



Tackling Long-term Youth Unemployment

yourtown Advocacy Paper

Paper written by Salote Scharr – December 2016

yourtown

Strategy and Research

Our Mission

TO ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITHOUT VOICE, TO IMPROVE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE.

Vision Statement

YOUNG LIVES TRANSFORMED, COMMUNITIES STRENGTHENED.

About us

yourtown is a charity with services young people can access to find jobs, learn skills, become great parents and live safer, happier lives. For 56 years, we've been tackling the issues impacting young people in Australia - like unemployment, mental health, and family and domestic violence.

We aim to be part of the solution by delivering programs that tackle grass root issues affecting our community. These include:

- **Training and Employment** services that give young people extra life choices and get them jobs;
- **Work Enterprises** that provide on-the-job experiences and skills for life;
- **Indigenous Employment and Wellbeing** programs that create job options and community engagement opportunities;
- **Education and Re-engagement** programs that keep young people in school and offer other positive pathways;
- **Counselling and Mentoring** from Kids Helpline's 24/7 service for Australia's children and young people, Parentline for parents and carers in Queensland and the Northern Territory, and face-to-face support for our services' clients;
- **Family Refuges** that give families temporary, safe homes and/or domestic violence support; and
- **Parenting and Family Services** that teach young families positive parenting and connect families with community.

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Overview

More than 50,000 young people across Australia aged 15 to 24 years were in long-term unemployment last year, that is, they had been looking for work for at least one year. The incidence of young people in this category has increased since 2007 reaching its highest point in 2015. **yourtown** is working with more than 7% of these young people and has an extensive knowledge of the issues they face.

The rates and incidences of long-term youth unemployment remain high, and the negative consequences are experienced at individual, community, and society levels. However, the difficulties in accessing suitable long-term data for young people means there is a lack of specific research in how to address this ongoing issue.

Barriers for young people in long-term youth unemployment

yourtown has access to young people in long-term unemployment and staff with expertise in the area and can therefore use research as advocacy to provide a voice for young people. Through a survey of 285 young people in long-term unemployment across Australia and focus groups and interviews with 21 service delivery and management staff, barriers to employment have been identified and specific strategies developed to address the issue of long-term youth unemployment. The barriers associated with long-term youth unemployment include:

- **Educational issues** such as low levels of formal schooling and qualifications and poor literacy and numeracy;
- **Vocational issues** such as limited work history and low work skills;
- **Practical issues** such as not possessing a licence and limited access to social and institutional support;
- **Contextual issues** such as intergenerational unemployment, living in low socio-economic areas, and lack of available jobs;
- **Psycho-social issues** such as poor mental health, substance misuse, and homelessness;
- **Cognitive-motivational issues** such as low self-esteem and motivation due to negative experiences, lack of future outlook, poor decision-making skills, and low cognitive ability; and
- **Anti-social issues** such as offending history and poor anger management.

Strategies to address long-term youth unemployment

In this Advocacy Paper, the key elements to addressing the issue of long-term youth unemployment have been identified through research. The process was grounded in a critical review of relevant literature in Australia and overseas with a specific focus on young people in long-term unemployment and formed **yourtown's** Discussion Paper on this topic. The findings of that paper informed this research process with young people in long-term unemployment and service delivery and management staff with expertise in working with this cohort. The key elements form a wider service model of intervention for effectively working with young people in long-term unemployment. The model is presented in Figure 1.

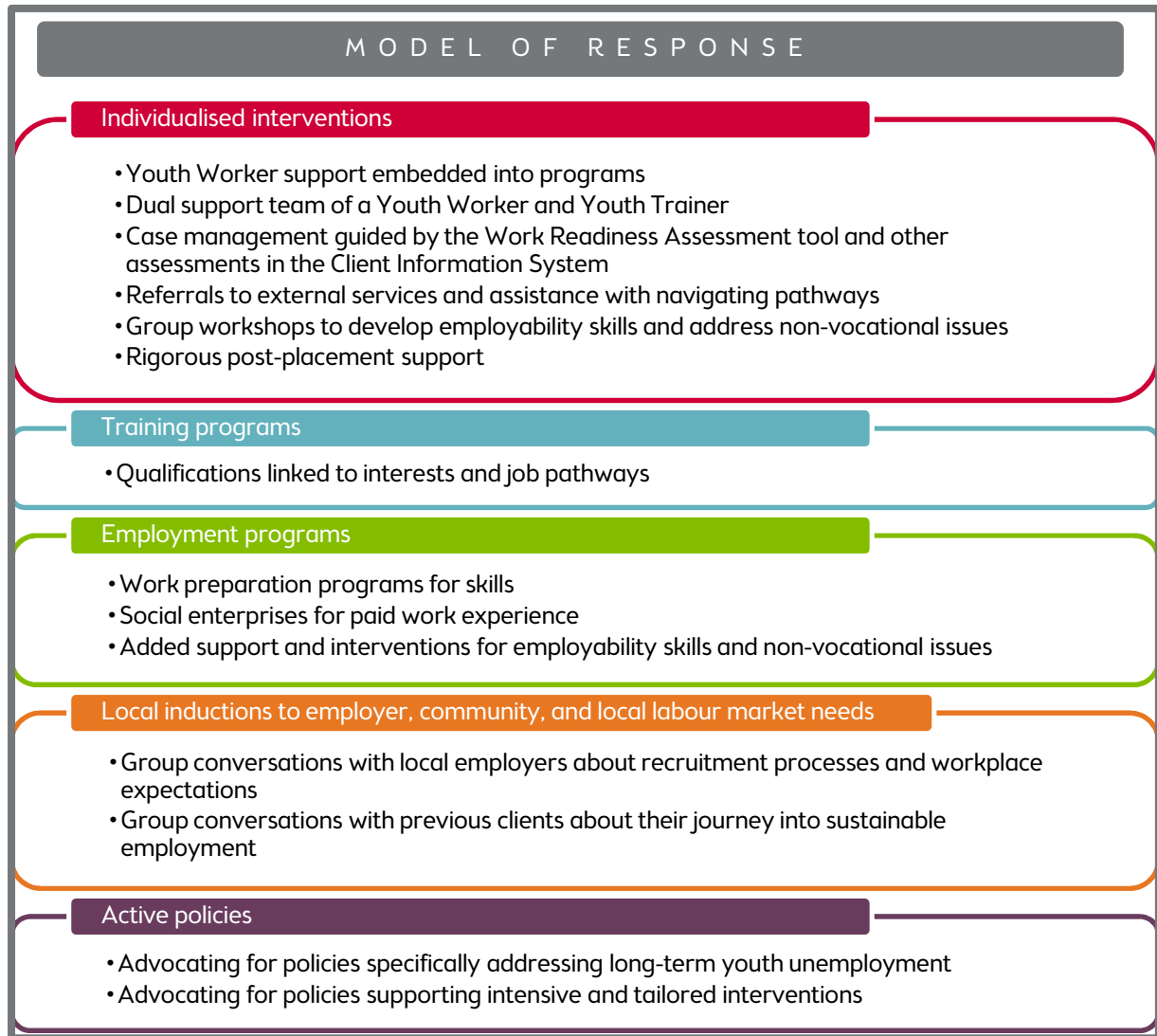


Figure 1. Model of response and key elements for addressing long-term youth unemployment.

Analysis of the data collected from the survey of young people and consultation with service delivery and management staff has yielded some key specific strategies for **yourtown** to adapt into in practice when it endeavours to assist young people in long-term unemployment. These key strategies revolved around intensive and tailored support that forms a model of intervention for specifically assisting young people in long-term unemployment. The research provides support for the various aspects of the model at a general level. The voices of young people have been used to detail specific elements and then put together in the overall model of intervention. This model would then need to be trialled and would require action research and evaluation to determine its effectiveness.

Recommendation: That the proposed intensive and tailored model of response to be implemented in programs assisting young people in long-term unemployment.

The current employment policy landscape is starting to recognise that strategies need to look beyond the broader issue of youth unemployment and focus specifically on addressing long-term youth unemployment. However, the policy approach does not take into account the intensive and individualised support that is required to adequately assist young people in long-term unemployment, particularly on a wide scale if these strategies are to reach the more than 50,000 young people across Australia in long-term unemployment. The aforementioned model on intensive support requires added investment to the models

of interventions that are available in the current landscape of policy and funded employment programs. Changes at a policy level are needed regarding support for young people in long-term unemployment.

Recommendation: That policies are developed to allow for the proposed model of responses and its key elements of intensive and tailored interventions in programs assisting young people in long-term unemployment.

Contents

Introduction	9
Outline of this paper	9
Concepts and definitions	9
Key concepts of ‘youth’ and ‘long-term unemployment’	9
Defining long-term youth unemployment	10
Scope of this paper	10
yourtown job seekers in long-term youth unemployment	11
Specific focus on the voices of young people in long-term unemployment	11
Purpose of this paper	11
Objective	11
Research questions	12
Method	12
Procedure and data treatment	12
Data collection	12
Data analysis	12
Participants	13
Survey participants	13
Focus group and interview participants	13
Tools	13
Survey	13
Focus groups and interviews	14
Barriers experienced by young people in long-term unemployment	14
Long-term unemployment compared to short-term unemployment	15
Female and male young people	17
Indigenous young people	19
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people	21
Young people in metropolitan cities and regional and remote areas	22
Strategies to address long-term youth unemployment	24
Job search	24
Training	24
Employment experience and programs	24
Active support	25
Personalised support	27
Local inductions to employers, communities, and local labour market needs	27

Active policies	28
Indigenous-specific strategies	28
Concluding remarks	28
Recommendations	30
References	32

List of figures

Figure 1. Model of response and key elements for addressing long-term youth unemployment.	4
Figure 2. Terms and definitions associated with long-term youth unemployment.	10
Figure 3. National long-term youth unemployment rate from 2005-06 - 2015-16.....	11
Figure 4. Perceived barriers to employment by surveyed young people in long-term unemployment.	15
Figure 5. Perceived barriers to employment by young people in long-term unemployment compared to young people in short-term unemployment.....	16
Figure 6. Comparison of trends in long-term youth unemployment rates among males and females.	17
Figure 7. Comparison of perceived barriers to employment by males and females.	18
Figure 8. Perceived barriers to employment by Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment.	20
Figure 9. Perceived barriers to employment by Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people in long-term unemployment.....	22
Figure 10. Comparison of perceived barriers to employment by young people in metropolitan cities and young people in regional and remote areas.	23
Figure 11. Model of response and key elements for addressing long-term youth unemployment.	29

Introduction

As part of its organisational priorities, **yourtown** is committed to using research as advocacy for those children, young people and families who are without a voice when it comes to topical issues. Long-term youth unemployment is one of the topics of **yourtown's** advocacy work. The issues faced by young people in long-term unemployment are multifaceted (Kieselbach, 2003; Reine, Novo, & Hammarstrom, 2004) and can potentially add to the risk of social exclusion and permanent detachment from the labour market (OECD, 2002). The consequences of these barriers become exacerbated as the time spent in unemployment is prolonged (Aaronson, Mazumder, & Schechter, 2010). The longer time spent in unemployment and the complex and serious nature of the barriers to employment means it is more difficult for this cohort to leave unemployment and obtain meaningful work (Covizzi, 2008).

