

MYAN National Sector Meeting on COVID-19

3 June, 2020

Breakout rooms-key discussion points

1. Education

Restrictions are easing - what are the emerging challenges for young people:

1. When and what the **restrictions** will be around external service providers being allowed back into schools and young people accessing services.
2. **Tech and internet access** continue as young people have to hand back devices and dongles.
3. **Some young people have thrived in remote learning**, what are the challenges for them going back?
4. **Some young people (who may have already been hard to engage) will have increased disengagement**. What are schools/ TAFEs approach to this transition back?
5. **Secondary/ primary sector seemed to get more support** for tech and access that young people in TAFE sector.
6. Some students/ young people still concerned about **the health and safety** of coming on public transport and onto campuses.
7. Even with provided/ loaned devices **some people had no data** (or money to purchase it) this will continue to be an issue.
8. **Permissions and processes for providers to access schools/** young people may be/ will be onerous/ take a lot of lead time.
9. **TAFE still not returned** so continue to experience issues we have been seeing.
10. Coming up to **assessment time** for schools and TAFE how can this be done in remote fashion, or face to face how can we assess when young peoples learning experience has been so different.
11. **Primary/ secondary seemed to have better capacity to connect with students and families** to help support and reduce disengagement. This is not part of TAFE model often although people have had that included in their roles – learning support teams and pathways guidance officers.
12. **Funding and programming concerns regarding the reduction in new arrivals** due to travel and migration restrictions and how this will play out in the sector mid to long term.
13. Concerns by young people and providers that they will not be able to access the **work experience** component of their programs (VCAL, VET, CERTS) especially aged care placements due to restrictions in that sector.

14. **Think creatively how to do work experience** – virtual reality work experience possibly an idea.
15. **Backlog of work experience placements** needed as there are all the ones that haven't gone ahead currently, and new ones upcoming.

What are the unmet needs for young people:

1. **Need a road map to reengage young people who were already disadvantaged and possibly disengaged** back into school/ TAFE. One idea was to do shorter modules and subjects not directly related to English speaking such as elective modules, social modules, youth and art focussed ones that encouraged coming back without pressure of 'work'.

Does this impact particular groups of people more than others:

1. **Young women (under 25) who had children/ families at home.** They found it particularly hard to engage in study online while at home with small children and family responsibilities.
2. **Young women on partner visas who wont be eligible for training and funding** when they are waiting for next visa, and the impact of COVID on that timeline.
3. **Teen boys** have had a particularly hard time engaging and being focussed online and transition back for some of them will be very tricky – school refusal and work refusal anticipated.

2. Employment

Restrictions are easing - what are the emerging challenges for young people:

1. **Unemployment options under reported** and the seriousness of under or unemployment being masked by Job seeker payments.
2. **Unemployment/underemployment** - increased competition for employment as others are now losing jobs.
3. **Pressure on organisations** in the coming months as people starting to overcome loss of income and no employment options.
4. **Underemployment** - VISA conditions are limited options.
5. **Digital skills** need to be improved to secure employment options. Job agencies being pushed to capacity to support people with online platforms and employment assistance in general.
6. **Access to technology is a barrier** when seeking employment options.
7. **Young people withdrawing from the labour market**, increased caring responsibilities, increased job losses, precarious employment in hard hit industries and a lack of digital technology to create resume's etc.
8. **Rates of youth unemployment** have always been traditionally tough of late and COVID will put increased pressure.

9. **Influx of youth in Centrelink** - increase referrals to youth programs to support people to transition to work - organisations at capacity - VIC have some strategies in place to support the increase in demand and funding places will increase as of July. BSL has a national community of practice - providing joint feedback to Ministers - providing strategies.
10. **Sectors/employment agencies need to work together** to get ultimate results.
11. **"Job Outlook" good information on industries** and updated all the time - can be shown to young people. Excellent resources.

Key employability skills that we should promote:

1. **Young people should be supported to highlight their own skills** and be able to talk about themselves - talk about themselves and their strengths - sometimes this is against cultural expectations/customs. Being able to recognise their own attributes and strengths - why a person is a value add for the organisation. How to sell yourself to prospective employers.
2. **Critical thinking and problem solving** - look to implement these skills in education.
3. **Community investment committees** - communities and employers, education providers meeting to look at the issue of youth unemployment and look at local issues.
4. **Working with the employer to have a deeper understanding of the key skills and qualities they need** and develop minimum requirements for the role - then working with the training provider to deliver that package.
5. **Discussions around advocacy and rights on young people in the workplace** to avoid exploiting young people.
6. **Responsibilities and rights in the workplace** - COVID 19 has highlighted the need for this - some young people are being overworked/exploited- employers are forcing people to do extra hours to make up the money.
7. **Communication** (body language etc.), team work - what it is - good preparation for interviews - which can be found on the Job outlook website.
8. **Costs of licence** - job readiness - drivers licence.
9. **Social isolation** has impacted the crisis with mental health.

What are the unmet needs for young people?

