A National Employment and Training Plan For

YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

Statement
by
The Prime Minister
The Honourable P. J. Keating, MP

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ASSISTANCE FOR UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE 3

THE KEYS TO A JOB: AN OFFER TO LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE 3
LINKED ASSISTANCE – JOBS AFTER TRAINING 5
ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES 6

Career Start Traineeships 6
Increased Employer Subsidies for Apprentices and Trainees 6
Group Training Schemes 7
Traineeships in the Australian Public Service 8

PRE-VOCATIONAL COURSES 8

LANDCARE AND ENVIRONMENT ACTION PROGRAM 8

ASSISTANCE TO HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE 9

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS 10

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY 11

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH INITIATIVES GRANTS 12

INCOME SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS 12

REFORM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING 15

A NATIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM 15

REFORM OF ENTRY LEVEL TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS 16

AGREEMENT WITH THE ACTU TO FACILITATE TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE 19

Career Start Traineeships 20
Apprenticeships 22
Jobskills Award 22

INCREASING SCHOOL RETENTION 22

LOCAL NETWORKING 23

CONCLUSION 25

ATTACHMENT A: SUMMARY OF MEASURES 27
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INTRODUCTION

Unemployment destroys livelihoods and damages the basic fabric of our national life. It is damaging to individuals, families, communities and the nation. It is the most urgent problem of our time.

Unemployment is the Australian Government's first priority and it will remain so until solutions are found and the present trend reversed.

Because it is on their work and their skills, their hopes and ambitions, and their faith in Australia that the nation's future depends, unemployment among our young people is cause for special concern. The Government recognises that unemployment is also causing great distress among older Australians, and will be making a concerted assault on the problem in coming weeks.

But the campaign has begun with young people. It is a national campaign against a national problem. It calls on the energy, ideas and good will of all Australians. It calls on us to recognise that the burden of unemployment should not be borne by the unemployed alone.

It was in this spirit that delegates came to the National Meeting in Canberra on 22 July 1992. It was a meeting notable for the sense of common purpose which emerged among representatives of business, trade unions, governments, community groups and young Australians. It was remarkable for the degree to which all delegates were determined to go beyond rhetoric, beyond good intentions, and find practical and imaginative solutions.

In broad terms there were three areas of common resolve.

First, it was agreed that the only practical context for long term solutions was a climate of economic growth. This is a Government commitment outlined in the 'One Nation' statement of February this year. In coming months, the Government will be redoubling its efforts to get the economy moving again.

It was also recognised by all at the meeting that vocational education and training is the key to a competitive and successful economy and, therefore, the key to long term rewarding jobs for young Australians. If a job is to remain a fundamental right of Australians, the right to high quality training must be seen as an equal right.

The third imperative is finding solutions to the problems besetting those who are unemployed now. Delegates agreed that the personal and social damage being done by unemployment among young Australians demands strategies to create immediate work and training.
This Statement sets out the Government's response to these critical issues in the light of discussions at the National Meeting.

Today the Government is announcing a package of measures costing about $770 million over three years. The Government is not offering a single, simplistic solution such as a cut to youth wage rates. The problem, and the needs of our young people, have many different dimensions and require a balanced, comprehensive range of responses. Taken together, the measures in the package will provide employment and training opportunities for just on 100,000 young Australians – 96,000 – by the end of 1993. These places are in addition to the existing 75,000 labour market program places for unemployed teenagers which will continue into next year.

The key features of the package are:

- An offer to all long-term unemployed young people of a six month vocational training course, with a JOBSTART card on completion, giving employers a wage subsidy to employ a young person. Funding will be provided for over 35,000 places;
- A milestone change with the creation of a new Career Start Traineeship, set up under a new single Federal award – to target early school leavers, amongst the most disadvantaged of job seekers;
- An expansion of SkillShare and JOBTRAIN with a link to a wage subsidy for a job beyond training;
- A new Landcare and Environment Action Program offering young people employment experience in environmental and conservation projects;
- Increased subsidies for additional current traineeships and extra support for apprentices;
- A further 12,000 pre-vocational TAFE places in 1993;
- $43.6 million over three years to underpin the development of the new entry level training arrangements for the Australian Vocational Certificate recommended in the Carmichael Report; and
- $56.3 million over three years to fund places in Carmichael pilot projects and the new Career Start Traineeships.

The measures in the package, combined with existing labour market programs and the opportunities now available in universities and vocational education, provide a positive option of employment, education or training for young Australians.
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ASSISTANCE FOR UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE

Delegates at the National Meeting on 22 July argued strongly that assistance was needed immediately for the young unemployed people who are facing hardship, low self-esteem and a feeling that they have been let down by the community.

The Government agrees that action must be taken now for these young people.

In putting together a package of measures, the Government was keen to ensure that action could be taken quickly to create employment and training opportunities for young people. To do this, it has built on existing measures by increasing the number of places, their effectiveness and attraction.

A strong element of the package is the linking of vocational education and employment.

It is important that unemployed young people do not miss out on high quality vocational education and training which will equip them for a satisfying and well-remunerated career. But it is also important that there is a link to employment to increase young people's interest in training and their chances of permanent employment.

The package also offers a range of opportunities which recognises the different needs and circumstances of young people. It includes special assistance for disadvantaged young people so that they do not miss out on the opportunities which will flow from the measures.

This package represents a substantial commitment by the Government. Many of the measures provide unemployed young people with the vocational skills they currently lack and a wage subsidy to offset the short term costs to employers of hiring a young person with limited work experience.

The Government was extremely heartened by the strong feeling, which emerged from the National Meeting, that reducing youth unemployment was a national responsibility. There was a consensus that if all sections of the community put in a concerted effort, the problem could be solved. The Government now calls on the employers of Australia to match its commitment.

