

# Supporting stronger post-school outcomes among Australian disadvantaged young people

## Australian Social Policy Conference

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# Overview

1. Overall approach
  - Our measurement of effectiveness
2. Supporting stronger post-school outcomes
  - At what age do we start?
3. School and post-school programs

# Overall approach

# The problem we're trying to influence

- Disadvantaged children and young people in Australia have poorer educational outcomes than their more advantaged peers.
- Gaps in educational outcomes exist prior to school, continue through school and into post-school education and employment.
- The relationship between student background and educational outcomes is more pronounced in Australia than in nations such as Canada.

# Research underpinning our approach

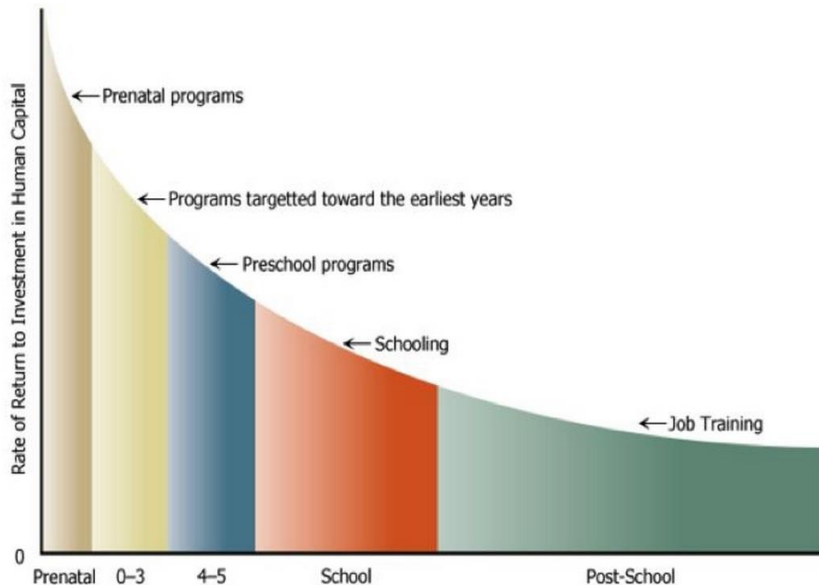


- Multiple factors impact children and young people's outcomes
- These factors place a child on a particular trajectory or pathway
- Trajectory isn't fixed - can be influenced by the right support at the right time
- Working in multiple areas of a child's life maximises likelihood of positive outcomes
- Early intervention and prevention is much more cost effective than remedial efforts aimed at 'fixing' entrenched problems

