



GROUND ZERO

FINDINGS FROM THE WEST

ground zero

noun

1. A thing or place that is of greatest importance to an activity or interest.
2. Centre of origin for intense activity or change.



GROUND ZERO REPORT

This report outlines recommendations and a summary of views and ideas obtained from unemployed youth, students, youth service providers, small business, large business, not-for-profits and other institutions in Melbourne's western region at a series of workshops undertaken between December 2018 and April 2019. The report aligns with YouthNow's mission statement and ongoing role to develop new programs and services to achieve more effective employment outcomes for unemployed young people in the west.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

YouthNow wishes to acknowledge the contribution provided by young people from across Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Melton, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley and Wyndham. We also thank youth service providers, community organisations, businesses, business associations and universities for their participation and candid views and insights.

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ENQUIRIES

Colleen Bergin
CEO YouthNow

GOVERNMENT WILL INVEST \$28+ BILLION IN MELBOURNE'S WEST BY 2028 - CAN THIS SPEND BE LEVERAGED TO REDUCE 18%+ YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT?

In 2018 State and Federal Government made significant funding available to build a rail link to Tullamarine Airport and expand road and rail infrastructure in Melbourne's west to meet the demand of regional population growth. Additional investment is expected over the next decade from the region's six councils, private investors, various institutions and statutory authorities.

\$15 BILLION MELBOURNE AIRPORT RAIL LINK (MARL) AND SUNSHINE SUPER HUB (SSH)

In September-October 2018 the Victorian and Federal Governments committed \$10 billion to the construction of a 27 kilometre, \$15 billion rail infrastructure project to create a dedicated rail link between Tullamarine Airport and the Southern Cross Railway station in Melbourne's CBD. The project provides the basis for establishing the Sunshine Super Hub.

\$6.7 BILLION WEST GATE TUNNEL

The Victorian Government is partnering Transurban to build a \$6.7 billion suite of projects, that include the West Gate Tunnel and Webb Dock Access Improvements.

\$2 BILLION WESTERN ROADS UPGRADE

Work is commencing on projects to transform eight priority roads in Melbourne's western suburbs at Point Cook, Truganina, Laverton North, Hoppers Crossing, Footscray and Werribee. \$200 million in additional funding will be allocated to Tulla upgrades.

\$2 BILLION FOR HOSPITALS IN THE WEST

\$1.5 billion is committed to constructing a new hospital in Footscray. Additional funding will be provided for incremental development of the Sunshine and Werribee hospitals, not including outcomes of a feasibility study for a hospital at Melton.

\$1 BILLION WESTERN RAIL PLAN

Victoria is investing \$1 billion to electrify two new metro lines through the growth areas of Melton and Wyndham Vale to meet unprecedented demand and enable regional Victoria to grow and be a destination of choice. This will include increased track capacity between Sunshine and the CBD to achieve faster access by metro and more frequent regional trains.

\$1.75 BILLION REGIONAL RAIL REVIVAL

The Ballarat Line upgrade project is underway to enable more trains and improved reliability for Melbourne's outer western suburbs, Melton, Bacchus Marsh, Ballan and Ballarat.

\$250 MILLION LEVEL CROSSING REMOVALS

Victoria has allocated \$250 million to remove seven dangerous level crossings across the region at Deer Park, Hoppers Crossing, Sydenham, Sunbury and Williamstown North.

PREFACE

This report provides a summary of views and ideas gathered from young people, youth service providers, business, education, training and community stakeholders in Melbourne's western suburbs. This information was gathered from people who participated in workshops and responded to the question of how major investment in new infrastructure in the region could be leveraged to create better employment opportunity for the region's young people.

Long-term unemployed youth and youth service providers across Melbourne's western suburbs are rarely included in early 'ground zero' planning for major infrastructure projects. The Melbourne Airport Rail Link (MARL) and Sunshine Super Hub (SSH) project is no exception.

Three months after the MARL announcement YouthNow raised concern about lack of opportunity to provide input into project conception. Government departments advised public consultation would commence when terms of reference became available in mid-2019.

History shows delivery of infrastructure projects in Melbourne's west has not led to large numbers of job outcomes for local long-term unemployed youth. Lived experience is that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who secure entry level work from major projects achieve temporary jobs and often find they become working poor.

With a regional youth unemployment level for 17 to 29 year-olds standing at 18.7%; regional under-employment at more than 8.1%; and disengagement levels estimated at higher than 4.5%; the fundamental question arises as to whether new approaches need to be found to achieve better results for local youth. An equally important question is if these unprecedented large scale projects are not an opportunity to try something different – when will such an opportunity arise?

In order to identify an innovative new program(s) that might be leveraged from the MARL/SSH project, YouthNow adopted European practice and facilitated workshops with youth and community in Melbourne's west to provide an unfettered opportunity for people to contribute ideas and views on how government might use its investment to create better local opportunity and more sustainable outcomes for the region's long-term unemployed youth.

This report encapsulates key outcomes from those workshops.

Colleen Bergin
CEO YouthNow

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The Markstone Zing electronic conference tool was selected as the most effective method available to enable YouthNow to cover a range of complex issues in ninety minutes and allow people the opportunity to provide their own views and ideas in their own words. The strength of the Zing process was reflected by highly positive feedback provided from each session:

YOUTH WORKSHOP

- ★ Get this report to the government so they know how we feel and what we want.
- ★ Everyone knows things need to change and improve.
- ★ Nobody is happy with the current situation in our community.
- ★ Honestly, most things put down today are valid points that should be considered.
- ★ We can work out problems and implement them more effectively than government.
- ★ Positive and educational - should do this on a larger scale and more often.
- ★ Today has been very informative.

YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDER WORKSHOP

- ★ It challenged my views.
- ★ Very excited for future opportunities to increase youth employment, careers and quality of life in my local area.
- ★ Personally, enjoyed the Zing session - very modern.
- ★ Inspired by the work taking place to assist youth people in the west.
- ★ Realising amazing opportunities are happening now and in the future for youth in the West.
- ★ This was a smart way to involve all concerned parties and develop better strategies.
- ★ Driven to contribute further to assist youth.

INDUSTRY AND INSTITUTIONS WORKSHOP

- ★ Good tool to brainstorm. Great way to get ideas out.
- ★ I loved this model of sharing ideas. Get through a lot in a short time.
- ★ Excellent process to start/increase momentum to increase employment in the west.
- ★ Great way to have many different people in the one room to brainstorm.
- ★ Good chance to see different views. Efficient way to cover a lot of ground.
- ★ It's a great platform with getting people of different and diverse backgrounds (industry and culturally) to participate.

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

- ★ Highly valuable piece of work for our community.
- ★ Effective way to contribute to discussion on an equitable basis.
- ★ Great opportunity to contribute ideas and address a significant issue.
- ★ Great brainstorming way of the future. Very effective technology.
- ★ Engaging. Did not have to listen to any waffle.
- ★ People with different ideas and views got them out without argument or boring speeches.
- ★ Impressive with the way it was done. Short, sharp, and focused.
- ★ Creates a big think tank in the room. Way better than Post-it notes!
- ★ Great turnout! Great session that needs repeating.
- ★ Everyone got a chance to put their ideas.
- ★ Got the chance to write what I wanted to say.

OVERVIEW

Young people in the West continue to experience higher than usual levels of disadvantage, disengagement and unemployment compared to young people in other areas of Melbourne. The amount of young people in the West, not in full time study or training, not working and not looking for work (NEET) continues to increase in Melbourne's West despite the delivery of government youth employment programs. This inequality highlights the need to develop new and innovative approaches and seize on opportunities to provide ongoing and effective support to aid young people into sustainable long-term work.

This report outlines recommendations and a summary of views and ideas gathered from youth, youth service providers and other key stakeholders in Melbourne's west on how investment in the delivery of the proposed Melbourne Airport Rail Link (MARL) and Sunshine Super Hub (SSH) and other projects across the region could be leveraged to provide larger scale and better job, education and training opportunity for local unemployed youth.

ZING WORKSHOPS

The purpose of the workshops was to enable participants to explore complex ideas and contribute ideas and views on how unprecedented government investment in building new infrastructure in the region could be leveraged to create large scale benefit local youth. Zing provided participants a unique opportunity to contribute thoughts in their own words and participate in a live collaborative think tank environment.

CAPTURING THE 'SPIRIT' OF THE WEST

Workshop participants characterised Melbourne's west as a multicultural and multi-ethnic population which is not afraid of diversity or change. It is smart in making the most of any opportunities and is tackling challenges inherent in fast tracking population growth. Its local people demonstrate their strength in courage and include quiet achievers working behind the scenes to get things done, while at the same time, showing that they are capable of magical and miraculous results. It is a socially inclusive community which enjoys recognition at high levels of government and is a community acutely aware it needs to make the most of this extraordinary once in a hundred year opportunity.

DESCRIBING YOUTH OF THE WEST

When considering the potential youth of the West offer, the workshops observed:

Skills: Adversity from disadvantage demands an innovative mindset. Their capacity to think laterally and outside the box, preparedness to get things done, resilience, flexibility and learning to be organised, many cultural perspectives, undervalued but smart, loyal and bold, light-hearted and versatile, persistent, irrepressible, and able to produce great things from small starts.