THE KEYS TO A JOB: AN OFFER TO LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE

Unemployed young people, particularly the long term unemployed, must secure the opportunity of mainstream training and vocational preparation. This view was reinforced by participants at the National Meeting.
In developing our response to the needs of long term unemployed, the Government is aware that training alone is not always the answer. Unless training is followed by, or integrated with, employment, the skills learnt will atrophy. Further, unless unemployed young people believe that the training is likely to lead to a job, they will quickly lose interest.

The young people at the National Meeting gave a stark picture of the effects of unemployment on the individual. They spoke of the feeling of worthlessness, the loss of self esteem and the loss of confidence. There is no doubt that the personal cost of unemployment increases with the length of unemployment. The longer the period of unemployment, the more difficult it is to find a job. We must ensure that our long term unemployed young people regain confidence in themselves and in their future. If we do not, they will lose faith in Australia.

The Government is determined to meet this challenge.

Today, we make an offer to all long term unemployed young people which will provide the keys to a job. All young people who have been unemployed for 12 months or more will be eligible for a six months vocational training course in TAFE or a private provider. At the successful completion of their course, participants will receive a JOBSTART card which will offer employers a wage subsidy at the rates prescribed under the JOBSTART program if they provide the young person with a job. The current rates are set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group (years)</th>
<th>Unemployed 6 months or more</th>
<th>Unemployed 12 months or more or especially disadvantaged</th>
<th>Unemployed 24 months or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>$70</td>
<td>$105</td>
<td>$--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 plus</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most long term unemployed young people are now in a situation where they rarely receive even an acknowledgment of their applications for jobs. Linking quality training and a wage subsidy ensures that the long term unemployed who take up their entitlement will substantially enhance their employment opportunities.

Participants will receive advice and career counselling to assist them in the choice of an appropriate course. They will receive Formal Training Allowance while they are studying, which provides for Newstart Allowance and incidental expenses.
The course will be accredited and so provide credit towards further education and training. The Government hopes that most of the young people who obtain a job at the end of their course, with the help of the wage subsidy, will continue to upgrade their skills by continuing with their study part-time. Some may, of course, prefer to continue in full-time education and training, in which case AUSTUDY would be available to eligible students.

This offer is available to all long term unemployed young people. Some, however, may prefer other elements of the package or existing labour market programs. The Government estimates that about 35,000 young people will accept the offer, and the cost will be $70.2 million in 1992–93 and $247.2 million over three years.

This offer to the long term unemployed is a commitment by the Government to disadvantaged young people. It means that they will have the opportunity of vocational preparation and the job prospects which follow from that.

LINKED ASSISTANCE – JOBS AFTER TRAINING

Some unemployed young people will prefer shorter, less formal training courses, particularly where these are provided by community based organisations, such as SkillShare. These organisations are able to combine vocational training with personal support, counselling and motivational activities which develop the confidence and the personal skills and attributes of unemployed young people. They also maintain close links with local employers.

Evaluations of SkillShare have shown it to be one of the most effective programs for assisting disadvantaged job seekers. Measures included in this package will increase both the size and the effectiveness of SkillShare.

Around 130 Youth Units will be established in regions of particularly high levels of youth unemployment. This will allow SkillShare projects to provide training and support services to more unemployed young people. Further, the Youth Units will develop even closer links with local employers and the community so as to tailor training to the needs of employers and to identify on-going work experience and job placements.

To further improve the employment outcomes from short term vocational training, such as that provided by SkillShare and JOBTRAIN, increased emphasis will be placed on linking training and wage subsidies by providing participants with a JOBSTART card at the completion of their course. This approach of training linked to a job prospect was advocated in a number of the submissions prepared by participants for the National Meeting, including ACOSS.

The Government will create an additional 15,800 Linked Assistance places for young people in 1993. The estimated cost of this measure is $107.8 million over three years.
ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES

Significantly, structured training arrangements, which combine employment and off-the-job training, offer both a rewarding career path and protection against unemployment. It is also part of the Government's commitment to ensure that a young person's teenage years are seen as a period of vocational preparation.

Career Start Traineeships

Today the Government is announcing a new Career Start Traineeship which will provide jobs and training for many young people, including those who currently face the most difficulties in the labour market.

The scheme will assist early school leavers who have among the highest rates of unemployment.

The scheme allows for longer periods of off-the-job training so that the young people can catch up on the more general skills which they have missed out on at school. Without these skills, early school leavers will find it increasingly difficult to keep pace with the requirements of technological and industrial change.

The length of the traineeship and the time spent in off-the-job training will vary with the level of schooling completed.

Wages will be based on hourly award rates for time spent on the job. The Government will guarantee a minimum rate of $125 a week for those under 18 years, and $150 a week for those aged 18 years or over. More details are set out in the second half of this Statement.

Critically, the ACTU has agreed to a single Federal award to cover the Career Start Traineeships.

The Government will provide generous subsidies to employers to help ensure their participation even during the current labour market downturn.

The Career Start Traineeship offers more than a quick response to young people's unemployment. At the same time it will build a solid base for the upgrading of skills. It provides attractive and flexible training arrangements for young people and employers.

Increased Employer Subsidies for Apprentices and Trainees

As a short term measure, the Government will increase the subsidy paid to employers of trainees to a total of $3000 for each additional trainee hired over their 30 June 1992 level. This will apply to trainees involved in the Australian
Traineeship System (ATS), Career Start Traineeships, and the Australian Vocational Certificate (Carmichael) pilots.

These subsidies, together with the increased training flexibility involved in the Career Start Traineeships and Australian Vocational Certificate pilots, will provide a strong incentive to employers to create additional traineeship positions.

The Government has allocated funding for approximately 10,500 trainees under this measure. However, a number of delegates at the National Meeting were of the view that many more trainee positions could be created. The Government will therefore provide further funding if there is additional employer demand for trainees.

In addition, the Government will extend the increased subsidy rate paid to employers of apprentices and ATS trainees outlined in 'One Nation'. In 'One Nation', the subsidy for all ATS trainees was increased from $1000 to $2000, while employers received $5000 for each additional first year apprentice indentured. This measure has already succeeded in bringing commencements back towards their levels for the same period in 1991, and its continuation will assist increased recruitment. It is expected that about 9,000 young people will be assisted by this measure in 1993.

