



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

Transition to Work

2022–2027

Consultation Paper



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The document must be attributed as the Transition to Work 2022–2027 Consultation Paper.

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1. Indicative Timeline

Date	Key Element
8 June 2021	Public release of the Transition to Work Consultation Paper at http://www.dese.gov.au/employment-services-purchasing-information
8 June 2021	Transition to Work pre-recorded Industry Briefing webinar at http://www.dese.gov.au/employment-services-purchasing-information
23 June 2021 (5pm Canberra time)	Closing date for comments on the Consultation Paper. There will be no obligation on the Department to receive further comments after this time.
August 2021	Release of the Transition to Work Request for Tender (RFT). Please note this and following dates are indicative dates only and final dates will be confirmed and notified as part of the release of the RFT. RFT Draft Industry Briefing webinar.
September 2021	Indicative deadline for respondents to submit questions and requests for clarification about the RFT.
September 2021	Indicative closing date and time for Responses to the RFT
Late 2021	Indicative timing for notification of outcomes for the RFT.
1 July 2022	Transition to Work 2022–2027 service delivery commences.

2. Consultation process

This paper forms part of the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's (the Department) consultation with stakeholders to inform the content for the RFT for the new Transition to Work service to commence on 1 July 2022. It should be noted that while there are several elements within this paper that are open for feedback, such as program implementation, the Transition to Work policy is settled and is not subject to change.

This consultation process is open to all organisations and individuals. A link to an explanatory webinar is available through AusTender and the Department's website. Register your interest on AusTender to receive future information about the new Transition to Work service. All communication with the Department should be directed to the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline (1300 733 514) or the [Employment Services Purchasing Mailbox](#) (espurchasing@dese.gov.au).

The Employment Services Purchasing Team is the only point of contact for all matters relating to this consultation process. Questions and requests for clarification about this Consultation Paper can be made by:

- email: [Employment Services Purchasing Mailbox](#) (espurchasing@dese.gov.au)
- phone: 1300-733-514, the Employment Services Purchasing Hotline (Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Canberra time, excluding ACT and national public holidays).

Submissions to the Consultation Paper can be lodged by completing the SmartForm available on the [Employment Services Purchasing Information](#) (dese.gov.au/employment-services-purchasing-information) website and emailing it to the Department's [Employment Services Purchasing Mailbox](#) (espurchasing@dese.gov.au).

Submissions will be published on the Department's website unless you do not agree to publication and indicate your preference in the section provided on the SmartForm. The Department may use, retain, copy and distribute any information contained in a submission, or otherwise provided by you to the Department, for the purposes of informing the RFT for the new Transition to Work service.

We value your privacy. If you do not want your personal details to be published, please ensure that the appropriate checkbox on the SmartForm regarding publication approval is ticked.

The timetable for the consultation process is as follows:

- release of Consultation Paper on 8 June 2021
- consultation process open to submissions via SmartForm from 8 June 2021 to 23 June 2021
- submissions close at 5:00 pm (Canberra time) 23 June 2021.

The Department is not liable for any loss resulting from any reliance on any information made available in this Consultation Paper.



3. Introduction

Transition to Work is the Australian Government's (the Government) specialist pre-employment service for youth at heightened risk of not making a successful transition from education into work. Going forward alongside the new employment services model¹, the purpose of Transition to Work will continue to be empowering participants to make a successful transition to employment and contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of Australia. Transition to Work aligns strongly with the Government's Priority Investment Approach to Welfare, which recognises that investment in early intervention, particularly for younger cohorts, leads to better Outcomes for individual participants, the community and the economy.²

The Transition to Work service

There are a range of core elements which have made Transition to Work successful and trusted by the community, and the Government remains committed to maintaining these features going forward (further detail is provided below under subheading 'Core components of success intended to be retained').

Transition to Work providers address participants' needs through a holistic and personalised approach that assesses and builds their human capability. The service was designed to ensure providers work alongside disengaged and disadvantaged young people, establishing trust with them and enlisting them as an agent of their own change.

This tailored approach is enabled by a funding model which is weighted more to service fees than Outcome Payments and gives equal value to Employment and Education Outcomes. Enabling upfront investments in the capabilities of the young person, helps to protect against the long-term scarring effects of labour market recessions.³ It requires that Transition to Work providers are able to identify training and education opportunities which will help young people develop the skills and attributes employers are looking for.

As many young people are also continuing to develop psychologically and emotionally, Transition to Work providers understand how to support young people to develop not just the vocational skills employers need, but the personal characteristics associated with trustworthiness, reliability and resilience.⁴ Providers seek to build participants' employability by linking them with valuable work experience opportunities, including through Youth Jobs PaTH Internships, to show employers what they can do.

The change achieved through the Transition to Work service can be understood as occurring through a series of virtuous cycles (see Figure 1: Participants' Capability Development). Developing these cycles requires a combination of tailored assistance, genuine engagement, achievable and relevant

¹ The Government is implementing a new employment services model from July 2022. The new model aims to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged job seekers, including young disadvantaged job seekers, are better addressed in the future.

² Department of Social Services, 2019

³ R Ranasinghe, E Chew, G Knight & G Siekmann, 2019; ILO, 2011; OECD, 2016


⁴ SJ Blackmore & S Choudhury, 2006

goals, appropriate feedback leading to improved performance and increased competence. This results in heightened confidence and leads to a willingness to set more challenging goals. It is an ongoing and ultimately self-perpetuating cycle of self-improvement that leads to improved self-confidence, self-efficacy and ultimately agency or human capital of the young person.

Figure 1: Participants' Capability Development.



As the [Targeted Compliance Framework](https://dese.gov.au/jobactive/resources/targeted-compliance-framework) (dese.gov.au/jobactive/resources/targeted-compliance-framework) does not apply in Transition to Work, a provider may exit a participant to jobactive for repeated non-compliance. Providers must actively work to deliver services which young people experience as engaging and valuable. There is a large amount of evidence outlining the benefits of continually and genuinely involving young people in decisions about the design and delivery of services and giving them a say in the issues that impact them. This includes involving young people



with lived experience of mental ill-health to ensure that services are appropriate and suited to their needs.