Attributes: Desire to succeed, friendly, display leadership when given the chance, entertaining, humorous, preparedness to stand up for themselves, reconnecting and engaging, interested in advancing the interests of the West, prepared to make their contribution, strong women, representative of many cultures and thinking.

Prejudice: Kids in West aren't seen as smart as others is a perception, youth not seen as qualified, 60% local jobs go to people who live outside the area; young people need to get motivated.

Challenges: Lack of experience and the opportunity to gain it, physical and mental health issues, age-related concerns such as being too young to have acquired relevant experience, lifestyle discrimination factors, lack of the number of permanent jobs available, competing family obligations, high rent and expenses, travel issues – involving both cost and distance, employers playing it safe and not offering opportunities to inexperienced applicants, preference for casual offers rather than permanent, necessity for relevant qualifications including driving license requirements and no way to gain it.

UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY

Workshop participants unanimously supported the view that the delivery of major new infrastructure across the region provides an unprecedented opportunity to create new large scale job, education and training opportunities for the region's large pool of long-term and disadvantaged unemployed youth. Some practical and specific opportunities were raised on how to capitalise on specific opportunities in the short, medium and long term:

- ★ Raise awareness and gain the support of the whole community in the West.
- ★ Identify ways to positively discriminate towards the West in procurement/employment policies.
- ★ Get government to agree to develop a new regional solution rather than impose the same government approaches that have not worked in the west. 'Give us a go.'
- ★ Purposefully engage with young people from multicultural and ethnic backgrounds as well as local industries through their various associations.
- ★ Lay down a foundation of the relevant skills currently required and emerging skillsets that will be needed by restructuring and expanding training opportunities and approaches and starting in schools through to universities, TAFE and Polytech institutions.

POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS

Workshop participants were practical and identified challenges and constraints on the development of a new regional approach:

- ★ Need to get Federal government actively involved in a new regional approach.
- ★ Need to get State government actively involved in a new regional approach.
- ★ Need to bring local councils onboard from officer level through to councillors.
- ★ Need to overcome outmoded thinking and approaches to training and skills development.
- ★ Finesse communication between educational institutions and industry.
- ★ Address planning regulations and requirements to fast-track development.
- ★ Likely need for a local development authority.
- ★ Align the focus and commitment of all levels of government.
- ★ Gain Centrelink involvement to fine tune/trial requirements and regulations.
- ★ Apathy and lack of commitment to a common purpose.
- ★ Local baseline of technology may work against the required advanced manufacturing technology required.
- ★ A possible influx of overseas workers from international companies involved.

USEFUL STRATEGIES

Workshop participants identified several strategies that help to achieve the goals:

- ★ The creation of an overarching Authority to coordinate the developments on a regional basis and to provide support and any necessary oversight of a mass youth engagement program throughout the decade.
- ★ Finding a Champion(s) to advocate the project and its possibilities,
- ★ Establish a Committee for Brimbank along the lines of the Committee for Melbourne,
- ★ Consider the concept of a Future Fund for the West.
- ★ Organise Career Roadshows to secondary schools on prospects from these projects
- ★ Hold regular Think Tanks (or Tanks to Think in) to engage young people in the consideration of solutions to 'wicked problems' and to develop design thinking skills,
- ★ Connect with industry organisations that represent companies likely to be involved in bids.

GETTING INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Suggestions for ensuring industry engages young, local talent in each stage of these projects:

- ★ Work through business associations to the members.
- ★ Engage business in re-engineering skills development programs and training pathways.
- ★ Revisit the concept of a job guarantee.
- ★ Approach the federal government to assist local business transition to advanced manufacturing and support the necessary skills training involved.
- ★ Organise a series of Roundtable discussions across various sectors and Industry Forums
- ★ Approach councils in the region to support better employment opportunities for local youth.
- ★ Co-design industry solutions by engaging young people in the process.
- ★ Develop a campaign to change the negative narrative concerning young people and their employment in the West.



WHAT YOUTH THINK

Young people from the six western municipalities were invited to provide views and ideas on how major government investment in new infrastructure over the next decade could be used to create better education, training and job opportunities for them.

Workshop participants included 17 to 28 year-olds from a cross section of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and lived experience. Using Zing they made the following suggestions:

GROUNDWORK FOR SUCCESS

Young people identified important groundwork that may need to be undertaken to achieve better local youth outcomes from MARL and other projects:

- ★ definitely exploit these projects to create more job, education and training opportunities in the west - youth who live in the west to be given priority
- ★ create a dedicated place or center to deal with all things arising from this initiative.
- ★ Revamp and improve Centrelink - get their involvement or it won't work
- ★ Streamline job search initiatives with more support for people looking for work
- ★ Apply and police labour laws better than is happening
- ★ Literally get anything moving now, something sooner rather than later
- ★ Need more opportunities for young people to get their voice heard
- ★ Need to get schools involved
- ★ Better local support to ensure high functioning mental health services with a better understanding of immature youth that have had to grow up fast.
- ★ Ensure real support for young carers.
- ★ More education addressing physical and mental health.
- ★ The availability of more mentors, people with life experience helping youth

PRACTICAL EARLY STEPS THAT COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Young People were given the opportunity to specify those steps that might make a difference in achieving better job outcomes from this initiative:

- ★ More education opportunities incorporating Certs 2,3,4.
- ★ More support around mental and family support.
- ★ More support for child care for young parents.
- ★ More diverse work experience opportunities.
- ★ Improved interview and application processes.
- ★ More relevant school programs.
- ★ Availability of mentors.
- ★ Employment advertising related to the West.
- ★ Employment advertising that is appropriate to young audiences.
- ★ More focus on practical and applicable skill development.
- ★ Linking the school curriculum to certificates 2, 3 and 4 as this will may be more relevant to emerging jobs.
- ★ A requirement to enforce labor regulations affecting young people.
- ★ Implementing work experience programs earlier in the education cycle.

FACTORS HOLDING YOUNG PEOPLE BACK

Each young person identified factors they considered might be holding them back from obtaining permanent jobs. These included:

- ★ Poverty – cannot afford training, tools, clothes or other things to start a job.
- ★ Lack of experience and the opportunity to gain it.
- ★ Age-related concerns such as being too young to have acquired relevant experience.
- ★ Lack of the number of permanent jobs available.
- ★ Most jobs are temporary – only last a few weeks.
- ★ Employers playing it safe and not wanting entry level jobseekers.
- ★ Employers not offering opportunities to inexperienced applicants.
- ★ Preference for casual employees rather than permanent.
- ★ Necessity for relevant qualifications including driving license requirements and no opportunity to gain them.
- ★ Lifestyle discrimination factors.
- ★ Physical and mental health issues.
- ★ Competing family obligations.
- ★ High rent and expenses.
- ★ Personal cost of equipment and boots etc to start a new job.
- ★ Travel issues – involving both cost and distance.
- ★ Centrelink.

SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Young people identified skills and attributes they believe they needed to develop to become more effective in securing job opportunity from these major infrastructure projects:

- ★ Teamwork and collaboration - an ability to work independently as well as a team.
- ★ Communication capacity and confidence.
- ★ How to communicate with bureaucrats.
- ★ Persistence and resilience skills.
- ★ How to persist and maintain effort when in survival mode.
- ★ A thick skin – to deal with prejudice.
- ★ Creative and lateral thinking.
- ★ Networking skills.
- ★ IT and technical skills.
- ★ Computer application experience.
- ★ Ability for self-promotion.
- ★ Understand entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship.
- ★ A sense of humour and of the ridiculous.
- ★ An understanding of life situations.
- ★ Financial management skills.
- ★ Research skills.
- ★ Specific skills related to particular industries.
- ★ Preparedness to put in the necessary research.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Further support young people would like to see offered to them and employers to create more sustainable employment outcomes for both:

- ★ Incentives for companies to offer more job opportunities.
- ★ Incentives for companies to offer more work experience.
- ★ Job probation initiatives.
- ★ Awareness and access to start-up support for young entrepreneurs.
- ★ Better understanding of how to work globally through the internet.
- ★ Access to better networking opportunities – end the isolation.
- ★ More training in effective job seeking in a changing world of work.
- ★ More education in lateral thinking.
- ★ More local support centres.

CENTRELINK

Youth reflected on current programs managed by Centrelink for out of work young people. It was clear from both discussion and their input that the system is not working well.

- ★ Lacks relevant and up to day information of job availability. Database needs to be modernized.
- ★ Centrelink's system needs to be streamlined to ensure greater efficiency.
- ★ Needs to provide better job seeker support by staff from more diverse background.
- ★ Needs to have staff who give a damn.
- ★ Needs to have staff who have a better understanding of job seeker point of view.
- ★ Needs to have staff committed to ensuring more positive outcomes and experiences.
- ★ Less monitoring would help – more time to find work.
- ★ Need to replace the telephone robots with an actual person on the line.
- ★ More focus on knowledge to do with the mental and physical health of their clients.

GEARING UP LOCAL AGENCIES

Youth service providers and youth employment organisations considered how best to prepare local agencies in Melbourne's west to assist government to create better youth employment outcomes from major infrastructure investment over the next decade.

