



Australian Government



# PARENTS

Talking Career Choices

2014

As a parent, you play an important role in helping your child to make educational choices and career decisions. This role begins when your child is young—as they watch you and others around them take part in working life.

As they grow older, you can play an even greater part in guiding their career development and fostering their optimism, enthusiasm, energy

and curiosity. A lot of this relies on good communication.

This brochure covers practical and beneficial ways for you to be involved in your child's career planning. It outlines current information on the many options your child will have when they leave school. It also identifies useful resources and websites.

## Start talking

Take advantage of all opportunities to talk to your child about possibilities for their future.

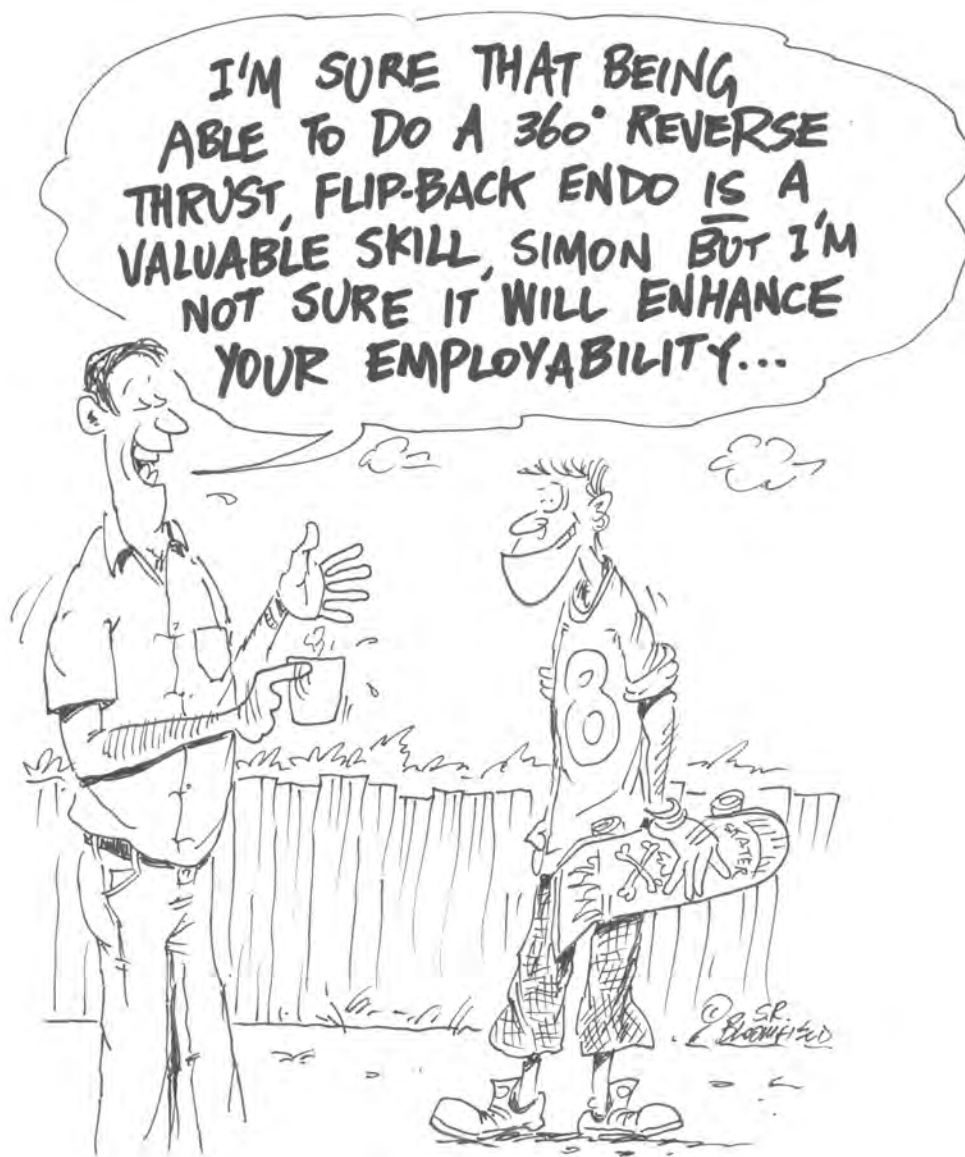
Most young people respond well to casual conversations about careers, so be ready when they ask questions about life after school. Your child probably wants to know how you made decisions about your career. Be ready to tell them about your own work and life experiences and the paths you took to get where you are. They'll gain from knowing about your different jobs, how you found them and whether you liked them. They may also like hearing about experiences of other family members and friends. It's quite possible you know someone who works in a job or industry that interests your child. See if they are willing to tell your child more about their work, and its positives and negatives.