# Research underpinning our approach

## Early childhood development is a smart investment

The earlier the investment, the greater the return



Source: James Heckman, Nobel laureate in economics

## Greatest returns from balanced interventions across young person's life

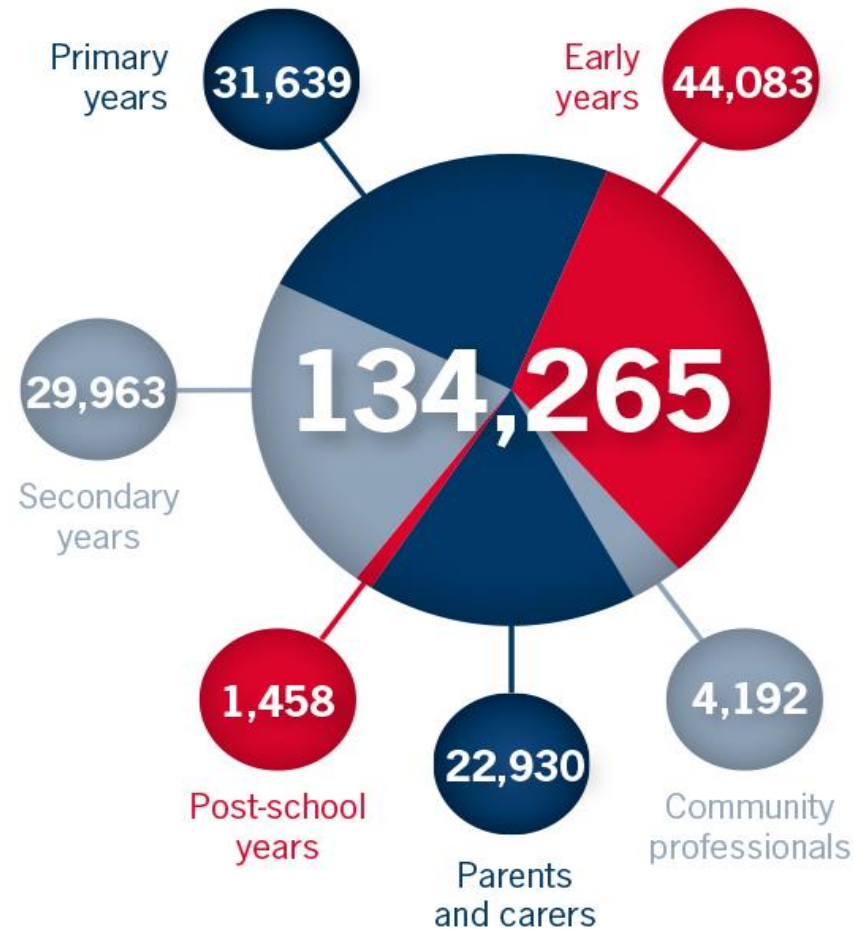
|  | High school graduation rates | University enrolment | Welfare enrolment |
|--|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Balanced intervention throughout childhood | +50%                         | +34%                 | -15%              |
| Early childhood & adolescent intervention  | +44%                         | +23%                 | -14%              |
| Early childhood intervention only          | +25%                         | +9%                  | -9%               |

Evaluation of many programs, including *Communities for Children*, highlights that the impact of early years programs can 'fade' over time

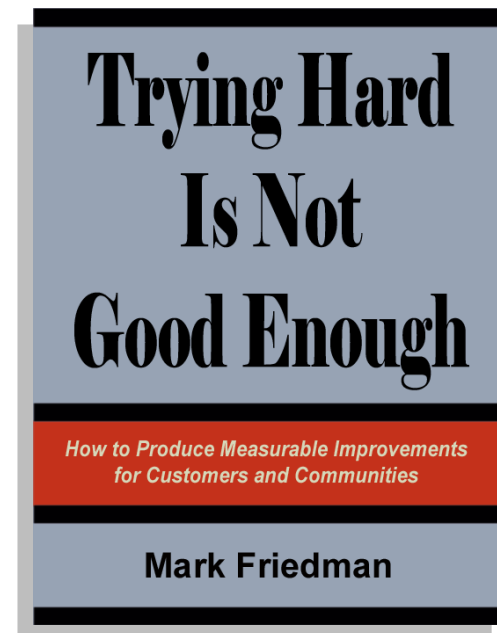
# Community-based approach

## PARTNERSHIPS

1. Family
2. School
3. Community



# How we measure effectiveness






# Outcomes based accountability

## LONGER TERM OUTCOMES

- Young people are in education, training and/or work
- Young people complete Year 12 or equivalent
- Young people stay engaged with learning

## ENGAGEMENT ADVANCEMENT ATTENDANCE



## SHORTER TERM OUTCOMES CONTRIBUTE TO LONGER TERM OUTCOMES

- Improved literacy and numeracy
- Improved confidence (self/efficacy)
- Improved motivation and aspiration
- Enhanced networks and relationships
- Improved knowledge/ understanding
- Improved or sustained school attendance
- Increased access to and use of community resources
- Increased parent engagement in school activities
- Improved service collaboration and integration
- Enhanced cross-sectoral partnerships