STRENGTHS AND ADVANTAGES

A range of attributes were identified as strengths and advantages youth services in the West might offer to achieve a better outcome for young people:

- ★ Sound understanding of the local environment.
- ★ The west is a powerful region given proper resourcing.
- ★ Inventive and adaptable – have to be flexible to deal with govt changes.
- ★ Know what works and doesn't work – never consulted by government.
- ★ Knows more about youth issues than government does.
- ★ Some are highly innovative – their program ideas are copied by government.
- ★ Some prepared to invest and move forward ahead of others.
- ★ Persistent winning spirit.
- ★ Passionate and consistent with strength of purpose – committed to youth.
- ★ A proven ability to tackle the impossible against all odds.
- ★ Seen as caring, cool, engaged by young people.
- ★ Great achievers.

VIEWS ON THE IDEA OF A NEW "YOUTH GUARANTEE"

Youth service providers identified components that would need to be included in a new 'Work Guarantee' for young people to get the most out of the investment in projects:

- ★ An effective functional alignment between industry and professional requirements.
- ★ New learning pathways to prepare local young people to meet those requirements-especially around the rail industry and construction in rail space.
- ★ A collaborative partnership between local youth services and industry to ensure sustained, long term employment is managed for young people.
- ★ Effective access to work for youth through public transport options.
- ★ Create 'Try before you buy' workplace experiences.
- ★ Offer on the job training and work experience and design more informal and flexible local work experience opportunities.
- ★ Involve the whole community through an effective campaign.
- ★ Maintain a regional database to report on young people from the West who may be employed through these projects.
- ★ Create a program of scale.
- ★ Buy in from both Federal and State government.
- ★ Buy in from Centrelink.
- ★ The construction projects will run for a decade – think of a program that can follow a 17 year old to a 27 year old where they are stronger placed at the end of it.

GOVERNANCE

Youth services identified some effective strategies to ensure proper oversight of government funding for a new program and relevant work and skills development is achieved included:

- ★ Set up a steering committee guided by youth service provider.
- ★ Have Centrelink and federal depts actively involved in steering committee.
- ★ Have State departments/agencies actively involved in steering committee.
- ★ Have six local governments involved.
- ★ Getting buy-in from the whole community.
- ★ Undertake campaign for the youth of the west.
- ★ Develop tailored targeted programs for youth.
- ★ Develop performance targets informed by overseas experience.
- ★ Recruit early interest among young people in the education system.
- ★ Use Connect West website as a portal to promote initiatives.
- ★ Get representative of all interests committed to the success of this initiative ensuring all parties are on the same page.
- ★ Convince local government to support with funding.
- ★ Get existing regional committees to get on board – not try to take control.

BUSINESS AND UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

Ways to engage businesses and learning institutions to identify skills needed and how to reconfigure relevant skill development programs and training pathways:

- ★ Form an industry, business university reference group for youth project.
- ★ Undertake a comprehensive skills audit and identification of future skill.
- ★ Engage businesses and learning institutions to reconfigure existing skill development programs and training pathways to make them more relevant – graduates of current programs are not getting sustainable job outcomes.
- ★ Look to the future offered by this initiative and a local skills audit, engage universities, TAFE and industry partners and schools in a vertically integrated design process that ensures new and more relevant knowledge and skills courses are on offer to meet the challenge of delivering this initiative.
- ★ Establish industry and university collaboration precinct in the heart of Sunshine.
- ★ Encourage the effective use of the Connect West portal and Western Learning Hub as basic infrastructure to pursue success.
- ★ Instigate regular programs with employers to promote and engage businesses in the initiative, including an inclusive Awards program to encourage commitment and recognition.

LOCAL ALLIANCES

Some of the strategic alliances which were identified as relevant in winning significant tenders included:

- ★ Adopting a regional approach to data collection and analysis.
- ★ Collective focus on tender opportunities arising from the initiative as the means to secure successful tender outcomes for organisations involving youth.
- ★ Creating an intermediary role through the establishment of an HR body designed specifically for purpose and matched by an alliance of youth organisations in their role of creating opportunities for disadvantaged youth.

BRINGING THE WEST TOGETHER

There was discussion from participants about the need to establish a local Authority for the MARL/SSH project that could provide a driver and oversight required to ensure a significant role to be played by industries and workers from the West

Putting this mechanism in place would provide an opportunity for strategic and collaborative discussion and decision making that is representative of local interests and involvement, including the relevant stakeholders.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

- ★ An overarching body could operate with specific portfolio interests with a mandate to form a vision for the enterprise.
- ★ It would need to have status and influence.
- ★ Operate with transparency.
- ★ A commitment to building social capital as a recognised authority with powers to make decisions and co-opt the involvement of Federal and State agencies.
- ★ To the extent it can place a focus on innovative ways to address systemic problems holding disadvantaged local youth in the region from securing sustainable jobs.
- ★ It's programs would need to be sensitive to the ongoing effects of people who have suffered trauma, display cultural competence and sensitivity.
- ★ To ensure the involvement of local community leaders.
- ★ To the extent it can, facilitate local industry access to project contracts.
- ★ This authority would need to be well-resourced, with philanthropic involvement.
- ★ Be accountable to the regional community with regular reporting back and maintaining open lines of communication at all times.

LOCAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ To ensure relevant skills can be developed in the community to meet potential demand in the near future it is important to ensure the early involvement of schools from the outset.
- ★ A challenge will be to identify and address the local provision of specific skillsets that may be required based on a thorough-going engagement of industry with trainers as well as an assessment of relevant international experience.
- ★ Adequate resourcing will be required to undertake a comprehensive skills gap analysis and an audit or review of accredited learning and training currently on offer, particularly any experiential and on the job training initiatives. Whatever training regime is adopted it needs to be configured to ensure it is oriented to the future so that skillsets developed can survive the life of the projects.

OTHER ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE

- ★ Ensuring public transport options (services) to construction sites.
- ★ More flexible approach by employers to degree of experience required at entry levels.
- ★ Extend the focus to include service sectors such as hospitality, provision of rail sleepers, recycled plastic for road making and any other such goods and services that could be sourced from within the West.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES OR CONSTRAINTS ON ASSISTING LOCAL JOBSEEKERS

- ★ Cultural and age discrimination.
- ★ Challenges based on a lack of experience.
- ★ Recognising the value inherent in multicultural contribution.
- ★ English language challenges and failing education initiatives.
- ★ Personal cost of equipment, boots and other items to start a new job.
- ★ A lack of commitment of learning institutions.

- ★ Failure to recognise the potential contribution of innovative start-ups.
- ★ Dealing with a negative community image and the demonizing of some local ethnic groups and their culture.

STRATEGIES TO ENSURE THE MOST RETURN

- ★ Consider introducing set quotas and protocols to add weighting to recruiting employees, particularly youth, from the West.
- ★ Adopt a strategy to hasten slowly and adopt a proof of concept approach that would ensure project development took place in stages.
- ★ Contracts need to be clearly spelt out to enable industries to gear up and to ensure proper training was put in place.
- ★ There needs to be more preparedness on the part of employers to recognise overseas qualifications and experience newcomers bring.
- ★ Investigate ways of establishing a series of complementary 'hubs' in the West charged with addressing the emerging requirements of infrastructure procurement and advanced manufacture.
- ★ To ensure that emerging trends can be identified early and addressed at the outset.

WAYS TO CONVINC EMPLOYERS

- ★ Build rapport between employing organisations and support agencies by promoting direct face to face contact between employers and young people.
- ★ Get a local youth service provider involved – not a national agency otherwise a local solution will not be found. Local business will support local approach backed by govt.
- ★ Make a virtue of proximity and savings in travel as well as the rich pool of creative energy and insight that comes with cultural diversity.
- ★ Working harmoniously with others builds social cohesion within the community as well as community health and wellbeing.
- ★ Recent arrivals provide workers who are highly motivated for a secure income in their new land.
- ★ This project provides an opportunity for employers to engage in the community and have that engagement recognised and applauded.
- ★ The infrastructure proposal provides high incentives for young and old workers to improve living conditions in the West.

KEY FINDINGS

More than 25 organisations and 50 young people from the West participated in the workshops. This cross section representation and the commonality of themes in ideas and responses that emerged from the workshops create important data for conceiving new opportunities for youth in the West.

Key findings from the workshops include:

- a) Stakeholders in the Melbourne West region agree that the spend of \$20+ billion on MARL/SSH and other major projects over the next decade create a once in 100 year opportunity to tackle persistent major youth unemployment issues in the region. This unique opportunity provides the context for shaping new approaches to youth issues.
- b) While Federal and State government are committed to creating youth apprenticeship, traineeship and entry level job opportunities from projects for long-term unemployed youth – historical outcomes have not been effective for the large number of youth who are unemployed in Melbourne's west.
- c) A different approach needs to be found to deliver better outcomes for a larger number of young people. Youth in the west do not start on equal terms with others – current processes assume they do. Change is needed.
- d) There is a need to take immediate local action. From June 2019 we have 2 years until construction on the major projects get underway in earnest.
- e) An innovative approach to the region's youth unemployment challenge will not succeed if it is not supported by Federal and State government. Key agencies such as Centrelink need to be at the table.
- f) Given the limited historical success of Federal and State Government youth programs in Melbourne's west, both governments need to give local agencies the opportunity to develop a different approach and provide early support to enable development, trial and evaluation of an alternative local approach, including measures to evaluate and determine that better local results are being achieved.
- g) Federal and State Government need to provide early funding to a local regional initiative to support the early implementation and trial of new, innovative local approaches that aim to more effectively engage youth and reduce persistent, high levels of long-term youth unemployment in Melbourne's west.
- h) In developing an innovative local approach learn from overseas public democracy methods, create a local 'think tank' on tackling youth issues and get people involved now – a local regional solution needs to be articulated, shaped and developed with stakeholders.
- i) By 2024 Melbourne's west faces the reality that disadvantaged youth who have experienced persistent cycles of unemployment since the 2009 global financial crisis period will reach 30 years of age. Many will have had little experience of a continuous work history; have little or no savings; survive pay to pay as working poor; require welfare support, have limited means to support a family; and have limited hopes to secure and meet the repayments of a mortgage.
- j) Local schools need to be involved in local trial programs. 10 year olds from socially disadvantaged backgrounds who attend local primary schools in 2019 will reach 18 when the projects are completed in 2028 – will they have a demonstrably better pathway to employment and a more financially secure future than they have today?