A suite of documents have been developed as part of **yourtown's** advocacy work on long-term youth unemployment, including:

- **Discussion Paper** reviewing Australian and international academic literature on the issues associated with long-term youth unemployment;
- **Advocacy Paper** highlighting the voice of young people in long-term unemployment to describe strategies about overcoming barriers; and
- **yourtown Position Paper** detailing **yourtown's** stance on effective strategies for tackling long-term youth unemployment.

This document represents the Advocacy Paper. It follows on from the literature review in the Discussion Paper.

Outline of this paper

This Advocacy Paper uses the voices of young people in Australia to highlight their experiences in long-term unemployment which are then used to develop strategies to better assist this cohort. This paper details the research questions that were sourced from the previous Discussion Paper on the topic and how these questions informed the data collection from young people and staff who work with this marginalised group.

The findings are presented at a general level where the quantitative survey data is presented and then explained using qualitative data from young people and staff. The quantitative data analysis findings are also presented for specific cohorts of males and females, Indigenous, and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) young people in long-term unemployment. The qualitative data is then presented to discuss strategies that are viewed by young people as effective. The findings of this paper are then used as a basis for recommendations to assist marginalised young people in long-term unemployment.

Concepts and definitions

Key concepts of 'youth' and 'long-term unemployment'

The Australian Government's Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the international Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) define the 'youth' component of long-term youth unemployment as being from 15 to 24 years. However, the concept of youth in the current labour market policy and employment services context is seen by the Australian Department of Employment as being from 15 to 29 years. The ABS (1995) and OECD (2002) define long-term unemployment as the duration of unemployment of 52 weeks or more where an individual has not worked in a job for more than two weeks.

In this paper, discussions about long-term youth unemployment data sourced from the ABS will be in relation to young people aged between 15 and 24 years who have been in ongoing unemployment for at least 52 weeks. It should also be noted that ongoing unemployment in this context is defined by the ABS as not having work for more than a two-week period and actively looking for work and being available to work.

Defining long-term youth unemployment

The Australian Government Department of Employment's definition of long-term unemployment is young people who have been in ongoing unemployment for at least 52 weeks. Because of the profound effect of the Government's youth unemployment policies, the concept of youth when discussing survey responses in this paper will revolve around young people aged between 15 and 29 years that have been in ongoing unemployment for at least 52 weeks. The definitions and statistical explanations for various long-term unemployment terms developed by the ABS (1995) are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Terms and definitions associated with long-term youth unemployment.

Scope of this paper

Long-term youth unemployment was selected as an advocacy topic due to:

- Ongoing high incidences and rates (see Figure 3 for trend in long-term youth unemployment rate);
- Negative and ongoing consequences experienced by individuals (Carvalho, 2015; Kelly, McGuinness, & O'Connell, 2012; Leeves, 2002; Marston & McDonald, 2008) as well as their families (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005) and communities (Bolam & Sixsmith, 2002); and
- The lack of research on the topic mainly due to difficulties in accessing suitable long-term data from the relevant cohort of young people (Covizzi, 2008).

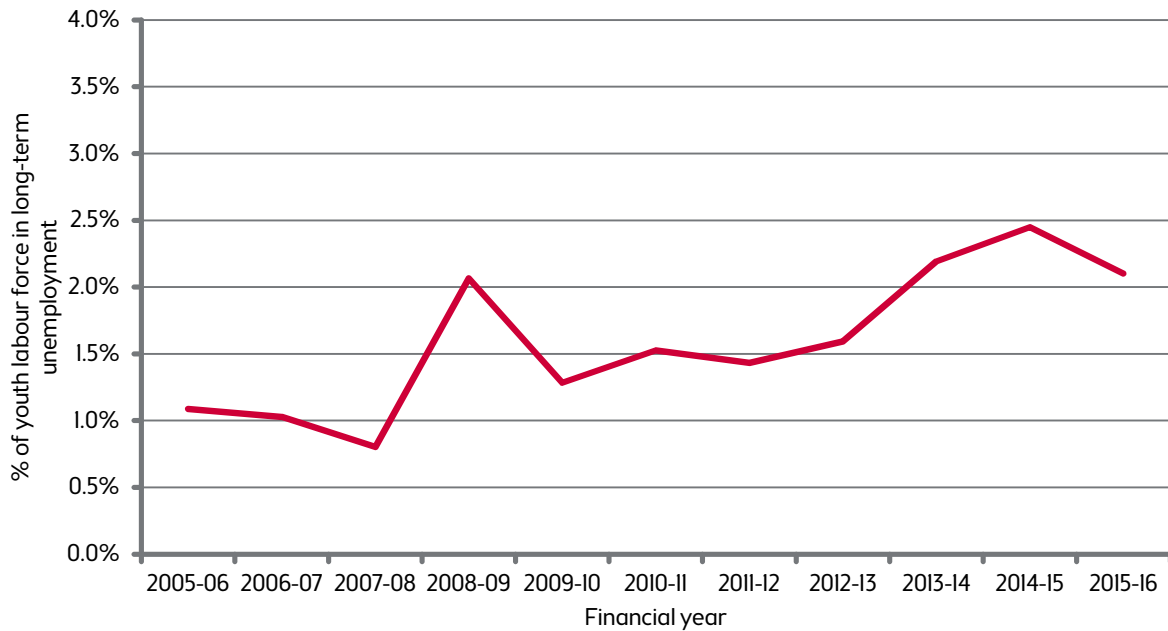


Figure 3. National long-term youth unemployment rate from 2005-06 - 2015-16.

yourtown job seekers in long-term youth unemployment

yourtown has developed this Advocacy Paper in response to the high rates and incidences of long-term youth unemployment across Australia and also the high numbers of young people in its services who are in long-term unemployment. Earlier in 2016, **yourtown** had 10,600 job seekers aged between 15 and 29 years in its jobactive employment services caseload. Of these young job seekers, 53.5% ($n = 5,668$) had been in unemployment for at least 52 weeks. Further analysis showed that 6,975 job seekers in **yourtown's** caseload were aged between 15 and 24 years. Of these young people aged between 15 and 24 years, 53.3% ($n = 3,718$) were in long-term unemployment. More than 50,000 young people aged between 15 and 24 years were unemployed for at least 52 weeks across Australia during the 2015-16 financial year. The aforementioned jobactive caseload data indicates that **yourtown** is working directly with more than 7% of these young people.

Specific focus on the voices of young people in long-term unemployment

The discourse on the broader topic of youth unemployment contains the voices of numerous stakeholders. Young people in long-term unemployment are a particularly marginalised group in the labour market and it is important to keep the focus of these advocacy papers on the issues, experiences and strategies that are specific to these young people rather than the broader topic of youth unemployment. In addition, when looking at the research on long-term unemployment it should be noted that some of the research findings are only applied in a broad sense or may be targeted towards other cohorts such as mature-aged workers or people made redundant who have struggled to re-join the workforce. Therefore, **yourtown** has made a considered effort to obtain the voice of young people who are classed as being in long-term unemployment and to gather the expertise of people who work directly with marginalised young people in long-term unemployment.

Purpose of this paper

Objective

The objective of this paper is to provide a voice for these young people in long-term unemployment that can be used to define their current barriers to employment and to develop strategies to effectively assist them in obtaining sustainable employment and participating meaningfully in society. Discussion points

were raised in the Tackling Youth Unemployment Discussion Paper based on long-term youth unemployment data trends, gaps in the reviewed literature, and suggestions for further research focusing specifically on young people in long-term unemployment. These discussion points informed the research questions in this paper that were directed at young people in long-term unemployment and people with expertise who work with and provide support for young people in long-term unemployment.

Research questions

The following research questions guide the data collection and discussion of this Advocacy Paper:

- What are the underlying factors in the high long-term youth unemployment rate?
- What are the barriers to employment experienced by young people in long-term unemployment?
- What are the differences in the ways that males and females experience long-term unemployment?
- What do young people in long-term unemployment perceive as useful strategies for assisting them to obtain employment? What elements of interventions are not as effective in assisting young people in long-term unemployment?
- How can **yourtown** respond more effectively to young people in long-term unemployment?

Method

A mixed method approach has been used in this research project. The quantitative data component of the mixed method was in the form of options in the survey tool for young people in long-term youth unemployment. The qualitative component took the form of open-ended questions in the survey of young people and also the semi-structured focus group or interview questions of staff who work with young people in long-term unemployment.

Procedure and data treatment

Data collection

The survey for young people was disseminated via paper and a website link via email to young people in **yourtown's** face-to-face programs. The website link to the survey was also posted on the websites and Facebook pages of **yourtown** and Kids Helpline and advertised in the newsletters and websites of organisations related to unemployment and youth. In addition, organisations linked to long-term youth unemployment (e.g. organisations that are funded to work with young people in long-term unemployment through the Empowering YOUth Initiatives) were approached to disseminate the survey with their clients.

Data analysis

Altogether, 616 survey responses were received. The data cleaning process involved removing respondents that were from overseas and/or aged below 15 years or older than 29 years. Responses judged to be 'pranks' were also removed. Of the 506 remaining responses, 221 respondents were removed because they indicated they were in short-term unemployment (under six months) or unemployed for between six and 12 months. In total, 285 responses from young people were used in the main analysis of this report because they indicated that they were aged between 15 and 29 years and they had been looking for work for at least 12 months, that is, they fit the definition of being in long-term unemployment.

Descriptive analyses were run on the demographic variables and the variables measuring the barriers of young people in the survey tool. Analyses were run on the cohort of young people in long-term unemployment as well as comparing their barriers to responses from young people in short-term unemployment, that is, young people in unemployment for less than six months. Comparisons were also looked at regarding gender differences. In addition, post hoc analyses were also run on specific cohorts of respondents in long-term unemployment such as Indigenous and CALD groups of young people. Further post hoc analyses were conducted with data from young people in metropolitan cities and those in regional and remote areas.

