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9-10 NOVEMBER 2015 // PULLMAN MELBOURNE ON THE PARK

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Mrs Daniela Ascone

Director - Strategy & Partnerships, Fingerprint Me Youth Employment Academy

Putting Education to Work

The journey from school towards the world of work can be daunting; the resume, the interview, the outfit, the first day and the new boss – it's a whole new world!

We also recognise that the secondary school curriculum is overcrowded however with increasing youth unemployment rates across Australia, we now need to make the room for a structured employability skills program that has been developed with input from industry and incorporates the career development framework. Introducing the Pathway Passport (PP) that is delivered by Fingerprint Me Youth Employment Academy career coaches, youth employment specialists and our Volunteer Industry Professionals (VIPs) within secondary schools, tertiary providers and community learning centres.

PP adds value to any existing activities with a school such as Mock Interview programs and is also mapped to the Australian Curriculum supporting schools and teachers to help develop the skills, character and attitudes students need to progress in life and succeed in the world of work through the delivery of a program that incorporates employability and life skills, and extended to entrepreneurship. Upon completion of the program, students receive their Pathway Passport that can be included in the young persons' resume and presented to prospective employers outlining the key competencies achieved by the young person throughout the program. The Pathway Passport is a young persons' ticket to success in today's competitive labour market!



Dr Dina Bowman

Senior manager, Research and Policy Centre, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Opening the gate: mature age jobseekers and employment services

Policy responses to mature-age unemployment tend to focus on incentives for employers to hire mature-age workers and on challenging ageist attitudes held by employers. The impact of employment services as intermediaries between mature-age jobseekers and employers has yet to be properly understood or addressed.

The report of the review into Commonwealth legal barriers to mature-age persons participating in the workforce or other productive work, Access all ages (ALRC 2013) observed that labour market intermediaries perform a critical 'gate-keeping function' that can exclude mature-age workers. The Inquiry heard 'mature-age job seekers are not receiving the appropriate employment assistance' and many feel 'their age means they are not treated with respect.' (ALRC 2013)

This presentation reports on a recently completed ARC Linkage study that examined workforce vulnerabilities in midlife and beyond. The study was conducted by researchers at the Brotherhood of St Laurence, University of Melbourne, Curtin University, in partnership with Jobs Australia. It provides insight into mature-job-seekers - often but not always negative - experience of employment services. The presentation highlights the importance of building greater awareness of the circumstances and needs of mature-age jobseekers and suggests some practical steps to more effectively assist them.



Mr Ian Bridger
Director, Across Culture

An alliance between Across Culture and Babana Aboriginal men's Group that centres on mentoring

There is an informal Alliance between Babana Aboriginal Mens Group, and Across Culture focusing on the placement and retention of long term unemployed.

Babana has led the way showing what can be done with mentoring as part of a successful fitness for work and retention strategy.

Across Culture has built on Babana's success and is taking mentoring training for Indigenous people Australia-wide - from remote communities in the Northern Territory to Australia's largest corporations eg Qantas where retention rates have increased to 80% over 18 months.

We aim to demonstrate how Babana and Across Culture formed an alliance based on a similar vision and methods of community engagement; how engaging families assists with employment retention and the important role that mentoring plays in assisting with employment retention

Our paper will focus on two case studies; Qantas Mentor strategy that increased the retention rate of school based trainees within Qantas by 80% and John C - a journey from LTU, mentoring to full time employment. We will also discuss why mentors should gain a formal qualification.

Babana is one of the largest and strongest Aboriginal Men's Group in Australia with over 300 members. Babana supports long term unemployed into employment and employs mentors to support people to remain employed.

Across Culture assists organisations to build cultural capability to retain staff. We are course developers and copyright owners of 10418NAT Certificate III in Mentoring Diverse Groups and 10571NAT Certificate IV in Workplace Mentoring.



Ms Therese Campbell

Executive Director, WorkFocus Group, delivering JobAccess

JobAccess - Helping you knock out the final barrier to employment

The rate of long term unemployment is at a 13 year high, with 69% of Newstart recipients on the payment for more than 12 months. The economic and human toll of long-term unemployment is inarguable. The nation and individuals alike suffer from skills atrophy and lack of productivity. What's more, people who are experiencing long-term unemployment are more likely to live with physical and mental health issues.

Employers and service providers are in the frontline in addressing this issue. You need to use every tool in the box to support job seekers into work and that starts with knowing what tools are at your disposal - and how to use them.

Sometimes everything is nearly lined up for placing a job seeker in a great job, but the employer is not confident it will work, or a workplace accommodation is needed, or there is some issue related to disability. This session guides you on what to do next.

What resources are available to service providers? Employers? Job seekers? How do you access them?

Delivered by WorkFocus Australia on behalf of the Australian Government, JobAccess is an example of practical Government investment in the speedy removal of barriers to work for people with disability. Set up to advise employers, service providers and job seekers with disability, JobAccess helps to reduce the impact of barriers faced in the workplace with advice, support and funding via the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF).

Case studies and practical tips will feature throughout the presentation, illustrating the role JobAccess can play in removing workplace barriers and overcoming long term unemployment for people with disability, including mental health conditions.



Ms Simone Casey
Policy Analyst, Jobs Australia

The social policy implications of resistance and conflict in employment services

This session is based on the findings of PhD research being undertaken at RMIT by Simone Casey who is also a long-standing Policy Analyst at Jobs Australia as leading policy development agency.

The research has focused on exploring the causes of conflict and resistance in employment services with view to understanding its implications for social policy. A critical theoretical account of resistance and conflict has been developed which identifies ways in which social policy could be designed to achieve better alignment with the interests and needs of unemployed people.

This approach focuses on developing pre-existing potential in the forms of capital and capability residing in individuals and their social networks.



Ms Deb Donaldson

Social Enterprise Manager, Family Life

Re-inventing "employment" through social enterprise and community investment

As a place based community service organisation, Family Life engages with individuals and families excluded from employment and the employment system. Our families face so many barriers beyond lack of skills: for example low self-esteem, eroded hope, caring responsibilities, and health concerns.

Yet they are capable; they can learn and become stronger and ready for employment, with time and the support of a community of caring citizens sharing their assets and resources for mutual benefit.

This is the essence of Family Life PeopleWorx, a social enterprise, community supported, employment training program where participants can learn new skills, meet new people and gain support in a fun and friendly environment.

For over 10 years, Family Life has provided young people and long term unemployed parents with a pathway into employment. Over 1,000 people have grown through the training and mentoring in our retail social enterprises for people who are disengaged with traditional learning, socially isolated and finding it difficult to secure employment.

PeopleWorx provides:

- Training in retail and logistics/warehouse skills
- Personal support and encouragement from trained volunteer mentors
- Support looking for a job
- Support going on with further education
- A social network
- Work experience in up-market Opportunity Shops and a Warehouse
- Professional counselling and welfare support from Family Life staff

Like those who participate in PeopleWorx, the program struggles to integrate with the formal government funded job services system.

The results achieved leads us to propose a system re-design to focus on real life outcomes, and re-inventing employment to include measures for social participation and community contribution as indicators of valuable, measurable activity, equivalent to employment. Program data and case studies will be shared.



Ms Colleen Chen

Independent Researcher, Recruitment and Consulting Services Association

A survey of Attitudes of the Recruitment Industry towards Older Workers

Older Australians face increasing barriers to employment. With more than 200,000 Australians aged over 50 are now on the dole, Australia has relatively low levels of mature age employment when compared to many other OECD countries. (Commonwealth Government, 2010)

In addition to the fiscal challenges this presents, Australian employers also suffer a cost by not fully utilising the skills, experience and mentoring abilities offered by mature age workers. The recruitment industry can lead the way in bridging the gap in successful placements between employers and mature age job seekers. (National Seniors Productive Aging Centre, 2012)

The aim of this paper is to measure and highlight the attitudes of recruiters towards older workers. The paper is a ten-year update to research undertaken as part of Age Management in the Workplace, a pilot program developed in 2005 by the Recruitment and Consulting Services Association (RCSA). Consistent with the prior report, senior managers in the recruitment industry are interviewed in order to identify longitudinal changes in the industry's views on age management needs, current industry practices and perceived employer attitudes to older workers.

