



Australian Government



Your
Career™

National Careers Institute



Parents and guardians guide



Education, training and work opportunities
for your young person (15-24 years)

yourcareer.gov.au/schoolleaver

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Introduction



When it's time to think about life after school, you can help your young person make their next move.

How this guide can help

This **Parents and guardians guide** has been developed by the **National Careers Institute (NCI)** to help you support your young person in making informed career decisions.

There is also the **Support for young people with disability** and **Support for regional, rural and remote** booklets.

These guides, as well as other resources and support, are available online at the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au.

Why a guide for parents and guardians?

It is widely recognised that parents and guardians have the most influence when it comes to a young person's post-school decisions. However, some parents and guardians aren't confident in offering advice about career options. Many rely on personal opinion and experience, as well as outdated ideas and information about jobs and careers when they talk about post-secondary school options.

This guide (as well as the SLIK) has been designed to help you support your young person in making informed career decisions.

The options after school:

There are 3 main options your young person could choose after finishing school:



Further education and training: higher education (university) or vocational education and training (VET), apprenticeships and traineeships, short courses, and tertiary preparation courses.



A gap year to experience travel, work, volunteering, or short-term study.



Finding Work

Talking about the options

The main thing to remember is that even if you don't feel confident about offering advice and guidance, the first step simply involves encouraging conversations around careers and career options.

A good way to start a conversation about the different career pathway options is to ask what they:

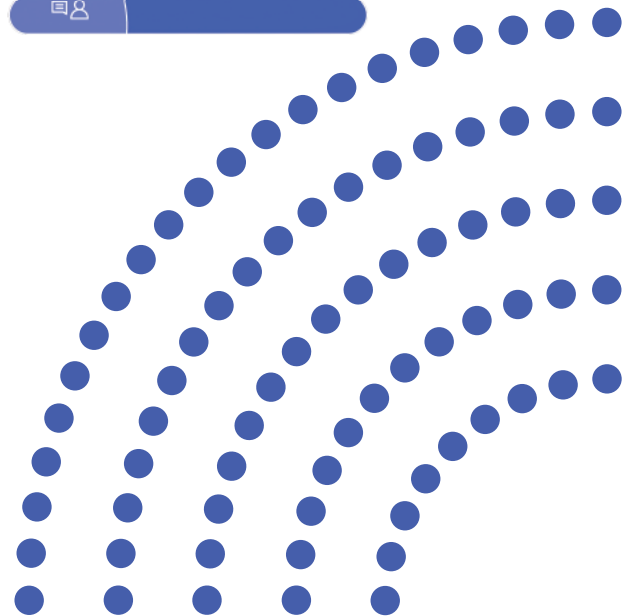
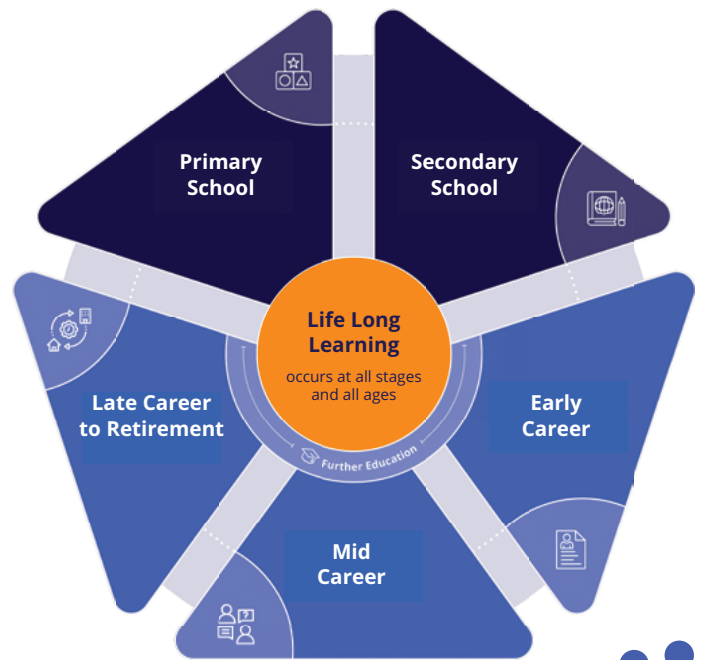
- enjoy doing
- think they're good at
- are interested in.

