



**youth  
options**

*young lives transformed*

# NDIS EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORIES



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# NDIS Employment Success Stories



## SHAYDEN'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

Shayden joined the video game testing program, QA for Gaming, in October 2024 as an experienced gamer who wanted to explore what employment opportunities might look like. This was an exciting step in testing a career path that would be a great fit for him. In his words for him, this was also about a pathway to become a more responsible adult with a future goal of renting his own home and contributing his employment taxes back to society. He also joined to get out of the house and build his confidence and skills to work with other young people he didn't know. Prior to this, Shayden began his learning journey at Youth Options in May 2023 and over 14 months developed his confidence and skills in cooking, resilience, and career development.

Shayden brought his love of video gaming playing and reading to the program, as well as his skills in critical thinking, relating to others, and giving feedback. Over 3 months he completed level 1 and level 2 and gained 5 South Australian Skills Commission accredited micro-credentials in: play testing, bug testing, game test plan writer, game test case writer, and game play testing lead.

During this time Shayden grew more confident in his testing skills, giving group presentations, and demonstrating his initiative including pro-actively asking questions to improve his learning and performance. These are employability skills that employers highly value alongside his technical skills in video game testing.

We thought Shayden was so good, we employed him as a QA for Gaming peer leader. In this role he is responsible for co-supporting participants with their technical learning and soft skill development alongside our highly experienced QA tester. Alongside his technical skills, Shayden's flair for establishing rapport, his facilitation skills, and giving constructive feedback have really shone.

We are so proud of him and are excited about his working future.

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories

## KEEGAN'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY



Keegan joined the video game testing program, QA for Gaming, in October 2024 as an experienced gamer who wanted to explore what employment opportunities might look like. This was an exciting step in testing a career path that would be a great fit for him.

Prior to this, Keegan began his learning journey at Youth Options in May 2024 and over five months developed his confidence and skills in cooking. Keegan is also currently building his driving skills to achieve his driver's licence to not only improve his independence but to also increase the variety of more secure jobs available to him which often require a driver's licence.

Keegan brought their love and high level of experience playing video games to the program, as well as his skills in critical thinking, relating to others, and giving feedback. Over 3 months he completed level 1 and level 2 and gained 5 South Australian Skills Commission accredited micro-credentials in: play testing, bug testing, game test plan writer, game test case writer, and game play testing lead.

During this time Keegan, grew more confident in his testing skills, giving group presentations, and demonstrating his initiative including pro-actively asking questions to improve his learning and performance. He also has grown significantly in improving his communication skills in a group setting and becoming more accepting and adaptable in social situations. He has also practiced his networking skills and made connections with local and national game developers.

We thought Keegan was so good, we employed him as a QA for Gaming peer leader. In this role he is responsible for co-supporting participants with their technical learning and soft skill development alongside our highly experienced QA tester. Alongside his technical skills, Keegan's flair for establishing rapport, his facilitation skills, and giving constructive feedback have really shone.

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## FINN'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

Finn began our service in February 2023 and wanted to work but was unsure of his pathway and needed support to become work ready. Over 23 months, Finn developed his skills and confidence in the preparation, cutting, grinding, work health and safety, and the welding of metal in a very small group setting with other welders-in-training. Youth Options also supported him to gain his white card so he could work in the construction industry. Finn also developed his skills in punctuality, focus, communication and teamwork. Importantly he also improved his ability to adapt to unexpected changes in preparation for the world of work. These employability skills are key skills that employers as much as technical skills.

Finn made the most of his time in workshop and really enjoyed the setting of meeting new people and building friendships while learning together. He developed connections with other mentees and a friendly member of the workshop who was always quick to praise other mentees about their work.

### **Building resilience for a brighter future**

During this time Finn also joined our resilience program to find a career pathway that was a great fit for him. He was empowered to identify and explore different trades and with the support of his family gained work experiences including mechanic and plumbing before finding landscape construction.

