



Work Inspiration: Findings and lessons from the Australian pilots

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Founding partners:



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Yamaha Student Grand Prix Pilot

This report outlines the findings and lessons from 14 Australian pilots of the Work Inspiration initiative.

Work Inspiration is an employer-led campaign that aims to ensure that young Australians' first experience of the world of work is meaningful and inspiring. It is a framework for the career development of young people, involving a combination of hands-on experiences, career conversations between students and adults in the workforce, and student reflections and feedback. Work Inspiration enables employers to use their expertise and creativity to design a program of career and work related activities and conversations that suit their individual circumstances and those of the young people involved.

Foundations and founding partners

Established in the United Kingdom in 2009, Work Inspiration was introduced to Australia by the National Partnership Broker Network in 2011. In 2013 the Foundation for Young Australians, The Smith Family and the National Australia Bank became the founding partners responsible for piloting the approach in Australia.

Work Inspiration aims to ensure:

- More successful transitions from school to work by young people
- Additional career development opportunities for students and recent school leavers
- Stronger and more strategic partnerships between employers and schools, leading to vocational learning and more positive pathways for young people.

The Australian pilots

Fourteen Work Inspiration pilots took place between November 2012 and June 2013 and involved 20 employer organisations, 150 employees, 210 young people, predominantly from Years 9 - 12, and 36 schools. The pilots were located in six states, in metropolitan, regional and rural areas. The employers involved were diverse, including large corporations, small to medium enterprises, public institutions, industry associations, local government and non-government organisations.

Evaluation

An evaluation strategy was implemented for the pilots involving students, employers and teachers, and a case study of each pilot was developed to capture findings and learnings. Aggregated survey responses from all three groups suggest that Work Inspiration can make a positive contribution to the career development of young people, as well as meeting the human resource and corporate social responsibility agendas of employers.

The evaluation shows students and teachers strongly valued the opportunity Work Inspiration provided for students to talk with employees about careers from a workplace perspective. Students, teachers and employers all noted that young people seemed inspired by the range of career options presented to



The Smith Family Pilot

them through the pilots. Students were motivated by the experience of Work Inspiration to develop and set goals and do well at school. Employers strongly agreed that the pilots had brought mutual benefit to them and to the young people involved. Employers indicated that Work Inspiration positively related to a number of their core business objectives, including ensuring a recruitment pipeline, industry profile and employee engagement. Most of the employers indicated they will develop additional programs within their organisation and/or integrate Work Inspiration

into their work experience programs over the next 12 months .

Key success factors and learnings

The pilots highlighted a number of key success factors including:

- The hands-on experiences offered to young people coupled with career conversations with employees.
- The exposure of students to a range of careers and work and learning pathways.
- Engaging students in pairs or small teams.
- Engaging employers initially through a Big Conversation event or similar so they gain a shared understanding of Work Inspiration and can brainstorm how they might run it.
- Incorporating a sense of adventure and fun was highly valued by young people
- Grounding the program in the business objectives of employers.
- Using brokers or coordinators to support employers and schools to work together.

The pilots also showed that Work Inspiration can successfully engage young people considered to be 'at risk' of a poor transition. The peer group nature of the program means it can be culturally appropriate for many young people who find an individual work experience placement daunting.

Sustaining and expanding Work Inspiration will depend in part on the development of a broad range of sources for brokerage and coordination, particularly if small to medium enterprises are going to be involved. In addition to the Partnership Brokers who played a key role in the pilot, other possible brokers include industry associations, group training organisations, local government and regional development agencies and Trade Training Centres .



Conclusion

The Work Inspiration pilots in Australia have shown it has the potential to enable young people and employers to engage and connect for their mutual benefit. It is grounded in solid evidence and success in the UK, and while it is in its early stages in Australia, there are positive indications that it can contribute to improved transition outcomes for young people. Getting it up and running to its full potential will require the early adoption, support and experimentation of innovative Australian employers and schools.



Citiwide Pilot

Sustaining Work Inspiration

1 - Setting the scene



What is Work Inspiration?

Work Inspiration is a **campaign** to encourage employers and their industry associations or networks to be proactive and creative in re-imagining work experience for Years 9 and 10 students. It invites employers to take the lead and become more strategic in their collaboration with schools, so Australia can generate:

- More successful transitions from school to work by young people
- Additional career development opportunities for students and recent school leavers
- Stronger and more strategic partnerships between employers and schools, leading to vocational learning and positive pathways for young people.

Work Inspiration is a **flexible program framework** of career development, work based learning and employability skills development for young people. The essential core of the framework is the Three Work Inspiration Insights. They are:

1. **All About Me:** Discovering the young person's passions and interests as the starting point to provide an inspiring first experience of the world of work.
2. **Look Behind the Scenes:** Introducing young people to the wide variety and scope of different jobs and roles in any business or organisation.
3. **Careers Happen:** Bringing alive for young people how careers unfold and how their first job can be the start of their journey.

The flexibility of the framework enables employers to work with a concept of career development, as well as utilising their own expertise and creativity, to design hands-on experiences and career conversations activity involving their personnel and young people who are studying or seeking work.

Work Inspiration is not a traditional work experience program. It is an innovative framework that enables employees to customise their own work experience model to suit the unique circumstances of the host company (Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA Pilot Evaluation Report, 2013).

Diversity and local innovation are encouraged to make Work Inspiration more sustainable. The parameters are flexible yet create a form of accountability. Employers lead the program, so it can most effectively connect young people to the workplace and the people who are employed or volunteer there.

Work Inspiration is freely available to all; it's not exclusive to any set of employers or brokers. This will promote the diversity, growth and sustainability of Work Inspiration in Australia.



Yamaha Student Grand Prix Pilot

The inception of Work Inspiration



Work Inspiration was established in the United Kingdom in September 2009 "as a national employer-led campaign to make work experience more meaningful, relevant and inspiring." (Business in The Community, 2009). The campaign was launched by the Chairman of Business in The Community (BiTC), Sir Stuart Rose. BiTC is a not-for-profit organisation and a business led charity committed to building resilient communities, diverse workplaces and a more sustainable future.

The campaign was, and remains, a call to action for employers to sign-up and respond to two critical issues:

- Earlier engagement with young people so businesses can access **employable recruits**
- Providing young people with a clearer picture of the world of work and equipping them to make career pathway decisions so **aspirations are raised and expectations managed**.

The UK campaign has successfully engaged 700 employers in providing nearly 200,000 young people with Work Inspiration opportunities (2009 – 2013). These opportunities are generated by employers leading their own **program** of activity which delivers the Three Insights, through a mix of hands-on tasks and conversations between employers and students. From a single campaign, hundreds of programs that reflect the diversity of the lead employers' culture and business mission have flourished.

The idea for BiTC and its member companies to transform work experience into Work Inspiration came into being during a Big Conversation - a pre-program planning exercise at which staff are asked to generate creative ideas for hands-on experiences and career conversations with young people. This particular event was where young people told BiTC business leaders that work experience in their own companies was time out of school (which they thought was good!) but often boring and did not directly motivate them to work for that company. The business leaders' motivation to restructure work experience for the better was intensified and Work Inspiration was developed.



McDonald's Pilot

Bringing Work Inspiration to Australia

Work Inspiration was introduced to Australia by members of the National Partnership Broker Network¹ in 2011. They organised British Telecom, a key champion of Work Inspiration in the UK, to visit Australia and present their business case and program experience to Australian employers, educators and brokers.



Keen interest was generated and early in 2013 the Foundation for Young Australians and The Smith Family negotiated the rights from BiTC for Work Inspiration in Australia. The National Australia Bank became the founding corporate partner of Work Inspiration in March 2013. The National Partnership Broker Network had brokered an international partnership and encouraged (with support from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) its members to facilitate local partnerships that would underpin the efforts of lead employers to develop Australian programs.

¹ The School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers) program is focused on building partnerships to help young people to achieve Year 12 or equivalent qualifications and reach their full potential. The program is based on the principle that supporting young people's learning and development is a collective responsibility and that partnering is the most effective way for schools, business and the broader community to work together.

<http://transitions.youth.gov.au/sites/transitions/programs/pages/partnershipbrokers/>

The changing context for young Australians

Two generations ago 20 to 25% of Australian teenagers (15 – 18 years old) stayed at school to complete Year 12 and 75 to 80% left in Year 10 for paid employment. In 2013, the numbers are reversed.



Between 1977 – 1997, more than half of all full time jobs for teenage males and more than two thirds of all full time jobs for teenage females disappeared.

-Professor Margaret Vickers, University of Western Sydney – Brotherhood of St Lawrence Social Inclusion and Youth Workshop Proceedings 29/10/2008.