## PROGRAMS

## INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY

## SCHOOL

## COMMUNITY

**Programs build skills and knowledge and influence attitudes and behaviours**

*Learning for Life scholarship, student2student, iTrack mentoring, Learning Clubs, smArts, Careers/Post school options workshops, Let's Count, Let's Read, Tertiary Mentoring, Tech Packs, Financial Literacy*

*School Community Hubs*

*Communities for Children, Child and Parent Centres*

**When do we start trying to  
improve post-school outcomes  
for young people?**

# Key programs at different stages

## EARLY YEARS



- *Let's Count*
- *Let's Read*

## PRIMARY YEARS



- *Student2student* reading program
- Learning Clubs

## SECONDARY YEARS



- *iTrack* career mentoring
- Creative enrichment
- Career and post-school pathways
- Work Inspiration

## POST-SCHOOL YEARS



- Tertiary mentoring
- Financial Literacy

## PARENTS AND CARERS



- *Tech Packs*
- Financial Literacy



*Learning for Life*  
scholarship  
**34,000 students**

*Financial scholarship  
Community worker  
Core programs*

# Secondary school and tertiary students

- *iTrack*
- *Work Inspirations*
- *Extended School Hubs*
- *Learning Clubs*
- *Career days*
- *Tertiary Mentoring Program*
- *Tertiary Specialist Program Coordinators*
- *Financial literacy*
- *Tech Packs*
- *Girls at the Centre*

# iTrack online mentoring program



## What is it?

- on-line mentoring program
- school-based
- students from Years 9 to 11
- 'matched' with a (trained) volunteer mentor
- weekly online chat sessions
  - Study, work, other issues

# iTrack online mentoring program



## Who participates?

- 800-1,000 students annual across Australia
- >70 schools

In 2014,

- 9% of participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 22% of participants identified as having a background other than Australian
- 909 volunteers participated as mentors

# iTrack online mentoring program



## What is achieved?

- 8/10 students who participated in 2014 had:
  - increased knowledge of their options
  - increased confidence to get work experience
  - were inspired to try harder at school
  - were been inspired to go onto further study
  - felt more confident in asking for advice or help from other adults
- Why?
  - 'independent' adult advice
  - in their field of interest
- Mentors
  - 85% believed they provided their student with new information related to their post-school plans and options
- Organisations
  - Value the training provided to mentors

# iTrack online mentoring program



## What is achieved?

- “I’ve been able to manage my study-plan time and my marks have increased. I’m feeling more positive with myself in going to uni, and have put in for a job as well as work experience.”
- “I’ve understood the things I need to do in order to complete my schooling and go to university. I’ve researched more in regards to the universities available to me and what they include. I narrowed down the career I would like to do in the future.”
- “I have been able to write up a proper resume, and have more confidence to go out and look for a job, and my mentor has made me want to try harder at school.”



# Work Inspiration



## What is it?

- collaboration - the National Australia Bank, The Smith Family, and the Foundation for Young Australians
  - to replicate the UK program for Australian employers
- a national employer-led campaign
- aimed at improving the quality and availability of work experience
  - hands-on experiences
  - career conversations between students and adults in the workforce
  - student reflections on their experience and feedback
- employers are supported to develop a work experience program

<http://www.workinspiration.com.au/>

# Work Inspiration

## Who participates?

- Years 8 to 12
- From disadvantaged and high achieving schools
- 2,098 secondary school-aged young people participated (2013-14)

## Where is it?

### WORK INSPIRATION ORGANISATIONS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

#### SA

- Department for Education & Child Development SA

#### Victoria

- Beechworth Health Service
- Charles Sturt University
- Employment and Education
- FYA
- L'Oreal
- Lander and Rogers
- Maroondah City Council
- NAB
- One Night Stand Sleepwear
- SAP Australia
- Select Harvests
- The Royals
- Wodonga Council

#### Western Australia

- Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA
- Lifeworx
- Quambie Park Aged Care Residential Facility
- Shell Prelude
- Southern River College

