



SECONDARY STUDENTS AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning, and
Part-time work out of school hours



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1. BACKGROUND

This research into the nature and extent of secondary student engagement with employers has been conducted on behalf of the Inner Northern Youth Employment Taskforce (INYET).

The INYET was established in mid 2014 as a strategic high-level initiative with the strong support of the three Councils in the inner north as major employers and civic leaders within the region. In 2019 the Taskforce consists of 20 active member organisations.

The Taskforce change framework consists of four key change elements, which are:

- building the skills, knowledge and attitude of young people
- building the capacity of local business to support young people into work
- building stronger connections between business, schools, education providers, and community organisations
- increasing access to employment

The framework provides a coordinated and strategic approach to youth employment across the region. Key initiatives that have resulted include the Jobs for Youth Campaign; development of an Employer Youth Pledge model; expansion of the Real Industries Real Jobs program; establishment of a Vocational Mentoring Exchange Pilot program; creation of the Inner Northern Industry Speaker Bank; and establishment of a Youth Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Hub.

A 2018 INYET Report “*Connect: mapping initiatives to empower young people into work*” reviewed the change framework, and made recommendations relating to ways in which employers engage with school students. The second of these recommendations were to:

“Establish a comprehensive data collection project to enable the development of a shared understanding of the nature and extent of student part-time employment, the use of work experience and the use of Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) in the region.”

The use and extent of volunteering was not included within this project.



7% of years 11 & 12 students across 20 schools report having no experience of employer engagement.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research project covered the 35 secondary schools within the Cities of Darebin, Moreland and Yarra in the inner north of Melbourne.

(A parallel project collected data from the 22 special and specialist schools in the north and western region to identify the extent of employer engagement for students with a disability. A separate report is being provided specifically for these schools.)

This research into the nature and extent of student engagement in part-time employment, work experience, and Structured Workplace Learning in the region depended on the assistance of students and staff in secondary schools who provided responses to the study. We would like to acknowledge the assistance of the schools and the more than 1600 students who responded to the survey.

A Working Party of the INYET guided the implementation of the research across both secondary schools and the Special/Specialist School networks. Particular thanks go to the members of this Working Party for their input and advice: David Smith (Thornbury High School); Kylie Witt (Northcote High School); Shelley Willoughby (Sydney Rd Community School); Daniel Grech (Apprenticeships Matter); Martin Collins (formerly DET); and Kris Parsons (Jackson School).

3. KEY FINDINGS

The more contacts with employers that a young person has while enrolled at school (through combinations of Work Experience, work placements, part-time work and SBATs), the greater the likelihood that they will subsequently gain employment.

While schools collect data on student involvement in particular employment engagement programs, they generally do not adopt an integrated view of how much or how little work-related activity each student is undertaking.

PART-TIME WORK

Despite the options available to senior secondary students to be able to engage with employers, this project has found that 7% of the responding Year 11 and 12 students (a total of 115 students) had done neither Work Experience nor Structured Workplace Learning, and had not had a part-time job. These students were not individually identified through the survey process, but the information is available to their schools through program and career planning data collection.

While the regional average of part-time work for secondary students was 58%, in five of the secondary schools, the



Students are seeking support and advice on their work rights, entitlements and responsibilities.

rate of part-time employment for students was below 50%. Research in Australia and internationally indicates that low levels of participation in part-time work places have a higher incidence of unemployment in the post-school year, while students who have had part time jobs have employment rates in the year after leaving school that are twice as high or more than those who have not combined school and work.

The extent to which parents support their children to take up opportunities for part-time work provides a significant context for some students, and is an issue within some communities. Parent groups need to be engaged in the discussion on the benefits of employer engagement in general, and part-time employment in particular.

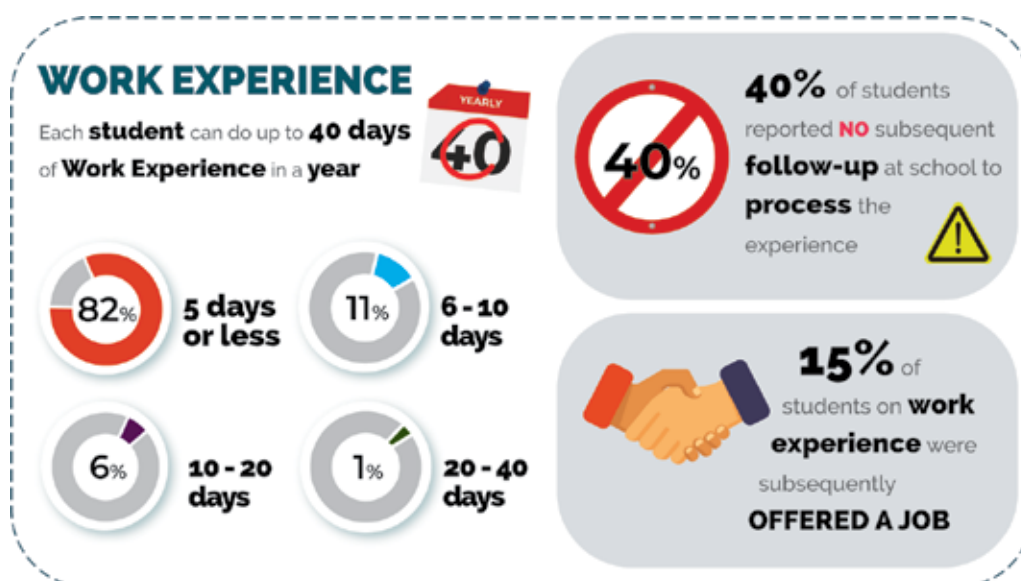
Students are seeking support and advice on their work rights, entitlements and responsibilities. There are a variety of resources available to schools to support the delivery of this information including the free YouthLaw service, the Young Workers Centre, and the Fair Work Ombudsman Best Practice Guide, as well as speakers available through the INLLEN Speaker Bank. The INYET Jobs for Youth campaign is also developing an online guide to information on “Rights at Work”.

VOLUNTEERING

The extent of student volunteering was not captured in this project. It has been estimated that around 5% of students in Years 11 and 12 are doing volunteer work, and that this is mainly occurring in sporting clubs. Further investigation is needed to identify whether volunteering provides an alternative form of employer engagement for some young people, or is another activity being used by students who already have multiple points of contact with employers.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Across the inner north, 82% of students report their Work Experience as being 5 days or less, and a further 11% report it being between 5 – 10 days. Schools could make greater use of the flexibility available within the Work Experience policy. Schools have the discretion to approve up to 40 work experience days for a student in a school year. A Principal can allow a student to undertake work experience for up to 15 days per term, but the total number of days must not exceed 40 days per year.



In the inner north, 13% of the students indicated that they had done an SWL as part of their study program.

The 40 days available can be customised to meet individual needs, but the data suggests that few schools are utilising this flexibility.

It is also noteworthy that 40% of students report that there was no processing of work experience against the curriculum upon their return to school. In some instances, this was the result of the timing of the Work Experience, either at the end of Term or the end of the school year.

STRUCTURED WORKPLACE LEARNING

Structured Workplace Learning is underutilised within the region. In the inner north, 13% of the students indicated that they had done an SWL as part of their study program (of which 3% had placement as a part of their SBAT). Approximately one-third of those enrolled in VET in Schools programs are actually doing placements.