He also identified that improving his literacy and numeracy was key to achieving a traineeship. However, actually working on these skills was a major challenge. He used what he learnt in resilience about awareness, acceptance, goals, motivation, growth mindset and more to unlock the secrets to motivation. He became a self-starter and willingly worked on his math skills independently. Finn also designed his own resilience challenges to practice when welding in our workshop. This integrated approach across programs and mentors allowed his team to better understand how to better empower him to build his resilience quicker and for Finn to understand more deeply how resilience could help him to not just get a job, but keep it.

### **Achieving Employment with a Traineeship**

In June 2024, Finn was offered a traineeship in landscape construction and is currently being paid to work for a contractor as he studies to complete a certificate III in landscape construction. Finn showcased his commitment to his learning at Youth Options where he continued to come in at the end of his working week as a trainee and develop his welding skills in our welding bays.

We are so proud of Finn and are excited for his working future!

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories

## HAMISH J'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

Hamish began our service in January 2024 and wanted to explore what a great job would look like for him and to achieve his driver's licence. He started

with our career development services to help him identify a career pathway based on what he was interested in and good at. He identified landscaping and horticulture and joined the Youth Options Garden Squad to test whether this was a pathway for him. He also began our Drive Me driving mentoring to achieve his independence. Having a driver's licence also broadens his choice of employment as having one is often a requirement of more skilled and secure work.



### **Growing a Career with Youth Options Garden Squad**

Hamish joined the squad for 12 months to develop his confidence and skills in horticulture and landscaping and his employability skills. Our highly skilled mentor with extensive gardening experience worked with Hamish in a way that worked for him. Through Garden Squad, Hamish was able to access real world industry projects to develop his capacity with our partnership with the City of Adelaide Horticulture team. Through more than ten verge garden projects across the Adelaide CBD, he developed his skills in: work health and safety, plant identification, plant propagation, soil preparation, irrigation installation, seasonal planting, as well as lawn and plant maintenance with hedge trimming, lawn mowing, and weeding. Hamish also developed his employability skills in working with others, organisation, and problem-solving which employers value as much as technical skills.

Hamish realised he wanted a career path in horticulture and not just casual work. We helped him identify that a traineeship would be a great way to achieve this goal because on completion he would receive a certificate III in horticulture as an industry recognised qualification. Longer term, this will give him eligibility for a greater variety of employment with better pay and conditions than casual unqualified work. To achieve this goal Hamish needed to work on his numeracy. He showed real leadership and commitment in his own success by working on this independently until he reached the required standard.

### **Achieving Employment with a Traineeship**

In January 2025, Hamish began a traineeship with a reputable council in their Horticulture team as an employment of Maxima through their group training organisation. The result is Hamish is being paid to study alongside the training he is receiving with the horticulture team.

We are so proud of Hamish and are excited for his working future.

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories



## STEVEN'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

Steven began our service in August 2023 and over 15 months developed his skills as a barista in our individualised and intensive barista skills capacity building program. Our highly skilled mentor with extensive barista experience and a double degree in social sciences and psychological sciences empowered him to make a great coffee on our manual barista machine, in a way that worked for Steven. He has developed his knowledge and skills in espresso theory, milk texturing, latte art, food safety, machine maintenance. He can make the full range of typical warm beverages on offer at any cafe using cow's milk and alternative milks. In a very small group setting he also developed his employability skills to work with others including the art of small talk while taking coffee orders using our point of sale system.

As his confidence grew, we linked him to multiple work experiences and paid barista work to further build and test his readiness in industry conditions.

### **Working Collaboratively with our DES partnership**

When Steven was ready to transition into open employment, we invited our DES partner Multiple Solutions to work with our career development service to find a role that would be a great fit for him. Through our partnership, we were able to convey our deep understanding of what a great job for him would look like and how he could be set up for success.

His Multiple Solutions Business Development Manager identified a barista and team leader role at a reputable ice creamery. The result of this partnership is that Steven feels at home in his barista role and confident about his working future. These collaborative approaches to supporting young people back into employment are vital. This model result.

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories

## KEITH'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

Keith started our service after his employment in the hospitality industry came to an unexpected end. His goals were to rebuild his confidence and to enhance his cooking skills to enjoy better quality meals at home. He also wanted to improve his cooking skills and achieve his driver's licence so he could have more choice in choosing a great job for him in hospitality.

