

Summary of AYF discussion topic – Youth At Work

Thank you to everyone who took the time to contribute ideas to the Youth @ Work discussion topic. It was great to receive additional content suggestions for Young Workers' Toolkit and hear about some of the challenges young people are dealing with when entering the workplace for the first time. A summary of all the ideas received is outlined below.

All of your comments have been passed on to developers of the Young Workers' Toolkit at the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and will be taken into account as part of the 'Toolkit' development.

Thanks again for taking the time to share your views.

Summary of Ideas – Youth @ Work

Additional topics you would like to see included in the Toolkit

- A number of people were supportive of the inclusion of information about:
 - possible ways of finding employment
 - the benefits of casual, part-time employment
 - workplace etiquette including standards e.g. dress
 - pay scales, as a number of young people reported that they were underpaid in their first job
 - a 'go to guide' if you have problems e.g. where to go to for help if you think you are being underpaid
 - information about the conditions under which you can be fired – can you just be fired on the spot?
 - superannuation
 - taxation including, but not limited to: definitions of taxation terms used in employment contracts (for example what does the term tax free thresholds mean), discuss the yearly tax process including what the employee needs to do and how to obtain a tax file number and why it is needed
 - avoiding workplace injury, including information on OHS rights and responsibilities as well as tips on the types of OHS questions to ask supervisors to ensure young workers are practicing safely. Young workers need adequate OHS orientation, training and supervision. The need to knowing their OHS rights and responsibilities - tips on the types of OHS questions to ask supervisors will help keep young workers safe would also be good
 - standard rights in the workplace including how you can find out about them, what support a union could provide, your rights to choose to join a union, how you go about joining a union, and which unions represented the particular types of work
 - it should explain the roles of different people in the workplace and provide information on the Industrial Relations system
 - assertiveness, provide examples or scenario on how to be assertive with employers
 - international students to include information for those on other temporary visas, such as the Bridging Visa or Graduate Temporary Visa.
- Other suggestions:
 - Any information should be arranged in such a way that young people can access information/rule or regulations that are relevant to their State or Territory
 - A pack from government doesn't make sense - a website maybe, but a friendly unionist sponsor helping new starters settle into a job, could be of use.

Design and access issues

- The 'Toolkit' needs to be visually interesting and should include the use of graphics, pictures of young people in the workplace from different ethnic backgrounds and locations including remote Australia.
- Font and headings should be used to effectively to present the information in a clear format.
- While technical language and terms were considered important – they should only be used when necessary. Young people voting on the posts supported the minimal use of complex language. The language needs to be relatively basic – provide information that is clear and concise without having to use words that are all over four syllables in length.
- The information needs to be set out clearly and be well organised so you can get to exactly what you need when you need it and not have to sort through a whole heap of stuff you don't need.
- It was also suggested that young people be involved in the design of the 'Toolkit'. Graphic design students often produce some great media.
- Consider using existing State/Territory websites which support young workers. For example myfuture (myfuture.edu.au). It has over 20 million hits a month and could easily accommodate a young workers toolkit.
- A Toolkit of some description is an excellent idea, however, like most of these ideas, it's bound to fail if it's not readily available

- While having access to the Toolkit via a website was thought to be a good idea, some felt that this would be limiting for young people who do not have internet access.
- Some thought having a hard copy of the 'Toolkit' would be beneficial as you could make notes, record additional information and take it with you and access it when you need it.

Problems encountered by young people in the workplace

- Young people indicated that they were being treated unfairly in the workplace and did not know what to do or which union, if any, they could turn to.
- A lack of assertiveness skills was seen as a barrier to young people being getting what they are entitled to e.g. the right pay etc.
- Some posts highlighted concerns about standing up to employers for fear of losing their jobs.
- Feeling threatened about asking for days off during holidays for family commitments as this might jeopardising their job.
- One young person commented that they have worked for a whole year without knowing what their pay entitlements were – as they never received a payslip.
- Due to their lack of workplace experience, young peoples' first job usually involves unskilled or semi-skilled work, increasing their risk of injury. Young workers cannot successfully manage workplace hazards and assess risk without adequate OHS orientation, training and supervision.
- One post raised concerns about young being used or taken advantage of "I was asked to come in for a trial day" and then was never paid. One young person reported being paid in tacos.
- Finding the first job is a challenge. You often need experience to get jobs. How do you get experience when you can not get a job in the first place?
- Having access to free training that provides young people with skills would help.

Other Issues Raised

- It is important that the community values different jobs and encouraged youth to seek employment in often perceived 'mediocre' jobs. This builds experience and often hard working ethics.
- Consider having unions provide employment services.
- The unions could run training days, host the recruit into the job, negotiating and monitoring "first job users" (like first home buyers), the employer registers the job with the union, the union finds candidates from those who register and we get our first job under the umbrella of the union, with the union ending up with a new member.
- The government should sponsor talks in schools from unions so that students start to learn something about their rights, and how to protect themselves, and work with colleagues, before they get their first job. This basic stuff should go back into the school curriculum as well - school prepares you for so many things, but not such an important thing as employment and employment rights.