

Nelson Regional Population Strategy:
Economic Opportunities Ageing Presents
to the Region

and

Ways to Address the Lack of
Employment Opportunities for Young
People

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1 Executive Summary

Purpose of this document

Like other developed countries, New Zealand's population dynamics are changing and Nelson-Tasman is no exception. The effects of an ageing population are many and varied; this document is intended to address two key points:

- what economic opportunities are presented by an ageing population in this region
- ways to address the lack of employment opportunities for young people in this region

The intention is to highlight dynamics regarding older and younger populations in Nelson-Tasman, and to provide a summary of opportunities and key recommendations. This document is produced with the intention to provide objective advice to Council, and is not shaped by any particular membership group or predetermined goals.

Effects of an ageing population

The concept of an ageing population is well understood. Older people will form a much larger proportion of the total population than they do at present, and these older people will live longer beyond retirement age than previous generations have done. There will be fewer young people to take part in the workforce and to support older people.

Compared to other New Zealand regions Nelson-Tasman is ageing faster and its median age is higher. By 2031 Statistics NZ predicts over a quarter of all people living in Nelson city area will be aged 65 or older i.e. the number of over 65s in Nelson is expected to increase from 14% to 26% of the total population. Tasman is set to see an even larger increase, from 14% to 29%.

Key areas of impact will be:

- Significant increase in demand for aged residential care, unless in-home alternatives can be found. Dementia care is a particular area of concern.
- Longer duration of active older age, as the health and mobility of over 65s continues to improve.
- Increased number of households fuelling demand for housing. Complexities with the passing on of housing wealth as active retirement and/or aged care may need to be funded by reverse mortgages / equity release products.
- Ageing of the workforce requiring changes to job design, elimination of ageism as well as an increase in workforce participation rates and later retirement age - Nelson-Tasman having the lowest participation rate in New Zealand for older workers.
- Increased productivity per capita will be needed, demanding a higher-skilled workforce than at present.
- Ageing occupations: some sectors such as Aged Care and Agriculture have an over-representation of older workers, who will all retire at around the same time.

- Competition for staff leading to increased wages and higher prices: depending on the price elasticity of demand for products and services, some sectors will have difficulties balancing costs and sales.
- Changing demographics will affect consumption patterns, requiring businesses to adapt.
- Changes to travel patterns and transportation needs.
- Increased need for post-school education and training, yet a potential shortage of educators.

Economic opportunities

If appropriate strategies are put in place, there are substantial economic opportunities to be realised.

- Significant growth in consumption among older consumers - from \$11 billion in 2011 to \$45 billion plus in 2051.
- New markets for age-specific items such as specialist home modifications, accessible technology or in-home services such as gardening.
- Financial products such as investment vehicles or equity release products.
- Business to business services in marketing, design, market research and job design.
- Additional aged care facilities - one 80-bed facility could contribute up to \$78 million over ten years.
- Increased workforce participation by older people increases fiscal contribution, reduces welfare dependency and improves wellbeing.
- Education and training provision.

Employment opportunities for young people

Nelson-Tasman is aware of the importance of getting young people into the workforce. In the face of a declining population of young people, it is even more important to ensure that they are fully engaged in working life.

If young people are to benefit from the increased competition among employers for staff, it is essential that they are properly equipped. Areas of focus are:

- Continuous monitoring of school leavers to ensure they do not “fall through the cracks”.
- Job seeking skills: cv preparation, interview skills, personal presentation and workplace behaviour.
- Access to affordable training beyond 16-17 years of age.
- Promotion of industry sectors that at present do not attract young people.
- General communication and customer services skills.
- Literacy and numeracy.
- Initiative and can-do attitude.
- Good work habits and an appreciation of the “real world”.
- Longevity of employment - staying in the job for longer.

2 Ageing Population: Economic Opportunities Presented to the Nelson-Tasman Region

The increasing ageing of the region's population can offer new opportunities, rather than be a problem.

Consumption in General

The mature consumer market is predicted to be the only growth market in terms of demography, with younger market segments likely to remain static or shrink. Not only will the baby boomer generation increase the population over 65, they will command more resources than older people in the past. This represents significant new opportunities for businesses that can recognise and adapt to the changing face of this market.

So whilst an ageing population will certainly bring increased demand for the goods and services most immediately associated with older people, such as health care, aged care and home support products and services, it is likely that new and enlarged markets will also emerge for a wide range of consumer goods and services.