### Holistic Service Design

To achieve his goals, Keith undertook our cooking skills program to use his creativity and interest in cooking to develop his skills with his mentor who has nearly 4 decades of experience as a commercial baker. Over 15 months, his mentor used Keith's passion and positive experiences with cooking to develop his skills to improve his mental health and openness to new work possibilities. Keith can now cook a suite of tasty and nutritionally varied recipes that he can use to plan his meals for the week as part of becoming ready for living independently.

### Skill Development for a Career Pathway

In October 2024, Keith also achieved his driver's licence through 13 months of focussed and consistent effort via our Drive Me program as a key milestone in his journey towards a career pathway. Having a driver's licence empowers him with a more convenient and efficient way to travel in the community. Longer term this improves his eligibility for a greater variety of jobs that are higher paid typically require a driver's licence. It is for this reason Youth Options offer's our Drive Me program as part of our holistic and independence focussed capacity building service model.

### A bright future ahead

Having completed our service and ready for his next role, Keith has achieved employment with a large defence company in Adelaide's north with support from DES provider Interact Australia. Keith is now feeling positive about his working future and we are very proud of him.



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# NDIS Employment Success Stories



## JAXON'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

Jaxon began his service with Youth Options in August 2022 and wanted to enhance his independence through the development of his communication skills, employability skills, and his adaptability as part of his pathway to employment preparedness. In the two years to date he has been empowered by the following services while he completes his bachelor degree in psychology.

### **Holistic Service Design**

We have facilitated Jaxon's development of his: communication and social skills through our Dungeon's and Dragon's communication skills for employment program; his adaptability and growth mindset through our resilience program; his employability skills and technical skills for part time work in the hospitality industry in our barista skills program; and his driving skills through our Drive Me program. These services have supported Jaxon to develop his confidence, resilience and skills in many areas. Not only has this greater enhanced his readiness for employment but it has helped him be clearer on what he wants from life and how to achieve it.

### **Cultivation of longer-term capacity and opportunity**

In July 2024, Jaxon achieved his driver's licence through our Drive Me program as a key milestone in his journey towards a career pathway. Having a driver's licence empowers him with a more convenient and efficient way to travel in the community. Longer term it also increases his eligibility for a greater variety and depth of higher paid jobs which often require a driver's licence. It is for this reason Youth Options offer's our Drive Me program as part of our holistic and independence focussed capacity building service model.

### **Transition to Employment**

So impressed were we with Jaxon's attention to detail, problem solving, and blossoming demeanour, we have employed him in a front of house administration role. He has showcased the development of his skills from his ability to fulfill his responsibilities on reception as well as taking care of record keeping and database maintenance. He has also supported our NDIS with conducting research for our practice framework resource suite. We are excited about his working future and look forward to his transition to employment in a career of his choice when he completes his degree."

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories

## CARTER'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY



Carter arrived in our service in June 2022 wanting to add to his employment history in Darwin where he worked as a barista and to develop his confidence in his working future. Over 24 months he was empowered through the below services to be ready to transition to employment.

### **Employment Preparedness**

Starting in our career development program, he explored what types of hospitality work and employers he wanted to work with and developed a plan to achieve this. This included building his work preparedness by refining his barista skills, customer service skills, and employability skills. He did this in a simulated work environment through our very small group barista skills program where he received individualised guidance from our mentor with industry experience. He also achieved his responsible serving of alcohol (RSA) certificate through our SA Government grant funded HOSPO Prepped program as part of his re-entry into the hospitality industry in Adelaide.

### **A Responsive Service Design**

During this time we were asked to empower him to build his confidence and skills to independently catch public transport from his home to our training facility in the Adelaide CBD. In eight weeks not only did Carter experience greater independence and confidence when travelling, he also eliminated the need to fund travel supports. These savings empowered him to use his NDIS funding to invest in other services and strengthen his capacity and longer-term independence.