Findings in relation to the research will strengthen an understanding of how recruiters recognise the talents and offerings of mature age and older workers and help place them with clients who may have been oblivious to the benefits an older worker can bring.



Mr Michael Claessens
General Manager, Agrifood Skills Solutions

AgriFood Collaborative Regional Enterprise Skilling (ACRES)

Regional areas suffer from a major lack of labour and skills. This is a strong impediment to regional growth and regional sustainability. There are significant tools of un and under-employed people in each region who struggle to engage with industry and the training system.

ACRES is a program guided by deep analysis and research and direct advice from industry in regions. It is unique in effectively addressing this intractable challenge. Using skills sets - targeted much more to meeting key business needs participants report quicker returns to profitability, better business skills and strong employment outcomes. The model also provides for cross industry skilling with the prospect of retaining key trained labour within the region over time, and improving regional output.

The model has won multiple industry training and industry collaboration models. A major independent evaluation of the project was completed by ACIL-Allens in May 2014. It noted that there are multiple concurrent market failures that have led to underinvestment in skills and workforce development in the agrifood sectors in regional Australia. It highlights that our approach seeks to address this through a replicable demand-driven model to effect cultural change in workforce development in agrifood and related industries at a regional level.

The Evaluation Report found that ACRES is well placed to meet local needs compared to similar programs. The Evaluation goes on to find that ACRES is not just able to develop regional networks, but can also shape the norms and values of those networks. Important norms and values of networks include trust, reciprocity, cooperation, and acceptance of diversity.



Ms Brooke Cunningham

Community in the Kitchen Coordinator, YWCA NSW

Mr Roger Kennedy

Head of Programs, Impact and Collaboration

Making a difference in the lives of risk youth in the Northern Rivers, NSW: successful transitions to work and life

Young people regardless of their upbringing or locale face a multitude of challenges when approaching the transition to work; high youth unemployment / underemployment statistics as well as lack of information, networks, work-relevant skills, experience and credentials. Challenges are compounded when young people face resilience and confidence issues, learning barriers, mental health concerns, disability or unstable family situations. What if we could provide youth, who are at-risk of or already disengaged from mainstream education models, the opportunity to find their possible, to push their educational boundaries and be a contributing member of Australia's employment market?

Eight years ago, YWCA NSW responded to a local community need, recognising that there was a critical lack of support for youth in the Northern Rivers region of NSW to engage in employment and further training. Following consultation with community service providers, employers and training institutions, the Community in the Kitchen program was born, to assist at-risk youth (aged 15 - 24 years) to make successful transitions to work and life.

Our oral presentation will outline the holistic approach we have developed to support youth in the Northern Rivers where our specialist youth worker integrates personal support and referral with life and employability skills development, facilitated industry work experience and an accredited Certificate II in vocational training. The presentation will outline lessons learned over the eight-year evolution of this program, including the importance of community sector and business community partnerships; and offer insight into the positive outcomes achieved (including training completion rates of over 75%, and employment and education outcomes greater than 65%), measured through YWCA NSW's Results Based Accountability™ measurement framework.



Ms Katrina Currie

General Manager, Work and Learning, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Ms Lisa Patience

Senior Manager, Work and Learning Centres, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Ms Helen Long

Project Manager, Northern Futures

Victoria's Work and Learning Centres - tackling long term unemployment through a model of collaboration and place based, community connections

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) operates five Work and Learning Centres in collaboration and partnership with local community organisations. The program primarily targets people who are long term unemployed and living in public or social housing and in areas that are highly disadvantaged. Four of the sites operate in the regional centres of Shepparton, Geelong, Moe and Ballarat.

The program recently received another four years funding from the Victorian Government. Work and Learning Centres have worked with over 2,300 clients, and placed over 1,000 people into work with 57% of these so far retaining employment for 16 weeks or more. Over 900 clients have participated in accredited training, with 58% completing the training. Around 65% of clients are also clients of the mainstream employment services system, with 42% long term unemployed.

Work and Learning Centres operate through a collaborative prime provider model. The model recognises and values local community networks and trust. This presentation will focus on the nature of the model and in particular how the relationship works between the Brotherhood of St Laurence and one of the local community partners for Work and Learning Centres, Northern Futures, in Geelong. Further, it will explore how Northern Futures utilises its local networks and relationships, including those with employers and jobactive providers, to add value to the program and to open up opportunities for clients.



Mr Peter Davidson
Senior Adviser, ACOSS

Does Work for the Dole work?

Work for the Dole plays a prominent part in the Abbott Government's employment services architecture. Most long term unemployed people will be expected to participate in the program. This is not surprising since the Prime Minister himself was responsible for entrenching the program as Employment Services Minister in the early 2000s.

Over the years the program has accumulated diverse objectives from 'giving something back' to the community to improving self esteem, skills and work incentives.

This paper will present evidence on the effectiveness of work for benefit schemes here and overseas in improving participant's employment prospects. It draws a distinction between 'threat' or 'referral' effects (which are strong) and 'program' effects (which are weak) and offers explanations for these strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, alternatives to Work for the Dole are presented.



Mr Mark Davis
Director, Feed More People

The power of connecting non-profits to your business to provide motivation for early school leavers to commence work

There are two types of people in the world. Those with a job, and those without.

Every young person wants a job. Because they need income to support the technology they rely on and to help support the family they can't afford to leave. More than 50% of the employees in our non-profit organisation are aged 16-18. Students doing school based traineeships who want to focus on a vocation that doesn't require University, but does give them a headstart in the job market and understanding how to work with others.

Youth need a mission to believe in, and traditional methods of employment don't always work. A part-time job at a fast food restaurant has them playing the role of a cog in the machine. They disappear into the business and every day is the same.

When you link your business to have a purpose supporting a non-profit or charity, directly, through the daily activities in their job, their focus changes. Instead of it being about me, me, me – it's about helping others. And nothing is more powerful a motivator than knowing that someone else is relying on you to come to work.

Using this motivation, our school based program had 92% attendance on a weekly basis - sometimes 90 minutes away from the students home, with two trains and a bus connection.

Using this model, thousands of students around Australia had the chance to get a job that they believed in. And over 90% completed their traineeship and received their certificate - and over \$4000 in part-time wages for the year.

In this talk, I want to share with you how to bring this partnership model into your business through the "Employ More People" model and help get more young people working from tomorrow.



Ms Liz de Chastel
Senior Policy Officer, Catholic Social Services Australia

Long Term Unemployment - part of the web of entrenched disadvantage

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) together with Jesuit Social Services released an update of the Dropping off the Edge Report in July 2015.

This report is the fourth in a series begun in 1999. The research shows that disadvantage in Australia is entrenched in approximately 3% of communities, and over many years these communities have borne a disproportionate burden of disadvantage across multiple indicators. The report maps the location of all communities experiencing disadvantage across Australia and their defining characteristics, and provides a framework for positive and sustainable change.

High levels of unemployment, low levels of income and education, housing stress, high incidence of family violence and criminal offending are consistently present in these communities. These factors coalesce to form a web of disadvantage severely limiting life opportunities over generations and accruing significant social and economic costs to the broader community.

This research found that a range of indicators are predictive of highly disadvantaged communities and where long term unemployment is prevalent. These include low family income, unengaged young people, disability, limited internet access, and overall education. Many of these communities are in regional and rural Australia and indigenous communities are amongst the most highly disadvantaged. However many outer metropolitan areas are close to dropping off the edge.

Assisting long term unemployed people with job placements has to be more than a stand alone program of interviews and skills training. There needs to be better integration with other services to address the wholistic nature of the causes of the long term unemployed person as well as working with the community to improve conditions.

We need a multi-layered, cooperative and coordinated strategy that is owned and driven by the community. It must involve all layers of government and the business and community sectors, reflecting shared responsibility and joint commitment to resolve this entrenched problem. The strategy must take account of the unique characteristics and circumstances of local communities and must be sustained over the long term.



Mrs Maria Dimitriou

Employment and Learning Coordinator, Hume City Council

Bringing Communities Together to Tackle Long-Term Unemployment and Improve Economic Development - Place Based Strategies in the City of Hume, Victoria.

The City of Hume contains some of the most disadvantaged areas in Victoria and Australia. The 2015 Dropping off the Edge analysis found that Broadmeadows (within Hume) was in the top band for disadvantage with people living there three times more likely to be experiencing long term unemployment. Youth unemployment is also exceptionally high. In recent years Hume City Council has led or partnered with a number of initiatives to broker better outcomes for both unemployed residents and local businesses.