Be ready with questions too. Ask your child if they have thought about different types of further learning. Find out what their friends are planning to do. Ask if they have talked to their school career adviser. Ask if they know other ways to find out more about careers or if they would like to attend career expos. Expos are a great way to find the education and training providers in your area, and meet potential employers.

Think about your child's experiences. Have they helped in or with your business? Do they have a creative hobby or a special skill or talent that could lead to an occupation? Have they worked as volunteers, held casual jobs or done work experience? How did they feel about these experiences? Learning what they don't want to do can be as important as learning what they do want to do. So even if they didn't enjoy an experience, it is good to talk about why they didn't enjoy it.

You can take this further by helping them to fully understand their interests, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, skills and what is important to them. Be sure to discuss the importance of gaining employability skills (see the checklist on page 4).

And above all, be encouraging and supportive. Be positive about their ideas and chances of finding a satisfying career path. Let them know you believe they are a capable and resourceful person. This kind of parental influence can help to boost your child's confidence, maturity and desire to succeed.



## Life experiences

### *A young person's story*

I started skipping class in primary school. I'd spend days playing in the neighbourhood. Later I moved on to graffiti: plastering my tag throughout my suburb and the wider city. In the end, I dropped out of school completely.

I'm sure everyone thought I'd never actually make anything of myself. Mum and Dad were completely frustrated by my behaviour, but they always stuck by me and encouraged me to 'find' myself. Mum, who is very artistic, was the

first to realise that art and photography actually captured my attention and provided a way for me to harness my skills and energies. She and Dad both worked to create opportunities for me to know myself better and to see how I might fit into a career in the world of art. I'll finish my fine arts university degree next year. I could finish earlier, but I'm working two jobs this term to keep the money coming in. I'm so grateful Mum and Dad never gave up on me.

## The options

There are plenty of pathways to a rewarding career. The most common options are:

- complete an Australian Apprenticeship or Traineeship
- take up a cadetship
- study at TAFE or Registered Training Organisation
- study at university
- take a gap year to earn money, volunteer and/ or travel
- start a business
- find employment.

The great thing is that a career or study choice made today does not limit a person's range of choices in the future. It's no longer common or necessary for people to stay in the same job or even the same field of work for their entire life.

**Job**—A position in which you perform tasks for payment.

This flexibility is wonderful and can be a source of great personal satisfaction. To get the most from this freedom of choice, everyone should make it a priority to learn and to keep learning. In fact, in order to expand their options many adults return to formal study to upgrade their qualifications.

Research shows that people are more likely to get a job if they have a Year 12 or equivalent education. They are also more likely to be able to take advantage of new career choices if they continue to learn. Today many people are working in jobs that didn't exist when they first entered the workforce.

So let's look more closely at the most common pathways.

### Australian Apprenticeships

*Australian Apprenticeships* (encompassing all apprenticeships and traineeships) offer practical work experience and formal training in more than 500 occupations. Australian Apprentices gain new skills, make a great start to an interesting career and earn a pay packet—all at the same time.

*Australian School-based Apprenticeships* give young people a head start in a chosen career. Students earn a wage as they work and study.

See [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au) for more information.

*Trade Training Centres and Trades Skills Centres* have been funded in eligible secondary schools around Australia to ensure students have greater access to industry relevant vocational education and training in schools and to ensure schools have strong partnerships with local businesses and industry to deliver this education and training.

*Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools* lets students combine vocational studies with their other subjects. VET in Schools is a critical element of our education system. It is an important pathway to further vocational education and training and to employment in the trades and other skilled occupations.

**Career**—The sum total of paid and unpaid work, learning and life roles you undertake throughout your life.

### Take up a cadetship

A cadetship can be a great option for starting a career, especially in professions such as finance, engineering and journalism. In general, cadetships provide work experience and financial support, with cadets combining employment and study for several years.

Across Australia, TAFEs and other training organisations offer a vast range of practical, hands-on and job-related courses. Students can gain nationally recognised qualifications in subjects as varied as aviation, aged care, cardio-technology, children's services, car mechanics, earth science, hairdressing, plumbing, nursing and many more.

### University

About half of all students go directly from secondary school to university. This is a big step, often meaning a move away from home. To ensure that future university students have access to meaningful information about where and what to study the Australian Government has developed the *MyUniversity* website.

*MyUniversity* is a searchable website that can be accessed from mobile devices. The website includes a broad range of information about Australian universities and other higher education providers, including course details and fees; information about student

services and campus facilities; results of student satisfaction surveys; and results of graduate destination surveys. Students can also find career and labour market information through a link to the Government's Job Outlook website.

Higher degree by research students will find postgraduate research information including details regarding Excellence in Research for Australia by discipline, which evaluates the quality of research at universities at a given point in time.

Visit [www.myuniversity.gov.au](http://www.myuniversity.gov.au) to assist you make choices about your future studies.

