



SKILLSROAD.COM.AU

2017 **YOUTH CENSUS**

Commissioned by:

APPRENTICESHIP
support
AUSTRALIA 

WELCOME TO THE INAUGURAL SKILLSROAD 2017 YOUTH CENSUS



FOREWORD FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR, APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT AUSTRALIA

As we face rising youth unemployment and at the same time, a national skills shortage across many industries, Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA)

commissioned this important research on youth living in Australia to better understand their fears and hopes for the future and how they are traversing the journey into adulthood and specifically, the workplace.

Backed by the business chamber movement in Australia, Apprenticeship Support Australia and our careers program, Skillsroad, are committed to taking action to improve youth employment outcomes.

There are many and complex issues contributing to some of the findings in this research. Whilst some of the themes are consistent with other bodies of youth research, our aim in undertaking the Skillsroad 2017 Youth Census research was to better understand the issues that are impacting young Australian's transition through school into further education and work.

This report combines two psychology tools, the 'Satisfaction with Life' and 'Flourishing' scales, which used together, assess the holistic wellbeing of respondents. That is, their subjective wellbeing and psychological wellbeing.

Alarmingly, we are seeing from the cohort of respondents, that although they are faring OK, they are not necessarily thriving. With housing affordability, whether there will be enough jobs for them and being treated unfairly or discriminated against at the top of the list of their worries about the future, it's not surprising that pay is the most important factor in applying for a job.

We know that our youth are turning to their parents for advice about their career and future. With such focus on extrinsic motivations for working and nearly 30% of respondents citing their biggest concern about starting a career is not knowing what to do, it's more important than ever that parents take an active role in helping their teens understand all career pathways and their suitability to these pathways.

As part of the business chamber movement in Australia, we have extensive connections to the businesses that ultimately provide employment opportunities for youth. It is our role to use this research to inform the future development of careers education and to raise awareness amongst the key supporters of our youth, around the vitally important role they play in delivering unbiased career advice. Collectively, we can help our youth thrive and skill Australia for the future.

The insights from this survey will also influence the development of new tools and resources provided by Skillsroad, so that we can continue to provide evidence-based approaches to the delivery of career advice to students and job seekers across Australia.

Apprenticeship Support Australia would like to acknowledge our dedicated team and registered psychologist Danielle Buckley for the preparation and analysis of this survey, as well as all participating youth. Without your involvement we would not have the vitally important information this project has provided to help us shape the future development of best practice skills development advice and workforce solutions.

As the saying goes 'find a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life'.

Darren Cocks
Managing Director,
Apprenticeship Support Australia

ABOUT THE SURVEY

BACKGROUND

In 2017 Skillsroad launched their inaugural national youth survey, the Skillsroad 2017 Youth Census. The research was commissioned by Apprenticeship Support Australia, in response to concerns regarding rising youth unemployment, whilst Australia simultaneously faces a national skills shortage.

The aim of the survey was to better understand the hopes, fears and realities of young people living in Australia today and explore attitudes and concerns around career pathways and workplace expectations. The insights gleaned ensure Apprenticeship Support Australia and Skillsroad can continue to provide evidence-based approaches for best practice skills development advice and workforce solutions.

Additionally, the findings are intended to inform students and job seekers as well as their parents, teachers and current or future employers about the current well-being levels of youth in Australia.

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

Youth were invited to complete the survey online. Invitations were sent via email and SMS to youth between the ages of 15 and 24. Social media advertising campaigns were utilised to target a broad geographic cross section of the youth community in all states and territories of Australia.

Furthermore, teachers in secondary schools were encouraged via email to promote the survey to their students.

The survey was open from 1 June to 31 July 2017.

RESPONDENTS

In 2017, 13,227 youth living in Australia completed the Skillsroad 2017 Youth Census survey.

METHODOLOGY

To ensure the sample provided an evidence-based approach to understanding youth, not only were questions asked to assess attitudes, fears and current realities. Two psychological tools, the Satisfaction with Life Scale¹ and The Flourishing Scale² were included in the survey to gauge youth's current wellbeing. The Satisfaction with Life Scale is a 5-item self-report scale measuring one's satisfaction with their life. The Flourishing Scale is a brief 8-item summary measuring one's self-perceived success in areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism and provides a single psychological wellbeing score. These two scales combined provide a whole picture of youth wellbeing.

'This research is critical in providing an evidence-based approach to ensuring our youth transition successfully into the workforce and flourish, benefiting themselves and Australian businesses.'

*- Danielle Buckley
Registered Psychologist*

1. Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen and Sharon Griffin as noted in the 1985 article in the *Journal of Personality Assessment*.

2. Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2009). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social Indicators Research*, 39, 247-266.

ABOUT US



APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT AUSTRALIA

Apprenticeship Support Australia exists to skill Australia for tomorrow by providing trusted apprenticeship and traineeship advice and expert solutions. Every day we strive to empower Australian business to develop talent to meet their workforce needs.

With 74 offices nationally and more than 400 specialist staff, Apprenticeship Support Australia combines the 60 years of collective experience of the apprenticeships centres of NSW Business Chamber (Australian Business Apprenticeships Centre), Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Business SA and CCI WA.