**Group Training Schemes**

Group apprentice training schemes are important in expanding structured work-based training for young people. A recent review of group training schemes found them successful in opening up training opportunities among the smaller employers and at ensuring that the smaller size of the firm is not a disadvantage in achieving training outcomes. Employers who participate in group schemes do so because the schemes allow them to show commitment to training whilst recognising the constraints that the small size of their enterprise impose upon their capacity to offer young people a long term employment contract.

The group training network is comprised of over 100 group training companies in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. The companies have a network base of some 22,000 host employers across all States and Territories. Supporting the schemes is a good way to deliver assistance across Australia.

The Government will therefore introduce a special incentive payment of $3000 over two years for all new group training apprentices indentured after 1 July 1992. Funding will also be provided for innovative projects employing groups of apprentices on housing and construction projects, as well as in tourism and hospitality. Up to 20 projects in the housing and construction area will employ apprentices, including out-of-work apprentices, in cooperative ventures with the housing industry for the construction of low cost housing. Around 3,500 group apprentices are expected to be assisted under these measures.
Traineeships in the Australian Public Service

The Commonwealth will also increase its intake of trainees under the Australian Traineeship System (ATS) next year. The Department of Social Security will provide ATS opportunities to an additional 1,000 teenagers and the Department of Employment, Education and Training will offer an additional 500 positions in 1993. These positions will be located throughout Australia, in regional centres as well as capital cities. The traineeships will provide career paths for young people. All Commonwealth Departments will be required to have at least 25 per cent of their base grade intake comprising ATS trainees. This will equate to an extra 150 trainee positions in 1993.

PRE- VOCATIONAL COURSES

The diversity of needs of young Australians requires measures which go beyond improving apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities. There is a clear need for other formal training opportunities.

In 1991–92 and 1992–93 the Government committed additional assistance to TAFE for pre-vocational courses aimed at school leavers. The bulk of the 1992–93 assistance will be undertaken in the second semester of 1992. The Government is now committed to further assistance in 1993, involving 6,000 full-time pre-vocational places in each semester. This will be provided at TAFE colleges or other providers of accredited pre-vocational courses. Under this initiative young people will continue to be provided with the valuable option of full-time study to prepare them for the skilled labour force.

There are three broad types of pre-vocational courses to assist young people. There are those that are virtually pre-requisites for skilled employment, such as keyboard skills. Others add to the individual’s skills portfolio to increase their chances of obtaining employment in a competitive labour market. Jobs in the hospitality industry are an example; although study is not essential to get a job, it assists in the competition for a job. A final set of courses articulate with mainstream awards and often help accelerate the time taken to achieve formal qualifications. A pre-apprenticeship course, for example, reduces the total time required to attain tradesperson status. This range of pre-vocational courses has been supported by community groups as an important way of giving unemployed young people access to valuable vocational preparation.

LANDCARE AND ENVIRONMENT ACTION PROGRAM

In developing its response to youth unemployment, the Government was aware of the need for a broad range of measures to cater for the diverse background and interests of young people.

Around half of the unemployed young people searching for full-time work are looking for their first job. They have not yet had the opportunity to gain work
experience and develop good work habits. Yet employers place a strong emphasis on past experience when hiring workers.

In addition, some young people have not had positive experiences at school and are not ready for more formal training.

The Government has been especially mindful that, in developing measures to assist young people, there is considerable scope both for the generation of more jobs and for attention to major national problems such as land and environmental degradation.

Land degradation has been identified as a significant national problem. Agricultural land is lost each year because of soil salinisation and soil erosion.

At the National Meeting on 22 July, delegates raised the option of young people working on conservation and landcare projects. The National Farmers' Federation and the Australian Conservation Foundation gave strong support to the idea, emphasising the long-term benefits for Australia. It is also similar to Archbishop Hollingworth's proposal of a scheme of national community service 'Serving Australia'.

The Government has, therefore, decided to introduce a Landcare and Environment Action Program to address some of these problems, as well as providing young people with direct hands-on work experience and training.

The National Farmers' Federation estimates that 5,000 places could be created reasonably quickly and more over the longer term. State Governments and regional bodies will be funded for projects initially involving up to 6,000 young unemployed persons in 1992–93 and 6,500 in 1993–94. The Government is keen to do more. If demand exceeds the 6,000 places in 1992–93, the Government will fund more places.

Participants will receive an allowance of $125 per week for 16–17 year olds and $150 per week for 18–20 year olds. Ancillary allowances will also be available in certain circumstances to meet special costs. It is envisaged that not less than 25 per cent of the participant's time will be spent in structured training. The Landcare and Environment Action Program will cost almost $135.4 million over the period 1992–93 to 1994–95.

The Government sees this as an ideal opportunity to encourage young women into an area where they have not traditionally worked. We will be aiming to achieve equal access for young men and women into this program.

ASSISTANCE TO HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

Delegates at the National Meeting, particularly the young people, urged that homeless young people not be overlooked when considering training and
employment opportunities. Homelessness and unemployment are closely linked. Homeless young people face disadvantage and hardship not just in finding employment, but in staying on in education and obtaining secure accommodation. They need a range of assistance and experience to make the transition into employment.

In designing an employment program to assist homeless young people, the Government was very impressed by the work being done by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Bodyshop and the initiatives shown by other companies such as Esprit. The scheme pioneered by the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Bodyshop offers homeless young people an innovative, coherent approach that works. It combines employment and TAFE training (through a traineeship) with personal support and assistance in finding accommodation. It is a model firmly built on the kind of commitment shown at the National Meeting.

This is but one good way of ensuring these young people are not left behind in life. But other ways will work in different circumstances. The Government will fund a series of projects which trial ways of linking accommodation and personal support with training, work experience and employment for homeless young people. The program will allow for flexibility and innovation to determine the most effective approaches.

The Government seeks the interest of community organisations who have the confidence of young homeless people, have skills in project co-ordination and who can forge good links with employers to be project managers.