#### New South Wales

- Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)
- COMPACT Incorporated
- Greater Hume Shire Council
- Greater Hume Shire Council
- NSW Department of Education and Communities
- Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District
- Panthers Group

- Southern Sydney Business Education Network
- Stockland

#### South Australia

- Absolutely Andrea
- Eyre Futures Inc
- Rural City of Murray Bridge

#### Queensland

- Arup
- Bowen Gumlu Growers Association
- Classic Holidays
- Darling Downs Dorpers Sheep Stud – 'Artunga'
- Goodstart Early Learning
- Horizons Foundation Inc
- Inglewood Fine Meats
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Mulgowie Farming Company

- Prestige Service Training
- Queensland Museum
- Withcott Seedlings

#### National

- Australian Children's Television Foundation
- Health & Community Care Work Inspiration Partnership

#### Tasmania

- Tasmanian Hospitality Association

#### Northern Territory

- DoubleTree by Hilton Alice Springs

#### Other

- Macquarie University
- microsoft

## What is achieved?

- Young people have developed an increased:
  - Awareness of career knowledge and pathways
  - Awareness of work ethic
  - Confidence for a future career
  - Understanding of teamwork and communication skills
  - Knowledge of skills required for industries

Student surveys show that:

- 89% improved knowledge of careers
- 71% improved perception of school

## What is achieved?

9/10 teachers:

- students are able to link their schooling to their future career options
- increased student motivation
- increased student confidence
- young people have more information

“The program enables students to identify early in their school lives what they need to achieve at school and in their personal lives in order to succeed in a future career.”

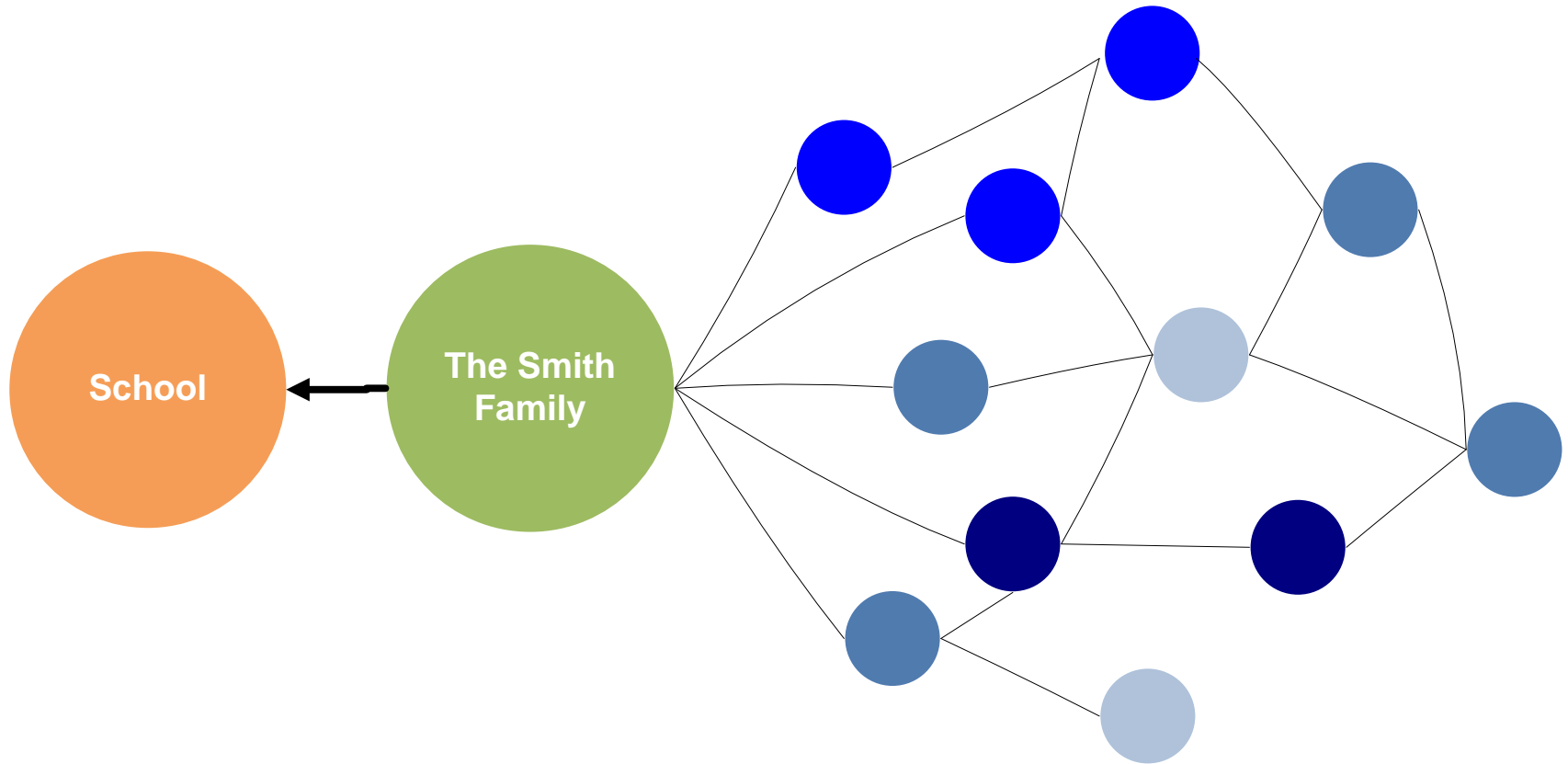
“After participation in the WI program, students have a lot more knowledge of things like career pathways, attitude employers expect their employees to show and the skills required by employers.”