Not all young people who are vulnerable are receiving income support or are connected with Government services and under the new Transition to Work service, providers must continue to implement outreach strategies and be able to support disadvantaged young people who choose to participate in the service without having mutual obligation requirements. Additional detail on this can be found at [Transition to Work](https://dese.gov.au/transition-work) (dese.gov.au/transition-work).

Responding to young peoples' needs

Young people have told the Government they feel mental health needs greater attention in government services.⁵ As a government service providing intensive assistance to vulnerable young people, it is important that Transition to Work providers deliver a service which embeds care for a young persons' mental health as part of their default service offer.

Beyond Transition to Work, the Government invests heavily in services and programs for young people. However, many young people—particularly those experiencing disadvantage—are not aware of, or struggle to navigate these services. A key role and responsibility of Transition to Work providers is to be aware of, collaborate with and link young people to the services and opportunities from which they stand to benefit. This includes, for example, government investments which seek to:

- support mental health and prevent suicide
- unlock productivity through skills development with JobTrainer and Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements
- connect to work experience and workforce opportunities through initiatives such as Youth Jobs PaTH, PaTH Business Placement Partnerships and other workforce pathways
- improve understanding of the labour market and how to navigate career pathways through the establishment of the National Skills Commission and the National Careers Institute.

This requires Transition to Work to adapt to the community in which it delivers services. Transition to Work providers maintain strong connections with employers, community organisations and other employment service providers (including other Transition to Work providers). Transition to Work providers operate in a non-competitive service environment and are encouraged to collaborate, share best practice information and feedback, and work with other services in the region in which they operate to deliver joined up and coherent service offers for young people.

There are a range of models and existing opportunities to engage in joined up service approaches depending on geographic location. For example, the Local Jobs Program is a government program which brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level to focus on reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways for people in each region.

⁵ Department of Health Youth Taskforce, 2019



2021–22 Budget measures

The 2021–22 Budget includes an increased investment of \$481.2 million in Transition to Work over 4 years from 2021–22. This will bring the Government’s total investment in Transition to Work to \$1.2 billion over the forward estimates. The Budget also includes measures to strengthen the Transition to Work service and position it to play the role of the sole youth specialist service in the new employment services model.

With greater investment to allow more people to access the service, Transition to Work providers will continue to help mitigate the impact of labour market scarring on young people who most need help transitioning to employment—those who have a limited work history, have never worked before, leave school early, are from a low socioeconomic background or have a combination of these risk factors. Research consistently shows us these young people are most at risk of poor labour market outcomes.⁶

What does success look like for Transition to Work going forward?

A continued successful Transition to Work service will maintain high levels of engagement and trust by young people in the service. It will improve the human capability of participants and result in young people who have higher levels of employability skills and who are able to engage independently and with confidence in the labour market, translating into successful Employment and Education Outcomes. Young people will have had positive and trusted experiences engaging with government services and feel more confident in engaging with and navigating government supports into the future. Participants will feel empowered by and satisfied with the services and this will have positive implications for their mental health and sense of belonging. Young people who need more immediate and intensive supports for other challenges they face, such as mental ill-health, will be connected with the specialist supports they need. The community will feel confident that the services delivered by Transition to Work providers are high-quality, fit-for-purpose and reliable.

Core components of success intended to be retained

Transition to Work is a well-regarded, successful service as evidenced in the Transition to Work Final Evaluation Report May 2021. The service has achieved strong outcomes for young people who are at risk of being long-term unemployed, through building a participant’s capabilities and helping them transition into work, including through education. Furthermore, Transition to Work consultant caseloads are generally smaller than jobactive, enabling them to service their caseload more actively. Transition to Work also allows frontline staff significant room to exercise judgement and discretion, which has translated to higher participant and employer satisfaction rates, compared with jobactive, and secures strong engagement from young people.

While there is always opportunity for improvement together with a need for some change in order to integrate the service within the new employment services model, as well as ensuring that the program meets the recommendations outlined in the Productivity Commission’s Inquiry Report into Mental Health and the National Suicide Prevention Adviser’s Report, the Government intends to maintain the core components of Transition to Work that led to its current success. Table 1

⁶ Ranasinghe, Chew, Knight & Siekmann, 2019

describes some of the current core Transition to Work policy settings that will be maintained post 30 June 2022.

Table 1. Core Components of Success to be Retained

Component	Description
Non-competitive service delivery	The non-competitive nature of the Transition to Work service, with one provider operating per dedicated service location, has supported Transition to Work providers to develop a strong collaborative approach. Best practices and ‘recipes of success’ are shared across providers. Retaining non-competitive service delivery will help foster this collaborative environment.
Consequences for non-compliance with mutual obligation requirements	Transition to Work will remain a service that eligible young people in receipt of activity tested income support can choose to participate in to satisfy their mutual obligation requirements. Participants who fail to engage in the service and meet participation requirements will be exited from Transition to Work and transferred to an Enhanced Services provider.
Eligibility for disengaged youth not in receipt of income support	<p>Access for disadvantaged young people not in receipt of income support who are disengaged from training or employment will be retained.</p> <p>Receipt of income support is not always an appropriate proxy for determining disadvantage for this cohort—for example, eligibility for income support may be affected by their parents’ circumstances, or because young people lack the willingness or ability to engage with Services Australia to claim income support payments.</p>
Flexible service delivery	<p>Transition to Work providers will maintain the flexibility to determine appropriate activities that will best support each young person’s development and use their funding to support this, with minimal administrative burden.</p> <p>The flexibility of the service delivery model allows participants to engage with their consultants to address both vocational and non-vocational barriers in ways which work for the individual and that are aligned with opportunities in the local region. Most Transition to Work providers agree that the flexibility of delivery, inherent in the service design, allows for innovation and a personalised approach to helping participants, offering them considerable scope to adapt their service delivery practices to the needs of individual participants.</p>

Component	Description
Demand-driven funding and a funding model that encourages upfront investment in young people	<p>The rapid and significant increases in the Transition to Work caseload in 2020, highlighted the importance of a demand-driven funding model.</p> <p>It is important for the Transition to Work funding model to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain weighted more to Service Fees than Outcome Payments to enable upfront investment in young people • continue to give equal value to Education and Employment Outcomes • remain at levels which support intensive servicing and facilitate low consultant to participant ratios • continue to be based on Funded Places that different individuals can occupy at different points in time rather than fees linked to transactional events for individual participants. A Funded Place is a unit of servicing under the Transition to Work Deed for the provider to service one or more participants over time in a particular employment region.
Youth Bonus Wage Subsidy	Access to the Youth Bonus Wage Subsidy of \$10,000 will remain to support the hiring of Transition to Work participants who are in receipt of income support and have mutual obligation requirements. This will help ensure that disadvantaged young people will be more competitive in the labour market.

