

# How do I Become a Youth Worker?

## What is Youth Work?

Given the diverse range of work youth workers are involved in, it is very difficult to concisely define 'youth work'. There is also the added confusion between Youth Workers and workers with young people. Three broad factors define youth work:

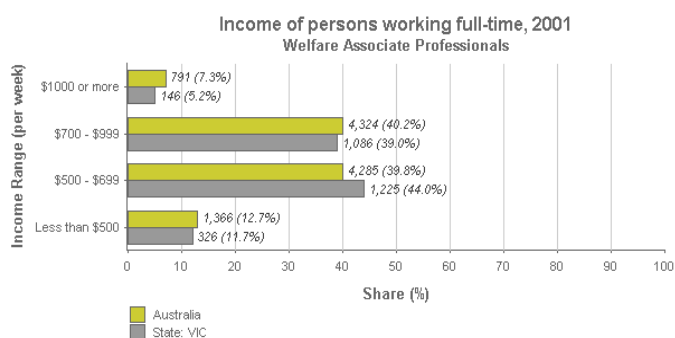
- Young people are the primary client
- Young people are worked with in their 'social context'
- Youth Work is holistic, it takes into account the whole person

Confused? It is a bit confusing, but to summarise a Youth Worker is someone who works for and with young people, where young people are their primary concern. Youth workers can work in a wide range of settings from Councils, to Church settings to schools... Youth Work is a career involving working for and with young people in a variety of fun and rewarding ways.

## What are the Working Conditions like?

Youth Workers work in a range of settings, from offices to outreach situations where they visit a range of facilities, from schools to health clinics and counselling services. Youth Workers can be required to work outside of business hours, including shift work.

The median (most commonly occurring) pay range for Victorian Youth Workers is between \$500 and \$700 per week, with the average pay being \$750/week. Youth Workers are paid under the SACS award. For the latest specific pay rates see: [www.wagenet.gov.au](http://www.wagenet.gov.au)



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Please Note: This graph is based on the 2001 census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Changes have occurred since 2001 and this information should therefore be used as an indicative guide only.

The job prospects for Youth Workers in Victoria are

considered to be very good. For more information on job outlooks see:

<http://jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook/default.aspx?Pa geld=AscoDesc&ASCOCode=3421>

## Education and Training

You can work with young people without formal qualifications, and you will probably get some informal training on the job. However, your ability to become a youth worker may be strongly improved if you have qualifications, and we would strongly recommend entering the field with some qualifications. There are Certificate IIIs, Certificate IVs, Advanced Diplomas of Community Services and Bachelors of Youth Work you can pursue. There is increasing demand from industry however, for minimum qualifications and this is often regarded as a certificate IV.

### CERTIFICATE III in YOUTH WORK (CHC30602)

A certificate III is normally an 18 week course, and is offered by a variety of institutions, from TAFEs to Youth Service Providers and Training Organisations. A list of current Certificate III providers can be found at:

<http://www.ntis.gov.au/cgi-bin/waxhtml/~ntis2/qual.wvx?page=82&inputref=1719&vic=Y&submit=Search+for+Providers>

A Certificate III in Youth Work will normally enable you to provide support to young people under supervision of senior staff in a position such as a Youth Housing Support Worker, Residential Care Worker or Juvenile Justice Officer. It also leaves the door open for further studies.

### CERTIFICATE IV in YOUTH WORK (CHC40602)

A certificate IV is normally a one year full time course that is offered by TAFEs and specialised Training Providers. A list of current providers can be found at:

<http://www.ntis.gov.au/cgi-bin/waxhtml/~ntis2/qual.wvx?page=82&inputref=1720&vic=Y&submit=Search+for+Providers>

A Certificate IV in Youth Work would allow you to work in a community, government and welfare agencies, such as in a position as a Community Development Worker (Youth), Youth and Family Resource Worker Co-ordinator, Youth Service Youth Support Worker. The option to continue on and study a Bachelor of Youth Work is available.