Participants

Survey participants

Of the 285 research participants in long-term unemployment, 50.9% identified as female, 47.7% male, 1.1% as intersex, trans or gender diverse, and 0.3% were unknown. The average age of this group ranging from 15 to 29 years was 21 years. Of the 285 survey respondents, 11.9% identified as Indigenous. In addition, 16.5% identified as being from a CALD background.

Postcode data was received from 275 participants enabling the state or territory of respondents to be determined. Altogether, 38.6% were from Queensland, 20.4% from New South Wales, 15.4% from Tasmania, 14.4% from South Australia, 4.6% from Victoria, 2.8% from Western Australia, and 0.4% from Northern Territory.

In addition, the postcode data enabled the use of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard to determine if respondents were in metropolitan cities or regional and remote areas. In terms of remoteness, 62.5% were located in metropolitan cities while 37.5% were in regional and remote areas. Specifically, 33.1% of respondents were in regional areas and 4.4% were in remote areas.

Data was recorded on other demographic and situational variables such as employment history, where 42.5% stated they never had a job, 33.0% had previously been in part-time or casual work, and 12.6% had experienced full-time work. Of the long-term unemployed participants, 46.7% had been looking for work for between one and two years and 53.3% had been in looking for work for more than two years, that is, they were in very long-term unemployment. Intergenerational unemployment was also present, where 17.2% indicated that they grew up in a home where the main income earner did not work.

In relation to formal schooling, 37.2% had completed Year 12, 30.2% Year 10, while 14.9% had left school in Year 9 or lower. Two-in-five (39.6%) participants indicated that they had no accredited qualifications, 4.2% a Certificate I, 21.8% a Certificate II, 21.1% a Certificate III, 2.5% a Certificate IV, 4.2% a diploma, and 3.2% an undergraduate degree.

Data on housing showed that 34.4% were living in a private rental situation, 19.6% in their parent's home that was owned, 17.9% in unstable accommodation, 16.1% in public housing, and 4.9% in community housing. In terms of offending, 5.6% have been in juvenile or adult detention.

Focus group and interview participants

Twenty-one staff members provided feedback through participation in face-to-face focus groups or individual interviews. Most of these interviews held over the phone. Staff members who were unable to attend an interview were given the questions for their feedback to be provided via email.

Research is lacking on Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment. In addition, ABS data in Indigenous long-term youth unemployment is not available. Therefore a concerted effort was made to not only gather the voices of Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment but also Indigenous staff members. This was done by conducting two focus groups with Indigenous staff members who have expertise in working with Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment.

Tools

Survey

The survey tool aimed at young people in long-term unemployment consisted of demographic and situational questions, such as age, gender, postcode, housing situation, detention history, personal work history, work history of main income earners when growing up, and time spent looking for work. The survey items, 'age' and 'time spent looking for work', were mandatory in the online survey. The options for responses to this question were in line with the ABS measurement of time in unemployment, that is, under

one month, between one month and three months, between six months and one year, between one year and two years, more than two years, and other.

The survey also measured the barriers to employment. The literature review in the Tackling Long-term Youth Unemployment Discussion Paper uncovered a number of different issues associated with long-term unemployment. Most of these studies were conducted in research projects overseas dating back to 2003. In an effort to ascertain the types of barriers experienced by young people in long-term unemployment in a contemporary Australian context, these barriers from international and Australian studies were presented in the survey for young people to select if they were relevant to their situation. The barriers under their broader categories were:

- Vocational issues of limited work history and low work skills;
- Educational issues of low levels of formal schooling and qualifications and low literacy and numeracy;
- Contextual issues of intergenerational unemployment and lack of available jobs;
- Practical issues of not possessing a driver licence, no vehicle, limited transport options, and limited access to social and institutional support;
- Cognitive-motivational issues of low motivation due to negative experiences, low self-esteem and confidence, lack of future outlook and goals, and difficulty making decisions;
- Psycho-social issues of poor mental health, alcohol misuse, drug misuse, and homelessness; and
- Antisocial issues of offending history and poor anger management.

Participants were also given the option in an open-ended question to describe other barriers to employment. Open-ended questions were used for respondents to describe strategies that they thought were or could be effective in assisting them to gain employment. In addition, questions were asked about strategies that were not effective in assisting young people in long-term unemployment.

Focus groups and interviews

The focus group and interview questions with staff members were conducted using a presentation of the discussion paper findings. The findings of the discussion paper were used to introduce the research questions throughout the sessions to stimulate discussion among the participants. Twelve participants were in the focus groups. Two of the focus groups comprised six staff in total identifying as Indigenous. These focus groups were conducted so that the questions and discussion were specifically in relation to Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment. The focus groups ran for approximately one hour and ten minutes while the interviews usually ran for about 40 minutes.

Barriers experienced by young people in long-term unemployment

Data from the young people in long-term unemployment who completed the survey indicated that vocational, educational and practical issues are the main barriers to employment. Limited work history was rated as the most common barrier to employment with 73.1% of respondents saying it was an issue for them. Other common barriers revolved around educational issues such as low levels of qualifications (66.0%), practical issues such as a lack of a driver licence (66.1%) and not enough available jobs (61.4%), and psycho-social issues such as low self-esteem (46.9%). The perceived barriers to employment by young people in long-term unemployment are shown in Figure 4.

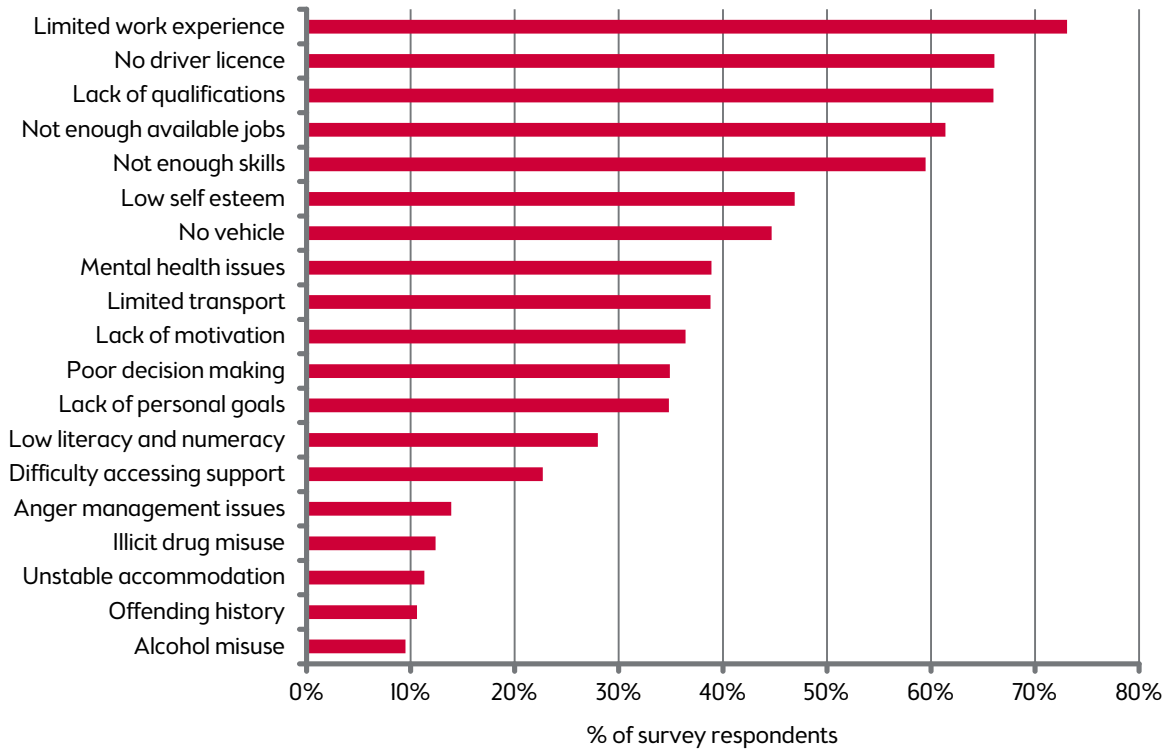


Figure 4. Perceived barriers to employment by surveyed young people in long-term unemployment.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide details about other barriers to employment that were not provided as options in the survey. One of the key themes that came out from this open-ended question was respondents naming specific mental illness such as anxiety and depression. The other key theme that arose from the answers of young people was the lack of confidence when having to approach employers and talk to people that they had not met previously. Many of these responses also described the anxiety that was experienced in these situations.

Staff in the focus groups and interviews stated that it is important to address the vocational, educational, and practical barriers to employment. However, they placed higher importance in comparison to young people on addressing the psycho-social, cognitive-motivational and anti-social issues associated with long-term youth unemployment.

While addressing the vocational, educational and practical barriers may assist young people to eventually find work, staff stated that the sustainability of employment outcomes was dependent on how well the non-vocational needs were supported. In particular, they mentioned that substance misuse was usually not acknowledged by young people as an issue for them even though it stopped them from engaging in programs. Furthermore, young people did not take their illicit drug use seriously even though it stopped them from gaining work with employers that have drug-testing as part of their recruitment processes.

Mental health was another key theme in the focus groups and interviews where participants observed young people going through their lives without a formal diagnosis because they did not acknowledge it as an issue due to the stigma attached to having a mental illness. In addition, many young people may not have had a formal diagnosis because of the difficulties they face when attempting to navigate on their own the complicated pathways to assistance for mental health.

Long-term unemployment compared to short-term unemployment

Out of the 506 responses to the survey from young people aged between 15 and 29 years, 158 were from respondents who indicated that they were looking for work for less than six months. These young people

are defined by the ABS as being in short-term unemployment. The survey responses regarding barriers to employment of these 158 young people were compared to the responses of the 285 young people in long-term unemployment. The findings are displayed in Figure 5.