Many of the 15 to 18 year old students who now remain at school want to work and seek a mix of learning and work experiences. As the school leaving age increases and the teenage labour market collapses, students wonder about the relevance of their school based learning to their career aspirations. They want to get out of the classroom and try out the world of work. Schools and websites can inform leavers about work options, but students need to be able to validate that information and make a connection between their learning at school and the expectations and opportunities of the labour market.

Work Inspiration and its Three Insights framework enable teenagers to connect with the world of work. Their exposure to multiple careers and interactions with a range of workers enables students to relate their studies to employment options. As they find out how adults have gone about developing their career pathway, they gain insights into the vital role of learning within career development.

Work Inspiration and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

Significant numbers of young people who are members of either jobless households or disadvantaged communities can become separated from the world of work. This hampers their successful transitions from school to work, as the rules of engagement and traditions of the formal labour market can be hard to understand in families where long term and even generational unemployment exist. Although Australia's youth unemployment rates are not as high as many other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations, they remain concerning and are concentrated in low socioeconomic regions.

Recent UK research indicates a statistically significant positive relationship between the number of employer contacts (such as careers talks or work experience) that a young person experiences in school (between the ages of 14 and 19) and:

- Their confidence (at age 19-24) in progressing towards their ultimate career goals
- The likelihood of whether (at 19-24) they are not in education, employment or training
- Their earnings if salaried (Mann, 2012).

Work Inspiration connects employers and schools and enables students to become connected to the activities of the workplace and to the wisdom and traditions of its workers. It offers multiple interactions which help the young person to become more inspired by choice and opportunity and so they can see relevance in their learning.



Work Inspiration: A timely step forward



For nearly 40 years, schools have been heavily dependent upon traditional Year 10 work experience as a means of making the world of work familiar to their students. The competition to find and keep a quality placement has become more intense between both schools and various sectors of education and training. Many secondary schools across Australia are currently re-assessing the priority they place on all Year 10 students undertaking work experience. Issues such as Work Health and Safety and the base-entry nature of most placements due to factors such as privacy, duty of care, the up-skilling of work roles and technological change, are all impacting on the availability of inspiring traditional work experience.

However schools remain keen to encourage students in career development activity that enables them to make connections between their classroom-based learning and career aspirations. A number of relatively new Australian programs are growing in strength and seeking to meet this need. Work Inspiration is one of these. It challenges employers to take the lead and achieve such a goal.

Work Inspiration and its flexible approach, including its team structure, can reach out to employers who cannot offer work experience but want to be involved. Similarly, students who may not need the opportunity of a base-entry work experience in Year 10 (as they are already in paid part-time or casual work) may benefit from participation in Work Inspiration. These students would not occupy a traditional work experience placement, which then becomes an opportunity that can be given to a less confident and less connected student who has had little or no participation in the world of work.

Work Inspiration is a timely innovation in the current Australian policy context, given for example, the recently released National Career Development Strategy, and the current drive to develop a national curriculum for Year 9 and 10 Work Studies and the new National Trade Cadetships.

The Work Inspiration model has great potential to underpin the Work Exposure component of the national 9 and 10 Work Studies curriculum.

- **Huon Valley Trade Training Centre Coordinator**, member of the National Work Studies Advisory Council and co-convenor of the Tassal/HVTTC pilot.



Northern Midlands
Council Pilot



QLD Museum Pilot

Re-imagining work experience

Work Inspiration is a call to employers to inspire young people in their early, if not initial, contact with the workplace. As many employers and schools reassess their commitment to traditional one week Year 10 work experience, Work Inspiration offers them choice in the form of an additional yet flexible framework of career development and workplace learning for students. Such an offer can support the current efforts of employers, educators and brokers to innovate in this field and stimulate new thinking about Year 10 work experience.

A comparison of work experience and Work Inspiration is summarised in the table below:

Ag Inspirations as a work experience program effectively tapped into student interests and abilities in the initial stages of the program which is the reason students so engaged with employers, industry representatives and program staff. It has certainly brought traditional work experience into the 21st century. The breadth of exposure gave students with a range of abilities and career goals an authentic experience of the diversity of the Agricultural industry.

-School Principal, Ag Inspiration pilot

Table 1

Work experience	Work Inspiration
• Test out a job/workplace	• Research multiple jobs/careers
• Undertakes base entry work tasks	• Career conversations and hands-on activities
• Concentrates on the 'now' and being kept busy on tasks	• Emphasises motivation and encourages thinking and planning for the future
• Placement based with a supervisor	• Project orientated and coached by employees
• Individual student located in a workplace	• Pairs, small teams working/learning across various sites
• Individual journal/workbook to capture learning	• Student team reflections and presentations

It is not the intention of the Work Inspiration national partners to replace work experience with Work Inspiration. Rather the partners wish to introduce an option that will offer choice to employers, students and schools. Such a choice may help schools to combine both approaches and more strategically prioritise the use of those valued places provided by employers (pre Structured Workplace Learning). Such places can, through work based learning, nurture a student who is most in need of a boost to their learning and career aspirations.



Uptake by the National Partners

The founding partners and the Partnership Brokers share a common commitment to the career development of young Australians and their successful transitions. They see Work Inspiration as a vehicle to more strategically engage employers in this shared undertaking.

- **The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA)** is a national, non-profit organisation dedicated solely to young people. FYA is relentlessly optimistic about young people and their ability to create change. This belief underpins FYA's strong interest in the career development of young people, as illustrated in their own in-house initiative, World of Work (WOW). FYA views Work Inspiration as a campaign to engage employers in leading creative activity and conversations with young people, in order that young people gain the insights and skills to navigate the worlds of learning and work and to shape their career pathways.
- **The Smith Family (TSF)** is a national independent charity helping disadvantaged young people to get the most out of their education. The Smith Family believes that education is the key to changing lives. For disadvantaged children and teenagers to thrive they need to be connected to and supported by an extended network that includes concerned employers. TSF believes that the activities and conversations of Work Inspiration can help disadvantaged young people build the insights, understandings and skills necessary to access work and learning opportunities. The Smith Family is also a provider for the Partnership Broker Program in six regions of Australia. Their brokers have been very active in facilitating a number of the Work Inspiration pilots.
- **The National Australia Bank (NAB)** is a leading Australian bank and corporate organisation. To support prosperous communities is seen as a responsibility at NAB. A crucial part of that commitment is to focus on those in the community with ties to the education of young people. Building on the NAB Schools First Program, the bank decided to become a founding partner and corporate champion for Work Inspiration. NAB sees great value in truly inspiring young people to think about their career pathways and bridge the gap between school and work. NAB has tapped into its Corporate Volunteering program and engages its own employees in both internal Work Inspiration projects and future initiatives that engage business customers.
- **The School Business Community Partnership Broker Program** operates nationally and is implemented by the Australian Government under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. Its key objective is to build partnerships that support young people to attain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications and make a successful transition into the workforce. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as the funding body and the Partnership Brokers National Network (PBNN) have strongly supported Work Inspiration, as it advocates for a common goal between employers and education to inspire young people to learn and work. Partnership Brokers can help bring partners to the table and assist them to develop and sustain their own Work Inspiration programs. In 12 of the 14 Work Inspiration pilots, brokers have also played a key role in both evaluating and documenting the pilot experience and thereby helped to capture the findings presented in this report.



2 - Pilot activity

Invitation to pilot

In late 2012, the national founding partners invited lead employers, with the support of brokers, to pilot the Three Insights framework across Australia. Learnings from the pilot will inform the subsequent development of Work Inspiration in Australia.

Lead employers were invited to utilise the experience, creativity and expertise of their people and design their program of activities and conversations that would deliver the Three Insights. They and their supporting brokers were encouraged to collaboratively negotiate with schools, so students could be appropriately referred and so the school could build on the students' learning and help young people see its relevance to their career planning.

An evaluation strategy was developed and evaluation tools sent to all participating parties, so that findings and learnings from the pilots could be consistently captured.

Fourteen lead employers responded positively to the invitation to pilot Work Inspiration in Australia. The pilots occurred between November 2012 and June 2013. They were located in six states in both metropolitan and regional or rural areas. Each of the pilots has been documented as a case study now available on the Work Inspiration Australia website².

The rich variety of these pilots is outlined in the table below.

