



GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE ONTO WORK PATHWAYS

A young woman with dark hair, wearing clear safety goggles and a white lab coat, is focused on her work in a laboratory. She is holding a test tube or pipette. The background is slightly blurred, showing laboratory equipment and shelves. The entire image has a red overlay.

LOCAL LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT NETWORKS GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE ONTO WORK PATHWAYS

Young people are growing up in a world of rapidly changing work. Ensuring they are prepared for change is a challenge our schools and communities must meet for Victoria's future.

Our prosperity depends on our young people being ready for the new higher skilled economy.

Victoria has 31 Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) that build partnerships in local areas to help young people:

- **stay at, and achieve in, school**
- **understand the opportunities and pathways available, and**
- **transition to employment or further education.**

LLENs bring schools, industry and the community together to address:

- **the absence of careers support in schools**
- **the absence of accurate labour market information in communities**
- **the difficulty young people face gaining work experience, and**
- **the devaluing of vocational education pathways, that will be important in the future.**

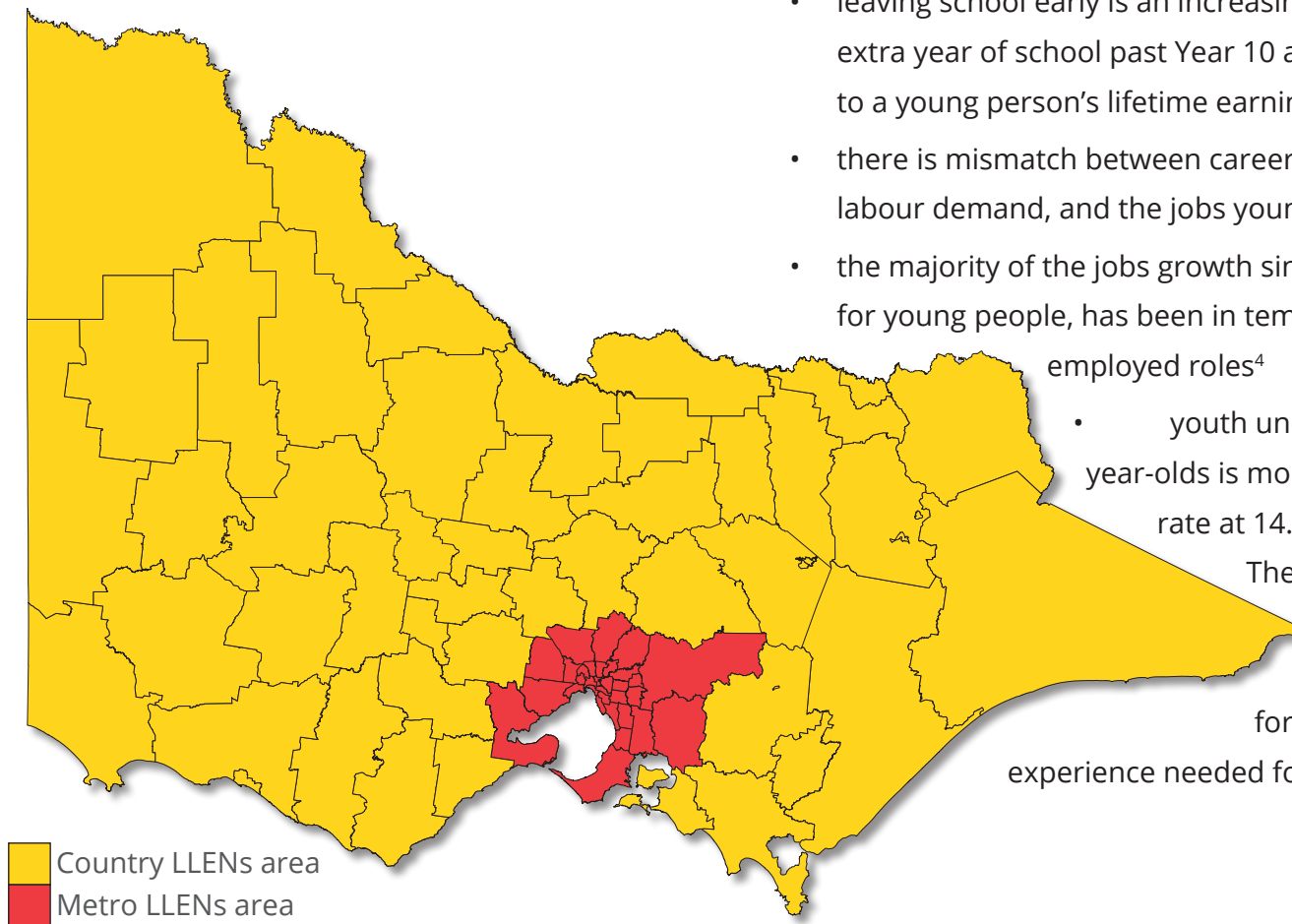
THE CHALLENGE

Work is changing. Local communities are grappling with economic change, and the new higher-skilled pathways are not well understood by young people or their parents, schools and communities.

The situation for young Victorians is concerning:

- one in five young Victorians (20 per cent) leaves school before completing Year 12 or equivalent¹
- leaving school early is an increasing disadvantage, with every extra year of school past Year 10 adding an extra 10 per cent to a young person's lifetime earnings²
- there is mismatch between career aspirations, projected labour demand, and the jobs young people eventually get³
- the majority of the jobs growth since the 1990s, particularly for young people, has been in temporary, part-time or self-employed roles⁴
- youth unemployment for 15 to 24 year-olds is more than double the adult rate at 14.0 per cent in Victoria⁵.