SKILLSROAD.COM.AU

SKILLSROAD

Skillsroad is an initiative of Apprenticeship Support Australia and the broader business chamber movement in Australia, to provide a one-stop, independent destination for students and job seekers, as well as their key supporters (parents, teachers and employers), to navigate the journey to a fulfilling career.

The Australian chamber movement represents over 300,000 businesses and collectively has a vested interest in effectively transitioning school leavers and new talent into the labour force through meaningful and fulfilling career pathways.

Skillsroad utilises best-practice, evidence based approaches to career advice and provides tools and resources anchored in positive psychology.



DANIELLE BUCKLEY

Danielle Buckley is a Registered Psychologist with extensive experience in coaching and positive psychology.

She holds a Masters of Applied Science in Coaching Psychology, a Post Graduate Diploma in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology). Danielle is a member of the International Society for Coaching Psychology and International Positive Psychology Association.

Danielle has worked in Australia, Europe, the United Kingdom and Asia developing and implementing both small and large scale coaching and behavioural change programs. She has worked with both private and public organisations, in schools and with individuals.

In her capacity as consulting psychologist to Skillsroad over the past seven years, Danielle has worked with the team at NSW Business Chamber to develop industry leading coaching and career assessments including the Skillsroad Career Quiz and Skillsroad Job Fit Test.

Danielle has honed her expertise as a leading authority on the use of positive psychology in the transition from school to work. She is a popular keynote speaker, has presented work at the World Congress of Positive Psychology in Orlando (2015), and is part-time lecturer at Upper Iowa University (Hong Kong campus).

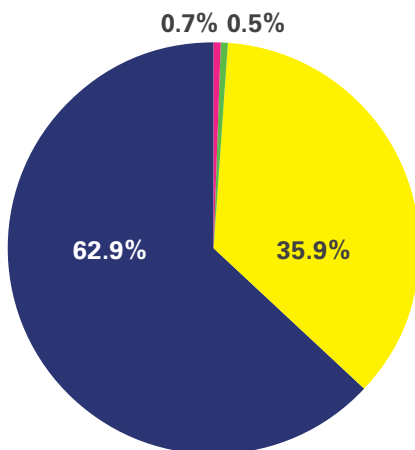


PARTICIPANTS

This survey focuses on those respondents categorised as youth (for international statistical consistency 'youth' is defined as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years³). The national results summary below reference only to those respondents in Australia and age 15-24, making the final number of respondents 13,227. Respondents were from across Australia representing all states and territories, although majority (46.3%) was from NSW, followed by QLD at (17.1%). Of the respondents, (35.9%) were male, (62.9%) were female, (1.2%) selected other or rather not say.

Figure 1.

What is your gender?



Gender

Female	62.9%
Male	35.9%
Rather not say	0.5%
Other	0.7%

SKILLSROAD.COM.AU
HAS SURVEYED

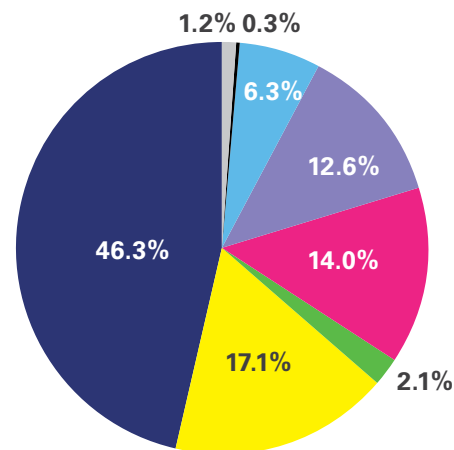
13,227

**15-24 YEAR-OLD
YOUTH LIVING IN AUSTRALIA**



Figure 2.

Where do you live?



Location

New South Wales	46.3%
Queensland	17.1%
Victoria	14.0%
Western Australia	12.6%
South Australia	6.3%
Tasmania	1.2%
Northern Territory	0.3%
Australian Capital Territory	2.1%

3. UN, Division for Social Policy and Development Youth, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/what-we-do/faq.html>

PARTICIPANTS

WHERE ARE OUR YOUTH ON THEIR CAREER JOURNEY?

Almost all young people (91.8%) who completed the survey were in full-time, part-time work or study.

Figure 3.

Where are you on your career journey?

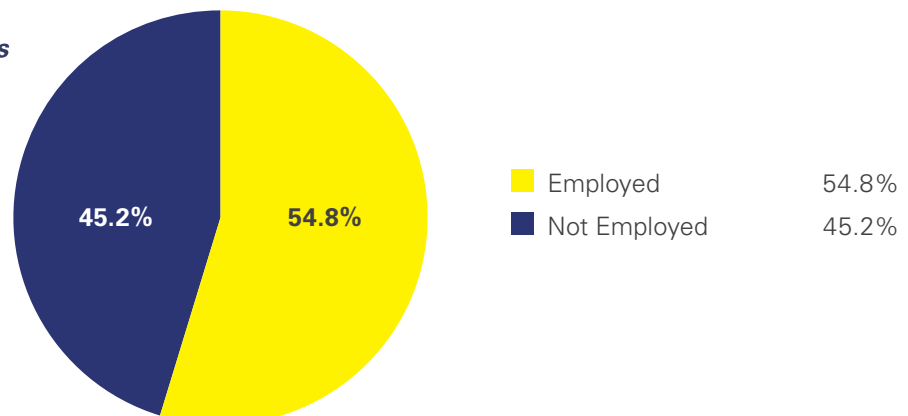
Response	Male	Female	Total
In school with a casual or part-time job	14.3%	25.8%	21.6%
In school with no job	14.6%	19.3%	17.8%
In an apprenticeship or traineeship	34.4%	6.3%	16.4%
Part-time or full-time study at university with a part-time or full-time job	4.4%	15.4%	11.4%
Employed full-time	11.8%	9.0%	10.0%
Employed part-time	4.3%	6.6%	5.8%
Unemployed - looking for work	5.5%	3.9%	4.5%
Part-time or full-time study at university with no job	2.6%	4.4%	3.7%
Studying a vocational course at TAFE or a private college	2.3%	3.0%	2.7%
In school doing a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship	2.7%	2.2%	2.4%
Unemployed - not looking for work	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%
Other	2.6%	3.6%	3.3%