They might have some ideas already or they might need help understanding and exploring the different options. A good place to help them start exploring their options is the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au. **Your Career** is the Australian Government's hub for trusted careers information.

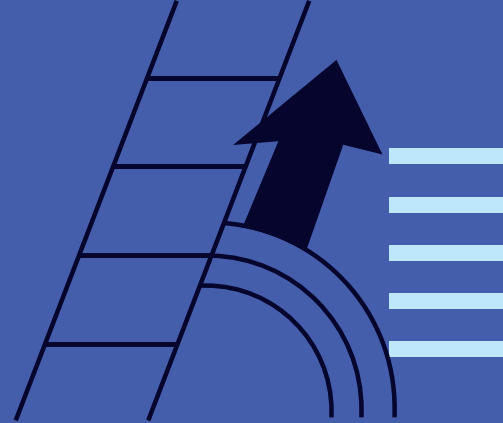
It is important to acknowledge that with so many options available, it may be challenging to decide what to do next, but they are not alone and life after school is exciting and full of opportunities and options.

Finally, always remind them that whatever they choose to do after school, no decision will be the wrong decision. Each person's career journey will be unique – and anything they decide to do will contribute to their career.

A career often involves forward, backwards, and sideways steps. Lifelong learning sits in the centre of the career journey, showing that we continuously learn and grow throughout our career.



1 Further education and training



Career pathways might include further education, study, or training.

There are 3 main further education pathways:



Vocational education and training (VET)

Choosing a pathway can be challenging. It's normal for young people to feel unsure or change their mind as they learn more and their career goals change.

Because of this, most further education and training pathways are designed to be flexible. It's possible to move between different courses and training, and students can often get credit for work they've already done in another course.

Vocational education and training (VET)

VET is nationally accredited training designed to teach the skills needed to get a job and succeed in the workplace. VET courses may include studying Certificates I-IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Skill Sets, and accredited courses.

VET is not just for traditional trades – it includes hundreds of different occupations and industries including accounting, retail, hospitality, technology, and the arts.

Most Certificates can take between 3 months and 3 years to complete. Visit the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/skills for more information on VET courses and which providers offer them.



Apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships and traineeships

An apprenticeship or traineeship offers the ability to work while learning. While working with an employer, your young person can get on-the-job skills and experience while being paid to study with a training provider and gain a qualification – from a Certificate II to an Advanced Diploma.

An apprenticeship or traineeship can be full-time, part-time, or school-based.

The type of qualification and the industry will determine whether your young person will need to complete an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Most apprenticeships are usually a pathway to a trade, with structured training delivered through certificate level qualifications and can take between 3 and 4 years to complete full-time.

Most traineeships are in non-trade occupations, including services and administration, and take between 1 and 2 years to complete full-time.

For more information on apprenticeships and traineeships visit the **Australian Apprenticeships** website apprenticeships.gov.au.



Higher education

Higher education

Most people start studying at a university or other higher education provider to get a diploma, advanced diploma, associate degree, undergraduate certificate, or bachelor degree. After that, there are options to continue study, like a master's degree.

Degrees completed through higher education could lead to many different careers, such as teacher, engineer, doctor, therapist and more.

The length of time it takes to complete higher education varies. As an example, most bachelor degrees take a minimum of 3 years to complete, and a master's degree takes a minimum of 1 year.

As prerequisites for courses vary between institutions, it is best to consult the higher education provider for specific information related to the course/s.

To compare higher education courses and providers, visit the **Course Seeker** website courseseeker.edu.au.

Short-term study and training

There's a range of short-term education and training options that could get your young person skilled up fast, from a few hours to a few months.