² www.workinspiration.com.au

Table 2 - The Work Inspiration Pilots

Pilot and Location	Lead Employer	Evaluator/Broker	Number of Schools and Students	One Special Feature
<p>1. Ag Inspirations Scenic Rim/West Moreton region, QLD.</p>	<p>Seven small to medium enterprises (SMEs), from the farm to the market, coordinated by Rural Skills Australia</p>	<p>Worklinks Partnership Broker, Brenda Desplace.</p>	<p>16 students from six schools (years 9 – 12)</p>	<p>A cluster of SMEs in Agri food cooperated to raise the profile of their industry</p>
<p>2. Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA Pilot, Perth CBD, WA.</p>	<p>The Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA (CCIWA)</p>	<p>Three brokers Balga Job Link Inc (BJL), CCIWA and Midland Job Link, evaluated by CCIWA Partnership Broker, Russell Trowbridge.</p>	<p>12 students from four schools (years 10 – 12)</p>	<p>A Chamber of Commerce and Industry wishing to fully understand the program before they promoted it to members</p>
<p>3. Citywide Pilot, Inner Sydney, NSW.</p>	<p>Citywide Service Solutions Environmental Services</p>	<p>Sydney Business Education Partnership, Adrian Rhodes.</p>	<p>Six students from two schools (year 10)</p>	<p>Seeking to build young people's career interest and respect for parks</p>
<p>4. Foundation for Young Australians Pilot, Melbourne CBD, VIC.</p>	<p>Foundation for Young Australians</p>	<p>FYA, Aidan McLaren.</p>	<p>Four students from three schools (in two pilots)</p>	<p>A national partner wishing to fully appreciate the program and the campaign they are leading and to reflect their own mission</p>
<p>5. McDonald's Pilot, Brisbane, QLD.</p>	<p>McDonald's Queensland Head Office and two franchises</p>	<p>The Smith Family Partnership Brokers, Brisbane North and West, Nicole Peterman.</p>	<p>19 students from three secondary schools</p>	<p>Added value offered to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse students</p>
<p>6. Queensland Museum Pilot, South Bank, Brisbane, QLD.</p>	<p>Queensland Museum</p>	<p>The Smith Family Partnership Brokers, Brisbane North and West, Jacki Waters.</p>	<p>12 students from a broad range of secondary schools (eight approx) (years 9 – 11)</p>	<p>Invited students attended during school holidays, connecting young people to the Museum and its future.</p>
<p>7. Northern Midlands Council Work Inspiration, in their headquarters, Longford, TAS.</p>	<p>Northern Midlands Council</p>	<p>Tasmania Life Long Learning (TL3) Partnership Broker, Lorraine McNamara</p>	<p>15 students from one local secondary school (year 10)</p>	<p>A local government now delighted that Work Inspiration participants have become informal ambassadors for their local council</p>

<p>8. NAB Pilot, in their Melbourne Head Office. VIC.</p>	<p>National Australia Bank</p>	<p>National Australia Bank</p>	<p>12 students from two secondary schools (year 10)</p>	<p>The founding corporate partner piloting for their own organisation and as a national partner in Work Inspiration</p>
<p>9. Stockland Shellharbour Pilot, Illawarra region, NSW</p>	<p>Stockland – a large national property group for residential and retail centres</p>	<p>The Smith Family Partnership Broker, Illawarra, Ian Batty</p>	<p>55 students from three local high schools (years 10 – 12)</p>	<p>A large corporation seeking to pilot and learn so it can roll-out Work Inspiration to other sites</p>
<p>10. Tassal/Huonville Trade Training Centre Pilot, Huon Valley, Tas.</p>	<p>Tassal Operations Pty Ltd (partnering with the local Trade Training Centre – Huonville)</p>	<p>Beacon Foundation and Evaluation by Huon Valley Trade Training Centre, Steve Harrison.</p>	<p>Eight students from the local Trade Training Centre (years 9 – 10)</p>	<p>Eight VET students using Work Inspiration as an induction process into their VET (Aquaculture) course</p>
<p>11. The Smith Family Pilot, QLD State Office, Brisbane, QLD.</p>	<p>The Smith Family</p>	<p>The Smith Family Partnership Brokers, Julie Bell and Simon Gregory.</p>	<p>12 students from one secondary school (years 9 – 10)</p>	<p>A national partner serving disadvantaged young people and promoting education piloted for their own mission, and to more fully understand WI for the national roll-out</p>
<p>12. Woolworths, southern suburbs of Adelaide, SA. (2 pilots)</p>	<p>Woolworths</p>	<p>Schools Pathway at Work Partnership Broker Dannii Armfield and CRS Australia, Sandie Holmes</p>	<p>Six school leavers and/or school refusers supported by Job Service provider CRS Australia</p>	<p>Two pilots that engaged school refusers/leavers who wanted a job at Woolworths</p>
<p>13. VISA Pilot, inner western suburbs of Sydney, NSW.</p>	<p>Visual Industries Suppliers Association (VISA)</p>	<p>Australian Schools Industry Partnership (AUSSIP) Sydney, John Watters.</p>	<p>Eight (year 10) students from one local school.</p>	<p>An industry association who seeks to raise the profile of the industry and involved SMEs who are members/ stakeholders of VISA</p>
<p>14. Yamaha Student Grand Prix, Port of Brisbane, QLD.</p>	<p>Yamaha Motor Australia (and local dealers)</p>	<p>The Smith Family Partnership Broker team, Brisbane North and West, Jacki Waters and Gold Coast, Karen Graham</p>	<p>25 students from two secondary schools (year 9)</p>	<p>Building on an existing partnership program, Yamaha sought to develop the three insights and raise the profile of its industry and associated career opportunities to school students and their parents</p>



Stockland Pilot

Current situation – evolving Work Inspiration projects

At the end of June 2013, it is estimated that at least 15 further local programs are in the planning or early implementation stages around Australia. These initiatives will build on the pilot program experience. In five cases, they are programs to be run by some of the lead employers who developed Work Inspiration in the initial round of pilots, e.g. Stockland, National Australia Bank, Visual Industries Suppliers Association, Citywide and McDonald's. An encouraging sign is that it is the intention of 12 of the pilots to either develop additional programs within their own organisation and/or to integrate Work Inspiration into their work experience programs within the next 12 months.

We at VISA have already led three pilots and are planning another one in September. We are getting better at it, the program is becoming more tailored and we are confident that our industry is benefiting. We are committed to rolling it out Australia wide.

-Event Manager – VISA.

3 – Pilot performance and key success factors

Who was involved?

Twenty employer organisations, 210 young people and 36 schools were involved in the 14 pilots. It is estimated that approximately 150 employees engaged in career conversations with students and/or in the design, coaching or mentoring of hands-on tasks in the workplace.

The evaluation generated feedback from 163 students, 44 employers and employees and 20 teachers.

Feedback from students, employees and teachers

The evaluation collected qualitative data through focus groups and audio visual materials. In addition, students, employees and teachers were asked to respond to a series of statements about their pilot. Each of the statements was scored on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 equating to 'strongly disagreed' and 5 equating to 'strongly agreed'. Individual responses from each of these three groups were scored, aggregated and averaged. These are provided in the **Appendices** of this report.



VISA Pilot

The aggregated average scores provide an overall picture of the performance of the pilots.

An aggregated average score of 4.2 out of 5 (84%) was calculated for the eight statements from the 163 survey returns of young people.

An aggregated average score of 4.1 out of 5 (82%) was calculated for the 10 statements from the 44 employee survey returns.

An aggregated average score of 4.5 out of 5 (90%) was calculated for the five statements from the 20 teacher survey returns.

This suggests that Work Inspiration can make a positive contribution to both the career development of young people and meeting the human resource and corporate responsibility agendas of engaged employers.

More detailed findings

The survey results highlight the value students and teachers place on students talking with employees about careers from a workplace perspective as distinct from information and insights acquired at school. Average scores of 4.52 (90%) and 4.90 (98%) were calculated for students and teachers respectively. Students felt that through such dialogue they learnt about different ways careers can develop (4.41 average score or 88%).

For the statement 'The young people seemed **inspired** by the range of career options', a student score of 4.31 (or 86%), an employer score of 4.36 (or 87%) and a teacher score of 4.50 (or 90%) were calculated from the survey returns.

I learnt how careers evolve and differ from what you originally want to do...
You can start anywhere and move up.

-**Student**, Northern Midlands Council Pilot

Two statements sought feedback on whether students were motivated by the experience of Work Inspiration to develop aspirations and set goals and/or to do well at school. Students' average score for 'Doing Work Inspiration has encouraged me to develop aspirations (set goals) for my future' was 4.04 (or 81%). The extent to which students stated that Work Inspiration had motivated them to learn at school was unexpectedly high, given it did not initially seem to be a direct connection, with an average student score of 3.98 or 80%.

Work Inspiration allows them to get outside the classroom, go into the real world and both apply their classroom learning to being at work and at the same time see relevance in their school studies. This helps some disengaged young people who don't like being behind the desk, to be more engaged in their learning.

- Sandgate State High School Year 9 Coordinator speaking on the Yamaha Pilot Video
(Available to view on the Work Inspiration Australia YouTube account <http://www.youtube.com/user/WorkInspirationAus>)

These results suggest that the Work Inspiration program has initially lived up to its name: to inspire means to motivate, to think, feel and do. A longitudinal evaluation is required to identify whether that momentum can be sustained and if so, for how long.