The projected income (after tax) available to older people for expenditure is expected to rise from about \$11 billion in 2011 to over \$45 billion by 2051. (*MSD, Office for Senior Citizens, 2012*).

Housing

There is expected to be a substantial increase in the number of households by 2031 (due to the trend for smaller households), as well as in the demand for retirement homes. The building, civil engineering and trades industries are facing significant opportunities for growth in a number of areas:

- New home building
- Infrastructure serving new subdivisions
- Age-friendly features such as assistive technology, home modifications, mobility support
- Economic heating and insulation solutions
- Security features
- Low maintenance designs and products

More households will mean more goods and services are needed too:

- Gardeners
- Home handyman services
- Trade services such as plumbers and electricians
- Cleaning and home help services
- House-related consumer goods, from carpets to white goods

There is some concern around the impact of elderly persons using the equity in their homes to fund retirement and/or residential care (see below). A 2005 paper by BERL¹ acknowledged potential problems insofar as the acquisition of inheritance plays a large part in the next generation being able to afford their own home. If home ownership therefore declines over time, it poses questions about how future generations of retirees will cope without such stored wealth.

Financial Products

Trustworthy investment instruments will also find a ready market in older people, some of whom may have seen savings eroded in the global financial recession. There are numerous opportunities for businesses and products to help manage baby boomers' savings. (*MSD 2011*).

As people live longer there is likely to be an increased need for people to access the stored wealth of equity in their homes, either because superannuation products are stretched more thinly, or because living actively for longer means more money is needed to live life to the full, enjoying holidays for example. Thus there will be increased demand for reverse mortgages and similar products to fund retirement activity as well as to fund aged residential care.

Technology

Baby boomers are embracing new technology. In New Zealand in 2006, 59 per cent of those aged 55–64 and 41 per cent of those aged 65–69 were internet users, rising to 74 per cent and 61 per cent respectively by 2009. (*MSD 2011*). Products and services that make computers and other devices more accessible may find a ready market.

Business-to-Business Services

Marketing, design, and social research services [will be needed] to help businesses target their products and services to the changing needs of the growing mature consumer market. Savvy businesses will ensure mature consumers are well served. (*MSD 2011*).

There is likely to be a need for consultants to go into a business and advise how jobs and environments can be restructured in order to suit older workers.

Opportunities from Aged Care Provision and Health Care

Sectors such as residential care services and hospital services will be more important to the New Zealand economy as the population ages, with the estimated increase of between 37% nationally in the number of aged care residents from 2008 to 2026. Caring services for this population group is in itself an opportunity for income generation and employment through provision of support and aged residential care facilities.

¹ *Intergenerational and Interfamilial Transfers of Wealth and Housing : Business and Economic Research Limited for the Centre for Housing Research, March 2005*

Economic Contribution of Aged Care Facilities : In 2011 a report was commissioned by the NZ Aged Care Association, exploring the financial value of building an aged care facility of 80 beds (the most efficient size of facility). Two models were used: a greenfield urban site and a rural site.

The models estimate that benefits to a region over a ten year period include:

- economic output by up to \$78 million (in present value terms)
- up to 750 man-years of employment over a ten year period.
- Increase in GDP by \$32-36 million
- Increase in household incomes by about \$16-18 million

NZACA 2011 ²

The NMDHB area currently has 27 licensed establishments providing 922 beds. Whilst a direct extrapolation cannot be made, (there are no available figures on bed numbers for 2008 to which to apply the projected increase of 37% in demand), nevertheless it is clear that the NMDHB area would be facing a substantial need for additional facilities.

Employment in Aged Care Facilities: Projected demand for the different occupations is shown below:

Projected Demand for NZ Residential Care Workforce (FTEs)

Year	Facility Manager		Nurse		Caregivers		Therapists		Non-care		Total	
	Low	High	low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
2008	599	599	3,440	4,151	11,817	12,831	809	1,074	4,214	5,351	20,870	24,005
2011	576	608	3,516	4,371	11,749	13,316	803	1,116	4,018	5,445	20,662	24,858
2016	573	715	3,789	5,161	12,241	15,731	833	1,322	3,936	6,394	21,372	29,323
2021	687	835	4,469	6,021	14,584	18,400	995	1,549	4,705	7,462	25,441	34,268
2026	873	1,027	5,559	7,367	18,347	22,587	1,253	1,902	5,981	9,158	32,013	42,042

“The projection shows workforce demand will remain stable or grow slowly for the next five years [from 2010] and then grow rapidly – by between 50% and 75% on an FTE basis (or by 10,000 FTEs to 15,000 FTEs) by 2026.” (Grant Thornton 2010).

