BGGS Careers Newsletter
Issue 18

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Introduction

In our final issue for the year, you'll find some interesting tips around starting portfolios in Year 10, alongside job spotlights on biochemistry and conservation careers. Happy reading and best wishes for a safe and restorative holiday. The Tertiary Pathways team looks forward to working with you in 2027.

Events

1 December: SAE Online Info Session: IT & Computer Science

Organisation: SAE University College
Location: Online
Date: December 1, 2026
From software development and cyber security to cloud computing and AI, technology careers are evolving fast. At SAE's Online Info Session: IT & Computer Science, you'll explore our complete range of technology courses, including our new Information Technology qualifications launching in February 2027, alongside our established Computer Science and Cyber Security pathways.
Find out more

1 December: UniSC Careers in Law and Justice online info session

Organisation: University of the Sunshine Coast
Location: Online
Date: December 1, 2026
Join us online to learn how UniSC can prepare you to make a difference in law and criminology through practical, flexible skills, taught by experienced legal practitioners and criminologists.
What we'll outline:

- Our law and criminology programs
- Entry pathways available to get started
- Support services to help you succeed including money to help you study
- Career trajectory and opportunities you can expect graduating in today's job market
- How you can balance study, work and family life with the option to study online
- Hear from UniSC staff and current students and get your questions answered
- Key dates to start study in 2027

Find out more

8 December: Basair Pilot Career Seminar, Brisbane

Organisation: Basair Aviation College
Location: Archerfield Airport
Date: December 8, 2026
Do you dream of taking to the skies and achieving your wildest aviation dreams?

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Attend Basair's Pilot Career Seminar and learn everything you need to know about becoming a Commercial Pilot with Australia's leading flight training organisation.
Find out more

16-18 December: Griffith Explore Your Options for School Leavers

Organisation: Griffith University
Location: Online
Date: December 16 to December 18, 2026
If your ATAR results don't go as planned, or you're reconsidering what you want to study, you have options at Griffith.
Griffith study advisers can help you explore alternative entry pathways, identify ways to boost your entry rank, and map out a clear route into your preferred degree. With the right advice, you can make informed decisions and plan your next steps with confidence.
Find out more

18 December: QUT Year 12 ATAR Advice Webinar

Organisation: Queensland University of Technology
Location: Online
Date: December 18, 2026
If you're planning to study in 2027, we're here to help you finalise your decision. Join us on Friday 18 December for advice about pathways to your preferred course, ordering your QTAC preferences, guaranteed entry, study costs and support.
Find out more

18 December: UQ ATAR Advice Online Event for School Leavers

Organisation: University of Queensland
Location: Online
Date: December 18, 2026
Wondering what to do after you get your ATAR? Whether you're seeking advice, information, or simply some reassurance, we can help. We'll answer all your ATAR-related questions at our free ATAR Advice online event.
What to expect:

- Live chat one-on-one with UQ Admissions staff.
- Understand your options if your ATAR is higher or lower than expected.
- Get personalised advice on the best pathway to UQ for you.
- Find out how to change your QTAC preferences, and how to respond to an offer.
- Explore our world-class facilities through virtual campus tours.

Find out more

2 March, 2027: UQ Medicine Information Evening, Brisbane

Organisation: University of Queensland
Location: University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus
Date: March 2, 2027

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Attend our information session to learn about studying medicine at The University of Queensland (UQ).
Hear from UQ Medical School staff, UQ alumni and current students on the changing medical climate, how to apply for medicine at UQ, and tips for success.
What's involved:

- Learn about admission requirements and how to apply for the Doctor of Medicine (MD).
- Gain insight into UQ's MD program structure, clinical placements, learning experiences and student support.
- Explore entry pathways, including partnerships with CQUniversity and UniSQ.
- Hear from UQ Medical School academics about UQ's new medical pathway.
- Hear insights from recent graduates and current students.
- Participate in an interactive Q&A with alumni and current students.

Find out more

3 March, 2027: UQ Medicine Information Evening, Online

Organisation: University of Queensland
Location: Online
Date: March 3, 2027
Attend our information session to learn about studying medicine at The University of Queensland (UQ).
Hear from UQ Medical School staff, UQ alumni and current students on the changing medical climate, how to apply for medicine at UQ, and tips for success.
What's involved:

- Learn about admission requirements and how to apply for the Doctor of Medicine (MD).
- Gain insight into UQ's MD program structure, clinical placements, learning experiences and student support.
- Explore entry pathways, including partnerships with CQUniversity and UniSQ.
- Hear from UQ Medical School academics about UQ's new medical pathway.
- Hear insights from recent graduates and current students.
- Participate in an interactive Q&A with alumni and current students.