## Gap year

Some young people opt to take a year off before returning to further study or training. This gap year gives them a chance to travel, learn a language, pursue a sport or hobby, earn money, gain a new skill, volunteer or simply figure out what they want to do in the future.

**Occupation**—A group of similar jobs found in different industries or organisations.

Many community organisations rely on volunteers and a gap year spent in this way can provide useful new skills and solid work experience.

Visit [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au) for volunteering opportunities in your area.

## Start a business

Enterprising young people sometimes begin a career by starting a business. There are programs and training available that can help them to develop innovative ideas and increase their business skills.

Go to [www.business.gov.au](http://www.business.gov.au) and [www.enya.org.au](http://www.enya.org.au) for information to help your child start their own business.

**Work**—A set of activities with an intended set of outcomes. Can include parenting or volunteering as well as paid employment.

## Start a job

Some young people choose to head straight to employment after completing school. Finding that first job can be made easier if the job seeker knows more about the labour market, skills needed, various industries, occupations, incomes and job prospects. Remember many jobs are not advertised, so word-of-mouth and local knowledge can play a big part in finding a job.

Refer to Key online planning resources below for more information.

## Useful skills

Employers always look for a 'little bit more' in their employees. This 'look' usually goes beyond the technical skills needed to do the job and encompasses aspects known as 'employability skills'.

Employers have told us their top eight employability skills.

They are:

- communication
- teamwork
- problem solving
- initiative and enterprise
- planning and organisation
- self-management
- learning and technology.

The Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework (CSfW) supports the development of employability skills by providing a common understanding of the non-technical skills required for work and how they can be taught, learned, observed and measured. For more information on the CSfW, see [www.industry.gov.au/csffw](http://www.industry.gov.au/csffw).

## Australia's job growth

Over the next five years, Australia's main job growth is projected to occur in the industries of Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

Reasonable job growth is expected across most other industries. These include: Education and Training, Transport, Retail Trade, Mining and Accommodation and Food Services.

## The law about schooling

Australian law says that all young people must stay in schooling (or an accredited equivalent) until they complete Year 10. After that, they must continue in full-time education (at least 25 hours a week), training and/or employment until they reach the age of 17.

This requirement stems from the nationally agreed Compact with Young Australians. Read more about the compact at [www.education.gov.au/compact-young-australians](http://www.education.gov.au/compact-young-australians).

## Key online planning resources

Here are various online resources that can help you and your child to better understand the career options and pathways that exist in Australia today. Visit these websites together or individually—and then make time to discuss the options and opportunities they describe.

### Bullseye Posters

Bullseye posters are a great way to start a conversation with your child about the school subjects they like and are good at, and the jobs those subjects might lead to. The posters cover more

than 30 different subjects and list the hundreds of occupations related to each one. The Australian Government produces the posters and makes them available for free at [www.education.gov.au/career-bullseye-posters](http://www.education.gov.au/career-bullseye-posters).

### Job Guide

Job Guide has in-depth information on over 500 entry-level occupations. In particular, it explains the education and training pathways that lead to each job. This can help young people to determine what jobs might suit them. The guide also has a helpful glossary of useful terms.

Job Guide is produced annually and distributed free of charge, in limited quantities as class sets to all schools with Year 10 students. It can also be accessed from your mobile phone and is available online at [www.jobguide.education.gov.au](http://www.jobguide.education.gov.au).

Parents wishing to obtain a copy of Job Guide for their child can do so online at [www.hobsonsbookshop.com/collections/careers-information](http://www.hobsonsbookshop.com/collections/careers-information). Alternatively, you can order the book by calling **1800 682 133** (toll free).

### Job Outlook

Job Outlook is a careers and labour market research information site to help you decide on your future career. Use the various search options to find a wealth of information covering around 350 individual occupations. Don't forget to take the short Career Quiz to help guide you to the most suitable jobs for your interests and skills. See [www.joboutlook.gov.au](http://www.joboutlook.gov.au).

### myfuture

The *myfuture* website is a one-stop shop of career information. It is an interactive resource, with tools and information that allow people to investigate career pathways and opportunities. There is comprehensive information about occupations,

courses, state labour markets, job hunting tips and much more. The section for parents entitled 'assist your child' includes advice on how you can support and encourage your child as they plan their future. See [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au).

### My Skills

My Skills is Australia's Directory of Training. My Skills features information on all publicly-available, nationally recognised vocational education and training in Australia. It is a Government initiative to assist individuals and employers to choose the training provider that best suits their needs. My Skills contains a range of training stories, statistical information on training providers and outcomes, and links to career and study assistance information. Visit [www.myskills.gov.au](http://www.myskills.gov.au) to find out more.

### Centrelink

The Australian Government, through Centrelink, offers financial support and career assistance to young people who are studying, or in training or an Australian Apprenticeship, or who are looking for work.