CONCLUSION

Workshop participants stated overwhelmingly they were passionate about improving the potential of youth in the West and committed to work with government to create new opportunity and outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From inputs obtained from the workshops, and consideration of unprecedented opportunity that will arise from the delivery of major infrastructure projects in Melbourne's west YouthNow makes the following recommendations:

1. Creation of an overarching "Development Authority" for Melbourne's western region with Federal, State and Local government representation, funded by Government with decision making and accountability powers.
2. The Development Authority to take responsibility for managing and planning, procurement and employment policies and processes related to the delivery of the infrastructure projects
3. Develop procurement and accountability requirements for all infrastructure project contracts that give youth of the West jobs/work/training as a priority
4. The Development Authority to delegate responsibility to a local youth services secretariat for the creation and management of a regional Youth Jobs Employment and Training initiative for the West
5. The Youth Jobs Employment and Training Secretariat to work with local stakeholders to develop a new youth employment service model for the West embracing innovative practices informed by local and overseas experiences and learnings
6. Infrastructure project contractors to give preference to youth sourced through the Secretariat model
7. YouthNow as a prominent regional youth employment services leader with 20 years' extensive local experience in advocacy, research and innovative youth employment programs to act as inaugural chair of the secretariat and attract immediate support and funding to maintain momentum for the trial and development of a new local youth employment service
8. In the interim, in lieu of achieving early Federal and/or State government support, YouthNow to:
 - continue to advocate to Government for the secretariat and a new regional youth employment program
 - continue to bring organisations together to maintain the momentum and to develop the plan/proposal for the first two year trial to commence in late 2019
9. A strong focus to be given to developing and trialing new approaches from July 2019-June 2021 in the lead up to the commencement of construction associated with the infrastructure projects.
10. Federal and State Government to fund a new youth employment service model in the West
11. Centrelink to be an active partner in the development and delivery of the new model
Consideration be given to how a modern youth guarantee/youth wage approach could be implemented as part of the government investment in the west.
12. A trial site/s to be identified for the new employment model for the West
13. The Secretariat to facilitate partnership with Education Providers in the west starting in primary school to develop in school curriculum/ programs to prepare the youth for the work to come
14. Partner with industry and business to provide education and support in working with young people
15. Establish a skills/work facility in Sunshine to support young people into work over the next decade, with Industry, Businesses and Local Government contributing to the building and ongoing funding.
16. Examine the UK practice of having companies allocate % of any contracts they receive to the centre.YouthNow to work with University partners to provide research, articulation and evaluation during the development and trial of the new model for youth employment in Melbourne's west to evaluate local success and potential replication in like regions Australia wide

**ATTACHMENT A
RAW DATA FROM THE WORKSHOPS**

WORKSHOP 1

1. How youth from the West can best benefit from this \$15 Billion infrastructure investment?

1.1. Specific opportunities that might present themselves in the short, medium or long term:

- ▶ Opportunity to raise awareness of the issue by bringing the community together behind a common cause and remove the status of having the highest youth unemployment in Melbourne.
- ▶ Need for workers and to build workforce capacity through reskilling. Develop upskilling and multi-skilling opportunities through a structured allocation of resources to western youth together with a key employer commitment to helping youth from West.
- ▶ Use incentives to support businesses to employ local young people in government tenders/ contracts – such as jobs from infrastructure upgrades. I.e. Rail to airport. Westgate tunnel project. Level crossing removal etc.
- ▶ Subsidise alternative training which must be different. Accredited courses, leading to apprenticeships in commercial construction offered free of charge.
- ▶ Before the projects kick off, we need to think about the additional projects that will come such as hotels, residential towers, more TAFE and university campuses and hospital facilities to create work opportunity.
- ▶ Need to plan a program that can include thousands of young people across the West. Social procurement needs to be written into service contracts for education, training and employment KPIs for companies.
- ▶ Take a collaborative approach to the opportunity and a new approach to support for youth by the federal government. Jobs with less experience are needed with training attached.
- ▶ Start an education program from grade 6 to take the kids through next 10 years – develop a chance to break the welfare cycle.
- ▶ Holding organisations responsible for the hiring of local people, particularly local manufacturers employing disadvantaged youth and upskilling them to produce materials for infrastructure projects.
- ▶ Local trades (cafes, restaurants etc) employing young people with the demand for infrastructure being built means more people in jobs and more demand on local services.
- ▶ Invite further investment through better profile and status of the region, such as public/private partnership headquarters being located locally.
- ▶ Get ready to get engaged. Leverage opportunities surrounding these projects by creating long term career prospects across the world, creating a highly skilled area, making a difference to our community, finding a career pathway that suits everyone with non-discriminatory opportunities for all involved.
- ▶ Purposefully engage many young people from multicultural backgrounds. Skilling up can be part of building success and self-esteem.
- ▶ Incredible life time thinking that can make an ordinary project exciting.
- ▶ Reinventing youth employment programs with an ability to engage youth in purposeful ways to build their community.
- ▶ Engage with employers differently e.g. apprenticeships in new fields such as aerospace technology.
- ▶ Business precincts developing.
- ▶ Use clothes manufacturing sites as spaces for training.
- ▶ Micro learning - technology driven.
- ▶ Presenting a united Brimbank front to support jobs for local young people.
- ▶ Specific focus on disengaged young people to circuit break patterns of offending behaviour and give focus and hope for this group.

1.2. Where any opposition might come from and challenges that may need to be overcome:

- ▶ Old thinking – leading to the same outcome. Kids in West aren't as smart as others is a perception to deal with.
- ▶ Government funding hurdles. Government funding restrictions meaning a lack of opportunities for local businesses.
- ▶ School/TAFE/Universities not being up to challenge with old style training and structures - not enough focus on transferable skills and outdated training styles. Knowing which skills to train in and knowledge of what we can use – a lack of soft skills, enterprise skills as part of regular training.
- ▶ Technology gaps locally mean skills levels may be sub-optimal for advanced technology proposed to be used.
- ▶ Government and industry want to do the same thing as always - that does not and has not worked for local youth. Need a new approach and it's time for innovation. This chance will never come again.
- ▶ Lack of awareness and engagement of the local community. Thousands of young people need to get motivated. Can we get the kids to turn up?
- ▶ Apathy or the lack of agreement on what we want and a lack of political clout and influence for the West.
- ▶ Current federal government is not interested in the west of Melbourne - need federal government and political buy-in.
- ▶ Centrelink will be a problem - need them on board and this to be a special project for them. Dealing with the challenge posed by Centrelink regulations.
- ▶ Council needs to find its voice and strongly represent the need for stronger outcomes for the municipality and the region. No one else can do it - they are our elected advocates.
- ▶ Close mindedness of council officers. Brimbank council is too bogged down in procedure but may still too readily approve new developments. Planning regulations and requirements may offer constraints with possible heritage and environmental barriers.
- ▶ Not enough specialised and local community groups. People power can get the right outcomes - even if there is a short period of time. If other countries can do it, we can!
- ▶ Different views and ideas, often political and a lack of interest from other regions. E.g. East and South-East. Other communities across the country wanting access to these opportunities.
- ▶ Massive, and over the top, company requirements. Businesses who want quick tender processing.
- ▶ Communication issues between the education sector and business with different priorities and expected outcomes.
- ▶ Not enough training opportunity and community resources. Resources not immediately being available for the number of young people and their supporters involved and not enough mentoring for young people in specific areas.
- ▶ Correct budgeting and a commitment to see it through. Holding companies or contractors to account and to keeping their word.
- ▶ Disagreement between state and federal governments. Conflicting priorities between State and Federal Governments - ensuring they're on the same page or the fallout from a possible change of government – and a consequent change of agenda.
- ▶ Net flow between public and private as example of a built-in community sponsorship component.
- ▶ Limitations of geography and lack of other supporting infrastructure (public transport etc). Bad or inadequate infrastructure to start with and a limited number of skilled workers.
- ▶ Peak employer bodies being worried about the state of readiness of new workers. International companies wanting to bring in their own workforces.
- ▶ Project cost overruns being blamed on the workers and their unions.
- ▶ West is too safe a Labor stronghold, so governments won't care! Labor party putting its money where its mouth is - no allowing any excuses.