### **Developing Partnerships for Employment Transition**

Our career development mentor used their deep insights of Carter and his employment goals to connect him to suitable work experience. This included work experience with SkyCity in the Adelaide CBD where the mentor negotiated an individualised placement tailored to Carter. So successful was this experience, they have employed Carter in one of their restaurants. They have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment and capability to set Carter's employment up for success and have remained individualised in their support of him in the workplace.

As part of our wrap around model to sustain Carter's employment, we have also invited our DES partner Multiple Solutions to support Carter as part of his success story. Their employment consultants are collaboratively supporting him as a model of support that allows each service to bring their unique skill set for the same client focussed end result.

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories



## HAMISH D'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

We are thrilled for Hamish who has started his employment journey with Show Support in the event hire industry and we look forward to him furthering his skills and experience. Over the past 3 years, Hamish's service has evolved as his confidence, skills and interests have grown.

### **Pathway Exploration**

Hamish started with an interest in woodworking and developed his technical skills through individualised woodwork projects based on his interests. Since then he also developed an interest in welding and later added this to his learning program. Through these twice weekly workshop sessions he has also developed his employability skills as he has learnt to work with others in the very small group format in our workshop.

### **A Responsive Service Design**

Hamish realised that to succeed in the world of work, he needed to build his social confidence and his communication skills. Through our Dungeon's and Dragon's social skills capacity building program, not only has his social confidence increased tremendously, he has learnt how to adapt his communication in different situations for different purposes.

Later he recognised he also needed to improve his adaptability as he found it challenging to respond productively to unexpected changes in situations. We also empowered him to see that he needed to work on his numeracy in order to move close towards an employment pathway. Through our resilience program, he has learnt how to improve his motivation and perform tasks he finds challenging, independently. Not only has he been able to better respond to unexpected changes in his simulated employment environment in the workshop, but in his own time at home he now regularly practices his maths skills via an online learning platform.

### **A Case Management Approach**

An important part of empowering Hamish with his learning was consistency of approach across his team of mentors. Through our case management approach, his resilience mentor also empowered his workshop mentors to consistently support him to build his resilience across his multiple workshop sessions a week. This repetition and consistency was key for his learning success.

Longer term, Hamish has a goal to work in set production. He currently receives guidance, insight and inspiration from his woodworking mentor who produced stunt props for the 2021 Mortal Kombat movie filmed in South Australia. He also has plans to complete a certificate in set production and metal fabrication.

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories

## SCOTT'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY



His capacity building journey has evolved over 4 years with Youth Options with the current highlight being his employment in a welding role with Southern Cross Repairs. When Scott first started in our service, he was experiencing challenges with his mental health having experienced bullying during high school. This left him with little confidence in his ability to learn or for his future. He wanted a job and to eventually move out of home but couldn't see a pathway forwards.

### **Pathway Exploration**

Scott was now ready to explore what a job that was a great fit for him might look like. He tried our Garden Squad program and further built his confidence and employability skills in a small social group setting. He then explored woodworking in our workshop before re-discovering his interest in welding. Over 17 months Scott then focussed on building his technical and employability skills through a combination of standardised and individualised welding projects.

### **A Responsive Service Design**

Scott still felt he needed to work on his social confidence with a particular focus on small talk. He blossomed in confidence from a combination of our resilience program and our Dungeons and Dragons social skills program. In resilience he learnt how to re-train some of his doubts and fears about his ability and some techniques for small talk, and importantly he practiced these skills in the social setting provided by Dungeons and Dragons.

### **A Case Management Approach**

An important part of empowering Scott with his learning was consistency of approach across his team of mentors. Through our case management approach, his resilience mentor also empowered his welding mentors to consistently support Scott to build his resilience in a welding setting across multiple welding sessions a week. This repetition and consistency was key for Scott's learning success.

### **Working Collaboratively with our DES partnership**

When Scott was ready to transition into paid open employment, we invited our DES partner Multiple Solutions to work with our career development service. Through our individualised partnership with Multiple Solutions, we were able to convey our deep understanding of what a great job for him would look like and how he could be set up for success in that role.