The employee surveys indicate that those who participated in Work Inspiration felt it was a worthwhile experience. An average score of 4.28 (or 86%), indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement and that mutual benefit had been generated for young people and employers. Employees also responded positively to the statement that 'Work Inspiration should be an integral component of career development activity in Australian schools', with an average score of 4.13 or 83%.

The Museum felt that Work Inspiration was inspirational for both young people and the Museum. The biggest learning of the benefit of Work Inspiration was that we were able to get young people's perspectives on how our organisation works... It provides a sense of new blood for an organisation as they can see what the future might be like for us – from the people who might work here one day.

- Coordinator, Queensland Museum Pilot

Tassal Pilot

Work Inspiration and work experience

The evaluation asked young people, employers and teachers whether they would recommend Work Inspiration over traditional work experience. The aim was to place Work Inspiration as an option rather than as a replacement to traditional work experience.

The average scores were as follows:

Young people	3.96	= 79%
Employers	3.89	= 78%
Teachers	4.15	= 83%

There is no data on how many students or employees who responded to this statement had experienced both Work Inspiration and traditional work experience. However there were indications from employers and teachers that there is room for both.



Students can participate in Work Inspiration and then follow the employer that they feel most suits their career path and seek work experience – there is room for both.

-Teacher of Ag Inspirations Pilot Students

Evaluation feedback reinforced the view of the National Partners that Work Inspiration offers all parties a real choice at Year 9 or 10 for the development of work experience. If Work Inspiration can enable young people to explore multiple career pathways before they take up work placements in Years 10 to 12 that are relevant to their preferred career pathway, this may lead to a more strategic use of the placement.



Woolworths Pilot

Work placements with employers are in high demand from various sectors of education and training. The strategic use of quality placements is vital, especially if schools and employers are to ensure that 'pathway placements' are available to all Vocational Education and Training (VET) and School Based Apprenticeship participants who **must** have one. In addition, it is generally accepted that valuable opportunities provided by employers should be available to those 'at risk', or young people who **need** a motivational placement so they can be retained in learning.

Key success factors

Each of the case studies identified one or more key success factors (ideas, processes, inputs and strategies) that contributed to the successful performance of their pilot. Pilot partners expressed the view that it was a **combination of factors that led to success**. The table on the following page profiles the key success factors for each pilot.

The special nature of any pilot frequently generates energy and resource allocation that boosts the chance of success and does not always guarantee success at a later stage. Those involved are often motivated by the innovation and high profile of the pilot initiative. Work Inspiration is new and it does require some initial investment of resources. **The pilot element** may itself be a key success factor. Nonetheless, it is reassuring that 40 of the 44 employees who responded to the evaluation survey agreed/strongly agreed that their organisation would get better at conducting Work Inspiration sessions with practice. This is encouraging for the potential growth in quality and the sustainability of Work Inspiration in Australia.

The Big Conversation event

Apart from offering employees an introduction to Work Inspiration and a helpful briefing, the Big Conversation event is seen as a means of harnessing the energy and commitment of employees to Work Inspiration. In most cases, particularly with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA Big Conversation event, Partnership Brokers facilitated the process in association with a contact person from the Chamber.

The internal Big Conversation workshop is a critical turning point for engaging employees in Work Inspiration, by providing the opportunity for them to familiarise themselves with the framework and take ownership of it.

-Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA Pilot Internal Evaluation Report 2013

Table 3 - Key Success Factors

Key Success Factor	Ag Inspirations	CCIWA	Citywide	FYA	McDonald's	QLD Museum	NAB	Northern Midlands Council	Stockland	The Smith Family	Tassal	Woolworths	VISA	Yamaha
Big conversation or similar planning forums (e.g. round-tables; some involving schools/youth provider)	✓						✓		✓	✓				✓
Grounded in Business objectives of Lead Employer e.g. HR/CSR/Profile				✓	✓		✓			✓				✓
Staff (and volunteers) engaged and feeling validated/helpful to students					✓	✓		✓		✓				✓
Located in Workplace and/or beyond the Classroom	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Young people animated with parallel projects, challenges, career board and/or student perspective presentations				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Keen support of Partnership Broker and/or Coordinator* (before, during and after)	✓							✓			✓			
The Three Insights - a helpful framework for activities	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓					✓

This table identifies the **key** success factors for the pilots. The non-allocation of a tick does not mean the pilot overlooked the factor. The spread of ticks reveals the factors the drivers of that pilot found particularly valuable, and integral to its success.

Business objectives

The stand-out business objectives that have direct relevance to Work Inspiration include developing a recruitment pipeline, getting closer to schools, raising the profile of a particular industry and achieving Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives of the lead employers. The statement that 'engaging with secondary school students adds value to our organisation' received an average score of 4.47, or 89%, from employer respondents.



Young people in a number of the pilots were also able to play a positive role in achieving employer objectives, in particular raising the profile of an industry or organisation with young people and schools. Students returned to their school as ambassadors for the lead employer in the case of the Museum and Yamaha pilots, or enthusiastically communicated their new knowledge of the role and value of local government to their rate-paying parents and relatives in the Northern Midlands Council pilot and the VISA participants designed promotional posters on this industry and distributed them at their school.

Staff engagement

Employers and their employees committed energy and expertise to the pilots. A significant number of these personnel felt that relaying their career stories, experiences and learning in response to queries from young people, was not only helpful to students but also a validation of their own career journey. They felt a 'buzz factor'



This experience will generate further momentum and commitment to future Work Inspiration programs in the workplace and just as usefully they may offer a vehicle for employee engagement. This aligning of employee values to the mission of the employer is a valued productivity enhancer.

The 'real' workplace

Students were motivated and inspired to engage and learn by participating in activity and dialogue that was located beyond the classroom and in the workplace. Employers and teachers noted the benefits accrued for students through work based learning, especially for 'at risk' young people, who may not be so readily connected to the culture of employment.

Some of these young people had never visited or seen an office in operation before.

- Arup staff member, The Smith Family pilot

Locating Work Inspiration in a workplace makes it 'real' for students and this principle should be an essential component of any Work Inspiration activity.



Stockland Pilot

Parallel project

In nearly half of the pilots, lead employers introduced a project in parallel to the career development theme of their program. Some students were invited to offer their perspective on the mission of the lead employer and then become an ambassador for that employer with their peers, school, family and community. Sometimes this was intentional; on other occasions it evolved organically, as with the Northern Midlands Council pilot.



In the case of the Queensland Museum, students were encouraged to inform staff as to how this public facility could be more teenage-friendly. A futures dimension was added to the student presentations: how can the Museum change and what could it look like in the future?

The concept of the parallel project complemented the student led Career Board presentations that featured on the last day in nearly all the pilots. The engagement of young people was enhanced by employees listening to and responding to student presentations on what they had learnt and also by trusting them to offer their perspective on the world of work and career development. Creative thinking about the nature of these presentations was also valued by young people, e.g. the movie making at NAB and the poster production at VISA. Lead employers such as Tassal, FYA and Stockland commented that their staff had gained insights into their organisational culture and operations through listening to students.

The pilot was a learning curve for our staff and once they saw the presentations from the students, they saw the impact they can make by sharing their stories and how they sell our organisation and industry – we also learnt more about our business through the eyes of the students and how we can become an employer of choice.

- **Human Resource Manager** from the Tassal Pilot.

Partnership Broker support **PARTNERSHIP BROKERS** SCHOOL + BUSINESS + COMMUNITY

Whether support was to facilitate a Big Conversation event, offer coordination support to a cluster (e.g. Ag Inspirations) and/or to advise employers and their employees on how to more fully engage young people (CCIWA), brokers made a valuable contribution to the performance and documentation of nearly all the pilots. For some pilots, they were seen as an independent and expert adviser. Where it was not available, the value of the pilot may not have been fully realised because of the lack of participation by an independent observer or critical partner.

The broker's role in underpinning partnerships between lead employers and schools or pointing out how an exciting partnership could be built upon by Work Inspiration activity (e.g. Yamaha Grand Prix and Tassal/Huonville TTC) was invaluable in many pilots. The role of a Partnership Broker as both a documenter and evaluator was extremely helpful, as capturing the learning is an essential ingredient of a pilot activity.

Broker support may come from a range of sources. It does not have to come from a Partnership Broker, but it should be on hand. The vital relationships between the role of a broker and the sustainability of Work Inspiration activity is further explored in the next section of this report.

The Three Insights Framework

Lead employers scored the contribution of the Three Insights to conducting effective career conversations between students and workers at an average of 4.09 (82%). Further feedback from this group confirmed how helpful this framework is to meeting both the student and employer orientated goals of Work Inspiration.

Stakeholders in the pilots perceive the framework as flexible and able to be tailored to the needs of individual workplaces, while simultaneously providing guidance and support.

It's about giving students a story about where you have been and where you are going, including all the bumps and successes along the way. The career board is showing what the students have learnt from the conversations and it is almost like they built a story around the person with whom they have communicated.