- ▶ Push back from local community - lack of engagement and not being aspirational enough. Lack of understanding of the barriers that young people might be facing from their families and community.
- ▶ Possibility of 'back room' deals already being in place to cover vested interests in tender bids.
- ▶ Awareness of different age cohorts involving these opportunities and getting youth leadership engaged with these opportunities or any sections of the community feeling excluded.
- ▶ Tenders where cost-cutting might exclude local young people in projects. Benefit of projects should not be just budget-focussed but people-focussed as related to benefits and challenges that need to be addressed to include local young people.
- ▶ Non-engaging activity for youth themselves. Will it target what they want?
- ▶ Time factors.

1.3. Strategies worth considering to best capitalise on this opportunity:

- ▶ Establish a Development Authority that will coordinate the development of projects and provide oversight for a mass youth engagement program - every kid gets chance to opt in – not just jobs, training and education - also engagement, entrepreneurship and other strategies to develop youth.
- ▶ Create a Future Fund for the West – direct a percentage of interest earned on project funding on hold for infrastructure initiatives or along the lines of using the interest of the Builders Guarantee fund for social purpose.
- ▶ Need local companies to man up. Encourage business consortiums with close relationships to youth skills development/work experience. Find a Champion to advocate the project.
- ▶ State and Federal support. Gain greater involvement from councils in the region with commitments from all levels of Government.
- ▶ Skills, Skills, Skills and Funding, Funding, Funding
- ▶ New federal seat of Fraser- new MP offers a chance for a new start for the West. Will he be the guy who looks over this project?
- ▶ Significant culture change at the council, especially with relation to economic development. Introduce a regular council agenda item to monitor this initiative.
- ▶ Young people paid to learn and gain experience. Start our kids thinking and working globally via internet like they do in UK, USA, Canada etc
- ▶ Establish a "Committee for Brimbank' involving a wide cross-section of sectors along the lines of Committee for Melbourne.
- ▶ New federal program to be trialled with kids in the region - innovation means some may work others may not – need to give it a go.
- ▶ Allow youth to change their mind, grow and develop across multiple jobs/work experiences. Need High Schools on Board!
- ▶ Mount Career roadshows at high schools from engineering firms etc.
- ▶ Encourage/nurture youth activism and youth-led campaigning. Allow young people a sense of ownership on the overall developments.
- ▶ Follow International leaders that have succeeded in creating the right infrastructure. Research and provide evidence of what has worked.
- ▶ Bring the right/strategic stakeholders together and make sure the project is apolitical and set up a G21 style organisation to oversee social procurement.
- ▶ Mount a grassroots campaign for community support
- ▶ Organise Think Tanks with young people to strategize solutions to wicked problems, encourage disruptive design thinking and to generate community led strategies and develop project proposals.
- ▶ Develop youth skills development pathways to align with an employment strategy.
- ▶ Create strategic discussions right now with builders, government departments and increase the number of graduates from Harvester TAFE college.

- ▶ Consider a new migrant intake to meet skills requirement of projects.
- ▶ Linkage partnerships to give holistic approach. Develop engagement strategies to give strength to any offering.
- ▶ Get on the front foot with industry organisations we expect to be major bidders.
- ▶ Identify gaps where we need educational design in micro-learning and utilise technologies
- ▶ Bringing in expertise where needed - we don't have the answers and skills
- ▶ Clarity of roles in working through this process to acquire local jobs for local young people
- ▶ Young people working locally reducing congestion by not travelling across Melbourne for work.
- ▶ Involve the target. Speak to the Youth to bring in young people's ideas, as well as surveys for all the community.
- ▶ Explore community-run funding models and have a positive discrimination procurement strategy put in place.

1.4. What needs to be done now to set the groundworks for such initiatives:

- ▶ Need to engage federal department in Canberra around new programs and approach them to be trialled here – this is the best chance in next 50 years.
- ▶ Introduce a 'Future of Brimbank' module into the local curriculum of secondary schools.
- ▶ Capitalise on the global nature of the area, utilising language skills, networks and family connections. Identify any other linkage opportunities that we can leverage?
- ▶ Start accepting and building on possibilities when Sunshine becomes the start and finish of the Melbourne -Brisbane fast train.
- ▶ Have 2 years to get people trained to work on the projects
- ▶ Come together with an open agenda and get big business on board. Work on the three levels of government through effective marketing. Establish a Youth reference group for the whole of the West and develop a 'Manifesto' for the West with media exposure through advertising/ marketing.
- ▶ Ensure ease of access to information for consultants and contractors working on the projects - a single point of contact.
- ▶ Develop a knowledge base of key intelligence and information to inform advocacy, planning, employment and training strategies. Enshrine a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics focus.
- ▶ Gather information on what is working and not working. Undertake surveys and promote information sessions. Undertake a scoping analysis of employment gaps and opportunities.
- ▶ Coordinated approach is a priority. Establish a high-profile stakeholder group ASAP to develop focus of this initiative – a collaborative advisory group and develop a 'Manifesto' for the West with media exposure through advertising/ marketing.
- ▶ Create a group/platform to incubate entrepreneurial thinkers. We need to invent a local program - not just copy someone else's. We have very different needs and experiences.
- ▶ Establish the Committee for Brimbank (like the Committee for Melbourne).
- ▶ Connect this opportunity to others that will come out of this investment - health etc
- ▶ A Western region jobs compact for major projects involving an integrated education and training strategy (place based) integrated transport plan for the West - rapid research to establish international best practice for transport hubs and leveraging transport hubs.
- ▶ Arrange for builders/contractors to meet with local enthusiasts and institutions in education.
- ▶ Codesign initiatives involving our youth at each stage, starting with primary schools.
- ▶ New public transport plan - these projects have come forward, so all the plans need to be revised. Connect HP to Sunshine to hospital to VU to Caroline springs by e-bus like Europe.
- ▶ Start thinking of the hotels, museums, art galleries and other public infrastructure we will need for the thousands of people who will come here.

- ▶ Make Sunshine a fun and creative place to be, irrespective of infrastructure funding.
- ▶ Campaign for better public transport for people to get to work. Better connect Brimbank with internal road infrastructure to complement the rail investment.
- ▶ Provide the outcome of this workshop to govt/council. – with recommendations for action.
- ▶ Promote 'Industry 4.0' applications into industry. 3D printing is our future. Encourage innovation and embrace good ideas from overseas.
- ▶ Hold Forums involving organisations – engaging with youth and other stakeholders. Hold more old-style town hall forums. Find ways to ask the youth!
- ▶ Develop Hashtags for a strong, public campaign and involve the local paper as sponsor to ensure regular coverage.
- ▶ Get into schools now with similar Think Tank meetings.
- ▶ New approaches to training
- ▶ Bring back trade schools with a new structured way of learning for the future in manufacturing and labouring.
- ▶ Secure government funding to develop new training structures. Skills training designed for the future. Encourage government involvement using all political parties by ensuring local MPs are on board.

2. What it would take to ensure industry engages this pool of young, local talent in each stage of the possible projects.

- ▶ Approach business associations such as Chambers of Commerce, Lions, Rotary other volunteer organisations to create a collaborative approach and align their goals with ours. Ask them for help to sell benefits of multi-skilled young workforce and bottom line benefits of well-trained locals.
- ▶ Involve businesses in re-structuring the training pathways and to provide more work placement opportunities and convince employers we will do it differently this time. Highlight the benefits and twist their arms with incentives and stressing that they are investing in their future interests by assisting to build their capacity through infrastructure opportunities.
- ▶ Revisit Keating's Training Guarantee concept - provide business and youth with a guarantee of trained/training to meet the skill needs of business and industry - providing youth with diversity and options.
- ▶ Institute a federal program to help business transition to new advanced manufacturing by using local youth. Create a Community Credits program that rewards businesses for focusing on employment opportunities locally.
- ▶ Need a roundtable program for different sectors - auspiced by Council and involving community and business representation.
- ▶ Get the new federal member actively involved and get the new Upper House member to be based in Sunshine. Ask them what they want to achieve in office and keep them informed about this process.
- ▶ Develop policies in local councils to support better employment outcomes for youth. Introduce quotas for council to employ local youth, including apprenticeships – need to lead by example.
- ▶ Talk to Centrelink – determine if there are local initiatives that we can work on together.
- ▶ Run an Industry forum and live stream it on ABC platforms to demonstrate the benefits of employing a highly skilled young local workforce in their projects.
- ▶ Create policies that incentivise companies to use young available workers from the West on these projects
- ▶ \$\$\$ and answer question, "What's in it for me!".
- ▶ Increase involvement via a Facebook page with Brimbank providing the drive and sharing ongoing costs.

- ▶ Identify employer pain point issues and address proactively and provide a solutions-based approach to solve some of their employment, training and supply issues.
- ▶ Co-design solutions with our youth by identifying any barriers or issues they see that would hinder or prevent them from becoming actively engaged into work or training.
- ▶ Adopt a strategic approach to Captains of Industry relevant to the construction development - engage them to have win-win situation for all through incentives and support.
- ▶ Be convincing that support for local young people will bring long term benefits to their business through young people feeling more connected to the local Brimbank community.
- ▶ Research a well-thought out plan and ask them how best to provide support for employers by involving them and working with them on their timelines.
- ▶ Show them the future and change the dialogue and narrative.

