

# **Business and Employment**

**An Investigation Into Youth Disengagement  
in the Workforce**

**Youth Parliament 2022**



Committee Investigating Business & Employment

# An Investigation Into Youth Disengagement in the Workforce

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## Terms of Reference

The Committee Investigating Business & Employment has explored a plethora of issues concerned with youth disengagement in the workforce, and would inquire into:

1. Inequalities within the workforce affecting rural and regional communities;
2. History of youth disengagement and unemployment in New South Wales;
3. Strengthening expenditure for businesses to provide opportunities for youth employees;
4. How the affordability of transport can impact youth employment rates in NSW;
5. The improvement in career advisor programs;
6. The inclusion of an understanding of unions in the school curriculum.

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## Chairperson's Foreword

As youth seek to engage themselves in the workforce, they are mostly conceived as unprepared or lacking education. Adolescents are misconstrued as unskilled, unprofessional and unreliable for work, and hence it has been difficult for the youth to properly integrate into their desired workforce. Additionally, students who receive education are met with low quality jobs due to their lack of experience; these jobs slowly decrease enthusiasm and cause casualisation in many fields. In the past, low pay and harsh hours have also played a role in the disengagement of youths in the workforce.

The Committee Investigating Business & Employment is pleased to present the Investigation into Youth Disengagement in the Workforce to the Youth Legislative Council for consideration.

The Committee has reviewed the current legislation and precedent as it relates to the workforce, resulting in affecting youth employment, which we believe is not adequate for our current time. Young people desire to engage in the workforce for numerous reasons; experience, support of income to families, and/or university fee contribution. However, the current pathway for youth employment has is not in balance with the current standards in the view of youths.

Youths have been treated as unskilled, unprepared, unproductive, and unreliable, yet they have contributed heavily to the New South Wales economy, later examined in this report.

The Committee has outlined and inherited key solutions in the following report that the Committee believes will solve the current issues that arise in our State before us.

The Committee - proudly on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation - introduce this Report to the Youth Legislative Council. We would like to extend our gratitude to all organisations, academics, and individuals involved in providing information, resources, and insightful knowledge, which have allowed us to flourish and culminate in producing this report.

Additionally, I would also like to thank all the members of the Committee for their service and dedication in providing research and solutions to the issues that surface in our state on the topic of youth engagement in the workforce.

I, on behalf of the Committee hereby, commend this Report to the House and to the floor.

**The Hon. Krish Nair, Youth MLC**  
**Youth Minister for Business & Employment**

# Introduction

The impacts of the COVID-19 economic recession have been echoed within the youth employment sector. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics youth unemployment, youth unemployment has risen from 0.9% to 16.4% however is 2.8 points lower than March 2020.<sup>1</sup> The rate of young people with full-time jobs fell by 10.1%.<sup>2</sup> However, these impacts have not been evenly distributed within New South Wales with significantly higher rates within rural communities which is also addressed in this report.

The age of 'youth' is often varied however it is best understood as “a period of transition from dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence,”<sup>3</sup> however for “main statistical purposes [it] defines those persons between ages 15 and 24 as youth.”<sup>4</sup> Engagement is a spectrum with disengaged on the bottom end defined as: “young people feel alienated or disconnected, unvalued or unable to contribute in a meaningful way. They may lack knowledge and skills or face structural barriers that limit their engagement, such as prejudice or limited resources and opportunities. Young people are also excluded from particular processes because they are considered to be deficient in skills or knowledge.”<sup>1</sup>

