



Brotherhood
of St Laurence

Working for an Australia free of poverty

LA EIC - Disadvantaged Jobseekers Inquiry
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Parliament

The social & economic benefits of sustainable work for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage

Brotherhood of St Laurence

August 2019

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) is an independent non-government organisation with strong community links that has been working to reduce poverty in Australia since the 1930s. Based in Melbourne, but with a national profile, the BSL continues to fight for an Australia free of poverty. We undertake research, service development and delivery, and advocacy with the objective of addressing unmet needs and translating the understandings gained into new policies, new programs and practices for implementation by government and others.

Our initiatives to support those who face barriers to entry into the job market include:

- **Jobs Victoria Employment Network:** a state-funded program targeted at disadvantaged jobseekers, as well as those ineligible for federally funded services. Sites include Dandenong, Flemington and Epping.
- **Work and Learning Centres:** a state-funded program, primarily targeted at public housing tenants and others experiencing long term unemployment. As a prime provider, the Brotherhood delivers in two locations, and supports local community based providers to deliver in a further three.
- **Given the Chance:** a supported labour-hire social enterprise that helps disadvantaged jobseekers access jobs and helps employers recruit more diverse workers.
- delivery of **accredited and non-accredited training programs** through our Registered Training Organisation.
- **Transition to Work:** a specialist youth focused employment service. As well as providing TtW in two locations, the Brotherhood convenes the Transition to Work Community of Practice, and the National Youth Employment Body.
- **Parents Next:** a pre-employment program for parents of young children. The Brotherhood participated in the pilot and is now delivering the service as part of the national roll-out.
- **Youth Transitions Support Pilot:** a program to support transitions of young refugees and other migrants. The Brotherhood is delivering the Hume pilot in partnership with settlement services providers and other ethno-specific support services.
- **Major research** on inclusive employment, economic security and labour market disadvantage, with a focus on mature age, women, migrants, and young jobseekers
- a project with local councils on **disability employment**.

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Recommendations

1. Affirm the value of state-funded employment support in addressing limitations of the nationally funded jobactive system and advancing Victoria's social and economic prosperity.
2. Establish a state-wide, evidence-informed model of support to prepare and connect disadvantaged jobseekers with training and jobs, designed to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the Victorian labour market.
3. Work with employers to stimulate opportunities for people experiencing labour market barriers, by:
 - activating employers through co-design of employment pathways, particularly in skill shortage areas
 - providing parallel support that combines preparing jobseekers for available roles with equipping employers to take on disadvantaged jobseekers
 - expanding supported labour hire arrangements to create opportunities for disadvantaged jobseekers, while minimising employer risk
 - using structures that streamline support for employers and industry bodies
 - demonstrating the business case for inclusive employment by building an understanding of shared benefits
 - including a voice for employers and their representative bodies in design and governance of state employment support
4. Embed collaborative mechanisms (e.g. employer-led Community Investment Committees) in the model for state-funded employment supports to mobilise local efforts, networks and resources.
5. Ensure state-funded employment support is delivered by local organisations with the connections, expertise and capacity to engage their community. Preference providers that co-locate or form consortia with key community agencies.
6. Intertwine economic development, training and employment initiatives so that they are mutually reinforcing.
7. Expand support to strengthen the social and economic participation of people receiving state housing assistance (including public housing). Provide flexible funding to enable sustained and intensive assistance for those that seek it, underpinned by provider targets reflecting local demographics.
8. Establish collaborative mechanisms, such as a Community of Practice, to connect state employment support providers and underpin shared learnings, use of data and continuous improvement.
9. Commission 'enabling organisations' to build the capacity of smaller organisations.

10. Realise the potential of social procurement initiatives by:

- establishing a Social Procurement Advisory Group to harness voices of stakeholders—including social enterprises, employers and participants—to keep government informed about key learnings, effective practices, and strategies to address emerging risks and challenges
- considering the flexible application of social procurement employment targets to reflect regional demographics and circumstances
- gearing state-funded employment services to provide parallel support to jobseekers and employers, to enable a positive experience of social procurement
- ensuring the new employer engagement body (Jobs Bank 2.0) has a mandate to build employer capacity for social procurement and inclusive employment
- developing social procurement legislation to embed, as a business-as-usual approach, a requirement for social, environmental and/or local economic dividends to accompany significant public expenditure.

11. Explore scope for government to enable employee-led co-operative and mutual enterprises as alternative models of sustainable employment for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage.

Overview

The Brotherhood is pleased to contribute to this important Inquiry into the social and economic benefits of employment for disadvantaged jobseekers. This submission draws on our practical experience¹ along with our research and that of others, to identify what is working well, opportunities for change and future directions. We would be delighted to work closely with the Committee.

Victoria's employment support initiatives are making a difference

The Brotherhood is heartened by current Victorian Government investments in policies and programs that seek to stimulate jobs and lift the economic participation of Victorians experiencing various forms of disadvantage and marginalisation. Notable advances include the Victoria's Social Procurement Framework; funding for tailored employment assistance (e.g. the Jobs Victoria Employment Network) and continued funding for Work & Learning Centres; the introduction of Disability Employment Targets across the public sector; local purchasing requirements, and related Education State initiatives (from the early years through to school and further education and training reforms) that focus on improving participation and outcomes for students experiencing disadvantage.

These state initiatives fill significant gaps in federal policy and programs. Critically, jobactive is delivering very poor outcomes for disadvantaged jobseekers. And several groups are not receiving or are ineligible for federally funded employment assistance.

Victorian Government investment in employment support is more closely targeted and nimbler in its response to local opportunities and challenges. It is improving the wellbeing and economic security of individuals and their families—both immediately and intergenerationally. It is also yielding considerable dividends for employers, local communities and the state, helping meet skills and labour shortfalls and contributing to productivity.

And represent a huge opportunity going forward

Victoria is enjoying strong employment growth. This creates opportunity to make headway in addressing the challenges facing some Victorians. Concentrated disadvantage in some locations and among some population groups (early school leavers, refugees and people seeking asylum; people with disability, mature age people) together with growing underemployment requires attention.

The cost for Victorians who cannot get a secure foothold in the workforce is immense. Some will face extended periods of unemployment, experience economic and housing insecurity, rely heavily on support services, suffer from poorer health, withdraw from community life and become involved with the justice system.

At the same time, many are unable to fully contribute their strengths and talents. Victoria's infrastructure boom coupled with emerging labour and skills shortages presents a significant

¹ Attachment A provides an overview of our key relevant programs: Work & Learning Centres, Jobs Victoria Employment Network; Given the Chance; and the federally funded Transition to Work program

opportunity to realise the potential of those who have found themselves excluded from or in a rapidly transforming economy.

And a growing number of employers are extending opportunities to jobseekers experiencing disadvantage – whether to meet their own workforce needs, satisfy social procurement requirements in contracts, or deliver their corporate social responsibility objectives.

Stronger design of employment support will drive better outcomes

Victoria’s existing foundation of support for people experiencing labour market disadvantage can be leveraged and strengthened. Learning from and building on what is working well in Victoria and elsewhere and refining existing investments will take state-funded interventions to the next level, and improve outcomes for employers, disadvantaged jobseekers and local communities.

Key opportunities for reform include:

- The roll out of a state-wide **evidence informed model of support to prepare and connect disadvantaged jobseekers with training and work opportunities**. It would be delivered by community embedded providers, with fidelity to a core service and practice approach but flexibility to tailor for place and discrete jobseeker groups and to provide intensive, sustained support. Sites

in areas with concentrated disadvantage would collaborate to develop a strong evidence base, share learnings and apply mechanisms for continued systems and service improvement. This would contrast with current arrangements under the Jobs Victoria Employment Network, which is characterised by often small, dispersed initiatives, delivering multiple models, and providers sometimes operating in isolation or in competition.

- **Activating employers through co-design and shared benefits**. Intensive emphasis on the demand side of the employment equation is key to opening decent opportunities for people who might otherwise be screened out by mainstream recruitment methods.

Employers, as well as employer and industry bodies, need to be involved at all points—from systems governance, to strategic advice on how state employment support can assist their present and future workforce needs; to co-design of training and recruitment pathways; to providing opportunities for jobseekers and being supported to implement inclusive employment practices and sustainable jobs.

The Brotherhood-enabled Community of Practice among some providers of Transition to Work, and its delivery of the Work & Learning Centre model as a prime provider demonstrate the benefits of replicating models in multiple locations and collaboration between sites to drive continued improvement

The demand-led approaches of Brotherhood employment programs, together with the employer-led Community Investment Committees attached to our Transition to Work program and the National Youth Employment Body, are instructive. Based on investment for mutual benefit, they position inclusive employment not as a charitable act but as a means for employers to build local workforces.

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- **Mobilising, aligning and strengthening local efforts to address unemployment and stimulate local economic development.** The opportunities, resources and networks available to jobseekers experiencing disadvantage have a strong place-based dimension. Local efforts need to be intentionally mobilised and community capacity strengthened to stimulate regional economies and create jobs. This requires collaborative structures and intentional efforts to collectively address both demand and supply side issues..
 - **Tying the skills and jobs agendas together as mutually reinforcing initiatives.** The skills and training area in Victoria has undergone significant recent reform including re-investment in TAFEs, free TAFE in skills shortage areas, creation of Skills & Jobs Centres, extensive VET quality reforms and a current review of Adult Community Education with a view to deliberately situating it in the skills and training ecosystem. While efforts to achieve closer alignment in the training system are underway, there is much to gain by more closely and deliberately entwining training and employment support to build localised educational and training pathways linked to regional labour market opportunities. Mutually reinforcing deliverables and embedded relationships between employment and training support infrastructure is critical to mobilising local efforts and resources to achieve sustainable employment for jobseekers experiencing labour market disadvantage.
 - **Strengthening the social and economic participation of people receiving state housing assistance,** Public housing residents and others experience very high labour market disadvantage; however, with appropriate support, many can secure and sustain work
 - Refining the **social procurement framework** and strengthening its governance and implementation. Gearing state-funded employment services to support social procurement goals is pivotal to this.
 - Supporting **alternative forms of employment – including employee-led cooperatives and mutual** to deliver outcomes for workers experiencing disadvantage, local communities and customers/service users.

The Brotherhood’s Work and Learning Centre model is successfully demonstrating how to work in place. The employer-led Community Investment Committees, developed as part of the Brotherhood’s delivery of Transition to Work has taken this further. And our JVEN’s work with African Pasifika communities is demonstrating strengthening community capacity.

A recent evaluation of these Work & Learning Centres found a strong need remains for intensive employment support for public housing residents and other highly disadvantaged jobseekers. The report noted the increasing concentrations of disadvantage in and around public housing, the high demand and long waitlists, the low economic participation and high unemployment among tenants and the fact that low education and training and lack of work experience continue to be major barriers to employment.

[W&LC evaluation 2019](#)

Social and economic benefits of sustainable employment for disadvantaged jobseekers

The social and economic benefits of ongoing, decent work for people experiencing disadvantage are wide-reaching. Table 1 provides a summary of benefits, and is followed by a case study of the benefits for people seeking asylum.