Review existing relevant programs and services in the region

Under the auspices of the Inner North Youth Employment Taskforce (INYET), the RIJI program provides employment preparation services to approximately 20 schools across the inner north. Other providers deliver similar services. A review of available programs and supports that can help train young people for after-school part-time work and connect them to potential employers would be a useful resource.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

That secondary schools and colleges:

- Use the VCAL framework to develop coordinated strategic plans through which each senior student is encouraged and able to experience at least four employer engagement experiences before they complete school.
- make greater use of the flexibility available within the Work Experience policy to provide longer and more varied placements appropriate to individual student needs. The timing of Work Experience should also ensure the opportunity to link the Experience to the school curriculum.
- use resources available through external agencies to ensure that all students are advised on their work rights, entitlements and responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That INYET work with the Darebin Moreland Career Network to develop processes for use in secondary schools that would enable:

- schools to identify which students are and are not involved in Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning or part-time work outside school hours, with the aim of focusing assistance on those who would like to work part-time, but lack the knowledge, skills, and social capital to do so.
- more students to be supported to find part-time jobs through:
 - targeted utilisation of the Real Industry Job Interviews (RIJI) program (or equivalent supports);
 - other employability skills development processes;

- promotion of the annual inner northern Jobs for Youth campaign
- proactive partnerships with employers; and
- utilisation of school alumni networks.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That INYET work in partnership with secondary schools, career practitioners and relevant professional bodies to create a student “Passport to Work” model which recognises the student’s skills, personal attributes and work readiness acquired through a range of employer-related activity while still at school.

- A Work Passport would act as a reminder for students of their engagement in Work Experience, Work Placements, part-time work and relevant volunteering; provide a useful resource to show employers (and others) when applying for work; and help students to think about the skills and work-related knowledge that has been developed that can be communicated in applications and interviews.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That INLLEN promote the continued availability of the employer engagement resources “World of Work” and “Face to Face” to Careers Networks and schools as additional means to increase student engagement with employers in the inner north.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That INYET implement a pilot parent partnership project to research parent attitudes on student part-time work.

A partnership with a secondary school is suggested to trial a survey and workshops with parents to collect data and discuss the available research.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That INYET, in collaboration with Careers Networks within the region, plan a major regional conference on employer engagement for 2020 that would:

- share the findings of the 2019 research on employer engagement and part-time work
- profile examples of schools strategic approaches to planning and monitoring student engagement with employers
- showcase the development of the Youth Enterprise Hub in building 21st century entrepreneurial skills of young people.

Young people with 4 (or more) contacts with employers have more positive subsequent transitions into employment

5. INTRODUCTION

International studies find that various forms of labour market participation (e.g. part-time work, work experience, and Structured Work placements) in teenage years are subsequently associated with strong employment rates as adults.

Connecting a young person with the world of work while they are still at school improves their long-term chances of ongoing employment. Studies into the effect of workplace preparation have shown that across the general school system, students who have four or more employer contact experiences (such as mentoring) are five times less likely to be subsequently unemployed or not engaged in further education.¹

The 2018 Victorian Inquiry into Careers Advice in Victorian Schools found that schools should provide students with more workplace exposure in a variety of forms. It reported strong evidence that school career development works best when it has an experiential component that enables students to familiarise themselves with work through workplace visits, work experience and/or VET.²

Part-time work in particular provides significant opportunities for workplace exposure. The OECD reports evidence from Australia, Sweden and the United States which indicates that young people who have part-time jobs improve their employment prospects and reduce their chances of becoming unemployed when they leave school.³

Swedish evidence even suggests that part-time jobs are

more effective than the work placement periods that are organised as part of school's programs and that are intended to be integrated with classroom instruction. Such jobs only appear to interfere with students' educational performance when the hours are too long (which is more than ten hours per week). Sweden and Finland have recently decided that at least 15% of study time of all vocational upper secondary students must be spent in a work environment.⁴

Workplace exposure helps students to:

- gain a realistic understanding of work, which improves their career decision making
- build networks that could connect them to other opportunities
- link classroom learning to employment, increasing their motivation and engagement at school

In 2016 a Local Learning and Employment Network in the Northern Mallee surveyed 734 students in Year 11 & Year 12 about their participation in part time work (after school and on weekends) and found that 61% had part time employment. Approximately a further quarter of those not working were looking at entering the workforce in the near future.

The 2016 Northern Mallee study identified the opportunity for schools to assist students in the pursuit of employment who may not have the networks and support outside of school. Students in that region took on part time work to increase their independence, skills and spending money but also gained skills such as customer service skills, workplace requirements and time management.

¹ The 'Employer Engagement Cycle' in Secondary Education: Analysing the testimonies of young British adults, 2015, Jones, S., Mann, A. & Morris, K. Journal of Education and Work, DOI: 10.1080/13639080.2015.1074665.

² Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee (2018), 'Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools', Parliament of Victoria.

³ OECD, Combining Learning at School and at Work, Issues Paper (2018), Final Conference on the transition from Initial Education to Working Life, 21-23 May 2018, Budapest, Hungary

⁴ OECD 2018

Workplace exposure can help young people become better prepared to make education and training decisions.

All school students need workplace exposure to assist them prepare for transition to employment, whether in the short term or at the completion of post-school education and/or training. Schools are responsible for documenting student participation in Work Experience and in SWL, but there is no requirement to document participation in part-time work.⁵

This project provides a basis for mapping the extent to which students in the region are accessing opportunities for workplace exposure across the various programs (Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning, School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, part-time work, and other relevant forms of industry contact).

6. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Engagement with Employers

In Australia, a 2018 report by the Foundation for Young Australians, “The New Work Reality”, reviewed longitudinal data of 14,000 young people’s journey over a decade and found that one of the four main barriers to work for young people is “not enough work experience”. Three in four young people say that they don’t possess the relevant vocational and practical experience to gain full time work.

Employer engagement provides knowledge and the practical skills demanded for successful school-to-work transitions. Young people’s chances of success in a competitive labour market are increased by access to authentic, relevant experiences and practical insights into how recruitment processes work and how contemporary workplaces operate.⁶ To enhance young people’s

understanding of jobs and careers, employer engagement needs to be authentic, frequent, valued, contextualized, and personalized.⁷

Workplace exposure can help young people become better prepared to make education and training decisions. It allows them to think about the breadth of career choices and routes into them. People in work have the capacity to provide young people with insights and experiences which offer distinct value which is difficult for schools to replicate.⁸

Skills for the 21st Century

Providing a variety of employment-related opportunities assists young people to develop the skills that they will need for work in the future. Particularly important are the enterprising, and people-based skills relating to problem solving and team work.⁹

In the report “The New Work Order” (2017), The Foundation for Young Australians’ research concluded that enterprising skills are transferrable across different jobs and are a more powerful predictor of long-term job success and performance than technical knowledge. They include communication; financial and digital literacy and the ability to critically assess and analyse information, be creative and innovate.¹⁰

The Foundation for Young Australians’ report found young people entering the world of work ‘will spend more time focusing on people, solving more strategic problems and thinking creatively’ than completing routine and manual tasks. Rather than trying to predict which jobs will disappear because of new technologies, the focus needs to be on preparing young people to be ready ‘for a future where the way we perform all jobs will change’.¹¹

⁷ ibid

⁸ Musset P & Kurekova L M, (2018) Working It Out: Career Guidance And Employer Engagement, OECD Education Working Paper No. 175.