The best part is they can sometimes be credited towards a full qualification if they decide to continue further study. They can choose from a wide range of options:

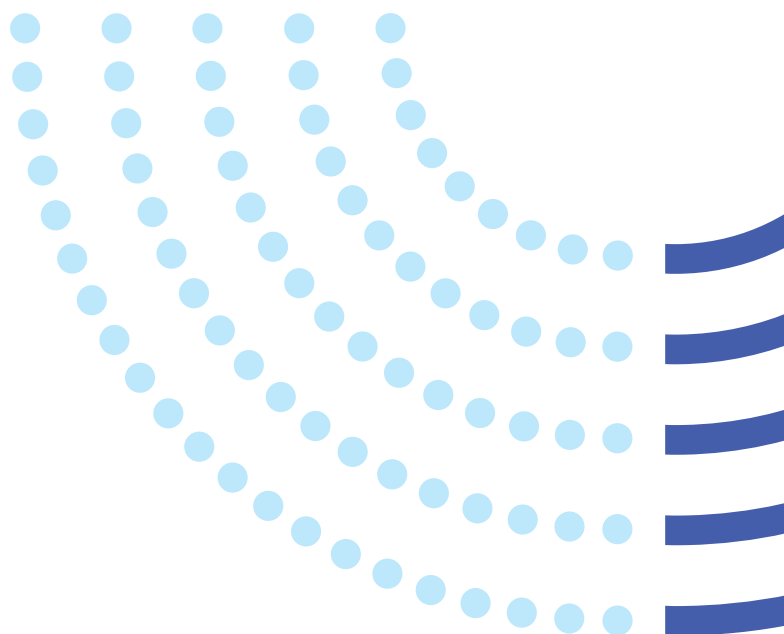
- Short-term education and training options
- Higher education short courses
- Tertiary preparation courses.

Short-term education and training options

Short-term education and training options are designed to help your young person upskill fast, and come in many forms within the VET system (accredited, unaccredited and industry certified) and higher education system.

Accredited Skill Sets are nationally recognised microcredentials, comprising one or more units of competency, currently developed by industry. For example, your young person could undertake a Hybrid Electric Vehicle Inspection and Servicing Skill Set that covers the essential requirements for inspecting and servicing hybrid electric vehicles in the automotive industry. Unaccredited short courses are not nationally recognised but address a local need and can be recognised by a single state or territory.

To learn more about short-term education and training options and to compare courses offered by registered higher education providers and selected VET organisations, visit **Microcred Seeker** microcredseeker.edu.au. You can also head to the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support/school-leavers-information-kit/further-study-and-training#shortcourses for more information and to search for Skill Sets you can undertake.





Higher education short courses

Short courses offer an introduction to a higher education degree through an undergraduate certificate offered by a university or other higher education provider.

Short courses are generally 6 months long and can be credited towards another higher education qualification, like a bachelor degree.

You can find information on higher education short courses through the **Course Seeker** website courseseeker.edu.au.

Tertiary preparation courses

If your young person hasn't met the entry requirements for their preferred higher education course, a tertiary preparation course could help them build skills and knowledge to prepare them for bachelor-level study with a higher education provider.

The duration of these courses varies, and you should check the higher education provider's website for details.

Unique Student Identifier (USI)

If your young person decides to do a nationally recognised VET course or go to university, they will need a USI. A USI is an individual's education number for life and creates an online record of Australian training achievements. Your young person will need a USI to get Commonwealth financial assistance, and their qualification or statement of attainment. Visit the **USI** website usi.gov.au for more information.

2 Financial assistance and planning



Your young person might be eligible for financial help to study, train or find work.

Fee-Free TAFE

Your young person may be eligible for a Fee-Free TAFE course. There are a range of accredited study options including diploma, certificate, or short courses that can prepare your young person for work in fast-growing industries needing skilled workers. For more information, visit the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/fee-free-tafe.

VET Student Loans (VSL)

VET Student Loans help eligible students pay tuition fees for approved higher-level (diploma and above) VET courses. Visit the **Department of Employment and Workplace Relations** website dewr.gov.au/vet-student-loans for more information.

Assistance for apprentices and trainees

Your young person may be eligible for financial and non-financial support if they are undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship. To check what support they may be eligible for, visit the **Australian Apprenticeships** website apprenticeships.gov.au/support-and-resources.

