

Pilot scheme gives youth life direction

A PILOT scheme in Adelaide's northern suburbs is helping early school-leavers connect with vocational training and jobs.

Eighty-seven per cent of young people involved in the flexible learning option program have made a successful transition to work, education or training.

Almost 26,000 young Australians leave school early each year and do not proceed to further education or the workforce.

The flexible learning option scheme set up in partnership with the Service to Youth Council, the Education Department and others, is helping those young people find direction.

In the pilot program, students in the north and northwest suburbs are referred by their schools for individualised support and assistance from an SYC case manager.

The aim is to successfully engage and retain identified school students to move towards a full-time learning program, both in a school and

community-based learning environment. SYC chief executive officer Paul Edginton says a key element of the FLO program is its commitment to running small groups and providing added support through volunteer youth mentors.

"This provides an environment in which young people can feel a sense of trust, connectedness and belonging," he says.

"FLO also works with the families of young people connected with the program. SYC is able to link families with other support services, as well as conducting support groups.

"The success of FLO is in the partnerships among the schools, the department and the range of community-service providers.

"The young people involved in FLO regain their self-esteem, motivation and improve their communication skills, providing them with greater options for their future."