

# Changes to Youth, Career and Transition arrangements – Fact Sheet

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## Background

The Australian Government believes that education is a key element in building a just, participative and productive society in which young Australians are able to reach their full potential. Difficult economic conditions have heightened the urgency to support young people, who are particularly vulnerable in periods of tight labour markets. Therefore, at its 30 April 2009 meeting, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to:

- accelerate its 90 per cent Year 12 or equivalent attainment target from 2020 to 2015, including Commonwealth funding of \$100 million to reward states and territories for progress towards the accelerated attainment target in recognition of just how critical educational achievement is to young Australians' futures;
- commit to a trajectory of halving the gap in Indigenous attainment by 2020; and
- a Compact with Young Australians that focuses on the importance of education and training for young people by supporting them to gain skills and knowledge through stronger engagement in education, training and employment.

COAG further agreed, at its 2 July 2009 meeting, to a National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. The National Partnership clarifies roles and responsibilities between the Commonwealth and the states and territories and will drive longer term reform to ensure that young people stay engaged in education and training.

## Compact with Young Australians

The Compact with Young Australians comprises a number of elements:

- A National Youth Participation Requirement which includes a mandatory requirement for all young people under 17 to participate in schooling (meaning in school or an approved equivalent) until they complete Year 10. Furthermore, where they have completed Year 10, they are required to participate full-time in education, training or employment, or a combination of these activities, until age 17. In relation to this requirement, full-time is defined as 25 hours per week.
- An Education and Training Entitlement for young people. Under this element 15-24 year olds are entitled to an education or training place for any government-subsidised qualification, subject to admission requirements and course availability. It is a requirement for 20-24 year olds only that the education or training place results in the individual attaining a higher qualification than they previously held.
- A Youth Allowance (Other) and Family Tax Benefit (Part A) participation requirement which makes full-time education or training a pre-condition for income support for young people under 21 who do not have Year 12 or an equivalent qualification. These changes are being progressively introduced for new and existing benefit recipients.

DEEWR and state/territory governments are currently working on a communications strategy regarding the Compact, to ensure that young people and their parents understand the new requirements and the support available for young people.

## National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

The COAG commitments outlined above will be delivered in collaboration with the states and territories under a National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. This National Partnership also involves the clarification of roles and responsibilities between the Commonwealth and the states and territories in the area of youth, career and transitions. This will result in:

- The Commonwealth having primary responsibility for youth labour-market programs;
- The states and territories having primary responsibility for the delivery of education and training including Vocational Education in Schools work placements, noting that this includes responsibility for the provision of Structured Workplace Learning; and
- The states and territories progressively taking primary responsibility for all youth, careers and transitions programs.

Under the National Partnership, responsibility for training, including Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) and work placements, has been transferred to the states and territories. States and territories are currently drafting their implementation plans for the National Partnership and are expected to address this responsibility as part of these plans, which are scheduled to be agreed between the Commonwealth Minister for Education and State/Territory Education Ministers on 30 November 2009. Further information on co-ordination of work placements will be available after that date.

Further information about the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions can be found at: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/YouthAttainmentandTransitions/Pages/Home.aspx>.

## New Program Arrangements

Under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, a range of the Commonwealth's current Youth, Career and Transition programs have been consolidated and streamlined into four new elements to be introduced from 1 January 2010. These elements are:

- Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions – \$106 million in funding to the states and territories to support the implementation of reforms in the areas of multiple learning pathways; career development and mentoring;
- School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers) – \$183 million in Commonwealth funding for a program which will improve community and business engagement with schools to extend learning beyond the classroom, increase student engagement, deepen learning experiences, lift attainment and improve educational outcomes;
- Youth Connections – \$287 million in Commonwealth funding for a program which will provide an improved safety net for youth at risk through the provision of tailored case management and support to help young people to re-connect with education or training and build resilience, skills and attributes that promote positive choices and wellbeing; and
- National Career Development – \$47 million in funding administered by the Commonwealth for the development of resources that it makes sense to undertake at a national level for the benefit of all jurisdictions (e.g. the Job Guide).

(Note: all funding is over four years)

The new youth, career and transition program arrangements will build on the success of current programs and have been informed by a range of evidence, including program evaluations, recent research reports and stakeholder feedback. The Australian Government is

working closely with states and territories to put these new programs in place. The collaborative approach with the states and territories aims to simplify support for young people, make it easier for them to get the help they need when they need it and to ensure that the Commonwealth programs complement existing state/territory government and local initiatives.

The new programs will initially be put in place by the Commonwealth until the states and territories achieve agreed reform outcomes under the National Partnership at which point the funding and responsibility will be transferred to the states and territories.

Requests for Tender were released on 22 August 2009 for the Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections programs (applications closed on 6 October 2009). Successful tenderers will commence delivering these programs from 1 January 2010.

State and territories are currently developing implementation plans for their responsibilities under the National Partnership. These plans are scheduled to be agreed between the Commonwealth Minister for Education and relevant State/Territory Education Ministers at the end of November 2009. The plans will then be made publicly available. It is expected that the implementation plans will include detail on how work placements will be managed in each jurisdiction.

Note: In Victoria, the Partnership Brokers program will be delivered via the Local Learning and Employment Network managed by the Victorian Government.

## **Existing Program Arrangements**

State and territory agreement on the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions means that a range of Australian Government youth, career and transitions programs will not continue in their present form and that all current contracts under these programs will cease on 31 December 2009. These programs include those under the Career Advice Australia (CAA) banner (Youth Pathways, Connections, Local Community Partnerships, Regional Industry Career Advisers and National Industry Career Specialists), together with the YouthLinx and Mentor Marketplace programs.

Over the remaining months of their current contracts, CAA, Youthlinx and Mentor Marketplace program providers will work with stakeholders directly impacted by program changes, including schools, business/industry, community organisations and young people, to ensure young people are referred to new programs and/or have access to appropriate services as we transition to new program arrangements.

More information about Career Advice Australia programs, including CAA providers in your region, can be found on the CAA website: <http://www.careeradviceaustralia.gov.au>

More information about the Youthlinx and Mentor Marketplace programs can be found at: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/Youth/OfficeForYouth/YouthPrograms/Pages/YouthPrograms.aspx>

## **Next Steps**

The process to select providers of the Youth Connections and Partnership Brokers programs is currently underway, with successful providers expected to be announced in December to commence operations from 1 January 2010. Further information will be distributed to schools and other stakeholders after this process has concluded.