Assistance for higher education students

Your young person may be eligible for subsidised course fees, a scholarship, or the **Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)**. HELP assists eligible students to study without the barrier of upfront fees. A HELP debt is then paid back through the tax system once your young person earns above the compulsory repayment threshold.

You can find more information on financial support for higher education on the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/support/financial-assistance/assistance-for-higher-education-students.

Scholarships

There are many scholarships available across Australia to help your young person financially with their studies.

Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships

If your young person is thinking about a career in teaching, they may be eligible for financial support. New undergraduate teaching students can receive up to \$40,000 and new postgraduate teaching students can receive up to \$20,000. To find out more including application dates, visit the **Department of Education** website education.gov.au/teaching-scholarships.

Assistance with living expenses

Your young person may be eligible for payments to assist them with living expenses while they are studying, including Youth Allowance, Austudy and ABSTUDY.

Youth Allowance is a payment for people 16 to 24 years of age who are completing full-time tertiary study or doing a full-time Australian Apprenticeship.

Austudy provides financial assistance for full time students and people undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship aged 25 years and older.

ABSTUDY is a group of payments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or apprentices.

To find out more about these and other financial supports, search for the '**Get a Centrelink Payment**' on the **Services Australia** website servicesaustralia.gov.au/get-centrelink-payment, or check out some short videos on **Services Australia's YouTube channel** by searching online.

Want more information on financial assistance?

For more information about what financial assistance your young person may be eligible for, visit the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/support/financial-assistance.



Financial tools and budgeting

There are plenty of tools available to help your young person take control of their finances.



The **Manage your money** webpage servicesaustralia.gov.au/manage-your-money can help your young person better manage their money, budget, deal with debt and build their savings. **MoneySmart** moneysmart.gov.au also has calculators and tips to help your young person make the most of their money.



Your young person can also speak to a Services Australia **Financial Information Service (FIS)** Officer for free via phone or video. FIS Officers can share tools, resources and information that can help your young person make more informed decisions about money and future financial needs servicesaustralia.gov.au/financial-information-service.



3 Gap year



While some people decide to go directly into further education or full-time employment after finishing high school, many choose to take a gap year.

A gap year can be a year, or shorter, and can include:

- working
- volunteering or undertaking an internship
- travelling and/or working in Australia and/or overseas
- enrolling in short-term study.

Regardless of the path your young person decides to follow, all these options will help them develop valuable skills.

While information regarding work, education and training can be found in earlier sections of this guide, below you will find additional information related to a few alternative options.

Harvest Trail

Seasonal harvesting work is a great way for young people to travel, see beautiful parts of Australia, earn money, meet new people, and add solid work experience to their resume.

To see what jobs are available now visit the **Harvest Trail** website workforceaustralia.gov.au/individuals/coaching/careers/harvest or call 1800 062 332.

Australian Defence Force (ADF) gap year programs

The Navy, Army and Airforce all have gap year programs where your young person can get paid for working while travelling around Australia. For more information go to the **ADF** website adfcareers.gov.au/students-and-education/gap-year.

Internships

An internship is a type of supervised work placement and can be paid or unpaid. It's designed to help your young person gain professional skills and experience in their preferred industry.

Internships are usually completed over a set number of days during a fixed period but will vary for each internship and workplace. In some cases, full-time internships may also be offered over summer or winter study breaks. Search online to find internship opportunities in your area.



Volunteering opportunities

Volunteering can give your young person the chance to make a difference and help build valuable skills for their future. There are many organisations that your young person can get involved with, depending on their interests, location, and availability. Find information on volunteering opportunities in your area by searching online.

Short-term work placements

Early experience in their industry of interest can give your young person a taste of the future and help them decide whether a particular job is right for them. Consider the types of roles they're interested in and how they might further their career. Search online to find short-term work placement opportunities in your area.

