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### What options are available for young people with a disability after they finish school?

Young people with a disability who are leaving school can explore a range of options and pathways depending on their skills, interests, goals and funding.

#### 1. School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) or School-to-Work Programs

These programs help young people with an NDIS Plan to build job readiness. As part of the program participants undertake activities designed to build their confidence and workplace skills.

Please note: SLES programs are generally only funded for 3 days per week and other supports may be required to supplement this program.

## School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) or School-to-Work Programs (continued):

Activities could include things such as:

Item	Description
Education & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training modules to build employability skills.</li><li>• Courses or workshops designed to improve work capacity and confidence.</li></ul>
Job Readiness & Employment Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing foundational skills required for work like communication, problem solving, social skills etc.</li><li>• Resume writing, assistance with applying for roles, mock interviews.</li><li>• Training to understand workplace expectations and following instructions.</li><li>• Career planning and exploring employment pathways.</li><li>• Undertaking work experience placements.</li></ul>
Life Skills Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Travel training (using public transport safely and independently).</li><li>• Time management skills (getting to work/interviews on time, suitable return to work after breaks etc).</li><li>• Money handling and budgeting skills.</li><li>• Tax knowledge and insurance basics.</li><li>• General hygiene and suitable attire for a work environment.</li></ul>
Personal Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying personal strengths and employment interests.</li><li>• Building confidence, resilience, and independence required for the workplace.</li><li>• Programs that include hands-on or creative activities, which help with fine motor skills, responsibility, and workplace behaviours. For example: cooking, gardening, small business projects.</li></ul>
Work Experience and Workplace Exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exploring various industries through training programs (e.g. retail, administration, hospitality).</li><li>• Supported work experience in open employment settings.</li><li>• Industry visits to understand different workplace environments (e.g. construction sites).</li><li>• Undertaking trial sessions in a supported employment role.</li></ul>

## 2. Supported Employment

Supported Employment programs offer ongoing, purpose-built work opportunities for people who may not be ready, or suitable, for open employment.

There are many options for supported employment in the Illawarra region including:

- Hospitality roles, including food preparation or being a barista in a purpose driven café
- Commercial laundry roles
- Production or manufacturing roles

There is also the option of starting your own small business with the assistance of a Support Worker from Interchange Illawarra. We have supported several participants to start their own businesses including Carly from Carly's Coffee Couriers at Shellharbour, and Brayden's car washing service, Squeaky Clean Cars.

### 3. Day Programs and Community Participation

Day programs focus on recreation, life skills, independence, capacity building and community involvement.

At Interchange Illawarra we offer many social support programs and capacity building options. We cater for adults, young adults (18 to 25 years of age) and for high school students (12 to 17 years of age).

Our group programs are always fun and encourage connection with other participants to form friendships.

- Weekdays Peer Support (group activities on Monday, Tuesday and Friday)
- BestLife Support Program (runs every week day with a focus on a different activity e.g. Active Monday and Creative Friday)
- Nightlife Social (nighttime social activities on Thursday and Friday nights)
- Kiama Social Support (Friday night group activities)
- Social Support South (Saturday daytime group activities starting from Lake Illawarra)
- Peer Support South (Saturday daytime group activities starting from Wollongong)
- Young Adult Support Options (individual support for activities enjoyed by young adults with the option to team up with another participant who is interested in the same things e.g. gaming or seeing live bands)
- Weekends Away (separate boy's and girl's weekends away at our cottage in Wollongong that run from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon)
- Individual Support (available for anything from attending appointments, doing grocery shopping, personal care, pursuing a hobby or learning a new skill).
- We also offer Saturday Club and School Holiday programs for high school students with a disability.

### 4. Further Education and Training

Many school leavers may want to continue learning through formal education courses or undertaking vocational training.

In the Illawarra pathways include:

TAFE	TAFE NSW offers specialised support, including Disability Teacher Consultants, for students with disabilities. Courses are offered in person or online. For more information: <a href="https://www.tafensw.edu.au/">https://www.tafensw.edu.au/</a>
ITeC Academy	ITeC Academy is a Wollongong Registered Training Provider offering practical, accessible training that puts students first. For a list of courses on offer visit <a href="http://www.itecacademy.edu.au">www.itecacademy.edu.au</a>
Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)	Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) offer specialised, supportive, and often fee-free courses for people with disabilities, focusing on vocational pathways, literacy, and industry-specific skills.
VET Courses	VET courses are fully accessible to people with disabilities, offering industry-recognised qualifications (Certificates I-IV, Diplomas) through tailored support.
University Courses	University subjects can be undertaken in conjunction with disability support options.