There is a risk that many young people will miss this crucial period for developing the base experience needed for a successful career⁶.



THE OPPORTUNITY

The costs of so many young people not participating in the economy, or being mismatched to jobs, are enormous. For example, the lifetime economic costs of early school leaving have been calculated at around \$12.6 billion, with additional social losses of around \$23.2 billion, per school leaving cohort⁷.

While universal investment to improve young people's skills at school is vital, it is only part of the solution. Australian and international research shows local economies are critical to young people's understanding of work, belief in what is possible and therefore attachment to school, and development of job search skills and work experience⁸.

LLENs connect schools and industry to design innovative local solutions that help young people explore what is available, helping to motivate them to stay in school, and connecting them to post school pathways⁹. We:

- provide expertise on the issues impacting on young people, the school system, and local economies
- bring the right school, industry and community partners to the table, to create local solutions
- mobilise local resources to prepare young people for the future.

¹ Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2017) Senior Secondary Certificate Statistical Information 2016.

² Leigh A & Ryan C (2008) Estimating returns to education using different natural experiment techniques. *Economics of Education Review*. 27: 149-1560. ANU: Canberra

³ National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2012) Student Outcomes: Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics. NCVER: Adelaide

⁴ OECD (2016) Investing in Youth; Australia. OECD: Paris

⁵ National Institute of Economic and Industry Research analysis for the LLEN (unpublished) 2018

⁶ Australian Financial Review (2017) 'Census 2016 reveals a generation of lost young workers'. October 23, 2017

⁷ Lamb S & Huo S (2017) Counting the Costs of Lost Opportunity in Australian Education. Mitchell Institute: Melbourne.

⁸ <https://theconversation.com/youth-unemployment-local-communities-essential-for-helping-young-people-find-work-56673>

⁹ Dandolo (2014) Evaluation of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. Dandolo Partners: Melbourne

THE SOLUTION

LLENs give Victoria a significant advantage as the economy changes by helping young people adapt and capitalise on the opportunities around them. They can assist the State Government to bridge the gap between policy and action at a local level to make a real difference across Victoria.

To continue to build our work we need:

1. A statewide strategy for youth unemployment in local areas

One size will not fit all when addressing negative youth labour market outcomes in hotspots across Victoria. Local solutions will be needed to ensure we can address skills shortages/gaps by ensuring students are work ready and have pathways into growing industries. There is a huge array of activities that can be conceived of, but a strategy is needed to ensure local action is effective, coordinated, and matched to regional economic investment aimed at creating jobs. LLENs could run roundtables across the State to help develop the strategy.

2. Delivery of more industry immersion activities in school

Education and training systems need to adapt, anticipate changes in labour markets, and address endemic skills

mismatches. Technical and vocational education is a solution, particularly for vulnerable young people, but it is under resourced, under-valued, and in need of an overhaul.

LLENs work in partnership with secondary schools, Trade Training Centres, Tech Schools, business and industry to deliver Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) in schools. It gives students the opportunity to integrate on-the-job experience with secondary study. We are also creating new partnerships with our fastest growing industries to increase their engagement with schools, develop new curriculum, create training pathways, and increase entry-level opportunities. We are therefore perfectly placed to deliver **Head Start Apprenticeships and Traineeships** in schools, and, the **Industry Immersion Program** for Year 7 to 10 students in schools with no access to a Tech School, providing students the opportunity to participate in industry immersion activities in growth industries.

3. A portal of the LLENs' work to scale our best practice to all schools and communities

LLENs have a range of inspiring local case studies of innovations that have worked. Much of this work could be scaled to other communities with investment in an evidence portal. Four examples are provided on the next page.

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

Improving local careers guidance in schools

Early careers advice makes a difference, but many Victorian students go through school without ever speaking to someone.

North Central LLEN formed a partnership between nine local rural schools, joining their **Managed Individual Pathways** funding together to hire two external careers specialist workers. The workers help every student from Year 10 develop a 'pathways plan' that explores a young person's interests and related careers, subjects and out-of-school activities.

Workers also talked to parents, run pathways information nights, and help with applications. The area had some of the biggest improvements in transition outcomes in Victoria between 2006 and 2011.

Providing accurate local information about the labour market

Labour market information does not exist across most schools and communities. When Geelong realised its post-school education and training programs were mismatched to its radically transforming economy, the Geelong Region LLEN built a partnership involving education and training, industry, job search agencies, local councils, community groups and government agencies.

The partnership built **Geelong Careers**, a one-stop online shop to help young people make informed career decisions by connecting them to labour market information, trending industries, pathways, careers resources and work experience or jobs.

Local work experience through the community

A lack of work experience disadvantages young people in labour markets. Central Ranges LLEN devised a **100 Ways in 100 Days** campaign to generate work experience for rural students in changing economies.

The campaign created a website and video inviting the community to offer work experience with offers ranging from come and try days, shadowing the local MP, resume writing, training in digital marketing methods, to full apprenticeships.

In 100 days the campaign created 158 opportunities for 513 young people. 7000 views of the video also helped expand the community's understanding of what young people need for the future world of work.

Building career aspiration in primary school students

A university study in primary school in an area with significant intergenerational disadvantage found Grade 6 students lacked career aspiration and held little hope of participating in work.

The Goldfields LLEN brokered a partnership between local councils, businesses and tertiary education providers to develop a **Passions and Pathways** curriculum that builds students' understanding of the world of work through workplace visits, talks by Young Industry Ambassadors, hands on workplace projects, TAFE or university workshops in university facilities (for example, using microscopes) and expos.

Students report the program has increased their understanding of the importance of staying at school.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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