

Shine

A publication of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
March 2009 | Volume 02

62 Mar 09

Youth Transitions

Transition program helps western suburbs youth

The Youth Transition Support Initiative (YTSI) helps young people at risk of disengagement get back on track with their education or employment.

The Youth Transition Support Initiative (YTSI) has been assisting young people to get back on track by helping them reengage with education or employment since January 2007. YTSI is targeted at early school leavers who have been out of school for six months or more. Many participants are highly disadvantaged and face a range of barriers to continuing their education, including homelessness, financial problems and substance misuse. The majority of participants have not completed Year 10 and many have literacy and numeracy problems. By anyone's standards, these young people are among the most vulnerable in the state.

There are 24 YTSI Transition Support Workers covering 12 LLEN areas in Victoria, providing personalised assistance through case management for young people to overcome these barriers. In its two years of operation, the program has assisted over 1900 young people.

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In the Western suburbs of Melbourne the YTSI program is provided by Western Workplace Learning, in conjunction with Melbourne Citymission. Covering the areas of Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Wyndham and Hobson's Bay, the four YTSI workers are based at youth hubs, community and resource centres in Altona, Braybrook, Footscray and Wyndham.

According to program coordinator Yoko Ah Kuoi, the program provides an invaluable service to those youth who are most at risk. "The YTSI program helps and supports young people who are not aware of all their options," she says. "The Transition Support Workers make sure that young people participating in YTSI make informed pathway choices.

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And it's young people such as 'Kate' from Melbourne's western suburbs who benefit from this assistance. Kate signed up with Western Workplace Learning YTSI in 2007. She had been in trouble with the police, and was having a lot of personal problems. When she made it to appointments with her transition worker, she showed a lot of enthusiasm. However, she found it hard to attend the appointments because of problems with her family.

Ms Ah Kuoi says that after being in the program for a year, Kate has managed to make many significant changes. "Kate has really turned her life around," she says. "She is in the process of completing her Certificate IV in Community Services and things are really looking up. Her relationship with her family has improved, and she is now helping her two younger brothers who are facing similar problems."



To be eligible for the program, applicants must be aged 15 to 19 and not currently in education or full-time work. To find out more about the Youth Transition Support Initiative in your area visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/sersecyouth/careertrans/