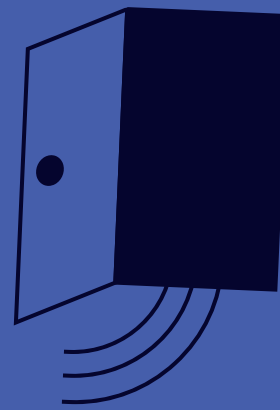
Working holidays

The **Working Holiday Maker program** offers the opportunity to travel and work overseas in over 40 different countries or jurisdictions. Australian participants can generally stay for up to 12 months and undertake short-term work and study. Visit the **Department of Home Affairs** website for more information immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/whm-program/working-holidays-for-australians.

Regardless of the path your young person decides to follow, all these options will help them develop valuable skills.



4 Building a career



Is your young person ready to jump into the world of work to build their career?

The **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au is designed to help navigate study and work options.

You can use the **Your Career** website to explore:

- growing industries
- trending occupations
- how to get job ready
- support services available to help you find employment.

Try the career finder

You can explore job ideas by asking your young person to answer a few questions about their personal interests and preferences on the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au.

Industries in Australia

If your young person is thinking about their future career, it's good to have an idea about the industries that are in Australia. Remember within each industry there is a range of jobs – some are well known, and others are emerging.













Your young person should think broadly about their skills, interests, and abilities. They don't have to lock themselves into one industry as there might be lots of different jobs in several industries that suit them. Explore the large range of industries on the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/industries.

Labour market trends in Australia

Explore the **Australian Jobs 2023** yourcareer.gov.au/resources/australian-jobs-report to learn about the most recent trends in the Australian labour market. The publication explores emerging and transferrable skills in the workforce.

Growing industries and occupations in 2023^{1,2}

Your young person could dive into exciting industries that are on the rise.

 Health Care and Social Assistance	 Construction	 Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
 Registered Nurse	 Carpenter and Joiner	 Software and Applications Programmer
 Aged and Disabled Carer	 Electrician	 Accountant / Solicitor
 Child Carer	 Plumber	 Management and Organisation Analyst

¹ jobsandskills.gov.au/reports/labour-market-update-september-2023

² yourcareer.gov.au/industries

Learn more about these fast-growing industries and occupations on the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au.

Emerging industries

Jobs in Clean Energy

Your young person could contribute to a more sustainable future and help drive innovation with a career in clean energy. There are many pathways to enter the sector, from entry level jobs that require no formal training through to higher skilled roles that require a qualification. To find out more about these industries, visit the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/resources/clean-energy.

If your young person is thinking about an Australian Apprenticeship in the clean energy sector, they may be eligible for financial support. Australian Apprentices undertaking an eligible qualification in a New Energy pathway may qualify for up to \$10,000 over the course of an eligible apprenticeship.

Find out more on the **Australian Apprenticeships** website apprenticeships.gov.au/support-and-resources/financial-support-apprentices-priority-occupations.

Getting job ready

Before they start working

To help transition to life after school, your young person might need to:

- get a tax file number (TFN) through the **Australian Taxation Office (ATO)** ato.gov.au/Individuals/Tax-file-number.
- find out how tax and superannuation works from the **ATO** ato.gov.au/individuals/super.
- create a myGov account on the **myGov** website my.gov.au.

The **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au is designed to help navigate study and work options.



Handy hints when looking for work

The following steps can help your young person improve their chances of securing a job:

1 Setting their expectations, ask them to:

- Consider how many hours they can and want to work each week, the days, times, and whether they need flexibility in their work schedule.
- Check whether their preferred job has licensing, training, or registration requirements.
- Understand their rights at work, including minimum wage and conditions yourcareer.gov.au/support/work-support.

2 Network with family and friends

- Encourage them to talk to their friends, family members and schoolmates to let them know they're actively seeking a job. Having a connection to a role can significantly increase their chances of obtaining the position.

3 Identify their skills

- See how your young person's skills match the skills employers are looking for on the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/occupations.

4 Write a resume and prepare for interviews

- There are many resume building tools to help get started. Visit the Resume Checklist and take the Resume Quiz on the **Your Career** yourcareer.gov.au/get-job-ready website.
- Encourage them to prepare for interviews by watching some helpful videos on the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/get-job-ready/videos.