In this report, the Business and Employment committee has aimed to remove the stigma surrounding youth in the workforce that have been enshrined in the Australian and New South Wales landscape as well as to provide further opportunities and equity in all parts of the state. This committee additionally aims to target the causes of youth disengagement listed above. It is not only our duty, but our moral obligation as the Business & Employment Committee to catalyse an opening dialogue on the matter of Youth Disengagement in the workforce for the benefit of our youths and New South Wales as a whole. By doing this, it will thereby allow youth to have a strong and stable foundation in the workforce, and advance our economy for the better.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), Labour Force, Australia, Reference period April 2022. Accessed 4th June 2022. Available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Ziffer, Racheal Clayton ABC News (2020) One in three young Australians is unemployed or needs more hours, and the trend could last a decade, Accessed 4th June 2020. Available at: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-07/young-australians-face-decade-of-employment-scarring/12951550>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations (2013), Definition of Youth. Accessed 4th June 2022. Available at: <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

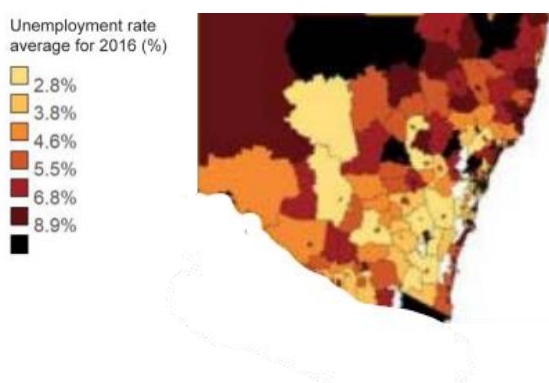
<sup>4</sup> United Nations (1981) Secretary-General’s Report to the General Assembly. Accessed 4th June 2022. Available at: <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/36>

# Background

## Inequalities within the Youth Workforce

Furthering the aforementioned statistics in the introduction, inequalities within the workforce have always been present and have been exemplified within the COVID-19 milieu.

One of the major groups impacted by inequalities are regional and rural youth. Many experts believe that over recent decades, Australia has developed a two-speed economy: one in metropolitan areas and one in rural communities. Unemployment rates within remote regions



is well above the national average within regions of far north Queensland including Aurkun, Palm Island and Pormpuraa having more than 40%<sup>5</sup> rates of unemployment. <sup>6</sup> Within New South Wales, the rate of youth unemployment reaches 21.5% in Murray and 19.8% in Grafton.<sup>6</sup>

One of the pillars of the Regional NSW Youth Framework is 'work ready'<sup>7</sup>. In a survey conducted it has shown that there is a mismatch between the needs and opportunities of industries in rural NSW. A

high proportion of regional youth enter into industry-relevant skills training that will support and drive economic prosperity in regional areas.

The Regional Youth NSW framework has laid out five main priorities<sup>8</sup> :

1. Young people have better access to great education and training opportunities.
2. Young people have improved skills and knowledge to navigate pathways and careers
3. Young people have clearer options to take them from school to training, work and further education opportunities
4. Disadvantaged, or at-risk young people are better supported to learn and achieve
5. Young people have an increased understanding of the workforce

These opportunities are mainly found at TAFE which may be a more effective and efficient education pathway as opposed to traditional universities. However, there has been a

<sup>5</sup> ACTU (2018) Regional Inequality in Australian and the future of Work 112-Supplementary Submission. Accessed 5th June 2022. Available at: <https://www.actu.org.au/media/1385202/d135-fow-regional-inequality-supplementary-submission.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> University of Melbourne (2018) 16th annual Hilda Survey. Accessed 5th June 2022. Available at: <https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/hilda/publications/hilda-statistical-reports>

<sup>7</sup> NSW Government (2020) Regional NSW Youth Framework. Accessed 5th June 2022. Available at: [https://www.regional.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1243912/NSW-Regional-Youth-Framework.pdf](https://www.regional.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1243912/NSW-Regional-Youth-Framework.pdf)

reduction of the apprenticeship budget by \$1 billion and the TAFE funding by 30%. A further \$247 million has been pulled from skills training which limits pathways available for disadvantaged youth to find employment<sup>6</sup>.

