**Young people with disability are not successfully transitioning from school into further training or employment; a factor that is an indicator of long term, and often life-long, disadvantage. In Australia, 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.**

Ticket to Work, which recently received funding from the Australian Government, aims to redress this situation by bringing local communities together to create opportunities for students with disability to move into a positive life beyond school.

Ticket to Work grew out of research that showed participation in work experience and employment during secondary school are among the most significant indicators of post-school success for young people with disability.  Research also shows that young people with disability who exit school with a job are more likely to maintain a positive career trajectory than those who do not.

Ticket to Work takes a partnership approach to improving the employment and education outcomes of young people with disability.  Ticket to Work brings together a range of local partners (including industry, schools, youth organisations, employment agencies and training providers) in local regions who work together to provide students with career development, workplace preparation, work experience and apprenticeships and traineeships.  These organisations bring their various skills and expertise together to collectively address youth disability employment issues in their local community.

Ticket to Work has already demonstrated significant success, with 80 per cent of students who took part in the pilot program in 2012 moving into sustainable employment. Ticket to Work has also shown that, with the support of local educators and organisations, parents and employers have greater capacity to assist and mentor young people into the workplace.

Michelle Wakeford, the National Ticket to Work Manager, said that, “the feedback from students, employers and parents has been very encouraging. Parents are feeling much more positive about the future of their son or daughter. Employers have been impressed with how much their young employee has developed in the workplace and the support they have received from Ticket to Work partners”.

By expanding Ticket to Work across Australia, more communities can now establish their own Local Ticket to Work Network and increase career development and employment opportunities for young people with disability. We would be keen to hear from communities interested in improving outcomes for young people with disability.   In addition to supporting local communities, Ticket to Work will spotlight research, strategies and practices that produce optimal employment and career achievement for young people with disability.

Louisa Ellum, Chief Executive Officer of the BGK LLEN and Ticket to Work member, said that “it is time we stop the soft discrimination of our young people with disability through low expectations and ignoring the aspiration.  Ticket to Work represents a great model for bringing together communities to ensure that these young people have every opportunity for a positive life beyond school”.

The National Ticket to Work Network is funded by the Australian Government and is managed by the Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network (BGK LLEN).

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