

Mayoral Youth Employment Taskforce

Key Achievements and Outcomes 2018



Action Plan – Achievements and Outcomes 2018

The Mayoral Youth Employment Taskforce was established in 2017 in response to high rates of youth disengagement and unemployment in Greater Dandenong. Membership included representatives from all levels of government, business and industry, community services and the education sector. Over a series of four sessions, Taskforce members worked to develop a collective action plan to prioritise focus areas and critical gaps.

The Mayoral Youth Employment Taskforce Action Plan was launched in November 2017, with key actions implemented throughout 2018. The information below represents a snapshot of the key activities delivered and resulting outcomes; as well as highlighting change and growth in the local education and employment sectors over the course of the previous 12 months.

Objective 1 Bringing young people and industry together

ACTION	OUTCOMES
<p>1.1 Trial a local Jobs Fair in Greater Dandenong to connect young job seekers with employers.</p> <p>(Accelerate)</p>	<p>Key activities delivered:</p> <p>Two 'Accelerate' events were held to bring young job seekers together in direct contact with employers (22 May and 7 September):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged a total of 12 employers and 39 job seekers across both events. • The event utilised a range of structured activities (including speed interviewing, workshops, a panel discussion and more) to promote interaction between job seekers and employers. • Two job offers were extended to young people on the day of Accelerate, with significant traction evident in the increased awareness amongst job seekers of key local industries and available job opportunities. 90% of participants agreed that they knew more about the breadth of local job opportunities following the event. <p>Partners/Stakeholders:</p> <p>City of Greater Dandenong Youth and Family Services (lead)</p> <p>South East Business Network (SEBN)</p> <p>Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre</p> <p>Local employers</p> <p>Various employment services</p>

Key learnings:

- Securing job matches requires reaching 'job ready' job seekers, whilst simultaneously engaging employers with appropriate entry-level vacancies. This is a challenging prospect, with the expectations (and interests) of job seekers and employers often misaligned.
- Whilst these activities were identified as a gap at the time of the development of the MYET Action Plan, an increased number of 'job fair' style events is noted. Six similar events were held in the south-east region within a seven week period between August and September 2018. This mobilisation of significant new activity has resulted in further saturation for both job seekers and employers, in an already complex service system. It highlights the importance of ongoing coordination across sectors to ensure viability of these types of events and reduce duplication of efforts.
- Despite initial interest flagged by a number of retailers, a third Accelerate event was cancelled, due to wavering interest from employers closer to the date.
- There is demonstrable benefit in bringing young people into direct contact with local employers. The smaller number of participants and more structured format of the Accelerate events provided an intimate setting and point-of-difference from the traditional notion of a jobs fair. This approach proved an effective model for facilitating meaningful conversation between job seekers and employers.
- Clear gains were noted in increasing awareness amongst young job seekers of local industries and job opportunities. Given that this need was also identified during the MYET meetings, it is pertinent that further means of effectively promoting key industries and pathways to young people continue to be explored.

Further relevant initiatives:

Other key initiatives that connected young people with employers, included:

- Kitchen Challenge – a partnership between SEBN and Youth and Family Services, this program witnessed young CALD job seekers undertake an immersive 'hands-on' learning experience over seven weeks. Working alongside local business representatives, young people were supported to develop skills relating to leadership, team work and communication. Youth participants were also encouraged to explore pathways and linked with appropriate services to support them in overcoming barriers to employment. VicHealth provided funding to deliver two Kitchen Challenge programs, which commenced in August and October 2018. Given the intensive nature of the Kitchen Challenge model, it is positive to note that in total, 10 young people completed these programs (of 12 enrolled).

Notable outcomes include three young people gaining employment following their participation in Kitchen Challenge, with a further two young people securing pathways into further education to commence in 2019.

	<p>These outcomes are particularly significant given the high level of vulnerability amongst youth participants in Kitchen Challenge. These young people faced multiple barriers to engagement, including significant mental health concerns, complex family relationships, insecure housing arrangements, early school leaving, English as a second language, and learning disabilities.</p> <p>The provision of a wrap-around model of support for young people was important in maintaining their engagement throughout Kitchen Challenge. Providing this model of support ensured that young people were provided with appropriate support to maintain their participation. This involved both the presence of a youth worker during the program, as well as referral to specialist support services as required. Six young people have remained connected with Youth and Family Services for ongoing support and/or engaged in further programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Work Inspirations</u> – engaged 20 students from Dandenong High School and Keysborough Secondary College for a two day program exploring career pathways with Council and the YMCA. Activities included mentoring, work place visits, work readiness and personal development modules. Upon completion of the program, 80% of students demonstrated increased knowledge of job opportunities in Greater Dandenong. <p>Given the success of this initiative, Youth and Family Services will continue to deliver the Work Inspirations program in 2019. Opportunities will be sought for students to gain exposure to additional industries through increased workplace visits.</p>
<p>1.2 Host a 'meet and greet' with local employers, targeting young people identified through the On Track process as disengaged after leaving school.</p>	<p>Key activities:</p> <p>The timing of key initiatives (including Accelerate and Kitchen Challenge) coincided with the On Track survey, providing significant opportunities for young people who were identified as looking for work to connect with local employers. Rather than duplicating existing programs and services, efforts were targeted towards improved links and facilitation of relevant offerings to young people.</p> <p>Youth and Family Services developed a brochure consolidating a list of available programs and services for young job seekers in Greater Dandenong. This resource, titled 'Create Your Future', captured a snapshot of key activities available in Greater Dandenong over the August - October period, including work readiness programs, job fairs, volunteering programs and useful websites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 400 brochures were distributed to young job seekers and relevant services in Greater Dandenong. These services included South East Local Learning and Employment Network (SE LLEN), who deliver 'On Track Connect' services, offering pathways advice and referral to local services for young people identified through the survey as needing support to re-engage with training or employment.