Table 1 Social and economic benefits of sustainable employment for disadvantaged jobseekers

Individual	Family	Employers	Community	State
Better physical and mental health	Improved family relationships	Increased workforce diversity	More inclusive and cohesive society	Savings in health, mental health, justice and homelessness
Increased confidence and self-esteem	Reduced risk of family violence	Labour needs met and niches filled	More engaged community members	Increased state productivity and social capital
Expanded connections and networks	Increased social connections and networks	Reduced turnover and increased workforce loyalty and retention	Increased volunteering and representation	Increased tax revenue
Improved skills and human capital	Improved wellbeing and development outcomes for children	Better employer–community connections	Stimulus for local economies	Reduced welfare expenditure
Increased economic security		Positive benefits of a more inclusive workplace		Reduced pressure on social housing
Increased food security				Higher proportion of people in labour market

While there is much evidence in different places about the beneficial impacts of employment for people experiencing labour market disadvantage, this Inquiry creates an opportunity for the Committee to capture and synthesise this evidence in one report.

People seeking asylum: a case study of potential benefits

The Brotherhood has a long history of working with former **refugees and people seeking asylum**. Securing stable, adequately paid and fulfilling employment is widely recognised as a significant contributor to their successful settlement. A 2017 report on employment outcomes for refugees in Australia by the Centre for Policy Development and Boston Consulting lamented the record of mainstream employment services, with only 17% of humanitarian entrants being in paid work 18 months after arriving in Australia. While recognising that settlement takes time, it highlighted the substantial economic and social dividend of assisting recent arrivals into work sooner: a 25% improvement in employment outcomes for one year’s intake of humanitarian migrants would, over the following decade, leave these new arrivals \$466 million better off, with the Australian government banking \$176 million in budget savings. If sustained with each new intake, benefits

would compound to additional income for humanitarian migrants of close to \$2.5 billion and a gain of almost \$1 billion for government revenue over the decade.²

In addition to the general benefits of employment, distinctive positive outcomes from integrating humanitarian migrants into the workforce, as summarised by the Parliamentary Inquiry into Settlement Outcomes³ include:

- helping meet labour shortages, including in low-skill and low-paid occupations
- contributing to labour market flexibility, as migrants have the potential to fill important niches
- increasing entrepreneurialism, with a higher proportion of humanitarian migrants engaging in small and medium business enterprises
- benefiting the wider community through developing and maintaining economic linkages with their origin countries
- making significant contributions through volunteering both in the wider community and within their own community groups
- building community support for a multicultural, diverse, inclusive and cohesive Australia.

The Brotherhood’s philanthropically funded Asylum Seeker Employment program achieved over 545 job placements in five years (2013–18) in a range of industries. Of those employed, 68% were still working six months down the track. A cost-benefit analysis undertaken by KPMG revealed a \$3.09 return for every \$1 invested (see Table 2).⁴

Table 2 Cost-benefit analysis of Asylum Seeker Employment Program

Impact	Net quantitative impact (NPV)
BSL delivery costs	(\$2.43 million)
Participant benefits – increased income	\$3.30 million
Government benefits – taxation revenue and avoided welfare	\$4.20 million
Net impact – NPV, 10 years	\$5.07 million
Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	3.08

KPMG noted that these results *materially understate the true benefits* to participants and government, as related improvements in key areas such as health, justice and housing were not quantified. Further, conservative assumptions, such as that participants would command no higher than the minimum wage, and would achieve comparable employment outcomes to those

² Centre for Policy Development and Boston Consulting, *Settling Better report: reforming refugee and employment settlement services*, 2017.

³ Joint Standing Committee on Migration, *No one teaches you to become an Australian: report of the inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes*, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2017.

⁴ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Given the Chance for Asylum Seekers 2013–2018*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic., [2018].

in traditional pathways, were used (but outcomes were far superior to those achieved by jobactive, with much higher placement rates and more than double the retention rates.)

State-funded employment support is critical

The employment potential of many Victorians is not being realised

Disadvantaged jobseekers include people in areas with few jobs as well as those who face challenges including lack of qualifications, experience or skills in demand; poor English language proficiency; discrimination because of age or disability; social exclusion or stigmatisation. Many groups face barriers to employment, and a substantial proportion face multiple barriers⁵ because of intersecting structures of disadvantage.

In Victoria, there is:

- **concentration of unemployment among certain population groups** – notably young people, people with disability, people with low levels of education/skills, public housing tenants, refugees and people seeking asylum.
- high rates of **long term unemployment** for particular groups – notably mature age jobseekers
- comparatively **low levels of workforce participation** among some groups. For example, just 53% of people with disability (of working age) are in the workforce compared with 82% of others. 43% have completed year 12, compared with 66% of the wider population.⁶
- the persistence of **long term unemployment** in some geographic locations, **existing side by side with skill and labour shortages**.
- **geographical concentrations of labour market disadvantage**. Victoria’s unemployment rate was 4.9% in April 2019⁷. When we zoom into local government areas, the extent of locational disadvantage becomes stark. The LGAs with the highest unemployment rates in March 2019⁸ included:

○ Brimbank	8.6%	○ Hume	7.8%
○ Casey	5.4%	○ Latrobe	7.1%
○ Central Goldfields	7.7%	○ Maribyrnong	5.2%
○ East Gippsland	6.1%	○ Melton	6.7%
○ Greater Dandenong	7.7%	○ Whittlesea	5.6%
○ Greater Geelong	6.9%	○ Wyndham	5.7%

⁵ Langenbucher et al., *Connecting people with jobs*, OECD 2017, p. 105.

⁶ DHHS (Vic.) 2018

⁷ ABS, *Labour force survey*, Cat.no. 6202.0, trend data.

⁸ Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, *Small Area Labour Markets data tables*, March 2019, DESSFB, Canberra, 2019. These LGA data are smoothed using a four-quarter average to minimise the variability inherent in small area estimates.

jobactive is not working well for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage

While the experiences of some jobactive users are positive, outcomes for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage are generally poor:

- More than two-thirds remain with the service for over a year, and around half for over two years; and for those in Stream C (highly disadvantaged), the average time is five years.
- Unemployed and underemployed workers are cycling between precarious work and employment services. Most jobactive employment placements are in short-term, casual and seasonal work—often through placements with labour hire firms. ‘Short-termism’ and its associated churn create long-term harm, together with long-term costs for governments and communities.

Our recent study of the experience of mature age jobseekers⁹ heard repeatedly from people ‘trapped in temporary work’. One woman had been cycling on and off Newstart for 20 years. A man we interviewed had three casual jobs, but remained on Newstart because he couldn’t secure adequate, stable work.

- Those at the margins of the labour market are not receiving the information, advice, pathways and support that they need. Investment in building skills and capabilities is low. Providers (which receive little reward for training outcomes) are increasingly taking a short-term, work first approach—prioritising moving people into any job over raising education or skill levels.¹⁰
- The system is not designed with the future of work in view. Jobactive does little to assist unemployed and underemployed workers to develop the skills and attain the qualifications and experience needed for the emerging labour market.
- The compliance-heavy approach is diverting front-line employment services staff from assisting clients in the way that they want to. This contributes to high staff turnover. It also undermines the trust and engagement of those seeking meaningful employment assistance.¹¹

[The jobactive provider] said I should forget about ever returning to full-time work, and embrace insecurity as the new normal. The future will be dictated by short-term contracts, casual, on-call work ... You get steered into low-skilled and insecure jobs, they argue that is all that exists in the local labour market ... This means you just end up in the never-ending roundabout of low-paid, low-skilled, casual jobs that last a few weeks or months. This situation sets in train a pernicious cycle of going in and out of work.

Correspondent with BSL 2018

⁹ See <www.workingforeveryone.com.au>; also D Bowman, A Randrianarisoa & S Wickramasinghe, *Working for everyone? Enhancing employment services for mature age jobseekers*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic., 2018.

¹⁰ JM Lewis, M Considine, S O’Sullivan, P Nguyen & M McGann, *From entitlement to experiment: the new governance of welfare to work*, Australian Report back to Industry Partners, 2016.

¹¹ D Bowman, M McGann, H Kimberley & S Biggs, ‘Activation and active ageing? Mature-age jobseekers’ experience of employment services’, *Social Policy and Society*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 647–58.

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- Jobseekers face an increasingly punitive approach, despite the chronic shortage of entry-level and low-skilled jobs, amplified by the Targeted Compliance Framework and its associated points demerit system.
 - Unemployed and underemployed workers have little choice or control over their experience of employment support. This works against building motivation and capability.
 - Employer engagement and confidence is low: just 4.7% of employers used public employment services in 2015, down from 8% in 2011.¹²
 - What little employer engagement there is tends to focus on single or small batches of job placements. Strategic engagement with industry and employer bodies to meet broader recruitment needs is rare.
 - Commissioning larger providers to operate across vast employment regions has diminished responsiveness to local circumstances and local collaboration, undermining some of the key benefits typically associated with outsourcing.¹³ As smaller community organisations have been pushed out of employment services or absorbed into larger organisations, local knowledge and connections have been lost.
 - The competitive market is eroding trust between providers, diminishing collaboration and sharing of evidence from programs and practice, and discouraging innovation.¹⁴
 - Employment services are largely disconnected from complementary federal, state and local initiatives. Opportunities to align efforts and resources are being missed, with duplication in some areas and neglect of others.
 - Increasing reliance on online servicing and automation, rather than face-to-face interaction, reduces access to individualised support.

And many fall through the gaps of federally funded support

In our frontline services the Brotherhood sees many working age people who have disengaged from the national jobactive system; some are driven out by its punitive conditionality and are technically no longer in the formal labour market.

We also see people who are not receiving income support or have no formal job search participation requirements so are only eligible for the lightest touch employment assistance through jobactive—typically limited to a single interview during which they might receive assistance with preparing a resume or advice about the local labour market. No resources are allocated for their training or ongoing support. Many of these jobseekers may later become eligible for increased assistance (for example when their children are older or their health

¹² KPMG, *The Australian recruitment industry: a comparison of service delivery*, report for the Department of Employment, KPMG, 2016, p.19.

¹³ Jobs Australia, *State of play: Jobactive employment services 2015–2020 tender results*, Jobs Australia, Carlton South, Vic., 2015.

¹⁴ S Olney & W Gallet, *Issues in market-based reform of human services: lessons from employment services*, paper prepared for the Social Service Future Dialogue, 2016.

changes). However, at a time when they are actively and independently seeking assistance, they receive very limited support. Such jobseekers may belong to the groups in Table 3.

Table 3 Groups who are eligible for little or no support from jobactive employment services

Groups
Migrants with a legal right to work in Australia who do not qualify for income support. Changes to social security laws in 2018 ¹⁵ extended waiting times for eligibility for income support and other social security benefits to three years after permanent residency is gained.
Refugees during their first 12 months in Australia
People seeking asylum who have work rights and are living in the Australian community
People on Disability Support Pension who are not required to seek work
Single and low income coupled parents (mostly mothers) who are not in the federally funded ParentsNext program and are receiving Parenting Payment but are not required to seek work due to the age of their youngest child
Underemployed workers with low wages
Low income women who are excluded from assistance because of to their partners' incomes
New Zealanders who moved to Australia after 2001 and are not Australian residents
People working below their skill level (e.g. the engineering-trained migrant working as a taxi driver)

While significant federal reforms are expected as part of the next wave of employment services, the details are not yet known. These will not be rolled out until 2022 at the earliest and will take several years to implement.