The Council has a unique role as it is often the first point of contact for employers and large developments offering new jobs. It also works closely with state and federal government agencies and local community based organisations supporting disadvantaged residents. œLocal Jobs for Local People ² has been the theme for a string of initiatives aimed at better understanding the labour force needs of employers and working with local agencies to prepare jobseekers to meet these needs or directly broker job ready candidates into roles. This has been done under the stewardship of the Hume Jobs and Skills Task Force established by Council in 2012.

The presentation will outline these initiatives including employer-led information sessions across sectors including aged care, banking, retail, transport and logistics where employers detail their immediate and future hiring needs, recruitment methods and tips to meet selection criteria to local residents; the innovative use of technology (local job on-line boards and Facebook pages); and the Council becoming a recruitment partner for large new developments such as Highlands Hotel and the Lend Lease Craigieburn Central Shopping Centre. It will detail outcomes and lessons learned and make the case for local governments across Australia to play a leading role in place-based solutions for long term unemployed people.



Ms Sue Ellson

Independent LinkedIn Specialist, Newcomers Network

Massaging the Message Online: how to share the good news via LinkedIn and Social Media

Individuals with gaps in employment, low levels of digital literacy, computer experience or professional skills can often believe that it is better to have no online profile than a 'bad' online profile.

However, 70% of hiring decision makers will do a Google Search before offering a job to an applicant. This workshop aims to demonstrate multiple practical ways that people with varied backgrounds can showcase their abilities in truthful and creative ways on LinkedIn and other social media.

It will also provide tips on how to massage various messages to create a quality perception without being dishonest. Various examples will be shared and templates and formats provided for implementation.

This is a seriously practical workshop - full of tips that you can take home and use.



Mrs Rebecca Fraser
Consultant, Rebecca Fraser Consulting

The implications of technology in job search strategies

There is extensive media surrounding how technology is impacting the way that individuals work and the future of industries that are being advanced through automation and technological changes. There is however limited media surrounding the way that technology is impacting the job search for all individuals, and in turn disadvantaging many others. The traditional method of job searching has been enhanced through the introduction of sites such as LinkedIn, increasing the growth of employment through the hidden job market which is reported to be operating at higher than 70% of all available job vacancies. However the introduction of technologies in the application process alone may be hindering many individuals' job search outcomes.

Automated systems are used to process candidate applications and the way that these systems have been developed and implemented mean that the individual submitting an application may not even be identified through the process. We know of large organisations that can track only 30% approximately of individuals submitting an application to completion. Parser technologies used in some systems to scan application documents for key content can be so simplistic that they cannot read content inside table formats, brackets and headers and footers.

This means that even templates commonly selected in Microsoft word are not compatible. These technologies are impacting individuals' at all socio-economic levels, however it is fair to say they will be a key contributor to disadvantaged individuals being further hindered by the technology dependent application process. Understanding these technologies and how they operate is integral for anyone working within the space of unemployment or job search support.



Dr Terry Froggatt
Lecturer, University of Wollongong

Social Enterprise as a catalyst for health behaviour change

The Soft Landing Social Enterprise is an employment model which facilitates health and lifestyle behavior change in people with a lived experience of a mental health condition.

Ostensibly the Soft Landing social enterprise is a business. It provides goods and services, involves manufacturing processes and competes with other businesses. What is unique about this business that its workforce consists of highly disadvantaged people who have been unemployed for a significant amount of time many of whom have a lived experience of mental health conditions? The topic of employment for this group of people is important at an individual, organisational and societal level.

Drawing upon the mental health and employment literature I present a general framework for understanding how the relationship between this model of employment and health/lifestyle behavior change can make a difference in the lives of people who have a lived experience of mental illness. Using a qualitative research methodology, data was collected from the participants in the business and several interesting patterns of findings emerged. The trans-theoretical model of behavior change was introduced to the participants for them to determine their current stage of change and their motivation for improvement. The paper concludes with a discussion of the future research directions and implications for future employment and mental health practice in the workplace.



Ms Dorothy Frost
Manager, Research and Innovation, IPAR

A new path to motivating change

In a quest to improve return to work outcomes when traditional rehabilitation has failed, IPAR has adopted a new approach to redeployment utilising standardised bio-psychosocial tools, chronic disease self-management techniques and personalised health and career coaching. The approach recognises that multiple factors impact how an individual responds to an injury.

Initial trials of this model have focused on individuals who may have participated in traditional vocational rehabilitation but remain unemployed and unable to participate in rewarding daily activities. Outcomes have been pleasing, including an individual who returned to work after 16 years. Of significance is the individual experience of greater empowerment and involvement in their treatment and job seeking program. Outcomes and implications for broader service delivery will be presented.



Dr George Giuliani
Chief Executive Officer, E-focus

The impact of a relationship based practice on employment outcomes and the individual and structural inhibitors to relationship based models of practice

My research methodology used focus groups of job seekers and employment consultants to inform the design of an online survey of employment consultants. The survey responses were used to construct a Relationship Focus Score which was correlated with employment outcome scores and the length of unemployment of job seekers on consultants' caseloads.

I plan to present material on the engagement styles of frontline workers. The impact of a relationship focus on employment outcomes and the individual and structural inhibitors to relationship based models of practice.

I also propose to discuss the identified decline in the education levels of frontline workers, leaving workers dependent on government contract guidelines and the policy settings of their respective agencies to guide their actions at the frontline. This, in turn, results in few frameworks and little opportunity for discretion in implementing empowering models of practice.

I will argue that a greater focus on relationship building and improving the skill level of front line workers could improve the capacity for effective case management, and better enable workers to practice in ways consistent with the values and processes expected in helping professions.



Dr Kylie Henderson
Managing Director, Back2Work Health Specialists

Dr Juanita Muller
Organisational Psychologist

Mr Brenton Fielke
Occupational Therapist

Employment Outcomes for job seekers with mental health and medical conditions: The Evidence and Strategies to improve return to work outcomes

It is well known that the unemployed have a higher incidence of mental health conditions, and poorer general health than the rest of the population. Assisting this sometimes vulnerable group of job seekers to gain and maintain employment requires a certain level of expertise. This presentation will provide the current research evidence on the most effective interventions to assist job seekers with mental health and medical conditions.

And we will also provide expert tips and practical strategies for employment services consultants on how to assess and match job seekers with mental health and medical conditions to employment. The learning outcomes from this presentation are to extend our understanding of effective interventions for job seekers, and to provide some practical skills to enhance employment services outcomes. This presentation will be delivered by a clinical psychologist, an organisational psychologist, and an occupational therapist - together with over 60 years in the return to work and employment services industry.



Dr Tass Frances Holmes
Researcher, University of Melbourne - Anthropology

Well, that just complicates matters: The prevalence of long-term poverty in a rural Victorian community, and its interface with enactments of social and health policy directives through government agencies

This paper discusses aspects of a recent anthropological research project, broadly focused on use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in a rural Victorian community. Participative research facilitated an in-depth understanding of the lives and character of residents of the community, in terms of their experience of entrenched poverty, and the relationship of this circumstance to personal and family hardships, impacted further by formalised enactments of moral health policy directives and institutionalised duty-of-care, through government agencies, including the Department of Human Services, the mental health system, and decision-makers in the welfare sector. In a community where little employment is available within reasonable travelling distance, the most impoverished persons encountered during the research were sole-parents and their children, who are specifically affected by recent changes to welfare payment rates designed to stimulate their increased effort to find gainful employment.

Building from simple structuring frameworks developed from anonymous quantitative appraisal of a poor segment of the community, and numerical tally of known community members and interviewees with mental health problems, the paper unpacks richly descriptive ethnographic data from the stories of research participants, particularly highlighting narratives about lives lived in the long-term role of sole parents, and through the eyes of mentally ill persons. Recent 'improvements' in policy approaches - addressing the seeming worklessness of sole parents, the need to accommodate children when family problems arise (often targeting Aboriginal, migrant, mentally ill, and sole-parent families), and the exercise of powerful and increasingly legalised sanctions that subjugate and control the experience of mental illness, for the benefit of sufferers, families and communities - provide an effective government-citizen interface that serves to complicate the life experiences of impoverished Australians, and seemingly overlooks attempts at realistic, supportive solutions. This problem was starkly apparent even in a relatively trouble-free yet poor community without imposed 'income management'.