## 5. Volunteering Opportunities

Volunteering provides an excellent opportunity to build confidence, understand routines, workplace culture and make community connections.

It is important to find a role that aligns with your goals or interests. If you have great organisational skills you might be interested in a role sorting donations at an op shop like Salvos, Wollongong.

Interchange Illawarra Support Workers can be rostered to provide transport and stay with you for the shift. Support Workers will provide support and advice, when required, to ensure the volunteering experience is not only enjoyable and rewarding but also building capacity.

## 6. Open Employment Pathways

School leavers might wish to pursue open employment opportunities.

There are many Inclusive Employment Australia (IEA) providers that assist people with disability, injury, or health conditions to find and retain employment. They offer personalised career planning, resume support, job matching, workplace adjustments, and ongoing support for both employees and employers.

Please note: The term Inclusive Employment Australia was previously referred to as Disability Employment Services (DES) providers.

Working with an IEA Provider can:

- Identify your skills and interests
- Boost your confidence and maintain motivation
- Access suitable training courses
- Align you with an appropriate mentor
- Assist you to create a resume and undertake interview practice
- Assist you to gain valuable on-the-job work experience
- Coach you on how to keep your job once you secure one

## 7. Individual Support

You may wish to set up a regular schedule of individual support with Interchange Illawarra Support Workers to focus on capacity building or personal goals.

Some examples of things you could consider:

Item	Examples	Benefits
Attending appointments	Attend a medical, therapy or personal care appointment, like a haircut or a dentist checkup.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Planning skills</li> <li>• Community participation</li> <li>• Money handling skills</li> </ul>
Community participation	<p>Increase your participation in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending a local community event like a market or live music event</li> <li>• Go shopping for a particular item</li> <li>• Visit a local library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money handling skills</li> <li>• Planning skills</li> <li>• Increased community participation and communication skills</li> </ul>
Developing personal interests	<p>Developing a hobby or area of personal interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit an expo (like Comic Con)</li> <li>• Learn a new skill (like crochet or guitar)</li> <li>• Find a social group to join (like Dungeons and Dragons)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Money handling skills</li> <li>• Increased community participation and communication skills</li> </ul>
Exercise	<p>Undertake exercise to promote health and fitness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join a gym</li> <li>• Take part in an exercise class e.g. yoga, aqua aerobics or karate</li> <li>• Decide on a walking route and do a long walk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community participation</li> <li>• Planning skills</li> <li>• Time management skills</li> <li>• Money handling skills</li> </ul>
Life Admin/Paying bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan the week ahead and what preparation needs to take place.</li> <li>• Pay a bill in person or online.</li> <li>• Purchase an item (like phone credit).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community participation</li> <li>• Money handling skills</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Computer skills</li> </ul>
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan a meal, buy the groceries required, complete the food preparation, follow a recipe, and clean up afterwards.</li> <li>• Learn the skills necessary to clean a bedroom, or wider areas in the home.</li> <li>• Wash clothing and bedding and hang it outside to dry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting and planning skills</li> <li>• Community participation</li> <li>• Food handling</li> <li>• Use of machinery e.g. washing machine</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> </ul>
Travel training	Decide on a destination and work out how to get there using public transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community participation</li> <li>• Money handling skills</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> </ul>



## Other things to consider

It is important to understand that depending on your circumstances, once a school leaver finishes school, more support might be required, more often.

Additional NDIS funding may be required to ensure that the school leaver is appropriately supported and that the parents/carers are able to attend work or manage other commitments.

An application for a NDIS funding change can take some time to be processed and approved. It is generally recommended that upcoming, planned changes are logged with the NDIS many months in advance. For school leavers it is suggested that you consider your options and preferences in Term 1 of the last school year.

Many schools offer tours for parents and students to visit local disability service organisations. These tours are generally done in February or March.

If you would like to do a site visit at Interchange Illawarra we are happy to organise this for you. Please contact us on [info@interchangeillawarra.org](mailto:info@interchangeillawarra.org) or call the office on 4227 1079.

## Need more information?

For more in-depth information about STA's, we encourage you to visit the NDIS website <https://www.ndis.gov.au/> or call the NDIS on 1800 800 110.

The information provided in this fact sheet is general in nature. Please contact your Support Planner or Coordinator if you need further clarification. We are here to help!