Find out more

Scholarships

Find out more

UQ Dr Pamela Reisner Scholarship for a Young Achiever

Organisation: University of Queensland
Location: Queensland
Value: AU$20,000 per year for up to 4 years
Open Date: August 17, 2026
Close Date: January 24, 2027
Find out more

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Competitions

Learning to Be Heard – Global Public Speaking Challenge for High School Students

Organisation: TED Summer School
Location: All
Value: Full or partial scholarship to attend the TED Summer School
Close Date: January 10, 2027
Find out more

First Jobs, Pay & Conditions

Are You Summer Work Ready?

You've updated your resume and sent off some applications. Well done! Now it's worth getting a few other things ready, so you can say yes quickly when an offer comes in.
Most employers ask for the same details before your first shift. This blog covers four of them: your tax file number, a bank account, a super fund and your workplace rights. The examples are Australian, so if you live somewhere else, look for the same steps under different names.

Get your tax file number
A tax file number (TFN) is your personal reference number for tax and super. It's free, and you can apply at any age.
How you apply depends on how old you are:

- **Aged 15 or over:** the fastest way is online, using a Digital ID such as myID.
- **Under 15, or can't use myID:** use the paper form or apply through Australia Post.
- **Who signs:** if you're 12 or under, a parent or guardian signs for you. At 13 to 15, you or a parent can sign. From 16, you sign yourself.

If you apply through Australia Post, the ATO says you should get your TFN within 28 days of it receiving your completed application. Without a TFN, your employer has to take more tax out of your pay. You can read the full steps on the ATO website or in our guide to tax for high school students.
Once you get started your new employer will also give you a TFN declaration form. This is where you can claim the tax-free threshold, which means the first $18,200 you earn in a year isn't taxed. That's about $350 a week. If you have two jobs, claim it from only one of them, usually the one that pays more. Our PAYG explainer shows how this appears on your payslip.

Set up a bank account for your wages
Employers pay wages straight into a bank account. You'll need to give them your BSB and account number, which you can find in your banking app.
If you're not already set up, you'll need to open a bank account. Look for an account that:

- can receive wage payments
- is easy to get to, comes with an app and a debit card
- has low or no fees, and a savings option for later

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Many banks offer accounts made for students and young people. If you're under 18, the bank may ask a parent or carer to help you open one. You'll also need to prove your identity. Our step-by-step bank account article walks you through it all, and our 100-point ID check explainer shows which documents you can use.

Know where your super goes

Super is money your employer pays into a retirement savings account for you, on top of your wages. The current rate is 12%.

Who gets it? If you're 18 or over, your employer pays super no matter how many hours you work. If you're under 18, they pay it when you work more than 30 hours in a week. So a few weekend shifts may not earn super, but a full-time summer job would.

There's one recent change. Since 1 July 2026, employers have to pay super on each payday, instead of once every three months. It should reach your fund within seven business days, so check your payslip to see it's there.

When you start, you'll get a form to choose your super fund. If you don't choose one, your employer asks the ATO for your "stapled" fund. That's an existing account that follows you from job to job. If you don't have one, they use their own default fund. Using one account for every job makes your savings easier to track and means you aren't paying fees on lots of small accounts. Our blog on what to look for in your first super fund could help you compare options.

If you're under 18, ask a parent or guardian to help. They may need to sign some forms.

Read up on your rights and responsibilities

The Fair Work Ombudsman is the best place to start. Your employer must give you a Fair Work Information Statement, even if you're a casual worker. Before your first day, find out your pay rate, whether you're casual, part-time or full-time, your hours and your duties.

Most jobs are covered by an award, which sets minimum pay rates. If yours isn't, the National Minimum Wage is $26.44 an hour from 1 July 2026, or $33.05 an hour for casuals (this includes a 25% casual loading). Lower rates may apply to juniors, so check your award. Our minimum wage for students article explains more.

Rules about the youngest age you can work, and the hours you can work, depend on where you live. Check what applies where you live.