## Financial support

Financial support for living assistance is available in the forms of Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY and Assistance for Isolated Children. See [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au) for more information about these programs.

To help students undertaking university studies or higher-level vocational education and training studies pay for their tuition, the Australian Government funds Commonwealth supported places and provides access to the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). Under the HELP scheme, eligible students can study now and pay their tuition costs later by accessing one of the HELP loans, which includes HECS HELP,

FEE HELP, OS HELP, VET FEE HELP and SA HELP. There are various eligibility requirements for the different loans.

Students should be aware that the cost of higher education degrees varies between courses and providers. Most undergraduate university places are Commonwealth supported which means that they are substantially subsidised by the Australian Government so that students only pay 'student contribution' amounts for their units. Eligible students can access a HECS HELP loan to pay their student contribution amounts or receive a discount for some up-front payments.

If you are not enrolled in a Commonwealth supported place, you are a fee paying student. This means you pay tuition fees for a place that is not subsidised by the Australian Government. Eligible fee paying students may access a FEE-HELP loan to pay all or part of their tuition fees.

OS-HELP is available for eligible Commonwealth supported students who wish to complete part of their course overseas.

VET FEE-HELP assists eligible students undertaking higher-level vocational education and training qualifications to pay their tuition fees. Eligible students must be enrolled in a VET-accredited diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate or graduate diploma course provided by Registered Training Organisations that are approved to offer VET FEE-HELP loans to their students. SA HELP assists eligible students to pay for all or part of their student services and amenities fee. The student services and amenities fee is a fee that universities and other approved higher education providers can charge for student services and amenities of a non-academic nature, such as sporting and recreational activities, employment and career advice, child care, financial advice and food services.

Students who use a HELP loan are only required to begin repayments through the tax system when their income is above the minimum repayment threshold for compulsory repayment. For the 2013-2014 financial year, the minimum threshold is \$51,309.

The thresholds are adjusted each year to reflect any changes in average weekly earnings. If you have a HELP debt, and your repayment income is above the minimum repayment threshold, the Australian Taxation Office will work out your compulsory repayment and include it in your notice of assessment.

Visit [www.studyassist.gov.au](http://www.studyassist.gov.au) or call the Student Enquiry Line on **1800 020 108**.

### Support for Australian Apprentices

Trade Support Loans, to be introduced from 1 July 2014, will assist eligible Australian Apprentices with the expenses associated with living, learning and completing and apprenticeship. Australian Apprentices undertaking training leading to an occupation on the National Skills Needs List may be eligible for Trade Support Loans. Trade Support Loans will provide Australian Apprentices with up to \$20,000 over the course of their apprenticeship as a concessional income contingent loan. Trade Support Loans become repayable, through the taxation system, when the apprentice's income reaches the FEE-HELP loan income threshold (currently \$51,309), with apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeship receiving a 20% discount on the amount borrowed. More information on support for Australian Apprentices is available on the Australian Apprenticeship website at [www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au](http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au).

## Key career development resources

Here are two key online resources that look especially at career development in Australia.

- [www.education.gov.au/careerdevelopment](http://www.education.gov.au/careerdevelopment) has free resources for people working in the career development industry. These can be found under Career Information and Resources.
- Module 1 of the Australian Career Development Studies suite is for parents and others who want to help children make career choices. See [www.career.edu.au](http://www.career.edu.au).

## More resources

- See [www.education.gov.au/accessprogram](http://www.education.gov.au/accessprogram) for information on the Australian Apprenticeships Access Program. This program helps those who find it particularly hard to enter skilled employment by getting them involved in nationally recognised prevocational training.
- See [www.grouptraining.com.au](http://www.grouptraining.com.au) for more information on apprenticeships and traineeships.
- See [www.employment.gov.au/ics](http://www.employment.gov.au/ics) information for Indigenous Australians hoping to take up a cadetship.
- See [www.lmip.gov.au](http://www.lmip.gov.au)—the Labour Market Information Portal (LMIP)—for extensive data on industry and regional employment trends and prospects in Australia.



## Visit myfuture ~ Assist your child

The Assist your child section of the myfuture website helps you support and encourage your child with their career making decisions.

### Does this sound familiar?

- I want to help my child plan for their future?
- My child doesn't know what they want to do when they leave school?
- My child wants to be a forensic scientist. Where can you find information to help?
- Where can I find information on courses and training providers in our local area?
- Where can we speak to someone working in the industry my child is interested in?
- I don't understand my child's chosen career path.



**myfuture.edu.au**  
*your career, your future*

For the answers to all these questions and more visit [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au). You will find a range of resources such as occupational videos, labour market information and the new myfuture forum, a tool allowing you to talk to people working in a range of industries.

**Australia's career information and exploration service**  
myfuture is a joint initiative of the Australian and state and territory governments