Methodology

We conducted a rapid evidence review of the literature and evidence base surrounding the barriers and enablers of employment for young people in the Australian context. Searches were conducted for empirical academic peer-reviewed research and grey literature documenting the barriers and drivers of employment for young Australians. Publications were included if they were published between 2014–2024 (unless deemed significant and warranting inclusion). Books (edited collections and monographs) were excluded from the search.

The search strategy did not exclude papers based on adopting a particular definition of "youth" or a particular age range for young people. The key search string focused on different terms for "young people", including "Young people", "Young person", "Young adult", "Youth", "Teenager", "Adolescent", and "School leaver"; and employment terms, such as "Employment", "Unemployment", "Underemployment", "Workforce participation", "Economic activity", "School-to-work transition", "Labour market", "Job market", and "Job search"; as well as terms to limit the search for studies, articles, and reports on/for Australia. Modified versions of the search string in multiple combinations were searched in six databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Informit, Google Scholar, Analysis and Policy Observatory (APO), and University of Melbourne Discovery. Searches were conducted using Google Chrome in incognito mode to avoid potential bias from the search history. The searches returned 309 relevant, unique papers and reports that were then subject to abstract and title screening. After titles and abstracts were screened, 22 publications were included for a full-text review. Several more papers and reports were also identified from references cited in relevant research and articles reviewed. A total of 66 papers and reports were included in the review. The evidence review then synthesised major barriers and enablers identified, re-structuring and analysing these factors from the micro, meso, and macro perspectives of an employment ecosystem.