The largest number of respondents (39.4%) were at school, 19.1% in apprenticeships, traineeships or pursuing a VET pathway, 15.1% were at university, and 15.8% were employed in full-time or part-time work.

For those respondents who were at still at school, just over half (54.8%) had a casual or part-time job while still at school. In a gender break down of those school students who were working, females were twice as likely as males to get a part-time or casual role while still at school with 25.8% of females working while in school compared with 14.3% of males.

Figure 4.

Of the 39.4% respondents still at school



PARTICIPANTS

LIVING SITUATION

Figure 5.

What is your housing situation?

Response	15-19	20-24	Total
Live with parents/family	83.2%	45.5%	70.5%
Live in a house I rent	5.1%	20.4%	10.3%
Live with friends/room mate	3.3%	12.9%	6.5%
Live with a partner	2.6%	12.8%	6.0%
Live in a house I own	1.9%	2.5%	2.1%
Live on my own	0.9%	2.4%	1.4%
Other	3.1%	3.4%	3.2%

In response to their living situation, living at home was the top response at 70.5%.

HOW YOUTH FEEL ABOUT WORKING

It is important to young people that they work in roles they enjoy and get satisfaction from, otherwise they will look for new roles. In this survey, 71.1% of respondents who were in work either liked or loved their job. While 8.8% felt indifferent, 4.1% didn't like it and 14.2% were actively looking for other opportunities.

Figure 6.

If you are in work, how would you describe your satisfaction with your role?

Response	Total
I like my job	39.8%
I love my job	31.3%
I'm looking for other opportunities	14.2%
I feel indifferent about my job	8.8%
I don't like my job	4.1%
Other	1.8%

PARTICIPANTS

Figure 7.

How did you find your current job?

Response	Total
Word of mouth - family or friend	48.2%
Online job board	22.5%
After work experience	5.6%
Careers advisor or teacher	5.3%
Local newspaper	2.3%
University or TAFE website	1.5%
Other	14.7%

Almost half of the respondents who were working reported finding their job through word of mouth (48.2%), followed by using an online jobs board (22.5%).

PERSONAL & NATIONAL WORRIES

To better support young Australians, this survey wanted to understand the personal and national worries facing young people growing up in Australia. Exploring the personal and national worries of youth living in Australia provides a broader context to getting a full picture of what is occurring amongst Australian youth today.

Figure 8.

What is your biggest worry about being a young person growing up in Australia?

Response	Total
Housing affordability	31.9%
There aren't enough jobs	18.1%
Being treated unfairly or being discriminated against	12.3%
Mental health issues	10.1%
The state of our economy	6.5%
Terrorism	4.7%
Climate change	4.6%
Drugs and alcohol	3.7%
Attitudes to refugees	2.4%
Other	5.7%

Overwhelming, the biggest worry about growing up in Australia is housing affordability, with almost one third (31.9%) of young people ranking that as their biggest worry, followed by there not being enough jobs (18.1%), being treated unfairly or discriminated against (12.3%) and then mental health issues (10.1%).

The housing affordability concern may provide insight into why pay has such a high priority when young people are choosing careers. The concern about there not being enough jobs for them is a surprising one, given in many industries there is a skills shortage.

TOP 3

BIGGEST WORRIES ABOUT GROWING UP IN AUSTRALIA

- 1 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
- 2 NOT ENOUGH JOBS
- 3 BEING TREATED UNFAIRLY OR DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

PERSONAL & NATIONAL WORRIES

Figure 9.

What is your biggest personal worry?

Response	Total
Stress	27.6%
School/study problems	24.1%
Body image	18.5%
Friendships	8.5%
Family	8.2%
Alcohol and/or other drugs	1.5%
Other	11.7%

When it comes to personal worries, coping with stress was the biggest concern (27.6%), followed by school and study problems (24.1%) then body image (18.5%).

Overwhelming stress and coping with school and study problems were the key personal issues facing youth today. This data indicates that young people still don't feel equipped to handle the stress and pressure they feel from school and life generally. It's important young people have and continue to have access to evidence-based interventions, tools and support in dealing with these pressures.



'Companies must understand what factors contribute to lower levels of wellbeing and how they can address this.'