## History of Youth Unemployment in NSW

Poor employment outcomes inflicted upon the youth - particularly during the early stages in working life - have caused substantial damage at a personal and societal level. Empirical studies have shown a strong correlation between young people spending additional time out of employment and the labour market during economic downturns.<sup>8</sup>



Source: ABS (2020) Education and Work, Australia, Table 34

Graduates that entered a labour market - 5 ppts above the average unemployment rate - faced lower employment opportunities and accepted lower quality jobs.<sup>9</sup> For example, the youth unemployment rate rose from 8.7 percent in March 2008 to 11.7 percent in May 2009 due to the GFC (Global Financial Crisis)<sup>10</sup> Unemployment for youth can be detrimental to their employment prospects, Superannuation and working ability; which can limit upward job

mobility and cause career setbacks.

The most problematic group in terms of employment outcomes are those not engaged in either training (school, university, TAFE) or employment. This group has been classified by sociologists and economists as NEET (not in employment, education or training).

Throughout modern history, this group has been predominantly composed of young people. A report commissioned by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare concluded that 12% of those aged 15-24 were considered NEET as of May 2020<sup>11</sup>. This is a 4 percentage

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRlhRqx6aMw>

<sup>9</sup> Churchill (2021) COVID-19 and the immediate impact on young people and employment in Australia: A gendered analysis. Accessed 6th June 2022. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/gwao.12563>

<sup>10</sup> Gillfillan (2021) Developments in the youth labour market since the GFC. Accessed 6th June 2022. Available at: [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/YouthLabourMarketGFC](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/YouthLabourMarketGFC)

<sup>11</sup> AIHW, (2022). *Australia's youth: Engagement in education or employment*. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Accessed 5th June 2022 Available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/engagement-in-education-or-employment#how-many>

point increase on the same survey conducted in 2019. It is worth noting that for the lowest 10% in socioeconomic rating, the NEET percentage was 10 percentage points higher than it was for the highest 10%.

There are multiple factors affecting these statistics. Such factors include: low educational outcomes, dysfunctional home life, poor access to housing, addiction to drugs or alcohol and a lack of understanding about career pathways and the education-employment transition. Ultimately the result of such dysfunction is grave. A study carried out by the Sociology Review had a variety of findings in this area<sup>12</sup>. They concluded that unemployment and NEET status creates a cycle of poverty. It is extremely difficult to become employed after 6 months out of the workforce. Additionally, having poor employment outcomes in all regards creates a higher likelihood of depression, drug use, homelessness and higher suicide rates. Ultimately, young people are disproportionately represented as disengaged in the workforce and this disengagement has detrimental outcomes for their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

## Status Quo

Whilst we may define youth disengagement as an ongoing issue, actions have been taken to increase youth engagement in the workforce. The status quo forced upon by the education system has allowed youths to inject themselves into the workforce and get more exposure outside school. The NSW government has additionally advocated for more youth engagement in the workforce, for better support of the economy and a faster development of our society. This is furthermore in support of better mental health.

The NSW education system has encouraged youths to get into the workforce, and this is done by educating youths about the workplace and going in depth of how they can be a successful employee. Schools in NSW have implemented a separate subject directed to learning about the workforce. The course name is outlined as Vocational education; the study of the workforce, university entrance, job seeking, application designing and professionalism. Over and above that, the NSW Education Standards Authority, has designed their syllabus in a way to allow youths to get exposure in many types of fields across all subjects, that includes maths, english, geography, history, science, woodwork, food technology and agriculture.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, under the NSW education system, the year 9 and 10 syllabus focuses on building on students' knowledge in order to prepare them for HSC studies or training and employment. Students have the option to do a VET (Vocational Education and Training) course which is done at TAFE. VET courses heavily contribute to the broad education of students, allowing students to engage and challenge their individual

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<sup>12</sup> Brand, J.E. (2015). The Far-Reaching Impact of Job Loss and Unemployment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41(1), pp.359–375. Accessed 6th June 2022. Available at: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043237>