You have a right to a safe workplace, and you're also responsible for taking reasonable care and following reasonable safety instructions. Each state and territory has a regulator with advice for young workers:

- New South Wales
- Australian Capital Territory
- Victoria
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Western Australia
- Northern Territory
- Tasmania
- New Zealand
- UK

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There's no test on any of this, and your employer will explain your role. But knowing the basics means you can spot a mistake or potential risk, and ask about it.

Check your first payslip
It's a good idea to keep track of how many shifts or hours you've worked. After your first pay, compare your payslip with your own record of the hours you worked. Check the hours, the hourly rate, any weekend or public holiday shifts, and your super. If something looks wrong, talk to your employer first. Our payslip guide shows what each part means.

Ready to start your search?
With these four things sorted, you can say yes as soon as the call comes. For tips on finding and landing casual work, read how to land your Christmas casual job. You can also explore more blogs in our Skills for Work section.

Portfolios, University

Why you should start a portfolio in year 10

A portfolio is a collection of work and records that shows your skills, achievements and experiences. It's often shared with employers, course providers and schools alongside a resume, and it can take different forms depending on what you want to show. Understanding what goes into a portfolio, and starting one early, makes it easier to collect pieces as they come up and put together strong applications when you need them.

What are the two types of portfolios?
Portfolios generally fall into two types: creative portfolios and career portfolios. Creative portfolios focus on what you make, while career portfolios focus on what you've done.

Creative portfolios
Creative portfolios refer to collections of your best creative work. They show your style, your technical ability and the way you approach ideas. Examples include:

- Artwork & sketches
- Design projects
- Photography
- Film or animation
- Creative writing
- Music recordings

Creative portfolios are commonly requested for creative courses and roles, such as design, media or fine arts. In some cases, they're required before an application can be considered.

Career portfolios
Career portfolios refer to collections of documents and records that show your skills, qualifications and experience. They can be useful for almost any job, course or program. Examples include:

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- A resume
- Certificates & awards
- References
- Records of work experience or volunteering
- School projects that show specific skills

While a resume lists what you've done, a career portfolio provides evidence of it. For example, your resume might mention that you completed work experience, while your portfolio could include the feedback form your host filled out.

Using them together
Creative and career portfolios can work separately, or be combined into a single portfolio with a section for each. The best approach depends on what you're applying for and which option best represents you.

Why start early?
You won't usually need a portfolio until an application asks for one, but starting well before then has several advantages.

It gives you more time to collect your work
Most of what goes into a portfolio comes from experiences spread across several years. If you wait until you need one, certificates, projects or feedback from earlier years can be hard to track down.

It shows how you've developed
Work from different years shows how your skills have grown over time. This can be particularly useful for creative course applications, where your progress and process can matter as much as your finished pieces.

It's ready when opportunities come up
Applications for work experience, part-time jobs and courses can have short deadlines. Having a portfolio already in progress means you can put an application together quickly, rather than starting from scratch.

It can help with subject choices
Looking back over your portfolio can help you see which subjects and projects you've done well in or enjoyed most. This gives you something concrete to discuss with teachers or careers advisers when choosing your senior subjects.
These advantages apply whether you're in Grade 8 or Grade 12. The earlier you start, the more you'll have to work with. Remember, the best time to start your portfolio was a year ago, and the next best time is today.

How Grade 10 can help build your portfolio
Grade 10 is often a year of new experiences, like work experience, a first part-time job or new responsibilities at school. Many of these can add something to your portfolio.

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Work experience
Many schools run work experience programs around this time. You may come away with a feedback form from your host, a short reference, or notes on what you worked on. Writing a short reflection soon afterwards, while the details are fresh, gives you another piece to add.

Part-time work
A part-time job helps you build a record of responsibilities you can list on your resume, like serving customers or working as part of a team. Over time, a supervisor may also be able to provide a reference.

Certificates and short courses
Short courses, such as first aid or training programs run through school, usually come with a certificate. These show you've met a specific standard, and they're one of the easiest things to add.

School projects
Assessments like research projects, presentations and major works can show skills that are hard to describe on a resume, like planning or problem solving. Keeping your best pieces, along with any feedback from your teachers, gives you examples to point to later.

Activities outside class
Sport, volunteering, leadership roles, clubs and competitions can all show qualities like teamwork and commitment. Certificates, letters or awards from these activities can be added as well.

How to start your portfolio
Starting a portfolio mostly comes down to choosing a format and gathering what you already have.