- **Pilot Convenor**, McDonald's Pilot Video.

4 – Key learnings

The pilots generated a satisfying and successful program experience for nearly all the young people, employees and lead employers (or clusters) who participated. The evaluation results are encouraging and lay a foundation for future innovation and improvement. They indicate that the Three Insights framework can make a positive contribution to the career development and transitions of young Australians and that Work Inspiration offers employers an opportunity to re-imagine work experience (especially at Year 10 level) and develop a more strategic approach to their collaboration with schools.

The pilot case studies reveal a set of learnings not only for the lead employers, brokers and schools but also for the national partners who are driving Work Inspiration in Australia. They will help to shape and refine future practice at the local level, design appropriate resources at the national level and make the campaign to employers more successful.



Tassal Pilot

Local learnings

- The program's success depends on interaction between young people and employees in the workplace. Qualitative data collected via focus group discussions indicated that students preferred **hands-on experiences and real tasks** that were balanced by career conversations with employees. These tasks can take the form of challenges such as the Student Grand Prix at Yamaha, special projects such as the 'Design an Exhibition' at Queensland Museum or the production of a particular item or service such as the posters at VISA. The career conversations need to be informal and familiar in character and involve two-way communication.

I loved doing activities and talking to employees, rather than sitting down and listening.
- **Student**, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Pilot.

- Between two and four days seems to be the most **appropriate length** for a Work Inspiration project. This can take place over consecutive days or a longer period of time. Feedback from students and employees involved in the one day pilot (Northern Midlands Council) suggested that this was a little too short. In the case of Stockland, some students are seeking further time with the company through follow-up requests to delve more deeply into a particular area of work through a project or placement.
- Students and employees both agreed that young people respond more positively to dialogue or talking with an employee, compared with being 'talked at' in a larger student group. The majority of the pilots provided **prompts or exemplar questions** to employees to facilitate such conversations. Quality career conversations are about **dialogue, reflection and application**. They are **interactive** and often occur alongside a hands-on experience or as part of an interview-style activity. They are unlikely to be generated by a traditional lecture or 'high voltage' speaker preaching to a large group.

- Seven of the pilots commented on the need for the **first day to be fast moving**, even more interactive and to utilise a range of learning styles and settings. Tours (Ag Inspiration, McDonald's, Citywide), visiting various sections of an office (CCIWA, NAB and Northern Midlands Council) or a factory (Tassal) and meeting a range of people were appealing aspects for students and got the pilot project off to a positive start.
- Young people and employees strongly agreed that one of the most valuable aspects of Work Inspiration was its capacity to expose students to a **range of careers and multiple options** in work, pathways and learning. Teachers also commented on how Work Inspiration enabled the students to explore a **variety** of careers and pathways, instead of concentrating on one particular job or work placement, at Year 9 and 10 especially.

The team approach is more supportive and conducive to conversations later on.

- **Teacher** of students in Northern Midlands Council Pilot.

It really has transformed work experience by not only giving them a preview of the industry, but also giving them valuable information on multiple career options and pathways to these careers.

- **Catholic Education Registered Training Organisation** who supported the VISA Pilot.

- Engaging students in **pairs or small** teams is a highly valued characteristic of Work Inspiration. Feedback from the pilots that predominantly involved Year 9 and 10 males (Tassal and Citywide) suggested that peer support offered these students greater confidence in participating in activities and entering into dialogue with employees in particular. In one of the Work Inspiration Employer Forums, an Ambassador for Generation One informed the meeting that this group and peer support approach was helpful and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Such learning will shape future development and help Work Inspiration to be accessible for all young people.
- **Engaging parents** before or during a pilot program was seen to be very helpful in achieving outcomes for both students and lead employers. The Smith Family case study revealed strong parental support. Citywide valued the practical help of some parents to motivate and transport students to a 6.30 am start and Yamaha felt that participation by parents/grandparents had strengthened the connection between the pilot and meeting their need of a recruitment pipeline. If a parent is impressed with the commitment and culture of an employer's workplace, it is likely to reinforce their child's perception or judgement of this business as an 'employer of choice'.

It was great to see the parents, families and teachers taking part and enjoying the activities with the students.

- **Yamaha Employee.**



NAB Pilot

- Design features within Work Inspiration pilots that stimulated high levels of **energy, fun, humour and adventure** were specially valued. Opportunities came through activities organised by the lead employer (Stockland and Yamaha Grand Prix organised challenges, while the Citywide group went tree climbing), or as a new challenge, for example the 6:30am start at a work site. Often it came from a project or activity that was led by the students themselves (research project at FYA, movie making at NAB, presentations on career boards at McDonald's and The Smith Family, designing their own promotional posters at VISA). Generally, these high-energy moments were of a team or group nature.

I loved it, feeling free but serious at the same time, presenting our ideas as students and being out in the city were the best things.
- **Student** participant in the FYA Pilot.

Employees from at least five pilots commented on how moving, joyful, or even inspiring student team presentations were for them. The Three Insights of Work Inspiration do not guarantee that such special moments will occur, but it does provide a flexible framework that allows and encourages lead employers and young people to learn from each other and generate inspiring moments.

Career Development for young people who need it most

There is a strong commitment from the national partners to engage employers in the leadership of programs that not only re-imagine work experience, but also take into account the principles of social inclusion. There is a significant number of young Australians who, due to their background or other extenuating circumstances, are separated from the labour market and do not readily benefit from a clear appreciation of how to engage with the world of work.

Connecting these young people to the workplace at an early age, to the stories of people in work and enabling them to better understand the expectations of employers and their rights as employees is a priority. It is a means of handing down tradition from a reliable and nurturing adult in an informal environment and with a non-preaching approach. The absence of such guidance, advice and knowledge reinforces separation from participation and the rewards of the labour market.



Citiwide Pilot

Many of the pilots engaged young people who were considered by teachers to be 'at risk' of an unsuccessful transition or retention in learning. The particularly targeted approach taken by The Smith Family and Woolworths also provides proof of the relevance of Work Inspiration to such student cohorts.

A common point made by many lead employers (in particular Stockland, Ag Inspiration, VISA and Yamaha) was that collaborative, sensitive and careful selection or referral procedures implemented by the schools, broker and lead employer can lead to a helpful mix of 'at risk' and students who are 'travelling well' participating in Work Inspiration together. Students are able to use the group character of Work Inspiration to support each other and boost the motivation of all members to more fully engage. There is still the need for careful monitoring of the individual(s) who may be experiencing some turmoil or crisis, but placing faith in young people to support each other is well worth the investment. Like all other participants, these 'at risk' students saw great value in the hands-on experiences and career conversations. They also responded to the sense of adventure, challenge and fun that characterised many pilots.

Positive feedback from students and parents was received, particularly that they had felt really motivated to get up and get there... [Disengaged boys, no problem with a 6:30 am start in time to get out to the site.]
- **Teacher** Observation of the Citywide Pilot.

My girls had a great experience and they were really proud of the poster and career board that they produced – in fact my daughter stuck it up on the wall and has kept it there!
-**Parent** of The Smith Family Pilot participant.

The pilots engaged a small number of young people with a learning disability. The group and peer support nature of Work Inspiration reinforced the encouragement offered by employees. Future Work Inspiration activity could be designed so it engages greater numbers of young people with physical and learning difficulties.

The Woolworths pilot revealed how a Work Inspiration program can be modified to suit the needs and expectations of young people who are early school leavers and see themselves as a **job seeker**, rather than as a student **learning** through a school supported career development or careers education activity.

The best thing about Work Inspiration at Woolies was being treated like an adult and not sticking out as a work experience kid or an add-on.
- Pilot participant.

We know that these young people feel that in many previous work placements, they were tolerated by employees, in Work Inspiration these candidates for real jobs have a much more meaningful role.
- Case Manager of pilot participants, Woolworths.

The selection of students in the Woolworths pilot involved a Job Services Australia provider. Case managers selected students carefully and the career conversations were more informal, akin to co-worker chats. They occurred while the young person and employee were doing the actual job together. Motivation to participate was also dependent on the job seeker being informed that there would be paid employment available at the completion of the program, as long as they could successfully complete the work-based learning and placement components of the Work Inspiration pilot.



The Smith Family Pilot

Cultural diversity

Certain groups of young people are also disadvantaged in making their transitions to work and learning pathways by the difference between their language, traditions and values and the cultural norms of the current employer community. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and those from a culturally and linguistically diverse background (CALD), often require career development opportunities that help **both themselves and employers to bridge those differences**. The participation of these young people in Work Inspiration makes the connection, as both groups gain vital information and insights while participating in the hands-on experiences and career conversations simultaneously.

The majority of pilots have been successful in reaching out to significant members of young people who are at risk of an unsuccessful transition. However, the number of CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students involved in the pilots has been small, though the experiences of The Smith Family, FYA and McDonald's pilots provide some key learnings in this matter.