Funding of $5 million will be provided in 1992–93 and in 1993–94 for approximately 30 services in areas of high youth unemployment, assisting about 2,000 homeless young people. The projects will be evaluated to determine how best to help homeless young people into permanent employment, further education or training and secure accommodation.

**YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS**

Young Australians who live in rural and remote areas face particular difficulties. They often have much fewer employment opportunities and lack access to training facilities important for vocational education.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in rural and remote areas have added difficulties. The Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody observed that 'mainstream' labour market programs often fail to meet the quite distinct and pressing employment and training needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The Government is strongly committed to the maintenance of specially targeted programs such as the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) and the Training for Aboriginals Program (TAP).
The Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody includes a five year package of measures, costing $54 million, to assist Aboriginal young people. It includes a Young Person's Employment Program providing work placements and linked, where possible, to TAFE training.

But it is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and other young people living in rural and remote areas do not miss out on the opportunities which will flow from this package of measures. The initiatives in the package must assist young people right across Australia.

To ensure this, the Government has called for a report by the end of November on how best to deliver the initiatives to young people in regional and remote Australia. The report will identify gaps in service delivery and facilities and include recommendations on how to facilitate and coordinate the provision of education, training and employment services.

The preparation of the report will be guided by a steering committee comprising relevant Commonwealth departments, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, the Office of Northern Development, State and Territory representatives and a representative of the Australian Youth Policy and Action Coalition.

The Government is particularly concerned that the major reforms to entry-level training proposed in the Carmichael Report are available to young people in rural and remote areas. It will be a challenge to ensure this, particularly in remote areas where there is a lack of educational facilities. The Government will pilot the Carmichael proposals in a remote area to identify the difficulties and test ways around them.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Young people with a disability must gain their share of training and employment opportunities.

In the past, young people with a disability had access to limited employment opportunities.

The Disability Reform Package announced in the 1990–91 Budget was a significant breakthrough.

To further support that package, progress has been made since then on developing revised wage setting arrangements for people with a disability and in assessing the extra costs people with a disability face in taking up employment and training.

A wage setting system comprising three essential elements – wage setting, workplace support and income support – has been developed.
The Government has endorsed the continuation of negotiations with key bodies to gain agreement on three elements so that the revised arrangements can be progressed.

A fair and equitable system of skills and productivity based wages is the key to breaking down barriers to employment of young people with a disability, enabling them access to the same rights and conditions as other workers.

To encourage employers to take on people with a disability, the Government provides higher wage subsidies. For example, as outlined earlier, this package of measures includes an increased subsidy of $3,000 for each additional trainee hired over the June 1992 level. For a trainee with a disability, the subsidy will be $4,000.

Young people with a disability face extra costs looking for work or taking up education or employment. The Government is considering this issue and measures will be announced in the Budget.

AUSTRALIAN YOUTH INITIATIVES GRANTS

The Government acknowledges that the community has a lot to offer in developing solutions to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people.

The Australian Youth Initiatives Grants Program funds local organisations to develop and provide services which deal with the specific problems experienced by disadvantaged young people. The level of effectiveness is further enhanced by the involvement of young people in the development of solutions.

Programs already funded in 1991–92 are providing services to disadvantaged young people who are faced with complex problems of homelessness, family breakdown, exiting juvenile institutions and cultural barriers. These are the young people most at risk of not participating in employment or formal training. This program provides vital support to ensure that they do make a successful transition into further education and training and worthwhile employment.

The Government has decided to expand the program by $2.9 million over the period 1992–93 to 1994–95, which will provide increased opportunities for specialist assistance for long term unemployed young people.

INCOME SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

In response to problems raised by a number of delegates at the National Meeting, the Government is announcing today initiatives to support and simplify income support arrangements for young unemployed people.
There will be significant changes to current arrangements under which people under 21 may be required to serve a 13 week education leaver deferment period (ELDP) after leaving education and registering as unemployed with the CES.

From December this year, eligibility for Job Search Allowance (JSA) for young people leaving school will commence 13 weeks after the date of leaving school or from 15 February in the subsequent year, whichever is earlier. The new arrangements will prevent young school leavers who fail to claim income support as soon as they leave school from being disadvantaged because they have either been poorly informed or have been unable to gain access to expected education places.

Some 6,500 young school leavers are expected to benefit from this provision in 1992–93, at an estimated cost of $1.4 million.

Another change in the rules will allow the ELDP to be waived for anyone who was previously on income support and has needed to reclaim within 12 months of ceasing to receive payment. In particular, this will ensure that long-term unemployed young people will be able to accept offers of AUSTUDY courses of between 6 and 12 months duration without facing the potential disincentive of having to go without income if they do not find a job at the end of the course.

It is estimated that some 300 young people will benefit from these arrangements in 1992–93 at a cost of $0.2 million.

Further modifications will allow part-time or casual hours worked since leaving education to be converted to a full-time equivalent, based on a 35 hour week. Currently only periods of full-time employment of at least one week's duration reduce the ELDP.

Some 2,000 young people with part-time or casual employment histories are expected to benefit, at an estimated cost of $1.4 million in 1992–93.

New arrangements from November 1992 will enable young people who currently qualify for payment of special benefit during the ELDP on hardship grounds to have the deferment period waived. These young people will gain immediate access to JSA or Sickness Allowance (SA).

It is estimated that some 24,600 education leavers will be assisted by this initiative in 1992–93.

In recognition of the difficulty young people face in finding full-time employment, a new initiative from March 1993 will modify the work history requirement for 15 year old JSA/SA claimants to accept 13 weeks registration with the CES as unemployed and seeking full-time work as fulfilment of the requirement.
This initiative is expected to assist some 800 young people, at a cost of $0.3 million in 1992–93.

From March 1993, income support recipients aged under 18 years and living away from home without parental support will benefit from a reduction from 26 weeks to 18 weeks in the time required for them to have lived away from home before becoming eligible for the higher independent rate of payment.