Recommendation 1
Affirm the value of state-funded employment support in addressing limitations of the nationally funded jobactive system and advancing Victoria’s social and economic prosperity.

¹⁵ Social Services Legislation Amendment (Encouraging Self-sufficiency for Newly Arrived Migrants) Bill 2018

Next steps for enabling jobseekers experiencing disadvantage into sustainable employment

The shortcomings in federal employment policy and programs signal areas ripe for state involvement. Likewise, the opportunities and challenges of the Victorian labour market point to where efforts are best placed.

There are opportunities for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage

State-funded employment assistance needs to leverage the opportunities emerging for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage, as well as tackling the barriers and challenges they face. Key opportunities, fostered by the current state policy environment, are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Opportunities for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage

Opportunity	Description
Current and projected workforce shortages	Around three-quarters of employers across Australia expect imminent skills shortages. ¹⁶ Growth industries including construction and social services (e.g. aged care, disability care, family violence and mental health responses) need expanded workforces. Victoria has developed (or is developing) workforce strategies in several of these areas.
Free TAFE and related training reforms	New incentives to take up training in areas of skills shortage are an important component of building future workforces.
Employer openness	Many employers, if given the right support, are willing to extend opportunities to jobseekers experiencing disadvantage—whether to meet their own workforce needs, meet social procurement requirements in contracts, or deliver their corporate social responsibility objectives.
Social procurement and local content requirements	Victoria’s Social Procurement Framework and the Major Projects Skills Guarantee (10% apprentices/traineeship on big infrastructure projects and 2% Aboriginal employment targets), are opening up opportunities for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage with both mainstream employers and social enterprises. Local content requirements can stimulate regional economies and generate jobs.
Changing landscape for people with disability	The NDIS has elevated the conversation around disability and is contributing to shifts in attitudes about what people with disability can do. Recent Victorian disability employment initiatives (targets for disability employment in the Victorian public sector of 6% by 2020,

¹⁶ Australian Industry Group, *Skilling: a national imperative*, AIG, 2018

Opportunity	Description
	12% by 2025 ¹⁷ ; disability focused social procurement initiatives; and investment in school to work transition and NDIS employment-related linkages) are opening new opportunities. The fast-growing NDIS workforce offers real employment prospects for people with disability. Recommendations of the Royal Commission on Victoria's Mental Health System are likely to advance this further.

But there are also challenges

The economy is changing, and with it the future of work. How far the adverse impacts of automation and other technological changes, and precarious working conditions become reality will be strongly influenced by political decisions. While not all the relevant policy levers rest with the Victorian Government, key challenges relevant to jobseekers experiencing disadvantage that need to be considered in state policy include those in Table 5:

Table 5 Challenges for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage

Challenge	Description
Requirement for qualifications	The vast majority of new jobs created in Australia now require a vocational or university qualification ¹⁸ and increased credentialism means higher qualifications are demanded for the same-level jobs. Around 650,000 of adult Victorians are at the lowest levels of literacy and 970,000 have very low numeracy. ¹⁹
A shortfall of low-skilled jobs	Anglicare's Job Availability Snapshot shows that for the sample month of May 2018, there were 110,735 jobseekers with various barriers to work; however low-skill, entry-level jobs (ANZSCO Level 5) made up only 14 per cent of jobs advertised, a total of only 25,997 jobs. In Victoria, for every level job advertised there were 3.17 jobseekers. ²⁰
Stark and entrenched locational disadvantage	The <i>Dropping off the edge 2015</i> report ²¹ found that disadvantage is highly concentrated in a small number of locations, with these communities experiencing a 'complex web of disadvantage'. In Victoria, 27 postcodes (4% of the total) make up 28.2% of the highest rank [top 5%] positions across 22 indicators of disadvantage such as

¹⁷ Victorian Government, *Every Opportunity Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018–2020*.

¹⁸ The Australian Industry Group, *Skilling: a national imperative*, 2018.

¹⁹ Victorian Government, *Future opportunities for adult learners Discussion Paper*, 2018. Data from ABS, *Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, Australia, 2011-12*, Cat. no. 4228.0, ABS, Canberra, 2013.

²⁰ Anglicare Australia, *Jobs availability snapshot*, Anglicare Australia, 2018.

²¹ T Vinson, M, Rawsthorne, A, Beavis & M Ericson, *Dropping off the edge 2015*, Jesuit Social Services/Catholic Social Services Australia, 2015.

Challenge	Description
	<p>unemployment (3 times more likely to experience long term unemployment), disability (2.4 times more likely to be on disability support) and family violence (2.6 times more likely to experience domestic violence). This disadvantage is not only concentrated, but entrenched, with 25 out of 40 ‘most disadvantaged’ postcodes in the 2015 study also being ‘most disadvantaged’ in the previous 2007 study.</p>
<p>Displacement of workers and increasing polarisation of jobs</p>	<p>Technological change, globalisation and climate change mean the kinds, types, distribution and quality of jobs are shifting.²² With this will come ongoing displacement of workers, as Victoria has already experienced with offshoring of car manufacturing and the shift to sustainable methods of energy generation.</p> <p>Greater polarisation between low and high paid work is expected; there will be fewer mid-range jobs.</p>
<p>Increasing precarity of employment</p>	<p>It is common for people with barriers to employment to move between periods of employment, unemployment and precarious employment. Over time, this instability exacerbates the very problems that initially contribute to disadvantage.</p> <p>Underemployment is high (8.3% Victoria, June 2019 trend figures).²³ Australia’s rate of part-time employment is the third highest in the OECD²⁴. Part-time and casual workers are increasingly confronted with unpredictable and irregular weekly rosters.²⁵ Many underemployed jobseekers are trapped in temporary jobs, which do not provide economic security.</p> <p>In the rising gig economy, marginal self-employment is growing, particularly among part-time, unincorporated and solo entrepreneurs²⁶.</p>

²² T Balliester & A Elsheiki, *The future of work: a literature review*, Working paper no. 29, International Labour Office, 2018.

²³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Labour force, Australia, June 2019*, cat. no. 6202.0, table 22, ABS, Canberra, 2019.

²⁴ OECD, *Part-time employment rate (indicator)*, OECD, 2018, viewed 30 July 2018, <<https://data.oecd.org/emp/part-time-employment-rate.htm>>.

²⁵ ABS, *Labour force, Australia, June 2018*, cat. no. 6292.0, table 22, ABS, Canberra, 2018; OECD, ‘The future of social protection: what works for non-standard workers?’, Policy Brief on the Future of Work, 2018, viewed 2 August 2018, <<https://www.oecd.org/social/Future-of-social-protection.pdf>>.

²⁶ T Carney & J Stanford, *The dimensions of insecure work: a factbook*, Centre for Future Work, The Australia Institute, 2018.

Challenge	Description
	<p>Even for those who are currently employed, there is a decline in perceived job security.²⁷ For those in bottom end jobs, minimum wages have declined relative to average wages and wage growth has stagnated.</p>
<p>Increasing poverty among unemployed and underemployed workers</p>	<p>The sub-poverty level rates of Newstart and Youth Allowance coupled with unaffordable rents²⁸ and long public housing wait lists are pushing many into deep economic and social exclusion²⁹, and homelessness.³⁰ This poverty operates as a barrier to employment, so many people seeking assistance from state employment services face compounding disadvantage and complex needs.</p> <p>Drastic changes to eligibility for income support through the federally funded Status Resolution Support Service mean that some people seeking asylum living in the Victorian community are facing destitution.</p> <p>Further, it is practically impossible for people living below the poverty line to meet the costs of work search, such as transport and phone/data usage.</p>
<p>Discrimination</p>	<p>Discrimination is a live issue for marginalised groups. For example, widespread and systemic employment discrimination against mature aged people and people with disability was highlighted in the 2016 reports of the Human Rights Commission, <i>Willing to work</i>.³¹</p>

A state-wide model grounded in evidence of what works

Successive Victorian Governments have invested in positive employment assistance initiatives to tackle pockets of high unemployment and entrenched disadvantage. There is opportunity to build on these efforts, using the learnings from the Jobs Victoria Employment Network, Victoria’s Work

²⁷ J Foster & R Guttman, ‘Perceptions of job security in Australia’, *Bulletin (Reserve Bank of Australia)*, March quarter, 2018, pp. 80–99.

²⁸ SGS Economics, *Rental affordability index*, May 2018.

²⁹ Saunders, *New budget standards*.

³⁰ Nicholson, T 2017, *Rough sleeping in Victoria: situation appraisal – May 2017*, p. 47, viewed 26 July 2018, <<http://chp.org.au/services/rough-sleeping-situation-appraisal/>>.

³¹ See also Australian Human Rights Commission, *National prevalence survey of age discrimination in the workplace*, AHRC, 2015.

and Learning Centres and programs elsewhere—such as the nationally funded Transition to Work (for people aged 15–21 years) which is delivering strong outcomes.

While Jobs Victoria has provided an important umbrella for alignment of state employment initiatives, employment support delivered throughout the JVEN network remains fragmented, with myriad services delivering a multitude of models. Some locations have multiple state-funded services, sometimes operating in competition, while other locations of need have none.

We believe there is much to be gained by delivering a coherent, evidence-informed model of employment assistance in locations with high concentrations of jobseekers experiencing disadvantage. Such an approach would mean both jobseekers and employers have an obvious point to connect with and could be confident about the type of assistance they can receive, wherever they are. It would create the foundation for deep collaboration between providers and sites, sharing of learnings, mechanisms for continuous improvement and development of a strong Victorian evidence base on what works, how and why. Moreover, it would enable a nimble, state-wide response to emerging opportunities and risks.

The core elements of the model we propose for a state-wide service are informed by research^{32 33} and our practice experience. It would address employment-related disadvantage through a combination of place and person-focused interventions and by using both supply and demand-side approaches. A high-level summary follows, with later parts of this submission delving into some of the key components.

The proposed state-wide model delivered by community employment service providers in locations of concentrated disadvantage:

- Applies **proven methodologies to build the agency, motivation, and confidence** of jobseekers experiencing labour market disadvantage, recognising that some require more intensive and sustained assistance than others
- Seizes the opportunity to **recognise and build jobseekers skills and capabilities** by supporting people to train, retrain or update their qualifications. For some jobseekers, attaining functional literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and English proficiency is an essential first step. Some need practical training so they can demonstrate their suitability for available roles, or work-specific training such as obtaining a

Consultations with clients demonstrated that the time spent at the WLC had been transformational for many, and that the support received had provided them not only with the skills to seek employment, but the attitude and confidence as well.

W&LC evaluation, 2019

We listen to [our participants], and work with them to find the best opportunities to suit their aspirations – they are not a number or a statistic, they are people with real challenges, and real hopes and dreams.

Program manager, Transition to Work Study, 2017

³² J Borland, M Considine, G Kalb & D Ribar, *What are best-practice programs for jobseekers facing high barriers to employment?*, Working paper, No. 4/16, Melbourne Institute, 2016.

³³ Langenbucher et al., *Connecting people with jobs*.

driver's licence, forklift licence or industry tickets.