⁹ The Foundation for Young Australians, The New Work Order (2017), FYA

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ Fostering Success for Our Secondary Students (2018), Department of Education and Training, State Government Victoria

⁵ Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2017), “Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth, 2006 cohort (Version 10.0)”. Available at: <https://dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.4225/87/WFEYRU>

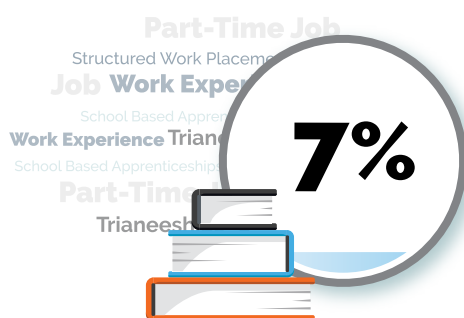
⁶ Mann, A., Rehill, J., and Kashefpakdel, E.T., 2018, Employer Engagement in Education, Education and Employers Research, Education Endowment Foundation.

SECONDARY SCHOOL & EMPLOYMENT ENGAGEMENT

Connecting a young person with the world of work while they are still at school improves their long-term chances of ongoing employment.

In 2019, **1,600** students from **20** inner north schools provided information on how much familiarity with work they had through work placements, work experience and part-time jobs.

Young people with 4
(or more) contacts with
EMPLOYERS and the
WORKPLACE have more
POSITIVE subsequent
transitions into employment



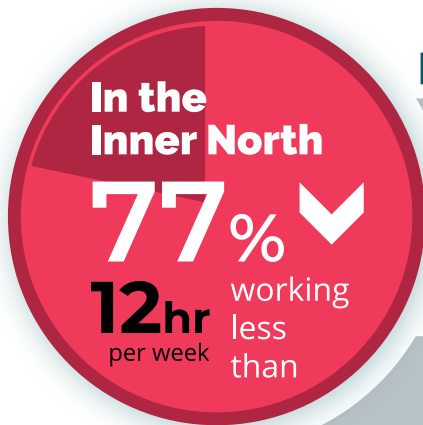
of years 11 & 12 students across
20 schools report having **NO**
experience
of employer engagement

Schools lack strategies
to **track and map** the
extent of each students
engagement with
employers (information not integrated)

Work Placement
Part-Time Work
Work Experience

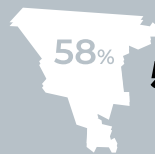
Multiple OPPORTUNITIES
for secondary students to
engage with employers in the work place including:





PART-TIME WORK

60% Work part-time **outside school hours**
(National average)



In the **Inner North**,
58% of secondary students work **PART-TIME**

Research indicates **1-12 hrs** part-time work **per week** has **NO NEGATIVE** impact on **learning/educational outcomes**.



Of those who **don't** have **PART-TIME WORK**



46%

UNABLE TO FIND WORK

39%

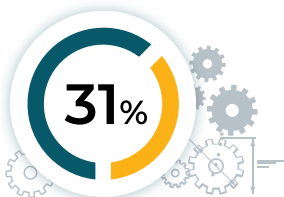
LACKED CONFIDENCE

36%

UNSURE HOW TO GO ABOUT IT



STRUCTURED WORK PLACEMENT



31% did a **Structured Work Placement** as part of their **VET** program

WORK EXPERIENCE

Each **student** can do up to **40 days** of **Work Experience** in a **year**



5 days or less



6 - 10 days



10 - 20 days



20 - 40 days



40% of students reported **NO** subsequent **follow-up** at school to **process** the experience



15% of students on **work experience** were subsequently **OFFERED A JOB**

Research shows a clear relationship between part-time employment while at school and a lower incidence of unemployment in the post-school years.

The school “system must take responsibility for the readiness of young people to enter further education and the world of work”. Half of all young Australians believed they lacked the appropriate education to gain full-time work.¹²

Many young people are lacking relevant experience and networks. For example, UK research has shown that secondary school students who had four or more employer contact experiences, such as mentoring, were five times less likely to be unemployed or not engaged in further education, and earning 18 per cent more than peers who recalled no such activities.¹³

Employers and worker volunteers are an information resource for those young people whose own networks are inherently limited. Engagement of people who have first-hand knowledge of work provides a young person with new and useful information about the labour market and how it relates to their own individual sense of who they might become.¹⁴

Exposure to the world of work can serve to challenge or replicate patterns of disadvantage. Research suggests that schools need to focus on the quantity (numbers of interactions) and quality (as perceived by students) of provision; and target interventions particularly on students from families lacking strong social networks related to careers of interest.¹⁵

Secondary students and part-time work.

It is typical for secondary school students to undertake part time work alongside their studies. There is good evidence to show that undertaking such work is positively connected with reduced risks of subsequent non-engagement in education or employment. By gaining workplace experience whilst still at school, young people give themselves advantages in the competition for jobs with older workers. They are able to demonstrate a successful track record of being in employment and will have had the opportunity to become familiar with the requirements and culture of the workplace.¹⁶

The LSAY research in Australia and international research cited by the OECD show a clear relationship between part-time employment while at school and a lower incidence of unemployment in the post-school years. Senior secondary school graduates who have had part time and holiday jobs have employment rates in the year after leaving school that are twice as high or more than those who have not combined their studies with work.¹⁷

Various studies in Australia have tried to determine how many students enrolled in secondary school are also working in part-time jobs outside school hours.

A 1989 study of several schools in Melbourne found that 56.9% of secondary students participated in part-time work.¹⁸ In 2011, NCVER reported through its Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth (LSAY) series,

¹² Department of Education and Training (2018)

¹³ The ‘Employer Engagement Cycle’ in Secondary Education: Analysing the testimonies of young British adults, 2015, Jones, S., Mann, A. & Morris, K. Journal of Education and Work, DOI: 10.1080/13639080.2015.1074665

¹⁴ OECD 2018

¹⁵ OECD 2018

¹⁶ A. Mann 2012, Work Experience: impact and delivery – insights from the evidence, Education and Employers Taskforce, UK

¹⁷ Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), “Work experience, work placements and part time work among Australian secondary school students.” (2001). LSAY Briefing Reports. LSAY Briefing; n.3 p.1-6 http://research.acer.edu.au/lsey_briefs/5

¹⁸ Nolan, K. & Hagen, R. (1989). School and work. A report into the employment of school students at two Melbourne high schools. Car1ton, Vic. Jobwatch)

Both Work Experience placements and part-time paid employment develop employability skills to a similar level.

that 50.7% (of 8077 young people) Year 10 students, 55.8% (of 8405 young people) Year 11, and 57.4% (of 6762 young people) Year 12 students were also working part-time.¹⁹

Impact of Hours Worked

The national LSAY study found that students who are combining work and school, on average, work 10–12 hours a week, with more females working than males; however, on average, males who are combining work and school worked longer hours.

The average amount of hours spent in part-time work per week hovers around nine or ten hours a week. However, some students work much more than that. Data collected in 2008 showed that 20 percent of Year 10 students worked up to 20 hours a week, and by Year 12 thirty-eight percent of this group were working up to 10 hours a week.²⁰

Combining school and work has a modest negative impact on school and post-school study outcomes when the hours are long (in excess of 15–20 hours a week). Concern about the adverse impact of part-time work on students' schooling appears to be largely unfounded.²¹ Females are better able to balance school and work, with the magnitude of these negative effects generally being less than for males.