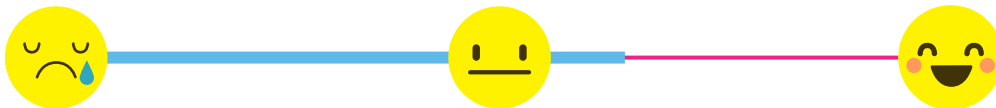
WELLBEING

Unlike other surveys, this survey was also designed to better understand how young people are tracking from a wellbeing perspective. Participants in this survey completed the Satisfaction with Life Scale⁴, which measures subjective wellbeing and the Flourishing Scale⁵, which measures psychological wellbeing.

Wellbeing can be defined as 'optimal psychological functioning and experience'⁶. This can be broken down into subjective wellbeing, consisting of pleasure or happiness. And, psychological wellbeing, the actualisation of human potential and describes the way to which people live in accordance to their core values.

Figure 10.

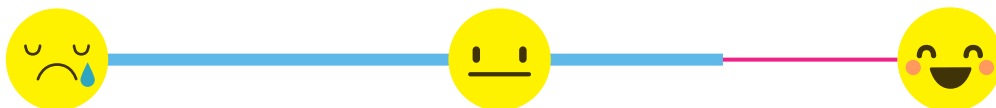
SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE **23 OF 35**



Youth living in Australia scored 23 out of a possible 35 on the Satisfaction with Life Scale, which translates to being 'slightly satisfied' with their life. The average life satisfaction for economically developed countries is in this range, it means generally people are satisfied but they have areas where they would like improvement in their lives.

Figure 11.

FLOURISHING SCALE **44 OF 56**



Youth living in Australia scored 44 out of a possible 56 in the Flourishing Scale. This means on average, youth report an average level of psychological wellbeing.

This is an interesting finding, particularly if we think about this in relation to young people starting careers. It means, that on average, the youth that were surveyed are generally satisfied, but have some areas of their life they would like to see some improvement in.

One's wellbeing levels significantly affect work performance. Research by Gallup found that millennials who have high levels of wellbeing, are less likely to seek out a new employer in the next year⁷. Research on wellbeing also suggests that when individuals have high levels of wellbeing they avoid ill health, take less sick days and return to work quicker after injury. People with high levels of wellbeing also typically display positive emotions and build better relationships, are more productive, more engaged at work, have clearer goals and better mental health. To improve young people's wellbeing, particularly as they enter the workforce, companies must understand what factors contribute to lower levels of wellbeing and how they can address this.

4. Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen and Sharon Griffin as noted in the 1985 article in the *Journal of Personality Assessment*.

5. Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi, D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2009). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Social Indicators Research*, 39, 247-266

6. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. In S. Fiske (Ed), *Annual review of psychology* (Vol 52, pp. 141-166). Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews, Inc.

7. Brandon Rigoni and Bailey Nelson, *Millennials Want Jobs That Promote Their Well-Being*, Gallup News, BUSINESS JOURNAL, 01.11.2016



WHAT YOUTH WANT *after school*

52.3% plan to go to university

18.3% plan to take a gap year

9.3% plan on taking on an apprenticeship or traineeship

6.7% plan on getting a casual job

6.5% plan on taking a vocational course at TAFE or a private college

0.3% plan on doing nothing

6.7% other

OF THOSE AT SCHOOL

In considering the next steps after school, we asked what young people would like to do when they left school. The majority (52.3%) reported plans to go to university; this was followed by taking a gap year (18.3%) and then taking on an apprenticeship or traineeship (9.3%). Other responses include getting a casual job (6.7%), attending a private colleague or TAFE (6.5%) or doing nothing (0.3%).

Figure 12.

What will be your next step after you leave school?

Response	Male	Female	Total
Go to university	41.2%	56.6%	52.3%
Take a gap year	14.2%	19.8%	18.3%
Get an apprenticeship or traineeship	21.8%	4.6%	9.3%
Get a casual job	9.2%	5.7%	6.7%
Study a vocational course at TAFE or through a private college	4.8%	7.2%	6.5%
Do nothing	0.7%	0.1%	0.3%
Other	8.0%	6.0%	6.7%

Of those who plan to go to university, more are female (56.6%) compared with 41.2% males, however it must be noted that this survey was completed by a higher proportion of females than males. When considering an apprenticeship or traineeship, males are five times more likely than females to pursue an apprenticeship or traineeship pathway, with 21.8% of males selecting that after school they will pursue an apprenticeship or traineeship compared to only 4.6% of females.

OF THOSE AT SCHOOL

The survey wanted to uncover the key concerns of young people who wish to pursue both a university pathway and an apprenticeship pathway.

With over half of those respondents still at school reporting plans to go to university after school, the survey asked what the biggest concern about taking on a university degree was. Almost one third stated that finances were the biggest concern (31.3%), followed by a lack of jobs after university (23.3%) and then balancing work and study (19.9%).

Figure 13.

In your view, what is the biggest concern about taking on a university degree?

Response	Total
Finances	31.3%
Lack of jobs after university	23.3%
Balancing work and study	19.9%
Workload	11.6%
Not being interested in university subjects	7.6%
Travel to and from university	1.9%
Working for a good employer	1.4%
I'm just not interested in university	0.4%
Other	2.6%

OF THOSE AT SCHOOL

Figure 14.

In your view, what is the biggest concern about taking on an apprenticeship/traineeship?