- Brings together **assistance for employers and jobseekers in the one place**, providing an intermediary to foster and align both supply and demand and drive innovative arrangements.
- **Fosters government, community sector and business procurement and employment practices** to deliver positive outcomes for marginalised jobseekers and local communities.
- Focuses on **leveraging and mobilising opportunities in place**. Harnessing local resources, networks and opportunities enables local communities to tackle unemployment and disadvantage, and to foster economic development. In partnership with employers, local government and TAFEs, the model would connect key stakeholders, and would learn from and buttress existing efforts (e.g. Hume Council's Local Jobs for Local People).
- **Builds intentional connections between employment and other state policy priority areas:** Recognising that many of the people seen by state employment services are experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage, the model would support priority state policy objectives in areas including housing, mental health and family violence.
- Works with jobseekers towards **sustainable employment outcomes**, recognising this may take time and may require stepping stone jobs, supported employment options, structured opportunities for work and learning and ongoing assistance to find more secure work.
- Would have a **flexible funding model** (like Work & Learning Centres) at least for some proportion of the caseload, to enable extended and intensive support for highly disadvantaged jobseekers. This contrasts with the outcomes-based funding in JVEN and jobactive, which can operate as a disincentive to work with clients who are facing multiple barriers to employment.
- Is based on a collaboration of not-for-profit providers accountable for delivering a coherent model with fidelity to core service and practice elements, but flexibility to tailor delivery and partnerships for
 - different cohorts of jobseekers, such as mature age people; people with disability, newly arrived communities, young people or First Nations communities.
 - different local labour markets and communities, leveraging what already exists.

... when I had a chance to meet up with people like [Work and Learning Advisor] here, and he can pick me up and take me in car and go to some bosses and say 'This person is looking for a job', that's when [I'm] successful. But I had already put in a resume there and they didn't call me back. But ... when someone connects you with those people ... I think we need that connection – someone who can stand up and say something.

Jobseeker, Work & Learning Centre Report, 2015

This model could be established across Victoria, building on existing Jobs Victoria programs, with priority given to areas with high concentrations of jobseekers experiencing disadvantage. It could coexist with specialised/tailored offerings for discrete groups where there is a strong case for them to exist separately.

Recommendation 2

Establish a state-wide, evidence-informed model of support to prepare and connect disadvantaged jobseekers with training and jobs, designed to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the Victorian labour market.

Activating employers: co-design, parallel support and shared benefits

Employers are pivotal to enabling disadvantaged jobseekers to secure work. Accordingly, intensive emphasis on the demand side of the employment equation is key to opening up opportunities for people who may be otherwise screened out by mainstream recruitment methods and preparing jobseekers to meet workforce needs and fill skills and labour gaps.

Our research and experience of delivering employment programs has found that many employers are eager to play an increased role in providing employment for disadvantaged jobseekers, if given the right support. Employers want candidates who are work-ready; who understand the job role and workplace requirements; and who are willing to learn. They also want to work with a single contact who understands their business; co-designs a recruitment pathway that meets their needs; sources appropriate candidates that match those requirements; navigates different program rules and subsidy opportunities, and assists them to support and retain staff.³⁴ We have found the following to be effective approaches:

... employers want that bespoke [service], someone who understands their business needs, and is able to go out and help them recruit, help them organise pre-employment training if it's required, you know—just ... outsource what they don't have the capacity to do internally, and navigate the market for them as well, and source talent for them.

Employer association member, employer study, 2014

Demand-led approaches to support workforce needs

There is significant opportunity to equip jobseekers to meet areas of labour shortage (where matched to their aspirations). The Brotherhood's use of demand-led approaches is producing results for both employers, disadvantaged jobseekers and local communities:

- The Victorian Government funded Work and Learning Centres partner with employers to prepare jobseekers for local opportunities. For example, the **Geelong** Work and Learning Centre (operated by Northern Futures) has co-designed training and employment pathways with major local employers including Barwon Health; and the centre in **Moe** (operated by GEST) has developed two courses in partnership with employers (Flavourite and Aussie Broadband) to provide a strong pathway into direct employment.
- Addressing skills shortages has been a focus of employer-led Community Investment Committees (profiled later) attached to the Transitions to Work program providers that have joined the Community of Practice convened by the Brotherhood. In the **Frankston Mornington Peninsula** area, an employment exposure program has been developed with

³⁴ VECCI & Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Barriers to hiring disadvantaged or vulnerable entry-level job seekers: Victorian employers' attitude survey*, December 2009.

Victoria's peak body for horticulture in response to the industry's difficulty in attracting young people. It includes a structured pre-employment program of tasters, hands-on learning and micro work experience. Employers are earmarking vacancies (ranging from casual to full-time, and including internships and apprenticeships) for program participants. Training pathways are being developed.

Parallel support for recruits and employers

The Brotherhood is achieving strong outcomes in employment programs by providing parallel support to both jobseekers and employers. Jobseekers are prepared for the role and culture of work through customised pre-employment training and are supported to retain their employment through ongoing field support. At the same time, managers are trained, prepared and supported to take on disadvantaged workers and respond effectively to issues that may arise. Continuity of support before and during placement is a key success factor. Brotherhood programs using this approach are delivering outcomes (26 weeks sustained employment) greater than double that achieved by jobactive.

Supported labour hire/supported employment placements

The Brotherhood's Group Training Organisation provides a supported labour hire model that incorporates the parallel support to recruits and workplaces described above, but with the additional feature of the GTO as the initial employer supporting fixed term paid placements, including traineeships and apprenticeships, with host businesses. This model encourages businesses that might not otherwise do so to open up opportunities. It also reduces the risk and compliance burdens of direct employment; provides flexibility; and enables them to try out recruits before hiring them. Our status as the legal employer gives us greater leverage in performance management and advice to managers and supervisors. Running since 2007, the Brotherhood's Given the Chance partnership with ANZ Bank highlights the potential of this approach (see Box).

Refugees being Given the Chance: A Brotherhood/ANZ partnership

Our Given the Chance at ANZ program (principally focused on Refugees) includes customised pre-employment training and supported work placements. Recruits are prepared for the role they will take on and are trained in Australian workplace culture and expectations. Workplace mentors and supervisors are trained to understand the needs and experiences of their recruits and provide appropriate support and guidance. Retention figures have been impressive: out of almost 200 participants, more than 90% have completed the six-month supported placement program and 86% gained ongoing work with ANZ. Of those, 94% are still working for ANZ six months later. Given the Chance has enabled ANZ to recruit skilled, loyal employees, increase workforce diversity and strengthen community connections in its branch network and call centres. The program is currently being expanded into ANZ branches in other states.

Streamlined support for larger employers and those operating in multiple locations

Our experience working with employers is that they prefer as few contact points as possible, or a 'one-stop-shop' approach. The Brotherhood has addressed this by having a centralised employer engagement function that is shared between different sites and programs.

A coherent, collaborative model of state employment support (outlined above) would be geared to support the workforce needs of employers operating in multiple Victorian locations, as well as delivering a streamlined approach for medium to larger employers to attract workers from further afield (e.g. Central Melbourne employers who draw workers from a wide radius).

Promoting the business case for inclusive employment practice

Inclusive employment practices targeted at jobseekers experiencing labour market disadvantage enable employers to tap into talent that would likely be overlooked through traditional recruitment approaches. Well-designed approaches enable recruitment and retention of skilled, loyal employees, reduce staff turnover, increase workforce satisfaction and wellbeing, improve workforce diversity, can increase performance and

'Some of our Given the Chance graduates come from cultures that truly value older people in their society. That makes them ideal candidates for aged care work.'

Andrew Jamieson, Benetas, Organisational Development Manager

productivity, improve brand reputation and improve community connections.³⁵ The Brotherhood enjoys repeat business of many employers who understand this business case, and are willing to champion it with others. The continuation of corporate social responsibility and social procurement initiatives depends on business experiencing positive benefits.

A voice for employers in program design and governance

Employers, as well as employer and industry bodies need to be at the table—from having a voice in systems governance, to strategically advising how state employment providers can assist their present and future workforce needs; to co-designing training and recruitment pathways; to providing sustainable and decent opportunities for jobseekers and being supported to implement inclusive employment practices. The local Community Investment Committees, operating as part of model delivered by Transition to Work providers who are part of the Brotherhood-led Community of Practice are designed with this in mind (see Box).

Transition to Work Community Investment Committees

Providers collaborating in the TtW Community of Practice have established Community Investment Committees. These local employer-led economic development groups aim to:

- foster a sense of community ownership of the issue of local youth employment, and community agency in addressing it

³⁵ J O'Leary, G Russell, & J Tilly, *Building inclusion: an evidence based model of inclusive leadership*, Diversity Council of Australia, Sydney, 2015.

-
- shift the way the community views young jobseekers, from passive service recipients to valuable, contributing members of the community
 - build sustainable employment pathways for young people by mobilising community resources, networks and support
 - involve business in the broader collaborative effort with government to co-create solutions to structural barriers to youth employment, and link the local effort with regional and national action for change.

The CICs must include the following core features:

- **Employer leadership** – The CIC is not an education or youth network. In order to drive local economic development for young people, it must be led by key local employers and industry, and have an employer as the Chair.
- **Community representation** – This includes local council and major public and/or private education and training providers, as well community organisations (e.g. Headspace), service and sporting clubs.
- **Action focus** – The CIC must set strategic tasks and achieve key outcome

The Victorian Government's recent establishment of an employer engagement body (Jobs Bank 2.0) is promising. It could provide a platform for strategic and coordinated employer engagement, enable a greater focus on demand-led approaches, inform the design and continuous improvement of state employment support and foster inclusive and sustainable employment practices. There may be opportunities for it to link with the National Youth Employment Body (see Box), particularly around Commonwealth/Victorian interface issues.

National Youth Employment Body – employers engaged in addressing structural and demand side elements of youth unemployment

Enabled by the Brotherhood, the recently established National Youth Employment Body provides a platform for multi-sector collaboration to address structural drivers of youth unemployment. Governance groups comprise an Advisory Group, a National Employer Reference Group, a Community of Interest bringing together key federal government agencies and a Youth Alliance. Focus areas include fostering demand side responses and developing a fidelity model to harness community investment to strengthen youth employment pathways. The NYEB aims to connect the local experience (expressed through place-based Community Investment Committees) with the national policy and program arena.

Recommendation 3

Work with employers to stimulate opportunities for people experiencing labour market barriers, by:

- **activating employers through co-design of employment pathways, particularly in skill shortage areas**
- **providing parallel support that combines preparing jobseekers for available roles with equipping employers to take on disadvantaged jobseekers**
- **expanding supported labour hire arrangements to create opportunities for disadvantaged jobseekers, while minimising employer risk**
- **using structures that streamline support for employers and industry bodies**
- **demonstrating the business case for inclusive employment by building an understanding of shared benefits**
- **embedding a voice for employers and their representative bodies in design and governance of state employment support**

Mobilising local opportunities, resources, networks and supports

Unemployment and disadvantage have a strong geographic dimension. Intentional approaches to identify and mobilise community expertise and resources are needed to build integrated and inclusive support for disadvantaged jobseekers to achieve sustainable employment and to foster local economic development. The growing consensus is that our community will not make significant progress in addressing locational disadvantage unless the affected local communities are deeply involved in place-based solutions.³⁶ Accordingly, collaborative structures to enable employers, governments, community services, local clubs, education and training providers, apprenticeship services and communities to play a role are critical.