The longitudinal research also concluded that working for relatively few hours a week (around five hours per week) had a positive impact on subsequent post-school full-time employment, compared with not working at all.²²

Nature of paid part-time work

Students engage in a wide variety of paid part-time work from retail and hospitality to office work, farm work, or involvement in a trade, to coaching and tutoring.²³

Combining school and work on school has positive effects on post-school employment. Working for relatively few hours a week (around five hours per week) has a positive impact on post-school full-time employment, compared with not working at all.²⁴

Students work for more than financial reasons, although the most common reason given for working in a number of surveys is to earn 'money for spending'. Other reasons for working reported by young people include independence, enjoyment, and that it would help in obtaining employment after school.²⁵

The value of Work Experience

Work Experience, like part-time work, is useful in developing general employment skills- particularly in working with other people, gaining self-confidence and following instructions.²⁶ Recent UK studies indicate that young people strongly believe that Work Experience helps to develop their employability skills. Both Work Experience placements and part-time paid employment develop employability skills to a similar level.²⁷

Students with part-time jobs who participate in Work Experience see the part-time job as more useful for general employment skills such as working with other people, confidence and following instructions, and the

¹⁹ Anlezark A, Lim P. (2011) Does combining school and work affect school and post-school outcomes? NCVER.

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), "Work experience, work placements and part time work among Australian secondary school students." (2001). LSAY Briefing Reports. LSAY Briefing; n.3 p.1–6 http://research.acer.edu.au/lsay_briefs/5

²² *ibid*

²³ Patton, W, and Smith, E (2009) Part-time work of school students: Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 19(2). pp. 216–224

²⁴ Anlezark & Lim (2011)

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ Fullarton, S, (1999) "Work experience and work placements in secondary school education". LSAY Research Reports. Longitudinal surveys of Australian youth research report ; n.10 http://research.acer.edu.au/lsay_research/70

²⁷ A. Mann 2012, Work Experience: impact and delivery – insights from the evidence, Education and Employers Taskforce, UK.

Without careers guidance, the value of the work experience is “greatly lessened and a waste of resources to all involved”.

work experience as being useful for looking at work conditions and skills required for particular jobs. This could well be because of the greater time period involved in part-time work as opposed to the more intensive, but shorter, period for Work Experience.²⁸

Work Experience also provides the potential benefit of leading directly to part-time employment. In the UK, an estimated one-quarter of pupils are offered part-time employment following a Work Experience placement.²⁹

The usefulness of Work Experience when it is arranged as a standalone activity is limited. Placement for placement's sake is “not advisable, and inappropriate placements hinder the interest of young people, possibly discouraging them from further engagement in the community and in the workforce”.³⁰ Without careers guidance, the value of the work experience is “greatly lessened and a waste of resources to all involved”.³¹

Work integrated learning

Work integrated learning enable young people to gain the critical relevant work experience they need alongside their education. Apprenticeships are an example of integrated approaches that encourages forms of learning and training that build in relevant paid employment. Apprenticeships are currently largely focused on trade professions, but the model could be expanded to more future focused industries by combining training and practical work experience for young people.³²

7. INNER NORTH SECONDARY SCHOOL DATA

Students enrolled in 19 secondary schools within the region provided 1,628 responses to an online survey. (The number of responses per school ranged from 253 down to 5, with an average response rate per school of 86 surveys.)

Students enrolled in Year 11 and Year 12 in 2019 were surveyed. (Year 10 students were not included, due to the timing of the survey occurring early in 2019.). Questions related to the experiences of Work Experience, Work Placements and part-time work or students across 2018 and 2019.

Gender

58% of the responses (943) were from females. 42% of the responses (671) were from males. Of the 19 participating schools, four were girls secondary schools / colleges, and were the source of large numbers of student responses.

Level of engagement with Employers

More than 80% of students had done Work Experience, 58% were also working part-time (or had previously worked part-time), while 14% had done a Structured Work Placement as part of their VCE, VET in Schools or School Based Apprenticeship / Traineeship.

However, there were a number of Year 11 and year 12 students who had done no Work Experience, SWL and had not had a part-time job. 7% (115 students) of those responding to the survey had not participated in any of these forms of employer engagement. These students were not identified through the survey process, but the

²⁸ Fullarton (1999)

²⁹ A. Mann (2012).

³⁰ Canadian Council on Learning, (2009) The Impact of Experiential Learning Programs on Student Success, Ontario Ministry of Education.

³¹ Work Experience: Benefits and Impact (2014) Briefing Note 44, City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development, Wales

³² The New Work Reality (2018), The Foundation for Young Australians.

The students that are most in need of quality work experience are likely to experience the greatest difficulty in sourcing their own opportunities.

information is available to their schools through program and career planning data collection processes.

Work Experience

While there is consensus that Work Experience is valuable, not all students get the opportunity to participate in it.³³

The reasons given as to why some schools do not offer students Work Experience include burdensome paperwork, legal and other compliance requirements and the difficulty finding placements. In addition, while employers recognise the value of Work Experience, the legal and other compliance requirements dissuade some of them from participating.³⁴

Some schools assist students to find placements, while others leave it up to students and families to source them. Without transparent access to registers of potential work experience placements, a student's ability to access their own work experience depends on their existing social capital. The students that are most in need of quality work experience are likely to experience the greatest difficulty in sourcing their own opportunities.

³³ Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee (2018), 'Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools', Parliament of Victoria.

³⁴ ibid

Participation in Work Experience

In the inner north, this project has found that 83% of the students indicated that they had previously done Work Experience. Of the remainder, 14% indicated that they hadn't done it, while 3% were 'unsure'. At least 2 of the 19 schools reported that they didn't have a Work Experience program in 2018, so their students would not have had the option of participating in Year 10.

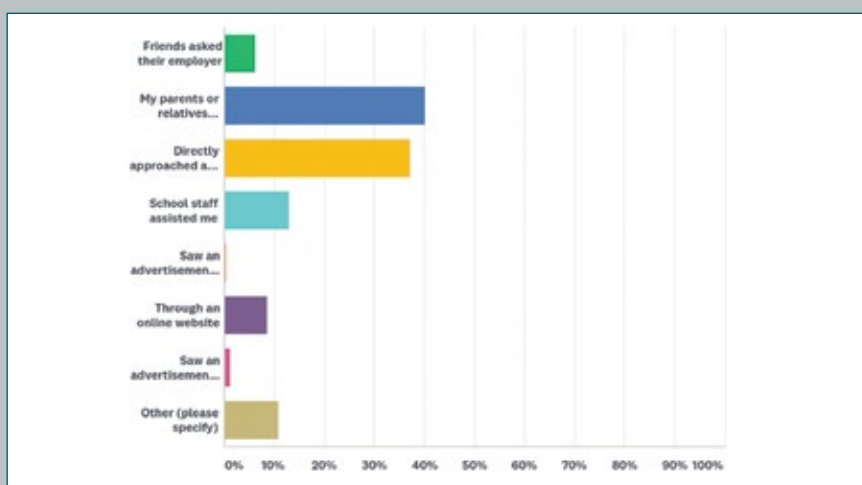
The rate among male students was 85%; the rate among females was 81%.