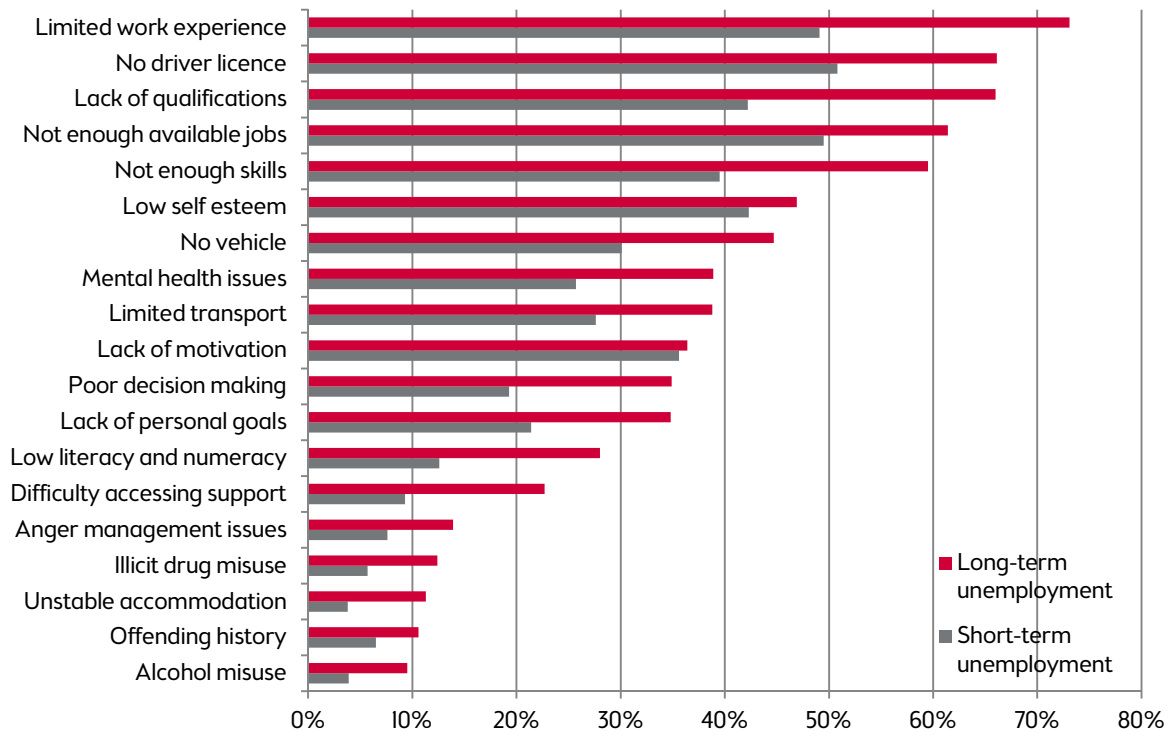


Figure 5. Perceived barriers to employment by young people in long-term unemployment compared to young people in short-term unemployment.

As expected, young people in long-term unemployment experience stronger and more complex barriers to employment than young people in short-term unemployment. On average, young people in long-term unemployment rated six issues as being barriers to employment, whereas young people in short-term unemployment rated only three issues as being barriers to employment. Furthermore, higher proportions of young people in long-term unemployment, in comparison to young people in short-term unemployment, rated each issue as a barrier to employment. The differences in experiences of barriers by young people in long-term unemployment compared to young people in short-term unemployment were particularly prevalent regarding:

- Vocational issues such as limited work experience (73.1% versus 49.1%) and low work skills (59.5% versus 39.5%),
- Educational issues such as low levels of qualifications (66.0% versus 42.2%) and poor literacy and numeracy skills (28.0% versus 12.6%),
- Practical issues such as a lack of a driver licence (66.1% versus 50.8%) and limited access to social and institutional support (22.7% versus 9.3%),
- Cognitive-motivational issues such as poor decision-making (34.9% versus 19.3%) and lack of personal goals (34.8% versus 21.4%), and
- Psycho-social issues such as mental ill health (38.9% versus 25.7%) and unstable accommodation (11.3% versus 3.8%).

Female and male young people

Analysis of ABS data shows that males compared to females have experienced higher rates of long-term youth unemployment since the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 where the long-term unemployment rates for both males and females stood at 0.9%. The male long-term youth unemployment rate continued to increase to its highest point of 2.9% in 2014-2015 while the female rate peaked at 2.0% in this same financial year. The largest difference between the female and male long-term unemployment rates occurred in 2015-16 when the female long-term youth unemployment rate (1.6%) was 1% lower male long-term youth unemployment rate (2.6%). This difference in these rates over a ten year period is shown in Figure 6.

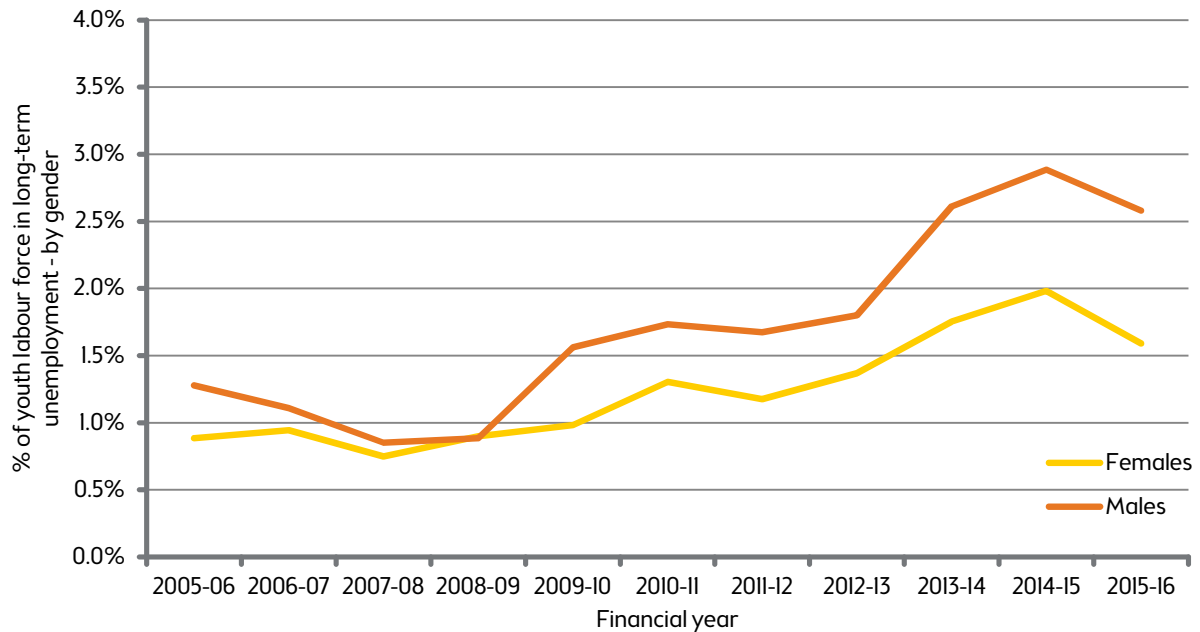


Figure 6. Comparison of trends in long-term youth unemployment rates among males and females.

Focus groups with people who work with young people in long-term unemployment have provided some insight into the differences in these rates between male and female young people. Two key themes from the focus groups were that the lower long-term youth unemployment rates were due to young female parents who were not actively looking for work or available to work and these young females relied on their partners to provide an income for their families. These themes are consistent with the findings of Kelly et al.'s (2002) study looking at the characteristics of young people in long-term unemployment in Ireland.

The other themes from the focus groups looked at the lack of emotional maturity and future outlook and increased risk-taking behaviours among males when compared to females. This is consistent with research looking at the differences in males and females when it comes to decision-making and risk (Cazell, Li, Lin, Patel, & Liu, 2012). When presented with an opportunity to gain skills through training and employment programs, female participants have been observed early on by staff to have developed an outlook for the future which influenced their engagement in the program, job-seeking behaviours, and work ethic once in the open labour market. Male participants on the other hand were observed to be more likely to lack the maturity to engage with the program and focused more on the present rather than the future. In addition, this lack of maturity meant that they were more likely to have poor anger management skills and participate in risk-taking behaviour such as illicit drug use and physical altercations. These themes of males being more likely than females to participate in risk-taking behaviours are consistent with research investigating gender differences regarding decision-making and risk-taking behaviours (Charness & Gnezy, 2013). In addition, these themes are consistent with the survey findings comparing males and females young people in long-term unemployment.

In **yourtown's** survey of young people in long-term unemployment, 144 were female ($M= 20.5$ years) and 135 were male ($M= 21.7$ years). In terms of work history, 32.6% of male respondents had never worked while 41.0% of female participants had never worked. One-in-five (20.0%) male participants and 13.9% of female respondents grew up in a home where the main income earner did not work. In addition, 6.7% of males and 3.5% of females had been in juvenile or adult detention. Survey participants were asked to indicate from a list of issues which ones were barriers to them gaining employment. The perceived barriers of the female and male survey respondents in long-term youth unemployment are shown in Figure 7.

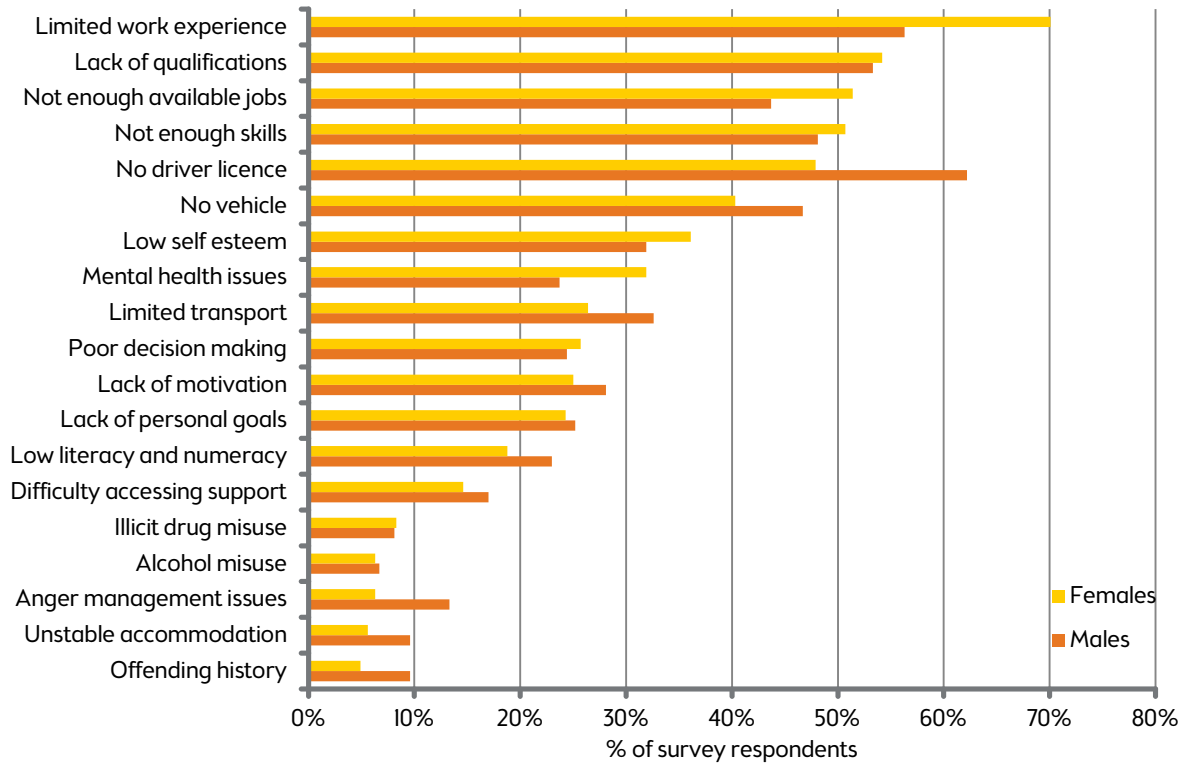


Figure 7. Comparison of perceived barriers to employment by males and females.