‘Harnessing community effort’ is a common thread running through Brotherhood programs. We see it as a way of working in partnership with government, business, community organisations, and philanthropy and education providers to tackle unemployment. It is about valuing the community’s expertise, knowledge and existing networks, and building on, rather than duplicating, community assets.³⁷

Three examples of the Brotherhood’s practical approaches to harnessing community efforts are described in the Box below.

³⁶ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *What next for place-based initiatives to tackle disadvantage? A practical look at recent lessons for Australian public policy*, Fitzroy, Vic, August 2015.

³⁷ Transition to Work Community of Practice, Practice guide

Community Investment Committees support the delivery of Transition to Work (for providers that are part of the Brotherhood-led Community of Practice). CICs vary in different places, as they build on existing efforts. The CIC in Hume is a subcommittee of local government's Economic Development and Jobs Committee; and the Gold Coast CIC is connected to the local Jobs Council.

Each **Work & Learning Centre has a Local Advisory Panel** that includes representatives from business, jobactive providers, training providers, other community organisations and different levels of government.³⁸

The **Flemington/North Melbourne JVEN Governance Group** meets quarterly and is nimbly co-developing solutions. The group includes council staff, participants, employers, local MPs office, community groups, Learn Locals and jobactive providers. Together the Group collectively addresses priorities such as pathways for women and young people in public housing.

Locally embedded providers best placed to deliver *with* the community
Providers that are embedded in their local community are best placed to deliver employment support to jobseekers experiencing labour market disadvantage. Leveraging their local relationships, they can connect jobseekers with other available services and supports; apply their understanding of local labour market constraints and opportunities; and engage with local training providers and employers. Local providers can rally a network of community support to help disadvantaged jobseekers find and sustain work.³⁹

We have found co-location to a powerful way to build alignment between supports. For example:

- The Brotherhood's **Transition to Work** service in Frankston is co-located with Headspace (youth mental health service); and in Hume, our TtW program has embedded employer engagement staff in Hume Council's Economic Development Unit.
- The **Work & Learning Centres** are co-located with or near other services (e.g. Ballarat WLC is a Neighbourhood House and Learn Local; Fitzroy is adjacent to community health, public housing and a children and families centre). The WLCs have established referral pathways: they refer clients to support services if they are not ready for employability training and receive referrals for clients from the other services when they are ready to seek employment.
- The Brotherhood's **Flemington/North Melbourne JVEN program** is co-located with council services and community agencies at the Flemington Community Centre on the housing estate. JVEN outreach staff are housed with delivery partners including The Huddle at North Melbourne Football Club, which specialises in engaging young people; and the Australian Oromo Community Assoc. (Vic.) and Multicultural Consulting Services (MCS) which provide outreach support to young Africans and Pacific Islanders. These partnerships enable mutual capacity building and culturally attuned employment supports.

³⁸ E Bodsworth, *What's the difference? Jobseeker perspectives on employment assistance: insights from Victoria's Work and Learning Centres*, BSL, Fitzroy, Vic., 2015

³⁹ See, for example, E Bodsworth, *Investing in local people and harnessing local communities: a progress report on Victoria's Work and Learning Centres*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne, 2014.

We also point to the federal government's (short-lived) Local Connections to Work pilot,⁴⁰ which demonstrated a concerted approach to aligning supports for highly disadvantaged jobseekers (see Box).

Local Connections' to Work

The Local Connections To Work pilot targeted long-term unemployed jobseekers, disadvantaged young people and others with significant need. It brought together training, community, housing and welfare organisations with Commonwealth, state and local government services, JSA and DES providers in a coordinated response—with many of the organisations co-located in Centrelink offices. A change of government saw the pilot and evaluation prematurely ended, however the audit office found shared case planning strengthened jobseekers' engagement and motivation and improved the assessment of their circumstances.

Currently, most state-funded employment providers are local community organisations. This strength can be built on through future commissioning processes that preference tenderers that demonstrate strong local connections and the capacity to leverage wider community partnerships, collaborate and co-locate with other local services.

Recommendations 4 and 5

Embed collaborative mechanisms (e.g. employer-led Community Investment Committees) in the model for state-funded employment supports to mobilise local efforts, networks and resources.

Ensure state-funded employment support is delivered by local organisations with the connections, expertise and capacity to engage their community. Preference providers that co-locate or form consortia with key community agencies.

Tying the skills and jobs agenda together

In 2018, almost 78% of VET graduates nationally were employed full or part time six months after completing their training in 2017.⁴¹ The Victorian Government is driving reform of the skills and training agenda including re-investment in TAFEs, free courses in areas of skills and labour shortages, Skills & Jobs Centres to provide vocational guidance, the Reconnect program to support learners experiencing disadvantage, extensive VET quality reforms and a current review of Adult Community Education. At the same time, significant investment has been made in employment related initiatives.

⁴⁰ Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), *Trials of intensive service delivery*, Audit report no. 40, 2013–14, ANAO, Canberra, 2014.

⁴¹ Department of Jobs and Small Business, *Australian jobs 2018*, DJSB, Canberra, 2018, pp. 31–2.

A logical next step is to bolster mutually reinforcing approaches by deliberately intertwining training and employment support initiatives, backed by contractual arrangements and shared KPIs. We see immediate opportunities, including:

- **Fostering localised educational, training and employment pathways linked to regional labour market opportunities and skills shortage areas** – which would require collaborative mechanisms (discussed above) to mobilise employers, TAFEs, state employment support providers and community supports. It also involves co-design, with employers, of relevant courses and training.
- **Linking employment and training supports to regional economic development**, place-based and priority precinct initiatives. Incentives (e.g. free training) would reflect regional labour market needs.
- **Delivering training courses in host businesses**. For example, the Brotherhood delivers aged care training in aged care facilities, which contributes to high recruitment rates of participants.
- Embedding **connections between state-funded employment support, TAFEs and Learn Locals** to ensure jobseekers experiencing disadvantage can be prepared and supported – before, during and after, to take up training, including free TAFE courses. For some jobseekers this will involve complementary pre-accredited training to strengthen capacity to achieve accredited outcomes. The following example illustrates this in practice:

Employment and Training collaboration in Broadmeadows

In Broadmeadows, the Brotherhood has partnered formally with Bendigo–Kangan Institute of TAFE. The Brotherhood’s Youth Transition Division, located on the TAFE campus, works closely with TAFE staff and learners in their Next Step and Reconnect Program, with the Learn Local Banksia Gardens, and with course coordinators to assist completing students to gain employment. This collaboration enables young people to have intensive support throughout their education and career journey and allows partners to leverage one-another’s expertise.

- Embedding **connections between state-funded employment supports and Skills and Jobs Centres** (provided these Centres are reinvigorated with an explicit mandate to engage people experiencing labour market disadvantage and steward local connections between Learn Locals, VET and other skill-building opportunities).
- Establishing **whole of system indicators and targets** for training and employment outcomes for people experiencing labour market disadvantage, clearly defining the components that different programs are delivering.

Recommendation 6

Intertwine economic development, training and employment initiatives so that they are mutually reinforcing.

Strengthening the social and economic participation of people receiving state housing assistance

Victorians receiving state housing assistance are among the most disadvantaged and marginalised in our community. While the state's public housing system was originally built to cater for working families, decades of disinvestment coupled with population growth have left Victoria with the lowest stock of social housing in Australia. There is a long waiting list of over 39,000 applicants—many of whom are living in private rental stress, or are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.⁴² Public housing has become highly targeted, with many residents having complex needs: very low incomes (around 90% receive a Centrelink payment), experiences of homelessness and mental ill health. Not surprisingly, labour market participation is low and unemployment and underemployment are very high, with around 20% of working age residents receiving income from employment. Turnover of residents has declined by almost a third over the last decade, reflecting serious disadvantage and the lack of affordable options to transition into.

The former Neighbourhood Renewal program, and more recently the Brotherhood led **Work & Learning Centre** program demonstrate the potential to move beyond the dominant 'housing only' model and assist public housing residents and other highly disadvantaged jobseekers to build their confidence, motivation, skills and employability.

There are five Work & Learning Centres in Victoria, all co-located with public housing estates and closely connected with community and training supports, and local employers. A flexible funding model has enabled extensive, extended support to build social and economic participation. To date, the W&LC's have assisted more than 5390 highly disadvantaged jobseekers, including more than 2160 public housing residents. Most clients are successfully engaging with training and securing employment. They are exiting the centres with higher incomes, reduced reliance on income support, improved skills and abilities, improved life satisfaction and more positive mental health and vitality.⁴³

Public housing residents make up over 30% of the caseload at the Flemington/North Melbourne site of the Brotherhood's JVEN program. In the last quarter, 70% of job placements at that site have been public tenants—mostly young people of African backgrounds.

Our Community Safety and Information Service (CSIS) is also delivering strong results with public housing residents (see Box).

⁴² More than 24,000 people in Victoria experience homelessness on any given night (ABS Census 2016). Around 116,000 people are assisted by Victorian homelessness services annually.

⁴³ E Bodsworth, E, *What's the difference? Jobseeker perspectives on employment assistance: insights from Victoria's Work and Learning Centres*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic., 2015

Community Safety and Information Service

Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and delivered by the Brotherhood, the Community Safety and Information Service has a record of success in employing public housing tenants as trainees to provide security and concierge services in the City of Yarra's high-rise estates. Last year, 91% of program graduates secured employment or went on to further training or education. Using an intermediate labour market approach, the program enables participants to combine training to Certificate III level in Security Operations with real employment experience over 12 months. The Brotherhood also supports participants' subsequent transition into sustained employment in the open labour market. Recent graduates have been placed with MSS, Wilson's Security, SecureCorp, David Jones and Southern Cross Protection providing security services in sites including the State Library of Victoria.

CSIS is delivered at similar costs to engaging a private security company for the same task, yet it adds significant value by improving safety, empowering communities and providing pathways into employment for disadvantaged jobseekers.

In addition to generating employment benefits, these programs also raise aspirations among public housing residents—as neighbour sees neighbour take up opportunities. They also increase housing mobility. Public housing rent increases with income.⁴⁴ Increased income from secure work creates housing choices – and critically opens options to move out of public housing, making room for others.⁴⁵

A recent evaluation of Work & Learning Centres⁴⁶ confirms that a strong need remains for intensive employment support for public housing residents and other highly disadvantaged jobseekers.

Going forward, there is opportunity to integrate housing assistance (whether it be social housing or other housing support packages e.g. for family violence survivors) with support to build economic participation.

⁴⁴ Public housing residents are required to pay either 25% of their household gross income, or the full market rent value - whichever is the lesser amount. For community housing residents, the rate is usually 30% of income.

⁴⁵ Although the lack of affordable housing constrains these options. According to Infrastructure Victoria's 30 Year Strategy (check 2016) an estimated 75,000 to 100,000 of vulnerable low-income households do not have appropriate housing, with around 143,000 households in private rental experiencing rental stress.