Proposed enhancements to Transition to Work

Transition to Work is a highly successful program, and the Department would like to take this opportunity to build some enhancements to further improve the efficacy of the service, as well as to ensure Transition to Work is integrated as the youth specialist service within the new employment services model. Enhancements will be designed to further strengthen Transition to Work based on feedback received in this Consultation Paper. Table 2 provides an overview of the Transition to Work policy settings the Department proposes to amend.

Table 2. Summary of proposed policy settings to be amended


Current Transition to Work arrangements	Proposed Transition to Work arrangements
Eligibility targets young people who would otherwise be in Stream B of jobactive, with a particular focus on early	Eligibility may be based on a range of risk factors that identify young people who face a heightened risk of not being able to successfully transition to employment. This will enable a larger number of young people with more complex non-vocational

Current Transition to Work arrangements	Proposed Transition to Work arrangements
school leavers and Indigenous young people.	barriers to benefit from the service. Please refer to the list of definitions in Appendix A, Glossary.
18 months maximum duration of service.	24 months maximum duration of service for those with complex non-vocational barriers. The maximum of 18 months in the service would remain for those with mainly vocational barriers.
<p>For job seekers subject to RapidConnect, their income support will be paid from the date of their initial appointment attendance.</p> <p>From here, no income support payment consequences apply if young people in receipt of activity tested income support payments do not participate appropriately in the service. However, an exit from the service along with referral to jobactive occurs if young people display repeated non-compliance.</p>	A one-off use of payment suspension where income support payments may be temporarily put on hold, where an eligible young person receiving activity tested income support does not attend the first appointment without providing a valid reason (including where the young person cannot be contacted by the Transition to Work provider to facilitate attendance at the first appointment despite the provider's best efforts). Once the young person commences in the service, current arrangements will continue to apply.
Performance targets linked to 12 week Outcomes achieved by mainstream employment services over a preceding 3 year period.	Move to a Provider Performance Framework that will better foster continuous improvement by all Transition to Work providers over the life of the Deed.
Manual adjustment of Funded Places allocated to each provider at the contract level.	A new and more automated method for calculating and putting in place adjustments for Funded Places.

4. Assessment, referral and eligibility

The new employment services model builds on and expands recent changes to the way job seekers enter employment services and how they are assessed and referred to those services. It includes a new Job Seeker Assessment Framework that refers job seekers to the service that best suits their individual circumstances, such as Digital Services, Transition to Work, generalist or specialist Enhanced Services.

The Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) will remain at the core of the assessment under the Job Seeker Assessment Framework. It will sit in the new employment services gateway for job



seekers claiming income support to assist with referring job seekers to an appropriate service. Further information relating to the JSCI can be accessed on the [Job Seeker Fact Sheet – Job Seeker Classification Instrument](https://dese.gov.au/job-seeker-snapshot/resources/job-seeker-fact-sheet-job-seeker-classification-instrument) (dese.gov.au/job-seeker-snapshot/resources/job-seeker-fact-sheet-job-seeker-classification-instrument).

Job seekers who are unable to complete their JSCI online may be contacted by Services Australia who can assist them in completing their JSCI over the phone.

The most job-ready job seekers who can self-manage online, will be referred to Digital Services while those needing extra support, will be referred to an employment services provider based on the different eligibility criteria for each.

Consistent with the new employment services model principle of job seeker choice, Transition to Work eligible job seekers will have the ability to choose between referral to a Transition to Work or an Enhanced Services (including specialist) provider.

All Australians will be able to voluntarily access a base level Digital Service in the new employment services model registration. This base level of service will be directly through myGov. Access to the online platform will not need a referral from Services Australia. Volunteer job seekers who meet the Transition to Work eligibility criteria will also be offered the choice to participate in Transition to Work.

Finally, eligible young people will still be able to directly register for the Transition to Work service with their local provider, as currently occurs. Transition to Work providers must only directly register a young person who is eligible and who has a legal right to work in Australia.


Retained eligibility criteria

The Department proposes the current high level eligibility criteria be retained post 30 June 2022. That is, to be eligible for Transition to Work, a person must be:

- aged 15–24 years on commencement in the service, and
- an Australian citizen, or
- the holder of a permanent visa, or
- a nominated visa holder (including a New Zealand Special Category Visa, Temporary Protection Visa Holder and a Safe Haven Visa Holder).

Proposed changes to eligibility criteria

Since youth are not a homogenous group and their risk profile changes as they age and encounter new and different challenges, the Department proposes the eligibility criteria for Transition to Work to include a new assessment of risk factors identified within the initial assessment to better identify young people who face a heightened risk of employment barriers. This is expected to result in an increase in the number of young people referred to Transition to Work due to complex non-vocational barriers, compared to the current model.



Young people with complex non-vocational barriers include, but are not limited to, those who experience difficulties with mental health, homelessness and substance abuse. Based on the current jobactive caseload, young people in this cohort are approximately 4 times more likely to have a disability and/or be homeless than other young people in jobactive. These young people are also much more likely to be Indigenous or ex-offenders.

Broadly, new eligibility criteria will likely see the national commenced caseload in Transition to Work support an average caseload of around 41,000 disadvantaged young people at any given point in time, as young people with non-vocational barriers become eligible for the service. This is a significant increase to the pre-COVID-19 average of the commenced caseload of 17,600 young people in Transition to Work (July 2017 to March 2020) but is similar to caseloads at the height of COVID-19. The Department is already seeing a decline in the Transition to Work commenced caseload and anticipates that the caseload will continue to reduce to levels approaching those seen prior to COVID-19 over time, on the basis of continued use of the existing eligibility criteria.

While the service will maintain a focus on early school leavers and Indigenous youth, the Department is conscious of the need to be vigilant around eligibility to ensure that young people who have the most impactful disadvantage and are unable to participate in self-service will be eligible for Transition to Work.

Questions for stakeholders

- 4.1 What primary risk factors that contribute to young people disengaging from work or education should be used to determine eligibility for Transition to Work services?