1. **Drug and alcohol use** - influx in WA with extra payments supporting more of this - very hard to transition. Increased incarceration and mental health issues.
2. **More time being spent to find employment** - need to find ways to encourage young people not to sit on the sidelines - be more proactive.
3. Schools - to welcome **settlement youth workers** to assist students. LMA manage this in NSW. Refugee students being left behind. Workers need to engage differently.
4. **Advocate for LMA managed hubs** -youth hubs have received funding for a 9 month period to work with schools. Pilot program are in action.
5. **Digital literacy impacted by school closures** and likely to cause problems with learning and increased disengagement.

Does this impact particular groups of people more than others:

1. **Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups** - less opportunity for self-determination and to live independently.
2. **Overseas/international students** not being supported.
3. **Increased pressure for support services** - increases vulnerability and exploitation.
4. **Young people on temporary visas** and having limited access to supports - safety nets not in place.

3. Settlement

Restrictions are easing - what are the emerging challenges for young people:

1. **Intersecting factors that exacerbate vulnerability** i.e. no opportunity for sport, dis-engaged from education, geographically isolated, access limitations, less services in outer areas, PT limited.
2. **Greater risk**, more visible, at risk of being caught up in the justice system.
3. With COVID-19 restrictions **fear that normally acceptable social interactions will be seen as unlawful** i.e. hanging out in groups, impacting young people.
4. **Navigating family tensions**. Youth in larger family groups, financial pressure, rise in family violence, youth people out to avoid, join groups, make bad choices, police and youth tensions increase.
5. **Court system (children's court) at a stand-still**, youth in holding pattern waiting to be addressed i.e. having incurred fines.
6. **Legal Aid access**- harder to access services during COVID-19 restrictions and now as restriction measures ease there is a back log and many young people waiting for access.
7. **Different kinds of support young people will need in the transition** back from isolation
8. Young people are impacted by the **current events in the US**.
9. **Increased family responsibility**, young people are supporting siblings and parents more with shopping, medical appointments and accessing remote education.
10. **Transport**, continued fear of using PT, if young people have a license they are responsible for driving family members to appointments etc.
11. **Mental health**, many young people struggling. Isolation from education centre, church, sport clubs, friends has exacerbated mental health issues, lack of peer to peer support, mentor support from teachers etc. increased family tensions, lack of routine, sleeplessness, recurring trauma.
12. **Confusion for many young people as school returns**, why can't community social and sport programs resume?
13. **Mentoring and tutoring programs**. In particular peer to peer mentoring needed and where these programs are flourishing: the benefits to young people are evident.
14. **Financial pressures** loss of part-time /casual employment, larger family groups struggling.

15. **Technology**-inequities in access and capability, gap in particular evident beyond schooling, TAFE, further education, AMEP, University.
16. **Evidence that settlement and education providers (TAFES, Learn locals) are working with community links and state and local government to provide young people with devices and data** and are making efforts to upskill young people to enable them to access education remotely. **As there isn't a coordinated government response to fill this gap**, there's a sense that things are not being done yet services on the ground have been taking the initiative and working hard to fill that gap.

Unexpected benefits of shifting to remote activity online:

1. **Greater flexibility** with independent learning.
2. **Some cohorts who struggled to take part in programs are now able to** i.e. young mums.
3. **Rapid upskilling has increased digital literacy** with positive impacts on learning, accessing information, interacting with government services.

4. Mental Health

Restrictions are easing - what are the emerging challenges for young people:

1. **Communication barriers** between teachers and students.
2. **Lack of access to technology** to be able to engage in online learning.
3. **Anxiety and challenges** associated with learning how to use the technology.
4. **Increased stress on parents with confusion on students returning to school** in addition to lack of IT equipment being shared amongst siblings in households.
5. **What behaviours should adults be role modelling** for the youth in these uncertain times as the adults are going through their own experiences of anxiety, and if that is being shown to the kids, that's going to cause more stress to the kids.
6. **International students are being left isolated** and unsupported financially as well with social engagement and struggling with essential living requirements. Much needed advocacy is required to campaign for increased funding and support services.
7. Decrease in **future employment prospects** is increasing levels of stress & anxiety amongst high school & tertiary education students.
8. **Universities are cutting teaching / lecturing roles** impacting on student learning outcomes and future prospects for industry employment.
9. **Sport & recreation** plays a fundamental role in the mental health of youth in Australia, and can prevent 'anti-social' behaviour by keeping young people engaged in positive activities. Local councils should advocate for return to sport activities.

Does this impact particular groups of people more than others:

1. **The psychosocial impact on person's living with a disability** is increasing levels of stress & anxiety.
2. **Parents of children living a disability have increased stress** due to constant changes in communication surrounding COVID-19 restrictions. Too vague and misleading.
3. **Funding in the disabilities sector is decreasing** with some departments closing even down.
4. There was open discussion about how **migrants of Asian heritage are experiencing racism** from their peers.
5. **There is increased domestic labour for women at home** - because everyone is at home.