How Work Experience was sourced

Students generally source Work Experience through two main channels: either through using the networks of their parents and relatives; or by directly approaching employers. The social capital of the students influences the work experience opportunities available to them. For 13% of students, school staff provides the assistance.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| • Parents and relatives | 40% |
| • Direct approaches to employers | 37% |
| • School staff assisted me | 13% |
| • Online website | 9% |

Q6. How did you find an employer for your Work Experience?

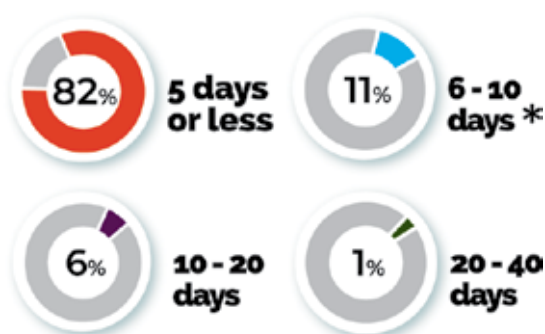


40% of students reported NO subsequent follow-up at school to process the experience

Duration of Work Experience

According to the Department of Education Work Experience Manual (2017), the total number of Work Experience days for a student must not exceed 40 days in a school year, and 10 days during any school term. A Principal can allow a student to undertake Work Experience for up to 15 days per term, but the total number of days must not exceed 40 days per year.

The survey asked students to indicate how many days their Work Experience lasted. The overwhelming majority who had done Work Experience only complete 5 days.



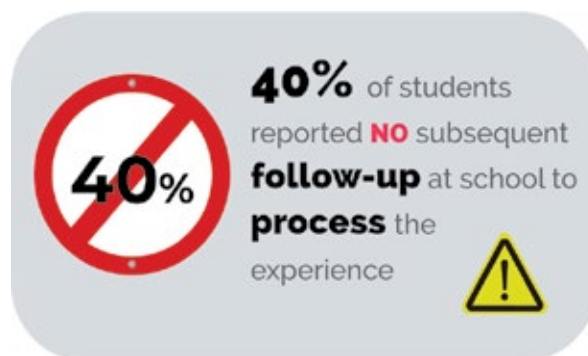
* often by having two 5 day experiences

Work Experience and the curriculum

Workplace learning activities are an integral part of students' learning and career development. Work Experience Coordinators are encouraged to work with relevant staff to integrate work education and Work Experience into their curriculum, rather than conducting it as a stand-alone activity.³⁵

The majority of students had some form of follow up once back at school, but 40% reported no form of subsequent processing. In some cases, this resulted from the timing of the Work Experience.

"We were not required to come back to school, as we had work experience during the last week of Term 4."

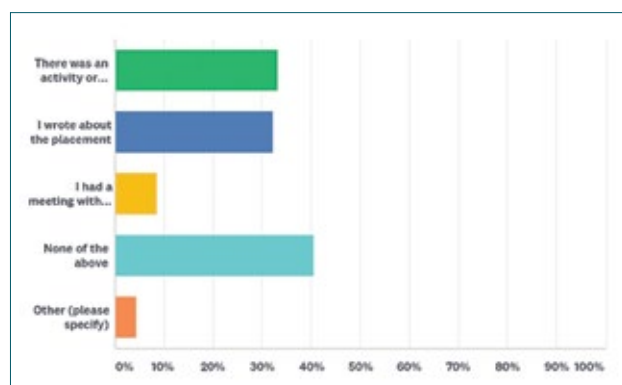


Writing about the placement and involvement in an activity or discussion in class both appear to be common practice.

"We held an exhibition night for the parents and teachers, where each Year 10 (student) could present their experiences on a poster"

"I promoted it to the new Year 10 (students) at assembly."

Q9. What follow-up occurred after the Work Experience when you returned to school?



Perceived value of Work Experience

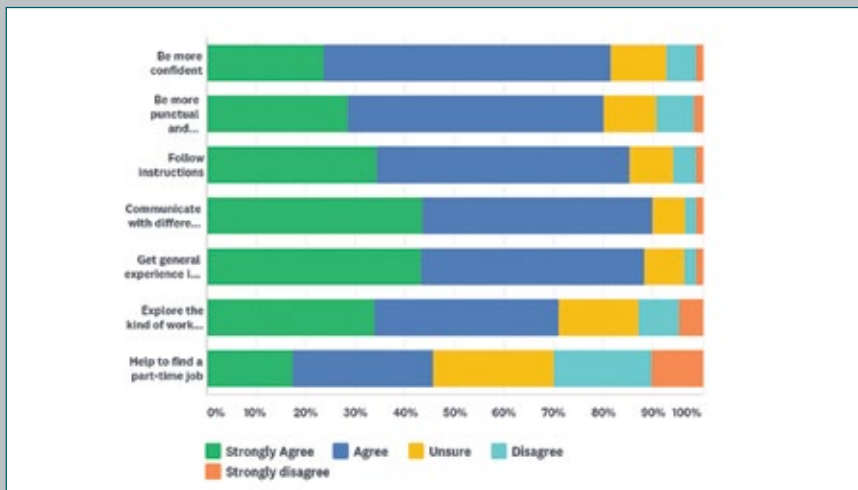
Students report that the value of work experience was in:

- Communicating with different kinds of people 90%
- Getting general experience in the workplace 88%
- Learning to follow instructions 85%
- Be more confident 81%

³⁵ Work Experience Manual for secondary students (2017) Department of Education

15% of students on work experience were subsequently offered a job

Q8. How strongly do you agree about the following statements about the effect of Work Experience?



The majority do not consider it of value in helping to find a part-time job (only 46% agreed). However, 15% of students said that the employer who provided them with Work Experience employer did subsequently offer them a part-time job.

- assessment of units of competency;
- achievement of some learning outcomes for VCE studies or VCAL units; and
- enhanced employment opportunities.



Structured Workplace Learning

Structured Workplace Learning provides students with the opportunity to integrate practical on-the-job experience and learning in industry with nationally recognised VET undertaken as part of either the VCE or the VCAL; VCE Industry and Enterprise; or VCAL units. It provides the context for:

- enhanced skill development;
- practical application of industry knowledge;

In Victoria the total number of Structured Workplace Learning days for a student must not exceed:

- 40 days during each School Year; and
- 10 days during each school term.

What students reported on Structured Workplace Learning

In the inner north, 13% of the students indicated that they had done an SWL as part of their study program (of which 3% had placement as a part of their SBAT). Approximately one third of those enrolled in VET in Schools programs are actually doing placements.

It is possible that, with the online survey being implemented in Term 1, SWL could occur later on in 2019 for Year 11 students, but it would be expected that Year 12 students to have previously undertaken placement.

Research indicates 1-12 hrs part-time work per week has no negative impact on learning/educational outcomes.

More males (17%) than females (12%) reported SWL participation.

"I now have connections in the industry if I want to pursue a career in the industry."

"As I currently have a part-time job in a hairdresser, if I want to take on hair dressing in the future I already have experience."

But...

"A week is not enough time to gain the experience that employers are looking for."

"What we are learning doesn't feel like it has anything to do with what I would do in a job."

Part-Time Work

Critical to an effective transition to full-time work is gaining relevant paid employment while undertaking study. The more hours undertaken in relevant paid employment also has a direct correlation to the speed of transition to full-time work. Experience in paid employment can be gained in various ways that complement formal education.

