

Using games to help boost young workers' resilience

Young Victorian workers will soon be able to use their smartphones to help guide them through an increasingly turbulent job landscape as part of the Victorian Government's Tomorrow Me project.

Tomorrow Me is a new digital game experience to help young people transition from education to full time or secure employment. It is designed to counter the negative impact increased competition and an uncertain work future is having on young Victorians' mental wellbeing.

With support from VicHealth and Creative Victoria, Tomorrow Me will be created by game design agency Millipede with Education Services Australia and Foundation for Young Australians. It aims to provide young people with an interesting and positive way to reflect on their individual skills sets, review their employment options and remain resilient and positive while trying to get a job.

Research has shown:

- One in three adults aged 18-24 is looking for more work
- It takes the average student graduating from full-time study 4.7 years to secure full-time employment, compared to just one year in 1986
- Young Australians are particularly at risk of being exposed to poor working conditions such as low job control, low job security and high demands
- 42% of young workers are exposed to at least one job stressor
- Stress has been found to be the strongest link to mental health issues in young people.

Victorian Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley said young people are facing a more volatile work future than previous generations.

"The rise of automation, casualisation and globalisation is impacting young people and their mental wellbeing – particularly as they enter the workforce after finishing their studies," Minister Foley said.

"Almost 75 per cent of mental illness begins before 25 years of age, so it's crucial we work to build resilience and prevent mental health issues before they occur.

"This project is about equipping young people with the resilience to cope with the ups and downs of daily life and prepare for their working life, in an unpredictable environment."

Mr Foley, who is also Victoria's Minister for Creative Industries, said creative approaches and techniques, such as those employed by digital games, could have a powerful impact on developing skills, confidence and self-esteem.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said many young Victorians were anxious about their future and their career path.

"The days where we worked in one job or one industry for our entire working life are long gone. Job hopping or gig-based work is becoming the new norm for young people," Ms Rechter said.

"Research suggests that today's primary school kids will end up in jobs and industries that haven't even been invented yet – it's an exciting but also daunting future.

"Only 22 percent of young Australians expect their life will be better than their parents. We must do more to turn this around.

"We know that gamification has been used effectively to tackle other health and social issues such as getting people to exercise, tackling bullying and goal setting.

"*Tomorrow Me* is about supporting young people to develop resilience so they can survive and thrive in the job market of the future."

For more information about Tomorrow Me visit www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/youngworkers

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