These figures, whilst representing challenges in recruiting and retaining extra staff, nevertheless represent opportunities both in terms of jobs, both skilled and unskilled, and in terms of training provision.

There will also be a concurrent increase in demand for non-medical staff and consultants. The Eldernet website ³ identifies a number of occupations that are featured in the details of various rest homes, such as Activities Coordinator, Occupational Therapist, Diversional Therapist, Hairdresser, Dietician etc.

² The Economic Impact of Aged Care Facilities in New Zealand, NZ Aged Care Association, COVEC June 2011.

³ www.eldernet.co.nz

Other services might include music therapists for Alzheimer’s patients, nutritionists, and specialist entertainers or fitness trainers.

Employment in Health Care: here will be an increased demand for General Practitioner services, community based long term care for the disabled and frail, nurses of all types, whilst at the same time the existing workforce in these areas is ageing and thus large numbers will retire at the same time. And competition from other countries wishing to attract New Zealand medical staff, already a problem, is expected to increase.

There is an opportunity therefore in the fields of recruitment and training to provide these staff that will be in such high demand.

Workforce Contribution of Older People

Because the ageing workforce is recognised as likely to lead to labour and skill shortages, the workforce contribution of older people will be the key to keeping New Zealand businesses operating at full potential. Despite the growing percentage of older people Nelson has the lowest number of workers in the 65+ age group of any region in New Zealand with no clear cause identified to date. *Nelson City Council 2009⁴ citing Statistics NZ, 2006 Census.*

At present this contribution is undervalued and under-used, and there is an opportunity now to influence the workforce participation rate of older workers. The retention of older workers for longer to offset the reduced numbers of younger people is seen as achievable given the projected improvements in life expectancy and health status. However employers and sectors that can accommodate the preferences of older workers will be more successful in retaining an adequate workforce so as to maintain business growth.

Findings from NCC research in 2009 were consistent with a 2009 MSD report.⁵, showing there were a range of factors people liked about work, with personal and social wellbeing issues featuring more commonly than economic reasons. The most common factor least liked by all ages and employment status groups about being in work was time commitment whilst the most important factor allowing older people to stay in work was health, particularly for those 60 to 69 years of age.

Successful employers will offer older workers the following:

- An egalitarian, non-discriminatory approach to recruitment

⁴ *Nelson City Council, Older Workers in Nelson, Results from a survey of attitudes of the over 50s toward work, November 2009. Citing Statistics NZ, 2006 Census.*

⁵ *Ministry of Social Development (2009) To Work or Not to Work? Findings from a survey of 65 year old New Zealanders.*

⁵ *Public Service Association “Working for Life” newsletter, March 2013.*

- Part time or reduced hours of work
- Flexible working and more leave options, especially for those caring for dependents such as an invalid partner
- Interesting work
- Reduced responsibility
- Less physically demanding and or stressful work
- A focus on skills and achievement rather than age
- Equal access to training and promotion
- Tailored training, for example to improve computer skills, or restructured training to accommodate the learning styles and entry skills of older persons
- Respect and a feeling of being valued, the opportunity to share knowledge, teach skills and mentor younger workers
- Flexible and consultative approach to retirement
- An inclusive and consultative approach to transitioning when the time comes to downscale work

Nelson-Tasman has no recorded employees aged 65+ in Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services, or the ICT sector. There may be an opportunity to target the employers in these sectors with an education campaign in order to avoid future problems with workforce.

Surveys of employment trends amongst old-age workers suggest that age discrimination may be present in the New Zealand labour market. A recent survey of workers over the age of 55 suggests that older workers are passed over for training and promotion on the basis of their age. (*Stephenson and Scobie 2002*). Employer concerns tended to be around wage demands, difficulties with technology, and skill base.

Opportunities in Education and Training

Aside from the specific areas of specialist health and aged care training, there will be a general need for upskilling to deliver the increases in productivity needed in order to maintain economic growth (as recognised by the Department of Labour in 2001), and the key to this will be education and training for all ages of worker, not just young persons.