- It is possible to develop interactive and engaging activities that enable 'at risk' and CALD students to not only participate in career conversations, but also to prepare colourful and insightful career boards on those staff members. The creative use of group work and art materials was particularly helpful at McDonald's

and The Smith Family. The poster production used in the VISA pilot and the movie making by students in the NAB pilot also provide Work Inspiration with helpful vehicles for effective communication between young people and employees.



- Mixing young people from CALD backgrounds with students from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds was helpful. Students gained an appreciation of the workplace culture and built their language skills from interaction with employees and other students. Anglo-Celtic students also learnt about the rich diversity of culture through their interaction, so mutual benefits were generated.
- Work Inspiration materials can be modified and refined, so they are both more culturally sensitive and more accessible to students with lower levels of literacy and/or who come from a different culture (FYA and McDonald's).
- The peer group nature of Work Inspiration and the pairing of students in both site visits and career conversations is culturally appropriate for many young people who may find an **individual** placement daunting. The feedback received from Generation One about this aspect of Work Inspiration is heartening. At this point in time, pilot work is being planned by lead employers and brokers that will engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in Work Inspiration; however materials, some activities and processes will need to be further crafted to reach out and fully engage these young people.

VISA Pilot



It would be remiss to not also refer to the engagement of gifted young people who may have limited experience of the world of work, yet have high expectations of their future career journey. Often they are keen to work towards a career or vocation of a high skill order, one in which you cannot get work experience (for example, neuroscience). They are likely to respond to intellectually stimulating and challenging career development opportunities. The flexible framework of Work Inspiration can cater for such young people.

They can be engaged in more complex processes of research and reflection, such as considering with employers a futures dimension to work and careers and to their own career journeys. Young people may imagine

the future of a business, facility or council with employees of that organisation. They might explore what jobs and careers in that place of work will be like in 20 years and present these findings to interested parties.

Certain community leaders and regional development agencies will have a keen interest in such futurist deliberations. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA and the Museum pilots introduced a futures dimension. Students were asked to explore the future of the Museum and in the case of the Chamber, students reflected on their Work Inspiration experience by drawing out the learnings for them **now** and contrasted them with their relevance as a 40 year-old adult.

Learnings – For the future development of Work Inspiration

The key success factors listed in Section 3 of this report signpost innovation and confirm good practice. The pilots have provided significant insights on developing successful Work Inspiration programs and enhanced an appreciation of its full potential in Australia.

- The value of the Big Conversation event or a similar process as a means of briefing and engaging employees in a program is noted. Not only did staff gain a shared understanding of what Work Inspiration is, they also brainstormed a list of hands-on experiences and helpful hints (intended to inform dialogue with students) that helped shape their own program with young people. This is vital for any organisation that plans to run Work Inspiration for the first time.
- Young people consistently stated that they particularly valued the opportunity to listen, talk, do and learn out of the classroom and in the workplace. They placed great importance on gaining information, insights and ideas from **people in work**.

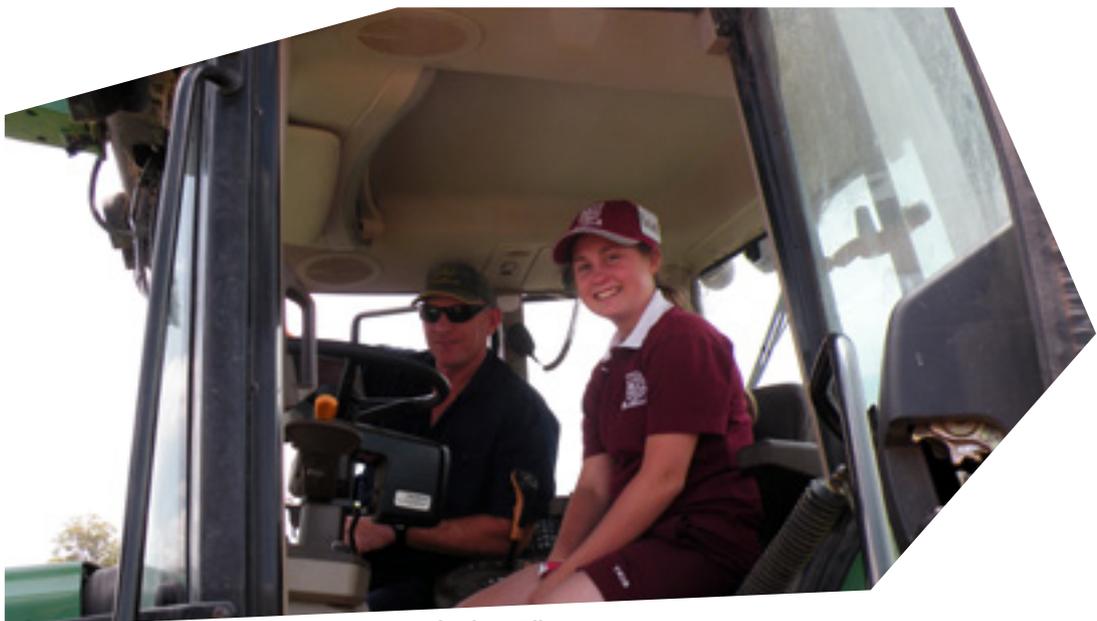
I liked best meeting new people and getting some of their experiences from what they thought about what to do, before they were in the work they do now.

- Student in NAB Pilot program.

- **From the lead employer perspective** satisfaction and a desire to further develop and sustain Work Inspiration activity was dependent on how the program can be **grounded in the business objectives** of the lead employer or employer association. The evaluations and feedback from the lead employers revealed that they felt their pilot had delivered on one or more of the following business objectives: recruitment pipeline, raising the profile of an industry, Corporate Social Responsibility and to some degree employee engagement. When a lead employer understands why they are engaging in Work Inspiration and have identified the particular benefits they seek to generate, they are far more likely to not only pilot successfully, but also to sustain their commitment to develop further programs for young people.
- The Ag Inspirations pilot was special in that a supply chain of small-medium sized employers came together to lead a program. Supported by a coordinator from Rural Skills Australia and a Partnership Broker, these smaller enterprises were able to combine their expertise and provide young people with an encouraging introduction to and exploration of the Agriculture Food industry. The evaluation of this pilot highlighted the **vital role of a coordinator and broker**.

Whether a cluster of small-medium sized enterprises is a supply chain located within an industrial precinct, a network of small or micro-businesses or a main street of small retailers, there is a key role for a coordinator or broker. They helped establish and then strengthen collaboration between the small to medium enterprises. **That resource can come from a range of sources, but it's essential that it is in place.** The final section of this report identifies the challenges of sustaining Work Inspiration and a range of sources for such a coordination service are identified.

- Nearly all the pilot programs chose to document their programs with a video presentation. While they were asked to provide photos or film clips in order to compile one complete picture video of the pilots, various pilots identified their own purpose for such an undertaking. Lead employers and brokers wanted to show their story to their own employees and/or to other potential partners and lead employers. The videos were presented to staff as a stimulus for further reflection and planning, as well as being used as a promotional tool. In the NAB pilot, students will receive a copy of a film they made as a record of their participation. Future development of Work Inspiration programs may well benefit from a suggestion that their innovation be filmed by the lead employer, broker or by young people. There is scope to distribute those clips through social media, which is a cost effective strategy for communicating with media savvy employers/employees and young people.



Ag Inspirations Pilot

- Feedback from lead employers indicated that some of their employees had experienced a 'buzz factor' through their contributions. Their career stories had been validated.

I did not know that the story of my career journey was so interesting and valuable to young people
- Employee of Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA involved in the Work Inspiration Pilot.

In some cases, students made career boards on the journey of an employee which were presented to that person. It felt like a genuine recognition of that employee's career journey, achievements and learnings. Young people were enthusiastic listeners and asked questions. They were interested and found value in their career conversations. Employees were heartened by the responses and feedback of young people to the opportunities they had been given (e.g. team presentations). In a number of the pilots, lead employers mentioned that participation in Work Inspiration had boosted the morale of staff.

Northern Midlands Council Pilot



When such engagement is aligned with the mission and values of their employer, human resources and organisational development studies consistently suggest that the business will experience a productivity boost.

Prompts for career conversations can be provided to students and employees that will encourage reflection by employees about such an alignment.

An engaged workforce is achieved when a high number of employees have their hearts and minds aligned to both the job they do and the organisation they work for. Research demonstrates that engagement leads to higher financial performance and productivity, higher customer service and satisfaction and higher employee attendance and retention.

-Employee Engagement - 2012 Benchmark Study Manpower Group, p.7

- As well as experiencing the world of work, students were also **inspired** by the opportunity to discover the range of options available and by their understanding of how careers happen. This feedback came from young people, employees and from the teachers who referred and on occasions accompanied participating students. It is likely that the process of young people making the connection between their school-based learning and their career aspirations has generated ambition and a desire to succeed.