5 Search for a job

- There are many tools and applications online that can help. Some solely focus on the job search, while others include features like social media and networking elements.
- View jobs with current vacancies and access further support and information to improve their chances of getting a job on the **Workforce Australia** website workforceaustralia.gov.au.
- There's a range of **entry-level and school leaver programs** available across both government and private sectors. To see what government organisations offer, visit the **Australian Public Service apprenticeship, trainee and school leaver career pathways** website apsjobs.gov.au/s/career-pathways-home.
- For more help to search for a job, visit **Services Australia's Job Hunting** page servicesaustralia.gov.au/looking-for-work-and-job-hunting.
- More opportunities can also be found by searching online and visiting websites of the organisations, departments, and agencies your young person is interested in.

6 Consider their personal brand

- Social media can be a great way for hirers, employers, and recruiters to get an idea of who potential employees are.
- Encourage your young person to consider what they are posting online and whether they would be comfortable with a future employer seeing it.





More tips for getting job ready

The **Get Job Ready** page on the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/get-job-ready provides help on writing job applications and preparing for interviews. There are also checklists, factsheets, and helpful videos to help your young person land their dream job.

Thinking about starting a business?

Self-Employment Assistance can help turn your young person's business idea or existing small business into a viable business. They can access Self-Employment Assistance while they are in school or higher education to prepare and assist with the transition into their own business once they finish their studies.

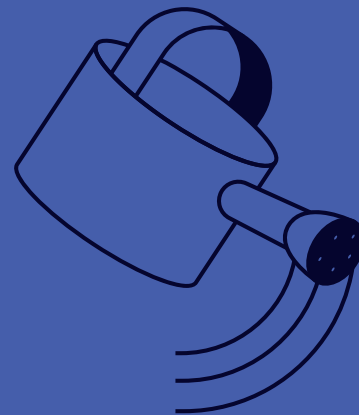
Self-Employment Assistance can help:

- determine if self-employment is for them
- decide on a viable business idea and develop a business plan
- get a business up and running
- get assistance to access finance.

To learn more, visit the **Department of Employment and Workplace Relations** website dewr.gov.au/self-employment-assistance.



5 Additional support



Support and services in your state or territory

There are many programs and services for young people who are setting out on their journey after school. These include:

- services that help them get into university or VET courses
- programs to help them get a job
- programs to help them gain new skills.

For a list of programs and services in your area, visit the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support/school-leavers-information-kit/additional-information/information-in-your-state-territory.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

There are many programs and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school leavers setting out on their journey after school, including:

- services that help them get into university or VET courses
- financial support to help them with studies
- programs to help them get a job or gain new skills.

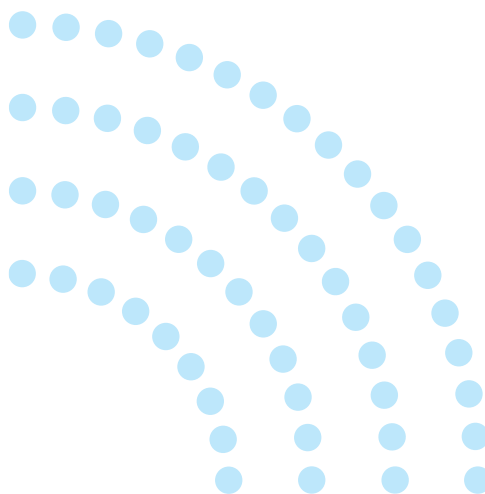
For comprehensive information on the programs and supports available, download the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander School Leavers Information Kit** yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support/school-leavers-information-kit/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-peoples.

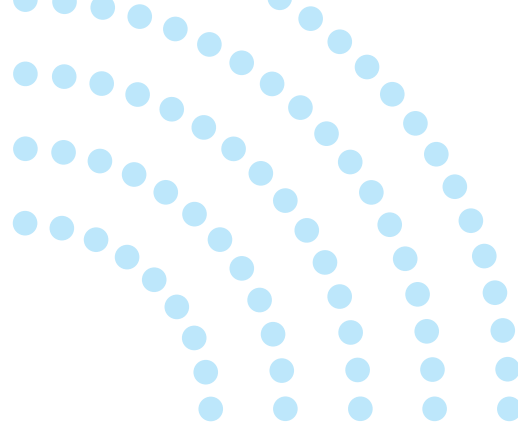
School leavers with disability or special education needs

There is a range of support available to help young people with disability reach their career goals in a way that suits them.

