

# What do Australians need to get and keep a job?

## Perspectives and experiences

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# Overview

## Learning and work :

1. what was intended?
2. what has emerged?
3. challenges posed?

# 1. Intentions



- An 'education and economic productivity dynamic' (Shore and Searle, 2009)
- Education and training
- A system responsive to industry needs
- Late 1980s, education seen to be at fault for our economic woes and education was seen as key to revival
- Yield positive outcomes –recognition, funding, prospects



# Learning and employment prospects

## 2. What has emerged?

# Learning and work

14.8 million people between 15 and 64 years in the labour force:

- 20% enrolled in learning

Of that 20%:

- 27% at school
- 21% in a VET organisation
- 39% at university
- 13% other providers eg adult community education (ABS, 2011)



# The research

- Multiple disadvantage and location affect workforce participation
- Effects of low skill is more marked for men in terms of education and workforce participation
- Women– with no post school qualifications – have increased in numbers of those participating in workforce. But in feminised labour markets – retail, hospitality, community care.
- Women's participation in workforce lower than men's - 72% males vs 59% women in 2010. More women in part time work, less knowledge intensive jobs and the lower remuneration levels that accompany that type of work

# Experience and qualifications

- Skills mismatch/ underutilisation – 30% of migrants have university degree working as taxi drivers compared with native born counterparts.
- Relevant experience – novices find it hard to find jobs. Yet dominant proportion of VET students work part time or full time – they do have experience.
- Post VET – 2/3 of graduates from lower paid occupations do not move into a different occupation level after training or gain higher pay

# Young people in Australia

- 8-10 young people combined study and work while at school and post-school (Wyn et al., 2010), young women most likely
- More than 2/3 found it hard to find work or were doing 'unsuitable' work (Wyn et al., 2010)
- Those from lower socio-economic backgrounds least likely to find suitable work, and would do irregular and shift work (Wyn et al., 2010)
- ¼ of young people disengaged (not in full time employment or study) between 15 and 24 years (Anlezark, 2011)
- 10% of these are genuinely at risk for significant periods between 15-25 years (Anlezark, 2011) – low levels literacy, numeracy, low socio-economic and no school completion





### 3. Challenges for learning and work?

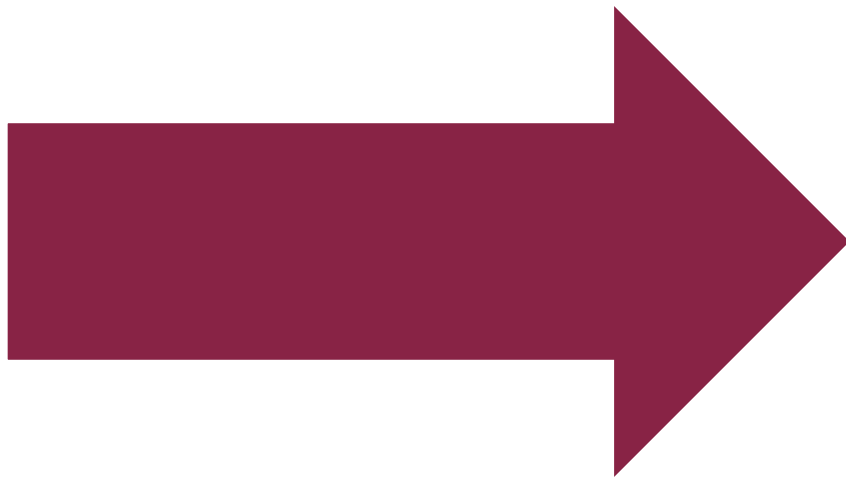
# Australia's performance rests on:

**high full-time participation** in education, although this is only going to be effective if the labour market is demanding educated labour

**multiple pathways:** apprenticeships and traineeships, and VET in Schools, VET, tertiary education, '**spread the risk**' and also mean that young people entering the full-time labour market are spread across a range of ages. (Karmel, 2012)



But there's more...



# Rethinking transitions

- Rhythm– ‘stop and starts’, ‘learning episodes’ (Billett et al., 2012) , not constant movement forward from one point to another (Wyn, Lantz and Harris, 2012).
- Multiple transitions – people move in and around employment, underemployment, UE
- More than school to work nexus/ transition
- ‘Transitional labour markets’ -sees working lives as more complex than transitions from youth to adulthood and from education/ school to work (Buchanan et al. 2009).

# Revisioning what counts toward employment

In addition to the traditional avenues by which learning has been thought to contribute to productivity, there is also evidence of benefits through **less obvious routes**. Studies, for example, have found **associations between learning and improved health, societal and environmental outcomes**. In addition, it is also likely that **investment in learning by one worker increases the productivity of his or her co-workers** (these benefits would be external to the individual but internal to firms and the economy as a whole) (AWPA, 2013, p. 5).




From learning *through* life to  
learning *for* life

# Realising employment prospects:

1. Employability perpetuates a fantasy that by attaining certain skills, employment is likely.
2. Understanding the compounded features of unemployment and disengagement as they influence prospects.
3. Recognising complexity of working lives and transitions within
4. A broader conception of what learning, wellbeing, work and livelihood





The decision of what to make the basics of education... depends not simply on the way the world is but on the way we think it should be, on the kind of life we believe to be worth living, and on the kind of society we believe to be worth living in.

(Jean Martin, 1982, p. 19)