Choosing a format
Portfolios can be physical, like a folder or display book, or digital. Most students and workplaces now prefer digital portfolios, as they're easier to update, share and store, and they can include videos, audio and links.
A digital portfolio can be as simple as an organised cloud storage folder, a document or slideshow, or a page built with a free website builder. Pieces can still be printed for interviews or courses that ask to see work in person.

Gathering and organising your work
A good place to start is with work you've already completed. Scanning or photographing physical items gives you a digital copy of each, which makes them easier to store and share. From there, sort your work into clear groups, like creative work, certificates and references, so your portfolio is easy for others to follow. A sentence or two about what each piece shows also helps give it context.

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Keeping your portfolio private
Because a portfolio is designed to be shared, some information should be kept in a separate private folder and only provided when it's specifically requested. This includes:

- Identity documents
- Your home address & phone number
- Your date of birth
- School reports

If you need to include contact details, a professional email address is usually enough. You should also ask permission before including photos of other people or listing someone as a referee. If your portfolio is digital, sharing it through a private link instead of a public page gives you more control over who sees it. The eSafety Commissioner has more information on protecting your personal details online.

Two example starting portfolios
The examples below show what a portfolio might look like for a Grade 10 student who has just started building one. Each item is a general stand-in you can match to your own work.

Example 1: A career portfolio
This student has recently finished work experience and started a part-time job. Their portfolio includes:

- A one-page resume
- A recommendation from their supervisor at work
- A feedback form from their work experience host
- A short reflection on what they learned during work experience
- A certificate from a short course
- A certificate from a school leadership program
- A school project that shows research & presentation skills

Together, these pieces show reliability, workplace experience and skills built at school. This portfolio could support an application for a new part-time job or a volunteering role.

Example 2: A combined creative and career portfolio
This student is interested in studying design after school. Their portfolio includes:

- Their best work samples from art class
- Sketchbook pages showing how one idea developed
- A short film made for a school assessment
- A photo of their work displayed at a school exhibition
- A certificate from an art competition
- A one-page resume
- A reference from a teacher

The creative pieces show the student's style and process, while the career pieces show their achievements and that others can vouch for their work. If a course asks for a creative portfolio on its own, they can simply share that section.

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Keeping it up to date
A portfolio is easiest to manage when it's added to regularly. Setting a reminder at the end of each term gives you a set time to add new pieces, and to remove older ones that no longer reflect your best work.
It can also help to keep a main version with everything in it. That way, when you apply for something, you can create a shorter copy with only the pieces most relevant to that application.

It's a long-term project
The most important thing to remember is that your portfolio doesn't need to be complete from the start. It's something you can keep building throughout school and beyond.
Whether it's a certificate from a short course, a new piece of artwork or a reference from your first job, each addition helps build a clearer picture of what you can do.

Job Spotlights

How to become a Biochemist

Biochemists study the chemical and biological processes in food to improve safety, nutrition, and product quality. They might develop new ingredients, test preservation methods, or investigate how food changes over time, applying laboratory science to solve real problems for food manufacturers and researchers.
If you're naturally curious, enjoy laboratory work, and love figuring out how things work at a molecular level, this career could be right for you.

What skills do I need as a Biochemist?

- Curious & analytical
- Scientific mindset
- Patient & precise
- Strong problem-solver
- Detail-oriented mindset
- Confident communicator
- Comfortable with technology
- Persistent & methodical

What do Biochemists do?
Before running any experiments, you're designing your approach, reviewing previous research or results, and preparing the equipment and samples you'll need. You'll plan testing protocols carefully, since good results depend on a well-designed experiment from the outset, and check that everything meets the safety standards required in a laboratory setting, including any handling requirements for the materials involved.
Through the day, you're running lab experiments and analysing chemical and biological data, such as nutritional composition, microbial content, or how a product changes over its shelf life. You'll test food safety and quality against required standards, recording your results with

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precision. When results are unexpected, you're troubleshooting the process, checking variables, and running further tests to understand what's actually happening.
Beyond the lab bench, you're writing up findings into clear reports and sometimes presenting results to colleagues, product developers, or clients. You'll often collaborate with food technologists or product teams to apply your research to real products. Many Biochemists specialise in an area like food safety, nutrition science, or ingredient development over the course of their career.