Ms Lisa Howlett

Workplace Learning Coordinator, Highlands Local Learning and Employment Network

Jobs and Skills Drive

As an inaugural event in 2013, the Ballarat Jobs and Skills Drive provided a vehicle for the development of industry, education, employment and jobseeker links within a condensed timeframe.

The aim was to increase job and training opportunities for unemployed jobseekers, including youth, single parents, indigenous people and jobseekers with disabilities in a regional area. This was done by offering a number of events focusing on skills and knowledge acquisition. It also provided the opportunity for jobseekers to speak directly with employers who had positions available immediately.

The Ballarat Jobs and Skills Drive offered an extensive suite of programs and activities for jobseekers as well as career practitioners, employers, community members, students, parents/guardians, e.g. Peak Performance, Dress of Success, What Employers Want, Improve Your Chances of Getting an Interview, You Don't Get a Second Chance to Make a First Impression, Meet the Bosses and a Live Jobs Find.

Building partnerships and obtaining sponsorship and funding are imperative, as the cost of the Drive is around \$25,000. Partnerships with local council as well as JSA's, government departments and local business networks provide a platform for a diverse program. It also enhances the sustainability of the Drive for the future.

The yearly event is successful due to co-ordination by one organisation who dedicated 1 staff member to the co-ordination role with additional support from the whole organisation. Reputation, branding and advertising for the Jobs and Skills Drive in 2013 established a recognised branding, allowing promotion through various organisations to established cohorts. Quality and reputation of speakers/experts and the variety of sessions provided in a CBD location along with the professional approach by staff and open-door friendly welcome to all also contributes. The willingness of local employers to participate and share knowledge and the support and attendance by local politicians is very important.



Prof Eoin Killackey

Professor of Functional Recovery in Youth Mental Health, Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health

Individual Placement and Support: Australian Evidence and implications for young people with severe mental illness

Young people with mental illness nominate employment as a number one goal. Despite this in most places, young people with mental illness have higher rates of unemployment than their same age peers, and these rates tend to persist. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an effective intervention to address employment and education in young people with psychosis. However, a number of challenges exist that need still to be addressed. These include factors related to the client, and external factors such as a changing world of work in which job security is diminishing

We have conducted two randomised controlled trials of IPS and an uncontrolled study of IPS for education. We found that IPS was extremely effective at helping young people with severe mental illness return to work, but not specifically better in relation to education. When we adapted IPS to be focussed exclusively on education, results were very positive. On the basis of these results we have made a number of policy recommendations.

Despite the cost of unemployment among young people with mental illness, and the evidence of an effective intervention to assist return to, or entry into, the workforce, very few young people have access to IPS to assist in their vocational recovery.

As a consequence of our evidence and our suggestions young people attending the new national early psychosis programs, federally funded and run by headspace will have access to IPS. Further, in this years budget money was committed to trialling new approaches to employment interventions for young people with mental illness. This presentation will discuss our evidence, these policy outcomes and directions for the future.



Mr Adrian King

Director Behavioural Services, Esher House Pty Ltd

Closing the Gap: How Behavioural Science Can Achieve Remarkable Results

The 2005 Social Justice Report sought commitment from the Government to achieve Australia-wide equality with Aboriginal health and life expectancy within the next 25 years: 'Closing the Gap'. After committing to the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA), over \$4.6 billion funding was funded by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and directed to projects in health, housing, early childhood, economic participation and remote service delivery.

This presentation digs a little deeper into this lofty aspirational goal, specifically looking at data and outcomes and showing comprehensively how we, as a society, might be failing miserably in relation to youth and remote service delivery.

We will, however, uncover insights from the data and how we can purposefully use this information to reshape what we do, how we deliver interventions and ultimately how we can achieve ground-breaking results. The talk's focus specifically targets disadvantaged youth, remote indigenous Australians and ultimately reveals how we can bridge academic research with real life coalface delivery for employment services and education.

After several years in remote and rural WA and QLD, "Bush-Shrek", as he's affectionately known, brings an enlightened perspective from his work in socially and economically deprived communities: from inner-city Scotland to outback NT. He shares behavioural insights and academic research-informed practice, revealing interventions in building individual's capacity to develop their own self-efficacy and opportunity. Pathways are indicated for governments and agencies to follow in order to not only "Close the Gap" but exceed targets!



Ms Fiona Lamb

Director of Operations - Employment Services, MAX solutions

Changing the face of employment services: An Employment First Model embedded into a service plan connecting technology, job seekers and employers

“Changing the face of employment services: An Employment First Model embedded into a service plan connecting technology, job seekers and employers”²

Monotonous schedules of monthly contact. Disempowering one on one discussion focussed on assumed barriers. Paper and word processor based assessments. Subjective views of job readiness. Red tape. No consideration given to employer requirements. These are attributes considered to generally characterise employment services.

This presentation focusses on an alternative model expected to change the face of employment services. Technology provides a focus of immediacy. The MAX Connect platform gives instant access to jobs with Employment First principals embedded. A questionnaire is completed by job seekers on-line or with support. Employer Business Centre staff liaise with employers to understand and capture vacancy requirements. Profiles are matched to provide a description of the ‘fit’ between a specific job seeker’s strengths and vulnerabilities and the assessed demands of a specific job. It generates the basis of a support plan to ensure sustainability. Support is focussed in-situ not pre-employment.

Open plan modern retail style offices provide are welcoming. Group facilitated sessions three times a week energise, motivate, empower and prepare job seekers for work. The environment and conversation is always positive. Focussed on what job seekers can do, not what they can’t.

Front line staff have pure focus on finding and supporting job seekers into work. Administration (including attendance management) has been shifted to central service teams. These teams enhance engagement by maintaining regular contact with job seekers - conversation is continually focussed on employment.

The presentation concludes that while the national rollout of an employment first model touching more than 120,000 job seekers is transformative in itself, it is the integration of this philosophy into every aspect of service delivery that is changing the face of employment services.



Mrs Kirsten Majidi
Director, Career Mastery

Supporting Mum's Returning to Work with Confidence and Clarity

This presentation focuses on identifying practical strategies to support women who are returning to the workforce after extended periods at home raising children. Using case studies and expertise Kirsten Majidi will identify 5 essential elements that build the framework for a successful return to work strategy.

These include,

1. Clarity
 - a. Focus - Identifying approaches that support mums to develop clarity around their unique career objectives, incorporating the importance of goal setting and career planning.
2. Crafting
 - a. Focus - Tactics to support clients in the preparation of a compelling and strategic resume, cover letter and LinkedIn profile. Often a challenging area requiring creativity in crafting responses to the "gap", identifying transferable skills and addressing the need for skill development.
3. Creating
 - a. Focus - Creating networks is becoming even more critical as the hidden job market continues to increase and there are approaches for both online and offline networking that are essential for the success of mums returning to work.
4. Charisma
 - a. Focus - Re connecting clients with themselves as a "professional" is a transforming process and with support, guidance and strategies return to work mums can shine in interviews and at networking events.
5. Confidence
 - a. Focus - With many clients associating with low levels of confidence identifying and implementation strategies to build and maintain confidence through what is often a challenging period is critical to a successful transition into the "paid" workforce.



Ms Sharon Mamo

Chief Executive Officer & Founder, Creating New Pathways

Behavioural Change Modification for Long Term Unemployed

Research clearly shows that long term unemployment negatively affects a person's wellbeing, which in turn can impair his/her ability to regain employment. Programs that enhance positive psychological characteristics and support behavioural change can improve employability and help lower unemployment.

Recurring characteristics in long term unemployed include mental health problems, disabilities, lack of formal qualifications, deficient education, low family incomes, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and criminal convictions. Recent case studies show these aspects exacerbate according to duration of unemployment.

Evidence suggests that mental health is one of the key factors in helping people return to work. Long-term unemployment is associated with poor physical and mental health, social isolation and poverty (Butterworth, 2009; Saunders, 2006). Workers who remain outside the workforce for some time find it much harder to re-enter – their skills lose currency and employers tend to screen them out in favour of people with more recent experience (an effect described as “hysteresis”) (Chapman & Kapuscinski, 2000).

