



Improving school transitions get Australian young people with disability into jobs

The current transition to employment support systems are largely failing Australian young people with disability and condemning these young people to a marginalised and dependant life with reduced opportunity for social and economic participation, according to a new report by Ticket to Work.

The *Transitions to Employment of Australian Young People with Disability and the Ticket to Work Initiative* report highlights that Australia compares poorly on the international stage when it comes to preparing our young people with disability to successfully transition into a life beyond school. Many of our young people, who could become active members of the Australian workforce, are dissuaded from doing so because of low employment expectations and limited or no exposure to employment experience or career development during the schooling years.

Australian young people with disability are more likely to drop out of school early, be excluded from the labour force, have fewer educational qualifications, experience poverty and be socially isolated; indicators of long term, and often life-long, disadvantage. 2012 Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that 7.8 per cent of all young Australians have a disability, almost two-thirds were *not* fully engaged in work or study, only 38 per cent had completed Year 12 or its equivalent and only half of all students with severe disability progress past Year 10 at school.

The report advocates for *all* Australian young people with disability to receive access to 'good transition' activities, activities generally provided as a matter of course to their non-disabled peers. The report asserts that all young people with disability should receive access to career development and workplace preparation, work experience, vocational education, Australian School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (ASbAT) and part-time work.

The report also evidences that the innovative Ticket to Work initiative is changing the Australian landscape of disability transition provision by building localised partnership networks comprised of representatives from the education, training, employment and youth sectors. These Local Networks, operating in metropolitan and regional areas, share a common goal to improve the outcomes and status of young people with disability in their community and work together to provide 'good transition' activities and opportunities to their young people.

The report drew upon a mix of Australian and international research as well as interviews conducted with over 100 Ticket to Work participants. Interviews highlighted that Ticket to Work does deliver results for young people with disability, employers, parents and schools. Some key research findings included:

- Nearly 80 per cent of young people believed that participation in Ticket to Work activities would assist them to complete their schooling and source employment post-school
- 100 per cent of employers attested to the business and workplace productivity benefits that employing a young person with disability can deliver and almost all advised they would continue to offer ongoing employment
- 100 per cent of parents believed that Ticket to Work was improving the likelihood of their child completing school and moving into paid employment post-school
- Schools believed that Ticket to Work was playing a role in changing school culture and that the partnership approach meant that schools could rely on others to provide wrap-around transition support to their students.

Overall, the report suggests that cultural and systemic changes, blended funding models, localised partnerships and provision of 'good transition' practices can significantly improve the post-school outcomes of Australian young with disability. The report also highlights that Ticket to Work is a model that can coordinate and galvanise local efforts, and provides an architecture for spotlighting strategies and practices that produce optimal employment and career achievement for young people with disability.

Dan Romanis, CEO of Marriott Support Services, said that "this report is an insightful and important document that illustrates ways our governments and communities can increase the numbers of Australian young people with disability entering into sustainable employment".

Report link - www.tickettowork.org.au/research/transitions-employment-australian-young-people-disability-ticket-work-initiative

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