Seven-in-ten female respondents rated limited work experience as a barrier to employment, making it the highest rated barrier among females in long-term unemployment. In comparison, 56.3% of male respondents rated limited work experience as a barrier, making it the second most common barrier to employment.

Lack of qualifications (54.2%), not enough available jobs in their industry (51.4%), not enough skills (50.7%), and no driver licence were in the top five rated barriers for female young people in long-term unemployment. Female respondents were more likely than males to rate lack of available jobs (51.4% versus 43.7%), low self esteem (36.1% versus 31.9%) and mental health issues (31.9% versus 23.7%) as barriers to employment. Data from the focus groups indicated that females are more emotionally mature than males and are therefore more likely to be aware of issues such as low self esteem and mental health and the impact of these issues. This findings is consistent with research that shows female are more likely than males to be self-aware and display help-seeking behaviours when it comes to mental health and its associated issues (Clement, et al., 2015; Henderson, Evans-Lacko, & Thornicroft, 2013).

For males in long-term unemployment, the most common barrier to employment was a lack of a driver licence, with 62.2% of male respondents indicating that it was a concern for them. In comparison, only 47.9% of female respondents rated this issue as a barrier to employment for them. This could be linked to the types of industries that male young people are more likely to be employed. Analysis of ABS labour force and industry data (2016) show that in the areas that **yourtown** deliver employment services, males

are more likely to be employed in the construction, and transport, postal and warehousing industries, where employers are looking for workers with driver licences. Females on the other hand are more likely to be employed in the industries of health care and social assistance, retail trade, and education and training.

Limited work experience (56.3%), lack of qualification (53.3%), not enough skills (48.1%), and no vehicle (46.7%) comprise the rest of the top five rated barriers for male young people in long-term unemployment. The low work skills and limited work history as barriers to employment for males is consistent with Dockery and Webster's (2002) Australian study showing that young males in long-term unemployment were the most deprived group in the labour force.

Male respondents were more likely than females to rate no driver licence (62.2% versus 47.9%), no vehicle (46.7% versus 40.3%), limited transport (32.6% versus 26.4%), low literacy and numeracy (23.0% versus 18.8%), anger management issues (13.3% versus 6.3%), unstable accommodation (9.6% versus 5.6%), and offending history (9.6% versus 4.5%) as barriers to employment. The lack of maturity and future outlook as well as the risk-taking behaviours among males that were raised in the focus groups could explain the higher ratings of anger management and offending history by male respondents. This link between risk-taking behaviour and anger management has been established in research (Rice, Fallon, Aucote, & Moller-Leimkuhler, 2013).

Indigenous young people

In **yourtown's** survey of young people in long-term unemployment, 34 respondents identified as Indigenous. Of these Indigenous respondents, 61.8% were female and 38.2% were male. Their ages ranged from 15 to 25 years ($M = 19.3$).

In terms of location, 58.8% were in metropolitan cities, 23.5% in regional areas, and 17.6% in remote areas. Two-in-five (38.2%) were from Queensland, 29.4% from New South Wales, 17.6% from Western Australia, 5.9% from South Australia, 5.9% from Tasmania, and 2.9% from the Northern Territory.

Half of the participants had been in unemployment for between one year and two years while the other half were in very long-term unemployment of more than two years. Intergenerational unemployment was experienced by 38.2% of respondents who grew up in a household where the main income earner did not work.

In relation to formal schooling, 14.7% had completed Year 12, 14.7% Year 11, 20.6% Year 10, and 32.4% left school prior to completion of Year 10. Two-thirds (64.7%) indicated that they did not have any accredited qualifications. Certificate I was the highest qualification for 2.9% of Indigenous survey respondents, Certificate II for 11.8%, and Certificate III for 17.6%.

Data on housing showed that 51.9% were living in public housing and 35.3% in community housing. In terms of offending, 25.0% had been in juvenile or adult detention.

Survey participants were asked to indicate from a list of issues which ones were barriers to them gaining employment. The perceived barriers of Indigenous survey respondents in long-term youth unemployment are shown in Figure 8.

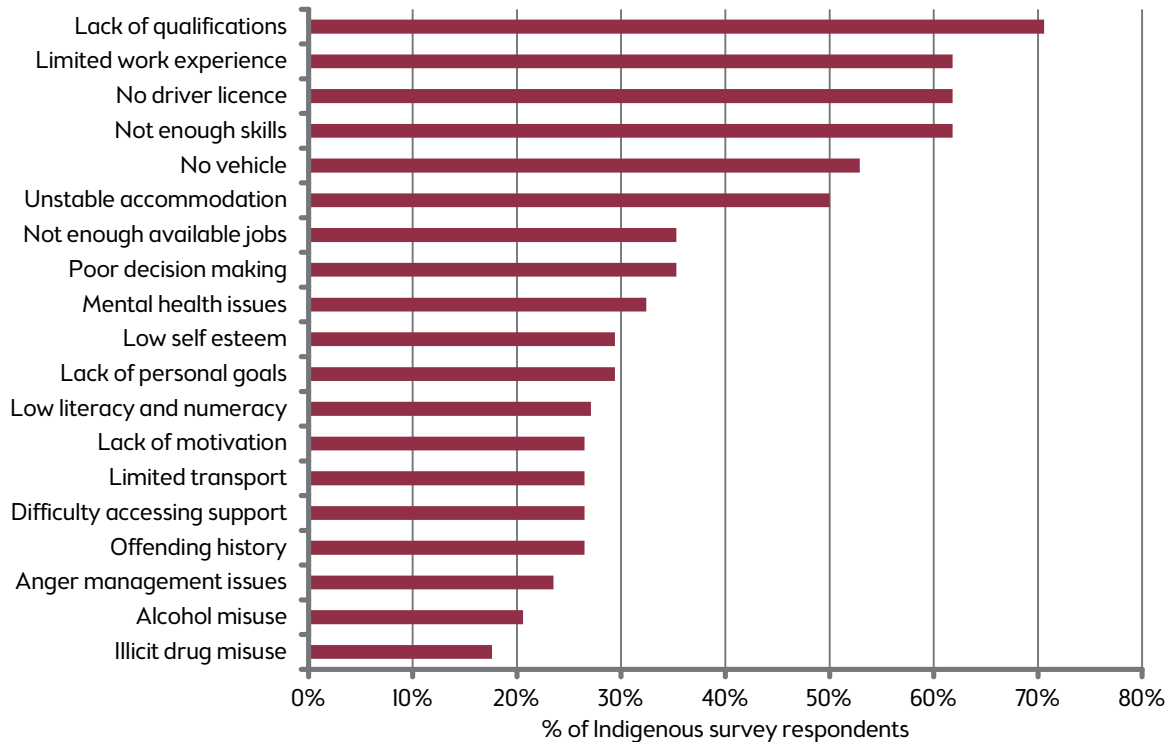


Figure 8. Perceived barriers to employment by Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment.

Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment appear to experience stronger and more complex barriers to employment. On average, Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment rated nine issues as being barriers to employment, whereas the overall group of young people in long-term unemployment rated six issues as being barriers to employment. While there is a similar trend to all survey respondents regarding vocational, educational, and practical issues being seen as more prevalent barriers to employment than the other types of issues, Indigenous survey respondents were proportionally more likely in comparison to the overall long-term youth unemployment group to rate the cognitive-motivational, psycho-social, and anti-social issues as barriers to employment. Offending history was raised in the focus groups as a barrier to employment. In addition, health and mental health and their link to hidden suicidal ideation were raised as specific concerns in the focus groups.

The survey data indicated that Indigenous young people had higher rates of not possessing accredited qualifications. The respondents in long-term unemployment have indicated that this is their greatest barrier to gaining employment. Vocational issues of limited work experience (61.8%) and low work skills (61.8%) and transport issues such as not possessing a driver licence (61.8%) and no access to a vehicle (52.9%) made up the rest of the top five barriers to employment as rated by Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment. The lack of relevant qualifications and driver licence aligns with themes from the focus groups with Indigenous staff about barriers to employment.

Unstable accommodation was seen as a key barrier to employment for Indigenous young people (50.0%) in long-term unemployment. This is higher when compared to all respondents (11.3%) in long-term unemployment. One of the themes to come out of the focus groups with Indigenous staff was that 'couch-surfing', where young people move from home to home of people in their social network, is a major issue for Indigenous young people. This type of secondary homelessness derived from uncertainty and a lack of stability and safety will be more of a focus for Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment than finding employment.

The severity and ongoing nature of these issues play a significant role in Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment not being able focus on employment. Altogether these findings are tied into one of the focus group themes that Indigenous young people are not aware of the support that is available specifically to them to address their barriers.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people

In **yourtown's** survey of young people in long-term unemployment, 47 respondents identified as being from a CALD background. Of these CALD respondents, 61.7% were female, 36.2% were male, and 2.1% identified as intersex, trans or diverse. Their ages ranged from 16 to 29 years ($M = 21.4$).

In terms of location, 87.2% were in metropolitan cities, 10.6% in regional areas, and 2.1% in remote areas. Two-in-five (42.6%) were from Queensland, 38.3% from New South Wales, 14.9% from South Australia, 2.1% from Victoria, and 2.1% from Western Australia.

More than half (55.3%) were in very long-term unemployment (more than two years in ongoing unemployment) while 44.7% were in unemployment for between one and two years. Half (50%) of the respondents said that they had never had a job. Intergenerational unemployment was experienced by only 13.3% of respondents who grew up in a household where the main income earner did not work.

CALD survey respondents had higher levels of formal schooling completion where 40.4% had completed Year 12. In addition, 27.7% Year 11, 25.5% Year 10, and 6.4% left school prior to completion of Year 10. Two-in-five (40.9%) indicated that they did not have any accredited qualifications. Certificate II was the highest qualification for 25.0% and Certificate III for 20.5%.

In terms of offending, 4.9% had been in juvenile or adult detention. This rate is lower compared to other cohorts of survey respondents except for females in long-term unemployment.

Survey participants were asked to indicate from a list of issues which ones were barriers to them gaining employment. The perceived barriers of CALD survey respondents in long-term youth unemployment are shown in Figure 9.