Long term unemployed job seekers (over 6 months on benefits) will be 3 times more likely to have a mental health condition such as anxiety or depression (The Australian 2013). A large number of this cohort is also on either prescription medication or using illicit drugs and/or alcohol.

The longer someone is out of work, the more likely they are to become depressed and the longer someone is depressed, the harder they find it to get back to work. This can cause long-term unemployment, independently of the economic situation.

Unemployment is one of the most likely factors to trigger psychological depression, second to relationship breakdowns. Research shows that anxiety and depression increases as the period of unemployment lengthens, creating a complex cycle of psychological and social problems. This progression requires professional intervention.



Mrs Deb Marven

Work for Wellness Program Manager, Ostara Australia

An Innovative Approach to Creating Employment Pathways for People with Mental Health Issues

According to the Department of Human Services National Mental Health Report 2013, people with mental illness experience double the rate of unemployment than people without mental illness.

People suffering with mental illness, particularly severe and prolonged mental illness, require tailored, intensive interventions in order to have the best chance of gaining employment and sustaining that employment in the long-term. Looking for employment can be stressful, particularly for people who are long-term unemployed and lack stability in their life. Ostara Australia is Australia's largest mental health specialist in the Disability Employment Services sector. Our experience is that many of our long-term unemployed participants require further interventions prior to placement in order to achieve the best results. We were unable to source an external program that was specific to addressing the self confidence and self esteem issues that our participants encounter and therefore engaged a psychologist to develop a program for our participants. This program is called 'Work for Wellness' and has achieved a 42% placement rate against a national figure of 27.5%, and a 63% outcome at 26 weeks against a national figure of 29.3%!

Ostara Australia is now also running this program for MIND Australia and Mental Illness Fellowship of Queensland clients to create employment pathways for people with significant mental health issues who otherwise may have never participated in the labour market.

The program combines Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and other recognised psychological principals combined with Eastern Meditative practises which allow participants to address their emotional barriers to employment and build on their sense of self confidence, self esteem and self worth.

The impact of this program can be clearly demonstrated in this short video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lapokH1URKY>).



Mrs Susan McDermott
Advocate, Epilepsy Leader

Employment, the challenge of being labelled as disabled today

A fundamental lack of understanding today, is those labelled as “disabled”, are theoretically accepted, yet socially excluded in our society. In reality looking around us, many do have physical and psychological challenges, and are working. But fear the lack of understanding of their cohorts should their “condition” be made public.

These facts influence how we, (those who bare the label), as well as those around us, (including family, “friends”, acquaintances, the education department, employers, workplace, the employment agencies.) As well as the professional sector including financial, legal, and medical, struggle to contend with. That is we can and will participate, but will we be encouraged to?

The reason being is many of us are not raised to realise that “normal”, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary as; Conforming to a standard, i.e. usual, typical, or expected, restricts development, and promotes discrimination.

The fact is, we must begin to change. Australia has formed groups such as the Australian Network on Disability for Employers Making a Difference who has posted a definition of Who are people with disability?

It is time we set our fear, hesitancy, lack of understanding, and social stigma aside, and built a path for those who are being left behind. We can do it, the challenge will be to convince those around us to open their doors, today.



Mr Arie Moses
Chairman, National NEIS Association

Social Enterprises and Self Employment

The paper is going to define what a social enterprise is, how it is constituted, how effective they can be by using local and overseas examples and how social enterprises can be established as self employment generating businesses.

In particular we will explore:

- Positive employment impact of social enterprises in employment depressed areas
- The legal process to establish a social enterprise
- Develop a commercial case to establish a social enterprise
- Look at steps to develop a social enterprise including: recruitment of participants, expectations, business planning, sourcing finance and defining operational guidelines of the enterprise



Mr Gregory Mowle
Lecturer, University of Canberra

Don't panic! Dealing with debt when you are unemployed - you have many options

For the unemployed who have loans and debts the stress of having to deal with debt collectors exacerbates the problems of trying to return to work. Research shows that debt collectors are the most aggressive to those debtors that are on a low income, such as pensions and benefits, and have few assets to seize for payment of the debt. There is an inverse relationship between the size of an overdue debt and the scale of the collection tactics used. The unemployed often find themselves frequently contacted and harassed.

These tactics may result in the unemployed resorting to borrowing money from family and friends or high-cost short term lenders. Some declare themselves bankrupt over relatively small amounts of debt. The short term benefits of bankruptcy need to be weighed up against the long term consequences. Most long term unemployed debtors do not realise they are “judgment proof” and debt collectors have no weapons to use against them except for a listing on their credit file. Pensions and benefits need to be used for essential living expenses not be paid towards unsecured creditors who are shouting the loudest.

Many long term unemployed debtors do not realise they could access free and independent financial counselling services and possibly have their debt(s) written off under a Bulk Debt Negotiation Project between financial counsellors and major creditors.

Gregory Mowle is a former Lifeline financial counsellor who will present his research into the link between unemployment and bankruptcy as well as providing practical guidance and information for the long term unemployed and their support workers on what to do if they are being harassed about debts.



Ms Jessica Perry
Lead Facilitator, Career BluePrint

Engaging young people in employment, entrepreneurship & skills development “ raising aspirations

With youth unemployment set to soar in 2016, one in five university students dropping out in the first year and Vocational Education and Training (VET) completion rates for young people that aren't ideal, it is everyone's business to help raise aspirations and see potential realised.

19 year old award winning Australian Apprenticeships Ambassador and entrepreneur Jessica Perry will share successful strategies to engage young people in employment, entrepreneurship and skills development.

Learn how governments, industry, employers, youth organisations, schools, students, parents, training providers and the startup community are embracing innovative programs for young people. Hear about practical approaches to Australian Apprenticeships including School-based, which make small and medium enterprises far more productive, see youth entrepreneurship and social enterprise initiatives in action.



Mr Geoff Revill

Manager, Building Family Opportunities Program, UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide

Whole of Family' considerations in design and delivery of services to address long-term joblessness in Australia

ABS Labour Force data for June 2015* recorded 183,274 Australians as being unemployed for over 52 weeks, almost half of whom (88,980) have been unemployed for more than 2 years. Numerous government and non-government reports, studies and surveys confirm that people experiencing long-term joblessness face a range of vocational and non-vocational barriers to gaining work.

For members of *families* experiencing long-term unemployment, the range of non-vocational barriers they experience can often become entrenched and increasingly complex over time. This often impacts negatively on the capacity of job seekers to prepare for, gain and sustain work; the level and quality of participation by children in education; and the engagement of family members with society more generally. These factors often combine to result in families experiencing inter-generational unemployment and ongoing social dislocation.

This has prompted a service approach for addressing long-term unemployment within families which involves enabling 'whole of *families*' to build their capacity to better manage issues related to complex participation barriers. Rather than address one family member's barriers in isolation, positive service engagement and collaboration with the 'whole of family' is undertaken. The aim is to create an enabling family environment that better supports family members who are seeking to participate in education, training and work.

This paper shares the experiences of an organisation in its delivery of a South Australian Government funded 'whole of family' employment program with over 350 families during the past five and a half years.

In so doing, it demonstrates how a service continuum that can successfully link 'whole of family' services/ programs can create a more sustainable pathway from **very** long term joblessness and social dislocation to positive social engagement which includes education, training and employment.

** ABS 6291.0.55.001 Table 14B Unemployed persons by Duration of unemployment and Sex - Trend, Seasonally adjusted, Original*



Dr Salote Scharr
Senior Researcher, BoysTown

Changing pathways for young ex-offenders through the use of transitional employment programs

Youth unemployment and disengagement remains a consistent problem in Australia. Young people who are marginalised due to their offending history are particularly disadvantaged in a labour market where overall youth unemployment continues to increase. Transitional employment programs have had success in assisting young ex-offenders to gain work experience and skills, improve their personal development and then move into employment, education or training outcomes.

BoysTown offers a suite of transitional employment programs that assist marginalised young people, including ex-offenders, in lower socio-economic areas. Over a five year period, one-in-five young people in these programs have spent time in detention. In a mixed method study, the quantitative component involved surveying these young people. The findings indicated improvements in work skills and personal psycho-social and cognitive-motivational areas. These were linked with lower rates of reoffending.