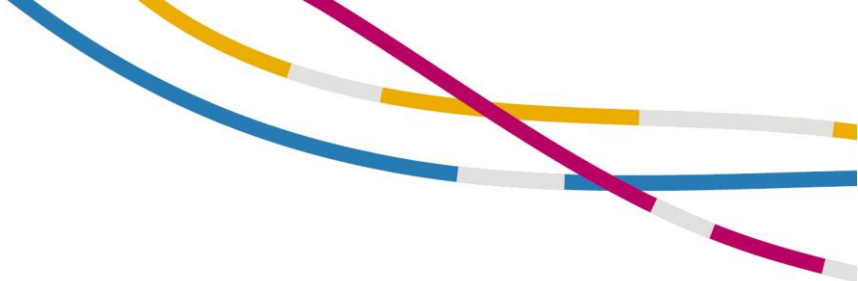
5. Maximum duration of service for participants

Transition to Work is a time limited service. Initially, participation in Transition to Work was limited to 12 months, however, the maximum duration of service was extended in the 2019–20 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook to 18 months, effective from 1 July 2020. The additional 6 months in service was expected to lead to more young people achieving Education or Employment Outcomes, thereby reducing the number of young people being referred to jobactive after their time in Transition to Work.

The extension of time was, in part, based on feedback from participants and providers which indicated that the original 12 month service period was insufficient for people with more significant barriers to education and employment, and that an additional 6 months servicing would improve outcomes.

Due to the significant increase in caseload caused by COVID-19 and the impact of the pandemic on Outcome Performance Targets and Funded Places, it is not yet possible to determine whether this change has led to a proportionate increase in outcomes.

It is widely recognised, including through evidence from local programs and international research provided by bodies such as the OECD, that more disadvantaged young people generally require a



longer period of support than other young people. In large part this is because youth servicing seeks to build the capability of participants to increase their employability, life skills and help the young person identify opportunities for work or education. This process can take longer for youth with more complex non-vocational barriers.

In recognition of the change in the type of young people participating in Transition to Work from 1 July 2022, it is proposed that the duration of service be extended from 18 months to 24 months— but only for the subset of young people with complex, non-vocational barriers.

There is currently no evidence to support extending the maximum duration of time in service for all eligible young people beyond the current 18 month period. It is also important to bear in mind, however, that some Transition to Work providers also pointed out that the time limit acts as an important incentive for providers to achieve Education and Employment Outcomes in the most efficient timeframe possible.

This means that most young people will continue to be exited at 18 months, unless they are tracking towards an Outcome or they continue to have complex non-vocational barriers and would benefit from remaining in Transition to Work for a further 6 months. The subset of young people with complex non-vocational barriers will generally be identified using their JSCI assessment and will be excluded from the exit process from the service at the 18 month point. The Department also proposes that providers should be able to override the 18 month exit process if they consider the young person has complex non-vocational barriers.

After a maximum of 18 or 24 months in the service, a young person may be referred to an appropriate service in the new employment services model, should they still need employment services. For those young people who continue to require provider support they may be referred to an Enhanced Services provider of their choice.

Questions for stakeholders

- 5.1 What characteristics should be used to determine whether a young person has complex, non-vocational barriers and requires the maximum of 24 months of servicing?
- 5.2 In addition to extending the maximum duration of service, are there any other changes needed to support Transition to Work providers in effectively servicing an increased number of young people with complex, non-vocational barriers?
- 5.3 What circumstances in a young persons' life should determine whether they are transferred to online services or to an Enhanced Services provider at the end of their service period in Transition to Work?

6. Improving attendance at the initial appointment

Feedback and departmental evaluations indicate participants have a high degree of engagement with Transition to Work once they actually commence in the service. However, providers have advised it can be very difficult to get young people to attend the first appointment where they can explain the benefits of the service and commence them in services by starting to build a trusting relationship with the young person.



RapidConnect

For those job seekers subject to RapidConnect, an initial appointment with a provider is normally scheduled to take place within two business days of a participant's interview with Services Australia. Their income support will be paid from the date of attendance, if a job seeker does not attend that appointment, they will not commence income support.

However, given the vulnerability of the Transition to Work caseload, it is not surprising that the majority of job seekers flowing into the service are RapidConnect exempt, meaning that the start date of their income support payment is not reliant on the attendance at that initial appointment.

This shows that RapidConnect, while an important tool, cannot be used as the sole lever for helping to ensure attendance at the initial appointment.

Suspension of Income Support

Under current arrangements, participants who repeatedly fail to participate appropriately in Transition to Work can be exited to jobactive, where all elements of the [Targeted Compliance Framework](#) are applied. Providers have reported that Transition to Work's flexibility encourages participants to develop and maintain a positive attitude towards them. Peak body representatives have also suggested that this approach under Transition to Work has led to a positive shift in the way participants perceive employment services.

Notwithstanding this, a range of Transition to Work providers have asked the Department for stronger compliance measures in the service, particularly for the initial appointment so that more eligible young people can successfully commence in the service. In practice, this only affects those not required (or exempt from the requirement) to connect to a provider before receiving income support.

The non-application of the Targeted Compliance Framework to Transition to Work is an important feature of Transition to Work, however, around 22 per cent of activity tested income support recipients referred to the service do not commence. Since the start of Transition to Work, this 22 per cent represents over 30,000 eligible young people who failed to connect with the service most likely to meet their needs.

The Government considers it both useful and appropriate to use the mechanism of temporary income support payment suspension to help ensure attendance at the initial appointment. It is understood that some providers have been reluctant to utilise this mechanism given the vulnerability of the cohort, but it is important to note that should payment suspension be needed, a young person who is exempt from RapidConnect will receive all back-pay once they attend the first appointment with their Transition to Work provider. This lever is intended to be used to ensure participants do attend that first meeting as the benefits of participating in the program outweigh this potential temporary impact. Use of this income support lever post 30 June 2022, will apply equally to any potential Transition to Work participant who is receiving activity tested payment.

Once the young person commences in the service by attending the initial appointment, no further use of the income support payment suspension mechanism would apply while they remain in the Transition to Work service.

Questions for stakeholders

- 6.1 Would a mechanism that helps facilitate commencement of young people in the service be desirable?
- 6.2 What is your preferred approach to achieving commencement and why?

