

Strengthening the role of skills and training for young people in the NYEB

Building evidence of innovation in place

When NYEB lead partners and Community Investment Committee (CIC) members came together in Melbourne in November 2023 for a Community of Policy and Practice (CoPP) forum focused on skills and training, they highlighted the need for more detailed evidence of the innovation that is taking place across the NYEB.

In the first half of 2024, 39 members from across the NYEB, including lead partners and CIC chairs, were interviewed by the BSL research team to build a detailed picture of why, how and in what ways CICs are strengthening the role the skills and training system plays in supporting young people into decent and meaningful employment, with a particular focus on Vocational Education and Training (VET).

Bold ambitions for change

89% of interviewees said that their CIC had an ambition to influence change in skills and training in 2024 and beyond.

This included ambitions to improve how training is designed and delivered, and strengthen the role it plays for young people.

As systemic change actors, CICs recognise that the skills and training system is not the only one responsible for young people's skill development and the success of career pathways. Multiple overlapping systems must work effectively together for young people in order to progress pathways meaningful to them. CIC members identified a range of change ambitions, some targeting change within the skills and training system, and some targeting change in the adjacent systems, such as the employment services system and public transport.

Career pathway: A plan that includes specific steps or tasks that help an individual advance to a desirable occupation or new role. Multiple stakeholders (e.g. community service provider, TAFE) can be responsible for the delivery of the steps of a pathway.

Systemic change actor: An individual or organisation undertaking the work of [‘systemic change’](#), a form of applied social policy work that intentionally disrupts and realigns systems that hold inequality and disadvantage in place.

“What we know is we’ve got a careers pathway system that only works for a proportion of young people, and when you move past blaming the individual you then have to look at the system.”

– CIC lead partner

Ambitions for change within the Skills and training system

54% of the ambitions that interviewees identified target change within the Skills and training system. A commitment to young people was the shared theme across a variety of ambitions that interviewees described. The most common types of changes within the system that CICs described were:

- + Stronger young-person centred practices within the skills and training system.
- + Improved models of delivery which are fit-for-purpose for young people.
- + Improved access and supports for young people engaged in skills and training.

Ambitions for change within adjacent systems

46% of interviewees noted that their CIC's ambition was for change in the systems adjacent to skills and training, which play a critical role in enabling access and participation, and contribute to how young people build capability for work. Employers were the key focus of these ambitions, with the most common types of ambition described as:

1. Stronger young-person-centred practices for employers of entry-level roles.
2. Stronger career guidance for young people entering education and employment.
3. Deeper connections between young people and the employers in their region.

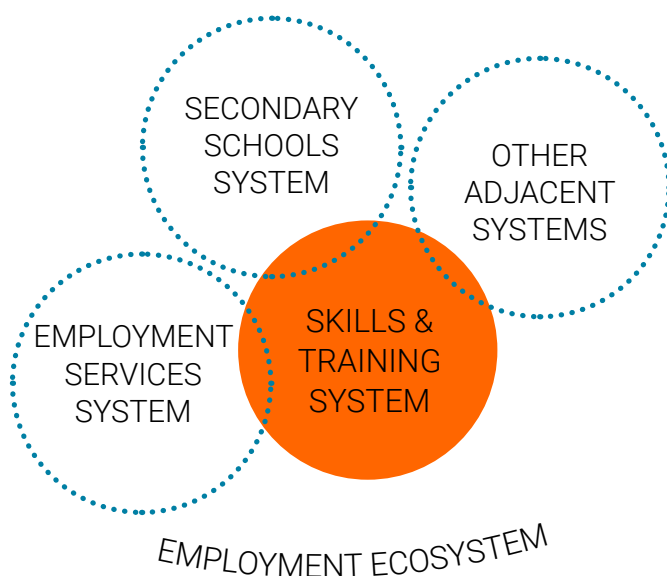


Figure 1

“[It] really is about how we can make training experiences accessible for young people and really putting their individual focus in the front and centre of those processes.”