Some 2,100 young people are expected to benefit from this provision over the course of a full year, at a cost in 1992–93 of $0.4 million.
REFORM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

On 20 July 1992, a background statement was issued setting out a framework for understanding and tackling the issues surrounding the employment and training of young people, including the problem of youth unemployment.

The background statement outlined the dramatic changes in the education and employment of young people over the last thirty years. These changes are a response primarily to changes in technology, in the way in which work is organised and in the industrial structure of the economy.

They highlight the importance of a highly skilled workforce able to implement and adapt new technologies and to adjust positively to change.

The attitude that there are some jobs which require minimal or no training represents a cruel betrayal. It totally fails to recognise the changes which are occurring and which will continue to occur. Indeed our future as a nation largely depends upon our skills and adaptability.

As the statement concluded: "We need our young people to become our brightest and best workers, capable of mastering new technologies and applying them in innovative ways which will give themselves and Australian industry an edge. To meet this challenge we must now view the later teenage years as a period of vocational preparation."

This view was unanimously endorsed at the National Meeting. There was also strong support for reform of vocational education and training outlined by the Government which will be necessary to equip young people with the knowledge and proficiency in key employment competencies and specific vocational skills to find interesting work and to upgrade their skills throughout their working lives.

The reform of vocational education and training has two core elements: the establishment of a national vocational education and training system; and reform of entry-level training arrangements.

A NATIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

The historic Commonwealth-State/Territory agreement on the establishment of a new national vocational education and training system announced on 21 July 1992 will deliver quality training programs that better meet the needs and priorities of industry and which are recognised across the country. It will assist in the development of an effective training market that provides improved opportunities, especially for school leavers. It will also improve the links between TAFE and schools on the one hand, and higher education on the other.
A key feature of the new arrangements will be agreed goals, objectives and priorities for the national training system, established through a Ministerial Council. The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) will plan and fund the national vocational training system and provide related policy advice to the Council. Implementation of strategic plans will be executed by State Training Agencies, consistent with a national strategic plan developed with direct input from industry. The Board of ANTA will comprise acknowledged independent experts with a strong industry representation.

The States and the Commonwealth will jointly fund the national training system through ANTA. States will at least maintain their effort for vocational education and training on an ongoing basis. Any State which is demonstrably underachieving in this area would increase its effort to an agreed level. In this context, the Commonwealth and States are committed to the development of agreed outcomes measures of effort for agreement by the commencement of 1993.

The Commonwealth will maintain its current level of financial support for vocational education and training, and will add the $720 million growth funding announced in 'One Nation'. All growth funding for 1993 will be allocated on a proportional basis in accordance with relevant population shares.

For 1994 and 1995, 80 per cent of cumulative growth funds will be allocated on the same basis, with the balance to be allocated by the Ministerial Council on the recommendation of ANTA having regard to assessed performance against agreed objectives and other relevant factors.

These new arrangements will provide stable and assured funding for vocational education and training and enable a major expansion and upgrading of the system to the benefit of our young people.

Transitional arrangements, including provision for an interim Board of the ANTA, will be determined by the Ministerial Council by 1 September 1992.

The Commonwealth has agreed to meet the running costs of ANTA, and the level of funding will be determined before it commences in 1994.

REFORM OF ENTRY LEVEL TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

As outlined in the background statement of 20 July, the Report of the Employment and Skills Formation Council provides an approach to reform of entry-level training which has been broadly endorsed by governments, unions and business.

The Report, known as the Carmichael Report, outlines a simpler and more coherent system of entry level training which is based on competency rather than time served; which builds on the strengths of current training arrangements, while
discarding their inefficiencies and rigidities; is flexible with an expanded range of options; and is relevant to and substantially delivered by industry.

The Report recommends that distinct pathways be developed between school and work with each pathway giving students the opportunity to acquire the knowledge which all young people need to participate effectively in life and the workplace.

The Report also proposes a new approach to training wages and allowances. Unlike youth wages, which are based solely on age, trainee wages would be based on the level of competency attained, the amount of time spent on-the-job in structured training or productive work and the value of the competencies demonstrated by the trainee on-the-job.

This new proposed system offers many benefits to young people. More flexible pathways and a broad industry coverage would ensure access to vocational preparation, even for those who have traditionally missed out, namely young women and young people who leave school early. Accredited training would guarantee that skills acquired would be widely recognised and transferable. The shift to competency based training would mean that the length of training reflected the abilities and prior learning of the individual. Finally, the close involvement of industry in developing and implementing the training would mean that young people would be in strong demand because their training would reflect employment opportunities and the needs of industry.

The National Meeting also welcomed the approach provided by the Carmichael Report and urged the Government to fast track the pilots which will test the new approach.

The Government will provide a total of some $43.6 million over three years to develop the infrastructure essential to underpin the changeover to the Australian Vocational Certificate (AVC) training system.

Developmental funding will allow for:

- development of the competency-based system of training;
- assistance in the development of industry training plans;
- expansion of assistance to industry to facilitate the changeover to the new system;
- development of the capacity of Group Training Companies to broker the provision of work experience and training opportunities in all vocational pathways; and
- a contribution toward the professional development of teachers and trainers in the delivery of vocational competencies in the training sector, with particular
focus at this stage on the TAFE and training sector. The needs of schools in this area will be considered when Governments have received the report of the Mayer Committee developing the concept of key employment related competencies.

Resources will also be provided for the pilot projects which will, in most cases, entail a staged or progressive implementation of the new arrangements. Key features that will be progressively implemented are:

- more flexible combinations of structured training and work experience in school, TAFE and work-based training;

- attention to general education, as well as vocational training, to ensure that young people, particularly those who have not completed Year 12, are better placed to play their part in the skilled workforce;

- change to competency-based training standards and curriculum and a shift away from time serving as a basis of duration of a training program; and

- changes to a form of remuneration where pay is based on competency achieved and applied rather than age of the trainee.

In many cases, some developmental work and industrial negotiation will be involved before pilots can start to place young people in training positions.