Support can come from the people around them, like you, their teacher, friends, and NDIS workers. There are also many programs and services to help them move from school to work, training or further education.

To find out more about the programs and support services available, download the **Support for young people with disability** booklet yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support/school-leavers-information-kit/people-disability.





Support for disadvantaged students

Families may face financial constraints when it comes to funding their young person's further education or providing support during their studies. Additionally, young people may find additional challenges due to various factors such as disrupted schooling, financial hardship, English language difficulty, refugee status, school environment or location.

The services on this page aim to offer valuable support in such circumstances.

The **Transition to Work** (TtW) service supports disadvantaged people aged 15–24 years. Your young person can receive intensive support over 25 hours a week to:

- identify and explore career options
- finish their education
- connect with further education or training
- develop skills to get a job and address barriers to employment
- connect with organisations and government agencies to access support.

To find out more, including eligibility requirements, visit the **TtW** page dewr.gov.au/transition-work.

Support for students living in a regional, rural or remote area

Some school leavers may face additional challenges because of where they live. A range of services and resources recognise this and provide targeted support and information.

The **Support for regional, rural and remote young people** booklet can help with guidance, advice and support to help young people in life after school. Download the booklet on the **Your Career** website yourcareer.gov.au/school-leavers-support/school-leavers-information-kit/regional-rural-remote.

The Smith Family

The Smith Family thesmithfamily.com.au/programs provides mentoring, learning programs and activities, and sponsorship to help students develop their academic skills and go on to further studies or employment.

Study Assist

The **Study Assist** website provides information about government assistance for financing tertiary study studyassist.gov.au/support-while-you-study/support-students.

Educational Access Scheme

The Educational Access Scheme helps students who have experienced significant educational disadvantage receive an offer to university.

Learn more on the **Universities Admissions Centre** website uac.edu.au/future-applicants/scholarships-and-schemes/educational-access-schemes.



6 Wellbeing support



Not everyone feels ready to take their next steps after school with confidence, but there are plenty of people both you and young people themselves can talk to.

Schools

School career advisors, guidance counsellors, psychologists and wellness teams are also there to support students' wellbeing and help them find the right options for their circumstances. They can also provide referrals to other support options.

Universities and TAFE

Students at university or TAFE can book an appointment with a career advisor, campus counsellor or student advisor to help them get support with their studies and find suitable career pathways. They can also provide referrals to other support options.

Headspace

Headspace offers a dedicated service for young people aged 12 to 25.

- Website: headspace.org.au
- Phone: 1800 650 890

Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue works to reduce the impact of anxiety, depression and suicide.

- Website: beyondblue.org.au
- Phone: 1300 224 636

Lifeline

Lifeline provides mental health and wellbeing information and support for everyone.

- Visit: lifeline.org.au/gethelp for Lifeline Chat Service (24/7)
- Phone: 13 11 14
- Text: 0477 13 11 14

Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline provides free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling for young people aged 5 to 25. There's also a range of support, services and resources for parents.

- Website: kidshelpline.com.au
- kidshelpline.com.au/parents
- Phone: 1800 55 1800

Head to Health

Head to Health is a free and low-cost, trusted online and phone mental health resource.

- Visit: headtohealth.gov.au for mental health guidance and advice.
- Phone: 1800 595 212

Acknowledgment of Country

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures, and the Elders past and present.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations acknowledges diversity and respectfully uses the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' throughout this document.

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The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (department) takes reasonable care to ensure that the information and advice provided is accurate and up to date. However, it is your responsibility to give us correct and complete information about your circumstances and to decide if you wish to take any action or decision based on any information or advice provided by our information officers. Before doing so you should exercise your own independent skill and judgement and make your own further enquiries relevant to your particular circumstances. The department is not liable for any loss resulting from any action taken or reliance made by you on any information or advice provided to you.

January 2024.



yourcareer.gov.au/schoolleaver