What kind of lifestyle could I expect?
Biochemists work across food manufacturers, research institutions, universities, biotechnology companies, and sometimes government food safety agencies. Some focus on applied research that directly supports new products, while others work on more fundamental research into food science and nutrition. Most of the work happens in a laboratory setting, using specialist equipment and following strict procedures throughout every stage of an experiment, from setup to cleanup.
Hours generally follow a standard working week, since laboratory work tends to run on consistent schedules. That said, some experiments require monitoring at specific intervals, which can occasionally mean checking on results outside typical hours or over a weekend. Because lab work usually needs to happen on-site with access to equipment and samples, this role tends to offer less flexibility than many office-based careers in the same industry.
The work is precise and methodical rather than physically demanding, though you'll spend long periods standing at a bench and need to follow safety protocols carefully at all times. Travel isn't usually a big part of the role, aside from occasional conferences or site visits. Salaries in this field tend to be above average, reflecting the specialised scientific expertise involved, and the industry outlook is steady as food safety, nutrition, and product innovation remain ongoing priorities for the industry.

How to become a Biochemist
- **Study science subjects in school**: Focus on subjects like chemistry, biology, and maths, which build the scientific foundation you'll need for further study in this field and any related science degree you go on to pursue.
- **Complete a science degree**: Study a bachelor's degree majoring in biochemistry, food science, chemistry, or a related field, which gives you the theoretical knowledge and practical laboratory skills employers look for in this role.
- **Gain laboratory experience**: Look for research placements, internships, or graduate programs with food manufacturers, biotechnology companies, or research institutions to build hands-on experience in a real laboratory environment early on in your career.
- **Develop specialist knowledge**: Consider postgraduate study, such as honours or a master's degree, if you're interested in research-focused roles, or build deeper expertise in an area like food safety, nutrition science, or ingredient development instead.

From here, you could move into senior research roles, take on food science management responsibilities, or lead product development projects within a food or biotechnology company.

What can I do right now?

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If you're in high school and interested in working as a Biochemist, here are some practical steps:

- Study science subjects like chemistry and biology to build the foundation needed for a science degree.
- Look for lab-based work experience, science camps, or open days at universities or research institutions to see real lab work in action.
- Join a science club or enter science competitions at school to build your practical experimental skills and curiosity.

Find out more about alternative careers on our Job Spotlights page.

7 Cool Careers in Conservation

Conservation careers cover a wide variety of work, and each role draws on a different mix of skills, interests and qualifications.
Knowing the range of roles available makes it easier to find one that matches your interests, and to work out which school subjects and study pathways could help you get there.

What is conservation work?

Conservation refers to the work of protecting plants, animals and the places they live, so they can survive into the future. A lot of this work focuses on ecosystems, which are communities of living things and the environments they depend on, like a wetland or a coral reef.
Conservation roles generally fall into four broad areas:

- Science & research
- Animal care & handling
- Technology & data
- Communication & advocacy

Employers include government environment agencies, not-for-profit organisations, zoos, wildlife hospitals, universities and environmental consulting businesses, which help other organisations meet environmental rules.

Conservation Geneticist

A Conservation Geneticist studies the DNA of plants and animals to help protect them. A big part of the role is measuring genetic diversity, which is the range of genetic differences within a population. Populations with low genetic diversity can struggle to cope with disease or changing conditions, so this information helps guide breeding programs and decisions about moving animals between groups.
Some Conservation Geneticists also work with environmental DNA, or eDNA. Animals and plants leave tiny traces of DNA in water and soil, and testing a sample can show which species live in an area without anyone needing to see or catch them. Most of the work happens in labs and offices, with occasional field trips to collect samples.
The usual starting point is a university science degree in genetics, biology or a related area, and research roles often require further study after that. At school, biology, chemistry and maths can help you build a strong foundation.

Conservation Dog Handler

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A Conservation Detection Dog Handler works with a dog that's been trained to find specific scents. Depending on the project, they might search for the droppings of pest animals so they can be removed from an island, locate rare species that are hard to spot, or help find illegal wildlife products and track poachers.
Days are often spent outdoors searching, followed by training sessions to keep the dog's skills sharp. Handlers are also responsible for their dog's health and care, and the dog often lives with them.
There isn't one set pathway into this role. Many handlers start by building experience in dog training or animal care, and some combine dog handling with ranger or field ecology work. A vocational qualification in animal care or conservation and land management could be a good starting point, and biology and agricultural studies are useful subjects at school.