The Government is committed to funding all proposed pilots of the AVC that:

- can demonstrate quality;

- plan over time to fully implement the principles of AVC; and

- provide for co-ordination with relevant industry organisations and education and training authorities.

It was particularly pleasing to hear at the National Meeting the commitment of a number of delegates to participate in pilot arrangements, including representatives from BHP, Coles Myer, CRA and AMECON.

The Business Council of Australia has announced a project to develop an enterprise-based stream of the AVC.
Companies involved in that project are:

- AOTC Ltd
- BHP Company Ltd
- Coles Myer Ltd
- CRA Ltd
- Email Ltd
- Ford Motor Company of Australia Ltd
- General Motors-Holden's Automotive Ltd.
- James Hardie Industries Ltd
- McDonald's Australia Ltd
- Mobil Oil Australia Ltd
- North Broken Hill Peko Ltd
- Pasminco Ltd
- Qantas Airways Ltd
- SA Brewing Holdings Ltd
- Shell Australia Ltd
- W.D & H.O. Wills (Aust) Ltd

Expressions of interest have also been received from the Australian Chamber of Manufactures, the Chamber of Manufactures of New South Wales and the Master Builders' Construction and Housing Association Australia Inc.

For its part, the Government is looking at modifying existing arrangements in the Australian Public Service to provide more flexible and competency-based pathways for entry.

State government education and training authorities, in consultation with industry parties, are also actively reviewing the manner in which pilots can be implemented. A number of school systems are exploring curriculum offerings and combinations of part-time school and work experience, like the Training for Retail and Commerce (TRAC) program in the Hunter Valley devised by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum. Such proposals are well advanced in New South Wales and several other states.

The Government expects that a range of pilots will be developed over the next several months, with the assistance of Commonwealth funding. In conjunction with the more flexible traineeship arrangements discussed below, the Budget will make provision for 8,500 participants in these new programs through the course of 1993 with flexibility to provide additional funding in light of demand for places.

An objective in developing these new places will be to achieve equal opportunity for young women, who have traditionally missed out on structured entry level training.

AGREEMENT WITH THE ACTU TO FACILITATE TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Following discussion on the range of suggestions put forward at the National Meeting the Government and the ACTU have reached agreement on a number of matters which, with the support and participation of Australia's employers, will increase the range and flexibility of training and employment opportunities available to young people in Australia.
The matters we have agreed on are:

- the creation of a new Career Start Traineeship set up under a single Federal award;
- increased flexibility in the way apprenticeships are conducted; and
- a single national award (and equivalent State awards) covering JOBSKILLS and arrangements which will facilitate the operation and expansion of JOBTRAIN and SkillShare.

The Government will be taking up these matters as a high priority over the coming weeks to ensure that our plans for greatly expanded labour market programs are implemented immediately.

Career Start Traineeships

This new scheme builds on and enhances the existing Australian Traineeship System (ATS). It will provide a bridge that will enable the industrial parties to move from existing training arrangements to the AVC training system. It takes into account the proposals put to the Government by major employer organisations, and is based on proposals developed by the ACTU.

In many instances the Career Start Traineeship will form an integral part of the piloting of the AVC, allowing more flexible training arrangements as an interim step while competency-based training and wage structures are developed over the next few years.

The greatest asset of the new scheme is its flexibility. It will allow young people to move into the workforce while obtaining accredited training, with as much as 50 per cent of their time in training in their first year and 35 per cent of their time in training in their second year.

Wage rates will be based on the existing age-based wage rate in relevant awards paid for time spent on-the-job. The Government will guarantee a minimum rate of $125 per week for those under 18 years, in circumstances where the award-based component outlined above results in a figure less than that amount. Similarly, a minimum rate of $150 per week will be guaranteed for those aged 18 years and over. In nearly all cases earnings from time spent on the job will exceed these minimum levels. The minimum rates will be indexed. Employers of Career Start Trainees will receive subsidies to make the employment of trainees more attractive.

It is intended to set the Career Start Traineeship in place via a single Federal award as a model for common rule awards in each State. The terms of these awards have been agreed with the ACTU. This milestone change will enable speedy implementation of Career Start Traineeships across key industries.
The Government will be discussing this proposal with State and Territory governments and employer associations as a matter of priority in the coming weeks. The Government enjoins these bodies to support this important development in our vocational training arrangements.

**EXAMPLES OF WAGES UNDER THE CAREER START TRAINEESHIP**

- A 16 year old who has finished school at Year 10 and is employed in a Sydney retail store could undergo structured training for up to two years
  - in the first year this training could involve up to 50 per cent of the working week (ie. no more than 19 hours) and up to 35 per cent of the working week in the second year;
  - the award component of the training wage would be $92.30 per week in the first year;
  - the Government would meet the difference between this amount and $125 per week.
  - in the second year the training wage would be $144.00 per week.

- A 17 year old Victorian clerical worker with Year 11 could undergo up to 18 months structured training involving up to 35 per cent of the working week in the first year and 25 per cent of the working week in the following period:
  - during the first year the training wage would be $160.70 per week.
  - during the following six months the training wage would be $216.30 a week.

The foregoing examples represent the minimum rate an employer would be required to pay and does not prevent employers paying over award wages.

These examples apply to trainees at the age specified; the training wage would increase on each birthday, consistent with the relevant award.

The employers would be eligible for subsidies from the Government for each trainee.
Apprenticeships

The ACTU and key unions in the metals and building industries have agreed in principle to increase the flexibility in the way apprenticeships are organised.

Accelerated vocational training will now be able to be provided and apprentices who otherwise may have been terminated may complete vocational training without having the normal, accompanying on-the-job element.

This will mean that existing apprentices are more protected from redundancy than otherwise would be the case and, combined with the increased subsidies described above, should encourage employers to take on extra apprentices.

Jobskills Award

A further new single Federal award covering JOBSKILLS will enable the industrial parties to overcome problems associated with implementing this important scheme. This will mean that JOBSKILLS will be available to a greater number of unemployed in a wider range of regions.

