in their fields of professional education. Industries that dominated the economy in the past have been transformed, and many industries of the present are not necessarily going to be prominent in the future.

The rapid transformations of the economy through technological change affect the nature and organisation of employment as well as society in many ways which are difficult to predict and anticipate.

A premise of the National Youth Commission (NYC) is that all Australians, especially young Australians, have the right to education as a basic human right and as one of the core foundations of Australia’s future prosperity.

The NYC will consist of a panel of distinguished Australians including young people.

The NYC will follow the practices of a Human Rights Commission in how testimony is sought from a wide range of stakeholders and how evidence is accumulated and analysed. The NYC will not accept funding from the Australian or state and territory governments to ensure that the Inquiry process itself is strictly independent from political influence or interference.

Terms of Reference:

1. The Commission will inquire into the following matters:

a) the nature, extent of social and economic change that impacts on the labour market and affects the employability and employment prospects and experiences of young Australians;

b) the effectiveness and appropriateness of educational curriculum and programs in school and in post-secondary institutions as preparation for future employment;

c) the issues that affect young people as they embark on pathways to employment and attempt to build sustainable careers;

d) the adequacy of the various service systems that are implicated in the transition of young Australians from education to employment;

e) the effectiveness of existing policies and programs that are directly relevant to the transition from school to work;

f) whether reforms and initiatives are required to improve the education, employment and transition outcomes for young people:

- i. amendments to relevant existing policy frameworks;
- ii. changes to guidelines and operations of existing social and educational programs; and
- iii. new reforms in policies, initiatives and programs to achieve a 'youth employment guarantee'.

2. In conducting its inquiry the Commission will give priority to matters, which in its opinion, need to be developed and addressed expeditiously.

3. The Commission will submit progress reports and media communications to the Australian community during the two-year inquiry process and a final report no later than July 2020.

The final report will contain:

a) the NYC's findings; and

b) any recommendations relevant to the inquiry and based on the evidence gathered that the NYC thinks ought to be placed before the Australian community and taken up to the Australian, State and Territory governments.

Definitions:

Youth refers to adolescents from 15-20 years of age and young adults aged 21-24 years of age. For the purposes of the NYC, the age range from 15-25 years of age is taken as the age range for employment related data, initiatives and policies. Generally, children in the context of transitions from school to work are not less than 15 years of age, nevertheless, for legal purposes in Australia, a 'child' is a young person under the age of 18 years.

Education: When reference is made to the education system, this refers to secondary education from Year 7 or 8, depending on the state or territory jurisdiction, to Year 12. In the Australian context, the completion of a TAFE Certificate II is regarded as equivalent to a successfully completed Year 12 certificate.

Employment is measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics according to standardised definitions that are consistent with international statistical standards.

For statistical purposes, 'employed persons are defined as all persons 15 years of age and over who, during the reference week: worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, in a job or business or on a farm (comprising employees, employers and own account workers).

An unemployed person is someone who is not working but within the past four weeks has been actively looking for employment.

An underemployed person is someone who is working for less than 35 hour per week who has indicated that they would like to work for more hours.

Transition refers to the process whereby young people embark on pathways from school/ education into employment and from living as a dependent with their family or carers to a fully independent life.