7. Performance Framework

Currently, the Transition to Work Performance Framework measures provider performance against three separate but complementary elements:

- Outcome Performance Targets
- utilisation of Funded Places
- assessment against key performance indicators (KPIs) through Annual Performance Reviews.


The payment structure for Transition to Work includes both an Upfront Payment and Bonus Outcome Payments that are intended to drive high performance. There are three elements to the payments providers can receive:

- an Upfront Payment of \$5,480 (GST exclusive) per place per annum paid on a quarterly basis with the expectation that an Outcome Performance Target will be achieved
- a Bonus Outcome Payment of \$3,619 (GST exclusive) for every Outcome achieved above the Outcome Performance Target which is paid as those Outcomes are achieved
- a Sustainability Outcome Payment of \$3,619 (GST exclusive) for every 26 week Outcome which is paid as Outcomes are achieved.

Annual Performance Reviews directly assess the performance of providers against the following KPIs:

KPI	Description
1. Effectiveness	a) the number of Outcomes (excluding Sustainability Outcomes) achieved for participants relative to the Outcome Performance Target achievement of Outcomes that result in a participant moving fully off Income Support Payments b) the improvement in a participant's work readiness from commencement to exit.*
2. Efficiency	the time lapsing between referral and commencement of participants.
3. Quality	for this KPI, assessment is undertaken on a qualitative basis utilising a range of resources including service delivery against the Service Guarantees and the Service Delivery Plan.

* It should be noted that the Department has not been able to measure this at the contract level due to the impact of relatively small caseloads.



In addition to directly assessing the performance of providers against KPIs, Annual Performance Reviews also consider compliance with a range of things including the [Employment Services Joint Charter of Deed Management](https://dese.gov.au/employment-services-purchasing-information/resources/employment-services-joint-charter-deed-management) (dese.gov.au/employment-services-purchasing-information/resources/employment-services-joint-charter-deed-management) and utilisation of Funded Places. Results from the Annual Performance Reviews are discussed with providers through formal performance feedback sessions where the Department may take defined action under the terms of the Deed to support providers to improve performance.

Feedback received from providers shows that while Transition to Work is delivering strong outcomes at the whole of program level, and that the KPIs and Outcome Performance Targets are achievable, improvements to the Performance Framework will allow greater visibility of, and responsiveness to, instances of poor individual provider performance. The move to a new contract provides an opportunity to introduce more robust KPIs to enable appropriate stewardship and support of the service, including for new entrants. This will help to maintain Transition to Work's strong reputation into the future.

New key performance indicators

The Transition to Work service will continue to operate under a deed with the aim of providing personalised and intensive support for disadvantaged job seekers.

The Transition to Work Provider Performance Framework is proposed to consist of the following modules, with underpinning performance measures:

Effectiveness (which may include)

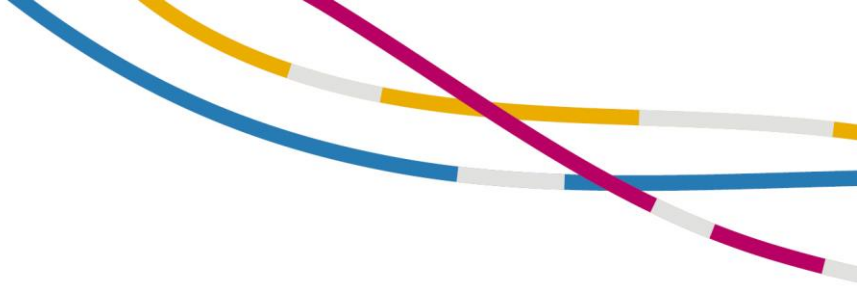
- measurement of the providers effectiveness in achieving 12 week Outcomes
- measurement of the provider's effectiveness in achieving 26 week Outcomes
- measurement of the provider's effectiveness in achieving Education Outcomes, inclusive of enrolments into education
 - measures the achievement of Education Outcomes against, for example, enrolments or the proportion of people on the caseload who have undertaken education or training
- participant experiences on their progress to employment
 - measures participants progress towards employment based on the labour market and/or via a service satisfaction survey.

Efficiency (which may include)

- analysis of appointments scheduled, or job placements or activities undertaken by participants
- the time lapsing between referral and commencement of participants. A range of data will be examined to inform the achievement of this KPI
- the proportion of all referrals that successfully commence.

Quality (which may include)

- participant satisfaction, measured against a new participant survey
- employer satisfaction, measured against a new employer survey
- Account Manager assessment of the quality of services provided on the ground.



The Department may adjust expectations incrementally under these KPI's over time to better reflect and allow for shifts within the labour market and broader economic environment. When these adjustments occur, the Department will clearly communicate these changes to providers in order to ensure transparency, market stability and trust in the service.

Questions for stakeholders

- 7.1 What elements should the Department use to measure achievement of Education Outcomes?
- 7.2 How should the Department seek to ensure job seekers and employers are receiving quality of service from Transition to Work providers?
- 7.3 Are there any other meaningful measures that could be included in the Provider Performance Framework?

Upfront Payments and Funded Places

The current Transition to Work funding model is different from that used in jobactive to ensure Transition to Work providers are able to invest in human capability development for all the young people on their caseloads. Providers are paid Upfront Payments for each Funded Place as specified in the Deed. The Department then monitors each provider's use of places to determine whether they are meeting the average utilisation of places of at least 90 per cent. This Upfront Payment model also helps to ensure providers have sufficient funding available to help disadvantaged eligible young people access opportunities as the economy continues to recover from the pandemic.

The provision of Upfront Payments will be retained in the new model at \$5,480 (GST exclusive) over a twelve-month period, paid in quarterly instalments per place. This amount has not been changed as the *Transition to Work Final Evaluation Report May 2021* found that increased expenditure on Transition to Work alone was not a sufficient indicator of performance or cost-effectiveness.

It is nevertheless expected that Upfront Payments will continue to provide flexibility for Transition to Work providers to invest in human capability development and help to facilitate the individual tailoring of services to the specific needs of each eligible young person.

A new method of calculating places will also be developed to better reflect demand in each employment region. These changes will have IT system support, which will assist in reviewing and allocating Funded Places that better adapt to changing labour market environments in different employment regions.