Participation in Part-Time Work

In the inner north, the overall rate of students combining study with part-time work is 58%. This overall rate appears to be generally consistent with those recorded in several national and regional studies of Australian secondary students.³⁶

However, students in some schools report much lower rates of part-time employment. While the overall rate of school students in part-time work in region is just below 58%, in five schools, the number of students with part-time jobs was below 50%. In four schools, the average of students with part-time jobs was over 60%.

By gender

A higher percentage of female students are also working.

³⁶ FYA, The New Work Reality, (2018) The Foundation for Young Australians

59% of females had a part-time job, while 56% of males had a part-time job.

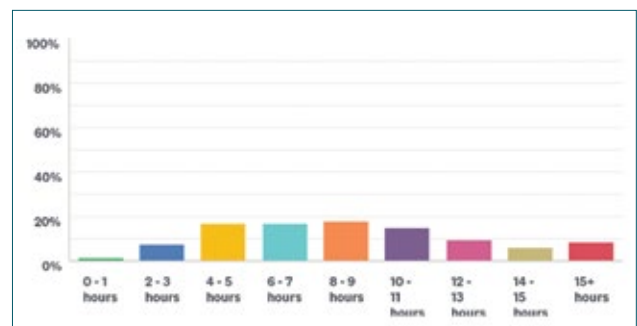
Hours worked per week

Australian researchers have found that students who are combining work and school, on average, work 11–12 hours a week. Combining school and work has a modest negative impact on school study outcomes when hours are long (in excess of 15–20 hours a week).

In the inner north region, the majority of those employed work between 4 – 9 hours per week. 23% are working more than 12 hours per week, of which 9% are working 15 hours or more (which research has found is likely to impact on education outcomes).

It should also be noted 20% of those who had had a part-time job were not in employment at the time of answering the survey.

Q17. What is the average number of hours per week which you work in your paid part-time job?



Finding a part-time job

How do students find their part-time job? Having the confidence to make a direct approach to an employer is a major avenue to finding work. The importance of having useful family and friendship networks are also highlighted by the data. 34% found work through their networks, while 28% made direct approaches to employers.

"My family friend is the store manager and asked me to come in for an interview."

"(A) friend of the family got me the job into the company directly."

Approximately half of those who said they did not have a part-time job, indicated that they had looked for work in the past year.

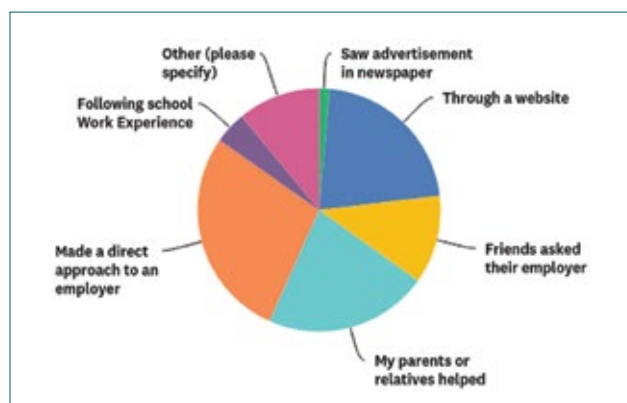
- 28% by direct approach to an employer
- 22% parents or relatives
- 22% through a website
- 12% friends asking their employer

In some cases, schools actively assisted students to find jobs

"(My) careers teacher helped me to get a job."

"Through my schools' Careers Coordinator."

Q18. How did you find your paid part-time work?



Involvement in sporting clubs was also an avenue to being offered part-time work for some students.

"At my out-of-school sport I was offered a job."

Job search for those not working

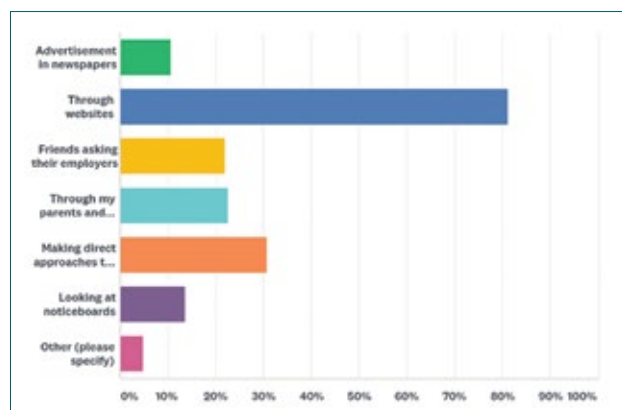
Not all secondary students in Years 11 and 12 are seeking part-time work. In some cases international students do not need to or want to work while they study. Others have commitments or parental pressures to not work. However, of the 42% who were not in employment, a significant number indicated that they wanted to work.

Approximately half of those who said they did not have a part-time job, indicated that they had looked for work in the past year.

- 81% had sought work through websites
- 31% had used direct approaches
- 23% had tried parents & relatives
- 22% had asked friends

Students had used combinations of these strategies, but the reliance on the use of websites and online searches stands out, particularly when this is compared with the group who actually found part-time work. Among the group 'in work', only 22% had found it through a website, while networks were used 45% of the time.

Q26. How did you look for a part-time job?



Some of the non-working may be placing an over reliance on websites due to lack of confidence and resilience. Students don't have to deal directly with employers using online searches, even if they are a less than optimal strategy for finding a part-time job.

Males and females differ in how they approach finding part-time work

Males and females reported slight differences in how they went about finding work.

Males mainly sought part-time work by:

- direct approaches (25%)
- friends and relatives (25%)
- websites (19%)

Females make more use of:

- direct approaches (30%) and
- websites (23%)

Females don't make as much use of:

- parents and relatives (20%)

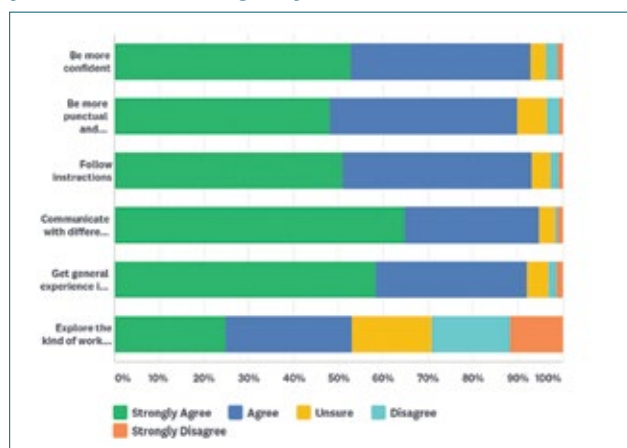
“(I experienced) unfair environment and working conditions as well as being underpaid.”

Student views on value of part-time work

While many students were working because they believed it would improve their future job prospects, most were not actually employed in jobs that they hoped to pursue as careers. Few indicated that their job was the kind of work they wanted to do as a career. Students see the main value of a part-time job as enhancing their employability by providing a more general experience of working, rather than in developing job-specific skills.

They tended not to see part-time work as a means of *“helping to explore the kind of work I might do in the future”*.

Q20. How strongly do you agree with these statements about whether part-time work helps you in the following ways:



The school role in part-time work

Schools within the region are engaged to varying degrees in providing support for students who are interested in part-time work. This support mainly occurs through advertising vacancies if the school is contacted by business; providing support for writing resumes and job applications, and in some cases providing job interview skills training (either through the RIJI program or in-school initiatives). In at least one school, information is also provided about workplace relations and worker rights and responsibilities.