“The need for older workers to be educated presents significant opportunities for business schools. Indeed, Wallace (1999) predicts “an explosion in retraining and relearning” which will offer “an opportunity for education entrepreneurs – to cater for adults in their prime working years, when they are run off their feet both at work and at home. The requirement is for concise learning packages that address peoples exact needs in as timely a fashion as possible. The issues of an ageing population also

open up significant opportunities for research in the business school. Employment relations, management and marketing issues are, perhaps, most obvious areas for research.” (Barrett 2010).⁶

Changes to ethnicity may also present opportunities for education and training. Currently Māori and Pacific Islanders are proportionately under-represented in tertiary education. The relative proportions of Māori and Pacific peoples for Nelson and Tasman are substantially lower than nationally, (Statistics NZ⁷), but that small proportion is set to increase substantially. In Nelson, of the 5,300 extra persons expected in the population by 2021, the Māori cohort of 800 persons represents 15% of the total increase - this is substantially higher than the prevailing 2006 census figure of 7% of the extant population. In Tasman the proportional impact is greater, with Māori expected to represent 38% of the increase in population as against an extant 9% in total.

Basic adult capability is also considered to be an issue and thus presents opportunities. “There remains a need to address an ongoing lack of basic skills among adults. Walker, Udy and Pole (1996) reported that the one in five New Zealanders operating at a highly effective level of literacy could manage abstract concepts and employ specialised knowledge in interpreting information...[and] one in five adults had poor literacy skills. More recently, the Minister for Education has claimed that “more than a million Kiwi adults” lack “the essential literacy and numeracy that they need” (Robinson, 2010). Thus, no more than 20 percent of the general adult population currently has the generic learning skills that a super-productive workforce might need. The challenge is exacerbated by the fact that older workers tend to have lower levels of educational attainment than younger workers (Davey, 2006).

⁶ *The demographic shockwave: How business schools can engage with an ageing population.* Dr Jonathan Barrett, School of Business, Open Polytechnic, 2010.

⁷ *Projected Ethnic Populations of Regional Council Areas, Medium Series, 1996-2021 (2006 base update) Statistics New Zealand.*

3 Addressing the Lack of Employment Opportunities for Young People

Apart from the simple need to maximise workforce participation generally, there is a particular concern regarding young people. With insufficient young people in employment, succession planning is jeopardised.

Why are Young People Unemployed?

Tania O'Donnell of Nelson Tasman Connections made the following observations:

- The extent to which schools teach job seeking and workplace skills is a matter for debate. There are guidelines but no prescribed curriculum.
- Some young people leave school with no knowledge of how to prepare a cv, interview skills or appropriate personal presentation. They can telephone Careers NZ or look at the website, but there is no one on one or face to face support available.
- Whilst there are good services available such as Gateway, Start and Trades Academies, these are generally aimed at 16-17 year olds. Once the young people reach 18 years of age, there is little or nothing available unless they can afford to pay for it themselves.
- Employers are put off employing young people because of issues like timekeeping, presentation and behaviour at work, use of cell phones and so on. Essentially employers do not see young people as being workplace-ready.
- Some employers, like orchard businesses, are unwilling to employ young people because they desire a stable workforce, employees who will return season after season. Young people tend not to see orchard work as a long-term prospect, instead viewing it as purely temporary seasonal work. This may be an issue with how the employers package the employee proposition.

Nelson Tasman Connections initiated a short survey⁸ of employers in order to learn about their experiences of employing youth who are under twenty years of age. The aim of the survey was to gauge positive and negative aspects of employing youth and to use the results to assist the Connections Steering Group in problem-solving the low regional youth employment rates. The survey obtained responses from 17 employers, completing in October 2012. The survey found the following key themes repeated when asking about employment of young people:

- Poor quality of applications, no covering letter, nothing much to show
- Poor personal presentation: bare feet, cap on backwards, baggy pants, poor personal hygiene, too much flesh on display, tattoos and piercings
- Bad timekeeping, absenteeism, excessive cell phone use

- Young people want results without putting the work in; expect rewards and seniority very early on
- Insufficient appreciation of the “real world” of work and what employers expect
- Tendency for young people to change jobs after a relatively short period of work, thus a perceived risk of employers not getting return on training investment, whether specific training such as apprenticeships, or general workplace training like health and safety

On a positive note however, the survey also showed that nearly three quarters of the respondents were impressed with the work ethic of young people that they did employ. The pros of employing young people included their youth and strength, keenness and ease of training, ability to undertake lower-skilled, monotonous tasks.

Most of these employers would give any young person employment if they were prepared to prove themselves through volunteer/work experience for a short period of time, subject to a soothing of concerns around health and safety issues and liability.

Whilst no specific studies are available that examine young persons’ perspective, the perception of youth workers is that young people feel unsupported and that they have nowhere to go for help in finding work.