As presented earlier, pilot case studies and survey feedback indicated that students (including those 'at risk') returned to school with greater clarity about their career hopes, a desire to aspire to career goals and/or with a boost in motivation to learn at school.

To be inspirational requires that the Work Inspiration experience connects with the feelings, values and beliefs of young people. Employee professionalism, commitment, passion or a sense of vocation reaches out to young people and makes an impact. The openness, honesty and care of employees in telling their own career stories and in showing an interest in the hopes of the students have motivated students to learn and work.



The flexibility of the program framework and the way lead employers exploited its freedom created a sense of adventure, fun and engagement. Parallel projects and team feedback presentations came from the ideas, hearts and minds of young people, indicating their buy-in. The peer support generated by the pair or team approach also played a key role in engaging the students to learn and then consider future action.

The encouraging news is that the Work Inspiration framework and the efforts of the lead employers and their brokers have lived up to the name Work **Inspiration**. This program must travel beyond providing work information, exposure and experience if it is to live up to its purpose and full potential. The next challenge is to determine whether that motivation and energy can be sustained.



QLD Museum Pilot

Chapter 5 - The sustainability of Work Inspiration



How can more employers be encouraged to re-imagine work experience by developing Work Inspiration programs and thereby become more strategic and pro-active in their partnering with education?

The diversity of the pilots and the nature of Australian communities suggests that Work Inspiration might engage employers through three major strands of activity (A, B and C) which are detailed at Figure 1. The pilots are reflected in these three strands.

A – Citywide, McDonald's, NAB, Stockland, Woolworths, Yamaha

B – Ag Inspirations, Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA and Visual Industries Suppliers Association

C – Northern Midlands Council, Queensland Museum.

The two national partners, the Foundation for Young Australians and The Smith Family, are medium-large sized non-government organisations that led their own programs.

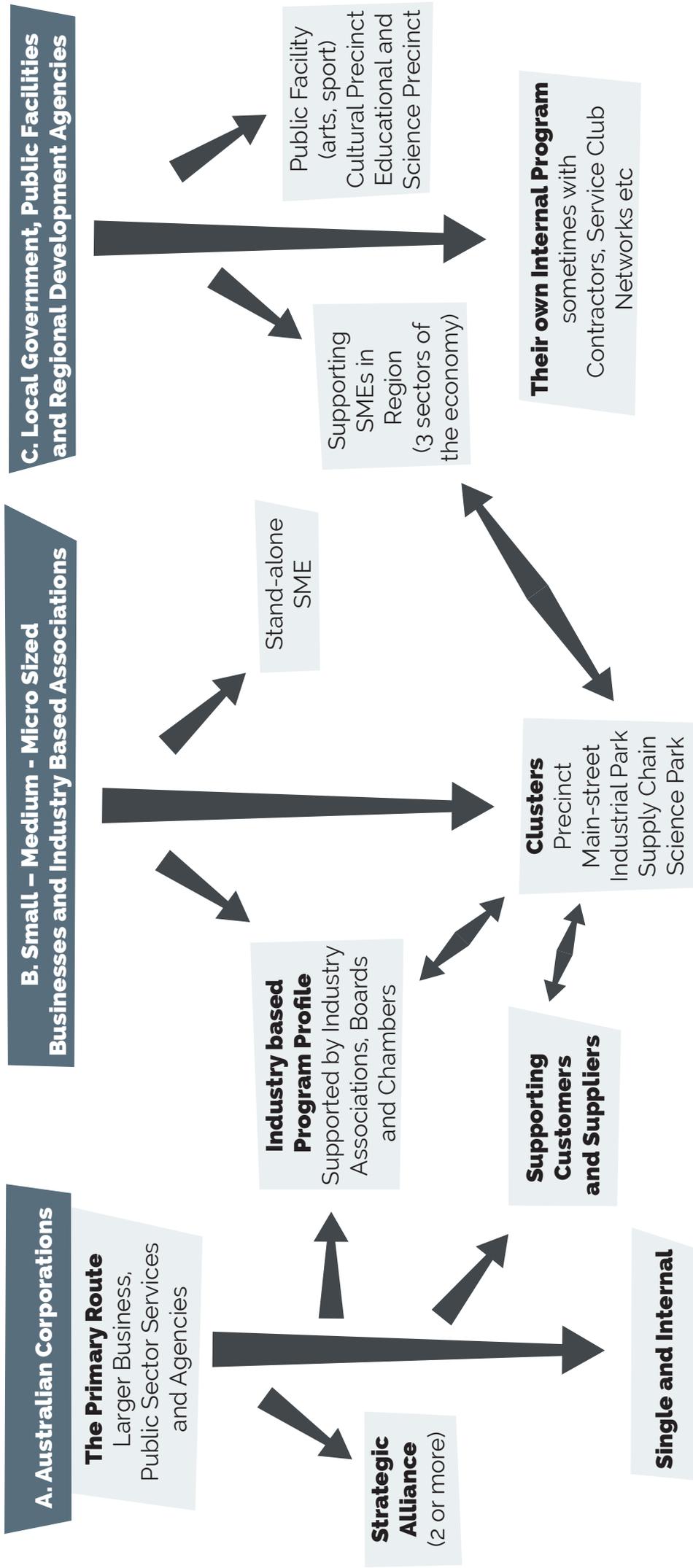
Although each strand is distinctive in character, there are many ways in which they can connect and reinforce each other. In Strand B (clusters of small enterprises), there will most likely be a need for an ongoing coordination and brokerage service. Such a service might include facilitating a partnership between those employers and schools (if not already existing), some capacity building of the SMEs and some hands-on coordination. A list of potential sources for such a coordination or brokerage service is offered at the bottom of Figure 1.



Yamaha Student Grand Prix Pilot

Figure 1 - The Australian Context – Work Inspiration

The three likely strands of Work Inspiration



Brokers and Coordinators

- The pilot programs and their clusters and partnerships were supported by Partnership Brokers
- Source of potential support people or brokers for strands B and C – school cluster coordinator, Trade Training Centres, Group Training Organisations, Economic or Community Department staff of Local Government and Regional Development Agencies, Aboriginal Development Agencies, Rural Skills workers, and staff from industry associations and boards, volunteers from service clubs.

Employees involved in the pilots were asked whether they believed that their organisation could resource and lead Work Inspiration development. An average score of 3.63 or 73% indicated that this may be possible. Scores to this question from smaller employers were slightly lower than those of the large corporations. However the response for all pilots to the statement that the employer required the cooperation of brokers and schools was higher at 4.27 or 85%.

Schools or external agencies could provide such a brokerage service, however, they must be aware of the kind of support that smaller employers and clusters of SMEs will require, for example:

- Bringing all partners to the table and facilitating early discussions or informing an existing partnership of the benefits of developing Work Inspiration e.g., at a Big Conversation event
- Providing some practical resources – e.g. parental permission notes, etc.
- Offering expert advice to the lead employer, e.g. preparing prompts for career conversations
- Acting as a critical partner and documenter of the program.

The sustainability of Work Inspiration in Australia is somewhat dependent upon the development of a broad range of sources for brokerage and coordination. The leadership role of VISA and Rural Skills Australia in two of the pilots that engaged small-medium sized enterprises is encouraging.

A possible source for brokers is from within Strand C: local government and regional development agencies. They value and support clusters of SMEs, value effective supply chains and recognise the vital role of knowledge sharing and contribution between employees, education and government to bring about economic and social development. The Northern Midlands Council pilot and informal discussions with the Australian Local Government Association offer some hope that economic and community development workers from this sector may assist in brokering some Strand B Work Inspiration programs.

The futures dimension present in some of the pilots has direct relevance to regional development, which seeks to find local solutions to local challenges **now and into the future**. Regional Development includes engaging young people, in rural or remote communities, for the development and future of their communities.



Stockland Pilot

For the immediate future, Work Inspiration can rely upon the support of many Partnership Brokers, but it is not a sensible strategy to depend exclusively on them in the longer term. There is a need for a diverse base of brokers. This may include a scenario in which larger corporations (Strand A) engage and support their customers, suppliers and neighbours to become involved in a cluster, as British Telecom has done in the UK. There are reasons to believe, for example, that a bank such as NAB could harness their local customers in a country town to participate in a Work Inspiration project that the bank, either alone or with the local government, coordinated or brokered.

The primary strand of Work Inspiration development in Australia is likely to remain strand A: Australian Corporations. Like their British counterparts, they have the capacity to resource early pilot work and invest the necessary front-loading of time and skills, for future roll-out. The size of their organisation means that they can promote and duplicate the pilot in a variety of sites. The success of Work Inspiration in the UK has been generated by mainly larger businesses located in densely populated communities. They have been linked by an existing advocacy structure (BiTC) that promotes the strategic engagement of business in community and education. It is anticipated that Australia has a corporate sector that will be similarly inspired and the commitment of the six corporate lead employers of the pilots is an encouraging start.