UNEMPLOYED YOUTH AND STUDENTS

WORKSHOP 2

1. Given this level of government spending, what steps would make the most difference in helping young people from the West achieve better job outcomes:

Themes: More and more education opportunities incorporating Certs 2,3,4, more support around mental and family support including child care for young parents, more diverse work experience opportunities, improved interview and application processes, more relevant school programs, availability of mentors, use of employment advertising related to the West that's appropriate to young audiences, more focus on practical and applicable skill development, linking the curriculum to certificates 2,3 and 4 that may be relevant to emerging jobs, a requirement to enforce labour regulations affecting young people, implementing work experience programs earlier in the education cycle.

- ▶ It needs to provide more opportunities for young people to get permanent work
- ▶ More youth organisations needed to provide more options for specific training
- ▶ More help based around mental health required, as it's not spoken about or dealt with the way it should be, particularly allowing for more support for youth with addictions.
- ▶ Young people need a louder voice in our community.
- ▶ Provide mentors for disadvantaged kids that don't get the support at home.
- ▶ Consider support for parents with troubled children, instead of allowing them to turn to the worst possible option.
- ▶ Improve the school curriculum to be more focused on practical and applicable skills for the work force with programs to provide work experience professions.
- ▶ Provide more education opportunities and adapt the curriculum to integrate Certs 2, 3 & 4.
- ▶ Subsidise employers with the necessary extra money to take on more students.
- ▶ Design better job advertising strategies, including social media.
- ▶ Enforce rules and regulations for the employment of young people more strictly.
- ▶ Provide childcare support to enable young parents to continue their study or work.
- ▶ Provide experience to people who haven't had work experience for jobs that require such experience and provide different learning and skill development pathways.
- ▶ A plentiful and wide variety of industries of jobs could be created with this initiative with more job opportunities based around popularity and need.
- ▶ Provide job training, interview training for students who are currently studying in order to expand their skills.
- ▶ Put money towards start-up businesses to create more jobs.
- ▶ More face-to-face resume handling instead of online only and change the job application process by doing trial shifts instead of interviews to show rather than tell.
- ▶ Introduce more creative ways and formats for resumes as resumes can look black and white and don't show much of the personality of an applicant.
- ▶ Programs at school that aren't just based around university entrance. Change that approach because it pushes us into one direction instead of allowing us to make our own choices

2. What is currently holding you back from getting a permanent job?

Themes: Lack of experience and the opportunity to gain it, physical and mental health issues, age-related concerns such as being too young to have acquired relevant experience, lifestyle discrimination factors, lack of the number of permanent jobs available, competing family obligations, high rent and expenses, travel issues – involving both cost and distance, employers playing it safe and not offering opportunities to inexperienced applicants, preference for casual offers rather than permanent, necessity for relevant qualifications including driving licence requirements.

- ▶ Employers wanting you to have experience but who aren't willing to give you the opportunity to get that experience.
- ▶ Age issues, being too young to get employment because we have no time to have had experience in the workforce.
- ▶ Too much experience and being considered over-qualified.
- ▶ Personal sickness or mental health issues and a lack of mental support
- ▶ Lack of relevant education
- ▶ No driving licence and no one to teach me to drive
- ▶ Conflicting family commitments
- ▶ Discrimination towards lifestyle issues e.g piercings, tattoos and coloured hair.
- ▶ Curriculum, experience need in profession when you need a starting position to get experience, Age, life style, injuries and criminal background.
- ▶ Not enough businesses to offer jobs or opportunities and not enough pay involved.
- ▶ Rents being too high
- ▶ Employers picking favourites e.g. particular school backgrounds, girls over boys etc
- ▶ Not enough full-time work. Employers preferring part time
- ▶ Family members
- ▶ Experience! Experience! Experience! Not having enough experience with no opportunities to gain experience.
- ▶ Competitive industries as well as competition levels.
- ▶ Competition, online tests, family/ friend issues, long distance
- ▶ Employers prefer casual
- ▶ Too much focus on playing it safe and getting the most qualified or best etc rather than giving people a chance who could really show there potential and maybe even perform better.
- ▶ Discrimination and lack of equality

3. Skills that might be needed to ensure better paid jobs are available from this initiative:

Themes: Teamwork and collaboration - an ability to work independently as a well as a team, communication capacity and confidence, persistence and resilience, IT and technical skills, computer application experience, ability for self-promotion, a sense of humour and of the ridiculous, an understanding of life situations, a thick skin, financial management skills, research as well as specific skills related to particular industries, preparedness to put in the necessary research and maintain persistent effort.

- ▶ Good communication, teamwork and collaborative skills.
- ▶ Interpersonal and social skills in personal interactions and the ability to interact comfortably with other people
- ▶ Ability to keep a positive work environment by cultivating a sense of humour
- ▶ Having real understanding of life situations and their implications
- ▶ Experience leading to self-confidence and being knowledgeable in marketing one's self.

- ▶ The ability to work independently as well as in a team at a moment's notice.
- ▶ Technical skills including IT, computer and equipment skills
- ▶ Leadership capacity
- ▶ Business skills including time management and research skills
- ▶ Preparedness to research the job beforehand.
- ▶ Personal persistence, reliability and the preparedness to put in the necessary effort.
- ▶ Finding the right person or place through effective networking.
- ▶ Specific technical skills within a relevant industry (e.g. Construction and advanced manufacturing)
- ▶ Administration skills such as skills working on cash registers and with applications like Microsoft word, PowerPoint and others.
- ▶ Entrepreneurial skills and mindset as well as the required business skills for a start-up.
- ▶ Money management and financial know how.

4. New jobs, training, education or support services young people would want to see made available?

Themes: Subsidies for companies to offer more job opportunities and work experiences, better networking capabilities, more lateral thinking and training in job seeking, job probation initiatives, start-up support for young entrepreneurs, more opportunities for young people lacking job experience, more support centres.

- ▶ More funding made available to companies to take up more opportunities.
- ▶ Better networking opportunities and capabilities.
- ▶ Need more thinking outside the box in tackling this issue.
- ▶ They need to have classes about the steps required to get a job.
- ▶ Job trials or probationary periods..
- ▶ Work placements for younger teens.
- ▶ Compulsory job trials/work experience with multiple work placements when young
- ▶ Provide more support towards start up businesses by young entrepreneurs.
- ▶ Help the little guy, giving opportunities to people in need with better understanding of how people work differently and deal with things differently.
- ▶ More workplace opportunities.
- ▶ Addressing transportation issues relating to seeking employment.
- ▶ More support towards mental health.
- ▶ More opportunities for youth with no experience (to be given a chance).
- ▶ More support centres for youth.

5. How 'Mutual obligation' and 'Work for the dole' programs currently managed by Centrelink, Job Active Providers and others might be improved or extended:

Themes: Relevant and up to day information of job availability is lacking and Centrelink's database need to be modernised and streamlined to ensure greater efficiency, better support for job seekers is needed from a more diverse staff who give a damn and have a better understanding of their point of view and who are committed to ensuring more positive outcomes and experiences, less monitoring would help and replacing the telephone robots with an actual person on the line, more focus on knowledge to do with the mental and physical health of their clients.

- ▶ Provide better understanding of the employment opportunities that are available now.
- ▶ Design better support for job hunting and cover travel expenses.
- ▶ Educational modules should be included in Work for the Dole programs.
- ▶ Ensure consistency in approaches adopted by the job provider agencies. Make them a more enjoyable experience.
- ▶ Recruit more experienced staff and people who give a damn.

- ▶ Improve access and better phone services.
- ▶ Less monitoring of individuals (kind of like a prisoner)
- ▶ Centrelink's database systems need to be upgraded from DOS to state of the art data capture.
- ▶ The issue isn't that we aren't applying for work, we do and never get a job because the lack of experience holds us back.
- ▶ We need to 'Empty the Swamp' and replace the government with fresh minds, ideas and innovative thinking.
- ▶ Remove the phone robots and allow us to talk to an actual person and not being put 'on hold' for hours.
- ▶ Reduce the requirement for 20 job applications per month as part of Work for The Dole
- ▶ Better staff who are not so annoying to deal with who are committed to a more personalised support to make the process less degrading.
- ▶ More diverse staff who have more understanding of people's life circumstances and who we can relate to e.g., with cultures, races, ages, lifestyles and can offer mental health support.
- ▶ Staff need to have a better understanding of our POV
- ▶ Have nice people committed to more positive outcomes and experiences with these programs.
- ▶ More focus on knowledge relating to mental and psychical health as they don't take it into consideration a lot of the time

YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

WORKSHOP 3

1. The key components of a work guarantee initiative that would best suit the needs of young people in the West securing positions from this proposal?