Response	Total
Finding an apprenticeship/traineeship	38.5%
Balancing work and study	19.6%
Working for a good employer	13.6%
Pay	10.3%
Perceptions of apprenticeships/traineeships	4.9%
The type of work you have to do	4.3%
Access to TAFE/training	4.3%
I'm not interested in those industries	1.0%
Other	3.6%

Pursuing an apprenticeship or traineeship path was the third preference in pathways after school for those respondents who were still at school. For those pursuing an apprenticeship or traineeship their biggest concern about taking on an apprenticeship or traineeship was finding one (38.5%), followed by balancing work and study (19.6%), working for a good employer (13.6%) and then pay (10.3%).

'Young people want to work and value money, but they also want to like what they do.'



STARTING A CAREER AND WORK EXPECTATIONS

When it comes to working, participants were surveyed on their concerns and attitudes towards starting a career, important factors when applying for a job, expectations of employers and reasons for leaving a job.

Figure 15.

What is/was your biggest worry about 'starting your career'?

Response	Total
Not knowing what to do	30.4%
Not liking the career I choose	30.4%
Coping with the stress of work	12.1%
Working for people I don't get along with	9.5%
Working on a 'starting' salary	6.9%
Finding work too hard for me	4.2%
Other	6.5%

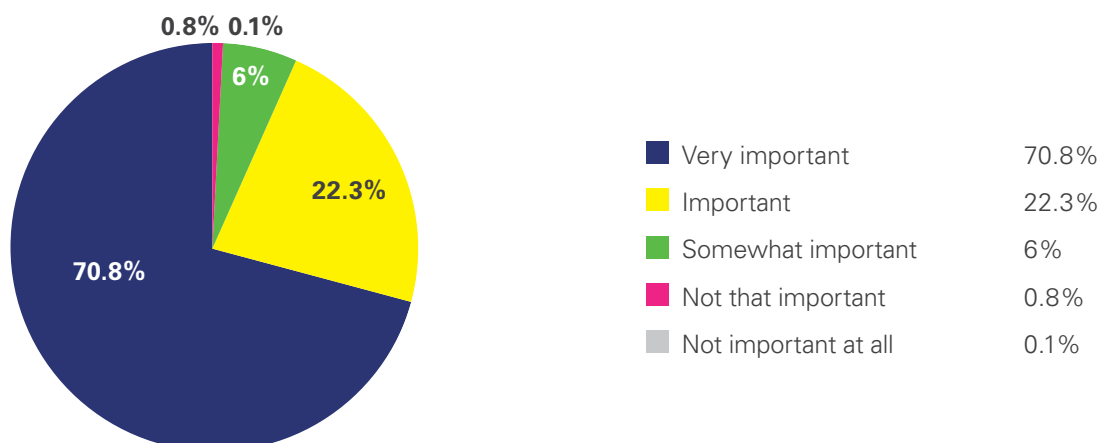
Starting a career can be daunting for many young people. According to this survey, the biggest concerns, when starting a career are: not knowing what to do (30.4%), and not liking the career they choose (30.4%), then coping with the stress of work (12.1%) and finally working for people they don't get along with (9.5%).

Many young people have been criticised for a tendency to job-hop and for a lack of motivation to work. However, based on this survey 93.1% of respondents stated that it is either very important or important that they get a job and earn money.

Equally, pay and finances are concerns of taking on further study. This may suggest that young people want to work and value money, but they also want to like what they do.

Figure 16.

How important is it for you to get a job and earn money?



STARTING A CAREER AND WORK EXPECTATIONS



MOST IMPORTANT

FACTORS IN
CONSIDERING A JOB

- ✓ PAY
- ✓ TYPE OF WORK
- ✓ LOCATION

Figure 17.

When you start (or started) work, what do you expect from an employer?

Response	Total
A positive, friendly work environment	16.6%
Coaching and mentoring	14.9%
A positive work climate	14.5%
Opportunities for progression	13.7%
Work life balance	12.0%
Flexibility with hours	10.1%
A clear path for progression	9.4%
Flexible learning	8.4%
Other	0.4%

The survey also asked young people to rank what they expected from employers once they start work. The highest ranked expectation was a friendly work environment (16.6%), followed by opportunities for coaching and mentoring (14.9%), a positive work climate (14.5%) and opportunities for progression.

Figure 18.

If applying for a job (or when you applied for your current job), what are the most important factors you consider?

Response	Rank
Pay	1
The type of work you will have to do	2
Location of work	3
Working hours	4
Team environment	5
The industry	6
Job title	7
The size of the business	8

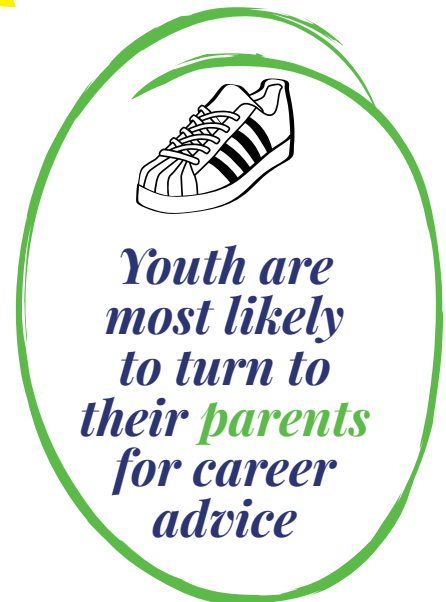
When it comes to applying for a job, participants were asked to rank the most important factors they consider in applying for a job. Pay was ranked the most important factor, followed by the type of work and then the location of the work.