⁴⁶ Grosvenor Public Sector Advisory, Evaluation of Work & learning Centres, conducted for Jobs Victoria, 2019 (unpublished).

Recommendation 7

Expand support to strengthen the social and economic participation of people receiving state housing assistance (including public housing). Provide flexible funding to enable sustained and intensive assistance for those that seek it, underpinned by provider targets reflecting local demographics.

Commission for collaboration and model fidelity

The Brotherhood has long believed that collaboration between service providers, built on trust and reciprocity, can foster innovation in human service delivery. Collaboration builds social capital (the glue that holds things together), enhances networks and creates opportunities to share ideas, experiment⁴⁷, grow best practice and achieve effective solutions for people with complex needs⁴⁸.

The Brotherhood currently plays an enabling role in several programs for which we are also registered providers. This approach—in which we deliver a program while concurrently collaborating with other providers to build their capacity—is sometimes described as ‘having skin in the game’. The idea is that direct experience of delivery helps us to appreciate the practical challenges staff face, and prevents a ‘disconnect’ opening between the front line and the back office.

The commissioning process for the Work & Learning Centres is based on a collaborative Prime Provider model—not the type of ‘prime provider’ approach recently abandoned in the United Kingdom that involved big commercial operators managing sub-providers, but instead an enabling approach between community sector partners. The Brotherhood is funded not only to manage sub-providers, but also—and more importantly—to develop providers’ capacity to build strong networks in their own communities. It has supported smaller, locally embedded organisations to provide front-line delivery and this approach mediates their risks.

Strengths of Work & Learning Centre collaborative commissioning approach recognised

A recent evaluation of Work and Learning Centres identified strengths of this approach: access to the Brotherhood’s expertise, research and advocacy; melding this with local knowledge; professional development provided by the Brotherhood; and positive relationships between providers, which enable frank conversations and support to address challenges. It found that these benefits outweighed any small cost savings to be gained from direct contracting.⁴⁹

An alternative approach to provider collaboration is occurring in our Transition to Work program. Aided by a commissioning model that appointed just one provider per region 12 community

⁴⁷ Productivity Commission, *Reforms to human services*; Productivity Commission, *Social capital: reviewing the concept and its policy implications*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, 2003.

⁴⁸ S Wickramasinghe & H Kimberley, *Networks of care*, Brotherhood of St Laurence Fitzroy, Vic.

⁴⁹ Grosvenor Public Sector Advisory *Evaluation of Work and Learning Centres*, Report for Jobs Victoria 2019 (Unpublished)

organisations in 13 communities around Australia have formed a Community of Practice convened by the Brotherhood. Through a structured model and practice approach and shared resources, TtW CoP providers have been able (over the past two and a half years) to exchange service expertise and situated knowledge across the country. This has results in new skills, improved practice, collectively solved problems and generated innovative ideas and solutions. The CoP is demonstrating national application of a consistent service model and approach that is tailored locally to place.

... employers want that bespoke [service], someone who understands their business needs, and is able to go out and help them recruit, help them organise pre-employment training if it's required, you know—just ... outsource what they don't have the capacity to do internally, and navigate the market for them as well, and source talent for them.

Employer association member, employer study, 2014

Recommendations 8 and 9

Commission for collaborative mechanisms, such as a Community of Practice, to connect state employment support providers and underpin shared learnings, use of data and continuous improvement.

Commission 'enabling organisations' to build capacity of smaller organisations.

Realising the potential of Victoria's Social Procurement Framework

The Brotherhood has a long involvement in supporting social procurement, corporate social responsibility and inclusive employment measures. We commend Victoria's nation-leading Social Procurement Framework⁵⁰ and the related Major Projects Skills Guarantee. Already, the practical impacts of these measures can be seen—including new opportunities for disadvantaged jobseekers, the development of inclusive employment practices and the stimulation of local economies. Examples include:

- a pilot project to place family violence survivors in roles with the Level Crossing Removal Authority
- new relationships for placement with major infrastructure businesses including John Holland, Boral, McConnell Dowell, Rail Projects Victoria and CPB Contractors;

Effective social procurement is underpinned by strong partnerships between employment support providers, social enterprises and employers to tackle barriers to employment and plan in good faith for a genuine pathway for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage. State-funded employment services are pivotal to realising the potential of the Social Procurement Framework. They need to be designed as an effective intermediary both to prepare jobseekers for available

⁵⁰ Operational since September 2018, the Social Procurement Framework applies across all 270 Victorian government agencies and departments and sets out seven social and three sustainable procurement goals aimed at creating social value.

opportunities and equip large contractors to have a positive experience of recruiting and retaining these jobseekers.

The Brotherhood's employment programs – especially our GTO - are working with major government contractors on effective ways to implement social procurement measures, and assisting them to source, prepare and retain recruits (including induction and supervision processes) and address teething issues, so as to create the best chance for successful and ongoing employment relationships.

A growing number of employers are seeking to engage about social procurement, recognising the framework can be used to address skills shortages, by tapping into jobseekers whose skills are being underutilised.

Social procurement: a win-win

Major construction contractors are seeking engineers to undertake government-contracts. This is creating significant opportunities for refugees. The Brotherhood and other community providers have been assisting African born engineers to prepare for Australian workplaces, have their overseas qualifications recognised (although there are cost barriers) and supporting upskilling (e.g. an engineer with a background in structural design is being upskilled for civil construction).

While there has been some good early progress in rolling out Victoria's social procurement initiatives, there are some emerging risks, which are consistent with the wider evidence base⁵¹:

- Implementation has been somewhat slow and inconsistent – amplified by the variation in contracting guidelines between projects, and different bidding approaches.
- Cultural change is a critical component. Workplaces need to buy in to the social procurement agenda – but different employers and public agencies are at different stages of this journey.
- There has been difficulty in meeting prescribed targets (particularly mandated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander targets) in some locations. A variable target, reflecting the demographics of location, might be more effective. Research from overseas has found more targeted, place-based, and context-specific procurement approaches have the best chance of success.⁵²

⁵¹ For a synthesis of these risks, see M Mupanemunda, *Social procurement: creating employment opportunities through purchasing expenditure* Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy, Vic., 2019 (publication forthcoming)

⁵² I Burkett, *Social procurement in Australia*, Centre for Social Impact, UNSW, Sydney, 2010, viewed 20 May 2019, <https://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/Social_Procurement_in_Australia_Report_-_December_2010.pdf>; C Newman, S Rawlings & T Philippa, *A plan to use social procurement to generate employment outcomes for GROW*, GROW, [Geelong, Vic.], 2017, viewed 31 May 2019, <<https://grow.g21.com.au/wp-content/uploads/pdf/GROW-SOCIAL-PROCUREMENT-Report.pdf>>.

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- Social enterprises (most of which are very small outfits⁵³ delivering cultural and recreational services, retail trade and health and social assistance support⁵⁴) have limited capacity to scale up efforts and impact in the sectors with current and emerging opportunities (e.g. construction). Initiatives such as the Victorian Social Enterprise Strategy are trying to address this, but there is a mismatch that needs to be bridged.
 - Measuring and capturing public value and social impact can be difficult.

While Victoria's new social procurement initiatives are in their infancy, we see several immediate opportunities to address the risks mentioned above, and strengthen implementation.

Bringing together key stakeholders—some of which are already doing significant work—to provide oversight of and advice on implementation opportunities and risks is critical to keeping this important reform initiative on track.

Further, creating confidence in the continuation of social procurement in Victoria would encourage the fundamental changes needed. Social procurement legislation—as has occurred in the United Kingdom⁵⁵ and the United States⁵⁶—ought to be explored. This would make Parliament the ultimate guardian of ensuring that publicly funded contractors deliver social dividends.

⁵³ Castellás et al. 2017, *Map for Impact: the Victorian social enterprise mapping project 2017*, Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, 2017, viewed 20 May 2019, <https://mapforimpact.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Map-for-Impact-FINAL-REPORT_2.pdf>.

⁵⁴ J Barraket, C Mason & B Blain, *Finding Australia's social enterprise sector 2016: final report*, Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, 2016, viewed 20 May 2019, <<https://www.socialtraders.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FASES-2016-full-report-final.pdf>>

⁵⁵ The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires government to consider 'how procurement could improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the relevant area'. See Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport, *The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012: an introductory guide for commissioners and policymakers*, Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport, London, 2018, p.2.

⁵⁶ Federal US law under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act of 1971 mandates all Federal Government agencies to procure select goods and services from not-for-profit organisations that employ people with severe disabilities. See Social Procurement Australasia 2014, *Social procurement: the business case*, Social Procurement Australasia, [Melbourne], 2014.

Recommendation 10

Realise the potential of social procurement initiatives by:

- **establishing a Social Procurement Advisory Group to harness voices across the sector —social enterprises, employers and participants—to keep government informed about key learnings, effective practices, and strategies to address emerging risks and challenges**
- **considering the flexible application of social procurement employment targets to reflect regional demographics and circumstances**
- **gearing state-funded employment services to provide parallel support to jobseekers and employers, to enable a positive experience of social procurement**
- **ensuring the new employer engagement body (Jobs Bank 2.0) has a mandate to build employer capacity for social procurement and inclusive employment**
- **developing social procurement legislation to embed, as a business-as-usual approach, a requirement for social, environmental and/or local economic dividends to accompany significant public expenditure.**

Explore and enable employee-led co-operatives and mutual enterprises

Employee-led mutuals and cooperatives are re-emerging as an alternative platform for fairer, sustainable employment outcomes for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage. Of particular relevance to this Inquiry are employee owned businesses. Worker co-operatives and mutuals are owned and democratically controlled by the people who work in it. Employees are pivotal in decision-making. They define working conditions, salaries and benefits, and share in surpluses in proportion to salary earned or hours worked.

The 2015 McClure Review of Australia’s welfare system emphasised the crucial role that mutuals and co-ops could play in disadvantaged communities, particularly among rural and regional communities.⁵⁷ It highlighted their ‘comparative advantages’ in supporting social and economic participation through job creation, local economic development and self-help initiatives. It noted their potential to generate economic and social resilience for individuals, communities and organisations; increase consumer engagement; and improve employee wellbeing. The report recommended that government work with the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals to build an enabling regulatory, economic and social environment for mutuals and co-ops. However, related recommendations, made by a subsequent Senate Inquiry into Cooperative, Mutual and Member Owned Firms, were met with a lukewarm response by the Australian Government.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *A new system for better employment and social outcomes: report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform to the Minister for Social Services*, Department of Social Services, 2015.

⁵⁸ Australian Government response to the Senate Economics References Committee Report: Cooperative, mutual and members owned firms. November 2017

Delivery of human services offers an area of growing employment opportunities. There are many contemporary European examples of mutuals and coops delivering disability, housing, aged care, employment and healthcare services.⁵⁹ Drawing on this experience, Australia’s Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) maintains that co-ops and mutuals offer a better alternative to traditional privatisation⁶⁰ with the ability to generate better social outcomes, greater value for money, higher returns on investments, higher levels of consumer engagement, higher quality services and improved employee wellbeing.⁶¹

In 2018, Australia’s first ‘employee-led public service mutual’—Kudos Services (SA)—was established to deliver Early Childhood Early Intervention services for children with disability and developmental delay funded through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).⁶² Staff are transferring into the co-op from employment with the SA Government.⁶³

There are myriad small purpose-built mutuals with workforces comprising people who have experienced disadvantage, but Australia is far from realising the potential of this sector

In the lead-up to the NSW state election earlier in 2019, both major parties promised to increase support for the mutual and co-op sector, including through renewing and extending loans programs and advice services, and streamlining registration, regulatory requirements and state/federal interfaces.