- ▶ A guarantee to put job seekers from the west first for these jobs, particularly the disadvantaged. Employers/developers need to be convinced to consider and target young people from the west with a guarantee to work with youth service and placement agencies and should include training activities for relevant qualifications and support between jobs.
- ▶ Organise work experience which is related to their preferred profession. Establish a work experience pathways organisation who works to match young people with trades for example or other professions/ positions in this project.
- ▶ Prepare for the types of jobs to be created as well as recognising the need to prepare and support employers to understand young people and their circumstances. Employers may need to be trained to be able to work with clients who have come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- ▶ Offer 'on the job' training and target educational programs designed to better assist the youth in succeeding within this opportunity with specific training tailored to serve the Rail industry.
- ▶ Work experience should be put back into the system so you people can get on the job training and experience of the work opportunities available.
- ▶ Collaborate with youth services to enhance the opportunity for sustained, long term employment and tap into existing social procurement policies and making connections with state department officers who are based in the local community
- ▶ Arrange key workshops to increase the employability skills for the youth together with free TAFE training used to lead into project opportunities. Introduce and teach enterprise skills to young people in the school curriculum.
- ▶ Provide more funding for secondary schools to include a focus on Learners and Drivers' licence preparation to enable young people to increase employability.
- ▶ Bring back trade schools with specific skills development related to the opportunities on offer such as training for the railway industry. Create a new qualification that includes licenced tickets as preparation for relevant industry career paths.
- ▶ Public transport in the west is limited coming from Melton, Bacchus Marsh. Lots of young people want to stay local. Ensure reasonable start times which are more closely related to available transport.
- ▶ Adopt a 'Try before you buy' approach with employers having on the job training for young people.
- ▶ Require all data be captured and reported on to ensure that young people from the West are being employed through these projects.
- ▶ Increase opportunities for informal work experience opportunities for young people - informal meaning (mentor rather than boss) with no requirement for pre-study etc. More informal and flexible experience
- ▶ Provide a relevant employment service that allows young people to work in this framework
- ▶ Jobs services allowed to prepare young people and support them in this project without mutual obligation since that is not relevant.
- ▶ Whole community needs to be involved in the Guarantee and a slogan or working title is needed e.g. Western Youth Futures Now.

2. Strategies that could ensure oversight of the youth work/skills development required to respond to this initiative:

- ▶ Gain 'buy-in' from the whole community, including young people.
- ▶ Mount a major campaign across the west to promote this initiative and encourage community involvement and the empowering of young people for them to get the most from it.
- ▶ Bring in a powerful role model for young people as a speaker who knows the different steps required and mount a media initiative to get the whole community and industry involved.
- ▶ Link up the job networks and other related youth programs to ensure everyone is on the same page and specifically filter jobs for young people like a job agency to monitor all programs that develop skills and learning.
- ▶ Develop a custom designed course for the western region that encompasses skills, commitment, support and mutual obligation within the program and make full use of the Brimbank Learning Futures (BLF) hub to run relevant training programs.
- ▶ Tailor targeted programs run by the job service providers to better prepare the young people and which are based on a better dialogue and liaison between industry and training institutes.
- ▶ Provide better information to young people on the opportunities available with more networking to ensure more people are 'in the know'. Young people need lots of support all round. It's 'not what you know it's who you know'!
- ▶ Advocate to local government to put pressure on regional committees that are responsible for embedding social procurement/employment policies for local major works projects.
- ▶ Support young people who are initially employed in the industry to achieve career progression and support the next intake of young people to be employed.
- ▶ Set up a steering committee with local council members, community leaders, business leaders, youth leaders and employment services etc to oversee this initiative. This group could lead the initiative, particularly with representatives from organisations that have proven their commitment to the initiative.
- ▶ Organise a 'Taster' program through TAFE to assist young people to try a trade. Need a carrot or incentive in place to assist the young people to compete for what is on offer and start earlier in secondary college - possibly year 9 instead of year 10. Start at primary, not secondary, with structured and scaffolded learning.
- ▶ Use the Connect West website as a resource portal for young people and organisations and set up a campaign to ensure all organisations in the west are part of the initiative and support it through joint strategy and collaboration. Otherwise develop a 'Work West' App as a portal to engage primary/secondary school aged students, employers, parents, community leaders and create regular Work West events.

3. What it would take to organise Career Roadshows throughout secondary schools within the region based on prospect arising from this infrastructure expenditure:

- ▶ Convert local Career Expos into interactive Western Work Futures Roadshows but don't call it a 'Career Roadshow' because that has its own connotations to career e.g. Future of Work Roadshow or Work Futures Roadshow or Western Work Futures Roadshow or the Work West Roadshow.
- ▶ Design a tailored approach for young people at different levels across the region to show-case a range of professions and occupations. Engage with the careers department in secondary schools to lead to higher exposure of the opportunities and better informing youth so that such positions are within reach.
- ▶ Give young people at roadshows the opportunity to volunteer in their preferred sectors...work experience and appoint young people as ambassadors who have achieved in their employment to go back to schools as successful role models in order to share their journey and how it's not always a planned or rosy pathway to their success.
- ▶ Be more youth friendly, by speaking to someone in the context of their preferred job and allowing them to experience it. Let young people teach their teachers about the future opportunities - e.g. Young ambassadors to industry and represented on the steering committee to bring the information back to their school.

- ▶ Work at overcoming any cultural issues that may be a barrier to communication or offering an effective roadshow.
- ▶ Offer more apprenticeship opportunities and reduce negative stigma regarding apprenticeship pathways as compared to that of a university.
- ▶ Bring teachers out of the classroom into community organisations for PD work experience workshops to encourage their understanding and involvement and have employers attend the secondary schools and discuss prospective career pathways.

4. How we could engage with businesses and learning institutions to reconfigure relevant skill development programs and training pathways to meet needs generated by this opportunity:

- ▶ Involve universities and industry partners in these discussions and encourage the design of new and more relevant courses to train young people in the skills specifically needed by employers.
- ▶ Learning institutions need to be encouraged to run industry specific courses aimed at customised and targeted employment development schemes that are relevant in ensuring the youth in the west do succeed.
- ▶ Undertake skills audits for local businesses so that we can assist them with young people to be trained and ready to take their business forward into new local opportunities.
- ▶ Offer in-house learning opportunities within industry sectors to get relevant learning aligned with appropriate employment opportunities.
- ▶ Develop a Western Learning Hub for training in employment and to create a sense of community and to increase transferable skill levels.
- ▶ Organise school excursions to developing projects in order to increase interest on the part of young people in the community and development.
- ▶ Encourage employers to link to the Connect West portal when looking for skills, while we link our young people to employers through the portal as well.
- ▶ Engage employers in breakfasts/workshops/dinners/surveys/award ceremonies/ etc to promote the initiative and encourage other businesses to be part of it.
- ▶ Let this initiative include an award system for those who support/employ/train young people

5. Strategic alliances that would enhance industries within the region in order to win significant tenders from this proposal:

- ▶ Encourage LeadWest to take up the role in encouraging business alliances so they should be involved in this initiative and enable better employer networking directly targeted around the opportunity.
- ▶ Collate all local statistics and data collection on a regional basis. We can also prepare data showing the need for the action and then share it with the businesses to use in their tender applications.
- ▶ Put the focus on skill development programs specifically related to preparing successful tenders.
- ▶ Educate employers in similar industries to partner together and collaborate in order to strengthen the project outcome and success rate of take up in the west.
- ▶ Encourage the sharing of new technology between industries.
- ▶ Help long-time unemployed to get work again through work experience opportunities and establish a HR body in the west to possibly to help employers in general to assist and support all employers who are time poor.
- ▶ Form an alliance with our youth organisation/s to support these employer/s to deliver opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- ▶ Design this initiative to develop a role as 'middle-man' or intermediary and an effective link between employers/businesses/ government/youth and community.
- ▶ Promote the possible opportunities for business through a business portal, newspapers, local radio, social media, and then provide an activity to bring them together to discuss potential alliances e.g. meeting/ breakfast or community event.

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

WORKSHOP 4

1. The type of authority that could best oversight the proposed \$25 billion infrastructure proposal to ensure industries and businesses in the West benefit.

Themes: Two year window before construction begins. Opportunity for strategic and collaborative discussion and decision making, representing local interest and involvement, representation of relevant stakeholders, cultural competence and sensitivity, overarching body with portfolios, sensitivity to effects of trauma, involve community leaders, mandate to form a vision, accountable to the community and reporting back, transparency, commitment to social capital, well-resourced including philanthropic involvement, recognised authority with powers to make decision

- ▶ Any authority needs to have status and influence. Something that is representative of community (diverse communities (newly arrived, disability) with community leaders having a meaningful role within the authority.
- ▶ Need to generate work based on potential multiplier effects of this initiative.
- ▶ Authority needs to be predominantly people and stakeholders from the West and needs to involve/consist of community leaders.
- ▶ Need to be well-funded, well-structured pilot programs to bring local youth up to speed
- ▶ Local councils must be deeply involved.
- ▶ Committee made up of people from local communities in the West together with industry representatives.
- ▶ Policy to mandate and dictate that a percentage of the local workforce has to come from the local area.
- ▶ Form a consortium of different organisations who represent a broad range of industries and groups involved in any infrastructure development.
- ▶ Limiting the degree of work allocated to each business sector.
- ▶ Group convened for strategic conversations with local involvement, but this group has to have more than intention, it needs to be able to influence the three tiers of Government.
- ▶ The Authority must include high rollers e.g. Melbourne Airport, Australian Rail Track Authority, Unions, Community representatives including youth, strategic Government representatives.
- ▶ Local government needs to play a minor role if you want things to happen (reducing red tape)
- ▶ The authority would need to understand the mental health needs of the community, for example the needs of newly arrived communities who have experienced trauma. This could be structured in through including trauma experts as part of the authority.
- ▶ Include representative of start-ups.
- ▶ Not just one type, but all types banding together as one to get the best ideas, outcomes and benefits for this project/future.
- ▶ An authority charged with developing a vision that sets out the key outcomes and benefits from this big infrastructure investment
- ▶ Lead West should put together a group of different people to identify community priorities through a collaborative process.
- ▶ Establish a steering committee/secretariat.
- ▶ Steering committee to reflect all cultures/stakeholder in the representatives.
- ▶ Stakeholder representatives need to come back and report to wider community. Work with cohorts and broader community to inform of what's happening so there is information and an invitation and buy in.
- ▶ No hidden agendas or secret deals by being totally transparent.
- ▶ Structure should be reflective of local providers and stakeholders.
- ▶ No duplication or redesigning a new wheel - Western Youth Futures- should re-visited.