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## YOUTH WORK TRAINEESHIPS

You can also become a youth worker through a *New Apprenticeship in Community Services - Youth Work*. Entry requirements may vary, but employers generally require Year 10. Doing a traineeship in Youth Work also means you study for either a Certificate III or Certificate IV, but do so in a workplace setting. This means you need to find an employer who is willing to take on an apprentice first. A traineeship as a Youth Support Worker (CHC30602) will qualify you with a Certificate III, whilst a traineeship as a Youth Services Coordinator (CHC40602) will qualify you for a Certificate IV in Youth Work. For more details on New Apprenticeships call the Apprenticeships Referral Line on 1800 639 629, or to see the details on these apprenticeships, go to [http://www.nacinfo.com.au/new\\_app\\_stp.cfm?u=185&cfid=8349&cftoken=45631015](http://www.nacinfo.com.au/new_app_stp.cfm?u=185&cfid=8349&cftoken=45631015) or [http://www.nacinfo.com.au/new\\_app\\_stp.cfm?u=203&cfid=8349&cftoken=45631015](http://www.nacinfo.com.au/new_app_stp.cfm?u=203&cfid=8349&cftoken=45631015)

This is not a comprehensive list of qualifications that will allow you to work with young people. The Certificate IV in Community Services (Protective Care), for example, trains workers in the Residential and out-of-home care sector which includes children and young people.

## TERTIARY QUALIFICATIONS

Tertiary level entrance into youth work generally requires a 3 year university degree as either a Bachelor of Youth Work or Bachelor of Social Work. There are a range of Bachelor degrees available in Victoria, including:

- Bachelor of Social Science (Youth Studies)- Australian Catholic University
- Bachelor of Arts (Youth Studies)- Victoria University
- Bachelor of Social Sciences (Youth Work)- RMIT University

If you already have a Bachelor degree, the University of Melbourne offers Postgraduate Diplomas in Adolescent Health and Welfare, and both the University of Melbourne and the Australian Catholic University offer Masters Degrees in Youth Work. Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas are also available from the University of Melbourne. A full list of all tertiary qualifications is available from

<http://www.acys.utas.edu.au/education/index.html#Heading87>

## OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

A number of fantastic youth sector email lists can keep you up to speed on the sector:

**YARN** (Youth Affairs Research Network)  
Description: YARN is an electronic network focusing on youth-related research  
**Web site:** <http://yarn.edfac.unimelb.edu.au>

**Youth.Comm**

Description: Initiated by the Australian Government in 2001, this list has news and information on Australian Government youth initiatives in Australia. To join email [Youth.Comm-on@mail-list.com](mailto:Youth.Comm-on@mail-list.com)

**Youth Gas**

A diverse email list that reaches Youth Workers and Young People right across the country. To join email: [youthgas-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.au](mailto:youthgas-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.au)

**YACVIC Announce**

A free email list from Victoria's Peak Youth Affairs Body that provides a fortnightly digest that covers a broad range of youth issues to join email a request to [info@yacvic.org.au](mailto:info@yacvic.org.au)

**Infoxchange**

Has up to date information on conferences, forums and employment see [www.infoxchange.net.au](http://www.infoxchange.net.au)

**Join YACVic**

Joining the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, ensures that you receive our bi-monthly newsletter and join a wide network of youth workers from right across the state, as well as supporting the voice of Young People. Joining costs only \$2.00 for people under 25 or \$15.00 for students/concessions. To join, download a membership form from [www.yacvic.org.au](http://www.yacvic.org.au)

**VOLUNTEER WORK**

Volunteering can be a great way to get some practical experience in the sector and to make sure that it is the career for you! Volunteering Australia has a web page that can connect to all the volunteer positions available near you:  
<http://www.govolunteer.com.au/>

**GOOD LUCK!** We look forward to working with you in the future. **Please note that YACVic does not offer any certificates or traineeships.**