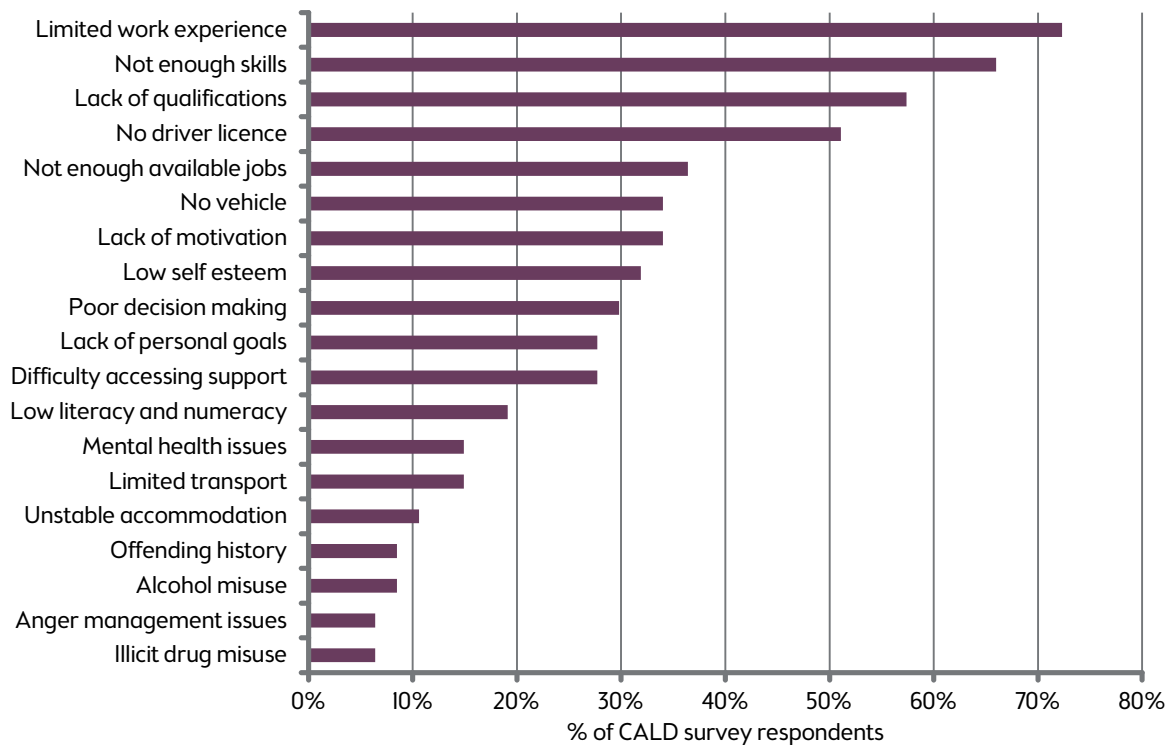


Figure 9. Perceived barriers to employment by Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people in long-term unemployment.

The top five barriers rated by CALD young people in long-term unemployment were limited work history (72.3%), not enough skills (66.0%), lack of qualifications (57.4%), no driver licence (51.1%), and not enough available jobs (36.4%). The issues that CALD young people in long-term unemployment, in comparison to other cohorts, rated more highly as barriers were lack of motivation (34.0%) and difficulty accessing social and institutional support (27.7%). Analysis of the qualitative responses from CALD young people showed that these two barriers were linked because some respondents due to their residency status in Australia were eligible only for limited support from employment services such as jobactive. This difficulty in accessing support was linked to a sense of hopelessness that then influenced the low levels of motivation from respondents. This finding has consistently been shown in the literature to be key barriers to migrants seeking help in Australia (Kearney, 2015; Sawrikar & Katz, 2008).

Young people in metropolitan cities and regional and remote areas

In **yourtown's** survey of young people in long-term unemployment, 172 respondents were from metropolitan cities, 91 from regional areas, and 12 from remote areas. Of the respondents from metropolitan cities, 53.2% were female, 45.0% were male, 1.2% identified as intersex, trans or gender diverse, and 0.6% were unknown. For regional and remote areas, a higher proportion of respondents were male (55.3%), 43.7% were female, and 1.0% identified as intersex, trans or gender diverse.

The ages of both cohorts ranged from 15 to 29 years. The average of respondents in metropolitan cities was 21.0 years while the average age of respondents in regional and remote areas was 21.1 years.

The majority of respondents from metropolitan cities were from Queensland (54.1%) and New South Wales (30.8%). The rest were from Victoria (4.7%). The majority of respondents from regional areas were from Tasmania (42.7%), South Australia (22.3%), and Queensland (16.5%). The rest of the responses from regional and remote areas were from Western Australia (7.8%), New South Wales (4.9%), Victoria (4.9%), and the Northern Territory (1.0%).

Intergenerational unemployment was more prevalent among young people in regional and remote areas, where 23.8% of respondents grew up in a household where the main income earner did not work. In comparison, only 14.3% of respondents in metropolitan cities grew up in a home where the main income earner did not work.

Respondents in regional and remote areas were more likely to be without qualifications. Specifically, 52.9% of respondents in regional and remote areas had no qualifications in comparison to 35.2% of respondents in metropolitan cities. Respondents in metropolitan cities in comparison to those in regional and remote areas were more likely to have a Certificate II (24.2% versus 19.6%) or Certificate III (24.2% versus 17.6%) accredited qualification.

In terms of offending, 7.3% of respondents in regional and remote areas had been in juvenile or adult detention. Proportionally this was higher than the 5.9% of respondents in metropolitan cities.

Survey participants were asked to indicate from a list of issues which ones were barriers to them gaining employment. The comparison of perceived barriers by survey respondents in metropolitan cities and regional and remote areas is shown in Figure 10.

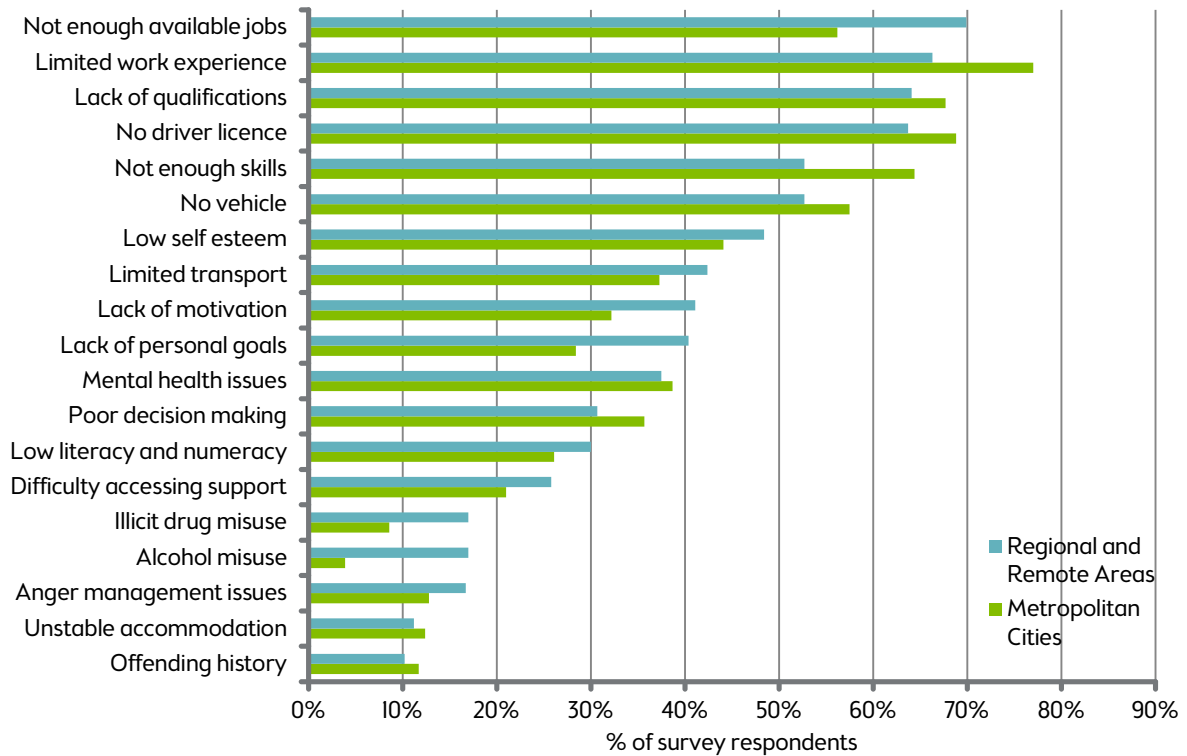


Figure 10. Comparison of perceived barriers to employment by young people in metropolitan cities and young people in regional and remote areas.

The top five barriers to employment for young people in long-term unemployment living in regional and remote areas was not enough available jobs (69.9%), limited work experience (66.3%), lack of qualifications (64.1%), no driver licence (63.7%), and low work skills (52.7%). For young people in long-term unemployment living in metropolitan cities, their top five barriers were limited work experience (77.0%), no driver licence (68.8%), lack of qualifications (67.7%), low work skills (64.4%), and no vehicle (57.5%). Marked proportional differences were seen between respondents in metropolitan cities and those in regional and remote areas when it came to rating limited work experience (77.0% versus 66.3%), low work skills (64.4% versus 52.7%), and no vehicle (57.5% versus 52.7%) as barriers.

The top issue that was rated by survey respondents in regional and remote areas as a key barrier to employment was the lack of jobs. Ratings from respondents in metropolitan cities showed that lack of available jobs (56.2%) was the sixth most prevalent barrier to employment. This is indicative of the slower labour markets in regional and remote areas in comparison to metropolitan cities. As previously stated, the lack of jobs in regional and remote areas means that the definition of long-term youth unemployment does not measure the true nature of unemployment in these areas. While young people may be available for work, they may not consistently be looking for work when there is no jobs growth and they do not have a driver licence to get to those areas where there may be new jobs. The lack of jobs and opportunities in regional and remote areas may be linked to low self esteem (48.4% versus 44.1%), low motivation (41.0% versus 30.2%), and lack of personal goals (40.4% versus 28.4%) being rated more highly as barriers in these areas compared to metropolitan areas. Respondents in regional and remote areas in comparison to those in metropolitan cities were also more likely to rate illicit drug misuse (17.0% versus 8.6%), alcohol misuse (17.0% versus 3.9%), and anger management (16.7% versus 12.8%) as barriers to employment. This is consistent with research showing higher rates of substance misuse in regional and remote areas (Miller, Coomber, Staiger, Sinkiewicz, & Toumbourou, 2010). Furthermore, structural disadvantage such as lack of jobs and difficulty accessing institutional support have been linked to mental health issues and increased rates of risk-taking behaviours such as substance misuse and anger management issues (Quine, Bernard, Booth, Kang, Usherwood, Alperstein, & Bennett, 2003).