STARTING A CAREER AND WORK EXPECTATIONS

Figure 19.

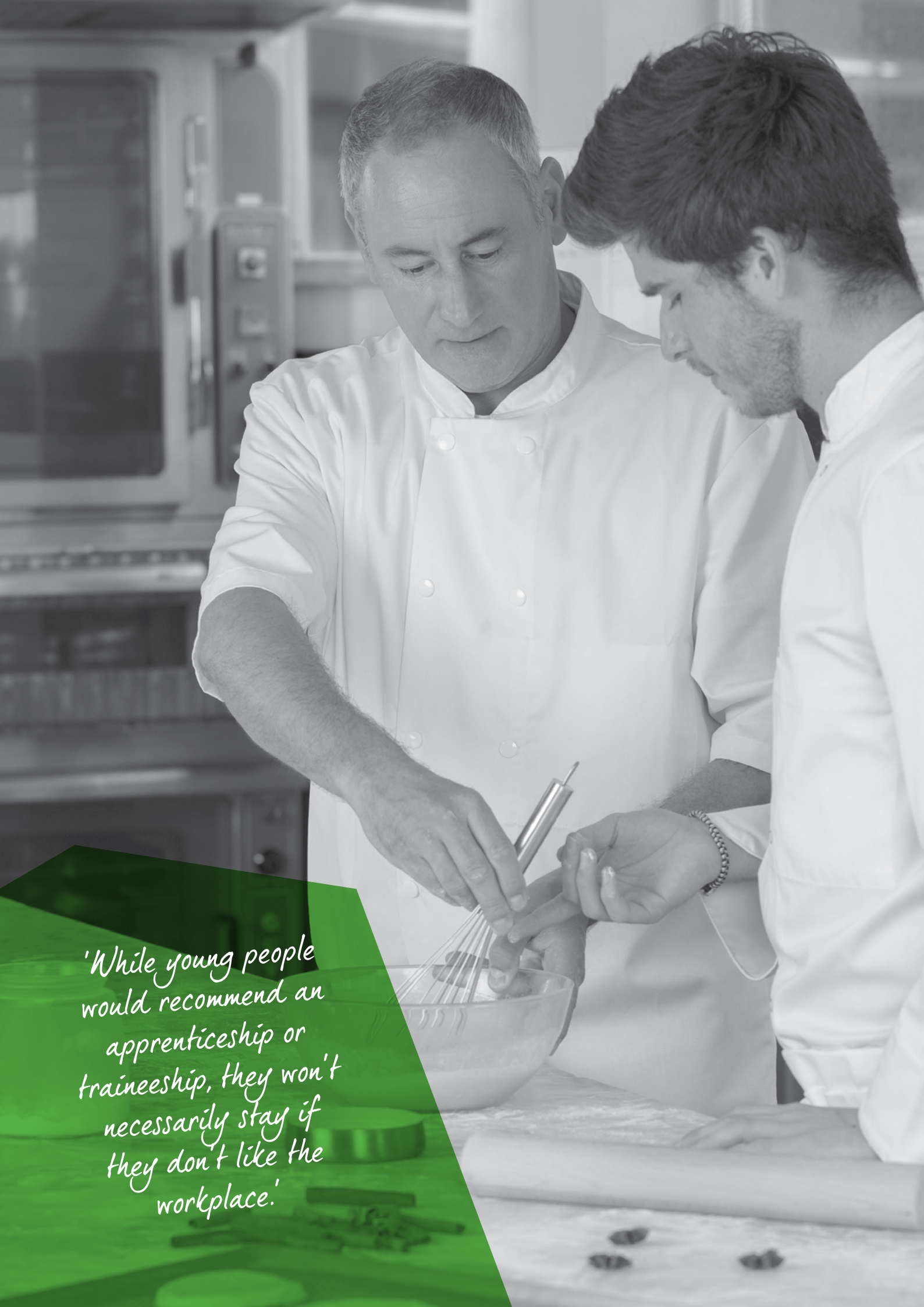
On a scale from 1 to 7, please rank who you are most likely to turn to for career advice?

Response	Rank
Parents	1
Friends	2
Teacher/Careers Adviser	3
Mentor	4
Colleagues	5
Family friend	6
The internet	7



Parents of young Australians' play a critical role in shaping their career and how they negotiate school and study problems. Respondents reported that their parents are the most likely people they would turn to for advice when it comes to their career. Whereas when it comes to turning to someone for support with personal problems, they are most likely to turn to friends for support. However, parents come a very close second.

It can be argued that the work expectations of young people today differ from many of the expectations of people who started work twenty or thirty years ago. The trends outlined here support the notion that while pay is important in choosing a career or job, liking work and being in a supportive, nurturing work environment is a top priority for young people. If these needs aren't met and they get a better opportunity somewhere else, they may leave.



'While young people would recommend an apprenticeship or traineeship, they won't necessarily stay if they don't like the workplace.'

THOSE ALREADY DOING AN APPRENTICESHIP OR TRAINEESHIP

Figure 20.

How likely would you be to recommend taking on an apprenticeship/traineeship to friends or family?