The qualitative component (semi-structured interviews) of the study yielded information about how transitional employment programs engage this cohort. In particular, the findings highlight the core concepts of 'person-centredness', 'program-centredness' and 'success-centredness' approaches to engaging these young people in the programs and assisting them to gain outcomes. The evidence from this research has enabled BoysTown to improve its service delivery and case management, which in turn enhances the prospects of young people to achieve positive outcomes in employment, education and training.



Mr Simon Schweigert

Manager, Media and Government Relations, Recruitment and Consulting Services Association

A survey of Attitudes towards Older Workers

Older Australians face increasing barriers to employment. With more than 200,000 Australians aged over 50 are now on the dole, Australia has relatively low levels of mature age employment when compared to many other OECD countries. (Commonwealth Government, 2010)

In addition to the fiscal challenges this presents, Australian employers also suffer a cost by not fully utilising the skills, experience and mentoring abilities offered by mature age workers. The recruitment industry can lead the way in bridging the gap in successful placements between employers and mature age job seekers. (National Seniors Productive Aging Centre, 2012)

The aim of this paper is to measure and highlight the attitudes of recruiters towards older workers. The paper is a ten-year update to research undertaken as part of Age Management in the Workplace, a pilot program developed in 2005 by the Recruitment and Consulting Services Association (RCSA).

Consistent with the prior report, senior managers in the recruitment industry are interviewed in order to identify longitudinal changes in the industry's views on age management needs, current industry practices and perceived employer attitudes to older workers.

Findings in relation to the research will strengthen an understanding of how recruiters engage the talents and offerings of mature age and older workers and assist in opening more pathways to employment and the benefits an older worker can bring.

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A/Prof Andrew Scott

Associate Professor in Politics and Policy, Deakin University Arts

Tackling mature-age unemployment through an exemplary place-based program informed by Nordic precedents

In order to tackle unemployment for the at-risk group of mature age workers displaced by industry sector restructuring, exemplary place-based initiatives are needed focusing on a selected area of high disadvantage identified by Professor Tony Vinson's 2015 Jesuit Social Services report *Dropping off the Edge*, with an Australian state government committed to supporting the initiative, as that report recommends. In order to make such a place-based initiative exemplary in its outcomes, so that it leads to uptake in other areas of high disadvantage, it needs to be thoroughly informed by successful Nordic precedents.

In particular, the new Australian place-based initiative needs to be informed by Danish regionally-focused large scale job skills programs involving transition into a proximate sector of employment growth; and by Norwegian measures for more even population distribution outside capital cities or in particular hard-hit regions within capital cities. An advantage of the proposed initiative is that it will also produce measurable results for children in families in which neither parent works, whose needs are normally tackled (if at all) by separate policy actions in separate tiers or departments of government. Australian children are disproportionately disadvantaged by the internationally extreme concentration of joblessness.

Denmark's *Lærløstilsbud* and *Virksomhedspraktik* job training programs subsidised by municipalities and the national government, and supported by Danish trade unions, will be discussed in this paper for the positive effects they have for participants, including establishing or re-establishing unemployed people's structured work habits and routines, improving their networks along with their social skills, and boosting their confidence. This paper will outline in detail the types of features the proposed new Australian place-based initiative will require, drawing on and drilling down further into data and analysis presented in the author's recent book: *Northern Lights: The Positive Policy Example of Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway*.



Prof Erica Smith

Personal Chair in Vocational Education and Training, Federation University Australia

The forgotten role of traineeships in assisting unemployed people to find and keep work

Traineeships were introduced in Australia in the 1980s to extend the benefits of traditional trade apprenticeships to a broader range of occupations and participants. Originally conceived primarily as labour market programs, they extended from this base to become a major focus of skill formation for many Australian companies and for Australian people. For unemployed people, undertaking a traineeship often provided an entry to employment, and for already-employed people, moving into a traineeship often signified a move from casual work to a permanent job with training attached. Employers reported that being able to employ people on traineeships reduced some risks associated with recruiting unemployed people.

Traineeships brought many social inclusion benefits such as development of self-efficacy and confidence in undertaking further study. However there have been arguments raised against traineeships, e.g. poor quality of the training in some instances. Perhaps because of these arguments, funding for traineeships, from Commonwealth and State governments alike, has been progressively reduced, with the result that the number of available traineeships has fallen dramatically in the past four years. This has had, inter alia, adverse effects upon women.

This paper provides case studies from a range of national research projects over the past decade, covering many of the at-risk groups that are the focus of the conference: mature age, youth, indigenous, regional, and those returning to work. The case studies indicate the benefits and the challenges of using traineeships to alleviate unemployment and social disadvantage.

The paper goes on to examine the drop in traineeship numbers and its association with funding changes. It posits a connection between the recent rise in youth unemployment and the fall in traineeship numbers, and questions why stakeholders have not been more active in identifying and addressing the problem.



Mrs Genevieve Smith
ehespace Work and Study Specialist, headspace

The headspace Work and Study Program - Vocational Support in an Online Environment

Introduction

The importance of providing vocational intervention for young people experiencing mental health difficulties is paramount. Research has demonstrated that vocational participation can reduce mental health symptoms, improve recovery and compliment the effectiveness of frontline mental health services.

Despite the well known benefits derived from supportive work and study programs, access to such services remains limited. eheadspace is an online mental health service providing telephone, webchat and email support to young people across Australia. Using an innovative online approach, the eheadspace work and study program assists young Australians in their psychosocial recovery. This presentation will describe the development, approach and implementation of the eheadspace work and study program.

Design

headspace recognises maintaining engagement with education and employment pursuits are essential for young people's recovery from mental health challenges. Based on the principals of the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model, eheadspace work and study specialists (eWSS) provide flexible, tailored assistance to assist young people to reach their vocational goals. Working alongside eheadspace mental health clinicians, the eWSS are integrated within eheadspace. This ensures clinician's awareness of the vocational needs of young people and allows for collaboration with clinicians to enhance young people's mental health and vocational support. An industry collaboration with ANZ has led to online mock interviews which has provided real-time, virtual interview practice for its participants.

Results

Since its inception in 2013, the eheadspace Work and Study Program has worked with over 200 young people. This is the first example of the IPS framework being adapted into an online environment for young people with mild to moderate mental health difficulties. This presentation will outline benefits experienced by young people receiving the service, as well as the challenges and opportunities in adapting work and study programs into online environments.



Miss Laura Sprules
Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Woolworths Limited

Woolworths commitment to Indigenous Australians through tailored, job specific pre-employment training

In partnership with the Federal Government and Diversity Dimensions Woolworths has committed to providing 2,000 job opportunities for unemployed Indigenous Australians.

The Employment Parity Initiative (EPI) launched by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in 2014 enables companies across Australia to have the flexibility to tailor a program that meets the needs of their business. By assisting Woolworths with the additional costs of employing and retaining Indigenous Australians, we have designed a bespoke program that breaks down many of the barriers to employment and provides ongoing support to provide a life-long employment skills.

In partnership with Diversity Dimensions, Woolworths have been running pre-employment training programs for Indigenous Australians for five years. The program consists of three days of classroom training, two weeks of on the job practical work experience and ongoing monthly support from an indigenous mentor. Woolworths have been steadily increasing Indigenous workforce participation, through pre-employment training approximately 300 jobs opportunities are provided each year. The latest program has been successful at retaining 86% of the participants at 26 weeks.

Many of the program participants had become disengaged with employment, attending multiple training programs in the past with no clear link to a job at the end. Woolworths will only run a program when there are job opportunities which ensures that all suitable candidates who are willing and able to work are successfully employed at the end of the program.

The presentation will provide more detail on the EPI contract; how the Woolworths pre-employment programs work; the lessons we have learnt through past programs and some of the wonderful success stories we have to date.



Ms Tamara Stewart Jones
Director, Multicultural Youth SA Inc

Refugee youth and their transition from school to further education, training and employment

This presentation will provide an overview of a new Australian Research Council (ARC) Industry Linkage Project that is exploring education and employment outcomes among young people from refugee backgrounds in South Australia. It is widely acknowledged that refugee youth face a unique set of challenges that place them at increased risk of poor education and employment outcomes including limited English language skills; limited or interrupted former education; difficulty understanding and negotiating the Australian education, training, and employment systems; psychosocial problems associated with pre and post-migration difficulties and pressures; lack of educational support at school and at home and; a general lack of knowledge among parents of the career possibilities and directions available in Australia due to low involvement in school-based educational and vocational guidance programs.