- CIC member

“[We’re] looking at ways that young people with no experience, that their skills can be showcased to employers and to build up the confidence of young people to identify their transferable skills”

- CIC chair

“...looking at how we’re working with TAFEs, RTOs, even in schools and with employers around their induction to address how young people can still access the courses or work... I think that’s a real barrier at the moment for the young people we work with. It stops them from completely participating.

- CIC lead partner

Ambitions targeted across the learner journey

CIC members spoke of the importance of a person-centred approach to influencing change in skills and training, and of influencing change across the whole of the learner journey – from commencement in training through to completion and career continuity. At this point in time, the research revealed that CICs are particularly focused on influencing change at two key points of in the learner journey:

- + Young people's **commencement** of skills and training pathways, including the influences which determine which pathways or programs they choose.
- + Young people's **conversion** of their training into initial employment, including how training models, curriculum, and employer supports are setting up young people to thrive in the workplace.

How interviewees talked about CIC ambitions and activities

“From our perspective...it's very much about how do we connect young people with the information and the services that they need that are going to help them on that pathway.”

– CIC member

“When it comes to skills and training, the area where we have done the most is around those entry points and the understanding of what careers within different industries can look like for a young person...to expose young people to the opportunities to help them connect with something that's meaningful and provides them with a level of purpose...open their eyes to things that they weren't aware of or weren't immediately obvious to them.”

– CIC lead partner

“There's a whole lot of emotional and relational skills that are critical for the success of learning technical skills, and then implementing them in a workplace. I think when we address those things, learning and skills development will improve dramatically.”

– CIC lead partner

“...filling those skills gaps as much as we possibly can for industry, but also ensuring that the pathways that are created for the young people that we're working with are suitable for those young people, and ensure that they are engaged and understand what outcomes are possible for them in that journey.”

– CIC member

How CICs are undertaking their work

60% of those interviewed said that their CIC was either undertaking or planning to undertake an activity to progress their skills and training ambition in 2024.

Interviewees described CIC activities which possessed a wide range of ambitions, approaches, and outcomes:

- + **55% of CIC activities described fit into the category of 'bridging' activities**, aimed at deepening the connection between young people and employers to improve and better convert skill development. Across the NYEB these activities include work experience and exposure programs, stand-alone co-design events, careers/jobs expos, and connection resources.
- + **29% of CIC activities described fit into the category of 'supply-side' activities**, aimed at building young people's technical and non-technical skills to thrive in employment. Across the NYEB these activities include accredited and non-accredited pathway pilots, and soft-skill development workshops.
- + **16% of CIC activities described fit into the category of 'demand-side' activities**, aimed at building employers' capability to work with young people, support their skill development, and provide work environments which enabled young people to utilise and grow their skills once employed. Across the NYEB these activities include employer toolkits and employer capability building programs.

A majority of interviewees noted that youth involvement in skills and training ambitions and activities came through young people's membership in the NYEB.

58% said that this involvement came through young people's contributions in CIC meetings.

13% said that young people were directly engaged as collaborators in their CIC's activities.

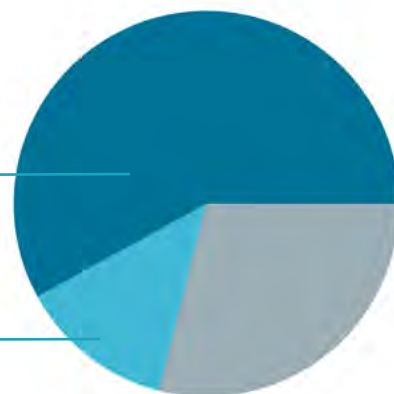


Figure 2

“The work needs to be done not just around young people, but around employers as well. And so it's actually a two-way thing.”

– CIC member

The National Youth Employment Body is enabled by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and is funded by Paul Ramsay Foundation, with additional contributions from Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, Ian Potter Foundation and Macquarie Group Foundation.