“[Post participation], I have noticed higher motivation and focus within the classroom, connectedness with staff and therefore higher levels of engagement with academic study.”

- 5,647 young people participated in other career/university days
  - Career days, Straight Talk, Next Steps, Girls Step Up, university visits/camps, tertiary information evening, Post School Options
- 197 parents participated in other career/university days
  - Career days, Straight Talk, Girls Step Up, university visits, tertiary information evening, Post School Options

(2% of both young people and parents were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander)

# Extended School Hubs



*The School*

*The Lead Agency*

*Community Partners*  
(Including agencies, business, education stakeholders)

# How effective is *LfL* model?

## LONGER TERM OUTCOMES

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## ENGAGEMENT ADVANCEMENT ATTENDANCE

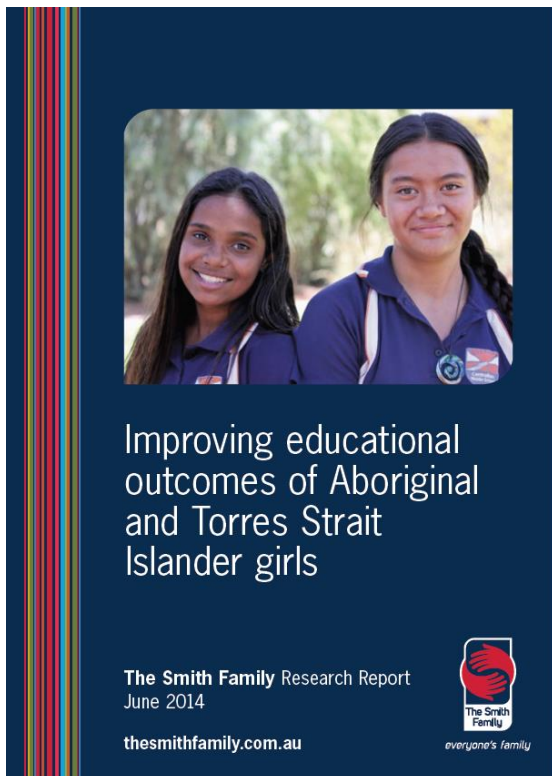
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## Increases in each of these KPIs year-on-year since 2010