The research represents a collaboration between Multicultural Youth South Australia (MYSA), the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide. The overarching aim of the study is to explore young people's transition from school into further education and training, with a particular emphasis on:

- a) Key factors influencing further education and employment decisions
- b) Extent of youth and parental awareness of education, training and employment pathways
- c) Barriers to successful transition from school into further education and employment
- d) Identifying those most likely to be affected by unsatisfactory education and employment outcomes
- e) Support systems accessed by those experiencing education and employment related difficulties. The findings are expected to inform the development of appropriate policy, services and support systems to improve education and employment outcomes among young people.



Ms Jo Tabit

Senior Manager, Employment Services, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Mr Angus Blackburn

Manager, Given the Chance for Asylum Seekers

Given the Chance for Asylum Seekers - preventing asylum seekers from becoming long term unemployed

A popular public perception of asylum seekers in Australia is that they don't want to work. In reality there is a huge demand among asylum seeker communities for assistance to find employment. They are highly motivated but have no access to mainstream employment services and struggle to access the labour market and navigate Australian workplace culture. It can be up to four years before they gain refugee status and they live a precarious existence with their status and work rights subject to sudden changes. Without support, asylum seekers are at high risk of becoming disengaged and joining the ranks of the long term unemployed by the time they finally attain refugee status.

With funding from a private philanthropist, the Brotherhood of St Laurence has been delivering Given the Chance for Asylum Seekers program in Melbourne Victoria since 2013. This program utilises an innovative recruitment model, working intensively with employers and jobseekers. It has a strong advocacy component and has been funded, in part, to change the conversation in our community of what asylum seekers can contribute to Australia if they are given a chance.

Jobseekers receive one to one assistance to create an employment pathway with a focus on developing new skills and renewing confidence. The program is achieving 70% retention in employment after 6 months. It is an early intervention, intensive support model that offers learning for other employment programs working with CALD and those at risk of disengaging.

This presentation will focus on the model's features and our learning from two years of successful delivery. The program has been refined through ongoing action research. We will identify what has worked best for this cohort of jobseekers, how we have engaged employers, as well as some of the risks and challenges of working effectively with asylum seekers.



Ms Ann Thornton

National Clinical and Quality Manager, Max Solutions Health

Job Readiness: A Paradox in Long Term Unemployment

Job readiness is a ubiquitous concept in the area of employment. The notion of a level of functional capacity (physical and/or psychological) that is believed necessary for successful employment is an entrenched belief of employment providers and indeed employers. To date, employment providers have sought to “fix” or significantly resolve barriers to employment before considering employment options. Employers have sought workers with the prerequisite skills to do the job successfully. This has inevitably restricted job seekers with more substantial barriers to employment, leading to a limited and/or disrupted employment history with at best, less skilled jobs, lowered work status and income expectations.

This quickly erodes independence, social skills and relationship development, self worth and sense of identity with adverse effects on social inclusion, financial stability and physical and mental health, which is particularly catastrophic for youth. These barriers further decrease accessibility to employment perpetuating the cycle of unemployment. This paper argues that this notion of job readiness is a substantial barrier to employment, particularly for the long term unemployed and youth. Job readiness is not only an idiosyncratically defined concept but “fixing” or reducing complex barriers prior to employment within efficient time and cost frames is difficult and unrealistic.

Max Employment has adopted a major paradigm shift: a model of rapid transition into employment, with the focus of pre-employment on employability rather than role specific skills, aligning workers’ values and expectations to employer values. Sophisticated assessments ensure placement of jobseekers into suitable employment that plays to jobseekers’ strengths while being open and transparent about their challenges. We also work collaboratively with employers and disadvantaged workers to provide individual and group based support in the workplace. This can change employer and community understanding of employment as a powerful intervention for long term disadvantage.



Mr John van Kooy
Senior Research Officer, Brotherhood of St Laurence

Mr Brian Finnigan
Employer Engagement Coordinator

Engaging employers to create job pathways for disadvantaged groups

There is growing recognition of the roles that employers play in shaping, ameliorating, or exacerbating unemployment. A need to create more and better job opportunities has led to a proliferation of programs involving employers and labour market intermediaries (LMIs), often appealing to private business interests, corporate social responsibility or diversity agendas. The active participation of employers in such initiatives is thought to promote the 'employability' and labour market participation of the unemployed.

To mitigate employment risks and reduce recruitment costs, firms often use screening and selection practices that exclude some job seekers on the basis of perceived gaps in 'human capital' (skills, knowledge and experience). Migrants and refugees, for example, have limited local work experience, and face language barriers and non-recognition of qualifications or skills. Young people and Indigenous job seekers often lack the social resources that can assist them to compete in the open labour market.

This presentation draws on the research and practice experience of the Brotherhood of St Laurence in partnering with employers to reduce recruitment and workplace barriers for disadvantaged groups. While some businesses are willing to consider employing from different talent pools, they may lack the internal capacity to effectively engage disadvantaged job seekers. Partnering with LMIs provides employers with a framework to invest in human resource adaptations and support structures for candidates. The presentation will demonstrate the importance of on-going relationship-building, communication, negotiation, and support to meaningfully engage and incentivise employers in promoting the economic participation of disadvantaged groups.

The presentation makes a contribution to understanding the critical role of LMIs in servicing employers with alternatives to mainstream recruitment, enabling more inclusive practices that recognise the strengths of diverse job seeker groups. If given the chance by employers, these underutilised workers can make a significant contribution to the economic and social fabric of Australia.



Mrs Maria Yap

Program Manager, Inner East Partners in Recovery, Eastern Melbourne PHN

Partners in Recovery Program: Tackling the 'wicked' problem of mental illness and unemployment

The Partners in Recovery (PIR) program is a three year federally funded initiative that provides service coordination to better support people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs and their carers and families. PIR achieves this through the promotion of system collaboration and collective ownership, and the encouragement of innovative solutions to assist its target group in achieving optimal health and wellbeing.

The Inner East Partners in Recovery (IEPIR) is one 10 PIR programs in Victoria that tried to address the challenging issue of long term unemployment in the cohort of people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness. This was done through funding and actively supporting small short-term funded demonstration projects.

Link Health and Community was one of the funded organisations with the aim of increasing opportunities for PIR consumers to be connected to, and participate in their local community through volunteering with the view of obtaining gainful employment. The IEPIR-funded 'Volunteer to Employment Project' provided a ten week tailor-made volunteer experience for ten PIR consumers that allowed them to be trained in, develop and practice administrative skills, in a structured, safe, respectful and inclusive working environment.

This successful project resulted in a two-way transformational change. For PIR consumers, an increase in confidence in their general communication skills, in applying for jobs, and in undertaking more mainstream volunteer opportunities. For Link Health and Community staff and the organisation as a whole, an improved understanding of the challenges faced by people with severe and persistent mental illness and complex needs, and the inspiration to further develop this unique volunteer model. With the support of IEPIR, Link Health and Community has built on this successful project by having the graduates of the previous group mentor the new set of PIR participants for another 6 months of the project.



Mr Brian Yates
Chief Executive Officer, Job Centre Australia Limited

Mr Travis Williamson
Key Account manager

Quality Employer partnerships providing opportunities for at-risk groups

Since 1991 Job Centre Australia Limited has been a federally funded Disability Employment Service. With 27 regional offices and 6 metropolitan offices in NSW and QLD we work with over 2,500 people with a disability to develop their skills and help them find and maintain employment.

Our Key Account strategies have been developed to effectively work with larger employers and meet their needs as well as providing opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers. We have created employment opportunities for People with a Disability, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people and mature aged job seekers.

Our major partnership has seen us achieve preferred provider status with McDonald's Australia and we currently work with over 120 McDonald's Australia and Licensee owned restaurants in NSW and QLD. We have placed over 300 people with a disability into employment and the program continues to grow. We are working with the NZ Government to see if this success can be duplicated based on requests from NZ McDonald's Licensees.

Our relationship with McDonald's has seen them support our successful application for funding for an Indigenous specific program to create 30 jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the next 18 months.

Similar strategies have seen success with Bunnings Warehouse, IGA Supermarkets and Baker's Delight. The on-site support and training provided is a key component to really getting to know the employer's needs and ensuring we can provide employees that can do the job (given the right support).