Questions for stakeholders

- 7.4 What improvements could be made to the current review and allocation of the Funded Places process?
- 7.5 What factors should the Department account for when determining Funded Places?

De-linking Outcome Targets from Payments

Transition to Work's funding model is weighted more to Upfront Payments than Outcome Payments. This reflects the expectations that the upfront investment in participants is greater in Transition to Work, and that there will be a low consultant to participant ratio in the service to help ensure tailored holistic assistance for eligible young people.

In line with receiving Upfront Payments for each Funded Place, providers are currently expected to achieve a specified number of Outcomes each quarter, known as the provider's Outcome Performance Target.

Outcome Performance Targets are the total number of:

- 12 week Employment Outcomes
- 12 week Hybrid Outcomes
- 12 week Education Outcomes

that a provider is expected to achieve each quarter. Outcome Performance Targets are intended to create incentives to encourage providers to perform. For example, a provider receives a Bonus Outcome Payment for any 12 week Outcome achieved above their Quarterly Outcome Performance Target.


Annual Outcome Performance Targets are currently calculated as follows:

$$\text{Target} = (\text{Average Outcome Rate} \times 1.25) \times (1.9 \times \text{Annual Funded Places})$$

The Average Outcome Rate is based on a rolling three-year Average Outcome Rate reflecting the jobactive provider performance in each Transition to Work employment region. This rate is then increased by 25 per cent in recognition of the higher funding Transition to Work providers receive in comparison with jobactive providers.

The Annual Outcome Performance Target is divided equally into quarters and providers receive a bonus payment of \$3,619 (GST exclusive) for every Employment, Hybrid and Education Outcome they achieve above the Quarterly Outcome Performance Target.

There are a number of issues with calculating the Expected Outcome Rate for Transition to Work based on the Outcome Rate achieved by jobactive providers over a preceding three-year period.

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1. Targets reflect the historic performance achieved by the jobactive providers in each employment region. Accordingly, targets are lower in regions where there has been poor or lower performance outcomes by jobactive providers, regardless of the actual impact of local labour market conditions. Exceeding the Outcome Target in these types of employment regions does not necessarily point to good provider performance from the Transition to Work providers in these same regions. Similarly, not meeting the Outcome Targets does not necessarily point to poorer Transition to Work provider performance for the same reason.
 2. Where a provider's utilisation of places was more than 100 per cent over the reporting period, it is easier for the provider to meet their Outcome Targets, and vice versa for under-utilisation. An assessment against the performance Outcome Target therefore tends to reflect the consequences of place utilisation, more than it accurately reflects provider performance.
 3. Transition to Work provider performance is measured against jobactive performance outcomes achieved in the same employment regions over a preceding rolling three-year period. This past data can reflect quite different local labour market conditions given the substantial lag between the period in which jobactive providers achieved these outcomes versus the time in which the Outcome Targets are applied to Transition to Work providers.
 4. It is possible for the Average Outcome Rate across a region in jobactive to decrease over time. Where this occurs, Outcome Targets can similarly decrease over time and a different period for Transition to Work providers.
 5. It is likely to be inappropriate to continue comparing future Transition to Work performance against historical jobactive performance.

For these reasons, the Department proposes to de-link Outcome Targets from provider payments in the new model. However, the Department recognises the impact that providers will be able to have on young people with more complex non-vocational barriers. As such, providers will be able to access all 12 week Outcome Payments as soon as they are achieved, rather than being paid only after a performance target has been met. This will be in addition to the Upfront Payments mentioned above.

Questions for stakeholders

7.6 How might performance be benchmarked in the new model?



8. Youth Advisory Sessions

As part of the Faster Connections and Greater Support for Young People measure in the 2020–21 Budget, Youth Advisory Sessions were introduced to provide up to 10,000 young people per year in Online and Digital Services access to up to three advisory sessions delivered by Transition to Work providers. Being part of the current Transition to Work Deed, Youth Advisory Sessions were scheduled to end on 30 June 2022. As part of the 2021–22 Budget the Government announced funding to continue Youth Advisory Sessions as part of the new Transition to Work arrangements from 1 July 2022.

Under the current settings of Youth Advisory Sessions, session participants must:


- be aged 15–24 and be:
 - participating in the Online Employment Service (OES), or
 - participating in the Volunteer Online Employment Services Trial (VOEST), or
 - be a Digital participant in the New Employment Services Trial (NEST), and
- have one, 2, or 3 sessions remaining.

Only eligible Online and Digital participants are able to both view and book sessions. Session participants are not eligible for the Transition to Work service unless a change of circumstances reassessment has been undertaken by the Digital Services Contact Centre or Services Australia that finds the participant is eligible for Transition to Work.

Session content is flexible and driven by the session participant's needs, and may include advice on education and training options, local labour market opportunities, resume and job interview tips, career advice and other assistance.

All session bookings are made and managed online by both the session participant and the provider. Providers are either paid a full payment of \$125 (GST inclusive) for each attended session, or a partial payment of \$62.50 (GST inclusive) for any session that has not been attended or was cancelled by the participant less than 2 calendar days prior to the appointment date.

Since Youth Advisory Sessions have only been in effect since 8 March 2021, the Department has not yet reviewed the efficacy and impact of this initiative. However, the Government has agreed to continue this initiative in the new Transition to Work Deed based on available evidence that a small number of young job seekers in Online and Digital Services lack the skills and confidence to navigate the labour market, connect to education or employment opportunities, and connect with local community services to address non-vocational barriers. Transition to Work providers are well equipped to provide a high level of assistance to these young people who, apart from the additional support that they may require, are already mostly job-ready and so may continue to successfully self-manage in Online or Digital Services.



Questions for stakeholders

- 8.1 Is there anything that the Department should change or improve in the way that Youth Advisory Sessions are currently running?

9. Other Service Settings to improve outcomes

Connecting to local approaches

While Transition to Work is a national service, Transition to Work providers operate in local communities and labour markets. It is fundamental to the success of the service that Transition to Work providers maintain strong connections and collaborate effectively with local services, ranging from schools to health services, housing, mental health and family supports. Strong connections to local stakeholders can help ensure, for example, that young people who have disengaged from school or are otherwise vulnerable, but not in receipt of income support, have pathways to connect to the Transition to Work service. Sufficient flexibility in national level program settings, supported by appropriate resourcing and incentives, allows service providers to generate and support local solutions to local challenges.