Whilst young people may lack appropriate job seeking or interview skills, they nevertheless feel disheartened to be rejected, whether at interview stage or application stage. In many cases the young person has no idea why they were unsuccessful. In the Connections employer survey in 2012, whilst some employers indicated that they would give helpful feedback to unsuccessful candidates, others stated otherwise: either their rejection processes were automated and used form letters, or they were wary of engaging in dialogue for fear of unpleasant outcomes.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Economic Opportunities Presented by an Ageing Population

Realisation of the economic opportunities related to an older population is heavily dependent upon the workforce and economic contribution of older people. This will require a community context that is fully inclusive of older people, with particular emphasis on the following areas:

- the elimination of barriers to workforce participation, such as discrimination and job task difficulties
- access to learning, especially in information and communications technology

Recommendation 1.1: Use a combined regional approach.

Active ageing is core to any future policy developments. In the context of Nelson-Tasman the two population groups should not be considered as distinct groups but rather within a context which spans the industries and regional coverage that are driving the economy. Currently there are separate council approaches or policies regarding the ageing population.

Recommendation 1.2: Engage key stakeholders to develop a framework for addressing community and societal factors, with a view to the re-education of employers, recruitment agencies and older people themselves.

The challenge to address future social cohesion across generations cannot be met by public policy alone but will require private sector, service providers and a range of stakeholders to work collectively.

Recommendation 1.3: Assess the need for and provision of adult literacy education.

There is a perception within the Ministry of Education that this is a problem area for the future.

Recommendation 1.4: Promote mentoring both in the workplace and in education and training.

The qualifications, skills and experience of older people can be leveraged to assist younger adults across a range of sectors. There is also opportunity for mentoring as part of training and development so that skills and experience are incorporated into curriculum work place training. Experienced older business people can also share valuable skills and experience with younger business owners.

Recommendation 1.5: Work with training providers to restructure adult education and training programmes to be more accommodating of older people's home and work commitments. Education should include computer and communications literacy.

Recommendation 1.6: Engage with the construction industry and other agencies such as the DHB to promote awareness of what built-in and upgraded features older persons need in a home. Consider whether sufficient low-cost housing will be available.

Appropriate housing provision to meet the needs of older people should be noted in urban planning, and relevant information be made available to developers to assist in their preparing to provide accommodation that will meet needs. Furthermore consideration should be given to housing provision for younger persons, to stem the outward migration from the region.

Recommendation 1.7: Encourage the development of business to business services to advise businesses on how to restructure job roles to accommodate the older workforce.

Businesses need research that examines retention and recruitment issues, particularly including the effects of ongoing training on the retention of older workers.

Recommendation 1.8: Assess the need for more aged care facilities and ways to encourage development in the region. Work with the sector to develop strategies for recruitment and retention of staff.

The economic and employment opportunities that the provision of residential aged care offers the region can be leveraged. Challenges to operate these facilities lie with recruitment and retention of an appropriately skilled workforce. The sector currently offers on average below-median wages, high annual turnover, low qualification completion rates, and decreasing perception of service standards by those with direct experience of the facilities. Unless this changes there will be additional challenges in assuring this workforce into the future.

Recommendation 1.9: Develop business to business services that will help businesses to exploit the growing market for elder consumption.

Recommendation 1.10: Educate employers in how to attract and retain older workers, and how to make best use of their contribution. The low rate of older people in the region's workforce is a concern to address.

It must not be forgotten that many jobs that are available to older workers are low-level, boring and repetitive and are unlikely to entice older workers. Quality jobs are required, and this should be the objective of initiatives taken by employers and by governments. Older workers will leave bad jobs, as will workers of any age. (MSD 2006).⁹

Recommendation 1.11: Promote succession planning for employers.

"Many of the small and medium enterprises we spoke to, including migrant-owned businesses, are not formally networked to business agencies such as chambers of commerce or employers' associations. This means they are reliant on either informal sources or professional services for advice.

⁹ *Work in Later Life - Opportunity or Threat?* Judith Davey, Mary Davies, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, MSD March 2006. <http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/journals-and-magazines/social-policy-journal/spj27/work-in-later-life-opportunity-or-threat-27-pages20-37.html>

Age is a dominant anxiety in many businesses around New Zealand. We heard again and again in different industrial sectors and across the regions about the issues relating to an ageing workforce. Whether it be succession planning for small business owners, older truck drivers, mentoring schemes in factories, or how to manage transitions to retirement, the ageing demographic of New Zealand's labour market was firmly on the agenda. However, most businesses acknowledge they are neither actively planning for nor currently managing their ageing workforce." (*National Equal Opportunities Network*).¹⁰

Recommendation 1.12: Engage with vulnerable (ageing) industry sectors, and those with an absence of older workers, to develop workforce strategies.