Short, professionally made videos are available to support the oral presentation.



Ms Cheri Yavu-Kama-Harathunian
Director / Chaplain, Indigenous Wellbeing Centre Ltd

The Cultural nuances of Long-Term Unemployment Experiences in an Aboriginal Community: Lessons on how to beat the system

“Aunty them policy people, them government mob, they are so stupid. They never talk to us mob that don’t work. Do they know what we know about them strategies? They keep pulling them out from Canberra. Did they even talk to just one of us mob? Aunty we an army now, we got thousands of people all unemployed right across our lands. And you know what! We teach each other how to stay unemployed. I’m off the grid and I like it... It’s not much, but I can live with what I get.” Cognisance of LTU culture, communication processes, anti-social education and lifestyle, and the sophisticated knowledge of how to play the system that is failing to engage them is a must.

LTU intergenerationally, sees members of Aboriginal families being skilfully trained into dependency, welfare mentality, and a victimised stance. Many LTU perceive job markets offers as problematic rather than challenging. Government strategies, attempting to close employment gaps often result in few positive long term outcomes. Why do Aboriginal people still have the highest rates of LTU? A key factor is the intergenerationality of knowing and understanding the origin of the issues and the impact of those issues within a population group. Hunter & Jordan, (2010) stated that it was important to; “Understand and accommodate cultural obligations”. However, the question that requires real understanding is the ‘cultural nuances’ that underpin cultural obligations and how that plays out in policies developed to encourage Aboriginal people back into the workforce.

This presentation discusses the hidden cultural nuance that contribute to LTU. Issues of structural systemic failures that, overtime, have become institutionalised, and are creating pathways toward LTU rather than to employment opportunities. “I got a job Aunty? It’s one day a week. I get a shower; get dressed; go to the ‘boss’ at CentreLink. He calls my name I go up; he gives me my wage; I come home, sit down and have a beer. I’m workin’ one day a week. Why should I work five days and get less?”



POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Ms Maria Bora
University of Melbourne

Portrait of training and education in the private employment organisation; a case study

The Government has deemed that employment organisations should have a training as well as placement role, but there is some doubt about how this should work in practice. The practice of recent government policy has been to assign much responsibility for employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged young people to private RTOs, but there has been very little research on either the effectiveness of this, or of what is actually being done in relation to the education and training responsibility by them. The standpoint of business managers and employment consultants is the point of departure for analysing the institutional arrangements organizing their work and social relations that coordinate these experiences.

Because I was interested in learning if and how training operates inside of an employment organisation and what staff perceptions are about this, I came to 'Employment with Care' to talk to staff who are directly involved in organising and providing training to job seekers. Their perceptions about the training of job seekers and ideological practices used to make training accountable provided a gateway to seeing the complexity of the labour market organisation and the allocation of education and training in the employment sector. I argue that the daily practices of VET practitioners in employment organisations are significant venues through which Government and businesses limit the training and education of disadvantaged job seekers.

Ms Gina Chinnery

National Vocational Services Manager, Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health

Undercover Intern: Stigma Reduction in the Workplace

In a 2014 report released by beyondblue, the National Depression Initiative, entitled 'State of Workplace Mental Health in Australia', business owners and organisational leaders were identified as playing a critical role in driving policies and practices that promote mental health in the workplace.

The Undercover Intern project seeks to use a novel approach to target large organisations and engage boards, management, industry leaders and business owners to influence change towards mental health in the workplace.



The project seeks to benefit interns by offering access to multiple areas of business operations combined with an opportunity to gain valuable references for future job applications and the possibility of ongoing work experience.

Interns with a lived experience of mental ill-health will provide employers and their employees with an overview of their own experience with support from a mental health clinician during the placement.

Employers will have access to mental health training that supports the promotion of practice that encourages their own employees to seek help and early support for mental health issues.

By demonstrating their commitment to good mental health in the working environment, organisational leaders will contribute to the reduction of stigma and improve awareness of mental health supports for employees while offering a valuable opportunity for a young person to gain exposure to an industry of interest.

Mr Mark Davis
Director, Feed More People

The power of connecting non-profits to your business to provide motivation for early school leavers to commence work

There are two types of people in the world. Those with a job, and those without.

Every young person wants a job. Because they need income to support the technology they rely on and to help support the family they can't afford to leave.

More than 50% of the employees in our non-profit organisation are aged 16-18. Students doing school based traineeships who want to focus on a vocation that doesn't require University, but does give them a headstart in the job market and understanding how to work with others.

When you link your business to have a purpose supporting a non-profit or charity, directly, through the daily activities in their job, their focus changes.



Mr David Hill

Accredited Exercise Physiologist, MAX Solutions

Effective Management of Lower Back Pain for Unemployed Australian Jobseekers Returning to Employment

Significant research exists which has investigated unemployment following compensable lower back injuries; however, there lacks research into Australian jobseekers unemployed for other reasons who are seeking a return to employment, and how to best assist them in maintaining long-term suitable employment.

Unemployment is known to have detrimental health effects and limit access to services due to related low socioeconomic status. A higher number of psychosocial 'yellow flags' has been shown to increase the risk of developing chronic pain and increases the risk of failure to return to work for persons with compensable injury. Such psychosocial factors are likely to be greater within the long term unemployed. It is probable that this has an impact on job-searching efforts of the unemployed, the length of unemployment, and sustainability of new employment.

Review of client files with disclosed barriers relating to lower back pain was performed by Max Solutions, and has been compared to published data from Worker's Compensation authorities and the Australian Bureau of Statistics to determine similarities and/or differences in prevalence rates between each group. Initial results indicate that unemployed Australian jobseekers may be twice as likely (or more) to experience lower back pain when compared to employed Australians and the broader Australian general public.

Ms Deborah Itzkowic

Director/Principal Solicitor, Social Security Rights Victoria

Empowering unemployed jobseekers through innovative technology to effect systemic change in the employment services system

JobVoice.org.au is an innovative social enterprise that empowers unemployed jobseekers by providing a platform to share their stories and effect systemic change. JobVoice is a website, like TripAdvisor, that actively engages with job seekers to improve the quality and results of employment service providers and Centrelink and provide transparent information to inform choice of provider to best suit individual needs. JobVoice used community co-design principles to develop a response to an evidenced need for a more robust complaints mechanism for jobseekers.

NewStart and Youth Allowance recipients are required to engage with job active service providers and agree to an Employment Pathway Plan in order to receive their benefit. Together with growing



unemployment, complaints about employment services have increased significantly over the past 12 months. Social Security Rights Victoria was unable to assist individuals with complaints about their job active service providers and therefore developed JobVoice to address the issue on a systemic level.

JobVoice, through online reviews (stories), a rating system and community forums, assists job seekers to find the best service to help them to find a job. Please visit jobvoice.org.au

JobVoice was recently awarded the National Rural Law and Justice Innovation Award 2015 for Transformative Use of Technology in the Law.

Mrs Carmel Marshall
Partnership Broker, CentacareCQ

Putting together the pieces of life – assisting jobless Rockhampton families to see a better future

Working within a funded system that deals with the expressions of unemployment, poverty or stress (violence, counselling, children not reaching development milestones) rather than addressing the causes (education, social support, levels of resilience) has long been a frustration for social services in Central Queensland. In 2013, CentacareCQ led a consortium in developing an innovative program that made a difference to 44 local long term unemployed people.

Rockhampton had: a high proportion of young parents and jobless families requiring work readiness support; and a health and community services sector with the highest rate of increasing demand for workers. It was hypothesized that, by providing both training for entry to an industry where jobs will be available, and supports to address barriers preventing young, jobless parents from attaining long term employment, the cycle of unemployment and poverty could be broken.

CentacareCQ led a consortium of stakeholders to develop the Pieces of Life Project. This initiative specifically designed and tailored a Certificate II in Community Services as a training solution to suit the needs of both the sector and the participants. A Certificate II may not sound innovative, but the specific and intentionally focussed components were custom designed to maximize participant engagement, taking into consideration the barriers they faced. These innovations were easy to organise, low cost and resulted in empowerment for the participants. For the CQ community, this means less people on welfare, and more kids in the next generation witnessing the process of going to work on a regular basis - which breaks the intergenerational unemployment cycle; and more workers to meet the growing demand in health and community services.