Response	Total
Very likely	58.9%
Likely	31.7%
Neither likely nor unlikely	7.3%
Unlikely	1.4%
Very unlikely	0.7%

For all of those respondents who were working in an apprenticeship or traineeship, they were asked how likely they would be to recommend taking on an apprenticeship or traineeship to others. The survey reported that almost everyone (90.6%) who were undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship were either likely or very likely to recommend taking on an apprenticeship or traineeship to others. Suggesting that once young people find an apprenticeship or traineeship, they typically enjoy it.

While this figure is high, it does not explain why apprentice completion rates continue to remain around 50-60% in many states and territories. One such interpretation is that while young people would recommend an apprenticeship or traineeship, they won't necessarily stay if they don't like the workplace.

THOSE ALREADY DOING AN APPRENTICESHIP OR TRAINEESHIP

Figure 21.

If you were to leave your apprenticeship/traineeship, what would be a likely reason?

Response	Total
Getting a better offer somewhere else	13.8%
Pay	13.2%
Family/personal lifestyle changes	12.3%
Not liking the work	10.6%
Feeling as though you aren't learning	10.4%
Not having a supportive team	10.1%
Having a bad manager	9.5%
Not being able to progress	8.5%
No work life balance	5.7%
Difficulty getting to and from work each day	3.1%
I'm not in an apprenticeship/traineeship	0.4%
Other	2.4%

Finally, when it came to leaving a job, we surveyed those participants in apprenticeships or traineeships and asked if they were to leave their apprenticeship or traineeship what would be the reason. The top response for leaving was getting a better offer from someone else (13.8%), followed by pay (13.2%), family and personal lifestyle changes (12.3%) and then not liking the work (10.6%).



KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data presented in this report valuable insight when it comes to understanding and supporting young Australians in their general upbringing, during their time at school, as they transition into the workplace and then as they embark on their career journey. The below discussion identifies three key themes as areas of further focus when it comes to improving how young people choose careers, transition into the workplace and strategies for improved wellbeing.

1. CAREER PATHWAYS AND CAREER CONVERSATIONS

University continues to be the most popular pathway after school, followed by taking a gap year and then undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship. This finding supports the notion that there is still a cultural bias towards youth in Australia pursuing university pathways. In many cases, students have more exposure to, and information on, university pathways rather than receiving in-depth information on all available career options. For a lot of young people, university may not be the right pathway towards a meaningful career.

Given a barrier to young Australians who are starting their career is worrying about making the right career choice and choosing a career path they will end up not liking, investment in assisting with career choice and career suitability is critical and leads to greater productivity, reduced employee turnover and less stress.

Only 15.8% of respondents planned to attend TAFE or a private college or undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship. It was reported the leading concern with taking up an apprenticeship or traineeship is the lack of knowledge of where to find one. With this insight, it becomes paramount that more investment is made in educating students on all career pathways, their suitability to these and how and where to pursue them. Thus enabling students to make informed career choices.

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

In schools, one approach is to begin career conversations earlier. This allows more informed subject selection, work experience and educational pathways that prepare for career transitions. For this to happen, career services need to be valued and seen as an integral part of a student's development. Helping students find pathways that they are passionate about and inspire them, can help develop a love of learning. As many of the jobs of the future are not created yet, encouraging students to become skilled workers in areas that they are interested in and enjoy, provides adaptability, a necessary skill for the future. This is particularly pertinent to females who are significantly under-represented in the trades industry.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents are key stakeholders in the career conversation. How knowledgeable parents are with regard to career options and pathways will influence choice given young people are more likely to turn to their parents than anyone else for career advice.

If parents are directing more young people to university on the belief that this will provide for a better foundation for the future, without considering what is best or what the strengths of the young person are, parents may inadvertently be contributing to the high levels of stress and low levels of wellbeing that is evident in these results. Educating parents on all career pathways, providing them with access to unbiased career advice including the earning potential via non-tertiary pathways, up-to-date information about jobs for the future and tools that are easy and accessible is a priority. Skillsroad.com.au will help to assist them in helping young people make positive, educated and informed career choices.

KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMENDATIONS

2. BUILDING BETTER WORKPLACES

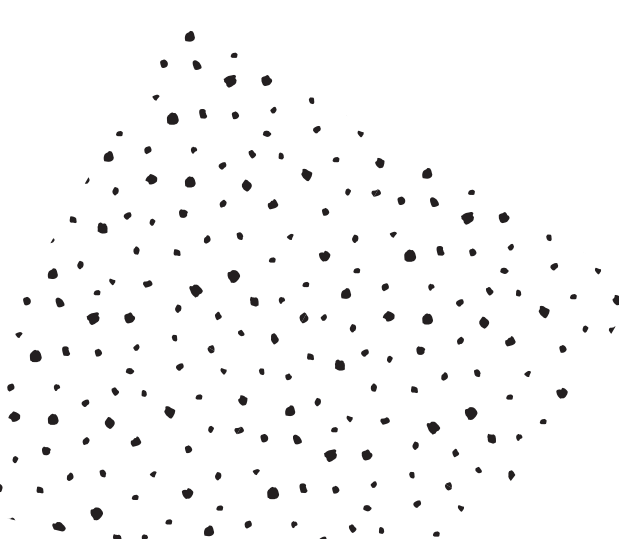
THE ROLE OF BUSINESS

For business leaders the survey results have highlighted key insights. That is, although pay is the primary concern for youth in Australia in applying for a job, young people also care deeply about the type of work they are doing, the environment they are to be working in and how they are treated and cared for in their role. As a result of young people's attitudes to work and workplaces today, some traditional management styles aren't working and our youth are expecting employers that are nurturing and who care about them. In order to ensure businesses can retain young people at work, they must first recruit the right person into the role. Many business owners lack the basic fundamentals when it comes to attraction and selection practices as well as some of the advanced technology skills young people can bring to the workplace.