We believe there is value in exploring and enabling the establishment of employee-led enterprises in Victoria.

Recommendation 11

Explore scope for government to enable employee-led co-operative and mutual enterprises as alternative models of sustainable employment for jobseekers experiencing disadvantage.

⁵⁹ D Donaldson & S Easton, ‘The push for a ‘third way’: mutuals, co-operatives win favour’, *The Mandarin*, 5 September 2014 [online] <<https://www.themandarin.com.au/?p=2557?p=2557>>

⁶⁰ Easton 2018

⁶¹ Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM), *Public service mutuals: a third way for delivering public services in Australia*, BCCM, 2014.

⁶² S Easton, ‘A spins off Australia’s first employee-led public service mutual’, *The Mandarin*, 6 March, 2018 [online] <<https://www.themandarin.com.au/89371-sa-spins-off-australias-first-employee-led-public-service-mutual/>>

⁶³ South Australian Department of Human Services (DHS), *Employee-led mutual to secure NDIS services for children and allied health jobs in South Australia*, media releases, 2 September, 2018 [online] <<https://dhs.sa.gov.au/latest-news/media-releases-2018/Employee-led-mutual>>

Work and Learning Centres: a place-based approach for public housing tenants and other highly disadvantaged jobseekers

Objective	To provide a collaborative, place-based intervention to enable public housing residents and other people experiencing high levels of labour market disadvantage
Location	Geelong, Fitzroy/Carlton, Moe, Ballarat and Shepparton.
Duration	Sites opened between 2013 and 2014 and are funded until Dec 2020. They followed a Victorian Government/BSL pilot which ran from 2006 in the City of Yarra
Target group	Public housing residents (approx. 40% of participants) and other highly disadvantaged jobseekers. Around 45% of clients had been unemployed for more than a year. A third of clients are under 25 years old.
Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underpinned by a capabilities approach that meets individual needs and aspirations with opportunity. • Focus on building community and economic participation • Intensive and sustained assistance to support both short term and long-term career goals. Includes one-on-one support; training; group based activities and workshops, pre-employment skills development, post placement support and repeat assistance where needed (e.g. where initial placement in short term work). • Strong engagement with local employers to understand and meet their workforce needs and workplace requirements • A place based approach that leverages local community networks and capacities to access support to address non-vocational barriers, training, community groups, job search and vocational guidance activities, employers and jobs. • Each site has a Local Advisory Panel comprising community and training organisations, business and government agencies to drive alignment. • Close working relationships with other support services. The WLCs are collocated with or nearby other services (e.g. Ballarat WLC is a Neighbourhood House and a Learn Local). The WLCs have established referral pathways from these support services and with other employment services such as JA providers and JVENs. The WLCs refer clients to the support services required if they are not ready for employability training and get referrals for clients from the other services when they are ready to seek employment. • Some sites offer outreach activities in nearby areas where there is high demand (such as Wendouree from Ballarat and Morwell and Traralgon from Moe) and limited public transport
Commissioning	The Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions contracts with the Brotherhood as a prime provider. The Brotherhood runs the Carlton and (as of July 2019) Shepparton WLCs and supports the following partner organisations, who are embedded in the local communities, to deliver the model elsewhere: Northern Futures at Geelong, Gippsland Employment Skills Training at Moe, and Ballarat Neighbourhood House in Ballarat. The Brotherhood carries responsibility for ensuring model fidelity across the five sites and manages reporting, compliance, evidence gathering, collaborative work practices and quality control as well as capturing the learning.
Governance	Contract is between Jobs Victoria and the BSL, who run to W&LC State Office which is responsible for oversight of all five centres; stakeholder management; ensuring best practice; ensuring contractual obligations are met; reporting and database management; and general operational support for each site

	The program is overseen by a Management Advisory Group comprising DJPR, DHHS, DET, BSL and the W&LC providers.																																
Relationship with other programs	The majority of clients are registered with a federal employment services provider (jobactive or DES) or programs (e.g ParentsNext), but voluntarily come to the Centres for meaningful support. They are typically attracted through word of mouth from existing or previous clients of the WLCs. Some referrals are received from JVEN and TtW providers. Strong connections (including co-location at some sites) with Learn Locals, at some sites with TAFEs and Reconnect providers.																																
Funding	<p>Flexible funding with targets. The lack of outcomes-based payments allows the WLC's to work with clients who face significant barriers and may not be prioritised by JA or JVEN providers.</p> <p>State Government funding for W&LCs is approximately \$1.75m pa until Dec 2020. There are also considerable in-kind contributions from community agencies, employers and local businesses who work with Centre staff to give people the chance for a better future.</p>																																
Outcomes	<p>Work and Learning Centres – Headline Outcomes cumulative across five sites- Carlton/Fitzroy, Geelong, Ballarat, Moe and Shepparton</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Outcome Area</th> <th>2012 – 2015 (WLC opening staggered across FY 2012)</th> <th>2015 – May 2019</th> <th>Total 2012- May 2019</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number of clients assisted</td> <td>2321</td> <td>3309</td> <td>5630</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of clients in public housing</td> <td>1019</td> <td>1140</td> <td>2159</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of DHHS Clients (including public housing)</td> <td></td> <td>1420</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of employment placements</td> <td>1271 (721 retained for 16 weeks)</td> <td>2026 (1443 retained for 12 weeks; 1158 retained for 26 weeks or more)</td> <td>3297</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number non-accredited training placements</td> <td>1671 (1545 completed)</td> <td>2703 (2455 completed to date)</td> <td>4374</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of accredited training placements</td> <td>980 (571 completed)</td> <td>619 (527 completed to date)</td> <td>1599</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employers connected with the Centres</td> <td>279</td> <td>123</td> <td>402</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A 2019 independent evaluation (unpublished) commissioned by Jobs Victoria found that the program was delivering strong outcomes with low costs compared with other programs. It enjoys high conversion rates from registration to employment (35%). The place based delivery model was identified as a key success factor of the program. And the prime provider contract model was endorsed. Potential areas identified for improvement included greater clarify around targets, clearer interfaces with JVEN and other employment and training supports and clearer reporting.</p> <p>A 2015 evaluation found that W&LC participants had increased their income, reduced their reliance on income support payments, improved their life satisfaction, indicated more positive mental health and vitality, and increased their confidence.</p>	Outcome Area	2012 – 2015 (WLC opening staggered across FY 2012)	2015 – May 2019	Total 2012- May 2019	Number of clients assisted	2321	3309	5630	Number of clients in public housing	1019	1140	2159	Number of DHHS Clients (including public housing)		1420		Number of employment placements	1271 (721 retained for 16 weeks)	2026 (1443 retained for 12 weeks; 1158 retained for 26 weeks or more)	3297	Number non-accredited training placements	1671 (1545 completed)	2703 (2455 completed to date)	4374	Number of accredited training placements	980 (571 completed)	619 (527 completed to date)	1599	Employers connected with the Centres	279	123	402
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Replication or upscaling	The 2019 evaluation recommended increased funding to expand the capacity of current sites and extension of the model to new locations – including Melbourne's growth corridors and additional regional centres experiencing concentrations of disadvantage. Learnings from the W&LC model can be used to inform design of state-funded employment supports.																																



Given the Chance: a demand-led, supported employment model

Objective	To provide a high support, low risk, recruitment model to encourage employers to diversify their workforces by taking on jobseekers experiencing disadvantage.				
Location	Metropolitan Melbourne				
Duration	GtC has been running in various forms since 2007.				
Target group	Given the Chance has worked with multiple disadvantaged jobseeker groups including: Refugees and People Seeking Asylum, young people, mature aged, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, People with Disability and long-term unemployed				
Model	<p>The Brotherhood’s Group Training Organisation is a social enterprise that provides high support labour hire. The Brotherhood acts as the initial employer supporting fixed term paid placements with host businesses, including via traineeships and apprenticeships. This model encourages businesses which might not otherwise do so to open up opportunities: it reduces the risk and compliance burdens of direct employment; provides flexibility; and enables them to try out recruits before hiring them. Our status as the legal employer gives us greater leverage in performance management and advice to managers and supervisors.</p> <p>Given the Chance establishes a host hire agreement with partner employers and charges an hourly oncost rate for participants hired by BSL who are placed in jobs at the partner’s worksites. The enterprise does not charge release fees for host employers to employ candidates directly, to remove any barriers to participants gaining ongoing employment.</p> <p>Key features of GtC include parallel support for recruit and the host employer:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="303 1388 1532 2083"> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 1388 446 1478">Employer support</td> <td data-bbox="446 1388 1532 1904"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing diversity employment programs with larger employers • A relationship manager to support employers, answer questions and provide further support and services where needed throughout the contract. • Assistance to structure positions suitable for entry level workers or disadvantaged jobseekers or make reasonable adjustments. • Employer training that develops managers’ skills to integrate new employees into the workplace. The training provides practical tools and information to help the whole team navigate cultural differences. • Field support assistance to help the employer identify the most appropriate supervisory and support strategies to both ensure a smooth transition and to embed the recruit into the work team of the organisation. </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="303 1904 446 2083">Recruit support</td> <td data-bbox="446 1904 1532 2083"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job preparation support through one-on-one assistance to navigate the recruitment process, complete any necessary screening, such as medical and police checks, as well as prepare CVs and gain interviewing skills. The model is supported by three Jobs Victoria Employment Network Programs in Epping, </td> </tr> </table>	Employer support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing diversity employment programs with larger employers • A relationship manager to support employers, answer questions and provide further support and services where needed throughout the contract. • Assistance to structure positions suitable for entry level workers or disadvantaged jobseekers or make reasonable adjustments. • Employer training that develops managers’ skills to integrate new employees into the workplace. The training provides practical tools and information to help the whole team navigate cultural differences. • Field support assistance to help the employer identify the most appropriate supervisory and support strategies to both ensure a smooth transition and to embed the recruit into the work team of the organisation. 	Recruit support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job preparation support through one-on-one assistance to navigate the recruitment process, complete any necessary screening, such as medical and police checks, as well as prepare CVs and gain interviewing skills. The model is supported by three Jobs Victoria Employment Network Programs in Epping,
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	<p>Dandenong and Flemington, funded by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored job preparation training with an emphasis on workplace culture and behaviour. Training covers 11 modules over four days, including a practice job interview. • Field support to help navigate the transition to employment. • Support to find direct employment with partner employers who come on board and implement alternate recruitment pathways using BSL as their intermediary. This approach ensures a level playing field by allowing candidates access to jobs without having to compete with other more advantaged candidates through ordinary exclusionary recruitment practises <p>Using a specialist team of employer engagement staff, the GtC model provides a single point of contact to actively brokers opportunities with employers (e.g. across a range of industries).</p>
Governance	The program is governed by an internal BSL steering group. BSL is also a registered Group Training Company and a national member of Apprenticeships Employment Network.
Relationship with other programs	GtC recruits from the Brotherhood's JVEN sites (Epping, Dandenong and Flemington) and W&LCs and local community agencies including Neighbourhood Houses, Aboriginal Organisations, LLEN's, RTO's, community clubs (e.g. sports and cultural groups)
Funding	Given the Chance is financed by a combination of oncost fees made by participating businesses and private sector funding. State and federal subsidies are accessed where relevant. Candidates recruited via the BSLS JVEN programs count towards funded job outcomes.
Outcomes	<p>In the two financial years, the GTOs has placed over 300 people with 43 host employers. Around half of the placements are in apprenticeships and traineeships and half in fixed term labour hire (minimum three months). The program reduces transaction costs for both employers and jobseekers. It helps to build social and business networks and lowers labour market risk for employers and jobseekers.</p> <p>Past participants ensure high demand for services from new clients, as those who gain work recommend the program in their communities. The program enjoys repeat business from employers, some of whom have championed it to their partners and supply chain.</p>
Replication or upscaling	<p>With public investment, and greater social procurement for employment outcomes, there would be significant opportunity to scale up supported employment approaches tailored to the needs of employers and industry sectors.</p> <p>The Given the Chance at ANZ program is currently being extended to ANZ branches outside of Victoria. The <i>Settling better report: reforming refugee and employment settlement services</i> (Centre for Policy Development and Boston Consulting 2017) pointed to the Brotherhood's Given the Chance program as a functional example of a successful labour market program that could be replicated.</p>