<sup>13</sup> NSW Education (2021)



talents and capabilities for further education and lifelong learning.<sup>14</sup> It is stated that more than 1 in 5 students in NSW have completed some VET course. Whilst there are actions to increase youth engagement in the workforce, not all schools have the resources and availability of teachers to have a separate subject focussing on vocational education, and not all have access to TAFE. With that stated, the NSW education system has focused on advocating for more youth engagement in the workforce and have contributed to educating youths about the fundamentals of the workplace. The graph on the right (Figure 1) illustrates NSW stance on students of Year 11/12 of cohort 2013-2015<sup>14</sup> entering into the VET course. Furthermore, the government has looked into advocating for more youth engagement in the workforce. Talking to businesses and media have allowed the voice to be heard throughout society. Recently the NSW government has reminded employers to ensure that young workers are safe. This comes after the drastic increase in youth unemployment, during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the federal government has enacted packages and plans to advance the support of youth engagement in the workforce. The government has included a \$7.8 billion investment in skills and \$20 billion in higher education this financial year alone. Additionally, other measures have been sought, such as a \$1.2 billion over four years of the Transition to Work program, which supports disadvantaged young people into employment and education.<sup>16</sup> The NSW government, additionally, believes that youth engagement will definitely increase mental health and allow a more flourishing society.<sup>17</sup> Bringing the status quo topic to an end, the NSW government, NSW education system and the federal government have played a huge role in advancing youths in the workforce and have backed the support in allowing more youths into the workplace.

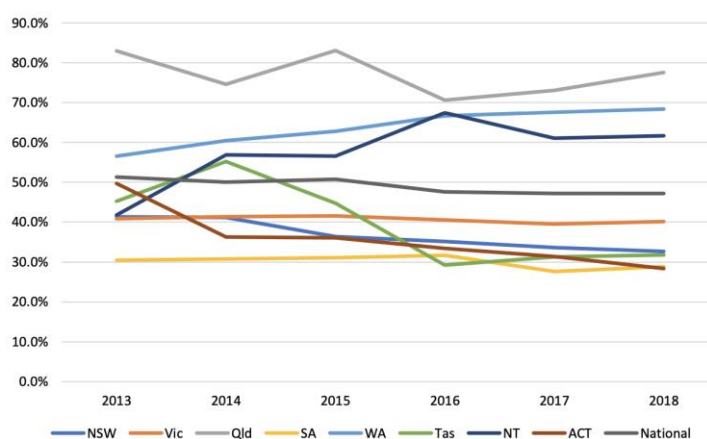


Figure 1 Proportion of VET students in Australian schools as proportion of Year 11/12 cohort 2013–2018

Sources: NCVET (2019) VET in Schools data slicer, retrieved 10 September 2019 from <https://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A84263>

ACARA (2019) retrieved 29 August 2019 from <https://acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia-data-portal/student-numbers>.

<sup>14</sup> NSW Government (2021) Vocational education and training delivered to secondary students. Accessed 5th June 2022. Available at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/educational-data/cese/publications/research-reports/vocational-education-and-training-secondary-students>

<sup>15</sup> Paulinet Tamaray (2022) NSW government reminds employers “Keep young workers safe”. Accessed 5th June 2022. Available at: <https://www.hcamag.com.au/specialisation/diversity-inclusion/nsw-government-reminds-employers-keep-young-workers-safe/403309>

<sup>16</sup> The Hon. Luke Howarth MP (2022) Youth jobs Market heads off Disruption. Accessed 6th June 2022. Available at: <https://ministers.dese.gov.au/howarth/labour-force-january-2022-youth-jobs-market-heads-disruption>

<sup>17</sup> NSW Government (2018) NSW Strategic Framework and Workforce Plan for Mental Health. Accessed 6th June 2022. Available at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/resources/Publications/mh-strategic-framework.pdf>

# Recommendations

## Education

This committee recommends that schools run two work experience programs keeping the status quo in year 10<sup>18</sup> and adding a new work experience program in year 8 with more of a focus on a casual experience of things that will be necessary as a teenager.