When the recruitment process is done well and someone is engaged at work, coping with the stress of work and building relationships will be easier. Productivity will rise.

The survey asked young people to rank what they expected from employers when they start (or started) work. These results found the highest ranked expectation was a friendly work environment, followed by opportunities for coaching and mentoring, a positive work climate and opportunities for progression.

For many businesses, investing in the 'softer side' of skill development (regular coaching, mentoring, relationship building) is new and often met with resistance. For a lot of big businesses, the expectations of young Australians are met through structured HR practices and policies. Yet for many small businesses, employers often lack the skills, knowledge, insight and possibly the time, to provide evidence-based coaching techniques and meet, the often implicit, expectations of young people. As an increasing amount of Australians either start their own business or work in small to medium size businesses, providing access to education on human capital and development for small and medium size businesses is critical. Evidence-based tools, strategies and resources to build better workplaces needs to be a focus if we want to engage and retain young Australians. The risk of not investing in better workplaces is that young people will leave. They will leave because even if pay is important to them, workplace satisfaction trumps pay.



KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3. FOCUS ON WELLBEING

Wellbeing encompasses the way one thinks and feels about their life, both from a happiness and satisfaction level, as well as from a deeper psychological level. An individual's wellbeing, has been shown to considerably impact their work performance, particularly in areas such as finding fulfilment and enjoying work, having positive social interactions and relationships with others, feeling financially secure and being mentally and physically healthy. Many youth surveys have explored beliefs and attitudes of young people, but none to date have surveyed what kind of baseline wellbeing level Australian youth are experiencing and the impact of this, until now.

In this survey, youth scored 23 out of a possible 35 on the Satisfaction with Life Scale, which translates to being 'slightly satisfied' with their life. They scored 44 out of a possible 56 in the Flourishing Scale. Again, reporting an average level of psychological wellbeing. These results indicate that on average youth are generally satisfied but there are areas they would like to see improvements in.

There are a number of factors that affect wellbeing levels and one of the most important aspects is social relationships. People who have close family and friends tend to report higher levels of wellbeing than those that do not. Another factor that influences satisfaction is work and school performance. When people enjoy what they spend most of their time doing, be that work or at school, they are generally happier. If we want to improve the wellbeing of our young Australians, one way to achieve this is to invest in helping them develop better relationships, finding work that they enjoy and provide opportunities for personal growth and satisfaction.

Another avenue to foster wellbeing is to help students find pathways and set goals that they are internally motivated by and which align with their strengths and passions. According to literature on wellbeing, individuals who place high importance on material goals (the pursuit of money, possessions, image and status) compared to goals of personal growth and contribution to the community, report lower quality of life on a variety of wellbeing measures. In particular, material goals were related to lower life satisfaction, less happiness, fewer experiences of pleasant emotions and higher amounts of physical symptomatology, more drug and alcohol problems, more narcissism and more behavioural disorders.

KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many young people put a lot of emphasis on material goals. In the survey, when young people are choosing a job, pay was initially the top priority (a material goal). This may be related to their concern of housing affordability. Another major worry for young people was body image and being treated unfairly, again, these are all external and relate to status and image. Could young people be so focused on material goals that it is negatively affecting their wellbeing? If young people were to focus more on internally motivated goals, it may not only influence their wellbeing, but also improve their career selection, retention rates, general satisfaction, mental health and the bottom line of many Australian businesses. Living in a consumer driven culture significantly impacts our pursuit of intrinsic happiness, if we want to see changes we must take action towards a changing shift in perspective and goal striving.

At a practical level for these changes to occur parents, educators and industry must hear what young Australians are saying and act. For parents, they must help their children discover who they are and encourage their self-development. Educators must continue to facilitate meaningful career discussions but also invest in the character development of young people. Industry must also realise and value the role wellbeing plays not just for its young people, but for the future of the workforce. The need to focus on the softer skills that encompass wellbeing along with many other areas identified here is no longer simply an expectation of young people, but rather an informed insight from a valid sample of young Australians at school and at work and critical to individual and business success.



KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMENDATIONS



Key insights

FROM THE SKILLSROAD 2017 YOUTH CENSUS

- **Australian youth are not thriving.** They report only being, 'slightly satisfied' with their life and have an 'average' level of wellbeing.
- Young people in Australia are most likely to be **driven by extrinsic motivations** when faced with career choice, for example pay.
- **Choosing a career is stressful** for young Australians. They worry they will make the wrong choice or not like what they choose.
- Australian youth are **most likely to turn to their parents** for career advice, amplifying the need for parents to boost career knowledge.
- If we want Australian youth to thrive, **we must help them see the bigger picture** and encourage them to invest in career pathways that give them passion and purpose.





SKILLSROAD.COM.AU
2017 **YOUTH CENSUS**