- model is effectively supporting disadvantaged Australian students to stay engaged in their education, evidenced through stronger
  - attendance
  - advancement to Year 12
  - post-school engagement
- but we have more work to do – counterfactual
  - disadvantaged of the disadvantaged
  - nevertheless, we want to continue strengthening these outcomes
  - range of policy and practice work
    - particularly related to senior secondary scholarship student outcomes




<https://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/about-us/research-and-advocacy/research-and-evaluation>



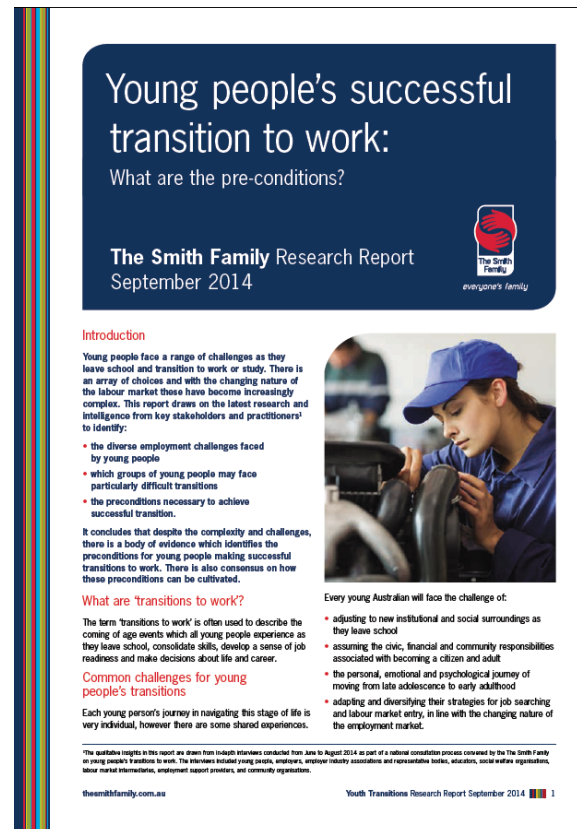
Improving educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls

The Smith Family Research Report  
June 2014

[thesmithfamily.com.au](http://thesmithfamily.com.au)




everyone's family



Young people's successful transition to work:  
What are the pre-conditions?

The Smith Family Research Report  
September 2014



everyone's family

**Introduction**

Young people face a range of challenges as they leave school and transition to work or study. There is an array of choices and with the changing nature of the labour market these have become increasingly complex. This report draws on the latest research and intelligence from key stakeholders and practitioners<sup>1</sup> to identify:

- the diverse employment challenges faced by young people
- which groups of young people may face particularly difficult transitions
- the preconditions necessary to achieve successful transition.


It concludes that despite the complexity and challenges, there is a body of evidence which identifies the preconditions for young people making successful transitions to work. There is also consensus on how these preconditions can be cultivated.

**What are 'transitions to work'?**

The term 'transitions to work' is often used to describe the coming of age events which all young people experience as they leave school, consolidate skills, develop a sense of job readiness and make decisions about life and career.

**Common challenges for young people's transitions**

Each young person's journey in navigating this stage of life is very individual, however there are some shared experiences.



Every young Australian will face the challenge of:

- adjusting to new institutional and social surroundings as they leave school
- assuming the civic, financial and community responsibilities associated with becoming a citizen and adult
- the personal, emotional and psychological journey of moving from late adolescence to early adulthood
- adapting and diversifying their strategies for job searching and labour market entry, in line with the changing nature of the employment market.

<sup>1</sup>The qualitative insights in this report are drawn from in-depth interviews conducted from June to August 2014 as part of a national consultation process convened by The Smith Family on young people's readiness to work. The interviewees included young people, employers, employee industry associations and representative bodies, education, social welfare organisations, senior market intermediaries, employment support providers, and community organisations.

[thesmithfamily.com.au](http://thesmithfamily.com.au) Youth Transitions Research Report September 2014 1