The Government and the ACTU are also working together to resolve difficulties in implementing the work experience elements of JOBTRAIN and SkillShare to ensure that program participants can gain access to worthwhile work experience placements.

INCREASING SCHOOL RETENTION

The rapid increase in school retention to Year 12 since the early 1980s is a critical element in the strategy to improve the knowledge and skills of young people. Currently, about 70 per cent of young people complete secondary school. An improvement in the retention rate of young people from low socio-economic groups is important in preparing young people for vocational education.

The Government's Student at Risk program assist young people at risk of not completing secondary schooling. A recent evaluation has found the program very successful in identifying students at risk and encouraging their continued participation in schooling. It found that the students' self esteem, confidence and overall level of satisfaction with school had improved. It also improved the capacity of teachers and schools to assist these students.

The Government has decided to continue this program in government schools and extend it to non-government schools. It will provide $5.1 million to government schools in 1993 and subsequent years and $2.1 million to non-government schools from 1993.

The Government is also introducing a new program aimed at supporting families to keep their children at school. It has been impressed by the EDU-CATE
program run by the Smith Family in a number of States. This program assists some 800 at-risk secondary students by providing family counselling, support services and an incidentals grant payable for students until they turn 16 and become eligible for AUSTUDY.

Funding of $4.4 million will be provided over the period 1992–93 to 1994–95 for non-government welfare agencies on a dollar for dollar basis for similar projects. Government funds would be directed to family counselling and support services for at risk students. Around 3,300 students will be assisted up to the end of 1993.

LOCAL NETWORKING

The increase in school retention has meant a great change in the population of young people who are in the final years of high school. This calls for a re-examination of the curriculum, in particular strengthening of the links between school and work. The promotion of education/industry links is an important avenue for assisting young people to enter the workforce with appropriate skills and knowledge.

The Carmichael Report identified the critical role that local networking could play in sponsoring links between industry, education and training institutions. The fostering of these links will facilitate work experience, pathways into work based training, and career education at the local level. It will also encourage partnerships between institutions to better cater for the range of interests of students, links with industry and exchanges for staff development.

The Government will provide seed funding to pilot the sponsorship of industry/education network committees at a regional level.

Funding will be provided in the form of an establishment grant of $50,000 in the first year and $25,000 in the second, in expectation that the interested organisations would augment that funding and meet ongoing costs. Funding will cover 20 pilots.

It is expected that these committees will link with Group Training Schemes which are also being funded to assist in placements in work experience and vocational training in the work place.
CONCLUSION

The present high level of unemployment is a matter of grave national concern.

But it will take more than concern to solve the problem.

Like other countries, Australia is emerging from a recession. We are going through a period of adjustment to the way our business and industry is conducted. These are changes we must make if we are to be a successful and competitive economy capable of delivering prosperity and jobs in the future.

The Government's efforts are directed both at the immediate and long term necessities. It would be irresponsible and counter productive to sacrifice one for the other. We will not reach our goals for future generations of Australians if we do not make the present generation part of it.

This is a plan for the present and the future. It is a practical plan emerging from the three imperatives described by one senior business person at the National Meeting – that we be "flexible, productive and committed".

At that Meeting, and in the days since, we have seen increasingly widespread evidence that Australia is prepared to embrace these principles. We have seen it from the trade union movement, from business and from community groups. That spirit – to get on and solve our problems – should be reassuring to all Australians.

With this Statement, the Labor Government turns that resolution into action.
## ATTACHMENT A: SUMMARY OF MEASURES

### I: OUTLAY MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMARY OF MEASURES</th>
<th>Estimated Effect on Outlays</th>
<th>No. Assisted in 1993</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer to long-term unemployed young people - Accredited Training and JOBSTART card</td>
<td>$70.2</td>
<td>$127.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased funds for youth counselling services</td>
<td>$2.2</td>
<td>$1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded linked training and employment assistance</td>
<td>$33.5</td>
<td>$40.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased Traineeship incentives for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Career Start Traineeships and AVC pilot trainees</td>
<td>$34.2</td>
<td>$21.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>- additional ATS trainees</td>
<td>$11.0</td>
<td>$3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extension of apprenticeship and traineeship recruitment incentives</td>
<td>$10.1</td>
<td>$10.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special incentive payments for Group Training apprentices</td>
<td>$20.3</td>
<td>$8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased ATS trainees in the APS</td>
<td>$10.5</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-vocational courses for full-time students - AUSTUDY costs</td>
<td>$20.1</td>
<td>$21.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-vocational courses - AUSTUDY costs</td>
<td>$5.1</td>
<td>$5.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landcare and Environment Action Program</td>
<td>$50.7</td>
<td>$56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job placement and employment training for homeless and at-risk young people</td>
<td>$5.3</td>
<td>$5.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Youth Initiatives Grants (AYIG)</td>
<td>$0.9</td>
<td>$1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Leaver Deferment Period (ELDP) and income support arrangements</td>
<td>$3.7</td>
<td>$4.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funds for the implementation of Australian Vocational Certificate training system</td>
<td>$13.4</td>
<td>$18.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students at Risk (STAR) program</td>
<td>$3.6</td>
<td>$7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Counselling</td>
<td>$1.2</td>
<td>$2.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilot sponsorship of Local Industry/Education Network Committees</td>
<td>$1.2</td>
<td>$0.7</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$297.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>$334.7</strong></td>
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II: DESCRIPTION OF MEASURES

Offer to long term unemployed young people - Accredited Training and JOBSTART card

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<td>70.2</td>
<td>127.8</td>
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Provide access to a six month full-time accredited training course from a TAFE or other provider for all teenagers unemployed for 12 months or more who wish to accept them. Participants will receive Formal Training Assistance at JSA/NSA rates and incidental expenses. To improve their job prospects at the conclusion of the course participants would be entitled to receive a JOBSTART subsidy on employment.