Strategies to address long-term youth unemployment

A number of common themes arose from the open-ended questions in the survey of young people and the focus groups and interviews of service delivery staff and management regarding strategies that address the issues of long-term youth unemployment. Young people in long-term unemployment and staff were particularly focused on the areas of training, work experience, and personalised support. Staff members also approached the issue from a broader perspective where interventions will need to take into account other factors such as employers, communities, local labour markets, and Government policies.

Job search

The responses from young people in long-term unemployment in relation to job search as an effective method of finding work was mixed. On one hand, some young people felt they had success with 'cold canvassing' more than 'cold calling' or searching for jobs online because they could talk face-to-face with employers and people who are working.

"All the jobs but one I've had have come from interactions with employers directly in person." Male job seeker, 21 years old

"Looking for jobs online has not been as useful as opposed to physically handing in resumes to viable options." Female job seeker, 19 years old

Others were disheartened by the process of searching and applying for jobs because they did not hear back from employers about whether or not they were successful in their application.

"I have applied for jobs, online, handed in resumes and I hear nothing back." Female job seeker, 20 years old

"I have not found any strategies to be of help to me. I have done cold canvassing, online emailing updated and changed resume repeatedly attended appointments, workshops and even attended skills workshops and completed two Cert II qualifications. Nothing works." Female job seeker, 24 years old

While job search may be viewed as an essential component of finding work, as a standalone technique it has been found to be more successful with people in short-term unemployment than with those in long-term unemployment (Campbell, 2010). This is because people in short-term unemployment do not require more interventions and added support like people in long-term unemployment to assist with their complex issues (Dockery & Webster, 2002; Soukup, 2011).

Training

Training is an important role for young people in long-term unemployment to acquire skills and gain accredited qualifications (Dolado, Felgueroso, & Jensen, 2003). Young job seekers mentioned that they needed training qualifications that would help them on a pathway to a job. However, some respondents mentioned that they were being offered places in courses that were not aligned with their interests or aptitudes. In many cases, young people stated they were being pressured by jobactive staff to go into courses because places were available rather than because the course would be a beneficial step in gaining employment. A common theme was that participation in these courses was not useful for young people gaining employment because they had not found employment returned to jobactive as job seekers.

"Being pressured into participating in courses has not been useful as these courses have not helped me secure employment after the course." Female job seeker, 20 years old

Employment experience and programs

Lack of work experience was a key theme in the survey's quantitative and qualitative responses from young people as a barrier to employment. While young people were looking for opportunities to gain

relevant experience, they noted that Work for the Dole was more about compliance so that they could get their benefits rather than gaining key skills for work. The general theme from young people was they were being put to the side during this time where they did not have to receive active support from employment services.

"Work for the Dole - being put in an activity that will not give me experience in the fields of work I am looking for and only being made to do it to receive my payment." Male job seeker, 24 years old

Staff members involved in delivering Work for the Dole and other employment programs stated that young people in long-term unemployment were more likely to be in the Work for the Dole initiative than other work preparation programs. However, the Work for the Dole model does not allow for the assistance and support required to address the needs of this cohort that stem beyond lack of work experience, that is, the cognitive-motivational, psycho-social and anti-social issues.

"It has not been useful to have to be sent out to work voluntarily by the government in order to be paid. This is not right or tailored to each individual circumstance." Female job seeker, 26 years old

"Work for the Dole in Non For Profit places. There is no potential for a job nor does it give a reasonable skill set." Female job seeker, 28 years old

Another common theme from young people about Work for the Dole was the effect of the scheme on their lives and the way they felt about themselves.

"No reliable transportation for everyone, hours given and so many days to go per week. Extra \$20 a fortnight doesn't cover transport costs." Female job seekers, 21 years old

"Work for dole program - being forced into a role lessens enthusiasm and is detrimental to enthusiasm, confidence, and self-esteem." Male job seeker, 27 years old.

"Work for the Dole - the terminology is disheartening and makes you not care anymore." Female job seeker, 21 years old

Research on work-for-benefit strategies in the United Kingdom has shown that these schemes do not improve the employment outcomes for unemployed people (Davidson, 2014). Furthermore, specific research on Work for the Dole has shown that participants did not have better employment outcomes than those who do not take part in the scheme (Borland & Tseng, 2003). The limited periods of employment and lack of specific focus on skills means that these programs do not facilitate skill development or employability.

Staff commented that other employment program models such as social enterprises have added support from the Youth Trainer and Youth Worker that can assist young people in long-term unemployment with their multifaceted barriers. The true model of social enterprises involves real-life work environments where young people can gain paid work experience to address their vocational barriers and have access to added Youth Work support to address their non-vocational barriers (Bartlett, Dalgleish, & Mafi, 2012; Spear & Bidet, 2005; Thompson & Doherty, 2006). The various types of vocational and non-vocational barriers raised by young people in the survey could be addressed in a social enterprise setting.

*"I remember doing work experience through **yourtown** but with lower wages (\$16) that worked and its real work job so I was learning and gaining experience in something I could do later." Male job seeker, 25 years old*

Active support

The complex nature of the barriers experienced by young people in long-term unemployment means that this cohort requires specific responses to their needs. Young people spoke about getting more specific help with their vocational issues rather than the generalised approach they were encountering in employment

services. At one end of the spectrum, young people in long-term unemployment commented that they were put through general workshops and told to search for jobs and fix their resumes but they wanted to be shown how to develop a resume and answer job selection criteria. The foundation for these comments was that the service the young people receive is underpinned by theory but they need the added step of being shown how to apply the theory. The feedback in staff focus groups provides support for young people who want more assistance with their resumes and job applications.

"I'm more a hands on person so if someone explains the instructions and doesn't show me I will not understand." Male job seeker, 20 years old

"Telling me how to do something but not showing me how to do it is not helpful." Male job seeker, 21 years old

"I get stuck when I am they are giving me information and expecting me to learn from it without assistance." Male job seeker, 23 years old

At the other end of the spectrum, young people commented that they were already actively looking for work and knew how to develop a resume so they wanted more assistance to help them stand out from other job seekers when applying for jobs.

"Services which offer to help with resume writing, life skills etc are aimed at people much less experienced/qualified than me. I can dress myself and write a killer cover letter, but that doesn't magically make there be more jobs available. There needs to be higher level services targeted to unemployed professionals and graduates. There are many of us." Female job seeker, 28 years old

The other key theme from young people was that the various aspects of jobactive were more about compliance than about active assistance from staff to help young people find jobs. This applied to the workshops and job search elements of jobactive, as well as the overall perceived lack of support from staff. In addition, young people were looking for more contact from their jobactive provider regarding job opportunities that were arising.

"Classes are not helpful at all and are continually dull and feel like a punishment. Treat clients as clients, not another jobseeker who has to be pushed on to the next level because of a computer system." Female job seeker, 25 years old

"Applying for jobs online never worked for me, rarely ever got a call from any jobs I applied for online." Male job seeker, 22 years old

"I have honestly received no assistance from any of the 5+ agencies I have been traded through over 2+ years in the system despite being completely capable and highly employable person apart from lack of experience, but I get shown job ads sometimes so there's that." Female job seeker, 24 years old

The perception of young people that jobactive has a heavy compliance focus was also linked to receiving pressure rather than encouragement from staff to find jobs. This had negative effects on some young people in long-term unemployment regarding their anxiety.

"Being pushed and forced makes my anxiety a lot lot lot worse. I become physically sick. Also constantly they're changing my job provider person it's not helpful it seems like every week there changing." Female job seeker, 23 years old

"jobactive providers do nothing except stress me out with constant arbitrary requirements which keep me away from my job search. Work for the dole makes me very stressed and tired which stops me sending out as many job applications and disrupts my independent attempts to learn new skills which might make me more employable. Female job seeker, 28 years old

Young people who held positive views about jobactive discussed working collaboratively with staff to find employment.

"Been helped out a lot by getting stuff done at appointments, applying for jobs with my consultant, going through different scenarios if I happened to get an interview." Female job seeker, 21 years old

"Explaining all my options to me and listening to what I'm looking for, helps to find the right fit for my life specifically." Female job seeker, 18 years old

Personalised support

Young people also spoke about their specific issues that required more long-term assistance from staff. These issues included homelessness, drug misuse, social anxiety, driver licences, low self-esteem, and anger management. The theme of working with staff continued in relation to receiving assistance from a Youth Worker role that would be able to provide individualised support.

"They should comprehensively interview and get to know you on a real level and investigation into understanding what the causes are and to provide the pathway to resolve the issues stopping persons from working or looking for work." Male job seeker, 21 years old

"Youth worker support. They help identify goals and set plans to achieve them. It also tailors the job hunting experience to suit individual needs." Male job seeker, 22 years old

Staff members agreed that these types of multifaceted barriers require personalised and intensive assistance from suitably qualified workers. They also mentioned that there is no scope for this type of intensive assistance in the jobactive and Work for the Dole service delivery models due to time constraints and cost. Ideally, this support would comprise Youth Work support in the form of case management, group workshops, and post-placement support. This post-placement support would take the form of regular face-to-face contact to ensure that the young person is progressing well in employment and determine other forms of support that may still be needed. The flow-on effects for this would be higher employability and sustainable employment outcomes.

Local inductions to employers, communities, and local labour market needs

The discourse on youth unemployment has increased in focus on meeting employer needs. It is recognised that community and local labour market factors need to also be taken into account when developing job and employability skills of young people (Campbell, 2010). However, the discussions on these needs have not been filtered to young people in terms that they understand. Young people commented that they wanted to hear about what employers were looking for in their recruitment process.

"Explain what employers are looking for." Male job seeker, 21 years old

"I would like the ability to meet with Managers/Store Owners to see what makes them a successful person." Male job seeker, 20 years old

The opportunities to employers to communicate with young job seekers are sparse, where job applicants who are unsuccessful in the recruitment process are rarely contacted by employers. Staff also commented that finding opportunities for young people in long-term unemployment to hear from employer would assist them with their focus and future outlook. Another key theme from staff was that people assisting young people in long-term unemployment need to have knowledge of the local community and labour market needs. This knowledge should be part of the tailored assistance for young people to ensure that any job pathways are relevant and sustainable. Another suggestion from the staff focus groups and interviews was that informal group conversations with employers would be a useful way of engaging young people as well as imparting knowledge about the needs of employers operating within the local labour market. In addition, staff suggested bringing in previous program clients who are now working for

the informal group conversations. Young people may relate to these speakers and will be able to learn from their knowledge and experiences in an informal setting.