In some cases, local community or governance arrangements may already exist, and where they are appropriate, Transition to Work providers should be working collaboratively to help achieve community goals for young people. For example, the Local Jobs Program brings together expertise, resources and access to funding at the local level to focus on reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways in the region. The National Youth Employment Body, led by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, also supports the operation of Community Investment Committees which seek to ensure a joined up approach across employers, service providers and other stakeholders within a location.

Questions for stakeholders

- 9.1 Is there anything in the Transition to Work program that should change in order to have the right balance between ensuring national service standards are maintained, while also allowing providers the flexibility needed to enable local collaboration and engagement in their communities?

Engaging youth

There is a large amount of evidence that youth engagement (that is—genuinely involving young people in decision-making processes and giving them a say in service delivery and design), offers a range of benefits for providers as well as young people themselves. For example, co-designing services with young people is one way providers can secure strong involvement from young people, which is necessary to achieve results in a service like Transition to Work that does not have ongoing



participant compliance arrangements.^[1] Active involvement in government decision-making also gives young people an opportunity to build new skills, makes them feel valued and increases their sense of responsibility, which can lead to improved mental health and resilience among other benefits.^[2]

The Department will continue to involve young people in the implementation of programs and policy that may affect them (the most recent example being the implementation of the Youth Advisory Sessions in 2021). Transition to Work providers have a unique role in involving young people at the individual level by working in close partnership with them to identify their needs and work with them to achieve their employability and personal development goals.

It is less clear how consistently and deliberately Transition to Work providers extend this individual engagement to the design and delivery of service strategies more broadly, for example by asking young people to be involved in designing and providing feedback on the services delivered. In many cases, it is not simply asking young people for their views but also involves building the capability of young people to provide and participate in a considered and meaningful way. Developing the skills required for participation is aligned with the overall goals for participants as these skills are often the same skills employers are looking for, such as motivation, teamwork, problem solving and a positive attitude.

Involving young people in the design and delivery of services can take place on a number of levels, including through building robust feedback mechanisms into service design, establishing participant representative committees or including youth involvement in Performance Frameworks and evaluations. Ensuring youth are engaged and able to have a genuine and consistent say in Transition to Work requires providers bringing their expertise and commitment to ensure it is done in a way that is appropriate for the service and works for youth.

The Government is interested on feedback around building youth engagement into the core business of Transition to Work providers and the Transition to Work service to ensure young people have a say in the services which impact them.

Questions for stakeholders

- 9.2 What role can the Transition to Work service play in ensuring that young people are engaged in the design and delivery of policy and services?
- 9.3 Is there anything in the current service settings that might be seen as limiting youth engagement?

^[1] Initiatives in the Department’s Empowering Youth Initiatives program, which involved young people in service delivery and design, were highly successful and had strong engagement levels from young people (DESE, 2018).

^[2] Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2013



Mental health and suicide prevention support

Mental health is inextricably linked to young people's capacity to find and sustain employment. Transition to Work providers currently support many disadvantaged young people with mental illness and mental ill-health to connect with services, address their barriers and transition from school to work. Transition to Work providers have experience in the non-vocational challenges facing young people, such as mental health, homelessness, family counselling and other complex barriers to employment. They are also a key conduit between a young person and more specialised supports. Yet while Transition to Work offers holistic services, its focus must ultimately remain on delivering Employment and Education Outcomes.

The scale of the mental health challenge is large. Around three-quarters of adults with mental illness experience mental ill-health before the age of 25, and young people (aged 16–25) have the highest prevalence rate of mental illness.^[2] Young people are also less likely than any other age group to seek professional help, and they are particularly worried about stigma.^[3] Suicide is the leading cause of premature death for young Australians, accounting for around one-third of deaths among people aged 15–24. Suicide rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more than double that of other Australians, with young males and those in regional communities particularly at risk. Young people at risk of poorer mental health are likely to be disproportionately represented in Transition to Work caseloads, and the National Suicide Prevention Advisor has called on the Government to apply an equity approach to suicide prevention that prioritises at risk populations.

Recent government reports, informed by expert advice from the Productivity Commission, National Youth Policy Framework and the National Suicide Prevention Taskforce, have consistently outlined the importance of providing an integrated and coherent response to the challenges of supporting peoples' mental health and suicide prevention. The Productivity Commission in particular has recommended the needs of participants with mental illness be specifically considered in the new employment services. This includes ensuring that participants are able to inform providers of a relapse in mental illness in a timely manner.

In relation to providers delivering services to young participants who are vulnerable to mental ill-health, it is important to find the balance between standardising core requirements to ensure quality assistance, while allowing providers the flexibility to deliver tailored assistance. In many instances, the role and strategy of Transition to Work providers is likely to depend on locational factors, such as the degree to which there are readily available mental health specialist services in the region.

^[2] Productivity Commission 2019; Productivity Commission 2020; True prevalence is likely higher. For example, the Productivity Commission (2019) reports ABS data estimating 42 per cent of Newstart and 29 per cent of Youth Allowance recipients had a mental health condition in 2014–15.

^[3] Slade et al., 2009



Questions for stakeholders

- 9.4 What do you think constitutes best practice with regard to supporting the mental health of participants in an employment service and how do we improve the ability of the service to deliver to this standard?
- 9.5 What are appropriate servicing strategies or principles in situations where there are longer waitlists for specialist services, in contrast to locations where there are readily available specialist mental health services?
- 9.6 What are the features of a service that acknowledges the significant mental health challenge across the youth caseload and embeds appropriate responses into the default service offer, including by addressing particular issues such as disclosure and stigma?

10. Appendix A - Glossary

In this document, unless a contrary intention occurs, all terms have the meaning given to them in the list of definitions in this glossary.