Increased funds for youth counselling services

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In conjunction with measures to increase provision of linked training for long term unemployed persons, establish an advisory process, with referral to more intensive counselling, through Youth Access Centres using additional in-house and contract counsellors.

Expanded linked training and employment assistance

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Provide additional labour market program places targeted towards the teenage long term unemployed. To improve the job prospects of those who undertake short-term courses, this also provides access to a JOBSTART subsidy. This proposal includes funding for a further 9,300 JOBTRAIN and 6,500 SKILLSHARE places for young people in 1993.
Traineeship incentives for additional ATS trainees and AVC pilot and Career Start Traineeships

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<tr>
<td>Career Start/AVC Pilots</td>
<td>34.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATS trainees</td>
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Funds will be provided for employer subsidies of $3,000 for Career Start Traineeships and AVC trainees in pilot projects. Funds will cover costs of trainee income support arrangements which provide for a Commonwealth contribution to make up the difference between the wage received and minimum levels of $125 for 16-17 year olds and $150 for 18-20 year olds. Funds are also provided for off-the-job training costs, feasibility studies, development of training agreements, specific curricula, assessment and competency standards as well as monitoring and evaluation of pilot projects.

In addition the ATS recruitment incentive will be increased by a further $1000 to $3000 for additional trainees until 30 June 1993. ATS trainee numbers are estimated to increase by a net 2,000 in 1992-93 as a result of the increased incentive payment.

Extension of apprenticeship and traineeship recruitment incentives

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The recruitment incentive payment was increased to $3500 in the first year for additional apprentices and $2000 for Australian Trainees in the "One Nation" Statement. This measure extends the period for which the higher payment will be made available by six months from 31 December 1992 to 30 June 1993.
Special incentive payments for Group Training apprentices

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Introduce for 1992-93 a special incentive payment of $3000 (payment to be spread over two years) for all new group training apprentices indentured after 1 July 1992 (replacing the "One Nation" incentive payment). By enabling group training schemes to pass on the payment through discounted charge-out rates this will encourage small/medium size employers to host group training apprentices. Funds are also provided for the supplementation of the Innovative Project Program for group training schemes announced in the "One Nation" Statement. This will provide for up to 20 cooperative project ventures with the housing industry, a number of concerted recruitment campaigns for trainees in the hospitality and tourism sector, and pilot projects to place out-of-work apprentices in jobs.

Increased ATS trainees in the APS

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Increase the number of persons under 20 employed in the APS by increasing the number of ATS trainees to the target of at least 25% of base grade recruitment, supplemented by an additional 1,500 trainees in the Departments of Social Security and Employment, Education and Training.

Pre-vocational courses for full-time students

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Provide 6,000 additional places each semester in 1993 at TAFE colleges and through other providers for accredited full-time pre-vocational training.

Pre-vocational courses - AUSTUDY costs

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The creation of 6,000 additional training places at TAFE in both 1992-93 and 1993-94 will require increased expenditure on AUSTUDY.
Landcare and Environment Action Program

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Fund States and regional bodies for projects to provide training and work experience in land care and environmental protection, initially involving 6,000 young unemployed persons in 1993. Project sponsors will be required to contribute to project materials and be responsible for supervision and some post program support. Local bodies will also receive additional subsidies to assist in providing necessary infrastructure and support. Training will be a substantial component of the program and funds for training providers are included.

Job placement and employment training for homeless and at-risk young people

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Establish a pilot program to assist young homeless into employment by funding selected community based projects which link accommodation and personal support services with training, work experience and employment opportunities and involve a case work approach.

Australian Youth Initiatives Grants (AYIG)

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Increase funding for the AYIG program. This program addresses the gaps in service provision for disadvantaged young people through developing community support links between training and employment, facilitating alternative training possibilities and establishing locally based employment projects.
**Education Leaver Deferment Period (ELDP) and income support arrangements**

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Changes will be made to income support arrangements:

- From December 1992, JSA and Sickness Allowance claimants who leave secondary education will become eligible 13 weeks from the date of leaving or from 15 February in the subsequent year, whichever is earlier.

- The ELDP will be waived for previous income support recipients who return to income support within 12 months. Those who under current arrangements would receive Special Benefit during the ELDP will also have the deferment period waived.

- The ELDP will be reduced by taking account of any periods of paid part-time and casual work following the cessation of study. The reduction will be calculated by converting the number of hours worked to a full time equivalent based on a work week of 35 hours.

- From March 1993, 15 year old JSA/SA claimants will be able to include 13 weeks registration with the CES in the work history requirement for eligibility.

- From March 1993, income support recipients under 18 living away from home without parental support will be eligible for independent level support after 18 weeks rather than 26 weeks as at present.
Funds for implementation of Australian Vocational Certificate (AVC) training system

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<td>13.4</td>
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Provide funding for activities associated with implementing the AVC arrangements as proposed in the Employment and Skills Formation Council (Carmichael) Report on the Australian Vocational Certificate training system. Activities include development of industry training plans, competency standards, new curricula, assessment and certification arrangements, professional development for trainers and associated administrative support. Funds to develop arrangements for group training companies and the Australian Public Service are included. Additional resources, above those indicated, of $2m in 1992-93, $2.5m in 1993-94 and $3.1m in 1994-95 will be allocated from existing programs to this area.

Students at Risk (STAR) program

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Continue the STAR program in government schools and extend to non-government schools. The STAR program allows schools to assist students who are at risk of not completing secondary schooling through a range of school based projects incorporating approaches such as integration of work, TAFE and school, and skill development in communication, literacy and numeracy.

Education Counselling

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Provide funding to the non-government welfare sector on a matching basis for a program to provide at-risk secondary students and their families with counselling and support services which advise parents on ways to further their child’s educational progress and assist in the family’s dealings with their school.
Pilot sponsorship of Local Industry/Education Network Committees

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Establish 20 co-ordinating committees across Australia to pilot arrangements which improve the linkages between local industry and education such as educational institution/business partnerships, work experience, entry-level training, teacher placement in industry programs and local career education.
National Employment and Training Plan for Young Australians