Multiple Solutions Business Development Manager was able to identify a welding opportunity with one of her amazing employers in the Heavy Transport Sector that was a great fit for Scott. The result of this partnership is that Scott feels at home in his new welding role and he and his family are excited about his working future. These collaborative approaches to supporting young people back into employment are vital. This model allows for each service to bring their unique skills set for the same client focussed end result.

### **A testimony from his family:**

*"We would like to take this opportunity to express that Youth Options have a high level of integrity and commitment that has worked above and beyond helping Scott achieve many goals over the last 4 years.*

*It has been an amazing journey seeing how Scott has challenged himself with all the wonderful caring compassionate support from all the team at Youth Options and his Mentors. Scott has become a confident young man by choosing growth and breaking through many difficult barriers. Youth Options team had taken the time to understand and interact trying different things when it was recognized that one of Scott's strengths was in welding.*

*Thank you we will be forever grateful."*

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories



## LUCY'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

Lucy came to Youth Options wanting to build on her 3 years of employment where she worked in administration roles including for an NDIS plan manager. She had the courage to know she wanted a role that was a better fit for her and engaged our career development capacity building services to build her confidence and skills to achieve this. We were inspired by Lucy's attention to detail, diligence, customer service skills, and her commitment to dedicate herself to make a valued contribution to her future employers.

We matched her to our career development mentor who developed deep insights into Lucy as a person in order to empower her to build her confidence and skills to identify and successfully apply for roles that aligned to her career aspirations. They did this through personality quizzes, career planning, and refining her interview skills alongside another mentee who was also going through the same process as a shared learning experience.

During this time Lucy was successful in her application for a short-term contract in an administration role at the Hutt Street Centre in the Adelaide CBD. Our service empowered her with the confidence and skills to advocate for an extension of her role which she succeeded in. Her short-term contract was extended, twice, such was the extent to which the organisation valued her work.

Lucy's self-confidence increased so much so she realised it was time to aim higher and she successfully applied for a full time administration role in the Australian Public Service in Canberra through the Aurora program. Since May 2023 she has been working as a valued member of her team and her manager has praised her work and has indicated they will support the extension of Lucy's employment beyond the program.

Lucy has identified her role has enabled her to learn valuable project and program management skills, grow in confidence, and she is keen to continue to develop her networking skills professionally and personally.

We are so very proud of Lucy over the 4 months she was in our service and the inspiring example she sets. We wish her every success in her career!

Lucy has this to say about her experience of her career development mentor:

I love how he believes in me and other clients. He has already shown me what I am capable of doing in the workplace. He makes me believe in myself! He takes the time to get to know me. He already knows so much. I like how he listens and encourages and doesn't let my disability stop me from achieving what I want in my life, and that includes employment. He is super friendly and approachable and really good with people!

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# NDIS Employment Success Stories

## CHRIS'S EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY



Chris came to our service in November 2020 wanting to gain his driver's licence and to find a career pathway that was a great fit for him and not just any job he could get. Youth Options mentors supported Chris to complete his night time driving hours and to continue building his driving skills in readiness to sit a driving test. They also empowered Chris to identify that a career path in welding would be a great fit for him.

Over 14 months in our capacity building service, Chris built his driving skills, his welding skills, and his employability skills. Towards the end of this capacity building phase, his career development mentor also supported him to complete two work experiences, develop his job interview skills, and to sit two job interviews. During this time he also gained his driver's licence, which is often a requirement of employment.

His career development mentor then provided transition support and empowered him to gain his first ever job, working full time at Saxon's Engineering at Lonsdale as a non qualified welder. He received individualised support during his probation from Youth Options in partnership with his other NDIS supports. This approach paid off and he worked casually for Saxon's for 9 months to support the company to meet a welding contract. Chris received outstanding feedback about the quality of his welding which was viewed as superior to colleagues at Saxon's for some two decades!

After the casual employment ended with the fulfillment of the welding contract, Chris re-entered our career development services where we again empowered him to gain employment at Allin Towbars in November 2022, some two years after we began working with him. Since May 2023, Chris has been employed as a full time welder producing 4WD accessories. He is also undertaking an apprenticeship with them to gain a formal qualification in welding and to cement his place as an integral part of their team.

We are very proud of Chris and wish him the very best with his welding career.

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