- ▶ Structure should consider accessing philanthropic funding.
- ▶ Authority needs to consider the competitive nature of the space.
- ▶ Lack of common sense look at needs of community. Local government needs to change in order to improve the way business is done.
- ▶ Business requires cultural competence and sensitivity. Partners and key drivers would be benefit by having cultural competence.
- ▶ Need to understand peoples' journeys, trauma, culture, gender and some unconscious bias.
- ▶ Create social capital through community representation which needs good understanding of what social capital is and how it can be such a disadvantage without it.

2 Steps to ensure that appropriate and relevant skills can be developed to meet the potential demand

Themes: Ensure the early involvement within schools, attract experiential on the job training, identify and address the provision of specific skillsets, insist on adequate resourcing, review accredited learning and training, configure a future orientation within learning approaches, job promotions, engagement of industry and trainers, skills gap analysis, international examples,

- ▶ Quality training - undertake an audit of the competent skills required and undertake a gap analysis of available courses and those missing.
- ▶ Involve those who are working directly with young people.
- ▶ Re-evaluate the education system that swaps between training and work.
- ▶ Encourage investment in future skill sets rather than reactive upskilling and build in longevity so skillsets can be used long after a project is finished.
- ▶ High levels of investment in the early stages are required to ensure long term outcomes.
- ▶ Industry needs to be clear about what skills are required especially apprenticeships based on a proper understanding of the skills capacity of industry.
- ▶ Training in skills sets to meet industry demands that are short, sharp, and targeted with intensive on the job training as an ongoing effort.
- ▶ Traineeships, internships and continuous development following a gap analysis of required skillsets.
- ▶ Adequate investment in training through TAFE and RTOs.
- ▶ Encouragement and career information being made available to young people to demonstrate the jobs that will eventuate.
- ▶ Maintain direct relationships between providers of training and industry and also involving schools.
- ▶ Using SIO (Settlement Information Orientation) sessions to clarify to newly arrived communities where the growth sectors are, what skills are transferable and where and how to develop skills needed for these jobs.
- ▶ Thinking of what is most required and needed with who and what needs to be trained in, so we can make sure the training is done properly
- ▶ Customised programs based on the creation of specific skill sets - paid and recognised by authorities and industries
- ▶ Micro-credentials skills for young people
- ▶ Creation of more experiential learning opportunities
- ▶ Government should fund skill sets
- ▶ Customised labour hire companies to prepare young people based on what is required regarding those opportunities may exist.
- ▶ Have a model of anticipation and work on what is needed to fill that gap
- ▶ Design it from an international standard, based on what other countries are doing and what technology they are embedding.
- ▶ Learn through a series of summits in order to making smarter investments.

3. Potential challenges or constraints that may need to be resolved in attracting opportunities and jobs to the West from this initiative

Themes: Cultural and age discrimination, challenges based on a lack of experience, recognising the multicultural contribution, English language challenges and failing education initiatives, a lack of commitment of learning institutions, failure to recognise the potential contribution of innovative start-ups, dealing with a negative community image and the demonizing of some local ethnic groups and their culture.

- ▶ Employers not wanting to employ young people by over estimating the need of experience as a pre-condition for their employment. The consequent need to support employers to take a risk on someone without experience.
- ▶ Recognition of skills bounty within our multicultural community and identification of how to best utilise them.
- ▶ Political focus can be a barrier – it's not focused on the West. The focus is on marginal seat investment when such a big investment is needed in the West.
- ▶ Getting employers engaged in focusing on Western region's workforce.
- ▶ Visa restraints and an overhaul of the accreditation of overseas qualifications.
- ▶ School gatekeepers not promoting all career opportunities.
- ▶ Current education system is a barrier e.g. upskilling young people's English language levels to give young people a chance to get interested and the need to prepare local youth for these opportunities.
- ▶ Big companies moving their teams around to jobs - not necessarily employing locals. Need to enforce a requirement for locals to local jobs first.
- ▶ Identifying what would help local industry to have what is required E.g. Government support to businesses in the West to encourage innovation.
- ▶ Communication mechanisms being well maintained between all relevant parties and stakeholders.
- ▶ The implementation of vantage points being publicised and available in order to exhibit and advertise the progress of these works.
- ▶ Information not being dispersed effectively to disengaged young people. Lack of engagement or understanding from schools and other educational and support institutions.
- ▶ Managing and challenging aspirations and addressing competing delivery models and competing attitudes and perceptions.
- ▶ Reinventing the West's image towards the positive by cleaning up the image of a drug culture and not demonizing other cultures.
- ▶ More focus and support for start-ups and support for young people to navigate short-term models of work,

4. Strategies to ensure the most return to both industries and young people in the West:

- ▶ Proof of concept approach with short term trials and more pilot programs to allow for evaluation before full implementation.
- ▶ Major contracting organisations being required to articulate projects they require so that Western industries can gear up and ensure targeted training is available.
- ▶ Allow more flexibility with regards to labour requirements – more use of people with overseas qualifications and experience.
- ▶ Buses to work sites for people who don't have cars and licences.
- ▶ Quota not only for employment from the West but also the supply of services and products - such hospitality for workers, the supply of sleepers to rail projects and, recycled plastic for the roads sourced from industries in the West wherever possible.
- ▶ Reframing the West as an area with great opportunities to attract more young people and others to seek out these opportunities.

- ▶ Convince employers that it is in their best interest to train Western youth and stop them asking for so many skills in their entry level roles.
- ▶ Short term targeted and collaborative training initiatives with short term but quality training courses.
- ▶ Tailored regional approaches with set quotas and protocols that dictate working relationships with providers.
- ▶ Create exchange hubs, e.g.: start-up business accelerators, training hubs, technology R&D labs, etc...
- ▶ Invest in upskilling. Identify what skills and talents are available in the West and ways to exploit those traits to increase local (West) job opportunities.
- ▶ Also understand and identify emerging trends such as drone technology to carry people and consider hyper-space loop technology (Sci-Fi troop carriers!).

5. Ways to convince employers that it is in their best interest to invest in the engaging and training of young people in the West.

Themes: Proximity and savings in travel, social cohesion within the community, community health and wellbeing, workers who are highly motivated for a secure income, adaptable young people, opportunity for employers to engage in the community, high incentives to work through improving living conditions in the West

- ▶ Expose employers to the workings of community organisations so they can see how many people come through them looking for work and promote face to face communication between employers and youths.
- ▶ Evidence of government interest and support
- ▶ Align these organisations with employers in strategic partnering. This will create a lot of good will for employers.
- ▶ Local people who live locally will have shorter distance to travel and would be more likely to turn up.
- ▶ Cultural diversity in the workplace will only enrich their businesses.
- ▶ Investing in storytelling - film the story, make the young people real to employers.
- ▶ Promote publicity for the employers in their hiring of Western suburb youths.
- ▶ Create an awareness of the untapped potential and talent in the West and the rich pool of creativity, flexibility and ability to work harmoniously with others.
- ▶ Young body of employees who will be ready to move on to future projects who are motivated and ready to learn as well as being enthusiastic to earn a secure wage.
- ▶ Youth employment improves the health and security of the next generation.
- ▶ Young people who are new to Australia often have work experience and are highly motivated to work and learn new skills.
- ▶ Keeps the money in the West. Local people make the best contributions because they live in the West and also reinvest their money in the local economy.
- ▶ Young people in the West are resilient and are good with adapting to changing environments. Let young people show what they can do and give them room for improvement.
- ▶ Less travel to some jobs which mean it could be more reliable with time
- ▶ Offer a chance, not only to young people, but also an older generation who may be experiencing hardship as well and who have a good work ethic.
- ▶ Secure support for employers to incentivise their investment in local youth.
- ▶ Provide post-employment support for the employer to build their capacity with young people and help them keep the young person employed.
- ▶ Turning the West into a place that rivals other major cities by investing back in the West by using the talent and labour force to improve its standard of living.
- ▶ Utilise federal, state and local government funding packages and incentives – particularly those focusing on employment opportunities in the West.

- ▶ Convince governments to offer businesses subsidies to move their operations to the West.
- ▶ Create a perception of the West being an emerging area and use the image of the West as a melting pot of many cultures and a place of cultural celebrations – with more festivals and events to celebrate and promote ethnic harmony.
- ▶ Invest more into the Footscray community art centre and other local art centres to create popular creative and design spaces.



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