Two schools in the region (Thornbury High School and Antonine College) reported collecting and maintain a database on their student part-time jobs through their

MIPs program.

Students also see a role for their schools in relation to part-time work.

There is strong support for a school role teaching about rights as workers (89%). They also think that experiences of part-time work should be discussed in classes (66%) and that school staff should help students find part-time work (64%).

However, less than half of them think that assessment should cover skills gained in part-time work (46%) or that experience of part-time work should be used in assignments (36%).

“I haven’t left my job, but if I was to leave it would be because the pay is very low for the work we do, our managers are rude and don’t take into consideration the importance of Year 12 VCE. I have no time to associate with any friends, I work four times a week and weekends, leaving me little time for homework, meaning I must stay up very late to finish it.”

“I was mistreated at previous employment before I moved to Woolworths.”

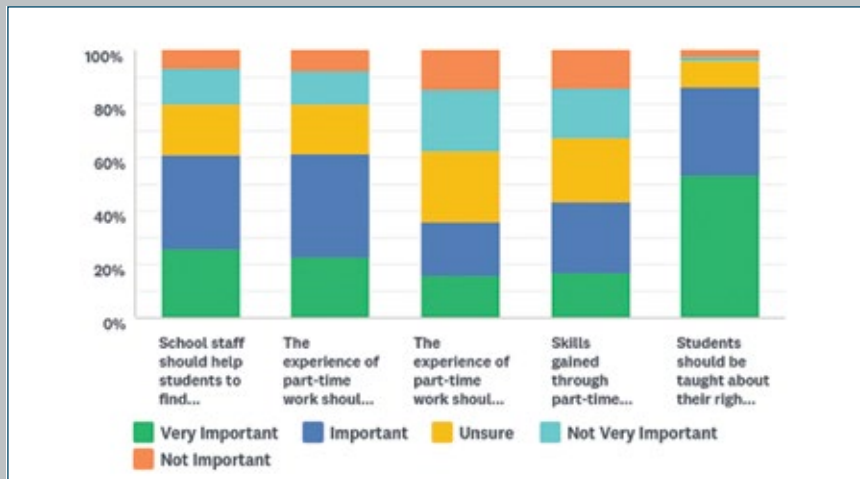
“(I experienced) unfair environment and working conditions as well as being underpaid.”

The opinion of those students not working part-time on the school role is fairly similar.

There is strong support for a school role teaching about rights as workers.

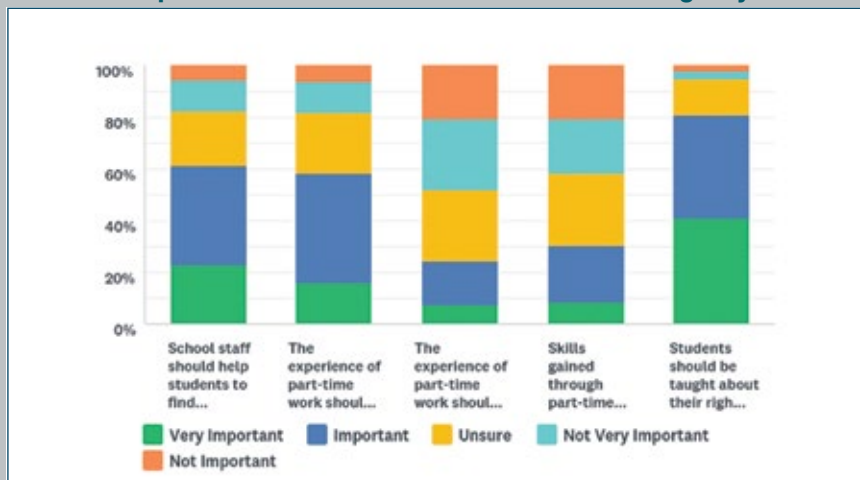
Working Part-Time

Q22. How important do you think it is that your school should be involved in part-time work for students in the following ways?



Not Working Part-Time

Q28. How important do you think it is that your school should be involved in part-time work for students in the following ways?



Reasons for not working part-time

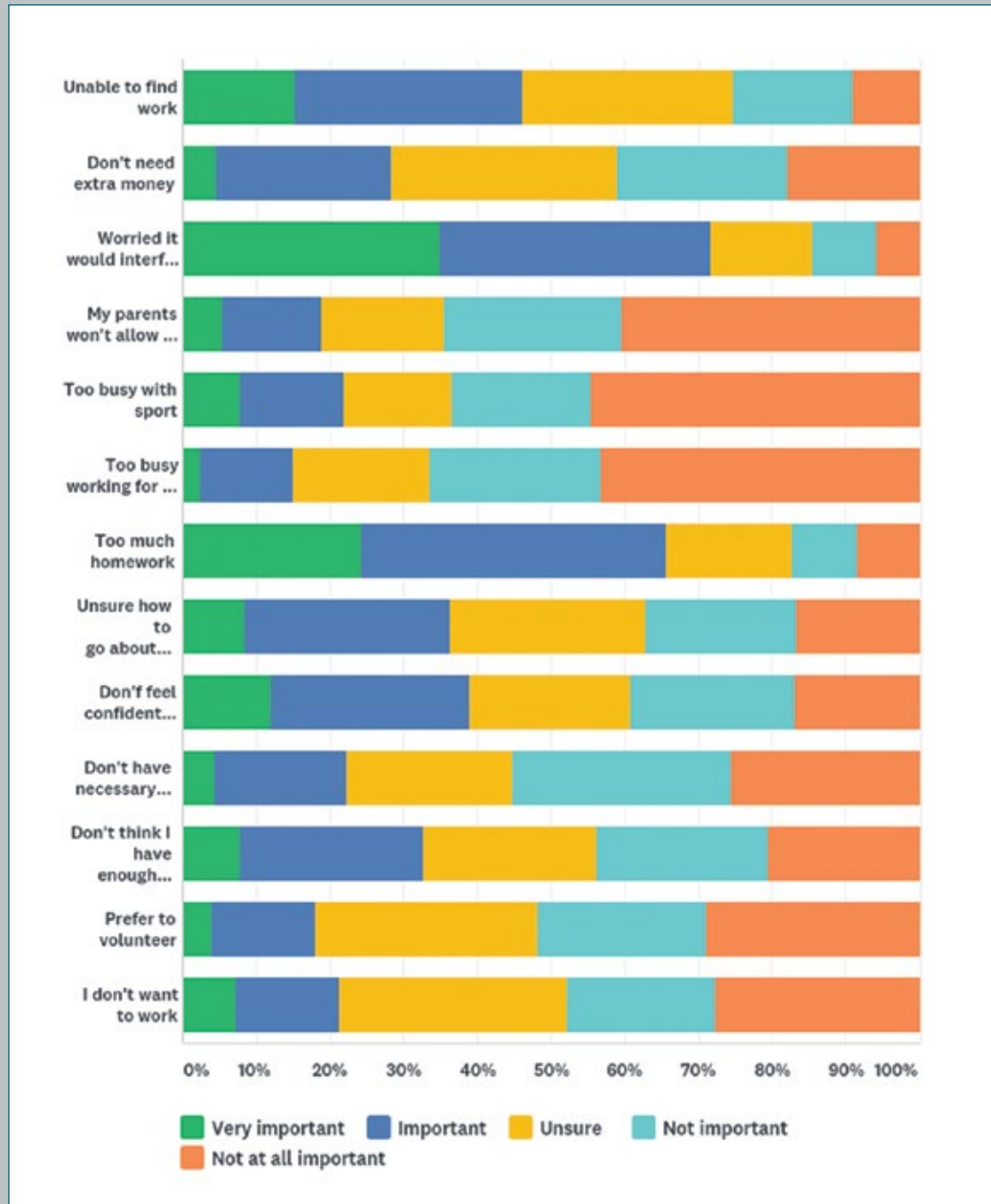
Those students who were not working part-time were asked to rate the importance of various factors in not having a part-time job.