- Through the On Track survey, 42 school leavers (from 2017) in Greater Dandenong were identified as 'looking for work', with a further 13 individuals identified as not in the labour force, employment or training. These numbers are comparable to previous years.

Partners/Stakeholders:

City of Greater Dandenong Youth and Family Services

SE LLEN

Key learnings:

- Feedback indicated that navigating available employment support services for young people remains a persistent challenge. Resources such as the 'Create Your Future' brochure offer the opportunity to consolidate the myriad of opportunities available to young job seekers in an easily accessible format.

Objective 2

Parent engagement in career planning and pathways

ACTION	OUTCOMES
<p>2.1 Undertake a pilot project with vulnerable families to promote a 'whole of family' approach to improving employment outcomes.</p>	<p>Key activities:</p> <p>A commitment was undertaken to promote a 'whole of family' approach to improving employment outcomes through linking parents who are job seekers with the Community Revitalisation Project and Careers Education Association of Victoria (CEAV).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater Dandenong Family Services commenced referring clients in mid-2018.• To date, four clients have been referred to the CEAV. Of those, three individuals have completed an initial Employment Readiness Scale and continue to actively engage in their tailored job seeker activity plan. <p>Stakeholders:</p> <p>South East Business Networks – Community Revitalisation Project Greater Dandenong Youth and Family Services</p> <p>Key learnings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Given that these clients are experiencing high levels of vulnerability, this approach is unique in providing a model of intensive, wrap-around support, that is targeted and responsive to the needs of each individual.• With significant barriers to employment to be addressed, achieving employment outcomes is a long-term prospect. Family Services' case managers will continue to work alongside clients to address these barriers, whilst supporting their ongoing engagement in the CEAV career guidance process. <p>Referrals to the CEAV project will continue throughout 2019 as appropriate clients are identified.</p>

Objective 3

Early intervention for young people at risk of disengagement

ACTION	OUTCOME/INDICATOR
<p>3.1 Advocate for programs (such as the Navigator program) that support young people's re-engagement in education.</p>	<p>Key activities:</p> <p>Since the development of the MYET Action Plan, the Navigator program has received substantial investment to ensure its continuation and expansion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 2018-19 State Government budget provided \$44 million to expand the Navigator program to communities across the state. This expansion will be a phased approach over 2019-2021.• Navigator continues to fill a gap in State and Commonwealth funded services, as the only program to provide direct support to young people (12 – 17 years) to support re-engagement in education. <p>Stakeholders:</p> <p>SE LLEN – consortia lead for the Southern Metropolitan Navigator pilot program</p> <p>Key learnings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A key service gap remains for supporting young people who demonstrate signs of disengagement from education younger than 12 years. As such, addressing issues such as chronic school absenteeism continues to be a focus for key strategic working groups including the Child and Youth Area Partnership. A pilot project has been established at Noble Park North, with the aim of addressing school absenteeism at Carwatha College and Silverton Primary School.

Future Direction

Young people in Greater Dandenong continue to experience higher than average rates of youth unemployment and disengagement. The causes of this are complex, often arising from systemic barriers and/or persistent intergenerational disadvantage. The MYET was established with the primary remit of bringing together a multi-disciplinary group of representatives to advance a collective response to these challenges. As the local education and employment sectors continue to evolve rapidly, ongoing coordination remains essential in monitoring service gaps and reducing duplication of existing efforts. There is an ongoing role for all levels of government to work alongside business and industry, community services and the education sector to advance better outcomes for young people.

For the City of Greater Dandenong, supporting young people's engagement in education and employment is a key priority that will be reflected in the development of Council's new integrated Children, Youth and Families Plan in 2019.

The Youth and Family Services team will continue to facilitate opportunities to address existing barriers and enhance outcomes for young people, including:

- Participating in a range of working groups and strategic projects (including the Child and Youth Area Partnership and Addressing Chronic School Absenteeism in Noble Park North steering committee) to advocate on behalf of young people and their families;
- Facilitating improved collaboration between service providers and stakeholders, utilising existing platforms such as the Greater Dandenong Youth Network and the Regional Employment Taskforce;
- Identifying current service gaps, alongside advocacy and/or coordination of appropriate responses;
- Delivering a range of capacity building programs to enhance young people's skills and work readiness, with a focus on trialling new and creative approaches.

Whilst the role of the MYET has now concluded, the key themes identified in the Action Plan will continue to underpin the future work of Youth and Family Services.

For further information about Youth and Family Services ongoing commitment to enhancing education and employment outcomes for young people in Greater Dandenong, visit youth.greaterdandenong.com or call 9793 2155.