1. A program where year 8 students dedicate at least 5 school days and at most 8 days towards a casual work experience program
2. Improve Career advisor program
3. Educate more youths about Employment - having either a separate subject or implementing a course about employment into a subject to get youths more knowledgeable about the workforce.
4. Have students learn how to write a resume and write a resume in school in year 8

## Government Expenditure

Strengthening more expenditure for businesses to give more opportunities for youths to work in firms as an intern.

1. Businesses could have a separate organ in which youths will be taught at casual times for a minimum of 6 months. This will allow students and youths to gain more knowledge in the field.
2. Have the state government recommend to the Fair Work Commission that the minimum wage for those under the age of 20 rise by 2.55% of the minimum wage of the current rate of pay<sup>19</sup>.
3. Subsidy for business creation for those under 25
4. Pay adults as adults meaning 18-year-olds to get 100% of the minimum wage

## Modern and ethical training for young employees

Often when we train young people, we forget to teach them the ethical obligations of an employee and their duty towards the employer or business. Students and the youth, in general, must be taught the ethical standards of an employee in the work sector; having a better attitude or being punctual can help build trust in employers for the youth. In many countries including Australia, there is a mismatch between the education, skills and training that young people acquire and the needs of the labour market. Modern standard training is key for young people finding a job in this fast-growing society; they must be trained in a way that suits their own strengths and the reality of their desired workforce.

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<sup>18</sup> NSW Government (2021) Work Experience in Year 10. Accessed 25th June 2022. Available at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/pathways-after-school/work-experience-in-year-10>

<sup>19</sup> Fair work commission (2021) The National Minimum Wage. Accessed 26th June 2022. Available at: <https://www.fwc.gov.au/agreements-awards/minimum-wages-and-conditions/national-minimum-wage>

## Change Minimum Full-time Working Age

Currently to work full-time in New South Wales an Individual must be of 17 years.<sup>20</sup> Hence, this committee recommends that this age is brought down to the requirement of a successful completion of the ROSA certificate. A full time employee is one who usually works an average of 38 hours a week on a permanent or fixed term contract.<sup>21</sup> Upon receiving the ROSA, given to students who decide to leave school in year 10 and satisfactorily complete the requirements, should be allowed to seek full-time employment as they seek to enter the professional workforce.

## Increasing Youth Voice

Youth voices often go unheard in society, especially in the workforce. Young people are experts in their own experience and their views are essential to solving the challenges they face<sup>22</sup>. Hence, this committee recommends that young people's voices are heard in the construction of NSW policies regarding entering the workforce. Additionally, within the workforce young people should not go without a voice in recommendation for a workforce.

## Gig Workers

This committee recommends for gig workers to be treated as employees of the business/company. In doing so, this will allow young people - who most of the time start their career as gig workers - to become more engaged and interested in different opportunities. Thus, allowing a smoother integration into the workforce when they apply as a permanent employee. Additionally, gig workers such as food delivery riders and rideshare drivers are deprived of basic workplace entitlements, hence, increasing inequality in the state workforce.

## Affordability of Transport

The great spike in fuel and public transport prices means that many young workers just starting out are unable to afford the journey to work. With students being allowed a free travel card, as well as a concession, card this committee recommends the following:

To reduce the cost of car registration on young apprentices and young tradies by 60% to make apprentices be able to commute to work easier, allowing for a greater range of work and more people to be able to get into the trades.

Exclude tradies and apprentices from tolls on toll roads by creating a new ETag system for those within the trades.

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<sup>20</sup> Ho. N (2019) Law Path. What is the Legal Working Age in Australia. Accessed 27th June 2022. Available at: <https://lawpath.com.au/blog/what-is-the-legal-working-age-in-australia>

<sup>21</sup> Fair Work Ombudsman Full Time employees. Accessed 27th June 2022. Available at: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/starting-employment/types-of-employees/full-time-employees>

<sup>22</sup> Youth Action (2019) A Minister for Young People. Accessed 27th June 2022. Available at: [https://www.youthaction.org.au/a\\_minister\\_for\\_young\\_people](https://www.youthaction.org.au/a_minister_for_young_people)

Introduction of concession cards for young workers to use public transport at a reduced rate.