Account Manager	The person for the time being holding, occupying or performing the duties of the position specified in Item 1 of Schedule 1, who has authority to receive and sign notices and written communications for the Department under the Deed.
AusTender	The centralised online procurement information system, AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au) for Australian Government agencies.
Bonus Outcome	An Employment Outcome and an Education Outcome, which is above the Outcome Performance Target.
Bonus Outcome Payment	A fee of \$3,619 (GST exclusive) for every Outcome achieved above the Outcome Performance Target which is paid as Outcomes are achieved.
Commence or Commencement	For: a) Group One participants and Group Three participants, the time at which the provider has recorded the completion of their Initial Interview on the Department's IT Systems b) Group Two participants, the time at which: (i) the provider has recorded the completion of their Initial Interview on the Department's IT Systems (ii) the participant has, in accordance with any Guidelines, agreed to participate.
Deed	A legal document that details general and specific terms and conditions relating to the delivery of Transition to Work services.
The Department or the Department of Education, Skills and Employment	The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) that may administer the Deed on behalf of the Australian Government.
Early School Leaver	A person who is aged 15–21 years, has not been awarded a Year 12 certificate or a Certificate III and is in receipt of Youth Allowance (other).

Education Outcome	<p>Is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 consecutive weeks’ full-time participation in or completion of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a Certificate III course, or ○ secondary education leading to Year 12, or ○ 26 consecutive weeks’ full-time participation in the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program.
Employer	An entity that has the legal capacity to enter into a contract of employment with a participant but does not include the provider.
Employment or Employed	The status of a person who is in paid work under a contract of employment or who is otherwise deemed to be an employee under relevant Australian legislation.
Employment Outcome	12 cumulative weeks of employment during a participant’s time in the service. The 12 cumulative weeks can be comprised of multiple periods of at least four weeks.
Employment Regions/Region	A geographical area identified and displayed on the Labour Market Information Portal (Imip.gov.au), as varied by the Department from time to time at the Department’s absolute discretion.
Employment Services Purchasing Hotline (the Hotline)	The Hotline is the primary means of contact during the Transition to Work procurement process and can be contacted on 1300 733 514 (Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Canberra time, excluding ACT and national public holidays) or via email (espurchasing@dese.gov.au).
Exit	An Exit from a participant from Transition to Work Services.
Gateway	Refers to an Information Technology function that routinely tests a job seeker’s program eligibility, and makes necessary referrals to an employment service as their circumstances change.
Hybrid Outcome	12 consecutive weeks combining eligible education and employment for 25 hours per week on average.

Income Support Payment	A payment of a benefit or pension under the <i>Social Security Act 1991 (Cth)</i> .
Initial Appointment	The first appointment between the provider and the Transition to Work participant.
jobactive	The current Australian Government program that provides training, work experience and other interventions to job seekers, particularly the disadvantaged, to help them obtain suitable employment.
Job Plan	The Job Plan as described in the Transition to Work Deed, and which includes an Employment Pathway Plan under the <i>Social Security Act 1991 (Cth)</i> or, if the <i>Social Security Act 1991 (Cth)</i> is amended, any such agreements.
Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI)	The tool used by Services Australia (Centrelink) and jobactive providers to measure a job seeker's relative level of disadvantage based on the expected difficulty in finding the job seeker employment because of the job seeker's personal circumstances and labour market skills.
Location/Site	One or more physical Locations in an employment region that the provider is contracted to service.
Mutual Obligation Requirement	The activity test or participation requirements that a job seeker must meet in order to receive an Income Support Payment in accordance with any guidelines, including attending appointments, performance job searches and meeting their Annual Activity Requirement.
Non-vocational Barriers	A range of barriers which are not related to a young person's education or training history, but which could prevent them from obtaining and sustaining employment or education, or from undertaking further skills development. This can include homelessness, mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction, sexual abuse or violence, and physical or mental abuse.

Outcome	An Employment Outcome, Education Outcome or a Hybrid Outcome which is achieved when a participant has been in a certain number of weeks of employment or training.
Outcome Performance Target	The number of Outcomes that the provider must achieve annually (or in the period specified) excluding Sustainability Outcomes.
Participant/s	The term used to refer to young people aged 15–24 years looking for work or volunteering for Transition to Work.
Partnership	An agreement entered into by two or more legal entities in which each agrees to provide a part of the capital and/or labour for a business enterprise, and by which each shares a defined proportion of profits and losses.
Payments	The fees payable to a provider.
Place	A funded unit of servicing that the provider must use to service one or more participants in a particular employment region.
Provider	An organisation that has entered into a Deed to conduct the Transition to Work services under the Transition to Work Deed 2016–2020.
RapidConnect	RapidConnect is a Services Australia initiative aimed at improving the chances of job seekers and early school leavers finding a job or enrolling in a course of education or training, by rapidly connecting them with an employment services provider after they contact Services Australia about claiming income support.
Referral or Referred	A referral of a person to the provider by Services Australia (Centrelink), the Department or a jobactive provider.
Register	The act of registering the creation or activation of a participant’s record on the Department’s IT Systems.

Service Delivery Plan	The Service Delivery Plan(s) is unique to each provider and outlines the servicing strategies and approach in a format that is able to be understood by participants and/or Employers.
Suspension	Provider is not required to service a participant that has a suspended status recorded on the Department's IT system.
Sustainability Outcome	Employment or Hybrid Outcomes over 14 consecutive weeks which follow immediately a 12 week Outcome.
Sustainability Outcome Payment	A fee of \$3,619 (GST exclusive) for every 26 week Employment or Hybrid Outcome which is paid as Outcomes are achieved.
Targeted Compliance Framework (TCF)	The Targeted Compliance Framework is designed to penalise participants who persistently commit Mutual Obligation Failures without a valid reason or reasonable excuse.
Transition to Work Provider	An organisation contracted to deliver Transition to Work services in location(s) or employment region(s).
Transition To Work Services	The intensive, pre-employment support services provided to participants by a Transition to Work provider.
Upfront Payment	A fee of \$5,480 (GST exclusive) payable per place per annum, paid on a quarterly basis.
Vocational Barriers	Lack of appropriate training, skills or qualifications for employment.
Work Readiness	Possessing the core skills and behaviours required by employees, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teamwork skills • communication skills



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a positive attitude and work ethic, including motivation, reliability and a willingness to work.
<p>Youth Allowance (Other)</p>	<p>A means tested Income Support Payment available to eligible young people aged 16–21 years (or 24 years subject to the passage of legislation raising qualifying age for Newstart to 25 years) who are seeking or preparing for paid employment; or who, until they attain Year 12 or an equivalent Certificate II qualification, are undertaking study or training in combination with other approved activities.</p> <p>See the <i>Social Security Act 1991 (Cth)</i> for a more detailed definition.</p>

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