Transition to Work: purpose build for young people	
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To evidence an effective, capabilities based model that moves young people into sustainable employment To work with government and communities to embed this approach in the mainstream response to youth unemployment.
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSL Direct Service Delivery in Broadmeadows, Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Sites attached to the BSL enabled Community of Practice include: Hobart, Gippsland, South Coast Victoria, Illawara South Coast, Greater Western Sydney, Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns, Darwin, Geraldton & Adelaide
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal funding commenced 2016 for the national roll out of TtW. The Brotherhood ran an earlier demonstration project – the Youth Transitions Program – from 2010 in various Melbourne locations, which in part inspired design of TtW
Target group	Young people aged 15-22 years who have not completed year 12, are on youth allowance, and are assessed as having a medium to high level risk of long term unemployment. Young people who are not receiving income support or who are receiving non-activity tested income support such as Parenting Payment are also eligible. The Australian Government has committed to a forthcoming increase the upper age limit to 24 years.
Model	<p>The Brotherhood’s TtW CoP model (currently delivered in 13 communities around Australia by the Brotherhood and 11 other community organisations) operates on a number of levels:</p> <p>At the local level the model seeks to test the effectiveness of a distinctive fidelity model of service delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A capabilities approach delivered in practice as Advantaged Thinking, which builds motivation and agency by working with young people according to their talents and aspirations. - An evidenced based service consisting of activities and opportunities that equip young people with skills, experiences and networks; and a structured approach to service delivery that provides young people with a plan for their journey to work. - Establishment of local Community Investment Committees which are designed to Harness Community Effort through linkages with local employers and other community stakeholders to increase opportunities for young people by combining ‘supply side’ support with ‘demand side’ interventions. <p>At a national level the model seeks to test the effectiveness of a new approach to commissioning and influence practice and policy development, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The formation of a TtW Community of Practice among agencies using the Brotherhood’s TtW service model, which aims to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ collaboratively develop and improve the service delivery model; ○ engage national employers and other stakeholders to harness community effort to increase opportunities for young people; and ○ engage with and influence government in relation to issues affecting the delivery of TtW and youth unemployment more broadly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As the convenor of the CoP, the BSL acts as an enabling organisation and provides service development, including Practice Guides, tools and resources, operational processes and the TtW CoP website; training in the service model and practice approach via site visits to organisations, training days, forums and e-learning modules; twice yearly CoP conferences; and ongoing support, guidance and troubleshooting - The use of a collaborative learning and action research approach to evaluation, which seeks to build the collective capacity of the Brotherhood and other TtW CoP partners in relation to service innovation and adaptive management, as well as capturing the impact and value of the model.
Commissioning	<p>The commissioning process for TtW set up the conditions that have enabled success of the program to date. The original discussion paper explained that the intention was to create:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A collaboration-focused market in which there would be a single provider in each employment region (with the number of employment regions being increased). Providers would be encouraged to collaborate across regions. This would also provide employers with a single point of contact in each region.</p> <p>The CoP brings together providers in the pursuit of a shared ambition of developing and demonstrating an alternative response to addressing youth unemployment, one that is premised upon collaborative, multi-sectoral effort rather than competition. Each partner has their own contract with Department of Employment, but also committed to the shared model of the CoP in the bidding process (some partners have subsequently joined).</p>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TtW CoP is governed by an internal BSL Steering Committee comprising research, service development, practice and operational managers. ● The CoP adopts a collaborative governance approach with a representation from senior managers from each partner organisation and the Department of Employment. There are a number of working groups of CoP partners informing the COP advocacy agenda, model development and monitoring and evaluation. ● The CoP have also established a National Employer Reference Group which is made up of local employers and from each of the partner sites across the country. The NERG also feeds valuable information into the BSL enabled National Youth Employment Body. ● Each CIC has its own governance structure with an employment chair and local community and business representation.
Relationship with other programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Job Active: TtW picks up about 20% of unemployed young people aged up to age 22. It is an alternative employment services provider – young people can only be registered with one service at a time. The Targeted Compliance Framework does not apply to TtW. Referrals can happen both ways. ● Reconnect: Recent administrative changes have prevented young people who are in TtW also receiving funded support from the Victorian Reconnect program

Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded in the 2015–16 Federal Budget by the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business. Subsequent budgets have increased the capacity of TtW to see additional young people, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. • Provider contracts were recently extended from 2020 to 2022. • TtW contracts are funded according to a combination of allocated places and outcomes payments • All members of the COP provide a contribution of 3% of their TtW contract value.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TtW CoP sustainability outcomes for employment are strong. This is important because it reflects a consistently delivered model and approach across different regions. • The first Advantaged Thinking participant survey indicates young people across the TtW CoP feel that Advantaged Thinking has enabled them to build positive and motivating relationships with TtW staff and feel that they are treated respectfully. Survey results found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 94% felt supported to find out about training, education and career opportunities and a high proportion of young people agreed they had access to opportunities and networks. - 91% felt that staff helped them learn from the experience of positive risk taking.
Replication or upscaling	Soon to have age eligibility extended to 24 years. Potential to deliver to a higher proportion of young people experiencing unemployment.

Jobs Victoria Employment Network: the Brotherhood's approach	
Objective	To support jobseekers experiencing disadvantage including refugees and asylum seekers, people with a disability, public tenants, youth, mature aged, Aboriginal and long term unemployed people to find and keep sustainable employment.
Location	BSL is the lead agency for program delivery and contract management across three metropolitan sites: Dandenong/Casey; City of Whittlesea/Epping; Flemington/North Melbourne
Duration	Sites opened between 2017-18 and are funded until Sep 2020.
Target group	<p>Profile of the Brotherhood's JVEN participants: The profile of jobseekers assisted varies across locations, in Flemington for example the service is more targeted to young Africans living in Public Housing, and in Dandenong there is a higher focus on women, single mothers and family violence. All three sites cater to refugees and asylum seekers on bridging visas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% Refugees & People Seeking Asylum • 30% unemployed over 6 months – two thirds unemployed for over a year • 6% young people under 25 years • 14% mature aged jobseekers (45 years plus) • At Flemington over 30% public housing residents
Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses local partnerships and leverage local community networks and capacities to access support to address non-vocational barriers, training, community groups, job search and vocational guidance activities, employers and jobs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Dandenong/Casey the program works in partnership with Life without Barriers, Launch Housing and Doveton College through co-location and cross referral. - In Whittlesea, the program is based with the Epping Community Services Hub, alongside BSLs Multicultural Communities Team. WISE Employment are a key partner for this site, adding expertise and staff to support people with disability into work. - In Flemington/North Melbourne we partner with Moonee Valley City Council and are co-located with Council services and community agencies at the Flemington Community Centre at the base of the housing estate. The Huddle at the North Melbourne Football Club is a co-delivery partner, providing specialised youth engagement support. We also partner with the Australian Oromo Community Assoc. (Vic) and Multicultural Consulting Services (MCS) as part of a mutual capacity building approach to deliver outreach employment support to young Africans and Pacific Islanders. We house our JVEN staff in both the Huddle and MCS. • Underpinned by a capabilities approach that focus on jobseeker goals and aspirations, developing skills, capabilities, employability and connectedness • Strong engagement with local employers to understand their needs, identify vacancies, and build pathways into the local labour market (e.g. Citywide in North Melbourne and Outlook Vic in South East) • Post placement support and access to high support employment models (via GTO)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained assistance to support both short term and long-term career goals, including repeat assistance where needed (e.g. where initial placement in short term work).
Commissioning	The Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions contracts direct with the Brotherhood as a JVEN provider. There are over 50 JVEN sites across the state, each delivering their own models and approaches.
Governance	Each BSL site has established or connected with local networks. For example, the Flemington JVEN Governance Group meets quarterly and is nimbly co-designing the program in real time. The Group includes Council, Participants, Employers, the Huddle, Local MP's office, Learn Locals and Jobactives. Together the Group collectively addresses priorities such as pathways for women and young people in public housing.
Relationship with other programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many clients are co-registered with jobactives to mutually support clients and tap into different supports each provider can access. • Unable to claim funding for supporting People with Disability into work if they are also registered with a DES provider. In Epping, JVEN is co-located with DES, and in Dandenong there is a partnership with Outlook (a DES provider) which enables cross-referrals, including where a person is not eligible for DES services. • Referrals into TtW for young people needing extended support, including re-engagement with school or training • Referring into TAFE, although some categories of bridging visas are not eligible for training/apprenticeship subsidies or free TAFE courses • Referral to Reconnect for those who need support with training • Refer people who are not eligible for JVEN/other employment programs to Skills & Jobs Centres. Currently exploring opportunities for joint work
Funding	<p>JVEN first funded in the 2017/17 Victorian budget, with further allocations in subsequent years. BSL funding totals \$4.7 M across the three sites, expiring September 2020.</p> <p>Additional funding has been received (\$100K for 12 months commenced March 2019) to partner with two community organisation Australian Oromo Community Assoc. (Vic) and Multicultural Consulting Services – a mutual capacity building approach to deliver outreach employment support to young Africans and Pacific Islanders deliver employment support. BSL has engaged a number of these young people in paid internships. Lack of experience a major barrier. Proving it internally.</p> <p>Outcomes-based funding model – based on placements of getting people into work of at least 15 hours per week. Payment is upon placement and then at the 26-week mark. Quarterly targets also apply. which can provide a disincentive to work with clients who are more difficult to place, or are facing more intensive barriers to employment</p>
Outcomes	<p>To date:</p> <p>2606 people have been through intake across our three sites.</p> <p>790 people have been placed into multiple jobs, (995).</p> <p>490 employers have provided jobs.</p>
Replication or upscaling	Model capable of expansion and extension to further locations.