## State Skills Fund

TAFE is a popular choice for many students looking to pursue certain careers, especially in hospitality, automotive, etc as an alternative to university and is disproportionately more popular in regional areas. However, as outlined above there is a great disparity between wealth and youth unemployment in these areas. Hence this committee recommends the introduction of a state skills fund that acts as a HECS loan system but for TAFE, making TAFE courses more affordable in the short term and decreasing strain on the student in the long term.

## Lowering Gender Wage Gap

The gender wage/pay gap is the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time equivalent earnings, calculated as a percentage of men's earnings. The purpose of such statistics is to measure the overall position of women in the paid workforce. Gender equality has still not yet been defined in Australian society. Australia has had and continues to have a gender wage gap, due to stereotypes of women being 'unreliable' due to their responsibilities and natural circumstances beyond their control. Statistics have shown that while the gender wage gap is wider between the ages of 30s and 50s, this has still not been reduced entirely for the youth. Statistics provided by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, show that NSW has a gender pay gap of 12.0%. NSW makes it just 0.46% under the average of all the States and Territories of Australia.

# Final Recommendations

## Education

While we recognise that there are current careers classes within part of the syllabus, to improve its accessibility and viability this committee recommends that schools run two work experience programs, keeping the status quo in year 10 and adding a new work experience program in year 8 with more of a focus on a casual experience of things that will be necessary as a teenager.

1. A program where year 8 students dedicate at least 5 school days and at most 8 days towards a casual work experience program. The implementation of this program will allow junior students to have the opportunity to learn skills, develop habits and engage in casual work. This committee strongly recommends this program be integrated into the current curriculum reform;
2. With an increase in uncertainty and the diversification of future prospects for many senior high school students, the role of the careers advisor becomes increasingly important. The implementation of the recommendation to better improve the training of career advisors will benefit both students, employers and teachers. This committee believes it extremely vital to be able to offer the best support and guidance to students regarding future pathways and employment;
3. This committee recognises the current Year 10 careers program, however, wishes further improvements to be made in the current syllabus. We have considered the once fortnightly lessons to be insufficient as well as the lack of formal structure in these classes. Additionally, the disparity in independent, government, as well as regional and rural schools, needs to be addressed with a re-evaluation in the new curriculum change.

## Government Expenditure

The Committee recognises and acknowledges the current work of the government in giving incentives to businesses to further the economy, however, we believe that the government should strengthen more expenditure, scoping mainly into allowing more room and opportunities for youth to work in firms as an intern. The Committee has amended the current positions on government expenditure by adding the following;

1. Businesses could have a separate organ in which youth will be taught at casual times for a minimum of 6 months. This will allow students and young people to gain more knowledge in the field. A business can expand itself, by employing more paid interns for them to teach youths, as well as learn themselves during their time at the company;
2. Higher wages for youths as this will encourage more youths to remain in the workforce or join the workforce, impacting the economy for the better. Government expenditure will go into businesses, in which they can then use that to pay the youths. This will additionally have a positive effect on the current cost of living pressure due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and floods in Australia;

3. Subsidy for business creation for those under 25. Australia has had a positive structure in allowing youths to start their own businesses, such as getting an ABN which people of any age can get, and getting a TFN. However, youths have struggled to start their business, which is why the Committee has advocated for more expenditure in business creation for those under 25. Governments can view youths' projects in which, if they believe it beneficial for the economy and the youth's individual income, can claim packages to receive up to \$4,000.