The top five reasons they reported were:

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|--------------|
| 1. | worried a job would interfere with schoolwork | 72% | 421 students |
| 2. | had too much homework | 66% | 380 students |
| 3. | were unable to find work | 46% | 269 students |
| 4. | don't feel confident enough | 39% | 228 students |
| 5. | Unsure how to go about it | 36% | 192 students |

72% of students responded that they were worried a job would interfere with schoolwork.

Q27. How important to you are each of the following reasons for not having a part-time paid job?



8. FINDINGS

The more contacts with employers that a young person has while enrolled at school (through combinations of Work Experience, work placements, part-time work and SBATs), the greater the likelihood that they will subsequently gain employment.

While schools collect data on student involvement in particular employment engagement programs, they generally do not adopt an integrated view of how much or how little work-related activity each student is undertaking.

Part-time work

Despite the options available to senior secondary students to be able to engage with employers, this project has found that 7% of the responding Year 11 and 12 students (a total of 115 students) had done neither Work Experience nor Structured Workplace Learning, and had not had a part-time job. These students were not individually identified through the survey process, but the information is available to their schools through program and career planning data collection.

While the regional average of part-time work for secondary students was 58%, in five of the secondary schools, the rate of part-time employment for students was below 50%. Research in Australia and internationally indicates that low levels of participation in part-time work places have a higher incidence of unemployment in the post-school year, while students who have had part time jobs have employment rates in the year after leaving school that are twice as high or more than those who have not combined school and work.

The extent to which parents support their children take up opportunities for part-time work provides a significant context for some students, and is an issue within some communities. Parent groups need to be engaged in the discussion on the benefits of employer engagement in general, and part-time employment in particular.

Students are seeking support and advice on their work

rights, entitlements and responsibilities. There are a variety of resources available to schools to support the delivery of this information including the free YouthLaw service, the Young Workers Centre, and the Fair Work Ombudsman Best Practice Guide, as well as speakers available through the INLLEN Speaker Bank. The INYET Jobs for Youth campaign is also developing an online guide to information on “Rights at Work”.

Volunteering

The extent of student volunteering was not captured in this project. It has been estimated that around 5% of students in Years 11 and 12 are doing volunteer work, and that this is mainly occurring in sporting clubs. Further investigation is needed to identify whether volunteering provides an alternative form of employer engagement for some young people, or is another activity being used by students who already have multiple points of contact with employers.

Work Experience

Across the inner north, 82% of students report their Work Experience as being 5 days or less, and a further 11% reporting it being between 5 – 10 days. Schools could make greater use of the flexibility available within the Work Experience policy. Schools have the discretion to approve up to 40 work experience days for a student in a school year. A Principal can allow a student to undertake work experience for up to 15 days per term, but the total number of days must not exceed 40 days per year.

The 40 days available can be customised to meet individual needs, but the data suggests that few schools are utilising this flexibility.

It is also noteworthy that 40% of students report that there was no processing of work experience against the curriculum upon their return to school. In some instances, this was the result of the timing of the Work Experience, either at the end of Term or the end of the school year.

Structured Workplace Learning

Structured Workplace Learning is underutilised within

the region. In the inner north, 13% of the students indicated that they had done an SWL as part of their study program (of which 3% had placement as a part of their SBAT). Approximately one third of those enrolled in VET in Schools programs are actually doing placements.

Review existing relevant programs and services in the region

- Under the auspices of the Inner North Youth Employment Taskforce (INYET), the RIJI program provides employment preparation services to approximately 20 schools across the inner north. Other providers deliver similar services. A review of available programs and supports that can help train young people for after-school part-time work and connect them to potential employers would be a useful resource.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

That secondary schools and colleges:

- use the VCAL framework to develop coordinated strategic plans through which each senior student is encouraged and able to experience at least four employer engagement experiences before they complete school.
- make greater use of the flexibility available within the Work Experience policy to provide longer and more varied placements appropriate to individual student needs. The timing of Work Experience should also ensure the opportunity to link the Experience to the school curriculum.
- use resources available through external agencies to ensure that all students are advised on their work rights, entitlements and responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That INYET develop a tool for use in secondary schools that would enable:

- schools to identify which students are and are not involved in Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning or part-time work outside school hours, with the aim of focusing assistance on those who would like to work part-time, but lack the knowledge, skills, and social capital to do so.
- more students to be supported to find part-time jobs through:
 - targeted utilisation of the Real Industry Job Interviews (RIJI) program (or equivalent supports);
 - other employability skills development processes;
 - promotion of the annual inner northern Jobs for Youth campaign
 - proactive partnerships with employers; and
 - utilisation of school alumni networks.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That INYET work in partnership with secondary schools, career practitioners and relevant professional bodies to create a student “Passport to Work” model which recognises the student’s skills, personal attributes and work readiness acquired through a range of employer-related activity while still at school.

- A Work Passport would act as a reminder for students of their engagement in Work Experience, Work Placements, part-time work and relevant volunteering; provide a useful resource to show employers (and others) when applying for work; and help students to think about the skills and work-related knowledge that has been developed that can be communicated in applications and interviews.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That INLLEN promote the continued availability of the employer engagement resources “World of Work” and “Face to Face” to Careers Networks and schools as additional means to increase student engagement with employers in the inner north.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That INYET implement a pilot parent partnership project to research parent attitudes on student part-time work.

A partnership with a secondary school is suggested to trial a survey and workshops with parents to collect data and discuss the available research.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That INYET, in collaboration with Careers Networks within the region, plan a major regional conference on

employer engagement for 2020 that would:

- share the findings of the 2019 research on employer engagement and part-time work
- profile examples of schools strategic approaches to planning and monitoring student engagement with employers
- showcase the development of the Youth Enterprise Hub in building 21st century entrepreneurial skills of young people.

ATTACHMENT 1

PART-TIME JOBS RATE REPORTED BY STUDENTS AT EACH SCHOOL

	Total Responses	Had a PT Job	Percentage	
School 1	31	25	81%	Above average
School 2	29	20	69%	
School 3	31	21	68%	
School 4	181	113	62%	
School 5	42	25	62%	
School 6	158	94	59%	
School 7	197	108	58%	Average
School 9	253	145	57%	
School 10	28	16	57%	
School 11	97	54	56%	
School 12	20	11	55%	
School 13	22	12	55%	
School 14	62	33	53%	
School 15	66	33	50%	
School 16	52	22	42%	
School 17	216	84	39%	
School 18	29	9	31%	
School 19	24	4	17%	Below average

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