Active policies

While a large focus of this paper is from a demand perspective, it is also important for active policies to address the supply side of long-term youth unemployment (Carney, 2006; Marston & McDonald, 2008). The current employment policy landscape is starting to recognise that strategies need to look beyond the broader issue of youth unemployment and focus specifically on addressing long-term youth unemployment through schemes such as the Empowering YOUTH Initiatives. However, the policy approach does not take into account the intensive and individualised support that is required to adequately assist young people in long-term unemployment on a wide scale if these strategies are to reach the more than 50,000 young people across Australia in long-term unemployment.

Indigenous-specific strategies

The focus groups with Indigenous staff yielded similar themes to the strategies that have been detailed so far, specifically, in relation to the themes revolving around individualised interventions, training, employment programs, and employer, community, and labour market needs. However, the specific needs of Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment means there are specific strategies that can be looked at to assist this group.

Individualised interventions were a key theme of the focus groups with Indigenous staff. Delving further into the main points, post-placement support was seen essential in ensuring that young people would have the best chance of achieving sustainable employment outcomes. This post-placement support would need to occur for at least 26 weeks. In addition, the support would be face-to-face and occur as workplace visits. This would then allow support to be provided not only for the young person but also the employer who could benefit from learning how to best understand and support their employee. Ideally, post-placement support would be conducted by an Indigenous Mentor who not only can relate to the young person on a cultural level but also have the right balance of addressing the non-vocational needs of a young person as well as having an employment-focus to understand the vocational needs of the young person, the local labour market and the needs of the employer. In addition, the caseload would have to be smaller to be able to deliver intensive support. This is consistent with research conducted by Hawke (2015) on a **yourtown** Indigenous Mentoring Pilot. A key component of providing support to Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment is that suitable people are employed and retained as staff members to engage young people.

Due to the higher rates of offending among Indigenous young people and its potential link to long-term unemployment, stronger working links could be developed with courts (e.g. Murri Court, Koori Court) specifically for sentencing Indigenous offenders who have plead guilty to an offence which is able to be heard by a Magistrate. These settings can be less intimidating than the Magistrates Court with the assistance of Indigenous Elders who will facilitate the healing and learning process.

Because of the complex nature of barriers experienced by Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment, a key theme in the focus groups was that early interventions in schools would be appropriate if a holistic approach is used. Another key theme was that engagement among the community with support services could be higher. This could be linked to a lack of knowledge of the available services or how to access the services.

Concluding remarks

In this Advocacy Paper, the key elements to addressing the issue of long-term youth unemployment have been identified through research. The process was grounded in a critical review of relevant literature from Australia and overseas with a specific focus on young people in long-term unemployment and formed

yourtown's Discussion Paper on this topic. The findings of that paper informed this research process with young people in long-term unemployment and service delivery and management staff with expertise in working with this cohort. The model of response and key elements are presented in Figure II.

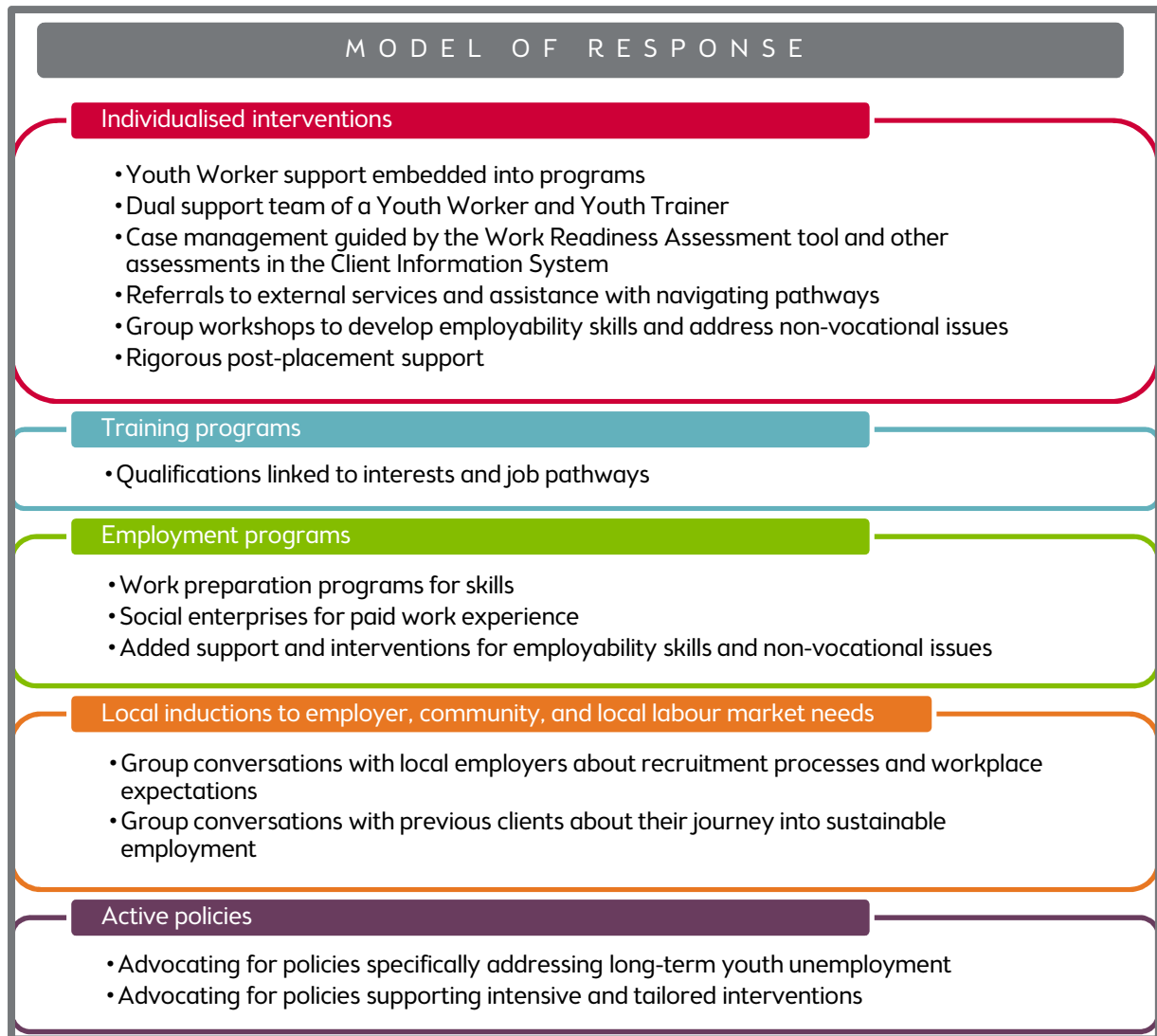


Figure II. Model of response and key elements for addressing long-term youth unemployment.

The main theme is that tailored interventions are required for young people in long-term unemployment. Driven by this overarching theme, there are also a number of key specific elements to assisting young people in long-term unemployment. These key elements are as follows:

- **Individualised Interventions** that support the needs and address the specific barriers of individuals. Youth Worker support would be embedded into program and occur on a consistent basis. The support would consist of ongoing case management using the Client Information System to identify goals and develop strategies to address issues. This would be guided by the results of the Work Readiness Assessment tool and would also involve referrals to relevant external services. Group workshops would also be used to go through employability skills and non-vocational issues based on issues identified in intake and assessment. Face-to-face post-placement support would be conducted for six months to assist the achievement of sustainable outcomes.
- **Training Programs** for acquiring skills and gaining accredited qualifications. Referrals and participation in these courses should be based on interests and aptitudes of young people. In addition, potential pathways to jobs should be evident from these courses.

- **Employment Programs** for gaining vocational skills and work experience through experiential learning while receiving added support for non-vocational issues.

Referrals to these work preparation and social enterprise programs would be based on the needs and interests of the young person. While these programs can provide work experience and skills for young people, the key component is the added support for non-vocational issues associated with long-term unemployment.

- **Local Inductions to Employer, Community and Local Labour Market Needs** to determine the specific job and employability skills required by employers and for delivering approaches that recognise community and local labour market factors.

While it is commonly understood within the employment sector that the needs of employers should be taken into account when preparing young people for work, this information is not necessarily being passed onto young people. An engaging way for young people in long-term unemployment to learn about the needs of employers, communities and local labour markets is through informal group conversations with employers to discuss the key components of their recruitment process and criteria. In addition, these conversations could also be the format for young people to hear from former clients who are now employed.

- **Active Policies** that specifically address the needs of young people in long-term unemployment.

Employment policies have a limited focus on long-term youth unemployment. Not only should there be policies to address long-term unemployment specifically of young people, but also for the additional resources required for the tailored and intensive support required to address the complex and ongoing issues associated with long-term youth unemployment.

Recommendations

The barriers associated with long-term youth unemployment are multifaceted and ongoing and are experienced by individuals to varying extents. Therefore, tailored and individualised interventions and support are required across all areas of service delivery such as training, job interests, and when addressing vocational and non-vocational issues. To support the tailored approach to young people in long-term unemployment, Youth Work support should be embedded into programs with high prevalence of long-term youth unemployment. An important part of this support is ongoing collaborations between Youth Workers and Youth Trainers to provide the best interventions for young people. This Youth Work support should be intensive so that case management and group workshops can occur on a consistent basis where these types of sessions are specifically scheduled into the program rather than on an ad hoc basis. This may also include looking at caseload numbers to ensure that intensive support can be provided during programs as well as post placement.

In relation to programs for Indigenous young people in long-term unemployment, staff members will need to be able to provide that intensive support for non-vocational issues while having a good understanding of vocational issues and of the local labour market situation. This will enable staff to provide support for the young person in the workplace as well as the employer on how to understand and support the young person.

The key strategies revolve around intensive and tailored support and these elements form a model of response for specifically assisting young people in long-term unemployment. The research provides support for the various aspects of the model at a general level. The voices of young people have been used to detail specific elements and then put together an overall model of intervention. This model would need to be trialled and would require action research and evaluation to determine its effectiveness.

Recommendation: That the proposed intensive and tailored model of response to be implemented in programs assisting young people in long-term unemployment.

The current employment policy landscape has a strong focus on the broader topic of youth unemployment but limited focus on long-term youth unemployment. The focus on long-term youth unemployment is on innovation, however, effective strategies emphasise intensive support which may not be seen as an

innovative approach. The implications revolve around advocating for change using the voice of young people.

Recommendation: That policies are developed to allow for the proposed model of responses and its key elements of intensive and tailored interventions in programs assisting young people in long-term unemployment.

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