Wildlife Vet
A Wildlife Vet diagnoses and treats sick and injured wild animals. They could work in a wildlife hospital, a zoo or a conservation program, where they might check an animal's health before it's released or moved, or monitor diseases that threaten wild populations.
To become a vet, you'll need to complete an accredited veterinary science degree, which usually takes five to six years, and then register to practise. Many vets spend time in general practice first, building wildlife experience through volunteering, extra training or work at wildlife hospitals.
Vet courses usually have high entry requirements and often list chemistry and maths as prerequisites. If this role interests you, check the requirements for courses you're considering before choosing your senior subjects.

Drone Mapper
A Drone Mapper flies drones fitted with cameras or sensors to capture images of land and water. Software then combines hundreds of these photos into one detailed map, which conservation teams can use to count animals, check the health of reefs and forests, or see whether replanting projects are working.
The role is a mix of time in the field flying drones and time at a computer processing and analysing the images. Flying a drone for work often requires a remote pilot licence, which you can gain through an approved training course. Many Drone Mappers also study spatial science, environmental science or geography through vocational courses or university. Digital technologies, geography and maths are useful school subjects.

Bat Surveyor
A Bat Surveyor works out which bat species live in an area and how they're using it. Many work for environmental consulting businesses, carrying out surveys before land is cleared or developed so any protected species can be identified and managed.
Because bats are active at night, much of the work happens after dark. Surveyors use ultrasonic detectors to record echolocation calls, which are the high-pitched sounds bats use to navigate, and software then helps identify each species from its call. Some surveys also involve catching bats in special traps or nets to examine them up close. This requires permits, and anyone who handles bats is advised to have a course of rabies vaccinations first.

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Most Bat Surveyors have a degree in environmental science, ecology or zoology, or a vocational qualification in conservation and land management, along with field experience. Biology and geography are helpful subjects to take at school.

Wildlife Documentary Maker
A Wildlife Documentary Maker tells stories about animals and the environment through film. Their work helps audiences learn about threatened species and the challenges they face. Documentary roles include researching stories, filming, directing, recording sound and editing. Filming wildlife can involve long periods of waiting in a hide, but much of the work happens before and after filming.
Common pathways include vocational or university courses in screen and media production, often paired with a science background or a strong understanding of animal behaviour. The best part is you can start building a portfolio now by making your own short films, even on a phone. Media, visual arts, English and biology can all be useful at school.

Environmental Lobbyist
An Environmental Lobbyist works to influence the decisions governments make about the environment. They meet with politicians and government staff, write submissions about proposed laws, and present evidence for why certain species or places should be protected. Some lobbyists work directly for environmental organisations, while others represent clients through consulting businesses and may need to be listed on an official register of lobbyists. The role relies heavily on research, persuasive writing and building relationships.
Common study pathways include law, politics, communications or environmental science. At school, English and legal studies are useful, and joining a debating team is a practical way to build the skills the role uses.

Getting started while you're at school
You don't need to choose a specific role yet to start building experience in conservation. Volunteering with a landcare group, a wildlife rescue organisation or a citizen science project, where members of the public help scientists collect data, can give you hands-on experience across several of these areas. It can also help you work out which type of work suits you best, whether that's lab work, fieldwork, technology or communication.
If you'd like to learn about other roles and pathways, we have plenty of jobs and careers resources for you to check out.

Entrepreneurship

The pros and cons of being an entrepreneur
Lots of young people dream of running their own business and that's fantastic. Maybe you've spotted a problem nobody is fixing, or you have a hobby that people keep offering to pay you for. Being an entrepreneur can be one of the most exciting paths you can take. But like any path, you might experience a few bumps along the way. The good news is that most of those hurdles are much easier to handle if you're prepared for them happening.
Let's look at the upsides, the challenges, and the practical steps you could take to give your idea its best chance.

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What's great about being an entrepreneur

You'll get to make the decisions. As your own boss, you'll choose what you sell, who you work with, and to a certain degree how you'll spend your days (tasks still need to get done).

You could also turn something you really care about into your work. Whether you love baking, coding, fashion, or fixing bikes, a business lets you build your work days around the things you enjoy.

Then there are the skills. Running even a small business teaches you about money, sales, marketing, customer service, and problem-solving. Employers value these skills in almost every industry, so they're never wasted, even if you later decide running your own business isn't for you.

Finally, there's no fixed limit on what you can earn. A regular job usually comes with a set wage, but a business can grow as far as you're able to take it.