## State Skills Fund

With the increase of disparities in wealth across NSW this committee has investigated the pathway of TAFE into future employment as an option that provides more hands-on training and apprenticeships. However, in doing so it has been realised that unlike universities with HECS there is no option in making TAFE more affordable. Hence, this committee recommends the introduction of a state skills fund. This fund will act as a HECS loan system but for TAFE, making TAFE courses more affordable in the short term and decreasing strain on the student in the long term. This loan will have the following repayment brackets based on yearly income:

i.	47,014 - \$54,282	1.0%
ii.	\$54,283 - \$57,538	2.0%
iii.	\$57,539 - \$60,991	2.5%
iv.	\$60,992 - \$64,651	3.0%
v.	\$64,652 - \$68,529	3.5%
vi.	\$68,530 - \$72,641	4.0%
vii.	\$72,642 - \$77,001	4.5%
viii.	\$77,002 - \$81,620	5.0%
ix.	\$81,621 - \$86,518	5.5%
x.	\$86,519 - \$91,709	6.0%
xi.	\$91,710 - \$97,212	6.5%
xii.	\$97,213 - \$103,045	7.0%
xiii.	\$103,046 - \$109,227	7.5%
xiv.	\$109,228 - \$115,781	8.0%
xv.	\$115,782 - \$122,728	8.5%
xvi.	\$122,729 - \$130,092	9.0%
xvii.	\$130,093 - \$137,897	9.5%
xviii.	Over \$137,898	10.0%

## Promoting Youth Voice

Youth voices often go unheard in society, especially in the workforce. Young people are experts in their own experiences and their views are essential to solving the challenges they face. Hence, this committee recommends that young people's voices are heard in the construction of NSW policies regarding entering the workforce. Additionally, within the workforce young people should not go without a voice in recommendations for a constructive workplace. One of the main recommendations that this committee finds imperative is

improving employer and employee relationships. In doing so this provides youth support in the workplace as well as security.

## Lowering Gender Wage Gap

Lowering the youth gender wage gap will set precedent to reduce the wage gap for additional ages. The committee believes gender wage gaps have discouraged the young workforce, especially women, who believe that they hold the right to acquire the same pay rate as their fellow male colleagues. Currently, the gender wage gap for 20 years and under is 3.7%. This is too much for a society where we acknowledge gender equality. The Committee has amended the current stands on the gender wage gap by adding the following;

1. Undertaking gender pay gap audits and acting on findings. The government will provide a body in which the gender wage gap will be looked into. Businesses employing youth 20 years-old and under for the same position and hours should not have a gender wage gap of more than 1.7%.
2. Have increased pay transparency and reporting on gender pay gaps. It is vital for businesses to provide an insight into how much is being paid to their employees.
3. Provide incentives to encourage businesses to provide equal opportunity to both male and females. The committee, looking into the business perspective, is aware that businesses are more prone to stop hiring women if they were forced to lower the gender wage gap. Hence, the Committee has looked into providing incentives for businesses in keeping or increasing the status quo for female employment intake and providing equal gender wage.



# Dissenting Statements

## Modern and ethical training for young employees

Exploring effective ways to train our young workforce is essential to the future of the economy and the state's productivity. Equipping employees with modern and ethical training can prepare them for the reality of their desired workforce and their responsibilities. In the past, the NSW government subsidised initiatives like the "Smart, Skilled and Hired" program which aimed to support young people into employment and develop necessary skills. In the conclusion of this program, it is estimated that the initiative helped 6,250 people find employment, including 1,920 with a disability. However, the NSW government did not renew funding for the Smart, Skilled and Hired program in the 2020-21 or 2021-22 budget plan. We propose that the government invest in areas left by programs like Smart, Skilled and Hired for young and amateur employees. Albeit, the NSW government did renew funding for two other programs targeted at the youth in the state. Additionally, amateur employees must be taught their ethical obligations towards the company or employer. Ethical training prepares an employee to deal with expectations from their employer or colleagues in the workforce, thus, allowing them to smoothly integrate into it. In conclusion, providing modern and ethical training for young employees can help them adjust to their workforce faster and also help them be more productive in their pursuit of work.