Although an active Industry Association can achieve similar results, the activity of most clusters of SMEs and local governments (strands B and C) will be limited to certain sites or precincts. If skilled brokerage is not available, this makes the upfront investment less attractive. Finding effective brokers is integral to the sustainability of Work Inspiration in Australia.

Work Inspiration will look to the energy and expertise of large private sector businesses and public service agencies that identify business objectives or business challenges that Work Inspiration can help achieve and meet, e.g., skills shortages, becoming an employer of choice, employee engagement and of course an active CSR vision for a prosperous and inclusive society.

The national partners may choose to link the findings of this report to the findings of international research which clearly proves:

- **The positive contribution of career development activity to young people's employability and learning.** OECD (2010) research indicates that around 50% of the earnings variations of young people between OECD countries can be attributed to career development skills.
- **The particular value added factor of such activity for 'at risk' young people,** especially when it is located in the workplace and engages these students with employers. The evaluation of American Career Academies by education and social policy research organisation MDRC (MDRC 2012) found that academies who develop strong links with local employers and promote work based learning doubled the rate at which high-risk students completed a core academic curriculum.



QLD Museum Pilot

How can the benefits of Work Inspiration for young people and employers be sustained?



When students return to school, how can the impact of Work Inspiration be retained? Teachers from a number of pilots who have either referred students or accompanied them in their Work Inspiration workplace activities, have raised the potential of the school connecting the learning that occurs in the program to school curriculum career planning courses in the classroom. This feedback was particularly strong from the teachers involved in the Tassal and Ag Inspirations pilots, where education was an integral part of the pilot planning phase. Queensland and Tasmanian teachers commented on how Work Inspiration experiences can contribute to and be reinforced by the students' development of their mandatory Senior Education Training/Individual Learning Plan/career and learning plans.

Teachers involved in the pilots have also identified how the Work Inspiration activity could be built on and strengthened by subsequent student engagement in School Based Apprenticeships, VET studies and the emerging Work Studies (Years 9 and 10) subject area of the National Curriculum. In the Tasmanian Huon Valley pilot, Tassal partnered with the Trade Training Centre and used the pilot as an induction process into a VET subject of relevance to the core business of Tassal. They (like Yamaha) built on an existing relationship with a school/college/Trade Training Centre and then strategically placed their joint effort in context with further and formal student learning at school, college or Trade Training Centre.

Work Inspiration is good for Year 10's searching for career options and before VET and Structured Workplace Learning ... But it is also a good fit for their career planning as a lead into Senior Education and Training planning and subject selection.

-Queensland teachers commenting upon the McDonald's Work Inspiration Pilot)

If the student learning outcomes can be brought back to the classroom and reflected on, then the energy, motivation and ambition generated by the Work Inspiration experience is more likely to be sustained.



Citywide Pilot

Conclusion



The pilots have laid a foundation for building the Australian evidence base of the value of Work Inspiration. The evaluation and the documentation undertaken to date suggests Work Inspiration is of value to both young people and employers.

The national partners are now in a position to communicate these findings to the Australian employer and education communities and others interested in young people's transitions. The pilots show that the lead employer and their employees believe that through developing Work Inspiration, their recruitment pipeline and connection to schools has improved, staff morale has been boosted and that Work Inspiration delivers CSR outcomes.

In order for the contributions and leadership of these engaged employers to make a positive and longer term difference to the lives of young people (especially those 'at risk'), education and schools will need to collaborate closely with the lead employer and ensure appropriate student selection and follow-up activity that builds on the motivation generated.

The pilot case studies indicate that lead employers want the freedom to develop and lead their own Work Inspiration project, but they are also keen for schools to build on the student experience in the workplace. Work Inspiration can remain employer led and at the same time a strategic partnership between those employers and their cooperating schools can underpin that leadership.

Local partnerships will be strengthened by national partnerships, as they give employers a voice and a place at the table to discuss their role and contribution in raising aspirations and improving learning outcomes of secondary students.

Work Inspiration pilots indicate that its future development and sustainability is dependent on three key ingredients.

- Communicating the evidence of the benefits of Work Inspiration for both young people and employers to lead employers, brokers and schools.
- Engaging a diverse range of brokers, from within schools or outside of schools, to support lead employers and in particular, clusters of SMEs.
- Developing an underpinning partnership approach between lead employers and schools that ensures the whole process of selection, participation and the follow-up of learning is in place.

Work Inspiration has the potential to enable young people and employers to engage and connect for their mutual benefit. It is grounded in solid evidence and success in the UK, but as it is in its early stages here in Australia, getting it up and running to its full potential requires the early adoption, support and experimentation of innovative Australian employers and schools.

International research supports the view that career development initiatives such as Work Inspiration can improve the learning performance, employability and transitions of young people, but the interaction between students and employers is vital to its success.



The Smith Family Pilot

Table 4 - **Work Inspiration - Student Survey Form**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Work Inspiration helped me to think about what I want in a career	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	10.4% (17)	55.2% (90)	34.4% (56)	4.24	163
I was inspired by the range of career options in this industry	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)	7.4% (12)	55.1% (85)	39.9% (65)	4.31	163
Talking with employers about careers is more helpful than just talking to teachers	0.6% (1)	0.6% (1)	8.0% (13)	27.6% (45)	63.2% (103)	4.52	163
I learnt about different ways careers can develop	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)	4.9% (8)	47.2% (77)	47.2% (77)	4.41	163
I would recommend Work Inspiration over traditional Work Experience	0.6% (1)	4.3% (7)	27.2% (44)	34.0% (55)	34.0% (55)	3.96	162
Doing Work Inspiration has encouraged me to develop aspirations (set goals) for my future	0.0% (0)	3.1% (5)	16.7% (27)	53.1% (86)	27.2% (44)	4.04	162
Work Inspiration has increased my awareness of different options for future work	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	8.0% (13)	52.5% (85)	39.5% (64)	4.31	162
Taking part in Work Inspiration has increased my motivation to do well at school	1.9% (3)	3.1% (5)	21.9% (35)	41.9% (67)	31.3% (50)	3.98	160
Answered Question							163



McDonald's Pilot

Table 5 - **Work Inspiration - Pilot Site Employer Survey**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
The three career Insight Tools helped facilitate career conversations with the young people	0.0% (0)	2.3% (1)	9.3% (4)	65.1% (28)	23.3% (10)	4.09	43
The needs of young people participating were appropriately matched to the aims of the pilot	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	20.5% (9)	61.4% (27)	18.2% (8)	3.98	44
The young people seemed inspired by the range of career options in this industry	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	9.1% (4)	45.5% (20)	45.5% (20)	4.36	44
Supervising staff felt Work Inspiration pilot was a worthwhile experience	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	14.0% (6)	44.2% (19)	41.9% (18)	4.28	43
Our organisation would get better at conducting Work Inspiration sessions with practice	0.0% (0)	2.3% (1)	6.8% (3)	52.3% (23)	38.6% (17)	4.27	44
We would recommend Work Inspiration over traditional Work Experience	0.0% (0)	9.1% (4)	27.3% (12)	29.5% (13)	34.1% (15)	3.89	44
Work Inspiration should be an integral part of the career development program for Australian students	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	15.4% (6)	56.4% (22)	28.2% (11)	4.13	39
Work Inspiration is a program that we as employers can lead and resource	0.0% (0)	11.6% (5)	25.6% (11)	51.2% (22)	11.6% (5)	3.63	43
We need schools or Brokers to help develop and deliver Work Inspiration	0.0% (0)	2.3% (1)	6.8% (3)	52.3% (23)	38.6% (17)	4.27	44
I think engaging with secondary school students adds value to our organisation	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	7.0% (3)	39.5% (17)	53.5% (23)	4.47	43
Answered Question							44

Table 6 - **Work Inspiration - School Contact Survey**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Work Inspiration was helpful to our students' career planning	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50% (10)	50% (10)	4.50	20
Students were inspired by the range of career options in this industry	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50% (10)	50% (10)	4.50	20
Talking with employers about careers adds a useful perspective students can't easily get at school	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	10.0% (2)	90.0% (18)	4.90	20
We would recommend Work Inspiration over traditional Work Experience	0.0% (0)	5.0% (1)	25.0% (5)	20.0% (4)	50.0% (10)	4.15	20
Work Inspiration should be an integral part of the career development program for Australian students	0.0% (0)	2.3% (1)	10.0% (2)	30.0% (6)	60.0% (12)	4.50	20
Answered Question							20

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Queensland Museum
Northern Midlands Council
NAB
Stockland
Tassal
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Woolworths
Visual Industries Suppliers Association
Yamaha

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Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA Pilot



Work
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Founding partners:

