

A Youth Jobs Guarantee

The issue everyone has before they land their first job: Every job wants you to have experience, but you can't get any experience until you get a job!

How can you break this cycle?

Young clients of Brophy Family and Youth Services,
Submission, 28 November 2019

The National Youth Commission Australia proposes the introduction of a Youth Jobs Guarantee that provides paid work for young people who are not in education, training, or employment or who are underemployed.

Under the proposed Youth Jobs Guarantee an entry-level job is to be provided to young people by the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. The Australian Government will pay for all or some of the costs of labour (wages, superannuation, leave entitlements etc) and training for young people.

Youth Job Guarantee placements should:

- lead to secure jobs, especially in occupations and industries facing long-term labour shortages.
- include accredited training associated with the placement to ensure that young people have the necessary qualifications and skills required to undertake ongoing jobs in their chosen occupation and industry.
- recognise that not all young people are ready or able to work but may need additional support to ensure they are 'job ready', rather than process them through 'work experience' that doesn't lead anywhere.



Recommendations

1. That the Australian Government introduce a national Youth Jobs Guarantee program that ensures any young person who wants a to work can access a work placement or pre-employment placement.
2. That the proposed Youth Jobs Guarantee focus on placements that lead to ongoing secure jobs with fair pay in occupations and industries where skill shortages exist.
3. That local coordinating organisations be given the authority to design, implement and monitor the Youth Jobs Guarantee with reference to local conditions.
4. That information and support for employers accessing workers through the Youth Jobs Guarantee be consolidated into a single support service in each region.
5. That the Australian Government fund careers information and pre-employment training services for young people in every region.
6. That local coordinating organisations engage with employers in decisions about Youth Jobs Guarantee wage subsidies.
7. That the Australian Government create youth-friendly intermediate work and learning experiences across Australia.
8. That the Australian Government fund a network of young worker rights services across Australia.

Conclusion

Few would disagree that we need to ensure young people can get jobs they are interested in and can commit to, that offer decent pay and conditions, and that have prospects for further skills development and progression. It is harder to think through and agree on how – even with a commitment to a large-scale wage subsidy program – we can correct some of the distortions, gaps and problems of existing labour markets and their interaction with the services and delivery system.

While existing worker and skills shortages may be temporary, Australia has the opportunity to build a better system to ensure a brighter future for Australia's young people and to create a skilled and knowledgeable workforce able to meet future challenges.