For those sectors with ageing occupations, a number of issues need to be more fully understood in order to facilitate appropriate strategies to address workforce issues. With high representation in key driver sectors the skills and experience of these people are at risk of being lost.

In-depth analysis of the age structure of these occupations and its relationship to skill shortages is needed. Businesses will need support and a cohesive approach in order to gain full value from such studies.

Recommendation 1.13: There is a need to investigate the health status of older workers and its relationship to workforce participation over time. The role of cognitive functioning and the potential changes in cognitive status in late mid-life on work performance should be examined. Work-related stress issues facing the growing number of older workers and the health and functioning of 65+ aged workers and its relationship to continued workforce participation should be a focus of research. (*DoL 2007*).

Recommendation 1.14: Given the dramatic changes to the nature and make-up of New Zealand's workforce occasioned by population ageing, further investment needs to be made in research that reflects the increasing diversity of that workforce. These investigations should explore the unique work experiences of older women and Māori and Pacific peoples in particular. In addition, the response by employers to workforce changes needs to be systematically examined across a wide range of employing organisations. (*DoL 2007*).

Recommendation 1.15: There is a need to quantify the actual positive performance attributes of older workers, and identify the successful compensatory strategies used by older workers in response to declines in health and functioning. Focusing on employers and recruitment agencies, researchers can examine attitudes about the productivity of older workers and mature job seekers, and explore how these lead to discriminatory practices. (*DoL 2007*).

Recommendation 1.16: Factors that influence decisions taken by older workers about workforce participation and retirement can be tracked over time. This research should examine health and

¹⁰ *National Equal Opportunities Network*
<http://www.neon.org.nz/nationalconversationaboutwork/whatemployerstolduswhatnext/>

financial factors, along with work-related factors (e.g. job and training opportunities, work design) and family related factors (eg caregiving responsibilities, retirement intentions of other family members. (DoL 2007).

4.2 Employment Opportunities for Young People

Recommendation 2.1: All initiatives should follow a combined regional approach.

Key stakeholders across Nelson-Tasman should be engaged to develop appropriate workforce strategies to increase opportunities for young people. Representatives from key industries, employers, career advisers, schools, Connections, Councils, the Nelson Regional EDA, and young people will need to be involved. However successful employment outcomes will require initiatives to be industry advised and led.

Recommendation 2.2: Ensure that the region has an effective long-term programme for monitoring, tracking and gathering statistics on young people as regards their engagement in work, education and training.

It is essential that the region knows what is happening with its young people in order to determine the effectiveness of all the other initiatives.

Recommendation 2.3: Review the effectiveness of service delivery as regards the teaching of job seeking and workplace skills, and the availability of advice (including how to find the advice). Areas covered should include:

- cv preparation
- interview skills
- personal presentation and conduct in the workplace

Recommendation 2.4: Review whether and how young people can be equipped with the personal attributes that make workers attractive to employers:

- customer service skills – in person, on the phone, and online
- ability to work well in a team
- planning and organizational skills
- initiative and a can-do attitude
- problem-solving skills
- communication skills
- having a driver's licence

Recommendation 2.5: Assess the need for, and availability of, support services for 18 year olds and older to provide assistance in getting into employment, education or training.

Recommendation 2.6: Engage with employers who have a low rate of youth employment. Develop strategies to improve the attractiveness of different industry sectors as long-term prospects.

Recommendation 2.7: Capitalise on existing initiatives to improve basic literacy and numeracy. Consider also computer literacy e.g. Microsoft Office skills as opposed to handheld device apps.

Recommendation 2.8: Engage with employers to promote the provision of work experience, volunteering and other stepping stones to employment. Address barriers such as concerns around health and safety, legal liability etc. Include strategies for making young people aware of these opportunities.

A perceived risk factor for employers is that they will go through the recruitment process only to find after a short time that the young person's performance or conduct is not adequate. Volunteer and work experience options can lead to employment, and are a win-win for both young people and the employer.

Recommendation 2.9: Build on existing mentoring programmes, such as that operated by Rotary clubs. Harness the skills and experience of older people with a particular focus on employment opportunities and workplace skills.

Recommendation 2.10: Work with employers to develop initiatives to take the risk out of employing young people.

For jobs involving significant or costly training, there is a fear that the young person will not remain in the job long enough for the employer to receive a return on the training investment.