The tricky parts (and how to handle them)

Every career has downsides. Here are the common ones for entrepreneurs, along with a tip to bear in mind about what you can do about each.

Your income might go up and down

Some months, sales might be brilliant. Other months, they might be slow. That can make it hard to plan ahead.

Start small and keep your costs low. Lots of people keep a part-time job while their business finds its feet, so they still have money coming in. Although it's tempting to splurge on good days, it's always worth remembering to put a little aside for quieter months.

It can take up a lot of time

When it's your business, there's always one more job to do and not necessarily anyone else to do it.

Setting clear limits, especially around schoolwork, sleep, and time with friends is a great habit to have from the start. Try blocking out two or three set times each week for your business and sticking to them. A business that fits around your life instead of consuming is far easier to keep going and avoid burning out.

Not every idea will work

This is the part that worries most people and with statistics like "half of new businesses don't reach year five" it can be easy to feel disheartened.

It's always a good idea to test your idea cheaply before you spend much money. Sell a small batch, run a quick survey, or ask people whether they'd actually pay for it. An idea that doesn't work shouldn't be the end of your plans, it's useful information for your next attempt.

It can feel lonely

Without a team or a manager, and everything resting on you, it's easy to feel weighed down. Find people to share ideas with. A teacher, a family friend who runs a business, or a school enterprise club can all offer support and honest feedback. You could even ask your local

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chamber of commerce if you can join their meetings or find other local business catch ups (or start your own) - you won't be the only one looking for connections.

Some entrepreneurs get it right first time…
Every now and then, someone's first big idea takes off. Sara Blakely had never taken a business class or worked in fashion, and she had just $5,000 to put into her idea for Spanx, a brand of shapewear. Interestingly, she kept working her nine-to-five job while she spent two years creating her product.
Melanie Perkins is another example. She started selling handmade scarves at 14, then launched Fusion Books at 19, an online tool for designing school yearbooks. It began in her mother's living room, and over five years it became Australia's largest yearbook company, expanding into France and New Zealand. That success led her to co-found Canva, the design platform you may have used at school.

…and some had to keep trying
For many entrepreneurs, success comes after plenty of attempts. James Dyson, the inventor of the bagless vacuum cleaner, built thousands of prototypes over four years, and then his successful cyclonic vacuum designs were rejected by all the major manufacturers, meaning he had to go into production alone.
The company behind Angry Birds Rovio had made 51 games and was close to bankruptcy when it developed its 52nd game, Angry Birds, which went on to become one of the most famous mobile games ever made. Bill Gates first startup Traf-O-Data failed at it's first demo when the machine didn't work. The founder of PayPal Max Levchin hd miltiple failed startups before he hit success.
In fact, if you read the biographies of lots of entrepreneurs, the majority experienced some setbacks and hiccups along the way. Luck plays a part in their stories, but sticking at it plays a bigger one.

Why a backup plan is a smart move
Having a backup plan doesn't mean you don't believe in your idea or yourself. It means you can take risks without everything depending on one outcome. Notice that Sara Blakely kept her job while she built her product. Aytekin Tank creator of JotForm worked as a senior web developer for a large internet media company while coding and launching his platform. Sal Khan kept working as a financial analyst, while tutoring his cousin in math using online notes and YouTube videos, that later grew into Khan Academy.
For you, a backup plan might mean finishing school, keeping your study or training options open, or holding on to a part-time job. It could also mean building skills, like writing, design or bookkeeping, that will be useful whatever you end up doing.

Do your research before you start
Good research is the key to turning a hopeful idea into a realistic plan. Before you launch, try answering these questions:

- **Who are your customers?** Be specific. "Everyone" isn't a customer group, but "busy parents at my school" is.

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- **Who else is doing this?** Look at your competitors and work out what you could do differently or better.
- **What will it cost?** Add up materials, equipment, and any fees, then work out a fair price that still allows you to make a profit.
- **What are the rules?** Check what applies where you live. If you're under 18, some things, like signing contracts or opening certain accounts, may need help from a parent or guardian. Working in some industries like food prep might require licensing. It's important to find all that out before you even start on anything else.

Ready to explore your business idea?
Being an entrepreneur isn't always easy, but with research, a backup plan, and the willingness to keep learning, it could be an incredibly rewarding path. Start small, stay curious and remember that every attempt teaches you something.
Want more inspiration? Head over to our Entrepreneurship page for business ideas, tips and real stories to help you take your first step.

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