## Change Minimum Full-time Working Age

Currently, to work as a full-time employee in NSW, one must be 17 or have completed Year 10. This committee proposes that the minimum age to work as a full-time employee be decreased to the age of 16 as the majority of students end up completing grade 10 at this age and receive their ROSA. However, if the minimum age to work as a full-time employee remains at 17 then young workers, who did not receive their ROSA after Year 10, would have to wait an entire year to achieve full-time status. This can have a detrimental impact on young employees who started their part-time jobs before high school and concentrated on accelerating their journey to becoming a full-time member of their workforce rather than completing their secondary education. Thus, changing the minimum full-time work age to 16 will help Year 10 students to efficiently integrate into the workforce as full-time employees.

## Gig Workers

The Gig economy or also known as the "on-demand" economy has changed drastically in the past decade. With the rise of e-platforms like Uber and Doordash; the ease of transitioning as a gig worker has never been easier. Around the world, big tech companies have been classifying gig workers as independent "contractors" and Australia is no different. Due to the flexibility and autonomy that gig work offers, many employees are ditching their traditional workplace to reap the fruits of the ever-growing gig economy. However, over the years there has been concerns if gig workers are just employees - with no benefits - in disguise. Gig work can be split into four characteristics: there is no guarantee of continuous



work; tasks are performed by individual workers; transactions are facilitated by a for-profit company (e.g Uber) and workers are categorised as independent workers. These major characteristics can become disadvantages for a gig worker as it causes them to earn below the minimum wage; achieve non-negotiable pay; have limited safety and no insurance. All these factors added up means that gig workers can neither be “employees” nor “independent contractors”; their terms seem to make them more dependent on these gig platforms. Additionally, gig workers are subjected to old laws that can’t keep up with the rate of change that are occurring in industries like the gig work. Hence, gig workers are placed in an uncomfortable and undesirable place to work in this state. This committee proposes amendments in the state Fair Work system so it covers the basic needs of all workers in NSW.

## Affordability of Transport

An unfortunate number of young people are missing employment and education opportunities due to the unaffordability of transport cost. Public transport should be provided free to young workers and job seekers under the age of 25. For the young workers who live in rural NSW or a place lacking in public transport, a state subsidised program for convenient car ownership should be in place for easier commuting to work. Ideally, the government subsidised car ownership program should encourage electric vehicles; a great way to enter the electric motor market in the state of NSW. Additionally, fees relating to the licence, registration and insurance should be reduced for young workers by 60% so acquiring a car could be easier. Furthermore, lack of transport in rural NSW has long been a major disadvantage for isolated Indigenous communities in seeking work; especially in the youth demographic. According to an empirical study by aph.gov, the unemployment rate for Indigenous young Australians is twice that of non-Indigenous youth. This statistic is accompanied by other factors such as lower participation rates in education, socioeconomic status and reluctance to leave family; reinforcing the point that the Indigenous youth are severely disadvantaged in the youth employment market.

1. To reduce the cost of car registration on young apprentices and young tradies by 60% to make apprentices able to commute to work easier allowing for a greater range of work and more people to be able to get into the trades.
2. Exclude tradies and apprentices from tolls on toll roads by creating a new ETag system for those within the trades.
3. Introduction of concession cards for young workers to use public transport at a reduced rate

## State Skills Fund

In NSW, young people should have complete access to an affordable, high-quality education that satisfies their current needs while also preparing them for the future. Australia ranked 30th out of 45 nations by the OCED in terms of the proportion of individuals (25-64) that have a Year 12 or Certificate III. There are currently minimal incentives to study vocational education, which will eventually lead to skill shortages in our labour market. The government should increase fee-free TAFE courses in areas of priority and high interest to attract more students towards vocational studies.

Additionally, the house proposes that TAFE courses should expand their eligibility criteria and increase funding towards improving the quality of teaching and infrastructure.